Articles

A New Wave of Terrorism? A Comparative Analysis of the Rise of Far-Right Terrorism

by Jonathan Collins

Abstract

Far-right terrorist incidents are proliferating throughout the Western world. There has been an exponential increase in such incidents in the past ten years. To better understand this phenomenon, the author uses David Rapoport's seminal theory on Modern Waves of Terrorism. Applying Rapoport's measurement criteria, this article seeks to determine whether the increase in far-right violence constitutes a new terrorist wave. The study provides an extensive analysis using the Global Terrorism Database, linking research dedicated to comprehending domestic occurrences of far-right extremism with patterns and themes across the affected regions. Based on mixed-methods empirical analysis, this article contends that the data's common themes and patterns fulfill Rapoport's distinctive wave conditions with regard to the phenomenon's international nature, the type of terrorist activity, its prompting cause, and its predominant energy.

Keywords: Far-right extremism, political extremism, wave of terrorism, violent extremism

Introduction

There has been a rise of far-right terrorism (FRT)[1] throughout the Western world. The Institute for Economics and Peace has highlighted the exponential increase (320%) in incidents connected to far-right assailants in the past ten years.[2] Multiple studies couple these findings to various themes, including the reemergence of far-right populist parties [3], the mainstreaming of hateful rhetoric [4], the scapegoating of targeted minorities and communities [5], as well as the idolization of far-right mass murderers.[6] The recent mass casualty incidents in Hanau (Germany), El Paso (United States) and Christchurch (New Zealand) related to far-right ideologies reaffirm the need to improve our understanding of why these attacks are on the rise. One proposed avenue of analysis is in utilizing David C. Rapoport's *Modern Waves of Terrorism* theorem. Rapoport argues that underlying political and ideological forces shape distinct patterns of terrorism.[7] These patterns form in cyclical waves, helping researchers to understand and identify the different themes precipitating the respective cycle. The article's central aim, using Rapoport's theory, is to determine whether FRT constitutes a new wave within terrorism. If so, highlighting FRT as the next wave of terrorism has repercussions for the field of study and the overall focus of scholarly research.

Traditionally, studies involving FRT have predominantly focused on single high-fatality occurrences rather than looking at general trends. Some exceptions to this tendency include the historical overview in Kristy Campion's "A 'Lunatic Fringe?' The Persistence of Right-Wing Extremism in Australia"[8] or Daniel Koehler's "Recent Trends in German Right-Wing Violence and Terrorism: What are the Contextual Factors behind 'Hive Terrorism'?"[9] However, these studies remain few and far between. Thus, this article aims to fill this literature gap by providing an extensive analysis, using the "most comprehensive database of terrorist incidents,"[10] and interlinking research dedicated to understanding domestic occurrences of FRT with the encompassing patterns and themes to be found across the affected regions. Moreover, it also seeks to challenge the current dichotomy between the importance placed on the religious wave of terrorism, and that placed on the under-research phenomenon of FRT. Among other developments, popular Western political language has presupposed new terrorism in the shape of 'Jihadism' as the polar opposite to old terrorism's 'secular extremism'.[11] Consequently, this Western characterization often depicts religious terrorism as international actors seeking extreme violence that threatens the current world order. Conversely, FRT or old terrorism has taken on the form of a less violent, domestic actor operating within the existing political order.

[12] Lost in the categorization and securitization of the religious wave, is the neglected research onto FRT. A recent study conducted by The Hague Institute for Security Studies suggests that Muslim perpetrators of terrorist attacks received 357% more press coverage than far-right individuals within the United States.[13] Such findings are not exclusive to public discourse. In a study conducted by Ahmed and Lynch between 2001 and 2018, they found that of 387 articles mentioning right-wing extremism, only 41 focused exclusively— instead of either briefly mentioning or comparatively using the term—on FRT.[14] The statistics belie the fact that there are twice as many incidents involving right-wing terrorists in the United States than from any other extremist base and also overlook an increasing number of comparable incidents in Western Europe. [15]

Therefore, this article aims to contribute two interlinked dimensions in terrorism research. The first is in establishing the existence of a new FRT wave of extremism, gradually replacing the longstanding religious wave. Readers may ask: why does establishing the next wave of terrorism as FRT matter? My answer is that it is not a symbolic representation with minor repercussions but a call for reorientation in understanding the changing extremist landscape. Most importantly, with the current fixation of Jihadism in the academic sphere, the far right has mobilized with few impediments while using the discourse surrounding the religious wave as an existential threat in their ideological narratives. However, this article is not attempting to undermine studies dedicated to Jihadi terrorism. Instead, it aims to close the gap, imploring more academics to focus on FRT. This reorientation of the field strives to better represent the ongoing extremism concerns in the Western world. Secondly, the typological production of themes and patterns spanning the selected cases should emphasize the underlying mechanisms fueling the growing wave of FRT. Identifying the varying motivations, targets, weapon types, group belongings, ideologies, and reoccurring patterns should provide future avenues for exploration.

Rapoport's Modern Waves of Terrorism Theory

David Rapoport defines a *wave* as a "cycle of activity in a given period—a cycle characterized by expansion and contraction phases."[16] In his historical analysis, the four modern waves take the form of [17]:

Anarchism (1880s–1920s) – The first wave started in Russia, with students calling for rebellion against the Czarist regime. The movement utilized assassinations and terrorism as a stratagem, including suicidal bombings which were portrayed as noble acts of martyrdom. A series of plots against establishment figures amounted to a "golden age" of assassinations, culminating in the murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914.

Nationalism & Anti-Colonialism (1920s–1960s) – The aftermath of WWI triggered the next wave, with many countries calling for self-determination following the breakup of colonial empires. Instead of the regional focus in the previous cycle, acts of terrorism took place across much of the globe, including in Pakistan, the Philippines, in much of Africa, but also in Cyprus and Palestine. Moreover, the tactics shifted from high-impact acts of terrorism to more hit-and-run-style acts of guerrilla warfare.

New Left Extremism (1960s–1980s) – The Cold War and the effectiveness of guerrilla tactics demonstrated in Korea and Vietnam fostered the third wave of nationalist fighters. Many organizations created during this wave, such as the RAF, the Italian Red Brigades, and the IRA, utilized spectacular acts of terrorism. This type of terrorism included dozens of plane hijackings, the assassinations of prominent political figures, international kidnappings, and other acts such as foreign embassy occupations.

Religious Extremism (1980s–current times) – Political Islam or Islamism rests at the heart of the current religious wave. Multiple interconnected events triggered the religious wave, including the Iranian revolution, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the rise of a Jihad movement in the Arab and Muslim world. The most outstanding act of terrorism characterizing the religious wave was the coordinated suicidal hijacking attack of 9/11.

However, with each wave of terrorism's life cycle averaging around forty years, researchers have presupposed

an ensuing novel phenomenon to arrive.[18] This assertion includes Vincent Auger's similar contestation that FRT is the next wave of terrorism, and Rapoport's assumption that by 2025 there will be a novel cycle.[19] His seminal article provides distinguishable criteria to establish the arrival of a new cycle of terrorism. The first—the global character—examines the transnational nature of terrorist activities. Secondly, an expansion of activity measures, number of individuals involved and characteristics of attacks over an identified period. A prompting or inciting cause depicts an "unanticipated international political transformation" that produces extremist and radical reactions.[20] Finally, the presence of a common predominant energy is part of Rapoport's theory. This article also draws inspiration from Vincent Auger's study on the wave phenomenon. Expounding on the upward trend of far-right violence, this Western Illinois professor holds that FRT could fulfill Rapoport's criteria for a wave. However, Auger's arguments are anecdotal and lack the qualitative and quantitative data necessary to fully back up his claim. Therefore, this article aims to fill this gap through the operationalization of Rapoport's criteria with empirical findings.

Far-right terrorism is not a recent phenomenon, but previous upsurges in right-wing violence have not received much scholarly treatment. This article ascertains that, historically, FRT has largely been a local trend featuring sporadic violence within a given country or region. For example, Campion's historical analysis details the ebb and flow of RWE from the 1930s to the modern day.[21] With spurts of violence in the 1930s and 1980s stemming from issues related to the economy and immigration respectively, we could observe similar upward trends in extremism at the present time. However, this article argues that at no point has there been such a consolidated transnational effort from far-right terrorists to affect the Western world as in the past ten years. The study aims to prove the uniqueness of current far-right terrorist activity as it predicts the next wave of terrorism.

Research Design: Evaluating the Next Wave

This article interlinks the phenomenon of FRT within a multi-case study comparative framework—allowing for comparisons with both the qualitative and quantitative data available in the Global Terrorism Database (GTD)—to investigate the emergence of a new wave of terrorism. These cases include the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Scandinavia—excluding Iceland and the Faroe Islands. The regions were selected based on their respective upsurge in FRT, the scholarly literature written on the areas, and their geographic locations spread across the regions affected by FRT. Moreover, due to the availability of data on the GTD during the period of research, the study covers the period between 2009 and 2018. This provides a decade of data and could potentially represent the starting point for the far-right wave. The measuring criteria or operationalized mechanisms for this investigation are the wave characteristics outlined by David Rapoport, namely: international nature, type of terrorist activity, prompting cause, and common predominant energy. The conditions for success in identifying whether or not FRT constitutes a new wave of terrorism depends on whether Rapoport's criteria are statistically provable—using either descriptive statistics for the quantitative data or thematic inductive analysis for the qualitative. Thus, the guiding research questions for this investigation follow the multi-case study comparative conditions listed above:

> RQ1: What is the principal arrangement of characteristics of FRT incidents within Scandinavia, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States?

> RQ2: Do these findings suggest a new wave of far-right terrorism when comparing the selected cases within the framework of David Rapoport's modern waves of terrorism theory?

Operationalization

The study operationalizes Rapoport's methods for defining a wave of terrorism. This operationalization process combines the theories' criteria in conjunction with data available in the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). Thus, the article outlines the following four measurement tools:

1. International Nature – The general trends of FRT incidents for the selected cases. Determining whether

the increase in FRT is a global phenomenon, or whether only a select region is experiencing the change.

2. Type of Terrorist Activity – Number of incidents per selected case study, including the target type, the method of violence, the type of weaponry used and the frequency of events. Showcasing the unique characteristics of the new wave, setting it apart from the previous cycles.

3. Prompting Cause – The motives behind each incident. Includes the ideologies or triggers used to justify the assailant's actions and measures the lethality per ideological grouping. Examining certain international triggers or events which have precipitated the movement's increased use of violence.

4. Common Predominant Energy – The interlinkages of common themes spanning the selected cases. Finding the transnationally unifying factors that bring the violent movement together in a popular cause.

Defining Far-Right Terrorism & Case Selection within the Global Terrorism Database (GTD)

This article utilizes Tore Bjørgo and Jacob Ravndal's (2019) examination of the recent dominating narratives within FRT as a working definition for case selection. According to the study, current right-wing signaling factors can differ from cultural, ethnic and/or racist nationalism but share inherent commonalities.[22] Cultural nationalism is rhetoric often used to combat and protect against the allegedly "repressive and backward" culture of Muslims. Conversely, ethnic nationalism refers to the perceived threat of mixing different ethnicities into a homogenous community. Instead, this type of nationalists believes that these groups should be kept separate to preserve the "uniqueness" of each community. Finally, racial nationalism makes claims for White superiority, often combined with a belief that all other races must be "subjugated, deported or exterminated." The movement embraces a narrative of racial purity and adopts a wide array of conspiracy theories against Jews, immigrants, and mixed-race individuals. Elements of these three nationalist subgroupings may include fascism, anti-immigration, nativism, chauvinism, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism.[23] Therefore, FRT represents a multifaceted, adapting and overlapping group of individuals adopting interrelated ideologies which seek to protect their communities from perceived threats.

Case selection within the GTD depended on the above working definition and START's sorting mechanisms: whether an act of violence is considered terrorism, extremism, or a hate crime. The GTD uses a set of attributes to determine the type of violence, and this includes subnational actors, a political, economic, religious, or social motivation, and the assailant's intentions to coerce an opponent or to relay a message to the broader public.[24] If all attributes are accounted for, the event appears as a unique terrorism incident in the GTD database. Once an act of violence was determined to meet the criteria for terrorism, the author inductively sorted out relevant incidents for the selected countries, using Bjørgo and Ravndal's framing of FRT. This process varied between the data available per event, but most often used a combination of variables including the assailant's group name, target type, motives (if provided), and summary.

Methodology & Data

The research methodology used here is comparative cross-national analysis. This practice examines a particular phenomenon to compare its "manifestations in different socio-national settings."[25] Using the small-N cross-national comparative method allows for the collection of predominant terrorism cases within the international system.[26] In developing functional equivalents of terrorism incidents and classifying these cases into groupings with identifiable and shared characteristics, the article seeks to offer a comprehensive evaluation of the multifaceted problem. In addition, this method is useful for evaluation since it allows for both qualitative and quantitative comparisons. Thus, the GTD's extensive catalog of data in combination with the cross-national comparison method provides the essential mixed-method approach between "variable-based logic and case-based interpretation."[27]

The primary source for the detailed breakdown of each event of far-right extremism is the open-source database created by START. The usefulness of the GTD for academics pertains to its extensive records of greater than 190,000 terrorist attacks since the 1970s.[28] START uses an open-source method for collecting

media articles which feeds their massive accumulation of data. This process involves using a Metabase Application Programming Interface which isolates close to 400,000 potentially relevant articles per month. [29] Refining the data is done by removing duplicates and irrelevant material. Only articles acquired from trusted primary high-quality sources are used to ensure validity. The data set comprises greater than 100 variables, characterizing each attack in detail, listing its tactics, targets, weapons, and casualties while also offering short descriptions of the assailants and their motives. Therefore, START provides the most comprehensive open-source database for incidents of terrorism.

Necessary for this study was the selection of relevant GTD variables. Each categorical variable used in the analysis was deductively selected to best represent the operationalized characteristics detailed by Rapoport. The following section includes a list of this investigation's defining features [30]:

Table 1. GTD variables used to measure Rapoport's Indicators

Variable Type	Summary
Summary	A brief narrative of the essential elements of the terrorist attack.
Attacktype1	The general method of attack which reflects a broad class of different tactics in terrorism.
Facility/Infrastructure Attack	The primary intention is to cause harm to nonhuman targets (buildings, monuments, vehicles).
Armed Assault	The objective is to cause physical harm or death against a target using firearms, incendiaries, or sharp instruments (lethal).
Bombing/Explosion	A device which, upon activation, creates an intense pressure wave causing physical damage to the surrounding environment.
Targtype1	The general type of target/victim for terrorists. The variable consists of 22 different categories, reflecting the broadness of target types.
Weapontype1	The general type of weaponry used for each incident.
Gname	Lists the name of the group that carried out the attack. Often, this was standardized labeling for the assailant's general ideological grouping.
Gsubname	When available, provides the specific faction to which the assailant belongs.
Motive	When available, provides the specific motive for the assailant's actions. May also include the relevant ideology used to justify the attack (Social, Economic, Political, and or Religious).
White Supremacy	Assailants are described as White supremacy when the GTD source confirms their involvement in a White supremacist organization.
Anti-Islamic	Includes all attacks on facilities, private property and individuals belonging to the Islamic faith.
Anti-Refugee	Includes all attacks on facilities, private property and individuals defined as refugees or asylum seekers.
Anti-Government	Includes all attacks on government personnel, property, and infrastructure. Also includes attacks on law enforcement.

International Nature

This element highlights the continuing rise of FRT in the individually selected cases and the overall trend. Figure 1 provides the initial representation of FRT activity in the data set between the selected range. Between 2009 and 2011, FRT activity for the nominated cases is relatively low. Only the United States exceeds five incidents per year in this time frame, with Germany registering five, Scandinavia two, and the United Kingdom two. From 2011 to 2014, extremist occurrences spike in three out of the four countries. The US jumps from five to seventeen cases and continues to climb after 2014, finishing this period with nineteen incidents. Both Germany and the United Kingdom see similar increases in activity, with incidents jumping

from one to eleven and zero to thirteen, respectively. The greatest increase in activity occurred in 2015. This year witnesses Germany (61) and Scandinavia (41) experiencing exponential growth in FRT activity. However, this growth is not consistent throughout the countries, with the US and the UK remaining relatively stable in terms of incidents per year. After the massive spike in 2015, extremist incidents in Scandinavia and Germany decline, and both finish at six each. Although case numbers are seeing a general decrease in the last year of the study, they surpass incidents at the start of the research period.
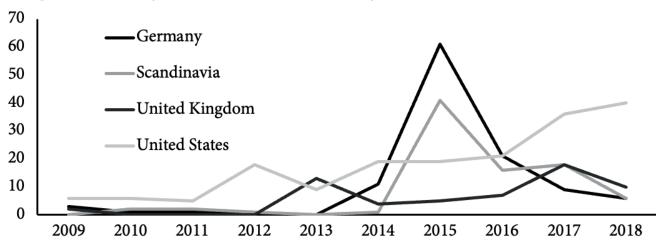
Figure 1. Summary of RWE incidents for the study's selected countries between 2009-2018

A summary of total FRT incidents within the selected four countries is depicted in Figure 2. The case numbers for the initial study period are generally small, ranging from eight to eleven between 2009 and 2011. Afterward, there is a gradual increase from 2012 (20), 2013 (22), to 2014 (35). The most significant upsurge in FRT events occurs in 2015, climaxing at a total of 126 unique incidents. These numbers are halved in the following year (65) but remain relatively stable through to 2018 (62). The inclusion of Figure 2 provides a different perspective on the current phenomenon. Whereas Figure 1 shows a general decline in case numbers in the selected countries, Figure 2 depicts the drastically higher number of cases between the end of the examination period in question.
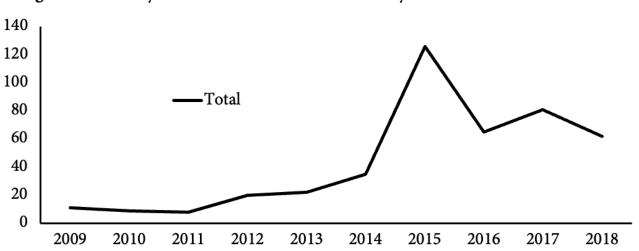
Figure 2. Summary of total RWE incidents for the study's selected countries between 2009-2018

The data points evaluating the overall projections of FRT are consistent with findings detailing the same growth across the affected regions in the last decade.[31]

Type of Terrorist Activity

This element examines the number of incidents per selected case, including weapon type, fatality rates and targets for each country in the study. Each wave in Rapoport's theory displayed unique characteristics dependent on the terrorist group. To establish these novel traits for FRT, a general overview of the assailant's characteristics is provided. The tables which follow in each section provide a breakdown of far-right terrorist incidents and offer a means to cross-compare the individual cases' data sets. Presenting the number of cases and percentages per incident category within a data table illustrates the common recurrences of incidents and shared traits of FRT.

Germany:

Table 2 provides the breakdown of far-right terrorism incidents for Germany. Predominant in the analysis is the composition of attacks targeting physical infrastructure rather than a population group. Standout figures include the 61.3% of total incidents directed toward the facilities of targeted populaces—namely buildings associated with refugees and asylum seekers 37.8%, and places of Islamic worship 7.2%.

Table 2. Summary of methods and targets for expected FRT assailants, number of cases, percentage per target, weapon type, and percentage per method in Germany between 2009–2018

Methods of Violence & Specific Targets	# of Cases	%	Weapon type	%
Facility/Infrastructure Attack	**68**	**61.3%**	Incendiary	95.7%
Refugee (Camps/IDP/Asylum Seeker)	42	37.8%	Unknown	4.3%
Place of Worship (Islamic)	9	8.1%		
Private Property	6	5.4%		
Diplomatic	3	2.7%		
Government Building/Facility/Office	3	2.7%		
Political Party Member/Rally	2	1.8%		
Police	3	2.7%		**100%**
Armed Assault	**26**	**23.4%**	Incendiary	61.5%
Refugee (Camps/IDP/Asylum Seeker)	21	18.9%	Firearms	23.1%
Place of Worship (Islamic)	1	0.9%	Melee	11.5%
Political Party Member/Rally	1	0.9%	Explosives	3.8%
Head of State	1	0.9%		
Unnamed Civilian/Unspecified	2	1.8%		**100%**
Bombing/Explosion	**8**	**7.2%**	Explosives	100%
Refugee (Camps/IDP/Asylum Seeker)	3	2.7%		
Place of Worship (Islamic)	1	0.9%		
Other	3	2.7%		
Political Protest	1	0.9%		**100%**
Unarmed Assault	**5**	**4.5%**	Melee	80.0%
Refugee (Camps/IDP/Asylum Seeker)	4	3.6%	Unknown	20.0%
Political Party Member/Rally	1	0.9%		**100%**
Assassination	**4**	**3.6%**	Explosives	50%
Political Party Member/Rally	3	2.7%	Melee	50%
Head of State	1	0.9%		**100%**
Total	**111**	**100%**		

Moreover, assailants mostly take advantage of incendiary devices (95.7%) to set fire to these amenities and make a quick getaway before potential identification. This tactic of terrorism accounts for 73% of total weapon use within Germany. Additionally, the disproportionate number of attacks on individuals affiliated with or belonging to refugee or asylum-seeking status is evident throughout Germany's Table 2 data set. In total, 63% of the violent acts are targeting either refugees or asylum seekers.

Scandinavia:

Scandinavia provides a similar FRT experience pertaining to attacks on refugee-affiliated facilities, individuals, and others connected to the Islamic community. Out of the total of eighty-six incidents across Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland, sixty-seven unique FRT cases were directed against refugee populations. These figures include 58.1% of attacks targeting refugee infrastructure or religious institutions affiliated with Islamic teachings. A further 7% of directed attacks focused on Jewish businesses and synagogues. Unique to the Scandinavian case is the wide range of targets related to immigration facilities. These include attacks on educational institutions (2.3%), cultural centers (2.3%) and social services offices (3.5%). The findings are also in line with attacks against government personnel who promote the pro-refugee institutions of Scandinavia (9.3%). In addition, the continued use of incendiary devices is evident from Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of methods and targets for expected FRT assailants, number of cases, percentage per target, weapon type, and percentage per method in Scandinavia between 2009–2018

Methods of Violence & Specific Targets	# of Cases	%	Weapon Type	%
Facility/Infrastructure Attack	**59**	**68.6%**	Incendiary	96.6%
Refugee (Camps/IDP/Asylum Seeker)	40	46.5%	Unknown	3.4%
Political Party Member/Rally	5	5.8%		
Memorial/Cemetery/Monument	1	1.2%		
Religious Figures/Institutions	10	11.6%		
Educational Institution	1	1.2%		
Government	2	2.3%		**100%**
Armed Assault	**15**	**17.4%**	Incendiary	53.3%
Refugee (Camps/IDP/Asylum Seeker)	10	11.6%	Firearms	26.7%
Procession/Gathering	1	1.2%	Melee	20.0%
Religion Identified	1	1.2%		
Unnamed Civilian/Unspecified	1	1.2%		
Religious Figures/Institutions	1	1.2%		
Educational Institution	1	1.2%		
Terrorists/Non-State Militia	1	1.2%		**100%**
Bombing/Explosion	**9**	**10.5%**	Explosives	100%
Refugee (Camps/IDP/Asylum Seeker)	2	2.3%		
Laborer/Occupation Identified	1	1.2%		
Museum/Cultural Center	2	2.3%		
Religious Figures/Institutions	1	1.2%		
Business	1	1.2%		
Government	2	1.2%		**100%**
Unarmed Assault	**2**	**2.3%**	Vehicle	100%
Political Protest	2	2.3%		**100%**
Total	**86**	**100%**		

United Kingdom:

Whereas the previous two cases predominantly targeted the refugee population, the UK's FRT activity is distributed differently, targeting the local Muslim community. Incidents involving the targeting of ethnic Muslims or Islamic institutions amounted to thirty-three out of the fifty-nine total cases. Violence against immigrants or visibly non-White minorities (71.2%) is the most apparent feature standing out from within the data set. In addition to the clear predominance of assaults against the Muslim population, other ethnic and religious minorities were also targeted. Incidents involving Jewish facilities, individuals and private property accounted for 10.2% of all cases. Additionally, non-British businesses were a focal point for FRT in the UK, with Indians and Eastern Europeans being victimized for a combined 8.5%. A continued commonality in the weapon type is the primary use of incendiaries (41).

Table 4. Summary of methods and targets for FRT assailants, number of cases, percentage per target, weapon type, and percentage per method in the United Kingdom between 2009–2018

Methods of Violence & Specific Targets	# of Cases	%	Weapon Type	%
Facility/Infrastructure Attack	**37**	**62.7%**	Incendiary	97.3%
Jewish Facilities	4	6.8%	Melee	2.7%
Churches	4	6.8%		
Islamic Facilities and Property	17	28.8%		
Indian Facilities	2	3.4%		
Residence of a Syrian Family	1	1.7%		
Shed of Polish Civilians	1	1.7%		
Business (Immigrant Owned)	6	10.2%		
Government	2	3.4%		**100%**
Armed Assault	**8**	**13.6%**	Incendiary	62.5%
Religious Figures/Institutions	2	3.4%	Melee	37.5%
Indian Civilians	1	1.7%		
Muslim Identity	2	3.4%		
Residence of Refugees	1	1.7%		
Business (Immigrant Owned)	1	1.7%		
Educational Institution	1	1.7%		**100%**
Unarmed Assault	**7**	**11.9%**	Vehicle	42.9%
Islamic Facilities and Property	2	3.4%	Chemical	28.6%
Muslim Identity	5	8.5%	Other	28.6%
Bombing/Explosion	**5**	**8.5%**	Explosives	100%
Islamic Facilities and Property	5	8.5%		**100%**
Hostage Taking	**1**	**1.7%**	Melee	100%
Police	1	1.7%		**100%**
Assassination	**1**	**1.7%**	Firearms	100%
Government Personnel	1	1.7%		**100%**
Total	**59**	**100%**		

United States:

The methods, targets and weapon types for the United States are more diverse. Whereas attacks on various infrastructures related to immigrants or refugees dominate the result in the previous cases, armed assaults constitute the main attack type in the United States. Moreover, many of these incidents involve the use of firearms (33.3%) compared to the previously noted incendiaries (32.8%). Thus, modes of violence differ greatly amongst cases. Furthermore, FRT specific targets in the US include an array of victims. Target types include Muslims (25.9%), Jews (5.2%), immigrants (4.0%), educational institutions (5.7%), women (5.7%), abortion clinics and staff (8.1%), government personnel (13.8%) and a range of other unspecified individuals/property.
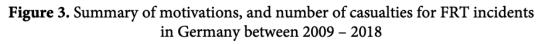
Table 5. Summary of methods and targets for expected FRT assailants, number of cases, percentage per target, weapon type, and percentage per method in America between 2009–2018

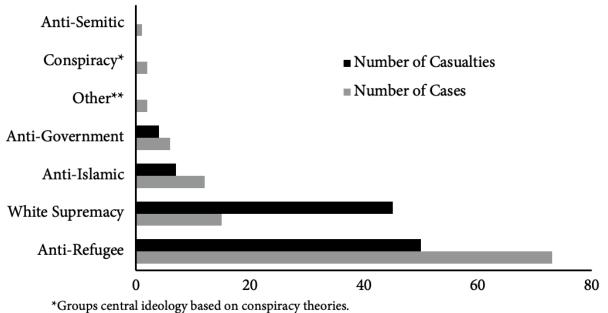| Methods of Violence & Specific Targets	# of Cases	%	Weapon Type	%
Armed Assault	**65**	**37.4%**	Firearms	80.0%
Religious Figures/Institutions	14	8.0%	Melee	16.9%
Private Citizens & Property	28	16.1%	Incendiary	3.1%
Government Property and Personnel	5	2.9%		
Educational Institution	3	1.7%		
Police	5	2.9%		
Business	7	4.0%		
Other	3	1.7%		**100%**
Facility/Infrastructure Attack	**60**	**34.5%**	Incendiary	91.7%
Religious Figures/Institutions	26	14.9%	Firearms	5.0%
Private Citizens & Property	9	5.2%	Chemical	1.7%
Government Property and Personnel	2	1.1%	Vehicle	1.7%
Educational Institution	4	2.3%		
Business	6	3.4%		
Other	13	7.5%		**100%**
Bombing/Explosion	**33**	**19.0%**	Explosives	93.9%
Religious Figures/Institutions	2	1.1%	Chemical	6.1%
Private Citizens & Property	7	4.0%		
Government Property and Personnel	14	8.0%		
Educational Institution	2	1.1%		
Journalists & Media	2	1.1%		
Police	1	0.6%		
Business	1	0.6%		
Other	4	2.3%		**100%**
Unarmed Assault	**12**	**6.9%**	Melee	58.3%
Religious Figures/Institutions	1	0.6%	Biological	25.0%
Private Citizens & Property	9	5.2%	Vehicle	16.7%
Government Property and Personnel	2	1.1%		**100%**
Hostage Taking (Barricade Incident)	**3**	**1.7%**	Firearms	100%
Educational Institution	1	0.6%		
Journalists & Media	1	0.6%		
Other	1	0.6%		**100%**
Assassination	**1**	**0.6%**	Other	100%
Journalists & Media	1	0.6%		**100%**
Total	**174**	**100.0%**		

Prompting Cause

The prompting cause in this study examines the different ideological factors, triggers, and motives behind each incident. The following questions informed this section: what are the motivations behind each incident; what ideologies or FRT organizations are the assailants linked to; and how dangerous are these motives? To provide the answers for each query, the prompting cause section utilizes the quantitative findings for FRT motives found in the GTD (See Figures 3–6). Then individual cases are highlighted to exhibit the prominent ideologies and their risk to Western society.

Germany:

A characteristic of FRT cases involving attacks on refugee, asylum seekers and Islamic infrastructure are the linkages with ideologically far-right organizations (33%). One group listed by the GTD is the Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the Occident (PEGIDA)(9.6%). This grouping accounted for 11.3% of all casualties within Germany. Playing on society's anxieties about globalization, the organization uses a broad array of tools to spread paranoia and fear amongst the population.[32] Common mechanisms include the labeling of Muslims as sexual predators, sending death threats to popular pro-refugee political figures, and encouraging violent street protests. Threats against politicians culminated when one PEGIDA-linked assailant, Frank S., attacked mayoral candidate Henriette Reker and four others. The database details the extremist's motivations as, "I had to do it. I am protecting you all."[33] The perpetrator justified his attack by saying, "she betrayed our country", referring to Reker's stance on immigration.[34] A similar incident occurred on November 27, 2017, when Werner S. attacked Mayor Hollstein and injured another individual, exclaiming, "you're letting me die of thirst, but you bring 200 refuges to Altena."[35] Other attacks by German far-right groups include those perpetrated by the Freital Group (2.6%), Neo-Nazis (4.4%), and the Atomwaffen Division (1.8%).

Figure 3. Summary of motivations, and number of casualties for FRT incidents in Germany between 2009 – 2018

*Groups central ideology based on conspiracy theories.
**Incidents that do not fall under any of the labelling categories due to difficulty establishing the motive.
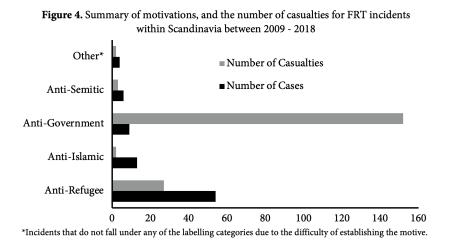
The assailants whose acts produced the highest fatality rates (95%) within Germany are those connected to White supremacy groups. An exceptional incident in the data set involves an attack in a Munich shopping mall which killed nine and injured twenty-seven people (32.1% of all casualties). During the attacks the assailant, Ali David Sonboly, yelled, "I am German" in reference to his racially driven assault while he was a second-generation Iranian.[36] Taking inspiration from Anders Behring Breivik, Sonboly carried out the

terrorist attack on the fifth anniversary of the 2011 massacre perpetrated by Breivik in Norway.[37] His manifesto revealed his admiration for Adolf Hitler and his belonging to the Aryan race which stood in contrast to his family background.[38]

According to the GTD data set, and in line with Koehler's study on hive terrorism—the phenomenon of unaffiliated citizens participating in attacks on refugees and migrants—most incidents (67%) occurred without any indication of membership to a specific FRT group.[39] Whereas far-right groups tended to claim the attacks on refugees, many of the incidents continue to remain unconnected to such groups. These acts of terrorism by unaffiliated individuals amounted to 42% of the total casualties in Germany. Rather than directly stating their motives, many of the unaffiliated individuals' social media activity displayed far-right narratives targeting immigrants and refugees.[40]. These findings are consistent with Koehler's analysis which noted an increasing duality between affiliated far-right members and a second group of mobilizing "ordinaries" previously unknown to security services.[41]

Scandinavia:

Scandinavia follows a similar line as Germany. The grouping's data set charts recurring attacks on refugee and Islamic infrastructure by assailants linked (18.5%) and unlinked (81.5%) to a particular FRT organization. Incidents which are connected to FRT groups are oftentimes attributed to the Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM) (5.8%). The NRM is a far-right organization with branches in Finland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Iceland.[42] The group focuses its operations in preparation of a future race war, procuring weapons and conducting street fights to train for this foretold event. Moreover, the NRM stood at the origin of the establishment of other related organizations in Scandinavia.

Figure 4. Summary of motivations, and the number of casualties for FRT incidents within Scandinavia between 2009 - 2018

*Incidents that do not fall under any of the labelling categories due to the difficulty of establishing the motive.
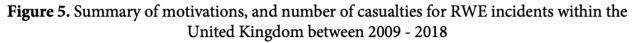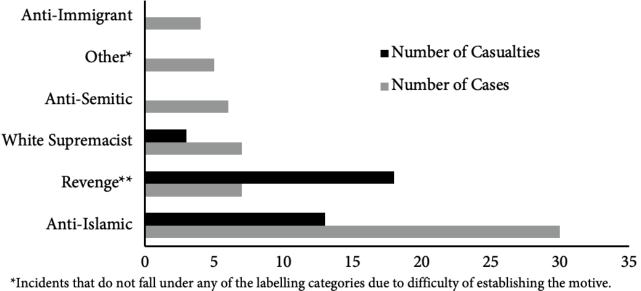
The infamous attack committed by Anders Breivik in Oslo and Utoya in 2011 is the most important incident, accounting for 93.9% of the total killed and 72.1% of the total wounded within Scandinavia's cases. Breivik's bombing followed by a massacre of young people on an island of Norway the same day remains a prime example of the threat posed by FRT to Western society; it has inspired several copycat incidents. A number of in-depth investigations into Breivik's motives [43], thought processes [44], and manifesto [45] have been conducted. Crucial was his belief that the Western world was undergoing an Islamification process, and that the Christian West was consequently under threat. Hemmingby and Bjørgo noted that his motivations were based on a double enemy image.[46] Breivik opposed the arrival of Muslims but attacked young people linked to the governing party because in his view they were linked to an inner enemy—an alleged Cultural Marxist political elite—who accepted and justified refugees coming to Norway. This resulted in one of the worst far-right extremist massacres recorded in recent years in the Western world. In comparison, other far-right attacks in Scandinavia were relatively minor, with the second largest injuring 15 in an arson attack on refugee dormitories by an unaffiliated perpetrator. Interestingly, when removing Breivik's case from the data,

unaffiliated perpetrators accounted for causing 73.5% of all casualties.

United Kingdom:

One theme repeatedly found in the United Kingdom relates to single-issue terrorism (11.9%) motivated by feelings of revenge. Lee and Knott studied this phenomenon within the UK FRT movement against the backdrop of IS-inspired terrorist incidents—Westminster 2017, Manchester Arena 2017, and London Bridge 2017—and discovered that the IS-related incidents incited hate amongst far-right communities against the Muslim community in general rather than focusing on Salafi-Jihadists.[47] Their finding is consistent with the cases included here. For instance, reciprocal violence occurred after the murder of British soldier Lee Rigby. Three related events involving attacks on Islamic mosques and businesses involved assailants whose sole motive was to avenge the soldier's death. In one case the perpetrator, John Parkin, asked police after the incident whether "[they] like Muslims."[48] In the London Bridge attack, assailant Darren Osborne caused the highest injury rate (55.0%) after ramming his vehicle into pedestrians.

Figure 5. Summary of motivations, and number of casualties for RWE incidents within the United Kingdom between 2009 - 2018

*Incidents that do not fall under any of the labelling categories due to difficulty of establishing the motive.
**Incidents described as reciprocal reactions from assailants predominantly motivated by IS-related attacks.

As was the case in other countries in this study (see Figures 3 and 4), many FRT events within the UK have connections with larger extremist organizations (11.9%)—with the English Defense League being the most common affiliation. The group's motives are to "counter the Jihad" movement in Europe. It exploits the same fears of Islamization as those that drove Anders Breivik.[49] A typical incident by an EDL member in the data set was perpetrated by Marek Zakrocki. Echoing his compatriot Osborne's act, he had attempted to run over a curry shop owner in London. After the attack, he told police, "I'm going to kill a Muslim. I'm doing this for Britain. I am going to do it my way because that is what I think is right."[50] In sum, unaffiliated assailants continue to be prevalent, accounting for 38.2% of all casualties and 55.9% of total cases.

United States:

The United States presents the broadest diversity in terms of incidents, ideological affiliation and lethality compared to this study's other cases. For Scandinavia, Germany, and the United Kingdom, most motivations are interlinked with anti-Islamic or anti-refugee ideologies. In contrast, the US exhibits a wide range of targets for hatred, ranging from anti-Islam (23.6%), White supremacism (18.4%), anti-government (13.2%), anti-abortion (8%), involuntary celibates (5.7%), anti-Semitism (5.7%), anti-immigrant (4%), and anti-LGBT (2.9%). Unique to the US cases is the relatively small number of unaffiliated perpetrators (17.1%), with most assailants being linked to a broadly defined extremist group.
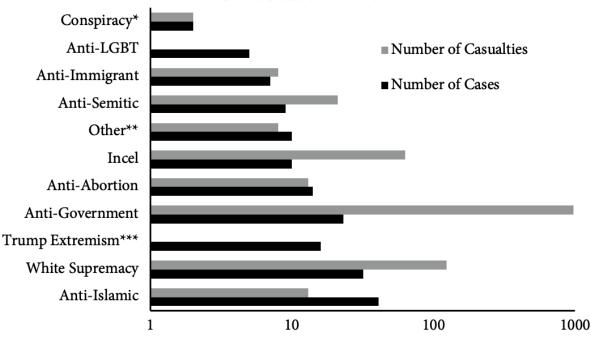
Figure 6. Summary of motivations, and number of casualties for RWE incidents in the United States between 2009 – 2018

*Assailants justified attacks based on conspiracy theories.
**Incidents that do not fall under any of the labelling categories due to difficulty establishing the motive.
***Assailants were inspired to attack persons critical of then President Trump.

For the United States, the general trend of far-right hatred directed against refugees was replaced by one opposing Islam. Specific target types vary from attacks on infrastructure to assaults on private citizens. Most descriptions of incidents within the data set mention one or another form of Islamophobia (23.6%) as the leading cause of terrorism. This includes multiple attacks on what assailants called "Punish a Muslim Day", and the murder of three Muslims at their place of residence by Craig Stephen Hicks and Richard Lloyd who wanted to "run Arabs out of the country."[51] A common theme in the anti-Islamic narrative is the association of Muslims with extremist movements in the Middle East. On several occasions, the assailants justified their actions by claiming the victim was affiliated with Jihadi terrorist groups. This rationale lay behind an attack on an Islamic Centre, a Muslim food vendor in New York, and a Bangladeshi migrant. Interestingly, these attacks often focused on a single target, thus the number of casualties (14) was relatively small in comparison to other targeted groups.

Centered around this culture of distrust amongst right-wing extremists in the United States is the adaptation of various conspiracy theories that center on an alleged Islamization of the world, perceptions of a "White genocide", and anti-Semitic discourse. Intriguingly, fatal attacks against the Jewish population were 157% higher than those targeting Muslims in the US. An example of how hateful rhetoric directed against the Jewish population shapes perpetrator motives is the case of Robert Bowers, who attacked a Pittsburgh Synagogue killing eleven and injuring seven. Portraying Jews as a threat to society on the social media platform Gab, Bowers stated, "I can't sit by and watch my people get slaughtered. Screw your optics, I'm going in."[52] Entries in his online account suggested that Bowers felt compelled to engage in violence to defend an alleged threat against Whites. He also subscribed to Jewish conspiracy theories.[53]

Consistent with the other cases in the study are White supremacy groups' activities in spreading hatred and engaging in acts of terrorism. Accounting for 26% of the total killed and 7.5% of the total injured within the US data set, the proliferation of these groups in different sub-movements signals a more diversified threat for US policy makers and security services to tackle. Significant incidents include Wade Page's attack on a Sikh place of worship, killing six and injuring four. Page, with connection to the transnational neo-Nazi group

Volksfront, was radicalized during his time in the army.[54] However, the targets for White supremacist groups varied greatly. For example, when counter-protestors showed up at a Unite the Right rally, assailant James Fields rammed his vehicle into them, injuring 28 people and killing one person. Another case involved a school shooting at Santa Fe High School perpetrated by Dimitrios Pagourtzis, a self-identified admirer of Nazism, who killed ten persons and injured another 14.

Common Predominant Energy

The purpose of producing a quantitative and qualitative analysis is to examine the existence of comparable patterns that span the national cases of Germany, Scandinavia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Therefore, the final measurement tool of common predominant energy should compound the results from the previous three operationalized mechanisms into discernible themes. The following thematic findings do indeed support the argument that there is a perceptible wave of FRT.

Combining the findings regarding the international nature of FRT and the type of terrorist activity provides us with an overview of the type of FRT activity occurring over the past ten years. The exponential growth of cases after 2014 (a 360% increase) seems to correlate with Europe's sudden influx of mainly Syrian refugees during the height of the migration crisis. The cross-national comparison supports this finding for Germany (63%), Scandinavia (77.9%), and the United Kingdom (55.9%); they are mainly related to attacks against Muslim individuals, Islamic facilities, or refugee centers. In the case of the United States (25.9%) the targeting of Muslims in general can be seen as a more muted response to the migration crisis, with a larger focus on Islamic terrorism. Thus, there exists a commonality in target types for FRT. Moreover, many of these incidents targeted infrastructure (48.8%) as opposed to the next most frequent type, namely armed assaults (24.6%). Similar results concerning the assailant's method of attack can be observed, where the average across cases in the use of incendiary devices amounts to 68.4%.
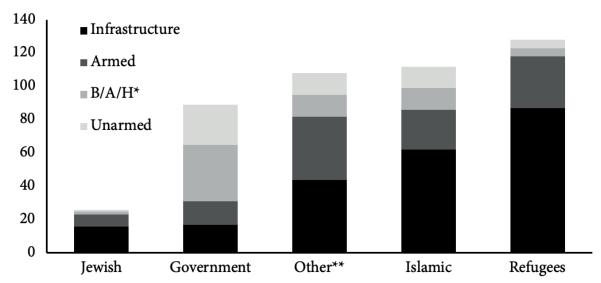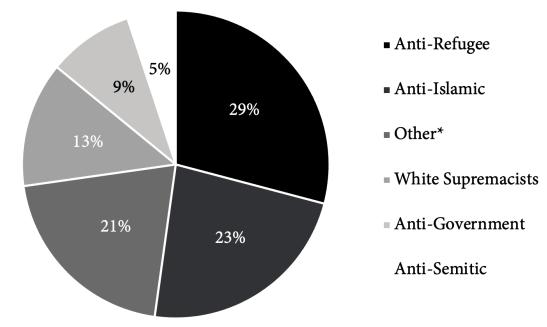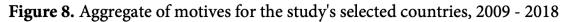
Figure 7. Aggregate of target types, and attack types for the study's selected countries, 2009 - 2018

*Bombings/Explosions, Assasinations, Hostage Situations
**Includes attacks on abortion facilities, immigrants, private businesses, religious facilities (non-Islamic, non-Jewish), the LGBT community and schools.

Comparing these results to the qualitative case study of individual assailants provides a complementary but complex picture of extremist motives. Bridging the outlined cases is the recurrent narrative that outsiders—according to the data set, predominantly Muslim individuals—threaten the ideological core ideas and safety of right-wing extremist communities and the wider ethno-European populaces in general. On multiple occasions, assailants either targeted Muslim persons, asylum complexes, or government officials who promoted pro-refugee policies. These grievances are showcased in the motives of Anders Breivik, Frank S.,

Werner S., Ali David Sonboly, Anton Pettersson, Darren Osborne, Marek Zakrocki, Thomas Mair, Hicks and Lloyd, and KC Tard.[55] Perhaps the most alarming finding is the copying of ideological interpretations that have followed Breivik's massacre and manifesto in 2011. Using Breivik as a martyr, part of the FRT community continues to justify and inspire others to conduct similar large-scale attacks on society.[56] Moreover, this syndrome of mimicking extremist events also transcends to the ideologically connected school shooting and involuntary celibate movement that can be found mainly in the United States.

Figure 8. Aggregate of motives for the study's selected countries, 2009 - 2018

*Includes anti-abortion, anti-immigrant, anti-LGBT, conspiracy inspired, involuntary celibates, revenge, trump inspired and undefined.

The transnational character of various organizations' networks links many FRT incidents. White supremacist associations share across national borders similar ideological themes, based on fears of foreign infiltration and the alleged Islamization of the Western world. PEGIDA in Germany, Britain First, the English Defense League and NRM (and subcommunities) use similar framings of a perceived existential threat as justification for targeting refugees and Muslims. Moreover, these organizations share ongoing communications, propaganda, racist content, and violent tactics to prevent the alleged Islamization of the West.[57]

Conclusion

This article aimed to answer the question whether the recent rise of FRT amounts to a new wave of terrorism. Proposing FRT as the next wave of terrorism requires the demonstration that all of Rapoport's criteria are present when evaluating the available evidence. Through the operationalization of the theory's descriptive elements for evaluating the existence of a new wave, the present study was able to analyze the phenomenon with the help of a number of variables existing in the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). The examination revealed the presence of the four key elements and their common characteristics. As a result, this article agrees with Auger's assessment that far-right terrorism can indeed be classified as an observable emerging new wave of terrorism. Such a conclusion is justified since a cross-national comparison managed to identify common themes and patterns occurring throughout the data set.

The ideological basis for the justification of right-wing extremism is the fear of an Islamization of the Western "Christian" world, with the White race losing its privileges. This alleged threat to the ethno-

European culture permeates far-right extremist discourse across the four cases examined.[58] The slogan of an impending "White genocide" has become a tool for enemy image creation and for fostering hatred against Muslim communities. Multiple studies have documented the existence of Islamophobia [59], and hatred directed toward refugees and asylum seekers [60], as well as the presence of paranoia in extreme right-wing circles with regard to the Muslim community in the selected countries.[61] For example, Acim's research documented the surge in Islamophobia linked to the events of 9/11, the subsequent war on terror, and the more recent refugee influx into Western Europe.[62]

Capitalizing on the more widespread concerns about the growing presence of refugees, asylum seekers and Muslim diasporas, right-wing extremists have created provocative narratives in efforts to persuade larger sectors of mainstream society that their vision is correct.[63] By securitizing Muslims and Islam they seek to convince 'ordinary' citizens of the validity of their far-right beliefs. The phenomenon of attacks on members of Muslim minority communities by seemingly ordinary civilians without direct links to known far-right organizations is generating an entirely new field of study within political extremism research, called "unaffiliated terrorism." [64] The concept of "unaffiliated terrorism", refers to more or less spontaneous hate crimes by individuals acting out a psychological impulse.[65] The source of such acts of violence is often fear from the ostensible "other".[66] For example, Germany's Federal Criminal Police Office discloses that only 33% of incidents involving attacks against refugees (individuals or infrastructure) could be linked to existing far-right organizations.[67] This finding is comparable to the 64% of cases demonstrated in Figure 3—cases reflecting anti-refugee motives without direct connection to White supremacy groups.

White supremacist organizations present a clear example of weaponizing insecurities and portraying these as existential problems of race and culture. Many individuals (13%) within the four case studies associated themselves with such organizations, although many of these incidents within GTD do not make a direct reference to a specific supremacist group. An inherent sign of their collectiveness are the frequent references to a "White genocide". Neo-Nazi groups capture the "White thymos"(mood) of rage, resentment and anger associated with losing the perceived Caucasian entitlement in the world.[68] These views have resulted in a series of violent events, including numerous attacks against refugees and asylum seekers in Europe, assassination attempts against pro-immigrant politicians and mass shootings in Europe and the United States.[69]

The recurrent theme of a "White genocide" is also a significant motivator in the many copycat incidents of FRT which can be found in the GTD data set. Assailants that cite previous right-wing-inspired terrorist attacks as their motivation include Sonboly, Pettersson, Osborne, Mair, Pagourtzis, Bowers, and Harper-Mercer. Langman defines this mimicking as radicalized individuals looking for "infamous" role models.[70] Many follow-up perpetrators seem to revere the "god-like" stature of previous attackers, having conducted extensive research on these assailants. This has sometimes led to an imitation of previous assaults and even to selecting the anniversary of a previous attack as time for their own, as in the case of David Sonboly on the fifth anniversary of Breivik's attack.[71] As noted earlier, the copying of language is also a common feature of some of these attacks. Examples include the repeated phrases of protecting the country against "foreign infiltration", the "want to kill Muslims", and the need of putting the native population "first."[72] The phenomenon of copycat crimes deserves significantly more research than it has received so far.

Moreover, findings based on data from the GTD suggest that incidents related to Islamic terrorism have often created a reciprocal reaction by right-wing extremists. In the case of the United Kingdom, multiple Islamist-inspired terrorist events triggered extremist responses from right-wing individuals. There were, for instance, four revenge incidents after the killing of the British soldier Lee Rigby. For example, in retaliation, Pavlo Lapshyn detonated a pipe bomb outside a mosque in Tipton. In June 2017, Darren Osborne drove his vehicle into Muslim pedestrians outside a Welfare House, calling this a retaliatory attack for the London Bridge incident. There have been similar cases in the United States often stemming from paranoia against Muslims. Such occurrences include a group of assailants shouting "ISIS, ISIS" while attacking a person from Bangladesh, multiple attacks referencing the color of an individual's skin or their Islamic religion as a sign of being a "terrorist," and the "Punish a Muslim Day" campaign.[73]

The importance of establishing the existence of a new wave of terrorism is not to be understated. The current fixation of many researchers on Jihadist terrorism fails to account for the changing dynamics of extremism both in Europe and in North America. Therefore, the findings presented here aim to promote a reorientation of the field while also providing a basis for comparing the new FRT wave with the previous (and still ongoing) religious one. Moreover, based on some of the recurring patterns discussed above, more research in general needs to be directed at FRT, for instance regarding unaffiliated terrorism, reciprocal radicalization, and copycat terrorism. In addition, with COVID-19's effects on the world's political, economic, and social functioning, there is a clear need to improve our understanding of the radicalization mechanisms that can influence ordinary citizens during times of insecurity. Ultimately, FRT presents a multidimensional challenge for researchers to unpack, with several avenues to explore. By having outlined various trends emerging from this exploration of the GTD data set in the light of Rapoport's wave theory, the author of this article hopes to inspire further research along these lines.

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Notes

[1] Far-Right Extremism is defined based on Bjørgo and Ravndal's (2019) study on signaling factors of right-wing extremism. These elements include cultural, ethnic, or racial nationalism and therefore represent a broad scope of application to cases of extremism. A larger working definition is provided further in the text. For more information see: Bjørgo, T. and Ravndal, J. (2019) *Extreme-Right Violence and Terrorism: Concepts, Patterns, and Responses*. International Centre for Counter-Terrorism. URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep19624.

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