

## Impact case study (REF3b)

<b>Institution:</b> Oxford Brookes University
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 30 - History
<b>Title of case study:</b> Influencing Counter-terrorist policy in the University Sector and Beyond
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Research insights from Professor Roger Griffin work to understand the dynamics of terrorism and fanatical violence demonstrate impacts on policy, practice and public discourse not only through his establishment as a world authority on terrorism but also his participation in the implementation of the Home Office Prevent strategy. Based on his research expertise, Professor Griffin is featured in a training DVD for WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent), delivered nationally to frontline staff in the public sector. Professor Griffin has influenced the plan by Universities UK and the Home Office to implement a radically new strategy for fulfilling Prevent policy in the University sector. His book on the social psychology of radicalization has attracted national and international attention in the wake of the Boston Bombings in April 2013 and Woolwich Assassination, leading to him being invited to join three of Europe's leading counter-terrorism research groups.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Professor Roger Griffin's research, since the mid-1980s, has been the ideological, historical and psychological dynamics of generic fascism. The impacts claimed within this case study derive from the originality of his work, undertaken at Oxford Brookes University, that lie in the profound linkages that he has established, on the basis of methodological understanding of convinced fascists. He has presented theoretical work on the growing crisis of meaning, purpose, and identity generated by modernity, and the profusion of utopian experiments in aesthetics, architecture, philosophy, social planning, life-style choices, and alternative political states so characteristic of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> twentieth century (sources 1,2). This phase of research culminated in the book <i>Modernism and Fascism</i> (2007) (source 3) and the series <i>Modernism and</i> (Palgrave) (24 volumes) which was launched in 2010 and reconfigure the remit and heuristic value of the term modernism.</p> <p>This research recognises a recurring pattern in human behaviour and culture when faced with a crisis of meaning, namely to take refuge in an existing or newly elaborated myth of rebirth, regeneration, and renewal (palingenesis), one which makes sense of catastrophic events and transmutes the experience of chaos and despair into a narrative of hope in an imminent new order. This also means that the 'fanatic' has an altered, and, in the act of violence, ecstatic experience of time which transcends empty, linear 'clock' time. This mythic narrative of a higher time satisfies the individual or collective longings for survival or redemption of a beleaguered (cultural/ religious/ ethnic/ geographical/ political/ social) community and provides strategies for acting on history which put an end to feelings of impotence, decay, and loss of nomos, leading to anomie. (source 4).</p> <p>On the basis of this understanding of fascism, the commitment to a terrorist cause can be understood as an attempt either to defend an existing phenomenon — usually a 'homeland', a fusion of territory with culture/ religion/ tradition/ language (e.g. the Zealots) —, to create a new phenomenon (e.g. anarchist and Marxist terrorists), or a hybrid of the two (e.g. IRA, Basque, and Islamist terrorism). The individual committing to a terrorist cause for intensely ideological motives experiences transcendence/ salvation/ the recreation of an otherwise pointless or impotent existence, and typically feels transformed into a cosmic warrior fighting for a good cause against evil (Manichaeization). Professor Griffin's in-depth exploration into the dynamics of terrorism and fanatical violence at the level of the search for a meaning bore fruit in <i>Terrorist's Creed. Fanatical Violence and the Human Search for Meaning</i> (Palgrave 2012) (source 5). The link between Professor Griffin's research and his involvement in pragmatic issues of counter-radicalization policy and strategy is the accumulated evidence to show that a) the radicalization process does not involve 'vulnerable' individuals in the conventional sense of the term, but may well be a process willingly embraced by gifted individuals who crave a deeper sense of purpose and activism; b) every 'fanatic' contains a residual non-heroized and non-fanatical self that is susceptible to de-radicalization; c) there is a distinction between being attracted by 'extremist' ideas or drawn to debate them and becoming committed to fanatical violence, a distinction to be respected by law agencies and which is a matter for university authorities to arbitrate on.</p>

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**3. Publications relating to the research** (indicative maximum of six references)

1. "I am no longer human. I am a Titan. A god!" The fascist quest to regenerate time', *Electronic Seminars in History*, History of Political Thought, (first published 1998), subsequently reprinted as a chapter in Matthew Feldman (ed.) *A Fascist Century. Essays by Roger Griffin* (Palgrave, 2008). ISBN: 978-0230220898.
2. *Fascism: Critical Concepts in Political Science* (Routledge, 2004), ISBN: 978-0415290159. 5 volumes, 2188 pages
3. *Modernism and Fascism. The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (Palgrave, 2007). ISBN: 978-1403987846.

Submitted to RAE2008, Oxford Brookes University, UoA62-History, RA2, RD Griffin, Output 2.

4. 'Shattering Crystals: The Role of 'Dream Time' in Extreme Right-Wing Political Violence', *Terrorism & Political Violence*, 15, no. 1 (2003), pp 57-95.  
DOI:10.1080/09546550312331292967

5. *Terrorist's Creed. Fanatical Violence and the Human Need for Meaning* (Palgrave, 2012). ISBN: 978-0230241299

Submitted to REF2014, Oxford Brookes University, UoA30-History, REF2, RD Griffin, Output identifier 8879.

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

Professor Griffin's exploration of the socio-historical and ideological dynamics of fascism and the relationship of various forms of political or religious fanaticism to modernity has enabled not only policy and practice impacts but also contributed to improved public understanding of radicalism, fanaticism and extremism.

On 22 July 2011, the Anders Behring Breivik terrorist outrages occurred in Norway, resulting in 69 deaths; Breivik had pledged to save Norway and Western Europe from a Muslim takeover and that the Labour Party had to "pay the price" for "letting down Norway and the Norwegian people". Breivik was convicted of mass murder, causing a fatal explosion, and terrorism in August 2012. In the aftermath of the massacre and Breivik's trial, Professor Griffin provided expert opinion to newspapers and the media (sources 6 a-d). On Days 28 and 30 of the trial Professor Griffin's research was cited, by expert witnesses for the prosecution Øyvind Strømme and Nik Brandal (source 7), referring to his theory of radicalisation (heroic doubling); explored and detailed in '*Terrorist's Creed. Fanatical Violence and the Human Need for Meaning*' (source 5).

Professor Griffin was engaged by *Verdens Gang*, Norway's leading popular newspaper (2012 circulation 188K), to write an article published in two parts '*Breiviks utopi*' (Breivik's Utopia) (source 6 d); the article explored radicalisation, exposing how terrorist violence differs from other forms of destruction. A further article '*Behring Breivik og modernitetens mørke side*' (source 6c) (Behring Breivik and modernity's dark side), commissioned by *Aftenposten*, Norway's leading quality newspaper (2012 circulation 225K) discussed how modernity and progress, enriching for many, has become a source of catastrophic destruction and loss for others. Following the Boston Marathon bombings and Woolwich assassination, Professor Griffin was invited to give expert opinion in a number of media interviews in the UK, Norway, and Sweden (sources 8a-b).

In November 2010, Professor Griffin proactively contacted the Home Office with an offer to give a presentation on radicalization to the Prevent strategy team following an interview with its director Baroness Neville-Jones, the Minister of State for Security and Counterterrorism, on the BBC Radio 4 *Today* programme that suggested a lamentable misunderstanding of the phenomenon of terrorism it was seeking to prevent. This Prevent strategy sets out how the UK Government aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Following Professor Griffin's talk to the Prevent team (February 2011) he was approached by the Home Office official responsible for producing a new edition of the training DVD for WRAP

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(Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) to be interviewed as a 'historian of terrorism'. The WRAP DVD (released 2011) has been circulated to all Local Authorities and public sector organisations in the UK, and has been delivered to nearly 15,000 frontline staff. The WRAP DVD is the centre of a 2.5 hour training package that aims to raise awareness in staff across the public sector, who may come into contact with vulnerable people, so that they may have an understanding of the Prevent agenda; the role they can play within it; and some of the skills to help recognise those potentially vulnerable to radicalisation (source 9).

The Education Liaison in the Office of the National Coordinator of Prevent, approached Professor Griffin to assist in finding a formula which would deliver Home Office demands for the implementation of 'Prevent 2' (source 10) in the University sector. Professor Griffin advised him to abandon the strategy of creating a Home Office structure to monitor potential sources of radicalism with the cooperation of Universities. It was suggested that a new body should be set up, 'owned' by the University sector through the Universities UK, on which various forms of expertise and input would meet - experts from the, Home Office, on radicalization, Islamic theology alongside a representative of moderate Islam and an expert on the far right.

Convinced by Professor Griffin's argument, since October 2012, the Education Liaison has advocated implementing this strategy. This position received further support from Universities UK's Jo Attwooll and Geoffrey Petts (Vice-Chancellor, University of Westminster) a key-player in the new body, to which the Education Liaison recommended Professor Griffin to be a part of in respect of his academic expertise on radicalization. The strategy proposed by Professor Griffin makes Universities compliant with Home Office counter-terrorist policies without jeopardizing university autonomy or academic freedom. Professor Petts, leading academic of UUK, met with the Education Liaison on 1 May 2013 to suggest the formation of a new committee by UUK (following Griffin's model) to address issues of radicalization on the campus with Home Office representation. At the UUK conference on Safer campuses held in 21 May he then unveiled a new UUK working party on radicalization on campuses with Home Office support. In an email to Roger Griffin, the Education Liaison attributed this *entente* between the Home Office and UUK directly to Professor Griffin's intervention. (source 11)

In May 2013 Professor Griffin was also invited to be contributor to the application to the Research Council of Norway by the Network for the Study of Totalitarianism and Democracy (NEST), which was founded at the University of Oslo in 2009 by senior researchers from various disciplines within Oslo University to investigate 'Challenges to an Open Society in an Age of Crisis'. This project will lead to a major bid to the EU Horizons 2020 programme, investigating radicalism and extremism in Europe, tackling the theoretical issues raised by extremism and fanatical violence.

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

6. Samples of a series of interviews in the immediate aftermath of the Breivik massacre, and following trial for newspapers and Television:
  - a. Dn.Se 'Därför ler Anders Behring Breivik' <http://www.dn.se/kultur-noje/kulturdebatt/darfor-ler-anders-behring-breivik/>
  - b. Russia Today 'Cross Talk - Judging Breivik' 20 April 2012; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=moj6gKjmXZA>
  - c. 'Behring Breivik og modernitetens mørke side' 22 July 2012 [http://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/kronikker/Behring-Breivik-og-modernitetens-morke-side-6947370.html#.UX\\_K9qJJM1l](http://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/kronikker/Behring-Breivik-og-modernitetens-morke-side-6947370.html#.UX_K9qJJM1l)
  - d. 'Breiviks utopi' 3 May 2012 <http://www.vg.no/nyheter/meninger/artikkel.php?artid=10057622>
7. Theory of radicalization (heroic doubling) used in Terrorist's Creed cited by expert witness for the prosecution, Øyvind Strømme, and, Nik Brandal in the trial of Anders Behring Breivik. Day 28; 31 May 2012 (<http://direkte.vg.no/studio/rettssak-dag-28>) Day 30, 4 June 2012 (<http://www.nrk.no/227/artikler/rettssaken---dag-30-1.8177436>).

8. Selected examples of Professor Griffins on-going contribution to debate and public understanding of issues around terrorism
  - a. Wired.com 'How Studying Extremist Psychology Can Help Prevent Another Bombing' 22 April 2013 – Interview concerning how to identify 'would-be' bombers'  
<http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2013/04/extremist-psychology/>
  - b. 'Know thine Enemy' The value of Methodological Empathy in combating terror, *Counter Terror Business* 13, April 2013.  
<http://www.counterterrorbusiness.com/features/104-terrorism/898-know-thine-enemy>
9. The Home Office WRAP(2) DVD used for awareness-raising workshops in the public sector
10. The Prevent Strategy 'Objective 2 – Protecting Vulnerable People 9.12, 9.13  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/97976/pr-event-strategy-review.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/pr-event-strategy-review.pdf)
11. Corroborating statement author 1. E-mail statement by Education Liaison, Office of the National Coordinator Prevent confirming that the consensual keynote address to the conference 'safer campuses' (21 May 2013) pointing to a way of reconciling Home Office and University perspectives on radicalization were to a large measure the fruit of Griffin's collaboration and advice

**People**

12. Corroborating contact 2. Researcher at the Norwegian Police University (NUPI).
13. Corroborating statement author 3. Letter from convener of the Psychotrauma Expert Group and director of the TERRA counter-radicalization initiative.