



# GSIS

# GLOBAL SECURITY & INTELLIGENCE STUDIES

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## **EDITED BY MELISSA LAYNE AND CARTER MATHERLY**

**Through the Extremist Lens: Uncovering the Correlation Between Domestic Right-Wing Extremist Ideology and Violence in the United States from 2000 to 2020**

*J.J. Brookhouser*

**The Convergence of Subjects: Defining Where Deobandi and Salafi Subjects Intersect**

*Joshua Pease and James Hess*

**How Does a Security Frame Affect Support for Refugee Protection in France and Germany in the Aftermath of Europe's Refugee Crisis?**

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**Comparative Analysis of Strategic Relationship between Industrial versus Corporate Espionage within the Framework of Implementation Methods**

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**The Counterterrorism Conundrum: Understanding Terrorist Organizations, Ideological Warfare and Strategies for Counterintelligence-Based Counterterrorism**

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**Words as Weapons: The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Information War**

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**Who is the Audience? What the Academic Field of Speech Communication Tells Us About Interpreting Open Source Messages**

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**The Assassination of Fakhriyadeh—A Major Iranian Counterintelligence Failure**

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**The Jump from Morbidity to Mortality: Lethality Evolved**

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**BOOK REVIEW: Leonid Savin's *Ordo Pluriversalis: The End of Pax Americana and the Rise of Multipolarity***

*Eugene Vertlieb*

**BOOK REVIEW: K. Braddock's *Weaponized Words: The Strategic Role of Persuasion in Violent Radicalization and Counter-Radicalization***

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*Aims and Scope.* *GSIS* is a bi-annual, peer-reviewed, open access publication designed to provide a forum for the academic community and the community of practitioners to engage in dialogue about contemporary global security and intelligence issues. The journal welcomes contributions on a broad range of intelligence and security issues, and from across the methodological and theoretical spectrum.

The journal especially encourages submissions that recognize the multidisciplinary nature of intelligence and security studies and that draw on insights from a variety of fields to advance our understanding of important current intelligence and security issues. In keeping with the desire to help bridge the gap between academics and practitioners, the journal also invites articles about current intelligence- and security-related matters from a practitioner perspective. In particular, *GSIS* is interested in publishing informed perspectives on current intelligence- and security-related matters.

*GSIS* welcomes the submission of original empirical research, research notes, and book reviews. Papers and research notes that explicitly demonstrate how a multidisciplinary approach enhances our theoretical and practical understanding of intelligence and security matters are especially welcome. Please visit <https://www.ipsonet.org/publications/open-access/gsis/instructions-for-authors>.



## Editorial Welcome

Welcome to the first issue of our Sixth edition! *Global Security and Intelligence Studies* is a double-blind peer-reviewed academic journal that aims to bridge the two-way gap between academia and practitioners. We serve as common ground to a diverse and growing audience ranging from policymakers to academics to operators on the front lines. *GSIS* strives to provide work pertaining to the most current and relevant topics in an ever-evolving and rapidly expanding threat-scape. In order to keep up with the evolving field, we are excited to introduce a new peer-reviewed section to *GSIS*. The *Critical Analysis* section will feature research subject to the same high academic standards as your other Research Articles but without the empirical requirement. This area of research is intended to showcase argumentative and explanatory research that stands on its own merits outside of a rigid experimental model. This edition sees the field further expand into epidemiology and the COVID-19 pandemic, the rise of political extremism in the US, corporate espionage, and how words have become weaponry. This issue covers a lot of ground in the security and intelligence industry!

We open this issue with an extremely timely discourse on extremism within the US. J.J. Brookhouser presents a quantitative analysis on domestic right-wing extremism and violence within the US from 2000 to 2020. Despite an increasing number of extremist groups with right-wing ideology, increases in violence associated with such groups have failed to be recognized as terrorism. Using the Global Terrorism Database Brookhouser correlated ideological motivators to attack lethality.

Our second research article in the issue Joshua Pease and James Hess depart of the research-rich field of extremist Islamism and look at their more moderate counterparts. The pair take an in-depth look at the philosophical underpinnings and limitations of Deobandi and Salafi doctrines. The research is founded on a very insightful qualitative meta-ethnography of past research and ethnographic accounts of the moderate (Deobandi and Salafi) and extremist (Taliban and Salafi Jihadi) doctrines. Applicable to researchers of Islamic-based terrorism the conclusions and methods of the authors also offer insight into the developmental evolution of budding extremist organizations in the US.

In our third article, Melissa Schnyder digs deeper into Europe's refugee crises by investigating how refugee protection and public support can be shaped. Her research articulates how participants from France and Germany perceive legislative protection measures when they are presented as aspects of national security. The results noted no significant differences for those presented with arguments centered on national security versus the control group who were not. The results

suggest that four years of integration and contact with refugees have reduced intergroup fears.

Kadir Altintas rounds out our research section with an in-depth look at modern economic espionage. The research takes a detailed look at the structural and methodological differences in the transfer of technology for both industrial and corporate espionage. As cyber warfare and attacks continue to increase in effectiveness and accessibility while decreasing in cost the opportunity for non-state espionage for economic gain is also increasing. The research offers a methodological model, the Industrial-Corporate Espionage Pyramid, as a unifying model to explain instances of espionage.

We are excited to expand our peer-reviewed offerings to include non-empirically based critical analysis. As many of you are keenly aware the academic community at large is founded on direct reporting of qualitative and quantitative empirical processes delivered in a rigid Introduction-Methods-Results-Discussion/Conclusion format. This type of research is intended to offer replicable and familiar constructs for researchers to base future projects. It is the tried-and-true basis of academic research, however limits scientific discourse in a way that hinders the promulgation of new ideas and theories. The unique aims and scope of *GSIS* to foster academic-practitioner discourse makes the move to broaden our research offerings a natural one. The new section, Critical Analysis, will offer non-empirically based research that presents new theories or discusses known topics at a higher academic level. Like other research articles presented within *GSIS*, the Critical Analysis section will offer double-blind peer-reviewed articles which represent the highest academic standards.

In our first Critical Analysis offering, Joshua Duke employs a Red Cell analytical examination of radical Islamic terrorist organizations as case studies on the phenomena. Looking into examples such as the Islamic State, the Haqqani Network, and al Qaeda, the author examines the factors that influenced the exportation of their unique forms of religious extremism. Drawing on these conclusions recommendations for counterterrorism strategies are discussed alongside the implications for national security and intelligence operations.

Margaret Marangione contributes to our Critical Analysis section with an in-depth discussion of information warfare and the global impact of its effects. Using disinformation campaigns identified and attributed to nations such as Russia and China the research discusses and outlines the cognitive effects that disinformation has on individuals and groups. The research highlights how nation-states at large have continued to exploit the modern hyper-connected world to achieve strategic objectives that were once only achievable through kinetic warfare.


We have two excellent policy offerings for this issue. In our first policy discussion, William Harlow discusses why Speech Communication is a vital, and an unfortunately overlooked, academic field in the security industry. His informative

research offers analysts significant analytical insight into widely available intelligence. In our second article, Ardavan Khoshnood takes a deeper look into the assassination of the Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh. His research compares past Revolutionary Guard Corps tactics and assassinations to Fakhrizadeh's. His research outlines a detailed analysis pointing to severe counterintelligence failures from within the Revolutionary Guard. Both of these great discussions offer insights and practical applications into the vital use of open-sourced intelligence to inform security-based policy.

The COVID-19 pandemic became the center of not just everyday life in 2020. It also became the catalyst behind numerous conspiracy theories, anti-science narratives, memetic warfare, politically motivated rhetoric, and sadly, poor academic practices. In an effort to help clarify many of the false narratives surrounding COVID-19 and the pandemic, Cameron Carlson offers a detailed insight into the science of epidemiology and virology surrounding the pandemic.

Rounding out our spring edition are two fantastic book reviews. We are honored to feature a book review of the Russian language title *Ordo Pluriversalis: The End of Pax Americana and the Rise of Multipolarity* by Eugene Vertlieb. Additionally, Donald Meyerhoff offers an extremely timely review of *Weaponized Words: The Strategic Role of Persuasion in Violent Radicalization and Counter-Radicalization*.

*Global Security and Intelligence Studies* strives to be the source for research on global security and intelligence matters. As the global threat-scape evolves over time, *GSIS* is evolving to keep pace. The Journal is enhancing its academic edge, impact, and reach. We are working to build stronger bridges between senior leaders, academics, and practitioners. In addition to new content that advances the global discussion of security and intelligence, readers can anticipate more special issues with a focus on current security concerns.



Melissa Layne, EdD  
Editor-in-Chief



Carter Matherly, PhD  
Associate Editor

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## Carta editorial

**B**ienvenidos al segundo número de nuestra quinta edición! Los estudios de seguridad e inteligencia globales se encuentran en la encrucijada entre la academia y los profesionales. Servimos a una audiencia diversa que va



desde legisladores hasta operadores. En todo este espectro de lectores, GSIS se esfuerza por proporcionar trabajo relacionado con los temas más actuales y relevantes para que la seguridad y la inteligencia puedan avanzar tan rápido como las amenazas puedan adaptarse. Esta edición no es una excepción, nos complace ofrecer información sobre la pandemia COVID-19, discutir las operaciones cibernéticas en varios niveles, los impactos sociales y de seguridad de los cambios en la ecología, el papel de la religión en las ONG atacadas por el terror y cómo el encuadre puede influir percepción pública de las políticas de protección de refugiados. Cerramos esta edición con cinco reseñas de libros que abarcan desde operaciones psicológicas hasta la ciberseguridad. ¡Este problema cubre mucho terreno en la industria de la seguridad y la inteligencia!

Abrimos este número con un artículo orientado a las políticas de Margaret Marangione sobre la pandemia de COVID-19 que aborda abiertamente las deficiencias entre agencias y la necesidad de una mayor inteligencia en los campos de la bioseguridad y las amenazas biológicas. Trazando paralelismos con las fallas de inteligencia y políticas que llevaron a los ataques del 11 de septiembre, el perspicaz artículo destaca fallas similares que, combinadas con una política deficiente, no específica de ninguna administración, no brindaron protección y preparación. Aunque no es un término o disciplina común en la actualidad, MEDINT (inteligencia médica) debería ser un lugar común en la comunidad de inteligencia.

Al Lewis explora los conceptos de la teoría de la guerra justa y cómo las capacidades cibernéticas se están empleando en un marco de *ius ad vim* (poco antes de la guerra) mientras se logran efectos que generalmente se ven durante los conflictos de guerra. El autor destaca la falta de un marco ético para guiar la guerra cibernética similar a la teoría de la guerra justa, que ofrece la base fundamental que describe el uso ético del poder bélico tradicional.

Parecido a la contaminación del río Flint de 2014 en Flint, Michigan, el *New River Report*, de Kristin Drexler, refleja impactos similares en el sistema socioecológico. A través de las entrevistas de Drexler con los residentes de las comunidades ribereñas, se refleja la misma falta de confianza en la industria y el gobierno, sentimientos de impotencia y futuros inciertos de quienes viven en las comunidades de Flint. A partir de las entrevistas, el autor identifica áreas dentro de nuestro sistema socioecológico donde los contaminantes antropogénicos representarán una amenaza a largo plazo y perjudicial, como la salud humana, los medios de vida, el medio ambiente, la cultura y la justicia social. El autor ofrece posibles soluciones a este problema a nivel nacional para incluir discusiones entre la industria, el gobierno, la agricultura y los ciudadanos de la comunidad.

En el artículo *ONG internacionales atacadas por el terror: el impacto de la religiosidad en la independencia, la neutralidad y la imparcialidad*, la autora, Dra. Kathryn Lambert, explora el impacto que tiene la fe religiosa en los principios humanitarios básicos y la defensa de problemas entre las organizaciones

humanitarias seculares y religiosas que han sido atacado por organizaciones terroristas. Su estudio longitudinal abarca dieciocho años y 92 organizaciones. En el complejo mundo actual de seguridad y amenazas, las organizaciones humanitarias llegarán rápidamente a la escena o al teatro con el objetivo de ayudar a su causa, independientemente de las complejidades que traen consigo. Comprender estas complejidades es fundamental para el comandante o líder de ayuda humanitaria y de socorro. El Dr. Lambert ofrece una visión única y crítica de estos efectos.

En una época política que ha visto una retórica cada vez más divisiva, la Dra. Melissa Schnyder ofrece una visión experimental de cómo el encuadre puede afectar las dicotomías dentro del grupo fuera del grupo. Utilizando poblaciones en Francia y Alemania, el autor señala que solo algunos marcos son efectivos cuando se intenta obtener apoyo para los migrantes refugiados. Esta investigación es fundamental para los profesionales de inteligencia y seguridad en las disciplinas de inmigración y seguridad nacional y podría ofrecer información y señales sobre los intentos de influencia de un actor extranjero.

El Dr. Jim Burch completa nuestros artículos de investigación para este número con una discusión sobre cómo operacionalizar la comunidad de inteligencia. En una era de guerra donde términos como Inteligencia Artificial, operaciones conjuntas de múltiples dominios y enemigos adaptables ágiles enmarcan la mentalidad del guerrero, ¿qué se puede decir sobre la recopilación de inteligencia? El Dr. Burch utiliza el marco de seis facetas de Hesselbeim para la transformación a fin de poner en funcionamiento y cerrar brechas críticas en los esfuerzos de recopilación de inteligencia.

En nuestro segundo artículo sobre seguridad cibernética, el Dr. Douglas Rose ofrece una visión técnicamente avanzada del futuro de la guerra y la teoría cibernéticas. Imagínese si la física avanzada y el análisis estadístico se combinaran para crear un dominio físico, pero virtual. Los espacios discursivos resultantes ofrecen mapas en los que se pueden realizar operaciones de inteligencia, pero en una era que tiene a la Inteligencia Artificial y el Aprendizaje Automático como la próxima gran evolución, esta investigación pregunta quién o qué está monitoreando los fractales ocultos. Las teorías e ideas propuestas en este artículo son fácilmente un cambio de paradigma en la guerra cibernética y la inteligencia.

Nuestros autores se han mantenido extremadamente ocupados durante los últimos meses secuestrados en condiciones de cuarentena. Esto les ha dado un tiempo considerable para ponerse al día con una lectura ligera. Como resultado, nuestra bandeja de entrada estaba repleta de reseñas de libros y estamos emocionados de presentar cuatro de los mejores con esta edición. El Dr. Mark Peters II ofrece una profunda visión y perspectiva del controvertido libro de Chris Wylie, *Mindf\*ck*, Cambridge Analytica y *The Plot to Break America*. Con la temporada de elecciones en marcha, esta revisión no podría ser más oportuna o relevante que la actual. La Dra. Elise Rainer nos trae una revisión y una recomendación

que invita a la reflexión para Porque somos humanos: impugnando el apoyo de los Estados Unidos a los derechos humanos de género y sexualidad en el extranjero. Los estudiantes, profesionales y académicos de derechos humanos y LGBTI se beneficiarían de esta revisión y libro autorizado sobre un grupo vulnerable que aún es perseguido en otras naciones. Alfred Lewis nos lleva de regreso al dominio cibernético con su reseña de El hacker y el estado: ataques cibernéticos y la nueva normalidad de la geopolítica. Un área creciente de jerga técnica y complejidad cada vez mayores The Hacker and the State ofrece una presentación y discusión digeribles en un formato no técnico. En nuestra revisión final del libro, el Dr. Jim Burch analiza Los innovadores: cómo un grupo de hackers, genios y geeks crearon la revolución digital. En parte relato histórico, en parte liderazgo y en parte destreza en equipo, este libro es una lectura obligada para cualquiera que trabaje en el dominio cibernético hoy.

Estudios de inteligencia y seguridad global se esfuerza por ser la fuente de investigación sobre asuntos de inteligencia y seguridad global. A medida que el panorama de amenazas global evoluciona con el tiempo, GSIS evoluciona para mantener el ritmo. La revista está mejorando su alcance académico, su impacto y su alcance. Estamos trabajando para construir puentes más sólidos entre líderes senior, académicos y profesionales. Además del contenido nuevo que avanza en la discusión global sobre seguridad e inteligencia, los lectores pueden anticipar problemas más especiales centrándose en las preocupaciones de seguridad actuales.



Melissa Layne, EdD  
Editora Principal



Carter Matherly, PhD  
Editor Asociado

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## 编者按

欢迎来到第六版的第一期！GSIS 是一本经同行评审的双盲学术期刊，旨在弥合学术界和从业者之间的双向鸿沟 从决策者到学术界再到一线运营商 我们为越来越多的受众提供了共同的基础。GSIS 致力于在不断发展和迅速扩展的威胁领域提供与最新和最相关主题相关的工作 为了跟上不断发展的领域 我们很高兴为 GSIS。 引入一个新的经过同行评审的部分 关键分析部分将以与您其他研究文章相同的高学术标准为研究重点 但没有经验要求 该研究领域旨在展示辩论性研究和解释性研究 这些研究在严格的实验模型之外还具有自己的优点 在此版本中 该领域进一步扩展到流行病学

和。 COVID-19 大流行，美国政治极端主义的抬头 公司间谍活动以及言语如何成为武器 该问题涵盖了安全和情报行业的许多领域！

我们以非常及时的关于美国内部极端主义的论述来打开这个问题 (J. J. Brookhouser) 对 2000 年至 2020 年美国国内右翼极端主义和暴力行为进行了定量分析 尽管有右翼意识形态的极端主义团体数量不断增加，但与此类团体相关的暴力活动并未被视为恐怖主义。使用全球恐怖主义数据库布鲁克豪斯关联了意识形态动机来打击杀伤力。

我们在本期 (John Pease) 和 (James Hess) 中发表的第二篇文章脱离了研究广泛的极端伊斯兰主义领域 并着眼于较为温和的同行。两人深入研究了迪奥班迪和萨拉菲学说的哲学基础和局限性。该研究建立在非常有见地的定性元民族志学基础之上 该元民族志学涵盖了中度 (Deobandi and Salafi) 和极端主义 (Taliban and Salafi Jihadi) 教义的以往研究和人种学研究。作者的结论和方法适用于基于伊斯兰的恐怖主义的研究人员 还提供了对美国萌芽的极端主义组织的发展演变的深刻见解。

在第三篇文章中 梅利莎 施耐德 (Melissa Schnyder) 通过研究如何形成难民保护和公众支持的方式 更深入地研究了欧洲的难民危机。她的研究阐明了来自法国和德国的参与者在被视为国家安全方面时如何看待立法保护措施。结果表明 那些以国家安全为中心的论点与没有以国家安全为中心的论点没有明显差异。结果表明 四年的融合和与难民的接触减少了群体间的恐惧。

Kadir Altintas 通过深入研究现代经济间谍活动来完善我们的研究部分。这项研究详细研究了工业和企业间谍活动中技术转让的结构和方法上的差异。随着网络战和攻击在降低成本的同时继续提高有效性和可访问性 为经济利益而进行非国家间谍活动的机会也在增加。该研究提供了一种方法模型 即工业公司间谍活动金字塔 作为解释间谍活动实例的统一模型。

我们很高兴将我们的同行评审产品扩展到包括非基于经验的关键分析。你们中许多人都敏锐地意识到 整个学术界都建立在以有序介绍 方法 结果 讨论/结论格式交付的定性和定量经验过程的直接报告基础上。这种类型的研究旨在为研究人员提供可复制且熟悉的结构 以作为未来项目的基础。它是学术研究的久经考验的真实基础 但是以某种方式限制了科学话语 从而阻碍了新思想和新理论的颁布。GSIS 促进学术从业人员话语的独特目标和范围。使扩大我们的研究范围成为自然而然的举动。新的“关键分析”部分将提供基于非经验的研究 以提出新的理论或在更高的学术水平上讨论已知的主题。像 GSIS 中提供的其他研究文章一样“关键分析”部分将提供代表最高学术标准的双盲同行评审文章。

在我们的第一个批判分析产品中约书亚 杜克 (Joshua Duke) 使用红细胞对激进的伊斯兰恐怖组织进行分析检查 作为对该现象的案例研究。通过研究诸如伊斯兰国 哈卡尼网络和基地组织等例子 作者研究了影响其独特形

式的宗教极端主义输出的因素。根据这些结论 讨论了对反恐战略的表彰以及对国家安全和情报行动的影响。

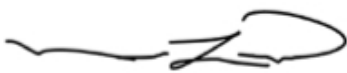
玛格丽特 马兰吉欧内 (Margaret Marangione) 通过对信息战及其影响的全球影响进行了深入讨论，为我们的关键分析部分做出了贡献。通过使用被识别并归因于俄罗斯和中国等国家的虚假信息运动，该研究讨论并概述了虚假信息对个人和群体的认知作用。这项研究突出了整个民族国家如何继续利用现代高度互联的世界来实现曾经只能通过动战来实现的战略目标。

对于此问题，我们提供了两种出色的策略。在我们的第一次政策讨论中，威廉 哈洛 (William Harlow) 讨论了为什么语音通信在安全行业中是至关重要的且不幸地被忽视的学术领域。他的信息丰富的研究为分析师提供了对广泛可用情报的重要分析见识。在我们的第二篇文章中，阿达万科什诺德 (Ardavan Khoshnood) 更深入地研究了伊朗核科学家 (Mohsen Fakhrizadeh) 被暗杀的情况。他的研究将革命卫队的过去战术和暗杀行为与法赫扎迪 (Fakhrizadeh) 的策略进行了比较。他的研究概述了详细的分析，指出革命卫队内部严重的反情报失败。这两场精彩的讨论都为深入了解开源智能以告知基于安全的策略提供了见识和实际应用。

COVID-19 大流行不仅在 2020 年成为日常生活的中心。它还成为众多阴谋理论，反科学叙事，模因战争，出于政治动机的言论以及令人遗憾的不良学术实践的催化剂。为了帮助弄清围绕 COVID-19 和大流行的许多错误叙述 (Cameron Carlson) 提供了有关大流行周围的流行病学和病毒学的详细见解。

完善我们的春季版是两个很棒的书评。我们很荣幸为您介绍尤金 韦特利布 (Eugene Vertlieb) 撰写的俄文标题 *Ordo Pluriversalis: 美国 Pax 的终结与多极化的崛起* 的书评。此外，唐纳德 梅耶霍夫 (Donald Meyerhoff) 极为及时地回顾了武器化词语：说服在暴力激进和反激进中的战略作用。

全球安全和情报研究致力于成为全球安全和情报问题研究的来源。随着全球威胁形势的发展，GSIS 也在不断发展。该期刊正在增强其学术优势，影响力和影响力。我们正在努力在高级领导人，学者和从业者之间建立更牢固的桥梁。除了可以推动全球安全和情报讨论的新内容外，读者还可以预期更多特殊问题，重点关注当前的安全问题



教育学博士主编



博士副主编

# Through the Extremist Lens: Uncovering the Correlation Between Domestic Right-Wing Extremist Ideology and Violence in the United States from 2000 to 2020

By J.J. Brookhouser

## ABSTRACT

Domestic right-wing extremist violence has been increasing since 9/11/2001, outpacing federal recognition of the problem. Preoccupation with Islamic terrorism is only a partial explanation of this shortfall, institutional barriers and an increasingly mainstream political salience of domestic right-wing extremist ideology create serious obstacles to efforts at countering violent extremism. This study presents a clear relationship between domestic right-wing extremist ideology and violence in order to inform an effective counter violent extremism strategy. A grounded theory approach was used to analyze the expressed ideologies of domestic right-wing extremist attackers in the United States from 2000 to 2020 before comparing them to the number of deaths resulting from their attacks to reveal the correlation between ideology and the number of deaths. Qualitative data gathered from primary sources cited in news media archives vetted and referenced by the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) were theoretically coded to develop a set of aspects of domestic right-wing extremist ideology which were compared to quantitative data on the number of deaths gathered from the GTD. Comparison of aspects of ideology to the number of deaths showed that the 'attacker justified violence' aspect of ideology correlates significantly at a .05 degree of significance. Significant correlation between other aspects of ideology and the number of deaths, though prevalent, remain uncertain due to the small size of associated samples.

**Keywords:** Right Wing, Extremism, Violence, Ideology, United States, Terrorism

# **A través de la lente extremista: descubriendo la correlación entre la ideología extremista de derecha doméstica y la violencia en los Estados Unidos de 2000 a 2020**

## RESUMEN

La violencia doméstica de extrema derecha ha ido en aumento desde el 11 de septiembre de 2001, superando el reconocimiento federal del problema. La preocupación por el terrorismo islámico es sólo una explicación parcial de este déficit, las barreras institucionales y una creciente relevancia política de la ideología extremista de derecha nacional crean serios obstáculos a los esfuerzos por contrarrestar el extremismo violento. Este estudio presenta una relación clara entre la ideología de extrema derecha doméstica y la violencia con el fin de informar una estrategia eficaz contra el extremismo violento. Se utilizó un enfoque de teoría fundamentada para analizar las ideologías expresadas por los atacantes extremistas de derecha en los Estados Unidos de 2000 a 2020 antes de compararlas con el número de muertes resultantes de sus ataques para revelar la correlación entre la ideología y el número de muertes. Los datos cualitativos recopilados de fuentes primarias citados en archivos de medios de comunicación examinados y referenciados por Global Terrorism Database (GTD) se codificaron teóricamente para desarrollar un conjunto de aspectos de la ideología nacional de extrema derecha que se compararon con datos cuantitativos sobre el número de muertes recopiladas. del GTD. La comparación de los aspectos de la ideología con el número de muertes mostró que el aspecto de la ideología de "violencia justificada por el atacante" se correlaciona significativamente con un grado de importancia de .05. La correlación significativa entre otros aspectos de la ideología y el número de muertes, aunque prevalente, sigue siendo incierta debido al pequeño tamaño de las muestras asociadas.

**Palabras clave:** Derecha, Extremismo, Violencia, Ideología, Estados Unidos.



# 透过极端主义视角：揭开2000-2020年间美国国内右翼极端主义思想和暴力之间的关联

## 摘要

自2001年9/11事件起，美国国内右翼极端主义暴力情况便不断增加，超出了联邦政府对该问题的认识。将其与伊斯兰极端主义相联系的预设仅仅是造成这一认识不足的原因之一，

制度障碍和变得日益主流的国内右翼极端主义思想的政治突出性，为一系列用于反暴力极端主义所作的努力制造了严峻阻碍。本文呈现了国内右翼极端主义思想和暴力之间的清晰关系，以期形成一项有效的反暴力极端主义战略。运用扎根理论方法，分析2000-2020年美国国内右翼极端主义袭击者所表现的思想，随后将分析结果与由暴力袭击产生的死亡人数加以比较，以期揭开思想与死亡数量之间的关联。从经过全球恐怖主义数据库（GTD）审查和参考的、由新闻媒体库所引用的原始数据中提取定性数据，对定性数据进行理论编码，以期提出国内右翼极端主义思想的一系列观点，并将这些观点与死亡数量（从GTD获得）的定量数据相比较。思想观点与死亡数量的比较表明，“由袭击者造成的暴力”（attacker justified violence）这一思想观点在显著性水平为0.05时呈显著相关。其他思想观点和死亡数量之间的显著相关性虽然也存在，但因样本量小而不确定。

关键词：右翼，极端主义，暴力，思想，美国

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## Introduction

Since 2000, domestic right-wing extremism (RWE) has accounted for more attacks and more deaths in the United States than Islamic terrorism, but has received only a fraction of the attention. The threat continues to grow, spurred on by increasing injection of domestic right-wing (RW) extremist rhetoric into mainstream public politics and the power of the Internet

and social media to disseminate minority views. The government response to domestic RWE is plagued by a preoccupation with the threat of Islamic terrorism, vocal political push-back, and a lack of inter-agency coordination including no standard lexicon of definitions. In 2009, the Homeland Security Report on domestic extremism named domestic RWE as a growing security threat facing the United States. The report specifically identified veterans re-

turning from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars as potential targets for radicalization; however, due to massive public outcry led by a wave of domestic RW political commentators, the report was eventually retracted and an apology issued by the secretary to the Director of Homeland Security. This reaction is representative of the public reaction to the threat of domestic RWE in the United States as a whole.

Currently the United States is experiencing a period of unprecedented growth in domestic RW extremist group membership and activity. While it could be argued that this increase began as a response to the 9/11 attacks, it has since been spurred on by conspiracy theories about the very legislation that resulted from that event. Exclusion and violence is the language of this ideology and increasingly mainstream politics have become its forum. Domestic RW extremist ideology has pervaded nearly every aspect of contemporary political discourse from social media to mainstream media to the White House to Congress. Ideological engagement is an integral part of any counter violent extremism strategy (CVE), but hate speech and incitements to violence should not be allowed air-time on the same media forums that disseminate legitimate political discourse. The latter represents constitutionally protected speech, the former does not. Any effective counter violent extremism strategy will need to take great pains in determining hate speech and incitements to violence from protected speech—failure to do so could damage one of the core tenets of American democracy. To

facilitate greater understanding of the issue, this study clarifies the relationship between domestic RW extremist violence and the ideologies espoused by those who commit it, clearly identifying which aspects of ideology correlate with and contribute to the greatest number of deaths resulting from violent attacks.

This study examines domestic RW extremist attack data in the United States between 2000 and 2020 to determine the effect the attackers' ideologies have on the number of deaths resulting from their attacks. By first identifying the relevant aspects of ideology of each attacker and then comparing them to the number deaths resulting from the attack, correlations between specific aspects of domestic RW extremist ideology and the number of deaths are identified. Further analysis of these correlations informs future efforts at CVE in the United States by identifying the most violent aspects of domestic RW extremist ideology.

In order to investigate the relationship between ideology and violence, this study answers the following research question and tests the following hypothesis.

Research Question: How does the attackers' ideology affect the number of deaths resulting from domestic RW extremist attacks in the United States between 2000 and 2020?

Hypothesis: The attackers' ideology correlates with the number of deaths resulting from domestic RW extremist attacks in the United States between 2000 and 2020.

This study seeks to clarify the relationship between ideology and the growing trend of domestic RW extremist violence in the United States between 2000 and 2020. Although numerous studies have examined domestic RW extremist violence and domestic RW extremist ideology, none have studied how violent incidents are shaped and driven by ideology. The legacy of this study is to identify which aspects of domestic RW extremist ideology correlate most closely with the number of deaths from extremist violence in the United States in order to better inform efforts at ideological engagement for the purpose of CVE.

## **Literature Review**

**T**he current view of domestic RWE in the United States is not a collection of radical groups as in international terrorism, but a fractured network of interlinking ideologies, borrowing aspects of each other's rhetoric to create a unique, interrelated constellation of views, the majority of which draw from a common background of racist, antisemitic and conspiratorial beliefs. However, each ideology is different, citing their own grievances, target populations, and associated rhetoric. This constellation is further complicated by varying degrees of extremism espoused by different members within each ideology, illustrated by the domestic RW extremist movement's adherence to the leaderless resistance model circulated in the United States by Louis Beam in the 1980s and '90s. Under this two-part model, non-violent public influ-

encers create and disseminate domestic RW extremist ideological propaganda for consumption by their extremist counterparts while remaining protected from legal recourse by the First Amendment. Those extremists, motivated by propaganda disseminated online and increasingly through social and mainstream media, engage in violent action, carrying out the unstated suggestions of their legally protected counterparts. Recently this model played a key role in former President Trump's reelection strategy. Years of rhetoric sympathetic to domestic RW extremist groups and un-corroborated narratives of election fraud and corruption within the Democratic party fueled a resurgent domestic RW extremist movement, resulting in numerous planned and successful attacks including the Capitol attack of January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021. However, little is known about the direct relationship between ideology and violence. How is violence influenced by ideology? How does the attackers' ideology affect the number of deaths resulting from domestic RW extremist attacks in the United States between 2000 and 2020? Current research on the topic of domestic RWE can be divided succinctly into one of five categories: government perceptions of domestic RWE, mainstream perceptions of domestic RWE, extremism and media, domestic RW extremist ideology, and domestic RW extremist organization.

### ***Government Perceptions of Domestic Right-wing Extremism***

Much of the current research on the topic of government perceptions of do-

mestic RWE is dominated by the government's recognition of the problem and shortcomings in responding to it. Recognition of the problem has been slow in coming and has been led as much by local law enforcement departments as by federal agencies (Bjelopera, 2017; Cunningham, 2007). Domestic RW extremists share many of the same radicalizing factors as Islamic extremists including social, economic, political, psychological or religious influences (Carpenter et al., 2009). The current surge in Domestic RWE is attributed in part to current economic and political trends including the election of the nation's first African-American president and recent gun regulations (Southers, 2013; Center for American Progress, 2012). Specific attention was paid to the risk posed by veterans returning from the Afghanistan and Iraq wars being especially susceptible to radicalization due to the great difficulties they face in community reintegration or even by being targeted for recruitment by extremist groups due to their military skill set (Southers, 2013; Center for American Progress, 2012). Most actions toward CVE have been preoccupied with an exaggerated threat of Islamic homegrown terrorism, continuing a trend post 9/11 that has plagued Intelligence Community analysis since the Murrah Federal building bombing in 1985 (Bjelopera, 2012; Corman, 2016; Sloan, 2016; Boggs & Pollard, 2006). This is reflective of mainstream views of terrorism at large, even the definition of "domestic terrorism" in the U.S. Patriot Act is offered only as an addendum to the perceived greater threat of international

terrorism (Quiney, 2007). Even as late as 2011, Federal CVE strategy focused on the threat of homegrown Islamic terrorism to the exclusion of other groups (Bjelopera, 2014; Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States, 2011). This is evident in efforts to stem the flow of funding to Islamist terror organizations, but a lack of programs targeting their domestic terror counterparts (Keatinge et al., 2019). This preoccupation with Islamic extremism seems especially misplaced in light of reports indicating Domestic RWE has accounted not only for more attacks than Islamic extremism, but also significantly more deaths in the US since 9/11 (Ducol et al., 2016; Center for American Progress, 2012). This trend is not unique to the United States either; during the period from 1998 to 2005, domestic terrorism accounted for 80% of all terrorism deaths world-wide (Sanchez-Cuenca & De La Calle, 2009). Part of this preoccupation may be due to the way Domestic RWE is conceived by federal security agencies.

Unlike international terrorism, there is no comprehensive list of domestic terrorist organizations nor of incidents of domestic terror; instead, they are organized into a loose list of threats based off of contributing ideologies (Alexander, 2017; Healy, 2010; Bjelopera, 2012 & 2017). This may be due in part to constitutional conflicts between the First Amendment and the leaderless resistance model commonly used to distance violent Domestic RW extremists from ideological organizations exercising their right to free speech (Bjelopera, 2017). Further complicating any

comprehensive federal response to Domestic RWE is a lack of standard legal terminology to identify and label terrorism in general and violent extremism in particular. Not only do the United States Department of State, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Central Intelligence Agency all have different definitions of terrorism, but the term “terrorism” is often conflated with “extremism” in legal proceedings (Chermak et al., 2011; United States Code of Federal Regulations). While it is argued that this allows lawyers leeway in prosecuting violent ideological crimes, the resulting confusion in the application of the “terrorism” label is widespread (Bjelopera, 2017; Ecoterrorism and Lawlessness, 2002).

Exacerbating the issue of government disorganization is the surge in Domestic RW extremist activity since 2001. The number of hate groups grew nearly 50% from 2001 to 2015, experiencing a dramatic but temporary uptick in 2011 (Alexander, 2017). More worrying, anti-government groups grew by nearly 700% between 2001 and 2015, peaking dramatically in 2012 (Alexander, 2017; Potok, 2016). The number of RW extremist incidents as a percentage of all attacks in the US grew from 6% in 2001 to 35% in 2010 (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2017). In the period from 2011 to 2015, Domestic RWE’s share of violent incidents in the US shot up to 73% (Corbin, 2017). Much of this increase in violence is attributed to a growing trend of “lone wolf” attackers among Domestic RW extremist incidents (Chan et al., 2013;

Hoffman, 2013). Tied to the use of the leaderless resistance model among Domestic RW extremists, various studies have identified literature promoting lone wolf tactics on every Domestic RW extremist website surveyed (Ray & Marsh, 2001; Adams & Roscigno, 2005). While the recognition of many misconceptions of Domestic RWE is unique to government, many of those same misconceptions are shared by the population at large.

### ***Mainstream Perceptions of Domestic Right-wing Extremism***

Mainstream perceptions of and discourse surrounding Domestic RWE are equally as disorganized and misled as those of government, exacerbated by hyperbolized representations in media and politics. Much like government conceptions of terrorism, mainstream perceptions of terrorism remain preoccupied with Islamic extremism so much so that the word “terrorist” conjures racialized images of Muslim extremists. This image, reinforced by two decades of media and Hollywood caricature, has led to the creation of a new suspect population within America at large (Boggs & Pollard, 2006). Like Japanese-Americans during World War II, American Muslims have been uniquely subject not only “to murders, beatings, death threats and other intimidation(s),” but also to new legislation which allows racial profiling of non-white Muslims or suspected Muslims, creating in effect “a modern, technological version of the Japanese internment camps of the 1940s” (Earth First, 2001). As a re-

sult, Githens-Mazer (2012) explains the shock of 9/11 and subsequent securitization of Islam has disallowed Muslims from engaging in radical non-violence in the west. Even the term “radicalization” has been associated with Islam post 9/11 in media and government communications (Horgan, 2005). These foreign conceptions of terror have culminated in a discourse dominated by fear of an alien “Other” in anti-terror legislation, the repercussions of which are shouldered by immigrants and asylum seekers “whose encroachment appears to make a besieged, deprived victim of the previously privileged native citizen” (Quiney, 2007). The USA Patriot Act allows for deportation of ‘suspect’ immigrants, requiring little more than the perception of a threat to national security (Quiney, 2007).

These conflations of non-citizens with the “Other” are best explained by Edward Said (1979) in that the colonization of the Middle East by European countries resulted in a binary juxtaposition of the Occident (the west) and the Orient (the east) in which the mirror image of any characteristic held by one group is reflected in polar opposite by the other (Saeed, 2007; Said, 1979; Said, 1981). Thus, western authors’ attributions of law, progress and superiority to countries of the Occident were necessarily mirrored by the lawlessness, backwardness and inferiority of the countries of the Orient (Saeed, 2007; Said, 1979; Said, 1981). These arbitrary characterizations have largely survived in contemporary consciousness. It is informative to note that these notions of “othering” are prevalent in the ideology

of both Domestic RWE and the Islamic State.

These binary perceptions of extremism extend beyond suspect populations and apply also to known terrorists. While white Christian terrorists are often portrayed in legal proceedings as human beings with childhoods, families and graduation photos, the same humanity is stripped from non-white Muslim perpetrators instantly, who are left only with mugshots and descriptions of their extremist ideology (Corbin, 2017). While white terrorists are immediately perceived as mentally ill victims of some prior trauma, non-white Muslim terrorists are not afforded the same benefit of the doubt— they are assumed to be religiously motivated members of a terrorist conspiracy (Corbin, 2017). Media coverage of white terrorists often include in depth analysis of their lives and personalities as if trying to ascertain where they went wrong; they are not terrorist “others,” only “good boys” who have tragically strayed down the wrong path (Corbin, 2017). Legal proceedings are not immune to humanistic rhetoric about white terrorists either; the magistrate overseeing the prosecution of Dylann Roof, a white terrorist, confided: “[w]e have victims, nine of them. But we also have victims on the other side ... There are victims on this young man’s side of the family” (Wash. Post, 2015). Furthermore, as terrorist attacks perpetrated by white attackers are perceived as “one-offs,” white Christian men are not subject to the profiling heaped upon non-white Muslims (Corbin, 2017). This double standard of the application of the “terrorist” label

is seen time and again in legal proceedings. Dylann Roof's killing of nine African-American worshippers at a church in Charleston County, South Carolina, is labeled a hate crime, despite the perpetrator having left a 2000-word manifesto claiming he wanted to start a race war and stating during an interview: "I had to do it because somebody had to do something ... Black people are killing white people every day on the street, and they are raping white women. What I did is so minuscule to what they're doing to white people every day all the time" (Norris, 2017; Corbin, 2017). Akayed Ullah, who is a non-white Muslim by comparison, was labeled a terrorist despite having killed only himself during a subway bus terminal bombing in New York (Norris, 2017).

This hesitancy to label white Christian violence as terrorism is endemic of a deeper, societal racism in which recognition or even mention of the problem is taboo, (DiAngelo, 2006, 2011). From a white perspective, whiteness is sensed as a kind of unbiased, universal baseline, devoid of a unique cultural perspective and instead representative of objective reality (McIntosh, 1988, DiAngelo, 2011). White people are never "white people," merely "people," and thus their experiences are representative of everyone's experiences; they are never members of a racialized group but merely individuals, completely separated from the racist implications of history or from the actions of other members of their racial group (DiAngelo, 2010). From that perspective, racism and privilege may be recognized as problems, but they are never "our prob-

lem," only the unfortunate results of actions taken by other "bad white people" and thus outside of "our" sphere of control or concern (DiAngelo, 2010). On the other hand, people of color are never conceptualized as merely "people," they are inextricable from their racial context and inherently separate from the white experience (DiAngelo, 2011). This separation results in the concept of a deracialized (white) environment representing not a societal loss but a societal gain (Johnson & Shapiro, 2003). This lends itself to a racialized interpretation of coded language for "good schools" or "good neighborhoods" to mean "white schools" or "white neighborhoods" (Johnson & Shapiro, 2003). These deracialized "white spaces" are reflections of white people's self-conceptions as inherently deracialized individuals, conceptions so deeply held that any challenge to that viewpoint whether overt or implied threatens to shatter the veil of a deracialized existence, resulting in feelings of deep discomfort often remedied by a series of socially sanctioned counter measures to distance oneself from the source of the discomfort (DiAngelo, 2011). Vodde (2001) describes it succinctly: "If privilege is defined as a legitimization of one's entitlement to resources, it can also be defined as permission to escape or avoid any challenges to this entitlement."

Beyond a strictly racial sense, most Americans are shielded from familiarity with their own complicity in supporting foreign and economic policies which have driven the creation of the very terrorist threats that now plague the public conscience, aided by



a one-sided and caricatured view of geopolitics made truth by decades of Hollywood revisionism (Boggs & Pollard, 2006). The mundane grievances of Muslim extremists—“American geopolitical hegemony, a long history of military interventions in the Middle East and elsewhere, unwavering support for Israel, enforcement of a neoliberal globalization regimen”—are lost behind a smokescreen of religious fundamentalism that Hollywood and the media are only too eager to perpetuate (Boggs & Pollard, 2006). This relates directly to the problems the US government (and others) have had in deriving a standard definition of terrorism—how to differentiate “their” terrorism, which is unacceptable and bad, from “our” terrorism, which is acceptable and necessary (Chomsky & Achcar, 2009). Viewed through this lens, even the events of 9/11 lose their apocryphal significance and are instead merely a reaction to a state of events set in motion by Western imperialism (Baudrillard, 2002). Truly it is the case that “America has the power and resources to refuse self-reflection. More pointedly, it is a nation that has developed a tradition of being oblivious to self-reflection” (Sardar & Davies, 2002).

The fault does not entirely lie with Hollywood and the media, however; these same caricatured and racist accounts are espoused by political figures. Newt Gingrich, former Speaker of the House, equated aid to families with dependent children or single mothers with the downfall of civilization (Gingrich, 1995). Political fear mongering has made a space in public discourse

for hate, to stoke fears of “Islamization” and the characterization of minorities as politically irrelevant at best or scapegoats for society’s problems at large at worst (Perry & Scrivens, 2017; Fleras & Elliott, 2002). Increasingly the agenda of Domestic RWE is reflected not only in mainstream political discourse, but in the platforms of RW political parties (Mallea, 2011; McDonald, 2011; Art, 2006, Berezin, 2009, Mudde, 2005). Indeed, much contemporary rhetoric concerning immigrants characterizes them as criminal, lazy or untrustworthy, inadvertently legitimizing Domestic RW extremist ideology which claims much the same (Dudek & Jaschke, 1981, 1982, 1984; Ohlemacher, 1998; Stöss, 2007). Much of President Trump’s popularity is at once both symptom and cause of this dualistic rhetoric, demonizing the immigrant terrorist “other” and mythologizing notions of white innocence and supremacy (Corbin, 2017). Frequent characterizations of immigrants as criminals or invaders, coupled with his notoriously delayed and tepid condemnations of Domestic RWE and even apparent defense of the movement during numerous events including the Charleston “Unite the Right” rally in 2017, in which he insisted that there are “very fine people on both sides,” legitimize the bipolar narrative of the foreign, criminal and terrorist “other” versus white innocence, virtue and supremacy (Corbin, 2017).

Mark Potok, senior fellow at the Southern Poverty Law Center and editor of the *New Report*, expands on the problem: “Today’s radical right leaders

are having remarkable success in pushing fringe ideas—typically based on sheer fantasy or just plain racism—into the political mainstream. Their divisive propaganda, which is being embraced by opportunistic politicians and pundits and exploited for partisan gain, is doing real damage to our country” (PR Newswire, 2012). Radical RW narratives are increasingly finding their way into mainstream discourse through a process known as “information laundering” in which fictionalized narratives are disguised as legitimate research on controversial contemporary issues (PR Newswire, 2012; Klein, 2012). These false narratives are then filtered through the Internet via a series of search engines, political blogs, and social networks until they are eventually picked up by mainstream media, each successive step adding additional layers of legitimacy to the original story (PR Newswire, 2012; Klein, 2012). Examples include claims that then presidential candidate Barack Obama was not an American citizen; the theory that the United Nation’s non-binding environmental sustainability plan is in reality a plot for global domination; or that Muslims are trying to integrate Shariah law into the United States court system (PR Newswire, 2012; Klein, 2012). These fictionalized narratives are written in an academic tone and presented in a professional manner to add legitimacy to their claims (Borrowman, 1999). These include reputable sounding titles and research organizations, affiliations with reputable universities, citations of published works, academic credentials, professional looking formats, and links to real stories on

mainstream news sites all of which serve to convince the reader that not only is the author rational, reasonable and intelligent, but that the website as a whole is a legitimate source of information (Borrowman, 1999; Klein, 2012). The QAnon movement is a novel example in which outlandish accusations of partisan conspiracy, child trafficking and demon worship posted anonymously to message boards online gain credence by claiming to have been authored by an individual with insider knowledge of the Trump administration.

The vast, interconnected nature of the Internet allows for a wider array of information to be accessed by any given researcher and a greater number of opinions to be presented (Klein, 2012). The unforeseen consequence is that the same pathways which lead to authentic information, such as Google or YouTube, also lead to hate sites or fictitious political narratives (Klein, 2012). After receiving enough attention, pundits of fictionalized narratives are invited into mainstream discourse, a prime example being representatives of the Family Research Council, an anti-gay propagandist group being invited onto various news networks like FOX and CNN 52 times in a single year (News Networks, 2011). A more contemporary example is Fox News’ engagement with and defense of the QAnon movement following the Capitol attack (Peltz, 2021).

### ***Extremism and Media***

It is no secret that terrorists and media appear to be helplessly embroiled in a mutually beneficial relationship,

nor have perceptions much changed in the last several decades as evidenced by Margaret Thatcher's famous 1985 comparison of the media to terrorism's oxygen (Lewis, 2005; Biernatzki, 2002; Weimann & Winn, 1994; Nacos, 2007). Terrorists benefit from media coverage by gaining not only dissemination of their grievances on a massive scale, but also legitimacy in the eyes of their victims and sympathizers (Wilkinson, 1997; Weimann & Winn, 1994). Media organizations stand to benefit from the boost in audience inherent in covering such a sensational event (Wilkinson, 1997). Furthermore, the dramatic and repetitive structure of the news cycle predisposes media organizations to cover terrorist incidents, a benefit further enjoyed by terrorist organizations (Nacos, 2007; Paletz & Boiney, 1992). Technological advances in media dissemination and reach have likewise benefited the terrorist organizations they cover, serving to magnify the perceived support of organizations and reinforcing the legitimacy of more violent and "newsworthy" organizations over more benign and thus less "newsworthy" organizations (Rohner & Frey, 2007; Tullock, 1974). The rise of Social Media and its increasing salience to other forms of mass media has further amplified the reach and news worthiness of terrorist organizations. In addition, the adoption or defense of RW extremist rhetoric by then President Trump and the Republican party at large has legitimized the movement on a massive scale (Stanley, 2021).

Terrorist organizations are generally opposed to mass media's preoc-

cupation with democracy and concern for human life and rights; however, savvy organizations often include dedicated media arms tasked solely with influencing the messaging media organizations adopt to describe the organization (Wilkinson, 1997). There is recognized utility to be found in media reports describing motives, weapons, or tactics used in attacks for use by would be copycats (Larsson, 2014). Termed the "contagion effect," media's propensity not only to inform and motivate potential copycat attacks but also to educate them on previously effective or ineffective tactics, has resulted in the perception of mass media as involved in a destructive cycle, accomplices of the terrorists they cover (Weimann & Winn, 1994; Paletz & Boiney, 1992; Midlarsky, Crenshaw & Yoshida, 1980; Jenkins, 1981; Weimann, 1983; Laquer, 1999; Scott, 2001). This problem is only exacerbated by Internet access, large audiences, and the speed of message dissemination afforded with social media (Ophir & Weimann, 2012). While some have called for the regulation or censorship of media, other research has pointed out that the contagion effect is based on contested and irrelevant literature researching TV and violence, and that the majority of terrorist incidents never even receive coverage (Biernatzki, 2002; Perl, 1997; Picard, 1986; Weimann & Winn, 1994; Norris et al., 2003).

Another view recognizes the issue of media's relationship with terrorism but places the onus of responsibility on the media organization itself for regulating what it reports (Wilkinson, 1997). Although it is recognized that

terrorism is a communicative event and thus dependent upon media to disseminate its message, it falls upon the media to act as a facilitator to this communication and thus portray the terrorist organization and its acts in a responsible way (Norris et al., 2003). Responsible media organizations can banish the narrative that terrorists are downtrodden victims of oppression by portraying their wanton violence against innocent people in the name of political ideology (Wilkinson, 1997). More than merely amplifying acts of terrorism, media also sanitizes them and contains them within a given setting (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2007). Media presents the context in which the public perceives acts of terrorism, not only juxtaposing legitimate and illegitimate violence but also tying a series of beliefs to that violence (Boyd, 2000; Jenkins, 2003).

However, the one-sided presentation of stories which “furnish consistent, predictable, simple, and powerful narratives that are embedded in the social construction of reality,” predispose the media to government exploitation by ignoring larger geopolitical factors in favor of threats (Norris et al., 2003; Picard, 1991; Nacos et al., 2011). Uncritical representation of government narratives as fact prevent media from even conceiving of alternative viewpoints (Norris et al., 2003). This is especially true of coverage of terrorism in which media is dominated by official sources and tends to adhere to authoritative narratives of the event (Jenkins, 2003; DiMaggio, 2009; Paletz & Vinson, 1992; Griffin, 2010; Thussu & Freedman, 2003). When stories crit-

ical of government are reported, they tend to differ from the official narrative in matters of degree and not substance, not questioning grand strategies or the justness of a war, but military tactics or shortfalls (DiMaggio, 2009; Lewis, 2008). In this way, media tends to act as a pundit of official policy and a cheerleader for war that uncritically accepts government conflation of military spending with security or support for the troops without ever considering an alternative (Carruthers, 2011; Lewis, 2008). In the event of a terrorist incident, the media propagates the government's own counter-terrorism message, granting legitimacy not to the terrorists but to the government and are thus indispensable in managing terrorist crises (Hammond, 2007; Mogensen, 2008). While these studies serve to increase understanding of mainstream perceptions of Domestic RWE and how it relates to mass communication, still others seek to define Domestic RWE as a unique phenomenon.

### ***Domestic Right-wing Extremist Ideology***

Domestic RW extremist ideology is a convoluted web of interrelated views espoused to varying degrees by different groups and individual actors. For the purposes of this study, the author will organize them by attributes of ideology and not by group, beginning with the most commonly held aspects of ideology before moving on to the more individualized. The most prevalent aspect of Domestic RW extremist ideology, one that is found in virtually every

facet of the movement and is informed by Domestic RW extremist views on race, taxation, and government is the belief in conspiracy theories (Barkun, 2013). Ironically this prevalent facet of extremist ideology has frequently predisposed adherents to political manipulation and fear mongering (Berlet & Lyons, 2010). Again, Donald Trump's presidency is a contemporary example of a political pundit utilizing conspiracy theories to manipulate their supporters and the media environment. The most comprehensive conspiracy theory is that of the New World Order (or Zionist Occupied Government) in which a shadowy cabal of nefarious actors ranging from liberals to communists to Jews are engaged in a centuries old conspiracy to wrest control of the world from legitimate governments to the detriment of the "white race" (Bjelopera, 2017; Crothers, 2003; Sharpe, 2000; Grumke, 2017; Pierce, 1997). The goal of this domination can be described in religious or sectarian terms, but always includes the mass subjugation of white people via a myriad of seemingly harmless vectors including the United Nations, human rights legislation, or immigration (Barkun, 1994; Pierce, 1997; Bjelopera, 2017; Crothers, 2003; Grumke, 2017; Barkun, 1995). The central ideology of the QAnon movement is a variation of this popular conspiracy theory. Adherents to this and other conspiracy theories seek out and invariably find confirmative evidence supporting their theory while ignoring or minimizing any contradictory evidence or alternative hypotheses, creating a feedback loop of falsely positivistic pseudo-sci-

entific theory (Popper, 1966, 1968; Bit-  
tner, 1963).

Often described as the "glue" which holds right-wing extremist ideology together, anti-Semitism has played a role in the ideology for centuries (Lipset, 1987; Klein, 2010). Jews, in the Domestic RW extremist ideological sense, are often inextricably linked with prominent conspiracy theories that play central roles in the motivating ideology of many Domestic RW extremist groups (Kaplan, 1995; Brannan, 2006). Domestic RW extremist views regarding Jews are full of religious rhetoric, often describing them as the timeless enemies of Christianity, or even descendants of the devil who have supplanted Aryans as God's chosen people (Kaplan, 1995; Brannan, 2006). While Jews are the central enemies in most Domestic RW extremist ideology, many researchers agree that there is nothing specific about Jewish people or ancestry which sets them apart for demonization and if the ideology did not seize on them specifically for condemnation, another group would quickly take their place as the prime villain, an assertion often supported by conspiracist references to a United Nations controlled New World Order (Lipset, 1987; Langauir, 1990; Kaplan, 1995; Sartre, 1948).

Both conspiracy theorist and anti-Semitic beliefs contain elements of racial superiority, the assertion that all races of people exist in a rigid hierarchy with the "white race" immutably placed at the top (Feagin & Feagin, 1993; Fortney, 1977; Haller, 1971). This notion of "white supremacy" is often reinforced

with historic or naturalistic rhetoric and borrows terminology from traditional Norse religious beliefs (Flower, 1981). Condemnation of racial mixing is a central tenet of white supremacist belief and is linked to every form of social malaise or physical illness (Aho, 1990; Shanks-Meille & Dobratz, 1991). Those who miscegenate or who do not support this white supremacist ideology are labeled “race traitors” and considered by adherents to be worse than non-whites (Aho, 1990; Fielding, 1981). Non-whites are invariably cast as the “other,” dehumanized, compared to animals, characterized as possessing a myriad of “uncivilized” qualities and referred to in unsympathetic, threatening language justifying violent reaction (Perry & Scrivens, 2017; Sharpe, 2000).

The justification of violence against perceived enemies of white people is a common theme in Domestic RW extremist discourse, commonly framed in terms of Manichean struggles between good and evil in which all tactics are justified (Wilkinson, 1997). Religious justifications posit the unique humanity of the white race, concluding that non-whites are not human at all and thus God neither hears their prayers nor cares about their well-being (Sharpe, 2000). In Domestic RW extremist ideology, the “white race” is constantly under siege from every direction, strangled by liberal economic policies, polluted by interracial marriage, and living in a world shaped by anti-white conspiracies (Sprinzak, 1991; Bjelopera, 2017; Bell, 2002; Lipset, 1959; Finlay, 2007; Grumke, 2017; Langquair, 1990). If the enemy is inhuman,

if non-violent means are ineffective and if the motivations for action are undeniably just, then any degree of action no matter how violent is inevitably justified (Saucier et al., 2009). In periods of social change or perceived challenge of white hegemony, these perceptions are likely to increase under the increasing pressures of horizontal or vertical competition (Lipset, 1981; Buzan et al., 1998).

Domestic RW extremist discourse often engages in millenarianism, the assertion that the apocalypse is imminent, or catastrophizing, the idea that terrible disasters have happened, will happen, or are taking place right now (Saucier, 2009). These ideas are often cast in religious terms in whatever form is familiar to their adherent. Christian millennials may envision the coming of Christ preceded by years of tribulations, while sectarian followers envision an imminent racial holy war, expressed in shorthand via the acronym “RAHOWA” (Aho, 1990; White, 1989; Kaplan, 1995; Bjelopera, 2017; O’Leary, 1994; Intelligence Report, 1998; Doskoch, 1995). While millenarian assertions are clad in religious phraseology, Landes (2006) asserts that they invariably represent political aspirations, “to bring about a transformation of the social, and therefore the political, universe.” The flip side of this rhetoric is the utopianization of a deracialized world in which white hegemony is not only global, but everlasting (Saucier, 2009).

In support of explicit propaganda, the mere re-framing of issues many Americans sympathize with can

have a drastic impact on public opinion (Saucier, 2009). Historical revisionism is a prime example of this and is used in right-wing extremist discourse to curry sympathy and inflame outrage. America's history of African-American slavery and oppression are flipped, portraying white Americans as the downtrodden victims of an anti-white liberal establishment (Finlay, 2007). Aryans displace Jews as God's chosen people, claiming Jewish ancestry, polluted with non-white Khazak blood or worse, has supplanted their God-given place (Hoffman, 2006; Aho, 1990; White, 1989). Romantic rhetoric of an independent, economically *laissez faire* "Old West" is used to prop up anti-regulatory policies in historically the most subsidized region of the United States (White, 1997; Merrill, 1999). Revisionist rhetoric wraps itself in an idealized, ultra-nationalistic version of history in which white America equates the nation—and the nation can never be wrong. Themes from American revolutionary history are romanticized and used to legitimate modern anti-government militias and violent action (Gage, 2011). Domestic RW extremist ideology goes on and on, re-framing current realities, re-imagining historical events and reviving lost racist ideals; however, the method by which the movement disseminates the message is also an effective contributor to its salience.

### ***Domestic Right-wing Extremist Organization***

Like terrorism, the primary function of RWE is not to impose its beliefs through

violence but to spread its ideology; violence is merely a vector of communication (Schmid, 2005). For the same reason Domestic RW extremist ideology is presented in graphic, offensive forms to capture the viewer's attention and instill a reaction, mobilizing an apathetic public (Aho, 1990; Deutsch, 1961). The Internet is a powerful tool for the spread of RW extremist ideology, allowing the movement to sidestep traditional media gatekeepers to disseminate its message (Nacos, 2006). However, the utility of the Internet and by extension, social media goes far beyond merely spreading propaganda, it is in essence a one-stop shop where extremist organizers can communicate with other individuals, plan attacks, seek out and receive funding, gather information to be used in counter-messaging or operational planning, or radicalize new actors and teach them how to carry out attacks (Nacos, 2006; Klein, 2012; Erbschloe, 2019; Dean et al., 2012; Neumann, 2009). The anonymity afforded users via the Internet allows them the freedom to engage in actions normally deemed unacceptable, to self-select into media congruent with their own beliefs and to congregate with like-minded others in online extremist communities (Dean et al., 2012; Neumann, 2009; Chan et al., 2013; Byrne, 2007; Daniels, 2009; Simi & Futrell, 2009; Blee, 2002; Futrell et al., 2006; Gerstenfeld, 2003; Levin, 2002; Reid & Chen, 2007). Internet access can be especially important for lone wolf actors to develop their own radical identities, especially in the later stages of violent radicalization (Ducol et al., 2016).

The concept of inclusiveness is



important in understanding radicalization. Many would be extremists experience feelings of social isolation, low self-esteem, or disillusionment that cause them to actively seek out communities of like-minded individuals online (Seib & Janbek, 2011; Decker & Pyrooz, 2015; Moghaddam, 2008; Gewirtz & Baer, 1958; de Roy van Zuijdewijn & Bakker, 2016; Kailemia, 2016; Roger et al., 2007). These groups can offer membership in a family of peers, privileged information on “the way the world really is” and the chance to craft the user’s own unique identity by contributing to an ideal greater than themselves (Roger, et al., 2007; Althusser, 1970; Perry & Scrivens, 2017; Moghaddam, 2008; Koehler, 2014). Group members begin to see the group as their family and strive to advance within it, their goals mesh with those of the group, and the pressure to conform even against social taboos is immense (Berger, 1967; Althusser, 1970; Asch, 1958; Milgram, 1974). Extremist websites go out of their way to create this sense of family by catering to every social need of the individual (stormfront.org). There are dating services, forums on fitness and literature, even sections of the website dedicated to children (stormfront.org).

International cooperation and funding are growing aspects of Domestic RW extremist organization. Websites espouse international fraternities with like-minded individuals in other countries (Grumke, 2017). Hate music is a unique approach to both international reach and funding. Hate music is a powerful recruitment tool, especially effective at radicalizing younger listen-

ers by creating a cohesive folklore and validating feelings of frustration with calls to violence (Cotter, 1999; Preston & Schwartz, 2012). Annual hate music festivals are held to raise money for the movement and to offer a chance for geographically distanced sympathizers to meet and socialize away from society’s taboos (Blee, 2010; Futrell & Simi, 2012; Simi & Futrell, 2010). One prominent hate music record label reported \$1 million in annual sales (Heim, 2012). Additionally, legitimate websites like the Christian crowd funding site GiveSendGo.com have recently reported massive increases in profits as supporters of domestic RW movements have flocked to their sites to donate money to a variety of causes, from the legal defense funds of terrorists to equipping groups such as the Proud Boys with tactical equipment (de Puy Kamp & Glover, 2021).

Considered spatially, the domestic RW extremist movement resembles an extremely loose network populated with myriad nodes interconnected with extremely weak, even latent ties (Latour, 1996). Far from being a weakness, this diffuse organization with weak ties makes the network incredibly resilient and effective at dissemination with latent ties activating or deactivating as necessary (Latour, 1996; Mayntz, 2004). Central nodes are ideological artifacts, key works of domestic RW extremist literature or ideology that remain static online or in print for decades, radicalizing sympathizers who stumble upon them and inspiring future generations of both activists and ideological authors alike (Keatinge, 2019; Kaplan, 1995; Grumke, 2017; Nacos, 2006; Skoll, 2006;

Bjelopera, 2017). This organization lends itself to the leaderless resistance model advocated for RW extremist action in the United States in the 1980s by a Ku Klux Klan Grand Dragon named Louis Beam (Bjelopera, 2017; Perry & Scrivens, 2017; Leader & Probst, 2003; Joosse, 2007). This two-part model benefits from First Amendment protections to allow creators of domestic RW extremist ideology to disseminate propaganda and calls to action in the public sphere while avoiding any connection with terrorists (Bjelopera, 2012, 2017). Consumers of the ideology gain motivation to engage in illegal activity without any direction or participation from their above-ground counterparts (Bjelopera, 2012, 2017). The threat is amplified by the widespread and decentralized nature of ideological consumers across the country (Sullivan, 2012).

## **Research Methodology**

This research uses a mixed-methods design to compare the number of deaths resulting from domestic RW extremist attacks in the United States from 2000 to 2020 with aspects of the ideology espoused by the attackers. Attack data compiled by the GTD, a project by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), was compared to primary source documents of attackers' ideology gathered from news media archives vetted by the GTD. Quantitative data was gathered about the number of deaths from the GTD directly. Qualitative data about the aspects of ideology espoused by

the attackers was gathered from primary source materials referenced in news media archives that have in turn been vetted and referenced in the GTD. This ideological data underwent an initial analysis using a grounded theory approach in order to codify a standard lexicon of ideological categories before being compared to the number of deaths using Pearson's correlation coefficient with a 0.05 degree of significance. Correlations identified in this manner represent potential theoretical relationships and avenues of future research and CVE legislation.

## **Research Framework**

The Grounded Theory approach, developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), seeks to develop new theories unaffected by other theoretical perspectives that are grounded in the data they analyze (hence the name). The authors posit that development of theory is processual—it is ever changing and adapts to new information as it is targeted for collection and analyzed. Furthermore, theory can nearly develop itself by comparing categories with sets of quantitative data as any correlations between these types of data clearly identify new associations to be conceptualized and analyzed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In short, the researcher, “induces a theory simply from the general relationships [s]he has found” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In the same fashion, the ideological aspects of the attacker, identified using grounded theory analysis and representing the independent variable, were compared to the number of victims in an attack,

representing the dependent variable. Any correlation between the number of victims and the attacker's ideological aspects proves the hypothesis, while a lack of correlation disproves it, represented by the following hypothesis: the attackers' ideology correlates with the number of deaths resulting from domestic RW extremist attacks in the United States between 2000 and 2020.

### **Data Collection**

Quantitative attack data were gathered directly from the GTD while qualitative ideological data were gathered from primary sources included in news archives vetted and referenced by the GTD. The sample consists of all attacks in the United States from 2000 to 2020 identified as domestic RW extremist or which included aspects of domestic RW extremist ideology analyzed by the GTD. Attacks that are not identified as domestic RW extremist or did not include aspects of domestic RW extremist ideology were not included. The GTD draws its data from a global supply of open-source news articles, which undergo a series of increasingly stringent analyses to determine inclusivity. The first level of analysis is entirely automated and seeks to collect and organize relevant articles from news organizations from over 160 countries using a set of keyword filters (Miller et al., 2019). Translated articles are acquired from the Open-Source Enterprise ([www.opensource.gov](http://www.opensource.gov)). The second level uses natural language processing to further refine the included articles, remove duplicates, and identify those that are

likely to be relevant (Miller et al., 2019). GTD reviewers analyze each article included in this list manually to determine if the unique inclusion criteria of the GTD are satisfied (Miller et al., 2019). Those that are included are then coded for inclusion in the GTD (Miller et al., 2019). GTD researchers recognize that source validity is imperative to an accurate database, thus sources are regularly analyzed for validity (Miller et al., 2019). Sources which "...are independent (free of influence from the government, political perpetrators, or corporations), ... routinely report externally verifiable content, ... are primary rather than secondary," are considered vetted and prioritized over lower quality sources (Miller et al., 2019). Data reported only by, "distinctly biased or unreliable sources," are not included (Miller et al., 2019). Sources of qualitative data are gathered from the GTD's list of vetted news archives. Primary sources are then identified in the archive and chosen based on their inclusion of ideological information espoused by the perpetrator of a specific violent event.

### **Results**

The analysis detailed in the Methodology section identified 49 aspects of domestic RW extremist ideology present in the 76 domestic RW extremist attacks analyzed (see Appendix A). Any attack that was not classified as domestic RW extremist in origin, but which included aspects of domestic RW extremist ideology, was included in the analysis. Every attack resulting in one or

more deaths was analyzed as well as 29 out of the 316 recorded attacks which resulted in zero deaths. Sampling continued until theoretical saturation was reached, yielding data for 29 attacks which resulted in zero deaths, 15 attacks which resulted in one death each, 11 attacks which resulted in two deaths each, seven attacks which resulted in three deaths each, three attacks which

resulted in four deaths each, two attacks which resulted in five deaths each, one attack which resulted in six deaths, two attacks which resulted in seven deaths each, one attack which resulted in nine deaths, two attacks which resulted in 10 deaths each, one attack which resulted in 11 deaths, one attack which resulted in 17 deaths and one attack which resulted in 59 deaths (see Table 1).

**Table 1:** Number of deaths resulting from domestic RWE attacks in the US from 2000 to 2020 and corresponding minimum sample size and degrees of freedom

# of Deaths	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9	10	11	17	59
# of Attacks	29	15	11	7	3	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1
Analysis Group (# of Attacks)	7+	7+	7+	7+	3+	2+	1+	2+	1+	2+	1+	1+	1+
Degrees of Freedom	3	3	3	3	4	7	12	7	12	7	12	12	12

When analyzed together, numerous aspects of ideology were found to correlate with the number of deaths; however, the cases with the highest number of deaths numbered so few that the degree of correlation was driven completely by the presence or absence of that aspect of ideology in the few attacks with the highest deaths, regardless of its presence or absence in attacks with fewer deaths. To provide a more meaningful analysis, the researcher excluded any number of deaths that were not associated with at least seven attacks, resulting in data for attacks resulting in between zero and three deaths. Data excluded this way is included in the discussion of the findings. This ensures the degree of correlation for each identified aspect of ideology is more representative of the sample as a whole and not

merely a reflection of their inclusion or exclusion in the few attacks associated with the highest number of deaths.

Of the  $n=62$  attacks with an occurrence rate of at least seven attacks (resulting in between zero and three deaths per attack), “attacker justified violence” was the only aspect of domestic RW extremist ideology found to correlate:  $r(3)=0.9750$ ,  $P=0.0250$  (see Figure 1).

Correspondingly the hypothesis detailed in the Introduction is proven correct: there is a correlation between at least one aspect of domestic RW extremist ideology and the number of deaths resulting from domestic RW extremist attacks in the United States between 2000 and 2020. It is possible that as many as eight other aspects of

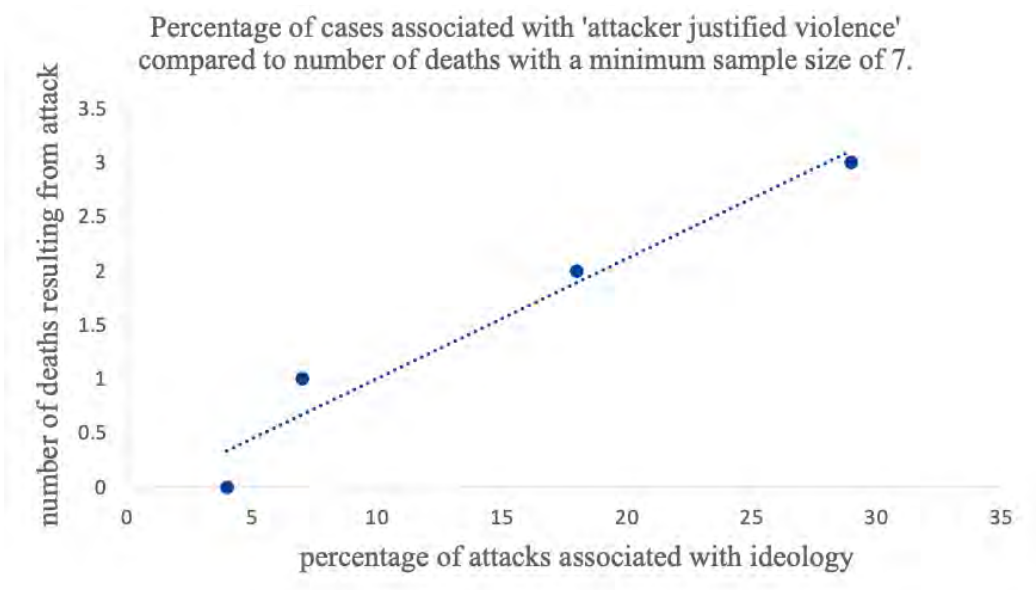


Figure 1. Percentage of cases associated with 'attacker justified violence' compared to number of deaths with a minimum sample size of 7

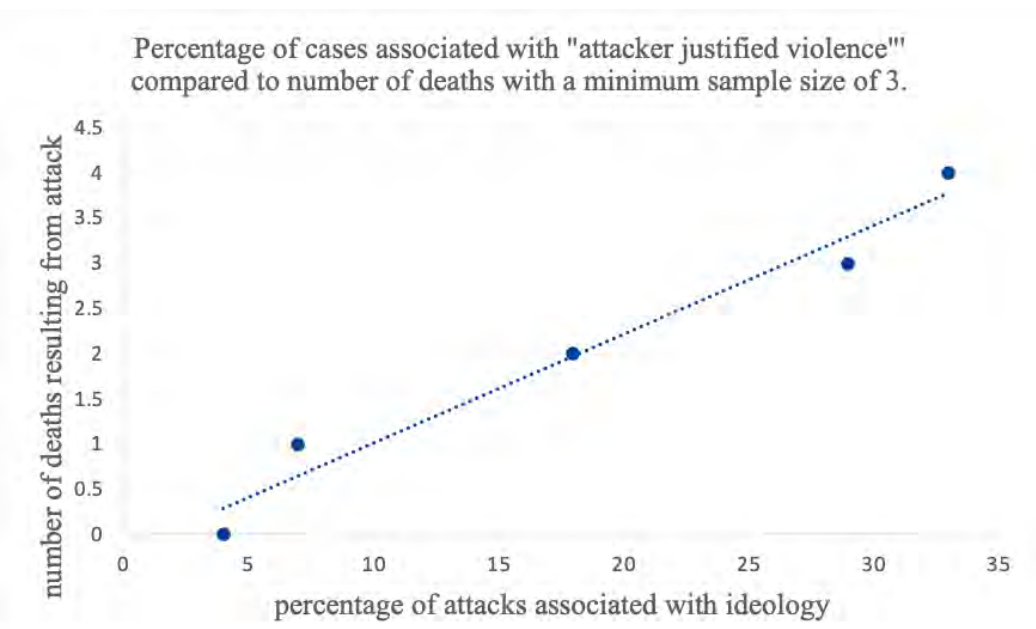


Figure 2. Percentage of cases associated with "attacker justified violence" compared to number of deaths with a minimum sample size of 3

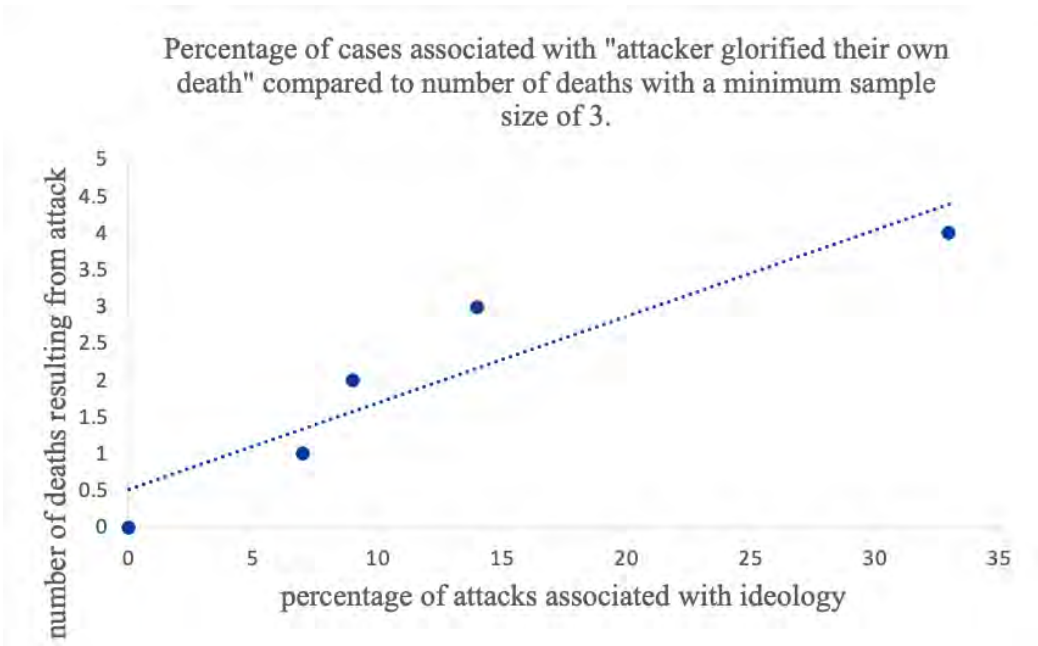


Figure 3. Percentage of cases associated with “attacker glorified their own death” compared to number of deaths with a minimum sample size of 3

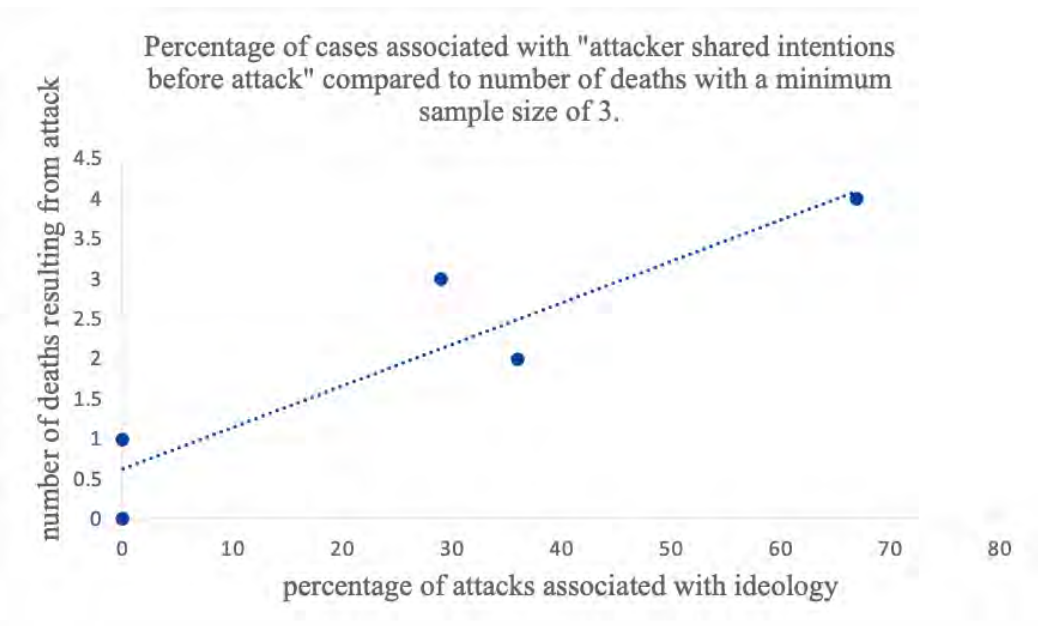


Figure 4. Percentage of cases associated with “attacker shared intentions before attack” compared to number of deaths with a minimum sample size of 3

domestic RW extremist ideology also correlate; however, additional data is necessary to confirm this. Among surveyed attacks, the “attacker justified violence” aspect of ideology was described by attackers in terms detailing past violence (or perceived violence) committed against the attacker themselves, or against an ethnic or social group to which the attacker belongs, thus justifying their own violent actions in retaliation. Frequently, the attacker cited the high number of deaths within their own ethnic group perpetrated by members outside of their ethnic group, although other complaints existed including attacks against themselves or their ethnic group by the government, members of other social groups or members of other political affiliations. In many cases these complaints appear to be wholly contrived, while others reflect documented violence against an ethnic group or recorded legal grievance. The correlation between deaths and the percent of attacks adhering to an “attacker justified violence” ideology suggests that the greater the degree an attacker feels they or a group to which they belong has been harmed physically, socially or politically, the greater the degree of violence they feel justified or even compelled to commit in return. Whether the grievance the attacker holds is based in reality or merely a matter of their own perception plays little part in their feeling of justification. Indeed, the variation among issues due to which the attacker feels justified to commit violence which range from social ostracization to imagined or legitimate violence against their own ethnic

group to their own peaceful and legal intentions suggests that what constitutes justification to commit violence is more driven by the attacker’s own perceptions than by any measurable degree of injustice.

Analyzing the number of deaths with fewer than seven associated attacks reveals that “attacker justified violence” remains significant for all deaths associated with at least three attacks as well as all deaths associated with at least two attacks. Only when analyzing all deaths associated with at least one attack does “attacker justified violence” stop being significant. The fact that this aspect of ideology remains significant throughout the various occurrence rates surveyed supports the finding that “attacker justified violence” correlates with the number of deaths resulting from domestic RW extremist attacks.

Aspects of ideology found to correlate with all deaths associated with at least three attacks are: “attacker justified violence”:  $r(4)=0.9826$ ,  $P=0.0028$  (see Figure 2), “attacker glorified their own death”:  $r(4)=0.9262$ ,  $P=0.0238$  (see Figure 3), and “attacker shared their intentions before the attack”:  $r(4)=0.9197$ ,  $P=0.0270$  (see Figure 4).

“Attacker glorified their own death” describes how an attacker views their own death in glorious or righteous terms. Attackers fitting this description viewed their attacks as vectors leading to their own death and cited that certainty as a reason for carrying out the attack. Whether the attacker sought to die by suicide or as a result of action by another party such as law enforce-

ment did not affect their inclusion in this group. The correlation between this ideology and the number of deaths suggests a variation in the goal the attacker sought to achieve by carrying out an attack. Seeking to kill a small number of people and survive suggests the attacker is more concerned with their own life than with whatever result they hope to achieve through their violence, whereas an attacker planning to kill a large number of people appears to care relatively little about their own life compared to the goal they hope to achieve through their attack.

To be included in the “attacker shared intentions before the attack” classification, an attacker had to share their intentions to carry out a violent attack on a public forum before the attack was committed. In all cases, the intentions were published online either on social media or a website curated by the attacker, and in most cases, their intentions were originally published weeks or months before the attack took place. The method of publication, however, ensured that only people familiar with the attacker or with similar viewpoints or interests as the attacker ever saw these messages before the attack was carried out. In most cases, the messages were written like manifestos, detailing their grievances and actively trying to convince the reader of the justification of their actions. The correlation between this ideology and the number of deaths suggests either that the attacker’s first choice was not to carry out an attack but to achieve their goals through threats, or that the attacker hoped to be caught before their attack could be

carried out. If an attacker believed that the only way to alleviate their grievance was through carrying out an attack, why would they risk being discovered by law enforcement before their attack could be carried out merely to write about their intentions online.

Analyzing the number of deaths associated with at least two attacks reveals that the “attacker justified violence” aspect of ideology is still significant:  $r(7)=0.766$ ,  $P=0.0267$  (see Figure 5). Two other aspects of ideology are found to correlate with the number of deaths: “attacker was proud of attack”:  $r(7)=0.7979$ ,  $P=0.0176$  (see Figure 6) and “attacker was socially isolated”:  $r(7)=0.8595$ ,  $P=0.0062$  (see Figure 7).

The “attacker is proud of attack” aspect of ideology refers to how an attacker describes their own attack. To be included in this ideology, an attacker must have expressed their intention to become famous or to gain notoriety among a subset of society as a result of carrying out their attack. The majority of attackers within this subset sought to gain notoriety specifically among a small section of society, namely other adherents to their extremist ideology. In every case, the attacker referenced previous attacks, actors or goals shared by adherents to their extremist ideology and sought to either replicate those attacks, pay tribute to those actors or serve the same goals by carrying out their attack. Inclusion in this ideology suggests that an attacker not only was a member of a larger extremist community, but also held the tenants of that extremist ideology to such high esteem as



Percentage of cases associated with "attacker justified violence" compared to number of deaths with a minimum sample size of 2.

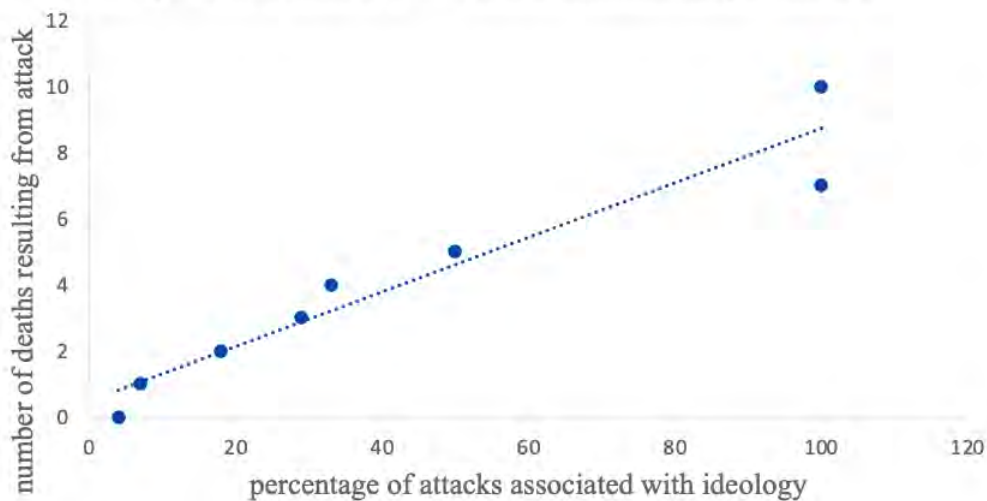


Figure 5. Percentage of cases associated with “attacker justified violence” compared to number of deaths with a minimum sample size of 2



Percentage of cases associated with "attacker was proud of attack" compared to number of deaths with a minimum sample size of 2.

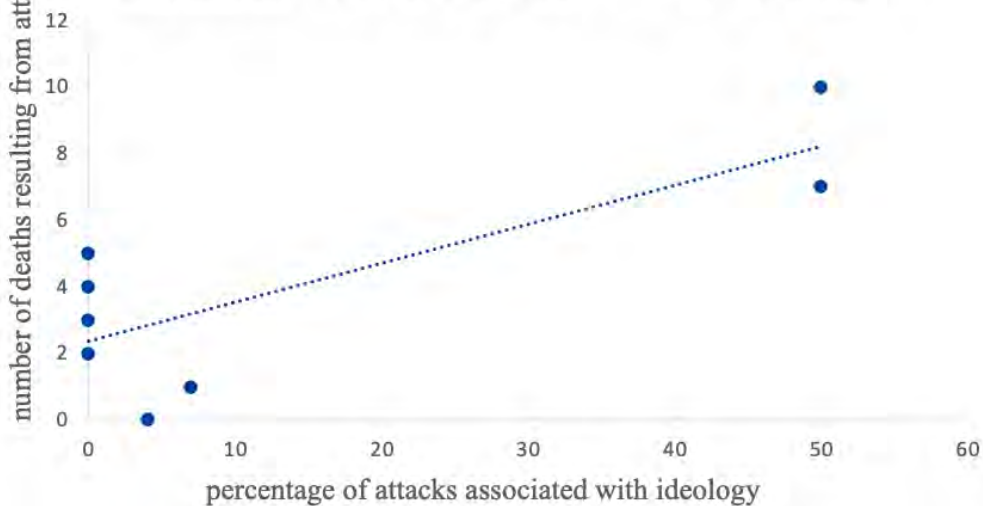


Figure 6. Percentage of cases associated with “attacker was proud of attack” compared to number of deaths with a minimum sample size of 2

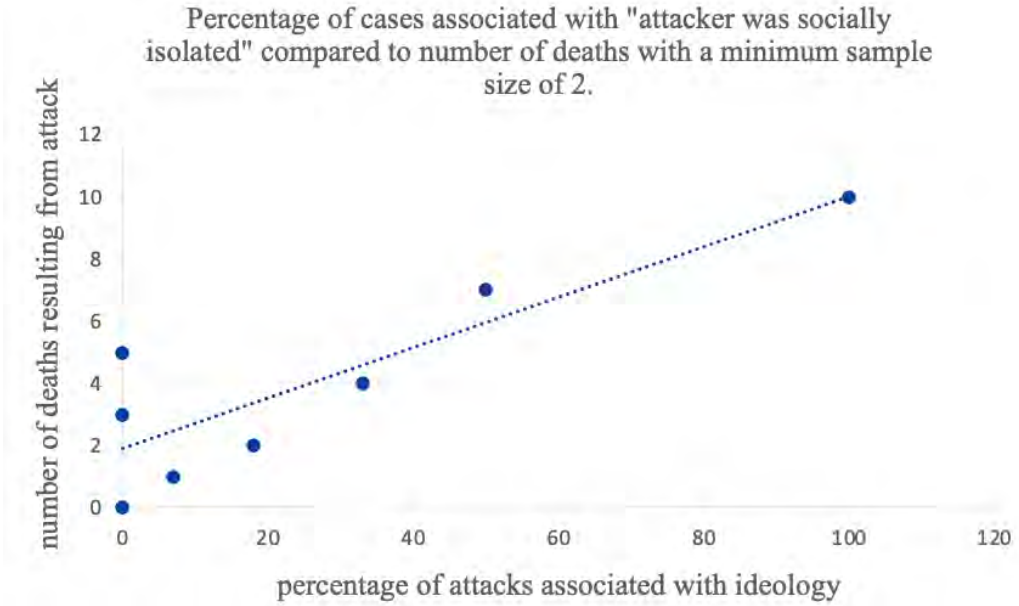


Figure 7. Percentage of cases associated with “attacker was socially isolated” compared to number of deaths with a minimum sample size of 2

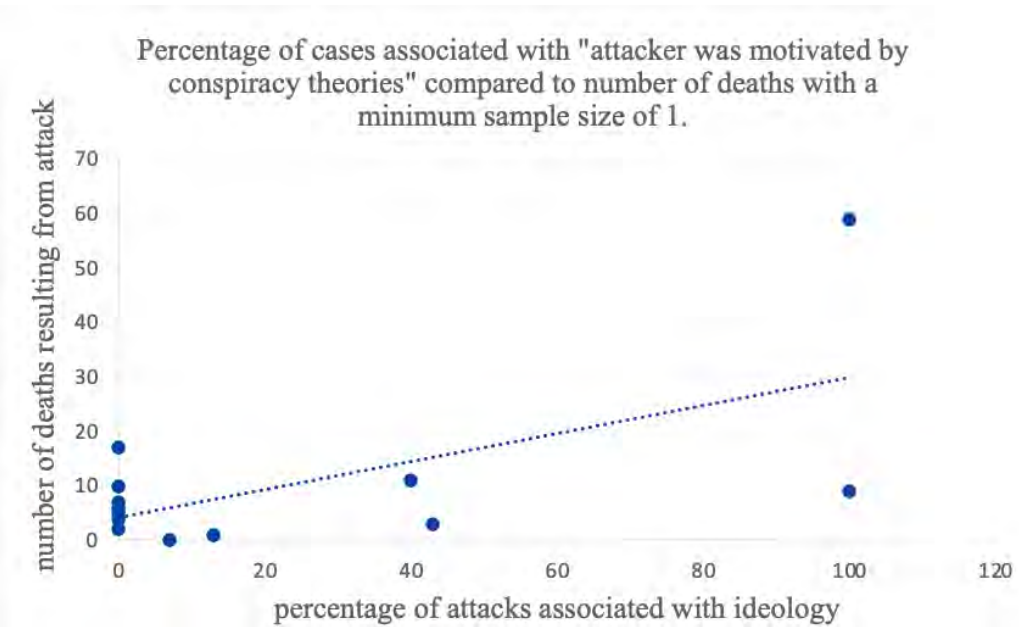


Figure 8. Percentage of cases associated with “attacker was motivated by conspiracy theories” compared to number of deaths with a minimum sample size of 1

to be motivated to carry out an attack in pursuit of them. This data suggests that the greater the level of violence of an extremist attack, the more convinced the attacker must be that this course of action is not only the correct course to take, but in doing so they will be gaining the notoriety they have recognized in others who have committed similar acts.

To belong to the “attacker was socially isolated” aspect of ideology an attacker must have expressed their own experiences of social isolation as a motivator for carrying out their attack. The majority of these attackers had no significant contact with any group of people, even other adherents of extremist ideology. In every case, their sense of social isolation and either inability or unwillingness to belong to any social group was a major contributor to their decision to carry out an attack. In many of the attacks it was the primary motivating force behind the attack, although a significant number of attacks were driven primarily by another aspect of ideology. This correlation suggests that the presence of social networks may play a role in moderating potential extremists. The lack of such networks may enable a cycle of self-radicalization that results in extremist violence.

When analyzing all deaths caused by domestic RW extremist attacks regardless of the number of attacks associated with each number of deaths, the data shifts further. The “attacker justified violence” aspect of ideology is no longer significant in this bracket, instead “attacker is motivated

by conspiracy theories”:  $r(12)=0.6212$ ,  $P=0.0235$  (see Figure 8); “attacker was motivated by a political or financial grievance”:  $r(12)=0.808$ ,  $P=0.0008$  (see Figure 9); “attacker glorified past domestic RW extremist attacks”:  $r(12)=0.7211$ ,  $P=0.0054$  (see Figure 10); and “attacker believed the government is illegitimate”:  $r(12)=0.6237$ ,  $P=0.0227$  (see Figure 11) are significant.

Inclusion in the “attacker was motivated by conspiracy theories” aspect of ideology required the attacker to reference a motivation leading to their attack which was not based in fact. The entirety of the attackers sampled referenced conspiracy theories related either to the National or Global government or the Jewish religion and ethnicity. The majority of attackers claimed that modern governments and social institutions are secretly run by a covert Jewish organization spanning the globe, some even claimed that the Holocaust was a fabrication in collaboration with the political left to achieve the aims of this group. The QAnon movement adheres to a variation of this popular conspiracy theory, but was not included in this statistical analysis as no attacks associated with that movement have yet been analyzed and included in the GTD. The remainder of attackers surveyed claimed that the United States government was illegitimate and involved in various schemes to defraud the American people ranging from illegal taxation to immigration plots to genocide instigated by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA). Some conspiracy theories combined the two, claiming liberal politicians are

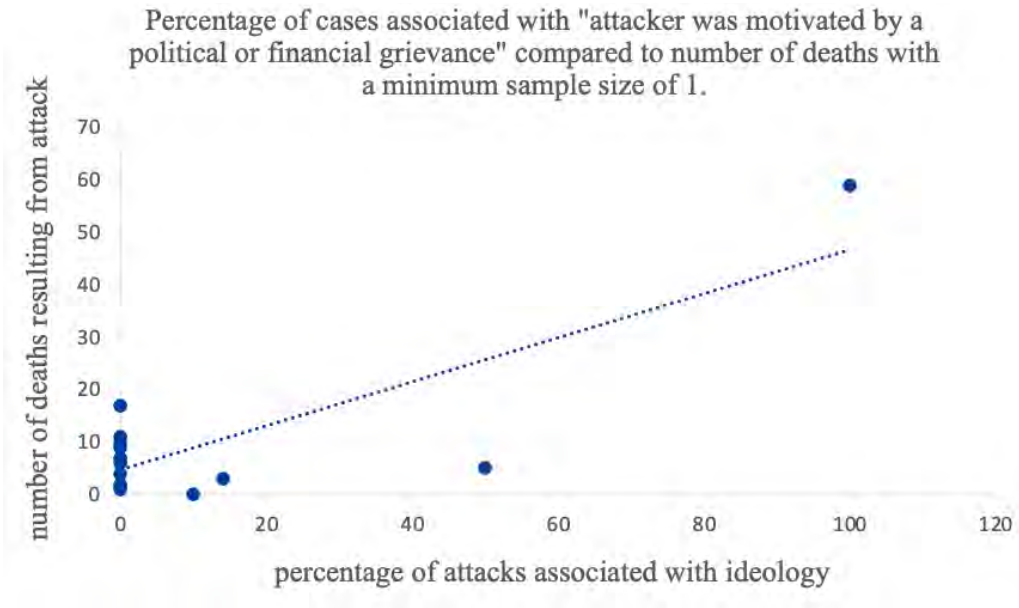


Figure 9. Percentage of cases associated with “attacker was motivated by a political or financial grievance” compared to number of deaths with a minimum sample size of 1

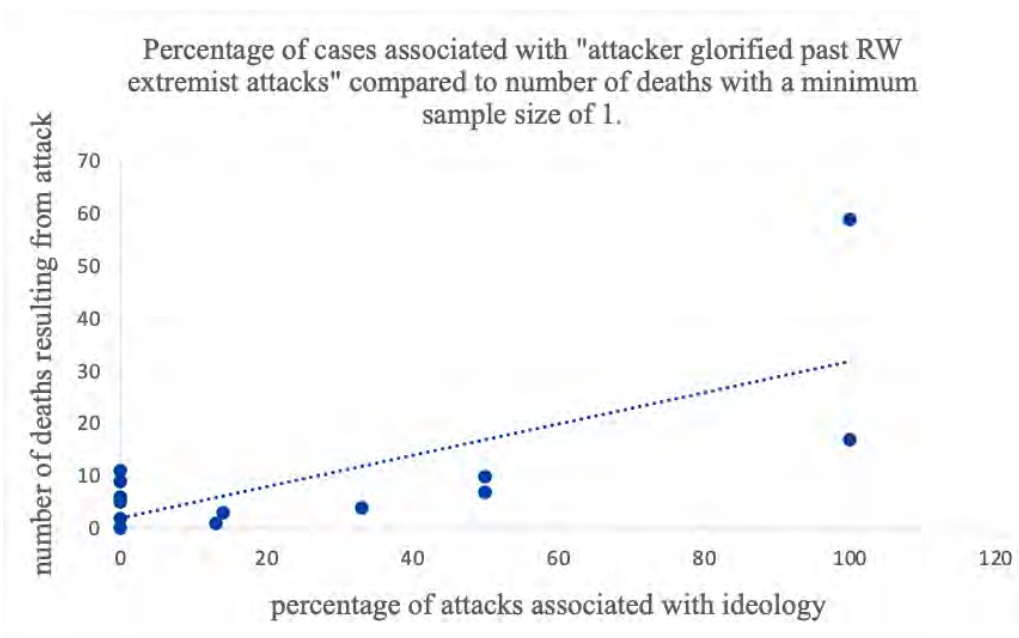


Figure 10. Percentage of cases associated with “attacker glorified past RW extremist attacks” compared to number of deaths with a minimum sample size of 1

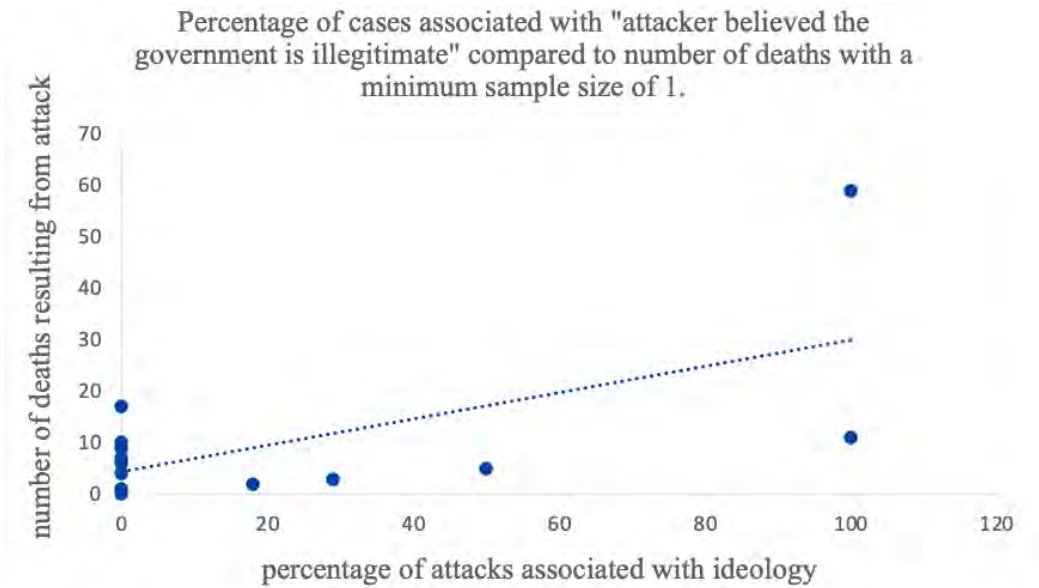


Figure 11. Percentage of cases associated with “attacker believed the government is illegitimate” compared to number of deaths with a minimum sample size of 1

in league with a global Jewish conspiracy. Although there was variation among conspiracy theories, they all adhered to popular conspiracy theories commonly referenced among domestic RW extremist conspiracy theorists. This correlation suggests not only that attackers who believe in conspiracy theories were more likely to carry out more violent attacks as a result of those beliefs, but also that the common domestic RW conspiracy theories popularized by radical domestic RW influencers played a role in motivating these attackers to commit extremist violence.

An attacker classified as “attacker was motivated by a political or financial grievance” latched onto a single issue they perceived as unjust as motivation for their attack. The majority of attackers in this category referenced either gun control legislation or immigration

legislation as the reason for their attack. A minority of attackers cited other federal regulations which had a detrimental effect on their business and personal finances. Many attackers who cited immigration legislation as their primary grievance also cited racial supremacist beliefs, although the two aspects of ideology remain mutually exclusive. In every case, the attacker believed they had been let down by the legislature and that legal or political action would be ineffective. Some attackers cited multiple failed attempts to reverse the legislation legally, however the majority referenced no legal action taken on their part to adjudicate their grievance. The correlation between “attacker was motivated by a political or financial grievance” and the number of deaths suggests that attackers with deeply held political beliefs at odds with the current nature of US legislation or with vested

financial interest in products likely to be regulated by the US government are more likely to carry out deadlier attacks than attackers whose political views are less ingrained or whose financial well-being is less likely to be affected by new legislation.

To be included in the “attacker glorified past domestic RW extremist attacks” aspect of ideology, an attacker had to reference one or more previous instances of domestic RW extremist violence as motivation to carry out an attack. The most commonly referenced instances of domestic RW extremist violence were the Waco and Ruby Ridge stand offs as well as the Murrah Federal Building bombing, although others including the Bundy standoff in Oregon or various school shootings were referenced as well. Attackers either cited these instances as examples of government corruption and overreach or as goals of like-minded individuals that they sought to achieve themselves. This correlation suggests that attackers intending to carry out larger attacks are more likely to be familiar with and be motivated by previous instances of domestic RW extremist violence, while attackers intending to carry out smaller attacks may be less familiar with or motivated by them.

The “attacker believes the government is illegitimate” aspect of ideology refers to attackers who believe that the United States government is either an illegal entity or is taking action beyond its legal bounds. The degree to which the United States’ actions or the United States itself is perceived as illegal

varies by attacker. Many adherents of this ideology also believe in conspiracy theories concerning the legitimacy and nature of power in the United States government. The correlation between the “attacker believes the government is illegitimate” aspect of ideology and the number of deaths suggests that belief in an illegitimate government either results in the perception of a greater necessity of action by the ideology’s adherents, or perhaps the perception of a greater degree of impunity with which an attacker is able to justifiably act.

Analysis of the surveyed attacks revealed that for every attack for which the identity of the attacker was known, the primary attacker was always male. In some cases involving attacks carried out by groups, members of the group were female; however, the primary perpetrators of violence in group attacks were always male. The Capitol attack on January 6, 2021, complicates this classification, as the participants included female and male adherents to a variety of domestic RW ideologies. However, this still suggests that participation in extremist political violence may be a uniquely male phenomenon. It is possible that the identities of some or all of the unidentified perpetrators of attacks are female, however as every attack in which the perpetrator remains unknown resulted in 0 deaths, this may still indicate that extremist violence correlates with the male gender.

## Conclusion

Research proved the hypothesis: the attackers' ideology correlates with the number of deaths resulting from domestic RW extremist attacks in the United States between 2000 and 2020. In total, eight aspects of domestic RW extremist ideology were found to correlate with the number of deaths when analyzing samples resulting in any number of deaths. However, confidence in those findings is prevented by the small number of cases available for analysis in attacks resulting in more than three deaths. Despite the fact that these domestic RW extremist aspects of ideology were found to correlate at a 0.05 degree of significance, the low number of attacks resulting in four or greater deaths associated with them precluded their inclusion in the results of this study. Greater confidence in these findings requires a greater availability of samples of attacks resulting in four or more deaths. While one hopes data of this sort remains rare, it would be irresponsible for the researcher or policy maker to doubt its eventuality. The affected aspects of ideology include: "attacker glorified their own death," at  $r(4)=0.9262$ ,  $P=0.0238$ ; "attacker shared intentions before the attack," at  $r(4)=0.9197$ ,  $P=0.0270$ ; "attacker was proud of attack" at  $r(7)=0.7979$ ,  $P=0.0176$ ; "attacker was socially isolated" at  $r(7)=0.8595$ ,  $P=0.0062$ ; "attacker was motivated by conspiracy theories" at  $r(12)=0.6212$ ,  $P=0.0235$ ; "attacker was motivated by a political or financial grievance" at  $r(12)=0.8080$ ,  $P=0.0008$ ; "attacker glorified past

domestic RW extremist attacks" at  $r(12)=0.7211$ ,  $P=0.0054$ ; and "attacker believed the government is illegitimate" at  $r(12)=0.9343$ ,  $P=0.0001$ .

The aspect of ideology "attacker justified violence" was found to correlate significantly at  $r(3)=0.9750$ ,  $P=0.0250$  not only when the number of deaths associated with seven or more attacks were included, but continued to correlate significantly when analyzing the number of deaths associated with three or more attacks at  $r(4)=0.9826$ ,  $P=0.0270$  and when analyzing the number of deaths associated with two or more attacks at  $r(7)=0.7660$ ,  $P=0.0267$ . The significant correlation between "attacker justified violence" and the number of deaths associated with at least seven attacks provides sufficient confidence in the results to prove the hypothesis, the persistent significant correlation of "attacker justified violence" with the number of deaths associated with three or more and two or more attacks respectively indicates that the correlation remains strong even when attacks resulting in a relatively high number of deaths are compared. The absence of significant correlation between "attacker justified violence" and the number of deaths associated with one or more attacks demonstrates the distortive effect only a small number of attacks (in this case five attacks) associated with a high number of deaths (in this case 11 or more) can have on the data.

That is to say that this study does not disprove correlation between "attacker glorified their own death," "attacker shared intentions before the

attack,” “attacker was proud of attack,” “attacker was socially isolated,” “attacker was motivated by conspiracy theories,” “attacker was motivated by a political or financial grievance,” “attacker glorified past domestic RW extremist attacks,” or “attacker believed the government is illegitimate” and the number of deaths resulting from domestic RW extremist attacks. More data for attacks resulting in a high number of deaths (four or more) is necessary to prove or disprove this possible correlation.

### ***Implications of Findings***

Although many of the aspects of ideology found to correlate with a high number of deaths (four or more) are specific to domestic RW extremist ideology, the only finding this study can report with any confidence, the correlation between the number of deaths and “attacker justified violence” is not. This suggests that the ideology most associated with the number of deaths resulting from domestic RW extremist attacks is not associated with domestic RW extremist ideology alone, but could possibly be associated with extremism of any political motivation. More data for domestic RW extremist attacks resulting in a high number of deaths (four or more) is necessary to corroborate or disprove this claim.

For the purposes of CVE, the findings suggest that methods to nullify the greatest correlative factor of domestic RW extremist violence could also be effective at CVE of any political motivation, although additional studies should be carried out to corroborate this. The

findings further indicate that a counter messaging strategy to combat perceptions of the justification to commit violence (for example to defend or take revenge on a specific ethnic group) would be effective at CVE. The twin problems of both real and imagined oppression of various groups in the United States will frustrate this strategy and continue to exacerbate extremism as they have previously done. Meaningful and effective strategies to resolve these issues should be taken not only for their own sake but also to curb the rise in extremism witnessed in the United States in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### ***Limitations***

Although this study strives to accurately explain the relationship between ideology and violence, its findings necessarily suffer from several limitations. First, because this study focuses on domestic RW extremist ideology and violence in the United States between 2000 and 2020, it represents only a narrow view of RW extremist ideology and violence as a whole. RW extremist ideology exists in many forms in many countries and has adapted to local political climates for generations. RW extremist violence, likewise, manifests in numerous forms around the world with a wide degree of varying motivations and goals. It should be noted that organizations as widely varied as the Ku Klux Klan and Al-Qaeda represent RW extremist organizations albeit from different countries and politico-religious backgrounds. New groups like QAnon and the Proud Boys further differenti-



ate the field of domestic RW Extremist organizations and their motivating ideologies. Even in the United States, events like 9/11 vastly affected the political milieu in which these ideologies manifest. It is entirely possible that the contemporary growth in domestic RW extremist activity in the United States is largely a reaction to the events of 9/11 and subsequent reactive legislation.

Furthermore, because this study focuses only on the relationship between ideology and violence, it ignores other factors which contribute to violence such as psychology or economics. In addition, due to its method of sampling, this study only investigated attacks that were carried out, reported in news media and subsequently collected by the GTD. Attacks that were planned but never carried out, attacks that failed to be classified as terrorism or as RW extremist by the GTD and which did not include aspects of domestic RW extremist ideology, were not included in the study. Ideologically ambiguous attacks which included aspects of domestic RW extremist ideology were included for analysis, but the possibility of a mischaracterization of an attack remains present. Because the ideologies collected for examination in this study were gathered from primary source documents and in many cases not directly from the people who expressed them, it is possible that they have been represented in a way that does not reflect their original meaning. Finally, due to the inherent wait time in analysis and inclusion of data in the GTD, attacks occurring after January 2020 were not included in this study. Given

the current climate of rapidly changing domestic RW extremist ideology, this inherent lag in analysis represents an “Achilles’ heel” of the GTD and a significant barrier to future timely research. Efforts should be made to decrease this lag time if future analyses are to have any hope of keeping pace.

### ***Future Research***

This study identified several avenues in which future research could prove to be beneficial. First, additional correlative studies comparing domestic RW extremist ideology and the number of deaths resulting from domestic RW extremist attacks should be carried out using larger samples for attacks resulting in four or more deaths. As waiting until more RW extremist attacks resulting in four or more deaths occur is both untenable and disturbing, a methodology surveying RW extremist violence across a wider sample of countries should be adopted. Care should be taken in selecting countries to include, however, as RWE adheres to widely different ideologies across cultures. Ideally countries with similar milieus of RW extremist ideology such as Canada, Australia, or England would be included in the analysis; however, meaningful data could be discovered by comparing RW extremist ideology across countries with dissimilar cultures. Findings of such a study might not only illuminate the differences in effective CVE strategies between domestic RWE in the United States and other forms of RW extremism, such as Islamic extremism, but could also highlight avenues in which the strat-

egies may converge, identifying possible force multipliers for investments in CVE. Additionally, further studies with shorter sample periods should be conducted to determine how the correlation between ideology and violence changes over time.

Another fruitful avenue of research would be to compare left-wing extremism with violence in the United States to determine if similar ideologies motivate those spectra of extremism compared to domestic RW extremism. If the data is similar to the findings of this study, a clear pathway for future efforts at CVE would be revealed and valuable information describing the nature of extremism and its psychological drivers could be illuminated.

Furthermore, for future research to be able to maintain pace with the current rapidly changing nature of domestic RWE, databases analyzing the effects of such movements, like the GTD, require increases in funding and staffing commensurate with their task. Con-

versely, new databases focusing solely on domestic extremism in the United States should be developed to alleviate this strain on the GTD. This is a hurdle present for all researchers of extremism in the United States. The increased domestic RW extremist activity witnessed over the past few years in the United States makes clear that the problem is both growing and changing at an alarming rate. Increasingly, extremists are more politically engaged, autonomously organized, resistant to counter narratives and cooperative with extremists adhering to similar ideologies. In time, movements like QAnon may come to represent a paradigm shift in domestic RWE after which extremists operate more independently, organize on a larger scale, reflect the stated or subliminal beliefs of serving political figures, and even occupy political office themselves at a significantly higher rate. Increased political attention and data collection is necessary to support innovative future research and subsequent legislation on this highly volatile public security issue.

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## **APPENDIX A: List of Identified Aspects of Ideology**

- Attack was carried out by a single actor.
- Attack was carried out by more than one person.
- Attack was incited by a social or legal event involving the attacker.
- Attack was motivated by conspiracy theories.
- Attack was racially motivated.
- Attack was religiously motivated.
- Attack was retaliation for a perceived slight.
- Attacker adhered to conflicting ideologies.
- Attacker believed the government is illegitimate.
- Attacker believed they were emasculated.
- Attacker carried out extensive planning prior to the attack.
- Attacker dehumanized victims.
- Attacker engaged in catastrophizing.
- Attacker glorified past domestic RWE actors and leaders.
- Attacker glorified past domestic RWE attacks.
- Attacker glorified their own death.
- Attacker glorified violence.
- Attacker had a military background.
- Attacker had connections with domestic RWE community.
- Attacker had history of mental illness.
- Attacker has a history of depression.
- Attacker has a history of legal problems.
- Attacker held anti-abortion beliefs.
- Attacker held anti-American beliefs.
- Attacker held anti-capitalist beliefs.
- Attacker held anti-female beliefs.
- Attacker held anti-government beliefs.
- Attacker held anti-police beliefs.
- Attacker held anti-religious beliefs.

Attacker held anti-RWE beliefs.

Attacker held anti-TSA beliefs.

Attacker intended to carry out a larger attack.

Attacker justified violence.

Attacker referenced domestic RWE ideology during or after attack.

Attacker shared their intentions before the attack.

Attacker sought to confess after the attack.

Attacker sought to inspire others to action.

Attacker suffered from a troubled childhood.

Attacker suffered from social isolation.

Attacker viewed attack as patriotic.

Attacker was a racial supremacist.

Attacker was an immigrant.

Attacker was anti-Muslim.

Attacker was anti-Semitic.

Attacker was motivated by a political or financial grievance.

Attacker was proud of attack.

Attacker had a history of misconduct

Authorities were warned about attack beforehand.

# **The Convergence of Subjects: Defining Where Deobandi and Salafi Subjects Intersect**

Joshua Pease and James Hess

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to compare the practical and philosophical limitations of moderate Deobandi and Salafi doctrine in contrast with their extremist brethren, specifically the Taliban and Salafi jihadists. This research followed a two-part methodology. The first part, meta-ethnography, as a form of meta-synthesis uses ethnographic accounts and qualitative studies as comparative values against each other. The second part of this method involved translating the highlighted variables of the four subjects into shared concepts. These methods were derived from historical connections to the source, the legitimacy of the party conducting the rationalization, and internal scholastic discourse. The subjects are united in their pursuit of their Islamism, and are distinguished through their origins and situational rationale. The subjects were found to have several similarities concerning their methods of interpreting shari'a, but differ greatly in how that shari'a should be developed or implemented. The study concludes that the absence of unified Sunni leadership and scholastic enforcement has led to erratic evolutions of subject ideologies about shari'a and the idealized Islamist society. This study recommends that future research be conducted within a narrower scope, focusing on the political psychology of the subjects.

*Keywords:* Deobandi, Salafi, doctrine, Taliban, jihadists. shari'a, Sunni leadership, scholastic enforcement

# **La Convergencia De Asignaturas: Definiendo Dónde Se Intercambian Los Subjectos Deobandi Y Salafi**

## **RESUMEN**

El propósito de este estudio de investigación cualitativa es comparar las limitaciones prácticas y filosóficas de la doctrina moderada deobandi y salafista en contraste con sus hermanos extremistas,

específicamente los yihadistas talibanes y salafistas. Esta investigación siguió una metodología de dos partes. La primera parte, la metaetnografía, como una forma de meta-síntesis, utiliza relatos etnográficos y estudios cualitativos como valores comparativos entre sí. La segunda parte de este método implicó traducir las variables destacadas de los cuatro sujetos en conceptos compartidos. Estos métodos se derivaron de conexiones históricas con la fuente, la legitimidad del partido que conducía la racionalización y el discurso escolástico interno. Los sujetos están unidos en la búsqueda de su islamismo y se distinguen por sus orígenes y su lógica situacional. Se encontró que los sujetos tenían varias similitudes con respecto a sus métodos de interpretación de la sharia, pero difieren mucho en cómo esa sharia debería ser desarrollada o implementada. El estudio concluye que la ausencia de un liderazgo sunita unificado y una aplicación escolástica ha dado lugar a evoluciones erráticas de las subsecciones de las ideologías sobre la sharia y la sociedad islamista idealizada. Este estudio recomienda que la investigación futura se lleve a cabo dentro de un ámbito más estrecho, centrándose en la psicología política de los sujetos.

**Palabras clave:** Deobandi, salafista, doctrina, talibanes, yihadistas. sharia, liderazgo sunita, cumplimiento escolar

## 小派别的汇集：界定德奥班德教派和萨拉菲教派之间的交叉

### 摘要

本篇定性研究旨在比较与极端主义成员——尤其是塔利班和萨拉菲圣战分子——形成鲜明对比的温和派德奥班德派教义和萨拉菲派教义的实际限制和哲学限制。本研究的方法论由两部分组成。第一部分是元民族志（作为综合集成的一种形式），将民族志叙述和定性研究作为比较值。第二部分涉及将四个主体的重点变量转化为共享概念。这些方法取自与来源相关的历史联系、实行理性化（rationalization）的教派的合法性、以及内部的宣讲话语（scholastic discourse）。各主体通过各自对伊斯兰主义的追求而聚集在一起，并通过各自的起源和情境原则（situational rationale）而加以区分。研究发现，四个主体在诠释伊斯兰教法的方法上具有几个相似点，但在伊斯兰教法应如何发展和实施一事上存在巨大差异。研究结论认为，缺乏统一的逊尼派领导力和宣讲执行，已导致关于伊斯兰教法和伊斯兰理想社会的小派意识形态出

现不稳定的发展。本研究建议，未来研究应在更窄范围内进行，聚焦上述主体的政治心理学。

关键词：德奥班德运动，萨拉菲运动，主义，塔利班，圣战分子，伊斯兰教法（shari'a），逊尼派领导力，宣讲执行（scholastic enforcement）

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## Background

The Deobandis and Salafis are scholastic Sunni sects rooted in their struggle to secure the ideal Islamist government. The Deobandis, borne from colonial struggles, were founded in 1866 at Deoband, India.<sup>1</sup> From their university, *Dar-Ulum-Deoband*, the Deobandi mission sought to reestablish and elevate the role of the *ulama* in British-occupied India through a formalized academic atmosphere of higher learning, centered around the Islamic sciences of such things as the Hanafi *fiqh*, *talid*, and *ijtihad*.<sup>2</sup> In comparison, the Salafis reject *fiqh* and seek to apply and practice the wisdom of the *al-salaf al-salihin* (“the pious predecessors,” the first three generations of Muslims, including the

Prophet) through a variety of practices guided heavily by their *ijtihad* and *taqlid* amongst other doctrinal interpretations.<sup>3</sup> Contemporary Salafism, which debatably claims its heritage and identity from Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab’s revival in the middle of the eighteenth century, idealizes the Salaf as practicing the perfect form of shari’a.<sup>4</sup> Salafism is a methodology of practical Islam, and not a *madhab* (Sunni schools of *fiqh* and academic discipline) itself.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the range of differences between the Deobandi and Salafi ideologies, rhetoric, and practices, they share fundamental similarities in their pursuit to maintain Islamic purity and their idealized visions for an Islamic future. This alignment to the greater ends of Islam influenced how their means developed and were executed. What resulted

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1 Ingram, Brannon D. *Revival from below: The Deoband movement and global Islam*. Oakland California: University of California Press, 2018. Kindle. 815.

2 Zaman, Muhammad Q. *The ulama in contemporary Islam: Custodians of change*. Princeton studies in Muslim politics. Princeton, N.J., Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002. Kindle. 1036.

3 Kose, Sadi. *ISIS: A Byproduct of Salafism?* Translated by Adil al-Kalbani and Haatim al-Ouuni, 2017b. Kindle. 10.

4 Maher, Shiraz. *Salafi-jihadism: The history of an idea*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Kindle. 06-08.

5 Duderija, Adis. “Mainstream Sunnism, Salafi-Jihadism and progressive Islam: Rejoinder to Alan Gabor’s.” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2019): 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2019.1657297>. 05.

are two distinct groups with apparently diverging ideologies, rhetoric, and practices, but which have ultimately developed shared characteristics. This study will focus on the two progenitor sects, Deobandism and Salafism, and two of their politically extremist subsects, the Deobandi Taliban and the Salafi jihadists. If the primary subjects' beliefs and rhetoric can be enumerated in terms of their practices, then their distinct differences can be outlined and compared, and the groups may be differentiated from each other beyond political terms of moderation and extremism.

Research Question: What is the nature of the philosophical and practical similarities in shari'a and *fiqh* among some of the outstanding Deobandi and Salafi moderates and extremists?

### **Definition of Terms**

*Bid'a*: Doctrinal "innovations or novelties that did not exist at the time of the Messenger of Allah."<sup>6</sup>

*Fiqh*: Islamic jurisprudence as it relates to the four Sunni *madhabs* (not to be confused with *usal al-fiqh*, which relates to the principalities of Sunni jurisprudence sourced in the Quran and Sunna).<sup>7</sup>

*Ijtihad*: Legal term referring to the jurist's process of independent reasoning

and rationalization to find a solution or opinion to a legal question within the terms of shari'a.<sup>8</sup>

*Shari'a*: Uncodified, immutable Islamic law.<sup>9</sup>

*Taqlid*: The "layman who has not reached the stage of *Ijtihad* has to follow one of the four schools; because he/she does not have the capability to read and comprehend all Islamic sources."<sup>10</sup>

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this research study is to comparatively address the similarities in the extremist ideologies and practices of the Deobandi Taliban and Salafi jihadists, versus their moderate origins in Deobandism and normative Salafism, respectively. This comparison is applied so that their common variables may be distilled and highlighted for further study, and used as future insight into the evolution of politico-religious extremism.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The literature used in this study was sourced from Muslim scholars, lay practitioners, and non-Muslim academics experienced in Islamic studies. Most of the sourc-

6 Kose, Sadi. *Bid'ah: According to the Four Madhabs*, 2017a. Kindle. 08.

7 Moj, Muhammad. *The Deoband madrasah movement: Countercultural trends and tendencies*. Diversity and plurality in South Asia. London: Anthem Press, 2015. 203-204.; Ingram (2018), 2768.

8 Maher, 66, 237.

9 Khan, Aamir I. *The Dispute: Reconciliation between Shi'a, Sunni, and Salafi*. Al Haqaiq Foundation, 2018. Kindle. 99; Moj, 221.

10 Khan, 12.

es come from academic, scholarly, and other peer-reviewed sources. The research uses primary sources from relevant Muslim clerics when they could be found in English. There are several consistent themes throughout the literature, many of which are subservient to its attempts to describe the functional and ideological limitations of the moderate subjects in comparison to their extremist counterparts.<sup>11</sup> This discourse highlights three central themes of discussion: the religious doctrine, its political application, and its practical application on general populations. These themes highlight significant gaps in objectivity.

## **The *Dar-Ulum-Deoband* and the Deobandi Taliban**

### ***Beliefs***

The literature regarding the religious doctrine between the progenitor Deobandi school at *Dar-Ulum-Deoband* and the Taliban lacks traditional academic quality and quantity. The Deobandi *ulama*'s (cadre of Islamic scholars) discussion is concerned with doctrinal subtlety and the continuity of their policies of non-innovation.<sup>12</sup> There is some discourse that addresses the finite limits of innovation, but this discussion hardly

rises to an academic level of organized discussion. External authors have organized some thematic trends in the religious evolution of Deobandism, as it relates to the Taliban, but these tend towards a historic retelling of events that do not address specific religious doctrine.<sup>13</sup> Other, non-Deobandi, Sunni authors analyze the evolution of the Taliban in comparison to their moderate roots at the *Dar-Ulum-Deoband*.<sup>14</sup> This is in keeping with the apologists' notion of both having to explain how the Taliban became extremists, and how the internal Deobandi *ulama* moderates both condemn and condone the Taliban's interpretations.<sup>15</sup> The decentralization of Islamic studies ensures that, were progenitor Deobandi *ulama* interested in regulating other *madrastas*' commentary and curriculum, there would be no recourse to censure developing heresy or *bid'a*.<sup>16</sup> There are few academic resources stemming from the Deobandi *ulama*, besides thousands of highly specific *fatwas* (legal opinion or ruling issued by an Islamic scholar) concerning appropriate individual behaviors within shari'a.<sup>17</sup> The living state of the Deobandi Taliban's literature is more present in the political and practical aspects of shari'a, than within an academic discussion of its religious doctrine.

11 Duderija (2019), 05.

12 Zaman, 645-652.

13 Syed, et al., 195.

14 Moj, 08-25.

15 Syed et al., 3087.

16 Arkoun, Mohammed. "Rethinking Islam Today." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 588, no. 1 (2003): 18-39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716203588001003>. 19.

17 Ingram (2018), 1182.

## **Rhetoric**

In contrast to the literature regarding doctrine, the body of literature surrounding the political development of Deobandism and the Taliban is rich with academic interest from both internal Muslim scholars and external, non-Muslim researchers. The academic quality of sources within this theme is substantially higher and within the bounds of traditional, Western standards of academics. The audience is more concerned with how the religion has secular governance as a fundamental facet of its existence and what those facets are, than of the nature of its politico-religious doctrine. The Deobandi scholars seek to provide a level of continuity to their doctrine, and the external researchers provide the progression of a moderate *madrassa's* development into political extremism.<sup>18</sup> The breadth of the audience is also revealed in the quantity of sources discussing the politics of the Deobandi and Taliban subsects. The literature works within the theme that Deobandism and the Taliban are one and the same, but are different expressions from different people operating in different environments. This section of the literature works primarily in the subtleties of vocabulary as non-Muslim authors attempt to organize what

defies organization. An example of this is the differences and extent of what is "Islam" versus what is "Islamism" or "jihad" versus "jihadism." These concepts both serve as religious identity and as religious purpose.<sup>19</sup> There is not a significant representation of the *ulama's* interpretations in this regard.

## **Actions**

The literature regarding the applied doctrine reflects the greatest divergence between the Deobandi *ulama* and the Taliban. The divergence implicates the separation between the moderates and the extremists as an attempt to explain why the moderates are different from the extremists in the great majority of cases.<sup>20</sup> The literature around the Taliban's practices in such activities as religion, Islamism, and warfare unintentionally places them in the spotlight of what makes them extremist versus moderate.<sup>21</sup> Non-Muslim scholars are quick to point out the tribal origins for the Taliban's practices, and that they are not necessary *halal* (permissible) in the traditional terms of Sunni Islam, or of Deobandism.<sup>22</sup> Beyond this oft recurring observation, the literature exists in a state of comparison between Taliban practices that are not condoned by the majority of Sunni Islam and how these

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18 Zaman, 977-1003.

19 Amin, Husnul. "Mainstream Islamism without Fear: The Cases of Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam in Pakistan." *Romanian Journal of Political Science* 14, no. 2 (2014): 126-57. 127.

20 Metcalf, Barbara D. *'Traditionalist' Islamic activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs*. ISIM papers 4. Leiden: ISIM, 2002.

21 White, J. T. "Understanding the Taliban: Assessing Religious Categories of Analysis." *Religion and Violence* (2012).

22 Metcalf, 15-17.



practices are categorically different from moderate Sunnism. The literature attempts to define the limits of terrorism and warfare within the Taliban's behaviors.

## **Salafi Quietists & Jihadists**

### ***Beliefs***

The early post-9/11 years show an elementary understanding of Salafism as a branch of Islam that is, by its nature and creed, following extremist ideologies and practices. As the years progressed, the literature evolved a better understanding of the separated natures of the three primary Salafist branches.<sup>23</sup> The demonstrations and activities from the different branches brought stark contrasts among their followers. The studies eventually brought out the subtle qualities and diffused structures from this time and highlight the branches as almost completely individual beliefs within Islam.<sup>24</sup> While a clearly defined element of the literature from the earliest studies of Salafism, there is a period in the literature that looks at political Salafism as a rift within the quietists and the jihadists.<sup>25</sup> Some authors look

at this development as a rationalized evolution for a religious group attempting to implement their version of government.<sup>26</sup> Others look at the reformation of political Salafism as the inevitable progression of extremists who faced the frontlines of implementing Salafism through jihad, and realized the futility of their endeavor through applied force.<sup>27</sup> There is not much literature dedicated to the core beliefs of the political Salafists, except to state where they sit between the quietists and the jihadists. The Salafi jihadists have the largest body of literature when discussing Salafism. The bulk of which does not apply to their religious beliefs. The discussion of the jihadists' religious beliefs has stagnated somewhat. As the quietists dictate the religious foundation, and the political Salafis look to peaceful implementation, the jihadists stand out primarily for their actions and less for their religion.

### ***Rhetoric***

The discussion of the Salafist's politics largely ignores the role of the quietists. The apparent reason is due to the quietists' adamant desires to remain beyond

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23 Wiktorowicz, Quintan. "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 3 (2006): 207–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100500497004>. 208.

24 Jones, Seth G. *A persistent threat: The evolution of Al Qa'ida and other Salafi jihadists*. Santa Monica CA: RAND, 2014. 02-03.

25 Lenz-Raymann, Kathrin. *Securitization of Islam: A vicious circle counter-terrorism and freedom of religion in Central Asia*. Global, local Islam. Bielefeld: Transcript, 2014. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1fxgjp>. 70-71.

26 Reese, Scott S. "Salafi Transformations: Aden and the changing voice of religious reform in the interwar Indian Ocean." *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no. 1 (2012): 71–92. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743811001255>. 73-74.

27 Osman, Mohamed N. M. "Salafi Ulama in UMNO: Political Convergence or Expediency?" *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 36, no. 2 (2014): 206. <https://doi.org/10.1355/cs36-2b.224-225>.

the political process and solely dictate the religious elements of Salafism.<sup>28</sup> The less apparent reason is the fundamental disagreement the political and jihadists branches have with the quietists about their role in promoting Islamism.<sup>29</sup> The quietist *ulama* seek a different set of goals than their political and extremist brethren, which comes out in the lack of discussion about their political stance or interpretation of events.<sup>30</sup> These discussions primarily regard the political means the Salafis use to gain peaceful traction in the various governments, and how they distance themselves from jihadists of the same name. Beyond their pragmatic successes, the literature defends the Salafis' actions in politics in contrary to that of the quietists and the jihadists.<sup>31</sup> The common form of research questions at this level is how the political Salafist reconciles the peace-seeking and jihad-seeking rhetoric of their religion to implement a form of Islamism that a popular majority could support.<sup>32</sup> These sources commonly involve a discourse between Salafi or Muslim scholars and non-Mus-

lim authors generating an image of what the political Salafist seeks in its final form. The jihadists look to contemporary interpretations of the Salaf to justify long-term lesser jihads.<sup>33</sup> The bulk of the literature regarding the jihadists' rhetoric is made up of attempts to both dissuade other Muslims from joining the movement and demonstrate to the non-Muslims that the *umma* (global Muslim community) does not follow the jihadists' ways. In academic discussions, this has created a body of works that look at the rationalized differences between Salafi jihadists and the rest of Islam.<sup>34</sup> Internal discussions seek to discredit the contemporary interpretations of the Salaf by both discrediting the interpreters and establishing the contextual nature of pro-jihadist rhetoric.<sup>35</sup> This area of literature is lacking substantial academic analysis of areligious variables, such as the psychological value of leadership to religious cultures.

### Actions

The dominating elements of this corner of the literature focuses on the Salafi

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28 Kose (2017b), 16-18.

29 Teplesky, Jacob M. "Salafi-Jihadism: A 1,400-Year-old Idea Rises Again." Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2016. 11-15.

30 Duderija, Adis. "The Salafi Worldview and the Hermeneutical Limits of Mainstream Sunni Critique of Salafi-Jihadism." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2018): 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1529359>. 03.

31 Malik, Maszlee, and Hamidah Mat. "The Historical Development of the "Sunnah" Reform Ideology in the State of Perlis, Malaysia." *SAGE Open* 7, no. 3 (2017): 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244017726356>. 01-02.

32 Wiktorowicz, 214-216.

33 Kose (2017b), 17-18.

34 Maher, 08-12.

35 Bin Ali, Mohamed. *The roots of religious extremism: Understanding the Salafi Doctrine of Al-Wala' wal Bara'*. London: Imperial College Press, 2016. Kindle. 66-70.

jihadists. Where the quietists and political Salafis do attract attention, it is frequently in comparison to jihadist groups, like Al Qaeda or the Islamic State.<sup>36</sup> The politics and rhetoric of the three subjects stand out in distinction as the limiting qualities between and among each other. The branches are organized enough to denote that once a Muslim, scholar or lay, commits to another's course of action they are recognized and associated with that new rhetoric. The literature has evolved much in line with this practical manner of association. No matter what branch the individual claims to associate with, the literature spends time organizing the stated doctrine of that individual into its appropriate classification. This is likely where the distinction of the scientific Salafism emerges.<sup>37</sup> With so many Muslims claiming an intentional Salafist following, the literature has committed parts of its discussion to creating hermeneutical limits between these codified beliefs.<sup>38</sup> In general, the academic literature regards the Salafi jihadists almost as a form of apostasy to whatever the authors are comparing their beliefs against. From the Muslim authors' perspectives, this is likely to separate the beliefs of the majority of the *umma* from these particularly violent extremists. The non-Muslim au-

thors' perspectives analyze the Salafi jihadists through the lens of answering why they are violent and how they became that way. There is very little discussion that looks beyond the development of cultural extremism through religious methods.

## Theoretical Framework

As it is defined for this study, rationalism is the process of distilling the vague and obscure into the realistic and the describable.<sup>39</sup> Rationalism is not the theoretical framework used for many of the sources cited in this review, but it is present in many of the findings and results. The very nature of applying shari'a and *fiqh* demands a limited application of rationalism.<sup>40</sup> Otherwise, concepts like *ijtihad* and *bid'a* could not rest against the bulwark of *taqlid*. Additionally, and as a product of the limited availability of primary sources, rationalism is used to explain the subjects' logical conclusions about their religion and their roles. In this study rationalism provided the translative element for corporeal logic to theological. Rationalism contributes to diluting extraneous information and assists in focusing the research on a limited pool of variables that can be organized and explained within context.<sup>41</sup>

36 Jones, 01-03.

37 Bin Ali, 221-223.

38 Duderija (2018), 09-13.

39 Robertson, J. M. *Rationalism*. London: Constable and Company LTD, 1912. 13-14.

40 Nelson, Alan J. *A companion to rationalism*. Blackwell companions to philosophy 8. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005. 26-27.

41 Ibid., 30.

## Summary

The review of the literature observed patterns across the four subjects of study through the examination of the Muslim versus non-Muslim authors, the comparison of extremists versus moderates, and extremists versus other extremists. The patterns rarely exist independently of each other, and often rely on the materials of their opposites for academic support. This internal dependence is indicative of a further trend within the literature that was not established at the beginning of this review, but is addressed in this research's question. There is little general comparison between the moderate Deobandis and Salafis and their extremist subjects, the Taliban and Salafi jihadists. There are significant gaps within the literature reviewed, with a vein of apologists running through many of the popular sources. There are areas of the literature, such as the subjects' philosophical doctrine, which are not commonly available in academic discussion. Instead of providing the primary sources and discussions around their topics, the literature looks to what scholars, both religious and academic, have ruled on the matter. This is likely a characteristic of how the personal versus the academic perspectives of *ijtihad* and *taqlid* are treated by the four subjects.

## METHODOLOGY

The literature review exhibits a well-developed field of studies around the four subjects. This field is predominantly qualitative, and seeks to explain the translations between the theoretical and ritual elements of Islam and its faultier practical emulations. Much of this literature exists within an academic sphere of discussion and debate, it does not typically address comparison. The existing body is still heavily concerned with translation, as opposed to internal comparison. The purpose of this study is to initiate part of that comparison between two general moderate sects and a couple of their extremist offspring. The research question is answered by following a meta-ethnographic approach aided by reciprocal translation as the chosen method of meta-synthesis.<sup>42</sup> This approach specifically looks to address the comparative elements that define the sects and subjects as unique beliefs within Islam, but not unique from each other.

### Research Design

This research followed a two-part methodology. The first part, meta-ethnography, is a form of meta-synthesis that uses ethnographic accounts and qualitative studies as comparative values against each other.<sup>43</sup> Meta-synthesis is already a practice that

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42 Noblit, George, and R. Hare, eds. *Meta-Ethnography*. California: SAGE Publications, Inc, 1988. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412985000>. 13-15.

43 Ibid., 28.

seeks to explain the “why” and “how” between studies, meta-ethnographies seek to use a more limited pool of qualitative information for comparison.<sup>44</sup> The appropriate result of this approach illuminates the shared characteristics between the subjects of study as it relates to the focus of their study. The second part of this method involves the translating process of qualitative elements. The basic explanation of this translation is explained through comparative means. The practice of translation seeks to maintain the core concept of comparison between the subjects in relation to the key concepts within the account’s setting.<sup>45</sup> It takes the concepts from one account and compares them to concepts in a different account. In the case of this research’s focus, the four primary subjects served as the themes of comparison, while their outstanding theoretical, ritual, and practical elements stand out as concepts of comparison.

## **Limitations**

**W**hile this methodology provides a flow and guidance to the development of a research project through comparative translation, synthesis, and analysis, its assumptions limit its general usage across a wider spectrum. There is rarely a defined minimal limit to the sources a study relies upon to make its case. The study is the distillation of thought from

the combined sources and the conclusions that the researchers derived. In this case, the body of knowledge was built from several dozen sources of variety, but, prior to the research, did not exist. Where a concept was raised in one subject, a correlative was sought in the others for comparison. This practice effectively removed the limitation of a fledgling body of knowledge, while fostering growth and understanding towards the study’s goals.

## **Summary**

**T**his two-part methodology led the research through a step-by-step process of comparative analysis between the broad subjects of study to highlight the shared elements within the subtleties of their doctrine and practice. As it pertains to this study’s purpose, the methodology is specifically designed to compare theoretical, ritual, and practical concepts between the four subjects. The method not only serves to compare, but also realizes which concepts may not be universal to the four subjects, but are limited to a few. The other benefit of this organization is that it is methodical in practice as well as theory.

## **FINDINGS & ANALYSIS**

**E**ven within a narrowed scope of comparing Deobandi and Salafi moderates and extremists, the

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44 Mohammed, Mohammed A., Rebekah J. Moles, and Timothy F. Chen. “Meta-Synthesis of Qualitative Research: the Challenges and Opportunities.” *International journal of clinical pharmacy* 38, no. 3 (2016): 695–704. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11096-016-0289-2>. 697.

45 Ibid., 30-39.

cone of relevant information was wide. The key task of this research revolved around sifting through this cone for recurrent ideologies that applied to the four primary subjects, while attempting to limit the singularity of these practices to only these four subjects. This goal contrasts with simply highlighting qualities that are practiced across greater Islam, or even just Sunnism. The following section is organized into two primary elements, Deobandism and Salafism, within in a scale ascending political extremism. Each section highlights unique developments and interpretations the subjects' practitioners have made to suit their interpretation of how and why shari'a and *fiqh* should be applied. As these are fully established sects and subsects there are many concepts and practices that are not addressed in this study. The concepts and practices included were identified based on the terms of the study, and selected for their similarity to each other across the different subjects of focus.

## Deobandism

The *Dar-Ulum-Deoband* was founded out of the pronounced need to restore quality and control to academic Islam within the Indian subcontinent during its period

within the English Empire.<sup>46</sup> As such, their curriculum is based in promoting the *manqulat* (revealed sciences) over the rational sciences (*maqulat*).<sup>47</sup> The Deobandi *madrasas* take the Muslim traditions to the original sources and focuses their curriculum on holy writs, preferring to teach from the Quran and Hadiths, instead of incorporating the centuries of discursive Islam.<sup>48</sup> This fundamentalist's approach to their education originally served to separate the Deobandis from the numerous other and longer-standing *madrasas* in the subcontinent. Initially, *fatwas* were issued in direct opposition to competing *madaras*, like Barelwi, which were more tolerant of the mesh of Indian-Islamic cultures.<sup>49</sup> This was presumably done to both demonstrate how far their competition had strayed from the true Islam, and to recruit a larger base of local Muslims.<sup>50</sup> The initial years of *fatwas* were broad strokes, eliminating cultural practices tied to *sufism* (mystic traditions), *shirk* (polytheism), and *bid'a*. This either removed the influence of the more liberal *madrasa* or, at the very least, challenged their legitimacy through the comparison of practices.

Deobandism loosely follows the tradition established by Shah Waliullah, which fundamentally emphasizes the balance of shari'a with *tariqah* (Sufi

46 Ingram (2018), 2309-2323.

47 Moj, 31.

48 Ibid., 16.

49 Ibid., 08.

50 Ingram, Brannon. "Sufis, Scholars and Scapegoats: Rashīd A mad Gangohī (d. 1905) and the Deobandi Critique of Sufism." *The Muslim World* 99, no. 3 (2009): 478–501. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-1913.2009.01281.x>. 481–482.

tradition of a spiritual journey to seek an ultimate truth).<sup>51</sup> In terms of shari'a, Deobandism diverged from al-Waliullah's attempt at immediately raising the educational standard of all Muslims through *tatbiq* (the process of rationalizing two conflicting ideas).<sup>52</sup> This was a process of al-Waliullah's design and sought to increase the legitimacy of *ijtihad* from the Hanafi *fiqh*. In this way, the *ulama* could practice *ijtihad* through a carefully controlled and restricted academic process, while still disseminating a conservative, anti-Sufi, anti-Shi'a Islam to their congregations. Due to a history of violent conflict and ideological attrition, however, Deobandism eventually abandoned the al-Waliullah tradition in favor of strict adherence to the Hanafi *fiqh*.<sup>53</sup> Hanafism, as distributed by the Deobandi, is strict enough for the lay Muslim to live within its boundaries without abundant fear of *shirk* or *kufir* (sin, corruption), and, more importantly, simple enough for the lay Muslim to apply it in their routine lives while also being vague enough to create a reliance on the Deobandi *ulama*.<sup>54</sup> The Hanafi's brand of

*fiqh* is well-designed to create a separation between the congregation and the *ulama*, as it is loose enough to allow the *ulama* to issue *fatwas* on culturally specific issues without contradicting the core shari'a.<sup>55</sup>

The Deobandi's initial organization of the curriculum at their central university promoted a franchisee structure and culture to Deobandism as a manner of learning and practicing Islam.<sup>56</sup> In a relatively short amount of time, they cornered the market on academically defining the proper and improper Muslim lifestyles. Over time the nature of the *fatwas* changed from defensively restoring the normative Islam from its Hindu influences, to offensively implementing certain elements of shari'a which could be practiced without an Islamic state.<sup>57</sup> At this point, Deobandism is heavily characterized through pronouncement of Shi'a as *shirk*, controlling the quality of the *ulama*, and the political promotion of an Islamist government.<sup>58</sup>

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51 Edgar, Iain R. *The dream in Islam: From Qur'anic tradition to Jihadist inspiration*. New York, NY: Berghahn Books, 2011. 91.

52 Shahid, Amir K. "Displacement of Shah Waliullah's Movement and its Impact on Northern Indian Muslim Revivalist Thoughts." *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan* 51, no. 2 (2014). 06.

53 Moj, 33-42.

54 White, 03.

55 Hamid, Myra. "The political struggles of the ulama of Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband: Identifying and operationalizing the traditionalist approach to politics." Master's Thesis, University of Maryland, College Park, 2005. 32.

56 Zaman, 2395.

57 Moj, 32.

58 Ibid., 17.

## Deobandi Taliban

In contrast to the Deobandi *ulama* in *Dar-Ulum-Deoband*, the Deobandi Taliban began as students attempting to restore peace and Islamism to Afghanistan, in the post-Soviet environment.<sup>59</sup> They began as refugee *talibs* (students) graduating from the *Haqqaniya madrasa* in Pakistan. The Deobandi *Dar-Ulum-Haqqaniya*, as led by Mawlana Sami' al-Haqq, used its prime location to prepare students for the world within the terms of jihad. The connection to the *ulama* is crucial, not only for spiritual guidance, but also provided legitimacy to their leadership, despite their incomplete understanding of shari'a, when they were hastily thrust from the *Haqqaniya*.<sup>60</sup> The Taliban's incomplete education, from top to bottom, ties them to the fundamentals, which can be taught and indoctrinated in a short amount of time.<sup>61</sup> Concepts like *al-amr bi'l-ma'ruf wa'l-nahy 'an al-munkar* (commanding what is right and forbidding what is wrong) are necessary to motivate refugees to return to their despoiled lands for their benefit.<sup>62</sup>

The Afghan Taliban entered the scene in 1994 during the Afghan civil war.<sup>63</sup> For the most part, including much of the leadership, the Taliban were unmolded students of the Deobandi *madrasas* on the Pakistani north-western borders.<sup>64</sup> Once released, they were guided by men like Mullah Omar: the products of an errant curriculum not controlled by a centrally-defined *ulama*, a multi-generational war of international interference, the tribal culture of Pashtunwali, and exposure to exceedingly successful Saudi Wahhabis working in Afghanistan's conflicts.<sup>65</sup> The resulting shari'a was based in extreme fundamentalism that, although not expressly stated by the sources, incorporated al-Wahhab's perspective on *ittaba'a* (literal application of holy writs), and did so without the guidance of an experienced *ulama*. Without the guiding *ulama*, or even a central document like a constitution (beyond the Quran and Hanafi *fiqh*), the Taliban followed the exemplified purity of their leadership and their Prophet.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, they prosecuted Afghanistan through jihad to unite under their brand of Islam, but not through academic dis-

59 Zaman, 2189.

60 Zaman, 2230.

61 Rashid, Ahmed. *Taliban: Militant Islam, oil and fundamentalism in Central Asia*. 2nd ed. New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2010. 23.

62 Mahendrarajah, Shivan. "Saudi Arabia, Wahhabism, and the Taliban of Afghanistan: 'Puritanical reform' as a 'revolutionary war' program." *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 26, no. 3 (2015): 383–407. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2014.982883>. 384.

63 Rashid, 20.

64 *Ibid.*, 89-90.

65 Syed, Jawad, Edwina Pio, Tahir Kamran, and Abbas Zaidi. *Faith-based violence and Deobandi militancy in Pakistan*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. 2173.; Zaman, 2239; Rashid, 04, 89-90.

66 Rashid, 93.



cipline like Deobandism. This is, in part, the explanation for behaviors like the Shi'a purges in Hazarajat, and the doctrinally unsupported *fatwas* issued against women's roles in society.<sup>67</sup>

At first glance the Pakistani Taliban follows the same line of fundamentalism as the Afghan Taliban. They are made up of hastily graduated *talib* from the Deobandi *madrasas* on, or near the Afghan border's with Pakistan. They follow the Hanafi Sunni tradition for their *fiqh*, and interpret the Islamic holy writs through an unacknowledged *ittaba'a*.<sup>68</sup> Much of the Pakistani Taliban's population is comprised of deserters or retreating members of the Afghan Taliban, of which were likely trained in the Pakistani Deobandi *madrasa*, in any case.<sup>69</sup> The similarities are evidenced by their social structure and by their victims.<sup>70</sup> Additionally, their scholastic and political connections to the Jamaat-e-Islam (JI) and the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) through the *madrasas* are much stronger than in the remote deserts of Afghanistan. The JUI's (commonly) and JI's (less common) sectarian discourse is prone to both waver and adjust the Pakistani Taliban's political and martial intentions as their

strength waxes and wanes in the Pakistani political spheres.<sup>71</sup>

## Salafi Quietists

Salafi quietists are strictly concerned with the maintenance and careful propagation of the Salaf's Islam.<sup>72</sup> They follow the core belief that the *manhaj* (method) of Islam from the *al-salaf al-salihin* must retain its identity and purity from its time and circumstances from history. From the fundamentalist's perspective of the Salafists, as put forth by *ulama*, such as ibn Taymiyyah and Mohammad Abd al-Wahhab, Islam is the divine religion, requiring no adaptation to fit the circumstantial requirements of mankind.<sup>73</sup> The Salafist's *ijtihad* is the corrective attempt, with significant restrictions, against temporal entropy to both maintain legitimacy in the present and adhere to the standards of practice from the past.<sup>74</sup> The *ijtihad* is supposed to be the solution to that application, but there are some inconsistencies within the *ulama* with regards to the role and relationships of *ijtihad* and *taqlid*. Generally associated with the Sunni *madhabs*, the Salafi *taqlid* is not universally accepted, nor

67 Ibid., 72-75, 107.

68 Moj, 106-107.

69 Rashid, 25-26, 93.

70 Fair, C. C. "Explaining Support for Sectarian Terrorism in Pakistan: Piety, Maslak and Sharia." *Religions* 6, no. 4 (2015): 1137-67. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel6041137>. 1141-1142, 1151.

71 Rashid, 92; Moj, 103-107.

72 Wagemakers, Joas, ed. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*. Oxford University Press, 2016. 12.

73 al-Wahhab, Al-Imam M. I. *Explanation of the Nullifiers of Islam*, 2016. 06; ibn Talmiyyah, Al-Islam. *Enjoining Right and Forbidding Wrong*. 03-06.

74 Bin Ali, 67.

condemned, but serves its purpose as a conduit for the present to interpret the past.<sup>75</sup> This is accomplished with two different application of the *taqlid*. There is the stagnant *taqlid*, which is concrete and is taught as rhetoric for educating lay Muslims and new scholars. This is the *taqlid al-amaa*, (blind following), and it requires no input or interpretation from its adherents, only stipulating that it is taught in its entirety.<sup>76</sup> The other, is a dynamic *taqlid*, and fills the role of answering the questions of the contemporary Salafi jurists, as they operate beyond the *fiqh* and influence of any one *madhab*.<sup>77</sup>

The *talfiq* (piecing together) and *ikhhtilaf* (differences of opinion) are characteristics that reinforce the credibility of the *ulama's* ruling, or at least are responsible for mitigating any accidental *bid'a*. The *talfiq* serves to give the Mujtahid (scholars qualified to rule on matters of *ijtihad*) restrictive guidance in the compilation of his juristic response, and is reminiscent of other scholarly research processes.<sup>78</sup> The *ikhhtilaf* continues the scholarly tone through the emphasis of the religious version of

“peer review,” and serves as the opposite to concurrence, *ijma* (legal consensus).<sup>79</sup> The *ikhhtilaf* serves to ensure that singular member of an *ulama* becomes too enamored with their methodology and analysis production. If an *ulama* is agreed upon in certain matters, such as Bin Baz in the case of ruling on Western troops in Saudi Arabia, they may issue rulings that effectively updates shari'a's logical applications.<sup>80</sup> It is critical to note that the shari'a itself is not being changed, but how it is applied is the subject of debate and change. Further, those of the *ulama* who issue incorrectly, but within the terms of the holy writ, may not be subject to *takfir* (excommunication), especially if the ruling was made with a misinterpretation of the language or historical context.<sup>81</sup> Within the vein of *takfir*, as was alluded to in the review of the literature, the Salafi quietists do not associate with, nor pronounce *takfir* against the Salafi jihadists.<sup>82</sup>

The quietist's goal is to prevent the further fraction and descent into extremism (from the Salafist's view) for the rest of Islam. In this, the quietists

75 Krawietz, Birgit. “Cut and Paste in Legal Rules: Designing Islamic Norms with Talfiq.” *Die Welt des Islams* 42, no. 1 (2002): 3–40. <http://www.jstor.com/stable/1571293>. 09.

76 Fareed, Muner. “Against Ijtihad.” *The Muslim World* 91, 3, 4 (2001): 355–70. 356.

77 Fariha, Fatima, and Pakeeza Shahzadi. “Ijtihad as a Legislative Function: Role of Ijtihad, Ifta and Taqleed in Legislative Process.” *Journal of Islamic and Religious Studies* 1, no. 1 (2016): 33–45. <https://doi.org/10.12816/0032208>. 40-42.

78 Krawietz, 07-09.

79 Aljloud, Saad A. “Ijtihād and Ikhtilāf: Re-interpreting Islamic Principles in Contemporary Times.” *Arab Law Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (2014): 85–98. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15730255-12341273>. 92-93.

80 Maher, 130-133.

81 al-Wahhab, 10.

82 Maher, 98.

are adherent practitioners of *irj'a* (to defer or postpone), and consider the unity of ideals and peoples within the *umma* to be significantly more important than routing out minor *takfirs* or *bid'a* within the community.<sup>83</sup> This is where certain restrictions of interpretive methodology come into play that distinguish the quietists from the rest of Salafism. One such restricted methodology is the *mafhum al-muwafaqa*, the process of reaching a logical conclusion based on concepts not explicitly stated in the Quran.<sup>84</sup>

### Salafi Jihadists

The Salafi jihadists, while making up the smallest population of one of the smallest sects within Sunnism and the general *umma*, with little doubt, have attracted the greatest attention for their capabilities to implement ideology and rhetoric into extremist practices.<sup>85</sup> Despite this attention, it is difficult to define the Salafi jihadists in ideological terms. If their *manhaj* of interpreting and applying the Quran and Hadiths was forced into a mold, the mold would appear derivative of the Salafi quietist scholars. Much like derivatives, the Salafi jihadists are logically removed by several steps from

the quietists' absolutism. They reject the *madhabs*, *bid'a*, and any measure of innovation that would remove or marginalize the divinity of Allah in the texts.<sup>86</sup> The *al-salaf al-salihin* exhibited the premier Muslim ideals, governance, and culture. As such, the fundamentals are about where the jihadists break from normative Salafism and implement their version of *ijtihad*.

The jihadist's *ijtihad* takes advantage of an absent *ulama*, which permits those Mujtahid to develop their rhetoric without the significant limitations of *ikhtilaf*. The *ijma* is significantly more pronounced in the jihadists, as there are fewer scholars who are qualified to speak on definitive measures, issues fatwas, and lead congregations.<sup>87</sup> This is not to state that the *ijtihad* is without boundary, or that jihadists operate without concern of being the targeted by *takfir* through *bid'a* (although al-Wahhab states that the scholars are above *takfir* if they come to an incorrect conclusion because of mistranslation, misunderstanding, or misrepresentation).<sup>88</sup> The boundaries of normative Salafi *ijtihad* run perpendicular to *ittaba'a*. *Ittaba'a*, in synchrony with al-Wahhab's lowered standard for entry into Islamic scholarship, permits the literalist's interpretation of the holy writs.<sup>89</sup>

83 Maher, 78-79; Zaman, 2497.

84 Maher, 50.

85 Syed, et al., 262.

86 Malik and Mat, 01.

87 Fareed, 359.

88 al-Wahhab, 06-07.

89 Evazpour, Mehdi, and Hamdallah Akvani. "Fiqh for Action: Jihadi Salafists and Rethinking in Salafi Jurisprudential Foundations." *Politics and Religion* 8, no. 1 (2019): 55-77. 61-62.

The absent academic discipline and *ikhtilaf* from the jihadist scholars who apply *ittaba'a* permits an *ijtihad* that does not carry any weight to influence normative Islamic thought, and simultaneously provides answers to other lay Muslims who are equally uneducated, but are motivated to dedicate their lives to Islam.<sup>90</sup> All considered, the fount of logic within the jihadists is based in *ijtihad* and al-Wahhab's insistence of the propagation of Islamic studies through relaxed disciplines and removal of restricted accesses.<sup>91</sup>

Once the foundation for academic deterioration is laid, the argument for offensive jihad must be made. This argument begins with *hakimiyya*. *Hakimiyya* is the act of protecting the rights of self-governance handed down from Allah.<sup>92</sup> Some scholars, particularly Qutbists, argue that *hakimiyya* as the defensible behavior to preventing Islam from slipping back into *Jahiliyya* (polytheistic period before the Prophet's arrival).<sup>93</sup> In terms of the jihadists, it is a call to action and commitment to jihad, to prevent that slip and restore a true caliphate under shari'a.<sup>94</sup> The logic of the *hakimiyya* is used as further evidence to prove the bleeding situation

of contemporary Islam. The absence of a true Islamic state, yet the quantity of Muslim-led governments provides material evidence of either the weakness of Islam, because of external oppression or the weakness of the Muslims leading the governments, who should be more focused on Islamism than secular issues.<sup>95</sup>

These rhetorical foundations are inextricably tied to their ideologies and follow a continuous rationale from one to the other. It begins with the case of defensive versus offensive jihad. The offensive jihad is only declared by a righteous authority, like the Caliph, and is solely for the purpose of territorial or political expansion.<sup>96</sup> Under the terms, and the absence of a formal caliphate, there is no clear rationalized path to declare an offensive jihad from an outlaw organization. Further, it is reasoned by some, such as Muhammed Nasir al-Din Albani, that a Caliph is less likely to arise without the proper realization of *'aqida* (maintenance of doctrinal purity) through *al-tasfiya wa-l-tarbiya* (education and purification). The rhetoric and rationale of defensive jihad, however, is much easier to substantiate and execute. Defensive jihad is a conflict borne out of the necessity to defend the

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90 Ibid., 63.

91 al-Wahhab, 06-07.

92 al-Mawardi, Ali i. M., and Wafaa H. Wahba. *Al-Ahkam Al-Sultaniyya: The Laws of Islamic Governance*. Great Books of Islamic Civilization. Reading: Garnet, 1996. 10.

93 Qutb, Sayyid. *Milestones*. 14th ed. New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 2002. 07.

94 Azzam, Abdullah. *Defense of the Muslim Lands: The First Obligation After Iman*. At-Tibyan Publications. 13-15, 34-35.

95 Mimouni, Abdelghani. "Debating al-Hakimiyyah and Takfir in Salafism: The Genesis of Intra-Salafi Schism in the 1990s." Doctoral, University of Exeter, 2016. 72-73.

96 Maher, 35.

*umma* from destruction due to external influences, typically political.<sup>97</sup> The defensive jihad must be carried out for two reasons. The first stipulates that to wait for an impossibility, such as complete Islamic reform or the return of the caliphate to carry out the jihad would be equivalent of removing the concept from the religion altogether. The second is within the *fiqh al-muwāzanāt* (the jurisprudence of balances), or in this case, choosing the lesser of two evils.<sup>98</sup>

Stepping further along the path of rationalized jihadism, *al-wala' wa-l-bara'* (loyalty and disavowal) draws the line between the pious and the non-believer.<sup>99</sup> As a defensive concept aligned with protecting Islam from polytheists (*shirk*), nonbelievers (*kufr*), and revisionists (*bid'a*) it determines those who are worthy of exposure to the secrets of Islam.<sup>100</sup> In jihadism, *al-wala' wa-l-bara'* create a “national” identity for the Islamic *umma*. Those who are within that scope are welcomed and given the *umma's* resources, while those who are beyond the scope, or even threaten those within, are subject to jihad.<sup>101</sup> Further, the threat from beyond, with the scope of *al-wala' wa-l-bara'* is a task for Muslims to both distinguish themselves in

their faith show their capability to defend Islam from *kufr*.<sup>102</sup> If *al-wala' wa-l-bara'* protected Islam from the *kufr* and enemy without Islam, then *takfir* protects Islam from the *kufr* and the enemy within Islam.

## Analysis

### *Considerations for Deobandism and Quietist Salafism*

In the terms of their shari'a, both of these scholastically-oriented sects are “scripturalists,” meaning their foundational studies are based solely on the Quran and Hadiths, rather than including the centuries of commentary and development of Islamic jurisprudence and philosophical discussions.<sup>103</sup> Both groups also look to *ijtihad* as a tool of rationalism to both answer questions regarding contemporary problems, and to translate the context of the past into the present. The Deobandis look at *ijtihad* within the restrictions of the Hanafi *fiqh*, which provides substantial delineators to guide the rationale.<sup>104</sup> These limitations, in addition to the *taqlid*, creates a restricted, yet reasonable conclusion-reaching paradigm for the Deobandi *ulama*. By comparison, the

97 Moyeed-ul-Zafar. “Contribution of Shaykh Nasir al Din Albani to Hadith Literature.” Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Islamic Studies, Aligarh Muslim University, 2005. 276-277.

98 Azzam (n.d.), 14-20.

99 Bhatt, Chetan. “The Virtues of Violence: The Salafi-Jihadi Political Universe.” *Theory, Culture & Society* 31, no. 1 (2014): 25–48. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276413500079>. 32-33.

100 Wagemakers, 11.

101 Bin Ali, 71-73.

102 Ibid., 77-79.

103 Moj, 16; Evazpour and Akvani, 61-62.

104 Moj, 33-42.

Salafi quietists rely more heavily on the *taqlid* to provide the decision-making paradigm within *ijtihad*.<sup>105</sup> Without the *madhab* to provide a *fiqh*, there are less restrictions in interpretation. This supposed philosophical freedom is countered by the *talfiq* and *ikhtilaf*, which are supposed to prevent any *bid'a*. Both groups prohibit *bid'a*, but do not provide exacting legal tests or practices that would indicate when an interpretative conclusion becomes *bid'a* or remains *ijtihad*. This absentee definition is partially responsible for the splintering and evolution of their subsequent subsects.

The *ulama's* role in both sects has significantly determined how far the shari'a can evolve to the contemporary circumstances. The Salafi *ulama*, particularly the Wahhabis, command strict control over their publications, edicts, *fatwas*, etc., and perform *ikhtilaf* within the tenured positions of the *ulama*.<sup>106</sup> This control does much to ensure the unity of the "proper" Salafi tradition, but does little to address the *Khawarij's* ("those who have gone out") heresy.<sup>107</sup> The Deobandi *ulama* follow a similar behavior, where they are ultimately concerned with the quality and integrity of their curriculum within the Hanafi *madhab*, but have very little recourse in the way of pronouncing *takfir* upon their graduates who commit to an illegal jihad, or even maintain *madrasas* with the intent of providing its

graduates as *mujahidin* (soldiers of a jihad).<sup>108</sup> This lack of control of subsects and political movements within the sect may be attributable to the lack of a centralized and linear command structure. Without the Caliphate and singular leader, as ordained by Allah, who can appropriately apply the correct shari'a, there will always be a competition to both devise the best shari'a or to prove the ideal shari'a through application.

### ***Considerations for Deobandi Taliban and Salafi Jihadists***

Both Deobandi Taliban and Salafi jihadists develop their shari'a beyond the traditional guidelines and restrictions of their normative brethren. The Deobandis adhere to the Hanafi *fiqh*, but the Taliban have yet to develop documentation on their anticipated shari'a.<sup>109</sup> They practice *ittaba'a* on the holy writs, as it regards governance of societies, in conjunction with the Pashtunwali, where it concerns a civil and criminal solution. In continuance of the absentee *fiqh*, the Salafi jihadists are presently more concerned with executing their global jihad, than they are with developing a practical shari'a within a geographical space (the Islamic State led by al-Baghdadi being the exception). As these groups prosecute the national or global jihads, they have rationalized the role of jihad as a fundamental part

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105 Bin Ali, 67.

106 Aljloud, 92-93.

107 Bin Ali, 233-234.

108 Zaman, 2189.

109 Rashid, 105.

of Islam. The “struggle” is necessary to sustain Islam with pure, loyal, and good Muslims. However, neither group has addressed the solution to the absentee jihad if their missions are successful. If jihad is a necessary and fundamental aspect of Islam, and if Islamism were to master the world, then Islam either must not be the true religion or it must turn on itself to achieve higher levels of idealism. This eventuality within their terms of success yields another trend throughout both groups, particularly the Salafi jihadists’ ideologies, which indicates evolving dichotomies that are reminiscent of Manichaeism.<sup>110</sup> Concepts like *al-walā’ wa-l-barā’*, *haqq wa batil* (truth and deceit), and *iman wa kufr* (faith and disbelief) are cornerstones in rationalizing violence against others, and, more importantly, against other Muslims. These qualities, once postulated, are applied to sort the jihadists from the rest of the world, from the rest of Islam, and, ultimately, from the rest of their humanity. From these dualities, the jihadists are separated from their victims through a clearly defined and rationalized path.

When the world is divided in binary terms it is easy to discern who is the enemy, who is the non-combatant, and who is the fellow *mujahidin*.<sup>111</sup> Without a normative *ulama* to reign control over the jihadists, there is no limit to their

*ijtihad*. Noting this, it is important to return to the notion that neither normative Salafis or Deobandis provide a limiting test for *bid’a*. There is certainly the concept and definition of *bid’a*, but within the terms of an absolute legal test, there is no agreed upon method to secure a standard.<sup>112</sup> The absence of the definition has allowed jihadist leaders like Bin Laden, al-Zarqawi, Mullah Omar, Haqqani, etc. to distill *ijtihad* through *ittaba’a*. The result appears as *bid’a* to the layman, but is rationalized within academic rationalization practices like *mafhum al-muwafaqa* or *mafhum al-mukhalafa* (“the understanding of the opposite”).<sup>113</sup> The result is generations of poorly trained Islamic students following moderately-to-well trained leaders, though hardly scholars, towards a rationalized goal of global shari’a, but without an operational shari’a to implement once that opportunity is upon them.

### **Summary**

There is a habit of comparing Deobandism and quietist Salafism, particularly Wahhabism, regarding their approach of shari’a with mentions of *fiqh*.<sup>114</sup> There are some similarities in fundamental backgrounds. Both *ulamas* retain strict control over their sects’ doctrine and proliferation, both ensure a separation between educated classes and

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110 Bonino, Stefano. “Violent and Non-Violent Political Islam in a Global Context.” *Political Studies Review* 16, no. 1 (2018): 46–59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1478929916675123>. 53.

111 Bin Ali, 110-112.

112 Kose (2017a), 04.

113 Maher, 46, 49-50.

114 Moj, 17.

the lay Muslim, and both design themselves around implementing shari'a. Beyond that, there are few similarities in their practices. Where Salafism rose to prominence through shared mutual politico-religious authority with the Saūd family, the Deobandis fought, sometimes literally, for their political prominence, a power that commonly wanes more than waxes.<sup>115</sup> This initial start into the political arena further separated the two sects in how they continued to pursue shari'a. The Salafis maintain a relationship with the Arabian royalty and leadership for a balance of politics and religious acquiescence. This has allowed the quietist Salafist *ulama* to maintain a strict control over their brand of Salafism and support an Islamist agenda. The Deobandis rely on a two-fold supportive framework that started with the commitment to the Hanafi *taqlid* and was distributed through their vast network of *madrastas*. Instead of being able to dictate the terms of Islamism from the top-down, the Deobandis commonly find themselves at odds with a political agenda of securing an Islamic state while also permitting a degree of tolerance for non-Deobandi Muslims.<sup>116</sup> This struggle has added to the degree of theological drift the Deobandi shari'a has undergone. The jihadist subsets of both scholastic disciplines are frequently aligned in their rationale. They use vague or restricted method-

ologies within *ijtihad*, *taqlid*, and *fiqh* (Deobandis through Hanafism) to reach prearranged conclusion to justify the purpose and opponents of the jihad. This is opposed to the methodologies of the normative *ulama* which use the Quran, Hadiths, and *madhab* to come to an unknown conclusion, then test that conclusion against the merits of other arguments. In terms of shari'a and the jihadists in this study, they have yet to demonstrate an interest in normalizing and codifying an operational shari'a that can be applied to a peaceful Islamic state. The Taliban came the closest with their occupation of Kabul, but this system was temporary and sought to aid the *mujahidin* on the front lines before attempting to return the city to a functional society.<sup>117</sup>

These points have answered the research question and highlighted where the general limits of the shari'a and *fiqh* of the Deobandis and Salafis intersect. All four subjects covered in this study seek to promote their particular brand of shari'a. These groups use a combination of the Quran and Hadiths to support their arguments. For the most part, these are the only unifying documents amongst the subjects, and they tend to splinter after this point. The Deobandis apply the Hanafi *fiqh* to support the political aspects of their shari'a with moderate long-term successes. In contrast, the Salafis disregard

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115 Khushboo. "The politics of Madrassa Education in Pakistan: Nexus with Militancy." *International Journal of Social Science* 8, no. 2 (2019): 51–61. <https://doi.org/10.30954/2249-6637.02.2019.3>. 55–57.; Maher, 114.

116 Zaman, 1395.

117 Rashid, 50, 105–106.



the notion of *fiqh* and the *madhabs* as *bid'a*, and work within the strictures of non-*madhab* specific *taqlid* and *ijtihad* to address political and evolutionary concerns as Islam comes across obstacles beyond the experiences of the Salaf. The *ulamas* of the Deobandi and Salafi seek to ensure the security of the *taqlid* before looking beyond at other goals within Islam. The jihadists use the holy writs to support their arguments as a foregone conclusion. Instead of altering their theories to suit the reality, they change the reality to suit their theories. This is an important note, as their moderate sects use holy materials like the Quran and Hadiths to evolve and develop theological treatises, the jihadists use the holy materials in piecemeal to support pre-existing arguments. This is how they can reconcile the targeting of Muslims, and other forbidden groups. They view the world in binary terms, without much tolerance for grey areas. The absence of a universal definition and test for *bid'a* is largely responsible for these rationalizations, as both jihadist groups (Taliban and Salafi jihadists) abstain and forbid *bid'a*, and yet some interpretation has taken place. From the broad scope of this study there are no clear characteristics shared by the four primary subjects that are not shared by other sects within Islam. A common theme amongst all subjects reviewed in this study is the dread that stagnancy of the *'aqida* will lead Islam to return to the periods of *Jahiliyya*. Although this is not a concept that is solely applicable to these subjects, much less this religion. The historical connection to the Prophet and His immediate

followers lends significant legitimacy to the clergy and their arguments, regardless of the nature of these arguments. In general, though, this is a typical Sunni characteristic, as established by the logic behind their creation. They follow the lineage of logic as an aid to pursue the contemporary logic. Where they splinter, is determined by their pre-determined goals, and their *manhaj*.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

This research study comparatively addressed the similarities in the extremist ideologies and practices of the Deobandi Taliban and Salafi jihadists, versus their moderate origins in Deobandism and normative Salafism. This comparison was applied in the research so that their commonalities could be distilled and highlighted for further study, and used as insight into the evolution of politico-religious extremism. The research was solely qualitative and used a two-part meta-synthesis methodology with a focus on meta-ethnography to incorporate the primary accounts and cultural contexts within the range of acceptable sources. The methodology was chosen to address why and how the subjects distilled the uncompromising tenets of their religion to suit their desires for law and warfare. The research question was answered through this manner, as it was limited solely to those qualities that spanned across the philosophical, practical, Deobandi's, and Salafi's development and practice of shari'a and *fiqh*.

## Conclusions

The study's findings revealed an additional circumstance that was not considered upon its design, which are the effects of chronic war and military conflict on the development of legal treatise as dictated through a religion. The observation that a missing centralized religious authority is desired from the four subjects is neither unique to this research, nor does it go unnoticed by the practitioners. Sunni Islam suffers from its requirements to maintain doctrinal integrity, but lacks the universally righteous authorities to intervene when conflict in doctrine arises. Part of this conflict comes from an absence of universal consideration towards the religion's fundamentals. This serves as a partial explanation for why incredibly important concepts like *bid'a* go without a unifying legal test. To provide a test to all Sunnis would not only secure the superiority of the initiative sect, but would also jeopardize the corporeal and spiritual standings of all other sects and subsects, who would find themselves in opposition to the universal authority.

Elements of the hypothesis were refuted by this research, there were no ideologies that are shared amongst the four primary subjects of focus that are solely unique to these four within the terms of greater Islam. There were elements of the subjects' doctrines that were outlined and compared beyond the terms of their individual circumstances. Instead of proving the subjects were unique within these terms, the similar elements within the doctrines

revealed common traits of rationale and logic. This conclusion was reached within the hypothesis by comparing how the different subjects restricted and permitted their behaviors based on logical conclusions they reached within the doctrine. One recurring theme within this research is the subjects' dedication to their logical doctrinal findings. None of their doctrinal conclusions were reached without rationalizing the elements of the doctrine to specifically fit their global ideologies. Within the hypothesis, this means that the routes of rationale need to be highlighted for further study. If these subjects are coming to similar conclusions, through wildly different origins and circumstances, then there are further similarities amongst these subjects.

## Recommendations for Additional Research

The broad scope of this research study means that there are many avenues that future research may take. The first recommendation for future research in comparing these four subjects is to examine the *ijtihad* of the four subjects through the restrictions of their definitions of *bid'a*. The absence of a unified legal test for *bid'a* permits a great deal of leeway for individuals to incorrectly rationalize shari'a. An interesting direction for future research would examine the similarities in their *bid'a* and attempt to explain the fundamental causes in their differences of practice. Another recommendation for this research is to re-examine these subjects within the scope of their polit-

ical psychology. These groups' political psychology goes beyond the demands of religion and simply states what behaviors and creeds are acceptable to the population of followers. This angle of research should reveal additional similarities within the four subjects beyond their political and religious inclinations. The final recommendation is to perform leadership personality assessments for the four founding leaders

with specific emphasis on their cognitive analyses. As their followers have tried to emulate the ideal behaviors of Mullah Omar, the Salaf, Maududi, ibn Taymiyyah, etc., they have tried to carry their mentalities and logic forward into the future as well. These cognitive analyses may be used in comparison against one another to distinguish additional similarities in their sects' lines of logic.

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# How Does a Security Frame Affect Support for Refugee Protection in France and Germany in the Aftermath of Europe's Refugee Crisis?

Melissa Schnyder

## ABSTRACT

This article examines whether public support for the protection of refugees in France and Germany changes when refugee protection is framed as a national security matter. In focusing on public attitudes four years after the height of Europe's refugee crisis, the paper examines two competing theoretical predictions: (a) that support for refugees should decrease when the matter is framed in terms of security, and (b) that sustained intergroup contact over time should decrease prejudice toward out-groups. Using a survey experiment design, research participants in France and Germany were randomly assigned into either a treatment or control group. The treatment group was exposed to a security frame, whereas the control groups did not see a frame. The experiment shows no evidence that a security frame has an overall effect on opinions about refugee protection, suggesting that this issue frame may not generate significant framing effects in these two countries, which have settled a large percentage of refugees and have had time for intergroup contact. The conclusion contextualizes these findings and presents avenues for future research on issue framing.

*Keywords:* Refugee protection, securitization, out-groups, tolerance, issue frames, Europe

## ¿Cómo afecta un marco de seguridad al apoyo a la protección de los refugiados en Francia y Alemania después de la crisis de refugiados en Europa?

### RESUMEN

Este artículo examina si el apoyo público a la protección de los refugiados en Francia y Alemania cambia cuando la protección de los refugiados se enmarca como un asunto de seguridad nacional. Al centrarse en las actitudes del público cuatro años después del apogeo de la crisis de refugiados en Europa, el documento examina dos

predicciones teóricas en competencia: (a) que el apoyo a los refugiados debería disminuir cuando el asunto se enmarca en términos de seguridad, y (b) que el contacto intergrupalo sostenido con el tiempo debería disminuir el prejuicio hacia los grupos externos. Utilizando un diseño de experimento de encuesta, los participantes de la investigación en Francia y Alemania fueron asignados al azar a un grupo de tratamiento o de control. El grupo de tratamiento estuvo expuesto a un marco de seguridad, mientras que los grupos de control no vieron un marco. El experimento no muestra evidencia de que un marco de seguridad tenga un efecto general en las opiniones sobre la protección de los refugiados, lo que sugiere que este marco temático puede no generar efectos de marco significativos en estos dos países, que han asentado a un gran porcentaje de refugiados y han tenido tiempo para el contacto intergrupalo. La conclusión contextualiza estos hallazgos y presenta avenidas para futuras investigaciones sobre el encuadre de problemas.

**Palabras clave:** Protección de refugiados, titulización, grupos externos, tolerancia, marcos temáticos, Europa

## 欧洲难民危机后的安全框架如何影响法国和德国公众对难民保护的支持

### 摘要

本文研究了当难民保护被建构为一个国家安全事务时，法国和德国公众对难民保护的支持是否会发生变化。聚焦欧洲难民危机爆发后第四年的公众态度，本文分析了两个不同的理论预测：（a）当难民事务被建构为安全事务时公众支持应会下降，（b）持续的群体间接触（intergroup contact）会随时间推移而降低对外群的偏见。通过使用一项调查实验设计，两国的研究参与者被随机分配到实验组或对照组。实验组被暴露在难民保护这一安全框架下，对照组则没有。实验表明，没有证据证明安全框架对难民保护舆论产生了整体效果，这暗示该议题框架可能不会在法国和德国产生显著的框架效应，两国已经安置了大量难民并为群体间接触提供了时间。结论将研究发现情境化，并就议题框架的未来研究提供了方法。

关键词：难民保护，安全化，外群，容忍，议题框架，欧洲

## **Introduction**

**R**esearch examining the politics of issue framing and its institutional effects concludes that public attitudes toward immigration and asylum are shaped in fundamental ways by how government elites and the media present the issue. In the issue framing literature, the security frame has been the focus of much research, examining how positioning the issue of migration as a security threat impacts public perceptions and opinions (Huysmans, 2000; Bourbeau, 2011; Mountz, 2015). Some studies have shown that a security frame produces more restrictive policy outcomes and attitudes toward migration among mass publics (Lahav and Courtemanche, 2012; Koslowski, 2002). However, other research has shown that publics are more tolerant than is often assumed. For example, political tolerance research has shown that living alongside members of a perceived “out group” can increase tolerance over time (Allport, 1955). Moreover, the content and character of public opinion appears to vary across space and time, generating fundamental debates about the extent to which publics hold restrictive versus more tolerant attitudes toward immigration and asylum, and the degree to which those (seemingly volatile) opinions inform policy (Freeman et al., 2012). Some studies, for example, have highlighted negative media portrayals of migrants and refugees in terms of security and economic threats (Greussing and Boomgaarden, 2017), and have examined how negative perceptions influence attitudes toward migration (May-

da and Facchini, 2006; Hansen, 2007). In general, much of this research documents the volatility of public opinion, highlighting dramatic fluctuations in attitudes toward migrants and refugees depending upon the question wording used and the level of detail presented in the frame itself (Schildkraut, 2013). Simply put, “there is still no consensus regarding the scope, definition, and impact of security as it relates to migration practices” (Lahav 2013, 237, citations omitted). Overall, this suggests that the security frame may not resonate particularly well in certain places or times. To help inform this debate, this research examines the extent to which a security frame impacts public opinion about refugees in Europe several years after the height of Europe’s refugee crisis. Does a security frame still resonate with the general public in refugee-receiving countries four years after the height of the refugee crisis, or has intergroup contact subdued its impact over time in countries that have settled a large percentage of refugees?

Taking this question as the point of departure, this study aims to test the effect of a security frame on public support for refugee protection policy in France and Germany—two countries that have taken in a large number of refugees during Europe’s refugee crisis. To examine how the framing of refugee protection as a security issue affects public opinion about refugee protection policy, this research uses an experimental approach. Survey experiments in France and Germany focus on testing an issue frame that positions refugee protection in the context of national se-

curity concerns. A battery of questions is used to measure support in order to guard against effects that are simply a function of the way a single question is worded. The security frame has been identified in the literature on forced displacement and migration, and is reflected in media and political discourse. If the security frame produces a framing effect in the post-refugee crisis period, then we should observe a decrease in public support for the protection of refugees relative to the control group. On the other hand, the intergroup contact hypothesis predicts that meaningful contact over a sustained period of time between refugees and their host populations should decrease prejudice, potentially rendering the security frame ineffective. This paper investigates these two predictions. The following section provides a more thorough discussion of the literature, followed by a description of the survey experiment methodology and data. After this, the results are presented along with a discussion. Lastly, the conclusion contextualizes the results of this study in light of the literature and develops implications for assessing public opinion on the issue. This paper contributes to the issue framing literature, as well as the extensive literature on the securitization of migration and refugee politics. It adds to the literature by considering the impact of a security frame not during the height of a crisis period, but several years later, after meaningful intergroup contact between in- and out-groups has had a chance to occur.

## **Issue Framing, Migration Securitization, and Intergroup Contact**

**A**n issue frame is a specific way of presenting information in which the messenger emphasizes certain aspects of an issue, thereby highlighting specific dimensions of the issue that are in-frame and omitting other dimensions that remain out-of-frame (Snow, 2013). Thus, issue framing can significantly affect how people process information. For any particular issue, advocates use in-frame dimensions to construct a specific narrative and communicate it to a target audience. Through this process of framing, the way that a particular issue or aspect of a problem is perceived and understood becomes redefined (Snow, 2013). Framing, then, through “meaning construction” (Snow, 2013, 470), allows advocates to create a collective interpretation of a problem or issue. The act of constructing meaning involves focusing on the cause of the problem, offering solutions, and mobilizing supporters to participate in common actions to effect a desired change. Those involved with the issue can therefore use issue frames as a means of creating consensus regarding both the nature of a problem and the types of solutions needed to resolve it, and can motivate supporters into action in the specific ways suggested by the frame (Benford and Snow, 2000; Snow, 2013). There is strong evidence in the issue framing literature to show that public opinion changes based on how an issue is presented (Chong and Druckman, 2007; Jacoby, 2000;



Berinsky and Kinder, 2006; Krosnick and Kinder, 1990). Moreover, because public opinion influences policymaking (Stimson et al., 1995; Soroka and Wlezien, 2010), the way that a particular issue is framed can also profoundly impact the policy responses to that issue (Keohane, 2015).

Over the years, migration has become a securitized policy space (Bourbeau, 2011), and much research has examined the securitization of migration in different political and institutional contexts (Bourbeau, 2011; Ceyhan and Tsoukala, 2002; Gerard, 2014; Mountz, 2015; Lazaridis and Skleparis, 2015). Across the last four decades in Western Europe, the political discourse as it relates to migration has progressively focused on its perceived destabilizing effects on domestic society and has linked it to security issues, including dangers for public order (Huysmans, 2000). Many and varied challenges to the nation-state, to include “economic and financial globalization, the rise of poverty, the deterioration of living conditions in cities, the revival of racist and xenophobic parties and movements, the estrangement of the electorate from the political class, and the rise of multiculturalism” (Huysmans, 2000, 752) have contextualized the social construction of migration into a national security issue. These issues and processes have played out over time such that any type of migration (including asylum) is framed and discussed as a phenomenon that erodes a singular conception of national and cultural identity, while compromising public order and economic stability (Ugur, 1995;

Doty, 1996). Additionally, as migration becomes increasingly politicized and securitized, the institutionally separate tracks of economic migration and asylum become linked in public and political discourse, and asylum is sometimes (mis)constructed as an alternate means of pursuing economic migration to the EU (den Boer, 1995). These developments have contributed to the issue of refugee protection increasingly being framed as a security matter. Within the EU, regulations on migration are debated and created within an institutional framework that emphasizes internal security and its protection (Buzan et al., 1998). In this context, public discourse that links asylum to criminal networks and terrorism further politicizes and securitizes the issue. In sum, these dynamics together lead to the framing of immigration and asylum as a security matter in political and policy discourse, as opposed to framing them as economic or human rights matters, for example.

The process of framing migration as a matter of national security involves many actors, including the media, governments, and professional security networks. Some research suggests that restrictive policies have institutionalized public consensus, as migration policy has become more security-oriented over time (Lahav and Guiraudon, 2006), and particularly so since the height of Europe’s refugee crisis in 2015. In this view, securitization has become “mainstreamed” into the political agenda (Collett and Le Coz, 2018). Many studies have shown how governments have tied the issues of migration and

asylum to law and order, and security more broadly, at the national, regional, and international levels (Lavenex and Ucarer, 2002; Lahav, 2003). Thus, as political actors publicly associate migration with physical threats, such as crime and terrorism, we might expect to observe more restrictive policy preferences among the public and more protectionist attitudes concerning border control (Lahav et al., 2007; Lahav and Courtemanche, 2012). There is also some evidence that public preferences influence policy outcomes, as relatively recent changes toward more restrictive migration policies in Europe can be seen as a reflection of changing preferences among both the masses and political elites (Lahav, 2004). In general, prior research has found that a security frame that presents migrants as physical threats (as opposed to cultural threats) has some impact on public attitudes and preferences (Lahav and Courtemanche, 2012). The literature on social psychology and political behavior provides much evidence to show that political elites' attitudes and public opinion regarding migration are influenced, often to a large degree, by perceptions of threat. In addition to physical threats, the literature has examined how frames that emphasize threats to national security and identity are associated with intolerance toward migrants (Lahav, 2004; McLaren, 2003). Security framing that emphasizes various dimensions of threat increases xenophobic attitudes, ethnocentrism, and in-group cohesion, promoting intolerance (Huddy, 2001; Levine and Campbell, 1972). More-

over, research has documented how a heightened appraisal of risk leads to greater support for policies that curtail the rights of out-groups (Branton and Jones, 2005; Coenders et al., 2009), and result in citizens being more willing to compromise democratic values and personal freedoms and liberties (Davis and Silver, 2004; Mutz et al., 1996).

On the other hand, the political tolerance literature offers a different prediction, suggesting that public opinion toward migrants might be more favorable than is often assumed by the securitization literature. Some research, for example, has shown that public attitudes become more favorable when individuals are presented with and informed about some of the complexity surrounding immigration (Freeman et al., 2012), suggesting that the scope of information presented and framing both matter. In addition, contact theory suggests that intercultural exposure should, over time, increase levels of political tolerance toward migrants and other out-groups perceived as culturally different (Allport 1955—see APSR article). The contact hypothesis posits that intergroup contact can significantly reduce prejudice toward out-groups. This hypothesis holds implications for how persuasive a security frame can ultimately be with the general public. Here, however, the type of contact matters. Meaningful intergroup contact (that is, contact that is sustained, has a common objective in mind, and is cooperative) has been shown to reduce negative sentiments, whereas superficial or “casual” contact may actually increase prejudice (Allport, 1955). This line of research

finds that attitudes often become more favorable as people gain experience living alongside, and interacting with, migrants and ethnic minorities (Freitag and Rapp, 2013), as meaningful contact has a chance to take hold and develop. For example, using a field experiment, Finseraas et al. (2019) randomly assigned Norwegian soldiers to share rooms with ethnic minorities, and found that repeated intergroup contact led to higher levels of trust toward immigrants. Similarly, Steinmayr (2020) has demonstrated an increase in support for the Freedom Party of Austria (Austria's far-right party) in areas where refugees were only passing through in 2015 (in other words, where there was only superficial contact), compared to lower levels of support for the far-right party in areas that hosted refugees for a sustained period of time. These findings could lead one to expect that a security frame would not significantly reduce public support for refugee protection in France and Germany, since both countries hosted sizable numbers of refugees during and after the 2015 refugee crisis, unlike, for example, many Eastern European states which were more likely to be transit countries for migrants and refugees and not final destinations. Overall, meaningful intergroup contact provides opportunities to share experiences over time and to build trust. This mechanism is further confirmed by Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) meta-analysis in which they examined over 500 studies and concluded that the evidence supports the claim that intergroup contact generally reduces prejudice. In this respect, repetitive contact with cultur-

ally different groups should moderate hostility toward those groups.

## **Experimental Protocol**

**F**rom June through August 2019, individuals over the age of 18 years in France and Germany were recruited to an online survey experiment to test their reactions to a security frame using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). France and Germany were selected based on several factors. To begin, both were among the member countries of the EU which had the highest number of asylum applicants granted protection status in 2015, the height of Europe's refugee crisis (Eurostat, 2016). An elapsed time of four years since the height of the refugee crisis should have provided many residents with opportunities to engage and interact with settled asylum-seekers, which, according to the contact hypothesis, would be needed for building tolerance and trust. In addition, one can also observe opposition to refugee protection and general migration in France and Germany, mainly via the positions of the far-right political parties. For instance, Germany's far-right Alternative for Germany party has recently fared well in the former Communist East (Bennhold and Eddy, 2019), and in 2015 the far-right political party in France (Rassemblement National, formerly Front National) won 28% of the vote, and won in the first round of its 2017 presidential elections (European Election Database, 2017). This suggests that a security frame may nonetheless resonate with certain segments of the

population, even as asylum-seekers integrate into society. Each country thus presents an interesting case for testing whether a security frame still holds salience when presented to the general population in the aftermath of the 2015 refugee crisis.

MTurk data generates valid estimates of treatment effects, as has been shown in prior studies (Berinsky et al., 2012; Goodman et al., 2013). Although MTurk samples are not representative, they are generally more reflective of the general population compared to other convenience samples (Berinsky et al., 2012; Goodman et al., 2013; Huff and Tingley, 2015). Therefore, while the use of MTurk data does not harm internal validity, it does affect the ability to make external generalizations beyond the cases considered here.

Participants in this research were paid US\$1.50 each for their participation. Other studies have used MTurk to collect samples for as little as US\$0.10 (Goodman et al., 2013). In this survey experiment, participants were paid regardless of whether or not they fully completed the experiment. Consistent with experimental protocol, each individual was randomly assigned to a control group or to a treatment group in which they were asked to read a paragraph that framed the issue of refugee protection in that country as a security threat. The security frame paragraph is presented in Table 1. After viewing the security frame, participants were then asked to complete a short questionnaire.<sup>1</sup> The control group did not see any frame. This group was simply routed directly to the short questionnaire.

**Table 1.** Text of Security Frame

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### Security Frame

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A refugee is someone who has been forced to escape his or her country because of war, or because they are being threatened with extreme violence, death, or other types of inhumane treatment in their own country.

By allowing a mass migration of refugees, particularly those from places where religious or political violence is widespread, countries open themselves up to possible threats. Often, governments cannot perform proper screening or background checks on these refugees, so they may not be able to distinguish legitimate refugees from terrorists. Not all people who are escaping dangerous situations are innocent victims. Many are simply on the losing end of bloody ethnic and religious conflicts. The challenge to refugee policy is, given the complete chaos in the sending countries, to be able to sort out the innocent people from those who may have ulterior motives.

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*Note:* Respondents were randomly assigned to the treatment frame (n=39). The control group (n=46) did not see a frame.

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<sup>1</sup> The dependent variable questions from the questionnaire are included in the appendix.

Before reading the security frame paragraph and answering the survey questions, all participants provided consent online, which is a stipulation of the study's IRB protocol. In addition, prior to taking part in the research study, participants were shown a description of what the experiment would involve, the estimated time for completion, and compensation details. Upon providing consent, participants were given the opportunity to click on a link to proceed to the survey experiment.

The treatment group consists of 39 respondents and the control group has 46 respondents. As a guide, Roscoe (1975) proposes the rules of thumb (as cited in Sekaran and Bougie, 2010: 296-297) concerning minimal sample sizes per group of 30 as appropriate. In this study, a minimum sample size of 35 is required for a minimum desired power of 0.72 and a 90% confidence interval (Brant, n.d.).

The survey questionnaire that all participants answered is used to measure three dependent variables. As a reminder, the treatment group answered the survey questionnaire after viewing the security frame paragraph, whereas the control group simply answered the questionnaire without viewing any

frame at all. First, respondents were asked to provide a value from 0 to 10 to assess the *importance of refugee protection policy*, with zero representing no importance and ten representing very high importance. Because a respondent could assign a high absolute importance to refugee protection, but at the same time rank it low in comparison with other important issues, respondents were also asked to rank the *relative importance of refugee protection compared to six other salient global issues*: climate change, democratization, global public health, international economic policy, the spread of nuclear weapons, and terrorism. Several opinion polls informed the choice of these particular issues, including a Gallup poll (Riffkin, 2014), a Pew Research Center poll (Stokes, 2013), and the Eurobarometer survey (Eurobarometer, 2014). Finally, respondents were asked to assess the need to *change refugee protection policy relative to the status quo situation in their country* (per Sullivan and Rich, 2017) by reporting whether the number of refugees permitted to enter their respective country should increase, stay about the same, or decrease. Table 2 displays the summary statistics for each of these three dependent variables.

**Table 2.** Summary Statistics for Dependent Variables

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Rating, Importance of Refugee Protection	7.38	2.13	0	10
Ranking, Importance of Refugee Protection (1=most important)	4.48	1.55	1	7
Number of Refugees Should (1=decrease, 2=stay about the same, 3=increase)	2.01	0.75	1	3

Source: Survey experiments.

## The Security Frame: Effects on Public Support for Refugee Protection

The effects of the security frame are examined using a difference-in-means estimator, with the results reported in Table 3.

The first dependent variable examined here consists of a measurement of individuals’ opinions regarding the importance of refugee protection in an absolute sense. Table 3 displays the mean rating of the absolute importance of refugee protection by the treatment group—those who saw a security frame. The treatment effect reflects the dif-

ference in mean ratings relative to the control group, for which the mean rating of refugee protection importance on the 0-10 scale is 7.50. Overall, the security frame does not produce a statistically significant framing effect when examined in the context of this dependent variable. That is to say, the difference in the mean ratings between the treatment group and the control group is not big enough to produce a statistically significant effect. This lends some initial, if indirect, weight to the idea that exposure to an out-group over time can have moderating effects, which would lessen the impact that a security frame might otherwise have among the general population.

Table 3. Security Frame and Ratings of Support for Refugee Protection Policy

	Estimated Treatment Effect	Mean Score	Two-Tailed <i>p</i> -value	95% Confidence Interval
<b>DV: Importance of Refugee Protection</b>				
Security Frame	-0.244	7.26	0.607	1.165, 0.685
<b>DV: Ranking of Refugee Protection</b>				
Security Frame	0.431	4.69	0.208	0.244, 1.104
<b>DV: Number of Refugees Should Increase or Stay the Same</b>				
Security Frame	0.100	0.77	0.365	0.178, 0.478

Note: Estimated treatment effects represent differences in mean scores relative to the control group.

Source: Data from survey experiments.

The second dependent variable reflects the relative importance of refugee protection policy, for which re-

spondents were asked to rank refugee protection importance relative to six other salient global issues, ranging from

1 (most important) to 7 (least important). Table 3 displays the difference in the mean ranking of the importance of refugee protection for the security frame treatment group relative to the control group. For comparison purposes, the mean ranking of refugee protection in the control group is 4.26. Similar to results discussed above, here there is not a statistically significant framing effect. In other words, there is no statistically significant difference between the treatment group, which saw the security frame, and the control group, which did not, on their mean rankings of the relative importance of refugee protection. Similar to the above finding, this result suggests that four years post the height of the refugee crisis might be enough time to moderate out-group differences. Over the course of the past four years, intergroup contact would have taken place between the native population and refugees. According to the contact hypothesis, this intergroup contact would be expected to dampen any effect that a security frame might have on local attitudes toward refugees in these countries.

The third and final dependent variable asks respondents whether the number of refugees allowed to enter their country should decrease, stay about the same, or increase, and thus presents a more specific attitudinal measure compared to the “importance” questions of the first two dependent variables. In order to more precisely hone in on those who believe that refugee protection policy should become more stringent or restrictive versus those who do not, the variable was recoded such that zero

reflects a belief that the overall numbers should decrease, whereas 1 indicates a belief reflecting no change or an increase. Table 3 displays the mean rating for the security frame treatment group, which again is considered relative to the control group, whose mean level of support on this question is 0.67. As with the above two dependent variables, there is no evidence of a framing effect, as the treatment group’s mean score is not statistically different from the control group’s mean score. Thus, there is a consistent lack of evidence for a framing effect across the three dependent variables tested here.

Taken together, these results do not provide evidence of a statistically significant framing effect when respondents are exposed to a frame that positions refugees as a security issue. At the same time, while they do not provide direct evidence of tolerance as a result of the contact hypothesis, these null findings are nonetheless more consistent with the tolerance literature, which argues that exposure to a particular out-group over time should lessen views that perceive that out-group as a threat. These experiments do not find strong enough support to suggest that framing refugee protection as a matter of security in Germany and France alters support for refugee protection or perceptions of its importance as a policy issue. At the same time, however, these null findings do not necessarily indicate that the security frame has no effect; they only indicate that we cannot conclude that there is, in fact, a treatment effect. Although the null findings suggest indirect support for the toler-

ance literature, the experiments cannot definitively conclude that there is no framing effect (Gill, 1999). Future research is needed to add more evidence to these initial findings.

## **Conclusion**

Using survey experiments administered to the general public in France and Germany, this paper focused on the extent to which positioning refugee protection as a national security threat produces a framing effect that impacts public attitudes toward refugee protection policy. The analysis finds that several years after the peak of Europe's refugee crisis, the security frame does not significantly alter public support for the protection of refugees in France and Germany, regardless of whether support is measured in a specific way by asking about admitting more or fewer refugees into the country, or whether it is measured in more general terms concerning the importance of the issue. These null findings are consistent with other research that finds that as the population interacts with and encounters a specific out-group with increasing frequency, the perceived threat of that particular out-group decreases over time (Allport, 1955). Experimental public opinion studies such as this can be used to determine the influence of different kinds of frames on public opinion over time, and policy designers can use this type of information to decide on appropriate policies or policy changes at different points in time, as public opinion changes.

The security frame used in these experiments linked the refugee issue to an increased risk of terrorism, reflecting themes found in many public debates, the media, and some political elites, and also presented the issue in terms of the more general risk of opening the country to an increased threat of violence. Because prior research confirms that it is more difficult for people to evaluate psychologically abstract concepts as opposed to more concrete concepts (Lieberman et al., 2007; Trope and Liberman, 2003), the presentation of the issue in terms of general threats to national security could possibly decrease the perceived importance that individuals assign to refugee protection policy. Other research examining security frames suggests that frames that position the issue as a more concrete physical threat may have particularly strong effects on public opinion and decrease support for upholding states' obligations to provide international protection to those who have been forcibly displaced (Lahav and Courtemanche, 2012). Thus, one area for future research is to create and test different types of frames applied to the issue of refugee protection. It would also be worthwhile to test such frames at different points in time, before, during, and after periods of crisis, for example, to get a better sense of how public opinion changes over time.

Recent research has shown that Europeans' attitudes concerning the protection of refugees and asylum seekers are typically more tolerant than many politicians and the media tend to assume; moreover, these attitudes



tend to be very consistent across different European countries (Jeannet et al., 2019). Individuals' support for refugee protection policy is thus not as rigid as is often assumed and may not be consistently amenable to rhetoric that securitizes the issue, particularly as time passes after a major shock. This possibility is important to consider, as Hochschild and Einstein (2015) under-

score how misinformation about public opinion and public policy preferences can produce bad policies. For scholars who study tolerance, the results of this study point to a greater need to examine how public attitudes may shift over time as meaningful exposure to out-groups increases, particularly after the shock of crises or other major global events subsides.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **Dependent Variable Survey Questions**

**Should the number of refugees allowed to enter your country decrease, stay about the same, or increase?**

1=Decrease

2=Stay about the same

3=Increase

**As a policy issue, how important is the protection of refugees, where 0 means not important at all and 10 means very important?**

(Not important at all) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Extremely important)

**Rank the following policy issues in order of importance from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important):**

Listed in alphabetical order:

- \_\_\_ Climate change
- \_\_\_ Democratization
- \_\_\_ Global public health
- \_\_\_ International economic policy
- \_\_\_ Protection of refugees
- \_\_\_ Spread of nuclear weapons
- \_\_\_ Terrorism



# Comparative Analysis of Strategic Relationship between Industrial versus Corporate Espionage within the Framework of Implementation Methods

Kadir Murat Altintas

## ABSTRACT

In the last 30 years, widespread illegal science and technology transfer, physical or cyberattacks on companies' trade secrets and intellectual property can cause serious damage to corporations. The effectiveness of precaution to be taken largely depends on accurate perception of these attacks and deciphering the sources of their motivation. The aim of this study is to comparatively analyse and model the relationship between industrial versus corporate espionage attempts for the purpose of legal/illegal technology transfer in terms of structural differences and implementation methods. Related concepts are explained through "Industrial-Corporate Espionage Pyramid" which is defined by Altintas, as well as evaluating alternative implementation methods of espionage activities. The choice that companies initially need to make is whether to carry out espionage activities within legal boundaries or not. Companies have to decide whether they will outsource espionage activities or will be carried out by using in-house sources.

**Keywords:** intelligence, industrial espionage, corporate espionage, corporate spying, cyberattack

## Análisis comparativo de la relación estratégica entre el espionaje industrial versus el espionaje corporativo en el marco de los métodos de implementación

## RESUMEN

En los últimos 30 años, la transferencia ilegal generalizada de ciencia y tecnología, los ataques físicos o cibernéticos a los secretos comerciales y la propiedad intelectual de las empresas pueden causar graves daños a las empresas. La eficacia de las precauciones a tomar depende en gran medida de la percepción precisa de estos ataques y de descifrar las fuentes de su motivación. El objetivo de este estudio es analizar y modelar comparativamente la relación entre los

intentos de espionaje industrial versus empresarial con el propósito de transferencia de tecnología legal / ilegal en términos de diferencias estructurales y métodos de implementación. Los conceptos relacionados se explican a través de la "Pirámide de Espionaje Industrial-Corporativo" que define Altintas, así como también se evalúan los métodos alternativos de implementación de las actividades de espionaje. La elección que las empresas deben tomar inicialmente es si realizar actividades de espionaje dentro de los límites legales o no. Las empresas deben decidir si subcontratarán las actividades de espionaje o se llevarán a cabo utilizando fuentes internas.

**Palabras clave:** inteligencia, espionaje industrial, espionaje corporativo, espionaje corporativo, ciberataque

## 执行方法框架下商业和企业间谍活动之间的战略关系比较分析

### 摘要

过去30年里，广泛的非法科学转移和技术转移、公司贸易机密和知识产权遭受的物理攻击或网络攻击，能对企业造成严重损失。预防措施的有效性很大程度上取决于对这些攻击的准确感知和破解攻击动机的来源。本研究旨在从结构差异和执行手段两方面比较分析商业间谍活动和企业间谍活动（这些间谍活动企图完成合法/非法技术转移）之间的关系，并对该关系进行建模。通过由学者Altintas定义的“商业-企业间谍活动金字塔”，并评价间谍活动的替代性执行方法，对相关概念加以解释。是否在法律限制内开展间谍活动，这是公司最初需要做的选择。公司须决定其是否将间谍活动外包，或者用公司内部来源开展间谍活动。

关键词：情报，商业间谍活动，企业间谍活动，企业间谍行为，网络攻击

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### Introduction

Since the early 1970s, technology-based globalization movements in the world have gained spectacular momentum and the period of com-

mercialization of technology, which means the transformation of information into technology and then commercial products or export commodities, has started. In this period, transforming innovative ideas and competitive meth-

ods into a commercial value belongs to countries and companies that can allocate their vast amount of resources into Research and Development (R&D) programs.

The accelerating effect of information technologies on economic globalization has contributed to the digital revolution and technological innovations that create the information age are generally produced by multinational companies in developed economies. However, information technology systems and infrastructures created by private companies have been exposed to threats, such as highly effective data/information theft of technological accumulation in the past few decades. At this point, a new strategic concept appeared on the agenda of relevant literature: Technology and Information Security.

Particularly, large-scale global companies in the last two decades are exposed to industrial and corporate espionage attacks (by targeting confidential data and information or by stealing intellectual property) from rival firms with the occasional help of government support. According to European Union Commission (2016), every year industrial and corporate espionage attacks can cause billions of euros in losses to companies. Moreover, public intelligence authorities have evolved into invisible stakeholders of national companies and have started working in cooperation and coordination towards their common goal of national and economic security in recent years. Large scale companies operating on a global environment have also started to

outsource espionage services to private intelligence companies.

The aim of this study is to comparatively analyse and model the relationship between industrial versus corporate espionage attempts for the purpose of legal/illegal science and technology transfer in terms of structural differences and implementation processes. Theoretical and functional scope of related concepts is explained through “Industrial-Corporate Espionage Pyramid,” which is defined by Altintas and also called “Altintas Pyramid,” as well as comparatively evaluating alternative implementation methods of industrial and corporate espionage attempts. Another important purpose of this study is to contribute to the awareness of corporate top management about cyber and physical industrial/corporate espionage attacks.

## **The Importance of Industrial versus Corporate Espionage within the Conceptual Framework**

Since the first half of 1980s, neo-liberal economic model and deregulation policies were widely accepted by most of the economies and financial markets. The subsequent dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the termination of Cold War caused concepts such as investment and privatization to become more popular. In addition, the widespread usage of mobile communication devices as well as portable computers and tablets, intelligence activities among countries

and companies increased exponentially all around the world. As a result, security has become the major issue of both individuals and institutions that have innovative skills and technological knowledge within this framework of espionage attacks together with covert economic operations.

However, information technology systems and infrastructures invented by corporations have been exposed to threats (such as trade secret theft together with intellectual property stealing). For this reason, large-scale global companies had to protect all digitalized assets and know-how accumulation produced as a result of enormous R&D activities and expenses. At this point, a new strategic concept appeared on the literature: Technology and Information Security.

Every year, high-quality industrial data and information as well as confidential documents are stolen by rival firms, through industrial espionage or corporate spying attacks organized by competitors, intelligence agencies of competitor states, disgruntled employees or shareholders. Technical infrastructures related to R&D and new product technologies as well as engineering processes of large-scale global companies are under serious threat.

Misappropriation or theft of trade secrets and corporate espionage threaten innovation, growth development and investment of business entities and national economy globally (OECD, 2016). Trade secret theft is one of the main factors that cause billions of dollars in annual losses to business en-

tities and the national economy (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2014). Trade secret is a gold nugget that determines the success and survival of a business entity. It provides a business entity with a competitive advantage over its rival. However protecting a trade secret is not an easy task especially from current and former employees as well as from competitors. The task is made difficult with the availability of technological devices that can be used to steal the information from inside and outside of the business organization (Jalil and Hassan 2020, 205).

The content of industrial and corporate espionage activities carried out in recent years has focused largely on economic and financial issues. At this point, it is more favourable to explain conceptual differences between industrial and corporate espionage by clarifying the juridical boundaries and the distinction between implementation procedures. Though are quite similar definitions between these two concepts, it is possible to describe industrial espionage as the activity of acquiring trade secrets or intellectual property through illegal attempts. Corporate espionage generally considered to be within legal limits (yet unethical), will provide economic and financial advantages to private enterprises in market competition.

Industrial espionage is carried out in a veiled and deceptive manner by private companies acting on their behalf. Obtaining economic intelligence using secret and illegal tools by the private sector is called industrial espionage (Porteus 1994, 737). It does

not cover the activities of private entities without the involvement of foreign governments, nor does it relate to legal efforts to obtain commercially useful information from internet. Some open source gathering efforts are not covered by industrial espionage, although they may be a precursor to future covert activities. Some countries have a long history of ties between government and industry. However, it is often difficult to ascertain whether espionage has been committed under foreign government sponsorship (Nasheri 2005, 13). In 2020, large-scale global companies due to fierce commercial and technological competition, it appears to bring corporations closer to the *sweet poison* of industrial espionage unfortunately. The goals and expectations of companies from espionage attempts are to:

- 1) Gain competitive advantage and prestige in their respective industries,
- 2) Save costs, particularly from R&D expenses,
- 3) Decrease the credibility of competitors in the industry,
- 4) Increase the efficiency of intercompany decision-making processes.

Finally, industrial espionage is an illegal initiative and process that is carried out to obtain confidential data and information as well as commercial/technological secrets related to rival firms or their employees which cannot be obtained by open source intelligence in order to gain absolute advantage.

However, corporate espionage (spying), defined as outsiders penetrating corporate offices or networks, and can be very damaging (Horan 2000, 29-30). These types of attacks could be described as illegal and unethical activities undertaken by organizations to systematically gather, analyse and manage information on competitors with the purpose of gaining a competitive edge in the market (Vashisth and Kumar 2013, 83), in other words it may arise due to unfair competition among firms (Vimmer 2015, 26). Corporate espionage sometimes referred to as industrial espionage, corporate spying, or economic espionage, has become a multibillion dollar industry. The exact dollar figure on the costs of corporate espionage is difficult to determine and many thefts of proprietary information go undetected and unreported. Even when espionage is discovered by an employer, the scale and impact of the breach often cannot be determined. Government studies have estimated the annual loss to businesses due to corporate espionage to be as much as hundreds billions of dollars (Koen and London 2019, 331). Corporate espionage is also used to examine products or ingredients for perceived or actual risks, to time markets, and to establish pricing. All too commonly, companies find themselves the targets of such activity without the knowledge or methodology to effectively counter it (Rothke 2001, 1). In case of evidence of an existence of foreign government or involvement of a hostile spying, companies involved in such illegal activities are subject to legal prosecution. Factors that determine the legal limits of corpo-

rate espionage attempts are also closely related with the degree of economic damage sustained to the owner of trade secrets or intellectual property and the deterrent potential of the prosecution.

The cases involving trade secret theft from Lucent Technologies, IDEXX and Avery Dennison demonstrate (1) how devious employees can use the naiveté of other personnel and the firm's computer infrastructure to support their corporate espionage activities; and (2) that corporate recognition of these security breaches occurred only after their technologies had been transferred to competitors (Fitzpatrick 2004, 66). The strategic importance of industrial espionage initiatives carried out for corporations operating on a global scale is becoming more and more remarkable in recent years. Moreover, within this phase, public intelligence authorities have transformed into invisible stakeholders of their national companies and have started to work in cooperation/coordination towards mutual economic security objectives.

Corporate and industrial espionage might occur at corporations as soon as other actors have competing interests. This makes everyone with competing interests a potential spy. However, if a corporation wishes to limit the possible impact of espionage, relatively simple mitigating measures might help. The first step is acknowledging that espionage might happen and that the corporation is a potential target. The second step is a risk analysis which identifies critical means and processes and their vulnerabilities. Based upon this aware-

ness and risk analysis, the corporation can develop policies for whom to allow access to confidential corporate information. Restraint in allowing access is in place here. Authorization to access confidential information should only be granted after no restrictions were found during a screening process. Still, theft of confidential corporate information cannot be fully excluded. Therefore, also a need exists to prepare for situations in which espionage actually has occurred. In order to create resilience after espionage, corporations need to develop contingency plans in advance, and conduct damage assessments and improve mitigating measures to avoid future espionage afterwards (Ijzerman and Berge 2019, 1).

As a result, there is a strategic relationship between industrial and corporate espionage initiative in terms of implementation procedures. The linkage between industrial and corporate espionage is closely related with the strategic decisions (conducting espionage activities within the boundaries of the legislations or not) to be made by the company's senior management. Corporate espionage attempts may fall within legal limits compared to illegal (sometimes publicly sponsored) industrial espionage attacks. However, espionage attacks carried out to obtain confidential data and information against competitors or their employees are considered as criminal offense when they go beyond the legal boundaries.

## **The Anatomy of Industrial and Corporate Espionage Attacks**

**T**he source of threat from espionage attacks can be evaluated under two main headings:

**A. Internal Threat:** In brief, the insider includes current or former employee, business partner or contractor. The information age makes it possible for all level of employees including business partners to gain access to volumes of data and pose a significant security risk. The case of Edward Snowden provides a good example of insider threat. According to Software Engineering Institute at Carnegie Melon University, insiders can pose a considerable threat to the organization. This is because the insiders know and are aware of the organization's policies, procedures and technology and they also know the vulnerabilities of the organization. They can bypass the security measures using their knowledge and access to the company's proprietary systems. In this regard, insiders have a significant advantage over outsiders or external attackers. Such threat from insiders is therefore real and could be substantial. Thus to prevent harm to the company or organization assets, focus should not only be made to external-facing security mechanisms, such as firewalls, intrusion detection systems, and electronic building access systems, but also to include insiders as potential threats (Jalil and Hassan 2020, 208).

In 2016, a survey conducted by the U.S. State of Cybercrime found that 27% of electronic crimes were suspected

or known to be caused by insiders and the insider attacks caused more severe damage than caused by outsider attacks (U.S. of Cybercrime, 2016). According to a Statistical Analysis of Trade Secret Litigation in the U.S. Federal Courts, 85% of the trade secret lawsuits in the state and federal courts of the U.S. found that the alleged misappropriator was either an employee or a business partner (Almeling et al., 2010, 59). In 2016, a survey conducted by IBM estimated that employees and other malicious or careless insiders accounted for 60% of cyber-attacks from unauthorized access, viruses or other malicious code, "phishing" attempts and other means (IBM X-Force Research, 2016).

The nature of insider threats is different from other cybersecurity challenges; these threats require a different strategy for preventing and addressing them. An insider threat is anonymous and difficult to identify but a clue could be derived from the definition of malicious insider threat. Such threat refers to "a current or former employee, contractor or other business partner who has or had authorized access to an organization's network, system or data and intentionally misused that access in a manner that negatively affected the confidentiality, integrity or availability of the organization's information or information systems." In addition, insider threats can also be unintentional (non-malicious) (The CERT Division Insider Threat Centre 2016, 2-3).

**B. External Threat:** This category includes competitor, hacktivist, foreign government and organized crime. The

act of these threat actors could also be associated with data breach and data leakage through computer system, intrusion of detection system and electronic building access system. According to Almeling (2010), there are increased threats from foreign individuals, companies and government due to three factors namely internationalization of business, access to technology that allows hackers to access trade secrets from anywhere in the world and that some countries viewed stealing of trade secrets as an aid to development (Almeling et al., 2010, 62).

Attacks on trade secrets and intellectual property, which are strategically important assets of companies, are usually caused by spies of hostile intelligence services, retired spies hired by competitors, private intelligence companies, unless they are caused by internal threats. Moreover, a rival company owned by a foreign government is also a significant threat in an industry segment. This method is generally applied by Chinese government that the rival company looks like a private company, but implicitly belongs to the government.

The need to access confidential data and information regarding trade secrets or intellectual property of competitors and the necessity to protect national companies against foreign industrial espionage and corporate spying attacks, without exception, increase the awareness of top management of corporations about intelligence gathering operations.

### ***Some of the Sample Cases of Industrial versus Corporate Espionage Attacks***

In recent years, espionage attacks have been frequently observed in uncontrolled areas such as commercial (technological) fairs, international airway travels, airport lounge or hotel accommodations-abroad. We should exemplify these attempts that intend to obtain confidential data and information of competitors as follows:

A copy of the German Transrapid train developed by engineers of Siemens and Thyssen-Krupp companies started operating in China under the name of CM1-Dolphin before the train started operating in Germany. Chinese intelligence acquired the technical characteristics of the train at the Shanghai Technology Fair in 2004. Additionally, American businessmen traveling to Europe for trade negotiations were cautioned in 1992 for travelling with French Airlines. Because the French Intelligence Service placed listening devices on the aircraft seats, and this was detected by CIA agents. Besides, hotel rooms with electronic cards are an extremely risky area as an uncontrolled zone. According to a news article titled "Hackers Lock Romantik Seehotel Jaegerwirt's Guests out of Their Rooms, Demand Bitcoin Ransom," in the bitcoinnews.com website published at January 30, 2017:

Hackers attacking critical IT infrastructure for Bitcoin ransom is not a new thing. It has been happening on a regular basis in the past couple of years. But attacking a hotel and locking



hundreds of guests out of their rooms probably never happened before last week. According to reports, one of the top European hotels, Romantik Seehotel Jaegerwirt in Austria became the target of cybercriminals. They managed to hack into the luxurious 4-star hotel's electronic key system, rendering it useless. While the hotel guests were unable to move in and out of their hotel rooms, the hackers demanded a ransom of over EUR 1500 in Bitcoin from hotel authorities. (Bilefsky 2017)

Apart from this, methodology of corporate espionage activities depend mostly on obtaining confidential data and information that belongs to rival firms within the legal limits. For instance, obtaining information from the executives of competitors under job interviews, hiring detective to spy on and evaluate the selling process of rival companies, eavesdrop on communication at rival companies' facility trips, b2b cooperation meetings, at a commercial fair organizations, recruitment of rival company employees together with confidential documents after resigning or employing a detective to obtain the password of target computer by shoulder surfing or by pretexting. Some of experienced corporate espionage examples from bloomberg.com website recently:

Hewlett-Packard's board became ensnared in a scandal in 2006 after the company spied on its directors, reporters, and employees in a probe to ferret out the source of boardroom news leaks. Investigators hired by the company obtained personal phone records

by posing as reporters and company directors. They also trawled through garbage and followed reporters. As a result, then-Chairman Patricia Dunn, who approved the spying, was fired. HP also agreed to pay \$14.5 million to settle an investigation by California's attorney general, \$6.3 million to settle shareholder lawsuits, and an undisclosed amount to settle a case filed by journalists at *The New York Times* and *Business Week*.

In April 2009, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide sued Hilton Hotels over trade secrets. Starwood had claimed two former Starwood executives hired by Hilton stole information about Starwood's W hotel brand to develop the Denizen line of properties. Ross Klein and Amar Lalvani were involved in developing Starwood's lifestyle and luxury hotels, including the St. Regis, W, and Luxury Collection brands, and downloaded confidential Starwood information to use later at Hilton, according to the complaint. In 2010, Starwood settled its case and said Hilton was ordered to make sure "the conduct that occurred does not occur again" (Beasley 2009).

### **Strategic relationship between industrial versus corporate espionage: Industrial-Corporate Espionage Pyramid**

**I**t is useful to classify industrial and corporate espionage implementation methods in two main categories. The main reason for this classification emerges from determining the

juridical boundaries of industrial and corporate espionage attacks. That is to say, the distinction is based on whether espionage attempts preferred by large-scale global companies will continue their covert operations within legal limits or to stray outside of legal boundaries. Confidential data and information gathering activities, that can be described as corporate espionage initiatives are generally carried out within legal limits, and commercial entities are not subject to any criminal sanctions about these types of attempts.

However, since industrial espionage attempts carried out against competitors beyond the legal boundaries, they usually involve activities that require experienced personnel. At that point, these types of attempts have to be executed either by recruiting expert personnel or purchasing outsourcing services. It is possible to elaborate general implementation procedures and preferences regarding industrial and corporate espionage activities through the Industrial-Corporate Espionage Pyramid defined firstly by Altintas, also called as Altintas Pyramid, (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Industrial-Corporate Espionage Pyramid, also called as “Altintas Pyramid”

At the lowest stage of the Industrial-Corporate Espionage Pyramid, within the framework of **Open Source Intelligence** activities start with the priority to collect and analyse public information (reports, fairs, social media, print-visual media, photographs, internet, etc.). The next stages are determined by companies’ strategic pref-

erence between industrial and corporate espionage attempts, in other words, companies should decide whether to stay within the legal boundaries or not.

In order to gain superiority over their rivals while staying within the legal boundaries, companies, as part of corporate espionage, may refer to a method called **Reverse Engineering**. Re-

verse engineering is the re-adaptation of products and is generally preferred by companies that do not have adequate technological competence. It involves disassembling competitors' product into detailed sub-units. In this method, by going backwards in the production process based on an existing product, the process is completely resolved, popular products of rivals are deciphered and easily can be re-introduced to the market with small differences and diversified brand names. Although there is limited resemblance to the original product in terms of quality, with little effort and without making significant R&D expenses, companies may reverse engineer a competitor's product and achieve certain sales advantage.

For instance—BGM-71 TOW missile (in May 1975), negotiations between Iran and Hughes Missile Systems on co-production of the TOW and Maverick missiles stalled over disagreements in the pricing structure, the subsequent 1979 revolution ending all plans for such co-production. Iran was later successful in reverse-engineering the missile and now produces its own copy, the Toophan. In other words, Toophan is an Iranian SACLOS anti-tank guided missile reverse-engineered from the American BGM-71 TOW missile. Moreover, Toophan 1, an unlicensed copy of the BGM-71A TOW missile, began mass production in 1988 (Defence Intelligence Agency, 1988).

Another way of obtaining confidential data and information about competitors is to **Collect Physical Wastes** for analysis, within the legal limits. The amount of physical waste,

which has been left out of use by the rival employees, but whose physical integrity or quality has not been damaged, can be analysed and bring out extremely useful clues in terms of current activities, strategies and current situations of competitors. Examples of these wastes are; untainted or partially damaged pieces of paper, post-its, CDs, USBs, documents that may contain critical data and information, notebooks, prototypes, undestroyed drawings, samples, plans, plane tickets, appointment books, etc.

The surveillance and covert searches began a year ago, after officials at software giant Oracle Corp. became outraged that some industry groups were aggressively supporting its rival Microsoft Corp. in that firm's federal antitrust fight with the Justice Department. Oracle hired Washington-based Investigative Group International and told its private detectives to find documents that might be embarrassing to Microsoft. It was corporate hardball, and it was all supposed to remain secret. But yesterday, after a series of revelations about individuals' rifling through trash and offering cash to janitors, Oracle chief executive Larry Ellison publicly acknowledged that his company paid the detectives to prove the three groups were public relations fronts for his company's biggest competitor (*The Washington Post*, 2000).

**Private Intelligence Agencies-PIA**, working in line with the principles of confidentiality and trust, provide monitoring and surveillance services for competing companies within the framework of collecting evidence in

accordance with the law. In this sense, companies may prefer the method of outsourcing that require special expertise, such as collecting confidential data and information about competitors or their employees. Because companies generally want to pretend to be acting within legal limits, they may not want to use their official personnel in such espionage attempts. Private intelligence agencies that are hired for a certain fee can also provide double-sided service. That is, the relevant offices of companies not only provide tracking and surveillance services to companies, but also protect company against industrial and corporate espionage attacks from competitors.

Some private intelligence agencies use online perception management, social media influencing/manipulation campaigns, strategic disinformation (such as fake news production/propaganda production, opposition research and political campaigns using social media and artificial intelligence. Former anti-corruption prosecutor Aaron Sayne said private intelligence is “an industry that’s largely undocumented and has very flexible ethical norms” as agencies collect and use sensitive information “for one purpose on day one and some completely contradictory purpose on day two” (Burgis 2017). The private intelligence industry has boomed due to shifts in how the U.S. government is conducting espionage in the War on Terror. Some \$56 billion (USD) or 70% of the \$80 billion national intelligence budget of the United States was in 2013 earmarked for the private sector according to *The New*

*York Times*’ Tim Shorrock. Functions previously performed by the CIA, NSA, and other intelligence agencies are now outsourced to private intelligence corporations (Abbot, 2013).

Besides, corporations generally want to obtain confidential data and information about competitors in order to be one step ahead at the international competition. In other words, they are always curious about competitors’ customers, suppliers, personnel, organizational structure, environmental awareness, technical knowledge, stakeholders, status of their partners, legal relations and similar high quality data and information. Provided that it is completely within the ethical rules and legal limits, raw data and information about competitors are collected from public sources. It is also analysed for the senior management which is used as input at the strategic decision making processes, called **Competitive Intelligence**.

The airline industry is a great example of how competitive intelligence is being used in practice. Every day, airline companies are changing their flight ticket prices based on several pieces of external information. For instance, if all competitors increase their price for a certain route, a flight provider would quickly follow suit to secure higher margins. In addition, customer information is frequently used for pricing adjustments. By identifying and tracking specific users, flight companies can spot when a potential customer is repeatedly searching for the same flight details and increase the prices over time, since they

can be sure that they really want to fly on these dates (Kompyte, 2018).

Conversely, within the scope of illegal industrial espionage activities, such operations require a more qualified knowledge and ability. At that point, engaging competitor firms' employees through **Social Engineering** requires sufficient knowledge and experience, especially in the areas of intelligence and espionage. The concept of social engineering is expressed as the art of human deception, and can also be defined as obtaining unauthorized access to competitor systems by detecting the weak chain among their employees. Actually, social engineering is the activity of manipulating human inadequacies and emotions, using various methods of persuasion and deception against rival employees. In other words, social engineering operations that force rival company employees to make mistakes through the exploitation of human emotions such as fear, excitement, joy, loss of reputation and trust in the eyes of customers and society, make rival systems completely unusable. Large-scale global companies may sometimes turn to illegal ways to obtain confidential data and information as well as commercial/technological secrets related to competitors. In addition, misleading claims against competitors try to weaken the commercial success of competitors, especially in the virtual climate of social media where there is limited or even uncontrolled environment.

The biggest social engineering attack of all time was perpetrated by Lithuanian national Evaldas Rimasauskas against two of the world's biggest

companies: Google and Facebook. Rimasauskas and his team set up a fake company, pretending to be a computer manufacturer that worked with Google and Facebook. Rimasauskas also set up bank accounts in the company's name. The scammers then sent phishing emails to specific Google and Facebook employees, invoicing them for goods and services that the manufacturer had genuinely provided—but directing them to deposit money into their fraudulent accounts. Between 2013 and 2015, Rimasauskas and his associates cheated the two tech giants out of over \$100 million. Moreover, in March 2019, the CEO of a UK energy provider received a phone call from someone who sounded exactly like his boss. The call was so convincing that the CEO ended up transferring \$243,000 to a Hungarian supplier—a bank accounts that actually belonged to a scammer (tessian.com Website).

Engaging rival companies' employees with criminal methods such as threat, wiretapping, blackmail, provocation, honey trap, in other words transforming them almost actual agents, are one of the most remarkable industrial espionage methods. In the organizations of large-scale companies, it is possible to employ retired members of armed forces or intelligence officers to engage rival employees working at critical position of competitor firms. The method that can be preferred for industrial espionage initiatives is to try to obtain confidential data and information from rival firms' employee by a certain fee or criminal procedures-also called as **Parallel Employment**. This method

aims to discover rival employees who have weaknesses particularly in fiscal matters, since money is the most important source of motivation for many people. It is an extremely easy and prevailing method. The initiation of an illegal financial relationship in terms of rival firms' employee means that he/she is going to be hired as a dual employer.

Pin Yen Yang and his daughter Hwei Chen Yang were arrested in Cleveland on September 5, 1997, and charged with mail fraud, wire fraud, money laundering, receipt of stolen property, and theft of trade secrets from Avery Dennison Corp. Avery Dennison is one of the largest U.S. manufacturers of adhesive products, including adhesives for such things as postage stamps, labels, and diaper tape. Pin Yen Yang is the President of Four Pillars Enterprise Company of Taiwan, which manufactures and sells pressure-sensitive products mainly in Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, People's Republic of China, and the United States. The company has more than 900 employees and annual revenues of more than \$150 million. His daughter has a Ph.D. in analytical chemistry from New Mexico State University, was employed most recently by Four Pillars as an Applied Research Group Leader, and may hold dual citizenship in the U.S. and Taiwan. The Yangs were convicted in April 1999 of having paid an Avery Dennison employee in Ohio, Dr. Ten Hong Lee, between \$150,000 and \$160,000 for highly sensitive and valuable proprietary manufacturing information and research data over a period of approximately eight years from 1989 to 1997. Payments were reportedly made

through Lee family members in Taiwan. Avery Dennison estimates that its direct costs for developing the stolen technology were in the tens of millions of dollars (U.S. Department of Commerce).

Agents (who have adequate intelligence expertise and professional knowledge) **Infiltrate or Pose Rival Companies** under different pretenses. Technology transfers or intellectual property theft by covert economic operations that was performed by agents as a hidden "payroll employee" of competitor firms are the most effective and at the same time the most damaging method of industrial espionage. In addition, self-employed agents (usually people who have criminal background) can also be hired by companies to obtain confidential data and information on their own initiative and sell them to companies offering the highest amount of money.

Yanqing Ye, 29, a Chinese national, was charged in an indictment today with one count each of visa fraud, making false statements, acting as an agent of a foreign government and conspiracy. Ye is currently in China. According to the indictment, Ye is a Lieutenant of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), the armed forces of the People's Republic of China and member of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). On her J-1 visa application, Ye falsely identified herself as a student and lied about her ongoing military service at the National University of Defence Technology (NUDT), a top military academy directed by the CCP. It is further alleged that while studying at

Boston University's (BU) Department of Physics, Chemistry and Biomedical Engineering from October 2017 to April 2019, Ye continued to work as a PLA Lieutenant completing numerous assignments from PLA officers such as conducting research, assessing U.S. military websites and sending U.S. documents and information to China. According to court documents, on April 20, 2019, federal officers interviewed Ye at Boston's Logan International Airport. During the interview, it is alleged that Ye falsely claimed that she had minimal contact with two NUDT professors who were high-ranking PLA officers. However, a search of Ye's electronic devices demonstrated that at the direction of one NUDT professor, who was a PLA Colonel, Ye had accessed U.S. military websites, researched U.S. military projects, and compiled information for the PLA on two U.S. scientists with expertise in robotics and computer science (U.S. Department of Justice).

**Cyber Espionage**, which has become a nightmare of companies in recent years, is now the most preferred method among espionage activities against large-scale, innovative, technology-based public/private enterprises. With almost zero cost, the intranet/internet infrastructure of the target company is affected from far away distances, and furthermore, the damages it causes can reach incredible dimensions compared to its cost. Cyber espionage is defined as the secret seizure of e-mail traffic, messages or all kinds of electronic communication facilities of competitors in order to collect confidential data and information.

Computer attacks on Google that the search giant said originated in China were part of a concerted political and corporate espionage effort that exploited security flaws in e-mail attachments to sneak into the networks of major financial, defence, and technology companies and research institutions in the United States, security experts said. At least 34 companies, including Yahoo, Symantec, Adobe, Northrop Grumman and Dow Chemical, were attacked, according to congressional and industry sources (Cha and Nakashima, 2010). Additionally, Google has discovered that the accounts of dozens of U.S. China and Europe-based Gmail users who are advocates of human rights in China appear to have been routinely accessed by third parties. These accounts have not been accessed through any security breach at Google, but most likely via phishing scams or malware placed on the users' computers (Google Official Blog, 2010). Internet giant Google has said it may end its operations in China following a "sophisticated and targeted" cyber-attack originating from the country. Although Google did not accuse Beijing directly, but said it was no longer willing to censor its Chinese search engine - google.cn. This could result in closing the site, and its Chinese offices, Google said (BBC News, 2010).

## **Conclusion**

**I**n recent years, attacks on companies' technological knowledge and experience, such as trade secrets or intellectual property, have been increasing. At the same time, these types of at-

tacks can cause serious damage to the economies of companies. The effectiveness of precautions taken in this regard largely depends on accurate perception of the content of these attacks and deciphering the sources of their motivation.

However, detailed analysis of structural differences and implementation methods among these types of attacks will also increase the awareness of senior management of corporations on defending valuable assets. Industrial and corporate espionage attempts should actually be evaluated from two perspectives; espionage attacks and counterintelligence. In other words, the strategies that companies choose to capture the desired confidential data and information will also increase the effectiveness of precautions that can be taken against such attacks.

Industrial-Corporate Espionage Pyramid models alternative implementation procedures of industrial and corporate espionage attacks as a whole. In this context, companies should make a strategic decision whether to stay within the legal limits or not. However, in all cases, companies must acquire the basic data and information with open source intelligence. Collecting physical wastes of competitors is another remarkable activity that requires proficiency. Reverse engineering and/or competitive intelligence activities are inter-company solutions for acquiring targets. Besides, companies that prefer to step outside of legal boundaries need expert contribution and sometimes require governmental assistance. Because illegal activities must necessitate ade-

quate expertise on espionage, companies which do not prefer to outsource may opt for recruiting retired intelligence and/or military persons that have enough experience on engaging rival employees by social engineering. Moreover, engaging rival employees for parallel employment and infiltrating rival companies as an agents are extremely dangerous and illegal activities which could be accepted as serious crimes across multiple jurisdictions. Besides, cyber espionage attacks to rival firms also require adequate expertise; hence, they are generally outsourced to freelance hacker groups.

Companies can also choose to achieve their desired goals by outsourcing. This is an optimal decision in terms of performing a specialized activity for companies that do not want to be associated with such activities in front of public. Outsourcing these types of activities to a third party has some advantages together with serious disadvantages. Although inter-company labour sources are more reliable and manageable compared to outsourcing, due to superior expertise requirements, companies generally hire external actors for these types of activities.

Finally, the preference that companies initially face with is to carry out espionage activities within legal boundaries or not. In addition, companies have to answer the strategic question of whether espionage activities against competitors will be carried out by outsourcing or by making use of inter-company labour resources. In other words, these are the preliminary stages



that companies should answer in the industrial versus corporate espionage process of acquiring targeted data and activities. information within the framework of

**Kadir Murat Altintas** holds a PhD in Economics-Finance and an MS in Industrial Engineering. His primary area of research includes industrial espionage within the framework of economic intelligence as well as Chinese espionage system as part of their security infrastructure. Dr. Altintas's latest book is on "Industrial Espionage within the scope of Economic Intelligence: The Strategic Importance of Industrial Espionage for Commercial Entities" has been established at September 2020. He welcomes opportunities for continued research and collaboration.

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# **The Counterterrorism Conundrum: Understanding Terrorist Organizations, Ideological Warfare and Strategies for Counterintelligence-Based Counterterrorism**

Joshua E. Duke

## ABSTRACT

This red cell analysis illustrates through case studies the capacities and capabilities of the Islamic State (IS) terror organization at its peak, and the Haqqani Network over time as individual organizations, including their origins, ideology, leadership, organizational structures, and operational capabilities, to examine global terrorism with a focus on the ideological warfare challenges of combatting radical Islamic terrorism. These organizations' connections to al Qaeda and the parts they play in the greater rising threat of global radical Islamic terrorism are established in order to frame global terrorism from a strategic historical standpoint to evaluate counterterrorism strategies for the future. The author presents strategy recommendations for the United States Intelligence Community (IC) and policy makers to effectively address the national and global security threats posed by transnational terrorism, using a combination of strategic counterintelligence and targeted ground operations, along with an original seven-principle approach to effective counterterrorism operations, as well as a broader strategy for targeting the ideological roots of radical Islamic terrorism.

*Keywords:* counterterrorism, strategy, ideology, terrorism, Haqqani, al Qaeda, counterintelligence, international law

## **El dilema del contraterrorismo: Comprensión de las organizaciones terroristas, la guerra ideológica y las estrategias para el contraterrorismo basado en la contrainteligencia**

### RESUMEN

Este análisis de glóbulos rojos ilustra a través de estudios de casos las capacidades y capacidades de la organización terrorista Estado Islámico (EI) en su apogeo, y la Red Haqqani a lo largo del tiempo

como organizaciones individuales, incluidos sus orígenes, ideología, liderazgo, estructuras organizativas y capacidades operativas. examinar el terrorismo global con un enfoque en los desafíos de la guerra ideológica de combatir el terrorismo islámico radical. Las conexiones de estas organizaciones con Al Qaeda y el papel que desempeñan en la creciente amenaza del terrorismo islámico radical global se establecen para enmarcar el terrorismo global desde un punto de vista histórico estratégico para evaluar las estrategias de contraterrorismo para el futuro. El autor presenta recomendaciones estratégicas para la Comunidad de Inteligencia de los Estados Unidos (CI) y los formuladores de políticas para abordar de manera efectiva las amenazas a la seguridad nacional y global planteadas por el terrorismo transnacional, utilizando una combinación de contrainteligencia estratégica y operaciones terrestres específicas, junto con un enfoque original de siete principios. a operaciones efectivas de contraterrorismo, así como a una estrategia más amplia para atacar las raíces ideológicas del terrorismo islámico radical.

**Palabras clave:** contraterrorismo, estrategia, ideología, terrorismo, Haqqani, al Qaeda, contrainteligencia, derecho internacional

## 反恐难题：解读恐怖主义组织、意识形态战和基于反情报的反恐战略

### 摘要

这篇假想敌分析 (Red Cell analysis) 通过案例研究阐述顶峰时期的伊斯兰国 (IS) 恐怖组织、和随时间推移作为独立组织的哈卡尼网络 (Haqqani Network) 的规模和能力, 包括各自的起源、意识形态、领导力、组织结构、以及操作能力, 以期分析全球恐怖主义, 聚焦于打击极端伊斯兰恐怖主义过程中意识形态战的挑战。确定了这些组织与基地组织的联系, 以及它们在全球极端伊斯兰恐怖主义这一愈演愈烈的更大威胁中发挥的作用, 以期从战略历史视角建构全球恐怖主义, 进而评价为未来做准备的反恐战略。作者通过结合战略反情报和精准地面操作、一项针对有效反恐操作的7原则法、以及一项锁定极端伊斯兰恐怖主义意识形态根源的、更广的战略, 为美国情报界 (IC) 及决策者提供战略建议, 以有效应对由跨国恐怖主义引起的国家及全球安全威胁。

关键词: 反恐, 战略, 意识形态, 恐怖主义, 哈卡尼, 基地组织, 反情报, 国际法

“Do not repeat the tactics which have gained you one victory, but let your methods be regulated by the infinite variety of circumstances.”

“If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles.”

—Sun Tzu

## **Introduction**

**I**slamic terrorism as it has become today is the product of more than a millennium of internal conflict and discord, between the Sunni, Shi'ite, and radicalized Muslim communities around the world, coupled with interference in Muslim regions and nations by other countries. The perpetuation of this ancient war into the modern day by radical extremists, along with the continual pressure placed on Islamic regions from the United States and others, has the potential to undermine the fabric of civilization across the globe. This red cell analysis illustrates through case studies, the capacities and capabilities of the Islamic State (IS) terror organization as it rose to power, and the Haqqani Network over time as individual organizations, including their origins, ideology, leadership, organizational structures, and operational capabilities, to examine global terrorism with a focus on the ideological warfare challenges of combatting radical Islamic terrorism. These organizations' connections to al Qaeda and the parts they play in the greater rising threat of global radical Islamic terrorism are established in order to frame global terrorism from a strategic historical standpoint to evaluate counterterror-

ism strategies for the future. The author presents strategy recommendations for the United States Intelligence Community (IC) and policy makers to effectively address the national and global security threats posed by transnational terrorism, using a combination of strategic counterintelligence and targeted ground operations, along with an original seven-principle approach to effective counterterrorism operations, as well as a broader strategy for targeting the ideological roots of radical Islamic terrorism specifically.

## **Red Cell Analysis**

**T**he research methods used in this article follow the problem/solution framework, drawing on a wide range of sources, including primarily peer-reviewed journals, government publications and records, institutional publications and records, personal experiences from the author and from third parties knowledgeable on the subjects and regions discussed, military doctrine, and international law, to include International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the Laws of Armed Conflict (LOAC). Historical terrorist and counterterrorism methodologies are analyzed to inform the project and to identify successful and

unsuccessful practices in counterterrorism. Ideological tendencies are also examined to provide insight into potential gaps in modern counterterrorism efforts combatting terrorist organizations that are framed around ideological belief systems. Overall, the article takes a multi-point-of-view approach to identifying and countering violent ideologies that promote terrorism, with a goal of providing strategies not just to combat terrorism, but to provide alternative future prospects to the individuals around the world most susceptible to being drawn into such ideologies.

A multiple pronged analysis is used in this article to analyze terrorist organizations from a red cell perspective, in order to frame a predictive analysis of the evolution of modern terrorism, focusing primarily on the IS historically, and the Haqqani network as a primary emerging threat. Analysis includes the possible reactions of Middle Eastern nations and local organizations sympathetic to terrorist causes, in relation to potential counterterrorism actions. An historical account of the doctrinal origins of the Khawarij ideology, the basis of which spurs the actions of many Islamic extremist organizations (Al-Tamimi, 2014), is included to differentiate between the ideologies, and to assist in their identification to facilitate appropriate counterterrorism activities targeting them. This historical analysis sheds light on the motives and objectives of like-minded Islamic terrorist organizations, allowing predictive analysis of potential future terrorist activities based on ideological motiva-

tions and their root causes. Analytical methodologies and techniques used in this article were primarily informed by *Structured Analytical Techniques for Intelligence Analysis* (Heuer and Pherson, 2012), and *A Tradecraft Primer: Structured Analytic Techniques for Improving Intelligence Analysis* (The U.S. Government, 2009).

## Analysis

### *Origins.*

**2003:** A small group called Jama'at al-Tawhid wa'al Jihad, after leaving the terrorist training camps in Afghanistan, moves into Iraq under the leadership of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

**2004-2006:** After gaining recognition through ruthless attacks on Coalition forces in Iraq, Zarqawi pledges his allegiance to Osama Bin Laden in October of 2004, changing the group's name to al Qaeda in Iraq (AQ-I). Disunity between the two organizations leads to another name change, in October of 2006, to the Islamic State in Iraq, shortly after Zarqawi's death in June of that year.

**2011:** Under the leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the Islamic State in Iraq shifts their focus to Syria, where the group spends two years recruiting and building their military power.

**2012-2013:** Al-Baghdadi establishes Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria in June of 2012, under the leadership of Abu Muhammad al Jawlani, with official al Qaeda allegiance, and in April of 2013, tries to unite to form the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) (Al-Tamimi, 2013).



This merge is rejected by al Jawlani, and by al Qaeda leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, resulting in major infighting between the al Qaeda affiliated al-Nusra Front forces and al-Baghdadi in Syria.

**2013-2014:** The Islamic State in Iraq renames themselves the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), while simultaneously launching assaults on Syrian military forces, and invading parts of Iraq. As ISIL power and numbers grow in Iraq and Syria, Zawahiri severs the official ties between ISIL and al Qaeda, declaring the ISIL forces to be inconsistent with the al Qaeda ideology.

**2014+:** Following the hostile takeover of most of Northern Iraq in the summer of 2014, ISIL re-designates themselves as the Islamic State (IS), announcing their status as the one true Islamic Caliphate, with al-Baghdadi declared Caliph over the entire Muslim world, until his death in October, 2019 (Terrill, 2014).

Decades before Zarqawi began his career in terror, a Pakistani man named Jalaluddin Haqqani fought side-by-side with American forces in Afghanistan against the invading Soviet Army while commanding Mujahideen fighters during the Soviet-Afghan War, in turn forging a lasting relationship for the fledgling Haqqani Network with Usama Bin Laden, as well as the future Taliban and al Qaeda (Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2015: 346). The Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence Agency's (ISI) participation in this process resulted in post-war Haqqani Network ISI connections, positioning the Haqqanis to become the most potent and influ-

ential organization in the region other than the Pakistani government itself. Western forces abandoning the Afghan and Pakistani people when the Soviets left in defeat in 1989 left an emotional rift in the people, leading to the Haqqani Network redirecting and fueling their anger and discontent, painting America and Western civilization as the true enemies of the region's people and cultures. Mainly through propaganda, the Haqqanis explained to the people how the noble Pashtun fighters were being used as a proxy army to fight America's enemy for them. Extreme poverty, government abuse, instability in the region and a void in the governance of Afghanistan prompted the Haqqanis to expand into regional activities to influence and manipulate the actions of the Pakistani government through the ISI. At the same time, the Haqqanis began taking advantage of connections with the Taliban and al Qaeda to target Western nations.

Sirajuddin Haqqani, son of Jalaluddin Haqqani, has exerted his extensive network's influence across much of the Middle East since taking over command of the network, through a variety of methods from terror to diplomacy. His network threatens to undermine the government of Pakistan through its connections with corrupt members of the Pakistani ISI. The organization has developed a pattern of continuously carrying out attacks against American and coalition forces in Afghanistan, directing espionage and propaganda campaigns in India, and contributing to terrorism around the world (Pant 2011; Katzman 2014; Mitton 2014). The

Haqqani network has operated in Pakistan and Afghanistan since the Soviet-Afghan war, and was officially designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) by the U.S. State Department in 2014. Targeting the Haqqani network in Pakistan has proven extremely difficult without risking backlash against the Pakistani government due to the Haqqani's fluctuating support within the population and from other Islamic sects (Senior Administration Officials, 2012). Any fluctuations within the Pakistani government raise significant concerns, as Pakistan is a leading nuclear power in the Middle East (Kerr and Nikitin, 2012). The Pakistani government is the only thing preventing the Haqqanis or other terrorists from gaining access to hundreds of Pakistani nuclear warheads, making the Pakistan-based Haqqani Network potentially the greatest threat to America, the Middle East and the world (Kerr and Nikitin, 2012).

**Ideology.** Despite members of the IS being widely categorized as “exclusively radical Sunni Muslims,” the core beliefs of the movement are modeled after the Khawarij ideology of the “first Muslim extremist group,” the Kharijites (Terrill, 2014: 19; Bin Ali, 2016: 3). The embodiment of the organizational ideology that dictates the IS goals and objectives is also intimately tied to the ideological belief system of its Kharijite-esque membership (Terrill, 2014). The Khawarij ideology has existed since the seventh century, consisting of a third faction of Islamic faith and practice operating alongside Sunni and Shi'ite belief systems, though less well known,

that disagreed with both of the others. Kharijites split off, forging a path based on Islamic extremism, Jihad against all infidels, and *takfir* against all other Muslims, which is essentially the practice of Jihad against Muslims (Bin Ali 2016). The ultimate goal of the IS, with a premise resembling the original Khawarij belief system, is to effect the complete “religious and cultural destruction of Shi'ite Muslims,” and to establish a permanent and exclusively radical Islamic caliphate in the Middle East, and eventually the world (Terrill, 2014: 19). This amounts to nothing less than the complete annihilation of every person to include non-radical-Muslims on the planet, including all Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims that do not follow the radical beliefs of the IS. The intentions of all Muslims indoctrinated into this Kharijite-esque belief system, inherently include destroying America, murdering all Christians, and brutal global religious, ethnic, and racial persecution.

The inevitable regional and global destruction inherent in this ideology galvanized the world into action against the IS and against the broad spectrum of global terrorism, shifting the dynamics of international alliances due to economic, ideological or financial interests around the world. Ideologically stemming from Darul Uloom Haqqania, dubbed the University of Jihad by outsiders around the world, the Pakistan-based Haqqani Network is also a major facilitator in exporting today's Islamic jihadist mindset. The Khawarij ideology of the past declared not only that their ideological version of Islam was the only true way of life

on Earth, but that the requirement of every believer was to force this way of life on humanity, and to kill all who resist (Haqqani, 2002). Many of the Darul Uloom / Deobandi Universities around the world are ground zero for the explosive radical Islamic terrorist ideologies that have spread around the world and continue to be advanced by organizations like the IS, the Haqqani Network, al Qaeda and the Taliban. The ultimate goal of the IS and the Haqqani Network is the same ultimate goal that al Qaeda has declared, and that Darul Uloom Universities embed into their students' minds throughout their studies—Global conquest and the subjugation of all nonbelievers (Haqqani, 2002).

**Leadership and Organizational Structures.** The leader of al Qaeda, Ayman al Zawahiri, promoted unity between splinter jihadist factions, supporting the doctrinal work, *Call to Global Islamic Resistance* (2004), written by Abu Mus'Ab Al-Suri. This terrorist guidebook advocates for a non-hierarchical and decentralized system for global actions by radical Islamic jihadists, as opposed to command-oriented, and easier to target, operational coordination (Sharp and Blanchard, 2013; Zackie, 2013). Zawahiri repeatedly advocated for tolerance between factions during the IS' multiple declarations of partnerships with al Qaeda affiliated organizations, who in turn refuted the claims, until the final breaking between Zawahiri and al-Baghdadi in February of 2014 (Sharp and Blanchard, 2013). Final control over the IS rested with Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who challenged

the authority of al Qaeda over the global jihad movement. With this shift, al-Baghdadi gained allegiance, operational control over, or pledged support from, organizations in at least eleven countries, many with broader regional or global operational capacities.

Several of these organizations are allies or affiliates of al Qaeda, and the list includes many notorious factions, such as the Pakistani Taliban; al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), operating in Yemen; Ansar al Sharia, who were linked to the 2012 American embassy attack in Benghazi; Abu Sayyaf Group, located in the Philippines, which has been involved with planning attacks in the U.S.; al Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), headquartered in Algeria; and Boko Haram in Nigeria (The Centre, 2019). After the thralls of war and many titles, the IS quickly expanded from about 5,000 to 6,000 fighters during the takeover of northern Iraq in the summer of 2014, to more than 30,000 fighters at the end of 2014. The IS systematically replaced al Qaeda in terms of power and influence across the world and presented a clear and present threat to its American-based ideological antitheses of freedom, liberty, and democracy.

The Haqqani Network has also presented as a unique threat, mainly due to their fluctuating public support within Pakistan and influence within the Pakistani government. Public support has provided the Haqqani Network with significant protection, mainly provided by locals who believe that they are standing as a force against corruption

to protect the people of Pakistan. Drone warfare attacks perpetrated by the United States, and sanctioned by Pakistan, resulting in collateral innocent casualties on a regular basis, have provided fuel for the Network to propagandize Pakistani citizens into believing they are fighting for the people. Additionally, taking up the global Jihad call to arms against the West has also increased their momentum and support across the region, further strengthening the Network's ties with several prominent Islamic jihadist organizations. Haqqani Network support also extends into the Pakistani government itself, and into the ISI in particular (Pant, 2011). The Haqqani's international reach is impressive, that when combined with their diplomatic and espionage capabilities make them an invaluable asset to the Pakistani government and the ISI in their efforts to control and manipulate the political atmospheres in Afghanistan and India.

Sirajuddin Haqqani has taken over leadership of the Haqqani Network from his father. His remaining known living brothers, Abdul Aziz Haqqani and Anas Haqqani were prominent members within the command hierarchy until Anas' capture in 2014. Anas' capture leaves only Aziz and Sirajuddin in command of the Network, both of whom have been known to use extreme tactics and inhumane combat techniques (Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2015: 346; Office of the Spokesperson, 2015). While the actual organization was relatively small, as of 2014 the Network had access to approximately "10,000 fighters," according to

the last U.S. State Department report on the subject, due mainly to alliances with the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban, as well as al Qaeda (Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2015: 346). Sirajuddin was also indoctrinated into the hierarchy of the Taliban by Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour as the Taliban leader's Deputy, and now leads the military arm of the Taliban under Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada. This appointment enhanced this partnership, casting aside any veil of doubt protecting the Haqqani Network from being linked directly to international terrorism, and indirectly to the IS through its alliances (House Foreign Affairs, 2015).

Formed primarily by family and tribal relationships, the Haqqani Network is nearly impossible to infiltrate without targeting existing members for recruitment. The lack of cooperation from Pakistani intelligence also severely degrades the U.S. IC's ability to document and profile the Network itself (Pant, 2011). Fluctuating public support for the Haqqanis throughout the region further hinders this process and makes identification of members difficult, since many citizens support and assist the Network without actually participating in their actions. Despite this public support, there is also a public resentment throughout another contingent of the population. Those who do not believe that the Haqqanis are defending them from drone attacks believe the opposite—that the drone strikes are continuing primarily because of the Haqqani Network, and that their elimination will end the strikes. Lastly, the Haqqani Network does not have

a centralized Nation-State style command infrastructure, such as technology-based command centers or communications centers, but are instead spread out within the civilian population, making targeting their leadership a persistent problem.

***Operational Capabilities.*** The IS successfully destabilized the Middle East in 2014 by way of an invasive conquering of much of northern and western Iraq, and northern Syria. The Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) provided “financial, material, [and] technological,” support to the IS, while designated AQ-I, and much of the IS’ operational capacity was inadvertently enhanced through other sources as well, including the United States government, indirectly (Library of Congress, 2012). Their advances in Iraq resulted in “thousands of extremists” being released from prisons, “hundreds of millions of dollars” confiscated from banks in Mosul, and “tons of military equipment,” including U.S. equipment provided to the Iraqi Security Forces made readily available by “Iraqi forces abandoning their positions” at the sight of the IS invaders (Statement by Senators, 2014; Iraq Politics, 2014). After the IS gaining control and challenging al Qaeda authority over the global jihad movement, jihadi elements in India, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria, Algeria, the Philippines, Indonesia, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Yemen, all swore support, and many allegiance, to the IS, and to al-Baghdadi (The Centre, 2019).

An unconfirmed number of “artillery, tanks, and a variety of other mil-

itary vehicles” were left by the four Iraqi Infantry Divisions that fled from the IS forces in June, 2014, along with “almost all of their weapons, equipment, and supplies” (Terrill, 2014: 18). The weapons capacity of the IS was further enhanced by military gains in Syria as well, including Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS), Russian T-55 tanks, and even “several squadrons of combat aircraft,” captured with the Tabqa airfield in northern Syria in August of 2014 (Terrill, 2014: 18). Additionally, according to the U.S. State Department, “several thousand [American] MANPADS” were “outside state control” in 2014, and terrorist organizations, “including ... al Qaeda,” were in possession of many of them (Sen. Schumer, 2014). Syria’s bio-pharmaceutical labs were also looted in conjunction with IS engagements in Syria, alluding to the possibility of biological agents and/or delivery systems falling into the hands of the IS or other terrorist organizations (Bellamy, 2014). A laptop with information of a scholarly nature on the development and implementation of biological weapons of mass destruction was also recovered from an IS cache, with instructions contained inside for creating “weaponized bubonic plague,” and other types of bombs (McGarvey and Shames, 2014). Discovery of this laptop clearly indicates intent to use such weapons if possible.

With “limited American intelligence” in the Middle East due to “a decline in U.S. Spy resources,” U.S. IC operations were stifled during the rise of the IS threat, allowing further IS ideological and military proliferation,

unchecked recruitment, and increased cyber-based propaganda successes throughout the world (Gorman and Barnes, 2014). The IS waged a “slick social media campaign,” targeting the internet savvy youth of the world, and luring them with promises of bloody revolution and a noble quest for eternal salvation (Sorenson, 2014: 26). Having recruited these technologically adept generations, the IS succeeded greatly in recruiting and ideological proliferation, by “spread[ing] its ideological virus” via YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter (Gunnaratna, 2015: 11). Through these mediums, combined with explicit execution videos and globally publicized victories, the IS continued to compel radicalized individuals and organizations around the world into action, making the threat of the global jihad movement even harder to track or counter. Global communications through social media and documentation of brutal murder allowed the IS to achieve a new historic level of global terror due to widespread visualizations not possible during past crises, presenting a formidable physical, psychological, and ideological challenge to the freedoms and stabilities that exist in the world.

In a similar fashion, playing on local citizens’ distrust of governments and the West, the Haqqani Network also uses propaganda operations on a massive scale to manipulate public support for themselves and against their enemies. Public perception manipulation allows terror operations to be conducted with minimal backlash, while preventing potential espionage actions against the Network due to the public’s

unwillingness to help. The dynamics of the Pakistani government in relation to the Haqqani Network also present a major problem in targeting them, and in differentiating the actions of the Haqqani Network with the actions of the Pakistani ISI. The Network’s coercive capabilities in India and Afghanistan are significant, but are primarily directed by the ISI, while its terror attacks are the will of the Haqqanis and are fought by the ISI and the Pakistani military in many cases. The United States supports Pakistan, who supports the Haqqani Network, who conducts terrorist attacks, which are fought by the Pakistani military and the United States. This scenario has become a chicken-and-egg cycle which must be broken in order to combat this Network, and to combat the ideologies of radical Islamic terrorism around the world.

The Haqqani Network has also cultivated strong connections within the Pakistani government, who has funded and supplied this “arm of Pakistan’s [ISI],” mainly due to their usefulness in manipulating Indo-Pak relations in favor of the Pakistani government (Kronstadt, 2012). The Pakistani government maintains its stronghold on the future of Afghanistan by supporting the Haqqani Network’s actions in Afghanistan and promoting the Haqqanis as a political element for negotiations and diplomacy in the region. With Sirajuddin’s appointment to lead the military arm of the Taliban, the relationship has become even more convoluted, and Pakistan has become a leading ally of a Network who supports global jihad through al Qaeda and the Taliban,

much like Iran. With such a unique and dangerous multifaceted partnership in the region, combined with the nuclear stockpile controlled by Pakistan, the Haqqani Network is quickly becoming the most dangerous threat to the Middle East and Western civilization (Kerr and Nikitin, 2012).

The Haqqani Network operates directly on a regional scale, and indirectly on a global scale, primarily through proxy organizations and alliances with global terrorist networks. As a regional power, the Haqqani Network is based out of Waziristan, participating in espionage and terror operations in India, Afghanistan and Pakistan, though on a much smaller scale in Pakistan to retain support from the local populace. In India, the Network's actions are sanctioned, funded, and supplied by the Pakistani ISI. The goals there are destabilization of the government of India, breeding dissent within the Indian population in order to facilitate pro-Pakistani support, and manipulating international support to facilitate the Kashmir region falling back under Pakistani control and governance (Mittton, 2014). In Afghanistan, the Network uses terror to prompt diplomatic talks designed to place the Haqqani Network into positions of power within the new government, thereby giving the Pakistani government direct input over the future of Afghanistan (Katzman, 2014). On a global scale, the Haqqani Network supports, assists, and coordinates terrorist attacks around the world, using the networks of al Qaeda, the Taliban and their allies (House Foreign Affairs, 2015).

## Recommendations

***Ideological Transformation.*** Many of the challenges of today have not been addressed before in history and must be analyzed and understood before they can be addressed. Some threats, however, are similar to threats of the past, and understanding history can help analysts learn to analyze more effectively through the study of human nature, warfare, and intelligence operations. Communism is an ideology, and the modernized Kharijite ideology that spurs the majority of radical Islamic terrorists into action is also an ideology. While there are few similarities between the ideologies themselves, the practice of combating an ideology on a global scale is not new to the United States or the IC. The Soviet Union eventually collapsed from economic and social disparity. The Communist ideology, however, lost popularity due to disillusionment within its believers, not because of the Soviet Union's collapse (Mayer, 2002). Even Communist China does not follow the original Marxist philosophies of early communism and has instead adapted to a Capitalistic type of Communism in the face of widespread disillusionment with the Communist ideology. Modern radical Islamic ideologies can be fought the same way—through intentional and widespread operations aimed at disillusioning the believers and potential believers of radical terrorism. Since cyberspace and economically challenged regions in the world are the primary recruiting grounds for radical terrorist organizations, the IC can target these same areas to eliminate

the potential for recruitment. A multi-pronged approach should be used, taking advantage of both Aggressive Strategic Offensive Counterintelligence (ASOCI) operations in cyberspace, and economic interventions to educate and elevate the populations of regions rampant with economic and social disparity, as these sociological causes are one of the primary elements that lead to radicalization around the world (Matherly, 2018). Ironically, significantly reducing social and economic disparity could collapse radical Islamic terrorist ideologies in much the same way that increasing economic and social disparity collapsed the Soviet Union.

Lack of education and the censorship of information are major factors that contribute to social disparity in the world, and therefore need to be countered with information proliferation and education. Part of this requires technological proliferation to increase the ease of access for societies to information through the internet. Another part should include government sponsorship of satellite communications and internet capabilities to Nation-States that lack the potential for such a technological infrastructure by themselves. Because this increases the risk of these technological assets being used by Non-State Actors for other purposes, increased intelligence operations, specifically in cyberspace, must accompany these information expansions. An inevitable side-effect of such a technological proliferation will be terrorist organizations becoming more connected to the digital world, making them easier to track and target over time. Finally, in

addition to longer-term strategic, economic and social methods to defeat the radical ideologies fueling the majority of Islamic terror, enhanced paramilitary operations and covert actions must form the basis of a supplemental strategy to combat physical terrorist elements around the world.

***Targeted Killings as a Globalized Counterterrorism Strategy.*** Terrorism as it is today is a new type of threat, which requires new laws to combat, and a new legal framework centered on transnational terrorism, with targeted killing explicitly defined as a tool to combat it. Targeted killings have emerged as a distinctly defined method of combat, specifically and explicitly designed for eliminating terrorists. Rather than addressing this emerging method to combat transnational terrorism, a resistance movement has emerged that focuses on outdated laws governing State sanctioned killings and assassinations, which does not contribute to the process of addressing the problem to be solved. This focus on outdated existing law instead convolutes the process, and forces States to either conceal their counterterror activities, or violate international law in order to combat terrorism. These actions are counterproductive to the advancement of civil society. The terms terrorist and terrorism need to be explicitly redefined by the international community in modern context, specifically to identify terror organizations and their members that have emerged as the leading combined global threat that faces the world today. Once those terms are explicitly defined and agreed



upon by the international community, the Laws of Armed Conflict (LOAC) and international laws governing warfare can be readily applied to terrorism and counterterrorism as forms of combat. The final necessary step in this process will be the addition of a new section of law that addresses the rules of counterterror combat for Nations who are actively engaged in combatting terrorism around the world.

Over the course of human history, assassinations have been used to achieve military, economic, political, strategic and ideological victory. The evolution of the world and technology has created a modern era of globalized civilization, however, that requires assassination as a tool to be explicitly differentiated into categories of acceptability, legality, morality, and justice. Assassination is no longer clearly defined in any of these fields, and there is a lack of focus on identifying methods of asymmetrical combat that historically fall under the blanket definition of assassination. Lack of an accepted definition of assassination, and a lack of clear differentiation between assassinations and targeted killings, are severely hindering modern-day counterterrorism operations necessary for the protection and advancement of freedom and peace throughout the world. Targeted killings applied specifically as a counterterrorism technique, explicitly as a tool to combat terrorist organizations, must be separated from this definition and evolve into its own category of acceptability, legality, morality, and justice for mankind to survive global terrorism.

Targeted killings of terrorists are not, by any accepted definition, assassinations, because the generally accepted assassination requirement of treachery cannot be adequately met when killing a known terrorist (Memorandum of Law, 1989). Terrorist organizations do not have internationally recognized territorial boundaries that can be breached, nor do they have internationally recognized governments that can be politically manipulated or shaped through the deaths of particular leaders. These traits further remove targeted killings of terrorists from the realm of assassination. There is therefore a concrete difference between assassinations and targeted killings, and particularly targeted killings as they have been used since the turn of the century with regards to terrorism. The word terrorist must be defined by the international community.

The entire paradigm of warfare has changed so dramatically with the emergence of globalized terrorism and massive technological advancements, that new methods of combat absolutely require new laws and definitions to govern modern warfare. Instead of trying to interpret existing laws in order to apply them to transnational terrorism, a new legal framework should be established, specifically to address terrorism, in addition to the laws that exist. A new terror-centric framework is needed to provide the international community with explicit authority to target any person proven to be associated with terrorism, or with an identifiable terrorist organization, such as the IS, the Haqqani Network, or al Qaeda. Part of the legal framework for cooperative internation-

al counterterrorism operations already exists, according to the UN Human Rights Council Study on Targeted Killings. The study establishes that violating the territory of a sovereign Nation to conduct a targeted killing is justified and legal, as long as the Nation whose sovereignty is being violated is “unwilling or unable” to stop the terrorism or terrorists themselves (Alston, 2010).

This is a very powerful phrase when combined with new laws that explicitly label terrorists, terrorism, and the rights of Nations to eliminate them—so powerful that, when applied within a global cooperative counterterrorism program, implementation on a global scale would result indirectly in Nations who support terrorism taking one of the two following courses of action:

- 1) Complying with counterterrorism efforts, by taking part in the targeted killings of terrorists within their own territory, or
- 2) Actively taking up arms against the international community of Nations that have united to challenge the emergence of global terrorism.

Terrorists would quickly become legitimate targets for any nation to pursue in combat operations at anytime, anywhere, under the right of self-defense that every sovereign nation retains. The “international [terrorist] hunting license” that William Galston predicted would emerge from the post 9/11 Bush Global War on Terrorism doctrine could essentially be recognized as international law under a united global

counterterror coalition (Galston, 2002). The sensitive nature of potential violations of sovereignty involved in this process mandates that participants not only tread carefully, but also that they exhaust every available means to include any host nation in the targeting process before taking action without them.

Implementation of global counterterror operations faces some problems, however, one of which is the proximity that Nations have to potential retaliatory terrorist forces, suggesting that a long-distance strategy for counterterror targeted killings could be useful. Israel’s proximity to Palestinian terrorists, for example, is a direct factor in the lack of long-term effectiveness of their counterterrorism strategies as a method of terror reduction and prevention. Their proximity also makes retaliatory attacks almost inevitable after every strike. American targeted killings of terrorists in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other Nations in the Middle East and elsewhere, however, has caused retaliation against Americans to be extremely rare comparatively to those of Palestinian retaliatory attacks against Israelis. Long-distance counterterrorism strategies designed for Nations at a distance to conduct targeted counterterrorism strikes should be implemented as an international cooperative counterterrorism mechanism designed to increase the effectiveness of strikes, while reducing the potential for retaliation. Terrorist organizations would be less capable of responding at a distance to attacks conducted by Nations beyond their reach and would be forced to either strike an ally that is closer or do nothing.

Combating transnational terrorism is mankind's most clear and present calling, and there is no alternative course to achieve worldwide liberty. The biggest problem that exists is agreeing on how to do it. Outdated idealist international laws, binding restrictions on military and intelligence personnel engaged in counterterrorism, and ill-defined terms and definitions related to terrorism and counterterrorism contribute significantly to this problem and will continue to hinder global solutions to transnational terrorism until they are addressed. Several basic and important concepts can be learned from examining terrorism from a historical point of view, particularly when looking to understand and combat modern terrorist organizations and oppression in the world. Counterterrorism operations must embody the following seven principles to create lasting and effective success:

- 1) Embody humanitarianism;
- 2) Avoid becoming oppressive;
- 3) Control public perception;
- 4) Separate targeted organization(s) from their recruiting base, physically, financially, emotionally and ideologically;
- 5) Acknowledge and address the real problems underlying the creation of, and support for, targeted organization(s);
- 6) Encourage political resolutions and political engagement by the organization(s) to achieve resolutions;
- 7) Counter, retaliate against, penetrate and eliminate the militant elements of targeted organizations(s).

When a terrorist organization gains the upper hand in any of these areas, it acts as a negative force multiplier against the counterterrorism forces combating them, whereas achieving these principles against terrorists all at once has the potential to lead to total and permanent victory.

The embodiment of the first principle of humanitarianism is strategically important in counterterrorism in order to control the third principle of public perception. Terrorists who can effectively paint their enemies as violating this principle gain in recruitment, legal standing, and international justification for their cause. Palestinian use of hospitals and other civilian buildings when launching attacks has many times resulted in Israeli retaliations killing innocents, allowing this paint to be applied to the Israelis. Terrorist organizations that have effectively painted their enemies this way have effectively created a state of permanent warfare in many regions of the world. Every time a force wavers on the second principle, becoming oppressive to the people, or even appears to become oppressive, their cause will be set back as many times. Military forces who become oppressive, regardless of their initial mission or intentions, will inevitably be viewed as invaders and occupiers in nearly every situation, rendering operations ineffective and futile, and further strengthening the cause of hostile elements within the population. Britain exemplified this failure of

principle in 1954 during its fight with the Irish Republican Army (IRA). After the Republic of Ireland was created as its own nation, IRA members captured in a raid, who were citizens of the new Republic of Ireland, were charged with treason against the queen—the foreign queen—of England (*The Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 1954). The backlash was severe, and significantly tarnished British public perception for decades, highlighting how these principles are interlocking and need to be addressed in unison, not individually.

One major element of the success of the Haqqani Network has been built upon their manipulation of public perception, not just in Pakistan, but around the world. Controlling public perception, particularly in the context of enhancing an ideologically based struggle, has the potential to drastically enhance recruitment, motivate members, increase financial and material support, and morally degrade one's enemies. When applied in reverse, it can achieve the opposite—drastic reductions in recruitment for terrorist organizations, demotivation and demoralization of terrorists, and present cause for the withdrawal of financial and material support. Alternatively, some of the biggest advances against terrorist organizations, such as the IRA, have been achieved through the fourth principle of separating a cause from the needs and ideologies of the rest of the local populace. By enhancing the lives of the Irish aristocracy, Britain was able to gain enough public and political support to cause the people of Northern Ireland not just to avoid participation

in the IRA's fight, but to oppose them in favor of the British (McGloin, 2003). This tactic was so effective in Ireland that even today, after Northern Ireland has been granted the right to vote to unite with the Republic, they choose not to (Coakley, 2008). Efforts must be used to ensure that terrorists are viewed as terrorists by local populations in order for counterterrorism operations to succeed.

In order to truly combat the causes of economic or social disparity, including in terrorist organizations, the fifth principle of real problems underlying their existence and support systems must be acknowledged and addressed. While murderous people will always exist in the world, without a perceived justifiable cause they will likely remain alone, less dangerous, and less powerful. Part of addressing these problems should include the sixth principle of a political approach, allowing a non-violent method to give voice and face to the struggles of the people, so that they can be understood and solved. The possibility of the Taliban acting as a political force should never be undermined or degraded to the point of permanent elimination, regardless of its violent trends over time. The Taliban offers the most likely path towards a peaceful resolution of differences within Afghanistan and in the Middle East, and eliminating it completely would essentially equate to killing the possibility of lasting peace, making achieving the fifth principle all but impossible. The seventh principle of countering, retaliating against, penetrating, and eliminating the militant elements of targeted

organizations is absolutely necessary for the success of every other principle, however it is also the most visible principle, receiving the most publicity and potentially backlash from the local and international communities.

***Aggressive Strategic Offensive Counterintelligence (ASOCI).*** The fight against radical Islamic terrorists is an ideological fight. Freedom and democracy are the terrorist's adversaries, making a globally focused strategic counterintelligence initiative, targeting not just specific groups, but the ideology in which they are based, the most logical weapon. Targeted information operations are one important counterintelligence element necessary to address the recruiting efforts of terrorist groups around the world. Primary goals for such information operations should include either intentional misrepresentation of radical ideologies, designed to drive away potential recruits, or representation and advocacy for freedom-based ideologies that run counter to the modernized version of the original Khawarij belief system. Counter-recruiting operations should also be run under the information operations premise, in order to support collection or infiltration operations, with an underlying strategy designed to empower the people of Pakistan and around the world in target recruiting areas for radical Islamic organizations. Combatting the ideology should be simultaneously advanced with combat operations, but under a new structure that will require the participation and support of many nations around the world.

Since the rise of al Qaeda and the Taliban, and the proliferation of communications technologies and the internet, this ideology has grown from many inconsequential and disconnected factions into a decentralized constellation of elements, all working towards similar goals and complementing each other's actions. With ideological power centers reaching all corners of the planet, amplified messaging stemming from each of the Darul Uloom Universities, and individualized radical terrorist organizations around the world threatening all of mankind. To combat this ideology, a strategy must be adopted that is more complex than simply fighting individual networks. The entire system must be accounted for and addressed simultaneously, including strategies to eliminate new sources of radicalism, strategies to remove the sources of power at these universities through humanitarian-based efforts, and strategies for counterterrorism operations designed to eliminate existing militant terrorist factions that already exist. To transform the ideology, education and information proliferation are imperative. Wisdom is the child of knowledge, and to combat such a widespread system, another system must be offered, antithetical to the modern version of the Khawarij belief system, to combat and contrast to the radical Islamism already rooted in the world. At the same time, a globally unified counterterror coalition utilizing targeted killings under a new terror-centric international legal framework can combat the already active terror elements. Enhancing international counterter-

rorism cooperation and knowledge on a global scale should be primary goals of all nations to combat this ideological danger to mankind.

In order to change a way of thought, that way of thought must be replaced and cultivated from one of hate, to one of tolerance and understanding. Destroying Darul Uloom type universities is not going to achieve this, but rather creating alternative learning environments to draw in those who would attend Darul Uloom universities, and enticing participation, can guide the masses towards a peaceful future. This will only work if the alternative system provides free education to poverty-stricken populations in the Middle East and around the world, is primarily driven by local people, and if governments and students are provided an uncensored internet infrastructure to support such learning environments. When nations and their governments allow such measures to grow, popularity will shift away from Darul Uloom universities indoctrinating young people into radical ideologies, towards the knowledge-enhancing free universities that cultivate ideologies of peace and understanding, which is the foundation of modern Islamic ideology at its core. This is a basic counterintelligence strategy that reinforces an already held belief in order to facilitate actions necessary to the completion of objectives. In order to succeed, this initiative cannot be driven by an outside force attempting to change the culture locally—the initiative must be publicly led by local populaces in each area. Eventually, it will be undeniable that

cultivating peace and understanding is more desirable than cultivating hate and war. The Darul Uloom universities will collapse from within due to lack of support, inevitably ending the radicalization of Muslims over time.

International networks commonly established by terrorist organizations often present many other prospective counterintelligence targets. Since any directed terror operations will likely require confirmation or approval from a higher-level commander, surveillance or infiltration of the intelligence elements of foreign support organizations will undoubtedly provide actionable intelligence for targeting, or for preventing future or imminent attacks. Dismantling these support organizations should be a primary goal of U.S. counterintelligence. Methods to achieve this goal should include inciting popular dissent against terrorist-affiliated organizations in the countries they reside, along with coordinated counterterrorism operations with Foreign Intelligence Security Services and local governments. Without an ASOCI effort against specific organizations and their ideology, intelligence and combat operations against them could last indefinitely. As technological proliferation continues and advanced weapon systems become more widely available, terrorist organizations have windows of opportunity to potentially gain an unacceptable situational advantage over their adversaries, including the United States. Action must be taken to prevent this, and protecting Pakistan's nuclear stockpile from the Haqqani Network and corrupt members of the Pakistani

ISI should be a top priority for the world.

Targeting the Haqqani Network essentially means targeting the Pakistani ISI, but with pressure rather than weapons. The government and ISI of Pakistan must be convinced to participate actively in combating the Haqqani Network. This course of action will likely be fought, as Pakistan will be forced to lose its influence in India and in Afghanistan that is currently facilitated through the Haqqani Network (House Foreign Affairs, 2013). The Pakistani government will likely comply, however, if the people of Pakistan are influenced with enhanced information operations and counterintelligence operations to turn them against the Haqqani Network itself, and against any support the Pakistani government provides them. This can most easily be done along the Afghan-Pakistan border, where the Haqqani Network is most active. After enough public and local pressure has built, the Pakistani government will be incentivized to lead targeted ground operations against the Haqqani Network in Pakistan, potentially as a joint operation with American forces targeting the same border region in Afghanistan.

A combat operation of this scale in the border region will force the Haqqani Network to react, and forces deployed to Afghanistan and India will likely be recalled to defend the Network's territory. Any Taliban forces in the region that respond will become targetable as well, whereas they presently are fluctuating between being regarded as a political organization or a

terrorist organization, making targeting them complicated under international law. Changing this dynamic will allow further operations to be sanctioned and conducted against the Taliban should they move away from peace, and Pakistani participation will inevitably result in the intelligence resources of Pakistan being provided to the U.S. IC. With the assistance and participation of the Pakistani ISI, the corruption within the Pakistani ISI will reveal itself, allowing the government to differentiate between internal supporters, and internal agents of the Haqqanis who have been facilitating dissent and insurrection. Operational guidelines should include an end goal of eliminating the Haqqani command structure, including Sirajuddin and any top commanders responsible for organizational, financial and regional coordination. Without the destabilization of the local Pakistani government, the United States can then withdraw from the region, leaving Pakistan stable and in control, and not have to worry about another Iraqi quagmire of indefinite war and tribal turmoil.

## **Conclusion**

**W**ithout a strong, unified military effort by counterterrorism forces around the world to seek out and destroy the active militant elements of terrorist organizations, every other principle becomes impossible to achieve. Active militants in the Middle East have continuously hindered political efforts to achieve a political resolution, providing endless public damage, justifying thousands of

deaths, undermining the peace process, and ultimately dragging conflicts on indefinitely. Perpetual counterterrorism operations that result in casualties are also used regularly to manipulate public perception against counterterrorism operations, feeding into the narrative of oppression and inhumane practices. Lastly, as long as active militants are numerous and effective in their strategies, addressing any negative underlying issues in a local populace becomes impossible. By understanding and applying these seven principles to counterterrorism operations, global victory against terrorist organizations and ideologies around the world is not only possible, but likely, and the United States is the nation best positioned to lead such an effort. This process takes time and is a long-term strategy that must be supplemented by overt and covert ground combat operations targeting the militant factions that already exist.

The ideologies of terrorist organizations cannot be eliminated without combat operations, and they likewise cannot be eliminated with only combat operations. They can, however, ultimately be eliminated with a simultaneous combination of offensive combat operations targeting active terrorists

through targeted killings, an aggressive ASOCI strategy, and a concerted global effort of economic and social engineering operations designed to spread information, knowledge and prosperity to every corner of the planet. The international community should have the responsibility not just to follow international laws, but to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the *spirit* of those laws, including the international mandate to protect human lives from global threats. Terrorism has become a global threat, and it is the international community's responsibility to address it, and to ensure compliance of one another in addressing it appropriately, bringing up any instances of misconduct so they can be addressed and resolved. A multinational effort to pursue the end of radical terrorism using the strategies outlined in this article, while adhering to the seven principles of effective counterterrorism provided, presents a real and achievable outcome of lasting peace across the globe and should be taken advantage of before the opportunity disappears. With persistence and the guiding forces of liberty and equality, America and its international partners can bring the world forward into a more peaceful future.

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# Words as Weapons: The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Information War

Margaret S. Marangione

*“The Supreme Art of War is to subdue the enemy without fighting.”*  
Sun Tzu

*“If [the West] did not have press freedom, we would have to invent it for them.”* KGB General Ivan Agayants

*“Who are the bearers of truth? We are in an example of the post-enlightenment period where opinion and emotion is before logic and reason; I am worried for the whole world. I worry about truths future.”*  
General Michael Hayden Former Director, NSA

## ABSTRACT

Historians and scholars are already defining the twenty-first century as the century of post-truth and it is shaping up into an era where objective facts have lost merit and, instead, are replaced by appeals to personal beliefs and emotions. George Orwell forecasted this 72 years ago in his dystopian novel 1984. While propaganda has been utilized for centuries, cognitive hacking or the weaponization of information has subtle nuances that make it disturbingly different. Cognitive hacking includes the mass delivery of conspiracy theories and intentional lies with the desired effect that the receivers of the information take action, often through likes and shares on social media, sometimes with violence. Advances in computing and global hyper-connectivity through social media have empowered algorithms capable of profiling a user's preferences and placing the user in information silos ultimately changing the thinking of the individual it targets. Global powers including Russia and China have worked to hone their capabilities to exploit individual and group cognitive processes to achieve their desired ends. The psychological domain is in need of cognitive security.

**Keywords:** Information Warfare; Disinformation; Social Media; Fake News; Cognitive Bias

## Palabras como armas: la guerra de la información del siglo XXI

### RESUMEN

Los historiadores y académicos ya están definiendo el siglo XXI como el siglo de la posverdad y se perfila hacia una era en la que los hechos objetivos han perdido mérito y, en cambio, son reemplazados por apelaciones a creencias y emociones personales. George Orwell pronosticó esto hace 72 años en su novela distópica 1984. Si bien la propaganda se ha utilizado durante siglos, la piratería cognitiva o el uso de información como arma tiene matices sutiles que la hacen inquietantemente diferente. La piratería cognitiva incluye la entrega masiva de teorías de conspiración y mentiras intencionales con el efecto deseado de que los receptores de la información actúen, a menudo a través de me gusta y compartidos en las redes sociales, a veces con violencia. Los avances en la informática y la hiperconectividad global a través de las redes sociales han potenciado los algoritmos capaces de perfilar las preferencias de un usuario y colocar al usuario en silos de información, en última instancia, cambiando la forma de pensar de la persona a la que se dirige. Las potencias globales, incluidas Rusia y China, han trabajado para perfeccionar sus capacidades para explotar los procesos cognitivos individuales y grupales para lograr los fines deseados. El dominio psicológico necesita seguridad cognitiva.

**Palabras clave:** Guerra de información; Desinformación; Redes sociales; Noticias falsas; Sesgo cognitivo

## 信息武器：21世纪的信息战

### 摘要

历史学家和学者已将21世纪定义为后真相世纪，并且该世纪正形成一个时代，在这个时代里客观事实已失去价值，取而代之的是吸引个人信仰和情感的信息。72年前，作家George Orwell在其反乌托邦小说《一九八四》中便预测了这一现象。虽然几百年来政治宣传不断被使用，但认知侵入（cognitive hacking）或信息武器化的微妙差异使其有别于政治宣传，这是令人不安的。认知侵入包括大量涌入的阴谋论和编造的谎言，意图让信息接收者采取行动，通常是在社媒上点赞或分享，有时是实施暴力。计算技术的进步和通过社媒实

现的全球超-连通性 (hyper-connectivity) 让算法能够对用户的偏好加以定性, 并将用户置入信息孤岛, 最终改变用户的思维。包括俄罗斯和中国在内的世界强国已通过磨练各自的能力来充分利用个体和团体的认知过程, 以期实现各自期望的目的。心理领域需要认知安全。

关键词: 信息战, 错误信息, 社交媒体, 假新闻, 认知偏见

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## Overview

**H**istorians and scholars are already defining the twenty-first century as the century of post-truth and it is shaping up into an era where objective facts have lost merit and, instead, are replaced by appeals to personal beliefs and emotions. George Orwell predicted this 72 years ago in his dystopian novel *1984*. He foretold the destruction of the foundations of democracy due to lies. His term for the outrageous flagellation of the truth was called *doublethink*. Doublethink is the more sinister twin of propaganda and while propaganda has been utilized for centuries, cognitive hacking or the weaponization of information has subtle nuances that make it disturbingly different. Cognitive hacking includes the mass delivery of conspiracy theories and intentional lies with the desired effect that the receivers of the information take action, often through likes and shares on social media, sometimes with violence. Algorithms can profile user preferences, and these preferences quickly put the social media user into information silos ultimately changing the thinking of the individual it targets.

What makes the current climate of fake news, misinformation or cognitive hacking so chilling and dangerous is that the weaponization of information magnifies the disconnect between reality, fact and falsehoods. Additionally, these falsehoods have the ability to undermine medical information, institutions, demoralize democracy and destabilize governments. The internet, social media, fringe commentators, state and non-state actors, and political leaders who further their own agendas, are the agent provocateurs. This is coupled with an increasing gap in critical thinking skills to decipher fact from fiction. Additionally, social media companies' aversion to mitigating their platforms, and policy and lawmakers' lack of definite action against these platforms has also contributed to the problem. These variables are all contributing to this twenty-first-century war.

Throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first century, there were old-fashioned stop gates, like editors, that provided some blockades for false, misleading, and violent information. As the internet and social media grew in reach and influence, Facebook and Twitter have been struggling to keep

pace with a mechanism that has outstripped their original ideas for social media platforms. It is no longer a stage to connect friends from high school, promote a business or let family know of milestones of children's achievements. It has become Victor Frankenstein's monster. Cybersecurity expert and journalist Patrick Tucker reports that these platforms, "have upped their efforts to stem the flow but remain overmatched by users' determination to spread it ... half or more of the most shared posts on Facebook have been from high-follower sources and users with a record of posting false or misleading information. [This] presents Facebook with a growing dilemma" (Tucker, 2020). The sheer volume of information has stripped Facebook, Twitter, and all social media corporations' ability to keep pace, and it brings into question whether it is their responsibility to monitor the content.

The advertising algorithms embedded in social media utilize users' profiles and preferences for targeting with the stealth and accuracy of ICBM missiles, and it is not just rogue individuals that have entered this stage. Concerted efforts by state actors like China and Russia have resulted in the super-spreading of fabricated information. This new war is being waged by tech geeks, like Russia's Internet Research Agency, that can launch an organized tactical and strategic alternate reality campaign, and not by nuclear weapons, which are antiquated and expensive. Though China and Russia have different goals in the information wars, they still utilize and disseminate a diz-

zying amount of falsehoods that alter reality. According to Michael Morell, Former Deputy Director of the CIA, the Chinese are not interested in elections; they try to influence the public on policy issues towards China. Russia's goal is to influence American opinions, especially when it comes to presidential elections. He stated, "We did not have as much interference in Russia in 2021 as we did in 2016 because they did not have to work very hard. The divisiveness in America by 2020 was already very deep. It was a brush fire and they just added fuel by utilizing social media" (Morell, 2021).

As early as 2012, an organization called the Internet Research Agency (IRA), which is a troll farm in St. Petersburg, began functioning as a weapon of mass destruction (Weiner, 2020, 221). By 2014, the IRA had targeted the Pentagon and other U.S. government organizations, as well as the 2016 Presidential election. Russia turned freedom of press and information against Americans and flooded social media with false, misleading and weaponized claims to distort reality, which was documented in the 950-page report, *The U.S. Select Committee on Intelligence on Russian Active Measures Campaigns and Interference in the 2016 U.S. Election*.

Recently, The People's Republic of China (PRC) conducted an information warfare campaign against the United States in an attempt to protect its interests and limit its strategic losses caused by COVID-19. The PRC went to great lengths to misrepresent the severity of the virus and suppress information that



would have potentially helped the international community. Once it realized it could no longer suppress this emerging threat, it shifted its weaponized information campaign to projecting misinformation and blaming the U.S. for the virus's rapid spread (Easton, 2020).

Russia, China, and various non-state and rogue actors may have perfectly timed their delivery because, it has been argued, there has been a cognitive decline in critical thinking, which further exacerbates a vulnerable audience's susceptibility to information as a weapon. Researcher and professor Patricia Greenfield analyzed over 50 studies on learning and technology. Her findings indicate that, while visual intelligence has risen in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it did not correlate to a rise in critical thinking and reading, which are intrinsically linked. IQs have also flattened (UCLA, 2009). This, coupled with the speed of information delivery, the inability of an information flooded audience to tell the difference between a conspiracy, hoax, manipulation or fact, has led to a society that has become increasingly defenseless to the new information war.

Strategies for combating the weaponization of information are crucial, and the approach will need to be aggressive and must be embedded with policies, laws, and tactical outcomes. While improving critical thinking is certainly a foundational proficiency, it is essential that social media platforms be held accountable for cognitive hacking, especially when these platforms are driving violence. Spokespersons in traditional and non-traditional media, as well as leaders who fail to refute lies

and conspiracies, must also be held liable. In addition, consideration for a new intelligence arm of Cognitive Security may be needed, because the weaponization of information is not just an inconvenience—it is a deliberate attack designed to magnify divisive elements, fears, and prejudices in an effort to undermine and destabilize rational thought.

## **A Brief History of Disinformation**

**T**he recorded history of disinformation wars dates back to ancient Rome. As early as 32 B.C., Roman Emperor Octavian waged a propaganda campaign against Roman General Mark Antony that was designed to smear his reputation. This took the form of “short, sharp slogans written upon coins in the style of archaic Tweets.” These slogans painted Antony as a womanizer and a drunk, implying he had become Cleopatra's puppet, having been corrupted by his affair with her (Posetti and Mathews, 2018). In 1493, the Gutenberg printing press, the Internet for the Feudal age, dramatically amplified the dissemination of disinformation, which included stories collected from seafarers seeing monsters in the deep ocean and the Catholic Church's deliberate use to spread pro-Crusade, pro-Church and anti-Islamic messages. Not surprisingly, the church felt the Gutenberg Press was a gift from God (Richelle, 2015). Unlike the critical thinking Dark Age occurring in twenty-first-century audiences, the invention of the Gutenberg Press

fostered and encouraged individuals to read and decipher information for themselves, which ultimately led to the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Nonetheless, a watershed moment in fake news occurred in 1835 when *The New York Sun* published six articles

about the discovery of life on the moon complete with illustrations of humanoid bat-creatures and bearded blue unicorns (see Figure 1). This moment of 19th-century fake news is eerily similar to much of the outlandish information contained in conspiracy theories today.



Figure 1: A lithograph that accompanied the *Sun* article.

There are many historic examples of disinformation. Some include, but are not limited, to the doctrine of Manifest Destiny, which led to the Mexican American War, propaganda espoused by the railroads that led to the settling of the West at the expense of the Native Americans, and the “yellow journalism” of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Yet it was not until the early part of the twentieth century that modern propaganda and the Nazis ushered in contemporary information warfare. Joseph Goebbels established

the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda in 1933 to spread Nazi messages of hatred by inciting violence against Jews and using all mediums, including theatre and the press. “Nazi propaganda was ... essential to motivating those who implemented the mass murder of the European Jews and of other victims of the Nazi regime. It also served to secure the acquiescence of millions of others—as bystanders—to racially targeted persecution and mass murder” (Prosetti and Mathews, 2018). The Ministry’s aim was to ensure

that the Nazi message was successfully communicated through art, music, film, literature, and newspapers similar to the Russian Internet Research Agency's targeting of populations via social media. Both are deliberate and meticu-

lous campaigns and both strive to elicit information loyalty to a set of beliefs. Goebbels propaganda also sought to elicit political loyalty and nationalism and propaganda posters were an effective tool. (Figure 2)



Figure 2. Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda poster.

The Nazis demonized and persecuted Jews so effectively that the atrocities of the concentration camps were committed with popular support and Holocaust denialism still continues in the 21st century.

During the same decade of Nazi propaganda, the War of the Worlds radio drama (1938) fooled its audience into believing that earth was being attacked,

foreshadowing 21st-century conspiracy theories. “No one involved with War of the Worlds expected to deceive any listeners, because they all found the story too silly and improbable to ever be taken seriously” (Schwartz, 2015). Yet it was taken seriously. Of the estimated two million people listening to Well’s broadcast, one out of 12 thought a Martian invasion was happening in New Jersey (Memmott, 2015).

It was the Soviet Union, at the end of WWII, that began to perfect a propaganda technique that has revolutionized disinformation and was the forerunner of weaponized information. Two years after the surrender of Nazi Germany in 1947, the Soviets created the Committee of Information to run undercover operations to influence public opinion. This was followed by a specialized intelligence unit established in the 1950s to specifically disseminate disinformation. By the 1960s, disinformation measures were an active part of KGB Intelligence operations and the Cold War which resulted in more than 10,000 individual Soviet Bloc operations (Rid, 2017). By the 1970s, disinformation became a larger part of the Soviet strategy, and the unit was upgraded to a full service and was placed under the command of a KGB general (Deeks et al., 2017).

One of the most popular methods Russia used for disseminating disinformation was targeting legitimate news outlets. By anonymously sending forged documents, such as embassy communications or military memoranda, to credible publications, the Soviets attempted to create well-timed fake news stories that the public accepted as true. Once the stories caught on, they were reprinted extensively in Soviet-controlled papers in the hopes that the story would be picked up by more mainstream sources gaining credibility in the process (Deeks et al., 2017).

## Russia: Not a One Trick Pony

**D**isinformation is an Anglicization of the Russian term “dezinformatsiya,” which means the deliberate spread of inaccurate information. Traditionally, dezinformatsiya includes tactical information about an adversary coupled with dissemination of propaganda to gain an advantage (Rand, 2020). Furthermore, besides destabilization and informational gaslighting, weaponization of information is also economically more viable than martial military and, according to a Russian General, is conducted in a roughly 4:1 ratio of nonmilitary to military measures (Rand, 2020).

Russia’s early harbinger of this fake news storm occurred in the 1980s when the Soviet Union attempted to portray the AIDS epidemic as the work of the Pentagon in the Soviet publication *Literaturnaya Gazeta* in October 1985. The story claimed that scientists from the American Centers for Disease Control and the Army at Fort Detrick in Maryland had created HIV from two known viruses found in Africa and Latin America in an attempt to make a biological weapon (Disinformation, 2013). Over the next several years, Soviet media printed numerous stories reiterating and then embellishing their claims to include that U.S. military personnel were widely infected and vectors for the spread of HIV overseas (Geissler, 2013).

In the twenty-first century, Russia has utilized a concerted and calculated approach to information warfare that may be unprecedented in history.

The current technology, along with the ability to quantify an individual's social media likes and shares, has been effectively exploited as a new weapon system by fully manipulating the impact of the internet and social media's open access. For example, in October 2019, the Senate Intelligence Committee reported that Russia's Internet Research Agency (IRA) reached tens of millions of voters to include at least 126 million U.S. citizens via Facebook, 20 million on Instagram, and 1.4 million via Twitter (Issac, 2017). Coupled with the anonymity of the internet, this allowed Russia to set agendas and take advantage of societal vulnerabilities. While Russia is not the only player in the disinformation wars, Russia's hacks and leaks were well documented by the Senate Intelligence Committee in their report about Russian interference leading up to the 2016 U.S. election. According to Adam Chiara, Professor of Communications, he feels, "Vladimir Putin [and] the U.S.'s complacency and cultural divisions have led to [this] opportunity, one in which Russia took advantage of and struck the U.S. within its borders in a surprising manner" (Chiara, 2017).

Russia's unchecked influence in the 2016 election has reaped benefits to Russia far beyond the polls. Moscow has helped to turn American against American and chipped away at the foundations of democracy to the point that the American public and government officials can countenance unjustified accusations of fraud in the 2020 elections. These accusations of fraud and malicious intent in vote counting occurred despite a lack of evidence and

Christopher Krebs, who led the 2020 federal government's election cybersecurity efforts, stating, "There is no evidence that any voting system deleted or lost votes, changed votes, or was in any way compromised" (Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency, 2020).

Putin learned the art of destabilization from the Stasi, East Germany's secret police. Russia built on Stasi tactics in creative targeting of online conversations and social media. As early as 2012, Putin dispatched the director of military intelligence to begin repurposing cyberweapons used in warzones for psychological operations use in American electioneering. (Bergman, 2017). Putin understands that truth and reality in the twenty-first century are malleable, and the Stasi method of *Zersetzung*, or decomposition, is ungluing the American psyche. Originally intended towards individuals, Stasi decomposition was designed to unhinge the spirit of an individual. In the words of a Stasi manual, the goal of decomposition was to, "[provoke] and [enforce] internal conflicts and contradictions within hostile-negative forces that fragment, paralyze, disorganize and isolate the opponent until the individual finds themselves in a Kafkaesque nightmare" (Tierney, 2020). A Stasi victim called the campaign an "assault on the human soul" (Tierney, 2020). Now, Russia is utilizing the Stasi playbook to weaken America's soul from the inside by identifying ethnic, racial and partisan discord and spreading dissonance about democracy, presidential elections and the election process, often through alt-right groups. Using a diverse toolbox of

propaganda and cyberattacks, Moscow employs hackers and trolls to propagate conspiracy theories and cultivate a skepticism of media, politicians, and government. A striking case in point was how the IRA targeted African Americans with dispatches about boycotting the 2016 election. These messages included, “Don’t Vote For Hillary Clinton,” and “Hillary Clinton Received \$20,000 from the KKK” (Shane, 2018). Other messages drove home harsh and pointed pro-gun rights and anti-immigration messages that garnered American supporters with over a quarter of a million followers, 4.9 million shares, and 5.4 million likes. (Shane, 2018).

Project Lakhta was a Russian intelligence operation that as early as 2014, began spreading false and divisive messages on controversial topics like gun rights, immigration, the Confederate Flag, race relations and American politics and politicians. One employee of Project Lkhata utilized a bogus account to post, “Just a friendly reminder to get involved in the 2018 midterms. They hate you, they hate your morals. They hate your 1A and 2A rights. They hate the police. They hate the military and they hate your president [Trump]” (Tucker, 2020). The troll farms opened fake social media accounts that targeted both conservative and liberal social groups. This was done without any costly movement of troops or equipment and was often funded by Russian oligarchs with ties to the Kremlin. It is estimated that the IRA employs about 400 people with a budget of \$400,000, with a typical employee working a 12-hour shift for approximately \$700.00 a

month. Employees are expected to post news articles 50 times a day and maintain six Facebook accounts with at least three posts a day. The goal is to win over 500 people a month (Waltzman, 2017).

### **China’s Covid Campaign, Cyberattack, and Censorship**

**M**ost news sources were in agreement in reporting that conflicting information was coming out of China during the early stages of the COVID-19 infection. A Red Cross study of blood samples from China, taken from the fall of 2019, indicated that at least two percent of those samples had the COVID-19 antibodies in them, a date much earlier than when Beijing admits to discovering the disease (Weichart, 2020). By December 2019, China was aware of the human-to-human transmission of the virus, refused to share information with the WHO, and denied the virus’s existence. Furthermore, doctors who initially raised alarm about the illness were arrested (Seaboyer, 2020). China also spread false narratives regarding the virus. According to Anthony Seaboyer, professor of Political Science at the Royal Military College of Canada, “Chinese agents have, for example, spread text messages and social media posts that falsely claimed the US president was locking down the country.” This was in an effort to strike fear and sow seeds of chaos and unrest. The rumors became so widespread that the National Security Council had to issue [an announcement](#) stating they were fake.

Along with drastically under-representing the severity of the virus and using a tactic from Russia's playbook to sow discord, China has tried to censor any critical citizen commentary of the response to, and threat of, the virus. China banned online gaming and chatting with foreigners in an effort to reduce the spread of information on the virus (Seaboyer, 2020). *The Washington Times* journalist and author Brandon Weichart went further in accusations about China. He states, "Disparate reports came out this year [2020] suggesting that China's embattled regime, when faced with the prospect of being at the epicenter of a major epidemic, allowed for the disease to spread beyond their borders to even the global playing field. Beijing rightly understood that if they contained the disease too early, then the disease would only harm China, and give other countries, notably the United States, a significant advantage" (Weichart, 2020).

By early March 2020, China started spreading fake news about the virus's origins that were picked up at alarming speed by social media and conspiracy theorists. For example, China ironically [began alleging](#) the U.S. Army was responsible for the outbreak which was developed as a genetically engineered bioweapon, and that the virus was either intentionally or accidentally planted by U.S. military personnel in the city of Wuhan. To support this claim, an [official of the Chinese Foreign Ministry](#) tweeted support for an article that suggested the COVID-19 originated in the United States (Bajhema, 2020.) This was a similar tactic used

during the 2002–2003 SARS epidemic when the *China Youth Daily* speculated that SARS was a genetic weapon developed by the National Institutes of Health in the United States.

A disinformation hacking tool, [Hamilton 2.0](#), tracked this COVID disinformation campaign. Hamilton 2.0 is dedicated to tracing official accounts and media outlets linked to or funded by the Russian government, and it also examines account behaviors and trends among Chinese state-backed media by pursuing content that Chinese government officials share on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and on state news websites. According to CBS News reporter Olivia Gazis, "What was revealed was a marked evolution in the type of content Chinese accounts shared since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak. While early messaging focused on Beijing's efforts to stem the virus' spread, those messages grew more overtly hostile in February and March [2020], as cases proliferated outside of China. Some of those accounts shared conspiracy theories about the origins of the virus and attacked Western officials for criticizing China's role" (Gazis, 2020).

Sadly, China took an aggressive approach to one of the early heroes of COVID-19, Dr. Li Wenliang, who had [warned about the new viral outbreak](#) only to be threatened by the police and accused of peddling rumors. He [died of COVID-19](#) and immediately China directed a disinformation campaign (See Figure 3).



CHINESE MEDIA DIRECTIVES	
TO CHINESE NEWS WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS:	关于武汉市中心医院李文亮医生去世一事，各网站、新媒体要严格规范稿源，严禁使用自媒体稿件擅自报道，不得弹窗PUSH，不评论、不炒作。互动环节稳妥控制热度，不设话题，逐步撤出热搜，严管有害信息。
	<i>"... do not use push notifications, do not post commentary, do not stir up speculation. Safely control the fervor in online discussions, do not create hashtags, gradually remove from trending topics, strictly control harmful information."</i>
TO LOCAL PROPAGANDA WORKERS:	各区、县（市）网信办：根据2月7日省网信办视频例会精神，现就近期工作提示如下：一、准确把握网上舆情严峻复杂的形势日前，李文亮医生去世已迅速成为网络热点。我们要清醒认识到此事所引发的蝴蝶效应、破窗效应、雪球效应，对我们的网上舆论管控工作提出了前所未有的挑战。各地网信部门要高度重视网上舆情，对于严重损害党和政府公信力、矛头直指政治体制的，要坚决管控；在其他事情上对于宣泄性的要引导，注意方式方法。
	<i>"We must recognize with clear mind the butterfly effect, broken windows effect and snowball effect triggered by this event, and the unprecedented challenge that it has posed to our online opinion management and control work. All Cyberspace Administration bureaus must pay heightened attention to online opinion, and resolutely control anything that seriously damages party and government credibility and attacks the political system ..."</i>
XIAOSHAN DISTRICT, FEB. 12	加强网军统一指挥，组织全区网评员实时待命，及时开展舆论引导。强化网络正能量推送及疫情防控科普工作，组织区级媒体、网评员撰写、转发正能量推文400余则，开展防疫科普宣传100余次，三是加强舆论引导，凝聚网络共识。加强网军统一指挥，组织全区网评员实时待命，及时开展舆论引导。强化网络正能量推送及疫情防控科普工作，组织区级媒体、网评员撰写、转发正能量推文400余则，开展防疫科普宣传100余次，发动网评员跟评、引导4万余人次，有效消除市民恐慌心理，提振防控信心，为打赢疫情防控阻击战营造良好的舆论氛围。
	<i>"Mobilized online commenters to comment and guide more than 40,000 times, effectively eliminating city residents' panic, boosting confidence in prevention and control efforts, and creating a good atmosphere of public opinion for winning the battle against the epidemic."</i>
TONGLU COUNTY, FEB. 13	通过重点加强对论坛、微博、微信、移动新闻客户端等网上互动区域的实时监测，确保及时发现、研判、处置重要舆情及各类谣言等有害信息。此外，积极发挥全县网评员和属地瞭望哨信息员作用，重点加强对朋友圈、微信群等封闭、半封闭网络平台的信息监测，为打击网络谣言和正面宣传引导搜集基础素材。针对网上发现的谣言信息，加强与涉事区域和涉事单位的沟通，并会同公安机关严厉打击。截止2月13日，我县共发布辟谣信息15条，转载辟谣信息62条，由公安机关落地查人16人，教育告诫14人，行政拘留2人，造谣造谣当事人自行删除不实信息20余条，组织网评员转发辟谣信息6000余条，及时解疑释惑，回应网民关切。
	<i>"As of Feb. 13, our county published 15 rumor-debunking posts, reposted 62 rumor-debunking posts, 16 people were investigated by public security organs, 14 people were educated and admonished, two people were put in administrative detention ..."</i>
FUYANG DISTRICT, EARLY FEBRUARY	及时处置防疫工作中涉确诊数量、夸大疫情影响、人员感染隔离等谣言信息。防疫期间，与公安网警共同依法落地查处28人次，官方平台发布和转载辟谣信息56条。避免不实信息蔓延造成公众恐慌，消解防疫工作成效。联动网军、自媒体、舆情监测服务公司力量，捕捉敏感线索，确保舆情发现早。发动全区1500余名网军力量，及时上报微信群等半封闭圈子舆情信息。发挥区自媒体联盟作用，借助其爆料通道收集一手线索。与中青舆情监测服务公司保持密切联系，加大软件巡查频次，精准设置关键字，提升灵敏度。
	<i>"Mobilized the force of more than 1,500 cyber-soldiers across the district to promptly report information about public opinion in WeChat groups and other semiprivate chat circles."</i>

Figure 3. False information distributed via China's information channels. C/o NY Times.



“China has a politically weaponized system of censorship; it is refined, organized, coordinated and supported by the state’s resources,” said Xiao Qiang, a research scientist at the School of Information at the University of California, Berkeley, and the founder of *China Digital Times*. “It’s not just for deleting something. They also have a powerful apparatus to construct a narrative and aim it at any target with huge scale.” Like Russia’s troll armies, it has been [estimated](#) that hundreds of thousands of people in China work to post comments and share content that reinforces state ideology. Many of them are low-level employees at government departments and party organizations. Universities [have recruited](#) students and teachers for the task. Local governments have also held [training sessions](#) for them (Zong, 2020).

There has also been evidence that coronavirus-related information is being used to disguise [malware-laced messages](#) and apps. According to a team at Check Point, a cybersecurity firm, they exposed a Chinese APT. Check Point stated that the Chinese APT had “weaponized documents to deliver previously unknown malware. This was a targeted cyber-attack by a Chinese APT group on a public sector entity of Mongolia [that] leveraged the coronavirus pandemic.” The APT sent two documents in the form of press briefings about COVID-19 that masqueraded as the Mongolian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and contained a remote access malware (Doffman, 2021).

## The Information Highway: Algorithms and Avatars

Russia and China have not acted in a void. They are utilizing a black hole of social media that is a breeding ground of fake news and conspiracy theories where everyone is an author. While this has certainly democratized data, it has also resulted in the dynamic that for every fact, there is a counter fact, or alternative fact, that often has no basis in reality. Fighting this digital disinformation is difficult, and social media companies have been slow to respond. As Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg has stated, he does not want to be “the arbiter of truth” (Levy, 2020). Unfortunately for users, social media companies make money from users’ activity and utilize mathematical equations to identify patterns in behaviors quantified by clicks, shares, comments, replies and video views. These algorithms predict what content to show and to whom (Jones, 2020). Only recently, after January 6, 2021, did Facebook respond to pressure, and has convened an internal Supreme Court to rule on Facebook postings and content.

Ironically, in 2004, Google was celebrated when it launched Gmail with its ability to read users’ email and then filter information to a user based on preferences. Data mining practices continued to get more sophisticated throughout the twenty-first century in manipulating what a social media user sees through “nudging.” Digital nudging is an approach based on insights from behavioral economics that applies

user interface design elements to affect the choices of users in digital environments, which ultimately puts them in a marketing and information silo. These continuously updated and pervasive algorithmically driven systems provide users with highly personalized environments by providing a narrow range of choices, based on a user's preferences, thereby artificially engineering a very narrow view. According to Professor Karen Yeung, this personalized propaganda can gradually shift moral norms and priorities (Ignatou, 2019).

Facebook was questioned about this in 2018 when Mark Zuckerberg went to Capitol Hill to explain to members of Congress how the detailed personal information of [up to 87 million Facebook users](#) ended up in the hands of a voter-profiling company called Cambridge Analytica (Kang, 2018). As early as 2014, *The New York Times* reported that contractors and employees of Cambridge Analytica sold psychological profiles of American voters to political campaigns by acquiring the private Facebook data of tens of millions of users—the largest known leak in Facebook history. According to former Cambridge employees, associates and documents, the breach allowed the company to exploit the private social media activity of a huge swath of the American electorate (Confessore, 2018).

Christopher Wylie, who helped found Cambridge Analytica and worked there until late 2014, said of its leaders, “Rules don’t matter for them. For them, this is a war, and it’s all fair...” (Rosenberg, 2018). Wylie, an eventual

whistleblower, was the mastermind in the plan to harvest the Facebook profiles and to use private and personal information to create sophisticated psychological and political profiles. The goal was to then target these users with political ads designed to work on their particular psychological makeup. “We ‘broke’ Facebook,” Wylie says. “I *made* Steve Bannon’s psychological warfare tool” (Cadwaladar, 2018).

*The New York Times* reported that Cambridge’s British affiliate, the SCL Group, were in contact with executives from Lukoil, a Kremlin-linked oil giant. Lukoil was interested in the ways data was used to target American voters (Confeseroe, 2018). Wylie supported this claim. The work, he said, would be, “shared with the CEO of the business,” a former Soviet oil minister and associate of Putin. “It didn’t make any sense to me,” says Wylie. “I didn’t understand either the email or the pitch presentation we did. Why would a Russian oil company want to target information on American voters?” (Cadwaladar, 2018). Mueller’s investigation traces the first stages of the Russian operation to disrupt the 2016 US election back to 2014. Coincidentally, that is the same year that Cambridge Analytica presented the Russian oil company with an outline of its datasets, capabilities and methodology (Cadwaladar, 2018).

Facebook’s algorithms are sophisticated when it comes to data mining the preferences of its users. According to Peter Eckersley, Chief Computer Scientist at a digital rights nonprofit, “Facebook can learn almost anything

about you by using artificial intelligence to analyze your behavior. That knowledge turns out to be perfect both for advertising and propaganda. If Facebook is being singled out for such practices, it is because it is a market leader and its stockpiling of personal data is at the core of its \$40.6 billion annual business” (Rosenberg, 2018). [Jonathan Albright](#), Director of the Digital Forensics Initiative at Columbia University’s Tow Center for Digital Journalism, [has mapped out](#) how social networks, including Facebook and YouTube, acted as amplification services for websites that would otherwise receive little attention online (Lapowsky, 2018). Facebook uses a number of software tools to do this tracking. When internet users venture to other sites, Facebook can still monitor what they are doing with software like its ubiquitous “Like” and “Share” buttons, and something called Facebook Pixel, an invisible code that’s dropped onto the other websites that allows that site and Facebook to track users’ activity (Singer, 2018).

This monitoring has occurred as Facebook has grown to be one of the largest sources of news. The Pew Research Center reports that 43% of Americans get their news from Facebook, and each year that percentage increases (Gramlich, 2019). This is, at a minimum, a two-fold problem. First, information feeds provide users a very narrow world-view based on their preferences. The second issue is the sharing and retweeting of false information. A team of researchers at Princeton University tracked the internet use of over 3,000 Americans in the lead-up to the

2016 presidential election. They found Facebook to be the referrer site for untrustworthy news sources over 15% of the time. By contrast, Facebook referred users to authoritative news sites only 6% of the time as seen in Figure 4 (Travis, 2020).

Because of the increasing backlash that social media organizations have been facing for their role in the spread of disinformation and alternate truths, Facebook has made attempts to outwit the buzz feeds. An early effort was the revamp of its News Feed algorithm to prioritize content shared by friends and family over posts from publisher pages. As Facebook noted, “Most of the news stories people see in News Feed are from sources they or their friends follow, and that won’t change” (Hutchinson, 2020). News Feed distribution comes down to what individuals share, so Facebook can’t intervene and make people share the original report. “When multiple stories are shared by publishers and are available in a person’s News Feed, we will boost the more original one which will help it get distribution” (Hutchinson, 2020). Because it is based on what an individual user or group shares, there still is not control of content and at least one study of the platform since that make-over suggests that the change actually [rewards](#) engagement, outrage, and division.

Another early effort by Facebook has been to label content and monitor toxic groups on their site. This is similar to the way Twitter finally started [labeling](#) some disputed posts from highly influential users such as political

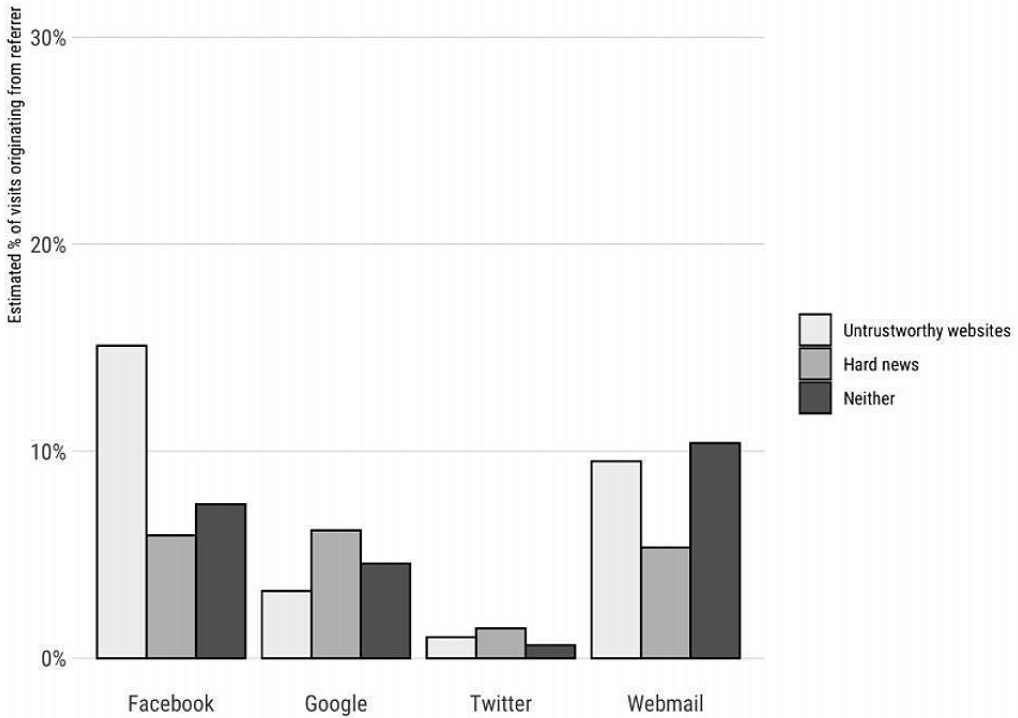


Figure 4. (Copyright Pew Research Center).

leaders. In early 2020, Twitter started to include labels of coronavirus misinformation, misleading tweets about elections and civic processes, and labeling information that is fabricated or manipulated media (Reuters, 2020). Facebook’s Monica Bickert stated, “If there’s content that is delegitimizing the [2020] election process, for instance, an inaccurate claim that mail-in voting is not secure, we would put a label on there” (Tucker, 2020). As of January 8, 2021, they are also banning users whose tweets incite violence (Twitter, 2021). On January 6, 2021, Facebook also took similar measures. Facebook Vice President Nick Clegg stated, “Every day, Facebook makes decisions about whether content is harmful, and these decisions are made according to Com-

munity Standards we have developed over many years. It would be better if these decisions were made according to frameworks agreed by democratically accountable lawmakers. But in the absence of such laws, there are decisions that we cannot duck” (Lyons, 2021).

In the months leading up to the 2020 election, the warning of Russian interference and domestic terrorism was discussed by FBI Director Christopher Wray at a meeting of the House Homeland Security Committee. He cautioned, “We certainly have seen very active—very active —efforts by the Russians to influence our election in 2020” Mr. Wray said, specifically “to both sow divisiveness and discord, and I think the intelligence community has assessed this publicly, to primarily ...

denigrate ... what the Russians see as a kind of an anti-Russian establishment,” (Kanno, 2020). According to Max Bergman, Senior Fellow of U.S./Russia Policy and former State Department senior adviser to the assistant secretary of state for political-military affairs, he feels the connection to Russian interference and alt-right groups is glaring. He states, “A number of academic experts in social media analysis have documented the role of Russian trolls, bots, ... in Russia’s growing links to the alt-right. Russia’s messaging and posturing has also demonstrated an intimacy with alt-right content, as shown by Russia’s tweeting of a racist meme used by white supremacists. These links are not surprising given Russia’s well-documented backing of far-right political parties and extremist groups” (Bergman, 2017).

Bergman mentions this was also true for the 2016 election. One report found that a popular pro-Trump, anti-Clinton Facebook group called Secure Borders, which at the time of the 2016 election boosted 140,000 subscribers, was actually a Russian troll factory. Alarming, one of the posts at the height of the election campaign reached 4 million Facebook users and was liked more than 300,000 times and shared more than 80,000 times and published as many as 50 million posts a month with anti-Clinton posts getting the most attention (Bergman, 2017).

The dilemma for all social media companies is they have their finger in the hole of the bursting dyke. Alex Stamos, Director of the Stanford Internet Observatory Policy Center, defined

part of the problem this way. “You have a relatively small number of people with very large followings who have the ability to go and find a narrative somewhere, pick it out of obscurity ... one tweet, one photo, one video, and then to harden it into these [false] narratives ... that will be the absolute biggest challenge for the platforms going forward. It’s relatively easy for social-media platforms to program their newsfeed algorithms to filter out, say, Russian trolls. But, when you talk about people that have millions of folks who have decided that they’re going to make the affirmative step of following this person’s account, they’re going to religiously reload their YouTube page for the newest video. They’re going to watch their Facebook Lives. How do you handle those people is a humongous problem” (Tucker, 2020).

Because of the sheer scale in monitoring the information highway, the competing priorities of private profit vs public good, with private profit tied to users’ preferences and psychology, perhaps the real defense in fighting digital disinformation should happen in the brain of the social media users. Cybersecurity and internet researcher Richard Fomo stated the best protection of cognitive hacking is the users themselves. “But that defense fails if people don’t have critical thinking skills, or worse, don’t use them to think critically about what they are seeing and examining claims of fact before accepting them as true” (Fomo, 2020).

## Cognitive Biases, Conspiracy Theories and De-evolution of Critical Thinking Skills

A disturbing trend of the information age is the idea that while everyone is allowed their own personal and often emotional opinion, somehow they also feel they are entitled to their own facts as well. This can be a slippery slope because currently, opinion is being masqueraded as fact. Once upon a time, there were logical thinkers who vetted ideas and theories, and these speculations were driven by evidence and science before being promoted as truth. In Jonathan Rauch's essay, "The Constitution of Knowledge," he considers how every society has an epistemic regime, an arena of ideas where what is knowledge is validated by logic. In democratic societies, this often includes clergy members, teachers, journalists, researchers, scientists, etc. and while there is plenty of room for counterarguments, there is an agreed-upon shared system of rules for weighing evidence, building knowledge and awareness of logical fallacies. According to Rauch, this system operates like a funnel. It allows a wide volume of ideas to pour in but only a narrow group of ideas survives collective scrutiny. "We let alt-truth talk," Rauch said, "but we don't let it write textbooks, receive tenure, bypass peer review, set the research agenda, dominate the front pages, give expert testimony or dictate the flow of public dollars" (Rauch, 2018). In the information age, we are in an epistemic assault. "These are truly uncharted waters for the country," wrote former NSA

Director Michael Hayden. "We have, in the past, argued over the values to be applied to objective reality, or occasionally over what constituted objective reality, but never the existence or relevance of objective reality itself" (Rauch, 2018).

When  $2 + 2$  equals 5, authority and power cannot be challenged, and humans might find themselves in a post-societal nightmare. Many argue that this is the forerunner to the decline of democracy. Facts are a democratizing tool in and of themselves as they are evidence that everyone can agree on, share and relate to. If all information is true then people will no longer be able to speak truth to power and all becomes spectacle. How to train brains in the fight against fake news is daunting. Many feel that social media and the internet have increased individuals' vulnerability to cognitive hacking, and this information environment has also been the catalyst in declining skills in critical thinking.

Not surprisingly, 75 percent of employers claim the students they hire after 12, 16 or more years of formal education lack the ability to think critically and solve problems (Haber, 2020). The reality for most of these Gen Z workers has been digital media, online transparency and the internet (the iPhone was launched in 2007, Facebook was founded in 2004), which encourages the skimming and scanning of info bites. *The Wall Street Journal* analyzed results from the College Learning Assessment Plus, a critical-thinking test given annually to freshmen and seniors from 200

U.S. colleges. The test tasks students to use data, articles, blog posts and emails to answer questions and demonstrate skills that are important “not only for success in high school and college [but also] for success in the workplace and other aspects of life outside the classroom.” The *Journal* found that at about half of schools, large groups of seniors scored at basic or below-basic levels. They can generally read documents and communicate to readers but can't make a cohesive argument or interpret evidence (Belkin, 2017).

Professor Perry Neel, with over 30 years of college teaching, also attributes the lack of intellectual efficacy to a solipsist attitude.

“Often, a student feels that the only concerns he/she has are their own concerns. The result of this is a lack of curiosity about others and the world. The most telling example of this has occurred several times in my Applied Ethics Class. Part of the course involves the selection of news articles that present examples of ethical issues in society. I have had students incapable of reading news sources to find ethical issues. The excuse offered is ‘I don't like reading about other people's problems.’ Or, ‘It makes me feel bad to know about all the trouble in world.’ I would describe these students' reaction as an intellectual paralysis. In fact, the result has been that these students dropped the class rather than challenging their ideas. A big part

of this change I attribute to technology. Whereas, the promise of the worldwide web was access to an almost unlimited amount of information, it has instead helped create these self-contained bubbles for individuals or particular groups. Rather than curiosity about what they don't know, too many students only use technology to suit their own personal needs and desires. I think one of the most important critical thinking skills is self-criticism. When technology conforms to the individual's whims, there is little in the way of self-criticism.” (Neel 2020).

A study at California State University in Los Angeles echoed Neel's observations. Thirty-five percent of seniors had below-basic critical thinking skills and 29 percent had basic skills. At the University of Kentucky, six percent of seniors were below-basic, and 14 percent were basic, according to the *Journal's statistics* (Belkin, 2017). A Stanford University study tested over 7,800 students in a study of reasoning concluding a “... stunning and dismaying consistency of critical thinking skills. Overall, young people's ability to reason about information can be summed up in one word: bleak. Students were unable to tell real news from lies” (Levittan, 2017).

Critical thinking requires the ability to address counterarguments, interrogate, examine, and follow logical structured thinking, and necessitates some degree of innate skepticism. This



is difficult if all the messages an individual is receiving is supporting their worldview, which then becomes an echo chamber. Also, without self-criticism and the ability to distinguish logical fallacies, an individual is isolated and polarized into their own alternate reality. University of Virginia Professor Donald Leech, who is co-author of the book *COVID-19 Conspiracy Theories*, states, “You have people who are literally in different reality bubbles ... you pick what fits your beliefs best” (Leech, 2020). Then individuals can isolate themselves into their own reality, which is supported by the algorithms fed to them via social media. Author Timothy Snyder feels these alternative reality bubbles are a slippery slope for humanity and civic engagement. He states, “It is our ability to discern facts that makes you an individual and our collective trust in common knowledge that makes us a society. The individual who investigates is also a citizen who builds. The leader who dislikes investigators is a potential tyrant” (Snyder, 2017: 3).

Thomas Jefferson, in his Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge, wrote, “the most effectual means of preventing [tyranny] would be, to illuminate, as far as practicable, the minds of the people at large, and more especially to give them knowledge of those facts.” Yet egocentric thinking, groupthink, drone mentality, biased experiences, arrogance, and intolerance are the foundation of many Facebook groups and Twitter Feeds. Objectivity rests on intellectual humility, knowledge of our extensive ignorance and the need to consider competing sources

of information. This lack of suspicion is also driving the belief in conspiracy theories.

A conspiracy theory (CT) is diametrically opposed to critical thinking and individuals who believe in conspiracy theories will believe it regardless of the amount of disconfirming evidence. So, without any evidence, what makes a conspiracy believable? Two primary things: a motive that hooks people, and a claim of abuse of power. What matters less than any evidence is the image a conspiracy theorist can put in someone’s mind that there is an engaging motive for an illuminati or special organization whose only goal is to manipulate the public. The demand for evidence of a cabal can be easily dismissed that the people in power would never let evidence reach the public. It’s a circular logic based in fallacy, but airtight if one accepts every claim as truth.

There are fundamental reasons why conspiracies are so attractive to some people. First, it offers conspiracy believers a clear villain. Ironically, by believing that the forces that govern the world are far beyond their own control, they then gain a sense of control for themselves in believing a conspiracy theory. “It becomes a tool of comfort, and a knowledge that the world is not orchestrated by confused, unconnected, chaotic processes, but instead by people (or lizards, aliens, illuminati, etc.) who are powerful and connected” (Dawson, 2020). Over a fifth of Americans still believe the conspiracy theory that [climate change is a hoax](#), while over a tenth insist that the [moon landing was faked](#),



including so-called “Flat Earthers” who deny that the Earth is a sphere (Statista, 2019). Many of these conspiracy beliefs are generally harmless. However, the ability to spread ideas through the internet without fact-checking can result in crises. QAnon, COVID, and the 2020 election results are startling examples.

The QAnon conspiracy theory has been linked to several violent acts since 2018, with QAnon supporters arrested for threatening politicians, breaking into the residence of the Canadian prime minister, an armed standoff near the Hoover Dam, a kidnapping plot and two kidnappings, and at least one murder (See Figure 5). Qanon adherents believe that Donald Trump is trying to save the world from a cabal of satanic pedophiles. The [conspiracy theory’s narrative](#) includes centuries-old anti-Semitic tropes, like the belief that a league of elites is harvesting blood from abused children, and it names specific people, including Democratic politicians and Hollywood celebrities, as participants in a global plot (Beckett, 2020).

The Pew Research Center examined the belief that COVID-19 was planned and correlated that belief to a user’s reliance on social media for information (see Figure 6). A majority of U.S. adults (71%) say they have heard at least “a little” about the conspiracy theory that the COVID-19 outbreak was intentionally planned by powerful people, including 19% who say they have heard “a lot” about this theory. Those who frequently turn to social media for news about the outbreak are especially likely to be aware of the theory. 30% of

individuals who often get COVID-19 news from social media say they have heard “a lot” about the theory that the outbreak was intentionally planned, compared with half as many (15%) among those who turn to social media for COVID-19 news less often. Americans’ assessments of the truth of this theory also differ substantially based on the sources of information they turn to most for news about the pandemic (Mitchell et al., 2020).

Americans who have heard of the claim that powerful people planned the pandemic, a majority of those who mainly rely on tweets from political leaders for COVID-19 news (56%), say the conspiracy theory is probably or definitely true. That outpaces those who rely most on local news outlets (42% who have heard of the theory think it is likely true), state and local officials (32%), public health organizations (25%), and national news outlets (22%). Those who rely mainly on national news outlets and are aware of the theory are most likely to say the theory is probably or definitely *not* true (68%) (Mitchell et. al., 2020) (See Figure 6).

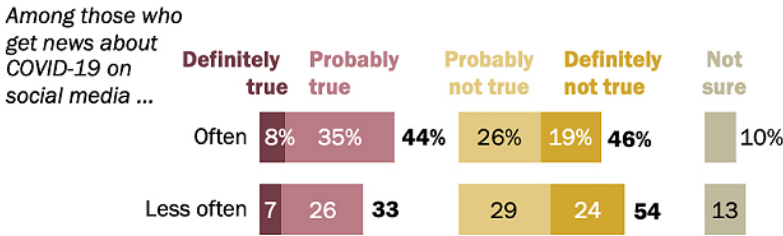
The COVID 19 conspiracy theory rejection of science, that it was planned and hatched in a lab, that it is a political tool of manipulation, that it is a purposeful bioweapon, etc. eerily resembles how fourteenth-century people reacted to the bubonic plague. According to David Leech, “In medieval times people turned to religion for answers as to why the plague was killing so many. As fear and superstition took hold, so did the need to blame something or

<b>QANON: A TIMELINE OF VIOLENCE LINKED TO THE CONSPIRACY THEORY</b>	
<b>15 JUNE 2018</b>	An Arizona resident blocks a bridge near the Hoover Dam with an armored vehicle. He later pleads guilty to a terrorism charge.
<b>19 DECEMBER 2018</b>	A California man is arrested after being found with what appeared to be bomb-making materials in his car, in an alleged plot to blow up a satanic display in the capitol in Springfield, Illinois.
<b>13 MARCH 2019</b>	In Staten Island, a 24-year-old man allegedly murders a leader in the Gambino crime family.
<b>25 SEPTEMBER 2019</b>	A QAnon supporter allegedly smashes up the Chapel of the Holy Hill in Sedona, Arizona, while shouting about the Catholic church supporting human trafficking.
<b>30 DECEMBER 2019</b>	Montana police arrest a QAnon supporter from Colorado in connection with an alleged kidnapping scheme.
<b>26 MARCH 2020</b>	A Kentucky mother is charged with kidnapping twin daughters.
<b>2 APRIL 2020</b>	A man is charged with intentionally derailing a freight train near the navy hospital ship Mercy in Los Angeles.
<b>30 APRIL 2020</b>	A woman is arrested after driving to New York and allegedly making threatening statements against Joe Biden and Hillary Clinton.
<b>11 JUNE 2020</b>	A Boston man leads police on a 20-mile car chase while livestreaming himself talking about QAnon.
<b>3 JULY 2020</b>	Corey Hurren, a reservist in the Canadian Rangers, allegedly rams a truck through the gates of the prime minister's residence in Ottawa.
<b>12 AUGUST 2020</b>	A Texas woman is arrested after allegedly chasing and crashing into a car, then telling police she thought she was chasing a pedophile.
<b>1 OCTOBER 2020</b>	Utah woman arrested in Oregon for allegedly kidnapping her young son.
<b>6 JANUARY 2021</b>	The QAnon conspiracy theory and significant misinformation fueled the insurrection at the Capitol.

Figure 5. Violence and QAnon Conspiracy theories.

**Those who get COVID-19 news from social media often are more likely to give credence to conspiracy theory that pandemic was planned**

Among U.S. adults who have heard about the conspiracy theory that powerful people intentionally planned the coronavirus outbreak, % who think that it is ...



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer not shown.  
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 4-10, 2020.  
 “Three Months In, Many Americans See Exaggeration, Conspiracy Theories and Partisanship in COVID-19 News”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 6.

someone. That fed into existing prejudices about the Jews and Muslims ... six hundred years later, we’ve accumulated a lot more knowledge but we’re clearly not smarter. We’ve just got more science to ignore” (Still, 2020).

**Who is Prone and Why: Seizing, Freezing, and Cognitive Closure**

**B**elief in conspiracy theories appears to be driven by motives that can be characterized as epistemic (understanding one’s environment), existential (being safe and in control of one’s environment), and social (maintaining a positive image of the self and the social group). Along with the dopamine hits everyone gets from *likes* on social media, it turns out

it is not completely random who will and will not believe in a conspiracy theory. Yet while our predilection to social media magnetism might be a tragic flaw in the human genome, psychological profiles of individuals who believe in one or more conspiracy theories have some significant trends. It is easy to demonize and stereotype conspiracy believers into the comedic “tin foil hat” depiction often mocked in media, but many are people who simply fall victim to misinformation. Unlike ordinary lies and propaganda, which try to make you believe *something*, disinformation tries to make you disbelieve *everything*. It scatters so much bad information, and casts so many aspersions on so many sources of information, that people throw up their hands and say, “They’re

all a pack of liars.” As Steve Bannon, former Trump aide and former leader of *Breitbart News*, succinctly put it in an interview with *Bloomberg*, “[T]he way to deal with [the media] is to flood the zone with shit” (Rauch, 2020).

One of the most fascinating things about those who believe in a conspiracy is their likelihood to believe another. As Psychology Professor Viren Swami puts it, “the best predictor of belief in a conspiracy theory is belief in other conspiracy theories” (Korther-Baker, 2013). This is likely because conspiracies tend to have crossover in themes (and occasionally even details), which almost always contains a lack of control on the part of the believer directed to a shadowy organization far larger and more powerful than themselves.

Professor Joseph Hart interviewed 1,200 Americans to understand the correlation of partisan leanings, personality traits and demographics in understanding conspiracy theories. His research suggests that people with certain personality traits and cognitive styles are more likely to believe in conspiracy theories (*Science Daily*, 2018). “These people tend to be more suspicious, untrusting, eccentric, needing to feel special, with a tendency to regard the world as an inherently dangerous place. [Additionally], they are also more likely to detect meaningful patterns where they might not exist. People who are reluctant to believe in conspiracy theories tend to have the opposite qualities,” (*Science Daily*, 2018). This is because belief in conspiracy theories also

has much to do with the ways in which individuals interpret and accept the legitimacy of evidence. For instance, psychological heuristics, such as the quick linking of a major event with a major cause, may account for the attribution of conspiracy theories to explain major public events. Once conspiracy beliefs become established, confirmation biases prevent consideration of disconfirming evidence. Information that confirms an individual’s existing beliefs will tend to be unquestioned and accepted whereas disconfirming evidence will often be blatantly rejected.

Also driving the psychological tendencies towards noncompeting information is a need for cognitive closure, which drives an individual to grasp onto views that support their need for order and structure; many people have discomfort with ambiguity. A quick solution provides cognitive closure, referred to as seizing. Once an individual has cognitive closure, they want to maintain it, which is referred to as freezing (Leman, 2013). Cognitive dissonance, personality tendencies and psychological heuristics coupled with the possible decline of critical thinking skills mean there is a portion of the public that is unable or unwilling to tap into the higher end of Bloom’s Digital Taxonomy and higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) as illustrated in Figure 7. For social media users, a quick like, share or three-sentence reply falls somewhere on step 1 or 2 of the pyramid. (See Appendix 1 for a deconstruction of a recent conspiracy theory and social media post).



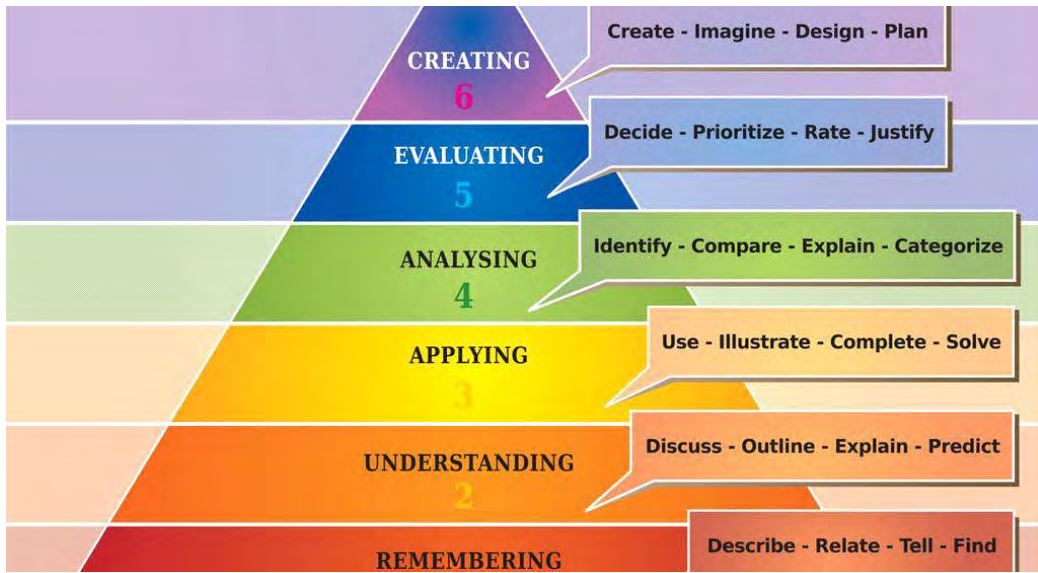


Figure 7. (thinkingmaps.com)

Behavioral conditioning, psychological tendencies plus neurological rewards increases the vulnerability of individuals to cognitive hacking. Social media is habit-forming and addictive. Research has found that social media *likes* are akin to social rewards. Providing and receiving *likes* to people's posts activates regions of the brain that release dopamine. This positive feedback has been found to mimic the same qualities as the positive feeling a person has when they donate to charities. This feedback loop of likes and sharing instills reinforcement learning and encourages a person to seek that outcome again. Although not as intense as a hit of cocaine, positive social stimuli result in a release of dopamine, reinforcing whatever behavior preceded it. Cognitive neuroscientists have shown that rewarding social stimuli—laughing faces, positive recognition by our peers, messages from loved ones—activate the same dopamine reward pathways

(Haynes, 2018). This dopamine influx is addicting regardless of the driver.

Researchers from the University of Michigan by Kent Berridge and Terry Robertson developed the "Incentive Sensitization Theory of Addiction" theory that has been applied to social media. Rewards are both "liked" and "wanted," and this process creates a dopamine loop, which creates addiction and cravings in the social media users. "When you bring up the feed on one of your favorite apps the dopamine loop has become engaged," said Dr. Susan Weinschenk. "With every photo you scroll through, headline you read, or link you go to you are feeding the loop which just makes you want more." Many social media platforms are taking advantage of research in neuroscience to increase social media use and encourage people to return, using some of the same principles casinos use to entice repeat gamblers (McKorkindale, 2019).

State and non-state actors have taken advantage of these psychological, behavioral and neurological paradigms and have an operational strategy for targeting social media users as outlined by Rand Waltzamn of Rand Corporation (see Figure 8). In the world of social media, it is easy to distort reality and exploit a user's neurological, intel-

lectual, and psychological vulnerability to weaponization of information. Individuals are poor judges of true versus false information online, information overload leads people to take shortcuts in determining the trustworthiness of messages, and familiar themes or messages can be appealing even if they are false.

## OFFENSIVE STRATEGY FOR WEAPONIZING INFORMATION AND COGNITIVE HACKING

1. Take the population and break it down into communities, based on any number of criteria (e.g. hobbies, interests, politics, needs, concerns, etc.).
2. Determine who in each community is most susceptible to given types of messages.
3. Determine the social dynamics of communication and flow of ideas within each community.
4. Determine what narratives of different types dominate the conversation in each community.
5. Use all of the above to design and push a narrative likely to succeed in displacing a narrative unfavorable to you with one that is more favorable.
6. Use continual monitoring and interaction to determine the success of your effort and adjust in real time.

Figure 8.

### The Way Forward: Cognitive Security (COGSEC)

Currently, most of the capability associated with Information Operations mission lies within DoD. P.L. 115-232 Sec 1284 tasked the State Department's Global Engagement Center (GEC) to "direct, lead, synchronize, integrate, and coordinate efforts of the Federal Government to recognize, understand, expose, and counter foreign state and foreign non-state propaganda and disinformation efforts." DHS also has a Countering Foreign Influence Task Force. Documents to support these missions include: The CRS Defense

Primer-Information Operations as updated on 12/15/2020 Defense Primer; Information Operations (fas.org); 2018 Joint Concept for Operating in the Information Environment joint\_concepts\_jcoie.pdf (jcs.mil); P.L. 115-232 Sec 1284 PUBL232.PS (congress.gov) P.L. 116-92 Sec 1631. Yet these manuals have not caused policymakers to enact laws or legislation. They are simply awareness and advising tools. Craig Terberg, *Washington Post* Technology writer, feels we have not had meaningful or any legislation to support the misinformation war (Davies, 2021).

COGSEC may need to be a new frontier in intelligence to protect peo-

ple from online exploitation, cognitive hacking and weaponized information. This is different from cybersecurity, which is the protection of internet-connected systems such as hardware, software and data to defend against unauthorized access. Cognitive Security protects people from their own thinking. In the arena of all information all the time by all individuals, COGSEC is essential. Admittedly, it is a problematic issue in a democratic society with freedom of speech, yet there can be a differentiation between voicing an opinion and weaponizing information. For example, people are not allowed to yell “FIRE” in a crowded movie theater.

Also, this is not one entity’s job. There needs to be a consortium of actors involved in a coordinated effort for countering weaponized information. As early as 2017, Rand Waltzamn of Rand Corporation testified before the Cybersecurity Committee on Armed Services promoting the necessity of COGSEC. He stated in his testimony that it will take all players like researchers, governments, social platforms and private actors to “be engaged in a continual arms race to influence and protect from influence large groups of users online” (Walltzman, 2017). According to Ronald Joy, Deputy Program Manager of Intelligence Programs with 22 years of intelligence, security and operational planning, he feels, “Our adversaries understand that unlike conventional ‘military’ operations, the weaponization of information in the public sphere currently falls below U.S. legal and planning thresholds for armed conflict. We have plans for what we do when someone

launches a rocket at an Embassy. There is a graduated, proportional response plan in place for that kind of attack, along with ‘off-ramps’ for de-escalation after the fact” (Joy. 2020). Joy feels that weaponized information might need to be looked at with an aggregated government methodology with agencies not siloed from each other so information can be shared.

In addition, there are numerous documents targeted at the audience of policymakers. These include *Information Warfare (IW): Issues for Congress, Defense Primer; Information Operations, Free Speech and the Regulation of Social Media Content*, prepared by the Congressional Research Service. These documents target the actions of nation-states. Yet domestic terrorism and information warfare have blurred the boundaries of what constitutes a state enemy. Traditional distinctions—public versus private interests, warlike versus criminal behavior—and geographic boundaries, such as those between nations as historically defined, are complicated by the growing interaction and the influence by state actors on alt groups. Given the wide array of possible opponents, weapons, and strategies, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between foreign and domestic sources of IW threats and actions. Roger Moreland of Rand Corporation states,

“You may not know who’s under attack by whom, or who’s in charge of the attack. This greatly complicates the traditional role distinction between domestic law enforcement, on the one hand, and national security and intel-

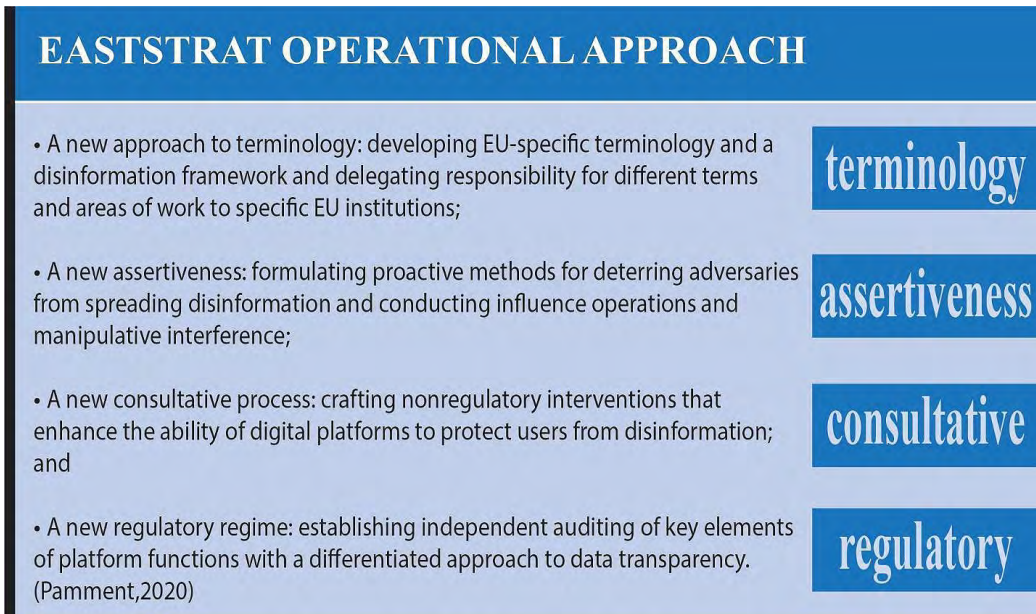
ligence entities, on the other. Another consequence of this blurring phenomenon is the disappearance of clear distinctions between different levels of anti-state activity, ranging from crime to warfare. Given this blurring, nation-states opposed to U.S. strategic interests could forgo more traditional types of military or terrorist action and instead exploit individuals or transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) to conduct “strategic criminal operations.” (Moreland, 1996)

Richard Fomo, from the Center for Internet and Society, has developed an offensive and defensive strategy for countering weaponized information. This strategy includes imposing sanctions and policy responses towards agent provocateurs like Russia and China, especially if they intervene in any democratic processes. This seems straight-forward but a fundamentally tricky recommendation is Fomo’s counsel to allow for intelligence transparency between the government and the public. The public needs to understand the context of some of the larger implications of cognitive hacking by knowing the actors and messages. While Fomo acknowledges that this is a difficult balance, he feels countering disinformation is a public policy priority and it is paramount that the government notifies the public and news media of evidence of cognitive hacking. The news media companies that should be given access to this information was not addressed and seems problematic

in and of itself given the current challenges of the public authenticating and trusting news sources.

A solid proposal from Fomo was the emulation of the European Union’s East StratCom disinformation task force to combat disinformation campaigns. Their biweekly newsletter, the Disinformation Review, published over social media, highlights disinformation. According to *The New York Times*, East Stratcom serves as “Europe’s front line against this onslaught of fake news” (Scott, 2017). The newsletter has over 52.9K followers (Rettman, 2017). Unlike the U.S., the European Union (EU) has taken a strategic attack against disinformation and by December 2018, the European Commission launched its Action Plan Against Disinformation, which remains a key pillar of EU policy, granting mandates to several operational arms. The action plan emphasized four areas of work: improving the capabilities of EU institutions to detect, analyze, and expose disinformation; strengthening coordinated and joint responses to disinformation; mobilizing the private sector to tackle disinformation and raising awareness and improving societal resilience. The European Council also made commitments to strengthening the EU’s democracy-building capabilities around the world, including promoting instruments created to mitigate the effects of online interference during elections. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace outlined these strategic proposals that could apply to the U.S. as well (Panameet, 2020). For the East Strat Operational approach, see Figure 9.





*Figure 9.*

Perhaps the most significant players, social media corporations, must also be engaged and take action. They cannot stand by wittingly with eyes on profit. Social media companies must become accountable and address the fact that their platforms are being used by foreign governments and nefarious groups to spread deadly disinformation. While Google and Facebook have been slow to take action, it must be noted that they have taken some steps to begin to tackle these issues. They have acknowledged that their platforms have been exploited and they now utilize third-party fact-checking and changing algorithms. Facebook did this for their trending section and Google has started tagging news search results with phrases like mostly true or false. Additional action against fake news includes not displaying ads for sites that include fake news (Fomo, 2020). Recently, Facebook's oversight board in

January 2021 directed the company to restore several posts that the social network had removed for breaking its rules on hate speech, harmful misinformation and other matters. The decisions are the first rulings for the board, which Facebook created last year as a kind of supreme court, casting the final votes on the hardest calls the company makes about what it does and does not allow users to post (Bond, 2021).

Another variable is that data privacy legislation for social media companies has not kept pace with the weaponization of information. According to Army General to Cyber Command, Joseph Brendlare states, "A dynamic that started with a purely commercial marketplace is producing technologies that can be weaponized and used for the purposes of influencing the people of the United States to do things other than just buy products . . . some of that

is a good thing . . . the extent to which it might produce a violent outcome, it's a really bad thing. Absent the appropriate forms of regulation, we really have an unregulated arms market here" (Tucker, 2020). In December 2020, the Defense Bill Section 230 was vetoed. The bill, which, among many factors, gives tech companies protections for third-party content posted on their platforms and allows them to make good faith efforts to moderate content. Some claimed that social media firms use the law to unfairly censor conservatives, a claim that has been proven unsubstantiated (Axelrode, 2020).

According to authors [Alina Polyakova](#) and Daniel Fried, they feel "[T]hat is a good (and publicly visible) step but does not address bottom issues of content distribution (e.g., micro-targeting), algorithmic bias toward extremes, digital cloning and lack of transparency." They suggest the U.S. government must make several organizational changes to counter foreign disinformation. "While the United States has sometimes acted with strength against purveyors of disinformation, e.g., by indicting IRA-connected individuals, U.S. policy is inconsistent. The U.S. government has no equivalent to the [European Commission's Action Plan Against Disinformation](#) and no corresponding [Code of Practice on Disinformation](#), and there remains no one in the U.S. government in overall charge of disinformation policy; this may reflect the baleful U.S. domestic politics and Trump's mixed or worse messages on the problem of Russian-origin disinformation" (Tucker, 2020).

## Conclusion

There is a proverb that is sometimes referred to as a curse—may you live in interesting times. First mentioned in British correspondence in 1936 and attributed to Chinese diplomats, the word interesting can certainly apply to the twenty-first century future of fake news and IW. The way forward in these uncharted waters is unmapped, muddy, and difficult to navigate. The denotative meaning of the word interesting implies something cute or curious, but the connotative meaning is something far more ominous. As stated by Craig Temberg, "While we love free speech and we want free speech to be as open as possible, it's also true that my speech can drown out your speech and my lies can drown out your truth" (Davies, 2021). Also, he points out, we are chartering a brave new world or what he refers to as a "science experiment" when it comes to fake information. What he has found is when, "you really eliminate the voice of someone who is pushing a lot of lies . . . It turns out that those lies have a lot less traction. They move around less often" (Davies, 2021). But as social media companies have shared, their hands have been forced to decide who gets to talk and they have not wanted to be the arbitrators of first amendment rights, for that is a lot of power.

Yet how to handle fake news and deliberate disinformation campaigns that are being wielded by state actors is difficult when the lines between state and non-state actors are blurred. Additionally, it begs the question of what

agency is to monitor lies, deceit and deliberately using information as a weapon. Both Michael Hayden and Michael Morell feel the intelligence community should not go down that road, but they are both concerned about the connection between white supremacy groups with ties out of the U.S. (Hayden, 2021). Recently, as both state and non-state actors experience the backlash from January 6, 2021, many social media disinformation campaigns have moved to platforms where the communications are encrypted end-to-end, and cannot be easily monitored, posing another challenge.

Back in the early 1800s, when the internet was the telegraph, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau preached self-reliance of the individual in all matters, but especially for people to think for themselves and not follow ideas or institutions blindly. Emerson stated, “Whoso would be a man, must be a nonconformist.” Weaponized information removes individualism by targeting the thinking mind with computational propaganda and technology that can mimic legitimate news websites and overloads an individual’s ability to decipher fact from fiction. Individualism turns into group think when a brain receives an echo chamber of

repetitive information. Because social media has become a tool in dangerous propaganda, doublethink has evolved into an unprecedented threat that must be addressed. The twenty-first century is an interesting time, especially when powerful new technology makes the speed and targeting of misinformation towards people’s cognitive biases unmatched in human history. Yet the weaponization of information alerts us to thinking about the very conscious use of information to achieve various goals.

“Words also shoot,” noted the Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu when opening the first military media festival in Russia in 2015, indicating the important role of information in contemporary Russian military thinking runs parallel to Chinese self-preservation information campaigns. The United States needs to be proactive in addressing the weaponization of information by educating its policymakers and public, enacting legislation with and for social media companies and devising counterintelligence measures, because the insurrection on Capitol Hill on January 6, 2021 may be a foreshadowing of a plane hitting the twin towers, and that plane may have already hit its target.

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## APPENDIX 1

C/o Xavier Dawson

### APPENDIX 1 EXAMPLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA CONSPIRACY THEORIES

December 2, 2020

Seasonal thoughts, feelings; covid-19: statistics, masks, tests, vaccine; rebelling citizenries; US election; imminent changes; unconditional love

With loving greetings from all souls at this station, this is Matthew. How greatly this season of holy days differs from previous years dominates thoughts and feelings around your world. Instead of traditional observances and festivities with family and friends, many are mourning loved ones to whom they were denied goodbyes and are having to forego attending sacred services. We, too, feel sadness that your year 2020 is ending on that solemn note.

*This paragraph in isolation is not brutally fallacious. There's an appeal to tradition in discussing typical holiday celebration, as well as an assumption that this tradition is a good and righteous thing (which will later be used to imply any change to this status quo for any reason is evil). This is mostly setting up for the paragraphs to come, establishing empathy and being, for the most part, reasonable at the start.*

Dear ones, you can keep bright the spirit of this season that celebrates love, the goodness in your life and the world, and sharing with those who are in need. As you act upon those sentiments that uplift you and all whom your caring touches, you can revisit joyous holidays in memory. If beloved persons no longer are with you, you can feel happy for them—they are living in a wondrous world of amazing activity and diversity.

*Again, not necessarily fallacious yet, but putting forth a great deal of work to create a connection with the reader by calling them "dear ones" and consoling them on potential deaths of close loved ones. This is to build an amount of trust and goodwill, which will later be leveraged.*

Earth's energy field of potential also is reflecting the society's other primary thoughts, feelings and actions. They have to do with covid foremost, then unrest in increasing numbers of countries and the United States presidential election. To address those situations, we begin with the reader's questions that are in the minds of all who know what is behind the "pandemic."

*This is a sort of de facto thesis statement for the email, covering its topics-to-come of the pandemic and election. Notably, the word "pandemic" is only referred to in this email in quotation marks, a quiet implication of non-legitimacy or lack of pandemic-worthy threat.*

"Should lightworkers not wear a mask in public and refuse to be tested for COVID-19 to help spread awareness of the truth about it? Why are cases spiking? What can we do if vaccinations are mandatory when a vaccine is available?" If masks are required by employers or entry into public buildings, never would we suggest that you incur a troublesome situation for yourself by violating that regulation. But as often as you can, lower the mask and breathe naturally.

*The questions opening this paragraph are loaded, based in a number of assumptions of an unspoken "truth" about covid, presented as questions from readers which the previous paragraph implies should be the questions all readers are asking. At the end of this paragraph is one of the most blatant deceptions in the email, in which the writer eschews all accountability by advising readers not to "incur a troublesome situation" for themselves by not wearing masks (note the implication that this is merely as a form of conflict avoidance, rather than an agreement with policy). Immediately following this statement, the very antithesis is stated, quote: "as often as you can", readers are encouraged to lower their masks and breathe "naturally" (an appeal to nature as an inherent good, implying that masks are artificial and therefore unhealthy).*

Unless your work requires being tested, avoiding that precludes the possibility of being quarantined when you don't have the disease. It is not that cases of covid are surging to record numbers, it is the statistics that are. Tests are part of the massive deception. Some are made to register only positive, others are designed to detect the viruses that cause colds and "standard" flu, and all those positives are declared covid-19. Statistics also include the seriously ill whose deaths are claimed to be caused by "complications due to covid!"

*This paragraph consists pretty much entirely of statements with no foundation in evidence, completely unfounded claims about covid-19 operations. Notably, these claims are not consistent; a number of claims about how covid-19 tests are fraudulent are given, because the point is not to prove a concrete truth, but to create doubt in the existing truth, in which case multiple disagreeing theories can be utilized as though they were multiple pieces of evidence, dissonance between them being avoided by stating that these fraudulent methods are all being used.*



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# Who is the Audience? What the Academic Field of Speech Communication Tells Us About Interpreting Open-Source Messages

William F. Harlow

In the movie version of *The Sum of All Fears*, the putative President Nemerov of Russia announced on TV that he had ordered a brutal chemical attack in Chechnya. In reality he had not done so—the attack had instead been ordered by a splinter of his own government. President Nemerov was still willing to claim credit for the attack because he found it more important to be seen as in control of his own government than to deny responsibility for a chemical attack sure to bring international condemnation. This movie clip highlights one of the challenges of analyzing the public statements of high-profile figures: Until the analyst understands the audience with whom a speaker is exchanging messages, it is very difficult to understand the message itself.

Public statements are one way that groups and individual leaders signal their intentions, provide information and disinformation, and achieve other communication ends. While these public statements are only one piece of any given analytic puzzle—some have noted that the “credibility of information obtained from open sources has always been an issue for intelligence and security communities” (Paz 2010, 243)—they are also a readily available data source which can sometimes yield

insight and drive policy choices. Additionally, understanding the audience with which a speaker is communicating makes public statements altogether more useful as an analytic tool. The function of this paper is to explain some of the contributions the academic field of Speech Communication can make in understanding and analyzing the public statements of key figures. While my primary focus is on the statements of individuals, many of the same lessons can be applied to groups. I start by providing what Jason Manosevitz (2013) calls the “conceptual framework” for understanding public statements. Having provided this broader reference, I then provide an audience-centered framework for interpreting the speech or other symbolic act.

## What is a Rhetorical Situation?

To understand what a speaker is doing, one first must understand the nature of the rhetorical act. When I use the term “rhetoric” here, I do not mean it in any pejorative sense. Rather, I mean it in the sense advanced by Aristotle—a speaker is searching for the available ways to persuade an audience. While a speaker certainly might abuse persuasive tools, searching for them is an act in which we common-

ly engage. Trying to convince one's teenager, for example, to complete his homework is fundamentally a rhetorical act. More to the point, analysts must interpret the rhetorical acts of speakers as a routine matter to provide an accurate basis for policy judgments somewhere higher up the chain. A rhetorical act is nothing more than what a speaker says—including the context in which it was said, and the audience to which it was addressed. This act can certainly be a speech, but it could also be a video, demonstration, social media post, or any number of other outlets.

A speaker both responds to and creates the rhetorical situation in which he finds himself. Lloyd Bitzer (1968, p. 4) notes "that a particular discourse comes into existence because of some specific condition or situation which invites utterance." In other words, there are real world events and speakers respond to them. Answering Bitzer, Richard Vatz (1973, p. 156) instead argues that, "We learn of facts and events through someone's communicating them to us." That communication changes what the audience knows about and thus may well change what they perceive to be important. From there, Vatz goes on to argue that the act of speaking creates a new reality—at least as that reality is perceived by the audience. For example, if we see a news broadcast about a humanitarian crisis in the Republic of Z, we are much more likely to perceive that crisis as important than if we had never heard about it. The act of broadcasting the news changed the reality for the audience—or at least that slice of reality they care about.

In the event, both Bitzer and Vatz have a point. Speakers do respond to real events—for example, a politician is likely to campaign in advance of an election. However, this rhetorical act also creates a new situation. A politician campaigning on some matter of tax policy makes it increasingly likely that some portion of the rest of the campaign will focus on that question, and if elected the leader will be expected (in many countries) to respond to the arguments s/he previously made about what taxes should be. To understand a rhetorical act, the analyst has to consider both things—the situation to which the speaker was responding, as well as the new situation which exists because of the rhetorical act. Understanding that new situation, however, necessarily presupposes understanding who the audience was for the original speech (or video, or social media post, or whatever the utterance was).

## **Defining the Conceptual Framework**

Speakers respond to real situations, and in so doing create new situations. This raises two further issues: The broader conceptual framework in which communicative transactions occur, and the notion of what constitutes an audience. I begin by defining the broad context in which messages are exchanged. Manosevitz (2013) noted that issues broader than whichever structured analytic technique (SAT) the analyst employs necessarily color how that technique is understood. In the case of a public statement, the concep-

tual framework involves a background understanding of the process of human communication.

Too many assume that communication is unidirectional—a speaker makes a statement and sends it to a receiver. Shannon (1948) developed one of the earlier formal models of communication. Now referred to as the “hypodermic model,” it asserts that a speaker is somehow capable of delivering a message directly to an audience which is then absorbed as intended. While this is true in part—speakers do in fact deliver messages to audiences—it ignores the role feedback plays in the communication process and assumes that audiences receive the messages as intended. It also assumes that there is a single speaker delivering a message to a single audience. A report from Arizona State University (Goodall et. al., 2006) notes that this one-way model of influence is outdated. Harlow (2010) argued that the hypodermic model also causes an analytic error: When we assume communication to be unidirectional, we frequently assume that any message we hear was intended for us. This implies a limited understanding of audience—the fact that someone heard a message, and even the fact that the speaker stated that the message was for them, does not mean that person was the intended audience.

Schramm (1954) advanced this model with his notion of feedback. Sometimes called the interactional model of communication, Schramm’s work is premised on the assumption that after an audience has received a message, they are apt to send feedback to the

speaker. This was an important advance from the hypodermic model, because it cemented the idea that audiences do not simply receive an act of communication the way a patient receives an injection from a physician. Rather, the audience is an active part of the conversation who is going to do something with the message received. However, the interactional model still suffers from the idea that there is a single audience that is readily identifiable and that this audience patiently waits its turn to provide feedback to the speaker. It also lends itself to the notion that the audience’s response to the speaker is readily identifiable. While this model was an important advance, it promotes the idea that communication is based on turn-taking behavior which very rarely happens in the real world.

The transactional model of communication (National Communication Association, 2014) builds on the work of Schramm and others to add the idea that both sender and receiver are simultaneously encoding and decoding messages. This means that rather than patiently waiting and taking turns while the first party is talking, the second party is constantly giving feedback and sending messages of his or her own. In the case of two people who are in the same room, this is reasonably clear to see—parties might gesture, interrupt, pay attention, look away, or exhibit any number of other behaviors in order to signal approval, disapproval, or understanding of a message. With public speaking the same basic premise applies—audiences will clap, or get up and leave, or throw rotten fruit. However,

that applies only to those members of the audience who are in the same physical space at the same time as the speaker. Mediated messages mean that the feedback will take other forms—voting, telling friends, quiet acceptance, and sometimes rioting in the public square. However, there will always be some sort of response from the audience—at least from whichever audience is most important to the speaker.

In addition to the basic flow of messages, there are additional elements to each of these models of communication. *Noise*, also known as *interference*, is the notion that something may impede transmission or reception of a message. Physically blocking a broadcasting signal would be an example of noise, as would the fact that a member of the audience was distracted and not paying attention. The *channel* is the route through which a message is sent, and speakers *encode* the messages which audiences *decode*. These elements of the communication process are discussed extensively by other scholars. However, the purpose of this article is not to provide an overarching understanding of communication theory. Rather, this first section is designed to introduce a basic conceptual framework for understanding a communicative transaction.

In terms of conceptual frameworks for understanding public messages—or any other communicative transaction, for that matter—analysts and policy makers have to keep in mind that speakers both respond to and create the situation in which they are speaking, and communication is a constant back and forth flow between speaker

and audiences. To interpret a message, an analyst must be able to determine who the relevant audiences were in order to determine how they were likely to perceive the message and, thus, to determine what the speaker was trying to accomplish. The next section of this article provides some insights from the academic discipline of Speech Communication which may help determine who the relevant audiences are.

### **An Audience-Centered Framework for Understanding Public Statements**

**B**efore determining who the relevant audience is or who the relevant audiences are, one must remember that there is almost always more than one audience for any public act. When President Biden delivers his State of the Union message, for example, he is certainly speaking to members of Congress. He is simultaneously speaking to justices of the Supreme Court, voters, the politically disengaged, foreign leaders, and anyone with a television set. While a set piece speech from the president might be an extreme example, it still illustrates the point—acts which can be seen or heard by more than one audience probably are. The key is determining which audience is most important to the speaker.

Campbell and Huxman (2009) identified four potential audiences which any speaker might address. The first is the *empirical audience*, or “all those exposed to the rhetorical act” (Campbell and Huxman, p. 192). Anyone who hears the message is thus a



member of the empirical audience, and that extends well beyond those in physical proximity with the speaker. Messages which are printed or recorded can have an empirical audience miles away or years after transmission of the message. The simple fact that a reader or listener has received a message does not mean that it was intended for him.

The *target audience* are those members of the empirical audience with characteristics desired by the speaker. Campbell and Huxman note that in advertising, a target audience is one with needs which the advertised product can fill. For example, a jihadist web site might target audience members of a sympathetic community who would be receptive to the message displayed. However, not all members of this target audience would be in a position to act on the message transmitted. In advertising, some might not have the money to purchase the product. For a terror group, those reading its web site might value other things more than the message received or might lack the physical capacity to act in the manner promoted. Those who have the capacity to do as the speaker wishes are *agents of change*. Much as the target audience is a subset of the empirical audience, the agents of change are a subset of the target audience.

That does not mean, of course, that the larger target audience is irrelevant. The inability to act as desired right now does not mean that the recipient will never be able to act as desired by the speaker. Also, the agents of change are not necessarily those sympathetic to whatever message is being promot-

ed. Rather, they possess characteristics desired by the speaker. As such, a high-level analyst in a rival intelligence agency could be the agent of change for a disinformation campaign—s/he would be in position to direct resources, and it might well be the intent of the speaker that those resources be directed in an altogether different direction. The key isn't sympathy with the message—it is the ability to act as desired by the speaker.

The final type of audience identified by Campbell and Huxman is the *created audience*. This involves the audience imagining itself in a role described by the speaker. Speakers will quite frequently describe scenarios more desirable than reality—if one was trying to sell cigarettes, for example, one might create for the audience an image of a rugged cowboy riding a horse while free of any cumbersome entanglements. While few have had that reality created for them by smoking, many have become part of the created audience who imagined themselves in such a position.

The first analytic task in interpreting a discursive act, then, is to determine to whom the speaker was sending a message. While the imagined audience tells something of whom the speaker is targeting, the first three types of audiences are often easier to identify. Since they are actual people living in the present, they are potential current targets of the communication. These three audiences—empirical, target, and agents of change—can essentially be treated as a series of concentric circles. While the analytic task is to get to the innermost circle, failure to consider

membership in the outer circles may lead the analyst to misidentify who the agents of change really are.

While necessary, identifying the target audience for a message is insufficient to truly understanding the message. The second step in the process should be looking at the messages which various audiences are returning to the original speaker. Most of these responses will not be so neatly coded as public speeches video-taped and sent as a formal reply to the original. Rather, one has to consider who might have been expected to respond and analyze what they said, or did, or even what they didn't say in response. There are several questions the analyst can ask to help determine who the target audiences and agents of change were. To follow the example through, I will answer each question for the fictional President Nemerov as his speeches are being analyzed by an opposition force. The first of those questions returns to the concept of noise.

*Was the rhetorical act simply an instance of created noise?* Not every rhetorical act will have a target audience who is supposed to digest and correctly interpret a message. As discussed earlier, noise is anything which impedes the transmission or reception of a message. Sometimes, speakers create their own noise in order to divert attention from some other item. One potential analytic tool to determine whether a rhetorical act is created noise is to determine who would have been offended by it. Very few pieces of public rhetoric will be completely without opposition. If nobody—or at least no identifiable audi-

ence—objects to a message, it may well be an act of created noise which wasn't created for any specific audience. This wasn't the case for the fictional President Nemerov—there was a very clear opposition to his speech, as is wont to happen when one announces the launching of chemical weapons. Assuming, however, that the speech (or video, or pamphlet, or whatever the rhetorical act happens to be) is not simply such a smokescreen, there are several other questions the analyst can ask to help determine who the target audience was.

*Who might respond positively to the message?* This is the created audience, and it isn't an either/or test. Saying one party might respond positively to a message does not preclude another party from also so doing. These would be the created audiences discussed earlier—they can see themselves benefitting and are thus more likely to respond. If an analyst can identify some group or groups who might respond positively to a message, then that is an excellent place to start looking for target audiences. *Someone* might have been happy about the attack. It also wouldn't have been—at least not demonstrably—any member of Nemerov's own government. Had such a person appeared, they would have been worth analytic time to determine whether they were the target audience for his speech. However, the empirical statement—the thing which was actually said—is not the only statement the speaker might have made.

*What would the reaction have been to any other message?* To ascertain who the audience was for a rhetorical act, one has to imagine the other op-

tions available to the speaker. Using the example here, President Nemerov also had the option of saying he was not responsible for the attack on Chechnya. Denying responsibility would have, at least temporarily, ameliorated his international problems. It also would have helped him at a later point in the movie when a bomb exploded in the U.S. However, it would have opened him to a host of attacks from those who knew he did not control his own forces and was ignorant concerning a large-scale event in his own country. Even if someone is clearly happy with a statement, the analytic task is to avoid confirmation bias. To do that, the analyst should ask what the reaction would have been to any other statement that would have been made. Those counterfactual statements would at least suggest another possible audience. Had President Nemerov made any other statement there would have been a coup in his near-term future.

In this particular case, it is also worth returning to the first question in this list—what if the statement is nothing but noise intended as a form of misdirection? There was certainly an element of misdirection here. However, there were also parties who were clearly unhappy with the statement made by President Nemerov. That meant that the fictional president very clearly was sending a message—it was just a message to a different group of people. The Russian president also had an altogether different option from sending a different message than the one he did—he might have elected to say nothing at all.

*Was it necessary for the speaker to create this rhetorical act?* The International Encyclopedia of Strategic Communication (Harlow, 2018) defines strategic silence as “the choice of an empowered actor who remains silent in an attempt to advance a strategic interest.” An empowered actor is one who would normally be expected to have something to say on a subject, and silence “is relative to what might be said” (Brummett, 1980). In other words, a president who has a statement on military matters delivered by his Secretary of Defense would be practicing a relative silence—it is a subject on which the president would be fully empowered to speak, but having the SecDef give the statement would give it less weight than it would have coming directly from the president. Harlow (2011) gives an example of strategic silence in studying the failure of President George H.W. Bush to condemn apartheid in South Africa. He received harsh domestic condemnation for not so doing. Archival documents reveal that Bush considered giving precisely such a speech, which would have shifted focus to a different audience—his domestic critics. However, Bush elected not to give the speech in order to give President de Klerk and his opponents in the ANC time to reach a peaceful political settlement without being seen as giving in to the demands of the U.S. president. The choice to practice a strategic silence was because he viewed those groups as his more relevant audience.

In assessing who the target audience is, then, one part of the analytic task is to determine whether the speak-

er had a strategic option of remaining silent. Strategic silence sends signals to audiences as surely as does speech, so the act of speech frequently implies a shift in who the speaker views as the target audience. Had President Nemerov elected to not speak in our movie example, that would have been an appeal to some audience somewhere—even if it was only a play for time from that audience. His decision to say that he ordered the chemical weapons attack instead signaled that he viewed the relevant audience as the parties who would have taken advantage of his failure to control his own country.

### **Figuring Out Who the Audience Is**

**S**peakers both respond to and create situations. In the movie, someone had attacked Chechnya and someone asked President Nemerov about it. That was a real situation which called for a response from him. However, in the act of answering the question Nemerov created a new reality—one in which he was seen as culpable for a heinous act and was presumed responsible for another act later in the movie. This happened in a context in which there was a

constant flow of messages between Nemerov and other parties; figuring out what those message meant implied analyzing the audience for whom they were intended. Unfortunately, the real-world analytic task is significantly more complicated since it lacks a movie's plot line to conveniently follow.

While that analytic task is complicated, it is also vital. Policy makers can't make sound judgments if they don't know why significant figures have said what they did, and that can't be answered without understanding who the audience was in the first place. Identifying audiences is one of the central strengths of the academic discipline of Speech Communication. While identifying the target audience isn't foolproof, without at least attempting to identify the audience you have no hope of understanding the message. In this essay, I have attempted to present at least the initial outlines of a framework for identifying who those audiences might be. When you are trying to understand why somebody said something, try to identify to whom they are talking—and remember that your having heard the message doesn't mean it was intended for you.

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# The Assassination of Fakhrizadeh—A Major Iranian Counterintelligence Failure?

Ardavan Khoshnood

**Summary:** The assassination of Iranian top nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh is one of numerous assassinations in Iran conducted by foreign powers ever since 2007. In the past six months, assassins have in addition to Fakhrizadeh also been able to kill Al-Qaida's no. 2 on Iranian soil. The three most important organizations in the Iranian intelligence community are the Ministry of Intelligence, as well as the Intelligence Organization and Intelligence Protection Organization of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. There is no doubt that the assassination of Fakhrizadeh is a counterintelligence failure; however, there are indications that the Iranian intelligence community have been compromised. The assassins of Fakhrizadeh had accurate information about Fakhrizadeh and his security details. Because of this breach, Iran will conduct serious reforms in its intelligence community and may also eliminate individuals it suspects work on behalf of foreign powers and may have leaked information.

The recent assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist and high-profile member of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Brigadier General Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, is yet a sign of the Islamic republic of Iran's poor counterintelligence. Since the beginning of 2007, Iran has witnessed seven targeted killings and one attempted assassination in the country. Seven of these attacks have targeted Iranian nuclear scientists, while one was directed against a leader of Al-Qaida. Only in the past six months, one Al-Qaida leader and one high-profile nuclear scientist have been assassinated in

the Tehran province. Have the Iranian intelligence community been compromised?

## A Review of Targeted Attacks

*Ardeshir Hosseinpour*  
(January 15, 2007)

Born in 1962, Hosseinpour was a nuclear physicist. He was found dead on January 15, 2007, in his house. Authorities stated that his death was because of "gassing" as a result of a "defect in the heating system" of his residence (Kayhan 2007). On November 30, 2020, Mostafa Moein, former Minister

of Science, revealed on his Instagram page that Hosseinpour was assassinated by Mossad using radioactive gas (Haghighatnejad 2020).

*Masoud Alimohammadi*  
(January 12, 2010)

Born in 1959, Alimohammadi was a physics professor. In the early morning of January 12, 2010, as he was leaving his residence, a motorcycle equipped with a remote-controlled bomb exploded and fatally injured him (Javanan Online 2010). In December 2010, the Ministry of Intelligence announced that it had arrested the perpetrator, one Majid Jamali Fashi, 24-years old. He “confessed” on television working for Mossad, and was hanged for the crime, in May 2012.

*Majid Shahriari*  
(November 29, 2010)

Born in 1966, Shahriari was a nuclear scientist and employee of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran. On the morning of November 29, 2010, he and his wife were picked up by their driver. A motorcyclist drove close to the car and planted a bomb which detonated, killing Shahriari (Mashregh News 2020a). The Ministry of Intelligence arrested Maziar Ebrahimi, who, under heavy torture, “confessed” on television to the assassination (Gol 2019). He was later proved innocent and freed (Tabnak 2019).

*Fereydoon Abbasi*  
(November 29, 2010)

Born in 1958, Abbasi is a nuclear physicist who previously headed the Atomic

Energy Organization of Iran. He is currently a member of the Iranian parliament. On the morning of November 29, 2010, Abbasi was driving his car with his spouse in the passenger seat, when a motorcyclist planted a bomb on the door (Asr-e Iran 2011a). Abbasi stopped the car, and both he and his wife fled the car as the bomb detonated, only injuring the couple. Iran blamed Mossad (Sanger & Broad 2011).

*Dariush Rezaeinejad*  
(July 23, 2011)

Born in 1977, Rezaeinejad was an electrical engineer who cooperated with the Ministry of Defense (BBC 2011). Rezaeinejad was assassinated on the evening of July 23, 2011. He was sitting in his car, outside of his house, together with his wife and their daughter, when two motorcyclists started shooting (Asr-e Iran 2011b). Five bullets were fired, of which one fatally injured him. His wife was injured, but survived. Iranian officials blamed Israeli Mossad for the assassination (Putz 2011).

*Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan*  
(January 11, 2012)

Born in 1979, Ahmadi Roshan was a nuclear scientist and worked as “commerce deputy of the Natanz nuclear power plant” (Tabnak 2018). On the morning of January 11, 2012, he was picked up by his driver, and while driving on the streets of Tehran, a motorcyclist planted a bomb on Ahmadi Roshan’s car door, which detonated and killed him. Iran, via its Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, blamed both the CIA and the Mossad (*The Times* 2012).



*Abu Muhammad Al-Masri*  
(August 7, 2020)

Born in 1963, Abdullah Ahmad Abdullah, better known as Abu Muhammad Al-Masri, was Al-Qaida's number 2. He lived in a prosperous area of Tehran with his family. On the August 7, 2020, Al-Masri and his daughter Maryam were gunned down by two men on a motorcycle (Goldman et al. 2020). Al-Masri and Maryam were sitting in a car outside of their residence. Iran claimed that the killed man was a Lebanese history professor (Mashregh News 2020b).

*Mohsen Fakhrizadeh*  
(November 27, 2020)

Born in 1958, Fakhrizadeh, a nuclear scientist, and a high-ranking member of the IRGC, was considered to be the architecture of the Islamic regime's nuclear program. At the time of his assassination, he headed the Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research. The details of his assassination are still unknown, but he was gunned down on November 27, 2020, as he drove—well guarded—in the city of Absard. Iran instantly blamed Israel (Zarif 2020).

## **Iranian Counterintelligence**

**C**ounterintelligence in Iran, for unknown reasons, is called Intelligence Protection. The two main intelligence and security organizations in Iran, are the Ministry of Intelligence (MOI) as well as the Intelligence Organization of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IO-IRGC). While the MOI has a central department of

intelligence protection, it is believed that it has also intelligence protection units inside its different departments as well. The IRGC has—parallel to the IO-IRGC—the Intelligence Protection Organization of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IPO-IRGC). The IPO-IRGC became independent from the IO-IRGC in the mid-1980s as Iran understood the importance of counterintelligence and started to invest in that discipline. Since then, the two organizations work closely together but fully independently from each other.

The incumbent head of the MOI is the clergyman Mahmoud Alavi. The IO-IRGC is since more than a decade, also headed by a clergyman, Hossein Taeb. The IPO-IRGC is currently headed by Brigadier General Mohammad Kazemi. The Minister of Intelligence is selected by the president but must be approved by the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic, Ali Khamenei. The heads of the IO-IRGC and IPO-IRGC, however, are directly appointed by Khamenei himself. While the IO-IRGC gathers both domestic and foreign intelligence, the IPO-IRGC is foremost responsible for counterespionage, counterterrorism, and safeguarding the IRGC from penetration (Khoshnood 2020a, 7).

In an attempt to coordinate the Iranian intelligence and security apparatus, the Islamic regime created the “Council for Intelligence Coordination” on 29 October 2013 (Mousavi 2018). The council is headed by the Minister of Intelligence and engulfs nine intelligence and security organizations,

among them the MOI, the IO-IRGC, and the IPO-IRGC. The fact that the IPO-IRGC is presented as an independent organization parallel to MOI and IO-IRGC, illuminates its important role in the Iranian intelligence community.

The current Chief Justice of Iran, Ebrahim Rayisi, recently visited the headquarter of the IPO-IRGC and stated that even though the IRGC as a whole have been of utmost importance for the strength of the Islamic Republic in Iran, the role of the IPO-IRGC has been far more important and sensitive (Mashregh News 2020c).

Interestingly, neither the MOI, nor the IO-IRGC or the IPO-IRGC, are responsible for the executive protection of high-ranking officials of the Islamic regime. It is instead a third organization inside the IRGC, the Protection Organization (PR-IRGC), which is responsible for this task. The PR-IRGC has a three-folded responsibility: (1) protection of the country's airports and airplane security, (2) protection of high-profiled members of the regime, and (3) protection of the Supreme Leader. The protection of high-ranking Iranian nuclear scientists is thus the responsibility of the PR-IRGC. The responsibility of safeguarding the PR-IRGC, lies though on the shoulders of the IPO-IRGC.

Even though information from the MOI, IO-IRGC, and IPO-IRGC is used by the PR-IRGC to organize, plan, and direct their protection for individuals under their responsibility, it is the duty of the IPO-IRGC to guarantee the safeguarding of the IRGC's intelligence,

including those provided to the PR-IRGC.

With so many assassinations and assassination attempts in Iran since 2007 against high-profile individuals of the regime, there is no doubt that Iran has suffered numerous counterintelligence failures (Khoshnood 2020b). In assassinating the aforementioned individuals, several clandestine teams have over a period of time been able to freely follow, map, and organize their attacks without the regime's intelligence organizations being able to reveal the plans or even stop them. Not even when the assassinations started and the regime's intelligence community became aware of the threats could they take the necessary measures to protect their assets. Thirteen years after the first assassination, when Ardeshir Hosseinpour was killed, opponents of the Islamic regime were able to not only assassinate Al-Qaida's number 2 in Iran, but also Iran's most important and valued nuclear scientist (Khoshnood 2020c).

### **More than a Counter-intelligence Failure?**

**A**fter the assassination of Ardeshir Hosseinpour, many blamed Mossad (Melman 2007). However, the Fars News Agency (2007), which is linked to the IRGC, wrote that Mossad had no role in this assassination, since "the Israeli intelligence agency is basically incapable of running operations inside Iran." Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani, current Secretary of the powerful Supreme Council of National Security, claimed in a pre-

vious speech that “[t]here are no threats against any officials in the Islamic republic. Listen to me, I am responsible for the security of the country, and it was in the 80s the Monafeghin [the Mojahedin] were able to assassinate. They cannot do that anymore. Adding to that, we have a strong intelligence organization, a strong police force, and a strong revolutionary guard corps. Why are you afraid? We must get rid of close protection” (YouTube 2020). Yet opponents of the regime as well as foreign powers have been able to both assassinate important individuals on Iranian soil, as well as conducting high-quality operations like the Israeli raid against an IRGC warehouse in Tehran in 2018, which contained highly secretive information on Iranian nuclear program (Perper 2018).

After the assassination of Fakhrizadeh, a major blow to the regime and its intelligence apparatus, several different accounts of his slaying have been reported. Initially, regime media stated that Fakhrizadeh was gunned down by several assassins (Fars News Agency 2020). This was later confirmed by the Ministry of Defense (Defa News 2020). The Commander-in-Chief of the Iranian military, Amir Hatami, stated later that Fakhrizadeh was killed because of injuries he received after that a car exploded during the shootout (Mehr News 2020). The latest information though state that no assassins were present during the assassination, and that Fakhrizadeh was killed by a remote-controlled weapon placed on a car which later exploded (BBC 2020). Probably more narratives will be pre-

sented during the coming months, which is part of the regime’s strategy in confusing the public.

Also as part of regime’s propaganda, in a very awkward interview, on the day of Fakhrizadeh’s burial, Ali Shamkhani stated that “our enemies have been wanting to kill Fakhrizadeh for 20 years, but they were not successful.” In discussing the regime’s intelligence apparatus, he stated that “[o]ur intelligence community knew that he [Fakhrizadeh] would be assassinated, and also knew the probable location of the assassination.” Shamkhani then added that the threat against Fakhrizadeh had not been taken seriously, which is why enemies had succeeded in assassinating him this time. He then continued, saying “I want to tell you that our intelligence community had the information that he would be assassinated, and that he would be assassinated on the exact spot which he became a martyr on.” Interestingly, Shamkhani concludes his remarks saying, “There were made reinforcements with regard to his bodyguards, but this time the enemy used a new approach, more sophisticated and more professional, why they succeeded” (Mizan News 2020).

Shamkhani did not elaborate on why the assassination was not stopped if the Iranian intelligence community were well aware of not only the threat against Fakhrizadeh, but also knew the exact location of where he would be assassinated. Not surprisingly, most of Shamkhani’s remarks are solely for propaganda use. However, his statement about being surprised by a new

approach and therefore not being able to protect Fakhrizadeh may very well be true, and in that case, one very important question arises: Was the assassination of Fakhrizadeh more than just a counterintelligence failure?

In a short [note](#) by Brigadier General Hossein Alaei (2020), a high-ranking member of the IRGC, Alaei writes that Fakhrizadeh's assassination indicated that Israeli intelligence is highly active in Iran and operates on "accurate information." Alaei asks how it is possible that Israel can be successful in its assassinations even though Iran is aware of the threats. He concludes: "[I]t remains to be seen what weakness there is in the structure and mechanisms of Iran's security apparatus."

The most important part of Alaei's short note is the question of "accurate information." How did the assassins know the whereabouts of Fakhrizadeh? How did they know when Fakhrizadeh would arrive in that exact area? How could they know details about Fakhrizadeh's executive protection?

It seems impossible that Fakhrizadeh's assassination was only because of an intelligence failure. Fakhrizadeh was not a regular Iranian nuclear scientist like Hosseinpour, Alimohammadi or Shahriari. Fakhrizadeh could not easily be monitored nor mapped by a surveillance team. Everything points out to one important factor: the Islamic Republic of Iran's intelligence and counterintelligence have been penetrated and thus compromised. High-ranking individuals in the Iranian intelligence community are working with opponents of the Islamic regime and foreign powers. In the coming months, we will with high probability witness a major reform in the Iranian intelligence community and specifically the IPO-IRGC. Most of the reforms will take place in the dark and behind the scenes, but we should not be surprised if individuals from Iranian intelligence are either killed in different accidents or flee Iran for Europe and the U.S.

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# The Jump from Morbidity to Mortality: Lethality Evolved

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## ABSTRACT

As the world evolves and grows in both technological advancements and in population density, epidemics and pandemics will become a larger and greater threat. Viruses, in most cases, can be considered the perfect predator. These organisms grow, infect, spread, and in many cases kill if not treated. These viruses themselves do not mutate on their own, but rather need a large population to infect, adapt, and then mutate to survive. These jumps from host to host will eventually produce a virus that can adapt to multiple environments and kill very quickly. In addition, the advancement of vaccination and treatment technology can provide protection but also can remove defenses from the human immune system. The question is, how does the world keep a virus from mutating and becoming highly lethal in a densely populated world?

**Keywords:** COVID-19; Pandemic; Global Security; Virus Mutation; Lethality

## El salto de la morbilidad a la mortalidad: la letalidad evolucionó

### RESUMEN

A medida que el mundo evoluciona y crece tanto en los avances tecnológicos como en la densidad de población, las epidemias y pandemias se convertirán en una amenaza cada vez mayor. Los virus, en la mayoría de los casos, pueden considerarse el depredador perfecto. Estos organismos crecen, infectan, se propagan y, en muchos casos, matan si no se tratan. Estos virus en sí mismos no mutan por sí mismos, sino que necesitan una gran población para infectar, adaptarse y luego mutar para sobrevivir. Estos saltos de un host a otro eventualmente producirán un virus que puede adaptarse a múltiples

entornos y matar muy rápidamente. Además, el avance de la tecnología de vacunación y tratamiento puede brindar protección, pero también puede eliminar las defensas del sistema inmunológico humano. La pregunta es, ¿cómo evita el mundo que un virus mute y se vuelva altamente letal en un mundo densamente poblado?

**Palabras clave:** COVID-19; Pandemia; Seguridad global; Mutación viral; Letalidad

## 从致病到致死的跳跃：致死性的演进

### 摘要

世界在科技进步和人口密度方面不断演进和发展的同时，流行病和大流行将成为更大更艰巨的挑战。大多数情况下，病毒能被视为完美的杀手。这些微生物繁殖、传染、扩散，并在许多情况下将夺走生命，如果不经治疗的话。这些病毒不会自身发生变异，而是需要大量人群来传染、适应、接着产生变异并存活。这些从一个宿主转移到另一个宿主的跳跃将最终产生一种能适应多个环境并迅速致死的病毒。此外，疫苗和治疗技术所取得的进步能提供保护，但也能削弱人体免疫系统的防御。问题则是，世界如何防止病毒变异、阻止其在人口密集的世界里具有高致死性？

关键词：新冠肺炎（COVID-19），大流行，全球安全，病毒变异，致死性

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### Introduction

In the beginning of May 2019, little was known about the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) virus except that it was a Novel Coronavirus. The 'Novel' means 'new' and the 'Corona or *coronam*' in Latin, refers to what the crown type spikes the virus appears to have under a

microscope (Secon, 2020). Other Coronaviruses include SARS-CoV-1 (SARS of 2003 fame) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS that made its rounds in 2012). The morbidity and transmission of COVID-19 virus was and is quite remarkable when compared to similar Coronaviruses. COVID-19, like its predecessors, SARS-CoV-1 and

then MERS, made the zoonotic jump from animal to human with relative ease. However, COVID-19, very much like the Spanish Flu, spreads quickly. During the periods of SARS-1 and MERS, the stem of transmission was stopped through government intervention and strict measures. Unfortunately, the early symptoms COVID-19 displays resembled that of typical Pneumonia, and when cases were handled without the additional precautions in place today, was able to spread, and mutate, quickly.

Like other RNA viruses (Ebola, Influenza, Pneumonia, etc.) (Duffy 2018), COVID-19 has a vast genomic base and can mutate extremely quickly, creating a public health crisis attempting to contain it. COVID-19 has already mutated into more virulent and contagious forms (Duffy 2018) and will continue to do so, with the ability to potentially develop more lethal consequences.

## **Coronaviruses Explained**

**T**he family of Coronavirus (*Coronaviridae*) are not new types of viruses to the human species. These viruses can be classified into four types of subfamilies of CoV: (Alphacoronavirus (alphaCoV), Betacoronavirus (betaCoV), Deltacoronavirus (deltaCoV), and Gammacoronavirus (gammaCoV) (Cascella et al., 2021). The alpha and beta CoVs are seen more often in bats and rodent genomes. However, the delta and gamma CoVs are more often seen in avian species (Cascella et al., 2021).

The Beta CoVs, which includes COVID-19, have caused 2 other epidemics, not counting the current one, by making a zoonotic jump from animal to human. The Beta-CoV subfamily cause symptoms ranging from the common cold to the severe respiratory infections the world is currently experiencing.

Coronaviruses are positive-stranded RNA viruses that normally reside in animals and have a vast genetic foundation consisting of 30,000 bases. Initially, the virus was spread from an animal host to a human at a wet (fresh or live meat) market in the Wuhan province in China (Cascella et al., 2021) sometime around October 2018. The initial zoonotic jump was a unique occurrence enabled by natural mutations in the original animal host. Current transmissions of COVID-19 have only been observed through human-to-human contact. As with other RNA viruses, such as the common cold or Influenza, the most common transmission is through aerosolization of fluids via coughing or sneezing (Cascella et al., 2021). Close contact with infected fluids is required for these viruses to effectively spread and continue their cycle of propagation. As with many Coronaviruses such as MERS and SARS-1, the cycle of infection can last up to 14 days.

One of the primary difficulties with COVID-19 is the potential for asymptomatic persons (individuals who show no symptoms) to contract the virus and spread it to close contacts. With a 14-day infection cycle the virus can spread to a significant number of individuals rapidly. This asymptomatic

non-presentation makes contact tracing and identifying the original carrier extremely difficult. Finally, many of the Coronaviruses identified in creating epidemics and pandemics have large infection rates or  $R_0$  (pronounced R-naught) that determine how many people one person can/will infect. For example, COVID-19 has an  $R_0$  of 2.2; one person will infect 2.2 others. SARS-1, MERS, and SARS-2 all had/have  $R_0$ s of 2.2 to 3.

### **COVID-19's Historical Infection and Mortality Rates**

**C**OVERID-19 first appeared in Wuhan province in an individual who had visited the Huanan Seafood Market in October 2019 (Mizumoto et al., 2020). This individual later presented to the hospital with typical Pneumonia-like symptoms as was treated as such, survived and recovered. However, unbeknownst to the host and those who treated him/her, the illness was not Pneumonia; it was COVID-19, which had successfully transmitted to others who then carried on the cycle of transmission. It was not until 7 January 2020 that scientists narrowed the possibilities and temporarily label the new strain as 2019-nCoV (Allam et al., 2020). As the virus spread, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the public health emergency a pandemic on March 11, 2020 (Mizumoto et al., 2020). With a  $R_0$  of 2.2, or one person can infect 2.2 people, the virus was able to tally an exponential rise in case rates throughout the world. As with many novel viruses, high transmission rates almost always proceed high mortality

(death) rates. In the case of COVID-19, this seemed to be true in the beginning. As not a great deal was known about this virus in the beginning, the mortality rates were reported to be as high as 6 to 7 percent (Loannidis 2020). That number has since dropped to approximately 0.27 percent (Loannidis 2020). This drop in mortality rate indicates that the higher the daily case rate or overall cases in the world, the mortality rate, unless exponential amount of people died, would lower. This drop, while a good sign, could point to a virus that is mutating to become a more lethal and/or virulent strain.

### **The RNA Type Virus**

**O**ne of the most concerning factors about COVID-19 that researchers should monitor more closely is its single stranded RNA (Ribonucleic Acid) structure. RNA differs from DNA in two distinct ways: 1) DNA contains Adenine, Thymine, Cytosine, Guanine. RNA contains the same except for Thymine. RNA contains Uracil. 2) RNA is single stranded and DNA is double stranded, which is why RNA can leave the nucleus of a cell and DNA cannot (Duffy 2018). This type of virus may exploit the presence of RNA-dependent RNA polymerases for replication of their genomes and mutate very quickly. Since COVID-19 has a long genome sequences (upwards of 30,000 genetic bases) it can mutate numerous times with hosts it infects (Duffy 2018). Normally, this is not of concern since a mutation most often causes a mistake in the genetic code and the new virus mu-

tation will not survive. However, when a virus does mutate properly, it can create a new strain or variant of virus that can be more virulent or lethal. These mutations or new variants cause obstacles to the progress of stopping a pandemic because any vaccine that is produced is made to target one type of protein that the virus presents. When the virus successfully mutates to something different, vaccines that were once effective may become less effective or not effective at all (Gounder 2021). This is exactly why the Influenza vaccine must be given every year at the start of the season and still may not have a 100% success rate. To date, COVID-19 has successfully mutated multiple times into several different strains. The three that are currently distinguishing themselves and of major concern are the UK, South African, and South American variants.

## **The Evolution of COVID-19**

**J**ust like any living creature, all viruses evolve or attempt to evolve, if they did not their species would eventually become extinct. While COVID-19 is able to mutate and therefore evolve very quickly due to the environment it has come to inhabit, the virus mutates only slightly and just drifts genetically (the gradual accumulation in any DNA sequence of random mutational changes that do not interfere with DNA's function), much like Influenza A and B. However, even with this genetic drifting, an individual's body can still recognize, respond, and fight to the best of its ability. If a virus is able to shift completely (the segmentation

of the viral genome that supports the genetic re-assortment into one that the immune system does not recognize) (Nguyen 2020), the immune system's own response will further the infection due to the increased cellular load in the body and become the greatest threat to the host. These dramatic shifts have occurred with three different viruses in recent history causing very deadly pandemics: 1) 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic; 2) 1957 H2N2 pandemic; and 3) 1968 H3N2 pandemic (Nguyen 2020).

The evolution of COVID-19 has been occurring since its introduction into the human population. However, what has made it prolific, is the ability and rate at which it has infected the human population. When a virus infects a person that virus is carrying all the information from the last infection, a library of information and mistakes. When it infects again or jumps to the next human host, it remembers its mistakes and changes. The virus becomes a very efficient organism and has the potential to become more efficient and lethal.

## **The Immune Response to COVID-19**

**T**he human immune system is an indiscriminate killer, targeting and eradicating anything it sees as a threat. However, if the body begins to fight a virus with everything it has, the immune system is constantly taxed and flooding the body with cytokines, cellular detritus, interferon, and other products that produce toxic effects not only to a virus but also to the body itself.

This production cells allows a virus to further infect an individual that could lead to feeling healthy one moment and dead within hours. If COVID-19 were to shift, the new forms of an antigen would be considerably different from the old antigen and no longer would bind to the antibodies, allowing the mutant virus to infect people who were immune to the original strain of the virus because of prior infection or vaccination (Nguyen 2020).

## **Viral Loading**

**A** key term that has been used is “viral load” or “viral loading.” The viral load in an infected person is the amount of the virus or the amount of the RNA material that is in the bloodstream at any given time. The amount of the virus in the bloodstream depends on the original dose an infected person has. However, this viral loading determines how the body and the immune system responds. Unlike a specific acquired immune response, where the body responds to a specific threat that it has seen before, the body reacts with a general response. When this occurs, the body produces cytokines and interferon which is toxic to both the body and the virus (Skinner 2020). The amount of the virus in the body determines how much and how hard the body will attempt to fight it. This is what leads to most of the deaths to elderly and young adults.

COVID-19 deaths are centered around a certain demographic. In this case, the demographic is the elderly population. The reason for this is

mostly due to their already weakened immune system and/or pre-existing complications or comorbidity factors, or the existence of other factors which contribute to the death of an individual (Skinner 2020). However, as COVID-19 death pertains to mostly healthy young adults, this comes from several factors—one of them being when the immune system recognizes the virus and the current viral load. If a healthy adult contracts the virus and the initial infection is a large dose, the virus has more time to replicate and in large numbers. This will force an immune response that will produce large amounts of toxins to fight an infection. These toxins are in the form of Cytokines and Interferon that is deadly to a virus as well as to the human body. The large productions of these Cytokines occur, this is called a Cytokine Storm. A Cytokine Storm produces massive inflammation of the surrounding tissues and can cause those surrounding tissues to die and cause damage to the individual on a long-term basis or death.

Finally, one of the jobs of the immune system is to stand down the response once the virus or infection has been dealt with. This allows the body to clear itself of the toxins which that have been built up over the course of the attack. However, if the virus continues to replicate and the body cannot stop it, the body continues to flood with toxins and healthy tissues begin dying, such as Lung tissue in the case of COVID-19 and the individual enters ARDS (Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome) or the entrance of fluid into the lung tissue (National Heart, Lung, and Blood In-

stitute, 2019). COVID-19 overall effects the elderly population demographic, but can have vast effects on anyone who contracts a high enough initial dose or has other undocumented, pre-existing complications.

## **Ways Ahead and Recommendations**

**P**resently, COVID-19 has mutated to multiple more virulent forms such as the South African strain (501Y.V2), the United Kingdom strain (VOC202012/01), and the South American strain (501Y.V3) (Reardon 2021). These more virulent forms have enabled COVID-19 to transmit and infect at much higher rates than previously seen. When these strains mutate again, they may become even more virulent, and more lethal creating a perfect pandemic that could surpass the Spanish Flu in both morbidity (infection rates) and mortality (death rate).

Luckily, there are ways to stop a pandemic and slow a viruses' transmission and therefore mutation rates. These methods may seem simple in nature, but require strict adherence by every person and without compromise. They are:

- 1) Wear a mask when in close proximity with others
- 2) Maintain social distancing
- 3) Increase hand hygiene
- 4) Stay home if possible

- 5) Avoid large gatherings
- 6) Vaccinate

In 1918, the world came to terms with a pandemic that killed approximately 6 percent of the European population. The death toll was as high as 100 million people over 18 months, sadly a vaccine never came. Over 18 months the vaccination efforts of multiple countries raged, but technology of the time was un-successful in combating the pandemic. Had technology been able to develop a vaccine, such as the ones we have today, the death toll may have been markedly lower. Presently, the vaccination effort is ongoing and has made tremendous strides in such a short time period. Four companies have been able to produce highly effective vaccines against COVID-19 in relatively short timeframes.

Unfortunately, many people in this world feel that vaccines are not safe or are part of a larger conspiracy theory. These fears are widely unfounded and based on isolated incidents, anecdotal conjecture or are products of intentional disinformation campaigns. Without the efforts of scientists and medical professionals, COVID-19 would have more of a chance to become lethal and the world would be a much different place. Three things are needed to stop a pandemic: public health control methods, personal responsibility, and vaccinations are required.

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# The Monopolar Paradigm in a Polycentric World, a Review of L. V. Savin's Monograph *Ordo Pluriversalis: The End of Pax Americana and the Rise of Multipolarity*

Original review in Russian by Dr. Eugene Vertlieb

Translated to English by Dennis T. Faleris

Leonid Savin. *Ordo Pluriversalis: The End of Pax Americana and the Rise of Multipolarity*. Translated by Jafe Arnold. London: Black House Publishing, Ltd., 2020. ISBN: 978-1-912759-36-1. 470 pages. \$28.00

Alexander Dugin, a thinker and leader of the international Eurasian movement, is confident that the best system of all is a multipolar world order, which is replacing “unipolarity.”<sup>1</sup> Defending the multipolar model is the leitmotif of the book being analyzed—political scientist Savin's *Ordo Pluriversalis: The End of Pax Americana and the Rise of Multipolarity*.<sup>2</sup> The book is dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the publication of Prince Nikolai Sergeyeovich Trubetskoy's “Europe and Humanity”—the first, according to Dugin, genuinely Eurasian text by a Eurasian, and the first to “overcome the West from within.” Savin currently serves as Editor-in-Chief of *Geopolitica.ru*, the informational, analytical e-publication portal whose ardent Orthodox pro-Eurasian position prompted the U.S. State Department to label this alternative political resource as a pillar of the “ecosystem of Russian propaganda and disinformation.”<sup>3</sup> The Editorial Board

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1 For information on Dugin and Eurasianism, see, for example, Shlapentokh, Dmitry, “Dugin, Eurasianism, and Central Asia,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Volume 40, Issue 2, June 2007: 143-156. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2007.04.002>. Note that Dugin uses the English term “unipolar” vice “monopolar.” These words are synonymous. Monopolar is used throughout this review.

2 The original book (in Russian) by Leonid Savin is «Ordo Pluriversalis. Возрождение многополярного мироустройства» (Москва, издательский дом «Кислород», 2020. ISBN 978-5-901635-99-5), rendered, in English as “Ordo Pluriversalis. The Rebirth of a Multipolar World Order” (Moscow, “Kislorod” Publishing House, 2020).

3 According to the U.S. Department of State Global Engagement Center's August 2020 Special Report, *Pillars of Russia's Disinformation and Propaganda Ecosystem*, 50, “*Geopolitica.ru* serves as a platform for Russian ultra-nationalists to spread disinformation and propaganda targeting Western and other audiences. Inspired by the Eurasianist ideology of the Russian philosopher and ultranationalist Alexander Dugin, *Geopolitica.ru* views itself as caught in a perpetual information war against the Western ideals of democracy and liberalism.” Until 2017, Savin served as Editor-in-Chief of the *Katehon* website and magazine—also blacklisted by the State Department in the August 2020 report. Also of note, Savin is founder and Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Eurasian Affairs*.

of the portal considered the sanctions to be punitive and “part of the consistent pressure on alternative sources of information that do not accept the neoliberal agenda and the monopolar world.”

Political systems analyst Savin “brainstorms” and methodically takes stock to identify the relative positions of opposing systems, and to develop the rules and mechanisms for establishing and sustaining global security for all. He affirms the fact that the old model of “democracy—good, authoritarianism—bad” no longer works; that alternatives to outdated templates and dogmas are needed; that Western mainstream neoliberalism-mondialism<sup>4</sup> is giving way to a multipolar world where conservative values take primacy. Changes are triggering a modernization and adaptation of previous international relations models and paradigms.

This expert assessment of multipolarity is a thesaurus of non-Western approaches to a multivariant perspective on world order. In his monograph, the author shares with the reader his reinterpretation of the fundamental components of statehood, including religion, economy, the worldview of a state’s peoples, its relationship to time and space, and the themes that mark its sense of security and sovereignty, its nationalism, and its civilizations. Savin’s multilevel study of the polycentric structure of the global political system is based on an abundance of illustrative facts, and contains extraordinary, existentially substantive conclusions.

The balance of power is a law of politics and a condition for non-war. The disorder caused by bipolarity is a political malaise and one that exacerbates social conflict. The collapse of the USSR ended the balance of the two poles that were propping up each other’s existence. For global security, a failure such as this in a system that functioned well to suppress conflicts had repercussions that are akin to a natural cataclysmic event involving a fault in the earth’s crust—if, for example, the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates had diverged and giant rifts had formed—the danger which results from of an imbalance of forces: the temptation to deliver a strike on an ontological enemy with impunity. And the *pathos* of Winston Churchill’s 1946 Fulton (“Iron Curtain”) speech confirms this axiom: “[T]he old doctrine of a balance of power is unsound. We cannot afford, if we can help it, to work on narrow margins, offering temptations to a trial of strength.” Consequently, even a small advantage in strategic forces provokes expansion.

With the defeat of the USSR in the Cold War, a “period of monopolarity” was established and lasted from the end of 1991—the collapse of the USSR, to September 15, 2008—the collapse of Lehman Brothers. The United States is still a superpower, but not the world’s policeman; it is a center of gravity: a mediator. Political scientists J. Nye and R. Keohane assert that to serve as a global regulator,

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4 Mondialism or world government is the notion of a common political authority for all of humanity, yielding a global government and a single state. Such a government could come into existence either through violent and compulsory world domination or through peaceful and voluntary supranational union.

all that is needed is one strong state capable of establishing the basic rules governing interstate relations, and having that state possess the will to do so. The U.S. and China are the main global regulators. The emerging parallel center of power—China— is hegemonically laying claim to a “world China zone.” In the short term, there is not going to be any “era of two poles.”

China is using “soft power” to achieve its aims. It has successfully made use of globalization to carry out its modernization without Westernization. It is doggedly forming its own geopolitical and geoeconomic expansion through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS,<sup>5</sup> and through its Chinese Free Trade Zones, respectively. Now, with its ambitious “Belt Road Initiative,”<sup>6</sup> it is “killing three birds with one stone”: 1) it is preventing a fall into an abyss from an impending decline in the rate of economic growth; 2) it is building its infrastructure facilities using its military bases for their defense; and 3) it is entangling developing nations into the scope of its strategic plans. Ancient strategies speak of China’s domination over other countries in the economic, cultural, and military spheres, and of an international order based on a monopolar system in which only China sets the rules. And the three-hundred-year geopolitical confrontation with Russia has probably not been forgotten. Following the end of the Daman conflict of 1969,<sup>7</sup> the Chinese so far have remained satisfied with the “harmonious neighborhood” it shares with the Russian Federation, which is considered the “rear area” of Chinese geopolitics. But China has an element in reserve and a geostrategy of “the stick”—establishing a temporary alliance with a distant state to defeat a nearby enemy state. Beijing knows how to extract maximum dividends—even from the collapse of the US-USSR bipolarity.

In a changing world, the azimuth of geopolitical confrontation is no longer West-East, but now consists of rivaling conglomerates: the European Union (EU), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Great Chinese Economic Zone, Japan, and the other Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) group of countries. The world is institutionally consolidated in pairs: NA-

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5 The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), or Shanghai Pact, is a Eurasian political, economic, and security alliance, the creation of which was announced on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai. Established in 2006, BRICS is the acronym coined for an association of five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The BRICS members are known for their significant influence on regional affairs.

6 Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a transcontinental long-term policy and investment program which aims at infrastructure development and acceleration of the economic integration of countries along the route of the [historic Silk Road](#). The Initiative was unveiled in 2013 by China’s president Xi Jinping and until 2016, was known as OBOR – One Belt One Road. See URL <https://www.beltroad-initiative.com/belt-and-road/>.

7 In March 1969, the Damansky Island border conflict brought the USSR and PRC to the brink of war in the vicinity of Zhenbao (Damansky) Island on the Ussuri (Wusuli) River, near Manchuria.

TO-CSTO; G-7-SCO; and EU-CIS.<sup>8</sup> It is more prudent for a too interdependent world order (the flow of pharmaceuticals from China to the U.S.) to adhere not to the vector of confrontation, but to a strategy of a new “consensus of legitimacy, sovereignty and governance.”<sup>9</sup> But in the current environment of a confrontational “tripolarity,” it is difficult to achieve harmony in international relations. The multipolar model was born at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 with the consolidation of geopolitics as a strategy for ensuring security and justice in international affairs.<sup>10</sup> Multipolarity is consistent with the current geostrategy of Russia, which maintains an approach of “balancing equidistance” (or “equal proximity”).

*Ordo Pluriversalis* provides a methodology for evaluating multipolarity as it makes a return: It is a distillation of ideas that provides a starting point; it is an anamnesis that provides the history of what has come before; it is a diagnosis of what is now; and it is a prognosis for what is to come—a forecast for the current transitioning state of world order that is undergoing restructuring. Savin examines the concept of “strategic culture”<sup>11</sup> as a special element for identifying statehood. In the conditions of a multipolar rivalry, in which everyone is against everyone else, an imprecise understanding of the enemy is dangerous for the General Staffs of the world. This vulnerability cost Joachim von Ribbentrop the gallows, and Adolf Hitler, defeat in the war.

Those involved in developing new systems of international relations and global politics will find it useful to become acquainted with the concepts that Savin offers—the theory of neopluralism, the synthesis of aesthetic politics, and the Fourth Political Theory.<sup>12</sup>

Particularly attractive to those who are non-liberalism-oriented is the author’s theory of sustainable politics, which is based on holistic conservative think-

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8 NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization; CSTO: The Collective Security Treaty Organization; G-7: Group of Seven; SCO: Shanghai Cooperation Organization; EU: European Union; CIS: Commonwealth of Independent States.

9 Savin 2020, 31.

10 Savin 2020, 79.

11 The concept of strategic culture has become widely used in the field of international relations, primarily in the context of efforts to explain the distinctive strategic behaviors of states through reference to their unique strategic properties. See <https://oxfordre.com/politics/politics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-320>, among other sources. Interestingly, a course was developed and taught by the author of this review, Dr. Vertlieb, entitled “The Russian Mind.” In it, considerable emphasis was given to the strategic importance of culture in geopolitics. The course was taught at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, an American-German security and defense studies institute that offers graduate-level resident programs to military and civilian government officials from around the world.

12 Savin 2020; see 403, 407, and 423, for major sections addressing “Neopluralism,” “Synthesis Theory,” and “Dasein and the Fourth Political Theory,” respectively.

ing.<sup>13</sup> The basis for bringing together those who support sustaining balance in the global community may be the rejection of radical liberalism, which is characteristic for Europeans, whether social democrats or right-wing Republicans—the Gaullist-Adenauer types. Russia, in the face of anarchic riots of the century before last, substituted the paradigm of a spiritual-civil-oriented society for moderate liberalism. “Only the energy of a sensible and liberal conservatism,” wrote the Russian scientist and political thinker of the century before last, B. N. Chicherin, “can save society from endless wobbling.”

Savin’s book is striking in the abundance of scientific methodologies that he proposes for describing a new type of world order: a system of systems, neofunctionalism, complex adaptive systems, relationism, multiplexity, polylogue, systase, and syneresis.<sup>14</sup>

With the author’s focusing of the issues, the blind spots caused by the tunnel-vision mindset of today’s postmodern man disappear, and he gains sight. This is what expands the boundaries of knowledge of both man and the world. Becoming acquainted with the Eurasian-conservative point of view on polycentricity will aid the political systems analyst in developing optimal foreign policy strategies and a multipolar-polycentric-pluriversal approach to political science—an indispensable innovation for a global security system given the current period of turbulent global geopolitical disturbances. The potential for conflict to arise in a multipolar world depends on how successful the strategic integration of the components is under the single umbrella of a power functioning in the role of a referee to settle disagreements. This approach is close to the ideas of Karl Schmitt, Richard Rosecrantz, and Alexander Dugin.<sup>15</sup>

Prof. Eugene A. Vertlieb

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13 Savin 2020, 419.

14 Savin, 431. Chapter 13, entitled “Multipolar Praxis,” addresses these and other scientific methodologies for describing a new type of world order.

15 Savin 2020, 53.

**Dr. Eugene A. Vertlieb** is a Russian-born dissident bearing US citizenship and currently living in France. He received a B.A. at Leningrad (Sankt-Peterburg) State University, a PhD at the University of North Carolina, and completed a postdoctoral internship at the Russian Academy of Public Administration in the Russian Federation. Dr. Vertlieb has held a variety of positions including Professor at the Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Germany, and at the Institute of International Relations (US). He is an author of several books and articles on geopolitics. Dr. Vertlieb has also served as Political adviser to the Committee on International Affairs and International Relations, Kyrgyzstan. He is currently President of the International Institute for Strategic Assessments and Conflict Management (IISACM-France); Executive Director of the Western Policy Forecasting Department for Slavic Europe, (Munich, Germany); and Participating Member of the Lisbon-Vladivostok Initiative (France).

**Dennis T. Faleris** received a B.S. from the University of Michigan and a Master's Degree in Russian Linguistics from Georgetown University. Mr. Faleris worked as an instructor, translator, senior intelligence analyst, and manager at the National Security Agency for more than thirty-five years. He currently resides in Annapolis, Maryland.



## Парадигма монополярья в полицентричном мире, Рецензия на монографию Л. В. Савина «Ordo Pluriversalis: Возрождение многополярного мироустройства»

Автор оригинального обзора на русском Д-р Евгений А. Вертлиб  
Перевёл с русского на английский Деннис Т. Фалерис

Савин, Л. *Ordo Pluriversalis. Возрождение многополярного мироустройства*. Издательский дом «Кислород», 2020.

ISBN 978-5-901-635-99-5. 592 с., с ил.

Мыслитель и лидер Евразийского движения Александр Дугин уверен, что лучшая из систем – многополярное мироустройство, идущее на смену «унополярью»<sup>1</sup>. Отстаивание многополюсной модели миропорядка – лейтмотив анализируемой монографии политолога Л. В. Савина<sup>2</sup>. Книга посвящена 100-летию выхода в свет работы князя Н. С. Трубецкого «Европа и человечество» – первого, по мнению Дугина, собственно евразийского текста евразийца номер один «в преодолении Запада изнутри». Информационно-аналитическое издание «Геополитика», возглавляемое Леонидом Савиным, своей яркой ортодоксально проевразийской позицией побудило Государственный департамент США счесть этот альтернативный политический ресурс одним из столпов «экосистемы российской пропаганды и дезинформации». Редакция же этого портала считает санкции карательными – «частью последовательного давления на альтернативные источники информации, не принимающие неолиберальную повестку дня и однополярный мир».

Системный аналитик Леонид Савин проводит «мозговой штурм-аудит» для выявления диспозиции противоборствующих систем

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1 Униполярный и однополярный - синонимы. По-английски, “unipolar” или “monopolar.” В английском переводе, будем употреблять “monopolar.” Александр Дугин «итальянообразно» использует термин «унополярное мироустройство».

2 *Ordo Pluriversalis: Возрождение многополярного мироустройства*. Издательский дом «Кислород», Москва, 2020. Издание на английском переводе опубликовано под названием *Ordo Pluriversalis: The End of Pax Americana and the Rise of Multipolarity.* Black House Publishing Ltd, London, 2020.

и выработки правил и механизмов становления и функционирования глобальной безопасности для всех. Констатируется факт, что старая модель «хорошая демократия против плохого авторитаризма» уже не работает; что потребны альтернативы устаревшим шаблонам и догмам; что западный мейнстрим неолиберализма-мондиализма уступает позиции многополярному миру с приматом консервативных ценностей. Изменения становятся триггером модернизации и адаптации прежних моделей и схем международных отношений.

Данная экспертная оценка многополярности – тезаурус не-Западного подхода к многовариантной перспективе мироустройства. В монографии переосмысливаются фундаменталы государственности, включающие в себя религию, экономику, мировоззренческие особенности народов, отношение ко времени и пространству, темы безопасности и суверенитета, национализма и цивилизаций. Это многоуровневое исследование полицентричной структуры глобальной политической системы базируется на обилии иллюстрирующих фактов и содержит оригинальные экзистенциально-сущностные выводы.

Баланс сил – закон политики и условие невоины. Биполярное расстройство – это недомогание политики и обострение противоречий в социуме. С распадом СССР закончилось равновесие взаимосдерживающих полюсов. Для глобальной безопасности такой сбой в отлаженной системе гашения конфликтов по резонансу соотносим с природным катаклизмом разлома земной коры, когда Северо-Американская и Евразийская тектонические плиты разошлись и возникли гигантские рифты – опасность последствий разбалансировки паритета сил: соблазн безнаказанного удара по онтологическому врагу. И пафос Фултонской речи 1946 года Уинстона Черчилля подтверждает эту аксиому: «старая доктрина равновесия сил теперь непригодна. Мы не можем позволить себе – насколько это в наших силах – действовать с позиций малого перевеса, который вводит во искушение заняться пробой сил». Следовательно: даже малый перевес стратегических сил провоцирует экспансию.

«Однополярный момент» американоцентричного иропорядка длился с конца 1991 (распад СССР) по 15 сентября 2008 года (крах Lehman Brothers). США всё ещё сверхдержава. Но не глобальный страж, а центр гравитации: медиатор. Учёные Дж. Най и Р. Кеохейн считают, что в качестве глобального регулятора достаточно одного сильного государства, способного утверждать основные правила, регулирующие межгосударственные отношения, и обладающего волей

поступать таким образом. Формирующийся параллельный центр силы гегемонистски претендует на свой мировой China-пояс. Однако в краткосрочной перспективе не наступит «эпоха двух полюсов».

Китай «мягкой силой» добивается желаемого. Он удачно использовал глобализацию для проведения модернизации без вестернизации. Упорно формирует собственное геополитическое (ШОС, БРИКС) и геоэкономическое (зоны свободной торговли) пространства. Своим амбициозным проектом «Один пояс – один путь» убивает сразу трёх зайцев: 1) предотвращает падение в «бездну от надвигающегося снижения темпов экономического роста»; 2) строит и защищает военными базами свои инфраструктурные объекты; 3) ввязывает развивающиеся страны в орбиту китайских стратегических планов. В их старинных стратегмах говорится о доминировании над другими странами в экономической, культурной и военной сферах и о «международном порядке, основанном на однополярной системе», правила в которой устанавливает только Китай. Наверняка не забыто ими трёхсотлетнее геополитическое противостояние с Россией. После Даманского конфликта 1969 года пока китайцев устраивает «гармоничное соседство» с РФ, рассматриваемой «тылом» китайской геополитики. Но есть у них прозапасная геостратегия кнута: установления временного союза с отдалённым государством для разгрома ближнего врага. Пекин умеет извлекать максимальные дивиденды – даже из крушения биполярности США-СССР.

В меняющемся мире азимут геополитического противостояния уже не Запад-Восток, а соперничающие конгломераты: Европейский Союз, Североамериканская зона свободной торговли (НАФТА), зона «большой китайской экономики», Япония и группа стран АСЕАН. Мир институционально попарно консолидирован (НАТО-ОДКБ, Г7-ШОС, ЕС-СНГ)<sup>3</sup>. Слишком взаимозависимому мироустройству (в США фармацевтика из Китая) благоразумнее придерживаться вектора «консенсуса легитимности, суверенности и управления». Но в нынешнем конфронтационном «трёхполюсье» трудно достичь гармонии в международных отношениях. Модель многополярья родилась с упрочением Венском конгрессом 1815 года геополитики как стратегии обеспечения безопасности и справедливости в международных делах. Многополярность соответствует нынешней геостратегии России, придерживающейся линии «балансирующей

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<sup>3</sup> НАТО: Организация Североатлантического договора; ОДКБ: Организация Договора о Коллективной Безопасности; Г-7: Группа Семи; ШОС: Шанхайская организация сотрудничества; ЕС: Европейский Союз; СНГ: Содружество Независимых Государств.

равноудалённости» (или «равноприближённости»).

Книга Л. Савина – методология оценки возвращающейся многополярности: концентрат проповедности (начала начал), анамнеза (что предшествовало), диагностики (что есть) и прогноза (что будет) нынешнего переходного состояния переформатирования миропорядка. Как особый идентификационный элемент, важный для государственности, рассматривается концепция стратегической культуры<sup>4</sup>. В условиях многополярного противоборства «всех против всех» неточное знание противника опасно для Генштабов. Эта уязвимость стоила Иоахиму фон Риббентропу виселицы, а Адольфу Гитлеру поражения в войне.

Для разработчиков систем новых международных отношений и глобальной политики полезно ознакомиться с выдвинутыми Л. Савиным концепциями: теорией неоплюрализма, синтезом эстетической политики и четвертой политической теорией. Особо притягательна для внелиберально ориентированных авторская теория устойчивой политики, которая опирается на целостное консервативное мышление. Основой сближения сторонников устойчивого равновесия в мировом сообществе может стать отвержение радикального либерализма, что характерно для европейских как социал-демократов, так и для правых республиканцев – голлистко-аденауэровского типа. Россия в ситуации анархических беспорядков в позапрошлом веке сменила парадигму духовно-гражданской ориентации общества – на умеренный либерализм. «Только энергия разумного и либерального консерватизма, – писал российский учёный и политик Б. Н. Чичерин, – может спасти общество от бесконечного шатания».

Поражает в книге Л. Савина обилие предлагаемых научных методик описания нового типа мироустройства: система систем, неофункционализм, комплексные адаптивные системы, реляционизм, мультиплексность, полилог, систаза и синерезис.

Слепые зоны туннельного мышления человека эпохи постмодерна в авторской фокусировке обретают “зрячесть”. Что раздвигает границы познания как человека, так и мира. Это знакомство с евразийско-консервативной точкой зрения на полицентричность поможет системной аналитике в выработке оптимальных внешнеполитических стратегий и многополярно-полицентрично-

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<sup>4</sup> Интересно, что автор читал дипломатам и военным в George C. Marshall European Center, Germany, свой спецкурс “The Russian Mind.” В ходе курса, большое внимание было уделено «стратегическому значению культуры».

плюриверсальному подходу в политических науках, столь необходимых новаций для системы глобальной безопасности в период турбулентных геополитических пертурбаций. Потенциал конфликтности в многополярье зависит от результата стратегической интеграции его составных компонентов, под единым зонтиком сильной державы в функции всемирного рефери в спорах. Такой подход близок к идеям Карла Шмитта, Ричарда Роузкранца, и Александра Дугина.

Проф. Евгений Александрович Вертлиб

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## Book Review: *Weaponized Words*

Reviewed by Dr. Don Meyerhoff

K. Braddock. *Weaponized Words: The Strategic Role of Persuasion in Violent Radicalization and Counter-Terrorism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020. ISBN: 978-1-108-46487-1. 289 pages. \$29.37

One of the most popular uses of media and online platforms is in the persuasion of audiences. An innumerable number of hours of the average person's day exposes them to persuasion of some form or another. Someone only has to turn on a television, read an online news article, or spend time on any of the popular social media platforms and they will be immersed in volumes of advertisements and articles attempting to persuade them to purchase a particular product, vote for a specific candidate, or perhaps even align with a new radical ideological belief. For whatever purpose it may be presented to the viewer, the intent comes down to the use of persuasive messaging through communication.

Of popular concern is the threat to younger generations and disenfranchised individuals susceptible to the persuasive messaging of domestic and international terrorist groups. Online messaging of radical ideologies centering around religious extremism, anarchism, and racism present themselves in the forms of video, music, e-zine publications (e.g., Dabiq and Inspire), and chat room conversations. This messaging has infected, molded, and motivated individuals to the point of active participation in violent acts they would not have previously engaged in. Susceptible individuals no longer have to travel long or short distances to training camps, religious centers, or compounds in order to fall prey to the radicalization process and the associated dire outcomes. Kurt Braddock, an assistant teaching professor and researcher at the Pennsylvania State University, skillfully explains how persuasive narratives and messaging are used as part of the overall radicalization process on the part of terrorists and how they can be countered and combatted.

Starting out in an attempt to explain the persuasive narrative and counter-narrative process the book's author provides the reader with a light yet digestible discourse of necessary theoretical groundwork on the radicalization process. Though there are several espoused frameworks of radicalization, the author presents McCauley's Single Pyramid model of radicalism and Moghaddam's Staircase to Terrorism model for a discussion of linear radicalization processes. Alternatively, for discussion of non-linear approaches to radicalization, McCauley and Moskalenko's Double Pyramid Model is introduced. As a final preparation for continued progression through the text the author establishes four key or baseline propositions pertaining to the radicalization process and its use of persuasion. The

fourth proposition rolls up the first three providing a baseline and overall direction for the rest of the text, and states “Proven theories of persuasion can inform (a) our understanding of how terrorist messaging promotes radicalization and violent radicalization and (b) our development of messages intended for counter-radicalization.”

Braddock continues to discuss lessons learned from existing counter-radicalization processes and programs focused on prevention as well as intervention for those already engaged in the mind-altering radicalization process. Hotlines and outreach programs, in countries such as Germany and Holland, which utilize presentations by ex-group members and victims of radicalization, are discussed. Training programs for frontline workers (e.g., social workers and counselors) in numerous countries such as Australia and Belgium are presented as well. Additionally, discussion of online re-direct programs and their tactics (e.g., Google’s Jigsaw program) are presented to the reader. For further comprehension, case examples are peppered throughout the text and aid the reader in binding concepts and theory to actual events.

The book’s author further sets the table for counter-narrative creation by providing baseline information on persuasive narratives which advances into a discussion on thematic analysis of radicalizing narratives. The results of the analysis eventually inform the proposed counter-narrative development processes. Additionally, the various emotions intended to be acted upon by radical messaging and how they are possibly countered are discussed. Once counter-narrative creation has been achieved methods of dissemination and associated communication vehicles are presented. The importance of utilizing trusted communicators (e.g., reformed terrorists or those that have previously been radicalized) is emphasized due to their essential nature in the creation of trust, believability and general acceptance by the intended audience.

Braddock also addresses inoculation of audiences against persuasive messaging meant to radicalize. Counter-messaging is created in order to prepare the public for terrorist-based attempts meant to entice particular age groups, populations and segments to embrace terrorist ideologies. Similar to public service announcements aimed at preventing or stopping smoking, drunk driving and drug use, inoculation messaging against terrorism prepares individuals from engaging or believing radical ideological messaging from groups such as Al Qaeda or the Skinheads. Oftentimes, the messaging presents the audience with grim images of unheeded consequences.

The book’s author then spends time discussing reasoned action theory and its several components describing the decision-making process and how influencing different factors may alter final decisions and behaviors. Ultimately, to wrap up the section on influencing human behavior, Braddock discusses the influential use of emotions in messaging, on the part of terrorists, and how it may be countered.



The final section of Braddock's work discusses current and future threats in persuasive communication and future directions. Areas covered include fake news, stochastic terrorism, and state sponsored illicit actors. Covered as well is the roles large media outlets and social media giants play in validating information for the masses.

Overall, Kurt Braddock did a fine job bringing the reader into the world of persuasive narratives and counter-messaging. Throughout the work there were necessary diversions into relevant psychological and communications theory. These moments were relevant and provided background necessary to comfortably progress the reader through well described processes and case interpretations essential to the understanding the subject matter at hand. However, due to the depth of detail and continued reference to various theoretical and academic material, the text is probably best suited for the student, scholar, and practitioner, not the layman.

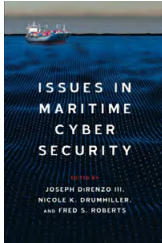
**Don Meyerhoff** holds a DBA in Homeland Security Leadership and Policy and an MA in Business and Organizational Security Management. His primary area of research includes the examination of factors attributable to terrorism as well as the impact of terrorist events on society. Highlights from his research include the impact of terrorism on the protection of buildings and spaces in the commercial and government sectors as well as its impact on entrepreneurialism in weak and failed states. He welcomes opportunities for continued research and collaboration.







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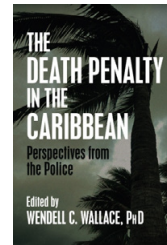


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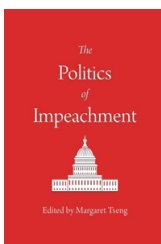
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Unworkable Conservatism looks at what passes these days for “conservative” principles—small government, low taxes, minimal regulation—and demonstrates that they are not feasible under modern conditions.



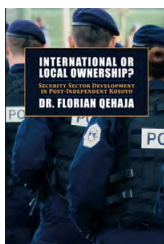
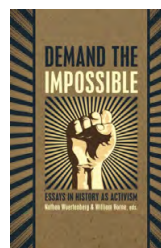
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Edited by Margaret Tseng

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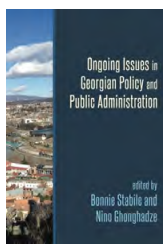
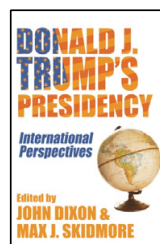


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