



Canadian Network for Research on Security, Extremism and Society

CANSES 2nd Annual Workshop Report

Halifax, Nova Scotia

September 25-26, 2025

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WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Workshop Overview

Introduction

On September 25 and 26th, the Canadian Network for Research on Extremism, Security, and Society (CANSES) hosted its 2nd Annual Workshop at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Purpose and Audience

CANSES is a network that connects individuals working on extremism across a variety of sectors. Reflecting this, Workshop attendees included early career researchers, established academics, government staff, law enforcement personnel, and P/CVE practitioners.

Accessibility

Understanding that travel is not always possible; we offered a blended workshop format. Zoom options were available for most presentations, workshops, and roundtable sessions.

Attendance

42 CANSES members attended the workshop in person, and another 50 members registered to attend remotely via Zoom. Attendees included professors, researchers, practitioners, government and law enforcement personnel, as well as students (both graduate and undergraduate).

Each Workshop morning featured presentations from CANSES executive members and other CANSES-funded researchers (see Appendix A for the full list of presentations). The Workshop included 4 working group sessions, 3 round table sessions, and 2 “Views from the Inside” sessions, in which experts shared firsthand knowledge on policy brief writing and practitioners shared their experiences and perspectives working in P/CVE spaces.

WORKING GROUP SESSIONS

Early Career Researchers Working Group

The Early Career Researchers Working Group (ECRWG) brings together CANSES members who are graduate students or have recently begun their professional careers to discuss issues related to conducting research on violent extremism. While ECRWG members agreed with CANSES's definition of early career researchers (ECRs), they also voiced a need to explicitly welcome bachelors and master's level students, as well as individuals working outside of academia (e.g., practitioners, policy makers, government) to participate in ECR-related activities. It was suggested that CANSES update our website language so that this inclusivity is clearly reflected. Similarly, members also discussed strategies to reach new ECR/CANSES members across universities, organizations, and government sectors where we currently have limited representation, especially those without a direct connection to the CANSES executive committee.

The bulk of the ECRWG meeting centred around the question: What CANSES can do for our ECR members? Attendees identified four key areas where CANSES can support ECRs:

- 1) Mentorship;
- 2) National/international relationship building;
- 3) ECR-specific funding; and,
- 4) Skill development/training.

All the ECRs present at the Workshop expressed a need for mentorship opportunities between ECRs and established researchers/ practitioners, including mentors outside of academia, especially those involved in policy work. ECRWG members recommended that CANSES facilitate these opportunities by hosting a mentorship directory on our website to enable ECRs to connect with pre-vetted and willing mentors. However, ECRWG participants raised questions about safeguarding mentors' privacy/contact information and how CANSES would grant access to the directory. In addition, ECR CANSES members also suggested fostering peer relationships within the ECR network, through informal ECR only drop-in Zoom chats/coffee breaks and voiced an interest in building international relationships with ECRs working in the extremism space. Working group participants suggested using pre-existing ECR networks such as those associated with CREST, NABS+, Vox-Pol, and IAPSS. Separate from the CANSES research-proposal funding, ECRWG members asked whether CANSES could offer small travel awards to help ECRs gain conference experience at extremism-relevant events.

ECRWG participants further suggested that the CANSES website act as a hub for:

- 1) ECR-relevant funding opportunities (e.g., the Guggenheim scholarship, MITACS);
- 2) Employment opportunities (e.g., RA work, non-academic positions);
- 3) A list of ECR-friendly publication spaces (e.g., the Conversation, Horizons, VoxPol).

ECRWG participants supported the ECR-focused webinar series in collaboration with [C-REX](#) and suggested a list of future topics, including grant writing, the transition from academia to industry, the peer review process, conference preparation, knowledge translation, establishing a healthy work-life balance, and navigating sensitive topics. While all ECRWG participants agreed that these were important skills/topics, there were concerns about how CANSES can help ECRs build general foundational competencies while remaining within our extremism-focused remit.

Corrections Working Group

Background

In March 2025, CANSES hosted a two-day symposium on the intersection of CVE work and corrections. The symposium covered four key themes in the CVE-corrections space:

- 1) Existing Canadian approaches to corrections and CVE;
- 2) Risk assessments and case management;
- 3) Strengthening awareness, capacity, and training; and,
- 4) Preventing silos through a networked approach (please see the [summary report](#) for more details).

CANSES 2nd Annual Workshop Discussion

At the CANSES Annual Workshop, the Corrections Working Group (Corrections WG) meeting revisited the themes from the symposium, giving new members and those who were unable to attend the symposium the chance to engage in these discussions. Corrections WG attendees emphasized the need to overcome and prevent the further siloing of P/CVE programming and corrections through building relationships between P/CVE practitioners and corrections staff working in prisons. [SHIFT BC](#) was recognized as an organization that has successfully bridged the gaps between relevant stakeholders, facilitating communication, program delivery, and client case management. Members of Corrections WG also highlighted social workers, both inside and outside of the prison setting (especially during the referral process), as key contributors in developing a networked approach.

Questions that were raised during the Corrections WG meeting, included the following:

- What kind of support do we currently offer people upon release to support reintegration? Is support similar/different for youth compared to adults?
- How do we reach clients within the correction system?
- What types of programs are offered in prison for violent extremists or terrorists? (Attendees noted a lack of programming in prisons, more generally).
- How politically popular are these programs for violent extremists or terrorists?
- Is there pushback from the community?
- How do you encourage buy-in from funders and/or government? For example, do you stress the importance of “return on investment” (e.g., reducing recidivism), public safety, or both?

Furthermore, the group identified returning terrorist/extremist travelers and children/youth as examples of complex cases that underscore the current issues in the P/CVE-Corrections space. Here, Corrections WG attendees highlighted the need to understand youth-specific psychological drivers of online extremism. Practitioners described the difficulties disengaging youth from online spaces and

ensuring that the transition to offline life offers youth comparable support and benefits to those found in online extremist communities. Similarly, the group discussed potential reintegration issues, especially after a youth has been charged and labelled as a violent extremist. Families were also identified as central to the youth’s successful post-release reintegration and engagement in CVE programming. At the same time, family members are often victims themselves, deeply affected by their child’s experiences. The discussion concluded by acknowledging the need to update policy, legislation, and the Criminal Code, particularly regarding online harms and the responsibility of social media platforms and providers.

Data Working Group

The Data Working Group (DWG) began by clarifying what CANSES wants to do – and what CANSES can do - regarding data access. In particular, DWG participants noted the unique needs and security concerns across different fields that CANSES members work –in, such as, government, academia, community organizations, etc. DWG members agreed that the CANSES website should host a data resource center that (a) stores datasets contributed by CANSES members such as researchers, practitioners, and partners, and (b) serves as a hub linking to other external/pre-existing dataset repositories, such as read.expert, [PIRUS](#),

the CIDB, GitHub, as well as other open-source datasets/codebooks relevant to extremism research.

Similarly, DWG members suggested compiling a list of datasets owned by CANSES members who are willing to share with others. In this model, CANSES would facilitate communication between data seekers and data owners. The DWG discussed the possibility of CANSES acting as a repository or host for datasets that are not published elsewhere. Members from multiple sectors were in favour of a post-secondary institution, such as Simon Fraser University (where CANSES is housed) providing the infrastructure for secure data storage and distribution. Notably, practitioners were open to sharing anonymized, privacy-compliant data on P/CVE clients for much-needed evaluation research. While this idea was strongly supported, there were many concerns about data privacy and security, especially, who would be permitted to access CANSES-hosted data. See the Key Considerations table (Table 1) below.

It was suggested that CANSES look at the [U.S.A. Extremist Crime Database framework](#) as a possible well-established model. Finally, there was support for CANSES providing workshops on data analysis and advanced research methods through a TSAS-style Summer Institute or through an existing program like [Vox-Pol's](#) Summer School, which was hosted alongside [C-REX in 2025](#). A list of all tasks

and suggestions from the DWG meeting can be found in Appendix B.

Education Working Group

Members of the Education Working Group (EWG) met in-person for the first time to discuss the group's grounding values, key priorities, and research agenda. The EWG agreed that their work should be grounded in decolonial and anti-racist values. Additionally, the EWG should be committed to diversity and inclusivity, making space for all voices to be heard, including teachers, families, community leaders/ youth-focused staff, and the youth themselves. At the same time, members recognized the need to keep people accountable for the CVE work that needs to be done in this space while also supporting teachers, many of whom are already overburdened. The responsibility of educating youth about extremism and countering violent extremism in the classroom should not fall solely on teachers.

Table 1. Key Considerations Regarding Data Sharing

Consideration	Notes/Examples
General	
Data organization and cleaning	Data formats available and variables/codebooks
Develop user instructions such as how to access and use certain data sets	Guidelines, step-by-step user guides, and support contacts
CANSES staffing and hours	Who will maintain the repository, what is their role expectations, and money to pay someone to manage the data repository and data requests
Hosting Platform Considerations	
Permanent domain name	URL for stable access
Platform organization	Similar to OSF? We could post external links to OSF data
Security/Privacy Concerns	
Risk of extremist groups attempting access	Vetting process for data access and monitoring data usage
Removal of Metadata and personal information or identifiers	Removing any personal information from datasets such as IP addresses/ geo-data or deidentifying case/client data
Virus protection	Maintain security
Other legal/ethical considerations	Compliance with privacy laws and policies in the user's country and institution, including REB/IRB compliance
Data Access Considerations	
Identification requirements	Require a student ID or proof of institutional affiliation or CANSES membership, etc.
Access requests	Require a brief project proposal to justify access/need
Authorship and Acknowledgements	Clarify expectations. Whether dataset providers receive co-authorship, citation only, acknowledgement only, etc.
Access based on roles/positions	Will access be granted similarly for all users, or will there be differing access based on education or affiliation, such as graduate versus undergraduate students
Country differences	Including a disclaimer as different countries (international users) may have different laws regarding downloading/possessing extremism data/content
Data-tiering	Some datasets can have a data-tiering system, such as some access being public, private, or "by request" depending on the need (e.g., data sensitivity)

The EWG session identified a list of key priorities and questions for members to consider, such as:

- What are the best ways to develop connections with teachers and demonstrate how extremism research/P/CVE curriculum is relevant to their work?
- Once these relationships have been established, what is the best way to navigate classroom spaces and the schools themselves?
- How do we reach youth who do not attend traditional schools? Would community centre training be needed?
- Prioritizing the expansion of our definition of education providers to include parents, the general public, teacher's unions, and government to support CVE work in schools.

The EWG also produced a research agenda focused on: (1) determining what teachers need from us (extremism researchers and practitioners) and, (2) building curriculum that is research-and-practitioner-informed. Working group members acknowledged the difficulty of speaking with educators about violent extremism and terrorism. The group also recognized that framing these issues as hate-based or related to bullying may help reduce stigma and lead to more productive conversations. Importantly, the EWG agreed that the best way forward is to ask teachers what they need and to build

relationships with education professionals and those of us conducting extremism research and working in P/CVE spaces. Crucially, these relationships could help inform the development of curriculum that is both effective and interesting for students, helping them build critical-thinking and digital-literacy skills.

ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS

Nihilistic Violent Extremism

The roundtable on Nihilistic Violent Extremism (NVE) was facilitated by Dr. Marc-André Argentino, the Team Lead of the Open-Source Unit at the Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence. Dr. Argentino gave attendees a brief introduction to NVE, focusing on its hybridized nature. NVE is a complex phenomenon that includes an array of harms/risks to victims (and perpetrators) both on and offline. Moreover, the online ecosystem relevant to NVE includes a network of mainstream and fringe platforms.¹

NVE is international in scale, resulting in a host of legal and jurisdictional issues for law enforcement and practitioners. For example, sextortion, commonly used by NVE actors, is not a separate crime under the Criminal Code of Canada, but is included in other offences. The wide range of crimes perpetrated by NVEs also speaks to larger issues in the Canadian context around the need to expand our definition and understanding of online harms.

Round table participants also discussed data access issues unique to NVE due to the age of the victims and perpetrators, who are commonly children. While NVE has a history, it is a relatively new issue,

¹ Dr. Argentino noted that the Canada Centre is currently working creating a document that will define and explain NVE. CANSES will alert our network when that document is publicly available.

providing us with the opportunity to “beat the silo” by building relationships and fostering communication between researchers, practitioners, government, and law enforcement/security services. In support of this point, practitioners who attended the roundtable also shared insights into their experiences of working with NVE clients while also educating law enforcement on the topic. Despite its comparative newness, round table participants also argued that responses to NVE must return to established best practice in P/CVE. The roundtable ended by discussing plans for the upcoming NVE session at the Canada Center’s Megaweek event, which will center around the creation of educational resources on NVE.

Collaborative Research and Large Grants

Dr. Amy Mack, Canada Research Chair (Tier II) in Digital Extremism, Assistant Professor at the University of Lethbridge, and Co-Director of the [Canadian Institute of Far-Right Studies \(CIFRS\)](#) facilitated a roundtable on collaborative research and large grants. The session was aimed at identifying and overcoming challenges associated with these types of applications. Participants explained that common challenges include being unsure of what grants are available, not understanding what makes a good application, lacking sources of support/advice, overcoming the siloed nature of extremism research, and confusion surrounding the financial process (e.g. which institution the funds

can/should sit with, how funds are moved from one institution to another, etc.).

Participants provided suggestions on how to address these challenges, such as speaking to your institution/university to understand what they require regarding grants and what is important for achieving career milestones like tenure.

Two main strategies for successful applications were suggested during the discussion. First, Dr. Mack suggested applying for grants with a more senior co-researcher, who could act as a mentor and improve the chances of winning a grant. Participants were reminded that money attracts money, so working with an experienced co-researcher can help ECRs and less established researchers build a name and reputation for themselves. For ECRs, this also means applying for grants early and often. Round table participants discussed how identifying policy makers who would be interested in/ benefit from their research makes applications stronger. In addition, looking to policy analysis and funding opportunities outside the narrow academic scope are helpful. Further discussion centred around translating research to policy or impact assessments. Round table participants underscored that grant writing is a skill that can be developed and improved. Lastly, attendees were asked how CANSES could support its members applying for grants. It was suggested that CANSES help facilitate relationships between members who are looking for

co-applicants, through the mentorship program proposed by the ECRWG, a separate coffee and connect session for those interested in applying for research grants. Participants also wondered if CANSES should encourage cross ranked projects (projects involving collaborators of all academic ranks including students, assistant professors, and full professors or senior scholars) in the next funding cycle. It was also suggested that the CANSES website list relevant grants and funding opportunities such as those offered by:

- [The Department of Canadian Heritage](#)
- [Global Affairs Canada](#) (for international work)
- [Health Canada](#) and [Public Health Canada](#)
- Public Safety Canada – [Community Resilience Fund](#)
- The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)
- Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS)
- [Woman and Gender Equality Canada](#)
- [Department of Defense](#) (particularly for work on right-wing extremism)
- Provincial/municipal government

Mental Illness, Neurodiversity, and Violence Extremism

This session was facilitated by Dr. Michael King, the Deputy Executive Director of the [Organization for the Prevention of Violence \(OPV\)](#). The roundtable began with a brief recap of the evolution of thought on the nexus between violent extremism/terrorism and mental illness from the 1960s to the present. Participants discussed how mental illness can create vulnerabilities but does not, on its own, explain violent extremism or terrorism. It was underscored that causal claims are premature and potentially misleading.

The session also recognized that specific types of extremist actors – e.g., solo actors/lone attackers – are more likely than group-based extremists to exhibit symptoms of mental illness. Similarly, certain disorders (e.g., psychotic disorders, autism spectrum) may be overrepresented in particular cases. Roundtable participants agreed that nuance is essential, especially in distinguishing among mental illness, neurodiversity, and personality traits/disorders that may influence terrorist behavior.

Dr. King cautioned participants against oversimplified explanations for a public or policy readership base that over-rely on mental illness as an explanatory tool. The discussion emphasized the importance of understanding the intent or purpose behind violent behaviour, which allows categorization as ideological, nihilistic,

opportunistic, and so on. Participants suggested that CANSES support research on mental illness, neurodiversity, and violent extremism through funding and collecting/hosting relevant data. CANSES was also identified as a potential facilitator for discussions among law enforcement, government officials, researchers, and practitioners to refine frameworks and definitions relevant to work in this area.

VIEWS FROM THE INSIDE

Policy Brief Writing Session

Dr. Shannon Nash, a Senior Policy Advisor at the Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence, hosted an interactive policy brief writing session for workshop attendees. This session centered around the intersection of policy-relevant research and strategic communication, focusing on how to craft succinct, accessible briefs that inform decision-making in the public sector. In particular, members discussed best practices in government writing and how to tailor content for policy audiences, emphasizing the importance of plain language, relevance, and structure. A key component of the session involved a walkthrough of a draft CANSES policy brief on Nihilistic Violent Extremism, analyzing its construction, messaging, and impact. The aim of this session was to give CANSES members practical insights into how to translate complex research into actionable, audience-specific policy advice. These insights include:

- **Identifying your audience.** Who are you writing to? Why should they specifically (and not someone else) care about this topic/issue?
- Use the **language** of the audience you are presenting to (such as the RCMP, CSIS, Public Safety, etc.).
- **Defining complex terms** is important.
- Be clear about the **impact/severity importance** of the issue.
 - Demonstrate urgency, impact, ties to Canada, threats to Canada. Be specific in describing the importance of the issue. Use statistics, discuss age ranges, identify relevant groups, geographic areas, etc.
- **Be very explicit about policy suggestions.** What exactly should be done? When? By whom?
- **Formatting is important.** Check page limits. Use bullet points and bolded text to highlight key points.
- **Use hyperlinks over citations,** but do not overuse hyperlinks. Note that policy briefs do not source the same way as academic papers/reports. Depending on the briefing, this might be a single source summary or involve multiple sources.
 - It can be useful to have one heavily hyperlinked/cited version of the brief to refer to if someone requests more information.

Experiences and Perspectives of Practitioners Working in the P/CVE Space

The second 'views from the inside' session featured Peter Smyth (the Organization for the Prevention of Violence) and Abokar Mohamed (Yorktown Child and Family Center), who shared their experiences as practitioners working in the P/CVE space. The discussion focused on four topics: (1) navigating collaborative efforts with law enforcement and the community, (2) the challenges of mandatory service participants, (3) the specific case of returnees from Syria, and (4) identifying additional key take aways.

Both speakers highlighted that collaboration with law enforcement requires clear boundaries, wherein practitioners only share safety-critical information. These boundaries help to establish and maintain practitioner-client trust which is key to successful case management. Similarly, law enforcement must trust practitioners to do their jobs effectively and communicate relevant information when necessary.

Trust also factored heavily in the discussion of challenges with mandatory participation. Here, trust is therapeutic for the client and operationally critical; building relationships through small, meaningful acts is just as important as formal intervention. Maintaining trust is essential for both safety and long-term client engagement. Mr. Smyth and Mr. Mohamed emphasized that

clear communication and patience are needed, particularly in the early weeks, which may be most difficult for practitioner-client relationships.

Round table participants also discussed complex client needs, barriers to service, access and public perception of P/CVE work. Here, returnees from Syria and Iraq were highlighted as an example wherein successful P/CVE necessitates connecting women and children to essential services, balancing public safety concerns, and navigating legal and logistical barriers (obtaining IDs, school registration, child welfare, etc.).

Mr. Smyth and Mr. Mohamed emphasized explained that clients often present with multi-layered vulnerabilities that make them more susceptible to extremism, including (but not limited to) trauma, mental health issues, developmental disorders, substance use, family conflict, and social stigma. Addressing these vulnerabilities often requires access to a multitude of services like housing and healthcare. The speakers stressed that practitioners must advocate for these individuals in order to address these needs and gain access to necessary services. Peter also discussed how service P/CVE practitioners often compete with online extremist communities that offer individuals engagement, belonging, and identity. It is the practitioner's job to identify services and programs that promote offline equivalents to online engagement.

Lastly, session participants discussed how public perception and media framing can affect intervention work; wherein, practitioners must balance transparency with public safety without further stigmatizing clients.



APPENDIX A: List of Presenters, Titles, and Abstracts

Hostile Online Environments: Examining Far-Right Content on Canadian Social Media

Presenters: Audrey Gagnon & Amy Mack

Abstract: The use of the internet and social media platforms by far-right groups is not a new phenomenon, and Canada is no exception; many far-right groups actively promote extreme ideas online. Evidence suggests that the internet, particularly social media, plays a role in the adoption of far-right ideologies. It does so by exposing individuals to extremist ideas, fostering community around them, and offering new narratives for interpreting social and political realities. Drawing on a unique dataset comprising 12,728 pages of screenshots from public posts by Canadian far-right groups on their websites and/or social media platforms, including Facebook, X, YouTube, Instagram, Gab, and Rumble, this research explores how Canadian far-right groups utilize the internet and social media. More specifically, how do they present themselves, their grievances, and their targets on social media and webpages? Additionally, how do these groups promote extreme ideas in these spaces?

OptiMoment: Identifying optimal moments for police to refer individuals to CVE intervention programs

Presenter: Michael King

Abstract: The presentation will summarize the work done by the Organization for the Prevention of Violence (OPV) to develop the OptiMoment, a tool to help police and security services identify the optimal moments to refer individuals involved in violent extremism, and other forms of targeted violence, to a psychosocial intervention program aimed at countering violent extremism (CVE). Based on social scientific evidence, the OptiMoment leverages specific circumstances that are known catalysts for disengagement from extremist groups, ideologies, and grievance-fueled violent activities. These specific circumstances represent the optimal moments to engage the individual because (1) the individual is more likely to be receptive to intervention, and (2) the intervention has the greatest potential to trigger disengagement.

The Specialized Interview and Intervention Team (SIIT): An Emerging P/CVE Best Practice Model?

Presenter: Sara Thompson

Abstract: Responding effectively to the increasing prevalence and changing nature of violent extremism has presented challenges for police and security agencies within and outside of Canada. Significant capacity and capability gaps undermine the sector's overall ability to identify and intervene when an individual is radicalizing/mobilizing to perpetrate extremist violence. Closing these gaps requires (among other things) guidance, mentorship and support from agencies that possess existing prevention/intervention specialism and experience. The RCMP – Central Region - GTA INSET's SIIT framework is a new and evidence-based model that offers an operational complement and supplement to traditional, reactive approaches. This research interviews SIIT team members and managers and reviews program documentation and relevant literatures to: 1) Document the SIIT model, mandate and core activities; 2) Locate the SIIT model, mandate and activities in terms of "what we know" about the critical importance of prevention/intervention activities alongside enforcement/disruption in the national security space; 3) Identify what's working well (in terms of SIIT operations), along with areas where there may be a need for operational tweaks/enhancements to the SIIT model; and 4) Create a series of evidence-based "next step" recommendations for bolstering SIIT operations, paying careful attention to resource and capacity considerations. This research is still in the field; the talk will provide a high-level overview of the SIIT model, its mandate and activities, and how it fits into the larger national security apparatus to provide access to wrap-around support and other risk mitigation activities for individuals at the pre charge, charge and post-charge phases.

Developing a Cloud-Based Database and Mapping Solution for Tracking Right-Wing Extremism (RWE) in Canada (2016-2026)

Presenters: David Hoffman & Yannick Veilleux-Lapage

Abstract: This presentation is an overview of ongoing research that is being conducted to create and maintain a cloud-based dataset focused on tracking Canadian right-wing extremism (RWE). The overall purpose of this project is to provide a useful tool for strategic partners to understand, visualise, and track Canadian RWE in a robust, transparent, and understandable manner. This presentation will provide an overview of the procedures and methods that were taken in the data gathering, coding, and implementation of the visualization software (NoCoDB).

Surveying Canadians on the Relationship Between Extremism and Conspiracy Theories

Presenter: Amar Amarsingham

Abstract: This project investigates the relationship between conspiracy beliefs and violent extremism in the Canadian context. While research in Europe has demonstrated that conspiracy mentalities can significantly predict extremist intentions—especially among individuals with lower self-control, higher self-efficacy, and weaker law-relevant morality—such work remains limited in Canada. To address this gap, the study will conduct multiple nationally representative online surveys with oversampling of key demographic groups. Using validated psychometric scales, the surveys will assess support for violent extremism, intentions to engage in extremist violence, and belief in both general and specific conspiracy theories. Advanced statistical analyses will identify risk and protective factors, test whether common psychological mechanisms underlie conspiracy and extremist beliefs, and explore conditional effects across diverse identities and ideological orientations.

Fragmented Beliefs, United Threats: A Network Analysis of Ideologically Motivated Violent Extremism in Canada

Presenter: Karmvir Padda

Abstract: This study analyzes six Canadian cases of ideologically motivated violent extremism using Natural Language Processing and Social Network Analysis to map ideological references in extremist manifestos. Findings show that lone actors draw from decentralized, personalized belief systems, blending ideology, personal grievance, and cultural references. Influences range from political and religious rhetoric to pop culture and prior attackers, revealing fragmented but recurring patterns across cases. The report offers actionable insights for improving individualized intervention strategies and refining counter-radicalization policies beyond traditional group-based models.

Report: [English](#) & [French](#)

The Online State of Hate: Analyzing Right-Wing Extremist Rhetoric Among Gamers on Reddit

Presenter: Mohamed Elgayar

Abstract: This study explores the prevalence of homophobia, misogyny, and racism among Reddit gaming communities, uncovering strong support for right-wing rhetoric and movements such as Gamergate. As video games become increasingly central to youth culture, their role in online radicalization demands closer examination. Through discourse analysis, the report highlights themes of perceived victimization, anti-“woke” sentiment, and extremist narratives that circulate within gaming spaces. It concludes with recommendations for law enforcement and countering violent extremism programs, and outlines priorities for future research on radicalization in digital entertainment cultures.

Report: [English](#) & [French](#)

Researcher Safety and Vicarious Trauma: A Literature Review and Recommendations for Universities, Supervisors, and Researchers

Presenter: Veronica Kitchen on behalf of Clare McKendry

Abstract: Research can be rewarding, but it can also put academics at risk. This study looks at the hidden dangers faced by researchers studying sensitive or controversial topics, from online harassment to the mental toll of vicarious trauma. The authors highlight who's most vulnerable, including graduate students, early career researchers, and marginalized scholars, and offer practical strategies for individuals, supervisors, and institutions to stay safe and supported while doing important work.

Report: [English](#) & [French](#)

Targeting Transnational Connections: Digital Information Flows, Foreign Influence Campaigns, and the Indian Diaspora in Canada

Abstract: This presentation is intended to expand our understanding of India's capacity to conduct foreign information manipulation and influence (FIMI) campaigns and engage in digitally subversive activities. In particular, it focuses on digital information flows and the framing of digital content on Meta platforms following a critical flashpoint in India-Canada relations. This presentation explores how online digital information spaces become sites of contestation, where digital content can be leveraged to shape opinions within the diaspora, erode democratic resilience, and undermine Canadian interests.

Perceptions of Right-Wing Extremism (RWE) among Diasporas: Exploring the Potentials of Decolonial Educational Approaches in Minimizing the Threat

Presenter: Helal Dhali

Abstract: Right-Wing Extremism (RWE) is increasing across Western societies and poses an urgent threat to diasporic communities. In Canada, rising hate crimes highlight the importance of understanding how these communities experience and interpret RWE, as well as how to counter it. Guided by some postcolonial theories, such as Fanon's analysis of colonial violence and racial alienation (1952), Bhabha's concepts of hybridity and mimicry (1994, 1984), and Quijano's "coloniality of power" (2000), along with perspectives on decolonizing education (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018; Abdi, 2012), this study examines how diaspora identities have been shaped by colonial displacement and how right-wing narratives frame them as "outsiders" threatening a white, Christian West. Through Narrative Inquiry, which captures the lived experiences of participants, and Grounded Theory, which helps develop themes, data were collected from ten participants (six in a focus group and four in interviews) from Asian, Jewish, and Muslim communities. The findings show RWE as "transplanted" and "reactionary". RWE is rooted in racism and driven by economic insecurities, media-driven fear, perceived threats, and persistent colonial myths. Participants share intersectional experiences of Islamophobia, antisemitism, and anti-Asian racism, and highlight how education can promote tolerance but also sometimes deepen divisions. The study emphasizes that decolonial educational approaches, such as centring diaspora voices, revealing colonial histories, and encouraging intercultural dialogue and critical media literacy, are essential to dismantling exclusionary ideologies and fostering inclusive, resilient communities.

APPENDIX B: List of Presenters, Titles, and Abstracts

- Create a list of people willing to mentor others to foster collaboration.
- Add a “Resource Center” or “Data” section to the CANSES website.
- For training we could highlight examples like David Hofmann’s SNA training (drug networks in South America).
- Consider a data engineer role—e.g., NLA language models management.
- Provide GitHub accounts or access for students.
- Encourage training in more advanced statistical and computational methods. Potential training sessions.
- Explore open data and open methods policies promoted by journals such as [Open Science Framework \(OSF\)](#). Many datasets, software codes, and codebooks available there. For example, the Grievance Dictionary (van der Vegt) is available on OSF.
- Consider creating a “Measures Bank” as an additional resource. Like non-proprietary risk assessments, psychometrics (survey research/experiments), etc.
- Acknowledge the large workload required, we need to take this to the executive committee at CANSES, some options include:
 - Option A: hire someone full-time. Potential post-doc person to manage this? Consider this added cost in the next round of funding?
 - Option B: fund a dedicated role with someone already in CANSES.
 - Option C: just begin by posting links to existing open-source repositories.
 - [IAPSS](#) knowledge translation could extend the reach of CANSES. Possible limited funding (for two years).

About CANSES

The Canadian Network for Research on Security, Extremism and Society (CANSES) is a national network that fosters communication, collaboration, and knowledge sharing between researchers and practitioners, law enforcement and national security, and government policy- and decision-makers. CANSES is funded by the Community Resiliency Fund (CRF) administered by the Canada Centre for Community Engagement and the Prevention of Violence under Public Safety Canada.

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