

Title: The Future of Right-Wing Terrorism in Canada

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Research Question:

What is the range of likely scenarios for future right-wing terrorism in Canada, based on connections to radical movements in the US and Europe? Which factors or actions may mitigate the most likely scenarios? How might the future of Canadian right-wing terrorism be distinct from those of the US and Europe?

Importance:

There has been a resurgence of right-wing terrorism in both the US and Europe, and Canada may see an upsurge in this threat in the near future. By comparing Canadian right-wing extremists with those abroad, policymakers and public officials can gauge the relative security threat posed by these groups and manage the unique challenges they create.

This research provides a general forecast of future violence based on recent changes within associated movements and networks, based in part on incident data established within the Canadian Incident Database (CIDB)—extremism.ca.

Research Findings:

Canada has many of the same basic ingredients that drive right-wing terrorism in both the United States and Europe. However, Canada has yet to experience a similar rise in violence of matching frequency, intensity and scale. Nonetheless, a large attack or intervention may motivate reciprocal radicalization of right-wing terrorists.

Despite their anti-government views, many Canadian right-wing extremists display a chauvinism that is activated in the face of foreign threats. A large-scale attack by an externally based threat like ISIS may spur a call for the kinds of attempted purges seen in Europe or targeted killings intended to scare perceived representatives of connected communities by demonstrating they are no longer safe within Canada.

Implications:

While predicting the future can be challenging, Canadian security agencies should reconsider their public stances on the potential for violence from right-wing terrorists. Given data on attacks in the United States and Canada on terrorism and extremism, right-wing organizations and lone wolves are capable of violence. The threat from lone wolves in the United States has been consistent over the last two decades, representing a substantial proportion of American attacks.



Canada should also do more to examine right-wing attacks against immigrants and make these communities more resilient. Previous waves of right-wing violence often began as mere harassment and escalated to lethal arsons and attacks emphasizing the need to ensure the safety of immigrant communities.

In addition, Canadian police agencies should prepare for standoffs with Freemen-on-the-Land and similar anti-government adherents. The history of extended standoffs in the United States suggests that some of these tactics may be imported into Canada.

Finally, Canada's greatest protection against the scourge of right-wing terrorism will be the continued promotion of its democratic ideals. The nation's multicultural distinctiveness, well-educated population, and progressive, secular political culture act as powerful bulwarks to large scale far right movements like those seen in the United States and Europe.