

Katarzyna MANISZEWSKA, Paulina PIASECKA Editors

SECURITY AND SOCIETY IN THE INFORMATION AGE



Volume 4



Collegium
Civitas

Katarzyna MANISZEWSKA, Paulina PIASECKA Editors

SECURITY AND SOCIETY



IN THE INFORMATION AGE

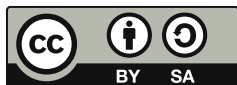
Volume 4

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*In memory of Dr. Krzysztof Liedel,
Director of the Terrorism Research Center (2008–2021)*

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to present the fourth scholarly volume bringing together a unique series of research papers by talented students – participants in the Security and Society in the Information Age program held at Collegium Civitas University, Warsaw, Poland. Due to the pandemic in the 2020/2021 academic year, the program was held online. The students took part in a fully-fledged online course and an online research internship seminar at the Krzysztof Liedel Terrorism Research Center (TRC).

Krzysztof Liedel Terrorism Research Center is a leading think-tank and a research unit within Collegium Civitas. It is named after its longtime Director Dr. Krzysztof Liedel, outstanding academic teacher and leading expert in security issues, who passed away in 2021.

The Center gathers scientists and experts involved in terrorism in the context of their scientific specialties. It is a platform for exchanging views, opinions, research results, and experiences of people who look at the phenomenon of terrorism through the prism of various analytical approaches. These include, among others, international relations, sociology, psychology, military sciences, internal and international law, political science, banking, finance, economics, anthropology, cultural studies. This multifaceted approach contributes to increasing the amount of our knowledge about terrorism and the possibilities of counteracting it.

Security and Society Summer School is a program run by Collegium Civitas in cooperation with SRAS (USA). It is composed of summer school courses, semester or academic year abroad opportunities, and an internship. The courses are devoted to a wide range of history, security, and

sociology issues. The courses are taught in English by experts in academia and practitioners. The program is aimed at ambitious students ready to engage in extracurricular academic activities who want to enhance their competencies and boost their academic and professional careers.

During the internship, the participants have worked on their research papers under the supervision of TRC mentors – analyzing a selected security issue of their interest. The security issues explored in this volume include terrorism, hybrid threats, environmental security, threats to human rights. The authors looked for solutions and had recommendations for law enforcement, policymakers, and scholars. This volume presents the result of the internship held in the summer of 2021.

Among the subjects discussed in the book, you will find issues connected with the most up-to-date threats to national and international peace and stability – and solutions to some of those problems. Young researchers confronted those issues with courage and analytical aptitude. They wrote about current conditions for domestic terrorism in the United States and the risk of radicalization in a post-coronavirus world (Luke Odo); the intersection of terrorism and organized crime (Hayley Sawyer); the impact of religion on suicide terrorism (James Bratton); cybercrime combating (Kylie Heitzenrater); the rise of domestic terrorism in the United States with the emergence of political motives (Jacob Falck) and money as a key to success in terrorism combating (Carissa Huntsberger).

We hope you will find this book interesting and valuable and we invite you to learn more about the program Security and Society in the Information Age at: www.securityandsociety.org

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Contemporary Conditions for Domestic Terrorism in the United States: The Risk of Radicalization in a Post-Coronavirus World

Luke ODO

Abstract: This paper examines what factors create domestic terrorism in the United States. First, the paper establishes three key motivating factors, those being economics, identity and socialization, and ethnicity. These are surveyed through statistical and expert analysis and their role in radicalization are explained. Finally, the paper provides insight on legislative action that could reduce these inflammatory societal ills that are creating terrorists.

Keywords: Terrorism, Radicalization, Sociology, Immigration, Racism, Economics, Social Media

Introduction

This paper seeks to establish an understanding on the factors that, on a societal scale, cause radicalization and eventually acts of terrorism. This paper will operate on the definition of terrorism as defined by Title 22, Chapter 38, Section 2656f, of the United States Code, that being “...premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against

noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents". This definition is inclusive of terrorism events that are crucial to an understanding of the phenomenon in the United States such as the Charleston church shooting of June 2015, orchestrated by Dylann Roof, but excludes those events that are more effectively described as random acts of violence such as the 2017 Las Vegas shooting conducted by Steven Paddock, which to this day has no clear motive.

This paper identifies the current risk of radicalization based on findings from critical research and what the author believes are the key factors of economics, socialization and identity, and ethnicity, and presents tentative policymaking directions to combat domestic terrorism at its roots.

Economic

The first, and perhaps most obvious indicator that the United States is a breeding ground for domestic terrorists can be observed in its economic state. Despite the role of the U.S. as the global hegemon of trade for over half a century, its citizens do not share the same level of comfort that many of its other developed counterparts do. According to a UC Berkley study on income inequality in the United States, "Income disparities are so pronounced that America's top 10 percent now average more than nine times as much income as the bottom 90 percent"¹. Further, worker hourly wages increased just 24 percent from 1979 to 2018, while worker productivity has increased 134 percent². The novel coronavirus COVID-19 has also been disastrous economically for the majority of U.S. citizens. Government aid was extremely sparse when compared to other countries, and the loss of income was felt significantly

¹ Emmanuel Saez, "Striking It Richer: The Evolution of Top Incomes in the United States," *Inequality in the 21st Century*, 2018, pp. 39–42, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429499821-8>.

² "The Productivity–Pay Gap," Economic Policy Institute, accessed July 6, 2021, <https://www.epi.org/productivity-pay-gap/>.

as one study found that “the poverty rate increased by 2.4 percentage points during the latter half of 2020... nearly double the largest annual increase in poverty since the 1960s”³. Home ownership is also on the decline among young (20–34) adults. In 2017, after decades of continuous decline, only 34% of the young adult population owned a home (this figure includes those with mortgage payments)⁴. Home ownership is associated with a slew of benefits according to the PRB, including “Homes can create wealth for their owners that in turn can benefit families for generations. Homeownership can also reduce economic risk by protecting families from rising rent prices. Owning a home has also been associated with better psychological health and greater stability for homeowners’ children”⁵. The culmination of all these negative economic factors create a deeply dissatisfied population. According to the World Happiness Report, “...numerous indicators of low psychological well-being such as depression, suicidal ideation, and self-harm increased sharply among adolescents since 2010, particularly among girls and young women. Thus, those from the iGen generation (born after 1995) have scored markedly lower in psychological well-being than the Millennials (born 1980–1994) did at the same age”⁶. Adults do not fare much better, and the general outlook for the American populace is a pessimistic one. This issue of happiness and mental health, as well as anxieties surrounding economic wellbeing were greatly exacerbated by the novel coronavirus COVID-19, as indicated by another World Happiness Report article stating “There is no doubt that the initial effects

³ “U.S. Suffers Sharpest Rise in Poverty Rate in More Than 50 Years,” Bloomberg.com (Bloomberg), accessed July 6, 2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-01-25/u-s-suffers-sharpest-rise-in-poverty-rate-in-more-than-50-years>.

⁴ Amanda Lee, Lillian Kilduff, and Mark Mather, “U.S. Homeownership Rates Fall Among Young Adults, African Americans,” PRB, accessed July 6, 2021, <https://www.prb.org/resources/u-s-homeownership-rates-fall-among-young-adults-african-americans/>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Jean M Twenge, “The Sad State of Happiness in the United States and the Role of Digital Media,” The Sad State of Happiness in the United States and the Role of Digital Media, March 20, 2019, <https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2019/the-sad-state-of-happiness-in-the-united-states-and-the-role-of-digital-media/>.

of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental ill-health symptoms were large, negative, and remarkably consistent across the data and studies discussed here. It is worth reiterating that these relate only to adults and solely to wealthy industrialised countries. These effects were worst in younger age groups and women, ethnic minorities, and those with pre-existing mental health problems, thus reinforcing many pre-existing mental health inequalities”⁷. So how does this tie into terrorism?

A leading theory in the subject of terrorism research is the theory of relative deprivation, defined by W.G. Runciman with the following example: “We can roughly say that [a person] is relatively deprived of X when (i) he does not have X, (ii) he sees some other person or persons, which may include himself at some previous or expected time, as having X (whether or not this is or will be in fact the case), (iii) he wants X, and (iv) he sees it as feasible that he should have X”⁸. In layman’s terms, the theory of relative deprivation posits that one will compare oneself to an outgroup who they perceive as having something that they do not, thus creating action or sometimes pathologies. Those who can be categorized as suffering from relative deprivation often manifest pathologies such as violence to equalize this perceived imbalance. While this phenomenon seems negative, it can be applied to many situations and is in isolation an observation without moral judgment. Two examples are the Civil Rights movement in the United States, in which African Americans were without rights enjoyed by white Americans, thus they were compelled to act in order to achieve equal rights, or the rise of the Nazi party in Weimar Germany, in which white Germans perceived that they were disadvantaged compared to Jewish Germans, thus they were compelled to support the Nazi party in

⁷ James Banks, “Mental Health and the COVID-19 Pandemic,” Mental health and the COVID-19 pandemic, March 20, 2021, <https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2021/mental-health-and-the-covid-19-pandemic/>.

⁸ W.G. Runciman, *Relative Deprivation and Social Justice: a Study of Attitudes to Social Inequality in Twentieth-Century England* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966).

order to achieve the desired effect of elevated social status. The second example highlights a key aspect of the theory of relative deprivation—its intrinsic subjectivity. Whether an individual suffers from relative deprivation differs from reality in that if one perceives that they exist in a state of deprivation, for the purpose of their psyche, they do. Hence the Nazi Germany example—while not exactly privileged, the average German was not meaningfully deprived when compared to the Jewish population of Germany. It is in this scapegoating that we can see the true usefulness of the theory in understanding radicalization as a tool to identify a population at risk of manifesting negative pathologies as a result of relative deprivation.

Relative deprivation's pertinence here and to the meaning of this paper as whole is to provide the first lens through which one can observe the American populace. The average American is highly likely to be a compelling case study for relative deprivation as they are becoming deeply unsatisfied, increasingly marginalized, and largely helpless as traditional safety nets (employment, housing, and insurance) disappear from under them. The most affected populations—young adults, and those with pre-existing health problems, according to the earlier World Happiness Report article, are especially at risk for violence^{9,10}. The effects of relative deprivation on a populace are well documented. One study titled "Income Inequality, Redistribution, and Domestic Terrorism" supported the idea of economic relative deprivation causing domestic terrorism, finding that "More income inequality results in more domestic terrorism; IV-approaches yield similar results"¹¹. Another study found that "Overwhelming evidence suggests negative impacts of relative

⁹ "Is Mental Illness a Risk Factor for Gun Violence?," RAND Corporation, accessed July 8, 2021, <https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy/analysis/essays/mental-illness-risk-factor-for-gun-violence.html>.

¹⁰ "Prevalence Rate of Violent Crime, by Age U.S. 2019," Statista, September 15, 2020, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/424137/prevalence-rate-of-violent-crime-in-the-us-by-age/>.

¹¹ Tim Krieger and Daniel Meierrieks, "Income Inequality, Redistribution and Domestic Terrorism," *World Development* 116 (2019): pp. 125–136, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.12.008>.

deprivation on a wide range of health measures, such as life expectancy in developed countries (including Japan, the UK, the US, and countries in Eastern Europe); coronary heart disease and cancer in the UK; self-reported health status in China and the US; diet and exercise in the UK; mortality rates, health-related limitations, body mass index, and risky health behaviors in the US; psychosocial health in China; and health-compromising behavior among people in the US and psychosocial stress-induced injuries among non-human primates in the lab”¹².

In the history of the United States there has been a large number of terrorist activity with clear economic motivations. The evolution of peaceful leftist groups such as the Students for a Democratic Society into offshoots such as Weather Underground and the 19 May Communist Organization are strong examples of economically driven terrorist activity, as they conducted bombings, drive-by shootings, and robberies aimed at the redistribution of wealth and advancing communist goals. While leftist terrorist activity in the United States has been virtually nonexistent for the past few decades, recent concerns about antifa (anti-fascist) movements have been reignited following the 2016 presidential election and especially the riots following George Floyd’s death. The Center for Strategic and International Studies defines antifa as “...a decentralized network of far-left militants that oppose what they believe are fascist, racist, or otherwise right-wing extremists”¹³. While the “antifa” moniker is ineffective due to the “leaderless resistance” nature of its organization, the presence of violent leftists in the media zeitgeist has the intended effect of terrorism: generating fear in the populace. Both former President of the United States (POTUS) Donald J. Trump and current POTUS Joe Biden have condemned antifa in public

¹² Xi Chen, “Relative Deprivation and Individual Well-Being,” *IZA World of Labor*, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.15185/izawol.140>.

¹³ Seth G Jones, “Who Are Antifa, and Are They a Threat?,” *Who Are Antifa, and Are They a Threat?* | Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 26, 2021, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/who-are-antifa-and-are-they-threat>.

statements^{14,15}, and according to Google analytics, search queries for “antifa” peaked during and surrounding the January 6th capitol building riots¹⁶. The media sensationalism of antifa could be emboldening to future acts of terrorism and runs contrary to the idea of deplatforming terrorists.

It is clear that the income inequality in the United States carries with it sweeping issues of mental health and wellbeing, as well as all the associated pathologies. The economic situation in the United States is an extreme potential motivating factor for radicalization, and as the research suggest, an extreme indicator of upcoming violence. But economic inequality is not the limit of America’s concerns, nor the scope of relative deprivation, as will be discussed in the next section of this paper.

Identity and Socialization

The populace of the United States is facing both an economic and identity crisis. A greater American identity can be ascribed to things like the democratic process and its presence in the world stage, but on a more micro scale is the identity founded on networks of high-trust neighborhoods, interpersonal relationships, church communities, and classrooms. According to pew research, trust in the government is near an all-time low, and has been since as early as 2007¹⁷. This trust is also greatly divided across party lines, exacerbating the lack of partisan

¹⁴ Barbara Barr, “One-on-One Interview with Joe Biden,” WGAL (WGAL, September 8, 2020), <https://www.wgal.com/article/one-on-one-interview-with-joe-biden-in-harrisburg/33944090#>.

¹⁵ “Amid Protests, Trump Says He Will Designate Antifa as Terrorist Organization,” Reuters (Thomson Reuters, May 31, 2020), <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-minneapolis-police-trump-antifa/amid-protests-trump-says-he-will-designate-antifa-as-terrorist-organization-idUKKBN2370LP>.

¹⁶ “Google Trends – ‘Antifa’ Search Query,” Google Trends (Google), accessed July 8, 2021, <https://www.google.com/trends>.

¹⁷ “Public Trust in Government: 1958–2021,” Pew Research Center – U.S. Politics & Policy (Pew Research Center, May 28, 2021), <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/05/17/public-trust-in-government-1958-2021/>.

trust among U.S. citizens, with conservative respondents polling in at 5% and liberal respondents polling in at 40% in April of 2021¹⁸ amid widespread concerns of voter fraud during the 2020 presidential election. A third concerning statistic derived from the same source is that trust among the government is lowest among Gen Z respondents, and as previously established, young adults are the most at risk of violence and radicalization. A Princeton study found that not only is trust in the electoral process at an all-time low, its efficacy is as well. According to the study, “When the preferences of economic elites and the stands of organized interest groups are controlled for, the preferences of the average American appear to have only a minuscule, near-zero, statistically non-significant impact upon public policy”¹⁹. To corroborate this, an Oxford study found that “computational propaganda,” that being information with a political agenda spread on social media through the dispersal of automated ‘bots’, had significant influence in the 2016 U.S. election. On Twitter alone, bots made up “...over 10% of the sample”²⁰, constituting “17 million tweets from 1,798, 127 unique users”²¹, and reaching “...highly influential network positions within retweet networks during the 2016 US election”²². The study’s findings indicate that there is significant and outcome-shaping influence from Twitter bots, and closes with the statement that “Computational propaganda is now one of the most powerful tools against democracy”²³. Not only does the average American do not trust in their government, these

¹⁸ “Public Trust in Government: 1958–2021,” Pew Research Center – U.S. Politics & Policy (Pew Research Center, May 28, 2021), <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/05/17/public-trust-in-government-1958-2021/>.

¹⁹ Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page, “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens,” *Perspectives on Politics* 12, no. 3 (2014): pp. 564–581, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1537592714001595>.

²⁰ Samuel C. Woolley and Philip N. Howard, “Computational Propaganda Worldwide: Executive Summary,” *University of Oxford*, November 2017.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

study indicates that they are correct in their analysis of the situation. Further polling conducted by Politico finds that “Among Americans who identify as Democrat or Republican, 1 in 3 now believe that violence could be justified to advance their parties’ political goals – a substantial increase over the last three years”²⁴. Another poll conducted by the Braver Angels, a bipartisan organization, found that “Nearly half (47%) of the 1,999 registered voters surveyed disagreed that the election ‘is likely to be fair and honest,’” and that “56% agreed that ‘America will see an increase in violence as a result of the election,’ with only 11% disagreeing”²⁵. Further polling found that “Unbelievably, 61% of Americans believe the country is on the verge of another civil war”²⁶ What all of these polls and studies amount to is that confidence in the American identity, and its keystone, the democratic process, are at all-time lows in the history of the state.

Further degradations of what are traditional measures of community cohesion and identity are also observable. Gallup’s 2021 bi-annual pew research found that “Americans’ membership in houses of worship continued to decline last year, dropping below 50% for the first time in Gallup’s eight-decade trend. In 2020, 47% of Americans said they belonged to a church, synagogue or mosque, down from 50% in 2018 and 70% in 1999”²⁷. Churches represent a strong source of community, with regular attendance providing numerous well-documented

²⁴ Larry Diamond et al., “Opinion: Americans Increasingly Believe Violence Is Justified If the Other Side Wins,” POLITICO (POLITICO, October 9, 2020), <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/10/01/political-violence-424157>.

²⁵ Jack Hadfield, “Poll: Majority of Americans See Possibility Of Civil War, Political Violence Following Election,” The Political Insider, October 7, 2020, <https://thepoliticalinsider.com/poll-majority-of-americans-see-possibility-of-civil-war-political-violence-following-election/>.

²⁶ Ryan Hughes, “NEW POLL SHOWS MAJORITY OF AMERICANS WORRIED ABOUT ANOTHER U.S. CIVIL WAR,” Engagious, accessed July 8, 2021, <https://engagious.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Back-to-Normal-10.1.20-FINAL.pdf>.

²⁷ Jeffrey M. Jones, “U.S. Church Membership Falls Below Majority for First Time,” Gallup.com (Gallup, May 6, 2021), <https://news.gallup.com/poll/341963/church-membership-falls-below-majority-first-time.aspx>.

benefits. One such study found that “religious attendance has salutary longitudinal effects on depressed affect among members of the youngest generation. These cross-sectional findings... withstand controlling for the effects of health, age, and other known sociodemographic correlates or predictors of both religious attendance and psychological well-being”²⁸. A Duke University study found that “The positive influence of religious certainty on well-being, however, is direct and substantial: individuals with strong religious faith report higher levels of life satisfaction, greater personal happiness, and fewer negative psychosocial consequences of traumatic life events”²⁹. As religiosity in the United States continues to trend downward, concerns about isolation are raised. A pew research study found that those who identify as Atheist are the least likely to participate in their community, followed by Agnostics and “nothing in particular” respondents³⁰. The psychological effects of isolation are extreme, and the novel coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic worsened this already serious situation.

Interpersonal relationships are declining as well, with marriages at an all-time low according to the CDC, who found that “From 2017 to 2018, the [marriage] rate dropped 6%, from 6.9 per 1,000 population to 6.5, the lowest of the 1900–2018 period”³¹. Not only is marriage on the decline, but dating is as well. According to a General Social Survey

²⁸ J.S. Levin, K.S. Markides, and L.A. Ray, “Religious Attendance and Psychological Well-Being in Mexican Americans: A Panel Analysis of Three-Generations Data,” *The Gerontologist* 36, no. 4 (January 1996): pp. 454–463, <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/36.4.454>.

²⁹ Christopher G. Ellison, “Religious Involvement and Subjective Well-Being,” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 32, no. 1 (1991): p. 80, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2136801>.

³⁰ Aleksandra Sandstrom and Becka A. Alper, “Who’s Active in Community Groups? Often, Those with More Education or Income,” Pew Research Center (Pew Research Center, August 18, 2020), <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/02/22/americans-with-higher-education-and-income-are-more-likely-to-be-involved-in-community-groups/>.

³¹ Sally C. Curtin and Paul D. Sutton, “Marriage Rates in the United States, 1900–2018,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, April 29, 2020), https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/marriage_rate_2018/marriage_rate_2018.htm.

in 2019, over half of young adults in America are single³². Further, birth rates in the U.S. are at an all-time low, as “The number of babies born in the U.S. dropped by 4% in 2020 compared with the previous year, according to a new federal report released Wednesday. The general fertility rate was 55.8 births per 1,000 women ages 15 to 44, reaching yet another record low... This is the sixth consecutive year that the number of births has declined after an increase in 2014, down an average of 2% per year, and the lowest number of births since 1979”³³. On top of the reduced birth rates, the United States also has among the highest abortion rates in the west, and while that number has fallen since 2014, on average 1 in 4 women will have an abortion in their lifetime in the United States³⁴. The number of families with a single mother has also been steadily trending upward³⁵, and overall, almost every conceivable metric for societal well-being is on the decline.

Given that, what we are left with is a mentally ill, isolated populace, who does not trust their government in the slightest. The risks of such a populace are clear. It is important to note that the theory of relative deprivation is not limited to economic envy but is also applicable to ideas like political representation and government treatment. It is clear that the individuals of the American populace are not only relatively deprived of political representation, but absolutely deprived as well. This generates concerns about the possibility of radical populist movements arising. A study conducted in France found that group

³² Emily Guskin Lisa Bonos, “It’s Not Just You: New Data Shows More than Half of Young People in America Don’t Have a Romantic Partner,” *The Washington Post* (WP Company, March 22, 2019), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2019/03/21/its-not-just-you-new-data-shows-more-than-half-young-people-america-dont-have-romantic-partner/>.

³³ Bill Chappell, “U.S. Birthrate Fell By 4% In 2020, Hitting Another Record Low,” *NPR* (NPR, May 5, 2021), <https://www.npr.org/2021/05/05/993817146/u-s-birth-rate-fell-by-4-in-2020-hitting-another-record-low>.

³⁴ “Induced Abortion in the United States,” *Guttmacher Institute*, May 8, 2020, <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states#>.

³⁵ “Number of Single Mothers U.S. 2019,” *Statista*, January 20, 2021, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/205000/number-of-families-with-a-single-mother-in-the-us/>.

relative deprivation (abbreviated as GRD and defined as “comparing the ingroup to some other target outgroup and indicating the extent to which they judge their situation to be better or worse off”³⁶) was the strongest indicating factor in voting for the Extreme Right (ER) party. This paper draws comparisons between the ER platform in France and the “alt-right” (alternative right) platform in the United States, and use the findings of the French study to convey the risk of further radicalization in the U.S. The study finds that “Issues surrounding immigration and rejection of cultural diversity play a central role in the ER party programmes”³⁷, and posits that these ER parties seek to equalize GRD through “national preference in housing, employment, and state benefits to those who are of French citizenship”³⁸. There are obvious parallels between the French anti-immigrant party programs and the American alt-right’s, as observed in the rhetoric of former POTUS Donald J. Trump and the border wall policy he ran on. The conclusion of the study found that “the present research showed that in addition to prejudice and antiegalitarian attitudes, GRD is a significant factor to consider in ER voting”³⁹. While it is very difficult to gauge population data in France by ethnicity due to a law from the 1800s that prohibits census data by religion or ethnicity⁴⁰, data on refugees suggests that a tiny portion of France is inhabited by non-native French, with “A total of 79,746 decisions have been made on initial [refugee status] applications... 84 percent of asylum applications have been rejected in the first instance”⁴¹. This data indicates that the refugee crisis of which many

³⁶ Karolina Urbanska and Serge Guimond, “Swaying to the Extreme: Group Relative Deprivation Predicts Voting for an Extreme Right Party in the French Presidential Election,” *International Review of Social Psychology* 31, no. 1 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.5334/irsp.201>.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ “France”, Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook (Central Intelligence Agency), accessed July 9, 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/france/#people-and-society>.

⁴¹ “Refugees in France: Figures and Development,” Worlddata.info, accessed July 9, 2021, <https://www.worlddata.info/europe/france/asylum.php>.

ER parties across Europe made the platform for the populist, nativist sentiment surveyed in the French study consisted only of a tiny population amidst greater France. Compare this to the United States, which according to Pew Research data houses “...more immigrants than any other country in the world”⁴², making up “13.7% of the U.S. population, nearly triple the share (4.8%) in 1970”⁴³. If less than 100,000 refugees can cause an ER revival in France, then it is no surprise that almost tripling the immigrant population of 50 years ago has created a similar movement in the United States. While there are no guarantees that a resurgence of ER movements in the United States necessitate terrorism, if it is coupled with the previously discussed factors of mental illness, economic and ethnic GRD, and a lack of identity, it is highly likely that there could be a correlative increase. According to the Global Terrorism Index, “In North America, Western Europe, and Oceania, far-right attacks have increased by 250 per cent since 2014, with deaths increasing by 709 per cent over the same period”⁴⁴. The dangers of far-right, populist movements are apparent, especially with respect to the difficult situation of ethnic tension in the United States.

Ethnicity and Race

The degree to which ethnic tension is pervasive in the media, political discourse, and minds of America is difficult to overstate. A Gallup poll on race relations found that in 2020 the United States hit a 20-year low in “relations between Whites and Blacks,” with only 36% of African Americans responding that relations are very good or somewhat good, and 46% of Whites responding very good or somewhat good. Compare

⁴² Abby Budiman, “Key Findings about U.S. Immigrants,” Pew Research Center (Pew Research Center, September 22, 2020), <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/08/20/key-findings-about-u-s-immigrants/>.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ “Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism,” accessed July 9, 2021, <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/resources/>.

this to 2013, in which the same poll found that 72% of White adults found race relations very good or somewhat good, and 66% of African Americans found race relations very good or somewhat good⁴⁵. Further, a 2021 poll also conducted by Gallup found that 48% of Americans answered they “personally worry about race relations” “a great deal,” and 25% responded “a fair amount,” similarly, 46% of respondents indicated that they are “very dissatisfied” with the state of race relations, and only 7% indicated they were “very satisfied”⁴⁶. An Associated Press poll found that 84% of surveyed adults believe that racism is a problem in the U.S., with 30% of respondents indicating that it is an “extremely serious” problem⁴⁷. Search queries for ‘racism’ also more than quadrupled the previous 16-year high in 2020 according to Google Trends⁴⁸. From this, it is clear that American citizens are preoccupied with racism and race relations.

Measuring the media’s obsession with a topic is difficult, but to give some level of indication, the New York Times has published 3,693 “Race/Related” articles in the time between May 2020 and May 2021⁴⁹. Compare that to the May 2019–May 2020 timeframe, in which 1,483 articles were published in the “Race/Related” category⁵⁰. While the Washington Post doesn’t allow users to refine their search in the same way, in the last 12 months the Washington Post followed a similar

⁴⁵ Gallup, “Race Relations,” Gallup.com (Gallup, July 6, 2021), <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1687/race-relations.aspx>.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ “George Floyd’s Death: One Year Later – AP-NORC,” AP, May 21, 2021, <https://apnorc.org/projects/george-floyds-death-one-year-later/>.

⁴⁸ “Google Trends – ‘Racism’ Search Query,” Google Trends (Google), accessed July 12, 2021, <https://www.google.com/trends>.

⁴⁹ “The New York Times,” The New York Times (The New York Times), accessed July 12, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/search?dropmab=true&endDate=20210501&query=racism&sort=best&startDate=20200501>.

⁵⁰ “The New York Times,” The New York Times (The New York Times), accessed July 12, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/search?dropmab=true&endDate=20200501&query=racism&sort=best&startDate=20190501>.

trend, publishing 3,682 articles on racism^{51,52}. Media interest in racism more than doubled in just a year. Searches into academia have similar results. A Google Scholar search finds that, since 2020, there have been 24,300 articles published with 'racism' in their title⁵³. The American Psychological Association has published 1,416 articles in the last year on racism⁵⁴. The 117th (2021–2023) Congress of the United States has introduced 132 bills that discuss racism in just 4 months, and the 116th (2019–2021) Congress introduced 146 bills⁵⁵. The 117th Congress introduced almost as many bills on racism in 4 months as the 116th did in two years. It is clear that race relations are of extreme pertinence to the future of the United States.

In the past there have been numerous instances of ethnic conflict bringing down states, or at least sparking violence. Rome is a go-to example, since the current state of the United States in many ways mimics the fall of Rome, but Yugoslavia, Rwanda, India, Ireland, Armenia, and China also come to mind as strong examples of disastrous ethnic conflicts. Given the earlier data regarding the looming threat of a second U.S. civil war and the increased acceptance of political violence, the escalation of small-scale ethnic conflicts in the U.S. such as those observed following the death of George Floyd is especially concerning.

The earlier discussion of GRD applies perfectly to ethnicity as well. High-profile theories of psychology and sociology such as Critical Race

⁵¹ "Search, racism" The Washington Post (WP Company), accessed July 12, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/newssearch/?query=racism&sort=Relevance&datefilter=12+Months>.

⁵² The Huffington Post, The Guardian, and CNN showed similar results but did not allow the sorting of their articles by time in the same manner as The New York Times, so I neglected to include them as redundant examples.

⁵³ "Google Scholar Search Query 'Racism,'" accessed July 12, 2021, https://scholar.google.com/scholar?start=0&q=racism&hl=en&as_sdt=0,26&as_ylo=2020.

⁵⁴ "APA PsycNet," American Psychological Association (American Psychological Association), accessed July 12, 2021, <https://psycnet.apa.org/search/results?id=3f8b3bee-0e55-f2d9-4db6-46c8746261c6&tab=PB&sort=PublicationYearMSSort%20desc,AuthorSort%20asc&display=25&page=1>.

⁵⁵ "Racism," GovTrack.us, accessed July 12, 2021, https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/subjects/racism/971#text=racism&congress=116&sort=introduced_date&terms=__ALL__&terms2=__ALL__.

Theory, White Privilege, and Systemic Racism, as well as policy decisions such as affirmative action, ethnicity-based scholarships and admission processes, and broader immigration and refugee programs can all lead to GRD manifesting in the populace. The group in question here is likely white Americans, who are at the butt-end of these policies meant to uplift minority groups, whether any negative effects as a result of these policies to white Americans is real or imagined. Abroad, white nationalism and nativist sentiment is very much on the rise, with populist parties seeing more support such as the French National Rally ER party discussed earlier in this paper with Marine Le Pen at its head, or the UK Independence Party that spearheaded Brexit. Militaries are also subject to radicalization, and one 2020 report from the Pentagon stated that “individuals with extremist affiliations and military experience are a concern to U.S. national security because of their proven ability to execute high-impact events,” and that “white supremacists are using our [the U.S.] military to further their hateful and violent agenda”⁵⁶. Concerns about extremism in the U.S. military are warranted, given examples from abroad such as the Ukrainian Azov Battalion, a militaristic neo-Nazi group that was accepted into the Ukrainian National Guard in 2014, or the recent German platoon that was withdrawn for racially-charged misconduct and extremist behavior⁵⁷.

Ethnically motivated extremism is not only present, but dangerous. According to the 2019 F.B.I. report on hate crimes as covered by the New York Times, “Overall, the F.B.I. collected data on 7,314 criminal incidents motivated by bias toward race or ethnicity or gender identity in 2019. It was the third straight year the metric surpassed 7,100 incidents and it was the highest number since the F.B.I. reported

⁵⁶ Megan Scully, “Pentagon Report Reveals Inroads White Supremacists Have Made in Military,” Roll Call (Roll Call, February 17, 2021), <https://www.rollcall.com/2021/02/16/pentagon-report-reveals-inroads-white-supremacists-have-made-in-military/>.

⁵⁷ “Germany Pulls Military Unit From Lithuania Amid Racism, Harassment Allegations,” Voice of America, accessed July 12, 2021, <https://www.voanews.com/europe/germany-pulls-military-unit-lithuania-amid-racism-harassment-allegations>.

7,783 incidents in 2008. Experts say the F.B.I. data likely undercounts the number of hate crimes in America, both because many victims fail to report incidents and local agencies are not required to report hate crime data to the F.B.I.”⁵⁸, with only 2,172 agencies out of the more than 15,000 across the U.S. reporting. On top of the marked increase in hate crimes have been the numerous high-profile, racially-motivated shootings and other atrocities in the United States. The El Paso shooting and the Charleston church shooting are two examples of mass shootings conducted with racial motivation, and instances of police killings motivated by race such as the death of Breonna Taylor and, most notoriously, the death of George Floyd. The public increasingly believes that those in positions of power use their status to abuse ethnic minorities, and the ethnic majority (though that is quickly changing) feels that they are being unfairly persecuted for being white. We are entering a situation in which every ethnic group is experiencing extreme GRD, and the effects are clear. Riots, hate crimes, and shootings are pervasive in the news. As shown by the earlier polls, nobody believes that they are getting their fair treatment, neither white Americans nor African Americans, and we could very well be reaching a boiling point of violence and frustration. Sweeping policy changes need to be enacted to avoid disastrous outcomes.

Social Media, Censorship, and Recruitment

Recruitment into extremist groups or ideologies has never been easier. While online chatrooms are monitored with significantly more efficacy than in the past, extremists still congregate in forums such as 4chan or chatrooms such as Discord. Some are so conspicuous as to post on Facebook or Twitter. It is undeniable that social media represents a massive

⁵⁸ Tim Arango, “Hate Crimes in U.S. Rose to Highest Level in More Than a Decade in 2019,” The New York Times (The New York Times, November 16, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/16/us/hate-crime-rate.html>.

chunk of the average American's time-budget. According to 2021 Pew Research, "71% of Snapchat users ages 18 to 29 say they use the app daily, including six-in-ten who say they do this multiple times a day. The pattern is similar for Instagram: 73% of 18- to 29-year-old Instagram users say they visit the site every day, with roughly half (53%) reporting they do so several times per day"⁵⁹. Further, "YouTube and Facebook continue to dominate the online landscape, with 81% and 69%, respectively, reporting ever using these sites"⁶⁰. They also find that social media is significantly more popular among young people, "Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok, that have an especially strong following among young adults. In fact, a majority of 18- to 29-year-olds say they use Instagram (71%) or Snapchat (65%), while roughly half say the same for TikTok"⁶¹. It is important to note that this sample only includes respondents 18 and older, so a real sample of even younger people, while not possible due to the moral and legal implications of conducting such a survey, would likely have even greater implications on social media usage. The question of whether the presence of extremist thought in these online spaces can influence radicalization remains understudied. Many creators that can be considered extremist use comedy or satire to veil their unmarketable views, such as comedian Sam Hyde, who has been falsely accused of numerous terrorist attacks by his fans in a way that disrupts journalistic integrity⁶². Social media companies, as well as other online platforms such as Google's search engine and YouTube's video-sharing service, have started enacting censorship measures intended to combat misinformation and extremism on a range of topics

⁵⁹ Brooke Auxier and Monica Anderson, "Social Media Use in 2021," Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech (Pew Research Center, April 9, 2021), <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2021/04/07/social-media-use-in-2021/>.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Gianluca Mezzofiore, "Never Believe Any Breaking Report on Twitter Naming This Comedian as the Attacker," Mashable (helios.web, June 19, 2017), <https://mashable.com/article/sam-hyde-shooter-twitter-finsbury-park-london-attack>.

from vaccination hesitancy to nationalist sentiments. European governments have also engaged in such campaigns, as observed in Germany, the United Kingdom, and to a lesser extent, France, criminalizing and censoring extremist views and attempting to grant law enforcement backdoors through encryption. The legality, morality, and perhaps most importantly, the efficacy of such censorship measures has come under a large degree of criticism. One expert found that it is not the case “that individuals can find themselves on inevitable trajectories toward extremism if they go to the right place on the Internet and start hanging out with the wrong crowd. It’s nowhere near as simple as that”⁶³, indicating that mere exposure is not at all a substantial factor in radicalization, instead that “Self-radicalization is not new, and in fact represents the norm that we have dealt with”⁶⁴. Another article states that “the evidence we have indicates that online speech plays a limited role [in radicalization],” and that as such, these measures are “...simply an invitation to censor online speech, even more than some nations already do. Nations need no additional incentives, nor international support, for cracking down on dissidents”⁶⁵. Another article states that “...there is scant evidence that social media crackdowns will actually prevent terror attacks from happening,” and that internet censorship, even with good intentions, can lead to “Citizens fighting for their rights in disadvantaged or persecuted communities across the world must not [to] be deprived of their most effective tool for organizing and exposing lies and injustice”⁶⁶.

⁶³ Kathy Gilsinan, “ISIS and the ‘Internet Radicalization’ Trope,” *The Atlantic* (Atlantic Media Company, December 9, 2015), <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/12/isis-internet-radicalization/419148/>.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Molly Land, “The UK’s Plan to Deny Terrorists ‘Safe Spaces’ Online Would Make Us All Less Safe in the Long Run,” *The Conversation*, June 23, 2021, <https://theconversation.com/the-uks-plan-to-deny-terrorists-safe-spaces-online-would-make-us-all-less-safe-in-the-long-run-79323>.

⁶⁶ Rebecca MacKinnon, “Can Censoring Social Media Stop Extremism?,” *The Aspen Institute*, July 1, 2017, <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/censorship-on-the-internet/>.

With the role of social media in radicalization being overstated, how does censorship affect potential radicals and the radicalization process? As was stated previously, free access to social media and the internet as well as free speech in general are vital not only for one's own personal liberty and sense of freedom, but for positive social change as well. Acknowledging that, governments and companies responsible for censorship must have an extremely profound reason to limit speech on their platforms or within their countries. Experts believe that censorship is ineffective, however, and rather than root out the problem of misinformation and extremism, it can vindicate the censored and cause misinformation to spread even faster. An article from the Guardian discussing censorship stated that "In fact, the history of censorship shows that it is completely useless in stamping out ideas: the fastest way to spread an idea is to censor it"⁶⁷. The article goes on to specifically mention examples of terrorist movements that were strengthened by censorship, including the Irish separatist movement and more currently, Islamist extremists. That begs the question, if states and non-governmental actors know the inefficacy of censorship, why do they make efforts to censor in the first place? It is unthinkable to assert that these groups lack the funding or know-how to inform themselves on their own programs. The Guardian article posits that it is due to the nature of censorship's efficacy in reinforcing negative aspects of the status quo, stating that "There is one thing censorship laws manage to do effectively: they do help leaders control and intimidate real grassroots dissent and democratic criticism of all kinds"⁶⁸. This once again brings to mind the earlier polling results and Princeton study that indicate our democracy no longer serves the needs or wants of its people. Quite to that point, we are observing the link between moderates and extremism as a product of censorship today, according to a USA Today article

⁶⁷ Naomi Wolf, "The Fastest Way to Spread Extremism Is with the Censor's Boot," The Guardian (Guardian News and Media, April 7, 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/apr/07/extremism-censorship-ideas-charlie-hebdo>.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

interviewing the Southern Poverty Law Center. They find that “Anger over perceived censorship by social media companies is bridging the divide between far-right extremist groups and Trump supporters,” which is “...largely to do with the rhetoric that we are seeing and the degree to which people are unifying around this issue of censorship or perceived censorship from tech companies”⁶⁹. Moderates and general U.S. conservatives are observably beginning to sympathize with more extremist thought as a result of its censorship, just as The Guardian article warned. The earlier data also indicates that Facebook and YouTube are the two most trafficked social media sites, which also happen to have among the most censorship efforts surrounding them.

From this research, it is clear that the effects of social media on radicalization are not as pronounced as academia initially presumed, but what is having a significant catalyzing effect on the proliferation of extremism is the censorship that these social media giants and governments have enacted to combat it.

Policy Recommendations

It is my firm belief that terrorism is a product of mistreatment, injustice, and misguidance. Counterterrorism in the modern age must not be a symptomatic response. No longer can America afford to prescribe band-aids for bullet wounds. Eliminating terrorists can be done with task forces and mass surveillance, but to eliminate terrorism requires a more basic approach. A simple truth is that happy people do not become terrorists; those with too much to lose and bright futures ahead of them do not throw it all away in order to get a grim headline and grieving families. The American people are quickly sinking into people

⁶⁹ Jessica Guynn, “‘They Want to Take Your Speech Away,’ Censorship Cry Unites Trump Supporters and Extremists after Capitol Attack,” USA Today (Gannett Satellite Information Network, January 16, 2021), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2021/01/15/censorship-trump-extremists-facebook-twitter-social-media-capitol-riot/4178737001/>.

with nothing to lose, especially the youth. As debt peaks and income plummets, Americans feel they have no economic future. As they fail to connect with neighbors and classmates and lead childless, unmarried lives, the American people become isolated. And as they experience the frustrations of these societal ills, they become radicalized, with no family or future to lose. To avoid the overboiling of this populace the U.S. must have not only the sapience, but also the humility to bow its head and admit its current state of affairs.

Addressing societal health is an extremely daunting task. No government wants to admit that their society is riddled with the problems discussed in this paper, let alone a hegemon in decline like the United States. But the fact remains that without an extreme readjustment of not only the policy being created in the U.S., but the outlook of our legislators, the current trajectory of misery will remain. The depressed, poor, and beaten down American people need a government that looks out for them, or at the very least represents their interests, unlike the government in its current state as is easily seen by the evidence presented in this paper. The scope of U.S. policy in addressing these issues is far too small-scale. To make meaningful change, our politicians must not be content to simply pass meaningless resolutions or make shallow campaign promises as they have been. America's bread and circus is among the world's best, but it is not enough to distract the people from their reality for much longer. It is becoming increasingly clear that citizens are willing to take violent action for political change if our leaders are unwilling to take the peaceful route, as I am sure many of the supposedly PTSD-afflicted congresspeople would attest to following the January 6th capitol building riot.

To paint with broad strokes, the first steps towards making meaningful ground on improving the conditions in the United States is to kick the leeches that have attached themselves to our policymakers and government officials. As the Princeton study indicates, interest groups exercise

a hold over our legislative process that far more closely resembles an oligarchy than a democracy, and our current representatives may never be capable of severing their ties with their deep-pocket benefactors. Money is being funneled into politics like never before, and its impact is clear. The extent to which the government favors corporate interest over its own was made most apparent during and after the novel coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic. Billions of dollars in corporate bailouts were levied without hesitation, but it took months of filibustering, political maneuvering, and destroyed livelihoods for the American people to receive any semblance of aid. Most insulting was that which was trojan-horsed into the legislation. Not only did U.S. citizens receive a pittance compared to other countries in economic relief, the U.S. was bankrolling other countries in very same piece of legislation that was providing far too little relief to the millions whose lives were turned upside down here in the states. The almost 6,000-page coronavirus relief package contained \$500 million to Israel, \$10 million in Pakistani “gender programs,” and \$454 billion in corporate bailouts. This is but one example of the abhorrent levels of greed and fiscal irresponsibility our government exercised during the time that the citizens most needed aid.

Policy needs to be put in place to prevent the ludicrous influence of lobbyists and companies over our legislative process. American bureaucracy is notoriously nightmarish, and every step along the way creates opportunities for money to change hands obscured from the public eye. But good journalism is far from enough to put an end to that, as billionaires control more than just the lobbies, but also increasingly the media that reports on them. Jeff Bezos owns the Washington Post, Mike Bloomberg his namesake publication, Twitter bots swung the 2016 Presidential election, and Google can and often does sweep under the rug information that could inform voters of policies that are harmful to Google’s bottom line. The tech giants need to be brought under serious regulation, and possibly forced to become public entities.

Monopolies need to be broken up not only in tech, but also in food and entertainment. Corporate America is the ruling class.

The way to change this is through numerous limits. Limits or even a complete banning of donations and lobbying. Limits on terms and term lengths for congresspeople. Limits on the size and reach of companies. U.S. law has long been committed to treating companies as it would individuals, but it has never been more abundantly clear that corporations are a cancer on our democracy, and ought to be excised as such. The corporations have been pushing the Overton window for as long as they have been allowed to, shaping policy to their liking at the expense of voters.

To an extent, legislature that represents the will of the public will serve to heal the social ills that have been outlined, especially those concerns about political participation and trust in government. Killing the snake does not remove the poison, however, and further action must be taken. The United States must realize that the era of a “world police” is far over. Steps in the right direction have been taken as troops are withdrawn from the Middle East, but even if the U.S. turns away from imperialism, the vestiges of its once far-reaching influences will remain problematic. Military bases across the world need to be repurposed or abandoned, and the billions of dollars in foreign aid and military expenditures must be redirected to domestic programs. The issues of mental health and the striking lack of community involvement in the U.S. can be remedied in a number of ways. If money is directed into domestic support programs for universal healthcare, a significant portion of the anxieties that Americans currently face would be relieved. Funds also ought to be directed into mental health services and support structures for families wanting to have children. If predatory corporations are removed, securing basic necessities like food and housing will be much less burdensome and people will have more time and ability to engage in community activities. Community centers would be well within the financial capabilities of this theoretical legislative package, and they

would foster involvement and quell isolation. The means to equalize economic GRD would be within the scope of such a package, and as earlier established, the manifestation of the violent pathologies is a by-product of factors like mental illness and RD. Through minimizing the factors that inflame tensions, ethnic divides could also be lessened. Resolving ethnic tension is far outside the scope of this paper, and perhaps the scope of sociology as a whole right now. Favorable economic conditions and lessened inequality across the board would dismiss current inciting factors, however.

The funding for such an ambitious change of policy could come from a restructured taxation system. Currently, the super-wealthy pay almost nothing in taxes due to loopholes and subsidies. This egregious failure of the government must be remedied, and in doing so will alleviate income inequality and provide funding for essential programs like those outlined prior. Through a declining military presence and redirection of foreign aid to domestic aid, no shortage of budget will arise. It goes without saying that the United States military is an obscene mess of overspending and downsizing without significantly reducing military capabilities is a much more pragmatic solution than it may initially seem. While the United States government has not been as bad as much of Europe on surveillance and censorship, abolishing the Patriot Act as well as many of the current ineffective, fiscally irresponsible government measures as well as regulating the tech giants will allow free speech to continue unfettered in online spaces. This will alleviate the concerns of censorship, without creating so-called “safe spaces” for terrorism as was outlined in the earlier research.

In summation, the policy changes that I propose begins from the ground up. Corporations, especially tech giants, must face significant taxation and regulation to prevent censorship and to limit what is currently an overt control over our government processes. Our legislators must be banned from receiving money from outside sources, and their spending and terms must be severely limited from its current state.

The military ought to face substantial downsizing and the practice of policing the world with endless wars, coups, and diplomatic bullying has to stop in order to promote a more peaceful world both abroad and at home. Funds diverted from frivolous foreign aid and the gratuitous military industrial complex ought to be redirected to domestic programs focused on mental health and community involvement, as well as universal healthcare. These policies only begin to scratch the surface of the plethora of issues outlined in this paper. The key to these policies and developing into a more effective counterterrorism strategy in general is to put an end to the War on Terror, and to develop a human-oriented approach. As was stated earlier, happy people do not commit acts of terrorism. The solution lies not in task forces raiding the homes of U.S. citizens, but in the fulfillment and futures of the populace.

Conclusion

The United States is facing a surplus of epidemics and crises. Crises of mental health, identity, housing, epidemics of violence, hate crimes, and poverty, all of which are currently more likely to be effectively addressed by a GoFundMe page than a government program. The scope of these issues goes beyond what was already covered ad-nauseum in this paper, and while the policy recommendations provided sound almost positive towards the end, I insist that the discussion is heeded as a warning. If serious efforts are not made to substantially restructure the status quo in America, no amount of money and guns will solve the problems. To restate an earlier statistic: 61% of Americans believe that we are on the verge of civil war. Well over half of everyone you meet has a deeply set fear of imminent and disastrous conflict breaking out at the drop of a hat. This fear, and the many others discussed here, cannot be resolved with another pointless resolution. People can no longer be distracted and misled from the depths of America's illness.

My policy suggestions are echoed more succinctly in the words of black activist and poet Gil Scott-Heron in his song “Comment #1”.

“All I want is a good home and a wife—

And her children, and some food to feed them every night—”

The American dream is not yet gone forever. Happy people do not commit acts of terror.

The Intersection of Terrorism and Organized Crime

Hayley SAWYER

Abstract: In the years following the events of 9/11, increased attention has been given to the intersection between terrorist groups and organized crime. This paper will explore the nexus between the two – how they are defined, their motivations, and how to prevent them. Both groups share key similarities within their methods and organization. The intersection of these groups is on a continuum but can be generally categorized by 1) coexistence 2) cooperation and 3) convergence. Differences lie within the end goals of the two groups: terrorists wish to achieve political and ideological goals and criminal organizations pursue financial gains. In the paper, a case study of the crime-terror nexus within the Tri-Border region of South America and Hezbollah is analyzed. This paper ends with a discussion of the implications of this nexus for counter-terrorism and law enforcement, and ways to prevent opportunities for intersection.

Keywords: terrorism, organized crime, illicit trade, Hezbollah, Tri-Border Area

Introduction: Defining Terrorism and Organized Crime

The definition of terrorism has taken many forms over the years. A comprehensive definition is difficult as the term carries grandiose social and political effects, and often defining the term depends on the political sympathy of the definer. This lack of universality can lead to problems within academic analysis, law-making, and developing a counter-terrorism strategy. With inflated media coverage and strong political rhetoric

surrounding the word, a clearly identified definition is of utmost importance. Attempting to uncover the nuances within each definition is outside the scope of this paper, so for the sake of coherence within this analysis, terrorism will be discussed using the definition created by Bruce Hoffman in his book *Inside Terrorism*. Hoffman defines terrorism as “the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change”⁷⁰. The key takeaway from his definition is “the pursuit of political change”. Political motivation is often the line that separates an act of terrorism from an act of violent crime or other forms of political violence. Apart from political motives, terrorism also aims to generate widespread psychological damage through fear to individuals beyond their initial targets⁷¹. Mass media plays an essential role in the spread of this fear. Although Hoffman does not include media in his definition, he understands their significance asserting, “Indeed, without the media’s coverage the act’s impact is arguably wasted, remaining narrowly confined to the immediate victim(s) of the attack rather than reaching the wider “target audience” at whom the terrorists’ violence is actually aimed”⁷².

Like terrorism, organized crime lacks a universally agreed-upon definition⁷³. The United States Federal Bureau of Investigation defines organized crime as, “Any group having some manner of a formalized structure and whose primary objective is to obtain money through illegal activities. Such groups maintain their position through the use of actual or threatened violence, corrupt public officials, graft, or extortion, and

⁷⁰ Bruce, Hoffman, “Defining Terrorism,” In *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 1–42, Accessed July 9, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/hoff12698.5>.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁷² Bruce, Hoffman, “The Old Media, Terrorism, and Public Opinion,” In *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 182–204, Accessed July 9, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/hoff12698.5>.

⁷³ Global Counterterrorism Forum, “The Hague Good Practices on the Nexus between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism,” March 2019, https://www.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/Framework%20Documents/2018/GCTF-Good-Practices-on-the-Nexus_ENG.pdf?ver=2018-09-21-122246-363.

generally have a significant impact on the people in their locales, region, or the country as a whole”⁷⁴. The motive for organized crime is quite clear: money. Financial gains are the motivator behind mercenary crimes including, drug trafficking, human trafficking, extortion, money laundering, kidnap for ransom, robbery, and counterfeiting⁷⁵. Those involved in organized crime engage in these acts “to advance and/or protect their criminal agendas”⁷⁶. Terrorists do partake in these activities for short-term financial gain, but unlike terrorism, financial gain is both the short-term and long-term goal of organized crime. Criminal activities also serve the purpose of obtaining or maintaining power. More often, money is the means to this power, but without a solution of both, crime groups cannot continue their stronghold over their state and its institutions⁷⁷.

Historically, organized crime and terrorism have been diametrically opposed in their position on the state and use of violence. Organized crime typically has long-term vested financial interests within the state and its institutions. Author Jack Jarmon in his book titled, *The New Era in U.S. National Security*, describes this relationship as parasitic. Organized crime needs a functioning and stable host to survive; thus, “crime members are often established members and depend upon state institutions and structures to operate, expand, and invest”⁷⁸. Terrorism, on the other hand, seeks to destabilize the state either by changing the

⁷⁴ Gregory F Treverton, Carl Matthies, Karla J. Cunningham, Jeremiah Goulka, Greg Ridgeway, and Anny Wong, “Organized Crime and Terrorism,” In *Film Piracy, Organized Crime, and Terrorism* (California: RAND Corporation, 2009), 11–26. Accessed July 9, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mg742mpa.8>.

⁷⁵ Sam Mullins, and James K. Wither, “Terrorism and Organized Crime,” *Connections* 15, no. 3 (2016): 65–82. Accessed July 9, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26326452>.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁷⁷ Louise I. Shelley and John T. Picarelli, “Methods and Motives: Exploring Links between Transnational Organized Crime and International Terrorism,” *Trends in Organized Crime* 9, no. 2 (2005): pp. 52–67, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12117-005-1024-x>.

⁷⁸ Jack A. Jarmon, “The New Era in U.S. National Security: an Introduction to Emerging Threats and Challenges” (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 163–184.

status quo, or mere destruction. Second, terrorists threaten to carry out acts of violence with hopes of procuring mass publicity to voice their political aims and bring about change, while criminal organizations wish to be more covert and deliberate with their use of violence⁷⁹. This dichotomy exemplifies why the intersection of the two groups was hard to imagine. During the 1990s, scholars warned that the nexus of terrorism and organized crime would be detrimental to national security, but no systematic study took place to analyze their assertion. It was not until a few years after the War on Terror began that studies took place to understand the two groups' interaction⁸⁰. Although these differences seem staunch, similarities within their organization and operations help in understanding this eventual nexus. Both groups are rational actors that use extreme violence with 'loosely networked cell structures' which contain 'back up leaders and foot soldiers' who are 'highly adaptable and resilient' and pose as an asymmetrical threat to the United States and other nations abroad⁸¹. The similarity within the structure of both groups can occur without contact. Organized crime and terrorist groups frequently use the loose network cell structure in order to frustrate law enforcement. These operational cells are highly flexible and rarely have connections with leadership. This allows both groups to "set up or close down operations overnight, maintain distance between operational and planning cells, move and use financial resources quickly and secretively, and make decisions without headquarters' approval"⁸².

⁷⁹ Mullins and Wither, "Terrorism and Organized Crime", 66.

⁸⁰ Shelley and Picarelli, "Methods and Motives", 10.

⁸¹ Thomas M Sanderson, "Transnational Terror and Organized Crime: Blurring the Lines," *The SAIS Review of International Affairs* 24, no. 1 (2004): 49–61. Accessed July 12, 2021. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26999200>.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 54.

The Drivers of the Intersection

There are many factors at play impelling the crime-terror nexus. First, financing is at the core of the two groups' overlap. After the decline in state-sponsored terrorism in the early 1990s and governments' increased adeptness at tracking terrorist's financial transactions after the War on Terror, the need for self-financing was evident. This pushed terrorists to crime in order to eliminate the opportunity for governments to interdict their funds⁸³. The 2010 Obama Administration reiterated this concern stating, "Terrorists and insurgents increasingly are turning to [transnational organized crime] TOC to generate funding and acquire logistical support to carry out their violent acts⁸⁴. Terrorist groups require funding to not only carry out attacks but "finance day-to-day recruiting, training, and maintenance, and to provide sanctuary for terrorist organizations"⁸⁵. This diversification of terrorist's capabilities functions not only to spread their political agenda, but often survival. Long-standing terrorist groups like the Taliban, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and Al-Qaeda have turned to the illicit trade to generate income. Illicit trade as outlined in the UN Security Council's resolution 2195 involves all money, goods, or value obtained by illegal or unethical activity⁸⁶. It should be noted that these groups did not enter illicit trade purely for financial reasons. Other reasons include, "destruction of history, demoralization of communities, the weakening of social solidarity, and harms individuals' health and well-being"⁸⁷. Jarmon expands upon the new capabilities of terrorists referencing a fat-

⁸³ Jarmon, "The New Era", 168.

⁸⁴ "Transnational Organized Crime: A Growing Threat to National and International Security," National Archives and Records Administration, National Security Council, 2010. Accessed July 14, 2021. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/administration/eop/nsc/transnational-crime/threat>.

⁸⁵ Treverton, "Film Piracy, Organized Crime, and Terrorism", 15.

⁸⁶ Louise I Shelley, "Illicit Trade and Terrorism," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 14, no. 4 (2020): 7–20. Accessed July 12, 2021. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26927661>.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

wa issued by Hezbollah asserting, “If we cannot kill them with guns, so we will kill them with drugs”⁸⁸.

Second, the nexus is often a function of environment. Although this transformation can occur in stable countries like the United States, France, and Canada, group overlap occurs most often in countries that contain an alienated government that lacks rule of law⁸⁹. These countries commonly coincide with additional environmental drivers to intersection including, “corruption, a lack of democratic participation, chronic state failures, crises in political systems, deteriorating socio-economic conditions, civil and regional conflicts, and increased media attention”⁹⁰. Groups then exploit these socio-political weaknesses in order to maintain or worsen conditions. In turn, this creates a conducive environment for the nexus. Moreover, shared spaces increase the opportunity for interaction. These can include “neighborhoods, penal institutions, conflict zones, and failed states”⁹¹. Penal institutions, notably prisons systems, are notorious places for “recruitment, radicalization and knowledge transfer for both terrorist groups and organized crime groups”⁹². In developed countries, the nexus grows in areas where norms are not shared among all groups. As a result, subgroups expand this nexus with disregard of the established order within their major cities or penal institutions.

Additional environmental factors that allow the crime-terror nexus to thrive are:

- 1) High border porosity;
- 2) Population transfers;

⁸⁸ Jarmon, “The New Era”, 164.

⁸⁹ Treverton, “Film Piracy, Organized Crime, and Terrorism”, 18.

⁹⁰ Center for Homeland Defense and Security, “Convergence of Terrorism”.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Global Counterterrorism Forum, “The Hague Good Practices”, 8.

- 3) Financial and Commercial developments (globalization);
- 4) Communication technology⁹³.

High border porosity has allowed for terrorists and organized crime groups alike to partake in illicit trade. Illicit arms trade following the fall of the Berlin Wall was heightened in countries with porous borders paired with weak law enforcement⁹⁴. Globalization and communication technology have enabled informal cooperation between the groups with new markets created for illicit goods, alongside new technology which has created easier methods of surveillance, information access, and communication techniques that avoid detection by law enforcement⁹⁵.

These conditions lead to the third driver of this intersection, the desire for legitimacy. Groups often combine resources in failed states that are drained of economic, political, and judicial resources to increase power and find an “in”. Jarmon expands upon this idea stating, “Gaining political leverage through corruption and or intimidation in these nations is a natural disposition for many parties in these dire economic environments...Attaining power via direct political involvement or over lucrative economic sectors can be achieved more quickly with force and violence”⁹⁶. Infiltration in legitimate sectors would give terrorists the platform to spread their political ideology, while simultaneously allowing criminal groups to push their illicit business ventures.

⁹³ Center For Homeland Defense Security, “Convergence of Terrorism & Transnational Criminal Organizations,” CHDS/Ed, May 10, 2018, <https://www.chds.us/ed/items/17382>.

⁹⁴ Sanderson, “Transnational Terror”, 51.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 50.

⁹⁶ Jarmon, “The New Era”, 169.

Types of Intersection

The nexus can be generalized into three categories: 1) coexistence 2) cooperation and 3) convergence⁹⁷. Coexistence applies when the two groups exist in the same area at the same time by coincidence. Although by happenstance, their simultaneous existence is mutually beneficial. Both groups contribute in keeping the state weak which allows for their activities to continue undisturbed as, “Governments may simply turn a blind eye to criminal activity, or governmental institutions may simply be too weak to be able to successfully confront the criminal networks or terrorist organizations”⁹⁸. Cooperation occurs when the groups temporarily work together due to mutual interests being served⁹⁹. This can be short-term or long-term relationships that utilize the others’ expert knowledge or operational support. With criminal organizations often working illicitly alongside the government, cooperation can be short-lived in order to keep their relationship alive. Long-term relationships have been cited including FARC, but these are merely “the convergence of terrorist and criminal groups into an organization where the two groups’ separate, and distinct operations are merged and conflated...the term ‘narco-terrorism,’ it could be argued, was coined to define just such organizations”¹⁰⁰. Lastly, convergence is characterized by both groups engaging in behaviors that are associated with the other¹⁰¹. All three categories can include the overlap of personnel, activities, interests, and skills to blur the lines between criminal organizations and terrorist groups.

⁹⁷ Center for Homeland Defense Security, “Convergence of Terrorism”; Erik Alda and Joseph L. Sala, “Links Between Terrorism, Organized Crime and Crime: The Case of the Sahel Region,” *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 3, no. 1 (October 2014), <https://doi.org/10.5334/sta.ea>.

⁹⁸ Alda and Sala, “Links Between Terrorism, Organized Crime and Crime”.

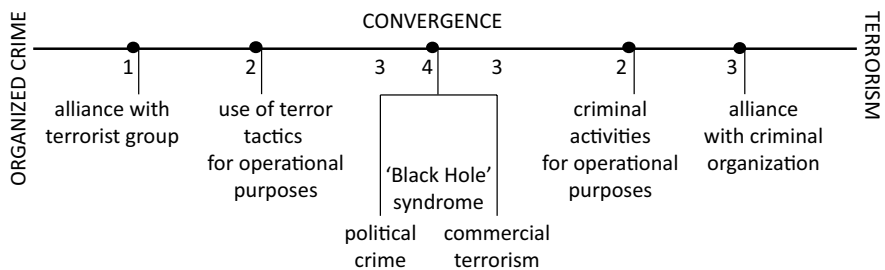
⁹⁹ Center for Homeland Defense Security, “Convergence of Terrorism”.

¹⁰⁰ Alda and Sala, “Links Between Terrorism, Organized Crime and Crime”.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., Center for Homeland Defense Security, “Convergence of Terrorism”.

Intersection is not confined to the three categories. The reality of the situation is rather grey than black and white. In fact, many scholars conceptualize their relationship along a continuum¹⁰². Along this continuum, there exists a myriad of intersections. Scholar, Tamara Makarenko, conceptualized this dynamic in her “crime-terror continuum”. Makarenko’s map illustrates the movement of the two groups along a sliding gradient with the assertion that “Organized crime and terrorism exist on the same plane, and thus are theoretically capable of converging at a central point”¹⁰³. From the left, organized crime moves towards terrorism gradually by first, alliance with a terrorist group; second, use of terror tactics for operational purposes, involvement in political crime; and finally, convergence (represented below in Figure 1¹⁰⁴).

Figure 1. Makarenko’s Crime-Terror Continuum



Source: Makarenko, Tamara *The Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Organised Crime and Terrorism* 2004.

Shelley and Picarelli agree with Makarenko on the fluidity of movement on the spectrum adding that groups might move backwards, skip steps, or maintain a single form of interaction¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰² Cameron Sumpter, and Joseph Franco. 2018. “Migration, Transnational Crime and Terrorism: Exploring the Nexus in Europe and Southeast Asia”. *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12 (5): 36–50.

¹⁰³ Tamara Makarenko, “The Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism,” *Global Crime*6, no. 1 (2004): pp. 129–145, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1744057042000297025>.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁰⁵ Shelley and Picarelli, “Methods and Motives”, 35.

Although Makarenko theorizes the groups are capable of converging, research has revealed that full convergence is few and far between. Professor James Anderson notes that long-term convergence depends largely on whether both groups are able to gain from combined operations while simultaneously maintaining operational security¹⁰⁶. Rather, many groups resort to cooperation, or appropriation, where “in house” services are used to exchange skills – criminals leveraging terrorist tactics or vice versa¹⁰⁷. For example, organized crime groups have used terrorist tactics of beheadings and assassinations to intimidate governmental authorities or rival gangs¹⁰⁸. This was personified in 2006 after a group of gunmen with suspected links to organized crime entered a bar in Uruapan, Mexico, fired their weapons, then tossed five human heads on the dance floor¹⁰⁹. Additionally, the relationship between the Italian Red Brigades (BR) and Naples Camorra in the 1980s is another example of cooperative interaction. Under pressure, the BR and the powerful crime syndicate, Naples Camorra, joined forces in the kidnapping of a senior politician and several other assassinations. From this short-term alliance, Camorra left with \$1 million in commission and agreed to assassinate others selected by the Red Brigades¹¹⁰. The ambiguity within the continuum is why broad statements cannot be made about the crime-terror nexus, with levels of embeddedness varying from case to case.

Hezbollah Tri-Border Area Nexus

The Tri-Border Area (TBA) encompasses the border region between Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay. Geographically, the triple frontier is

¹⁰⁶ Sanderson, “Transnational Terror”, 55.

¹⁰⁷ Mullins and Wither, “Terrorism and Organized Crime”, 71.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁰⁹ Jarmon, “The New Era,” 163.

¹¹⁰ Chris Dishman. 2001. “Terrorism, Crime, and Transformation”. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24 (1): 43–58.

characterized as a lawless border that permits easy access to urban areas and the surrounding jungle¹¹¹. This area has been recognized as a key center for criminal activities, money laundering, smuggling, intellectual property theft, counterfeiting, and arms and drug trafficking¹¹². Criminal activity in this area is rooted in the economic conditions of the TBA countries. All three are riddled with poverty, income disparities, and corruption¹¹³. Government corruption within the TBA facilitates organized crime and terrorism, and their relationship is conducted like a normal business and fueled by profitable criminal activities. This creates a mutually beneficial nexus among all three groups¹¹⁴. With the corruption high and the legitimate economy in decline, an environment is created where law enforcement, the judicial system, and the government turn a blind eye to shady business; consequently, the area has become a haven for terrorist groups and criminals alike. This crime-terror ‘haven’ makes the TBA an excellent example of Makarenko’s ‘black hole syndrome’ – “situations in which weak or failed states foster the convergence between transnational organized crime and terrorism, and ultimately create a safe haven for the continued operations of convergent groups”¹¹⁵.

Although Hezbollah is often associated with operations in the Middle East, the terrorist group has a long-standing presence in the TBA of South America and has prospered in the region over the last few decades. The refugee migrants created by the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990) enabled Hezbollah and Iran to create a presence in the

¹¹¹ Trevisi. 2013. “Assessing the Terrorist Threat in The Tri-Border Area of Brazil, Paraguay And Argentina,” *International Institute for Counter Terrorism* (1): 2–65.

¹¹² Sarah Nielsen, “Fighting Terror in the Tri-Border Area,” Wilson Center, December 9, 2019, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/fighting-terror-the-tri-border-area>.

¹¹³ Shelley and Picarelli, “Methods and Motives”, 60.

¹¹⁴ Rex A Hudson, and Library of Congress. Federal Research Division. 2003. *Terrorist and Organized Crime Groups in the Tri-Border Area (Tba) of South America: A Report*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/pdf-files/TerrOrgCrime_TBA.pdf.

¹¹⁵ Makarenko, “The Crime-Terror Continuum,” 138.

region. The groups infiltrated the country by “planting numerous agents and recruiting sympathizers among Arab and Muslim immigrants on the continent. Their efforts led to the establishment of formal terrorist cells throughout the region...”¹¹⁶. Their presence was finally felt by the masses after two deadly attacks in the 1990s. First, the 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, which killed 29 people and injured an additional 250; second, the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA) Jewish center in 1994, killing 87¹¹⁷. Iran is still a financier of Hezbollah, but their fast expansion led the group to seek outside sources in the region for its growing budget. With organized crime flourishing in the TBA region, the solution was quite clear. Hezbollah found a supportive population for recruitment in addition to strong support and financing with the additional aid of criminal organizations¹¹⁸.

Initially, the relationship between Hezbollah and the organized crime ring in South America was an unlikely pairing. In fact, the discovery of their connection came about by pure coincidence. In 2007, wiretaps meant to monitor the Medellín cartel picked up Arabic in the transmission. This was later traced back to be Chekry Mahmoud Harb, a money launderer connected to Hezbollah. Their conversation revealed a shipment plan to the Middle East that included multi-ton shipments of cocaine. Later investigations dubbed, “Project Cassandra,” took officials down a rabbit hole of a multi-billion-dollar, worldwide operation with cases spanning over a decade – all orchestrated by Hezbollah officials¹¹⁹. This investigation uncovered the shift in Hezbollah’s operational tactics to incorporate criminal activities and their cooperation with organized crime

¹¹⁶ Matthew Levitt. 2016. “Iranian and Hezbollah Operations in South America: Then and Now”. *Prism* 5 (4): 118–33.

¹¹⁷ Shelley and Picarelli, “Methods and Motives”, 59.

¹¹⁸ Trevisi, “Assessing the Terrorist Threat in the Tri-Border Area”, 22.

¹¹⁹ Emanuele Ottolenghi, “Hezbollah: Narco-Terror and Crime in Latin America,” Jewish Policy Center (Jewish Policy Center, January 7, 2021), <https://www.jewishpolicycenter.org/2021/01/07/hezbollah-narco-terror-and-crime-in-latin-america/>.

groups. In 2019, 25 years after the AMIA attack, Argentina designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization, making them the first country in Latin America to do so¹²⁰. This was an important milestone in the ongoing investigation of the linkage between organized crime and terrorism in the region. One year prior, the Financial Information Unit (FIU) of Argentina froze assets of the ‘Clan Barakat,’ an organization involved in both criminal and terrorism-linked financing¹²¹. Their detection in 2018 uncovered an attempt to launder \$10 million in Argentina. The suspect, Lebanese Assad Ahmad Barakat, was arrested later in Brazil¹²². Countless other arrests have highlighted the growing issue of this nexus in the TBA. In a review of open-source information on the connection of Islamic terrorist groups in the TBA between 1999–2003, the Library of Congress reported that terrorist groups in the region include, Egypt’s Al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya, Al-Jihad, al Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, and al-Muqawamah¹²³. Organized crime syndicates and terrorist groups have a mutualistic relationship in the TBA. Hezbollah is a money-laundering powerhouse in the region. Their multi-billion-dollar industry “cleans organized crime’s ill-gotten gains through multiple waypoints in the Western Hemisphere, West Africa, Europe and the Middle East”¹²⁴. Hezbollah’s presence in the TBA is an important national security risk for the United States and the blurring of groups and actors makes it difficult for officials to draw a line of those involved.

Combatting the Crime-Terror Nexus

As emphasized, the crime-terror nexus is a growing threat to national security for countries around the globe. Their relationship can

¹²⁰ Sarah, “Fighting Terror in the Tri-Border Area”.

¹²¹ Trevis, “Assessing the Terrorist Threat in the Tri-Border Area”, 22.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Hudson, “Groups in the Tri-Border Area”, 5–6.

¹²⁴ Ottolenghi, “Hezbollah: Narco-Terror and Crime”.

undermine the security, stability, and socio-economic development of affected States¹²⁵. Combatting this threat will be no easy feat for local, national, and international authorities. Although there is no one size fits all solution to neither terrorism nor organized crime, steps can be taken to circumvent their expansion and embeddedness. In their initiative to combat this issue, The Global Counterterrorism Forum outlines four areas of priority when addressing the crime-terror nexus:

- 1) Legal considerations;
- 2) Research and information sharing;
- 3) Local engagement;
- 4) Capacity building and law enforcement¹²⁶.

As the lines blur between groups, legal prosecution becomes increasingly more difficult to address matters of jurisdiction especially in cases involving transnational activities¹²⁷. To help alleviate this judicial strain, coherence between domestic anti-crime and anti-terrorism legislation should exist that matches with regional and international conventions and protocols on the topic¹²⁸. This will ensure a higher level of consistency, so in the case that a terrorist or criminal is accused, they cannot find loopholes in the system based on state, regional, or international discrepancies. New legal prosecutions should also be put in place for charges related to both terrorism and organized crime, rather than choosing to prosecute using precedent of one or the other. In turn, this will make the nexus riskier for potential participants.

Arguably, the most challenging measure is the coordination among local agencies, international institutions, and state and national governments. Effective coordination includes the “exchange of information, interagency/inter-departmental cooperation, adequate resources and

¹²⁵ Global Counterterrorism Forum, “The Hague Good Practices”, 3.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 2.

¹²⁷ Center for Homeland Defense Security, “Convergence of Terrorism”.

¹²⁸ Global Counterterrorism Forum, “The Hague Good Practices”, 3.

appropriate legal frameworks”¹²⁹. Exchanging information will allow for a greater exchange of ideas and policy recommendations to combat this nexus. Examples of possible pieces of shared information can include, “data from law enforcement investigations/arrests/charges, judicial decisions, government policy decisions, changes in law, on-going projects, and initiatives”¹³⁰. It should be noted that this information will still adhere to data protection rules. The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) is a working example of cross border cooperation. INTERPOL facilitates “international cooperative linkages among law enforcement agencies, Interpol, and its member countries’ national central bureaus (NCBs)”¹³¹. In 2002, INTERPOL created the “Fusion Task Force” to address linkages between terrorism and organized crime¹³², and has been valuable in the arrest of individuals planning or financing terrorist attacks¹³³. Just as terrorist groups and organized crime groups share tactics and practices, law enforcement and intelligence groups need to do the same¹³⁴.

At the local level, authorities should work with their communities to circumvent the nexus from the ground up. This can include awareness programs of recruitment tactics against youths, prison radicalization prevention, protection of whistleblowers, and including local partners in anti-terrorism and anti-crime initiatives¹³⁵. Human security conditions like health, economic, and personal insecurity should be addressed in areas prone to the crime-terror nexus. Oftentimes, members of shadow economies have no option but to turn to illicit markets for income.

¹²⁹ Mullins and Wither, “Terrorism and Organized Crime”, 78.

¹³⁰ Global Counterterrorism Forum, “The Hague Good Practices”, 6.

¹³¹ Sandler T, Arce D.G, and Enders W. “An Evaluation of Interpol’s Cooperative-Based Counterterrorism Linkages”. *Journal of Law and Economics* 54, no. 1 (2011): 79–110. <https://doi.org/10.1086/652422>.

¹³² Sanderson, “Transnational Terror,” 57.

¹³³ Sandler, “Evaluation of Interpol,” 84.

¹³⁴ Sanderson, “Transnational Terror”, 58.

¹³⁵ Global Counterterrorism Forum, “The Hague Good Practices”, 9.

With efforts to boost education and expand formal markets, the attraction to terrorism and crime may decrease. Outside of economic factors, societal figures can play a large role in reducing this nexus. Individuals like religious leaders, teachers, and family members should be supported in their efforts to help the community through referral programs for citizens who are at high risk of radicalization. In essence, engagement through awareness and education is essential at the local level.

Lastly, capacity building is at the forefront of many countries affected by the crime-terror nexus. In regions corroded by conditions like corruption, poverty, and weak border enforcement, it is easy to see how they became a breeding ground for the nexus. In these scenarios, underlying problems within the country need to be addressed. For example, the U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime partnered with its departments on terrorism and organized crime to help weakened states by “strengthening the ability of customs officials, immigration officers, and border guards to counter trafficking in narcotics, human beings, vehicles, and weapons....”¹³⁶. By increasing the investigative capacities of practitioners, the nexus can be slowed. This can include, financial investigations, cyber investigations, or simply increasing border security. The United Nations has repeatedly addressed capacity building in the following resolutions, urging member states to be aware of the nexus and act early.

Table 1. United Nations Security Council Resolutions(UNSCR), Addressing the Crime-Terror Nexus

UNSCR 2195 (2014)	• “International action to prevent terrorists from benefiting from transnational organized crime; • Prevention through securing borders and prosecuting illicit networks”¹³⁷
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¹³⁶ Sanderson, “Transnational Terror”, 57.

¹³⁷ “Security Council, Adopting Resolution 2195 (2014), Urges International Action to Break Links between Terrorists, Transnational Organized Crime | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases,” United Nations (Security Council, December 19, 2014), <https://www.un.org/press/en/2014/sc11717.doc.htm>.

UNSCR 2322 (2016)	• “Enhance cooperation to prevent terrorists from benefiting from transnational organized crime; • Investigate and build capacity to prosecute those involved in crime-terror nexus”¹³⁸
UNSCR 2370 (2017)	• “Strengthen member states judicial, law enforcement and border control capacities; • Develop investigative capabilities of arms trafficking networks to address the crime-terror nexus”¹³⁹
UNSCR 2482 (2019)	• “Consider engaging relevant local communities and non-governmental actors in strategic development; • Establishing laws and procedures that allow for broad international cooperation, police to police cooperation, use of joint investigation procedures and coordinate cross-border investigations; • Adopt measures to prevent radicalization within prisons; • Create and promote means of rehabilitation and the reintegration of convicted terrorists”¹⁴⁰

Conclusions

It is clear that intersection of organized crime and terrorism is a growing threat to the stability of many governments no matter their proximity to the nexus. The two groups are realizing that political and economic power enhance one another – terrorists benefit from the involvement in criminal activities, or from the knowledge of criminals recruited; criminals have benefitted from terrorist tactics to secure influence. Through group intersection in illicit trade, cyberspace, and other criminal activities, their relationship will only grow more embedded without the proper action taken. Having a comprehensive understanding of the nexus is the first step in countering the threat. It is important not to make base claims on the intersection as the nexus is not uniform. Due to the intersection’s fluidity on the continuum, law enforcement

¹³⁸ Global Counterterrorism Forum, “The Hague Good Practices, 1.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ “Security Council Expresses Concern over Links between International Terrorism, Organized Crime, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2482 (2019)” United Nations (Security Council, July 19, 2019).

and intelligence officials will have to match the agility and adaptability of intersecting crime-terror groups. This security threat is pressing in regions like the Tri-Border Area but is a growing threat to the United States and other UN member states. Cooperation and inclusion at all levels of government and non-government agencies will be needed to combat this ever-evolving nexus.

Examining the Impact of Religion on Suicide Terrorism

James BRATTON

Abstract: Is religion the main factor for why religious-based terrorist organizations employ suicide terrorism? Or is it caused by other variables? This paper attempts to answer these questions by examining the link between religion and suicide terrorism. In particular, this research examines and analyzes Robert A. Pape's book *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* and provides updated information on suicide terrorism. To investigate the connection between suicide terrorism and religion this article will include and combine previous research from subject matter experts. This study concludes that religion is a significant contributing factor for why religious-based terrorist organizations implement suicide terrorism attacks. As this paper highlights, more research is still needed to not only confirm whether these findings are accurate and but also answer new questions prompted by this research.

Keywords: Religion, Culture, Suicide Terrorism, Ideology, Secular

Introduction: the Religious Call of Suicide Terrorism

The topic of religion's impact on terrorism has been investigated extensively but the impact of religion has on terrorism has not been determined. Robert A. Pape's book *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* provides expert insight on religion's debated role in suicide terrorism. Pape argued that the presence of an occupying force, not religion, was the main cause for suicide terrorism. However,

Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism was published in 2007 and therefore up-to-date data is needed to confirm and verify whether this is still presently the case. To address this gap, this paper examines other expert accounts and statistical data sources that have been published over the past fourteen years on the topic of religious suicide terrorism since Robert A. Pape's infamous book and hypothesis and compares them to determine whether his conclusion on the impact of religion is still accurate or is no longer accurate due to new data and information¹⁴¹.

Before analyzing the data from 2008–2021, the history of suicide terrorism from 1980–2007, with special attention to the impact that the 2001 attacks played on religious suicide, needs to be examined and investigated to understand the history and evolution of suicide terrorism. Terrorists in Lebanon began implementing the tactic of suicide attacks in the 1980's, which soon became implemented by the Liberation Tigers of Sri Lanka, the Kurdish areas of Turkey, and Chechnya. The Palestinian attacks during the Al Aqsa intifada further demonstrated the effectiveness and support for suicide terrorism which brought it to the attention of other religious terrorists who supported the martyrs¹⁴². The terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001, was the beginning of a new age of terrorism which became more lethal and caused increased fatalities. Many experts attribute this "change of face" to the revival of religious fundamentalism¹⁴³. Laqueur recognized this new wave of religious terrorism which differed from the previous 20–30 years when secular, political, or nationalist terrorism were predominant. This new face of terrorism is drawn to suicide attacks because of the respect and admiration that

¹⁴¹ A., & Moghadam, A. *Suicide Terrorism, Occupation, and the Globalization of Martyrdom: A Critique of Dying to Win*. Taylor & Francis. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10576100600561907>.

¹⁴² Crenshaw, M. "Explaining Suicide Terrorism: A Review Essay". Taylor & Francis. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09636410701304580?scroll=top&needAccess=true>.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

martyrs garner, along with the promise of the afterlife with God¹⁴⁴. The trend of suicide attacks in Afghanistan drastically increased from 2005–2006. In 2005 there were only 27, but in 2006 it jumped to 139 suicide attacks¹⁴⁵.

Robert A Pape's book *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Terrorism* provides statistical data on suicide terrorism. At the time of publication, in 2007, there were only 315 suicide attacks for Pape to examine¹⁴⁶. As of 2018 that number spiked to a total of 5,600 suicide terrorist attacks¹⁴⁷. Pape examines the root causes of terrorism and argues that religion is not the primary reason behind the increase in suicide terrorism. Additionally, he rules out the arguments that poverty or irrationality contribute to suicide terrorism. Pape explains that from 1980–2001, many of the countries which reported the use of suicide terrorism are classified as middle-income societies. In addition, the U.S Department of Homeland Securities compiled 47 articles seeking to explain the cause for the rise of suicide terrorism and determined that the attacks were planned and meticulous, which demonstrated that the attacks were not conducted because of irrational thinking¹⁴⁸. Experts further state that in cultures and societies which are supportive of suicide attacks and honor the deceased, the attacks are viewed as an act of "benevolent self-destructive activities" where the attacker views their own life "as less commendable than that of the gathering's honour, religion, or some other aggregate intrigue"¹⁴⁹.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Mustafa Demir & Ahmet Guler (2021) The effects of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on suicide terrorism, Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression, DOI: 10.1080/19434472.2020.1866052.

¹⁴⁶ Assaf Moghadam (2006) Suicide Terrorism, Occupation, and the Globalization of Martyrdom: A Critique of *Dying to Win*, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 29:8, 707–729, DOI: 10.1080/10576100600561907.

¹⁴⁷ Mustafa Demir & Ahmet Guler (2021) The effects of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on suicide terrorism, Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression, DOI: 10.1080/19434472.2020.1866052.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Kabra, P. (2019). *Suicide terrorism – Physical and mental destruction* (thesis).

The crucial argument which Pape underlies is that terrorists adopt suicide terrorism tactics because it has proven to be an effective and lethal means of spreading terror and gaining fame and notoriety. Demir and Guler confirm this argument after investigating the results of the 9/11 attacks on suicide terrorism. They share in their study the following:

Using data obtained from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) between 1981 and 2018, this research examines the effect of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on suicide terrorism and different types of terrorist organizations that commit suicide terrorism before and after 9/11 and the changes in the trends in the outcomes. The results of negative binomial regression tests comparing pre-9/11 and post-9/11 and monthly interrupted time series analyses showed that the 9/11 terrorist attacks had significant impacts on the above-mentioned outcomes. The results suggested that the 9/11 attacks have played a critical role in inspiring and encouraging terrorist organizations – religious-based ones in particular – to adopt suicide terrorism as an attack strategy¹⁵⁰.

Pape provides excellent reasons for what could be causing this trend towards suicide terrorism but fails to explain why religious organizations are increasing in their use of and effectiveness of suicide terrorism while secular terrorism has seen a sharp decline since the rise of the new wave of terrorism¹⁵¹. This new wave of suicide terrorism is not limited to religion or Islamic fundamentalism, but as mentioned earlier, 81% of these attacks are being carried out by Islamic fundamentalists, suggesting that religion is a critical variable when examining motivations and patterns of suicide terrorism. This trend undermines Pape's previous findings in the 1980s and 1990s which suggested that the majority of suicide attacks in South Lebanon were predominantly

¹⁵⁰ Mustafa Demir & Ahmet Guler (2021) The effects of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on suicide terrorism, *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, DOI: 10.1080/19434472.2020.1866052.

¹⁵¹ Assaf Moghadam (2006) Suicide Terrorism, Occupation, and the Globalization of Martyrdom: A Critique of Dying to Win, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29:8, 707–729, DOI: 10.1080/10576100600561907.

communists and Christians, failing to accurately describe the new wave of terrorism in the 21st century¹⁵².

In addition, Pape's choice to ignore the global definition of suicide terrorism may present skewed results, which warrants further research. Pape's definition of terrorism includes suicide attacks against military targets which allows Pape to include many of the secular Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's (LTTE) attacks in his data points. Only a small percentage of the LTTE's attacks targeted civilians which may influence Pape's argument against religion being a major factor in suicide terrorism. The Tigers of Tamil Eelam are rightly defined as a terrorist organization; however, this raises an issue on whether experts should include attacks that target military targets as terrorism or whether those attacks would be considered acts of war and insurgency rather than acts of terror¹⁵³. Traditionally these attacks would be considered as guerrilla warfare, hybrid warfare, or as an insurgency rather than terrorism. This change in definition causes a discrepancy when reviewing the 315 attacks which Pape details, leading critics to wonder how many of those attacks should be removed if the traditional definition of terrorism being used against non-combatants would still apply to the record. Robert Pape also identifies 16 separate suicide terrorist campaigns between 1980–2001¹⁵⁴. Of these sixteen, ten are argued as being primarily driven by religious demands. For the remaining six, all but two were influenced by religion as a motivating factor. The two campaigns which were not affected by religion were both orchestrated by the Marxist Kurdish Worker's party against the Turkish government¹⁵⁵.

¹⁵² Assaf Moghadam (2006) Suicide Terrorism, Occupation, and the Globalization of Martyrdom: A Critique of Dying to Win, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29:8, 707–729, DOI: 10.1080/10576100600561907.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Pedahzur, A. (Ed.). (2006). *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism: The Globalization of Martyrdom* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203964910>.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

These facts suggest that religion has a large effect on whether suicide terrorism is implemented or not.

When analyzing data, it is crucial to ensure which definition of terrorism is applied and what is applied to the data points. For example, the case of the train bombs in Spain in March 2004 illustrates some of the problems of classifying suicide terrorism. The bombings caused 191 deaths, making them one of the most destructive terrorist attacks since September 11th, which involved the coordination of multiple bombs by a relatively large conspiratorial group. Although the bombings were initially conventional since the bombs were left on trains, most of the group members later blew themselves up when cornered by the police. This leads to a gray area where it is unclear if this was a purposeful suicide attack and therefore counted in the data, or if this was a conventional terrorist attack which ended with the terrorists changing their plans due to intervention¹⁵⁶.

Research conducted by the Chicago Project identified more than 40 organizations which implemented suicide terror attacks between 1982 and 2013. These 40 organizations took part in 25 separate suicide campaigns. Hezbollah is cited as the first terror organization to implement suicide terrorism in their campaign against Israel. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were not the first group to implement suicide terrorism, but until 2001 the LTTE were the most lethal and numerous in their use of suicide attacks. The Chicago Project accounts for 72 suicide terror attacks conducted by the LTTE in their separatist mission, which resulted in the deaths of more than 1,000 victims and over 2500 casualties in Sri Lanka and India. The Chicago Project also identified 174 suicide attacks between 1980–1990 which resulted in the deaths of over 2700 people. While the attacks were largely aimed at military

¹⁵⁶ Martha Crenshaw (2007) "Explaining Suicide Terrorism: A Review Essay", *Security Studies*, 16:1, 133–162, DOI: 10.1080/09636410701304580.

targets (which is being defined as insurgency and not terrorism), 17% were targeted at civilians and 15% were political targets, making roughly a third of the total suicide attacks designated as terrorism attacks¹⁵⁷.

Many analysts argue that religious ideology is the primary factor which determines the level of suicide terrorism. This is especially true of groups which mix religious and ethnic grievances and pursue a “pure” religious message¹⁵⁸. In the past few decades this has been particularly true regarding Islamic terrorist groups. There is nothing inherently different about Islam which makes it more prone to violence or to committing acts of terror. Any group is capable of committing extreme violence, whether they are religious or secular, communists or nationalists, or left-wing or right-wing extremists¹⁵⁹. However, the facts have demonstrated that in recent years Islamic terrorist groups are not only more likely to commit acts of terror, but also more likely to commit acts of terror and suicide terror attacks. Experts theorize that another potential explanation of the increased fatality count which religious groups extoll could be their ability to dehumanize their enemies. Enemies’ civilians and combatants are viewed as the physical beings and representations of evil, condemned as the enemy of their religion¹⁶⁰.

While there are many experts who support the hypothesis that religion plays a factor, perhaps even a primary factor, there are also many experts who do not support this notion. For example, Ghabdian suggests that it is not a religious trend, but rather a political one due to the “repressive political environment in the Middle East, the dictatorial rule

¹⁵⁷ Harmon, Vanessa & Mujkic, Edin & Kaukinen, Catherine & Weir, Henriikka. (2018). Causes & Explanations of Suicide Terrorism: A Systematic Review Suggested Citation. *Homeland Security Affairs*. 14. 1–60.

¹⁵⁸ Peter S. Henne (2012) *The Ancient Fire: Religion and Suicide Terrorism, Terrorism and Political Violence*, 24:1, 38–60, DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2011.608817.

¹⁵⁹ Peter S. Henne (2012) *The Ancient Fire: Religion and Suicide Terrorism, Terrorism and Political Violence*, 24:1, 38–60, DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2011.608817.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

of most of the governments in the region, and their use of coercion, are behind violence and counter-violence by the disenfranchised and the marginalized groups in the society”¹⁶¹. For these reasons, coupled with the facts of economic inequality and rising unemployment among the younger generation, Ghadbian argues that the conditions combine to form a breeding ground for terrorist and extremist organizations¹⁶². Atran agrees with Ghadbian and contradicts arguments of anti-democratic and anti-western culture as a universal driver among individuals who decide to engage in suicide terrorism. Rather, Atran places blame on Middle Eastern governments which failed to “guarantee basic civil liberties and political rights for their citizens explains to a large degree their support for suicide terrorism”¹⁶³. Other experts such as Merari, conclude that suicide bombings are “neither an Islamic phenomenon nor a religious phenomenon: religion is just one more element in the persuasion, but it is neither necessary nor sufficient”¹⁶⁴.

The purpose of this research is not to say that all Muslim terrorists are motivated by religious intent or that those who practice Islam are dangerous members of society. Rather the purpose of this paper is to examine the correlation between religion and suicide terrorism to educate policy makers and the public on this issue. The goal is not only to understand the correlation behind religious extremism but also examine how to prevent the next rise in religious terrorism from outside the Islamic faith. Through examining how this new wave of terror aligns with religion, it will assist policy makers and intelligence officials to make decisions that best prepare for and prevent religious suicide terrorism.

¹⁶¹ Capell, M., Sahliyyeh, E. Suicide Terrorism: Is Religion the Critical Factor?. *Secur J* 20, 267–283 (2007). <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.sj.8350029>.

¹⁶² Ibid.

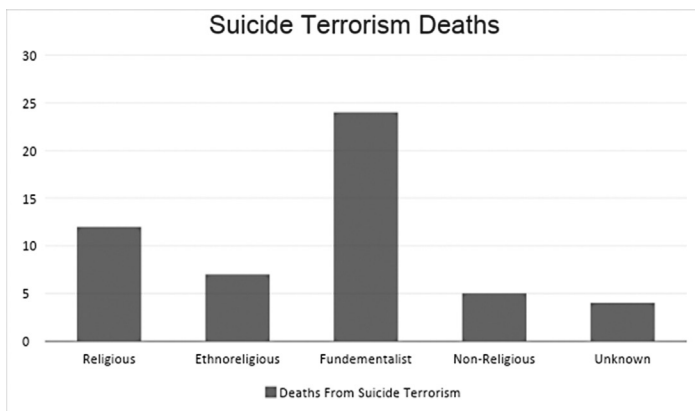
¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

Research Data

Examining the RAND Terrorism Incident Database, Bruce Hoffman discovered that 78% of all suicide attacks since 1968 have occurred post-9/11. Islamic terrorists conducted 81% of the total number of suicide attacks. Of the 35 groups that employed suicide attacks during this timeframe 31 are classified as Islamic Terrorist groups¹⁶⁵. Throughout 1981 to 2018 there have been a total of 5,600 suicide terrorist attacks which makes up roughly 4% of the total worldwide terrorism attacks, including those which did not implement suicide attacks. Despite the low percentage of suicide terrorist attacks, these attacks make up almost 19% of the total deaths as a result of terrorism. Religious suicide terrorism also proved to be extremely deadly, especially given the relatively small quantity of attacks. Religious suicide terrorism claimed 59,000 out of 314,000 fatalities (18%) and 132,000 injuries out of 475,000 (27.8%)¹⁶⁶.

Figure 1. Lethality of Terrorism Attacks



Source: Peter S. Henne's "The Ancient Fire: Religion and Suicide Terrorism, Terrorism and Political Violence", 24:1, 38–60, DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2011.608817, pg. 48.

¹⁶⁵ Assaf Moghadam (2006) Suicide Terrorism, Occupation, and the Globalization of Martyrdom: A Critique of Dying to Win, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29:8, 707–729, DOI: 10.1080/10576100600561907.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

In Henne's book "The Ancient Fire: Religion and Suicide Terrorism, Terrorism and Political Violence," he shares (see above figure):

A preliminary analysis of the data indicates the greater lethality of attacks by religious groups. Out of 2200 attacks, 841 were by religious groups, 253 were by non-religious groups, and 1,108 were unknown. Out of attacks by religious groups, 619 were by ethnonreligious groups and 222 were by fundamentalist groups. The mean number of deaths from attacks was 8; for religious groups it was 12, and non-religious groups was 5. For ethnonreligious groups, the mean was 7, and for fundamentalists it was 24. The mean number of deaths from unknown groups was 4. This suggests that groups with a religious ideology are more likely to cause a great number of deaths from suicide attacks than non-religious groups, but among religious groups fundamentalists were more violent¹⁶⁷.

To study the causes of suicide terrorism, it is best to analyze suicide terrorism from three different angles or levels – the individual, organizational, and environmental. This produces a framework using the data from Palestinian, Chechen, and Sri Lankan suicide terrorism campaigns. This model can also be repurposed for analysts to understand risk factors to determine possible policy making decisions¹⁶⁸. By examining suicide terrorism on one of these three levels, it simplifies the research process and allows the reader to better understand the research target group, model, and purpose. In addition, the three levels face an array of different challenges, solutions, and variables; therefore it is vital to differentiate which level is being investigated.

¹⁶⁷ Peter S. Henne's "The Ancient Fire: Religion and Suicide Terrorism, Terrorism and Political Violence", 24:1, 38–60, DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2011.608817, pg. 48.

¹⁶⁸ Peter S. Henne (2012) The Ancient Fire: Religion and Suicide Terrorism, Terrorism and Political Violence, 24:1, 38–60, DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2011.608817.

Table 2. Statistics of Suicide Attacks

	Total	Total	Transnational	Transnational	Domestic	Domestic
Variables	Mean	Obs.	Mean	Obs.	Mean	Obs.
Attacks ¹⁶⁹	3.92	624	0.96	442	3.79	533
Casualties ^b	27.57	2448	37.30	426	24.82	2022
Attack-specific¹⁷⁰						
Religious Group	0.69	2448	0.82	426	0.63	2022
Officials	0.34	2448	0.33	426	0.41	2022
Military	0.17	2448	0.06	426	0.21	2022
Business	0.08	2448	0.1	426	0.06	2022
Social Services	0.07	2448	0.07	426	0.07	2022
Major City	0.57	2448	0.63	426	0.38	2022

Source: Santifort-Jordan, C., & Sandler, T. (2014). An Empirical Study of Suicide Terrorism: A Global Analysis. *Southern Economic Journal*, 80(4), 981–1001. Retrieved July 15, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23807680>.

An empirical study of suicide terrorism by Santifort-Jordan and Sandler, as shown in Table 2, provides a summary of statistics and variables regarding religious suicide terrorism from 1998 to 2010. In order to present the data as realistic as possible the researchers chose to exclude outlier suicide terrorism attacks such as the 9/11 suicide attacks and the August 7, 1998, suicide attacks on the U.S embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. The data shows that the average number of suicide terrorist attacks (including non-religious) that a country faces per year is 3.92,

¹⁶⁹ Comes from country-specific panel data sets.

¹⁷⁰ Comes from observation-level data.

0.96 transnational suicide terrorist attacks and 3.79 domestic suicide attacks, with religious suicide terrorist attacks making up the bulk of the total suicide attacks. Religious suicide terror attacks account for 2.70 average suicide attacks (69%) of the total of 3.92 worldwide suicide terror attacks, 0.78 (82%) out of 0.96 transnational suicide terrorist attacks, and 2.38 (63%) of total domestic suicide terrorist attacks¹⁷¹.

The data in Table 2 shows what is already expected with regards to the frequency of transnational terrorism versus domestic suicide terrorism, due to domestic suicide terror attacks being easier to plan and carry out. However, when examining the average number of casualties, the researchers discovered that the transnational suicide terror attacks have an average of 37.30 casualties per attack versus the 24.82 at the domestic level¹⁷². The data also portrays some interesting information for the targets of suicide terrorists. For transnational suicide terrorism attacks target officials 33% of the time, military 6%, businesses 10%, social services 7%, and 63% of the time target a major city. Domestic suicide terrorist attacks target officials 41% of the time, 21% are military targets, 6% are businesses, social services 7%, and a major city only 38% of the time¹⁷³. This data presents a multitude of data which can inform officials on the potential targets of suicide terrorism attacks to help prevent future attacks from taking place. The data also displays a clear trend that roughly 3 out of 5 domestic suicide terror attacks and 4 out of 5 transnational suicide terror attacks will originate from a religious terrorist organization¹⁷⁴.

¹⁷¹ Santifort-Jordan, C., & Sandler, T. (2014). An Empirical Study of Suicide Terrorism: A Global Analysis. *Southern Economic Journal*, 80(4), 981–1001. Retrieved July 15, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23807680>.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

Conclusion

The new wave of suicide terrorism which began decades ago has been undeniably linked to the rise in religious Islamic fundamentalism. However, more research and data are required to ascertain the impact of other contributing factors such as society, culture, and the presence of an occupying force. The other contributing factors could assist in explaining the unusually high relationship between suicide terrorism and religion. Suicide terrorism has also proven to be an extremely lethal form of terrorism and continues to increase in popularity among religious terrorist organizations. It is currently unclear why other extremely violent secular or political terrorist organizations do not also adopt this method of terror attacks due to increased casualty ratio which has been attributed to suicide terrorism. Further research is required to investigate this relationship. Upon the completion of the fore mentioned research, it may become clearer why religious terrorist organizations are much more likely to implement suicide terrorism than other non-religious terror organizations.

The conclusion of this research should inform policy makers of the extreme dangers of suicide terrorism and make obvious the need for solutions to mitigate the dangers, lethality, and prevalence of religious suicide terrorism. Some of the potential solutions to combat domestic suicide terrorism that should be considered include: religious outreach programs which creates a counter-narrative to combat terrorist recruitment and propaganda, increased abundance of metal detectors and security check points at large public venues, and close discussion with religious community leaders. Some recommendations to prepare for and prevent transnational suicide terrorists are increased scrutiny and security at border crossings over land, sea, and air, and for nations which a visa is required to gain entry to maintain a strict screening process which investigates those who apply for admittance. None of these recommendations are new which may lead many to dismiss these

suggestions, however, as with any security issues there must be a balance between security and freedom. Further research is required on all of the above subjects to determine the impact of the results. Finally, researchers and investigators must remain vigilant to subtle changes to suicide terrorism tactics along with the innovation of new techniques being developed to slip by the counterterrorism efforts of researchers, investigators, policy makers, and security officials.

Eternal Solutions for an Ephemeral Problem: Suggestions on Cybercrime

Kylie HEITZENRATER

Abstract: With the steady, all-consuming march of the Information Age, new avenues for crime emerge daily. Yet, the legal landscape faces a challenge in addressing these crimes due to the paradoxical need for stable laws that will last, and flexible laws that can bend to the rapidly evolving digital world. This paper analyzes two types of cybercrime – cryptocurrency laundering and doxxing, assessing the existing laws surrounding them, and proposes amendments and future considerations for cyber legislation and regulation. The first crime falls into an existing structure of laws against money laundering, but must adapt to the ways in which blockchain and cryptocurrency further obfuscate financial traceability and attribution. The second type is a contemporary form of harassment that exists in a liminal space of gray morality and technical legality, but which abuses speech to provoke violence. By reviewing current legislation and establishing proper definitions for these crimes, this paper will formulate suggestions for potential improvements to the legal systems surrounding these digital issues.

Keywords: cybersecurity, cybercrime, international law, internet policy, forensic linguistics, cryptocurrency, doxxing

Introduction

Globalization and the extended reach of the cyber dimension pose a problem for lawmakers and law enforcers as the law-making process fails to keep pace with the evolution of crime on the internet. Cyber

defense up to the present has been reactive rather than proactive. This tends to be in large part due to the fast and far-reaching evolution of technology and globalization, especially in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. As many governments, schools, and businesses quickly jump into the online world, cyber security will continue to be a top priority in international security. The devious financial resources of crime and the malicious invasion of privacy continue to plague the internet. Investigating a long-standing form of crime, money laundering alongside a legally dubious internet activity, doxxing, provides insight into the wide spectrum of illicit happenings in the cyber realm. In this paper, information on the ease of crypto-laundering will be combined with understanding of current laws to provide suggestions for cryptocurrency regulation. This paper will also present a case for why doxxing should receive more legal scrutiny.

Lexical and Analytical Framework

In searching for holes in the legal framework, we must first establish a lexical paradigm with which to assess current laws and to properly suggest amendments.

Cybercrime

To litigate against and to combat cybercrime, we must first understand what cybercrime is. The European Commission provides an excellent and succinct definition:

Cybercrime is a borderless issue that can be classified in three broad definitions:

- crimes specific to the internet, such as attacks against information systems or phishing (e.g. fake bank websites to solicit passwords enabling access to victims' bank accounts)

- online fraud and forgery: large-scale fraud can be committed online through instruments such as identity theft, phishing, spam and malicious code
- illegal online content, including child sexual abuse material, incitement to racial hatred, incitement to terrorist acts and glorification of violence, terrorism, racism and xenophobia

Many types of crime, including terrorism, trafficking in human beings, child sexual abuse and drugs (sic) trafficking, have moved online or are facilitated online. As a consequence, most criminal investigations have a digital component¹⁷⁵.

For the purpose of this paper, I will analyze cryptocurrency laundering and doxxing and propose regulation on a new form of online harassment. The established illegal act of money laundering with the added element of blockchain networks and cryptocurrency demonstrates the integration of old crime finding new techniques in cyberspace. Assessing the morally gray act of doxxing, which does not currently technically violate internet policy, provides insight into new types of crime on the internet.

Crypto-currency

The term “cryptocurrency” refers to a wide variety of digital currencies that all operate through a cryptographic records system known as blockchain (not to be confused with the cryptocurrency company Blockchain). Loosely, blockchain and cryptocurrency operate through ‘blocks’ of digital information that, through peer-to-peer networking, legitimize transactions, allow degrees of identification, and constitute the cryptocurrency market. The three most popular and prominent cryptocurrencies as of the writing of this article according to Time magazine and CoinDesk are Bitcoin, Ethereum, and XRP. Bitcoin dwarfs all other cryptocurrencies

¹⁷⁵ “Cybercrime,” European Commission, Policies, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/cybercrime_en.

by a factor of 3 for Ethereum and 10 for XRP^{176,177}. Bitcoin is the first cryptocurrency and generally the one that appears the most frequently in media. Ethereum is a blockchain network that hosts the cryptocurrency, Ether. XRP, or Ripple, is a currency exchange network that operates through its own blockchain network. The essential difference between all of these currencies is akin to the differences between US dollars, Japanese yen, and European euros. Each currency exists within its own blockchain network, can be exchanged for other currencies (cryptocurrency or USD, etc.), and functions as fiat currency on the digital market.

Doxxing

According to cybersecurity technology company, Kaspersky Lab, doxxing is the “the act of revealing identifying information about someone online, such as their real name, home address, workplace, phone, financial, and other personal information. That information is then circulated to the public — without the victim’s permission”¹⁷⁸. Other sources, such as Google, often identify an underlying malicious intent or call to violence alongside the dissemination of the private documents. The term “doxxing” (also spelled “doxing”) is a shortening and anthimerization of “docs” or documents, stemming from the 1990’s hacker phrase “dropping the documents” on a certain individual. General examples of doxxing include the prominent hacker group, Anonymous and their exploits revealing personal information on corrupt law enforcement officers, KKK members, and Q-Anon leaders. Other examples from the Kaspersky website include data leaks from pro-infidelity dating site (Ashley Madison, or The Ashley Madison Agency) and the spreading of the personal details of an American dentist who illegally

¹⁷⁶ Ryan Haar, “The 10 Most Popular Cryptocurrencies, and What You Should Know About Each Before You Invest,” NextAdvisor, July 1, 2021, <https://time.com/nextadvisor/investing/cryptocurrency/types-of-cryptocurrency/>.

¹⁷⁷ “The CoinDesk 20,” CoinDesk, Accessed July 13, 2021, <https://www.coindesk.com/coindesk20>.

¹⁷⁸ “What is Doxing – Definition and Explanation,” Kaspersky Lab, Resource Center, Definitions, <https://www.kaspersky.com/resource-center/definitions/what-is-doxing>.

hunted and killed a lion on a protected African preserve¹⁷⁹. The primary objective of doxxing is to intimidate, to humiliate, and ultimately to endanger the victim whose information is being proliferated on the internet. This paper identifies approximately four levels of doxxing, ranked so by the degrees of identifying information leaked and the malintent behind the leak. The chart is an original analysis of the various types of harassment that occur in doxxing scenarios and is a prototype for future investigations into harassment and privacy violation on the internet. Levels of doxxing range from 1 to 4 in terms of intention and maliciousness. Level 1.5 for example, is included as a form of doxxing as an isolated and impersonal incident associated with company database leaks, but also as a form that can be intentional and malicious, such as the Ashley Madison leak. It should be noted that many forms of doxxing are not illegal as information obtained and disseminated generally comes from the public domain as illustrated below in Table 1.

Table 1. Levels of Doxxing

	Information released	Perpetrator (P) and Victim (V)	Intent
Level 1: Identity Reveal	• full legal name • photo • sometimes leaking personal accounts to professional sphere	• P: typically individual (though group is possible), anonymous or identifiable • V: typically singular individual	• personal vendetta • humiliation based on perceived wrongdoing • damage victim's reputation
Level 1.5: Database Leak	• full legal name • password to account from leaked site • personal data from leaked site	• P: hacker or hackerbot • V: clientele list of target site	• generally a broadscale attempt to obtain financial and account information • can be more malicious and targeted

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

Level 2: Public Domain Doxxing	• Level 1 • home addresses of victim and/or victim's friends and family • criminal history • personal phone numbers • workplace details • private photos	• P: individual, anonymous or identifiable, with or without programming skills, with access to public domain information • V: individual or group of individuals	• personal vendetta • humiliation based on perceived wrongdoing • damage victim's reputation • harassment and call to harassment • sometimes call to violence
Level 3: Hacking Doxxing	• Level 1 and 2 • social security number or equivalent • bank statements and account information • private correspondence • private photos (oftentimes nude or explicit photos)	• P: individual or group, anonymous or identifiable, with programming skills • V: individual, family and friends of individual, professional colleagues of individual	• personal vendetta • humiliation based on perceived wrongdoing • damage victim's reputation • harassment and call to harassment • hijacking identity, finances, reputation • call to public violence
Level 4: SWATing and Physical Intervention	• Any amount of Levels 1–3 preceding event • call made to local law enforcement requiring a SWAT investigation	• P: individual, anonymous or identifiable, with or without programming skills, with knowledge on what call situations require SWAT intervention • V: individual, family and friends of individual, professional colleagues of individual	• direct physical harm and/or distress to the victim or victim's family • total harassment of victim

Source: Kylie Heitzenrater, Forensic linguistics.

The International Association of Forensic Linguistics states that, “in its broadest sense, “forensic linguistics” covers all areas where law and language intersect”¹⁸⁰. We will focus on three subtypes known as “linguistics and the law,” “linguistics as evidence”, and “research/teaching”. These intersections apply generally to legal analysis and discourse, semantics and pragmatics used in court cases, and educating law professionals and law enforcement on legal language, respectively. These aspects of forensic linguistics aid in evaluating the legal landscape of the internet, how cryptocurrency and doxxing fit in, and where legislation could potentially improve. Forensic linguistics will appear again under labels like ‘precedent’, ‘attribution,’ and ‘suggestions’.

The Crypto-laundering Problem

How does it work?

Sicignano argues, “the primary risk associated with the use of bitcoins is money laundering”¹⁸¹. Toolkitaki Technologies coalesced multiple reports to outline how cryptocurrency specifically is laundered suggesting:

Criminals use a number of methods involving cryptocurrencies to hide the illicit origin of funds. All these methods make use of some of the other vulnerabilities of cryptocurrencies such as their inherent pseudonymity, easy cross-border transactions and decentralized P2P payments. As in the case of cash-based money laundering, there are three main stages in money laundering using cryptos.

(1) Placement – In this state, illicit funds are brought into the financial system through intermediaries such as financial institutions,

¹⁸⁰ “Forensic Linguistics,” The International Association of Forensic Linguists, About, <https://www.iafl.org/forensic-linguistics/>.

¹⁸¹ Gaspare Jucan Sicignano, “Money Laundering using Cryptocurrency: The Case of Bitcoin!,” Athens Journal of Law 7, no. 2 (April 2021): 253–264, <https://www.athensjournals.gr/law/2021-7-2-7-Sicignano.pdf>.

exchanges, shops and casinos. One type of cryptocurrency can be bought with cash or other cryptocurrencies. It can be done through online cryptocurrency exchanges. Criminals often use exchanges with less levels of compliance with AML regulations for the purpose.

(2) Layering – In this phase, criminals obscure the illegal source of funds through structure (sic) transactions. This makes the trail of illegal funds difficult to decode. Using crypto exchanges, criminals can convert one cryptocurrency into another or can take part in an Initial Coin Offering where payment for one type of digital currency is done with another type. Criminals can also move their crypto holdings to another country.

(3) Integration – Here, illegal money is put back into the economy with a clean status. One of the most common techniques of criminals is the use of over the counter (OTC) brokers who act as intermediaries between buyers and sellers of cryptocurrencies. Many OTC brokers specialize in providing money-laundering services and they get very high commission rates for the same¹⁸².

Methods such as crypto mixing (or tumbling), peer-to-peer crypto networks, crypto ATMs, or online gambling result in additional illegal activities and aid in criminals conducting business.

Statistics

Locating concrete statistics for crypto-crime is impossible due to its very nature; it is often undetectable and untraceable. The United Nations “estimates, between US\$800 billion and US\$2 trillion are being laundered every year across the globe, representing 2–5% of the global gross domestic product. Out of this, more than 90% goes undetected.

¹⁸² Tookitaki, “Money Laundering via Cryptocurrencies: All You Need to Know,” Tookitaki Inc., Accessed July 14, 2021, <https://www.tookitaki.ai/news-views/moneylaundering-via-cryptocurrencies/>.

The exact volume of crypto laundering is yet to be ascertained”¹⁸³. Therefore, all crypto-based cybercrime is inherently under-studied, poorly understood, and desperately in need of increased regulation and monitoring.

Jurisdiction

While there are many reports of successful operations seizing cryptocurrency involved in crime, who holds jurisdiction over such cases remains a complex situation¹⁸⁴. While crime committed in the physical realm has a distinct location that can provide insight into attribution and therefore jurisdiction, crimes exclusively in cyberspace require more nuanced evaluations. If a blockchain firm can be responsible for what is done with their currency, then in theory the world’s governments should be liable for the crimes paid for with their currencies. Websites for ‘mixing cryptocurrency to further remove identifying markers could hold responsibility for those who use their services. Since most cryptocurrency exchanges go under the radar, simply finding a culprit takes priority over how international law comes into play^{185,186}.

Attribution and Non-state actors

In recent times, non-state actors have emerged as a threat that cannot be ignored in security analysis, especially in the cyber sphere. They exploit the freedom of cyber infrastructure to conduct illicit business, cyber attacks, and engage in conflict in the physical dimension.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Guy Faulconbridge (Sarah Young and Michael Holden, ed), “British police seize record \$408 million haul of cryptocurrency,” Reuters, July 13, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/british-police-seize-250-million-cryptocurrency-2021-07-13/>.

¹⁸⁵ Francesco Calderoni, “The European legal framework on cybercrime: striving for an effective implementation,” *Crime, Law and Social Change* 54, no.5 (2010): 339–357, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-010-9261-6>.

¹⁸⁶ Susan Huanfeng Ning and Han Wu, “China: Cybersecurity Laws and Regulations 2021,” *International Comparative Legal Guides*, (February 2020), <https://iclg.com/practice-areas/cybersecurity-laws-and-regulations/china>.

Cryptocurrency is often used to fund the illicit activities of non-state actors. CipherTrace provides a detailed outline on how to monitor the process of cryptocurrency crime stating:

Financial Institutions employ Know Your Customer (KYC) processes to confirm the identity of their customer. These processes typically involve the collection and verification of a customer's personally identifiable information (PII)—including, but not limited to, government-issued ID, phone number, email address, physical address, and more. Exact KYC requirements vary by jurisdiction, meaning criminals can use jurisdictional arbitrage to choose geos with lax KYC procedures to further obfuscate their flow of funds.¹⁸⁷

In what ways can states hold each other accountable for crimes committed within their cyber borders or by state actors?

The Doxxing Problem

'Good' Intentions, Bad Outcomes

Under the technical definitions of this paper, perhaps, incidents such as the NSA WikiLeaks incident with Edward Snowden (doxxing the US government is already illegal), the FBI Investigation into the leaked emails of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and other types of document dropping that supposedly come from a place of benevolence should not be included in doxxing laws. Even individual doxxing such as the surging doxxing of people revealed to be in some way bigoted could be construed as informing the public with good intentions. This article reflects that intentions do matter in doxxing: perpetrators always anticipate retribution and humiliation of the victim. There is no reasonable person who would willfully find and spread identifying information

¹⁸⁷ "2020 Geographic Risk Report: VASP KYC by Jurisdiction," CipherTrace, Accessed July 13, 2021, <https://ciphertrace.com/2020-geo-risk-report-on-vasp-kyc/>.

about another person on the internet without the knowledge that bad things will come of it. Be it stolen identity, brutal harassment, or violence, those who doxx are well aware of the potential outcomes. The kind of speech umbrella that doxxing falls under is not protected, even by the United States Constitution. Doxxing, no matter what level, is intended to harass the victim and provoke violence or negativity against them. This should be illegal.

Globalization and Digital Evolution

Laws must be stable and the internet must be flexible. The good news is that a lot of cybercrime is simply normal crime conducted on the internet, such as cryptocurrency laundering, which is generally covered by anti-money laundering laws. However, activities like doxxing are a wholly new dilemma birthed by the Information Age and any regulation surrounding them has consequences that ripple far beyond the initial act. Doxxing sheds light on the ubiquitous practice of data mining by individuals and companies alike to better target world citizens. If limitations are placed on information and data retrieval, large corporations and some governments will not accept restraints on their access to citizens' lives. For example, in spring of 2021, Hong Kong attempted to broaden legislation regarding privacy and personal data protection in the wake of multi-directional doxxing of pro-independence and pro-Chinese police. This was met with immediate backlash by the Chinese government and American internet corporations with large branches in Hong Kong^{188,189}. It is all too easy to create a law that is too broad or too narrow. However, no matter how flexible and evolution-friendly a law may be, various interest groups will attack it. Restrictions on

¹⁸⁸ Jeffie Lam and Chris Lau, "Hong Kong's proposed doxxing law is too broad and more safeguards are needed, legal experts say," South China Morning Post, May 12, 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3133218/hong-kongs-proposed-doxxing-law-too-broad-and-more>.

¹⁸⁹ Paul Mozur, "American Internet Giants Hit Back at Hong Kong Doxxing Law," The New York Times, July 5, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/05/technology/hong-kong-doxxing-national-security-law.html>.

doxxing generally eat at the heart of data mining and privacy invasion on the internet, which benefit those same interest groups. The freedom and openness of globalization must be balanced with the trepidation of overreaching into a person's existence.

Reactivity vs Proactivity

While cyber defense should be proactive in its protection of people and the state, it runs the risk of devolving into discriminatory profiling and assumption-based surveillance. Although this type of monitoring already to some extent exists, we must be careful to not leap into the dystopian Big Brother state in order to produce even an iota more of security. Doxxing toes a tight line intersecting in speech protection and privacy protection. Unlike in the case of crypto-laundering, doxxing laws should aim to be case-by-case reactions rather than anticipatory assessments.

The Current Solutions

Laws pertaining to crypto-laundering

International law has created basic frameworks for anti-money laundering^{190,191}. Flexibility is a good model that appears frequently in international conventions. US codes 18 USC §§ 1956 and 1957 stipulate against most forms of money laundering, and appear to cover crypto-laundering¹⁹². Articles 4, 6, 7, and 8 of the Budapest Convention provide

¹⁹⁰ Nils Melzer, *Interpretive Guidance on the Notion of Direct Participation in Hostilities under International Humanitarian Law* (Geneva, Switzerland: International Committee of the Red Cross, 2009), <https://www.icrc.org/en/publication/0990-interpretive-guidance-notion-direct-participation-hostilities-under-international>.

¹⁹¹ Marco Gercke, "Understanding cybercrime: phenomena, challenges and legal response," International Telecommunication Union, last modified September, 2012, https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Cybersecurity/Documents/Cybercrime2014_E.pdf.

¹⁹² Joel Cohen and Linda Noonan, "USA: Anti-Money Laundering Laws and Regulations," International Comparative Legal Guides, (May 2021), <https://iclg.com/practice-areas/anti-money-laundering-laws-and-regulations/usa>.

for cooperation against economic cybercrime¹⁹³. Likewise, articles 5 and 6 in EU Directive 2019/713¹⁹⁴ forbid willful and nefarious money practices. Case-by-case basis judgement is optimal for situations like doxxing, where a thorough examination of the situation yields the best results. However, documents that attempt to circumnavigate the different legal systems in every state tend to be overly vague as opposed to beneficially flexible.

Flaws/Critique^{195,196,197}

The issue with flexibility is that the lack of concreteness in language allows for too much plausible deniability. This is a problem given the already challenging task of attribution in cybercrime. Additionally, “an illegal act needs to be clearly described in and prohibited by law. Pursuant to the moral principle of *nullum crimen sine lege* (Latin for “no crime without law”) a person cannot be punished for an act that was not proscribed by law at the time the person committed the act (UNODC, 2013, p. 53)”¹⁹⁸. If there is not an explicit ban on the most commonly used methods of identification interference, then the legal process is slowed. Law enforcement needs a clear avenue of locating fraudulent and laundered transactions, as they go on to fuel more corporally dangerous affairs such as terrorism and trafficking.

¹⁹³ “Details of Treaty No. 185: Budapest Convention,” Council of Europe, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/185?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=185>.

¹⁹⁴ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/713/oj>.

¹⁹⁵ “Assessing the implementation of the Budapest Convention,” Council of Europe, Assessments, last modified 2017, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cybercrime/assessments>.

¹⁹⁶ Paul Mozur. “American Internet Giants Hit Back at Hong Kong Doxxing Law,” The New York Times, July 5, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/05/technology/hong-kong-doxxing-national-security-law.html>.

¹⁹⁷ Jeffie Lam and Chris Lau, “Hong Kong’s proposed doxxing law is too broad and more safeguards are needed, legal experts say,” South China Morning Post, May 12, 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3133218/hong-kongs-proposed-doxxing-law-too-broad-and-more>.

¹⁹⁸ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. “The role of cybercrime law”. In E4J University Module Series: Cybercrime; Module 3: Legal Frameworks and Human Rights. Accessed July 13, 2021. <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/cybercrime/module-3/key-issues/the-role-of-cybercrime-law.html>.

Suggestions for Cryptocurrency Laundering

Future legislation on cryptocurrency laundering should utilize the existing framework for money laundering, including language about mixing websites and other methods of making crypto untraceable. Current laws already prohibit the laundering itself as well as many forms of intentional obfuscation. However, the language should include, where possible, explicit reference to websites designed to further encrypt cryptocurrency. Many countries need stricter laws on Know Your Customer data and other methods of de-anonymizing exchanges and transactions. Mixing websites and other mechanisms of inhibiting the traceability of cryptocurrency should be banned and razed from the internet where possible. To a reasonable extent, no transaction should be completely anonymous.

Suggestions for Doxxing Regulation

In the United States: The Brandenburg Test

According to our definitions and analysis of doxxing, it falls under legal precedent banning speech that intentionally invites violence and malicious actions against others. However, this does require clarification due to the myriad attempts to censor offensive and inflammatory speech. While legally dubious cases such as *Schenck v United States*, *Whitney v. California*, or *Dennis v. United States* invite doubt on the morality of doxxing laws, in America it should be illegal to maliciously divulge personal information about someone with the knowledge and intentions of causing the doxxed victim harm.

The legal precedent that could potentially support anti-doxxing laws in the US is the eponymous litmus test birthed from *Brandenburg v Ohio*, a case originating from a long line of considerations on free speech and the First Amendment of the US Constitution. As Sherman points out,

“Brandenburg v. Ohio set a standard for protection of speech that remains in effect today. According to the Supreme Court, speech advocating even extreme ideas may only be proscribed when it is intended to incite imminent lawless activity and is likely to do so”¹⁹⁹. The Brandenburg test involves three components:

- 1) the willful intent to speak in a way that invites lawlessness
- 2) the temporal imminence and imploration of imminent violent
- 3) the likelihood that the speech will directly influence a reasonable person to act in accordance with the unlawful suggestions.

Regulating doxxing requires consultation with the components of the Brandenburg test and anti-harassment laws. Doxxing is an uncomfortable manifestation of the accessibility of the internet; and it is seemingly the kind of uncouth speech that ought to be protected. However, as we discussed, many instances of doxxing result in direct calls to harassment of the victim, checking off all the boxes of the Brandenburg test.

In the International Sphere

International law presents a difficult challenge as speech laws are highly contested and highly individualized among governments. We need to decide as an international community what our fundamental rights are to data privacy, anonymity, and speech protection. Is it illegal for a private citizen to doxx a state official in another country? Or vice versa? The international community needs a consensus on internet freedom and the freedom from internet harassment in order to create solutions to these growing issues.

¹⁹⁹ Michael J. Sherman, “*Brandenburg v. Twitter*,” *Civil Rights Law Journal* 28, no.2 (2018): 127–172. http://sls.gmu.edu/crlj/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2019/02/GMC202_crop-1-1.pdf.

Implications

With new technology comes new ways to commit crimes, with new laws come new ways to abuse power, and so on and so forth. As with any consideration for new regulation and legislation, anything created must be done with the utmost care for stability, outcomes, implications, loopholes, and the myriad ways that rules impact our lives.

Additionally, it is one task to assess issues and create laws to combat malintent. It is another task entirely to enforce these regulations and track down those who violate cyber laws. The law is limited by how well it can be executed and enforced. Blockchain/crypto mixers and doxxing hackers cover their digital tracks well, and the constant evolution of covert activities and methods of conducting crime prevent legislation from fully encompassing the scope of cybercrime. The task of cyber legalities must be cautious ambiguity.

A recurring theme in countless articles, assessments, and other documents on cybersecurity is the reverence and caution at restraining the ultimate freedoms and opportunities for connection provided by the internet. Throughout history, the scales seem to have leaned toward either security or liberty. Technology has placed weight on both sides of the scale, none to be taken lightly. As we move ahead in defending ourselves from the limitless potential of the future, we must tread lightly with the knowledge that just as this world wide web connects us to the ends of the universe, so too can it trap us and consume us whole.

Terms of Service and social media outlets that make data readily available to all of the internet need more consumer/user-friendly explanations of what is being broadcast and sold. The intentional esoterism of these documents, which many simply scroll through to the accept button, place users in binding agreements that put them at risk for doxxing and other harmful uses of their information. Education is

a large component of safety, and the public must be educated on the dangers of doxxing and the dubious nature of cryptocurrency.

Conclusion: The Journey Ahead

What makes humans such a strong species is our ability to adapt and to be proactive in the face of a chaotic world. We consider ourselves in control of our existence that we create rules around societies. The nature of law requires stability and equity to produce justice and fair decisions, but the world wide web challenges that rigidness with the ever-evolving avenues to commit cybercrime. We outpace ourselves every day in how to be the very best and at the same time the very worst of ourselves. The ecosystem of economics and the new flavor of criminality brought forth by cryptocurrency asks us to reevaluate how we engage with money. The immortal battle against privacy and speech that must surely be as old as the human language itself, finds insidious homes in the Information Age with doxxing. The hope is that more attention will be focused on the doxxing phenomenon and that Know Your Customer laws will encourage the de-anonymization of crypto transactions. With that, we can make the internet even a fraction safer than before.

The Rise of Domestic Terrorism in the United States with the Emergence of Political Motives

Jacob FALCK

Abstract: Over the last few years, terrorism has been on the rise in the United States of America. Most people in the United States would think of foreign agents as the largest catalysts for terrorism in the country. In reality, domestic agents were and still are the largest threat to America and likely to remain as such for the foreseeable future. These domestic agents are part of terrorist groups that have diverse goals and motives that are very similar yet different from one another. One such motive that is shared amongst these groups is politics. Domestic extremist groups, predominantly from the far right, want to influence change in politics so that their views can be included in the public sphere. This aim is hardly new, already dating back to the nineteenth century, but there has been a sharp increase since the start COVID-19 pandemic. This paper provides a brief historical examination of the roots of domestic terrorism in the United States and analyzes how it has increased over time. It will also use examples of active right-wing extremist groups to look at whether or not political motives pose a potential threat for increasing domestic terrorism. The end goal of this research is to make people aware of the prevalence of domestic terrorism, showcase the different political motives of domestic terrorist extremist groups in the United States and give recommendations on how to limit the threat of domestic terrorism.

Keywords: terrorism, domestic terrorism, driving factors, political motives, political violence

Introduction

The Federal Bureau of Investigation defines domestic terrorism as, “violent, criminal acts committed by individuals and/or groups to further ideological goals stemming from domestic influences, such as those of a political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature”²⁰⁰ The political threats for terrorism have only grown larger over time through issues involving race and other factors. The threat of domestic terrorism dates back to 1871, when right wing extremists were motivated to fight back against the government due to public policy and taxes²⁰¹. Politically motivated attacks grew in response to the US government’s initiative to build highways and hospitals which were perceived of as “socialist” policies²⁰². The focus of this fight against “socialism” blossomed into something greater at the turn of the twentieth century.

History of Domestic Terrorism

Domestic terrorism in the twentieth century was fueled by the resistance of black rights and unionization. These issues surrounding race are still prevalent today with right wing extremists and serve as a source of motivation for political change. The beginning of modern right wing domestic terrorist groups started with Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the New Deal²⁰³. These white domestic terrorists were against the government using their money as handouts for black men and they thought that it would bring socialism to the United States²⁰⁴. This theme is one that is often brought up by right wing extremists that has still stayed

²⁰⁰ “Terrorism,” FBI, 3 May 2016, www.fbi.gov/investigate/terrorism.

²⁰¹ Heather Cox Richardson, “January 16, 2021,” 17 Jan. 2021, heathercoxrichardson.substack.com/p/january-16-2021.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

relevant in recent decades. In 1987, the Fairness Doctrine ended which saw the rise of talk radio that gave right wing extremists a platform to share their opinions and ideas with citizens surrounding the government taking “white money” and giving it to black people. The end of the fairness doctrine promptly accelerated the rise of domestic terrorism in the United States and continued to bring many different political motives to light²⁰⁵.

Domestic terrorism was prominent in the United States before the 90’s but this was when the number of attacks and death toll started to increase. One of the first of such attacks occurred in 1992 when a man from Idaho got involved in a shootout with police over a fire-arms charge. The man, Randy Weaver, was in Idaho trying to get away from the “corrupt” American society. The shootout between Weaver and the police ignited the role of domestic extremists getting involved in politics. There were numerous right-wing extremists protesting what happened with Weaver and a similar situation happened a year later in Waco, Texas, with seventy six people left dead after a 51-day blockade²⁰⁶. This would all eventually boil over to the most deadly domestic attack to this day. In 1995, former soldier Timothy McVeigh set off a bomb in a truck outside the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City that killed 168 people²⁰⁷. McVeigh’s had his own strong political motives for the attack, and they were based around the idea of reforming the government to prevent taxes and government maladministration²⁰⁸. Right before the domestic attack in Oklahoma City, The Center for Strategic and International Studies started to keep data on

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ O’Harrow, Robert, et al. “The Rise of Domestic Extremism in America”. The Washington Post, WP Company, 12 Apr. 2021, www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/interactive/2021/domestic-terrorism-data/.

²⁰⁸ Heather Cox Richardson, “January 16, 2021”.

domestic terrorism in the United States²⁰⁹. The numbers in their data shed light to a large surge in domestic terrorism due to evolving political motives. Table 1 below provides a visual example to show the large increase in the number of attacks.

Table 1. Domestic Terror Incidents by Year in the Twenty-First Century

Years	Number of Incidents
1994–1999	225
2000–2005	171
2006–2010	74
2011–2015	147
2016–2019	238
2020–2021	127

Source: O’Harrow, Robert, et al. “The Rise of Domestic Extremism in America”.

According to the CSIS data, there have been around 980 domestic terrorist attacks in the United States since 1994. Of this number, ten percent of the attacks occurred in 2020 with 73 being far-right disturbances and the remaining 25 being far-left. This would seem to coincide with the increasing political tension in the United States. Barack Obama’s historical win in the 2008 presidential campaign was a large contributing factor for the tension between far-right white supremacists and the government. The campaign win itself can be seen as a motivating call to action for many domestic extremists with far-right views.

Political Motivations of Right-Wing Extremists

Of the many politically polarizing motives for domestic terrorism, white supremacy and other racist ideas are some of the most abundant that

²⁰⁹ O’Harrow, Robert, et al. “The Rise of Domestic Extremism in America”.

are seen in the country today. Many of these attacks have been covered by the news and social media since the start of the Black Lives Matter movement. Like Obama's presidency, the Black Lives Matter movement contains lots of politically tied motives that have sparked a string of domestic attacks in the United States. In fact, over a quarter of right-wing extremist attacks and more than half of the deaths in the attacks were motivated by the ideology of white supremacy²¹⁰. This politically-racial motive also led to the plotting of some attacks on fifteen mostly black churches all over the country with one such church, New Shiloh Christian Center, being set on fire three times. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic also caused a stir among right-wing extremists which can correlate to the spike in domestic terrorist attacks in 2020.

With the spread of the coronavirus increasing in the beginning of 2020, many nonessential businesses were forced to close down indefinitely and a stay-at-home order was put in effect. The large focus of many citizens during that time was on the pandemic through all of the coverage on the news and social media. This in turn could be seen as an easy way for domestic terrorists to get noticed by hundreds of thousands of people. An example of one such attempted attack would be the planned bombing of a hospital in Missouri by Timothy Wilson²¹¹. Wilson was a far right-wing extremist and white supremacist who was motivated to commit a terroristic act by his hatred for government policy²¹². His plan to detonate a bomb outside of a hospital was very similar to the attack carried out by Timothy McVeigh back in 1995. Wilson chose to try and bomb a hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic because he wanted to get more publicity for his attack²¹³. If he had been successful

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ CSIS Briefs. "The Escalating Terrorism Problem in the United States". *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 26 July 2021, www.csis.org/analysis/escalating-terrorism-problem-united-states.

²¹² "FBI: Government's Response to Virus Spurred Would-Be Bomber". *AP News*, Associated Press, 15 Apr. 2020, apnews.com/article/ad891a0e69f0e3d285c397a1626d1e0d.

²¹³ CSIS Briefs. "The Escalating Terrorism Problem in the United States".

in his attempt, he might have triggered more civil unrest in the country during the pandemic which other domestic terrorists could have taken advantage of. The pandemic has also created more polarization among citizens of the United States when it comes to masks and vaccinations. CSIS reported that both of these topics could lead to more violence by right-wing extremists²¹⁴. This kind of violence has already been seen in January 2021 with the attack on the United States Capitol. Even though COVID-19 has been used as a large source of political motivation for domestic terrorists, it is not the only factor contributing to the upswing in attacks.

The increasing popularity of social media over the last decade has helped many domestic terrorists share their political views and organize attacks around the country. Over the last five years, right-wing extremists have been using social media platforms more and more to communicate with one another and share ideas²¹⁵. The rise in online communication has unsurprisingly led to more conspiring about potential attacks and targets and the media presence of such extremists peaked in 2020. Bruce Hoffman, an expert in counterterrorism and professor at Georgetown University, said that social media acts as the propellant for domestic terrorism in the United States.¹² This would make sense since the use of technology is expanding more and more by the year. The Washington Post also reported that 24 incidents of terrorism related violence in 2020 had some sort of social media involvement with right-wing extremists. That number is also equivalent to one in five occurrences of right-wing violence in the year. Besides the Washington Post, the White House also released a strategy on how to combat domestic terrorism relating to social media. They talk about social media and technology as one of the largest threats that the country has in regard to domestic terrorism and the online platforms serve as a way

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ O'Harrow, Robert, et al. "The Rise of Domestic Extremism in America".

to mobilize violent extremists²¹⁶. The strategy details how to limit the effect of social media on the threat domestic terrorism by imposing harsher terms of service on online platforms as well as sharing relevant information with countries. That being said, there are still many different domestic terrorist groups operating through the use of online social media platforms with unorthodox politically motivated goals in mind.

Influential Right-Wing Extremists and Domestic Terrorists

One of the many politically motivated domestic terrorist groups in the country during 2020 was the Wolverine Watchmen. Like many other right-wing extremist groups, they share a hatred for the government and its policies. This Michigan-based extremist group was behind the conspiracy to kidnap Gretchen Whitmer, the governor of Michigan during the 2020 pandemic. These domestic terrorists were politically motivated to carry out their kidnapping of the governor because they were not happy with all of the shutdowns caused by the spread of the coronavirus²¹⁷. Not only did the Wolverine Watchmen plan to kidnap the governor, but they also planned to attack the state capitol building in Michigan to abduct more politicians as well as targeting different members of law enforcement.¹⁴ The Wolverine Watchmen blamed the government for the way the pandemic was being handled because the group members thought that politicians were using too much power to control their lives by imposing lockdowns. Moreover, the group used the momentum of polarizing tensions in politics during the lockdown to their advantage since lots of people were not happy with the way the

²¹⁶ "National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism". White House, June 2021, www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/National-Strategy-for-Countering-Domestic-Terrorism.pdf.

²¹⁷ Knowles, Hannah. "Wolverine Watchmen, Extremist Group Implicated in Michigan Kidnapping Plot, Trained for 'Civil War'". The Washington Post, WP Company, 9 Oct. 2020, www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/10/08/wolverine-watchmen-michigan-militia/.

pandemic was being handled. Dana Nessel, Michigan's attorney general, underlined how the group used the civil unrest as a jump start to bring publicity and awareness to their far-right extremist views. The Wolverine Watchmen also saw civil war as a way of revamping society so that they could hopefully influence policy with their own ideology. This small group of people posed such a great threat through their political motivations that they were willing to go to great lengths to fight against their own government. There are also a lot more right-wing extremist groups in the United States with their own political goals in mind that present threats to the country today.

One of the largest right-wing antigovernment extremist groups in the United States is the Oath Keepers. They were founded in 2009 and most of its 30,000 members are current and former employees of the military, law enforcement, and emergency services²¹⁸. The members of the Oath Keepers are politically motivated through the means of stopping the "New World Order," the theory that talks about the formation of a socialist government. This extremist group has had a large contribution to domestic terrorism since its beginning. A man from Oklahoma named Daniel Knight Hayden threatened to attack state government officials in 2010 as a way of trying to prevent the "New World Order". One of the members of this organization, Matthew Fairfield, was motivated to store bombs to use for a potential domestic attack in 2011. The Oath Keepers have also tried other plans to try and promote their political ideas. The organization's political ideology was seen with the formation of Citizen Preparedness Teams in 2013. These militias could be seen as a way to protect civilians and neighborhoods from the government, but the organization had other underlying political motives. The Oath Keepers are motivated to revive the American militia movement as a way of combating the government and political

²¹⁸ "Oath Keepers". Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed July 12, 2021, www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/oath-keepers.

policy²¹⁹. The creation of such militias poses a large threat to domestic terrorist attacks across the nation and especially with those that are politically motivated through their own ideals. In more recent years, the Oath Keepers have been more active and vocal in their support for former president Donald Trump. Many of the members share the same idea that the 2020 presidential election was rigged against Trump and this motivated them to get involved in the riots that took place in the U.S. Capitol in early 2021²²⁰. The Oath Keepers were inspired to attack the Capitol building with the goal of disrupting the electoral vote count that would confirm President Biden's victory. The organization contributed to one of the most public domestic terrorist attacks known to date and the Oath Keepers motivations showcase how large of a threat domestic terrorism has become.

Another extremist group that has been making headlines in recent years is the Proud Boys. They have been active since 2016, but former President Trump gave them a boost when he told the right-wing extremist members to "stand back and stand by". Trump's mention of the group resulted in a large escalation of support resulting in 6,000 members and 20,000 followers on both Facebook and Twitter²²¹. The Proud Boys political motivation is rooted in anti-immigrant and white supremacist beliefs. Both of these motives coincide with many other far-right organizations that pose as a threat to the upward trend of domestic terrorism through their violent actions. One such incident that occurred with the group was when they attacked a group of left-wing protesters in New York City in 2018. Their pro-violence stance also continued after this event when chat logs were leaked of members talking to other militia groups about how and when they should use violence during protests.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Lucas, Ryan. "Who Are The Oath Keepers? Militia Group, Founder Scrutinized In Capitol Riot Probe". NPR, NPR, 10 Apr. 2021, www.npr.org/2021/04/10/985428402/who-are-the-oath-keepers-militia-group-founder-scrutinized-in-capitol-riot-probe.

²²¹ "Proud Boys". Southern Poverty Law Center accessed July 12, 2021, www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/proud-boys.

This is rather alarming when thinking about how violent extremists could contribute to the already growing domestic terrorist landscape. Some group members also threatened Black Lives Matter protesters in Portland in August of 2020 and acted out violently. These members shot protesters with both paintball and airsoft guns and one protester named Skylor Jernigan drove a car into the crowd of protesters while firing two gunshots. One week later, Alan Swinney was motivated to carry out a similar assault on left-wing activists where he pointed a gun at protesters and used tear gas on them²²². The Proud Boys' violent attacks also mixed with their support of former President Trump when they joined other right-wing extremists in the riots in the U.S. Capitol. Like many other right-wing extremists, the Proud Boys falsely believed that the 2020 presidential election was rigged against Trump and that Joe Biden and the democrats were trying to steal the election. This was more than enough political motivation for group members to act out against the government. Two group members, Ethan Nordean and Joe Biggs, were arrested for their role in the attack on the Capitol and charged with obstructing an official proceeding, entering a restricted building, and aiding and abetting. After the domestic terrorist attack, the Canadian government officially labeled the Proud Boys as a terrorist entity because of the significant role they played in the violent riots. The actions of the Proud Boys go to show how driven they are to act out violently against different left-wing groups and minorities as well as the role they play in increasing the prevalence of domestic terrorism.

Recommendations for Change

After analyzing the progression of domestic terrorism in the United States, there are many ways in which people can slow its pervasiveness. Even though the threat for domestic terrorism is at an all-time

²²² *Southern Poverty Law Center, "Proud Boys"*.

high, educating citizens on the political motives of different right-wing extremists can help to prevent violence. The 2020 presidential election, COVID-19, and social media all play a part in contributing to the increase of domestic terroristic threats. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter could flag specific posts related to different right-wing extremist groups and notify law enforcement of potential threats. Platforms that do this would limit the communication between extremists which could stop riots and attacks from being planned. Eliminating the online communication and educating citizens on social media threats would be a great start to halting the spike of domestic terrorism. People working in law enforcement could also be more proactive when monitoring social media to stop future threats from happening. They could do this by posing as right-wing extremists on various social media platforms in an effort to expose potential domestic terrorism related plots. Being proactive instead of reactive is crucial in order to reduce the risk of future threats related to violence and domestic terrorism all over the country. Groups highlighted earlier such as the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys would have a harder time coordinating violent politically motivated attacks which would make them easier to stop.

Furthermore, easing the political polarization of COVID-19 would also limit the danger of domestic terrorism. A recommendation for curbing the political motivations associated with the coronavirus would be educating people on the importance of following safety guidelines. Many right-wing extremists used their hatred of masks and lockdowns as motivation to advocate for political change, but educating people on the importance of safety could reduce the likelihood of people choosing to act out violently. Also, there might not be a need to wear masks or live in isolation when the country starts to go back to a state of normalcy in a post-pandemic world. This would take away one of the key political motivations that right-wing extremists could use to start violence. The easing of lockdown restrictions would also help to eliminate some of the polarization between both political sides and finding some

middle groups could help to eliminate some of the domestic threats. Even though the coronavirus pandemic is near the end, the motivation of violent extremists could be carried over to future problems associated with political policy.

Conclusion

In summary, the United States has seen a large rise in domestic terrorist threats in recent years due to many different political motives. Many of these motives were formulated over a century ago with the focus on a fear of socialism and black rights²²³. These ideas were the building blocks to some of the more prominent motivating factors of right-wing extremists in the 1990's²²⁴. The attacks carried out were in favor of the oppression of black rights that can still be seen today as a cornerstone for all right-wing white supremacists. Today, these extremists have political motives that lie in their antigovernment beliefs that their liberties are being taken and there are new factors that have kept their motives on the rise. The most abundant motivating factors found in the research that have caused such an increase in domestic terror incidents were social media, fallout of the 2020 presidential election, and COVID-19 related issues. The data supported the proposal of an increase of domestic terrorist attacks, and it was found that a staggering 110 attacks occurred in the year 2020²²⁵. Most of these attacks were also observed to be politically motivated by right-wing extremists²²⁶. Regarding the increase in domestic terrorism, social media was found to have played a crucial role with helping organize right-wing attacks as well as gaining publicity for their actions²²⁷. There were also many domestic

²²³ Heather Cox Richardson, "January 16, 2021".

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ O'Harrow, Robert, et al. "The Rise of Domestic Extremism in America".

²²⁶ CSIS Briefs. "The Escalating Terrorism Problem in the United States".

²²⁷ O'Harrow, Robert, et al. "The Rise of Domestic Extremism in America".

attacks carried out by right-wing extremists that were part of their own organizations. Some of the most active ones that were highlighted in the research were the Wolverine Watchmen, the Oath Keepers, and the Proud Boys. Each group had their own underlying motives that contributed to the increase of domestic terror attacks, but most of these concepts were influenced by their disgust with left activists and liberal political policies. Additionally, there are many different ways to reduce the surging number of domestic terror attacks starting with a more focused monitorization of social media and chat rooms. The censoring and flagging of comments related to domestic terrorism would reduce the threat and prevent attacks from occurring. Overall, the political motives from both the past and present are becoming more dangerous to the United States, but bringing awareness to the issue at hand can dampen the threat of right-wing extremists for years to come.

Money is Key to Success Even in Terrorism

Carissa HUNTSBERGER

Abstract: Since the introduction of Lydian Coins in 650 BC to ancient Asia Minor, capital has played a central role in many systems of human society, both for better and worse. Thus, as terrorism becomes a more prevalent issue in the global security narrative, the relationship between monetary funds and the ability to commit atrocities has come under scrutiny, especially in regards to the sources of their financing. Recent research has shown that funding for terrorism largely comes from organized crime, such as money-laundering, international drug trade, blackmail operations, and human trafficking. Moreover, due to the complexity of international financial and legal systems, terrorists can exploit disadvantages and loopholes in a way that conceals illegal transfers of money. In this paper, an in-depth analysis of terrorism financing will be given with an emphasis on international crime and state sponsorship. Then, suggestions are provided on how to improve current regulations in a way that will prevent further exploitation.

Key Words: Sponsorship, International Crime, Exploitation, Global Trade, Money-Laundering, Narco-Terrorism

Introduction

While terrorism was already a security concern in many countries by the twenty-first century, the tragic events of 9/11 brought it even more into focus on a global scale. Many international and governmental organizations began to look even closer at the causes and supporting factors of terrorist attacks. One such factor was the ability of terrorist organization(s) and/or individual(s) to gain or access monetary funds

for their illegal efforts. Research reveals that a secure financing network is critical to the effectiveness and maintenance of ones' operation. This was reflected in a statement declared by a former al-Qaeda Chief Treasurer, Sheik Saeed: "funding is the mainstay of jihad"²²⁸.

Though individual attacks have been found to be relatively cost effective, the running costs of organizations, such as recruitment, housing, propaganda, and intelligence gathering, require substantial funding. In fact, recent estimates put the maintenance of the entire Islamic terrorist network at billions of dollars²²⁹. Comparatively, al-Qaeda, by itself, is thought to have a \$30–50 million operating budget per year²³⁰. This is not to say that terrorist attacks do not require some form of financing; in 2004, the national commission report found that al-Qaeda spent \$400,000–500,000 to execute the 9/11 attacks²³¹. By examining these numbers, it becomes clear that terrorists can do immense damage at a low expense to themselves. For this reason, cutting off terrorists from their respective financial networks is recognized as crucial to creating preventive measures against terrorism. This was made apparent following the events of September 11, when former American president George W. Bush famously stated, "We will starve the terrorists of funding ... From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime"²³². Though governments and organizations agree on

²²⁸ Ari Shapiro, Morning Edition: Obama Stays the Course on Terrorist Financing (NPR radio broadcast Mar. 11, 2009, 12:17 AM), available at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=101676777>.

²²⁹ Rachel Ehrenfeld "Funding Evil: How Terrorism is Financed – and How to Stop It" (Chicago, IL: Bonus Books, 2003) P. 2.

²³⁰ National Commission on Terror Attacks Upon the United States "The 9/11 Commission Report" (Washington, D.C. 2004) Full report accessible at https://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/911Report_Exec.htm. See also Baradaran, Shima "Funding Terror" (University Pennsylvania Law Review, 2014) P. 480.

²³¹ National Commission on Terror Attacks Upon the United States "The 9/11 Commission Report" (Washington, D.C. 2004) Full report accessible at https://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/911Report_Exec.htm.

²³² Bush, George W. 2001 "Address to Joint Session of Congress and the Nation" Transcript of Speech Delivered at Congress in Washington D.C., America. September 20, 2001. https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/bushaddress_092001.html.

the importance of this matter, it will take the cooperation of public, private, and international entities to locate the sources of funding and determine effective countermeasures.

Vast amounts of research and legislation on this topic provide details about the financial networks of terrorist organizations, especially in reference to state sponsorships and international crime operations. Concerning state sponsorship of terrorism, it is seen as the driving force of modern terrorism. Historically, terrorist organizations had to dedicate more time to the pursuit of revenue for specific, individual attacks. However, now in part thanks to the monetary funding by nation-states, terrorist organizations are able to possess larger, better organized, and well-informed operations²³³. This form of financing has been expressly discouraged by the international community since 1934 with the enactment of the League of Nations' *Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorists*, which says nations have the responsibility, "to prevent and suppress such subversive activity against foreign Governments as assumes the form of armed hostile expeditions or attempts to commit common crimes against life or property"²³⁴. Unfortunately, the international community since then has not been able to clearly define a standard definition of terrorism; this inability has allowed limitations to be placed upon international conventions regarding state sponsors and subsequent consequences²³⁵.

The second prominent form of financing comes from criminal activity, such as exploitation, drug trafficking, and money-laundering. While these forms have different circumstances with varied overlaps, all exploit the vulnerabilities of global and domestic financial systems to

²³³ McFayden Jr., Elgie "Global Implications of State Sponsored Terrorism" (SSRN Electronic Journal, 2009).

²³⁴ Lassa Oppenheim, *International Law* (Hersch Lauterpacht ed, 8 ed 1955), Vol 1, 292–293.

²³⁵ Maogoto, Jackson "War on the Enemy: Self-Defence and State-Sponsored Terrorism" (2006) Accessible at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228161177_War_on_the_Enemy_Self-Defence_and_State-Sponsored_Terrorism.

conceal monetary transactions in a layer of anonymity and ambiguity²³⁶. By effectively working outside of traditional economic forums, terrorist organizations are able to sustain larger operation costs.

In an effort to prevent the financing of terrorist organizations by states, public entities, or individuals, many nations have written legislations surrounding the status of groups. For example, the United States has formed a list designating seventy-two groups as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO). By designating who constitutes as FTOs, the government is able to place legal ramifications on the providing of material resources to organizations by persons or corporations within the jurisdiction of the United States²³⁷. The UN has also drafted and enacted pieces of legislation on the act and prevention of terrorist financing. These resolutions deal with a variety of types of financing from extortion to state sponsorships. The UN's Security Council has also included in many of their resolutions a need for a unifying enforcement body on legislation in order to effectively cut terrorist funding.

Sponsorship: State versus Individual Investors

Sponsorship is the act of an organization or individual financing a project, event, or organization which is controlled by a separate actor or actors²³⁸. With regards to terrorist-related sponsorships, the exchange of funds can be traced back to a variety of "open" funding bodies connected to the public domain rather than the criminal underworld. Primarily these bodies contain national governments or states, financial

²³⁶ "IMF and the Fight Against Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism" (International Monetary Fund, 2021) Accessible at <https://www.imf.org/en/About/Factsheets/Sheets/2016/08/01/16/31/Fight-Against-Money-Laundering-the-Financing-of-Terrorism>.

²³⁷ Bureau of Counterterrorism "Foreign Trade Organizations" Accessible at <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>.

²³⁸ *American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition*. S.v. "Sponsorship money". Retrieved July 16 2021 from <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Sponsorship+money>.

institutions, charity organizations, and wealthy executives. Head of the IDF Intelligence, Major General Herzi Halevi, would argue these forms of funding are truly key in any efficient terrorist activity, saying “behind every successful terrorist organization stands a financial system and in many cases, it’s a country”²³⁹.

Many scholars define sponsorship as governmental support and provision of resources to non-state actors for the purpose of committing violent attacks against others²⁴⁰. As of now, four countries have been designated as state sponsors of terrorism by the United States: Syria, Iran, North Korea, and Cuba. All four countries have been formally connected to terrorist activity since the late 1970s and 80s. For example, North Korea was attributed with organizing and funding the bombing of a South Korean civilian plane as it was in-flight²⁴¹.

Of the four countries on the US list, Iran is seen as one of the largest contributors to state-sponsored terrorism. It has been actively connected to such terrorist organizations as “Hezbollah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad” and individually committed terrorist attacks²⁴². These connections have been discovered in multiple ways; recently, Iran was even linked to several monetary transactions with affiliated bank accounts world-wide. This occurred in January 2021, when the United States gathered \$7 million in a civil forfeiture investigation in collaboration with global partners²⁴³.

²³⁹ Itai Zehorai, “The Richest Terror Organizations in the World,” *Forbes* (Forbes Magazine, January 29, 2018), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesinternational/2018/01/24/the-richest-terror-organizations-in-the-world/?sh=12149a3e7fd1>.

²⁴⁰ Findley, Michael. “What is Terrorism? Why Should I Care?” (GOV 360S, TERRORISM/COUNTER-TERRORISM, University of Texas at Austin on August 27, 2020).

²⁴¹ Dianne Rennack, “State Sponsors of Acts of International Terrorism—Legislative Parameters: In Brief,” *Federation of American Scientists*, May 4, 2021, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R43835.pdf>, 1–2.

²⁴² Iran’s Support For Terrorism In The Middle East: Hearing Before The Subcommittee On Near Eastern And South And Central Asian Affairs Of The Committee On Foreign Relations United States Senate, 2012, Leg., (Washington D.C. 2013) Opening Statement Of Hon. Robert P. Casey, Jr., U.S. Senator From Pennsylvania.

²⁴³ “U.S. Government Collects \$7 Million in Iranian Assets for Victims of Terrorism Fund,” *The United States Department of Justice*, January 5, 2021, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/us-government-collects-7-million-iranian-assets-victims-terrorism-fund>.

In addition to states, financial institutions represent a second major source of sponsored terrorism. Financial institutions include banks, investment agencies, brokerage firms, and internet-based currencies. This is the traditional mode of funding that usually garners the most attention by investigation operations concerning terrorist financing. And while money-laundering is a frequent way that terrorist organizations use the vulnerabilities of these institutions, there are other methods of exploitation. For example, banks are used to collect loans, complete transactions, and transfer funds. Financing from these institutions is not just physical anymore, recently terrorist organizations have started to exploit insecurities found in crypto-currency and online banking. In August of 2020 for example, several terrorist organizations were caught campaigning through cyber-related sources, representing one of the biggest cryptocurrency seizures. These groups included the al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas's military wing, al-Qaeda, and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. By promoting on social media, these campaigns were able to amass millions in donations on several cryptocurrency accounts. According to one report, "millions of dollars, over 300 cryptocurrency accounts, four websites, and four Facebook pages all related to the criminal enterprise"²⁴⁴ were seized from the campaigns by law enforcement. Crypto-currency is a largely favored form of financing due to the little governmental supervision and regulation placed on the institution. Moreover, many falsely believe that donations to bitcoin wallets are cloaked in anonymity; however, the crypto-currency tracks the IPN addresses of users' accounts²⁴⁵.

A third source of funding that has gained attention in recent years comes from charities and non-governmental organizations with connections

²⁴⁴ "Global Disruption of Three Terror Finance Cyber-Enabled Campaigns," The United States Department of Justice, August 13, 2020, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/global-disruption-three-terror-finance-cyber-enabled-campaigns>, Top of Page.

²⁴⁵ "Global Disruption of Three Terror Finance Cyber-Enabled Campaigns," The United States Department of Justice, August 13, 2020, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/global-disruption-three-terror-finance-cyber-enabled-campaigns>, Top of Page.

to terrorist organizations. Through these relationships, terrorists can fundraise, indoctrinate new members, and create propaganda. One example is the charity *Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development* that closed in 2001 after the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) traced funding for Palestinian Hamas to them. Officials discovered that donations for the charity were being used to fund schools and indoctrinate children. NGOs affiliated with Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) serve as another example, who provided aid to Algerians after the 1989 earthquake. By aligning with these organizations, the FIS was able to garner popular support in the region²⁴⁶.

The Overlap Between Organized Crime and Terrorism

The Crime-Terror Continuum model is commonly used to describe the relationship between organized crime and terrorist activity. It states that these two types of organizations sit on opposite sides of each other: crime is on the left and terrorism is on the right. And organizations are placed on the continuum depending on their motivations with a caveat of flexibility to change. This model captures the differences along with the tendency for the two to blur in situations of similar motivation as will be illustrated for the remainder of this section, by examining shell companies, money laundering, and narco-terrorism²⁴⁷.

Similar to organized crime units, shell companies provide terrorist organizations with an easily accessible and anonymous financial tool. Shell companies are incredibly difficult for law enforcement to trace funds back to any particular individual, primarily because these companies

²⁴⁶ Ly, Pierre-Emmanuel. "The Charitable Activities of Terrorist Organizations". *Public Choice* 131, no. 1/2 (2007): 177–95. Accessed July 21, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27698091>. 177–178.

²⁴⁷ Emma Björnehed, "Narco-Terrorism: The Merger of the War on Drugs and the War on Terror," *Global Crime* 6, no. 3–4 (2004): pp. 305–324, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17440570500273440>, 307.

allow terrorists the ability to disguise their true identities while transferring funds. In order to create a shell company, terrorists will present themselves as a charity or legitimate business. Terrorist-owned shell companies will seldom raise alert signals due to privacy, but also thanks to the prominence of the format amongst actual businesses. It is estimated that two million shell companies were created in the U.S. alone back in 2009. Even with the increasing scrutiny of governments, shell companies have found ways to adapt in order to continue to protect the privacy of owners. Understanding this system's lax regulatory nature regardless of new regulations, terrorists continue to exploit entities to circulate millions²⁴⁸.

Terrorist organizations and criminals, collectively, are thought to bring in two to four trillion dollars every year of laundered money²⁴⁹. Money-Laundering is the act of processing the resources and monetary assets gained through illegal means in a way that decouples them from their origin. Unlike some forms of financing, money-laundering occurs in a multi-step process: placement, layering, and integration. In the placement stage, the money received from illegal activities is placed into a legal financial institution. Next, during the layering stage, the money goes through several different institutions. Here shell companies (discussed in the section before) are used to avoid attracting any suspicion to the constant change of location. Lastly, the money is placed back into the economy through operations and transactions that appear legitimate.

This form of financing is widely used since the methods are diverse, complex, and ubiquitous. It also provides the terrorists with multitudes of ways to remain untraceable to law enforcement. A few channels

²⁴⁸ Shima Baradaran, "Funding Terror," in *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, vol. 162 (University of Pennsylvania Law Review, 2014), pp. 477–495, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/256051603_Funding_Terror, 492–495.

²⁴⁹ "Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism – United States Department of State," U.S. Department of State (U.S. Department of State, December 1, 2020), <https://www.state.gov/anti-money-laundering-and-countering-the-financing-of-terrorism/>.

fitting these criteria are casinos, precious metal industries, internet banking, brokerage accounts, and many more. Money-Laundering is also hard to shut down on an international scale because every nation has differing laws surrounding the crime. Therefore, most terrorists conduct business in the countries with weakest money-laundering laws, such as Afghanistan or Myanmar²⁵⁰.

Narco-Terrorism

This term has been attributed to several different forms of terrorism over the years. It was once used to describe the violent actions of drug traffickers as a way to implement political change. However, for the purpose of this report, the DEA's definition will be used: "narco-terrorism may be characterized by the participation of groups or associated individuals in taxing, providing security for, or otherwise aiding or abetting drug trafficking endeavours in an effort to further, or fund, terrorist activities"²⁵¹. Of the 36 organizations designated by the United States' Foreign Terrorist Organization List, 12 fall under this definition of narco-terrorism. This relationship between terrorist organizations and the drug trade is estimated to be globally worth billions of dollars. Al-Qaeda, one of the twelve groups identified, was caught trading weapons and ammo for cocaine and \$2.5 million by United States law enforcement²⁵².

²⁵⁰ Shima Baradaran, "Funding Terror," in *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, vol. 162 (University of Pennsylvania Law Review, 2014), pp. 477–495, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/256051603_Funding_Terror, 488–490.

²⁵¹ Hutchinson, Asa, "International Drug Trafficking and Terrorism" testimony given before the Senate Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on Technology, Terrorism and Government Information, Department of State, Washington DC, 13 May 2002, p. 1.

²⁵² Rachel Ehrenfeld "Funding Evil: How Terrorism is Financed – and How to Stop It" (Chicago, IL: Bonus Books, 2003) P. 3–4

Examination of Current Regulation

As terrorist activities intensify on a global scale, efforts to limit financing and, consequently, the effectiveness of terrorist attacks on a transnational and domestic level have also expanded. There is a general consensus that in order for counter-terrorism measures to be successful, financial intelligence must become more readily available between private and public sectors. Vital to their success is an emphasis on cooperation and coordination, especially in regard to intelligence sharing between nations. Historically, states have viewed international policies and “norms” of any type as a threat to state sovereignty; ultimately this perspective has limited global efforts on multiple fronts.

Due to this consideration, the UN Resolution 2462 stresses the importance of a complete commitment by international efforts to legal processes and human rights issues²⁵³. Though the UN has passed a series of resolutions dealing with the financing of terrorists, this section will only give an in-depth examination of Resolution 2462. In 2019, the UN Security Council passed this resolution with the goal of forming a united front to combat and criminalize the financing of terrorist organizations. The preamble of this resolution references past resolutions by the Security Council as a way of reminding member states of their obligations surrounding financial countermeasures. In the preamble, a broad definition of the prohibited activities is also provided to members. The resolution’s preamble presents members with information regarding ways that terrorist organizations receive funding. It states they receive funding through a “variety of means, which include but are not limited to abuse of legitimate commercial enterprise, exploitation of natural

²⁵³ “Countering the Financing of Terrorism | Office of Counter-Terrorism,” United Nations (United Nations), accessed July 21, 2021, <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/cct/countering-the-financing-of-terrorism>.

resources, abuse of non-profit organizations, donations, crowdfunding and proceeds of criminal activity”²⁵⁴.

The Security Council addresses the need for nations to adopt legal measures that are concurrent with Resolution 2462, such as the “prohibition described in paragraph 1 (d) of resolution 1373 [which] applies to making funds, financial assets ... or other related services available, directly or indirectly, for the benefit of terrorist organizations or individual terrorists for any purpose”²⁵⁵. Resolution 2462 also stresses the importance of public and private sectors on an international scale openly and effectively coordinating efforts to share financial intelligence. To do this, the resolution also calls for member states to “establish or strengthen, at the national level, a framework”²⁵⁶ that deals with sharing of financial intelligence along with an international system that enforces the guidelines set forth in the resolution. Overall, as stated before, the resolution places an obligation on member states to safeguard human rights in their efforts against terrorism. This is in respect to not just stopping terrorism from expanding threats of violence and insecurity, but also to making sure governmental measures comply with international laws regarding human rights.

Suggestions

After reviewing Resolution 2462, along with the U.S. Patriot Act, UN Resolution 2195, and many more, the following suggestions have been compiled by the author. These suggestions largely focus on the lack of international cooperation and mutual acceptance and enforcement of legislation. It should also be noted that these suggestions are

²⁵⁴ Security Council, “Resolution 2462,” United Nations, March 28, 2019, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N19/090/16/PDF/N1909016.pdf?OpenElement>, 2.

²⁵⁵ Security Council, “Resolution 2462,” United Nations, March 28, 2019, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N19/090/16/PDF/N1909016.pdf?OpenElement>, 3.

²⁵⁶ Security Council, “Resolution 2462,” United Nations, March 28, 2019, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N19/090/16/PDF/N1909016.pdf?OpenElement>, 4.

formed with the understanding that the world is diverse on many notions of norms and standards.

To begin, an international consensus of the definition for terrorism must be created. By not having one, many legislation measures have been effectively limited due to nations being allowed to continue having different standards and agendas on the matter. At this time the author would like to present their definition of terrorism as a suggestion. Terrorism is a violent act or acts by an organization or individual(s) (regardless of nationality, religion, or political affiliation) against primarily non-combatants on a domestic or international scale with the goal of enacting political or social change.

Secondly, the international community needs to enact an effective enforcement body for legislation regarding financing of terrorism. The UN, international organizations, and individual nations can draft resolutions, treaties, and conventions as a way to prevent funding, but without a real way to enforce these agreements, they will not see a decline. As of now committees and sanctions are the tools commonly employed by the international community to encourage nation-states to follow legislation and norms. Both methods however face issues over their inability to actually impose the collective will on nations that sign such documents.

Committees are treaty bodies that governments and individuals can self-report compliance to legislation. Through this form, failures to comply can be brought to the attention of the international community. If such failures are found however, no penalties can be enacted to change the nation's behavior besides soft tactics (trade embargos, etc.). And if these transgressions are not reported to the committee, nations are often able to contradict themselves by signing one document, but doing something else. Sanctions, on the other hand, encompass a variety of tactics that international organizations or nation-states can employ in the pursuit of enforcement. Arms embargoes, trade restrictions, travel bans, and financial aid limitations are all forms of sanctions commonly used.

After the review of the enforcement methods, it is suggested that a model with sanctions, consequential actions, and investigative monitoring should be adopted. In this model sanctions would be continued to be used as a reactionary act after a breach of treaties. However, a consequential action would also occur at the same time. Consequential actions would include limitations being placed on international diplomatic power of future UN projects, international coercive pressure being applied to non-compliant states, and the calling of hearings on issues with current legislation as a way to address issues. An important note on coercive pressure should be made – it is not the author's intention for an international police force to be formed, but rather a call for greater coordination by individual nation-states. Before such reactionary actions are taken though, enforcement decisions should first be influenced by evidence that the country in question has actually breached the treaty. Along with self-reporting, a committee that investigates and monitors the conditions surrounding the agreement could be formed. These committees would not continuously monitor countries but would rather investigate on an agreed-upon general schedule. By doing this it would limit any suspicions regarding threats on state sovereignty, while still allowing a full conclusion to be reached.

Thirdly, nation-states need to frame structures on the domestic and international levels that better regulate financial institutions and businesses. Many forms of financing that are at the disposal of terrorists rely on the vulnerabilities of current financial systems. For institutions, such as internet banking, more monitoring is needed, especially when large transactions occur. Though customer privacy is important, perhaps banks could start a policy that reports abnormal transaction sizes based on employment records of the account holder. In order for this policy to effectively work, banks would also have to vet all account holders' information, which may limit fraudulent accounts.

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