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Title	'Ceci n'est pas du terrorisme: this is not terrorism': representation of far-right and jihadi terrorism in the terrorism studies literature
Authors	Ahmed, Yasmine
Publication date	2021
Original Citation	Ahmed, Y. 2021. 'Ceci n'est pas du terrorisme: this is not terrorism': representation of far-right and jihadi terrorism in the terrorism studies literature. PhD Thesis, University College Cork.
Type of publication	Doctoral thesis
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Download date	2026-11-17 10:38:44
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/13576



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'Ceci n'est pas du terrorisme. This is not terrorism': representation of far-right and jihadi terrorism in the Terrorism Studies literature

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2021

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Declaration

This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own and has not been submitted for another degree, either at University College Cork or elsewhere. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I have read and understood the regulations of University College Cork concerning plagiarism and intellectual property.

A brief note about the title of this thesis



Figure 1: "The treachery of images" – René Magritte, 1929

In 1929, René Magritte's painting work named "The Treachery of Images", also known as "This is not a pipe" gained significant public attention. The painting is that of a pipe, and below the pipe Magritte wrote "Ceci n'est pas une pipe" (meaning "this is not a pipe"). He drew the attention of the spectator to the fact that what was seen in the painting was not a pipe, but *the representation* of a pipe. Magritte was interested in questioning the relationship between images (and the language) and the reality they are intended to represent. His work was a "warning of the danger of failing truly to look at things, or of trusting in received ideas or abstractions." (Rooney, 2016: xvi). Similarly, this thesis will not investigate what terrorism is and is not, instead, it focuses on its representation in the academic literature, and by doing so, it will also question the 'received ideas or abstractions' about terrorism and the terrorist. The title wanted to capture this parallelism and bring the attention to the fact that what will be discussed is the *representation* of terrorism, rather than its factual reality.

Acknowledgments

There are many people to be thanked for this PhD and the first one is probably my father: I think I took him too seriously when he told me that my studies were my job! I also want to thank my mother, who after my father's passing is trying her best, even if it's not easy. She is also the one member of the family who keeps me grounded by asking "when are you going to get a real job?".

But anecdotes aside, this PhD is a work of love, the one that I have for this research but also the love that the people around me have shown towards me while I was investing all my energies in this project. To my favourite person, who is also my husband, thank you. Thank you for supporting me in these 18 years, and especially in the last few months, I am aware that lately I almost entirely dedicated my time and energy to this PhD. Thank you for your support, for reminding me that things are ok, and that I can manage. I love you.

To our dog Nhara, you left us after 16 amazing years together; thank you for your time, companionship and love while growing up, and thank you for accompanying me into adulthood. You made my life better and I hope to have done the same for you. I miss you every day.

To my siblings, thanks for having supported me even when I locked myself up at home and did not meet you, I know we wanted to spend more time together while I was in Italy, I promise to try and create more memories with you.

Thank you to the friends in Ireland and in Italy, who made me smile and laugh (at times too much!) and promptly reminded me how far I've come when I was tired and in doubt I could make it. I feel incredibly lucky in having friends both the countries where my heart is, I have missed them so much while I could not meet them, but even from afar, I could feel they were supporting me in this path.

During the first lockdown to curb the spread of COVID-19 I also joined a new online community, the PhD Forum. In the last year spent time with them, I participated in the shared happiness when someone of us was submitting their thesis, and we were all there supporting each other while those in the group closer to submission were doing their best to add the finishing touches to the work. Feeling them rooting for me too in the last months and weeks has been hearth-warming and moving. So, thank you PhD Forum, you are a special group of people.

I waited up to this point to thank my supervisors, Dr. Orla Lynch and Dr. Katharina Swirak because I really wanted to thank them in a meaningful way. Thanks to them I made it through this project and have learnt so much about research, writing, and integrity. They made sure to include me in interesting projects and they got in touch with me when they found an article or a graphic novel I could like. They have been part of my formative path even before this PhD, and I feel they helped me become a better human being, working with them has been inspiring. I also met Dr Orla Lynch online every week since the lockdowns began, and she made sure I could express my doubts or occasional ranting and replied to long lists of questions, thank you for the continuous reassurance and support, feeling welcomed and supported in this adventure has been a precious gift.

My gratitude also goes to the Department of Sociology and Criminology; thanks for being supportive, for the casual daily interactions in the office and for checking in with me while we could not meet in person.

Finally, the topic of this dissertation and the research area I chose are not easy, the work also significantly changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and I realised how much I rely on artists daily. I would like to acknowledge them (and I am aware this is unorthodox) for providing what I needed during this path, whether it was some energy or levity: so thank you Sam Cooke, Nina Simone, System of A Down, Ludovico Einaudi, Vitamin String Quartet and Django Reinhardt, and so many others which kept me company during the nights and days I spent working.

Glossary

This glossary provides guidance to the reader in relation to some terms that will be present in the work. The author is aware that some of these terms are still debated at the academic and, in some instance, at the religious level therefore this glossary only aims at telling the reader what they are meant to indicate *in the context of this thesis.*

ALT-MEDIA

With this term the author refers to media produced by terrorist groups (more often used in the context of far-right terrorist groups) in an attempt to gain control of the narratives they can share. The term is used to differentiate these channels of communications such as websites from traditional media channels.

EXPLANATORY POWER

This thesis borrows from quantitative research the concept of explanatory power, and uses it in a qualitative context. In this work, explanatory power refers to the leverage a concept has, how much it is used in the literature but also how it is linked with other concepts in this work.

EXTREME RIGHT

In this thesis the term ‘extreme right’ is used to refer to a branch of the far-right that is essentially anti-democratic, and hence opposed to the participation in electoral politics. Such term is chosen to differentiate between extreme-right and radical right, which has different characteristics (see below in this glossary).

FAR-RIGHT

Far-right is intended as an umbrella term which includes two main manifestations: the extreme right and the radical right (also addressed in this glossary), further information on this differentiation is provided in the course of this work. The author will use the term *far-right* to encompass these two instances of far-right groups and is also used to refer to electoral parties. While a part of this work mentions the far-right as an electoral actor, this work is interested in terrorism perpetrated by the far-right, and it will indicate it with the use of the term far-right terrorism.

JIHAD (or JIHADI)

The term jihad (or sometimes jihadi, as an adjective) in this work is used with to refer to extremism stemming from a jihadist ideology. Jihadism is here intended as an ideology which looks at violence as theologically legitimated and capable to bring about political change. When referring to jihad used in a non-political, individual religious imperative, or personal struggle i.e. striving to improvement and moral correctness, the author will use the term ijtihad.

MAINSTREAM MEDIA

This work will use the term *mainstream media* to indicate those media channels which are not created by far-right or jihadi terrorist groups for the purpose of distributing their propaganda. The term is used to refer to widely available media, whether private of publicly owned, that range from print to social media and that of easy access by the general public. The author is aware that the term is seen as politically loaded and that is often used by terrorist groups to mean *pro-establishment* and that the term is used in an effort to delegitimise the narrative that the media share about these groups. This is not, of course, the intention of this work.

MILITANT SALAFISM

Whit this term the author refers to a puritan interpretation of Islam, Salafi Muslims aim at conducting a life close to that of that of early Muslims. Those Salafi Muslims who support violent action in support of this ideology are defined here as Militant Salafi. Militant Salafi is often used in the literature interchangeable with terrorist, jihadi, extremist etc.

NASHEED

Nasheed (plur. Nasheeds/hymns) are musical compositions, they treat a number of themes which include individual, religious and social life. In this work, those Nasheeds which deal with themes related to jihad are simply referred to as Nasheeds (or sometimes, they are qualified as *jihadi* Nasheeds).

QUTBISM

The word Qutbism refers to the Islamic thought which started with Sayyd Qutb, Qutbism proposes a violent strict interpretation of Islam and has been often indicated as the ideology that inspired the rise of Al Qaeda.

RADICAL RIGHT

The radical right refers to individuals or groups who do not oppose participation in democratic elections. In this work, radical right groups are still placed under the umbrella term of 'far-right'.

TAKFIR (apostasy)

The notion of Takfir is a characteristic of a strict interpretations of Islam whereby only those adhering to a puritan vision of the religion are considered to be 'real Muslims'. In the context of this work, the work Takfir is used to indicate the process through which Muslims declare other Muslims to be apostates, and is seen as a tool to legitimise violence against other Muslims.

UMMAH

Throughout this project the term Ummah is used to indicate a transnational Muslim community. As the term is translated from the Arabic language, it can also be found spelled as Umma (the author will use the spelling Ummah throughout the text and the spelling Umma if the term is present in an extract of text being quoted).

WAHHABISM

The term Wahhabism is used to refer to the interpretation of Islam proposed by Muhammed ibn Abd al-Wahhab during the 18th century, this interpretation of Islam is strict, puritanical and violent (and is also understood as having inspired ISIS).

Abstract

This thesis examines how terrorism is imagined, constructed, and researched by examining the output of scholars in key research journals. The aim of this work is to understand exactly what it is we are talking about when we research about terrorism, not to examine how we define terrorism, but how we define the problem of terrorism. This representation becomes manifest in the research areas we prioritise, the different ways we talk about different ideological motivations, the methods we use to gather data and to analyse terrorism in two of its major manifestations: jihadi terrorism, and far-right terrorism. By examining how we define the problem of terrorism it becomes clear that as an area of study, Terrorism Studies as a manifestation of its time and place (western and post 9/11), is imbued with conservative notions of securitised state centred narratives and is influenced in its analysis by the ideological claims of the perpetrators. This thesis will demonstrate that the way we talk about jihadism as opposed to how we talk about the far-right is a manifestation of the field of terrorism studies. It will also demonstrate that in order to further the academic endeavour of research into terrorism we need new ways of thinking about the field, moving away from the influence of Western, state-centric dominant definitions and towards a framework that prioritises on an empirically based and grounded approach to understanding what the problem appears to be.

Prologue

The restrictions of movements to slow down the spread of COVID-19, meant a change of plans for many researchers. This project as originally conceived involved travel to meet with a number of practitioner groups across Europe who engage in PVE and CVE initiatives with a range of actors including jihadi and far-right extremists. The aim of the method of data collection was to understand how practitioners understood the issues of extremism, how they viewed the problem of extremism and how they used academic frameworks to scaffold their work and evaluate their interventions. In other words, to understand the relationships between academia and the practice of PVE/CVE. During the early stages of this project, in pursuit of this aim, I attended a number of RAN European Commission meetings focused on the extreme right and began preliminary data collection by engaging with practitioners in the CVE/PVE field. However, with the declaration of a global pandemic and the following lockdown in Ireland in March 2020, my research plans had to be revisited. In an effort to remain on schedule and given the sudden freeze in travel options, and in the early days, limited online meeting options, I had to pivot to a more realistic method of research that would allow me to collect new data, that maintained coherence with what I have done before. While conducting the original research was potentially possible, despite early efforts to do so, requests for data access and interviews, being an additional burden on researchers, were unsuccessful. As a result, it was decided in 2020 to use desk-based research for this study.

In order to address the underlying premises of the original the research questions that focused on the relationship between scholarship and practise, it was apparent that I first needed to understand exactly what scholars were talking about when they were talking about terrorism; specifically, how did the field , through its inclusion and exclusion of topics, ideas etc construct terrorism as a phenomena. In order to do this, I created a database focused on the literature on Terrorism Studies between 2001-2018, based on the top three Terrorism Studies journals. The focus of the data base was on articles that addressed far-right terrorism and articles that focus on Jihadi terrorism.

The result of this analysis, and thus maintaining coherence with the original proposal was an examination of the underlying assumptions of the field of terrorism studies and the implications of this for how we think about and address different manifestations of terrorism. In addition, the project resulted in the creation of the TeR-BAT tool which is an evidence based tool, based on a number of questions for the researcher with the aim is to assist researchers and practitioners working in the field of CVE/PVE to reflect on how they think about their research and interventions. The TeR-BAT makes use of the available literature on terrorism and invites the research to interrogate themselves in how this might inform and frame their practice. While the sudden mid project shift in methods and research question was disruptive, the outcome of the project still serves to provide a critical understanding of how we conceive of and apply the label terrorism in the academy, and also provides a useful tool to assist researchers and practitioners to engage in terrorism research and PVE/CVE practice in a way that overcomes the long-identified weaknesses inherent to the field of Terrorism Studies.

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The field of Terrorism Studies, its strengths and weaknesses

The emergence of terrorism studies as a distinct field of studies can be traced back to a small number of studies in the US focusing on counter insurgency in the 1960's and 1970's. However, what is currently understood as terrorism studies is very much an artifact of the post 9/11 focus on sub-state threats to western democracies and their allies. Before 9/11, the field remained a small and narrow pursuit for a handful of researchers with limited resources (Silke, 2018), but has a long tradition of internal critique, both of the research itself and of the ontological concerns inherent in the use of the label terrorism. An early review of the field by Schmid and Jongman in 1988 identified the issues the field had (and in some cases continues to have) particular to the issue of a consensus definition of terrorism, in addition they reviewed the use of methods and the affiliations of contributors. A more recent post 9/11 review by Silke, much like the work of Schmid and Jongman, pointed to the poor condition of the field of terrorism studies. Silke (2004) highlighted how the problems presented by Schmid and Jongman almost 20 years previously remain as pertinent as ever. He went further to point out that in the flurry of research conducted in the aftermath of 9/11, the field suffered from new problems – particularly that the research mainly uses secondary sources and exists in a loop where the researchers don't always create new knowledge, but rely on existing sources, thus presenting a false validity to the literature. This lack of primary data was attributed both to the

lack of resources (pre-9/11), lack of access to substantial bodies of data, and lack of collaborative researchers and research projects (most of the contributions analysed by Silke were produced by authors working in isolation). Overall, as Silke points out, the field of terrorism studies "exists on a diet of fast-food research: quick, cheap, ready-to-hand and nutritionally dubious." (ibid.:12).

Some five years after 9/11 further reviews emerged and pointed out how formative the 2001 Al Qaeda attacks were on the field of terrorism studies. Since the attacks, the focus of research was almost entirely on Al Qaeda, to the neglect of other instances and types of political violence (Schuurman, 2019). Schuurman (ibid.) highlighted that the field remains strongly event-driven and tightly linked to the concerns presented by Western states, significantly influencing the focus of the research.

A further critique by Jackson (2007) moved beyond the issue of content to address core issues of the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning the field. Jackson examined the relationship of Terrorism Studies with institutions and power, and pointed out that much research on terrorism since 9/11 is devoid of any substantial critique that examines the link of discourses on terrorism to power and power structures. This, Jackson stated, perpetuates the idea of terrorism as only a sub-state endeavour carried out by actors in isolation from the systems that sustain them, and which sees terrorism as an ontologically fixed entity. Jackson and colleagues (2009) have thus pointed out that the events of 9/11 have allowed the current dominant frame that explains terrorism to have an incredibly wide resonance. As a result, the reproduction of dominant discourses around terrorism have had substantial effects in real-life through its influence on the design of policies

as well as preventative and counterterrorism interventions (Burke, 2008, Smyth, 2007).

This research project is inspired by the critiques of the field offered by scholars who adopt a critical approach in evaluating the area of Terrorism Studies, in that it analyses and questions the underlying assumptions in the Terrorism Studies literature. Following on from the health metaphor that Silke introduced in 2001 when he talked about the state of play of Terrorism Studies, this research project is based on the premise that the critiques previously offered of the field are valid and, in addition to this, the issues highlighted are symptomatic of the presence of routinely accepted underlying assumptions about *what terrorism is, who the terrorist is* and *its causes.* Such underlying assumptions (Jackson, 2009) become manifest in the topic selection for the research, as well as in the paradigms and theoretical approaches adopted by those researching terrorism. The numerous reviews of the field from an early stage have repeatedly highlighted a number of issues such as the definition of terrorism (Schmid and Jongman, 1988), methods (Silke, 2001) and narrow topic selection (Schuurman, 2019) but these issues have nonetheless persisted. If this is the state of the art of the field of terrorism studies this means that the problem does not reside in what we focus on and with which methods we research it in itself, but on *how* we as researchers construct and imagine terrorism.

This thesis contributes to the field of terrorism studies because it moves on from a focus on the definition of terrorism, and looks instead at the way terrorism is constructed in the academic literature after 9/11; it does so through an analysis of the literature produced and by asking throughout 'what is said without being said?'. In so doing, this research explains why certain assumptions are so widespread in the

field, and proposes a tool to assist researcher in designing future research projects whilst avoiding the implicit or explicit application of said assumptions.

Overview of the research project

This research provides a snapshot of the field of Terrorism Studies in the time frame 2001-2018, by interrogating the literature published in three Terrorism Studies journals. The aim of the work is to understand how the literature represents the phenomenon of terrorism as it manifests in the distinct categories of far-right and jihadi. The three journals are Terrorism and Political violence, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism and Critical Studies in Terrorism, and have been selected on the base of their Hirschi Index (H-index) for the year 2018.

The first collection of the data, pertaining to the far-right, happened at the beginning of 2019, and considering the proliferation of publications in the Terrorism Studies field after 2001, the starting date of 2001 was considered a sensible starting point, up to and including everything published until the end of 2018. While the initial aim of the research was to understand the use practitioners make of academic literature, the declaration of the pandemic significantly impacted the feasibility of the research, hence, it was decided to collect articles which would look at jihadi terrorism. In this case, the articles were collected in the timeframe 2010-2018 in order to capture a more stable state of the field. As mentioned earlier in fact, while 9/11 had an impact on the growth of the field, authors such as Silke (2008) highlighted issues at the methodological level, and Jackson (2012) portrayed a field which produced a large body of research based on sparse evidence. In light of these issues highlighted in the

research, it was decided to collect articles for far-right terrorism between 2001 and 2018 and to collect articles for jihadi terrorism between 2010 and 2018. This meant that the clearly documented (Silke, 2009; Silke, 2018; Sageman, 2014) teething problems experienced in the early years of the emergence of the field of Terrorism Studies post 9/11 did not overly impact on the analysis.

This works aims at understanding how the field of Terrorism Studies imagines terrorism and what are the field's base assumptions. To answer these questions, the research avails of a mixed methods approach: in the first instance articles were accessed via a search using the journals' portal, those that met the inclusion criteria were collected into separated databases (one for far-right terrorism and one for jihadi terrorism) and quantitatively analysed how many articles focus, mention or use the far-right as a term of comparison. The same is done with the articles collected for jihadi terrorism. Following the rapid appraisal phase, the articles which emerged as 'focused' on far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism are further analysed using a qualitative content analysis.

The argument this thesis makes relates to the fact that the topics selected when researching terrorism (e.g., focusing on one instance of terrorism such as jihadi terrorism) and the way terrorism is framed and talked about, together with the theoretical frameworks applied (e.g., radicalisation, cognitive opening, group dynamics etc...) are symptomatic of the base assumption of the field. In particular, that the field tends to accept assumptions about what terrorism is and who the terrorist is without problematising them, and that such assumptions are the results

of important historical events (such as 9/11) which contributed to shape the field as we know it today.

The remainder of this chapter will provide the background of this research project as well as a breakdown of the chapters which make this thesis, with a description of their content and contribution to the research.

(Far) Right here, right now

Newspapers, think tanks, and discussion forums in recent years pointed to an increased threat of violence coming from far-right terrorist groups: for example, the overwhelming majority of gun violence in the United States in 2018 was linked to far-right actors (Anti-Defamation League, 2019). Furthermore the New York Times (Cai and Landon, 2019) traced a lineage from the attacks in Utøya, Norway, in 2011 to the Christchurch shooting, New Zealand, in 2019 and warned that the threat coming from far-right terrorist groups and individuals was increasing, and so were their connections at the global level. Donald Trump's electoral campaign and presidency since 2016 have been widely recognised as progressively and deliberately legitimising the far-right in the USA, with this process (arguably) culminating in the attacks on Capitol Hill on the 6th of January 2021 (Mondon and Vaughan, 2021).

In spite of the increased attention that media outlets and think tanks have dedicated to it, far-right terrorism is not a dominant theme in the literature in Terrorism Studies post 9/11. The literature is focused on the threat coming from terrorist actors *from* (mostly) the MENA region and directed *to* Western countries or to Western targets, attending to the threat perceived as coming from the outside, and affording little

attention to the threat coming from within, such as far-right terrorist groups (Schuurman, 2019). This started with Al Qaeda post 9/11 and expanded to include their affiliates, then Syrian linked groups, with an overwhelming focus on ISIS dominating the past ten years (ibid.). The gap between the attention afforded to jihadi terrorism and far-right terrorism is partly the result of the reactive characteristic of the field (see, for example, the exponential growth in the research on jihadi terrorism post-9/11, Gunning, 2007), and this is mirrored in the way these two instances of terrorism are dealt with in the literature. This means that the tendency of the field to focus on 'hot topics' -as observed above- happened to the detriment of research attending to other instances of terrorism (Ahmed and Lynch, 2021). Two decades after 9/11, the field remains quick to react to attacks coming from jihadi actors, quick to associate terrorism with Islamic actors and remains very much (CT) solutions focused (Abbas, 2021).

In order to explore this issue further, this research aims to examine the manner of representation of different *terrorisms* in the terrorism studies literature. In particular, it focuses on how jihadi terrorism and far-right terrorism are addressed in the published research, how both are framed, how the research is justified, what assumptions are inherent in the research and what this means for how we perceive the problem of terrorism. This research first investigates the extent to which far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism are present in the Terrorism Studies literature in three journals (Terrorism and political violence, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism and Critical Studies in Terrorism) in the timeframe 2001-2018, and then explores *how* far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism are understood and represented in this academic literature.

In this work, far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism are considered as two manifestations of terrorism, and are investigated to demonstrate that the narratives used to talk about how both are different. As such this research is not preoccupied with defining terrorism but instead focuses on how it is *represented* in the literature. To do so, this project uses a mixed qualitative methods approach, based on rapid appraisal and on content analysis; the details of the methods and of the methodology will be provided in depth in chapter 5.

The contribution of this work to the debate in Terrorism Studies

The field of Terrorism Studies is considered to have originated in the 1960s with the study of counterinsurgency, and in the last decades it underwent a number of reviews which have pointed to a number of limitations which range from definitional to methodological issues. Some of these reviews considered the lack of consensus on the definition of terrorism (Schmid and Jongman, 1988) and, connected to this, others have highlighted the field's lack of 'discipline' borders (Stampintzky, 2013). Other reviews focused instead on the affiliation of the contributors, on methodological issues (Silke, 2001) and on the topic selection (2018). Scholars who adopted a critical stance towards Terrorism Studies also viewed at the knowledge production in the field and portrayed the field as in need of a new ontological, epistemological and ethical basis (Jackson, 2007). Research in the field of Terrorism Studies comes from different disciplines (among which, for example, psychology, sociology, media studies, International Relations) and all bring into the debate their own contribution in the process of knowledge creation, as well as in the inherently

different research methods involved. However, to date, it seems that even if many studies looked quantitatively at the field, there is no known study which looks at the underlying assumptions of the academic output in Terrorism Studies. The present study seeks to go beyond the mere quantitative description of the field, and to move forward to a qualitative understanding of the way Terrorism Studies _represents_ terrorism, and fill the research gap. The overall point of the work is not necessarily to criticise the field, but rather, to try and further its comprehension from a research stance which takes in consideration its nature as a field at the intersection between academia and policy to interrogate the literature and investigate on its underlying assumption. This represents the first point of divergence from the previous reviews of the field, discussed more in depth in the next chapter, and which have mostly focused on the quantitative aspects of the publications.

In addition to this connection between academia and policy, this thesis takes advantage of the nature of the Terrorism Studies field as a research area which has a broad and multidisciplinary scope, and draws from a number of concepts and theories. These come from, but are not limited to, International Relations (securitisation), Sociology (moral panics), Criminology (fear of crime), Psychology (emotions and fear, group conflict) and Political Science (policy analysis). Therefore, while this thesis does not result in the formulation of a new theory, it nonetheless works and threads together diverse disciplines and theoretical approaches. By doing so, it firstly provides a picture of the field of Terrorism Studies in the aftermath of 9/11, but it also investigates the link between the politics of knowledge and the politics of fear, and how these cause a cascade effect which have real life implications in and outside of academia. As will be discussed more in depth in the next chapters,

this research interrogates the underlying assumptions of the research in Terrorism Studies, and does so combining two frameworks coming from the field of policy analysis and the field of psychology: it will merge and re-adapt them to show that there are a number of routinely accepted ideas around terrorism and these become manifest not only in the topic selection of the research, but also through the concepts and frameworks used to investigate the phenomenon of terrorism. Such ideas deal with who is the terrorist, where terrorism comes from, as well as the causes of terrorism. Therefore, while this study begins by surveying the academic output in the field at the quantitative level, it then delves more in depth through the means of qualitative content analysis, which allows "to systematically transform a large amount of text into a highly organised and concise summary of key results." (Erlingsson and Brysiewicz, 2017: 94) as well as the application of a process of abstraction to the data collected, and the ideas expressed in the texts analysed.

Finally, this thesis also provided a space and a tool for reflection on the research process, in two ways: it firstly provides insight into the field of Terrorism Studies, with a perspective which, as stated above, goes beyond the quantifiable aspect of the research such number of publications, topic selection, chosen methodology, etc...By doing so, this work allows for introspection, as the research reveals those knowledge assumptions that became embedded in academic narratives about terrorism, especially post 9/11, and underlines how such narratives are different if one compares far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism in the literature. Secondly, this research project looks at the future of the research in Terrorism Studies, and contributes to the improvement of the field by providing a framework to put

reflexivity in the research practice. It allows for an introspection that is not only oriented towards the past but, crucially, also to future research. This is done through the formulation of the TeR-BAT, the Terrorism Research-Base Assumption Tool, an evidence-based framework to reflect on how we think about our research. This is the final and main contribution of this work, which sees the research process as a problematising activity and the knowledge produced as not-neutral; by carrying out research on a topic, the researcher intends the topic as an issue to be investigated, and this can be seen a particularly true for Terrorism Studies, since the field has been described as problem focused and solution driven. The TeR-BAT is a framework which, through a set of questions based on the evidence collected through the process of creating this thesis, guides the researcher to interrogate their own ideas about terrorism and the terrorist, and how the research imagines, constructs and represents them. The utility and use of the TeR-BAT is illustrated in the final chapter of this work, where it will be discussed at length and applied to this very same piece of research.

Thesis structure and chapters outline

This thesis is divided in four sections: section one comprises this introduction and chapters 1-4 that contain a review of the relevant literature. Section two consists of chapters 5, 6 and 7 which are, respectively, the methodology, the results of the rapid appraisal and content analysis for the articles on far-right terrorism and the results for rapid appraisal and content analysis for jihadi terrorism. Section three contains chapters 8 and 9. Chapter 8 deals with the discussion of the results. Chapter 9, applies

the Terrorism Research Base Assumption Tool (TeR-BAT), the integrated framework and tool for researchers created in the context of this research project, and which emerged from the results of this thesis. This tool allows the researcher to *think about* their research in a way that foster the exercise of reflexivity. Section four includes the conclusion of this thesis, this chapter will sum up the findings but will also propose future directions for the improvement of the state of the field of terrorism studies. Section four will also include additional material produced during this research project in the form of bibliography and appendices.

Chapter 1 is the first chapter of four which review the literature relevant to this thesis. This chapter focuses on the state of play of Terrorism Studies as a field of research and discusses the problems that have been highlighted in reviews of the field at different stages of its development.

Chapter 2 focuses on the process of securitisation and its relationship with jihadi terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11. Then, the chapter looks at the notion of jihad, its declination in the form of jihadi terrorism, its relationship with Islam and its presence in West since before 9/11. Following, this chapter looks at the processes of securitisation, through which an event -or a group- is cast as an existential threat by powerful political actors and how this impacts on phenomena such as immigration.

Chapter 3 looks at the criminological literature around fear of crime and applies it to the fear of terrorism, as well as to its relationship with the construction of the *other* as inherently different. Relying on other relevant criminological literature, this chapter also discussed how terrorism became a moral panic in the aftermath of 9/11, and Muslims were easily cast as 'Folk devils' (Cohen, 1972). Chapter 3 also looks at

immigration, and how it is often easily cast as a process that 'imports' the threat. This chapter of the thesis also discusses how often the phenomenon of immigration is represented as threatening and conflated with terrorism, and how this link is exploited in the application of restrictive anti-immigration policies.

Chapter 4 constitutes the final chapter of this section of literature reviews, and focuses on how terrorism is framed, especially in the case of far-right and jihadi terrorism. This chapter also poses the accent on the relationship between knowledge and power, on the effect of existing power structures and discourses on the knowledge production and its impact on terrorism research. Finally, this chapter introduces and provides a justification for the two frameworks used, respectively from the field of policy analysis and applied psychology, which are at the base of the Ter-BAT, the integrated framework applied later to this research, in chapter 9.

Chapter 5 is the first chapter of section two of this thesis, it discusses the methodology and the methods of this research project, which is based on mixed qualitative methods: a rapid appraisal and a (qualitative) content analysis. The articles collected from the three journals considered (Terrorism and Political Violence, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism and Critical Terrorism Studies) were appraised and input in an Excel dataset which collected their editorial information, their topic focus and methodology/methods (if present). Following the rapid appraisal phase, the articles selected from the dataset as having far-right and jihadi terrorism as their focus were subjected to the content analysis. The content analysis that gave life to the results of chapters 6 and 7 was carried out with a grounded approach, where the themes were let emerge from the text as it was analysed.

Chapter 6 is the first chapter of results, and focuses on the findings emerging from the rapid appraisal and the content analysis applied to the articles focusing on far-right (n=41) in the timeframe 2001-2018, in the three journals mentioned above. The chapter firstly provides a brief overview of the quantitative results emerged from the rapid appraisal, and then goes in depth in discussing the results of the qualitative analysis. From the 41 far-right focused analysed, six themes emerged which highlight the fact that in relation to far-right terrorism the literature is preoccupied mostly with the role of ideology, the use of communication means and the relationship with the media, the adaptability and lifespan of groups, the relationship of far-right actors with mainstream politics, and their grievances and sense of victimhood.

Chapter 7 is the last chapter of section two, and continues the discussion of the results; it illustrates what emerged from the rapid appraisal and content analysis of the articles focusing on jihadi terrorism (n=285). What is immediately apparent is that jihadi terrorism, as already discussed by Schuurman (2019), occupies a prominent position in the field of terrorism studies. The content analysis resulted in a high number of codes, emerged during the coding phase through the NVivo software, therefore the codes have been organised in four overarching themes and 23 themes, with related sub-themes. The four overarching themes emergent from the articles reveal that when looking at jihadi terrorism the literature is concerned with the mechanisms through which individuals become involved in terrorism and looks at them through a lifecycle lens, focusing on those mechanisms which encourage joining a terrorist group, mechanisms which allow to remain in the group and legitimise violence and mechanisms which foster the process of leaving. The literature also conceives jihadi terrorism as a group phenomenon, paying special

attention to the actors, but also to the leadership, the communication, the strategies and the values of said actors. In smaller measure, the literature also investigates inter and intrastate responses to terrorism and finally, it also deals with the construction and deconstruction of the threat of terrorism through the presentation of critical perspectives.

Chapter 8 is the first chapter of section three, and is the discussion chapter where the results of the content analysis for far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism are analysed together and combined through a process of compare and contrast. This process led to the emergence of six key issues in the field of Terrorism Studies which highlight how far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism are treated differently. These six key issues revolve around the ideas of radicalisation and mainstreaming, individual vs collective attribution of responsibility, the relevance of 9/11 in its impact on threat perception, the relationship with the media and, finally, the gender dimension emerging from the representation of women in the literature.

Chapter 9 is the second and final chapter of section three where the six key issues are distilled in two broad problem areas to which the integrated framework illustrated in chapter four is then applied. The chapter finally addresses the issues highlighted in this and the previous chapter and proposes a toolkit for the researcher to be used as a framework for *thinking about the research.* The TeR-BAT, introduced earlier, is here explained. The TeR-BAT is a framework developed to assist the researcher in *thinking* about the assumptions that underpin conceptions of terrorism. The framework is developed based on existing frameworks from social policy and applied psychology disciplines, and informed by the findings of the data analysis for this project; it is based on the evidence provided in the previous chapters

and provide a valuable tools for researchers to reflect in their research practice. This renders this research project, that is partly based on a review of the field of terrorism studies, different from the reviews of the field often referenced throughout this thesis: it looks beyond the issue of definition and the mere categorisation of topics to look at the *construction of the problem of terrorism* and provides a tool to assist researchers and practitioners *to do* reflexivity in their research.

The conclusion chapter will summarise the findings of this research project with a focus on stressing the set of accepted knowledge emerged from the articles analysed; as a concluding chapter this one also wants to start from the limitations of this thesis overall, discussed in the methodology chapter (5) and look at them as an invitation and a starting point for future research endeavours.

CHAPTER 1: THE STATE OF PLAY OF TERRORISM STUDIES

Publication output, politics of knowledge and privileged authorship, topic selection

Introduction

This chapter aims at painting the picture of the field of Terrorism Studies; existing reviews of have analysed the field and have looked at the lack of consensus around a definition of terrorism (Schmid and Jongman, 1988), the methods and authorship (Silke, 2001 and 2004), the choice of topics in the field (Schuurman, 2018) and at the ontological and epistemological stances and issues in the field (Jackson, 2007). These reviews are here discussed and considered in light of the reactivity and solution-driven aspect of the field (Ranstorp, 2009) and in light of the 'undisciplined' nature of the field (Stampintzky, 2013): these two characteristics are pivotal in that, as will be threaded throughout the chapter, they impact on the topic selected for research (in light for example of a reaction to such an important event as 9/11) and also in relation to the discipline and frameworks used to research terrorism. Throughout the chapter, it will also be discussed how the field of Terrorism Studies is linked and influenced by policy concerns, this is not necessarily negative (Horgan and Boyle, 2008), as the matter itself of terrorism has practical consequences and is indeed policy relevant, however, the links between academia and governments go beyond policy relevance, with those defined as embedded experts (Ranstorp, 2009) and carries the possibility of hindering the scope and quality of the research due to hidden agendas (Burnett and Whyte, 2005).

A review of the academic output in the field

In a sobering review of the state of the field of Terrorism Studies, Silke (2001) provided a worrying picture of the status of terrorism research: perhaps even more problematic was that Silke's evaluation did not deviate much from the one reported in 1988 by Schmid and Jongman, when the authors concluded that in spite of the prolific production of literature on terrorism, there was little empirical underpinning to substantiate the material in the publications. A similar conclusion is reached by Silke (ibid), who focuses on the sources and methodologies used in the publications produced in the timeframe 1995-2000, and finds that over 80% of publications were based on secondary sources (mostly literature reviews). In other words, only about 20% of the publications analysed by Silke (2001) were based on primary sources. Legitimate questions were also raised about the validity and reliability of the data collection methods, as well on the possibility (and dangers) of generalising any of the findings. This analysis depicted a situation in which Terrorism Studies publications fed into a loop (Dolnik, 2011) and where communication occurs within and between the publications themselves without effectively advancing the knowledge with new information (Schuurman and Eijkman, 2013).

In a subsequent publication Silke (2004) provided an overview of the background of the authorship in terrorism research in the context of a sharp increase in the production of papers post 9/11. He reported that more than half of authors in publications pre 9/11 (1990-1999) were not based in academia. Outside of the academia, which field was dominated by government officials, representing about half of the authors of the output analysed, and of whom the majority were one-time contributors. The distribution of contributors to the field later changed and after

9/11 there was an increase in scholarly publications (Silke, 2004; Reid and Chen, 2007) emerging from the academy.

The implications of the overreliance on secondary sources and of the prevalence of non-academic contributors among Terrorism Studies' authors are multi-fold. From the point of view of the methods used, the limited use of primary sources is seen as prohibiting the discipline from advancing, leaving the research at an exploratory stage without theory development becoming a possibility. Silke (2001; 2004) highlights the importance of progression between the different levels of knowledge: exploratory, descriptive, explanatory. This advancement of the discipline is not only related to the quality and quantity of data that it is able to produce, but also to the level of coherence in which different research pieces are organised. From the perspective of authorship, the initial dominance of material from political scientists and government officials represents an indicator of the fact that the research in terrorism, not only after 9/11, was led by policing/security concerns and state-agendas (Chen et al., 2008; Zulaika and Douglass, 2008), leaving little room or diminishing the voice of those who were researching terrorism with a broader focus. Similar concerns were also expressed by scholars who adopted a critical perspective to the field, as well as by those who were foundational in the emergence of what became known as critical terrorism studies (both the journal and the scholarly group): these scholars sought to apply a critical and a sceptical attitude towards the knowledge produced around terrorism both in terms of social theory but also regarding the relationship between power and academia, and the role of academics in supporting, informing, and consulting with and for the security services (Jackson, 2009; Raphael, 2009). The founding premise of this *movement* was that knowledge

is not neutral, it is produced with a purpose and with an audience in mind and these facts need to be taken into consideration when assessing the legitimacy of such knowledge. In this context, the term 'terrorism' is of course not neutral, and its application even less so. One of the staples of the CTS approach is, in fact, to challenge the notion that terrorism is a fact rather that a socially constructed phenomenon (Jackson, 2007). This approach to the term 'terrorist/m' as not neutral and the recognition of the high political load the term carries is not, however, exclusive to CTS affiliates, and is also shared increasingly by researchers who are broadly critical of the field.

In addition, scholars critical of Terrorism Studies also saw (and still see) what they refer to as 'traditional' terrorism knowledge, as state-centred and recognise that this characteristic served to justify and legitimise counter-terrorism measures, including torture and imprisonment, in the name of national security (Abbas, 2021). To attempt to prevent this from happening again, scholars who adopt a critical approach aim at embedding critical reflexivity and transparency "regarding the aims, means and outcomes of terrorism research" (Jackson, 2007: 249). In particular, in assessing the dominant knowledge in the field of terrorism, scholars concluded that its foundations sit on a weak theoretical base, employ inappropriate and narrow research methods, and have strong associations with state funding institutions, therefore not allowing for a clear division between state-led and academic research (Jackson, 2007). In describing those which are "The core commitments of Critical Terrorism Studies", Jackson (ibid.) emphasized how research on terrorism had to *reset* and start prioritising new epistemological, ontological and ethical commitments. This translates into the need for a wider range of methods to gather

data, and in the treatment of terrorism as a social construct rather than as an ontologically certain fact.

From this standpoint, the methods of choice would be those able to bring forward the meaning making processes surrounding terrorism, which can present new knowledge on the way the individual understands the reality of terrorism (Horgan, 2012). This "constructivist turn" in Terrorism Studies was also advocated by scholars in neighbour disciplines, such as security studies and international relations (Hülsse and Spencer, 2008). The purpose of bringing about a change in standpoint, such as that advocated by Jackson, is that such new perspective would take into consideration the relationship between those involved in terrorism knowledge production and those in positions of power with political agendas (Toros, 2008). Using this lens of social constructionism, the researcher is enabled to investigate the lived experience of those involved, and bring a deeper understanding, for example, in the process of involvement, which is highly idiosyncratic (Horgan, 2012).

As mentioned earlier, one of the critiques brought forward in relation to the field of Terrorism studies is that linked to the affiliation of the contributors. Silke (2001) has in fact highlighted how about half of the authors publishing in the field were governmental officials, and subsequently, Miller and Mills (2009) traced the links between the field and governments since its early stages, due to terrorism experts actively advising government around matter of counterinsurgency. The connections between the research field and governmental actors impact on what is researched (topic selection), as well as on who can publish and influence the public opinion, to detriment of researchers in the field: Sageman (2014: 566) did in fact claim that "The

voice of true scholars is drowned in this hysterical cacophony of political true believers." Such link between authorship and selected research topic will be further analysed in the next sections.

Terrorism Research: the topic selection and privileged publishing authorship

The choice of topics addressed in terrorism research cannot be separated from considerations on conceptual definitions of terrorism, as well as the involvement of governmental actors in the research, and therefore, on privileged publishing authorship. As mentioned before, scholars who take a critical approach to Terrorism Studies (see Silke, 2004) highlight the strong links between state-funding and research in the field. The existence of such relationships is seen as problematic in terms of independence (Gunning, 2007), as states are both sponsoring and consuming the knowledge produced (Stampnitzky, 2011). But this can be also thought of as linked to the existence of Terrorism Studies as an *un-disciplined* field. The field, because it is not a distinct discipline, naturally lacks the classic elements which often define a *discipline:* clearly defined places of knowledge production and dissemination, and institutionalised setting in which this knowledge is created, and career paths delineated (ibid.). This is both positive in that it prevents the disciplinary boundaries limiting investigation, but negative in that the boundaries and standards sometimes scaffold research and scholarship in a meaningful way. Terrorism Studies tap into different well-established disciplines such as psychology, sociology, International Relations, and while this contributes to promoting a variety of

perspectives, this also means that the field still presents internal tensions and diverse approaches which become manifest, amongst other things, in the lack of universal academic consensus on the definition of terrorism, a lack of depth in some avenues of investigation, and a lack of continuity in the research direction (Stampnitzky, 2013). This points to a field which lacks definite borders to delineate expertise and institutional presence, and which produces knowledge "that exists on the boundaries where academia, the media and the state meet" (Stampnitzky, 2011: 7). It is by virtue of these porous field borders that it is hard to detach academic research from state-concern and which, in turn, links the scholarly knowledge production to the dissemination through the media and government reports.

In another critique of the field by Schuurman (2019), it was noted how the focus on certain instances of terrorism happen to the detriment of the study of other instances, and that in academic publications between 2007 and 2016, jihadi terrorism and the MENA region remained the main concern. In particular, Al Qaeda remained dominant in the topic selection until 2014, when ISIS took its place. Such focus on jihadi terrorism and the MENA region is linked to the 9/11 effect, which seem to have given life to the belief in the emergence of a 'new terrorism' (Jackson, 2007) where 'old terrorism' was used to refer to all pre 9/11 attacks. 'Old terrorism' was a descriptor was used in two ways: at a temporal level it is everything happened, of course, before 9/11 but it is also a reflection of how terrorism is conceived. This conception of terrorism is linked to the fact that the field of terrorism studies emerged out of counterinsurgency monitoring and practice in the 1960s and 1970s (Duyvesteyn, 2004; Miller and Mills, 2009), which saw terrorism more as a tactic of

illegitimate political actors (Stampnitzky, 2013) rather than a term that encapsulated all actors worthy of the label. The 'new terrorism' is, instead, seen through the lens of religious ideology and the *outsider other*: mostly portrayed as irrational but at the same time assumed to want to inflict maximum harm (Dolnik and Fitzgerald, 2011); the old maxim of wanting a lot of people watching not a lot of people dead (Jenkins, 1975: 15) . Terrorism post 9/11 is also seen in the literature as highly dynamic and capable of adaptation (McCoy and Knight, 2015), hence requiring continuous and flexible counter-terrorism policies. This also means that the 'new terrorism' is framed as an adaptable threat, capable of mutating to escape counter-terrorism measures, and can therefore be frames as a capillary and looming threat.

The idea of a net rupture between the terrorism*s* pre and post 9/11 is, however, contested, in that while 9/11 has been and still is an event which reverberates worldwide, it is also argued that the rupture was not created by 9/11 itself, but in the way events before and after that have been thought of (Fitzgerald, 2021) and responded to. 9/11 "is an epistemological black hole of such force that past events continue to be sucked into its pull and recast as (its) fragments" (ibid.: 1). Such epistemological rupture is also reflected in the number of scholar outputs post the event: Reid and Chen (2007) mapped, through the use of bibliometrics (citations), the domain of terrorism research and the sudden increase in the publications post 9/11. From their analysis it emerged that a spike in publications is related to the way the violence was experienced by the United States on 9/11. Terrorism is, from this point of view, perceived of as a threat to the international powers, while before, it was considered to be mainly a low-intensity domestic, and mostly 'foreign', problem, in essence it became thought of as both an existential and strategic threat. This "shift

in the cognitive structure of terrorism research" (ibid.: 49) seems to be reflected also in the change of topic of the publications. For example, while before 9/11 one of the most researched topics was the Troubles in Northern Ireland, after 9/11 the main interest topic converged on Islamist terrorism (Reid and Chen, 2007, Silke, 2008). A parallel change in research was also observed in the geographic focus, where the attention of research moved from Europe (where different countries were busy with, among others, separatist and independentist movements) to the Middle East and Asia (Silke, 2004). In addition, the language used to refer to the groups perpetrating violence also changed, the word "insurgency" was less used, with a preference now for the word "terrorism" (Zulaika and Douglass, 2008), which "governments tend to be quick to apply […] to an opponent if they can possibly get away with it" (ibid.: 7).

So far, a number of critiques of the field of Terrorism Studies have been discussed, however, it is important to reflect on the improvements the field has undergone and is still undergoing: this relate to the improvement in the use of different methodologies and to an increase involvement of scholars in the field -as opposed to a majority of government officials- (Silke, 2004). In addition, the definition of the field as "stagnant" (Sageman, 2014) further highlighted the tensions between political and academic agenda and sparked a debate in the field (Taylor, 2014). Finally, in more recent years, the nature of the field as one working at the boundaries of different disciplines is seen as a point of strength rather than as a hindrance to progress in the field (Silke, 2018), this does not mean, however, that the field does not present other challenges. Finally, the past year has seen the research in Terrorism Studies turning towards introspection and looking at the ethics surrounding the field and its application while doing research (Morrison,2021) and at the safety of the researcher

while doing research (specific to, in the latter case, researching extremism online, see Conway, 2021).

Terrorism studies and the politics of knowledge

As mentioned earlier, the field of Terrorism Studies was (and still is) dominated by research that examines terrorism and political violence related to Islamic extremism (Schuurman, 2018; Burke, 2008, Toros, 2017, Silke, 2004), and to a lesser degree nationalist and separatist/secessionist campaigns (Ahmed, Lynch, Marinone, 2021). It is only very recently that significant attention has been focused on other ideologically motivated extremisms, namely the far-right. There are a plethora of reasons for this focus on Jihadist terrorism over the past twenty years, but these have not been comprehensively attended to in the literature (Schuurman, 2018). A key reason often stated for the disparity in coverage is the impact of 9/11 , however, on its own and without the plethora of media reporting and political framing, it is possible that 9/11 could not explain the conflation of the terrorism threat with jihadi terrorism, and, in turn, with Muslims (Campbell, 2017). This line of reasoning can also be applied to the flourishing of publications in the field post 9/11: in short, while the event was dramatic, it is its continued re-telling through different avenues such as publications, newspapers and memorials, that keep the event salient even 20 years later. The relationship between 9/11 and Terrorism Studies is not direct; but it is tight and had a far-reaching impact: it is mediated by threat perception and institutional discourses and practices which rendered the mortality of the 9/11 attacks resonant worldwide. As power and power

dynamics are involved in the creation of meaning and concepts, one has to interrogate the representation of problems and events, with the aim of understanding the power dynamic behind it (Campbell, 2010.). This observation on the relationship between meaning and power is also echoed by Jackson (2009) in the context of Critical Terrorism Studies, and highlights how much of the accepted terrorism knowledge is politically biased and feeds into a dynamic of reinforcing already existing structures; such knowledge is reproduced through journals, conferences and other publication avenues. Such link between knowledge production and power makes sense if one considers the influences on Terrorism Studies coming from counterinsurgency and conservative institutions (Miller and Mills, 2009). The relationship between such institutions and experts reflected in what early terrorism researchers defined to be terrorism; such definition still remains pervasive today and it strongly relies on the identity of the actor to define who is a terrorist. This works also at the broader level when considering terrorists those actors that are sub-state (hence neglecting states as actors of terrorism), and on a smaller scale it can also be seen as impacting on which sub-state actors are labelled as terrorist. This reflects and can be explanatory, at least in part, of the quasi-absence of far-right terrorism in terrorism studies in the literature analysed.

Finally, it is worth highlighting that the link between knowledge, power and conservative ideas of terrorism, especially around *who is the terrorist,* emerges as even more problematic if one considers the policy relevance of the contributions in the field. Previous reviews of the field have already highlighted the issues in the field of Terrorism Studies as being solution-driven, reactive and reactionary (Silke, 2001; Sageman, 2014), and Jackson (2016) poses that a field that is preoccupied with state-driven concerns, and a policy-related research agenda means that the research is constantly in 'problem

solving mode' and that only certain questions are asked (and only certain answers accepted). In addition, the contribution of the academic field in state driven agendas should also aim at considering and countering the fact that counterterrorism regimes, Jackson reports, are "inherently violent, oppressive, life diminishing [whose] practices are anti-emancipatory, anti-human and regressive" (ibid.: 121).

Conclusion

The field of Terrorism Studies is 'un-disciplined' (Stampitzky, 2013) in that it taps into a variety of disciplines (psychology, sociology, International Relation, Security Studies among others). Originating from the study of counterinsurgency in the 60s, the events of 9/11 seem to have brought about a "renaissance for terrorism studies and with so many students and scholars fresh to the field" (Silke, 2008: : 29), with a quick increase in publications, as well as the introduction of new journals (seven new journals began publishing between 2008 and 2016) (Schuurman, 2018), and a new involvement of scholars in the research. Despite a renewed interest in terrorism research, the field remains problematic in the empirical underpinnings of the research and limited in its topical focus, perceiving the terrorism threat as something coming from outside. In fact, jihadist groups were the major focus of research from 9/11 and remained at the top of the topical preference for the research in about three quarters of the publications between 2007 and 2016 (Schuurman, 2019). Among these, publications about Al Qaeda remained the dominant topic in that timeframe, albeit with fluctuations, until the Islamic State became the new "hot topic" since 2014 (ibid.).

Scholars who offered a review of the field of Terrorism Studies from a critical perspective, saw the field as strongly event driven and linked to state concerns (Schuurman, 2019), and interpreted this narrow topic selection to be a consequence of these relationship between state concerns and researchers. In addition, this link between research and state concerns privileged solution-driven knowledge to detriment of research which intend terrorism with a broader focus (Jackson, 2007) as well as that research which looks at domestic instances of terrorism, such as the far-right.

CHAPTER 2: TERRORISM STUDIES, 9/11 AND THE TOPIC SELECTION

The impact of 9/11 on Terrorism Studies and securitising narratives

Introduction

This chapters looks at the aftermath of 9/11 and how terrorism, which was not new for the USA (nor for Europe), became framed as an impending threat, and the USA had to face its vulnerability (Hoffman, 2002). Terrorism became securitised both through extraordinary counterterrorism (CT) measures (and allowed for the infringement of civil rights in the name of security, see Boyd and Scouras, 2010) both through the implementation of tools that government put in place to communicate with the population about the perceived threat coming from terrorism (such as traffic-light systems which indicate the possibility of a terrorist attack in a given country). Securitisation, as discussed throughout the chapter, is closely linked with emotions and in particular fear (Ahmed, 2015), and such emotion can be exploited by political actors in order to further a given political agenda. 9/11, security and fear of terrorism remain pivotal in the CT narratives of Western governments (Fitzgerald, 2021) and being academia closely related to policy, the research was also strongly impacted by the governments' focus on 9/11 and as well as by the continuous recounting of the traumatic events of that day. Since the emotions elicited by 9/11 are long-lasting and became so strongly politicised, they had the effect of hindering an informed discussion that would take in consideration not only the questions we ask about who the terrorist is, but also the ethics of CT interventions and if, while the

focus is dedicated to jihadi terrorism, the research is not neglecting other terrorist actors, which do instead exploit and appropriate securitisation narratives.

The immediate aftermath of 9/11

In the days and weeks following the 9/11 attacks there was a global outcry against the violence. The shocking imagery of the towers collapsing was relayed around the world and the perceived vulnerability of the west became heightened (Hoffman, 2002). The response to the attacks was swift, brutal and internationally supported, and within 27 days the USA had launched their campaign in Afghanistan (Khattak, 2011) with the support of the UN and 51 number of allied nations (Kirby, 2021). However, the military response was just one component of the very comprehensive and in many cases draconian counter terrorism reaction to 9/11. Emergency legislation was introduced in many countries in an effort to prevent and prosecute terrorism, comprehensive volumes of new terrorism legislation was introduced very quickly after the attacks (e.g., see the PATRIOT Act in the USA and CONTEST in the UK in Parker, 2007). Extra judicial measures were also introduced and extraordinary rendition, black site prisons and incarceration in Guantanamo Bay all became key tools in the CT response (Boyd and Scouras, 2010). While these measures were taken as part of a Global War on Terrorism, the reality for many Muslims living in the West changed: Muslims in America, once considered assimilated, were now scrutinised, subject to registration to American authorities and ethnically profiled at airports (Boyd and Scouras, 2010). The situation in Europe came to be similar, with discussions surrounding the integration of Muslims in Europe now occurring through the lenses of security and through those of identity and 'loyalty', where the question

was around Muslims being more French/British/Spanish, than Muslim (Mandaville, 2009 and Ajala, 2014). Muslims in the West were also subject to backlash in their daily lives: “Incidents of verbal harassment, including racial slurs, were common, and many had been called ‘‘terrorists’’ when they frequented public places” (Barkdull et al., 2011: 144). While the newness of the terrorism carried out on 9/11 was debated in policy and academic circles, ultimately agreement reached that there was little new about it (Crenshaw, 2008). However, it can safely be said that what was new about 9/11 was the counter terrorism response. The impact of the CT response to 9/11 can still be felt today as we attempt to deal with the end of a catastrophic Afghan campaign (Costs of War, 2021), grapple with the remaining prisoners in Guantanamo Bay (Rietveld, van Wijk and Bolhuis, 2021), and reconcile that twenty years of post 9/11 CT may have not made the west any safer (Rasmussen, 2021).

It is in this context that the introduction of the concept of securitisation takes place; securitisation is but one of the reactions to 9/11 and in this thesis it is used as a framework which aids the understanding of how Muslims were cast as an existential threat, how Muslims living in the West became all potential terrorist, and how this compares if one looks at securitisation dynamics when far-right terrorist groups are involved.

Terrorism and securitisation

The concept of securitization emerged in the scope of the field defined as “Security Studies” (McSweeney, 1996) and can be defined as the process of turning a situation into a “security issue”, framing it as an existential threat to a referent object, like the state. This process allows for the mobilization of extraordinary measures to deal with

the situation, as for example, planning and implementing exceptional security interventions to deal with the threat of terrorism (airport checks, limitation of the freedom of movements of the individuals and similar) (Rushton, 2018). Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde are the major exponents of what became known as the "Copenhagen School"; they carried out research about issues of security and securitization at the Centre for Peace and Conflict research in Copenhagen. Research on security and securitization, however, began earlier, during the Cold War with the aim of avoiding the outburst of a nuclear war (Rushton, 2018, Buzan et al., 1998). After the end of the Cold War, an academic debate on the breadth of securitization began, and saw the emergence of two major approaches: a "narrow" one, mainly focused on the military use of force against a clearly identified enemy, and a "wide" approach, which aims at extending the domain of security to other issues (Buzan et al., 1998) with a new emphasis on the concept of social identity (McSweeney, 1996). While the military approach does not take in consideration the constant changes happening at a societal and political level, securitization scholars were concerned that a wider approach to securitization would bring the risk of including and treating everything as a security issue, potentially drifting towards infringement of civil liberties and human rights (Rushton, 2018). As securitization is a process dealing with rendering of a situation as a security issue, a necessary consideration is that it would involve the construction of a condition as an existential threat through the use of a specific rhetoric (Balzacq, 2005): such issues "*have to be staged as an existential threat to a referent object by a securitizing actor who thereby generates endorsement of emergency measures beyond rules that would otherwise bind*" (Buzan et al., 1998: 5).

Not every actor in a society can "speak security", speeches on securitization normally involve institutional actors, this assumes particular relevance when the concept of security is applied to societal situations (in that societal situations are related to collectives on a defined territory, and to their identity), and not to a strictly military issue. For example, six months after 9/11 America implemented a colour-coded system which gave an indication of the presumed levels of terrorist threat. The system was supposed to help citizens in their decision-making process about their daily activities (Fung, Graham and Weil, 2007). Similarly, the UK also has a system of 5 alert-grades which, determined by the MI5, the British intelligence agency, communicates to citizens the likelihood of a terrorist attack in the UK (UK Government, 2021). The implementation of such measures meant that notions of security and risk were brought into the daily lives of individuals, where daily activities and threat alert become intertwined. It also meant that the level of threat was associated as coming from jihadi terrorism, and in turn, from Islam as the result of a process where "'Terror' became translated into 'Islam'" (Mavelli, 2012: 165).

Security agendas ultimately deal with threats to a community identity, which is linked to state boundaries, thus maintaining the state as the security unit (Buzan et al., 1998). If one takes the state as a unit of analysis on which securitization issues unravels, it is worth noting that it also represents the referent object, towards which the communities show loyalty and support, and which then has the power and the means to propagate ideas about a threatened "us". In the case of securitization terrorism, Islam became the object to be securitized, in that post 9/11 the adherence to the Islamic faith became perceived as potentially dangerous (and linked to securitization) per se.

If we follow the Copenhagen school mentioned above, securitization actors are normally institutions who can speak security and can elicit support by the citizenship (Buzan et al., 1998). When securitization discourses are applied to terrorism, however, it is important to note that the narrative can be understood differently according to the audiences receiving such discourse. On one hand, there are those working in the counter-terrorism field, included but not limited to those who research it, who can accept the discourse and then have the tools to enact the extraordinary measures required to implement the security measures. On the other hand, there are far-right groups, who exploit narratives to support their views and embrace a justified violence against those who are perceived as willing to somehow replace western values with illiberal and oppressive values (Kundnani, 2012). Far-right groups which appropriate counter-terrorism securitizing narratives, are part of a cycle in which governmental narratives, jihad narratives and far-right narratives interplay and reciprocally reinforce each other, in a dynamic of "fear and mutual demonization" (Kundnani, 2012: 11). In this light, it is not surprising to observe the rise of populism and far-right parties exploiting not only counter terrorism narratives but also applying those same narratives to migration. The process of othering comes then from a different audience, which often gains wider support from the general public (as it was the case for the EDL and a section of the general English population, see Kassimeris and Jackson, 2015). The effects on these two audiences seem to all lead to the same results, although carried forward by two different actors: Muslims are othered and ontologically perceived as "something else". Allowing for the introduction of such security practices renders Muslim communities remote (Eroukhmanoff, 2015) and can lead to banal and little valued acts to promote

securitization (Huysmans, 2011). Such mundane securitisation interventions have often had the result of alienating even more those communities which instead should be integrated more and could help towards the delegitimization, and disapproval of the terrorist jihadist groups they are associated with in certain official narratives.

Securitisation in the aftermath of 9/11

The process of securitization can be seen as a process of creation of discourse, as well as a meaning making process, in that facts are not mere facts, but they are subject to a process of interpretation. Such meaning making processes are generally linked to power structures and to hegemonic discourses, as for the example of states who promote securitizing narratives. It is important, especially where there is an active far-right element to consider, that the security narratives proposed by the state take into account the drifts and the behavioural consequences that securitization requests can lead to (Floyd, 2017). Far-right groups tend to openly express hostility towards Islam, promoting Islamophobia on a wide scale, but hostile speeches can be considered securitization requests put forward to reach more powerful actors, such as the state. However, one must also consider that such requests are harmful to those racial, ethnic or religious minorities who are at the centre of such discourses, as the message that is transmitted is that such groups are dangerous just because of who they are. Even if these securitizing requests with all the related speech can be considered as generated by genuine concern, one cannot avoid considering the ethical implications this could have. If the overall aim of democratic societies when resorting to securitization is to maintain intact the freedom of speech, one should also consider the way ideas are expressed. This

means posing under ethical consideration security speeches coming from non-institutional actors (ibid.), to avoid possible negative consequences.

The consequences of the security measures taken as a result of 9/11 to protect Western Countries from the 'Al Qaeda threat' have branched out to impact *all* Muslims living in Western countries. For example, a number of European countries began implementing laws which securitized Islam and immigrants coming from Muslim countries such as giving to law enforcement agencies unrestricted access to 'suspect individual's financial records (France), preemptive detention (UK), and the Netherlands planned to introduce searches in religious places such as mosques and to be able to monitor individuals outside of anti-terrorism 'suspect list' (Cesari, 2010). Antiterrorism laws in the US also targeted Muslims living in the country, implementing new surveillance measures which would give extensive power to law enforcement agencies of intruding into individual's daily lives, and where agents "*Investigators may enter a citizen's place of residence, take pictures, search and download computer files, and seize items without informing the resident of the search until days, weeks, or even months later*." (Monshipouri, 2010:57). As they are now framed as an "other", identified solely by virtue of their religious faith and looked upon with suspicion (Ajala, 2014). While terrorism and securitization are not new phenomena, they became more closely linked in the aftermath of 9/11 as it represented a watershed moment in the perception of terrorism as a threat to the West (Kaunert and Leonard, 2019). However, both the European Union and the United States are not new to instances of terrorism, but in the aftermath of 9/11 terrorism, embodied by Al Qaeda, was reframed as an existential threat that required special attention and dedicated

measures (Abbas, 2021; Eroukhmanoff, 2015; Monshipouri, 2010; Smith, Stohl and al-Gharbi, 2018; Kaunert and Leonard, 2019). Europe already had a long history of dealing with domestic terrorism, as well terrorism linked to conflicts outside of the region, for example linked to Palestinian issues (Kaunert and Leonard, 2019). Large scale terrorist attacks against American targets were also not new, for example the Marine barracks bombing in Lebanon in the 1980s and the 1995 Oklahoma bombing by Timothy McVeigh; however, the scale, the complexity and the consequences of the terrorism witnessed in 9/11 was seen as qualitatively different (Linder, 2007; Ackerman, 2021).

Europe reacted to the events of 9/11 and framed the attacks as relevant t' Europe's security and began the works to the implementation of a European Security Strategy which would render securitisation and terrorism preventing measures central to the strategy (Galli, 2008). Not dissimilar from measures implemented in the USA through the PATRIOT Act, the European Security Strategy relied on improved law-enforcement and intelligence cooperation, as well as on control of personal records of bank accounts belonging to suspicious actors. Such EU security strategy culminated in 2005 with the launch of the European Union Counterterrorism Strategy.

The terrorism threat has been framed and inflated as important to the EU since the events of 9/11. In a behaviour that resembles that o' the US' responses to 9/11, discussed in this and the next chapter, Europe also moved from looking at securitising states, to securitising specific people and populations (Hassan, 2010).

In line with what already said above about securitisation, the attacks in Madrid and London, which have been tragic, were also framed as a "crisis, "*in such a way as to*

legitimise the securitisation of terrorism, and push a much wider set of policy actions than the events themselves would have suggested." (Hassan, 2010: 446)

In spite of these considerations about pre-existing instances of terrorism both in Europe and the United States, Schuurman (2018), found that the MENA region and Islamist terrorism remained, through the early 2000s and up to 2016, the preferred topic of selection in the field of Terrorism Studies.

In addition to the scale of the attacks on 9/11, the perception and the assessment of the terrorist threat shifted significantly, and led to the emergence of the narratives that suggested that there was something fundamentally new about the terrorism of Al Qaeda (Crenshaw, 2008). This so-called *new terrorism* (Hoffman, 2006) was thought to be linked to fanaticism, fundamentally irrational, influenced by fundamentalist interpretations of scripture and in the anathema of Brian Jenkins' famous maxim (1975) that terrorists wanted a lot of people watching and not a lot of people dead. The threat coming from this new terrorism was constructed as a looming war that would be waged against the West, and as such only a war was the appropriate response. The result of course was Bush's War on Terror (Kaunert and Leonard, 2019), and this war was pitched as a battle of good against evil, right against wrong, where countries had to demonstrate that they were either 'with us (America) or with the terrorists', there were no grey areas.

9/11 and the fear of terrorism

America's (and, safe to say, Western) perceived vulnerability to terrorism became evident in the aftermath of 9/11 (Hoffman, 2002), and fear of terrorism became a significant part of the daily lives of many individuals. Emotions such as fear, pride,

anger and need for retaliation became relevant in the process of securitization and securitization of terrorism (Van Rythoven, 2015). These emotions shaped the reactions to 9/11 and contributed to the War on Terror (WoT) becoming the dominant frame for understanding the CT response. Post 9/11 governments needed to fulfil the need for security but, Smith, Stohl and al-Gharbi (2018) contend, that in doing so and in communicating to the population that they are implementing counter-terrorism measures they contribute to actually increase the feelings of insecurity. While Jenkins (1975) defined terrorist violence as performative, Stohl (2019) added that the reaction of the 'audience' to such performative violence is way more important, and the reaction of the US (first, and other Western countries then) shaped the CT response for the past two decades. Bush's framing of the response to the attack changed from the targeting of the individuals responsible of the attack to that of a 'war' against terror (Tapper, 2001). The attack's significance went beyond the loss of lives and became framed as a war against freedom and democracy (Bush, 2001) and both al-Qaeda and Islamic terrorism became frames as a looming existential threat (Stohl, 2018). As the WoT became globalised, governments of countries such as the UK and Australia resorted to discourses based on anger and fear in their framing of their participation to the WoT (Ahmed, 2015 and De Castella, McCarthy and Musgrove, 2009). In fact, the attack on the World Trade Centre was framed in Bush's discourse as an attack to the whole Western way of life (Kaunert and Leonard, 2019), therefore resonating not only in the USA but also in the other states of the 'Global North'. Al Qaeda was perceived and labelled as an existential threat, and such label was soon extended to Muslims living in the West: while the CT measures implemented in response to 9/11 quickly meant military interventions in

Afghanistan, the global WoT also brought with it a trend of general demonisation of Muslims in the West which manifest as widespread surveillance (Bleich, 2009), arrest and detention without charge and deportation (Tirman, 2010).

9/11 became a prism for interpretation and framing of life, risk and security measures (Fitzgerald, 2021). This is not to diminish the impact of the loss of life of the victims and their families, but to point out the exceptionalism with which this particular threat is presented. Deaths from other forms of extremism violence such school shootings, domestic violence, far-right or other paramilitary groups are neglected in comparison. Gruenewald and colleagues (2020) found, in fact, that excluding the casualties of 9/11, far-right attacks in the USA resulted in 345 deaths, and Islamist inspired attacks resulted in 154 deaths (in a timespan that goes from 1990 to 2019). The shock and horror of the events of 9/11, the repetition of images of the towers on fire together with the discourses around the attacks against freedom and democracy, led to Islam being securitised worldwide, with funding mainly gone to, for example, counter-radicalisation programmes addressing Muslims (Brown, 2018), with the far-right only being attended to very recently and with minor resources. This happened for example, much after 9/11, during the Trump administration: the Brennan Centre for Justice reports in fact that funds dedicated to the Life after Hate initiative, which helped individuals to disengage from far-right movements , have been diverted to CVE directed at detecting signs of radicalization among Muslims community in America, and in so doing, the administration "reinforced the message that CVE is about Muslims" (Patel, 2017).

The perception of the threat as coming from Al Qaeda and jihadi terrorism took hold in politics and among the population not only in light of the death toll of 9/11 or in

light of the risk of further terrorist attacks, but also thanks to pre-existing concerns around security, Muslim integration in Western countries and identity (Bleich, 2009). For long before 9/11, the presence of Muslims in Western countries was in fact scrutinized as Islam is seen to be essentially backwards and incompatible with democratic values and secularism (Cesari, 2010), such ideas around this incompatibility came at the forefront after 9/11. These same identity mechanisms and the elicitation of fear in reaction to the events have also contributed to the difference in attention given to jihadi terrorism and far-right terrorism, and this will be discussed in the next paragraphs.

Far-right terrorism in and outside of academia

Historically, the terminology used to describe the electoral political spectrum derive from the French Revolution, where those supporting the monarchy would sit on the right of the king and those supporting popular sovereignty would sit to the left (Mudde, 2019). This terminology changed during the centuries, and manifestations of the 'right' have also changed, not without debates at the academic level: in fact, while in the first decades after the Second World War these groups were defined as 'neo-fascists', in more recent times these groups became commonly referred to as 'far-right'. (Mudde, 2019). In this piece of work, the far-right is used as an umbrella term which encompasses both the radical right (nominally democratic, opposed to some liberal values) and the extreme right (antidemocratic in essence) (Mudde, 2007). A discussion of the far-right which would comprehensively embrace both electoral and terrorist groups is out of the scope of this thesis, however it is important to note that far-right electoral and terrorist groups share characteristics

at the level of worldview; in addition it has been found that electoral and terrorist groups do oftentimes link to each other by way of participating in the electoral process or by way of providing covert electoral support to political parties (Matanock, 2016).

As discussed in the previous chapter, reviews of the field of Terrorism Studies in the last decade have pointed out that the literature has predominantly attended to jihadi terrorism, but despite the slow start, there is increased attention from within academia afforded to the threat of violence emanating from far-right extremism (Ravndal and Bjørgo, 2018). However, while there is growing consensus on the emerging trends in far-right terrorism, there is a general lack of coherence in the body of work that attends to the issue of far-right terrorism. Much like the literature on terrorism, there is no one *home* for the work on the far right and in general the knowledge and research that inform the debates on the far-right do not constitute a coherent body of research, nor does it emerge from any single discipline. Recognising this issue, Ravndal and Bjørgo state that knowledge in this field is "diverse, disorganised and discontinuous" (2018:11). This can partly be attributed to the fact that the research comes from many different disciplines, but also partly explained by the tendency to focus on ideologically motivated violence as wholly defined by its ideology as is often the norm in the field of terrorism studies. While research, policy and intervention pay lip service to the notion that all ideological violence is relevant and prioritised in the field, this is not the case. For example, counterterrorism tools used with those convicted of extremism or extremist related offences in the UK were originally developed, tested and validated with a population made entirely of Al Qaeda linked perpetrators, yet the tool is claimed to have relevance across the

ideological spectrum (Lynch and Joyce, 2019). This goes back to the point made by Silke (2004) that the field is reactive, somewhat myopic and dominated by particular frames of reference and informed by problematic political discourses. However, over the past few years, significant attention has been diverted to far-right terrorism, and encouragingly a more comprehensive view of the issue is being taken whereby reciprocal violence across the ideological spectrum is attended to and a more nuanced view of the issue of far-right is being developed (Busher and Macklin, 2015). The following paragraphs in this chapter will look at the possible reasons for the trend of reactivity in the field, especially in relation to the post 9/11 environment.

Fear of crime and fear of terrorism

So far, this chapter has dealt with the concept of securitisation, has applied it to terrorism and it has linked it to 9/11, explaining how the events of 9/11 became a prism of interpretation and understanding reality and CT responses, also due to the high emotional impact of the event. This section of the chapter delves more in depth into the emotions stemmed from 9/11, with a focus on fear, and does so by drawing on concepts deriving from criminology (such as fear of crime) and from sociology (such as 'culture of fear', Furedi, 2006).

The framing of a situation as a threat is not new and is not exclusive to the case of securitisation and terrorism, it, in facts, also occurs in the case of 'ordinary' crimes. In the criminological literature, fear of crime is a construct which serves to investigate at its most literal level the fear of being victimised, but it has been recognised as encompassing a wider range of emotions around the possibility of being harmed (Goodey, 2005). A narrow application of the construct of fear of crime is contested

by critical criminologists both at an operational level ("are survey questions investigating fear of crime really measuring this construct?") and at a theoretical level ("what is, in reality, fear of crime?"). In fact, Walklate and Mythen (2007) provided a review of the concept of fear of crime, noting how its use in the literature is a measure of *insecurities* related to social issues other than crime. When the awareness of such social issues rises (occurrence now facilitated by the overarching presence of technology in everyday life), feelings of insecurity can grow, and with these, also seems to grow fear of crime. In this broader sense, fear of crime expresses "wider sublimated concerns about – and challenges to – the certainty, order and security of everyday life" (ibid.:213). It follows that, if fear of crime expresses insecurity related to everyday life's activities, surveys investigating fear of crime may indeed reveal something different: they could actually measure some of the dimensions constituting what is defined as "ontological insecurity", as, for example, economic, personal and social instability.

Cultural and political changes can be part of what constitutes this sense of insecurity, at a social level as well as at the political one. In addition to pre-existing insecurity, governments also began considering the consequences of hypothetical risks and harnessing the fear coming from risk perception (Furedi, 2002 in Walklate and Mythen, 2007). Everyday life activities are seen and presented to the population after a filtering process which provides an assessment of the risk that the activity holds. An example of this being the traffic-light alert system implemented in the USA as well as in the grade-alert used in UK (and other EU countries) to inform the citizens on the threat of terrorism. Two important considerations stem from this: the first is that generally, by implementing such risk-management measures, the individual is

encouraged to take responsibility for their own security through the avoidance of those activities considered as having a "high risk" of victimisation. However, terrorism is not one of those activities where place and time of victimisation is often predictable, which is in itself a characteristic of terrorism. Even if terrorism risk outside war zones has been found to be extremely low (Mueller and Stuart, 2021), national agencies cannot guarantee total security to its citizen and therefore terrorism is constantly communicated to citizens through the frames of the existential threat and 'dramatic cautioning' (Mythen and Walklate, 2008). The second consideration relates to the implications of framing terrorism as an unpredictable existential threat: the active effort that government input in ensuring that after 9/11 remained at the top of western governments' political agendas (Mythen and Walklate, 2008) had negative consequences such as impairing informed debates on terrorism, its causes and the ethics of counter-terrorism measures (ibid). The politization of fear coupled with the unpredictability of terrorism then seep not only into the daily lives of citizens, but also in the activities of researchers and policy makers that then frame, in their activities, the issue of terrorism in line with the emotions elicited from events and political discourses. As mentioned above, emotions become an integral part of our understanding, perception and meaning making (Ahmed, 2015) and in this frame "*shadow of fear shades into and obscures the rationale underpinning domestic anti-terrorism measures and international military interventions.*" (Walklate and Mythen, 2008: 228) but it is also safe to say that this extends to research in academia and that the field of Terrorism Studies was also impacted by the sentiment of fear and uncertainty following 9/11. The management of risk and security, then, becomes embedded in a network of

collaborations between the state and private entities -other than the police, which, nonetheless contribute to policing tasks (Shuilenburg, 2011) as well as to the reproduction of political discourses on terrorism.

The events of 9/11 elicited a wide array of feelings, and fear is certainly one of them: governments and media have contributed to the diffusion, reiteration, and continued exposure to the trauma. However, the fear that people felt following the event cannot be ascribed entirely to governmental fabrications: emotions are relational in that they are *about something* (Ahmed, 2013) and in fact fear was elicited by the events of 9/11, as well as by the narratives around the event (the love for death of the hate for the USA as a bulwark of freedom). But emotions are also 'things we do' (Ahmed, 2013) in that they are embodied in what we do, and become embedded in daily actions and decision. Therefore they became part of the way Muslims were perceived in the aftermath of the event, and in their treatment, but they also became part of the way we, in the field of Terrorism Studies, researched the topic of terrorism.

Moral panics, terrorism and Muslim others

The reactions to 9/11 in terms of counterterrorism and pre-emptive measures, as well as the continued presence of terrorism in the media has sparked debated on whether terrorism is a moral panic, a scare that becomes amplified and reverberates through society (Rothe and Muzzatti, 2004 and Altheide, 2009). To consider whether this is the case, one should consider first the way moral panics emerge and how these are created. Moral panics emerge from events representing a change in moral values, and this change is so significant that a disturbance at a moral level is perceived

(Young, 2009). Those who enact this disturbing change, and those agencies who are seen responsible for it are referred to as “folk devils” (Cohen, 1972). “Folk devils” are part of the historical and social context, and are a *construction* to which participate different actors: the media, the public, the agents of social control, politicians, action groups, and the folk devils themselves (Erjavec, 2003). There is a strong emotional value attached to the moral panic they created and, as ‘folk devils’ are deviant, they require corrective action. This corrective action needs to make sure to pre-empt any risk of further disturbance: this translates in very real consequences for those who are bestowed the label of ‘folk devils’. This strong emotional value is amplified thanks to the intervention of the mass media, which foster a spiral of public fears to which the public (as well as politicians and agents of social control) react (Young, 2009). Moral panics and folk devils change in parallel with the historical events ongoing in a society, and by applying an interactionist approach, reactions to terrorism -and Muslims treatment post 9/11- can be read in terms of moral panic.

After 9/11, terrorism has become a buzzword which has allowed governments to implement measures that restrict civil liberties and violate human rights in name of security and fear of terrorism (Lee, 2013). In Lee’s interpretation “the terrorist” is a constructed feared subject (2013): without denying the occurrence and the tragic consequences of terrorist attacks, there is a tendency by governments to define and stereotype certain populations as “terrorist”. Such labelling process promotes exclusion and division through the ad-hoc manipulation of the anxieties expressed by the public. It is against this backdrop that discourses on security and fear can take place and feed in the cycle of moral panics. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, in the aftermath of 9/11 there has been a sudden inflation of terrorism with Islam, and

while terrorism became a buzzword, Muslims (and everyone who was seen as being coming from a Muslim country, Nguyen, 2006) became its effigy. It can be argued, then, that while terrorism remains high in political agendas, it is not terrorism in itself that became a moral panic, but Muslims living in the West, by being described as directly linked to terrorism by way of religious ideology and radicalisation. In putting Islam in direct connection with terrorism through assuming a danger inherent to Islam itself, Muslims have been constructed as an 'Other'. While the othering of Muslims living in the USA can be traced back to the Cold War (Maira, 2009); this time, in the aftermath of 9/11 they became the ultimate 'other' and deviant, they became the 'folk devils'. Muslims and Arabs became seen as a dangerous monolith of people and, as 'folk devils' theory posits, they required "increased number of rule enforcers and more extensive authority" (Rothe and Muzzatti, 2004: 329).

In a context of moral panic and folk devils who need to be stopped, measures such as profiling, surveillance and pre-emptive detention became all too well accepted in the frame of the War on Terror (Qurashi, 2018). The *damage* inflicted by the attacks justified the use of extreme measures in order to prevent something similar from happening again, and therefore, for example, Guantanamo Bay and Abu Grahib can be tolerated as part of the 'War on Terror' (Cohen, 2005). The brutality of certain acts perpetrated by the government have become secondary when compared to the potential threat that terrorist attacks pose to the population, but the exploitation of the fears that terrorism elicits in the population has allowed severe human rights violations, from unjustified detention, to deportation, abduction and rendition. The severity of human rights violation in the War on Terror comprises cases of extraordinary renditions, where suspects were abducted and kept in secret locations,

without the access to legal assistance and subject to treatments that amount to torture (Fabbrini, 2014).

As mentioned earlier, the change that results from the moral panic has long lasting effects, even once that moral panic is over (Rothe and Muzzatti, 2004), indicating that moral panic is not simply episodic. The series of interventions and illegal measures that the USA government put in place, had repercussions that went far beyond the immediate effects of the terrorist attacks and the subsequent investigations, anti-Islamic attacks continued to happen, not only in the USA but worldwide, and the continued narratives about a 'Muslim Other' fed in the creation of specific anti-Muslims hate groups (SPLC, 2021 and Rehman, Noureen and Ahmad, 2021) as well as a continuation and increase of anti-Islamic hate in Europe (Bairakly and Hafez, 2017).

Media and threat perception

The media are also part of the process of, and often pivotal in, passing information and promoting narratives, that serve to control the levels of fear of crime (Burscher et al., 2015). Media seem to have the trend to present crimes in waves, emphasising a particular crime at a time, selectively ignoring or dismissing other crimes. This selective attention happened after the attacks on 9/11, where the extensive media coverage of terrorist attacks and the repetition of reminders of the attack in dramatic tones pushed other crimes and harms to the background, assigning them an incidental value (Rothe and Muzzatti, 2004). But not all terrorist attacks receive the same media attention, and the way different terrorist accidents are described changes in the media, depending on the location of the attack. For instance, just a

few hours before the attacks to the Bataclan theatre in Paris in 2015, two suicide bombers linked to ISIS attacked a shopping district in Beirut, Lebanon, and the two events did not receive the same attention in the newspapers, let alone the same sympathy, and the same attention in social media (for example, Facebook allowed those in Paris on the night of the attack to mark as 'safe' while the feature was not made available to those in Beirut) (Ajaka, 2015 and Graham, 2015). While the headlines describing the attacks in Paris focused on shock and disbelief, those talking about the attack in Beirut focused on putting Beirut in context as 'the stronghold of Hezbollah' (Hezbollah was opposing ISIS in Syria) (Ajaka, 2015) as to imply that the casualties in Beirut were not civilian, as the ones in Paris. But selection also happens in the way terrorists are described, in that 'not all terrorists are created equal'. News stories cover violent incidents differently, for example using descriptors as 'mental illness' to report cases of shootings perpetrated by white people (so placing the attack in the context of the individual's characteristics) while generally describe violent incidents perpetrated by Muslims through the lenses of terrorism (implying that when Muslims do perpetrate a crime it must be terrorism and for religious reasons) (Frisby, 2017). The representation of Muslims in the media changed so much that even naturalised USA citizens, if Muslims and involved in terrorism were described in the media through the lenses of 'foreignness' and religion (Chuang and Roemer, 2013), rather than through descriptors that would indicate they are American and *also* Muslims. This narrative feeds into a generalised tendency to humanise the terrorist when they are non-immigrants, and to highlight, instead, their being Muslim when it's the case, ignoring their nationality (Powell, 2011).

In the case of the actions of the American government in the aftermath of the 9/11, the media, in providing information about the attacks, prepared the population to accept a series of interventions, not always fully legal, that would not have been possible in times of relatively low concern. “The Bush doctrine of war was begun in a cloud of illegality throughout the […] ability to induce fear […]” (Rothe and Muzzatti, 2004: 340). The fear in the aftermath of the attacks was re-produced, re-iterated and re-proposed through continued newspaper and TV coverage, but along with fear, also the evil that was done was continually reinforced together with the identity of the perpetrator(s). This reproduction of fear feeds into the process of creation of moral panics discussed earlier, and as the fear spreads and is generalised, it became easier for State leaders to promote exceptional laws that are then accepted by the population (Herman and Sullivan 1989 as cited in Rothe and Muzzatti, 2004).

While the media is arguably the most influential of the actors in the creation and fostering of moral panics, the public is the actor who can, ultimately, allow the perpetuation of such moral panic as well as allowing the political actors involved to enact measures to handle such panic and related folk devils. Similarly to what Balzacq (2005) proposed about the importance of a recipient audience in the securitisation process, the emphasis in the cycle of creation of moral panics is on the public as the audience who received the speech. This could parallel the process of creating and spreading securitising speeches, proposed by authorities and government agents, that are able to progress and get concretised into policy if the audience accepts the content of the security speech. Again, here is important, for the security speech to be resonant with a real situation. At the social level, the implications of the exploitation of fear of terrorism are far reaching, especially

considering the progressive “Arabization of terrorism” (Hall, 2003) which equates Arabs (Muslims and Catholics alike) to terrorism in light of their country of origin. Even if Muslims (and immigrants, more in general) living in the USA were not new to a general hostility against them, after 9/11 they assisted to a sudden crash down of their liberties accompanied by episodes of violence coming at them from other citizens (ibid.). They became the centre of policing attention and monitoring, as for example the secret surveillance put in place by the New York Police Department, which allowed monitoring of Muslims in the city of New York, and which despite its widespread use did not lead to any criminal charges (Shamas and Arastu, 2010). But life also changed on a day-to-day level in communities, as Muslims living in the west became more and more exposed to episodes including physical violence as well as workplace discrimination and name-calling (Abu-Ras and Abu-Bader, 2009 and Barkdull et al., 2011).

Through the support of the media and the preference of the media for the “predatory other” (Lee, 2013), terrorism is now represented as a new moral panic, promoting detrimental levels of fear among the population (Rothe and Muzzatti, 2004). The fear of terrorism, if read through the lens of moral panic creation, can be managed through variation in the media coverage. As a result of the involvement of the media, the attack and those who perpetrated it are explicitly depicted as a threat to the values or the interests of the nation (Rothe and Muzzatti, 2004), in opposition to an “us” who are good and bearers of moral values. In these terms, there is a polarization in the attribution of qualities to “us” and ”them”, the insistence on a contraposition between the good and bad, where the enemy is overtly and absolutely evil and their actions are violent without explanation (ibid.). Finally, if the narratives presented by

politicians and media resonate enough with the situation in a given country, such narratives have a hold on the public, and are able to generate concern and hostility towards the group defined as the enemy (ibid, 2004). However, it is also important to remember that without an audience willing to accept the proposed narrative, the moral panic cannot be created, while once it is put in place, it consequences can last for long and have an impact on the members of the group defined as "evil" (Hall, 2003).

Conclusion

The consequences of 9/11 were and still are hard felt even 20 years after the events, and at multiple levels: in Terrorism Studies 9/11 represents both a 'new Renaissance' (Silke, 2004) and an hindrance to academic debate (Mythen and Walklate, 2008). The attacks were so shocking that in researching terrorism they became pivotal in the understanding of the world post 9/11, but also for understanding attacks before 9/11 (Fitzgerald, 2021). The consequences of 9/11 branched out to impact Muslims living in Western countries in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, but the securitisation of Islam and the related suspicion with which Muslims are looked at continues to this day (Abbas, 2021 and Dmello, 2021). Almost overnight, terrorism underwent a process of 'Arabization' (Hall, 2003) the perpetrators of the attack were labelled as enemies of liberty and democracy (Bush, 2001) and terrorism became a threat to be securitised. Extraordinary (and at times extra-legal) measures were implemented with a short turnaround -27 days between 9/11 and the military response targeting Afghanistan- and both governments and media promoted a narrative around Muslims living in

Western countries which depicted them inherently as a risk to such Western countries, becoming a new moral panic. While the narratives around Muslims took hold among the public, media and governments, also influencing academia, other political actors, namely far-right groups, remained neglected in discourses of securitisation (Kundnani, 2012) and instead participated in further promoting securitisation narratives around Muslims. The next chapter will look at how far-right actors are often seen as participants in narratives which promote an outsider (such as immigrants) as a threat to be expelled, surveilled or outright expelled, and how this intertwines with the politics of fear.

CHAPTER 3: THE POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE POLITICS OF FEAR

How the politics of fear become integrated with the politics of knowledge: jihadi terrorism, far-right terrorism and the "outsider" threat.

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the fear of terrorism is linked to the criminological concept of fear of crime, the fear of becoming a victim of crime, which is unrelated to the crime statistics in a given area or to the actual chances to become a victim of a given crime (Goodey, 2005). However, fear of crime is also a political matter, in that the narratives around those to be feared can be exploited by political actors such as governments, to create a culture of fear (Lee, 2013). Governmental and non-governmental actors might consider a certain level of fear of crime as desirable to promote action in two directions: the maintenance of the status quo, and of the current governmental organization, or the promotion of new interventions (Lee, 2013). In this light, fear of crime assumes a twofold value: it is an issue to be resolved, as well as a tactic. In the latter case, governments can take advantage and harness the reactions to a situation to manage the level of fear of crime among the population. This chapters looks at the politics of fear and at how these intersect with the politics of knowledge in and out of the field of Terrorism Studies.

The politics of fear

As mentioned earlier, maintaining high levels of fear of terrorism has been used to implement exclusionary or criminalising immigration policies: for example, within the

first three weeks of his presidency Donald Trump signed three executive orders which directly conflated immigrants and refugees with terrorism: and this happened 15 years post 9/11. One of them (Executive Order number 13769) became known as the 'Muslim Ban' and forbid people from 7 Muslim-majority countries from entering (or returning) to the USA, and suspended Syrian refugees from entry into the country (Fullerton, 2017 and ACLU, 2017). Away from the USA, Australia also implemented what became known as the 'Pacific Solution' (subsequently stopped in 2002) where asylum seekers and refugees were de facto deported to two Pacific Islands while their status was assessed (Jupp, 2006). Additionally, the threat of terrorism has also been used to curtail civil liberties such as freedom of speech coming from groups opposing national politics (e.g. in the USA meat industries have begun applying the 'terrorism' label to the actions of peaceful animal rights protests to frame them as dangerous, get insurance payments following an 'attack' and ask for government interventions, see Sorenson, 2009). The 82perception of a significant threat of terrorism has been in fact linked to a higher acceptance of restrictions of civil liberties in exchange for security and also linked to a higher acceptance of harsh government anti-terrorism policies (Davis and Silver, 2004 and Kossowska et al, 2011). Therefore, the implementation of restrictive and discriminating policies is made possible, or at least facilitated, by a heightened threat perception and by the need for security such threat perception bears.

It is in this context of building and using fear strategically, that the lack of securitising narratives focusing on far-right groups as *object* of securitisation becomes particularly stark. Compared to the speed and far-reaching of the acceptance of securitisation of the Muslim population in the Global North post 9/11 the far-right

have almost been ignored. An increase in far-right violence has been observed in the last number of years in the USA, but the far-right has long been involved in terrorism in the USA. Far-right attacks have accounted for 57% of attacks and plots between 1994 and May 2020 (Jones, Doxsee and Harrington, 2020) but, perhaps ironically, far-right terrorist groups and electoral parties appear to be *actively participating and fostering* narratives that securitise Muslims. Far-right terrorist groups are usually excluded from government's narratives on terrorism, but this is not entirely surprising considering that far-right militant groups often share grievances with electoral parties and offer more or less covert support to them (Matanock, 2016). Miller-Idriss (2021) contends the lack of securitising narratives about far-right is linked to the War on Terror and is one of its unintended consequences: not only did 9/11 give to far-right groups a good pretext to bring forward their xenophobic and white supremacist ideas, but the diversion of all counterterrorism resources to prevent jihadi terrorism attacks left far-right groups unattended and free to thrive.

While it is recognised that the narratives promoted by far-right groups, especially in relation to Islamophobia, became more mainstream in recent years, the relevance of securitising narratives cannot be ascribed simply to the rise of far-right ideas among the general population. These ideas harness fear of 'the other' and promote the protection of national boundaries from 'enemies' and those perceived as threats to the 'imagined unity' of the nation. Nonetheless, it has not been a matter of 'inventing' a threat as much as to use a feeling of insecurity and threat that was already lingering: the *feared object* was already there and has been reified and exploited (Lee, 2013) by far-right actors. In fact, the threat coming from the far-right has been often underestimated in that it has been considered a *domestic* threat,

which would need to be dealt with at the individual state level (Miller-Idriss, 2021) while jihadi terrorism post 9/11 has been continuously and repetitively constructed as an international threat. The threat coming from jihadi terrorism has been framed as impending, and the alert level remained high the reiteration of news about terrorism and the implementation of colour-coded systems which would communicate the threat level to the general population. Such a continuous exposure also meant that the threat perception became to some extent normalised and permeated into considerations about daily activities. This threat was also constantly framed as coming from the outside and from the outsider, which became identified with Muslims first, and generally with immigrants later, as will be discussed with the next chapter.

A comparison between jihadi and far-right groups as complex politicised actors

So far, it has been mentioned a number of times that far-right actors and jihadi actors are approached differently, both in quantity at the academic level and qualitatively at governmental level; this manifests in the quasi-total absence of securitizing narratives around far-right terrorism (Miller-Idriss, 2021) whereas not only jihadism but Islam as a whole has been securitized in the aftermath of 9/11, in fact "*The persistence of this perception [of Islam as an enemy] at the public level has made it virtually impossible to extricate Western Muslims from the external political enemy*" (Monshipouri, 2010: 45). An overview of the origins and possible points of contacts between the far-right and jihadism will contribute to highlights the discrepancies in their treatment.

While on the surface it might seem that jihadi and far-right groups are the antithesis

of each other, there appear to be striking similarities if one attempts at a comparison between these movements. It is worth noting, that when analysing such movements, one should consider the multidimensionality of these groups – they are political, social and religious organisations (Charters, 2007). Interestingly, there are elements in the origins, ideology, and activities of jihadi terrorist groups, which have led researchers to question whether jihadism, in particular the one brought forward by Al Qaeda, is a new form of *fascism* (Charters, 2007). Given the strong religious element present in the propaganda of jihadist groups, there has been the tendency to exclusively focus on the religious sphere that is part of such groups. Shifting the definition of jihadist groups from religious to political movement (albeit with strong religious elements), makes it possible to analyse it from the point of view of their complex social and intellectual origins. In the context of a comparison between the representation of far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism, making explicit the possibility of a parallel between the two instances of terrorism, can help in highlighting the discrepancies in the narratives that surround the two in the academic literature. This also entails considering how the homogenisation of jihadi groups post 9/11 fits in a narrative of 'new terrorism' which sees this new terrorism as irrational and linked to fanaticism: synonymous with extreme religious fervour, thus stripping the groups of any element of political grievance. Such narratives of homogenisation and fanaticism allowed the West to consider and treat all jihadi groups as under the same banner, constructing Al Qaeda as *the* threat to the Western World, without effectively having to engage with political grievances linked to Western presence in Muslim majority countries. Per contra, far-right groups are afforded a different level of nuance in the way they are treated, in spite of clear

similarities emerging once the religious elements of jihadi ideology are placed in the background. As an illustration, the attack in Oslo perpetrated by Anders Breivik in 2011, killing 77 people was initially claimed by the Washington Post as an Islamist attack even before confirming the far-right ideology and Breivik's manifesto, behind it (Kundnani, 2012), which instead professed that Europe was under the threat of multiculturalism, and this threat was the 'Islamic colonization of Europe' (Reuters, 2011). Again Kundnani (ibid.: 1) argues that the focus on the 'Islamic threat' stems from a "*values-identity narrative of terrorism, which establishes fundamental ideas about how to identify the 'we' that is countering terrorism, the 'them' that is engaged in terrorism, and the terms on which the conflict between 'us' and 'them' is to be understood*" and it is only recently that the far-right came under the spotlight in terrorism (and counterterrorism) discourse (especially in the wake of the January 6th attacks) (Allam, 2022).

The definition of fascism by Paxton, can help in making clearer how far-right and jihadist groups have a lot in common. He defined fascism as a "*Form of political behaviour marked by obsessive preoccupation with community decline, humiliation, or victimhood and by compensatory cults of unity, energy, and purity, in which a mass-based party of committed nationalist militants, working in uneasy but effective collaboration with traditional elites, abandons democratic liberties and pursues with redemptive violence and without ethical or legal restraints goals of internal cleansing and external expansion*" (Paxton, 2004: 218)

An overview of the emergence of fascist movements

Given the elements emerging from the definition, it is necessary to provide an analysis of the origins of fascism at historical and intellectual level. Even when analysing the phenomenon from different perspectives, there is academic agreement that fascism is the result of a condition of conflict, a struggle in society where there are sections of the population which are left behind (Abbas, 2017). As a result of economic crisis and fast processes of industrialization and de-industrialisation in Europe (in part as a consequence of World War I), groups of citizens have found themselves to be pushed at the margins of the society (Charters, 2007). Following this marginalisation, and in addition to the scarcity of resources, a competition with other marginalised groups, often minorities, could emerge. It seems, then, that such strata of the population express against the above-mentioned minorities frustration and nationalist tendencies, as a result of the marginalisation process. In a moment of crisis of identities and roles in the societies, brought about by changes in the political (as well as geographical) scene, fears can feed narratives of victimhood and function as a justification of violent actions against other groups (Hobsbawm, 2010). In addition to this, far-right narratives also seem to perceive a threat to the existing culture (Anders Breivik's manifesto, for example, reported of the threat coming from a progressive 'Islamisation' of the West), depicting a culture that is 'under siege' (Wollenberg, 2014). Violence is both justified and glorified as an aesthetic experience (ibid.). Violence is looked at both with a nihilistic eye and a strategic value that ranges from the elimination of the enemy of fascism to the purification of society through human sacrifice. Such glorification of violence is exemplified in The Turner Diaries, written by William L. Pierce under the pseudonym

of Andrew MacDonald (1978), where the protagonist successfully carries out a suicide operation. The consequences of the operation are threefold: hitting a governmental target, freeing the way for the revolutionaries to finally win over "liberals, Jews and black", and gaining his place in the selected level of the revolutionary sect he was part of. The Turner Diaries does not just represent an example of the aesthetic of violence of fascism, the text also inspired the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 perpetrated by Timothy McVeigh, who had a copy of the book with him when arrested (Ball and Dagger, 1997).

Such view of violence is part of a wider set of beliefs, which Paxton (2004) characterises as an "empty vessel" rather than a coherent ideology, a flexible system which can be adapted to add or change elements to fulfil an agenda. Fascism is, in fact, both anti-conservative and anti-liberal and aims at changing the status quo (Charters, 2007). Fascist movements are also historically anti-Semitist, in part inheriting a tradition of racism, partly as they are seen as vanguard in leading globalisation and the decline of morality. Such anti-Semitic sentiments find expression in different modalities, depending on the historical and social context. Even though being anti-liberal, such movements tend to appropriate civil liberties and take advantage of democratic systems (op. cit., 2007), as for example the freedom of speech, thanks to which they can continue their propaganda. Militants of fascist groups have been defined as "useful idiots" (Mirsky, 2002) gathering around a charismatic leader, mostly male, who represents the ideal individual that will emerge once the nation has been purified.

A brief overview of the emergence of modern jihadi movements

Developing in Arab countries, jihadist movements emerge in societies and cultures in crisis, at times caused by a series of factors ranging from intervention of western powers to a fast-paced urbanization and industrialization (as in the case of Saudi Arabia, see Charters, 2007). The promises of improvements in the life of Muslims thanks to democracy and economic growth remained distant, and furthermore, those promoting a stronger presence of Islamic traditional values (Islamist) were oppressed, reinforcing the perceived and actual clash between the two cultures. Even if among scholars and intellectuals there is no univocal definition for the concept of jihad, it cannot be denied that the oppression of Islamists and the import of new, Western, ways of living, might have fuelled the idea of a culture under siege, a theme which is always present in recruiting messages and propaganda. From the point of view of the intellectual origins, it has been also observed how the interpretation of various jihadi groups, and in particular Al Qaeda is acknowledged as a mix of medieval interpretations alongsi[de] European 20th century ideas, such the ones proposed by, amongst others, Sayyid Qutb and Ayman al Zawahiri. This combination of older and newer interpretation is found, for example, in ideas and strategies such as suicide bombers, the cycle of the fall, sacrifice and redemption of the hero, and the anti-Americanism, which assimilate America with evil and modernisation (Charters, 2007 and Abbas, 2017).

Notwithstanding the immediate parallels with fascism, other scholars such as Laqueur (1997) have argued that there are substantial differences that make them two movements different.

These differences are present, for example, in the way the two movements approach

and value national boundaries. While fascism relies on nations as the unit to protect (albeit, more recent far-right movements have extended such boundaries to "the West", see Kundnani, 2012), often the community to be protected in the case of jihadist movements is the Ummah, an ultra-national entity, which includes all Muslims. The way the nation is used by fascist groups and the way the Ummah is used by groups such as Al Qaeda do share the characteristic of being a way of enclosing and defining an ingroup, and this ingroup is contraposed to an outgroup. They are different ways to create and reinforce a sense of identity for the ingroup members, as well as contributing to the creation of the outsider which, as per social identity theorists, also fosters the creation of an enemy and the breeding of hate (Reicher, Haslam and Rath, 2008). However, it is important to acknowledge the existence of a degree of variability in the way those defined 'jihadi' groups define their ingroup, and not all of them refer to the Ummah as a supranational entity. This is evident in the case of the Taliban in Afghanistan and ISKP (the Islamic State of Khorasan Province), as the Khorasan province is a region which historically included Pakistan, Afghanistan, part of India, and Iran. These two groups are generally referred to as being 'jihadist', stressing the religious elements of their ideology, but including these two groups among 'jihadist' groups with little consideration of their political ideology neglects their focus on borders, and ignores that both the Taliban and ISKP could be better understood as nationalist groups (Tarzi, 2018; Raqib and Barreto, 2014), albeit with strong religious elements.

The tendency to neatly separate fascist and jihadist groups on the basis of their relationship with national borders is relevant in light of the ways in which is possible

to engage with them. For example, Charters (2007) traces the trajectory of fascist and jihadist groups contending that the use of the nation or of the Ummah as a unit to delineate an ingroup leads to a pivotal difference in the direction the two movements could take. Hence, while fascist movements can enter electoral politics and form parties, the ultra-national character of the Ummah and of militant jihadist movements would not allow for a unitarian party to be created, and therefore there is not an electoral avenue to challenge jihadist groups (Charters, 2007). This has meant that regardless of the heterogeneity of the groups, the Ummah has been understood as the target of counterterrorism interventions, and that states haven't been capable of challenging jihadist movements without reducing the liberties of Muslims living in Western countries.

The paragraphs above have described 91in parallel between fascist groups and jihadi groups exist in terms of how they emerge from political crisis and how they use different ways to reinforce the identity of who is part of the group and who is not (e.g. fascist groups use the idea of nation and jihadi groups use the notion of Ummah). In spite of the relevance of political crisis and marginalisation *for both,* fascist groups are selectively dealt with in political terms, while jihadi groups are often stripped of their political elements and dealt with on the base of their religious ideology; on the base of these premises the following section discusses and compares how these groups are treated when it comes to securitisation.

State-led narratives about far-right and jihadi groups

This section attempts to delineate how actors of securitisation (the state) produce narratives about militant jihadist groups and far right groups. It has been illustrated

how securitisation narratives tend to expand a lens of suspicion to the whole Muslim population, discussing how religious values are presented as opposite to those of liberal states. In terms of far-right and fascist groups, such narratives are in general fewer in number and in efficacy and tend to minimize the threat posed by these groups, and do not assume that the group represents a particular population. Further, a consideration of state-led narratives and the politics surrounding them is important as many of these are securitising narratives, and securitisation is studied, among others, in the discipline of International Relations, which is one of the disciplines the research in the field of Terrorism Studies taps into. In light of the 'undisciplined' nature of the field (Stampintzky, 2013), as mentioned in chapter 1, Terrorism Studies works at the juncture of different disciplines with porous borders. In addition, contributors to the field come from inside and outside of academia, therefore it is reasonable to extend the idea of porous borders also to the ideas and narratives that different contributors bring into the field and which become shared knowledge and routinely accepted.

In 2012 Kundnani reported how there are limited securitising narratives in relation to far-right groups, and most official positions and security narratives are focused on militant jihadist groups. However, after the e^{ve}nts on the 6th of January in 2021, the trend by which far-right is an agent of securitisation rather than its *object* could change, but the failure to recognise the threat and the partisan way in which the event is currently being dealt with via tribunal is testament to the very divided view taken regarding the far-right, at least in the USA. It is safe to say that if the *insurrection* were carried out by any other social, political or religious *minority* group in the USA the reaction would likely have been very different. But while in the last

year there has been an increased recognition of the threat coming from far-right terrorism, there also seem to be an active effort to avoid securitising narratives around far-right terrorist groups, bar the events of 6th January 2021, far-right actors are more often than not talked about individually, referring to them as lone actors (Schuurman et al., 2019).

This could be considered in light of the relationship between governmental narratives, far-right narratives and jihadist narratives, which seem to reinforce each other. In particular, far-right groups tend to appropriate sections of the government's security speeches, and to incorporate them in their discourses which attempt to justify violence; Andres Breivik, to bring a famous example, seemed to have appropriated a "global counter-jihad" narrative to justify his attack in Oslo, in 2011. This appropriation of security narratives has long been found to be a staple characteristic of far-right groups, before 9/11 it was in relation to (seemingly increasing) crime rates related to high rates of immigration, and then these narratives were turned to securitising Islam. For example Marine Le Pen in France declared that "multiculturalism [is] a weapon for Islamic extremists and claimed that (multicultural) France has become "a university for Jihadists." (Mudde, 2019: 40). This "blind spot" in securitisation, as Kundnani (2012) defines the far-right activism after 9/11, can be further understood if one looks at the numbers of people killed in Europe by far right extremists and those killed by militant jihadists. Far-right killings amount to 249 individuals since 1990, while jihadi killings in the same timeframe are 263, revealing that there seems to be an exaggerated perception of what constitutes a threat to the population, a perception that is unbalanced towards jihadist movements (ibid.). The narratives proposed by governments, and reprised by certain

groups, for example the EDL (English Defence League), focus on targeting Islam, depicted as an extreme political ideology, as well as targeting multiculturalism, which enabled "Islamification". Other approaches served to ridicule the Muslim population, and these are widely used and accepted. For example, in 2017 Boris Johnson who in 2017 compared "veiled Muslim women to 'letterboxes' and 'bank-robbers'" (Tell MAMA, 2018). The idea of Islam of a violent ideology tout-court, is partly also derived from those speeches and interventions aimed at reducing radicalisation, which seems to have become a new catchword (Eroukhmanoff, 2015). Radicalisation links in a causal manner radical ideas (ideology) with terrorism (behaviour) and suggests that there is a path from Islam to extremism for all Muslims. For example, Heath-Kelly (2013), proposing an analysis of the UK PREVENT strategy (part of the broader CONTEST counterterrorism strategy) describes it as being based on the assumption that there exist a radicalisation process and that by preventing such process the strategy is also able to address "al Qa'eda-related terrorism and the 'extremist ideas' that 'terrorist ideologies' draw upon" (ibid.: 394).
This allowed for the whole population of Muslims being othered (Lynch, 2013), as they became identified as more prone to radicalisation (Coppock, 2014), due to some innate personal or cultural *flaw* whereby intergenerational angst is transmitted to young Muslims who will then be vulnerable to involvement in extremism (ibid.).

Terrorism and Immigration: how 9/11 pushed the narrative of immigrants as a threatening' other' to the West, and how the far-right appropriated the narrative

The immigrant 'other'

So far, this literature review has posed that the reaction to the events of 9/11 brought in place not only a series of interventions which, in the name of security, infringed civil liberties through the use of mass surveillance for Muslims living in Western countries (Bleich, 2009; Dmello, 2021). Such security measures were also accompanied by an increase perception of fear that went beyond the fear of terrorist attacks and instead was directed at Muslims (and immigrants more in general, see Cesari, 2010), including those living in the West for long and subsequent generations; they became framed as 'others' in need of adapting to life in 'democratic countries' (ibid.). With the progressive implementation of CT strategies, it became increasingly difficult to trace a boundary between those CT measures that targeted 'the terrorist' and those instead which targeted Muslim communities as being at increased risk of radicalization, conflating Islamic faith (and its manifestation in daily lives) with potential violence (Eroukhmanoff, 2015; Monshipouri, 2010). This section of the chapter looks at how immigration has been framed in terms of threat to security, how such narrative is widespread and accepted not only in the media but also at the governmental level.

As mentioned above, Western countries began questioning the feasibility of integration for Muslims with a 'Western way of life', given how Muslims tend to be regarded as backward and how Islam is seen as *essentially* incompatible with

democracy (Monshipouri, 2010), but 9/11 brought such concerns to the forefront of the security discussion. Muslims became labelled as either extreme or moderate, and to those regarded as 'moderate' is asked to prove their 'allegiance' to Western values and to prove they're not supporting jihadi terrorists (Cherney and Murphy, 2016).

This narrative of immigrants and Muslims as 'others' is also integral part of far-right ideas, both for electoral and terrorist actors; such anxieties related to immigration can be interpreted as linked to far-right groups' obsession with purity (Paxton, 1968) but also take the form of theories of replacement, and the fears that there is a plan in place to replace European inhabitants with non-European (and more broadly it sees whites replaced by people of colour) (Gentry, 2022). Replacement theories were found in the Turner Diaries by Andrew McDonald (1978), which is thought to have inspired the Oklahoma bombing in 1995 (Ball and Dagger, 1997), and were also found in Anders Breivik's manifesto which envisioned Europe as 'victim' of multiculturalism and Islam and essentially non-white – and referred to the result of this process of replacement as Eurabia (Reuters, 2011). On the other hand, the case of Italy can help in illustrating how such narrative is instead embedded and used at the electoral level: for example, in 2002 the centre-right government established the immigration law which became known as the Bossi-Fini law (after the names of the two politicians who proposed it). It saw harsher punishment for illegal immigration and called for the implementation of immigration detention centres (Cesari, 2010). Less than 20 years from the implementation of the Bossi-Fini law, another radical-right candidate, Matteo Salvini (representing the same secessionist party La Lega Nord, to which Bossi belonged too), appropriated the narrative of 'uncontrolled immigration' to build his electoral campaign and successfully increased his electoral base. Between 2018 and

2019 Salvini began his campaign and depicted Italy as 'Europe's refugee camp' (Dennison and Geddes, 2021) and once he became Interior and Deputy Prime Minister he proposed and managed to pass a decree-law on immigration which would add further restrictions to the existing Bossi-Fini law. Among these additional restrictions are "*abolished humanitarian protection status for migrants, reduced barriers to stripping migrants of Italian citizenship, lengthened the 97naturalization process, stopped asylum seekers from accessing reception centres and introduced a fast-track expulsion system for 'dangerous' asylum seekers*" (Dennison and Geddes, 2021: 450). Salvini's appropriation of narratives about 'dangerous' or 'illegal' immigrants that need to be prevented from coming and expelled, are not unique to Italy, very recently the UK government has put in place a deportation plan which would deport asylum seekers arriving from the Channel to Rwanda, where they could -according to Conservative MP Priti Patel- claim asylum there (Adams, 2022).

This seems to be in line with an observable trend in the recent years, and particularly following the global financial crisis of 2008, of resurgence of nationalist tendencies (Baig and Dağdelen, 2013). Following what was discussed above on the emergence of fascist movements from moment of economic crisis and marginalization (Charters, 2007) and according to Baig and Dağdelen (2013) it seems that economic hardship, anti-European domestic politics together with securitisation narratives about terrorism as a threat coming from the outside seem to have brought a revival of nationalistic tendencies and the perceived necessity to protect national borders.

Imagined communities

Both identities related to the supranational European Union and national borders can be considered to be "imagined communities", a concept introduced by Anderson (2006), who used the term to explain the origins of nationalism. Anderson posits that imagined communities tend to be founded on the assumption that all those belonging to the community share certain characteristics, therefore all those in the community are, by virtue of these similarities, connected. National borders do foster the creation of an imagined community which means that those living within the borders of such community share an identity which can be reinforced through processes of othering, and in the case where nationalism is the sentiment which fosters the ideation of a community, it can interplay with feeling of xenophobia, racism, regionalism (and more recently, Islamophobia) (Baig and DağDelen, 2013). This means that while the creation of an imagined community fosters a feeling of connection, which based on sharing significant similarities, it also fosters the creation of an outsider, those that are 'other' than those inside the community and not fitting. Therefore, the imagined community allows both for the connection of the members of the ingroup that the creation of the outgroup. Importantly, in case of immigration the borders of the imagined community seem to be mostly referred to those of the nation-state, whereas, it seems that in the case of jihadi terrorism and security, the imagined community seemed to be expanded to 'the West'. This situation is devisable in the words of the former President Bush in the Address to the Nation, post 9/11, and in the response to the attacks which came from the US and with the support from other 51 countries (Kirby, 2021).

This mechanism of creation of ingroup and outgroup through an emphasis on boundaries is also describe by Mudde (2007) in analysing European radical-right parties, for which enemies are both in and outside of the *national boundaries.*

In spite of attempts to create a European identity out of pluralistic communities, the nation-state still exists as an important entity and this attachment to the nation-state is put in practice through physical exclusion of the immigrant "other", the "stranger", through the reaffirmation of the state borders (Buonfino, 2004). Therefore, whole communities of immigrants were never allowed to fully integrate and often remained pushed at the margins of society. This was witnessed even amongst those communities who have long lived in European countries: the events leading to the Brixton riots in the UK in April 1985 exemplify the marginalisation and the ongoing othering of the Black community and the prejudice of the police in investigating crimes in the area (Clifton, 2021). The riots took place over three days, and began as a reaction to the shooting of Cherry Groce by a police officer which led her to be paralysed and unable to walk (ibid.). Mrs Groce was the mother of Michael Groce who was suspected of a robbery in a grocery store, and she was shot in the context of a raid to in their home. In spite of Black residents in Brixton having moved to the UK from countries of the Commonwealth (hence afforded the same status of UK-born citizens) (Jackson, 2015), the black community living in the area was familiar with marginalisation and harassment from the police force (ibid.). A similar pattern was also recognised in the events which gave rise to the London riots in 2011, where manifestations took place after the shooting of Mark Duggan, apprehended by the Metropolitan Police Services while returning home: the growing frustration with the lack of respect and discriminatory practices enacted by the Metropolitan Police

towards members of the black community, along with other grievances, have been recognised at the roots of the riots (Lewis et al., 2011).

Therefore, even if Black people are not new in the UK, and have live there for centuries (Gillborn, 2018) and as mentioned above are *in theory* granted the same rights as UK-born people if coming from the Commonwealth area, they are still *in practice* treated as outsiders, othered, and not seen as part of the imagined community that is the UK. In turn this means that the status of 'insider' is very hard to reach for certain communities such as Black people and, in the specific case of this thesis, this discourse can also be applied to Muslims.

According to Baig and Dağdelen (2013), there are a series of factors which would encourage the process of othering, which are economic, political, socio-cultural and international. In this paper, a brief description of the economic factors will be provided. In line with other research, the economic element plays a role in fostering processes of othering, both towards other states of the EU, and towards immigrants coming from outside of Europe. This appears to be a stable occurrence in history: as the economy is seen as going through cyclic patterns of growth and crisis, it is realistic to consider that times of crisis at the economic level, can also bring along anti-immigration sentiments where immigrants are perceived as competitors for resources (for example in the employment market) (Melossi, 2015). The hostility expressed by far-right groups towards immigrants in the case of high national unemployment has been explained through different frameworks such as the group-threat hypothesis and the ethnic-competition hypothesis (Cochrane and Nevitte, 2013). These hypotheses contend that the native-born population feel their wellbeing is threatened and see themselves competing against immigrants for scarce

(work) resources and that far-right parties and terrorist groups help in establishing a connection between economic hardship and immigrants. The link between far-right groups and narratives about the theft of resources by immigrants, fits in what Kimmel (2013) finds in the context of the rise of white supremacy in the USA as linked to economic crisis and the loss of land by American farmers (especially those living in the central states). The placement of poverty and economic misery in relation to immigration does also fit, however, with the use of race as a proxy for class issues (and this could be reasonably extended to nationalism and ethno-nationalism). Anderson (2006) also links racism to economy, and states that "they justify not so much foreign wars as domestic repression and domination" (p. 150).

Far-right parties seem to be particularly skilled in fostering and harnessing these anti-immigrant feelings in order to gather consensus and electoral gains. The research also suggests a link between the length of the downturn at the economic level and the intensity of separatist feelings (Euroscepticism), but there is a lack of evidence to support the same relation between economic crisis and the intensity of anti-immigration feelings. It could be plausible, however, to think that in a moment of high unemployment and economic stagnation, the movement of people is seen not as a carrier of new resources, but rather as a threat to the few resources available to the natives (Baig and Dagnelen, 2013).

In these instances, States' borders can be reinforced, drawing not only a closed border line for the state on the map, but also a symbolic border which signifies the difference between who is inside the border and "the other" (Van Houtum and Van Naerrsen, 2001). Delineating the space of the state objectifies it, switching from the notion of nation (which comprises culture, language, history etc.. not necessarily

homogeneous) to the one of state, which is a governable entity. This serves to reaffirm the identity of the "insider", but paradoxically, it is the border itself that creates and rejects "the other" (ibid.). This, as introduced earlier in the context of 'imagined communities' means that those who do not belong to the state are outsiders, and given that the states need to be governed, these could also implement measures that frame the outsider as 'other' (Melossi, 2015): the implementation of citizenship laws which render the acquisition of status difficult and that at the same time penalise (or criminalise) those who don't acquire this status can function as an example of that.

Even if this conception of the border could apply to a general discourse on immigration, there is a substantial difference to be made: even among immigrants there are those who are allowed to trespass the border (economic immigrants, or, less recently, those belonging to the enlarged borders of the EU), and there are those immigrants who remain the others (mostly, asylum seekers). This means that immigrants, depending on the country of origin, and often their capital resources or work capability are selected and allowed entry, or are framed as a threat to security and the wellbeing of those *belonging to the inside* of the border (Van Houtum and Van Naerrsen, 2001). It is possible to find a similar differentiation when looking at the freedom of movement that economic capital has, if compared to the limitations that people have to face if they want to move. It seems then, that the freedom of movement is guaranteed, but there is no certainty to be allowed entry by another country (and this repeatedly proves to be true in the case of asylum seekers) (Van Houtum and Van Naerrsen, 2001). A similar discourse is brought up by Melossi (2015), when he notices that the treatment that certain European countries afford

to incoming migrants demonstrates that these are considered to be less than whole human beings, as what remains is “bare life” and mere subsistence, allowing incoming migrants to be put in structure where they are afforded little more than means of survival or directly endangering the immigrants’ lives (see for example the decree-law Salvini, leader of the radical-right party La Lega Nord implemented to withdraw endangered migrant ships in the Mediterranean in proximity of the Italian coast humanitarian help (Dennison and Geddes, 2021).

Sadly, this trend seems to be similar across the Global North (including USA, Western EU, Canada, Australia, and parts of Asia), (Melossi, 2015), where the rhetoric of othering are not new and became prevalent, thanks to the presentation of immigrants as a security issue (Epps and Furman, 2016). The immigrant is constantly labelled as “other”, allowing for the implementation of repressive immigration policies, which feed into a vicious cycle producing more othering. As it was mentioned earlier in this chapter, the process of othering is linked to xenophobia, racism and regionalism. The Global North’s discourse about immigration seems to be dominated by immigrants’ blaming for economic malaise and security issues, and therefore seems to adhere to this trend. The consequences of these narratives, however, have real life consequences for immigrants, ranging from physical to the social exclusion (ibid.).

Framing immigrants as criminals and a threat to security

The movement of people from one place to another is not novel (Melossi, 2015). Such constant movement is accompanied by cyclic waves of anti-immigrant sentiments (Gutierrez, 1995), often linked to economic malaise and deprivation (Baig

and DağDelen, 2013) and most recently exacerbated by security concerns in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on 9/11.

Lorenzetti (2020) has also observed that generally the narratives around immigration revolve around the framing of immigrants as a disease and a parasite that is *inherently* criminal and as such needs to be expelled. However, the current body of research that focuses on the relationship between crime rates and the presence of immigrants on a particular national territory, seems to point us towards results that may look counterintuitive: in spite of an increased presence of immigrants (especially in the UK and USA), crime rates have fallen (Stansfield, 2016). However, the constant flux of people around the globe is also accompanied by cyclic concerns around immigrants and crime. Far-right parties, as also mentioned above, are often quick to harness the potential that the immigrant threat pose for electoral gains even when there is no real threat coming from an influx of migrants (Yılmaz, 2012), and that such parties "appeal to voters and in turning social and economic anxieties against the system" (ibid.: 371) by portraying incoming immigrants as threatening. In relation to immigrants coming from Muslim-majority countries, for example, the Danish People's Party used the theme of incompatibility between Islam and Western democratic values to support their political campaign, shortly after 2001 (Dahl et al., 2001). As already discussed, the Italian government has also used the narrative of the dangerousness of immigrants and had implemented the Bossi-Fini law in 2002 (Cesari, 2010) and more recently the Golden Dawn party in Greece has exploited grievances related to climate change and environmental protection to cast immigrants coming to Greece as a threat to native plants and 'national beauty' (Turner and Bailey, 2021).

Migration to a new country is not just a matter of leaving behind material belongings, as well as families in certain cases, it also requires an adaptation to the new country. In between migration and adaptation, the person experiences an unbalance at different levels: personal as well as economic and cultural. In Park's work (1928) this unbalance (referred to as "social disorganisation") is represented as a cultural clash, while the person tries to live in between the culture of belonging and the one the individual attempts to adapt, and it is following this confusion that the person could resort to crime. At this point of the migration process the so called 'ethnic enclaves' are seen as "laying a role in ensuring that such transition is supported and have a function of social control, reducing anomie and reducing the risk that the person will engage in criminal activity (Stansfield, 2016; Melossi, 2015). This means that immigrants are perceived and framed as a threat through the proposition of laws which criminalise them *and* because these laws are often framed as a matter of protecting the national population from, for example, drugs dealing and sexual violence. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss the entirety of the measures that states adopt when dealing with immigrants or how they are portrayed, it is important to acknowledge that there exists an extensive body of work commonly referred to as 'crimmigration' literature (Stumpf, 2006) and which focuses on the ways in which immigrants are both stigmatised and criminalised in Western countries. The crimmigration literature considers that immigrants are framed as 'unwanted bodies' and investigates how they are criminalised both at the symbolic and material level through the incarceration system, even where the penal climate is seen as less punitive (Kiely and Swirak, 2021). The detention of immigrants, has in

fact, become a normalised practice which serves to criminalise those considered unwanted and beyond integration and inclusion in society (Barker, 2013).

Immigration, terrorism and governing through fear

What happens when immigrants are presented as a terrorist threat? In recent years, particularly since the 9/11 attacks, immigration is increasingly depicted as a security threat (Mythen and Walklate, 2008) and securitising states and people became synonymous with controlling incoming migration. As mentioned, the resonance and power of the "*terrorist threat from immigrants"* trope is witnessed in the strategy of Donald Trump who managed to base much of his presidential campaign on the issue of "illegal immigrants" and refugees, explicitly linking them, amongst other things, to terrorism. In Europe, the narrative adopted by far-right parties about Muslims and security is different, and Tekin (2021) note that the incompatibility of Muslims with the West is often pivoted on the question of gender, especially in Italy and Austria. Muslim men are seen as not able to live in Western countries and to respect women's rights as they are adhering to a form of violent and oppressive Islamic patriarchy (ibid.). Per contra, while high levels of violence have been observed since 2016 (Miller-Idriss, 2021) far-right groups haven't been securitised at all, rather, to reprise the USA as an example, Donald Trump seems to have progressively aligned his narratives to those of groups such as the Proud Boys and gradually heightened the level of tolerance for such groups (Kutner, 2020). In fact, recent research has shown that there is indeed a positive correlation between terrorism and immigration, but not in the direction that the policies discussed above

would indicate. While policies of immigration control are based on the assumption that crime and terrorism *come from the outside* and that security stems from border closure, McAlexander (2020) finds that increase in migration is correlated to an increase in domestic right-wing terrorism. While McAlexander researches this correlation in the Western European context, far-right related violence is increasing globally, so it would be reasonable to extend the findings to explain at least part of the global rise of the far-right, at least when economic and immigration conditions are similar. Ravndal (2018) also came to similar conclusions when looking the rise of far-right terrorism in Scandinavian countries, even if their research focused on the period 1980s and 1990s, and Marbach and Ropers (2018) also found that a similar pattern can be devised in Germany, where a higher level of immigration was associated with an increase in violence directed at asylum seekers.

Thinking with fear, thinking security

Politicians and parties around the globe seem to adopt similar narratives around threatening *others*, attributing issues of social and economic malaise to the immigration situation and specifically reinforcing a discourse that frames immigration in terms of terrorism and security (Mythen and Walklate, 2008). The violence of 9/11 is presented as something new that did not exist before, a new form of terrorism, while arguably there was nothing new about 9/11 except the scale, what it did was to "undo the liberal myth that the state is able to secure order and maintain territorial control" (Mythen and Walklate, 2008). This supposed novelty of terrorism post 9/11 seems to bring into the political discourse the idea of "thinking security" and the idea of risk evaluation, making insecurity part of the everyday

experience (op. cit, 2008). As the previous chapter discussed, among counter-terrorism measures introduced, there were threat alerts through which governments communicated the risk of terrorism to the general population and by doing so they embedded in everyday life the notion of threat and risk judgement.

"Thinking security" in turns is part of what Furedi defines "cultures of fear" (Furedi as cited in Mythen and Walklate, 2008) and which Altheide (2006) defines "politics of fear", where the prevalent narratives are those of the worst-case scenarios, representing an existential threat to the people, and therefore needing exceptional interventions. This includes the extension of crime control measures to fields that previously were not included in the crime control. Research shows that notions of (in)security allow the control of the population's behaviour, and represents a style of governing which takes advantage of fear, and which truly is "governing through fear" (Mythen and Walklate, 2008; Lee, 2013). From the point of view of the government then, a certain level of fear is desirable as it guarantees the above-mentioned behavioural control (Lee, 2013). At the same time, the group that has to be feared, is a constructed object, and it is not unusual for this construction to merge or overlap with existing "problem groups" (Mythen and Walklate, 2008). This construction of the 'feared object' feeds into the idea of the other as "folk devil" and rendering the suspect of crime (the marginalised group) a scapegoat for an array of other social issues.

The perception of a new terrorism and the traumatic impact of 9/11 meant that the USA, and also other Western states, had the chance to frame terrorism as a continuous and imminent threat and to present this view to the population. The impact of 9/11 was such that the threat of terrorism was almost unconditionally

accepted as fact in many Western countries. The attack was framed as new terrorism that 'old' pre-existing legal frameworks could not deal with this threat, and had to be scrapped in favour of new methods that could handle the novelty of this new terrorism (Crenshaw, 2008). In doing so, however, counterterrorism policies emerged that created and reproduced racist and/or Islamophobic discourses which, in light of the perceived threat, were contested by the general population, academics and society more generally (Groothuis, 2020).

Accepting the 'governance of fear' and the scapegoating immigrants

The rise of far-right parties across the Global North (but not only, see for example the election of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil and Narendra Modi in India) and the predominance of discourses about immigrants as threatening in the aftermath of 9/11, would suggest that immigrants were in a position of vulnerability and thus open to scapegoating (Melossi, 2015). Immigrants are often scapegoated and singled out even for crimes other than terrorism, as the examples above on immigrants linked by far-right parties to crimes which go from sexual to environmental. The way in which waves of anti-immigrant sentiments emerge and re-emerge also seems to indicate that what happened post 9/11 is not new, and that the scapegoating of immigrants as such is not a recent occurrence (Gutierrez, 1995). In fact, the frame of 'illegality' in the news reports which talked about immigrants post 9/11 is the one mainly used by the media (in the USA) since the 80s (Akdenizli et al., 2008).

Immigrants are blamed for a multitude of issues, and this overt blaming became part of a political discourse that, in turn, worsen immigrant bashing by legislators as well as from the population of the hosting country (Gutierrez, 1995). The repetition and

acceptance of this kind of rhetoric might have brought along a process of desensitisation, for which now a public immigrant blaming does not elicit a general reaction of outrage among the audience (Boeynaems, Burgers and Konijn, 2021). The current body of research investigating the mechanisms behind the scapegoating of immigrants focuses on groups dynamics, and in some way points in the direction of intergroup conflict. Cochrane and Nevitte (2012) consider an interaction between processes at the individual and at the group level, namely ethnic-competition hypothesis and group-threat hypothesis. Both hypotheses posit the perception of a threat, which would facilitate the acceptance of compelling outgroup (anti-immigrant) narratives. These, however, do not happen out of context, and individuals are often subject to multiple narratives (often contrasting) at a time, hence there must be another driver that may tip the balance towards one of the available discourses. In accordance with what proposed in other works on immigration and anti-immigration sentiments, this driver seem to be the economic one (Melossi, 2015, Gutierrez, 1995, Buonfino, 2004), which makes anti-immigrant narratives more easily accepted in times of economic depression. Importantly, there is agreement on the fact that parties (especially far-right parties) do help in the creation and harvest the results of the shared approval of such narratives. Therefore, it is reasonable to place the emergence of narratives on terrorism and on the *terrorist other* in continuation with pre-existing narratives that already framed the other as dangerous and criminal, and in the context of economic concern.

Other studies which looked at the processes of scapegoating have focused on the role of group feelings -in particular collective guilt for wrongdoing- in the process of scapegoating (Rothschild et al., 2013). In their investigation of the emotions that

could favor processes of scapegoating, Rothschild and colleagues (ibid.) postulate that blaming immigrants (or a third-party group in general) can be a technique to evade sentiments of collective guilt for the ingroup wrongdoing. If members of an advantaged group are presented with evidence of wrongdoing against a relatively disadvantaged group, the first should come across feelings of collective guilt, but when the harm is presented as coming from a third-party group, this sparks moral outrage. This emotion is an "other-oriented" emotion (rather than a "self-oriented" emotion as collective guilt) based on anger and indignation against the harming group, on behalf of the group that received the harm. In turn, from moral outrage stem a search for justice and punishment for the group which perpetrated the harm. Rothschild et al. (2013) reached the conclusion, then, that scapegoating a third-party group which is deemed responsible for harming a disadvantaged group, can be an avoidance strategy to reduce the feeling of collective guilt and is a strategy that can lead to hostility. Importantly, the scapegoated group has to be considered as a reasonable target, as narratives that blame non-viable targets tend not to receive support. Here, come into play the relevance of media and state agencies in shaping and providing information about the immigrants as threatening or dangerous, which help increasing the credibility of scapegoating narratives. The moral outrage can be amplified thanks to the intervention of the media, and it is such amplification that could be at the base of an increased thirst for punitiveness against the scapegoat. Absurdly, "*the irony of the present findings, is that the moral outrage in the present study arguably ensures the maintenance of the status quo of disadvantaged groups' suffering, while providing advantaged group members with an air of self-righteousness*" (ibid.:905).

Scapegoating of immigrants in media discourse

So far, the discussion has focused on the scapegoating of immigrants and the relationship between immigration and crime, and immigration and terrorism. The media have been described throughout the chapter as taking part in the spread of narratives which target and *other* immigrants, by linking them to crimes such as drug dealing and rape. Even if this the role of academia in framing terrorism will be dealt with more specifically in the next chapter, is also mentioning also here that academic research is an actor in the spread of narratives powerful narratives and can impact on the process of policymaking. This has been discussed, for example, by Burnett and Whyte (2003), who identified the problems in the existing links of terrorism scholars with counterinsurgency agencies, and referred to this connection as 'embedded expertise'. For example, in the context of immigration policy, researchers in psychology have often provided a useful background to 'restrictionist' immigration policies through the explanation of difference in IQ scores for different groups (Samelson and Kamin, 1975), perpetuating narratives about the superiority of one *race* over the other. The legacy of the links between scholarship and powerful institutions is still to be dealt with fully, as it's considered to be at the foundation of the "naturalisation" of racial inequality (Winston, 2018). As will be further discussed in the next chapter of this thesis, in the field of Terrorism Studies the linkages between powerful institutions and scholarship have often meant that the knowledge produced could not be considered objective and needs to be, instead, understood as reproducing power discourses that come from those institutions (ibid.). Furthermore, this connection also manifested in practice, with, for example, psychologists working along with the CIA in the program of so called "enhanced

interrogation" (Soldz, 2011), therefore, the impact of embedded scholars, has generally gone beyond the production of knowledge and extended to the domain of policy and practice.

Conclusion

This chapter revolved around the framing of *the other* as a threat, to delve deeper into the differential treatment afforded to far-right and jihadi actors and how, in spite of some relevant similarities, far-right actors are often seen as a subject promoting securitising discourses while jihadi actors are often the object to be securitised. To do so, this section firstly highlighted the points of contacts between far-right and jihadi groups (their presumed origin in times of crisis, their designation of boundaries which clearly define who is inside and who is an outsider threat, and an idealised idea of purity and past, see Charters, 2007) and then it looked at the dynamics of state led narratives around the two and around immigrants. The discussion in this chapter highlighted how immigrants are often scapegoated and constantly portrayed as threatening others at the state level, and how far-right groups are able to harness the fear of the other to gain support and electoral gain (Yılmaz, 2012). A large body of research, in fact, investigates the intersection between migration and criminal law (crimmigration) and in doing so it emphasizes how immigrants are often blamed for social issues while at the same time being the targets of laws which put them in a condition where it is difficult to integrate in the new country (Melossi, 2015). Against this backdrop, the fear elicited by the events of 9/11 and the subsequent targeting of the broader Muslim population can be seen as on a continuum which goes from historical fears of immigration, related to drug, sexual and (more recently)

environmental crimes to the current all-encompassing fear of terrorism. At the same time, it has been discussed how maintaining a high level of fear around a given situation (e.g. terrorism or immigration), is not only favourable to far-right terrorist groups actors, but also at the governmental level, as through 'governing through fear' (Furedi, 2006) governments (which can be far-right electoral actors) are often able to push their own agenda and therefore exploiting the fear for their own gain. Importantly, as already discussed, academia is not totally impermeable to the various narratives promoted by various actors, (e.g. media and governments) and this happens both due to the resonance with the researcher of certain frames, especially those related to feelings of fear (Ahmed, 2015), and also due to the academic links to governments as provider of research funding (Jackson, 2009) and experts (Burnett and Whyte, 2005). The next chapter will analyse more in depth the phenomenon of framing in the field of Terrorism Studies in its connection to the production of knowledge.

CHAPTER 4: WHEN DO WE CALL IT TERRORISM?

Identity conflict, framing and questioning how "the problem of terrorism" is represented to be

Introduction

"Terrorism is often little more than a convenient label with which to categorize acts with which we disagree—if they do it, it is terrorism; if we do it, however, then perhaps it is something else" (Horgan, 2017: 199)

This quote by Horgan clearly conveys the issues around the use of the label 'terrorism', and how the label can be applied depending on the identity of the perpetrator (being the perpetrator one of 'us' or 'them') or political interests involved.

In his speech in front of the UN General Assembly in 1974, Yasser Arafat addresses the question of Palestine, framing the work of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as a struggle of liberation against Israel, which was and is using terrorist tactics against Palestinians in order to displace them from their territories. Arafat appealed to the UN to consider and address the struggle of the Palestinian people, condemned the attacks against Palestinian, Egyptian and Lebanese targets and openly labelled as acts of terrorism. But he also called out the USA for providing weapons to Israel, therefore supporting its terrorist activities.

"And still, the highest tension exists in our part of the world. There the Zionist entity cling tenaciously to occupied Arab territory; the Zionist entity is holding on to the

Arab territories it has occupied and persisting in its aggressions against us." (Arafat, 1974).

From the examples above it emerges how the labelling of an act of terrorism is all but objective: however, while the difficulties in reaching a consensus around definition seem to remain, academia is coming to terms with the arbitrariness of such a process. This chapter contributes to the debate on the framing of terrorism discussing how the politics of knowledge are intertwined with academic production, and how social identity processes weigh in to render certain frames or *representations* of the problem of terrorism more resonant in academic research.

Framing terrorism

28 years after Arafat addressed the UN, in the aftermath of the attacks on 9/11, the then USA president George W. Bush pronounced his speech declaring that Iran, Iraq and North Korea were part of an '*axis of evil*' conspiring to destroy the USA and the 'western way of life' (Ryan, 2010). Such a compelling expression was built on a series of CIA intelligence reports, which seemed to indicate that the three countries were acquiring weapons of mass destruction, and that they could *potentially* provide them to terrorist groups (Heradstveit and Bonham, 2007). Reports issued later by the CIA, and later interviews with senior White House consultants revealed how the framing of Iran, Iraq and North Korea as a cohesive force conspiring against the USA and the West resulted from inconclusive evidence, but nonetheless the narrative of the *axis of evil* became well known, and President Bush will often use it in its future addresses to the US Congress (ibid.). However, as this chapter deals with the issue of framing terrorism, two considerations are important about the *'axis of evil frame'*: the first

consideration relates to the way in which the idea of an *axis of evil* constructs Iran, Iraq and North Korea as an outsider threat which share the same aim of 'harming the West'. This is what Cornell (2002, as cited in Heradstveit and Bonham, 2007) refers to as 'indivisibility' of terrorism, where the responsibility for the terrorist attacks is extended to include not only bin Laden, but also those countries that possess weapons of mass destruction "*because anyone who possessed them may be tempted to sell them to terrorists, thus evoking fears of chemical, biological, or even nuclear attacks on American cities*" (Heradstveit and Bonham, 2007: 423). A second consideration stems from this, in fact, Ryan (2010) contended that Iraq, Iran and North Korea were included in the 'axis of evil' in light of their acquisition of weapons of mass destruction but that the three countries were actually concerned with local issues and were not involved in planning attacks in the west. Per contra, those countries which had weapons of mass destruction, and which had enough weapons to attack the West (Russia, China and Israel among these) were not included in the axis, revealing that there was a concerted effort to include only certain countries, even if with just a pretext (ibid.). As an additional example of the arbitrary process in the designation of countries responsible or at risk of perpetrating a terrorist attack, there is Saudi Arabia. While 15 out of 19 of the hijackers of the planes which crashed on the Word Trade Centre, the Pentagon and tried to strike the White House were Saudi, Saudi Arabia is seen as an ally of the USA, and therefore not designated as an enemy of the USA (Ottaway, 2009).A third consideration is that pertaining to the wording of this frame: the word 'axis' is linked to the connection between Fascism and Nazism during the Second World War, and therefore it is clearly placed in the context of a 'war' and that something is to be done about it. As the axis is also

explicitly refer to an axis of 'evil' it also follows that there is no space for negotiations and can be only dealt with through military intervention (Heradstveit and Bonham, 2007). In fact, the USA reaction to the attacks of 9/11 has been constantly framed as a War on Terror, a war between absolute good and absolute evil, and this framed was used to justify, among other military interventions, the invasion in Iraq of 2003 (ibid.).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, political discourses and academic discourses are linked to each other as contributors to the academic debate around a topic are often involved in working for government agencies and other institutions. This echoes what Silke (2004: 286) found that approximately half of the contributors to the field of Terrorism Studies were not based in academia (mostly government officials) and were instead" working in a professional counter-terrorism capacity" . Furthermore, the academic knowledge produced can have an impact on the design of policies, the PREVENT strategy in the UK, for example, is based on the notion of 'radicalisation' and that radical religious beliefs carry the risk of violence and allows for the knowledge produced around radicalisation to be put in practice and made "accessible to problem-solving approaches (or 'governance')" (Heath-Kelly, 2013: 396). But the links between academia and powerful institutions can also manifest in what is defined to be terrorism, and Campbell (2017) contends, in fact, that powerful discourses do become part of the 'hegemonic culture', easily spread and reproduced, and this has also been discussed in the context of academia (Jackson, 2009). For example, there is a disparity in the treatment of far-right and jihadi terrorism, but in spite of the lack of research on the topic in the field of Terrorism Studies (Schuurman,

2019), far-right violence is present in research outside of the academia: there is in fact a body of work done by think tanks and watch groups that look at the recent violent events in the US, linked of the perpetrators, for example, of mass shootings in 2018 with far-right groups (ADL, 2019). Some newspapers and magazines have also addressed how violent episodes in the last year are being mis-labelled and began questioning the standards around the use of the term terrorism. Interestingly, there is a recognition that the label is applied based on the identity of the perpetrator (Gladstone, 2015), exposing a tendency to conflate the "terrorist identity" with being Muslim.

The way terrorism is constructed and framed in academia represents the focus of this section, it lays down the theorical base for the Terrorism Research-Base Assumption Tool (TeR-BAT), the framework used in this thesis (addressed in detail in chapter 11), and is analysed through the lenses of social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974). In so doing, the chapter it problematises the underlying assumption of the accepted knowledge around terrorism.

The politics of knowledge and Terrorism Studies

There are a series of accepted truisms about terrorism and counterterrorism, which constitutes the basis of the current terrorism debate, both in the literature of Terrorism Studies and in the design of policy and related counterterrorism interventions. Such knowledge relates to the nature of terrorism, the threat level this poses to the Western society, its origins and the way to respond and manage it. However, while describing this body of accepted knowledge, Jackson (2009) contends that this is politically biased, being in itself a product of political discourse.

Jackson also argues that while such knowledge is accepted as ontologically valid, it should rather be questioned and deconstructed, at least by those who research the subject and that use this knowledge as foundation of their studies. Following this perspective, terrorism is not a "brutal fact", but a social fact, and as such, its meaning is constructed and negotiated, with consequences ranging from policies to concrete social effects on targeted groups. The production of knowledge is inherently linked to power and the discourse that stems from this process tends to perpetuate the agenda of those who hold the power (ibid.).

Similarly, Campbell (2017) takes a cultural criminological stance to look at the framing of terrorism and of the "Muslim other". Campbell argues that cultural criminology should look at image production through discourse and should interrogate the portrayal and look at the power that shapes it (Campbell, 2010). The discourse becomes a carrier as well as a producer of meaning, that is produced by and embedded in the hegemonic culture (ibid.). From this standpoint – and in accordance with the critical stance brought by Jackson (2009)- power is not just held but circulated and expressed through forms which are not overtly (or always) coercive. The relationship between the power and the individual, as well as the one of the power between institutions and the economy is, thus, vertical. The knowledge produced filters through the cultural artefacts and gets represented in various communication forms which more or less consciously reproduce the narrative and make it available to the society.

This situation is problematic in multiple ways: while it poses challenges when the dominant discourse around the "other" as a carrier of terrorism is presented in popular culture (Campbell, 2010), it could be argued that it is even more problematic

when research and academic literature reproduce the same dominant discourses without hinting at analysing or deconstructing it.

The absence of attention afforded to the far-right in Terrorism Studies since 2001, can be interpreted through this lens, where it represents a manifestation of the fact that even part of the academic literature is based on the same problematic underlying knowledge. This, as Jackson explains (op.cit), is not only the result of the fact that dominant discourse is overarching and constantly reproducing but is also consequence of the connection between academic knowledge and institutions as well as sources of powers (e.g. governments).

"Not all discourses are created equal"

If the discourse is a structure of meaning as well as a productive act, it follows that the way the world is perceived depends on a variety of competing discourses. There is going to be a dominant discourse which, if not questioned, becomes stabilised; yet it is not totalising as there are going to be other competing narratives attempting to destabilise it (Campbell, 2017). The eventuality of a discourse becoming the dominant one is contingent to a set of factors, in particular it is related to historical and contextual relevance (Jackson, 2009).

For example, the dominant narrative around terrorism since 2001 maintains that terrorism is a form of illicit violence mostly perpetrated by non-state actors, and which poses an existential threat against which state violence/control is required (ibid.). In addition, the proposed explanation of terrorist behaviour tends to be focused on the individual carrying out the act, not only individualising the responsibility, but also framing the terrorist outside of the spectrum of "normality".

In the specific case, after 9/11, the dominant discourse conflates the identity of terrorism with the one of the Muslim, perpetuating binary identities of us/them, rational/irrational, necessary violence/random violence (Grewal, 2003). The individual is assumed to be driven by processes of radicalisation, to which the individual becomes open because of some inherent vulnerability, related to their personal or historic family identity (Coppock and McGovern, 2014; Campbell, 2017). The post 9/11 construction of terrorism is best understood as a frame; a discourse that strategically tells a story around a topic to achieve a goal. The frame is an "interpretative package" constituted of a central idea and its surrounding symbols (Yang and Chen, 2019: 396) which works with the identity, in this case the 'Muslim identity' of the terrorist (Campbell, 2017) and acquires social significance in the context in which it develops (Desrosier, 2015). Again, the strategic value of a frame depends on the way and when it is presented. The question moves from asking *why* terrorism happens to *where* it happens (Bouhana, 2019), and in this chapter it moves to asking *when* certain acts are labelled as terrorism, and others are not. The right frame needs to be used at the right time, and in the right context, being *aligned* with the values and beliefs of the audience and resonating with the *context* (Desrosier, 2015). If the right frame is disseminated and gets accepted, this will not directly cause a change in behaviour, it will, instead, cause a shift in perception around the topic of the frame: it will, in practice, mobilise consensus (Desrosier, 2015).

It is reasonable to understand how framing around terrorism post /11 not only had an impact on the public and media, it also impacted on the literature that is part of Terrorism Studies as an academic field, where the production and dissemination of knowledge increased sharply following the events of 9/11. The reasons for the

prevalence of framing of terrorism post 9/11 as a new and existential threat are multi-fold. Given that the 9/11 attacks resulted in the highest peace time casualties in the USA, there was understandably a degree of shock and trauma in the reaction to the event (Stampintzky, 2013 and Ritchie et al, 2013). Secondly, the foundation of Terrorism Studies as a field is rooted in security studies, politics, international relations, conceptions of risk, and ultimately dominated by Western ideas and structures (Miller and Mills, 2009): this is evidenced in the fact that in the dominant logic and framing, terrorism s mostly portrayed as coming from *the 'outside'*. Hence, the discourses around enemies of 'freedom and democracy' and 'our way of life', which, in the context of the aftermath of 9/11, implied that the threat come from those who are unable to commit (and integrate in) to Western values (Millet and Swiffen, 2021).Ultimately, the field that is underpinned by western governments and transnational institutions through funding, access to information and production of knowledge and expertise. "Terrorism studies' [early theorists] have a shared history of intertwined relations with the military, the government and the arms industry" (Miller and Mills, 2009: 418), and the field is still grappling with this legacy, which is reflected in the production of knowledge and the way the problem is framed and represented to be. This is exemplified (but not limited to) by the connections between the RAND corporation and the Centre for Studies in Terrorism and Political violence at St Andrews University (CSTPV): while the CSTPV has been considered as "the epicentre of academic study of terrorism" (Burnett and Whyte, 2005: 9) it is also closely linked to the RAND corporation, founded by the US military, by way of employing many of its current analysts (ibid.). Therefore, the knowledge produced in an environment with a strong presence of 'embedded experts' is circular, tends to

reinforce governmental narratives, with limited space for critical and conflicting narratives (Ranstorp, 2009).

In addition, one must add that the researchers are more than anything else human beings and that the 'rupture' represented by 9/11 (Fitzgerald, 2021) also had an impact on our own fear of terrorism and threat perception: it would be unreasonable to think of 9/11 or the London and Madrid bombings as having no effects. Such an impact could in fact be intensified for researchers because we face daily reminders of the threat of violence and the experience of the victims (Walklate, 2017). This phenomenon has already been discussed in relation to what it means to be a criminologist when researchers are constantly provided with information on crime and trauma (Walklate, 2017). This can reasonably be extended to researchers in Terrorism Studies.

The impact of the frames on researchers is but one way in which the production of knowledge in the field of Terrorism Studies is linked to existing power structures. Having the frames serve to allow meaning making is another which builds frames to make sense of terrorist events in a way that renders them external, as belonging to the other', as well as being linked to a reaction to bearing witnessing and constantly memorialising traumatic events such as 9/11. In addition to academia, the media, as mentioned, are powerful vectors of framing because of the breadth of their reach, journalists publishing in Western-aligned media in particular, tend to follow the dominant ideology and to frame the "other" according to that (Yang and Chen, 2018). Notably, the coverage of terrorist attacks as presented in Western (and Western-aligned) outlets has been criticised as "hypocritical and irresponsible" especially when relating to attacks in non-democratic countries (Li and Li, 2015:39 in Yang and

Chen, 2018). Part of the criticism was brought about because of the application of double standards in the coverage of terrorist attacks, which changes in relation to the proximity between the country who suffered the attack and the one which the media is representing (e.g. economic relationship, ibid.). The dimension of proximity is sitting on a broad spectrum, which includes geographical and linguistic vicinity as well as the economic relationship entertained between countries (Yang and Chen, 2018). From this last point follows that, in an era of international and intercontinental economic exchange, the dominant narrative will be influenced by economic relationships (ibid.) between states.

In terms of perception, a successful frame will not have a direct effect on the behaviour of the audience, it will however, provide a lens for interpretation of the reality. The framing of terrorism as "a new wave", "irrational and unpredictable" and an existential threat, coupled with the high level of media coverage that terrorist attack receive in the "global north" make space for acceptance of policies and interventions that would not receive much support otherwise (Mythen and Walklate, 2008). Given that "Mass media role in transmitting the dominant ideologies, beliefs, culture and values is widely accepted by media researchers and scholars" (Sultan, 2016), without the accepted frame around the War on Terror, it is reasonable to imagine that there would be less support for policies which restrict civil liberties and impinge on human rights (Mythen and Walklate, 2008). This has been referred to as "governing through fear", a state of things where the risk of terrorism is inflated by institutions, with the help of the media, and where the understanding and maintenance of social security ultimately leads to the regulation of human

behaviours (ibid). “In many respects, terrorism serves as a classic risk society problem, bearing the principal hallmarks of the manufactured risk” (ibid.: 224).

(Un)framing terrorism and identity-based conflict

Framing theory (Entman, 1993) posits that framing is a way of communicating strategically to reach a certain goal, which normally consists of mobilising support or action. The current frame around terrorism maintains that terrorism comes from the “other”, who generally is an outsider. Framing theory is not often applied to terrorism from the far-right, partially, because of a conservative research tradition that has seldom questioned the status quo, partially because it was born out of the necessity to control insurgency movements (Miller and Mills, 2009).

However, it is possible to rely on other fields of research which apply concepts of framing, such as research on identity-conflict. This works in two ways: firstly, it can be applied to the treatment of terrorism from different actors as a question of identity; secondly, it can be applied to the frames that far-right terrorists apply to legitimise their actions. The purpose of this section is to deal with the first instance, with a cautionary note: while the study on identity based conflict proposed here refers to the question of why people accept a frame, this passage will present an effort to extend that to ask why the far-right seldom appears labelled or attended to as terrorism and the ease of application, even in the academic field, of the label to attacks carried out by actors seen as ‘others’.

As already discussed, there are certain requirements for a frame to be accepted and to stick with the audience: such requirements are the alignment of the proposed frame with pre-existing values and the resonance of the frame with the context and

experiential knowledge of the audience (Desrosier, 2015). After 9/11, the narrative about the "terrorist Muslim other" acquired an incredibly heavy social significance and coupled with an actual victimisation event it became a frame that still holds a grip at a social level. The frames around risk to "our way of life" and around victimisation represent what Gamson defined as "hot cognition" (1995): in these victimisation frames, the harms are constantly stressed and help in mobilising support for a particular frame. In addition, frames about "othering" and the "external threat" are reiterated, and it is reasonable to think that following this it became easy to turn a blind eye towards insiders who perpetrate terrorist attacks. "Othering" frames imply an element of intergroup conflict, building a binary relation between "us and them", as well as an identitarian element, making the in-group salient. Group psychology at this point would contend that part of the processes which led to the conflation of the Muslim identity with terrorism are embedded in the overgeneralisation of characteristics and stereotypes which is normally bespoke to the outgroup (Sherif, 1969). Conversely, the identity of terrorist is not easily attributed to a white individual who would carry out a terrorist attack because to do so would equate some shared characteristic of the ingroup with the "terrorist". The solution is to separate the terrorist by labelling them as "desperate", "mentally ill", "derailed" and more recently a "lone wolf" (Kunst, Myhren and Onyeador, 2018). This implies that those "of us" who carry out the attack are an exception. The same frame which produces and perpetuates the dichotomy of "us/good *vs* them/bad" allows no space for someone of "us" to be as bad as "the other". In addition, while a conscious use of such frame is a powerful control tool, a hypocritical use could also

mean that the frame is more of a constraints which is not open to adaptation according to the circumstances.

An additional complication arises when one considers the political situation of certain European states (e.g. Italy, UK and Greece) and the USA, in which far-right parties have gained space in the public debate and in politically relevant positions, allowing for a broader mainstreaming of their narratives. Consequently, it becomes progressively more difficult that far-right parties and groups will label someone who perpetrated a terroristic act inspired by a far-right ideology as a terrorist because the views are seen as mainstream. It is more probable, that the narrative adopted in such cases, will be again related to a "legitimate violence", with retaliatory or defensive value (it is not a coincidence that an overarching narrative in the ideology of far-right groups deals with feelings of being under siege and with the fear of being replaced by other ethnicities).

Asking: "What is the problem represented to be?"

So far, the chapter has looked at the role of frames in shaping and providing understanding of the world and how this is applied to the field of terrorism and Terrorism Studies. Academia, governments and media are all involved in the creation and dissemination of narratives, and given the strong links between academia and governments (Burnett and Whyte, 2005; Ranstorp, 2009) and between government and media (Sultan, 2016), these narratives are often circular and tend to reinforce each other. In addition, as mentioned in the previous chapters, the narratives promoted have an impact on emotions, and emotions are not just feelings, but seep through actions (Ahmed, 2015) including academic research; therefore, the way

terrorism is framed in academia, cannot be investigated without consideration of the ways frames are deeply shaped by a variety of actors. This means that any issue, specifically terrorism, is not a brute fact but is instead construed as such when it is talked about it is *represented* in a certain way. Academic research, as policy making, is a problematising activity (Bacchi, 2009) in that to investigate something it needs to fix the topic to a given representation (ibid.).

Since this thesis interrogates how academia problematises far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism, the following section will look at two frameworks for doing so, such frameworks come from two different fields of research: policy analysis and applied psychology. The two, combined together, provide a useful tool for analysis to be applied to the representation of far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism and for the field of Terrorism Studies overall. The frameworks will be firstly introduced as they are intended by their original authors, then, the integrated framework resulting from the two is presented and each question is explained in its relevance for this thesis.

Policy analysis and the 'What's the problem represented to be (WPR)' approach

In 2009, Bacchi developed a framework for policy analysis, which has at its foundation the concept that policy creation is a problematising activity and as such, it shapes the problem on the base of a specific theoretical underpinning. Hence, as the government is actor in this policy production process, it is also responsible of the way the problem is presented. Her policy analysis, named "What's the problem represented to be?" is based on a set of six questions, that help in working backwards to uncover and deconstruct the base assumptions of the policy, as well as considering which areas remain un-problematised. Importantly, as Bacchi applies this framework

to policy, she also considers the implications of such policies, especially in relation to specific social groups: such implications span from discursive implications, to subjectification implications, to lived ones.

As in this framework the policy is based on discourse, this type of approach is an analysis of such discourse, which can also be extended to knowledge and problem representation (ibid.). The picture 2, below, provides the full set of questions which make up Bacchi's framework.

What's the problem represented to be?: An approach to policy analysis

1. What's the 'problem' (e.g. of 'problem gamblers', 'drug use/abuse', domestic violence, global warming, health inequalities, terrorism, etc.) represented to be in a specific policy?
2. What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the 'problem'?
3. How has this representation of the 'problem' come about?
4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? What are the silences? Can the 'problem' be thought about differently?
5. What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?

Figure 2 - Six questions constituting Bacchi's framework for policy analysis (Bacchi, 2009: 2)

A framework coming from a different field of research looks at the application of psychological theories and concepts to terrorism and political violence, and was advanced by Lynch and Joyce in 2019. Similarly to Bacchi's framework, this one works

on the basis that of a set of questions can help in the definition of the problem rather than a definition of the term (e.g. not focusing on 'what is terrorism' but how is the problem of terrorism constructed). In its original formulation, this approach focuses on the observable behaviour, as well as on the explicit recognition of the limitations that the problem definition bears. While the purpose of this paper does not extend to a psychologization of the issues related to far-right and jihadi terrorism, the value of this analysis to the construction of an integrated framework stands in the consideration of vested interests and politicisation of the study of terrorism (ibid.). Importantly, and useful to the scope of this analysis the academic terrorism studies literature, the framework proposed by Lynch and Joyce already acknowledges one of the main difficulties that is part of the research in the field: the merging of research interests and interventions that are, instead, to be considered as two distinct processes. Below, the list of questions constituting Lynch and Joyce's framework.

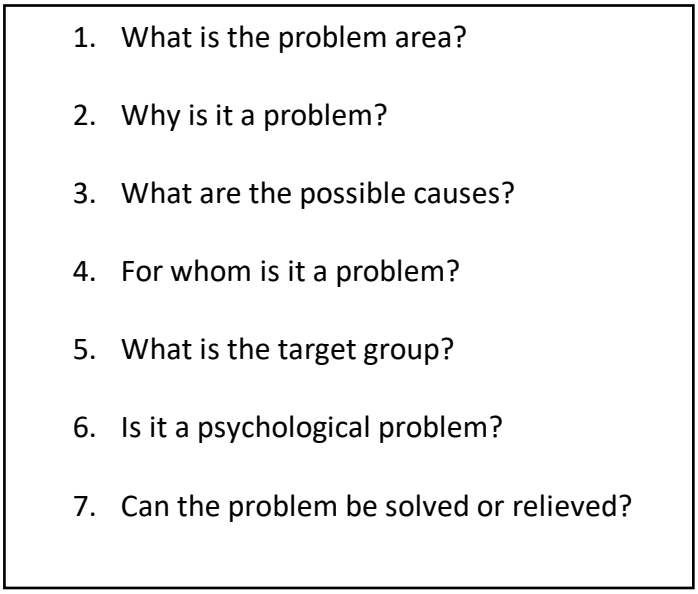


Figure 3: adaptation of the diagram of Lynch and Joyce's framework (2019: 18)

Why these frameworks

The relevance of these framework for the present research stands in the fact that, as stated above, the field of Terrorism Studies is heavily solution-based and focused on informing policies for the creation and application of counterterrorism interventions. This means that the field of Terrorism Studies is not considered as a producer of 'floating knowledge', knowledge produced in a vacuum with no real world consequence, but is instead linked to the after-effects of such knowledge, namely policy. Hence, Bacchi's framework becomes relevant to this research as it is intentionally designed to analyse policies, but it also allows sufficient flexibility for it to be expanded to academia as a field of analysis.

The sequelae of policies produced after and in response to 9/11 (in and outside of the USA) are often criticised for their dubious efficacy as well as the collateral effects they bring about, such as the 'imagination' and creation of suspect communities and the rise of islamophobia (Breen-Smyth, 2014 and Awan, 2013). In addition, as discussed above, the field of Terrorism Studies is not impermeable to world events and is linked to sources of power for funding and access to info, as well as a shared expertise with the early founders of the field of study. The field is linked both directly and indirectly to the production of policies and in addition, the research activity is also a problematising activity, in that the research question assumes a 'problem' to be investigated further, and in doing so, the field can also contribute to the re-production of power discourses.

Lynch and Joyce's (2019) framework also comes to be a part of the integrated framework proposed for this study because their set of questions was introduced to allow the researcher to apply psychology to the case of terrorism, hence, as the focus

is already *on and in* the field, the researchers are already aware of the problems of the field (lack of evidence to support, difficulties in the access to information, focus on the pathologisation of the individual terrorist actor). In fact, in the words of the authors "the strength of applying psychology to the case of terrorism research is that it requires a change in traditional representations of the topic" (ibid.: 3).

Therefore, both frameworks focus on the representation of the problem, moving the attention from the questions around 'what is […]' to 'how is the problem represented', and allowing the researcher to exercise reflexivity in their own research practice, starting with thinking about how the topic of research is *thought.*

The discourse becomes, then, the object of the analysis as a system of meaning that is important in what's said as much as in what's unsaid and it is in this fashion that the field of Terrorism Studies is analysed in this thesis.

An integrated framework, the Terrorism Research – Base Assumption Tool (TeR-BAT)

Both frameworks presented above find that the complexity of policy and problem definition is aggravated by their respective underlying assumptions and interests, which often remain silent, but still carry practical implications. As this is essential to the consideration of far-right and jihadi terrorism treatment in the academic literature, this aspect will appear prominently in the process of building the framework.

The integrated structure of analysis proposed below is based on a merging of the most relevant aspects of the two frameworks above, and will follow a reduced

number of questions, which will be discussed in details later in the thesis, after the discussion of the results. It represents an attempt to combine a definite focus on the problem area and its causes with an analysis of the discourses and knowledge around the problem. The questions will be listed first, then they will be introduced at a general level in their relevance for this research and later, used as a guide to attempt explaining the absence of far-right and jihadi terrorism in academic literature.

The representation of far-right and jihadi terrorism in the academic literature: the TeR-BAT

1. *How is the problem represented?*
2. *Why is this representation a problem?*
3. *What are the possible causes of these representation?*
4. *How is this representation of the problem reproduced and disseminated?*
5. *Can the problem be relieved or resolved?*

Figure 4: The Terrorism Research – Base Assumption Tool (Ter-BAT) resulting from the combination of Bacchi's (2009) and Lynch and Joyce's (2018) frameworks

How is the problem represented?

This question relates to the delineation of the problem and its representation in order to obtain a definite focus to tackle the matter. In this case, the problem is represented by the quasi absence of far-right in terrorism literature from 2001, which focuses, instead, on terrorism perpetrated by actors affiliated to other ideologies, mostly Islamist terrorism. Terrorism is represented as something coming from the

outside (and, by extension, by those considered outsiders). The academic field of Terrorism Studies is taken as an object of analysis to explore how the treatment of far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism unfolds in the literature, outside of considerations of the definition of terrorism in itself. Articles in the timeframe 2001-2018 are analysed in relation to far-right and in the timeframe 2010-2018 for jihadi terrorism, and the research focuses on what is researched and how it is researched to highlight the base assumption emerging from the field. As discussed in the previous chapters, 9/11 represented an important turn for the field of Terrorism Studies: the event brought a sudden growth in the publications in the field, and these publications focused on jihadi terrorism, and terrorism coming from the Middle East, to the detriment of research on other instances of terrorism. Therefore, 9/11 also impacted the time frame of the data collection, which was designed as from 2001 for articles pertaining to the far-right. The cut-off year for the articles collected was 2018 as the data collection of articles to input in the database happened in the first trimester of 2019, and therefore it was decided to include all the articles published up until the end of the previous year. The time frame was adapted for the data collection of jihadi articles: reviews of the field underlined how 9/11 shifted the focus of the research from counter-insurgency to jihadi terrorism and Jackson (2012) noted that the field was mainly guided by policy concerns. Therefore, to capture the field at a more developed and mature state, articles pertaining to jihadi terrorism were collected starting from the year 2010 (until the end of 2018).

Why is this representation a problem?

At a theoretical level, it is a problem because acts perpetrated by far-right affiliated actors are not represented in Terrorism Studies as much as those perpetrated by actors affiliated to other ideologies and this is a reflection of overarching underlying assumptions. On the other hand, there is a discrepancy between the data reported by academia and those by think tanks and watch groups which point towards an increased threat by far-right actors in the last years, academia does not seem to have caught up with such change in focus. The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies (Görder and Chavannes, 2020) has in fact reported an increase of far-right violence in the last decade, especially in terms of number of incidents. Similarly, the Anti-Defamation League in 2019 has reported that in the year 2018 all mass shootings in the USA were linked to the far-right. Similarly, the Southern Poverty Law Centre (Miller and Graves, 2020) reviewed the trends of far-right violence in the USA and reported that since the 2008, when Barack Obama became President of the United States, there was an increase in violence from the fa-right, with an uptick in particular between 2016 and 2018. As will be discussed more in depth later, academic publications in the time frame analysed did not dedicate the same attention to the threat coming from the far-right, with an increase in the number of articles focused on the far-right only in 2018, with 10 articles spread across the three selected journals, focusing on the far-right.

In addition, this is a problem because the academic field is linked to policy production, albeit not directly, in multiple ways such as sharing of data and experts and because researchers are not immune from biased narratives. While think tanks are clearly linked to policy work, previous reviews of the academic output in the

Terrorism Studies field have highlighted how the production in the field is tightly linked to counter-terrorism professionals (Silke, 2004) and overall has a strong presence of embedded experts. As a further example, Burnett and Whyte (2005) discuss the specific link between the RAND corporation and University of St Andrews. Similarly but at a broader level, Miller and Mills (2009) found that terror experts are not only linked with academic publishing, but also with media, government and military agencies.

Therefore, the researcher can also, albeit involuntarily, promote those same power narratives which are both resulting and instrumental in the promotion of a political agenda.

What are the possible causes of this representation?

One of the possible reasons is the threat perception in the aftermath of 9/11 fostered by the recurring and widespread discourse on the War on Terror in response to the deadliest terror attack in a Western country. This, however, would not be sufficient without a research field which maintains without questioning them strong links with the academia.

How is this representation of the problem reproduced and disseminated?

This question relates again to the analysis of the discourse around the topic and how this discourse becomes accepted widespread. Definitions of terrorism with its related limitations are currently based on the idea of terrorism as an existential threat to the society that, as such, requires extreme counteractions. This conception of terrorism

also brings in notions about terrorism as an extreme behaviour committed by outsiders. Such discourse gets reproduced through various means of communication, starting from official political sources and expanding then to media and academia.

Can the problem be relieved or resolved?

There is the possibility of relieving the problem through a recognition of the links between academia and institutional power, and following this, an application of a critical approach to the field of Terrorism Studies, through questioning of the underlying assumptions of the knowledge that gets produced and disseminated. This means being aware of the politics of knowledge and bringing more awareness into the relationship of the academic research with the institutional powers with which it interacts, in short: bringing the practice of reflexivity into research on terrorism.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the mechanisms *behind* the way Terrorism Studies frames terrorism, and how discourses around terrorism are shaped by a variety of factors such as social identity dynamics (Reicher, Haslam, and Rath, 2008) which foster a positive representation of the ingroup (us) and allows for a negative representation of 'the other' (them). While in previous chapters academia was described in its connections with government actors (funding and embedded expertise), this chapter digs deeper into this matter and questions *how the problem of terrorism is represented* and then proposed a framework (the TeR-BAT) to reflect on the base

assumption of the academic research. Such framework is the result of the combination of two different frameworks, one apt to policy analysis and the other created for the application of psychology to terrorism, and is intended to be used later in the context of this thesis, to discuss the project results, and at a broader level, it also represents an evidence-based tool to apply reflexivity to one own's research while in the process of formulating the question and the representation of the problem to be investigated.

SECTION II: METHODOLOGY, METHODS AND RESULTS

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY, METHODS AND PRELIMINARY QUANTITATIVE RESULTS.

Introduction

This thesis examines how different manifestations of terrorism (e.g. far-right or jihadi) are imagined, constructed and researched by examining the output of scholars in key research journals. This is not an investigation of a potential consensus definition of terrorism, this research focuses, instead, on the representation of terrorism through an interpretation of the way key topics are dealt with, which topics are included or omitted and how research makes meaning of terrorism in the doing of research. The aim of the analysis of the content of the Terrorism Studies literature goes beyond mere description and builds a comparison between the analysis of the articles in relation to the far-right and the analysis of the content of the articles related to jihadi terrorism. In so doing this research project answers the following research question: *how are far-right and jihadi terrorism represented in the academic literature?* In order to build a comparison between the two datasets and content analysis, we need to ask: *do we treat terrorism equally across the ideological spectrum? Do we treat far-right as terrorism to the same extent that we do with jihadi terrorism?*

At the core of this research is that the focus on chosen topics and the terms used to talk about issues; the way of speaking about events, and the decision to research

them in the first place exposes the base assumptions of the field and, in particular in the field's orientation towards or away from explanatory and power structures. In order to address these issues, the method is as important as the research question. A number of methods are part of the qualitative paradigm, and some of them do overlap with quantitative ones (for example, content analysis is born out of quantitative paradigms and became later embedded in qualitative ones), but as mentioned the choice of the methods is relevant as they inform and are informed by epistemological assumptions. In this study for example, while somewhat superficial information on the theoretical approach present in the literature could have been achieved through the method of systematic literature review (Jesson, Matheson and Lacey, 2011), this could not be expected to provide deeper insight into the base assumptions which underpin the research and the creation of knowledge in the field. To achieve meaningful and thorough understanding of the phenomena in question in this study, a content analysis was chosen as the most appropriate method.

Graneheim, Lindgren and Lundman (2017) provide a graphic representation of the possible epistemological positions that the researcher can adopt while performing a content analysis: such epistemological position is based on the level of closeness to the text and to the approach of the researcher, depending on whether they are looking to examine the manifest or latent content of the text.

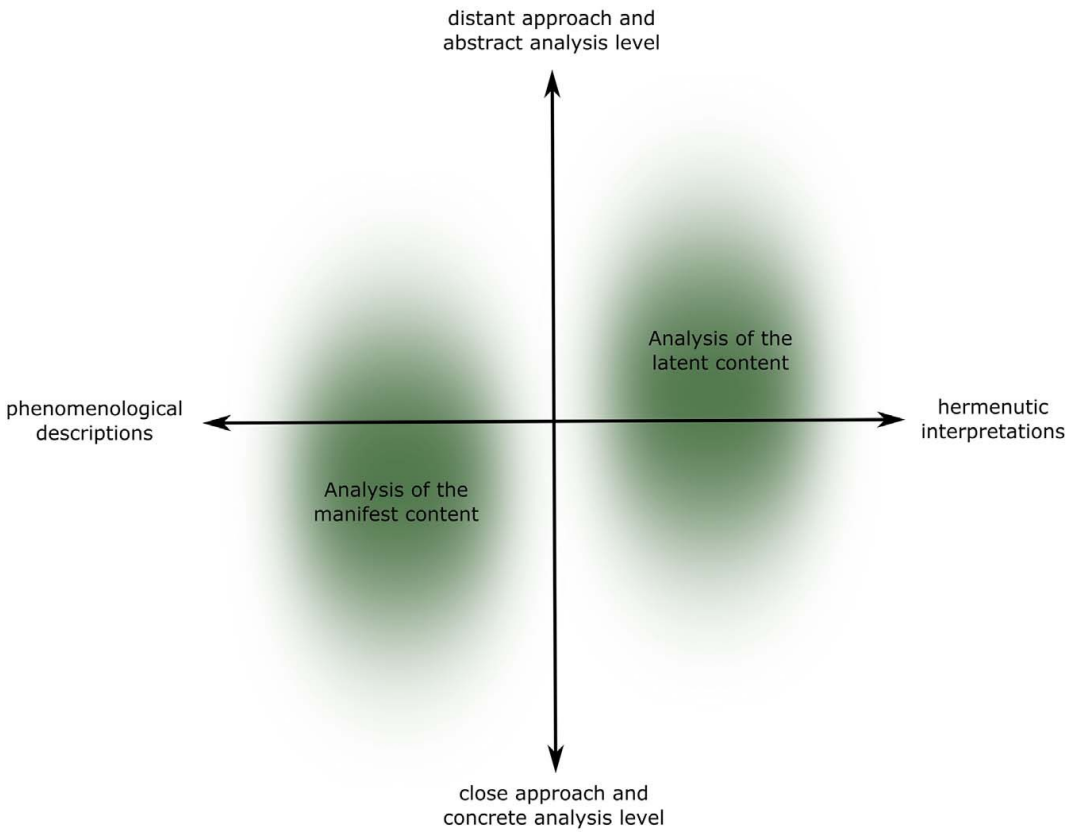


Figure 5 – Mapping of content analysis proposed by Graneheima, Lindgrena and Lundmana (2017: 3)

The above map is helpful in representing the epistemological position adopted in this research. This research adopts different epistemological positions and data approaches throughout: the descriptive phenomenological approach resorts to a reading which is closer to the text, and this is used in the first phase of the research. The analysis then moves towards a consideration of the latent content where an hermeneutic phenomenological approach becomes relevant (Sloan and Bowe, 2014) during the process of category and theme building, to finally highlighting the base assumptions underlying the text analysed. This happens in the context of

understanding what the text wants to communicate through what it says: 'To understand a text is to follow its movement from sense to reference: from what it says, to what it talks about' (Ricoeur, 1976 as cited in Lindseth and Norberg, 2004). This allows the research to move from the reading and categorisation of the manifest content to the interpretations of underlying assumptions of the text analysed as the move is basically a move towards an interpretation of deeper meaning emerging from the text.

Induction or deduction

The methods chosen are informed by an inductive approach : this fits well with the scope of the project which aims at finding commonalities and evidencing contradictions where present. Qualitative content analysis that works in an emergent (inductive) way is a flexible research method that allows for investigations of themes in the context of written text, picture, video and audio sources (Krippendorf, 2004). While the approach is informed by a grounded approach, it is not a theory building approach (Charmaz, 2006) as it remains descriptive and explanatory without aiming for a generalisation. This does not mean, of course, that meaningful elements and connections among themes will not emerge in the process, patterns and meaningful elements are often discovered in the context of content analysis (Cho and Lee, 2014). The manifestation of recurring codes speaks to the latent content of the data and can draw attention to relevant patterns of information that will emerge as themes in later iterations of the data analysis.

Krippendorff (2004) considers this approach to content analysis as the one that allows for the most transparency. This impacts on the creation of the content, which is not simply inherent in the text (manifest and objectively measurable, as Berelson, 1952 puts it), but emerges in the process of analysing the data. Krippendorff continues stating that "*a content analyst must acknowledge that all texts are produced and read by others and are expected to be significant to them, not just to the analyst"* (2004: 22), therefore the creation as well as the interpretation of the data is rooted in the awareness that the text has meaning also in that is a text produced with *in mind* a certain audience that will read it. In the case of this research, the focus is on articles belonging in the academic literature, produced by contributors to the field of Terrorism Studies that are mostly intended to be read by other academics and students and to a lesser degree policy makers and practitioners (Miller and Mills, 2009). The researcher's impact on the creation of content in the process of analysis also implies that the meanings emerging from the interaction between the researcher and the text can only reach a certain extent of intersubjective agreement, due to the very interactive nature of the data analysis. The position that Krippendorff adopts in relation to content analysis as a method is interactionist in nature and allows for the process to remain emergent. In this work, this means that the significance as well as the context of the text analysed are also constructed by the researcher, as it is through the context that the texts analysed acquires meaning. The context is this case is 'the conceptual environment of a text, the situation in which it plays a role' (Krippendorff, 2004: 33). The fact that the meaning is constructed, in tandem with a qualitative emergent approach adopted in this project means that there is no calculation of inter-rater reliability involved

through statistic parameters. However, it is still possible to establish the validity of the research (further discussed below) through recognising that the meaning is not only constructed in the process of analysis of the deeper meaning of the text (Potter and Levine-Donnerstein, 1997), but is also inter-subjective. As such, the research validity will be validated by the sharing and understanding of the meaning created by the readers of the research (ibid.) in this case the scholar community of the Terrorism Studies.

Validity and reliability

According to Krippendorff (2004: 313) "a content analysis is valid if the inferences drawn from the available text withstand the test of independently available evidence, of new observations, of competing theories and interpretations or of being able to inform successful actions". While validity and reliability are important in qualitative research overall, the validity of content analysis becomes even more important if the research aims at having application in practice (Potter and Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). While this thesis and this research project are not directly aimed at practitioners in the field of terrorism/counterterrorism, as argued in the previous chapters, the way terrorism is framed and understood in the literature is not free from consequences at the practical level.

As this project does not aim nor end with theory building, validity does not depend on the testing of a theory, nonetheless, Potter and Levine-Donnersteing (1999) argue that good content analysis can be carried out without theory playing a role in it and

it is still a valid approach to research, even in the cases where the researcher has to apply interpretation to code the data. As mentioned above, if the validity cannot be tested through theory-testing, the research can still be evaluated for *ecological validity,* intended as the resonance of coding among the social community in which the data collected are created. In this context, the social community is the academic community of terrorism experts. In the case of qualitative content analysis, validity and reliability are linked and reliability is seen as the *condictio sine qua non* there is no validity: reliability in this case is intended as replicability (Krippendorff, 1980) and details on the methods and detailed steps to ensure the study is replicable are provided in depth below.

Context of the present study and methods

A 2001 review of the emerging field of terrorism studies published by Andrew Silke describes the area as one that draws on secondary sources and is based mostly on literature review type analysis, with little to no empirical support for said analysis. Through the years the situation has changed and certainly improved, with an increase in the variety and rigour of the methodological design employed (Silke, 2004). The research, however, still represents a restricted topical focus, with the majority of publications focused on Islamist inspired terrorism (ibid.). Linked to this is the attempt to apply knowledge gleaned from the study of Islamist extremism to terrorism influenced by any and all ideological persuasions. A later review by Schuurman (2019) confirmed that the field is still reactive in nature and mainly

focused on jihadi terrorism and Al Qaeda specifically, neglecting right-wing and state terrorism.

To answer the research question while trying to address the issues above, this thesis firstly presents the findings of a rapid appraisal of the existing literature concerned with the far-right in three prominent terrorism journals between 2001 and 2018: the journals included are Terrorism and Political Violence, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism and Critical Studies in Terrorism (Jesson, Matheson, and Lacey, 2011). The research also presents the results of the rapid appraisal of articles published in the same journals but on articles on jihadi terrorism, between 2010 and 2018.

The three journals were selected from those focusing on terrorism, on the base of the H-index as provided from Scimago Journal Ranking. The rapid appraisal method used is a modified systematic review (ibid.): this means it does not look at the theoretical paradigm of the articles or at the aim of the papers. Nonetheless, it allows for scope in the research area of terrorism studies by looking at already existing data, and allows for a coherent organisation around a research question. The focus of this rapid appraisal was based on the following questions:

1. Between 2001-2018, how many articles in the three named journals address the issue of the far-right and to what extent?
2. Between 2010-2018 how many articles addressed Jihadi terrorism, and to what extent?

The 2018 cut off point for this research project has two main justifications: the first is that when the collection of the far-right articles began it was the beginning of 2019,

therefore the articles published up to the end of 2018 meant that all the most recent literature was included. The author is aware of the importance of iterativity in the data collection phase, and is aware that the field might have changed since 2018, especially in consideration of terrorist attacks linked to far-right actors such as the Christchurch shooting. The second justification pertains to maintaining the cut-off point of the research to 2018 also for the collection of jihadi terrorism articles, and it stands in the pivot the research project had to undergo at the beginning of 2020, with the beginning of the pandemic. As mentioned in the introduction, the declaration of the pandemic by the World Health Organisation meant that the work for many had to be moved online, and that while the world was adapting to the situation, it made sense to switch the thesis to a desk based approach in order to be able to progress with this thesis, therefore replicating the study already done for the far-right, but focusing on articles which would deal with jihadi terrorism.

Data Gathering for far-right articles

The first phase of this data analysis involved a *rapid appraisal* of all articles published between January 2001 and December 2018 in the journals *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* and *Critical studies in Terrorism* (CST only began publication in 2008). The selection of these three titles is based on the Hirsch index (h-index) of each journal. Initially proposed by Hirschi to evaluate the impact of an author's research (Hirsch, 2005), the h-index is also applied to journals, and measures both the number of publications, as well as the impact of the research via

the number of times the article has been cited (Braun, Glänzel and Schubert, 2006). The ranking available through Scimago Journal and Country Rank (SJR) places these journals in the top three in terms of h-ranking in the field of Terrorism: Terrorism and Political violence has a h-index of 44, Studies in Conflicts and Terrorism has a h-index of 43 and Critical Studies in terrorism has a h-index of 21. Although this is not a perfect measure we used it as a blunt tool to give a general indication of which journal would be most representative of the field of terrorism studies. At the end of the collection, 387 articles were input in the dataset for the rapid appraisal.

In order to conduct the *rapid appraisal* a keyword search was performed using the publishers' portal (Taylor and Francis) for the three journals, independent of each other. The initial search criteria was the term "far-right", limited to the timeframe 2001-2018; the key-term was searched for in the title, article keywords and full-text, in addition, in-text searches were performed for keywords as 'fascism', 'right wing' and 'white supremacy'(or 'suprematism'/'supremacist') when the article appeared to show the keyword "far-right" only in the appendix or in in the references. This search returned a total of 1846 articles.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The 1846 articles were manually reviewed by the author in order to determine if they met the criteria for inclusion. To avoid the exclusion of relevant pieces of research, a low inclusion threshold was applied when selecting articles to input in the dataset,

including all the results that only contained one mention of the far-right. Excluded from the dataset were the articles which employed the words “far-right” only in terms of geographical location, or with a meaning non relevant to this piece (e.g. “right” in the juridical meaning). The dataset also excluded review articles, book reviews as well as board discussions and introduction to special issues.

To determine if an article was of relevance to the far-right or merely ‘mentioning’ the far right it needed to be manually checked. In these cases, an evaluation on a case-by-case was performed and each decision on inclusion or exclusion was discussed by the author and the supervisor. Once applied the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 387 articles were input in the dataset for the far-right articles.

Data gathering for jihadi terrorism articles

The research in the three journals listed above was performed, for jihadi terrorism articles, in the same way as it was done for far-right terrorism articles this time with a shorter timeframe. Rather than focusing on the timeframe 2001-2018, the data collected are a snapshot of the period 2010-2018: in this way, the plethora of articles published in reaction to the attacks of 9/11 and which represent the shaping of the research field is excluded from the database. 9/11 has in fact been recognised as a watershed moment for the Terrorism Studies field, and brought a sharp increase of publications of the field (Silke, 2008), however it is also recognised as an event which led to the publications post 9/11 being influenced by state-led narratives (Silke, 2004) and to research that was reportedly based on scarce evidence (Jackson, 2012).

Therefore, in order to capture a more mature field of research and to avoid capturing the issues that have already been addressed in existing reviews of the field, the articles to build the database for the jihadi articles have been taken in the same three journals as the far-right terrorism articles but from 2010. Being the researcher aware that jihadi terrorism is also referred to with different terms, and in order to capture the entirety of articles in spite of the different terminology used in the articles, a research of four keywords was carried out for each journal, the keywords were: jihadi, jihadism, Islamic, Islamist.

The total number of results given is 2971; as the three journals present a wealth of resources on jihadi terrorism, and to maintain coherence with the first database built, the same exclusion criteria above have been applied, hence, all editorial boards, introduction to journal issues, research notes, discussions and roundtables are excluded. The same was applied to review articles and essays.

Those marked as “articles” and “original articles”, both in special and ordinary issues of the journals became part of the database. One of the journals presented a high number of articles included as part of “special section”, “technological impact”, “case studies” and “foreign fighters research”, those are also part of the database.

Due to the breadth of research focus of the three journals, articles that only included the keywords in relation to political movements and not in relation to terrorism have been excluded (e.g. Islamic party, Islamic country, Islamic law etc..). Same when the research terms are only present in the endnotes or footnotes.

Once applied the exclusion criteria and excluding duplicates, the database contained 679 articles (for comparison, 387 articles were included in the database compiled for articles pertaining to the far-right, in turn this means that per year the Islamic linked

publications emerge at approximately 85 per year and the Far right lined at just over 21 per year), to which, as for the far-right database, follows a content analysis of those focused on jihadi terrorism. Given that the resulting number of articles focused of jihadi terrorism is seven-fold in comparison to those collected for the study of far-right, the content analysis this time availed of NVivo as qualitative analysis software: this facilitated not only the storage of the data (while for far-right articles the codes were recorded on an Excel worksheet) it also allowed for the easy setting up of codes and for a smoother process of grouping of said codes into categories as well as visualisation of the results. A comparative table of the articles resulted from the keyword search on the journals is provided below, while at the end of the next section is included a full comparison of articles resulted, inputted in the database and analysed for content.

	Far-right Terrorism	Jihadi Terrorism
Returned Results (articles)	1846	2971
Total in database	387	679

Table 1: comparison of returned results from the key-word search for far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism articles, and of the articles which were then included in each of the databases

"Building the dataset" of articles for far-right and Jihadi terrorism articles

The rapid appraisal for far-right and jihadi terrorism articles was conducted using a Microsoft Excel template originally developed by Andrew Silke and James Windle

(Windle and Silke, 2019), for the purpose of conducting data analysis on Organized Crime groups. The categories included: title, author(s), journal of publication, year of publication, year of focus, geographical focus and methods (if present). In addition to these, further categories were introduced: these included having a *far-right focus, far-right mention and far-right comparison/co-focus* and the same was done with jihadi terrorism articles adding the categories of *jihadi focus, jihadi mention, and jihadi comparison/co-focus.*

Two types of variables are used in the database: text-based variables pertaining to publishing information, temporal and geographical focus, and dichotomic variables (0/1) where a value of 1 indicates presence, a value of 0 indicates absence of the considered variable: these included far-right focus, far-right mention and far-right comparison/co-focus and jihadi focus, jihadi mention and jihadi comparison.

For each article, the following process was followed:

The articles discovered as a result of the key-word search were individually assessed in order to determine in greater detail the focus of the article.

If the article presented referenced the research key words in the title, abstract or keywords, it was then categorised as “focus” and assigned a value of one in the “focus” cell (e.g., “Far-right focus” or “jihadi focus” cell)

Articles categorised as focusing on the research topic, were also scrutinised for methods used. If a methods/methodology section was not found in the text, a value of 0 was given to the corresponding cell. On the other hand, its presence was recorded in the corresponding cell through assigning a value of 1; and subsequently

assigning a value of 1 to every method mentioned in the methodology section (and a value of 0 to every remaining one).

If there was no keyword mention in keywords, title, or abstract, the author evaluated the article to consider whether the treatment of the research topic was only limited to mentioning it in the text or to using the far-right/jihadi terrorism as a term of comparison/shared focus with other themes.

If the keywords appeared in the text in unrelated contexts (e.g., use of the 'far-right' term simply as adverbs/adjectives or the use of 'Islamic' only in 'Islamic law') the article was excluded from the database.

Once this information was gathered and input in the database, the second part of the analysis examines the articles deemed to be of relevance to these issues using a content analysis. The table below illustrates the quantitative results obtained through the creation of the dataset and compares the articles collected for Far-right terrorism and for jihadi terrorism. The articles listed in the table as 'focused' on Far-right terrorism and on jihadi terrorism proceeded to be analysed through qualitative content analysis.

	Far-right Terrorism	Jihadi Terrorism
Returned Results (articles)	1846	2971
Total in database	387	679
Focused	41 (11% of total articles entered in the database)	285 (42% of total articles entered in the database)
Yearly average (focused articles only)	2.3	31.8

Focused with methodology	4 (10% of focused articles)	78 (27% of focused articles)

Table 2: Terrorism Studies at a glance – a comparison of far-right terrorism articles and jihadi terrorism articles

Content Analysis

First analysis of the raw data

To answer the research question of this thesis (comprehend how far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism are understood, portrayed and dealt within the academic literature) a qualitative content analysis was performed on the articles from the dataset that were identified as having the far-right as the main focus, and the same was done with those focusing on jihadi terrorism. The aim of this content analysis was to convert the 'raw data' – in this case the text of the articles- into categories or themes leading to the creation of a highly organised and concise summary of the results. This process of abstraction enables the researcher to move from the literal meaning intended in the text to expose the latent meanings in the data (Erlingsson and Brysiewicz, 2017).

This process involved dividing the text into *meaningful* chunks and analysing the material in the following manner (Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas, 2013):

1. Each article was divided in chunks that varied in length from a sentence to a full paragraph, depending on the content of the section.
2. Each chunk was assigned a code (word/expression/description) which would sum up the content (e.g. “ideology”,”radicalisation”, “propaganda”, “mainstream politics”, etc…).

3. At the end of each article the content which emerged:
    a. in relation to far-right articles, was organised using Microsoft Excel, in a hierarchical manner, where descriptive codes were grouped together where appropriate and higher order codes emerged. These higher order codes were referred to as themes (Bree and Gallagher, 2016).
    b. in relation to jihadi terrorism the content was organised using the NVivo software.

    Each meaningful chunk, or meaning unit, was labelled in NVivo and assigned a code. At the end of this process the researcher found a very high number of codes which were then grouped into categories (intended as groups of codes that relate to the manifest content of the text and belong together, according to Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017). Codes organised in categories were analysed as a whole and themes were extrapolated. Considering the high number of codes, categories and themes emerging, the results were organised in overarching themes, themes, and sub-themes.

4. The process resulted in:

    a. six themes with their associated sub-themes for the articles related to far-right terrorism.

    b. four overarching themes and 23 themes, with related sub-themes, for the articles related to jihadi terrorism.

From raw data to codes, from codes to themes

As mentioned, codes were created while reading the articles: each article is divided in a significant chunk of text or meaningful unit (e.g. a paragraph) and to each chunk a code was assigned in relation to its content. Given the nature of the process as well as the number of articles, the codes created were re-examined periodically to make sure that there are no duplicates, overlaps and to begin the process of aggregating codes in pertinent themes. Due to the number of articles to be analysed for far-right (41) and for jihadi terrorism (285) there were two different procedures for each set; these procedures are discussed below.

The codes created while analysing far-right articles were recorded, for each article, in an Excel worksheet, reprising and readapting the procedure for thematic analysis by Bree and Gallagher (2016). The first codes created were 'raw' and required refining and collation with related codes; this process of refining was also aided by the application of a colour code which would highlight similar themes (e.g. all codes related to ideology and which would include labels such as 'complexity of ideology', 'apocalyptic views' and 'racism' would be highlighted in the same colour to facilitate

recognition and grouping). Once reviewed the codes the chunks of text pertaining to related codes were read together to be able to extrapolate the emerging themes and those themes were finally labelled. Where necessary, the themes were articulated in sub-themes that emerged in the analysis and the creation of meaning, this also aided the discussion of the results.

The process of coding and the creation of themes for jihadi articles was overall more complex and time consuming. The 285 articles were added to the NVivo software and then the analysis began in the same way as for the far-right articles: dividing the text into meaningful chunks of text and assigning a code to each chunk, in this case the codes were created directly in NVivo. Given the process was rooted in a grounded approach, the coding development phase was iterative in that the codes were renamed and reorganised while the data was being analysed.

The number of codes at the end of the coding phase was over 300, with a number of codes being already organised with sub-codes. To organise the codes without oversimplifying the content and impairing the emergence of themes, it was necessary to adopt a more complex organisation, so the structure proposed by Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017) was followed. The authors suggest that codes can be grouped into categories which still maintain their proximity to the text, and form the categories the content can be further analysed and abstracted in themes (and sub-themes were present) and overarching themes, as shown below.

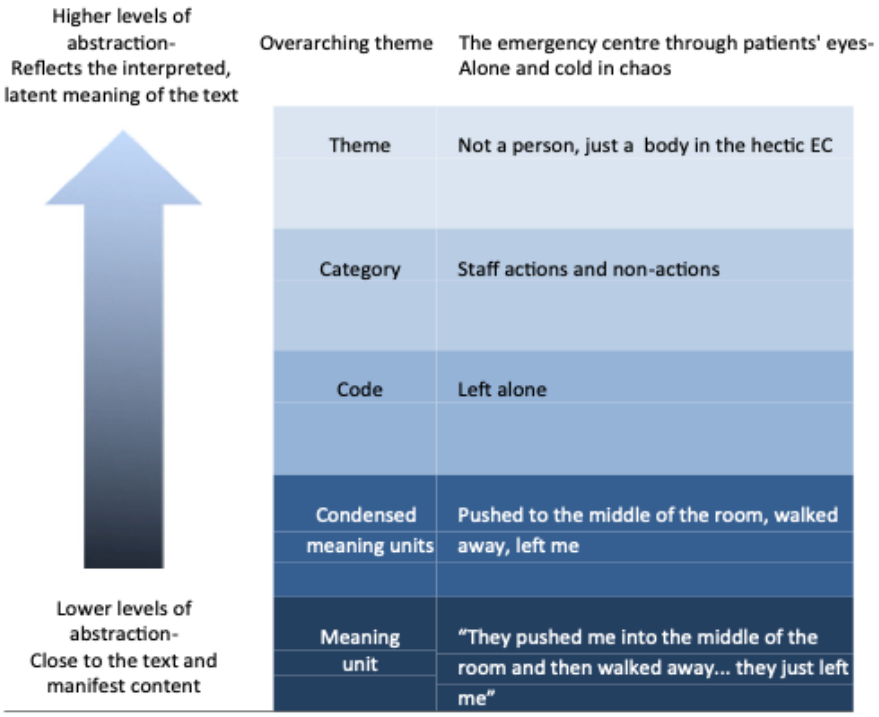


Figure 6: from meaning units (chunks of text) to overarching themes, in the step by step process by Erlingsson and Brysiewicz [examples as from original author's text](2017: 34)

As visible from the picture above, the path from text to overarching themes is one that goes from manifest content to abstraction, but in addition, the creation of themes is also the creation of meaning in that, as mentioned earlier, the researcher applies their own interpretation to the data, for example in deciding to include a code under one theme rather than under another.

This is consistent both in the process of meaning making from the part of the author, where the meaning is not considered inherent in the text but also constructed, as well as in the process of content analysis as a grounded process, where again, the meaning of the content emerges and is reiteratively re-categorised and analysed in light of what emerges.

From themes to key problem areas

While the process proposed by Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017) concludes with the creation of overarching themes, this research project required a further step of abstraction, in that the themes emerged in the analysis of far-right articles and those emerged in the analysis of jihadi articles needed to be also organised to build a coherent comparison.

It was hard to work and build a comparison considering the paucity of data on far-right terrorism, the abundance of data on jihadi terrorism and the difference of content between the two, however that is in itself telling and through a further process of analysis and highlighting of common and contrasting themes it was possible to further distil the theme into 6 key problem areas. These problem areas constitute the discussion chapter of this thesis and are those for which, objectively, there was enough data to compare and contrast both at the qualitative level. The difficulties experienced with the disparity of data (in particular at the at the quantitative level) meant that a criterion for choosing the key areas was also their leveraging and explanatory power and their capacity to outline the problems that such framing in academic literature represent.

From methodology to understanding

Multiple reviews of the field of terrorism studies report that the field is mainly reactive, and solution driven (Ranstorp, 2009; Schuurman, 2019), in addition to this,

the field is tightly linked to power in that the research relies on government and non-governmental agencies for funding and this impacts on the narratives of that surround terrorism coming from different actors (Taylor and Horgan, 2021), with Jackson (2007) describing the field as 'intimately connected – institutionally, financially, politically, and ideologically – with a state hegemonic project' (p. 245). This means that the reactions to terrorist attacks could vary profoundly in terms of literature production. For example, a rapid appraisal conducted by the author of this thesis for exploratory purposes, found that the literature does not react strongly to terrorism perpetrated by the far-right, even in the event of a deadly attack on US soil, such as the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995. A search performed on the journals Terrorism and Political violence and Studies in Conflict and Terrorism found that between 1995 and 2000 only 7 articles (spread between the two journals) focused on or mentioned the events in Oklahoma. Detailed information of this study, pertaining to the methods and results can be found in the appendix (Appendix 1). In addition to this, Jackson (2007) describes the creation of the field known as Critical Terrorism Studies and the need to build it on new epistemological bases which would recognise the power involved in the creation and the description of the 'terrorist subjects' and the way the research in the field is carried out. In an attempt to contribute to this debate, the final step of this content analysis is to sum up the six key areas for research in two main questions for research: these two main questions are answered using a WPR approach (Bacchi, 2009), and are operationalised and answered within this scaffold. This is done with the aim of providing a framework representing a useful tool to investigate the research field as well as the researcher interpretive lenses or bias in the process of conducting research in itself. This means

that the methodology and the method become the starting point not only to ground a critique of the field in empirical data, but also to provide instruments which foster reflexivity.

From understanding to practice: the TeR-BAT

This methodology section has so far discussed the ontological and epistemological position of this research, and has shown the reader how the researcher went from the raw data to the extrapolation of themes. The last step of this content analysis deals with taking the results of the content analysis and to build an evidence based tools for future research.

The TeR-BAT is the tool that resulted from the process of distilling the findings of this research into six key areas, and from this, creating a set of questions to be used by researchers to assist them in *thinking about their own research*. Through the discussion of these six key issues, the researcher is able to give meaning to the findings of the rapid appraisal and content analysis, but also to move the discussion forward: the TeR-BAT is built on the backdrop of these six key areas, which represent, as mentioned above, the points of comparison between the findings for far-right and jihadi terrorism. The formulation of the questions took place after the process of distillation of the six key issues in Terrorism Studies, so that through a process akin to reverse engineering, the researcher could build a set of guiding questions to help the researcher interrogating their own research assumptions, this is particularly evident in the sub-set of questions proposed as a solution to the 5th question of the framework.

The 5 questions that form the TeR-BAT are:

1. How is the problem represented?
2. Why is this representation a problem?
3. What are the possible causes of this representation?
4. How is this representation of the problem reproduced and disseminated?
5. Can the problem be relieved or resolved?

Each of these questions will be answered in the last chapter, both in relation to far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism; the fifth question is answered through the implementation of an additional sub-set of questions. The questions of the sub-set are created through a process akin to a photo negative: the six key areas helped in highlighting the issues emerging from the analysis of the Terrorism Studies field, to address those six key areas, the researcher has then elaborated a number of questions which address them directly. This renders the TeR-BAT tightly linked to evidence, but it also aims at helping the researcher in exercising their own reflexivity.

Limitations

This study presents a number of limitations, that will be discussed in this section. Recognising the limitations of the project is, in part, what this research is about, and so it is important to reflect critically on this piece of produced knowledge.

This project intentionally looked at far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism in the field of Terrorism Studies, yet terrorism is also relevant to the field of International Relations (IR) as the study of relationship between states and between states and sub-state groups. Part of this research project discusses the notion of securitisation, a concept that is part of the field of International Relations, and applies it to the case of far-right and Islam in the aftermath of 9/11, so it is sensible to think that a review of far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism in the field of IR could further enrich the discussion of the underlying assumption in treating these two instances of terrorism, even in light of the possibility that far-right terrorist groups might be defined through the use of different terms (e.g. extreme/extremism). It would also serve, being that the notion of securitisation is also strongly related to the concrete consequences of securitising discourses, to further highlight the relationship between powerful political actors such as governments, and the translation of discourses around existential threats into policy design and implementation. Similarly, this limitation can also be expanded to the lack of review of the field of Political Science; this research took the definition of far-right, for example, from Mudde, a well-known political scientist and scholar who works in the field of extremism and populism, and this is further proof of the overlap between the field of Terrorism Studies with other well established fields of research. A more in depth analysis in the field of Political Science could also provide further insight into the relationship between far-right sub-state groups and far-right political (as in electoral) actors, which the present research finds to be linked through the process of mainstreaming. In addition, it could be interesting to see how these two fields outside of terrorism studies consider Islamist parties in their own countries, and observe whether the orientalist stances

highlighted in this research (see chapter 7 and 9) are also found elsewhere. The opinion of the author of this research is that considering the Western and Western centric origins of International Relations and Political Science, such assumptions could also be integral part of the scholarship production of the above mentioned fields.

Also relevant to the selection of journals, is the fact that the criterion of selection is the H-index for the year 2018. The H-index, as mentioned earlier, is indented as a measure of the impact of a given author, but is also calculated to quantify the impact of a journal. Braun, Glänzel and Schubert (2005) and Waltman, Costas and Jan van Eck (2012) have, however, highlighted a number of limitations of this parameter, some of which are worth considering here. Firstly, the impact of a publication or journal are calculated on the citations a single or a set of articles obtain, and are a good indicator of the quantity, but this does not give any additional information on the quality of the publications, or of its impact outside of academia. This aspect is particularly relevant for the field of Terrorism Studies, which has close links with the outside world, in particular in terms of policy production. This consideration leads to the second aspect of this limitation, which relates to the fact that the H-index represents a single-dimension parameter (Waltman, Costas and Jan van Eck, 2012), which attempts to establish the relevance of a journal through a single numeric value, therefore could be seen as a reduction of the impact of the journal to the number of citations each article has.

The journals selected for this research are considered to be the top-tier journal for Terrorism Studies (as mentioned above, on the base of their H-index). While these are taken as representative for the field of Terrorism Studies, there are limitations in

focusing on top-tier journals which are expected to publish high impact articles; for example, to be published there an article needs to be of high relevance, and could therefore unintentionally contributing to the reactivity of the field. It is also possible that, as Terrorism Studies researches on the border of other disciplines such as Political Science and International Relations and does not represent a discipline in itself (Stampintzky, 2013), articles pertaining to the far-right have been discussed in other fields before they became relevant to Terrorism Studies.

Furthermore, this research focused on the literature post 9/11, in that it recognises its impact on the direction the field has taken. Part of the literature, albeit minor, brought some consideration about jihadi terrorism not being a new phenomenon in Europe: for example, groups such as GIA (Armed Islamic Group) in Algeria fighting towards the end of French colonisation were well known before 9/11. Similarly, Europe is not new to instances of far-right terrorism, for example, Italy, was subject in the 70s and 80s to deadly attacks by actors falling under what was called “black terrorism”, which was part of a dynamic of destabilising the existing political balance, building tension among the population and to stop the formation of a left-wing opposition (Tranfaglia, 1998). Research in the field of Terrorism Studies which would take into consideration the period before 9/11 could shed further light on the underlying assumptions around terrorism before 9/11, especially with the awareness of the presence of jihadi terrorism in Western countries well before 9/11. Similarly, and again in relation to the timeframe chosen for this work, the cut-off point of 2018 means that the literature published in these journals since the beginning of 2019 was excluded, therefore, some changes to the field of Terrorism Studies could not be

captured in this snapshot of the field, and this could represent a future research direction.

A further consideration to be made is that this research did not provide background on the authors of the articles analysed (an approach previously used by Silke, 2001) and hence did not look in depth at the affiliation(s) of the researchers. This could be investigated to gain further understanding of, for example, the theoretical frameworks employed to understand and explain the causality of terrorism in relation to the institutions to which the researcher is affiliated.

A final consideration needs to be made in relation to the limitations of this qualitative content analysis; as a qualitative and interpretive approaches are considered as one of the methods able to further the knowledge in the field and provide information on how terrorism is constructed (Horgan, 2012) in the literature. On the other hand, content analysis, when approached qualitatively as in the case of this study, is time consuming, especially when applied to a large body of data. The time-consuming nature of the analysis can be linked to 'coding fatigue', which could potentially impact on the reliability of the study (Potter and Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). As mentioned earlier, the reliability of this study is warranted by the replicability and the researcher has carefully recorded each step of the project to guarantee replicability. In addition, 'coding fatigue' is lessened through the provision of coding training (which was provided to the researcher in the context of this project) and through the acquisition of experience, gained throughout the various steps of this work (Peter and Lauf, 2002).

CHAPTER 6: RESULTS

THE REPRESENTATION OF FAR-RIGHT TERRORISM IN THE TERRORISM STUDIES LITERATURE

A complex ideology, the importance of communication and networks and the adaptability of far-right actors.

Introduction

The previous section discussed the literature that links Terrorism Studies and the far-right, and discussed in depth the far-right and its relationship with immigration and terrorism, especially in the wake of 9/11. The review of the literature highlighted a pattern where the 'other' is constantly framed as a threat, both in the case of terrorism post 9/11 and in the case of immigration, which is conflated with various crimes. The literature review highlighted an additional trend that relates to the growing violence coming from far-right militant groups, at times supported and more or less openly by far-right electoral groups. Nonetheless far-right groups are seldom labelled as criminal or terrorist, they are almost never treated as a threat to security, unlike with Muslims living in the West. Given these patterns it was necessary to review and introduce the concept of framing and to apply this concept to the field of terrorism. In addition, as one of the premise of this thesis is that the reactive character of the field of Terrorism Studies leads the research to be closely linked to state concern, the literature review has discussed the possibility that implicit assumptions about the threat coming from the other became not only part of governmental security narratives, but became also

embedded in the terrorism literature, and this can provide initial insight into the absence of the far-right in terrorism literature.

The results presented here concern the articles pertaining to far-right terrorism in the timeframe 2001-2018 and were from the three main Terrorism Studies Journals, selected on the base of their H-index, the journals are: Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, Terrorism and Political Violence and Critical Studies on Terrorism. The key-word search (in the whole text) returned a total of 1846. The chapter will begin with a quantitative overview of the articles analysed, and how they are represented in the Excel Dataset in terms of far-right focus, far-right mention, far-right comparison/co-focus categorisation. The articles which were input in the dataset and were categorised as having a 'far-right focus' (41) have been further analysed through a manual content analysis, assisted by MS Excel and gave life to 6 themes with related sub-themes. An extract from the far-right database, both for the Rapid Appraisal and for the Content Analysis is provided in Appendix 2.

Out of the totality of the articles assessed (=1846), 387 deal with the far-right to some extent, either they mention the far-right, or they include it for comparative purposes – these 387 articles became a part of the dataset. The majority of these 387 articles only deal with the far-right at a superficial level, with the majority only mentioning it (282 articles, 72.86%), while 64 articles (16.53%) included in the data base only mention the far-right in comparison to other phenomena. Of the 387 articles included in the database, only 41 articles (10.61%) have the far-right as the main focus. The breakdown of articles pertaining to far-right terrorism is shown in the chart below, and illustrates

the percentage of articles which focus, mention or deal with far-right as a term of comparison.

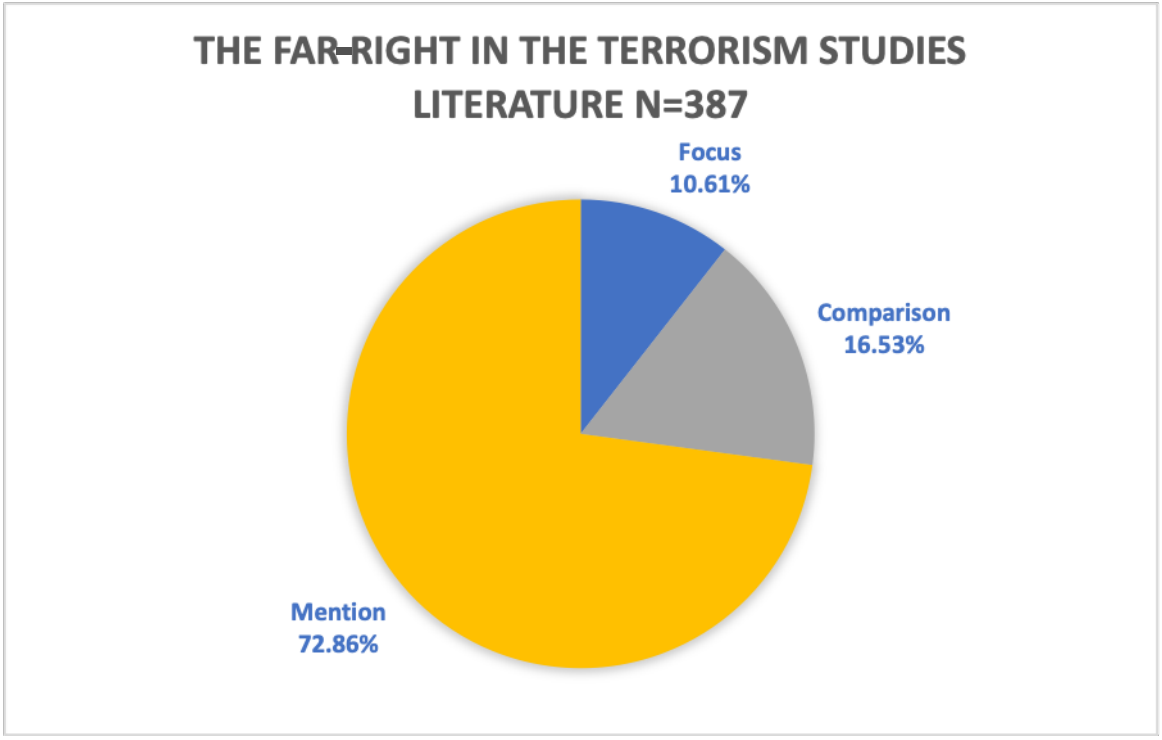


Figure 7: Dealing with Far-Right in Terrorism Studies literature, distribution of 387 articles in the database

The 41 'far-right focus' articles identified (10.61%) that were published in three top terrorism studies journals between 2001 and 2018 were subsequently included in the content analysis. These 41 articles were included regardless of whether or not they included a methodology or a methods section, a breakdown of articles with or without methodology that were analysed in the study is shown in figure 9 below. The 6 themes mentioned in table 2 in the next pages emerged from the analysis of these 41 articles.

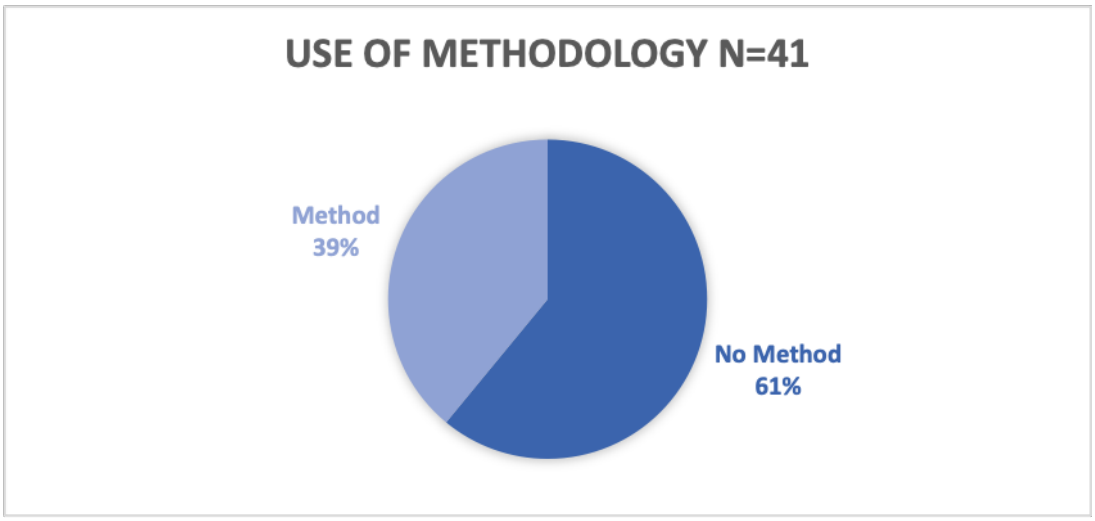


Figure 8: Percentage of 41 'far-right focus' articles with a dedicated 'methods' or 'methodology' section.

Content analysis

The following table summarises the themes and codes that emerged from the content analysis carried out on the 41 'far-right focus' articles deemed to have the far-right as the main focus of the journal article, in addition, at the end of the table, a mind map created through the use of a tool called Coggle, is provided as a visual representation of the themes and subthemes emerged from the content analysis of the far-right focused articles.

Themes	Sub-themes
Ideology	Boundaries Conspiracy theories and historical revisionism Fixed gender roles Eschatological views and RAHOWA Complexity of ideology Reactions to 9/11
Terrorism, communication and the media	Relationship with the public Relationship with the media Propaganda Dangerousness and threat perception
Adaptability and life-span of the group	Leadership and lone wolves Adaptability and group survival Weapons, targets and satellite crimes Networks
Mainstream politics	
Grievances and victimology	
Engagement/disengagement (and radicalisation/deradicalization)	

Table 3: Summary of themes and sub-themes emerged from the content analysis of the 41 articles focused on the far-right

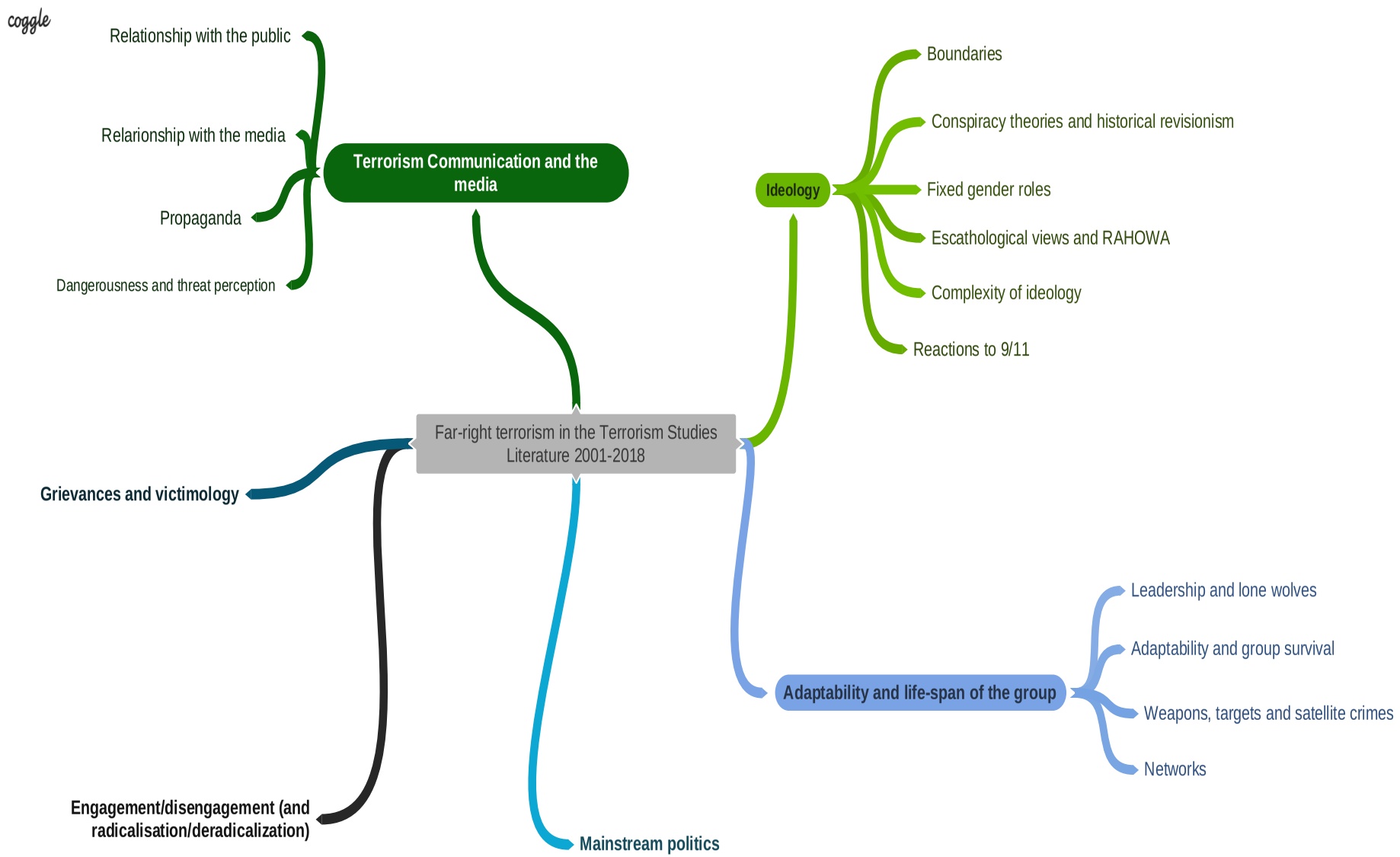


Figure 9: Far-right terrorism in the Terrorism Studies literature, a graphic representation

Ideology

The content analysis of the 41 'far-right focus' articles in this study revealed that the articles were dominated by a focus on ideology. The meaning of ideology in this context was nuanced and given the breadth and complexity (Ackerman and Burnham, 2019) of the concept a number of sub themes were also identified. The articles do not deal with far-right ideology as a monolith, rather they identify the nature of the ideology at a group level and in many cases use the far-right umbrella as a reference for comparison. The sub-themes that emerged under the theme of ideology are discussed below.

Complexity of the Ideology

A significant sub-theme that emerged from the analysis of the journal articles was the complexity of far-right ideologies. It was widely noted that attempting to discuss, define or analyse the far-right as a monolith was inappropriate. The complexity was particularly stark in relation to the definition of the out-group or the enemy of the group. In addition, how a far-right group or movement reacted to, memorialised or adopted historic events was a significant point of difference across the various ideologies. For example, far-right groups reacted very differently to the 2011 Oslo attacks perpetrated by Anders Breivik; some movements applaud the attack and his manifesto, while others chastise Breivik because he attacked white people. Despite the fact that Breivik's stated aim was to undermine Norway's multicultural society an aim widely shared across far-right groups, the targeting of white Norwegian students was seen by some as unacceptable. Similarly, far-right groups and movements were not united in their reaction to the 9/11 attacks in

the USA. In some cases there was an upswelling of anti-Muslim sentiment leading to a surge in attacks towards Muslim communities who were seen as somehow associated with the perpetrators of the attacks. For other far-right groups, they saw the attack as an attack on the power wielded by the Jewish community on the American economy; ironically some far-right groups expressed support for Al-Qaeda in the aftermath of the violence on the basis that they *shared an enemy.*

Apart from the key ideological sub-categories that are commonplace in far-right movements or groups, another site of ideological complexity is amongst the single issue groups, for example the separatist, anti-tax, anti-gun control, anti-abortion movements. Far-right groups appear to be a continuously changing reality which finds expression in the heterogeneity of individual ideas, targets and behaviours. However, while these ideas may appear somewhat ad hoc, there are commonalities identifiable even amongst the single-issue ideas. For example, ideologies in their multiple manifestations can be classed into anti-state/anti-federalism, misogynistic, religiously motivated and racism. In relation to this issue Mehta (2015: 417) wrote that *"… the heterogeneity among movements of the right (as well as of feminist movements) and the diverse ideologies they stem from, the variety of discourses they employ, and the diversity in their engagement with the gendered self and other (Dworkin 1982; Moghadam 1994; Bacchetta and Power 2002)."*

Boundaries

Boundaries as both a physical manifestation as well as a delineation of self and other was a prominent theme that emerged in the analysis of the articles for this study. Boundaries primarily emerged as the demarcation between the ingroup and the outgroup as well as the geographic demarcation of national and regional borders.

The creation of in-groups and out-groups is a normal part of interpersonal relationships, and we know from social identity theory that these are positive and necessary in society (Tajfel and Turner, 2001). However, in the case of the far-right the aim is the creation of collective hate and discrimination (Verkuyten, 2013). While for the far-right the definition and delineation of the out-group is important, it is also important that the out-group can be portrayed as a unified entity. This does not however prevent a shifting in the category or membership of the out-group that is the focus of the far-right groups' attention, and a shift in what constitutes the in-group. The designated out-group can change according to the grievances being expressed however, there are some core out-group categories that are omnipresent for the far-right groups/movement: immigrants, refugees, black people, Jewish people, Muslims, governments and elites routinely feature prominently in far-right rhetoric. The mere existence of such far-right groups in society is not sufficient for the group members – they are active in the construction of out-groups as threatening and dangerous. In addition, the nature of the out-group speaks to the identity of the in-group, and Reicher, Haslam and Rath speak of an inverse relationship between the threatening out-group and the virtuous in-group (Reicher, Haslam, and Rath, 2008). As a result of this construction, the violence carried out by the ingroup is retaliatory and is always constructed as being carried out as a result of

provocation. Generally, the actions of far-right groups are seen as a necessary effort to eradicate a dangerous outgroup which threatens the identity/boundaries of the in-group. For example, Durham (2003), referring to the American far-right and in particular to the Indiana and Michigan Militia Corps, writes that "In an Open Letter to the President in early November members of the Indiana Militia Corps and of the Michigan Militia Corps Wolverines were among those who declared that militias had been set up to protect America against enemies both domestic and foreign" (p.106), illustrating at the same time the importance of national borders as well as the framing of the in-group violence as merely retaliatory.

Related to the construction of the in-group and the out-group and an extension of the need for far-right adherents to imagine the out-group as a homogenous other is the belief that at achieving “sameness” through an “ethnically homogeneous territory” is a priority of the movement. Here, the external boundaries of the ingroup (often synonymous with some simplified idea of a nation) become vital to keep out the external enemy but also to ensure homogeneity amongst the population. Hence, and linked to the sub-theme of the creation of enemies, those who threaten this effort to maintain s*ameness*, even if they are part of the in-group, become seen as the enemy.

Conspiracies and historical revisionism

In the content analysis of the articles for this study c*onspiracy* was a major sub-theme that featured widely in the literature. Both conspiracies and historical revisionism are widely recognised as serving important functions for the far-right and conspiracies, ranging from de-masculinisation to ethnic replacement, were widely documented.

Conspiracies involved the co-ordinated actions of ethic/religions groups (e.g. the Jewish Community), the role of historical events in furtherance of globalist agendas (e.g the Holocaust) and the singling out of families or individuals as wielding global power (e.g. George Soros, the Rothschilds). For example, Michael (2003: 66), in a commentary piece on William Pierce, author of the Turner's Diaries, describes the conspiracy theory which is an integral part of the Turner's Diaries' worldview which sees the "*rise of the counterculture, which commenced in the 1960s, was no mere spontaneous response to contemporary conditions, but rather a Kulturkampf to destroy the underpinning of Western civilization. […] the anti-war and civil rights movement of this era set the country on a destructive course from which it has yet to recover".*

Fixed gender roles

The issue of fixed gender roles is commonplace amongst far-right groups and movements however, there is some variability around this. Predominantly, fixed gender roles emerge as part of a worldview where males and females are "naturally" defined and fixed, and where virility is at stake due to feminism, trans-rights etc. The discussion on fixed gender roles as it emerged in the articles reviewed for this study was not only relevant for female identity, but also for concepts of maleness and masculinity; heroism, support for the military and Mixed martial arts (MMA) were common features of adherents to the far-right. Masculinity is, for example, described as shown through personal violence, Simi and Windisch (2018: 9) found that *"interpersonal violence [is seen] as a masculine endeavour, whereas shooting or bombing people from a distance was considered dishonourable and unfair"*

Eschatological views and RAHOWA.

A recurrent motif in the content analysed is related to apocalyptic views and to an upcoming racial holy war (RAHOWA) where racial and religious (Christian) concern interlace. These apocalyptic views seem to be also linked to a survivalist perspective where the individuals feel the necessity to be ready for impending conflict. Finally, in the analysis of some articles for this study it appeared that amongst the far-right racial holy war was inevitable and the possibility of such war being strategically precipitated was a significant consideration. Coupled with the precipitation of a war, many articles describe the glorification of violence, where the violence assumes an aesthetic dimension, and which lead to a palingenesis: a sacrifice-born rebirth which benefits the whole (deserving) collectivist; in this regards Koheler and Popella (2018: 3)state that *"The unifying ideological element of these actors is essentially apocalyptic racism (i.e., the idea of being "part of an innately superior biogenetic race (i.e., 'master race') that is under attack by race-mixing and intercultural exchange")."*

Terrorism, communication and the media: a symbiotic relationship?

This group of sub-themes gravitates around the relationship of far-right groups with the media and the general public, as well as around themes of propaganda (and related tools) and perceived dangerousness of such groups.

Relationship with the public

The relationship between far-right movements and the public does not seem to be consistent, nor do such movements seem to be univocally interested in eliciting support from the wider public. On closer analysis, the relationship with mainstream society seems twofold: on one hand, certain movements look at getting more involved in the society through the exploitation of grievances, other movements are perceived as divorced from the main society (as the Neo-Nazi movements) and do not aim at expanding their support base. What emerges from the content analysis is that the results of attempts to gain public support tend to go in two possible directions, or the public seems to follow after a racist upsurge, either the society goes through a sort of "awakening" process in relation to the threat of such groups (this is linked to actions committed by the groups).

In relation to how the public acknowledges the actions perpetrated by far-right groups, no one action receives univocal attention. From the literature analysed, it appears that attacks such as the one perpetrated by Anders Breivik in 2011 and the Oklahoma bombing in 1995, tend to divide the public regarding their perception of far-right groups. The Oklahoma bombing seemed to have resulted in a negative public perception to the

movement in the USA, as a result the far-right was further divorced from society. On the other hand, the attack perpetrated by Anders Breivik seemed to have had a different impact on the public in Russia, where the presence of the far-right in the popular culture seemed to be more widespread, and which resulted in a heroization of the acts committed by Breivik.

"For the militias, predominantly the province of the radical right, the attacks appear to have had more of an impact. It has long been suggested that if Waco marked a catalyst for the militias, the Oklahoma City bombing dealt them a severe blow, driving away less committed members as public opinion hardened against what was seen as the source of right-wing terror." (Durham, 2003: 108-109).

The reactions of Russia's political right-wing representatives to Breivik's actions have been heterogeneous and thus can be linked to the complex nature of the ideology of the far-right. While some party leaders and militants in Russia expressed support for the actions of Anders Breivik and hoped for "more Breivik(s) in Western countries", others have instead renounced his actions commenting on Breivik's ideology, condemning his violent tactics.

Even inside apparently unitarian movements, such as the Russian neo-Nazi and White Power (NS/WP) movement, views on Breivik's action were contradictory. Emblematic is the case of some militants of this movement: while some, expressed support and raised Anders Breivik to symbol of a new Holy War, others actively expressed disapproval of Breivik's action. The reason for this discrepancy, resides in the manifesto released by Anders Breivik, which seems to express positive attitudes towards Jews, whereas anti-

Semitism is a pillar of Neo-Nazi movements. While this represents an example of internal discrepancy in relation to the ideology, a similar heterogeneity of views is evident amongst the spectrum of far-right movements, and in itself represented by the varied and splintered reality of such movements.

Relationship with the Media

The relationship between the mainstream media and the far-right is complex and varies, across time and context. The relationship does not seem to be often considered in articles dealing with the far-right and when done, the topic is treated in relation to the group rather than to the whole movement. For example, an analysis of the media discourse in Russia around Breivik's action, highlighted that discourses around and from the far-right are normalised and part of mainstream media discourse. Other groups, instead, have a more hostile relationship with the media, as it seems that one of the characteristics of fascism is hate towards the media and reporters. This also appears to emerge in response to the complex ways through which far-right groups are approached: when looking at the National Social Movement Underground (NSU), the content analysis shows a complexity regarding media representation of the movement and its action. For example, the media discourse around the NSU seem to progress from an expression of support to a position of othering of the far-right. Hence, while at the beginning there was a certain homogenisation of the victim of the NSU, who nonetheless is depicted as distinct from the "native" population, and the violence treated as an expression of personal grievances. This position shifts with the media depicting the violence as expression of the idiosyncratic hate and othering those adhering to the

movement and a far-right ideology, a change which is indicated in the use of the word "terrorist". Graef (2018: 4) deals with this in the context of a study on the National Socialist Underground (NSU) and reports that *"their ability to institutionalize coherent interpretations of the world means that the media hold considerable socio-political power; they constantly re-stabilize "normality" and mediate conflicts, thereby shaping the fluid boundaries of that which is considered socially acceptable. […]."*

Propaganda

Consideration around propaganda of far-right groups seems to mostly look at the role played by the internet, in particular social media. It emerges from different pieces of research that groups who engage in social media activities do so in order to expand their recruitment as well as of course increasing their visibility in the mainstream society. Traditional ways of propaganda still exist however, and an example is the case of Hindu Women in far-right groups, where recruitment and propaganda are carried out through a strong presence on the territory (Mehta, 2015). To illustrate the point of the co-existence of new and traditional forms of propaganda, Metha (2015: 424) writes that: *"through VHS tapes, audiocassettes and recording of their speeches, Rithambara and other leaders of the Hindu right-wing movement seeped into everyday and intimate spaces of living and being."*

Dangerousness

Few articles seem to take into account the perception of threat perception coming from far-right extremism. Among these articles, there does not seem to be agreement in terms of how the far-right is perceived. About half of them point toward an increased concern regarding the threat coming from far-right, especially for 'lone wolves', while, the other half talk about differences in the threat assessment when dealing with far-right, reporting differences when looking at ideologically motivated versus non-ideologically motivated crimes. Another sub-theme emerging in relation to the threat of the far-right deals with the perception of the threat by state authorities, describing the threat as underrated and often overlooked, both in academia and at the law enforcement level which *"have long been concerned with the "lone-wolf" threat. This tactic is thought to be more difficult to counter, than the danger posed by organized, top-down entities. Lone-wolf attacks are illegal incidents that are committed by a single political extremist."* (Chermak, Freilich and Simone, 2010: 1022)

Adaptability and life span of the groups

The theme of far-right groups as entities capable of adaptability seems to emerge often in the literature analysed focusing on far-right Extremism. The observations on the changing aspects of the movement are contained in five sub-themes: leadership and lone wolves, group survival, satellite crime and networks.

Leadership

In terms of leadership there are two main aspects emerging from the literature, one related to the traditional presence of a charismatic leader in far-right groups, seen as a depositary of quasi-divine characteristics, and which represents the vox populi. The other aspect is instead related to the changes that such groups are undergoing, leading to the creation of what has been defined as "leaderless resistance" (Kaplan, 1997) a system in which rather than a centralised authority which manages and directs the follower, the individuals act independently. *''Beam argued that the pervasiveness of government surveillance and infiltration was so great that organized insurgent activity was too dangerous. Instead, opponents of the ''New World Order'' needed to take action individually, at times and places of their own choosing, so that violence would be traceable only after the fact."* (Barkun, 2007: 122)

Lone Wolves

Related to leaderless resistance, is the notion of lone wolf, which often appears in the literature and frequently in the media. The lone wolf represents an individual adhering to an ideology, who acts independently from a constituted group and without orders from someone higher in the hierarchy. Despite the use of such terminology in the media, there seems to be variability in the way the term is used in the articles analysed. There are, for instance, articles attempting to differentiate lone wolves based on the extent to which they entertain relationships with a formal group (both online and offline), hence the use of specific terms as "loners" (who have minimal two-way contacts with movements), "lone wolves" (who entertain mostly online contacts with far-right movements) or "wolf packs" (who are still independent but affiliate to some extent with other extremists). Lone actors are seen as "*the culmination of this process [of self-transcendence and the re-enchantment], ideologically programmed by an eclectic mixture of extremist diagnoses of the crisis of the modern world or of national decline."* (Griffin, 2003: 87)

Adaptability

A further sub-theme present in the literature analysed is related to the changes that far-right groups undergo to survive: when such changes are taken into consideration they deal, albeit briefly, with the path of the groups from terrorist activities to organised crimes and vice-versa.

Survival of the groups

Linked to the adaptability of the group is the sub-theme of survival of the groups, in fact a part of the literature is dedicated to exploring the factors impacting on the longevity of far-right groups. Albeit there is an agreement in the research in relation to the fact that many movements tend to die before their third year of activity, there are some which survive longer thanks to their adaptability and a consistency in their ideology, for example, the size seems to positively impact the longevity of a group as "larger organizations benefit more from the collective expertise of members and, ultimately larger organisations are more lethal terrorist organizations […]" (Chermak et al, 2013: 197).

Actions: weapons, target and satellite crimes

In terms of the actions perpetrated by far-right groups, the majority of articles tackling this aspect report that such groups carry out a series of actions both ideologically and non-ideologically motivated. This research also highlights how these actions tend to be criminal in nature, at times bordering on terrorism. Such actions are often crimes and not always violent; instead, they are preparatory actions such as funding for future attacks. As these funding activities are not always clearly linked to far-right groups by law enforcement and authorities, they are not always prosecuted under the criminal law of the country and therefore are not always considered crimes.

The violence perpetrated by far-right groups, as reported in the articles, is variable in its nature: alongside violence that is racially and ideologically motivated, it also possible to

find spontaneous violence, such as that perpetrated during riots against the police or opportunistic violence, the latter aligned with other violent crimes perpetrated by individuals not driven by ideology. Some researchers (Chermak, Freilich and Simone, 2010) have highlighted that the commission of opportunistic non-ideological crimes can represent a pathway towards escalation and future ideological violence. For example, the same Chermak, Freilich and Simone (2010: 1024) report that *"terrorists frequently are involved in non-terrorist, preparatory crimes. These acts are committed to finance terrorist organizations as well as provide specific material to carry out terrorist actions. In addition, there is some discussion that terrorist groups are becoming involved in a variety of offenses"*

A last point is to be made in relation to the value of violence: from the content analysis violence emerges as having not only an instrumental value of resistance and defence, but also an aesthetic value, able to convey a message to the mainstream society.

Networks

Emerging from the content analysis of the articles, is the tendency of far-right groups to build networks with other groups, both nationally and internationally. Such links are built both in instrumental, support terms, and in ideological terms, gaining inspiration from one another. Cross national ties are often established with historically relevant groups such as the KKK, but some articles reference instances of appropriation of elements of other groups. For example, far-right groups provided support to the survivors of the Branch Davidians, a religious group that suffered the death of almost all the adherents due to a fire in Waco, in 1993. The fate of the Branch Davidians is often idealised, and

those who died in the fire are described as martyrs and victims of the police. In spite of the incompatibility of the ideology of the far-right with the Branch Davidians, the Waco standoff is often cited by far-right group as a grievance and reason for other attacks being perpetrated in the USA (e.g., such as the Oklahoma City bombing).

In relation to international networking, there seem to be a number of movements with which far-right groups entertain relationships, for example, it emerged that far-right groups build ties not only with European and USA groups, but also with their counterparts in Libya and in the Middle East. In these terms, online platforms and social media offer ready-available tools to establish collaborations at a global level.

"*Perhaps more than any other figure in the movement, Duke has worked to forge international ties with white nationalists in Europe and Russia (where the scandalous ''Protocols of the Elders of Zion'' originated41) meeting with key leaders and building alliances with other groups. In 2000, Duke travelled to Moscow at the invitation of right-wing nationalist Vladimir Zhrinovsky to attend a holocaust denial conference"* (Wright, 2009: 198)

Almost entirely absent from the discussion on networking of far-right groups is the connection to the military and law enforcement. Militarism is sometimes discussed in the literature as one element of the ideology, sometimes in relation to survivalism. Simi, Bubolz and Hardman (2013) research on the involvement of far-right extremists in the military and find that many of the far-right extremists included in their case study had prior involvement in the military (and a high percentage of them experienced 'involuntary role exits' from the military (ibid.:654). Yet, events in the last 2 years, including, for example, the reactions of law enforcement to protests such as Black Lives Matter, have brought up questions about the links between law enforcement agencies and far-right groups. For example, a dedicated database created by Reid Ross in (2020) found significant links between law enforcement and far-right vigilante groups across the US (Mathias, 2020). As will be discussed more earlier, it is possible that the way the field represents far-right terrorism has changed since 2019, and due to the 2018 cut off date of this research project this is not captured here.

Mainstream Politics

The relationship between the far-right and mainstream politics does not seem directly addressed in the Terrorism Studies literature, however, in the context of understanding far-right perception in electoral politics, two main aspects emerged. Firstly, articles point toward an increased normalisation and legitimisation of far-right discourses in main mainstream politics, this might be related to a pre-existing presence of such narratives in mainstream discourses, but also to specific political events, such as the election of

Donald Trump as President of the United States, which is seen as emboldening for far-right movements.

The second aspect emerging from the content analysis is related to the elements appropriated by far-right movements that are also part of the mainstream politics; for example, a tendency to conflate border concerns and national security, as a way for far-right narratives to find their path into national mainstream politics.

In spite of the two points above, a certain complexity in the relationship between far-right narratives and politics emerges: the relationship is less than linear, with a tension emerging between the acceptance of narratives and the legal tools in place to exclude them from the mainstream politics. Richards (2018: 51) highlights such tension when writing about the rise of Golden Dawn in Greece, and finds that *"internationally occurring sympathy toward an expanding field of right-wing nationalism is evidenced by growing public support for far-right political entities. Such entities include the Greek Golden Dawn party, which came third in Greece's September 2015 election, and whose spokesman Ilias Kasidiaris bears a swastika tattoo and denies the official history of the Holocaust." (Richards, 2018: 51).*

Grievances and victimhood

Themes around grievance often emerge when addressing the emergence of far-right groups. These can be articulated around three main dimensions: the exploitation of immigration fears, the channelling of the emotionality and the economic issues which are embedded in far-right discourse. Arguments around the exploitation of immigration fears by the far-right often appear in the research, especially in relation to foreign policy

deemed to be too permissive and in relation to issues of national security and border security. This immigration fear in the USA is also linked to the emergence of organizations of vigilantes taking on a state role and patrolling the US-Mexico border.

Next in the research there are those themes pertaining the channelling of the emotionality of the potential recruits. Such emotionality is linked to sentiments of anger and frustration, often coming from a difficult economic situation, or from the feeling of real or perceived wrongs which remain unresolved. Through the adherence to a far-right ideology, such negative feelings can be externalised by the participants.

Finally, the motif that most frequently emerges from the content analysis is around the issue of economic instability, this serves as the topic easily exploited by the far-right. The most referred to in the literature is in relation to unemployment, but there in additional dimension emerging, around the loss of national territory as well as the loss of land experienced in rural areas (in the USA).

"Similarly, fascism fed on social fears–it needed enemies and found these on the left and among minorities. Above all, it drew on what he called ''mobilizing passions.'' These included: a sense of overwhelming crisis incapable of traditional solutions; the primacy of the group (i.e., the movement) over the individual; victimization of the group, justifying all actions against its enemies; dread of the group's decadence ''under the corrosive effects of individualistic liberalism, class conflict and alien influences […]'' (Charters, 2007: 67)

Engagement and Disengagement/Radicalisation and de-radicalisation

Only a minority of articles look at issues of engagement and radicalisation (and disengagement and de-radicalisation), but from those, arguments around engagement, disengagement and ideological commitment mainly arise.

In terms of getting involved in far-right movements, a motif often stressed is around the role of kinship. In fact, there are a variety of instances described where kinship exerts an important role in involvement, and this ranges from the early socialisation into the movement thanks to relatives and friends, to the camaraderie that develops in situations such as the military (an element which, in the literature analysed, has been linked to an increased risk of radicalisation).

Also, interesting are the themes dealing with disengagement from violent movements. In this case, kinship also has a role, but in this case helps to promote the disengagement from the movement. Social ties which connect the person to mainstream society are, in fact, described as an element that helps with the detachment from the movement. But it is not enough and other researches have highlighted that together with social ties outside of the movement there is the need for a disillusionment with the movement. Such disillusionment often emerges as the result of noticing hypocrisy in the movement (a discrepancy between what is professed and what is done) or following a situation of emotional strain, where the values professed in the movement are re-assessed at an individual level.

"[…]obligations of everyday life encourage a "stake in conformity." Personal obligations, such as marriage and children, create interdependent systems of attachment or "social bonds" that connect the person to conventional society.

These attachments alter a person's routine activities, constrain unstructured socialization time, and have the ability to alter one's sense of self through cognitive transformation." (Simi and Windisch, 2018: 11)

Finally, and only in minor proportion, the ideological commitment to the movement is discussed. While not discussed in depth, there is agreement on the different levels of commitment that individuals experience towards the movement, and it also emerged that different levels of commitment could be linked to the perpetration of different types of crime, ranging from non-violent to violent and ideologically motivated.

Conclusion

This study has revealed that in the period between 2001 and 2018 in the top three terrorism studies journals, only 41 articles focused entirely on the far-right. Of these articles only 4 used primary data to inform their analysis. However, on analysing the content of the articles there is significant cause for optimism; the analysis contained in these publications of the far-right is nuanced, complex and wide-ranging. The authors of the articles considered the complexity of the ideology, issues of social identity, differential motivations, individual behaviour, the symbiosis and reciprocity between the media and the movements and the undulations, reversals, inversions and reversions that are part of an individuals' engagement with a far-right movement or far-right ideas. What is interesting in the analysis of the articles, is how there was a clear consensus on

how blame, agency and identity issues are attributed to the individual rather than the group – but also how the individual was so often the subject of the analysis. Using the example of motivation this paper shows that for presumed members of a terrorist group, motivation for action is attributed by virtue of the individuals affiliation (i.e. externally attribute), however in the case of the far-right adherent, motivation, identity and causality are often attributed internally without considering social identity nor ideological/group affiliation in the same manner. This *attribution error* is explained in this article by reference to how we set up the boundaries of academic definitions of terrorism, but also in relation to the framing of knowledge and the construction of the other in terrorism research. The focus of the literature focusing far-right is more likely to be the individual rather than the group, motivation is more readily linked to shared grievance and ideology is often linked to key issues in electoral politics. But importantly, there are fewer assumptions about the perpetrator and a greater recognition of the diversity of adherents.

While the nuance demonstrated in the articles reviewed for this study are laudable, it is important that levels of analysis are comparative across the field of terrorism studies, that attribution style is understood and that meaning , framing and interpretations are challenged, and deconstructed to reveal the pre-compiled knowledge assumptions that hinder innovation and critique in this field.

It is worth considering that the field of Terrorism Studies could have changed significantly, with more attention dedicated to the far-right since 2019. Taking into consideration events such as the Christchurch (New Zealand) shooting in 2019, where Brandon Tarrant shoot people congregating in two different mosques and killed 50 people and the attack to the Capitol in Washington, DC on the 6th of January 2021 it is

reasonable to think that the field of Terrorism Studies dedicated more attention to the threat coming from the far-right. This means that, while what is captured here is a snapshot of a precise time frame, the need for a cut-off point impacted on the inclusion/exclusion of the reactions of the field to events such as the one above-mentioned. Additionally, while this means that the literature produced since 2019 could represent far-right terrorism differently, the possible increase in the number of articles produced in relation to the far-right could also provide additional support to one of the arguments of this research project, that revolves around the reactivity of the field of Terrorism Studies.

CHAPTER 7

THE REPRESENTATION OF JIHADI TERRORISM IN THE TERRORISM STUDIES LITERATURE

A focus on the lifecycle approach to jihadi terrorism, group actors and counterterrorism responses.

Introduction

This thesis examines how terrorism is imagined, constructed and researched in the terrorism studies literature by examining the output of scholars in key research journals. The aim of this work is to understand exactly what terrorism researchers are talking about when we talk about terrorism. The aim here is not to examine how terrorism is defined, but how the problem of terrorism is *constructed and imagined.* By examining the research areas prioritised, the different ways ideological motivations are discussed, the methods used to gather data, what is *not* seen as terrorism and what is seen as relevant the nature of the *problem* of terrorism will be apparent. By examining how we define the problem of terrorism it becomes clear that as an area of study, Terrorism Studies as a manifestation of its time and place (western and post 9/11), is imbued with conservative notions of securitised state centred narratives and is influenced in its analysis by the ideological claims of the perpetrators more so than anything else. This thesis will demonstrate that the way we talk about jihadism as opposed to how we talk about the far-right is an expression of the assumptions inherent in the field of Terrorism Studies, and demonstrates that in order to further the academic endeavour of research into terrorism we need new

ways of thinking about the field moving away from the influence of western, securitised, reactionary, legal state dominant definitions and towards a framework that focuses on a grounded approach to understanding what the problem appears to be rather than a top down research of the gaps that is limited by the definitional quagmire that currently exists. In addition, this research is concerned with how the academic framing and conceptualisation of terrorism impacts on how we think about solutions ….in other words what we represent the problem to be.

An overview of the content of academic literature on jihadi terrorism

This chapter provides the results of a content analysis of the articles which emerged as focusing on jihadi terrorism. The research carried out within the three terrorism studies journals selected returned a total of 2971 articles which were individually analysed and input in the Excel dataset. Each article was scrutinised for content and added to the dataset and categorised on the basis of having a 'jihadi terrorism focus' or 'jihadi terrorism comparison' or 'jihadi terrorism mention'. Of these articles, 285 emerged as being primarily focused on jihadi terrorism and so were chosen for further analysis.

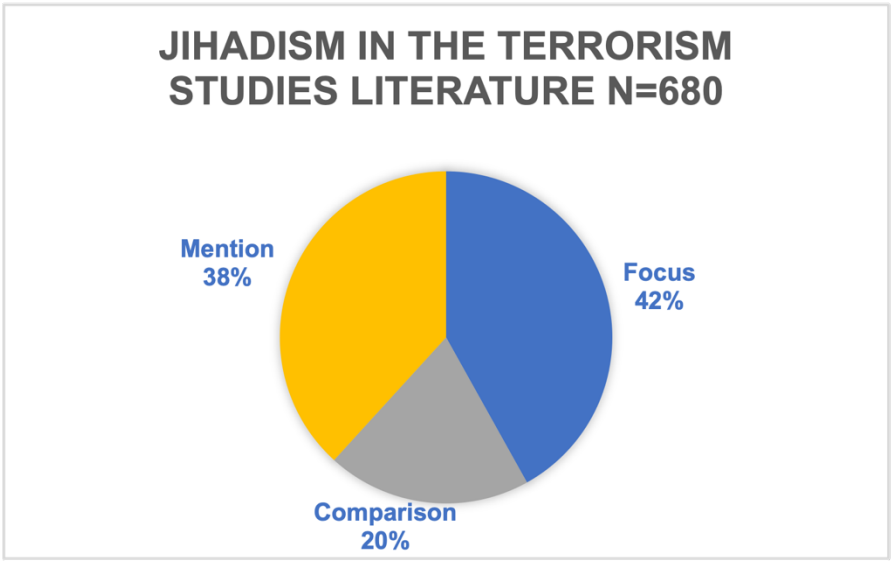


Figure 10: Proportion of articles which focus on jihadi terrorism, or with only a mention of jihadi terrorism or which use jihadi terrorism as comparison with another instance of terrorism

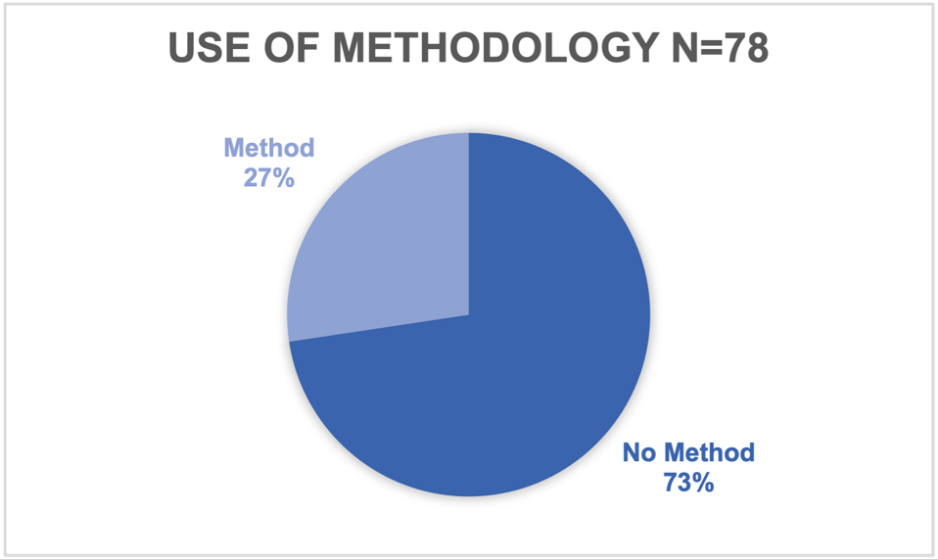


Figure 11: proportion of jihadi-focused articles which have a methods and/or methodology section

These selected articles were analysed using a modified content analysis and more than 300 nodes emerged in the initial analysis. From this data 23 themes emerged ultimately leading to 4 thematic areas that will inform the discussion in chapter 10.

As mentioned, the 285 articles analysed gave life to a high number of codes recorded in NVivo, at the end of the process of coding of the articles, the codes were arranged into categories and subcategories, themes and sub-theme and finally distilled in four overarching themes, as shown on the table below. For ease of reading this table only shows themes, sub-theme and the four overarching themes, a complete table which includes the nodes and the categories is provided in the appendix (Appendix 3).

Themes (indicated with numbers) and sub-themes (indicated with letters)	**Overarching themes (roman numbers)**
1. Radicalisation: a. Radicalisation as an 'Islamic' extremist phenomenon b. Causal triggering factors c. Radicalisation as individual or social phenomenon d. Spatial focus: the places of radicalisation e. Radicalisation as both the cause and consequence of violence f. Assumptions around radicalisation *2.* Grievances	I. A lifecycle approach to terrorism
3. Legitimisation of violence and Takfir *a. Religious vs utilitarian mechanism* *b. Individual vs group mechanisms*	
4. Military and Security Interventions (Counterterrorism) *a. Funding* *b. Unintended Consequences*	

5. Preventing radicalisation	
6. Inter and Intra state responses a. *Threat to Western countries* b. *The USA, its war against terrorism and international relationship* c. *United Nations*	II. Countering terrorism at the national and international level
7. AL QAEDA a. *Local vs Global* b. *Adaptability, Structure, and responses* c. *Strategies and tactics* d. *Communication and ideology* 8. ISIS a. *Novelty and brutality* b. *Communication and propaganda of the deeds* c. *Values* 9. Foreign fighters 10. Women *11.* States	III. Terrorism as a group phenomenon
12. Channels of communication 13. Clerics and charisma	
14. Internal group dynamics a. *internal disputes* 15. Paramilitary Strategy a. *Suicide bombers and presumed mental illness* 16. Networks 17. Internet a. *Change*	
18. Borders 19. Religious values: a. *Ummah*	

b. *Martyrdom and honour* *20.* Political ideology a. *The Caliphate* b. *Sharia*	
21. Critical perspectives: a. *Critical terrorism studies* b. *Orientalism* c. *Colonisation and decolonisation* d. *Othering* e. *Narratives and Power* 22. Narratives on jihad a. *Public perception of jihad* b. *Jihad there* c. *Jihad here* d. *International media* e. *Counternarratives* f. *Criticism to violence from other Islamic authorities* g. *Threat to Islam* 23. Constructing the threat: a. *Islamism and Islam* b. *Jihad and jihadism* c. *9/11* d. *New terrorism* e. *The threat There*	IV. Constructing and deconstructing the threat

Table 4: Overview of the 23 themes and 4 overarching themes discussed in this chapter

Presented below is another representation (the same as the one used in the far-right chapter) of the themes and overarching themes that will be used in the chapter to assist the reader in placing the themes that will be addressed each time. This mind map was built through a tool called Coggle, and was built while the themes and

overarching themes were emerging in the hope of providing further clarity, given the vast number of themes, their placement in relation to the overarching themes and in the literature on terrorism studies. While the image below includes all of the themes treated here, it will be used in the next pages with a magnified focus on the thematic area that is going to be discussed, for better readability. In an additional effort to improve the readability of this chapter, only a limited number of themes and subthemes will be discussed below, while additional details, where relevant, will be added in the appendix.

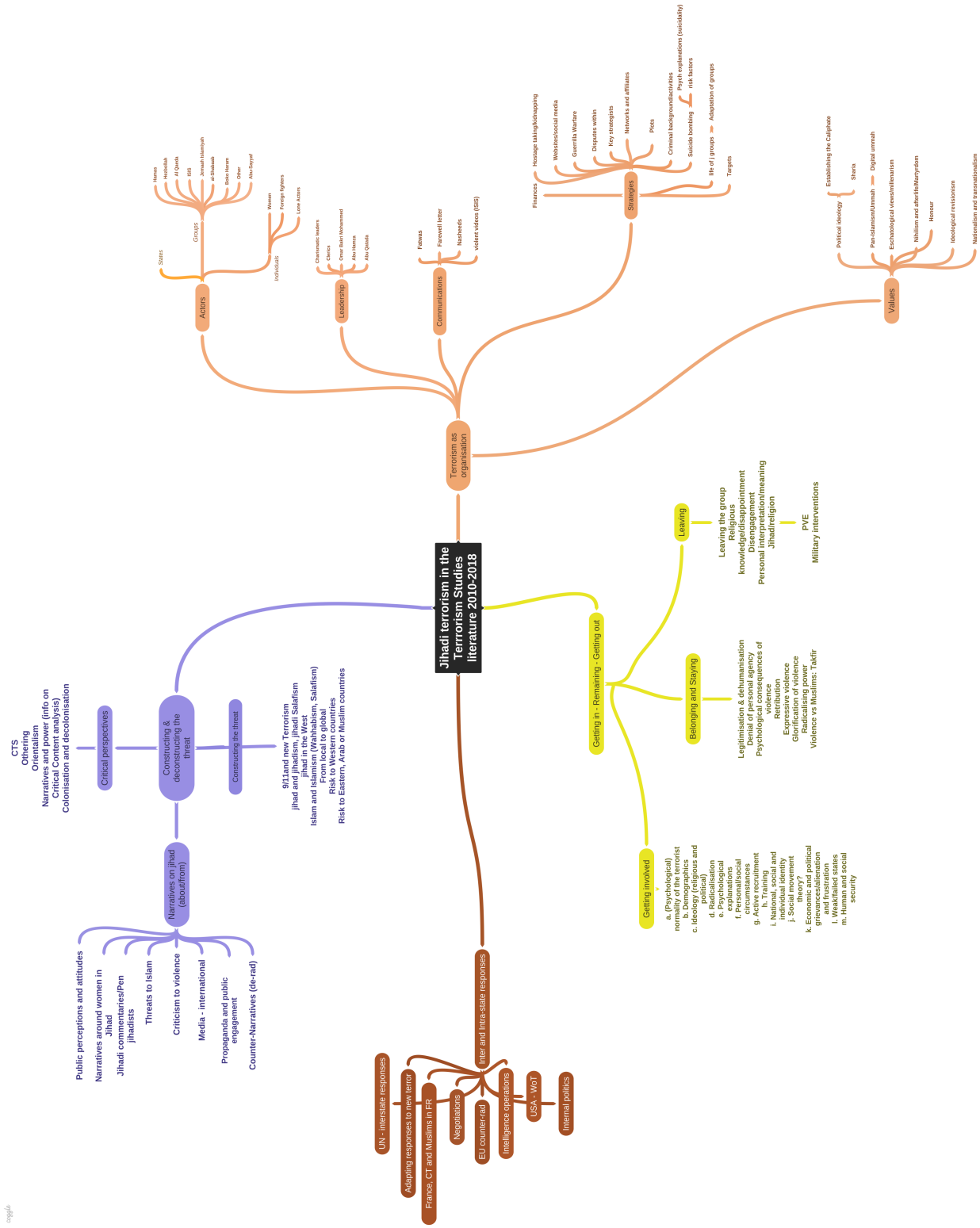


Figure 12: Overview of Overarching themes and themes emerged from the content analysis of the 285 jihadi-focused articles.

Overarching theme I: A lifecycle approach to terrorism

Ways of getting in, staying and getting out

The overarching theme of 'Lifecycle approach to terrorism' comprises 138 articles and three categories of nodes: getting in, belonging and staying, and leaving; below there is a breakdown of the articles for each meso-area from the most prominent to the least.

1. Getting in: 117 articles
2. Leaving: 42 articles
3. Belonging and staying: 16 articles

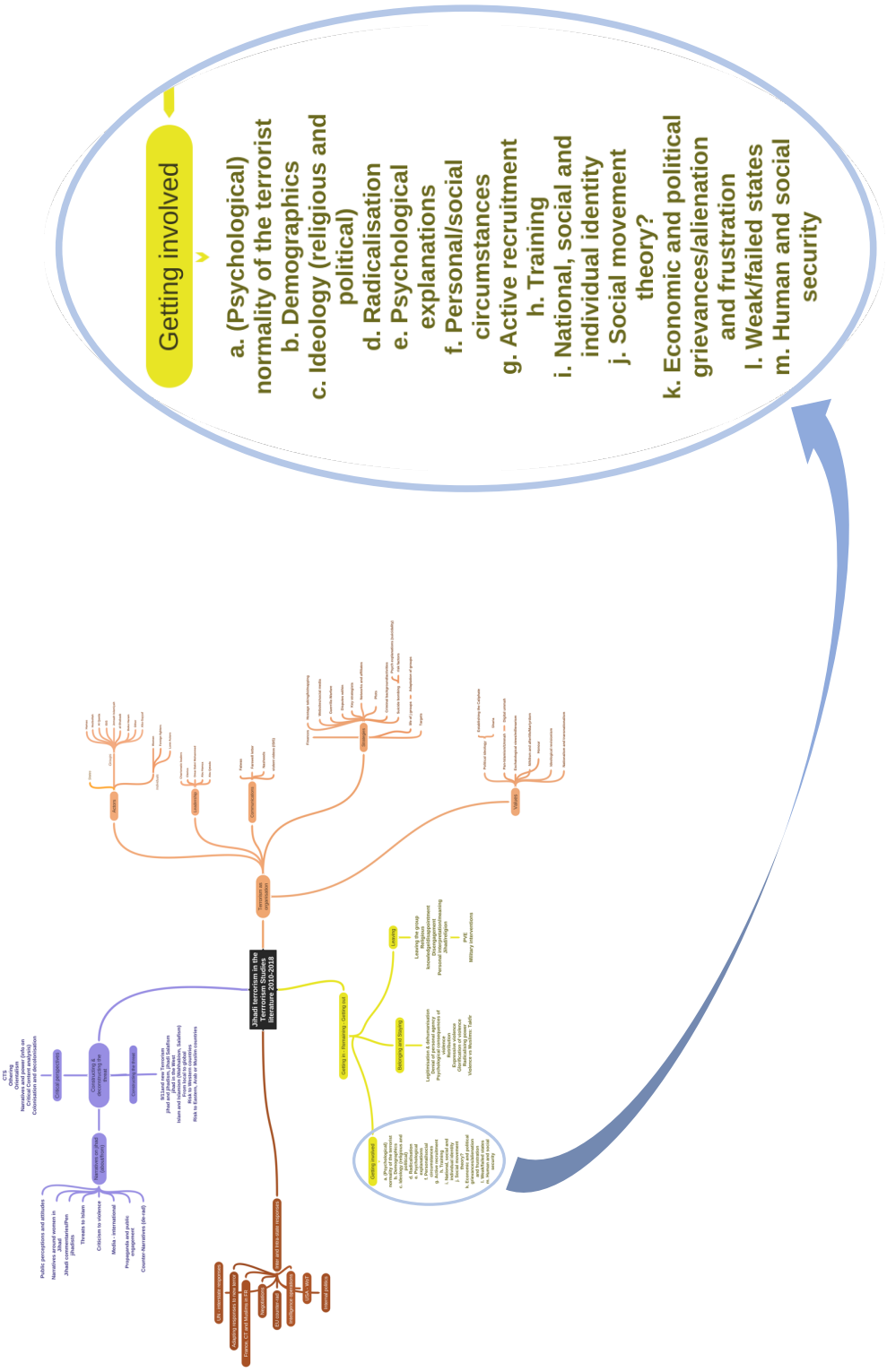


Figure 13: Microscopic view of the explanations provided in the literature for 'joining' a jihadi terrorist group

Getting in

From the content analysis of articles focusing on jihadi terrorism, several codes concerning the mechanism of involvement in terrorism emerged. In this analysis, these are not considered in isolation, instead, they form a coherent structure along with explanations of how individuals remain and perpetrate violence, and how individuals leave terrorist groups, tracing the arc of a lifecycle approach to terrorism, such coherent structures are the categories mentioned above.

If considered from the quantitative point of view, the 'getting in' category is among one of the most prominent, featuring in 117 articles, out of the 285 analysed and represents the prevalent focus when compared to the mechanisms which foster of staying (16 articles) and leaving (42 articles). The dominant focus on mechanisms of engagement in comparison to those of disengagement is not new, this pattern of focus was already highlighted in Terrorism Studies literature, with Horgan (2005 and 2009) discussing the importance of trying to provide an answer to questions of why individuals join as much as to why they do leave. Despite a critique in 2005, in the literature post 2010, this focus on joining is still relevant – however this is not unusual, for example in desistance literature in criminology there is a focus on joining because it is understood that prevention is easier than intervention later (Farrington 2007; Kazemian 2007).

The codes that pertain to the themes of "getting in" are varied, and focus on more detailed explanations or contributing factors involved in joining a terrorist group. Such codes range from individual psychological explanation to notions of human and social security and include the following:

a. (Psychological) normality of the terrorist
b. Demographics
c. Ideology (religious and political)
d. Radicalisation
e. Psychological explanations
f. Personal/social circumstances
g. Active recruitment
h. Training
i. National, social and individual identity
j. Social movement theory?
k. Economic and political grievances/alienation and frustration
l. Weak/failed states
m. Human and social security

Continuing to work with an emergent approach while organising the codes above, it became evident how they could be placed on a continuum of approaches that goes from the most psychological or personological to the most social or situational ones as a means of explaining why individuals take part in terrorist activities. There was a more prevalent focus on explanations for joining that take into account individual paths and social circumstances at the micro-level (e.g. individual experiences of frustration and alienation, or involvement processes intended as individual paths).

The codes 'radicalisation' and 'economic and political grievances' emerged as most dominant in terms of number as well as having strong explanatory power, almost encompassing the remaining nodes, hence, they will be analysed below.

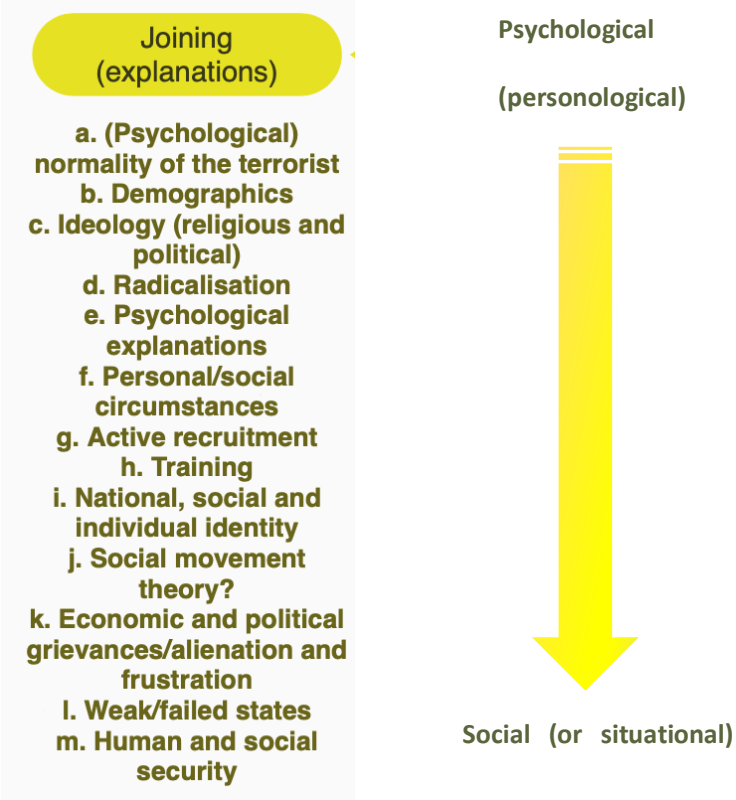


Figure 14: The explanations for joining provided in the jihadi literature can be placed on a continuum that goes from psychological to social

1. Radicalisation

The articles which address radicalisation focus on different models of radicalisation, but there seems to be agreement on the fact that radicalisation is a process of variable duration, gradual rather than sudden and that the process closes with a violent action.

While some articles accept that radicalisation is the basis of violent behaviour, others contends that radicalisation is a process that leads to cognitive and behavioural changes, and that the two are not necessarily related or appear in this order. However, as Bouhana and Wikström (2011) highlight, the concept of radicalisation has been re-worked and criticised since its emergence, in fact, the word radicalisation is applied to both the process and the outcome, becoming a tautological explanation of involvement in terrorism.

A number of frameworks are used to talk about radicalisation, and they stem from different fields, for example academia and police documentation (Silber and Bhatt, 2007): the 'pyramid model' by McCauley and Moskalenko (2017), the 'cognitive-opening' frame by Wiktorowicz (2004), the 'conveyor belt' model by Baran (2005) and the 4-step radicalisation framework by Silber and Bhatt (2007).

From the analysis, the theme of radicalisation emerged as articulated around a number of sub-themes.

These sub-themes are:

a. Radicalisation as an 'Islamic' extremist phenomenon
b. Causal triggering factors
c. Radicalisation as an individual or a social phenomenon
d. Geographic focus: the places of radicalisation
e. Radicalisation as both the cause and outcome of violence
f. Underlying assumptions informing radicalisation

To improve the readability of this chapter, only a limited number of themes and subthemes will be discussed below, while additional details, where relevant, will be added in the appendix.

The sense that radicalisation is more likely in the case of jihadi terrorism is prevalent in the field of terrorism studies. For example, a number of articles in this study referenced Silber and Bhatt's framework (albeit considering the framework's limits), which explicitly talked about the process as of '*jihadisation'* (Kleinmann, 2012), indicating that it is assumed that the radicalisation process is specific to the Salafi-jihadi ideology.

The radicalisation frameworks above seem to assume that Salafi-jihadism as an ideology, has a radicalising potential, there is agreement that this potential needs to find fertile ground. The way an individual becomes susceptible to the Salafi-jihadi world view can vary, but the majority of articles indicated such an opening stems from personal crisis, for example following an important personal loss (Dawson and Amarasingam, 2016) or economic/social grievances (Cottee, 2011). The relevance and the way grievances are treated in the literature will be discussed later, as this is another dominant feature in the literature looking at joining mechanisms.

Whether the literature talks about the opening to radicalisation as a private or a public grievance, there tends to be agreement that social ties do exert an important influence on the radicalisation process. In the literature, such influence comes from the formation of new significant social ties while in search of meaning and identity as well as from direct peer pressure once the individual(s) joined a group, a dynamic that is not different from that of other non-extremist groups and subtends to the phenomenon of conformity and groupthink (Nilsson, 2018 and Kleinmann, 2012).

The literature revolved around the lives of Muslims in the West and, in particular, the second, third and subsequent generations of Muslim youth, who, by virtue of their immigrant family history are thought to experience social grievances and *identity crisis*. Importantly, despite their citizenship, residency and generations of family history in, for example the UK, they became referred to as homegrown, especially in the aftermath of the London bombing, a phrase that emerged as used as a rhetorical device to distance the perpetrator from the mainstream population; it also indicated that the threat is now perceived as internal (Crone and Harrow, 2011).

In the literature analysed for this study, an adherence to an extremist ideology, as well as the commitment to violent lethal actions seem to be presented with the assumption that Western democracy represents the best and most evolved form of governance, hence, those second and subsequent generations who manifest the desire to adhere to a puritan and restrictive governance model linked to religion appear in stark contrast with the opportunities offered by democracy.

a. Radicalisation as both the cause and consequence of violence

There is broad agreement that, whatever radicalisation is, it is essentially what happens 'before the bomb goes off' (Neumann, 2008: 4), however, there are at least three points of discussion stemming from the way that the temporal dimension is expressed in the literature.

There was some (albeit little) space in the literature to consider that violence itself can have a radicalising power (Payne, 2011), and that groups like Al Qaeda took advantage of violence as a strategy for cognitive engagement, hence upturning the relationship direction. Payne (2011) talked about Al Qaeda's strategy in the use of

violence as radicalising to force people to join a side and perpetuate violence in retaliation: “fighting creates politics, not the other way round” (ibid.:131), therefore considering also the possibility that the direction of radicalisation is not unilateral.

Furthermore, there seems to be an assumption that the opening to radicalisation happens in an unconscious way, and that individuals become carried along in the dynamic of the radicalisation process (ibid.). In fact, when looking at radicalisation in the literature, the relevance of grievances and how they *push* people to become radicalised is critical and outweighs the focus on rational choice aspects of the process of radicalisation (rational choice approaches emerged from the analysis in minor proportion when explaining terrorist violence). This seems to betray the assumption that grievances and rational choice are not linked and that, as mentioned earlier, the grievances represent a strong leverage on the individual’s behaviour.

2. Experiences of grievances

Among factors that deal with joining a terrorist group emerged from the analysis, grievances appear as a strong leverage in the discourse around joining a terrorist group.

Most articles addressed grievances by pointing towards the perception of injustice and violence reported by ‘radicalised’ Muslims. These are not the only grievances considered in the literature and overall grievances can be represented as on a dichotomy between grievances lived in the own country (e.g., second generations who may live experiences of discrimination and personal crisis) and/or international grievances. Also, it is possible to devise in the literature a dichotomy between

personal and political grievances, where instance of personal grievances are rendered political, and the personal experiences of the individual become interpreted as part of the political grievances in other parts of the world. Ilardi (2013: 721) reports, in fact, that: “perceptions of Islamic victimization emerged as a product of the radicalization process, rather serving as a driver of it”.

The literature dealt with grievances in conjunction with the process of radicalisation, it seemed to chronologically place them before the process itself, as something that fosters the process. A couple of articles, however, reversed the order and pointed to the fact that grievances and perceptions of victimhood can appear when the radicalisation has already begun and could also appear post-violence, (Ilardi, 2013, Schuurman et al., 2016). These articles highlighted that individuals were not so aware of the grievances related to the Muslim world when they joined the group, and that it did not really represent a strong reason for joining. It also seemed that the vicarious victimhood experienced became connected to the personal experience, this was only mentioned briefly in these articles, in fact, the data reported about the interviews in the articles did not report negative personal experiences, and reflected instead on positive life experiences in Western countries (Ilardi, 2013).

Interestingly, the literature mostly focused on the ‘reality of the grievance’ (e.g. stressing the events in the Muslim world which, for example, represent a grievance) with minor focus on the possibility that, albeit existing, such grievances become exploited and amplified by jihadi groups, in particular Al Qaeda and ISIS. This means that there is a portion of the literature which framed grievances as a tool for terrorist groups to foster recruitment as well as justifying their actions. On the other hand,

such groups not only exploit the already existing grievances, but they take control of their narrative and framing. Al Qaeda and ISIS are seen as framing conflicts in different way and to appeal to different grievances, but both present themselves as an attempt to address such grievances: in fact, “while IS theology may rightly be called apocalyptic, the group has explicitly linked attacks to U.S. and Western policies.” (Cantey, 2017: 760). While ISIS emerged as looking at the conflict as religious *and* political, Al Qaeda is described as framing violence in terms of response to the Western presence and violence in Muslim countries, with religion appearing secondary in the group’s narrative. However, while the mistreatment and death of Muslims in Muslim countries is a narrative that these groups can use at their own advantage, such narrative could not take hold on individuals if these were not also resonating with their real life experience, that could be, for example an experience of discrimination (Ilardi, 2013) or as Cottee puts it (2011: 738): Muslim youth in Europe “face systematic discrimination in the labour market. They are underrepresented in public and political life. They live in an atmosphere of hostility and distrust toward their cultural and religious background” and their Wester identity is “constantly called into question by the enmity and exclusion they routinely experience in their everyday relations with the secular Western societies in which they live”.

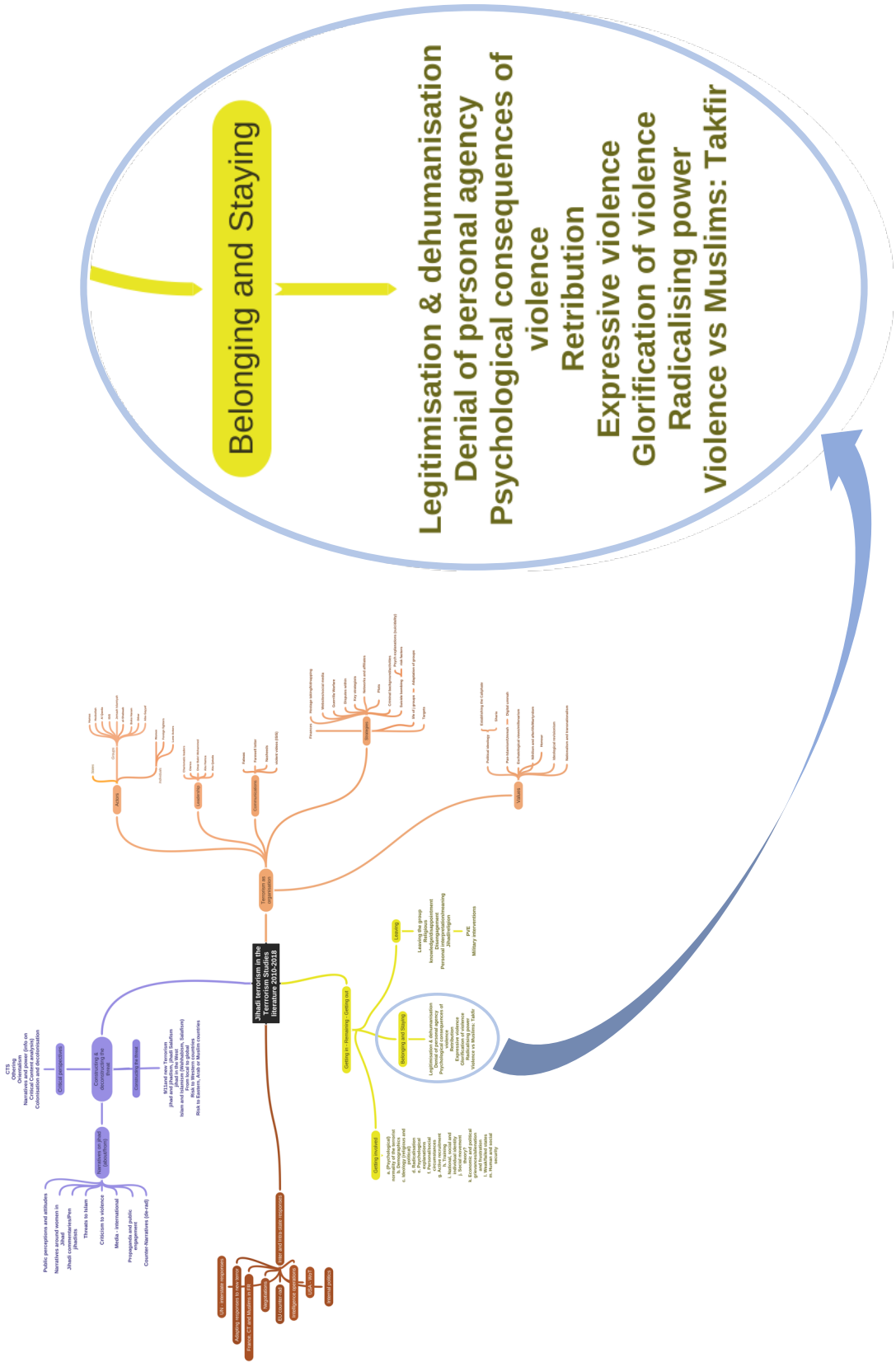


Figure 15: Microscopic view of the explanations provided in the literature for 'belonging and staying' in a jihadi terrorist group

Belonging and Staying

The second unit of analysis is related to what happens while the individual perpetrates violence, and in its immediate aftermath. If compared to the previous sections around paths to engagement, this area did not receive much attention in the literature, and, overall, only 16 articles are coded under this theme. The theme that emerged in this category of codes points towards the mechanisms that allow violence to be perpetrated which are the legitimisation of violence and the doctrine of Takfir, through which an individual (or a group) can be labelled as apostates.

Mechanisms of legitimation of violence and Takfir are strongly present in the literature and are discussed more in depth and together. It is reasonable to associate them because both are used to justify the perpetration of violence against individuals (Muslims and not) and the analysis below looks at them as the expression of two ways of explaining the legitimisation of violence, one more utilitarian and the other as religious.

3. Legitimisation of violence and Takfir

Mechanisms of legitimisation of violence and moral justification for violence have been discussed at length both in psychological literature (Bandura, 1990) as well as in studies on conflict and terrorism (Bar-Tal et al., 2009).

Similarly to the analysis of the ways of getting in proposed above, this area can be seen as made of two sub-themes which show how the topic of legitimisation of violence is represented in the literature, these sub-themes are: religious *vs* utilitarian mechanisms and individual *vs* group mechanisms. The decision emerges as mostly political and not religious, even if religion seem to be taken into account in the literature, some articles referred to the legitimisation of violence in 'the Salafi-jihadi world view' and that this legitimisation happens in the context of a *holy* war (Aly and Striegher, 2012).

The literature represents mechanisms of legitimisation of violence not solely as helping the individual in justifying their own actions, but also in crossing the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable targets. It is in this context that discussions of Takfir and its application in jihadi terrorist groups takes place. The practice of Takfir is the one where Muslims are declared to be apostates and not to be real believers, hence, it is religious based. Importantly, this practice is particularly relevant to a large portion of Muslims living in the West, namely, those Muslims that are perceived as *friendly* and referred to as 'moderate'. This means that these Muslims are framed as moderate in the context of their Western lives and the fight to terrorism, but at the same time, they are also framed as other and enemies by other Muslims who perceive them as having abandoned their faith.

In the literature, the concept of Takfir is dealt with in reference to its historical practice aimed at the destitution of (perceived) corrupt leaders in Muslim countries, however, the one of *Takfiri* also became a label that is bestowed upon (civilian) enemies to justify their killing (Nilsson, 2015). The literature presented some

instances in which the individual applied the mechanism of Takfir in a more discretionary way and others where it is the organisation (in particular, Al Qaeda and ISIS) to guide the member of the group to the use of Takfir. From the literature the doctrine of Takfir emerged as a common feature of many jihadist groups to justify the killing of Muslims (Nilsson, 2015). However, it did not emerge as a feature of Islam as a system of belief tout court, but a feature that this is based on a puritan view of Islam (e.g., links it back to the Salafi branch of Islam, see Lynch, 2010).

Almost absent from the literature in the theme of legitimisation of violence is discussion on violence perpetrated by Western countries in the MENA region. Only one article (Mullin, 2011) dealt with the legitimisation of violence as a mechanism applied with a double standard depending on the actor perpetrating the violence. In particular, this source addressed how Western violence is framed by governments, with particular focus on the Obama's mandate. What emerged from this article is how the framing and justification of US' government violence followed were similar to those of jihadi groups. Violence from the West is depicted as a necessary occurrence, defensive and therefore rational; on the contrary, violence perpetrated by jihadist groups is seen as nothing but brutal, senseless, and overall immoral.

This is not essentially different from what emerged in the previous chapter in relation to the far-right and how the literature also framed far-right groups as creating their enemies and applying the same reasoning of 'way of life under siege' to legitimise their violence.

Leaving

The third aspect of the overarching theme 'Lifecycle approach' to terrorism is the category of leaving. The articles (42) coded under this theme deal with deradicalization, counterterrorism, disengagement. If compared to the number of articles coded under 'joining' (117) this difference points to the prevalence of research more interested in asking how someone does engage in terrorism, than how does terrorism ends. Discussions collected here around disengagement, deradicalization and counterterrorism are, nonetheless, complex and among different lines of thought It is possible to devise a number of dimensions emerging, and these seem to run throughout the data, albeit at different extent

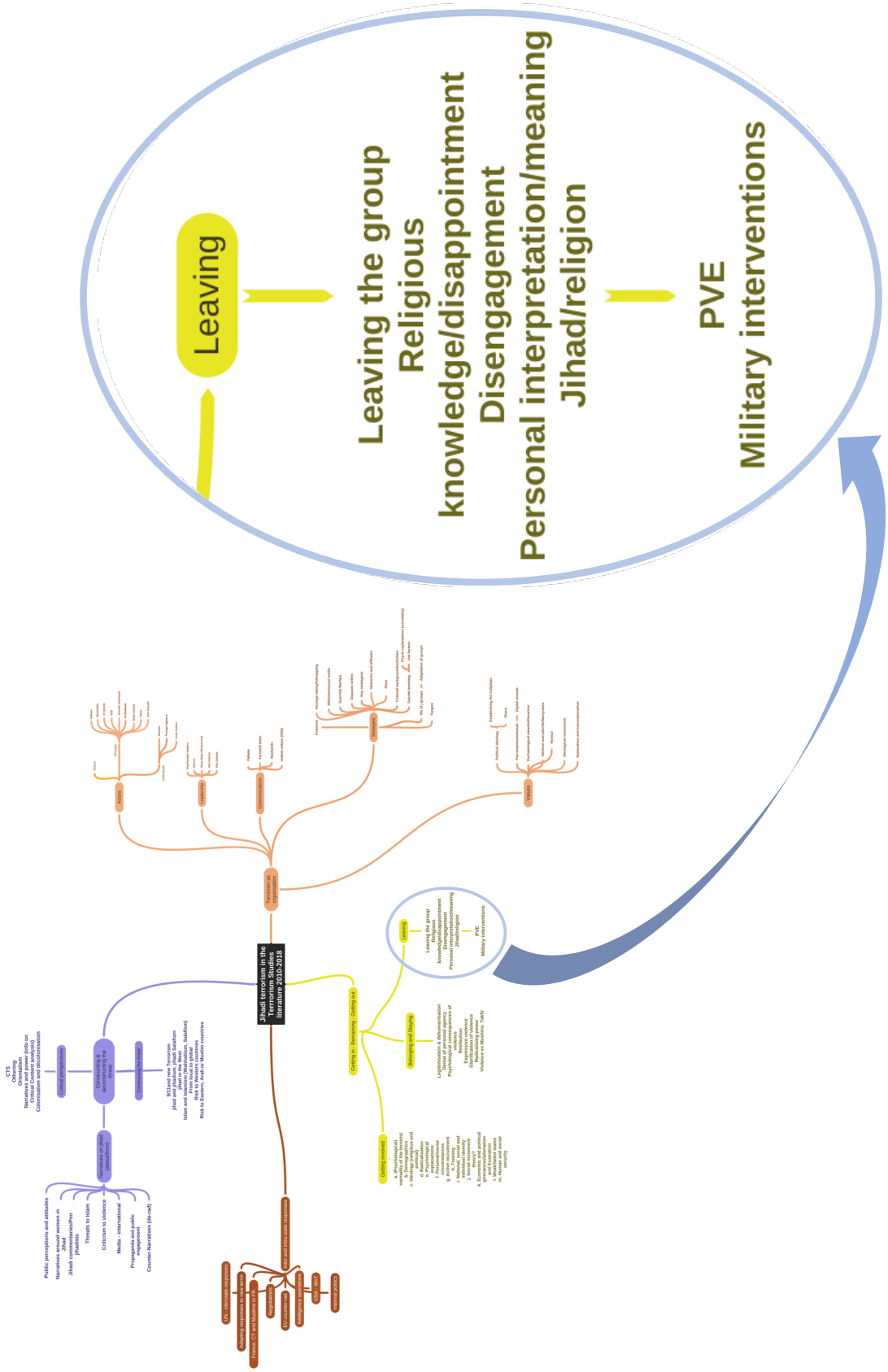


Figure 16: Microscopic view of the explanations provided in the literature for leaving a jihadi terrorist group

The first layers of analysis to emerge from the literature is about the unit on which to apply the intervention, this relates to the assumptions about what terrorism is.
In the literature is possible to devise a distinction between interventions that look at deradicalizing or preventing the radicalisation of communities or individuals and interventions at the military/security level. The section below will begin with the discussion around military and security interventions, which in the literature are discussed in the context of funding and of the unintended consequences of such military interventions. The discussion will follow with and analysis of the literature linked to the concept of *prevention (PVE),* and mostly aimed at young Muslims, perceived as in some way vulnerable to radicalisation. The discussion on PVE in the literature is accompanied, at least in part, by a critique of PVE interventions in that they single out the population targeted by the intervention and label them all as potentially dangerous by virtue of their religious belief.

4. Military and Security Interventions (Counterterrorism)

Articles which looked at military and security interventions tended be focus on Western countries' military interventions and looked at the countries that receive funding from said Western countries. Military interventions take place in the context of the framing of terrorism as an existential threat: Western countries hit by terrorism perceive the threat and the need for securitisation (e.g. the USA after 9/11), and the countries perceived to be the epicentre of terrorist groups are to be 'sanitised' of the terrorist group's presence (e.g. Iran and Yemen). The following is a

discussion of the sub-themes emerging from the analysis of the literature focused on military and security-based interventions.

a. Funding

Funding emerged as a sub-theme from the literature, with emphasis on the funds granted to military departments within a state, as well as on the transfer of funds between states. The latter aspect seems to be prominent in this section of the literature: articles which dealt with funding, highlighted mostly the role of the US in providing funding (or weapons) to the government of countries in the MENA region, where groups like Al Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) recruit and act (Loidolt, 2011). In fact, the literature pointed to the fact that these interventions can lead to the formation to 'securocracies' (Milton-Edwards, 2012) in those government which want to show (and gain) support to the USA and/or Europe. This means that the narratives on terrorism brought about by Western states, not only reverberated in countries which cooperated internationally in the counterterrorism efforts, btu also that the process of securitisation extended to the MENA region. Hence, the securitising narratives travelled cross border and became relevant for states in the Middle East. The Arab Spring is presented in the literature as a factor contributing to this process and as reassessing the political balances previously built at the local and international level.

b. Unintended consequences

Following from the discussion on military interventions, is the discourse on the involuntary and unanticipated consequences of counterterrorism operations. This is

not a sub-theme which strongly emerged from the literature, however, it crosses a few articles, and it is worth noting which of these consequences are highlighted. This points to the fact that a section of the literature analysed applied a critical frame to counterterrorism interventions.

Probably the most striking consequence emerged in relation to the USA policies in the context of the "war on terror", is the high cost for civilians in areas already affected by conflict and internal tensions (Loidolt, 2011). This is the case for air strikes and raids carried out by the USA military forces in Yemen, where, while the aim is to target specific personalities at the hierarchy of AQAP, these end up harming and killing civilians. Something similar happened in Nigeria, where the Nigerian president has intervened military to attempt and stop Boko Haram, which pushed the group to act transborder and harm civilians in other areas (Weeraratne, 2017). In addition to this, the USA began withdrawing military forces from Iraq and Afghanistan, but replaced them with drones, framing them as highly specific in target hitting (as well as being remotely launched so to avoid to the USA military to possible harm). Drone strikes resulted, however, not only unsuccessful in targeting 'high-profile individuals', but carried an extremely high costs for the civilian population (Powers, 2014).

Also associated to the consequences on civilians and terrorist groups are the severe consequences of the use of detention-based methods to investigate and attempt to stop future terrorist attacks when suspects are apprehended. Human rights violations in the case of terrorist investigations are not new, as the case of the Guantanamo Detention Camp had already highlighted. Human Rights violations such as un-lawful detention and torture have been perpetrated in Guantanamo in the name of the War on Terror, and as history repeats itself, human rights violations have

continued in the case of Boko Haram in Nigeria, as well as in Indonesia in an attempt to stop Jemaah-Islamiyah (Oak, 2010).

5. Preventing Radicalisation

In the literature reviewed for this study, preventing radicalisation emerged as another theme. These interventions emerged based on the assumption that radicalisation is a matter of messaging and communication, therefore, building a message which successfully counteracts the radicalising narrative is seen pivotal in the prevention of radicalisation. This is most often referred to as counter-narrative. In this context, two things are worth noting from the literature: the first is that the target group for deradicalization interventions emerged as primarily Muslim youth (Lambert and Parsons, 2017). The second is that, especially in the UK context, such interventions are linked to the idea of "new terror" as entirely religious, hence they are directed at (young) Muslims as that population seen most at risk of becoming radicalised. These articles seemed to indicate that the issue to look at when preventing radicalisation is the one of vulnerability.

In discourses around the end of terrorism there are two processes that emerge from the literature, those of disengagement and those of deradicalization. The first, happens following the involvement in terrorism, and can occur individually, in the literature it emerges as in the form of disillusionment from the movement (Chernov Hwang, 2017). Disengagement is discussed in the literature as a process that involves behaviours rather than cognitions, so an individual can stop participating in violent

action with a group, but still support the ideas of the group (Vidino, 2011). At times, this could mean not acting violently, but still participate in background operation to support the group (for example through help with fundraising). At times, however, the literature describes the support as completely withdrawn, and no other action was taken to support the group. Not emerging often in the literature but still present to some extent is the discussion on barriers to leave, hence, all those obstacles that prevented the individual to leave the group, such as fear of retaliation. Importantly, in one article, it is discussed how disengagement is not an irreversible process, and in certain cases is conditional and contingent on political circumstance (e.g. dependent on the situation at the local level) (Clubb, 2016).

The literature seems to understand de-radicalization as a process which goes in the opposite direction of radicalisation (e.g., away from more extreme ideas and back to more mainstream ones), and which does not happen in isolation but is influenced by social ties such as friends/comrades and parents.

Largely missing from the discussion on disengagement in the literature is the gender dimension, especially in the context of foreign fighters and individuals joining ISIS. Discussions about foreign fighters in the literature seemed to assume that these are men only, and in part, this assumption is reflected in the fact that the extremely puritan ideology follows a strong heteronormative division of the roles. This heteronormative role division posits that men have to fight while women have the duty of supporting the men and provide the group with new fighters, through childbirth. Even if in terms of numbers it is true that foreign fighters are prevalently males, in the past years those called 'ISIS brides' gained significant media attention (for example, the case of Lisa Smith and Shamima Begum).

The articles dealing with women joining the ranks of ISIS, and with their disengagement, pointed to the fact that more research is needed to understand at which extent mechanism of disengagement changed by gender (Peresin and Cervone, 2015). In particular, where women expected, or are promised, more active role in the fight for ISIS, how does the encounter with a completely different reality impact on their engagement with the group? This question did not seem to be addressed much in the literature analysed, however, Peresin and Cervone (2015) report a few testimonies of women who from an ISIS camp got in touch with their relatives in an attempt to receive help to go back home.

Regardless of gender, the literature indicated that individuals who want to leave ISIS risk to face severe consequences once back in the country of origin, and that leaving the group can be encouraged if the individual is not fearful of draconian measures upon return. This strikes as particularly relevant considering that in the past months the media covered the case of Shamima Begum, a woman born and raised in the UK, who travelled to Syria aged 15 to join ISIS. She has lost her appeal in court and has been stripped of the UK citizenship due to 'security concerns'; following, she might be left to live in a camp in Syria, rather than being able to go back to the UK and re-join her family. This means that while the literature analysed might assume that men and women joining a terrorist group are perceived with a different degree of threat, the real-life experience of these individuals could in fact be characterised by the assumption that women are at least as dangerous as their male counterpart, and that they also pose a threat to their home country upon return.

Finally, the discourse of *labelling* is important as it seem to cross both de-radicalisation and military based interventions. Two are the labels that seemed to

emerge in the literature, the first label is the one of “terrorist”, much debated in the academic literature and at the government level. The label is used as a blanket in relation to groups such as Hezbollah and Jemaah-Islamiyah, regardless of the actual action undertaken. Such groups often operate in a grey area between fundraising to carry out terrorist attacks and welfare services, being closely linked to the local community, and providing social services when the state is not able to reach them. This is exemplified by the activities of Hezbollah in Lebanon, where Hezbollah is also an electoral party which “uses social assistance to win over Lebanon’s Shi’ites while using violence to eliminate rivals” (Azani, 2012: 741). In this context the groups’ grievances can become shared with the local community, and the use of brute force to deal with these groups regardless of what they are actually doing, can risk bringing them more support at the local level. Hence, when the group is labelled as “terrorist” this label gets extended to every activity they carry out. This also means that the governments can force the label onto some groups, often as a consequence of the local governments’ international relationships, and gain the benefits they can obtain when applying this label without refined discrimination. The very fact that, while walking ‘on the edge’ between legal and illegal activity Hezbollah is nonetheless framed as a terrorist actor, indicates that the label of terrorist can be applied according to political interests, and that this label also resonates within the academic literature.

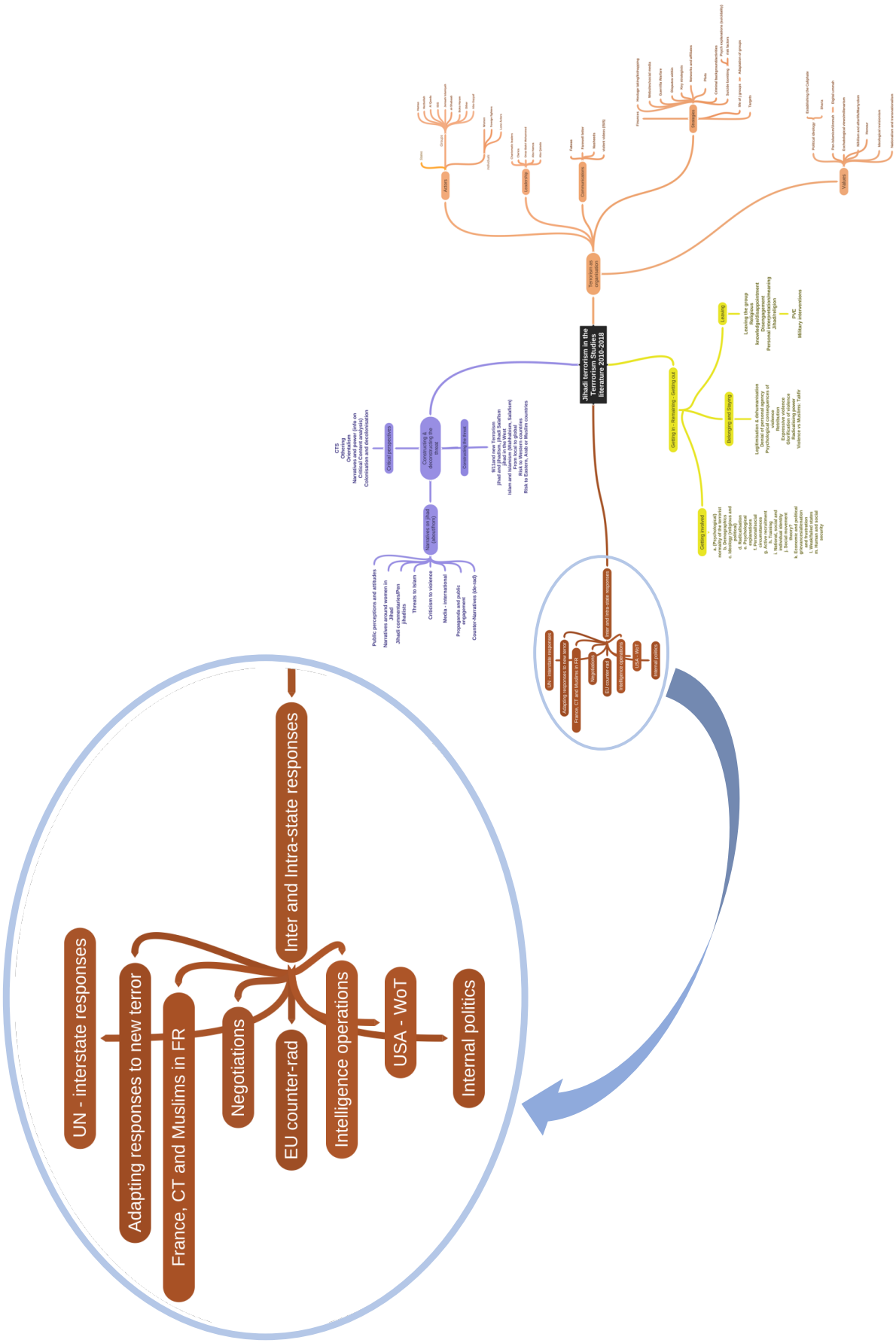


Figure 17: Microscopic view of the theme 'Countering terrorism at the national and international level'

6. Inter and Intra state responses

This overarching theme presents a degree of overlap with counterterrorism and interventions to prevent violent extremism. “Inter and intra state response” is also the theme which makes up this overarching theme, and the articles coded under this the theme (41) are mostly dealt with responses at military and security level. A number of important sub-themes emerged from the literature, and revolved around which countries tackle terrorism through military and security actions, their relationship with internal politics in the countries affected by military actions and the approach adopted at a supra-national level, like those adopted by the UN.

a. Threat to western countries

The geographic aspect of the state responses was the first to emerge from the literature, indicating that for the most, the threat coming from terror attacks, is perceived as a threat to Western countries. In this sense, articles discuss the threat of terrorism and the measures that countries such as France, UK, USA, Australia and Canada decided to implement.

The majority of measures were implemented in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, not always as a direct consequence (for example, France implemented additional law enforcement measures after the 2012 attack on French soil, see Hellmuth, 2015). Interestingly, the fact that pre-emptive measures were put in place after the 9/11 attack outside of the US, could testify both resonance that 9/11 had on other

countries of the “Global North” and also of the perception of this “new terrorism” as more dangerous/unexpected.

The literature pointed to the fact that most of these measures tackled terrorism from a law enforcement point of view. The USA represent an exception because from the literature it emerged how the War on Terror, and related narratives, are based not only on legal approaches, but also on military attacks on those countries deemed to represent a “terrorist heaven” (Davies, 2018; Cragin, 2015).

On the other hand, interventions in the UK and Europe in general seem to be referred to as based on community engagement (Davies, 2017; Lambert and Parsons, 2017; Silverman, 2017). As discussed previously in the context of PVE, acting at the community level is a powerful tool as well as a double-edge sword, in that the community can be a source of good and genuine communication. On the other hand community-based interventions can risk targeting the community in the wrong way and to make it an object to *work on* rather than a subject to *work with.*

Nonetheless, especially in relation to the fear of ‘homegrown’ terrorism and to the phenomenon of foreign fighters, the literature indicated how important is the involvement of the community, also as a source of intelligence and precious information (Silverman, 2017). As mentioned earlier, such interventions cannot be successful if the intervention did not gain the trust of the community with which it needs to act. Policies which emphasise the relevance of the community in the fight against terrorism, however, also entails the risk of framing the group as responsible for the action of the individual; for example, clerics and family members are invested of the responsibility to recognise signs of radicalisation and to report them to the relevant authorities.

Among law enforcement-based approach, the French one stood out from the literature, as it is based on investigation and punishment (detention), as well as on forms of individual surveillance and removal of citizenship (Hellmuth, 2015). This line of action is based on the prominence of the crime-terror nexus in the approach post 9/11, where disruption of terrorist action is enabled through the disruption of other "satellite" criminal activities which could be used to fund terrorist activities (Hutchinson and O'Malley, 2007). Other approaches, such as the one discussed for Canada and Australia, look at additional pre-emptive measures, point towards the change in legislation, for example, criminalising the intention to commit a terrorist action or to support a terrorist organisation (for example through funding) and the increase in length of the sentence.

b. United Nations

Finally, it is worth considering the role of the UN in the discourse of responses at the supra-national level. While terrorism is not a new phenomenon and the UN had in place some procedures to deal with it, 9/11 impacted on the relevance terrorism in the UN and on how to deal with it (Mendelsohn, 2014b). Two are the aspects that were mainly evident from the literature in relation to the UN: the putting in place of a series of resolutions (res 1267, 1269 and res 1333) and the establishment of dedicated committees to tackle terrorism. These measures mostly tackled terrorist groups from the economic point of view, attempting to freeze the finances of those individuals and organisations that are present in the UN Security Council (UNSC) Consolidated List. The UNSC list includes (as of 12th October 2021) 710 individuals

and 256 organisations “all individuals and entities subject to measures imposed by the Security Council. The inclusion of all names on one Consolidated List is to facilitate the implementation of the measures […]” (United Nations Security Council, 2021).

This list, as emerged from the literature, is no way perfect, presenting issues related to how the groups enter the list, from local disputes to delays existing between the moment a group becomes enlisted to which measures are enacted. Additionally, the enlisting of a group on the UN list follows similar challenges to the definition and study of terrorist groups in general, in fact, the definition of terrorism employed by the UN is not universally accepted and represents more a set of guidelines than strict criteria.

Interestingly, one of the articles in the literature took in consideration how Al Qaeda views the UN. The UN has previously targeted Al Qaeda through sanctioning the countries deemed to host bin Laden in order to force them to expel him, as well as through the resolutions disposing the freezing of funds aimed at Al Qaeda (Mendelsohn, 2014a).

This has impacted how Al Qaeda views UN and the narratives around the UN reflect those already expressed towards the “West”. Through the lenses of Al Qaeda, the UN is nothing but another tool to maintain Western power, therefore, the power dynamics between the UN and Al Qaeda reflect those already present at the international relations level. Also, the narrative of Al Qaeda pivots on the victimisation of Muslims in the MENA region and in EU, and the UN is perceived as participating in this victimisation as well as being responsible for the division of Palestine (Mendelsohn, 2014a).

Overarching Theme III: Terrorism as a group phenomenon

This overarching theme pertains to emergence of terrorism, from the literature analysed, as a group and phenomenon, where there is a clear devisable organisation. From the content analysis, the categories of codes which formed are pertaining to actors -prevalently groups- leadership, communication, values and strategies.

This overarching theme encompasses a large number of articles (227), as well as a large number of themes and sub-theme, therefore in the process of organising the codes while letting the themes emerge, the codes addressed in this overarching theme are also organised in categories and sub-categories (as mentioned earlier in chapter 7). This structure of categories/sub-categories and theme/sub-theme is also used in the discussion of this overarching theme.

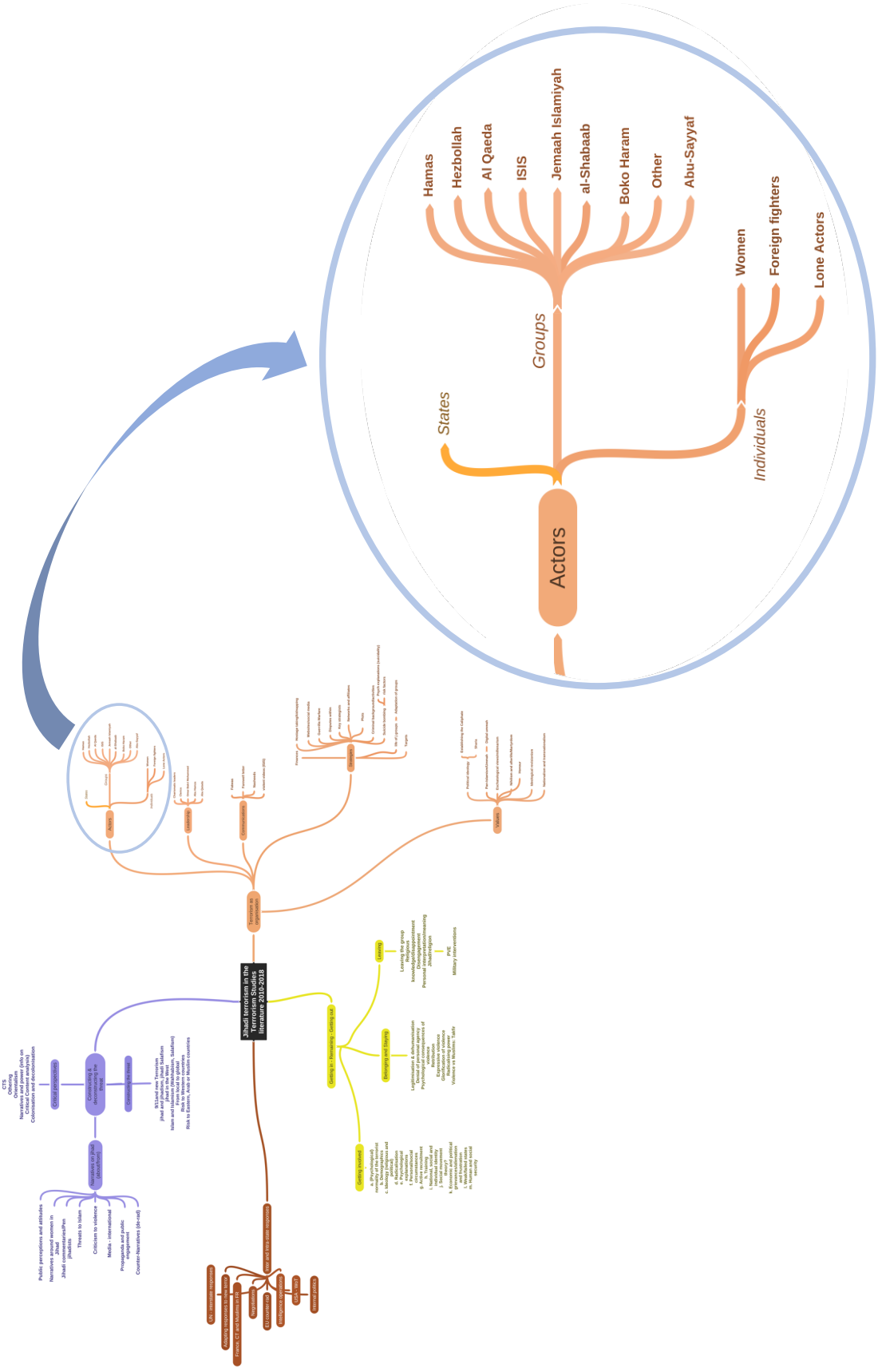


Figure 18: Microscopic view of the theme 'Actors'

ACTORS

The codes which dealt with groups, individuals and (albeit in minority) states involved in terrorism are grouped under the category 'actors'. In the context of studying terrorism as a group organisation, this category was the one encompassing the highest number of articles (169) of the whole overarching themes (227). This seems to already highlight that the literature focuses on questions of "who" is an actor of terrorism.

The 'actors' category is in turn divided in sub-categories, which are (in ascending order of articles coded):

1. Groups (145)
2. Individuals (46)
3. States (6)

This content analysis does not aim at being strictly quantitative, but the number of articles can help in spotlighting where most of the literature focuses. For ease of organisation of this piece, the discussion will follow the order of actors proposed above, thus will start with the groups.

Actors - groups

In the literature published between 2010 and 2018 groups emerged as the focus and of the 145 articles categorised under 'groups': of these, 61 were those related to Al-Qaeda and 44 those related to IS/ISIS/ISIL. Other Islamist related groups, such as Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, Hamas, Hezbollah and others receive significant less attention, and mostly seem to be treated in relation to their links with Al-Qaeda and

ISIS. Al Qaeda and ISIS, hence, have been selected as themes to be further explored given their strong presence in the literature (in number of articles) and richness of content. Each of these themes comes with a number of sub-themes which will be also addressed, listed below:

Al Qaeda

a. Local vs Global
b. Adaptability, Structure and responses
c. Strategies and tactics
d. Communication and ideology

ISIS

a. Novelty and brutality
b. Communication and propaganda of the deeds
c. Values

7. Al-Qaeda

Four sub-themes are developed around Al Qaeda in the literature, and these are locality/globality (and related targets), adaptability, structure and responses, strategies and tactics, and communications and ideology. Finally, few articles in the literature attempted to build a comparison between AQ and ISIS.

a. Local vs Global

The first sub-theme taken into consideration is the one focusing on the reach of Al Qaeda and its targets. Articles analysed discuss what is the importance of Al Qaeda

at the local level and at the global level, and the literature seemed to point to an evolution of the group through an arch that goes from Al Qaeda as a local movement to Al Qaeda as a global one. From 2011, with the war in Iraq, the literature addressed Al Qaeda again as an actor mostly active locally, on Iraqi soil, and this is evidenced in the literature by articles which deal with the emergence of groups such as AQI (Iraq), AQAP (Arabic peninsula), AQIM (Islamic Maghreb) and AQIS (Indian Subcontinent) (Hoffman, 2013).

The watershed moment of Al Qaeda as a global movement (and threat) the literature pointed to is, of course, 9/11 where the attention of Al Qaeda is directed to the "far enemy" and aims at the expulsion of the US from the Middle East. From this moment, the perception of Al Qaeda is that of a threat to the West, and some articles point to the risk of 'homegrown' terrorists, who are encouraged to hit the West 'from within' (Gunaratna and Oreg, 2010). It is in this context that, as will be discussed more in depth later, Al Qaeda came to be perceived as a grassroot movement of individuals that 'self-radicalise', developing their ideological affiliation and then acting, independently of the Al Qaeda "franchise" (ibid.). What surfaced in some articles is, however, that the idea of a Global jihad is not univocally accepted; this shows in the tensions between bin Laden and al-Zawahiri, the first seemingly more preoccupied with the enemy 'within' and the purity of the Ummah than the far enemy (Loidolt, 2011). Evidence of this internal tension are also the critiques that Muslim clerics have brought up about the indiscriminate killing of civilians, including Muslims. Also, the establishment of new groups linked to Al Qaeda which names reference their geographic focus, seems to point to the fact that the tension between the local and the global agendas of Al Qaeda was never completely settled. The consideration of

internal disputes, as well as of the formation of Al Qaeda's local branches is important in terms of framing as the group is represented -without too much consideration of internal nuances and local agendas- as an existential threat to the West, against which extraordinary measures have to be taken. The earlier discussion about drone strikes portrayed as having minimal collateral damage is a good example, in fact, upon clarification that minimal collateral damage *does not mean* zero harm to the civilian population, it is possible to devise that the framing of Al Qaeda as a threat is then instrumental to the enactment of warfare strategies of dubious ethical (and efficacy) value and that the lives of the individuals involved are considered to be an acceptable price to pay for defeating Al Qaeda.

b. Adaptability, structure and responses

The second sub-themes which resulted from the thematic analysis related to the 'trajectory' and adaptability of Al Qaeda. The literature analysed looked at Al Qaeda from a historical perspective, considering its development and changes. Even in this instance, 9/11 is represented as a historical moment, alongside the civil war in Syria and the literature marked them as important pivoting moments for the group.

Discussions on the trajectory of Al Qaeda follow part of what already said in terms of local and global plans and targets, but they seemed to mostly do so in connection with changes at the structural level. The literature dealing with the trajectory of Al Qaeda also highlighted the fact that Al Qaeda proved numerous times to be very resilient in spite of counterterrorism interventions and leaders' death (Hoffman, 2013).

It is in the context of its evolution as a movement that the literature discussed the strategy of Al Qaeda: the transformation that the literature seemed to focus more on was the one of decentralisation. One of the articles, for example, highlighted that decentralisation was both as measure taken to survive, as well a way to intimidate the enemy and pretend to be ubiquitous (Gunaratna and Oreg, 2010). Al Qaeda is depicted as a system whose 'tentacles' (ibid.) have the potential to reach volunteers everywhere. In terms of framing, this implies that the threat is so widespread, that again, extraordinary counterterrorism measures need to be taken, and that these measures should expand to attack Al Qaeda not only on Western soil, but also at the local level (see the discussion earlier around Yemen as well as Somalia). A further tendency which emerged in the field is also that to point towards a vision of Al Qaeda as a system more than an organisation (Acharya and Marwah, 2010), with loose cells or individuals sharing ideological relations but working with their own resources. Other articles gave the idea of the presence of such ideological affiliation talking about Al Qaeda as a brand or a franchise, where Al Qaeda is represented as a sort of umbrella organisation able to reach various Islamist groups with different looseness of connection (Weeraratne and Recker, 2016) as well as referring to the application of leaderless jihad (McCoy and Knight, 2015). This potential for capillarity is represented to as a threat, in particular seen as directed towards the US (Bergen et al., 2011). Other articles, adhered to this franchise approach but also maintained that the senior leadership of Al Qaeda was still present and serves the role of directing its affiliates, approaching this instance as perhaps the worst of both possibilities (Gunaratna and Oreg, 2010). This change was seen as encouraging the global expansion of the movement (helping it in diffusing its doctrine and facing the

backlash led by counterterrorism operations post 9/11), but also as having the potential to revive the tension between Al Qaeda's local and global agendas. Additionally, it is worth noting, and maybe open for more research in future, the fact that the literature on Al Qaeda has adopted, at a certain point, a vocabulary that uses economic-related terms such as 'brand' or 'franchise'. Not many articles looked at Al Qaeda in these terms, but at a first analysis it is possible to highlight that framing Al Qaeda through the language of economy can indicate a tendency to normalise it. It could follow, that if Al Qaeda gets treated as an economic entity, then the way to deal with such entity might change too onto economic terms (and negotiations) rather than through the security/counterterrorism lenses. In addition to this, the articles which addressed at Al Qaeda as a brand also seemed to indicate that groups can become Al Qaeda branches through the adoption of the 'brand' hence framing the ideology (and concordance between the branch and Al Qaeda) as a secondary matter (Turner, 2010).

8. ISIS

This section addresses the sub-themes emerged during the analysis of the literature pertaining to ISIS, the second most prominent group actor in terms of articles coded under the 'actors' category (with 44 articles).

There seems to be a common thread that is intertwined in the other sub-themes generated in the analysis of ISIS, that is brutality. Brutality seems to be discussed across the board through the sub-themes, which have been identified as being:

a. novelty (brutality and welfare),
b. communications (internet and propaganda of the deeds, recruitment, and coercive membership),
c. values (territory and statehood, religion, gender roles, coercive membership).

a. Novelty and brutality

When considering ISIS, some articles pointed to the fact that it has been a surprise to the West (Andersen and Sandberg, 2018) and that in some way ISIS is a "different beast", dissimilar from other groups (Esfandiary and Tabatabai, 2016), and that as such, requires different tools to approach it. This narrative resonates with the narratives which circulated and took hold in the aftermath 9/11 in relation to Al Qaeda, and this seems to indicate that the literature applies the frame of novelty to ISIS in pretty much the same way it did with Al Qaeda 15 years before. This also entails that the literature only partially acknowledged the continuity that exist between Al Qaeda and ISIS, even when explicitly talking about these connections, as will be shown above. In spite of the links between the two groups, the literature seemed to consider the brutality of ISIS as something new, and unseen before.

The literature offered a retrospective on the history of ISIS and largely agreed that the group emerged from what was previously Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). Similarly, the literature pointed to the void left in Iraq in the aftermath of the US withdrawal in 2007 as a key enabler of the group. The power vacuum left in Iraq is described as working alongside a series of pre-existing factors such as the corrections regime managed by the US in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion, and which allowed key leaders to emerge and 'rebrand' the group from AQI to ISIS. It becomes evident from

the articles that one of the known advantages that allowed ISIS to gain such traction with the local population was its ability to capitalise on the sectarian tensions being stoked by the fallout of the Iraq war, the involvement of Iran in this conflict, the local instability in Syria and the involvement of international powers at the borders of both these tinder boxes. In the literature the rise of ISIS is treated as somewhat fatalistic in that it is viewed as filling a void created by the ongoing conflict in the region. It is then not surprising that the group found a powerful leverage in harnessing the feeling of injustice that Sunni Muslims in the area were expressing due to their discontent with the Shi'ia Iraqi government of Nuri al Maliki (Kaltenthaler et al., 2018). The group was portrayed as being able to present itself as a saviour and an alternative to the corrupt elites supported by the USA and their allies (Barr and Herfroy-Mischler, 2017).

At this point the literature considered that ISIS could not maintain its power through the mere use of brutality. So, while the group has been described as a "ruthless and authoritarian" organisation it appears to be still subject to the local perception and therefore, it has to maintain some local support to be able to conduct its operations (Pollard et al., 2015). This explains ISIS employment of many resources in terms of communication, along with "extreme expression of "'carrot and stick' policies that offer high rewards for cooperation and costly punishments for resistance." (ibid.: 1057). This authoritarian presence is also seen as signifying a return to the 'near enemy', a focus on apostate states and governments that are seen as impeding the formation of the caliphate in the region. However, much in the same way as this was presented for Al Qaeda, there is tension between local and global agenda, and ISIS

has proved to be able to merge the tension between local aims and global need through its channels of communication.

ISIS is described as particularly prolific on multiple fronts, such as the production and dissemination of violent videos, its presence on social media and the distribution of its magazines, Dabiq and (later) Rumiyah; it is not, however, just prolific, communication from ISIS is treated in the literature as highly skilled, specialised, and strategic. In order to streamline the reading for this chapter, the themes of communications channels for ISIS are not discussed here.

Actors - Individuals

Individuals emerged from the literature as the second most important actors of terrorism and is possible to further categorise individual actors in the literature into foreign fighters, women and lone wolves. If looked at the quantitative point of view, foreign fighters are represented in the majority of articles dealing with individuals, so the first section is dedicated to this theme.

9. Foreign fighters

The literature about foreign fighters is quite extensive, 33 articles make up this theme (out of 169 articles which are part of the category of 'actors'). The discussion on foreign fighters is articulated around the sub-themes of threat, recruitment and origins (history) of the phenomenon. The literature coded under this theme looked

at foreign fighters both in their more recent manifestation (citizens who, for example, travelled from a European country to Syria to join ISIS) as well as looking at foreign fighters as a historical phenomenon (e.g., Finnish travellers to Spain during the civil war). Nonetheless, foreign fighters are for the most framed as a Western phenomenon, with only a minority of the articles looking at the origin of foreign fighters in the Arab world (Byman, 2013, Moore, 2015) and to their involvement in previous conflict areas such as Bosnia and Chechnya.

Many articles analysed framed foreign fighters -and returnees- as a threat, and this threat is mainly perceived towards western countries, with northern European countries, US and Canada being those where the articles focused the most. The perceived threat is rooted in the fear that these foreign fighters have been instructed to carry out attacks upon their return, either to continue the war at home (Gendron, 2016) or because of the potential trauma endured while fighting for ISIS (Van San, 2015). On the other hand, those articles that didn't analyse foreign fighters exclusively as a phenomenon related to Western security looked at foreign fighters coming from Arab countries and travelling either to other Muslim countries (Byman, 2015), or to countries where the conflict is framed in religious terms, such as the one in North Caucasus. This is particularly relevant if one considers that Byman (2015) reported that of about 20 thousand foreign fighters, only about 3400 are originating from Western countries, hence, the author contended, there is an inflation of the perceived threat that returnees pose to Western countries.

When the literature framed foreign fighters as a potential threat, it did so by asking whether returnees do represent a threat for their home country: for example, there is particular concern as to whether they come back with a baggage of experience in

fighting, and potentially instructed to carry out attacks in the West (Gendron, 2016). But while the research indicated that foreign fighters don't generally intend to carry out attacks at home (Hegghammer, 2013) Western states behave as if this was the case. In the US, for example, the investment in 'jihadi investigations' has increased across 50 states, with the FBI re-allocating resources for white collar crime to counterterrorism and foreign fighters (Davies, 2017). Similarly, European states do perceive the threat as increased, the Netherlands, for example, has increased the national alert level due to the possibility of "traumatised foreign fighters" being more open to violence in the homeland (Pelletier et al., 2016). France, instead, approached the matter in a pre-emptive way, attempting to stop people from travelling to Syria in the first place. In the French context, these measures also come with the extension of 'terrorist related offence' also to the process of organisation and support of a terrorist activity, hence, also individuals who did not travel and who are not responsible for attacks on French soil are treated according to terrorism legislation (Hellmuth, 2015). This means that terrorism legislation is applied also to those who have not committed violent attacks and is made possible thanks to the extension of the label of 'terrorist offence' to activities such as fundraising. In addition to attempting to prevent travel, some articles also tried to look at demographics and characteristics of foreign fighters (Dawson and Amarasingam, 2016, van San, 2016, Wignell et al., 2017), to highlight patterns or sign of change prior to leaving, or at the possible behavioural trajectories that former fighters could follow, including that of working with their homelands towards prevention.

The portion of the literature that looks at foreign fighters from a historical point of view indicated that foreign fighters are not a new phenomenon, nor an exclusively Muslim one. The articles pointed to other conflicts that are either not religious, but which nonetheless attracted fighters from other countries, such as the civil war in Spain. The literature also considered conflicts which began as nationalist/separatist and that have been, later on, co-opted and reframed through a religious lens (as it is indicated in the literature, was the case for the Chechen conflict, in the northern Caucasus).

In terms of framing, the points discussed above mean that foreign fighters emerge in the literature as a threat mostly to Western countries, in spite of the fact that the numbers of travellers are low, and the number of returnees even lower. The number of foreign fighters coming from Western countries is also low if compared with the numbers of foreign fighters originating from Arab countries, but these are not represented as a concern towards Arab countries. The preoccupation, instead, is prevalently for the security of Europe and the USA, rendering this part of the literature western-centric.

Finally, there is a small portion of the literature which dealt with lone actors (only 4 articles are included in the 'lone actors' code), nonetheless, while this category has not emerged strongly from the literature, there has been a preoccupation hyped by the media around the threat that lone actors pose, but this seems to present a theme more prevalent in the discourse on the far-right than in the jihadi one.

10. Women

Women are the last theme emerging from the literature on individual actors. Women as actors of terrorism have acquired increased importance at the academic level, considering the observed increase in involvement of women in terrorist activity. The image of the woman as “jihadi bride” became common in the media, and this image is not too distant from what emerges in the literature and the ‘jihadi bride’s portrayal is mainly that of a woman that has a passive role in the jihad as well as in the project of Caliphate of ISIS. The literature’s portrayal of women highlights a tension between the search for more active roles in the jihad, and the need of the organisations to maintain a conservative façade, de facto resulting in the exclusion of women from positions of power. Some of the publications by jihadist groups, like the writings form the said wife of al-Zawahiri, remain intentionally vague on whether women are allowed to partake in jihad, and indicate it is possible to do so only in extreme circumstances without being too specific on which these are (Lahoud, 2014). However, while both Al Qaeda and ISIS do claim to exclude women from active jihad, ISIS understood and began to reap the advantages of involving some women in active roles, in particular suicide bombing. The gain is, in fact, described as twofold: firstly, the literature discusses counterterrorism as having a gendered dimension and attending more to men than to women (Fair and Hamza, 2018), women are seen as able to move with less suspicion and groups are seen as harnessing this characteristic at their advantage. Secondly, a woman that looks for more active roles and manages to become a suicide bomber won’t have high expectations to advance in the ranks of ISIS. This allows the group to ‘innovate’, but also to remain visibly conservative,

keeping women's activities in line with the conservative design of the Caliphate (Peresin and Cervone, 2015).

The portrait of women emerging from the literature, is the one of women who look for and are promised emancipation but face the reality of an ultra-conservative and misogynistic movement; however, this also means that women are not 'dragged in' or 'brainwashed' or merely guided by merely emotional motives. They are active searchers, and encounter the narratives proposed by the group(s) which resonate with the personal, social, and political circumstances they live in. "The women in this study are not simply seduced by male recruiters; they are active seekers who experiment with various Islamic interpretations before choosing IS. Disappointment with moderate or rival extremist groups usually motivates people to explore IS." (Nuraniyah, 2018: 900)

11. States

If compared to the other actors**,** the literature overall does not seem to consider States as terrorist actors. Only 6 articles are coded under 'states' in NVivo, and unsurprisingly, there does not seem to be an in-depth treatment of state-terrorism. For context, 145 articles were coded under 'groups' and 46 were coded under 'individuals'.

The analysis of this section of literature revealed that there are states that sponsor terrorist groups or that exploit existing tensions among actors on a territory. These dynamics appeared as overall complex and with the risk of backlash for the state that wants to use such tensions in their favour. One article also looked at the circumstances that might lead a group to defect from the agreement taken with the

state actor (Popovic, 2015), while others focused at instances of groups like Hezbollah which is linked to the Iranian government, from which it received funding (DeVore and Stähli, 2014).

This means that state terrorism and state sponsorship of terrorism emerged from the literature as a phenomenon not involving states of the Global North, and hence aspects of counterterrorism interventions that involve tactics of asymmetric warfare (see drone strikes discussed earlier) are accepted as counterterrorism measures rather than analysed as a form of state terrorism. In addition to this, 5 out of 6 articles focused on state terrorism seem to suggest the involvement of states in the Global South into sponsoring or taking advantage of terrorist groups on national territory (Pakistan, India, Iran, Korea), hence further situating the matter out of the sphere of the Global North. This is additional evidence that, when states are considered actors of terrorism, the Global North is excluded from such depiction, possibly unveiling a western-centric bias in the consideration of terrorism as coming from 'the other', but nonetheless threatening to 'us'.

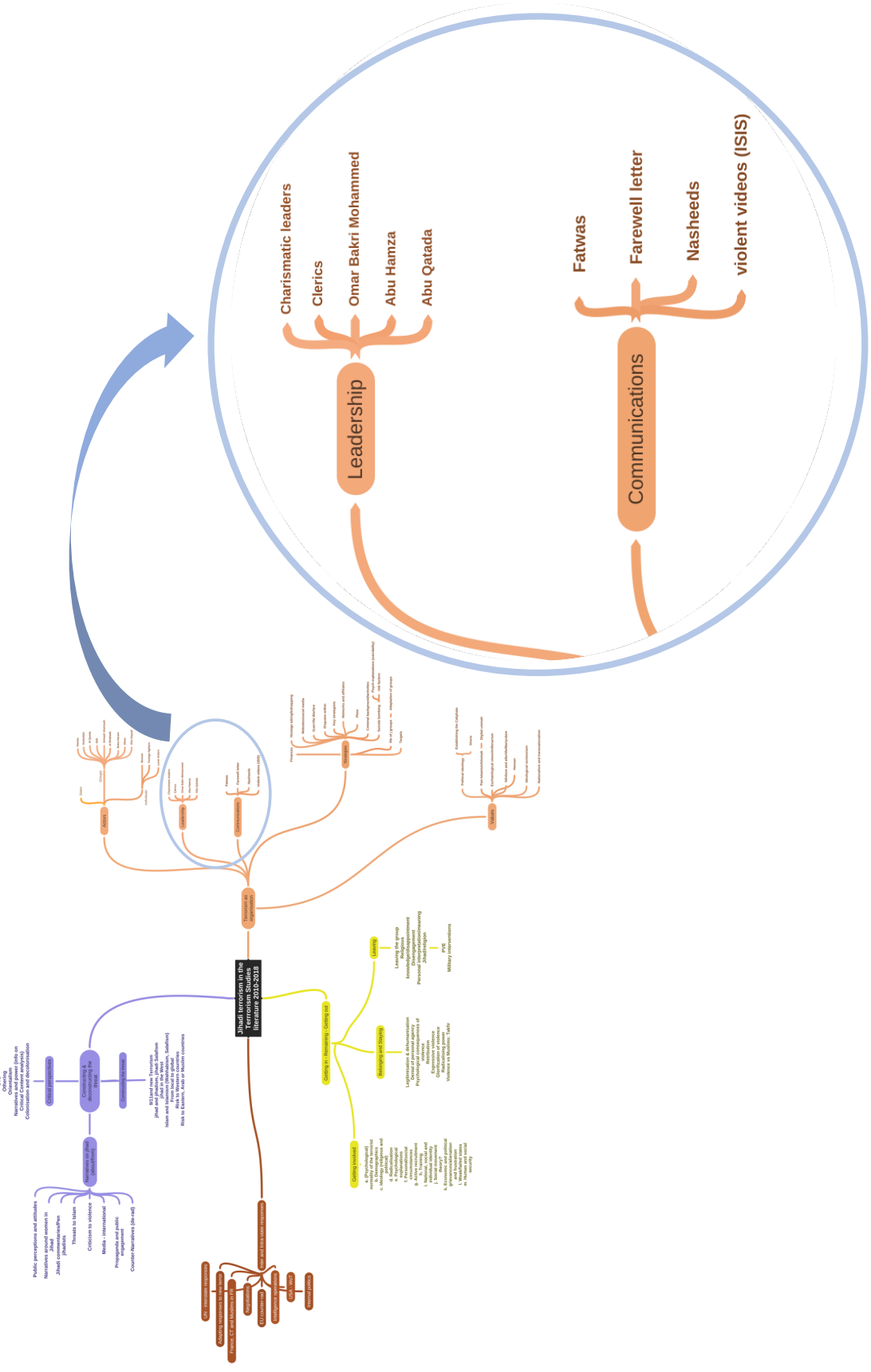


Figure 19: Microscopic view of the themes 'Communication and Leadership'

COMMUNICATION AND LEADERSHIP

The articles categorised under 'Communication and Leadership' (26 in total, split equally between the two) do not represent a big portion of the discussion on terrorism as an organisational phenomenon. The researcher has considered and decided to categorise here articles which have relevance at a broader level (e.g. trace an evolution of the communication strategy or of the leadership) and are general (e.g. don't look at a group specifically), albeit there is some overlap with what discussed in terms of group actors.

12. Channels of communication

The theme of communication seems to be organised around two levels of depth of analysis, one more general that considers the communication channels that terrorist actors adopted, and the other one more focused on the communication from a specific group, like ISIS. Discussion on the themes emerging from ISIS' videos and magazines is present in the previous section, so the following section is focused on the presence of Nasheeds (hymns) in the literature of jihadi terrorism focused articles.

Nasheeds

Nasheeds are religious hymns with a long history, deriving from poetry (Gråtrud, 2016) and having high relevance in what is defined as 'jihadist culture' (Said, 2012).

In this context, Nasheeds are discussed in socio-historical terms. For example, Gråtrud (2016) define Nasheeds as religious hymns, trace their origins back to Arab poetry and analyse them from the point of view of rhythm and themes. The analysis of jihadi Nasheeds from this article showed that these songs deal with overarching themes in the 'jihadist culture' such as the binary and un-nuanced vision of the conflict between good and evil, martyrdom, the weakness of the Ummah and the crisis of Islam. ISIS uses the power of music to convey the message that Islam is in crisis, they exploit this perception of crisis to pose itself as God-driven leader of the Ummah and to justify its use of violence (and jihad as the solution to the problems of the Ummah). The use of Nasheeds that emerged from the literature is that of an avenue of communication that serves the purpose of reaching a wide and young audience (Said, 2012). But Nasheeds are also a tool used by ISIS to communicate with its target audience its own propaganda, and this manifests in the themes of such Nasheeds which include, as mentioned above: martyrdom, the crisis of Islam, weakness of the Ummah and ISIS as a saviour of the Muslim world (Gråtrud, 2016).

Said (2012) also looked at the historical aspects of Nasheed as a form of musical propaganda and their development. This article discussed Nasheeds as at the intersection between Salafi/Wahhabi worldview and 'Qutbism'; the first is seen as strict and puritan, and this also extends to the permissibility of forms of entertainment such as music. 'Qutbism' instead allows for more flexibility in the musical accompaniment for Nasheeds, and they were often used in Muslim Brotherhood's youth camp. Albeit only two articles dealt specifically with Nasheeds, in this portion they emerged as framed as powerful tools of propaganda, exploited by ISIS in order to expand its recruitment potential and increase its support. The

consideration of forms of communications such as Nasheed in the terrorism literature, albeit interesting, highlights the preoccupation of the literature with forms of propaganda and communication with were developed outside of the terrorism context. As Nasheeds are seen at the intersection between two interpretations of Islam, the fact that the literature considered them so powerful can indicate that the academic literature analysed placed the potential for terrorism violence in the religious ideology.

13. Clerics and charisma

The literature on leadership, similarly to that on communication, can be roughly split in two major areas depending on the level of detail in their analysis of leadership: for example, a few articles looked specifically at the life and/or activities of clerics and ideologues of the jihad, and detailed their origins and how they became influential in their communities. This is the case for Abu Qatada, Abu Hamza and Omar Bakri Mohammed (Pantucci, 2010). These three are found to be discussed in the same article, both because Abu Qatada is considered to be the ideological father of the other two, and also because they operated and became influential in Europe (UK).

Other clerics and ideologues are also considered in terms of their contribution to the development of the jihadi ideology, as for example Al Maqdisi. His contribution emerged as not straightforward or constant, he has been accused of revisionism for having, later in life, condemned some practices of jihad as useless or outright illegal (Wagemakers, 2011; 2017). Considering the tendency to think about jihadi ideology as homogeneous, the variability in leadership's ideas supports that when dealing

with jihadism and its supporting ideology there is need to depart from the idea of it as a monolith.

Azzam, the founder of Al Qaeda, is also analysed in the literature on leadership. Azzam is credited for providing fighters at a transnational level "a doctrinal rationale with an organisational infrastructure" (Moore, 2015: 399), which encouraged and supported their travel in Afghanistan. Hence, the article that talked about Azzam as the ideologue who from the North Caucasus conflict created a form of pan-Islamic activism.

Bin Laden also figures among leaders of jihad, albeit the articles tended to point to his lack of ideological contribution (attributed instead to Al Zawahiri as Turner (2010) notes) and highlighted, instead, his charismatic and communication abilities. Such communicative skills are seen as having rendered him the face of Al Qaeda after the death of Azzam (Gendron, 2016, Martin and Smith, 2011, Turner, 2010). The lack of ideological contribution highlighted in the literature is, nonetheless, in contrast with the framing of bin Laden as the ideological leader of Al Qaeda and with him being targeted as such in the context of the War on Terror.

At the more general level, one article was interested the contribution of specific leaders around the topic of women's direct participation in military jihadi activities. The article contended that clerics (those considered in the context of the article) presented the matter of women's involvement in jihad with ad hoc vagueness and contradictions: "as far as the military domain is concerned, when jihadi ideologues and leaders invoke the individual obligation of jihad to rally Muslims around the world to take up jihad, they either refrain from calling on women to join them or

exclude them from having a military role altogether" (Lahoud, 2014: 783). The clerics analysed also appeared to use the contradictions present in religious and legal texts to 'cherry-pick' the elements that relegated women to "feminine" roles of house cleaning, caring and raising the morale of the men involved in jihad (ibid.).

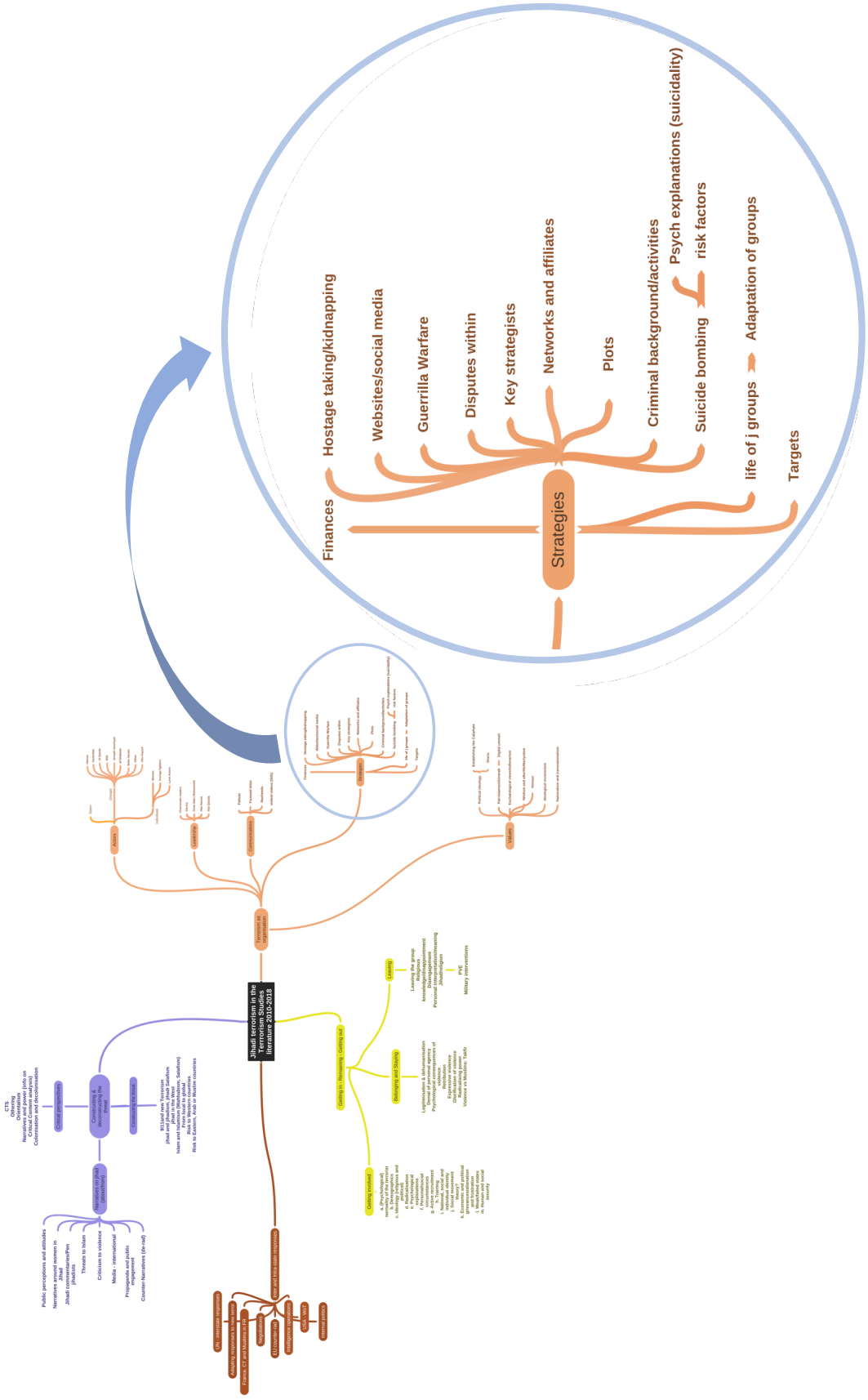


Figure 20: Microscopic view of the theme 'Strategies'

STRATEGIES

This section will look at the literature categorised under "strategies", another category pertaining to the overarching theme of 'terrorism as a group phenomenon'. In this category are included articles (108) which looked internal group dynamics and at paramilitary strategies. In the first instance articles dealt with criminal activities/criminal background of individuals, finances, disputes, and life/evolution of jihadi groups. In the second sub-category, articles discussed groups' guerrilla strategy, hostage taking, plots, targets, and suicide bombing.

At the intersection of these two categories there is a body of literature that considered terrorist networks and at the use of websites.

14. Internal group dynamics

a. Internal Disputes

The articles collected under 'internal disputes' explored disagreements at the ideological/strategical level and are in total 17. Disputes and disagreements are looked at from the ideological point of view but also with a closer lens, in relation to specific group.

The debates around the methods for waging jihad seemed to be the main point of discussion in the articles, which pointed to the fact that not only ideologues discussed about this at the general level, but also that leaders and strategists of Al Qaeda engaged with questions around the appropriate methods to continue fighting, especially in light of lack of agreement. This is important as Al Qaeda, through its

years of activities, has tried to retain the image of the jihadist vanguard and had to make sure that it would not be overthrown by other groups such as Hezbollah (Cragin, 2015) and ISIS (Cragin and Padilla, 2016) and to maintain cohesion between its core and the affiliates over battle strategies (as it was with AQMI, in Ouellet et al., 2014).

Tensions in the jihadi movement also ensued due to the conflicting views on legitimate or priority targets: while the central leadership of Al Qaeda was, in fact, focused on the far enemy, its affiliates were thorn in between their allegiance to Al Qaeda central and their local grievances (as for the case of Al Qaeda in Iraq, discussed in Weeraratne and Recker, 2016 and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, in Ouellet et al., 2014).

15. Para-Military Strategy

a. Suicide bombers and presumed mental illness

Among paramilitary strategies the author has coded articles that looked at suicide bombers, 12 articles are coded under the 'strategies' theme and paramilitary strategies emerge as a subtheme. These articles seemed to articulate the discussion on suicide bombing across three main dimensions: the psychological dimension, the ideological discussion and the strategic aspects of employing suicide bombing. In terms of article numbers, they seem to be quite equally distributed across these three aspects.

Three articles were interested in the psychology of the suicide bombers, and adopted from different perspectives from each other. The motivations to engage in suicide bombing and become a martyr are analysed in the context of suicide terrorism in

Palestine, from this article martyrdom and the decision to become a martyr are framed as an altruistic process. The protection of the people of Palestine becomes framed as the most important reason to become a martyr than revenge on the enemy (Cohen, 2016). Also, one article questioned whether suicide bombers could be suicidal, assuming that the external (declared) goal of the attack, could not necessarily match one's internal plan. In this sense, the author of the article considered that suicide bombers employed by the Taliban are not particularly successful in inflicting damage on their targets, tended to detonate too early and killed themselves (only) in half of the cases. According to the authors this indicates that the real motive lies with their suicidal intentions, even if they try to appear 'prosocial' and altruistic in presenting their motives of the attack (Lankford, 2011).

The focus that the literature brought in the discussion of suicide bombers and their mental health seems to point that there is a continued preoccupation with the possibility that suicide bombers would in fact suffer from a mental illness, and this to detriment of considerations around suicide bombers as rational actors.

Four articles also discussed suicide bombers considering the impact of ideology on their process of becoming suicide bombers. The papers collected here researched the justification for the use of suicide attacks; for example, one of the articles looked at the framing applied to martyrdom to render it halal (allowed) rather than haram (prohibited). While suicide is punished in the afterlife and has individualistic and egoistic motivations, the second is framed as aimed at a higher goal (Burki, 2011). This article also traced the changes in ideology around suicide bombing and martyrdom, defining the increased employment of suicide bombing as a modern

phenomenon (starting around the 1980s) and as a contentious issue which sees the Muslim world divided over its legitimacy.

Another article considered the impact of goals on the adoption of suicide bombing and linked Sunni's unattainable goals and sectarian violence to higher suicide attacks: Choi and Acosta (2018: 1373) said about this that "ideologies derived from the tenets of Sunni Islam produce abstract and highly unachievable outcome goals. Many militant Sunni aims centre on eradicating sectarian "apostate" rivals and/or "infidel" adversaries in order to erect a transnational empire." Similarly, another article assessed the impact of clerics' statements over suicide attacks in the Pakistani context (Ouellet et al., 2014) and noted how clerics provide justification for suicide attacks and information on the targets involved (mostly secular/military). This article speaks back to the importance given to clerics in discourses about radicalisation and de-radicalisation, clerics in this case are seen as directly influencing the individual to become a suicide bomber.

Finally, the last article in this category deal with the absence of women among suicide bombers in Afghanistan and connected such absence to a series of strategic and cultural considerations. For example, the article reported that Taliban did not need to extend their recruitment to women, and that in Afghanistan, women of Pashtun ethnicity are relegated to traditional roles and hence not encouraged to take up jihad as their male counterparts (Dearing, 2010).

Finally, the literature considered suicide bombing from a strategic point of view, considering for example the role of foreign fighters in the Afghan war in the 80s, foreign fighters were, in fact, often charged with the responsibility to work on

bombing vest preparation and also were suicide bombers themselves (Stenersen, 2011). Another article specifically addressed the employment of suicide bombing from Hezbollah (in particular car suicide attacks) and highlighted how this strategy was initially implemented during the Lebanese Civil was in the 1970s and remained in use with Hezbollah until the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon (DeVore and Stähli, 2014). Finally, one article attempted to understand the significance of suicide bombers by disaggregating the data on their targets and focused on the period 2003-2010 in Iraq. The author concluded that different targets, at different times, are the manifestation of variation on the priorities of the groups in terms of goals (Seifert and McCauley, 2014). These three works in the literature talked about suicide bombers in terms understanding their strategic value and, it also seems, dangerousness: for example, they evaluated the biographies of individual suicide bombers to survey their knowledge to build suicide vests and the training available to them (Stenersen, 2011). Suicide bombers are also investigated in terms of understanding what are the priorities of the groups from the analysis of their targets (Seifert and McCauley, 2014) and finally, suicide bombers are considered in connection with Hezbollah and are both seen as a continuation of the strategies used in the civil war in Lebanon and as a 'novelty' (DeVore and Stähli, 2014).

Networks and Strategies

These two areas are placed, in this analysis, at the intersection between military and organisational strategies.

16. Networks

The theme of networks emerged as particularly relevant from the quantitative point of view, with 29 articles coded at this node.

Protagonist of this theme seems to be Al Qaeda, as many articles were interested in tracing the extent of its networks and the relationship between Al Qaeda central (AQC) leaders and its affiliates. What emerged is a picture of Al Qaeda that is known and already debated in the Terrorism Studies field, that of an organisation which has a central core and to which affiliates and cells refer. However, while the literature pointed to this organisation as branching out, the strength of the connection between the core and the affiliates and between affiliates did not emerge clearly. The literature highlighted the existence of idiosyncrasies that depend on the nature of the affiliate group and on the geopolitical situation in which the affiliate group find itself and which impacted on the establishment and strength of ties.

Al Qaeda central seemed to be treated, in this part of the literature, as a franchise and its affiliate are seen as earning the benefits of being associated with the name, for example guidance and economic support. However, the establishment of links between Al Qaeda and local groups also means the need to balance local grievances which allow the group to receive the support from the local population (Loidolt, 2011) with the orders from Al Qaeda central. In this way, affiliates of Al Qaeda maintain a high level of autonomy, and while this is framed as positive, tensions can arise when this autonomy clashes with the overall aims of Al Qaeda, or with its methods. The development of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is a useful example in this case: AQIM represents the evolution of the group known as GSPC

(Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat) in 2007 (Ouellet et al., 2014), it joined the global jihad promoted by Al Qaeda, being also influenced by Al Qaeda in Iraq and al-Zarqawi's position on pan-Islamism (ibid.). The founding of AQMI and its allegiance to AQC followed an internal conflict where two factions opposed over the main aim of the group (local struggles or global ones); while the globalist faction prevailed, the group still maintained elements of its original identity. For example, in spite of AQMI's connection with AQC, concealed nationalist sentiments and the aim of removing Algeria's corrupt government remained and were at odds with the implementation of globalist aims (Ouellet et al., 2014).

In addition to focusing on specific groups, other articles looked at the existence of network with a precise geolocation: this is the case of Harris-Hogan, (2012), Zammit, (2013), and Harris-Hogan and Zammit, (2014) who researched the development and extent of terrorist networks in Australia. These papers applied different tools to the research of networks and while Harris-Hogan (2012) performed a social network analysis providing an overview of the Australian network and its members, Zammit (2013) looked at the links of the network with al Qaeda, and contended that jihadis cells in Australia do not represents a big advantage for the organisation and therefore, all the cells in Australia by 2003 were self-started and organised. This entails a couple of interesting implications in the way Al Qaeda is framed in the literature, the first is that the image of Al Qaeda as a global entity has limitations in that Al Qaeda performs its own strategic evaluations in terms of international cells. Hence, the threat of Al Qaeda as perceived in the West in general, and in Australia more specifically, does not necessarily match with the presence of Al Qaeda affiliates on a given territory. The second implication is linked to the idea of Al Qaeda as a

franchise, as discussed earlier, and entails that while the acquisition of the Al Qaeda brand presents benefits for the group joining the franchise, such benefits are not granted and are based on the strategic importance of the location of the group who wants to join.

Harris-Hogan and Zammit (2014) looked instead at the networks between Australia and Lebanon, and argued that those who join terrorist cells in Australia with the aim of travelling to Lebanon could be motivated by a combination of 'long distance nationalism' and a condition of disadvantage in Australia. In the literature these individuals are do not seem to be represented as a threat to Australia, as they're engaged in local (Lebanese) struggles.

This resonates with what previously discussed around grievances as a path to join a terrorist group for second and subsequent generations of Muslim in other Western countries (such as Canada and the Netherlands). In these cases, the grievances of the individual, initially framed as personal, become re-framed in political terms and in accordance to wider social issues to allow the individual to join the group.

Finally, a part of the literature analysed also considered jihadi terrorist networks from a critical perspective. Among these two articles (Stollenwerk et al., 2015, Matesan, 2012) were interested in the attempt by the UN to map Al Qaeda, as well as the use of narratives on 'global terrorist networks'.

Stollenwerk et al. (2015) summed up the uncertainty around the reality of Al Qaeda as an organisation that is network based, and the authors partially attributed this lack of clarity to missing information from international organisations. This source took into consideration the UN sanctions list to understand what picture of Al Qaeda surfaced, and in this instance, the representation of Al Qaeda was that of global

entity connected all over the world with cells and affiliates, but also of an organisation that must juggle its global aims with concerns at the global level.

Stohl (2012) adopted instead a critical stance and highlighted the lack of clarity around what is meant by 'global network'. The article took as a starting point the conception of terrorism as 'new' post 9/11, and from there considered the "communicative inflation" around Al Qaeda as a network. Such communicative inflation is paired with the fact that despite the abundance of narratives on Al Qaeda in the context of the War on Terror, there is still vagueness on the definition of network. This definitional confusion, however, did not emerge as being accidental; in fact, miscommunicating the size of the threat emanating by Al Qaeda could actually be advantageous to at least three actors. Al Qaeda itself can benefit from an inflated sense of threat, state actors (and in the case of Stohl (2012), the USA) can legitimise the extraordinary measures to fight the threat, and other state actors (such as those cooperating with other western countries) are able to reap more economic and military support if the perceived threat is bigger.

17. Internet

Twenty three articles looked at the use that terrorist actors make of websites, and this theme represents an important part in the discussion of strategies, with 23 out of 103 articles coded under this theme.

In the literature there is agreement on the fact that the advent of the internet and its diffusion represented a positive turn for terrorist groups and the sub-theme of 'change' seems to run through most of the literature coded under this theme. Many

articles, in fact, indicated that internet has helped terrorist groups in spreading their propaganda and practical knowledge, enlarging their pool of possible recruits, raising and transferring funding and organising possible attacks, plots. Another aspect on which the literature seemed to a agree is that the globalisation of jihad has been aided by the development of the world wide web. For example, it is reported that already at the time of the Chechen conflict, the Azzam.com website was used to spread a globalist jihadi agenda through the example of the Chechen conflict (Cohen et al., 2016). As discussed earlier, the conflict began as a nationalist/indigenous struggle and ended up being co-opted by Islamist groups, in this context, the literature seemed to consider the use of websites as playing a pivotal role in this shift. Another interesting point of discussion emergent from the literature is more closely related to the sympathy for jihadist movements and recruitment. This is tightly linked to the information flow of the Internet era, where the increased ease of access to information available online allowed those who come in contact with jihadi material, to vicariously experience the suffering of the Muslim population through ad-hoc narratives present on the websites/forum/social media (Campana and Ducol, 2014, Schuurman et al., 2016). In this way, even those who are physically distant from conflict zones, are seen as potentially involved emotionally and more inclined to support. The literature's interest in recruitment and the possible solicitation of sympathy for the suffering of Muslims through online content seems to be related to the possibility of a proliferation of jihadists and with it, an increase in the perceived threat that individuals 'radicalised online' can pose.

Also, the use of the internet by terrorist actors is presented as providing additional challenges for counterterrorism efforts, in fact, while intelligence agencies and social

media platforms seem to have measures in place to research and collect information from jihadi platforms, a complete removal of jihadist material online is next to impossible. In fact, the literature described how terrorist groups apply a strategy of diversification of the platforms to avoid being cut out completely. This diversification is also manifest in the use of 'mainstream' social media, such as Twitter, where a very high number of accounts belong to supporters of terrorist groups, in particular ISIS. Diversification does not only have the function of escaping online counterterrorism operations, but also diverse platforms are dedicated to different purposes. For example, websites can act as repository of practical and organisational knowledge (Kenney, 2010) while social media can help the organisation to provide information for a variety of audiences (supporters, enemies, general public) and to maintain the control of the narrative (Mair, 2016).

Interestingly, from the literature emerged that an analysis of the use of websites - especially related to Al Qaeda, was able to provide valid intelligence sources and information on the structure of a group and its level of decentralisation.

It follows that, if one considers terrorism as an operation of communication and counterterrorism operations as offering a different narratives, providers of counterterrorism measures and states can use online platforms in the same ways as terrorist organisations (Amble, 2012). This means that online material is seen also as useful and providing some advantage to plan and implement counterterrorism interventions, but also that the literature still showed a preoccupation with the potential that messages have to the individual.

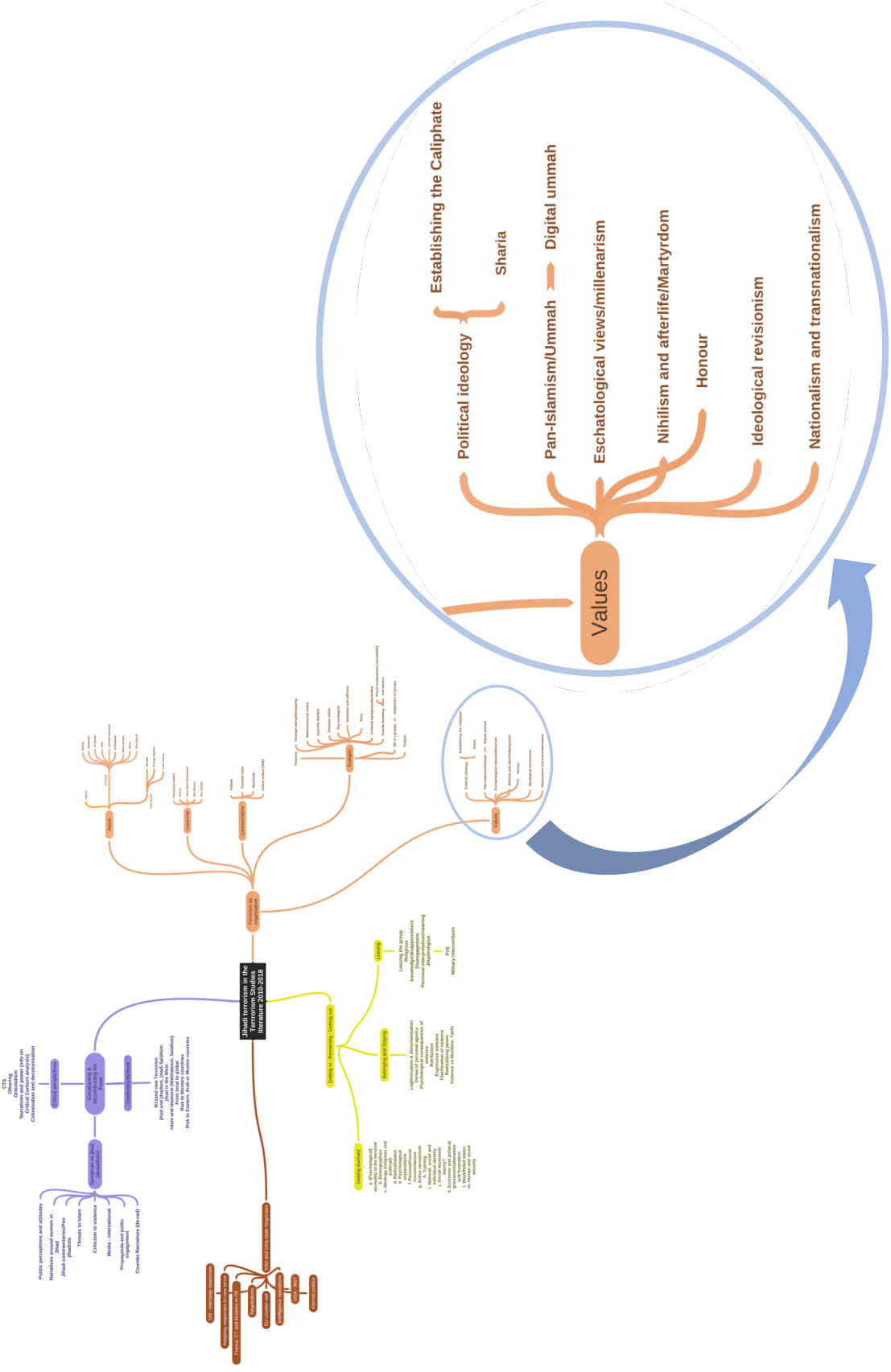


Figure 21: Microscopic view of the theme 'Values'

VALUES

The following section discusses the themes emerging from the articles categorised under 'Values' (39 articles).

The themes emerged from the articles in this category revolve around apocalyptic views, nationalism, transnationalism and pan-Islamism, nihilism and martyrdom, political ideology and political adjustment.

An important consideration to be made is about the fact that the values expressed here are both political and religious, and is not always possible to keep them distinct: in fact, those values that have a religious origin are often intertwined with practical implications.

18. Borders

In terms of number of articles, the literature seemed to focus on the dimension of borders (or lack thereof), with 23 articles coded under this theme.

The literature mostly considered Al Qaeda and ISIS and described them as characterised by a lack or a refusal of national borders per se. This becomes evident both in the case of foreign fighters who decide to travel to Syria (Mishali-Ram, 2017, Nilsson, 2015), and in the cases of those conflicts that begin as national and then assume transnational tones. This is the case, for example, of the conflict in Chechnya (addressed earlier in this chapter), which started as a conflict to revendicate the independence of the Chechens and ended up acquiring a transnational tendency through the framing of the conflict in Islamist terms (Garner, 2013). This conflict is

highlighted and framed as a resistance to the occupation of Muslim territories, that needed to be liberated and hence, the conflict invited volunteers to join the fight in the territory (Moore, 2015). Similarly, the conflict in Kashmir is described as following a similar pattern, such conflict is compared to the one in Chechnya in relation to the way in which a "political leadership wrapped itself in the mantle of Islam" (Garner, 2013: 424), even when the conflict began with secular revindications.

In the instances described borders are a relevant dimension because they are crossed and re-designed according to the movement needs and aims. This also fits in the preoccupation of the literature with the idea of a 'new terrorism' which targets the far enemy and has a far reach, allowing the groups to fight the far enemy everywhere. It is important to highlight that this representation of the groups as lacking or rejecting national boundaries stands in contraction with the literature analysed earlier in the context of Al Qaeda and its affiliates. Such Al Qaeda affiliates have in their name an indication of their own geographical collocation (Al Qaeda in Iraq, Al Qaeda in the Arabic Peninsula, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) and were earlier discussed as linked to specific local grievances. This perspective on boundaries also partially contrasts with the literature which analysed ISIS as a group behaving as a state in the provision of services, but is also in contrast with the literature where the group's emergence was linked to the power vacuum left after the US occupation in Iraq, so again connected with localised power issues.

Borders also seem to be relevant in the case of long-distance nationalism, and the literature looked at individuals who joined Al-Shabaab in Somalia, from Canada (Ilardi, 2013). These articles saw a feeling of nationalist pride as a factor for these

individual to join, and seemed to relegate religious ideology to a secondary factor. Similarly, another article looks at the relationship and between fighters who travel from Australia join jihadist or nationalist groups in Lebanon (Harris-Hogan and Zammit, 2014), and highlights a similar instance of nationalistic connection that brings individuals of Lebanese descent to travel to Lebanon.

Borders can, however, also represent a barrier or a challenge to the group which, for some reason needs to cross it. D'Amato (2017) looked at groups in North Africa (focusing on AQIM – Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb), which are, at their inception, local but then need to adopt transnationality as a survival strategy. This was the case for AQIM (Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) which is seen as having to become transnational with high costs at the physical (e.g. movement of resources and lack of knowledge on the new territory), social (e.g. bottom up support, coming from the new local population) and strategic level (e.g. adapting to new counterterrorism measures employed by the new host state).

19. Religious values

As part of the theme of religious ideas, two sub-themes emerged:

a. Ummah
b. Martyrdom and honour

a. Ummah

The Ummah is defined in the literature as the Islamic community, which is supra-ethnic (Mishali-Ram, 2017) and transcending national borders. In the scope of this

analysis, this topic will be treated as a religious value for two reasons: because belonging to the Ummah is, at least in theory, dependent on being Muslim and because the notion of Ummah is at times supported by leaders and preachers through Quranic references (Barr and Herfroy-Mischler, 2017, Hellmich, 2014). This notion is only partially challenged in the literature: Cherney and Murphy (2016) in their article looked at the issues around the adoption of the moderate/extreme label to talk about Muslims living in the West (more of this later in this chapter) and highlight how it is problematic to employ such a simplistic dichotomy to talk about a variegated group of people. Also, McCauley and colleagues (2011), in the context of 'Tackling the war of Ideas' surveyed Canadian Muslims and discussed how disapproving the action of the Canadian government did not mean approving a terrorist group aim/means. Overall, there is not a sense of an impending threat when talking about the Ummah, but there seems to be a feeling that it is referred to and treated as a monolith. Discourses around the Ummah in the literature cannot be completely divided from discourses on borders; even our perception of communities is often based on the nation-state entity at the personal level, and this seems to be reflected in the literature.

The concept of Ummah is also used by jihadist leaders with a political meaning and culminates in the creation of a Caliphate (Nilsson, 2018), as will be discussed later.

The articles in this section considered the Ummah from different points of view: for example, Hellmich (2014) looked at how the concept of Ummah has been used by Al Qaeda, and noticed that the Ummah is mainly described as suffering at the hand of unbelievers (and invasions) such as the USA. This representation of the Ummah by bin Laden has two main results: the first is that it allows jihad to be framed as a

defensive action, and the second is that it is part of a critique to modern (secularised) Islam. Through the claim that the Ummah is oppresses and suffering, bin Laden can call for a unification and awakening of the Ummah to fight back (Holbrook, 2013). The article (Hellmich, 2014) also provided an overview of the challenges faced in the establishment of the Ummah, which, the paper linked to the end of the last Caliphate in 1924. The paper specified that while the concept of Ummah as Muslim solidarity is widely accepted, an agreement on how the political Ummah should be formed and governed is still far from being reached.

All together it seems that the literature's employment of the notion of Ummah parallels that of the terrorist groups that also use the concept, so the Ummah is perceived to a certain extent unified. Such consideration goes in tandem with the adoption of labels such as 'moderate' and 'radical' Muslims, discussed earlier in this chapter, and brings the need to question the underpinning assumption of these labels. So, if the Ummah is a unitary entity and there is the need to apply a black and white type of labelling such as 'moderate' and 'extreme' to refer to Muslims, the threat is implicitly seen as coming from all Muslims. This also means that Muslim identity in relation to terrorism involvement should be engaged with more nuance: real life is rife with policy examples of how the Ummah is considered to be monolithic and *potentially at risk all together*. The PREVENT policy in UK, the French counterterrorism efforts to invest Muslim clerics of the responsibility to detect radicals, the more recent of Swiss 'Burqa-ban" are all examples of this conflation of Muslim identity with terrorism, and of a monolithic view of Islam, turned into policy.

b. Martyrdom and Honour

The second value analysed in the literature is that of martyrdom: discourses on martyrdom in the literature are articulated around three main points: the difference between suicide and martyrdom, martyrdom as at the intersection of values and strategy, and finally, martyrdom as a rational choice and these will be addressed in the section below.

The distinction between suicide and martyrdom is not only relevant in term of terminology, but also because looking at the act of taking own's life as martyrdom subtends to the dimension of sacrifice and to the person's intention. While suicide is frowned upon -religiously speaking- and is viewed as egoistic, martyrdom is seen as pro-social self-sacrifice and at times depicted as desirable, by jihadist groups which use suicide attacks as a strategy (Weimann, 2011). Also, the difference between suicide and martyrdom is sanctioned at the religious level, and one article looked specifically at the use of cyber-fatwas (broadly translatable as 'teachings') (Weimann, 2011) and at how the difference is set between suicide (religiously sanctioned) and martyrdom (encouraged in jihadi discourse). This difference between suicide and martyrdom also set the tone for the discussion on martyrdom as a rational choice. In fact, while the person who commits suicide is deemed to be punished in the afterlife, the person who sacrifices their own life for jihad is abundantly rewarded. Hence, in the context of being rewarded in the afterlife for sacrificing for the good of the Ummah, martyrdom appears as a rational choice where the reward is nor tangible or immediate.

However, it seems that rewards in the afterlife are not the only reasons individuals decide to sacrifice themselves, albeit some described martyrdom as their higher

aspiration (Dawson and Amarasingam, 2016). Their personal status while still alive changes as being a martyr is highly considered, and so the status of their families is also said to change. In fact, Perry and Hasisi (2014) reported that the families of martyrs are rewarded with status and economic support, which points to the fact that individuals who sacrifice their lives are not driven by irrationality but underwent a process of benefit-cost evaluation.

In this context, the discussion on martyrdom in the as focused on values and on rational choice seems to be in contrast with the literature analysed earlier around suicide bombing which saw the literature interested in investigating the psychology of the suicide bombers which looks at them from the lenses of psychopathology. Nonetheless, even if in a framework of rational choice, it seems the individual is depicted as someone who blindly believes to the promises in the afterlife with no critique of it. The community is also represented as being accepting the narratives on afterlife rewards and is also described as be part of the socialisation process, in perpetuating the value of honour in martyrdom.

While martyrdom has a meaning for the one who performs it, the individual at the top of the organisations might add another level of meaning to the act of the suicide bombers. For example, groups as Hamas and ISIS are known to employ as well as encouraging suicide attacks through martyrdom narratives that highlight the privilege and status of the martyr.

Hamas has made of suicide attacks its prominent combat strategy and provides both justification at the practical and religious level (Litvak, 2010), on the other hand, ISIS has also insisted on the importance of martyrdom. The literature indicated that martyrdom is, in fact, one of the main topic of ISIS magazine Rumyiah (Lakomy,

2018). The groups are both represented in the literature as encouraging suicide attack for practical and strategic reasons: in the case of Hamas, it is related to the damage that suicide attacks inflict on Israeli forces, in the case of ISIS the employment of suicide attacks is a way to respond to territorial losses.

20. Political ideology

From the articles coded under the theme of political ideology, two main sub-themes emerged, one relates to the establishment of the Caliphate, and another, linked to the first, about the implementation of Sharia. Below, the sub-theme of the Caliphate is discussed.

a. The Caliphate

While the establishment of Caliphate is dealt with, more specifically, in relation to groups such as ISIS, and more recently ISIS-K (an ISIS affiliate which looks at securing territory in the Khorasan region encompassing Middle East and Central and South Asia), the Islamic State was not the only group to have this aim at its forefront. According to the literature, Al Qaeda also aimed at creating a supra-state form of government where to have a united Ummah. Contrary to ISIS, however, while for Al Qaeda the establishment of the Caliphate is seen as an obligation, it is a more distant one, that has to go through the falling of corrupt Muslim governments and Europe's weakening (Gartenstein-Ross and Vassefi, 2012).

Interestingly, while the Caliphate is part of other groups' political project, such as ISIS, this was not immediately taken seriously (which probably reflects the strong hold that the nation-state has as political entity in the modern world). In fact, ISIS

apocalyptic ideology was initially dismissed as simply delusional and also its proclamation of the Caliphate in 2014 in Syria and Iraq was not taken seriously, even if the name of the group had their political ideology clearly stated (Islamic State) (Barr and Herfroy-Mischler, 2017).

The sources analysed also looked at other group actors and their ideology, for example Jones and Smith (2010) and Mohamed Osman (2010) considered at Hizb-ut-Tahrir in Indonesia (HTI), and the possibility that it might engage in violence to reach the establishment of the Caliphate. However, the articles pointed to the fact that rather than looking at HTI as a 'conveyor belt' towards violence, the group attempted to work within the institutions and, therefore, is portrayed as having the potential to prevent people from doing engaging in violence.

Overarching Theme IV: constructing and deconstructing the threat.

This last overarching theme "constructing and deconstructing the threat" analyses how terrorism in the literature is constructed, looks for where is the threat and where it is framed as coming from. This last section also pertains to how the threat can be deconstructed and which critical concepts and tools the literature applies to do so. 137 articles are coded in this macro-area, which has 3 themes: Constructing and deconstructing the threat, Narratives on Jihad and Critical Perspectives.

21. Critical perspectives on terrorism and terrorism studies

This section focuses on the critical perspectives (24 articles coded under this theme), which is organised around 5 sub-themes:

a. Critical Terrorism Studies
b. Orientalism
c. colonisation and decolonisation
d. othering
e. Narratives and power

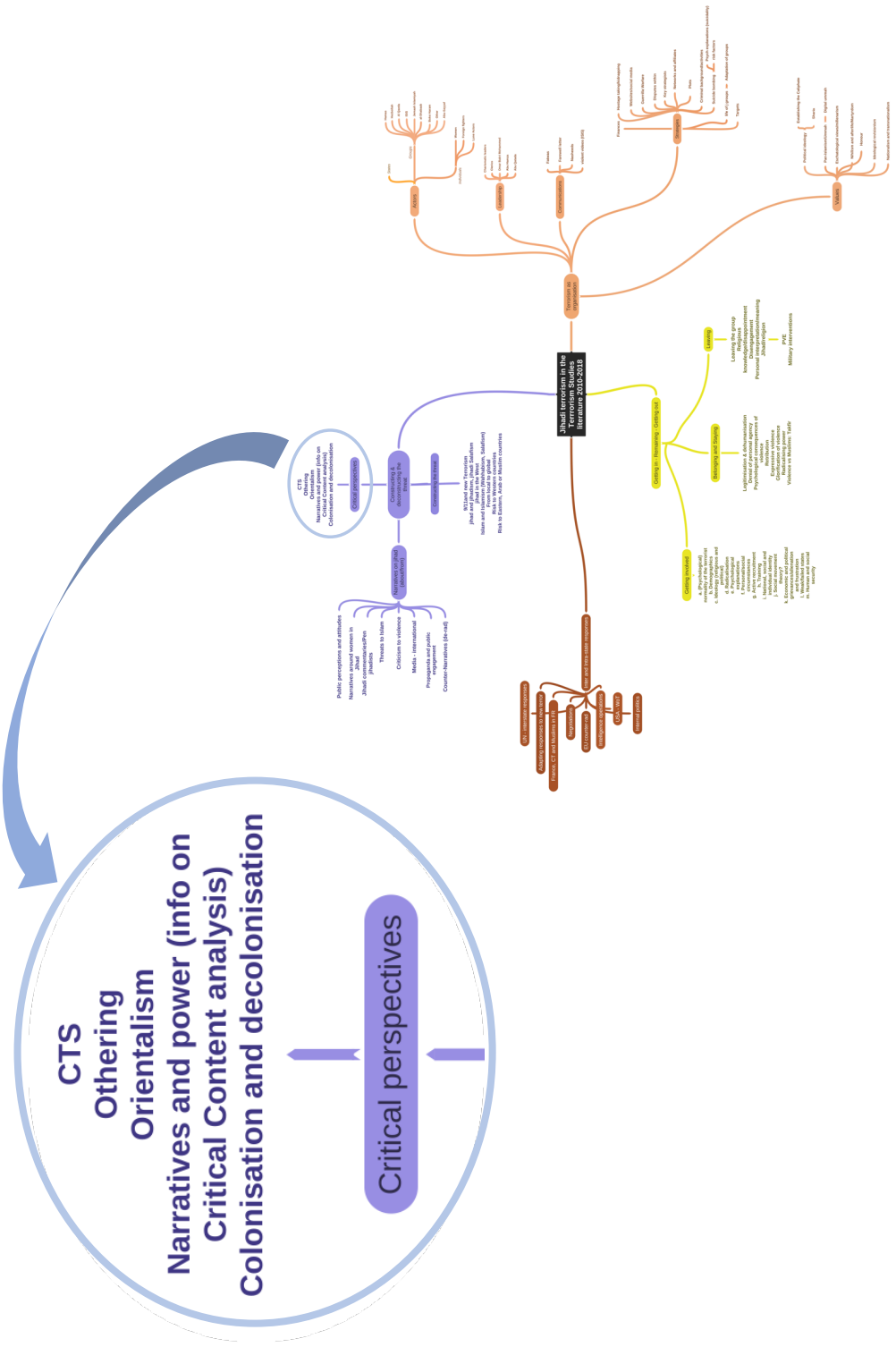


Figure 22: Microscopic view of the theme 'Critical Terrorism Studies'

a. Orientalism

Three articles dealt with Orientalism in Terrorism literature at different depths. These three articles mentioned Orientalism in relation to the representation of Dabiq, in relation to the intersection of Orientalism and gender, and criticising the critical perspectives as ignoring completely ideology's involvement in causing terrorism.

In the literature analysed Orientalism seemed to be presented consistently in accordance with the concept as developed by Edward Said (1978). As such this construct emerged from the narratives around terrorism, for example, when the graphic of Dabiq, the English language magazine published by ISIS, is defined as 'slick' or when there was an expectation of a product that was somewhat 'less' and rough (Al-Dayel, 2018).

One article dealt with Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HUT) and seemed instead to criticise Critical Terrorism Studies and its consideration of Orientalism. The source described HUT as justifying actions and grievances through narratives that have been discussed in the West (Jones and Smith, 2010). The narratives used by HUT are seen as being provided by Critical Terrorism Study, and the article seemed to subtend to the fact that critiques of the West or 'mainstream terrorism studies' can be dismissed as non-relevant. Finally, Orientalism was provided as a prism to analyse how of the Muslim woman is constructed. While the sex/gender hierarchy discourse is maintained in this framework, Orientalism adds an additional layer of interpretation in that brown (and, in particular, Muslim) women are portrayed as in need to be saved, presumably by a white man from a barbaric brown -Muslim- man. In relation to this Martini (2018: 459) reported: "Muslim women are mainly understood as oppressed and passive

victims, and this image is reinforced visually by Islamic garments such as the hijab or the burqa, which the West usually interpret as signs of oppression". Orientalism is not only surfacing in the way Muslim women are portrayed (to be saved, over infantilised) but also in the way this portrait happens as a 'negative' of the West, implicitly assumed as superior.

b. Colonisation and decolonisation

A larger number of articles (7) took into consideration processes of colonisation and decolonisation and their legacy. These articles analysed these processes in different contexts, including Palestine, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Caribbean, the UK and Nigeria. Among these articles there is a sense that societies that were in past colonised still live with the legacy of colonisation at multiple levels. Such legacy is not only manifest in the relationship between countries or in their internal (in)stability, but also in the discourses that are applied *to talk about* the population of that country. For example, when analysing the way in which Boko Haram is dealt with, it is highlighted how BH is still represented in a position of subalternity if compared to the West, almost deprived of agency. In this sense, the narratives on Boko Haram seem to follow the power relationship and distance between West/Orient (Wyszomierski, 2015). These narratives also led to ignoring the neglect of basic human rights and needs that are -among other factors- at the base of the success of Boko Haram (Yusuf, 2013).

But colonialism-related narratives did not only emerge, in the literature, from narratives on subjects that are geographically far, as Boko Haram in Nigeria. They also emerged from the narratives that the UK applied to British Muslims in the

context of the PREVENT strategy (Qureshi, 2015). Narratives at the base of PREVENT seem to betray the assumption that Islam is to be sanitised of its threatening elements and can be only accepted in a version that is Western-approved (or UK approved in the specific case). In this framework, the radical is 'created' and constructed in the process of creating a strategy of prevention.

c. Othering

"Othering is the simultaneous construction of the self or in-group and the other or out-group in mutual and unequal opposition" (Brons, 2015: 70). The process of Othering is based on the definition of desirable and undesirable characteristics, which allows for the *othered* group to be de-humanised and degraded, from the discursive to the practical level. This idea of 'the other' is harnessed, in a discursive framework, by those able to produce information and are communicated to influence the audiences' ideas. In part of the literature analysed, the Orient and the Muslim population emerged as the 'ultimate other'. Its image is created in a specular way to the West, where 'we' are depicted in a self-serving positive way and 'they' are presented in a negative way. In the case of this analysis, some articles also dealt with the way Islam is depicted as an 'Other', distant, and backward (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2018). It is not a coincidence that part of the narratives on jihadi terrorism do look at the terrorist as irrational and guided by religious motives which, in the eye of the secular West are irrational. Again, the case of the narratives on Boko Haram can exemplify this representation, where the group is depicted as lacking agency, 'not able' to apply a strategic reasoning to its decision and therefore can only imitate the West or other groups in its strategy (Wyszomierski, 2015).

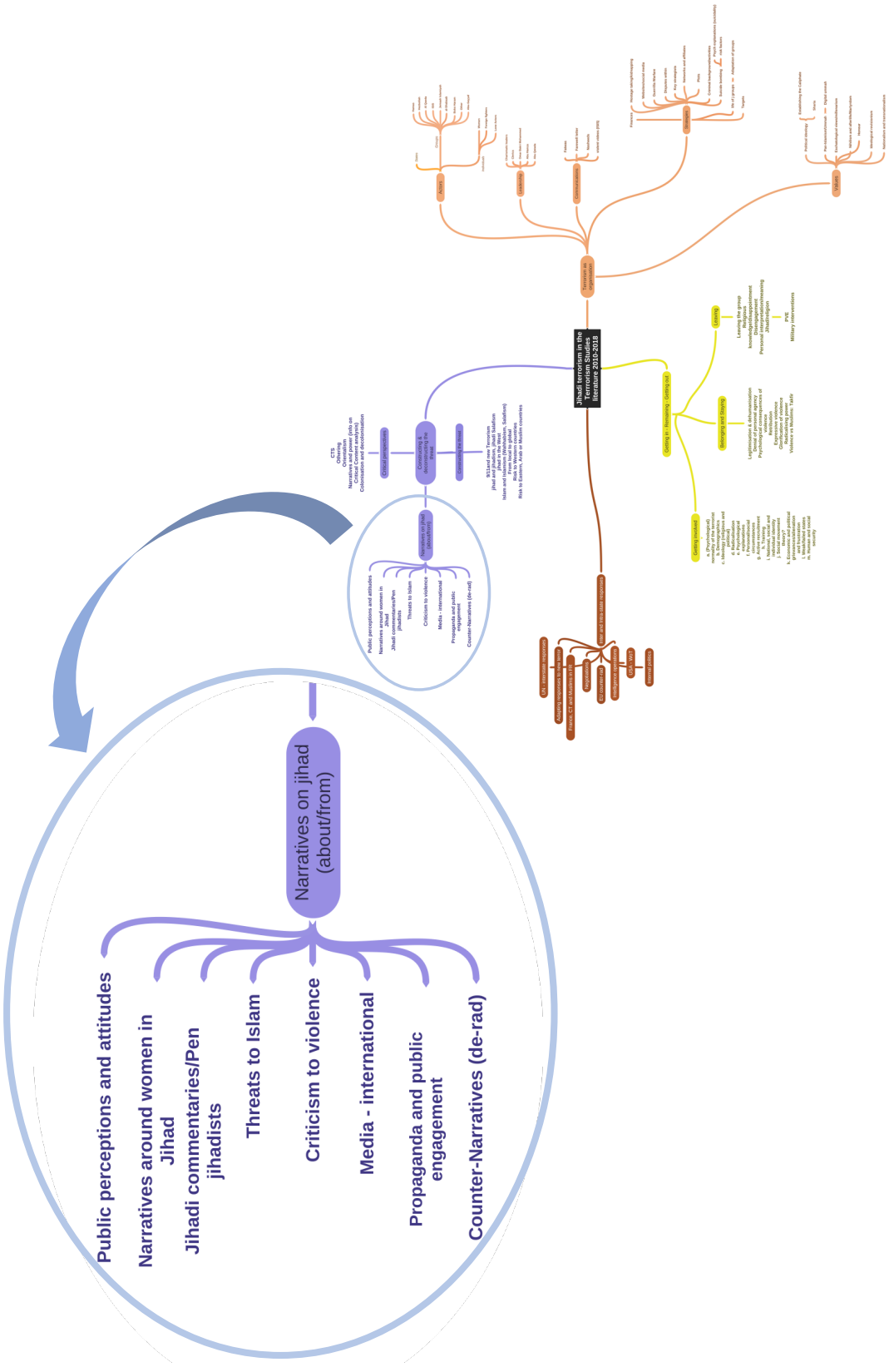


Figure 23: Microscopic view of the theme 'Narratives about jihad'

22. Narratives on Jihad

The second theme pertaining to the overarching theme of 'Constructing and deconstructing the threat' is that of 'Narratives on the Jihad'. This theme is connected to that of the critical perspectives in that it does not focus on what terrorist actors do or do not, rather, it looks at how actors and actions are portrayed and which narratives emerged from the literature analysed.

The articles belonging to this theme are in total 57 and are articulated around a number of sub-themes, which are:

a. Public perception of jihad
b. Jihad 'there'
c. Jihad 'here'
d. International Media
e. Counternarratives
f. Criticism to violence from other Islamic authorities
g. Threat to Islam

a. Public perception of jihad

13 articles are coded under the sub-theme of public perception of jihad and dealt with the support (or lack thereof) given to terrorist groups and to jihad, more in general.

Two dimensions emerged in the analysis of this sub-theme that could be summed up with 'jihad here' and 'jihad there': the literature looked at the support for groups of

for jihad in specific countries and in the West. In the earlier case, the literature focuses mainly on three areas: Pakistan, Iraq and Palestine. These articles explored the support that terrorist groups have among the population and attempt to provide an explanation for such support based on a range of factors among which ideology, sectarian tension, education and receipt of social services.

b. Jihad 'There'

Three articles centred on Pakistan and the support that the local population affords to different groups, among which are Therik-e-Taliban Pakistan and Al Qaeda. What emerged from these discussions on the situation in Pakistan, is the picture of a complex political context where support for terrorist groups is present and is not simply guided by ideology, even if that element is present in the form of a rejection of the status quo (Kaltenthaler et al., 2010). Armed jihad appeared to be seen as a legitimate means to achieve political change, together with other tools employed by terrorist groups. Such legitimisation of jihad seems to come from a general malcontent with the political situation, including internal politics, sectarian tensions, and the conflict in Kashmir (Fair et al., 2010). Similarly, aspects which in the discourse on extremism and terrorism became part of the common parlance, such as Sharia, seemed to be read in the light of the political situation; in fact, from the literature it surfaced how the support for a stricter application of Sharia is not closely related to stronger religious beliefs, but rather to the perception of Sharia as a form of good governance (ibid.).

In addition, one article looked at internal tensions in Pakistan coming from Islamist groups that oppose to the collaboration of the Saleh government with the USA in the

ambit of counterterrorism. Such tensions did not originate merely as a response of Islamist groups to the Saleh government, but mostly as a consequence of the counterterrorism campaign of the USA, which deployed drone strikes. The resulting loss of civilians framed as 'collateral damage', together with the previous history of collaboration between Taliban and USA during the Cold War are discussed in this section of the literature as the main reasons for these internal tensions (Nazir, 2010). Kaltenthaler and colleagues (2018) focused instead on the support that Iraqi people provided to ISIS and analysed it in relation to the availability of media information on the actions of the group and the education of the individual who avails of the information. Considering the amount, type and quality of the propaganda put in place by ISIS, it makes sense to understand the factors which can influence the support from the local population of Iraq. Such support seems to be given on the base of access to information material not coming directly form ISIS, and on the base of the feeling of safety that is perceived as coming from ISIS itself (Kaltenthaler et al., 2018).

Palestine, Hamas and Hezbollah are also represented in the literature, with reference to the provision of social services by the group and the support that this can elicit both at the electoral and military level. However, while reciprocity could point to an increase support for Hamas following the provision of social services (Flanigan and O'Brien, 2015, Szekely, 2015), there are additional factors impacting on such support. Namely, the grievances and disillusionment stemming from the action of the Palestinian government (Flanigan and O'Brien, 2015) and the ability of other actors to successfully mobilise support. This result is not surprising and is reflected in researched carried out elsewhere with other terrorist groups: Delia Deckard et al.

(2015), to bring an example, looked at the support that local populations give to Boko Haram and found that support is not directly correlated to religious alignment but rather to the failure and corruption at the state level.

What emerged as a common thread among the articles analysed, is that the literature saw support for terrorist groups in the Middle East as related to (mostly) internal political grievances that become expressed through the support for the group. In the case of Hamas, Hezbollah and ISIS, support was also gained by the groups' provision of welfare services which filled a power vacuum.

Understanding the reasons for supporting a terrorist group is surely important, however, there seems to be an assumption that the support to the group is simply given, and that often there is no other incentive (such as fear) to provide said support. By doing this, it seems that the articles neglected the victimisation of people in the Middle East and the fact that these people find themselves between a rock and a hard place when it comes to supporting a corrupt government or a violent group.

c. Counternarratives

A third sub-theme formed in the analysis of the literature is that of counternarratives and is a theme that mainly converged on delegitimising the terrorist actors' propaganda. Hence, the articles coded under 'counternarratives' looked at forms of strategic communications with the aim of preventing engagement and promoting disengagement.

Articles coded under this sub-theme took in consideration narratives provided in different circumstances, as, for example the case of recruitment of women joining ISIS, and the use that narratives could have in unveiling the truth about women's treatment in ISIS controlled territories, as opposed to what the group promises in its propaganda (Peresin and Cervone, 2015). In this context, counternarratives could rely on the same discursive tools as the propaganda narratives, but are described as needing cognitive opening, a common ground, as a starting point (Nilsson, 2018). Counternarratives are described as instruments to be tuned and hence, adjusted on the base of the audience (Ingram, 2016, Muhanna-Matar, 2017) and are mainly considered in relation to their potential for counterterrorism.

More critical is the stance taken by Antúnez and Tellidis (2013), who looked at the difficulties that Western countries face in delegitimising the narratives proposed by Al Qaeda. Such difficulties are described as deriving from a lack of terminology that not only ignores political grievances but harms entire communities through the application of the 'Islamist' label and of the conflation of terrorism with Islam (ibid.).

d. Criticism of violence from other Islamic authorities

Present in the literature is also the theme of criticism of violence coming 'from within' a group or from other communities/actors.

Criticism of the use of violence came from different sources, for example Wagemakers (2011; 2017) reported that al Maqdisi criticised the use of violence encouraged by al Zarqawi in that, al Maqdisi contended, violence should be strategic and increase support, not alienating other Muslims that could join or support the

jihad. Such indiscriminate use of violence is dealt with as the base for the decreased support for Al Qaeda in Iraq, since jihad was "tarnished" by the killing en masse doctrine which killed those Muslims it should have protected (Brahimi, 2010).

Kamolnick (2013) took instead a legalistic approach and discussed the thorough legal objections to the use of violence put forward by Sayyd Imam, a "former Al Qaeda *Sharia* guide" (ibid.: 394, emphasis in original), and recognised their value for counterterrorism interventions.

On the other hand, criticism to the use of violence is not only directed at Al Qaeda, or at ISIS, but also towards the USA and its counterterrorism operations. The USA and the media worldwide seem to have almost unanimously accepted the narrative of the War on Terror, nonetheless as it is presented in a *war frame* violence coming from terrorist groups is fought with further violence. This has a series of negative consequences: the first is to blanket-label Islam as a threat, not allowing for a consideration of the heterogeneity existing within Islam and facilitating the application of indiscriminate counterterrorist operations. The second consequence is that indiscriminate counterterrorism operations promote an image of the USA where counterterrorist aims and tools don't match, and therefore the picture emerging is that of the USA as almost exclusively interested in the use of war as endgame in opposing terrorism (McIntosh, 2014).

e. Threat to Islam

Another of the narratives on jihad revolves around threats to Islam, 8 articles are coded under this sub-theme, which made reference to the narratives used by terrorist actors to foster support and justify their actions.

Islam is perceived and portrayed as being under attack, which comes under the form of destruction of the Muslim world, as well as under that of corruption of local governments. Such grievances are explained by the malcontent that some Muslims have experienced in Muslim countries as well as in the West, due to unfavourable (and often outright stigmatising) policies (Abbas, 2012). The latter are well exemplified in the laws implemented in Belgium and in the Netherlands to prohibit the use of headscarves in public places (also known as 'burqa-ban' (Van San, 2015).

It is not unforeseen then, that political developments that do regulate the lives of Muslims, weather living in Muslim-majority countries or in the West, were picked up by, amongst others, Al Qaeda and ISIS as a demonstration of the aggression that is perpetrated against Muslims worldwide. In fact, both Al Qaeda's Inspire and ISIS' Dabiq promote an image of an Ummah under attack and in crisis and attempts to appeal to these sentiments to elicit support and recruitment (Ingram, 2016). It in this context that Al Qaeda and ISIS can pose themselves as bearer of a solution that comes through violence, and in the case of ISIS, is also openly expressed through the distribution of violent videos.

Hence, the narrative of threat to Islam becomes part of the literature mostly when is used as explanations of propaganda and actions by terrorist actors and does not seem to consider in depth the relevance of political grievances that terrorist groups exploit.

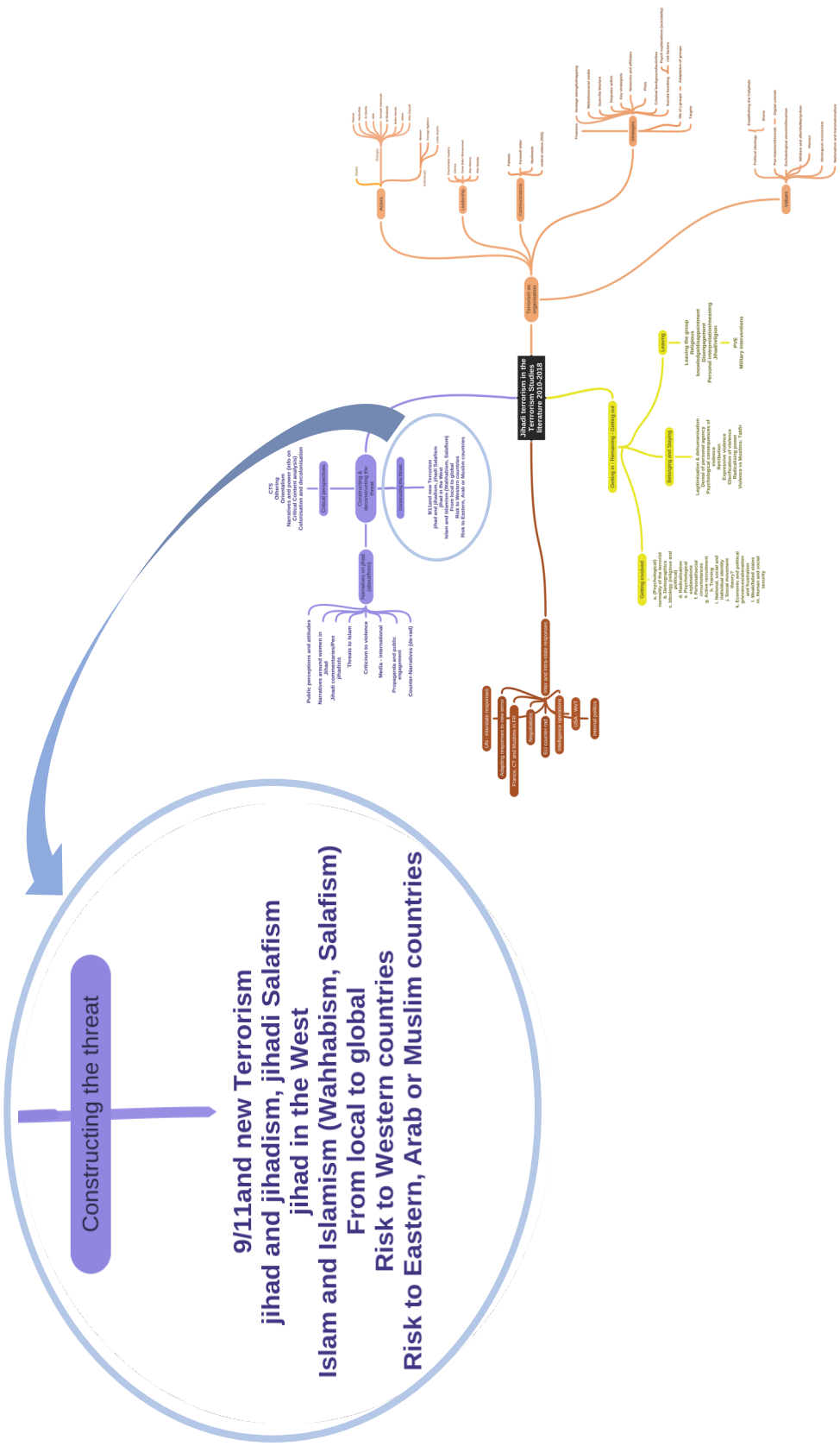


Figure 24: Microscopic view of the theme 'Constructing and deconstructing the threat'

23. Constructing the threat

The overarching theme of 'constructing and deconstructing the threat' is also related to the theme of 'constructing the threat' and contains articles that provide insight on how the threat of jihadi terrorism is constructed in the literature. A total of 90 articles are coded under this theme (while the total of the overarching theme is 137) and look at how the terrorism threat is constructed and debated in the literature published in a time span from 10 to 18 years from 9/11.

The sub-themes that are part of this theme are:

a. Islamism and Islam
b. Jihad and Jihadism
c. 9/11
d. New Terrorism
e. Threat to Arab world

Once read and analysed the articles, the above-mentioned sub-themes can be organised around two aspects, the first is represented by construction of the threat in the literature and which revolves around the notions of jihad and jihadism, Islam and Islamism, as well as around the change represented by 9/11 and the inception of what was defined as 'New Terrorism'. The second aspect emerging is a distinction between threats and risk perception following broad geographic lines, for which is possible to see how article describe a 'threat here' in the West and a 'threat there' in Muslim countries.

a. Islam and Islamism

The articles collected under this sub-theme dealt with the different strands of Islam, with a focus on Salafi and Salafi Jihadi Islam. Salafi Muslims are those who aim at returning to an ancient reading of Islam and its Scriptures and wish to follow the steps of those that were closer to Mohammed (Cottee, 2010). Islam is seen as a way of life, guiding both public and private life, prescribed by the word of God directly and thus, not open to be questioned. However, Salafism is only one expression of Islam, revived in the second decade of the twentieth century and it can be practiced in violent and non-violent ways. For example, in talking about the situation in Gaza, Milton-Edwards (2013) mentioned how the Salafi movements in the area are generally opposed to Hamas and, even if they don't view democratically elected authorities as legitimate, they respect them and will not use violence to overthrow them. While Salafists overall are described as a fundamentalist movement (Cottee, 2010) they are clearly differentiated in the literature from Salafi-Jihadists by virtue of the mode of actions, as the latter see violence as a legitimate tool to reach their goal (Nuraniyah, 2018).

A portion of the articles also looked at Islamism, defined as a religious (Mishali-Ram, 2017) and political ideology (Campana and Ducol, 2014). In this representation Islamism has a religious and political dimension to it (Mishali-Ram, 2017), but remains nonetheless heterogeneous (Campana and Ducol, 2014). In fact, radical manifestations of Islamism also exist, as they also adhere to a strict reading of the Quran and aim at the implementation of a political leadership that would reflect God's sovereignty, in an Islamic State and of Sharia as a way of living (Alonso, 2012).

Part of these articles were interested in the relationship between Islam and terrorism, and a number of articles pointed to the potential for radicalisation that might be intrinsic in Islam (ibid.). Such potential seems to peak and is described as exacerbated by the lack of integration and the tensions among 2nd and 3rd generation Muslims living abroad (Jones and Smith, 2010) who try to conciliate the dichotomy between religion and secularism (Sirseloudi, 2012).

The literature also highlighted the reformist aspects of Islam (in the sense of Islam as a 'young' religion that aims at correcting the 'mistakes' by Judaism and Christianism) Martin and Smith (2011) pointed to some manifestation of Salafi-Jihadism as innovative, as for example new interpretation and readings of the scriptures around takfirism (apostasy) and suicide, as proposed by Salafi-jihadi groups (Cottee, 2016 does so in the context of investigating what 'ISIS really wants').

But innovations do not always come from violent movements, and this topic is treated in the context of movements that are trying to integrate in their political thought constitutionalism and democracy, especially in the aftermath of the Arab Spring (Milton-Edwards, 2012; Muhanna-Matar, 2017). This includes Salafi parties, which are trying to modify their political thought, some are described as having renounced aspects that were closer to militant/jihadi Salafism and have begun to "adopt some democratic element" (Ranko and Nedza, 2015: 531).

The literature also presented some critical considerations on the treatment of Islam in relation to terrorism. For example, Antúnez and Tellidis (2013) looked at the limitations of the vocabulary used by the West to differentiate the ideology of Al Qaeda from mainstream Islam, and non-violent Salafism. This lack of terminology

happens to the detriment of the majority of Muslims, which are peaceful, and Muslim countries which are those suffering the most from terrorist attacks (ibid).

This difficulty in differentiating between religious and political thought of different groups, had also led to the adoption of a differentiation between 'moderate' and 'extreme' Muslims, which, as discussed in the previous sections, is a stigmatising and problematic label. This leads to the construction of an "acceptable face of Islam" (Francis, 2015: 916), which not-too-implicitly constructs a distinction between good and bad Muslims.

Finally, articles which adopted a critical perspective also talked about the impact that Orientalism has on the way Islam is conceived, for example, through highlighting its exceptionalism, and treating it as "unique amongst faiths" (Dunning, 2015: 294) that provides unquestionable instructions for both public and private life. Such accounts fail to consider the notion of 'itjihad', the exercise of independent reasoning required and encouraged in the Quran itself (Dunning, 2015).

Lastly, Conrad and Milton (2013) and Eroukhmanoff (2015) looked at how, in the aftermath of 9/11, the thesis of religious fundamentalism took hold and terrorism post 9/11 was hypothesised to belong to the '4th wave', which is guided by religious motives (Conrad and Milton, 2013) and as such, understood as not open to negotiations (Francis, 2015). As a consequence of the central role attributed to religious fundamentalism in the construction of the 'new terrorism' Islam became securitised, a process made possible happens through the use of dehumanising and othering language, which allowed for the adoption of special measures to deal with the threat (Eroukhmanoff, 2015).

b. New Terrorism

Discourses on 'new terrorism' and discourses on 9/11 can be considered as linked, even if narratives on religious terrorism are not exclusive to the post-9/11 period (Stohl, 2012). This 'new terrorism' seemingly presents new challenges for which old strategies are not deemed effective (Dolnik and Fitzgerald, 2011). Other characteristics of this new terrorism are increased dynamism (McCoy and Knight, 2015) and a *love for death* (Dolnik and Fitzgerald, 2011) that renders negotiations with such actors ineffective (Stohl, 2012). The consideration of such characteristics in the literature is important, as it means that the narrative about this new, reckless terrorist is one that erases the opportunity to engage in any form of communication and negotiation with them, and that only possible interventions are military. This representation ultimately fits in the frame of the War on Terror as the sole path to end terror.

While there are not many articles that dealt with the concept of 'new terrorism', only 5 articles are coded under this sub-theme, it is important to consider this aspect of the discourse as it can provide useful pointers to the shift in the threat perception of jihadi terrorism.

Furthermore, the idea of *this* terrorism to be something runs throughout the literature on jihadism in different forms: the literature at times pointed to a neo-jihadism, as well to the use of innovations such as the implementation and framing of suicide attacks as martyrdom. While the debate on whether this terrorism is still new or not, throughout the literature there are often references to innovation and to insurgence of new groups through the lenses of novelty. For example, it was discussed earlier how ISIS has been labelled 'a different beast', in spite of the

literature's awareness of the pattern of power vacuum post-military occupation that created a fertile ground for such groups to grow. The focus on novelty could be an indication of the reactionary nature of the field, as well as of its problem-solving attitude, which renders necessary a clear definition of the problem to evaluate and propose new measures to tackle it. This is also reflected in the fact that overall what happened pre and post 9/11 is not placed on a continuum but is instead represented as two different *terrorisms*.

c. The threat 'there' – Threat to Muslim-majority countries

Finally, the literature, albeit in minor part, looks at the threat in Muslim-majority countries. Three articles are coded under this sub-theme: two of them were interested in Arab foreign fighters, the third considered instead the threat coming from ISIS.

In the first case, the articles questioned what is the trajectory that Arab foreign fighters could take once returned from the conflict, considering a return rate of approximately 30% (Byman, 2015). The article highlighted the lack of a single possible path, and envisaged different possibilities, such as:

- Returning and take part in local conflict
- Remain there in the country to fight
- Returning to the home countries but maintaining the links with established organisations
- Return to the home countries without the intention to take up arms, but then ending up doing so following lack of integration and sectarian tensions.

Similarly, Reiff (2018) looked at Shi'a foreign fighters who fought in Syria against ISIS and also emphasised how their trajectory upon return is not definitive. Additionally, the experience of Shi'a foreign fighters could end up being exploited by local governments, in the hope of being able to deploy their military ability against other enemies (such as Iran's intention to use them against Israel).

Finally, Aghazadeh Khoei (2015) took into consideration the threat from ISIS to Iran, considering that Shi'a in Iran, Iraq and Bahrain are targeted by ISIS. The article traces the origin of the recent tensions between Sunni and Shi'a from 1979 (post Iranian revolution) and highlights the consequences of such tensions on the politics of the Middle East, including the exacerbation of sectarian tensions in the area.

Only a minority of literature considered that Muslim-majority countries are the most hit by terrorism and researched them in this fashion; the amount of articles that investigated the risk that these countries run to be hit by terrorist attacks is low and this seems to point to the fact that the literature is mainly concerned with the threat and risk to Western countries. Hence, the field seems to be biased in the preoccupation for almost solely Western victims of terrorism, and this is not only reflected at the academic level in the articles which consider the threat of terrorism to Western Countries, but also in other manifestations such as memorialisation of victims of terrorism attacks in the West. A stark example of this difference in treatment is represented by the media coverage and memorialisation of the attack to the Bataclan theatre in Paris in 2015, an attack which was later claimed by ISIS and which killed 137 people. However, during the same period, another ISIS attack took place in Beirut, Lebanon, and while it killed 43 people, the same attack did not

receive the same media coverage or manifestations of sympathy worldwide (Graham, 2015).

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results of the content analysis of 285 articles focusing on jihadi terrorism. The articles collected represent a large and coherent corpus or research and if compared with the body of research analysed for far-right terrorism (41 articles) the number of articles analysed is more than seven-fold. This is a first indication of the different levels of attention afforded to far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism, but in addition to this, the themes emerged from this analysis highlighted the presence of 4 overarching themes revolving around: a lifecycle approach to terrorism involvement, countering terrorism at the national and international level, terrorism seen as a group phenomenon and finally, the construction and deconstruction of the threat. These 4 overarching themes are in turn articulated around 23 themes (some, with related sub-themes) and the content analysis of these themes has underscored how the field is mainly focused on understanding the mechanisms of engagement in terrorism (and such engagement in the literature is mainly explained through the concept of radicalisation), more than it researches processes of staying in the group or leaving. Jihadi terrorism is also mostly seen as a group phenomenon, the vast number of articles focused on group actors, mainly al Qaeda and ISIS, and it is reasonable to think that the research has privileged these actors over other groups and individual as a response to the attacks on 9/11 and later, as a reaction to the 'novelty' and 'brutality' surrounding ISIS' actions. Other actors, such as women, lone actors and states, remain secondary in the literature.

The field also looks at the response to terrorist attacks, analysing the counterterrorism response both at the level of the single state (considering the use of preemptive detention, surveillance and PVE programmes), both at the international level, and it examines, in the analysis, the cooperation between states and also include the UN response to the attacks by al Qaeda. The research, albeit limited, also considers military interventions and some articles do also look at the civilian damage that such intervention bear.

Finally, the research in Terrorism Studies which focuses on jihadi terrorism also looks at how the threat of terrorism is constructed and how terrorism after 9/11 is seen as new, many of these articles adopt a critical approach to Terrorism Studies, and introduce in the discourse on jihadi terrorism also notions of bias, Orientalism, while problematising the causal connection existing in the literature between Islam, Islamism and jihadi terrorism.

SECTION III: DISCUSSION AND FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION

The base assumptions of the field of Terrorism Studies

Introduction and aim of the project

This research project is interested in understanding how terrorism is framed and represented in the academic literature in Terrorism Studies. To do this, articles related to far-right inspired terrorism and jihadi inspired terrorism have been collected and then analysed as case studies to investigate the representation of terrorism in these two instances.

This research is limited to three Terrorism Studies Journal, selected on the base of their H-index (Hirschi impact factor for academic papers) for 2018 according to Scimago Journal Ranking. Such journals are: Terrorism and Political violence, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism and Critical Terrorism Studies and they have been researched from 2001 to 2018 for far-right terrorism and from 2010 to 2018 for jihadi terrorism (except for Critical Terrorism Studies, which was created in 2008 and hence researched from that year).

The timeframe for the research has been adapted for both far-right and jihadi samples primarily due to the impact of 9/11 and its aftermath. The event is recognised as a watershed moment in the emergence and development of terrorism studies. Predominantly however, it is recognised in the literature that post-9/11 we witnessed the proliferation of securitised narratives (Silke 2001 and 2004), deterministic interpretations of terrorism (Reid and Chen, 2007), racist and

Islamophobic interpretations of minority communities (Jackson, 2007) and analysis based on a very sparse evidence base. In his now famous piece, Sageman (2014) depicted terrorism studies as stagnant and chaotic, partly related to a lack of data and partly related to an unwillingness of security agencies to work with researchers. While other authors, for example Taylor (2014) have challenged Sageman's characterisation of the field, his views received broad support.

As a result in order to avoid capturing the teething problems of a subject in the early phases of its development (Jackson, 2012), the sample for the jihadi sample drew from post 2010 publications only. While some of the same problems exist in the case of the far-right, the impact of 9/11 was not nearly as relevant. The sample for the far-right was so limited, and on review of the material available, unrelated to the problems associated with jihadi terrorism post 9/11, even if the sample for this topic was drawn from the time period 2001 to 2018. In addition, the cut-off point for this research project warrants further explanation: the data collection phase for the far-right terrorism articles began at the start of 2019, and to make sure the literature collected was up-to-date it made sense to include every article published until the end of 2018. The second round of data collection, the one pertaining to jihadi terrorism articles, began in 2020 and was the result of this research project pivoting to an entirely desk based approach, following the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic by the WHO. Therefore, to avoid establishing an arbitrary cut-off point for the collection of jihadi terrorism articles, it made sense to maintain consistency and keep the cut-off point at the end of 2018 in this instance. Also, and as considered in the chapter on the discussion of far-right terrorism results, the field could have changed since 2019 in relation to the far-right, but the watershed moment for

Terrorism Studies publication on jihadi terrorism was, as mentioned earlier, 9/11, the starting year of the data collection time frame for both far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism.

As the field of terrorism studies developed and matured, many of the problems associated with terrorism research post 9/11 were overcome, and the field emerged as more self-critical, introspective, and more empirically grounded, however, as might be expected, there are still issues. Most recent reviews of the field of Terrorism Studies field tend to point to a field in better health, but worry about an inherent reactive tendency of contributors to the field, dominated by attention to jihadi Terrorism (Al Qaeda, ISIS and more in general focus on activities in the MENA region) (Schuurman, 2019) and most recently the emergence of ISISK (ISIS in Afghanistan and Pakistan). In recent years, the over reliance on secondary sources, media reports, studies based on very small numbers, and case study research has waned and increasingly there is research being conducted that draws on a stronger evidence base. Despite evidence of the field's improvement, the dominant focus on jihadi Terrorism has remained. Schuurman (2019) points out that in his analysis of the terrorism studies literature between 2007 and 2016, 74.5% of articles analysed between focused on jihadi groups. This of course means that other instances of terrorism from sub-state groups, to single actor, to the far-right were covered to a much lesser degree.

Many of the issues that have *washed out* in the more introspective and self-critical terrorism studies that evolved in the years after 9/11 are captured in the arguments of Jackson (2007). In 2007, Jackson highlighted how 'mainstream terrorism

knowledge' (as opposed to Critical Terrorism Studies), was strongly linked to state institutions, how there was a lack of a critical analysis on the structures and institutions that are relevant for understanding terrorism and how the field was both overtly and subtly highly influenced by the hegemonic powers. In an effort to rehabilitate the field, Jackson discusses the need to approach Terrorism Studies from a stance which considers new (critical) ontological, epistemological and ethical commitments that highlight how terrorism cannot be understood without understanding the power structures of those who do both terrorism and counter terrorism. In order to avoid capturing the output of these early debates, and in the context of the rapid growth in terrorism studies publications, this study sought to capture how in recent years terrorism is *represented* and what are the fundamental assumptions inherent in such representations.

Discussion of results

The results discussion will highlight six key issues in the field of Terrorism Studies; as mentioned above, these six key issues are reached through a process of compare and contrast between the findings related to far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism. These key issues can be further organised in two 'problem areas' pertaining to the attribution of responsibility when violent events happen and to the threat perception coming from terrorism. The table below, illustrates the organisation of the six key issues in the problem areas, and the discussion of the results below will follow the table's order.

Problem areas (the problems)	Key Issues
1. Attributing responsibility for violence?	1.a. Radicalisation and mainstreaming
	1.b. Understanding and attributing causality
	1.c. Women and terrorism – disempowerment VS agency
2. Threat perceptions	2.a. The impact of 9/11 on the field, on the groups and on this research
	2.b. Terrorism and the media
	2.a. Imagining the threat *vs* actual threat

Table 5: The problem areas and the key issues in the field of Terrorism Studies

Problem Area 1: The attribution of responsibility for violence

1.a Radicalisation and mainstreaming

At the most basic level of analysis, the data in this study demonstrates by virtue of the number of publications dedicated to jihadi and far-right terrorism, that jihadi terrorism received inordinately more attention than the far-right. Furthermore, through an in depth content analysis of the articles it is evident that far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism are represented via different frames. This was particularly apparent with the concept of radicalisation, a notion that gained prominence in relation to jihadi terrorism post 9/11. From a simple review of the use of the term, in the case of the far-right only 1% (4/41) of the articles refer to the concept of radicalisation (and relatedly deradicalization and

engagement/disengagement) but in the case of jihadi terrorism, 42% (117/286) of the articles deal with the topic of radicalisation.

Radicalisation is considered as a process through which an individual moves from mainstream ideas to more extreme ones and is thought of as being precursor of violent behaviour, although the direction of the relationship from thought to action is not supported by evidence (Pisoiu, 2013). Radicalisation is a wide concept and it's been worked, reworked and criticised in the field (Bouhana and Wikström, 2011) but the literature seems to treat it as a process particularly apt to describe engagement in jihadi terrorism, so much so that a (small) part of the literature refers to it as 'jihadisation', unveiling the assumption of an overlap between becoming *a* terrorist and becoming a *jihadi* terrorist (Gartenstein-Ross, 2014). "*It appears that Muhammad falls into this category. Following his conversion, he began to identify with Salafism, his religious practice became progressively more rigid, and finally he decided to undertake violence during time he spent in Yemen. Indeed, after carrying out his shooting, he explained his actions by reference to religious obligation*." (ibid.: 116)

The impact of such representation of terrorism, in particular jihadi terrorism, in terms of radicalisation extends to policing and community interventions, community stigmatisation and the stereotyping and labelling particularly of Muslim youth (Lynch, 2013). For example, radicalisation emerges from the literature not only as an explanation of the individuals' involvement in terrorist activities, but it also informs how action might be taken to prevent an individual becoming radicalised. This means

that such interventions are based on the assumptions that radicalisation happens before the violent action and, maybe more importantly, that to foster disengagement from violence the individual needs to be disengaged from radical ideas. One characteristic of deradicalization often mentioned in the literature is the relevance of *community* for the implementation and success of such operations (Spalek, 2014). The inclusion of the Muslim communities living in Western countries as partly responsible for a deradicalization process can be read as a form of extension of the responsibility from the individual to the entire Muslim community (see PREVENT for example in O'Toole, DeHanas and Modood, 2012).

This community representation is usefully analysed in tandem with the process of labelling: it was earlier discussed how some articles do make reference to 'moderate' Muslims, and how some articles problematise the label and its application (Cherney and Murphy, 2016). The literature speaks about the need of Western governments to have 'moderate Muslims' to cooperate with them in the context of counterterrorism: the (moderate) Muslim community is called all together to condemn jihadi terrorism and the terrorist *and* the label of 'moderate Muslim' is applied to those who offer such cooperation. An additional consideration can also be made that the label is problematic as it leaves questions open as to 'what is moderate enough?' and 'how to show one's moderation in the practice of Islamic faith?'. 'Radical' and 'moderate' become labels that construct the image of all Muslims, even outside of the context of terrorism; in this construction, all Muslims who are not *moderate enough* are therefore, radical. This has been also expressed in a more critical part of the literature analysed, which looked at the poverty of language the West employs when talking about Islam and its more conservative manifestations.

Such a lack of nuance in the language used is seen as having the potential of alienating all Muslims, even the 'moderate', which are called by Western governments to participate in counterterrorism interventions (Antúnez and Tellidis, 2013).

The points made above about radicalisation and its relationship with counterterrorism interventions, as well as the blunt dichotomy between moderate and extreme Muslims, indicate that there is conflation between radicalism and jihadi terrorism, furthermore, there is conflation of radicalism and Islam. Part of the literature, and this seems to be supported by the use of terms such as 'jihadisation', seems to feed this narrative (Aly and Striegher, 2012).

As mentioned earlier, the literature surveyed in relation to far-right terrorism only occasionally examines radicalisation; there is very little attention to the concept of radicalisation and even less to any intervention or deradicalisation.

While radicalisation is thought of as a process that goes from mainstream ideas to more extreme ones, it is only thought to be so in the case of jihadi terrorism because the discourse about the far-right in the literature seems to point instead to a process of *mainstreaming*, where ideas go from marginal (or extreme) to being embedded in mainstream discourse (whether electoral or public) and hence, more widely acceptable. *"Aleksandr Belov (Potkin), […] in his remarks on Breivik, […] has repeatedly stressed the large extent to which Russian nationalists view Breivik positively, even as a hero, and explained this view by reference to the immigration situation in Russia."* (Enstad, 2017: 775).

The use of the concept of mainstreaming as a means of explaining far-right ideas is highlighted in a recent article by Brown, Mondon and Winter (2021). This paper points out that the notion of mainstreaming as applied to the far-right does not imply a linear relationship, but a more nuanced undular process that explains the flow of ideas between the minority and the mainstream. This means that there is a certain degree of acceptance of far-right discourse and that the literature on terrorism expresses this through the lenses of mainstreaming, as opposite to the lenses applied to jihadi terrorism, which is looked at through the lenses of radicalisation.

The political spectrum in most Western countries is traditionally understood as going from left to right, with variations across countries in terms of what elements represent an 'extreme' view and how parties and actors are labelled. These variations depend on specific local historical/political developments, and they're in a process of constant movement and adaptation (Mudde, 2019).

The literature analysed in this study supports the idea that in the case of the far-right, and even the extreme far-right, there is a recognition that the ideas of the far-right are nuanced and that there is a porous border between mainstream and extreme views. The ideas, even those apparently abhorrent ideas, are tolerated as they are seen to be linked to more mainstream interpretations as manifest in parliamentary politics and popular culture.

Importantly, the adoption of ideas that are situated on the far-right of the political spectrum, however, is not represented in the literature as an indication of terrorist intent, nor the adoption of such ideas are seen as the starting point of a process of *radicalisation* that will end in terrorist violence. The same nuance and tolerance is not afforded to individuals adhering to the Muslim faith and who might express ideas

outside of the mainstream, such as the wearing of the hijab and niqab, or supporting Sharia Law (Lindekilde, 2012). While it might be reasonable to state that an individual who supports Sharia Law in say, Western Europe, is objectively an outlier it is not the same to say that this individual is more vulnerable to radicalisation and terrorism and so should be suspect. While, as said, the literature which looks at radicalisation, seems to accept the linear relationship between radical ideas and violent action, one article in the literature highlights how such a view is not supported in that, as mentioned, there's no evidence of a direct link between radicalisation and terrorist action (Pisoiu, 2013). Another article, critical of the dichotomy moderate/radical looks at how Muslims (who live in Western countries), reflects on how being understanding of a terrorist group's ideology does not necessarily conflict with supporting the actions of Western governments (McCauley et al, 2011).

If one considers the relationship between mainstream and radical ideas, and, in turn with violent actions, such relationship emerges as specular in the case of far-right and jihadi terrorism: where aspects of far-right ideas are seen as 'allowed' in mainstream discourse, Islamic ideas need to be 'proofed' for moderacy, under the threat of being labelled radical and hence securitised.

One possible explanation for this is that western lenses on political discourse are applied outside of the 'Global North' without considering the differences in the political and historical development of the territories these lenses are applied. For example, there seems to be little consideration of the relationship of the territories considered in the literature of Terrorism Studies with colonial and imperialist past, and how such history plays out in the narratives of terrorist groups, which are used to recruit new elements in the groups (see as an example the consideration of

Westphalian borders by ISIS in (Colas, 2017) and the overreliance of the Global North on fossil fuels, which make them easy targets for both Al Qaeda and ISIS).

Hence, the representation of terrorism is diametrically different when considering far-right and jihadi terrorism: for the former there is a more nuanced understanding of the genesis and flow of ideas and how these ideas have multiple places and meanings, yet in the latter ideas are definitive markers of difference, they are either radical or not, and these ideas indicate, void of agency, that an individual will act in support of them.

1.b Understanding and Attributing Causality

Differences in the representation and framing of the far-right and jihadi terrorism is evident in how the actors are dealt with in the literature. In a recent tweet, Josefine Graef (2021), a well-known international relations scholar who studies terrorism, mentions how the study of *terrorism* is still the study of the *terrorist* (pointing to the fixation of the field with the *subject*, whether an individual or a group). And while actors do, in fact, figure as integral part in the representation of terrorism for both for far-right and jihadi terrorism, the way in which the individuals and groups are framed and analysed is not the same.

A notable difference in how the subject of terrorism is addressed in the case of the F far-right and jihadism is the *absence* of the focus on the group in the case of the far-right.

This could of course be due to a great number of reasons, but in conjunction with the other findings in this study, it is not unreasonable to point out that the attribution of responsibility for far-right attacks is most often channelled to an individual devoid of cultural ties and community support. This *isolationist stance* is not only applied to the individual, but also the group. In the case of far-right terrorism, even when the action is thought to be the result of a group, the group is oftentimes conceived of as heterogeneous, without a hierarchical structure that would render them perceivable as a monolith, and without tangible ties to a broader movement. The term that is adopted to describe this state is 'groupuscules' (a term found and used outside of the literature analysed, see Griffin, 2003) that have commonalities but continue to have distinct identities.

It is worth adding that the focus on individuals involved in far-right attacks has decreased in favour of a focus on groups, and this is especially evident if looking at the past 12 months. Valid examples are the events surrounding groups such as QAnon, the pandemic and the attempt to forcefully enter the Capitol in Washington DC on January 6th 2021, after the ratification of Joe Biden's election as President of the United States. While this focus shift is important, this could also be interpreted as the tendency of the field to be reactive, hence, this focus on the group could be the reaction to the sensationalization of the events in the past year.

On the other hand, the representation of jihadi terrorist actors seems to be mostly built on the study of groups, and among groups, Al Qaeda and ISIS are those most often present in the literature. These groups are considered in their formation, sometimes in a historical perspective, and/or lifespan approach, which includes the absorption of other groups or the processes of splintering. This was the case for Al

Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) which is well represented in the literature, where there is a focus on its evolution into ISIS or for the Armed Algerian Groups GIA and Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) in the Maghreb region who are also depicted via allegiance to Al Qaeda and its re-naming as Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). The picture of jihadi terrorism emerging from the literature is one of dynamic group activity, groups that are in a constant state of flux and capable of adapting to local and international conditions. Even when the literature explicitly focuses on terrorist actors as individuals – the analysis in the previous chapter of this dissertation dealt with foreign fighters and women – the dominant frame is the group, and how the individuals relate to the group.

Linked to the primacy of the group as the subject of analysis in the case of jihadi terrorism is the notion of radicalisation discussed above: the literature routinely represents the radicalisation process and involvement in terrorist groups as a matter of kinship. This renders the social ties as a key focus in how radicalisation is understood in the literature, has implications in terms of perceptions of communities and, in turn, counterterrorism. The depiction of communities as pivotal for encouraging processes of engagement or disengagement in terrorism creates a suspect community whereby there is the assumption of guilt by association. This, alongside the labelling of Muslims as either 'moderate' or 'extreme' , 'with us or against us' adds to the generally suspicion and othering (Lynch, 2013) of Muslim communities living in the West. For example, Nguyen (2006) reports the on the experience of immigrants living in the US after 9/11 and describes how their lives have changed and how they became suspects, by members of the general public and

by state and federal institutions and this had the very serious impact of curtailing their liberties.

Awan (2012) points to a similar process at work in the UK, whereby counter terrorism policies focus on entire communities, and while this might be thought of as a softer policy, in effect it politicises, securitises and even criminalises entire communities. A similar assumption is also seen in the engagement of Muslims clerics in PREVENT and other counter terrorism initiatives. The assumption is that community leaders must implicitly understand extremism, radicalisation and terrorism, and even more problematically, know how to recognise, tackle and prevent it. Apart from the fact that this assumption is a failure to understand the generational differences amongst Muslim communities, and the role of traditional and formal religion in the lives of young people in general, it is perhaps most problematic in that the solution is thought to lie in formal community structures (Lambert and Parsons, 2017)

Further demonstrating that in the case of jihadi terrorism the focus on the community of Muslims is dominant, is the way in which the notion of the Ummah is used to explain the contagion effect of extremist ideologies, and the potential of these ideologies to infect the entire Muslim population. The term Ummah is used in the literature in relation to the ideology of the group and to the targets of groups' message (Gråtrud, 2016): the Ummah is intended as a supranational Muslim community and the way the term is used seems to indicate that the Ummah is homogeneous and equally reachable by 'radicalising messages'. However, the same articles seem to implicitly assume the existence and significance of the Ummah in considering the community as the 'place' where radicalisation is made possible.

This approach whereby the group or community is the focus is not applied to the case of far-right terrorism. The far-right actor is dealt with as an individual, with little to no reference to a community, rather, he/she is depicted as isolated actors perhaps influenced by a shared ideology, but not necessarily associated with a group or analysed as such. This focus on the individual is not merely related to the issue of ideology, but also to the issues of race and ethnicity. Research (outside of the articles collected for the database) has demonstrated that terrorism, when perpetrated by white people more often than not is narrated via the lenses of mental illness and exceptionalism rather than through the lenses of groups (Frisby, 2017). Furthermore, the label of 'terrorist' is more easily bestowed upon people of colour and those considered to be outsiders or other (Frisby, 2017). It would be reasonable to ascribe the lack of group focus around the far-right to the same bias which allows a person of colour to be more easily labelled as a 'terrorist', such as the process of homogenisation applied to the outgroup. This has been recently investigated also in the US context, where D'Orazio and Salehyan (2018) found that outgroup homogeneity plays a role in bestowing the 'terrorist' label on Arab-Americans and the label of 'mass shooter" to white Americans.

Being presented as the far-right element of a broad political spectrum, and considering that elements of an extremist ideology are positioned at the centre of processes of mainstreaming, it is evident that some of the assumptions that underpin this mainstreaming have emerged as assumptions in the academic analysis, have informed the research questions on the far-right and have influenced the interventions and counterterrorism for these groups and movements. In fact, the literature on far-right analysed in the context of this research, is lacking a discussion

on CVE interventions, supporting the interpretation that the base assumption for far-right terrorism literature is that it is not *as* threatening or impending as jihadi terrorism.

1c. Women and terrorism – disempowerment VS agency

The picture of women emerging from all the literature analysed (far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism) differs, in spite of some points of contact between the two, which will be now discussed.

At this point, is not surprising that articles about far-right terrorism are a minority in the timeframe analysed for Terrorism Studies, and women's involvement in terrorism represents a minor theme. Earlier in this research, the ideology of the far-right was taken into consideration in relation to gender roles, how they were defined and enforced. One of the key elements of far-right ideology is heteronormativity, with gender roles that are fixed and follow what is considered their natural order. Such heteronormativity is reflected in the literature analysed, even if only a handful of articles look at women, and do so in relation to notions of militarism and masculinity. However, outside of the literature analysed, Miller-Idriss and Pilkington (2019) highlight how the role of women in far-right groups is changing and it is observable that more women are taking up active roles in far-right groups including management roles. In the literature analysed about the far-right very little data emerges about women, in fact it is almost completely absent: women are not depicted as actors, except in one article which deals with Hindu women in the Indian far-right and which talks about women who play an active role in the social and

political life of the group, hence negotiating a space against the patriarchal structures imposed on them (Mehta, 2015).

The literature selected for the study of jihadi terrorism can provide some more details on the involvement of women in terrorism and how they are represented in the literature itself. An earlier section discussed women in jihadi terrorism as *actors*, but women are represented as a minority, mostly passive and lured into a movement (specifically ISIS) which promises emancipation and then seems to provide only strict traditional roles for women. These women who joined, are depicted as being attracted to being empowered, and this representation is evident in Dabiq: it is described as containing a column written *by a woman for women,* which explains how women joining ISIS are central to the Caliphate project and how they are empowered once joined. From other articles, women involvement's in terrorist activity seems to follow the representation and explanation that is already applied to homegrown terrorism: there is an underlying narrative of personal struggle and crisis which renders individuals more open to terrorist engagement. In addition to that, the representation also seems to point towards the role of a personal struggle *rather than* of the political view in terms of women's involvement in terrorism.

It appears that the representation of women in both instances of the literature analysed does betray a gender stereotype rooted in the idea of passivity, considering how both the ideology of the far-right and that of Al Qaeda and ISIS are rooted in fixed gender roles this representation is coherent with that representation of these ideologies. However, it seems that the treatment of women who engage in terrorism has a tradition of being biased on the base of gender, already Martha Crenshaw in 1983 highlighted the need to understand the role of women in terrorism and how

this would affect gendered norms and stereotypes. Women's involvement in terrorism is represented as double deviance: a deviance of criminality or terrorism and the deviance of violating gender norms (Bolognani, 2009). Hence, women that engage in terrorism do not seem to be depicted as an impending threat, even if part of the literature on jihadi terrorism seems to point to the fact that the decision to include women in terrorism operations is due to the fact that women are less prone to be detected before and so is a strategic advantage.

Glynn's work (2013) echoes this observation in their study of Italian women who joined terrorist organisation during the 'anni di piombo' (years of lead – 1969 -1983). Their work is mostly based on the case studies of women who joined left-wing organisation and how they were depicted in the media, nonetheless, their reflection can also be considered applicable in this case. Glynn reprises the work of Neroni on femininity and women in American Cinema (2005) and highlights its relevance in the case of terrorist women in Italy: their representation is symptomatic of a society that is changing and it "unravels the ideological fantasy of male/female complementarity on which society is based" (Glynn, 2013: 28).

The minor presence of women in the literature of Terrorism Studies and the way their involvement is represented seems to stem from the consideration of women as a 'lesser-threat' due to the -perceivably- passive role and at the same time the dominance of gender roles which still ascribes passivity and care-giving functions to women. However, this carries consequences at a broader level, in that women and gender discourses are also absent from discourses on preventing and countering terrorism. This is not a new issue, as Nacos (2005) has highlighted that the portrayal of women in terrorism is highly stereotyped as well as being highly mass-mediated

and warned towards a future increase in women's involvement in terrorist activities due to them being perceived of less threatening.

Problem Area 2: Threat perception

2a. The impact of 9/11 on the field, on the groups and on this research

The literature on both far-right and jihadi terrorism talk about the relevance of 9/11, albeit in different ways. There are a number of reasons that 9/11 was chosen as a key moment in the sampling and analysis in this study. Primarily, the critiques that exist of the Terrorism Studies field all point to a reactive, security focused solutions (CT) driven area that is highly influenced by spectacular global events and led by traditional interpretations of international relations. The aftermath of 9/11 is often described as a dark period for terrorism studies, in that research emerged that was not empirically grounded, internalised racist and Islamophobic sentiments, did not incorporate any critical or in some case theoretical underpinning and drew heavily on secondary and tertiary sources (Silke, 2008) As the field developed during the 2000 there was significant improvement in the quality of the outputs featured in the main terrorism studies journals (Schuurman, 2018) and many of the problems identified in the early years were addressed by researchers in the field. While there are of course still many problems, there is much improvement been witnessed. In order to avoid capturing this turbulent period in the emergence of terrorism studies, and to get a picture of a more mature and settled field, the start date for the analysis of jihadi terrorism was 2010 (Jackson, 2012). While 9/11 was a watershed moment

in the emerging field, the impact of the attacks on literature produced on the far-right was minimal (Ahmed and Lynch, 2021). The problematic narrative around the emergence of a New Terrorism (Duyvesteyn, 2004) was a response to jihadi extremism and not far-right extremism; the far-right continued to be the silent (but deadly) ideological cousin of Islamic inspired terrorism. For this reason, as well as the fact that there is comparatively very limited literature available on the far-right between 2001 and 2018, the start date for the far right analysis was 2001.

Even considering the problems revolving around the labelling of jihadi terrorism as 'new', jihadi terrorism is not a new phenomenon and its prevalence in the publications in the aftermath of 9/11 is undeniable. Such flourishing of academic production goes in tandem with jihadi terrorism threat perception; not only are publications and threat perception linked, they can be seen as parts of a self-sustaining loop where threat perception impacts on publications and vice versa, the number of publications can increase the threat perception. Such increased threat perception post 9/11 seems to be related to Al Qaeda, and a minor part of the literature points to the fact that the threat coming from Al Qaeda, while existing, is inflated, as with that inflation come benefits such as international help for counterterrorism and the support for human liberties and rights infringement in the context of counterterrorism (Brinson and Stohl, 2012).

This situation around production and threat perception post 9/11 does not seem to be mirrored in the literature on far-right. In terms of how the far-right is dealt with in the literature, it is clear that far-right terrorism relationship with 9/11 is not linear, the literature affords, in fact, a certain degree of nuance in considering how different groups reacted to the event. In particular, the groups are represented as oriented

towards two reactions: 9/11 as a spark for a new wave of Islamophobia or 9/11 as an attack on the economic power perceived as coming from the Jewish community. Hence, a portion of far-right and jihadi terrorism movements are seen as aligned in their enemies.

The threat perceived post 9/11 does not come from *terrorism,* but from j*ihadi terrorism:* interestingly, the way far-right and jihadi terrorism are positioned and analysed in the literature in relation to 9/11 unveils how different lenses are applied to far-right and jihadi actors. While far-right movements emerge as being studied as *subjects* in their relationship with 9/11, considering their reactions, the existing discrepancies and how this can have impacted on the life of the movements (e.g. splintering or formation of a new network), jihadi groups are studied in relation to 9/11 as *objects* of the research. These groups, and specifically Al Qaeda, are seen as objects of the research in the context of counterterrorism efforts. When the literature considers Al Qaeda's changes post 9/11, these considerations emerge as being reactive and presented in tandem with a reflection on what such changes could mean for counterterrorism operations. This is the case, for example, of Acharya and Marwah (2010), who consider Al Qaeda in relation to the first counterterrorism operations post 9/11 and how the structure of the group had to change in order to adapt.

This is not a new finding, previous reviews of the field of Terrorism Studies have highlighted the reactive nature of the field, this research project has highlighted how this reaction did not spread evenly to include and research all instances of terrorism, but focused on jihadi terrorism. As for the field being solution driven, the way the problem is represented in relation to and in the aftermath of 9/11, both for far-right

terrorism and jihadi terrorism, coupled with the absence of radicalisation (and intervention) talk for far-right is further evidence of this critique. However, the results of this research also highlight that the field does not treat all ideologies equally even when the actual threat and the threat perceived do not correspond. In this case, even ten years post-9/11 the threat represented by jihadi terrorism suggests that it is still perceived as high and deserving of exclusive attention. Jihadi terrorism maintained a high level of attention in the academic literature even in the last year, when various think tanks reports to seem to point to an increase in the number of attacks coming from the far-right (Anti-Defamation League, 2019), but the publishing time lag may have some role to play here.

2b. Relationship with the media: far-right groups, jihadi groups and academia

Similar to the points made above, the data emerging from the comparison of the academic literature on far-right and jihadi terrorism representation are different in quantity and quality. Far-right actors, for example, are considered in their relationship to 'mainstream' media (albeit briefly) but such relationship appears to be ambivalent. Such relationship is expressed, for example, in the complexity present in the literature in relation to far-right actors' reaction to events such as the attack carried out in Norway by Anders Breivik: the literature reports that the attack did not receive the same welcome among far-right groups in Russia and Western Europe. Some thought the attack was justified as Europe and the West are under siege by multiculturalism, others instead perceived that as wrong due to its casualties (white people) (Enstad, 2017). There is also ambivalence in the way far-right group interface

themselves with the media, such interfacing ranges from hate (a characteristics of fascism and far-right movements) to acceptance of far-right aspects in the narratives of such media. This for example, again emerges in the Russian context, where aspects of the far-right are accepted at the public level (ibid.) and this can be linked back to the processes of mainstreaming discussed above. In this perspective, those elements of the ideology originally considered extreme make their way into public and electoral discourses. On the other hand, the relationship of the media with the far-right is not univocal nor static, as the example of the media analysis for the NSU (National Socialist Underground) (Graef, 2018) tells: the group becomes progressively othered and the label of 'terrorist' is applied to those part of it. On the other hand, there is the relationship of far-right with social media: in the literature analysed in this research project, far-right actors are represented as engaging online as part of a process of propaganda creation in order to increase their reach and recruit participants. However, this is not a substitution for offline propaganda activities, but it is a way for these actors to adapt to the changes in available tools to recruit, it emerges therefore, as treated in continuation of the offline space.

The way the literature analysed deals with communication tools and media relationship in relation to far-right actors seems to indicate that there is not one univocal way in which such relationship emerges and social media tools are used. From the analysis of the literature on jihadi terrorism, it appears clear that the two are dealt with differently: jihadi groups are investigated for their relation with and use of media, with more attention dedicated to the use of online tools. The use of the online space emerges as different from that of the far-right, in that the first is represented as using online for propaganda (and this seems the only aspect emerging

from the literature around online use by the far-right) while jihadi groups, and in particular ISIS, are represented as using the online space for multiple purposes. Not only propaganda, but also education, information on the 'health status' of the group and incitement of the group members to continue the fight.

Furthermore, ISIS is represented as producer of 'official' media such as magazines (see Inspire for Al Qaeda and Dabiq and Rumiyah for ISIS) as well as spectacularly brutal videos. The literature looks at these videos and highlights their ruthlessness and brutality as well as the purpose of such brutality (e.g. reaching supporters as well as opponents in communicating the capability of the group).

Such representation could subtend to the implicit assumption of the incommunicability with ISIS and as accepting the narratives around the fourth wave of terrorism of which religious fundamentalism is the main characteristic. The preoccupation of the literature with ISIS' use of online platforms is also feeding in the narrative which sees ISIS as something not seen before, 'a different beast' (Esfandiary and Tabatabai, 2016), and all together fits in the moral panic around internet's usage by terrorist groups (Bowman-Grieve, 2015). Bowman-Grieve (ibid.) contends, in fact, that the increased attention dedicated to terrorist groups' access and use of internet can be read through the lens of moral panic, especially because the production of content from users which want to show their support has also increased sharply, so much that terms such as 'digital jihad' became used in the discussion of this topic. However, the use of the internet by terrorist groups has been documented since the early 2000 (and in a way that could be considered in line with that of ISIS, albeit on a minor scale), and not only for jihadi groups, but also for far-right ones: Stormfront, a radical right virtual community was active at least since 1995, and used the platform

for sharing experience, create and maintain the community as well as encouraging activities (Bowman-Grieve, 2009). The motivation for such representation is in part to be found in the communication strategy of jihadi actors, which officially builds a narrative around religious motivations for their actions and make continuous reference to religious elements in their ideology and communications strategy: for example, Dabiq -ISIS produced magazine- openly refers to the city of Dabiq, in northern Syria which, according to the Sunni religious tradition, is going to be the theatre of the final battle between good and evil.

The academic literature also attends to other forms of communication used by jihadi groups, and includes Nasheeds (hymns), which are not per se forms of violent communication. Nasheeds originate in a religious context, however, the literature takes them in consideration in their link and to jihadi actors and looks at their content and spread. Jihadi actors have exploited Nasheeds to spread their message, however, the inclusion of religious material in the literature on terrorism can be seen as further support that the religious element is considered as a defining feature of this wave of terrorism and that religious instructions are perceived as mandatory. This entails that individuals subscribing to such religious ideology lack the opportunity or the willingness to engage in negotiations, and that the solution to this *new terrorism* can't go through dialogue, but has to be resolved with military intervention. This also implies that political grievances, albeit partly addressed in the literature, are seen as guiding the group's action in the background, rather than being central as motivations for actions.

The framing of an actor as not open to communication and negotiations has important implications at the counterterrorism level, as this only leaves space for

military intervention in the area where the group is active, hence, this way of framing a terrorist actor in the academic literature can be seen in line with the framing coming from the states which decide to undertake military interventions in the name of 'war on terror'. This also speaks to the low proportion of articles that look at political and social grievances in the context of jihadi terrorism and that talk about ISIS as based on the statehood process. If ISIS becomes framed as a legitimate actor (akin to a state), it cannot become embedded in securitising speeches which would allow states to begin a military operation.

In this sense, it seems that the narratives around ISIS are still solution/action-driven, while, when far-right is taken in consideration, there seems to be space to consider the nuances of the group and the different ways in which far-right groups react to an attack, betraying the assumption that there is space for communication with such groups and movements.

A further point to be made in relation to media, is the relationship it has with the academic literature. There are a number of articles which look at communication strategies and analyse the content of different media channels, however, it can be asked why academic literature relies so much on media reports and media publications in the case of Terrorism Studies. Articles which use interviews as methods are not completely absent in the literature, hence there seems to be, at least in part, the possibility of a dialogue and to obtain information directly from someone who is or was involved in terrorist activity. However, there is a disproportioned use of media sources and this could be traced back to the representation of actors such as ISIS as ruthless and brutal and so incorrigible (Wilkinson, 2006). It has to do with the availability of media produced by jihadi

groups, but also speaks to the existence of a taboo around allowing the subjectivity of the terrorist *in* the research (Zulaika and Douglas, 2008), which in turns allows for state-centric interpretations of the problem to be considered.

2c. Threat perception: imagining the threat vs actual threat

As mentioned above, there is a difference in the attention given to the threat coming from jihadi Terrorism and far-right terrorism, and the number of articles in the academic literature, as well as the way these two instances of terrorism are represented in the literature support this.

Considering the timeframe used in the research on jihadi Terrorism (2010-2018) it emerges that Jihadism is still seen and represented as a live threat: articles still look at the potential of Al Qaeda to perpetrate further attacks on western countries. The presence of Al Qaeda, albeit in minor proportion in the literature, is also researched and considered in Muslim countries such as Yemen (Hellmich, 2012) which collaborated with the USA for counterterrorism purposes. Such collaboration is represented in the literature as backfiring for the USA due to its involvement in counterterrorism interventions. The threat emanating from Al Qaeda, as imagined in the literature, emerges as involved in a process of adaptation to respond to the enacted counterterrorism measures, such us the case of decentralisation

The threat perception is also evident in the use of the term 'homegrown' which refers to 2nd, 3rd and subsequent generation of Muslims living in the west and prone to radicalisation due to the lack of successful integration (Ganor, 2011). Such use of the term contributes to the collocation of the threat coming from jihadi terrorism is

located mostly ‘here’, with here being the West, and is represented as a threat to Western Countries to detriment of the representation in line with the fact that Muslim countries bear the majority of the attacks and casualties by jihadi groups.

A different story emerges when considering the portrait of the threat coming from the far-right, in primis, this different story is told by the overall lack of a broad and coherent corpus of research on far-right terrorism in the field of Terrorism Studies. Secondly, there does not seem to be agreement, in the literature analysed, of the extent of this threat, and on how to quantify and qualify it. While some articles point to an increase in the threat coming from the far-right, another part of the literature points to the challenges in considering which actions are to be defined as terrorism, lingering on definition matters in order to progress in defining *what can be included in far-right terrorism.*

From the different stories that the Terrorism Studies field tells about jihadi terrorism and far-right terrorism two main point emerge: the first is the representation of jihadi terrorism as a threat to the West, with little to no consideration about the Middle East and Africa and the effects that terrorism has on these regions of the world. Middle Eastern countries are not only targeted by terrorist groups, but they are also at the centre of military interventions that countries of the Global North carry out as part of counterterrorism operations. Data gathered from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) show how 95% of terrorist attacks in the year 2017 hit the Middle East and Africa, and the majority of casualties worldwide (again around 95%) were in the same regions, with the addition of the South Asian region (Ritchie et al, 2019).

In considering the Middle East and Africa as “cradle of terrorism” rather than as a victim of terrorism, the literature seems to feed an orientalist discourse around the

MENA region. Insofar as this orientalist view is present in the literature, it is expressed in the fact that the Middle East as well as Northern Africa and South Asia are imagined, for the most, as the places *where terrorism comes from* and becomes the object of military counterterrorism operations, rather than the places *where terrorism hits the most.*

On the other hand, there is little material about the threat emanating from the far-right, and this is in itself telling. Furthermore, as discussed in the context of attributing responsibility, the threat is represented as coming from *individuals* rather than from groups, and this, in turn can impact on the perception of the threat The problem surrounding such representation of terrorism coming from white actors as deviant from the norm does not only emerge from the academic literature focus on individual far-right actors and on jihadi group actors, but it also entered public discourse. For example, a -now quite well known- meme features a headshot of Holmes, the man who shot and killed 12 people and injured 70 in Aurora, Colorado, and recites: 'If I were Arab, the shooting would be terrorism. If I were black, I'd be a thug. But I am white, so it's mental illness."[1]

An additional consideration can be made in terms of dynamics of othering emerging from the treatment of jihadi terrorism and far-right terrorism, and in relation to the concept of 'homegrown terrorist'. In the literature on terrorism, this label is almost

[1] The author of the meme is unknown, the picture is available at this address: https://www.memesmonkey.com/images/memesmonkey/42/4290ae8398b97db2f92dae34890d26bd.jpeg

exclusively applied to 2nd or 3rd generations of Muslims living in Western countries (Crone and Harrow, 2011 and Schuurman et al., 2014) but it seems it ultimately serves to deny identity to the individuals in question – by adding homegrown, the assumption is that they somehow are less than British or less than Belgian – all the time making relevant their non-European ethnic heritage. For example, earlier in this chapter which discussed the content analysis of articles focused on far-right terrorism, ideology and its elements were discussed, among which there were grievances. Interestingly, Kimmel (2013), in a book which is not part of this analysis but which provides useful insight on White Supremacist movements in the USA, seems to expose as a reason for the emergence of such movements, similar mechanisms applied to 'homegrown' jihadi terrorism. The individuals interviewed in Kimmel's book talk about being hard hit from the global financial crisis in 2008, about losing the opportunity to earn their livelihood from the farms that once belonged to their fathers and grandfathers, and to the lack of further opportunities for self-sustenance. Hence, in both cases, the engagement in groups seems to stem from deep social and personal crisis, which, however seems to only be portrayed as threatening in the case of jihadi Terrorism.

This unveils the assumption, in the literature, that far-right is not inherently an issue (yet), and not an immediate threat, even if further review would be necessary to understand if past the 1-2 years' publication cycle the situation has changed and more articles have been published with a focus on the far-right. The fact that, in spite of growing attacks from far-right actors and a warnings coming from think tanks that far-right violence is also on the increase, leads to the question of *how did jihadi terrorism became an existential threat to the west and how did this representation*

take hold also in the academic literature. To answer this question, the next section will discuss the relationship between media and terrorist groups, specifically for the two abovementioned groups, the relationship between framing of information in the media and academia.

Conclusion: we are where we are…

From the picture above, it is clear how defining and researching terrorism, both for far-right and jihadi actors, as a unified entity is complex to say the least. The research that currently exists identifies the challenges that need to be overcome in order to progress in our understanding and conceptualisation of the phenomenon, however these challenges are not qualitatively different to those that have been experienced in terrorism studies in the past. Issues of definition are again central to the debate around what is and is not terrorism and recently the Revised Academic Consensus Definition proposed by Schmid (2012) has contributed to this discussion. Schmid's definition constructs terrorism as "*on the one hand, a doctrine about the presumed effectiveness of a special form or tactic of fear-generating, coercive political violence and, on the other hand, to a conspiratorial practice of calculated, demonstrative, direct violent action without legal or moral restraints, targeting mainly civilians and non-combatants, performed for its propagandistic and psychological effects on various audiences and conflict parties"* (ibid.: 86). In this light, episodes as the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017, are not perceived or framed as terrorism, in part because the propagandistic value of violence is absent, albeit resulting in attacks against participants of the rally with one fatality and more than 30 casualties. Similarly 'shooting

sprees', most of which occur in the USA and all of which are linked to far-right movements, are often overlooked in terrorism studies although this is changing (Silver, Horgan and Gill, 2019). When compared, jihadi terrorism and far-right terrorism are treated differently, whether this happens in relation to radicalisation and mainstreaming, media use and production, attributing responsibility or threat perception.

One of the possible explanations for this, is that terrorism research comes with a set of pre-compiled knowledge assumptions. These assumptions encompass answering to the question of *what* terrorism is and of *who* is the terrorist. Campbell proposes a meaningful reasoning to explain why adherents of the far-right are seldom labelled as terrorist, while Muslims who perpetrate acts of violence are more easily bestowed the label (Campbell, 2017). This reasoning is linked to the notion of power exerted through the dissemination of relevant discourses by key sources. For example, the case of white perpetrators of mass shootings is one according to Campbell, where the label of lone wolf is easily applied and easily accepted. This label is used to indicate that this shooting was the act of "one hateful person" not representative of any particular demographic (Butler, 2015). On the other- hand, violence by Black people and Muslim individuals is framed as systemic and representative and as a consequence a response and action is demanded from all those who share the relevant characteristic (ibid.).

While this distinction is debated in the field of terrorism studies, think tanks and NGOs such as the Anti-Defamation League and the Southern Poverty Law Centre appear to more readily label this violence as terrorism. This of course has implications for how we think of and report such violence, how it is recorded in various databases on terrorism and, as this research has shown, how academic research represents terrorism.

CHAPTER 9: TeR-BAT, THE "TERRORISM RESEARCH - BASE ASSUMPTIONS TOOL"

A toolbox for the researcher to put reflexivity in practice

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the findings of this research have been discussed and the findings indicated that there are 2 main problem areas in the field of Terrorism Studies, and each of them were articulated around 3 key issues. These problem areas are the result of a distillation and abstraction process and represent the common threads which run through the overall 6 key issues.

In this chapter, the TeR-BAT (Terrorism Research – Base Assumption Tool), the integrated framework is applied to the problem areas. The tool is the result of the combination of the 'What's the problem represented to be' (WPR) approach (Bacchi, 2009) and the framework to apply psychology to the case of terrorism (Lynch and Joyce, 2019) elaborated in chapter 4. The problem areas as well ask the 6 key issues are recapitulated in the following table.

Problem areas (the problems)	Key Issues
3. Attributing responsibility for violence?	1.a. Radicalisation and mainstreaming
	1.b. Understanding and attributing causality
	1.c. Women and terrorism – disempowerment VS agency
4. Threat perceptions	2.a. The impact of 9/11 on the field, on the groups and on this research
	2.b. Terrorism and the media
	2.a. Imagining the threat *vs* actual threat

Table 6 : The 6 key issues from the discussion categorised in two problem areas ('the problems')

The premise of this chapter is that we are now aware of what the issues are in the research on terrorism in the field of Terrorism Studies, based on the results of this study. This section aims at furthering these findings and moving from describing *what* the issues in terrorism research are to *how* we can relieve the issues that are apparently inherent in terrorism research. In addition, the use of the TeR-BAT can help in the formulation of *new research questions* and in the application of what Critical Terrorism Studies refers to as *reflexivity,* where the researcher works to become aware of their relationship with power and with the subject they are investigating, and how this impacts on the research (Stump and Dixit, 2013).

Reflexivity and research

The researcher's awareness of their own (possible) participation in reproducing discourses of power becomes instrumental in disrupting such reproduction, because in applying this framework the researcher questions their own relationship with the ontology of terrorism as well as with the epistemology of terrorism. A focus on the ontology of the research can have multiple implications for the research as it can move the research from being problem-solving oriented to be problem-understanding oriented. Such a turn can have a cascade effect on the relationship of the field with knowledge production and intervention/policy implementation, as well as on the field's understanding of its own relationship with dogma and power structures. Following, a return to focusing on the epistemology means that the research would be considered a problematising activity (to use the words of Bacchi, 2009), in that terrorism is a social fact to which layers of interpretations are applied during research. Finally, an epistemological change is also followed by a change in the methods and the subjects of the research, if terrorism is recognised as a social fact, the taboo around the 'terrorist subject' (Zulaika and Douglass, 2008) can be removed and the weight of the label 'terrorist' is recognised in its consequences for the research. Among these implications is the exclusion of the terrorist as the subject of the research, and, in turn, knowledge produced without the possibility to confront (where possible and safe) the base assumptions with the subject of the research: the terrorist.

The Terrorism Research- Base Assumptions Tool (TeR-BAT)
1. *How is the problem represented?* 2. *Why is this representation a problem?* 3. *What are the possible causes of this representation?* 4. *How is this representation of the problem reproduced and disseminated?* 5. *Can the problem be relieved or resolved?*

Table 7: the 5 questions which make up the TeR-BAT (Terrorism Research-Base Assumptions Tool)

Problem area 1: Attributing responsibility: what's the problem represented to be?

1. **How is the problem represented?**

The problem area is the attribution of causality and responsibility in the field of Terrorism Studies: in the literature analysed causality for the terrorist act is attributed differently for far-right and jihadi actors. In the case of far-right terrorism the causality is attributed to the individual, singled out from the group or movement they're linked to. The literature analysed does not focus on groups (it only does so only minimally): far-right terrorism is treated a mostly individual process with factors such as mental health being involved in the explanation, the literature on far-right terrorism mostly talks about *lone actors* portraying such actors as untied from any group or organisation. This representation is present regardless of the presence of

linkages and connections between the individual who perpetrated the attack and other groups or movements.

Contrary to this, jihadi terrorism is constantly framed as a group issue, this also includes the wider Muslim community which is often suspected of involvement in the processes of radicalisation and deradicalization. This issue of shared responsibility is demonstrated in the way Muslims were asked to show how they were 'moderate' (Cherney and Murphy, 2016), in order to avoid automatic labelling as 'extreme'. Additionally problematic is the idea of prevention of terrorism through community engagement, which imbues the community with the responsibility for recognising signs of radicalisation and reporting them to the relevant authorities (Awan, 2012). This involvement of the community in prevention operations also highlighted the implicit assumption that the risk of radicalisation is in being Muslim *in itself* (Pisoiu, 2013). The link between religious ideas and radicalisation is so close in the literature, that part of it talks about a 'jihadization' process, indicating a conflation in the literature between elements of Islam and radicalisation. The absence of any grey area in consideration of the Muslim identity, and the need to characterise Muslims via a dichotomy of extreme/moderate seems also to be related to a closure to every form of non-violent puritan interpretation of Islam, where every manifestation of Islamic faith that is not seen as 'mainstream' enough is conflated with terrorism and then condemned. On the other hand, as discussed, the literature on far-right does not talk about radicalisation, and such literature does not draw a causal link between religion and terrorism. Far-right ideas seems to be talked about through the frame of mainstreaming, where ideas generally 'on the fringe' are seen

as flowing into public discourse; therefore to these ideas is not ascribed, in the literature, any inherent dangerousness or radicalising power.

In addition, terrorism literature also emerges as having a strong gendered dimension, in that women are disproportionately neglected in the research analysed, and when they are treated in the literature it happens through lenses which propagate existing gender stereotypes. In fact, women are seen as joining groups such as ISIS following a personal crisis or with expectations of empowerment that do not play out in reality (Peresin and Cervone, 2015). Women in the far-right are also talked about in relation to the heteronormativity of far-right groups (Blee, 2005), but in general even in this case the narrative is that of actors who are less than empowered. Interestingly, masculinity is linked to the far-right, in that it is treated as an integral part of the ideology and that is operationalised in the military experience and symbolism (Simi, Bubolz and Harman, 2013) and via, for example Mixed Martial Arts gyms (Perry and Scrivens, 2016). Therefore, the literature ascribes the characteristic of *threat* to men for the most part but, toxic masculinity does not seem to be addressed in the literature.

2. Why is this representation a problem?

This representation of terrorism and the way that blame is attributed are problematic in two ways, firstly, it reveals the presence of a bias in terrorism research, which renders it possible to generalise assumptions to a religious group as a coherent whole: this does not happen for the far-right. This bias serves to reproduce a narrative from a Manichean world where 'we' are good and 'they' are evil. This is problematic in that the supposed rationality and objectivity of the research are often

overlooked and tacitly accepted, therefore, biases can filter into the research practice, significantly impacting the way academics research the issue of terrorism, and on the way the research question is posed, to start with.

Secondly, but no less importantly, the adoption of a Manichean worldview and the propagation of such narratives in a field supposedly *super partes* as academia also brings with it real-life implications for the communities affected and targeted by both othering narratives and interventions. A rise in Islamophobia has been observed in the aftermath of 9/11 and in addition to this, political parties worldwide have exploited the narratives around the existence of a dangerous Muslim 'other'. This narrative has significant leverage in political debates and has transformed the Muslim population living in the West into a threat to the homeland. Far-right parties and groups have also participated in this process, with the English Defence League being a stark example in Europe (Allen, 2011), and Donald Trump in the USA (Fullerton, 2017).

In addition to this, interventions to prevent terrorism have mainly focused on the process of radicalisation, and at the territorial level the interventions seem to have automatically included in participation of the whole Muslim community (e.g., clerics and families expected to recognise early signs of radicalisation and following reporting to the relevant authorities). This represents a continuation of a narrative which sees the issue of jihadi terrorism as a group process, where the social aspect is pivotal in transforming the person from 'vulnerable' to 'radicalised'. Hence the groups is invested in preventing radicalisation and is all-together responsible when singled out.

The fact that radicalisation is almost absent in the terrorism studies literature about the far-right and that it is talked about as an individual instance is also in itself telling. This (lack of) representation is problematic because far-right is not seen as a group phenomenon and because far-right discourses are seen as part of electoral and public discourses, this has an impact on the normalisation of far-right ideas as legitimate. It also means that far-right groups are not automatically perceived as threatening and therefore they tend to be excluded from prevention and counterterrorism interventions, this could be partly due to the fact that discourses around the far-right deal with the motivations of the group on the basis of economic grievances and insecurity, which can be seen as relatable at a broader level. In this context, the sense of shared victimhood and grievance of far-right groups emerges as being better understood in the literature if compared with the grievances expressed in the literature by jihadi actors.

3. What are the possible causes of this representation?

The issues discussed so far present a picture of the field of Terrorism Studies as accepting almost uncritically an ingroup/outgroup representation that has been part of the narratives of the war on Terror and that depicted the West as uncontested bearer of positive values and the rest of the world, in particular the Islamic World, as bearer of violent ideas and values that need to be sanitised. This also signifies that Terrorism studies as a field and those who carry out research in the field are not immune to the mechanisms of social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974) and to cognitive distortions such as the fundamental attribution error (Rodd, 1977).

Other possible causes of the differences in the representation of far-right and jihadi terrorism lie in the application of Western lenses to interpret the culture and the historical developments of areas of the world that do share a portion of history with the West that is based on conflict dynamics. This means that while far-right ideas are seen, for example, as a continuation of the political left-right spectrum already part of the Western political and electoral world, in the West there is no space for understanding a puritan Islamist interpretations without it being seen as a risk factor for radicalisation (see chapter 2 on securitisation and jihad).

Linked to the previous motivations reported here, there is also the fact that the field tends to critically accept powerful narratives as the field in itself is born out of the work of experts who are linked to governments and agencies that were and are conservative. This means that what is generally referred to as 'mainstream terrorism studies' is still confronting the legacy derived from its inception as a discipline which emerged as an academic intertwined with systems of power (Mills and Miller, 2009).

4. How is this representation of the problem reproduced, disseminated, and defended?

The field of terrorism studies reproduces narratives around far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism in different ways.

Firstly, there is an almost total neglect of research on far-right terrorism between 2001 and 2018; as reported in this study only 41 articles, in the three journals researched, focused on far-right terrorism. This is in stark contrast with the number of articles which focused on jihadi terrorism that is seven times higher (285) and

which were instead collected in a significantly shorter time span (9 years). The attention dedicated to jihadi terrorism and far-right terrorism reveals how much and in what way they are thought about and represented, and given that these representations seem to be in line with other actors such as government and media, they also contribute in perpetuating the discourses about far-right and jihadi terrorism. Further to this, in the case of jihadi terrorism, the dominant focus on the process of radicalisation ensures that the narrative of Islam as being *predisposed* to radicalisation becomes an integral part of the research into the causes of terrorism.

Problem area 2: Threat perception: what's the problem represented to be?

1. **How is the problem represented?**

The number of far-right terrorism focused articles and the number of jihadi terrorism focused articles is the first indicator of the fact that the literature shows a different preoccupation in relation to the two: in short, there is a different attention afforded to the threat coming from far-right terrorism and jihad terrorism. 9/11's impact, the academic literature and the media all play a role in this differing threat perception in that they all feed in a loop which continues to represent the threat coming from far-right and jihadi terrorism as different.

9/11 has obviously had an impact on the attention given to the threat coming from jihadi terrorism, it was not a new phenomenon per se, but given the attacks represented the deadliest terrorist attack in the history of the USA its impact reverberated worldwide. The discourse of President G.W. Bush focused on the War on Terror as a war between good and evil, and the underlying narrative implied that 'we', the West, are good, rational, democratic and free, and 'they' are the exact

opposite: hateful, irrational and inherently violent. In the aftermath of 9/11 this narrative had a strong resonance not only with the public but also with the academic audience which has also strongly reacted to the event with a spike in the increase of academic publication in the field of Terrorism Studies (Silke, 2007).

On the other hand, while 9/11 is of course a pivotal moment in the history of terrorism and international relations, the reverberance of the event has meant that forms of terrorism already in existence and posing a threat to the security of Western countries have been selectively ignored. This partly happened because of the dynamics of ingroup and outgroup relationships mentioned above, partly because such groups tended to carry out less spectacular attacks (albeit the Oklahoma city bombing in 1995 had 168 deaths and more than 500 injured, see Jones and Hillerman, 1998). Nonetheless, Timothy McVeigh's actions did not generate a wave of suspicion for his ethnic community nor there was any backlash on the creation of a suspect community (Linder, 2007).

2. Why is this representation a problem?

The complications of this problem representation are partially related to those discussed earlier related to 'attributing responsibility' in terms of real-life implications, such as the creation of suspect communities and the rise of islamophobia in the West.

However, the threat perception has an impact on the research around the selection of the topic, in the selection of methods as well as in the impact of the definition of terrorism. The last point refers to the fact that terrorism is understood and hence researched primarily as a sub-state phenomenon which comes from those perceived

to be outsiders. In fact, in spite of the increase in far-right violence across Europe and the United States (ADL, 2019), in the academic field of Terrorism Studies the prevailing focus is still on jihadi terrorism.

In addition to the Manichean worldview which sees the terrorist as an outsider, as someone 'other than me/us', terrorism is perceived as a threat to the West even if this region is not the one suffering most of the burden of terrorist attacks worldwide. This means that despite evidence of the contrary, the terrorist threat is perceived primarily as a threat *to the West,* with little consideration for the populations in the Global South that suffer more terrorist attacks and casualties on their territories, as well as dealing with counterterrorism interventions linked to the War on Terror. The perception (and partially, construction) of the threat as impending has also led to the implementation and almost uncritical acceptance of surveillance measures that are overtly Islamophobic. Post 9/11 the USA first, later joined by other Western states, have increased their surveillance operations which targeted the *whole* Muslim population. Such surveillance operations were deemed necessary because Muslims living in the West shared one characteristic with the perpetrators of 9/11, their religious faith, hence, all Muslims became suspects. Police Departments, such as the New York PD became involved in undercover operations in Mosques, with the aim of testing individuals for 'terrorist intentions' (Eroukhmanoff, 2015 and Shamas and Arastu, 2010), effectively searching criminal activity before it had happened. The measures adopted in the aftermath of 9/11 can be seen as a reaction to the perception of incumbent threat which followed the attacks. The real time transmission of images of the World Trade Centre collapsing had the effect to bring one own's mortality into consciousness, and with it, the realisation that it could

happen to everyone. Mortality salience has been tested in the aftermath of 9/11 and it has demonstrated to be linked to an increased support of George W. Bush and his counterterrorism policies and military interventions in Afghanistan (Landau et al., 2004), and, 15 years later, it seems mortality salience elicited by the terror attacks in Europe (Paris) in 2015 was also linked to increased support for Donald Trump (Cohen, Solomon and Kaplin, 2017). This points to the fact that in times when our mortality is rendered salient, we are more likely to support leaders who uphold our worldview, as it signifies certainty and order (ibid.). Being that researchers are human, mortality salience can have also had an impact on the research produced post 9/11 in that the research carried out captures the perception of the risk and mortality stemming from the attacks and the broadcasting of the attacks in a continuous manner (Walkate, 2017).

3. What are the possible causes of this representation?

To try and understand the possible causes of such perception of the threat coming from terrorism, one must look at the relationship between knowledge and power, but also between knowledge and fear. In the first instance, the relationship between knowledge and power, the work by Jackson (2007) is helpful, in that the researcher can (and needs to) detach themselves from the institutional sources of powers and from the "state-centric priorities and perspectives [which] tends to reproduce a limited set of assumptions and narratives about the nature, causes and responses to terrorism" (ibid.:2).

In addition to this, the research seems to also be based on an implicit Orientalism which impacts on the way jihadi terrorism is represented: overwhelmingly religious,

hence irrational, mostly due to radicalised individuals and only partly related to real grievances which remained unaddressed. Such Orientalism could also be the basis of the quasi-systemic neglect observed in the literature, but nonetheless far-right terrorism is represented as an *individual issue.* A Western centric view of the world and a tendency to Orientalism are not the only explanations available for the difference in representation of far-right and jihadi terrorism, after all, the research in the field of Terrorism Studies post 9/11 was aimed at understanding how what happened could happen and to prevent it from happening again. However, it is possible that there is a lack of awareness of the relationship between knowledge production and fear, and in particular of how the events of 9/11 impacted on such knowledge production. The attacks, the number of casualties and the continuous report on the events meant that us, as researchers, also felt the fear (Walklate, 2017), and the feeling that 9/11 represented a 'rupture' and became 'an epistemological black hole of such force that past events continue to be sucked into its pull and recast as (its) fragments' (Fitzgerald, 2021: 1). 9/11 became more than a historical event, it became a prism of interpretation of reality *as well as of the research*, and this because -even 20 years after the attack- it is not easy to shake off the emotional effects of the events of that day and the following newspaper reports and public speeches around the necessity of a War on Terrorism. The language of 'threat' became part of the daily experience of many in Western countries. The messaging around the War on Terror was intertwined with a propaganda of fear (ibid.) that permeated not only the daily lives of the citizenship but also the research.

4. **How is this representation of the problem reproduced and disseminated?**

The continued representation of jihadi terrorism as a threat, and the tendency to overlook far-right terrorism as such, becomes embedded in everyday experience and research. The memory of 9/11 forced a focus on the threat coming from the 'outside' and, as said above, it became embedded in the way events were interpreted. In fact, the attacks to the World Trade Centre are continuously memorialised, and through such memorialisation the events remain a constant pivot for our attention as researchers. In fact, while the attacks were highly successful in terms of casualties and in terms of creating fear, "In memorialising 9/11, we also recreate an artificial inflection point, as if there were a terrorism "before 9/11" and a terrorism after" (Fitzgerald, 2021: 1), hence, the research focuses on everything that is seen as 'new' terrorism, leaving behind research on movements that were already present on national soil (suffice to think about far-right in Germany, in Italy as well as in the USA). While remembrance of 9/11 is important, as researchers it is important that we realise 'its distortive power' (ibid.) on the research we carry out and on the Western centric lenses we risk applying to it involuntarily: as discussed above, while this is partly related to matters of in/outgroup dynamic, it is also linked to the trauma of 9/11 and to mortality salience, which impacted on the need for certainty and order.

5. Can these problems be resolved or relieved?

The TeR-BAT (Terrorism Research-Base Assumptions Toolkit)

A lot of thorough critique of the field has been discussed so far and while critique is important, if we care about improving the field, it is also important to put forward possible solutions and to debate them. The final question of the framework applied

to this research project is answered together for the two problem areas presented above, and the answer will attempt to provide practical guidance on *how to reflect on the research* using of a toolkit in the form of a checklist aimed at inspiring contemplation of the implicit assumptions we bring with us in the research process. This is also a means of reflecting on the humanity of the researcher and with it, the biases we are involuntarily subject to, this is why the questions are written in first person.

The TeR-BAT as a research reflexivity tool

Radicalisation and Mainstreaming

- What am I researching (e.g. what instance of terrorism)?
- If I am looking at jihadi inspired terrorism, is radicalisation the concept I feel most apt to carry the analysis forward? What other concepts do I have available for my project?
- Which words do I use to describe the relationship between radicalisation and behaviour? E.g., Do I imagine and put them in a causal relationship? Do I imagine them linked to other processes (normative processes or group processes, for example)?
- How will I make sure to contextualise the concept? Will I consider factors such as geopolitical developments, conflicts, unattended political grievances?

Attributing and Sharing Responsibility

- Am I looking at a population or an individual? Is this following a terrorist attack?
- If I am looking at a population which shares characteristics such as ethnic origin or religious faith with the attacker, why is the population relevant?
- If I am looking at an individual, what are my expectations around their behavioural motives?
- Which words am I using to describe the group/individual in question? Why these?

Event Reaction & Threat perception

- Is this research project following a recent terrorist attack?
- How much media attention has an attack received?
- If the terrorist attack is recent, how do I self-check on the impact of the event on my research and/or practice?
- If the event is not recent, but still felt relevant, how am I placed in relation to it (e.g. sharing one or more identities with targets or attacker)?

Gender and Orientalist lenses in the research

- Which actors am I looking at?
- Which behaviours of these actors I am interested in?

- If I am looking at women, does my research consider them as having agency (e.g. their participation in what I am researching is not thought as the product of unawareness or crisis, but the result of a choice?)?
- How am I thinking about the subject of the research, and, if the subject are people, how do I think about them? What are the words I use to describe them: do I think about them through an Orientalist lens (e.g., as a distant and incommunicable other)?
- Do I deal with masculinity as part of my gender analysis?
- Do I consider the terrorist to be male? Why?

Conclusion: the reflexive researcher

A thorough analysis of the field of Terrorism Studies between 2001 and 2018 has revealed a number of base assumptions that are deep-rooted in the field and impact the production of new knowledge. Such base assumptions are considered in this chapter and organised around two main problem areas, which are the attribution of responsibility and the threat perception; the two problem areas are at the base of the TeR-BAT (Terrorism Research Base Assumption Tool), the evidence-based framework presented and applied in this chapter in a sort of self-assessment of the research. The analysis and comparison of the literature pertaining to far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism has made us aware of the biases implicit in the research, but has also evidenced the consequences at the practice level of such biases. Being the field of Terrorism Studies, by virtue of the subject it studies and of embedded expertise, inherently policy relevant, this chapter aims at fostering a reflexive approach to terrorism research, and this reflexivity needs to start from the

moment in which the problem of terrorism is thought about. Therefore, the TeR-BAT assists the researcher in directing the attention to the own construction of what is terrorism, who is the terrorist and what are the causes of terrorism; it does so with a series of questions asked in first person, built against the backdrop of the themes emerging from jihadi and far-right terrorism articles. It is hoped that the adoption of the TeR-BAT will contribute significantly to the field of Terrorism Studies, to avoid the pitfalls highlighted throughout this work about the frameworks we use to understand the causes of terrorism, the attribution of responsibility (e.g. to a group or individual); the reactivity of the field; and the consideration of biases (e.g. gender, Orientalism) in our own research.

SECTION IV: CONCLUSION, BIBLIOGRAPHY AND APPENDIX

Conclusion: what the treatment of far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism in the literature of Terrorism Studies tells about the base assumptions of the field.

It is well documented that the field of Terrorism Studies is challenged by a range of issues, including a scarcity of use of primary sources (Silke, 2001),a preoccupation with Al Qaeda, ISIS and the MENA region (Schuurman, 2019) and a focus on threats to Western states and their allies (Jackson, 2009). This is true especially post 9/11, which represents a watershed moment as well as a source of distortion for the research (Fitzgerald, 2021). However, the challenges are more complex than a failure to broaden horizons, and include issues of islamophobia, racism, orientalism, sexism, and abuse of power. Terrorism studies is a microcosm of the political dynamics at play in western societies, and as is demonstrated in this study, the field replicates, often uncritically, the tropes that go unchallenged in other aspects of political life.

This thesis examined the representation of far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism in the key journals on Terrorism Studies between 2001 and 2018. The study examined the manner in which jihadi and far-right terrorism are constructed and represented in the academic literature. The study focused on three main terrorism journals: Terrorism and Political Violence, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism and Critical Studies on Terrorism. This work did not only explore the representation of far-right and jihadi

terrorism in the Terrorism Studies literature, it also analysed the frame applied to each in their treatment in the literature and demonstrated the assumptions through which each of these terrorism*s* is imagined and constructed. To do so, this research focused on what the literature included and excluded, who were deemed to be terrorist actors by their inclusion and exclusion and what was said and unsaid in the literature more broadly.

This research's findings

The story of the field of Terrorism Studies begins with a focus on sub-state insurgent movements, and therefore in dominated from its early days by a focus on an overt state-centric agenda (Miller and Mills, 2009). Several reviews critiqued the field knowledge contribution from the methods, ontological and epistemological point of view, and highlighted that the field did not improve much and that the issues brought up in previous reviews nonetheless persisted. This leads to questions *on the way* we carry out research, on *how we think about terrorism,* and on how this impacts on the representation of terrorism inspired by different ideologies.

The picture of the field which emerges from the literature analysed here is the one of a field that approaches far-right and jihadi terrorism differently, and that is already evident in the degree the two are attended to in the literature: while articles focused on the far-right between 2001 and 2018 were only 41, jihadi terrorism was the focus of 285 articles, and it is in a time span which is half of the one for the far-right, given that jihadi terrorism's representation was studied in the literature between 2010 and 2018!

The literature analysed strongly relies on the notion of radicalisation when talking about jihadi terrorism and does not approach far-right terrorism in the same way, in fact, only a minority of articles mentions radicalisation among those focusing on far-right, while the process that seems to be most relevant in the literature on far-right is that of mainstreaming. Also, there seems to be a certain degree of acceptance of some elements of the ideology of far-right in public discourse, while on the other hand Islam is perceived as having the inherent potential to 'create radicals' and therefore elements of Islamic faith need to be 'sanitized' according to western standards. In this research, such a difference is seen in that the field of research approaches Islam through Western political and religious lenses, without too much consideration for the historical origins and evolution of Islam or of the geopolitical developments in the areas of the MENA region, for example. This is reflected in the necessity, emerging from the literature, to split the Muslim population between radicals and moderates and to ensure that radicals are labelled and treated accordingly, and that moderates actively work *with* western governments to prevent attacks on national soil. On the other hand, and in opposition to this, the literature thinks about far-right ideas with more nuance and does not consider them inherently dangerous, even accepting a certain degree of contagion in public and electoral discourse.

Another difference in the base assumptions underlying the treatment of far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism in the literature is evident in the different attributing of responsibility. In fact, there is a strong focus in the literature on jihadi terrorism on *group actors*, with a strong preference for Al Qaeda and ISIS as the main influencers, while other actors such as foreign fighters and women are present but

to a lesser degree. There is, in fact, a strong preoccupation with jihadi terrorism as a group phenomenon, and the articles considered also analyse the value, the leadership and the communication methods of the groups. On the contrary, far-right actors are analysed in an *individualised* fashion, in fact, the literature is concerned more with those defined as 'lone actors' than with groups, which seldomly are represented in the selected far-right literature. These differing preoccupations stem from the expansion of in and outgroup dynamics to the way we attribute responsibility in the case of terrorism attacks: even if the proximity and subjectivity of the terrorist is a taboo (Zulaika and Douglass, 2008) far-right terrorists are nonetheless perceived as part of the in-group, they emerge as 'one of us' and therefore seen in their individuality. On the other hand, Muslims are seen as 'the other', part of the out-group, therefore homogeneous and, in relation to terrorism, the blame is attributed to the group and collectively distributed. This is particularly true in the aftermath of 9/11. This concept is a reaction to the lethality of 9/11 and represents the fear of a terrorism that is seen as irrational, motivated by a 'love of death' and hate of Western values and freedom. This representation became embedded in the subsequent narratives of the War on Terror, as part of the justification for a virulent reaction to the attacks: terrorism became almost automatically identified with *jihadi* terrorism and therefore, counterterrorism interventions were aimed at those specific instances of terrorism, and were extended to entire Muslim communities. 9/11 is also present in the way the literature deals with Al Qaeda even 20 years after the event, in fact, the group is looked at through the lens of risk, in the sense that Al Qaeda's status is evaluated in relation to what 9/11 meant for the organisation (fame, as well as necessity to decentralise, according

to the literature). Hence, 9/11 became a prism through which observe facts related to terrorism; this has been discussed also by Fitzgerald (2021) who, at 20 years since the event, described 9/11 as an event capable of epistemological distortion through which events after and before are interpreted.

The events of 9/11 are continuously memorialised and while this testimony is important, they also continue to remember the feeling of suffering and shock. All together 9/11 has signified a shift on how we perceive the threat and while the world outside has to grapple with the rise of racism and islamophobia, academia has to come to terms with the fact that itself also is tangled in dynamic of fear of terrorism and threat perception. This, coupled with the tendency to follow ingroup and outgroup dynamics to attribute responsibility, as discussed above, has contributed to the construction and emergence of the narratives about jihad as a unique existential threat, as well as to the neglect of the far-right threat, in spite of the increase of planned and completed attacks. This view of jihadi terrorism as an imminent threat is, however, imbued with western centric ideas and perception of risk: the literature, in fact, shows that it is mainly preoccupied with the risk from jihadi terrorism to Western countries (and mostly in relation to the USA and UK) and only minimally with the (overwhelmingly major) risk to countries in the MENA region or in the South of Asia. When articles refer to these regions of the world, they do so to refer to the location of terrorist groups under the perspective of prevention or counterterrorism interventions, which intertwines the discourse of threat perception for the West with the application of Orientalism lenses and Othering processes to look at the terrorism situation of places out of the Global North. The threat *comes from the other, who is not seen as at risk of the same terrorist attacks as the west,*

and this threat is inevitably and almost exclusively directed 'here'. From this stems that if the threat is understood as external (in terms of group dynamic and geographic origin) and directed inward there is a certain resistance to frame far-right terrorism, which is internal, in the same threatening terms.

Such an attention to the threat is certainly also linked to media and it emerges to be, in fact, a close relationship between media and academia, more evident in the case of jihadi terrorism representation than in the case of far-right terrorism representation. Evidently, the literature relies on media produced by jihadi terrorist groups to gain information on them, their ideology and their aims (for example magazines produced by ISIS and Tweets published by al-Shabaab) and uses those as legitimate and encompassing source of information. This points to the fact that there is an assumption, in the literature analysed, of incommunicability with these groups, which links back to the taboo of the 'terrorist subjectivity' discussed above (Zulaika and Douglass, 2008). Incommunicability or incorrigibility (Wilkinson, 2006) as a characteristics of jihadi groups also fits in the framing of terrorism post 9/11 as a 'new terrorism' which is irrational and hate-fuelled. In addition to this, and this becomes evident if one looks at the way far-right is represented, jihadi actors seem to be objectified in the literature. The far-right is considered as a subject and studied in its relationship with the media: in considering the far-right in relation with the media it becomes possible to analyse it in a more nuanced way, and to take into consideration that far-right groups and media tend to influence each other.

Finally, the literature dealt with women in jihadi terrorist groups and far-right groups differently. The articles analysed which focused on far-right terrorism predominantly do not look at women, of the few that do, they portray them as actively taking part

in propaganda and recruitment (Mehta, 2015 and Blee, 2005). Women in jihadi groups, and in particular ISIS, are represented differently: mostly disempowered and unaware of the reality of the terrorist group. In addition, part of the literature advances the idea that women are lured into groups with promises of emancipation which are ineluctably disattended. It emerges then, that women are placed on a dichotomy of agency/disempowerment if one compares their representation in far-right and jihadi literature. This is read as an indication that the literature also uses gendered lenses when looking at women joining terrorist groups: the causes of this are not discussed in this dissertation, however, it can be hypothesised that the field has been for a long time dominated by men and that this has in some way impacted on the production of knowledge around women in terrorism (as an example: out of the 45 authors of the far-right selected articles, 14 are women (Graef, 2021). Terrorism literature, as criminology, meant the 'male' as the standard object of research, and that meant that women were an afterthought. This discrepancy (or absence) in the representation of women in these two instances of terrorism has implications not only as it reveals the presence of gendered lenses in the literature, it also unveils the fact that women, albeit not new in terrorist groups (as Glynn, 2013 and Miller-Idriss and Pilkington, 2019 evidence) are not perceived with the same level of threateningness. Considering how women are aspiring and reaching management position in far-right groups (Miller-Idriss and Pilkington, 2019), this could soon change. In addition, gender is taken to mean women, but the toxic and hegemonic masculinities so relevant to terrorism are neglected.

The language of threat and of responsibility run through the themes that emerged from the literature. This is why the 'six key issues' in the field of Terrorism Studies

highlighted in this research have been distilled into two main problem areas: the first one has to do with the attribution of responsibility, and the second with the threat perception coming from far-right and jihadi actors.

This thesis has identified substantial critiques of the field and has contended that the problem is not in how we define terrorism but in how we talk about it, how it is represented, and what's left unsaid. However, a critique of the field can result in sterility if it is not also followed by an explicit attempt to contribute and move on from the critique itself. Hence, the definition of the two problem areas discussed in the previous chapter represents a further level of abstraction of the themes that emerged in the analysis and is functional for the application of the integrated framework presented earlier. The TeR-BAT, the Terrorism Research - Base Assumption Tool presented in chapter 9, aims to be a practical tool to help the researcher in considering the assumptions underpinning the way they think about the subject of their study and how they are designing their study. The framework is based on the finding highlighted in this thesis, and draws on concepts such as Orientalism, othering, in-outgroup dynamics and gender stereotypes.

Future directions: where to next?

This study involved an analysis of the academic literature in the field of Terrorism Studies to investigate what are the underlying assumptions in the literature. What emerges is a field which is animated by good intentions to understand and prevent 9/11 from happening again, but that is flawed in that the field applies Orientalist, state-centric and gendered assumptions to the research. Such assumptions are

reflected in how the research is designed, in what questions are asked, as well as in the paradigms the research is based upon: this is the case, for example, in the over-reliance of the field on the concept of radicalisation. in the future, terrorism research would benefit from the application of the practice of critical reflexivity (Jackson, 2007) which serves to recognise that the knowledge produced in the field is not absolute and neutral and therefore requires reflection on the assumptions that come with it. The TeR-BAT presented in this thesis is a starting point to guide future research in that it serves to avoid the presence of six key issues highlighted in the discussion chapter and fits in idea of reflexivity *in practice*.

In addition to this, further work is needed to understand if and how the academic literature is used to inform interventions at the state level, especially when the findings of the academic literature seem to contradict the narratives of governments around terrorism (the research could also be extended to non-governmental organisation). This would imply progressing to the collection of governmental documents, where available, and investigate on which academic literature it relies on as well as enriching the analysis with a further investigation of the underlying assumptions emerging from the content of such documentation. Finally, as explained throughout the text, the cut off point for the collection of the articles was 2018, as the project began in 2019; it is possible that the field of Terrorism Studies changed considerably since the beginning to 2019, especially in relation to the consideration of far-right and in the aftermath of the events of the 6th January 2021, therefore, a direction for future research would involve the study of the literature from 2019.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Terrorism Studies and the Oklahoma City Bombing - an exploratory study

One of the arguments of this work is that the field of Terrorism Studies is reactive, such reactivity is also based on a set of accepted assumptions, which relate to the identity of the actor of a terrorist attack. To support this point, the researcher has carried out an additional exploratory study which looked at the article published in Terrorism and Political Violence and Studies in Conflict and Terrorism between 1995 and 2000 (Critical Studies in Terrorism began publishing in 2008) which dealt with the Oklahoma City bombing, happened on the 19th April 1995. To do this, the researcher used the same database used for the collection of far-right and jihadi articles, with a modified approach: far-right and jihadi articles were researched in the journals through the use of keywords, selected according to inclusion criteria and were then input in the Excel Dataset according to whether they mentioned, compared or focused on far-right/jihadi terrorism.

In this exploratory research, all articles published and labelled by the journal as *original articles* were included in the database and the researcher manually input them in the Excel Dataset. As it was done with far-right terrorism and jihadi terrorism articles, only original articles were included, whereas reviews, editorial and special sections articles were excluded from the dataset. Also, rather than having the articles appraised and categorised according to whether they focus on, mention or compare far-right and jihadi terrorism, the articles between 1995 and 2000 are all individually

appraised through title, keywords and abstract, regardless of their topic, and each article's topic is added in a dedicated column for later review.

The total of articles collected in the database is 278 and of these, only 7 discuss the Oklahoma City bombing, albeit at different extents (2 of these 7 mention the Oklahoma City bombing as the deadliest attack on US soil, but do not focus on the event throughout the article).

The findings of this exploratory review indicate and further confirm that while the field of Terrorism Studies is reactive and event-driven, this feature is also applied differently to different instances of terrorism, as dealt with in depth in the Discussion chapter (8) of this work.

Appendix 2: Extracts from the far-right database (Rapid Appraisal and Content Analysis)

Rapid Appraisal Database

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
1	Full citation	Title	Publicationyear	Journal	Volume	Issue	Noauthor	1Author	2Author	1Country	Time focus	Group focus	Geo focus	Offence focus (only for FR focus)	Far Right Focus	Far Right Mention	Far Right Comparison or Co-focus	Did paper include a methodology?	No source	Academic literature	Open gc docs
2	Johannes Due Enstad (2017) "Glory to Breivik	Glory to Breivik! : the Russian Far Right and the 2011 Norway	2015	TPV	29	5	1	Due Enstad, J.			from 2011	Far-right	Russia	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
3	Martin Durham (2003) The American far right	The American far right and 9/11	2003	TPV	15	2	1	Durham, M.			post 2001	Far-right	USA	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
4	Daniel Koehler & Peter Popella (2018) Mappir	Mapping Far-right Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuc	2018	TPV	NA	NA	2	Koehler, D.	Popella, P.		1970-2917	Far-right	West	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	
5	Barbara Manthe (2018) On the Pathway to Vi	On the Pathway to Violence: West German Right-Wing Terro	2018	TPV	NA	NA	1	Manthe, B.			1970-1980	Right-Wing	Germany	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
6	William S. Parkin & Joshua D. Freilich (2015) F	Routine Activities and Right-Wing Extremists: An Empirical Co	2015	TPV	27	1	2	Parkin, W.	Freilich, J.		1990-2007	right-wing	USA	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	
7	Steven Chermak & Jeffrey A. Gruenewald (20	Laying a Foundation for the Criminological Examination of Rig	2015	TPV	27	1	2	Chermark, S	Gruenewald, J.		NA	Far right, Far	USA	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	
8	George Michael (2006) RAHOWA! A History c	RAHOWA! A History of the World Church of the Creator	2006	TPV	18	4	1	Michael, G.			NA	World Churc	USA	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
9	Joshua D. Freilich, William S. Parkin, Jeff Grue	Comparing Extremist Perpetrators of Suicide and Non-Suicide	2017	TPV	NA	NA	4	Freilich, J.	Parkin, W.		1990-2013	far right, al C	USA	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	
10	Carole Villiger (2013) Political Violence: Switze	Political Violence: Switzerland, A Special Case?,	2013	TPV	25	5	1	Villinger, C.			1968-1995	far right, far	Switzerland	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	
11	George Michael (2003) The revolutionary mo	The revolutionary model of Dr William L. Pierce,	2003	TPV	15	3	1	Michael, G.			NA	National Alli	USA	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
12	Sappho Xenakis (2012) A New Dawn? Change	A New Dawn? Change and Continuity in Political Violence in (	2012	TPV	24	3	1	Xenakis, S.			1974-2002	NA	Greece	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	
13	Leena Malkki, Mats Fridlund & Daniel Sallam	Terrorism and Political Violence in the Nordic Countries	2018	TPV	30	5	3	Malkki, L.	Fridlund, M.		1997-2018	NA	Nordic Cour	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
14	Stuart A. Wright (2009) Strategic Framing of F	Strategic Framing of Racial-Nationalism in North America and	2009	TPV	21	2	1	Wright, S.			from 1995	NA	USA	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
15	Michael Barkun (2007) Appropriated Martyrs	Appropriated Martyrs: The Branch Davidians and the Radical	2007	TPV	19	1	1	Barkun, M.			post 1993	radical right	USA	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
16	Jacob Aasland Ravndal (2018) Right-wing Ter	Right-wing Terrorism and Militancy in the Nordic Countries: A	2018	TPV	30	5	1	Ravndal, J.			1990-2015	far right	Sweden	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
17	Mattias Gardell (2014) Crusader Dreams: Osl	Crusader Dreams: Oslo 22/7, Islamophobia, and the Quest fo	2014	TPV	26	1	1	Gardell, M.			NA	NA	Norway	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	
18	Jeffrey Kaplan (2017) Red Dawn is Now: Race	Red Dawn is Now: Race vs. Nation and the American Election	2017	TPV	29	3	1	Kaplan, J.			1950-1960	far right	USA	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
19	Jussi Jalonen (2018) From Underground Terro	From Underground Terrorism to State Terrorism and Beyond	2018	TPV	30	5	1	Jalonen, J.			WWI-1930s	Jäger Moven	Finland	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
20	Daniela Pisoiu (2015) Subcultural Theory Appl	Subcultural Theory Applied to Jihadi and Right-Wing Radicali	2015	TPV	27	1	1	Pisoiu, D.			NA	far right, Jihi	Germany	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	
21	MARTIN SCHÖNTEICH (2004) The Emerging T	The Emerging Threat? South Africa's Extreme Right	2004	TPV	16	4	1	Shoenteich, M.			NA	Boeremag	South Africa	0	1	0	0	0			
22	Øyvind Bugge Solheim (2018) Right-wing Ter	Right-wing Terrorism and Out-group Trust: The Anatomy of a	2018	TPV	NA	NA	1	Solheim, Ø.			2011	NA	Norway	0	0	0	1	0	0		
23	Roger Griffin (2003) Shattering crystals: The r	Shattering crystals: The role of 'dream time' in extreme right	2003	TPV	15	1	1	Griffin, R.			NA	right-wing	NA	0	1	0	0	0			
24	Joshua D. Freilich, Steven M. Chermak, Rober	Introducing the United States Extremis Crime Database (ECD	2014	TPV	26	2	5	Freilich, J.	Chermak, S.		NA	NA	NA	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	
25	Paul Joosse (2007) Leaderless Resistance and	Leaderless Resistance and Ideological Inclusion: The Case of	2007	TPV	19	3	1	Joosse, P.			NA	radical right,	ELF	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
26	Jessica Stern (2014) Response to Marc Sager	Response to Marc Sageman's "The Stagnation in Terrorism R	2014	TPV	26	4	1	Stern, J.			NA	NA	NA	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
27	Jean-Loup Samaan & Andreas Jacobs (2018) (	Countering Jihadist Terrorism: A Comparative Analysis of Fre	2018	TPV	NA	NA	2	Samaan, J.	Jacobs, A.		NA	NA	France, Gern	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
28	Catherine McGlynn & Shaun McDaid (2016) R	Radicalisation and higher education: Students' understanding	2016	TPV	NA	NA	2	McGlynn, C	McDaid, S.		post 2015	Student	UK	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	
29	Julie Chernov Hwang (2017) The Disengagem	The Disengagement of Indonesian Jihadists: Understanding	2017	TPV	29	2	1	Hwang, J. C.			2010-2014	Jihad	Indonesia	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
30	Leena Malkki & Daniel Sallamaa (2018) To Ca	To Call or Not to Call It Terrorism: Public Debate on Ideologica	2018	TPV	30	5	2	Malkki, L.	Sallamaa, D.		1991-2015	NA	Finland	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	
31	Joshua D. Freilich, Steven M. Chermak & Jose	Surveying American State Police Agencies About Terrorism T	2009	TPV	21	3	3	Freilich, J.	Chermak, S.		2006-2007	NA	USA	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	
32	Richard E. Berkebile (2017) What Is Domestic	What Is Domestic Terrorism? A Method for Classifying Event	2017	TPV	29	1	1	Berkebile, R.			NA	domestic ter	Global	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	
33	Joel Busher & Graham Macklin (2015) Interpr	Interpreting "Cumulative Extremism": Six Proposals for Enha	2015	TPV	27	5	2	Busher, J.	Macklin, G.		NA	Right-wing, (	NA	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	
34	Barbara Perry, David C. Hofmann & Ryan Scri	"Confrontational but Not Violent": An Assessment of the Pot	2018	TPV	NA	NA	3	Perry, B.	Hoffman, D.		NA	Anti-authori	Canada	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
35	Sabri Sayari (2010) Political Violence and Terr	Political Violence and Terrorism in Turkey	2010	TPV	22	2	1	Sayari, S.			1976-1980	NA	Turkey	0	0	0	1	0	0		
36	Joshua D. Freilich & Gary LaFree (2015) Crimi	Criminology Theory and Terrorism: Introduction to the Specia	2015	TPV	27	1	2	Freilich, J.	LaFree, G.		NA	NA	NA	0	0	0	1	0	0		
37	Sam Jackson (2016) Non-normative political e	Non-normative political extremism: Reclaiming a concept's a	2016	TPV	NA	NA	1	Jackson, S.			NA	NA	NA	0	0	0	1	0	0		
38	Martin Innes, Colin Roberts, Alun Preece & Da	Ten "Rs" of Social Reaction: Using Social Media to Analyse th	2018	TPV	30	3	4	Innes, M.	Roberts, C.		post 2013	NA	UK	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	
39	Aurel Croissant (2007) Muslim Insurgency, Po	Muslim Insurgency, Political Violence, and Democracy in Tha	2007	TPV	19	1	1	Croissant, A.			post 2001	NA	Thailand	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	
40	A. Pedahzur, W. Eubank & L. Weinberg (2002	The War on Terrorism and the Decline of Terrorist Group For	2001	TPV	14	3	3	Pedahzur, A	Eubank, W.		1910-2000	NA	West	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	
41	Sarah V. Marsden (2016) A Social Movement	A Social Movement Theory Typology of Militant Organisatio	2016	TPV	28	4	1	Marsden, S.			NA	Militant dor	NA	0	0	1	0	1		1	

Content Analysis Database

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
1	*TITLE*	*"Glory to Breivik!": the Russian Far Right and the 2011 Norway Attacks*				*The American Far Right and 9/11*				*Mapping Far-right Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Terrorism Efforts in the West: Characteristics of Plots and Perpetrators for Future Threat Assesment.*				*On the Pathway to violence: West German Right Wing Terrorism in the 1970s*				*Routine Activities and Right-Wing Extrer Empirical Comparison of the Victim Ideologically and non-Ideologically Mc Homicides committed by American Far-*		
2	*Year of Publication*	*Pub 2017*				*Pub 2003*				*2018*				*2018*				*2015*		
3	*Time Focus*	*Post 2011*				*2001-2003*				*1970-2017*				*1970s*				*1990 - 2007*		
4	*Method (Y/N=methodology)*	*Content analysis media/blogs*				*Theoretical piece*				*Y-Dataset research*				*Historical-qualitative study*				*Y- Empirical Hypothesis test*		
5	*FR more prevalent (attack/research)*	*N/A*				*Increase attention to FR in T research*				*Increase attention to FR in T - but not as much as J,*				*Increase attention to FR in T research*				*N/A*		
6	*Themes or Categories (terminology TBD)*	Normalisation FR in media discourse/immigrant				Complexity of movement (different responses to				Anti-establishment plots				Evolution of the movement - generational change /				Ideological/non ideological crime		
7		Complexity of FR ideology and reactions to B.				Synergy with Jihadist movements/groups				Lone actors				Heterogeneous movement				Enemies: government, racial and reli		
8		Presence in popular culture				Definitional issues wit FR - different from				Heterogeneous composition of FR movement:				Enemies (Jews, Communists, Immigrants,				Domestic violence/patriarchy		
9		Social media engagement				A variety of enemies ("wealthy race traitors, Negro				Escathological views / under siege				Complex relationship to Gov't				Different risk perception for i/non-i c		
10		Cultural label - heroicization				Nationalism				Racism				Right wing violence (≠ terrorism)				Race War - upcoming/elicited		
11		Anti-multiculturalism				Complexity Neo-Nazi VS FR in response to 9/11				Nationalism				Conspiracy theories - impending doom/siege,				White supremacy		
12		Link to mainstream (Russian) politics				Anti-establishment and anti-governmental control				Lack of agreement in Academia/ conceptual				Anti-democratic, nationalism, racism				School/office shooting		
13		Public perception of FR				Conspiracy theory				Diverging threat assessment and perception for FR				Nationalism (linked to loss of territory)				Single issues		
14		Racism and nationalism				Radical right and the question of race (with				Anti-semitism				Fragmentation/splintering of the movement						
15		Violence in Russian Culture				Immigration/foreign policy				Duplex relationship with public no				Negative Public reception						
16						Impact on followers/ public reception of FR				Increased sophistication of weapons (evolution of				International links/inspirations						
17	Ideology																			
18	Complexity of ideology (variability and splintering)																			
19	Relationship with Public																			
20	Relationship with the Media																			
21	Evolution of tools: propaganda and leadership																			
22	Threat perception																			
23	Mainstream politics																			
24	Actions: leadership, weapons and target and satellite crimes																			
25	Network																			
26	9/11 reactions																			
27	Engagement and disengagement																			
28	Grievances																			
29	Other																			
30																				
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Appendix 3: Omni comprehensive table of the themes about jihadi terrorism in the literature, including all codes, categories, themes and overarching themes that became part of the discussion of jihadi terrorism focused articles.

Codes	**Categories and sub-categories**	**Themes (indicated with numbers) and sub-themes (indicated with letters)**	**Overarching themes (roman numbers)**
- Normality of the terrorist - demographics - ideology (religious and political) - radicalisation - psychological explanations - personal and social circumstances - active recruitment - training	Getting involved	*1. Radicalisation:* f. Radicalisation as an 'Islamic' phenomenon g. Triggering factors h. 3.Radicalisation as individual or social phenomenon i. Spatial focus: the places of radicalisation j. Radicalisation as both the cause and consequence of violence	V. A lifecycle approach to terrorism

- national, social, and individual identity - social movement - economic and political grievances/alienation and frustration - weak/failed states - human and social security		k. Assumptions around radicalisation *2. Grievances*	
- Dehumanisation - Denial of personal agency -Psychological consequences of violence - Retribution - Expressive violence -Glorification of violence	Belonging & staying	*3. Ways to the legitimise violence*	

- Radicalising power of violence - Takfir			
-Leaving the group - Disillusionment - Disengagement - Personal interpretation/meaning	Leaving	*4. De-radicalisation* 5. *Counterterrorism*	
- United nations - Response adaptation - Negotiations - EU counter-rad - Intelligence Operations - USA and the War on Terror - Internal politics	Counterterrorism	*6. Inter and Intra state responses* a. Threat to Western countries b. The USA, its war against terrorism and international relationship *c.* United Nations	VI. Countering terrorism at the national and international level
- Al Qaeda - ISIS - Hamas	Actors (individuals, groups, states)	*7. AL QAEDA* a. Local vs Global	VII. Terrorism as a group

- Hezbollah - Al Shabaab - Boko Haram - Jemaah Islamiyah - Abu-Sayyaf - Other		b. Adaptability, Structure, and responses c. Strategies and tactics d. Communication and ideology	phenomenon
- Lone actors -Foreign fighters -Women		*8. ISIS* a. Novelty and brutality b. Communication and propaganda of the deeds c. Values	
States		*9. Foreign fighters* *10. Women* *11. States*	
- Fatwas - Farewell letters - Nasheeds	Communication and leadership	*12. Variability of channels of communication:*	

- Violet videos (ISIS) - Omar Bakri Mohammed - Abu Hamza - Abu Qatada		13. *Clerics and charisma*	
- Networks - Websites - Internal disputes - Suicide bombers	Strategies	*14. Internal group dynamics* *a. internal disputes* *15. Paramilitary Strategies* *a. Suicide bombers* *16. Networks* *17. Internet* *a. Change*	
- Political ideology -Establishing the caliphate - Sharia	Values	18. Borders 19. Religion: *a. Ummah*	

-Nationalism and Transnationalism - Pan Islamism and Ummah - Martyrdom		*b. Martyrdom and honour* *20.* Political ideology *a. the Caliphate* *b. Sharia*	
- Critical Terrorism Studies - Orientalism - Colonisation and Decolonisation - Othering - Narratives and power	Critical terrorism Studies	21. Critical perspectives: *a. Critical terrorism studies* *b. Orientalism* *c. Colonisation and decolonisation* *d. Othering* e. *Narratives and Power*	VIII. Constructing and deconstructing the threat
- Public perception of Jihad - International media - Criticism of violence - Counternarratives - Islam under siege	Narratives on Jihad	22. Public perception of jihad: *a. Jihad there* *b. Jihad here* *c. Counternarratives* *d. Criticism to violence*	

- Propaganda and public engagement - Narratives on women and Jihad		e. *Threat to Islam*	
- Islamism and Islam - Jihad and Jihadism - 9/11 - New Terrorism - Threat to the West - Threat to the Arab World	Constructing the threat	23. Constructing the threat: *a. Islamism and Islam* *b. Jihad and Jihadism* *c. 9/11* *d. New terrorism* e. *The threat There*	