

POLICY FORUM

POD

Policy Forum Pod Countering violent extremism

Episode 98

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Australian
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POLICYFORUM.NET

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About us:

Policy Forum Pod is the podcast of Policy Forum.net - Asia and the Pacific's platform for public policy debate, analysis and discussion. Policy Forum is based at Crawford School of Public Policy at the Australian National University.

Our regular podcasts are written for a broad audience of public policy professionals, and those interested in public policy throughout the region.

Policy Forum connects with the Asia and the Pacific Policy Society – a network of thousands of people involved in every level of policy around the region.

Host 1: Martyn Pearce, presenter for Policy Forum Pod, Editor of Policy Forum

Host 2: Dr Sharon Bessell, Director of the Children's Policy Centre, Crawford School, ANU

Jacinta Carroll: Jacinta Carroll, Director of National Security Policy, ANU National Security College

Assoc. Prof O'Neil: Assoc. Prof Mathieu O'Neil, University of Canberra

Caroline Fisher: Caroline Fisher, Assistant Prof in Journalism, University of Canberra

Anooshe Mushtaq: Anooshe Mushtaq, Chair of the Raqib Taskforce

Host 1: Hello, Martyn here. Before we get started with this week's podcast, I have a big favour to ask. If you like Policy Forum Pod, could you please leave us a quick review on iTunes? It will only take 30 seconds or so and it will be a huge help to us in getting the word out about this podcast.

Also, a cautionary note: today, we are going to be talking about some things that some listeners may find troubling. Now, let's get on with the Pod.

[interlude music 0:00:29-0:00:42]

Host 1: Hello and welcome to Policy Forum Pod – the podcast for those who want to dig a little deeper into the policy challenges facing Australia and its region. I am Martyn Pearce. Policy Forum Pod is produced at Crawford School, the region's leading graduate policy school. You can find out more about us at crawford.anu.edu.au.

I am delighted to welcome Sharon Bessell as my co-host today. Sharon is a Professor here, at Crawford School. She is the ANU Lead of the Individual Deprivation Measure Project and she is also editor of Policy Forum's Poverty in Focus section. Hello, Sharon. How are you?

Host 2: Hi, Martyn, I am really well.

Host 1: So, how has your week been?

Host 2: It has been pretty busy. I have been in Tasmania for a couple of days, but it has been a good week.

Host 1: At the beginning of each Pod, we go over some of the big policy issues that have been playing out over the previous week. Tell me, Sharon, what has caught your eye in the wide world of policy?

Host 2: Well, there is a lot going on. Of course, we are going to be talking about issues around countering violent extremism today – which has been, I think, in everyone's mind in the news, but I wanted to pick up on the story that came originally from Al Jazeera and has now been discussed by others in the media, around James Ashby and Steve Dickson.

Both One Nation – Steve Dickson the leader of One Nation in Queensland and James Ashby Pauline Hanson's Chief of Staff, so both closely associated with that party, being in the United States and spruiking for cash to be able to have their way in the Australian Parliament, which I think is just incredibly disturbing on so many fronts, from the issues around gun control right through to what this kind of behaviour does to democracy.

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Host 1: It is a pretty incredible story, isn't it?

Host 2: It really is amazing. I mean, it is shocking. I think it was James Ashby that said they had been set up. Well, yes, perhaps they had, but it was also an incredible piece of investigative journalism. The fact that these comments were being made and that they were engaging in discussions that were really about undermining the Australian democratic process is just appalling.

Host 1: Yes, very interesting story indeed. Now, what I would like to talk about, Sharon, would it surprise you to know that I want to talk about Brexit?

Host 2: Oh, that does not surprise me in the least. I just hope you are going to keep your calm because I know you are becoming more and more exercised about this.

Host 1: I am going to keep my calm, because I think this week there has been a touch of positivity in the whole slow-car-crash that is Brexit. I want to highlight three things that happened over the past week.

The first is that the Parliament has voted to, essentially, take control of the Brexit process by doing a series of what they are calling indicative votes, so they can gauge different ideas and test whether there is actually parliamentary support for different ideas. I think, with all the politics that has been played with Brexit over the last two years, that is potentially a positive development.

The second is, I want to highlight that huge march that happened in London over the weekend about a second vote – a people's vote. The estimates put it at more than a million people taking to the streets – a very positive, very warm-natured march. There was no trouble or anything like that.

The third is, I want to highlight the petition that is on the UK Government website. On the UK Government website anyone can start a petition for anything and, when it reaches certain numbers of e-signatures, the Parliament is obliged to debate whatever that idea put forward is.

Someone started a petition to revoke Article 50 – Article 50 being the legal mechanism that the UK triggered in order to start the two-year process to leave the European Union. Anyway, they started this petition to revoke Article 50, and last time I checked that petition is now up to 5.7 million signatures so, for me, Brexit has been terrible.

It has been a vivid display of democracy and democratic institutions going wrong. We heard some of that on last week's podcast, but I think this week we have seen some examples of when these types of things happen people are not necessarily going to *[be]* passive, they are not going

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to take it lying down, they are prepared to speak out, they are prepared to come out in force, they are prepared to express their views. Even an online petition is not necessarily going to change government policy, but it certainly changes the atmosphere around discussions around Brexit.

As we saw with the climate strike a couple of weeks back, when young people took to the streets in huge numbers to protest the failure of politicians and policy-makers to really tackle the issue of climate change, it can really change the nature and the discussion of a topic.

Host 2: Where, do you think, it is going to land in terms of Brexit? Do you have optimism in terms of what the outcome will be or is it the process that has made you feel a little better about that slow-car-crash that you talk about?

Host 1: It is definitely the process that has made me feel better. I have no idea whatsoever where it is going to land. It is such a fast-moving story. It is very hard to keep on top of and who knows where it might go but, yes, the process has certainly heartened me this week.

Host 2: That is a good news story.

Host 1: Yes, for once.

Host 2: [laughing] We do not have enough of them.

Host 1: Now, we cannot wait to dive into this week's podcast. Before we get going, just a quick reminder that our great Facebook podcast group is looking for you. If you want exclusive insights into what is going on behind the scenes, you want to chat to other listeners, our presenters, then just jump onto Facebook, type 'Policy Forum Pod' into the search bar, and come and join the gang. It will be great to see you there.

Talking of great podcasts, one you might really want to tune into – if you haven't already – is our friends at The Familiar Strange. Here are the familiar strangers with some details of our favourite anthropology pod.

Julia Brown: Hi, I am Julia Brown.

Ian Pollock: I am Ian Pollock.

Simon Theobald: And I am Simon Theobald.

Julia Brown: Some of your familiar strangers from The Familiar Strange podcast.

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Ian Pollock: The Familiar Strange is a podcast about doing anthropology – that is about listening, looking, trying out, and being with in pursue of uncommon knowledge about humans and culture.

Julia Brown: The show alternates between in-depth conversations with experts and senior academics about the ways they think, write, do research, and navigate the academic world.

Ian Pollock: And panel discussions where emerging anthropologists, like ourselves, take a look at our worlds using what we've learned as students of anthropology.

Simon Theobald: Subscribe to The Familiar Strange podcast at our podcasts' sound cloud, Spotify and all the other familiar places.

Julia Brown: And find our blog at thefamiliarstrange.com.

Ian Pollock: Is that it?

Simon Theobald: That's it.

Julia Brown: Excellent. Check us out and keep talking strange.

Host 1: Thanks very much for that, familiar strangers.

Today on the Pod, we are taking a look at the issue of countering violent extremism, radicalisation and the role of mainstream and social media in the spread of violent footage and hateful attitudes. The brutal attacks on two mosques in Christchurch, in New Zealand two weeks ago, shocked the world and claimed the lives of 50 people. New Zealand's Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, rushed through a new firearms policy and openly showed her solidarity with the Muslim community.

On this side of the [?? 0:07:59], Australian Senator, Fraser Anning, shifted the blame onto Muslim immigrants, saying that Muslims were more often the perpetrators instead of the victims. While these comments had many on the social media commenting, and calling out lies and hate speech, YouTube and Facebook, in particular, were also the stage for brutal life-streamed images of the Christchurch attack. Mainstream media broadly criticised social media's slow response in effectively removing the content, although outlets such as the UK's Daily Mirror called the attacker an "angelic boy who grew into an evil far-right mass-killer".

Today, we want to ask does Australia have its countering violent extremism, also known as CVE, settings right? Do policy makers have a blind spot when it comes to right-wing extremism, and are social media and the mainstream media pulling the way in regards to preventing violent content spreading?

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We have got a fantastic line-up of guests to discuss these questions, haven't we Sharon?

Host 2: We have. Once again, it is an amazing line-up of people to talk through these issues that are just so disturbing and so pressing. We have Jacinta Carroll, who is Director of National Security Policy here, at the National Security College. She was previously the inaugural Head of ASPI's Counter-Terrorism Policy Centre, so lots of experience to bring to this discussion.

We also have Professor Mathieu O'Neil, who is an Associate Professor at the University of Canberra and also an Adjunct Research Fellow at the ANU, at the School of Sociology. His research focuses on incorporating communication studies, the sociology of fields and controversies, and online research methods. He also works on social network analysis, so it will be really interesting to hear Mathieu's take on some of these issues.

We have Anooshe Mushtaq, who is founder and Chairperson of the Raqib Taskforce, a Muslim-led organisation that builds social inclusion through engagement across the Australian community to dispel extremist messages. Anooshe is also a lead consultant to Members of the Australian Government's Countering Violent Extremism Services Panel.

We also have Professor Caroline Fisher. Caroline is Assistant Professor in journalism at the University of Canberra. She is a member of the News & Media Research Centre and co-author of the annual *Digital News Report – Australia*. Her research interests are trust in the news media, journalist-source relations in a digital era – an issue that is becoming, I am sure, more and more complex, and disclosure and transparency in journalism.

A really amazing set of panellists to talk through some of these really difficult issues.

Host 1: I cannot wait to hear what we are going to cover today. I think it is going to be very interesting discussing ahead. Now, before we get to that, though, a reminder to our listeners: please, do get in touch with us. We love hearing your comments, your questions, your thoughts about what we talk about. You can reach us on Twitter, where we are [@APPSPolicyForum](https://twitter.com/APPSPolicyForum). You can email us: podcast@policyforum.net or, the very best way, join the Facebook gang – just type in 'Policy Forum Pod' into your Facebook search bar, and there we are. We'd love to hear from you.

Stick around after the main interview because we are going to be going over some of your comments, but we also need to tell you about our grand plans for the upcoming 100th episode of Policy Forum Pod, which we need your help with. Stick around – we will get to that after the main interview but, for now, let's meet our guests.

[interlude music 0:11:36-0:11:42]

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Host 1: Thank you to you all for joining us today. Hello, Jacinta.

Jacinta Carroll: Hello Martyn. It is very good to be here.

Host 1: It is great to have you back. Welcome Anooshe.

Anooshe Mushtaq: Thank you, Martyn. Thank you for the invitation.

Host 1: Oh, it is a pleasure to have you here. Hello, Caroline. How are you?

Caroline Fisher: I am very well, thank you. Thanks for the invitation.

Host 1: And Mathieu, thanks for joining us.

Assoc. Prof O'Neil: Great to be here.

Host 1: Two weeks ago, the terrorist attack on two mosques in Christchurch, in New Zealand, left the world stunned in the face of really unspeakable violence.

While New Zealand is still trying to come to grips with what has happened, questions are being asked about whether policy-makers had their Countering Violent Extremism, also known as CVE, policies right and, indeed, whether they were properly targeting right-wing extremists.

I want to start this discussion with a very personal story. Anooshe, you recently wrote a powerful and very personal piece on Policy Forum, "Why women adopt Jihadi ideology". In it, you wrote about your own experiences with radical ideology, and that social exclusion and feelings of alienation pushed you down that path, and you talked about how your family wasn't conservative when they moved from Pakistan but that the influence of the Muslim community in Australia changed their way of thinking which, in turn, pushed you to become more and more religious yourself. It is a really terrific piece and well worth a read.

I am interested, Anusha, what are some of the lessons that policy-makers can draw from these factors that you highlighted in your piece driving the radicalisation processes?

Anooshe Mushtaq: Yes, thank you, Martyn. I think, from the Muslim community point of view, what I have seen is that people like to shield their culture and religion. It is not limited to only Muslim community but also we have seen Asians, Italians, Greeks – they all do the same, but from that piece and other publications that I have written and I have also been speaking at various forums, I think the CVE policies, as I have always mentioned, have been more towards marginalising Muslims. It is very focused on Muslims and Islamist terrorism. We have not gone broader, to look at there could be other issues.

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It was funny that I was watching this movie, actually, which was called "*BlacKkKlansman*". It is about KKK and it actually shows exactly what we are doing now. At that time, it was the black people. Now, it seems like it is the Muslims. That marginalisation is dangerous, and I have said this again and again: the more you focus on Islamist extremism the more terrorism will rise, because that is exactly what Islamic State and Al-Qaeda want. They want this hatred and they want a focus on Muslims so they can recruit them. That is what we have seen what has happened recently in Christchurch.

Host 2: Jacinta, I want to bring you in here. When we hear Anooshe explaining what is going on here in terms of the way in which we respond to the potential emergence of violent extremism, it seems relatively clear about what we should be doing, and that should be around inclusion, but we seem to have real challenges in creating policies that address the issues in the way that Anooshe just described them.

Why is that? Why are we facing such challenges in terms of the way we think through the policy approaches?

Jacinta Carroll: One of the themes that keeps coming through is it is very easy to see a violent threat when it is manifest. What I mean by that is that when an attack happens – and, sadly, we have seen this in Christchurch, within a day, Friday morning, New Zealand just woke up with a terror threat alert level of low. With one incident that was raised to high and their entire world has changed – and, I would say, Australia's environment has changed, as well.

What this means that, in terms of government response initially – because governments are usually charged with safety, and security, and investigating crimes, and so on, that it is very clear that something needs to be done to protect the rest of the community. Anooshe and I have been at many conferences where we have heard police and others talk with passion about trying to ensure that the communities that are most affected are not alienated through this, but the prison that they work in, the counterterrorism environment, is about preventing attacks, so investigating people who look like they may be on the radar and, of course, there will be a lot of questions asked about why this person apparently was not.

There is a lot of focus and attention there. There are resources that follow, and it is also something where, sometimes, in some ways it is a bit easier to legislate. There is a high focus of communities to ensure that there is protection, so the population is protected from an attack. All of this attention we see, again as police often say to us, "Well, we cannot arrest our way out of this. This is not something that is for counterterrorism investigators and police to stop and prevent," so something has to happen earlier, and that something is extremely complex.

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Even as we hear Anooshe's incredible story, there is something very personal in it. There are a range of factors that may lead someone to radicalise, and there is a range of theory about that, and different mechanisms that various groups use, but trying to completely prevent that is something that does not appear to be possible. Better ways of doing it, of course, are there. I will quickly mention two things.

One is that, in the Australian context, the way of preventing extremism or even deradicalizing has tended to be run by the states and at the community level, and governments typically are funding particular communities because they are best placed to be able to do something.

Going to Anooshe's comments, well it is clear that you were then focused on communities that are most affected, that seem to be targeted – in Australia, recently that is primarily Muslim communities but not exclusively, and that can then create the perception – and we have seen this quite extremely in the UK that, while there are good works happening there, it really is focusing on one community that are not that big a problem. A very small percentage of Australia's population support terrorism – very small percentage of the Muslim population, so it is very difficult then to tease out how we best do that.

The second thing is, by contrast, a different approach. We have seen a masterclass from Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in New Zealand, where she has not talked about where this has come from. She has not focused on a community. She has not whether – and regardless of this being right-wing or other forms of terrorism, she has not done what we call other-wing. She has not said there is a fight between us and them, and this is probably the most powerful thing you can do in building resilience.

Host 1: On the 13th of March, the Secretary of Australia's Department of Home Affairs, Michael Pezzullo, gave an address where he talked about the seven threats to Australian security in the future, but right-wing extremism was not one of those. Does that suggest that Australian policy-makers have a bit of a blind spot when it comes to right-wing extremism?

Jacinta Carroll: It is interesting. I looked to that – that day. I had been talking to some people about it. It is interesting he does specify Islamist terrorism or Islamist extremist terrorism and gives a good reason for it, and it is one that is backed up by the enormity of that threat. Islamist terrorists – not Islamic, Islamist terrorists do present the largest terrorist threat globally and do account for, I think it was, 20,000 deaths around the world just last year. Right-wind extremism, for example, accounts for double figures rather than thousands, so there is something about relative.

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One of the other threats he identified was entities that are seeking to undermine liberalism and liberal democracy. It is clear that Mr Pezzullo's particular examples and focus were other countries – authoritarian countries, but what we are seeing in terrorism in general, and particularly in right-wing terrorism, is organisations that are seeking to attacks human rights, that are inherently racist by definition, and are seeking to undermine the lawful authority of governments in liberal democracies and exclude people who they say do not belong in that community. There is a very strange, historically inaccurate and oversimplified definition of what that community should be.

Look, it was a short, sharp description of his seven threats. I would say that they were kind of covered a little bit in these areas that he spoke about, but the world changed just a few hours later. The heads of Australia's intelligence agencies got together last week in Canberra to really dive into this 'what are we doing about right-wing extremism and is it enough?'.

Host 2: As our regular listeners will know, we always like to put our call to our listeners to ask whether they have questions to put to the panel. This week, @DigbyHowis has asked on Twitter – and I think, Jacinta, you might be best placed to at least first response to this question from @DigbyHowis: "Does Australia need a debate to expand or change the definition of terrorism in the Criminal Code Act of 1995 so it is inclusive of right- or left-wing extremism?" What would you say to that question?

Jacinta Carroll: Yes, we need a debate but, secondly, part of the reason we need the debate is that our law is actually agnostic on the source of a threat. That is not unusual in common law countries. The definition in the various relevant legislation: Crimes Act, the Criminal Code and various others, talks about politically motivated violence and then it does have descriptions of terrorist organisations. There is *[sic.]* a fair few permutations on those, but they are not actually limited. It talks about religious-motivated, politically motivated and others. They are regularly reviewed.

The thing that is most interesting about Digby's question is that, what I have heard in a lot of public discussion in the last couple of weeks, that element – the nature of our legislation – is not well understood publicly, so we will need – those of us who work in the space and talk about it publicly, need to explain more, and it is beholden of governments to describe what these laws are and talk more about who they are investigating.

Host 1: I would like to move on to talk about social media and how social media responded in the wake of the Christchurch attack, because on the day there was that horrifying livestream footage on Facebook and on YouTube, and the platforms really struggled to contain that. In this week's Policy Forum Pod Facebook group survey, we asked you, our listeners, whether social

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media companies are doing enough to tackle violent extremism on their platform. Most of you answered that extreme content should be banned but the censorship needs to be avoided. Some of you also supported the idea that they should be legally forced to approve content, in particular videos, prior to publication.

I want to bring you in here, Mathieu. Why is it so difficult for social media companies to keep a lid on the spread of violent material or other radical content?

Assoc. Prof O'Neil: It is not--; When you are talking about Islamic terrorism, they have pretty much shut it down, so it is interesting to compare the reaction to both, I think. There is *[sic.]* different reasons why it is harder to combat extreme right-wing content.

I guess there was a parallel that was made at the beginning between the two. They both come from a sense of grievance, I suppose, but the sense of grievance of Muslim people is probably rooted in history of colonialism, and international relations since the Second World War, and what is going on in the Middle East, whereas the cause of the right-wing extremism and other people in that sphere is reaction to perhaps immigration, but also it is about feminism and it is about lots of other things.

I think it is a wide discussion, but just to go back to the point about why the difference, there are several answers to that. One of them, is the right-wing people, they were quite clever in that they did not advocate for murder, whereas Daesh – as we call them in Europe, or ISIS, they were advocating for crimes, for murder. That way, the right-wing people got out of that net.

Another reason, obviously, is in the United States. Right-wing terrorists, for example, they are local citizens, so it is much more difficult to prosecute them than others and the people from other countries because they are, after all, citizens of the United States.

Then, probably one of the things also that plays a role in radicalisation is the role of algorithms and the role of the platforms. The start of a lot of this online extremism was not in places like Stormfront, in Nazi Party and all that stuff. It was actually Gamergate, 2014, when there was a reaction against women introducing more progressive ideas in video games, and there was an outcry against that. It meshed with the libertarian, anti-authoritarian, hacker, anonymous mentality and it has been taken over by these reactionary politics.

What is interesting is how people who are not radical become radicalised. They become radicalised because of the algorithms, because of the way that, when you look at a video on Gamergate, instantly there is another video that pops up in your feed about social justice warriors and how horrible they are, and then you watch that and then instantly there is another one about

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racism, and instantly there is--; So, insidiously you become part of this continuum and you do not even realise that it is happening. It is just the content that is proposed to you.

What you then get is some people talk about filter bubble, some people talk about echo chambers. I think they are not actually synonymous – and I do not know if you want me to talk about that, but there is quite an interesting distinction to be made.

Filter bubble, you can think about it as the information that you get from your social media, from your mainstream media, et cetera, but if somebody says, "Well, actually that is not true," and you look at the evidence and you change your mind.

Echo chamber, you can think about it as somebody who believes in a misguided or malevolent authority, so that everything that comes from that authority makes sense. This authority could be [?? 0:27:14], it could be Pauline Hanson, it could be Donald Trump, and anything that contradicts it you will not assess it on the basis of evidence. You will assess it on the basis whether it contradicts the authority.

That is why you have people who are Anti-Vaxxers, climate change deniers, et cetera. Everything that contradicts that is just a conspiracy that is being produced by the mainstream media, by whatever, and it is very hard to reach those people. I think that is--;

There are these phenomena that are happening online and the problem with the social media platforms is that they are based in the United States a lot of the time, so they have very liberal or permissive rules when it comes to freedom of speech. Also, they are transnational, so it is very hard to regulate them.

I want to just go back to the thing I said at the beginning, about the difference between the reaction to Islamic terrorism and right-wing terrorism. It is that there is definitely a more permissive, or there has been a more permissive attitude towards the right-wing terrorism than towards Islamic terrorism.

Jacinta Carroll: Can I make a couple of comments on that – and I am probably saying it as I am sitting here, in the studio, next to Anooshe. We focus on terrorism and countering violent extremism, so it is fantastic hearing that expertise coming from a different perspective – if I can speak for you, as well.

One thing that is relating to terrorism but other issues, there is a very good theory on propaganda and why propaganda works. We have done some work picking up theory by people like Ellul, talking about the stages that someone goes through in being receptive to propaganda. That actually linked very nicely to the things that Mathieu was talking about – and Anooshe, because

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one of the first is that you have to have pre-conditions. There is something about your life, or your world view, or something that is happening that makes you receptive or curious about an issue.

The second stage is making contact. Typically, it is in person – and we have seen this in our cases in Australia. While the online environment provides great facilitation and incubation, that personal contact is needed – and it may be online, but quite often it is physical, personal contact. Then, we come to the echo chamber where you make this conscious decision to just have one source of authority.

Interestingly as well, these are ordinary people who can live that life online, and then step out of it and say, “Well, I will engage elsewhere in the world, but I have got this other life online,” so very interesting.

Assoc. Prof O'Neil: That is true, not just for extremism but also for people who engage in trolling – really repulsive behaviour taking people to the brink of suicide or even further, and then it turns out they have got three kids and they are lovely on the outside, and nobody had any idea that they had this other persona online.

Naturally, there is no social cost for that kind of behaviour online, but then this is the thing: it is that, now, what we saw with the terrorist in Christchurch, is that the online and the offline are extremely well connected because he was making [?? 0:30:20] and streaming it live. The messages that he left just before embarking, it was very much signalling that this was a continuation. There was a homage being paid to his community and he was--;

Anyway, I do not want to spend--; I want to follow the lead of the New Zealand Prime Minister and not spend too much talking about [that? 0:30:44].

Anooshe Mushtaq: Can I add something to that? I read, Jacinta, that you mentioned in SBS that recently 900,000 were allocated to countering online hate. I think in my opinion – and also I just read the AST [verify acronym] report that they have brought down a lot of content from Islamic State and others, Al-Qaeda.

In my opinion, unless we start tackling the issues from the grassroots level, we cannot really tackle Islamist extremism. This has to come from the Muslim community. Engaging Islamic scholars is really important. At the moment, I am actually working with the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies (PIPS) and we are actually involving Muslim scholars – not imams, because there is a bit of a difference there; scholars are more well read and they are certified from Islamic jurisprudence.

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I think unless we start taking the content that, what they describe, is Koranic and hadith to lure people to radicalisation, and that is very powerful compared to just showing beheading videos or anything. It is the interpretation of Koran which they use to justify the cause, and that is the problem we are seeing. Unless [?? 0:32:06] do that, no matter how much money we spend from the top-down approach, unless we start looking at the grassroots level, online, offline, we cannot tackle extremism.

Host 2: I want to take this back to thinking of the wake of the atrocities that occurred in Christchurch. Of course, hate speech or fuelling division does not only come from one part of the community. In the wake of the attacks in Christchurch, Senator Fraser Anning said in the press release – and I am reluctant to quote this, but I will repeat what he said, “The real cause of the bloodshed on New Zealand’s streets today is the immigration program which allowed Muslim fanatics to migrate to New Zealand in the first place. Let us be clear, when Muslims may have been the victims today, usually they are the perpetrators.”

How do we begin to respond to those kinds of comments and how do we educate at that level? Anooshe, what are your thoughts on how we respond to those kinds of comments?

Anooshe Mushtaq: I think the political landscape, in my opinion, starting from Tony Abbott up to now has been our focus, and there is a lot of hate speech which goes around and, also, marginalisation of Muslims in the media whatever they say, so it is not only Fraser Anning but if you look at Pauline Hanson, and she said that “Islam is a disease”. Then, Scott Morrison, in the Melbourne attack last year, said ‘extreme radical Islam’. This kind of things does nothing, but all it does is produce more terrorism – and I am talking about the rise of the right-wing extremism, because they are fuelling what these people actually want.

When we look at Muslims in Australia and New Zealand, we are in the minority group, and there is *[sic.]* very few people who actually choose the Jihadi ideology, or go through extremism or radicalisation, so we really need to think about what we are doing here. Pauline Hanson rocking up in Parliament House with a burka and saying this should be banned, or halal – it should be banned, there are a lot of Muslims, doctors, lawyers, teachers who are actually contributing to Australia. Even a person like me – I am fighting against any kind of terrorism; Islamic terrorism. I am educating people.

We need to realise that hating Muslims or producing hate speech against Muslims is only going to not help the politicians and the counterterrorism experts. These kind of--; Even like immigration laws, what they are saying about Muslims and about opening up – sorry, what was that offshore detention centre?--

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Host 2: Christmas Island.

Anooshe Mushtaq: -Christmas Island, as well. It is all stigmatising. It is stigmatising, it is toxic, in my opinion.

Jacinta Carroll: I just want to add to that on the Fraser Anning piece. One thing that concerns me – and we were discussing beforehand we are mostly avid followers of current affairs and some of us of social media, and I was disappointed at the high profile that that had. I had been following international reporting about Christchurch, and a Senator who two weeks most Australians probably would not necessarily be able to name was getting headline news around the world.

Assoc. Prof O'Neil: It was also because he got egged – that helped.

Jacinta Carroll: Yes. It is that very, very high-profile – Pauline Hanson, as well. There has been, I would argue – certainly my experience, I have not seen so much documentary footage of Pauline Hanson over the past few years as I have in the past couple of weeks. This comes to narrative.

Again, if we look at New Zealand, I wonder whether Prime Minister Ardern would have given as much air time to discussing this issue as we have – and when I say 'we', our community, our media, and our politicians, because talking about fringe politics – and in the case of One Nation, let alone Senator Anning in his previous, we are talking seven percent of the population according to current polls – seven percent of the vote.

That is not helping a discussion that is trying to calm down populous sentiment. If you google what Australia's reaction is – and I have had some discussions with international media, they all ask about One Nation, they all ask about Pauline Hanson and Fraser Anning. That is where we need to get into a different space.

I think we actually did make some progress in the way that the media handled the mainstream media, handled the aftermath of the Christchurch incident, not speculating and really trying to calm things down.

Anooshe Mushtaq: We also need to think that more Muslims actually die from Islamic State's terrorist attack. Last year, when this guy in Melbourne who was mentally ill came with a knife, and when Scott Morrison said "extreme radical Islam", 40 or 50 people died in Kabul in the mosque from Islamic State's terrorist attack. We need to keep that in mind that these terrorists do not even consider us as Muslims because they think that their ideology is superior to other school of thought.

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Jacinta Carroll: [crosstalk 0:37:47] extremist, too.

Host 1: I want to come back there to something Jacinta said about the global coverage of Fraser Anning's media release, because that was not just driven by social media. It was also driven by mainstream media. Now, I would really like to get you in here, Caroline. How, do you think, the mainstream media are coping with some of these very difficult issues – the changing threats, and responding when terrible incidents like Christchurch happen?

Caroline Fisher: Look, I think it is really difficult. You have to walk a very fine line and, I think in all honesty, you damned if you do and you damned if you do not. On the one hand--;

I guess one of the things that I would like to pick up that you say, Jacinta, that the number of people who support One Nation is only seven percent of the population, or whatever, and if you remember back, too, when Pauline Hanson first came into the Parliament. In fact, there was almost this censorship and the ABC would not report it, et cetera, and it fed into the whole marginalisation of 'we are not heard' – the angry, white, marginalised person who was not being heard by the elites, and that fuelled.

That attempted at censorship was actually very counterproductive, so I think it is a very difficult argument to run, about should we censor how much air time do you give these groups, because on the one hand they arise because they are not being heard. I think that is very difficult.

There is no doubt about it that the media coverage around terror event feeds into some of those main themes that appear in all media, and the key news value that people talk about around journalism, the value of conflict. Obviously, it is an act of violence, so there is the conflict within the act itself, but it is politically full of conflict: there is cultural conflict, there is conflict at every level, and so it is a tantalising and wicked news story in that regard because there is so much that is attractive to that conflict paradigm of news.

Senator Anning – I think it was, to be honest--; I mean--; I think it was the sheer audacity of someone saying that. I genuinely think that--; I mean, the gentleman is a human as well, and I think there was this general shock of, "My God, did that person really say that?" I think that it is really unexpected. We are not familiar with that, particularly in Australia – to have someone so brazenly come out and be so offensive within the immediate context of such a terrible event. I think there was genuine surprise from the news media, that this actually occurred.

Beyond that, yes, it was fuelling the conflict, it was taking the story further, et cetera, and at that time there was a vacuum around--; there is only so much you can say to certain time. There were nicer cities around, well let's not try and--; let's temper our coverage of certain aspects, but then

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it was like it was fair game, "Oh, this is an easy thing to report," because we are actually trying to be quite delicate about other things.

But the news cycle must go on, and it is 24/7, and it is a bottomless pit, and you have got to fill the time with something, so I think there is a whole range of things fuelling the coverage of Senator Anning. I just think the audacity. I think, genuinely, it was a shock.

Host 2: Caroline, there has also been debate around the way the mainstream media covered the so-called manifesto that the person who committed the atrocities in Christchurch left. Some newspapers and media outlets refused to publish that at all, and others decided to publish excerpts. What do you make of the decision to not publish or to publish? Where do you think media outlets should [crosstalk 0:41:37]?

Caroline Fisher: It is a really difficult--; I have to say I watched Media Watch, that episode, immediately after that and I felt quite torn. I, in fact, did not agree with the criticism. I thought, particularly for the broadcast media, let's face it: if you have got pictures, you are going--; if you have not got pictures you have not got a story in broadcast media, in TV. Now, of course, there is limits and you do draw limits and you are not going to show the vision of the actual shooting taking place, but having the vision of him it is--;

You know, yes, it is showing what happened and I think that there is a legitimate use of certain limited material in that, in actually informing the public about what went on. As for whether or not you actually talk about--; How we, as a society, are meant to understand this person's motivations if we do not actually get to see some of the manifesto? I think, again, limited explanation of that is really necessary.

[?? 0:42:36] This does not happen in a vacuum. It does not just act out of nowhere. There was this evidence. There was this stuff online. I mean, I think it is a really important context.

Jacinta Carroll: From a research perspective, we all agree with that because it is really useful to be able to see that. The thing that really struck me is, as I said, I have seen a growing maturity in mainstream media in particular in how they handled this. What I particularly liked was that you could actually see elements, for example, of that statement, and so on, but that there was such a prevalence of media outlets explaining their decision-making process.

Getting to your point, it was not censorship. It was not 'you cannot', but it was the media saying, "We have actually thought about this from our editorial perspective and we are making a call one way or the other." All of the ones I have read – and I have read different views, were all

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quite reasonable and sensible, and they made different calls and sometimes at different levels, but that shows a maturity about the way the media is our entrée to all of this issue.

Caroline Fisher: Because the irony is, in schools – for instance, my daughter the next day in class, as an activity, they went and they read the manifesto from top to bottom, and they had a discussion about it.

Assoc. Prof O'Neil: I think that is really important because I think one of the inspirations for this manifesto was actually coming from quite an unexpected area, which is this anarchist, primitivist, anti-industrial sphere. It reminded me of *"The Unabomber Manifesto: Industrial Society and Its Future"*, which came out in the '90s and which he had printed in the New York Times under duress, because he said, "If you do not print it, I am going to continue with this campaign of bombing."

That manifesto, and the primitivist philosophy in general, is based on the idea there is *[sic.]* too many human and we have to reduce dramatically the population to save the biosphere. Of course, everybody wants to save the biosphere, but if you recognise that it is based on a genocidal premise. Then, it is disqualified by definition and the people who agree with that are Nazis, and so if you start saying Nazi, for most people it is still a bad thing, I think. We have not quite reached the point where it is acceptable to be a Nazi, so if you say this is actually a Nazi perspective, it is a genocidal perspective which is based on the extermination of people, that is it, you are not labelling them exactly, you are just describing factually what it is about.

I think that, probably, there will be a negative effect in the first instance, that people will read it, and be inspired, and radicalised, and stuff, but at the same time if you keep it under wraps it just gives it an extremist [?? 0:45:27] and an extra aura, and it is the mainstream media trying to manipulate things. I think at the end of the day it is better to have transparency and some light to disinfect rather than keeping things hidden.

Jacinta Carroll: I will just throw in that probably the half-way point is that we--; It is not about censoring but how much attention are we giving to the sensible way forward, if you like. The discussions on what our societies can do and are doing to try to address potentially damaging views, and also to provide some factual information about what is going on, whether it is what laws are, who is being investigated, and so on, just to help ensure that these extreme ends are not the ones that are getting all the air time.

Host 2: We have covered a lot of issues to day, and I think there are many, many more issues to cover. We could keep talking for a lot longer but, in wrapping up for now, let me ask you each: if you had one piece of advice to policy-makers or to social media platforms on how to better

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manage the treat of violent extremism what would that one piece of advice be? Methieu, perhaps we will begin with you: what would you advise?

Assoc. Prof O'Neil: I am just trying to limit the stigma around debating ideas and about going to the bottom of ideas. I think there is a reluctance on both sides. A lot of people are reluctant to confront sexism, for example, in immigrant communities because there is a traditional patriarchal culture and there is still that issue you are worried about being labelled a racist if you confront that, and so that can lead people to hold-off on some criticism because they feel that it is going to feed right-wing extremism or right-wing critique.

But the other way, as I outlined just before in terms of, if there is a genocidal purpose, if there is exclusionary and genocidal purpose behind somebody's ideas then it should be called that. It should be--; The media should do a better job of explaining in what way this is contrary to humanity. I think that would be helpful, rather than focusing on the purely factual or sensational aspect of whether we show the images or not. It is the ideology that needs to be confronted clearly.

Host 2: Jacinta?

Jacinta Carroll: A couple of things. One is that we have had a lot of focus on online and social media, and one theme that is kind of misunderstood is that these are mega-businesses. We think about social media as being ours. I can be on Facebook, I can be on Twitter and I organise my life, and it is a great enabler for modern society. It is a wonderful thing, but because it exists in an environment that does not have quite the regulation, that form of forms of communication and discussion have had, what we have seen is that that lack of regulation.

I am not saying there needs to be more but there needs to be some self-regulation and an acceptance with those media companies that they are still part of society, they have a responsibility to society and the great enabler of liberal society that we have, particularly through these communications fora is one that can also undermine that society. What we have seen is that this has attacked.

Assoc. Prof O'Neil: Facebook has denied until, I do not know, they will probably still deny that they are media. They just put people in touch, and they do not accept –

Jacinta Carroll: [crosstalk 0:49:05] some responsibility, so they –

Assoc. Prof O'Neil: They do not accept that they are a broadcast like a traditional media which has public interest rules to respect.

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Jacinta Carroll: Yes, and they are worth something like US\$140 billion, so I would challenge that 'oh, we just sit here and not do anything' because they get those billions of dollars through pushing to you advertising from clients around the world. They are a business. They operate in our societies. They do have a responsibility to them.

As you mentioned before Mathieu, two years ago we saw – I have to say in response to countries like Australia and others through the G-20 putting pressure on these companies, they came together in the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism and then quickly, by putting a bit of effort into it, took down 75 percent of extremist propaganda put out by groups associated with Al-Qaeda and ISIS, so they can do this if they want to.

Assoc. Prof O'Neil: Absolutely.

Host 2: Anooshe, what would your piece of advice be?

Anooshe Mushtaq: My piece of advice would be to get more Muslims involved in the policy making, get more Muslims involved around the security, counterterrorism areas, because they understand their cultural and religious aspect, as well. Also, a big piece of advice is that being vigilant for the science of radicalisation and supporting interventions is important, but more important is changing the tone of discussions in the communities, building community resilience.

Jacinta Carroll: I would like to pick up on Anooshe's point there and, I guess, particularly for politicians and public figures, just really tempering their language and really steering away from language of division, particularly exploiting the immigration debate through political lens. I mean, that is just proving to be so toxic. And, I guess then also in relation to the media, more education about Islam, the other cultures and diversifying the media. It tends to be white Anglo-Saxon reportage. The ABC and other places are making a big effort to diversify their work forces and that needs to happen more broadly.

Caroline Fisher: I think in the resilience piece, as well, we do have an example of Jacinta Arden not engaging in a debate or narrative of the type that we have been critiquing, so we have got an example now.

Jacinta Carroll: Yes, absolutely.

Host 2: Thank you so much for your insights and for your wisdom today, and for those pieces of advice that I hope our policy-makers, those who manage our social media platforms and perhaps Mark Zuckerberg are all listening, too. Thank you so much for your time. Jacinta, Anooshe, Caroline, Mathieu, thank you.

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Assoc. Prof O’Neil: Pleasure.

Jacinta: Thank you.

Anusha: Thank you.

Carolyn: Thank you.

[interlude music 0:51:51-0:51:56]

Host 1: Well, welcome back, and thanks once again to our guests. I thought it was a really interesting discussion which covered a huge range of issues that sprang out of countering violent extremism in our communities.

What did you think of that, listeners? Let us know. We are really keen to get your feedback, your questions, your comments, whatever you want to say about the podcast. You can reach us on Twitter, where we are [@APPSPolicyForum](#). You can email us, podcast@policyforum.net or, best option, jump onto Facebook, join the Policy Forum Pod Facebook group – you will just find us as Policy Forum Pod. We would love to hear your thoughts.

If you are all keen to learn more about countering violent extremism or counterterrorism, you might want to check out the National Security College’s Master of National Security Policy. It is a great graduate degree. You can find it at nsc.crawford.anu.edu.au/study, but if a Master sounds like a bit much, you might want to instead have a listen to our fellow podcast, the National Security Podcast. Every couple of weeks, Chris Farnham discusses the hot topics driving national security policy-making, and you can find the pod on iTunes or wherever you get your podcasts from.

Now, at the end of each podcast, we go over some of your questions, your comments, your suggestions, and what I want to do today is actually just take a look at a couple of suggestions for future podcasts, because we are really keen to get your thoughts on the issues that you would like to see us cover on Policy Forum Pod. They are incredibly helpful to us, as well, in the editorial discussions we have and the planning that we do.

A new member on the Facebook podcast group, Sanjoli – hi, Sanjoli, wrote, “I am interested in the India- Pakistan- China relations (...) More broadly, terrorism, nuclear weapons, Indo-Pacific, and gender are some topics I am curious about.” Another new member, Caroline – hello, Caroline, said we should have a look at death, stroke, dying and palliative care, non-paid caring, and access to control over aged care services. Plenty to chew over there. What do you think about those suggestions, Sharon?

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Host 2: Well, as always great suggestions from our listeners. Sanjoli, what a broad range of interests you have, which is excellent. I think that is our typical podcast listener, interested in everything. Sanjoli, keep watching because we may have something really interesting around gender in the next few weeks.

Host 1: Oh, spoiler. Spoiler alert.

Host 2: Spoiler alert. [laughs] Now, we are committed. No, I am not going to say anymore. Keep listening, folks.

Host 1: Oh, come on, you have got to tease a little more than that, Sharon.

Host 2: No, no, no, no, just stay listening. There is a real treat ahead for you. [laughs] Of course, on issues around death, dying, palliative care – I mean, really pressing issues that Caroline raises, there is some really incredible research happening around those issues here, at the ANU. People like Christie Gardiner across, in Law. Yes, great suggestions.

Host 1: I think they would all be good podcasts, so thank you so much, Sanjoli, and Caroline, everyone who has got in contact with us for suggestions.

Now, before we wrap up, I have a very special request to make. In two-weeks' time, we are going to be putting out our 100th episode of Policy Forum Pod. It is a big one for us and we need your help to make it happen. For episode 100 what we are going to do is an 'ask us anything' podcast. It is the very first one we have done of these and it will probably be the last, unless we actually get some questions from you, listeners.

The questions can be absolutely on anything. They can be policy related, they can be specific aspects of a policy, they can be totally non-policy related. If you want to know how Australia should tackle climate change, we will give it a crack for you and give you some suggestions about how to do that, or perhaps you are more interested in whether our presenters, Sharon perhaps, will prefer to fight one horse-sized duck or 1000 duck-sized horses. Whatever your question, however sensible or otherwise, get it in because we are going to pick the best and we are going to put them to our special panel that we are convening for that 100th episode.

As always, get them to us on Twitter, [@APPSPolicyForum](https://twitter.com/APPSPolicyForum), email podcast@policyforum.net or, best option, leave them on the Facebook group, [PolicyForumPod](https://www.facebook.com/PolicyForumPod). It should be really fun. Sharon, can you give us a bit of a hint on the question about whether you would prefer to fight one horse-sized duck or 1000 duck-sized horses? My guess is you are going to battle 1000 tiny horses.

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Host 2: This is a really one for me to answer. I was chased by goose last time I was on fieldwork, in South Sulawesi, so I am not going into battle against any kind of birdlife, but I grew up with horses, so I am going to take those 1000 tiny horses and befriend them.

Host 1: But they want to cause you harm, Sharon. I am not sure--; I know you beg good will towards horses but, in this imaginary scenario, they want to harm you.

Host 2: I am confident I can win them over. [laughs] I will have them listening to the podcast and hitting that fifth star on iTunes before you know it – 1000 tiny horses supporting us. [laughs]

Host 1: You are going to use evidence and analysis to win them over, then.

Host 2: To win those little ponies over, absolutely.

[laughter]

Host 1: Okay, so there is a bit of a clue how Sharon might respond to that question, but what other questions do you have for Sharon, or for me, or for any of the people involved in the podcast, or you want to draw a much broader and talk about a policy issue. We are really keen to get those questions and it should be a fun episode.

That's it for this week. We will be back next week with another Policy Forum Pod but, until then, from me, Martyn Pearce, cheerio.

Host 2: And from me, Sharon Bessell, bye-bye for now.

[closing music 0:58:11-0:58:26]