

The Development of Strategic Culture in Terrorist Organisations

PhD Pre-Submission Seminar / Final Review Documentation

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Introduction

How might the strategic studies construct of strategic culture explain terrorist organisations? What identified causal mechanisms are relevant to strategic subcultures? What does the failure of an attempted strategic subculture mean in a terrorist organisation? In this thesis, I answer these research questions with a causal theory of strategic subcultures in terrorist organisations. How terrorist organisations formulate victory conditions, select and indoctrinate their leadership, and seek to acquire counter-power capabilities can shape their campaign success or failure. In contrast to communication and rational choice-based frameworks, I contend that possible, interacting causal mechanisms such as the *cultural transmission* of ideas, in-group *social learning*, and in-group bonding via shared *folklore* remain under-appreciated by counterterrorism analysts and policymakers.

The re-emergence and growth of religiously motivated terrorism has transformed international security in the early 21st Century. Neo-jihadist terrorist organisations such as Al Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) have developed trans-national networks, waged insurgencies to capture (and then lose) territory, and have conducted sophisticated information warfare and propaganda campaigns.¹ Predecessors such as Japan's Aum Shinrikyo developed compartmentalised research into chemical and biological weapons.

The central argument of this thesis is that terrorist organisations develop these counter-power capabilities in order to achieve particular strategic objectives. Aum Shinrikyo's Shambhala Plan fantasised about overthrowing Japan's constitutional monarchy, installing its founder

¹ Lentini, Pete (2013). *Neojihadism: Towards A New Understanding of Terrorism and Extremism?* Cheltenham, United Kingdom: Edward Elgar Publishing.

and leader Shoko Asahara as Emperor, and founding a utopian community of Lotus Villages. However, initial short-term success via strategic surprise and battlefield insurgency led to eventual failure: Aum's planned utopian community of post-apocalyptic Lotus Villages did not become long-term, sustainable institutions that were embedded in the international system.

The Puzzle

I contend that a terrorist organisation's decision-making is underpinned by in-group beliefs and preferences about the causal effectiveness of terrorist or insurgency violence as a means. A moral calculus or a meta-ethical justification for violence is needed.² Other solutions such as participation in domestic parliamentary and political processes may have been tried and have failed. Terrorist leaders as norm entrepreneurs identify, select, and cultivate a core ideological worldview that the organisation becomes identified with over time. Tactical personnel — who I call violence professionals — are recruited, socialised, trained, and deployed.³ A terrorist campaign may achieve initial success but later fail, and this may in part be due to the possible path dependencies of early decisions.

A strategic subcultures framework offers the potential to help analysts and policymakers anticipate terrorist organisations that may be gaining what I call *mobilisational counter-power* to displace an existing government or politico-military elite. A strategic subculture can

² William T. Vollmann (2004). *Rising Up and Rising Down: Some Thoughts on Violence, Freedom and Urgent Means*. New York: Ecco, pp. 438-515.

³ Jacob N. Shapiro (2013). *The Terrorist's Dilemma: Managing Violent Covert Organizations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

help to identify where in-group beliefs and preferences for violence come from: cultural, philosophical, political, and religious sources. It can help to identify mesolevel factors that may be relevant to radicalisation and recruitment processes. It also reflects group level and social psychological processes that bind decision elites and violence professionals together in terrorist organisations. Being aware of these factors may help counterterrorism policymakers to craft responses to prevent the growth and maturation of terrorist organisations, and to end them.⁴

The Argument

I argue that group and organisational level processes are important to begin to answer these puzzles. I draw on a Cold War era think tank debate about comparative cultural influences on the possible use of nuclear force by the United States of America and the then Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in a ‘limited’ nuclear exchange. An overlooked aspect of this debate was the two-level identification of cultural-psychological influences on war-fighter decision-making (Strategic Culture), and the importance of politico-military elites and institutions in filtering and shaping those decisions (Strategic Subcultures).⁵

Such group and organisational processes can be modelled as a lifecycle of terrorist organisation activity. *Initiation* concerns: (i) the formative experiences of a terrorist organisation’s leadership and decision elite; and (ii) the preference formation for a moral

⁴ Audrey Kurth Cronin (2009). *How Terrorism Ends*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

⁵ Jack Snyder (1977). ‘The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations’ (R-2154-AF). Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R2154.html> [accessed 31st October 2018].

calculus in order to achieve particular strategic objectives. *Capabilities* deal with the development of organisational resources, and the recruitment and retention of violence professionals. *Enactment* deals with an unfolding terrorist campaign as a means to achieve strategic objectives. Going through the terrorist organisation lifecycle involves cumulative decisions about the means chosen versus the ends pursued.⁶

In-group beliefs adoption and preference formation are conceptualised using three specific causal mechanisms:

Cultural Transmission concerns how terrorist organisations and leaders adopt particular religious or socio-political beliefs that inform their moral calculus.⁷ This may be vertical (familial sources), horizontal (in-group or peer group), or oblique (from educational teachers or other environmental sources and experiences). It may be from proximate (near) or distal (faraway) sources. It may be synchronic (present) or diachronic (through-time) in timeframe.

Social Learning is a particular horizontal form of cultural transmission that occurs in groups.⁸ It involves social learning and information transmission between individuals. A terrorist organisation is considered as a specific population in which the leadership and the decision elite develop innovations (perhaps on the basis of cultural transmission) and which are then

⁶ Martha Crenshaw (1990). 'The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behavior As A Subject of Strategic Choice.' In Walter Reich (Ed.). *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 7-24.

⁷ Ute Schonpflug (Ed.). (2009). *Cultural Transmission: Psychological, Developmental, Social, and Methodological Aspects*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press. Angela K.Y. Leung, Chi-Yue Chiu, and Ying Yi Hong (2011). *Cultural Processes: A Social Psychological Perspective*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

⁸ William Hoppitt and Kevin N. Laland (2013). *Social Learning: An Introduction to Mechanisms, Methods and Models*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.

learned by violence professionals. A variant on this can involve mutual conversion dynamics between peers, which have also been observed in cultic and new religious groups and movements.

Folklore shapes in-group cohesion and identity through metaphors, myths, narratives, rituals, stories, and symbols.⁹ Folklore is both a unit of culturally transmitted information and it creates a social matrix of aligned, shared learning and understanding. It articulates and embodies a deeper stratum in a terrorist organisation in which terrorist leaders and decision elites mobilise narratives, stories and symbols to create in-group social bonds. In bureaucratic terms it is one way that leaders and decision elites exert psychological control over violence professionals: to ensure that they carry out mandated actions that will advance or progress a terrorist campaign to predetermined ends.

The Analytical Constructs: Strategic Culture and Strategic Subcultures

The analytical construct is the possible existence of strategic subcultures: in-group attitudes, beliefs, and preferences that inform organisational capabilities about the use of terrorist violence (means) in order to achieve a particular strategic vision or set of victory conditions (ends).

⁹ Regina F. Bendix and Galit Hasan-Rokem (Eds.). (2014). *A Companion to Folklore*. Chichester, West Sussex, United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons.

The notion of strategic subcultures arose when the political scientist Jack Snyder sought to understand the mindset of Soviet Union nuclear strategists. Snyder posited an overarching strategic culture or choice sets of attitudes, beliefs, and preferences based on historical experience and governance structures which influenced how Soviet Union nuclear strategists theorised and thought about the use of force. Strategic subcultures referred to defence, national security, and politico-military elites that might have variations in attitudes, beliefs, and preferences and who could influence policymaking. Yet this insight remains a footnote in the strategic culture literature which has largely focused on nation-states.

Snyder's initial research occurred in a Cold War context at the RAND think tank. He distanced his research from RAND's interest in game theory and subsequently adopted rational choice frameworks. Meanwhile, Colin S. Gray at Herman Kahn's Hudson Institute conceptualised a war-fighting form of strategic culture to consider how United States nuclear strategists might win a limited nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union.¹⁰ Gray's possible path to victory mirrored the Schlesinger doctrine of flexible response in the Carter Administration.¹¹ Ken Booth at the United States Naval War College considered a third perspective, warning of possible ethnocentric biases in strategic studies about enemies and adversaries.¹²

¹⁰ Colin S. Gray (1977). 'Across The Nuclear Divide: Strategic Studies Past and Present', *International Security* 2:(1) (Summer), 24-46.

¹¹ Colin S. Gray (1979). 'Nuclear Strategy: The Case for a Theory of Victory', *International Security* 4:9 (Summer), 54-87.

¹² Ken Booth (1979). *Strategy and Ethnocentrism*. New York: Holmes and Meier.

Contemporary security challenges suggest that this early research on strategic culture might be reconceptualised to deal with new threats. Snyder's work anticipated current attempts in comparative international politics and diplomacy to understand and negotiate with authoritarian nation-states and rising powers. In particular, the Putin Administration in Russia has deployed sophisticated information warfare to meddle in the 2016 Presidential election in the United States. Gray's original war-fighting stance looks more ominous given nuclear arms proliferation to Pakistan and North Korea, and given failed development programs in Libya and Iraq. Booth's warning has foreshadowed analytic misperception of the 2003 Iraq War, the Arab Spring, post-Gaddafi Libya, and Syria's civil war.

Militant and terrorist organisations are a significant security challenge. Although psychologist Jerrold M. Post linked first generation strategic culture to understanding terrorist psychology: this link remains underappreciated.¹³ Aum Shinrikyo crossed a threshold and became the first non-state actor in the contemporary era to deploy biological and chemical weapons against civilians. Islamic State captured significant territory in northern Iraq and Syria, and expropriated oil assets to sell to black markets. Their success has forced the United States, Iraq, Russia and other countries to counter and rollback Islamic State's geographic footprint. Colombia's government spent much of 2016 negotiating two peace deals with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People's Army. Other militant and terrorist organisations such as Al Qaeda, Boko Haram, Hamas, and Hezbollah remain active threats.

¹³ Jerrold M. Post (2008). *The Mind of the Terrorist: The Psychology of Terrorism from the IRA to Al-Qaeda*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Strategic subcultures enable decision elites—leaders and the core nucleus—to shape how a terrorist organisation wages a campaign of violence. A strategic subculture has three aspects. First, it has a *worldview* about the external environment, about its adversaries or enemies, and about specific changes that the terrorist organisation wishes to make (its ends). This worldview may arise from past collective experiences via *cultural transmission*; from *social learning* within the decision elite; or from *folklore* narratives about the terrorist organisation's genesis, decision elite, and combat experiences. Second, it has *ranked ordered preferences* that prioritise terrorist violence as the means to achieve the specific changes or ends. A terrorist organisation may emerge from on-going philosophical, political, or religious debates. Third, the terrorist organisation develops *counter-power capabilities* which enable it to persist and survive in the face of adversaries or counter-measures.

Strategic subcultures explain how terrorist organisations transform ideas and preferences about waging violence into counter-power. They are midrange or meso-level structures that mediate between the macrofoundations of material conditions and the microfoundations of individuals. Strategic subcultures emerge from the formative experiences of a leadership or decision elite. They become embedded as shared collective capabilities in terrorist organisations that enable and justify the use of force. This is often through the development of a core ideology that attracts, sensitises, and mobilises individual recruits into trained violence professionals. In this view, Al Qaeda's training camps for mujahideen in Afghanistan were just as important an innovation as the Hamburg Cell's terrorist attacks against the United States on 11th September 2001.

A terrorist organisation with a viable strategic subculture has observable growth and momentum-like effects. They have evolved from a small clandestine group into an open insurgency and may have developed quasi-state governance, infrastructure, and resources. To do so they achieve escalation dominance in a particular nation-state or region versus other strategic actors. They may merge with or seize control of other militant and terrorist groups. They likely use psychological warfare to exploit the vulnerabilities and weaknesses of a nation-state's military forces. They may use deception to create a potential climate for analytic misperception by others. Yet once they achieve and sustain initial success they also create a climate of panicked threat escalation in enemies, adversaries, and observers.

This outcome can be modelled as a causal decision process. This can be uncovered through the process tracing of publicly available evidence and through the causal, probabilistic inference of non-public information and knowledge gaps. A decision elite in a terrorist organisation first formulates its strategic subculture as a choice set of attitudes, beliefs, and preferences. It builds organisational capabilities, acquires resources, and magnetises potential recruits. It then enacts a campaign of terrorist violence in which it may achieve its strategic objectives, or it may become locked in to this ranked ordered preference. 'Degrade and destroy' or leadership decapitation counter-measures may deliver volatile shocks to the terrorist organisation. Its decision elite may choose amnesties, negotiation, or peace deals. However, if it has a viable strategic subculture then the decision elite in the terrorist organisation will remain motivated by its core ideology and over time it may be able to regenerate.

Methodology and Case Study Selection

I use the qualitative research methodologies of process tracing (also informed by past experience with discourse analysis, event analysis, and subcultural identity formation) to examine the selected case study of Japan's religious cult Aum Shinrikyo. This is a deviant case of apocalyptic-driven, religiously motivated terrorism. Aum Shinrikyo was a Japanese new religion whose decision elite or senior leadership researched chemical and biological weapons capabilities in a covert, compartmentalised research program that many of its members did not know existed.

Alexander George and colleagues originally developed process tracing in the late 1970s to understand the operational codes or decision styles of political leaders.¹⁴ Process tracing maps a causal pathway from independent variables such as belief adoption or moral calculus formulation via posited causal mechanisms to dependent variables (such as the possible existence of strategic subcultures as institutional fields in terrorist organisations) or outcome variables (terrorist organisation growth, decline, survival, or failure).¹⁵ Process tracing's epistemological roots in Bayesian probabilistic inference enables me to examine and evaluate a range of primary and secondary information sources on both terrorist organisations.

¹⁴ Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett (2005). *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

¹⁵ Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen (2013). *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Chapter Structure

Chapter 1, which follows, lays out the theoretical framework for identifying strategic subcultures in terrorist organisations, and why it is important for counterterrorism analysts to do so. This theoretical framework lies at the confluence of two sub-fields in international security: strategic studies and terrorism studies. Chapter 2 considers relevant literature and research programs from each of these two sub-fields. Relevant insights for theory-building and closer sub-field integration are considered. Chapter 3 outlines process tracing as the chosen methodology (along with aspects of discourse analysis and event analysis); the selection and inclusion criteria for the two chosen case studies; the three posited mechanisms of cultural transmission, social learning, and folklore; and tests for empirical observation.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus on the Japan's Aum Shinrikyo as the chosen case study for within-case analysis. These chapters build on analysis of relevant propaganda and secondary literature insights about Aum Shinrikyo from area specialists and religious studies scholars. Each chapter examines possible evidence for the posited causal mechanisms and tests detailed in Chapter 3. They conclude with the formulation of a new causal theory of how decision or subcultural elites who seek counter-power may be instead captured by political, religious, or philosophical ideas.

Chapter 6 discusses conclusions including the implications for counterterrorism analysts who study, monitor, and seek to disrupt or to end terrorist organisations. An evolving agenda for strategic subcultures in terrorist organisations as part of fourth generation scholarship is identified, along with other, possible future research.

Chapter 5: Aum Shinrikyo's Shambhala Plan

Introduction

Chapter 4 examined how and why Shoko Asahara founded the religious organisation Aum Shinrikyo in 1984. Despite its initial utopian ideals Aum subsequently evolved into a path dependent trajectory of extremist beliefs, covert research into chemical and biological weapons, and embracing terrorist violence. This pathway into violence transformed Aum from a utopian religious cult to a religiously motivated terrorist organisation: both different forms co-existed with each-other in the same entity.

Chapter 4's analysis focused in particular on the role of three **mesolevel** or mid-level mechanisms in shaping Aum's attempt to develop a strategic subculture: (1) Asahara's deity yoga experiences in the context of Hindu and Buddhist Vajrayana beliefs and his communication of this esoteric knowledge to Aum's senior leadership; (2) the initiatory, religious sub-system in Aum that involved elite deviance and renunciate followers (*shukke*); and (3) how after the failure of other, explored options—such as an unsuccessful 1990-91 political campaign to recast Asahara as a populist political candidate for election to the Japanese Diet (the Parliament)—Aum's senior leadership increasingly chose a pathway of terrorist violence.

I noted in Chapter 4 that Japan's occult-informed politics was strange at the time and did not strongly resonate with Japanese voters. However, there is now also a Traditionalist current (from Julius Evola and other relevant thinkers) which has influenced the advisors of both Russia's President Vladimir Putin and United States President Donald Trump (Aleksandar

Dugin and Steve Bannon, respectively), as well as the post-2016 alt.right political movement. Aum's experimentation with both the occult milieu and with political campaigns were thus forerunners of how contemporary political analysts engage with occult ideas in order to mobilise subcultural voter blocs—and which can help lead to unexpected election outcomes such as the 2016 Presidential Election in the United States.¹⁶

This chapter advances a new, political economy-informed analysis of Aum Shinrikyo's long-term strategic objectives: the so-called Shambhala Plan to enlighten the world and transform Japan into a Buddhist paradise, based on founder Shoko Asahara's knowledge of the *Kalacakra* Tantra.¹⁷ This utopian vision shaped Aum's organisational expansion and its recruitment drive for new members. Below, I examine and discuss three different analytical levels: (1) the **macrofoundations** of the onset of *deflationary stagnation and debt austerity* that likely shaped Aum Shinrikyo's socio-economic environment from 1988 onwards; (2) the **mesofoundations** of the *indoctrinability*, or the unique vulnerability of humans to ideological coercion, manipulation, and persuasion; and (3) the **microfoundations** of individual renunciates' experiences with *rent-seeking* and *wealth extraction* in Aum which were due to the senior leadership's *elite deviance*.

¹⁶ Gary Lachman (2018). *Dark Star Rising: Magick and Power in the Age of Trump*. New York: Penguin Random House.

¹⁷ Ian Reader (2000). *Religious Violence in Contemporary Japan: The Case of Aum Shinrikyo* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press), p. 91. The 'Kalacakra' means the 'Wheel of Time' and also mirrors the relationship between esoteric aspects of the human body and the objective world or cosmos. Various commentaries include Khedrup Norsang Gyatso's *Ornament of Stainless Light: An Exposition of the Kalacakra Tantra* translated by Gavin Kilty (Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2004).

Resituating Aum in this Japanese socio-economic context means that it is more significant than media narratives about apocalyptic doomsday cults or more sophisticated insights about religiously motivated terrorism (discussed in Chapter 2's literature review). It was also a safe haven from socio-economic pressures that reflected debt austerity in ways that we now better understand culturally.¹⁸ Aum transformed from a safe haven to a psychic prison for its members as Asahara became more isolated and obsessed after 1991 with apocalyptic narratives. This can be understood as a form of in-group psychological priming for violence that occurred in Aum prior to its attacks in July 1994 and March 1995. In this chapter's middle sections and conclusion I consider some of Aum's broader lessons for areas such as white collar crime and the psycho-political effects of economic speculative bubbles.

This chapter advances a new perspective on Aum which is informed by a more contemporary period of volatile, affective politics. Towards the chapter's end I also reconsider Jack Snyder's under-theorised concept of a strategic subculture (introduced in Chapter 1 and initially examined in Aum's context in Chapter 4) to consider a central puzzle mentioned briefly in the Introduction: what failure to achieve the long-term strategic objectives a mature strategic subculture would embody can mean for a terrorist organisation.

To achieve this, I draw together the three posited causal mechanisms (from Chapter 3's methodology discussion)—cultural transmission, social learning, and folklore—to suggest a process of how decision or subcultural elites who seek counter-power (such as against a government or its judicial, police, and national security apparatuses which holds existing

¹⁸ Annie McClanahan (2017). *Dead Pledges: Debt, Crisis, and Twenty-First Century Culture*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Arne De Boever (2018). *Finance Fictions: Realism and Psychosis in a Time of Economic Crisis* (New York: Fordham University Press).

nation-state power) may instead be captured by specific political, religious, or philosophical ideas. I subsequently discuss the implications of this process—**the ideational capture of decision or subcultural elites**—in Chapter 6’s Conclusions (including of possible future research).

The 2018 Executions and Revisiting the Non-State Actor Debate on Terrorists

On 6th July 2018 the Japanese Government executed Aum Shinrikyo’s founder Shoko Asahara (born Chizuo Matsumoto) and six members of the Hindu and Buddhist Tantra Vajrayana-influenced religious cult.¹⁹ Six further members were executed on 26th July 2018.²⁰ Senior members were in both executed groups. Aum Shinrikyo achieved notoriety for its sarin gas attack on Tokyo’s subway on 20th March 1995, which killed 13 people and injured 6000 others, and for its covert development and experimentation with chemical and biological weapons.

Amnesty International and other human rights groups protested the Japanese Government’s executions of Aum members, and its support of the death penalty.²¹ Asahara’s execution highlighted how Japan’s death penalty stance was at odds with Western countries such as Australia. The Aum member executions revived narratives about the terrorist organisation and led to a new audience on social media platforms such as Twitter. These events were an important reminder that terrorism involves a broader and deeper spectrum of political and

¹⁹ James Griffiths and Yoko Wakatsuki (2018). ‘Japanese cult leader Shoko Asahara executed for Tokyo sarin attack’, CNN (6th July), <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/07/05/asia/japan-aum-shinrikyo-leader-executed-intl/index.html>

²⁰ Anonymous (2018a). ‘Tokyo Sarin attack: Japan executes last Aum Shinrikyo members on death row’, BBC (26th July), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-44962581>

²¹ Anonymous (2018b). ‘Japan: Executions of seven cult members fails to deliver justice’. Amnesty International (6th July), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/07/japan-aum-cult-executions-fails-to-deliver-justice/>

religious-motivated groups and organisations beyond the militant Islamist jihadism which has become more prominent since Al Qaeda's terrorist attacks on the United States on 11th September 2001.

Shoko Asahara's psychopathology (discussed in Chapter 4) did not prevent his execution by Japanese authorities. This psychopathology can also be understood as adaptive in an evolutionary psychology sense. At the time of Asahara's death the sub-field of evolutionary psychopathology was becoming more integrated and scientifically rigorous.²² His execution now poses difficulties for terrorism studies researchers to apply this new scientific knowledge to Asahara and the other, now executed Aum members. However, it is possible to reach one conclusion informed by an evolutionary psychology perspective. Asahara's initial, long-term objective of the Shambhala Plan failed (as discussed in Chapter 4 and outlined further below). However, successor organisations continue to be subtly influenced by him, even if like Hikari no Wa (which translates as 'The Circle of Rainbow Light'), they apologise for Aum's attacks, and attempt to create new religious identities.²³

The Japanese Government's executions have prompted a media and public reassessment of Aum Shinrikyo in a new sociocultural context. When the online media streaming platform Netflix released the 2018 documentary *Wild, Wild Country* about Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh cult's experiences in Oregon, the United States, *The New Yorker's* journalist Win McCormack noted that if Aum had been more effective, "the death toll could have reached

²² Marco Del Giudice (2018). *Evolutionary Psychopathology: A Unified Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press.

²³ Anonymous (2018c). 'Ex-Aum executive Joyu offers apology to cult's victims on day of Asahara's execution', *The Japan Times* (6th July), https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/07/06/national/crime-legal/ex-aum-executive-joyu-offers-apology-cults-victims-day-asaharas-execution/#.W8r_9WgzZPY

hundreds of thousands” from the sarin gas attack on Tokyo’s subway system.²⁴ Below, I discuss several counterfactual scenarios and the emergence of ‘neo-Aum’ literature where such mass casualty outcomes are explored as if they might have occurred or are reconstructed from the Aum terrorist’s perspective. Aum Shinrikyo thus remains a cultural marker for the dangers of charismatic leadership, small group beliefs, orchestrated public relations campaigns in the media (that may hide darker realities), and how motivated non-state actors can attempt to acquire chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons.

Aum Shinrikyo signified that non-state actors (detailed in Chapter 2’s discussion of what I call fourth generation strategic culture, which I date from 2002 to the present) have greater significance in a new, multipolar, uncertain world. For some international relations theorists this is a return of a classicist and premodern worldview to the current era and to contemporary security problems.²⁵ However, Aum combined both the culturally transmitted roots of its Hindu and Tibetan Buddhist Vajrayana worldview with fascination of contemporary technology: a vision that rivalled the Western interest in Cyberpunk subcultural aesthetics. If counterterrorism officials were more familiar with this subcultural, strategic imagination then Aum’s Tokyo subway attack would possibly not have had its ‘strategic surprise’ effects.

²⁴ Win McCormack (2018). ‘Outside The Human Limits Of Imagination’, *The New Yorker* (27th March), <https://newrepublic.com/article/147657/outside-limits-human-imagination> [accessed 1st September 2018].

²⁵ Robert D. Kaplan (2000). *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War*. New York: Random House. Kaplan provided an update in *The National Interest* article ‘The Anarchy That Came’ (21st October 2018), <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/anarchy-came-33872> [accessed 31st October 2018].

This leads to a very different situation which counterterrorism and security analysts must face. Ideational aspects of premodern history are either resurgent or recurrent, as international relations scholar Jakub J. Grygiel has noted.²⁶ However, their ideological drivers – or Red Team thinking in security studies parlance - also lie outside the Western canon of thinkers like Thomas Hobbes, Niccolo Machiavelli, Immanuel Kant, or Carl von Clausewitz. Nor can they be reduced to the threat salience of apocalyptic, nuclear terrorism: the terrorist moral calculus and its strategic logics must be understood on its own terms and metaphysical foundations in order to be effectively countered (and for deterrence strategies targeted at non-state actors such as militant and terrorist organisations). This means that Aum Shinrikyo's long-term strategic agenda must be confronted and understood: the Shambhala Plan.

Resituating Aum Shinrikyo's Shambhala Plan: Social Mobility and Stratification

Aum Shinrikyo's utopian Shambhala Plan was to survive a coming (nuclear) war between the United States and Japan, to overthrow the Japanese Government, and to create a post-apocalyptic community of self-sustainable and communitarian Lotus Villages as part of a global, Buddhist paradise. The Shambhala Plan was Aum's more long-term strategic vision in which the Tokyo subway sarin gas attacks of 20th March 1995 must be contextualised in. What Aum desired more deeply was a radical resacralisation and restructuring of Japanese society from its existing form and socio-political structure.

The Shambhala Plan's result would be a Japanese society based on stratified Tibetan Buddhist Vajrayana roots, that was ruled and safe-guarded by an initiated elite, who controlled and promulgated the knowledge for social mobility and spiritual enlightenment.

²⁶ Jakub J. Grygiel (2018). *Return of the Barbarians: Confronting Non-State Actors from Ancient Rome to the Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 5.

Asahara's vision of the 'shadow' government that Aum would control was neo-authoritarian: a forerunner in a 'cult of personality' sense of the post-2016 authoritarian populism that has underpinned the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom, and the surprise election of President Donald Trump in the United States.

Did the Shambhala Plan actually exist in a substantial, documented, and detailed form? Or was it more like a speculative vision informed by Japanese anime and manga media? The deaths of Aum's senior members now means that such questions may not be ever conclusively answered. The Tokyo subway attacks of 20th March 1995 are also interpreted by some scholars as an improvised attack designed to deflect attention away from Aum and towards either the Japanese Government or to external enemies.²⁷ This means that the Shambhala Plan was more speculative and utopian in intent: "the place that was promised" as novelist Haruki Murakami describes it in his *Underground* section on Aum member interviews, but whose lived experience turned out to be very different than their initial expectations and hopes.²⁸

Macrofoundations: The Onset of Japan's 'Lost Decades' Deflationary Period

Japan experienced a significant, debt-fuelled economic speculative bubble during the 1980s. Its rapid financial and industrial growth meant that Japan had significant cultural, financial, and technological effects on the United States. This economic speculative bubble deflated in 1988-91 and led in Japan to the onset of the 'lost decades' of deflationary growth and debt

²⁷ John R. Hall and Philip D. Schuyler (2000). *Apocalypse Observed: Religious Movements and Violence in North America, Europe, and Japan*. New York: Routledge.

²⁸ Haruki Murakami (2001). *Underground*. New York: Vintage, p. 211.

austerity. This unexpected transition from bubble-driven prosperity to debt austerity would deeply affect Japanese society and several generational cohorts within it.

These structural changes became part of the macrofoundations, or the larger socioeconomic context, that Aum Shinrikyo operated in. In retrospect, similar periods can be identified comparatively in United States society such as the 1995-2000 dotcom bubble (which affected internet technology) and the 2003-08 housing bubble (which included growth in subprime mortgages). Each economic speculative bubble had their own subcultural impacts. Japan's 'lost decades' and its high levels of debt were also the "canary in the coal mine" according to Adair Turner for economist Larry Summers' revival of the secular stagnation hypothesis, to explain post-2008 macroeconomic conditions of low growth and productivity.²⁹

I argue particularly in this chapter that Aum Shinrikyo's transition from its early, optimistic years to its later, more apocalyptic phase occurred in this macroeconomic context.³⁰ Japan's 'lost decades' created psychosocial stressors such as unfunded debt obligations and unemployment which led renunciate followers to feel more estranged from Japanese society's rank-ordered status competitiveness. This created a greater receptivity to Asahara, Joyu, and Aum Shinrikyo's message of spiritual growth. Yet ironically as Aum evolved its senior leadership established a similar rank-ordered status via the development and control of initiatory rituals and symbols surrounding Asahara's leadership (as discussed in Chapter 4).

²⁹ Institute of New Economic Thinking (2016). 'Investigating 'Secular Stagnation'', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sirXAfplrao>. Adair Turner (2015). *Between Debt and the Devil: Money, Credit, and Fixing Global Finance*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

³⁰ This process is outlined in particular in Ian Reader's *Religious Violence in Contemporary Japan: The Case of Aum Shinrikyo* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), pp. where Aum's failure is outlined comparatively in pp. 205-06, 244.

This can be understood as both Aum mirroring aspects of Japanese society and also the embeddedness of a neo-Darwinian perspective of intense competition in and between Japanese new religions for new members.

Aum's senior leadership already had an optimistic growth plan: to gain 30,000 renunciates who would transform Japanese society into a utopian country. This was an important, early stage of the Shambhala Plan. Such key performance indicators for Aum's growth made sense in the euphoria of the 1980s economic bubble in Japan.³¹ This optimism also anticipated and paralleled the cyberpunk and techno-utopian communities in Europe and the United States which played a role in the 1995-2000 dotcom bubble during which such subcultural experimentation occurred.³² Such optimistic growth plans with significant key performance indicators illustrate euphoria-driven thinking that reoccurs time and again in economic bubbles and that have contagion-like effects in the societies in which they occur (as innovations diffuse from subcultures into the broader society). Subsequent to Aum and the 1995-2000 dotcom bubble, similar euphoric 'new thinking occurred in the 2016-18 hype cycle in Bitcoin, Ethereum, Ripple, and other cryptocurrencies in the United States and other Western countries.

What this bubble-driven thinking suggests is that Asahara, Joyu, and Murai in particular were susceptible to the decision heuristics of anchoring, representativeness, and overconfidence. Asahara's deity yoga experiences discussed in Chapter 4 created anchoring biases—which Aum continued through its interest in Nostradamus' prophecies and other examples of the

³¹ T.J. Pempel (1998). *Regime Shift: Comparative Dynamics of the Japanese Political Economy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

³² Erik Davis (1998). *Techgnosis: Myth, Magic, Mysticism in the Age of Information*. New York: Harmony Books.

occult milieu in Japan and the United States. (The growth of Aum's members in Russia also mirrored the receptiveness of some Russians to Traditionalist beliefs.) Aum's disastrous political campaign in 1990-91 for the Japanese Diet illustrated a representativeness bias in which current information was filtered through Aum's subjective belief systems but that did not reflect the actual reality of Japanese society (as the onset of the 'lost decades' occurred). The overconfidence bias was Asahara's belief that Aum Shinrikyo would become as popular and powerful in Japanese society—when it lacked the economic, political, and social infrastructure base of more established Japanese new religions such as Soka Gakkai International.

Asahara's shift in 1991 to his more apocalyptic-driven Armageddon Seminar coincides with the depression phase of an economic speculative bubble and the beginning of Japan's 'lost decades'. The growth of successor organisations like Aleph and Hikaro no Wa occurs in a combination of the depression phase and the reflation phase of recent Abenomics (the post-2011 macroeconomic interventions by the Abe government in Japan's economy). It also occurs in a period in the United States in which there is a proliferation of 'debt crisis' documentaries on sites like Zerohedge and on online streaming media platforms like YouTube. These internet documentaries may have priming effects for their respective audiences about beliefs that are critical of existing financial elites and economic international organisations. Asahara's Armageddon Seminar can thus be seen entrepreneurially as the Japanese religious forerunner of Zerohedge's enigmatic Tyler Durden, Infowars' founder Alex Jones, and YouTube documentaries about the next economic crisis.³³

³³ An example is *Overdose: The Next Financial Crisis* (2017) which connects Al Qaeda's terrorist attacks on 11th September 2001 to Federal Reserve policies that led to the 2003-08 speculative bubble in subprime real estate, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmHAqiBbyE8>

Mesofoundations: Renunciates' Indoctrinability in Aum Shinrikyo

As discussed in the above Introduction, this chapter advances a new and different interpretation of the Shambhala Plan and thus of the long-term strategic objectives that underpinned Aum Shinrikyo's attempt to build a viable strategic subculture (as defined in Chapter 1). The Shambhala Plan had several organisational and strategic functions for Aum Shinrikyo. It provided an elite circulation framework for Aum Shinrikyo's senior leadership to overthrow and replace the Japanese Government—and to potentially install Shoko Asahara as a new Emperor. Ideationally it bound the senior leadership to Shoko Asahara's conspiratorial, geopolitical vision including his fascination with the Reagan Administration's Strategic Defense Initiative and the new satellite or space-based weapons that SDI promised to develop. Its aim to resacralise and to restructure contemporary Japanese society gave a pretext for Aum Shinrikyo to diffuse its syncretic religious beliefs to a broader audience: Shoko Asahara's goal to recruit 30,000 renunciates for facilitating utopian change. Finally, the Shambhala Plan provided the senior leadership with the legitimation of upward social mobility. This relied on a syncretic religious ideology that facilitated extracting rents, and the expropriation of financial and material assets from renunciate followers.

Shoko Asahara presented himself to students as a Tibetan Buddhist Vajrayana teacher who claimed to be authentic—despite not being part of a recognised or sustained lineage of teacher-student transmission. Asahara can instead be likened to the 'crazy wisdom' style of Chogyam Trungpa and other teachers in which Asahara sought legitimation from an older spiritual tradition and also to establish guru-like dominance in a teacher-student relationship. However, as Trungpa himself noted this teacher-student relationship has significant dangers

and it is misunderstood in the West outside of its original, appropriate cultural context.³⁴

Vajrayana's reliance on the student's focus on the guru as a spiritual exemplar meant that Aum's renunciates were more likely to develop a dependency relationship with Asahara rather than to become independent, sovereign individuals who might question his authority.

Aum established an organisational process that shaped how followers and renunciates perceived the teacher-student relationship: a more submissive stance where Asahara (particularly during his sermons which evolved into the later period Armageddon seminars) asserted his dominance. The key to this is the notion of *indoctrinability* in which an adherent adopts or is socialised into particular political, philosophical, or religious beliefs in a group context.³⁵ Indoctrinability may involve appeals to war, to defend civilizational blocs from enemies, or to protect and to proselytise for a particular belief system. In its earlier, formative period (discussed in Chapter 4), Aum Shinrikyo used indoctrinability to rapidly build a new religious organisation—that Asahara had over-optimistic growth projections about. In its later stages as Asahara shifted to his Armageddon seminars then he appealed to the apocalyptic subcurrents in Japanese society and the psycho-political anxieties from the onset of Japan's 'lost decades' period of deflationary economic growth.

Indoctrinability is also the key to why Aum invested so much of its resources into anime, manga, media, and publishing appearances by Asahara, Joyu, and others. This media infrastructure coincided with political economy changes in the Japanese media in the early to mid 1990s (post Gulf War I and the CNN Effect on the international media). This media

³⁴ Nga la Rig'dzin Dorje (2001). *Dangerous Friend: The Teacher-Student Relationship in Vajrayana Buddhism*. Boston and London: Shambhala Publications.

³⁵ Albert Somit and Steven A. Peterson (1997). *Darwinism, Dominance, and Democracy: The Biological Bases of Authoritarianism* (Westport, CT: Praeger), p. 4.

infrastructure attracted the attention and sensitised potential recruits to Aum: it acted as a media ecosystem around Aum which anticipated successor group Hikari no Wa's later use of social media platforms to promote its vision of 'happy science'. This also suggests the potential for future research (to be discussed in Chapter 6) on indoctrinability's role as a psychological factor in digital disinformation and online propaganda narratives, and the so-called meme warfare (the weaponisation of cultural memetics theories from the late 1990s by online and political subcultures).

Aum Shinrikyo thus had a 'dual use' function as an organisation: (1) it provided a Japanese new religion for spiritual seekers and for those who decided to commit to becoming renunciates; and (2) this spiritual 'seeking after truth' provided a sub-population for extracted rents to flow upwards to Aum's elite in order for them to have preferential access to resources. In an evolutionary psychology sense, Aum can be understood as the vehicle for a dominance-submission hierarchy based on the cultural transmission, social learning, and folklore mechanisms (outlined in Chapter 3) which facilitated the indoctrinability of Aum members to Shoko Asahara's vision. Indoctrinability meant that Aum followers over time adopted Asahara's values and worldviews rather than competing or different belief systems: a selection lock-in in the competitive marketplace of Japanese new religions and different spiritual teachers who claimed to possess deep, esoteric, and transformative truths.

Indoctrinability thus is the key dimension or result that cultural transmission, social learning, and folklore all converge on. It's what Aum's senior leadership looked for in the renunciate followers. Aum's anime, publishing and other media infrastructure also focused on creating a receptive image of Asahara, Joyu, and the organisation.

Microfoundations: Low-Cost Labour, Rent-Seeking, and Wealth Extraction

Examining the Shambhala Plan from this viewpoint resolves several debates and inconsistencies in the scholarly literature to-date on Aum Shinrikyo. Below, I consider a range of possible, relevant causal factors and the organisational processes involved.

Elite Circulation and Social Stratification

Seeichi Endo, Hideo Murai, and others attempted to build a shadow Japanese government in Aum Shinrikyo that also reflected the bureaucratic elites who influenced socioeconomic policies.³⁶ Whilst this may seem unusual it also mirrored the cultivation and placement of ex-officials from Japanese Government ministries into the public sector and private corporations.³⁷ Aum Shinrikyo's recruitment of scientists from Japanese universities reflected this process in reverse: Asahara sought to gain specific science and technology expertise through science and technology-based knowledge transfer. However, as Chapter 4 noted, Seeichi Endo, Hideo Murai, and others did not have the necessary and sufficient scientific expertise to completely fulfil their research programs' aims and objectives.

Aum Shinrikyo's organisational structure created two cohorts of social stratification: (1) the senior leaders who hoarded opportunities, enjoyed preferential access to financial and material resources, and who knew of the religious cult's long-term strategic objectives; and (2) the renunciate followers who were indoctrinated into a syncretic belief system and ritual practices, and who provided a low-cost workforce labour pool for marketing, facilities management, and other activities. This social stratification mirrors the "closed multi-track

³⁶ Rex A. Hudson (2002). *Who Becomes A Terrorist And Why: The 1999 Government Report on Profiling Terrorists* (Guilford, CT: The Lyons Press), p. 200.

³⁷ Richard A. Colignon & Chikako Usui (2003). *Anakudari: The Hidden Fabric of Japan's Economy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

model” of “lower track”, “intermediate track”, and “elite track” pathways that occurs in Japanese Government bureaucracy.³⁸

Ideational Sources and Cognitive Biases

It is unclear about whether Shoko Asahara gave the order for the Tokyo subway sarin gas attacks, or instead whether Hideo Murai and others independently acted on Asahara’s beliefs in order to please him. Katsuhisa Furukawa’s doctoral dissertation examined several different models—rational actor, bounded rationality, groupthink, and group dynamics—reflecting the theory-building legacy of Martha Crenshaw, Herbert Simon, Irving Janis, Wilfred Bion and other theorists.³⁹ However, a more constructivist approach would suggest that the ideational sources from Japanese popular culture which Aum’s senior leadership drew on had shaping effects on them also: it led to a shared mindset in Aum’s senior leadership on the pathway to violence.

Seeichi Endo, Hideo Murai, and others got many of their ideas from anime and manga depictions of a post-apocalyptic Japanese society—rather than from the specialised scientific knowledge of chemical and biological weapons (CBW) development, which they lacked. This was a significant knowledge gap which meant that Endo and Murai in particular failed in their reality-testing of the knowledge base that they needed to have a successful chemical and biological weapons program—a common limitation of non-state actors who attempt such programs.⁴⁰ This suggests that the causal link between educational status in Japanese

³⁸ B.C. Koh (1989). *Japan’s Administrative Elite*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, p. 125.

³⁹ Katsuhisa Furukawa, ‘Report on PhD Thesis Defence’, GRIPS, p. 1.

⁴⁰ Sonia Ben Ouagrham-Gormley (2014). *Barriers To Bioweapons: The Challenges of Expertise and Organizations for Weapons Development*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

universities and Aum's claimed scientific expertise to carry out CBW research was false. There is a further relatively unexplored implication to the interest of Aum's senior leadership in anime and manga. As anthropologist David Graeber has observed, an interest in fantasy fiction and similar subcultures provides a way to psychology cope with a strongly bureaucratized, neoliberal world.⁴¹ Fantasy narratives in Aum Shinrikyo provided a psychological buffer against the harsh socio-economic realities of Japan's deflationary 'lost decades'.

Wealth Extraction

The Shambhala Plan had ambitious and utopian goals. In its early stages Aum Shinrikyo experienced significant implementation difficulties. Its recruitment of Japanese youth alienated parents and created opposition to the religious cult. Yet these practices also created a low-cost labour pool for Aum Shinrikyo's media, publishing, and construction activities: the growth priorities of recruitment, front companies for information technology, and real estate asset portfolios. Local neighbours protested against Aum Shinrikyo's construction of religious communes in their residential areas. Aum Shinrikyo lobbied the Japanese Government for tax exempt status which was granted—an outcome similar to the Church of Scientology's campaign for tax exempt status against the United States Internal Revenue Service.⁴² Aum Shinrikyo and its successor groups (in a Japanese context), and the Church of Mormon and the Church of Scientology (in a United States context) highlight on-going

⁴¹ David Graeber (2015). *The Utopia of Rules: On Technology, Stupidity, and the Secret Joys of Bureaucracy*. Brooklyn, NY: Melville House Publishing.

⁴² Lawrence Wright (2013). *Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood, & the Prison of Belief*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

tensions between government taxation authorities and religious institutions who seek to have or to maintain a tax exempt status.⁴³

Aum Shinrikyo is commonly understood as a cultic or religious organisation with an apocalyptic, doomsday orientation. This viewpoint can obscure the fact that these different facets have an integrative purpose: they are strategic objectives, managerial priorities, and operational actions that facilitate a core institutional logic of rent-seeking and wealth extraction from the renunciate followers to the financial and material benefit of Aum Shinrikyo's senior leadership. Whilst this dynamic has long been identified particularly in Marxist heterodox political economy work on the dominance since the 1960s of trans-national corporations it has not been applied analytically (to my knowledge) to contemporary terrorist organisations who although covert still operate within a (largely) globalised, neoliberal political economy.⁴⁴

Integrating Levels: Understanding Elite Deviance in Aum Shinrikyo

This core institutional logic of rent-seeking and wealth extraction places Aum Shinrikyo in the case universe of elite deviance and white collar crime: a broader understanding than just being a terrorist organisation. In their evolutionary psychology-informed study of schizotypal prophet-led cults the psychiatrists Anthony Stevens and John Price observe that Shoko Asahara benefited from a luxurious lifestyle that his renunciate followers lacked that included “private quarters”, “a bath large enough to accommodate ten people” and “entertaining young

⁴³ Samuel D. Brunson (2018). *God and the IRS: Accommodating Religious Practice in United States Tax Law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁴⁴ Paul A. Baran & Paul M. Sweezy (1989) [1966]. *Monopoly Capital: An Essay on the American Economic and Social Order*. New York: The Monthly Review Press.

ladies from the cult's 'Dance Department'.⁴⁵ Although this may seem bizarre in a 'crazy wisdom'-led cult it may be better understood as a form of aspirational, Weberian 'opportunity hoarding' that Brookings Institution policymaker Richard Reeves has noted occurs in United States-based upper middle class families (such as in preferential access to education opportunities and suburban land zoning).⁴⁶

These observations indicate that as Aum Shinrikyo evolved organisationally it became a microcosm for elite deviance—albeit in a religious cultic rather than a corporate or a political context.⁴⁷ The organisational architecture that Aum Shinrikyo developed—asset expropriation, front companies, covering up harm, and the murder of investigative journalists and renunciate followers—also reflects some of the forensic behavioural and the causal mechanisms of how white collar crime works.⁴⁸ This organisational architecture enabled Aum's leadership to extract economic rents from its renunciate followers and from other sympathetic donors.

Aum Shinrikyo's attempt to create a viable strategic subculture had a 'dual use' purpose: (1) to protect the religious cult from its ever-growing list of critics, and (2) to ensure that its senior leadership maintained its positional power base with preferential access to financial and material resources. Cultivating sarin would enable the covert disposal of critics and also would shift attention elsewhere, such as to the Japanese domestic fear of foreign interference.

⁴⁵ Anthony Stevens and John Price (2000). *Prophets, Cults and Madness*. London: Duckworth Overlook. Loc 296 (Kindle edition).

⁴⁶ Richard Reeves (2017). *Dream Hoarders: How the American Upper Middle Class Is Leaving Everyone Else in the Dust, Why That Is a Problem, and What to Do About It*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

⁴⁷ David R. Simon (2011). *Elite Deviance* (11th ed.). New York: Routledge.

⁴⁸ Eugene Soltes (2016). *Why They Do It: Inside the Mind of the White-Collar Criminal*. New York: PublicAffairs.

Maintaining a syncretic religious ideology would provide the “psychological control” mechanisms and practices⁴⁹ for Aum’s senior leadership to indoctrinate the renunciate followers—and to hide key facts and omit vital information from them about the elite deviance that was actually unfolding. One of the microfoundations of this was the information asymmetries that existed between what the senior leadership knew and when, and how the renunciate followers perceived the same circumstances.

This case universe link between Aum Shinrikyo and the forensic behavioural mechanisms of white collar crime becomes clearer when the religious cult is compared to other high profile cases. Asahara engaged in fraudulent activity as a young masseur.⁵⁰ This behaviour later continued in Aum Shinrikyo via the faking of levitation photos for *Twilight Zone Magazine* and other publications, and in Aum-funded hospitals that did not conduct appropriate or safe medical procedures. These are behavioural markers of founder-induced fraud designed to maintain the social fiction of charismatic leadership.⁵¹ Similar dynamics underpinned Elizabeth Holmes’ fraud at Theranos and her sophisticated manipulation of Silicon Valley and venture capital media.⁵²

Shoko Asahara, Fumihiko Joyu and others made high-profile magazine and television appearances in a similar fashion to how Enron’s senior leadership used the United States business media to present an image of corporate innovation and shareholder returns. Based on

⁴⁹ Michael A. Aquino (2016). *MindWar* (rev. ed.). San Francisco, CA: Barony of Rachane.

⁵⁰ Robert Jay Lifton (2000). *Destroying The World To Save It: Aum Shinrikyo, Apocalyptic Violence, and the New Global Terrorism* (New York: Metropolitan Books), p. 17.

⁵¹ Daniel Davies (2018). *Lying For Money: How Legendary Frauds Reveal the Workings of the World*. New York: Profile Trade.

⁵² John Carreyrou (2018). *Bad Blood: Secrets and Lies in a Silicon Valley Startup*. New York: Knopf Doubleday.

investigations by short-seller Jim Chanos leaked strategically to reporter Bethany McLean, Enron hid their unethical use of derivatives to price gouge California's energy markets. Enron also used complex financial structures such as off-balance sheet limited partnerships that as pass-through vehicles hid the real liabilities from shareholders.⁵³ Aum Shinrikyo compartmentalised its secretive research program into chemical and biological weapons; the Galleon hedge fund used a compartmentalised 'family and friends' fund to hide profits from limited partnership clients.⁵⁴

Aum Shinrikyo's senior leadership developed an illicit network to share information; a similar closed network developed in 2003-08 amongst United States hedge fund managers for the sharing of material, non-public, insider information.⁵⁵ Similar illicit networks facilitated the rigging of the London Interbank Overnight Rate (LIBOR) by a network of rogue bankers at several financial institutions.⁵⁶ Aum Shinrikyo stratified information flow between its senior leadership and follower renunciates; hedge fund founder Steve A. Cohen developed similar internal control structures at SAC Capital to hide his preferential access to the "black edge" of non-public, material, confidential information, such as crucial financial information before earnings releases.⁵⁷

⁵³ Bethany McLean & Peter Elkind (2005). *The Smartest Guys In The Room: The Amazing Rise and Scandalous Fall of Enron*. New York: Portfolio.

⁵⁴ Anita Raghavan (2013). *The Billionaire's Apprentice: The Rise of the Indian-American Elite and the Fall of the Galleon Fund*. New York: Grand Central. Turney Duff (2013). *The Buy Side: A Wall Street Trader's Tale of Spectacular Excess*. New York: Crown Business.

⁵⁵ Charles Gasparino (2013). *Circle of Friends: The Massive Federal Crackdown on Insider Trading—and Why the Markets Always Work Against the Little Guy*. New York: HarperCollins.

⁵⁶ David Enrich (2017). *The Spider Network: The Wild Story of a Math Genius, a Gang of Backstabbing Bankers, and One of the Greatest Scams in Financial History*. W.H. Allen. Alexis Stenfors (2017). *Barometer of Fear: An Insider's Account of Rogue Trading and the Greatest Banking Scandal in History*. London: Zed Books.

⁵⁷ Sheelah Kolhatkar (2017). *Black Edge: Inside Information, Dirty Money, and the Quest to Bring Down the Most Wanted Man on Wall Street*. New York: W.H. Allen.

The anti-Semitic and power elite conspiracy theories that influenced Shoko Asahara also had unintended effects within hedge fund subcultures in the United States financial community. These conspiracy theories functioned as a mis-directive information overlay that hide the prime bank fraud that some deviant hedge fund managers engaged in, when faced with investor fund outflows during the 2008 Global Financial Crisis or Great Recession.⁵⁸ This was a period during which white collar crime also flourished but remained largely unprosecuted in the United States and other countries, with the illustrative exception of Iceland. Many of these elements also combined in Bernie Madoff's \$US65 billion Ponzi scheme fraud - which although unconnected with the Global Financial Crisis - relied on elite deviance and social stratification to be effective.⁵⁹

Social class anxieties, and the bids to overcome a falsely meritocratic society and establish a more dominant position drove both Madoff's investors and some of the Aum elite. Conspiracy theories from this stance are viewed not necessarily as anti-capitalist but rather how a paranoid worldview about an entrenched power elite can filter down from it into an (informational) underclass or subculture. The latter may lack both the educational socialisation mechanisms of elite reproduction, and the stability to create true counter-power (as envisioned by the Italian Autonomists and other heterodox Marxist thinkers). Later examples of this include the strange, fitful half-lives of the Pizzagate conspiracy theory during the 2016 election campaign of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton; and the rise-and-

⁵⁸ Guy Lawson (2013). *Octopus: Sam Israel, the Secret Market, and Wall Street's Wildest Con*. New York: Broadway Books. Susan Wll, Stephen Handelman, and David C. Brotherton (Eds.). (2013). *How They Got Away With It: White Collar Criminals and the Financial Meltdown*. New York: Columbia University Press.

⁵⁹ Collen P. Eren (2017). *Bernie Madoff and the Crisis: The Public Trial of Capitalism*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

fall arc of Alex Jones' Infowars media platform which in 2018 was blocked from Facebook, Twitter, and other major social media platforms.

The Shambhala Plan's Lessons for 'Failed' Strategic Subcultures

Aum's unsuccessful Shambhala Plan has lessons for understanding 'failed' strategic subcultures (as suggested in Chapter 4). Asahara's vision grew out of childhood dreams to become Japan's Emperor or Prime Minister. Aum envisioned a victory or end state to their goals: ruling over and transforming a post-apocalyptic Japan into a resacralised, spiritual country. What Aum lacked was the means to bring about this transformational change in Japanese politics and society. Asahara's goal of recruiting and mobilising 30,000 renunciates globally also did not occur—a potential lesson in the possible dangers of key performance indicators announced in the early stages of organisational evolution. In Aum's case this early goal created significant path dependencies as the senior leadership became more desperate after the failed 1990-91 political campaign to maintain its influence.

Whilst Aum had successful biological weapons attacks in Matsumoto in 1994 and Tokyo in 1995 it failed in its aims to carry out larger-scale attacks in Japan. Counterfactual reasoning can reveal the possible spectrum of adjacent possibilities that exist with potential terrorist attacks: 'minimal rewrites' of Al Qaeda and 11th September 2001 for example illustrate threat scenarios where terrorist attacks may be prevented or thwarted as well as darker realities of greater mass casualty outcomes.⁶⁰ Likewise, similar counterfactual scenarios can be generated for Aum: both positive (in which Japanese investigative journalists, judiciary, and

⁶⁰ Alex Burns (2011). 'Doubting The Global War on Terror', *M/C* 14(1), <http://journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/view/338>

police may have discovered its covert research program) and negative (or where the religious organisation was possibly able to carry out large-scale militaristic attacks in Tokyo that would have led to a greater number of deaths) for counterterrorism and intelligence analysts.

These grim counterfactual scenarios of the Shambhala Plan's potential success featured in millennialist popular culture. 'The Time Is Now' episode of Chris Carter's television series *Millennium* (1998) recast the shadowy Millennium Group as an Aum-like propagator of a deadly virus. John Woo's *Mission: Impossible 2* (2000) relocated the film's deadly Chimera virus from Tokyo to Sydney, Australia hinting that Aum might have had greater success if its covert research program was implemented undetected in Western countries. The Umbrella Corporation of the *Resident Evil* film series and video games also regenerated aspects of Aum's techno-scientific research for a subcultural fandom audience. Whilst Aum's Shambhala Plan failed in real life to reach its maximum impact its potential as a mass casualty event lives on in multiple fictional universes. Similar fears arose in United States domestic politics and media culture after Al Qaeda's terrorist attacks on 11th September 2001.⁶¹

Aum Shinrikyo is famous in terrorism studies for being the first post-Cold War non-state actor to cross the threshold and attempt to acquire chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons. However, its popular media impact suggests that Aum—like Al Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant—may have afterlives in terms of the public's own folklore narratives, stories, and symbols about what terrorism is and who the terrorists are. One manifestation of this is the emergence of a 'neo-Aum' culture such as religious sermons

⁶¹ Stuart Croft (2006). *Culture, Crisis, and America's War on Terror*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

based on Asahara's teachings.⁶² Another manifestation is the growth of literature that seeks to either reconstruct Aum's Tokyo subway attack from Aum's viewpoint, or to posit counterfactual scenarios where Aum successfully acquired nuclear and radiological weapons.⁶³

Yet, Aum did not achieve these counterfactual scenarios. This in part is because 'failed' strategic subcultures involve organisational failures to use force to achieve declared strategic objectives. There may be several reasons for this. Firstly, an organisation's declaratory policy may be in advance of its actual capabilities or knowledge. Secondly, it may not be possible for an organisation to close this gap – such as due to the high thresholds involved for non-state actors in chemical and biological weapons development, for example.⁶⁴ Thirdly, there may be implementation challenges or problems as the organisation strives to realise its strategic objectives. 'Failed' strategic subcultures are thus more likely to be group-oriented, systemic in nature rather than due to individuals' fault.

Aum Shinrikyo clearly fits this pattern of organisational failure—when the Shambhala Plan's original scope is fully taken into account. Its senior leadership chose highly aspirational goals with little evidence of solid reality-testing about the likelihood that they could overthrow the Japanese government and establish a new, utopian, spiritual nation-state. Aum's biological weapons development program failed due to scientific inexperience. It experimented with

⁶² Isamu Michi (2017). *Neo-Aum Sermons*. Martinet Press.

⁶³ Jonas Fox (2017). *Tsar Bomba*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Square Press. Stew Magnuson (2012). *The Song of Sarin*. Seattle, WA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform. David Mitchell (2001). *Ghostwritten*. New York: Vintage.

⁶⁴ Sonia Ben Ougrham-Gormley (2011). *Barriers To Bioweapons: The Challenges of Expertise and Organizations for Weapons Development*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Haruki Marukami (2012). *1Q84: The Complete Trilogy*. New York: Vintage.

sarin and other nerve agents. But there is no evidence beyond Asahara's sermons and individuals' diary entries that there was a planned or sustained coup d'état in place to overthrow the Japanese government and replace it with Aum's 'shadow' government officials.

Aum's so-called 'shadow' government was likewise aspirational. Its members lacked the institutional knowledge or the specific domain insights required to run the government bodies or functions that they represented. Although Aum attempted to build offshore entities in Russia and Korea the membership numbers cited in the literature (discussed in Chapter 4) remains highly speculative. Aum did develop media capabilities for publishing, radio broadcasts, and Asahara and Joyu's media appearances. Yet whilst this did lead to recruits Aum's 'shadow' government was unable to mobilise renunciate followers on a larger scale.

Aum did not become a long-lasting institution or international organisation. This is a key outcome of a 'failed' strategic subculture: a small group never establishes its longevity or grows beyond a particular threshold. The failure may first begin in the strategy formulation that occurs amongst founders or senior leaders. It then has path dependent repercussions as the senior leadership implements its strategy in the form of a terrorist violence campaign or some other form of attempted counter-power. Its path dependency creates decision-lock-in. A further reason for this may be the normative effects of influential ideas on terrorist organisation elites themselves.

Subcultural Elites, Counter-Power, and the Risk of Ideas Capture

In Chapter 1, I discussed how a terrorist organisation involves a decision elite (or subcultural elite) and can recruit followers who carry out the operational aspects of a terrorist campaign.

In this section I discuss a new thesis: how subcultural elites who seek counter-power (whether terrorist or not) may become captured by specific political, religious, or philosophical ideas. Decision or subcultural elites may be particularly vulnerable to this if there is strong in-group belief and little or no constructive dissent.

The three posited causal mechanisms (defined in Chapter 3) also suggest further potential explanations for organisational failure. *Cultural transmission* means that a senior leadership can become hostage to past ideologies: Aum's pathway into violence echoed the militant, earlier periods of Hindu and Buddhist Vajrayana religion.⁶⁵ *Social learning* means a small group can convince itself of extremist beliefs: the senior leadership existed in an isolated world of its own - a pre-internet filter bubble. *Folklore* stories, symbols, and narratives can replace or undermine reality-testing: the feedback loop from Japanese culture and media into the senior leadership's mindset highlights this particular danger. Each of these three posited causal mechanisms underpins the indoctrinability of Aum members during Asahara's leadership.

⁶⁵ Jacob P. Dalton (2011). *The Taming of the Demons: Violence and Liberation in Tibetan Buddhism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Combining these three causal mechanisms leads to a cognitive process in which subcultural elites who seek counter-power (such as against a nation-state's existing government or elites) may instead be captured by specific political, religious, or philosophical ideas. This can occur in a legitimation process of attempted elite circulation, mobilisation, or replacement. This observable phenomenon has also occurred with Aum's successor organisations and subcultures in Japan. First, Aleph, Hikari no Wa, and other successor organisations now mean that Aum Shinrikyo and Shoko Asahara's religious vision will continue to survive and mutate into new forms: an illustration of cultural transmission that lies beyond an individual life.

Aleph's 'cult of personality' about Asahara for example is a function of guru-like systems: the resulting 'Aumer' subculture has parallels in how Elizabethan magus John Dee, Thelema promulgator Aleister Crowley, and Dianetics and Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard have each left distinct subcultural legacies in the West. Social learning and folklore provide experiences, myths, symbols, and narratives that bind the renunciate followers to Aum's deviant elite (which over time consolidated its material, positional, and reputational power). These two causal mechanisms both illustrated in Aum on the interaction of the organisational structure with the susceptibilities or vulnerabilities of the (renunciate) followers. This means that over time the renunciates (followers) came to accept the validity of Asahara's teacher status due to his *Kalacakra* Tantra knowledge (cultural transmission), that they felt part of the organisation and felt unable to leave (social learning), and that the organisation's myths, stories, and narratives had influential and motivational power in their lives (folklore).

An effective strategic subculture thus enables a core belief system or ideology to survive beyond specific individuals and also beyond its founders. In its original formulation this related to defence and politico-military institutions that had the state-based authority to use and to mobilise force—often reflecting a national ‘way of war’. Aum’s growing militarisation via Asahara’s Armageddon Seminar has its echoes in the role that militant Zen played in building support for Japanese armed forces in World War II. Likewise, its interest in chemical and biological weapons meant Aum was the heir to the Imperial Japanese Army’s Unit 731 which was active from 1935 to 1945 in Harbin, China.⁶⁶ Viewing Aum in this historical context highlights that there are precursors in Japanese history about the potential roles that militant religious forms can play in the psychological build-up to and decision to use force, albeit in a war rather than a terrorism context.

Conclusion

Aum Shinrikyo’s sarin gas attack on Tokyo’s subway in March 1995 had broader and more longitudinal psycho-political effects on Japan’s society. It was an incident that transformed the subway network into the site of terrorism as a volatility event (or vega in the language of options traders in financial markets). Now the subway network is understood anthropologically as a complex technological infrastructure in its own right.⁶⁷ The 2018 executions of Asahara and other Aum Shinrikyo members also highlighted that two distinct non-strategic subcultures had emerged which had afterlives on social media coverage: (1) the depiction of Asahara and Aum’s deviant elite as a ‘Parrot’ subculture that engaged in covert CBW research; and (2) an ‘Aumer’ subculture of former Aum members, successor

⁶⁶ Daniel Barenblatt (2005). *A Plague Upon Humanity: The Hidden History of Japan’s Biological Warfare Theory Program*. New York: HarperCollins.

⁶⁷ Michael Fisch (2018). *An Anthropology of the Machine: Tokyo’s Commuter Train Network*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

organisation members (such as in Aleph and Hikari no Wa), and sympathisers who desired to keep Asahara's religious identity and vision alive.

When RAND's Jack Snyder originally conceptualised strategic culture in 1977 he did so in the context of late Cold War nuclear détente negotiations (discussed in Chapter 1). Aum's pathway into violence (discussed in Chapter 4) highlighted that in a terrorism studies context Snyder's strategic culture framework can be understood as the strategic use of violence as a means to gain an advantage in a strategic bargaining situation with others: in Aum's case to misdirect the attention of investigative journalists, judiciary, and police from the religious cult's real activities. Understanding Aum in this way involves a Red Team-like logic: some terrorist organisations may use terrorist violence in a strategic subculture sense to gain greater dominance, leverage, to extract concessions from stronger adversaries, or to force their withdrawal from a strategic environment. Whilst this does involve symbolic communication it also involves the establishment of escalation dominance over potential or real adversaries: Herman Kahn's insight from nuclear deterrence theory which political scientist S.M. Amadae notes now underpins the political economy of neoliberal capitalism.⁶⁸

This chapter resituates Aum Shinrikyo as a religious organisation (which had a pathway into terrorist violence) in a larger, political economy context. Central to this new way of understanding Aum was its organisational ability to extract rents (assets and excess profits) from its members: its relatively uninformed spiritual seekers perceived Aum and its leader Asahara as an elite spiritual organisation largely due to successful marketing and publishing

⁶⁸ S.M. Amadae (2016). *Prisoners of Reason: Game Theory and Neoliberal Political Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

of a utopian community.⁶⁹ Aum did this to ensure its organisational survival through several means. Aum's Kiyohide Hayakawa oversaw a construction program that relied on low-cost labour. Aum built a network of companies to diversify income generation activities (such as via selling computers) or that were fronts to acquire specific science and technology resources. Aum media and propaganda facilitated the recruitment of new members—who then became a low-cost labour force for anime, manga, and other publishing. Yet Aum struggled to stand out in the marketplace for Japanese new religions when compared with more dominant competitors.

This new view places Aum Shinrikyo into a broader and deeper context: the political economy of terrorism and how organisational leaders (principals) are able to persuade followers (agents) to carry out operational campaigns of terrorist violence. Aum was a microcosm of Japan's social stratification: economic rents flowed upwards from a base of (renunciate) followers to Aum's deviant elite. Asahara's syncretic religious ideology (discussed in Chapter 4) was a source of identity-based motivation for terrorist violence—but its intense religiosity also created and entrenched a minority group that bound the renunciate followers to a deviant elite. This is the insight that Alexandra Stein advances in recent cultic studies scholarship: that human attachment bonds are pivotal to in-group binding between leaders and followers, in a way first noted in John Bowlby's mother-infant research about families.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ This argument and its facilitation of social inequality is made more broadly in Gerrit De Geest (2018). *Rents: How Marketing Causes Inequality* (Beccaria Books).

⁷⁰ Alexandra Stein (2016). *Terror, Love, and Brainwashing: Attachment in Cults and Totalitarian Systems*. New York: Routledge.

What its renunciate followers encountered in Aum was an organisational environment that Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Robert Tollison might have recognised: indoctrinability provided the belief system and the social class structure for economic and social rents to be extracted from susceptible believers who have come to accept the cultic milieu that they have been socialised into.⁷¹ This provided Aum Shinrikyo with the financial power base from which to attempt the Shambhala Plan's specific ends—through the means of terrorist violence.

This means that Aum Shinrikyo—like other cultic religious groups—acted as a moderator of the structural forces in Japan's society on the renunciate (followers). This operated in a multi-level way. Japan's 'lost decades' of deflationary stagnation and subsequent visible austerity created selection pressures in the societal environment. Japan's communitarian form of capitalism was undergoing significant transformation as the safety net of its traditional institutions was being hollowed out and eroded.⁷² Aum and other Japanese new religions offered potential safe havens from these harsh socioeconomic conditions as well as the promise for members of transformative spiritual growth. In Aum the dominance of Asahara's increasingly apocalyptic and militaristic imagery occurred at the same time that socioeconomic anxieties increased in Japanese society. These selection pressures transformed Aum from a potential safe haven into a psychic prison in which the rank-ordered status of initiatory names granted by Asahara was sought by follower renunciates.

⁷¹ Erik Olin Wright (Ed.). (2005). *Approaches to Class Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Erik Olin Wright (2015). *Understanding Class*. New York: Verso Books.

⁷² Marie Anichordoguy (2005). *Reprogramming Japan: The High Tech Crisis Under Communitarian Capitalism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

The Shambhala Plan's utopia was thus also a communalistic solution to the insecurity and precarity that renunciate followers felt before they joined Aum. At the microlevel—documented in Haruki Murakami's interviews with former and low-level members in particular—was a recruitment pool of individuals who faced stressors: unemployment, existential crises of meaning, and disaffected alienation from traditional Japanese employment and institutions. The indoctrinability of Aum's mid- and low-level members created a low-cost labour pool for Aum Shinrikyo's media and real estate infrastructure to expand; it also provided the funding for the covert research program into developing chemical and biological weapons.

In retrospect Aum Shinrikyo was far more than just a terrorist organisation. Its multiple terrorist attacks and their deep psycho-political effects on Japanese society were a precursor to the impact that affective politics and emotional states now have on contemporary mass psychology.⁷³ At the time of Aum's Tokyo subway attack on 20th March 1995 the macroeconomic impacts of Japan's 'lost decades' were still unfolding: the structural effects of deflationary periods of debt austerity on contemporary society became much clearer after the 2008 Global Financial Crisis or Great Recession.⁷⁴ Aum has now become part of a larger crisis narrative about Japan which now also includes the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear reactor disaster of 11th March 2011, a rapidly ageing population, and the spectre of artificial intelligence to create new levels of an unemployed workforce.⁷⁵

⁷³ William Davies (2018). *Nervous States: How Feeling Took Over The World*. London: Jonathan Cape.

⁷⁴ Adam Tooze (2018). *Crashed: How A Decade of Financial Crises Changed The World*. London: Allen Lane. Also see the summary of Japan's 1987-2017 period of economic bubble, 'lost decades', and renewed macroprudential policy intervention in Ray Dalio's *Principles For Navigating Big Debt Crises* (Westport, CT: Bridgewater, 2018), pp. 303-306. For the thesis that Japan exported deflationary stagnation and debt austerity to the world see William Pesek's *Japanization: What The World Can Learn From Japan's Lost Decades* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2014).

⁷⁵ Pilling, David (2015). *Bending Adversity: Japan and the Art of Survival*. New York: Penguin Books.

Now, social scientists better understand the interconnections between the multi-level framework of macro, meso, and microfoundations advanced in this chapter. Deflationary stagnation and debt austerity can create a receptive climate for neo-authoritarian populism and may pose dangers to Japan's communitarian form of capitalism. These socio-economic selection pressures can potentially increase the indoctrinability of people into extremist belief systems via the intense psychological bonding of small groups (social learning and folklore). These extremist belief systems may be mutations from past political, religious, or philosophical ideas and ideologies (cultural transmission). For terrorism studies researchers there is now a much larger potential case universe of militant groups, terrorist organisations, and nascent political and social movements to be analysed, explored, and investigated (to be discussed in Chapter 6 on possible future research).

Aum's political economy as a religious cult that transformed into a terrorist organisation continues to resonate today. Its maturation illustrates how a moral calculus of terrorist violence can be envisioned, recruited for, financially resourced, and ultimately mobilised in surprise attacks on critical infrastructure. Contemporary research agendas in political economy, political psychology, and terrorism studies still have much to learn from Shoko Asahara's vision and the Shambhala Plan implementation. Chapter 6 discusses the potential lessons that could be applied from Aum Shinrikyo to understanding other terrorist organisations such as Al Qaeda, Boko Haram, Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant which have each evolved beyond small group status. Possible future research is also discussed and explored.

Appendix 1: PhD Completion Timeframe

‘Working Notes’ Draft Material

Draft ‘working notes’ material written to-date includes:

1. 27,757 words of draft working notes from 2006-08 on terrorism studies.
2. 270 pages of hand-written notes from 2011-14 on strategic culture and terrorism.
3. 136,600 words of draft chapters (second draft) and working notes from 2014-16.
4. 104,011 words of draft working notes from August 2016 to September 2018.

I will draw on this material for my in-progress final draft.

Proposed Chapter Delivery

November 2018: Delivery of Chapter 2 literature review chapter (second draft).

December 2018: Integration of existing Chapter drafts into a single, consolidated document.

January—June 2019: Developmental editing of thesis manuscript (integrating ‘working notes’ material where appropriate and possible third data chapter on Aum Shinrikyo or lessons for strategic subculture theory-building) using Scott Norton’s book *Developmental Editing* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

June 2019: Copy-editing of thesis manuscript, footnotes, and bibliographic references.

July 2019 Submission of completed thesis on 22nd July 2019.

Appendix 2: Draft Table of Contents

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Appendix 3: Doctoral Candidate Training

For the majority of my Monash University doctoral candidature I have worked full-time in university research management, and have lived interstate since August 2016 (in Brisbane and Canberra). This has meant I have been unable to access the face-to-face and event-based training for doctoral candidates at Monash University.

Instead, I have pursued the following training (some which was work-based):

Monash University MyDevelopment

- Arts: Monash Doctoral Program – Compulsory Module. Completed 28/10/18.
- Research Integrity: Arts and Humanities. Completed 29/10/18 (exempt).
- Research Integrity: Social and Behavioral Sciences. Completed 28/10/18.
- Arts: Program Induction. Completed 20/05/17 (exempt).
- Monash Graduate Research Induction. Completed 19/05/17.
- Monash Graduate Research Induction (Online). Completed 19/05/17.

Monash Graduate Research Office confirmed by email (Colin Rose, 29th October 2018) that my MyDevelopment training is 100% complete.

Monash University SPS Symposium

As part of my doctoral candidature, I gave the following SPS Symposium talks since my Mid-Candidature Review milestone (no presentation was given in 2016 due to an interstate move and work commitments):

- 24th October 2018: a presentation on Aum Shinrikyo (personal blog [note](#), [abstract](#), [slides](#), and [audio](#)).
- 25th October 2017: a presentation on what I call fourth generation strategic culture (discussed in my Chapter 2 literature review) (personal blog [note](#), [slides](#), and [audio](#)).
- 28th October 2015: a presentation on Islamic State (personal blog [note](#) and [slides](#)).

Digital Journalism Journal (June—August 2018)

Invited review of a manuscript on Iran's use of social media to monitor election outcomes (now under second round of blind peer review following first round developmental feedback).

Australian National University (April 2018—Present)

Training in research program and pre-award / post-award grant development in the College of Asia and the Pacific. Experience with Australian Research Council grant rounds DE19 and

DP19 (rejoinders), and FL19, FT19, DE20, and DP20. Handled the submission of grants to the Department of Defence's Strategic Policy Grants program. Trained in CPA Tool (Costing, Pricing, and Advisory) and ARIES (IRMA) research management systems for data entry, and institutional review and sign-off of research contracts, grants, and tenders. Use of the Menzies Library archival collection for case study research. Research discussions with Dr. Michael Cohen, Dr. Andrew (Andy) Kennedy, and Dr Adam Broinowski on research program, PhD case study, and research methodology issues (process tracing and case study selection). Brief discussion with Dr. Wesley (Wes) Widmaier about bringing in political economy frameworks into my evolving research program.

Swinburne Online (May 2017—Present)

Tutoring and assessment marking for the undergraduate units:

- *POL10001 Australian Politics* (TP3, 2018): tutoring one student cohort.
- *POL20008 Australian Foreign Policy* (TP3, 2018): tutoring one student cohort.
- *POL10001 Australian Politics* (TP1, 2018): tutored three student cohorts, assessed two student cohorts, did cross-moderation, and made suggestions for curriculum development. Student Evaluation mean: 9.10 (Swinburne Online mean: 8.77).
- *POL20008 Australian Foreign Policy* (TP2, 2017): tutored and assessed two student cohorts, and did cross-moderation, and made suggestions for curriculum development. Student Evaluation mean: 9.45 (Swinburne Online mean: 8.60).

Training in the use of Blackboard and Canvas learning management systems, and in constructivist and online learning pedagogy.

Contemporary Security Policy Journal (December 2017)

Invited review of a manuscript on Australian and Polish strategic culture and counterterrorism policy. I provided a summary of relevant research findings from my dissertation that were relevant to the article to Editor-in-Chief Hylke Dijkstra. The manuscript was published in May 2018 as '[Using strategic culture to understand participation in expeditionary operations: Australia, Poland, and the coalition against the Islamic State](#)' by Fredrik Doeser and Joakim Eidenfalk.

Monash University (September 2017—March 2018)

Developmental editing and grant development of Dr Benjamin Eltham's ARC DECRA application 'A New Cultural Policy for Australia' (DE190100780).

The University of Queensland (March 2017—March 2018)

Training in the University of Queensland Diamantina Institute for research program management; laboratory team-based coordination; pre-award and post-award management of grant applications (for national and international funders); developing and submitting human

research ethics applications; copy-editing journal articles; working with Early Career Researchers on grant applications and promotions applications; and translational research commercialisation (with UniQuest). As part of this work I compiled a [Reading List for Early Career Researchers](#) which I updated and published publicly on my personal blog in mid 2018. I attended the University of Queensland and Translational Research Institute workshops on ‘Accessing Non-Dilutive Funding in the United States’ and ‘ARC Deconstructing the Proposal’.

Griffith University (February 2017—June 2017)

I completed two Master of Public Administration units—*7023GIR The Political, Legal, and Governance Environment* and *7027GIR Implementation and Service Delivery*—to better understand the public policy dimensions of counterterrorism and the potential government market in Australia for academic research.

Bond University (March 2017—August 2017)

Training in the Pure research management system, the Human Research Ethics Application system, strategic positioning for research Centres and Faculties, and finding academic grant mentors and new funding landscapes.

Victoria University (September 2008—August 2016)

Training in research program conceptualisation and evaluation; pre-award and post-award grant, tender, and panel management; developmental editing of journal articles; research contract review and management; intellectual property; and the Australian Research Council's Research Management System. Completed the management courses 'Coaching for Change' (CLE Consulting Australia), 'Research Commercialisation Module for Administrators' (e-Grad School Australia, Queensland University of Technology), and 'Planning For Excellence' (Australian Institute of Management).