THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EVIDENCE BASE FOR ASSESSING AND MANAGING THE RISK OF TERRORISM IN THE UK

by

MONICA SHIRLEY LLOYD

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Centre for Applied Psychology
School of Psychology
College of Life and Environmental Sciences
University of Birmingham
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STATEMENT OF PRIMARY AUTHORSHIP

I, Monica Shirley Lloyd confirm that I am the primary author for the following papers:

1. Lloyd, M. & Dean, C. (2015) The Development of Structured Guidelines for Assessing Risk in Extremist Offenders. *The Journal of Threat Assessment and Management, Vol 2*, Issue 1. 40-52. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/tam0000035

My co-author and I collaborated closely on this paper as co-developers of the ERG22+ in order to ensure that it was an accurate representation of our shared learning. The paper was authored by myself, and my co-author took the role of corresponding author as he remained in the employ of HMPPS after I had moved to the University of Birmingham as he was in a position to respond to any correspondence on behalf of HMPPS.

2. Lloyd, M, & Kleinot, P. (2017) Pathways into Terrorism: the Good the Bad and the Ugly. *The Journal of Psychoanalytic psychotherapy: Applications, Theory and Research.* http://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/AuImmw9CSqManxWgDW5y/full

My co-author and I collaborated on this paper after I spoke at a conference organised by the second author who is a qualified psychoanalytic psychotherapist and group analyst. Pamela authored the section headed *Psychoanalytic understanding.* I took the role of the primary corresponding author.

3. Lloyd, M. & Pauwels, A. (2021). Lone Actors as a Challenge for P/CVE. Radicalisation Awareness Network. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/radicalisation-awareness-network-ran/publications/lone-actors-challenge-pcve-july-2021_en

My co-author and I collaborated on this paper as experts for the Radicalisation Awareness Network. My co-author provided the material for the first part of the paper *Lone Actors: an overview* and I provided the material from '*What motivates lone-actor violence?'* that includes '*The psychology of lone actors'* and *'Identifying lone actors'.* We agreed the conclusions and recommendations between us, and I took responsibility for authoring the paper to our deadline.

Signed endorsements of these statements are included in the submission.

SYNOPSIS

This thesis tracks my learning journey from a dedicated three-year project developing a professional risk assessment methodology for terrorist offenders in HMPPS, through advising Prevent, to academia where I have continued to contribute to a growing evidence base for understanding the psychology of terrorism. As a co-I for CREST, I compiled a Directory of extremism risk assessment frameworks and networked with subject matter experts in the USA, Canada and Australia. This led to invitations to contribute chapters to the second edition of the International Handbook for Threat Assessment, and to the NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme on Terrorism Risk Assessment Instruments. As an expert member of the European Radicalisation Awareness Network I contributed two papers on countering extremism, one advising on ethical practice for mental health practitioners and the other on the increasing challenge of detecting lone actor terrorists pre-crime. The as yet unpublished paper is informed largely by my work as an expert witness for those charged under counterterrorist legislation and completes my learning journey to date. It exposes a gap between legal and psychological approaches to assessing terrorist risk with the potential for miscarriages of justice where national security is prioritised over individual rights.

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the parallel development of legal and psychological frameworks developed to manage the risk of terrorism following the introduction of counterterrorist (CT) law in the UK at the turn of the millennium. Twenty years on, data from CT Police Headquarters shows how readiness to prosecute is informed by the level of public alarm generated by geo-political events rather than terrorist intent per se. In contrast, professional assessment of risk is informed by the low baseline level of terrorist attacks, the multiple outcomes of radicalisation trajectories and the known threshold behaviours that signal intent. Two case studies are presented that illustrate the complexity of professional risk assessment and the jeopardies of pursuing charges within a risk-averse environment. The gap between legal and psychological understanding of risk is characterised as a gap between empirical and normative approaches, in which an evidence-based ethically informed approach is contrasted with a legal framework shaped by perceived threats to national security that are amplified by normative media opinion. A case is made for expert psychological advice to be made available to the Crown Prosecution Service to ensure that charges under CT law are only made where there is evidence of an intent to cause harm that is intended to advance an extremist cause, and that this is informed by a professional evidence-based risk assessment. Finally, the UK legal definition of terrorism is re-examined to address the tautology implied in the title of this paper.

Introduction

This paper examines two frameworks, legal and psychological, that currently provide the infrastructure for identifying and managing terrorist risk in the UK. The legal framework has evolved since 2000 to include counterterrorist (CT) legislation that was not in place during the Troubles in Northern Ireland and that has expanded in scope with successive legislation. It was informed at its inception by the learning that accrued from the Troubles and was introduced to fulfil the United Kingdom's evolving commitments to protect national and international security and individual rights. The new legislation was enacted in July 2000, a year before the attack on the twin towers in New York augured a new wave of international terrorism that brought it into immediate service. Over the next decade it also brought into custody a cohort of Terrorist Act (TACT) offenders convicted under the new CT legislation that was designed to detect and disrupt terrorist attacks before they happened. In turn this required forensic psychologists in HMPPS[1] to develop an evidence-based methodology for assessing the risk of harm in a range of TACT offenders with widely varying levels of engagement, intent and capability in order to manage them proportionately to their risk. This paper explores how these parallel legal and psychological frameworks have worked in practice in relation to the original goal of protecting both national security and individual rights.

Police statistics on CT convictions are now available for a twenty-year period[2] and are analysed here for what they tell us about their use, and potential overuse, in response to global geo-political events that threaten national security. The paper draws on research

[1] His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service.
[2] Source: Counter Terrorism Police Headquarters Coordination Centre (CTPHQ).

related to the prevalence of terrorist attacks and the psychology of the perpetrators, to calibrate more specifically the level of risk that the UK faces from terrorism and evaluate whether the application of CT legislation is proportionate to this risk and responsive to neurodiversity and individual rights.

The analysis is informed by the empirical work undertaken in HMPPS by the author as part of a small team that worked exclusively with TACT offenders between 2008-11 to develop the extremism risk assessment methodology (ERG22+)[3] that has become a common assessment framework for the criminal justice system in England & Wales. The author now works in an academic role at the University of Birmingham and continues to research and publish on extremist violence theory and practice, and to provide reports to court for those on CT charges.

The legal framework during the Troubles

Adherence to criminal law in response to terrorism was an important principle for successive governments during the Troubles in Northern Ireland, consistent with a 'criminalisation' model of terrorist management (Walker, 2007). Politicians were keen to signal to the public that perpetrators' claims to be part of an armed political struggle lacked legitimacy, and Margaret Thatcher resisted adopting specific anti-terrorist legislation that might legitimise the Provisional IRA's claim to be pursuing Republican Home Rule.

> *"There is no such thing as political bombing or political violence… We will not compromise on this… Crime is crime is crime. It is not political." Thatcher, 1981*

[3] Extremism Risk Guidance 22+ (Lloyd & Dean, 2015).

Historically, in Northern Ireland, in the absence of specific anti-terrorist legislation, a range of extraordinary powers were used to manage the sectarian violence that erupted in 1969. A Special Powers Act (1922) that permitted internment without trial was used from 1971-75 to detain those suspected of Republican activity, in significant numbers, and under the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1973, so-called 'Diplock' courts were introduced for non-jury trials that were presided over by a single judge for political and terrorism-related cases where juries could not be trusted to be non-partisan in their allegiance. With the end of internment, a shift of approach towards 'police primacy' and 'criminalisation' was implemented that allowed 'supergrass' evidence to convict terrorists (Walker, 2016). Under this system, arrested paramilitaries divulged the identities of their compatriots to the police in return for immunity from prosecution, with those so identified charged and tried in a Diplock court (Bonner, 1998). By the mid-1980s this system had collapsed over concerns about the credibility of such evidence, and judicial unease about their role in implementing government security policy. Balancing the power of the state with individual rights had become a pressing concern, and in 1995 the government invited Lord Lloyd to consider the merits of specific anti-terrorist legislation.[4]

> *"The Government's aim is to create legislation which is both effective and proportionate to the threat which the United Kingdom faces from all forms of terrorism - Irish, international and domestic- which is sufficiently flexible to respond to a changing threat, which ensures that individual rights are protected, and which fulfils the United Kingdom's international commitments. It recognises that it is not easy to strike the right balance in seeking to achieve these objectives."*

[4] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/265689/4178.pdf. para 8, Introduction.

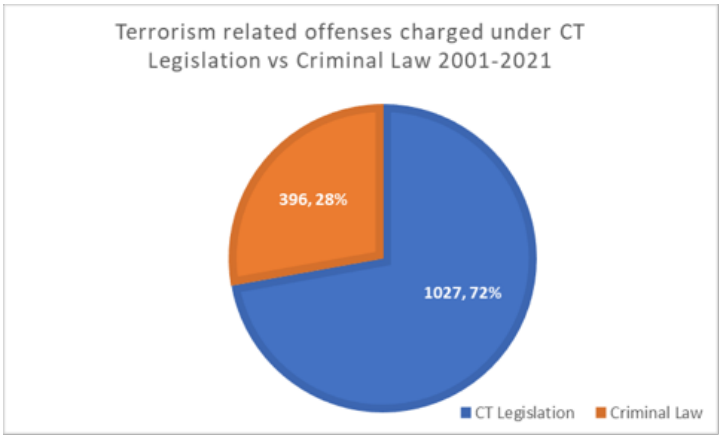
The Lloyd report confirmed a role for such legislation on a permanent basis, not only for ending the insurgency in Northern Ireland but also for managing the peace that would hopefully ensue and other potential forms of future terrorism, both international and domestic. Following the 1998 Good Friday agreement, the government published a consultation paper inviting comment.

The outcome of this consultation was the Terrorism Act 2000 (TA 2000) that defined terrorism for the first time and introduced CT legislation within a 'control' model of terrorist management that included measures to prevent and disrupt terrorist plotting through early police intervention. This was a clear departure from the ad hoc criminalisation that had dominated in Northern Ireland, and it informed the UK government's overarching counter-terrorism strategy CONTEST that was launched in 2006 under the four Ps of Prevent, Pursue, Protect, and Prepare. To ensure that this model of executive management did not undermine the Rule of Law, TA 2000 also established the role of an Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation to provide annual reports to Parliament.

Twenty years of Counterterrorist legislation

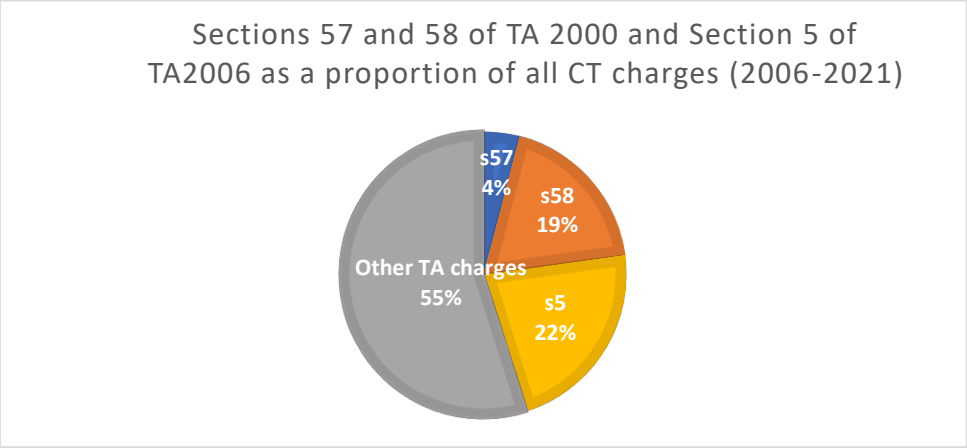
At the turn of the millennium terrorism was defined in TA 2000 for the first time as *"The use or threat [of action] designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and the use or threat is made for the purposes of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause",* although terrorism per se was not identified as an offence in law. In the twenty years since CT legislation was introduced, just over a quarter (28%) of terrorist charges have been brought under mainstream criminal law and almost three quarters (72%) under CT legislation.

FIGURE 1



Source: Tables A.05a and A.05b from the Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000: quarterly update to March 2022: annual data tables using CTPHQ Coordination Centre data

FIGURE 2 shows that from 2006, 45% of all CT charges are accounted for by three sections of CT legislation, Sections 57 and 58 of TA 2000 and Section 5 of TA 2006.



Source: Table A.05a from the Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000: quarterly update to March 2022: annual data tables using CTPHQ Coordination Centre data

TA 2000 Section 57 criminalises the "possession of an article in circumstances which give rise to a reasonable suspicion that the article is possessed for a purpose connected with the commission, preparation, or instigation of an act of terrorism".

TA 2000 Section 58 criminalises collecting, recording, possessing or viewing/ accessing by way of the internet "information of a kind likely to be useful to a person committing or preparing an act of terrorism".

TA 2006 Section 5 criminalises "engaging in any conduct… in preparation for giving effect to an intention… to commit or assist in the commission of an act of terrorism".

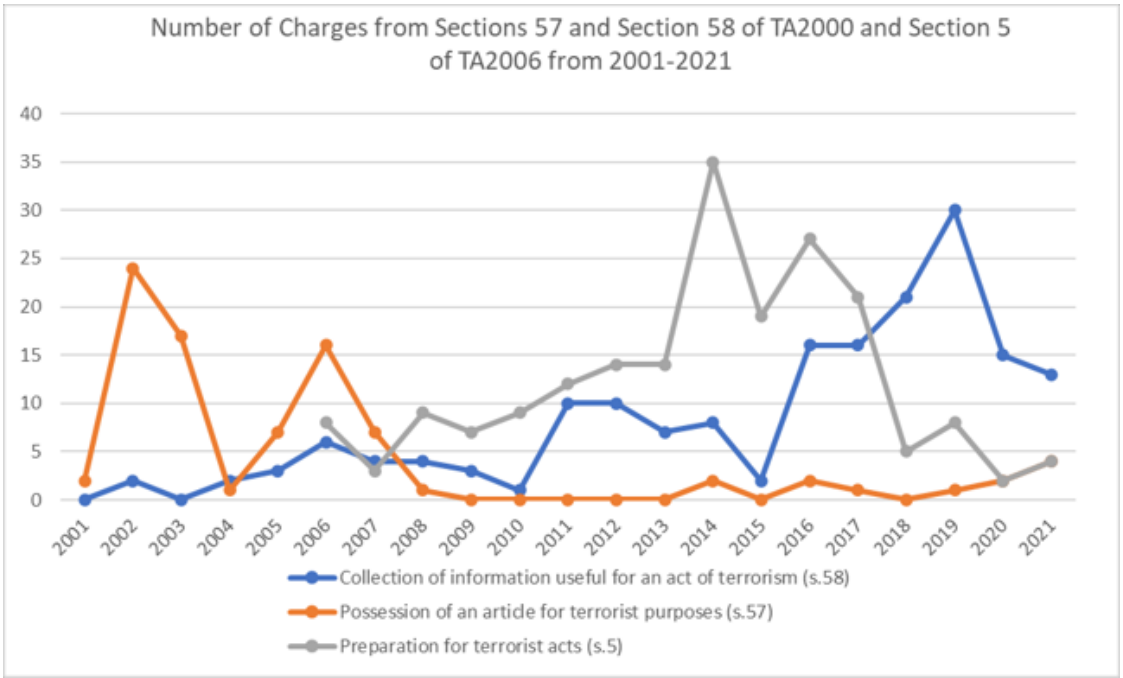
Under sections (Ss.) 57 and 58 the path to prosecution is laid without any plea being made and the evidential burden is placed on the accused to provide information to contradict the presumption that possession is connected with a terrorist purpose. S. 58 refers to the exchange of information as well as its possession, such that a person can be liable under both S. 57 and S. 58, and multiple charges are often made. For both these charges there is very little need for the CPS to prove anything as the content per se is incriminating. In contrast, S. 5 specifies terrorist intention that bears more directly on terrorist risk, but its assessment in the individual case is complex and requires expertise which is not readily available to the courts.

Prosecutorial discretion

Terrorist events are disproportionately impactful, and it has been proposed that the lack of a coherent code defining terrorist acts and terrorist intention allows the decision to prosecute to be influenced by the prevailing level of public alarm (Walker, 2017). An experiment carried out in the aftermath of 9/11 in the USA reported that New Yorkers estimated their chance of being hurt in a terror attack in the following year to be 20%, and for the average American to be 48% (Lerner et al., 2003). With such high perceived levels

of threat in the communities impacted by these crimes, public protection becomes paramount, and risk aversion the norm at all stages of the criminal justice system, from detection, through to prosecution and decision making about the threat of terrorist risk that individuals pose to society.

FIGURE 3



** Years run from March to the following March.*

Source: Table A.05a from the Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000: quarterly update to March 2022: annual data tables using CTPHQ Coordination Centre data

Figure 3 plots the number of charges under three problematic sections of CT legislation in the UK over the past twenty years. These statistics do not include known terrorist attackers as they either perished in their attacks or were charged under criminal law; they are limited to CT charges concerned exclusively with terrorist potential. As such, the trajectories under the different sections of this legislation over time reflect the prevailing level of perceived

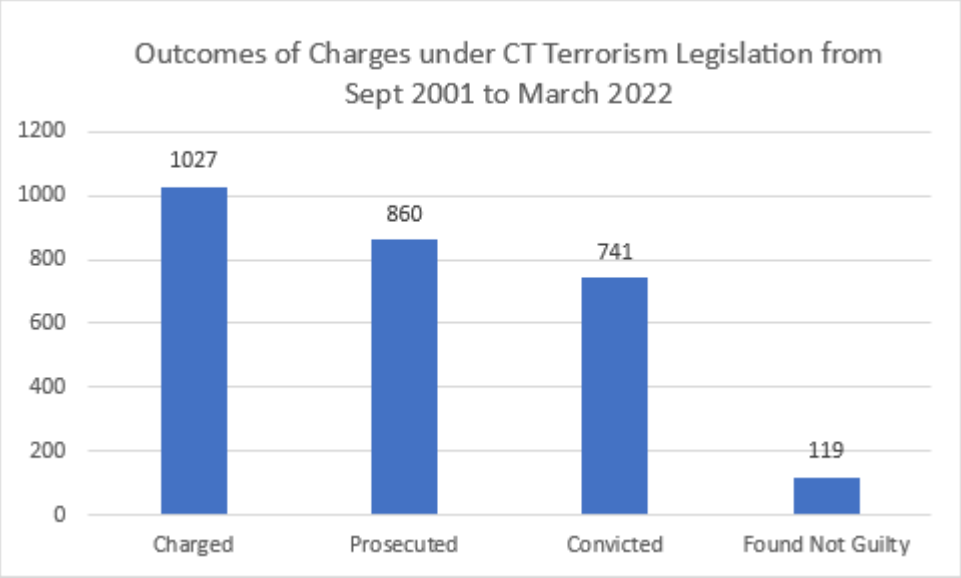
terrorist threat. The numbers are small, so it is difficult to draw substantive conclusions, but some broad trends are discernible.

In the period between 2001 and 2021 the use of S. 57 steadily diminished and of S. 58 steadily increased, reflecting the increasing dominance of the internet and digital devices that overtook the early role of pamphlets and audiocassettes as radicalising material. S. 57 charges peaked following the bombing of the London transport system in July 2005 which generated high levels of alarm among the public and within government. TA 2006 followed, with S. 5 introducing the concept of terrorist intention, and within a year overtaking both Ss. 57 and 58 on a trajectory that tracked the rise and fall of ISIS in the Middle East (2013-2017). This is likely to be because terrorist intention was hard to deny by those travelling to Syria to join what the British government had declared was a proscribed organisation. After ISIS fell, a series of high-level terrorist attacks followed between 2015-17 on the continent of Europe, and between 2017-19 in the UK. With this high level of threat and new smart phones for downloading and sharing digital material, prosecution under S. 58 regained its prominence. Its focus on the possession of digital material that could be useful to a terrorist was easier to prove than terrorist intention beyond reasonable doubt, and S. 58 charges peaked in 2019 before dropping dramatically before the pandemic shut down the opportunity for terrorist attacks.

Figure 4 shows that there is a relatively high rate of attrition for charges brought under CT legislation, which suggests that they are difficult for the prosecution to prove and for juries to adjudicate. A major problem for CT legislation pre-crime is that it relies on police intelligence that does not have the evidential status of witness testimony in providing proof

beyond reasonable doubt (Walker 2007). Figure 4 shows the attrition in numbers at different stages of the criminal justice process from charge to conviction. The figures show that of the total 1,027 charged over the last twenty years 72% were convicted, compared to a broadly stable conviction rate of 87% for mainstream criminal charges pre-pandemic.[5]

FIGURE 4



Source: Table A.05a from the Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000: quarterly update to March 2022: annual data tables using CTPHQ Coordination Centre data

Normative media opinion and potential bias

Terrorist offences are high profile and newsworthy, attracting significant media attention that fuels mainstream beliefs about perpetrators, the threat they pose, their impact on victims and what the consequences should be for their crimes. This provides fertile ground

5 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/802032/criminal-justice-statistics-quarterly-december-2018.pdf

for risk aversion in which those responsible for risk decisions do not want to be the ones who miss or under-estimate a risk that results in serious harm, or that fails to assuage public alarm. Assessment therefore carries significant political, organisational and reputational risks for assessors, judges and juries who are all exposed to normative media opinion, and where assessors must maintain a keen awareness of unconscious biases to ensure objectivity, proportionality and transparency in their analysis (Dean & Lloyd, 2022). Preparation and guidance is therefore necessary for juries and others responsible for terrorist risk decision making to ensure that they understand the low base rate prevalence of terrorist offending, the concept of multi-finality, the central role of intent and the influence of unconsious bias and risk aversion (see later).

Reputational risk, neuro-immaturity and the decision to charge

Case 1 concerns the prosecution of two boys for counterterrorist offences, for one of whom the author acted as an expert witness. Two 16-year-old school friends had been encouraging Muslims through their Instagram postings to fight jihad and seek martyrdom, attracting a significant number of followers. Their ambitions were not to join ISIS but to liberate Syria through defeating ISIS and deposing Assad, and they had identified an organisation (HTS)[6] that shared these goals and which they planned to join when they were older. Their plans to be heroes and saviours were little more than adolescent fantasies which they had no capacity to carry out, but they had the misfortune of coming to the attention of their Headteacher ten months after the Manchester arena bombing that had been perpetrated by a former pupil from the same school. In this highly charged context

15 CT charges were brought against each boy. The difficulties of prosecuting and adjudicating this number of charges proved considerable. The juvenile court felt that the seriousness and complexity of the charges meant that the boys should be tried by jury in an adult court, which postponed their trial by three years. In an adult court the jury found them not guilty on eight of the 15 charges but were unable to decide on the other seven. The judge discharged the jury and scheduled a second trial for the following year. In their opening statement the prosecution made it clear that *"an actual or perceived Just Cause is no defence against charges of encouraging terrorism or disseminating terrorist publications, firstly because CT law does not specify that terrorism is limited to countries of any type of government. The definition of terrorism extends to any military activity aimed at bringing down a foreign government, even where that activity is approved of by the UK government. Secondly because action intended to advance a political, religious or ideological cause which involves the use of firearms or explosives "is terrorism" whatever its intended purpose".* This speaks to the title of this paper, which draws attention to the tautology of declaring something to be so because you have earlier pronounced it to be so (see R v Gul, 2013).

The two boys were now adult men who bore little resemblance to the juveniles they had been four years earlier. Of the seven outstanding charges each faced in their second trial, one defendant was found guilty of four and the other of three. Sentencing was adjourned for post-sentence reports and five months later each was sentenced to a 24-month community order, a 50 hours' Rehabilitation Requirement, 150 hours unpaid work and the forfeiture of their computers. This tally of community punishments does not reference the five years they had waited for the criminal justice system to decide their fate, during which

it had been effectively impossible for them, while facing terrorist charges, to attend college or gain meaningful employment. Neither were they able to access mentoring, support, or guidance. It is evident, with the benefit of hindsight, that prosecution was the least effective way of protecting the public and managing the low level of risk these boys presented. It was also, arguably the most difficult and protracted route to take when they could have received timely religious mentoring and guidance through Prevent. It is not hard to see the influence of risk aversion and reputational risk to the school, CT police, juvenile court, CPS and judiciary in the decisions that were made.

By way of contrast, in the Netherlands under an inquisitorial court system the public prosecutor is able to draw on specialist advice from police officers, probation workers and (for juveniles) the Council for Child Protection to inform the decision to prosecute. These parties can advise the public prosecutor to request a comprehensive forensic evaluation from the Netherlands Institute for Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology (NIFPP) to provide a short evaluation and advise whether a full mental health and/or risk assessment should be prepared for the court (Van der Wolf, 2022). Given the specialist nature of terrorist risk assessment, access to advice pre-charge could potentially discourage proceeding with charges that are disproportionate to the risk of harm, difficult to prosecute, not in the public interest and that fail to safeguard the rights of defendants.

Neuro-immaturity

Research into adolescent brain maturity has been increasingly influenced by advances in cognitive neuroscience. It has long been known that adolescent behaviour is characterised by risk-taking, sensation-seeking and impulsivity, and this is now understood to be the

product of a developmental asynchrony between an easily aroused reward system in the lower brain that inclines toward sensation seeking, and a more slowly maturing self-regulatory system in the upper brain that controls and manages these inclinations (Steinberg, 2008). These two systems have been evidenced in a large study of over 5,000 male and female adolescents across 11 countries spanning a range of cultures. In this study, sensation-seeking increased in late teens (peaking around 18-19) and decreased thereafter, while self-regulation increased steadily at a slower pace throughout adolescence and into the early to mid-20s (Steinberg et al., 2018). These separate trajectories are thought to be associated with a burst of pubertal hormones that drive sensation seeking, and slower incremental gains in self-regulation that accrue through learning, creating a gap during teenage years when self-regulation lags behind sensation seeking (Luciana, Wahlstrom, Porter, & Collins, 2012). Further research suggests that self-regulation in young people is affected by the strength of the emotions involved, and that control is more easily achieved in 'cold' than 'hot' circumstances that rouse feelings of injustice and anger (Botdorfa, Rosenbauma, Patrianakosa, Steinberga & Cheina, 2017).

With the passion of youth, the defendant in **Case 1** felt that he should do something to help the Syrian people. Four years later he referred to their plans at this time as *"a fantasy"... "You don't really have that life experience to know much about it, so it's more instinctive, you … just want to help, without really thinking."* Decisions are made in the moment. When asked about his thoughts on martyrdom he said *"We saw it as an honourable thing at the time… we didn't really appreciate the death part of it, we just thought like, oh Martyrdom! Martyrdom! ... but obviously you'd be dead if you were a martyr."* Other relevant features of adolescence are the pull of excitement, challenge and adventure and the overriding

importance of peer approval, such that refusing to take part in risky behaviour with friends raises anxiety about being rejected by them (Lamb & Sim, 2013). The defendant in **Case 1** explained that he and his co-defendant were a strong influence on each other and that each wanted to retain the approval of the other. *"If we were just on our own it wouldn't have got that far. You think if he's doing it, I'll do it as well as he's my friend."* Such responses are typical of adolescents when executive control is not fully developed, and decision making is driven more by emotions than a considered balance of risks and benefits.

This is important given the proportion of those under 24 years of age who are referred to Pursue and Prevent each year. From CTPHQ statistics 43% of those charged in 2022 were aged 24 or younger. A direct comparison with Prevent referrals is not possible as Prevent statistics in England & Wales report the numbers in age cohorts of under 15, 15 -20 and for each subsequent decade. However, the combined figures for those aged 20 or younger constituted 47% of the total number referred to Prevent from March 2020 to April 2021 (the last year for which statistics are available), 51% of those discussed at a Channel panel and 60% of those who were adopted as Channel cases.[7]

In the Netherlands, adolescent criminal law was introduced in 2014 based on *"the dual rationale of accountability (neuroscientific evidence that the brain is maturing until around the age of 24) and prevention….to provide an effective and offender-oriented manner of sentencing which does justice to the committed offence, and which takes into account the personal circumstances of the offender, including his/her developmental phase."* (Van der

[7] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/individuals-referred-to-and-supported-through-the-prevent-programme-april-2020-to-march-2021 accessed 10/01/23

Wolf, 2022. p. 204). This initiative acknowledges the importance of doing justice to the offence as well as to the young perpetrator and recognises that the pull of excitement, challenge and adventure can be stronger than their grasp of global issues and the implications of their decision-making. This underscores the value of guidance from Prevent, forbearance on the part of Pursue and access to expert advice pre-charge.

Professional assessment of terrorist intent in the UK

The central task of the forensic assessment of terrorist risk is to distinguish between those who may be engaged with extremist ideology but who lack terrorist intent from those who are able and willing to cross this threshold. Following conviction, this task becomes the provenance of correctional professionals in HMPPS that includes forensic psychologists, offender managers and security staff. By this stage the offender has been through extended police custody and courts in conditions of high security, relationships with co-defendants or liked-minded social media contacts have been ruptured, and the balance of push and pull factors has shifted dramatically. The individual is facing a bleak future, creating a potential de-radicalisation window for correctional staff to work within. For mainstream crimes of violence full information of the crime is made available to HMPPS in the form of a 'prosecution bundle', but where a terrorist offender is convicted of pathway behaviours assessment of the scale of the risk is more difficult as a range of other possible outcomes might have prevailed had their pathway run its course.

Bartlett & Miller (2012) matched al-Qaeda influenced terrorist case studies from Canada and Europe with a control group of twenty of their associates who shared their radical beliefs but who had not engaged in terrorist violence. The radicals were interviewed to identify what they had in common with those who had committed terrorist offences, and what set them apart. Both groups shared a grievance against the West and a desire for an Islamic caliphate, but the radicals believed that violence should be defensive and confined to a 'just war'. In contrast, the terrorists believed in their supremacy and the decadence of the West, rejected their host society and its laws, lacked critical thinking, and embraced a romantic notion of restoring their honour through violence.

In the Bartlett & Miller (2012) study, a group of 'radicals' shared some of the beliefs and objectives of their associates who went on to carry out terrorist offences. It is highly likely that, in the UK, if the radical views of the associates had come to the attention of the authorities, they would have fallen foul of CT legislation, when the passage of time has verified their law abidance. In **Case 2** below, for whom the author again acted as an expert witness, the defendant had maintained an obsessional interest in jihadi propaganda over an eight-year period in the prime of his life,

Case 2. A 32-year-old Asian male with high grade autism was convicted on two 2 counts of Collecting Terrorist Material, contrary to S. 58 of the Terrorism Act 2006. He was radicalised online in his final year at university by a radical Muslim cleric and this became a solitary, intense and all-absorbing interest consistent with his autism. Over the next eight years he spent long periods of his time in his bedroom in his parental home obsessively searching the internet for jihadi material. When ISIS began posting graphic hostage beheading videos in 2015 these provided a strong sensory reward (also consistent with his autism) and became his new obsession. His only identity and social contact outside of his parental family was his online identity and a few social media contacts who shared his radical interests. This virtual world was less challenging to him than the real world, but he felt bad about himself for his addiction to graphic violence, and for not being religiously observant or having the courage to act on his beliefs. His online life was exposed when his phone came into the custody of the police following a road traffic accident, and his secret life ended in shame for himself and his high-achieving parental family, with the tragic outcome that his mother suffered a fatal heart attack on the first day of his trial. He was sentenced to 2.5 years in prison with the requirement to register with the police on his release for an extended period of 10 years.

during which there was ample opportunity for him to travel to Syria as a foreign fighter or carry out a low-tech attack in the UK. Neither of these opportunities were taken as he lacked both the motivation and the capacity for action. Effectively his pathway stalled, and he was relieved when his obsessive online behaviour was brought to a close.

A recent Ministry of Justice publication reports a marked difference in the profiles and risk levels of convicted TACT offenders who radicalised online compared to those who radicalised offline (Kenyon, Binder & Baker-Beall, 2022). **Case 2** fits the profile of those who are both radicalised online and convicted of online offences, who have few social connections and are more likely to display signs of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), depression or personality difficulties. Although some in this group devised plots with the potential to cause serious harm, these rarely progressed beyond the planning stage and were the most likely to have been foiled. In contrast, those who radicalised offline were older, part of a group of four or more with both a violent offending history and a violent TACT index offence. This is a very significant contribution to a growing evidence base that suggests that those who are the easiest to detect because of their online presence are also the least likely to constitute a risk to the public.

Assessing intent pre-crime

There are several reasons why assessing the likelihood of a terrorist offence before it takes place is difficult. Firstly, it is very hard to predict a rare event, and a first terrorist offence has a very low base rate in the general population, with an attendant high risk of identifying false positives (Cooke and Michie, 2014; Hart & Cooke, 2013; Lloyd, 2019).

> *"The state pursuit of false positives not only diverts scarce resources from targeting true threats but also results in unfair harassment, persecution, and even prosecution of these false positives."* (Sageman, 2021, p.302).

Sageman has calculated that for Western countries[8] between 2000-2019 the number of Muslim neo-jihadis amount to less than 1 (0.84) per one million Muslims per year, about a tenth of the general homicide rate of European countries. Secondly, the evidence is based on intelligence rather than full information that includes direct contact with the offender, and thirdly the exercise is often confounded by the multifinality of terrorist pathways.

Multifinality

This concept is central to a proportionate assessment of terrorist risk. There are self-evidently many more individuals who engage with a political, religious, or ideological cause than become terrorists. This issue of multiple and diverging outcomes makes it difficult to know whether an individual possessing information that could be useful to a terrorist, or engaging in a social media dialogue about an ideological cause will retain this interest over time or ever act on it. In a survey of adult Muslims in the UK in 2016, 4% sympathised with terrorist attacks in support of a political cause either completely or to some extent, which equates to about 40,000 Muslims with extremist views who could potentially act on them but who evidently had not.[9] Estimates about future risk need to bear in mind the very low prevalence baseline for terrorist offending and the widely under-appreciated and under-reported role of protective factors. The vast majority of those who engage with a political, religious or ideological cause are protected from carrying out a terrorist attack by a good enough life, positive family relationships, hope for their future, a capacity for critical reasoning, self-esteem, identification with British society and an appreciation of British

[8] Australia, Britain, Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Austria and Canada.

[9] Source: ICM Survey of Muslims for Policy Exchange (May-July 2016): interviews with 3,040 Muslims aged 18+

values and the rule of law (Bartlett & Miller, 2012; Knight, Woodward, & Lancaster, 2017; Rottweiler & Gill, 2022; Wolfowicz, Litmanovitz, Weisburd, & Hasisi, 2020).

Equifinality

The issue of equifinality creates the biggest challenge for understanding terrorist pathways as it reflects the finding that there is not one single pathway to a terrorist outcome. It is now understood that not all terrorist pathways involve radicalisation (McCauley and Moskalenko, 2014) and that only a small number of those who are apparently 'radicalised' will carry out a terrorist offence (Hafez & Mullins, 2015). Equifinality applies to the true positives who complete a terrorist pathway but by different routes, the most lethal of which is that taken by socially isolated lone actors with mental health difficulties and/or prior criminality and a level of capability that allows them to keep under the radar and carry out attacks without warning (Jasko, Lafree, & Kruglanski, 2017; Radicalisation Network, 2021; Rahman, Meloy, & Bauer, 2019). The value of examining equifinal trajectories is that these pathways can then be reverse engineered to identify how the mindset of intent developed in each case and what threshold behaviours accompanied this.

Three equifinal pathways to terrorism

The three pathways outlined below provide such insights. They are the moral/political, criminal, and clinical (Lloyd, 2017). The perpetrators were all convicted under criminal law rather than CT law as they showed both sustained terrorist intent and capability. The first two pathways were evidenced in the early empirical work with TACT offenders between 2008-11, and the clinical pathway has been evidenced from criminological research and the

author's court work. These three pathways align with previous scholarship that has identified three broad typologies of terrorists: crusaders, criminals and crazies (Hacker, 1976) and political terrorism, (organised) crime-linked terrorism and pathological (crazy) terrorism (Schmid & de Graaf, 1982). Their pathways are referred to below as moral/political, criminal and clinical. They are not mutually exclusive however, and lone and group actors straddle all three, though lone actors are over-represented in the clinical pathway.

1. A moral/political pathway

This is driven by the perceived injustices experienced by those who believe themselves, or those with whom they identify, to be directly or indirectly victimised by government and compelled to avenge their mistreatment in a noble cause. In Islamist ideology Muslims see themselves as persecuted by a decadent and exploitative West despite their moral superiority, and in far-right ideology white European males see themselves as displaced by immigrants and robbed of their birthright to jobs and a good life, despite their gender and racial superiority. In both these narratives the persecuted group see themselves as mistreated by those who are inferior to them, providing them with a moral/political/ religious obligation to assert their supremacy and achieve redress.

Those in custody when the first empirical work was undertaken were mainly group actors who had come together to share their grievances and ideological narratives, fuel their passion for change, forge bonds as a band of brothers, fantasise about becoming heroes and plot their attacks. Their radicalisation took place in the context of apparent western aggression against Muslims in Afghanistan and Iraq, framed by an extreme Islamist ideology

inspired and funded by al Qaeda and promoted by radical Muslim clerics. This narrative was amplified within clandestine groups that created identity fusion, reinforced their shared ideology and locked in loyalty (Lloyd & Dean, 2015). Our work in custody confirmed that those on this pathway were seeking to empower themselves against the west by adopting a Salafi-Islamist worldview in which they avenged the injustices against Muslims as soldiers and saviours. This was the avowed position of the 7/7 attackers as recorded by videotape prior to their bombing of the London transport system and was also the position of the fertilizer bomb plotters whose plan to carry out a large bomb attack in London was thwarted two years later. None of these young men on this moral/political pathway had a previous history of violence and overcame their inhibitions about crossing this threshold over time through a gradual process of 'socialisation into terrorism' (Roberts & Horgan, 2003).

2. A criminal pathway

In contrast, criminal engagement with jihadi ideology was adopted much more quickly and uncritically than in the moral/political pathway. For those with a criminal history, grooming was not necessary to develop attitudes supportive of offending. Their polarised thinking already divided society into criminals and 'straight-goers' with the latter devalued and now labelled as 'kuffar' or unworthy (Basra, Neumann, & Brunner, 2016; Lloyd & Kleinot, 2017). By engaging with jihadi ideology, they were able to deploy their criminal capability in a noble cause and launder their past offending by a righteous affiliation. Those inspired by al Qaeda operated in groups, though more recently lone attacks have been encouraged by both far right and ISIS leaderships (see Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2021). A recent criminological study with access to the closed source data of 49 lone actors in the UK

between 1995 and 2015 identified that almost half (49.7%) had a versatile criminal history, 45% a violent past, 29% a history of 'deviant sexual interests' and 22.5% a history of substance misuse (Gill, Corner, McKee, Hitchen, & Betley, 2022). The authors concluded that *"our interpretation is that lone-actor terrorism is often just the latest manifestation of a criminal career and/or violent past."* A similar conclusion was reached by Wolfowicz et al., (2020) from a large meta-analysis across 57 OECD countries of risk and protective factors for terrorist violence that included lone and group actors. The largest effect sizes were for traditional criminological factors such as low self-control, thrill seeking/risk taking, low law legitimacy, deviant peers, criminal history, and police contact. Similarly, Simi, Sporer, & Bubolz (2016) concluded from in-depth life-history interviews with 44 former members of violent white supremacist groups that adverse childhood and adolescent experiences preceded conduct problems and subsequent participation in violent extremism. They state that *"violent extremists are a heterogeneous population of offenders whose life histories resemble members of conventional street gangs and generic criminal offenders"* (Simi et al., 2016, p. 537).

3. A clinical pathway

In this third pathway are those with clinical conditions that create a susceptibility to engagement in political, religious or ideological causes. This is a pathway typically taken by lone actors. Several criminological studies have confirmed that lone actors are up to ten times more likely than group actors to have a diagnosed mental disorder (Corner & Gill, 2015; Corner, Gill and Mason, 2015; Gruenewald, Chermak, & Freilich, 2013). Clemmow et al. (2020) identified four broad clusters of lone actors: one entirely idiopathic and accompanied by social isolation, a second associated with a mental disorder that creates a

susceptibility to radicalisation, a third involving situational stressors and psychological distress, and a fourth providing an outlet for criminality and violence.

> **Case 3.** A far right 33-year-old male in Norway killed 77 people including 69 teenagers on the island of Utøya, in opposition to the country's policy of multiculturalism. His manifesto conflated his personal grievances with broader political and social grievances, calling for the deportation of all Muslims from the European continent and for the restoration of patriarchy. He cultivated an image of hyper-masculinity and was diagnosed with narcissistic personality disorder, describing himself as "*Europe's most perfect Knight since WWII…future Regent of Norway," and w*hen arrested claimed that he was the leader of an (imaginary) group who were carrying out attacks in other parts of the country. A reviewer of his biography said, "*His is a story of family dysfunction, professional and sexual failure, grotesque narcissism and apocalyptic delusions."*
> (Buruma, 2015)

The first of Clemmow's clusters, the idiopathic cluster is illustrated in **Case 3.** The mindset of this man was the product of pathological narcissism and an intense commitment to an 'extreme over-valued belief' that was curated over time to protect against threat, boost fragile esteem and meet authoritarian/ fundamentalist personality needs, a syndrome more akin to paranoid fixation than psychotic delusion (Rahman, Meloy, & Bauer, 2019). The second cluster refers to those with clinical conditions such as psychotic delusional disorders, developmental disorders such as ASD and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and personality disorder, all of which can constitute a susceptibility to extremist narratives. The third cluster are those with high levels of psychological distress associated with multiple and complex needs, whose life choices are diminishing and who turn to martyrdom as their options diminish. The fourth cluster is associated with criminality that includes sensation seeking, grievance, lack of critical reasoning, substance misuse and a chaotic and increasingly unsustainable lifestyle (Raine, 2014).

Lone actors fail to embed in a group, especially when they are driven by an individual pathology and a single issue that is not shared by others, but group actors also experience troubled lives. Corner and Gill (2020) explored the presence of psychological distress from 91 group actor autobiographies and concluded that although they were troubled before joining an extremist group, their levels of distress doubled after they joined and did not return to pre-engagement levels after they disengaged. Koehler (2022) suggests that this deleterious impact on mental health is the outcome of the dysfunctional relationship between the 'problem' that drives engagement and the 'solution' of joining an extremist group, which although it confers a sense of identity and agency fails to deliver the promised vision of the future but instead creates further conflict, stress, and despair.

A recent systematic review of mental health in a large mixed sample (1,705) of lone and group actors (including closed source data), found that mental disorders were present in 17%, but that discrimination, trauma, a sense of threat, relationship problems, unemployment, homelessness and substance misuse constituted further jeopardies (Gill et al., 2021). From what we know about the mental health and criminality of lone actors it is likely that between them they account for a large proportion of those with complex needs in this study. However, this does not detract from their terrorist capability, and to the extent that their distress is accompanied by desperation and suicidal intent this can potentially render them more lethal than those without mental health issues (Bouzar & Martin, 2016; Corner & Gill, 2019; Hoffmann et al., 2011; Ilardi, 2013, Simi et al., 2016).

Threshold behaviours and mindset

So, what do equifinal pathways tell us about threshold behaviours? Since the first matched control study of Bartlett & Miller (2012), Knight et al. (2017) have compared violent extremists with non-violent extremists of mixed ideologies and confirmed that the former felt a personal responsibility to act, severed previous connections with family and friends and attended a number of mosques, presumably actively searching for those who shared their passion and readiness for violence. Criminological studies have confirmed that those who cross this threshold are significantly more likely to have been exposed to severe violence and bullying, have low self-esteem and to have underachieved. Wolfowicz et al., (2020) in his large meta-analysis identified criminality, a sense of threat (paranoia), superiority (narcissism), and an authoritarian/fundamentalist personality as prominent risk factors, with protective influences being political satisfaction, trust, depression, out-group friendships; school bonding and performance, parental involvement, and institutional trust; with the strongest single protector identified as 'law abidance'.

From the threat assessment literature in the USA, a core of threat indicators have been validated from retrospective studies that have 'post-dicted' true positive cases using the officially validated TRAP-18[10] risk framework.[11] These are pathway planning and last resort behaviours, a warrior identity, ideological framing of grievances, fixated beliefs, and changes in thinking and emotion that manifest in stridency and dogmatism, loss of humour and warmth, and rejection of those who do not share their views (Challacombe & Lucas,

[10] Terrorist Radicalization Assessment Protocol ©Reid Meloy
[11] https://www.rma.scot/research/rated/

2018; Meloy, Hoffmann, Roshdi, & Guldiman, 2014; Meloy et al., 2019; Challacombe & Patrick, 2022). The warrior identity has also been confirmed by Karmani (2009) in what he termed 'vanguardism' from his interviews with Islamist terrorist offenders, and Saucier, Akers, Shen-Miller, Knežević & Stankov, (2009) have described how a zealous adherence to ideology is weaponised by militancy. Such features of behaviour and mindset signal intent and should therefore be taken as indicators of the risk of terrorist harm.

Discussion and Conclusion

Firstly, it is worth considering to what extent the goals of the public consultation on the Lloyd report (1996) have been met. These were to create legislation that was both effective and proportionate to the threat which the UK faced from all forms of terrorism, sufficiently flexible to respond to changing threats, and protective of individual rights. Over twenty years of CT legislation in the UK, the threat to national security has evolved from group based al Qaeda inspired attacks on home soil to ISIS inspired foreign fighting and nation building in Syria, followed by low-tech lone attacks on home soil as the fortunes of ISIS declined. A reciprocal threat has also emerged from the far right in the form of a range of ideologies and conspiracy theories that have been developed, catalysed, and disseminated by means of the internet and social media. CT legislation has been responsive to the changing role of digital media, but arguably at the expense of individual rights to an extent that is hard to quantify without further research. Although CT legislation has been described as a model of control rather than criminalisation, this is a false dichotomy in that a significant number of benign acts have been criminalised in CT law that are not evidenced as threshold behaviours in the academic literature. The criminalisation of possession in Ss.

57 and 58 has allowed the terrorist label to be applied even when the court is aware that there is no terrorist intent, and S. 5 can be applied even to those who have actively desisted, thereby undermining the ability of correctional practitioners to address risk effectively.

This paper has identified a gap between normative assumptions that are reflected in CT law and empirical forensic assessment. Under the Dutch system, Professor Van der Wolf is able to sit in court as a deputy judge alongside three legally qualified judges. Drawing from this experience he comments, *"I am often struck by the ease with which judges assess dangerousness intuitively – and extend sentences accordingly – as if the vast body of knowledge from decades of risk assessment research is not of relevance, if only as a test for their intuition."* (Van der Wolf, 2022, p.1). This is evidenced in the gap in the UK between the empirical assessment of terrorist risk and a legal framework that is open to the influence of normative media opinion that embodies hostility and intransigence towards those on terrorist charges.

Over the last twenty years 1,027 individuals have been charged with terrorist offences of whom 84% were prosecuted and 72% found guilty. Whatever the outcome, all carry the stigma of 'terrorist' for life. It is not possible to know how many had already spontaneously disengaged or would have done so had their pathway run its course. Prevalence statistics suggest that disengagement would have been the most likely outcome. The CT legal framework does not take account of the low base rate of terrorist offending, nor the multifinality of terrorist pathways or the immaturity, neurodiversity, or the mental health of those who adopt ideology without terrorist intent. It remains the case that a lack of expert evidence and a reliance on a legal framework that is not evidence-based creates

significant scope for miscarriages of justice. A consequence is that post-conviction, correctional work is impeded by the need to contain and manage the grievance this creates in individuals, their families and their communities who are at risk of losing confidence in government and the rule of law. If this is confirmed by further research, it constitutes an urgent call for reform of CT law and practice to ensure that it aligns more closely with evidence-based forensic assessment.

To answer the question "When is a Terrorist not a terrorist?" it is worth reflecting on the TA 2000 legal definition: *"The use or threat [of action] designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and the use or threat is made for the purposes of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause."* To the extent that CT legislation specifies the behaviours that are criminalised, those found guilty by a jury can legitimately be viewed as Terrorists in law. But it remains the case that among those captured by this legislation are those, as in **Cases 1** and **2** above, who had no wish to influence the UK government or to intimidate the public. Such individuals may have become entrained in extremist ideology and incriminated themselves within CT law, but they did not intentionally place themselves outside of the rule of law. Their interest in jihadi ideology met other needs for them and the label of terrorist does not fit; neither does it support correctional work which is built on a shared understanding of the motivation for the offence between the assessor and the offender in order for it to be effectively addressed. Experience has shown that the first barrier to building an effective working relationship is the label 'Terrorist' itself.

Early contact with TACT offenders indicated that this label was contentious. It was considered to apply only to those who were prepared to mount large scale attacks against civilians on home soil, and few of those convicted under CT law recognised themselves in this description. Most were at pains to describe how they would only attack those representing government or military targets, and for many this was limited to targets abroad. Some eschewed any involvement in violence at all, though they were prepared to support in other ways. Others argued that their objectives were benign because they did not wish to establish an Islamic caliphate in the UK. Indeed, at this time few of the British TACT offenders interviewed had this as their goal, and some were actively trying to bring their family members to the UK because of the country's level of inclusivity extended to Muslims. Their grievance concerned not domestic policy but foreign policy in the form of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. This was in stark contrast to the few foreign national prisoners from Muslim countries in UK custody at this time whose main objective was to restore an Islamic Caliphate. As a result, two indicators were developed for the ERG22+ 'Harmful means to an end' and 'Harmful end objectives' to prompt clarification of who was at risk from the individual being assessed and whether he or she was prepared to embrace harmful means to advance their cause.

Finally, it has emerged from research that the concept of 'law abidance' plays a central role as a protective factor against terrorism as it is incompatible with terrorist intent. Since CT legislation has criminalised a number of behaviours that fall short of terrorist plotting, many are now finding themselves outside of the law who did not intentionally place themselves there. The issue of intent is central to risk assessment, in that an individual cannot carry out a terrorist attack without intending to do so, and it is important that this simple reality

is not obscured by legal rhetoric. In these circumstances the answer to the question of *"when is a Terrorist not a terrorist?"* then becomes "*when s/he has not intentionally placed themselves outside of the rule of law in order to advance their cause through violence".* A democratic pluralist society should be able to avoid criminalising behaviours that do not signal terrorist intent, and this paper suggests that there is scope for a better alignment between counterterrorist law and professional forensic assessment that is able to meet more effectively the twin goals of public protection and individual rights.

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The Development of Structured Guidelines for Assessing Risk in Extremist Offenders

Monica Lloyd
Birmingham University

Christopher Dean
National Offender Management Service, Interventions Services, HM Ministry of Justice, London, United Kingdom

This paper describes a methodology developed by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to assess risk and needs in convicted extremist offenders in England and Wales, and for the assessment of those offenders for whom there are credible concerns about their potential to commit such offences. A methodology was needed to provide an empirically-based systematic and transparent approach to the assessment of risk to inform proportionate risk management; increase understanding and confidence amongst front-line staff and decision-makers, and facilitate effective and targeted intervention. It outlines how the methodology was developed, the nature of the assessment, its theoretical underpinnings, the challenges faced and how these have been addressed. Learning from casework with offenders, from government commissioned research and the wider literature is presented in the form of 22 general factors (with an opportunity to capture additional idiosyncratic factors, i.e., 22+) that contribute to an individual formulation of risk and needs that bears on three dimensions of engagement, intent and capability. The relationship of this methodology, the Extremism Risk Guidelines (ERG 22+) with comparable guidelines, the Violent Extremism Risk Assessment 2 (VERA version 2) and the Multi-Level Guidelines (MLG), is also discussed. This paper also considers the ERG's utility, validity and limitations.

Keywords: violent extremism, terrorism, risk assessment, needs assessment, corrections

In England and Wales, the Extremist Risk Guidance (ERG) has become embedded in offender management and intelligence management systems since 2011. Its conceptual framework has been shared across law enforcement and correctional agencies to provide a common approach to identifying, managing, and addressing extremism, and it has also informed approaches in the community with those in the "precriminal space" within the U.K. government's Prevent agenda (HM Government, 2007, 2011). This paper describes this methodology, its origins, and approach, and it reflects a commitment to publish government-based approaches to assessing and managing extremism. At the time this work was performed, the authors were both practicing forensic psychologists within the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) of England and Wales.

Before this methodology was developed, those convicted under terrorist legislation were typically considered by NOMS officials to be high risk of serious harm by virtue of their offense alone, making it difficult to proportionately deploy case management and operational resources and to effectively manage risk. This became acute after the United Kingdom's 2006 Terrorism Act that brought into custody a significant number of new offenders whose needs

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Monica Lloyd, Department of Psychology, Birmingham University; Christopher Dean, National Offender Management Service, Interventions Services, HM Ministry of Justice, London, United Kingdom.

Christopher Dean is currently director of Identify Psychological Services Ltd, Warrington, Cheshire UK.

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Christopher Dean, Identify Psychological Services, Ltd., C/O Towney & Co Ltd, 67 Bewsey Street, Warrington, Cheshire, WA27JQ, England. E-mail: Christopherdean@identifypsychologicalservices.com

and risks were not fully understood. A methodology was needed to provide an empirically based systematic and transparent approach to the assessment of risk in those convicted of, or susceptible to, extremist offending; to inform proportionate risk management; to increase understanding and confidence among front-line staff and decision-makers; and to facilitate effective and targeted intervention.

When this work began, there were no established methodologies for assessing risk and need in extremist offenders. Levels of trust were low between NOMS officials and the offenders; the latter typically did not trust the offender management process and some of those in NOMS who carried the risk and responsibility for making risk decisions were skeptical about trusting a new and as yet unproven methodology with this group. Negotiating the cooperation of the offenders themselves to engage in conversations was a challenging task; tape recording and transcribing interviews was not acceptable to prison officials or offenders or their lawyers, therefore the methodology could not be developed through a conventional academic approach. Some offenders refused to speak to us, some insisted that our interview notes were shared with them and signed by them as a true record, and some agreed to speak but changed their mind at the last minute.

Despite these challenges, casework contact gradually grew, providing the opportunity to learn about pathway influences and susceptibilities. This paper describes how the methodology was developed to be clinically sensitive, empirically grounded, and ethically defensible.

Definitional and Ethical Issues

Debate regarding the definitions of extremism and terrorism continues and is extensively outlined elsewhere (Hoffman, 2006; Schmidt, 1984). A major challenge is to define these concepts without criminalizing or pathologizing political beliefs or dissent, especially within a democratic, pluralist society in which freedom of thought is considered to be an inviolable human right. The offenders we worked with took strong exception to being labeled "terrorists," and we had to be very sensitive in our use of language and to our role as government officials given that they had offended against the state. Extremist offending is defined here as "Any offense associated with a group, cause or ideology that propagates extremist views and actions and justifies the use of violence and other illegal conduct in pursuit of its objectives" (National Offender Management Service, 2007). This definition focuses on the criminality deployed on behalf of a group, cause, or ideology, and the phrase *associated with* accommodates not only social, political, and ideological motivations but (also) opportunistic and criminal motivations. Our position is that in U.K. society individuals are free to hold any beliefs and to express dissent, but where there are democratic means to accommodate this they should not resort to breaking the law or to the use of violence.

We are aware that this definition is tautologous and potentially hegemonic coming from state officials in response to a threat to national security and in the absence of any definition of "extremist views and actions." Therefore, we distinguish the features of extremist thinking from nonextremist thinking in relation to the concept of cognitive integrative complexity (Liht & Savage, 2008; Savage & Liht, 2008; Suedfeld, Tetlock, & Streufert, 1992). Extremist views or ideologies are characterized by simplistic, reductionist, bipolar thinking (them and us, persecutors and persecuted, worthy and unworthy) that preempts argument, is emotionally charged, and appeals to the part of our brains that mediates fight or flight in response to threat. They are characterized by low integrative complexity in that they do not accommodate or integrate multiple perspectives, a mindset that analysis suggests is more likely to lead to conflict and violence in state and nonstate actors (Guttieri, Wallace, & Suedfeld, 1995; Suedfeld & Bluck, 1988). These similarities in the nature and character of extremist thinking—regardless of their specific or unique content—are consistent with the commonalities Bjorgo and Horgan (2009) have identified in right-wing and Al Qaeda (AQ) influenced extremist pathways and underlie the NOMS approach of treating extremist offenders as a single group for assessment and management purposes.

Another contested term is *radicalization*. At the time that this work was undertaken, we were aware that it lacked rigor because it referred to a process and an outcome, neither of which were a necessary precursor to extremist offending. Neither did it apply to the significant pro-

portion of extremist offenders with a criminal background whose motivation was essentially opportunistic. It is self-evident that many individuals share extreme beliefs (are "radicalized") but have no intention of performing an act of terrorism, and that is possible for someone who has performed a terrorist act to desist from violence without relinquishing their ideology or cause. The ERG methodology avoids the use of this word, an approach that has been vindicated by recent academic criticism (Knefel, 2013; Sageman Interview, 2013).

We use instead the term *engagement* to describe the process by which individuals become involved with or identify with an extremist group, cause, or ideology, and we use *intent* to describe the mindset associated with a readiness to perform or contribute to an extremist offense. In addition, we consider the offenders' *capability* to perform an act of terrorism, producing a three-dimensional model. Those convicted under terrorist legislation are mostly convicted for offenses that fall short of an act of violent terrorism. Some have a clear intent to offend that can be deduced from their actions; others are clearly engaged with a group, cause, or ideology but do not intend to contribute to or perform an act of terrorism. This is an important distinction to make in assessing risk of harm, and the degree of engagement and intent have become crucial in allowing us to make sense of past offending and make judgments about possible future offending. Changes in engagement and intent may be expressed in terms of *disengagement* (the opposite of engagement) and/or *desistance* (the opposite of intent).

The Development of the ERG Methodology

We were initially wary of using risk assessment protocols developed for criminal violence for those whose motivation was apparently political (Dernevik, Beck, Grann, Hogue, & McGuire, 2009; Gudjonsson, 2009; Roberts & Horgan, 2003), although Roberts and Horgan (2003) have asserted that "effective processes for assessing risk of extremist offending do not appear different to those used for assessing other types of offending" as long as a causal relationship between putative risk factors and offending is not assumed. The use of structured professional guidelines has subsequently been recommended by Monahan (2012) in his review of which of the approaches for assessing "common violence" might legitimately be applied to violent terrorists. This approach was informed by a small advisory group of international experts in assessing risk of serious offending or in extremism and terrorism who were assembled to oversee our work (including Professors Stephen Hart, David Cook, Andrew Silke, Caroline Logan, Hazel Kemshall, Jackie Bates-Gaston, and Karl Roberts). They suggested beginning with individual case formulation based on functional analysis of individual offenders given the lack of an existing knowledge base (Roberts & Horgan, 2003; Dernevik et al., 2009). This approach is commonly used in forensic and clinical settings for the assessment of problematic clinical presentations and is endorsed in the wider risk assessment literature (Lewis & Doyle, 2010; Logan & Johnstone, 2010; Tarrier & Calam, 2002). It makes no assumptions about the etiology of behavior, but it simply identifies what needs the behavior is meeting for the individual. The advisory group suggested that these needs from the accounts of individual offenders, evidenced also where possible from the wider terrorist literature, should then be collated into a set of factors for assessors to consider within future case formulations, producing a set of structured professional guidelines. Various members of the advisory group continued to oversee this work as it developed, mainly by means of individual consultation. They commented on early drafts of the Structured Risk Guidance (SRG) and on its evaluation and provided formal feedback of the SRG revision that produced the final ERG (see later).

Despite the necessity of assessing individual offenders, we were aware of the common risk assessment error of attributing risk solely to factors within the individual and of overlooking the importance of the environment (Monahan, 1995). The ERG necessarily focuses on the individual, but it also identifies the role of families and friends in providing support for offending, of groups in exerting influence or control over the individual, of transitional periods that provide a cognitive opening for potential engagement, and of access to networks that can provide the training and funding to realize a terrorist offense. In addition, political context provides the vehicle and the opportunity for the offender (Hoffman, 2006). In line with the

thinking behind the Multilevel Guidelines (MLG), Professor Stephen Hart specifically advised that we should include this because it was a unique feature of extremist offending. This advice was built into the practice guidance as a contextual influence to be referenced in the assessment report, but it was not included as a factor in its own right, which was perhaps an omission.

Pathways into Extremist Offending

Casework with extremist offenders indicated that for those without a criminal background, a period of conditioning or grooming was typically required for them to overcome their inhibitions about breaking the law, a process Roberts and Horgan (2003) refer to as "socialisation into terrorism." This process alters the balance of push and pull factors in favor of engagement with a group, cause, or ideology. At some point those who completed the pathway crossed a threshold between engagement and intent. To make sense of how this may happen, we consulted Ajzen and Fishbein's (2005) Theory of Reasoned Action, which was derived from 35 years of experimental research. This proposes that action follows intention and is the product of behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs that determine "attitudes," "subjective norm," and "perceived behavioral control," respectively. Put simply, the motivation to act translates into an intention to act when the individual has a positive attitude toward it, when it is anticipated that it will bring social approval, and when they believe they have the capability to carry it out.

Applying this theory to the threshold between engagement and intent, for an individual to positively contemplate carrying out an act of terrorism a major shift in subjective norm seems necessary to change a normative belief that terrorism is abhorrent to an extremist belief that it is legitimate or even necessary, promising not only personal reward but social approval. For an individual to arrive at this position, he or she not only has to overcome their inhibitions against terrorist offending and accomplish a major attitude shift but (also) has to encounter the political and social circumstances that provide the vehicle and the opportunity for this to be accomplished. The Theory of Reasoned Action not only helps to clarify the role of attitudes, beliefs, and intention, but it also accommodates the widespread finding that those who commit such offenses are generally not suffering from any defect of reason and that their behavior is the product of strategic choice (Crenshaw, 1998), notwithstanding that their attitudes and beliefs may have been conditioned or groomed to be far from normative.

Intent factors represent the end point of Roberts and Horgan's socialization into terrorism. Those who have arrived at this point by such a route typically have the following features: they overidentify with an ideology, group, or cause to the extent that they have lost their personal identity and agency; they have accepted a single narrative explanation of world events; they have adopted polarized thinking that divides the world into persecutors (them) and persecuted (us); and they have made a moral judgment about the out-group as unworthy in contrast to the righteousness of the in-group and acquired attitudes that justify violence in pursuit of their noble cause, telling themselves that the end justifies the means. They have engaged their emotional brains and immersed themselves in stories of heroism, honor, and gallantry. This mindset corresponds with a low level of "integrative complexity" (Suedfeld et al., 1992) as previously described. A collective identity psychologically displaces individual identity with its associated inhibitions against violence (Schwartz, Dunkel, & Waterman, 2009).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to outline in detail other theories that may explain the mechanisms by which individuals become identified with extremist groups, causes, or ideologies; how certain personality traits may find expression in the extremist identity and lifestyle; or how groups exert their influence. However, promising avenues include identity theory (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1993; Schwartz et al., 2009), authoritarian personality theory (Altemeyer, 2004), and social psychological theories of group influence and prejudice (Brewer & Hewstone, 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

A Criminal Pathway

Over time, further casework identified cases that did not accord with the theory that all extremist offenders were socialized into committing extremist offenses. Several convicted AQ-influenced offenders had a history of vio-

lent offending and a seemingly fragile identification with ideology. They held criminal attitudes supportive of violence, and two had carried out acts of serious violence in custody. Their involvement appeared to be opportunistic and self-serving, and they did not share the same belief system or religiosity as other AQ-influenced offenders. Assessment of these individuals identified a high level of social dominance, aggression, and intimidation and exploitation of others through fear as well as narcissism and sensation-seeking, suggesting that they were motivated by the exercise of power and control rather than a "noble cause." Others whose motivation was political and moral were often disparaging of them, recognizing that their motivation and values were at odds with their own.

The finding that some with criminal capability had deployed their skills to assist extremists despite having little interest in their cause resulted in the inclusion of opportunistic motivation as an alternative to political/moral motivation as an engagement factor and the addition of criminal history as a further capability factor. The implication is that there may be more than a single linear pathway into extremism: one that is essentially political that progresses through engagement to intent and another that is essentially criminal progressing from a preexisting level of intent and capability to include an opportunistic and fragile level of engagement.

The First SRG

The first SRG was developed in 2009 from early casework with approximately 20 convicted extremist offenders who were prepared to speak with us about their offending. In time, our findings were cross-referenced against those from an independent researcher and youth leader commissioned by London Probation to identify influences in the backgrounds of another 12 offenders convicted under the Terrorist Act and on license in the community (Karmani, 2009). From these two independent sources, there was a significant convergence of findings that we were able to cross-reference against government-commissioned reviews of the literature on terrorist offending. Twenty-one features were identified as common pathway influences that were also endorsed in the literature as seemingly significant. These were collated into formal guidelines for preparing individual formulations of risk and need. A range of staff disciplines were provided with a day's training in the guidelines, after which the SRG was piloted in custody and the community (See Figure 1).

From a structured interview that explored these 21 factors, trained assessors were required to assess risk in terms of four dimensions: beliefs, motivation, intent, and capability. These were intended to capture the areas that were relevant to the degree of commitment to an extremist ideology, group or cause, seriousness of harm, and the likelihood of a future extremist offense. Trained multidisciplinary staff from the same establishments were asked, when possible, to complete the assessments together to create a shared formulation.

An independent evaluation in 2010 by the National Centre for Social Research focused on the content, delivery, and implementation of the SRG (Webster, Kerr, & Tompkins, in press). It included interviews with stakeholders, assessors, and offenders in prisons and probation sites. Assessors indicated that the SRG provided procedural clarity; improved partnership working; and increased their professional competence, confidence, and sense of legitimacy in their role. Others said they would like further guidance on how the relatively generic needs identified by the 21 factors informed the assessment of risk of serious harm. In addition, the shared formulation approach was considered less efficient and effective than when assessments had been completed by a lead assessor

1. Lack of emotional resilience
2. Problems with Relationships
3. Need to feel important, valued or special
4. Need for identity, meaning and belonging
5. Feelings of threat and insecurity
6. Sensitivity to perceived injustice
7. Idealism and political naivety
8. Susceptibility to charismatic individuals
9. Susceptibility to indoctrination
10. Susceptibility to group influence and control
11. The family and/or community support extremist offending
12. Over-identification with a cause
13. Attitudes that justify offending
14. 'Us and Them Thinking'
15. Need for stimulation and excitement
16. Desire to experience themselves as a hero, soldier or person of honour
17. Intent to bring about harmful regime change
18. Opportunistic involvement
19. Individual knowledge, skills and competencies to commit extremist offences
20. Access to networks, funding and equipment to commit extremist offences
21. Diagnosis of Mental Illness & Personality Disorder

Any Other Area Relevant to Risk

Figure 1. SRG factors.

(usually a psychologist) but who consulted other staff for their opinions and information. Offenders reported that the process improved their perceptions of staff and increased their willingness to engage with them and with the regime, affirming its value in establishing communication and building trust between those who had offended against the state and those who represented its authority.

Revisions to the SRG streamlined the factors and added in some others, clarified the stages of assessment, and provided further practice guidance. By this time, casework experience with extremist offenders had grown and more clarity was emerging about common pathway influences and failures of protection. It became increasingly evident that the susceptibilities were generic across different causes and ideologies; associated broadly with grievance, threat, identity and status issues; and facilitated by a cognitive opening often associated with a transitional period in the individual's life. Also important was the absence of other sources of self-efficacy, security, identity, and status that might have protected against their involvement, emphasizing the importance of protective factors.

Feelings of grievance and injustice were emerging as the most frequent common denominator. Emotional resilience and problems with relationships remained relevant, but they were captured by other vulnerabilities, including mental health and transitional periods, some of which were associated with relationship breakdown. A complex of features were emerging from assessment and were associated with criminality, including dominance, risk-taking/sensation-seeking (need for excitement), attitudes that justified offending, and criminal capability. Therefore, SRG factors 7 and 18 were recast as ERG factors 7 and 9, capturing the distinction between political and opportunistic motivation. In addition, the work of Altemeyer (2004) in the United States informed the features of authoritarian dominant and submissive personalities that were captured within a need for status and/or dominance and susceptibility to indoctrination, respectively (ERG factors 4, 6, and 7).

SRG factor 17 was broken down further in response to the unexpected finding that offenders differed considerably in what they wanted to achieve and what they would do to achieve it. For example, in France those in custody for extremist offenses, mainly of Moroccan heritage, typically wished to establish Islamic government in their host country and were very antagonistic to what they perceived as this country's racist policies (Khosrokhavar, 2006). In the United Kingdom, none of the British AQ-influenced offenders we spoke to wanted to establish Islamic government in the United Kingdom. On the whole, they retained an affection for their country and for the freedoms and respect they were afforded here. Their goals were to alleviate the suffering of Muslims elsewhere and to express their antagonism to British and American foreign policy in Muslim countries. Therefore, their end objectives were not necessarily harmful, although what they were prepared to do to achieve them was, in varying degrees. In contrast, the objectives of those with extreme right-wing beliefs were to forcibly repatriate those from a non-White ethnic background or to eliminate them in a final "holy war." This became an important distinction to make in terms of risk assessment: who did the offender wish to harm, on what scale, and to what end? These areas are captured by ERG intent factors 5 and 6 (See Figure 2).

A Dimensional Model

In the ERG, the factors have been brigaded under three dimensions of engagement, intent, and capability that clarify their relationship to risk and to need. Engagement replaced beliefs and motivation from the SRG. Engagement was a term emerging in the literature that reflected a commitment to ideology, group, or cause, and feedback from assessors was that relevant beliefs could be adequately captured by the engagement factors. Therefore, the three dimensions of the ERG are not derived from statistical analysis but from a conceptual understanding of the functional distinction between engagement and intent and the self-evident relevance of capability to extremist offending.

In line with Ajzen and Fishbein's (2005) Theory of Reasoned Action, we separated the original SRG factors that accounted for the individual's engagement with ideology or cause from those associated with a readiness to offend, with the former constituting engagement factors and the latter constituting intent factors. This separation was broadly endorsed within two national

Engagement

1. **Need to redress injustice and express grievance**
2. **Need to defend against threat**
3. **Need for identity, meaning, belonging**
4. **Need for status**
5. **Need for excitement, comradeship or adventure**
6. **Need for dominance**
7. **Susceptibility to indoctrination**
8. **Political/moral motivation**
9. **Opportunistic involvement**
10. **Family or friends support extremist offending**
11. **Transitional periods**
12. **Group influence and control**
13. **Mental health**

Intent

1. **Over-identification with a group or cause**
2. **Us and Them thinking**
3. **Dehumanisation of the enemy**
4. **Attitudes that justify offending**
5. **Harmful means to an end**
6. **Harmful end objectives**

Capability

1. **Individual knowledge, skills and competencies**
2. **Access to networks, funding and equipment**
3. **Criminal history**

\+ **Any other factor**

Figure 2. ERG 22+ dimensions and factors.

exercises in which a total of 35 offender managers supervising extremist offenders were asked to place the original SRG factors along a pathway either side of a threshold that represented readiness to offend.

Therefore, the first dimension concerns the process of engagement and includes the factors that motivate an individual to engage with a group, cause, or ideology. The second concerns the degree of intent or readiness to offend associated with the individual mindset, including what they would do and to what end. The third concerns the individual's capability of carrying out an act of terrorism.

The dimension of capability emerged from the finding that many terrorist offenses had failed or been sublethal in their impact because of the offenders' lack of capability to carry them out. This could take the form of a lack of personal resource such as finance, knowledge, skill, or resilience or a lack of access to resources for terrorism such as social capital or networking ability. Aspects of capability can also provide information about intent where individuals had clearly developed a capability for terrorism through, for example, amassing materials for bomb making or reconnoitering possible terrorist sites. Experience suggests that capability is perhaps the most difficult dimension to assess and requires clarity over what level of capability is of concern. The killing of an off-duty British soldier in Woolwich, London, in 2013 showed that individuals do not need advanced capability and resources to commit an act that has significant impact. However, for all of its challenges it remains an important dimension to consider in assessing the potential nature and lethality of an extremist offense.

Guidance helps assessors to consider the role and function a particular factor may play in contributing to an individual's offending. Not all will be relevant to every offender, and factors may play various or multiple roles. For example, family or friends may either encourage or discourage involvement depending on whether they share sympathy for the ideology. Mental health may exert a pathway influence in multiple ways or not at all. The extremist identity can meet needs for status, empowerment, and revenge in those with narcissistic, paranoid, or antisocial personality traits, and disinhibition can be associated with callousness, lack of empathy, or a sense of entitlement. The ERG is careful not to assume the function or role that factors or circumstances play in the offending, although their typical role is described in the accompanying guidance. This feature distinguishes the ERG from approaches that assign a score for each factor that builds into a total score for each domain. Within the ERG items are not scored because their role is qualitative, not summative; more factors do not equate with a higher level of engagement, the combination of factors simply tell the risk "story."

Factors and dimensions are dynamic and subject to change over time (with the exception of criminal history). Bjorgo and Horgan (2009) identify that engagement depends on a dynamic balance of push and pull factors and McCauley and Segal (1989) point out that an extremist is becoming engaged, is being engaged, or is in the process of disengaging. Therefore, the assessment is designed to measure changes in engagement, intent, and capability and the implications for disengagement and/or desistance over time. Assessment of the presence and role

of protective factors on each of these dimensions also ensures that positive changes are reflected over time. These identify the circumstances or influences that may counter the influence of risk factors. Their importance is endorsed in the terrorist literature (Hoffman, 2006; Horgan, 2009; Jacobsen, 2010), and they are commonly included in risk assessment protocols. This focus on risks, needs, and protective factors as targets for intervention or management are distinctive features that allows decision-makers to systematically consider how changes in individual susceptibilities and circumstances may reduce and increase future risk.

Therefore, conceptualizing risk in terms of three dimensions accommodates the apparent disconnect between engagement and intent, identifies the psychological hooks that can be targets for change, underscores the central importance of behavioral intent for future risk, and provides a framework for making risk judgments and developing risk management strategies. Because the three dimensions are essentially dynamic, the assessment can be repeated within annual sentence plan reviews and parole reviews to provide an updated assessment of risk and need.

Completing the ERG 22+

Rather than work through the list of factor assessors, consider four questions that broadly structure their interviews and analysis: (a) What contextual circumstances seem to have contributed (or could contribute) to their offending? (b) What personal attributes (needs, susceptibilities) seem to have contributed (or could contribute) to their offending? (c) What did the person get out of (or could get out of) their offending? (d) What circumstances or attributes could protect them from offending in the future? The 22 ERG factors are consulted for their relevance, and the "+" suffix accommodates any other factor/s that appears relevant. Case formulation allows for the possibility that other factors not previously identified may emerge as significant in the individual case and ensures they are not overlooked and that assessment is individualized. It also allows the ERG to adapt as the evidence base develops. In the practice, guidance assessors are provided with a description of the factor, examples of its presence or absence, and suggested protective factors. A record form is provided to note the presence and significance of relevant factors and how they may affect risk. Practice guidance also includes the rationale for the role of each factor and the evidence for it from the wider literature and from casework.

Assessors are asked to use their judgment to consider the role these factors played in the offense and could play in the future; how they map on to the three dimensions of engagement, intent, and capability; and what influences may protect individuals from being drawn into future offending. Case formulation is not simply a "tick-box" approach but requires careful analysis of the individual push-and-pull factors and the context of the offending to build credible hypotheses about risk and need. Conclusions are then drawn from this analysis to inform risk decisions and risk management strategies within a written report.

Features of the ERG 22+

The ERG is a manualized assessment consistent with other contemporary methodologies that assess risk of offending, such as the recently revised Historical, Clinical & Risk Management-20 (HCR-20; Version 3) for violent offenders (Douglas, Hart, Webster, & Belfrage, 2013) or the Risk of Sexual Violence Protocol (RSVP) for sexual offenders (Hart, Kropp, & Laws, 2003). The HCR-20 and RSVP are internationally evidence-based structured risk guidelines that assess the historical and clinical factors empirically linked with nonsexual and sexual violence, respectively, alongside factors that concern risk management. These inform conclusions about the likelihood, imminence, and nature of future violence and probable victims and how this risk may be effectively managed. Similar to these guidelines, the ERG is manualized and includes features such as an overview of its applications and limitations; administration procedures; descriptions and rationale for its risk and protective factors; and academic references.

The ERG is not as yet informed by an equivalent evidence base, primarily because of the paucity of equivalent research into factors underlying extremist offending. Assumptions are avoided about the genesis of extremist violence and the methodology is intended to capture the learning from casework as it develops. The ERG when it

was formally adopted in 2011 was based on empirical data from the offense accounts of upward of 40 convicted extremist offenders (~30% of the total population in custody or under license in NOMS at this time) alongside case information from the wider literature and research commissioned under the U.K. government Prevent initiative (Home Office, 2011). The factors are also grounded in mainstream psychological theories. The ERG is only completed by qualified forensic psychologists or probation officers who are experienced in complex risk assessment and who have completed ERG specific training over 2 days, which includes applying the assessment to practice cases. Trainees are licensed to use the guidelines and access is restricted to those who are trained to prevent their use by anyone who does not appreciate their provenance and limitations.

The Relationship Between the ERG and Other Tools for Assessing Violent Extremism

When this methodology was first developed in 2009 there was only one other risk framework in development for the assessment of extremist offenders and no outcome studies that could inform an actuarial approach because of the small numbers involved and the lack of reconviction data. The developer of the Violent Extremism Risk Assessment, now in its second version (VERA 2), consulted us about whether we could develop a single framework in collaboration (Pressman, 2009; Pressman & Flockton, 2012), but we came to recognize that the goals and purpose of our assessments were different. The ERG had to accommodate those convicted of extremist offenses that fell short of extremist violence, in line with U.K. legislation that set the bar lower than other jurisdictions. Indeed, factors in the VERA 2 such as "seeker, consumer, developer of extremist materials" constitute offenses in themselves in the United Kingdom. In addition, our work needed to identify the dynamic needs and susceptibilities that might become the target for intervention or management, be sensitive to change over time, and encompass extremist offenders as a generic group. To achieve this, the ERG adopts a case formulation approach in which assessors consider not only the presence of a factor but also its role in the offense (including those that may be idiosyncratic to the individual) to inform a nuanced conclusion about risk and protection. The VERA 2 typically focuses on the presence of factors alone to inform an overall risk decision.

The VERA 2 was not intended as a correctional tool but simply as a means to assess the risk of violent extremism. For our purposes, we needed to determine the actual engagement influences for extremist offenders in the United Kingdom at this time to be confident that we understood their pathways and objectives. At this point, we had already been surprised that many of our assumptions about motivation and goals had been challenged. Therefore, the ERG is informed by casework with U.K. convicted terrorists, cross-referenced to the literature where this provides corroboration, but essentially evidenced by the offenders themselves, whereas the VERA 2 is a conceptual formulation of 31 items grouped into five categories informed largely by the literature (Beliefs and Attitudes; Context and Intent; History and Capability; Commitment and Motivation and Protective items). However, the VERA 2 is also similar to the ERG in a number of ways; both adopt a structured professional judgement approach, have clear standards for administration and focus on protective as well as risk factors. There are also overlaps in the dimensions of risk assessed (such as intent and capability) and specific risk factors assessed, such as grievance, dehumanisation and indoctrination.

These similarities are shared with the MLG, a set of structured professional guidelines to assess group-based violence that aspires to include organized crime, gangs, freeman sovereign (antigovernment) citizens, terrorism, and honor-based violence (Cook, Hart, & Kropp, 2014). The MLG groups risk factors from the literature within a nested ecological model with Individual, Individual-Group, Group, and Group-Societal domains. Similar to the VERA 2, which is specifically intended to assess violence in the context of extremism, the MLG is specifically intended to assess violence in the context of groups, and their respective factors are informed by systematic searches of the literature by these terms. In contrast, the ERG is concerned with capturing the pathway influences (especially motivating factors) in those convicted of extremist offenses to understand how they became engaged and to facilitate their disengagement or desistance. It is specifically

concerned with assessing their intentions in terms of what they would have done had they not been apprehended, to what end, and their capability of carrying it out.

In contrast to the VERA 2 and the MLG, in the ERG there are no factors that refer directly to violence. Most of those convicted of terrorist offenses in the United Kingdom have no history of violence, although some do. Their convictions are rarely for violent offenses but essentially for contributing to, supporting, or plotting extremist offenses. In terms of administration, the MLG advocates that case formulation is completed by a group whereas the ERG is now completed by a single assessor after the feedback from the SRG pilot that found this to be problematic in our particular setting. Again, it is not surprising that there are significant overlaps between the ERG and MLG given that Professor Stephen Hart was part of the expert group for the development of the ERG and one of the authors of the MLG.

However, it is the case that the laboratory environment and academic context in which the VERA 2 and MLG, respectively, were developed has supported a more systematic and academic approach. The developer of the MLG built in an assessment of interrater reliability within the pilot training, an opportunity that we missed and that is only now being corrected through a dedicated interrater reliability study.

The Utility of the ERG

In addition to the general endorsement of the utility of the pilot version of the ERG, (see Webster et al., in press), the final version was peer reviewed within NOMS and by two of the international experts in risk assessment from the original advisory group—Professors Stephen Hart (Simon Fraser University, Canada) and David Cook (Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland). Their feedback was that the guidelines would serve to educate staff and to guide practice as well as stimulate further work in the field. The evidence base was considered to be well summarized and the best available at this time; the guidelines were explicit and well organized; and the focus was consistently practical, with appropriate emphasis on assessors needing to be organized, systematic, thorough, experienced, trained, and free of assumptions. The ERG was considered to be equal or superior to existing alternatives at the time. After approval, the SRG was formally renamed the ERG 22+ in 2011 and mainstreamed for use across NOMS.

Since this time, the ERG has become embedded within the NOMS and is used to inform decisions about sentence planning, relocation, intervention, reintegration, parole, release, recall, license conditions, and supervision. All convicted extremist offenders, a total of more than 150 individuals from a range of extremist affiliations have now been assessed (including those associated with far-right, nationalist-separatist, and animal rights groups). The ERG has played a critical role in informing decisions that concern convicted extremist offenders across NOMS, including how they are managed, supervised, and monitored; what interventions they complete; whether these have affected risk; and whether and how they should be located, relocated, released, and reintegrated into society or recalled into custody.

The ERG has also been adapted to create the Extremism Risk Screen (ERS), a shortened version of the ERG that asks key questions under the three headings of engagement, intent, and capability. The ERS is designed to assist prison and probation officials in assessing information about an offender's possible involvement or interest in extremist groups, causes, or ideas. This is used with offenders with no previous convictions for extremist offenses. It directs the attention of security staff, police liaison officers, and offender managers to the dimensions that are deemed to bear on risk. A shared discussion allows them to evaluate the credibility of concerns and decide whether and how to intervene; one possible outcome being the completion of a full ERG assessment to provide a more complete picture.

The Home Office Channel project that operates in the community to support and intervene with those vulnerable to extremism uses the Vulnerability Assessment Framework (HM Government, 2012)[1] derived from the ERG to assess vulnerability and monitor the impact of interventions. Confidence in its use is associated with the fact that it is derived from the actual pathway experiences of the "true positives" or

[1] See https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118187/vul-assessment.pdf.

those who have been convicted of terrorist offenses.

The ERG allows those working in counterterrorism from different agencies to use a common language that allows focused discussion and consistent decision-making across custody and the community. Important decisions have to be made about extremist offenders on a daily basis and the ERG provides a systematic, transparent, and accountable framework that structures that and supports defensible decision-making.

The Validity of the ERG

There is evidence from experience and evaluation that the ERG has face and content validity (Webster et al., in press). There is also a degree of convergent validity in the overlap between some of the ERG factors and those within the VERA 2 and the MLG for group-based violence, although this is not surprising given that all have been informed directly or indirectly by a common literature and mutual consultation. The widespread use of the ERG demonstrates its face validity and utility, but it cannot be taken as a substitute for predictive validity, which many consider to be the gold standard for forensic instruments. This is commonly derived from regression analysis of reconviction data, but this is difficult with this offender group for several reasons. Reoffending may be prevented by the level of monitoring, surveillance, license restrictions, and ready recall that currently accompanies their release. Those convicted may well withdraw from a front-line role once they have become known to police and security services and remain undetected although still involved. Many of the more serious extremist offenders are serving very long minimum terms, and those who carried out suicide bombings did not survive their offense. Those with a criminal history will be more likely to reoffend, although not necessarily commit extremist offenses, and current manifestations of extremism may spontaneously diminish as the political climate changes.

Negligible extremism reoffending rates will require softer outcomes for analysis that may shed less light on the predictive power of the methodology. Given these issues, research that helps identify how the ERG contributes to decision-making that maintains desistance may be a more fruitful and realistic objective than the sole pursuit of predictive validity.

NOMS is currently exploring from competed ERG assessments which factors are generic and which specific to different types of extremist offending and what may protect against them. An interrater reliability study is also being completed. As with other risk and need instruments, ongoing studies will develop our understanding of this area of risk and of the performance of the instrument and result in adaptations to the ERG over time.

On the plus side, the individual factors have been derived from the engagement pathways of the true positives and to that extent are empirically grounded. The role of individual factors and dimensions are also underpinned by mainstream psychological knowledge that explains the importance of personal and social identity; status; the role of groups; the appeal of the extremist identity to particular personality traits; the role of integrative complexity in understanding the mindset of intent; and how a combination of motivation, attitudes, and self-efficacy can reach a tipping point in the decision to take action. The terrorist literature has also been a constant touchstone and source of evidence for each development in the methodology. This all provides a sound foundation for further validity studies.

The Limitations of the ERG

The current lack of demonstrated reliability and validity remains the main limitation of the ERG at this time. It remains essentially a qualitative tool that requires a level of professional judgment and experience to be effectively used.

The ERG requires assessors to have a level of political awareness in the area of extremism in question. Without regular use, which is difficult with relatively few extremist offenders, they have limited opportunity to gain this knowledge and maintain their expertise, such that political, cultural, and social context, together with protective factors, can potentially slip from the analysis.

Another possible limitation is that it was constructed to primarily capture the particular pathway influences and objectives of British AQ-influenced extremist offenders during the period of the Afghan and Iraqi wars. It has already been established that they differed in objectives from their French counterparts, although the inclusion of a specific factor concerning objectives should

ensure that changes in objectives are captured as they evolve. In the United Kingdom, the ERG has been found to support assessment with extreme right-wing offenders, animal rights activists, female extremists, and gang members who's offending is based on joint enterprise. Therefore, it is likely to continue to prove useful in assessing manifestations of extremism elsewhere as the geopolitical situation evolves.

Conclusion

The ERG is work in progress. This paper has described its origins in the analysis of the true positives—those convicted of terrorist offenses in the United Kingdom, which is perhaps a strength and a weakness. To our knowledge, it is the only approach that has derived such a methodology from direct contact with those convicted of terrorist offenses as well as the wider literature. However, the circumstances of its development may have detracted from its academic credentials in that it was not based on recorded and transcribed interviews or systematically analyzed, and a transparent and replicable literature review was not conducted specifically for this purpose. We came to this work as practitioners with a strong imperative to develop products for correctional and managerial purposes. Now that the ERG dimensional model has become embedded in NOMS and a significant number of assessments have been completed, efforts are being made to further analyze its performance and to validate it more systematically.

There remain important questions to be explored, most notably around reliability and validity, but in the meantime the ERG provides a systematic, transparent, and accessible framework for engaging, assessing, and managing extremist offenders and those vulnerable to engagement in prison and the community. Such an approach is crucial in this field where public protection is a primary consideration and decision-making needs to be transparent and defensible.

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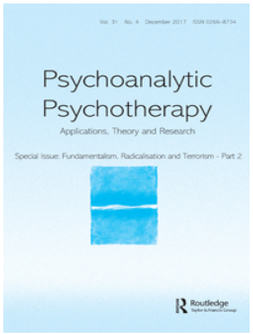

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Monica Lloyd & Pamela Kleinot

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Pathways into terrorism: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Monica Lloyd[a]* and Pamela Kleinot[b]

[a]*School of Psychology, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK;* [b]*Private Practice, London, UK*

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This paper contains the reflections of the first author as a forensic psychologist working with convicted terrorists in prison between 2008 and 2011, and subsequently as an academic and government consultant in this field. The task of making sense of this learning has been helped by a psychoanalytic understanding of the causes of terrorism by the second author who is a psychotherapist and group analyst. Psychoanalytic processes of defences, splitting and projection throw light on the potential unconscious thoughts, feelings and behaviour of those who resort to terrorism. Two broad groups are identified whose motivations are ostensibly noble cause and criminality respectively, but whose involvement also serves to avenge their personal humiliations and feelings of injustice that are projected into a political cause. A third group is also described of mainly lone actors motivated by pathological narcissism. It is proposed that terrorism manifests as a political phenomenon but is also a form of communication that reveals much about the state of mind of those who choose to become involved.

Keywords: terrorism; extremism; grievance; humiliation; splitting; projection; projective identification; paranoid schizoid state

Background

Following the London suicide bombings of the transport system in 7/7, the UK Government passed legislation criminalising behaviours considered to be preparatory to terrorism or which glorified terrorism in an attempt to disrupt terrorist plotting within the UK.[1] This brought into custody a number of offenders who were in varying degrees engaged in jihadi ideology, not all of whom were intending to commit terrorist offences at the time of their arrest. It was important therefore to develop a transparent and defensible methodology for making discriminations between them so that they could be managed in a way that was proportionate to their risk of harm. With the country still galvanised by the terror induced by these attacks, levels of risk aversion in prisons were high. All terrorist prisoners were classified as high risk by default, and the bar for declassification was set very high.

*Corresponding author. Email: M.Lloyd.1@bham.ac.uk

Individual psychopathology

The literature about what engages individuals in terrorism and the evidence for psychopathology in terrorists is confused; there are many definitions of terrorism and suggestions for how terrorism or terrorists might be classified, but no single pathway or consensus about their psychology. Research by psychiatrists and psychoanalysts that tried to make sense of totalitarianism and the genocide of the Second World War focused on psychopathy, narcissistic personality disorder and authoritarianism as possible causes. In contrast, the political science literature concluded that terrorist violence was the product of rational decision-making to bring about political change within asymmetrical power structures when other means were unavailable. Crenshaw (1981) famously concluded that 'the outstanding common characteristic of terrorists is their normality' (p. 390) and Arendt (1963) came to a similar conclusion in referring to the *'banality of evil'* in the title of her book referring to Adolf Eichmann's presentation at his trial for his actions as the architect of the Holocaust.

Corner, Gill, and Mason (2016) collated multiple psychiatric epidemiological studies to calculate the prevalence of diagnosed mental disorders in the general population and compare them to the prevalence of the same disorders among lone-actor and group-actor terrorists. They identified higher recorded levels of schizophrenia, autistic spectrum disorder and unspecified personality disorder in lone actors than in the general population, but lower recorded levels of any disorder at all in group actors. The latter, however, is likely to be a result of the absence of psychiatric assessment of group actors rather than an indicator of their superior mental health.

The disorders that are over-represented among lone actors are those associated with pervasive problems of personal and social adjustment, such as odd and eccentric behaviour, communication deficits, idiosyncratic beliefs, difficulties in relationships and social isolation. In earlier research Corner and Gill (2015) identified a high preponderance of single-issue ideologies in lone actors alongside highly personal grievances linked to political aims. Though a causal role between these difficulties and extremist violence cannot be assumed, for those who have failed to find their place in society, an ideology that provides an explanation for their difficulties and locates the responsibility elsewhere may be seized upon and become something of a fixation over time.

However, although helpful in dispelling the truism that there is no psychopathology in terrorists this says little about the larger proportion of group actors. In truth, studies have not been done that systematically assess the presence of diagnosable mental disorders in group actor terrorists, or more specifically in those fulfilling the different roles of leaders, followers, enforcers, funders, bomb planters or suicide bombers that are likely to attract different personalities and motivations. Self-evidently, socio-economic inequality and political oppression are insufficient explanations in themselves as this would apply to a much larger number than the few who become terrorists. As Miller (2006) asserts 'Something then beyond mere adversity, turns a person into a terrorist' (p. 255).

Over time, the first author's casework in prisons identified vulnerabilities such as grievance and a sense of injustice, identity and status issues, thwarted ambitions, a breakdown in relationships (often with the father), poor social adjustment and a general lack of well-being. Dialogue revealed no defect of reason but a deep-seated sense of personal humiliation and injustice that was projected into an extremist cause. A study by Bartlett, Birdwell, and King (2010) contrasting the views of radicals and terrorists suggested that they had different motivations and goals, and that radical views per se did not operate as a gateway to terrorism. Similarly, Meloy and Yakeley (2014) identified that

> … in the final analysis, acts of political violence, terrorism, or civilian massacres … are personal – whether ideologically driven or not – in the sense that an individual decides to commit the act alone or within a closely affiliated group … and the individual's own mind is what differentiates him from the many who are protestors or extremists who do not carry out acts of violence. (p. 348)

This places the explanation firmly within aspects of the individual personality and emotional experience, albeit within a political context. The conclusion of the first author's work in prisons was that an extremist identity met needs for identity, meaning, belonging, safety, respect and status for those who had experienced personal humiliation, alienation, injustice and/or identity confusion and who harboured a deep sense of grievance. In psychoanalytic terms it allows a *good self* to be constructed and maintained through the construction and maintenance of a *bad other*. This defensive splitting involves regression to a simple internal world of good and bad objects rather than whole objects with good and bad qualities (Kernberg, 1976).

Although not formally assessed there were elements of personality disorder in many of those convicted of terrorist offences. Most had accomplished an extreme version of in-group/out-group splitting between the worthy and the unworthy, or the righteous and the unrighteous that is an element of both paranoid and narcissistic personality disorders. The over-idealisation of the in-group and devaluation of the out-group is a feature of borderline personality disorder, and the uncritical acceptance of the authority of a leader by their followers is consistent with dependent personality disorder. Those with a criminal history also evidenced features of antisocial personality disorder such as self-centredness, sensation-seeking, exploitation and disregard for others, underpinned by attitudes that justified violence; all characteristics that were consistent with anti-authority ideologies and that could usefully be deployed in a terrorist cause.

Psychoanalytic understanding

Psychoanalysis has always focused on the underlying causes of violence and aggression. Many psychoanalytical ideas about trauma and violence are relevant to the study of terrorism, especially in connection with individual and group identity. There are several useful psychoanalytical insights about the unconscious

motivation for such violence which include trauma, loss, shame and annihilation anxiety. Early experiences that are not digested get replayed when triggered by a new trauma, injustice or insult to oneself, family or ethnic group. Terrorism is a potentially meaningful communication and may be a re-enactment of early trauma as well as a splitting off of the uncomfortable and painful parts of the self and locating them in others.

Terrorism has preoccupied many psychoanalysts and group analysts since Freud. More recently, De Zulueta (2006) has stressed that dehumanisation of the enemy is the result of allowing the dehumanised self to be projected on to the 'other'. Akhtar (2002) quoting Volkan (1997) writes that most major players in a terrorist organisation are themselves deeply traumatised individuals who, as children suffered chronic physical abuse and profound humiliation. Akhtar (2002) claims that the terrorist leader appeals to group members' infantile hunger for love and acceptance in offering what is, in effect a new family with himself in the role of the good father. Hopper (2017, personal communication) also says that hope is essentially a wish to be heard and understood by a good parental figure. De Zulueta (2006) identifies that a recurring finding in the literature is that 'terrorists' are essentially 'normal' people who experienced a lack of social ties or attachments, and she cites Gilligan's (1996) proposition that the basic cause of violent behaviour is the wish to ward off or eliminate feelings of shame or humiliation and replace them with their opposite, feelings of pride. She argues that the loss of cultural and Islamic pride due to centuries of colonialism and exploitation by both the West and their own leadership has been a powerful source of shame, particularly for young men.

Volkan (1988) describes how the role of large group identity shapes the terrorist's individual identity, arguing that it emerges from shared mental representations of large group history that include historical traumas and triumphs that become the source of both collective pride and shame. These events are unconsciously chosen and ritualised by the group to build cohesion and group identity, differentiating themselves from the enemy. Akhtar (2002) states that then 'feeling itself to be a victim, the group begins to victimise others in an act of externalisation' (p. 91).

Political context

These references to large group history stress the importance of geo-political and social contexts. Becoming a terrorist depends on events that expose an asymmetry of power and locate the individual in a power-poor apparently victimised group. The goal of a terrorist attack is to usurp power from the power-rich group, usually identified as government, and provoke a reaction from them. An overly oppressive response from government can escalate antagonism by exposing a lack of concern for the terrorists' cause and result in a loss of moral authority; a process exemplified in the escalation of conflict between the UK Government and

the provisional IRA in Northern Ireland during the Troubles. Alderdice (2005), a psychoanalytical psychiatrist and member of the Alliance party at this time, identifies terrorism as a means of exacting revenge for the humiliations heaped upon the power-poor in Ireland over many generations. He suggests that this dynamic of the power-poor provoking the power-strong into counter-productive pathological reactions is commonly enacted in both the consulting room and on the world stage. Parallels can be drawn with the current wave of Islamist terrorism in the UK where grievance, experienced on both a personal and political level, cathected by apparent current political victimisation and in the absence of sufficient protective influences, can become a driver for terrorism.

Three main types of terrorist

It became clear from the first author's dialogue with terrorist offenders in the UK that despite their common vulnerabilities there were also some differences in terms of what they wanted to achieve and in what they would do to achieve it. At the time this work was done, none of those from the UK wanted to introduce Sharia law into the UK; most wanted to demonstrate against British and American foreign policy in Muslim lands. Some wanted to prepare themselves through attending training camps in the UK to fight in a prophesised 'final holy war', others wanted to help Muslims abroad by travelling to areas of conflict as insurgents. In addition, what each individual would do to achieve his goal also varied. Some were persuaded, particularly if they were thwarted in their goal to fight abroad, to carry out a terrorist act in the UK, but not all were prepared to target civilians; some would first seek out a military or government target and settle for a softer civilian target when this proved difficult. In retrospect, those with the most scruples were those who believed they were fighting a noble cause; criminals had fewer scruples. A smaller number occupy a different space altogether in which their narcissistic needs for power and revenge and the opportunity to fight an imagined 'just war' act as a toxic combination transforming them into sadistic killers.

Many of those who have speculated about typologies of terrorism in the past have identified three main types. Miller (2006) in his overview characterised these as comprising an ideologically-driven leader, a number of acolytes drawn to the group's ideals and a number of opportunists meeting personal motives. Hacker (1976) referred to crusaders, criminals and crazies, and Schmid and de Graaf (1982) to political terrorism, (organised) crime-linked terrorism and pathological (crazy) terrorism. In UK prisons we saw noble cause and criminal types (the Good and the Bad), and those who might legitimately be labelled Ugly can be identified from other sources. This describes a syndrome of grievance fuelled violence that is evident in the backgrounds of school shooters, some terrorist leaders, and some lone-actors: those with fixated and delusional beliefs, grandiose but unstable

self-esteem, a sense of entitlement, lack of empathy and delusions of grandeur. It is associated with both extreme violence and pervasive psychopathology.

These three types are not mutually exclusive. Mental health difficulties can be present in both noble cause and criminal groups, though a functional link between mental health and terrorist violence is more discernible in the Ugly category. All three groups find common cause in blaming a power-rich group for their apparent disempowerment and victimisation.

The Good: noble cause

One terrorist offender was a university student when he first encountered Islamist ideology. From a traditional Pakistani family he found it hard to adapt to the freedoms of university life after a family-centred self-contained home life. He felt humiliated by his lack of sophistication in comparison with other students and found solace with other Pakistani students who were preoccupied by the plight of Muslims in the Middle East. Over time they abandoned their studies in favour of seeking evidence for their extremist beliefs, travelling to Pakistan with the intention of joining the struggle in Afghanistan. Frustrated in this they turned their attention to plotting a terrorist offence in the UK. Involvement in this provided him with a noble identity and allowed him to overcome his feelings of humiliation, gave him self-respect, a sense of destiny, a friendship group, and someone to blame for his difficulties.

Roberts and Horgan (2003) have identified that individuals are 'socialised into terrorism' by means of small steps that gradually overcome their initial inhibitions about becoming a terrorist. Push and pull factors eventually reach a tipping point that culminate in the decision to engage with a group, cause or ideology. Push factors among those convicted in the UK were broadly feelings of grievance and humiliation, exclusion, dissonance between host and heritage cultures, and a lack of agency, significance, identity, meaning, belonging and worth. Pull factors were broadly the opportunities to achieve an identity of significance, a way of making sense of the world that projected blame on to others, an opportunity to belong to a closely bonded proxy family, to exact revenge, to escape from cultural dissonance and perceived second class status; and for some an outlet for their violence and criminality. The experience of excitement, challenge, adventure and in the context of the emergence of the Islamic state, the opportunity for nation building, can also act as pull factors. Jihadi ideology justifies this attitude shift rather than constituting the prime motivation.

In addition to psychological gains engagement also provides moral superiority. As Meloy and Yakeley (2014) observe

> What distinguishes the predatory violence of the terrorist from other cases of instrumental violence is the moral sanctioning of the act. This is superego-driven homicidal aggression wherein the terrorist finds a mandate for his violence: the drive to

> punish those who are judged morally wrong and therefore disgusting, and the wish to establish an ideal state, or state of mind, that has heretofore eluded him. (p. 362)

These push factors are generic and one would expect them to be fairly widespread within diaspora Muslim communities in the West. To understand why extremist violence is not therefore more common it is necessary to understand the role of factors that protect against involvement. Most individuals are protected by a good enough life, positive relationships, secure friendships, adequate self-esteem, hope for their future and/or sufficient knowledge of Islam that they are not entrained by jihadi ideology. But for the few without sufficient protection, conditioning and grooming within a group or online can achieve an attitude shift that finally overcomes their inhibitions against taking action. The presence of in-group/out-group thinking reflects the accomplishment of a clear split between good and bad objects such that the in-group is experienced as good and worthy and the out-group as bad, unworthy and even inhuman, the reason for their difficulties and the source of their humiliation. The process is helped by the underground nature of terrorist plotting that forges close bonds that lock in loyalty and prevent disaffiliation, maintained through threat or force if necessary.

This pathway was taken by those whose motivation was characterised by 'noble cause'. These individuals did not have any conviction history or criminal motivation for their engagement. They became involved as a result of their grievance against the West for their invasion of Muslim lands in Iraq and Afghanistan and the West's apparent support for Israel and the victimisation of Palestinians. It is proposed that at root this grievance was personal, stemming from narcissistic wounds sustained earlier in life and mirrored on the political stage. Alongside idealism, sensitivity to injustice and a firm belief that they could make the world a better place for Muslims, forged their justification for violence.

Some male offenders recalled racial abuse that mirrored the humiliations from the arbitrary abuse of patriarchal power within the family. In Asian and Arabic cultures patriarchal power holds sway and can manifest in violence towards women and children and fraught relationships with fathers, especially in boys who step into their power in adolescence. This splitting into the power-rich and the power-poor therefore becomes a fundamental organising principle for children in these cultures. The work of the psychoanalyst Kobrin (2010) explores the Arabic Muslim culture that denigrates and victimises women in the home, causing the children to experience their early loved mother as a hated object such that their needs and thinking remain infantile and they find it hard to achieve independence. She believes that the terror in Islamic suicide terrorism is displaced murderous rage for the early mother, stemming from the projection of the hatreds developed through the blaming and shaming childrearing practices of their families.

Among those in prison convicted of terrorist offences, a breakdown in relationship with the father was an almost universal background factor, accompanied in many cases by strong feelings of hate and antagonism towards him. Those who

espoused Islamist extremism spoke of being able to trump the authority of the father with their allegiance to Allah and the Muslim cause. 'What are you doing for the umma?[2] … I am a better Muslim than you.'

The Bad: criminal

In contrast, about 60% of those in custody at this time had a criminal history, which ran counter to initial assumptions about the political nature of terrorist offending. The link between terrorism and criminality is now widely evidenced, with Carrapico, Irrera, and Tuman (2015) clarifying established links between terrorists and transnational and organised crime at the macro level. The Belgian offenders who undertook the Paris shootings in November 2015 and Brussels airport and metro bombings in March 2016 came from the impoverished, overcrowded and deprived area of Molenbeek in Belgium described by its Mayor as *'a breeding ground for violence'*. For them, no conditioning or grooming was necessary to develop attitudes supportive of offending; they already had them, as well as polarised beliefs dividing the world into 'Us and Them' or criminals and straight-goers, now labelled 'kuffar'.[3] They were able to deploy their criminal capability for apparent moral as well as financial gain, and launder their offending by a righteous affiliation. Involvement met their criminal needs for status, sensation-seeking, dominance, control, violence and revenge against the authorities, and promised redemption. Such offenders had only a superficial engagement with ideology or cause, sufficient only to justify their terrorist offending; their motivation remained essentially opportunistic.

Alderdice (2005), drawing on his political experiences, highlights the difference between those joining paramilitary groups before and after the Good Friday agreement in Northern Ireland. Earlier members saw themselves as taking up a noble cause, often as a response to personal loss or injury and were disparaging of those referred to as 'Ceasefire Soldiers' who joined to benefit from a culture of organised crime that took hold in the wake of the peace agreement, 'using the political cause as a flag of convenience for crude personal material gain' (p. 578).

In custody, terrorist offenders with a criminal background did not adopt ethnic dress, nor display an exaggerated religiosity. Their appearance was westernised; they identified with mainstream criminals and were scornful of those who presented as religious Muslims. In turn, those motivated by 'noble cause' were scornful of those they saw as criminals motivated purely by revenge. One in particular had a violent background and had committed several serious assaults in custody. He was considered to be the leader of a terrorist cell and had been involved in procuring arms for an Islamist terrorist attack, despite not sharing their ideology or aims. Personality assessment identified him as a psychopath, high on dominance, exploitation of others, sensation-seeking and extroversion, as well as alcohol and drug use. His profile was that of a violent and versatile criminal and his motivation purely opportunistic.

The Ugly: pathological narcissism

Baumeister (1997), exploring the causes of 'evil', concludes that one of the basic causes is high but unstable self-esteem, sometimes referred to as insecure grandiosity. He says: 'I propose that violent, evil people tend to be marked by feelings of superiority but also a fear that they will lose their superior position.' (p. 152). Manne (2014) interprets this psychodynamically as the product of split parenting between an under-valuing (or absent) parent and an over-valuing parent that makes it difficult to integrate good and bad aspects of the self, such that the self is taken as the love object. Kobrin (2010) suggests that suicide terrorism among Arab Muslims is a product of a failure to integrate love of the father with love of a mother who is apparently hated by the father, with suicide achieving a longed for fusion. Similarly, Kernberg (2009), in discussing the evidence for the death drive, identifies the unconscious function of self-destructiveness as not simply an urge to destroy the self but also to destroy significant others, be it out of guilt, revenge, envy, or triumph.

The far-right terrorist Breivik (2017), convicted of the murder of 77 people including 69 teenagers in Norway, is an example of this type of narcissistic killer. Eventually diagnosed with narcissistic personality disorder, his father was absent from his life and his mother depressed and unstable, alternately smothering and rejecting him. He cultivated an image of hyper-masculinity and became obsessed with the political left and their support for multi-culturalism and liberal values which he saw as robbing him of his birthright. He believed he was a modern incarnation of the Knights Templar, a 12th-century group of elite warriors during the Christian crusades. Yet as Buruma (2015), the reviewer of his biography, summed up: 'His is a story of family dysfunction, professional and sexual failure, grotesque narcissism and … apocalyptic delusions'.

Another potential example of pathological narcissism is Mohammed Emwazi, otherwise known as Jihadi John. His terrorist trajectory has been widely reported. His role as a guard and torturer for ISIS appeared to act as a 'narcissistic supply' in which he found satisfaction from inflicting pain and humiliation on those he judged to be unworthy. He not only carried out the beheading of eight individual hostages and oversaw the beheadings of 21 Syrian soldiers but he also was filmed doing so in videos released to the whole world, providing further gratification of his narcissistic needs.

Summary and conclusion

This paper suggests that there are three broad pathways into terrorism, though it is not proposed that they are mutually exclusive. It is the case that many of those who take the noble cause pathway are also troubled, as are many of those with a criminal background. Depression and elements of personality disorder and substance misuse are not uncommon in terrorist offenders, as would be expected in those who have struggled to find their place in society. The inclusion of a clin-

ical pathway in this model is for those few individuals, often lone actors, whose involvement is primarily driven by their often idiosyncratic clinical condition.

This pathway model is an attempt to make sense of the empirical situation that confronts us at a time when our collective understanding of terrorist offending is still in its infancy. Until recently there have been few opportunities to apply psychological analysis to those involved, and the prevailing belief has been that this form of violence is the product of rational decision-making in the pursuit of political aims. The UK correctional imperative to reduce future risk has provided a rare window into the subjective experience of those who have committed terrorist offences and provides an opportunity to develop our understanding of the needs that are met by engaging with extremist ideologies, groups or causes.

Far from pathologising terrorist violence this exercise understands terrorist offending as the product of frustrated normal human needs for love, acceptance and reciprocal trust from infancy through to adulthood. Criminality appears to constitute a vulnerability to radicalisation in itself by virtue of its demonisation by mainstream society and a reciprocal desire on the part of criminals for revenge and redemption. Those with higher levels of conventional psychopathology are found within the smaller group of lone actors with idiosyncratic grievances. In contrast, group actors present as hostile and aggrieved but are largely emotionally and cognitively intact, despite elements of personality disorder and accompanying depression.

Psychoanalytic interpretations are helpful in understanding terrorism as a form of communication driven by unassuaged primal fears and existential threats that through primitive mechanisms allow a persecuting group to become the repository for disavowed feelings, and thereby a target for annihilation. Group analytic interpretations also help to explain how large group history shapes ideology and individual identity, maintains group allegiance and sanctions terrorist offending.

Further experience and research may confirm the utility of this pathway model and provide additional clarification of the intersection between psychopathology and terrorism.

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Notes

1. The Terrorism Act 2006.
2. The global Muslim community.
3. Heretic, unworthy.

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CREST Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats

Extremism Risk Assessment: A Directory

FULL REPORT

MARCH 2019

Monica Lloyd

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EXTREMISM RISK ASSESSMENT: A DIRECTORY

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Monica Lloyd, University of Birmingham

This directory has been assembled from those frameworks that have been developed in recent years to assess aspects of extremist violence, a broad term used here to encompass terrorist violence that is framed by ideology and targeted violence that is framed by idiosyncratic beliefs. A further framework concerned with group based violence is included because of its potential relevance to group actor terrorist offending. For each of these the originators completed their own entry and consented to its publication, providing contact details for further enquiry.

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INTRODUCTION

This directory has been assembled from those frameworks that have been developed in recent years to assess aspects of extremist violence, a broad term used here to encompass terrorist violence that is framed by ideology and targeted violence that is framed by idiosyncratic beliefs. A further framework concerned with group based violence is included because of its potential relevance to group actor terrorist offending. For each of these the originators completed their own entry and consented to its publication, providing contact details for further enquiry.

Each of these frameworks was developed in a slightly different context, and optimised for a different purpose and group of users; the first three to assess those already convicted of terrorist offences or group based violence that are direct assessments that incorporate to some extent the offender's own account of their offending, and the others to assess the risk of a possible first terrorist attack or act of targeted violence against a named individual or group that operate as indirect assessments carried out without the direct input of the subject of concern. These all conform, to a greater or lesser extent, to an approach that structures professional judgment from a number of potential indicators of risk derived from clinical and correctional research and practice, with the exception of the IVP that consists of a checklist for the assessment of escalating behaviours that open source research suggests correspond with more serious intent and/or imminence of attack. The ERG22+ and the TRAP-18 both provide some risk indicators that are more theorised in that they are concerned to explain the individual needs that are met by engagement in ideology or in an idiosyncratic belief system, thereby providing clinical information to guide intervention to reduce or manage that risk.The VERA (forerunner of the VERA-2R) and the SRG (forerunner of the ERG22+) were developed initially to assess the risk of re-offending in those already convicted of terrorist offences. The original VERA derived its risk factors from the terrorist literature, evidenced from open source case studies and feedback obtained from terrorism experts, national security and law enforcement analysts. The ERG also derived its risk factors from the literature, validated against the accounts of terrorist offenders themselves and of the probation officers working with them. The MLG was designed to assess an individual's risk for group-based violence, including terrorism, and derives its risk factors from the literature on group violence and from feedback obtained from experienced threat assessment analysts. It is therefore confined to use with group actors and the authors recommend that it is deployed alongside other tools for the assessment of terrorist offending. At the opposite pole, the TRAP-18 was developed specifically with lone actors in mind, though it has been found to have utility also with group actors.[1] All the other frameworks were developed for use with both group and lone actors.

Of those designed specifically to assess the risk of a first offence, the TRAP-18 was derived from research into lone actor targeted violence in the USA that included assassinations, stalking, school shootings, work place violence and other idiosyncratic single issues, including lone actor terrorist violence.[2] It includes a set of proximal factors that are intended to act as warning factors, and a set of more theorised distal factors designed to capture the perpetrator's underlying motivational influences. The IR-46 was developed to identify individuals in the community at risk of carrying out an Islamist terrorist attack and does not purport to be suitable for other ideological groups. The IVP was developed in the UK to assist in the identification of those in the community about whom there may be radicalisation concerns and although it claims to be 'ideologically neutral'[3] six of its 16 indicators apply specifically to Islamist extremism. It is derived from the terrorist literature and analysis of open source 'empirical events', and the IR-46 was developed by psychologists in the Netherlands working with the Dutch National Police and was derived from the terrorist literature, closed source Islamist case studies and consultation with intelligence analysts. Both have a set of 'red flag' indicators that are associated with advanced terrorist plotting that are intended to trigger action by law enforcement.

1 Meloy, J.R., Roshdi, K., Glaz-Ocik, J. & Hoffmann, J. (2015). Investigating the individual terrorist in Europe. Journal of Threat Assess Management 2: 140-152.
2 Meloy, J. R. (2011). Violent true believers. FBI law enforcement bulletin, 80, 24–32.
3 Egan, V., Cole, J., Cole, B., Alison, L., Alison, E., Waring, S. & Elntib, S. (2016) Can you identify violent extremists using a screening checklist and open-source intelligence alone? Journal of Threat Assessment and Management, 3 (1):26

Broadly speaking these six frameworks vary to the extent that they focus on engagement in ideology, indicators of violent intent, and/or terrorist capability, which in turn depends on the stage in the terrorist trajectory for which they were developed. Those concerned with preventing radicalisation focus more on the process of engagement and the individual pathway vulnerabilities associated with this. Those concerned with identifying individuals with an active terrorist intent are more concerned with evidence of attack planning, the changes in thinking and behaviour that accompany an intent to cause harm, and evidence of terrorist capability. This threshold is an important one for counter-terrorist purposes. In the UK both MI5, charged with intelligence analysis, and the counter-terrorist police within the government Prevent strategy, independently assess the threat of extremist violence either side of this threshold; the former for 'Pursue' purposes and the latter for 'Prevent' purposes, though the endeavour is very similar. Risk assessment therefore remains core to much of the counter-terrorist effort of intelligence agencies and policing in the UK, and it is hoped that this directory will contribute to the recent recommendation for "a refreshed approach to research and innovation, including academic, private sector and international partners." [4]

None of these frameworks claim to be able to straightforwardly predict future violence. In accordance with good practice in risk assessment, most claim instead to be able to identify behaviours or scenarios that signal when and in what circumstances an attack is more likely, in order to inform efforts to prevent it through appropriate action. Each is presented as work in progress, within a standard template that allows for some comparison across frameworks. The originators of each framework completed their own sections 1 to 5, except for the ERG, which was completed by HMPPS as the copyright holder. For this reason they vary a little in terms of style, content and detail. A final section 6 addresses the strengths and limitations of each framework. These were completed not by the originators but by other risk assessment experts who were also in some cases experienced users, though the originators have also had sight of them and been invited to comment. Each section 6 therefore also varies somewhat in focus and style as they are the product of different expert reviewers. Section 6 should therefore only be read as the output of a sample of expert peer reviewer opinion. As the evidence base develops and more studies are published, and as more frameworks come on stream or are placed in the public domain, the entries and peer reviews can be updated.

GOOD PRACTICE

Although psychologists have been assessing violent patients or prisoners for their risk of re-offending for many years, the task of assessing the risk of individuals carrying out a first act of violence in the community is a more recent endeavour that is altogether more difficult, as most approaches are predicated on the understanding that past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour. Without evidence of past violence, such assessments are informed either by intelligence that an individual is connected to a terrorist network, possibly engaged in an extremist ideology and/or potentially involved in terrorist plotting, or is nursing an idiosyncratic grievance and possibly making targeted threats of harm that may or may not be seriously intended. More worryingly, they may not be declaring intent at all, at least not publicly, thereby successfully remaining under the radar and preserving the element of surprise. Judgments need to be made about whether the threat is real, what form it might take and how imminent it may be, based on what is often incomplete information from indirect sources, without the opportunity to interview the individual concerned. Making assessments in such circumstances can also raise ethical issues for practitioner psychologists for whom requests for assessment before an offence has been committed may not be considered legitimate within the boundaries of their code of conduct and ethics. Guidance has recently been published by the British Psychological Society that addresses the ethical challenges of working with extremist violence,[5] and that have been highlighted by the UK Prevent duty.[6]

The development of frameworks to assess extremist violence has taken place against a backdrop of

4 See David Anderson QC's report: Attacks in London and Manchester March-June 2017. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664682/Attacks_in_London_and_Manchester_Open_Report.pdf. 3.47f
5 https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/ethical-guidelines-applied-psychological-practice-field-extremism-violent-extremism
6 Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on public bodies to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism"

academic research into the methodology of violence risk assessment in general that has lost confidence in 'non-discretionary' actuarial approaches that attempt to place an individual in a low, medium or high risk category on the basis of their conformity to a fixed offender profile. Such approaches have lost currency for all forms of violence,[7] and especially for targeted and terrorist violence.[8] [9] They assume that dangerousness resides within the individual, is fixed, either present or not, and can be measured by summing risk factors; whereas for all forms of violence, dangerousness is now viewed as an emerging construct that is the product of an interaction between push and pull factors in the individual case, within a particular familial, social, cultural and/or political context, and in the absence of protective factors.

The 'discretionary' approach of Structured Professional Judgment (SPJ) is now recognised universally as good assessment practice.[10] [11] It provides guidance to practitioners to structure their judgments of risk by means of a scaffold of key indicators, often grouped into broader domains that can demonstrate a link (theoretical and/or empirical) with the violence to be prevented. It produces a holistic assessment that integrates the information available from a range of sources that has become central to an interagency process of information exchange that informs risk management, in both treatment settings and in threat assessment. It allows practitioners to bridge gaps in the knowledge base and is applied within a cycle of referral, prioritisation, further investigation, information sharing and formulation, followed by more or less active intervention and/or management. In treatment settings it includes direct interview with, and ideally the collaboration of the perpetrator; in a threat assessment context, face to face contact with the individual threatening violence is rare, and more emphasis is placed on intelligence, risk factors, warning behaviours, stressors, and possible precipitating events and mitigators.[12] In a fast moving threat scenario there are many gaps to be bridged and timely decisions to be made about whether to investigate further, monitor events or intervene to actively manage the risk, or effect an arrest.

SPJ frameworks are now available for a range of violent offending and have been recommended for use with extremist violence.[13] [14] [15] It should be acknowledged that there is a continuum of SPJ approaches from the fully operationalised that require scenario planning and formulation, to leaner approaches that support an appraisal of the pattern of risk (and protective) factors in the individual case to inform a summary risk rating of high, medium, or low. It is generally understood that the more complete approach is the preserve of professionals such as psychologists, behavioural scientists or probation officers, and that the leaner approach is more suited to those with operational expertise and experience. These two approaches have been characterised in the literature as SPJ full-fat and SPJ lite.[16] The originators of the frameworks featured here all claim that their framework conforms to some extent with this approach, in that risk (and ideally protective) factors are formulated into an overall risk judgment that informs proportionate risk monitoring pre-crime, or appropriate risk management post crime. It is probably true to say that some were deliberately designed to conform to this approach, and that others have migrated towards it following revisions. The IVP was originally developed as a checklist-based screening instrument but has been re-badged an SPJ framework

7 *Hart, S.D., & Cooke, D.J., (2013). Another look at the (im)precision of individual risk estimates made using actuarial risk assessment instruments. Behavioral Sciences and the Law, 31, 81-102.*
8 *Borum, R., (2015). Assessing risk for terrorism involvement. Journal of Threat Assessment and Management, 2, 63-87.*
9 *Borum, R., Fein, R., Vossekuil, B., & Berglund, J. (1999). Threat assessment: Defining an approach for evaluating risk of targeted violence. Behavioral Sciences & The Law, 17 (3), 323-337.*
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11 *Logan, C & Lloyd, M (2018). Violent extremism: A comparison of approaches to assessing and managing risk. Legal & Criminological Psychology. DOI: 10.1111/lcrp.12140, p.3*
12 *U.S Department of Justice FBI. Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing, and Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks. Behavioral Analysis Unit – National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime.*
13 *Skeem, J.L. & Monahan, J. (2011). Current Directions in Violence Risk Assessment. Current Directions in Psychological Science, 20(1), 38-42, doi.org/10.1177/0963721410397271*
14 *Monahan, J. (2015). The individual risk assessment of terrorism: Recent developments. Virginia Public Law and Legal Theory Research Paper, 57, 520–534. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn. 2665815*
15 *Sarma, K. M. (2017). Risk assessment and the prevention of radicalization from nonviolence into terrorism. American Psychologist, 72(3), 278-288. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/amp0000121*
16 *See footnote 10, p.7*

in the directory since the 2006 study of its utility that suggested that gaps in information needed to be bridged by a human led assessment of the case.[17] Similarly in 2015 the TRAP-18 was labelled an investigative template,[18] but has since been re-badged an SPJ framework in the directory as its function has evolved.

This approach allows assessors to make both common sense and theoretical sense of the function of the extremist identity, ideology and/or violence to the individual, rather than assessing their degree of conformity to a fixed terrorist profile that research has confirmed does not exist.[19] Hart (2009) has stated, in the context of sexual violence, that an assessment approach should be judged "to the extent that it coheres with the facts of the case, common sense views of the world, and (where applicable) scientific research and theory."[20] Meloy also makes it explicit in his description of the TRAP-18 that his aim is to identify the pattern that emerges from the constellation of warning behaviours as a Gestalt which the clinician constructs from experience, stressing the importance of clinical insight (see TRAP-18 entry). Such factors should also be 'dynamic, iterative, and responsive to change'.[21] An important feature of the SPJ approach that requires more clarity is the precise role of protective factors, which are variously referred to in the different framework entries.[22] Only the VERA-2R explicitly lists six protective and risk-mitigating factors, which are essentially the reverse of six key risk factors. Meloy asserts in the entry for the TRAP-18 that "the absence of certain indicators, both proximal warning behaviours and distal characteristics are protective" but this is far from established. A recent paper by Warren et al (2018) proposes a new theoretical model to explain attacks perpetrated by radicalised civilians that incorporates risk and protective factors as the end points of the same continuum, individualised to capture the particular protective influences that bear on particular risk factors to more precisely inform individual risk analysis and management. There is more work to be done to achieve a consensus about the precise mechanism of the protective function.

Our task therefore in evaluating these frameworks is to ensure that they allow the assessor to formulate the individual case by identifying the factors that motivate and incentivise engagement, and the potentially idiosyncratic influences that protect against it. These drivers should be aspects of the individual that provide common sense explanations for the adoption of an extremist identity, ideology or terrorist intention, that also make theoretical sense, and that allow for the possibility of a different life choice in the future.

VALIDATION

The frameworks presented here all represent work in progress and none are yet fully validated. This is a task that presents multiple challenges, particularly for violent extremism for which the evidence base is thin, perpetrators few in number though disproportionately damaging, the social and political context complex, and the range of agencies and practitioners involved significant, each with different skills, approaches and priorities. Assuming sufficient relevant information to inform the assessment, the validity of a risk assessment framework is determined by how reliably it performs and whether the identified factors are actually causal and therefore valid indicators of risk (criminogenic). The assessment framework should structure and guide the assessor's task, so that close agreement can be achieved by different assessors working independently of each other with the same information. Reliability is commonly established through inter-rater reliability studies, and these are cited in the directory where available.

The validity of SPJ frameworks cannot be established as in conventional psychometric scales by internal analysis of the contribution that each item makes to a total score that measures a unitary construct such as intelligence or neuroticism that can be independently evidenced. There is no such thing as a propensity to terrorism that can be measured by means of a single scale, and the factors within SPJ domains

17 *Egan, V., Cole, J., Cole, B., Alison, L., Alison, E., Waring, S. & Elntib, S. (2016) Can you identify violent extremists using a screening checklist and open-source intelligence alone? Journal of Threat Assessment and Management, 3 (1). pp. 21-36.*
18 *Meloy, J. R., Roshdi, K., Glaz-Ocik, J., & Hoffmann, J. (2015). Investigating the individual terrorist in Europe. Journal of Threat Assessment and Management, 2, 140–152.*
19 *See footnote 7*
20 *Hart, S. (2009). Evidence-based assessment of risk for sexual violence. Chapman Journal of Criminal Justice. 1, 143-165. p.160.*
21 *www.RMAScotland.gov.uk/FRAME, Principle 11.*
22 *Warren, J.I., Leviton, A.C.R., Reed, J., Saathoff, G.B., Patterson, T.D., Richards, L.A., & Fancher, A.D. (2018) Operationalizing Theory: A Moral Situational Action Model for Extremist Violence. Journal of Threat Assessment and Management. V. 5, No. 4.205-226.*

apply differentially to different terrorist roles and personalities. They broadly identify the range of push and pull factors and personal vulnerabilities that have been identified in the literature, and rely on professional judgment for a formulation of what particular combination of risk and/or needs apply to the individual being assessed, and what protective influences might mitigate that risk. A recent study systematically reviewed 148 studies from peer reviewed journals that identified empirical factors that predicted radicalisation and classified them as push factors, pull factors or personal factors.[23] Although there was a broad convergence of findings, only 19 (12%) used a control group and only one used a matched control group of non-violent extremists. Access to terrorists and matched controls is difficult to achieve in the real world but remains a gold standard for confirming that proposed risk factors are actually valid indicators of risk and are not also present in radicals with no terrorist intent.

The single study referred to above compared open source Al Qaeda influenced terrorist case studies from Canada and Europe with 28 Radicals, all of whom were associates of a terrorist in the sample but who had not engaged in terrorist violence themselves, twenty of whom were interviewed as a matched control group.[24] Both groups shared a grievance towards the West, support for a Caliphate and for defensive violence, but the terrorists held strident beliefs in their supremacy and the inferiority of the West, lacked critical thinking and made a deliberate decision to reject their host society and embrace a romantic notion of restoring their honour through violence. Protective factors were good role models growing up, in-depth understanding of Islam, respect for their host society and openness to new learning.

Two recent studies compared by means of the TRAP-18, groups with and without violent intent. The first compared thirty 'sovereign citizens' who planned or executed violent offences with 29 who carried out non-violent offences.[25] Six of the proximal factors and four of the distal factors significantly discriminated between them, and the total score was able to correctly predict 76% of the violent offenders. Examination of these indicates that 'last resort behaviours', 'pathway planning behaviours' and 'identification with a commando identity' were powerful proximal predictors and 'personal grievance, framed by ideology' and 'criminal violence' were powerful distal predictors. The second study compared 33 lethal lone actor terrorists with 23 subjects of concern who lacked clear intent or were successfully diverted from this intention and their cases closed. Five proximal and four distal factors significantly discriminated between them. The same 'last resort behaviours', 'pathway planning/ preparation behaviours' and 'identification as an agent or soldier for a cause' emerged as powerful correlates, with the addition of 'energy burst' and the absence of a 'directly communicated threat'. Among the distal factors 'ideological framing', 'changes in thinking and behaviour', 'creativity and innovation' and the absence of 'mental disorder' were all significant correlates. The configuration indicates that every attacker had at least one proximal warning behaviour and most of the distal characteristics were present in the majority of the attackers and nonattackers, confirming the utility of the approach that recommends that the presence of any one proximal characteristic should be followed by active management of the case while the presence of only distal characteristics should result in active monitoring of the case.

Other 'known outcome' studies exploring the performance of the TRAP-18 indicators retrospectively with actual cases reveal that nine attackers with more lethal intent had a greater psychopathology than 5 with less lethal intent;[26] nine school shooters showed a pattern of warning behaviours that 31 empty threateners did not;[27] 15 lone actor terrorists and 7 group actor terrorists shared 6 of the 8 warning

23 *Vergani, M., Iqbal,M., Ilbahar, E., Barton, G. (2018). The Three Ps of Radicalization: Push, Pull and Personal. A Systematic Scoping Review of the Scientific Evidence about Radicalization Into Violent Extremism. Studies in Conflict & Terrorism. https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1505686*

24 *Bartlett, J. & Miller, C. (2012). The Edge of Violence: Towards Telling the Difference Between Violent and Non-Violent Radicalization. Terrorism and Political Violence. V.24, Iss.1.*

25 *Challacombe, D.J. & Lucas, P.A., (2018) Postdicting Violence in Sovereign Citizen Actors. An exploratory test of the TRAP-18. Journal of Threat Assessment and Management. Dec 2018.*

26 *Hoffmann, J., Meloy, J.R., Guldimann, A. & Ermer, A. (2011). Attacks on German public figures, 1968-2004: Warning behaviors, potentially lethal and nonlethal acts, psychiatric status, and motivations. Behavioral Sciences and the Law, 29, 155-179.*

27 *Meloy, J.R., Hoffmann, J., Roshdi, K. & Guldimann, A. (2014). Some warning behaviors discriminate between school shooters and other students of concern. Journal of Threat Assessment and Management 1: 203-211.*

behaviours with the exception of direct threats that were not made by group actors. There was significant similarity between them in terms of grievance framed by ideology, and changes in thinking and emotion, but more lone actors than group actors showed evidence of psychopathology;[28] (Meloy et al, 2015); 70% of 111 lone actor terrorists, including Islamist, Far Right and single-issue terrorists shared at least half or more of the indicators, suggesting more commonality than difference between them.[29]

Such studies touch on another aspect of SPJ frameworks that bears on their coherence and validity: the extent to which the risk factors are theorised and able to provide a degree of explanation for the individual's extremist behaviour. In this respect a distinction may be made between risk factors that are intrinsically indicative of risk such as Direct threats, Leakage of an intent to do harm (TRAP-18), or Planning or preparing for a terrorist attack (VERA-2R), and those whose link with risk is less direct but potentially more explanatory, such as 'Changes in thinking or emotion' (TRAP-18) or 'Over-identification with group, cause or ideology' (the ERG22+). To the extent that a factor directly communicates violent intent it does not need a theoretical explanation for its role, but where a factor is not a direct indicator of harm, then some explanation for its role is necessary. Such a factor needs to make both psychological sense, and be able to demonstrate a direct functional link with the adoption of extremist identity/ideology, or the development of attitudes and behaviour that are consistent with terrorist intent. Such explanations add value to the assessment in helping to explain the individual's motivations, inform subsequent intervention and risk management options, and contribute to the framework's evidence base.[30]

Postdictive studies such as that with sovereign citizens above have been recommended to test the performance of a framework retrospectively with known outcome case studies,[31] providing a measure of their criterion or concurrent validity, as well as a means of comparing the profile of different ideological groups of those either side of the threshold of violence as above. The main barriers to the efficacy of such studies are the influence of confirmatory or hindsight bias in judging whether an indicator is evidenced or not, and of the self-fulfilling function of indicators that are elements of the behaviour that is to be predicted, effectively confounding independent and dependent variables. Several postdictive studies have been carried out with the TRAP-18 that are vulnerable to such criticism. However, the application of the TRAP-18 in postdictive research as above has also produced new learning where studies have contrasted targeted violence with more or less lethal intent, lone actors and group actors and different ideological groups on the TRAP-18 indicators. They have shown, for example, that more lone actor than group actor terrorists show evidence of psychopathology; that greater lethality is correlated with greater psychopathology, and that those threatening targeted violence often issue direct threats, whereas terrorists do not.

Most of the frameworks included in this directory claim to be suitable for all extremist ideologies, with the explicit exception of the IR-46, whose originators are currently developing alternative frameworks for Far Right and Extreme Left Wing groups. More research is needed to clarify commonalities and differences. Concurrent validity was found between the overall summary risk ratings for the MLG Version 2 and the HCR-20 by the authors of the MLG, confirming that those at risk for terrorist violence are also at risk for general violence, though this finding does not imply that anyone judged to be at risk for general violence is also at risk for terrorist violence. The MLG Individual and Individual-Group domains were found to overlap significantly with the VERA2, whereas Group and Group-Society domains overlapped very little, confirming that the two frameworks measure different aspects of group based violence (see MLG entry). These differences are important; identifying which frameworks work best for which client group and in what circumstances, and deploying them appropriately is part of the expertise of risk assessment that advances with the benefit of such findings.

It is hoped that with the publication of this directory, risk assessment practitioners, intelligence analysts and

28 *Meloy, J.R., Roshdi, K., Glaz-Ocik, J. & Hoffmann, J. (2015). Investigating the individual terrorist in Europe. Journal of Threat Assess Management 2: 140-152.*
29 *Meloy, J.R. & Gill, P. (2016). The lone actor terrorist and the TRAP-18. J of Threat Assessment and Management 3: 37-52.*
30 *See footnote 10, (p.11)*
31 *Monahan, J. (2012). The individual risk assessment of terrorism. Psychology, Public Policy, and Law, 18, 167–205. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0025792*

the academic research community will be able to access more of the tools available for assessing ideologically motivated targeted and/or group based violence, and be inspired to approach the authors or copyright owners directly for permission to use them, or for training. Cooperative research is needed to build evidence for their reliability, validity and utility, to carry out more matched controlled studies, to test frameworks against known outcome case studies, and contribute to the knowledge base that will accrue from their use. More clarity about what discriminates between targeted violence and terrorist attacks, between lone and group actors, and between different ideological groups is needed. This directory is intended to contribute to this work in progress.

EXTREMISM RISK GUIDANCE (ERG22+)

1. PROVENANCE

1.1 ORIGINATING AUTHORS, PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION, ROLE AND CONTEXT

HMPPS developed and owns the intellectual property of the ERG. HMPPS is responsible for training and registration of assessors, as well as its ongoing development and adaptation in line with evolving HMPPS population requirements and emerging literature and research.

CONTACT EMAIL

Interventions_businessenquiries@noms.gsi.gov.uk

1.2 BACKGROUND AND PROVENANCE

The Extremism Risk Guidance (ERG) is best described as a Structured Professional Judgment tool (SPJ); a formulation guided assessment of risk and need. When the development of what we now know as the ERG began, there were no known established methodologies for assessing risk and need amongst extremist offenders, and with the increasing number of individuals being convicted of extremist offences, and developing legislation (e.g., Terrorism Act 2006), an assessment was required that could provide an empirically-informed systematic and transparent approach to assessing risk and need amongst convicted extremists.

The ERG was informed by the international terrorist literature, from casework with up to 50 convicted terrorist offenders, and from a comparative analysis of the criminogenic profiles of extremist offenders compared to mainstream criminal offenders from OASys (Offender Assessment System) group data.

Casework findings were cross-referenced against independent research into the radicalising influences in the backgrounds of 12 extremist offenders on license in the community.[32] These findings were reviewed by an advisory panel of experts in the field who suggested a case formulation approach based on functional analysis of the individual's offending, to identify the factors relevant to involvement in extremism and to extremist offending, to inform a structured professional judgment framework (Lloyd & Dean, 2015).

1.3 DATE OF FIRST PUBLICATION OR ORIGIN AND SCOPE OF USE

The ERG manual is an internal publication. *Extremism Risk Guidance. ERG22+ Structured Professional Guidelines for Assessing Risk of Extremist Offending.* Offender Services & Implementation Group. NOMS (2011).

1.4 HAS THE FRAMEWORK BEEN PEER REVIEWED?

During the development of the ERG, an independent process evaluation of the first version, the Structured Risk Guidance (SRG[33]) was conducted by the National Centre for Social Research, which focused on its content, delivery and implementation (Webster et al., 2017).

This evaluation, along with the feedback from an exercise with 35 probation officers with experience of extremist offenders, led to further review and development of the framework and the introduction of a three dimensional model.

The expert advisory group continued to oversee this work as it developed. The final version of the ERG was peer-reviewed within HMPPS and externally by two of the experts from the advisory group. The ERG22+ as

32 *Karmani, A (2009). Reducing the influences that Radicalise Prisoners. London Probation Trust. Unpublished internal report.*
33 *A Process Evaluation of the Structured Risk Guidance for Extremist Offenders. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/661787/process-evaluation-srg-extremist-offender-report.pdf*

it stands today was mainstreamed across Prisons and Probation by HMPPS in 2011.

1.5 AIMS OF THE FRAMEWORK

The ERG aims to:

- Assess the extent to which an individual is engaged or committed to an extremist group, cause or ideology, and is motivated to offend on their behalf.
- Assess the extent to which an individual holds a current readiness or intention to offend.
- Assess the extent to which an individual is capable of, or has the resources to carry out a further extremist offence (particularly acts of terrorism which cause serious and significant harm).
- Inform judgments about their likelihood of contributing to, or committing a future extremist offence.
- Inform sentence planning, including recommending any interventions or other strategies that may be appropriate to manage an individual's risk, and support them in moving on with their lives without offending.

1.6 DESCRIPTION OF APPROACH

The ERG is an SPJ tool, a formulation guided assessment of risk and need. Assessors are asked to consider the 22+ factors, and record and evidence those significant to an individual's pathway into extremism (i.e., engagement), how they overcame inhibitions against offending and/or harming others (i.e., intent) and their ability to contribute to, or commit a further extremist offence (i.e., capability). Assessors are then asked, based on their formulation to comment on the individual's risk and need, what might protect against further offending, and make recommendations to facilitate desistance and support disengagement from extremist ideology.

The ERG is not an actuarial measure. It was not designed to determine guilt, or to predict whether an individual will reoffend; it was designed to be used as part of multidisciplinary decision-making process to inform proportionate risk management, to increase understanding and confidence in front-line staff and in decision-makers working with extremist offenders, and to facilitate effective and targeted intervention (Lloyd & Dean, 2015).

1.7 TARGET POPULATION

All individuals in England and Wales convicted of an extremist offence (under terrorism and in some cases, other legislation where the offence is clearly extremist in nature) are subject to an ERG assessment; generally, within the first twelve months of sentence. In some cases, individuals for whom there is significant concern regarding possible involvement in extremism but who were convicted of an offence unrelated to extremism may be subject to an ERG.

1.8 FOCUS OF THE ASSESSMENT

The ERG focuses on the individual, but it also identifies the role of factors and circumstances external to the individual that may have influenced their engagement and/or involvement in extremism. Consideration needs to be given to the group, cause or ideology that is being supported, the individual motivations and protective and contextual factors, as well as their role within the extremist activity.

1.9 DIRECT OR INDIRECT ASSESSMENT?

When undertaking the assessment assessors are encourage to work responsively with the individual to create a collaborative assessment that allows them to provide their own account and insights, to create an understanding and formulation of their pathway into extremist offending and assess the risk of further offending. Assessors are also encouraged to use as many sources of information as possible in its completion.

1.10 GENERIC OR SPECIFIC TO IDEOLOGY?

Generic. Those identified by **HMPPS** as extremist offenders include anyone convicted under terrorist legislation or anyone whose offending is allied to an extremist ideology that justifies violence or illegal conduct in pursuit of its objectives. This includes far

right, animal rights activists or others pursuing single issues.

1.11 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

The ERG is grounded in a number of mainstream psychological theories and incorporates amongst others, the following key theories and concepts:

- Ajzen & Fishbein's theory of reasoned action.[34]
- Suedfeld's theory of cognitive integrative complexity.[35]
- Altemeyer 's findings concerning authoritarian dominance and authoritarian submission.[36]
- Tajfel & Turner's Social identity Theory of Inter-Group Behaviour.[37]
- Schwartz et al's Identity Theory of Terrorism.[38]
- Bjorgo & Horgan's model of push/pull factors in engagement and disengagement.[39]
- Horgan's characterisation of 'socialisation into terrorism'.[40]
- McCauley & Segal's observation on the dynamic nature of engagement and disengagement.[41]
- Ward's Good Lives Model.[42]

2. STRUCTURE

2.1 AN OUTLINE OF THE STRUCTURE

The ERG is three dimensional in its structure. The dimensions 'engagement' and 'intent' seek to measure the longitudinal journey of an individual taking into account a number of factors which unfold in interaction with one another in different degrees and sequences across a number of developing pathways. The third dimension, 'capability' serves a different function in the formulation, essentially looking at the operational capacity to cause harm.

Within the ERG, engagement is defined as a process by which an individual becomes interested in, involved in, committed to, and/or identified with an extremist group, cause and/or ideology (NOMS, 2011[a]). This process is often referred to elsewhere in the literature as radicalisation. The factors within the engagement dimension include for example, need to redress injustice, need for identity, meaning and belonging, need for status, susceptibility to indoctrination, need to dominate others, political/moral motivation, transitional periods, the influence of family and/or friends, opportunistic involvement and mental health.

The term 'intent' refers to the mind-set associated with a readiness to act illegally and/or violently on behalf of a group, cause and/or ideology. The intent dimension is best described as the end point of an engagement process if uninterrupted, and includes for example, over-identification (as an end state of engagement and identification), us and them thinking, dehumanisation (as an end state of us and them thinking), and harmful objectives; all of which represent a state of mind where inhibitions against offending and causing harm have been overcome. It is this dimension which bears most heavily on risk.

The third dimension 'capability' seeks to measure an offender's abilities to carry out an act of terrorism and/or cause serious harm (NOMS, 2011[a]). Capability is a mixture of static, dynamic, risk-neutral and risk-specific variables, and is an operational rather than a clinical indicator. The capability dimension includes factors such as skills, competencies, networks, resources and criminal history, all of which act as enabling factors (NOMS, 2011[a]).

34 Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (2005). The influence of attitudes on behavior. In Albarracin, D., Johnson, BT., Zanna MP. (Eds.) The Handbook of Attitudes. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
35 Suedfeld, P (2010). The Cognitive Processing of Politics and Politicians: Archival Studies of Conceptual and Integrative Complexity. Journal of Personality, V.78(6), 1669-702
36 Altemeyer, B. (2004). Highly Dominating, Highly Authoritarian Personalities. The Journal of Social Psychology, 144(4), 421-447.
37 Tajfel, H & Turner, J (1986) The Social Identity Theory of Inter-group Behaviour, in Worchel, S & Austin, W. The Psychology of Inter-group Behaviour. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
38 Schwartz, S J, Dunkel, C S & Waterman, A.S (2009). Terrorism: An Identity Theory Perspective. Studies in International Conflict & Terrorism. 32:537-559.
39 Bjorgo,T & Horgan, J (Eds.) Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement. Oxon: Routledge.
40 Horgan, J. (2005) The Psychology of Terrorism. Routledge.
41 McCauley, C and Segal, M, 'Terrorist Individuals and Terrorist Groups: The Normal Psychology of Extreme Behaviour' in J Groebel and JH Goldstein (Eds) Terrorism (Seville: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Sevilla, 1989. p 45).
42 Ward, T. & Stewart, C.A. (2003). Criminogenic needs and human needs: A theoretical model Psychology, Crime and Law, 9, 125-143.

2.2 ARE PROTECTIVE FACTORS INCLUDED?

Yes. Assessors are asked as part of the ERG to consider alongside the 22+ risk factors, how any of these or additional factors may be mitigated by protective influences, and support an individual's desistance and disengagement from extremism.

2.3 IS THE FRAMEWORK SENSITIVE TO POLITICAL CONTEXT?

Yes. Assessors are asked to pay attention to the political and social context within which an individual becomes involved in extremism and offends (Lloyd & Dean, 2015), and to consider how the static or changing political and social context might impact future risk and need.

2.4 RISK SEEN AS STATIC OR DYNAMIC?

Risk is treated as dynamic; all risk factors within the ERG other than two of the capability factors and arguably some mental health issues are dynamic and susceptible to change.

2.5 TIME-FRAME FOR RISK JUDGMENTS

As a dynamic framework, the ERG assessment has limited longevity and should be reviewed periodically to reflect progress or change, in order to inform risk and sentence management decisions.

2.6 ANY REFERENCE TO IMMINENCE OF HARM?

Not directly, this is not the prime purpose of the ERG. The assessment does however comment on any risk triggers, enabling or disinhibiting influences or circumstances in different scenarios. Where there is a risk of imminent harm, or harm in particular scenarios, this information is fed into processes concerned with the day-to-day risk management of an individual.

2.7 INFORMATION REQUIREMENT

Individuals subject to an ERG are asked to participate in the assessment process, either through interview or in writing. The ERG is completed based on written information when individuals decline participation, but they are still given an opportunity to review the completed ERG. Assessors are encouraged to use as many sources of information as possible, including in some cases, speaking to family. The completed ERG is disclosed to the individual in the context of sentence planning and management.

2.8 IS SCENARIO PLANNING INCLUDED?

Not in the way that other SPJ tools in the field of violence or sexual offending risk assessments instruct scenario planning, but assessors are encouraged in the guidance to use the case formulation in this way.

2.9 ARE THERE ANY RED FLAGS?

No red flags as such but the dimensions of Intent and Capability bear more directly on the risk of extremist offending.

2.10 OUTPUT – RISK BANDING OR LIVE RISK/THREAT MANAGEMENT ADVICE?

The ERG does not propose risk bandings but the formulation is intended to be used to inform risk management.

The assessment includes a narrative explaining those factors significant to an individual's engagement and involvement in extremism, and their offending, a case formulation based on the SPJ guidance, an assessment of risk and need, and recommendations regarding how best to manage risk and target intervention. A record sheet is provided as an 'aide memoir' which assessors may review but do not need to code or score. As stated previously, if there is imminent risk of harm, or risk of harm more generally, there are existing mechanisms within HMPPS into which this information would be inputted.

2.11 IS PRACTICE GUIDANCE PROVIDED?

Yes. Guidance is provided to trained and registered users.

3. TRAINING AND LICENSING

3.1 THE CONTENT OF TRAINING

Two day training:

1. How to use structured professional guidelines to assess risk of extremist offending.
2. A brief history of the ERG; how the structured guidelines were developed, the context in which they were developed, the limitations of the evidence-base and scope for future refinement.
3. The key literature, evidence and theories upon which the structured guidelines have been developed.
4. How the guidelines are intended to be used and reported, including their scope and limitations.
5. The significant risk (and protective), factors and circumstances associated with extremist offending that need to be considered as part of a risk and needs assessment.
6. How to translate analysis of risk/protective factors and circumstances into conclusions about risk, and recommendations to inform decision making e.g., sentence management, interventions, release decisions etc.
7. How such assessments can be effectively reported.
8. Practice with three case studies.

3.2 OPTIMISED TO WHAT KIND OF ASSESSOR(S)?

ESSENTIAL

Chartered and registered psychologists or experienced probation officers required as part of their role to undertake assessments with convicted extremist offenders, and those for whom there are credible concerns about their potential for such offences.

DESIRABLE

Experience in completing psychologically informed risk assessment and formulation.

3.3 LICENSING

Those completing the training are licensed to use the ERG **within HMPPS**. There are both educational licences and commercial licences available. The commercial licence is currently on hold pending a review of the ERG. To date no commercial licences have been issued, however some US Probation Officers were trained in the ERG in 2017, and licences are being issued to them.

4. UTILITY AND ETHICAL PRACTICE

4.1 IS THE FRAMEWORK UNDERSTOOD BY STAKEHOLDERS AND ACCESSIBLE TO THEM?

HMPPS

Operational management: The ERG is well established within security departments that monitor extremist risk in custody.

Sentence management: The ERG is the established means of assessment for extremist offenders that informs prisoner category, sentence planning, interventions, parole decision making and risk management in custody via Pathfinder (the Extremist Risk Screen for assessing prison intelligence), and in the community via MAPPA.

GOVERNMENT

The terminology of the ERG (and in particular reference to the three dimensions) is used throughout Government.

EXTREMIST OFFENDERS

Seen as a respectful non-judgmental approach to assessment that treats them as individuals.

The process of assessment is collaborative and the report shared with offenders and their solicitors.

The approach supports proportionate risk and sentence management; both in custody and whilst in the community under the supervision of the NPS.

4.2 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following are observed:

- An open, transparent and collaborative approach.
- A focus on the offending as the target for change rather than an individual's beliefs.
- A recognition that engagement is dynamic, and that desistance and disengagement are possible.
- A balanced and objective approach to risk assessment and management that is free from bias and proportionate to assessed risk and need.

5. PUBLICATION HISTORY

5.1 PUBLICATIONS

Lloyd, M. & Dean, C. (2015) The Development of Structured Guidelines for Assessing Risk in Extremist Offenders. *The Journal of Threat Assessment and Management,* Vol 2, Issue 1. pp 40-52.

Lloyd, M. (2016) Structured Guidelines for Assessing Risk in Extremist Offenders. *Assessment and Development Matters,* Vol 8, No 2. pp 15-18. British Psychological Society.

Webster, Kerr & Tompkins (2017) A Process Evaluation of the Structured Risk Guidance for Extremist Offenders. *https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/661787/process-evaluation-srg-extremist-offender-report.pdf*

Dean C., Lloyd, M., Keane, C., Powis, B., Randhawa K. (2018) Intervening with Extremist Offenders - A Pilot Study *https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/intervening-with-extremist-offenders-a-pilot-study*

5.2 PUBLICATIONS THAT BEAR ON INTER-RATER RELIABILITY

Pending. Study being completed by MOJ.

5.3 PUBLICATIONS THAT BEAR ON VALIDITY

Pending. Study submitted to peer-reviewed journal for publication.

5.4 FOLLOW UP STUDIES USING THE FRAMEWORK

Herzog-Evans, M. (2018) A comparison of two structured professional judgment tools for violent extremism and their relevance in the French context. *European Journal of Probation 2018, Vol. 10(1) 3 –27.*

6. SUMMARY & EVALUATION

6.1 STRENGTHS

- Linked to a treatment programme which addresses factors identified in the ERG: the Healthy Identity Intervention (HII).
- Is both empirically informed by one on one casework and a comparative analysis of the criminogenic profiles of extremist offenders and mainstream criminal offenders, and theoretically informed by the international terrorist literature and mainstream psychological theories.
- Provides quality assurance through requiring competence, experience and specialist training in assessors.
- Completed in collaboration with the offender and contains their own insights.
- Informs sentence planning, intervention and release planning for extremist offenders.
- Development overseen by international expert advisory group.
- Independent evaluation of first iteration by National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), UK.
- Peer-reviewed by two members of the advisory group before implementation: Profs Stephen Hart and David Cook.
- Supports the separate assessment of criminogenic needs for intervention purposes (Engagement dimension), and the likelihood of future extremist

offending for risk management purposes (Intent and Capability dimensions).

- Factors are dynamic, with the exception of two of the capability factors and some mental health issues, so the framework is sensitive to change over time.
- A strong ethical focus on the individual rights of the offender and concern not to pathologise extremist beliefs per se but to focus on the potential harm to society, and the rehabilitation and reintegration of the individual.
- Fits the legal framework of the UK that includes terrorist pathway offences that fall short of terrorist violence.
- The basis of the Extremist Risk Screen for those at risk of being drawn into terrorism. Has good face validity and utility with stakeholders, including offenders.
- Has demonstrated utility with extremist offenders including Islamist, Far Right, Far Left, Animal Rights and other single issues, and gang members whose offending is influenced by group processes.
- Allows the inclusion of any additional factor that can be shown to bear on risk or need.
- Training provided and licences available to countries wishing to use the framework.

6.2 LIMITATIONS

- Information on reliability and validity not yet available.
- It has not been established that the factors in the ERG 22+ are either correlates or predictors of risk. Given the low base rate of extremist recidivism it may not be possible to validate their role for some time.
- The ERG was developed on the limited international literature available at the time, and casework which focused on al-Qaeda inspired extremism. Further research and refinement is underway to ensure the ERG remains appropriate and responsive to different types of extremism, and different cohorts e.g., women and young people.
- As with all assessments, the ERG 22+ is dependent upon the accuracy and extent of the information used. Incomplete or unreliable information could limit the weight that can be placed on the ERG, or aspects of it.
- Remains the intellectual property of HMPPS, not available for casual use.

ISLAMIC RADICALIZATION (IR-46)

1. PROVENANCE

1.1 ORIGINATING AUTHORS, PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION, ROLE AND CONTEXT

Executive project leaders within the KiM-project of the Dutch National Police.

CONTACT EMAIL:

To the attention of the KiM-project

cter.ik-dlr.landelijke-eenheid@politie.nl

1.2 BACKGROUND AND PROVENANCE

Empirical, knowledge based model. Developed from the pathways of known cases, triangulated against the literature and interviews with academic experts and the investigative and intelligence services. A theoretical model was developed and tested on three occasions and on 240 cases in total (of known radicalised Islamist individuals). Extensive analysis of this data underpins the model.

The Dutch National Police is the owner of the approaches developed by the project and responsible for its ongoing development.

1.3 DATE OF FIRST PUBLICATION OR ORIGIN AND SCOPE OF USE.

2009/2010 as internal publications.

2010 Intelligence and Security Informatics (ISI) 'Terrorist threat assessment with formal concept analysis'.

IR-46 has been operational within the Dutch National Police, Royal Constabulary since 2010, but use of the tool was optional for regional police units until January 2015 when its use has been mandatory. Pilots are being conducted within some of the 'Regional Safety Houses' (multi-disciplinary teams that handle individual cases).

1.4 HAS THE FRAMEWORK BEEN PEER REVIEWED?

A feedback loop is used to continuously evaluate the model and keep it dynamic and up-to-date, by professionals and academics with expertise in terrorism; there is no peer reviewed published article on the instrument.

1.5 AIMS OF THE FRAMEWORK

- To detect and map out signs of radical Islamist behaviour at an early stage
- To determine from their religious experience and/or social circumstances to what extent a person is 'ready' to use violence
- To detect how likely it is that a person would actually be able to carry out an attack.
- To interpret the complex interaction between personality, behaviour and circumstances, since it provides insight into the stage or degree of radicalisation reached.
- To provide an overview of the information available about an individual.

1.6 DESCRIPTION OF APPROACH

IR-46 is based on structured professional judgment (SPJ). An important principle is that the model is not intended to substitute for human interpretation. The model does not replace professional analysis, but helps in formulating judgments.

1.7 TARGET POPULATION

Pre-crime: Islamic Radicalised individuals in the community.

1.8 FOCUS OF THE ASSESSMENT

The degree of radicalisation and extent to which the person sees violence as an acceptable means to 'promote' or realise his/her ideals.

1.9 DIRECT OR INDIRECT ASSESSMENT?

In reality direct assessment is rarely achieved and the IR-46 is completed pre-crime as more information comes to light.

1.10 GENERIC OR SPECIFIC TO IDEOLOGY?

Specific to Islamic radicalisation only.

1.11 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

The theoretical basis for the model was the staircase to terrorism: Moghaddam (2005), but reviews of the performance of the model identified outcomes that didn't fit this theory, so the model has been adjusted to accommodate empirical findings, though it still retains the concept of stages to radicalisation.

2. STRUCTURE

2.1 AN OUTLINE OF THE STRUCTURE

Two axes:

1) Ideology indicators (26)

2) Social Context indicators (20)

The two axes work in parallel. Depending on the individual case, ideology related indicators are more prominent than social context indicators, or vice versa. More information might lead to scoring more indicators, but more indicators do not automatically sum to a higher degree of radicalisation. The indicators relate either to phase or degree of radicalisation.

2.2 ARE PROTECTIVE FACTORS INCLUDED?

Protective factors are included and unlimited in the model.

2.3 IS THE FRAMEWORK SENSITIVE TO POLITICAL CONTEXT?

The framework is only concerned with Islamist offending but does not specifically refer to political context.

2.4 RISK SEEN AS STATIC OR DYNAMIC?

All indicators are dynamic and capable of change over time. The model does not predict, but assesses the current risk (as is). By repeating or updating the assessment the dynamics, 'trends' or developments come to light.

2.5 TIME-FRAME FOR RISK JUDGMENTS

The tool is not meant to be used 'one time, stand-alone', but should be part of an ongoing multi-disciplinary approach to monitoring and corrective action.

2.6 ANY REFERENCE TO IMMINENCE OF HARM? ANY RED FLAGS?

This is contained within the identification of the phase of the terrorist trajectory that the individual has reached. The focus pre-crime is on evidence of intentions and capabilities and the phase the individual has reached on a terrorist trajectory. The final phase is coded red in that it reflects a willingness/ readiness to use violence.

2.7 INFORMATION REQUIREMENT

The framework is used pre-crime in real time and necessarily operates with less information than is available post-crime. As more information becomes available over time from different agencies the risk picture can change, but this is real time snap shot information and not processed information that

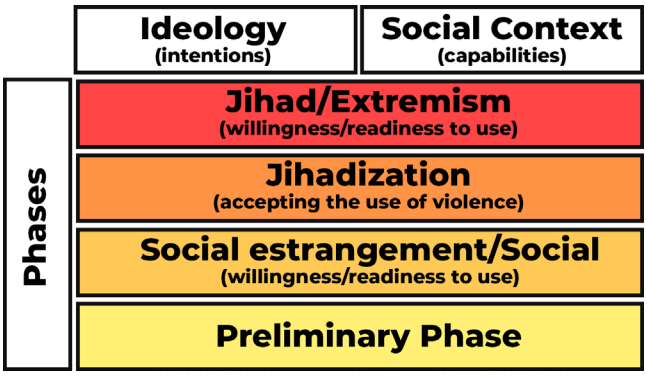
allows theorised sense to be made of the individual's psychology and motives. Conclusions about emerging risk are made with agreement from all the agencies involved as new information becomes available.

2.8 IS SCENARIO PLANNING INCLUDED?

Not in the pre-crime context. It is up to the assessor to judge what actions should or should not be taken.

2.9 OUTPUT – RISK BANDING OR LIVE RISK/THREAT MANAGEMENT ADVICE?

IR-46 output outcome:



An overview and professional analysis is provided of the evidence for the judgment (in terms of the presence/absence of information) and reported to multi-agency meetings in the community, consisting of:

1. Internal/organisational directed advice:
   a. clarifies what is unknown (blank spot) so the user(s) can focus on what needs to be collected.
   b. clarifies inconsistencies in behaviour or statements to different agencies (police, council, probation service) so each agency has the whole picture going forward.
2. External/subject focussed advice: helps identify the 'main source of the subject's radicalisation (e.g., group/peer-relations, criminality (drugs, criminal past etc) or lack of opportunities/alternatives).

B.1 IS PRACTICE GUIDANCE PROVIDED?

Guidelines are provided with the training

3. TRAINING & LICENSING

3.1 THE CONTENT OF TRAINING

Half day training:

1. Background of the model based knowledge approach and specifically the origin of IR-46.
2. Principles and drawback of the model as part of SPJ.
3. Literature studies, expert meetings, theoretical model.
4. The examined case studies and analyses.
5. Comparison with other models.
6. Current model and the indicators.
7. Toolbox: excel tool, guidelines, info-graph, folders, instruction video.
8. How to use the guidelines and the info-graph in combination with the excel tool.
9. Examples: how to use the tool and the outcome.
10. Interpretation of possible outcomes and the limitations.
11. Practice with case examples in small groups.
12. Discussion in full group.

3.2 OPTIMISED TO WHAT KIND OF ASSESSOR(S)?

ESSENTIAL

Practitioners within police, intelligence services, probation/prison service, who on a regular basis have to analyse information on relevance, assess risks or threats or report on individuals. Must be experienced with full access to the highest level of information. Assessors and case-managers from public prosecution, mental health, youth protection and probation services have been trained and are using the IR-46.

DESIRABLE

Analytical skills.

3.3 LICENSING

There is not a formal licence necessary (yet). Though we strongly advise against the use of IR-46 without the proper training.

4. UTILITY & ETHICAL PRACTICE

4.1 IS THE FRAMEWORK UNDERSTOOD BY STAKEHOLDERS AND ACCESSIBLE TO THEM?

There are two versions of the model and its products:

1. Police (confidential).
2. Partners within the multi-agency meetings.

4.2 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Within the Dutch police it was decided that for every suspected) radicalised person an IR46 would be undertaken. The assessment takes place within a policing framework and individual rights are not specifically considered.

5. PUBLICATION HISTORY

5.1 PUBLICATIONS THAT BEAR ON INTER-RATER RELIABILITY

Not known.

5.2 PUBLICATIONS THAT BEAR ON VALIDITY

Not known.

5.3 FOLLOW UP STUDIES USING THE FRAMEWORK

Elzinga, P., Poelmans, J., et al. (2010) Terrorist Threat Assessment with Formal Concept Analysis.

Published in: 2010 IEEE International Conference on Intelligence and Security Informatics. Date Added to IEEE Xplore: 14 June 2010.

6. SUMMARY & EVALUATION

6.1 STRENGTHS

- Strong utility for law enforcement staff policing the risk of radicalisation in the community and other agencies charged with managing this risk.
- Developed from the literature, triangulated with (group) interviews with academic and professional experts (police, intelligence services, public prosecution, city council, mental health etc.) and the pathways of known cases.
- Meaningful to stakeholders, is not complex and had good face validity.
- Structures multi-agency management of risk in the community and closes information gaps, preventing terrorist violence by early intervention, proportionate policing and effective information sharing.
- Assesses radicalisation separately from intent and capability, supporting proportionate management and avoiding over-zealous policing that has the potential to be counter-productive.
- A theoretical model was developed and tested on three occasions and on 240 cases in total (of known Islamist radicalised individuals). Extensive analysis of data underpins the model, but is not available in the public domain.
- Ongoing monitoring and review ensure that practice continues to develop as the shape of the risk shifts into a different form.

6.2 LIMITATIONS

- Limited to the assessment of Islamist extremist offending.
- Designed for pre-crime assessment only and does not therefore include the offender in the assessment process.
- Assumes a radicalisation trajectory over time, though this is often not the case with those from a criminal background who, from recent evidence, are recruited within short timescales.

- Information about reliability and validity not known.
- The framework not published, so no cross validation work against other frameworks has yet been possible.

IDENTIFYING VULNERABLE PEOPLE (IVP)

1. PROVENANCE

1.1 ORIGINATING AUTHORS, PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION, ROLE AND CONTEXT

University of Liverpool:

Professor Jonathon Cole, ***Reader in Psychological Sciences***

Ben Cole, ***PhD, Dept. of Psychological Sciences***

Professor Laurence Alison, ***Chair in Forensic Psychology***

Emily Alison, ***Dept. of Psychological Sciences***

CONTACT EMAIL:

joncole@liverpool.ac.uk

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF APPROACH

Developed as a checklist based screening instrument, though now conceived of as a Structured Professional Judgment tool.

1.3 BACKGROUND AND PROVENANCE

Items derived from a literature review and research into the open source background material on convicted violent extremists.

1.4 DATE OF FIRST PUBLICATION OR ORIGIN AND SCOPE OF USE

Developed in 2008, in use since 2010.

As the IVP is freely available on the internet it is not known who has officially adopted it.

The originator has spoken to numerous individuals in the UK, USA, and Canada who have discussed their use of the IVP.

1.5 HAS THE FRAMEWORK BEEN PEER REVIEWED?

During the development of the IVP there were many stakeholder meetings and peer reviews.

1.6 AIMS OF THE FRAMEWORK

To facilitate decision making among frontline practitioners around the proportionate initiation of employers' safeguarding procedures, now replaced by the Prevent Duty.

1.7 TARGET POPULATION

Pre-crime. Any individual about whom there are radicalisation concerns in the community.

1.8 FOCUS OF THE ASSESSMENT

Vulnerability of recruitment to violent extremism.

1.9 DIRECT OR INDIRECT ASSESSMENT?

Direct, in that the tool is intended for use by public sector employees, such as a health professional or teacher to determine whether there is cause for concern about an individual's potential radicalisation.

1.10 GENERIC OR SPECIFIC TO IDEOLOGY?

Generic, though indicators 1, 4, 10, 11, 15, and 16 are more relevant to Islamist extremism.

1.11 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

The framework is predicated on rational choice theory, that individual actors are rational agents who take account of available information, probabilities of events, and potential costs and benefits in determining their preferences, and act consistently in choosing a self-determined best choice of action.

2. STRUCTURE

2.1 AN OUTLINE OF THE STRUCTURE

Generic risk indicators:

1. Cultural and/or religious isolation
2. Isolation from family
3. Risk taking behaviours
4. Sudden change in religious practice
5. Violent rhetoric
6. Negative peer influences
7. Isolated peer group
8. Hate Rhetoric
9. Political activism
10. Basic paramilitary training
11. Travel/Residence abroad

Red Flag indicators:

1. Death rhetoric
2. Member of an extremist group
3. Contact with known recruiters/extremists
4. Advanced paramilitary training
5. Overseas combat

2.2 ARE PROTECTIVE FACTORS INCLUDED?

NA.

2.3 IS THE FRAMEWORK SENSITIVE TO POLITICAL CONTEXT?

No specific reference to this.

2.4 RISK SEEN AS STATIC OR DYNAMIC?

Dynamic.

2.5 TIME-FRAME FOR RISK JUDGMENTS

The assessment informs a one-off referral after which the risk is managed by other public sector agencies.

2.6 ANY REFERENCE TO IMMINENCE OF HARM? ANY RED FLAGS?

Yes, Red Flag indicators are an explicit part of the framework.

2.7 INFORMATION REQUIREMENT

Professional contact between a public sector professional such as a teacher or doctor, and an individual about whom there are radicalisation concerns.

2.8 IS SCENARIO PLANNING INCLUDED?

NA

2.9 OUTPUT – RISK BANDING OR LIVE RISK/THREAT MANAGEMENT ADVICE?

Not relevant as the IVP is essentially a screening tool.

2.10 IS PRACTICE GUIDANCE PROVIDED?

Online guidance:

http://www.safecampuscommunities.ac.uk/uploads/editor/files/IVP_Guidance_Draft_v0.3_web_version.pdf

3. TRAINING AND LICENSING

3.1 THE CONTENT OF TRAINING

A four-part e-learning package was developed in 2010 but never utilised. Practitioners use it without receiving formal training from the originators. Unknown if organisations are training their employees in its use. Anecdotal evidence suggests that they are.

3.2 OPTIMISED TO WHAT KIND OF ASSESSOR(S)?

All public sector employees from primary school through to prisons, more recently described as all those who have a 'Prevent duty' under The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

3.3 LICENSING

Not required.

4. UTILITY & ETHICAL PRACTICE

4.1 IS THE FRAMEWORK UNDERSTOOD BY STAKEHOLDERS AND ACCESSIBLE TO THEM?

Good face validity; high level of interest from UK, USA, Canada and renewed interest since the public sector Prevent Duty in the UK (Counter-Terrorism & Security Act, 2015).

4.2 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Not explicit.

5. PUBLICATION HISTORY

5.1 PUBLICATIONS

Cole, J., Cole, B., Alison, E., & Alison, L. (2010). Preventing Violent Extremism: Identifying Risk Factors in Vulnerable People. *Jane's Intelligence Review*.

Cole, J., Cole, B., Alison, E., & Alison, A. (2010). Free Radicals: Stopping extremists before they start. *Jane's Intelligence Review,* 22(10), 18-21.

http://www.safecampuscommunities.ac.uk/uploads/editor/files/IVP_Guidance_Draft_v0.3_web_version.pdf

5.2 PUBLICATIONS THAT BEAR ON INTER-RATER RELIABILITY

Egan, V., Cole, J., Cole, B., Alison, L., Alison, E., Waring, S. & Elntib, S. (2016) Can you identify violent extremists using a screening checklist and open-source intelligence alone? *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management*, 3 (1). pp. 21-36. ISSN 2169-4850. This study examined whether the IVP items acted as a useful risk screening metric with 182 known violent extremists, using publicly available open source intelligence. The mean kappa for inter-rater reliability was .80 for the 30% of cases with the fullest information.

5.3 PUBLICATIONS THAT BEAR ON VALIDITY

The above study confirmed the principle that predicting the prevalence of a low baseline event (in this case terrorist violence) in a low prevalence setting is not productive. Like other predictive tools for violence the IVP was better at ruling out true negatives than ruling in true positives. Missing information, which is the real context of pre-crime investigation, also reduced predictive utility. The authors conclude that "screening instruments must be followed by a 'human-driven' risk assessment of the individual to optimise judgment of the risk…" The total IVP score was a better predictor than any individual items.

5.4 FOLLOW UP STUDIES USING THE FRAMEWORK

Weyers, J.R. & Cole, J. (2014). Identifying ISIL support populations and persons vulnerable to recruitment: Implications for force protection. In Cabayan, H. & Canna, S. Multi-method assessment of ISIL. Strategic Multilayer Assessment Periodic Publication, Special Operations Command Central Command (pp156-160)

6. SUMMARY & EVALUATION

6.1 STRENGTHS

- Easily accessible on line.
- Face validity and easy to administer.
- Provides a means of structuring concerns and informing possible referral.
- No training or licensing required.
- Empirically grounded and informed by terrorist literature.
- Developed with government stakeholder consultation.

6.2 LIMITATIONS

- Indicators 1, 4, 10, 11, 15, and 16 are more relevant to Islamist extremism, limiting its efficacy with other forms of extremism.
- Developed from features of Al Qaeda inspired extremism (political activism, basic paramilitary training, travel/residence abroad) that are less relevant to ISIS inspired extremism.
- Atheoretical.
- No reference to common co-vulnerabilities of criminality and mental health issues.
- As a checklist, no consideration of protective factors or risk management.
- Does not aspire to be a risk management tool, rather a means of identifying instances of potential Islamist radicalisation in the community.

MULTI-LEVEL GUIDELINES (MLG VERSION 2)

1. PROVENANCE

1.1 ORIGINATING AUTHORS, PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION, ROLE AND CONTEXT

Alana N. Cook, PhD

Registered Psychologist

Cook Psychological Services

Adjunct Faculty, Simon Fraser University

Stephen D. Hart, PhD

Professor, Simon Fraser University

Visiting Professor, University of Bergen

Director and Threat Assessment Specialist, Protect International Risk and Safety Services

P. Randall Kropp, PhD

Registered Psychologist

Forensic Psychologist, British Columbia Forensic Psychiatric Services Commission

Adjunct Faculty, Simon Fraser University

Threat Assessment Specialist, Protect International Risk and Safety Services

CONTACT EMAIL:

acook@cookpsychservices.com

1.2 BACKGROUND AND PROVENANCE

Risk factors were empirically derived from a systematic and comprehensive review of the literature (i.e., Campbell Collaboration style review).

1.3 DATE OF FIRST PUBLICATION AND SCOPE OF USE.

The MLG was first produced in 2013 and evaluated as part of a doctoral thesis in 2014 (see Cook, 2014 below).

It has been in use since then in North America and Europe.

1.4 HAS THE FRAMEWORK BEEN PEER REVIEWED?

The framework was initially developed and validated as part of Dr. Cook's doctoral dissertation and was reviewed by her doctoral dissertation committee in 2014 that included the co-authors, supervisor Dr. Raymond Carrado (criminologist), internal examiner at SFU Dr. Garth Davis (criminologist), and external examiner of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Dr. Mario Scalora (psychologist).

1.5 AIMS OF THE FRAMEWORK

- To provide assessors with comprehensive and systematic guidelines to assess and communicate an individual's risk for group-based violence, including terrorism
- To prevent, not predict violence
- To guide prevention though planning
- Ensure assessors are following best-practice
- To outline basic risk factors to consider without restricting scope or imposing scoring rules
- To allow assessors to monitor change in those being assessed.

1.6 DESCRIPTION OF APPROACH

The MLG is an SPJ guide that follows SPJ guidelines: gather information, determine the presence and relevance of risk factors, develop primary scenarios of violence, develop case management plans and communicate findings. The model is designed to

specify a basic set of empirical and rationally derived risk factors that reflect best practice. It is not an actuarial tool. There are no scoring rules.

1.7 TARGET POPULATION

Pre-crime or post-crime. Individuals (male or female) 14 years or older who are currently a member of or affiliated with a group. Although the MLG assumes that all group types can be assessed under these guidelines based on logical and empirical evidence, future validation of the guidelines will examine if they are applicable to all group types.

Group-based violence (GBV) is defined as *the actual, attempted, or threated physical injury that is deliberate and non-consensual by an individual whose decisions and behaviour are influenced by a group to which they currently belong or are affiliated with.* Affiliation can include identification without membership of the group (i.e., lone actors). This definition captures all major violence groups identified by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2002)[43] such as gangs, terrorists, and organized crime.

The authors recommend the MLG for use in conjunction with other relevant risk assessment tools to evaluate terrorist group-based violence if there are relevant risk factors not captured in the MLG tool present and relevant in the individual case.

1.8 FOCUS OF THE ASSESSMENT

The generic risk of an individual engaging in group-based violence, including terrorist violence.

1.9 DIRECT OR INDIRECT ASSESSMENT?

Either are possible.

1.10 GENERIC OR SPECIFIC TO IDEOLOGY?

Generic to group based violence.

1.11 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

- Decision theory
- Structured Professional Judgment
- Psychology of the Individual
- Group Dynamics
- Social Psychology

2. STRUCTURE

2.1 AN OUTLINE OF THE STRUCTURE

There are **16 basic risk factors**, with the opportunity for Assessors to consider any additional case-specific factors. The 16 basic risk factors cover four domains: individual, individual-group, group, and group-societal.

Individual risk factors are relatively independent from that of the individual's group membership.

Individual-group factors are how the individual relates to the group (e.g., identity, attitudes, the role in the group).

Group factors are related to the group process and structure.

Group-societal factors are external or peripheral contributions to violence risk (e.g., intergroup threat).

2.2 ARE PROTECTIVE FACTORS INCLUDED?

The 20 basic risk factors do not include protective factors. Assessors are encouraged to consider and include in their formulation and management plans case-specific protective factors that are relevant to the formulation and prevention of violence in the individual case.

2.3 IS THE FRAMEWORK SENSITIVE TO POLITICAL CONTEXT?

Political context, and changes in political context can be captured and conceptualized under the group-societal

43 World Report on violence and health (2002). Geneva: World Health Organisation.

domain (i.e., how the group and following from this the individuals risk for violence is impacted by the political context).

2.4 RISK SEEN AS STATIC OR DYNAMIC?

Risk is seen as dynamic. The MLG was developed to be appropriate for measuring change in risk and to operate as a monitoring tool.

2.5 TIME-FRAME FOR RISK JUDGMENTS

Time-frame can be weeks to months. The maximum recommended period before re-assessment is 12 months, as risk is dynamic and changing.

2.6 ANY REFERENCE TO IMMINENCE OF HARM? ANY RED FLAGS?

The MLG does not use any red flags. All risk factors and any case-specific risk factors that are judged to be present and relevant are monitored and managed. One of the summary risk judgments to communicate is any evidence of imminent risk of harm.

2.7 INFORMATION REQUIREMENT

Multimethod multisource information is ideal but direct contact with the assesse is not required, though is encouraged when it is possible and appropriate. Information is required of the individual, the individuals' association with the group, the group in question, and the group within the larger societal context. A Subject Matter Expert on the group to which the person belongs or ascribes to is highly recommended and often involved. Information may be gathered by direct contact, mental health records, corrections records, security information, intelligence, and any other relevant interviews or records.

2.8 IS SCENARIO PLANNING INCLUDED?

As an SPJ tool scenario planning is a fundamental part of the general procedure to generate primary scenarios of violence that are of concern to the assessor. Scenarios are then used to develop management plans to prevent the scenarios from occurring.

2.9 OUTPUT – RISK BANDING OR LIVE RISK/THREAT MANAGEMENT ADVICE?

Assessors are asked to make several summary risk judgments to communicate in their findings (i.e., case priority, risk of violence, severity of violence, imminence of violence, likely victims) as well as development of management plans focused on monitoring, surveillance, treatment and victim safety planning as appropriate. In addition to group-based violence Assessors are also asked to consider any indications of other violence risk (general violence, sexual violence) or self-harm or suicide that become apparent and would trigger another risk assessment.

2.10 IS PRACTICE GUIDANCE PROVIDED?

A guide book takes assessors through the general procedure (described above) to form opinions and develop plans about violence risk prevention.

3. TRAINING & LICENSING

3.1 THE CONTENT OF TRAINING

Users will not have to complete a specific training program to use the guidelines as training can be accomplished in a variety of ways, such as self-study, supervised use, or attendance at lectures and workshops. Ideally, the assessment is completed in a team with at least one team member being a Subject Matter Expert on the group to which the person belongs or ascribes to. Such an expert could be an analyst, a knowledgeable team member with experience and expertise on the particular group(s), or an external expert consultant. Those interested in workshops can contact Dr. Cook at the above email address.

3.2 OPTIMISED TO WHAT KIND OF ASSESSOR(S)?

Use by criminal justice, security, and mental health professionals working in a variety of contexts where there is risk or contact with those involved in group-base violence.

3.3 LICENSING

The MLG is copyrighted in Canada by the authors, but is an open access tool. It is available for purchase by the general public, and evaluators are not required to complete a specific training program prior to purchase or use of the tool.

4. UTILITY & ETHICAL PRACTICE

4.1 IS THE FRAMEWORK UNDERSTOOD BY STAKEHOLDERS AND ACCESSIBLE TO THEM?

Stakeholders and users were provided the opportunity to provide feedback formally in 2012 and after the first publication in 2014 during two training courses (the MLG manual provides full details on this process, see also Cook, 2014). These professionals represented established threat assessment and terrorism experts, various level of experienced law enforcement, intelligence analysts, and mental health professionals.

This group also included academics and administrators who would not use the tool in practice. The authors also routinely solicit feedback from users to improve the accessibility of the guidelines in updated versions of the manual.

4.2 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The MLG was developed in line with Canadian Psychological Association and American Psychological Association ethical principles.

5. PUBLICATION HISTORY

5.1 PUBLICATIONS THAT BEAR ON INTER-RATER RELIABILITY

Cook, A. N., Hart, S. D., & Kropp, P. R. (2013). *Multi-Level Guidelines for the assessment and management of group-based violence*. Burnaby, Canada: Mental Health, Law, & Policy Institute, Simon Fraser University.

Intra-class coefficients for averaged ratings were 0.81 over the four domains. The Hart et al (2017) comparative study below confirms coefficients of the same order.

5.2 PUBLICATIONS THAT BEAR ON VALIDITY

Cook, A. N. (2014). *Risk assessment and management of group-based violence* (Doctoral Thesis). Available from: *http://summit.sfu.ca/system/files/iritems1/14289/etd8437_ACook.pdf*

Cook, A. N. & Hart, S.D. (2014). *Risk/threat assessment and management of group-based violence (including terrorism)*. Internal report for Public Safety Canada.

The first paper provides evidence that the MLG is *"face valid, content valid, legally valid and evidences clinical and practical utility."* However, further evidence is awaited for concurrent and predictive validity.

5.3 FOLLOW UP STUDIES USING THE FRAMEWORK

Hart, S. D., Cook, A. N., Pressman, D. E., Strang, S., & Lim, Y. L. (2017). A concurrent evaluation of threat assessment tools for the individual assessment of terrorism. *Canadian Network for Research on Terrorism, Security, and Society Working Paper Series*. Available from *http://tsas.ca/tsas_library_entry/tsas-wp17-01-a-concurrent-evaluation-of-threat-assessment-tools-for-the-individual-assessment-of-terrorism/*. If the link does not take you directly there search under tsas-wp17-01 on the TSAS site.

In this study concurrent validity was found between the overall summary risk ratings for the MLG and the HCR-20, confirming that those identified to be at risk for terrorist violence are also identified to be at risk within a generic violence framework. This finding does not imply that anyone judged to be at risk for general violence would also be at risk of terrorist violence. Predictably the MLG Individual and Individual-Group domains overlapped significantly with the VERA2 whereas the Group and Group-Society domains overlapped very little, confirming that the two frameworks are measuring different aspects of group based violence.

6. SUMMARY & EVALUATION

6.1 STRENGTHS

- The MLG was developed from a Campbell Collaboration style review that included book chapters and theoretical papers due to the shortage of empirical papers in the field of group violence.
- Empirical grounding was provided by subject matter experts in terrorism, gangs, cults and organised crime from a social science background and form different countries, who reviewed the first draft of the guidelines for utility and comprehension. Practitioners in threat assessment and terrorism, law enforcement, intelligence analysts, and mental health professionals participated in the first training and live practice with the framework.
- The framework is informed by Decision theory, Psychology of the Individual, Group Dynamics, Social Psychology.
- SPJ structure is fully deployed, from the systematic assessment of presence and relevance of risk factors through summary risk ratings to scenario planning.
- Explicitly considers the individual in their social and wider societal/political context.
- Addresses the group affiliation that often accompanies identification with a shared group, cause or ideology.
- Has potential use with gangs, terrorists and organized criminals.
- Scenario planning provides a firm foundation for risk management.
- The Individual-Group and Group-Societal factors have demonstrated relevance even with lone actor terrorists as their belief system is often defined by their opposition to society and perceived social or political injustice.
- The structure is lean and easily understood by users and stakeholders.
- Strong inter-rater reliability was established during its construction.

6.2 LIMITATIONS

- Because of the leanness of the framework users need to be experienced risk assessors to evaluate the significance of the information.
- Factors in the Individual domain are general and may lack the specificity required for a detailed terrorist assessment, which is particularly the case for lone actors with idiosyncratic motivation.
- The Individual domain also lacks sufficient detail to assess general violence, which is a feature in the backgrounds of many terrorist offenders. For this reason the authors recommend that an HCR-20 is also undertaken for terrorist offenders with previous non-terrorist violence.
- There is some evidence that the MLG may not flag up risk of terrorist pathway offences that fall short of terrorist violence, and the additional use of the HCR-20 is recommended by the authors.

TERRORIST RADICALIZATION ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL (TRAP-18)

1. PROVENANCE

1.1 ORIGINATING AUTHORS, PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION, ROLE AND CONTEXT

J. Reid Meloy, PhD, ABPP

Forensic Psychologist

Faculty, San Diego Psychoanalytic Center

Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, University of California, San Diego

Consultant, FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit, Quantico.

CONTACT EMAIL:

reidmeloy@gmail.com

1.2 BACKGROUND AND PROVENANCE

Primarily empirical through study of literature on lone actor terrorists over fifteen years, the author's own practice experience, and current research. The TRAP-18 warning behaviours are derived from the pre-attack signals identified in the targeted violence literature on lone perpetrators of mass killings, assassinations, spousal homicide and terrorist attacks. The distal background factors are the theorised features of the mind-set of a lone actor 'violent true believer' that create their vulnerability to targeted violence.

The TRAP-18 is a proprietary instrument which is owned, copyrighted and trademarked in the US by Dr. Meloy. The TRAP-18 is licensed to Multihealth Systems, Inc., for distribution and sale (mhs.com).

1.3 DATE OF FIRST PUBLICATION OR ORIGIN AND SCOPE OF USE.

As TRAP-18 in *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management,* 2015, 2:140-152;

Proximal warning behaviours first appeared in 2011 in several peer reviewed publications.

Distal characteristics were first published in 2014 (Meloy, R., & Yakeley, J. (2014). The violent true believer as a lone wolf– psychoanalytic perspectives on terrorism. *Behavioural Sciences & the Law*, *32(3), 327-365).*

TRAP-18 has been in use since 2015 by various counterterrorism analysts and investigators in Canada, US, and Europe. It is not sanctioned or officially adopted by any government or agency.

1.4 HAS THE FRAMEWORK BEEN PEER REVIEWED?

See below.

1.5 AIMS OF THE FRAMEWORK

- To help the threat assessor prioritize cases based upon imminence of risk: the presence of a cluster of distal characteristics indicates that the case should be continuously monitored; the presence of any one proximal warning behaviour indicates that the case should be more actively managed. The term proximal is used in a temporal sense, and we use a meteorological analogy (Monahan & Steadman, 1996) concerning violence: Watch vs. Warn.
- To identify the pattern within the proximal warning behaviours, capitalizing on the findings of gestalt psychology (Wertheimer, 1938) that we naturally see patterns, allowing the assessor to see the larger picture and not just focus upon one discrete variable.
- To help prioritise cases and assign resources in a rational manner (a major unaddressed problem throughout the CT community).

1.6 DESCRIPTION OF APPROACH

The TRAP-18 is a structured professional judgment (SPJ) instrument, not an actuarial measure. Factors are coded rather than scored, and the weighting of the various indicators is left to the assessor, as well as the final assignment of the case to a category of monitoring or active management. The focus of the instrument is upon prevention rather than prediction. The manual for the TRAP-18 contains questions to help the assessor develop a narrative for understanding the case given the presence or absence of indicators and other idiosyncratic circumstances that might apply in the individual case.

1.7 TARGET POPULATION

Pre-crime: Target population are persons of concern (POC) for engagement in ideologically-motivated violence who have been identified by counter-terrorism and other law enforcement officials.

1.8 FOCUS OF THE ASSESSMENT

Threat of committing an act of ideologically motivated and intended (targeted) violence toward a person or persons.

The TRAP-18 is primarily focused on the lone actor terrorist, and not group actor terrorists, although it has been shown to be useful in the analysis of autonomous cells in Europe in one study.

1.9 DIRECT OR INDIRECT ASSESSMENT?

A direct interview is very helpful for additional information, but in a pre-crime scenario may not be possible, necessary or wise.

1.10 GENERIC OR SPECIFIC TO IDEOLOGY?

Generic: Commonality across ideologies demonstrated empirically in Meloy, J.R. & Gill, P. (2016). The lone actor terrorist and the TRAP-18. *J of Threat Assessment and Management 3: 37-52* in which equivalence was shown across 78% of indicators comparing jihadists, right wing extremists, and single issue terrorists from Europe and the US.

1.11 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

The TRAP-18 is informed by:

- Gestalt psychology
- Theory and research on targeted violence
- Psychoanalytic (object relations) theory
- Attachment theory
- Aspects of social psychology
- Psychobiological foundations of predatory violence

(See two foundational papers below by Meloy, Hoffmann, Guldimann & James (2012) and Meloy & Yakeley (2014)).

2. STRUCTURE

2.1 AN OUTLINE OF THE STRUCTURE

Two clusters

1. Proximal warning behaviours (8)
2. Distal characteristics (10)

Indicators are coded as present, absent, or insufficient information.

2.2 ARE PROTECTIVE FACTORS INCLUDED?

Although protective factors are not formally included, the absence of certain indicators, both proximal warning behaviours and distal characteristics are protective. The narrative questions also explicitly ask about protective factors that may be present in the individual case.

2.3 IS THE FRAMEWORK SENSITIVE TO POLITICAL CONTEXT?

The TRAP-18 is sensitive to changing political contexts and situations in relation to fixation and identification among the warning behaviours, and the joining of

personal grievance and moral outrage in the distal characteristics.

2.4 RISK SEEN AS STATIC OR DYNAMIC?

All the proximal warning behaviours are dynamic. Reassessment is recommended due to the dynamic nature of short term risk and the need to prioritise cases.

Several distal characteristics are static (eg, history of criminal violence and history of mental disorder).

2.5 TIME-FRAME FOR RISK JUDGMENTS

The time frame is short term (days, weeks, months), and most of the indicators are dynamic, meaning they can change over time.

2.6 ANY REFERENCE TO IMMINENCE OF HARM? ANY RED FLAGS?

The proximal factors are warning behaviours that concern leakage of an intent to offend. The presence of any one of these should result in active management of the case.

2.7 INFORMATION REQUIREMENT

The most reliable and valid assessment of a case utilising the TRAP-18 will have three sources of data:

- A direct interview (clinical or nonclinical, and may or may not utilize psychometric testing},
- Collateral interviews of those who currently know the person of concern and his behaviour, and
- Public records available on the person, including law enforcement and national security sources if available.

2.8 IS SCENARIO PLANNING INCLUDED?

Scenario planning is an explicit formulation question among the narrative questions in the instrument. This is based upon the work of Hart and Kropp.

2.9 OUTPUT – RISK BANDING OR LIVE RISK/THREAT MANAGEMENT ADVICE?

The TRAP-18 does not band at a level of risk since there is no empirical research to support this for any instrument (since there are virtually no comparative studies). Cases are prioritized for active risk management or monitoring so that time and personnel efficiencies can be maximized.

The TRAP-18 does not provide explicit risk management advice, but the narrative questions included in the codebook ask specific questions about risk management for the assessor to answer.

2.10 IS PRACTICE GUIDANCE PROVIDED?

A codebook guides assessors' decisions about each factor.

3. TRAINING &LICENSING

3.1 THE CONTENT OF TRAINING

Training is provided by Dr. Meloy and his associates in several ways: through live training sessions and on demand online. The training is 6-7 hours in person or online. The method of training is through lecture, group discussion, and assessment of actual cases using the TRAP-18, examples of cases which illustrate each and every indicator, videotapes, and handouts. The content of the training involves a conceptual overview of the instrument, its origins, research basis, and its purpose. The training then moves to a detailed description of each indicator with an illustrative case. The current reliability and validity research is then reviewed, critiqued, and directions for further research are outlined. There follows an in depth analysis using the TRAP-18 of two individual terrorism cases in the

US: the Timothy McVeigh case (ethnic nationalist) and the Malik Hasan case (jihadist).

3.2 OPTIMISED TO WHAT KIND OF ASSESSOR(S)?

The training is designed for threat assessment professionals, including mental health clinicians, law enforcement officers, intelligence analysts, counterterrorism investigators, and others with specific case load or supervisory responsibilities. It is not designed for the public. It is specifically tailored to maximize learning and use for practical application in the field.

User feedback suggests that the TRAP-18 proximal factors are very easy to use by those with a basic knowledge of psychology, crime/criminology, but that more clinical expertise is necessary to interpret the distal factors.

3.3 LICENSING

The TRAP-18 is copyrighted and trademarked in the US by Dr. Meloy, and solely licensed to Multi-health Systems, Inc., for worldwide marketing and distribution.

4. UTILITY & ETHICAL PRACTICE

4.1 IS THE FRAMEWORK UNDERSTOOD BY STAKEHOLDERS AND ACCESSIBLE TO THEM?

Feedback to the developer from stakeholders within the national security community in Canada, US, and several countries in Europe indicates that it is; the TRAP-18 is accessible as outlined above, and through scholarly publications.

4.2 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

APA ethical principles have informed the development of the TRAP-18; and the instrument, due to its generalizability, is free from some forms of bias such as targeting of certain ethnic or religious groups. The proximal warning behaviours in particular help with balancing rights of the individual against the state because the focus is upon specific patterns of behaviour and not any demographic characteristics or profiling. The proximal warning behaviours help narrow any investigative efforts to persons of concern who are *currently* engaging in behaviours that warrant investigation given the extant research on lone actor terrorists and also targeted violence in general.

5. PUBLICATION HISTORY

5.1 FIRST PUBLICATIONS THAT BEAR ON INTER-RATER RELIABILITY

In a study independent of the developers, interrater reliability demonstrated by Challacombe and Lucas (2018) in a comparative study of Sovereign Citizens was 0.76 (kappa).

5.2 FIRST PUBLICATIONS THAT BEAR ON VALIDITY

Hoffmann, J., Meloy, J.R., Guldimann, A. & Ermer, A. (2011). Attacks on German public figures, 1968-2004: Warning behaviors, potentially lethal and nonlethal acts, psychiatric status, and motivations. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 29, 155-179.

5.3 FOLLOW UP STUDIES USING THE FRAMEWORK

Meloy, J.R., & O'Toole, M.E. (2011). The concept of leakage in threat assessment. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 29, 513-520.

Hoffmann, J., Meloy, J.R., Guldimann, A. & Ermer, A. (2011). Attacks on German public figures, 1968-2004: Warning behaviors, potentially lethal and nonlethal acts, psychiatric status, and motivations. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law, 29, 155-179.*

Meloy, J.R., Hoffmann, J., Guldimann, A. & James, D. (2012). The role of warning behaviors in threat assessment: An exploration and suggested typology. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 30, 256-279.

Meloy, J.R. (2011). Approaching and attacking public figures: a contemporary analysis of communications

and behaviour. In: C. Chauvin, ed., *Threatening Communications and Behavior: perspectives on the pursuit of public figures*. Board on Behavioral, Cognitive, and Sensory Sciences, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, pp. 75-101.

Meloy, J.R., & Yakeley, J. (2014). The violent true believer as a "lone wolf" – psychoanalytic perspectives on terrorism. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 32, 347-365.

Meloy, J.R., Hoffmann, J., Roshdi, K. & Guldimann, A. (2014). Some warning behaviors discriminate between school shooters and other students of concern. *J of Threat Assessment and Management* 1: 203-211.

Meloy, J.R. & Hoffmann, J., eds. (2014). *International Handbook of Threat Assessment*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.

Meloy, J.R., Hoffmann, J., Roshdi, K., Glaz-Ocik, J. & Guldimann, A. (2014). Warning behaviors and their configurations across various domains of targeted violence. In: J.R. Meloy & J. Hoffmann (eds.) *International Handbook of Threat Assessment*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.

Meloy, J.R., Habermeyer, E. & Guldimann, A. (2015). The warning behaviours of Anders Breivik. *J of Threat Assessment and Management* 2: 164-175.

Bockler, N., Hoffmann, J. & Zick, A. (2015). The Frankfurt airport attack: A case study on the radicalization of the lone-actor terrorist. *J of Threat Assessment and Management* 2:152-163.

Meloy, J.R., Mohandie, K., Knoll, J. & Hoffmann, J. (2015). The concept of identification in threat assessment. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law,* DOI: 10.1002/bsl.2166.

Meloy, J.R., Roshdi, K., Glaz-Ocik, J. & Hoffmann, J. (2015). Investigating the individual terrorist in Europe. Journal of Threat Assess Management 2: 140-152.

Meloy, J.R. (April, 2016). Identifying warning behaviours of the individual terrorist. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*. Available at leb.fbi.gov.

Meloy, J.R. & Genzman, J. (2016). The clinical threat assessment of the lone actor terrorist. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America,* 39, 649-662 http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.psc.2016.07.004.

Meloy, J.R. & Gill, P. (2016). The lone actor terrorist and the TRAP-18. *J of Threat Assessment and Management* 3: 37-52.

Meloy, J.R. & Pollard, J. (2017). Lone actor terrorism and impulsivity. *Journal of Forensic Sciences. V 62, Issue 6, pp 1643-1646.*

Challacombe, D.J. & Lucas, P.A., (2018) Postdicting Violence in Sovereign Citizen Actors. An exploratory test of the TRAP-18. *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management*. In press.

Meloy, J. R., Goodwill, A.M., Meloy, M.J., Amat, G., Martinez, M. & Morgan, M (2018).Some TRAP-18 indicators discriminate between terrorist attackers and other subjects of national security concern. *Journal of Threat Assess Management*. In press.

Bockler N, Hoffmann J, Meloy JR. "Jihad against the enemies of Allah:" The Berlin Christmas market attack from a threat assessment perspective. *Violence and Gender*, 2017, DOI: 10.1089/vio.2017.0040

Erlandsson A, Meloy JR. The Swedish school attack in Trollhattan. *J Forensic Sciences*, 2018, DOI: 10.1111/1556-4029.13800

Meloy, JR. The operational development and empirical testing of the Terrorist Radicalization Assessment Protocol (TRAP-18). *J Personality Assessment*, DOI: 10.1080/00223891.2018.1481077.

Meloy JR. Threat assessment of lone actor terrorism. In: *Lone-Actor Terrorism: An Integrated Framework*, edited by J. Holzer, P. Recupero, P. Gill, A. Dew. New York: Oxford University Press, in press.

Cotti P, Meloy JR. The Tamerlan Tsarnaev case: the nexus between psychopathology and ideology in a lone actor terrorist. *J Threat Assess Management*, in press.

Goodwill A, Meloy JR. Visualizing the TRAP-18 indicators for terrorist attacks with multidimensional scaling. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, in press.

6. SUMMARY & EVALUATION

6.1 STRENGTHS

- Conforms with SPJ recommended structure.
- As such it has the potential to contribute to case prioritisation pre-crime and information analysis, formulation, re-formulation and on-going risk management post-crime by application of the proximal factors and distal factors separately.
- Proximal factors very easy to use by those with a basic knowledge of psychology/criminology.
- Acts as a screening method pre-crime for assigning to either active management or monitoring.
- Informed by clinical understanding of the psychology of grievance fuelled violence, personality disorder, insecure attachment, mental health problems and fixated and delusional beliefs.
- Some distal factors are based on psychoanalytic theory providing clinical understanding to inform risk assessment and intervention, and potentially structure research that is able to build the knowledge base.
- Studies specifically suggest a relationship between the lethality of the violence and the degree of psychopathology of the perpetrator, underscoring the importance of understanding the psychopathology.
- A growing number of postdictive studies are building evidence for the efficacy of the framework as an effective retrospective predictor of ideologically motivated violence.
- Supports risk management and prevention, with the potential to discriminate between empty threats and real threats.

6.2 LIMITATIONS

- The focus on lone actors means that there are no references to group influences in the framework, potentially limiting its utility with group actors.
- User feedback is that realistically, in a pre-crime scenario neither a direct interview, nor psychometrics, nor complete information are available for a complete TRAP-18 assessment that was built initially from a rich source of post-crime information.
- The psycho-analytic explanation for some of the distal factors is hard to validate, and appears esoteric to some. Clinical expertise is required to make sense of them.
- There may be a danger from the foundational focus on lone actors that group actor extremist violence might be over-pathologised with the TRAP-18, when the evidence suggests that fewer group actors than lone actors have mental health problems.
- TRAP-18 needs more comparative and postdictive research by independent researchers.

VIOLENT EXTREMISM RISK ASSESSMENT VERSION 2 REVISED (VERA-2R)

1. PROVENANCE

1.1 ORIGINATING AUTHORS, PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION, ROLE AND CONTEXT

D. Elaine Pressman, **PhD**, NIFP & ICCT & Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada

Nils Duits, MD, PhD, Netherlands Institute for Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology (NIFP)

Thomas Rinne, **MD, PhD**, Netherlands Institute for Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology (NIFP)

John S. Flockton, **Principal Psychologist**, Correctional Service of New South Wales (CSNSW)

CONTACT EMAIL:

n.duits@dji.minjus.nl
for enquiries related to Europe and

e.pressman@rogers.com
for enquiries related to outside Europe

1.2 BACKGROUND AND PROVENANCE

The indicators of the first VERA were based on the existing literature of violent extremism. It was constructed within the structured professional judgment (SPJ) methodology (Pressman, 2009).[44] Following consultation with terrorism experts, national security analysts, law enforcement analysts, and professionals trialling it with convicted terrorists in a high security prison, revisions were made. This revised version was identified as the VERA-2 (Pressman & Flockton, 2012).[45] The current VERA-2R, 2018 version, is an updated and improved version of the VERA-2 and the VERA-2R 2016.

The VERA-2R includes three additional motivational indicators which have been identified as relevant to radicalisation to violence and are applicable to men, women and young people. It also includes 11 additional indicators related to non-violent criminal history, personal history and mental disorders. These additional evidenced based indicators have been identified as potential indicators for violent extremism. This version has become more user-friendly; indicators have been defined more clearly and consistently, and are better explained. Translations are available in Dutch, German and French languages in addition to the English version. Finnish and Swedish language translations are forthcoming.

1.3 DATE OF FIRST PUBLICATION OR ORIGIN AND SCOPE OF USE.

The original VERA upon which the VERA-2R is based, and which is the updated and improved version, was first published in 2009 in Canada (see footnote 1)

The VERA-2R is in use in Europe, North America, Australia and South-East Asia in a broad range of settings and by various types of experts. About 1200 professionals have been trained. In Europe about 600 judicial professionals have been trained (Netherlands, France, Belgium, Finland, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Denmark, and England) with presentations, manuals and training examples in English, Dutch, German, and French. The VERA-2R has been implemented in the Netherlands since 2015 with 150 professionals trained for different judicial settings.

44 *Pressman, D.E. (2009). Risk Assessment Decisions for Violent Political Extremism 2009-02. Public Safety Canada, Government of Canada, Ottawa, Cat. No. PS3-1/2009-2-1EPDF; Available: https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/2009-02-rdv/2009-02-rdv-eng.pdf*
45 *Pressman, D.E. & Flockton, J.S. (2012). Calibrating risk of violent political extremists and terrorists: The VERA-2 structured assessment. The British Journal of Forensic Practice, 14 (4), 237-251.*

1.4 HAS THE FRAMEWORK BEEN PEER REVIEWED?

The VERA-2R has been continually improved by feedback from terrorism experts, national security analysts, law enforcement analysts, forensic psychiatrists and psychologists, and other professionals using the VERA, VERA2, and VERA-2R. The criteria for indicators set out in the VERA-2R have been carefully considered and researched. The publications in journals and book chapters identifying the VERA framework have all been peer-reviewed.

1.5 AIMS OF THE FRAMEWORK

- The VERA-2R provides a structure for the analysis of the individual's risk of violent extremism, based on the person's:
  - beliefs, attitudes and ideology; social context and intention; history, action and capacity, and the commitment and motivation of the person,
  - protective and risk-mitigating indicators, and
  - relevant criminal and personal history and potential mental disorders.
- The VERA-2R enables the identification of risk scenarios with objectives for interventions and risk management
- The VERA-2R enables violent extremism risk monitoring and supervision of persons with risk assessments, repeated over time to determine changes in risk and protective indicators

1.6 DESCRIPTION OF APPROACH

The VERA-2R is based on the structured professional judgment approach (SPJ). The 34 indicators of the VERA-2R domains have their scientific base explained and have well described criteria for three levels of rating (low, moderate, high). For each indicator extra explanation is added with lead questions and extra information in bullets. This is also provided for the 11 additional indicators.

In this way a more objective assessment is possible. This objectivity supports consensus discussions in cases where more than one professional is involved in assessment or management. The final professional judgment of the assessor is based on the weighting of all available information and data related to the risk and protective indicators. The final judgment is not made based on a numerical overall score. Counting the indicators to arrive at a sum is not consistent with the structured professional judgment methodology of the VERA-2R. Different risk scenarios can be considered and risk management planning for each of these scenarios may be undertaken (Hart & Logan, 2011; [46]Douglas et al., 2013).[47]

1.7 TARGET POPULATION

- The VERA-2R can be used for all types of violent extremists, terrorists and violent offenders motivated by religious, political or social ideologies, pre-crime or post-crime and in any judicial setting (prison, forensic mental health, prosecution, in court, probation, police, intelligence, exit facilities or other). It can inform risk assessment, risk management and risk decision making including, intervention, to track progress or to inform management plans for discharge.
- The VERA-2R includes six domains, and is improved with up to date evidence for each indicator. The sixth domain contains 11 additional indicators related to criminal history, personal history, and mental disorders.
- The VERA-2R is appropriate for youths as well as for male and female adults. It has been used with aspiring and returning foreign terrorist fighters and their returning families in addition to the other target groups identified above.

1.8 FOCUS OF THE ASSESSMENT

The VERA-2R is aimed specifically at assessing an individual's risk of violent extremism related beliefs, attitudes and ideology; social context and intention; history, action and capacity, and the commitment

46 Hart, S.D. & Logan, C. (2011). Formulation of violence risk using evidence based assessments: The Structured Professional Judgment approach. In P. Sturmey & M. McMurran (Eds.), Forensic case formulation (pp. 83-106). Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell.
47 Douglas,K.S.,Hart,S.D.,Webster,C.D.,&Belfrage,H.(2013). HCR-20: Assessing risk for violence (3rd ed.). Vancouver, BC: Mental Health, Law and Policy Institute, Simon Fraser University.

and motivation of the person. The focus is also to identify any relevant criminal and personal history and presenting mental disorders of the individual being assessed. It enables risk scenario planning, the charting of risk pathways with baseline measures and successive measurements repeated over time to determine changes in risk and protective indicators. It is applicable both to lone actors and to members of extremist groups.

1.9 DIRECT OR INDIRECT ASSESSMENT?

Both are possible.

1.10 GENERIC OR SPECIFIC TO IDEOLOGY?

The VERA-2R is generic and can be used across the spectrum of extremist ideologies.

1.11 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

The 34 indicators and 11 additional indicators of the VERA-2R 2018 are based on the literature on violent extremism and terrorism related to lone actor terrorism (Gill, 2015), violent extremism and terrorist groups, suicide terrorism (Lankford, 2014a, 2014b, 2016, 2018), moral disengagement (Bandura, 1990, 2016). Some of the original items were derived from Saucier et al (2009),[48] Sageman (2004),[49] Kruglanski et al (2009). [50] Other mainstream research related to engagement and disengagement and group factors is also included, and literature related to mental disorders of lone actors.

2. STRUCTURE

2.1 AN OUTLINE OF THE STRUCTURE

The VERA-2R indicators have a scientific base that is explained in the manual with well described criteria for three levels of rating (low, moderate, high). For each indicator extra explanation is added with lead questions and extra information in bullets. This provides a more objective assessment. This objectivity supports consensus discussions in cases where more than one professional is involved in assessment or management.

Protective and risk mitigating indicators are scored in reverse. A low rating indicates no change, a moderate rating indicates some positive shift and a high rating indicates a significant change in a positive, protective direction and towards risk mitigation. The final professional judgment of the assessor is based on the weighting of all available information and data related to the risk and protective indicators. Summing the indicators is not consistent with the SPJ methodology.

The VERA-2R has five domains with 34 indicators and three additional domains with 11 indicators.

1. Domain beliefs, attitudes, and ideology (7). This domain is of essential importance in identifying the nature of the extremism and the support for the use of violence to further ideological goals. It contains indicators such as grievances and perceived injustice, identification of the causes or persons responsible for grievances and, moral emotions, alienation, the relationship of the individual to the laws and norms of the state, and in-group affiliation.

2. History, Action and Capacity (6). This domain is relevant to an individual's ability to plan and carry out a violent extremist attack. This can include a criminal or violent past, specialized training the individual has received, access to the necessary persons to facilitate a violent extremist action and resources and materials. Recent events have shown that a dedicated person may only require everyday possessions such as a car or a knife to carry out a successful violent extremist attack leading to death. Nonetheless, specific training with explosives, extremist indoctrination and previous criminal behaviour remain salient to the identification of the skills and capacity a person has available to facilitate violent extremist action.

3. Commitment and Motivation (8). This domain identifies eight possible individual motivations or

48 *Saucier, G., Aker, L.G., Shen-Miller, G et al (2009). Patterns of thinking in militant extremism. Perspectives on Psychological Science. 4(3): 256-271*
49 *Sageman, M. (2004) Understanding Terrorist Networks. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.*
50 *Kruglanski, A.W., Chen, X., Dechesne, M., et al (2009). Fully committed: suicide Bombers' motivation and the quest for personal significance. Political Psychology. 30(3): 331-357.*

indicators that have been identified as drivers of violent extremism. Such motivations are important for planning intervention programs and for understanding the individual's risk and threat level. An individual may be motivated, for example, by adventure and excitement, and at the same time believe that there is a moral obligation to act, and a need to belong to a group. A criminal opportunist may have little or no ideological commitment to a cause but be driven by financial or other personal gain that can result from engagement. Several different motivating elements may play a role at the same time in pushing an individual to violent extremism.

4. Protective/Risk Mitigating Indicators (6). These indicators are important for identifying positive changes in persons, both at a specific point in time and over a continuum of time. They are important for identifying program objectives and for measuring the results of intervention programs. Disengagement from terrorism might be due to psychological or emotional issues and/or physical external reasons due to imprisonment, 'other role' activity, dismissal or withdrawal from the group, a change of individual priorities or a moderation in ideology or belief.

5. Additional Indicators (11). These indicators in three domains (Criminal history, Personal history, Mental disorder) may impact the risk of individuals engaging in violent extremism and terrorism when in combination with the presence of ideological, contextual, and motivational indicators identified in the VERA-2R. The criminal and personal history factors are particularly relevant to youth. These indicators are rated as 'present' or 'not present'.

2.2 ARE PROTECTIVE FACTORS INCLUDED?

Six generic protective and risk-mitigating factors are identified as protective indicators.

2.3 IS THE FRAMEWORK SENSITIVE TO POLITICAL CONTEXT?

Political views and ideological objectives are considered within the Beliefs, Attitudes, and Ideology domain. Although there are no specific indicators concerned with the geopolitical context of the assessment, such information should be documented in the qualitative section of each relevant risk indicator. Such background information is considered when the geopolitical context is pertinent to the violent extremism and the risk being assessed.

2.4 RISK SEEN AS STATIC OR DYNAMIC?

Dynamic. The VERA-2R assessment is based on the current status of the individual. Historical indicators are interpreted in terms of the impact that past experiences have had on the individual's current presentation, and assessments are repeated over time to track change.

2.5 TIME-FRAME FOR RISK JUDGMENTS

The time-frame of the VERA-2R is short term, dependent on the judicial setting. The dynamic nature of engagement and/or disengagement necessitates repeated measurements. After each assessment advice is given when and how a new risk assessment will be necessary. After each assessment advice is provided as to when and in which context a new risk assessment should be undertaken.

2.6 ANY REFERENCE TO IMMINENCE OF HARM? ANY RED FLAGS?

This is a judgment made by the assessor. There are no red flag indicators as such, but those concerned with intention, capability and commitment bear directly on risk and threat.

2.7 INFORMATION REQUIREMENT

Risk assessment should be based on the most complete information possible paying attention to credibility, validity, importance, and appropriateness of the information. If there is no direct contact with the individual the assessment can be based on collateral information alone, including surveillance intelligence, legal documents and psychological or psychiatric evaluations.

2.8 IS SCENARIO PLANNING INCLUDED?

This is not specifically included in the English manual, but risk scenario planning is specifically dealt with in the VERA-2R training programs and in the training cases. Also, the information and formats that accompany VERA-2R training programs provide references to risk scenario planning and relevance.

2.9 OUTPUT – RISK BANDING OR LIVE RISK/THREAT MANAGEMENT?

Risk banding and a written narrative final judgment in a VERA-2R report or risk formulation are recommended. This sets out the overall risk assessment (low, moderate or high) together with the significant domains and risk and protective indicators. These are explained and evidenced, and inform risk scenario planning and risk management efforts.

2.10 IS PRACTICE GUIDANCE PROVIDED?

Yes, the VERA-2R manual or official VERA-2R handbook© provides:

1. Explanation of the scientific context of radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism and the principles of risk assessment.
2. Development of the VERA-2R.
3. Guidelines for using the VERA-2R.
4. Full explanation of the VERA-2R indicators and their evidence base. Reliability and validity are discussed. VERA-2R manuals are provided to those who complete the specified training program.

3. TRAINING & LICENSING

3.1 THE CONTENT OF TRAINING

The VERA-2R training course includes background information and the key knowledge base for the tool, research findings that underpin the tool, additional research needs, definitions related to radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism and practical aspects of violent extremism and terrorism related to the law. In addition, the knowledge base of group related, and lone actor violent extremism and the role of mental health problems are included.

The principles of The Structured Professional Judgement (SPJ) methodology and risk communication are explained.

Experience with use and implementation are discussed.

Participants acquire experience in applying the indicators and completing assessments with five or more actual case studies.

After completion of the training participants understand the VERA-2R rating definitions and are able to apply them within the SPJ methodology. They understand the benefits and limitations of the VERA-2R in terms of its application to violent extremists and are able to explain its limitations and advantages.

A follow-up day every year after completion of the training course is advised. This focusses on understanding implementation issues and writing reports with example formats and a training case. Participants leave with more experience of risk assessment in daily practice and an understanding of how to use appropriate risk concepts and descriptions, and how these assessments can be reported.

3.2 OPTIMISED TO WHAT KIND OF ASSESSOR(S)?

Professional staff in key criminal justice and law enforcement agencies (psychologists, psychiatrists, analysts) and by security and intelligence analysts.

It is preferred if assessor(s) have experience in undertaking individual assessments and hold a position in a government agency, security service, international agency or are professionally authorised to conduct risk assessments.

3.3 LICENSING

The VERA-2R has a copyright and a trademark for European countries (NIFP, Dutch Custodial Services, Nils Duits) and for countries outside Europe (D. Elaine

Pressman). Professionals have to follow a specific VERA-2R training course to obtain the manual or official VERA-2R handbook©. They receive a certificate and have access to the extranet environment of the VERA- 2R website.

4. UTILITY & ETHICAL PRACTICE

4.1 IS THE FRAMEWORK UNDERSTOOD BY STAKEHOLDERS AND ACCESSIBLE TO THEM?

The framework has face, content and construct validity as all risk indicators and risk domains are directly related to violent extremism.

A half-day introductory course is available for professionals who are stakeholders in extremism risk-assessments, such as lawyers, public prosecutors and judges, and for senior officials and executives from prison and probation services.

A one-day introductory and interactive course on the VERA-2R is available for frontline workers and professionals who work with violent extremists, such as police officers, teachers, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers in mental health and prison settings, and municipal social workers.

4.2 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The focus of the VERA-2R is on violent extremism, and it cannot be used for other purposes. Users must be familiar with the research, SPJ methodology, have operational knowledge of violent extremism and use the latest version of the protocol. The VERA-2R can only be used within the specifications and limits described in the training. Users must be able to explain to others what the limitations and advantages of the VERA-2R and SPJ approach are in its application to violent extremists, and be able to write reports explaining and communicating this. For example, the VERA-2R is not a screening instrument that can be applied to the general population.

Written informed consent of the subject may be required, depending on the assessment situation.

5. PUBLICATION HISTORY

5.1 PUBLICATIONS THAT BEAR ON INTER-RATER RELIABILITY

Kappa values for inter-rater agreement within the Beardsley and Beech (2013)[51] study between two independent raters across five terrorist case studies were all >0.76.

5.2 PUBLICATIONS THAT BEAR ON VALIDITY

Pressman, D. E., & Flockton, J. (2014). Violent extremist risk assessment: Issues and applications of the VERA 2 to the high security prison setting. In A. Silke (Ed New York: Routledge. This chapter reports a study about construct validity in which there were statistically significant differences between terrorists and non-terrorist violent offenders on a range of risk tools (VERA-2, LSI-R; the HCR-20, Version 2, Psychopathy Checklist; Screening Version, and the Violence Risk Scale; Screening Version). The terrorist offenders were significantly lower risk than the non-terrorist violence offenders in terms of general violence and criminality, but significantly higher risk for violent extremism as assessed by the VERA 2.

The authors explain its face validity and user-friendliness, deductive validity (the framework measures the elements of the offending that lead to the conviction), construct validity, and content validity (degree to which the indicators reflect the characteristics of violent extremists). With this being the case it would be expected that extremist offenders would score higher on the VERA-2R than non-terrorist offenders.

Beardsley N.L. & Beech A. R. (2013), see footnote 51. Applying the violent extremist risk assessment (VERA) to a sample of terrorist case studies. This study compared the scores of a group of general violence perpetrators with five foreign terrorists on five assessment tools for general violence, and the VERA.

51 Beardsley, N. L. & Beech, A.R. (2013). Applying the violent extremist risk assessment (VERA) to a sample of terrorist case studies. Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research, 5 (1) 4- 15.

The VERA performed better in returning higher scores for the terrorists than for the general violent group, and the general violence assessments returned higher scores for the generally violent perpetrators than the terrorists (p=<.01).

5.3 FOLLOW UP STUDIES USING THE FRAMEWORK

Herzog-Evans, M. (2018). A comparison of two structured professional judgment tools for violent extremism and their relevance in the French context. European Journal of Probation 2018, Vol. 10(1) 3 –27.

This descriptive study compared the VERA-2 and the ERG22+ for the French probation context with convicted terrorists. The author found overlap in content and intrinsic value between the two frameworks, the main difference being the previous VERA's emphasis on ideology as a motivating factor in contrast to the ERG's emphasis on identity issues as drivers for extremism. The author concluded that both tools have strengths, but that the ERG was more suitable for the assessment of individuals in France where, like the UK, terrorist offenders have not necessarily carried out an act of extremist violence.

The French Ministry of Justice (Direction Administration Penitentiaire; DAP) reviewed risk assessment approaches and chose to implement the VERA-2R in the French prison services. VERA-2R training courses were provided in France to the French National Prison Administration and Training Institution (ENAP).

A European Database of convicted (and deceased) terrorists and their actions has been developed based on judicial documents. The research group is compared with a control group of 'ordinary' convicted violent offenders. The aim of the European Database is to map factors that are related to engagement, continuation and disengagement in terrorist activities. The European Database contains more than 300 indicators about terrorists, motives, risk indicators and VERA-2R indicators, and psychopathology in relation to contextual characteristics, and judicial interventions. The European Database will be filled at the start of 2019. This project is financed by the European Union and has six participating European Member States (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Sweden, The Netherlands).

6. SUMMARY & EVALUATION

6.1 STRENGTHS

- Conforms with the SPJ approach
- Has become more empirically informed in its later revisions as the knowledge base has grown
- Is applicable to all ideological types
- The focus on violent extremism gives the VERA-2R strong face, content, and construct validity
- Allows the addition of specific indicators relevant to the individual being assessed
- Provides a rich source of detail for risk assessment and risk management where sufficient information is available to address each indicator
- The criteria are well described criteria and the requirement for detailed information supports objective assessment and consensus discussions where more than one professional is involved in the task.
- Includes some protective/ risk-mitigating indicators
- Good inter-rater reliability has been demonstrated in one small study
- Validity may potentially be tested within the European DARE Database study

6.2 LIMITATIONS

- Not designed to assess terrorist pathway offences that do not include violent action or the support of violent action.
- Items are comprehensive and added to as new indicators come to light. Users say that there is a danger that allowing it to grow results in some loss of clarity
- Each item requires both quantitative rating and qualitative information from as many sources as possible, documented in detail. The time requirement may represent a challenge in some contexts.

- The risk level for each of the items is defined either qualitatively or quantitatively, though users have questioned the empirical basis for these definitions and suggest that a professional judgment of low, medium or high is all that is required
- Needs access to classified information that may not be available to clinical or correctional practitioners
- Protective indicators are general risk mitigating and/or disengagement indicators, that do not substitute for individually relevant protective influences
- The authors' claims for content validity (the indicators reflect the characteristics of violent extremists) and deductive validity (the framework measures the elements of the offending that lead to the conviction) need evidencing through empirical studies.

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SECOND EDITION

EDITED BY

J. REID MELOY

JENS HOFFMANN

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Making Sense of Terrorist Violence and Building Psychological Expertise

MONICA LLOYD

Targeted violence refers specifically to instrumental and predatory violence, driven by grievance but framed and justified by a shared ideology in the case of terrorists, or often a more idiosyncratic belief system in the case of lone actors, that is curated over time to meet their narcissistic needs. This category of violence has previously been the separate preserve of two different research communities, one concerned with threat assessment before the crime, and the other with correctional risk assessment after the crime. The former developed largely in the United States from the foundational studies of assassinations and school shooters carried out by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Secret Service in the United States (Fein, Vossekuil, & Holden, 1995; U.S. Secret Service and Department of Education, 2004), and the latter developed over several decades, largely in Canada, the United States, Europe, and the United Kingdom from collaboration between academic experts and practitioners charged with reducing the risk of sexual or violent reoffending in prisoners or detained patients.

Assessment of targeted violence emphasizes the pivotal role of intent and planning in its execution, and potentially in its detection, unlike mainstream protocols for the assessment of general or sexual violence, which do not discriminate between predatory and affective (angry) violence and are not intended to inform detection. The task of identifying signs of an individual planning an attack in the community before it takes place is different in several respects from that of assessing the risk of a repeat violent offense in a detained offender. The latter is able to draw on a digest of information from a pattern of violent behavior that can be assembled over time, together with interviews with the perpetrator within a therapeutic or correctional context, drawing on the added perspective afforded by hindsight. In contrast, information about a current threat emerges piecemeal and in real time, is of unknown quality, and rarely includes a direct interview with the subject of interest, which "in a pre-crime scenario may not be possible, necessary or wise" (Meloy, in Lloyd, 2019, p. 34). The challenge in the pre-crime context is that threats of harm may or may not be seriously intended and are rarely made, at least not publicly, in order to preserve the element of surprise. Nevertheless, judgments are required and made every day by law enforcement and intelligence analysts from incomplete information about how real the threat is, how much resource to deploy to its investigation, and whether to file it, actively monitor it, or intervene to effect an arrest.

A key difference between threat assessment and risk assessment is the role of warning behaviors, which do not form part of post-crime analysis except indirectly in the context of future scenario planning that informs pre-release decision-making. The Terrorist Radicalization Assessment Protocol-18 (TRAP-18) is something of a hybrid in that it

includes both proximal warning behaviors and a set of more distal characteristics of the lone actor "violent true believer" that provide a theorized explanation for the motivation and mindset of the perpetrator. It is this dual role, supported by empirical grounding and theorization, that arguably provides the most comprehensive framework for the assessment of the risk of targeted violence to date, reflected in its recent granting of validated status by the Scottish Risk Management Authority.[1]

A degree of convergence between threat and risk assessment has recently come about as a result of the attention that correctional risk assessors are now giving to understanding terrorist violence and of meeting the political imperative to prevent a repeat offense, for which there is considerably less public tolerance and more political fallout than for a first offense. This convergence has been further catalyzed by studies that have demonstrated a moderate to good degree of postdictive utility from applying the TRAP-18 retrospectively to both a large sample of international lone actor terrorist case studies (Meloy & Gill, 2016) and a smaller group of mixed lone and group actor terrorist case studies from Europe, suggesting that a protocol developed initially for lone actors with idiosyncratic grievances might also assist with the assessment of ideologically motivated group actor terrorism (Meloy, Roshdi, Glaz-Ocik, & Hoffmann, 2015).

Alongside the concern to prevent mass shootings and terrorist attacks, an intense debate has been taking place within the risk assessment research community about the efficacy of discretionary as opposed to nondiscretionary methodologies for assessing the risk of general and sexual violence (Logan & Lloyd, 2019). Nondiscretionary actuarial tools such as the RM2000 (Barnett, Wakeling, & Howard, 2010; Thornton, Mann, et al., 2003) in the United Kingdom or the Violence Risk Appraisal Guide (VRAG; Harris & Rice, 2015; Harris, Rice, & Quinsey, 1993) in Canada and the United States, previously considered to be superior to discretionary clinical judgment, have themselves become the subject of criticism. Non-discretionary actuarial approaches place individuals in a low-, medium-, or high-risk category on the basis of their conformity to a known recidivist profile, which though helpful in providing a broad categorization by means of information that is readily available in prison or patient records, is unable to identify which individuals in a high-risk category are of particular concern and why (Cooke & Michie, 2014; Hart & Cooke, 2013). Neither is actuarial analysis applicable to targeted violence, for which the baseline is too low and for which there is no evidenced recidivist profile. This debate about the relative merits of discretionary and non-discretionary approaches has played out within the clinical/correctional research community, while the threat assessment research community has remained focused on the central task of identifying behaviors that signal violent intent and imminent attack, favoring a checklist approach such as the "Tripwires and Warning Signs" developed in the United States by the FBI (2016).

For the assessment of general and sexual violence, professional judgment has now reclaimed its place within the discretionary structured professional judgment (SPJ) methodology, in which an individual formulation is structured by a scaffold of known, or in the case of extremist violence, hypothesized risk factors for the harmful behavior to be predicted, often brigaded within relevant domains. The assessment specifies the nature of the risk and to whom and in what circumstances it is likely to manifest, with a focus on prevention rather than prediction. Although SPJ frameworks include some static factors, their value lies in the inclusion of dynamic risk factors that over time can inform progress, intervention, decision-making, and risk management, which nondiscretionary tools cannot. They are also able to accommodate an idiographic (case study) approach to complex individuals whose presentations are obscure and/or not well evidenced, to provide a starting point for assessment and a structure to support work in progress (see Logan & Lloyd, 2019).

Those advising on the development of new correctional frameworks for extremist violence therefore identified SPJ as the go-to methodology for this task (Borum, 2015; Monahan 2012, 2015). A Directory of Extremism Risk Assessments (Lloyd, 2019) provides a template comparison of six frameworks[2] across a range of key features, using information provided by their originators. This shows that the VERA 2R, the ERG22+, and the MLG were developed specifically to conform to the SPJ approach for post-crime assessment. In contrast, the TRAP-18, IR-46, and IVP were developed initially to fulfill a pre-crime screening function. The

TRAP-18 provides a set of both proximal and distal risk indicators that are coded as present, absent, or "insufficient information," with the presence of any one proximal indicator triggering active case management; the IR-46 provides a set of individual and contextual risk factors over four phases of a radicalization pathway that correspond with an increasing readiness to use violence, with the highest phase indicating an imminent risk of attack; and the IVP provides a checklist of both generic and red flag risk indicators that prompt referral to the authorities. Although these three approaches were not conceived originally as SPJ frameworks, their originators now make various claims to this approach.

These shifts in nomenclature reflect an evident need to include professional judgment in the application of frameworks that, in the case of the IVP, was operationalized with nonprofessionals in mind. The hope that risk indicators would be sufficient to inform accurate screening by non-experts has not been supported in a study carried out by its originators who applied it retrospectively to open source case studies (Egan, Cole, et al., 2016). This showed that the tool was better at ruling out true negatives than ruling in true positives, as is universally the case with probability estimates of low-frequency events (see Cooke & Michie, 2014), and that missing information, which is the norm for public sector employees such as teachers and health care staff for whom the framework was developed, also reduced its efficacy. The total IVP score was a better predictor than any of the individual items, but only in respect of identifying true negatives. The authors conclude that, "the IVP guidance has potential value as an initial screening tool, but must be applied appropriately to persons of interest, is strongly dependent on the integrity and completeness of information, and does not supersede human-led risk assessment of the case and acute risk states" (p. 21).

The two correctional frameworks that were developed specifically for assessing ideologically motivated violence (VERA 2R and ERG22+) are based on the assumption that their risk indicators apply to all extremist ideologies, whereas the IR-46 is specific to Islamic radicalization. Evidence is accruing, however, for the assumption of at least a moderate degree of commonality across ideological groups. A study by Meloy and Gill (2016) demonstrated equivalence across 78% of the TRAP-18 indicators comparing jihadists, right-wing extremists, and single-issue terrorists from Europe and the United States. In the Egan et al. (2016) study, the IVP performed best with Irish Republican, Islamist, and right-wing extremists compared with animal rights activists and school shooters, who had significantly lower scores. Given that this tool was optimized as a screening tool for al-Qaeda–inspired extremism and that six of its 16 risk factors apply exclusively to this group, its reduced efficacy with animal rights and school shooters is not surprising, but the tool did appear to work as well with Irish Republican and right-wing extremists as it did with those inspired by al-Qaeda. A study from the Alfred Deakin Institute in Australia (Vergani et al., 2018) examined the structural push and pull factors at the macro and meso levels of analysis, and the personal push and pull factors at the micro level of analysis, across 117 studies. It identified no statistically significant differences in the distribution of push and pull factors across ideologies at any level of analysis, including the personal, though outrage at Western foreign policies was predictably exclusive to jihadist ideology. The evidence for a fair degree of commonality in motivation across extremist ideological groups is therefore mounting, though we should be wary of confirmation bias that directs attention away from potential evidence for difference.

VALIDATING STRUCTURED PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT FRAMEWORKS FOR TARGETED VIOLENCE

In contrast to conventional psychometric measures, the validity of SPJ frameworks cannot be established by analysis of the contribution of each factor to a total score that measures a hypothesized unitary construct such as intelligence or neuroticism. It was the assumption of classical psychometrics that such constructs would in time be shown to have a neurological or physiological basis (Kline, 1998). But radicalization is a construct that emerges from the ideological framing of personal grievance within a social and political context in the absence of sufficient protective influences, and cannot be measured by means of a single scale. The factors that contribute to it are a mix of intra-individual push factors and extra-individual social, political, and opportunistic pull factors. The pathway for

each individual depends on the needs that are met by their engagement, together with their intent and capability. The output of an SPJ assessment is a formulation that is qualitative and captures the individual's pathway, rather than a summative score that measures risk quantitatively, and specialist expertise is required to identify the particular combination of risk and needs that are relevant to the individual, and the protective influences that might mitigate that risk.

For ideologically motivated violence, a further challenge is how to incorporate its social and political context into an assessment of risk that is focused on the individual. Extremist ideologies reflect a dynamic and transient political context that seeds the narratives, which in turn provide the vehicle and the opportunity for extremist engagement. Islamist extremism has morphed over time as the focus of the "war on terror" has shifted from al-Qaeda to ISIS, and is morphing again with the end of the conflict in Syria and Iraq and the advent of a new balance of power in the Middle East. Moreover, in response to a wave of Islamist terrorist attacks in the United Kingdom, Europe, and the United States, there has been a reciprocal increase in Islamophobia and far-right extremism. Therefore, although the push factors reside within the individual, the pull factors are located within the social and political context and its narratives. The Multi-Level Guidelines (MLG) for the assessment of group violence include a specific Group-Societal domain (Cook, 2014), whereas the ERG22+ and VERA 2R train assessors to incorporate the changing social and political context of the offending into their overall formulation and scenario planning. Factors such as "Rejection of society and its democratic values," "Hostility toward national identity," and "Exposure to ideology" in the VERA 2R, and the role of "Pro-extremist family and friends," "Group influence and control," and "Transitional periods" within the ERG22+, all contribute to an understanding of individuals in their psychosocial context, though there is arguably scope for more emphasis on the group-societal domain in the ERG22+.

Given these challenges, experts in violence risk assessment have recommended retrospective research to test the postdictive performance of risk assessment frameworks for extremist violence with open source case studies, to provide a measure of their criterion validity. Several studies deploying the TRAP-18 have endorsed the role of proximal factors as potential predictors of targeted violence. Böckler, Hoffmann, and Meloy (2017) identified retrospectively five proximal indicators that were evidenced from records of the 2016 attack on the Christmas market in Berlin, concluding that, "It will become increasingly important in the future that officials fall back on evidence-based and validated evaluation criteria. It is for this reason that both the development and implementation of structured risk and threat assessment instruments, as well as the scientific debate about them, are highly desirable" (p. 7). Subsequently Challacombe and Lucas (2018) carried out an independent study to compare, by means of the TRAP-18, the profiles of 30 "sovereign citizens" who planned or executed violent offenses, with 29 who committed nonviolent offenses. They identified six proximal and four distal indicators that significantly discriminated between them, with the total score correctly predicting 76% of the violent offenders. More recently Meloy et al. (2019) compared, again by means of the TRAP-18, 33 lethal lone actor terrorists (true positives) with 23 subjects of concern who lacked clear intent (true negatives) in which five proximal and four distal factors were significant discriminators. Three of the proximal indicators were the same as in the Challacombe and Lucas study, providing further validation of their criminogenic role, and every attacker evidenced at least one proximal indicator, confirming that it is possible, albeit retrospectively, to discriminate by means of warning signs between those with and without violent intent.

The significance of this for validation purposes is complex. First it should be acknowledged that such studies are prone to confirmatory or hindsight bias in judging whether an indicator is evidenced or not, and there is a danger of over-determination of the role of factors that are correlates of the violence, but not necessarily criminogenic. It can also be argued that those proximal indicators that are intrinsic to the behavior to be predicted do not require further validation. "Last resort behaviors" and "Pathway planning behaviors," both endorsed in the previous two studies, are direct behavioral indicators that the individual has crossed the threshold from engagement to intent. In contrast, the third indicator that both studies had in common, "Identification as an agent or soldier for a cause," is independent of the

behavior to be predicted and has a theorized function that, if validated, provides an important insight into the perpetrator's motivation. It is hypothesized to be an indication that the individual under investigation has switched identification from victim to perpetrator and is now "fully operational as a soldier for the cause" (see "Identification warning behavior" in Meloy et al., 2019). Such indicators that provide insight into the individual's motivation are harder to detect because they are internal to the individual and imputed from the available evidence. For this reason they are also harder to validate without direct contact with the perpetrator. In terms of the distal factors that were endorsed in the previous two studies, only "Ideological framing" was evidenced in both. However, the lack of endorsement of an indicator does not necessarily invalidate it. Not all will apply to every perpetrator because motivations and *modus operandi* will vary between them, and the necessary information to evidence an indicator may not be available to assessors from open source information alone. What these studies do support is the potential efficacy of proximal indicators as warning signs of the presence of intent.

In the Vergani et al. (2018) study discussed earlier, only one of a total of 148 studies reviewed included a control group of nonviolent extremists. This single study by Bartlett et al. (2012) amounts to "validation gold." It compared open source al-Qaeda–influenced terrorist case studies from Canada and Europe ($n = 61$) with 28 radicals who were associates of terrorists in the sample but who had not engaged in terrorist violence themselves, 20 of whom were interviewed as a control group. Both groups held a grievance toward the West and supported an Islamic caliphate and the role of defensive violence, but the terrorists believed stridently in their supremacy and the decadence of the West, lacked critical thinking, rejected their host society, and embraced a romantic notion of restoring their honor through violence. Protective factors were exposure to good role models growing up, an in-depth understanding of Islam, respect for their host society, and openness to religious teaching. There were limitations in respect of the richness of the information about the lived experience of the terrorist sample compared with the control group because their profiles were obtained indirectly from open sources rather than directly from interviews; but this study does provide some clues about what may be criminogenic for terrorist violence.

Table 34.1 suggests that the three main assessment frameworks for targeted violence have mostly referenced the five criminogenic features identified in the Bartlett et al. (2012) study rather than the non-criminogenic features, though the wording and emphasis vary between them. The VERA 2R references them all but also has a greater number of risk factors. Interestingly, "Restoring honor through violence," described as "walking the talk" in Bartlett et al., is close to "Identification as an agent or soldier for a cause" that was postdictive of violence in the TRAP-18 studies discussed earlier, and is referenced in both the ERG22+ and VERA 2R as "Need for excitement, comradeship, or adventure" and "Motivated by sensation-seeking and adventure," respectively, providing further validation of its criminogenic role. However, there are many more risk factors identified in the literature and featuring in these assessment frameworks than are identified within the Bartlett et al. study. There are 18 in the TRAP-18, 22 in the ERG22+, and 28 in the VERA 2R (with a further 11 "permitted indicators" that cover criminal history, personal history, and mental disorder). There are several explanations for this variation in number. First, it is likely that there were others that the Bartlett et al. study failed to identify from open source data alone; and second, this study was concerned specifically with identifying the correlates of intent, whereas the assessments' frameworks include factors that concern engagement and capability as well as intent. Indeed the first factor in Table 34.1 that is identified as non-criminogenic is specific to engagement. Although engagement is not in itself a sufficient indicator of risk of harm, it still arguably has a valid role within a risk assessment framework.

The relationship between engagement and intent is not a linear one. Terrorist attacks have evidently been carried out opportunistically by those with a history of criminal violence and arguably little engagement in ideology, as recent attacks in the United Kingdom and Europe testify (see Basra, Neumann, & Brunner, 2016). In these circumstances ideology is used to justify a lifestyle of crime, drug use, and violence, but is fueled by a grievance against their perceived persecutors and avenged in a final terrorist attack. It is also manifestly the case that most of those who engage with

TABLE 34.1 COMPARISON ACROSS THREE FRAMEWORKS OF FACTORS FROM A MATCHED CONTROLLED STUDY

Bartlett et al. (2012)	TRAP-18	ERG22+	VERA 2R
Noncriminogenic Factors			
Grievance toward the West	Personal grievance and moral outrage Distal factor 1	Need to redress injustice and express grievance Engagement factor 1	Frustration, anger, and hate toward persecutors Beliefs, attitudes, and ideology factor 5
Support for an Islamic caliphate	NA	NA	NA
Violence as a defensive strategy	NA	NA	NA
Criminogenic Factors			
Increased stridency	Changes in thinking and emotion Argument ceases, preaching begins Distal factor 6	Overidentification with group, cause, or ideology Intent factor 14 Dehumanisation of the enemy Intent factor 16	Lack of empathy and understanding for those outside one's own group Beliefs, attitudes, and ideology factor 7
Belief in their supremacy	The presence of a belief system that justifies the intent to act Distal factor 2	Need for status and superiority Engagement factor 4	Motivated by a sense of moral superiority Commitment and motivation factor 4
Lack of critical thinking	NA	Susceptibility to indoctrination in which the individuals accept uncritically and without question what they are told Engagement factor 7	Predisposition to allow oneself to be influenced, controlled, or indoctrinated Social context and intent factor 7
Rejected their host society	NA	NA	Rejection of society and its democratic values Beliefs, attitudes, and ideology factor 4
Restore honor through violence	Identification as an agent or soldier for a cause Proximal factor 3	Need for excitement, comradeship, or adventure Engagement factor 4	Motivated by sensation-seeking and adventure Commitment and motivation factor 5

radical ideologies do not cross the threshold of violence from engagement to intent, demonstrating that each is to some extent independent of the other. However, for those who do cross this threshold, the strength of their conviction is relevant to their risk of reoffending. It remains the case that there is likely to be a core group of factors that between them can account for all manifestations of targeted violence, and that identifying these will optimize the performance of a risk assessment framework and reduce the "noise" contributed by spurious correlates that are neither necessary nor sufficient to account for this offending.

DECONSTRUCTING THE ROLE OF CRIMINALITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

It is becoming increasingly clear that to progress our understanding of what motivates targeted violence we need to look beyond ideology per se. Within the push/pull model of radicalization, ideology acts as a pull factor (see Horgan, 2005; Roberts & Horgan, 2003), whereas motivation is located in the individual constellation of push factors that have included in most frameworks references to both mental disorder and criminal history. Meloy specifically identifies ideology as a framing

factor within the TRAP-18 rather than as a driver (see "Ideological framing" in Meloy et al., 2019), and locates the push factors in other aspects of the "violent true believer" that are captured mainly by the distal factors, of which "Predatory violence" refers to criminality and "Nexus of psychopathology and ideology" to mental disorder. Both the ERG22+ and VERA 2R also include Mental Health and Criminality as risk factors. Both of these are construed as "composite constructs" by Schmidt, Heffernan, and Ward (2020), who point out that such constructs lack specificity and require deconstruction for their role to be clear and for it to be possible to validate them.

Evidence has built over the years for a biological basis for a syndrome of criminality with neurological and physiological correlates that can account for the co-occurrence of sensation-seeking, impulsivity, lack of critical reasoning, addiction, and violence (see Raine, 2014). Problematic backgrounds and criminality have been evidenced in many of those who traveled to Syria to join ISIS in its early days (Weenink, 2015), and criminal history has been evidenced since that time in Islamist-inspired terrorist attackers in Europe and the United States (see Basra, Neumann, & Brunner, 2016, p.7). Psychiatric morbidity studies carried out in U.K. prisons by the Office for National Statistics (Singleton et al., 1997/2013) also confirm higher levels of mental illness, personality disorder, substance misuse, anxiety, and depression in prisoners than are found in the general population. Therefore, where criminality is present in terrorist offenders, accompanying mental health issues are also likely to be present, associated with chaotic lifestyles, relationship breakdown, addiction, violence, and exclusion from and vilification by mainstream society. However, criminality is not present in the background of all terrorist offenders. Lloyd and Dean (2015) confirm a clear divide between those with and without criminal backgrounds from their correctional work with terrorist offenders in U.K. custody between 2008 and 2011, both in relation to their pathways and motivations, and in terms of their behavior and presentation in custody. Those following an ideological pathway effectively weaponized a "noble cause" belief system and adopted Islamic dress and an exaggerated religiosity to embody their difference and signal their separation and superiority; whereas those with a criminal background adopted ideology to justify their violence and exact vengeance, and associated with and presented as mainstream criminals in custody.

In a further paper, Lloyd and Kleinot (2017) add that the noble cause radicalization pathway was a relatively long trajectory compared with the criminal pathway. Without attitudes that justified crime, individuals had to overcome their inhibitions about carrying out a terrorist offense, which required a period of conditioning and grooming, often within a group with which they came to fuse their identity, as well as sanctioning by an "emir" or leader. In the first wave of Islamist offending, this pathway often included travel to a training camp in Afghanistan or Pakistan that completed their preparation for terrorism. They would likely have joined ISIS if this opportunity had been available, but at this time many returned from training camps with the intention of committing terrorist offenses in their host country. In contrast, the criminal pathway was much shorter. There were no inhibitions to overcome. They already had attitudes that justified violence and a sense of grievance against authority and mainstream society. They lacked critical thinking and were impulsive in their decision-making. Polarized "them and us" thinking was already part of their mindset and allowed them to see themselves as victims rather than perpetrators. It was a small step to frame this grievance in terms of an extremist ideology that validated violence against the ungodly "kuffar." Lifestyle criminals live in the moment and recklessly, seeking sensation and not anticipating a long life. The high-octane lifestyle of covert terrorist plotting and violence is not dissimilar to a criminal lifestyle—thrill-seeking, living under the radar, funded by crime, and fueled by grievance and drugs—but with the added benefit of a strongly bonded proxy family that affords protection, a righteous identity, and rewards in the afterlife.

Those who have speculated about typologies of terrorism have identified three main types characterized by noble cause, criminality, and mental disorder, respectively. Hacker (1976) referred to crusaders, criminals, and crazies, and Schmid and de Graaf (1982) to political terrorism, (organized) crime-linked terrorism, and pathological (crazy) terrorism. Miller (2006) links this with the different roles that individuals take within a terrorist group in terms of the ideologically driven leader,

acolytes drawn to the group's ideals, and opportunists meeting personal motives. Lloyd and Kleinot (2017) confirm that although "crusaders" and criminals were evident among convicted terrorists in the United Kingdom, Hacker's "crazies" were not, though there was some evidence of psychological distress and personality disorder that did not reach a threshold for diagnosis. A recent study by Corner and Gill (2019) explored the experience of distress in terrorists from a range of ideologies and countries, as revealed in their autobiographies (n = 91), before they engaged, during their active involvement, and after they disengaged. They concluded that psychological distress doubles between pre-engagement and engagement and decreases after disengagement, though does not return to pre-engagement levels, and long-standing effects can remain. Those who reported psychological distress were less likely to have fused their identity with the group (Byrne, 2003; Turner & Avison, 1992) and more likely to report guilt and regret for what they had done; they also associated anxiety with the risk of what they were being asked to do and the fear of the retribution that would follow if they refused. Rumination on their guilt and vulnerability seemed to contribute to the burnout that was the main cause of their disengagement.

Part of the explanation for the apparent lack of formal mental illness among U.K. extremist prisoners between 2008 and 2011 may well be that most were group actors (78% had co-defendants)[3] who had operated in terrorist cells; members of terrorist cells, it now emerges, have a considerably lower level of previously diagnosed mental illness than lone actors. Corner and Gill (2014), in a matched control study, identified relatively high levels of diagnosed mental illness among lone actors (34%) compared with a matched sample of group actors (3.4%). In a subsequent epidemiological study, Corner, Gill, and Mason (2016) compared the prevalence of lone actor and group actor mental health diagnoses with the general population. Among lone actors the prevalence of schizophrenia was 11.6%, autistic spectrum disorder 2.7%, delusional disorder 2%, and unspecified personality disorder 6.3%. This was higher than the prevalence of these disorders in the general population, but much higher than that of group actors, for whom the prevalence of any disorder at all was close to zero. Notwithstanding that this was due in part to a lack of assessment of group actor terrorists, who present largely as cognitively and emotionally intact, it is consistent with Gill's main finding that significantly more lone actors than group actors in the United States and Europe have diagnosed mental health problems (Gill, 2015). Grunewald, Chermack, and Frielich (2013) also found a significantly higher rate of mental illness in far-right lone actors compared with far-right group actors (40.4% vs. 7.6%).

In the Corner and Gill (2014) matched controlled study, lone actors with a history of mental illness were more likely to be associated with single-issue ideologies than al-Qaeda–inspired or extreme right-wing ideologies, and were more typically fixated on a target they perceived as wholly responsible for their grievance. This study also shows a potential amplifying role for previous violence, and by implication for criminality. It found that for both lone and group actors, those with a history of violence were 2.5 times more likely to have a mental illness, and those who killed were 3.8 times more likely. Or, because the direction of causality is unclear from correlational studies, the mental illness may amplify the violence. This finding is interesting in that it applies to group actors as well as to lone actors, which suggests that group actors are not entirely without mental health problems. In a small retrospective study by Hoffmann et al. (2011) of nonterrorist lone actor targeted violence toward German public figures, attackers with lethal intent were more often psychotic, suicidal, and with a history of severe mental illness and unstable attachments compared with those without lethal intent. More than half had lost a mother, a father, or both during childhood. In the Corner and Gill study (2014), comorbidity of diagnosis (a measure of the complexity of the mental health issues) was associated with previous negative experiences, such as witnessing parents' divorce, prejudice, and chronic stress, and with later violence and stockpiling of weapons. These findings suggest the existence of a pathway for some lone actors characterized by early trauma and subsequent mental health problems and violence.

Although Gill's seminal work suggests that diagnosable mental illness is part of the explanation for the offending of close to half of lone actor perpetrators, this does not account for the violence of the other half, or for group actor violence for whom

diagnosed mental illness plays a more limited role. Contrary to expectation, in the Corner and Gill (2014) study the social isolation of lone actors was not significantly correlated with diagnosed mental illness, which suggests that in the absence of mental illness, personality features and idiosyncratic narratives play a significant part in their isolation. The authors acknowledge that the motivation of lone actors is driven by a greater number and range of risk indicators than mental illness alone. Psychiatry has been unable to agree on the classification of cases where idiosyncratic beliefs may be construed as either a symptom of delusional psychosis or an "extreme overvalued belief." The latter term was derived from the work of Carl Wernicke, a prominent German psychiatrist in the latter part of the 19th century, to make sense of those patients with intensely held convictions that did not match the symptomatology of schizophrenia. Rahman, Meloy, and Bauer (2019) have recently explored the provenance of this concept and its potential relevance to lone actor targeted violence. Keen to clarify the difference between an overvalued belief and a psychotic delusion, they state, "An extreme overvalued belief is one that is shared by others in a person's cultural, religious, or subcultural group. The belief is often relished, amplified and defended by the possessor of the belief and should be differentiated from an obsession or a delusion. The belief grows more dominant over time, more refined, and more resistant to challenge. The individual has an intense emotional commitment to the belief and may carry out violent behavior in its service" (p. 2). The authors draw parallels with the concept of pathological fixation within the TRAP-18. It also corresponds to "Over-identification with ideology, group, or cause" within the ERG22+ and provides an alternative explanation for the motivation of those aggrieved individuals who are fixated and paranoid but without a diagnosed mental illness. It goes some way to explain the fixated and curated ideologies of lone actors such as Anders Breivik and Franz Fuchs, the Austrian mail bomber.

A CASE STUDY

Open source data indicate that Franz Fuchs was an isolated lone actor: an unemployed engineer convicted in March 1999 on four counts of murder for a series of letter and pipe bomb attacks that killed four people. He was also convicted of more than a dozen cases of causing grievous bodily harm with three improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and five waves of 25 mail bombs. First assumed to be the work of a neo-Nazi, it was not until further bombings occurred that interest was taken in letters sent to the police claiming responsibility for the attacks in the name of the unknown "Bajuwar Liberation Army." These letters ran into 72 pages and set out an ideology that was less anti-Semitic than anti-Slavic, referring in derogatory terms to the "Tschuschen," a slang word for immigrants mainly from southeastern Europe who were referred to as the new "ruling caste" of Austria, effectively identifying members of government as legitimate targets for attack.

In December 1993, the first mail bomb victims were a priest who helped refugees, a journalist who supported minorities, the mayor of Vienna (a social democrat), a worker from a humanitarian organization dedicated to easing the hardships of the poor, and four politicians from the Green Party. The following summer, Fuchs planted a bomb outside a bilingual German/Slovenian school that seriously injured a policeman who attempted to disarm it. Following the failure of another series of mail bombs later that year, in early 1995 he booby-trapped a sign reading, "Roma back to India," with a pipe bomb that killed four Roma when they attempted to dismantle it. Subsequently, between June and December 1995, he sent three more waves of mail bombs that targeted a TV host, the vice mayor of Lübeck, and a dating agency. Another wave targeted two medics and a refugee aid worker, two of whom were injured, though the next mail bomb targeting a South Korean medic was discovered and disarmed. There followed almost 2 years of no further attacks, despite there being bombs in his car when he was arrested and in his house when it was subsequently searched. His arrest in October 1997 followed a report to the police by two women in a car that they were being followed, though Fuchs in his paranoia believed the women were police spies following him. On his arrest he detonated a bomb in an apparent suicide attempt.

His *modus operandi* was to create explosives with a clear lethal intent that would work remotely and not directly incriminate him. Despite this he sent letters to the police claiming that he was part of a larger army, presumably to garner the notoriety and boost his status. His targets were either descendants of refugees, more recent immigrants,

or inclusive caring people that he perceived to be helping those he framed as his enemy. An interesting exception to this was the dating agency, which suggests that he may have used this agency himself but failed to find a partner through its services, or that he resented this agency for its role in bringing together those of different ethnicities. Failed relationships are a significant feature in the backgrounds of lone actor terrorists.

Spaaij (2012), in a case study of Fuchs, highlights his exceptional intelligence and higher education in chemistry, physics, and electronics that provided the capability for his attacks, but which he failed to translate into a viable career. He also failed to find a sexual partner and suffered from depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and borderline personality disorder, making several suicide attempts. His father facilitated his committal to a psychiatric hospital, but he was discharged without improvement. Over time he became reclusive and paranoid, conflating his personal grievances with broader political and social grievances that manifested in what Hegghammer (2011) has termed "macro-nationalism," in which a common national identity is extended to clusters of nation-states held together by a notion of shared identity, in Fuchs' case a German identity stretching from the Alps to the Black Sea. It is likely that he intended through his targeted attacks to achieve revenge for his social exclusion, project blame for his underachievement, achieve justice for the deprivations he believed he had suffered, and gain the notoriety and recognition he felt he had been denied throughout his life—or die in the process.

This pathway is similar to that of Anders Breivik, a lone actor with a similar macro-nationalist ideology who also represented himself as part of a larger movement that did not exist, though he lacked suicidal intentions. Breivik killed eight people in a diversionary bomb attack in Oslo, before travelling to the island of Utøya where he murdered 69 young people who represented to him the favored, liberal political left whom he framed as the enemy. Although both Fuchs and Breivik were unhappy, isolated, and troubled, psychosis does not account for their syndrome of beliefs and behavior, though there may be elements of autistic spectrum disorder and personality disorder in their etiology. As underachievers they both carried a grievance against those they believed had usurped the power that rightfully belonged to them as members of a superior cadre—Germanic people in Fuchs' eyes and Nordic people in Breivik's. The racist element of these views may have been shared with others, but they were infused with narcissism and grandiosity, passionately held, relished, amplified, and curated to the point that they both felt the need to write long letters in Fuchs' case, or a manifesto in Breivik's case, setting out the beliefs that had come to define them and for which they were evidently prepared to kill. Neither was psychotic or delusional, and the description of an "extreme overvalued belief" (Rahman et al., 2019) that becomes more entrenched over time seems to offer the best explanation for their violence.

A POSSIBLE THIRD PATHWAY

Others are known to conform in key respects to this essentially narcissistic pathway, and it may be that pathological narcissism corresponds to Hacker's third typology of "crazies." Research in the 1970s posited psychopathy and narcissism as potential drivers of terrorism, though this concept lost currency following Crenshaw's (1981) conclusion that "the outstanding common characteristic of terrorists is their normality" (p. 390). It is now clear that there is no one single pathway that can account for all targeted violence or one single explanation for what drives it. Empirically there is evidence for both noble cause and criminal pathways, and there is emerging evidence that a continuum of narcissism from "a need for significance" at one end to pathological narcissism at the other may contribute to both, with the latter possibly constituting a pathway in its own right. There is some support for this in the literature. "Belief in one's supremacy" is one of the factors for terrorism identified as criminogenic by Bartlett et al. (2012) in Table 34.1. Schwartz, Dunkel, and Waterman (2009) include a belief in one's superiority in the list of identity factors they suggest predicts individual involvement in terrorism, and both Islamist and white supremacy ideologies assert the superiority of the apparently victimized group, who are urged to reclaim their rightful place in the world. Eidelson and Eidelson (2003) list superiority as one of the five beliefs that propel groups toward conflict, alongside vulnerability, injustice, distrust, and helplessness. It stands out from the five as the only empowering belief,

and as such potentially the main driver for aggression in conditions of adversity. Baumeister (1997) concludes that one of the basic root causes of "evil" behavior in perpetrators is high but unstable self-esteem, which he characterizes as insecure grandiosity, such that when esteem is impugned such individuals are driven to restore it through violence. He says: "I propose that violent, evil people tend to be marked by feelings of superiority but also a fear that they will lose their superior position" (p.152), and that "those who harbour inflated self-esteem will be likely to harbour a relatively large number of ego threats—and hence be prone to hostile, aggressive, or violent responses" (p. 144).

Empirically, there are examples of terrorist leaders who have exhibited gross narcissism and ruthless, violent, and controlling leadership, such as Ocalan, leader of the PKK[4] in Turkey and Iraq; Prabhakaran, leader of the LTTE[5] in Sri Lanka and Guzman; and the leader of the Sendero Luminoso[6] in Peru. Indeed, so as not to suggest that pathological narcissism is unique to terrorists, it is also evident in those totalitarian heads of state who create a cult of personality such as Hitler, Stalin, and Mao Dse Tung, who all wreaked havoc on their own civilian populations. George Orwell, in a review of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in 1940, commented on the apparent willingness of people in fascist states to respond with enthusiasm to their leaders' invitations to struggle and self-sacrifice in the service of nationalism and supremacy. He observes, "However they may be as economic theories, Fascism and Nazism are psychologically far sounder than any hedonistic conception of life. . . . All three of the great dictators have enhanced their power by imposing intolerable burdens on their peoples. . . . Hitler has said to them 'I offer you struggle, danger and death,' and as a result a whole nation flings itself at his feet" (p. 24). He also, of course, offered them a redemptive narrative and supremacy following the humiliations heaped upon them after their defeat in World War I. Interestingly, Altemeyer (2004), after decades of systematic research to validate the authoritarian personality proposed by Adorno et al. (1950) in the wake of World War II, found that only two features of the original hypothesized nine features reliably replicated: authoritarian dominance and authoritarian submission. Both show a preference for prescriptive absolutist beliefs and strong leadership predicated on a sense of righteous superiority, though the former maneuver themselves into positions of power, whereas the latter are happy to remain as acolytes.

Jasko, Lafree, and Kruglanski (2017) applied a "quest for significance model" of radicalization to ideologically motivated violence in a study of almost 1,500 terrorist cases from the PIRUS[7] database in the United States. Their model tested whether exposure to indicators of loss of significance (in terms of achievement, relationships, and trauma) or a radical social network was positively related to a violent as opposed to a nonviolent outcome. They found that experiences of economic and social loss of significance were independent predictors of a violent outcome, with the presence of radicalized others (friends but not family members) increasing the likelihood of violence. This study does not reference narcissism directly, but operationalizes significance in terms of sensitivity to social rejection, achievement failures, or trauma. This "quest for significance" may potentially contribute to all of the pathways discussed, fulfilling a dominant function in a possible third lone actor pathway that includes both those suffering from diagnosed mental illness and those developing idiosyncratic narratives to meet narcissistic needs.

THE NEED FOR THEORIZATION AND ONGOING VALIDATION

Hart (2009) has stated, in the context of sexual violence, that an assessment framework should be judged, "to the extent that it coheres with the facts of the case, common sense views of the world, and (where applicable) scientific research and theory" (p. 160). It is in respect of scientific research that theorized risk factors play their most important part. Any new framework for assessing human violence should not be at odds with mainstream psychology, should sit squarely within existing theories of how individuals respond to humiliation and shame and can be entrained by narratives that promise power and significance, and how reasoned action is fundamentally driven by emotional needs.

Meloy and Yakeley (2014) provide a theorized explanation based on psychoanalytic object relations theory for the extreme grievance-fueled targeted violence of the lone wolf "violent true

believer." In this model a sense of personal grievance and moral outrage, intensified by a pathological narcissism, creates a vulnerability to deflation at the slightest wound. With such a collapse, a deeply felt shame is defended against with rage that is projected into an ideology that frames grievance and promises revenge. Relationships with others are narcissistically driven, their self-image fueled by omnipotent and grandiose fantasies in which others are viewed as objects to be denigrated or destroyed. Although the "lone wolf" may consciously adopt an ideological rationalization for violence, the actor's moral outrage is the unconscious projection of personal grievance that defends against deficits in moral reasoning and superego functioning, and in some cases against psychotic decompensation. This analysis suggests that pathological narcissism could potentially constitute a third terrorist pathway that might encompass not only lone actors but also those who gravitate toward controlling leadership roles that lone actors can only envy.

Such theorization is rare, however. We understand how radicalization occurs in terms of a dynamic balance between push and pull factors that favors engagement in ideology in one set of circumstances and disengagement in another, but the paucity of qualitative studies with the actual perpetrators of these crimes means that we have less understanding of why this happens, that is, the personality, emotional, sexual, social, and existential needs that are being met. Within the manuals of the assessment frameworks reviewed here, there are references to the literature and some theorizing in the context of individual factors, but little about typologies and pathways that capture what drives targeted violence. Most of our understanding has been informed by open source case studies compiled from public records and press reports that do not include the voices of the perpetrators themselves. A further complicating factor is that the perpetrators of these crimes often have little insight into what may be unconsciously driving them, preferring instead to believe in their own stories, which cast them as heroes in a noble cause.

Our quest for understanding would be helped by greater input from former perpetrators themselves and also where possible from their partners, friends, and/or families who have witnessed firsthand their backgrounds, personality, engagement pathways, and often also their violence. We also need to continue to carry out validation studies that compare the profiles of true and false positives as demonstrated with the TRAP-18 (Meloy et al., 2019), and from matched controlled studies such as that by Bartlett et al. (2012), to be able to identify with confidence which factors are criminogenic for targeted violence. Prospective longitudinal studies that control for the confirmation bias that bedevils retrospective studies should also be possible if cooperation between law enforcement, intelligence analysts, and academics can be achieved.

It may also be timely to assemble a group of subject matter experts to work collaboratively to develop a framework that incorporates the learning from research into a validated framework optimized for international use. The global nature of terrorism and other forms of targeted violence merits a global response, and those countries with the most financial and professional resources are best placed to spearhead this. Current frameworks developed in the West remain beyond the reach of many countries that are excluded from accessing copyrighted products and lack the resources to develop their own. We are approaching the stage at which our combined understanding of the etiology of targeted violence will be sufficient to inform a collaborative evidence-based approach to its assessment, management, and prevention, should there be a will to do so.

KEY POINTS

- A key difference between threat assessment and risk assessment is the role of warning behaviors, which do not form part of post-crime analysis except indirectly in the context of future scenario planning that informs pre-release decision-making. The TRAP-18 combines both approaches and includes both proximal warning behaviors and the distal characteristics of the "violent true believer" that provide a theorized explanation for the motivation and mindset of the perpetrator. It is this dual role, as well as its empirical grounding and performance in comparative and postdictive studies, that makes it the most validated framework for the assessment of the risk of targeted violence to date.
- Those advising on the development of correctional frameworks for extremist violence

identified SPJ as the go-to methodology. Correctional frameworks were developed specifically to comply with this approach, and threat assessment approaches were developed to fulfil a screening function before the crime, though their originators now make various claims to SPJ methodology. This shift both acknowledges and restores the central importance of professional expertise in formulating risk in the individual case.

- Evidence is mounting for a good degree of commonality in the motivations of different extremist ideological groups, though we should be wary of confirmation bias that can blind us to the evidence for difference and deny this dedicated research attention.
- The challenges of validation include incorporating the social and political context into an assessment of risk that is focused on the individual. An assessment of ideologically motivated violence is not complete without reference to the political context and the narratives that provide both the vehicle and the opportunity for radicalization.
- The postdictive utility of the TRAP-18 has been demonstrated in an increasing number of retrospective studies, particularly in relation to the performance of its proximal warning behaviors, and the Bartlett et al. (2012) matched controlled study has provided the opportunity to identify some of the correlates of ideologically motivated violence that are associated with intent to harm. There is an encouraging convergence between the risk factors in this study and those identified within published frameworks, and a clear argument for a conceptual separation between engagement factors and those associated with intent, with the latter bearing more directly on risk.
- Deconstructing the composite constructs of mental illness and criminality suggests a differential role for both across three different pathways: a classic "noble cause" pathway that includes a minor role for mental illness; a criminal pathway specifically driven by criminality and accompanied by substance misuse and a degree of psychological distress; and a clinical pathway with a prominent role for psychosis, autistic spectrum disorder, and/or pathological narcissism.
- There is currently some understanding of the individual needs that are met by engagement with extremist ideologies, but a dearth of theorization. A bigger picture is now emerging of pathways that correspond with moral/political, criminal/opportunistic, and narcissistic motivations, but progress has been hampered by a lack of access to the voice of the perpetrators, their families, and their friends. Locating former attackers who are willing to discuss their experiences with the benefit of hindsight will provide opportunities for further learning. Prospective studies in cooperation with law enforcement and intelligence agencies would also deliver more definitive evidence of the utility and validity of threat assessment tools.
- We have reached the stage in which our combined understanding of the etiology of targeted violence is sufficient to inform a collaborative evidence-based approach to its assessment, management, and prevention, and potentially a validated framework optimized for international use.

NOTES

1. See www.rma.scot/research/rated.

2. VERA 2R (Violent Extremism and Radicalisation Assessment); ERG22+ (Extremism Risk Guidance); MLG (Multi-Level Guidelines); TRAP-18 (Terrorist Radicalization Assessment Protocol); IR-46 (Islamist Radicalisation) developed in the Netherlands by psychologists within the Dutch National Police to identify individuals in the community at risk of carrying out an Islamist terrorist attack; IVP (Identifying Vulnerable People) guidance constructed in the United Kingdom to assist with the identification of those in the community about whom there may be radicalization concerns.

3. A one-off check of extremist offenders in custody in March 2009.

4. The Kurdistan Workers party.

5. Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

6. The Shining Light.

7. Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States, hosted by the National Center for the Study of Terrorism and the Response to Terrorism at the University of Maryland.

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From Empirical Beginnings to Emerging Theory

Monica Lloyd
University of Birmingham, UK

Abstract

This chapter charts the author's own learning pathway as a forensic psychologist working with those convicted of terrorist offences in the UK, from the Maze prison in Northern Ireland as a senior member of HM Inspectorate of Prisons, through to casework in England & Wales with those convicted of terrorist offences between 2008 and 2011. These experiences have informed an ongoing research interest into the etiology of terrorist offending. An empirical exploration of the pathways into terrorist offending taken by those convicted of terrorist offences in the UK informed a methodology for the assessment and management of the risk of terrorist re-offending for the British criminal justice system in 2012, and interventions to assist in their disengagement and/or desistance (Lloyd & Dean, 2015). This learning in turn informed the Prevent strand of the UK government's counter-terrorism strategy for countering violent extremism in the community.[1] More recently this work has developed into a theorized typology of terrorists as more evidence has come to light about the contributions of criminality and individual psychopathology to terrorist violence. This chapter seeks to map this journey from empirical beginnings to emerging theory.

Keywords. Terrorism, Engagement, Disengagement, Desistance, Ideology, Lone Actor, Group Actor, Criminality, Mental Health, Narcissism, Narratives, Typology

1. Empirical beginnings

1.1. The issue of definitions and ethical practice

Definitions are important in this area of study as what is perceived as terrorism depends very much on the individual's perspective. One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter, and depending on where you sit, the state can be viewed as employing terrorism against its subjects or non-state actors can be viewed as employing terrorism against the state. Hoffman (2017) reviewed the history of the use of the term 'terrorism' following Schmid's (1984) conclusion that a consensus definition was not possible. In tracking the use of this word, he identified a tactic of 'semantic obfuscation' by non-state actors to usurp the moral high ground by referencing themselves as freedom fighters operating in self-defense or seeking righteous vengeance, in an attempt to adopt the mantle of responsible governance and/or assumed statehood. In practice therefore those convicted of terrorist offences do not necessarily view themselves as terrorists, or take kindly to being labelled as such. They may also view psychologists employed by the state as agents of the state, and not trust in their willingness to work with them fairly. This was indeed the context of our early work, and the subsequent successful litigation brought against psychologists in the Salim v Mitchell 2017 lawsuit in the USA for their

[1] Prevent ref

role in aiding and abetting torture, non-consensual human experimentation and war crimes, justifies this caution. Pragmatically, we learned early on not to use the word 'terrorist' and employed a light touch approach to build rapport with those convicted of terrorist offences, in which we undertook to listen and learn from them about how they came to be involved, what they wanted to achieve and what they were prepared to do to achieve it. Despite this, the development of a risk assessment methodology from this early work has still been represented in the literature as an act of political hegemony (Skleparis & Knudsen, 2020).

As practitioner psychologists, our code of practice requires us to act with respect, competence, responsibility and integrity, and we adopted an open-minded and transparent approach that modelled respectful and inclusive behavior.[2] We were careful not to claim competence we did not have, and sought signed informed consent for this work, which was entirely voluntary and outside of formal sentence management. Not everyone we approached was willing to talk to us, but confidence in this dialogue grew as individual terrorist offenders shared their experiences with others. Our demonstration of understanding, compassion and respect challenged their dehumanization of us, and helped to shift the dialogue from a potentially oppositional one to a collaborative and potentially transformative one. We were helped in this by the definition of an extremist offense adopted by the UK correctional service in 2007 that defined extremist offending as *"any offense associated with a group, cause or ideology that propagates extremist views and actions and justifies the use of violence and other illegal conduct in pursuit of its objectives".* The generic nature of this description, which did not focus on ideology but on the offending behavior, allowed us to take an ideologically agnostic approach. We reasoned that in a democratic pluralist society where there are legitimate means for expressing political dissent, the use of violence and other illegal behavior in pursuit of a political goal can legitimately be challenged. This definition also omits any reference to radicalization, which has proved to be another problematic term in the context of risk assessment.

Early pathway models of terrorism adopted a linear conveyor belt or staircase assumption that proposed that 'radicalization' preceded radical action, Moghaddam, (2005); Silber & Bhatt, (2007); Wictorowicz (2005). However, such models have been unable to explain how such a small number of those who are apparently 'radicalized' go on to carry out a terrorist offence (Hafez & Mullins, 2015), or why many terrorist offenders have only a superficial engagement with ideology (McCauley and Moskalenko, 2014). As the latter succinctly state *"radical opinions are neither necessary nor sufficient for terrorist violence"*p.213. Because in the UK, the Terrorism Act (2006) that followed the terrorist attacks on the London transport system criminalized a number of behaviors considered preparatory to terrorism, or glorifying of terrorism, not all those in custody had contributed directly to terrorist plotting, or indeed had any intention of doing so. Assessing the degree of engagement with ideology, group or cause, separately to an intent to cause harm was therefore a key task, for which the term radicalization was too general. Making sense of individual pathways required engagement to be assessed separately to the intent to harm, and from the individual's capability to do so; three

[2] Guidance has recently been published by the British Psychological Society for practitioner psychologists addressing the ethical challenges of working with extremist violence.https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/ethical-guidelines-applied-psychological-practice-field-extremism-violent-extremism

domains that make a separate and discrete contribution to the overall risk assessment, despite there also being some overlap between them.

1.2. The role of protective factors

Evidently the number of terrorists are relatively few in number, and any complete explanation for their engagement needs to identify why a relative few choose this pathway, when most exposed to the same events do not. The features of individuals that emerged as push factors in those convicted of terrorist offences in the UK were essentially generic; they concerned grievance, a sense of threat, a need for identity, meaning, belonging and/or status, an attraction to authoritarian solutions and in some a desire for excitement, challenge and adventure. There were no features unique to terrorists that made them exceptional (Lloyd & Dean, 2015). As Martha Crenshaw (1981) famously concluded *"the outstanding common characteristic of terrorists is their normality."* p.390. The answer to the question of why so few with the same generic vulnerabilities in the same political context become terrorists, therefore lies firstly in whether they encounter the opportunity to do so, but more importantly whether they have a good enough life that affords a level of protection against so doing, which clearly most do. The actual protective factors that operate in the individual case are specific to the individual, but in general they comprise success at something, a positive future orientation, achievable goals, good role models, good enough family relationships, a capacity for critical thinking and, for Islamist extremism, a basic understanding of Islamic teaching and an identification with their home country. In short, a sufficiency of self-esteem and self-efficacy to provide an optimistic future focus that protects against the appeal of shortcuts to status and approval. It is in the absence of this that individuals become vulnerable to an alternative life that confers not only status but renown, a heroic identity, supremacy and rewards in the afterlife.

1.3. The importance of the geo-political context

Although for psychologists, individuals are the main focus of analysis, their radicalization takes place within a political context that provides both the vehicle and the opportunity for terrorist violence, so that a full understanding of how extremist violence gains traction requires an appreciation of the context in which it occurs. Bjørgo (2009) concluded that both engagement and disengagement are the outcome of a balance between push factors within the individual, and pull factors within the socio-political environment that, in the absence of protective factors eventually reach a tipping point. Richardson (2006) identified the essential ingredients of terrorist radicalization as *"a disaffected individual, an enabling community and a legitimizing ideology"* (Richardson, 2006, p.14). Here push factors reside in the individual's disaffection from family and/or society, and pull factors are located in the ideology that frames their grievance and the jihadi community that enables and supports the necessary shift in attitude and identity to that of a terrorist. The implication is that push and pull factors are both dynamic, and that spontaneous disengagement of individuals is possible when the balance of push and pull factors shifts. However this also implies that, as long as the political environment continues to provide the oxygen and the opportunity for engagement, others will continue to take their place. The solution will therefore inevitably be a political one rather than a psychological or correctional one. The contribution of psychology can only ever be to help individuals make sense of their pathways and decision making, potentially to

identify warning signs that might assist with the detection of an attack before it happens, and later to assist with disengagement and desistance by encouraging individuals to make different choices for their futures, which may or may not be supported by a different socio-political environment.

Over time, as the political context has changed, so have the choices of potential hostile action against the West. Those committing terrorist offences within their home countries in Europe in the first decade of the millennium were those influenced by al-Qaeda rhetoric that sought to inspire Muslims globally to carry out attacks against the governments of their home countries who were accused of shoring up un-Islamic regimes in Muslim lands. After 9/11 and America's declared war on terrorism, this message was amplified by a range of radical preachers and organized groups who responded to this call to arms by inspiring terrorist attacks within the Muslim diaspora in the West. Between 2003 and 2008 autonomous homegrown groups were responsible for 78% of jihadi terrorism plots in the West, (Sageman, (2009). In July 2005 the UK experienced its first homegrown terrorist attack on the London transport system, carried out by four British men, three of Pakistani heritage, which caused widespread alarm among the government and the general public. Other attacks followed, though many more were thwarted, but the increased risk and attention to security that followed in the wake of this first attack on home soil changed British life fundamentally. There followed a Terrorism Act (2006) that brought into custody many of the terrorist offenders who were the subject of this early empirical work. Dialogue with these individuals at this time left us in no doubt that their main grievance was with British and American involvement in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq which they saw as targeting Muslims for their own ends.

Subsequently, in the wake of the instability brought about by misgovernment and sectarian rule in Iraq after the war ended, and the collapse of Syria into civil war in 2011, many of those who had fought in Afghanistan and Iraq continued the fight in the name of al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) with the goal of establishing an Islamic state. In 2014 they crossed the border from Iraq to Syria and became firmly entrenched in both countries, calling themselves the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), with a new leader who boldly declared himself to be the new Caliph. Al Baghdadi became the fresh rallying point for disaffected Muslims globally, and the message to the Muslim diaspora switched from an invitation to martyr oneself in the jihadi cause to an invitation to travel to Syria to help establish a new Islamic state. Nation building replaced martyrdom, and attracted not only those willing to fight, but also those who saw an opportunity to live off the spoils of war and build a new life for themselves and their families in which their culture and religion dominated. This invitation front-loaded the rewards that Bin Laden had promised post-martyrdom. Whereas al-Qaeda had promised 72 'pure virgins' in heaven, ISIS offered fighters unlimited numbers of sex slaves from their arrival in Syria, and by 2014 an estimated one thousand foreign fighters were joining ISIS every month, far more than were being recruited to al-Qaeda (Tierney, 2016).

One would not necessarily expect the same psychological drivers to apply to those who were prepared to martyr themselves within their home countries and those who responded to a call for Muslims across the world to establish a new nation state, to which a significant number of Muslims in the west responded. From their perspective they were being offered the opportunity to experience a life with material advantages in a new Muslim land, in which they would not be subject to the relative disadvantage they experienced in their home countries, and where they could make a fresh start. One is an invitation to end your life for a new life in heaven and the other is an opportunity to build a new life on earth. Travelling to a promised land does not require the same degree of

engagement in ideology that is proposed under the conveyor belt or pyramid models of radicalization, and individuals who took the decision to travel to Syria made their decision in a shorter time frame than these models proposed. Experience confirms that the nation-building opportunity was readily embraced by young single women and whole families, as well as men of fighting age. This may imply that subsequent disengagement also takes place more readily when the balance of push and pull factors shifts against remaining, which is the current state of affairs at the time of writing. This remains to be seen, and will depend on the response of the governments in the home countries, and the choices that are made available to them. Rendering them stateless or reacting too punitively risks missing the opportunity for rehabilitation that comes with a time of transition, and reinforcing a narrative of persecution that may be revived if an opportunity presents for re-engagement in a new political context.

1.4. Push and pull factors

Work with UK Islamist terrorist offenders identified the broad drivers for radicalization listed in Table 1 below. Not all applied to each offender; some were more associated with leaders, some with followers and others with opportunists, but what was common to all was a sense of injustice, grievance and hostility towards their 'persecutors' and a chance to seek retribution, renown and supremacy. Contrary to our original assumptions, British Islamist offenders at this time did not express a wish to bring about Sharia government in the UK. They spoke positively about the opportunities they were afforded to live according to their culture and to practise their religion, and some were actively trying to bring family members from Pakistan to join them in the UK when they were arrested. This was in stark contrast to those in French custody who were strident in their perception that their home country did not respect them and that the nation needed to experience Sharia government in order to learn respect for Muslims, (Khosrokhavar, 2006). But what these ideologies promised, both Islamist and far right, was not only respect from their persecutors but supremacy over them, and this was a significant part of their appeal. Islamist ideology cast the West as morally decadent and inferior to Muslims, and far right ideology promised to restore white supremacy over immigrants and people of color who were cast as racially inferior. This goal of achieving supremacy is discussed later in relation to the role of personality.

Table 1. Drivers for Islamist radicalization from casework with AQ influenced offenders in UK custody 2008-2011.

Push factors	Pull factors	Protective factors
Grievance and desire for revenge	Membership of a proxy family	Success at something
Need for identity, meaning, belonging, status	Opportunity to bring about political change/ build a new Islamic nation	Achievable goals
Thwarted career/work goals	A righteous identity, goals, status	A strong sense of identity/ a good enough life
Cultural dissonance	The 'cool' counter-culture of AQ/ISIS	A sound understanding of Islamic teaching
Relationship/family breakdown	A high octane lifestyle	Positive familial role models
Drive for excitement, challenge and adventure	Redemption, a place in heaven	Good family relationships
Desire for supremacy, dominance	The experience of Courage, Justice, Transcendence*	Capacity for critical thinking
Uncritical acceptance of authoritarian ideology		Openness to new learning
Desire to prove oneself, "walk the talk"		Identification with home country

*three of the six virtues of positive psychology

The most common push factor, identified initially from work with Islamist offenders, but subsequently found also to apply to those from the far right and to other 'domestic extremists' was a sense of injustice at their personal mistreatment or the treatment of those who represented them by those in power, accompanied by a desire for revenge. Ideology located the cause of their grievance in a persecuting group of people who were allegedly responsible for their failure to thrive and achieve a good life. This framing of their grievance in terms of ideology allowed them to project blame for their own frustrations or failures on to a persecuting group who were identified as the cause of their grievance, such that in fighting this enemy they were able to redeem themselves. Ideology was therefore the justification for their engagement rather than its driver, identifying the enemy and legitimizing their desire for justice and revenge.

Another prominent push factor was the promise of an identity that conferred self-esteem and significance. This essential task to achieve an adult identity that would support a good enough life to meet their needs was a particular challenge for those who experienced a dissonance between their heritage and home cultures. Evidently most young British Muslims in this situation resolve this successfully, but among those who adopted a jihadi identity were many who had found it hard to find their place in British society, experiencing a clash of cultures and expectations. In some cases the experience of geographical displacement in their formative years also created a challenge to their identity. There were some examples of second and third generation immigrant youths, both black and Asian, being moved across continents to and from the UK between members of an extended family to prevent them from becoming too identified with their home culture, and to correct behavior that was becoming westernized. The outcome in these cases was a sense of not belonging anywhere and a vulnerability to adopting a terrorist identity that conferred clarity and purpose, status and power. Such experiences of displacement were not necessarily intrinsically damaging, but impacted badly when they were carried out against the will of the young person, without warning or their cooperation.[3]

This dissonance between heritage and home cultures manifested in clashes with a patriarchal honor culture that prescribed their choices with regard to career, marriage partner and lifestyle. In many respects the collective culture of Pakistani Muslims, which was the main heritage culture of those convicted of terrorist offences in the UK at this time, was incompatible with the individualistic culture of British society that allowed a much larger degree of self-determination. This was particularly problematic where it concerned romantic relationships, and specifically the son's sexual orientation. It surprised us when four of the twenty participants in a pilot one-on-one intervention for those whose involvement was connected with identity issues, disclosed in confidence their homosexuality and/or bisexuality. This would not have been particularly significant were it not for the fact that the ideologies they espoused, both far right and Islamist were homophobic. It became evident that where homosexuality could not be openly expressed, it was necessary to suppress it or risk becoming ostracized from the family, or for Muslims, to risk becoming the victim of an honor killing. Also proscribed was un-Islamic behavior such as alcohol or drug use and other hedonistic pursuits, which were considered almost a rite of passage among their western counterparts.

[3] The vast majority of terrorist offenders in custody at this time were male. This is not to suggest that young women were not also experiencing forced removal for the purposes of arranged marriage or FGM.

A related source of both individual grievance and family disapproval was thwarted career goals, in which individuals failed to meet their parents' career aspirations for them, or secure a job commensurate with their level of education. Such failures relating to career and lifestyle were commonly the subject of friction with the father, and where this relationship was ruptured the sons became vulnerable to the influence of charismatic preachers who were able to fill this vacuum in their lives. Adopting extremist Islamic ideology allowed the son to claim that at least he was a better Muslim than his father, and it provided an alternative proxy family in the form of a closely bonded group of like-minded jihadis. Fundamental changes such as moving from home to University, the death of a family member, the breakdown of a relationship, divorce or the loss of a job, all created cognitive openings to radicalization. Such destabilizing experiences were accompanied by emotional insecurity and a search for new sources of identity, succor and belonging.

1.5. Emerging pathways and typologies

The first terrorist offenders to engage with us were those from a non-criminal background, whose motivation was ostensibly the pursuit of a noble cause. They had become entrained in jihadi ideology and conditioned and groomed by others to join a jihadi group. A large proportion of those in custody at this time had been convicted with co-defendants (78% in 2009) and operated within groups, inspired by al-Qaeda but not directly under their command. Those who spoke to us readily were more followers than leaders who had come to believe that they were special people who had been chosen to restore the supremacy of Islam. They had narrowed their lives to socialize only with those who shared the same ideology and goals, and were over-identified with their group to the exclusion of all else, sacrificing their previous family identity and goals. Many had travelled to Pakistan to join training camps and fight in Afghanistan or Iraq, and when this opportunity passed they returned to the UK with the intention of carrying out a terrorist attack in their home country. Over time they had been broadly *"socialized into terrorism*" as described by Horgan (2005) and were able to overcome their inhibitions about carrying out a terrorist offence. As long as they remained within the echo chamber of their terrorist group they had no reason to question the ideology that bound them as brothers, but the balance of costs and benefits shifted dramatically following their arrest and solitary confinement in high secure police cells and later small units within high security prisons, and many were thrown into immediate doubt. Such individuals, without any criminal sophistication and from law abiding families, were largely traumatized by these experiences and desperate to make sense of where this left them. They had entered, in effect, a new transitional period that provided a cognitive opening for change. This was not the complete picture however. In retrospect those who resisted speaking to us were making a different sense of their incarceration, interpreting this as a test of their commitment. These individuals remained staunch in their identity and resisted speaking to psychologists, so we had less direct contact with them during the early part of this work. Looking back, these had more of an investment in ideology, aspired to be leaders, and had curated over time an 'extreme over-valued belief system' that had come to define them and give their life purpose. They were not willing to give this up and were keen to prevent others from disaffecting from their cause.

As our caseload grew the next group to emerge were those with a criminal background who slotted easily back into prison as it was familiar to them. Their radicalization pathways had not followed a linear progression through cognitive

radicalization to terrorist plotting. They had made opportunistic decisions in the moment to lend their criminal capability to terrorist plotting for personal gain and had only a superficial engagement with Islamist ideology. In prison they developed alliances with other mainstream criminals trafficking mobile phones and drugs, and achieved this status as a result of their ready use of violence. They were disparaging of those who wore ethnic dress and who made a show of practicing their religion. In return 'noble cause' terrorists were disparaging of mainstream criminals who they saw as taking an opportunity to exact revenge against society without fully embracing a radical Islamic lifestyle. Those with a criminal background did not need to be groomed over time to adopt polarized thinking that divided the world into persecutors or persecuted; they already divided their world into criminals and 'straight goers' and held a deep-seated grudge against the straight world that demonized them. It was a small step to frame this grievance in terms of an extremist ideology that validated violence against the ungodly 'kuffar'. Those with a criminal background did not need to develop attitudes supportive of violence as they already had them, and they did not have to overcome their inhibitions about committing a terrorist offence as they had no such scruples.

It became evident that the staunch minority of terrorist offenders who were more entrenched in ideology were happy to form alliances with those prepared to use extreme violence, and put pressure on other terrorist prisoners to remain loyal to the cause. They were also happy to put Muslim prisoners who were not radicalized under pressure to join the jihadi brotherhood. Moreover some prisoners from a non-Muslim backgrounds began to take a spontaneous interest in Islamist ideology apparently without pressure, seeking out jihadi literature and requesting to convert to Islam, indicating that a proportion of those with a criminal background were intrinsically drawn to the jihadi cause. Career criminals live in the moment and recklessly, seeking sensation and not anticipating a long life. Recent research into the biological basis of crime that encompasses neuro-science and criminology, now referred to as 'neuro-criminology' has identified a syndrome of behaviors that constitute criminality for which there is an evidenced biological basis (Raine, 2014). These are sensation seeking, impulsiveness, lack of critical reasoning, addiction and violence. The high octane lifestyle of covert terrorist plotting meets these needs and is not dissimilar to a criminal lifestyle: thrill seeking, lived under the radar, funded by crime and fueled by grievance and drugs, with the added benefits of a strongly bonded band of brothers that affords protection, a righteous identity, redemption, and rewards in the afterlife.

2. Emerging theory

2.1. Discriminating between Violent and Non-Violent extremists.

In the literature, the distinction between violent and non-violent extremists has received increasing attention because of the importance of being able to discriminate reliably between more or less lethal extremist offenders. Self-evidently, those involved on the periphery, or not involved in terrorist plotting at all, are less of a direct threat than those who are prepared to die for a cause. An essential task for risk assessment purposes is therefore to distinguish between those who engage with extremist ideology but on the periphery with no intention of carrying out an attack themselves, and those who cross this threshold and actively contribute to the plotting or execution of a terrorist attack. However, studies so far suggest that there is no clear cut distinction between the profiles

of violent and non-violent extremists, not least because those who have framed their grievance in terms of ideology retain this mind-set as they cross the threshold of violence. In fact, the features that distinguish them from each other are as likely to be protective factors as risk factors. Bartlett & Miller (2012) in a rare matched controlled study compared open source al-Qaeda influenced terrorist case studies from Canada and Europe with a control group of twenty of their associates who were defined as Radicals, but who had not engaged in terrorist violence themselves. They shared the same grievance towards the West, and supported an Islamic Caliphate and the role of defensive violence. What distinguished them was the stridency of the terrorists' beliefs in their supremacy and the decadence of the West, their rejection of their home society, a lack of critical thinking, and a readiness to embrace a romantic notion of restoring their honor through violence, or 'walking the talk'. Protective factors were exposure to good role models growing up, an in-depth understanding of Islam, respect for their home society and openness to religious discussion and debate.

Subsequently Knight et al. (2017) compared and contrasted 24 violent extremists (VEs) with 16 non-violent extremists (NVEs) from the UK, to identify the themes, subthemes and variables from their case histories that characterized them, and to identify whether there was a significant difference in the distribution of these characteristics across VE and NVE groups. They were drawn from Islamist, far right and animal rights causes. This analysis confirmed that there were more commonalities than differences between them. All showed evidence of grievance and blamed this on an out-group of persecutors who became their target of attack. Both VEs and NVEs identified with their in-group, had a strong sense of purpose and were preoccupied by seeking and belonging to a righteous cause. However, VEs were significantly more likely to have been exposed to extreme violence, to have experienced bullying, to have low self-esteem and to have underachieved, and to have deliberately disconnected from others and visited several mosques, presumably in a search for those who shared their readiness for violent jihad. It seems that those who were more violent were also more personally damaged and felt their wounds more keenly, and were more strongly motivated to resort to violence to avenge their humiliation and restore their status. Dehumanization of the enemy was also common to both groups, but VEs felt a personal responsibility to act (reminiscent of the Bartlett and Miller finding of 'walking the talk'). Knight et al. did not consider the role of protective factors, but it is implicit in their findings that a lack of exposure to violence, higher self-esteem and better integration into society would have afforded protection.

Psychologists from the Home Team Behavioral Sciences Centre in Singapore carried out a study comparing the twitter postings of three confirmed UK foreign fighters with those of three UK jihadi sympathizers who had not travelled to Syria or engaged in real world violence (Neo et al. 2018). Unfortunately the numbers are small but the number of twitter postings amounted to around 100 per head. The tweets were mapped against factors derived from current risk assessment tools. Again there was considerable overlap between the two groups in terms of perceived grievance, intolerance towards multi-racial mixing and commitment to violent extremist groups, but more foreign fighters were seeking redemption for un-Islamic behavior and a more meaningful life. They also declared their readiness to use violence, including inciting others to join the cause, seeing themselves as protectors of fellow Muslims and expressing a willingness to become a martyr. Protective factors were a willingness to engage in discussions about ideology and the use of violence, and an appreciation for diversity.

The following three studies contrast the risk profiles of known true and false positive perpetrators of targeted or terrorist violence by means of the TRAP-18, with the aim of

identifying which risk factors are criminogenic for violence in lone school shooters and lone actor terrorists. This framework combines ten warning behaviors (proximal indicators) garnered from the literature on stalking, work place violence and mass shootings, and eight distal indicators that capture the psychology of the 'violent true believer' (Meloy & Yakeley, 2014a). It is intended for use by law enforcement and the FBI to assist in the detection of threatened violence in the community pre-crime, though the addition of the distal indicators means that it also supports a holistic assessment of motivation and personality post-crime. Meloy et al. (2014a) tested whether the warning behaviors from the TRAP-18 discriminated retrospectively between nine school shooters (true positives) and 31 'controls' who had threatened violence but not carried it out (true negatives). Six of the eight warning behaviors did indeed discriminate between them. Those with no intention of carrying out their threats showed no preparatory pathway behaviors, energy burst or last resort behaviors, and little evidence of fixation or identification. Subsequently Challacombe and Lucas (2018) compared, also by means of the TRAP-18, the profiles of 30 'sovereign citizens' who planned or executed violent offences with 29 who committed non-violent offences. They identified four warning behaviors (pathway, identification, leakage, and last resort) and four distal indicators (personal grievance, framed by ideology, greater creativity, and criminal violence) that were positively associated with the violent attackers. More recently Meloy et al. (2019) compared, again by means of the TRAP-18, 33 violent lone actor terrorists (true positives) with 23 subjects of concern who lacked clear intent (true negatives) in which five warning behaviors (pathway, identification, energy burst, last resort and directly communicated threat) and four distal factors (ideological framing, changes in thinking and emotion, creativity and innovation, and mental disorder) were significant discriminators. Those who did carry out offences showed clear evidence of pathway behaviors, evidencing both energy burst and last resort behaviors as well as the presence of fixation and identification. Therefore, pathway planning, identification, and last resort behaviors are the three warning indicators, and ideological framing and creativity the two distal indicators that cross validate as correlates of violence risk across all three studies.

It is a little disappointing that there was not more consistency across studies, but the non-endorsement of certain indicators as discriminators does not mean they would not discriminate in further studies, as not all apply to every case. Also, reliance on open source data means that mental states and intention have to be imputed from behavioral information and may therefore be missed. One distal indicator in the TRAP-18 that has not been endorsed in these three studies but was in the Bartlett & Miller (2012) study as present in terrorists but not radicals, is stridency (referred to by Meloy as 'Changes in thinking or emotion'). This refers to the cognitive and emotional changes that accompany the identity shift from victim to perpetrator in which previous familial links and friendships are severed, two way discussion is overtaken by preaching, and compassion and humor are lost. Such an individual has fully adopted the prism of ideology through which he judges others as in-group or out-group and treats with disdain those who do not align with his thinking. This would probably only have been experienced by friends and family or direct associates of the individual concerned, but is an important indicator to risk assessors, not only to identify the mind-set of intent, but also as an indicator of disengagement as it diminishes over time as this mind-set softens.

The endorsement in these studies of planning and last resort behaviors among those who carried out an attack is not surprising, as is their absence in those who did not carry out an attack. Such indicators are self-validating. The presence of 'identification'

however is much more instructive. This is a theorized indicator that Meloy et al. (2019) describe as the point at which an individual identifies himself as an agent, soldier or warrior for his cause, be it Islamist, far right, or single issue, indicating that he has moved into operational space and switched his identification from victim to perpetrator. The fact that it was present in the true positives and absent in the true negatives across three studies validates this proposed function, especially as it is referenced also in the Bartlett and Miller (2012) study as 'walking the talk' and implied in the Knight et al. (2017) study in the VEs' disconnection from previous friends and search for like-minded others from different mosques.

Until recently there has been comparatively little contribution to the study of terrorism from criminologists, with the notable exception of Gill's seminal work on lone actors. A recent systematic review and meta-analysis suggests that, contrary to initial assumptions of terrorism being a unique form of offending, traditional criminological risk factors apply equally to terrorist offending, perhaps not surprisingly given the degree of overlap in terms of criminality (Wolfowicz et al., 2019). This study examined the effect sizes for risk and protective factors from studies in 57 OECD countries, for radical attitudes, intentions and behaviors. The largest effect sizes, which measure the extent to which they contribute to terrorist violence, were for traditional criminological factors such as low self-control, thrill seeking/risk taking, low law legitimacy, deviant peers, criminal history and police contact. The indicators connected with radical intentions in those who had crossed the threshold of violence were symbolic and real threat, in-group superiority, 'in-group' connectedness and low self-esteem. The last two were also identified in VEs in the Knight et al. (2017) study as low self-esteem and the lack of 'out-group' connectedness, which amounts to a very similar thing. The strongest protective factors were school bonding and performance, parental involvement, institutional trust, acceptance of the legitimacy of the law, and a willingness to abide by it.

The finding of the presence of criminal violence in the backgrounds of violent sovereign citizen perpetrators in the Challacombe & Lucas (2018) study is consistent with the role of criminal history in the meta-analysis above. It has long been established in criminology that previous violence is the best predictor of future violence, and this seems to apply equally to terrorist violence. This picture is also consistent with empirical findings from direct work with terrorist offenders, the majority of whom had criminal backgrounds and a behavioral and attitudinal presentation consistent with mainstream criminals. The authors conclude that *"the findings of the current study provide strong support for criminological approaches to the study of radicalization, with some of the most important putative risk factors identified being traditional criminogenic and criminotrophic factors derived from well-established theories."*(Wolfowicz et al., 2020, p.30). Interestingly the authors also acknowledge that there are psychological factors over and above those associated with criminality that set terrorist offending apart from other mainstream offenders. These are the influence of symbolic and real threat, in-group superiority and an authoritarian/fundamentalist personality (see 2.4.2 and 3.1 later).

2.2. Disengagement and re-engagement

We have seen in prisons that it is possible for terrorist offenders to spontaneously disengage from ideology, and that this happens to a significant number after their arrest and conviction when the balance of push and pull factors in favor of their remaining engaged dramatically shifts. We have also noted that a smaller proportion hold out against this and pressurize their peers to remain staunch, such that those who disengage

may need to be protected from them. There are choices to be made by terrorist offenders in prison, or in a war zone when hostilities have ceased, and these need to be framed in such a way that individuals can see a viable pathway of rehabilitation back into the community. There are also self-esteem issues. We can see from the studies above that those who cross the threshold of violence often have low self-esteem and have failed to find their place in British society. They therefore need help to achieve this and to be protected from relapse. Those convicted of terrorist offences in the UK are therefore given close oversight on their release and provided with enhanced supervision and support to settle back safely into society. They are subject to restrictive license conditions that are only relaxed cautiously over time, and they are readily recalled to prison if any of these are breached. Silke (2014) published figures for England and Wales that showed that between September 2001 and March 2008 there were 196 convictions for terrorist-related offences, mostly connected to al-Qaeda extremism. By early 2009, nearly 100 had been released back into society but none had been re-convicted for terrorist activity by the time his paper was published. However this dramatically changed with two separate repeat terrorist attacks on the streets of London in December 2019. Both perpetrators were released from prison without going through the parole process as they were serving fixed term sentences with automatic release. Both were released on license following risk assessment and were subject to ongoing multi-agency management in the community.

In the scrutiny that followed these two separate incidents it emerged that the first perpetrator had been granted permission to attend a University of Cambridge's alumni conference for those working in offender rehabilitation, to which he had been invited. He had clearly been feigning his disengagement very convincingly for this to have been approved, and subsequent events proved that he had misled everyone involved in his risk assessment and management. The second perpetrator was a young man who had been correctly assessed as very high risk of re-offending but who was serving a fixed term sentence with automatic release and could no longer be lawfully detained. His high level of risk to the public had clearly been accurately assessed, such that he was under close surveillance by police marksmen and shot dead within 60 seconds of stealing a knife from a shop and attacking his first victim. These two incidents illustrate one of the choices available to those who remain staunch and do not disengage. They can pass their perceived responsibility to remain loyal to the cause on to others and withdraw from the front line, or by carrying out murderous attacks while wearing (fake) suicide vests, they can ensure that they both create victims and become martyrs to the cause.

A recent Belgian study assessed the Syrian statistics for terrorist engagement and recidivism. Renard (2020) examined 557 jihadi terrorist convictions in Belgium over three decades from 1990–2020, identifying that less than five percent re-engaged in terrorist activities. This compares with a criminal recidivism rate of about 50 percent. Most of these 27 offenders (88.9%) had at least one conviction linked to Syria, and seven had two successive convictions linked to Syria. Fourteen of the 16 (88%) whose first offence was foreign fighting in Syria returned there to fight a second time. Eighteen out of the 27 were already involved in terrorist activities before 2011, and 11 of them before 2005, which indicates a degree of staunchness over time, though this amounts only to .07% of the total sample. For six of the reoffenders (22.2%) their second offense was for recruitment or leadership activities, four of whom were former foreign fighters, which confirms that a proportion of veteran jihadis do remain engaged and become future recruiters, though none of these second offenses was for a terrorist plot, which suggests that over time most individuals do withdraw from the front line. Six were re-convicted

for financing or logistical activities, and three for propaganda or 'apology'. These figures inevitably reflect the opportunities provided by the political context as much as they do the characteristics of the individuals concerned. Where criminal records were available (in only 15 of the total) eight had a criminal history and seven did not, which matched the ratio in the dataset as a whole.

2.3. A crime-terror nexus

References to a crime-terror nexus have in the past focused on the links between organized crime and international terrorism, which are well evidenced in the examples of the Columbian narco-cartels (Bjornehed, 2004) and the Afghan Taliban (Phillips & Kamen, 2014). However, a more recent Norwegian study (2015) indicates that most European attacks in Western Europe between 1994 and 2014 were funded by means of a mixed economy, by cells that mostly generated their income from the salaries and savings of their members, complemented by an illegal trade in drugs, weapons and goods, theft and robbery (Oftadel, 2015). More recently Basra et al. (2017) examined the perpetrators of the terrorist attacks in France, Belgium, Germany and the UK between 2015 and 2017, all of whom came from a background of disorganized street crime and who were deliberately targeted by ISIS for their anti-authority attitudes, criminal lifestyle and ready use of violence. They refer to this as a 'new' crime-terror nexus, effectively between disorganized crime and international terrorism, in which both criminal and terrorist organizations recruit from the same pool of petty criminals who are thereby able to continue their criminal lifestyle and change only their affiliation. In the Belgian study above 54% had a criminal history. We know from psychiatric morbidity studies carried out by the Office for National Statistics in prison (Singleton, 1997, 2013) that this brings with it a complex of mental health problems that typically include anti-social personality disorder, substance misuse and wellbeing issues, to which we can add impulsivity and domestic violence, underpinned by a reckless attitude towards their future (Raine, 2013). Taken together with the chaos of their lifestyles this constitutes a sizeable rehabilitation challenge.

2.4. Personality characteristics

Despite the influence of the political context and the generic nature of the push factors that create the motivation for violence, the decision to become a terrorist is ultimately a personal one, and it is here that psychological analysis can add value to the understanding of terrorists' choices. The search for risk factors among socio-demographics such as age, gender, socio-economic status, employment and education has yielded little of statistical significance or explanatory value (Victoroff, 2005), and a recent literature review confirms this (Desmaris et al., 2017). The Wolfowicz et al. study was able to identify the role of criminality and deviance in terrorism, but also some key personality variables. King and Taylor (2011) also make a case for the explanatory role of personality variables including superiority and authoritarian personality. They conclude *"Hence, we encourage experts to revisit disregarded assumptions about personality characteristics in terrorism research, as the most plausible model for radicalization would be one that considers an interaction between personality traits and situational factors."*(p.615).

2.4.1. Sensation seeking

This personality feature has already been discussed in the context of both the terrorist and criminal lifestyles, in which thrill seeking and living recklessly and in the moment are common to both. The biological basis of criminality suggests that this is the manifestation of a combination of neurological and physiological characteristics that underlie a syndrome of impulsive and hedonistic behaviors (Raine, 2016). Atran (2008) described al-Qaeda extremists as sensation seekers, predominantly young, male and in their late teens to mid-thirties, seduced by adventure and dreams of glory and the chance to make their mark against the most powerful armies of the West. He saw this as more about youth culture than theology or ideology, in which sharing dreams and heroes were more exciting than their pedestrian lives. Karmani (2009) also confirmed the role of the warrior identity from interviews with 12 terrorist offenders under the supervision of the London Probation Service. He pointed out that Islamic heroes all concerned violent jihad past and present, and he used the word 'vanguardism' to describe the belief that in taking up arms they were the only effective champions of Islam. Schumpe et al. (2020) have also recently published a paper that links Kruglanski's significance quest theory to sensation seeking. They demonstrate in an ingenious series of experiments that sensation seeking is activated following an experimentally induced loss of significance, which then steers individuals towards novel activities that promise to restore it. Similarly Wiktorowicz proposed the concept of "cognitive opening" (2005) by which individuals become receptive to new ideas and worldviews in the aftermath of personal crises that damage their status and self-esteem. Both these theories validate the proposed role of transitional periods as a window for the radicalization of terrorist offenders.

2.4.2. Authoritarian personality

The authoritarian personality was originally proposed by Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford (1950) who developed an 'F' scale that stood for "pre-fascist personality" that was intended to identify those predisposed to right-wing ideology and receptive to fascist government. Adorno was an academic refugee from Germany who found sanctuary in California before WW2 where he joined forces with Sanford and Levinson, psychology professors at Berkeley researching ethnocentrism, and Frenkel-Brunswik who was working on establishing the link between family background and personality through interview studies. Throughout the war these researchers worked together on understanding the blind obedience to authority evidenced in both Stalin's Russia and Nazi Germany. The original scale comprised nine traits and was subsequently reduced to three in 1954: ethnocentrism, anti-Semitism and political and economic conservatism. Following decades of experimental research in Canada to validate these traits, Altemeyer (2004) was able to identify just two clusters of authoritarian personalities that reliably replicated: authoritarian dominants and authoritarian submissives. Both shared a preference for prescriptive absolutist beliefs and strong leadership, with the former gravitating towards positions of power and the latter happy to act as followers. He lists the qualities of authoritarian dominants as dominating, manipulative, exploitative and fear-mongering, and of authoritarian submissives as subservient to authority, respectful of those with power, trusting of untrustworthy authorities, uncritical toward their chosen authority, gullible and prone to panic. He referred to them as a natural pairing of which he says *"(authoritarian dominators) can pose a serious threat for they lead people who are un-inclined to think for themselves, are gullible towards leaders of their "in-group", are brimming with self-righteousness*

and zeal and are fey to give dictatorship a chance." (Altemeyer, 2004. p. 45). If such personality types are faced with a state of affairs in which their honor is impugned and their status threatened, it is possible to see how they might be attracted to an authoritarian solution that promised to redeem them and restore their self-respect. In our work with terrorist offenders we came across both personality types: those who were dominant, narcissistic and violent, and those who had been seduced by the authoritarian solution of the jihadi cause and accepted the doctrine uncritically. Both dominance and susceptibility to indoctrination were included as risk factors in our risk assessment framework, hypothesizing that they would apply to leaders and followers respectively.

2.4.3. Narcissism

It is perhaps to be expected that this feature of personality would be prominent in those who are attracted to ideological narratives that promise supremacy. This was a widely offered explanation for terrorist violence in the latter half of the twentieth century, with Lasch (1979) drawing attention to the centrality of narcissism in contemporary American life, and Pearlstein (1991) claiming that narcissism was key to understanding the mind of the political terrorist. It is essentially a psychoanalytic construct that proposes that an infant experiencing narcissistic injury unconsciously projects the bad parts of himself into others to preserve a good sense of self and if this is unresolved, remains over-sensitive as an adult to ego threats and prone to aggression to restore esteem. Baumeister (1997) also concludes that one of the basic root causes of 'evil' is unstable self-esteem or 'insecure grandiosity' that motivates violence when esteem is impugned. He says: *"I propose that violent, evil people tend to be marked by feelings of superiority but also a fear that they will lose their superior position."* p.152. Psychoanalytic theory also proposes that individual identity is shaped by large group history that includes stories of historical triumphs and traumas that become the source of collective pride and shame (Volkan, 1988), (see also Karmani in *2.4.1*). Such shared stories build cohesion and group identity, but can also tap into narcissistic wounds and cathect feeling of revenge that can be exploited by radicalizers. Kruglanski (2013) proposes that self-love is a motivational force that when awakened arouses a quest for personal significance, or the sense that one's life has meaning and accords with the values of one's society. Schwartz et al. (2009) include a belief in one's superiority in the list of identity factors they suggest predicts individual involvement in terrorism, and Eidelson and Eidelson (2003) list superiority as one of the five beliefs that propel groups towards conflict, alongside vulnerability, injustice, distrust and helplessness. Although the concept of narcissism has lost currency as a master explanation, it retains a role within a number of theoretical explanations for terrorist behavior.

3. Pathways and typologies

3.1. Psychopathology

Despite speculation over the years about both clinical and character pathology as causes of terrorism, no single explanation has been able to account for terrorist violence. It is clear that the phenomenon itself is as much the product of a political context as it is of individual decision making, and the specific features that render individuals vulnerable are themselves the product of both personality and life choices. Empirically,

very few group actor terrorists suffer from mental illness, but empirically they have had troubled lives and carry grievances that they are able to weaponize in terms of jihadi ideology. Whether this distress predated their conviction and imprisonment or is the result of it was clarified in a recent study by Corner and Gill (2019) who explored the presence of psychological distress in 91 terrorist autobiographies from a range of ideologies and countries. They concluded that distress doubled between pre-engagement and engagement, and decreased following disengagement, but not to pre-engagement levels, and that there were longstanding negative effects. Interestingly those reporting psychological distress were less likely to have fused their identity with the group, which would have allowed them to diffuse their individual responsibility for their actions among others (Byrne, 2003; Turner & Avison, 1992). Retaining a sense of individual responsibility and agency resulted in experiences of guilt and regret for what they had done, as well as anxiety associated with the risk of what they were being asked to do, and the fear of the retribution that would follow if they refused. Rumination on guilt and vulnerability seemed to contribute to the burnout that was the main cause of their disengagement. So, evidence suggests that although engaging in terrorist violence promises rewards, in reality the experience brings high levels of stress and distress that attenuate with disengagement, but can still leave a permanent mark. And this was among those who were without formal mental health problems. Further research suggests that a proportion of lone actor terrorists are driven at least in part, by mental illness.

3.2. Lone actors

Part of the explanation for the absence of formal mental illness among convicted terrorist offenders in the UK may well be that they were mostly group actors who, it now emerges have a considerably lower level of mental illness than lone actors. Corner and Gill (2014), in a matched controlled study identified ten times the level of diagnosed mental illness among lone actors (34%) compared to group actors (3.4%). A subsequent epidemiological study identified that levels of schizophrenia and psychosis, as well as personality disorder, autistic spectrum disorder and delusional disorder were all higher in lone actors than in the general population, and higher again than in group actors, for whom the prevalence of any disorder at all was negligible (Corner, Gill and Mason, 2015). Notwithstanding that this is due in part to a lack of assessment of group actor terrorists who largely present as cognitively and emotionally intact, it is consistent with previous findings for lone actors in both the USA and Europe (Gill, 2015), and for those motivated by far right ideology (Grunewald et al. 2013). Moreover, they may also be more deadly in their violence. In a small retrospective study by Hoffmann et al. (2011) of 14 cases of lone actor targeted violence in Germany, the nine attackers with lethal intent were more often psychotic, suicidal, and with a history of severe mental illness and unstable attachments compared to the five without lethal intent. Corner and Gill (2014) also found that lone and group actors with a violent history were 2.5 times more likely to have a mental illness, and those who killed were 3.8 times more likely, suggesting that group actors are not entirely without mental health problems, and that the combination of mental disorder and criminality is a particularly toxic mix. From this matched controlled study they also found that lone actors with a history of mental illness were more likely to be associated with single-issue ideologies than al-Qaeda inspired or extreme right-wing ideologies, Comorbidity of diagnosis (a measure of the complexity of the mental health issues) was associated with previous trauma such as parents' divorce, prejudice and chronic stress, and with later violence and stockpiling of weapons,

which taken together suggest a pathway to terrorist violence characterized by early trauma leading to complex mental health problems and grievance that, when framed by ideology find expression in violence.

However, although Gill's findings suggest that mental illness is part of the explanation for the offending of between a third and a half of lone actor perpetrators, this does not account for the violence of the others, or for group actors for whom diagnosed mental illness plays a less prominent role. Contrary to expectation, the social isolation of lone actors in the study above was not significantly correlated with diagnosed mental illness, which suggests that personality and idiosyncratic beliefs also play a significant role. The authors acknowledge that the motivation of lone actors is driven by a greater number and range of risk indicators than mental illness alone, and an alternative explanation is an intense emotional investment in an 'extreme overvalued belief' that is curated over time to protect against threat, boost esteem and meet authoritarian/ fundamentalist personality needs. This syndrome was first described by Carl Wernicke, a prominent German psychiatrist in the late nineteenth century to make sense of those patients with intensely held convictions that did not match the symptomatology of schizophrenia. Rahman et al. (2019) have recently revived this explanation for lone actor terrorist violence that is not driven by delusional beliefs. They state *"An extreme overvalued belief is one that is shared by others in a person's cultural, religious, or subcultural group ... is often relished, amplified and defended ... and should be differentiated from an obsession or a delusion. The belief grows more dominant over time, more refined, and more resistant to challenge. The individual has an intense emotional commitment to the belief and may carry out violent behavior in its service."*p.2.

The authors draw parallels with the concept of pathological fixation within the TRAP-18 that provides an alternative explanation for those who may be fixated and paranoid but without a diagnosable mental illness. It goes some way to explain the obsessionally curated ideologies of lone actors such as Anders Breivik and Franz Fuchs, the Austrian mail bomber, both of whom were totally consumed by their ideologies and lived their lives in service to them, deliberately isolating themselves in order to plot and prepare for their attacks, representing themselves as part of a larger army of like-minded people that did not actually exist, and once they had revealed themselves to 'their public' showing no remorse and continuing to draw media attention to their mission. This level of egocentricity and narcissism is breathtaking, but not the sole preserve of lone actors. Empirically, there are examples of terrorist leaders who have exhibited gross narcissism and ruthless, violent and controlling leadership, such as Ocalan, leader of the PKK, Prabhakaran leader of the LTTE, and Guzman, the leader of the 'Shining Path'. It is also evident in totalitarian heads of state such as Hitler, Stalin and Mao Tse Tung who created a cult of personality to ensure a permanent narcissistic supply.

However, it seems that perpetrators of terrorist violence continue to defy classification. No master explanations have emerged that discriminate reliably between lone actors and group actors or between terrorists with different ideologies. Personality features are relevant to some extent as well as childhood trauma, criminality, previous violence, low self-esteem and mental illness, and the role of protective factors and political context are arguably as relevant as the role of risk factors. Lone actors themselves become lone actors through different routes. Perhaps their lone status is not their most important characteristic. Gill (2015) identifies four distinct clusters generated by small space statistical analysis of empirical data: lone attackers who operate with command and control links but who undertake their attack alone; loners who have been

rejected by wider groups, probably because of their problematic personalities and who make a virtue of their consequent isolation by curating their own idiosyncratic ideology including imaginary armies and plotting their big reveal; those who drop out by choice and build virtual social networks that do not require face to face contact, consuming propaganda and creating a virtual identity as a warrior for a cause that will provide them with a final exit route in a blaze of glory; and a fourth group who fail to find their place, are probably no strangers to violence, are arrested as juveniles, join the military, indulge in substance misuse, convert to religion and make their exit as a martyr in a final act of personal redemption. The difficulty with behavioral data is that it does not provide a window into the emotional life of the individuals concerned, or of the sense that they make of their own behavior to provide the richness that is needed to give these caricatures depth. Much of the above description has been imputed by myself in an attempt to create a narrative from these four clusters of behavioral information. Somewhere among these groups there will be those with mental illness, those with a history of violence, those seeking sensation, those with authoritarian personalities and those displaying pathological levels of narcissism.

3.3. A possible typology

The typology in Figure 1 below attempts to capture the learning so far. Building on Hacker (1974) who proposed three types of terrorists: crusaders, criminals and crazies, and Schmid and de Graaf (1982) who identified political terrorism, (organized) crime-linked terrorism and pathological (crazy) terrorism, the three types below identify moral/political, criminal/opportunistic and clinical/pathological types, their differential relationship to criminality and mental health and the personality features that accompany them. These three types come closest to capturing the empirical presentation of those we encountered among UK terrorists 2008-2011, that appear still to apply to violent extremists in a more recent context, and to capture the learning identified here.

Type/pathway	Mental health	Criminality	Personality
Moral/political	Little diagnosed mental disorder Some psychological distress	Little criminality	Authoritarian/ fundamentalist
Criminal/opportunistic	Anti-social personality disorder Substance misuse Some psychological distress	Significant criminality Addiction Violence	Sensation seeking Impulsive Lack of critical reasoning Reckless
Clinical/pathological	Schizophrenia/psychosis Autistic spectrum disorder Delusional disorder Unspecified personality disorder	Little criminality	Pathological narcissism Obsessive Fixated

Figure 1. Proposed terrorist typology

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Ethical Guidelines for Working on P/CVE in Mental Health Care

Authored by **Monica Lloyd**, RAN Expert Pool Member

Ethical Guidelines for Working on P/CVE in Mental Health Care

This paper describes the task of mental health professionals working in the context of preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) and provides guidance on how this can be undertaken to be consistent with ethical practice. In the section on **Ethical Dilemmas**, the key concerns of psychiatrists, psychologists and psychiatric nurses in relation to this work are identified and addressed. These concern their dual responsibility towards their patients and the wider public, the challenges of breaching confidentiality and sharing information, the dangers of pathologising beliefs, and the importance of ensuring that their practice is evidence-based and does not take them beyond the limits of their competence as mental health practitioners. The different contexts in which mental health professionals are called upon for professional advice and the possible links between mental health and radicalisation are described, as are the consequences for the risk of harm. The paper concludes with a section titled **Guidelines** that presents the ethical guidelines that are consistent with the professional codes of practice of mental health professionals under the four headings of Respect, Responsibility, Competence and Integrity.

Introduction

Mental health professionals, including forensic practitioners, have become engaged in preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) through their role in assessing the risk and needs of individual extremist offenders, and in identifying the role that mental health issues may have in engagement with extremist ideologies and/or extremist violence. This may be either before or after an offence is committed; before in the context of P/CVE work, and after in the context of advising the courts or assessing the risk of extremist reoffending. More recently, this role has included assessing the mental health needs of returning foreign fighters and their families, to determine how mental health issues might bear on possible future terrorist intent, and/or to identify reintegration needs that might include addressing post-traumatic stress symptoms. In all these contexts, the same broad ethical principles apply, and those developed for psychologists working in forensic contexts have informed the content of this paper. The key difference of the pre-crime context is the legal status of the patient or client, when mental health assessment cannot be compelled by law. However, good ethical practice would expect that in both contexts voluntary cooperation would be sought in a spirit of openness and transparency, to deliver the best-informed assessment for both the client and the wider public. This work, in both criminal justice and P/CVE settings, is currently being carried out by forensic and/or mental health professionals working within criminological and medical models, and therefore the term patient/client is used to describe the individual assessed throughout this paper.

The lack of clear boundaries between a diagnosable mental disorder and other psychological difficulties that may be relevant to extremist behaviour is reflected in the terminology used here. As both can constitute a vulnerability to extremism, the wider term “mental health issues” is used to encompass both, and the term “mental disorder” is confined to a diagnosable disorder that is listed within a recognised diagnostic manual.

The key task of mental health professionals is not to predict risk, an aspiration that forensic risk assessment experts have largely abandoned in favour of its prevention. Rather, it is to identify symptoms that may, either directly or indirectly, account for an interest in extremist ideology or violence, such that treating or managing these symptoms, or providing more general support, might prevent a violent outcome. An example of a direct link between mental disorder and the risk of harm is a command hallucination to attack a specific target, where treating the psychosis will directly reduce the risk of harm. An example of an indirect link is the presence of psychological distress where treatment may reduce this distress and increase resilience against radicalisation. This paper stresses the importance of establishing whether there is such a functional link between a mental health issue and engagement in extremism, in order to clarify the likely consequence of treating the mental health issue. Where there is no clear functional link, treating the issue will not in itself mitigate engagement in extremist ideology or violence.

A further consideration for mental health professionals working with radicalisation is that there is an important distinction to be made between an interest in extremist ideology and an intention to engage in extremist violence. It is self-evident that there are many more people with extremist sympathies than there are terrorists. Engagement in ideology is not therefore a sufficient indicator of risk of harm. The terms “extremist interest” and “extremist violence” are therefore used to discriminate between these different positions. The term “radicalisation” is also avoided where a clearer distinction is needed between engagement with ideology and an intent to cause harm, and the term “terrorist” is avoided as it can be alarmist and potentially stigmatising. It is advisable to avoid this term in direct conversation with patients/clients about whom there are extremist

concerns. It can undermine the perceived legitimacy of the mental health practitioner in the eyes of patient/clients who reject the designation terrorist and prefer to see themselves as warriors in a noble cause.

Ethical dilemmas

What are the legal frameworks within which healthcare professionals work and how do they relate to ethics?

It is generally recognised that medical healthcare cannot be delivered effectively without a trusting relationship between doctor and patient that is supported by confidentiality. Across Europe, it is accepted that this is an important ethical and legal duty expected of all health professionals, but nowhere is it treated as absolute. Article 8 of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has determined that the right of privacy can be lawfully restricted where this complies with national law and the ECHR. Across Europe the legal frameworks will differ, but the principles of ethical practice should not. So also will the detail of professional codes of practice for different mental health professionals, but all will permit disclosure where this is required by law or ordered by a judge. All accept that there is a responsibility on the part of health professionals to maintain their competence, to practise effectively and responsibly, to honour the trust that is placed in them, and to prioritise the individual patient/client. But there are also references to a dual responsibility, to both the wider public and to individual patients. This is particularly relevant to forensic practitioners, whose clients include the criminal justice system and the general public, as well as their individual patient/client. In these circumstances guidance states that only the information that is relevant to the request is disclosed, and that wherever practicable the patient is informed of this disclosure, unless this would prejudice the prevention, the detection, or the prosecution of serious crime.

Article 8 II ECHR.

There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of **national security, public safety** or the economic well-being of the country, for the **prevention of disorder or crime**, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

In the UK, a statutory 'Prevent duty' requires local authorities, health facilities, schools, institutes of education, and probation and police officers to "have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This is controversial for pluralist societies because of the danger of pathologising beliefs where a wide spectrum of beliefs is the norm, and beliefs are not regarded per se as indicators of mental disorder. The Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCP) has expressed these concerns explicitly. They question whether there is a sufficient evidence base for a relationship between mental illness and terrorism, and whether they should report to the authorities those who show signs of engagement in extremist ideology but who do not express an intent to cause harm. However, their Code of Ethics also acknowledges that:

Where possible, sharing confidential information should take place in a transparent way, with the patient's full informed consent, and at all times in compliance with best practice and law. There are information governance systems and leads in all health and social care organisations to enable psychiatrists to carry out this duty ([1]).

([1]) RCP, Good Psychiatric Practice. Code of Ethics, p. 9.

How do we understand the concepts of Respect, Competence, Responsibility and Integrity?

These four concepts underpin ethical practice for practitioner psychologists across Europe and the United States of America (USA). The European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA) has produced a Meta-Code of Ethics ([2]) that provides specific recommendations for its interpretation in forensic contexts. The three generic principles of Respect, Responsibility and Integrity overlap to a large extent and are described in generalities, such that individual practitioners are advised to consult with colleagues, and potentially lawyers, to clarify their position if faced with a particularly novel or complex challenge. The principle of Competence is more pragmatic and concerns the importance of maintaining high standards and working within the limits of one's knowledge, skills, training and experience. Competence has been a source of specific concern to many health professionals who do not feel that they are sufficiently skilled to work with extremism, or that it is appropriate for them to do so. This is addressed below in the section entitled 'What are the ethical considerations regarding risk assessment for mental health professionals?'

How can practitioners deal with the issue of confidentiality?

In P/CVE work, the immediate priority for mental health professionals remains the well-being of the patient/client, but there is also a responsibility to members of the community who could become a target for violence. Maintaining complete confidentiality therefore may result not only in harm to the patient/client but also to the wider community. The interests of both are therefore served by a degree of information sharing with the relevant authorities, who in this scenario are likely to be P/CVE officials. It remains the case, however, that there is no mental health expertise that can predict whether an individual will commit an offence of extremist violence, especially when there is no history of previous criminal behaviour. In these circumstances, assessment should be transparent and evidenced, and any statements that bear on the risk of harm tentative and nuanced. In the P/CVE space, it is particularly important that the patient/client's legal status is acknowledged and respected, and that the individual is made aware that they are free to decline the contact with a mental health professional.

British Psychological Society, DFP, ethical guidelines, p. 6

Practitioner psychologists may be asked to conduct work with those who have not been arrested, convicted or sentenced for terrorism or terrorism-related offences but who are under suspicion. In these circumstances, practitioner psychologists should be sensitive to an individual's legal status and seek consent to interview them; and encourage their clients' engagement and be open about the nature of their role and the potential benefits of engagement both for the individual and for the safety of the general public. They should also acknowledge the limitations of predictions of harm based on pre-criminal behaviour.

For each country, where there are processes in place to regulate the sharing of health information, these should be complied with. Good practice suggests that the practitioner should act as an honest broker who shapes the expectations of both the patient/client and the referrer, and manages the process of assessment and information sharing transparently through to its conclusion. Psychiatric opinion is that any sharing of confidential information should take place openly with the patient's full and informed consent. Such sharing should also be limited to the minimum to safeguard the individual and protect the public, mindful of the individual's right to freedom of information and access to personal data which are endorsed by the EU, subject to the needs of national security ([3]). What is disclosed to the authorities should also therefore be shared in full with the patient/client unless this puts the mental health practitioner at risk or would reveal sensitive information that should not be disclosed. Ideally therefore, a written consent form should be signed

([2]) EFPA, The European psychologist in forensic work and as expert witness, p. 3.
([3]) Directive 95/46/EC, the Data Protection directive.

by the patient/client before the assessment detailing the possible need for information sharing and the possibility that what has been shared may not be disclosed to them.

What are the ethical considerations regarding risk assessment for mental health professionals?

The main ethical concerns of mental health professionals are those articulated by the RCP above in 2017 ([4]), and repeated within the RAN Mental Health network of professionals meeting on ethical practice. They concern the pathologising of beliefs, especially in young people for whom embracing idealistic beliefs can be a normal part of the process of becoming an adult, and the apparent lack, at this time, of validated risk assessment protocols for assessing the risk of extremist violence.

Advances have been made since these early beginnings. It is now a key function of correctional risk assessors to discriminate between those who show only signs of engagement in extremist ideology and those who also show signs of intent to carry out a terrorist attack ([5]). Recent research on white supremacist extremists suggests that violent talk in chat rooms can act as an end in itself, by providing a "sense of doing" and an opportunity to express frustration and anger that may substitute for violence ([6]). Moreover, a recently published trend analysis of the prevalence of right-wing terrorism and violence in western Europe suggests that grooming vulnerable individuals to carry out attacks has become a "dark and morbid subcultural practice" in chat rooms for the "lulz" (amusement) of those who have no intention of carrying out attacks themselves ([7]). Despite this separation between engagement and intent, in many countries behaviours that promote extremist ideologies that sanction violence are criminalised in the same way as the direct plotting of a terrorist attack, though the risk of harm is arguably lower. This is because the ideology itself promotes or justifies violence, and in OECD countries such as in Europe, where there are legitimate means for expressing political dissent, ideologies that promote the use of violence to further a political cause are viewed as neither necessary nor acceptable. The role of radicaliser and/or recruiter to extremist causes is therefore treated as a criminal offence.

A distinction is often made, however, between those who radicalise and those who are radicalised. It is widely accepted that young people and vulnerable adults should be protected from sophisticated radicalisers who would exploit their vulnerability and potentially sacrifice them to their cause. It is important, therefore, that where young people or vulnerable adults are referred to P/CVE because of concerns about extremism, this is not treated as criminal behaviour but as a safeguarding issue. Mental health professionals can help to discriminate between those who are vulnerable by virtue of a mental health issue and those with a criminal intent. Pre-crime, the interventions offered by P/CVE projects are therefore patient/client-centred in the form of activities and mentoring that are benign, discrete, protective, voluntary, and have the goal of increasing well-being and resilience.

There has been progress, too, in establishing the validity of risk assessment frameworks. None of the frameworks in use in Europe at the present time have been validated, though this is largely due to lack of access to sensitive information. In contrast, in the USA there is an established body of threat assessment research into lone actor targeted violence that includes assassinations, mass shootings and stalking, and a long tradition of the FBI working collaboratively with academics and practitioners. This has been extended to research into lone actor terrorists and contributed to the development of the Terrorist Radicalization Assessment Protocol (TRAP-18) for the assessment of lone-actor terrorist violence and the imminence of risk, which has achieved validation. ([8]) The application of this framework has generated further learning about the role of warning behaviours and the changes in thinking and emotion that signal the shift from victim to perpetrator and constitute the mind-set of intent to harm, findings that are all consistent with the evidence base for the VERA 2R and other frameworks.

However, the specific role of mental health professionals is not to carry out a full forensic assessment or to challenge religious beliefs, both of which are beyond their competence unless they are specifically trained to

([4]) RCP, Position Statement PS04/16S.
([5]) Lloyd & Dean, 'The development of structured guidelines for assessing risk in extremist offenders', p. 41.
([6]) Simi & Windisch, 'The Culture of Violent Talk: An Interpretive Approach'.
([7]) Ravndal et al., *RTV Trend Report*, p. 21.
([8]) Risk Management Authority, *TRAP-18™*, online.

do so. Their task is confined to identifying the presence of any mental health issue and its relationship to any apparent extremist interest or violent intention. In the absence of any direct or indirect functional link, the mental health problem remains a private matter with no direct consequences for public safety. In these circumstances, communicating this to the P/CVE authorities leaves the matter of risk management to the authorities, and the mental health issue with themselves to be addressed separately. However, consistent with a holistic patient-centred approach, it may also be helpful for the mental health practitioner to identify any protective factors in the patient/client's life that may have emerged from the assessment, or to suggest who or what may provide protection going forward. If a functional link is present, the mental health professional may advise on the treatability of the mental health issue, and the likely consequence of its successful treatment or management for the extremist interest to which it is linked. If treatment for a mental health issue with a functional link to the extremist interest is not available, or if the patient/client is not willing to cooperate with this, the consequences could well be an ongoing or potentially increasing risk of harm. Any such conclusions should be clearly evidenced and phrased tentatively to reflect the limitations of such predictions.

How can the boundaries between mental disorder and psychological difficulties be distinguished and maintained?

This is complex, as mental disorders that may be relevant to extremist behaviour include a wide spread of mental health problems. These range from severe and enduring mental illness and affective disorders to developmental disorders such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD), post-traumatic stress disorder, personality disorders and substance misuse. In addition, there is the possibility of co-morbidity and the features of criminality that are common in the backgrounds of many terrorists, which include sensation seeking, impulsivity, lack of critical reasoning, addiction and violence ([9]). The RAN (2019) Handbook for Practitioners provides specific guidance on which aspects of mental illness across the main diagnostic categories may be relevant to risk and in what way. All of these can be accompanied by a sense of psychological distress as they affect the individual's quality of life, and can thereby reduce resilience and constitute an indirect vulnerability to extremism. The reality, therefore, is that there is no clear delineation between mental disorders and psychological difficulties as vulnerabilities to extremism. A recent study of the autobiographies of 91 group-actor terrorists revealed that only 12 % disclosed any mental disorder over the course of their lifetime, but 23 % claimed they were suffering psychological distress at the point at which they became engaged with a terrorist group ([10]).

These distinctions are nuanced and central to the skills of mental health professionals, who are ideally placed to help operational staff make sense of the real-life complexities of mental health presentations that might not reach a threshold for diagnosis, but may still constitute a vulnerability to extremism.

How to deal with the false assumption that mental disorders are a precondition of terrorism

It will be evident by now that mental disorders are not a precondition of terrorism, but one of an array of factors that contribute to an individual's vulnerability and risk. Research indicates that there is an elevated level of diagnosed mental disorders among lone-actor terrorists, above that of the general population in the areas of ASD, schizophrenia and personality disorder ([11]), but this accounts for between only a third and a half of lone actors ([12]). Other than in these three areas, the prevalence of mental disorder in lone actors does not exceed that of the general population. Moreover, in group actors the level of mental disorders appears to be considerably lower than that of the general population, though this undoubtedly reflects a lack of assessment rather than superior mental health. Group actors are rarely assessed for mental disorders as they present as largely cognitively and emotionally intact. In terms of pathways, most are characterised by a criminal history, failed employment, failed relationships, domestic abuse and street violence. A smaller proportion without a criminal past are conditioned to overcome their inhibitions about committing a terrorist

([9]) Raine, *The Anatomy of Violence: The Biological Roots of Crime*.
([10]) Corner & Gill, 'Psychological Distress, Terrorist Involvement and Disengagement from Terrorism: A Sequence Analysis Approach'.
([11]) Corner et al., 'Mental Health Disorders and the Terrorist: A Research Note Probing Selection Effects and Disorder Prevalence'.
([12]) Gill, '*Lone-actor terrorists. A behavioural analysis*'.

offence by skilled radicalisers who exploit their idealism and allow them to believe they are contributing to a noble cause. Group actors with a diagnosable mental disorder are empirically very small in number ([13]).

The 2019 RAN Handbook for Practitioners, p. 38:
EXTREMISM, RADICALISATION & MENTAL HEALTH

When extremist behaviours and mental illness are both present in an individual, practitioners would benefit from using individualised case formulations that are evidence-informed to identify any specific aspects of mental illness that contribute to extremism vulnerability or risk. Mental illness may be present but not relevant to shaping vulnerability to extremism and may in some instances be protective against it or a secondary effect of extremist engagement. Wherever mental illness is present and relevant, it may play a direct or indirect role in shaping vulnerability, often by interacting with social, environmental, and biological factors that impact the individual.

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Among lone actors are many who develop a fixated and "over-valued" belief system that allows them to project blame for their failure to thrive onto a group of persecutors who are judged to have robbed them of their birth right to a good life. Psychiatric assessment for the courts can misinterpret an over-valued belief system as a delusional disorder, though it does not fully conform with the symptomatology of schizophrenia ([14]). A useful tool is now available to discriminate between these two presentations in the context of lone-actor terrorism ([15]).

A useful psychometric discriminates between delusional disorder and extreme over-valued beliefs in lone actors: MADDD-or-RAD-17 ([16]).

It is with lone actors, therefore, that the need for input from mental health professionals is most critical. The RAN Ex Post Paper 'Understanding the mental health disorders pathway leading to violent extremism' (2019) addresses this directly and stresses the importance of mental health professionals being available to offer triage and in-depth assessment specifically in the area of ASD. This paper also stresses the importance of being careful not to stigmatise people with mental health disorders. A patient/client-centred approach avoids the implication that certain categories of people are more at risk of extremist violence than others.

Guidelines

These are derived from guidelines drafted by the DFP within the British Psychological Society (BPS) in the UK, specifically to support ethical practice with extremist offenders. As such, they are focused on psychological practice that extends beyond the P/CVE space to include those convicted of terrorist offences, though they have been edited to conform more to the concerns of those working in P/CVE and to provide more direction. They are grouped under the four main principles of ethical practice that structure the codes of conduct that underpin the practice of psychology in Europe and the USA.

([13]) Lloyd & Kleinot, *Pathways into Terrorism: the Good the Bad and the Ugly.*
([14]) Rahman et al., 'Extreme Overvalued Belief and the Legacy of Carl Wernicke'.
([15]) Cunningham, 'Differentiating delusional disorder from the radicalization of extreme beliefs: A 17-factor model'.
([16]) Cunningham, 'Differentiating delusional disorder from the radicalization of extreme beliefs: A 17-factor model'.

Respect

- Understand what the terms extremism, violent extremism and terrorism mean in your country, as defined by policy and legislation, and use these terms carefully.
  - Ensure that you do not assume that engagement in ideology is equivalent to an intent to cause harm.
  - Retain a professional focus on the illegal and/or harmful behaviour associated with extremism, and its assessment and management, and avoid labels that may be experienced as stigmatising and alarmist.
- Be clear about the limits of privacy and confidentiality you can extend and make these clear to stakeholders and to clients before face-to-face work begins.
  - Complete a clear and unambiguous written and dated consent form that takes into account the patient/client's understanding of consent and the need for an interpreter if required. (This is not necessary if you are asked for an opinion that does not involve direct contact with the client.)
  - Work within the safeguarding, disclosure and information sharing procedures required by law in your country, or by virtue of your employment.
- Remain sensitive to the legal status of your patient/client. For P/CVE patients/clients:
  - acknowledge their right to refuse to cooperate with the assessment but explain that this may have the effect of raising concerns rather than affording them protection;
  - encourage their cooperation, and be open about the nature of your role and the potential benefits of engagement, both for them and for the safety of the public;
  - acknowledge the limitations of predictions of harm based on pre-criminal behaviour and explain how you will approach your task and what the basis of your recommendations will be;
  - explain what will happen to your report, what can be shared with the patient/client, and what the likely consequences will be.
- If working in a forensic capacity that includes intervention, acknowledge that every individual has a right to hold and express their own beliefs within the limits of the law, but remain willing to challenge beliefs and attitudes where these drive or justify their offending.
  - Where beliefs are challenged, have a very clear rationale for doing so, and do it in a sensitive and respectful way that invites them to consider, address or modify their thinking, rather than demanding change.
  - Remain mindful about how your practice may be viewed by the communities from which your patient/clients are drawn, and avoid stigmatising them or their communities.
  - Seek instead to build understanding and encourage inclusion.
- Given the societal pressures and fears surrounding a terrorist threat, monitor yourself for unconscious bias, prejudice or fear that may influence your professional practice.
  - Remain mindful of how such processes may affect the objectivity of your practice.
  - Ensure regular supervision to reflect on how events may be affecting your thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

Competence

- Become familiar with key literature on the psychology of terrorism and/or violent extremism and from the publications of non-governmental organisations and from empirical first-person accounts.
  - Be aware of your own cultural perspective and the unconscious biases embedded in the science and language of Western psychology.

  - Keep updated about government policy in the field of counterterrorism and extremism, and your legal and professional duties in relation to this.
  - Keep abreast of national and international resources and the legislative context of your work. Published policies, strategies and guidance are being regularly updated to reflect new learning.
- Be cautious about claiming expertise in this area.
  - When acting as an expert witness, clearly stipulate the limits of your expertise, and where your access to potentially important information has been restricted, state this clearly.
  - Carry out all your work in this area mindful that it could become the subject of significant public interest.
  - Before agreeing to any media engagements, weigh the intended benefits of your contribution — such as informing the wider debate — against any potential damage to your work with individuals or trusted bodies or to the reputation of your profession.

Responsibility

- Do no harm.
  - Do not comply if an employer or referrer requires you to behave in ways that are not consistent with your code of conduct or ethics.
  - Consult with your professional peers if you are in any doubt about what constitutes appropriate professional practice.
  - Avoid working with those whose causes you are strongly opposed to and where you cannot ensure that you will be objective and dispassionate.
- Remain circumspect.
  - Given the incomplete evidence base for this work, avoid making dogmatic, definitive and unsubstantiated statements of “truth”.
  - Remain mindful of how you communicate your knowledge, acknowledging its limitations and welcoming debate and peer review.
- Maintain vigilance.
  - Have regard for your own safety (and those of family members). This patient/client group may seek to disrupt your work through intimidation or threatened or actual acts of violence.
  - Ensure there are clear procedures in place to manage such incidents.
  - Remain alert to patient/clients seeking personal details.
  - Be cautious about sharing personal details on social media.
  - Be sensitive and vigilant about the safety and welfare of patient/clients, especially those seeking to disengage from a violent extremist group. This may put them at risk from those wishing to prevent this.
  - Monitor these risks or other consequences such as social exclusion or emotional distress.

Integrity

- This field poses complex challenges between responsibility (e.g. to reduce harm) and integrity (e.g. openness). You may be subject to heightened security vetting and be holding sensitive information that you cannot disclose to your clients. You must balance a complex set of responsibilities that has the potential to impact the security of your country, the safety of your patient/clients and the public, and the legitimate expectations of your employer.

  - Reflect on these challenges and identify an ethical balance that supports your practice and aligns with your personal values and professional code of conduct.
  - Show courage in embracing a new area of practice that can be the subject of intense or hostile scrutiny, but which has the capacity to make a vital contribution to national and global security.
- Be clear about where you stand in relation to extremist violence and be prepared to articulate this to both patient/clients and colleagues as necessary.
  - Be clear how you will respond to challenges before embarking on face-to-face work with those who may challenge your role.
  - Where you are paid by public money and can be seen as working on behalf of the state, do not deny this, but bring the conversation back to their safety and well-being as your patient/client and what you perceive to be in the best interests of all.
  - If you are part of a community that has been the direct target of a terrorist attack, consider asking to be excused from direct work with the perpetrators responsible.
  - Do not be afraid to express your values of ethical practice, and be willing to challenge other stakeholders whose actions may be undermining of their colleagues or equate to unethical practice.

Further reading

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About the author:

Monica Lloyd is a professional forensic psychologist who has worked in prisons where she specialised in the management of disruptive prisoners in high security conditions, and as a prison inspector where she carried out thematic reviews of prison service policy and practice. She has contributed to the literature on the mental health effects of solitary confinement, and to understanding the pathways into terrorism of those convicted of terrorist offenders. As an academic she continues to publish on the assessment of extremist violence and to provide consultancy to the UK government's Prevent strategy.

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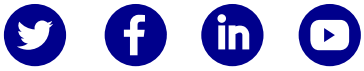

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Lone Actors as a Challenge for P/CVE

Authored by **Monica Lloyd,** RAN Expert Pool Member
and **Annelies Pauwels**, RAN External Expert

Radicalisation Awareness Network
RAN Practitioners

Lone Actors as a Challenge for P/CVE

Introduction

The increase in lone-actor terrorist attacks in Europe is concerning: lone actors' relative isolation compared to group actors, as well as the near-spontaneous character of their attacks have made it harder for law enforcement to detect and disrupt their plans. The latest Europol terrorist threat assessment highlights that in 2019, all but one of the seven jihadist attacks or failed attacks in the EU were committed by individuals acting alone, while most foiled plots by jihadists involved multiple suspects [1]. Much of our understanding of lone actors has been sourced from data sets spanning the period 1940 to 2015, so as to ensure large enough samples for analysis. Recent efforts focus on creating smaller and richer data sets from 2015 for more contemporary relevance. This paper provides an overview of past research and discusses more recent lone-actor profiling and their psychology as well as the challenge of identifying lone actors.

Lone actors: an overview

A growing phenomenon

Lone-actor terrorists who plan, prepare and carry out violent attacks without direction from a wider organisation pose an increasing threat in Europe [2]. Through magazines, social media and propaganda videos, jihadist ideologues have encouraged Western sympathisers to conduct terrorist plots alone, while right-wing ideologues have promoted the concept of 'leaderless resistance' [3]. Other lone-actor terrorists adhere to idiosyncratic, highly personal ideologies [4] or to single issues such as animal rights, anti-abortion and environmentalism, and more recently, to internet-based conspiracy theories.

No single profile

Research suggests that it is not possible to identify one single, comprehensive profile of 'the lone actor'. Compared to group actors, they tend to be older, with an average age of 30: violent Islamist extremist (VIE) lone actors are usually younger than violent right-wing extremist (VRWE) actors [5]. Lone actors may have attained relatively high levels of schooling, with many completing secondary or higher education, although often they are not employed at a grade commensurate with their level of education[6]. It is also evident that their needs are more complex – psychologically – than those of group actors [7].

Operational characteristics

Terrorist attacks by lone actors can vary significantly. Few conform to the stereotype of a stealthy and highly capable 'lone wolf' [8]. More often, lone-actor attacks fail or are less lethal in their impact than group-based attacks, due in part to their limited resources. A recent study of 120 European lone-actor attacks between 2000 and 2014 found that only one in four plots, and one in three attacks, were fatal [9].

Why do lone actors act alone?

Lack of social competence. A group may reject individuals because of their mental health and/or personality traits (e.g. volatility or dominance) and the security threat they pose. Conversely, some lone actors may reject a group because they fail to find their place within it, and decide instead to operate alone.

[1] Europol, EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) 2020, p. 14.
[2] See, for instance, Nesser, Single actor terrorism; Feldman, Comparative lone wolf terrorism; Khazaeli Jah & Khoshnood, Profiling lone-actor terrorists.
[3] Kaplan, Leaderless resistance.
[4] Pantucci et al., Lone-actor terrorism. Literature review, pp. 5-6.
[5] De Roy van Zuijdewijn & Bakker, Analysing personal characteristics of lone-actor terrorists, p. 43.
[6] Liem et al., European lone actor terrorists versus 'common' homicide offenders, p. 63.
[7] Gill, Horgan & Deckert, Bombing alone.
[8] Schuurman et al., End of the lone wolf.
[9] Palombi & Gomis, Lone-actor terrorism. Policy Paper 2: Attack methodology and logistics, p. 2.

Readiness to attack. Some lone actors decide to act autonomously if they judge that fellow group members are not sufficiently committed to carrying out an attack, particularly if their attack is also an act of martyrdom.

Ideological autonomy. While some lone actors share the same ideology as a group, others may construct idiosyncratic narratives or focus on a single issue not shared with a group.

Tactical choice. Lone actors may be inspired by terrorist propaganda, or may be directed by the group hierarchy to carry out an attack alone. Terrorist groups of various ideologies (including VIE, VRWE and single issue-focused groups) have encouraged individuals to attack alone, to evade detection by law enforcement and security services.

A sample study of lone-actor attacks in western Europe between 1999 and 2018 confirms that more recently, lone actors have used less sophisticated and more readily available weapons such as knives, vehicles and arson, rather than firearms. This has resulted in fewer fatalities, with the exception of vehicle attacks which have proved the deadliest[10]. Overall, lone actors are characterised by lower capability compared to group actors, limited attention to operational security, and online and offline leakage of their motivation and intent. Such leakage occurred in nearly half of all cases of the 120 lone attacks referred to above: in 44% of leakage instances, perpetrators disclosed some indication of their intent to act; in 21%, they shared at least some details of their planned attack [11].

The role of the internet in lone-actor terrorism?

1. **Radicalisation**. The internet provides access to online material and social interaction without (physical) links to a group. Online extremist content can inspire lone actors to commit acts of violence by providing direct encouragement and/or justification for this violence. But radicalisation of lone actors rarely takes place in front of a computer screen alone – more often, it involves the interplay of both offline and online influences [12].
2. **Tactical support**. Lone actors predominantly use the internet for the planning and preparation of their attacks, including for basic reconnaissance and access to tactical instructions. Often, though, these are low quality, resulting in a lower 'success' rate and lethality [13].
3. **Networking.** Social media plays an important role in facilitating communication between like-minded individuals; it can provide a source of inspiration and allow them to share extremist propaganda and create connections [14]. Some lone actors post details of their plots, from a few days to a few hours prior to launching or livestreaming their attacks [15]. They also make use of social media platforms to express extremist rhetoric, thereby exposing their intentions and/or plans [16].

Connections to like-minded individuals and groups

Lone-actor terrorists are less visible than group actors, as they are not part of known networks. Nevertheless, despite not integrating into extremist groups, lone actors are often connected to them in some shape or form.

[10] Pauwels, Prevention of gun-, knife-, bomb-, and arson-based killings by single terrorists.
[11] Ellis et al., Lone-actor terrorism. Final Report, p. 11.
[12] Pantucci et al., Lone-actor terrorism. Literature review, p. 14.
[13] Smith et al., Lone-actor terrorism. Policy Paper 3: Motivations, political engagement and online activity, p. 6; Clifford, Exploring pro-Islamic state instructional material on Telegram.
[14] Shehabat, Mitew & Alzoubi, Encrypted jihad.
[15] Smith et al., Lone-actor terrorism. Policy Paper 3: Motivations, political engagement and online activity, p. 6.
[16] Ellis & Pantucci, Lone-actor terrorism. 'Leakage' and interaction with authorities, p. 4.

"There is a continuum of connections to likeminded extremists and most lone actors display varying levels of communication and affiliation with others who share their worldview" [17].

Many lone actors are inspired by or networked to extremist organisations. A study found that ties to online and offline radical milieus are critical to lone actors' motivation to carry out attacks, and that 78% of lone actors received encouragement or justification from such milieus for their use of violence [18]. Others are enabled (or even directed) by extremist individuals or organisations through social media to plan or implement an attack, with virtual 'planners' guiding the attacker by means of encrypted communications. For example, Mehdi Nemmouche, who attacked the Jewish museum in Brussels in 2014, acted alone but was trained, funded and logistically supported by Daesh [19].

Social isolation

Studies indicate that between a quarter and half of lone actors are socially isolated, and of these, almost two thirds have mental health problems.[20] But as researchers have pointed out, it is possible to be connected to like-minded individuals online at the same time as appearing to be socially isolated [21]. The concept of psychological isolation is discussed further below.

What motivates lone-actor violence?

Although lone-actor violence often appears near-spontaneous, researchers characterise the targeted violence of lone actors as grievance-fuelled and planned over time. The aim is to exact revenge for perceived injustice and to achieve notoriety [22]. Ideologically motivated lone actors target strangers who represent or symbolise their persecutors, and they attack these victims in public spaces as an act of theatre. Those adhering to single issue ideologies, such as anti-abortionists or animal rights activists, may target known, specific individuals directly – but still publicly, for maximum impact. Lone actors with completely idiosyncratic grievances will still seek out a public arena in which to mount their attack and achieve the notoriety they seek [23].

Clusters based on behaviour: level of stability, organisational capability and criminal background

Despite the lack of a clear lone-actor terrorist profile, EU-focused research has identified clusters of characteristics that correspond broadly with patterns of attack planning [24]. One study contrasted a stable autonomous cluster of lone actors who shared their ideology (and had an intermittent connection with others) with an unstable volatile cluster having few links to either ideology or group. Both groups had a history of violence, but more members of the volatile group had a background in serious crime; a history of having tried and failed to join a terrorist group or start their own; and minimal attack planning and poor attention to operational security, often changing the target of their attack. VIEs were over-represented in this volatile cluster. By contrast, VRWEs were over-represented in the autonomous cluster, whose members were older, with long-term loyalty to their cause and a longer period of attack planning. These findings are consistent with a more recent study of 36 lone actors in 2015 and 2016 in western Europe, which noted that 41% held a previous criminal record and that criminals were at a higher risk of jihadi violence [25]. This finding of greater volatility and serious criminality in VIEs is picked up in the discussion of complex needs in lone-actor psychology, below.

[17] Mullins, Lone-actor vs. remote-controlled jihadi terrorism.
[18] Schuurman et al., Lone actor terrorist attack planning and preparation, p. 1195.
[19] Mullins, Lone-actor vs. remote-controlled jihadi terrorism.
[20] See, for example, Khazaeli Jah & Khoshnood, Profiling lone-actor terrorists, p. 40; De Roy van Zuijdewijn & Bakker, Analysing personal characteristics of lone-actor terrorists, pp. 43-44.
[21] Liem et al., European lone actor terrorists versus 'common' homicide offenders, pp. 62-63.
[22] Liem et al., European lone actor terrorists versus 'common' homicide offenders, p. 47.
[23] Richardson, What terrorists want, p. 95.
[24] Lindekilde, O'Connor & Schuurman, Radicalization patterns and modes of attack planning and preparation among lone-actor terrorists; Clemmow, Bouhana & Gill, Analyzing person-exposure patterns in lone-actor terrorism.
[25] Khazaeli Jah & Khoshnood, Profiling lone-actor terrorists, pp. 33-36.

Two main clusters of lone-actor terrorists

Stable autonomous cluster. Sharing of ideology. Intermittent connections with others. Less history of serious violence. Long-term loyalty to the cause. Long-term attack planning (VRWEs over-represented).

Unstable volatile cluster. Loose links to either ideology or group. Criminal background involving serious crime. Attempts and failures to join terrorist groups. Minimal attack planning and poor attention to operational security (VIEs over-represented).

Clusters based on social competence and ideological autonomy

In 2015, an American government task force classified lone actors into four subgroups based on two dimensions: **'ideological autonomy'** (the extent to which individuals share an ideology with others), and **'social competence'** (the social and psychological difficulties that contribute to their isolation). These subgroups are Loner, Lone follower, Lone vanguard and Lone soldier [26]. It is important to stress that these classifications are not clear-cut, not least because each individual is placed at a point along two dimensions which actually produces more of a scatter gram than four clusters. However, Table 1 below is an attempt to map the findings from European research onto the American lone-actor typology. The three data sets include European and US cases, expanded in one study (to provide more breadth of analysis) and reduced in the other to a subgroup of those representing the peripheral and embedded subtypes (to provide more depth). This is an attempt to capture what several decades of data tell us about the characteristics and attack patterns of lone actors across a wide span of our shared history. However, it should be noted that none of these data sets includes lone-actor attacks after 2015, when Daesh encouraged their followers to carry out terrorist attacks in the West instead of migrating to Syria [27]. This challenge was taken up by a number of Europeans with criminal backgrounds [28] in contrast to previous lone-attackers that research confirmed were largely drawn from the well-educated middle class [29]. These more recent cases are therefore absent from Table 1 below.

Table 1: A proposed typology of lone-actor terrorists

National Security Critical Issue Task Force, USA (2015) n=98, US only*	**Type 1 Loner** **Low social competence; ideological autonomy**	**Type 2 Lone follower** **Low social competence; shared ideology**	**Type 3 Lone vanguard** **High social competence; ideological autonomy**	**Type 4 Lone soldier** **High social competence; shared ideology**
Lindekilde et al. (2019), Europe n=33, USA, UK & Europe	Isolated, unstable, peripheral-withdrawn, weak social ties, rejected by group, unstable employment, long-term attack planning	Unstable, peripheral-volatile, violent, weak social ties, rejected by group, drug use, jihadi convert, ad hoc shorter planning, poor operational security, desire for martyrdom	Embedded-supported, ruptured relationship with group, stable, organised long-term attack planning, good operational security, far-right leanings	Embedded-autonomous, stable, organised attack planning, good operational security, occasional low-level criminality

[26] Connor et al., Report: Lone wolf terrorism.
[27] Wignell et al., A mixed methods empirical examination of changes in emphasis and style in the extremist magazines *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*.
[28] Basra, Neumann & Brunner, Criminal pasts, terrorist futures: European jihadists and the new crime-terror nexus.
[29] Sageman, Understanding terror networks, p. 89.

Clemmow et al. (2020) * n=125, USA, UK, Europe & Israel	Unstable mental health/personality, relationship failure, isolated and unconnected to a network, low level of leakage **Example: Franz Fuchs, Austrian mail bomber**	Unstable networks, low stress, high level of violence and criminality, potential leakage **Example: Anis Amri, Berlin Christmas market attack**	Solitary but stable, little interaction with others, low level of networking and leakage, and of personal stress **Example: Anders Breivik, Norwegian massacre**[30]	Stable, but subject to strain and stress, bolstered by networks, potential leakage **Example: Mohammed Bouyeri, Amsterdam murder of Theo van Gogh**

* US data set 1940–2013; Lindekilde et al. selected subset of Gill data set; Clemmow et al. expanded data set from the Gill data set (1978–2015).

The psychology of lone actors

Mental disorder, criminality and complex needs

A study in 2015 identified that about 35% of a sample of European lone actors suffered from a **mental disorder** compared to 27% in the general population [31]. Another study observed that the odds of a lone-actor terrorist having a mental disorder is 13.49 times higher than the odds of a group actor [32]. The disorders associated with lone actors (schizophrenia, delusional disorder, personality disorder and autism spectrum disorder [33]) all include disordered thinking that is deluded, rigid or fixated, which can be readily framed by a belief system or ideology. This same study identified a syndrome of **complex needs** that included many features of **criminality** alongside mental health issues. The profile suggests a pathway of victimisation that begins with childhood trauma and develops into antisocial behaviour, identity issues, thrill-seeking, deviant peers, substance abuse, relationship instability and mental health issues. This complex of needs represents a degree of comorbidity between mental disorder and criminality. It explains the attraction of extremist ideologies that provide a righteous identity, promise redemption and value criminal capability, and it offers early evidence of a jihadi lone-actor criminal pathway.

Suicidal intent

With the level of stress and distress associated with the lifestyle described above, it is possible to understand lone attacks as acts of **martyrdom**. A study of lone assassins in America found that 22% had suicide as their main goal [34], and a European study found elevated levels of suicide in lone VRWEs, compared to group VRWEs [35]. An ideology that promises revenge and redemption can appeal to individuals lacking a vision of the future for themselves. In these circumstances, perpetrators may wear fake suicide vests or engineer a siege and shoot-out to ensure their death at the hands of law enforcement or at their own hands in a final act of theatre. A recent study on ideological active shooter attacks in the United States found that arresting ideological shooters required lethal force more often than arresting perpetrators of common homicide [36].

Personality traits

Although mental disorder and criminality may explain the personal and social dysfunction of a significant proportion of lone actors, it does not account for all lone-actor offending. Personality aspects also play a role. A study reviewing the social and psychological evidence for five models of radicalisation concluded that

[30] Although Breivik's ideology is characterised as far right, it also has idiosyncratic features that set it apart from mainstream far right ideology. He was more extreme than most of the far right organisations he attempted to link with, and side-lined by most of them. In his isolation he curated a singular ideology that was anti-Muslim, anti-communist and pro-Nordic, that included personal fantasies of himself as the First Prince Regent of Norway, a member of the Knights Templar and with an army behind him that did not in fact exist, placing him towards the autonomous end of the ideological dimension.
[31] De Roy van Zuijdewijn & Bakker, Analysing personal characteristics of lone-actor terrorists, p. 44.
[32] Corner & Gill, A false dichotomy ?, p. 23.
[33] Corner, Gill & Mason, Mental health disorders and the terrorist.
[34] Fein & Vossekuil, Preventing assassination: Secret service exceptional case study project, p. 18
[35] Gruenewald et al., Distinguishing 'loner' attacks from other domestic extremist violence, p. 50
[36] Capellan, Lone wolf terrorist or deranged shooter? A study of ideological active shooter events in the United States, 1970–2014.

personality traits such as aggression, narcissism, sensation-seeking and social dominance helped to explain why only a fraction of those exposed to radicalising influences were indeed radicalised [37].

"The most plausible model for radicalization would be one that considers an interaction between personality traits and situational factors" [38].

Narcissism has been widely cited in early research as a principal explanation for terrorism [39]. This is understandable, given that extremist narratives promise supremacy, and that some prominent lone terrorist attackers are characterised by moral superiority and self-righteousness. Anders Breivik, for example, who was diagnosed with narcissistic personality disorder, referred to himself as 'the future Prince Regent of Norway'; in a similar vein, Timothy McVeigh promoted himself as the 'first hero of the second American Revolution'. A large meta-analysis of 57 terrorism studies identified **authoritarian/fundamentalist attitudes** as strongly predictive of radical behaviour, alongside **in-group superiority** (narcissism) [40]. **Pathological fixation** can be delusional, obsessive or associated with an extreme overvalued belief [41]. The first two are mental health diagnoses, but the third is more aligned with personality and associated with autonomous, organised and lethal lone actors such as Breivik and McVeigh.

Identifying lone actors

Threat assessment by professionals

Not everyone who engages with extremist views will act on them. Assessing the risk of lone-actor violence before it takes place involves identifying the presence or absence of threshold behaviours that mark the point at which an individual mobilises for attack. Figure 1, below, illustrates a theoretical **lone-actor pathway** [42]. The commonalities in push and pull factors that engage both group and lone actors are shown, as is the point at which their pathways diverge when the lone actor fails to find a place within a group (for a number of reasons, as identified in Table 1). Assessment of risk in the P/CVE space needs to determine how well protected the individual is by family, friends, work and future goals. Those who have found a niche and can envision a future for themselves are protected from the extremist narratives that allow them to blame failings in their lives on a persecuting out-group [43]. Research indicates that those at risk of becoming lone actors are more psychologically disturbed than group actors, hailing from broken homes with a history of trauma and violence that create complex disorders across both criminality and mental health [44].

Progression on a radicalisation pathway is not inevitable: individuals may be diverted at any point by P/CVE interventions that address risk factors and boost protective influences in their lives, but once isolated they place themselves beyond reach, and are more likely to decide that an attack is the only option remaining to them. A crucial aspect in identifying risk in lone actors is their **mindset of intent**: individuals who develop an intent to attack undergo a shift from a victim to a perpetrator mindset. This may be accompanied by a range of threshold behaviours [45] including stridency of belief, fixation on a final solution, identification as a warrior, pathway planning and last resort behaviours, and potentially, leakage, as captured in the TRAP-18 risk assessment tool [46] and evidenced in several recent studies [47]. The TRAP-18 is informed by the clinical experience of its originator, and is designed to capture the psychology and motivation of the lone actor. This

[37] King & Taylor, The radicalization of homegrown jihadists, p. 615.
[38] King & Taylor, The radicalization of homegrown jihadists, p. 615.
[39] Pearlstein, The mind of the political terrorist.
[40] Wolfowicz et al., A field-wide systematic review and meta-analysis of putative risk and protective factors for radicalization outcomes, p. 27.
[41] Meloy & Rahman, Cognitive-affective drivers of fixation in threat assessment, p. 2.
[42] The above theoretical lone actor pathway is informed by research findings and from professional practice with terrorist offenders.
[43] Bartlett & Miller, The edge of violence.
[44] Gill, Horgan & Deckert, Bombing alone.
[45] Meloy et al., The concept of identification in threat assessment.
[46] TRAP-18 (Terrorist Radicalization Assessment Protocol), Meloy™.
[47] Meloy et al., Some TRAP-18 indicators discriminate between terrorist attackers and others subjects of national security concern; Böckler et al., Islamist terrorists in Germany and their warning behaviors; Challacombe & Lucas, Postdicting violence in sovereign citizen actors; Guldiman & Meloy, Assessing the threat of lone-actor terrorism: the reliability and validity of the TRAP-18.

can also be achieved through 'psychological autopsies' of lone-actor perpetrators, the testimony of forensic professionals who work with lone-actor terrorists, and/or the autobiographies of lone actors themselves. All these sources have informed the psychological and criminological studies reviewed here to produce a fuller understanding of the individual lone actor's motivation and intent.

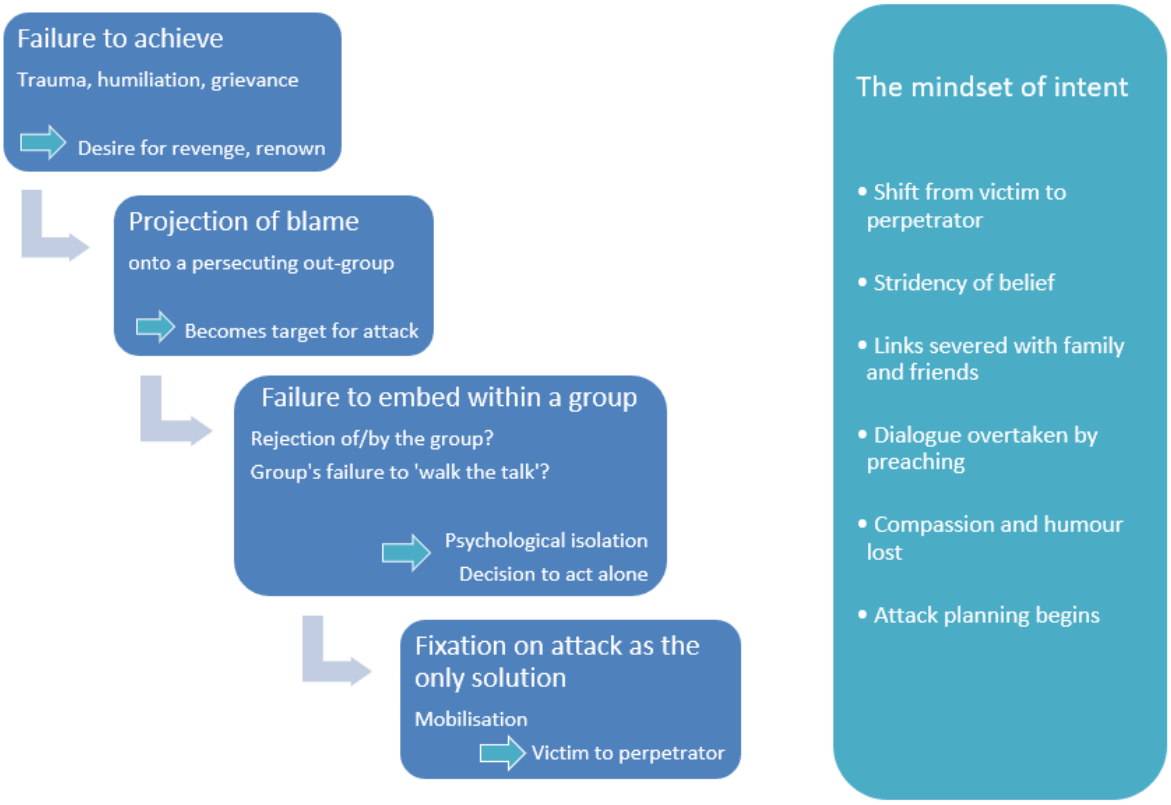

Figure 1: Lone actor pathway

Sharing information across practitioners

Information-sharing enables patterns of behaviour to be identified. Taken individually, mental disorder, criminality, online curiosity, legal gun possession or withdrawal from one's family are not necessarily indicative of risk, but in combination, they may be. The clusters of characteristics listed in Table 1 and the descriptions of the mindset of intent should prompt the sharing of (sensitive) information – within legal and ethical boundaries [48] – between P/CVE colleagues (mental health practitioners, law enforcement officers, intelligence analysts and digital companies, etc.). Despite there being some evidence for typologies, each case needs to be assessed individually by a multidisciplinary team.

"Threat management can only succeed if an interdisciplinary approach is guaranteed. Police, law enforcement, forensic and general mental health professionals and other experts must join forces" [49].

[48] Bakker & de Roy van Zuijdewijn, Lone-actor terrorism. Toolkit Paper 1: Practical guidance for mental health practitioners and social workers, p. 3.
[49] Guldimann & Meloy, Assessing the threat of lone-actor terrorism: the reliability and validity of the TRAP-18, p. 164.

Risk spotting by family, friends and community

Family, friends, colleagues, and members of the public can play a crucial role in identifying potential lone actors, especially in terms of detecting changes in thinking and behaviour. As noted earlier, many lone actors leak their extreme views or even their intent to take violent action to those around them. According to the 2015 study mentioned earlier [50], in 79% of lone-actor attacks, others were aware of the individual's commitment to an extremist ideology, in 82% they were aware of the individual's grievance, and in 64% they were aware of the individual's intent to mount a terrorist attack, because the offender had told them as much. Leakage by lone actors should therefore be taken seriously in both offline and/or online networks, and efforts made to build trust with the police so that the public feel able to pass this information on [51]. In 2019, a lone actor employed in the Paris police headquarters killed four colleagues after reports of his suspicious behaviour were not followed up. Reportedly, a 'culture of reticence' prevented the police from investigating radicalisation in their own ranks, driven by concerns about 'appearing racist or anti-Muslim' [52]. Related helplines and hotlines should be readily available and adequately resourced [53].

Threat assessment by professionals

Lone actors can be rehabilitated pre-crime or post-crime. If potential lone actors are successfully diverted from their intended pathways before committing an attack, their rehabilitation should include a formal assessment of risk and needs carried out by a specialised team of P/CVE practitioners. Depending on the lone actor's age and how advanced along the pathway they are, the viability of delivering prevention in the community needs to be balanced against the case for prosecution. A full assessment should identify the drivers, but more importantly, should also identify where protection is missing and might be put in place, informing the decision to either rehabilitate in the community or refer the case for prosecution.

In terms of rehabilitation following a long sentence, the challenge of reintegration is postponed, but may be greater for lone actors lacking social competence, preferring their own company, and/or holding a longstanding antagonism towards mainstream society. There is likely to be scepticism from others about their capacity to change, and potentially a reluctance on the part of the individual to do so. In these circumstances, a shift in mindset may neither be possible nor desired by the individual, who may choose to forgo rehabilitation or feign compliance while plotting a different future that includes suicide/martyrdom [54]. Post-crime, P/CVE practitioners need to be alert to this possibility. As each individual's radicalisation pathway is unique, so should their rehabilitation pathway be tailored to individual needs, both in terms of pre-crime and post-crime rehabilitation [55]. P/CVE practitioners and individuals should set realistic goals [56] that take account of age, abilities, mental health, culture, faith and ethnicity, and the plan should include buddying with a mentor and a group of helpers until a new identity crystallises [57].

Recommendations

- **Increase communication around mental health** in schools and in the workplace to build awareness and address issues before they risk creating a vulnerability to radicalisation.
- **Maintain vigilance** in school and work environments, youth and social welfare services, and in extremist content online for changes in behaviour or presentation that might be warning signs for radicalisation.

[50] Gill, Horgan & Deckert, Bombing alone, p. 429.
[51] Ellis & Pantucci, Lone-actor terrorism. Toolkit Paper 2: Practical guidance for security practitioners, p. 2.
[52] Sinai, Forecasting active threat attacks, p. 102.
[53] RAN, Helplines and hotlines in preventing and countering violent extremism, p. 2.
[54] See the case of Usman Khan, a convicted terrorist offender considered a 'success story' for an educational project, prior to his killing two of its members at London's Fishmongers' Hall in November 2019.
[55] RAN, Rehabilitation Manual, p. 15.
[56] RAN, The diversification of VRWE as challenges for rehabilitation, pp. 2-3.
[57] RAN, Rehabilitation Manual, p. 87.

- **Be aware that lone actors show more evidence of disturbance than group actors,** with complex needs that may include both criminality and mental health issues, and backgrounds characterised by broken homes, trauma and domestic violence.
- **Remain alert** to the possibility that violent criminals may be attracted to extremist martyrdom as a form of redemption when faced with faltering criminal careers and narrowing options.
- **Share information to inform multi-agency decision making.** Build as comprehensive a picture as possible from social services, mental health and forensic professionals, intelligence and law enforcement analysts and digital service providers to identify any psychological characteristics that bear on risk, and any threshold behaviours that may indicate mobilisation for violence.
- **Where concern is growing, undertake a full threat assessment** to identify both risk factors and where protective factors might be strengthened, to inform the decision to either rehabilitate in the community or refer the case for prosecution.
- **Do not assume that if a subject of interest drops off the radar they are no longer active.** If they have previously shown a strong level of identification with ideology and a potential willingness to use violence, they are unlikely to have spontaneously changed their mind. They may be plotting a lone attack.
- **Promote reliable follow-up of reported concerns**, as these are rarely made lightly.
- **Raise public awareness** of the appeal of violent extremism to those harbouring grievances who are seeking a target for their anger. This includes education on how to spot at-risk behaviour (both online and offline) and where to find professional advice and support.
- **Build trust in the police.** A trusted police presence in local communities can help police officers detect worrying behaviour and increase the willingness of community members to share their concerns.
- **Set up fully resourced helplines and hotlines** for friends, family members, professionals or members of the public to share their concerns and receive guidance and support.
- **Take reported leakage seriously** in both offline and online networks.
- **Provide tailor-made rehabilitation plans** with realistic goals that take into account age, abilities, education, mental health, culture, faith and ethnicity, and include buddying with a mentor and a group of helpers until a new identity is established.

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About the authors:

Monica Lloyd is a professional forensic psychologist who has worked in prisons where she specialised in the management of disruptive prisoners in high security conditions, and as a prison inspector where she carried out thematic reviews of prison service policy and practice. She has contributed to the literature on the mental health effects of solitary confinement, and to understanding the pathways into terrorism of those convicted of terrorist offenders. As an academic she continues to publish on the assessment of extremist violence and to provide consultancy to the UK governmennt's Prevent strategy.

Annelies Pauwels is a Research Fellow at the Flemish Peace Institute in Brussels, where she focuses on violent extremism and terrorism. Prior to that, she conducted research on conflict and crime prevention for several international organisations, including the EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI). Her previous research projects have focused, among others, on jihadist and right-wing terrorism, radicalisation in prison settings, and the EU's terrorism prevention initiatives and cooperation.

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