A New Wave?

The Terrorism and Extremism Landscape

Edited by Sophia Brook and Katja Theodorakis

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Foreword

As democracies, we must be prepared to defend ourselves against various threats, including those that challenge our way of life and exploit the vulnerabilities of open societies. Islamist terror attacks such as in the Paris opera, at the airport in Brussels, or at the Christmas market in Berlin shook our societies and lead to a necessary upgrade to our security policies.

The right-wing extremist attack on a synagogue in Halle in November 2019 prompted the German government to implement several further measures as a response to a surge in right-wing extremism (RWX), including the creation of an RWX coordination cell on a national intelligence level, a Cabinet committee to combat the RWX threat, and initiatives to combat racism, anti-Semitism, and hate speech. These measures contribute to greater national resilience against extremism, but recent events, such as the dismantling of a terror plot by a Reichsbürger faction, show that we cannot take our security or our democracy for granted.

To be resilient against extremism and anti-democratic forces, Western liberal democracies need comprehensive and targeted strategies. The enemies come in different forms and can instrumentalize crises to undermine trust in government and democratic institutions. For instance, the consequences of Putin's unlawful attack on Ukraine's sovereignty and the ensuing war extend beyond military and external security questions for Germany – they also have profound impact on our internal affairs, manifested in the need for Germany

to be prepared for targeted acts of sabotage against critical infrastructure, for example. Internal and external security are certainly "two sides of the very same coin" in the 21st century.

Germany has been learning from Australia's legislative responses to foreign interference, and knowledge-exchange and cooperation with like-minded partners are key to devising comprehensive responses to these challenges. However, it is important to recognize that democracy often requires striking compromises. But we should not compromise on our foundational values and principles. We must recognize red lines and be attuned to emerging dynamics to negotiate our collective responses across and beyond existing fault lines. The cornerstones of a resilient democracy lie in these efforts.

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Introduction

As the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting government lockdowns brought a rupture to public life and social interactions, new communities and networks formed online where people connected and exchanged ideas driven by the unprecedented global crisis. Alternate realities grew stronger and found expression under the umbrella of a broadly conceived 'Freedom Movement'.

This resulted in a wave of ideological activism loosely united around the idea that Covid-19 was a secret, government-controlled conspiracy against 'the people'. Especially in Germany, this developed from a diverse ecosystem of existing ideological forces: from ethnonationalist populists and Identitarians, Sovereign Citizen-style Reichsbuerger, white supremacists and neo-Nazis to various stripes of anarchists and militant anti-capitalist. As the increasing transnationalization of the far-right became further interwoven with the expansion of QAnon, from a fringe phenomenon to a movement boasting hundreds of thousands of adherents worldwide, notable international connections emerged, including to Australia and New Zealand. The momentum spread through online and offline environments as they rallied around certain ideological flashpoints under the common denominator of opposing the powers that be, by violent and non-violent means.

Overall, the threat of terrorist violence is reported to be on the decline across liberal democracies, evident for example in the downgrading of the official terrorism threat level in Australia. But this should not invite complacency. Recent assessments

by domestic security agencies in Australia, Germany and New Zealand have all highlighted a more diffuse and complex extremism landscape as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, including the rising danger of conspiracy narratives. We cannot dismiss that so-called single-issue movements like anti-mandate or eco-defence groups, are increasingly driven by anti-system ideas, not only in rebellion against the political status-quo but in rejection of the democratic order per se, accompanied by a greater willingness of 'ordinary citizens' to use violence.

Examining the dynamics behind the growing acceptance of such ideas and actions is crucial. This is the objective of the NEW WAVE series. Earlier PERISCOPE papers and briefs under this theme already addressed some of these issues.

But there is a need for a more focused deep-dive that grapples with more fundamental questions: about the evolving nature of extremism and terrorism, what their current manifestations look like across liberal societies, and societal enablers.

Asking such questions is more than an academic endeavour. The lens of a 'A NEW WAVE?' is intended to explore conceptual questions as a springboard into policy-related considerations. To this end, it is important not to shy away from conflicting perspectives and schools of thought that might be regarded as controversial – it is necessary to include a breadth of arguments in order to facilitate the type of dialogue that can also lead to realistic solutions. Because what is at stake is the

quality of our pluralist societies, any lasting changes can only come about through examining the widest possible mosaic of opinions and perceptions. Here, it is fundamental to keep in mind that threats to democratic societies do not come from extremists, but also an overall decline in the societal climate permitting the normalization of intolerant, anti-pluralist and misanthropic ideas. If a thriving pluralist order is the goal, it must also be the means to get there. Having guardrails for our democracy means learning to recognize when we are in danger of crossing red lines. These are not always easy to recognize since "*society does not necessarily change with seismic jolts but rather can be shaped slowly and in tiny increments*."[1]

As Nauel Semaan and Steven Bickel highlight in an earlier KAS article on the linkages between extremism and democracy, we cannot shy away from difficult discussions by using the label of extremism as a means to shut down unpalatable positions.[2]

The varied contributions by authors from Australia, Germany, New Zealand and the USA include analyses into the nature of terrorism and types of extremism, case-studies as well as examinations of responses and potential prevention methods. We hope that the outcome will be a series that contributes to a more differentiated assessment, to assist experts and policy-makers in developing responses and strategies for resilience that reflect and address the complexity of issues underlying extremism in democratic societies.

by Katja Theodorakis and Sophia Brook

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The Terrorism Puzzle: A Look Inside a Nebulous Phenomenon

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About the Author

Since 2015 Carolin Görzig has been leading the research group „How Terrorists learn" at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle, Germany. Before that she has been a visiting scholar at the London School of Economics, Uppsala University, the EU Institute for Security Studies and the Rand Corporation and she held a position as assistant professor at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, U.S. Together with her team in Halle she has conducted field research in nine countries speaking with former and current members of terrorist organizations. As a result she has developed models about learning processes and patterns of radicalization and de-radicalization. Her most known publication is her book *Talking to Terrorists: Concessions and the Renunciation of Violence* (2010, Routledge) which is based on her PhD thesis and field research in Egpyt, Syria, Turkey and Colombia. In 2015 she published her second book together with Khaled Al-Hashimi titled *Radicalization in Western Europe: Integration, Public Discourse and Loss of Identity among Muslim Communities.* The edited volume ‚ How Terrorists learn' by Carolin Görzig and her research team is forthcoming.

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of terrorism is puzzling. This is the case for several reasons, one of them being the clandestine environment in which terrorist groups operate. Access to first-hand information is limited by the secrecy surrounding the phenomenon and related to its underground existence by security concerns. Since terrorism is a black box for scientists and the rest of society alike, several myths and conspiracy theories have developed for example for the purpose of gaining control of the unpredictable dynamics that characterize individual and organizational radicalization and de-radicalization. We either underestimate, overestimate or misinterpret terrorism because of its unpredictability, lack of first-hand insights as well as of fear which terrorist groups themselves try to provoke. Finally, terrorism is full of contradictions. Researching the phenomenon means studying leaders of terrorist organizations who admit to making mistakes, right-wing radicals without empathy who nevertheless seek recognition, terrorist organizations which imitate their enemies and radicalization of the educated and well-off. It is often difficult to comprehend why terrorists do what they do, and what dynamics shape their actions.

When I studied Conflict Analysis in Belgium shortly after September 11th, I exchanged views? with my American co-students. They were convinced that the attacks on the twin towers made our generation a unique generation coined by terrorism. The perception that today everything is worse than in the past and that the presence is especially burdening is a common misinterpretation. Several statistics show that the world had recently become more peaceful. Europe recently belonged to the most peaceful regions in the world. A look into the past testifies that the present might not be that particular in comparison. Our parents were in the middle of the Cold War, our grandparents lived during one or two World Wars. What is more, while my co-students thought that our generation stands out because of September 11th, we are currently seeing a generation growing up coined by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our perceptions frequently are blurred and biased and so are our perceptions about terrorism. However, although it is hard to access reliable information and data about terrorists because they operate in secrecy, it is nevertheless possible to identify patterns. In this paper I will, firstly, outline some of the misinterpretations of the terrorism phenomenon and I will, secondly, give insights into the inner life of terrorist organizations. While leading the research group 'How 'Terrorists' learn' at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology I have conducted extensive field research together with my team, which allowed us to derive findings that contribute to breaking up the black box of the nebulous terrorism phenomenon.

2.1 Underestimation of Terrorism: Conspiracy Theories around 9/11

One form of misinterpreting terrorism is its underestimation. Take for example the attacks on the Twin Towers. September 11th is sometimes called the mother of conspiracy theories and indeed several myths rank around that day.[1] Several people believe in alternative explanations for the twin-tower attacks and in the United States a whole movement – the 'Truther Movement' – exists. Truthers do not believe that Al Qaeda was responsible. There is no unity in the truther movement regarding who in the end was the perpetrator, but many believe that members of the US government let the attacks happen or were even involved. The argument underlying this claim is that the US government needed a reason to invade Afghanistan and Iraq to get access to oil. Other truthers believe that the Mossad or Jewish Bankers are responsible; antisemitism almost always is part of conspiracy theories. What is astonishing is that these myths flourish although Osama Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda confessed that they perpetrated the attacks. It seems many underestimate terrorist groups and rather look for those responsible of attacks among the powerful.

2.2 Overestimation of terrorism: The New Terrorism

Another form of misinterpreting terrorism is its overestimation, leading for example to the magnification of countermeasures. The war on terror has been a direct consequence of 9/11. It was assumed that a threat had emerged no one had ever witnessed before. In order to differentiate between the past and this new threat the term 'New Terrorism' proved useful.[2] Although this concept had already been proposed in the 1990ies, September 11th seemed to confirm the assumptions made earlier. These assumptions include that the new terrorism is globally connected. Thus, rather than operating as organizations with clear hierarchies, new terrorisms can be understood as networks. It was further assumed that the new terrorism had access to Weapons of Mass Destruction. Fears of a dirty bomb or of chemical weapons characterized the years following 9/11. It was moreover generally assumed that the new terrorism was more deadly, more apocalyptic and therewith beyond negotiation. The new terrorism concept was mainly associated with Islamist terrorism and it has been argued that Islamist terrorists cannot be negotiated with reasonably. Although the terrorism threat had been high earlier on and continues to be high until this day, it can be said that terrorism after 9/11 became overestimated.

2.3 Overestimation of Terrorism: Terrorism and Coconuts

Overestimation of terrorism is frequently caused by irrational fears and societies' fear of a terrorist attack is high. The danger of falling victim to a terrorist attack is thereby assessed wrongly. Statistics show that is more probable to die getting hit by a coconut or bitten by a shark than being killed in an attack by terrorists.[3] But why do we assess terrorism so wrongly and frequently overestimate it? According to sociologist Paul Marsden, emotions are contagious. When others cry or laugh we are compelled to do likewise. The same counts for fears. Fears are contagious. Fears thereby belong to human nature. Our predecessors needed fear to guarantee their survival. Today the media also plays a role. Although statistics shown on TV or the web can be interpreted rationally, fears are irrational and images and headlines can provoke fears in many ways. Walter Krämer, an expert for statistics, explains the overestimation of risks.[4] To him fears are contagious and can lead to mass panics. He states moreover that we underestimate those risks we take voluntarily. Risks that are beyond our control are especially threatening. Furthermore, concerted incidents – incidents in which many people die suddenly – are especially fearsome. The problem of the overestimation of terrorism lies in the fact that the most dangerous consequences of terrorism are

actually being ignored. Indirect consequences such as for example the limitation of individual freedoms can be much more detrimental to a society than the direct consequences of terrorism themselves.

2.4 Overestimation of Terrorism: Terrorism as Provocation

The overestimation of terrorism can lead to unintended consequences. The indirect yet important consequences of terrorism have also been described by Peter Waldmann.[5] According to him, terrorism is a strategy of communication attempting to cause insecurity and terror among society but also sympathy and support. When the state overreacts to terrorism the strategy of provocation is successful and terrorist groups can hope to gather support from the population that does not accept the overreaction by the state. The danger for the state lies in developing from a democracy into a dictatorship that limits individual freedoms in order to fight terrorism. The Red Army Faction in Germany tried to provoke the German state into overreaction and many other examples illustrate how terrorist groups want to mobilize support as an indirect consequence of their acts.

2.5 Misinterpretation of Terrorism: Are Terrorists mentally ill?

Terrorism is frequently under- or overestimated. However, the factors driving radicalization are also commonly misinterpreted. For many people it is somewhat calming to imagine perpetrators of horrendous acts as mentally ill. Yet not everyone who becomes a terrorist is 'crazy' so to speak. While a couple of decades ago terrorism researchers assumed mental illness on the part of terrorists, this assumption

has been corrected and no clear correlation between mental illness and terrorism has been found. Instead, terrorists are as mentally sound or ill as the rest of the population.[6] Nevertheless, in the last years it has been found that so-called lone-wolves indeed often are psychologically unstable and this applies to right-wing terrorists just as much as for jihadists. In the end, the assessment has to be made case by case and an important question is whether an attack has been politically motivated. It is this political motivation that differentiates terrorism, for example, from crime. The assessment of this political motivation is also important for policy makers and society. On several occasions, terrorist attacks have been preliminarily assessed as a rampage perpetrated by an unstable individual. For example, in Germany especially right-wing terrorist attacks are often correlated with mental illness, such as the attack in Munich in the Olympia shopping centre in 2016. It was only later acknowledged that an extremist right-wing motivation stood behind the attack . The classification of an attack as perpetrated by a mentally ill person can trivialize the deed and ignore the embedment of the perpetrator in wider radical networks.

2.6 Misinterpretation of Terrorism: Are Terrorists uneducated and poor?

Next to the misinterpretation of terrorists as psychologically ill there is a certain bias to understand terrorists as disadvantaged. Quite often it has been assumed that poverty, lack of opportunities or lack of education are reasons for resorting to terrorism. However, several study projects have been able to weaken these arguments. For example, some researchers observed that

a high level of education can even be related to a more radical approach. Among the right-wing extremists in Europe there are individuals right from the middle of society, and separatist movements often operate in more prosperous regions. Even though separatism does not necessarily turn into terrorism, separatist movements often "form" a radicalization environment. The motivation for radicalization can be as diverse as the individuals themselves. Going through the biographies of radicalized individuals, a high variance can be noted. Osama Bin Laden originally came from an entrepreneurial family of multimillionaires from Saudi Arabia. Andreas Baader from the Red Army Faction had to leave high school and came into conflict with the law several times. Stephan B., the attacker of the Halle synagogue shooting in October 2019, was unemployed, railed at everything and everyone according to his own mother, and blamed "the Jews" for his situation. Millionaires' son, highly gifted dropout and unemployed individual – looking for the common denominator is quite difficult and leads to the assumption that radicalization processes are as individual as the radicalized individuals themselves. Among them there are the more or less privileged, highly and little educated, wealthy persons as well as those fighting for survival.[7]

3. A look inside the Phenomenon

One reason for the misinterpretation of terrorism is the lack of information thereof. But although it is hard to access reliable information and data about terrorists because they operate in secrecy, it is nevertheless possible to identify patterns and gain insights into the inner life of terrorist organizations. In the following I will

share some of the findings I collected while leading the research group 'How 'Terrorists' learn'. These findings contribute to breaking up the black box of terrorism.

3.1 What is terrorism

Let's firstly look at the definition of terrorism. Terrorism is an essentially contested concept. The debate on a definition has been described as the Bermuda triangle of terrorism research by Brian Jenkins. The problem is aggravated by the mingling of scientific and political discourses.[8] That after September 11th so called embedded experts investigated terrorism for the government getting their funding for example from defence ministries did not help the lack of agreement among scientists. Since the term was here rather seen in light of counterterrorism, it was used to demonize and delegitimize the opponent. In political discourses frequently one's freedom fighter turns into another's terrorist. While the contested nature of the term implies that there will be no universal definition, there is nevertheless a perspective in mainstream terrorism studies that assumes that terrorism is a form of violence that can be differentiated from other forms of violence and that there are elements of a definition that can be used as a basis of discussion. One such element is the killing of civilians. However, criminals sometimes kill civilians too. An adding element would be the political purpose – terrorists kill civilians for political purposes. Yet again, the same can be said about states – states also kill civilians for political purposes. The opinions on the existence of state terrorism diverge, however recent events like the Ukraine war shed new light on the state terrorism term. An interesting definitional element is terrorism as a communication strategy

that addresses different audiences – such as the enemy state, the enemy population of the own followers. These elements from some of the defining features of the terrorism term that help researchers to speak a common language inspite of ongoing disagreements about the phenomenon's definition.

3.2 Painting a differentiated picture

The underestimation, overestimation and misinterpretation of terrorism is due to a lack of a differentiated picture. Instead of lumping different terrorisms together it makes sense to ask what for example terrorist organizations actually have in common and what not. David Rapoport, the pioneer of terrorism research, described different waves of terrorism in recent history – namely the anarchist wave from the 1880s to the 1990ies, the anti-colonial wave from the 1920ies to the 1960ies, the leftist wave from 1960 to 1990 and the religious wave since the 1980ies onwards.[9] Each wave is characterized by its transnational spread and by certain doctrines and technologies. Each wave lasts approximately for one generation and the religious wave should correspondingly come to an end in the presence raising the question for what comes next. One possibility is that the right-wing movement constitutes a new fifths wave.[10] Interestingly, when looking at the Right, many parallels to earlier waves become clear. Right-wing extremists share with anarchists the tactic of propaganda by deed – perpetrating spectacular attacks with the goal to wake up the sleeping masses. They share with the leftist wave the criticism of the elites. According to the vision of the great exchange propagated by Renaud Camus, capitalistic elites in the West want to exchange the white population with immigrants. And the right-wing extremists share with the religious wave the use of lone wolves and the perspective of peace as something unmanly. While different forms of terrorism generally share their war rhetoric and a claim for justice, seeing themselves as victims acting in self-defence, they differ in their ideological reference frames. This difference does not mean that terrorist groups act in isolation and are not embedded transnationally and historically as just shown. If we look at right-wing terrorism today, it can be metaphorically described as the grandchild of leftist terrorism, step child of religious terrorism and small brother of populist regimes. Right-wing extremists are not only widely embedded but also intentionally co-opt the discourses of other groups. So-called discourse piracies lead to GDR-Slogans, solidarity with Nelson Mandela or slogans for fighting climate change by right-wing extremists. The purpose of these discourse piracies for right-wing movements is to appear more moderate and to get accepted as belonging to the middle of society.[11] Some observers also describe the tactic of inversion used by the Right. They are blamed for using Nazi Symbols and they themselves cite the horrors of the holocaust. They are blamed for not accepting the constitution and they themselves invoke law and order in their rhetoric. While the lines between different forms of terrorism are clearly blurring in the present, as also becomes clear in protests consisting of leftists, rightists, conspiracy theoreticians or corona deniers, the variety of different forms of terrorism is high and it is key to understand commonalities and differences. Arguably, all extremisms are the same but the nuances are also important. Even between terrorist groups among the same historical wave there can be differences and commonalities also leading to learning among groups. Sometimes terrorist groups thereby learn through direct exchange. The Provisional IRA for example learned a lot from the South African ANC. Members of the ANC went into the prisons in Northern Ireland and taught the IRA members that they can also win by peaceful means. While in Belfast, an interview partner told me that meeting members of the ANC was the decisive moment for him which eventually led to his change of mind. Ideas travel as the example of Northern Ireland illustrates, where Catholics are seen analogous to the blacks of South Africa and Protestants analogous to the whites of South Africa. While the IRA members learned from the ANC, they saw themselves in contradistinction for example to the Red Army Faction, claiming that they represent substantially more people and have a real cause in contrast to the RAF. Among the different Islamist groups there is also much room for disagreement. The Egyptian Gamaa Islamiya – the group responsible for the Luxor Massacre in the 1990ies – called for a ceasefire initiative in 1997 and its leaders published about 20 books explaining their change of mind. They also argued against the radicalism of Al Qaeda and stated the following in one of their books:

> Improper interaction with reality is not limited to those who are defeated by it or who are unaware of its facts; the matter extends to others who look at reality through a lens that is sometimes colored by their desires and sometimes by their anger. There are also those who rely on interpreting reality using erroneous interpretations; some might rely on a conspiracy-based interpretation of events and facts, while others might rely on a deterministic interpretation of the course of events on the basis of historical or economic determinism, or some other form thereof, as if life were a chemical laboratory.[12]

The Gamaa Islamiya no longer wanted to see life as a chemistry lab painted in black and white and clearly differentiated themselves from Al Qaeda's radical course. Terrorist groups are capable of learning and they copy friends and enemies alike. Only by understanding their learning capacities and their tactical and strategic transformations as a result of learning can counterterrorism go beyond repressive measures that only provoke more violence and develop strategies of dialogue. The variety among terrorist groups is high and grasping that variety prevents the state and society alike from seeing terrorism in black and white. An understanding of terrorism itself is thereby a form of dialogue. Empathy without sympathy – as anthropologist Günther Schlee[13] has put it – helps to open new channels for conflict resolution.

3.3 What do terrorist organizations have in common with other organizations?

Terrorist groups do not only differ from and resemble each other; they can also be compared to non-terrorist organizations. In one of their books on their revisions the leaders of the Gamaa Islamiya lament that one does not have two lives: "We cannot live two lives or live our years twice over so as to have one life in which to experiment and make errors and another in which to learn from our mistakes."[14] When reading these sentences I thought of my research group. As field researchers we go into the field and collect experiences and afterwards we return behind the desk and analyse that experience. It surely feels like two different

lives. What is important here is that many of the statements made by the Gamaa Islamiya leaders would be applicable to most of us or for example to leaders of business organizations raising the question: what do terrorist organizations have in common with other organizations and what differentiates them.

Thus, terrorist groups even have a lot in common with the organizations they are fighting. In the course of conflict, terrorist groups start resembling their enemies. The action-reaction logic of violence and counter-violence leads to a spiral of escalation through which the conflicting parties become more and more similar. The leaders of the Gamaa Islamiya for example read the literature of its enemies such as Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilization'. They thoroughly studied their enemies' literature and reflected on it. The Gamaa leaders generally had a lot of time for literature studies and reflection in prison. In one of their books they spell out the following reflection:

> The best thing is to take time to think when you are somewhat remote from the struggle, and you are able to look over the whole map from a distance [...] Those who work for Islam have been prevented from doing so over recent years under the pressures of the terrible persecution they have faced, and their activity has become simply action and reaction.[15]

Education and the production of knowledge in prison also characterized other organizations. Members of the IRA even formed reading circles in prison. Just like the members of the Gamaa Islamiya, they also came in contact with individuals with other opinions and world views. A certain openness – somewhat paradoxically achieved while in prison – and the emphasis on education is a further point that terrorist groups have in common with a variety of other organizations. Education and openness form the essence of universities or schools and most other institutions.

Additionally, intergenerational processes take place in terrorist groups that characterize for example business organizations alike. The leaders of the Gamaa Islamiya emphasize that during their belligerent past they were young and stupid. They have developed a sense of responsibility. Thus, they even admit in their books that they have made mistakes. It is one thing to admit a minor error but to lead thousands of people sometimes even into death and then declare 'we were wrong' also testifies the profoundness of the revisions of the Gamaa Islamiya leaders. These leaders uncovered the errors they were making and even identified obstacles to correcting their course. They argue in their books that many Muslim societies fall short of self-criticism, and "points of error multiply." Thus, "Human beings are enchanted by their own actions [...] they consider that they have reached perfection in their works, and shortcomings or defects should not be sought within them." A further obstacle identified by the Gamaa leaders surrounds the notion that leaders are excessively sanctified, and that such excess is unnecessary and counterproductive. Moreover, ignorance and fancy "obscure the truth of matters from man." And man is often "hostile towards that of which he is ignorant."[16] The leaders of the Gamaa Islamiya admitted their mistakes when they matured and saw their belligerent youth in a different light. Similarly, the leaders of the IRA argue that with their peace initiative they wanted to protect the youth from making the same mistakes. It has moreover been argued that in the case of the IRA it was precisely the mingling of different generations that facilitated the peace process. Intergenerational learning is key for business organizations that want to keep up with the times. Some terrorist groups have realized that as well.

Additionally, terrorist groups are organized in more or less hierarchical structures, have specific forms of communication and further organizational routines that equally characterize any other organization. Education, intergenerational processes and organizational structures are features which we find beyond terrorist groups. And yet, there are several elements that are unique about terrorism. What differentiates them from other organizations is their particularly clandestine environment. Thus, a major difference lies in the underground existence of terrorists. Martha Crenshaw for example writes that the "commitment to violence as a primary method of action condemns terrorist organizations to... operate clandestinely. Terrorist organizations are predominantly underground conspiracies, and their activities are governed by the strictest rules of secrecy".[17] Similarly, Michael Horowitz writes that "[t]hey are different from states because they exist in a constant state of war".[18]

The existence in the underground and in a constant state of war mentally shapes members of terrorist organizations. These members often exhibit a strong sense of justice, claims for their own victimhood and an emphasis on their right to self-defence. Moral outrage can be found almost among all forms of terrorism and seems to be a specificity thereof.

4. Conclusion

Terrorism is a puzzle. It is difficult to take a look inside. As field researchers we try to do exactly that – gather findings about the inner life of terrorist organizations. We thereby encounter numerous obstacles but also opportunities. One such opportunity is that going into the field can substantially enrich the researcher. Field research can for example help the field researcher to realize his own normative assumptions. Thus, he or she can learn that even peace is an agenda. What is violence and what not is ultimately a political question. In a way field researching terrorism implies stepping out of one's own normative context and to realize one's own implicit normative assumptions. Furthermore, how the researcher is viewed by the interviewee influences the findings gathered and is influenced by many factors. The researcher's profession, gender or nationality can substantially influence the interview. During my field research, Hamas members in Syria associated my nationality with Adolf Hitler, in Kurdish Turkey interviewees lamented Germany's export of weapons to Turkey, in Egypt the Israeli flag served as a doormat to a hall where Egyptians demonstrated against the Lebanon war and in Colombia interviewees complained about the interventions of the International community. My nationality brought with it associations for my interviewees and hence implications for the course and content of the interviews. Nevertheless, this also contributed to my realization of my own normative biases.

Terrorism is a puzzle. Even if we overcome hurdles of communication access still is difficult making the terrorism phenomenon so puzzling. Interviewees are often afraid to talk about sensitive issues. State violence can usher in a culture of silence. And

yet, simultaneously, many like to speak and to be listened to. The willingness to talk can however also lead to hopes and expectations the researcher can hardly fulfil. One danger lies in becoming used as an instrument for propaganda. A Hamas interviewee told me that Hamas makes peace with Israel to show the world that Israel does not want peace. He wanted me to carry propagandistic messages to Germany. Expectations of interviewees can lead to feelings of guilt on the part of the researcher. However, he or she must have enough distance not to feed propaganda discourses. At the same time the researcher cannot burden the interviewees for publication purposes. At the end the interviewees want a certain control over what they have said. The researcher has to balance these different coins of sensitive interviews.

Terrorism is a puzzle. Anthropologist Günther Schlee has emphasized the importance of understanding and not forgiving violence. In his solution of the puzzle empathy without sympathy is necessary to break up the black box of terrorism and gather insights into this nebulous phenomenon. A member of the Italian Red Brigades once said that it is one thing to leave prison but another to break out of one's mental prison. Our misinterpretations and biases about terrorism that emanate for example from difficulties of access to this underground phenomenon also constitute our mental prisons. The black box of terrorism can only be opened through an attempt of understanding rather than destroying the manifold similar and dissimilar organizations and their members.

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There is no terrorism here!: New Zealand's long–standing gulf between perception and reality

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This paper seeks to explore how 'terrorism' has been perceived in New Zealand from the beginning of terrorism's modern era in 1968 leading to the present day. For much of this period terrorism was presumed to occur elsewhere and always perceived as unlikely in New Zealand. This paper traverses the 1970s, considers the impact of the *Rainbow Warrior* bombing in 1985 and the controversy that surrounded the Operation Eight investigation in 2007. None of these periods prompted an examination of the nature of local terrorism, nor did they make much impact on the prevailing perception that *there was no terrorism in New Zealand*. Well publicised international developments in terrorism occurred apace in the early 21st century, which New Zealand watched from a distance, perceiving it as a problem a world away, and not one that needed serious consideration at home. The 15 March 2019 attacks shattered this illusion, though not for the first time, and left New Zealand having to confront the issue it had long ignored. The complexity of the post-COVID19 lockdown period brings with it challenges in determining the potential varying impacts of post-truth belief and expression, and what, if any, connection there is with violent extremism and terrorism now or likely to be in the future. In navigating its future response to terrorism, New Zealand would do well to embrace the omissions of its past.

New Zealanders in the twentieth century by and large perceived terrorism as a foreign phenomenon, which did not occur domestically. The country was far away from the rest of the world. Its political system was seen as stable and unlikely to prompt violent contention, despite politically charged unrest during the Depression years and the 1951 waterfront strike. These periods did evoke violence and even the occasional bombing, but they were rare, usually isolated, not fatal and easily forgotten. The bombing of a railway bridge during a 1951 mining strike was labelled 'terrorism' by Prime Minister Sidney Holland; the label did not stick, nor prompt any subsequent similar activity.[1] The incident was more commonly regarded as an extension of the strike or protest, by one or a few fringe individuals who failed to inspire anyone to emulate them.

In 1965, New Zealand committed combat troops to the Vietnam War. This prompted little public concern from New Zealanders initially. However, well documented protest subsequently emerged, as well as much less documented deliberate bombings. In 1970 alone there were at least a dozen politically motivated bombings or attempted bombings in New Zealand. All were prompted by anti-Vietnam war sentiment to some degree, but other political motives were evident.[2] At a number of bomb scenes notes were left or sent to the media claiming responsibility, detailing clear dissatisfaction with the political status quo or government policy and a determination to continue violence until policy changed.[3]

On 13 January 1970, a bomb exploded at the Intercontinental Hotel in Auckland, where a few days later visiting US Vice President Spiro Agnew was scheduled to meet New Zealand Government Ministers.[4] A police investigation was already underway following the discovery of an undetonated bomb at an ammunition store at the New Zealand Army base at Ardmore ten days earlier. A letter had been sent to the *New Zealand Herald* by the 'Revolutionary Activists' claiming responsibility for the attempted bombing, demanding New Zealand withdraw from ANZUS and SEATO, "the establishment of a people's militia and transfer of industries to workers".[5]

Despite the claims of responsibility, intimated motivations, clear successful and unsuccessful attempts at violence, which continued throughout 1970 and following years – these 'revolutionary activists' were not called terrorists, nor their violence – 'terrorism'. Defending three men charged with arson offences stemming from bombings or attempted bombings in September 1970, defence counsel depicted them as "not saboteurs, but protesters". The sentencing Judge only in part disagreed:

In his Honour's opinion it was not a political protest. The offences were based on truculence, defiance of authority, and unwillingness to accept the discipline of an ordered society. Anyone had a right to speak and think as he wished, so long as he did not harm others. They also had a right to protest, but this protest must be within the law.[6]

Neither Judge nor defence counsel appeared to perceive the term 'terrorism' as remotely applicable – nor did media reporting of this and other bombing incidents, police investigations or court proceedings, suggest it. Any risk to public safety as the result of bombings, or challenge to the state's monopoly on the use of force, or attempts to force changes in policy by violence, seem to have been entirely subsumed by the much greater afront to public decency.

In 1971, activist Tim Shadbolt explained the actions of his contemporaries as an evolution of protest in the face of peaceful tactics that had been ineffective. "The Vietnam War went on despite all the marches down Queen Street and Lambton Quay, and the majority of [university] students were still apathetic."[7] Shadbolt referred to those responsible for 13 bombings that he recorded as occurring in a space of 12 months as 'The Bombers' motivated by their objections to New Zealand's involvement in Vietnam. While he argued 'The Bombers' were not members of communist or socialist groups, being motivated solely by their objections to Vietnam – he nevertheless noted the firebombing of one group by another "as a result of an ideological split between radical groups."[8] Despite claiming he was opposed to the bombing, he justified it:

No, I don't agree with bombing. But if I did I'd bomb and bomb hard. Bomb every troop train, every munitions cargo and every supply boat that left for Vietnam.

I believe that what you have to do is blow people's minds. This is a political war more than a military one.[9]

The notion that any of this could be seen describing or supporting 'terrorism' did not enter Shadbolt's mind. Nor, it would seem, did it occur to anyone else. Despite Shadbolt's claims, among this milieu was a spectrum of radical expression; there were those sympathising with communism and anarchism, there was a clear challenge to authority and opposition to Western foreign policies. Protests involved 'scuffles' with police. If there was 'extremism' and irrational 'conspiracy' thinking, there was no social media to capture and amplify it. A study considering how this earlier protest, dissent and anti-authority expression compares to contemporary experience could prove insightful, if it were possible.

New Zealand took no steps toward legislating against 'terrorism' or empowering agencies to counter terrorism in the 1970s. Tentative steps were taken, beginning a theme in New Zealand of tiny pockets of practitioners more aware than most of the possibility that terrorism could occur, but with no influence over broader perceptions. NZ Police had developed a small headquarters-based terrorist intelligence capability by mid-1975 – the Police Terrorist Intelligence Unit, but the precise dates of its establishment and subsequent disbandment are not recorded in police records.[10] Anti-Terrorist Squads (ATS) within the existing Armed Offenders Squads were also formed a few years later.[11] Terrorism was added to the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service Act in 1977.[12] All of these developments were reactions to an upsurge in international terrorism, rather than any broader awareness of terrorism risk in New Zealand.

In 1975, New Zealand experienced its first international terrorism plot. It developed rapidly and was detected entirely by accident.[13] In October 1975, three men of the Ananda Marga (AM) sect were arrested after breaking into a quarry at Horokiwi, and admitted their intent was to obtain explosives to blow up the Indian High Commission in Wellington to draw attention to the imprisonment of the sect's leader in India. Police discourse internally, and externally with other law enforcement and intelligence agencies noted that "Ananda Marga in India is known as a criminal terrorist organisation," but did not otherwise refer to this incident in New Zealand as 'terrorism' or a precursor to it.[14] There was little media coverage of the incident. With no terrorism legislation existing, the AM offenders were charged and convicted for burglary and conspiracy to commit arson. The incident then largely faded from public memory. The public were unaware of warning calls made from New Zealand the day before an Ananda Marga bomb exploded at the Sydney Hilton Hotel on 13 February 1978, killing three people.[15]

In the meantime, the Springbok rugby tour of New Zealand between July and September 1981 prompted levels of protest comparable to a decade previously, along with a number of actual, attempted and threatened bombings. Thereafter, an individual fired a shot at the Queen in Dunedin in October 1981; an anarchist killed himself while bombing the NZ Police Computer Centre in Wanganui in 1982, and the Wellington Trade's Hall was bombed in 1984 killing one person. These later incidents were 'lone actor' events (discovered only after they occurred) and were not linked to any broader movement.[16]

In 1985, the French *Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure* (DGSE) undertook a covert operation against Greenpeace, sinking their flagship *Rainbow Warrior* in Auckland Harbour in July 1985 by setting explosive charges against its hull. Suddenly 'terrorism' flashed up bright and clear as the label for French actions across the entire spectrum of government, academic and public domains. The sinking of the *Rainbow Warrior* was commonly labelled as the "first act of international terrorism" in New Zealand, the "end of innocence" and a watershed moment denoting that New Zealand was no longer immune from terrorism.[17] One commentator asserted that New Zealand previously had little need for the term 'terrorism' at all until the *Rainbow Warrior* bombing occurred.[18]

Precisely none of this was true. Over the course of the previous 15 years, New Zealand had experienced multiple incidents of deliberate politically motivated violence, two of which had caused fatalities and several others had come close to doing so. If none of it was perceived as 'terrorism', it was because New Zealanders seemed unwilling to recognise it as such. This obduracy persisted even as New Zealand enacted its first and only 20th Century terrorism legislation in the wake of the *Rainbow Warrior* incident. Sheridan Webb in her recent study

of New Zealand's terrorism legislation observed:

> Within this fraught context, the International Terrorism (Emergency Powers) Bill 1987 was developed. In the Bill's third reading, Deputy Prime Minister Geoffrey Palmer stated … that "there should be no misunderstanding that the Bill is aimed at anything other than internationally motivated terrorism, because it is becoming increasingly evident that that is where the danger from terrorism lies." The Labour-led government was clearly hesitant to consider the possibility of domestic terrorism due to concern that discourse would encompass domestic protest, especially since the 1981 Springbok Tour protests (which Labour generally supported) were still a recent memory.[19]

New Zealand would concede terrorism a risk to be mitigated, but only from the comfort of its long-standing assumption that it was a foreign-borne affliction, and nothing New Zealanders actually did could be regarded as such.

The 9/11 attacks confirmed New Zealand's prevailing assumption that terrorism was a problem largely manifest on distant shores. New Zealand hastily improvised the Terrorism Suppression Act (TSA) in 2002. The TSA was not designed to be a serious attempt to counter the risk of terrorism in New Zealand. The TSA was a show of compliance with UN Security Council resolutions in the aftermath of 9/11 to demonstrate New Zealand was in step with the international community. No need was seen to review the TSA until almost two decades later, due to the assumption that terrorism was unlikely ever to be a problem.[20]

In October 2007, NZ Police terminated Operation Eight (which had involved multiple successive surveillance warrants issued by the High Court). Seventeen people were arrested following a lengthy investigation into weapons acquisition, 'quasi-military' style training, and expressions of intentions to use violence for assassination, race war and violence against police.[21] Police sought authorisation from the Attorney General (which was quickly devolved to the Solicitor General) to lay charges under the TSA. Despite the fact that a) the High Court had issued successive surveillance warrants over the previous several months, b) the High Court would not issue any more because it believed NZ Police had a sufficiency of evidence to prosecute and, finally, c) in October 2007 the High Court issued a search warrant for almost 50 addresses in Auckland, Bay of Plenty, Manawatu and Wellington regions – the Solicitor General declared in November that the TSA was faulty, its wording unclear and that he could not lay charges under it.[22] While almost all subsequent criticism was directed at Police, this dramatic variation in the judiciary's actions passed virtually unnoticed.

Most of those arrested were thereafter released, and media coverage subsequently took up the view that those affected should never have been arrested in the first place. The predominant narrative was that the police had over-reacted, and what occurred in October 2007 was not counter-terrorism, but racism writ large, where the state had used unreasonable force against Maori people. This simplification was more easily conveyed in the media and more digestible by the bulk of New Zealanders who had never thought deeply about terrorism and preferred to shape what occurred into an easier frame of understanding. Academics – supposedly critics and consciences of society and there to challenge its

assumptions – simply did not do so in this case.[23] The complexity of the situation involving a grouping of activists, from various causes, brought together by overlapping (but certainly not common) desires, ethnically diverse and spread across the country was not delved into. The ease with which a group obtained and apparently trained with firearms, Molotov cocktails and improvised explosives seemed not to elicit general concern at the time, nor prompt any attention to implications of some other group or individual doing so in the future. There was also the puzzle of what those under investigation intended to do; and when, or indeed if, they ever would have done anything at all. Was this violent extremism? Or was it a highly successful exercise in activist theatre designed to provoke a reaction easily discredited as heavy-handed? Either way, real or not, there was ample reason to review a fundamental question – 'What was terrorism in New Zealand?' Regardless of the cause or ideological motive, what behaviour was acceptable and what was not?

But New Zealand did not confront these questions. A review of the TSA was ordered, but then later cancelled.[24] Amid the furore, the Crimes (Repeal of Seditious Offences) Amendment Act was passed, removing sedition as a crime in New Zealand.[25] The reason given was that laws relating to sedition were outdated and unduly interfered with the freedom of speech.[26] Speech or actions which incited violence against the state – were no longer criminal acts.

As the tumultuous year 2007 came to a close, terrorism was a crime that could not be prosecuted because the Act proscribing it in New Zealand was too confusing for the judiciary to understand, and the crime of sedition no longer existed. Rather than confront the complex issue of terrorism, New Zealanders returned to the comfort of their long-held assumption that real

terrorism did not occur in their country. The Police later apologised for the action they took under Operation Eight, thus compounding the idea that the whole affair was a misstep, and no one was any the wiser on the question – what was terrorism in New Zealand?[27]

Meanwhile, social media was harnessed by ISIS to recruit and activate individual perpetrators, inciting them to perform mass killings across the US and Europe. The Orlando, San Bernadino, and Nice attacks received significant media coverage in New Zealand. The devastating multi-staged attack by Anders Brevik in Oslo in 2011, demonstrated that the threat of 21st century terrorism was not ideologically confined to religion. These new millennial attackers were defined by their modes of attack against the communities in which they lived, or lived near to. They used automatic weapons and improvised explosives, not against political figures, but against ordinary people in crowded and largely unpoliced places. They took no hostages, but instead aimed to kill volumes of people, foregoing the traditional ransoms or trading hostages for tangible outcomes. If weapons purposely designed for killing were unable to be accessed, they resorted to everyday items such as knives and vehicles. New Zealanders in general watched these developments, perceiving them as horrific but distant curiosities. Little need was seen to anticipate the possibility of anything like this occurring locally.

Throughout almost the entirety of the first two decades of the 21st century, New Zealanders continued to perceive terrorism as a hemisphere away, underscored by the fact that while dreadful attacks occurred elsewhere – including in Australia – they simply could not happen in New Zealand. This perception was also true in reverse, with New Zealand often seen as having nothing to

offer in the counter terrorism context. Attending a terrorism conference in Sydney in 2017, the author was asked by a prominent Australian counter terrorism academic – what New Zealand was doing there, "there is no terrorism in New Zealand" he said.[28] New Zealanders themselves continued to feed the notion. The following year, at a National Security Conference run by the Centre of Defence and Security Studies, at Massey University, a Muslim speaker presented New Zealand as a role model for the rest of the world, citing its commitment to democracy, human rights and diversity as its key strengths. "In comparison to our Western counterparts, there has been no exodus of young Muslims heading overseas to fight, nor have there been any major acts of terror within our country."[29] The assumption was clear, terrorism was not only a distant phenomenon, but New Zealand did everything so well, it was unlikely to occur locally.

However, in March 2019, New Zealand experienced a brutal attack on two Christchurch mosques, from a completely unknown and undetected well-prepared attacker, who gave no warning and who exploited all New Zealand's assumptions about itself. Despite the sheer scale of the death toll, there was very little involved in the attack that was without precedent. Mass killings had occurred in New Zealand before, semi-automatic weapons had been used in mass shooting incidents, and calls for the restriction of semi-automatics were of long standing, as was political inertia in terms of heeding them. Concerns about firearms licensing had been voiced and lone actors had gone undetected before carrying out politically motivated violence on a number of previous occasions. Yet almost identical illusions to those used for the *Rainbow Warrior* bombing 34 years earlier headlined the 15 March attacks. New Zealand's

immunity from terrorism was gone, it had experienced its end of innocence and international terrorism had finally emerged in New Zealand. Probably the most succinct summary came from Guardian journalist Elle Hunt:

> *It is as my friend from Christchurch messaged me this morning, "inconceivable". There are many words for this horror, but that is the one I and many others can't get past. There is no terrorism in New Zealand, I'd have told you before I went to bed on Thursday night – and wondered why on earth you'd asked.*[30]

Without question, terrorism in New Zealand had been less frequent and less severe than in many other countries and 15 March was different because of the scale of the tragedy occurring that day. But terrorism had nevertheless existed in New Zealand for fifty years, happening periodically, prompted by various local and international influences, perpetrated usually by isolated lone actors, or small fringe groupings, without warning and at times inspired by ideas emanating from overseas. The primary reason why New Zealand was caught by surprise in March 2019 was not because terrorism was absent previously, but that New Zealanders had so patently ignored its occurrence, and, despite clear local and international omens in the 21st century, had remained transfixed by the perception that it would not seriously occur. That Brenton Tarrant had gone undetected should not have surprised New Zealanders, when historically a number of previous individual perpetrators of political violence had not been detected either. The only well-known police interception of an allegedly nefarious group prior to any violent incident occurring had been in 2007. The police ultimately apologised for doing so.

In February 2020, New Zealand belatedly produced a Counter Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy; it was short, undeveloped and hastily produced before the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Christchurch attacks (RCOI) could criticise the non-existence of such a strategy.[31] It has since been revised, but not extensively. In any event, it has been largely overtaken by a bureaucratic scramble to 'implement' the 44 recommendations made by the RCOI, when it reported in December 2020. However, The RCOI was premised on 15 March 2019 being effectively the start point of terrorism in New Zealand, and it missed the opportunity to review the past 50 years of intermittent political violence and drill down to the basics of how terrorism had manifested itself during the period. Terrorism was framed instead by the RCOI, as singly ideological, recent, racist and Right Wing in its origins. While no agency was found to have information it should have acted on and didn't, the RCOI nevertheless asserted that too much intelligence resource had been spent on Islamist concerns and not enough on Right Wing Extremism, as if counter terrorism was as simple as allocating a quota.[32] On 3 September 2021, ISIS inspired attacker Ahmed Samsudeen stabbed 7 people in an Auckland supermarket. He had been watched by police and NZSIS since 2016.[33] *Was he one of the individuals the RCOI would have suggested too much resource had been allocated to?* Moreover, Tarrant by his own admission did not come from Australia because of a deep underlying RWE presence in New Zealand, but because he saw the country as complacent about its own safety and security. His manifesto expressed disappointment in both Right Wing and gun lobby groups in New Zealand.[34] The former had been always small, fractious and recent research on 'Action Zealandia' – the most well-known

of such groups, suggests it remains largely dysfunctional.[35] Practitioners continue to warn against an undue focus on the singular ideologies of threat groups or individuals, and have drawn attention to the likelihood of perceived emerging threats being driven by a combination of motivations.[36] Despite this, broader public expectations continue to presume RWE as the primary and most serious terrorist concern in New Zealand.[37]

The COVID19 pandemic which resulted in periodic lockdowns and nation-wide vaccine mandates, has prompted new levels of dissent. This dissent, some with rational bases and some not, has flourished on social media and intersected with tiny but multi-faceted and vocal anti-authority, Christian conservative, conspiracist, sovereign citizen and other groups with a range of vague identities. In February 2022, many of these groups converged on Parliament grounds in Wellington for a 23-day occupation which culminated in a day of rioting on 2 March.[38] Concerns are held about the enduring nature of the motives and online expression of those who hold 'post-truth' or conspiratorial beliefs. Their expression includes inciting violence against the state and its government and individual ministers, including the Prime Minister.[39] But since 2007 such expression has not been a criminal act in New Zealand!

Here then is the cumulative risk of New Zealand foregoing the crime of sedition and in persistently refusing to acknowledge, discuss or debate historical trends in terrorism. Seeing nothing as relevant prior to 2019, perceiving little or no terrorism to have existed previously, or that relevant analogous events have occurred before, the country is at a standing start on terrorism in the 2020s. Future terrorism will likely be a kaleidoscope of bits and pieces of old modes, grafted onto new motivations, and

will almost certainly catch New Zealanders by surprise when it inevitably happens again. But more than that, dissent, protest against authority, strong and impassioned political criticism, radical thinking and extremism have all existed before in New Zealand. Whether there is any relationship between impassioned criticism, dissent and extremism; and between extremism, violent extremism and terrorism in a domestic context, is a question New Zealand has failed to address for half a century. Not for the lack of opportunity has this failure occurred, but because of an unwillingness to confront and fairly debate the questions – what is terrorism in New Zealand? Regardless of motivation, ideology or excuse – what politically inspired behaviour is acceptable and what is not?

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2   See John Battersby, The Ghost of New Zealand's Terrorism Past and Present, *National Security Journal,* 1 (2019), pp.35-47. Available at https://doi.org/10.36878/NSJ201901.35.

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6   "Four Year Sentence on Bombing Charge," Press, 10 September 1970, NLNZ.

7   Tim Shadbolt, *Bullshit & Jellybeans*, Alister Taylor (Wellington, 1971), p.127.

8   Shadbolt, p.128.

9   Shadbolt, p.130.

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21 Battersby, "The Ghost of New Zealand's Terrorism," pp.42-43.

22 Affidavit of Detective Sergeant Aaron Lee Pascoe, released under OIA request 2018; "Review of terror laws stopped," Sunday Star Times, 15 September 2013, available at http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/9166763/Review-of-terror-laws-stopped. In 2016 the author commenced interviewing former senior police officers regarding this operation. In the course of which was divulged the detail regarding the High Court judging the evidence to be sufficient for prosecution and no further warrants were necessary. This has since been confirmed by a subsequent interview with another officer involved, Interview, name withheld, 22 August 2022.

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31 For critique see John Battersby, Rhys Ball & Nick Nelson, New Zealand's Counter-terrorism Strategy: A Critical Assessment, *National Security Journal*, 2:1 (2020), pp.79-96, available at https://nationalsecurityjournal.nz/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2020/06/NSJ-2020-Battersby-Ball-Nelson.pdf

32 Report: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain on 15 March 2019, 26 November 2020, pp.14-15, 593; available at https://christchurchattack.royalcommission.nz/

33 "LynnMall terrorist named as Ahamed Aathil Mohamed Samsudeen, refugee status and criminal history revealed," Newshub, 4 October 2022, available at https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2021/09/lynnmall-terrorist-named-identity-revealed-after-court-lifts-suppression-order.html

34 Brenton Tarrant's manifesto "The Great Replacement", March 2019, viewed with permission granted by the Chief Censor. The document is otherwise not legally available in New Zealand.

35 James Halpin & Chris Wilson, "How online interaction radicalises while group involvement restrains: a case study of Action Zealandia from 2019 to 2021," *Political Science*, see latest articles list (2022) available at https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rpnz20/current.

36 NZSIS Director-General opening statement to Intelligence and Security Committee, 15 March 2022, available at https://www.nzsis.govt.nz/news/nzsis-director-general-opening-statement-to-intelligence-and-security-committee-2022/; see also Combined Threat Assessment Group, "The Violent Extremism Ideological Framework Explained, *National Security Journal*, 4:1 (2022); available at https://nationalsecurityjournal.nz/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2022/07/NSJ-2022-July-CTAG.pdf.

37 This is true also of overseas perceptions – the author has received a number of requests from overseas research groups to write on RWE in New Zealand. I approach such requests as I have done here, encouraging a broader view of the spectrum of risk.

38 New Zealand's parliament protest ends with clashes, arrests," Reuters, 2 March 2022, available at https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/new-zealand-police-dismantle-tents-tow-vehicles-clear-anti-vaccine-protests-2022-03-01/.

39 Such expression is easily located on various social media sites, but not wishing to draw attention to it, I have refrained from citing examples.

About the editors

Katja Theodorakis is a national security professional with academic, policy-relevant and international experience; her particular expertise lies in terrorism, extremism and propaganda/information dynamics, as well as Middle East politics.

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Katja has also engaged in academic research and teaching, after living in the Middle East, where she conducted educational projects and NGO work in Syria. Notable recent publications include 'ASPI's Counterterrorism Yearbook 2022: The Road From 9/11'; 'Counterterrorism as an Anti-Hero's Journey' (in Agenda for Change, 2022); 'The Convergence Puzzle: Australia, Germany and Emerging Cybersecurity Trends' (2020), as well as 'The Marawi Crisis: Urban Conflict and Information Operations' (with Dr. Charles Knight, 2019).

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