

2015 START Symposium

Individual Radicalization Panel

- **Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States (PIRUS)**
Presented by Gary LaFree
- **Childhood Trauma and Adolescent Misconduct as Precursors to Violent Extremism**
Presented by Pete Simi
- **The Psychology of Terrorism and Terrorist Motivations**
Presented by Anthony Lemieux
- **Deradicalization of Extremists**
Presented by David Webber



Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States (PIRUS)

Gary LaFree
START Symposium
10/15/2015

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What is PIRUS?

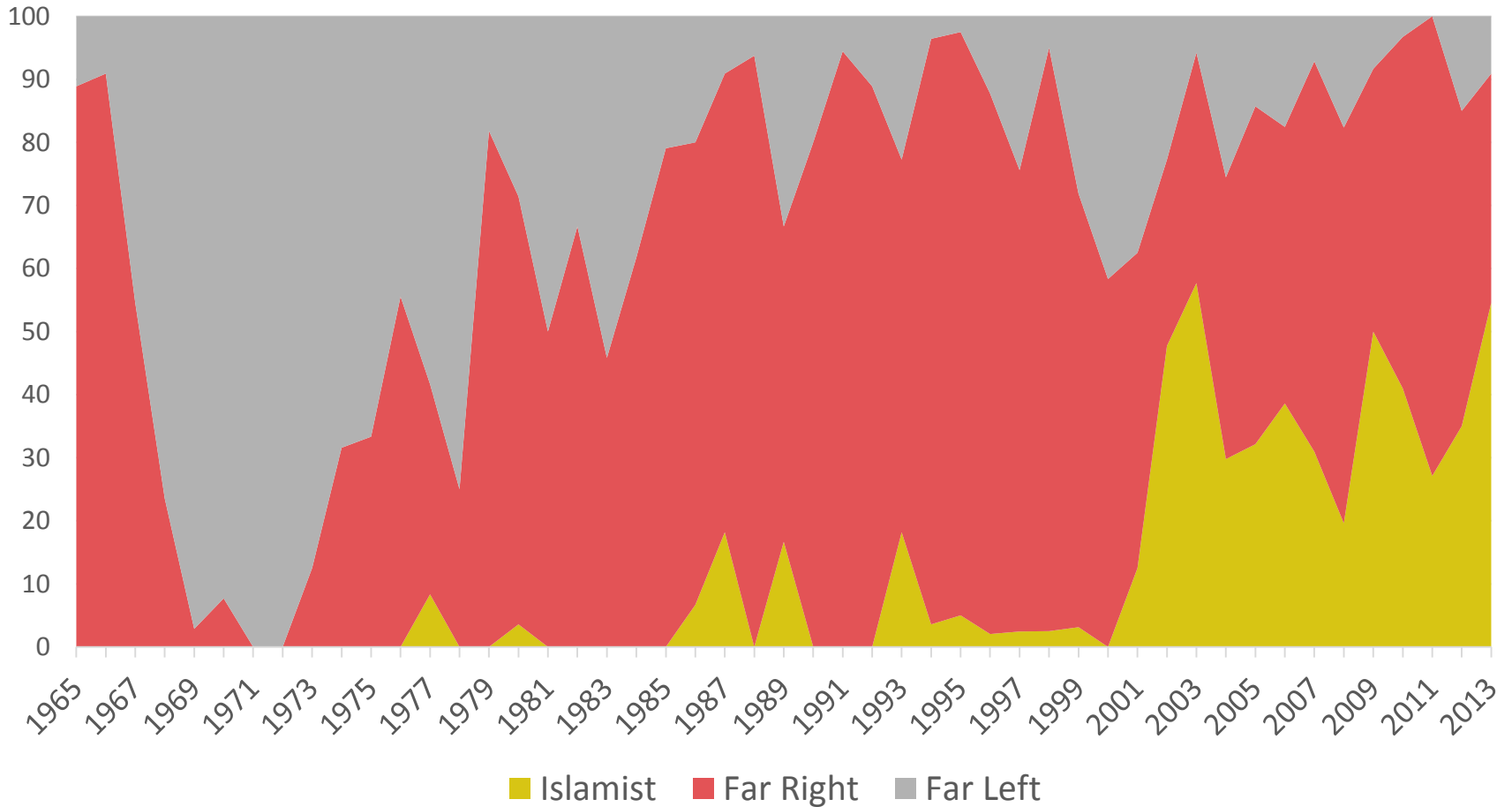
PIRUS codebook

Number of individuals: 1,503

- **Identification Variables**
 - Number ID
 - Name and aliases
- **Plot and Consequences**
 - Activity description
 - Location of plot
 - Date of exposure
 - Violent/non-violent
 - Criminal charges
- **Group information**
 - Group name(s)
 - Role in group
 - Name of group leader
 - Group dynamics
- **Radicalization details**
 - Ideologies
 - Recruitment
 - Role of internet/media
 - Event influence
- **Demographics**
 - Ethnicity
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Marital status
 - Religious background
 - Citizenship
- **Socioeconomic Status**
 - Education level
 - Finances and employment
 - Military background
 - Socioeconomic stratum
- **Personal details**
 - Abuse and psychological concerns
 - Family and relationships
 - Drug and alcohol use
 - Social life
 - Previous criminal activity
 - Mindset prior to radicalization

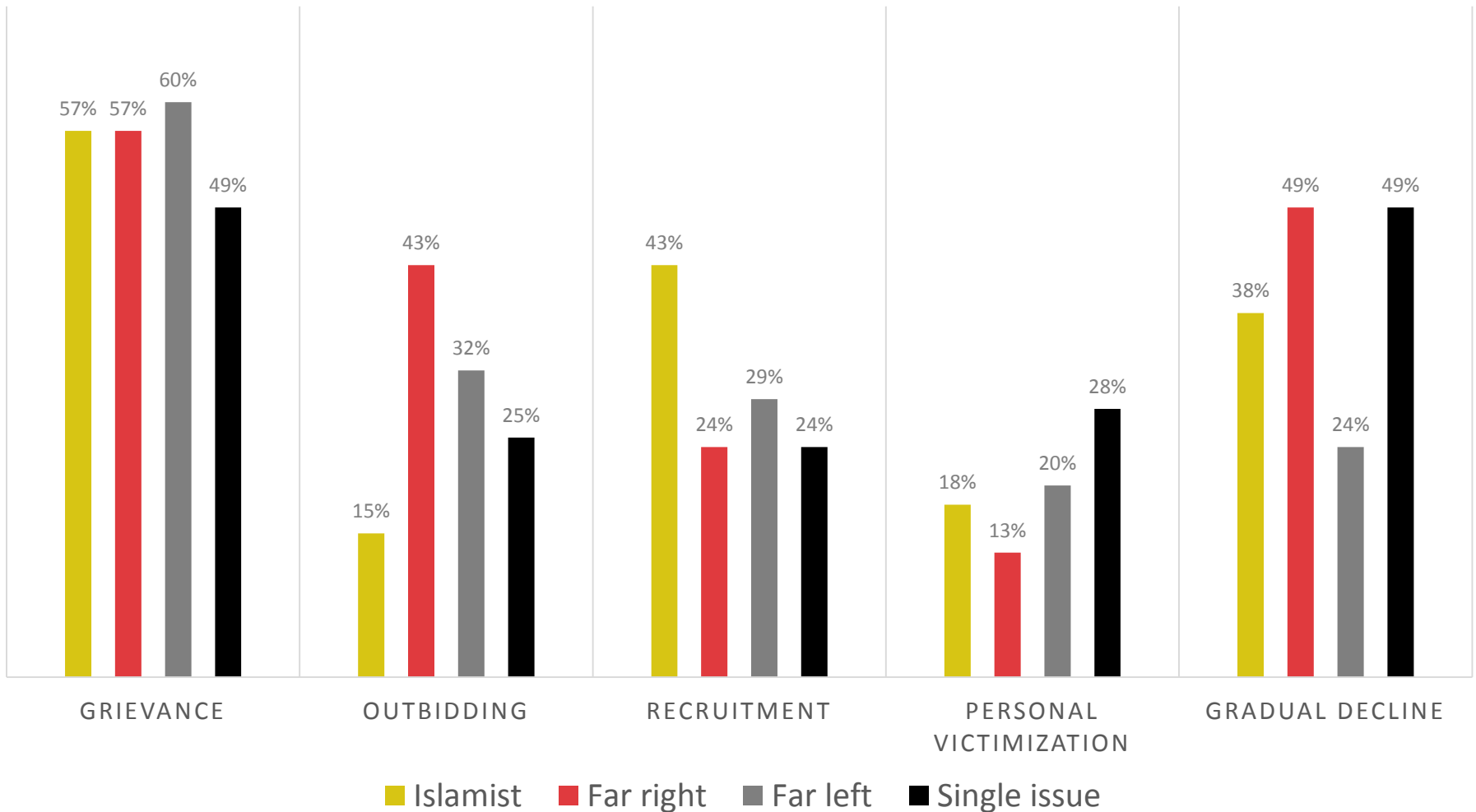
Radicalization Over Time

ALL CASES BY IDEOLOGY 1965-2013 (percentage)



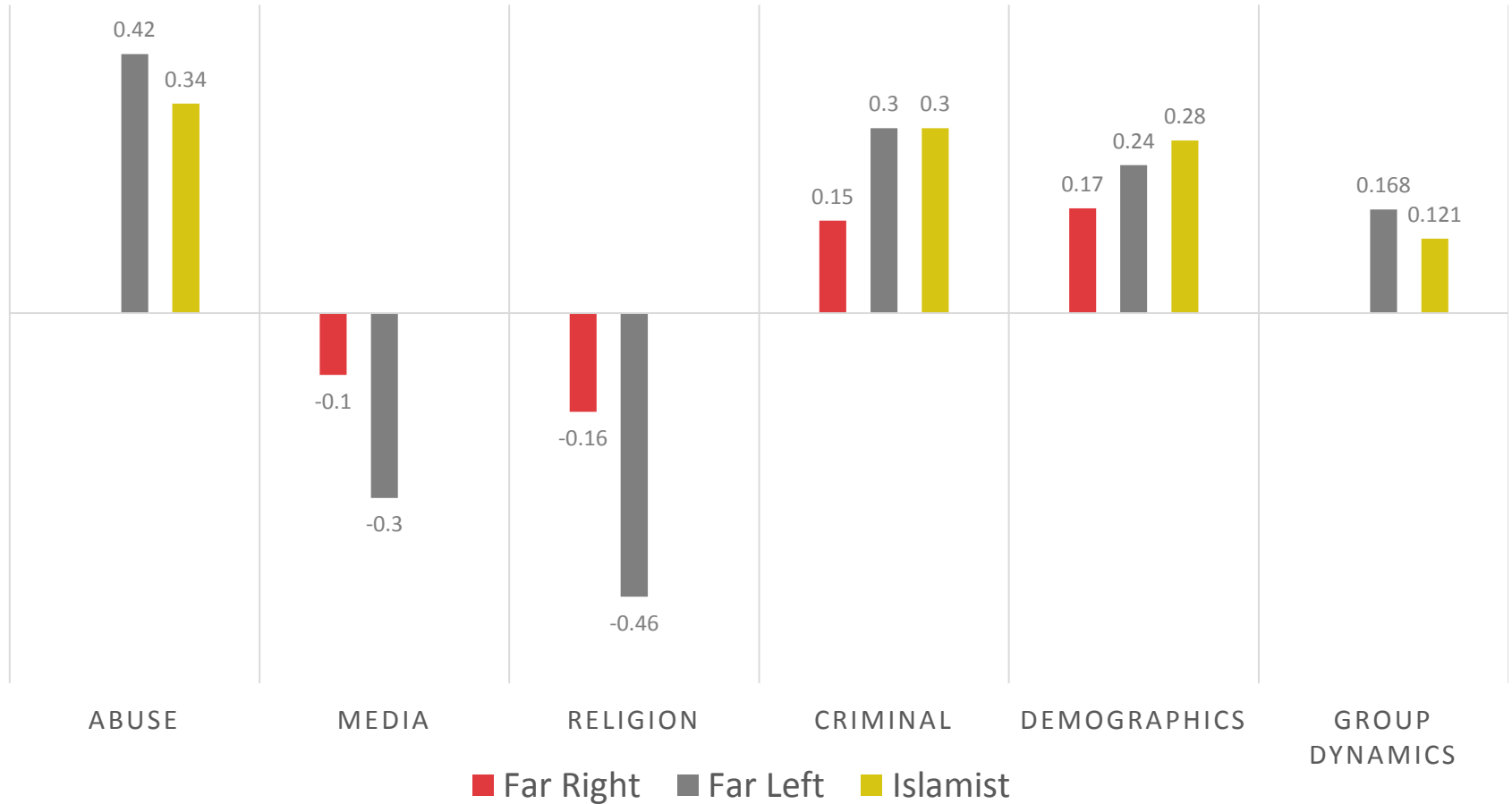
Radicalization Mechanisms

RADICALIZATION MECHANISMS ACROSS IDEOLOGIES



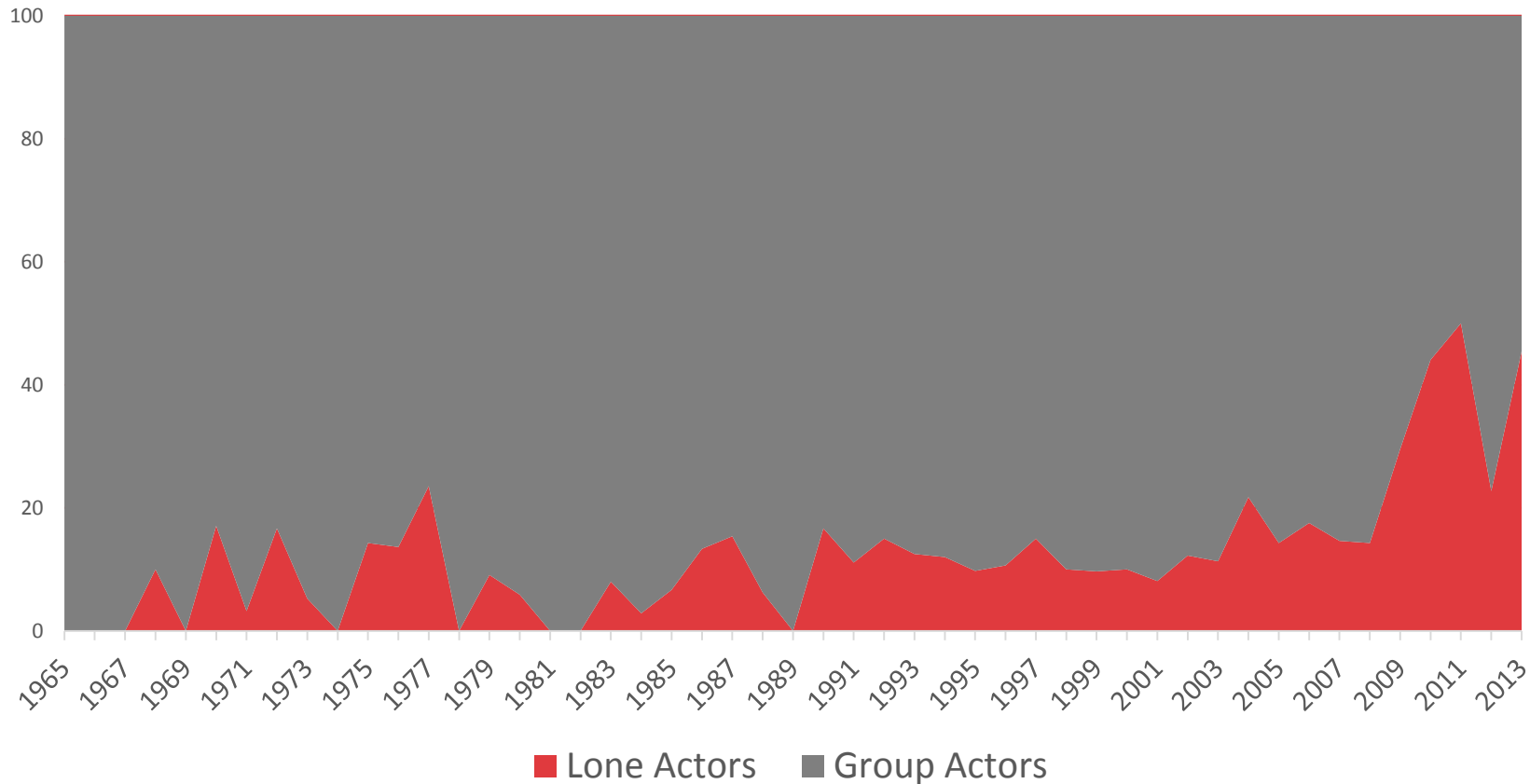
Predictors of Violence

Predicting the probability of violent outcomes



Lone Actors and Group Actors Over Time

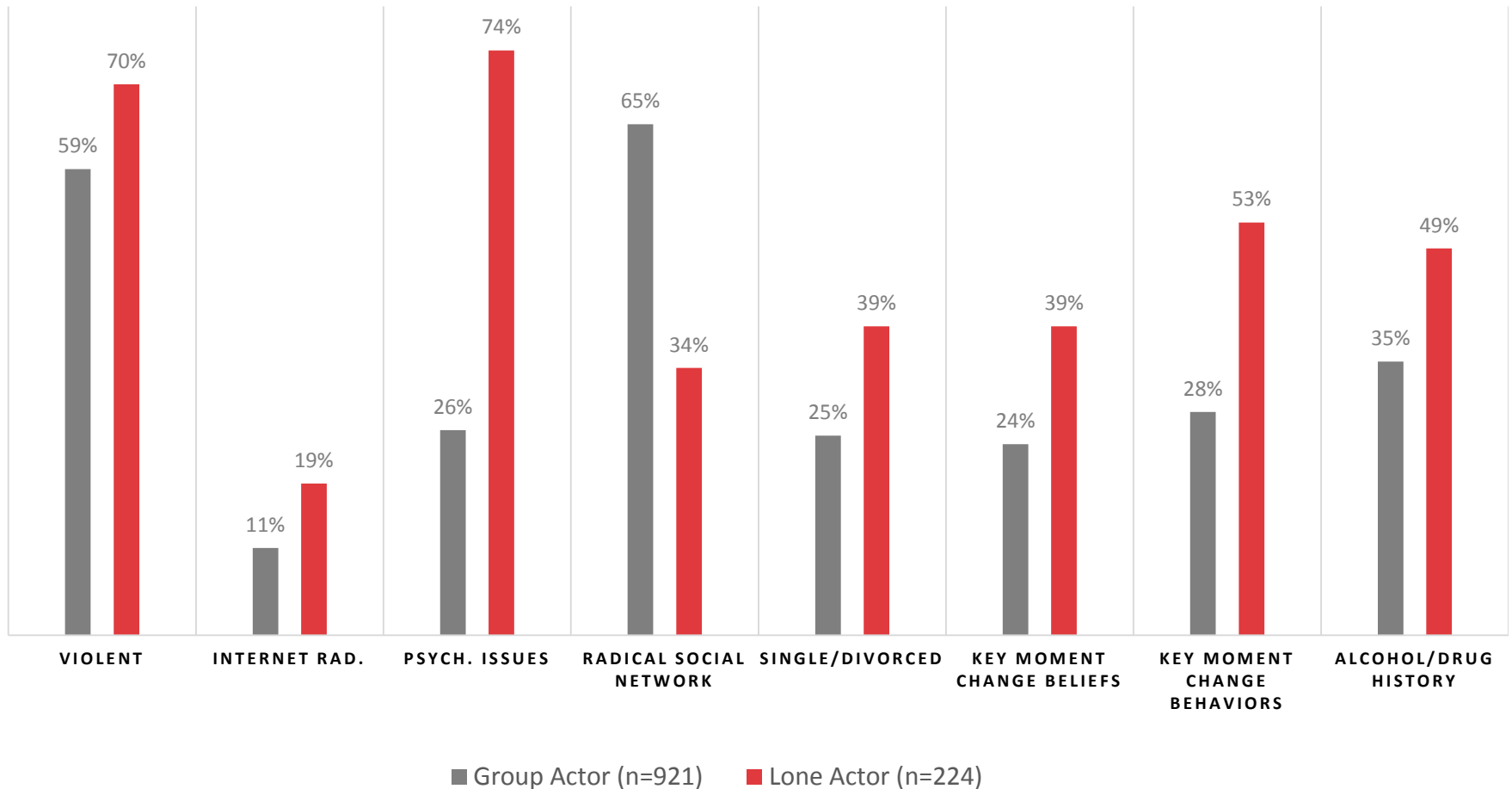
LONE ACTORS v. GROUP ACTORS 1965-2013 (PERCENTAGE)



Graph depicts “date of exposure” for individuals in PIRUS from 1965 to 2013. The date of exposure represents the time at which the individual’s radical activity or plot first came to public attention. Usually the time of incident or arrest, or earliest mention of the individual in open sources, so long as it is related to the plot/radicalization of the individual.

Are Lone Actors Different?

Comparing Lone Actors to Group Actors

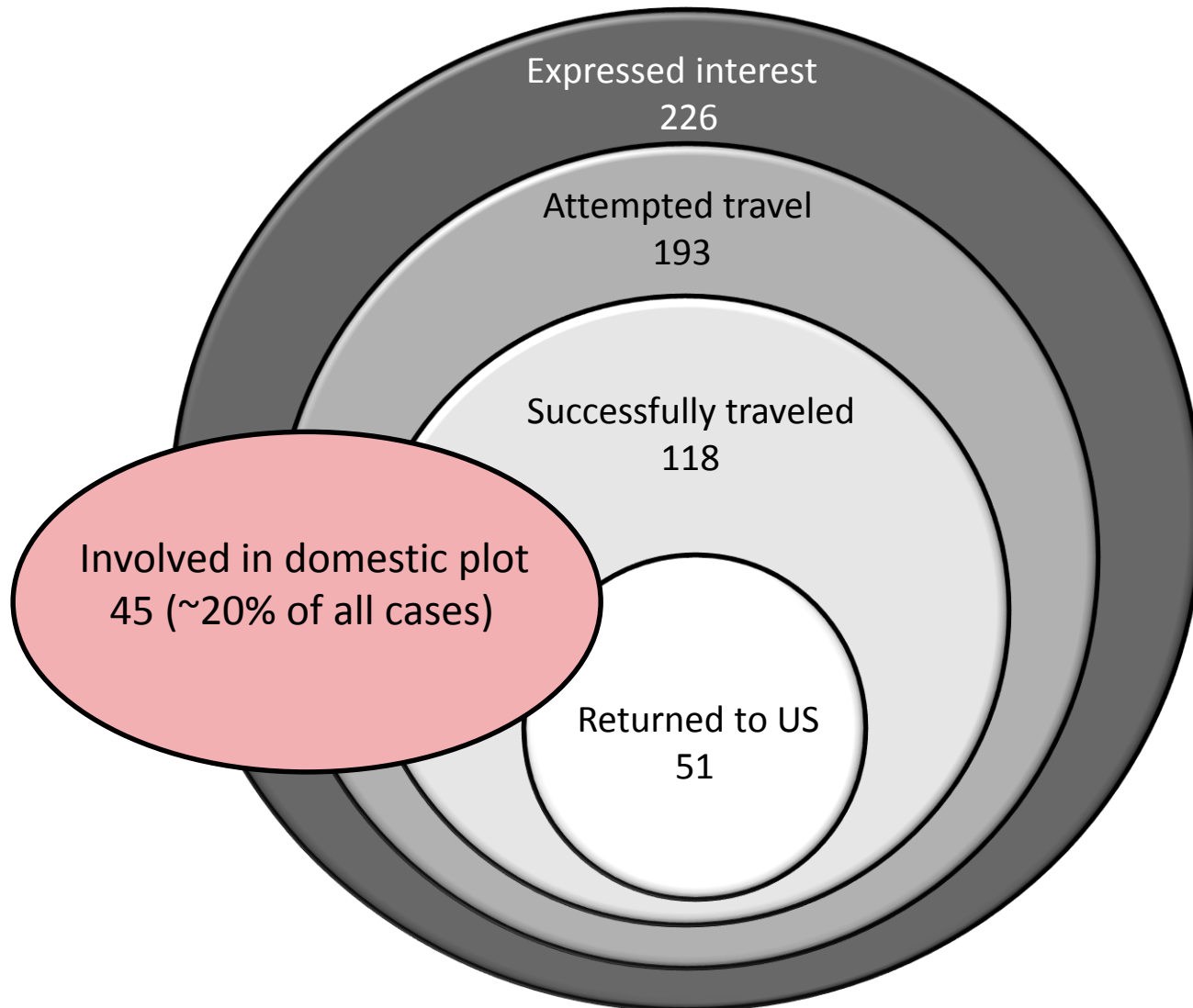


*All results are statistically significant using Pearson’s chi-squared to at least the .005 level

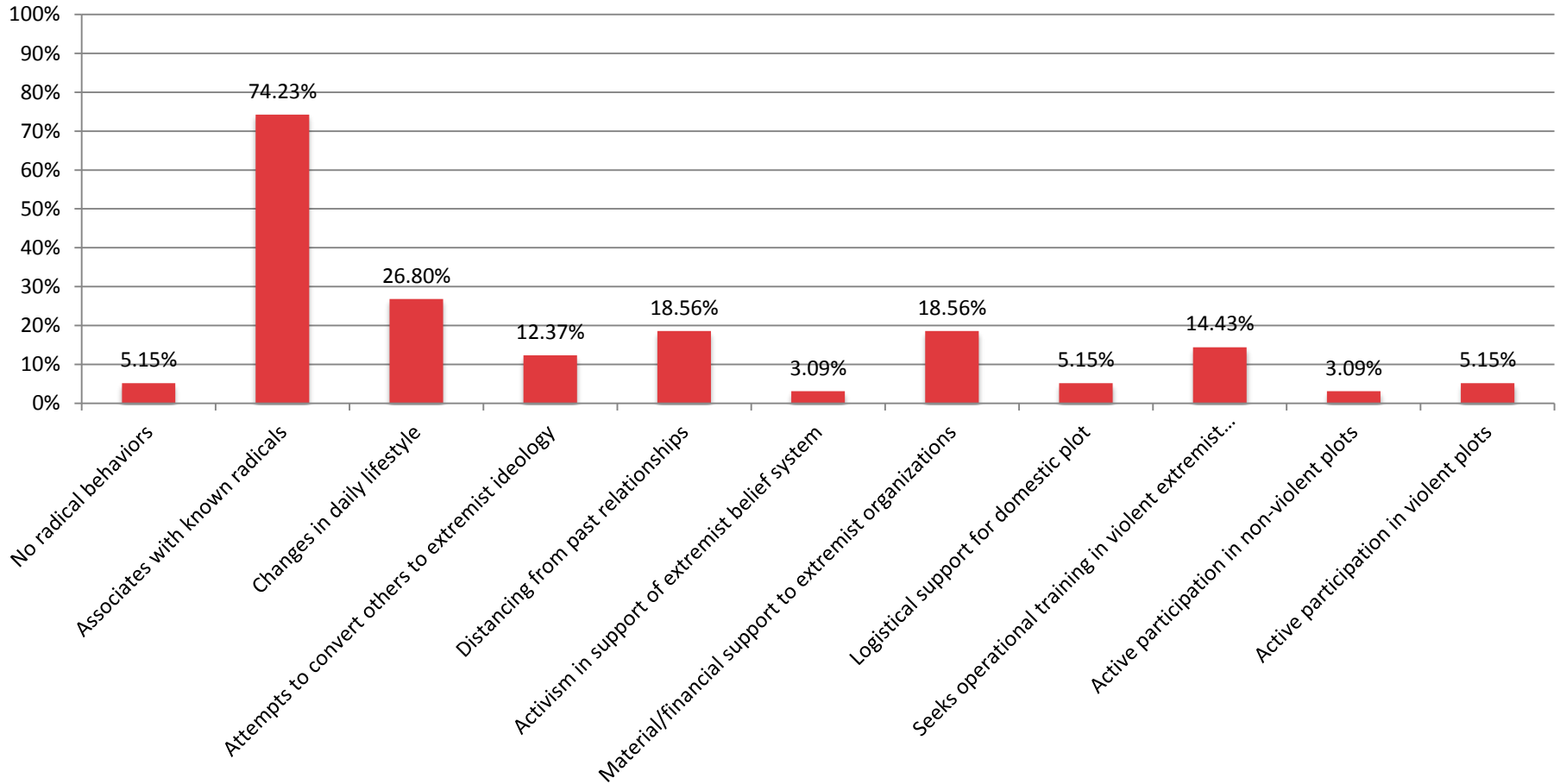
Group actor = coded as either a member of a formal extremist group; an informal extremist group; or an above-ground political activist group

Lone actor = coded as having no group affiliation or membership

US Foreign Fighters: Outcomes



Behavioral Indicators of Radicalization



Implications: Radicalization

- Substantial rise of far right and Islamist groups in last decade
- Increasing prominence of lone actors
- There is a window of opportunity for intervention with foreign fighters.
- Foreign fighter returnees may not be more dangerous than those that choose to stay.

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Childhood Trauma and Adolescent Misconduct as Precursors to Violent Extremism

Pete Simi

START Symposium

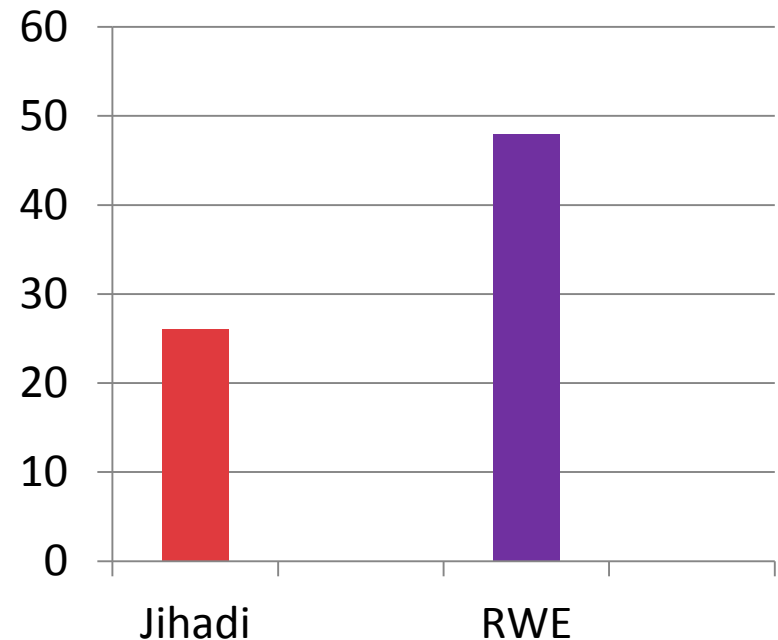
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Scope of the Problem

- Since 911 Right-Wing Extremists have killed more Americans in the United States than violent jihadists (New America Foundation Study, 2015)

Figure 1



Key Concepts

- **Violent Extremism:** violence committed by an individual and/or group in support of a specific political or religious ideology (often used interchangeably with terrorism) (Borum 2011).
- **Right-Wing Extremism:** The far-right subscribes to aspects of the following ideals:
 - national, racial, and/or religious chauvinism; suspicious of centralized federal authority (or conversely promotes authoritarian leadership and governing style); conspiratorial thinking; sense of being under attack (Chermak, Freilich, and Suttmoeller 2013).

Research Questions

- What types of early childhood and adolescent experiences characterize the lives of violent extremists?
- What role, if any, does childhood trauma and adolescent misconduct play in the process of becoming involved in violent extremism?

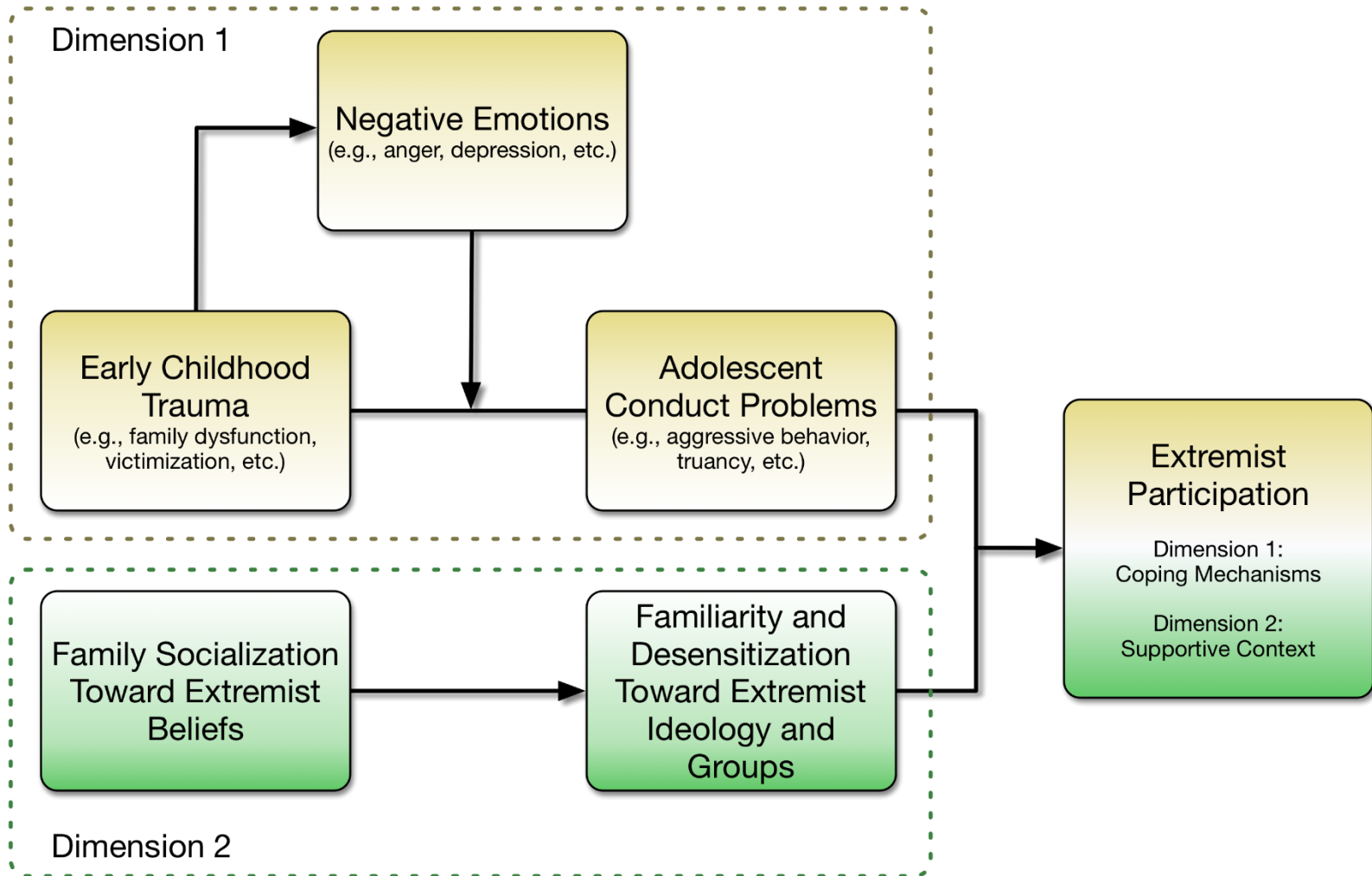
Method & Data

- In-depth life history interviews (n=44)
 - structured and unstructured questions
 - earliest memories to present
- National sample
- Broad range of right-wing extremist groups

Risk Factor Frequencies

Types of Risk	Child Abuse	Family Substance Use Problems	Neglect	Mental Health Issues	Attempted Suicide
% of Subjects	45%	49%	46%	57%	62%

Multidimensional Model of VE Participation



Process Tracing: Case Study 1

- **Childhood Trauma**: “I can recall him [step-father] being like a buddy, even after **he raped my mom, beat her**. He came out and he put his hand on my head and rubbed my hair...I remember the feeling, just being like, stuck...lots of memory after memory about physical violence...being kicked in the face, thrown down stairs on and on....”
- **Adolescent Conduct Problems**: “The first suicide attempt was at 12, but I was not hospitalized. Second attempt I was 14, 15, and then the last one resulted in a three-month forensic lockdown unit. It was like an adolescent suicide treatment center is how they described it...”

Process Tracing Cont.: Case Study 1

- **Non-Ideological Coping Mechanism**: “Then me and Roger [leader of an extremist group] started hanging out on the street. He was drinking a lot, we had lots of heartfelt conversations. He actually taught me how to roll people [rob people] effectively and this sort of thing...I was on the streets, this was how I got off the streets... I had a role; I got invited into a small cell of guys who worked under a larger organization that had like a hundred and some members. It was this tiered system.”

Implications

- Intervention opportunities prior to extremist involvement
- Relative importance of ideology
- Rely on “lessons learned” from gang and delinquency intervention

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The Psychology of Terrorism & Terrorist Motivations

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A wide range of motivations

Grievance, Risk, Opportunity, Identification

Individual Level Factors: SDO, RWA, ARIS.

Experiments in the US & Internationally: An approach to test the relationships.

- Allows us to determine the extent of impact of grievance, establish causality in relationships

Core areas of research: Taking stock of research efforts to date

Experiments in the US & Internationally: Egypt, Morocco, Turkey, Jordan, Malaysia.

1.) Grievance: Grievance has a positive influence on the justification of both protest (U.S., Malaysian, and Jordanian samples) and terrorism (across samples).

2.) Individual Level Factors: SDO, RWA, ARIS (in Egypt & Morocco).

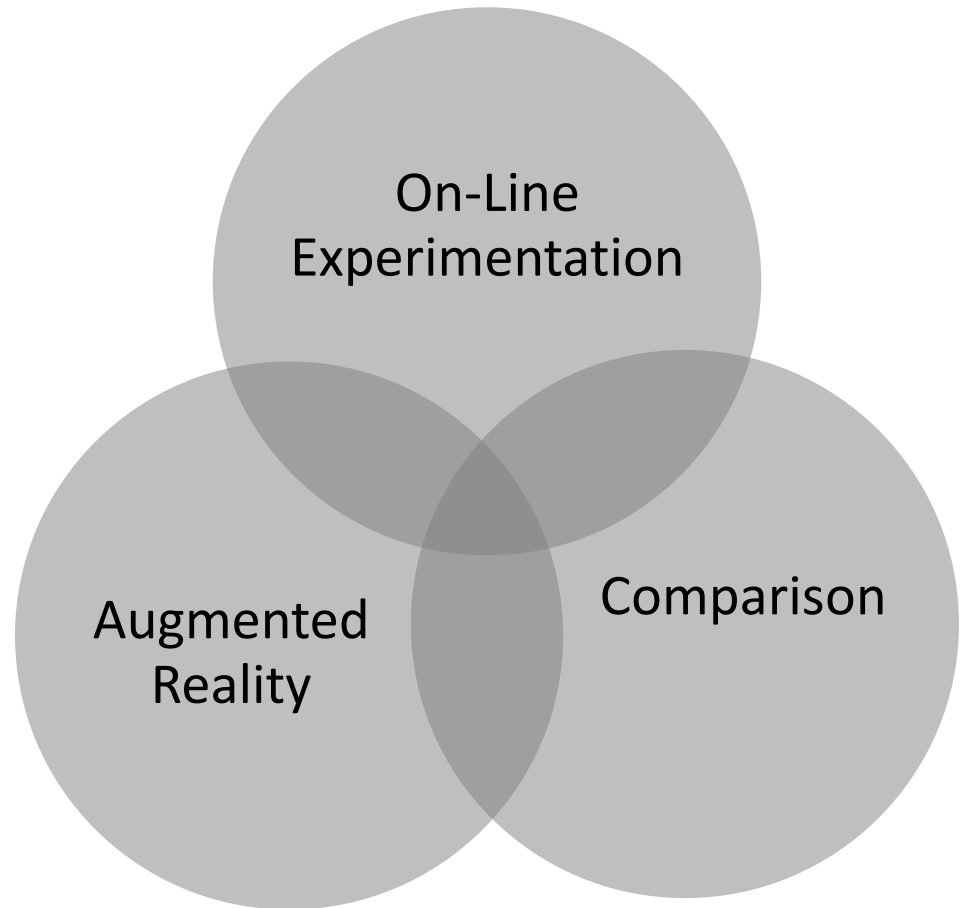
3.) Intergroup Images & Representations: Evil, Oppressive.

- Viewing the other as *oppressive* is correlated with higher levels of protest justification.
- An image of the other as *evil*, and to a lesser extent as subhuman, leads more respondents to view an attack as justified.

RESEARCH CONCEPTUALIZATION

Comparative Approach Advantages:

- Experimental approach to examine causality in relationships
- Online & International – broad reach, efficient data collection, comparison
- Augmented Reality – engaging, higher realism
- Direct comparison will allow us to test for differences (Spring / Summer 2016), and going forward.



Bottom Line

- Empirical support for grievance
- Empirical support for image
- Expanding our experimental approach to include AR; which enhances multidisciplinary expert network.
 - Massive potential to test additional variations (i.e., communicator properties, grievance properties, setting & context; presence of others, etc.)
 - Demonstrating & Documenting what this enhanced approach offers is critical.

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Deradicalization of Extremists

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Overview

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)

- Terrorist organization that waged secessionist campaign in Sri Lanka, until defeated by Sri Lankan military in 2009

Rehabilitation program effectiveness

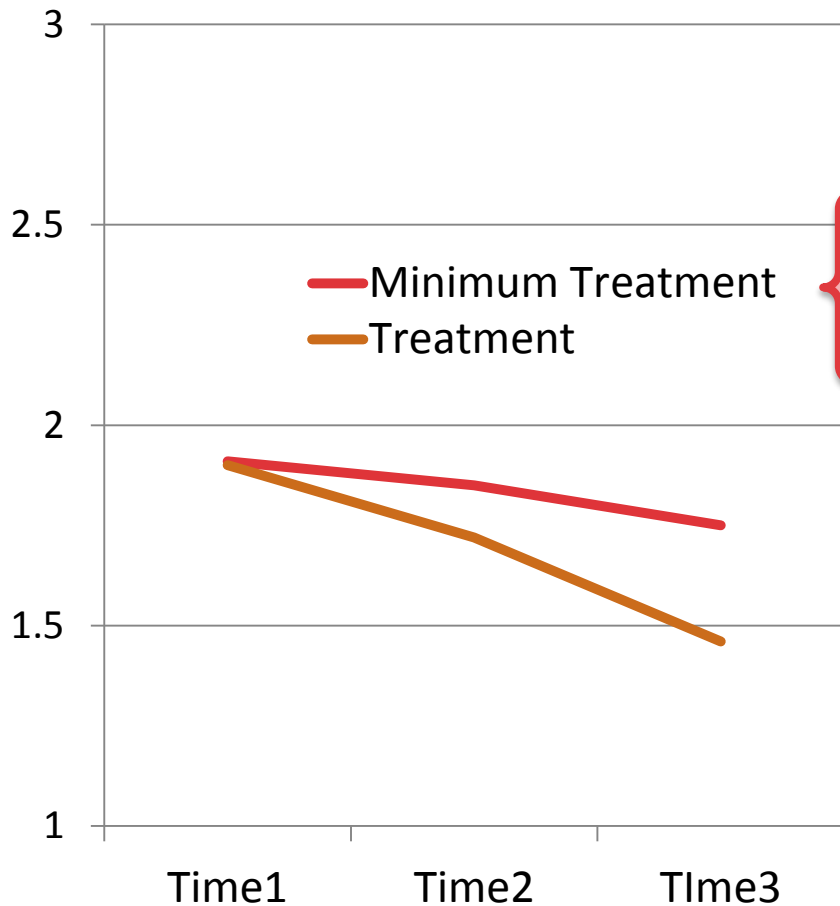
- Longitudinal assessment across a 1 year of rehabilitation
- Assessment /comparison with non-extremists in the communities after reintegration in society

Psychological factors

- Psychological variables involved in the processes of radicalization and deradicalization

Radicalism across 1 year in rehabilitation

(Support of LTTE / violence / separate state / armed struggle)

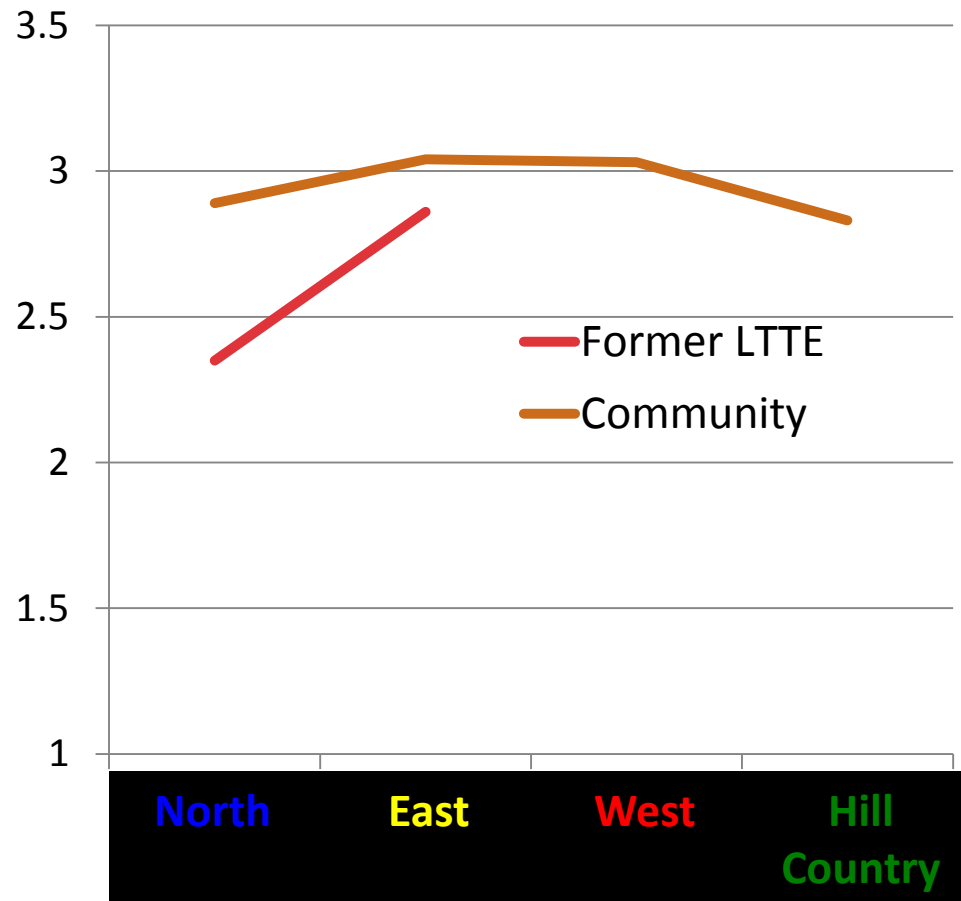
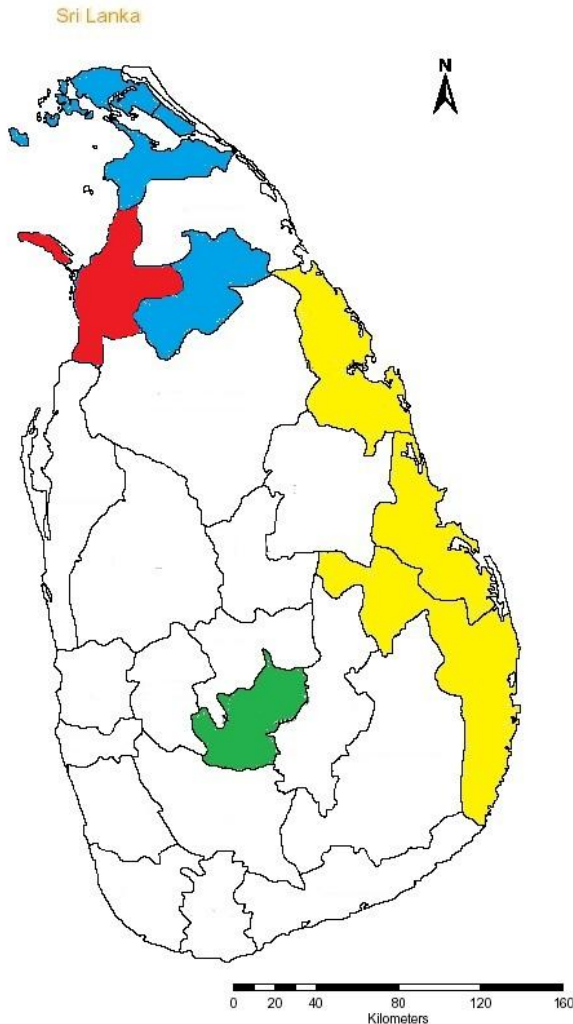


Treatment components

- Educational
- Spiritual
- Vocational
- Cultural/family
- Psychological/creativity
- Sport/extra-curricular

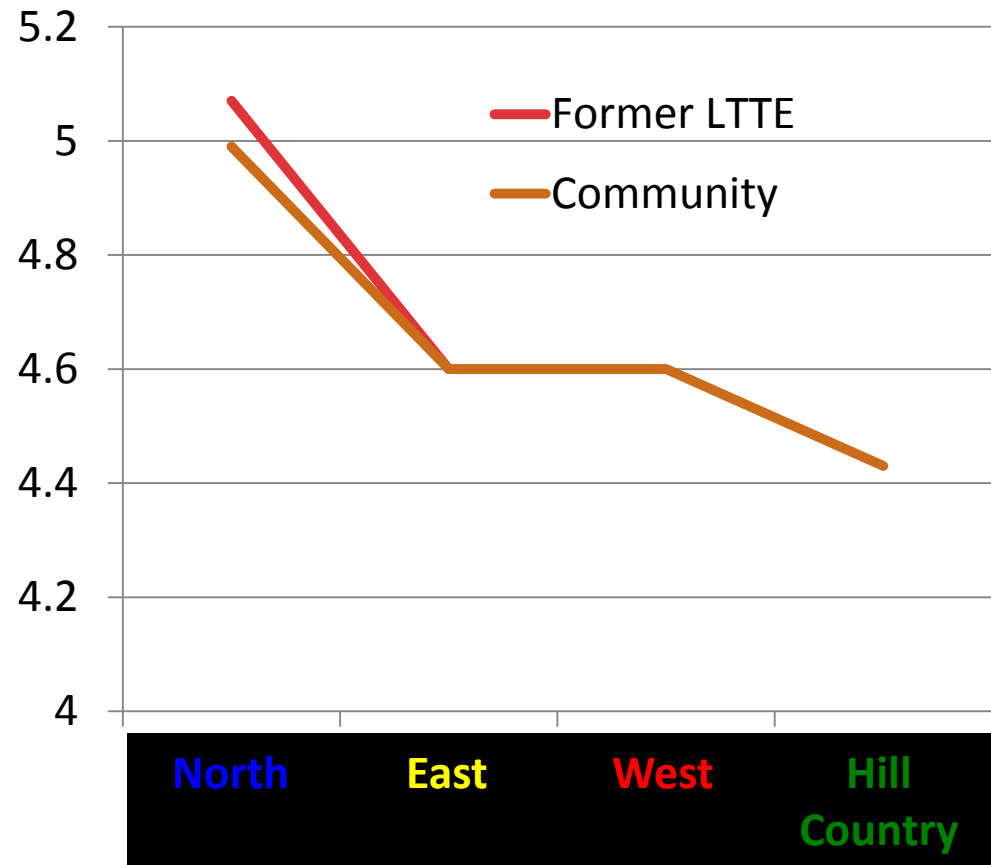
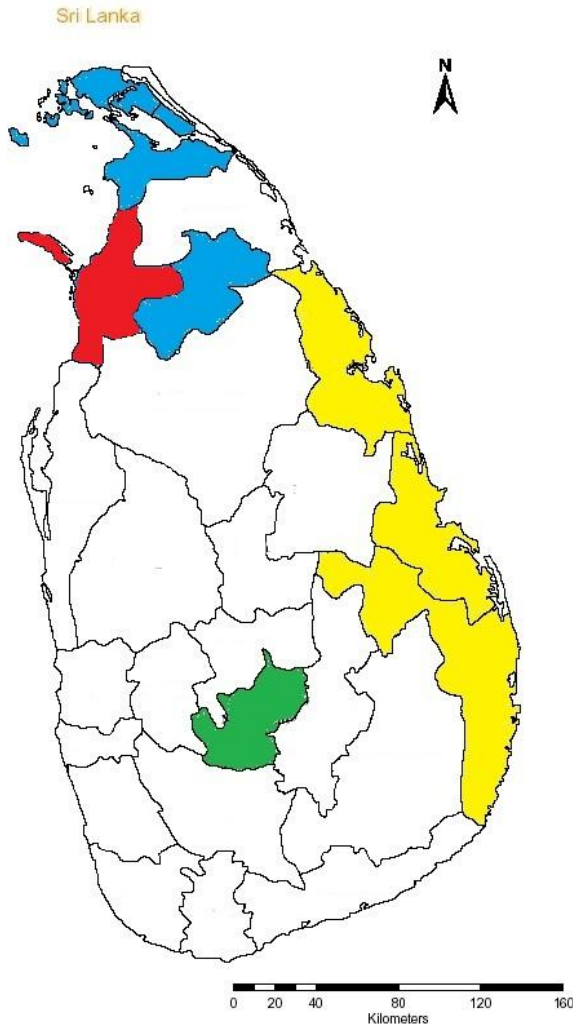
Radicalism after reintegration

(Sacrifice for equality, support for violence / separate state)



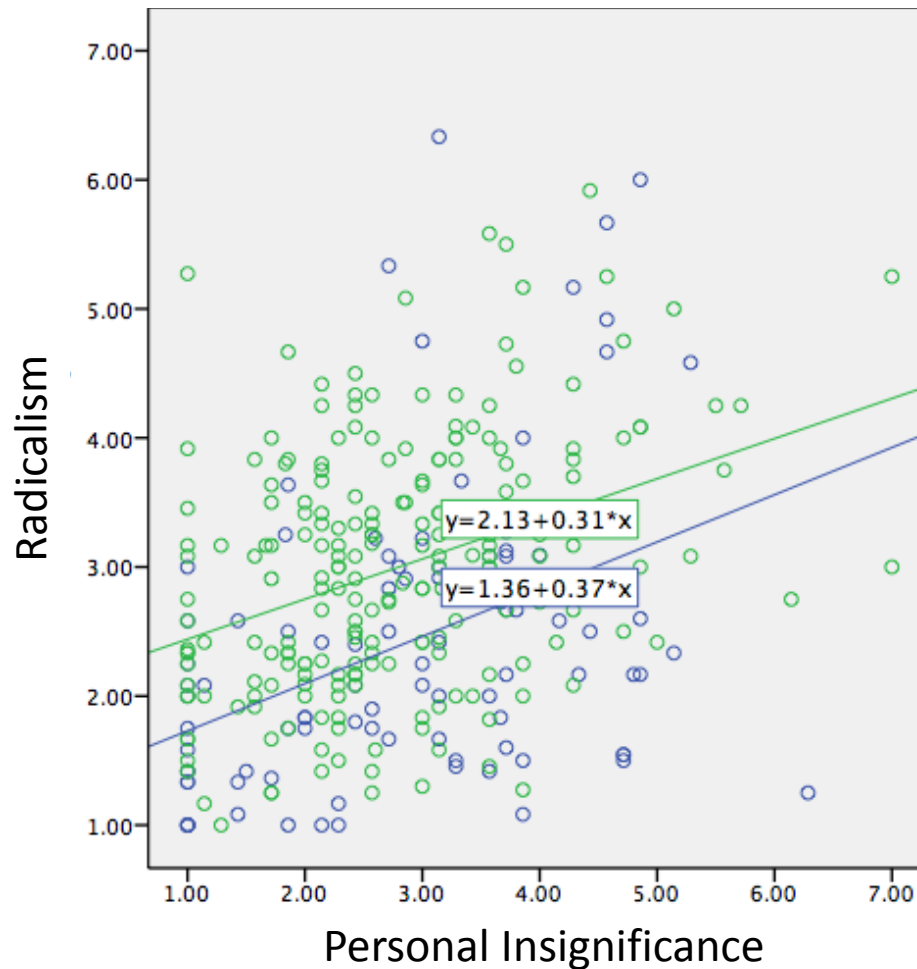
Positivity after reintegration

(Support government, positive relations with Sinhalese)



The role of personal significance

(Personal / Tamil / caste humiliation or discrimination)



Blue = Former LTTE
 Green = Community

Bottom Line

- Overall, rehabilitation appears successful
 - Most were beneficiaries of full treatment
 - After reintegration, former LTTE are comparable or less extreme than their community counterparts
- Regional differences suggest the Eastern districts may be at greater risk of future radicalization
- Greater radicalism might stem from experiences of humiliation that breed self-condemnation and insignificance

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