

# Exploring the Continuum of Lethality: Militant Islamists' Targeting Preferences in Europe

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## Abstract

*This article provides an in-depth analysis of the targeting preferences of militant Islamists operating in Western Europe. In addition to target types, this study has a particular focus on the degree of target discrimination, casualty focus, and soft versus hard target preferences. These features of intent constitute a warning triangle with regard to the lethality potential of terrorist acts. There is also a lone actor vs. group perspective included, as well as a comparative glance between the targeting preference of militant Islamists and actors from other ideological directions in Europe. The main findings are that a soft target focus is dominant and increasing, while particularly well-protected targets are almost totally avoided. There is a substantial mass casualty focus, but only few attacks lead to such results. Indiscriminate vs. discriminate targeting comes out evenly. The jihadists are more ambitious regarding targets in early planning stages, compared to later in the process. Furthermore, there are higher ambitions in launched attacks physically carried out by more than one perpetrator. Both lone actors and groups prefer soft targets, but individuals acting alone are more likely to act discriminately and with a limited casualty focus. Attacks directed against name-specific individuals are mostly a one-perpetrator phenomenon. Jihadists are generally conservative with regard to target preferences, attack approach and weaponry. There is no evidence supporting suggestions that there are modus operandi-related differences between AQ and ISIS-linked perpetrators. Shifts in trends seem rather to be influenced by practical and contextual factors.*

**Keywords:** Militant Islamists, targets, modus operandi, tactics, response to terrorism

## Introduction

As soon as the dust settles after a terrorist attack a basic question for security authorities is why the target in question was chosen. Even more pressing is the question: will other attacks follow, and if so, who or what are the most likely next targets? In addition, security professionals will analyse details of every attack, in order to enhance the protection of other potential targets. Finally, knowledge on modus operandi-related issues provide the best foundation for selecting scenarios to consider - for example, as part of threat assessments related to protective efforts, as well as for education and training programmes.

Modus operandi (MO) has traditionally not been given too much attention within terrorism research. Three decades ago Max Taylor noted how the focus of terrorism research had been on *involvement* issues, and not *event* issues.[1] Other senior researchers have since repeated the call for more research on operational issues.[2] Indeed, the focus on MO has increased in recent years, including works relevant for targeting.[3][4] Still, more research on MO issues is needed - not least because there are quite different activities involved.

Targeting research, like other operational issues, is challenging due to the need for detailed information. The amount and quality of the information available determine the output. Large datasets with basic information are useful for quantitative research on a meta or macro level, but may offer limited insight into operational issues per se. More detailed datasets, where the situational contexts can be derived, allow closer examination of operational issues and targeting preferences, which this article aims to do.

More specifically, this article examines the targeting preferences of militant Islamists operating in Western Europe from 1994 to 2016. Furthermore, this article focuses on three features commonly attributed to militant Islamists - that they target indiscriminately, have a mass casualty focus and prefer soft targets. Obviously they commit such acts, but to what degree? This is important to clarify since these three features of intent constitute a warning triangle regarding the lethality potential of terrorist acts, which is meaningful from the perspective of security within a society. These features are also very much illustrative of why militant Islamists represent a threat for European authorities that is more complex than the threat posed by terrorists during the 1970s and 1980s.[5] This seems to be somewhat overlooked when comparing different periods of time.[6] It will also be argued here that a focus on casualty levels, and on soft versus hard targets, are issues that are rarely thoroughly defined and/or measured - even in works focusing on operational aspects.[7] Also, claims that terrorists are more ambitious in early stages of planning than later are rarely documented. In addition to the issues mentioned above, this article offers perspectives on the issue of lone actor vs. group actors, a comparison to actors from other ideological directions within Europe, and some brief recommendations based on the findings from this study.

### ***Approach and Dataset***

Research on targeting-related issues is complex. Ideological, moral, strategic and tactical factors are all influencing terrorist decision-making, in addition to external factors beyond the control of the perpetrators. [8] Moreover, interactions between intervening variables make targeting processes profoundly dynamic and rarely straightforward.[9] Analysing the situational context is also essential. Here a customized variation of the triangle introduced by Cohen & Felson has been adopted; it distinguishes between offender, target and situational circumstances.[10] A structured approach, however, cannot necessarily *explain* target preferences and interlinked features. Therefore, process tracing has also been applied.[11]

The dataset utilised here consists of 246 registered plots and initiated attacks in Europe from 1994 to the end of 2016.[12] By confining the focus to one region with similar societal conditions, the relevance of the research for policymakers and practitioners is enhanced. As for other inclusion criteria, actors must adhere to the Sunni-based jihad ideology, for example as promoted by GIA, GSCP, al-Qaida and ISIS. There must be strong indications of a planned attack, or an attack must have been initiated. A plot is defined as a planned attack that has not yet been initiated. In order to be registered as an initiated attack, the act must have been set in motion against a selected target.

Information available on individual plots and attacks are rated as *strong* or *vague*. Strong documentation means there are several, well-documented indications that an attack has been planned or initiated. Vague documentation means that there are concrete indications that an attack is planned, but the indications are fewer and not as precise as in the strong cases. When measuring specific parameters or making comparisons in this article, only plots with strong documentation and attacks have been included. Each attack is assessed individually, which for example means that Muhammed Merah is coded in the data as being responsible for three incidents.[13] This is a prerequisite for a functional dataset on targeting, since every attack is unique. Each item has a case ID and, in addition to basic details, numerous MO and targeting related features have been registered. Nine target-type categories are established in accordance with observed practices of militant Islamists operating in Europe: *authorities, diplomatic missions, military, law enforcement, public area, transport, public debate, religious institutions* and *others*. [14] Regarding incidents involving transport, subcategories were established due to the different nature of the targets within this category. It also makes the analysis more useful for the different branches within the transport sector.

This research is built on open sources; the majority of information comes from mass media sources, legal documents and official inquiry reports.[15] Furthermore, a number of articles, reports and books on jihadists in Europe have provided detailed information in some cases.[16] Studies on militant Islamist ideological, strategic and operational texts have provided important insights about the jihadists' rationale.[17] Finally, online publications from militant Islamists - like al-Qaida's *Inspire* and ISIS' *Dabiq* - have been examined, although propaganda often differs from actions taken.[18]

One must be realistic with regard to what can be retrieved from open sources. MO research requires detailed information, and the security services have richer data materials than academic researchers in this particular area. This is a main reason for focusing on targeting *preferences*, rather than detailed decision-making processes in this project. The strength of this research lies in the structured theoretical and methodological approach applied. By casting the net wide from the start, it has been possible to locate more incidents than a narrow approach would have achieved. This has led to a more complete picture with regard to the extent of militant Islamists' actions in Western Europe for the 23 years under consideration in this study, as well as strengthened the potential for valid inferences. It is an advantage that the author has developed the dataset himself, since close familiarity with the research material ensures consistency with definitions and data inclusion. It is possible, however, that some cases have escaped his attention. Media reports can be overlooked and the security services may thwart attacks without publicly acknowledging them.[19] New information also sometimes sheds new light on old incidents.[20] It is, however, unlikely that additional information on a few missed cases will alter the main conclusions of this research significantly. Geographical boundaries and customized coding will make direct comparison with other projects challenging, but the same factors increase the relevance of this research for practitioners and policy-makers within the area covered.

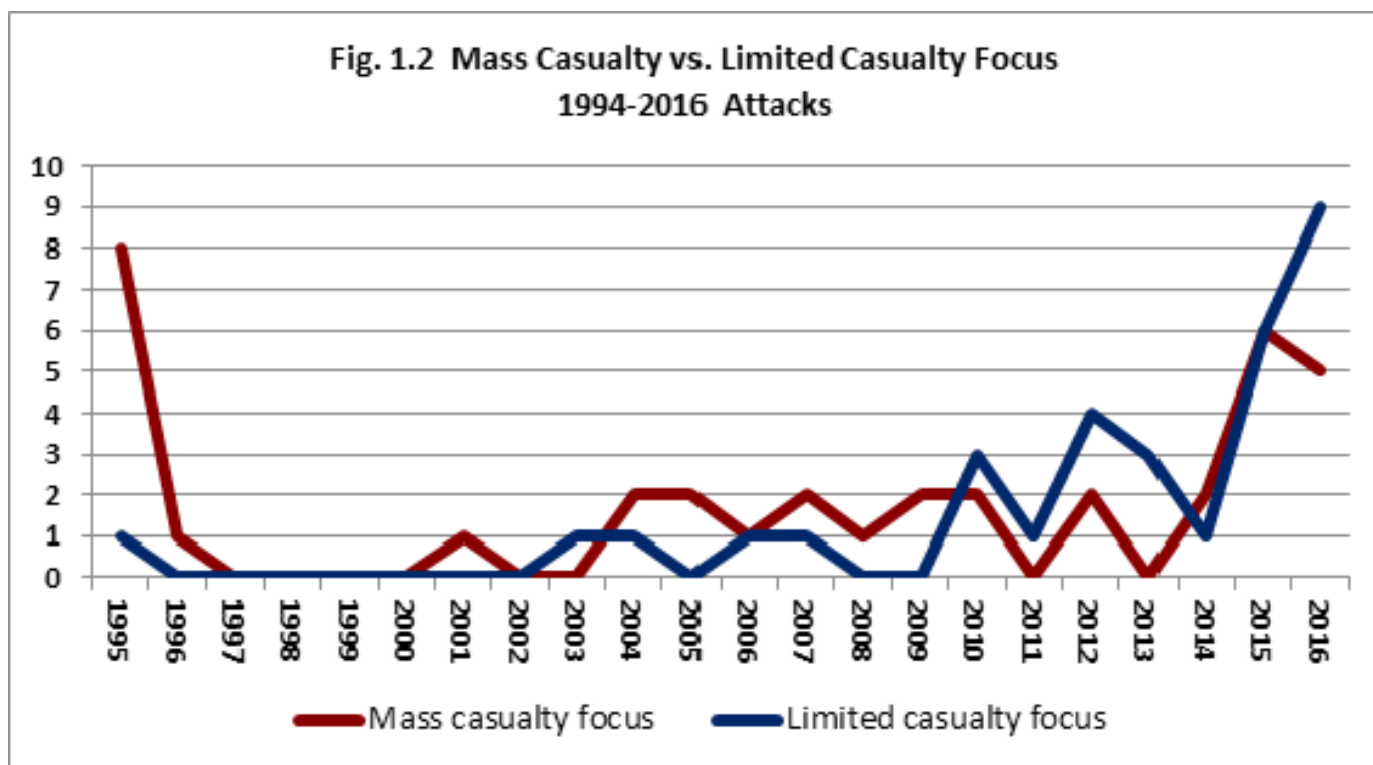
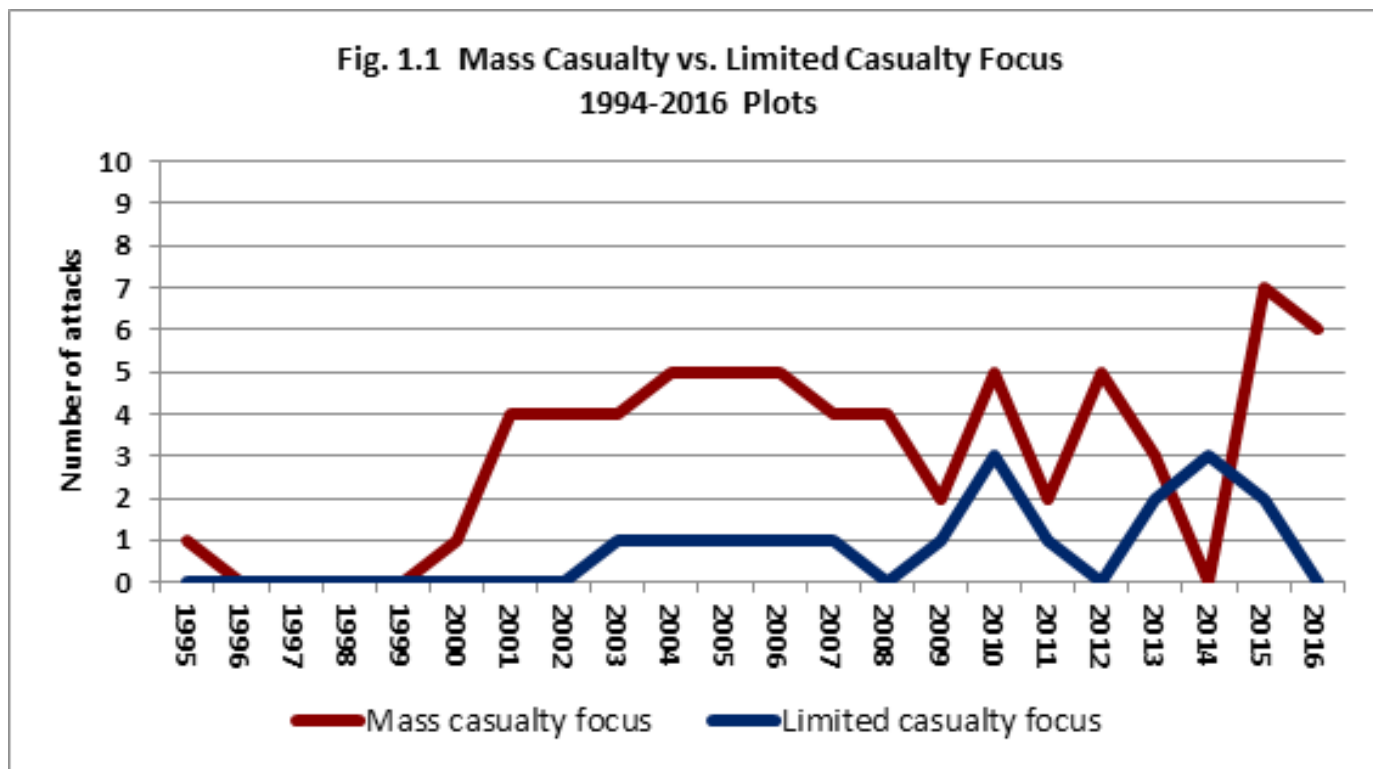
### ***Expressed Intention of Producing Mass Casualties not Reflected in the Results Achieved***

The first topic addressed in this study involves the three issues of intent - the casualty focus, the hard or soft target preferences and the degree of discrimination. To begin with, it should be acknowledged that the number of casualties does matter. For authorities and the public, the number of fatalities says something about the severity of an attack, and for the terrorists it is a parameter for success. It also has considerable impact on the relationships between media coverage, public fear and political pressure on authorities to act more decisively. [21] However, mass casualty attacks may also backfire against terrorists in different ways.[22] A common definition of a mass casualty incident is that it involves a number of casualties, calling for an extraordinary effort from the emergency services.[23] Most analysts avoid setting a fixed number of fatalities in order to define a mass casualty incident, since local emergency capacities vary, but contextual information will most often clarify whether the casualty potential is low (e.g. five or fewer victims), or higher. In the latter case emergency capacities are likely to be activated regardless of location.

In 194 cases it has been possible to assess the casualty focus. 47 plots have vague documentation and are excluded from further analysis. According to the 77 plots with strong documentation, there is a mass casualty focus in 87.0% of the plots (see Figure 1.1), and a limited casualty focus in 22.1% (in seven plots both alternatives are present). In contrast, for the 70 launched attacks the mass casualty focus is down to 54.3%, while a limited casualty focus exists in 45.7% of the attacks (see Figure 1.2).

A mass casualty focus dominated in plots for almost the entire period. As for launched attacks, the mass casualty focus dominated significantly in the 1990s due to the consistent MO applied by GIA-linked groups. Meanwhile, a limited casualty focus increased from 2010 onwards. The mass casualty focus among militant Islamists is substantial, and it is rarely controversial within their own ranks. Some perpetrators conduct both limited and mass casualty attacks, like Muhammed Merah in 2012 and Amedy Coulibaly in 2015 - illustrating that tactical and practical factors (and not just moral reflections) influence target decision-making.[24] Regarding the divergence of casualty focus between plots and attacks, the explanation can be found in a few intertwined factors. Groups and larger networks, which dominated the scene until around 2010, seem more ambitious than lone actors. Intragroup dynamics and a perception of high capacity can initially trigger ambitious plans, which are reduced during the planning process. The increased limited casualty focus from 2010 corresponds with more attacks conducted by one perpetrator for the same period of time. The four relevant attacks in 2010 were Mohammed Geel's attack on cartoonist Kurt Westergaard in Denmark, Roshonara Choudry's attack on Member of Parliament Stephen Timms in East London, Loris Doukaiev's attempt to send a parcel bomb to the newspaper Jyllands-Posten in Copenhagen, and the Stockholm suicide bomb attack by Taimour Abdulwahab al-Abdaly.[25] Also important to remember in this context is that groups run a higher

risk of being detected than lone actors.[26]



This analysis found that 26 of the 70 launched attacks conducted in Western Europe from 1994 to 2016 caused fatalities. In total 555 people were killed, leading to an average of 7.9 fatalities per attack. Eight attacks caused 523 deaths (94.2%), and seven of these were connected to established networks.[27] The eighteen remaining attacks that claimed lives caused four or fewer fatalities. Accordingly, most of these terrorist attacks do not lead to casualties, few attacks cause mass casualties, and those that do are normally the work of established networks. Less connected, ‘inspired’ jihadists rarely achieved grave results. It has been a negative development for the last few years with more attacks, however, and five of eight mass casualty attacks in the

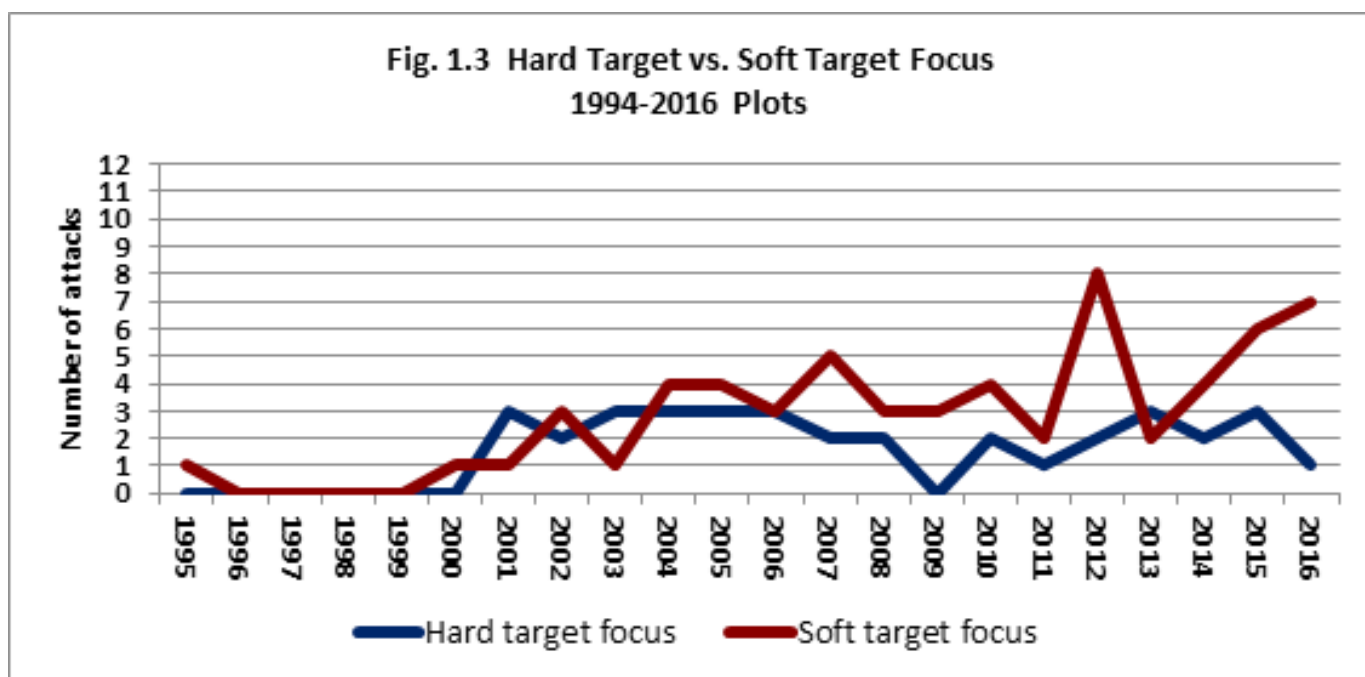
dataset used here took place between January 2015 and December 2016. Several serious attacks have followed in 2017.

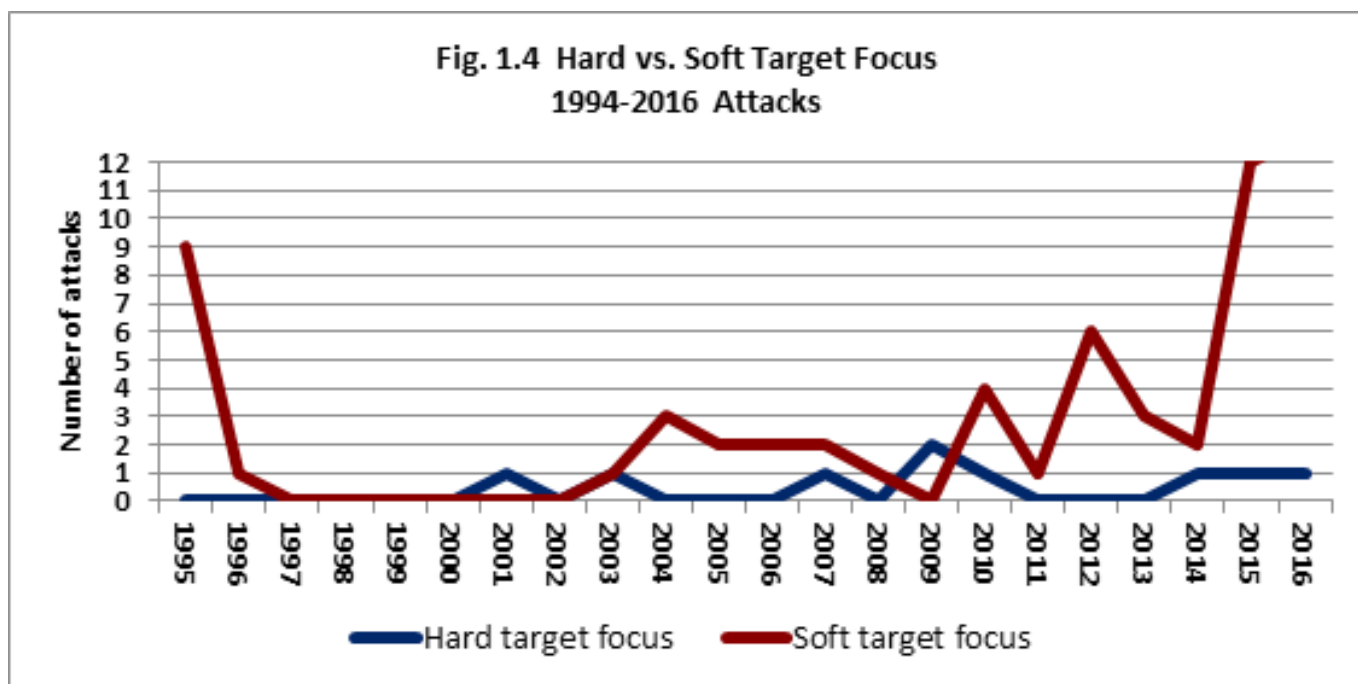
Weapon type is highly relevant for determining the casualty factor. Bladed weapons (e.g., knife, axe, etc.) and vehicles have increasingly supplemented explosives and firearms in attacks for the last several years. In the eight attacks causing mass casualties, explosives played an essential part in five of them: the 1995 St. Michel bombing, the 2004 Madrid bombings, the 2005 7/7 bombings, the 2015 November attacks in Paris (combined with assault rifles), and the 2016 Brussels bombings. The highly lethal potential of military assault rifles in particular has been demonstrated on several occasions. Examples include the 2014 Jewish Museum attack in Brussels, the 2015 Charlie Hebdo incident in Paris and the 2015 November attacks, also in Paris. The 2015 Sousse massacre in Tunisia, where one man killed 38 people, fully illustrates the devastating effect that assault rifles can produce.[28] As illustrated in Nice and Berlin in 2016, as well as in Stockholm and Barcelona in 2017, the lethal potential of large vehicles overrunning pedestrians has proven significant.

**Increasing Focus on Soft Targets: Hardened Targets are Avoided**

Terrorists often consider the basic factor of how well a potential target is protected, and the level of protection they observe may range from unprotected to very well-protected targets. The latter are considered *hardened targets*, and typically include state leaders, government buildings, military bases and commercial airlines. Targets with no or inadequate protection are referred to as *soft targets*, and can include unarmed civilians (as well as police and military personnel patrolling a street, in contrast to clear-cut distinctions in some reports). [29] Importantly, the toolbox for preventive measures is extensive, but *target hardening* does not automatically lead to a hard target status.[30] A target can switch between being a hard or a soft target, for example, when additional protection officers are provided on special occasions.[31]

In 205 of the 246 cases it is possible to say something about hard or soft target focus. 53 plots have vague documentation and are excluded from further analysis. For the 82 plots with strong documentation, there is a hard target focus in 42.7% of them (see Figure 1.3), and a soft target focus in 75.6% (in 15 plots both alternatives were present). For the 70 attacks the hard target focus is down to 14.3% (see Figure 1.4), while there is a soft target focus in 88.6% (in two cases both alternatives are present).



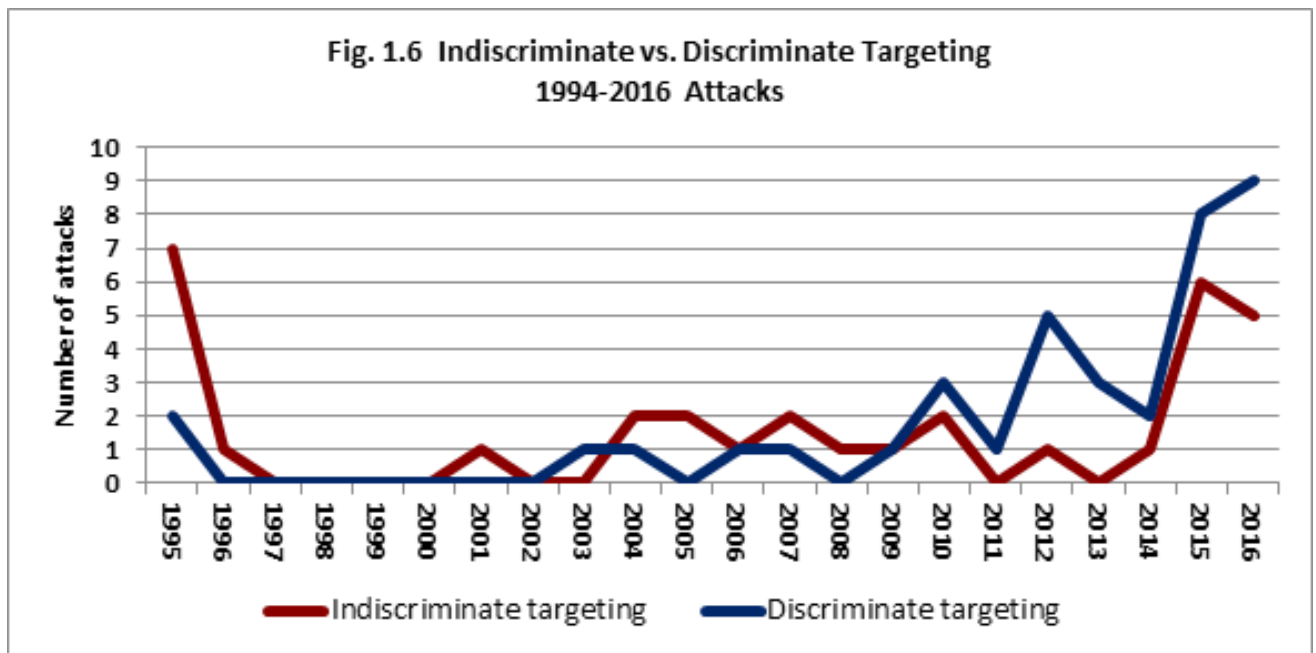
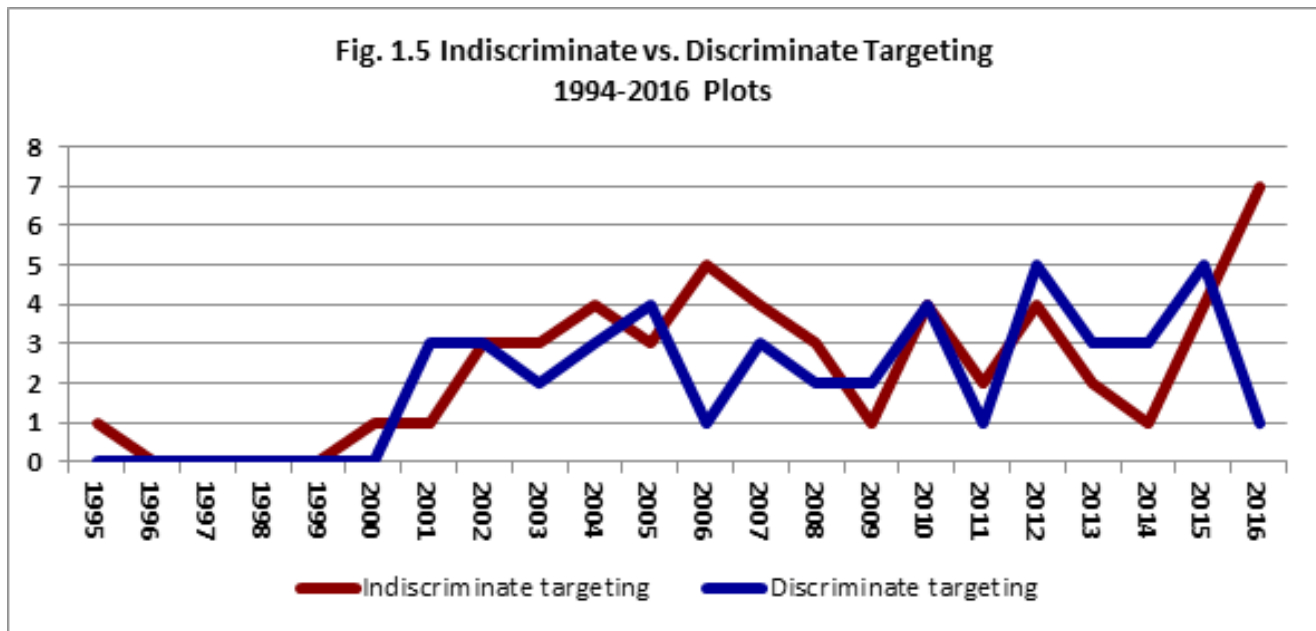


The soft target dominance in plots is evident, but it is even stronger for actual attacks – in other words, the frequency of attacks against hard targets has decreased. The likely explanation is the combination of robust security at hard targets, and that militant Islamists find it legitimate to attack random civilians. By avoiding hard targets the odds for operational success and escape increases for the perpetrators.

As for the few hard target incidents in our database, it is interesting to note that no attacks involved the hardest targets, like state leaders or highly symbolic state buildings.[32] These are far better protected today than they were just two decades ago.[33] As such, hard targets have become harder, but soft targets are just as soft as they have always been. Accordingly, extensive protection does have a deterrent effect, given the fact that operational success is crucial for terrorists.[34] Commercial airliners are the most consistent hard target with only four recorded attacks.[35] Interestingly, it is possible to observe a shift of focus from hard to soft targets within the law enforcement and military target type categories. From 2000 to 2010 most plots and attacks within these categories were focusing on the headquarters of security and intelligence services or military bases respectively, which normally will have a hard target status. Since Arid Uka’s attack on U.S. servicemen in 2011, a clear majority of plots and attacks have targeted military personnel in a public area, or near the entrance of military premises – that is, in situations where they are momentarily most vulnerable. Likewise, after Bertrand N.’s knife attack against police officers near Tours in 2014, plots and attacks against the law enforcement sector have (with one possible exception) been directed against police on the streets, near or in the entrance of police stations, and in one case at their home.[36] In general, it can be said that police personnel in public areas represent soft targets for attackers, who have the element of surprise on their side and are acting at close range.

**Degree of Discrimination**

The discriminate factor is strongly linked to the terrorists’ rationality and ethical framework.[37] If they find it legitimate to stage random attacks, the range of targets is almost unlimited. *Indiscriminate targeting* refers to attacking random civilians, while if there is some type of constraint in the selection of target, it is *discriminate targeting*. There are 207 cases where degree of target discrimination is specified. 55 plots have vague documentation and are here excluded from further analysis. For the 82 plots where strong documentation is available, there is an indiscriminate focus in 64.6% of them (see Figure 1.5), and a discriminate focus in 54.9% (in 16 cases both alternatives are present). For attacks, the indiscriminate focus is down to 48.6% (see Figure 1.6), while there is a discriminate focus in 54.3% (in two cases both alternatives are present).



Again, the mid-1990s was marked by the Algerian GIA network’s indiscriminate attacks in France, but apart from that the frequency of indiscriminate attacks is fairly low and even throughout the 2000s. The difference between plots and attacks seen in more recent years is mainly due to the fact that a number of lone actors have slipped under the radar and launched discriminate attacks against military and police personnel. On the whole, there is nevertheless a considerable indiscriminate focus noticeable among militant Islamists. Occasionally, the discrimination issue has become a topic for internal discussions among perpetrators.[38]

Turning to the discriminate attacks, several types of target groups in European societies have received attention from the jihadists. As previously mentioned, police and military personnel has often been a focus. Jews, Christians and media institutions are also among the frequent targets. Militant Islamists have also launched eight attacks against name-specific individuals. Usually these victims have a trophy target status, as they are in the public eye and the perpetrator(s) will receive a high level of recognition for murdering such persons. Individuals alleged to have insulted the prophet as well as participants in the public debate have been particularly targeted.[39] So, although freedom of speech is guaranteed in all liberal democracies, those individuals who draw public attention to themselves by their words or actions may run a higher personal risk.[40]

**Target Type Categories**

Turning to specific target type categories, the starting point for analysis is the 80 plots with strong documentation where targets have been identified and the 70 attacks that were actually conducted during the period from 1994 to 2016. A number of plots and a few attacks have involved several target type categories.

Target type categories 1994-2016	Plots (n=80)	Attacks (n=70)
Authorities	13	2
Law enforcement	11	9
Military	17	8
Diplomatic missions	9	2
Public area	30	21
Transport	34	21
Public debate	9	7
Religious institutions	12	5
Others	6	2

As this table illustrates, civilians in a public area and on public transport are the most common target types when it comes to plots, and these two categories are also targeted in more than 50% of the launched attacks - equally divided between them. Regarding transport, the attacks have primarily been directed against the aviation sector and railway trains, except for the bus attacks in the 2005 7/7 and 21/7 cases in London. Looking closer to the threats against aviation, there are four cases involving in-flight incidents and two involving airports. There are 13 incidents involving rail transport, with attacks against underground services and commuter trains dominating. It should be noted that initial plans of targeting the aviation sector are not often followed up on in practice, in comparison to plots involving rail transport.

Terrorist interest for targeting top politicians and highly symbolic buildings is evident in several plots, but not reflected in actually conducted attacks. This must be due to the high level of protection dedicated to VIPs and buildings of this type. However, as has been made clear by the stabbing of MP Timms in 2010 and other cases, politicians a step below the top level are more vulnerable for attacks – especially when out of office. Diplomatic missions from countries like the U.S. and Israel are well protected, therefore initial interest in targeting them may often be discarded in favour of softer targets. Citizens, servicemen and companies from the U.S. and Israel seem to serve as substitution targets to a certain degree, and are addressed later in this article.

Law enforcement and military personnel are attractive targets, as they are symbolic and representatives of the state, and also are often direct parties of the conflict. As described above when discussing hard and soft targeting, we have observed a shift of focus away from the HQs of security services and military bases, to police and military personnel on the streets or near police station and military base entrances. Although somewhat hypothetical, it is possible that Arid Uka’s killing of two U.S. servicemen in 2011, as well as the 2013 Lee Rigby murder, inspired others to use the same attack approach against police and military personnel.

Attacks in the public debate category have primarily been directed against individuals and institutions that have, according to the Islamists, offended the Prophet or promoted blasphemy. Most of the cases have been related to the 2005 Muhammed cartoons and Lars Vilks’ drawings.[41] It is interesting to note that militant Islamists have plotted or carried out more attacks against public debate participants and media individuals than politicians. In fact, this is why former Danish police intelligence and security director general Scharf at one time called for a critical review regarding the use of close protection capacities.[42]

As in the case of public debate participants, the targeting of religious leaders and institutions has mainly been discriminate, like the plots against the San Petronio Basilica in Italy, which has a controversial fresco inside. [43] The churches of interest to Sid Ahmed Ghlam in Villejuif in Paris in 2015, as well as the church attacked



by two men in Normandy (France) in 2016, may have been chosen more at random, and here the perpetrators' local affiliation may have been a factor.[44] Interest in attacking critical infrastructure targets has been low. This includes nuclear facilities, although an interest displayed in a few cases worldwide should be noted.[45]

### ***Particularly Exposed: American, Israeli and Jewish Targets***

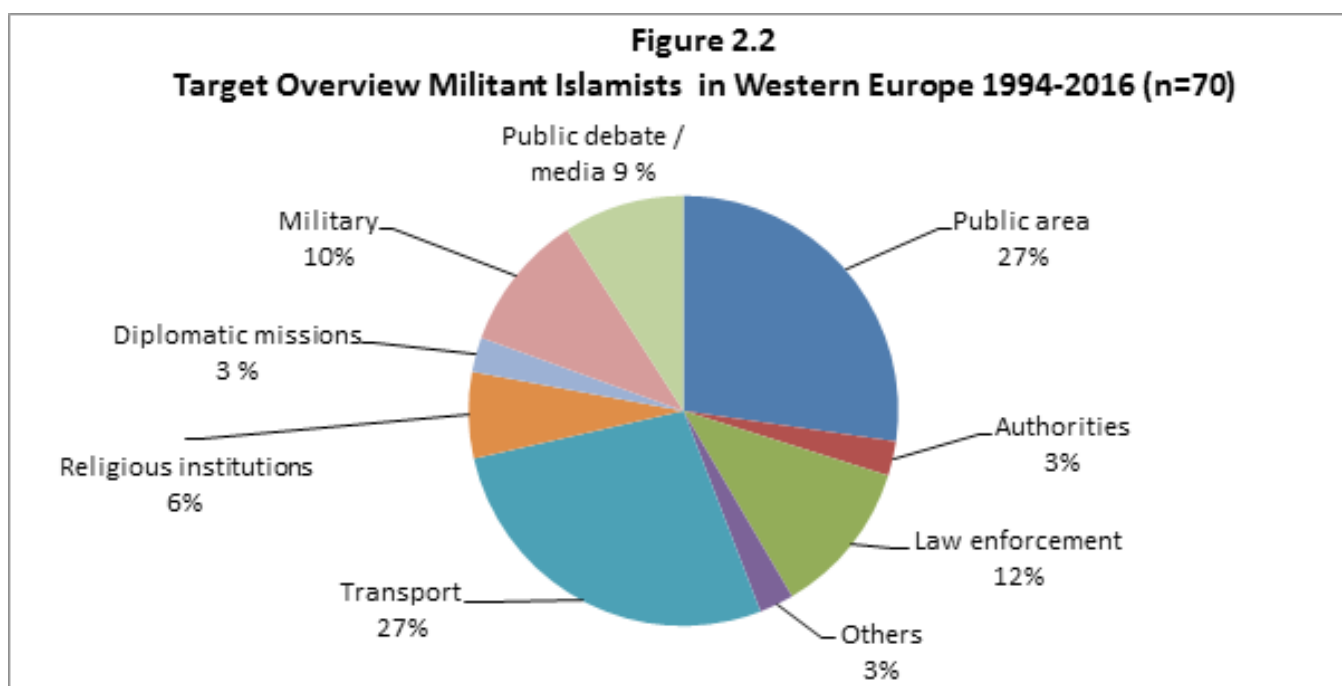
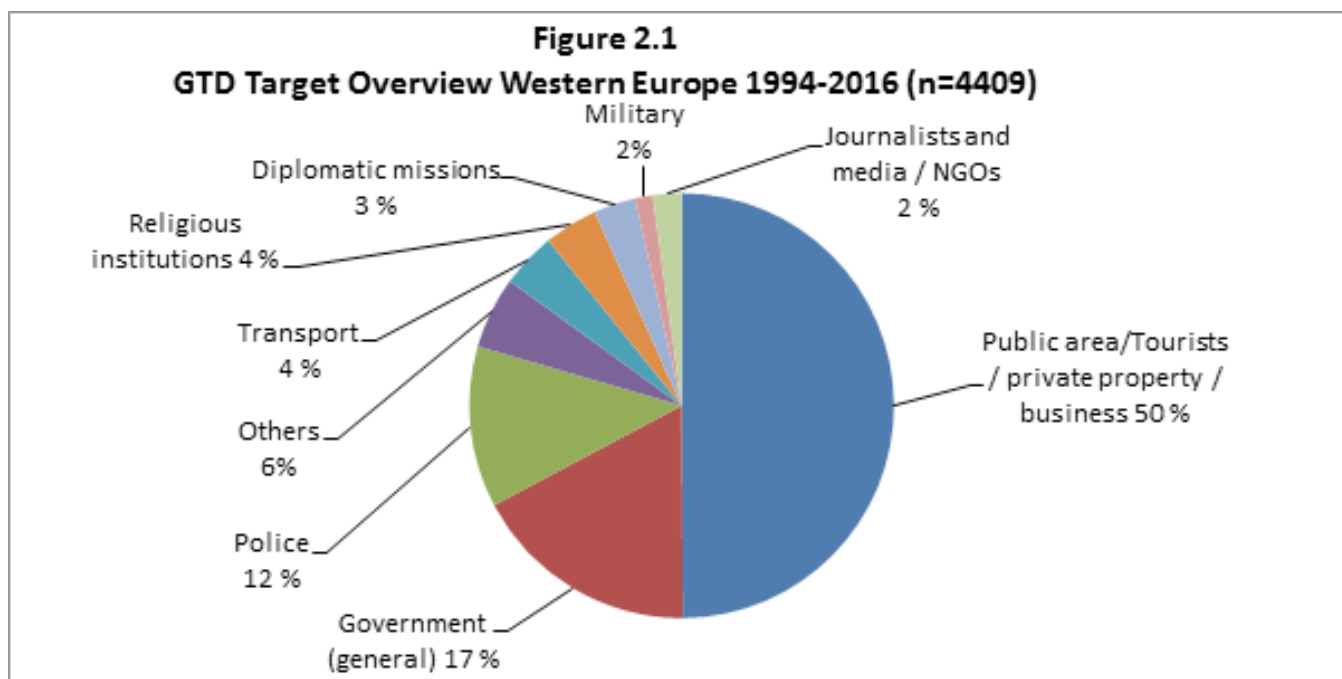
A target issue of interest not covered above is that the United States, Israel and Jews have been given substantial attention in the jihadists' discourse and rhetoric, since the early days of the jihad movement.[46] Has this, however, been reflected in the actions taken? The total dataset shows that there have been U.S.-linked targets in 34 of 209 cases where targets could be identified—more specifically, in 9 conducted attacks and 25 plots. The fact that 12.9% of the 70 launched attacks have targeted U.S. interests or citizens, combined with the number of plots where such interest has been identified, shows that statements reflecting anti-American verbal aggression have been followed by action. Launched attacks against trans-Atlantic flights are on top of the list with three attacks, followed by two attacks against U.S. embassies carried out by low-capacity actors. Casualties in attacks where U.S. citizens have been deliberately targeted are found in the 2011 Arid Uka attack against military personnel in transit at Frankfurt airport, and the massacre at the Bataclan concert venue in the 2015 November Paris attacks, where the American band *Eagles of Death Metal* was performing on stage.[47]

Regarding Israel and Jews, militant Islamists and Hezbollah represent a current global threat to them - as seen in attacks that occurred in South America, Europe and Asia.[48] The total dataset shows that there have been Israeli or Jewish targets in 26 cases, more specifically in 19 plots and 7 attacks. Additionally, it has been documented that the 2004 Madrid bombers and members of the Cannes-Torcy network planned follow-up attacks against Jewish targets.[49] 10% of the 70 conducted attacks were directed against a variety of Jewish targets: two schools, two kosher shops, a museum, a synagogue, and a rabbi in a public area. Three attacks caused four victims each: the 2012 Merah attack against a Jewish school, the 2014 Jewish museum attack in Brussels and the 2015 Kosher shop siege in Paris. No attacks have been launched against Israeli diplomatic missions, which have been extensively protected following a Palestinian terrorist attack against the Israeli embassy in Bangkok in 1972.[50]

### ***Militant Islamists' Targeting Preferences in Comparative Perspective***

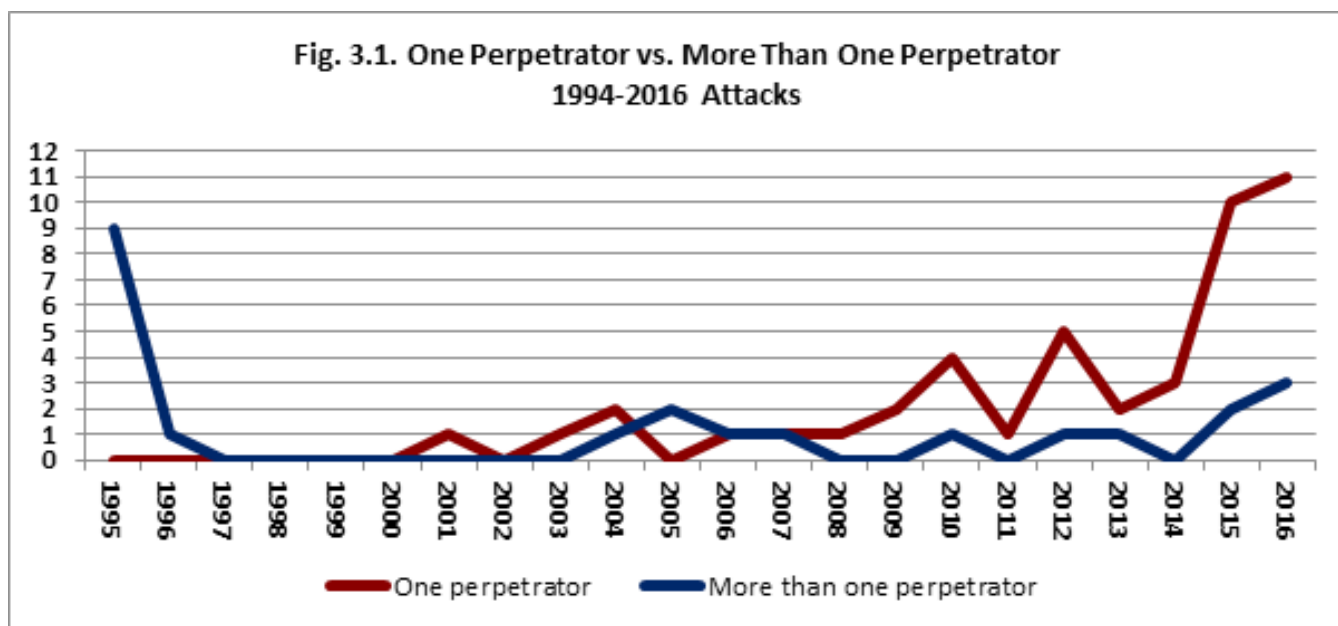
How do the targeting practices of militant Islamists in Western Europe compare to other ideological types of terrorists? Although coding issues do not allow strict comparisons, indications can be found by making a comparison with all ideological types of terrorists in Europe, using the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) maintained by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), University of Maryland. The GTD has registered 4,409 terrorist incidents (excluding ambiguous cases) in Western Europe from 1994 to 2016.[51]

Figures 1.7 and 1.8 (below) illustrate that the general public is very much exposed to terrorist activity in general, since the categories "public area" and "transport" most often involve civilians who have no part in the conflict. However, it is important to note that the GTD includes a number of incidents against private property, which is not typical for militant Islamists in Europe. It is therefore reasonable to argue that compared to terrorists in other ideological categories, jihadists target people in public areas more actively. Islamist terrorists also have a greater focus on the transport sector. As with attacks in public areas, this may be related to the mass casualty focus, the intention of spreading fear among the public as well as the societal disruptive effect. The jihadists' interest for targeting law enforcement is similar to that of terrorists in other ideological categories, but they give comparatively more attention to military targets. Furthermore, terrorists from other ideological directions have initiated more attacks against authorities. However, while the militant Islamists' interest is largely directed against well-protected top-level targets, cases in the GTD also include incidents directed against low-level and local authorities.



**Single Perpetrator Versus Duos and Groups**

The issues addressed above are also of relevance for the lone actor vs. group actors debate, although it is often quite challenging to distinguish between these two actor categories. In general, most lone actors have some sort of contact with other extremists.[52] Some of the individuals conducting lone actor attacks have in fact been known to have a clear extremist milieu background, yet they have seemingly acted on their own initiative without involving others. One example is the Dutch-Moroccan Mohammad Bouyeri, who killed filmmaker Theo van Gogh in 2004. He had ties with the Hofstad network, but apparently planned and launched the attack without involving others.[53] Hence, there is always a substantial uncertainty regarding group and network participation when determining who actually may be involved in an attack. For this reason plots are left out of the discussion here, and a simple distinction is made between attacks physically carried out by one perpetrator and attacks executed by several perpetrators. In total 45 of 70 launched attacks have been carried out by a single individual (see Figure 1.9).



The table below illustrates findings related to hard or soft target preference, casualty focus, and indiscriminate or discriminate targeting attacks only – again, for the period 1994-2016.[54]

Attacks 1994-2016 (n=70)	Hard target*	Soft target	Mass casualty	Limited casualty	Indiscriminate targeting*	Discriminate targeting
One perp. (n=45)	17.8%	86.7%	37.8%	62.2%	35.6%	68.9%
Several perp. (n=25)	8.0%	92.0%	84.0%	16.0%	80.0%	20.0%

\* Two attacks conducted by one perpetrator included both alternatives.

Both categories are overwhelmingly focusing on soft targets for reasons explained earlier. However, there are differences when it comes to casualty focus and discrimination. Individuals conducting attacks alone have a mass casualty focus in about one third of the cases, while several perpetrators acting together have a mass casualty focus in more than four out of five cases. Regarding discrimination, duos and groups have targeted indiscriminately in four of five cases. This supports the assumption that groups are more ambitious than lone actors regarding a high damage result - both in planning processes and in launched attacks. Those conducting attacks alone are more often than not prioritising discriminate attacks. Interestingly, seven of the eight attacks targeting a name-specific individual were executed by one perpetrator only. As for the two most sophisticated attacks launched by one perpetrator - the in-flight attacks by the shoe bomber Reid in 2001 and by the Nigerian millionaire’s son Abdulmutallab in 2009 - these were centrally led. Regarding type of weapons utilised, the overview for the period 1994-2016 is as follows:

Attacks 1994-2016 (n=70)	Explosives	Firearms	Blades	Vehicle	Others
One perpetrator (n=45)	10	13	18	5	3*
Several perpetrators (n=25)	20	4	2	2	3**

\* Three cases involved arson, toxic letters and hand grenades respectively.

\*\* Two cases involved hand grenades

The single perpetrator category dominates the firearms category, while groups are more often behind attacks with explosives. As for bladed weapons use, the single perpetrator category is dominant. The same applies for vehicles, where the exceptions are the duos attacking Glasgow airport in 2007 and Lee Rigby in 2013. The attacks involving advanced or high-effective (military-grade) explosives, or assault rifles, were all conducted by individuals with links to criminal or Islamist networks.[55] For lone actors without such connections the ‘simple means’ approach prevailed, as it is not easy to acquire weapons illegally in most West European coun-

tries without risking detection through leakage or entrapment.[56]

### ***Jihadists Appear Conventional in their Targeting and Attack Approaches***

In general, militant Islamists in Western Europe are conventional and imitative when it comes to their targeting preferences – in contrast to suggestions implying that ISIS has shown innovation in this area.[57] The vast majority of targets can be categorized into a limited number of typical target types, and as such the main challenge facing counter-terrorism planners is more the broad range of potential targets the militant Islamists can choose from. Having established that the odd targets are few and far between, elaborating on what is not often struck becomes an issue. One example is that attacks directed against random private homes have been more or less absent, in contrast to what is seen in some other regions of the world.[58] The jihadists are also conservative with regard to attack approaches and weaponry. They can occasionally be creative, but are more adaptive than innovative, although a high level of sophistication and skills have been shown in a few cases - like the 2006 Liquid plot and the 2010 Cargo planes plot. The most advanced plots and attacks have unsurprisingly been linked to established, central terrorist networks.

This study did not have at its disposal information that would enable detailed tracking of the decision-making processes in each case. Nevertheless it appears that those executing the attacks will normally make the final target selection, for the simple reason that most attacks are not centrally organized.[59] Furthermore, it has in some cases been noted how central figures or the core leadership have suggested targeting alternatives, but have still given the perpetrators a say in the final decision regarding target selection.[60] In some cases, target proposals from the core leadership have also been rejected by the perpetrators.[61] From an operational point of view, leaving the target selection to those on the front line has advantages. They will often have local knowledge, be able to blend into the surrounding, and are in a better position to map potential targets that carry a limited risk of detection during the preparatory stage.

MO and targeting-related differences between AQ and ISIS operatives in Europe are hard to identify. Shifts in modus operandi trends appear to be influenced more by contextual and operational factors than by network affiliation. It is true that ISIS has a proven ability to launch complex mass casualty attacks, but so had AQ in the past. The one attack that arguably has had ISIS characteristics - since beheadings became an ISIS signature from 2014 onwards - was the previously mentioned 2015 Lyon Air Products factory incident, where the perpetrator beheaded his boss. That said, intentional beheadings were also observed in several jihadists cases in Europe before then, e.g., in the 2004 attack against Theo van Gogh, the 2007 Parviz Khan plot and the 2013 Lee Rigby murder.[62]

### ***What are the Lessons Learned?***

Based on the findings of this research into targeting, some brief recommendations can be made. First of all, it has been noted that politicians a step below the top level may be the ones most vulnerable for assassination attacks. Since close protection services are a limited resource, behavioural advice from security authorities and less resource demanding protective efforts based on individual threat assessments offer more cost-effective approaches. When it comes to highly symbolic buildings and premises, like parliaments and government institutions, the general absence of attacks indicates that physical protective measures work. This fact should inform considerations about creating security perimeters around other key institutions.[63] When it comes to diplomatic missions from exposed countries like the US and Israel, the substantial security efforts appear to have a deterrent effect, taking into account that there were only two incidents in our dataset.[64] It is also possible that previous failed attempts to enter U.S. and Israeli embassies may have contributed to the deterrent effect. One example is the incident at the Israeli consulate in Berlin in 1999, when three Kurds were killed by Israeli security guards during an attempt by more than 50 Kurds to storm the consulate.[65] When it comes to police and military personnel in public areas, vulnerabilities have been disclosed with regard to attacks from close quarters. Accordingly, proper tactics must be applied when they do patrols or guard duty.

Attacks against crowds in public areas and in transport represent the most challenging issue, since it is not

possible to protect everyone everywhere all the time. Despite this fact, a structured combination of physical security efforts, police response capabilities and rational behaviour from those attacked can make a positive difference in this area. Certain crowded areas will benefit from the use of physical protection in the form of bollards, balustrades and vehicle barriers, in order to counter vehicle attacks and vehicle-borne IED attacks. Moving to police, a rapid response is vital when attacks take place, as acknowledged by French authorities after the 2016 Nice attack.[66] The density of ordinary police coverage of an area is key, since local policemen are most often first on the scene – if they have capacity to counter armed threats. Dedicated mobile response units can be established in major cities, like the armed response vehicles in London.[67] This is a cost-effective alternative, compared to maintaining a permanent police presence in a large number of locations.

On top of this, national counterterrorism units, bomb disposal teams and negotiators possess crucial expertise for some of the most difficult situations. During periods with a high or critical threat level, there will be a lack of sufficient police resources to secure key assets, buildings and premises. Special police units can be established for this, like in Berlin, where a dedicated local unit is securing non-federal assets.[68] It is also important to further develop police-military cooperation, as proven with *Operation Sentinelle* in France.[69] As for the general public, information campaigns from security authorities regarding how to behave when observing suspicious activity or experiencing attacks are potential lifesavers.[70] Such campaigns can also be of value in order to detect lone actors, who have proven difficult to detect in time with an intelligence-driven approach alone.[71] When it comes to lone actors, research has made clear that information about an impending attack is often being disclosed among those closely surrounding the perpetrator (e.g., family and friends).[72]

Recommendations for public areas are also relevant for public transport. As for the aviation sector, airliners are generally well protected. As demonstrated with the Rajib Karim case from 2010, however, the insider threat needs more attention.[73] Some countries have taken intensified efforts to counter this threat, as seen in France.[74] As for airport and railway terminal buildings, they are hotspots that need special attention. Crowds in check-in zones and counters related to some specific airlines linked to certain countries must be given enhanced attention. Finally, the cyber threat, which has worried counter-terrorism officials for years, should not be neglected.[75]

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## Notes

[1] Taylor, Maxwell (1988). *The Terrorist*. London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, p. 183.

[2] Clarke, Ronald V. & Newman, Graeme R. (2006). *Outsmarting the Terrorist*. Westport: Praeger, p. 233; Schmid, Alex. P. & Jongman, Albert J. (2007). Research Desiderata in the Field of Terrorism, in Ranstorp, M. (Ed.) *Mapping terrorism research*. London: Routledge, p. 268; Schmid, A. (Ed.) (2011). *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research*. London: Routledge, p. 468

[3] Books focusing on targeting include Bell, J.B. (1990). *IRA Tactics and Targets*. Dublin: Poolbeg Press; Drake, C.J.M. (1998). *Terrorist Target Selection*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press; Clarke & Newman 2006; Hemmingby, C. & Bjørge, T. (2016). *The Dynamics of a Terrorist Targeting Process: Anders Behring Breivik and the 22 July Attacks in Norway*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. Articles and other publications include Hoffman, Bruce (1993). Terrorist Targeting: Tactics, trends and potentialities, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 5:2, 12-29; Drake, C.J.M. (1996). *The factors which influence the selection of physical targets by terrorist groups*. PhD thesis. University of St Andrews; Nemeth, Stephen C. (2010). *A rationalist explanation of terrorist targeting*. Phd thesis. University of Iowa; Libicki, M.C., Chalk, P. & Sisson, M. (2007). *Exploring terrorist targeting preferences*. Santa Monica: Rand Corporation; Silke, A. (2011). Understanding Terrorist Target Selection, in *Terrorism and the Olympics*, Richards, Fussey & Silke (Eds.). London: Routledge; Wright, A.I. (2013). *Terrorism, Ideology and Target Selection*. Princeton University.

- [4] For terrorist innovation see Dolnik, A. (2007). *Understanding Terrorist Innovation*. London: Routledge; Oppenheimer, Andy (2009). *IRA: The Bombs and the Bullets*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press; Ranstorp, M. & Normark, M. (Eds.) (2015). *Understanding Terrorism Innovation and Learning*. London: Routledge. For symbolism see Matusitz, J. (2015). *Symbolism in Terrorism*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- [5] See Alexander, Y. & Pluchinsky, D. (1992). *Europe's Ted Terrorists*. London: Frank Cass; Aust, S. (2009). *Baader-Meinhof*. New York: Oxford University Press; Calle, S.C. (2006); Clark, Robert. P. (1984). *The Basque Insurgents – ETA, 1952-1980*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press; Dartnell, M.Y. (1995). *Action Directe*. London: Frank Cass & co; English, R. (2003): *Armed Struggle*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Kraushaar, W. (Ed.) (2006). *Die RAF under der linke Terrorismus*. Band I & II. Hamburg: Hamburger edition; McGladdery, Gary (2006). *The Provisional IRA in England*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press; McKittrick, D. Kelters, S., Feeney, B. Thornton, C. & McVea, D. (1999). *Lost Lives*. London: Mainstream publishing; Peters, Butz (2008). *Tödlicher Irrtum*. Frankfurt am Main: Argon Verlag.
- [6] See, for example, Bergen, Peter (2015). The Golden Age of Terrorism. CNN. URL: <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/07/28/opinions/bergen-1970s-terrorism/>; Stanley, Tim (2016). West Europe is safer now than in the 1970s. *The Telegraph*. URL: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/03/25/west-europe-is-safer-now-than-in-the-1970s-and-safer-than-almost/>
- [7] See for example Hesterman, Jennifer (2015). *Soft Target Hardening*. Boca Raton: CRC press; Sommer, D. (2010). *Terrorist Modus Operandi*.
- [8] See for example Drake, 1996, 1998; Hemmingby & Bjørge, 2016.
- [9] Schuurman, B. & Eijkman, Q. (2015). Indicators of terrorist intent and capability: Tools for threat assessment. *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict: Pathways toward terrorism and genocide*. URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17467586.2015.1040426>
- [10] Cohen, L.E. & Felson, M. (1979). Social Change and Crime Rate Trends: A routine activity approach. *American Sociological Review*, 1979, Vol. 44 (August), p. 589.
- [11] George, Alexander L. & Bennett, Andrew (2005): *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs; Andersen, Svein S. (2010): *Case-studier og generalisering*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- [12] This dataset is part of a PhD dissertation project on terrorist target selection issues, conducted at the Norwegian Police University College and University of Stavanger. It will be made fully available at the website of first-mentioned at the time of conclusion. URL: [www.phs.no](http://www.phs.no)
- [13] Muhammed Merah conducted three separate attacks in the Toulouse and Montauban region in March 2012. See *BBC News* (2012). Shootings in Toulouse and Montauban: What we know. URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17428860>
- [14] Category *Public debate* includes media institutions. Category *Others* covers target types rarely selected by militant Islamists in Western Europe, like critical infrastructure and financial targets.
- [15] Examples include House of Commons (2006): *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005*; Intelligence and Security Committee (2009). *Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented? Review of the Intelligence on the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005*; London Assembly (2006). *Report of the 7 July Review Committee*; Intelligence and security committee of Parliament (2014). *Report on the intelligence relating to the murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby*; Assemblée nationale (2016). *Au nom de la commission d'enquête (1) relative aux moyens mis en œuvre par l'État pour lutter contre le terrorisme depuis le 7 janvier 2015*.
- [16] For example Kohlmann, E.F. (2004). *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe*. Oxford: Berg; Lia, B. & Kjøk, Å. (2001). *Islamist Insurgencies, Diasporic Support Networks, and their Host States - The case of the Algerian GIA in Europe 1993-2000*. Oslo: FFI-report 2001/03789; Nesser, P. & Stenersen, A. (2014). The Modus Operandi of Jihadi Terrorists in Europe. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, vol. 8, issue 6; Nesser, P. (2015): *Islamist Terrorism in Europe*. London: Hurst; Pantucci, Raffaello (2015). 'We Love Death as you Love Life': Britain's suburban terrorists. London: Hurst; Rabasa, Angel & Benard, Cheryl (2015). *Eurojihad*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Skjoldager, Morten (2009). *Truslen indefra – de danske terrorister*. Lindhardt og Ringhof; Skjoldager, Morten (2016). *Syv år for PET*. København: People's press; Steinberg, Guido W. (2013). *German Jihad*. New York: Columbia University Press; Storm, M., Cruickshank, P. & Lister, T. (2014). *Agent Storm*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press.
- [17] For terrorist rhetoric and statements see Holbrook, D. (2014). *The Al-Qaeda Doctrine*. London: Bloomsbury; Kepel, G. & Milelli, J.P. (2008). *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*. London: Belknap Harvard; Lawrence, B. (2005). *Messages to the World - The statements of Osama Bin Laden*. Verso. For analysis of ideological, strategic and operational texts, see Cigar, N. (2009). *Al-Qaida's Doctrine for Insurgency*. Dulles: Potomac Books; Lacey, J. (Ed.) (2008). *The Canons of Jihad*. Annapolis: Naval institute press; Lia, B. (2007). *Architect of the Global Jihad*. London: Hurst; Stout, Huckabey, Schindler & Lacey (2008): *The Terrorist Perspectives Project*. Annapolis: Naval institute press.
- [18] See for example Holbrook, D. (2014). *The al-Qaeda Doctrine*. London: Bloomsbury.

- [19] See for example comments by former PET director general Jakob Scharf in *Skjoldager* 2016: 222.
- [20] For example the 2005 7/7 bombings in London. *CNN* (2012). Documents give new details on al Qaeda's London bombings. URL: <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/04/30/world/al-qaeda-documents-london-bombings/>
- [21] Consult Nacos, B.L. (2007). *Mass-Mediated Terrorism*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- [22] English, R. (2016). *Does Terrorism Work?* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 89.
- [23] WHO (2007). *Mass casualty management systems: strategies and guidelines for building health sector capacity*. URL: [www.who.int/hac/techguidance/MCM\\_guidelines\\_inside\\_final.pdf](http://www.who.int/hac/techguidance/MCM_guidelines_inside_final.pdf)
- [24] Both Merah's and Coulibaly's committed two limited casualty attacks first, while the third had mass casualty potential. See *IBT* (2015). French Authorities Connect Amedy Coulibaly, Kosher Grocery Store Gunman, to Separate Shooting of Jogger. URL: <http://www.ibtimes.com/french-authorities-connect-amedy-coulibaly-kosher-grocery-store-gunman-separate-1779834>; *BBC News* (2015). Charlie Hebdo Attacks: Three days of terror. URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30708237>.
- [25] For the Mohammed Geele case see: Astrup, S. (2011). Øksemand atter kendt skyldig i angreb på Kurt Westergaard. *Politiken*. URL: <http://politiken.dk/indland/ECE1313529/oeksemand-atter-kendt-skyldig-i-angreb-paa-kurt-westergaard/>; For the Roshonara Choudry case see: Rayner, G. & Bingham, J. (2010). Stephen Timms stabbing: How Internet sermons turned quiet student into fanatic. *The Telegraph*. URL: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/8105516/Stephen-Timms-stabbing-how-internet-sermons-turned-quiet-student-into-fanatic.html>; For the Lora Doukaiev case see: Pedersen, T. & Søgaard, J. (2011). *Lora Doukaiev skyldig i terror*. *Extrabladet*. URL: <http://ekstrabladet.dk/112/article4097277.ece> For the Stockholm bomb attack see: *The Guardian* (2010). Sweden suicide bomber: police search Bedfordshire house. URL: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/dec/13/sweden-suicide-bomber-bedfordshire-house>
- [26] Read more on terrorists and detection with Scandinavia as an example, in C. Hemmingby & T. Bjørgo 2016, p.101-105.
- [27] The eight incidents are the 1995 St Michel bombing, the 2004 M11 attacks, the 2005 7/7 bombings, the 2015 Charlie Hebdo attack, the 2015 13 November attacks, the 2016 Brussels bombings, the 2016 Nice truck attack, and the 2016 Berlin truck attack. At the time of writing there is no clear direct link between the 2016 Nice perpetrator and central jihadi networks.
- [28] *BBC News* (2015). Tunisia attack: What happened. URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-33304897>
- [29] One report where police and military forces are uncritically are defined as hard targets is *Europol – European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2017*. URL: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/eu-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-te-sat-2017>
- [30] For example politicians can receive basic security advice, and be equipped with modest protective measures at home and at their workplace, but they will still be soft targets.
- [31] Cartoonist Kurt Westergaard and artist Lars Vilks are two examples. The protective steps at their homes do not necessarily make them hard targets, but close protection officers assigned to them for public appearances do. See *Jyllands-posten* (2015). *FAKTA: Det ved vi nu om skyderierne i København*. URL: <http://jyllands-posten.dk/indland/politiretsvaesen/ECE7489720/FAKTA-Det-ved-vi-nu-om-skyderierne-i-Koebenhavn/>
- [32] An interest for such targets can be seen in some plots, but they are rarely developed into actual serious attacks.
- [33] There are several sources illustrating the security know-how of today. See, for example, the Internet resources of the Centre for Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) in the UK and the US Department of Homeland Security. URL: <https://www.cpni.gov.uk> and <https://www.dhs.gov/topic/critical-infrastructure-security>. For manuals, see, for example, Federal Emergency Management Agency (2007). *Site and urban design for security*; FEMA 430 /December 2007; Department of Homeland Security (2011). *Reference manual to mitigate potential terrorist attacks against buildings*. FEMA-426/Bips-06/October 2011 ed.2. Homeland security.
- [34] See Nagin 2013: 199. Criminals can be deterred by apprehension and punishment. However, this is less applicable for militant Islamists; they tend to be more concerned about operational failure.
- [35] These are the 1994 hijacking, the 2001 Richard Reid case, the 2009 Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab case and the 2010 cargo planes plot.
- [36] The possible exception is the ISIS-linked Strasbourg and Marseilles cell which was arrested in 2016. Its members displayed an interest in targeting the DSGI HQ (French security service), a police HQ and the High Court building. It is, however, more likely that they prioritized other targets over these. See Osborne, S. (2016). Isis terror cell 'planned to attack Disneyland Paris and Champs Elysees Christmas market on 1 December'. *The Independent*. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/isis-terror-plot-paris-france-disneyland-champs-elysees-christmas-market-a7436441.html>
- [37] Moghaddam 2008: 13

- [38] See for example the case of Adlene Hicheur, who in October 2009 was arrested for planning terrorist attacks in France after online dialogue with AQIM. He preferred discriminate targeting, and did not wish to conduct a suicide operation. Hanlon, C. (2012). Former nuclear scientist at Large Hadron Collider goes on trial accused of 'being Al Qaeda agent'. *Daily Mail*. URL: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2122309/Adlene-Hicheur-trial-Former-nuclear-scientist-Large-Hadron-Collider-accused-Al-Qaeda-agent.html>; Chrisafis, A. (2012). Former Cern scientist faces terror trial in France. *The Guardian*. URL: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/29/cern-scientist-terror-trial-france>
- [39] For example the killing of Theo van Gogh in 2004, several plots and attacks against Kurt Westergaard and Lars Vilks, the 2013 attack on Lars Hedegaard, and the 2015 killing of Stéphane "Charb" Charbonnier.
- [40] Militant Islamist publications contribute to the creation of a trophy target status and to keep such a focus alive over a long period of time. In Inspire magazine issue 10 (2013), the Islamists presented a dead or alive list, naming 11 people. Most of them were linked to media, namely Carsten Juste (mentioned as Luste, editor-in-chief in Jyllandsposten from 2003 to 2008), Kurt Westergaard, Lars Vilks, Stéphane "Charb" Charbonnier, Flemming Rose (culture editor in Jyllands-Posten in from 2004 to 2010) and Molly Norris (US based cartoonist).
- [41] *Jyllands-Posten* (2005) Muhammeds ansigt. URL: <http://jyllands-posten.dk/indland/ECE4769352/Muhammeds-ansigt/>; Fröden, M. (2015). *NA inte ensam om att publicera Muhammed-bild*. URL: <http://na.se/nyheter/sverige/1.2844566-na-inte-ensam-om-att-publicera-muhammed-bild>
- [42] Skjoldager 2016: 153-155
- [43] *BBC News* (2002a). Italy arrests men over church plot. URL: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2205263.stm>; Jordán, J. (2014). *The foiled attacks in Italy*. In *The evolution of the global terrorist threat* (B. Hoffman & F. Reinares, Eds.), New York: Columbia University Press.
- [44] *Le Parisien* (2015). Sid Ahmed Ghlam avait fait des repérages autour des églises. URL: <http://www.leparisien.fr/espace-premium/actu/sid-ahmed-ghlam-avait-fait-des-reperages-autour-des-eglises-25-04-2015-4722733.php>; Willsher, K. (2016). *France in shock again after Isis murder of priest in Normandy*. *The Guardian*. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/26/france-shock-second-isis-attack-12-days>
- [45] A targeting interest has for example been noted around facilities in the United States, Lucas Heights in Australia, the Dimona facilities in Israel, Sizewell in the UK, as well as facilities in the Netherlands, France and Belgium.
- [46] See for example Lawrence, 2005; Holbrook, 2014: 73-74.
- [47] One could also argue that the 2015 Lyon gas factory attack was directed against US interests since the factory was U.S. owned, but the one person killed before the attack on the factory was the perpetrator's boss. See *The Guardian* (2015). French terrorism attack: suspect took selfie with severed head. URL: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/28/french-terrorism-suspect-took-selfie-with-slain-victim>
- [48] Serman, A. (2014). Israel has killed perpetrators of 1994 Buenos Aires bombing, says ex-envoy. *Times of Israel*. URL: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/iranian-bombers-in-amia-attack-were-taken-out-by-israel/>; Davies, W. (2013). Hezbollah linked to the Burgas bombing. *BBC News*. URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-21342192>; *Jerusalem Post* (2014). Report: Peru arrested Hezbollah operative planning attacks on Israelis, Jews. URL: <http://www.jpost.com/International/Report-Peru-arrests-Hezbollah-operative-planning-attacks-on-Israelis-Jews-380369>; Ravid, B. (2014). Hezbollah Members Arrested in Thailand Admit to Planning Attack on Israeli Tourists. *Haaretz*. URL: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.586220>
- [49] *BBC News* (2004b). Madrid bombers 'had more targets'. URL: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3855085.stm>; Le Figaro (2012). *Cellule djihadiste : 7 suspects déférés, 5 relâchés*. URL: <http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2012/10/10/01016-20121010ARTFIG00632-cellule-djihadiste-d-inquietantes-decouvertes.php>; *Le Figaro* (2013). L'inquiétante cellule islamiste «Cannes-Torcy» passée au crible. URL: <http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2013/07/05/01016-20130705ARTFIG00750-l-inquietante-cellule-islamiste-cannes-torcy-passee-au-crible.php>
- [50] Pedahzur, A. (2009). *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle Against Terrorism*. New York: Columbia University Press, p.44
- [51] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2017). Global Terrorism Database. Information retrieved from GTD June 2017. URL: <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>
- [52] Nasser, P. 2015: 253-255; Mullins, S. (2017). *Lone-actor vs. Remote-Controlled Jihadi Terrorism: Rethinking the Threat to the West*. War on the Rocks. URL: <https://warontherocks.com/2017/04/lone-actor-vs-remote-controlled-jihadi-terrorism-rethinking-the-threat-to-the-west/>
- [53] Schuurman, B., Q. Eijkman, and E. Bakker: A History of the Hofstadgroup. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Volume 8, issue 4.
- [54] Two attacks involved both hard and soft targets, based on the definitions utilised in this project; the 2003 toxic letters case in



Belgium, and the 2015 Copenhagen attack on Lars Vilks. Furthermore, two attacks involved both discriminate and indiscriminate targeting; the 2015 Copenhagen attack against Lars Vilks, and the 2015 Lyon gas factory incident.

[55] Mehdi Nemmouche and Amedy Coulibaly are two examples.

[56] Not only seen in plots, but also confirmed by former terrorists in interviews by the author conducted from 2013 to 2017.

[57] Europol review (2016). *Changes in Modus Operandi of Islamic State Terrorist Attacks*. URL: [https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/changes\\_in\\_modus\\_operandi\\_of\\_is\\_in\\_terrorist\\_attacks.pdf](https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/changes_in_modus_operandi_of_is_in_terrorist_attacks.pdf)

[58] Regarding the attack against a police couple at their private home in Magnanville in June 2016, there are strong indications that the perpetrator knew the police officer from before. *BBC News* (2016b). France police killing: Jihadist Abballa 'knew his victim'. URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36547663>

[59] Mullins, S. (2017).

[60] One example is the 7/7 2005 bombings. Notes from central AQ planner Rashi Rauf revealed that the perpetrators were given the choice between the Bank of England, the G8 summit in Scotland and the London underground. *CNN* (2012). Documents give new details on al Qaeda's London bombings. URL: <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/04/30/world/al-qaeda-documents-london-bombings/>

[61] The Sauerland-cell was encouraged to attack Uzbek targets, Steinberg 2013: 71, 74. Furthermore, there are claims that Merah was encouraged to target the Indian embassy, Naravane, Vaiju (2012). Slain terrorist Merah planned to attack Indian embassy in Paris. *The Hindu*. URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/slain-terrorist-merah-planned-to-attack-indian-embassy-in-paris/article3430764.ece>

[62] Carter, H. (2008). Fanatic planned to kidnap British Muslim serviceman and behead him 'like a pig'. *The Guardian*. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2008/jan/30/terrorism.world>

[63] An example: Westminster City Council made major efforts in the Whitehall area with the Whitehall Streetscape Improvements project 2007-2010. See *BBC News* (2007): £25m Whitehall street work begins. URL: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/england/london/6900760.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/london/6900760.stm)

[64] For the toxic letters case from Belgium in 2003 see *Associated Press* (2003). Iraqi arrested after letters in Belgium. URL: [www.apnewsarchive.com/2003/Iraqi-Arrested-After-Letters-in-Belgium/id-00fb046623dcb2bf11c25e8f7e0fd35b](http://www.apnewsarchive.com/2003/Iraqi-Arrested-After-Letters-in-Belgium/id-00fb046623dcb2bf11c25e8f7e0fd35b). For the US embassy attack in Vienna in 2007 see *BBC News* (2007): Vienna 'embassy bombing' foiled. URL: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7022522.stm>

[65] Cohen, R. (1999). Three Kurds shot dead by Israeli guards at Berlin protest. *New York Times*. URL: <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/02/18/world/3-kurds-shot-dead-by-israeli-guards-at-berlin-protest.html>

[66] *BBC News* (2016). Nice attack: France calls up 12,000 reservists. URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36817435>

[67] More information: Metropolitan police archive. URL: [https://web.archive.org/web/20120503150929/http://www.met.police.uk/co19/armed\\_response.htm](https://web.archive.org/web/20120503150929/http://www.met.police.uk/co19/armed_response.htm)

[68] Der Polizeipräsident in Berlin. *Objektschutz*. URL: <https://www.berlin.de/polizei/beruf/objektschutz/>

[69] See *Operation Sentinelle*: <http://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/operations/france/operation-sentinelle>

[70] See for example The National Counter Terrorism Security Office (2017). *Run – Hide – Tell*. URL: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-counter-terrorism-security-office>

[71] Hemmingby & Bjørgo 2016: 88-95

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