Violent Extremism at the Crossroads:
Persistence, Change and Dynamism
20 Years After 9/11
AVERT International Research Symposium

3 - 5 November 2021

AVERT
RESEARCH NETWORK

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Welcome

We are delighted to welcome you to the 2021 AVERT Research Symposium. This year's theme is **Violent Extremism at the Crossroads: Persistence, Change and Dynamism 20 Years After 9/11.** Since 9/11, the landscape of violent extremist movements has demonstrated both persistence and change. The legitimation of violence as both a strategic tool and existential endgame in achieving terrorist goals remains a constant. Yet the violent extremist landscape is now more ideologically and methodologically diverse, fluid and fragmented, and powered by dynamically evolving digital communications and networks. This includes not only the ongoing challenges of violent Islamist networks and the intensification of globally networked right-wing violent extremism, but also the emergence of violent male supremacists, extremist conspiracy movements and hateful extremism alongside the polarising impacts of misinformation and disinformation. The COVID-19 pandemic has arguably intensified some of these challenges.

For this year's conference, we have a range of outstanding keynote addresses and conference presentations that, against this backdrop, address issues including:

- How fit for purpose are current preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) architectures of policy and practice for responding to these dynamics?
- What lessons have we learned over the last 20 years, and how can we apply them to existing and future challenges?
- How can we promote genuine community-led P/CVE?
- What resources do we need to help divert and disengage people from violent extremism across different ideologies, platforms and networks, especially in relation to young people?
- Is the 'violent' in violent extremism still the primary focus, or does the evolving relationship between non-violent and violent forms of extremism demand new understandings, responses and interventions?
- How should we navigate the boundaries between violent extremism versus democratic social protest and dissent?

The conference is convened by the AVERT Research Network. The AVERT Research Network is a multidisciplinary, multi-university research initiative administered by Deakin University's Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation (ADI) in Melbourne, Australia, which provides generous funding support to AVERT. AVERT brings together academics across a wide range of disciplines to engage with community and government partners to address violent extremism and radicalisation to terrorism through critical, evidence-based research and scholarship.

This year's conference will be delivered entirely online. Attendance for invitees to the 2021 AVERT Research Symposium is free of charge thanks to generous sponsorship funding from the Australian Department of Home Affairs. Registration and access information appear on the next page.

A warm welcome to what we know will be three stimulating, exciting and rewarding days of intellectual and practical inquiry and dialogue on the contemporary dynamics of violent extremism!

Michele Grossman (Convenor), Lydia Khalil (Coordinator) and the AVERT International Research Symposium Organising Committee (John Cianchi, Natalie Davis, David Kernot, Aftab Malik, Natalie Pyszora, Debra Smith, Lise Waldek, Andrew Wright)

General Information

Registration

This is a free of charge, invitation-only conference and registration is only open to presenters and invited participants. Click the link below to register.

<div style="background-color:#2e9e5b;color:white;padding:8px 20px;display:inline-block;font-weight:bold">REGISTER</div>

Time Zones

The times listed in this program are in Australian Eastern Daylight Time (AEDT) and are correct for Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra and elsewhere in that time zone. If you are joining from elsewhere, please make sure you adjust the times accordingly. Please click here to access a time zone converter.

Platform

The symposium will be held entirely online as a Zoom webinar. A link to access the webinar will be provided to all registrants ahead of the symposium. Presenters will use the same link as attendees and will be added to the panel for the session in which they are presenting.

Technical Assistance

For technical assistance prior to or during the conference, please contact Benjamin Freeman at b.freeman@deakin.edu.au

General Enquiries

Please contact AVERT at adi-avert@deakin.edu.au

Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri, Wadawurrung and Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin nations, and the Gunditjmara people as the traditional owners of the lands on which Deakin University's campuses stand, and the traditional owners of all Indigenous lands wherever we may be sited for this online event. We pay our respects to ancestors and to elders past, present, emerging and future, and acknowledge that sovereignty over these lands was never ceded.

Symposium Schedule

Wednesday 3rd November

Welcome		
9:00	**Welcome and Housekeeping Notes** Professor Michele Grossman *Convenor, AVERT Research Network* *Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University*	
9:15	**Conference Opening Remarks** Richard Johnson, First Assistant Secretary – Social Cohesion Division, *Department of Home Affairs*	
Keynote Address		
9:30	**Future of Terrorism: Inspirational or Strategic?** Professor Emerita Martha Crenshaw *Senior Fellow Emerita, Centre for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University* *Professor Emerita of Government, Wesleyan University*	
Shaken and Stirred: COVID and (Violent) Extremism		
10:30	**Extremist Exploitation of the Context Created by COVID-19 and the Implications for Australian Security** Dr Kristy Campion and Kristy Milligan *Australian Graduate School of Policing and Security, Charles Sturt University*	
10:50	**The Adaptive Nature of Online Hate: The Impact of COVID-19 on a Telegram Conspiracy Channel** Dr Matteo Vergani (presenting), *Deakin University* Assistant Professor Ryan Scrivens, *Michigan State University* Dr Alfonso Martinez Arranz, *University of Melbourne*	
11:10	**Crisis Points: Countering Violent Extremism under a State of Emergency** Associate Research Fellow Lydia Khalil Senior Research Fellow Mark Duckworth *Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University*	
11:30	**Session Q&A**	
11:50	**LUNCH BREAK**	

Conspiracy, Extremism and Social Movements

12:30	**Is Q-Anon a Terrorist Group?** Professor Mia Bloom (presenting) and Dr Sophia Moskalenko *Georgia State University*
12:50	**(Con)spirituality and COVID-19** Associate Professor Anna Halafoff (presenting), Emily Marriott (presenting), Dr Ruth Fitzpatrick and Dr Enqi Weng *Deakin University*
13:10	**Conspiracy Theories and Far-right Violent Extremism** Dr Julian Droogan and Jana Vanderwee *Macquarie University*
13:30	**Session Q&A**
13:50	**BREAK**

The New Supremacists: Gender and Violent Extremism

14:00	**The Threat of Incel Terrorism** Adjunct Professor Jacob Ware *Georgetown University*
14:20	**Male Supremacist Violent Extremism and Terrorism: A New Paradigm** Dr Joshua Roose *Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University*
14:40	**Session Q&A**
15:00	**BREAK**

Right-wing Extremisms in Context

15:10	**The Evolution of Siege Culture in the UK** Dr Benjamin Lee *University of St Andrews*
15:30	**Far-right Fictions: Literature as an Extremist Recruitment Strategy** Dr Helen Young and Dr Geoff Boucher *Deakin University*

15:50	**Social Media Algorithms and Online Extremism: An Examination of Far-right Reactions Usage on Facebook** Jade Hutchinson and Dr Julian Droogan *Macquarie University*	
16:10	**Session Q&A**	
16:30	**BREAK**	

Defining Extremism: Contexts and Controversies

18:00	**Countering Violent Extremism: The Role and Rule of Law** Dr Keiran Hardy *Griffith Criminology Institute*	
18:20	**Extremism: A Philosophical Analysis** Professor Quassim Cassam *University of Warwick*	
18:40	**Discussant Response - Extremism: A Philosophical Analysis** J. M. Berger *VOX-Pol*	
19:00	**Session Q&A**	
19:20	**End of Day 1**	

Thursday 4th November

Keynote Address	
8:00	**What Terrorism Studies can Learn from Internet Studies** Professor Maura Conway *Paddy Moriarty Professor of Government and International Studies, Dublin City University* *Coordinator, VOX-Pol*
9:00	**BREAK**

Extremist Online Ecosystems	
9:10	**Right-wing Extremists' Use of the Internet: Emerging Trends in the Empirical Literature** Assistant Professor Ryan Scrivens (presenting), Tiana Gaudette and Professor Thomas J. Holt, *Michigan State University* Maura Conway, *Dublin City University*
9:30	**Subversive Online Activity Predicts Persuasion by Far-Right Extremist Propaganda** Assistant Professor Kurt Braddock (presenting), Brian Hughes, Beth Goldberg and Cynthia Miller-Idriss *American University*
9:50	**Australian Online Extremist Ecosystems** Dr Julian Droogan, Lise Waldek, Brian Ballsun-Stanton and Jade Hutchinson *Macquarie University*
10:10	**Session Q&A**
10:30	**BREAK**

For the Cause: Violent Extremist Recruitment

10:40	**Contact Zones: Change and Persistence in Terrorist Recruitment Methods, Tactics and Procedures** Professor Michele Grossman (presenting), Dr Vanessa Barolsky, Lydia Khalil, Dr Vivian Gerrand, Dr Hass Dellal, Associate Professor Natalie Davis, *Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University* Dr Mario Peucker, *Victoria University* Professor Paul Thomas, Dr Kris Christmann, *University of Huddersfield*
11:00	**'Coaches', Groomers', 'Handlers' and 'Seducers': How Terrorist Recruiters Seek the Right Stuff for the Wrong Reasons** Professor John Horgan (presenting) and Katerina Papatheodorou *Georgia State University*
11:20	**Session Q&A**
12:00	**LUNCH BREAK**

Panel: Database of Hate

13:00	**Using Open Sources to Build the First Database of Hate in Australia (DaHA): A Pilot Test Run** Dr Matteo Vergani, Dr Imogen Richards, Professor Greg Barton, Alexandra Lee, Haily Tran, Dan Goodhardt *Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University*
13:45	**Session Q&A**
14:00	**BREAK**

Words Matter: Narratives and Discourses of Violent Extremism and Terrorism

14:10	**The Importance of Alternative Narrative Interventions for the Prevention Landscape** Dr Vivian Gerrand, Bec Devitt and Dr Joshua Roose *Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation*

14:30	**Discourses of Terrorism After Christchurch: Rupture or Continuity?**
	Scheherazade Bloul, *Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University*
	Tasnim Mahmoud Sammak, *Monash University*
	Dr Shakira Hussein, *University of Melbourne*
14:50	**Session Q&A**
15:10	**BREAK**

Assessing Youth Engagement with Violent Extremism

16:00	**Radicalised Youth: Vulnerability and Risk Within an Evolving Australian Context**
	Steven Barracosa
	Youth Justice New South Wales
16:20	**A Statistical Framework for Assessing the Strength of Risk Assessment Instruments on Juveniles, Teens, and Young Adults During an Important Cognitive Development Phase**
	Dr David Kernot (presenting)
	Defence Science Technology Group, Department of Defence
	Dr Muhammad Ibqal and Associate Professor Debra Smith
	Victoria University
16:40	**Youth Resilience Against Violent Extremism: Do Sociodemographic Characteristics Matter? Findings From a Perception Study in Sri Lanka**
	Emmanuel Nene Odjidja and André Alves Dos Reis
	Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund
	Sanka Galagoda, *Helvetas Sri Lanka*
17:00	**Session Q&A**
17:20	**BREAK**

Tech Transparency: Understanding Online Extremism

18:00	**Frameworks for Pursuing Greater Transparency: GIFCT's Transparency Working Group** Dr Erin Saltman *Global Internet Counterterrorism Forum*
18:20	**The State of the Tech Industry: Research Community Engagement and Collaboration** Lydia Khalil *Lowy Institute*
18:40	**Session Q&A**

Navigating Terrorist Use of Online Platforms

19:00	**An Introduction to the Project and Dataset** Joost S. *Moonshot*
19:05	**A Comparative Analysis of Islamic State Channels on Telegram** Dr Kamil Yilmaz, *Swansea University* Farangiz Atamuradova, *Hedayah*
19:15	**Trident Division: A Case Study of How Extremist Supporters Navigate and Exploit Online Platforms** Dr Simon Copeland *Swansea University*
19:25	**IS's Exploitation of File-Sharing Sites: Which Platforms and Why?** Connor Rees *Swansea University*
19:35	**Username Selection Practices and Purposes in Online Violent Extremist Communities: A Means of Detection and Disruption?** Professor Maura Conway *Paddy Moriarty Professor of Government and International Studies, Dublin City University* *Coordinator, VOX-Pol*
19:45	**Session Q&A**
20:05	**End of Day 2**

Friday 5th November

Winds of Change? Communities and Violent Extremism Prevention	
8:00	**The CP3 Initiative: Prevention, Programs and Partnerships in US Approaches to Countering Violent Extremism** Dr Richard L. Legault and Dr John T. Picarelli *United States Department of Homeland Security*
8:20	**Working with Communities to Counter Radicalisation: Histories, Vexations, Prospects** Professor Paul Thomas, *University of Huddersfield* Professor Michele Grossman, *Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University*
8:40	**Rebuild Social Trust in Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention** Professor Stevan Weine *Center for Global Health, University of Chicago at Illinois*
9:00	**Session Q&A**
9:20	**BREAK**
Perspectives on Radicalisation Pathways I	
9:30	**Non-involvement in Terrorist Violence: Understanding the Most Common Radicalisation Outcome** Associate Professor Bart Schuurman and Dr Sarah Carthy *Institute of Security and Global Affairs, Leiden University*
9:50	**An Exploration of Network Social Dynamics to Illuminate Radicalisation Processes** Professor David Bright *Deakin University*
10:10	**Session Q&A**
10:30	**BREAK**

Perspectives on Radicalisation Pathways II: Southeast Asia

10:40	**Why They Join: Entry into Islamist Extremist Movements in Indonesia and the Philippines** Associate Professor Julie Chernov Hwang *Goucher College*
11:00	**A Comparative Analysis of Indonesian Terrorists Radicalised Online** Mukhamat Leberty Adi Surya (presenting), Adrian Cherney and Winnifred Louis *University of Queensland*
11:20	**Session Q&A**
11:40	**LUNCH BREAK**

Interventions: Violent Extremist Case Management, Rehabilitation and Incarceration

13:00	**What has Been Learnt from Case-managed Programs Targeting Violent Extremists in Australia: Lessons for CVE Program Delivery and Evaluation** Professor Adrian Cherney *University of Queensland*
13:20	**Transcending the Terrorist Stigma: The Role of Rehabilitation Programs** Dr Gordon Clubb *University of Leeds*
13:40	**Incarcerating Terrorist Prisoners: A Consistent Conundrum** Amber Hart *Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities, Victoria University*
14:00	**Session Q&A**
14:20	**BREAK**

CVE Policy, Practice and Programming Challenges

14:30	**A Change of Heart, or How the European Union Became a Prevention Innovator** Inés Bolaños Somoano *European University Institute*
14:50	**Politics and the Origins and Development of Countering Violent Extremism Policy in Australia** Mark Duckworth *Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies, Deakin University*
15:10	**Subjective Assessments in Early Detection** Anne Marie van de Weert *Utrecht University of Applied Science*
15:30	**Pro- and Anti-Social Resilience: Possibilities for Stabilising Resilience within CVE** Dr Richard McNeil-Willson *Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute*
15:50	**Session Q&A**
16:10	**BREAK**
16:30	**Joining the Conversation, Joining the Cause: Communication and Collaboration to Counter Violent Extremism** Malcolm Haddon and Sophie Murray-Farrell *NSW Department of Communities and Justice*
17:15	**BREAK**

Intersections: Conspiracy and Extremism

18:00	**The Contingent Relationship Between Conspiracy Beliefs and Violent Extremist Intentions** Dr Bettina Rottweiler and Professor Paul Gill *University College London*
18:20	**Intersections Between Conspiracy Theories and Violent Extremism in Austria and Germany** Dr Daniela Pisoiu *Austrian Institute for International Affairs*

18:40	**Political Extremism and Conspiracy Theories: The Case of Q-Anon** Dean Smith *University of St Andrews*
19:00	**Session Q&A**
19:20	**End of Day 3**

Presentation Abstracts

Wednesday 3rd November

Future of Terrorism: Inspirational or Strategic?

Professor Emerita Martha Crenshaw
Senior Fellow Emerita, Centre for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University
Professor Emerita of Government, Wesleyan University

Researchers and practitioners approach terrorism from two different perspectives. The first is that acts of terrorism are performed by lone actors who are radicalized and inspired to act through social media. The second is that terrorism is instrumental, the result of a conscious choice based on calculations of ends and means. In the first case, the cause of terrorism is psychological, and the individual is the focus of concern; in the second, terrorism is primarily political, and the key actor is the organization. The remedy for inspired terrorism lies in the realm of CVE, community-based persuasion, targeted interventions, "strategic communication" to counter propaganda, the cultivation of societal resilience to messaging, deradicalization/counter-radicalization measures, and rehabilitation. The prescription for strategic terrorism is disruption, ripping apart networks through law enforcement or military means, "decapitation" of leadership through targeted killings, deterrence, even defeat. These policies rely on intelligence and surveillance. This framework is over-simplified, of course, since different understandings are usually more a matter of emphasis than either-or, but it can lead to important questions. Are these two approaches compatible? How can terrorism be both inspired and strategic? Is this dichotomy actually a reinvention of the "old vs. new" debate that followed 9/11? Has the advent of social media fundamentally altered the terrorist threat?

Shaken and Stirred: COVID and (Violent) Extremism

Extremist Exploitation of the Context Created by COVID-19 and the Implications for Australian Security

Dr Kristy Campion (presenting), Kristy Milligan (presenting) and Jamie Ferrill
Australian Graduate School of Policing and Security, Charles Sturt University

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, extremists around the world have sought to exploit the global crisis to serve their own strategic or ideological means and ends. In order to understand the threat posed by such extremists to the Australian national security context, this study investigated how extremists incorporated contemporary events in Australia and elsewhere into their COVID-19 related narratives. This traversed three ideological milieus, to examine Salafi-Jihadist, the extreme right, and the extreme left. This study employed a constructivist approach and accepted that ideology is a central explanation for beliefs, behaviours and identities which regulate human behaviour. It also incorporated a measure of naturalistic inquiry, as we examined overlapping and interacting contexts within and beyond Australia. We catalogued primary source material related to

the milieus, open-source websites, and media reporting to create an evidence report, dividing between significant domestic and related international incidents. We then undertook qualitative content analysis to distinguish key themes which demonstrated engagement with, or exploitation of, the context created by COVID-19. We then contrasted these outcomes against extremist engagement with context before the emergence of COVID-19 to delineate continuity and change. By examining how ideological milieus interact with the current context, it is possible to observe the real-time fluctuation of ideological construct through the identified narratives. All three milieus interpreted COVID-19 in ideologically significant ways. The contemporary threatscape was complicated by the (mis)information environment, the crowd-sourcing of narratives related to COVID-19, and the expansion and diversification of information networks.

The Adaptive Nature of Online Hate: The Impact of COVID-19 on a Telegram Conspiracy Channel

Dr Matteo Vergani (presenting), *Deakin University*
Assistant Professor Ryan Scrivens, *Michigan State University*
Alfonso Martinez Arranz, *University of Melbourne*

Existing research has explored how the COVID-19 pandemic triggered a wave of conspiratorial thinking and online hate speech. However, little is empirically known about how different phases of the pandemic (e.g., lockdowns and re-openings) impacted on the intensity of hate against adversaries that have been identified by various conspiracy theories circulating in online communities. To address this gap, we used automated text analysis techniques to study one year of conversations in an Italian-themed conspiracy theory channel on Telegram. Our results suggest that, when COVID-19 is perceived by online community members as a significant threat, narratives tend to reflect or promote a *foreign-focused conspiracy theory*, where China is blamed for a new bioweapon fabricated in a Wuhan lab. However, over the course of the year of the pandemic, and especially after the end of the first lockdown, the discussions in the Telegram channel became more concerned about the economic consequences of the lockdowns and as the death rates of the virus decreased, the population became less concerned about the health consequences of the virus. Within this context, and given the change in the Italian public opinion about the pandemic, the conspiratorial narratives aligned with a *domestic-focused conspiracy theory* in that Italian elites, journalists and healthcare workers were blamed for exaggerating the threat of the pandemic. Our findings suggest that the targets of hate speech within online conspiracy communities adapt to the changing social and political environment as well as respond to changes in the public climate. This study has important policy implications because it points to new targets of hate that – especially in the current context – need more protection, such as journalists, doctors and nurses.

Crisis Points: Countering Violent Extremism Under a State of Emergency

Lydia Khalil and Mark Duckworth
Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University

In Australia as elsewhere, violent extremist actors have exploited and instrumentalised a contested information environment during concurrent crises in 2020-2021 – including the COVID pandemic and natural disasters like the recent bushfires – to mobilise, plot and commit violent attacks, oppose government emergency responses and challenge or undermine social cohesion. Crises of this nature are likely to persist in one form or another; alongside evidence that natural disasters are on the rise (UN/CRED, 2020), there has been an equally unprecedented spread of misinformation and disinformation and contestation of the cause and origins of these crises (Cinelli, M., Quattrociocchi, W., Galeazzi, A., 2020) that will likely persist. Previous research findings have demonstrated that natural disasters like bushfires, hurricanes, earthquakes and pandemics have the potential to act as push factors to violence (Berrebi & Oswald, 2011; Fisher & Dugan, 2019; Kang and Skidmore 2018).   However, little is currently known about how natural disasters can impact violent extremism in the Australian context and in other high GDP countries. The relationship between the potential for conflict and natural disasters and emergencies is largely unaccounted for in disaster and emergency management (DEM) plans within advanced economies and consolidated democracies. Understanding exactly how natural disasters and emergencies can provide fodder for violent extremist groups and contribute to a mobilisation to violence will remain important into the future. This presentation will present the conceptualisation and research design of the Crisis Points Project, which explores these issues, as well as the findings from a policy stocktake and analysis of Australian national, commonwealth and state emergency management, counterterrorism and countering violent extremism policies from 2001-2020 revealing the state of policy responses on the nexus between emergency management and counterterrorism/countering violent extremism policies. We identify gaps that need to be addressed in order to tackle the intersecting issues of violent extremism and disaster management, as well as integration gaps in disaster management and countering violent extremism policies.

Conspiracy Extremism and Social Movements

Is Q-Anon a Terrorist Group?

Professor Mia Bloom (presenting) and Dr Sophia Moskalenko
Georgia State University

In 2021 the Secretary of the US Department of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas, the Attorney General Merrick Garland, and the FBI's Christopher Wray all suggested that Q-Anon conspiracy believers might engage in terrorism. For Garland and Mayorkas, the failures of Q-Anon's many prophecies might drive followers to engage in violence, like Edgar Welch in December 2016 when he arrived at Comet Ping Pong Pizzeria in Washington DC, or Floyd Ray Roseberry, who threatened to blow up the Library of Congress during a five-hour standoff in August 2021. Fortunately, both incidents ended without casualties, but the question remains: is Q-Anon a terrorist organization? Preliminary studies (Soufan Group 2021) have argued yes. This paper argues that, in fact, Q-Anon by itself fails to meet the standard for terrorism. Drawing from the differences in

organizational structure, the lack of a coherent set of principles, the small number of cases (that are little more than just private domestic violence; against one's children like Matthew Coleman or Lilliana Carillo) are statistically insignificant compared to the polls from the American Enterprises Institute (AEI) and Institute for the study of Religion that place the potential number of Q-Anon believers in the tens of millions in the US alone if their surveys are representative. Applying the theoretical framework of radicalization mechanisms developed by McCauley and Moskalenko (2008), this paper will assess the radicalization of Q-Anon. Using original data from Q-Anon discussions on Telegram and surveys of Q-Anon Casualties (Family members) the paper will demonstrate the ways in which Q-Anon varies from traditional terrorist groups. Finally, the paper will show that intersectionality between Q-Anon belief with other militant groups (3%ers, Proud Boys, Patriot Front) or recruitment of members from law enforcement and the military make it more likely that Q-Anon members might engage in coordinated violent attacks in the future (Moskalenko 2021).

(Con)spirituality and COVID-19
Associate Professor Anna Halafoff (presenting), Emily Marriott (presenting), Dr Ruth Fitzpatrick and Dr Enqi Weng
Deakin University

Charlotte Ward and David Voas first used the term conspirituality in a scholarly article in 2011, to describe the merger of conspiracy theories and New Age spirituality at the turn of the twentieth century. This paper presents the findings of an International Research Network for Science and Belief in Society Small Grant Project on (Con)spirituality, Science and the COVID-19 Pandemic in Australia. We bracket the 'con' in (con)spirituality to problematise the term, and to highlight the internal diversities and complexities within spiritual and wellness communities regarding attitudes to COVID-19 and vaccination. We identify twelve (con)spiritual convictions and discuss the processes of radicalisation, and potential for violent extremism, occurring within these movements. We argue that a deeper understanding of (con)spirituality may assist with developing more effective strategies for countering the spread of disinformation, anti-lockdown protests, threats to authorities, and vaccine refusal in and beyond Australia.

Conspiracy Theories and Far-right Violent Extremism
Dr Julian Droogan and Jana Vanderwee
Macquarie University

Conspiracy theories have increasingly been linked to attacks by violent extremists, particularly from the far-right. This has created a popular view that believing in one may be a motivating and mobilizing factor in carrying out violence. The 2019 Christchurch attack, 2019 El Paso shooting, and 2019 Poway shooting have all been linked in the popular press and in professional reports to a white-genocide conspiracy theory termed the 'Great Replacement', first popularized by French academic Renaud Camus. This paper tests whether such a link can be supported empirically. This is achieved by examining and comparing Camus' original text They Will Not Replace Us and three internet-spread manifestos linked to its ideology: The Great Replacement by Brenton Tarrant, The Inconvenient Truth by Patrick Wood Crusius; and An Open Letter by John Timothy Earnest. A coding framework centred on anger, contempt, disgust ('ANCODI'), three emotions that have been connected with intergroup aggression and willingness to engage in violence

against out-groups, has been adopted as a theoretical perspective across these texts. It is anticipated that both sources will be shown to contain high levels of ANCODI emotions but that the manifesto will be higher. This would suggest that while the conspiracy theory functions to create a narrative of ingroup/outgroup dichotomy and crisis, the manifestos go further in precipitating violent solutions to this crisis. This research will further scholarly debate about the connection between conspiracy theories and violent extremism, and may contribute to improved detection and understanding of the drivers of violent extremism for policy makers.

The New Supremacists: Gender and Violent Extremism

The Threat of Incel Terrorism
Adjunct Professor Jacob Ware
Georgetown University

Incel terrorism first broke into the news in 2014, and then again in 2018, and since has continued to pose an enduring threat to Western countries. But is the violence escalating or decreasing? What are the latest trends in the movement? How are counterterrorism agencies responding? And what can we expect to see over the next several years? This presentation will provide an update on the latest news from the incel movement and on the terrorism threat it poses.

Male Supremacist Violent Extremism and Terrorism: A New Paradigm
Dr Joshua Roose
Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University

Security agencies and scholars across Western contexts have started to take the politically motivated violence against women seriously as a domestic terrorism threat. This has been framed primarily as 'violent misogyny', with the focus upon involuntary celibates or 'incels'. However, notwithstanding the recent body of research examining Incel communities and their activities online, very little work has been undertaken to conceptualise the dimensions of 'violent misogyny' and how it might constitute a new and particularly virulent form of violent extremism This paper aims to contribute to filling this conceptual vacuum by assessing the concept of male supremacism as a substantive paradigm for understanding the emergence of new modalities of anti-women violent extremism and terror. Male supremacism is not only inherently anti-feminist,but is centred on the principle that men are biologically superior to women and that the laws and institutions of society should reflect this. The paper explores several case studies of hate crime, terrorism and violent extremism that might be considered to have a male supremacist ideological motivation and considers the implications of male supremacism for the study and response to violent extremism both in academic literature, as well as in P/CVE practices.

Right-wing Extremisms in Context

The Evolution of Siege Culture in the UK

Dr Benjamin Lee
University of St Andrews

Siege culture and associated groups represent an extreme ideological tendency within the far-right. Militant rhetoric, violent imagery, and real-world violence associated with the subculture have generated substantial interest from security practitioners but available research has concentrated on specific texts, most notably James Mason's Siege, and groups, rather than recognising the subculture as a whole. In contrast, this paper offers a case study of Siege Culture as a subculture, with a specific focus on how it manifested in the UK. The case study suggests that Siege Culture is dynamic, evolving as the result of UK based participants interacting with transnational ideas, norms and aesthetics. This paper contributes to knowledge in three ways: it extends knowledge of Siege Culture itself; it applies the concept of a subculture as a way of expanding understanding of extremist communities beyond a focus on single platforms or groups; and it highlights how transnational ideas play out in local contexts.

Far-right Fictions: Literature as an Extremist Recruitment Strategy

Dr Helen Young and Dr Geoff Boucher
Deakin University

Far-right extremists have a decades-long history of strategizing and seeking to recruit through literature, from William L. Pierce's The Turner Diaries (1978) and Hunter (1989) through an expanding raft of contemporary accelerationist fictions. Extremists and scholars alike recognise that literature has a capacity to reach readers who would not engage with political tracts (Michael 2010, 166). Explorations of fiction's capacity to recruit typically focuses on the style and content of a particular novel, most often The Turner Diaries (Goehring and Dionisopoulos 2013). Decentralisation of publishing technology was a significant shift in circulation of such fictions. The American neo-Nazi author Harold A. Covington, for example, praised 'print per order' self-publishing as having enabled circulation of his fiction by breaking establishment power over publication. This paper offers a history of the far-right fiction as a recruitment strategy through an exploration of self-published fiction and its digital circulation from the early years of the internet to the present. The exploration of change and continuity in this area of significant action by the far-right seeks a deeper understanding of how and why far-right actors take advantage of the evolving capacities of digital publishing to disseminate their ideas and positions.

Social Media Algorithms and Online Extremism: An Examination of Far-right Reactions Usage on Facebook

Jade Hutchinson and Dr Julian Droogan
Macquarie University

Little is known about which social media affordances appeal to users of extremist groups, how such affordances influence a user's interaction with far-right themes and narratives,

and how this is being experienced across nations. In this study, we used a mixed methods approach to conduct a cross-national comparative analysis of over eight years of 'Reaction' use across 59 Australian and Canadian far-right extremist groups on Facebook. We assessed the level of user-engagement with Facebook public group posts using 'Reactions', and identified the types of posts, themes and narratives that generated the most user engagement specific to each (👍 Like ♥ Love, 😄 Haha, 😲 Wow, 😢 Sad , 😡 Angry). This was paired with a qualitative analysis of the more popular 'Reactions' used over time, and the themes and narratives that attracted the most user engagement. Results highlight the 'Anger' and 'Love' Reaction as effective generative mechanisms for user engagement with far-right themes and narratives, while producing dangerously broad spectrums of referential meaning with moral and ideological implications. This study contributes to research on how personalisation algorithms may exacerbate the influence of affordances when assigned to far-right themes and narratives.

Defining Extremism: Contexts and Controversies

Countering Violent Extremism: The Role and Rule of Law
Dr Keiran Hardy
Griffith Criminology Institute

Countering violent extremism (CVE) is typically associated with community-based, 'soft' approaches to counter-terrorism, in comparison to 'hard' counter-terrorism laws. However, legislation is playing an increasingly important role. Under the UK's Prevent Duty, law requires local authorities to implement CVE measures, and debates continue as to whether terms like 'extremism' and 'violent extremism' can and should be defined in statute. These debates are building in Australia, where research on counter-terrorism laws has typically focused on criminal offences and coercive powers. The assumption is that law could take on a greater role in CVE, if violent extremism could be appropriately defined. In this paper, I argue that law already plays several key roles in CVE, which remain largely unexamined. I explore how the law responds to radicalisation and violent extremism through criminal offences, bail conditions, control orders, sentencing, information sharing standards and digital platform regulation. I consider the law's prospects for success in these areas, and some ongoing limitations, before asking whether a legal definition of extremism would help or hinder these tasks. Finally, based on rule of law concepts, I consider the values and principles that should guide these diverse uses of law to prevent violent extremism.

Extremism: A Philosophical Analysis

Professor Quassim Cassam
University of Warwick

This paper will propose an analysis of the concept of political extremism. Three different conceptions of political extremism will be distinguished. Methods extremism consists in the use of extreme methods in pursuit of one's political objectives. Ideological extremism is a position in ideological space, and ideological extremists are those who endorse an extremist ideology. Ideological space is multi-dimensional, and a distinction needs to be drawn between the sense in which ideological extremism is relative and the sense in which it is not. To be a psychological extremist is to have an extremist mindset, that is, extremist preoccupations, attitudes, and ways of thinking. Extremists are preoccupied with their own virtue and with their ideological, religious, or ethnic purity. Their purity preoccupation leads to an intolerance of dissent and a tendency to regard all compromise as rotten. Extremist thinking tends to be conspiratorial and apocalyptic. After exploring the extremist mindset and discussing the relationship between extremism in the three senses, the discussion will conclude by considering the relationship between extremism and radicalism.

Thursday 4th November

Keynote Address

What Terrorism Studies Can Learn from Internet Studies

Professor Maura Conway
Dublin City University

Why is it that within terrorism studies research there has been a surge of research on questions related to terrorism and the Internet, especially social media, without reference to the key scholars and existing studies of media and communication research generally and Internet studies particularly? Probably because the original interest of most of us currently researching the intersections of violent extremism and terrorism and the Internet is violent extremism and/or terrorism rather than the Internet. A literature that researchers in our field could therefore benefit greatly from increased familiarity with is Internet Studies. In my remarks, I want to draw attention to some of that literature and what we can learn from it.

Extremist Online Ecosystems

Right-wing Extremists' Use of the Internet: Emerging Trends in the Empirical Literature

Assistant Professor Ryan Scrivens (presenting), Tiana Gaudette and Professor Thomas J. Holt
Michigan State University
Professor Maura Conway
Dublin City University

Close attention by journalists and policymakers to the widespread use of the Internet by violent right-wing extremists (RWEs) and terrorists is relatively recent. It was a reaction, at least in part, to an eruption of hateful content online in 2015 and 2016, which arose out of the U.S. presidential campaign and subsequent election of President Trump, the Brexit referendum, a spate of Islamic State-inspired or directed terrorist attacks, and the arrival of large numbers of refugees to Europe from war torn Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. In 2017, more focused attention was drawn to the role of the Internet in RWE activity in the wake of events at the 'Unite the Right' rally in Charlottesville. Concerns about the political fallout of online RWE activity, including disinformation and radicalization, continued to receive attention throughout 2018 – at least partially due to a series of attacks and failed attacks in the U.S. that appeared to have significant online components. However, the Christchurch terrorist attack in 2019 mainstreamed these concerns, as the attack was peculiarly Internet-centric, including a pre-planned online manifesto distribution strategy and Facebook Live video stream. Most recently, the spread of COVID-19 misinformation among QAnon supporters online and the planning of the Jan. 6 Capitol Riot by RWEs in various online channels only furthered the visibility of RWEs on and offline. Yet the RWE-Internet nexus has a much lengthier history than this, and so too does the empirical research on RWEs' use of the Internet. This presentation summarizes the emerging trends in the empirical literature in this regard. These trends are organized into five core uses

identified by Conway (2006): information provision, networking, recruitment, financing, and information gathering. Highlighted throughout are what we view as key current and emerging trends in the empirical literature on RWEs' use of the Internet and associated technologies.

Subversive Online Activity Predicts Persuasion by Far-Right Extremist Propaganda

Assistant Professor Kurt Braddock (presenting), Brian Hughes, Beth Goldberg and Cynthia Miller-Idriss
American University

Despite the widespread assumption that online misbehavior can affect outcomes related to political extremism, few studies have provided quantitative empirical evidence to this effect. To redress this gap in the literature, we performed two studies in which we explore the relationship between subversive online activities and proclivity for persuasion by far-right extremist propaganda. Study 1 (N = 404) demonstrates that when individuals are exposed to far-right 'scientific racism' propaganda, subversive online activity is significantly associated with feelings of gratification, attribution of credibility to and intention to support the propaganda's source, as well as decreased resistance – in the form of reactance – to the propaganda. To verify these findings across thematic domains, Study 2 (N = 396) focused on far-right propaganda that advocates 'male supremacy.' Results in Study 2 replicated those from Study 1. These findings have implications for understanding subversive online activity, vis-à-vis its association with one's susceptibility to persuasion by far-right extremist propaganda.

Australian Online Extremist Ecosystems

Dr Julian Droogan (presenting), Lise Waldek, Brian Ballsun-Stanton and Jade Hutchinson
Macquarie University

The term 'ecosystem' has become a popular descriptor, used by researchers and CT/CVE practitioners to point towards the complex intersections between violent extremism and the digital environment. Drawing from the natural sciences, as well as media and communication studies, scholars of online terrorism and violent extremism have sought to capitalise on the conceptual potential of 'ecology' to understand and map online environments that are characterised by complex interactions of human and nonhuman things. However, fundamental gaps remain when exploring the benefits and limits of using 'ecology' and related concepts to generate understandings of, and responses to, online violent extremism. This paper presents the finding from a RESOLVE-funded project reviewing the theoretical underpinnings and use of 'ecology' and 'ecosystem' in terrorism studies. These insights were tested against multi-platform data representing a portion of the Australian online right-wing extremist community and cross-correlated with a calendar of right-wing and platform moderation news. It explores the project's conceptual and empirical findings into how network components of the digital environment shape and characterise the spread of themes and narratives across the online ecosystem. Through the provision of foundational knowledge, the project identified lessons for moving disciplinary research and policy work forward, specific to providing empirical insight into the complex nature of online extremist communities and offering guidance on how future studies can use 'ecology' and related concepts in a more rigorous, consistent, and efficacious manner.

Violent and Non-Violent Extremists: Disparities in Risk Factors and Recruitment

Emma Belton
University of Queensland

Despite the rapid increase in scholarly interest on radicalisation and violent extremism, less attention has been paid to the evolving relationship between violent and non-violent forms of extremism. Further, the impact of recruitment strategies, and how this may explain the process of radicalisation to violent extremism, has rarely been explored. This paper argues that to better understand involvement in terrorism, research needs to focus on how violent and non-violent extremist populations differ and what factors can provide greater insight into why some extremists will commit acts of violence. Drawing on data from the Profiles of Individual Radicalisation in Australia (PIRA) dataset, this presentation will use a sample of violent and non-violent extremists to examine risk and recruitment factors and assess how these impact paths to radicalisation and associated outcomes. Implications for theory and policy will be considered.

Contact Zones: Change and Persistence in Terrorist Recruitment Methods, Tactics and Procedures

Professor Michele Grossman (presenting), Dr Vanessa Barolsky, Lydia Khalil, Dr Vivian Gerrand, Professor Hass Dellal and Adjunct Professor Natalie Davis
Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University
Dr Mario Peucker
Victoria University
Professor Paul Thomas and Dr Kris Christmann
University of Huddersfield

This paper presents findings from a quasi-systematic literature review on change and persistence in terrorist recruitment definitions and strategies that forms part of a broader project on understanding the dynamics of terrorist recruitment in order to develop a typology of recruitment definitions, characteristics, methods and processes that can assist communities, analysts and practitioners to identify and disrupt recruitment processes at an early stage. We reviewed literature on recruitment in Islamist extremist, right-wing and left-wing extremist and online/offline recruitment from 1979 - 2021, as well as allied literature on grooming, cults, gangs, military and lone actor and gender dimensions. We present findings from the literature review here, in particular focusing on temporal shifts in recruitment (from 'influencer' to 'handler' or facilitator); how recruitment is aligned with or distinguished from social influence; the relationship between spatial and relational analyses of recruitment processes, and the change from organisationally driven to 'leaderless' or collective recruitment processes.

'Coaches', Groomers', 'Handlers' and 'Seducers': How Terrorist Recruiters Seek the Right Stuff for the Wrong Reasons

Professor John Horgan (presenting) and Katerina Papatheodorou
Georgia State University

Terrorism studies continues to go from strength to strength, with commendable (and tangible) progress having been made in the past twenty years. Conspicuously absent from the otherwise improving research into radicalization is a thorough examination of recruitment into terrorism - that is, the process through which individuals are not merely the subject of broad outreach (e.g., via propaganda), but how (and by whom) they are found, approached, groomed, mobilized, selected, and matched with tasks, jobs or roles. For some, recruitment may be considered part of the radicalization process, but the specific tactics and strategies (and successes or otherwise) employed by terrorist recruiters are shrouded in mystery and have rarely been subject to scrutiny. This presentation argues for greater examination of recruitment and a consideration of the approaches and performance-related factors associated with terrorist recruiters. We further propose a closer analysis of the personal constructs used by terror groups in appealing to prospective candidates – i.e., what traits or qualities they believe appropriate for involvement.

Panel: Database of Hate

Using Open Sources to Build the First Database of Hate in Australia (DaHA): A Pilot Test Run

Dr Matteo Vergani, Dr Imogen Richards, Professor Greg Barton, Alexandra Lee, Haily Tran and Dan Goodhardt
Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University

The panel will discuss the creation of the first Database of Hate in Australia (DaHA): a project that sees the collaboration of a group of academics and practitioners including Dr Matteo Vergani, Prof Greg Barton, Dr Imogen Richards, Haily Tran, Alexandra Lee, and Dan Goodhardt. The DaHA aims to include criminal and non-criminal incidents motivated by – or displaying evidence of – prejudice, as well as incidents motivated by a hateful extremist ideology, including terrorist-related crimes such as attacks, plots, financial schemes and control orders. Why is it important to collect data about a range of hate-motivated behaviours – including hate speech, hate crime and terrorism-related offences? How can we build a database of hate-motivated behaviours using open sources? What is this database useful for? The panel discusses the conceptual underpinnings, methods and procedures adopted to retrieve the documents, and demonstrates the potential of our database by offering a preliminary analysis of about 100 court documents containing information about hate crime, hate speech and terrorism-related offences in Australia. A comparative sample of descriptive data from Australasian Legal Information Institute (AustLII) documents mentioning one of more than 70 'far-right' organisations active in Australia is also provided, demonstrating further applications of this database for community beneficiaries of counter-hate research.

Words Matter: Narratives and Discourses of Violent Extremism and Terrorism

The Importance of Alternative Narrative Interventions for the Prevention Landscape

Dr Vivian Gerrand, Bec Devitt and Dr Joshua Roose
Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University

Alternative narrative interventions are an under-researched, critical part of addressing violent extremism and radicalisation to terrorism. In contrast to counter-narratives, alternative narratives directly address root causes such as real and perceived grievances as well as the psycho-social needs that may lead to engagement with extremist discourse. They thus have a significant role to play in sustainable redirection away from violent action. Evidence in the field of terrorism studies on the efficacy of alternative narratives is still limited, however. This paper presents the findings of a recent rapid evidence assessment of alternative narratives, reflects on how they differ from counter-narrative approaches and considers the qualities of good alternative narratives within a framework of pro-social resilience. In particular, we consider whether and how the BRAVE measure of youth resilience to violent extremism pioneered by Grossman et al (2020) might be fruitfully applied to evaluate interventions in the alternative narrative space. At a time of heightened vulnerability, and diminished trust in institutions, in what ways do these interventions encourage a shift away from friend/enemy polarities and mobilise social capital to support resilience to violence? Finally, the paper provides some examples of alternative interventions to illuminate their role in building pro-social resilience to violent radicalisation.

Discourses of Terrorism after Christchurch: Rupture or Continuity?

Scheherazade Bloul, *Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University*
Tasnim Mahmoud Sammak, *Monash University*
Dr Shakira Hussein*, University of Melbourne*

Jacinda Ardern's naming of the Christchurch attack as an act of terrorism was greeted with relief by Muslim community leaders, as well as by many individual Muslims. The standard response in Muslim community discourse to white supremacist attacks has been to wonder whether western governments would apply the category of terrorism to the crime, or simply file it under the categories such as mental illness, drug-related crime or neighbourhood conflicts. The response to the Christchurch attack was regarded as a welcomed break from the usual observed use of the word 'terrorism' solely for attacks perpetrated by Muslim offenders, a step forward from the Islamophobic conflation of Muslims with terrorism. While understanding the sense of relief expressed by many Muslims, we would like to suggest that the response to the Christchurch attack does not represent a rupture with past racialising national security discourse and policy. Muslims are asked to place our faith in the counter-terror security apparatus by reassurances that its resources are now being (belatedly) directed towards white nationalists, as well as us. Developed during the War on Terror, the counter-terror apparatus is further strengthened and fuelled through national responses to far-right violence, while systematic causes to white terror remain unacknowledged. The white nation dis-identifies with the white nationalist terrorist, compared to the nation's handballing and disposing of the Muslim terrorist to implicate Muslim communities.

Assessing Youth Engagement with Violent Extremism

Radicalised Youth: Vulnerability and Risk Within an Evolving Australian Context

Steven Barracosa
Youth Justice New South Wales

Radicalised youth represent a growing threat for the international community. However, it remains a relatively unexplored issue, as do policy responses to youth radicalisation. This presentation will draw upon the experiences of the Youth Justice New South Wales Countering Violent Extremism Unit. It will explore youth radicalisation to varied violent extremist ideologies and how Youth Justice New South Wales has responded. Case studies will be used to highlight the interaction between youth vulnerability, radicalisation, and possible violent extremism risk. This presentation will review the implementation of developmentally informed approaches for working with at-risk and radicalised youth. This presentation will reflect on the lessons learned and challenges for youth-specific approaches to prevent and counter violent extremism.

A Statistical Framework for Assessing the Strength of Risk Assessment Instruments on Juveniles, Teens, and Young Adults During an Important Cognitive Development Phase

Dr David Kernot (presenting), *Defence Science Technology Group, Department of Defence*
Dr Muhammad Ibqal and Associate Professor Debra Smith, *Victoria University*

It is difficult to compare Structured Professional Judgement tools used to identify individuals at risk of radicalisation, when individual indicators differ and the instruments have been developed for varied purposes. While these instruments follow Monahan's thematic drivers of radicalisation, measuring their comparative effectiveness can be subjective. Here we propose a framework where the statistical partial eta-squared variable provides a standardised measure where these various instruments can be graded alongside each other. We draw on the different powers of these instruments across a range of youth ages up to the age of twenty-five, where cognitive development is still occurring. Taking a grounded theory approach, we examine the different effects that youth age has on the individual indicators in four risk assessment tools: the Radar risk assessment tool, the Terrorist Radicalisation Assessment Protocol (TRAP-18), the Violent Extremist Risk Assessment (VERA) and a Person of Interest (POI) prioritization protocol used in a policing context. Data from 92 individuals were coded into these four tools. Individuals were categorised as juveniles, teenagers, and young adults, those with cognitive development still occurring (<26), a combined teenagers and juveniles group (<20) and separate age categories (20-21, 22-23, 24-50, and 20-25). Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted across these age ranges to examine statistically significant indicators that separate age categories. Overall, 92 indicators separated an age category statistically. Drawing on partial eta-squared measures, results showed a range of small, medium and large effects occurring across different indicators. These effect sizes were used with supporting sensitivity analysis and highlight all tools have a low effect in the 20-21 age range (n=17), with further research required in this area. Findings highlight the power of the VERA instrument, the strength of the Radar early risk assessment tool, and the POI protocol across various age groups, and the limitations of the TRAP-18 instrument on this cohort. Implications for CVE Practice are discussed.

Youth Resilience Against Violent Extremism: Do Sociodemographic Characteristics Matter? Findings From a Perception Study in Sri Lanka

Emmanuel Nene Odjidja and André Alves Dos Reis
Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund
Sanka Galagoda
Helvetas Sri Lanka

The concept of building resilience against violent extremism (VE) has dominated both academic and practitioner debates. However, the sociodemographic characteristics which sustain or hinder an individual's resilience remains poorly understood. Therefore, this paper aims to understand the level of resilience among youth and the associated sociodemographic characteristics in certain Sri Lanka districts. A cross-sectional survey in which 2,008 youth aged 15 – 29 years old were selected, using a robust 2-stage sampling procedure across five districts in Sri Lanka. The survey included the standard fourteen questions of the BRAVEtool, used to measure resilience. The researchers

analysed through 2 sequential steps: first, analysis of variance (ANOVA) to assess the association between background characteristics and resilience. All significant relationships were then inputted into a multivariate regression model. Significance of association was considered when p-value ≤ 0.05 Overall, the study showed an average of the resilience 42.2 (out of 70). Youth residing in Ampara district were more resilient compared to those in Colombo (44.2 v 39.9 p>0.001). Youth with primary education appeared to be more resilient than those with a Masters degree (45.7 v 37.7 p>0.001). The resilience level for youth who were current students was higher than those who were not (42.9 v 41.9 p>0.001). There was no significant difference between men and women, nor between those currently working and those not. In multivariable linear regression, seven out of the 11 youth sociodemographic characteristics were significantly associated with resilience. First, resilience varies across socio-demographic groups, but sometimes does not follow what is often assumed by PVE practitioners. Second, the BRAVE tool might possess limitations that need to be addressed if it is to be applied to certain contexts.

Tech Transparency - Understanding Online Extremism

Frameworks for Pursuing Greater Transparency: GIFCT's Transparency Working Group

Dr Erin Saltman
Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism

The presentation will discuss issues around transparency and progress towards implementation of transparency frameworks for tech companies and government stakeholders through the work of the Global Internet Counterterrorism Forum (GIFCT). This panel will brief on the work of the Transparency Working Group of the GIFCT in developing resources and frameworks that could facilitate greater transparency from tech companies while also respecting privacy and human rights. The presentation will also review the latest recommendations from the Transparency Working Group for pursuing greater transparency among tech companies and within the GIFCT.

The State of the Tech Industry: Research Community Engagement and Collaboration

Lydia Khalil
Lowy Institute

The presentation will discuss the findings of survey data published in a Global Network on Extremism and Technology (GNET) Report – GNET Survey on the Role of Technology in Violent Extremism and the State of Research Community: Tech Industry Engagement – which aimed to gain a current understanding of the research community's findings of the role of computer mediated communication and social media in extremism and to gauge the academic research community's level of engagement with the tech industry. Responses revealed that researchers' engagement with the tech industry is a potentially fruitful but fraught space. This presentation will not only present the report's data and analysis, but discuss methodological limitations of the expert survey approach, ideas on how to overcome some of the methodological limitations and discuss how to refine the survey design to gain future insights on how academia and industry can engage on matters of extremist and terrorist use and exploitation of social media platforms.

A Comparative Analysis of Islamic State Channels on Telegram

Dr Kamil Yilmaz, *Swansea University*
Farangiz Atamuradova, *Hedayah*

In recent years, the use of social media platforms and online messaging apps by terrorist groups has received special attention by researchers, policy experts and politicians. This is because these platforms and apps have become entrenched in our lives. They simultaneously shape and are shaped by our experiences and expectations. In addition, today nobody can be impervious to the effects of the vortex created by the development of these platforms and apps at a high speed. This applies to ordinary, law-abiding citizens as well as the members of various terrorist organizations. While these effects manifest themselves both positively and negatively, terrorist groups seem to be adept at adapting themselves to these developments and benefiting from the affordances provided by them. Accordingly, they consistently use these tools to communicate with fellow members and the world, to find new recruits, to claim their attacks and disseminate their messages, among other things. In this study, we focused on two Islamic State (IS) channels on Telegram to explore how and why the group uses these channels on this platform. The main emphasis will be placed on the contents of the texts to discover the discursive strategies by which various groups are constructed as in-groups or out-groups within these channels. Deciphering these strategies has significant ramifications on counterterrorism in relation to understanding both traditional and innovative methods of terrorist recruitment, communication, propaganda and ideological indoctrination.

Trident Division: A Case Study of How Extremist Supporters Navigate and Exploit Online Platforms

Dr Simon Copeland
Swansea University

The war in Eastern Ukraine has seen the emergence of a complex milieu of groups and individuals posting content across messaging and social media platforms in support of Ukrainian forces and, in particular, the volunteer armed units that have become a feature of the conflict. This paper focuses on the activities of one such online organisation, Trident Division, who continue to propagate the far-right Azov Regiment and other Ukrainian ultra-nationalist groups via Telegram, Instagram and TikTok. Detailed data collected from Trident Division's Telegram channel and social media accounts provides important insights into how extremist supporters navigate the online space, in particular, their efforts to maintain presences on multiple platforms and response to moderation and/or bans. This case study shows that such groups often demonstrate significant resilience in refusing to leave certain platforms, something that may be dictated from the bottom-up – or their audience – as well as from the top-down. With no footage of its own, Trident Division also demonstrates how extremist supporters re-appropriate, reuse and re-edit media for different platforms and audiences. In doing so, it is shown how the content and form of these new outputs serve distinct strategic purposes, in particular, to exploit social media algorithms and increase propagation.

IS's Exploitation of File-Sharing Sites: Which Platforms and Why?

Connor Rees
Swansea University

Research on online extremist ecosystems has shown that extremists use an array of different platforms and online services. Such services include social media, websites (including both news sites and terrorist-operated websites), messaging, video-sharing, content-hosting, and URL shortening. Studies that have focussed specifically on jihadist groups, including the so-called Islamic State (IS), have shown the important role that file-sharing sites play in their propaganda dissemination strategy. However, most of this research treats file-sharing sites as a homogeneous entity, not questioning whether specific platforms are targeted – and, if so, why. This paper seeks to plug this gap by, first, identifying the most outlinked-to file-sharing platforms from a number of public-facing Telegram channels, then second, by examining three possible reasons why these platforms are relied upon more heavily than others. First, it examines the affordances of these platforms. Second, it looks at the takedown rates of the content stored on these platforms. Finally, it highlights the role of bot activity in generating and disseminating links to these platforms.

Username Selection Practices and Purposes in Online Violent Extremist Communities: A Means of Detection and Disruption?

Professor Maura Conway
Dublin City University

Usernames are a core component of contemporary social networking. They perform several functions: they express personal identity and uniqueness; they signal adherence to a particular ideology or cause; they make it easier to be found by like-minded others; and, they help build relationships and communities. Yet, usernames have to date received relatively little academic attention, leaving unanswered questions surrounding their role in online violent extremist communities. To begin to address this, this presentation shares the findings of a preliminary assessment of IS and AWD Telegram usernames. It compares 'historic' IS Telegram usernames with those of today, and compares each of these with the usernames of AWD supporters, highlighting the use of subcultural languages, codewords, numbers and emojis. The policy implications are also explored, including the importance of educating new and small platforms and the potential for usernames to facilitate earlier detection and disruption.

Friday 5th November

Winds of Change? Communities and Violent Extremism Prevention

The CP3 Initiative: Prevention, Programs and Partnerships in US Approaches to Countering Violent Extremism

Dr Richard L. Legault and Dr John T. Picarelli
United States Department of Homeland Security

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) seeks a resilient America where localities are united to help end targeted violence and terrorism. One May 11, 2021, Secretary Mayorkas replaced the Office for Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention with CP3 to ensure DHS's efforts are grounded in an approach to violence prevention that uses behavioral threat assessment and management tools, and addresses early-risk factors that can lead to radicalization to violence. The Center coordinates and builds upon the broad range of prevention activities that are currently undertaken across DHS, including grants, community and law enforcement awareness briefings, threat assessments, and information sharing. CP3 provides technical, financial, and educational assistance to whole-of-society stakeholders to establish and expand local prevention frameworks. Local prevention frameworks connect all segments of local society to prevent individuals from radicalizing to violence and intervene to help individuals who have radicalized to violence. Radicalizing to violence is the process whereby an individual comes to believe, for a variety of reasons, that the threat or use of unlawful violence is necessary – or even justified – to accomplish a goal. The Center utilizes a diverse set of resources to accomplish its mission across five teams: Policy and Research, Prevention Education, Strategic Engagement, Grants and Innovation, and Field Operations. CP3 also works in close partnership with DHS's Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) to ensure that solutions, operations, and intervention programs are data driven, scientifically informed, and independently evaluated.

Working with Communities to Counter Radicalisation: Histories, Vexations, Prospects

Professor Paul Thomas
University of Huddersfield
Professor Michele Grossman
Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University

This paper critically considers how policy efforts to counter radicalisation have framed, approached and interacted with 'communities', and what we know about the effectiveness of these relationships in preventing radicalisation. Community members, organisations and leaders have consistently been identified in preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) 'whole of society' policy models as crucial partners in various radicalisation prevention and support programs and resourcing. Such policy efforts in the West have often built upon broader state policy and practice approaches to minoritized and often geographically-clustered communities – and particularly, in P/CVE contexts, to Muslim diaspora communities. Yet these same strategies have also led to persistent accusations in many national settings of securitising community-state relationships; promoting surveillance of and within communities, and 'responsibilising' (Etzioni, 1995; Rose, 2000) communities for preventing terrorism and building resilience to radicalisation

at community level without either adequate resourcing or sufficient agency and control over the interventions demanded of them. We critically consider these issues in light of what we can learn from past government-community engagement focused on P/CVE, as well as how the current P/CVE landscape is now shifting in relation to emergent concerns with far-right extremism, digitally influenced social structures and networks, and reassessments of how 'communities' are defined and constituted as a result. What are the implications of this for community-based and -focused P/CVE policy as both concept and practical strategy?

Rebuild Social Trust in Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention

Professor Stevan Weine
Center for Global Health, University of Chicago at Illinois

Although the majority of domestic terrorism threats in the U.S. are racially motivated violent extremism and most come from white supremacists, the existing ecosystem for targeted violence and terrorism prevention is burdened by inequities. Following the murder of George Floyd, in the U.S. trust in public safety agencies dropped to an all-time low. Longstanding racial disparities in policing have driven persistently low trust in the police among Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Muslim Americans, each with unique contextually driven grievances. Further developing public health approaches to violence prevention is regarded as a promising complement to securitized approaches. Yet the ongoing devastating pandemic has also undermined trust in public institutions and experts and revealed weaknesses in many public health systems due to chronic neglect. To succeed in this landscape, community-led multi-stakeholder prevention approaches must work to build a new consensus on targeted violence and terrorism prevention as a basic civic responsibility. This calls for deliberate efforts to convene public conversations that make contact with those who feel alienated and to bridge the social chasms that divide societies. Governments need to partner with community leaders and faith leaders to facilitate grassroots engagement on public safety and public health so as to build a new consensus in civil society. At the same time, there is an urgent need to expand the community of practitioners, including social workers, mental health professionals, faith-based workers, former extremists, and public health practitioners, engaged in targeted violence and terrorism prevention, giving community members more access to trusted helpers.

Perspectives on Radicalisation Pathways I

Non-involvement in Terrorist Violence: Understanding the Most Common Radicalisation Outcome

Associate Professor Bart Schuurman and Dr Sarah Carthy
Institute of Security and Global Affairs, Leiden University

Understanding why people become involved in terrorist violence been a focus of academic inquiry for decades. This pursuit has been guided by a question which informs many studies of undesirable behaviour. What sets certain people apart? Whilst numerous radicalization models propose routes and pathways to perpetration, they also come with an important caveat. For those who undergo a process of radicalization, the vast majority will never come to be involved in the planning, perpetration or commissioning of terrorist violence. Most individuals who become radicalized will occupy mundane roles, ranging from posting extremist ideological materials online to controlling the finances or recruitment. Indeed, some may just 'hang on' for a few years before eventually tethering off. However, despite the heavy representation in the radicalized population of extremists who do not become involved in terrorist violence, the majority of radicalization research is conducted with the smaller sub-population who do become involved in such attacks. This overemphasis on the dependent variable ultimately limits our knowledge of potential protective factors that may keep those who radicalize from perpetrating terrorist attacks. In the study of other behavioural outcomes such as disease and disorder, such knowledge gaps are addressed through disaggregation based on "outcome" status. This presentation will detail the methods and preliminary findings of a novel, cross-case comparison study which sought to use this approach. Radicalized individuals across Europe and North America (n = 200) who occupied a spectrum of roles in extremist movements were included in the study, and their trajectories were compared. By selecting cases based on their "outcome status" (i.e. involved in terrorist violence or not), the goal of the current project was to determine the representativeness of a number of theory-driven individual, structural and group level variables in these sub-populations using primary and secondary sources. Efforts to reduce bias and confounding will be discussed alongside the preliminary findings of this three-year project.

An Exploration of Network Social Dynamics to Illuminate Radicalisation Processes

Professor David Bright
Deakin University

We report results of a longitudinal statistical analysis of network data on individuals in a sample of radicalised individualised in Australia. The data covers a time-period from 2004 to February 2020 and includes 235 individuals and14 organisations. We analysed the determinants of (a) the formation of new ties between people, (b) people joining organisations, and (c) becoming radicalised. Results demonstrate that there is radicalisation 'contagion,' and radicalisation spreads through all types of ties except 'family' ties. This suggests that when an individual's non-familial contacts become radicalised, the risk of that person also radicalising is increased. Radicalised actors do not appear to form connections to other radicalised individuals who were not previously known to them. In contrast, radicalised actors become associates with other radicalised actors. However, where an actor is not radicalised, being associated with a radicalised actor presents an increased risk of radicalisation. Radicalised actors appear to join organisations that already have many other radicalised actors as members.

Perspectives on Radicalisation Pathways II: Southeast Asia

Why They Join: Entry into Islamist Extremist Movements in Indonesia and the Philippines

Associate Professor Julie Chernov Hwang
Goucher College

What motivates individuals to join Islamist extremist movements? How does this vary across country and gender? Drawing on original fieldwork in Indonesia and the Philippines between 2010 and 2019 with 97 Islamist extremists in Indonesia, 25 in the Philippines, and 7 from Malaysia, this paper will unpack those motivations. It contends that individuals join Islamist extremist groups due to the interaction of whom they know (eg: relational pull factions) and what they seek (purpose-driven push factors). Relational pull factors include family, friends, and mentors. Purpose-driven push factors include seeking knowledge about Islam and jihad; seeking actual opportunities for jihad; seeking redemption; seeking revenge; seeking opportunities for altruism; or seeking financial benefits. This article combines broad patterns data with partial and life histories of individuals who joined Islamist extremist groups in Southeast Asia—Jemaah Islamiyah, Darul Islam, the Maute Group, Tanah Runtuh, and a host of small pro-ISIS groups—in order to examine why one joins and the mechanisms underlying and motivating joining.

A Comparative Analysis of Indonesian Terrorists Radicalised Online

Mukhamat Leberty Adi Surya
University of Queensland

This presentation explores the role of online radicalisation amongst Indonesian terrorists. Data will be presented from primary research comprising 34 interviews conducted with imprisoned and released terrorists in Indonesia. These interviews form part of a larger project examining radicalisation and deradicalisation. The presentation will look at the relationship between online and offline behaviour and will focus on online recruitment and transition to offline behaviors amongst the research sample. Key results will include highlighting the initial motivations for accessing online resources, including for example to improve religious awareness and support the establishment of the ideal Islamic state (Caliphate), to take revenge for perceived injustices and to debate radical ideology. Online recruitment strategies to be examined will include how online technology is used to lure potential recruits using 'clickbait' words (e.g., "jihad" or "hijrah"), and hoax articles and videos focusing on narratives of Muslims suffering atrocities. Once online, individuals are directed to use fake names and are provided with materials targeted to their interests. To maintain loyalty, group administrators do not permit arguments between members. Results will show how recruiters instruct recruits to consider other Ustad (Muslim preachers) outside their groups as infidels or heretics. The role of these online activities in transitioning individuals to connect offline will be outlined. These themes will also be explored through a series of case studies.

Interventions: Violent Extremist Case Management, Rehabilitation and Incarceration

What has Been Learnt from Case-managed Programs Targeting Violent Extremists in Australia – Lessons for CVE Program Delivery and Evaluation

Professor Adrian Cherney
University of Queensland

Case-managed programs have become a central way of intervening with individuals identified as at risk of radicalisation, or who have been charged for a terrorist offence. A common feature is the development of tailored intervention plans. This presentation will report results from a program of research that has examined the implementation of case-managed interventions in Australia and set out to evaluate their impact. Findings will cover the types of supports provided and their link to protective factors, contextual conditions that influence client progress, the challenges of managing residual risk and promoting resilience amongst clients and outline metrics for evaluation that take account of the dynamic nature of disengagement. Implications for CVE policy and practice will be highlighted, and case studies will be drawn on to demonstrate key lessons.

Transcending the Terrorist Stigma: The Role of Rehabilitation Programs

Dr Gordon Clubb
University of Leeds

The "defeat" of ISIS' caliphate and questions surrounding the return and repatriation of foreign fighters associated with the group have focused scholarly attention and government practice on terrorist rehabilitation and reintegration (Yacoubian, Bosley, and Steadman, 2020). In addition, countries are confronting an increasing number of homegrown terrorist offenders scheduled for release (Basra and Neumann, 2020; Morton and Silber, 2018). Existing research across disciplines suggests that the reintegration of these individuals will depend on their acceptance by the local community (Gendreau et al., 1996; Laub and Sampson, 2001; Özerdem, 2012). Terrorist offenders, however, often confront additional layers of stigma and discrimination when compared with "ordinary" criminal offenders (Altier, 2021). Research in criminology suggests that providing members of the public information about the offender's successful completion of a rehabilitation program helps reduce stigma (Hardcastle et al., 2011; Rade et al., 2016), but how effective are these programs in the context of terrorism? Do they reduce stigma or might they further securitize individuals? Drawing on a representative survey of 2,500 respondents in the United Kingdom, we examine first, the degree to which individuals convicted of incitement to terrorism are accepted by the community upon their release. We then employ a survey experiment to examine the effect of reporting that the individual successfully completed a rehabilitation program in prison on community acceptance. We find that the stigmatization of these offenders is high, but that reporting successful completion of a rehabilitation program increases communal acceptance and willingness to engage with the terrorist offender. This acceptance and reduction in stigma is vital for their reintegration. The research illustrates the benefits of communicating with communities to reduce barriers to reintegration and to facilitate small behavioral changes in the community which may reduce the risk of re-offending.

Incarcerating Terrorist Prisoners: A Consistent Conundrum

Amber Hart
Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities, Victoria University

The incarceration of terrorists and radicalised prisoners is a persistent conundrum for legislators and policymakers. Attacks perpetrated by terrorists following incarceration and subsequent release is becoming a familiar occurrence in many jurisdictions, yet still no consensus can be reached as to the most effective method of imprisoning the terrorist cohort. This presentation, drawing upon the author's research into three incarceration methods, addresses the risks and challenges of incarcerating terrorists and radicalised prisoners. With a focus on how research has enhanced knowledge surrounding incarcerating terrorists since the attacks of September 11, 2001, the presentation seeks to highlight various complexities of incarcerating the terrorist cohort, such as how to manage competing goals of imprisonment, societal expectations and perceptions of risk, and the difficulty in facilitating disengagement or deradicalisation whilst terrorists are imprisoned.

A Change of Heart, or How the European Union Became a Prevention Innovator

Inés Bolaños Somoano
European University Institute

European counterterrorism was thoroughly shaken by the 9/11 attacks, but fundamentally changed by the events of 11-M in Madrid, and Christchurch attack in New Zealand in 2019. From surveillance to education, from an Islamist bias to including right wing extremism as a source of security anxiety. In less than two decades, Prevention has become a central pillar of the European Union (EU) approach to counter-terrorism, despite its origins as an obscure, crisis-response related concept. One of the most relevant aspects of the "Prevention innovation" is the EU's preoccupation with practitioner-led approaches, represented by the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) and a multitude of associated projects funded by the European Commission. These projects and agencies have the main goal of producing new knowledge and best practices on violent extremism, de-radicalisation and prevention processes, as well as training a new cohort of practitioners, policy makers and academics in this new policy arena. Within such a complex and long-term process, identifying actors and concrete steps of field establishment can provide valuable insights on the intra/inter-institutional and actor dynamics channelling EU counterterrorism policy towards the Prevention arena. My paper thus explores the emergence and establishment of notions of Prevention within EU institutions. Relevant factors include national policy preferences; international discursive influences; institutional conditions for internal security cooperation in the EU; and security shocks. This article also looks at the results of these changes, namely new funding opportunities and the creation of new EU structures and bodies. Methodologically speaking, this paper is based on remotely conducted interviews, with EU actors, practitioners and academics involved in radicalisation knowledge creation, and it also draws on EU documents and policy.

Politics and the Origins and Development of Countering Violent Extremism Policy in Australia

Mark Duckworth
Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies, Deakin University

This paper looks at the interplay between politics and the approaches adopted by governments in Australia relating to violent extremism in the period 2001-2021. It examines several Australian counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism strategies, both national and state, looking at how the concepts of resilience, countering and preventing violent extremism are characterised in these documents. While much of this policy is primarily evidence driven, there has also been an overlay of politics in how the violent extremist threat has been characterised and how strategic policy and programs have been developed to prevent or counter these threats. In the policy documents developed in the immediate period after 9/11 there was no reference to countering or preventing violent extremism. The 2005 London bombings and the CT Operation Pendennis, in the Australian States of Victorian and New South Wales, were pivotal moments in the development of CVE policy. However, the idea of "home grown" terrorism came up against a prevailing narrative among some political leaders following 9/11, and the 2002 Bali bombings, that terrorism was largely an external threat and that it was imported into Australia. For those holding the view that we were in a "War on Terror" with an identifiable enemy, a change to a broader focus that included seeking to understand the causes of violent extremism could be criticised as explaining away, or even justifying, terrorism. The paper will also examine whether the initial characterisation of terrorism as largely an external threat is one reason why the challenge of right-wing and white supremacist extremism in Australia received less attention. It will also look how the approaches to P/CVE in Australia cover a spectrum from social policies aimed at social cohesion, community resilience and inclusion, to those focussed on law enforcement and corrections. The paper examines whether tensions arising from the inherent ambiguity in this policy approach have ever been successfully resolved.

Subjective Assessments in Early Detection

Anne Marie van de Weert
Utrecht University of Applied Science

In recent years, the fight against terrorism and political violence has focused more on anticipating the threats that they pose. Therefore, early detection of ideas by local professionals has become an important part of the preventive approach in countering radicalization. Frontline workers who operate in the arteries of society are encouraged to identify processes toward violent behavior at an early stage. To date, however, little is known about how these professionals take on this screening task at their own discretion. Research from the Netherlands suggests that subjective assessment appears to exist. In this article, we argue that the absence of a clear norm for preliminary judgments affects prejudice or administrative arbitrariness, which may cause side effects due to unjustified profiling.

Pro- and Anti-Social Resilience: Possibilities for Stabilising Resilience within CVE

Dr Richard McNeil-Willson
Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute

This paper focuses on resilience within CVE, particularly how to reframe and advance discussions around pro-social versus anti-social forms of resilience. Resilience as a means of countering violence and polarisation is a relatively recent addition to contemporary European policy and practice (Cavelty, Kaufmann, & Kristensen, 2015; Pospisil & Gruber, 2016). Whilst traditionally used more extensively beyond the European sphere (Carlson et al., 2012), recent studies have encouraged a wider push to place concepts of resilience into the context of the global North, to create long-term community-led responses to growing societal inequality and political polarisation (Grossman, Hadfield, Jefferies, Gerrand, & Ungar, 2020). However, whilst the language and approach of resilience may offer important means of desecuritising elements of countering violent extremism (CVE), questions remain around how to account for instances whereby resilience-building is used either as resistance against counterterrorism or is deployed by extremist groups (McNeil-Willson 2021). This discussion examines instances of resilience-building practices by anti-social groups, focussing on the case studies of Hizb ut-Tahrir Scandinavia and the Nordic Resistance Movement. Drawing on interviews and online statements by both groups, it will assess the extent to which we can determine resilience-building practice evident in their behaviour, as well as how they have interacted with resilience-based CVE in Scandinavia. The paper aims to critically advance discussions that delineate between pro-social and anti-social resilience, considering whether the lens can be adapted to include other theories around terrorist and extremist violence, such as social movement approaches. In doing so, it aims to enable approaches that are more dynamic and consistent, analysing and responding to resilience-building practice that take place across the political spectrum.

Joining the conversation, joining the cause: communication and collaboration to counter violent extremism

Malcolm Haddon and Sophie Murray-Farrell
NSW Department of Communities and Justice

After years of sustained criticism, suspect agendas and failed attempts, what has Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) learned about communicating its purpose and fostering genuine collaboration between government and community? How do we achieve consensus and commensurability with communities on what our common cause, common values and principles, common problem or common enemy might be, when consensus is hard enough to achieve even among government CVE policymakers and practitioners? Who is "community" and who is the "we" in CVE? This panel brings together two CVE practitioners who will share their insights and experiences on having the tough discussions and sustaining robust relationships through tough times. The panel will explore themes around trust and collaboration, building and mobilising community partnerships and alliances, and enhancing the public conversation about violent extremism.

Intersection of Conspiracy and Extremism

The Contingent Relationship Between Conspiracy Beliefs and Violent Extremist Intentions

Dr Bettina Rottweiler and Professor Paul Gill
University College London

Increasingly, we are witnessing a seeming convergence between belief in conspiracy theories and ideological extremes. A series of recent far-right terrorist attacks occurred across the U.S., Canada, New Zealand and Germany where the attackers expressed extreme conspiratorial worldviews. Further incidents, most notably the US Capitol attack, demonstrate that extreme belief in conspiracy theories (e.g., QAnon) may mobilise individuals towards extremist violence. These incidents point to a potential functional role of conspiracy theories within violent extremism, thus necessitating a systematic analysis of the relationship. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how extremist intentions and belief in conspiracy theories are interrelated and how their interaction functions and finally how this, in turn affects individuals' readiness to engage in violent extremism. Research in these areas, however, largely remains siloed. Our studies examine the effects of conspiracy beliefs on violent extremist intentions. More specifically, we investigate whether the relationship between conspiracy beliefs and violent extremism depends upon individual characteristics such as varying levels of self-efficacy, self-control and legal cynicism but also whether this relationship is affected by group-level factors, such as group injustice (deprivation) and perceived group threats as well as social-environmental influences, such as exposure to extremist peers. Our results confirm that a stronger conspiracy mentality leads to increased violent extremist intentions. However, the relationships are contingent on several individual differences and social-environmental influences. Depending on their individual characteristics and social-environmental factors, people who hold conspiracy beliefs vary widely in their behavioural intentions towards violent extremism. These results have important implications for practice in the area of violent extremism risk assessment and management. Conceptually, this highlights the need to further elaborate the conditional effects of certain risk as well as protective factors for violent extremism. These findings further demonstrate that multiple factors likely contribute to a single individual's pathway into violent extremism.

Intersections Between Conspiracy Theories and Violent Extremism in Austria and Germany

Dr Daniela Pisoiu
Austrian Institute for International Affairs

Demonstrations against COVID-19 measures in Austria and Germany have reunited well-known right-wing extremists, conspiracy theorists, esoterists and single-issue activists. This surprising development is only the symptom of a more complex phenomenon currently taking place at the intersection between the far right, other political orientations and other types of thus far non-violent, as well as previously apolitical milieus. The paper explores the various manifestations of this new phenomenon, in particular focusing on the following aspects: the ways in which the far right has instrumentalized the pandemic in their propaganda and mobilization efforts; the evolution of some COVID-19 related conspiracy theories (in particular the Querdenker) towards right-wing extremism; the overlaps between QAnon, the far right and other local conspiracy theories; the morphing of single issue activists and esoterists in the context of COVID-19 narratives. The paper is especially focusing on the discursive level and how specific narratives have been created and modified in this context, as well as their potential for mobilization and violence. The analysis is based on primary online data on social media blogs and other types of websites specific to the various scenes.

Political Extremism and Conspiracy Theories: The Case of Q-Anon

Dean Smith
University of St Andrews

In the wake of the January 6th Capitol attack in Washington D.C., both domestic and international attention was directed at the groups involved, as well as they ideology and conspiracy theories associated with the movement. This project aimed to explore the relationship between the Q-Anon conspiracy, the social worldview of participants, their political ideology (defined as their orientation on an abridged version of the Political Compass Test), as well as demographic factors. A questionnaire was distributed online via Prolific, to 100 individuals who voted for Donald Trump in the 2020 presidential election. Data was collected between the 2nd and 9th of August 2021. Initial exploratory factor analysis (EFA) shows at least 3 factors, when combining items measuring endorsement of the Q-Anon conspiracy and items measuring political ideology. A second EFA of the Duckitt's Social Worldview Scale (Perry, 2013) supports their initial theory, loading on two factors – competitive jungle and dangerous world. Multimodal Content analysis of extremist material present at the Capitol Attack shows some support for Reicher and Haslam's social identity model of collective hate (Reicher et al, 2008).

Presenter Profiles

A - H

Farangiz Atamuradova
Program Officer
Hedayah
🐦 @FarangizAN
✉ farangiz.atamuradova@hedayah.ae

Farangiz Atamuradova is a Program Officer at Hedayah, where she supports a number of department's programs, such as the Annual International CVE Research Conference and MASAR, a monitoring, measurement, and evaluation application for P/CVE programs. Farangiz is also providing oversight for the Radical Right Counter Narrative Collection and the Counter Extremism Hub (both projects are funded by EU STRIVE Global). Recent publications include an evaluation of the narratives and themes contained in education-related primary source documents of the "ISIS Files." Farangiz holds a Master of Letters in terrorism studies from the University of St. Andrews and a Bachelor of Arts in politics with international studies from the University of Warwick.

Brian Ballsun-Stanton
Digital Solutions Architect
Macquarie University
✉ brian.ballsun-stanton@mq.edu.au

Data scientist, educator, sysadmin, and data security specialist designing and delivering technical solutions for academic and student research projects at the Macquarie University Faculty of Arts. Chief Investigator in category one and two grants, contracts, and prizes across the humanities, social sciences, and security studies disciplines. Lead Investigator on a big data investigation of violent extremism using tens of millions of posts on social media deploying computational data collection and analysis techniques using Machine Learning and NLP. Technical Director and Product Owner for a field-data collection project, supporting 60+ projects since 2013.

Steven Barracosa

Senior Manager, Countering Violent Extremism Unit
Youth Justice New South Wales
✉ steven.barracosa@justice.nsw.gov.au

Steve is the Senior Manager of the Youth Justice NSW CVE Unit. He is a Psychologist and a PhD Candidate at the School of Social Science at the University of Queensland. Steve's area of research is juvenile radicalisation and violent extremism risk assessment. He is a certified user and accredited trainer of the VERA-2R tool and a number of additional violent extremism risk assessment measures. Steve is a court appointment expert for CVE proceedings in the NSW Children's Court and has experience in the development and implementation of CVE services in both youth and adult criminal justice settings.

Greg Barton

Professor
🐦 @gregjamesbarton
✉ greg.barton@deakin.edu.au

Greg is Research Professor in Global Islamic Politics in the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University where, since August 2015, he has led research on Islam and civil society, democratisation, and countering violent extremism. Over the past 30 years he has undertaken extensive research on Indonesia politics and society, especially of the role of Islam as both a constructive and a disruptive force. He has been active in the inter-faith dialogue initiatives and has a deep commitment to building understanding of Islam and Muslim society. The central axis of his research interests is the way in which religious thought, individual believers and religious communities respond to modernity and to the modern nation state. He also has a strong general interest in international relations and comparative international politics.

Emma Belton

PhD Candidate
University of Queensland
✉ e.belton@uq.edu.au

Emma Belton is a PhD Candidate and Senior Research Assistant in the School of Social Science at the University of Queensland. Her research aims to improve understanding relating to the backgrounds and risk factors associated with individuals who have been convicted of a terrorist offence or identified as having radicalised to violent extremism. Her research draws on the Profiles of Individual Radicalisation in Australia (PIRA) dataset. She has also worked on several research projects examining the impact of countering violent extremism interventions, across community and custodial settings.

Mia Bloom
Professor, Georgia State University
International Security Fellow, New America Foundation
@miambloom
miambloom@me.com

Mia Bloom is the International Security Fellow at the New America Foundation, a professor at Georgia State University, and member of the Evidence Based Cyber Security at the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies. Bloom has conducted research in Europe, the Middle East and South Asia and speaks eight languages. She authored several books and articles on violent extremism including *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror* (Columbia 2005), *Living Together After Ethnic Killing* (Routledge 2007) *Bombshell: Women and Terror* (UPenn 2011) and *Small Arms: Children and Terror* (Cornell 2019) and *Pastels and Pedophiles: Inside the Mind of QAnon* with Sophia Moskalenko (Stanford 2021). She is publishing *Veiled Threats: Women and Jihad* (in 2022). Bloom is a former term member of the Council on Foreign Relations and has held appointments at Princeton, Cornell, Harvard and McGill Universities. She serves on the Anti-Radicalization board of the Anti-Defamation League, and the UN Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate (UNCTED) and a member of WASL - Women's Action and Leadership Network. Bloom has a PhD in political science from Columbia University, a Masters in Arab Studies from Georgetown University and a Bachelors degree from McGill in Russian, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies.

Scheherazade Bloul
PhD Candidate
Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University
@scherrybloul
scheherazade.bloul@deakin.edu.au

Scheherazade Bloul is a PhD candidate at the UNESCO Chair for Comparative Research in Cultural Diversity and Social Justice hosted by the Alfred Deakin Institute, Deakin University. Her research interests include media studies, digital counter-hegemonic infrastructures, youth political subjectivities in North Africa and Europe. She was a director at a journalism exchange program aimed at disrupting racialised media discourses and representation of the Middle East and North Africa region. She is also a radio host and writer.

Geoff Boucher

Associate Professor
Deakin University
✉ geoff.boucher@deakin.edu.au

Geoff Boucher is associate professor in the Faculty of Arts and Education at Deakin University. He is the author of a number of books on historical materialism and continental philosophy, including Understanding Marxism (2012), Adorno Reframed (2012) and The Charmed Circle of Ideology (2008). His latest book is Habermas and Literature (Bloomsbury Academic, 2021). He is also the author (with Matthew Sharpe) of Zizek and Politics (2010) and The Times Will Suit Them (2008).

Kurt Braddock

Assistant Professor of Public Communication
Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab and School of Communication, American University
🐦 @KurtBraddock
✉ braddock@american.edu

Kurt Braddock is an Assistant Professor of Public Communication in the School of Communication at American University. Kurt also holds faculty fellow positions at the SOC's Center for Media and Social Impact (CMSI) and the Center for University Excellence's Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab (PERIL). His research focuses on the persuasive strategies used by violent extremist groups to recruit and radicalize audiences targeted by their propaganda and how theories of communication, persuasion, and social influence can be used to inform practices meant to prevent radicalization among vulnerable audiences. He is the author of *Weaponized Words: The Strategic Role of Persuasion in Violent Radicalization and Counter-Radicalization* (Cambridge University Press, 2020).

David Bright

Professor
Alfred Deakin Institute, Deakin University
🐦 @BrightProfessor
✉ David.bright@deakin.edu.au

Professor David Bright is a criminologist and forensic psychologist. His research interests include criminal networks, organised crime, and terrorism. He is an internationally recognised expert in the use of social network analysis and related approaches to study organised criminal groups and terrorist groups. Professor Bright has been Chief Investigator on five consecutive ARC funded projects in addition to receiving funding from other industry and government sources. His recently published book (co-authored with Professor Chad Whelan), *Organised Crime and Law Enforcement: A Network Perspective*,

examines organised crime and law enforcement through the conceptual lens of networks.

J.M. Berger
Research Fellow
VOX-Pol
🐦 @intelwire
✉ jmberger@gmail.com

J.M. Berger is a research fellow with VOX-Pol and a PhD candidate at Swansea University's School of Law, where he studies extremist ideologies. He is the author of four books, including *Extremism* (MIT Press, 2018) and *Optimal* (2020). Berger's work encompasses extremism and terrorism, propaganda and social media. As a consultant for technology companies and government agencies, he has conducted research and training on issues and policies related to countering extremism. Berger is a member of the advisory board of the RESOLVE Network and the independent advisory committee of the Global Internet Forum for Counter Terrorism.

Kristy Campion
Lecturer of Terrorism Studies
Australian Graduate School of Policing and Security, Charles Sturt University
🐦 @kristycampion
✉ kcampion@csu.edu.au

Dr Campion (BA (Hons 1 Class) PhD (JCU) is Lecturer of Terrorism Studies in the Master of Terrorism and Security Studies at Charles Sturt University. She is edits and peer reviews for scholarly journals, supervises doctoral candidates, and lectures on contemporary and historical terrorism threats. Her research spans left wing, right wing, and religious terrorism threats – both contemporary and historical. She has published extensively on right wing extremism, spanning theories and ideologies; gender; networks and transnational links. She also examines the extreme left, recently publishing on Left Wing Extremism in Australia and 'unstructured terrorism'. Dr Campion engages with various domestic and international security audiences, delivers seminars to specialist audiences, and consults with counterterrorism stakeholders.

Sarah Carthy
Postdoctoral Researcher
Institute of Security and Global Affairs, Leiden University
🐦 @SLCarthy
✉ s.l.carthy@fgga.leidenuniv.nl

Sarah Carthy is a Postdoctoral Researcher at Leiden University's Institute of Security and Global Affairs (ISGA) in the Netherlands. Her recent work was in the area of radicalization, where she explored the potential for counter-narratives in the context of prevention. In her current role, she is working alongside Bart Schuurman on a multi-year, multi-region project on non-involvement in terrorist violence.

Quassim Cassam
Professor of Philosophy
University of Warwick, UK
🐦 @QCassam
✉ q.cassam@warwick.ac.uk

Quassim Cassam is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Warwick. He was previously Knightbridge Professor of Philosophy at Cambridge University, Professor of Philosophy at UCL, and Reader in Philosophy at Oxford University. He was a Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford for 18 years and later a Professorial Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. He is the author of seven books, including *Extremism: A Philosophical Analysis* (Routledge 2021), *Vices of the Mind: From the Intellectual to the Political* (Oxford 2019), and *Conspiracy Theories* (Polity 2019). His research interests include vice epistemology and the philosophy of terrorism and extremism.

Adrian Cherney
Professor
University of Queensland
✉ a.cherney@uq.edu.au

Adrian Cherney is a Professor in the School of Social Science at the University of Queensland. He is currently an Australian Research Council Future Fellow. He has completed evaluations of programs to counter violent extremism and is conducting research on radicalisation, extremist risk assessment and disengagement. Projects include the evaluation of case-managed CVE interventions in Australia implemented by police and corrections, comparative research on radicalisation pathways, systematic reviews on CVE programs, and studies on the socio-demographic backgrounds and risk factors associated with individuals who have radicalised in Australia. He has secured national and intervention research grants.

Gordon Clubb

Lecturer in International Security
University of Leeds
@GordonClubb
g.clubb@leeds.ac.uk

Dr Gordon Clubb is a Lecturer in International Security at the University of Leeds in the UK. His research focuses on de-radicalisation and on the role of former combatants in preventing and countering violent extremism. His most recent book called *Selling De-Radicalization: Managing the Media Framing of Countering Violent Extremism* (2021) was published with Routledge. He is currently working on public attitudes to reintegration of terrorist offenders and public support for prevention policies.
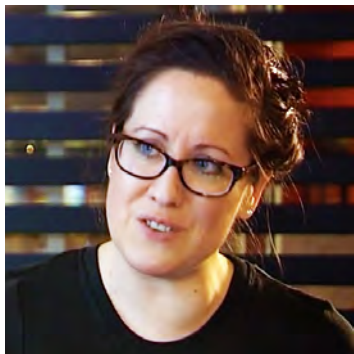
Maura Conway

Paddy Moriarty Professor of Government and International Studies
Dublin City University
@galwaygrrl
maura.conway@dcu.ie

Maura Conway is Paddy Moriarty Professor of Government and International Studies in the School of Law and Government at Dublin City University; Professor of Cyber Threats in CYTREC at Swansea University; and the Coordinator of VOX-Pol (voxpol.eu).

Simon Copeland

Postdoctoral Researcher
Cyber Threats Research Centre, Swansea University
@simoncopeland1
s.l.copeland@swansea.ac.uk

Simon Copeland is a postdoctoral researcher at the Cyber Threats Research Centre at Swansea University. His work focuses on extremist networks, narratives and aesthetics and builds from his PhD that explored the influence of kin and peers on individuals' engagement in political violence. Simon holds an undergraduate degree in Law and an MA in International Security Studies. He has also worked in political and security risk consultancies focusing on terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa and interned at the International Security department of Chatham House.

Martha Crenshaw

Emerita Professor and Senior Fellow
Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies
Stanford University
✉ crenshaw_martha@yahoo.com

Martha Crenshaw is senior fellow emerita at the Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University, and professor emerita of Government at Wesleyan University. She was a Guggenheim Fellow and is a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy. Recent publications include "Rethinking Transnational Terrorism: An Integrated Approach," United States Institute of Peace Peaceworks Report, 2020. She is a Principal Investigator with NCITE, a Center of Excellence of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. Previously she was a Principal Investigator with START, a DHS Center of Excellence at the University of Maryland (2005-2017). She directs the Mapping Militants Project.

Bec Devitt

HDR Candidate
Deakin University
🐦 @DevittB
✉ b.devitt@deakin.edu.au

Bec is a HDR candidate at Deakin University. Her thesis focuses on far-right narratives in India and Sri Lanka. Bec is a Research Assistant for the Crisis Points Project at the Alfred Deakin Institute of Citizenship and Globalisation. Bec is a Digital Sherlock Fellow with the Digital Forensic Lab at the Atlantic Council and has previously worked as a speechwriter at the Parliament of Victoria.

Julian Droogan

Senior Lecturer
Macquarie University
✉ julian.droogan@mq.edu.au

Dr. Julian Droogan is Senior Lecturer in Terrorism Studies and editor of the Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism. His research focuses on countering violent extremism, online radicalisation, extremist narratives, and religions. He currently co-leads an ARC Discovery grant examining the relationship between online extremist materials and offline violent action, as well as a project for the NSW Government and United States Institute for Peace examining far-right extremism online. His research was instrumental in creating the $10 million NSW COMPACT CVE program. He has also worked as an academic evaluator for a national social media-based anti-far right CVE project.

Mark Duckworth
Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies
Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship & Globalisation, Deakin University
✉ mark.duckworth@deakin.edu.au

Mark Duckworth PSM is a Senior Research Fellow at the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation at Deakin University working in the Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies (CRIS). Before taking up this appointment in 2019 he had more than 30 years of experience in the Victorian and New South Wales public sectors. He held many senior executive roles including as Executive Director of Governance, Security and Intergovernmental Relations, and as Chief Resilience Officer in the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet. He was member of the Australia and New Zealand Counter Terrorism Committee for thirteen years, and the inaugural co-chair of the ANZCTC Countering Violent Extremism sub-committee.

Sanka Galagoda
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
Helvetas, Sri Lanka
🐦 @nemindagalagoda
✉ sanka.galagoda@helvetas.org

Sanka has more than seven years of experience in monitoring projects, including peacebuilding, reparation, interfaith coexistence and rights-based interventions across Sri Lanka. He obtained his bachelor's degree in Peace and Conflict Resolution and holds a post graduate diploma in Monitoring and Evaluation. Currently, he is reading for his master's degree in Sociology. He has worked with numerous local, international, and inter-governmental organizations and is also a member of the Sri Lanka Evaluators Association (SLEvA). With a particular interest in working on reconciliation and peacebuilding, most of his work is related to the advancement of the National reconciliation process.

Vivian Gerrand
Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation
✉ vivian.gerrand@deakin.edu.au

Dr Vivian Gerrand is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies at the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation at Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia. She is a Chief Investigator on the Horizon 2020 BRaVE (Building Resilience against Violent Extremism) research and program grant, and also contributes to the Horizon 2020 GREASE Research and Innovation project on secularism, radicalization and the governance of religion, both led by European University Institute in Florence.

Paul Gill
Professor of Security and Crime Science
University College London
🐦 @paulgill_ucl
✉ paul.gill@ucl.ac.uk

Professor Paul Gill is a Professor of Security and Crime Science at University College London. His research examines the behavioural underpinnings of terrorism and terrorist attacks.

Dan Goodhardt
Researcher
Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University
🐦 @dangoodhardt
✉ dan.goodhardt@deakin.edu.au

Mr Dan Goodhardt is a casual researcher at the Alfred Deakin Institute at Deakin University and the co-convener of the Practitioners Working Group – Tackling Hate in Victoria with Dr Vergani. He works at Victoria Police as an Intelligence Manager at the Forensic Services Department. Mr Goodhardt previously worked for the Jewish Community Security Group, a not-for-profit security company which monitors antisemitism and threats to the Jewish community in Victoria. He has extensive experience in collecting reports of hate incidents and providing victim support at a community level. He holds a Masters in Counter-Terrorism from Monash University.

Michele Grossman
Professor and Research Chair in Diversity and Community Resilience
Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University
🐦 @mbgdeakin
✉ michele.grossman@deakin.edu.au

Professor Michele Grossman is Research Chair in Diversity and Community Resilience at the Alfred Deakin Institute at Deakin University, where she is also Director of the Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies (CRIS) and Convenor of the AVERT Research Network. Michele's current research focuses on terrorist recruitment, right-wing extremism intervention capacity, community reporting thresholds for terrorism and terrorist recidivism. She is an Editorial Board member of *Terrorism and Political Violence* and *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, and a Robert Schuman (Distinguished Scholar) Fellow at European University Institute in Florence through her role on the European Commission Horizon 2020 GREASE project.

Malcolm Haddon
Associate Director, Community Resilience
Multicultural NSW
✉ malcolm.haddon@multicultural.nsw.gov.au

Dr Malcolm Haddon leads the Community Resilience team at Multicultural NSW. He has worked in Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) policy and program development at both state and national levels in Australia for over ten years and has pioneered a range of initiatives to effectively engage communities on CVE issues. His community resilience-based CVE programs, firmly aligned to social cohesion outcomes, have been showcased in a range of international forums and reports by the Global Counter Terrorism Forum, Global Center for Cooperative Security, United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, Institute for Strategic Dialogue, RAND Corporation, and others.

Anna Halafoff
Associate Professor
Deakin University
✉ anna.halafoff@deakin.edu.au

Anna Halafoff is Associate Professor in Sociology at Deakin University, Australia. She is also a member of the Alfred Deakin Institute, and the AVERT (Addressing Violent Extremism and Radicalisation to Terrorism) Research Network. Anna is leading the (Con)Spirituality in Australia Project, and a Chief Investigator of the Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies (CRIS) Consortium, and two Australian Research Council Discovery Projects on the Worldviews of Generation Z Australians and on Religious Diversity in Australia. Her most recent book (with Andrew Singleton, Mary Lou Rasmussen, and Gary Bouma) is *Freedoms, Faiths and Futures: Teenage Australians on Religion, Sexuality and Diversity*.

Keiran Hardy
Senior Lecturer
Griffith Criminology Institute
🐦 @khardyGCI
✉ k.hardy@griffith.edu.au

Keiran Hardy is a Senior Lecturer in the Griffith Criminology Institute and the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University. He has published widely on counter-terrorism law and policy, countering violent extremism, intelligence whistleblowing and the accountability of intelligence agencies. He has contributed to many parliamentary inquiries on counter-terrorism laws and comments regularly for the media on national security issues.

Amber Hart

PhD Student
Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities, Victoria University
@amberjhart
amber.hart@live.vu.edu.au

Amber Hart is a law enforcement professional with more than a decade of experience working across several types of crime, including terrorism. For the past three years, she has focused exclusively on counter-terrorism work. Amber holds both a bachelor's degree of Policing and a master's degree in Terrorism and Security Studies (with distinction), both programs undertaken at Charles Sturt University. She was the recipient of the New South Wales Police Association Award and was conferred Dean's Awards three years running throughout the degrees. Amber is now a PhD student at Victoria University, researching the disengagement of terrorist and radicalized inmates in correctional facilities.

John Horgan

Distinguished University Professor
Georgia State University
@drjohnhorgan
jhorgan@gsu.edu

John Horgan is Distinguished University Professor at Georgia State University's Department of Psychology where he also directs the Violent Extremism Research Group (VERG). His books include *The Psychology of Terrorism* (now in its second edition and published in over a dozen languages worldwide). He is Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Consulting Editor of *American Psychologist*, and Consulting Editor of *Psychology of Violence*. He is a member of the Research Working Group of the FBI's National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime. Horgan's latest book, *Terrorist Minds*, is forthcoming from Columbia University Press.

Shakira Hussein

Honorary Fellow
University of Melbourne
@shakirahussein
shussein@unimelb.edu.au

Shakira Hussein is an honorary fellow at the University of Melbourne and the author of *From Victims to Suspects: Muslim Women since 9/11* (Yale University Press, 2019). Her research areas include gendered-based violence, racism, disabilities, and South Asia.

Jade Hutchinson

Cotutelle PhD candidate
Macquarie University
@JadeoHutchinson
jade.hutchinson@mq.edu.au

Jade Hutchinson is a Cotutelle PhD Candidate in the Department of Security Studies and Criminology at Macquarie University (Australia) and the Research Centre for Media and Journalism Studies at Groningen University (The Netherlands). Jade's research is focused on understanding far-right violent extremism in the context of an 'online eco-system' and in what ways social media platforms and websites shape far-right extremist disposition and engagement in terrorism.

Julie Chernov Hwang

Associate Professor of Political Science and International Relations
Goucher College
@Julie_c_hwang
jchwang@goucher.edu

Julie Chernov Hwang is an associate professor of political science and international relations at Goucher College. She is the author of *Why Terrorists Quit: The Disengagement of Indonesian Jihadists* (Cornell University Press, 2018); *Peaceful Islamist Mobilization in the Muslim World: What Went Right* (Palgrave Press, 2009) and the co-editor of *Islamist Parties and Political Normalization in the Muslim World* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014). Her articles have been published in *Political Psychology, Terrorism and Political Violence, Asian Survey, Contemporary Southeast Asia, Asia-Pacific Issues, Southeast Asia Research,* and *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*. Her new book project, *Becoming Jihadis: Radicalization and Commitment in Southeast Asia* explores how and why Indonesian and Filipino Muslims join, commit and take on high risk roles as part of Islamist extremist groups.

I – P

David Kernot

Senior Researcher
Defence Science Technology Group, Department of Defence and Victoria University
@KernotD
david.kernot@dst.defence.gov.au

David Kernot has a PhD in Political Science and International Relations from the Australian National University's National Security College where he examined cognitive markers of playwrights, poets, novelists and terrorists from their writing style

to create linguistic fingerprints. David is a senior researcher within the Defence of Defence Science and Technology Group's Intelligence Analysis Branch where he leads the organisation's countering violent extremism research programme.

Lydia Khalil
Research Fellow
Lowy Institute and Deakin University
🐦 @arcanakhalil
✉ lydia.khalil@deakin.edu.au

Lydia Khalil is a Research Fellow at the Lowy Institute and manages the Lowy Institute's core partnership with the Global Network on Extremism & Technology. She is also an Associate Research Fellow at Deakin University and serves as the AVERT Coordinator. She has a broad range of policy, academic and private sector experience, and has spent her career focusing on the intersection between governance, technology and security — understanding the rationales behind terrorism and counterinsurgency, how to create governance systems that lead to functioning societies, effective policing strategies or the security and policy effects of new technology.

Alexandra Lee
PhD Candidate
✉ leealex@deakin.edu.au

Alex is a PhD candidate (Sociology) and research assistant at Deakin University. Her research interests include, youth mobilities, and transnational identities. Alex is also involved in the Centre for Multicultural Youth's 'Explore' program, promoting meaningful youth involvement in research processes.

Benjamin Lee
Senior Research Associate
St Andrews University
✉ bjl20@st-andrews.ac.uk

Benjamin Lee is a Senior Research Associate at the Centre for Research & Evidence on Security Threats and is based at the Handa Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence, University of St Andrews, UK. Benjamin's research interests cover the evolution of the extreme-right terrorism, ideology, and organisation, both globally and as they manifest in the UK. He has published extensively in peer-reviewed journals, and recently co-edited the edited volume *Digital Extremisms*, available from Palgrave Macmillan.

Richard L. Legault
Senior Advisor for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Science at the Science and Technology Directorate
United States Department of Homeland Security
✉ richard.legault@hq.dhs.gov

Richard L. Legault is the Senior Advisor for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Science at the Science and Technology Directorate (S&T), U.S Department of Homeland Security. Dr. Legault leads scientific advisement, technical direction, and fundamental research portfolios on a variety of topics including violence prevention, disinformation, human trafficking, and workforce acceptance of technology. He has published a book, book chapters, and journal articles on violence prevention, gun ownership, and quantitative methods in criminal justice and terrorism studies. Dr. Legault received his PhD from the School of Criminal Justice, University at Albany, in 2006.

Emily Marriott
PhD Candidate
Deakin University
✉ esmarrio@deakin.edu.au

Emily Marriott is a PhD candidate in Sociology at Deakin University under the supervision of Associate Professors Anna Halafoff and Vince Marotta. Her current PhD research investigates the role and participation of Women in the Men's Rights Movement. Her other research interests include media and representation, countering and preventing violent extremism and religious diversity. She has recently worked as a Research Assistant on an Australian Research Council Discovery Project on Religious Diversity in Australia, and on the (Con)Spirituality in Australia Project.
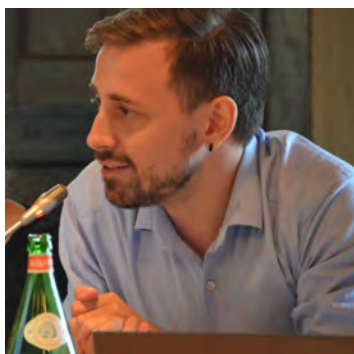
Richard McNeil-Willson
Research Fellow
Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute
🐦 @mcneilwillson
✉ richard@mcneilwillson.eu

Dr Richard McNeil-Willson is a Max Weber Research Fellow at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies and Research Associate with the European Commission Horizon-funded project Building Resilience against Violent Extremism and Polarisation (BRaVE), based at the European University Institute, Florence. His other projects include the Counterterrorism and Safeguarding in response to Islamic State (CASIS) project, mapping state responses to returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters in Europe and the Middle East, and the Prescription of Right-wing Extremist Organisations (PREO) project with the European Commission. His research critically analyses the construction and impact of counterextremism and counterterrorism.
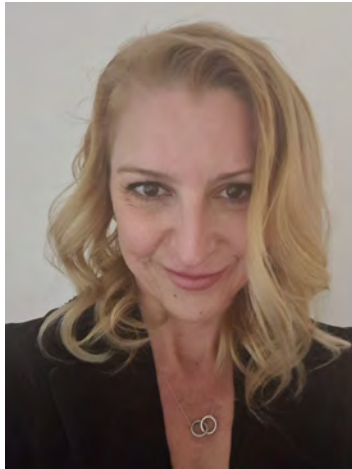
Kristy Milligan
CSU Adjunct, PhD Candidate
🐦 @KristyPMilligan
✉ kristypmilligan@gmail.com

Kristy Milligan VA was a member of the New South Wales Police Force for 15 years, attaining the rank of Sergeant and being awarded the Commissioner's Valour Award for bravery. Kristy completed her Masters in Terrorism and Security Studies with Distinction through Charles Sturt University in 2020, and will commence her PhD in 2022. Kristy's research has recently focussed on RWE, specifically idiosyncratic actors including the Sovereign Citizen movement in a journal paper she has co-authored with Dr Kristy Campion. Her primary research for her PhD is the examination and identification of contemporary and emerging terrorism and extremist symbology manifesting in the RWE landscape and the digital environment.

Sophie Murray-Farrell
Manager Countering Violent Extremism, Office of Community Safety and Cohesion, NSW Department of Communities and Justice
✉ sophie.murray-farrell@justice.nsw.gov.au

Sophie Murray-Farrell manages the NSW Government Countering Violent Extremism Program. Sophie has a decade of experience in social policy and program design in Australia and the Pacific in international development, in both the non-government and government sectors. With a background in social work, Sophie sees social cohesion and community resilience as the bedrock of countering violent extremism policy and program design.

Emmanuel Nene Odjidja
Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist
Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund
🐦 @eodjidja
✉ e.odjidja@gcerf.org

Emmanuel Nene Odjidja is a program evaluator with over nine years of experience working in development, conflict and fragile settings. He is currently a Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist (Sahel Region, Tunisia and Sri Lanka) for the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF). Before this, he worked with several organisations in Ghana, South Sudan and Burundi. His research interests lie in using participatory methods to develop evaluation methods that enhance inclusivity and empower communities while promoting learning. He has published widely in reputable journals. He holds an MSc in Global Health (distinction) from the Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, UK.

John T. Picarelli
Director, Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3)
United States Department of Homeland Security
✉ john.picarelli@hq.dhs.gov

John T. Picarelli is the Director of the Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3), U.S Department of Homeland Security. Dr. Picarelli oversees five major initiatives driving the Department's mission to prevent all forms of terrorism and targeted violence in America. He is also responsible for coordinating the prevention mission among a dozen offices and components of the Department. Dr. Picarelli has published over two dozen journal articles and book chapters, and serves as an adjunct faculty member at George Washington University. He received his PhD in international relations from American University in 2007. He lives in Virginia with his wife and two children.

Dr Daniela Pisoiu
Senior Researcher
Austrian Institute for International Affairs
🐦 @DPisoiu
✉ daniela.pisoiu@oiip.ac.at

Dr Daniela Pisoiu is Senior Researcher at the Austrian Institute for International Affairs and Lecturer at the University of Vienna. She has been researching radicalisation for over 16 years and is specialized in individual radicalisation processes of jihadis and the far right. She is the author of *Islamist radicalisation in Europe. An Occupation Change Process* and co-author of *Theories of Terrorism. An Introduction*. Daniela has also been active in the Radicalization Awareness Network, in particular in the areas of narratives, youth, reintegration and rehabilitation.

Q - Z

Connor Rees
PhD Student
Swansea University
🐦 @Connor_Rees67
✉ 872245@swansea.ac.uk

Connor Rees is a doctoral researcher in Criminology and Computer Sciences at Swansea University, UK. His research examines the ways in which certain extreme right groups are more successful than others in maintaining a presence on social media and evading content moderation efforts. Whilst his research concerns online extremism, it also addresses wider issues regarding human-computer interaction and the ethics and regulation of Artificial Intelligence.

André Alves Dos Reis
Performance and Impact Manager
Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund
✉ a.alvesdosreis@gcerf.org

André Alves dos Reis is a political scientist, a monitoring and evaluation specialist, and a researcher with years of experience working with local governance, peace and security. He is currently Performance and Impact Manager at the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), where he oversees the MEAL system of GCERF portfolio. André has lived and worked in Latin America, Europe, East Asia, and Southeast Asia. He holds a Master of International Affairs from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, Switzerland, and he is currently a PhD candidate at the IR/Political Science department at the same institution.

Imogen Richards
Research Fellow and Lecturer
✉ imogen.richards@deakin.edu.au

Imogen Richards is a research fellow and lecturer in criminology at Deakin University, researching in the areas of social, news, and alternative forms of online media. She also writes on the political economy of counter/terrorism, and the performance of security in response to social crisis.

Joshua Roose
Senior Research Fellow
Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation
🐦 @DrJoshuaRoose
✉ Josh.Roose@deakin.edu.au

Dr Joshua Roose is a political sociologist and Senior Research Fellow in Politics and Religion at the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation at Deakin University, Melbourne. His research focuses on the intersection of politics, law and religion. He is currently a Chief Investigator on an Australian Research Council funded study The Far Right: Intellectuals, Masculinity and Citizenship (2021-2023). He sits on the Executive of AVERT and is a member of the Editorial Board of the *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) Journal* and Research Fellow at the Institute for Research on Male Supremacism (IRMS) in the United States.

Bettina Rottweiler

Postdoctoral Research Fellow
University College London
@b_rottweilerUCL
bettina.rottweiler.16@ucl.ac.uk

Dr Bettina Rottweiler is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Security and Crime Science at University College London. Her research examines risk and protective factors for violent extremism with a specific focus on the effects of conspiracy narratives and violent misogyny.

Erin Saltman

Director of Programming
Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT)
@ErinSaltman
erin@gifct.org

Dr. Erin Saltman is the Director of Programming at the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT). She was formerly Facebook's Head of Counterterrorism and Dangerous Organizations Policy for Europe, the Middle East and Africa. As a practitioner, she works with multi-sector stakeholders building strategic counterterrorism and counter extremism programs online in partnership with international tech companies and NGOs. Dr. Saltman's background and expertise includes both white supremacy and Islamist extremist processes of radicalization within a range of regional and socio-political contexts. Her research and publications focus on the evolving nature of online extremism and terrorism, gender dynamics within violent extremist organizations and youth radicalization. Previous roles include senior research and program positions at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD Global), where she remains a Research Fellow.

Tasnim Mahmoud Sammak

PhD Candidate
Monash University
@SammakTasnim
tasnim.sammak@monash.edu

Tasnim Mahmoud Sammak is a PhD candidate in Education at Monash University, Naarm (Melbourne). Her research interests include Muslim political subjectivities, imaginaries and visceralities across the intersections of race and gender. She engages in counter-storytelling work that documents the learning journeys of politically active Muslims who are of the 9/11 Generation. She is a teaching associate at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, Monash Faculty of Education and has worked as a research assistant on the Children of Islamophobia research project for the Centre of Islamic Studies and Civilisation at Charles Sturt University.

Bart Schuurman
Associate Professor
Institute of Security and Global Affairs, Leiden University
@BartSchuurman3
b.w.schuurman@fgga.leidenuniv.nl

Bart Schuurman is an Associate Professor at Leiden University's Institute of Security and Global Affairs (ISGA). His past work has looked contemporary terrorism and counterterrorism from a variety of perspectives, including the role of public support in determining counterterrorism success or failure, the causes of homegrown jihadism and the state of the field of research. His current research project studies the differences between individuals who radicalize to extremism but do not use terrorist violence, and those who do. This research is being carried out with Dr Sarah Carthy.

Ryan Scrivens
Assistant Professor
Michigan State University
@R_Scrivens
rscriv@msu.edu

Dr Ryan Scrivens is an Assistant Professor in the School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University. He is also an Associate Director at the International CyberCrime Research Centre at Simon Fraser University and a Research Fellow at the VOX-Pol Network of Excellence. He conducts problem-oriented interdisciplinary research with a focus on the local, national, and international threat of terrorism, violent extremism, and hatred as it evolves on- and offline. In the past five years, he has published over 30 peer-reviewed journal articles, books and book chapters, conference proceedings, and policy notes.

Dean Smith
PhD Candidate
University of St Andrews
ds232@st-andrews.ac.uk

Dean Smith is a PhD candidate at the University of St Andrews, Scotland. Dean's work involves the use of social psychological theory to understand complex socio-political phenomena, ranging from right wing extremism to police brutality. Dean's research focuses on a social psychological understanding of right-wing extremism and is supervised by Dr Kenneth Mavor.
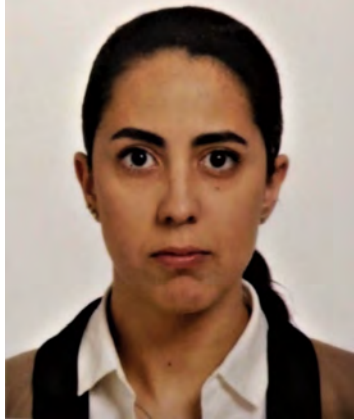
Inés Bolaños Somoano

PhD Researcher
European University Institute
@Inessomoano
ines.bolanos@eui.eu

Ines Bolaños Somoano is currently a PhD Researcher at the Social and Political Sciences Department of the European University Institute, Florence (Italy). Her research looks at EU counter terrorism policy, focusing on the emergence of Prevention as a policy field and the role of European practitioners in the (P)CVE sphere. She also writes on methodology issues such as remote interviewing and gender in institutional research.

Mukhamat Leberty Adi Surya

Member of the Indonesian National Police and
PhD Candidate, University of Queensland
m.surya@uq.net.au

Mukhamat Leberty Adi Surya is a member of the Indonesian National Police (INP). He last held the position of Head of the Criminal Psychology Division at INP Headquarters. He is now undertaking a PhD at the University of Queensland, Australia. In the third year of his thesis, "The Pathway in and out Processes of Indonesian Terrorists," he is interviewing 34 captured and released Indonesian terrorists. In 2019, he won the prestigious Hadi Soesastro Award from the Australian Embassy, worth $25,000 (AUD). The prize supported fieldwork that was successfully completed in 2020.

Paul Thomas

Professor
University of Huddersfield
@paul_thomas11
d.p.thomas@hud.ac.uk

Paul Thomas is Professor of Youth and Policy and Associate Dean (Research) in the Huddersfield Centre for Research in Education and Society (HudCRES) at the University of Huddersfield, UK. Paul's research focusses on how Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) and broader multiculturalist policies have been enacted by ground-level practitioners and experienced by communities. He is the author of *Responding to the Threat of Violent Extremism: Failing to Prevent* (2012). His latest book (with Miah and Sanderson) is '*Race', Space and Place in Northern England* (2020). Thomas and Grossman are currently working on North American replications of the Community Reporting Thresholds research.
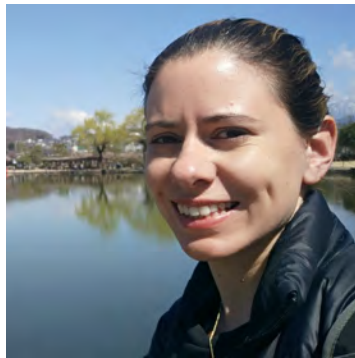
Haily Tran
PhD Candidate
@haily_tran
haily.tran@deakin.edu.au

Haily Tran is a researcher at Deakin University. Her research areas include social psychology and hate prevention. She is currently undertaking a PhD in masculinities and the far-right in Australia with a focus on Relative deprivation theory.

Jana Vanderwee
Research Masters Candidate
Macquarie University
jvanderwee@hotmail.com

Jana Vanderwee has a background in law enforcement and is completing her Master of Research at Macquarie University. Her research examines the Great Replacement conspiracy theory and its influence on three violent extremists, Brenton Tarrant, Patrick Crusius and John Earnest, using emotional and radical narrative analysis.

Matteo Vergani
Senior Research Fellow and Senior Lecturer
Deakin University
@teoverga
matteo.vergani@deakin.edu.au

Dr Matteo Vergani is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Deakin University, and Senior Research Fellow at the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation. Matteo's research focuses on the "ecosystem of hate", which includes discrimination, micro-aggressions, hate speech, hate crime and politically motivated violence. It looks at the factors that cause and accelerate hate, as well as the factors that contribute to prevent and mitigate hate, such as social cohesion and inclusion of diverse communities in multicultural societies. Matteo has completed numerous impact evaluations of P/CVE projects in Australia and South-East Asia.

Lise Waldek
Lecturer
Macquarie University
✉ lise.waldek@mq.edu.au

Lise Waldek is a lecture in Terrorism studies, Department of Security Studies and Criminology, Macquarie University. She has over 18 years professional experience in the security domain including roles in the UK Ministry of Defence, Home Office, and Defence Science and Technology Labs. Lise is chief investigator on research grants totalling over $890,000, including an ARC discovery grant investigating youth audience and online violent extremism; examinations of online right-wing extremism in Australia drawing on empirical datasets, and the design of the NSW COMPACT countering violent extremism grants program. Lise has fourteen peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters. She recently co-edited a special issue journal on 'Political Emotions and Ideological Performance' for *Emotions: History, Cultural, Society*. Her forthcoming co-authored book on youth engagement and violent extremism will be published by Cambridge University Press Elements Series in October 2021.

Jacob Ware
Adjunct Professor, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service
Georgetown University
🐦 @jacob_a_ware
✉ jware@cfr.org

Jacob Ware is an adjunct professor in the Center for Jewish Civilization at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, where he teaches a class on domestic terrorism and the international far-right and male supremacist extremist movements. He holds master's degrees from Georgetown's Security Studies Program and from the University of St Andrews.

Annemarie van de Weert
Researcher Early Detection Approach
Utrecht University of Applied Science
🐦 @AnnemarieAble
✉ Annemarie.vandeweert@hu.nl

Annemarie van de Weert is a researcher at the Research Centre for Social Innovation. For the Research group Access to Justice, she mapped out the process of early detection of youth extremism by primary care professionals.

Kamil Yilmaz

Postdoctoral Researcher
Swansea University
@yilmazkml
kamil.yilmaz@swansea.ac.uk

Dr Yilmaz works as a post-doctoral researcher at the Cyber Threats Research Centre (CYTREC), Swansea University, in the UK. He holds a PhD in political anthropology from Columbia University (2012) as well as multiple master's degrees in Criminal Justice, International Affairs and Political Anthropology. He is the author of "Disengaging from Terrorism: Lessons from the Turkish Penitents" (Routledge 2014). He is interested in Computational Social Science and his research interests include political violence, anthropology of terrorism, radicalization and deradicalization processes related to terrorism, terrorists' use of the Internet and malign influence operations.

Helen Young

Lecturer
Deakin University
helen.young@deakin.edu.au

Dr Helen Young is a Lecturer in Literary Studies in the School of Communication and Creative Arts, Deakin University, with research interests in histories of race and racism, medievalism, and popular culture. Helen has recently published in ELN, postmedieval, and the Journal of LGBT Youth, and has a forthcoming book (co-authored with Dr Kavita Mudan Finn), *Global Medievalisms: An Introduction* with Cambridge University Press.