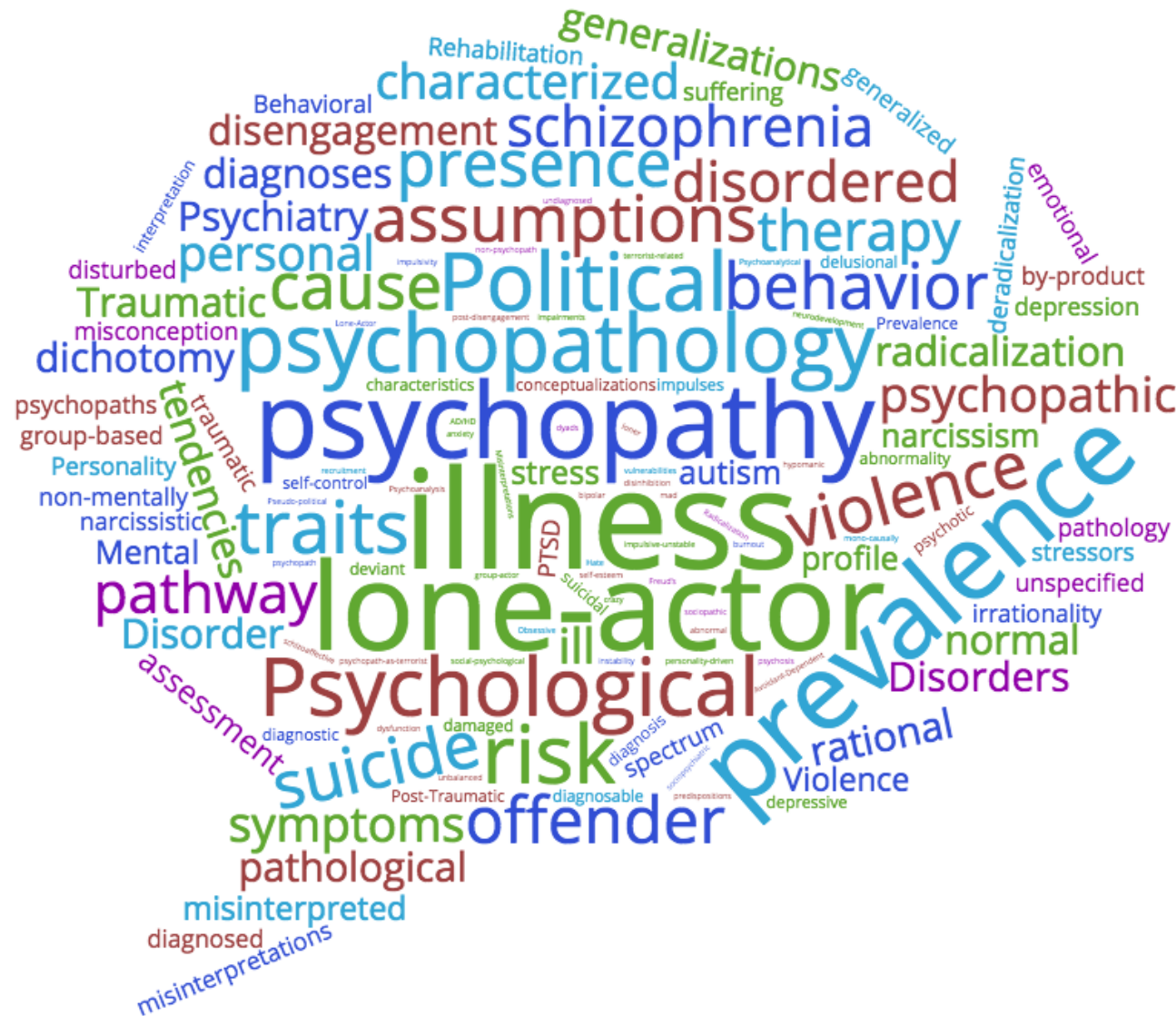


Terrorism and Psychopathology

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Psychopathology within Terrorism Research

“The boundaries between violent extremism and psychopathology are blurry. The boundaries of terrorism are invented, while the construct of mental disorder is being continuously revised”

Jenkins, 2013; p.11



It's a group phenomenon.
To search for individual characteristics in order to understand them is totally misleading. It will lead you to a dead end. Sageman (2004)



A False Dichotomy?

An act of targeted public violence is ***either*** carried out by a terrorist ***or*** a mentally ill individual.



How the terrorist is characterised

Aggregation and regression

How 'mental disorder' is characterised

Loss of specificity

The conflation between the mental disorder and irrationality and incapability

Stigma

Presumption of overarching explanatory power of one factor

‘Silver Bullet’



Expanding “The Terrorist”

Hewitt (2003)

Lone vs. Group

Disorder prevalence (22% vs. 8.1%)

Merari et al. (2010)

Suicide Bombers vs. Non-Suicide Terrorists

Suicide bombers more likely to be diagnosed with

avoidant-dependent PD, suicidal ideation, depressive tendencies

Grunewald et al. (2013)

Lone vs. Group (Right Wing)

Prevalence 40.4% vs. 7.6%

Corner & Gill (2015)

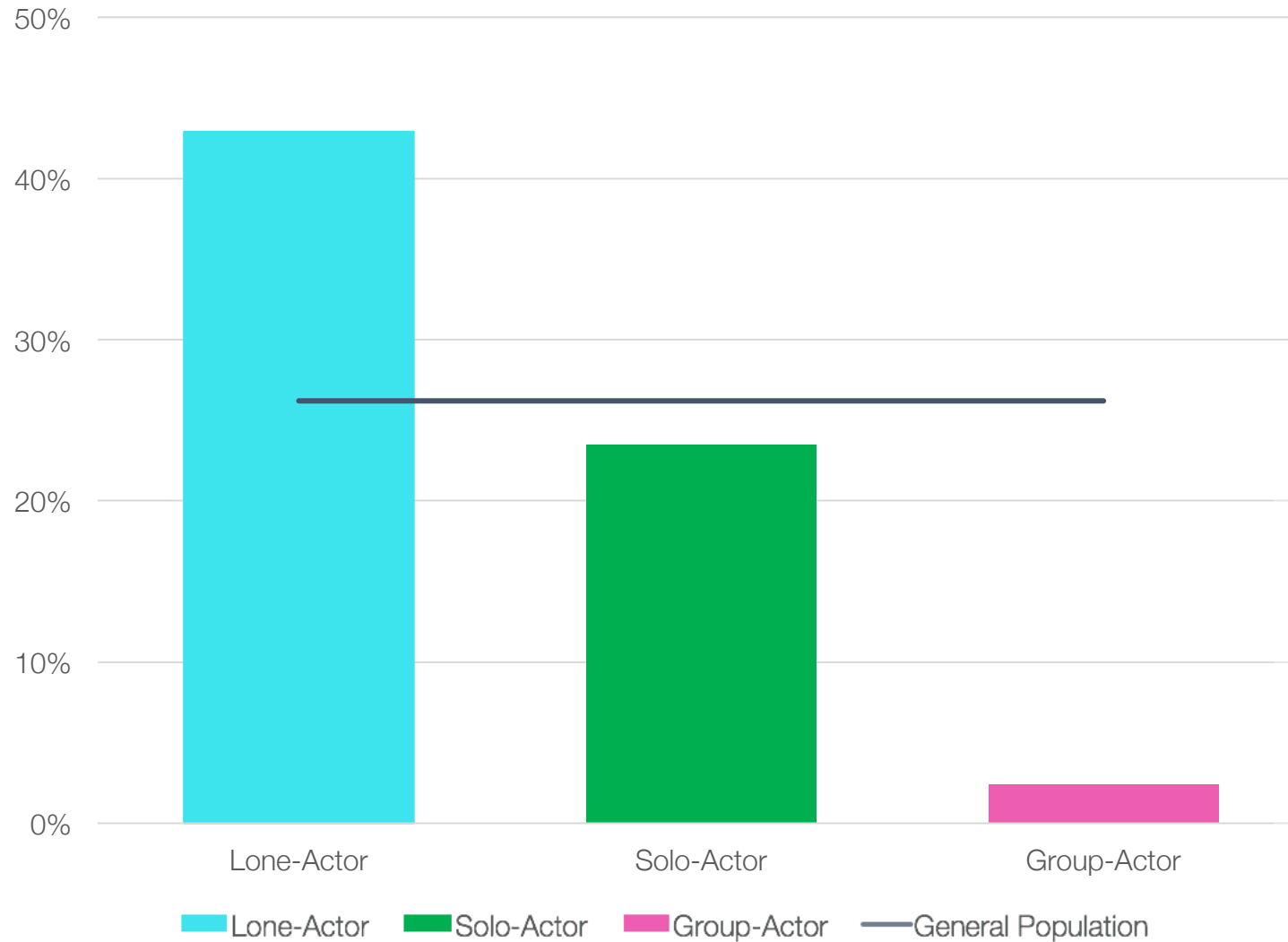
Lone actors 13.5 times more likely to be diagnosed

Corner & Gill (2017)

IS Directed less likely to have contact with services than IS Inspired



Mental Disorder Prevalence across Actors



Expanding Psychopathology

Gottschalk & Gottschalk (2004)

Incarcerated Palestinian and Israeli Terrorists vs. Controls

Terrorist group- higher scores for psychopathic, paranoid, depressive, schizophrenic, and hypomanic tendencies

Weenink (2015, Forthcoming)

Attempted and Successful 'Foreign Fighters'

Schizophrenia, psychosis, substance abuse/addiction, NPD, ADHD, ASD, PTSD

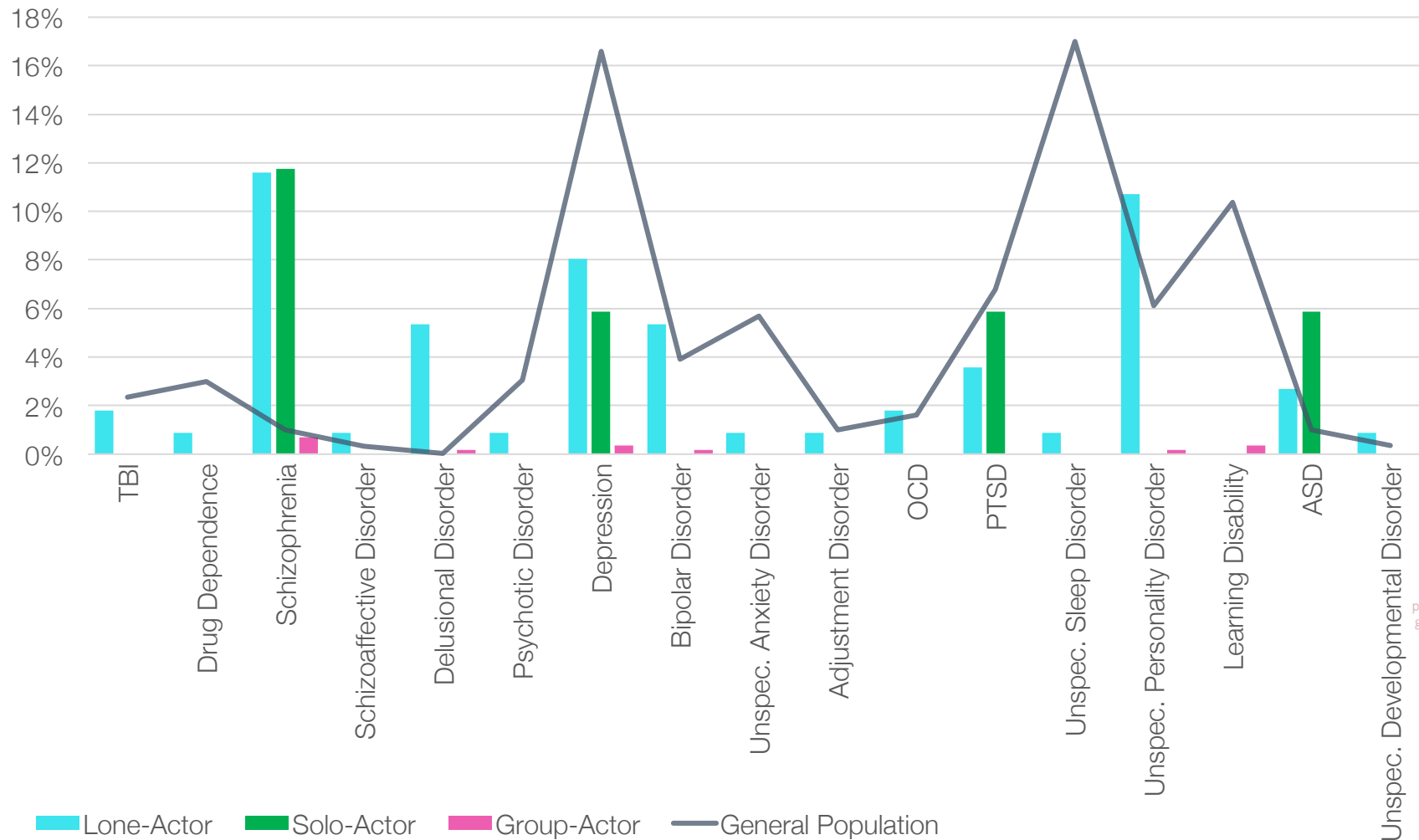
Corner & Gill (2015)

Schizophrenic more likely to have history of violence

ASD more likely to display obsessive tendencies and online behaviours



Mental Disorder Prevalence Across Actors



‘Rationality’

Wilson et al. (2010)

“terrorists are not characterized by mental disorder... [and instead are]... like many other criminals... **rational decision makers**”

McDonald (2013)

“people with psychological disorders **do not make good terrorists**. They **lack the discipline, rationality, self-control and mental stamina** needed if terrorists are to survive any length of time”

Taylor (2015)

“there is little research to show that terrorists are mentally disturbed, which makes sense, as **such an individual would be a liability to the cause**”



“Many high-profile, Islamic State-inspired individuals have undoubtedly either shown symptoms of psychological distress in earlier years or have been formally diagnosed with a disorder. However, at a time when rigorous and interdisciplinary insight was needed, many researchers, reporters, and practitioners turned to flippant language and coinage. ***Such phrases not only failed to explain the relationship (if any) between terrorist engagement and psychopathology...*** These include Max Abrahms’ “**loon wolf**” phrase, a term that he applies to any lone terrorist suffering any form of mental disorder or psychological distress... Other popular terms used on Twitter are “**Islamopsychotics**” and “**Mentahadist**” terms that ***conflate religious devotion with mental illness, thus simplifying and demonizing both.***”

Corner & Gill (2017)



Lone Actors

Observed Percentages for Nonmentally Ill and Mentally Ill Actors

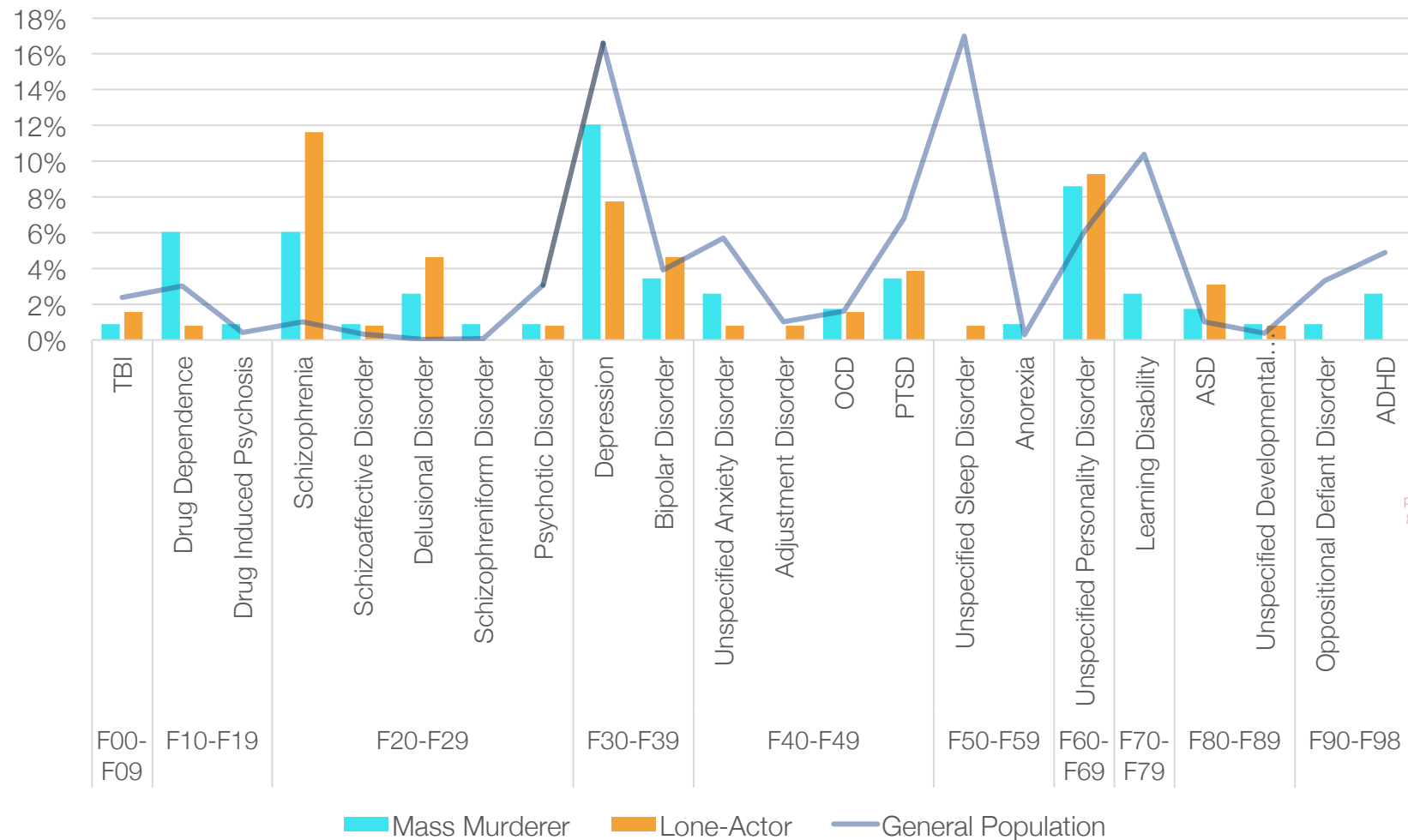
	Mentally ill	Nonmentally ill
Hypothesis 2		
Individual's spouse or partner part of wider movement.	18.4%***	1.2%
Command and control links with others.	7.9%	21.0%*
Hypothesis 4		
Individual's parents divorced.	31.6%***	9.9%
Proximate upcoming life change.	15.8%*	6.2%
In build up to event; individual experienced being target of prejudice.	28.9%**	11.1%
In build up to event; individual experienced being disrespected.	28.9%*	14.8%
Individual recently under elevated level of stress.	44.7%*	27.2%
Chronic stress in individual's life.	34.2%*	19.8%
Hypothesis 5		
Recent increase in levels of physical activity.	21.1%*	8.6%
Individual had stockpile of weapons.	63.2%**	40.7%
Individual expressed desire to hurt others.	76.3%*	58.0%
Discriminate or nondiscriminate target?	73.7%**	50.6%
Individual claimed responsibility publicly.	53.3%*	38.3%
Hypothesis 6		
Individual engaged in violent behavior previous to terrorist event.	52.6%**	30.9%
Violent attack carried out?	65.8%**	44.4%
Did the individual kill?	55.3%***	24.7%
Did the individual injure?	52.6%***	25.9%
Additional variables		
Single issue inspired individual.	28.9%**	12.3%
Born in United States.	63.2%**	39.5%
Held a Ph.D.	10.5%*	2.5%

* $p < .1$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.



Expanding 'Rationality'

Mental Disorder Prevalence



Mentally Ill Lone Actors vs. Mentally Ill Mass Murderers

‘Leakage’

- Letters
- Statements
- Others know grievance and planning
- Recruit others
- Propaganda
- Public claim of responsibility

Planning

- Online learning
- Dry runs
- Research
- Preparatory travel
- Stockpiling weapons
- Plans for further attacks

Ideological Interactions

- Spouse/partner in movement
- Face to face interactions
- Virtual interactions
- Joined a group



Nikolas Cruz: Depressed loner 'crazy about guns'

'Silver Bullets'

'He would break everything around him': Family detail Nice attacker's mental health issues

Published time: 16 Jul, 2016 16:54

Edited time: 29 Jul, 2016 13:42

Jordan says mass killer was mentally disturbed, not a jihadist

Fort Lauderdale attacker 'lost his mind in Iraq,' say family

Published time: 7 Jan, 2017 14:39

Edited time: 8 Jan, 2017 15:01

Martin Couture-Rouleau: A homegrown madman

Branded a terrorist driven by Islamic State, the man who struck a soldier with his car in Quebec was really a lone wolf with nothing to lose

Martin Patriquin

October 22, 2014

Stephen Paddock: Vegas suspect a high-roller and 'psychopath'

© 5 October 2017

WORLD NEWS | Thu Jul 28, 2016 | 12:21pm EDT

Fervent jihadist or suicidal refugee: the many faces of Bavarian bomber

Mental health issues, not Islam, is why man shot Philly cop, lawyer says

'Always Agitated. Always Mad': Omar Mateen, According to Those Who Knew Him

By DAN BARRY, SERGE F. KOVALESKI, ALAN BLINDER and MUJIB MASHAL JUNE 18, 2016

09 June 2016 5:13 PM

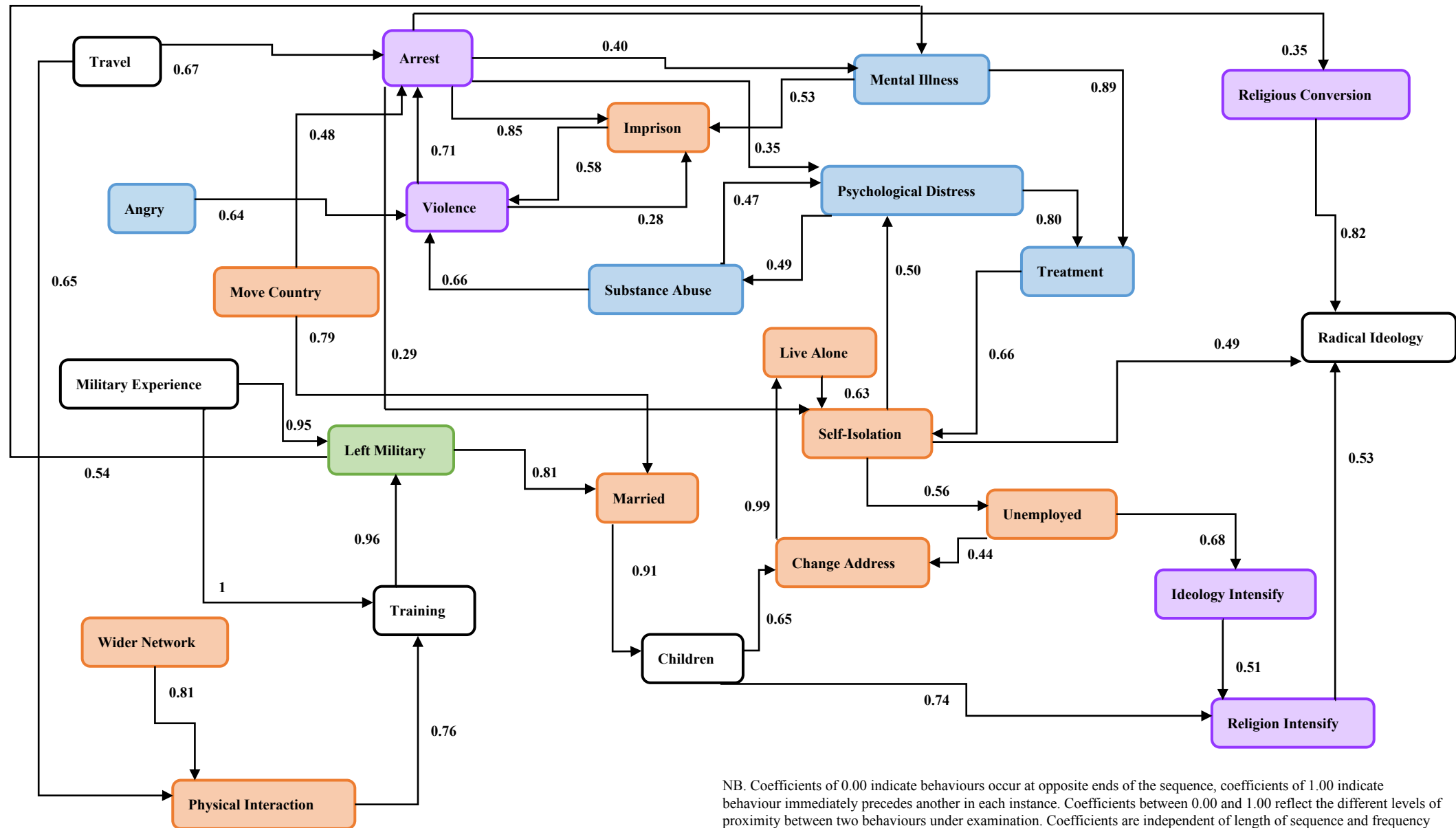
He wasn't No Terrorist, Bruv - reflections on the Leytonstone Knife Outrage

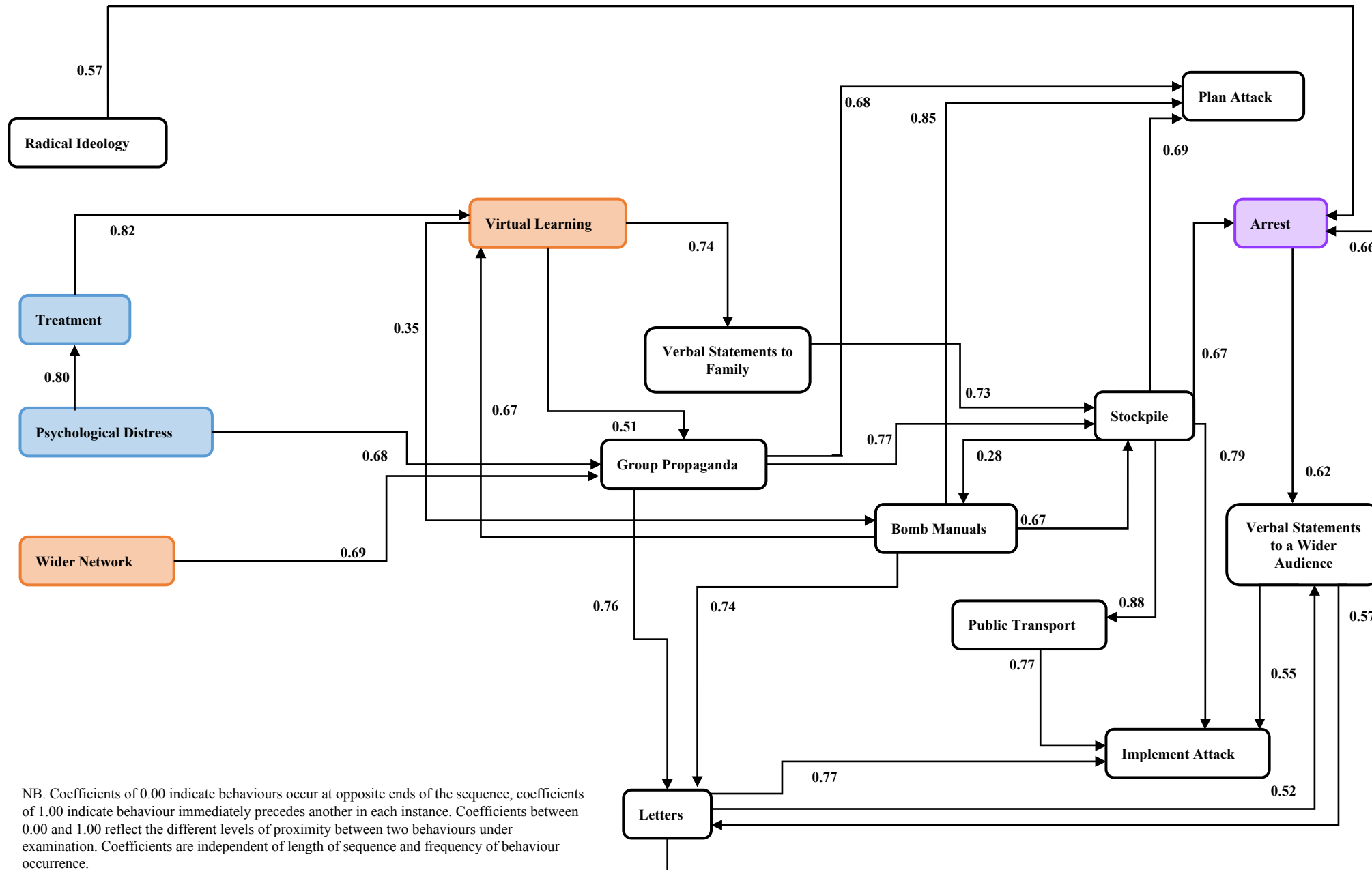
Man Haron Monis: 'Damaged' and 'unstable'

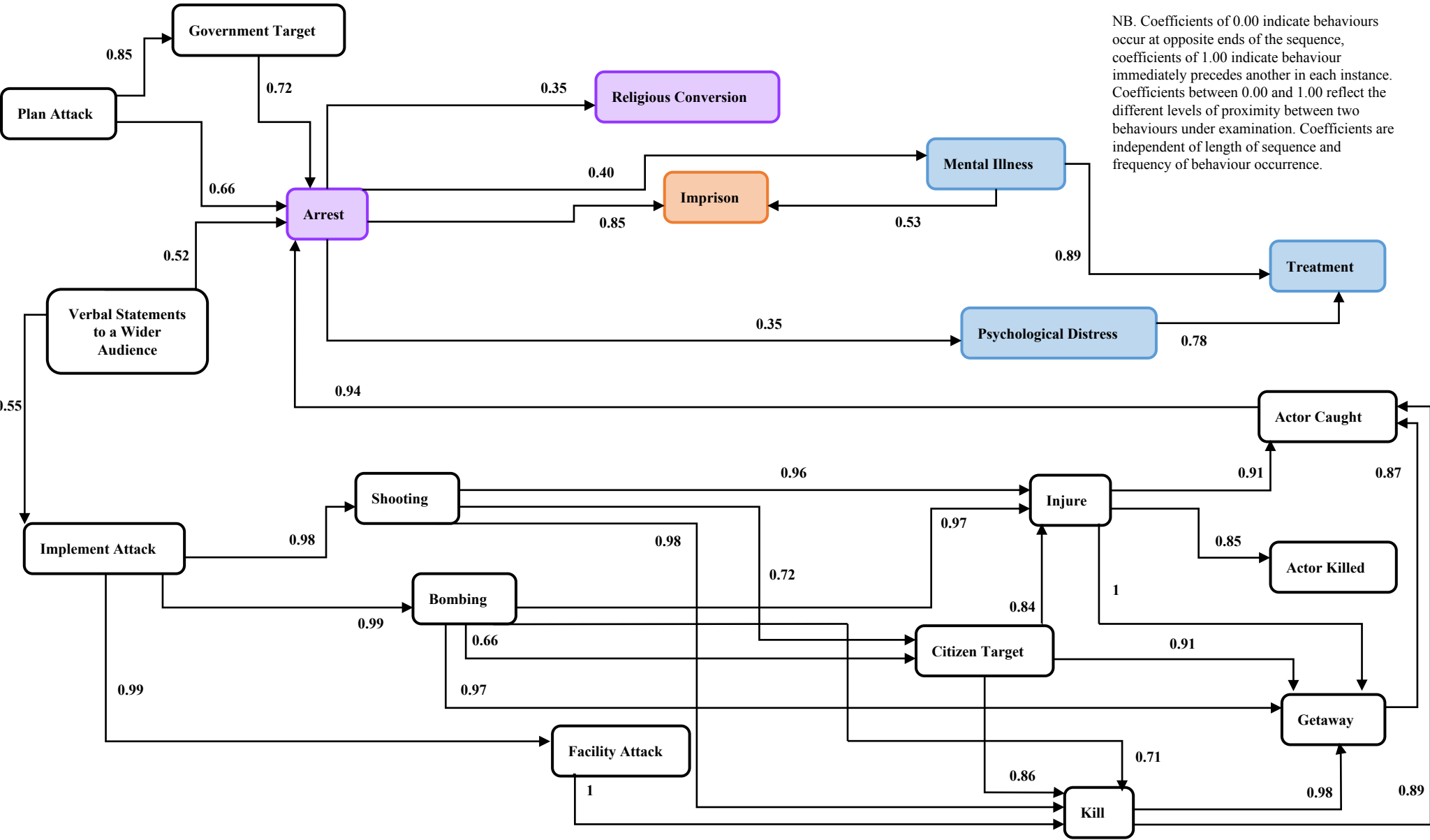
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Should We Allow Mentally Ill 'Lone Wolves' To Call Themselves A Terrorist?







NB. Coefficients of 0.00 indicate behaviours occur at opposite ends of the sequence, coefficients of 1.00 indicate behaviour immediately precedes another in each instance. Coefficients between 0.00 and 1.00 reflect the different levels of proximity between two behaviours under examination. Coefficients are independent of length of sequence and frequency of behaviour occurrence.

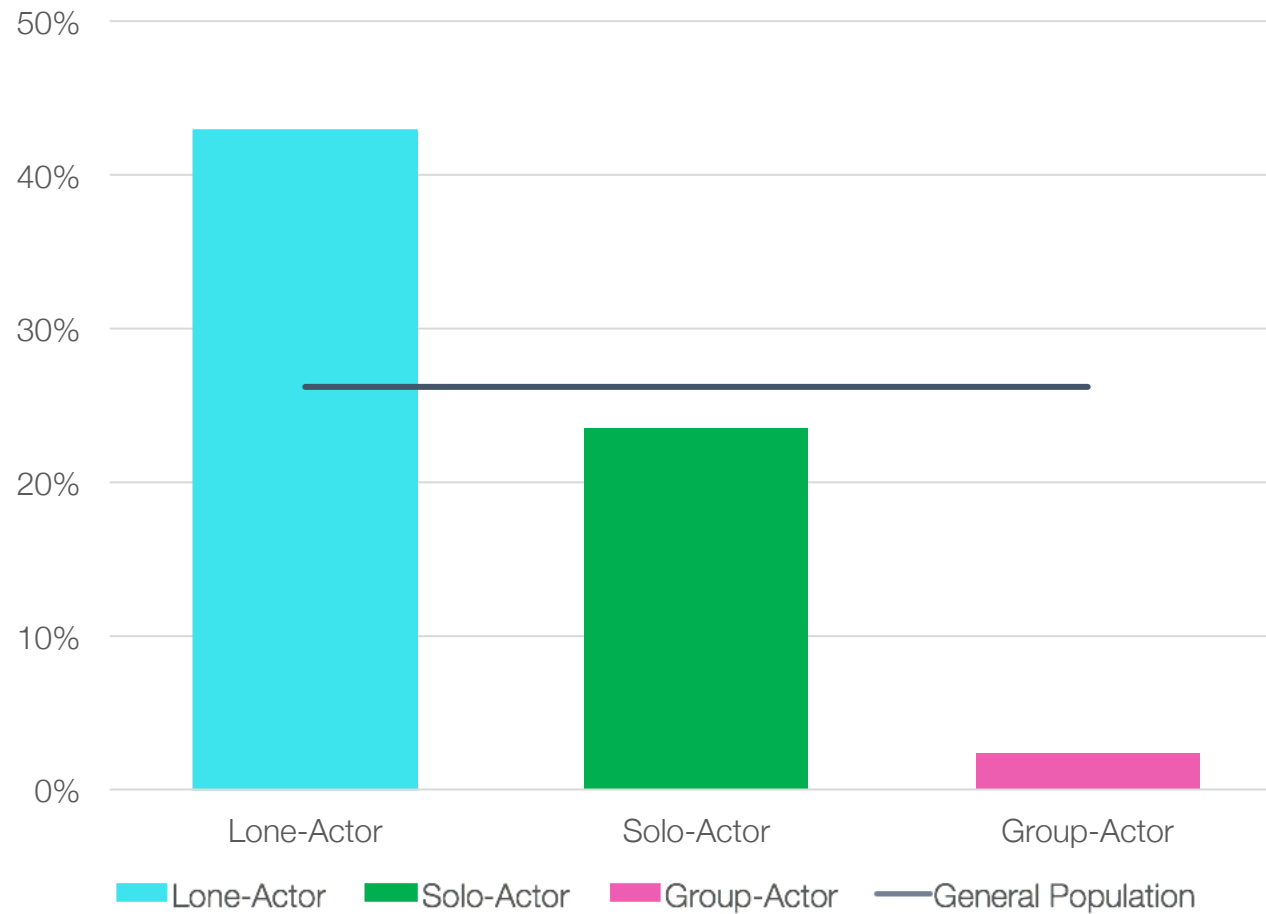
“The cases share a mixture of unfortunate personal life circumstances coupled with an intensification of beliefs that later developed into the idea to engage in violence. ***What differed was how these influences were sequenced. Sometimes*** personal problems led to a susceptibility to ideological influences. ***Sometimes*** long held ideological influences became intensified after the experience of personal problems. ***This is why we should be wary of mono-causal master narratives.*** The development of these behaviors is usually far more labyrinthine and dynamic.”

Horgan et al., 2016



'Being' a Terrorist

Mental Disorder Prevalence across Actors



'Being' a Terrorist- 'Selection Effects'

Hudson & Majeska (1999)

“Candidates who appear to be potentially dangerous to the terrorist groups’ survival **are screened out.** Candidates with unpredictable or uncontrolled behavior **lack the personal attributes** that the terrorist recruiter is looking for”

Post (2009)

“terrorist groups attempt to **screen out emotionally disturbed recruits**”

Jackson (2009)

Those with an overt mental disorder **may not 'fit' into roles** within a group- deemed unsuitable for operations



'Selection Effects'?

Only 46.2% mention a recruitment process before engagement

Recruitment between those disclosing suffering psychological distress

$\chi^2(1) = 0.348, p = 0.555$

Vast differences in recruitment processes
both between and within groups

In certain cases, some traits are prioritised, but mental health further down list

"If they were more mentally stable... like if they were 51% mentally stable and 49% wacko... we would tend to take them. If they were mentally retarded or had disabilities or something like that, we didn't really want them, because that was clear. At first I wondered if he was a heroin addict. I thought, a man that has so much tipsy by himself, without a guide. One day, I can't remember too many cases, maybe that's just I could tell from the way he moved his eyes there was something not quite right about him... We developed a friendship after lunch, their eyes. Once we returned where African was in the cave. We learned I think if they became a liability or if they were too much to wonder if he was allowed to drink Nescafe to help take handcuffs, and they had radioed for a four-by-four to take him the engine like completely like autistic, and you can see I got back to Pakistan... We had been in the car since before but about this, it was certainly true that Abdul Kerim was an dude's crazy. Let's get him," crazy in a sense that he would he had returned to Pakistan. Now he wanted to come back... exception to all sorts of rules. The wild variations in the tone Then he went onto say there was something wrong with the of his speech, the motions, the rapid mental swings, African, something not right in his head. It was very important to people, I think that they look for people capable of putting the stream of information he poured forth without any keep reason and logic aside, I am going to use the word a different reason or logic to go do things, so I think that they solicitation – another broader dangerous have been kicked out of look for vulnerable people... some of which may have (Nasiri 2006, 78) mess of these. Though it would be silly to find broken people essentially... I mean dealing with identity before I understood why... They were letting him stay for a crises... abuse, drug addiction, alcoholism, family poverty... those types of things... kids who were on the street... you could tell there was not a lot of family oversight, 'cos we (Nasiri 2006, 155). "reason."

"We were looking to draw them into our family."

'Being' a Terrorist-Identity and Stress

Fused Identity

Intergroup Emotion Theory

Group Stressors not Present



Expanding 'Being' a Terrorist

Reinares (2011)

‘personal reasons’, “existential crisis”

Altier et al. (2015)

burnout, psychological distress, fear,
physiological distress

Bubolz & Simi (2015)

32% distress prior or during involvement, 44% self-report suicidal ideation, 58% substance abuse

Prevalence			
Mental Disorder	Psychological Distress Prior to Terrorist Engagement	Psychological Distress During Terrorist Engagement	Psychological Distress Post-Disengagement
11.8%	23.1%	45.9%	41.9%



Individual Protection-Resilience

Do experiences really have equal impact?

Those who don't report distress - more likely to turn to substance use/abuse after physical abuse from caregivers, then report criminal behaviour

Birth of a child appears to halt criminal/antisocial behaviour in those who don't report distress

Those who do report distress - more likely to carry out criminal behaviour before reporting substance use/abuse.

Distress more likely to precede involvement in anti-social/criminal behaviour

	Psychological Distress N=21	No Psychological Distress N=70
Caretaker Physically Abusive	61.9%***	21.4%
Caretaker Verbally Abusive	23.8%*	5.7%
Familial History of Mental Disorder	33.3%***	7.1%
Good Relationships with Family	23.8%	44.3%*
Children	0.0%	21.4%*
Involved in Criminal Behaviour	61.9%*	35.7%
Loner	57.1%***	2.9%
Alcohol Abuse	38.1%**	10.0%
Drug Abuse	52.4%***	10.0%

Group-Based Protection

28.6% of those who suffered psychological distress prior to engagement, did not report psychological distress during engagement

65% of those who did not suffer psychological distress prior to engagement, reported psychological distress during engagement

Social Protective Factors Alone Not Sufficient

	Psychological Distress N=50	No Psychological Distress N=59
Individual was a Spy	19.6%**	3.4%
Poor Relationship with Leaders	18.0%**	1.7%
Retain ties with Family & Friends not in group	72.0%**	45.8%
Trouble Balancing Marriage with Activities	89.7%*	66.7%
Trouble Balancing Children with Activities	84.6%*	57.1%

Risks Within Engagement

No Differences between Distress and

- Undertaking a Violent Role
- Being a Victim of Violence
- Being Disrespected
- Being Incarcerated
- Abuse During Incarceration
- Death of Close Family/Friends
- Satisfaction with Role

Those who don't report distress- more likely to report physiological problems and physical illness after a report of guilt and trouble coping with actions

Those who do report distress- reporting of distress both follows and precedes continual reporting of guilt, regret, and trouble coping

	Psychological Distress N=50	No Psychological Distress N=59
Physiological Distress	32.0%***	8.5%
Guilt over Actions and Group Actions	32.0%**	10.2%
Regret for Actions and Group Actions	34.0%**	11.9%
Trouble Coping with Role and Actions	20.0%*	6.8%
Trouble with a Clandestine Lifestyle	42.0%***	13.6%
Became Physically Ill whilst Engaged	50.0%*	28.8%
Burnout	52.0%***	20.3%

Risks Within Disengagement and Post-Disengagement

Despite Differences in Reasoning, No Difference between Distress and Desire to Disengage

$$X^2(1)=0.041, p=0.840$$

Those who don't report distress- following guilt, more likely to move more quickly towards a role in legitimate politics

Those who do report distress- cyclical nature of guilt and distress; suggestive of a lack of positive coping mechanisms

	Psychological Distress N=36	No Psychological Distress N=50
Disengagement		
Fear Harm from Group	26.0%**	6.8%
Religious Conversion	10.3%*	0.0%
Tasks too Risky	33.3%*	15.2%
Burnout	30.8%*	8.9%
Post-Disengagement		
Victim of Violence	72.2%*	50.0%
Expressed Regret	47.2%***	10.0%
Trouble Coping	27.8%*	8.0%
Fear Harm from Group	36.1%***	8.0%
Disillusionment with Group Strategy	71.4%*	44.9%
Guilt	40.0%*	18.4%
Burnout	61.1%***	22.0%
Politics	14.3%	38.0%*
Felt Judged	44.4%**	18.0%
Psychological Support	12.8%*	0.0%

“The results largely agree with, and build on the conclusions of the seminal reviews... In *certain cases*, mental disorder *may* play a role in terrorist behaviour, and in *certain cases*, terrorist involvement *may* play a role in the development of a mental disorder. The work in this thesis has highlighted that accepted theories surrounding ‘rationality’, ‘selection effects’, and ‘social buffering’ require immediate review. It is not sufficient to claim that individuals with mental disorder are not capable of planning and executing sophisticated attacks, or that these individuals are not recruited to organisations because they are viewed as less desirable, or that the social environment of a group protects all individuals from developing mental health problems. Terrorism is an emotive subject, and this, alongside the relative youth of the academic field has allowed, and in some instances, encouraged the proliferation of ‘intuitive’ (and in some cases, uninformed) reasoning, which has not been supplemented with, or verified by a valid empirical evidence base.”



