Amarta O'Neil

RIGHT-WING TERRORISM IN THE WEST:
RADICALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION

Keywords: radicalization, right-wing extremism, terrorism, racism, United States, Norway, group dynamics, lone wolves, leaderless resistance, decentralization, online radicalization

Abstract: The article examines the process of radicalization to terrorism on the political right in the West and in particular how that process has changed with access to the Internet. This is done through a general overview of the radicalization process, followed by a comparison between three specific incidents: the 1995 Oklahoma City Bombing carried out by Timothy McVeigh, the 2011 massacre in Oslo, Norway, by Anders Behring Breivik, and Dylann Roof's 2015 attack on the Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston, South Carolina. Comparative analysis of these cases shows how the Internet and social media have allowed for decentralization of the radicalization process on the far right and the effects that the decentralization has had.

Ключевые слова: радикализация, правый экстремизм, терроризм, расизм, США, Норвегия, групповая динамика, «одинокие волки», безлидерное сопротивление, децентрализация, онлайн-радикализация

Аннотация: В статье анализируется процесс радикализации террористов правоэкстремистского толка на Западе и, в частности, те изменения, которые этот процесс претерпел в эпоху Интернета. Наряду с кратким общим обзором процессов радикализации в статье проводится сравнение этих процессов на трех примерах, приведших к терактам с массовыми жертвами: подрыву федерального здания в Оклахома-Сити Тимоти МакВеем (1995 г.), терактам в Осло, совершенным Андресом Брейвиком (2011 г.) и нападению Дилана Руфа на церковь Матери Эмануэль в Чарльстоне, Северная Каролина (2015 г.). На базе сравнительного анализа этих трех кейсов показана роль Интернета и социальных медиа в децентрализации процессов радикализации правых экстремистов на Западе и ее последствия.

I. Radicalization dynamics of the far right: comparing three Western cases

An individual is often pushed to seeing radical action as an acceptable choice following an event, or less commonly a series of events, that confirm several ideas. First, that the government is either helpless to prevent the offending event from occurring, or complicit in it. Second, that the event confirms in the mind of the individual that there is a

"war" taking place. For U.S. citizen Timothy McVeigh, the perpetrator of the April 2015 Oklahoma City Bombing that killed 168 people, it was the standoffs at Ruby Ridge and Waco, Texas, where the government attempted to forcibly disarm groups of people. Both incidents had involved violence against civilians by the government. For another U.S. citizen, a white supremacist Dylann Roof, who attacked the Mother Emanuel African Methodist Church in Charleston, South Carolina, in June 2015, killing nine people, the triggering event was the 2012 shooting death of an African American Trayvon Martin by a neighborhood watch coordinator George Zimmerman in Florida. The outcry surrounding that case led Roof to seek out information concerning "black-on-white" crime. Norwegian Anders Breivik, who killed eight people with a car bomb in central Oslo and then shot dead 69 young people at the Workers' Youth League summer camp on the Utøya island in July 2011, is a more interesting example, due to the possibility of the determining incident being fictitious. He maintained that he had seen a white woman being gang raped by a group of immigrants and that this was an impetus to his ideological journey. There are no reports of such an incident ever taking place in Oslo.

In McVeigh's case the government was the perpetrator of the violence against civilians perceived to be innocents. For Roof and Breivik, the government was complicit and corrupt, but not directly responsible. Breivik believed that the Norwegian government was favoring Muslim immigrants over native Norwegians. Less is known about Roof's direct motivations. However, his actions fit the behavioral pattern of someone acting to draw attention to a grievance, believing that is the only way to have the "problem" addressed.

Comparing these events shows that one of the most significant components of radicalization is the overlapping of a personal grievance and a group grievance. In all three cases, the triggering event was not directed against the individual but against a group with which the individual identified. McVeigh identified strongly with pro-gun groups and the related Patriot Movement in the United States. Breivik and Roof were motivated by racial concerns: both believed that they were members of a persecuted group being "colonized" by outsiders (culturally, if not literally). What is interesting is how the two grievances overlap. For McVeigh, the group grievance became a personal grievance. Breivik had a personal grievance that led him to seek out an ideology and the group associated with it, he then appropriated the group grievance to his personal grievance.

One of the more difficult aspects of the radicalization process is the interactions between individuals and groups. A key facet in the process is the individual's disassociation from wider groups and over-identification with a smaller group. This seems to be driven primarily by a feeling of disassociation with the wider group. The individual's inability to "fit in", or feel a part of, the wider group leads to a strong feeling of resentment against the group. This is appreciably heightened when there is a sense that the group *should* be more accepting of the individual. This phenomenon is why second generation immigrants are more statistically likely to commit terrorist acts than first

generation immigrants. They have been raised in the ideals of Western society but are still prejudiced against as if they are non-natives. In the right-wing terrorists' case, it is a bit more complicated as they tend to be members of the dominant culture in society. However, a strong element of nativism is often observed in such cases. "In anthropology, nativism has been applied to social movements that proclaim 'the return to power of the natives of a colonized area and the resurgence of native culture, along with the decline of the colonizers.' The term has also been used to refer to a widespread attitude in a society of a rejection of alien persons or culture".[1] This contributes to the process of how an individual sorts the world into "us" and "them" categories.

Nativism is part of the drive towards joining a smaller, radical group. Individuals feel themselves to be a persecuted minority in their own country, which causes them to identify more strongly with a group. In the radical right, this is closely tied with how "us" is defined, which ultimately contributes to the radicalization of the individual. One of the defining characteristics of the radical right ideology is a constricted view of who the "real" citizens are (the people whom the government should be serving and protecting). "Real" citizens are defined most often by being productive members of society (i. e. taxpayers) but also as being not "other". The "other" is an integral part of right-wing ideology. One defining characteristic of the "other" is that they represent a threat, real or perceived, to the group or individual. Essentially, they come to personify the grievance the individual feels. Perceived threat is a powerful motivating factor in radicalization. Thus, the "other" functions as the unifying enemy for many right-wing groups. More importantly, demonizing the "other" provides one of the key components of the radicalization process. Perceiving that "other" as less than human, as an oversimplified caricature, is one way in which violence against that group, or representatives from it, can be contemplated as an acceptable solution to a grievance.

Group dynamics, combined with the individual's distance from wider society, lead to a radicalization of opinions. In any group confined to like-minded individuals, radicalization of opinions will occur. "Discussion among like-minded individuals tends to move the whole group in the direction initially favored".[2] Those espousing the strongest opinion (often synonymous with the most radical) will be given more recognition within the group. This will lead to more radical (both in quantity and in tone) opinions being expressed within the group. "Individuals more extreme in the group-favored direction – the direction favored by most individuals before discussion – are more admired. They are seen as more devoted to the group, more able, more moral – in sum, as better people".[3] An individual seeking recognition within the group will strive to assume the most radical position possible, so as to gain respect.

Furthermore, being within an enclosed group produces an *echo chamber* effect, which reinforces the concept that an opinion is the correct one, that it is shared by the majority, and that it is "true". The echo chamber effect has a propensity for overlapping with a conspiratorial mindset within the radical right-wing. The belief that your opinion is "true" very quickly extends to the belief that only that opinion or idea is "true". From there

it is a short step to believing that you belong to a select group that alone has access to the "truth". When combined with a persecution complex, it devolves into the belief that an "other" is deliberately suppressing the "truth" and the "truth-tellers". As Lane Crothers argues, "the real problem posed by the militia or any other fundamentalist group lies in its conviction that all truth and all justice are contained by its values, while all evil is represented by the 'other' ".[4]

One point to bear in mind is that the individual right-wing radical is often fixated on issues of status or recognition, either personally or for the group. As mentioned above, group status, perceived or real, is a significant motivating factor for many radicals. However, it is not only grievances that overlap, it is also status. The individuals' status becomes intertwined with the group status (in their own head if nowhere else). Therefore, by raising the group's status they raise their own individual status. This feeds the idea, so essential to many radicals, that the individual is a soldier fighting a war against a corrupt enemy. More than that, they seem to see themselves as a mythic hero waging an epic struggle against evil. They believe that they (and their group) alone possess the "truth" about a menace, and that the populace at large must be "woken up" to the danger so that they might join the individual's noble quest. To put it simply, the individual becomes the avatar of the group in the "struggle". As noted by Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, "more commonly, radicals essentialize themselves as supermen, a virtuous vanguard, a chosen people, embattled heroes, and freedom fighters".[5]

One interesting aspect of the need to "wake" the populace is that the individual chooses an inverse of how they were triggered. As was mentioned above, in each of the three cases studied here, the individual was radicalized by violence being perpetrated by an "other" against a person or people perceived as being part of "us", the "in" group. This was the wake-up call for these individuals. Each of them then proceeded to justify their actions by the need to enlighten people to the danger of the 'other' but they did this by perpetrating an act of violence. In Roof's case, he had demonized African-Americans to the point that he appears to have believed them to be irrationally violent. Thus, his claims that he hoped to start a race war. He seems to have thought that he could incite African-Americans into perpetrating acts of violence in such numbers against whites that whites would realize their "danger". McVeigh's terrorist act had a different rationale. He believed that he was already at war with the United States government. Consequently, his bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City was meant to be a continuing action in an ongoing war, rather than the beginning of a war. His belief was less that people needed to be made aware of the danger of the federal government, but rather that they needed to be aware of its *acts*. It is this author's contention that he was surprised by the general approbation he received following his act, having expected to receive more support from the general public.

McVeigh and Roof directly targeted the enemy "other" – the U.S. federal government and African-Americans, respectively. Breivik is a more complicated

example. He targeted his "enemy", but his enemy was not entirely the one proscribed by the ideology he used to justify his attack. To return to a previous point, Breivik had a personal grievance that sent him looking for an ideology. His original grievance was directed at the liberal government in Norway. He repeatedly railed against the "Marxists" of his parents' generation and how they governed the country. He found an ideology that supported that animus. The liberal government was complicit in a conspiracy to allow Europe to be colonized by Muslims and establish a new caliphate called "Eurabia", making white Europeans slaves or second class citizens in their own countries. His primary target, however, was not a government building. Instead, it was the summer camp of the Workers' Youth League (AUF), a group that had long been associated with socialist ideas in government and is the youth wing of the ruling Labor Party. His manifesto ("Compendium") spoke of the need to rouse people from their complacency, similar to McVeigh and Roof. His actual target indicates a personal vendetta being cloaked in ideological trappings.

II. The 1995 Oklahoma City bombing

The bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on 19 April 1995 was the largest and deadliest attack on United States' soil until 11 September 2001. It produced widespread fear in the population, spurred in part by the indiscriminate nature of the casualties. That a daycare center was hit was particularly jarring to many people. It led to rampant speculation as to who the perpetrator(s) likely were, until the nation was shocked to discover it was a decorated Army veteran from New York State. "It seemed impossible that an 'American', especially a white person, could commit such a horrible crime".[6]

Timothy McVeigh began his path towards radicalization while serving in the United States Army. He had difficulties fitting in with his unit and his social circle eventually constricted itself to two like-minded people – Michael Fortier and Terry Nichols. "The relative isolation McVeigh felt within his unit was limited only by his friendships with Terry Nichols and Michael Fortier. (…) Many of their conversations reinforced their inherent racism".[7] While in the Army, McVeigh read "The Turner Diaries" for the first time, the novel that would have a profound effect on him. "The Turner Diaries" is a dystopian novel featuring a white supremacist grotesquery of affirmative action laws in the United States. It casts them as a tool of white suppression in the hands of a corrupt government, and only possible due to the government's efforts to disarm the population. Armed resistance through citizen militias became a "heroic" act, as does violence perpetrated against minorities in a "race war". The book ends with all non-whites having been killed and Adolf Hitler being hailed as "the Great One" whose vision had finally been fulfilled. Following his discharge from the Army, McVeigh traveled around to various gun shows selling copies of "The Turner Diaries".

The novel was written by William Luther Pierce, a leader of the white supremacist

movement in United States. It would go on to serve as inspiration to several groups affiliated with the Patriot Movement, most notably the "Order" and the Aryan Republican Army. The Patriot Movement originated in the 1980s as an outgrowth of the farm protest groups. Farmers, highly mortgaged and unable to turn a profit due to the regulatory climate, organized in order to protest against and petition the federal government. However, when the political process proved ineffective, a minority of the disaffected farmers radicalized into militias and the "sovereign citizen" movement. The sovereign citizen movement claims that the Constitution of the United States represents a God-granted covenant between the Founding Fathers and the original citizens (i. e. white Europeans) of the nation and that the descendants of those original citizens are the final, and only, arbiters of constitutionality. "It is sovereign citizens who, as the posterity of the original contract makers, get to decide what is and is not appropriate government action. Moreover, anything that these sovereign citizens decide is inappropriate is, ipso facto, wrong, unconstitutional, and corrupt – an assault on the fundamental values of the nation".[8] Any interpretation of the Constitution disagreed with or disliked by members of the movement has been deemed "government overreach".

Criminal actions taken by the "Order" and the Aryan Republican Army in the 1980s and the early 1990s, respectively, led to a crackdown on the Patriot Movement as a whole. This typically took the form of legal proceedings against the person or property of the central leaders of the movement. In response, in 1992, Louis Beam, a leader in the "Ku Klux Klan", advocated for "leaderless resistance". This consisted of small cells (or individuals) acting independently of each other or of a centralized organizing (directing) force. The cells should know as little as possible about each other, so that if one cell is compromised, it could not bring down others. However, communication was permissible if it could take place under the cover of something mundane.

"In the phantom cell model of organization promoted by Louis Beam and other Patriot movement leaders, the logistics of communication were left to the enterprising efforts of the cell members. Patriots were only advised to reduce communication and employ indirect contacts if possible. The gun shows furnished an ideal conduit for infrequent contact, essentially minimizing the risk of infiltration by federal agents".[9]

Furthermore, the centralized, pyramidal organizing structure took time to be dismantled. Resources and information still needed to pass from the center to the outlying cells. The gun show circuit was ideal for these purposes.

Terry Nichols' older brother had been a member of the farm protest movement in the 1980s and was on the fringes of the Patriot Movement. Through Nichols and through contacts made at gun shows McVeigh was incorporated into the Patriot Movement. He received inspiration for the attack from "The Turner Diaries" as well as relying on planning from an earlier attack that was intended but not carried out. Commentators disagree to what extent he received operational help from the central organization. It is agreed that he spent time and received at least some support from Elohim City, a central location for the Patriot Movement (this will be discussed later).

In his book "Patriots, Politics, and the Oklahoma City Bombing", Stuart A. Wright maintains that McVeigh received active assistance in carrying out the Oklahoma City bombing, including two accomplices who were never found. Wright contends that federal authorities never sought them. Furthermore, Wright believes that McVeigh was merely a soldier, carrying out the plans of central authority figures. McVeigh, himself, declared that the action, planning and execution, had been his own and it had been carried out only by himself, Nichols, and Fourier.

"The upshot of this evidence [Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms' undercover operative who reported that a group was planning bombings] is that McVeigh became part of a larger effort by Patriot actors to carry out the bombing, and the base of operations was Elohim City. To be sure, McVeigh vehemently denied this connection. But McVeigh had ample motive to protect fellow Patriots involved in the insurgency while solemnizing his own status in the movement as a martyr".[10]

At this date, it is unlikely that the full truth will ever be known.

III. The 2011 Oslo terrorist attacks

Norway was shocked by the attacks on 22 July 2011. The first attack, a car bomb in the center of the city, near the building where the Prime Minister's office is located, killed eight people. The second attack, far more devastating, was on the summer camp of the AUF, on the island of Utøya. 69 people were killed and 110 injured as Breivik, dressed as a policeman, hunted the young people on the island and intentionally drove them to seek shelter in the cold water around it. He "had planned that the fjord would be his 'weapon of mass destruction': he would kill the AUF members by chasing them into the water".[11]

Anders Behring Breivik was, literally, an ocean apart from Timothy McVeigh. By all accounts, raised in a dysfunctional home in Oslo, Breivik blamed many of his grievances on the Norwegian society created by the liberals of the 1960s, his parents' and most of the ruling Labor Party leaders' generation. He considered the Labor Party a "feminizing" body (he was required to learn how to sew and knit in primary school) that deprived white men of their self-respect and status and saw their encouragement of multiculturalism as dangerous. Breivik early on appears to have established a pattern of reaching out to a group, attempting to fit in, being rejected by it, and then resentfully withdrawing from interactions. In his school years, he started tagging to gain entrance to a gang, but he was a failure as an artist, substituting quantity for quality. He considered himself the organizing glue of his three man tagging team, but the others thought he was destructively controlling and "socially overambitious".[12] This was the start of a trend. He would join a group and then attempt to insinuate himself at the center. This was true of his time playing "World of Warcraft" – he considered himself a guild/raid leader, his guild mates did not. In the Progress Party, he proposed a center-right youth wing of the party, but was not taken seriously. Later, when frequenting right-wing blogs and discussion

forums, he attempted to both gain the recognition of a leading intellectual and to organize a rival media source. In this last attempt, he was both not taken seriously and rebuffed by his ideological "father figure". This was a crushing disappointment.

Following each rejection from a group, Breivik would isolate himself and slip further into radicalization. Similar to McVeigh, his social circle constricted almost exclusively to those already within the same ideological circle. As described above, group dynamics led Breivik to espouse (and embrace) more and more radical ideas, in order to appear more important in the eyes of the group. However, unlike McVeigh, Breivik sought primarily personal recognition and not recognition for the group overall. This parallels their grievances, as discussed above. McVeigh was acting out of a sense of group grievance taken personally, while Breivik acted from the idea of a personal grievance being projected onto the group and then mirrored back as a justification for violence.

Breivik appears to have sublimated his personal failures and resentments into an epic quest to save Europe. He took the mythic hero archetype, common to right-wing terrorists, to an extreme, believing that he would finally get the recognition and status he craved.

Also dissimilar to McVeigh, Breivik was not part of a radical action group. While he participated actively in online debates on radical right-wing pages and blogs, Breivik was not recruited for, nor assisted by anyone in, his act. He reached out to the radical community, the community did not reach out to him. Furthermore, much of the socialization required for committing violent acts came from watching videos posted online, namely al-Qaeda beheadings. Somewhat ironically, McVeigh conversely received his socialization from the state he came to despise as a member of the United States Army, rather than specifically from the Patriot Movement. McVeigh's successful completion of such a devastating terrorist act, either as a planner or merely as a soldier, was due in part to the training he received in the military. Leaders in the Patriot Movement took note. This led to an increase in active attempts to recruit active-duty military personnel into the movement, following the Oklahoma City Bombing.

IV. The 2015 Mother Emanuel Church attack

The Mother Emanuel Church is a historic African American church in Charleston, South Carolina. One of the church's founders was suspected of planning a slave rebellion in 1822. Dylann Roof's attack took place on the anniversary of that stymying rebellion. The church was further associated with several civil rights movements, including the recent, and controversial to many white Americans, "Black Lives Matter" movement. The senior pastor, Clementa C. Pinckney, was also a senator in the state legislature who was an advocate for body cameras being worn by police. This was in response to several highly publicized instances (one of which took place in Charleston) of questionable shootings of African-American men by police officers.

At present, less is known about the background and motivations of Dylann Roof.

As was already mentioned, he was triggered by the outcry surrounding George Zimmerman's shooting of African-American teenager, Trayvon Martin. Roof began researching statistics about "black-on-white" violence in the United States, which led him to right-wing websites such as the Council of Conservative Citizens. In his mind, the inaccurate information he found there justified the shooting of unarmed African-Americans at the Mother Emanuel Church. Roof's stated intent was to start a race war, similar to the one in "The Turner Diaries". No specific mention has been made of that book, but one suspects Roof is familiar with its ideological premise, if not with the work itself. Similar to McVeigh, Roof believed that he could gain recognition for the group grievance he believed himself to represent, namely that of "white suppression". However, as with Breivik, there is no indication that Roof was recruited by an organizing center to perpetrate this act, although he was in contact with white supremacists online. He self-selected into the radicalizing process and then sought out materials to further that aim.

There are two other similarities to Breivik that should be examined further. The first raises an interesting contrast with McVeigh. In interviews with police following their actions, both Breivik and Roof *undercounted* the casualties they had caused – Breivik believed that the fjord had been responsible for roughly a third of the deaths he had caused and Roof actively doubted the number of deaths he was responsible for when told by police officers. It is possible that this is simply due to how each of these individuals was socialized to violence. Regrettably, the military has significantly more practice in socializing people into being capable of violence. It is also possible that this is one aspect of decentralized radicalization that needs to be further explored.

V. Online radicalization and decentralization of the radical right

More germane is the role that the internet had in providing radicalizing material to both Breivik and Roof. Communication both internal to the group and as recruitment has become inexpensive and difficult to monitor. Group dynamics and echo chambers were discussed above, however, the internet adds a new dimension to those phenomena. The internet, with its anonymity, steepens the radicalization curve. "It creates a new social environment in which otherwise *unacceptable views and behaviour are normalized*. Surrounded by other radicals, the internet becomes a virtual 'echo chamber' in which the most extreme ideas and suggestions receive the most encouragement and support. It seems obvious, then, that the internet can have a role in intensifying and accelerating radicalisation".[13] An individual, safely hidden behind a screen name and an online persona, can engage in behavior and rhetoric that they would never do in person. According to Peter Neumann, "the sense of anonymity granted by the internet lowers the threshold for engagement with illicit and risky materials such as extremist forums or content. Moreover, the internet creates a virtual community and a social environment in which like-minded users can block out diverse perspectives, thereby normalizing

extremist views and creating a sense of empowerment and participation".[14] They can espouse ideas outside the mainstream without fear of repercussion. In an environment where the most radical view is given the most prominence and recognition, this encourages escalation. That escalation can lead an individual seeking a cause, a la Breivik, to very quickly radicalize to an extreme position, from which it is easier to contemplate violence.

Previously, radical groups recruited individuals in face-to-face settings, similar to how Timothy McVeigh was recruited into the Patriot Movement. This was due in part to the efforts made at movement infiltration by the federal government, following a series of criminal acts in the 1980s and the early 1990s bank robberies and deadly shootouts with police featuring most prominently. "Individuals are recruited to a terrorist group via personal connections with existing terrorists. No terrorist wants to try to recruit someone who might betray the terrorists to the authorities".[15] However, this was also because of the centralized organizational (pyramidal) structure under use at that time. Resources flowed to and from the center, with the gatherers (e. g. bank robbers) acquiring resources that the center then redistributed to the actors. Information also passed from the periphery to the center and back to the periphery. Ostensibly, McVeigh acted alone in planning and carrying out the Oklahoma City Bombing, but he visited Elohim City several times and received at least some assistance with operational planning. This is based on a previous plan, complete with scouting information, having been developed by other residents of Elohim City. That plan was never put into motion, but, as Wright points out, McVeigh's final plan bears many similarities with it.

Elohim City presented another difficulty concerning a centralized organizational hub – it could be raided by the authorities. Its very existence as a resource center made it particularly vulnerable in this regard, as illegal items could often be found there. "A final dimension of the government–movement relationship that worked to undermine the militia was the use of court cases by private citizens to break up right-wing organizations".[16] While federal prosecutors have faced challenges in bringing charges against group leaders for their role in any incidents, civil suits have a lower burden of proof associated with them. This allowed injured parties to sue group leaders for damages, with the fate of the group's property often hanging in the balance as the case against the "Aryan Nations" shows. A civil suit brought by a couple shot at by the compound's security guards led to the couple being awarded USD 6.3 million in damages and the compound being closed. However, despite the challenges, federal prosecutors have filed charges and "leaders of militia and other groups could face legal action if their followers broke the law; accordingly, leadership became as dangerous as followership".[17]

These factors were some of the driving forces behind the embrace of leaderless resistance on the radical right. By decentralizing the movement, leaders shielded themselves from prosecution. They have also used leaderless resistance to protect themselves from moral culpability. Following the Oklahoma City Bombing, the Patriot

Movement faced a serious public disapprobation and questions as to the legitimacy of its mission. This forced questions about the validity of the movement's underlying ideology, both inside and outside the Patriot Movement as well as some leaders disavowing McVeigh's actions and their association with that ideology. "Pierce [author of "The Turner Diaries"] who gained national prominence following the Oklahoma City bombing, repudiated McVeigh's attack, stating, 'it's really shameful to kill a lot of people when there's no hope for accomplishing anything'".[18] Now, leaders can place radicalizing material on the internet anonymously and, even if that material is traced to them individually, they can simply disavow the act without disavowing the ideology.

Peter Neumann refers to radicalization as a "sales pitch and an advertisement of a specific product".[19] Radicalization and the acts it produces draw recognition to a cause or grievance. By disassociating the ideology and the act, these right-wing terrorist attacks are attempting to redefine what constitutes radical and mainstream. Extremism "may describe *political ideas* that are diametrically opposed to a society's core values, which – in the context of a liberal democracy – can be various forms of racial or religious supremacy, or ideologies that deny basic human rights or democratic principles".[20] Radical right terrorist acts are often reactionary, attempting to demand a return to an imagined status quo ante, seemingly driven by a desire to return society to a mythicized past where the chosen group reigned supreme. Furthermore, "the word 'radical' has no meaning on its own. Its content varies depending on what is seen as 'mainstream' in any given society, section of society or period of time".[21] From this it can be argued that what right-wing radicals are attempting to do is redefine 'extreme' and 'mainstream' with their actions. This has also allowed the ideology to be mainstreamed, while the acts themselves are disavowed. Decentralization allows the ideology to go unquestioned, despite what acts are carried out in its name.

So-called *lone wolf terrorism* lends itself particularly well to this phenomenon. As explained by Peter Neumann, "there is rarely such a thing as a true lone wolf terrorist. Even those who acted alone had to have a perceived community or teacher to introduce them to extremist ideologies – even if that teacher was a video recording and the community was an online forum".[22] These ties between individual and group allow a group to claim the actions of an individual, whether they had any direct hand in implementing those actions or not. Furthermore, because in lone wolf terrorism "[m]ore than any other category of radicalization, there is a probability of some degree of psychopathology",[23] a group is able to claim the ideological grievance of the individual while disavowing the extreme actions taken by them. A group could argue that McVeigh, Breivik, or Roof had legitimate grievances that should be addressed, all while deploring (and refusing to take responsibility for) their actions.

This decentralization aspect of online radicalization is particularly dangerous. It encourages the mainstreaming of ideas and opinions that were previously considered too extreme. It allows the argument that while the disturbed individual has committed a deplorable act, his justification may be valid for having done so. This concern is

exacerbated by the Western media's hesitation to label these acts, unlike those committed by Islamists, as "terrorism". By not labeling these incidents as terrorism, a discussion of the underlying grievances and ideology is avoided.

Timothy McVeigh was brought into the radical movement by friends whom he had sought out only for companionship. Anders Behring Breivik and Dylann Roof sought out radicalizing materials on the internet, using mainly discussion forums and "alternative" news sources (e. g. "Stormfront"). This marks a change towards decentralization in the radicalization process. This shift was brought about due to a mix of opportunity (ability to claim a grievance without claiming an act) and challenge (facing increasing consequences for involvement in terrorist activity) for leaders of right-wing movements.

ENDNOTES

[1] Mudde C. Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. P. 18.

[2] McCauley C.R., Moskalenko S. Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and Us. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. P. 95.

[3] Ibid. P. 104.

[4] Crothers L. Rage on the Right: the American Militia Movement from Ruby Ridge to Homeland Security. – Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003. P. 124.

[5] McCauley C., Moskalenko S. Op. cit. P. 169.

[6] Crothers L. Op. cit. P. 133.

[7] Ibid. P. 125.

[8] Ibid. P. 60–61.

[9] Wright S.A. Patriots, Politics, and the Oklahoma City Bombing. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. P. 181.

[10] Ibid. P. 180.

[11] Borchgrevink A. A Norwegian Tragedy: Anders Behring Breivik and the Massacre on Utøya. Transl. by Guy Puzey. – New York: Polity Press, 2013. P. 464.

[12] Ibid. P. 272.

[13] Stevens T., Neumann P.R. Countering Online Radicalisation: A Strategy for Action. The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence. URL: <https://cst.org.uk/docs/countering_online_radicalisation1.pdf>, accessed 22 December 2016.

[14] The Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation Roundtable: Discussing "online radicalization" with Peter Neumann. The Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation. New York, 11 November 2013. URL: <http://globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/13Nov15_Peter-Neumann_Online-Radicalization_web-blurb.pdf>, accessed 22 December 2016.

[15] McCauley C., Moskalenko S. Op. cit. P. 421.

[16] Crothers L. Op. cit. P. 156.

[17] Ibid. P. 156 – 157.

[18] The Turner Diaries: Extremism in America. Anti-Defamation League. URL: <http://archive.adl.org/learn/ext_us/turner_diaries.html>, accessed 21 December 2016.

[19] The Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation Roundtable. Op. cit.

[20] Neumann P.R. The trouble with radicalization // International Affairs. 2013. V. 89. № 4. P. 874–875.

[21] Ibid. P. 875.

[22] The Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation Roundtable. Op. cit.

[23] McCauley C., Moskalenko S. Op. cit. P. 419.