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# Fundraising for Right-Wing Extremist Movements

## How They Raise Funds and How to Counter It

Tom Keatinge, Florence Keen and Kayla Izenman

In this article, Tom Keatinge, Florence Keen and Kayla Izenman look at how right-wing terrorist and extremist movements raise funds, and how this should be reflected in counter-extremism and counterterrorism financing strategies. They highlight the importance of acknowledging the growing threat posed by right-wing terrorism and extremism, and thus the need to develop: an increased understanding of related fundraising strategies (including the relevance of significant numbers); the articulation of a more robust legal definition of extremism and greater willingness of the UK government to engage – at a strategic and political level – with the threats posed by right-wing extremism; and finally, greater collaboration between public and private sectors to enable the identification and disruption of related, enabling funding.

On 16 June 2016, just days before Britain's referendum on EU membership, unemployed gardener Thomas Mair repeatedly shot and stabbed Labour MP Jo Cox in her constituency of Batley and Spen, Yorkshire, in a brutal attack from which she would later die.<sup>1</sup> Police searches of Mair's house uncovered a library of far-right literature and Nazi memorabilia, and revealed an internet search history that included the Ku Klux Klan, white supremacy, and prominent Jewish individuals. Although Mair was charged under the common-law offence of murder, the Crown Prosecution Service made it clear that Mair had been convicted of 'a terrorism offence'.<sup>2</sup>

Figures released in September 2018 revealed that the number of people detained in relation to far-right terror offences has increased nearly five times since Cox's murder,<sup>3</sup> which includes members of National Action, the first right-wing group to be proscribed as a terrorist organisation,<sup>4</sup> and Darren Osborne, who drove a van into Muslim worshippers, killing one of them, outside Finsbury Park Mosque in June 2017.<sup>5</sup>

According to Richard Walton, former Head of the Metropolitan Police's Counter Terrorism Command, the increase in far-right terrorism in the UK is in part a reaction to Islamist terrorist attacks in London and Manchester in 2017.<sup>6</sup> The

1. Ian Cobain and Matthew Taylor, 'Far-Right Terrorist Thomas Mair Jailed for Life for Jo Cox Murder', *The Guardian*, 23 November 2016.
2. Crown Prosecution Service, 'Terrorism', <<https://www.cps.gov.uk/terrorism>>.
3. Home Office, *Operation of Police Powers Under the Terrorism Act 2000 and Subsequent Legislation: Arrests, Outcomes, and Stop and Search, Great Britain, Quarterly Update to June 2018: Statistical Bulletin 19/18* (London: The Stationery Office, September 2018), <[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/739972/police-powers-terrorism-jun2018-hosb1918.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/739972/police-powers-terrorism-jun2018-hosb1918.pdf)>; see also *The Guardian*, 'Far-Right Terror Detentions Rise Fivefold Since Jo Cox Murder', 16 September 2018.
4. In December 2016, then Home Secretary Amber Rudd proscribed the first extreme right-wing group, National Action, under the Terrorism Act 2000. The government took further action in September 2017, proscribing Scottish Dawn and National Socialist Anti-Capitalist Action as aliases of National Action.
5. *BBC News*, 'Finsbury Park Attack: Cardiff Man Darren Osborne Charged', 23 June 2017.
6. Charles Hymas, 'Surge in Far-Right Extremists Reported to Authorities as Islamist Cases Fall', *The Telegraph*, 13 December 2018.



Armed police at a cordon surrounding one of the mosques attacked in Christchurch, New Zealand, March 2019. Courtesy of PA Images/P J Heller

trend is not limited to the UK; analysis of the Global Terrorism Database by researchers at the University of Maryland demonstrated a 'sharp increase' in the share of attacks in the US from the right wing, from 6% in the 2000s to 35% in the 2010s.<sup>7</sup> Europe also faces a 'growing menace of right-wing violent extremism',<sup>8</sup> with a number of violent incidents (albeit not classified as terrorism) that took place in 2017 motivated by right-wing extremism. Europol's 2018 Terrorism Situation and Trend Report found that the number of individuals arrested in relation to right-wing extremism almost doubled in 2017 compared to previous years, the majority of which were reported in France.<sup>9</sup> The March 2019 attack in New Zealand, in which a lone

gunman killed 50 worshippers in two mosques in Christchurch, highlights the global nature of this threat.

According to the UK's Home Office, before 2014, 'extreme right-wing activity was confined to small, established groups with an older membership, which promoted anti-immigration and white supremacist views but who were assessed to present a very low risk to national security'.<sup>10</sup> Yet, as the UK government's updated counterterrorism strategy (CONTEST) indicated in June 2018 – also reflected in the reported addition of right-wing threats to the portfolio of MI5, the UK's security service, alongside Islamist and Northern Ireland-related terrorism<sup>11</sup> – the UK now faces an

7. National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), 'Ideological Motivations of Terrorism in the United States, 1970–2016', November 2017, <[https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START\\_IdeologicalMotivationsOfTerrorismInUS\\_Nov2017.pdf](https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_IdeologicalMotivationsOfTerrorismInUS_Nov2017.pdf)>.
8. Matthew Tempest, 'Commissioner Warns of "Growing Menace" of Right-Wing Terrorism in EU', *Euractiv*, 23 March 2017, <<https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/commissioner-warns-of-growing-menace-of-right-wing-terrorism-in-eu/>>, accessed 2 January 2019.
9. Europol, *TESAT: European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report* (The Hague: Europol, 2018).
10. Home Office, 'Fact Sheet: Right-Wing Terrorism', 19 March 2019, <<https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2019/03/19/factsheet-right-wing-terrorism/>>, accessed 29 March 2019.
11. Vikram Dodd, 'MI5 to Take Over in Fight Against Rise of UK Right Wing Extremism', *The Guardian*, 28 October 2018.



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increasing threat from right-wing terrorism, having disrupted four plots since 2017.<sup>12</sup> Home Office figures on individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent programme between April 2017 and March 2018 reveal that 18% (1,312) were related to right-wing extremism.<sup>13</sup> This represents a 36% increase compared to the previous year, in contrast to Islamist referrals, which have decreased by 14% within the same timeframe, as part of a continued downward trend since 2015. These figures may be somewhat surprising and in contrast to a news-cycle that is dominated by Islamist-inspired terrorism. Mark Rowley, formerly UK national lead for counterterrorism policing, has expressed concern that the UK has not yet ‘woken up’ to the threat from the far right, describing National Action as ‘neo-Nazi, ... proudly white supremacist, [and] portraying a violent and wicked ideology’.<sup>14</sup>

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### Finance plays an important role in enhancing the promotional activity of extreme right-wing groups

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Far-right terrorism is by no means a new phenomenon. RUSI’s Countering Lone Actor Terrorism (CLAT) study in 2016,<sup>15</sup> which compiled

statistics for lone-actor terrorism (both successful and disrupted plots) in EU member states (in addition to Norway and Switzerland) between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2014, found that 33% were right-wing attacks. Of the 72 successfully launched attacks, right-wing terrorism was the most lethal – accounting for 48% of fatalities. It is important to caveat this figure by acknowledging the attacks in Norway by Anders Behring Breivik as part of this calculation. Nevertheless, the lethal intent of extreme right-wing terrorism is clear and not to be underestimated. As one leading terrorist prosecutor told the authors, individuals belonging to the UK proscribed group National Action have access to weapons, and genocidal aspirations.<sup>16</sup>

There is a growing body of academic literature that has investigated the rise of right-wing terrorism and extremism,<sup>17</sup> not to mention increased policymaker focus and attention on the subject. Much of the literature is concerned with societal factors that lead to radicalisation – for example, high levels of immigration or unemployment,<sup>18</sup> in addition to the impact of online radicalisation<sup>19</sup> – but there has been as yet no attempt to understand how these individuals and groups raise funds, in contrast to the focus applied to the financing of Islamist terrorist actors. This is a gap, as without money, terrorist groups struggle to sustain themselves and manufacture more complex plots.

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12. HM Government, *CONTEST: The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering Terrorism*, Cm 9608 (London: The Stationery Office, June 2018), p. 8, <[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/716907/140618\\_CCS207\\_CCS0218929798-1\\_CONTEST\\_3.0\\_WEB.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/716907/140618_CCS207_CCS0218929798-1_CONTEST_3.0_WEB.pdf)>, accessed 2 January 2019.
  13. The Prevent programme was released in 2011 as part of the UK government’s CONTEST strategy. Its three distinct elements are: challenging the ideology that supports terrorism and those who promote it; protecting vulnerable people; and supporting sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation. See Home Office, *Individuals Referred to and Supported Through the Prevent Programme, April 2017-March 2018, Statistical Bulletin 31/18* (London: The Stationery Office, 13 December 2018), <[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/763254/individuals-referred-supported-prevent-programme-apr2017-mar2018-hosb3118.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/763254/individuals-referred-supported-prevent-programme-apr2017-mar2018-hosb3118.pdf)>, accessed 20 March 2019.
  14. Mattha Busby, ‘UK Has Not “Woken Up” to Far-Right Threat, Says Ex Counter-Terror Chief’, *The Guardian*, 18 August 2018.
  15. Clare Ellis et al., ‘Lone-Actor Terrorism: Analysis Paper’, *RUSI Occasional Papers* (February 2016).
  16. Authors’ interview with leading UK prosecutor, London, January 2019.
  17. See, for example, Jacob Aasland Ravndal and Tore Bjørgo, ‘Investigating Terrorism from the Extreme Right: A Review of Past and Present Research’, *Perspectives on Terrorism* (Vol. 12, No. 6, December 2018); Noémie Bouhana et al., ‘Background and Preparatory Behaviours of Right-Wing Extremist Lone Actors: A Comparative Study’, *Perspectives on Terrorism* (Vol. 12, No. 6, December 2018); Jacob Aasland Ravndal, ‘Explaining Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe: Grievances, Opportunities and Polarisation’, *European Journal of Political Research* (Vol. 57, No. 4, November 2018); Max Taylor, P M Currie and Donald Holbrook, *Extreme Right-Wing Political Violence and Terrorism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018).
  18. Manuela Caiani and Donatella Della Porta, ‘The Radical Right as Social Movement Organisations’, in Jens Rygdren (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); James A Piazza, ‘The Determinants of Domestic Right-Wing Terrorism in the USA: Economic Grievance, Societal Change and Political Resentment’, *Conflict Management and Peace Science* (Vol. 34, No. 1, 2017), pp. 52–80.
  19. Daniel Koehler, ‘The Radical Online, Individual Radicalization Processes and the Role of the Internet’, *Journal for Deradicalization* (Winter 2014/15).

Although the majority of right-wing attacks have been committed by lone actors and small cells, the financing of which plays a far smaller role, the plots often nonetheless have a financial dimension – the purchase of a knife or the hire of a van, for example. Although the small sums involved do not necessarily trigger red flags before an event, this can provide important intelligence in a post-attack investigation. Furthermore, the extremist milieu – both online and offline – on which extreme right-wing terrorism feeds, also requires funding. Finance plays an important role in enhancing the promotional activity of extreme right-wing groups, from creating propaganda to organising marches and events to maintaining websites supporting and promoting extremist literature and exchanges of ideas. Thus, to facilitate the development of identification and disruption strategies, this article argues that there is value in understanding how these groups fund themselves.

## The Definition Dilemma

It is important to mark the distinction between ‘terrorism’ and ‘extremism’, two discrete terms that are often used interchangeably. While there is no universally accepted definition of terrorism, scholar Bruce Hoffman has described it as ‘violence—or, equally important, the threat of violence—used and directed in pursuit of, or in service of, a political aim’.<sup>20</sup> Unlike terrorism, extremism may be non-violent, and in many countries, including the UK, it is not considered a criminal offence – thus impeding a traditional terrorist financing-based law enforcement response and prosecution. This is in contrast to the German Criminal Code, wherein propaganda, political parties and any symbols representing National Socialism or any other ‘unconstitutional organisations’, such as Daesh (also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, ISIS), are banned outright.<sup>21</sup>

The UK definition of terrorism is contained within the Terrorism Act 2000 and includes the following definitional guidance:

(1) In this Act “terrorism” means the use or threat of action where—

the action falls within subsection (2),

the use or threat is designed to influence the government [or an international governmental organisation] or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and

the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious ... or ideological cause.

(2) Action falls within this subsection if it—

involves serious violence against a person,

involves serious damage to property,

endangers a person’s life, other than that of the person committing the action,

creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public, or

is designed seriously to interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system.

(5) In this Act a reference to action taken for the purposes of terrorism includes a reference to action taken for the benefit of a proscribed organisation.<sup>22</sup>

According to the UK’s Counter Extremism Strategy 2015: ‘Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist’.<sup>23</sup> Lord Anderson (former independent reviewer of terrorism legislation in the UK) has stated that this definition has three particularly significant features: first, it is ‘viewpoint neutral’, not limiting itself to a particular ideology; second, it seeks to characterise extremism as an evil in its own right, not just as the ideological fuel for terrorism; and third, it is unashamedly ‘values based’, defined as an activity that is contrary to democracy, the rule of law and human rights.<sup>24</sup>

Senior law enforcement practitioners have also suggested that non-violent extremism is often the first step in a process of radicalisation that ends in terrorism,<sup>25</sup> which is why financial analysis into non-violent extremism should not be overlooked. The UK government has previously recognised this point, albeit on the question of Islamist extremist activity in the UK. In December 2015, former Prime Minister

20. Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2006), pp. 2–3.

21. Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz, ‘Strafgesetzbuch (StGB) § 86, Verbreiten von Propagandamitteln verfassungswidriger Organisationen’, <[http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/stgb/\\_86.html](http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/stgb/_86.html)>, accessed 21 March 2019.

22. ‘Terrorism Act 2000’, <<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/11>>.

23. HM Government, *Counter Extremism Strategy*, Cm 9148 (London: The Stationery Office, 2015), p. 9.

24. Lord Anderson of Ipswich, ‘Extremism and the Law’, speech given at Middle Temple Hall, London, 18 March 2019.

25. Authors’ interview with counterterrorism law enforcement officer, London, January 2019.

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David Cameron announced that the government would ‘establish a comprehensive review to root out any remaining funding of extremism within the UK’.<sup>26</sup> He added that the review would ‘examine specifically the nature, scale and origin of the funding of Islamist extremist activity in the UK, including any overseas sources’. The process was subject to sharp criticism when the review was not published.<sup>27</sup> Eventually, in July 2017, former Home Secretary Amber Rudd shared some limited details via a written statement to Parliament which, she claimed, gave ‘the best picture we have ever had of how extremists operating in the UK sustain their activities’.<sup>28</sup> The review did not, however, address the funding of terrorism (which the Home Secretary asserted ‘is a better understood area’) or funding of extremism overseas from UK sources. The findings emphasised: the importance of small, anonymous public donations, most commonly coming from UK-based individuals; that a small number of organisations rely significantly on overseas funding; and that charitable status can be abused to encourage donations.

More broadly, the government’s commitment to a counter-extremism and safeguarding bill, announced in the May 2016 Queen’s Speech,<sup>29</sup> never emerged, with reports that government lawyers were unable to find a ‘legally robust’ definition that would survive a challenge in the courts on the grounds of free speech,<sup>30</sup> in addition to sharp criticisms that the Bill covered a range of extremist activity that may have encompassed a large amount of legitimate political and religious speech – including criticisms of the government.<sup>31</sup> Consequently, the government has needed to use powers such as prosecuting for religiously aggravated harassment or excluding foreign nationals from entering the UK instead.<sup>32</sup>

According to a former UK counterterrorism official, the government’s ‘feeble ownership of the middle ground’ and inability to address extremism

in a legal sense has allowed extremist movements on both sides of the political spectrum to flourish.<sup>33</sup> In his view, the wider societal impact of extremism is a greater threat to British citizens than terrorism, because the response to the latter is robust and will keep developing – unlike the response to extremism, which remains poorly defined, and is seemingly too sensitive for politicians to tackle head on. Lord Anderson has stated that the UK definition’s imprecision makes it ‘manifestly unsuitable as the basis for criminal or coercive sanctions’. However, he also remarked that its emphasis on ‘democracy, the rule of law, freedom and tolerance provides principled guidance to those tasked with defending our foundational liberties and values’.<sup>34</sup>

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### The CTF regime as it is known today was rooted in the threat posed by jihadi terrorism after the 9/11 attacks

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After the wave of terror attacks across the UK in 2017, the Queen’s Speech announced the creation of the Commission for Countering Extremism,<sup>35</sup> appointing Sara Khan as its first commissioner in 2018.<sup>36</sup> This is an important policy development, under which the UK’s counter-extremism strategy, and inherent definitional issues, will continue to be debated.

The picture of right-wing extremism and terrorism is thus complex and driven by both online and offline variables. As a *New York Times* investigation described, ‘everyday users’ of social media might not intend to participate in extremist activity, but online incentive structures and algorithms can over time drive up the anger and fear, whereby users arrive at hate speech on their own and extremism emerges

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26. UK Parliament Daily Hansard Debate, ‘House of Commons, Wednesday 2 December 2015’, <<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151202/debtext/151202-0001.htm>>, accessed 7 March 2019.
  27. Jessica Elgot, ‘Theresa May Sitting on Report on Foreign Funding of UK Extremists’, *The Guardian*, 3 July 2017.
  28. Amber Rudd, ‘Extremism: Written Statement – HCWS39’, 12 July 2017, <<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2017-07-12/HCWS39/>>, accessed 13 March 2019.
  29. Home Office, ‘New Home Office Legislation Features in Queen’s Speech’, press release, 18 May 2016, <<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-home-office-legislation-features-in-queens-speech>>, accessed 20 March 2019.
  30. Alan Travis, ‘Paralysis at the Heart of UK Counter-Extremism Policy’, *The Guardian*, 17 September 2017.
  31. Anderson, ‘Extremism and the Law’.
  32. Home Office, ‘Fact Sheet: Right-Wing Terrorism’, Home Office in the Media, 19 March 2019.
  33. Authors’ interview with former UK counterterrorism official, London, March 2019.
  34. Anderson, ‘Extremism and the Law’.
  35. Gov.UK, Commission for Countering Extremism, <<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/commission-for-countering-extremism>>, accessed 17 April 2019.
  36. Gov.UK, ‘Biography’, <<https://www.gov.uk/government/people/sara-khan>>, accessed 17 April 2019.

‘organically’.<sup>37</sup> This article refers to both extreme right-wing terrorism and right-wing extremism, with the qualification that the latter often falls into a grey area for authorities that impedes a formal criminal justice response. Nonetheless, enhancing the understanding of the financing behind both categories remains valuable, as they are inextricably linked, and what begins as right-wing extremism may progress rapidly into right-wing terrorism, as vividly illustrated by the transition of the Christchurch killer from online postings to murderous action.

## Terrorist Finance: Not Just an Islamist Threat

In recent years, the focus of efforts to identify and disrupt terrorist financing (so-called ‘counterterrorist financing’ or CTF) has been largely on Islamist-inspired terrorism. Indeed, the CTF regime as it is known today was rooted in the threat posed by jihadi terrorism after the 9/11 attacks, which were largely financed via the formal financial system. While UN Security Council Resolution 1373, passed unanimously just days after the attacks, calls on countries ‘to prevent and suppress, in their territories through all lawful means, the financing and preparation of any acts of terrorism’, high-level international CTF messaging is focused on Al-Qa’ida, its various affiliates and imitators, and Daesh. The ways in which Daesh amassed its wealth, and the measures deployed by the coalition gathered to confront the terror group and drive it from the territory it had seized have been well reviewed by governments, international bodies such as the Financial Action Task Force and the UN, and academics around the world.

Yet the focus of global CTF efforts has been one dimensional, with most law enforcement agencies, policymakers and private sector financial crime leaders confining their efforts to the Islamist threat. Such a focus made sense immediately after 9/11 but may not fully reflect the spectrum of terrorist threats faced today, including the growing trend towards extreme right-wing terrorism in Europe and North America.

This article thus now considers in more detail the financial activities and indicators of right-wing terrorism and extremism, primarily in the UK but with some reference to international activity and links, an understanding of which can assist policymakers and practitioners (in both the public and private sectors) in tackling the financing of different threat actors.

## Financial Indicators

As noted above, available analysis of the financial activity and indicators of extreme right-wing terrorism is limited. One reason for this is that this form of terrorism is most commonly undertaken by lone actors and small cells in the countries where it exists. This means that any fundraising – if it occurs at all – is likely to be limited, as funds are accrued to commit basic, low-tech attacks. This contrasts with the funding structures that support a complex organisation operating across multiple jurisdictions or having a large number of members.

The UK has proscribed one extreme right-wing group (National Action and its offshoots) as a terrorist organisation.<sup>38</sup> This, along with the general rise in far-right extremism in the UK, Europe and the US, provides a useful basis from which to consider related fundraising activity, determine possible patterns in far-right funding methods and thus assess the potential application of government- or private sector-led disruption strategies.

## Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism

The group National Action was banned in the UK in 2016, following its support of the murder of MP Jo Cox and subsequent assessment by the Home Office that it is ‘concerned in terrorism’.<sup>39</sup> Since the proscription of National Action as a terrorist organisation there have been a number of related prosecutions, including Adam Thomas and Claudia Patatas, who were jailed in December 2018 for membership of the group and who gave their child the middle name Adolf, in admiration of Hitler.<sup>40</sup> They were sentenced alongside four others, including Joel Wilmore, who

37. Max Fisher and Amanda Taub, ‘How Everyday Social Media Users Become Real-World Extremists,’ *New York Times*, 25 April 2018.

38. Home Office, ‘National Action Becomes First Extreme Right-Wing Group to be Banned in UK,’ press release, 16 December 2016, <<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/national-action-becomes-first-extreme-right-wing-group-to-be-banned-in-uk>>, accessed 12 March 2019.

39. *Ibid.*

40. *BBC News*, ‘National Action Trial: Members of Neo-Nazi Group Jailed’, 18 December 2018.



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was reported in the media as the group's 'banker',<sup>41</sup> although there is little information as to what this meant in practice, other than that the group had access to a PayPal account that he managed.<sup>42</sup>

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### Extreme right-wing terrorism in the UK has largely been confined to individuals or small cells that have little or no connection to any wider or more formalised group

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Another National Action member, Zack Davies, was convicted of attempted murder in 2015 (prior to the group's proscription), after attempting to decapitate a Sikh dentist in his local Tesco store.<sup>43</sup> This attack was purportedly a response to the murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby and looks broadly analogous in its method.<sup>44</sup> The weapons he used, a claw hammer and machete, reveal little about Davies's finances, given that they were either in his possession already, or if purchased would have been extremely cheap.

Michael Adebolajo, one of the convicted attackers of Lee Rigby, reportedly purchased knives prior to the attack worth £35.<sup>45</sup> Much like Davies's attack, little is known about how Adebolajo's weapons were financed. In both attacks, the use (and potential purchase) of a weapon was therefore unlikely to be detected by a preventive CTF strategy.

Although little may be known about the financing of such attacks, National Action, with its clear

organisational structure, is believed to be well financed. Its publicity and promotional activity would seem to require substantial funds, yet there is no clear evidence in the public domain as to the source of these funds.<sup>46</sup> Given National Action's ability to mobilise members, for example at demonstrations and rallies,<sup>47</sup> and the group's access to weapons, it is certainly reasonable to assume that its funding requirements are more significant than those of a lone actor or small cell.

Some have suggested that National Action's founders, Ben Raymond and Alex Davies, 'came into money' via inheritance in 2015, enabling them to boost their propaganda and recruitment activities.<sup>48</sup> The group is generally estimated at between 50 and 100 members, structured into regional 'chapters' with unit heads. Recruitment has not stopped since the group's proscription, but funding has become reliant on more discrete peer-to-peer transactions, such as PayPal or bank transfers.<sup>49</sup> Experts disagree on the role foreign funding may play in the financing of National Action, but given the prevalence of related extreme right-wing groups across Europe, it is reasonable to assume some level of international connectivity.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, evidence of international links between right-wing groups and actors is increasingly emerging. One example of this is the international nature of Europe's Generation Identity groups. Generation Identity, or *Génération Identitaire*, is a far-right identitarian youth movement that began in France in 2012 and has now spread to include Germany, Austria, the UK, Italy, and more.<sup>51</sup> It is most known for its 'Defend Europe' campaign in the summer of 2017, when it attempted to hamper

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41. *Ibid.*

42. Authors' interview with UK prosecutor, London, January 2019.

43. Brian Whelan, 'National Action's Zack Davies Guilty of Attempted Murder', *Channel 4 News*, 25 June 2015, <<https://www.channel4.com/news/national-actions-zack-davies-guilty-of-attempted-murder>>, accessed 12 March 2019.

44. Stephen Morris, 'Lee Rigby Revenge Attacker Jailed for Life', *The Guardian*, 11 September 2015.

45. Dominic Casciani, 'Woolwich: How Did Michael Adebolajo Become a Killer?', *BBC News*, 19 December 2013; Andry Rudd and Adrian Shaw, 'Pictured: Lee Rigby Murder Accused Michael Adebolajo Buying Five-Piece Knife Set and Sharpener Before "Frenzied Attack"', *The Mirror*, 2 December 2013.

46. Authors' interview with UK prosecutor, London, January 2019; authors' interview with UK law enforcement officers, London, January 2019.

47. Oscar Webb, 'English Neo-Nazis Were Totally Humiliated in Liverpool This Weekend', *Vice*, 17 August 2015; *Darlington and Stockton Times*, 'Neo-Nazis Outnumbered at Protest', 4 July 2015.

48. Authors' interview with UK law enforcement officials, London, January 2019.

49. Authors' interview with UK law enforcement officials, London, January 2019; authors' interview with UK prosecutor, London, January 2019.

50. Authors' interview with UK law enforcement officials, London, January 2019; authors' interview with former UK counterterrorism official, London, March 2019; authors' interview with far-right extremism expert, London, March 2019.

51. Hope Not Hate, 'Generation Identity', <<https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/research/investigations/undercover-inside-britains-far-right/generation-identity/>>, accessed 16 April 2019.



the work of NGOs helping refugees cross the Mediterranean.<sup>52</sup> Generation Identity is reportedly linked to Identity Evropa, one of the groups behind the ‘Unite the Right’ rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017,<sup>53</sup> a white supremacist event that included members of the self-identified far-right, alt-right and neo-Confederates.

Furthermore, the Christchurch attacker allegedly travelled through Europe in 2017 and 2018, visiting close to a dozen countries, including Ukraine,<sup>54</sup> home to the Azov Battalion, an emerging central player in transnational right-wing violent extremism,<sup>55</sup> and a ‘hotbed of far right activity’ since the Maidan revolution in 2014.<sup>56</sup> He also reportedly made a donation of €1,500 to the far-right Identitarian movement in Austria in 2018, from which he drew inspiration in his manifesto.<sup>57</sup>

Aside from the proscription of National Action and its offshoots, extreme right-wing terrorism in the UK has been confined to individuals or small cells that have little or no connection to any wider or more formalised group. Prominent examples include David Copeland, the ‘Soho nail bomber’ whose bombing campaign left three people dead in 1999;<sup>58</sup> Pavlo Lapshyn, the Ukrainian student who murdered Mohammed Saleem in Birmingham in 2013;<sup>59</sup> Thomas Mair, who murdered the MP Jo Cox in 2016;<sup>60</sup> and Darren Osborne, who killed a worshipper after driving into a crowd outside Finsbury Park Mosque in June 2017.<sup>61</sup> In these instances, the methods of attack fit broadly into the typical pattern of lone-actor and small-cell terrorist activity (regardless of whether they were inspired by right-wing, Islamist or any other ideology). Osborne, for example, hired a van two days before the attack, reminiscent of Westminster Bridge attacker Khalid Massood, who hired the car that he drove into pedestrians in March the same year.<sup>62</sup> The funds required for this type of

attack are small and would possibly have been drawn from legitimate sources such as his personal savings, welfare payments or salary, once again currently beyond the traditional forms of CTF intervention.

However, financial leads may still play a valuable role. Investigations into Mair after his attack on Jo Cox revealed a series of purchases made from the National Alliance, a neo-Nazi organisation in the US. The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) found that Mair had purchased manuals on the construction of bombs, the assembly of homemade pistols, six back issues of the National Alliance journal, *Free Speech*, and a rare surviving copy of *Ich Kämpfe*, which was handed out to Nazi Party members in 1943. In total, he spent approximately £500 on National Alliance purchases.<sup>63</sup> Although Mair acted alone and there is no indication that his actions were in any way connected to the National Alliance, a subscription to journals such as *Free Speech* may well be a useful indication that an individual is attracted to an extremist ideology. Where this activity occurs online involving electronic payments rather than anonymous cash payments, it could trigger a ‘red flag’ for financial institutions processing the related payments that may prove useful to law enforcement, even if the flagged activity is not directly connected to terrorism or a planned attack.

## Funding of Right-Wing Extremism

Notwithstanding these challenges, valuable financial activity can be identified when examining the funding methods of some right-wing extremist groups in the UK where clear typologies exist. In general, groups tend to raise money to fund a milieu on which those aspiring to more violent acts may feed in one of two ways: event fees and merchandising; or donations.

52. Generation Identity, ‘Mission: Defend Europe’, <<https://www.generation-identity.co/mission-defend-europe/>>, accessed 16 April 2019.
53. *The Economist*, ‘Far Right and Very Wrong: Why White Nationalist Terrorism is a Global Threat’, 21 March 2019.
54. Nick Miller, ‘The European Journeys of the Alleged Christchurch Mass Murderer’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 March 2019.
55. The alleged Christchurch attacker wore a jacket during the attack that included a symbol often used by the Azov Battalion. See Patrick Kingsley, ‘New Zealand Massacre Highlights Global Reach of White Extremism’, *New York Times*, 15 March 2019.
56. *The Economist*, ‘Far Right and Very Wrong’.
57. *Deutsche Welle*, ‘Austrian Far-Right Leader Denies Link to Christchurch Shooter’, 27 March 2019, <<https://www.dw.com/en/austrian-far-right-leader-denies-link-to-christchurch-shooter/a-48072056>>, accessed 30 March 2019.
58. Dominic Casciani, ‘Soho Nail Bomber David Copeland Sentenced for Prison Attack’, *BBC News*, 28 October 2015.
59. David Lumb and Dominic Casciani, ‘Pavlo Lapshyn’s 90 Days of Terror’, *BBC News*, 21 October 2013.
60. Cobain and Taylor, ‘Far-Right Terrorist Thomas Mair Jailed for Life for Jo Cox Murder’.
61. *BBC News*, ‘Darren Osborne Guilty of Finsbury Park Mosque Murder’, 1 February 2018.
62. *BBC News*, ‘Westminster Attack: What Happened’, 7 April 2017.
63. Ian Cobain, Nazia Parveen and Matthew Taylor, ‘The Slow-Burning Hatred that Led Thomas Mair to Murder Jo Cox’, *The Guardian*, 23 November 2016.

## Fundraising for Right-Wing Extremist Movements

### Event Fees and Sales of Merchandise

Blood & Honour, a UK-based neo-Nazi group, provides perhaps the best example of the use of event fees and merchandising to raise funds. Blood & Honour organises up to 15 concerts per year across the UK, billing themselves as a 'white musical resistance network'.<sup>64</sup> In contrast to the position in the UK, the group's German, Spanish and Russian branches are all banned in their respective countries for spreading Nazi ideology.<sup>65</sup> In an attempt to evade disruption by the authorities, Blood & Honour announces its concert plans only 12 hours in advance.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, similar to the way in which National Action's founders are believed to have used their personal wealth to raise their profile, one Blood & Honour member has bought land in Lincolnshire on which to hold events, in an effort to avoid being shut down by the police.<sup>67</sup> Blood & Honour also sells a magazine, alongside organising its concerts. Their website offers four issues for £14.<sup>68</sup>

Blood & Honour has also been linked with Combat 18 (C18), an extremist group reportedly linked to acts of terrorism and violence in the 1990s.<sup>69</sup> C18 began as the security arm of the British National Party but broke away in 1993.<sup>70</sup> C18 also previously offered Nazi merchandise for sale online, though at the time

of writing, their merchandise website seemed to be offline.<sup>71</sup>

### Donations

Donations are the most popular mechanism for far-right extremist fundraising, and the tool most often cited by the media.<sup>72</sup> Donations can be solicited in a number of ways, but typically follow three main forms: internet-based crowdfunding campaigns; sourced openly from deep-pocketed sympathetic donors; and via more discrete peer-to-peer transactions.

Crowdfunding websites have become a staple of the internet age, ranging from campaigns on Facebook to more specialist fundraising websites, such as Patreon, GoFundMe, Justgiving or Kickstarter. Until around 2017, many right-wing extremist groups and individuals used these sites. Following the 'Unite the Right' rally in Charlottesville, Virginia and the rise to prominence of many far-right figures, such as Richard Spencer, Christopher Cantwell and Mike Enoch, fundraising sites began removing and excluding (referred to as 'de-platforming') extremist figures from their services due to hate speech.<sup>73</sup>

The immediate reaction was the creation of alternative, dedicated far-right fundraising websites, most notably Hatreon,<sup>74</sup> GoyFundMe,<sup>75</sup>

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64. Blood & Honour, 'B & H Calendar', <<https://www.bloodandhonourworldwide.co.uk/bhww/b-h-calendar/>>, accessed 16 April 2019; authors' interview with senior UK law enforcement officials, London, January 2019.
  65. *BBC News*, 'Germany Bans Neo-Nazi Group', 14 September 2000; *Público*, 'El Supremo Ordena a la Organización Neonazi "Blood and Honour" Que Se Disuelva' ['The Supreme Court Orders the Neo-Nazi Organization "Blood and Honour" to be Dissolved'], 8 June 2011, <<https://www.publico.es/actualidad/supremo-ordena-organizacion-neonazi-blood.html>>, accessed 16 April 2019; *Sputnik News*, 'Russian Supreme Court Bans Blood & Honor', 29 May 2012, <<https://sputniknews.com/world/20120529173741667/>>, accessed 16 April 2019.
  66. Authors' interview with senior UK law enforcement officials, London, January 2019.
  67. Authors' interview with UK law enforcement officials, London, January 2019.
  68. Blood & Honour, 'B & H Magazines', <<https://www.bloodandhonourworldwide.co.uk/bhww/magazines/>>, accessed 16 April 2019.
  69. Nick Lowles, 'Ex-Combat 18 Man Speaks Out', *BBC News*, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/panorama/1672100.stm>>, accessed 16 April 2019; for the connection between Blood & Honour and C18, see 'Combat 18 Blood & Honour', archived 24 February 2019, <<https://web.archive.org/web/20190224091257/http://www.skrewdriver.net/index2.html>>, accessed 16 April 2019.
  70. Authors' interview with senior UK law enforcement officials, London, January 2019.
  71. Aryan Unity, 'Imperium Press Flags', archived 6 November 2018, <<https://web.archive.org/web/20181106222011/http://www.aryanunity.com/>>, accessed 15 January 2019.
  72. See, for example, Sarah Marsh, 'Charity Commission Looks Into Far-Right Groups' Work With Homeless People', *The Guardian*, 29 January 2018.
  73. Blake Montgomery, 'PayPal, GoFundMe, and Patreon Banned a Bunch of People Associated with the Alt-Right. Here's Why', *Buzzfeed News*, 2 August 2017, <<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/blakemontgomery/the-alt-right-has-a-payment-processor-problem#.diZvE7ZGp>>, accessed 16 April 2019.
  74. Hatreon, <<https://hatreon.net>>, accessed 16 April 2019.
  75. Gab, @Goyfundme, <<https://gab.com/Goyfundme>>, accessed 16 April 2019.

MakerSupport,<sup>76</sup> and WeSearchr.<sup>77</sup> Hatreon reportedly collected around \$25,000 per month during its peak in 2017.<sup>78</sup> However, PayPal, Stripe, Apple Pay, and Google Pay, the companies most frequently used in online payment processes, have increasingly declined to process card payments on many far-right blogs and websites.<sup>79</sup> In June 2017 PayPal limited the account of European far-right group Generation Identity, and in November 2018 it shut down the account of Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, otherwise known as Tommy Robinson.<sup>80</sup> Hatreon was suspended by Visa in November 2017 and Stripe permanently banned MakerSupport in April 2018.<sup>81</sup> This has led the far right to rely on other methods for raising donations, such as deep-pocketed donors and more discrete, possibly anonymous, peer-to-peer transactions.

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### Donations are the most popular mechanism for far-right extremist fundraising

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Securing the support of large financial backers is a well-known way of receiving donations.<sup>82</sup> However, this approach often requires the recipient to be already established and of more mainstream appeal as wealthy donors tend to support political

or cultural groups with which they are willing to be publicly associated. Violent fringe groups or lone actors are thus far less likely to attract such support.<sup>83</sup> A proscribed group such as National Action does not appear to have (or have had) any prolific wealthy benefactors, whereas more mainstream extreme right-wing operations or individuals such as Breitbart or Tommy Robinson have a multitude of larger and sometimes more well-known donors,<sup>84</sup> such as Robert and Rebekah Mercer or Robert Shillman.<sup>85</sup> In the case of Robinson, this includes bankrolling rallies to campaign for his release when in prison.<sup>86</sup> Whereas there is an appeal to supporting mainstream right-wing ideology, there is potential for reputational damage of the donor from supporting an outwardly violent group.

Perhaps the most common donation method nowadays is peer-to-peer direct transactions. Peer-to-peer donations can range from cheques to bank transfers to cryptocurrency donations. Most of these transactions are low value and make an attempt to anonymise the sender.<sup>87</sup> For example, both Blood & Honour and C18 indicate that a supporter must first email them directly for payment details and only accept UK bank transfers, indicating their desire to conceal transactions, avoid cross-border wire transfers, and only allow trusted members to donate.<sup>88</sup> This means they are likely receiving fewer transactions than if they readily shared this

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76. Twitter, @MakerSupport, <<https://twitter.com/gomakersupport>>, accessed 16 April 2019.
  77. Gab, @WeSearchr, <<https://gab.com/WeSearchr>>, accessed 16 April 2019.
  78. Adam Popescu, 'This Crowdfunding Site Runs on Hate', *Bloomberg*, 4 December 2017.
  79. Daniel Moritz-Rabson, 'PayPal Shuts Down Alt-Right, Antifa Accounts Amid Debate Over Free Speech and Extremism', *Newsweek*, 9 November 2018.
  80. Robinson was a co-founder of the English Defence League (EDL) and is currently the political adviser to the UK Independence Party (UKIP). See *The Local* (France), 'Paypal Acts Over French Far-Right Group's Plan to Thwart Migrant Rescue Boats in the Mediterranean', 14 June 2017, <<https://www.thelocal.fr/20170614/french-far-right-groups-pan-to-block-migrant-rescue-boats-scuppered-by-paypal>>, accessed 16 April 2019; *The Guardian*, 'PayPal Bans Tommy Robinson From Using Service', 8 November 2018.
  81. Elizabeth King, 'The Activists Waging a War to Make The Far Right Go Broke', *Splinter*, 19 October 2018, <<https://splinternews.com/the-activists-waging-a-war-to-make-the-far-right-go-bro-1829659363>>, accessed 16 April 2019.
  82. On terrorism, see Robert Windrem, 'Who's Funding ISIS? Wealthy Gulf "Angel Investors," Officials Say', NBC News, 21 September 2014, <<https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/who-s-funding-isis-wealthy-gulf-angel-investors-officials-say-n208006>>, accessed 23 April 2019. On extremism, see Thomas E Mann and Anthony Corrado, 'Party Polarization and Campaign Finance', Center for Effective Public Management at Brookings, July 2014.
  83. Authors' interview with far-right extremism expert, London, March 2019.
  84. Andrew Gilligan, 'Tommy Robinson is Best-Funded Politician in UK', *Sunday Times*, 10 March 2019.
  85. Darko Janjevic, 'Who are the Mercers, the Wealthy Backers of Breitbart?', *Deutsche Welle*, 10 January 2018, <<https://www.dw.com/en/who-are-the-mercers-the-wealthy-backers-of-breitbart/a-42100407>>, accessed 16 April 2019; Josh Halliday, Lois Beckett and Caelainn Barr, 'Revealed: The Hidden Global Network Behind Tommy Robinson', *The Guardian*, 7 December 2018.
  86. Mattha Busby, 'US Rightwing Groups Bankroll Campaign to Free Tommy Robinson', *The Guardian*, 22 July 2018.
  87. Authors' interview with far-right extremism expert, London, March 2019.
  88. Blood and Honour, 'Subscribe', <<https://bloodandhonourworldwide.co.uk/bhww/28-2/>>, accessed 16 April 2019.

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information, but suggests they have made privacy a priority over funding, perhaps suggesting that they recognise the risk posed to their operations from financial disruption.

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### The appeal of cryptocurrencies to right-wing extremism is not merely one of practicality

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Recently, cryptocurrencies have begun to emerge as a means by which groups or individuals can send money easily with relative anonymity. Among those using cryptocurrencies are Andrew Anglin (*The Daily Stormer*), Mike Peinovich (*The Right Stuff*), Richard Spencer (National Policy Institute), Don Black (Stormfront), Radio Aryan, and Christopher Cantwell (*Radical Agenda*).<sup>89</sup> Cryptocurrencies have become especially prevalent following the de-platforming of some sites from traditional payment processors and the need to transfer funds internationally, making cash or bank transfers a less practical option. This cryptocurrency activity is not limited to Bitcoin – Andrew Auernheimer (Weev), a far-right hacker linked with *The Daily Stormer*, promotes the use of Monero, a privacy coin offering increased anonymity for transactions.<sup>90</sup>

The appeal of cryptocurrencies to right-wing extremism is not merely one of practicality. John Bambenek, a cybersecurity expert based in Illinois, has observed that these actors' engagement with Bitcoin is underpinned by a historical mistrust of global financial systems, one that is closely connected to the idea of financial institutions as part of a global Jewish conspiracy.<sup>91</sup> Anglin has gone so far as to call Bitcoin the 'Nazi cryptocurrency'.<sup>92</sup> In 2017, shortly after the Charlottesville rally, the US cryptocurrency

exchange giant Coinbase took the decision to block transfers to Anglin's website, *The Daily Stormer*, citing its policy of prohibiting the use of an account that would 'abuse, harass, threaten, or promote violence against others'.<sup>93</sup> Such action demonstrates the useful financial choke point that private sector companies can provide against right-wing extremist financing by determining if their activity appears to go against their terms of service.

The practice of financial service companies removing customers who do not fit their business philosophy – or who might attract unwelcome attention – shows clear parallels with the debate around the responsibility of content service providers (CSPs), in particular social media companies, to remove extremist content. Facebook took the decision to remove Robinson for violating its community standards, stating that 'Robinson's Facebook Page has repeatedly broken these standards, posting material that uses dehumanizing language and calls for violence targeted at Muslims'.<sup>94</sup> The following month, it announced that it will extend its ban on white supremacist material to also include white nationalist and separatist postings and will divert those who searched for white supremacist material to the website of a non-profit that helps people leave hate groups.<sup>95</sup> In what could be described as CSP misalignment, YouTube (owned by Google) has previously defended its decision to keep Robinson's channel on its platform, arguing that the content is fundamentally different from the posts on Facebook that led to his ban.<sup>96</sup> Tom Watson, the deputy leader of the UK Labour Party, wrote to Google's CEO, Sundar Pinchai, arguing against this position and pointing to the fact that Robinson's YouTube subscriptions increased by almost 30,000 in the days since his ban on other sites.<sup>97</sup>

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89. Twitter: @NeonaziWallets, 'Neonazi BTC Tracker', <<https://twitter.com/neonaziwallets>>, accessed 16 April 2019.

90. Julia Ebner, 'The Currency of the Far-Right: Why Neo-Nazis Love Bitcoin', *The Guardian*, 24 January 2018.

91. *Ibid.*

92. Jordan Pearson, 'Can the Bitcoin Community Stop Neo-Nazis From Using the Digital Currency?', *Vice*, 18 August 2017, <[https://motherboard.vice.com/en\\_us/article/vbbb5y/can-the-bitcoin-community-stop-neo-nazis-from-using-the-digital-currency](https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/vbbb5y/can-the-bitcoin-community-stop-neo-nazis-from-using-the-digital-currency)>, accessed 1 April 2019.

93. Kevin Kelleher, 'Another Registrar Rejects The Daily Stormer as Coinbase Blocks Transfers', *Venture Beat*, 15 August 2017, <<https://venturebeat.com/2017/08/15/another-registrar-rejects-the-daily-stormer-as-coinbase-blocks-transfers/>>, accessed 1 April 2019.

94. Facebook Newsroom, 'Removing Tommy Robinson's Page and Profile for Violating our Community Standards', 26 February 2019, <<https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2019/02/removing-tommy-robinson/>>, accessed 30 March 2019.

95. Facebook Newsroom, 'Standing Against Hate', 27 March 2019, <<https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2019/03/standing-against-hate/>>, accessed 30 March 2019.

96. Alex Hern, 'YouTube Defends Decision to Keep Tommy Robinson on its Site', *The Guardian*, 6 March 2019.

97. Tom Watson, @tom\_watson, 2 March 2019, <[https://twitter.com/tom\\_watson/status/1101931566387941376?lang=en-gb](https://twitter.com/tom_watson/status/1101931566387941376?lang=en-gb)>, accessed 16 April 2019.



This example demonstrates that the simple act of removing extremist activity from one business, whether related to funding or promotion via social media, does not always solve, but can merely displace, the issue. If, however, the private sector acts in a collaborative and coordinated fashion (through self- or government regulation) the mainstream reach of extremism could be more effectively quelled.

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### Alongside the importance of symbols, certain numbers have an express meaning for extreme right-wing groups

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YouTube has since introduced a number of restrictions on Robinson's content, removing comments, likes, viewer counts, recommended videos and the live-streaming function. Robinson is also unable to make any revenue from his videos, as they breach the platform's advertising policies.<sup>98</sup> A recent study by the Pew Research Center revealed that YouTube's recommended video function plays a major role in users' viewing habits, which often begin automatically after the video they are watching has finished playing.<sup>99</sup> Arguably, therefore, YouTube's limits should impact Robinson's ability to communicate with followers and attract sympathisers to his cause – although only time will tell if it has this desired effect in practice.

## The Relevance of Numbers

This article has considered the sources and means by which extreme right-wing groups raise funding and the challenges this poses for law enforcement and private sector actors in seeking to identify and disrupt such money flows.

One element – distinct from indicators linked to other forms of extremism and terrorism – that has the potential to facilitate the identification and subsequent disruption of related money flows is the relevance of numbers to these groups.

Alongside the importance of symbols, certain numbers have an express meaning for extreme right-wing groups. Use of these numbers may be indicative of extreme right-wing or neo-Nazi beliefs. While a range of numbers holds relevance to these groups,<sup>100</sup> below are listed a selection of relevant numbers with their associated rationale:<sup>101</sup>

- 18: The first letter (1) of the alphabet is A and the eighth letter (8) is H: 18 can therefore stand for AH, or an abbreviation of Adolph Hitler. This use is obvious in the name Combat 18.
- 14: This number represents the '14 words' of David Lane, often cited as the 'battle cry' for the white supremacist movement: 'We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children.'<sup>102</sup> Lane was a founding member of The Order, a violent white supremacist group. He died in prison in 2007.
- 88: H is the eighth letter of the alphabet: eight twice signifies HH, or 'Heil Hitler'.

Sometimes these numbers may also appear in combinations, the most common of which is 1488.

Another important number is 1683, the date of the Battle of Vienna, viewed by the extreme right as the moment when the Ottoman Empire began to decline and its advance into Europe was reversed. This number was included among the various names written on the weapons and magazines used in the Christchurch shootings.<sup>103</sup>

Finally, a more recent addition to the list of significant numerals is 2083, contained in the title of the manifesto of Anders Behring Breivik, '2083 – A European Declaration of Independence'.<sup>104</sup>

Awareness of these numbers and their relevance may help inform the transaction screening processes

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98. Will Bedingfield, 'The Ethics and Effect of YouTube's Fudged Tommy Robinson Ban', *Wired*, 6 April 2019.

99. Aaron Smith and Monica Anderson, 'Social Media Use in 2018', Pew Research Center, March 2018.

100. For an extensive list and associated rationale, see ADL, 'Hate on Display™ Hate Symbols Database', <<https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resource-knowledge-base/hate-symbols>>, accessed 7 March 2019.

101. North West Counter Terrorism Unit, 'Extreme Right Wing Symbols, Numbers and Acronyms', <<https://www.trafford.gov.uk/residents/community/community-safety/docs/extreme-right-wing-symbols.pdf>>, accessed 1 April 2019.

102. ADL, '14 Words', <<https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols/14-words>>, accessed 16 April 2019.

103. Chris Pleasance, 'New Zealand Killer Scrawled "Inspiration" for his Shooting Spree on his Guns – from Far-Right Murderers and Historical Figures to Sex Scandals Linked to Muslims', *Daily Mail*, 15 March 2019.

104. Andrew Berwick, '2083 – A European Declaration of Independence', 2011, <[https://fas.org/programs/tap/\\_docs/2083\\_-\\_A\\_European\\_Declaration\\_of\\_Independence.pdf](https://fas.org/programs/tap/_docs/2083_-_A_European_Declaration_of_Independence.pdf)>, accessed 16 April 2019.

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of financial institutions and enhance their ability to investigate unusual transaction activity.

### Conclusions

This article has considered the overlooked phenomenon of financing related to extreme right-wing terrorism and right-wing extremism at a time when law enforcement and private sector actors such as banks and money-service businesses are already actively seeking to identify and disrupt financial activity connected with Islamist terrorism and, to a lesser extent, extremism.

This is a challenging issue to explore, for a number of reasons, in large part due to the limited amount of open-source information that can be found on either phenomenon. Despite the significant threats posed by extreme right-wing groups and, specifically, extreme right-wing terrorism in the UK, Europe and the US, it would appear that very limited focus is applied to the funding of these groups and individuals.<sup>105</sup> As indicated by the communiqués issued by high-level international forums,<sup>106</sup> the emphasis on identifying and cutting off sources and uses of threat finance is exclusively confined to groups such as Daesh and Al-Qa'ida.

### Why Does This Gap Exist?

First, as is evident in the UK where the only extreme right-wing group to have been proscribed is National Action (and its offshoots), the extreme right-wing terror threat emanates most often from lone actors and small cells, which, as the authors noted in a 2017 report, make it extremely difficult to detect.<sup>107</sup> With this form of terrorism, the contribution made by analysing financial activity is often most valuable after an attack, when financial investigation is used to assess an attacker's previous activities, movements, purchasing habits, contacts, and support network. This analysis can then be applied to identify potentially linked and likeminded individuals and to

strengthen the system against future similar attacks. Legitimate sources are often used to purchase low-tech weapons. Therefore, more effort should be spent raising awareness of extreme right-wing terrorist methodologies to enable sectors beyond financial institutions, for example, retail sectors, vehicle hire companies and welfare agencies.

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**The emphasis on identifying and cutting off sources and uses of threat finance is exclusively confined to groups such as Daesh and Al-Qa'ida**

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This challenge does not mean that CTF practitioners in both the public and private sectors should cease being alert to the possibility of identifying and disrupting financial activity related to the extreme right wing. While there is no international struggle under which these actors currently unite (in contrast to the threat posed by Islamist actors), far-right terrorist and extremist groups are increasingly connected, sharing and emulating best practices, which may include financial methodologies and the transferring of funds. Thus, domestic and cross-border law enforcement working to understand and combat the financing of (potentially) violent extreme right-wing groups is clearly necessary.

A further challenge is presented by the lack of a clear, legal definition that can be applied to right-wing extremism, frustrating the potential pursuit by law enforcement of related finances. This contrasts with the strong legal and operational basis on which law enforcement actors (notably the UK's National Terrorist Financial Investigation Unit) can pursue terrorism-related finance. This challenge is exacerbated by the apparent unwillingness of the UK government to engage – at a strategic and

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105. A very rare example of high-level recognition occurred at a March 2019 UN Security Council meeting convened to pass Resolution 2462, a new resolution on terrorist financing. Jonathan Allen, the UK's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, noted in his intervention that the international community should work together to deny resources not only to Daesh but also 'to far-right extremists'. See, UN, 'Security Council Unanimously Adopts Resolution Calling upon Member States to Combat, Criminalize Financing of Terrorists, Their Activities', 28 March 2019, <<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sc13754.doc.htm>>, accessed 30 March 2019.

106. See, for example, *France Diplomatie*, 'Final Statement – International Conference On Combating the Financing of Daesh and Al-Qaeda (Paris, 25-26 April 2018)', statement issued following the 'No Money For Terror' Summit, hosted by President Emmanuel Macron in Paris, <<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/defence-security/events/article/final-statement-international-conference-on-combating-the-financing-of-daesh>>, accessed 30 March 2019.

107. Tom Keatinge and Florence Keen, 'Lone-Actor and Small Cell Terrorist Attacks: A New Front in Counter-Terrorist Finance?', *RUSI Occasional Papers* (January 2017).

political level – with the threats posed by right-wing extremism, leaving a leaderless vacuum in which these groups can flourish.

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**The private sector can certainly play a useful role, taking action to remove extremist material or close a client’s account if it does not fit within its terms of service or business model**

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Notwithstanding the lack of publicly available information, this article has endeavoured to illuminate the means by which right-wing extremist and terrorist groups raise finance, identifying a number of financial strategies. While those related to right-wing extremist groups may not justify a law enforcement response, insights into funding activities may nonetheless be of value in developing the overall understanding of the growing threat from right-wing extremism, particularly as such extremism may be one stage on a journey towards terrorism.

These funding sources and activities include event fees, merchandise sales, donations, the use of cryptocurrencies, and the exploitation of web-based fundraising tools and social media platforms to promote activities and raise funds. Those – such as Thomas Mair – who engage in web-based electronic purchases from recognised extreme right-wing sources might also provide insights into the potential threat they pose, activity that may be identified by the processing banks and flagged to law enforcement via suspicious activity reporting.

Furthermore, this article has also identified the importance of significant numbers to right-wing extremists, monitoring for which by financial institutions might enhance their awareness of and response to any related activity in their transactional activity.

The private sector can certainly play a useful role, taking action to remove extremist material or close a client’s account if it does not fit within its terms of service or business model. The case studies of Coinbase and *The Daily Stormer*, and Facebook/PayPal and Tommy Robinson show the impact that the private sector can have if it perceives an actor as a risk to its reputation, even if it does not represent a breach of the law. In recognising the influence that the private sector can deliver, it is also important to note that a coordinated and harmonised approach is needed if extremist actors are not easily to find other channels for promoting and financing their activity.

It is clear that the terrorist or extremist right-wing threat in the UK and other Western countries is likely to grow in the years ahead, encouraged by algorithm-induced echo-chambers on social media platforms that incite and endorse extremist views. Today’s low-priority risk could become tomorrow’s high-priority threat, and developing a financial analysis and understanding of these groups, their activities and facilitators is imperative as part of an enhanced response. ■

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