Introduction

The introduction of modern environmental activism in the 1960s also saw the eventual emergence of a strain of radical environmentalism, which believed that the damage being done to the planet by actors like states and corporations required a more robust response than mere protesting. These environmentally minded individuals and groups are concerned that the pace of change is not occurring fast enough or in a direction they deem appropriate through mainstream political avenues. The central question here is, to paraphrase Mohammed Hafez and Creighton Mullins, why and how, and to what extent do environmental activists in democratic and affluent societies come to embody radical ideologies to the point where they are willing to commit political violence in the furtherance of their cause? The aim of this book is to provide some answers to this question.

To their opponents such actors are ‘ecoterrorists’; to others, who applaud their behaviour, they are ecowarriors committing ecotage on behalf of Mother Earth. Indeed, like in other political movements, there have been instances in which a small minority of environmental activists engaged in political violence to attempt to advance their agendas. Environmental-oriented political violence may also be considered to be associated with a form of identity politics. In these circumstances, the terrorists view humans and non-human species as equals. Hence, the identity politics espoused here is one that could be considered to be more of a non-hierarchical, non-anthropomorphic nature.

Radical environmentalists perceive themselves as ‘entrenched’ in a battle for environmental and animal liberation ‘against the social order’. H.H.A. Cooper argues that terrorists come to believe that maintenance of the status quo is far worse than the violence they perpetrate. Radical environmental groups can fit this mould, arguing that acts such as scientific experimentation on animals and the destruction of habitat are the true crimes. Acts that to outsiders may be considered terrorism are considered by these groups to be just revenge for these social evils, or a lesser evil than that perpetrated by governments or corporations. Thus ‘terrorism’ is perceived as the only recourse available to provide redress or end actions considered evil.
However, given that this book seeks to understand whether environmental groups have radicalized to the point of utilizing violence it is important to use nomenclature correctly. While their opponents may decry them as terrorists this has not been demonstrated as accurate. One purpose of this book is to determine the veracity of such claims. Consequently, it will not utilize the term ‘ecoterrorism’ to apply to their actions at this stage (unless a quote or criticism) but will refer to ‘radical environmental groups’.9

It is important initially to note that, from a research perspective, the accuracy of the number and severity of any purported action remains uncertain. The questionable nature of any public information on environmental protest and incidents occurs because: first, any individual and any action may be taken on as the responsibility of one of the organizations. This means that hundreds of individuals partaking in a single action increases significantly the appearance of the group’s activity level.

Second, a member of the public can perform an action and claim it on behalf of the organization (through an online communiqué or a simple vandal tagging at the scene of the action), and it is impossible to know how many activists are core, repeat offenders or fed-up citizens taking part in a single, frustrated action. Third, not only is there the potential for groups to take credit for random acts of defiance and destruction, but it is just as likely that shop owners do not report every act of destruction – for a myriad of reasons, including fear of further retaliation, a potential increase to their insurance or even the attempt to reopen their business as quickly as possible. Lastly, collaborations between radical environmental groups are quite common, allowing the illusion of a more active and larger movement.

According to Bandow, ‘ecoterrorism’ as a phenomenon first manifested in the early 1970s. One of the first known cases involved an individual known as ‘the Fox’, engaged in a campaign of ecosabotage against Chicago-area firms during that time period. In 1972 a group calling itself ‘Environmental Action’ published the self-help guide Ecotage!10 According to Long, the 1970s provided an increase in the number of acts of environmental sabotage across the USA, including the destruction of mining equipment on Black Mesa in the Desert Southwest by the Arizona Phantom.11 Former activists, despairing at the state of the environment and the glacial pace of change in humanity’s attitude towards nature, in the decade after the modern environmental movement was born went on to form groups such as the Animal Liberation Front (1971), the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (1977), Earth First! (1979) and its spinoff group the Earth Liberation Front, all of which are the subject of inquiry here.12
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While these groups (at least initially) swore off targeting individuals for violence there have been examples where individuals have utilized physical violence in pursuit of environmental goals. Theodore Kaczynski (the Unabomber) is a prominent example of such radical eco-activism, who in 1978 undertook an 18-year individual bombing campaign against what he considered to be the environmentally destructive ‘industrial-technological’ system. His bombings were responsible for the deaths of three people and injuries to a further 23.13

Young further argues that by the 1980s, ‘a few groups had started to engage in similar activities’ – including the ‘Bolt Weevils’ in Minnesota, the ‘Ecoraiders’ in Arizona, the ‘Billboard Bandits’ in Michigan and the ‘Eco-Commandoes’ in Florida.14 The damage caused by these groups, and others, has been significant in the UK, Canada and the USA. The increasing radical activities of environmental organizations in this period caused concern for ‘political and industry leaders’ and intelligence services, particularly in Western democracies where such groups were most prevalent. Groups such as the Earth Liberation Front and the Animal Liberation Front have been accused of utilizing intimidation and violence against both property and persons to bring about environmental change.15

Despite the concern by governments and security forces there has been a surprising paucity of academic writings analysing the overall phenomenon in a cogent and overarching way. As Eagan notes, ‘little scholarly attention has been paid to the phenomenon of eco-terrorism’.16 Further, few recently published books on the occurrence of terrorism mention ecoterrorism. Those publications that mention ecoterrorism only do so ‘in a paragraph or a page or two at best. In these short descriptions, these authors also generally fail to provide a definition of eco-terrorism that lends itself to empirical research.’17

Thus despite the plethora of works on environmentalism and terrorism the phenomenon of ‘ecoterrorism’ remains relatively unstudied and undertheorized.18 According to Taylor, there appears to be major and problematic differences between activist empirical accounts of their activities, which tend to be hagiographic, and outsider or academic accounts of the historical growth of such groups that tend to focus on one group operating in isolation.19 Further, academic research in this area has not tended to examine such entities as part of a continuing process as is customary in terrorism studies. As such, Taylor concludes, ‘these phenomena deserved much closer scrutiny than most had heretofore received’.20 Relative to the issue there has been little academic empirical work that systematically documents the ongoing activities of these
groups. Rather the scholarly ‘gap’ has tended to be filled by government institutions monitoring such groups, in particular the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Although there are works that address environmental and animal rights actors, outside of a handful of contributions to scholarly journals such as *Terrorism and Political Violence* and *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* there are few that are not either alarmist, implying that all environmental and animal rights actors intend to derail contemporary civilization, or that uncritically glorify all the acts they take, regardless of whether they destroy property or actually or potentially place people in harm’s way, including circumstances that could have lethal consequences.

Commentators have also tended to understand this concept through the prism of their particular political bias when analysing this phenomenon. The term ‘ecoterrorism’ is utilized by proponents and opponents alike uncritically, particularly in public discourse – notwithstanding some insightful analyses from various academic researchers. However, to date no book has sought to engage with this topic that is neither hagiography nor a polemic screed against ecowarriors or ecoterrorists.

Environmental-oriented and animal rights-motivated violence constitutes significant scholarly and security concerns for two main reasons, and deserves more in-depth analysis. First, the environment is increasingly becoming the main global political issue. Indeed, it is one matter in which it is plausible to state that all humans are stakeholders. However, governments and others have not been able, often due to financial and other pressures, to deliver policies that may satisfy those individuals who had voted for them in the hope of seeing substantial change in environmental legislation and practices. In these respects, they may face a credibility gap amongst some of their most ardent supporters.

Within the context of political violence this is indeed significant as there is research which suggests that terrorism is often caused not by feelings of powerlessness and destitution, but by the feeling that progress was being made on a set of issues and that it was abruptly ended. In these respects terrorism occurs as a response to dashed expectations. Therefore, governments’ failure to address environmental issues in full may be a cause for concern for sporadic or premeditated violence from a small minority of environmental-oriented actors.

Second, the argument has been made by some researchers and opponents of radical environmentalism that violence by some radical environmental groups has occurred more frequently and has escalated in intensity. Monaghan argues that, at least applied to the example of animal rights terrorism, incidents in the UK have in fact been reduced due to a sophisticated policing and judicial response.
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Adopting a historical narrative approach will enable a determination as to whether the selected radical environmental groups are carrying out operations in greater numbers and with ever-increasing political violence. Thus, there is a need to develop a more enhanced understanding of environmental and animal rights-oriented actors, and their actual and potential use of political violence – and, more importantly, to identify what features may have been factors in influencing them to revert to the use of political violence, including terrorism. Such an initiative would sit well with the emerging literature on radicalization.26

This book further seeks to understand and identify what, if any, are the various trigger points for moving from one stage of radicalism to the next. It examines the issue of targeting carried out by such groups with their emphasis on ecotage (or ecosabotage) that privileges attacks on property rather than humans.27 It considers whether we can observe an escalation in environmental political action, as the breeding pool for such activists is becoming much larger as ecological consciousness becomes widespread within the global community. Given that issues such as global warming are receiving such widespread attention, can we expect to see an upsurge in environmental political action as individuals/groups become concerned that the pace of reform is not fast enough to deal with what they consider to be an imminent threat to the planet?

Although global in scope, the book concentrates mainly on organizations and groups from three countries: the USA, the UK and Australia, but other examples are included where relevant. These three countries are significant for understanding these movements for several key reasons. First, animal rights activism has its origins in the UK (Hunt Saboteurs, Animal Liberation Front), and some of its most active groups (Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty) operate there. Further, the Environmental Liberation Front was also born there in 1992. The USA also has a very strong tradition of environmental activism ranging from groups such as the Sierra Club, and was the initial home for Earth First!. Australia also has a strong environmental-oriented culture. It has members of the Green Party sitting in federal and various state parliaments. There have also been acts of environmental-oriented violence conducted in Australia. Recently, the Earth Liberation Front threatened the director of a major Australian power plant.28 Additionally, the Sea Shepherds often use Australian ports to begin their campaigns to disrupt Japanese whaling.

This book further seeks to rigorously examine the growth of radical environmental groups operating on a global scale, how they form, their principles, philosophies and their history. Specifically, it seeks to generate understandings on how or whether such groups evolve from activists to militants to ecoterrorists and argues that such a progression is a
process that can be explained. For the purposes of this book an ecoterrorist group is one that uses or threatens the use of violence of a criminal nature against innocent victims or property by an environmental-oriented group for environmental–political reasons, or violence aimed at an audience beyond the target, often of a symbolic nature.29

It has been argued that the primary objective of ecoterror is to preserve the environment. Such activity is starkly distinct from ‘normal environmentalism’ in the belief of ‘doing whatever they consider necessary to disrupt any activity or project that they determine is detrimental or a threat to the environment’.30 The belief of many radical environmental groups is that, ‘through fear and economic damage, environmental “violators” will cease their behavior’.31

Given the scope of this book, not all radical environmental groups can be examined. Thus it critically examines the key radical environmental groups, both historically and currently active in such activities, including Earth First!, the Earth Liberation Front, the Animal Liberation Front and the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. Further, it examines questions of how such groups perceive their actions, and addresses questions of whether they see themselves as vigilantes, upholding a higher law on behalf of the environment or whether they view themselves outside of any law.32 It further seeks to understand the group’s motivations, history and objectives in a broader thematic context. In particular, it is concerned with how these groups adopted violence as a tactic within their overall strategies to effect social change on behalf of the biosphere.

The proposed study contains several novel features:

- First, unlike most current books on ‘ecoterrorism’ that concentrate on an uncritical narrative, this book seeks to establish an historical understanding of why groups advocate and conduct political violence on behalf of the environment, by critically examining the history and actions of these groups.
- Second, it compares and contrasts the selected groups, highlighting their similarities and differences as regards their use of political violence and pathways of radicalization.
- Third, it attempts to fuse existing theoretical approaches to group radicalization – but with some focus on identifying the type of individual who becomes involved with radical environmentalism – and apply them as a model to current global radical environmental groups to determine their efficaciousness.
However, before we can proceed to examine potential political radicalization of environmental groups there is a need to understand key terms that will be utilized in this text.

UNPACKING THE TERM: TERRORISM

Whilst terrorism has been a mode of political violence for almost two millennia it has been amongst the most debated terms in political science and public discourse. Defining the term ‘terrorism’ has proven fraught for researchers given the different perspectives and rationales advanced for the concept. There are numerous definitions of ‘terrorism’ that can be observed. Quillen correctly observes, ‘far too many trees have been slain and far too much ink spilled debating the exact definition of terrorism’ and that there ‘are as many definitions of terrorism as there are acts of terrorism’. Establishing an agreed-upon definition has proven difficult.

The term ‘terrorism’ first emerged in the Oxford English Dictionary (1795) as, ‘a government policy intended to strike with terror those against whom it was adopted’. However, according to O’Lear, attempting to define terrorism is, ‘like aiming at a moving target since the meaning of the word changes over time’. Edward Said believes:

The use of the word terrorism is usually unfocused, it usually has all kinds of implicit validations of one’s own brand of violence, it’s highly selective. If you accept this as the norm, then it becomes so universally applicable that it loses any force whatsoever. I think it is better to drop it.

Griset and Mahan further argue that it is difficult to define since there are multiple types of terrorism, ranging from guerilla warfare and conventional warfare to criminal activity. The use of the term is always subjective and invariably utilized for partisan purposes. Alex Schmid argues that thus there cannot possibly be one true definition of terrorism because it is an abstract concept that no single definition can encompass.

A detailed engagement with the debate over the definition of terrorism is beyond the scope of this book and the term is and will remain an essentially contested concept. For the purposes of this inquiry, however, it is not necessary to resolve this epistemological fight. Schmid offers us a way forward. He notes that most leading definitions of the concept include two characteristics: ‘someone is terrorized, and the meaning of the term is derived from terrorists’ targets and victims’. Building on this Monaghan argues that, while a definition cannot be agreed upon, scholars and governments have agreed to the following as ‘core characteristics’ of the phenomenon:
1. The use or threat of violence;
2. The existence of a political motive;
3. The targets selected are representative of a target category;
4. The aim is to terrorize, or create fear;
5. The goal is to modify behaviour;
6. The method employed may be extreme or unusual;
7. The act of terrorism is an act of communication.41

Features that are required to label the movement as ‘terrorist’ include:

The distinguishing characteristic of the terrorist … is a deliberate decision to abandon [conventional moral] restraints or to refuse to accept as binding the prevailing moral distinctions between belligerents and neutrals, combatants and non-combatants, appropriate and inappropriate targets, legitimate and illegitimate methods. The terrorist knows that others will regard his actions as shocking or as atrocities, and this is one reason why he acts as he does, for his object in using terror … is to create a ‘new consciousness’ by methods which provoke extreme emotional reactions – panic, horror, revulsion, outrage, and sympathy … The nature of the act, not the status of the persons who commit it, is the critical feature.42

Lentini proffers that most scholarly and state definitions define terrorism as: ’non-state actors using or threatening to use violence against civilians, non-violence and property in order to effect political change to achieve political goals by establishing a state of fear’.43 Thus, building on the aforementioned definitions for the purposes of this inquiry it can broadly be defined as using or threatening to use violence against innocent people or non-combatants – or even property – to effect political change and achieve political goals by creating an atmosphere of fear.44

Left Wing/Right Wing/Special Interest Terrorism

While the term ‘ecoterrorism’ has thus been adopted to cover a range of different environmentally radical actions there have been attempts both to categorize and understand the phenomenon. There is some debate amongst researchers and government agencies as to how to classify accurately ‘ecoterrorist’ activities. One possibility is considering them to be left-wing terrorists as opposed to right-wing terrorism.45 According to the FBI, such groups tend to ‘profess a revolutionary socialist doctrine and view themselves as protectors of the people against the dehumanizing effects of capitalism and imperialism’.46

The objective of left-wing groups is to ‘bring change in the U.S. and they believe this change will be realized through revolution rather than through the established political process’.47 Smith’s study found that ‘it
may very well be that animal rights and ecologists are politically leftist, though it is important to note that he was unable to come to a definite conclusion.48

However, the US government considers that ‘ecoterrorism’ should be understood as a type of special interest extremism.49 Accordingly it should be distinguished from both traditional right-wing and left-wing extremism in that proponents seek to resolve specific issues (in this case ending the ongoing destruction of the environment) rather than seek to effect overarching political change through a revolution. Examples of such groups include anti-abortion groups, animal rights advocates and radical environmental activists.50 Single-issue campaigns such as those focused on animal rights or protecting the global environment have seen adherents utilize political violence. Despite, however, some groups adopting tactics more usually associated with terrorism there has been a reluctance to label them as such since it is argued they pose no existential threat to the state.51

This book will also seek to determine which classification is correct. Are radical environmental groups influenced by revolutionary socialist doctrine that considers the root cause of environmental degradation to be capitalism? Or are they a special interest that focuses merely on one specific issue, which if resolved would mean that for such groups their raison d’être for existence would cease to be and they would disband? Or should they be understood as an amalgam of both approaches, requiring a new classification?

Etymology and Defining ‘Ecoterrorism’

The labelling of environmental activism as terrorist can be traced back to its usage by private security companies in 1988 to describe these activities.52 On top of various private security firms, public relations offices have also been responsible for the spread of such a label. In 1991 a leaked memo written by the public relations firm Ketchum, representing Clorox, exposed that there was a crisis management plan targeting Greenpeace for its chlorine phase-out campaign, concerned it would target private households and their use of bleach and thus impact profits.53

The plan, set out by Ketchum, recommended labelling the non-governmental organization as ‘terrorists’ and accusing the group of violence and conducting ‘spurious research’. It further relied on separate industry associations to promote a ‘Stop Environmental Terrorism’ campaign, which would demand Greenpeace and the media to ‘be more responsible and less irrational in their approach’.54 According to Rowell
the plan was devised by Ketchum and Clorox in order to bring about a paradigm shift in the public’s perception of the group’s activities: that they were in fact violent.55

A second example of such labelling is evidenced in the release of a false memo purportedly written by Earth First!, which called for ‘acts of violence’ against forestry workers that was sent to the San Francisco Examiner but was actually drafted and distributed by public relations firms representing the forestry industry in order to discredit the environmental movement.56

If groups like Greenpeace, which publicly advocates only ‘bearing witness’ to environmental damage, are accused of ‘ecoterrorism’ it can be observed that the actions for which groups like Earth First!, the ELF and Sea Shepherd have been held responsible have easily been labelled as ‘ecoterrorism’ or ‘environmental terrorism’. By the mid-1990s the term was used to label any act of sabotage committed by these groups. It became the preferred term utilized not only by their opponents but also the mainstream news media, law enforcement and politicians.57

Radical environmental activists maintain, however, that the use of labels such as ‘ecoterrorism’ and ‘environmental terrorism’ unfairly ‘spread blame to all who care about protecting the Earth’.58 Some activists argue that: ‘simply debating the term eco-terrorism gives it legitimacy’ and allows law enforcement to clamp down on their activities since they are ‘terrorist’ in nature.59 On the other hand, environmentalists have also been known to use exaggeration and overstatement in their use of the term and attempt to pin the label on their opponents. Dick Russell, an environmentalist, argues that, ‘the real eco-terrorism is being committed every day by corporate America’.60

It is important when examining the phenomenon of ‘ecoterrorism’ to keep in mind that simply using the term does not ‘provide much clarity or precision, confusing acts of terrorism with acts of civil disobedience, pollution and journalism’.61 Further, some commentators such as Karasick are critical of using such a wide approach of defining the concept, arguing that, ‘broadly defined ecoterror may include legitimate activity and attach to that activity the stigma of being labeled “terrorism”’.62

‘Ecoterrorism’, like terrorism, remains an essentially contested term: a plethora of researchers from various disciplines have generated multiple definitions and understandings. Schwartz argues that many North American academics have, at least within the North American domestic arena, uncritically accepted the concept.63 Karasick maintains that the concept (and definitions) of ‘ecoterror’ involves the ‘use of fear-inducing coercive tactics to the end of either protecting the environment or influencing those who may be affecting the environment to protect the environment
(or at least cease affecting the environment). Chalecki defines it as: ‘the violent destruction of property perpetrated by the radical fringes of environmental groups in the name of saving the environment from further human encroachment and destruction’.65

According to Vlahos, ‘ecoterrorism’ is best understood as the ‘violent destruction of property perpetrated most often by the radical fringes of environmental groups in the name of saving the environment from further human encroachment and destruction’.66 Eagan states that the term is ‘used to denote the use or threatened use of violence of a criminal nature against innocent victims or property by an environmentally oriented subnational group for environmental-political reasons, aimed at an audience beyond the target, and often of a symbolic nature’.67 Eagan argues that the aim of an ‘ecoterrorist’ is to ‘slow or halt the exploitation of natural resources and to bring public attention to environmental issues such as unsustainable logging or wildlife habitat loss through development’.68

Similar to labelling an individual a ‘terrorist’, labelling an entity as an ‘ecoterrorist’ organization can be considered a categorical assessment of their illegitimacy.69 Some argue that: ‘use of the term implies a degree of illegitimacy, and questions of legitimacy are inherently subjective’. As Richard E. Rubenstein points out:

To call an act of political violence terrorist is not merely to describe it but to judge it … Descriptively, ‘terrorism’ suggests violent action by individuals or small groups. Judgmentally, it implies illegitimacy … To the defenders of a particular regime or social order, any politically motivated disobedience (even mass resistance) smacks of terrorism … And on the other hand, a regime in power is considered terrorist by those who deny its legitimacy even if they are but a handful and their opponents legions. Nobody wants to be called a terrorist; terrorism is what the other side is up to.70

One potential problem involves a state establishing a definition that includes as many different activities as possible. For example, in the proposed US Stop Terrorism Property Act of 2003, the Act defined ‘ecoterror’ as implicating anyone who ‘intentionally damages the property of another with the intent to influence the public with regard to conduct the offender considers harmful to the environment’.71

Chief Jarboe of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation Counter-terrorism Division provided a more useful and the most cited definition in testimony before the US Congress in 2002, when he defined ‘ecoterrorism’ as:
The use or threatened use of violence of a criminal nature against innocent victims or property by an environmentally-oriented, sub-national group for environmental-political reasons, or aimed at an audience beyond the target, often of a symbolic nature.\(^72\)

There are several problems with this definition. First, it does not account for the global reach of some of these groups. Radical environmental groups are now supranational in nature – with a worldwide following on the internet and cells scattered worldwide. Second, Chief Jarboe’s FBI definition related to domestic groups does not apply to groups such as Sea Shepherd that act primarily on the high seas, generally outside of state jurisdiction. Third, there is an ongoing dispute amongst activists and researchers as to whether property damage should be considered violence so as to constitute ecoterrorism.

Is Ecotage (Destroying Property) Violence or a Terrorist Act?

Should the destruction of property alone be considered ‘violent’ or a ‘terrorist’ act or is it ‘an unwarranted extension of the term that distorts its meaning?’\(^73\) Some argue that such radical activities as these do not represent ‘terrorism’, as no human life is threatened by such activities. Weinberg and Davis maintain that terrorism is not the same as ‘the sabotage of public or private property’.\(^74\) Others, however, like Shackley, contend that we do a disservice if we dismiss these acts as mere pranks.\(^75\) Further, Wiktorowicz argues that arson, vandalism and theft, being the preferred tactics of such groups, all fit into the FBI’s definition of terrorism.\(^76\)

It is important to highlight that the FBI definition, as espoused by Jarboe, removed the concept that an act should only harm persons in order to be classified terrorism, broadening it to include attacks on property.\(^77\) The then FBI Director Louis French, appearing before Congress in May 2001, cited the propensity for environmental special interest extremists from the animal rights and environmental movements to increasingly use violence to advance their causes. This, he argued, meant that terrorism needed to be redefined to include attacks on property and such acts to be classified as ‘ecoterrorism’.\(^78\)

However, many question whether ecotage (that is, violence against inanimate objects rather than persons) should be classified as terrorism at all. For many activists who advocate destruction of property for a political purpose, such as Dave Foreman of Earth First!, the targeting of property for action is not considered a ‘violent act’. However, legal codes
invariably consider a crime of violence to include the use, or attempted use, of physical force against property.\textsuperscript{79} Such activists deem property’s meaning to be socially constructed and, thus, any action against property must be examined in a historical/political context that allows for such actions, given the greater good that such actions may bring about.\textsuperscript{80} As Vanderheiden points out, ecotage is not ‘mindless, erratic vandalism’. Rather it is a calculated strategy against property that is environmentally destructive, for example bulldozers or logging equipment.\textsuperscript{81} It is not targeted at life.\textsuperscript{82} As Foreman explains, they pick their targets judiciously since vandalism is both counterproductive to their aims and immoral.\textsuperscript{83}

A potential problem for ecotage adherents is that within its philosophy lies a conundrum that can derail any campaign or violate their stated principles in that they might well, in pursuit of their goals, cause inadvertent harm to humans, or their group could be taken over by those who are willing for humans to be killed or injured to further their cause.\textsuperscript{84} Recklessness or negligence when committing ecotage that brings about an injury to humans may well constitute terrorism in the eyes of the law.

While there is debate regarding whether or not property damage should be considered as violent, arson and extensive vandalism are generally considered violent acts and crimes. What differentiates it from criminal acts for personal gain is the political motivation element. Ecotage also has victim-target differentiation, so it can be considered a form of terrorism.\textsuperscript{85} Many environmental extremists, including Barbarash, insist that they are ‘far from being terrorists’ and that their actions focus on property not human life.\textsuperscript{86} Given this ongoing debate, what needs to be considered is whether the acts of ecotage committed by these groups rise to the level of ‘terrorism’.

\section*{POLITICAL RADICALIZATION}

Historically, the literature on terrorism has tended to focus more on the last step, the ‘transition to terrorism’, rather than initial forms of protest or action. However, since the 9/11 attacks there has been greater focus on the earlier forms of activism and actions that can, in some cases, precede the use of political violence.\textsuperscript{87}

Traditional sociological explanations of how people become terrorists focused on aspects such as political repression, socioeconomic marginalization and on indoctrination, but such factors have proved lacking in both theoretical parsimony and in predictive value.\textsuperscript{88} Academics have
Further disproved the theory that radical individuals commit violent acts because they have a psychological disorder. The evidence shows that the rate of mental illness amongst terrorists is the same as among the general population.

However problematically, like terrorism the concept of radicalism in the literature remains contested, but at its essence radicalism can be understood as diametrically opposed to political moderation and, critically to our understanding, it occurs on a continuum of action. A terrorist is presumed to be a radical but a radical is not yet a terrorist. A lengthy trajectory of radicalization and low-level violence almost invariably precedes the killing of civilians. A terrorist becomes ‘mentally ready’ to use lethal force only over time and when they have reached a stage when they have effectively dehumanized their perceived enemy.

However, when examining the process of radicalization, what needs to be borne in mind is that while being a radical means rejecting the status quo it does not mean that all radicals engage in political violence. This book therefore focuses on a subset of potential radicalization processes, namely that of violent radicalization, ‘a process in which radical ideas are accompanied by the development of a willingness to directly support or engage in violent acts’. It is clear that some, but not all, activists do engage in political violence and can become terrorists. However, as Moskalenko and McCauley point out, there is little systematic evidence provided in the literature as to how peaceful political action begets political violence in some cases. Further, radicalization is underwritten by a ‘syndrome of beliefs’ about the current state of the world. Radicals believe that: ‘We are a special or chosen group (superiority) who have been unfairly treated and betrayed (injustice), no one else cares about us or will help us (distrust) and the situation is dire – our group and our cause are in danger of extinction (vulnerability).’

For the purposes of this book radicalization is defined as:

[a] process in which individuals develop, adopt and embrace political attitudes and modes of behaviour which diverge substantially from those of any or all of the established and legitimate political, social, economic, cultural, and religious values, attitudes, institutions and behaviours which exist in a given society. Radicalization also involves advocating either replacing and/or attempting to replace the status quo by transgressing legitimate or accepted modes of political pursuits (electoral means, civil society organizations, sanctioned protests and strikes, and non-violent civil disobedience), using or condoning the use of violence against property or persons – whether private citizens or state employees – in order to implement new structures, values, leaders and elites which will usher in a new order or new society. Regardless
whether they personally use, condone or encourage the use of violence by those other than themselves – or even disavow using violence entirely – radicals advocate significantly disrupting, dislocating and ultimately destroying existing political, economic, social and cultural norms and structures. The result of this process is an eponymous radical departure from that which they seek to overturn.98

The question that needs be asked is how does such radicalization occur? How do radical environmental groups that are prepared to utilize political violence move towards conflict and violence in attempting to achieve their goals? Understanding how environmental and animal rights groups radicalize from legal and socially sanctioned forms of protest to violent activity is an imperative for scholarly, counterterrorism and even environmental and animal rights activist stakeholders. This proposed volume seeks to provide such an analysis. First though we need to examine some of the prevailing theoretical models that seek to understand the process of radicalization.

The Process of Radicalization: Theoretical Models

There is contention amongst analysts over what fuels terrorism. Left-wing scholars and representatives from the developing world insist that poverty and destitution produce despair and foster conditions that force individuals to resort to violence to end what they perceive as unjust political, social, cultural, economic and even religious conditions.99 Nevertheless, many terrorists, particularly their leaders, are drawn from the ranks of the middle class and are tertiary educated. Other theorists, usually of the centre-right orientations, associate terrorism with the presence of poor governance, corruption and lack of democratic institutions.100

Despite the upswing in scholarly interest in radicalization post-9/11 there is still no consensus as to the appropriate model to adopt when examining the process as to how individuals, or groups, become terrorists.101 There tends to be greater agreement, however, that terrorism evolves as a process.102 Radicalization when it occurs is not an overnight process, nor is there one single influence that brings it about. Most of the major academic models of radicalization (Sprinzak’s ‘delegitimization’ stages, Moghadam’s ‘staircase’ or Baran’s ‘conveyor belt’) engender within them the idea that there is a progression over time involving different facets and an interplay of dynamics. While they may differ as to length and complexity of the process they all maintain that becoming a
terrorist is a process and that the examination of radicalization entails discovering the nature of that process.103

When examining the literature on radicalization it is apparent that there are two levels of abstraction that can be focused on: first, the individual terrorist and how they became radicalized; second, focusing primarily on how groups radicalize to the point that they are willing to embrace political violence. This next section examines the current theories pertaining to both approaches.

Daalgard-Nielsen notes there are a number of strands of radical theorizing that can be utilized when examining ongoing radicalization of individuals. Gilles Kepel, Farhad Khosrokhavar and Olivier Roy argue that radicalization can best be understood as the individual trying to ‘reconstruct a lost identity in a perceived hostile and confusing world’.104 Their work focuses on how westernized Muslims in Europe attempt to create identities within an occasional unwelcoming Western society. Militant Islam can offer an answer to the search, providing a fixed values system, sense of community and an outlet from everyday frustrations such as ongoing racism. By blaming Western decadence for their exclusion individuals can rationalize their exclusion not as a personal failing but as a part of a Western systemic failure.105

Wiktorowicz utilizes framing theory that ‘focuses on the social production and dissemination of meaning and on how individuals come to conceptualize themselves as a collectivity. A frame is an individual’s worldview, consisting of values (notions about right and wrong) and beliefs (assumptions about the world, attributes of things, and mechanisms of causation).’106 The main point is that frames are competing to become the dominant interpretation of social reality. How successful a group or movement is depends on its ability to make its version of reality resonate (frame alignment) with potential recruits.107

Framing, like the international relations theory of constructivism emphasizes the importance of social and intersubjective processes in establishing motivation when seeking to determine how activists become terrorists. How do ‘normal’ activists evolve into terrorists? Framing theory emphasizes how social and intersubjective processes create the motivation. Radical members are socialized through ‘a constructed reality or worldview, which frames problems as not just misfortunes, but injustices, attributes responsibility for these injustices, and constructs an argument for the efficacy and/or moral justification of using violence against civilians to right the perceived wrongs’.108

Wiktorowicz maintains that being aggrieved does not inevitably lead to individuals undertaking political violence. Rather, for an individual to get to that point is best understood as a social process resulting from
interactions both with and within a radical organization. As part of the process a person becomes convinced over time that due to injustices they can observe they must respond with physical violence. Wiktorowicz never references the term radicalization in his article, preferring to focus on four processes he argues that can lead to someone joining an Islamic terrorist group: cognitive opening, religious seeking, frame alignment and socialization.

Borum proposes a four-step approach to the emergence of the ‘terrorist mindset’ in individuals. The process begins with the ‘framing of some unsatisfactory event, condition or grievance (It’s not right) as being unjust (It’s not fair). The injustice is blamed on a target policy, person or nation (It’s your fault). The responsible party is then vilified – often demonized – (You’re Evil) which facilitates justification or impetus for aggression.’ At the last stage negative stereotypes are perpetuated about group outsiders, with violence becoming legitimated towards the evil ‘outgroup’ that is held to be responsible for all apparent injustices.

Similarly, Moghaddam’s six-stage ‘staircase’ terrorism model begins with individuals having a ‘desire to alleviate adversity and improve their situation. Unsuccessful attempts, however, lead to frustration, producing feelings of aggression, which are displaced onto some perceived causal agent (who is then regarded as the enemy). As their anger towards the enemy builds, some become increasingly sympathetic towards violent, extremist ideology and to the terrorist groups that act against them. Some of these sympathizers eventually join an extremist group, organization, or movement that advocates for, and perhaps engages in terrorist violence.’ Moghaddam argues that specific factors at each level can lead an individual deeper into radicalization and towards committing terrorist acts.

WHAT TYPES OF INDIVIDUALS ARE ATTRACTED TO ‘ECOTERRORISM’?

Given the focus of the above models on individuals undergoing radicalization, the key question to be considered is what kind of person is drawn to or willing to commit violent acts on behalf of the environment? Liddick argues: ‘one of the most intriguing aspects of so-called eco-terrorism and animal liberation criminality is the mind-set and beliefs of the persons involved’. Sprinzak argues that members of terrorist groups are generally an elite group led by young, well-educated middle- or upper-middle-class individuals. Similarly, according to Eagan, the majority of environmental extremists are middle-class individuals who
believe that: ‘human beings are just an ordinary member of the biological community, no more important than, say, a bear or a whale’. However, Scarce argues that a key distinguishing feature of many radical environmentalists is that they are ‘poor to the point of destitution’. However, he does clarify this, arguing: ‘this is by choice. They possess an array of talents, and most have at least some college education.’ Under this framework, cells tend to swing into action, not because of directives from above, but from a group of young men spending time with each other and spurring each other on. Once a group has violent views they reach out to others that can connect them – in the case he examined, Al Qaeda. Or, alternatively, they act on their own recognition inspired by ideology.

Bakker’s work also backs up a number of other studies which note that at least when applied to terrorists operating in Europe they vary widely in terms of age, socioeconomic background, education levels, occupation, family status and previous criminal record. Further, in terms of population and age they are ‘normal’ in terms of analysed socioeconomic factors.

According to Nilson and Burke, ‘it is hard to profile these terrorists’ personalities in that they are perfectly normal, mentally healthy, educated and established individuals who have opted to engage in only this kind of deviant behavior’. However, it has been argued that many terrorists begin with a troubled home and personal life. While this is not concluding that every troubled child will inevitably become a terrorist, ‘studies of terrorist organizations have found a high incidence of fragmented families and violent childhoods, and the lives of many terrorists studied “demonstrated a pattern of failure both educationally and vocationally”’. What needs to be considered is whether this holds true for people who have engaged in violent radical environmental action.

Liddick argues that the dedication of these activists should not be questioned, as they are what sociologist Eric Hoffer called ‘true believers’, and they wish to dedicate their lives to changing the world for the (perceived) better. Eagan maintains that most terrorists (including environmental extremists) have an affinity with the philosophy of the cause to which they are dedicated. When discussing the process of a non-violent animal/environmental activist developing into an ecoterrorist, Young argues that they are ‘at least partly driven by the rising and falling fortunes for their cause’.

Liddick argues that the role of women in the radical environmental and animal rights movements should not be downplayed. According to Ingrid Newkirk, ‘the founder of ALF in the United States was a woman’, and the history of Earth First! tells us that women have always played an
important role, sometimes assuming leadership or iconic positions, as in the cases of Judi Bari and Julia Hill.\textsuperscript{128}

Within Einwohler’s fieldwork she reports that many activists ‘described themselves and their activism in terms of either emotional attachments to animals or emotional reactions to animal abuse and exploitation’.\textsuperscript{129} Bartlett and Miller argue that four often overlooked factors can also influence how radicals can become terrorists: they may do so due to the emotional ‘pull’ they experience when confronted with injustice; for the thrill or ‘coolness’ of undertaking such activities; for the status conferred or because of an internal code of honour in place; or act due to peer pressure.\textsuperscript{130}

McBride argues that a more sophisticated way to understand why terrorists engage in their activities is that the carrying out of terrorist acts can assuage existential anxiety. She proposes a theoretical model, an ‘existential-terroristic feedback loop’, for understanding terrorist ideologies. The feedback loop theory postulates that: ‘existential anxiety compels individuals to seek meaning; for some individuals, support of a terrorist ideology functions as an anxiety-reducing, meaning-giving construct; these terrorist ideologies often result in acts of terrorist violence; terrorist violence ultimately exacerbates existential anxiety, compelling terrorists to defend their ideologies and returning them to the very state the ideologies were meant to relieve.’\textsuperscript{131} For those individuals who commit political violence in the service of a radicalized terrorist ideology, the ‘organization, ideology, religious themes, and combat environment all serve to mitigate existential anxiety’.\textsuperscript{132}

Cottee and Hayward argue that engaging in terrorism for some adherents can be ‘profoundly thrilling, empowering and spiritually intoxicating’ and, while other motivations can be in play, it can be a crucial factor in understanding individual drives to commit such acts. The study of terrorism requires an understanding of how such adherents ‘behave, how they think and ... how they feel’.\textsuperscript{133} For some who engage in terrorism there can be three core existential motives, amongst other motivational drives, for doing so: (1) the desire for excitement; (2) the desire for ultimate meaning; and (3) the desire for glory. The carrying out of terrorist action for some allows for the manifestation of these existential desires.\textsuperscript{134}

Cottee and Hayward, similarly to McBride, theorize that carrying out terrorism can relieve existential frustration at the boredom, banality or meaningless of life. Joining a terrorist organization furnishes members with ‘an all-embracing cause and bonds of great intimacy and solidarity; they also open up a world of exhilarating action, violence, intrigue and drama’.\textsuperscript{135}
Groups Evolving Towards Terrorism

The conducting of terrorism is both a political and collective activity; it is usually carried out by individuals acting in the context of a group identity. Thus understanding the nature and dynamics of terrorist groups should be considered essential by the researcher. Writing in the early 1990s Sprinzak argued that the problem with terrorism research at that time was that it focused on explaining terrorists as opposed to terrorism – and current research reveals the same biases by most researchers in the area. Problematically, individual cases of radicalization remain impossible to predict or determine with any certainty the factors that bring about individual radicalization.

Rather, understanding the group process dynamic and its developmental stages is far more important than seeking to understand individual members’ personal psychology motivations. Since the group identity overtakes much of the individual identity of adherents, and their actual behaviour can best be clarified by examining the psychology of the larger collective, there is a need to focus on this level of analysis.

The most long-standing, and perhaps most respected, process theory of how groups embrace terrorism is Sprinzak’s delegitimization perspective. Sprinzak argues that terrorism is best understood in political terms since it is an extension of opposition politics in a democracy. Sprinzak contends that political activists do not just suddenly decide to engage in terrorism. It almost always begins with non-violence by a group and, he argues, they proceed through a rather lengthy process that is involved with the delegitimization of the state.

Sprinzak maintains that such a process ‘involves a group of true believers who challenge authority long before they become terrorists, recruit followers, clash with the public agencies of law enforcement from a position of weakness, obtain a distinct collective world view, and, in time, radicalize within the organization to the point of becoming terrorist’. Under such frameworks, the group believes that the state can no longer protect the interests of the identity group in the name that the terrorists are supposedly acting, in this case the environment. Sprinzak’s model postulates that activists usually begin by engaging in protests using peaceful and lawful means, through such activities as strikes, demonstrations and other means of direct action and symbolic resistance actions to influence either the ballot box or civil society. Sprinzak calls this the ‘crisis of confidence’ phase.

This crisis of confidence stage implies a conflict with the government and policies but the group is not seeking to challenge the foundations of the established political system. Rather the protesters assert that the
government have misguided policies, rather than believing that the political system is fundamentally flawed. However, the group experiences a ‘profound disenchantment’ with the government that is beyond the typical political opposition on offer.\textsuperscript{143} It can be observed at this stage that the distinctly different ideological group challenging the establishment will refuse ‘to play according to the established rules of the game’ but will not engage in illegal activity. If anything, its actions will be countercultural in nature.\textsuperscript{144}

In the second phase, the conflict of legitimacy, the group begin to get more militant, as they view purely non-violent political or confrontational politics of limited success.\textsuperscript{145} Further, the group is willing to question the legitimacy of the current political system and will seek to transform the system because of its flaws. The current system and its norms is thus delegitimated in favour of a new ideological and cultural system, which can be characterized as a break from the current political order. The stage is usually precipitated by a ‘great disappointment’ occurring with the previous stage. The former ‘moderate’ radicals are either frustrated by the government’s responses to their demands/actions or from their failure to succeed in their endeavour, so they channel their frustration into more radical forms of protest.\textsuperscript{146} They see themselves as ‘soldiers in a just war’ and their actions will create the required revolutionary conditions that will encourage a mass movement to develop.\textsuperscript{147}

Thus an upswing in intense political action – running the gamut from angry protests (demonstrations, confrontations and vandalism) to acts of small-scale violence carried out against the state – can be observed. The group also undergoes intense radicalization and closes ranks, its members under great emotional change and ‘totally consumed by the great moments’ they are experiencing. The language and rhetoric enunciated by the group is both revolutionary and filled with exhortations of ‘slanders and desecrations’ against their enemy.\textsuperscript{148} The conflict of legitimacy stage presupposes the emergence of an alternative ideological and cultural system that delegitimates the current regime and its code of social norms in the name of some better ones.\textsuperscript{149}

In the final stage, the crisis of legitimacy, the activists make a complete transformation. Having failed to accept the rules of the game in which broader society rejects their initiatives (as exemplified by their inability to achieve political change through legal channels), a minority of individuals choose violence to attempt to achieve their political goals and to publicize their cause. During this crisis of legitimacy phase, these individuals consider anyone they define as associated with the regime to be an enemy, and they become willing to use violence against them.\textsuperscript{150} At this level the formation of a small, isolated terror underground that
engages in political violence against the regime and its allies can be observed. The group creates its own reality and strictly imposes on its adherents a new set of behavioural and moral standards.\textsuperscript{151} For Sprinzak this culminating stage has the terrorist group considering all people associated with the suspect political order to be depersonalized, dehumanized and virtually subhuman, allowing members to commit heinous actions up to and including murder.\textsuperscript{152} To the members of the group the world becomes Manicheistic in nature, with the ‘sons of light’ (themselves) warring with the ‘sons of darkness’ (their opponents) – enabling a ‘fantasy war’ of the former versus the latter as fully legitimate. The first external sign of this stage is linguistic and symbolic in nature. Expressions of political delegitimation are ‘no longer limited to political terms or social concepts but are extended to a language of objects, animals, or “human” animals’. The state and/or their lackeys are labelled as ‘things’, ‘dogs’, ‘pigs’, ‘Nazis’ or ‘terrorists’, enabling them to be killed because they are not legitimate members of the community and not human by default.\textsuperscript{153} The group at this point often rejects conventional morality and believes itself free to engage in forms of criminality, or non-conventional sexual activity.\textsuperscript{154} However, most radical groups stay the crisis of confidence or conflict of legitimacy levels rather than proceed to level three.\textsuperscript{155}

Sprinzak argues that if terrorist activity is determined primarily by group identity two variables hold great explanatory value:

1. the changing symbolic behaviour of the activists involved – the ways in which they talk, categorize, theorize and stigmatize the world, both their own and that of the enemy;
2. the changing political and legal behaviour of the activists involved – the ways in which they interact with the prevailing political and legal system.

By examining how these two factors interconnect Sprinzak maintains that the researcher can determine the general facets of the three stages of the process of delegitimation.\textsuperscript{156} Sprinzak’s work is applicable in different contexts. Sprinzak utilized this model when examining the left-wing Weathermen group,\textsuperscript{157} and with right-wing groups in which he modified his original thesis to accommodate what he calls ‘split delegitimization’. Under this rubric, right-wing terrorists attack the state because they view it as ‘the hostage’ or the puppet of special groups. Hence, here the terrorists fail to see the distinctions between the state and the group against whom they are actively opposed.\textsuperscript{158}
Examining the history of the ‘ecoterrorist’ groups demonstrates how a ‘collective psychopolitical process can turn “some young, educated, sensitive human beings into tough revolutionaries and brutal killers”’.159 The Weathermen leaders, politically socialized by violent confrontations, went through a ‘psychopolitical crisis of legitimacy’ process comprising four components: (1) a political language of delegitimation of the regime, (2) rhetoric and symbols of depersonalization and dehumanization of individuals belonging to the system, (3) intended and planned violence, and (4) terrorism’.160

Wiktorowicz and Sageman, using network theory, argue that radicalization is more a case of who you know within your social network. Violent radicalization occurs within smaller groups where factors such as bonding, peer pressure and indoctrination can come into play, altering an individual’s worldview gradually and changing the individual’s view of the world.161

Sageman, also influenced by the social movement theory, emphasizes the importance of social bonds and networks bound together by a common ideology and by usage of the internet to create a community. Sageman notes that those who join a cell invariably know at least one member. Recruitment is a bottom-up process and there are a number of stages. It starts with a sense of moral outrage at violence or personal discrimination and leads to the conclusion that there is – as in Sageman’s case study – a ‘war against Islam’. Gradually the rhetoric escalates, with men encouraging each other that a violent response is necessary.162

The cell members or ‘affinity cells’ tend to reinforce each other towards performing acts of terrorist violence in what Sageman calls the ‘bunch of guys’ theory. Under this framework, cells tend to swing into action not because of directives from above, but from a group of young men spending time with each other and spurring each other on.163 Once a group has violent views they reach out to others that can connect them – in the case he examined, Al Qaeda. Or alternatively they act on their own recognizance inspired by ideology.164 Bakker’s work builds on Sageman’s with the emphasis on networks and personal bonds but adds that most people become radicalized in their domiciled state and that they tend to be of approximately the same age and from the same locale.165 Neumann and Rogers’s work has also supported the importance of social networks and personal bonds in the radicalization process.166 They note that groups provided these individuals with a community they can belong to and be accepted within and which provides both a mission and sense of superiority. They also examine how social pressures apply to the individual members of the groups and that this can increase group conformity over time.167
An approach that postulates a continuum linking activists to militants and militants to terrorists remains to date an undertheorized concept. This book argues that becoming an ecoterrorist is a process of radicalization and what needs to be understood is what factors contribute to a group feeling compelled or, just as importantly not compelled, to engage in violence. The group theoretical models addressed here constitute broad political dynamics and constitute macro-level radicalization factors that this book will focus on. As it has been established that peer group influence greatly impacts upon radicalization, including pressure to conduct terrorist acts, the volume also addresses what collective processes may be involved in influencing environmental and animal rights actors to progress from protest to more militant and violent forms of political expression.

This book intends to test the above theories empirically by applying them to the selected radical environmental group case studies. It adopts primarily the Sprinzak analysis – due to its long-standing nature and similarity to the group stage theories – to determine whether activists are indeed progressing towards violence. Sprinzak’s process theory is also applicable in other circumstances and to other types of radical groups, regardless of their political belief structures, but is it fully applicable to the ‘ecoterrorist’ groups examined here? His model is an appropriate starting point for analysing possible breakdowns in radical environmental groups’ perceived legitimacy towards the liberal-democratic state or institutional order and the history and activities the examined groups operate in, but it remains to be seen if it holds great explanatory power when applied to potential ‘ecoterrorist’ groups.

To further assist our understanding of group radicalization this volume will adopt Wright-Neville’s approach that we can observe a progression from activist to militant to terrorist, which corresponds respectively with Sprinzak’s crisis of confidence, conflict of legitimacy and crisis of legitimacy phases. The analysis intends to synthesize Sprinzak’s approach with Wright-Neville’s tripartite model of categorizing such actions in order to critically examine the selected radical environmental group case studies to determine if these approaches can yield some insights as to purported ‘ecoterrorist’.

Wright-Neville defines an activist group that, while ‘dedicated to altering or replacing the political hierarchy and its policies … they do not seek to change the principles that underpin existing political and/or democratic frame-works. Activists prefer to work “with the system”, agitating within existing legal and political norms even though these might be manifestly biased against them and militate against the successful realization of their goals.’
Introduction

In certain circumstances, activists who experience ‘accumulated frustration’ combined with a sense of political impotence can be tempted to adopt more militant actions.\textsuperscript{173} This stage maps neatly with Sprinzak’s ‘conflict of legitimacy’ stage that tends to be preceded by a ‘great disappointment’ with earlier forms of protest and activism that have not generated expected results.\textsuperscript{174} For Wright-Neville, terrorists exhibit de-humanizing behaviour towards their opponents that cannot be observed in the behaviour of activists or militants.\textsuperscript{175}

So a key question becomes: can we observe amongst these radical environmental groups an ‘accumulated frustration’ with the prevailing political and social status quo that has led some activists to become militants and then some militants to progress to terrorism?\textsuperscript{176} Other subsidiary research questions include: are these groups terrorist according to traditional analysis? Is the inspiration of fear through their actions their main goal? Do they claim they want their opponents to fear them?

However, the other theoretical approaches (both group and individual) to radicalization raise some interesting questions that should be tested empirically and can be mapped on to the primary approach adopted. Can we observe, as per Wiktorowicz and Sageman’s approach, that radicalization only occurs in small groups and that bonding, peer pressure and indoctrination are key factors in altering individuals to adopt the group view of the world? As Sageman notes, how important has the internet been in creating a like-minded community?

Do members of radical environmental groups invariably know other cell members before they join? To what extent is Sageman wrong when he argues that most radicalization occurs amongst groups of young men? Are members primarily recruited from their own locale? Are Neumann and Rogers correct that radicalizing can provide people with a mission in life and a sense of superiority over others? As per Einwohler’s research, are the type of people who join radical environmental groups doing so because of emotional attachments to animals and/or their abuse or because of a felt close connection to the Earth?

Bartlett and Miller argue that radicals can become terrorists do to the emotional ‘pull’ they experience from perceived injustice or from the thrill or ‘coolness’ of undertaking actions on behalf of the environment. Can we observe this in the case of radical environmental group members? Or, alternatively, do people become involved – as McBride, Cottee and Hayward contend – because it provides meaning in a person’s life and mitigates existential anxiety, boredom or frustration?
Are such groups becoming more violent?
History teaches that radical groups’ violence tends to escalate if their
applied strategies and tactics are unsuccessful in achieving their goals.\textsuperscript{177} According to Enders and Sandler, transnational terrorism will become
more violent over time even if the number of attacks decreases.\textsuperscript{178} Therefore, according to Beck, if radicalization is a universal process of
all militant groups then such analysis should be applicable to the case of
‘ecoterrorism’.\textsuperscript{179}
This book will thus also examine whether environmental radical
groups are on a continuum of violence: are they becoming more violent
over time as the literature suggests? There appears to be two schools of
thought. Some writers contend that recent evidence has suggested that
some radical environmental organizations (including both the Animal
Liberation Front and the Earth Liberation Front) are becoming more
willing to pursue aggressive and violent tactics. Gary Ackerman
(Monterey Institute for International Studies) observes that: ‘a shift in
[more violent] propaganda is considered to be the key indicator of an
increase in an organization’s propensity to use violence’.\textsuperscript{180}
However, Taylor argues that such groups have internal dynamics and
characteristics that mitigate against an increase in violence. He argues
that such groups’ anti-hierarchical structures provide venues for inter-
movement debate and foster a culture of discourse that can have an
ameliorating effect, which can prevent momentum towards utilizing
violence. These include: open lines of communication – particularly via
the internet – that reduce insularity; and the lack of a charismatic leader
who dominates a movement and could, by sheer force of will, push a
group towards violence. Additionally, environmental radicals tend not to
sever ties with their families or communities (many terrorist groups
demand a cutting off of all outside influences). They also tend to engage
face-to-face with their opposition thus tending to humanize them. More-
over, such groups understand that committing acts of violence will draw
the attention of law enforcement and they are not willing to run that risk.
Finally, such groups tend to ascribe to deep ecological beliefs and hold
life to be sacred, preventing the development of a type of ideology that
allows for physical violence against individuals.\textsuperscript{181}
Ackerman’s analysis of the Earth Liberation Front and why they are
unlikely to resort to more aggressive forms of violence also builds on
Taylor’s observations. He claims that many activists are young and
relatively poor and the movements tend not to have generous benefactors
and thus are not able to fund large-scale operations.\textsuperscript{182} Taylor postulates
that the greater threat is from a lone wolf activist like the ‘Unabomber’
who is isolated from the movements and their ameliorating effects regarding the use of physical violence.\textsuperscript{183}

Thus, as Howard Ehrlich maintains, it is not unusual for radical-minded groups to resort to violence if they believe they have no other options and that their government or society is unresponsive to their brand of political activism.\textsuperscript{184} Can we observe this occurring for the radical environmental groups being examined here? Do they perceive they have no choice but to operate outside the democratic political system, using violence to achieve their goals?

Thus a further series of research questions need to be interrogated: are attacks by ‘ecoterrorists’ becoming more frequent or more violent (either in overall attacks or attacks on sentient beings)? Have the groups’ geographical reach expanded over time? According to Scarce, radical environmentalists recognize that their cause is a global one. Issues such as biodiversity loss and climate change demonstrate that the problems they rail against have a global dimension that needs to be tackled at that level.\textsuperscript{185} It has become apparent that the movement has also spread geographically. Arslan argues that previously most actions undertaken were in industrialized, modern states (the UK, Italy, France, the USA) but there is now a shift in focus with actions committed in less-developed states such as Greece, Turkey and Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{186}

Can we further observe an uptick in attacks against purported environmental opponents as activists become more frustrated at the lack of progress relating to such issues as climate change or the perception that global environmental stocks are ever rapidly decreasing? Are lone-wolf operators a greater threat? Have these groups’ political influence or ability to project political violence waned? As a potential mass movement (as groups such as Earth First!, Animal Liberation Front and Earth Liberation Front wish to become), have they been successful in building their group into a mass movement to achieve their objective? Lastly, are the various examined organizations merging into one entity with a single unified aim or are they still distinct groups with their own philosophies and differing types of actions?

**AIM AND STRUCTURE**

To recapitulate: what this book seeks to do is critically examine if or how the radical environmental groups selected (Earth First!, Earth Liberation Front, Animal Liberation Front and Sea Shepherd Conservation Society) progress from activists to militants to terrorists as the literature on political violence suggests. To answer the proposed research questions
this book will historically trace the evolution of these groups, their strategies, tactics and philosophies as well as critically examining the biographies of key personnel.

The book is divided into several research themes. The first is introductory in scope. The second provides an overarching view of the radical environmental groups chosen. Part I examines the growth of groups dedicated to protecting animal welfare and rights such as the Animal Liberation Front, Animal Rights Militia and Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty. Part II examines Earth First! and the schism over the use of violence as a strategy that spawned the birth of the Earth Liberation Front. Part III considers the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, and how and to what extent they have become radicalized. The book is set out as follows:

Chapter 1 scrutinizes the case study of the primary ‘ecoterrorist’ group protecting animals: the Animal Liberation Front (ALF). It sets out a brief history of animal welfare groups, the Hunt Saboteur protest group and the radical environmental group Band of Mercy that predated the ALF, as well as a biography of the group’s charismatic leader, Ronnie Lee. The chapter describes the birth of the ALF both in the UK and the USA. It goes on to critically analyse both the ALF’s underlying philosophy and the development of a radical animal rights philosophy that underpinned ALF actions.

Chapter 2 focuses on the ALF’s organizational structure and financing, the reasons people have joined the group, its relationship with mainstream environmental groups and the strategy and tactics utilized to attempt to achieve its goals. The chapter also provides a history of the actions carried out by the ALF. It further critically examines the ALF’s attitude to political violence and explores the reasons why it has proven to be the most violent of the ‘ecoterrorist’ groups, willing to proffer physical violence against those it designated to be an enemy. It provides a history of their campaigns and actions undertaken.

Chapter 3 critically examines the rise of purported ‘offshoot’ groups – the Animal Rights Militia, Justice Department and Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty – and their campaigns to end animal cruelty by targeting humans. The final section applies the previously outlined prevailing theories of radical group and individual evolution, and charts the ALF’s (and their purported offshoots) members growth from activists to militants to terrorists willing to commit large-scale arson and attacks on humans to further their goals to end animal suffering.

Chapter 4 provides a critical examination of the group Earth First!, focusing on key proponents, its history, the conditions that brought it about and its philosophy. It examines the role played by Edward Abbey and the impact of his 1975 novel *The Monkey Wrench Gang* on radical
environmentalism. It also examines the birth of Earth First!, their campaigns and the role played by Dave Foreman in creating this group dedicated to protecting the biosphere. It analyses their strategies and tactics, operating philosophy and campaigns, and seeks to explain their demise as a functioning group and why it never progressed towards more radical violent action.

Chapter 5 examines the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and charts its development of a philosophy of property violence – or ecotage – as opposed to violence against humans. The group’s evolution, as well as distinction, from the group it sprang from, Earth First! is also critically evaluated. The strategies, tactics and appeal of the group are critically examined as well as its successes and failures. The chapter evaluates how ELF has spread from its beginnings in England in 1992 to having autonomous cells globally. It examines this cell structure with its emphasis, in the case of ELF, on ‘affinity groups’, which are usually autonomous and self-funded, and asks if they can be considered examples of leaderless resistance. This chapter also provides a history of the various militant acts carried out by ELF. It considers whether these groups are vigilantes, militants or terrorists. Lastly it questions how effective ELF has been in achieving its stated goals. It further examines the group’s evolution using prevailing radicalization theories and considers whether – given their actions – they should be considered terrorists or militants.

Chapter 6 sets out to explore the history and evolution of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (SSCS). It details the background of the group’s totemic leader, Paul Watson, and his childhood influences that led him to want to work to save oceanic creatures. It describes his oft-times fiery relationship with the environmental non-governmental organization Greenpeace and his rancorous exit from that organization. It then critically examines the formation of Earthforce, the stillborn antecedent group to the SSCS, and the creation in 1977 of the SSCS. It goes on to critically analyse the group’s ethos; its attraction to its members; its organizational structure, the strategy and tactics; its use of diplomacy; and the global media and militant direct action to achieve its goals. It further examines SSCS’s attitude to violence carried out in the service of its mission, and its distinction between violence against humans and property damage, which the group argues should not be considered a violent act.

Chapter 7 provides a history of the various militant acts done by the SSCS since its inception. It focuses in particular on the ongoing annual confrontation between the SSCS and Japanese whalers in Antarctic waters. It further asks how effective the SSCS has been in their stated
goals to end Japanese whaling and whether the methods are counter-
productive to their stated goals. The chapter also critically examines the
recent domestic state attempts to charge Watson and the SSCS for their
actions. The chapter concludes by examining the implications of the
arrest of the group’s totemic leader on future campaigns. Lastly, its
opponents – in particular the Japanese government – has labelled the
SSCS as ‘pirates’ (a label the group wears proudly) and/or vigilantes or
terrorists.

Chapter 8 analyses the various claims to legitimacy made by the
SSCS. It demonstrates how the unwieldiness of modern international
oceanic law has enabled the SSCS to evade legal punishment for their
actions. Lastly it considers how successful the SSCS has been and
whether such success will continue on in the future and, utilizing the
previously examined radicalization theories, questions whether the SSCS
is an ecoterrorist group or should be better understood as a vigilante
group willing to use political violence to achieve its goals.

Conclusion – here the case studies and the theoretical analysis are
drawn together to recapitulate the central findings as to whether we can
observe a process in the examined groups from activist to militant to
terrorist. In particular, we will determine whether there are distinctive
radicalization patterns within particular groups, particular movements and
tendencies (environmental or animal rights), and country-specific trends.
In addition, the conclusion addresses other relevant questions about these
groups: are the examined groups counterproductive to the aims of the
broader environmental movement or a necessary ‘evil’ that enables more
moderate groups to have success? Have the examined radical environ-
mental groups flourished or grown weaker over time and what factors
account for their relative strengths or weaknesses? Lastly, have they
developed into a mass movement to realize their political goal of
changing how humans interact with the environment?

NOTES

1. Steve Vanderheiden, ‘Eco-terrorism or justified resistance? Radical environmentalism and
synthesis of empirical approaches to homegrown extremism’, Studies in Conflict and
Terrorism, 38 (11), pp. 958–75, p. 959.
3. The first use of the term ‘ecoterrorist’ is claimed by Ron Arnold from the Center for the
The term is further analysed and defined later in this introduction.
4. See the section on ecotage for further analysis, but at its simplest ecotage can be defined
as illegal, non-public acts, motivated by environmental concerns that aim to retard or
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7. Liddick, Eco-Terrorism: Radical Environmental and Animal Liberation Movements, p. 91.

8. Liddick, Eco-Terrorism: Radical Environmental and Animal Liberation Movements, p. 91; White, Terrorism: An Introduction, p. 22.

9. At its simplest, the consensus view amongst those studying radicalization appears to be that it is: ‘(1) a gradual “process” that entails socialization into an (2) extremist belief system that sets the stage for (3) violence even if it does not make it inevitable’, Hafez and Mullins, ‘The radicalization puzzle: a theoretical synthesis of empirical approaches to homegrown extremism’, pp. 958–75, p. 964. See the radicalization section for a more comprehensive assessment of the term.


13. Ibid.


18. In recent years terrorism has become for many countries a significant, if not the most significant, political and security issue on their political agendas. Scholars are therefore rightly devoting attention to developing more nuanced understandings of this form of political violence. Indeed, it has been reported that since the 9/11 attacks there has been on average one book published on terrorism every six hours. Pete Lenton (2008) ‘Understanding and combating terrorism: definitions, origins and strategies’, Australian Journal of Political Science, 43(1) pp. 133. However, there are other forms of terrorist and radical threats that are present and also deserve attention from researchers.


20. Ibid.


24. Gerry Nagtzaam and Pete Lentini (2008) ‘Vigilantes on the high seas?: The Sea Shepherds and political violence’, Terrorism and Political Violence, 20, pp. 110–33, 124–6. For example, the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society’s recent annual campaign against Japanese whaling in the Southern Ocean constitutes the most significant example of animal rights violence escalating. Since 2000, the contest between the Sea Shepherds and the whalers has moved from one in which the former’s members have attempted to get between the whalers and whales to prevent harpoons being shot into the cetaceans, to illegally boarding ships that carried particularly life-threatening consequences at international maritime law. For many years both sides have ratcheted up the means with which they confront each other. This has resulted in the emergence of increasing political violence.


27. Ecotage, at its simplest, is defined as, ‘the practice of damaging property to prevent ecological damage’, Teale Phelps Bondaroff (2008) Throwing a wrench into things: the strategy of radical environmentalism, Journal of Military and Strategic Studies, 10 (4), p. 5. See section on ecotage and violence for a more complete analysis of the term.


32. According to Ehud Sprinzak: ‘Vigilante movements rarely perceive themselves involved in conflict with the government and the prevailing concept of law. They are neither revolutionary nor interested in the destruction of authority. Rather, what characterizes the vigilante mind is the profound conviction that the government and its agencies have failed
to enforce the law or establish order in a particular area... They believe they are acting legally against criminal elements because the authorities are either too weak to enforce the law or negligent in their duties.' Ehud Sprinzak (1995) 'Right-wing terrorism in comparative perspective: the case of split delegitimatization' in Tore Bjørgo (ed.), Terror From the Extreme Right (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd), pp. 17–43, p. 29. Rather they believe that the government is failing to create or enforce their laws requiring them to take on that role to effect justice. Ehud Sprinzak (1987) 'From messianic pioneering to vigilante terrorism: the case of the gush emunim underground', Journal of Strategic Studies, 10 (4), pp. 194–216, p. 211.

40. Ibid.
43. Lentini, Neojihadism, pp. 1–42, p. 9.
45. According to Young, right-wing terrorist groups often, ‘adhere to principles of racial supremacy and embrace antigovernment and anti-regulatory beliefs’. Such organizations often involve themselves in actions that are covered and protected by ‘constitutional guarantees of free speech and assembly’. Examples of these groups include the World Church of the Creator and the Aryan Nations. See Young, ‘A time series analysis of eco-terrorist violence in the United States: 1993–2003’, p. 14.

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47. Ibid.
49. The concept of ‘extremism’ is also considered a nebulous term within political science circles. Lentini argues extremism can be characterized by an outlook that rejects ambiguity and considers opponents’ ‘answers’ to be not merely wrong but evil. In an extremist’s worldview, the world is Manichean with no shades of grey and compromise is both a sign of weakness and a betrayal. Extremists believe that their morally superior state of mind entitles them not to be bound by the prevailing strictures of the political order and thus are free to utilize violence against the state, corporations or individuals to achieve their goals. See Lentini, Neojihadism, p. 11.
53. Rowell, Green Backlash: Global Subversion of the Environment Movement, p. 150. It is important to note that industry has often sought to brand environmental activists as ‘environmental terrorists’. For example, when Clorox became concerned that Greenpeace might launch a major public relations campaign against the company’s household bleach, it hired Ketchum Public Relations to handle the spin control. The Ketchum ‘Crisis Management Plan’ laid out suggestions for Clorox that included, ‘dealing with the environmentalists and any “unalterably” green journalists by accusing them of “environmental terrorism”’. See Eagan (1991) ‘From spikes to bombs: the rise of ecoterrorism’, p. 2; Charles Campbell, ‘Crisis Plan’s leak smudges Clorox’, Los Angeles Times, 2 June, D8.
56. Ibid., p. 151.


71. Karasick, ‘Curb your ecoterrorism: identifying the nexus between state criminalization of ecoterror and environmental protection policy’, p. 583. It is also interesting to note that the Stop Terrorism Property Act of 2003 provides a similar definition to the stated primary objective of the ELF, to ‘inflict economic damage on those profiting [sic] from the destruction and exploitation of the natural environment’, in Karasick, ‘curb your ecoterrorism: identifying the nexus between state criminalization of ecoterror and environmental protection policy’, p. 583.


77. Amster, Perspective on ecoterrorism: catalysts, conflations, and casualties, p. 289.


79. For example in the USA the term ‘crime of violence’ means: (1) an offence that has as an element of the use, attempted use or threatened use of physical force against the person or property of another, or (2) any other offence that is a felony and that, by its nature, involves a substantial risk that physical force against the person or property of another may be used in the course of committing the offence. See US Code, Title 18, Part 1, Chapter 1, s 16, https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/16#.


82. Ibid.


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95. For example, the Weather Underground, which was born out of the anti-Vietnam war group Students for a Democratic Society in the 1960s, underwent such a progression. See Sprinzak, ‘The psychopolitical formation of extreme left terrorism in a democracy: the case of the Weathermen’, p. 11.
98. Pete Lentini (2009) ‘The transference of Neojihadism: towards a process theory of transnational radicalisation’, in Sayed Khatab, Muhammad Bakashmar and Ela Ogru (eds), ‘Radicalisation crossing borders: new directions in Islamist and Jihadist political, intellectual and theological thought in practice, refereed proceedings from the International Conference, 26–7 November 2008, Parliament House, Melbourne Victoria (Caulfield: Global Terrorism Research Centre), pp. 1–32, http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/gtrec/files/2012/08/gtrec-proceedings-2008-01-pete-lentini.pdf. While again definitions of extremism are varied and there is no agreement among researchers as to a definitive classification, here we adopt the definition proposed by Manus Midlarsky where: ‘Political extremism is defined as the will to power by a social movement in the service of a political program typically at variance with that supported by existing state authorities, and for which individual liberties are to be curtailed in the name of collective goals, including the mass murder of those who would actually or potentially disagree with the program. Restrictions on individual freedom in the interests of the collectivity and the willingness to kill massively are central to this definition.’ Manus Midlarsky (2011) Origins of Political Extremism: Mass Violence in the Twentieth Century and Beyond (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press), p. 7. Extremists can be distinguished from radicals in that, ‘Extremists strive to create a homogenous society based on rigid, dogmatic ideological tenets; they seek to make society conformist by suppressing all opposition and subjugating minorities. That distinguishes them from mere radicals who accept diversity and believe in the power of reason rather than dogma.’ Alex P. Schmid (2013) ‘Radicalisation, de-radicalisation, counter-radicalisation: a conceptual discussion and literature review, ICCT research paper, March, p. 8. None of the groups examined in this book rise to the level of extremists but fit comfortably within the rubric of radicalism.
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102. Sageman, Understanding Terror Networks, p. 108.
105. Ibid., p. 800.
107. Ibid.
109. Ibid., p. 802.
115. Liddick, Eco-terrorism: radical environmental and animal liberation movements, p. 90.
119. Sageman, Understanding Terror Networks p. 108.
120. Dalgaaard-Nielsen, ‘Violent radicalization in Europe: what we know and what we do not know’, p. 804.
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128. Liddick, Eco-Terrorism: Radical Environmental and Animal Liberation Movements, p. 83.
132. Ibid., p. 567.
134. Ibid., p. 966.
135. Ibid., pp. 978–9.
136. Ibid., p. 966.
140. Ibid., p. 78.
141. Ibid., p. 79.
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152. Ibid., p. 82. Similarly the well-respected National Extremism Tactical Coordination Unit (NETCU) has a radicalization model that broadly follows Sprinzak’s approach. The first phase their model postulates is where radical activists pursue lawful protest including boycotts or demonstrations. The NETCU paradigm further maintains that if such an approach does not yield results then harsher tactics are enacted such as a coordinated intimidation or harassment campaign that targets organizations, individuals and businesses (trespass into offices, threatening letters, intelligence gathering on targets). In this second phase, if adherents become disillusioned with results they can turn to more radical action, with the line between peaceful yet passionate protest and the use of force becoming hazy for protesters. At this level activists consider campaigns of property damage, vandalism, theft or liberation operations as legitimate exercises. See Arslan, ‘The social and operational intersections of environmental extremism in North America and Europe’, pp. 155–8; National Extremism Tactical Coordination Unit, http://www.netcu.org.uk/protection/domesticextremisttactics.jsp.


154. Ibid., p. 83.

155. Ibid., p. 85.

156. Ibid., p. 80.

157. For instance in his classic study of the Weathermen, Sprinzak demonstrated that this group emerged from the Students for a Democratic Society, who largely engaged in non-violent protest actions (crisis of confidence). Not being able to have influenced policies enough through these actions, various groups became more militant and took over campus buildings. Their activities culminated in the Days of Rage at the Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968 (conflict of legitimacy). Following this crackdown, the Weathermen split off from the main protest groups and began their campaign of terrorist bombings throughout the USA (crisis of legitimacy). See Sprinzak, ‘The psychopolitical formation of extreme left terrorism in a democracy: the case of the Weathermen’ pp. 65–85.


160. Ibid., p. 77.


163. Sageman, Understanding Terror Networks, p. 108.


169. See, for example, Sageman, Understanding Terror Networks.
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170. For example, the anti-abortion terrorists proceeded through similar stages during the 1990s. Various interest groups performed as activists such as Operation Rescue, and so on. However, not being able in their opinion to win complete bans on abortions, the anti-abortion activists began demonstrating and blockading access to abortion clinics. As a result of this the pro-choice Clinton Administration introduced the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) legislation. Thereafter, with one of their prime means of protest removed from them, the terrorists began engaging in acts of violence against abortion clinic workers. Indeed, as Christopher Hewitt observes, anti-abortion clinic terrorism, especially bombings and shootings, became deadly under President Clinton. Christopher Hewitt (2003) Understanding Terrorism in America: From the Klan to Al Qaeda (London: Routledge), pp. 38–41.


172. Ibid., p. 32.

173. Ibid., p. 35.


176. Ibid., p. 42.


