

Investigating Terrorism from the Extreme Right: A Review of Past and Present Research

by Jacob Aasland Ravndal and Tore Bjørgo

Abstract

This introductory article examines how research on terrorism and violence from the extreme right has evolved over the past two decades by comparing the contents of the present Special Issue with those of a previous Special Issue from 1995. This comparative review is divided into three sections: (1) concepts and definitions; (2) data; and (3) theory. Conceptually, the article finds considerable divergence between scholars in the field, and therefore proposes a definition of extreme-right terrorism and extreme-right violence meant to apply across all contexts and actors. Empirically, the article recognizes the inherent challenge of gathering reliable and comparable data on extreme-right violence. At the same time, it finds that considerable advances have been made with regards to generating systematic events data suitable for analysing variation across time and place. The article also outlines some of the most important findings emerging from these new data. Theoretically, the article finds some overlap between the two Special Issues concerning proposed causes of extreme-right terrorism and violence. At the same time, many theories do not speak to each other, or even investigate the same types of outcomes. The article therefore concludes by proposing a conceptual distinction between three distinct types of violent outcomes: (1) violent radicalization, (2) violent events, and (3) aggregate levels of violence. By being more explicit about the types of outcomes one seeks to explain, scholars in this field will hopefully move towards a more unified future research agenda.

Keywords: Extreme right; terrorism; violence; review; state of knowledge; special issue

Introduction

Recent events and media reports have generated a widespread public notion of an emergent terrorist threat from the extreme right in Europe [1] and in the United States.[2] However, the nature of this threat and the conditions shaping it remain poorly documented and understood. For example, we often do not know whether to classify attacks from the extreme right as terrorism, or as less premeditated forms of violence such as racist violence or hate crime. Furthermore, while several theories on terrorism and violence from the extreme right exist, they often do not speak to each other, investigate the same types of outcomes, or even share the same research objectives.

These two observations – a widespread public notion of a growing threat, alongside limited knowledge about the nature and causes of this threat – motivated us to prepare this Special Issue on Terrorism from the Extreme Right. We invited leading experts in the field to submit original analyses of key developments, with a special emphasis on contemporary actors, their *modus operandi*, and the conditions shaping them.

Besides synthesizing the contents of this Special Issue, this introductory article also reviews a previous Special Issue on terrorism from the extreme right, published in 1995 (see Appendix I).[3] We have decided to do so for two reasons. First, we wish to diagnose the state of knowledge in this field by looking at its evolution over the past twenty-three years. What kinds of concepts, data, and theories have been and are being used? In what ways has the field progressed? And what appear currently to be the most promising theoretical avenues?

Second, based on our review of these two Special Issues, we offer some suggestions on how to move forward in order to stimulate a more unified research agenda. Most importantly, we propose a conceptual distinction between three different types of violent outcomes: (1) violent radicalization, (2) violent events, and (3) aggregate levels of violence. Because these outcome types refer to different aspects of violence, they also require somewhat different explanations. However, in existing research on the causes of (extreme-right) terrorism and violence, they are often conflated, and theories about one type may be falsely rejected on the basis that they do

not explain another type. Thus, to avoid confusion and enable more cumulative research, future investigations may benefit from being more explicit about the types of outcome one seeks to explain.

Our review is divided into three sections: (1) concepts and definitions; (2) data; and (3) theory. For each section, we review the contents in the 1995 issue and then compare them with the contents in the 2018 issue. Appendix I gives an overview of the articles in both special issues.

Concepts and Definitions

To move this research field forward, scholars need to agree upon what their object of study is, and how to distinguish it from related phenomena such as hate crime.[4] However, there is limited academic debate on how to conceptualize extreme right terrorism and violence. Some scholars avoid explicit definitions altogether, while others operate with conceptualizations tailored to specific groups, movements, or countries.

These varying practices are reflected by the contributions to the 1995 Special Issue. To create a shared point of departure, the contributors were all asked to relate their analyses to the late Ehud Sprinzak's theory of split delegitimization, which served as a theoretical introduction to that volume.[5] Although Sprinzak never provided an explicit definition of extreme-right terrorism, he did provide two characteristics of extreme-right terrorists: (1) they operate with a double set of enemies: a non-governmental or external threat (e.g. immigrants and communists), and the internal enemy (e.g. the "traitors" in government and the political establishment); and (2) they are "particularistic" in their ideological orientation, as opposed to being oriented by universal values. Although both characteristics may still apply, they are arguably insufficient for including all extreme-right terrorists while excluding all other types.

None of the other contributions to the 1995 Special Issue offer any overarching conceptualizations of extreme-right terrorism or violence either. Some rather conceptualize different subtypes of extreme-right milieu, perpetrators, or violence,[6] while others are more case-oriented and look at specific groups, movements, or countries.[7] In terms of terminology, the concepts used are quite diverse, including "right-wing terrorism", "racist violence", "neo-fascist violence", "radical-right violence" and "far-right violence". Terms such as "extreme", "radical", and "far" right are used interchangeably throughout the volume.

When trying to arrive at a *shared* understanding of our object of inquiry – extreme-right terrorism and violence – it is perhaps the extreme/radical/far right categories that are most challenging to conceptualize in a way that applies across all contexts and actors. Back in 1995, an academic consensus did not exist about these related, yet different, concepts. In fact, it was precisely that same year that Cas Mudde published his influential article on right-wing extremism [8] – a study that lay the groundwork for what has later become an authoritative conceptualization of the far/radical/extreme right – at least in Europe.[9] This conceptualization is rooted in Norberto Bobbio's classic distinction between, on the one hand, leftists who support policies designed to reduce social inequality, and, on the other hand, rightists who regard *social inequality* – and corresponding social hierarchies – as inevitable, natural, or even desirable.[10] Furthermore, unlike their moderate counterparts, members of the *far right* share an *authoritarian* inclination,[11] that is, an inherent need for sameness, oneness, and group authority, resulting in intolerance towards diversity and individual autonomy,[12] and some form of *nativism* or ethnic nationalism.[13] Mudde also distinguishes between, on the one hand, *radical* right actors who operate within democratic boundaries, and on the other hand, *extreme* right actors who openly reject democracy, and favour violent or other non-conventional means to generate political change. The *far right* may thus be used as a collective term comprising both (democratic) radicals and (anti-democratic) extremists, who all share three key features: acceptance of social inequality, authoritarianism, and nativism.

Turning to the 2018 Special Issue, five out of ten contributors provide or reference other scholars who provide explicit definitions of their overarching concepts. Three of those five definitions draw either directly or indirectly (via other scholars) on Mudde's conceptualization. In addition, Sweeney & Perliger's definition of the American far right is quite compatible to Mudde's by combining *internal homogenization*, which expresses the desire

that all people who reside in the homeland will share similar primordial characteristics, with *nativism*, here understood as opposition to foreign influence.[14]

Both conceptualizations (Mudde and Sweeney & Perliger) comprise elements that may be seen as *necessary* and, in combination, *sufficient* for the concept to be defined, which constitutes one of two prototypical concept structures proposed by Goertz.[15] The second concept structure is called “family resemblance” and requires sufficiency but not necessity. In other words, features that are important for certain members of “the family” will be included in the definition although they may not be shared by all members. This structure can be found in Freilich et al.’s definition of the American extreme right, which includes a number of features that are characteristic for some – but not necessarily all – actors associated with the American extreme right.[16]

Family resemblance definitions are typically longer and more detailed, which may be a strength if thick and exhaustive descriptions are required. At the same time, their level of detail may stand in the way of analytical precision and ability to travel across time and place. In our search for a *unifying definition*, we therefore suggest using Mudde’s framework as a shared point of departure for conceptualizing the far right, the radical right, and extreme right. In our opinion, this is the most cognizant conceptual framework developed thus far, and it has already proven useful in terms of generating theoretical debates and new avenues of research covering a wide range of topics involving (democratic and non-democratic) far-right actors in Europe, in the United States, and elsewhere.

This suggestion rests on the idea that we should keep definitions of the far/radical/extreme right separate from definitions of terrorism and violence. We see no good reason why a concept such as terrorism should be altered depending on its ideological prefix. In other words, we should avoid particularistic definitions of extreme-right terrorism, and instead be clear about what we mean by “extreme right” and what we mean by “terrorism”. After all, not all right-wing extremists or violent perpetrators are terrorists. One authoritative definition of terrorism argues that terrorists *deliberately* use or threaten violence to trigger “far-reaching psychological repercussions beyond the immediate victim or target.”[17] As several of the contributions to this Special Issue show, most violent attacks motivated by extreme-right ideas are spontaneous and therefore do not qualify as terrorism because they lack such deliberation.

However, Sweeney & Perliger argue in this Special Issue that even spontaneous attacks could qualify as terrorism if they promote political objectives by utilizing violence to generate fear and anxiety within some target group. This might lead to an over-stretching of the concept of terrorism. At the same time, we recognize a general unwillingness by authorities and politicians, especially in the United States and Germany, to use the term ‘terrorism’ when it comes to extreme-right attacks that were indeed premediated. One reason may be that in the case of extreme-right terrorism, a deliberate use of violence to trigger repercussions beyond the immediate target can be hard to document because extreme-right perpetrators rarely issue demands or claim responsibility for the attacks they carry out. Most attacks are never claimed or explained by the perpetrators, but they generally involve demonstrating hostility towards, and installing fear in, some target group symbolized by the victim. Thus, although specific demands may be lacking, such attacks do contain a clear political message addressed to the target group, telling it that their presence is unwanted. As such, the target selection may be seen as a political message in and of itself, and the wider target group may be seen as the primary audience to be influenced by the attack.[18]

One could therefore consider an attack as *extreme-right terrorism* if the target selection is (1) premised on extreme right ideas, (2) the attack is premeditated, and (3) the violence is intended to trigger psychological repercussions beyond the immediate victim or target. On the other hand, *extreme-right violence* does not require premeditation, and includes all violent attacks whose target selection is premised on extreme right ideas.

Data

The study of extreme-right terrorism and violence has traditionally been dominated by case studies drawing on rich qualitative data from original propaganda materials (magazines, fanzines, books etc.), interviews with current and former activists, newspaper article collections, and ethnographic field work. Such qualitative case studies have provided insights into the worldviews and inner dynamics of extreme-right groups in different countries, regions, and contexts. At the same time, quantitative data suitable for making comparisons across cases, over time, or between places, have been rare. To illustrate how different data sources have been used (and not used) in the two Special Issues, we have divided our data review into a qualitative and a quantitative section.

Qualitative Data

The clandestine nature of extreme-right terrorism and violence makes investigations into this topic inherently challenging. Unlike many other social science fields, valid and reliable data is difficult to retrieve, and access to activists and informants is limited. As a result, generating knowledge about this topic requires time and commitment. Furthermore, one is usually bound to rely on different types of sources that must be pieced together to gain both overview and insight. It is therefore no coincidence that many of the scholars involved in this field have spent large parts of their academic careers investigating actors on the extreme right. This is particularly true for many of the scholars involved in the 1995 Special Issue, such as, Ehud Sprinzak, Jeffrey Kaplan, Peter Merkl, Helene Lööw, Helmut Willems, Tore Bjørgo, and Leonard Weinberg. These scholars' life-long commitments are in many ways also reflected in the types of data used in their studies. Besides the general knowledge developed over years of investigations, they typically rely on a multitude of mostly qualitative sources, such as interviews, documents and propaganda produced by various extreme-right actors, as well as some official records, such as court documents and police reports.

Such qualitative data are particularly useful for gaining insights into how these groups and activists think and organize, and for uncovering influential narratives or ideological currents. Systematization and interpretation of such qualitative data may also serve to develop typologies of dominant actors, discourses, and types of violence, as exemplified in the 1995 Special Issue by the contributions from Sprinzak (types of terrorism), Kaplan (types of violent milieu), Merkl (types of violence), Willems (types of violent perpetrators), and Bjørgo (types of violent discourses). Other contributions from the 1995 Special Issue, most notably those from Lööw, Weinberg, Welsh, and Szymkowiak & Steinhoff, combine rich historical records with court documents, interviews, and police reports to conduct in-depth case studies of entire movements as well as local groups.

Large and diverse collections of mostly qualitative data remain an essential source of information for contemporary research on extreme-right terrorism and violence. One important development in this regard has been the evolution of the Internet and social media. This development has facilitated greater access to information about contemporary groups, networks, and discourses, including information that may have been previously inaccessible. In the 2018 Special Issue, the contributions from Macklin and Mareš illustrate the impressive amount of information that can be retrieved about semi-clandestine groups and networks by using the Internet and social media as primary sources.[19] At the same time, retrieving data from the Internet and social media raises a number of ethical concerns that scholars must be aware of when mapping and analysing contemporary actors.[20]

Some information, however, can only be obtained through interviews, and relies on access to the activists themselves. Three contributions from the 2018 Special Issue benefit from such interviews. Most notably, the study by Windisch et al. relies on life-history interviews with 89 white supremacists in the United States.[21] Preparing and carrying out such interviews is not a straightforward exercise. It requires long-term planning as well as building of rapport, which may in some cases take weeks and months. However, provided that the informants are willing to share otherwise inaccessible information, carrying out such interviews may be well worth the effort.

Another large body of interview materials has been retrieved by Hemmingby and Bjørge in their study of Anders Behring Breivik's target selection.[22] This study draws on access to 220 hours of video recordings and 1,200 pages of condensed transcripts from the police investigative interviews with Breivik. These interview data illustrate that Breivik's planning process was far from flawless, and that he also made several tactical mistakes and miscalculations while carrying out his attacks. More importantly, they illustrate how unpredictable situational factors had a decisive impact on the selected targets, and the lethality of the attacks.

Finally, Castelli Gattinara et al. combine different data sources in their study of another lone actor – Gianluca Casseri – including personal interviews with members of CasaPound Italia who had been interacting with Casseri before his attacks.[23] These interviews offer unique insights into Casseri's unfulfilled relationship with CasaPound, which according to Castelli Gattinara et al. is the key to understanding his decision to engage in violent action.

To conclude this section, we might also add that several of the more quantitatively oriented contributions to the 2018 Special Issue incorporate rich qualitative data into their analyses, often using the Internet as a primary source of information. Furthermore, behind any quantitative terrorism dataset lies a vast amount of qualitative data that has been systematically analysed and coded. In other words, no matter what one's preferred method of analysis is, qualitative data remain the bread-and-butter of the study of extreme-right terrorism and violence.

Quantitative Data

Having access to systematic data suitable for analysing variation between cases, across time, and between places, is essential for accurately describing the evolution of any social phenomenon as well as for testing theories. Again, considering the clandestine nature of extreme-right terrorism and violence, obtaining such data can be a challenge to researchers in this field. For example, apart from Willems' extensive perpetrator dataset,[24] the 1995 Special Issue contained little systematic data on violent events compiled by the researchers themselves. As a result, contributors who did refer to variation of violence relied on available government and police statistics, which in most countries were (and remain) a rather limited and unreliable source, as has been argued elsewhere.[25]

Turning to the 2018 Special Issue, it is encouraging to see that many contributors use unique datasets compiled by the researchers themselves, or by other researchers in the field. The United States is particularly well covered. First, using a grounded theory approach, Windisch et al. have developed a unique perpetrator dataset based on their life history interviews with former white supremacists.[26] Notably, this dataset enables comparisons between violent and non-violent activists – an important premise for investigating why and how some activists engage in violent action. Second, Freilich et al. rely on the United States Extremist Crime Database (ECDB) – a comprehensive events dataset covering all types of domestic terrorism in the United States post-1990, including the extreme right.[27] Finally, Sweeney & Perliger rely on the Combating Terrorism Center's (CTC) dataset of right-wing violence the United States,[28] which includes 4,420 violent events between 1990 and 2012, causing 670 fatalities and injuring 3,053 people.

Turning to Europe, Castelli Gattinara et al. draw on the Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence (RTV) dataset, which covers the most severe attacks and plots in Western Europe between 1990 and 2015, including 190 deadly events causing 303 fatalities.[29] Koehler uses data from his own Database on Terrorism in Germany (DTG), which includes data on 92 right-wing terrorist actors from 1963 onwards.[30] Bouhana et al. rely on an expanded version of Gill and colleagues' dataset of lone actors in Europe and the United States,[31] and a unique dataset on the pre-attack behaviour of extreme-right lone actors. Finally, in his study of right-wing terrorism and violence in Russia, Enstad has compiled an entirely new dataset (RTV-RUSSIA), modelled on the RTV dataset mentioned above.[32]

A number of interesting insights emerge from all these data. First and foremost, they show that since 1990, the number of deadly attacks motivated by extreme-right ideas exceeds that of any other ideology in Western

democracies, including Islamist terrorism. This is most evident in the United States from the ECDB dataset, which includes perpetrator types of different ideological backgrounds.[33] Furthermore, if we compare data from the RTV dataset on deadly attacks by the extreme right in Western Europe [34] with similar data on Islamist terrorism,[35] we see that extreme-right attacks outnumber Islamist attacks by far (when counting the number of attacks rather than the number of fatalities). In Russia, however, Islamist attacks (mainly related to the North Caucasus insurgency) appear to be more frequent, notwithstanding the fact that Russia has experienced more deadly attacks from the extreme right than any other country, as Enstad shows in his study. [36] Furthermore, because the intensity (number of fatalities per attack) of Islamist terrorism is considerably higher both in Russia and elsewhere, more people have been killed by Islamist terrorists in recent years than by violent perpetrators from the extreme right. Therefore, these figures suggest that from an operational counter-terrorism point of view, Islamist terrorism and terrorism from the extreme right represent two rather different types of threats: Islamist terrorism is relatively rare but often involves a high number of casualties, while extreme-right terrorism and violence is more frequent, but usually results in fewer casualties.

Another key finding addressed by several of the contributors to this Special Issue is the seemingly unorganized and spontaneous nature of extreme-right violence. This characteristic was also addressed by several of the contributors to the 1995 Special Issue (although based on less systematic evidence).[37] These general findings have important implications for the types of theories that may help explain why extreme-right violence occurs. Notably, they suggest that most extreme-right perpetrators may be more driven by emotional, relational, and situational dynamics than by deep ideological convictions or strategic calculation.

At the same time, we must not forget that more organized forms of violence from the extreme right can be found in some countries, perhaps most notably in Italy, as demonstrated both by Castelli Gattinara et al. in this Special Issue, as well as by Weinberg in the 1995 Special Issue.[38] Enstad also finds a higher level of organized militancy and a stronger ideological commitment among activists in Russia than in Western Europe. [39] Furthermore, Koehler shows that the seemingly unorganized nature of recent extreme-right violence in Germany was accompanied by several attacks and plots that, while fewer in numbers, were far better organized. [40] Similar organized threats were also demonstrated by the three case studies included in the 2018 Special Issue, covering National Action in the UK, the so-called Death Squad and the Hungarian Arrows National Liberation Army in Hungary, and the singular case of Anders Behring Breivik in Norway.[41] In other words, since we are not dealing with a uniform threat here, we need to tailor our analyses and responses accordingly.

Some of the datasets presented in the 2018 Special Issue can also be used to compare the extent of extreme-right terrorism and violence between different countries. Notably, they indicate that after 1990, the number of deadly attacks per million inhabitants has been several times higher in Russia than in any other country. In the West, the countries with the highest scores are Sweden and Germany, followed by the United States, the UK, Spain, and Greece.[42]

Two of the datasets allow comparisons between extreme-right perpetrators and other perpetrator types. For example, the ECDB figures show that in the United States, only twenty-four percent of extreme-right homicide offenders have some college education, compared to forty-five percent of jihadists and seventy-seven percent of left-wing activists. Furthermore, more than half of extreme-right homicide offenders had prior arrest records, and were significantly more likely to have criminal histories.[43] Compared to other perpetrators of political violence, those from the extreme right thus appear to experience a higher degree of societal marginalization.

Finally, in their comparative analysis of lone actors in Europe and the United States, Bouhana et al. find few significant differences in terms of the vast majority of pre-attack indicators, including those related to motivation, capability, leakage behaviour, and warning signs.[44] However, they also discovered significant differences, for example that lone actors from the extreme right were on average more thrill-seeking, impulsive, and angry than other lone actors. They were also more likely to stockpile weapons, have formal ties to extremist groups, and to have been victims of bullying during childhood.

Theory

Existing research on terrorism and violence from the extreme right may be characterised as diverse, disorganized, and discontinuous. It is *diverse* because it consists of contributions from many different disciplines that often do not speak to each other nor share the same research objectives. This can be illustrated by the disciplinary backgrounds of the contributors to the 1995 Special Issue, which include history (Löow), history of religion (Kaplan), social anthropology (Bjørge), sociology (Steinhoff; Willems), journalism (Szymkowiak), and political science (Merkel; Sprinzak; Weinberg; Welsh). The field is also rather *disorganized* and difficult to navigate, partly because of its interdisciplinary nature, but also because few efforts have been made to review it. Furthermore, those few reviews that exist are becoming outdated, and also mirror to a certain extent the diverse and disorganised nature of the field.[45] Finally, and perhaps due to its diverse and disorganised nature, the field has also become rather *discontinuous*. For example, none of the contributors to the 2018 Special Issue use any of the contributions from the 1995 Special Issue to guide their research. However, as the following theory review shows, similar theoretical arguments can be identified in both Special Issues, suggesting that a more unified approach to investigating extreme-right terrorism and violence might be within reach.

The 1995 Special Issue

The 1995 Special Issue was created on the basis of a workshop where scholars in the field were brought together to compare insights on extreme right terrorist groups and militant movements from different parts of the world. They were asked to focus their papers on how, under which circumstances, and for what motives, extremists turn from radical right politics – or from just harbouring racist or right-wing attitudes – to violent action.[46] Today, this process is generally referred to as violent radicalization.[47] In addition, the contributors were asked to apply or comment on Sprinzak's proposed theory of split delegitimization.

Sprinzak's theory is concerned with how extremist groups delegitimize their targets before an attack occurs – a sort of necessary condition for engaging in violence. The theory draws on Sprinzak's previous research on such delegitimization processes and terrorism on a broader level.[48] However, in his contribution to the 1995 Special Issue, Sprinzak claims that unlike most other terrorists, extreme-right terrorists “do not feel remorse about their violence and the atrocities they cause” and thus have “no need to undergo a profound psycho-political transformation to become brutal killers”.[49] Delegitimization of perceived enemies is thus an inherent part of becoming a right-wing extremist, according to Sprinzak.

When considering the applicability of Sprinzak's theory of extreme-right terrorism, we should keep in mind that it is primarily meant to explain processes of group radicalization. As such, it is not a holistic theory because enemy delegitimization is not a *sufficient* condition for engaging in violence. This is illustrated by the simple fact that most right-wing extremists never use physical violence despite the supposed inherent delegitimization of their enemies.

However, Ehud Sprinzak also highlighted another important condition for engaging in violence when arguing that “violence, and gradually terrorism, will only emerge when the group involved feels increasingly insecure or threatened [by their enemies]”.[50] In addition, Sprinzak lists four circumstances expected to increase the likelihood of violence: (1) a sudden and intense sense of insecurity which produces emotional extremist reactions; (2) a conviction of right-wing leaders that they can rationally benefit from terrorism; (3) a sense of increasing public support for radical action against “undesirable people”; and (4) the imposing presence of violent personalities whose resort to terrorism is made for purely personal-psychological reasons.[51] Thus, according to Sprinzak, a combination of enemy delegitimization with any of these four conditions will raise the likelihood of extreme-right terrorism.

In his study of right-wing violence in North America, Jeffrey Kaplan first provided rich details about various extreme right milieus, events, and individuals.[52] With regards to theory, Kaplan applied Campbell's theory of the cultic milieu [53] as well as religious mapping theory.[54] Both theories “posit deviance from the beliefs of

mainstream society as the key analytical factor.”[55] Thus, part one of Kaplan’s analysis was primarily oriented towards the ideational affinities of different extreme-right milieu in North America, with a special emphasis on their justifications for—or against—violence.

In part two of his contribution, Kaplan discussed Sprinzak’s theory of split delegitimization by applying it to the North American case. While recognizing that the theory offers valuable insights, Kaplan also highlights four areas in which the theory does not comply with the North American situation: (1) delegitimization in North America appeared to be a reciprocal rather than a unilateral process; (2) the theory underestimated the role of the state as a primary enemy for many activists; (3) the theory underestimated the religiosity of the American radical right; and (4) the theory may have underestimated how far even a democratic state is prepared to go in repressing radical-right movements.[56] Concerning this last question, Kaplan concludes that “state violence once unleashed can acquire a momentum of its own”, and that “the consequences are surely considerably more deleterious than the disquieting views espoused by the radical right.”[57] In other words, too much state repression is likely to cause more—rather than less—terrorism and violence.

In his comparative essay on extreme-right violence in Europe, Peter Merkl touched upon several issues. Notably, he argued that many victims of the extreme right were neither immigrants nor government representatives, but also included leftists, homosexuals, and homeless people. Merkl also emphasized the seemingly apolitical character of many attacks, meaning that true political motivation appeared to be lacking. Instead, Merkl attributed motives to “the undereducated, ‘no-future’ youth or underclass ‘losers’”. He also argued that most violent attacks appeared to be “uncoordinated responses to community panic and media hype regarding perceived ‘floods’ of asylum seekers and illegal immigrants”, and that by “making themselves the executors of community panic, the otherwise despised skinhead gangs are grasping at personal acceptance and legitimacy.”[58] Economic and social marginalization thus appeared to be key drivers of extreme-right violence, according to Merkl.

Heléne Lööv described similar tendencies in her study of racist violence in Sweden.[59] In addition to exploring Sweden’s historical experience with national socialism, Lööv offered four case studies of violent groups operating in different locations in Sweden during the early 1990s. Much in line with Merkl, she showed that the perpetrators of violence were typically unorganized fringe elements of the larger extreme-right scene. She also argued that a general hostility against foreigners in the local community, combined with the development of a violent white power subculture, were important preconditions for these offenders’ engagement in violent attacks.

In his study of “anti-foreigner violence” in Germany during the early 1990s, Helmut Willems engaged more directly with explicit theoretical claims about the underlying causes of extreme-right violence. Just like Merkl and Lööv, he noted that although political and ideological motives were present in some cases, most attacks came across as less politically motivated, although expressing a general notion of unease about the new influx of refugees. Willems then moved on to discuss *social disintegration theory*, which posits that right-wing violence may result from relative deprivation and a loss of social status. However, he found mixed results for this theory as it only explained a subset of his violent offender dataset. Willems therefore moved on to discuss how increased individualization and related problems of anomie and identity crisis may have led some individuals to violent attitudes and behaviour. However, Willems also noted that, just like social disintegration, individualization is not a sufficient condition for becoming a violent offender and must be combined with other conditions such as the emergence of violent subcultures.

Finally, Willems supplemented these findings with four “theses” about how interaction and communication processes shaped violent attitudes, dispositions, and behaviour in Germany in the early 1990s. These theses related to (1) how asylum procedures treat refugees as societal burdens; (2) how a lack of effective political solutions to increased immigration opens new opportunities for the extreme right; (3) how weak state authorities fail to punish racist violence and thereby lower the risk for engaging in violent attacks; and (4) how a shift in public opinion toward more xenophobic attitudes gives violent youths a sensation of public approval. To summarize Willems, the ebb and flow of extreme-right violence can be explained by combining structural factors such as grievances related to immigration, socio-economic hardship, and modernization

with subcultural and government responses to such structural changes. In other words, it is not immigration or relative deprivation alone that explains the violence, but the ways people and authorities relate and react to it.

Several of the contributions to the 1995 Special Issue engaged specifically with Sprinzak's model of split delegitimization, and with how different types of right-wing extremists *justify* the use of violence against external and/or internal enemies. For example, Bjørgo developed a comparative analysis of how militant nationalists in Sweden, Norway and Denmark justified violence against external and internal enemies in ways which, on the surface, may look very different but were in fact similar in structure. He showed how national socialists dominated militant discourse in Sweden claiming that they were "the Aryan resistance movement" fighting against "the Zionist Occupation Government" (ZOG) and "the racial traitors". By contrast, in Norway and Denmark, the militant nationalists based their discourse on the legacy of the resistance against the German Nazi occupiers during World War II, claiming that they were "the new resistance movement", fighting "the invasion of foreigners" and "the present-day national traitors". The difference in discourse can be explained historically: Sweden – unlike Norway and Denmark – did not experience a brutal Nazi occupation during WWII, and the local Nazis never became national traitors. These different historical experiences may also help explain why militant neo-Nazism has been much more prevalent in Sweden than in Norway and Denmark. [60]

The three remaining contributions to the 1995 Special Issue offered rich case studies aimed at showing why and how terrorism from the extreme right occurred in three special cases: Italy; South Africa; and Japan.[61] Although there is much to learn about the particularities of these countries' extreme-right movements, we will not summarize these accounts here due to their context-specific nature, as well as due to space restrictions.

The 2018 Special Issue

Just like the 1995 Special Issue, the 2018 Special Issue was created on the basis of a workshop where leading scholars were invited to reflect on recent developments in the field, with a special emphasis on contemporary actors, their *modus operandi*, and the conditions shaping them. We also encouraged comparisons with previous actors and trends, other countries or regions, or other forms of political violence. Finally, we asked all contributors to reflect on how this threat is best understood theoretically, and on the types of labels and categories that most accurately describe it. Geographically, the 2018 Special Issue covers the United States, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, Hungary, Italy, and Norway.

In their study of white supremacists in the United States, Windisch et al. investigate how certain micro-situational factors help radicalized individuals overcome inherent barriers against violence.[62] Notably, they demonstrate how some activists were able to overcome fear and hesitation by (a) targeting vulnerable victims, (b) adhering to an audience that encouraged violence, and (c) utilizing clandestine attacks. Furthermore, and in line with several of the contributions to the 1995 Special Issue, they highlight how the habitual nature of violence cultivated within this subculture generate an immunity toward cognitive controls amongst several of the activists. Windisch et al. also highlight commonalities between violent extremism and general crime, indicating that extreme-right perpetrators, in many ways, resemble members of conventional street gangs. These insights have important implications for our understanding of these violent offenders, and for the types of measures that could be used to guide them away from violent subcultures.

In their study of fatal extreme-right attacks in the United States, Freilich et al. propose a number of theoretical approaches that may be used for future theory development.[63] For example, and much in line with Windisch et al., they argue that conceptualizing extreme-right violence as criminal events would allow researchers to build on well-established theories about subcultural dynamics and how certain social surroundings bring certain groups to engage in violent behaviour. Freilich et al. also highlight the highly complex causal patterns that must be traced between macro conditions such as relative deprivation and social disorganization on the one hand, and extreme-right terrorism and violence on the other hand. For this purpose, the authors propose several theoretical avenues, including social learning theory, environmental criminology, and various interactionist

and situational approaches.

In their contributions, both Sweeney & Perliger and Koehler focus on a specific form of violence, namely *spontaneous violence* by groups and individuals unaffiliated to extreme-right groups or organizations. [64] Investigating spontaneous violence is relevant because it is likely the most common form of violence motivated by extreme-right beliefs, at least within Western democracies.[65] Although Koehler uses the term “spontaneous” somewhat more freely than Sweeney & Perliger do, both studies appear to have captured similar trends in Germany and the United States. They also present similar explanations of this type of violence. In particular, and much in line with Ravndal’s proposed grievances-opportunities-polarization model,[66] they highlight the importance of grievances produced by ethnic diversity and increased immigration. In addition, Sweeney & Perliger highlight *grievances* related to marginalization as spontaneous perpetrators come from a lower socio-economic background and are usually younger, less educated, and more prone to be unemployed than perpetrators of planned attacks.

Both studies also address *opportunities* created by the authorities’ failure to correctly label and prosecute extreme-right violence as terrorism. This lowers the threshold for engaging in violent extremism because the risk of getting arrested and prosecuted is fairly low, and the punishment is less severe than for crimes labelled ‘terrorism’. An additional opportunity structure identified by Koehler in Germany is a recent subcultural turn away from party politics towards extra-parliamentary forms of activism. This shift has, according to Koehler, led to increased interaction between members of the public and established extremist groups with a record of violence. A similar dynamic was described by Lööw in her study of racist violence in Sweden during the early 1990s.[67] Finally, Koehler highlights the importance of recent *polarization* dynamics related to how increasing immigration has been handled by the government and by civil society. These dynamics echo those highlighted by Willems in his study of a similar wave of violence in Germany in the early 1990s.[68] In this regard, there appears to be considerable theoretical overlap between the 1995 and 2018 Special Issues.

Grievances and opportunities are also addressed by Enstad in his study of right-wing terrorism and violence in Russia.[69] In particular, and in line with several contributions from both Special Issues, Enstad highlights grievances caused by high immigration and socio-economic hardship as important preconditions for Russia’s astounding level of extreme-right violence. Several opportunities are also identified, including a combination of restrictive political opportunities within a permissive discursive environment, as well as the Internet as an arena for spreading violent propaganda. Considering how *limited* discursive opportunities have been suggested to influence *positively* on extreme-right violence in countries like as Sweden,[70] it is interesting to see how a highly permissive discursive environment, i.e. low social stigmatization of extreme-right views, appear to have had a positive impact on the level of extreme-right violence in Russia. Although these findings may come across as contradictory, they do in fact resonate well with Ravndal’s theorized effects from the discursive environment on extreme-right violence: “While extensive repression and stigmatization might fuel violence and militancy, a complete absence of repression and stigmatization might also lead to the same outcome (...). High or low repression and stigmatization should, in other words, not be seen as mutually exclusive conditions, but rather as two alternative paths that may lead to a similar outcome (equifinality).”[71]

The very same issue – the effects from permissive vs. repressive environments on violence – is addressed in the contributions by Macklin and Mareš, but using rather opposite cases.[72] On the one hand, Macklin investigates the (preliminary) effects of banning the UK group National Action, and asks whether such repressive measures reduce militant mobilization and violence, or simply provoke solidarity and resistance, thereby exacerbating the very tendencies that governments are trying to prevent. He finds that whilst the ban successfully dismantled National Action as an organization, it also engendered a period of ideological and organisational experimentation and adaption as those activists, undeterred by the ban, sought out new modes and methods of activism.

In contrast, Mareš discusses whether the *lack* of repressive measures against the far right in Hungary might have facilitated the emergence of two violent groups: the so-called Death Squad and the Hungarian Arrows National Liberation Army. Although these groups emerged during a time when public hostility against minorities in

general, and Roma gypsies in particular, was generally high, Mareš also shows that rising popularity of radical-right parties in Hungary has been followed by a decline of militant activism and violence. In other words, a permissive environment does not necessarily lead to more militancy and violence.

To complicate matters further, a couple of caveats should be made. First, although the UK has experienced some of the highest levels of extreme-right violence in Western Europe since 1990, the case of National Action is strictly speaking not a case of violence since the organisation never carried out any attacks. As such, the ban against National Action should first and foremost be considered as an (other) example of the UK's relatively high level of repression. Whether there is a causal connection between such high levels of repression and the level of extreme-right violence remains an open question – one that, despite some provisional evidence,[73] needs further investigation. Notably, Macklin finds that the UK police and security services have interdicted four extreme-right terrorist “plots” following the ban, at least two of which related directly to National Action.

Second, although Hungary's fairly permissive environment may have facilitated the emergence of two violent groups, we should keep in mind that the number of deadly attacks per million inhabitants is lower in Hungary post-1990 than in several other European countries, including Sweden, Germany, Spain, and the UK.[74] In other words, although radical-right sentiments are prevalent in Hungary, the level of extreme-right violence is not among the highest in Europe.

The remaining three contributions to the 2018 Special Issue are all concerned with lone actor terrorism. First, Castelli Gattinara et al. use the Italian lone actor Gianluca Casseri as a case for studying how *relational dynamics* might impact on individual violent radicalization.[75] This is an interesting exercise because the so-called relational approach to political violence is perhaps most evidently relevant for studying processes of group radicalization.[76] However, as Castelli Gattinara et al. demonstrate, social relations, and in particular unfulfilled social relations, may also play a crucial role in individual radicalization paths. This should perhaps not come as a surprise, considering how recent research demonstrates that social ties are an integral part of most lone actors' radicalization.[77] Yet unlike most lone actors, Casseri was not exactly socialized into terrorism. It was rather his experience of not being included, but neither being fully excluded from a radical group that led him to violent action. This form of partial embeddedness in radical or extremist milieu is an underdeveloped topic and one with potentially significant consequences. It should therefore be studied across a larger number of cases in future research.

In their contribution, Bouhana et al. explore the background and preparatory behaviours of extreme-right lone actor terrorists vis-à-vis other lone actor types.[78] In particular, they are interested in *risk indicators*, i.e. characteristics or experiences that increases an individual's likelihood of getting involved in terrorism. Such indicators are mainly developed as a tool for terrorism prevention and should not necessarily be seen as causal in and of themselves. However, some risk indicators may act as markers for the types of causal mechanisms that may lead to terrorism in the sense of representing their observable implications. Perhaps the most important finding emerging from Bouhana et al.'s analysis is the *lack* of significant differences between the background characteristics and preparatory behaviours of extreme right and other types of lone actors. This raises the question of whether or not risk assessment tools need to be tailored to ideology.

Finally, in their study of Anders Behring Breivik's target selection procedures, Hemmingby & Bjørge carefully trace the process from the point where Breivik had already been radicalised into a commitment to carry out terrorist attacks, and then through a complex target (de-) selection process, where a large number of potential targets were gradually reduced to two.[79] Notably, Hemmingby and Bjørge show how Breivik's personality and narcissistic nature, combined with his high endurance and technical abilities, enabled him to prepare and commit mass atrocities completely on his own. At the same time, they also show how he was quite average in other ways, and how a number of internal and external constraints limited the number of targets that were ultimately “available” to him.

The Way Forward – Distinguishing between Different Types of Violent Outcomes

Our review shows that there is indeed some theoretical overlap between the findings of the 1995 and 2018 Special Issues, as well as within each Special Issue. At the same time, it is difficult to identify dominating theories or ongoing theoretical debates in the two Special Issues (apart from the “requested” discussion of Sprinzak’s theory). This may partly result from the interdisciplinary nature of the field, but it could also be because existing scholarship appears to focus on (at least) three rather distinct violent outcomes.

A first type of outcome may be labelled *violent radicalization* and is essentially about the (often highly complex) paths towards violence that some individuals and groups experience. When investigating these types of processes, we are more interested in relevant events and experiences that happened *before* a violent event occurred, than in the actual event. Thus, the key question to be asked about this outcome type is why some individuals and groups turn to violence while a large majority do not.

When pursuing this question, societal conditions at the macro level appear less relevant than micro- and meso-level conditions at the individual and group levels.[80] For example, existing research suggests that emotions and social relations play important roles in violent radicalization processes.[81] One example from this Special Issue would be the case of Ginaluca Casseri, which demonstrates how unfulfilled social relations were important to understand his path towards violent action.[82] A more general theory of violence that could prove useful in future research on violent radicalization is the so-called Virtuous Violence Theory, which sees violence not as produced by isolated individuals, but as emerging from social relationships.[83] Virtuous Violence Theory posits that individuals are not violent in and by themselves, but always in relation to other individuals, circumstances, and situations. Most violence is intended to regulate social relationships, to set them straight in accordance with certain moral motives, that is, conceptions of right and wrong held by the perpetrators and shared by their community or in-group.

A second type of outcome may be labelled *violent events* and is essentially about explaining why, when, and how specific violent events or series of related events occurred. Unlike violent radicalization, this type of outcome requires explanations that are more oriented towards the situational context of an attack, as well as on the actual attack itself. What are the contextual barriers against, and drivers towards violent events, and which opportunity structures and conditions shape the targeting, intensity, and characteristics of an attack? These are some of the questions pursued by Windisch et al. in their study of the micro-situational factors of white supremacist violence.[84] Rather than looking at each individuals’ radicalization processes, Windisch et al. analyze the micro-situational factors that determine whether and how some extremists engage in violence. In doing so, they draw on Randall Collins’ renowned micro-sociological theory of violence, which is designed to explain the occurrence of violent events on a much broader scale.[85]

Violent events are typically investigated through case studies. However, they can also be investigated using large-N studies, in particular when trying to explain *how* violent events occur, i.e. the *modus operandi*. Why are some target groups selected rather than others? And why are some weapons and attack modes used more frequently? Several of the contributions of the 2018 Special Issue propose answer to these kinds of questions, using large-N datasets, most notably Freilich et al., Sweeney and Perliger, and Bouhana et al.[86]

On this note, we should be mindful that studies of violent events should be distinguished from studies of violent actors. The reason is that even violent actors – be that individuals or groups – are most of the time not violent. Most studies of violent actors are oriented towards explaining their mobilization or radicalization processes, but usually less focused on explaining when and how they engage in violence. To really understand when and how violent events occur, we need to isolate variables or conditions tailored to these particular questions. For example, Hemmingby and Bjørge do not investigate Breivik’s self-radicalization process in this Special Issue, but focus instead on factors explaining his target selection.[87]

Finally, a third outcome type – *aggregate levels of violence* – is essentially about explaining why some places and periods experience more (extreme-right) terrorism and violence than others do. Such explanations tend to be oriented towards structural and societal conditions at the macro level that may encourage (or discourage)

a higher level of violence over time. Amongst our three proposed outcome types, this is probably the one that remains least investigated empirically because systematic events data have been lacking.[88] At the same time, many of the theoretical claims proposed in both Special Issues are oriented towards this outcome type. These include claims about perceived grievances related to immigration, socio-economic hardship, or modernization; political opportunities or the lack thereof; and polarization dynamics, such as how contentious issues are treated in public debates, or the extent to which far right actors experience public stigmatization and repression.

By distinguishing more clearly between these three different violent outcomes, the field will hopefully move towards a more unified approach to the study of extreme right terrorism and violence. It may also demonstrate how (some) micro-, meso- and macro-level perspectives on extreme right violence are complementary rather than competing; after all, it is largely the nature of the outcome that determines the usefulness of a given theoretical perspective.

Conclusion

Although 23 years have passed since the previous Special Issue on terrorism and violence from the extreme right was published, the field remains rather diverse, disorganized, and discontinuous. On this note, we would like to emphasize that diversity is not necessarily a negative trait, but one that can potentially enrich the field. However, this warrants scholars to actually relate to—and build on—each other's research findings. The aim of this review has therefore been to help prepare the ground for a more unified research agenda. On the conceptual level, we argued that future research should align itself with Mudde's conceptualization of the radical, extreme, and far right, which is now well established in the broader study of far-right politics. Besides encapsulating three core features of the far right—social inequality; authoritarianism; and nativism—this conceptual paradigm also distinguishes radicals and populists from *extremists* by highlighting their anti-democratic attitudes and behaviours.

We also argued that qualitative data remains the bread-and-butter in this field, providing insights into individual and group radicalization processes as well as into the situational contexts from which violent events tend to emerge. At the same time, a general lack of systematic events data has inhibited the field from moving forward. It is therefore encouraging to see the growing amount of both qualitative and quantitative data now available in this field, exemplified by several of the contributions to this Special Issue. In other words, the time has come for scholars to start communicating with each other more intensely, sharing data, and testing each other's theoretical claims and assumptions.

In doing so, we have suggested to distinguish between (at least) three different outcome types: violent radicalization; violent events; and aggregate levels of violence. By being more explicit about the types of outcomes one seeks to explain, scholars in this field will hopefully develop more rigorous theories that can be tested across a larger number of cases and contexts.

Finally, if we were to derive three key themes from this comparative review, these would be *emotions*, *relations*, and *repression*. In addition to being recurrent themes in both Special Issues, these three themes also share a similar causal ambiguity in the sense that they can both serve to facilitate and discourage extreme-right terrorism and violence, depending on how they are configured. Future research should therefore aim at understanding how different emotional, relational, and repressive configurations might impact on individual and group radicalization processes, the occurrence and characteristics of violent events, and on the accumulation of such events over time and between places.

Appendix I

Table 1 – The 1995 Special Issue: *Terrorism and Political Violence* (Vol. VII, No. 1, 1995)

Author(s)	Title
<i>Ehud Sprinzak</i>	Right-Wing Terrorism in a Comparative Perspective: The Case of Split Delegitimization
<i>Jeffrey Kaplan</i>	Right-Wing Violence in North America
<i>Peter H. Merkl</i>	Radical Right parties in Europe and Anti-Foreign Violence: A Comparative Essay
<i>Heléne Lööw</i>	Racist Violence and Criminal Behaviour in Sweden: Myths and Reality
<i>Helmut Willems</i>	Development, Patterns and Causes of Violence against Foreigners in Germany: Social and Biographical Characteristics of Perpetrators and the Process of Escalation
<i>Tore Bjørge</i>	Extreme Nationalism and Violent Discourses in Scandinavia: ‘The Resistance’, ‘Traitors’, and ‘Foreign Invaders’
<i>Leonard Weinberg</i>	Italian Neo-Fascist Terrorism: A Comparative Perspective
<i>David Welsh</i>	Right-Wing Terrorism in South Africa
<i>Kenneth Szymkowiak and Patricia G. Steinhoff</i>	Wrapping up in Something Long: Intimidation and Violence by Right-Wing Groups in Postwar Japan

Table 2 – The 2018 Special Issue: *Perspectives on Terrorism* (Vol. XII, No. 6, 2018)

Author(s)	Title
<i>Jacob Aasland Ravndal and Tore Bjørge</i>	Investigating Terrorism from the Extreme Right: A Review of Past and Present Research
<i>Steven Windisch, Pete Simi, Kathleen Blee, and Matthew DeMichele</i>	Understanding the Micro-Situational Dynamics of White Supremacist Violence in the United States
<i>Joshua D. Freilich, Steven M. Chermak, Jeff Gruenewald, William S. Parkin, and Brent R. Klein</i>	Patterns of Violent Far-Right Extremist Crime in the United States
<i>Matthew Sweeney and Arie Perliger</i>	Explaining the Spontaneous Nature of Far-Right Violence in the United States
<i>Daniel Koehler</i>	Recent Trends in German Right-Wing Violence and Terrorism: ‘Hive Terrorism’ as a New Tactic?
<i>Johannes Due Enstad</i>	The Modus Operandi of Right-Wing Militants in Putin’s Russia, 2000-2017
<i>Graham Macklin</i>	Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism in Britain: The Case of National Action
<i>Miroslav Mareš</i>	Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Hungary at the Beginning of the 21st Century
<i>Pietro Castelli Gattinara, Francis O’Connor, and Lasse Lindekilde</i>	No Country for Acting Alone? The Neo-Fascist Movement and Lone-Actor Terrorist Attacks in Italy
<i>Noémie Bouhana, Emily Corner, Paul Gill and Bart Schuurman</i>	Background and Preparatory Behaviours of Right-Wing Extremist Lone Actors: A Comparative Study
<i>Cato Hemmingby and Tore Bjørge</i>	Terrorist Target Selection: The Case of Anders Behring Breivik

About the Authors: Jacob Aasland Ravndal is a Postdoctoral Fellow with the Center for Research on Extremism (C-REX) at the University of Oslo. He has published widely on right-wing terrorism and violence in Western Europe. His current research interests include the relationship between left- and right-wing militancy, the relationship between revolutionary strategies and terrorist tactics, and how ideas, emotions and relations shape violent extremist behaviour.

Tore Bjørgo is Director of Center for Research on Extremism (C-REX) and Professor at the University of Oslo and the Norwegian Police University College. He has published widely on right-wing extremism and violence, terrorism, disengagement from extremist groups, counter-terrorism and crime and terrorism prevention. Among his recent books are *Vigilantism against Migrants and Minorities* (forthcoming), *Preventing Crime: A Holistic Approach* (2016), *Strategies for Preventing Terrorism* (2013), and *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement* (2009). He is Associate Editor of the journal *Perspectives on Terrorism*.

Notes

- [1] "UK Has Not 'woken up' to Far-Right Threat, Says Ex-Counter-Terror Chief," *The Guardian*, August 18, 2018; URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/aug/18/former-counter-terrorism-chief-says-uk-has-not-woken-up-to-far-right-threat>; Politico, "Counter-Terror Chief: Extremist Groups on the Rise in East Germany," *POLITICO*, February 9, 2017; URL: <http://www.politico.eu/article/counter-terror-chief-extremist-groups-on-the-rise-in-east-germany/>.
- [2] "Terrorism Is Surging in the US, Fueled by Right-Wing Extremists," *Quartz*, August 17, 2018; URL: <https://qz.com/1355874/terrorism-is-surging-in-the-us-fueled-by-right-wing-extremists/>; "Americans Are More Likely to Be Attacked by Far-Right Terrorists than Islamists," *New Statesman*, March 22, 2018; URL: <https://www.newstatesman.com/world/north-america/2018/03/americans-are-more-likely-be-attacked-far-right-terrorists-islamists>
- [3] Tore Bjørgo, "Introduction," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7, no. 1 (1995): 1-16. The Special Issue was also published in book format: Tore Bjørgo (Ed.), (1995). *Terror from the Extreme Right*. London: Frank Cass.
- [4] Kathleen Deloughery, Ryan D. King, and Victor Asal, "Close Cousins or Distant Relatives? The Relationship Between Terrorism and Hate Crime," *Crime & Delinquency* 58, no. 5 (2012): 663-88; Colleen E. Mills, Joshua D. Freilich, and Steven M. Chermak, "Extreme Hatred: Revisiting the Hate Crime and Terrorism Relationship to Determine Whether They Are 'Close Cousins' or 'Distant Relatives,'" *Crime & Delinquency* 63, no. 10.
- [5] Ehud Sprinzak, "Right-Wing Terrorism in a Comparative Perspective: The Case of Split Delegitimization," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7, no. 1 (1995): 17-43.
- [6] Jeffrey Kaplan, "Right Wing Violence in North America," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7, no. 1 (1995): 44-95; Helmut Willems, "Development, Patterns, Causes of Violence against Foreigners in Germany: Social and Biographical Characteristics of Perpetrators and the Process of Escalation," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7, no. 1 (1995): 162-81; Ehud Sprinzak, "Right-Wing Terrorism in a Comparative Perspective", op. cit.; Peter H. Merkl, "Radical Right Parties in Europe and Anti-Foreign Violence: A Comparative Essay," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7, no. 1 (1995): 96-118.
- [7] Helene Lööw, "Racist Violence and Criminal Behaviour in Sweden: Myths and Reality," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7, no. 1 (1995): 119-61; Tore Bjørgo, "Extreme Nationalism and Violent Discourses in Scandinavia: 'The Resistance', 'Traitors', and 'Foreign Invaders,'" *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7, no. 1 (1995): 182-220; Leonard Weinberg, "Italian Neo-Fascist Terrorism: A Comparative Perspective," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7, no. 1 (1995): 221-39.
- [8] Cas Mudde, "Right-Wing Extremism Analyzed. A Comparative Analysis of the Ideologies of Three Alleged Right-Wing Extremist Parties (NPD, NDP, CP'86)," *European Journal of Political Research* 27, no. 2 (1995): 203-224.
- [9] Roger Eatwell and Cas Mudde, *Western Democracies and the New Extreme Right Challenge* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004); Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Elisabeth Carter, "Right-Wing Extremism/Radicalism: Reconstructing the Concept," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 23, no. 2 (2018): 157-82.
- [10] Norberto Bobbio, *Left and Right: The Significance of a Political Distinction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
- [11] Bobbio, op. cit., 72-79.
- [12] Karen Stenner, *The Authoritarian Dynamic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- [13] Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, op. cit., 15-23.

- [14] Matthew Sweeney and Arie Perliger, "Explaining the Spontaneous Nature of Far-Right Violence in the United States," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 6 (2018).
- [15] Gary Goertz, *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 35–50.
- [16] Joshua D. Freilich, Steven M. Chermak, Jeff Gruenewald, William S. Parkin, and Brent R. Klein, "Patterns of Violent Far-Right Extremist Crime in the United States," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 6 (2018).
- [17] Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 40.
- [18] Jacob Aasland Ravndal, "Explaining Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe: Grievances, Opportunities and Polarisation," *European Journal of Political Research* 57, no. 4 (2018): 847.
- [19] Graham Macklin, "Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism in Britain: The Case of National Action," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 6, (2018); Miroslav Mareš, "Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Hungary at the Beginning of the 21st Century," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 6 (2018).
- [20] See e.g. Ted Reynolds, "Ethical and Legal Issues Surrounding Academic Research into Online Radicalisation: A UK Experience," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 5, no. 3 (2012): 499–513.
- [21] Steven Windisch, Pete Simi, Kathleen Blee, and Matthew DeMichele, "Understanding the Micro-Situational Dynamics of White Supremacist Violence in the United States," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 6 (2018).
- [22] Cato Hemmingby and Tore Bjørge, "Terrorist Target Selection: The Case of Anders Behring Breivik," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 6 (2018).
- [23] Pietro Castelli Gattinara, Francis O'Connor, and Lasse Lindekilde, "No Country for Acting Alone? The Neo-Fascist Movement and Lone-Actor Terrorist Attacks in Italy," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 6 (2018).
- [24] Willems, "Violence against Foreigners in Germany", op. cit.
- [25] Jacob Aasland Ravndal, "Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe: Introducing the RTV Dataset," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 10, no. 3 (2016); Jacob Aasland Ravndal and Anders Ravik Jupskås, "Methods for Mapping Far Right Violence". In *Researching the Far Right: Theory, Method and Practice*, edited by Stephen Ashe, Joel Busher, Graham Macklin, and Aaron Winter. Oxon: Routledge, 2019.
- [26] Windisch et al., "White Supremacist Violence in the United States", op. cit.
- [27] Joshua D. Freilich, Steven M. Chermak, Roberta Belli, Jeff Gruenewald, and William S. Parkin, "Introducing the United States Extremis Crime Database (ECDB)," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 2 (2014): 372–84.
- [28] Arie Perliger, "Challengers from the Sidelines" (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, 2012); URL: <https://ctc.usma.edu/challengers-from-the-sidelines-understanding-americas-violent-far-right/>.
- [29] Ravndal, "Introducing the RTV Dataset", op. cit.
- [30] Daniel Koehler, "German Right-Wing Terrorism in Historical Perspective. A First Quantitative Overview of the 'Database on Terrorism in Germany (Right-Wing Extremism)' – DTGrwx' Project," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 8, no. 5 (2014).
- [31] Paul Gill, John Horgan, and Paige Deckert, "Bombing Alone: Tracing the Motivations and Antecedent Behaviors of Lone-Actor Terrorists," *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 59, no. 2 (2014): 425–35.
- [32] Johannes Due Enstad, "The Modus Operandi of Right-Wing Militants in Putin's Russia, 2000-2017," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 6 (2018).
- [33] See URL: https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_ECDB_IslamistFarRightHomicidesUS_Infographic_Feb2017.pdf
- [34] Ravndal, "Introducing the RTV Dataset", op. cit.
- [35] Figures on fatal Islamist attacks have been retrieved from the Global Terrorism Dataset (GTD; URL: <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>). For another overview of Islamist attacks in Europe, see Petter Nesser and Anne Stenersen, "The Modus Operandi of Jihadi Terrorists in Europe," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 8, no. 6 (2014).
- [36] Enstad, "Right-Wing Militants in Putin's Russia", op. cit.
- [37] Willems, "Violence against Foreigners in Germany", op. cit.; Löow, "Racist Violence in Sweden", op. cit.; Merkl, "Anti-Foreign Violence", op. cit.
- [38] Castelli Gattinara et al., "Lone-Actor Terrorist Attacks in Italy", op. cit.; Weinberg, "Italian Neo-Fascist Terrorism", op. cit.

- [39] Enstad, "Right-Wing Militants in Putin's Russia", op. cit.
- [40] Daniel Koehler, "Recent Trends in German Right-Wing Violence and Terrorism: 'Hive Terrorism' as a New Tactic?" *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 6 (2018).
- [41] Mareš, "Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Hungary", op.cit.; Macklin, "The Case of National Action", op. cit.; Hemmingby and Bjørge, "The Case of Anders Behring Breivik", op. cit.
- [42] See Enstad, "Right-Wing Militants in Putin's Russia", op. cit.; Ravndal, "Explaining Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe", op. cit.; Joshua D. Freilich, Steven Chermak, and William Parkin, "Did Far-Right Extremist Violence Really Spike in 2017?" *The Conversation*, accessed January 5, 2018; URL: <http://theconversation.com/did-far-right-extremist-violence-really-spike-in-2017-89067>.
- [43] Freilich et al., "Violent Far-Right Extremist Crime in the United States", op. cit.
- [44] Noémie Bouhana, Emily Corner, Paul Gill, and Bart Schuurman, "Background and Preparatory Behaviours of Right-Wing Extremist Lone Actors: A Comparative Study," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 6 (2018).
- [45] Wilhelm Heitmeyer, "Right-Wing Terrorism," in *Root Causes of Terrorism*, (Ed.) Tore Bjørge (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 141–53; Wilhelm Heitmeyer, "Right-Wing Extremist Violence," in *The International Handbook on Violence Research*, ed. John Hagan and Wilhelm Heitmeyer (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2003): 399–436.
- [46] Bjørge, "Introduction", op. cit., 5.
- [47] Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, "Understanding Political Radicalization: The Two-Pyramids Model," *American Psychologist* 72, no. 3 (2017): 205–16.
- [48] Ehud Sprinzak, "The Process of Delegitimization: Towards a Linkage Theory of Political Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 3, no. 1 (1991): 50–68.
- [49] Sprinzak, "Right-Wing Terrorism in a Comparative Perspective", op. cit., 22.
- [50] *Ibid.*, 21.
- [51] *Ibid.*, 39.
- [52] Kaplan, "Right Wing Violence in North America", op. cit.
- [53] Colin Campbell, "The Cult, the Cultic Milieu and Secularization", in: *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain, 1972*, pp. 119–36.
- [54] Martin E. Marty, *A Nation of Believers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).
- [55] Kaplan, "Right Wing Violence in North America", op. cit., 46.
- [56] *Ibid.*, 74.
- [57] *Ibid.*, 88.
- [58] Merkl, "Anti-Foreign Violence", op. cit., 96.
- [59] Löow, "Racist Violence in Sweden", op. cit.
- [60] Jacob Aasland Ravndal, "Right-Wing Terrorism and Militancy in the Nordic Countries: A Comparative Case Study," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 30, no. 5 (2018): 772–792.
- [61] Weinberg, "Italian Neo-Fascist Terrorism", op. cit.; Kenneth Szymkowiak and Patricia G. Steinhoff, "Wrapping up in Something Long: Intimidation and Violence by Right-wing Groups in Postwar Japan," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7, no. 1 (1995): 265–98; David Welsh, "Right-Wing Terrorism in South Africa," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7, no. 1 (1995): 239–64.
- [62] Windisch et al., "White Supremacist Violence in the United States", op. cit.
- [63] Freilich et al., "Violent Far-Right Extremist Crime in the United States", op. cit.
- [64] Sweeney and Perliger, "Far-Right Violence in the United States", op. cit; Koehler, "'Hive Terrorism' as a New Tactic?", op. cit.
- [65] Ravndal, "Introducing the RTV Dataset", op. cit.
- [66] Ravndal, "Explaining Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe", op. cit.

- [67] Lööw, “Racist Violence in Sweden”, op. cit.
- [68] Willems, “Violence against Foreigners in Germany”, op. cit.
- [69] Enstad, “Right-Wing Militants in Putin’s Russia”, op. cit.
- [70] Ravndal, “Right-Wing Terrorism and Militancy in the Nordic Countries”, op.cit.
- [71] Ravndal, “Explaining Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe,” op. cit. , 849.
- [72] Mareš, “Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Hungary”, op. cit.; Macklin, “The Case of National Action”, op.cit.
- [73] Ravndal, “Explaining Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe”, op. cit.
- [74] Assuming that all or most fatal attacks are included in Mareš historical summary.
- [75] Castelli Gattinara et al., “Lone-Actor Terrorist Attacks in Italy”, op. cit.
- [76] Eitan Y. Alimi, Chares Demetriou, and Lorenzo Bosi, *The Dynamics of Radicalization: A Relational and Comparative Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
- [77] Bart Schuurman, Lasse Lindekilde, Stefan Malthaner, Francis O’Connor, Paul Gill, and Noémie Bouhana, “End of the Lone Wolf: The Typology That Should Not Have Been,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, advance online publication (2017); URL: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1057610X.2017.1419554>
- [78] Bouhana et al., “Right-Wing Extremist Lone Actors”, op. cit.
- [79] Hemmingby and Bjørgo, “The Case of Anders Behring Breivik”, op. cit.
- [80] Donatella della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
- [81] Michael A. Jensen, Anita Atwell Seate, and Patrick A. James, “Radicalization to Violence: A Pathway Approach to Studying Extremism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, advance online publication (2018); URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2018.1442330>; McCauley and Moskalenko, “Understanding Political Radicalization”, op. cit.
- [82] Castelli Gattinara et al., “Lone-Actor Terrorist Attacks in Italy”, op. cit.
- [83] Alan Page Fiske and Tage Shakti Rai, *Virtuous Violence: Hurting and Killing to Create, Sustain, End, and Honour Social Relationships* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
- [84] Windisch et al., “White Supremacist Violence in the United States”, op. cit.
- [85] Randall Collins, *Violence: A Micro-Sociological Theory* (Princeton, N.J.; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009).
- [86] Freilich et al., “Violent Far-Right Extremist Crime in the United States”, op. cit.; Sweeney and Perliger, “Far-Right Violence in the United States”, op. cit.; Bouhana et al., “Right-Wing Extremist Lone Actors”, op. cit.
- [87] Hemmingby and Bjørgo, “The Case of Anders Behring Breivik”, op. cit.
- [88] But see Ravndal, “Explaining Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe”, op. cit.