

TSAS WORKSHOP SERIES

June 8, 2018

Held in Ottawa, this one day workshop hosted by the *Canadian Network for Research on Terrorism, Security and Society* (TSAS) featured a variety of presentations by TSAS affiliates. The workshop was divided into four panels, with panelists presenting new insights into countering violent extremism based on the following: (1) new data on the process of radicalization; (2) comparative legal analyses; (3) new data on social networks; and (4) experimental and legal studies. Following each panel, an open discussion was held under the Chatham House rule.

Panel 1: Insights into Violent Extremism from New Data on the Process of Radicalization

Educational Trajectories of Radicalized Females in Montreal

Dr. Ratna Ghosh, Integrated Studies in Education, McGill University

In this session, Dr. Ghosh presented her research from a TSAS-funded research project on the educational trajectories of radicalized females in Montreal. Through focus group interviews with the families and peer groups of two young girls in Quebec who left to join Islamic State (IS) in Syria, Dr. Ghosh attempts to identify the circumstances that make some girls who are socialized in Canada vulnerable to Islamic State propaganda. The research relies on primary data, and pays particular attention to the experiences of radicalized females in the formal education system, their interpersonal relationships with peer groups and family members, and their use of social media and the Internet.

The study utilizes the theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory, which postulates that human development is influenced by biological, psychological, social, and institutional factors in one's social-ecological environment. The theory can be illustrated by a set of concentric circles. The individual is at the centre, and is influenced by: the microsystem, which consists of one's family, peers, and classmates; the mesosystem, which is the interaction of extended levels of microsystems; and the exosystem, which consists of factors, such as the media, that individuals are not necessarily in direct contact with, but they are influenced by nonetheless. The microsystem significantly impacts the society and culture in which individuals live, and as a result, this study takes the microsystem as its level of analysis.

The aims of the study are fourfold: (1) to explore the educational trajectories of two radicalized females who left or attempted to leave Greater Montreal to join IS; (2) to better understand the circumstances that make some females vulnerable to IS propaganda; (3) to examine the radicalization process of young females in Montreal, and; (4) to shed new light on this emerging phenomenon in the Quebec context. While the researchers could not gain access to the girls themselves, through the use of snowball sampling, they were able to interview the girls' families, peer groups, and community leaders. In total, three focus group interviews were conducted. The first group consisted of three male community leaders who knew the girls: one was a social worker, another was an imam, and the last was a researcher. The second group

consisted of three female friends who believed they were quite close to the girls, but did not know of their intention to travel to Syria. The final group consisted of the mother of one of the radicalized girls, and a brother-like figure of the second radicalized girl.

The study revealed three key findings. Firstly, participants noted that Muslim youth in Greater Montreal have exclusionary educational experiences, fraught with discrimination and marginalization. One of the interviewees, for example, recalled being referred to as “the immigrant” by a teacher, despite being born in Quebec. The three girls who made up the second focus group, however, suggested that non-formal education spaces, such as mosques, were not of concern, while their parents believed the contrary, as they were unaware of the messages and individuals that youth were exposed to in these spaces. The second main finding was that both girls experienced or were exposed to strained and dysfunctional relationships at home. Both girls also experienced differential treatment by their fathers compared to their brothers. Thirdly, focus group participants had no knowledge of the girls’ Internet searches or media consumption, including those related to arrangements to leave for Syria. Focus group participants did not appear to be concerned with the girls’ Internet browsing history; instead, they noted that they were more concerned with newspaper articles that blamed Muslims and Islam for terrorism, and the related negative attitude towards traditional female clothing such as the hijab.

Dr. Ghosh then shared some of the conclusions of the research project. Firstly, the primary data on extremists or radicalized persons was extremely difficult to obtain, in part due to participants’ reluctance to talk to researchers due to security concerns. Secondly, no gender-specific radicalization push factors could be identified, with the exception of differential treatment for Muslim women who wear the hijab, and increased mobility constraints placed on Muslim women by their families when compared to Muslim men. Thirdly, the girls’ family circumstances, and their experiences of marginalization in school and wider society, appeared to culminate into a need to escape to what they believed was a “better world” in Syria. As the study has demonstrated, a combination of factors appear to shape the path to radicalization. Each person’s individual circumstances, experiences, and thought process, make them more or less vulnerable to radicalization.

Based on the insights garnered through this research, Dr. Ghosh suggested that concrete efforts are needed to improve the integration of cultural communities into social institutions in Quebec. There is also an urgent need for improvement in teacher education. Teachers require training in dialogical methods through critical pedagogy that allows them to engage in constructive dialogue with students and address and unpack controversial topics. This is imperative, as education’s “soft power” makes it central to any comprehensive approach to CVE/PVE.

Prison Radicalization, Inmate Subcultures, and Informal Governance of Ideological Group

Membership

Will Schultz (PI: Kevin Haggerty, Sociology, University of Alberta)

In this session, Mr. Schultz presented his research from a project with Dr. Sandra Bucerius and Dr. Kevin Haggerty. Through almost 700 interviews with prison inmates, Mr. Schultz and his research team sought to address three key points: (1) whether radical groups serve as a place for belonging for prisoners in provincial institutions; (2) the correctional perceptions of radical groups, and the ways in which the correctional system gauges and defines radicalization within

its institutions; and (3) the perceptions of prison staff on what works when encountering radical groups and radicalized inmates. The researchers have received access to six prisons, and have conducted interviews in four thus far. Of these four institutions, two were remand centres, one was a mixed facility, and one was a sentence facility. Research was conducted over short timespans, ranging from 10-20 days. The research team was able to conduct 683 interviews with inmates from various units, and 122 interviews with correctional officers.

Mr. Schultz began the presentation by explaining the theoretical underpinnings of the project. Much of the literature on prison radicalization focuses on the idea of legitimacy. This is based on the belief that if institutions have some form of legitimacy in the eyes of its inhabitants, they will be less likely to produce radicalized prisoners. Disorganized and dirty institutions, on the other hand, are believed to be more likely to contribute to high levels of radicalization. Maintaining this focus on the theoretical concept of legitimacy, Mr. Schultz noted that the first institution the research team visited was quite unstable, had an open-concept design, and had massive inmate transfers. Institutions three and four were also open-concept, but were older than institution one. Institution three had large dormitories that housed 60-90 prisoners, making it an extremely difficult institution for officers and inmates, due to the absence of inmate privacy and officer control. All four institutions present many opportunities for the recruitment of gang members, and members of radical groups.

Conventional wisdom suggests that prisons are an incubator for extreme ideas. Prisoners are thought to form a captive audience, and many have characteristics that render them vulnerable to radicalization, including alienation, antisocial attitudes, disillusionment, and violent tendencies. This pattern certainly appears to be accurate when one analyzes the rate of gang membership in American and Canadian prisons. It also appears to be true in the European context, where notable terrorist attacks have been carried out by individuals who were radicalized in prison. Despite conventional wisdom, and the cases which support it, the researchers did not find radicalization of any type through their interviews, and the few individuals who could be considered radical were, for the most part, cases of poor mental health. While prison radicalization is possible, the study suggests that in the Canadian context, it is highly unlikely.

Given this unexpected finding, the researchers shifted their focus to the prison subcultures, in order to uncover the reasons why ideological group membership is limited in Canadian prisons. The researchers were also interested in how prison subcultures inhibit or foster prison radicalization, and why some specific prisons in specific jurisdictions seem more prone to producing radical inmates than others. They found that radicals were not accepted by the larger prison community. When the interviewees were asked about what radicalization actually meant, they overwhelmingly received responses about Islam. Interestingly, most prisoners distinguished between a quasi-mythical “radical Muslim” and the Muslim prisoners they knew and interacted with on a regular basis. The former is demonized and vilified, while the latter were accepted by the wider prison community, a trend which remains consistent throughout the study, suggesting that Canadian inmates are tolerant towards what they judge to be valid Islamic practice.

Overall, the study uncovered four main factors which inhibited radicalized messaging within their research setting. The first factor, referred to as the national cultural imaginary, suggests that radicalization is not Canadian. Inmates demonstrated this line of reasoning when they consistently stated that Canada is a multicultural nation, and that white supremacism and Islamist extremism were not to be tolerated. The racial profile of the prison was the second main inhibiting factor. Interviewees noted that fights within the prison are not to do with religion or

race, but about other factors. Interviewees also used race to compare and contrast Canadian and American prisons, with inmates in the latter forming race-based clusters and groups, while inmates in the former did not. However, many interviewees noted that massive Indigenous overrepresentation meant that the decision to adopt a racialized viewpoint of any type, especially one that was anti-Indigenous, such as white supremacist, would jeopardize inmates' safety. Third, gangs did not appear to be supportive of extremist ideations at all, as their interests were predominantly financial, rather than racial. Lastly, radicalization allowed prisoners and correctional officers to act outside of the established subcultural rules. While there is a clear subcultural divide between inmates and correctional officers that limits the ability of both groups to work collaboratively with one another, inmates cited instances in which the belief that certain prisoners were radicalized, prompted prisoners and inmates to work together to remove their common enemy.

Panel 2: Insights into Countering Violent Extremism from Comparative Legal Analyses

Global Financial Networks and Anti-Terrorism Financing Laws

Dr. Arthur Cockfield, Law, Queens University

In this session, Dr. Cockfield presented his research from a TSAS-funded project that he conducted in collaboration with Dr. Christian Leuprecht, M.A. student Pamela Simpson, and PhD candidate Maseeh Haseeb. The researchers utilize a terrorism resource model (TRM) methodology, which allows them to map and detect terrorist resourcing patterns. Coding the data derived from case law, they found 32 cases of terrorist financing from around the world, and aim to highlight key patterns in terrorist financing. TRM presents a major contribution to current efforts to counter terrorist financing, as it offers more and better information than existing methods, and can improve anti-terrorist financing laws, and police and risk management practices.

To begin the presentation, Dr. Cockfield contextualized the research team's work by providing an overview of global financial crime. In recent years, there have been a number of high profile data leaks from tax havens, such as the 2016 Panama Papers. These leaks have given us insight into the scope of illicit global financial flows. It is estimated that flows of transnationally laundered money equal roughly \$2.5 billion per year, which is primarily associated with the illicit narcotics industry. It is also estimated that Canadians currently have undisclosed financial wealth of approximately \$300 billion hidden away offshore, resulting in a massive revenue loss for the Canadian government.

Dr. Cockfield is specifically interested in studying the operations of offshore service providers, which are smaller companies based around the world that facilitate financial transfers. Since it is difficult to regulate and monitor these service providers, terrorist groups and other criminal entities tend to prefer to transfer their money to a haven and deal with offshore service providers. In studying the offshore world through a Canadian lens, Dr. Cockfield notes that lawyers and accountants in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, have facilitated global crooked financial networks from the 1970s-present. Canada has also been condemned by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), as it has been claimed that solicitor-client privilege hinders the ability to apprehend financiers of terrorism.

As Dr. Cockfield suggests, increasingly though, the onshore financial world has become more important in our analysis of money laundering and terrorist financing. It has been suggested that Canada is an attractive destination for global financial criminals due to its lax enforcement regarding financial crimes. For example, no individuals in Canada have ever been convicted for offshore tax evasion. Additionally, the *Canadian Business Corporations Act*, and a number of provincial corporate laws allow individuals to mask their identities and money behind entities such as corporations, limited liability companies, trusts, and foundations. Another financial instrument, the bearer share, has shown to be detrimental to Canada's ability to apprehend financial criminals. Bearer shares are different than common shares as they do not require individuals to register their identity with a shareholder registry that law enforcement agencies have access to. The owner of a physical bearer share owns all of the underlying assets of the corporation, allowing individuals to essentially travel across state boundaries with large sums of undeclared money.

Leaks, however, have provided no evidence of the use of tax havens for terrorist financing purposes. Through the utilization of the TRM methodology, the researchers hope to detect and map terrorist resourcing patterns. The researchers found 32 cases of terrorist financing from around the world, coded the data using case law, and analyzed the relationship between data points that would have otherwise been obscure. In analyzing these data points, the researchers addressed a number of key points of concern, such as the number of financial intermediaries that appear in the 32 cases.

They found that London, Beirut, and New York City were the most frequent locational hubs used for terrorism resourcing. Arab Bank PLC, UBS AG, and HSBC Group PLC were the most frequently recurring banks in the dataset, which is consistent with other instances of terrorist financing, money laundering, and offshore cases. In nearly half of the cases in the dataset, resources were transferred using the conventional banking system, demonstrating the vulnerability of the financial system and existing legal mechanisms.

Protecting Mobility Rights in an Era of Terror

Dr. Patti Lenard, Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa

In this session, Dr. Lenard presented her TSAS- and Public Safety-funded research on justice in democratic states. She is interested primarily in how to balance collective goods with rights protection in ways that treat *all* citizens equally. Dr. Lenard emphasizes that equal treatment and protection should be applied not only to law-abiding citizens, but also to those who she terms the "bad guys." In so doing, Dr. Lenard seeks to broaden our definition of security by emphasizing the need for egalitarian values in security practice. Specifically, she seeks to encourage wariness with respect to certain policies and the negative impact that they may have on marginalized communities in Canada.

Dr. Lenard began the presentation by highlighting the basic right of mobility, especially the right to exit one's country of residence. This right, she notes, is central to living a flourishing and fulfilling human life. In her research project, she analyzed the ways in which policies adopted by four democratic states — Canada, the US, the UK, and Australia — to combat foreign fighting undermine or violate the right to move freely. Thus far, Dr. Lenard has found that the right to exist is undermined by policies combatting actual and suspected foreign terrorist fighting. That is, actual and suspected foreign terrorist fighters find their right to exit restricted, as do many others. Because the policies adopted to combat foreign fighters cast a wide net, Dr.

Lenard suggests that we should adopt a wary attitude towards claims that these policies are evidence-supported and the least burdensome available. Finally, she suggests that the impact may well be problematically discriminatory, and therefore exert harm that is worth weighing against supposed security benefits.

Dr. Lenard then shared some general findings from her research. Firstly, she noted that in all four countries, foreign terrorist fighting is considered a novel phenomenon that poses a significant security threat. Public actors argue that contemporary foreign fighters are different than those of the past in that they are no longer fighting on the side of “good,” but are now fighting on the side of “evil” only to return, and continue the battle at home. Based on this new understanding of foreign fighters, it is seen as necessary to implement new legislation to tackle the challenges that foreign fighters are believed to pose. Dr. Lenard suggests, however, that no notice is made of the ways in which these policies may run afoul of democratically protected human rights.

All four countries implemented a number of policies that made exiting difficult. These policies were implemented with different levels of severity, and no country adopted all of the listed measures. The first measure is preventative detention, which is the detaining of individuals suspected of intending to join foreign wars. The second measure, declared area legislation, lists specific locations to which citizens are not permitted to travel. No-fly lists, passport cancellations, and the denial of re-entry, are three more measures that have been implemented that negatively affect mobility rights.

Dr. Lenard then shared some of her main conclusions. Firstly, it appears that the number of people whose right to exit is affected — that is, those whose right to exist is reduced or curtailed — is far higher than the estimated number of foreign fighters. Secondly, Dr. Lenard suggests that it is more helpful to see policies as being pursued together, rather in isolation, as they often impact the same group(s) of people. Thirdly, there are many cases where “no-exit” policies have been applied in what are believed to be discriminatory ways. Fourthly, accusations that these policies have a differential impact on certain populations, especially Muslims, should be of concern to us all. Lastly, security should not be understood as a singular concept, rooted exclusively in physical safety. Security is multi-dimensional, and protecting one dimension can be at odds with protecting another. Dr. Lenard contends that if citizens in democratic states cannot count on having their basic rights protected, democratic security is at risk.

Panel 3: Insights into Violent Extremism from New Data on Social Networks

How ‘Alone’ are Lone Actors? Understanding Networks of Influence, Communication, and Tactical Support among Lone-Actor Terrorists

Dr. David Hoffman, Sociology, University of New Brunswick

In this session, Dr. David Hoffman presented on his TSAS-funded empirical analysis of lone-actor terrorism. Dr. Hoffman suggests that the term “lone-actor” is a misnomer, as these individuals have shown to have social networks from which they have learned, and drawn inspiration, from, and within which, they have shared their plans to conduct attacks. Through social network analysis, he explores the networks that lone-actors form in the 24 months prior to their first act of terrorist violence. Research on lone-actor terrorism is fairly new, and suffers from the same theoretical and methodological issues as other subthemes within the overarching

framework of terrorism studies. Through his research, Dr. Hoffman has contributed to filling this gap, and has done so using social network analysis, a technique that has not yet been utilized to analyze lone-actor terrorism.

Social network analysis is a collection of quantitative techniques that explore the structure and patterns of social relations among individuals and their larger social networks. The method provides us with both a broad view of actors' social networks and a narrow view of the relations present within larger social networks. Relying on open-source data, such as biographies, court and police documents, news reports, and media sources, Dr. Hoffman constructed social networks for Timothy McVeigh and Michael Zehaf-Bibeau, two known lone-actor terrorists.

Relational ties across four different types of networks were coded for the 24 months prior to the commission of the lone-actors' act of terrorist violence. The first type of network was the full social network, comprised of all of the networks that the lone-actor had. Within this network type, only repeated contacts were listed, while incidental connections were omitted. The second network type, the ideology network, included individuals with ideological, radical, or extremist views that were similar to that of the lone-actor. The third network type, known as the signaling network, included individuals who the attackers told or hinted at about their plans to execute an act of terrorist violence. The final network type, the support network, includes individuals who provided direct support that intentionally or unintentionally aided in the planning, commission, or execution of an act of terrorist violence.

Dr. Hoffman then provided some of his findings. Timothy McVeigh had a fairly well-connected network, with people in the network being connected to approximately five other people within the network. McVeigh's ideology network was larger than anticipated, and interestingly, he was connected to individuals from known far-right groups and individuals, including notorious far-right figure, Louis Beam. Zehaf-Bibeau's ideology network was similar to that of McVeigh's, albeit less populated, which was likely a result of data limitations. McVeigh's signaling network suggests that he talked to many people about his attack plans, who in turn, spoke to others about these plans. He also had a fairly populated support network, providing empirical evidence that he was supported by a number of individuals.

Dr. Hoffman then presented a number of key findings from his research. Firstly, he suggested that social connections matter to lone-actors. Multiple small-group and person-to-person dynamics played a role in the radicalization towards violence of both McVeigh and Zehaf-Bibeau. Additionally, when it came to discussing ideological material, friends and acquaintances were the most connected, and thus, the most important, actors within ideological networks. This suggests that lone-actors primarily spoke to friends and acquaintances about their ideological stances, rather than going to family members. Secondly, lone-actors like to talk. Almost 40% of McVeigh's network, and 19% of Zehaf-Bibeau's network, had prior knowledge of their plans to attack, and information on the attacks tended to be shared from person-to-person, rather than in small groups. Lastly, lone-actors appear to rely on friends and acquaintances for ideological and material support. Roughly one-quarter of McVeigh's, and one-fifth of Zehaf-Bibeau's, overall networks provided them with some form of material or non-material support, with acquaintances being McVeigh's most common type of support connection, and friends and coworkers being Zehaf-Bibeau's.

While Dr. Hoffman noted that more research is required, based on his research beyond the two case studies he analyzed, based on his research, he was able to provide some preliminary policy suggestions. Firstly, social networks matter; lone-actors do not radicalize, plan, or operate

in complete social isolation. The “lone-actor” moniker is misleading and self-defeating from a policy standpoint, and it is important that we adopt a new term to describe this phenomenon. Next, lone-actors tend to be operationally lax; they like to talk and broadcast their intentions, and leave trails for those who know what to look for. This is markedly different than “traditional” forms of terrorism. All of this suggests that effective detection and interdiction strategies can be developed.

Exploring Resilience and Violent Extremism among Religious Converts in Canada

Dr. John McCoy (PI: Andy Knight, University of Alberta)

In this session, Dr. John McCoy presented his research on why converts are overrepresented among individuals engaged in violent extremism. Through secondary research on 18 Canadian religious converts engaged in violent extremism, Dr. McCoy and his research team found that exclusion and feelings of disappointment can coalesce to create heightened vulnerability to radicalization to violence (R2V) and recruitment by a terrorist group.

To frame his own research, Dr. McCoy presented some of the main theories on religious converts and R2V. According to the first theory, R2V is a logical extension of the zealotry that is a common characteristic of converts. It is believed that converts, who are seeking to establish themselves in a new community, overcompensate for the lack of grounding that they have in the religion through ancestry by behaviors such as excessively studying religious texts. In turn, these individuals may turn to purist, fundamentalist ideals, including Salafi-Jihadism. Consistent with this line of reasoning is the idea that converts lack sufficient religious knowledge to critically evaluate the different religious perspectives they may encounter, and are thus uniquely susceptible to R2V. Another theory suggests that converts have personality traits and experiences, such as trauma, mental illness, and criminality, that make them particularly vulnerable to R2V.

Taken together, the existing research on converts and R2V appears problematic and incomplete. First, it assumes a linear and predictable path for converts, where conversion becomes a conveyor belt to R2V. Second, it establishes a “terrorist personality,” where characteristics and predispositions create automatic risk or susceptibility to R2V. Existing research on converts and R2V thus tends to deny converts’ agency, and essentialize the convert experience by ignoring the diversity of pathways to R2V.

After explaining the current state of research, Dr. McCoy shared information on his own study. The study draws on a dataset of 18 Canadian converts involved with R2V, and a control group of 20 converts that were not involved with violent R2V. For the radicalized group, much of the data was extracted through secondary sources, such as online journals, websites, forums, and academic publications. The researchers also got access to the friends and families of some of the converts who were engaged in violent extremism. Of the individuals belonging to the radicalized group, most completed post-secondary education, the median age was 24, and the median estimated time between conversion and radicalization was 2.8 years.

Dr. McCoy then applied established theories on conversion and R2V to highlight where his findings confirm or challenge them. While other scholars suggest that converts lack religious knowledge, Dr. McCoy’s results on converts’ level of religious knowledge varied. Some individuals, such as Martin Couture-Rouleau, rarely attended religious service and had a surface-level knowledge of Islam. Most of the individuals, however, took their religious education seriously, and displayed outward signs of religious knowledge that impressed those who were

born into the faith. Based on these findings, it thus appears untrue, at least in the Canadian context, that converts are prone to radicalization based on a lack of religious knowledge.

The study also challenged “convert personality” theories. These theories held true to a certain extent, as experiences with trauma, such as abuse, and troubled upbringings, were common among the individuals in the study who engaged with violent extremism. Petty criminality was also not uncommon either; however, most previous criminal behavior was non-violent, and thus does not indicate that individuals had susceptibility towards violence. On the other end of the spectrum, some individuals, such as the Gordon brothers in Calgary, experienced next to no trauma. Taking these seemingly contradictory findings together, it appears that we cannot ignore trauma as a critical area of risk and intervention. Having said that, we should be careful not to overemphasize the importance of the connection between trauma, conversion, and radicalization, and retroactively ascribing those experiences as creating a propensity towards R2V. We should also realize that for converts who have experienced significant trauma, religion — with its redemptive themes, answers around justice and fairness, and moral framework — can be cathartic.

Dr. McCoy then turned to theories of conversion and R2V focused on zealotry and radicalization. While some suggest that converts are more attracted to puritanical understandings of religion, Dr. McCoy found that for a handful of individuals, R2V had significant overlap with the early stages of conversion, making it difficult in their cases to make a discernable difference between conversion and radicalization. For the majority of individuals, however, the processes of conversion and radicalization were far less linear and far less predictable. For Andre Poulin, for example, zealotry was not the primary factor that led him down the path of radicalization. Instead, it was a sense of disappointment and disillusionment with his experience that solidified his religious beliefs. Disappointment and disillusionment were based on: a belief that there was a sense of discrimination against converts in the Muslim community; an increasingly negative perception he had of individuals born and raised in the Muslim faith, yet engaged in activities that he believed were hypocritical; and a waning of his original commitment and zeal.

Finally, Dr. McCoy shared the findings from his interviews with the control group of converts who did not engage in R2V. Their shared experiences can perhaps shed light on the experiences of converts and R2V. Based on interviewees’ responses, Dr. McCoy noted that converts can experience a dual form of exclusion, whereby they are excluded both within their new religious communities, and additionally, become estranged from their family and friends. Roughly half of the control group expressed a sense of isolation and marginalization within their new religious community, and nearly 60% experienced estrangement from family and friends. Some interviewees noted that racial hierarchies within the Muslim community affected their sense of belonging. Another important observation was that converts found it difficult to find acceptance within the community, and lacked community support.

In closing, social isolation, dualistic exclusion, and feelings of disappointment can potentially coalesce to create heightened vulnerability to R2V among converts. This is important, because in the Canadian context, terrorist group recruiters have intentionally targeted recent converts and provided them with social bonding and answers to existential questions that the converts may have. Improved programs and community support networks, however, can contribute to the prevention of R2V among converts, and a positive conversion experience.

Panel 4: Insights into Countering Violent Extremism from Experimental and Legal Studies

Aggression, Empathy, and Extremist Propaganda

Dr. Neil Shortland, Center for Terrorism & Security Studies, University of Massachusetts at Lowell

In this session, Dr. Neil Shortland presented on four of his studies, including TSAS-funded research, which apply a psychological lens to the topics of extremism and countering extremist messaging. Dr. Shortland is primarily interested in analyzing the ways in which extremist material affects individuals differently based on their unique psychological makeup. He hopes to utilize this information to implement strategies to create tailored preventive counter-messaging tools that can effectively reduce the effects of extremist material in people with different psychological profiles.

Dr. Shortland began the presentation by outlining his first study, from 2016. While this project focused on the effectiveness of anti-domestic abuse campaigns on college campuses, and not extremism, the insights garnered from this project have clear implications for those interested in countering extremist narratives. Two campaigns were analyzed in the study: the first one included images of popular cartoon characters, but with injuries that suggested that they were victims of domestic abuse; the second campaign featured similar images, but with images of celebrities instead of animated characters. In the study, 340 participants were exposed to these images, and their perceptions of believability and emotionality, and the effectiveness of these campaigns, were measured. The study found that the cartoons had little effect on participants. The study also found that the most effective messages were not the most emotive, and did not depict the most severe forms of violence. This is an example of the boomerang effect, which is when attempts to create a specific outcome result in the opposite outcome. If messaging campaigns — including those that are designed to counter extremism — are poorly designed, they might increase the behavior that they intend to decrease.

In his second study, Dr. Shortland sought to analyze the believability of extremist propaganda. The 432 program participants were shown one of three videos: a control video, a propaganda piece in which threats are made against the US and UK governments, and an IS tactical training video. After watching one of these three videos, participants were presented with an incomplete story and were asked to fill in the blanks, with the idea that the stimulus — which, in this case, was the video that they watched — would impact their emotions, and the words that they chose to select to complete the story. Participants' hostility, empathy, and aggression were measured. The researchers found that individuals who were shown extremist propaganda were nicer, and more pro-social, than those shown the control video. This finding was consistent among participants, with the exception of individuals who already had higher levels of aggression. For these individuals, extremist material did not affect their level of aggression. This finding is important, because it shows us that extremist propaganda, and any forthcoming cognitive change that emerges from that, is going to be moderated by the nature of the individual exposed to the material.

In his forthcoming third study, which was funded by TSAS, Dr. Shortland and his research partners are attempting to build on their previous findings to inform CVE programming. Specifically, their study has three goals: to test the effectiveness of different CVE campaigns; to test the interaction of CVE campaigns and personality; and to validate a series of domain-

specific measures of extremist-related cognitions. In the study, three forms of IS counter-messaging were analyzed: ideological counter-messaging, which is based on claiming that IS is un-Islamic; deterrent messaging, which emphasizes that those who join IS will be apprehended upon their return or will die in battle; and emotional messaging, which plays on viewers emotions by focusing on the victims of IS, and the damage it has caused.

The study's 1111 participants are separated into a control group, a group exposed to extremist propaganda, and a third group, which is exposed to propaganda and one of the three forms of CVE messaging. To measure participants' aggression, empathy, and hostility, the policy attitudes questionnaire (PAQ) was administered, which measures one's opinions on the extent to which states can act in the name of national security. Another test measured the number of extreme cognitions that participants hold. Participants were then given behavioural scenarios and asked what they would do in certain national security-related situations. The study found that baseline aggression and hostility correlate with baseline extremism. It also found a significant interaction between personality and CVE type. Deterrent and ideological CVE messages worked for some individuals, and not others, based on the personality factors that individuals brought to the table. Different personality types thus appear to be more affected by different types of CVE.

Based on his third study, Dr. Shortland has begun designing a fourth study, in which he will be developing personality typologies, and exposing individuals from different personality clusters to extremist videos. Individuals' neural activity will be monitored, with the goal of uncovering how different types of messages resonate with individuals' underlying psychological typology. Different types of propaganda will resonate with different people differently, and in turn, different types of counter-messages will do the same. This study will allow us to match counter-messaging strategies with the people who they can affect the most, presenting a nuanced alternative to existing emotive, broad brush counter-messaging campaigns.

Is the Rule of Law Keeping Pace with the Demands of Counter-Terrorism?

Leah West, (PI: Craig Forcese, Common Law, University of Ottawa)

In the final presentation of the day, Leah West presented her research on the intelligence to evidence dilemma. Through an analysis of disclosure of evidence in criminal proceedings in Canada and the UK, and interviews with legal personnel involved in terrorism cases in both countries, she sought to understand how and why terrorism charges are laid. Her findings are particularly important, given that some have claimed that per capita, Canada is falling behind when it comes to prosecuting those who support, or engage in, terrorist activities.

As of 2017, approximately 60 persons who travelled abroad to engage in or support terrorist activity have been permitted to return to Canada, with only one individual being charged with a criminal offence. According to the Minister of Public Safety, Ralph Goodale, this is primarily due to the problem of using information collected for intelligence purposes as evidence in criminal proceedings — a problem commonly referred to as the intelligence to evidence dilemma. While this issue is not new or specific to Canada, Canada's legal apparatus is such that it is affected by this issue more so than other states. Between 2001 and 2015, for example, Canada conducted 21 terrorism prosecutions, with 17 more slated between 2016 and 2017. In comparison, between 2015 and 2017 alone, the UK prosecuted 132 people in connection with terrorism. Given Canada's unequivocal stance against the targeted killing of Canadians, including those who have engaged with a terrorist entity, prosecution remains Canada's strongest deterrent against terrorism. With the return of foreign terrorist fighters from Iraq and Syria, Ms.

West suggests that Canada must learn from the UK's experience, and reform its rules of evidence at the federal at provincial levels.

In order to explore this topic further, Ms. West undertook a comparative analysis of the rules of evidence in the UK and Canada, specifically the regimes governing two aspects of evidence: the disclosure of evidence in criminal proceedings, and the applicable privileges available to protect information that would otherwise be available, but national security necessitates its protection. Ms. West was primarily interested in the mechanical effect of these regimes, and how the regimes themselves affect the conduct of criminal prosecutions and the laying of charges in terrorist-related activity in Canada since 1995, and since 1996 in the UK. To gain a better understanding of how and why charges are laid and how and why cases come to court like they do, Ms. West spoke to Crown prosecutors, defence counsel, and special advocates in Canada and the UK, all of whom had experience working on terrorism cases.

Before reporting on some of her findings, Ms. West made the important definitional distinction between evidence and intelligence. She noted that evidence is information collected by law enforcement to advance a police investigation, support the laying of criminal charges, and secure a conviction. There is an expectation that the collection and admissibility of evidence will be challenged in open court and become public domain. There is also an expectation that this evidence will be disclosed to the accused, which is protected under section seven of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Intelligence, on the other hand, is collected from national and international partners, often under caveats, including the demand for secrecy. The disclosure of national security information not only reveals the information itself, but also who collected it, how it was collected, the source of the information, the methodologies of the collectors, and other sensitive information. Protecting this information is thus vital to national security. Intelligence is not intended to be used in open court, and is instead used to provide advice to the Government of Canada or disrupt a threat to the security of Canada.

The intelligence to evidence dilemma starts with the issue of the disclosure of evidence in criminal proceedings. Under Canadian common law, under the *Stinchcombe Rule*, all relevant information is in the Crown's possession and control. As such, anything that is collected in an investigation, unless clearly irrelevant, will have to be disclosed. If everything is not disclosed, a defence counsel can make an application that the accused's Section seven rights have been violated. If there is a finding that these rights have been violated, a remedy — which can be as severe as a stay of the charges themselves — can be issued. In a national security situation, if CSIS shares information with the RCMP, and the RCMP follows this lead, resulting in subsequent action, the RCMP officer taking the stand will likely be asked to reveal the source of the information and the method in which it was collected. This means that the information will likely be disclosed, as might the identity of the CSIS officer. At the time that the information is shared though, CSIS personnel do not know whether the information will lead to a criminal charge in future. There is also no way of knowing what effect the release of certain privileged information may have later on. Based on these factors, CSIS is very hesitant to share information, leading to wasted resources in the form of parallel investigations by CSIS and the RCMP. Additionally, in Canada, the defence has no obligation to disclose any information.

The UK model of disclosure is very different than that of Canada. In the UK, information which might reasonably be considered capable of undermining the case against the accused, or of assisting the case for the accused, must be disclosed in trial. Thus, there would be no obligation for intelligence services to disclose how information that led to a conviction was obtained. Furthermore, unused material, or material that is relevant but not disclosed, is listed in a schedule

and is provided to the defence. If the defence wants any of the information listed on the schedule, it must prove that it is relevant. The defence in the UK, thus, and unlike in Canada, has a disclosure obligation. They must explain the general principles or issues they will raise in trial, the witnesses they will raise in trial, and any issues with regard to alibi or mental health. This must be disclosed in advance. This allows Crown prosecutors to agree or disagree that certain pieces of information meet the requirement of relevance; otherwise, information remains the possession of the Crown. Additionally, unlike in Canada, where CSIS' information may be subject to the *Stinchcombe Rule* if it works too closely with the RCMP, in the UK, it is defined that the security services are not third parties, and their information is protected. There is an obligation on the Crown to gather any relevant information, and the Crown must ask security services for relevant information to meet their disclosure obligations, but there is no risk, for example, that MI5 may have to provide all of its information. This makes it much easier for the legal apparatus in the UK to limit the intelligence to evidence dilemma and secure convictions. The ability to control disclosure also allows Crown prosecutors to get inventive. If, for example, they know that they can charge an individual for five or six different offences, and only two charges rely heavily on intelligence, they just will not charge those, and in the process, not disclose any national security-related information.

Ms. West then explained the protection of security intelligence, which is another point of difference between the Canadian and UK systems. Under the Canadian regime, Section 38 of the Canada Evidence Act allows the Attorney General to determine that certain relevant information may be withheld where the injury to national security, national defence, or international relations outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. If such an application is made, it halts the disclosure process, and the criminal trial stops. A new proceeding then begins in federal court with the Attorney General's counsel, and a new judge who knows nothing about the criminal proceedings. The judge is provided with redacted material, and must determine whether the information is relevant, whether there would be an injury to national security if it was released, and what the balance of the interests are. In the UK, on the other hand, a Minister's Certificate issued by the Home Secretary is issued to the criminal court judge to state that if disclosed, the information would be injurious. There is also a public interest immunity application done between the trial judge and the Crown prosecutor in the trial court. They decide whether information can be disclosed, and if it cannot be, then more information is ordered to be disclosed, or the trial is stayed. This appears to be much more expedient than the Canadian alternative.

Following this comparative analysis, Ms. West provided a number of recommendations to improve the Canadian system. Firstly, relevance should be codified. This would perhaps change how the Crown and police look at relevance when they decide what needs to be disclosed. Section seven will necessitate the release of all relevant information, but by codifying what constitutes relevant information, a definition can be provided. Secondly, a third-party record disclosure should be codified. This would modify the Canadian and UK processes to give more respect to the fact that CSIS collects its information with different goals in mind and its information may not be necessarily directly relevant to the charges being laid. Thirdly, specialized prosecutors and judges, which are commonplace in the UK, should be involved in cases from the beginning. They should decide, with the police, what charges will be laid, and have a strong relationship with security services to determine what information can be used before a charge is laid. Finally, she suggested codifying witness anonymity and protection for

those in the security services who wish to testify. This is the case in the UK, where a codified regime protects MI5 personnel, allowing them to testify.

*Report written by Mr. Nabil Bhatia (NPSIA, Carleton University)
at the request of TSAS*

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