Measuring Political Violence

Methodological overview

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Introduction

This study gives a methodological insight into the results of a two-years-long research project, resulting in the Measuring Political Violence study (Political Capital, 2015), which focused on the attitudes towards political violence in online and offline contexts. The project, entitled 'Developing innovative methods for comparative researches on violent radicalization among the youth to help prevention', was carried out by Political Capital. DEMOS UK – our British partner in this project – conducted certain aspects of the research. The project was supported by the European Commission programme 'Prevention of and Fight against Crime' (ISEC) and Open Society Foundations.

We launched our project based on the experience that, while good comparative data would be the necessary (but not sufficient) precondition of any good policies and decisions to prevent political violence, exact datasets are often missing for the comparison of different countries and communities from the perspective of the potential for the use of violence they have. The goals of our project was to develop and pilot good traditional and new comparative research methods in order to assess the threat of violent radicalization by identifying the vulnerable groups in given EU member states where the justification and glorification of violence poses a danger.

Methodological approach seems to carry the burden of genuine research content issues on two fronts. Firstly, as mentioned above, researchers lack good comparative databases mostly because hate crime data compiled by justice authorities are not fit for proper scientific analyses. Therefore, official datasets on violent behaviour need special methodological treatment before those can be used for any analysis. Secondly, a vast amount of information on people's behaviour and attitudes are recorded, stored and distributed in the internet's different databases. Consequently, new methodological approaches need to be developed to meet the needs of an increasingly technicized society's information production, which cannot be accessed via "traditional" research methods.

In the Measuring political violence study, we summarized the existing European hate crime definitions and data available in Europe according to the the 2012 FRA (European Agency For Fundamental Rights)[1] report, the RAXEN[2] (RAXEN Annual Report, 2005) report and the OSCE[3] (OSCE Annual Report, 2011) report and, to supplement the above, the Hate Crime-report[4] (Making hate crime visible, 2012) also sponsored by FRA, as well as the 2012 EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report. To indentify the best models, categories and items for explanation and measurement the most important theories of hate crime to date were reviewed and secondary analyses of two databases conducted.

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1 Annual Report 2012, Fundamental rights: challenges and achievements in 2012

2 Racist Violence 15 EU Member States, 'A Comparative Overview of Findings' from the RAXEN National Focal Points Reports 2001-2004, April 2005

3 Hate Crimes in the OSCE Region: Incidents and Responses, Annual Report for 2011

4 Making hate crime visible in the European Union: acknowledging victims' rights, 2012

The conclusions of the bibliographical summary and secondary analyses allowed us to devise our own researches based on new questionnaires, measurement items and specific explanatory models. Finally, preliminiary research coupled with new research data made it possible to verify existing explanatory models of hate crimes as well as pointing out the limits of different research methods of the social phenomenon in question.

The first section of the methodology report reflects on the theoretical explanations of violent behaviour, followed by two (one domestic and another international) of the available datasets' used for secondary analyses in the second part. The third part elaborates the methodological inferences of two new researches based on personal and online surveys in Hungary and in the UK. The fourth part deals with the information age's challenges to collect and analyse "network-data" in the form of a social media mapping.

We hope this project contributes to the research methods applicable to violent extremism and its social-attitudinal background, increasing the effectiveness of prevention programmes in the future.

All errors and omissions are our own.

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Executive summary

- Analysis of available datasets made it clear that statistical results correspond with theoretical models of explanation, however, wording of original questionnaires essential. On the bright side, conventional statistical methods applied to available datasets are able to identify a "vulnerable group" prone to violence. On the other hand, "harder" or "softer" wording may affect the visibility of the phenomenon under review, since respondents adhere to social norms on expressing aggression accordingly.

- The real drawback of secondary analysis is the limited number of items suitable to measure political violence, while important "contextual" items of violent behaviour are missing that could explain or predict atypical cases of violence.

- Traditional research based on personal surveys proved to be useful to explore statistical interdependence between items deemed important in researching political violence to create separate indexes for measurement of violent behaviour or group segmentation. It is important to see that the effects of the respondent's demographic features, party preference and political activism follow from his personality traits that, in turn, are closely related to these variables. Personal surveys are, however, severely limited in reaching the limited amount of extremist people or groups in randomized samples of general populations.

- On the other hand, targeted online interviewing based on Facebook advertising tools is very much able to collect a sizeable dataset from a largely unexplored group of individuals, revealing their complex and violent behaviour. The self-selection of online interviewing severly limits the generalization of results, unfortunately.

- Both traditional personal or online surveys can be used to create and verify statistically excellent standardized tests for measuring political violence. However, "de-contextualized" surveys are in many ways unable to distinguish between general attitudes of aggression as a bottom line compared to the more special forms of political aggression.

- Social media mapping may compensate for the "contextualization" problem by measuring both the individual's behaviour (in the form of hate speech) and the organizations or groups situating those acts in virtual environments in real-time. This kind of research also has generalization problems by relying on self-selection, limited forums of interactions and the availability of data depending on technical issues.

- As certain survey questions seem to be a useful tool for quantifying the potential for violence in certain Member States, we would recommend pollsters to do regular international surveys on acceptance, justification and glorification of certain forms of political violence including terrorism. The best way to draw a map on the "potential for violence" in Europe would be to put a block of questions into a Eurobarometer survey and regularly include them in it.

- Besides having a clear picture of the dynamics of violent attitudes, such measures would even help to identify the most problematic regions in the EU, helping it to make good decisions when allocating funds for prevention and deradicalisation programmes.

- Similarly, regular researches in Member States on the acceptance of violence would help to identify the social groups that need the most attention, and probably targeted interventions. Our researches in Hungary and the UK indicate that young men living in cities, with authoritarian and prejudiced views seem to be the most problematic group.

- Besides regular polling of the attitudes towards violence in Member States, continuous tracking and mapping of the most important radical and extremist Social Media channels seems to be crucial. New methods can help in assessing the impact of certain events in the Social Media sphere practically real time, helping a lot not only in retrospective tracking, but in prospective prediction of the violent threats.

- Analysis of available datasets should focus on comparability issues, producing a "toolbox" of statistical methods for secondary analysis, making differing datasets comparable, and dealing with the problems of limited, divergent information in different databases.

- New innovative methods of "big data" social research, albeit limited in generalization, are best suited to work out novel explanations of political violence, new items for models.

- On the one hand, traditional offline or online surveys can be used to define and refine standardized tests for general and political aggression alike. On the other hand, it may verify novel models based on more specific researches produced by "big data" analysis.

THEORETICAL EXPLANATORY MODELS

Theoretical considerations looked at the relevant literature on hate crime, violent extremism, violent attitudes, and different approaches to measure it.

Among all the bibliography under review, the study of Green et al. titled *Hate Crime: An Emergent Research Agenda* (Green-McFalls-Smith, 2001) provided one of the most comprehensive explanations of hate crimes taking into account the phenomenon's micro-, mezzo-, and macro level explanations which also helped interpreting the methodological questions of the empirical research presented below.

Green makes a distinction between two fundamental types of causality analysis in identifying vulnerable groups: the individual-psychological and social approach (Green-McFalls-Smith, 2001). Individual explanations focus essentially on identifying psychological motivations behind the act, which can be described as an explicit psychological orientation or conviction activated by specific situations lurking in the background (Green-McFalls-Smith, 2001:484). In contrast, macro-sociological explanations aim to define a broader social, economic and political context leading to individual acts. The authors distinguish six general categories used to explain such acts. (Green-McFalls-Smith, 2001:485).

The approach based on **psychological traits** makes an attempt to identify psychological reasons behind the commitment of a crime. Major definitions of hate crime, based on the assumption that perpetrators harbor hostile feelings towards their victims, take the relevance of this consideration for granted. This approach associates and explains these acts with extreme prejudice in the context of Allport's conclusions, who traced a wide range of discriminative behavior to affective disorders (frustration, projection and paranoia, etc.) tied to stereotypes. While theories related to authoritarian personalities try to develop the perpetrators' standard personality profile, based on an analysis of attitude-research on personality traits, this is insufficient as an explanation because only a small percentage of individuals with an authoritarian streak commit these crimes (Green-McFalls-Smith, 2001:485).

Aside from individual prejudices, **socio-psychological explanations** also try to identify the circumstances leading to violent behavior. Some of the models trace individual acts to small-group dynamics where violent attitudes proliferate under peer pressure or peer values, turning members extremist or making them susceptible to such behavior patterns. Empirical studies have demonstrated the relevance of these factors in white racist groups. Other approaches, primarily European research projects, looked at the correlation between psychological orientation and broader social motivating forces, more specifically the causal effect of the electronic and print media. Accordingly, the media presentation of various hate crimes may not only lead to the proliferation of such acts (by way of providing examples) but may also act as a direct motivating force through the presentation, promotion and legitimization of stereotypes associated with potential victim groups. The media's secondary causal role is seen when it disseminates and reinforces the statements of political forces and politicians building on existing stereotypes (Green-McFalls-Smith, 2001:486).

The **sociological approach** traces its origin to Durkheim's modernization theory, associating crime with the criminal actions and aggression of the young population exposed to rapid social changes. One version of the sociological theory was tested specifically in post-communist countries where social organization is undergoing radical change, claiming that the perpetrators of crime are mostly modernization's collective or individual victims, i.e., socially unintegrated individuals and members of tight-knit communities "threatened" in their existence.[5]

A broader explanation is offered by the **globalization model** focusing attention on marginalized, poorly educated and easily identifiable migrants emerging in different, primarily developed countries (Green-McFalls-Smith, 2001:487). "Economic theories" explain this social anomie not with the disintegration of social relations but with frustration-transference and group competition[6] for resources generated by economic difficulties. According to the so-called 'realistic group conflict theory', hostile behavior can be traced to a gap in the economic power of diverse groups. The authors indicate that the theory is in need of empirical fine-tuning regarding areas of competition (jobs, housing and education, etc.) and status that may potentially motivate these groups to commit crimes. The question is whether a dominant group standing on a higher rung in the social hierarchy is more prone to launching a preemptive strike (defending territory) against a weaker group occupying a lower status, or it involves action on the part of a ruling elite on the verge of losing its dominant position. In this process one must already look at the role of political elites and articulate interest groups in the concentration and mobilization of structurally inherent frustrations[7] (Green-McFalls-Smith, 2001:488). The **historic-cultural** school studies the impact of political discourse on the commission of crime, even though it takes the long view. This explanation posits hate crime in the context of long-term (longue durée), all but "immutable", cultural traditions and behavior patterns. While the authors believe that at this point the culturalist approach has yet to offer convincing causal connections, it has proven to be useful in grasping the radically and consistently differing crime rates of societies with a similar social structure (e.g., in comparing hate crime trends in the USA and Canada) (Green-McFalls-Smith, 2001:486).

Finally, the **political theories** of hate crime study the mobilization of grievances (Green-McFalls-Smith, 2001:488). According to political explanations, relying on the theory of social movements, instead of the perpetrator's real or perceived grievances against the victim, the determining factor is the "political opportunity structure" that eventually justifies the offense. This implies the existence of forums and means suitable for the expression of personal grievances (obviously also structured by society and groups), legitimizing the expression of prejudices in public and in political discourse, as well as the weak probability of hate crime prevention and criminalization.

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5 In the text there is repeated reference to the wave of xenophobic attacks following unification with East Germany after 1991.

6 For instance, from this point instead of socialization for direct violence, extremist political movements may play a more important role in taking extremist views to the public and construing frustration as a legitimate public cause, as we have seen in Jobbik's Roma-communication.

7 For instance, from this point instead of socialization for direct violence, extremist political movements may play a more important role in taking extremist views to the public and construing frustration as a legitimate public cause, as we have seen in Jobbik's Roma-communication.

The "opportunity-structure" may lead to a number of mutually contradictory and empirically studied conclusions. With respect to political organizations, on the one hand, the absence of organizations articulating extremist views in mainstream political discourse may lead to the escalation of violence[8] and, on the other hand, the presence of extremist politicians and organizations may focus passions and kindle violence[9].

With respect to the opportunity-structure, one should not ignore the feebleness of the institutional environment (police, prosecution, courts, etc.), its distant, indifferent and potentially conniving role in racism, including the behavior of the political elite. At the same time the authors emphasize that while the opportunity-structure fundamentally has a "liberating" effect, support from the political elites is instrumental in reinforcing the phenomenon[10] (Green-McFalls-Smith, 2001:489).

Lena Roxell's study (Roxell, 2011) specifically looked at registered hate-crime accomplices and specialization in such crimes. The study points to problems in the official registration of crimes and the resulting limits to research (e.g., victims are more likely to report serious rather than minor incidents of crime, and crimes committed by foreigners[11]) (Roxell, 2011:206). It all suggests that important hate crime types are missing from official data and may only be studied through other means, i.e., research including the victims. Based on international studies, one can also question the reliability of the definition of crime motivation. After studying 2976 hate crime incidents registered in the USA between 1997 and 1999, Levin and McDevitt found that 66% of the committed crime was motivated by "sensationalism", 25% by self-protection, 8% by revenge and only 1% of the perpetrators "wished to save the world" from undesirable groups (Roxell, 2011:203). In the case of young offenders, researchers have usually found prejudices harbored against a number of minorities. In their case, a high level of intolerance was associated with parents' poor education and low social status, troubled family life and, at the personal level, by restlessness, aggression and the lack of empathy, as well as poor school performance. (Roxell, 2011:202). These circumstances are also used as a vulnerability factor in criminal behavior. Roxell's own research focused on xenophobe, anti-Islam and homophobe attackers registered by the Swedish police in 2006, charged with assault, threats and molestation, with special regard to accomplices and specialization in hate crimes (Roxell, 2011:198, 205). The available data on offenders covered age, gender, past criminal records and involvement as an accomplice (Roxell, 2011:199).

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8 This was one of the possible explanations for a wave of violence against foreigners in the newly unified Germany in the 90s.

9 In connection to the Roma murders in Hungary, one cannot ignore Jobbik's discourse and the effect of extremist organizations of the type of the Hungarian Guard that radicalized public life.

10 The relationship between the political-opportunity structure and the elite is complex, because the elite is simultaneously a part of and promoter of the structure, or perhaps the preventer of racist incidents caused by the structure.

11 Although based on most criminological data and research the offenders are usually "strangers", according to the author this largely depends on the definition of "strangeness". For it is possible that while there is no personal acquaintance between the victim and the offender, some offenders included in the study live in the same neighborhood as the victim, went to the same school or worked at the same place (Roxell, 2011:201).

Research findings show that the overwhelming majority of the offenders were men known to the majority of their victims.[12] Although most of the hate crimes committed in 2006 were xenophobic in nature, the perpetrators of crime against homosexuals had the lowest average age and 55% of the suspects were repeat offenders, there is no significant difference regarding the age, gender or criminal record of those committing such criminal acts. The committed crimes are associated almost exclusively with "lone offenders" showing no sign of specializing in hate crime (Roxell, 2011:212).

Marshall H. Medoff uses the rational decision theory to analyze the economic/demographic factors motivating hate crime (Medoff, 1999). Medoff starts with the assumption that the level of hate crime decreases with a rise in (1) market income, (2) the value put on time, (3) age and (4) the fight against crime (Medoff, 1999:959).[13] For the most part, the findings have supported the underlying hypotheses. Hate crimes have a negative correlation with the unemployment rate, the percentage of the 15-29 age group in the total population, the given country's liberal attitudes and the level of education. A negative correlation was seen in relation to the level of market income. At the same time, the intensity of law-enforcement and religious beliefs had no significant effect on hate crime, just as urbanization, low employment status, social mobility showing a downward trend, all considered to be typical causes behind hate crime, were not seen as major contributing factors either (Medoff, 1999:970). Of all the findings, the correlation between a liberal ideology and high level of education with the number of crime incidents requires further elucidation. According to the economic theory, the cost of producing one unit of hate crime is the lowest in liberal states with the most tolerant attitudes, for in these states the identification of potential victims is easier and marginal costs for offenders are the lowest. A higher level of education similarly contributes to the identification of criminal acts: those with more education (states with such population) usually express more tolerant and liberal political views. (Medoff, 1999:967).

Matt E. Ryan and Peter T. Leeson studied the empirical correlation between the existence of extremist groups and hate crime in the United States (Ryan-Leeson, 2011). The research compared the number of hate groups (e.g., KKK and neo-Nazis) identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center with the FBI's Hate Crime Statistics state-by-state indicator for the period between 2002 and 2008. A number of demographic and economic variables were used in the research[14], in part as control and in part as independent variables (Ryan-Leeson, 2011:257). The research tested the "frustration-aggregation" thesis, postulating that people experiencing economic difficulties take out their frustration on defenseless social groups (Ryan-Leeson, 2011:255).

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12 Although in only 30% of the cases could the offenders even be identified.

13 The social-economic data came from the Statistical Abstract of the United States 1996 and the U.S. Bureau of the Census, State Reports 1996, and hate crime figures were based on FBI Uniform Crime Reports 1995 database (Medoff, 1999:871).

14 Economic variables include unemployment rate, the number of those living under the official poverty line and the gross state product per capita (GSP). Demographic variables: the percentage of urban residents, the percentage of Afro-American and Jewish minorities, the percentage of those abused under the age of 18. Official demographic data for the period under review come from the Statistical Abstract of the United States database.

The selection of demographic indicators relied on past observations, according to which urbanization is conducive to crime, the incident of hate crime is directly related to the size of minority populations and people subject to abuse as children are more likely to become criminals (Ryan-Leeson, 2011:257). The findings did not offer proof for the conclusive role of either extremist groups or economic/demographic factors in the commitment of hate crimes. The number of extremist groups did not or barely showed a significant correlation with the level of hate crimes. As predictive indicators, economic factors indicated nothing but a weak correlation, while demographic indicators could not be used for this purpose at all (Ryan-Leeson, 2011:262). In light of Medoff's paper referred to above, it is interesting to see the weak predictive effect of general economic and demographic variables on crime. However, it is clear that research by both Ryan and Medoff demonstrate the effects of certain economic indicators, and even though urbanization, the percentage of minorities, social status and mobility are typically identified as major causes of crime motivated by racism, they do not appear to be significant. Moreover, even the role of specific factors (e.g., religion, education and political attitude) may be interpreted only at the organizational level or in a broader social context.

Research looking at the underlying causes of violence in Western European and political violence also turned to the rational decision theory to uncover economic factors. An analysis by Raul Caruso and Friedrich Schneider compared data[15] from 12 countries for the period between 1994 and 2007 (Caruso-Schneider, 2011). Simultaneously, the authors tried to uncover "factors creating opportunities for terrorism over the long term" and the brutality of these acts (Caruso-Schneider, 2011:37). Their economic explanation placing the concept of opportunity cost[16] in the center starts with the assumption that the number and brutality of terrorist acts (based on the number of those killed or injured in these acts) is determined by a negative outlook and a drop in present or future prospects for economic success. With this the "opportunity cost" of participating in a terrorist act decreases as the gap in profits from unproductive terrorism and productive activity becomes narrower (Caruso-Schneider, 2011:48). According to the economic "deprivation model" of terrorism, poverty and income inequality make deprived groups more frustrated, and make participation in terrorist acts "worthwhile" in their eyes. According to the "immiserizing modernization theory", economic development puts some social groups at a disadvantage, i.e., for them the "opportunity cost" of terrorism decreases (Caruso-Schneider, 2011:38).

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15 France, UK (incl. Northern Ireland), Spain, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Austria, Belgium, Ireland, Switzerland and Sweden.

16 The opportunity cost is a special cost; it is incurred when with the choice of a line of business we relinquish other equally profitable opportunities.

The authors took into account present (unemployment, inflation, productivity and the openness of the economy) and future variables (investment-rate and youth employment rate) influencing economic opportunities to explain the number of terrorist acts and the number of injured in such acts as independent variables, as well as political variables associated with terrorism based on professional literature (mandate fragmentation, the duration and consistency of policy and voter participation).[17] Based on the findings, the study of factors influencing terrorism resulted in the reinforcement of the deprivation and the modernization theses alike. In the case of the deprivation thesis, strong negative correlation was found between economic conditions and the level of terrorism. For instance, a 1% increase in the GDP decreased terrorist acts by 1.64%, and the same increase in productivity decreased terrorism by close to 5%. The negative effects of modernization are indicated by a positive correlation between terrorism and investments (as expected future economic growth potential) and youth unemployment (as frustration pointing to the future). A 1% growth in GDP-rated investment is associated with 3% and a 1% rise in youth unemployment to 0.5% increase in terrorist acts. Interestingly, the fragmentation of parliamentary mandates among the parties, i.e., the fragmentation of the political system, is also positively associated with the number of terrorist acts (Caruso-Schneider, 2011:44). Factors responsible for economic growth also offer an explanation for the brutality of terrorism: according to the authors, in developed countries with a high rate of income terrorists also wish to be more effective and productive. The staying power of governments also shows a positive correlation with the brutality of terrorist acts. The authors maintain that in the case of durable and stable governance the brutality of terrorists may also increase in order to elicit more attention and support from the population (Caruso-Schneider, 2011:48). In short, the study's economic theses shed light on the effect of economic inequality on political instability and political violence.

The theoretical summary is followed by empirical analyses of two different databases that include data on violent behaviour with the aim to reveal determining factors of political violence. While empirical results correlate with some findings of the theoretical models, the limits of empirical research are also highlighted.

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17 The data had been provided by the Global Terrorism Database, Penn world tables, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (ILO-KILM), the Polity IV and a Comparative Political Data Set III databases. Due to similarities in the countries' educational level, the research did not make use of education and educational attainment indicators that may also be linked to terrorism.

While, from the point of both fundamental and applied research, measuring the acceptance of political violence is a salient issue, relatively little relevant information is available on the topic, which is essential if one considers that the measurement of propensity poses a number of methodological challenges. It is interesting to note, however, that although it is not easy to identify groups ready to accept violence (e.g., vulnerable to recruitment by extremist organizations), there are general tendencies that can be recognized regardless of the methods applied. Below we present the relevant findings of a survey based on a Hungarian representative sample (Konfliktusmonitor) and that of the 2008 European Values Survey.

Konfliktusmonitor database

Based on a sample of 1011 responses to the statement, "Violence is acceptable if it serves a noble cause", we established two groups. 178 agreed with the statement (17.6%) and 589 rejected it (58.29%). Those placing themselves in the middle on a scale of five or declined to give an answer were left out of the comparison. The group agreeing with the statement included more men and people with less education than the group of those expressing their disagreement, although with respect to age there was no significant difference between the two. The distribution of answers showed the strongest relationship with the following statement: "I would rather be a prominent than a happy person". We also studied the relationship between the acceptance of violence and social dominance orientation (SDO). Based on the findings, the group accepting violence achieved a higher score on the SDO scale's social dominance sub-scale, although the difference is insignificant along the equality preference. There are fewer apparent differences with respect to satisfaction with life and the assessment of family background. While the group accepting violence can be said to be more satisfied with life, they see the family as more rigid, rejecting and punishing.

One of the most interesting correlations is seen in relation to the scale measuring nationalist feelings. Creating a single scale containing 20 items, we have found that the group accepting violence achieved a somewhat higher score in terms of nationalist feelings. For an in-depth study of the correlation we subjected these items to a factor analysis dividing them in two groups: separating positive views of one's own group from negative statements related to the outgroup. While there is no difference between those accepting and those rejecting violence with respect to positive feelings related to one's own group, a negative perception of the outgroup is more characteristic of those accepting violence. The group accepting violence also differs from other respondents in the sample in such complex attitudes as the assessment of historical events.

Looking at the group's socio-demographic and attitudinal characteristics, the most important conclusion is that with the application of a single, not particularly strongly worded item, one might successfully identify a sub-sample holding slightly distinct opinions.

Considering that the group accepting violence can be characterized with higher social dominance orientation, a more negative assessment of the outgroup, a stronger sense of mission, less accepting family background and, compared to the total sample, a unique historical understanding, one can state that these connections mostly known from qualitative research can also be demonstrated statistically. Also, it is an interesting intermediate result that the life satisfaction in the sub-sample, which accepts violence more, is higher than in the other sub-group. This phenomenon may be explained by a higher social dominance and a denigration of the outgroup, referring altogether to a system-justification. However, the interpretation of the cited findings is limited by two important factors. The first, clearly apparent problem is caused by slight discrepancies found in descriptive statistics. However, the publication is justified by the fact that these relations show a logically and substantively consistent pattern. The other special feature is that the interpretation of the findings would be greatly facilitated if the party preferences and political orientation of the respondents were known. However, such data is not available.

European Values Study

The analysis below was based on the following statement in the 2008 European Values Study (EVS): "Terrorism under certain circumstances can be justified/must be always condemned/neither". We compared groups choosing the first or the second option; first in the entire sample and then, to identify potential differences between specific countries, in some sub-samples as well. Based on looking at socio-demographic backgrounds and the aggregate data of countries participating in the survey, there are more men and young people among those accepting violence under certain circumstances than among those rejecting violence. The group that accepts terrorism considers work, family and religion less important, and looks at leisure and politics as more important. Accordingly, this group shows more interest in politics and is more likely to discuss political issues. As for the level of political activity, members of the group show strong interest in all forms of political activity (they have either already attended or would like to attend the listed political activities) The most pronounced difference is that they are less likely to oppose unofficial strikes or the occupation of a building/factory than the rest of the sample. The sub-samples also show the difference in respect to various political systems. Those more ready to accept terrorism are less opposed to a strong leader or rule by a technocratic government or the army.[18] In light of all the above, it is hardly surprising that they have less confidence in democratic institutions as well. We compared the distribution of responses to the acceptability of terrorism with opinions on immigrants (5 items in all), marriage, religion, sexual orientation and abortion (20 items in all). The data show that the group more likely to accept violence under certain circumstances sees immigrants as less threatening, is more tolerant of them and, based on the other set of questions, has a generally more accepting attitude. This intermediate result justified a comparison of the two groups along a number of other variables considered to reflect traditional social values (e.g., cohabitation, attitudes on parenthood, and the right of homosexual couples to adopt children). Additional studies have also demonstrated that in general the group accepting violence is more accepting and less tradition-bound.

18 The biggest discrepancy was seen in respect to the army. 'Democracy' was the fourth alternative in the questionnaire.

Similar to the observations offered by the Konfliktusmonitor database, it is evident here as well that screening along a single item is already sufficient to perform certain basic analyses, although discrepancies seen in descriptive statistics are not spectacular here either. The profile of those more accepting of terrorism shows the outlines of a group more open to political topics and even specific actions, while more critical of the democratic system currently in place.

However, the reliability of these findings can be questioned on several counts, especially since the differences between the two groups cannot be said to be significant. It is conceivable that the observed differences come from the fact that those more accepting of violence are also less likely to follow social norms, i.e. social exigencies have less of an effect on them.

Below, we show the differences between specific countries along the variables presented above. In our analysis we focused on whether differences between specific countries can be shown based on the factors related to the acceptance of violence. If the goal is the development of an internationally applicable measuring tool, this is an extremely important issue. The highest rates of respondents saying that terrorism was acceptable under certain circumstances were seen in Finland, Greece and Romania. Looking at attitudes towards immigrants, confidence in institutions, the overall "justifiability" of divorce, homosexuality and abortion, we saw the following results. In the case of Finland no significant differences were detected in respect to immigrants, although there were differences when it came to confidence in institutions and the "justifiability" phenomena listed above. Moreover, a higher level of political discourse can also be demonstrated. In Greece the two groups, those accepting and those rejecting violence, differ along the issues of immigrants, confidence in institutions and justifiability. Romania represents a marked exception; there is no difference between the two groups in respect to the perception of immigrants, the level of confidence in institutions or political discourse and, in fact, of the three countries Romania is the only one where the power of the army is rejected by significantly fewer people otherwise accepting violence than in the other sub-sample.

Due to the political nature of the phenomenon under review these groups are worth comparing based on their political orientation and party preferences. The EVS database features the following variables on this topic: political orientation (left-right self-definition on a scale of 10), party preference and party preference converted to the left-right self-definition scale. In respect to ideological bent, two issues can be considered: its direction (right or left) and its intensity. If we assume that support for both left- and right-wing extremism goes hand-in-hand with the acceptance of political violence, it is reasonable to apply a so-called intensity scale that, in practical terms, means the recoding of respondents' original self-definition, where radical and moderate positions are positioned in the same place, regardless of their left or right orientation. Below we will present differences demonstrated with the help of the traditional left-right scale and party preference, as well as with the intensity scale referred to above.

In all four countries one sees a drift to the left by the group accepting violence, and the only difference is seen in the magnitude of the shift compared to the total sample. It is also interesting to note that while people put in the sub-sample typically place themselves in a more committed ideological positions (farther from the center) although not necessarily in extremist positions. One of the most important observations in connection with the listed results is that if one is to see the reasons behind the acceptance of political violence clearly, differences between specific countries must be taken into account. In other words, political activity in the given country and its relationship to democracy cannot be left out of the analysis and the interpretation of the results. The findings related to political radicalism must be treated with caution because, as has been shown in previous analyses, the sub-sample more accepting of violence can be characterized with more tolerant attitudes in general (presumably not independent of orientation).

Measurement problems

The reported data and findings have demonstrated serious deficiencies when it comes to the targeted identification of individuals potentially supporting/committing political violence and the measurement of the acceptance of the use of force. However, in light of the above, some salient observations can still be made with respect to the methods applied.

The first question is whether it's worth calling the object of the measurement by its proper name. It may be reasonable to ask about the advantages and disadvantages of using direct wording. In the EVS database the featured item asks about a rather extreme sub-case of political violence. Due to the purported distorting effect of adhering to social norms, it may contribute to a situation where fewer respondents give an affirmative answer.[19] However, it may be useful if those not "petrified" by such wording are put in the same group, as this way we presumably end up with a sub-sample with more cases. In turn, this makes future analysis considerably easier. The use of a wide open question leads to situation where, in some cases, so few people end up in a sub-sample that it makes it unsuitable for developing conclusions supported by proper testing. In an earlier World Values Survey (WVS) database one finds a more general statement: *"The use of violence for political ends can never be justified".* Provided that we accept the comparison of these two databases compiled at different times, it is evident that this wording elicited less resistance from participants, therefore, this time more people expressed their acceptance of violence (in this case answering 'I agree/I don't agree').

The Konfliktusmonitor questionnaire also uses a different language where, instead of political ends, the question refers to "*a noble cause*". There is also a significant difference between the options made available to respondents. In the case of the EVS participants, they may essentially choose between answered questions, raising the problem that their wording may inspire respondents to give answers more in line with accepted standards.

19 In the case of a survey looking specifically at the acceptance of violence, the need may arise for the control of social desirability applied in some fashion. Professional literature offers a number of tools for the task, such as the lie-scale applied in Kruglanski's Need for Closure scale (1993) allowing the filtering of individuals trying to conform to norms in the extreme.

The WVS and the Konfliktusmonitor databases already operated with different levels of agreement with the statement, although there is an important difference here as well: in the case of the former the wording is in reverse and there is no median score (a 4- and 5-point scale). In the identification of vulnerable groups, the role of factors indicating a correlation cannot be ignored under any circumstance. These may refine the prediction of readiness to accept violence by an individual. Starting with the simplest one, socio-demographic variables play an important role in this context. The role of various attitudes cannot be ignored either (e.g., political interest or political orientation). However, it is also extremely important to mention the ethical aspects of measuring. When interpreting the findings one must always keep in mind that the classification is based on answers given to a single item that does not automatically justify labeling some respondents as people "inclined to accept violence". A survey of this kind carries a great risk of stigmatization.

Overall, in the databases referred to above little role is given to personality traits examined in qualitative research. Thus, it is difficult to conclude whether or not these are actually associated with the acceptance of political violence. However, a reliable interpretation of the findings definitely requires an attitude assessment related to "general" violence that, in turn, could serve as a kind of "benchmark" in the study of political violence. It is easy to concede that individuals with a higher level of aggression are more likely to give an affirmative answer to an item tied to political violence. Aside from the fact that relatively few people are included in the group of those showing more readiness to accept violence, it should not be ignored that this group is not homogenous either. The major difference is the social context itself, as it also became evident during the presentation of the findings that in each country the phenomenon may have a different attitudinal background. National or regional characteristics, such as the level of political activity or cultural differences expressed in commonly accepted standards, make a definite difference.

Conclusions

Data from empirical analysis appear to reinforce earlier explanatory models and research findings on hate crime. In line with psychological, sociological and economic models, groups of those more prone to violence primarily include young people, people with economic and social handicap and mostly men. Factors leading to a development of an authoritarian personality also come into play both at the individual and the group level (e.g., a rigid family background, social dominance and hostility towards the outgroup). Support for strong leaders and the army, a lack of confidence in democratic institutions, an emphasis on national feelings and a higher level of political activity are all part and parcel of the political rationale and mobilization. An alternative interpretation of historical events can be identified as a component of a "historical-cultural" mindset. At the same time, some items cannot be logically associated with a higher acceptance of violence in some groups. An example of this is the assessment of work, family or leisure time and, in fact, a more tolerant attitude towards immigrants, resulting in findings that defy expectations.

And with this we have come to one of the central conclusions of empirical analysis: the acceptance of political violence, the measurement of related attitudes and identification based on these findings does not mean that someone would actually commit such acts. Therefore, the definition of vulnerable groups and screening for predictive factors is possible only by considering additional social contexts.

Group-level measurement fundamentally assumes that micro-level individual attributes, conditions and attitudes come into play within the framework of micro- or mezzo-level families, various groups and institutions, even as at the macro level the given group's hierarchical or perhaps equal relation to other groups and the place it occupies in the social structure and the market, etc., remain determining. Groups and institutions offer the individual the immediate environment that, through tolerant or racist norms and behavior patterns, may fundamentally determine the expression of personal attitudes, their translation into action or the lack of peer groups, i.e., integration may contribute to the development of deviant behavior. An analysis of specific Facebook pages allows for the targeted identification of difficult-to-measure and marginalized groups and individuals, and a search for politically motivated subjects particularly susceptible to hate crime. In turn, with a better understanding of the social context, the nature of these groups allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the findings.

The inclusion of the group represents a change from traditional explanations suggested by criminological data, which explanation is based on a disorganized social strata at a lower level of socialization, emotionally-motivated individuals in a state of deprivation and beyond social control (whether individually or as members of a group) who are predisposed to commit hate crime. As part of the findings, research taking advantage of community and institutional contexts may even arrive at conclusions that defy expectations (e.g., an interpretation of state statistics on a high level of education) and, in fact, from a criminological point may associate anti-specific factors (high status, income and no criminal record) with criminal acts that carry a predictive power only through collective mediation.

CAPI and CAWI research

Based on the lessons of available data and literature on hate crime, we conducted our own empirical research to develop a new approach to measure the justification and glorification of political violence. With the help of two different types of surveys we examined attitudes towards violence in general and violent acts in particular, the acceptance of those acts and, in general, opinions on and attitudes towards violence in Hungary and the UK in 2014. One of the methods used was a personal survey (from now on referred to as 'CAPI'), which was conducted by Ipsos in Hungary and by Ipsos Mori in the UK as part of their regular omnibus survey. The other method applied was an online survey (from now on referred to as CAWI) developed by Demos UK. Respondents were recruited via Facebook ads asking for filling in the questionnaire. The ads were displayed on the Facebook pages of users who fall within the target groups defined during the preparation phase.

The aims of the research were twofold. On the one hand, using both traditional and innovative research methods applied during our research, we wanted to answer the following questions: 1) which social groups accept and justify violence (driven mainly by political conviction and ideology) the most? 2) What demographic and social characteristics and attitudes lie behind the acceptance of political violence? We made every effort to make the surveys conducted in Hungary and the UK methodologically as similar as possible to help us get comparable results.

Personal interviewing research

A more extensive set of questions applied in the Hungarian CAPI research allowed for a deeper analysis of methodological questions concerning political violence. We examined the level of tolerance for violence in general and then took a closer look to see in what situations, to what extent and against which social groups people believe that the use of violence can be justified. The research presented factors of various socio-demographic variables, political interests and activities, general views about democracy and party preferences explaining the acceptance of political violence. - including various personality traits. We analyzed the effects of specific types of prejudice, such as anti-Roma sentiments, anti-Semitism, homophobia and xenophobia. Moreover, we closely examined the correlation between right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation and the acceptance of political violence – categories widely used in professional literature[20].

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20 See details in Political Capital: Measuring Political Violence, available online: http://www.politicalcapital.hu/wp-content/uploads/PC_ISEC_political_violence_study_eng_web.pdf

How interested are you in politics?

    have a great deal of interest
    have some interest
    have not very much interest
    have none
    DK

In the following, we are going to list possible situations and acts with which you can possibly express your opinion in questions regarding politics or society. What do you believe is a way to express your political or other opinion, disapproval from the following situations and which one(s) would you possibly partake in? So: Have you ever participated in gathering signatures, signing petitions in protest to something, or if you have not, can you imagine yourself doing so or do you believe you will never do that? And…?

	Have already done	Might do	Would never do	DK
Participate in gathering signatures, signing a petition				
Participate in an announced, lawful demonstration?				
Participate in an announced strike?				
Participate an announced, remonstrative political gathering				
Participate in the boycott of goods or stores				
Participate in road closure or any other action blocking traffic				
Join an unlawful strike				
Join an unlawful demonstration				
Participate in violent action to defend your opinion or values				
Participate in violent action if your livelihood was in danger				
Fight the police to protect your opinion and values				

	Have already done	Might do	Would never do	DK
Fight the police if your livelihood was in danger				
Defame an immoral politician, even in his presence				
If near one, would you hit or throw something at an immoral politician				
Participate in a demonstration only as a supporter (for example: standing up for LGBT people, rights of abused women, national causes, protection of rainforests)				
Try to convince others to join remonstrative acts you are partaking in as well				

How acceptable do you think the following acts are if they are done by others? So, how acceptable it is if someone participates in gathering signatures, signs a petition in protest to something: do you think it is completely acceptable, under some circumstances it is acceptable or under no circumstances is it acceptable? And…?

	Completely acceptable	Acceptable under certain circumstances	Under no circumstances is it acceptable	DK
Participate in gathering signatures, signing a petition				
Participate in an announced, lawful demonstration?				
Participate in an announced strike?				
Participate an announced, remonstrative political gathering				
Participate in the boycott of goods or stores				
Participate in road closure or any other action blocking traffic				

	Completely acceptable	Acceptable under certain circumstances	Under no circumstances is it acceptable	DK
Join an unlawful strike				
Join an unlawful demonstration				
Participate in violent action to defend your opinion or values				
Participate in violent action if your livelihood was in danger				
Fight the police to protect your opinion and values				
Fight the police if your livelihood was in danger				
Defame an immoral politician, even in his presence				
If near one, would you hit or throw something at an immoral politician				
Participate in a demonstration only as a supporter (for example: standing up for LGBT people, rights of abused women, national causes, protection of rainforests)				
Try to convince others to join remonstrative acts you are partaking in as well				

How do you feel about

the number of immigrants from other EU member states is reasonable, or
too low, or
too much?
DK

and

the number of immigrants from regions outside the EU is reasonable, or
too low, or
too much?
DK

Some people think that criminality is in the blood of Gypsies. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Agree strongly
Tend to agree
Tend to disagree
Disagree strongly
DK

Some people think that the majority of migrants are criminals. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Agree strongly
Tend to agree
Tend to disagree
Disagree strongly
DK

There are people to whom it is important to live in a democratically lead country, while there are others who do not think it is a priority and value other factors more. How important is it to you to live in a democratically lead country? Please, grade these statements on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 means it is the most especially important and one meant it is not at all important. You can give a more nuanced answer with the grades in between 1 and 10.

1 - not important at all					10 - especially important					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK

In your experience, how democratic is the leadership of your country today? Please, grade the statements again. 10 means 'completely democratic' and 1 means 'not democratic at all'.

1 - not democratic at all					10 - completely democratic					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK

In your experience, how well do human rights prevail in your country today? Please, grade the statements again. 10 means they 'prevail completely' and 1 means 'they do not prevail at all'.

1 - do not prevail at all					10 - prevail completely					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	DK

In the following, you will read pairs of sentences. There will always be two of them. There are people who agree with the first one, while others agree with the second one. Please, decide in each case which statement you agree with more.

1. *Under some conditions terrorism is the only means to express one's political opinion.*

2. *Terrorism is to be condemned under all conditions, regardless of its justification.*
   - o agree with the first statement
   - o agree with the second statement
   - o DK

1. *The main aim of democracy is that everyone should be able to express their opinion and political views, even if they are extremist ones.*

2. *Extremist political views, such as differentiating between people based on race, or giving someone a chance for delivering hate-speech should not be allowed, as such thinking is not compatible with democratic ideas.*
   - o agree with the first statement
   - o agree with the second statement
   - o DK

1. *Homosexual people are just like any other, they have the same rights to full and free life, just like others.*

2. *Homosexuality is unnatural, therefore space for these kinds of relationship should not be given.*
   - o agree with the first statement
   - o agree with the second statement
   - o DK

1. *Voting and the chance to vote are our democratic right that we have to exercise whenever there is a chance.*

2. *One vote in itself does not worth much, therefore, it does not matter whether we vote or not.*
   - o agree with the first statement
   - o agree with the second statement
   - o DK

1. *When it comes to objectives considered important by you, even violence can be used.*

2. *The use of violence is not justified by any objective.*
    o   agree with the first statement
    o   agree with the second statement
    o   DK

I will now read statements some people agree with, while some people do not. How much do you agree with the statements? Please, grade them on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means 'Agree strongly' and 1 means 'Disagree strongly'. You can give a more nuance answer with the grades between 1 and 5.

	5 – Agree strongly	4	3	2	1 – Disagree strongly	DK
Jewish people are going to stay alien to Hungarian society — they keep their culture and norms, and they do not accomodate to Hungarian lifestyle.						
Jews tend to extend their influence on the global economy						
Jews often operate in secret, behind the scenes						
Jews sometimes meet secretly to discuss issues important to them						
Jews aim to dominate the world						
Jews want to have a decisive voice in international financial institutions						
Jews achieve their group goals by plotting secret agreements						
Jewish people have no culture of their own and they try to copy the important things in the country where they live						

I would like to know your opinion on the following statements. Please, grade them again on the same scale, where 5 means 'Agree strongly' and 1 means 'Disagree strongly'

	5 – Agree strongly	4	3	2	1 – Dis-agree strongly	DK
Violence is sometimes needed to put other groups in their place.						
To advance in life, we sometimes have to marginalise other groups.						
Every patriot's duty is to step up against those condemned by the country's leaders.						
Nowadays those who do not respect their leaders and the order of society are the ones who harm society the most.						
Unethical relationships are the result of parents and teachers for-getting that physical punishment is still the best method of education.						
There should be less emphasis on religious doctrines, and we should decide what is ethical and what is not instead.						
Most problems in our society would be solved if we got rid of unethical and perverse people.						

Now I am going to list some goals. Please, state if you think the use of violence could be justified to reach the listed goals. So how justifiable do you think the use of violence is if the Hungarian nation faced a threat? Please, grade how justifiable violence is in these situations on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means 'Completely justifiable' and 1 means 'Completely unjustifiable'.

	5 – Completely justifiable	4	3	2	1 – Completely unjustifiable	DK
The Hungarian nation faced a threat						
The government oppressed its citizens						
There was an attempt to limit your personal freedom						
Environmental resources or the future of the next generation were threatened						
Social inequality become unbearable						
Your livelihood was threatened						
Your family faced dangers						

Now I am going to list some groups. Please, state if you think the use of violence could be justified against these groups. So how justifiable do you think the use of violence is against criminals? Please, grade again on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means 'Completely justifiable' and 1 means 'Completely unjustifiable'.

	5 – Completely justifiable	4	3	2	1 – Completely unjustifiable	DK
Criminals						
Terrorists						
Radical right-wing groups						
Radical left-wing groups						
Traitors and enemies of the nation						

Gypsies					
Politicians					
Banks					
Jews					
Multinational companies					
Drug addicts					
Those destroying nature					
Homosexuals					
Authoritarian leaders undermining democracy					

Measuring political violence – recommendations on methodology

Based on the findings of the Hungarian CAPI research, this section considers variables that, in our opinion, should be kept or rejected, including variables whose continued relevance should be reconsidered. We must call attention to a fundamental methodological problem. Since there has been no systematic measurement of social violence to date, we must rely on the findings of the present study as we develop our recommendations. It is important to note that the questionnaire is based on theories of prejudice and hate-crime, and on questions posed in other relevant studies, i.e., the development of the questionnaire was preceded by a long process of conceptualization and operationalization. With all that, the adequacy of our recommendations will have to be tested in future studies. Subsequent findings in this chapter shall be interpreted in that light.

To measure the public perception of political violence we used three pairs of propositions about democracy and political violence; wether "the end justifies the means"; and "support for terrorism as an extreme form of political violence". As it turned out, the variables used for measurement do not constitute a composite index.[21] However, the responses are scaled, i.e., if someone supports violence in the case of a "tougher" proposition, he would do the same with respect to "softer" indicators as well. In our case this means that the person who does not reject the use of terrorism is likely to believe that ends close to his heart justify violence, and that democracy and political violence are reconcilable.[22]

We approached the issue of political violence specifically from two angles. We wished to find out for what ends and against which people respondents believe violence can be justified. In this chapter of our study we try to identify variables that we believe can be dropped in future surveys.

Deletion may be justified in two cases. Either the variable in question is not related to or has but a weak connection to the dimension to be measured. Or it is redundant, i.e., compared to the other involved items it does not carry additional information, making its measurement in the presence of the other variables irrelevant. In both cases we apply two methods: an internal consistency study with the help of the Cronbach alpha calculator and a principal-component analysis. While the results are closely related[23], we believe that their simultaneous study may give our recommendations more substance.

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21 As it involves dichotomous variables, we measured the consistency of the index based on variables using the so-called Kuder-Richardson 20 (KR-20) formula. In studying index values, we used the maximum values accepted for Cronbach alpha. In the case of the three variables – KR-20 = 0,455. The item looking at the relationship between democracy and political violence has the weakest link to the rest, although the value of KR-20 is only 0.519 even after the removal of this item.

22 We measured the scale structure with the reproducibility coefficient. This shows the percentage of the original responses that can be reproduced based on scale scores created with the help of variables. According to the accepted rule of thumb, the index must have a minimum value of 0.9. In our case this came to 0.94, which means that based on the scale scores 94% of the responses can be reproduced.

23 However, it is an important difference that while the principal-component analysis serves for the creation of weight-cumulated indices, the Cronbach alpha calculates with an index created through the aggregation of the variable with specific weight.

We have also studied correlation coefficients[24] in all cases, although it is important to note that their analysis alone would not have yielded results because this only describes the paired relationship of the variables.

Variables unrelated to dimensions

In the course of testing we took into account the following methods:

Cronbach alpha

1. *Corrected Item-Total Correlation: the value belonging to one variable shows the correlation between the given item and the index from other items based on aggregation. In this case we considered a value of 0.2 as clearly problematic, and between 0.21-0.3 as slightly problematic.*

2. *Cronbach's Alpha if Item deleted index: for all variables it shows the value of Cronbach alpha if the variable in question were deleted. In this case we try to find out whether there is a variable whose removal would increase the Cronbach alpha value.*

Principal-component analysis

1. *We looked at communalities. Communalities under 0.25 were taken as a clear sign of non-dimensionality. Moreover, we found it intriguing when the communality of one variable fell short of that of other variables. We also looked at how much the information content increases by with their removal.*

In the case of ends, based on the Cronbach alpha index we found no variable we would recommend for deletion without hesitation. However, when it comes to the analysis of communalities, in the case of the variables „When the Hungarian nation comes under threat" and "If your family is threatened" the values we found were lower than those of other variables[25]. Fundamentally, these two variables proved to be more difficult to define because in this case the rate of those sharing the same opinion is high, i.e., presumably even those who, on the whole, reject violence would agree with these statements. Based on the aggregate data one may draw the conclusion that in themselves these variables would be absolutely unsuitable to measure the acceptance of political violence for various ends, but used together with the others they clearly belong to the dimension to be measured. However, if we have to get rid of one of the items (e.g., to shorten the questionnaire), we definitely recommend their deletion. Taking all that into account, in international surveys we would rather recommend the removal of the item related to family because the positions taken on the other one may be more subject to the given country's value system.

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24 This is all the more logical because both Cronbach alpha and the principal-component analysis are based on that.

25 73% of the information preserved by the main component that includes all variables. With the removal of the first variable mentioned it increases by 3, with that of the second by 2 and with the simultaneous removal of both by 5 percentage points.

In the case of groups, based on Cronbach alpha analysis we cannot recommend the deletion of any single variable.[26] Based on the principal-component analysis, the communalities of questions related to criminals, terrorists and homosexuals fall far short of that of other variables, although all exceed 0.25.[27]

Redundant variables

When testing these, we considered the followings

> Cronbach alpha

> 1. *Corrected Item-Total Correlation: we considered variables characterized by a value of over 0.8 to be redundant, those with a value of over 0.85 as highly redundant.[28]*

> Principal-component analysis

> 1. *We looked at communalities. Exceptionally high communalities were seen as a sign of redundancy. We also investigated by how much the information content increases with their removal.*

In the case of ends, based on Cronbach alpha values the following items are considered redundant[29]:

> *"When inequalities become unbearable within society."*

> *"If someone wants to limit your personal freedom."*

> *"If the government oppresses its citizens."*

The principal-component analysis also shows that their communality stands out.[30] In the case of ends we don't necessarily believe that due to redundancy the variables should be dropped, although if it becomes necessary, we recommend the ones referred to above.[31] In the case of an international survey, a selection among these variables may also be determined by prevailing conditions in the country under review.

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26 Incidentally, in respect to ends and here as well the reason is that these variables are closely related to each other.

27 59% of the information is preserved by the main component that includes all variables. The three items referred to here were left out in the development of the composit index created and analyzed earlier. With the removal of the item related to criminals the information content preserved in the main component increased by 1, with the removal of the item related to terrorists by 2 and with that related to homosexuals by 1 percentage points. The simultaneous removal of all three variables resulted in a 5 percentage point increase.

28 Professional literature urges reflection already at values over 0.75.

29 The proposition "If natural resources and the future of the next generation are threatened" is at the borderline.

30 Based on multiple correlation coefficients characterizing variables, the variable measuring the first recommended item is explained by the other variables by 72%, the second by 70% and the third by 75%.

31 The decrease of the reserved information amount doesn't reach even 1% if these are deletedd one by one or together.

In the case of groups, the Cronbach alpha analysis does not show significant redundancy and looking at communalities we didn't find any high peaks either. Earlier we saw that in this set of variables the amount of information preserved by the main component was also much smaller. The question is raised whether the position of these groups differs from each other, in other words whether there are sets of groups whose positions are more related to each other than that of other groups. The answer is, yes, there are.[32] The strongest correspondence can be seen when it comes to the acceptance of violence against extremist rightist and leftist groups.[33] The link between these variables is much stronger than that of any other variables.[34] The next significant nodal point is constituted by variables measuring the acceptance of violence against the following groups: politicians, banks, Jews and multinational companies.[35] It is also strongly related to the perception of politicians and authoritarian leaders[36], although the link is much weaker with the other three variables. The perception of criminals and terrorists also show a relatively strong relation.[37]

It is safe to say that variables showing strong correlation measure similar things[38], although these connections also greatly depend on the political situation and climate prevailing in the given country, and thus their removal carries definite risks. Moreover, we recommend that if closely related items are featured together in a survey, they should be placed at a distance from each other in the questionnaire. If the analysis of various situations becomes important, an effort could be made to find a more accurate definition of these nodal points in a future study as well.

If the question to be answered is whether a survey of situations or groups is more relevant, we would opt for the former. Analyses appear to suggest that the explanatory power of the latter is already subsumed in the former, i.e., when the two were featured simultaneously in models and the former was kept under control, the effect of the latter was insignificant.

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32 We performed the analysis with an examination of the correlation coefficient. With the help of Maximum Likelihood factor analysis we also examined whether there is a latent structure behind the positions of various group types, although the fit of the factor model and its interpretability were not adequate.

33 The value of the correlation coefficient between the variables is 0.862. Incidentally, this is the highest value of them all.

34 Interestingly, if we look at them together it is related to variables measuring the acceptance of violence against criminals and drug addicts. Radical leftist groups are also linked to the perception of authoritarian leaders threatening democracy. While this may be attributed to historical reasons, it is interesting to note that the perception of the radical right is much less related to this. (All highlighted correlations are above 0.5.)

35 In this instance, the paired correlations to each other exceed 0.7 in all cases. The perception of a link between Jews and multinational companies is exceptionally strong: in this case the correlation is 0.814.

36 The correlation coefficient is 0.717.

37 The correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.793.

38 With all that, the social background of the perception of right and left radical groups may differ from each other.

With respect to the commitment of violent acts we found it potentially irrelevant to query about this because the percentage of those who had already have and even of those who would contemplate to commit such acts in the future is negligible.

This was demonstrated even in the case of questions related to political activism bordering on political violence[39].

Factors predisposing one to accept political violence

Earlier studies clearly show that the acceptance of political violence is fundamentally motivated by divergent personal traits, such as right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation and prejudice. In the latter category in Hungary, anti-Roma attitudes and anti-Semitism proved to be major explanatory variables. On the other hand, the weak explanatory power of anti-migrant sentiment may be attributed in part to the similarity of the variable's wording with that of the anti-Roma variable. However, it is even more notable that, compared to countries characterized by strong anti-migrant sentiment and where the ideology of far-right parties is also dominated by that attitude, there are few immigrants in Hungary. This also means that in an international study the anti-migrant variable or set of variables should not be ignored by any means.

Since in the current survey, when looking at anti-Semitism, we essentially measured belief in Jewish world conspiracy we cannot say to what extent other dimensions of anti-Semitism would have affected attitudes toward political violence. However, based on earlier studies and recent findings, we assume that a reduction has been the right decision. In the Measuring Political Violence study (Political Capital, 2015) we said that when developing the composite index we had to leave out one of the items[40] measuring Jews' outsider status and, in our opinion, the removal of the other item[41] would render the index even more consistent.

When measuring right-wing authoritarianism or RWA we had to leave out the statement related to traditional religious values, although the remaining variables gave a sufficient picture of this personality trait. Based on the models, the SDO proved to be extremely important and as a result we recommend the inclusion of additional items for its measurement.

In short, it is important to see that the effects of the respondent's demographic features, party preference and political activism follow from his personality traits that, in turn, are closely related to these variables.

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39 The vilification and defamation of a corrupt politician, even in his presence, and more directly, throwing things at or hitting a corrupt politician.

40 "Jews don't have their own culture, they try to appropriate important things in their country of residence."

41 Jews have remained foreigners in Hungarian society – they preserved their old culture and norms, and refuse to adopt a Hungarian lifestyle." The variable's commonality is 0.607, while that of all other variables is over 0.805. With the removal of the variable the information content of the principal component increased by 5 percentage points.

If the need arises for a more detailed study of the associative space of political violence, we should look for other standardized tests identifying personality and showing a correlation with a propensity for the acceptance of violence. The application of such standardized tests is all the more practical because they can be used to great effect in international studies as well.

Online interviewing research

Demos has been collecting survey data from Facebook supporters of various political parties in the UK and Hungary.

Facebook allows third parties to design adverts which are shown to Facebook users who can be targeted based on the preferences or data they have shared on the site. We designed a series of adverts which ask users to complete a survey. Users who click on the survey are then redirected to a survey page where they are presented with a consent page; and then asked to complete the survey. We asked a series of questions relating to basic demographic data, social and political attitudes data and a series of questions relating to attitudes toward violence.

Data collection involved a survey recruitment design pioneered by Demos that uses Facebook to target people who 'Like' specific pages. Using the same techniques as in the *New Face of Digital Populism* and *New Political Actors in Europe* series (Demos, 2011 and 2012-13), surveys were conducted via Facebook. Facebook was selected because it is the most widespread and popular social media site in Europe, and political parties have a sizeable presence on the platform (particularly in respect of young people). Facebook allows adverts to be targeted at users based on their political preferences, although this is not always as precise as we would like (for example, it allows advertising directed at people who like categories such as a specific political party, but this tends to also include those who like similar parties too).

Targeted individuals were shown an advert on Facebook inviting them to click on a link to complete a survey. By clicking on the advert, participants were redirected to a digital survey page hosted by the website Survey Monkey, setting out the details and purpose of the surveys along with an invitation to take part. There was no monetary compensation for partaking in the surveys.

Data Collection Caveats

This recruitment technique allows the collection of a sizeable dataset from a largely unexplored group of individuals who are hard to recruit via traditional recruitment approaches. However, there are caveats to keep in mind.

First, the population is self-selected. It is thus hard to control for what groups partaking individuals affiliate with and how many individuals from a given group partake. While the survey is advertised to a broad population of individuals that affiliate with political groups on Facebook, there is no control over what individuals ultimately complete the survey. In this particular study, this left us with somewhat different data sets for the UK and Hungary, and in some instances we gained disproportionate numbers of responses from supporters of different parties.

Second, this study targets individuals who follow political parties on Facebook, and not political actors or activists themselves. Therefore, one ought to be careful about drawing generalisations about the parties and groups in question, as survey participants do not necessarily represent the groups in their entirety.

Third, Facebook's advertisement options do not allow the targeting of specific groups, but rather a collection of *similar* groups. Therefore, it is not possible to disaggregate respondents according to which Facebook advert reached them. Respondents are thus asked which political groups or movements they are most closely affiliated with and categorized accordingly.

This sample is not a perfectly representative sample of the population, nor is it a representative sample of Facebook users. This is a self-selecting survey, which means only those who chose to respond did so. Although the research team targeted adverts at users in a way to create a sample that was broadly similar to Facebook users in the UK and in Hungary as a whole (based on gender, age, and political affiliation), because of the way Facebook's targeted advertising functions, it is not possible to create a perfect sample. Self-selection also creates a potentially significant (and unknown) bias in the survey's responses. It is with these caveats that the results should be read.

Social Media Mapping

Why the role of social media is important in spreading extremist ideas

There has been a change over the last decade in the way people access, consume and produce media: a shift away from mainstream media and towards internet-based content and social media.

Radical right-wing parties and movements are well established as early and active users of social media, both as a way of producing cheap and rapid propaganda; creating a coherent group identity, and organising events and activities[42]. Although it is increasingly recognised that these groups are active users of social media, there is a lack of research into precisely how they use it.

Methodology

This study was conducted using both Facebook and Twitter. The reason both sites were used was because both are known to be popular with the groups in question; and both platforms allow researchers to collect and analyse data from them in a relatively easy and structured manner.

It is possible to manually collect social media data in a number of ways - copying, screen-shooting, note-taking, and saving web-pages. However, where large volumes of data are involved, the most appropriate method is to collect the data automatically. This is done through connection to a platform's 'Application Programming Interface' ('API'). The API is a portal that acts as a technical gatekeeper of the data held by the social media platform. They allow an external computer system to communicate with and acquire information from the social media platform. Each API differs in the rules they set for this access: the type of data they allow researchers to access, the format they produce this data in, and the quantities that they produce it in.

Some APIs can deliver past data stretching back months or years, whilst others only deliver very recent content. Some deliver a random selection of social media data taken from the platform, whilst others deliver data that matches the queries – usually keywords selected by the analyst - stipulated by the researcher. In general, all APIs produce data in a consistent, 'structured' format, and in large quantities. Facebook and Twitter's APIs also produce 'meta-data' – information about the data itself, including information about the user, their followers, and profile. This meta-data can be a rich source of information of value to social media researchers, often containing information on everything from the sender's device type, to their account creation date, location and social media following[43].

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42 See Demos (2012) *The New Face of Digital Populism* for an overview.
43 C Miller, 'Social Action on Social Media', Nesta Working Paper, Working Paper Series (Nesta: 2015)

There are several types of API access to Facebook data, most of which have been designed for app makers, such as Public Feed API, a Keyword Insights API, a Marketing API and Atlas API[44].   For this work we used the Public Feed API which allows researchers to access all data that has been posted on a public Facebook page. (Access to all Facebook data is predicated on the user's settings and who has agreed to share information with them. Facebook's privacy structures are complex - potentially, any single user can have a distinct privacy setting for every piece of data they share. The Public Feed API will only return data that is public).

Using the Public Feed API, we collected data from selected Facebook pages from the UK and from Hungary. We used 'R', an open source software that allows researchers to access publicly available data from public pages. These pages were handcrafted by the researchers who are subject matter specialists in the subject.

We also collected tweets via Twitter's 'stream' and 'search' application programming interfaces (APIs). The 'search' API returns a collection of relevant Tweets from an index that extends up to roughly a week in the past. The stream API continually produces tweets that contain one of a number of keywords to the researcher, in real time. Identifying specific accounts also allows researchers to collect the last 3,200 tweets from that account. These tweets are then returned to the researcher's own computer data set in a Json file, which can then be subjected to analysis. We analysed the data using a software package called Qlik. As for Facebook, we subjected the data to a series of analysis.

In neither instance did we attempt to collect or use any personal information about individuals; nor did we attempt to identify any individuals. We have obscured all account names and quotes to ensure no individuals are identified, and deleted all the data following the analysis. (Although a decision was taken to mention some large organisational accounts). The purpose was to understand the broad patterns of behaviour. For Facebook we did not collect any data from groups or from individual's pages; and we did not collect any data from closed pages. We did not attempt to collect or use any personal information about individuals; nor did we attempt to identify any individuals. Where a user's name or ID was collected inadvertently, it was deleted.

It is important to stress that these are in many cases quite experimental methodologies. There are no firmly established 'best practice' methods to collect and analyse data of this nature. Further, this was designed as a scoping study.

Strengths and weaknesses of these methodologies

There is a growing interest in the field of 'big data' analytics and how it can be applied for social science research – including the willingness to the study of radical groups and movements. There is a considerable amount of relevant and useful data available on social media platforms, particularly Twitter and Facebook (although there are many others). Typically, social media datasets are far larger than comparative datasets gathered through conventional polling, interviewing and surveying techniques.

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44 https://developers.facebook.com/docs/graph-api/other-apis

This often (although not always) means it requires automated systems to collect and analyse them and this creates new methodological challenges. Social media data are often – although not always – generated by users themselves, and sometimes contain personal data, and this also creates new ethical concerns.

Overall, while there has been a considerable growth in the type and nature of social media research – especially in the commercial and advertising sectors – there is no broadly accepted best practice for the methodology and ethics of how to collect, use, and present these data sets for academic and social science researchers. Established ways of researching attitudes have long histories of use. This experience has consolidated into a body of good practice – 'do's and 'don't's – that, when observed, ensures the quality of the research. Social media research does not have a long history of use, or a collective memory of what works and what doesn't. It uses new technologies in ways that are unfamiliar with social sciences, often with new and important implications for research.

This research has found that:

- Social media has become an important and active venue for a wide variety of populist right wing activity.

- However, although the network appears large, it is often led by a relatively small number of dedicated and active users.

- Nevertheless, these pieces of content can reach relatively large audiences outside their own network of users.

- They use both Facebook and Twitter extensively to discuss and share information about both mainstream and very niche political issues. It is common for these groups to share 'mainstream' information in order to reach a wider audience.

- For reasons discussed below, however, we are very hesitant to draw general conclusions based on these data sets about the offline composition of these groups.

In very general terms, most social media data tend to share the following broad features, which are useful in terms of deciding when and where it is (and where it is not) a potentially useful source. These are both positive and negative attributes of these data sets.

Strengths

Relational: Because most social media is premised on curated networks of users, most data include some information about the relationship between users. This can take several forms: for example, if a user follows another user; has posted to another user; has interacted with another user; or has shared another user's content. What these relationships mean remains an open research question.

Real or near-real time: Many social media platforms allow data to be collected as soon as it is posted. For example, on Twitter, researchers can access tweets as they are posted by users, making real time research work possible.

High volume, available at low (or even no) cost: One of the major benefits of this type of research work is that open social media data is available, often for free via APIs, and at very large scale.

A new way to understand these groups: Social media is an increasingly important way in which various groups – including radical groups – communicate with each other, share content, and build a sense of identity. It is, therefore, also a space that researchers need to understand in order to reach a better understanding of how they operate.

Reactive and indirect: Social media is often a reactive source of data; a space where people react to an event – either online or offline. This creates a dynamic relationship between media reports and stories and broader conversations which take place afterward; and creates new challenges in respect of accurately determining opinions and attitudes, which are often indirectly expressed.

Weaknesses

Demographic and self-selection biases: many social media users do not demographically represent wider populations (they remain slightly younger, and more urban than average). Anecdotal and small-scale research suggests they might also be more liberal than average. Moreover, even collected data often does not represent all users, because it appears that many users go on Twitter or Facebook to express a particular reaction to an event if they have a strong opinion about it, and so they are not necessarily a representative sample even within the platform.

Unpredictable: It can be extremely difficult to predict in advance the likely volume and data quality of social media data on any given subject. This can make it difficult to plan in advance what topics and subjects can be researched.

Forum specific biases: Social media spaces are new social spaces, which are characterised by their own norms and morals. For example, based on our research, Twitter is a medium characterised by humour, sharing stories, and anti-establishment sentiment. For a human analyst not habituated with certain memes or group specific language it can be very difficult to determine likely sentiment or underlying attitude. This is even more difficult, if not impossible, when training any automated system to recognise these very subtle distinctions.

Future uses

To sum up, we believe, if used with careful methods and caveats, this type of research can be very useful to better understand the nature and beliefs of groups – providing they have a presence on social media. In particular, we suggest it is of most value for the following purposes:

Understanding trends in thinking: Social media research offers a unique opportunity to understanding trends in thinking and beliefs within a group or set of groups. For researchers interested in how beliefs evolve over time – including in more or less violent directions – this type of research is invaluable.

Group response to events or flashpoints: Social media is a reactive platform. This means that much online traffic on both Twitter and Facebook tends to be driven by recent events, and individuals' responses to them. This also provides insight into the way a group responds to specific external stimuli, which, in turn, can help provide greater understanding of how certain events are likely to provoke a response.

Measure size and reach of content: Most social media data includes 'meta-data' such as volume of interactions, re-tweets or shares. This allows researchers to gauge the possible reach of certain pieces of content – and indeed what is popular content among users. This could be 'engagement' (for example, it might be the ratio of users who viewed the page and those who signed up, which is a useful proxy of potential reach. We have been able to measure this effectively; volume and exposure, such as how many posts are being produced on the topic, and how many unique users are discussing it? Or how large is the audience? Is hate speech being limited to isolated communities (either by the communities themselves or Facebook's personalisation algorithms)?

Understanding networks: Network maps are relatively easy to construct, and provide a useful illustration of influential accounts or users within a data set – either to measure one's own position or to identify other important stakeholders talking on a subject.

Counter-speech measures: While this report has focused on populist right-wing groups; the same approach can be applied to better understand users who are confronting or disagreeing with certain groups or ideas. This can be used to identify areas where the reach and engagement of this content could be increased.

On the whole, we are sceptical about these approaches as a way to 'predict' or 'spot' violent intention or behaviour. It is better understood as a useful research instrument for academic (and other) researchers, used in conjunction with other techniques. However, there are a number of challenges involved with using this research in a way that is useful for researchers, academics, and public policy specialists. Because it is a new discipline there are several considerations that should be taken into account when a decision is made whether to undertake this type of research or not.

Does the research question require social media data – and does it need to be automated? Based on the features of social media data as set out above, not all research questions require, or would benefit from, a social media component. A compelling case should be made as to why social media is a valid instrument of study for the research question, and why it is preferable to existing, more established research methods.

Clarity over data access: So called 'black box' data – where data is provided by a third party without clarity over methods, search terms used, or access levels - should be avoided wherever possible. This means that 'off the shelf' data analytics tools are likely to be less valuable than systems that allow researchers and analysts control over how the system operates.

Clarity over sampling methods: Data is sometimes acquired on social media platforms by something called key word matching. This is where data sets are trawled to identify and collect matches with (a) pre-determined word(s) or term(s). Because data are collected based on conversations rather than demographic or what we call 'topographic' details (for example, the power law features), it adds a high degree of uncertainty to the demographic background of any collected data set. These keywords can produce different kinds of problems – sometimes they are over-inclusive (and collect irrelevant data), and sometimes they are under-inclusive (and miss relevant data). In both these ways, keyword matching is inherently prone to systemic bias – meaning that the data collected and therefore the conclusions drawn, are affected in a non-random way by the search terms employed. With respect to data quality overall, it is important to make a distinction between internal and external validity. At present, for example, we do not believe Twitter is a valid instrument to conduct reliable, population-level opinion surveys. There are often significant problems with several types of self-selection bias in social media data and often no clear way to correct them. Statements making generalisations about overall public attitudes based on social media data sets – 'external validity' – should be made with extreme caution.

Adherence to research ethics: Conducting research using Twitter or Facebook data presents new ethical challenges in respect of how researchers should collect, store, analyse and present data. Because it is a new field of research, there are no widely accepted protocols and approaches for how to do this ethically. In the UK, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) principles of ethical research[45] is an excellent guide for conducting research of all kinds – and can be usefully applied to online as well as offline research. Social media research should adhere to research ethics standards set out by the ESRC's principles. The key questions are whether or not the research has sufficiently explained the risks and minimisation strategies for:

- The potential identification of individuals.

- Whether or not the research has sought informed consent, and, if not, why it is not considered necessary (ideally with reference to the expectation of privacy a research subject might have).

- Whether there is any possible harm to the individual, and what measures there are to minimise them.

- Whether techniques to 'cloak' or protect the identity of research subjects are necessary, and how that might adversely affect the quality of the research.

As a very general principle, where an individual is identifiable, explicit permission should be sought, unless a) it is clear that the subject has no expectation of privacy and b) the research will be significantly adversely affected unless the individual is identified.

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45 http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/

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