

Institution: University of Northampton
Unit of Assessment: 30 - History
Title of case study: Radicalism and New Media Research Group (hereafter RNM)
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Concerns regarding the politics of radicalism and extremism have become increasingly prominent in recent years, especially with the emergence of new Far-Right organisations across Europe. Research by Jackson and Feldman into the history of radical ideologies in the first half of the 20th century and on the historical contexts of Far-Right organisations today has allowed RNM to connect with and impact upon: [a] policy debates and Government policy analysis; [b] best practice in relation to Far-Right organisations especially in local government activity linked to the Prevent Strategy for which a new training package has been developed; [c] public awareness of Far-Right thinking and activities, affected through conferences; public reports; media commentary; public talks.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Established in 2009, RNM was directed by Dr Feldman (Lecturer, then Senior Lecturer, 2004–2012) and then by Dr Jackson (Research Fellow, then Senior Lecturer, 2009–present). It consciously sought to link innovative historical analysis of Modernist and radical ideologies to current policy debates on extremism which, until recently, have been dominated by Islamist concerns. In linking historical with contemporary concerns, RNM has stressed the importance of ‘tit-for-tat’ radicalisation and highlighted terrorist threats emerging from the Far Right. The core research by Feldman and Jackson has been augmented by two PhD students, Jones (2012–present) and Castriota (2012–present). It was further strengthened by the appointment of a Visiting Fellow, Shekhovtsov (2010–13) who works on Far-Right politics and culture, especially in eastern Europe.</p> <p>The core research interests of Feldman and Jackson lie in radicalism and fascism in the early decades of the 20th century. In detailed empirical studies of the ‘fascist intellectuals’ Ezra Pound and Martin Heidegger, Feldman highlighted the relevance of fascism to their wider intellectual output (1). These ideas were elaborated through conferences and edited collections in which Feldman, along with Turda (Budapest) and Georgescu (Budapest), developed the idea of fascism as a political religion (2). This challenged established thinking by indicating the ideological complexity of fascism. Jackson’s wide-ranging expertise on fascism and the Far Right was developed through his PhD research and his extensive contributions to major works of reference: <i>The Historical Encyclopedia of World Fascism</i> (2007) and <i>The Far Right in Europe: An Encyclopedia</i> (2008). His research focused on the ways in which radical ideologies were an important part of modernist thinking in early 20th-century Britain (3), and also drove key figures such as Gavrilo Princip (4). In particular, he argued that a wide range of ‘modernist’ political projects developed at this time which sought fundamental renewal of society, a trend also central to fascist thinking. As a body of work, this has had the effect of offering a platform to place the contemporary Far Right in a much longer historical context of radical and revolutionary ideologies which define themselves by opposing the political mainstream.</p> <p>From this base, both Feldman and Jackson have developed methodologies that allow them to make important contributions to the academic debate surrounding contemporary developments in Far-Right ideologies and politics. Jackson in particular has successfully applied historical and qualitative approaches to unpicking contemporary, ultra-nationalist milieus, especially their ideologies – for example, the case of Anders Brevik (5). This has allowed him to bring a distinctive, historically-informed voice to the current debate over the rise of the Far-Right in Europe. In this, his work has been complemented by that of Visiting Fellow, Dr Anton Schekhvtsov, whose research has examined the complexity of Far Right popular appeal (6). At the same time, both Feldman and Jackson have expanded the scope of their contemporary research to encompass: Far-Right terrorism, BNP propaganda, nationalist extremist use of the internet and, with Shekhovtsov, white power music. This research has been critical in highlighting the importance of Islamophobia in structuring Far-Right ideology, for example in the English Defence League (EDL).</p>

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The deep historical underpinning of their research, coupled with significant and impactful engagement with contemporary developments in radicalism and political extremism has given members of RNM the expertise and credibility to engage with policy debates. It has also provided them with the intellectual and methodological toolkit required to make a significant impact through consultative and training work with practitioners engaged in a variety of anti-racists agendas.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. M. Feldman, 'Between Geist and Zeitgeist: Martin Heidegger as ideologue of meta-political fascism', in *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 6/2 (2005)
2. M. Feldman and M. Turda, with T. Georgescu (eds.) '*Clerical Fascism*' in *Interwar Europe* (Routledge, 2008)
3. P. Jackson, *Great War Modernisms and The New Age Magazine* (Continuum, 2012)
4. P. Jackson, "'Union or Death!": Gavrilo Princip, Young Bosnia and the role of "sacred time" in the dynamics of nationalist terrorism', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 7/1 (2006)
5. P. Jackson, 'Licence to Hate: Peter Jensen's fascist rhetoric in Anders Breivik's Manifesto 2083 *A European Declaration of Independence*', *Democracy and Security* 9/3 (2013)
6. A. Schekovstov, *Новые праворадикальные партии в европейских демократиях: причины электоральной поддержки (New Radical Right-Wing Parties in European Democracies: Determinants of Electoral Support)* (ibidem-Verlag, 2011)

Publications 3 and 4 form part of REF2. Publication 1 was submitted to RAE2008.

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2010: Metropolitan Police: £10,000

2010: Bergen Research Foundation: c. £50,000

2011: Berendel Foundation Grant: £10,000

2011: Steel Foundation Grant: £15,000

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Building on its base of theoretically-informed historical research, the impact of RNM comprises three elements: contributing to broad public debates on the far right; influencing policy debates and policy formation, and shaping best practice among practitioners engaged in anti-racist agendas.

Contributing to the public debate

Making its knowledge base known has been central to the activities of RNM. An essential part of this is a programme of conferences each attracting audiences of 60-100 delegates [*source 1*]:

- Speaking with Forked Tongues (June 2009);
- Fascist Radicalism and the New Media (Sep 2010);
- Think Global Hate Local (April 2011);
- Populist Racism in Britain and Europe (Sep 2011);
- Special Relationship of Hate: 50 Years of the Anglo-American Far-Right (Sep 2012);
- The British Far-Right in Transition (June 2013).

Bringing together academic and largely non-academic voices (including police forces, probation services, journalists, and local and Westminster-based civil servants), these events have helped to shape the public debate on the Far Right. They have also fed into opportunities for further public

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engagement in terms of talks at public events on extremism organised by: Hounslow Council, Leicester Police, Portsmouth Council, West Sussex County Council, Avon and Somerset Police, and the St Phillip's Centre. Indeed, in a survey undertaken those who had attended conferences or other RNM events, over 80% said that they would work with the group in the future, and over 90% stated that they would recommend the activities of the group to their colleagues [source 2]. As one conference delegate from the St Phillips Centre noted: "I initially worked for the Police when the EDL were being labelled a 'far right social movement'. It was through interaction with the RNM Group that changed my opinion and my approach and meant that I tackled the issue in a more direct fashion which yielded more positive results and progress for me". [source 3].

Jackson also gave eight keynote lectures to events organised by Show Racism the Red Card, themselves funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the National Union of Teachers. These invitations are a measure of a growing reputation for authoritative expertise on the contemporary British far right and have truly significant impact which is reshaping public debate and attitudes [source 4].

Connections with non-academic audiences are given greater reach by Jackson's contributions to magazines such as *The Big Issue* (8-14 Oct 2012; circulation c.585,000) and by maintaining a close working relationship with the leading magazine on far-right politics, *Searchlight* (estimated readership c.30,000). This includes a regular, independent column written by Jackson and a booklet series called *Mapping Extremism*, which makes academic analysis accessible to a new audience [source 5]. In 2012, RNM launched a new publication, hosting the views and opinions of a wide range of practitioners and commentators, called *Far Right Forum*. This made available through third party organisation websites, including Concilio CIC (<http://conciliocic.org/component/search/?searchword=paul%20Jackson&searchphrase=all&Itemid=104>) and *Searchlight* (<http://searchlightmagazine.com/>). The extended reach that this gives RNM impact is further enhanced by the group's own website (www.radicalism-new-media.org) which includes PDF files of reports, podcasts of conferences, and details of our consultancy opportunities.

Influencing policy debates

In addition to the broad impact of this public engagement, RNM has produced two public reports, Gable and Jackson, *Lone Wolves: Myth or Reality?* (2011), and Jackson et al., *The EDL: Britain's 'New Far Right' Social Movement* (2011). Both are open access on the RNM website and have been independently hosted by numerous organisations, including Faith Matters and Engage [source 6], and distributed by third party groups, such as Searchlight, among practitioners in the criminal justice system. These reports have been cited in both policy debates and formal policy documents. For example, in the re-launched *Prevent Strategy* of 2011 [source 7], *Lone Wolves: Myth or Reality?* is discussed on page 15. Meanwhile, *The EDL: Britain's 'New Far Right' Social Movement* is cited in the Commons Home Affairs Select Committee report *Roots of Violent Radicalisation* (2012) [source 8]. Moreover, in 2011 Feldman gave formal evidence to this Select Committee's hearings; he stressed in particular the ways larger, more populist groupings such as the EDL can host more extremist far-right activists.

Shaping best practice

Perhaps the most significant impact of RNM research and expertise is in terms of shaping best practice. This occurs ad hoc through professionals' attendance at RNM events, although this has important cumulative effects which have considerable significance. As a Community Education Worker from Show Racism the Red Card stresses: 'Paul's work specifically on the EDL has helped me to help other people to stop viewing the EDL through a narrow stereotypical lens, it has helped me to understand better the push and pull factors of being involved in extreme movements and in turn this has helped me shape my facilitation work and discussions in teacher training.' [source 9].

More formally, and building on its growing reputation, in 2012 RNM developed a training package, *Far Right Aware*, initially as a bespoke CPD course for Portsmouth City Council. The Council had first approached Jackson to deliver a talk at a conference (2010), and then (2011) to develop for them a 'train the trainer' course, for a fee of £4500. Delivery of the package since August 2012 has fundamentally altered the activities of the council's Hate Crimes unit, especially in the ways it trains

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members within the wider council to be aware of far-right issues in the workplace – something which the Council had previously been unable to achieve [source 10].

Other organisations, including Walsall Council and Essex Police, have expressed interest in the CPD course. More importantly in terms of its reach, the OSCT has asked RNM to develop the package in a form that they could formally licence for rollout on a national scale. This project is still on-going, but a tangible indication of the value that the OSCT places on RNM activities and expertise is that it sent ten of its far-right mentors to 'The Far Right in Transition' conference (2013). These events are seen by the OSCT as part of its formal development of such mentors. This reflects a wider recognition of the important role of RNM activities in shaping best practice: 75% of respondents to our survey of users stated that RNM helped improve results for their organisation [source 2].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1 Conference programmes and delegate lists

2. Survey results

3 Supporting statement from Prevent Co-ordinator, St Philips Centre (a faith-based training centre and community hub - <http://www.stphilipscentre.co.uk>)

4. Show Racism the Red Card: <http://www.srtrc.org/news/news-and-events?news=3665>

5 *Far-right.com: Nationalist Extremism on the Internet* (2011); *White Power Music: Scenes of Extreme-Right Cultural Resistance* (2012)

6 Engage: <http://iengage.org.uk/component/content/article/1-news/1547-the-edl-britains-new-far-right-social-movement>

7. *Prevent Strategy*, 2011:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf, (esp. p. 15)

8. *Roots of Violent Radicalisation* (2012):

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmhaff/1446/1446.pdf>, (esp. p. 8; ev. 84-5, ev. 99)

9. Supporting statement from Community Education Worker, Show Racism the Red Card

10 Supporting statement from Senior Hate Crime Caseworker, Portsmouth City Council