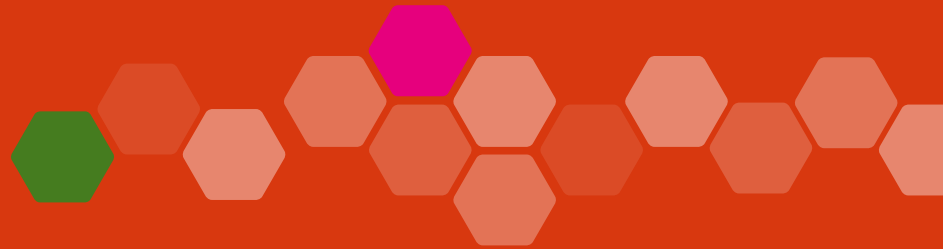


# Understanding extremism in Scotland: Evidence review



**PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES**

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# 1. Introduction

This report reviews evidence on defining extremism and the extent and nature of extremism in Scotland. This section provides an overview of the background to this evidence review and outlines the research aims and questions.

## 1.1. Background

### Prevent policy

The purpose of Prevent is to ‘stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism’ (Home Office, 2018a). While counter-terrorism (and therefore Prevent) is a reserved matter and the responsibility of the UK Government, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015) places a duty on sectors that are devolved from Westminster to the Scottish Government (including local authorities, health and social care, education, prisons, and the police) to pay ‘due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism’. This is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent duty guidance for Scotland (Home Office, 2021a) outlines how specified authorities are expected to comply with this duty. There is sector-specific guidance for further education institutions (Home Office, 2021b) and higher education institutions (Home Office, 2021c).

The Scottish Government supports the specified sectors to fulfil their obligations under the Prevent duty (Home Office, 2021a), and ensures that mechanisms are in place for safeguarding and supporting individuals who may be susceptible to being drawn into terrorism as outlined in the Prevent Multi-Agency Panel (PMAP) Duty Guidance (Home Office, 2021d).

In Scotland, the approach taken to Prevent is tailored to the Scottish context and the specific challenges faced by Scottish communities. Emphasis is placed on early intervention, safeguarding, and the prevention of people from becoming alienated or isolated, with the aim of reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience to extremist narratives.

### Defining extremism

The UK Government currently adopts the following definition of extremism:

‘vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas’. (Home Office, 2011: 107)

This definition was used in the UK Government’s Counter-Extremism Strategy (Home Office, 2015), which set out the UK Government’s approach to countering ‘both violent and non-violent’ extremism. However, counter-extremism is a devolved matter and the Counter-Extremism Strategy and the UK Government’s definition of

extremism were not adopted in Scotland. At present, therefore, the Scottish Government does not have an official definition of extremism.

## **1.2. Research aims and questions**

The aims of this review were:

1. To explore how extremism is defined in the existing evidence base.
2. To enhance understanding of extremism in Scotland, by exploring available research on the extent and nature of extremism in Scotland.

To meet these aims, the review sought to answer the following questions:

1. How is 'extremism' defined in the literature, and to what extent is there a shared understanding of the term in the existing evidence base?
2. What evidence is available in relation to the prevalence of extremism in Scotland, particularly in comparison with the rest of the UK, and what are the strengths and limitations of these sources?
3. What evidence is available in relation to the nature of extremism in Scotland? In particular, what are the most common types of extremism, is this different or similar to the rest of the UK, and has this changed over time?

## **1.3. Report structure**

The next section describes the methodological approach taken to conduct the review. The following sections summarise findings from the evidence with reference to the research questions. The report concludes with a discussion of key findings, gaps in evidence identified and recommendations for further research.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Search strategy

To conduct the review a search strategy was firstly developed, including search terms and tools.

#### Search terms

The search terms were derived from the research questions. A range of preliminary keyword searches were developed, which were tested and refined based on the results of initial searches. The final search terms are detailed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Search terms**

<b>Research question 1: Defining extremism</b>
Extremism + Definition
Extremism + Define
Extremism + Defining
Extremism + Understanding
Extremism + Meaning
What is extremism
What is extremism + Scotland
<b>Research question 2: The prevalence of extremism</b>
Extremism + Scotland / UK
Extremism + Amount + Scotland / UK
Extremism + Level + Scotland / UK
Extremism + Scope + Scotland / UK
Extremism + Extent + Scotland / UK
Extremism + Prevalence + Scotland / UK
Extremism + Scale + Scotland / UK
Extremism + Measure + Scotland / UK
Extremism + Amount
Extremism + Level

Extremism + Scope
Extremism + Extent
Extremism + Prevalence
Extremism + Scale
Extremism + Measure
<b>Research question 3: The nature of extremism</b>
Extremism + Nature + Scotland / UK
Extremism + Types + Scotland / UK
Extremism + Variants + Scotland / UK
Extremism + Threats + Scotland / UK
Extremism + Threat picture + Scotland / UK
Extremism + Threat landscape + Scotland / UK
Extremism + Nature
Extremism + Types
Extremism + Variants
Extremism + Threats
Extremism + Threat picture
Extremism + Threat landscape

## **Search tools**

Three main search tools were used, to maximise the chances of capturing all relevant evidence.

### **Electronic databases**

In the first instance, the search terms were entered into the online search engine KandE. KandE was developed by the Scottish Government Library Service and covers a range of academic and other research databases, which are detailed in Table 2.

**Table 2: KandE Databases**

<b>Search engines</b>
Academic Search Ultimate (asn)
AGRIS (edsagr)
Australian Research Data Commons (edsard)
BioOne Complete (edsbio)
Bloomsbury Collections (edsblc)
British Standards Online (edsbsi)
Business Source Index (bsx)
Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (edschh)
Credo Reference (edscrc)
Credo Reference: Academic Core (edscra)
Criminal Justice Abstracts with Full Text (i3h)
DigitalNZ (edsdnz)
Emerald Insight (edsemr)
ERIC (eric)
FT.com (edsfit)
GreenFILE (8gh)
Military & Government Collection (mth)
New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics Online (edsdeo)
Oxfam Policy & Practice (edsoxf)
Oxford Bibliographies (edsobb)
Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (edsodb)
Oxford Reference (edsoro)
Oxford's Who's Who & Who Was Who (edsoww)
Political Science Complete (poh)

Public Information Online (edspio)
RePEc (edsrep)
SAGE Knowledge (edsskl)
SAGE Research Methods (edsrem)
ScienceDirect (edselp)
Sociology Source Ultimate (sxi)
<b>Journals</b>
Directory of Open Access Journals (edsdoj)
JSTOR Journals (edsjsr)
<b>Books</b>
Books at JSTOR (edsjbk)
eBook Collection (EBSCOhost) (nlebk)
<b>Library services</b>
Biodiversity Heritage Library (edsbhl)
British Library Document Supply Centre Inside Serials & Conference Proceedings (edsbl)
British Library EThOS (edsble)
Canadian Electronic Library (edsce)
E-LIS (Eprints in Library & Information Science) (edseli)
Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (lxh)
<b>Archives</b>
Archive of European Integration (edsupe)

The search terms were also entered into databases which focus specifically on social science, criminal justice and extremism and terrorism-related research, including:

- Sociological Abstracts
- Social Science Abstracts (SocialSciAbs)
- Studies in Conflict & Terrorism
- Terrorism and Political Violence



- Perspectives on Terrorism
- Journal for Deradicalisation
- Security Journal
- Critical Studies on Terrorism

### **Snowballing and hand searches**

A snowballing method was also used, which involved reviewing the reference lists of identified studies in order to identify further potential sources. A series of broader keyword searches were then conducted using Google and Google Scholar, as a sweep of studies that may not have been found in the initial search.

### **Stakeholder assistance**

Finally, stakeholders provided advice on research that had been carried out on this topic in Scotland. The stakeholders included academics and UK Government departments.

## **2.2. Coverage and inclusion and exclusion criteria**

The review concentrated on evidence relating to the research questions, meaning that the focus was on studies seeking to define extremism and explore its extent and nature, particularly in Scotland. Studies that focused on other elements of extremism, such as its impact, risk and protective factors, and the prevention of extremism, were excluded.

To ensure the evidence was current and relevant, the initial time-period specified for the search was between 2012 and mid-2022 (when the review was carried out). However, due to a lack of Scotland-specific evidence identified in the initial search, the time-period was extended to between 2005 and mid-2022. Only evidence that was written or available in English was included. In relation to research questions two and three, Scotland-specific evidence was prioritised, as well as UK-wide studies which included evidence on Scotland. This was reflected in the search terms used to identify evidence for inclusion. However, where relevant to the research questions and available in English, evidence from other countries was also included.

The review focused predominantly on journal articles, books and book chapters, and reports from governments and independent/non-governmental organisations. Grey literature such as conference papers, published theses and other unpublished work was also included. Student papers, dissertations, opinion pieces and news articles were excluded.

Table 3 summarises the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to the selection of the studies.

**Table 3: Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

	<b>In scope</b>	<b>Out of scope</b>
<b>Aim of study</b>	<p>Research seeking to define extremism or review existing definitions</p> <p>Research seeking to explore the prevalence, extent and nature of extremism, particularly in Scotland and the wider UK</p>	<p>Research focusing on other elements of extremism, such its impact, risk and protective factors, and the prevention of extremism (including the impact and effectiveness of Prevent)</p>
<b>Date</b>	2005-2022	Before 2005
<b>Language</b>	Written or available in English	Not written or available in English
<b>Publication format</b>	<p>Journal articles, books/book chapters, government and non-government reports</p> <p>Grey literature such as conference papers and theses</p>	<p>Student papers, dissertations, opinion pieces and news articles</p>

### 2.3. Search results

The initial search for evidence yielded over 3,000 results. The application of the above criteria led to a body of evidence consisting of 128 studies. Details of these studies, including bibliographic and methodological information, can be found in Appendix A.

The majority of the studies were published between 2006 and 2022. One study was included that was published prior to 2005 (Sotlar, 2004), due to the findings being highly relevant to the review. In addition, the report also covers the most recent data on referrals to Prevent in Scotland and England and Wales, which were published in 2023 (Home Office, 2023; Police Scotland, 2023).

Most studies presented evidence from the UK (76), including 27 which presented evidence on Scotland, followed by studies which presented evidence from more than one country (24) and studies from the USA (7)<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The other studies presented evidence from Australia (4), Canada (2), Germany (2), Slovakia (1), Slovenia (1), Spain (1), Sweden (1) and Switzerland (1). For eight studies, the country of focus was not specified.

Other studies which provided relevant contextual information but which were not directly relevant to the research questions are included in the Reference list.

## **2.4. Quality assessment and limitations**

The body of evidence was quality assessed, which involved reviewing the characteristics of the studies and their strengths and limitations. While the evidence identified was generally found to be high in quality, a key issue was the lack of empirically-grounded research. Many studies were theoretically-driven, with strong reliance on data gathered from secondary sources and literature review-based methods. While this was not particularly problematic for the first research question, which focused on exploring how extremism is defined in the literature, it presented challenges in relation to the second and third research questions, which were focused on gaining understanding of the prevalence and nature of extremism in Scotland. This criticism has been noted elsewhere; for example, Schuurman (2018) argues that the lack of primary research and empirical data is an enduring issue in the study of extremism and terrorism, and has hampered the development of new insights in this field.

Additionally, a distinct lack of evidence from Scotland was identified when carrying out the review, with the majority of purportedly UK-wide studies having been undertaken predominantly in England. This presented difficulties given that the focus of the review was on exploring extremism within Scotland, and meant that the conclusions that could be drawn about extremism in Scotland specifically were limited, as will be discussed later in the report.

It is also important to note wider limitations with this review; in particular, the application of a range of inclusion and exclusion criteria mean that while this report covers a range of literature on extremism, it should not be regarded as a comprehensive or definitive account of the evidence. Rather, it constitutes a collation of material relevant to the research questions which could be accessed using available channels. The review is further limited by inherent difficulties in assessing the scale of an issue that is by its nature often covert or hidden, and by the lack of a universally agreed definition of the term extremism, which makes it challenging to measure, as will be discussed in section 4.

## 3. Defining extremism

This section reviews how extremism is defined in the existing evidence base. It firstly outlines some of the challenges with defining extremism, before exploring ways in which authors have sought to categorise different types of definition.

### 3.1. The challenges with defining extremism

Many authors have noted the challenges with defining extremism (e.g., Lowe, 2017; Redgrave et al., 2020; Schmid, 2014; Sotlar, 2004). For example, Sotlar (2004) discusses how various factors can influence the way that extremism is understood, such as the prevailing political culture, value systems and personal characteristics and experiences, making the process of reaching a definition inherently subjective. Wilkinson and van Rij (2019) also discuss how extremism is often conceptualised as a continuum of beliefs and behaviours rather than a discrete phenomenon, which makes it difficult to capture in a concise definition (Wilkinson and van Rij, 2019).

A further difficulty noted in the literature is the sensitive nature of the concept; Redgrave et al. (2020) discuss how defining extremism too broadly risks impeding rights to free speech and protest but defining it too narrowly can lead to elements being overlooked. These conceptual challenges have meant that while a range of definitions of extremism have been proposed, there is a general lack of consensus on how the term should be defined (Bötticher, 2017; Busby, 2022; Lowe, 2017; Martins, 2020; Nasser-Eddine et al., 2013; Redgrave et al., 2020; Saija et al., 2021; Schmid, 2013).

### 3.2. Categorising definitions of extremism

Although no universally accepted definition of extremism exists, attempts have been made to categorise different types of definition (Ford, 2017; Redgrave et al., 2020). For example, Ford (2017) has suggested that there are broadly three types of definition of extremism. The first of these focuses on extremist values, describing values as extremist if they are atypical, unpopular or deviant. In this definition, extremist values are typically viewed as those furthest away from the values usually associated with liberal democracy, 'on the horizons of legitimate political attitudes' (Ford, 2017: 145). Ford (2017) argues that definitions within this category highlight the subjective nature of extremism: 'one person's norm is another's extreme'.

Rather than focusing on extremist values, the second type of definition instead emphasises extremists' lack of openness or receptiveness to the perspectives of others, highlighting the centrality of intolerance to difference. Extremists are conceptualised as closed-minded and absolutist, which is contrasted with the open-mindedness and pluralism central to liberal democracy.

Finally, the third type of definition focuses on the synthesis between extremism and violence. In this definition, extremist ideologies are viewed as synonymous with violence, by inciting adherents to either engage in violence themselves, or to support the violence of others. Ford (2017) suggests that while at times only one of

these definitions is used, often two or even all three types are employed together to define extremism.

As well as these three key conceptual types of definitions, Redgrave et al. (2020) suggest that definitions of extremism also often fall into two categories: those which are descriptive (i.e., seeking to describe or explain what extremism is), and those which are iterative (i.e., listing common features of extremist behaviours or groups). Appendix B contains some definitions of extremism from the evidence identified when carrying out this review, and categorises them according to the groupings presented by Ford (2017) and Redgrave et al. (2020).

### **3.3. Summary**

Extremism has been defined in a variety of ways, and while common features between definitions can often be identified, they can also diverge on important elements. Knight and Keatley (2020) highlight the potential challenges associated with this. For example, when definitions differ, it can be difficult to compare findings from different research studies, because fundamental aspects of the studies depend on the definitions adopted. A related problem is that the term extremism often ends up being used interchangeably with terms such as terrorism and radicalisation, without clear demarcation between the concepts (Ali, 2021; Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011; Onursal and Kirkpatrick, 2019; Torregrosa et al., 2021).

## 4. Exploring the prevalence of extremism in Scotland

The focus of this section will be on exploring what evidence exists in relation to the prevalence of extremism in Scotland, particularly in comparison with the rest of the UK, and the strengths and limitations of available sources. It will firstly outline some of the challenges with measuring extremism which have been discussed in the literature, before demonstrating how authors examining the extent of extremism across the UK have sought to overcome these difficulties through the use of 'proxy' measures. Similar measures that are available for Scotland, as well as additional research exploring the prevalence of intra-Christian sectarianism in Scotland, will then be reviewed. Finally, consideration will be given to where key gaps exist in relation to understanding the prevalence of extremism in Scotland.

### 4.1. The challenges involved in measuring extremism

Authors have noted that as well as being a challenging concept to define, extremism is also difficult to measure (Bartlette and Miller, 2012; Knight and Keatley, 2020; Schuurman, 2018). Bartlette and Miller (2012) argue that this in part stems from the definitional challenges surrounding the study of extremism, as without having a clear conception of what extremism is, it is difficult to determine what to assess. In addition, a lack of availability of relevant data has also been noted. For example, Knight and Keatley (2020) discuss how relevant information is rarely available in the public domain due to its sensitive nature, and note that the processes in place to protect individuals can create obstacles for data sharing between government departments and researchers who have the skills, resources and expertise to study this information.

Knight and Keatley (2020) also argue that where data is available, it often lacks specificity. For example, large datasets exist such as the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and Profiles of Radicalisation in the United States (PIRUS). The GTD is an open-source database including information on global terrorist events from 1970 to 2020, while PIRUS contains deidentified individual-level information on the backgrounds, attributes, and radicalisation processes of over 2,200 extremists in the United States covering 1948-2018. However, these cover a range of different types of extremism (e.g., both violent and non-violent forms, inspired by a range of ideologies), as well as terrorism and radicalisation more broadly, and therefore lack the focus and detail that smaller datasets could provide (Knight and Keatley, 2020).

As noted in the methodology section, a resulting criticism levelled at research in this field is a lack of empirically grounded insight, with most studies relying on secondary sources and literature review-based methods. Schuurman (2018) suggests that research based on primary sources of data are 'the exception rather than the norm'.

## 4.2. Exploring the prevalence of extremism across the UK

As a result of these challenges, authors often rely on a range of ‘proxy’ measures of extremism to estimate its prevalence. An example of this approach is research undertaken by Bellis and Hardcastle (2019) who, in their report exploring the potential of public health approaches to preventing extremism, use various sources to understand the extent of extremism across the UK.

Bellis and Hardcastle (2019) firstly look at trends in terrorist attacks in the UK, using sources such as the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) (Institute of Economics and Peace (IEP), 2018), and data from Europol (2018) and the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) (2012). Key findings from these sources include that the 2018 Global Terrorism Index ranked the UK 28 out of 163 indexed countries in a score that describes the measurable impact of terrorism through attacks, fatalities, injuries and property damage, and that the UK was one of only five countries in Europe that saw an increase in terrorism in 2017 (IEP, 2018).

Bellis and Hardcastle (2019) also look at data on prosecutions for terrorism-related offences in England, Scotland and Wales, showing that there was a record high number of arrests for such offences in 2017, although arrests declined by 31% in the following year (Home Office, 2018b). They then examine the Prevent referral data for England and Wales (Home Office, 2018c), noting that 7,318 individuals were referred to Prevent in England and Wales between April 2017 and March 2018. The number of ‘foreign fighters’ (individuals who have travelled to conflict zones to engage in terrorist acts) from the UK is also examined using estimates from sources such as The Soufan Centre (Barrett, 2017) and the European Parliament (2018), which showed that the UK had been one of the largest sources of foreign fighters in Europe.

Finally, Bellis and Hardcastle (2019) look at public perceptions of extremism, reviewing a range of opinion polls which have explored support for extremist violence (e.g., BMG Research, 2017; YouGov, 2018), perceived security and levels of threat (YouGov, 2017; Ipsos MORI, 2017) among the UK population. They highlight that while these surveys suggest that the majority of the population condemn the use of violence, there is evidence which shows that between a fifth and a quarter of the British public understand why other people may be attracted to radicalism, and that levels of fascism may be increasing in the UK. In addition, they note that high levels of concern are expressed in the surveys about rising levels of extremism and the threat of future terrorist attacks in the UK.

Bellis and Hardcastle (2019) acknowledge the limitations of the sources they use; for example, the GTI overlooks unsuccessful, abandoned or disrupted terrorist attacks or ongoing and planned activity, while the extent to which extremism exists in communities, homes, institutions and other settings remains largely absent from academic literature. However, they argue that in the absence of more robust measures of extremism, data exploring criminal justice involvement and perceptions held by the general public offers at least some insight into the current reach and appeal of extremist ideals in the UK.

A similar approach is adopted by Redgrave et al. (2020) in their report reviewing the UK Government's approach to countering extremism. As with Bellis and Hardcastle (2019), Redgrave et al. (2020: 24) examine trends in terrorist activity in the UK, citing its 'close relationship to extremism'. To do so, they use data from Europol's (2018) European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report, Home Office (2020a) data on the number of individuals arrested for terrorism-related activity in the UK and Police Foundation (2020) data on deaths resulting from terrorism. They argue that this data shows that the most substantial terror threat in the UK is Islamist extremism, but note that there is also a growing threat from right-wing extremism.

Also in line with Bellis and Hardcastle (2019), Redgrave et al. (2020) look at the Prevent referral data for England and Wales (Home Office, 2020b), noting that there was a rise in referrals in the year ending March 2020 compared with the year ending March 2019. They also explore public attitudes data, including findings from a bespoke YouGov (2020a) survey which explored experiences and perceptions of extremism in the UK, as well as British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey and Eurobarometer survey data (NatCen, 2019; European Commission, 2019). Redgrave et al. (2020) argue that this data indicates that extremism is a growing problem in the UK, with key findings from the YouGov poll including that nearly a quarter (24%) of the public had experienced or witnessed extremism, and almost three-fifths (58%) believed that extremist behaviour had increased over the previous four years.

In addition to these sources, Redgrave et al. (2020) look at trends in the number of extremist protests and demonstrations in the UK, showing that attendance at far-right protests in particular had increased over the last decade (Bailey, 2020; 2014; Mulhall, 2019). They also look at estimates of the size of the membership of different groups involved in extremism based on information from the campaign group Hope Not Hate, but note limitations in this approach, including that such groups are not always structured in the manner of traditional membership-based organisations and that many exist entirely online.

Finally, Redgrave et al. (2020) look at trends in hate crime in the UK using police recorded statistics (Home Office, 2019a), the Crime Survey for England and Wales and data held by civil society organisations (Community Security Trust, 2019; Tell Mama, 2019). However, Redgrave et al. (2020) note some difficulties with using hate crime as an indicator of extremism; most significantly, that hate crimes are by no means always perpetrated by individuals with extremist views, whichever definition of extremism is relied upon. They also point to research which suggests that the individuals committing hate crime offences are unlikely to be the same individuals being referred to Prevent (START, 2012). However, Redgrave et al. (2020: 15) argue that in the absence of procedures and tools such as a police mechanism for flagging hate-related incidents and offences as extremist, it is a helpful measure when appropriate caveats are applied, as 'hate crime creates a permissive environment for extremism to flourish'. Overall, Redgrave et al. (2020) contend that the indicators they examine in their report suggest extremism is a growing problem in the UK.



A further report which brings together data available on a variety of proxy indicators to get a sense of the scale of extremism in the UK is that produced by the Commission for Countering Extremism (CCE)<sup>2</sup> (2019). The sources used in this report are in line with many discussed above, including Prevent referral data (Home Office, 2020b) and hate crime data for England and Wales (Home Office, 2019a). However, this report also looks specifically at data on offences involving ‘stirring up’ hatred based on race, religion or sexual orientation in England and Wales (Crown Prosecution Service, 2019). Estimates of social media sanctions are also explored, including YouTube channels removed for being hateful or abusive, content removed by Facebook for hateful speech, and accounts penalised by Twitter for hate conduct (CCE, 2019). The CCE (2019) argue that the measures they examine show that ‘hateful extremism’ is increasing in the UK.

### **4.3. Exploring the prevalence of extremism in Scotland**

The above examples demonstrate how studies exploring the prevalence of extremism in the UK as a whole have typically brought together a range of sources to provide a broad understanding of its scale. The limitations of this approach, including the use of particular sources as proxy measures for extremism, are acknowledged.

The focus of the majority of studies identified was to assess the scale of extremism across the UK, and while some included data from Scotland (e.g., Bellis and Hardcastle (2019) look at arrests for terrorism-related offences in England, Scotland and Wales), more commonly the sources examined relate to England and Wales specifically. For example, discussion of the Prevent referrals in the reports produced by Bellis and Hardcastle (2019) and Redgrave et al. (2020) is focused on the England and Wales data published by the Home Office, and does not cover the Scotland data published annually by Police Scotland<sup>3</sup>.

Little research was identified for this review which focused exclusively on the extent of extremism in Scotland. However, many of the sources examined by Bellis and Hardcastle (2019), Redgrave et al. (2020) and the CCE (2019) to determine the prevalence of extremism in the UK include Scotland-specific data. The remainder of this section will therefore review these sources as well as additional evidence identified which explores the prevalence of sectarianism in Scotland, an issue which has been linked with extremism in the literature (Baker, 2017).

#### **Terrorist activity**

Firstly, the GTD can be examined. The GTD (2022) has a broad definition of terrorism that is wider than the legal definition of terrorism in the UK Terrorism Act 2000, covering ‘the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear,

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<sup>2</sup> The CCE is a non-statutory expert committee of the Home Office which was established by the UK Government in 2018.

<sup>3</sup> [Police Scotland Prevent Referral Data](#)

coercion, or intimidation'<sup>4</sup>. According to the GTD (2022) there were 5,513 incidents of terrorism in the UK between 1970-2020, 28 (<1%) of which took place in Scotland. The most prominent of these include the Lockerbie Bombing incident in 1988, when 270 people died after a Pan Am Passenger airline exploded over Lockerbie, and the incident at Glasgow Airport in 2007, when two individuals drove a jeep loaded with propane canisters into the glass doors of the terminal.

More recently, the GTD also includes the murder of Asad Shah, an Ahmadiyya Muslim shopkeeper who was attacked in Glasgow in 2016 by Tanveer Ahmed (a Sunni Muslim) because of his religious views. Though included in the GTD, Ahmed was charged and convicted of murder, not a Terrorism Act 2000 offence. The GTD also includes less high-profile incidents, such as when an explosive device was discovered and safely detonated in Edinburgh in 2018. An individual claimed responsibility for the device on an 'eco-terrorism' website, and identified as a member of the International Terrorist Mafia<sup>5</sup>. The vast majority of the other UK terrorist incidents over this period took place in Northern Ireland (4,705; 85%), while 759 (14%) took place in England and 21 (<1%) took place in Wales. Excluding incidents that took place in Northern Ireland, of the 808 incidents 94% took place in England, 3% took place in Scotland and 3% took place in Wales.

There is also evidence to suggest that the number of individuals who have travelled to engage in terrorism in other countries from Scotland is lower than other parts of the UK. It has been estimated that at least 850 British citizens have travelled to Iraq and Syria as 'foreign fighters' (Barrett, 2017, cited in Bellis and Hardcastle, 2019), but only two of these individuals travelled from Scotland specifically<sup>6,7</sup>.

The Home Office publishes annual reports on arrests and prosecutions for terrorism-related offences in the UK. Although this includes data from Scotland no breakdowns by region are provided, meaning that the source cannot be used to look at arrests and prosecutions for terrorism-related offences in Scotland specifically, or to draw comparisons between Scotland and the rest of the UK. Overall, however, the above sources provide evidence which indicates that levels of terrorism may be lower in Scotland than in other parts of the UK, particularly England and Northern Ireland.

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<sup>4</sup> In practice this means in order to consider an incident for inclusion in the GTD, all three of the following attributes must be present: (1) the incident must be intentional, i.e. the result of a conscious calculation on the part of a perpetrator; (2) the incident must entail some level of violence or immediate threat of violence; including property violence as well as violence against people; (3) the perpetrators of the incidents must be subnational actors (meaning the database does not include acts of state terrorism).

<sup>5</sup> [Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service](#)

<sup>6</sup> [BBC](#)

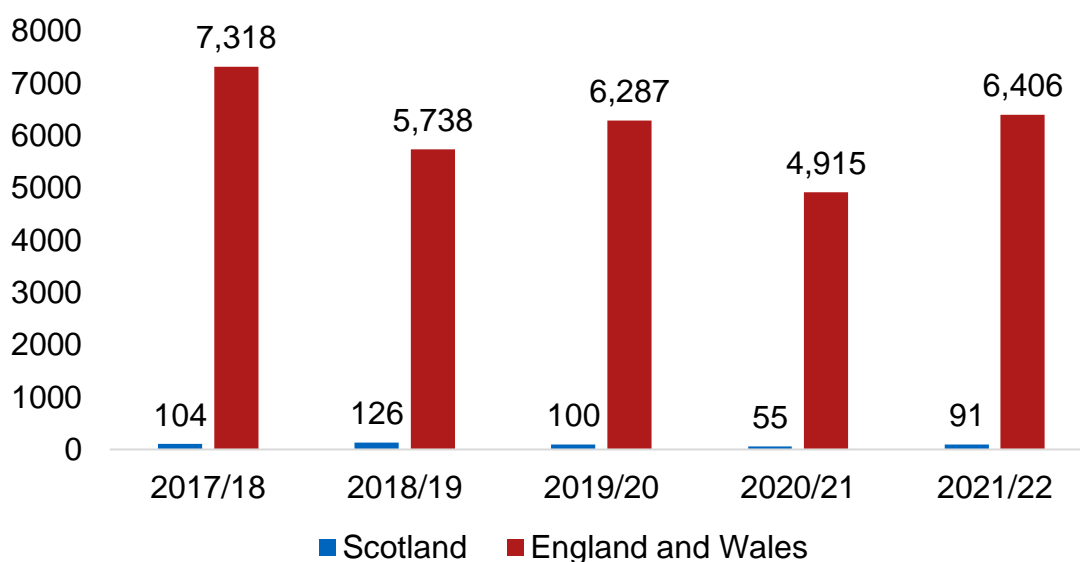
<sup>7</sup> [Counter-extremism Project](#)

## Prevent referral data

A further source which can be used to explore the prevalence of extremism in Scotland is the Prevent referral data. In Scotland, Police Scotland takes initial receipt of referrals to Prevent and thereafter coordinates a multi-agency response to safeguard the individual concerned (Police Scotland, 2023). As noted above the Scotland data is published annually by Police Scotland<sup>8</sup>. The England and Wales data is published annually by the Home Office, typically on the same date<sup>9</sup>.

Figure 1 shows the total number of referrals in Scotland since 2017/18 compared with the total number of referrals in England and Wales, and shows that over this period there have been far fewer referrals made to Prevent in Scotland<sup>10</sup>. In the most recent year for which data is available (April 2021-March 2022) there were 91 referrals to Prevent in Scotland (Police Scotland, 2023) compared with 6,406 in England and Wales (Home Office, 2023).

**Figure 1. Total number of referrals to Prevent since 2017/18, Scotland and England and Wales**



Source: Police Scotland (2023), Home Office (2023)

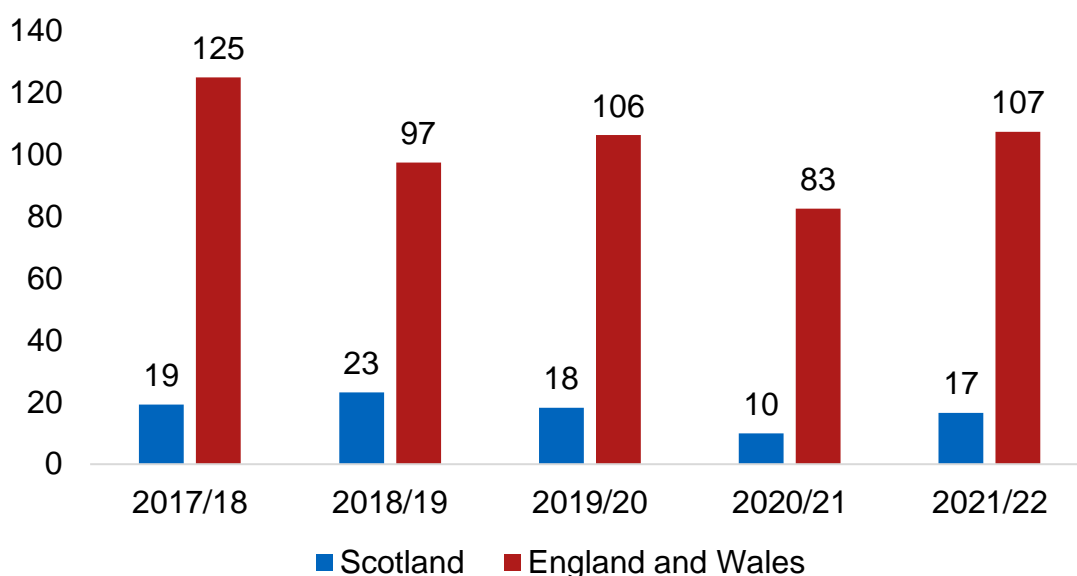
While the population of Scotland is significantly smaller than the combined population of England and Wales, Figure 2 shows referrals per million of the population in Scotland compared with England and Wales, and demonstrates that referrals also remain lower in Scotland when population size is taken into account.

<sup>8</sup> [Police Scotland Prevent Referral Data](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Home Office Prevent Referral Data](#)

<sup>10</sup> There were decreases in total referral numbers in both Scotland and England and Wales during the 2020/21 reporting year, which is likely to have been driven by the effects of the public health restrictions that were in place throughout the year to control the spread of COVID-19, as many sectors were closed or only partially open during periods of lockdown.

**Figure 2. Total referrals to Prevent per million of the population since 2017/18, Scotland and England and Wales<sup>11</sup>**

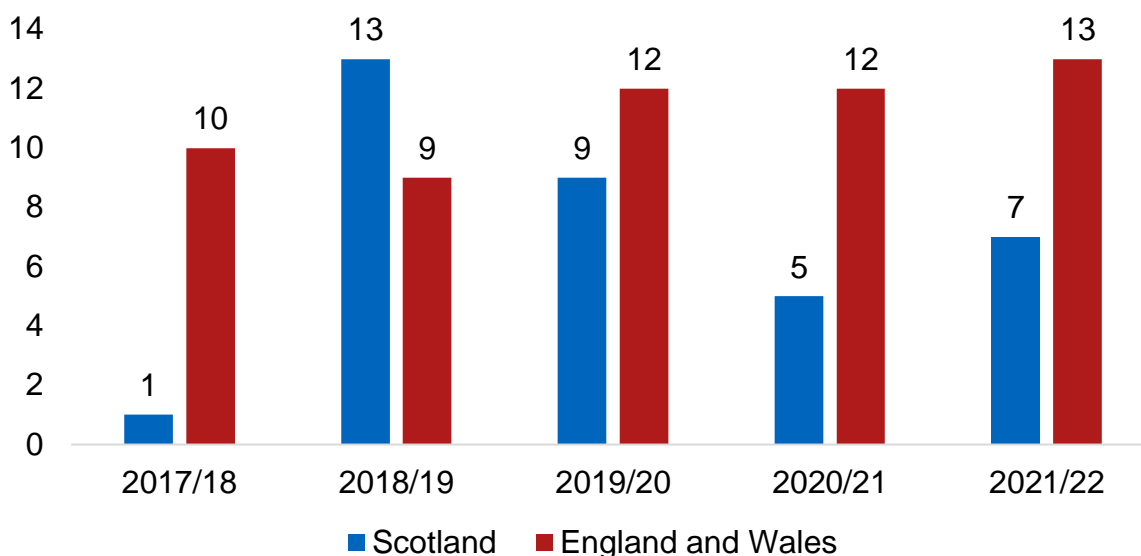


Source: Police Scotland (2023), Home Office (2023)

However, although the total number of referrals to Prevent is lower in Scotland than in England and Wales, there are some similarities in the data. Figure 3 compares the number of referrals identified as suitable for Prevent per million of the population in Scotland and England and Wales since 2017/18. In Scotland, 'suitable for Prevent' refers to an individual being identified as suitable for the Prevent Multi-Agency Panel (PMAP) process, which involves using a multi-agency approach to assess the nature and extent of an individual's vulnerability and develop an appropriate support plan. This process is called 'Channel' in England and Wales. The figure shows that the number of referrals identified as suitable for Prevent relative to population size in Scotland and in England and Wales have been more comparable than total referrals, particularly in 2018/19 and 2019/20. This is because a lower proportion of referrals are identified as suitable for Prevent in England and Wales than in Scotland.

<sup>11</sup> Based on [NRS mid-year Population Estimates Scotland](#) and [ONS Population Estimates for England and Wales](#) for each year in question.

**Figure 3. Referrals suitable for Prevent per million of the population since 2017/18, Scotland and England and Wales**



Source: Police Scotland (2023), Home Office (2023)

There are also similarities in the demographic characteristics of those referred to Prevent in Scotland and in England and Wales. In particular, the vast majority of those referred to Prevent in both Scotland and England and Wales are typically male, and the largest proportion of those referred tend to be aged between 15-20. There have also been similarities in the types of concern for which individuals have been referred to Prevent in Scotland and England and Wales in recent years, which will be covered in section 5 (exploring the nature of extremism in Scotland). Finally, the highest proportion of referrals typically come from the education sector and the police in both Scotland and England and Wales.

The Prevent referral data has limitations in relation to its use as a measure of the prevalence of extremism. In particular, the data only reflect individuals who have been brought to the attention of authorities through the referral system. There are a range of reasons why individuals who are susceptible to radicalisation might not be identified, for example due to individuals keeping their extremist views hidden. It is also important to note that not all individuals referred to Prevent are ultimately assessed as being vulnerable to radicalisation, with many signposted to other services or referred to other sectors for different forms of support, which should be borne in mind when considering figures relating to all referrals rather than just those who are deemed suitable for Prevent. The proportion of referrals not suitable for Prevent (either requiring no further action or being referred onwards) has broadly risen over time, from 44% in 2018/19 to 58% in 2021/22.

Thorton and Bouhana (2019) have also carried out research in England which suggested that thresholds for referrals are inherently discretionary and differ between local authorities, meaning that trends in the Prevent data may not reflect differences across the wider population. Caution must also be exercised when comparing the Scotland and England and Wales figures due to potential differences in reporting, recording and data management practices.

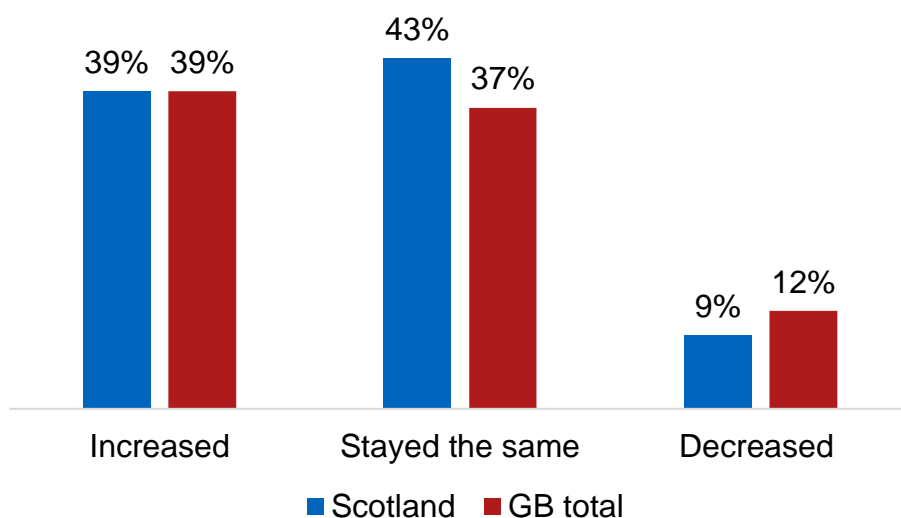
However, the data provides relevant insights, and show that while the total number of referrals is lower in Scotland than in England and Wales, the number of referrals relative to population size that are suitable for Prevent are more comparable. There are also similar patterns in the demographic characteristics of individuals referred between Scotland and England and Wales.

### Public attitudes data

While some of the public attitudes surveys cited by Bellis and Hardcastle (2019), Redgrave et al. (2020) and the CCE (2019) focus specifically on England and Wales (e.g., YouGov, 2020), others are Britain-wide, and therefore include a small number of respondents from Scotland. The data can therefore be explored in further depth to gain some insight into views on the threat of extremism in Scotland.

For example, a biennial poll conducted by YouGov looks at perceptions of the threat from terrorism in Britain over time, which Bellis and Hardcastle (2019) examine in their report. Figure 4 shows that in August 2022, almost two-fifths (39%) of respondents in Scotland thought the threat of terrorism in Britain had increased in the last five years, while over two-fifths (43%) thought it had stayed the same and one-tenth (9%) thought it had decreased (YouGov, 2022). These figures were similar to those for Britain as a whole, where almost two-fifths of respondents thought the threat had increased (39%), a comparable proportion felt the threat had stayed the same (37%), and just over one-tenth (12%) thought it had decreased (YouGov, 2022).

**Figure 4. In the last five years, do you think the threat of terrorism in Britain has...**



Source: YouGov (2022)

Base: Scotland (151), GB total (1759)

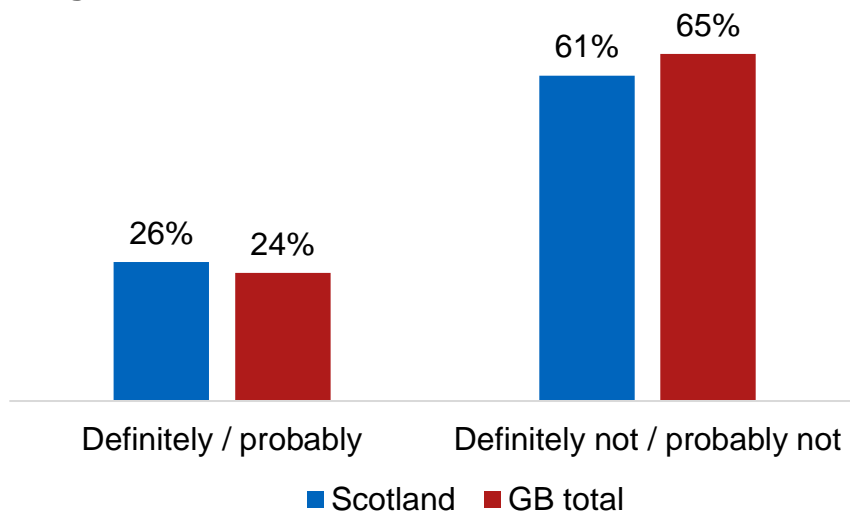
Looking at breakdowns by region in existing polls can therefore provide an insight into whether attitudes to terrorism and extremism in Scotland are in line with attitudes across Britain. However, no polls were identified which focused on issues more pertinent to the current evidence review, such as perceptions of the threat of extremism rather than terrorism, and personal experiences of extremism. Further,

existing polls focus on views about Britain as a whole, meaning there is no scope to look at perceptions of the threat of terrorism and extremism in Scotland specifically. Additional caveats to note include that the Scotland sample in these polls is often very small, making it difficult to draw robust conclusions. Small sample sizes in Scotland also preclude more in-depth demographic breakdowns, for example by age or gender.

There is some attitudinal data available from the British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey, which overcomes some of the limitations associated with polls because it employs random probability sampling techniques and has a larger sample size than a typical poll (around 3000-4000 respondents, including 300-400 in Scotland).

Several questions on extremism have been included in the BSA survey. Most recently, in 2018 the survey asked respondents about their opinions on extremists holding public meetings and expressing their views on the internet or social media. As shown in Figures 5 and 6<sup>12</sup>, views on these issues were broadly comparable between Scotland and Britain as a whole, with most respondents believing that religious extremists should not be allowed to hold public meetings or publish their views on the internet or social media.

**Figure 5. Views on whether religious extremists should be allowed to hold public meetings**

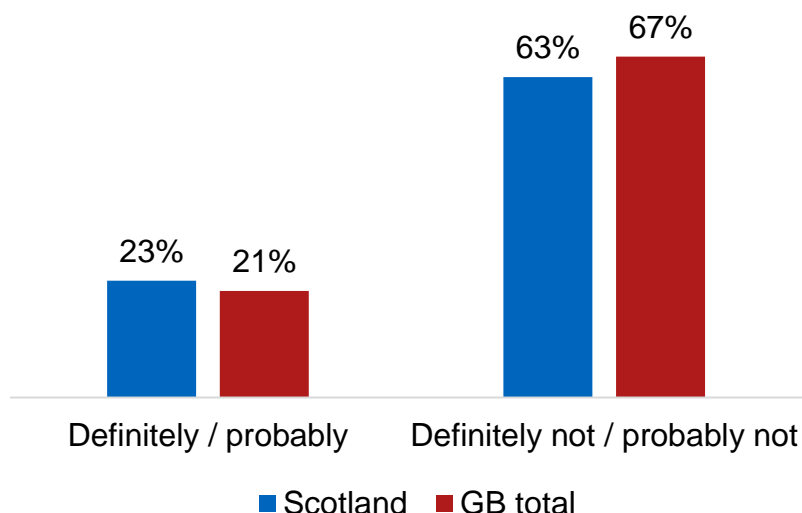


Source: BSA, 2018

Base: Scotland (135), GB total (1552)

<sup>12</sup> Percentages do not total 100 due to the exclusion of those who responded 'don't know' or refused to answer.

**Figure 6. Views on whether religious extremists should be allowed to publish their views on the Internet or social media**



Source: BSA, 2018

Base: Scotland (135), GB total (1552)

However, although BSA's sample size is bigger than the typical Scotland sample size in polls, it is still too small to undertake reliable subgroup analysis or to draw robust comparisons between Scotland and Britain as a whole. The BSA sample in Scotland also does not include any respondents in the Highlands and Islands. Further, while the issues covered in BSA are relevant to wider issues around extremism, they do not offer significant insight into the research questions being addressed by the present evidence review. Nonetheless, a tentative conclusion that can be drawn from the surveys examined is that perceptions of extremism and terrorism may be similar in Scotland to other parts of Britain.

## Hate crime

An additional source of data that can be explored is that relating to hate crime. While the limitations of using hate crime as a proxy indicator for extremism are highlighted above, authors have argued that the two issues are closely related (Mills et al., 2015). For example, Mills et al. (2015) note that both hate crime and extremism can involve acts of violence and the targeting of individuals based on their perceived group membership.

A range of evidence is available in relation to hate crime in Scotland. In 2021 the Scottish Government published a study into the characteristics of hate crime in Scotland using police-recorded data. In this report, hate crime is defined as 'any crime which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated (wholly or partly) by malice and ill-will towards a social group' (Scottish Government, 2021a: 6). In Scotland, the law recognises hate crimes as crimes motivated by prejudice based on disability, race, religion, sexual orientation and transgender identity.

Limitations with police-recorded crime data are noted. For example, there are a range of factors that could influence the number of hate crimes recorded by the



police, such as public reporting practices and attitudes to certain types of behaviour, which can change over time. Under-reporting of hate crime is also an issue, as different groups in society may be less likely to report hate crime to the police than others. These limitations mean that analysis of hate crime data can only inform us about the characteristics of hate crime that is reported to the police in Scotland, rather than the characteristics of all hate crime. Nonetheless, the report provides relevant insights into trends in police recorded hate crime in Scotland.

The report showed that in 2019/20, the police recorded 6,448 hate crimes in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2021a). Over three-fifths (62%) of those crimes included a race aggravator, 20% a sexual orientation aggravator, 8% a religion aggravator, 4% a disability aggravator and 1% a transgender identity aggravator. The remaining 5% had multiple hate aggravators. In contrast to England and Wales, where hate crime recorded by the police has increased over time (with the 105,090 recorded hate crimes in 2019/20 representing an increase of 8 per cent compared with 2018/19 (97,446) (Home Office, 2020c, cited in Redgrave et al., 2020), the number of hate crimes recorded annually by the police in Scotland has remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 6,300 and 7,000 (to the nearest 100) since 2014/15 (Scottish Government, 2021a).

The research also involved reviewing a random sample of hate crime recorded by the police in 2018-19 in greater depth, to provide more detailed information on the nature and characteristics of police-recorded hate crime in Scotland. Key findings include the observation that almost two-thirds (64%) of race-aggravated hate crimes had a victim from a visible minority ethnic (non-white) group, including 18% which had a victim of Pakistani ethnicity and 17% which had a victim of African, Caribbean or Black ethnicity. Further, in around two-fifths (42%) of religion-aggravated hate crimes the perpetrator showed prejudice towards the Catholic community; in a quarter (26%) of such crimes prejudice was shown towards the Muslim community; and in one in ten (12%) cases prejudice was towards the Protestant community. In the majority (94%) of sexual-orientation aggravated hate crimes the perpetrator showed prejudice towards the gay and lesbian community.

Further information on hate crime in Scotland is provided by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), who recently published details of hate crimes reported to COPFS in Scotland in 2021-22 (COPFS, 2022). The report covers crimes aggravated by race, religion, disability, sexual orientation and transgender identity. It showed that in 2021-22, the number of charges reported containing at least one element of hate crime was 5,640 in 2021-22, marginally less (-0.2%) than the 5,654 charges reported in 2020-21. Racial-aggravated crime was the most commonly reported hate crime, followed by sexual orientation-aggravated crime. There was a decrease in the number of charges reported to COPFS in 2021-22 compared to 2020-21 for race- and religion-aggravated hate crime, while sexual orientation-, disability- and transgender identity-aggravated hate crime charges saw an increase.

Finally, the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS), an annual survey which asks people about their experiences and perceptions of crime in Scotland, also provides insight into trends in hate crime in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2021b).

Although the SCJS does not ask directly about hate crime, at the most recent survey wave (2019/20) respondents who had experienced violent crime were asked if they believed the incident was, or might have been, motivated by a range of factors, including their ethnic origin/race, religion, sectarianism, gender/gender identity or perception of this, any disability/condition they have, sexual orientation, age, and pregnancy/maternity or perception of this. Over one in ten (12%) respondents believed an incident of violent crime they experienced was motivated by at least one of these factors, with the largest proportion (5%) believing it was motivated by their ethnic origin/race.

The above sources therefore show that while the number of hate crimes recorded by the police has stayed relatively stable since 2014/15, and there has recently been a marginal decrease in overall hate crime charges, hate crime remains a prominent issue in Scotland, with racially aggravated hate crimes the most common.

### **Research on sectarianism**

A final source of evidence which can be explored in relation to the prevalence of extremism in Scotland is that relating to intra-Christian sectarianism. An Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland was set up by the Scottish Government in 2012, to provide Scottish Ministers with impartial advice on how to develop and assess work to tackle intra-Christian sectarianism in Scotland. The Advisory Group defined sectarianism as:

‘...a mixture of perceptions, attitudes, actions, and structures that involves overlooking, excluding, discriminating against or being abusive or violent towards others on the basis of their perceived Christian denominational background. This perception is always mixed with other factors such as, but not confined to, politics, football allegiance and national identity’. (Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism, 2015: 24)

As this definition emphasises, sectarianism is a complex phenomenon that covers a range of beliefs, behaviours and attitudes, some of which may be understood as forms of prejudice, discrimination and hatred. However, particular beliefs, attitudes and behaviours associated with sectarianism may also overlap with important elements of extremism, especially with regard to abuse or violence towards others on the basis of religious differences (Baker, 2017). Exploration of what existing research can tell us about sectarianism in Scotland therefore has relevance to the current evidence review.

A key aim of the Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism was to develop a body of empirical evidence on the nature, extent and impact of sectarianism in Scotland. The Advisory Group oversaw a range of research, including: a literature review, which examined existing evidence as well as undertaking analysis of the 2011 census, the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) and the SCJS (Scottish Government, 2013; 2015); a nationally-representative survey to collect information on public attitudes towards sectarianism (Hinchliffe et al., 2015); qualitative research in communities where sectarianism was perceived to exist, either currently

or in the past (Scottish Government, 2016); and research into the community impact of public processions (Hamilton-Smith et al., 2015). In addition, further research on marches, parades and static demonstrations in Scotland has been carried out (Rosie, 2016), as well as survey research exploring the use of sectarian language on social media (Action on Sectarianism, 2017).

In 2015, the Advisory Group drew some key conclusions from the evidence base. Most significantly, they noted that there is evidence to indicate that pockets of sectarianism exist in Scotland, with the more violent and extreme forms concentrated in particular districts, towns and regions, in more impoverished areas, and in certain industries and workplaces. However, the Advisory Group (2015) also highlighted that while a substantial body of evidence corroborates the perception that sectarianism is widespread and a real problem in Scotland, only a minority of people in Scotland appear to have been directly affected by it, and many have either not experienced sectarianism or can avoid it. The Advisory Group (2015) note that key gaps in our understanding of sectarianism in Scotland remain, particularly in relation to its form, character and extent, and highlight that a major challenge in the examination of sectarianism is the common recourse to 'anecdote and assumption' rather than robust research findings.

#### **4.4. Summary**

There are a range of sources which can be used to explore the extent of extremism in Scotland, including data relating to terrorist activity, Prevent referrals, public attitudes, hate crime and intra-Christian sectarianism. A tentative conclusion that can be drawn from this evidence is that the threat posed by extremism may look different in Scotland to other parts of the UK. For example, there appear to be lower levels of terrorism in Scotland, while Scotland faces unique challenges relating to sectarianism. Numbers of referrals to Prevent in Scotland are also lower, though there are similarities between the Scotland and England and Wales data, such as the demographic characteristics of those typically referred. However, while these sources provide relevant contextual information about issues closely related to extremism, a central issue with the material reviewed is that it does not look at the prevalence of extremism specifically, meaning evidence gaps remain.

Furthermore, a notable gap in the evidence relates to how recent crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and cost of living crisis, may have had an impact on the nature and prevalence of extremism in Scotland. Recent research has shown that some extremists have attempted to weaponise and exploit COVID-19, by using it as a means of spreading their ideologies through disinformation and conspiracy theories (Chapelan, 2021; Davies, 2021). However, no evidence exploring these trends in Scotland was identified for this review.

## **5. Exploring the nature of extremism in Scotland**

The focus of this section will be on exploring what evidence is available in relation to the nature of extremism in Scotland, including the most common forms of extremism, how this compares with the rest of the UK, and whether this has changed over time. It will firstly outline some of the challenges with measuring the nature of extremism, before exploring what existing data sources can inform us about the types of extremism that exist in Scotland and their prevalence, as well as the strengths and limitations of these sources. The section will conclude by considering where key gaps remain in relation to our understanding of the nature of extremism in Scotland.

### **5.1. Measuring the nature of extremism**

The previous section demonstrated the challenges associated with measuring extremism, rising from the lack of consensus around the definition of the term, as well as a lack of availability of relevant data. This lack of consensus around definitions also presents difficulties when studying different types of extremism and their prevalence. Knight and Keatley (2020) give the example of three studies which sought to examine instances of lone actor terrorism in the UK, US and Europe over a similar timeframe. Due to different interpretations of what is meant by the term 'lone', as well as other parameters such as the nationality of the individuals and the threshold required for an event or incident to be considered 'terrorist', the sample sizes varied significantly between the three studies, hindering their comparability.

Knight and Keatley (2020) note that further difficulties arise when attempting to study the nature of extremism due to the small population of cases to study. For example, researchers seeking data to compare violent versus non-violent extremists, acting alone versus as part of a group, operating only in the UK, found only seven non-violent lone actors to include in their sample, meaning that the generalisability of their results was limited (Knight et al., 2017).

### **5.2. Exploring the nature of extremism in Scotland**

Few papers were identified for this review that presented evidence relating to the nature of extremism in Scotland specifically. However, the sources reviewed in the previous section – including data relating to terrorist activity, the Prevent referral data, public attitudes data and research on intra-Christian sectarianism – provide relevant insights. In addition, a small body of work was identified which explores potential reasons why there appears to be less Islamist extremism in Scotland than in other parts of the UK, as well as some work exploring the reach of particular right-wing extremist groups in Scotland. The remainder of this section will therefore examine what findings from these sources suggest about extremism in Scotland.

## Terrorist activity

The review identified a small number of sources focusing on the reach and impact of different forms of terrorism. This work mostly focused on the UK as a whole, the US, Eastern Europe, or Western countries more broadly (Alaimo, 2020; Collins, 2021; Doering et al., 2020; Knight et al., 2017; Michalski, 2019; Tin et al., 2022). For example, Michalski (2019) examined 8,000 terrorist attacks that had taken place in the UK and the USA between 1970 and 2017 using the GTD and classified them in terms of their ideological orientation and degree of lethality.

Michalski (2019) found that eight main categories of group could be identified from the incidents which had taken place in the UK and the USA. He classified these as: (1) animal rights or environmentalists; (2) nationalists or separatists; (3) leftists or Marxist groups; (4) protest groups opposing government policies, along with those designated as anarchists or anti-government agitators; (5) radical Islamist extremists; (6) right-wing religious extremists, racists, or hate groups; (7) anti-abortionists; and (8) promoters of sectarian violence. Michalski (2019) demonstrated that between 1970-2017 terrorism in the UK was largely driven by sectarian violence, with 92% of terrorist incidents linked to this category. However, Michalski (2019) also noted that in recent years there has been a shift in the predominance of particular types of terrorism, including an increase in Islamist and extreme right-wing attacks.

It is possible to examine instances of terrorist activity which have taken place in Scotland using Michalski's (2019) system of categorisation. As discussed in the previous section, according to the GTD (2022), 28 incidents of terrorism took place in Scotland between 1970-2020. Using Michalski's (2019) groupings, 4 (14%) of these were associated with nationalist or separatist groups, 4 (14%) were associated with sectarian violence, 2 (7%) were associated with right-wing religious extremists, racists or hate groups, 2 (7%) were associated with the radical Islamist extremist category, and 2 (7%) were associated with animal rights or environmentalist groups. In addition, 2 (7%) were associated with conspiracy theory extremists. For the remaining 12 (43%)<sup>13</sup> the ideology underpinning the incidents is unknown.

It therefore appears that of the groups Michalski (2019) discusses, those pursuing a nationalist or separatist ideology and promoters of sectarian violence have posed the biggest threat in Scotland since 1970, which differs to the picture across the UK. However, the small number of incidents that have taken place in Scotland over this period, and the fact that for most the underpinning ideology is unknown, mean that the inferences that can be drawn from this information are limited. Further, limitations of the GTD that were highlighted in the previous section remain relevant here, notably that this dataset does not cover unsuccessful, abandoned or disrupted terrorist attacks or ongoing and planned activity, and that it focuses on terror incidents rather than extremism more broadly.

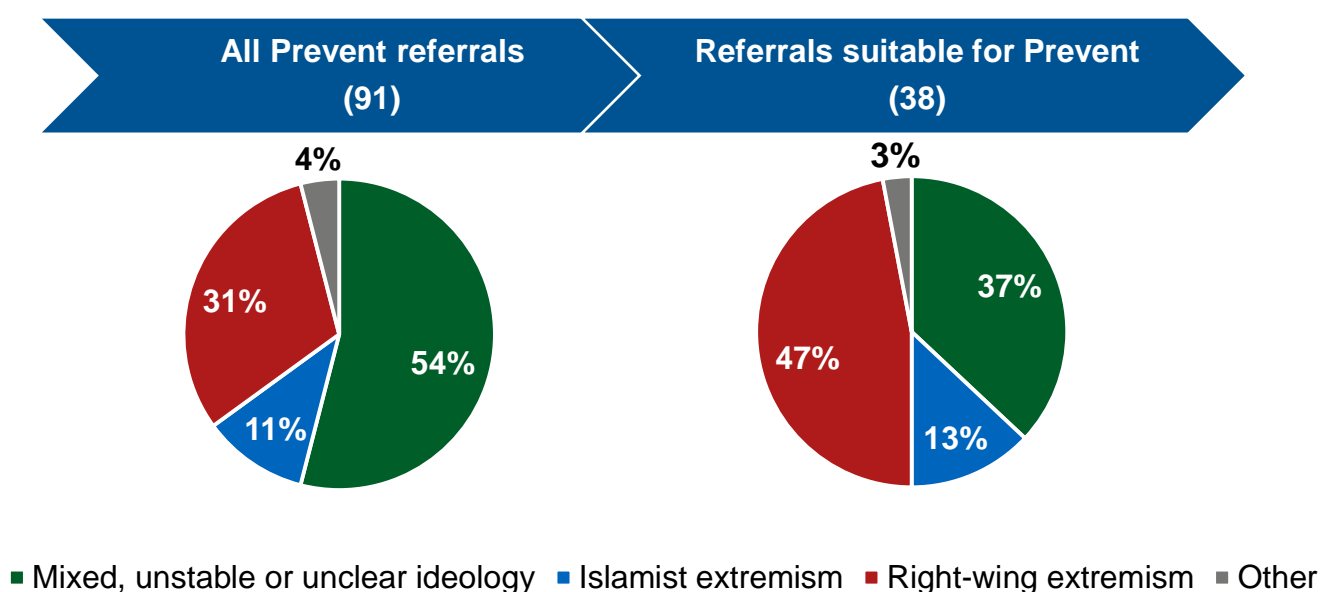
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<sup>13</sup> Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

## Prevent referral data

The Prevent referral data provides some insight into the nature of extremism in Scotland. In Scotland, referrals to Prevent are currently grouped into four categories: right-wing extremism, Islamist extremism, a mixed, unstable or unclear ideology<sup>14</sup>, and Islamist extremism. As noted in the previous section, in 2021/22 91 individuals were referred to Prevent in Scotland (Police Scotland, 2023). Figure 7 shows that of these 91 referrals the largest proportion were for concerns related to a mixed, unclear or unstable ideology (54%), followed by referrals related to right-wing extremism (31%). Of referrals identified as suitable for Prevent<sup>15</sup> (38), those related to right-wing extremism accounted for the largest proportion (47%).

**Figure 7. Type of concern for all Prevent cases and for cases suitable for Prevent in Scotland, 2021/22**



Source: Police Scotland (2023)

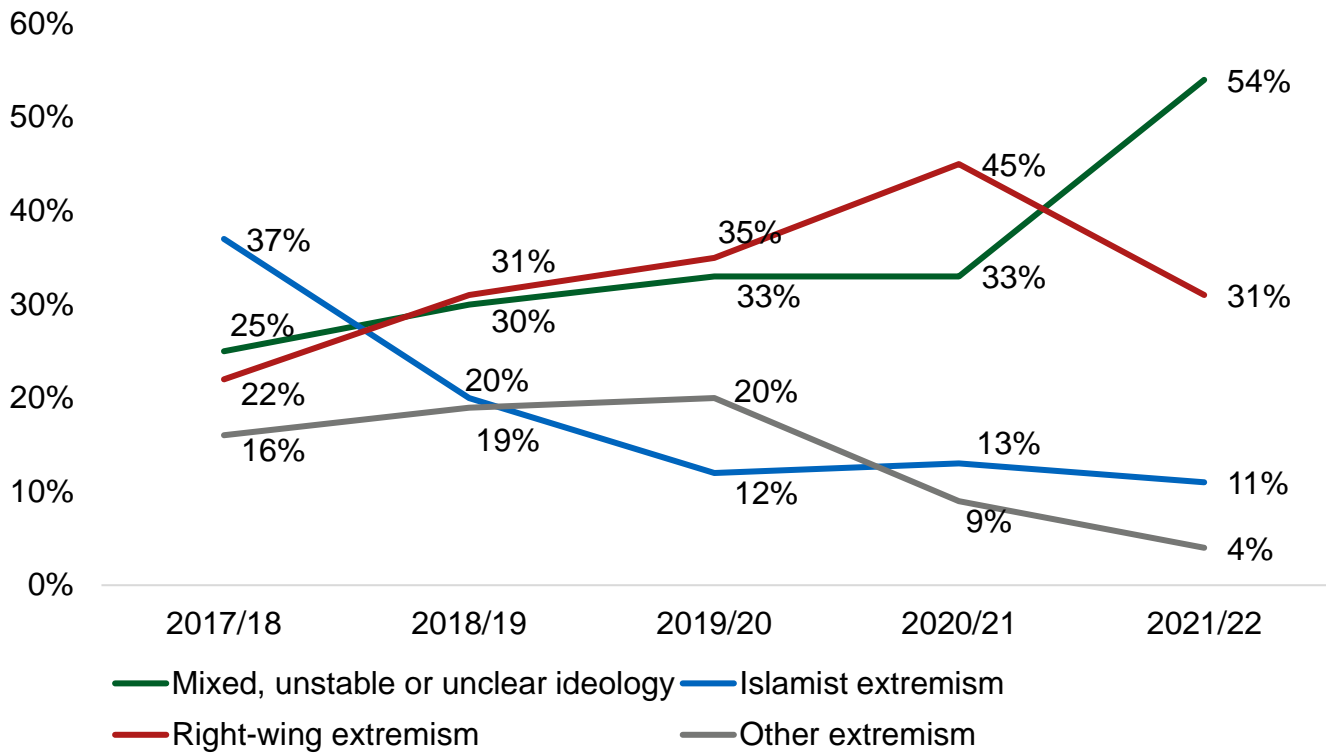
Figure 8 shows that since 2017/18, the proportion of referrals relating to a mixed, unstable or unclear ideology has risen from a quarter (25%) to more than half (54%) in 2021/22. This includes a steep increase of 21 percentage points between 2020/21 and 2021/22. The proportion of referrals relating to right-wing extremism rose from over a fifth (22%) in 2017/18 to 45% in 2020/21, before falling to under a third (31%) in 2021/22. The proportion of referrals relating to Islamist extremism fell between 2017/18 and 2019/20 (from 37% to 12%) and has remained broadly stable

<sup>14</sup> The mixed, unclear and unstable category reflects instances an ideology includes a combination of elements from multiple ideologies (mixed), shifts between different ideologies (unstable), or where the individual does not present a coherent ideology yet may still pose a terrorism risk (unclear).

<sup>15</sup> In Scotland, suitable for Prevent refers to an individual being identified as suitable for the Prevent Multi-Agency Panel (PMAP) process, which involves using a multi-agency approach to assess the nature and extent of an individual's vulnerability and develop an appropriate support plan. This process is called 'Channel' in England and Wales.

since. Having risen slightly from 16% in 2017/18 to 20% in 2019/20, the proportion of referrals relating to other types of extremism has since fallen to 4%.

**Figure 8. Type of concern for referrals to Prevent in Scotland, years ending March 2018 to 2022**



Source: Police Scotland (2023)

Given that the Home Office publishes equivalent data on referrals to Prevent in England and Wales, comparing the Scotland data with the England and Wales data provides some indication of how comparable the nature of extremism may be between Scotland and elsewhere in the UK, although as noted in the previous section, caution must be exercised when using the Prevent data as a measure of extremism, and when drawing comparisons between the Scotland and England and Wales data due to different data management practices. In particular, it is possible that types of extremism could be coded differently by Police Scotland and the Home Office, especially in relation to the ‘other’ and ‘mixed, unclear or unstable’ groupings. In addition, since 2017/18 there have been changes in Police Scotland recording processes in relation to the ‘other’ and ‘mixed, unstable or unclear’ groupings, meaning that trends in the data should be interpreted with caution.

Nevertheless, comparing the data suggests that there may be some similarities in the trends relating to the types of concern for which individuals are referred to Prevent between Scotland and England and Wales. In particular, Figures 8 and 9 show that in both Scotland and England and Wales the proportion of individuals referred for concerns relating to a mixed, unstable or unclear ideology has risen over time, although this has increased at a faster rate in England and Wales than in

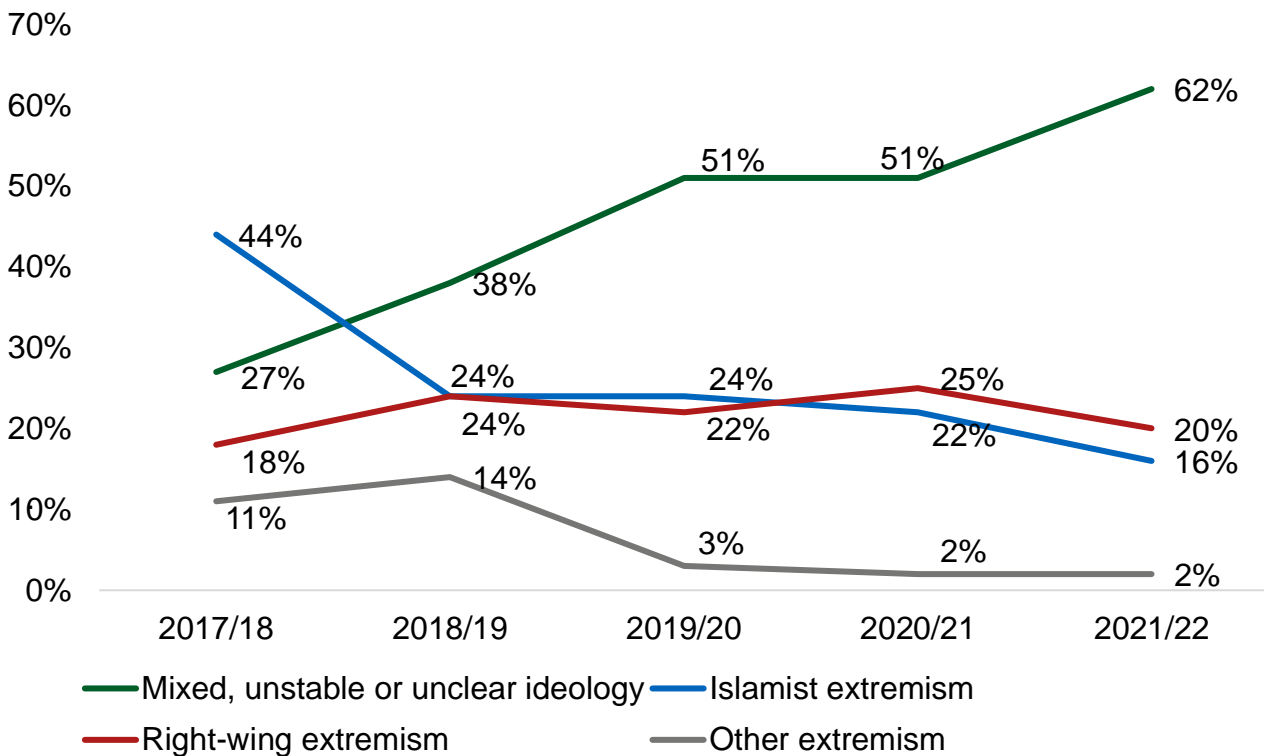
Scotland. In both Scotland and England and Wales the mixed, unstable or unclear category accounted for the largest proportion of all referrals in 2021/22<sup>16</sup>.

The proportion of referrals relating to Islamist extremism has also fallen since 2017/18 in both Scotland and England and Wales, though it is notable that the proportion of referrals relating to Islamist extremism is typically lower in Scotland than it is in England and Wales.

However, the trend for right-wing extremism differs slightly between Scotland and England and Wales. In Scotland, the proportion of referrals relating to right-wing extremism increased between 2017/18 and 2020/21 before falling in 2021/22, while in England and Wales the proportion of referrals relating to right-wing extremism has remained more stable over this period.

Further, a key difference between the Scotland and England and Wales data is that in Scotland right-wing extremism has accounted for a much higher proportion of all referrals than Islamist extremism since 2018/19, while in England and Wales the proportion of referrals relating to right-wing and Islamist extremism have been broadly comparable.

**Figure 9. Type of concern for referrals to Prevent in England and Wales, years ending March 2018 to 2022**



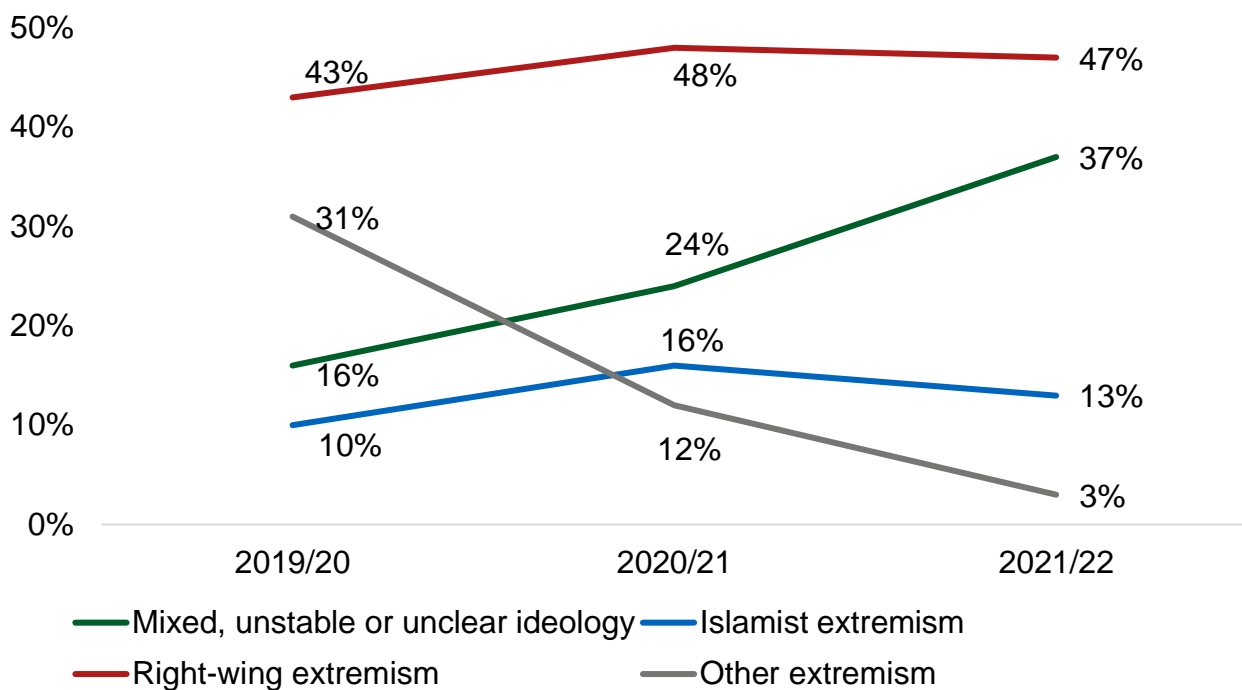
Source: Home Office (2023)

<sup>16</sup> In 2021/22, the Home Office directly reported the subcategories that were aggregated into mixed, unstable and unclear in previous years to provide a more granular view of types of concern. However, in this report, mixed, unstable and unclear has been used to enable comparisons to be made between the Scotland and England and Wales data.



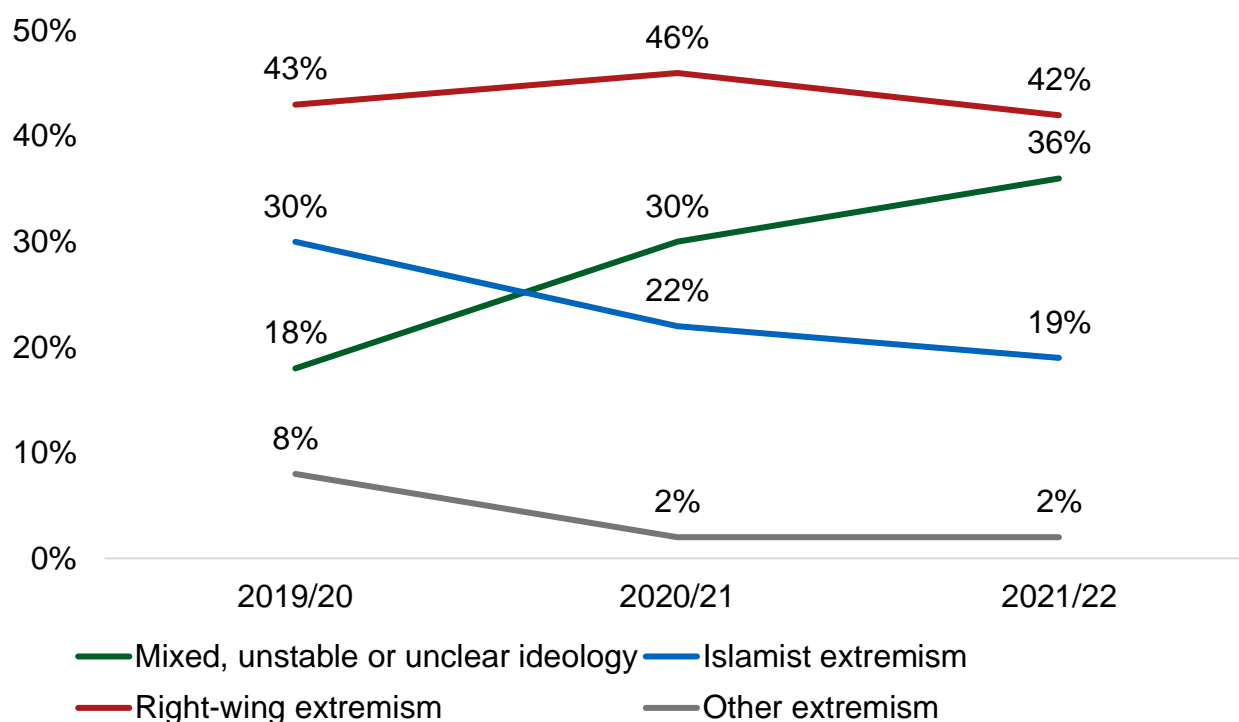
There are further similarities when looking at referrals identified as suitable for Prevent in Scotland and England and Wales. Figures 10 and 11 show that in both Scotland and England and Wales, individuals with concerns related to right-wing extremism tend to make up the largest proportion of referrals identified as suitable for Prevent, followed by those with a mixed, unclear or unstable ideology and those with concerns relating to Islamist extremism.

**Figure 10. Type of concern for referrals suitable for Prevent in Scotland, years ending March 2020 to 2022**



Source: Police Scotland (2023)

**Figure 11. Type of concern for referrals suitable for Prevent in England and Wales, years ending March 2020 to 2022**



Source: Home Office (2023)

Overall, therefore, the Prevent referral data suggests that mixed, unstable and unclear ideologies are a growing source of referrals in Scotland. The proportion of referrals relating to mixed, unstable or unclear ideologies has also increased over time in England and Wales, but a key difference between the Scotland and England and Wales data is that in England and Wales right-wing extremism accounts for a lower proportion of referrals than in Scotland, while Islamist extremism accounts for a higher proportion. This is reflected in referrals relating to Islamist extremism accounting for a broadly similar proportion of referrals to right-wing extremism in England and Wales, whereas in Scotland the proportion of referrals relating to Islamist extremism is lower than right-wing extremism.

However, it should be noted that as well as having limitations as a measure of the prevalence of extremism, the Prevent data is also limited in what it demonstrates about the nature of extremism, as the overarching groupings used within Prevent reveal little about particular extremist groups and specific ideologies that individuals may have expressed an affiliation with. Further interrogation of the data would be required to explore the groups/ideologies which underpin the categories in more detail.

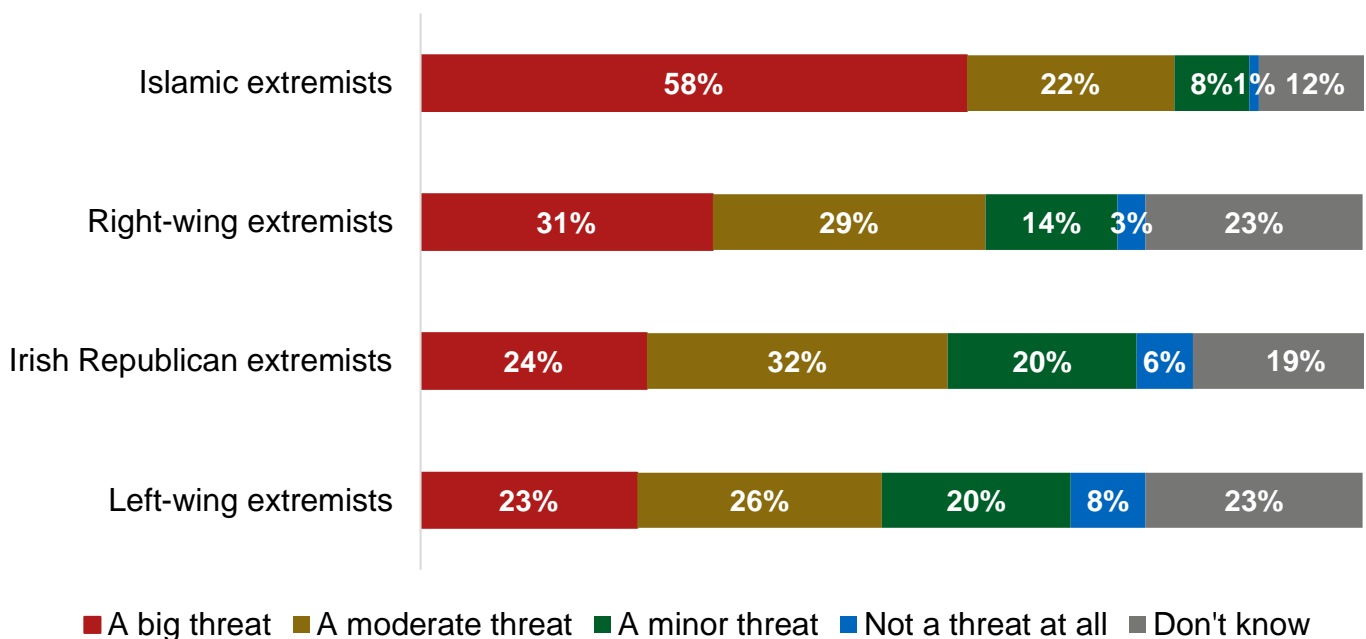
### Public attitudes data

Some exploration of the nature of extremism can also be undertaken using public attitudes data. Attitudinal data is helpful for providing an understanding of people's perceptions of different types of extremism, including what threat they perceive to

be greatest, as well as their experiences of different types of extremism. While no survey data on people’s experiences of different types of extremism in Scotland was identified for this review, in 2021 YouGov undertook a Britain-wide poll which asked respondents how much of a threat they consider a range of types of groups to be, with a breakdown by region available (YouGov, 2021).

As shown in Figure 12, the survey indicated that people in Britain view the threat from Islamic extremists to be greatest, with 58% considering this to constitute a ‘big’ threat. Almost a third (31%) considered right-wing extremists to be a ‘big’ threat, and around a quarter considered Irish Republican and left-wing extremists to be a ‘big’ threat (24% and 23% respectively).

**Figure 12. How much of a threat do you consider the following types of group to be? – GB results<sup>17</sup>**



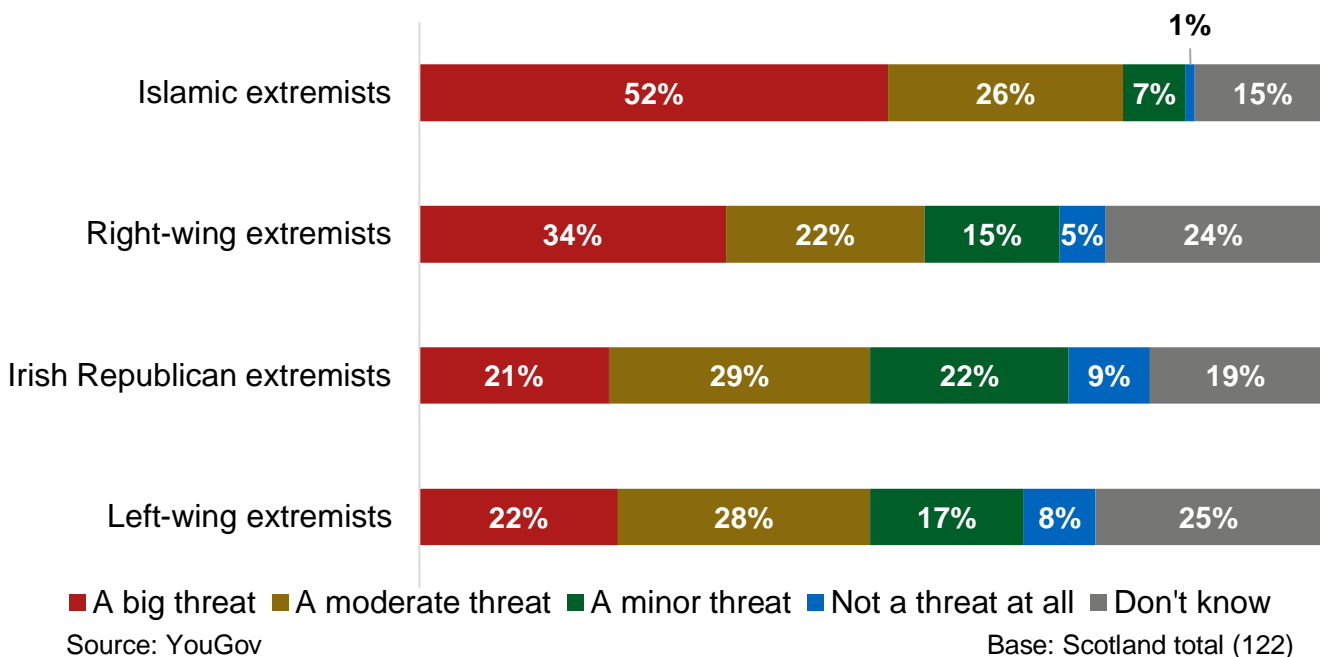
Source: YouGov

Base: GB total (1663)

The results for Scotland were broadly in line with the findings for Britain as a whole. As shown in Figure 13, a slightly smaller proportion of respondents in Scotland considered the threat from Islamic extremists to be ‘big’ (52%). Around a third considered right-wing extremists to be a ‘big’ threat, while around a fifth considered Irish Republican and left-wing extremists to be a ‘big’ threat (21% and 22% respectively).

<sup>17</sup> The answer categories shown in the Figure reflect the wording used in the YouGov survey and not official terminology adopted by the Scottish Government.

**Figure 13. How much of a threat do you consider the following types of group to be? – Scotland results<sup>18</sup>**



While there are some small differences in the distribution of responses, as discussed in the previous section, these may be the result of methodological issues such as the small sample size in Scotland rather than reflecting actual differences in attitudes between Scotland and Britain as a whole. However, it is notable that despite seemingly low levels of terror activity in Scotland (GTD, 2022), the perceived threat from both Islamist and right-wing extremists is considerable, with the majority of respondents in Scotland believing these groups to pose a big or moderate threat, and small minorities believing these groups to not pose a threat at all.

### Research on sectarianism

Further evidence that can be explored in relation to the nature of extremism in Scotland relates to sectarianism. As discussed in the previous section, in 2012 an Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism commissioned a range of research on sectarianism, including a literature review (Scottish Government, 2013; 2015), public attitudes survey research (Hinchliffe et al., 2015) and qualitative research (Scottish Government, 2016; Hamilton-Smith et al., 2015). A key finding of this research was that sectarianism is perceived to be a serious problem in Scotland. For example, the survey research found a widespread perception that religious prejudice against Catholics and Protestants exists, with football being a commonly-mentioned contributory factor (Hinchliffe et al., 2015).

When asked about their own experiences, 14% of survey respondents said they had experienced some form of religious discrimination or exclusion at some point in

<sup>18</sup> The answer categories shown in the Figure reflect the wording used in the YouGov survey and not official terminology adopted by the Scottish Government.

their lives, with those who identified as Catholic more likely to say they had experienced some form of discrimination or exclusion based on their religion than those who identified as Protestant (Hinchliffe et al., 2015). Those who had experienced religious discrimination or exclusion as a result of sectarianism were more likely to be Catholic than any other religious group.

The Advisory Group (2015) concluded from the research that experiences of sectarianism appear to be more common among Catholics, and that there remain pockets of sectarianism, with more violent and extreme forms often concentrated in areas with higher levels of deprivation. Overall, however, a minority of people in Scotland have been directly affected. The Advisory Group (2015) highlighted that there remain some key areas in which there is a lack of robust knowledge about the nature and extent of sectarianism in Scotland.

### **Research on Islamist extremism**

An additional source identified for this review was a limited body of evidence which has sought to explore potential reasons as to why there appears to be less Islamist extremism in Scotland than other parts of the UK (Bonino, 2016). A small number of studies have discussed potential reasons why both the number of terror incidents related to Islamist extremism in Scotland (GTD, 2022), and the number of individuals from Scotland who have travelled to Syria and Iraq to engage in terrorist activity, are lower than other parts of the UK.

In this literature, a range of reasons are put forward to explain why fewer instances of Islamist extremism have occurred in Scotland than elsewhere. The first is that the Muslim population in Scotland may have a comparatively stronger attachment to Scottish identity than Muslims in England and Wales do to English or Welsh identity (Bonino, 2016). For example, results from the 2011 Census showed that 40% of Muslims in Scotland described their national identity as Scottish (either exclusively or in combination with British or another identity), while only 16% of Muslims in England described their national identity as English and 15% of Muslims in Wales described their national identity as Welsh.

Bonino (2016) argues that a potential reason for this is that Muslim communities in Scotland are well integrated, particularly in comparison with the rest of the UK, citing qualitative research undertaken by Homes et al., (2010) which showed that both Muslims and non-Muslims in Scotland perceived integration in Scotland to be easier than in England. This was attributed to three main factors: smaller numbers of Muslims, less fear of terrorist attacks and particular aspects of living in Scotland (e.g., people in Scotland were seen as typically friendly, open and straightforward). Further, survey research examining the attitudes of Muslims and non-Muslims towards integration in Scotland undertaken by Homes et al. (2010) found that the majority of respondents agreed that 'most Muslims in Scotland are integrated into Scottish life'. Bonino (2016) also points to the small size of the Muslim population in Scotland as a factor which enhances integration, as well as suggesting that ethnic segregation is not as widespread in Scotland as it is in major cities in England and Wales.

Qualitative research undertaken by Choudhury and Fenwick (2011) also explored the impact of counter-terrorism measures on Muslim communities across the UK. Choudry and Fenwick (2011) carried out focus groups with Muslims living in Glasgow, and found that the stance taken by the Scottish Government and police in challenging the use of powers under s44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 to stop and search individuals in designated locations by the British Transport Police was viewed positively by participants, and contributed to an overall sense that the impact of counterterrorism policing and policies were different in Scotland compared with the rest of Britain.

It has also been suggested that Islamophobia is a less prevalent issue in Scotland than it is elsewhere in the UK (Bonino, 2016). For example, Hussain and Miller (2006) used BSA and Scottish Social Attitudes (SSA) survey data to compare levels of Islamophobia in Scotland and England. Exploring respondents' attitudes towards Muslims, they found that while Islamophobia existed in Scotland, its prevalence was higher in England.

Overall, therefore, there appear to be several reasons why the prevalence of Islamist extremism may be lower in Scotland than other parts of the UK. However, it is important to highlight the limitations of this evidence; notably, that the number of studies on this subject is small, much of the data are now dated, and the work by Bonino (2016) was not based on primary research.

### **Reach of right-wing extremist groups**

Finally, some information is also available regarding the membership and reach of particular right-wing extremist groups in Scotland. The campaign group Hope Not Hate produces annual reports on the state of right-wing extremism in the UK. Their most recent report, published in 2022, indicated that several extreme right groups have active branches in Scotland. Most significantly, they noted that at the time of writing, the Scottish branch of Patriotic Alternative (PA), a far-right white nationalist group, had recently carried out canvassing, displayed banners and held events in Scotland, including their second annual conference in Stirling in October 2022 (Hope Not Hate, 2022). Hope Not Hate (2022) stated that PA's Scottish branch was 'its most active, hardline and independent'.

Notably, however, since the publication of this report Patriotic Alternative have undergone a split, with members of PA forming a new group named the 'Homeland Party'. That the organiser is based in Scotland and that most of the Scottish branch has become part of the group has led Hope Not Hate to state that 'while the Homeland Party is a UK-wide organisation, Scotland is undoubtedly a key region of strength at present'<sup>19</sup>.

Other extreme right groups identified as having a Scottish presence include: Blood & Honour (B&H), who organised a concert in Scotland in October 2021; Britain First (BF) and the British Freedom Party (BFP), who carried out campaigning in Scotland in the run up to the 2021 Scottish Parliament election; and Identity Scotland, who

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<sup>19</sup> [Hope Not Hate](#)

carried out postering, leafleting and a banner drop in Scotland in 2021 (Hope Not Hate, 2022). In previous reports, Hope Not Hate have also noted groups including the British National Socialist Movement, Proud Boys, and Combat 18 as having active units in Scotland (Hope Not Hate, 2021, 2020).

Overall, there is evidence to suggest that some extreme right-wing groups have gained traction in Scotland. However, the focus of Hope Not Hate is on right-wing extremism specifically, and limited evidence was identified for this review looking at the reach of particular extremist groups relating to other ideologies. This evidence cannot therefore be taken to suggest that the extreme right is a more prominent form of extremism in Scotland than other types of extremist ideology.

Further, while looking at the reach of particular extremist groups provides useful insights, there is evidence to indicate that both Islamist and right-wing extremists have moved away from formal group structures in recent years, and now embrace a looser and more 'light-touch' model of association based on prominent influencers and known group identities (Redgrave et al., 2020). For example, Redgrave et al. (2020) note that two of the most prominent extreme right-wing attackers in recent years, Brenton Tarrant (Christchurch, New Zealand) and Darren Osborne (Finsbury Park, London), were radicalised online and were not members of formal groups.

### **5.3. Summary**

In summary, there is some data available which can be used to explore the nature of extremism in Scotland, including data on terrorist activity, Prevent referral data, public attitudes data, and research on intra-Christian sectarianism, Islamist extremism and right-wing extremism. These sources provide some indication of the types of extremism which may be more and less prevalent in Scotland, as well as allowing some tentative comparisons with the rest of the UK to be drawn. In particular, as noted in the previous section it appears that mixed, unstable and unclear ideologies are a growing issue in Scotland, a trend also apparent in other parts of the UK. There is also evidence to suggest that the prevalence of Islamist extremism could be lower in Scotland, but that Scotland also faces distinct issues relating to intra-Christian sectarianism. However, each source reviewed has limitations in its use as a measure for examining the nature of extremism in Scotland, meaning that evidence gaps remain.

## 6. Conclusion

The aims of this review were to explore how extremism is defined in the existing evidence base and to enhance understanding of the phenomenon in Scotland, by exploring available research on its nature and extent. This section will discuss the key findings of the review and the evidence gaps identified, as well as presenting recommendations for further research.

### 6.1. Summary of key findings

The first key finding is that there is no universally agreed-upon definition of extremism in the existing evidence base. The term is subjective by its nature, which has resulted in it being defined in a variety of ways.

The second key finding is that there is some evidence available which provides insight into the extent and character of extremism in Scotland, including data relating to terrorist activity, Prevent referrals, public attitudes, hate crime, intra-Christian sectarianism, and Islamist and right-wing extremism. A tentative conclusion that can be drawn from this evidence is that extremism may look different in Scotland to other parts of the UK. In particular, there is evidence to suggest that levels of extremism may be lower in Scotland than elsewhere in the UK, with less terrorist activity taking place, and fewer referrals to Prevent. There may also be differences in the types of extremism and their prevalence in Scotland. For example, while mixed, unstable and unclear ideologies appear to be a growing concern across the UK, there is evidence that right-wing extremism presents a bigger concern than Islamist extremism in Scotland, and also that Scotland may face unique challenges relating to intra-Christian sectarianism.

However, a fundamental limitation of the sources identified is that although they provide relevant contextual information, most do not specifically focus on researching the prevalence or nature of extremism in Scotland, which means there are significant gaps in the available data and evidence on this. Additionally, a notable gap in the evidence relates to how recent crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and cost of living crisis, may have impacted engagement with extremism in Scotland. If these gaps are to be addressed, it is likely that further research will be required.

### 6.2. Recommendations for further research

Overall, while the existing evidence provides relevant insights, the conclusions that can be drawn about extremism in Scotland are limited. This review therefore recommends that further research is carried out to begin to address the gaps identified. Firstly, it is recommended that more work is undertaken to explore approaches to defining extremism. In particular, given that the focus of this review was predominantly on academic literature, it would be useful to review how governments in other countries have approached defining extremism, and what can be learnt from these definitions.



Secondly, it is recommended that a programme of research is developed to address the gaps relating to the extent and nature of extremism in Scotland. While this could be advanced in various ways, given the challenges with measuring extremism outlined in this report, it is suggested that in the first instance a useful approach could be to explore understandings and perceptions of extremism from the perspective of key groups and communities, such as the public, practitioners working to deliver Prevent in Scotland, and stakeholders who have an interest in Prevent or extremism in Scotland. The research could explore how these groups define and understand extremism, as well as their views on the extent to which extremism is a problem in Scotland, the types of extremism that are more and less prevalent, and how well they perceive current approaches to countering extremism in Scotland to be working. This would provide an opportunity to gain insight into areas of concern in communities that could form the basis of further research, as well as complementing work to review approaches to defining extremism.

This work should be undertaken alongside ongoing work to improve understanding of the Prevent referral data in Scotland, with the triangulation of different sources supporting a multifaceted and nuanced understanding of extremism in Scotland, and the development of an evidence-based narrative for Scotland's experience of different types of extremism.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A – Body of evidence

Author(s)	Year	Title	Focus country of research	Document type	Publication setting	Knowledge type	Publisher / journal
<b>Research question 1: Defining extremism</b>							
Ali, S. S.	2021	<a href="#">Far-Right Extremism in Europe</a>	Multi-country (Europe)	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Journal of European Studies
Backes, U.	2010	<a href="#">Political Extremes: A Conceptual History from Antiquity</a>	Germany	Book	Academic	Theoretical	Routledge
Baisagatova, D. B., Kemelbekov, S. T., Smagulova, D. A., Kozhamberdiyeva, A. S.	2016	<a href="#">Correlation of Concepts "Extremism" and "Terrorism" in Countering the Financing of Terrorism and Extremism</a>	Multi-country (USA, Russia and Kazakhstan)	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	International Journal of Environmental & Science Education
Bakali, N.	2019	<a href="#">Challenging Terrorism as a Form of "Otherness": Exploring the Parallels between Far-right and Muslim Religious Extremism</a>	Multi-country (North America and Europe)	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Islamophobia Studies Journal
Baruch, B.	2018	<a href="#">Evaluation in an emerging field: Developing a</a>	None	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Evaluation

		<a href="#">measurement framework for the field of counter-violent-extremism</a>					
Bötticher, A.	2017	<a href="#">Towards Academic Consensus Definitions of Radicalism and Extremism</a>	Germany	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Perspectives on Terrorism
Berger, J. M.	2018	<a href="#">Extremism</a>	Multi-country	Book	Academic	Theoretical	The MIT Press
Busby, E. C.	2022	<a href="#">Perceptions of extremism among the American public and elected officials</a>	USA	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	Electoral Studies
Carter, E.	2018	<a href="#">Right-wing extremism/radicalism: reconstructing the concept</a>	None	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Journal of Political Ideologies
Commission for Countering Extremism	2018	<a href="#">Study into Extremism: Terms of Reference</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Commission for Countering Extremism
Commission for Countering Extremism	2021	<a href="#">Operating with Impunity: Hateful extremism: The need for a legal framework</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Mixed	Commission for Countering Extremism
Elliot, M. and Thomas, R.	2012	<a href="#">Public Law</a>	UK	Book	Academic	Theoretical	Oxford
Ford, K.	2017	<a href="#">Developing a Peace Perspective on Counter-Extremist Education</a>	Multi-country	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice

Hardy, K.	2018	<a href="#">Comparing Theories of Radicalisation with Countering Violent Extremism Policy</a>	Multi-country (UK, Australia, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands)	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	Journal for De-radicalization
Jackson, S.	2019	<a href="#">Non-normative political extremism: Reclaiming a concept's analytical utility</a>	USA	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Terrorism and Political Violence
Knight, S. and Keatley, D. A.	2020	<a href="#">How can the literature inform counter-terrorism practice? Recent advances and remaining challenges</a>	Multi-country	Journal article	Academic	Mixed	Terrorism and Political Aggression
Lowe, D.	2017	<a href="#">Prevent Strategies: The Problems Associated in Defining Extremism: The Case of the United Kingdom</a>	UK	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Studies in Conflict and Terrorism
Malmros, R. A.	2019	<a href="#">From Idea to Policy: Scandinavian Municipalities Translating Radicalization</a>	Multi-country (Denmark, Norway and Sweden)	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Journal for De-radicalization
Martin, G.	2011	<a href="#">Terrorism and Homeland Security</a>	USA	Book	Academic	Theoretical	Sage
Martins, A. C. R.	2020	<a href="#">Extremism definitions in opinion dynamics models</a>	None	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Physica A: Statistical Mechanics and its Applications

Mattsson, C.	2018	<a href="#">Caught between the urgent and the comprehensible: professionals' understanding of violent extremism</a>	Sweden	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	Critical Studies on Terrorism
Mythen, G. and Baillergeau, E.	2021	<a href="#">Considering strategies designed to counter radicalisation: Comparative reflections on approaches in the United Kingdom and Belgium</a>	Multi-country (UK and Belgium)	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Oñati Socio-Legal Series
Mythen, G., Walklate, S. and Peatfield, E.	2017	<a href="#">Assembling and deconstructing radicalisation in PREVENT: A case of policy-based evidence making?</a>	UK	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Critical Social Policy
Nasser-Eddine, M., Garnham, B., Agostino, K. and Caluya, G.	2011	<a href="#">Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Literature Review</a>	Australia	Report	Practitioner	Mixed	Australian Government
Neuman, P. R.	2013	<a href="#">The trouble with radicalization</a>	UK	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Oxford University Press
Obaidi, M., Skaar, S. W., Ozer, S. and Kunst, J. R.	2022	<a href="#">Measuring extremist archetypes: Scale development and validation</a>	None	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	PLOS One

Onursal, R. and Kirkpatrick, D.	2019	<a href="#">Is Extremism the 'New' Terrorism? the Convergence of 'Extremism' and 'Terrorism' in British Parliamentary Discourse</a>	UK	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	Terrorism and Political Violence
Pilkington, H. and Hussain, A.	2022	<a href="#">Why wouldn't you consult us? Reflections on preventing radicalisation among actors in radical(ising) milieus</a>	UK	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Journal for De-radicalization
Prinsloo, B. L.	2018	<a href="#">The etymology of "Islamic extremism": A misunderstood term?</a>	None	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Cogent Social Sciences
Pullerits, M., Turley, C., Gates, S. and DeMarco, J.	2019	<a href="#">Public Perceptions of Extremism</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	The Commission for Countering Extremism
Pratt, D.	2010	<a href="#">Religion and Terrorism: Christian Fundamentalism and Extremism</a>	None	Journal article	Academic	Mixed	Terrorism and Political Violence
Rendkova, P.	2018	<a href="#">Understanding of Extremist Expressions at the Level of Higher Education in Slovakia</a>	Slovakia	Journal article	Academic	Mixed	SGEM Scientific
Redgrave, H., Stott, J. and Tipple, C.	2020	<a href="#">Countering extremism: Time to reboot?</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Crest

Richards, A.	2011	<a href="#">The problem with 'radicalization': the remit of 'Prevent' and the need to refocus on terrorism in the UK</a>	UK	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Oxford University Press
Rowley, M.	2018	<a href="#">Extremism and Terrorism: The need for a whole society response</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Theoretical	Policy Exchange Lecture
Saija, B., Gearon, L., Kuusisto, A. and Koirikivi, P.	2021	<a href="#">Threshold of Adversity: Resilience and the Prevention of Extremism Through Education</a>	Multi-country (Nordic countries)	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Nordic Studies in Education
Scerri, D.	2022	<a href="#">Secondary school teachers' and 'Prevent' practitioners' conceptualisations of radicalisation : the impact on teachers' professionalism</a>	UK	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	Royal Holloway, University of London
Schmid, A. P.	2013	<a href="#">Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review</a>	Multi-country	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	International Centre for Counter-Terrorism
Schmid, A. P.	2014	<a href="#">Violent and Non-Violent Extremism: Two Sides of the Same Coin?</a>	Multi-country	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	International Centre for Counter-Terrorism
Sotlar, A.	2004	<a href="#">Some Problems with Definition and Perception</a>	Slovenia	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Policing in Central and Eastern Europe:



		<a href="#">of Extremism within Society</a>					Dilemmas of Contemporary Criminal Justice
Southers, E.	2013	<a href="#">Chapter 1 - Defining Homegrown Violent Extremism</a>	USA	Book	Academic	Theoretical	Taylor & Francis
Striegher, J.	2015	<a href="#">Violent-extremism: An examination of a definitional dilemma</a>	Multi-country	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Edith Cowan University
Toft, M. D.	2016	<a href="#">Networks fighting networks: Understanding and combatting extremism and radicalisation on a smaller scale</a>	UK	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Juncture
Torregrosa, J., Bello-Organ, G., Martinez-Camara, E., Del Ser, J. and Camacho, D.	2021	<a href="#">A survey on extremism analysis using natural language processing</a>	None	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Journal of Ambient Intelligence and Humanized Computing
Wael, H.	2017	<a href="#">A Policy-Oriented Framework for Understanding Violent Extremism</a>	None	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	New England Journal of Public Policy
Walker, R. F.	2019	<a href="#">The emergence of 'extremism' and 'radicalisation': an investigation into the discursive conditions that</a>	UK	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	University of London

		<a href="#">have enabled UK counter-terrorism strategy to focus on 'radicalisation' and 'extremism', and a theorisation of the impact of this focus</a>					
Wibisono, S.	2019	<a href="#">A Multidimensional Analysis of Religious Extremism</a>	Australia	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Frontiers in Psychology
Wilkinson, B. and van Rij, A.	2019	<a href="#">An analysis of the Commission for Countering Extremism's call for evidence: report 1 - public understanding of extremism</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Commission for Countering Extremism
Wilkinson, B., van Rij, A. and Hewlett, K.	2019	<a href="#">An analysis of the Commission for Countering Extremism's call for evidence: report 2 - tactics and harms</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Commission for Countering Extremism
Winter, C., Heath-Kelly, C. and Mills, C.	2022	<a href="#">A moral education? British Values, colour-blindness, and preventing terrorism</a>	UK	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	Critical Social Policy
Zedner, L.	2021	<a href="#">Countering terrorism or criminalizing curiosity? The troubled history of UK responses to right-wing and other extremism</a>	UK	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Common Law World Review
<b>Research question 2: The prevalence of extremism</b>							

Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland	2015	<a href="#">Final Report of The Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Scottish Government
Action on Sectarianism	2017	<a href="#">Sectarianism on Social Media</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Action on Sectarianism
Bailey, D. J.	2014	<a href="#">Contending the crisis: What role for extra-parliamentary British politics?</a>	UK	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	British Politics
Bailey, D. J.	2020	<a href="#">How Protest Is Shaking The UK And Why It's Likely To Continue</a>	UK	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	The Conversation
Barrett. R.	2017	<a href="#">Beyond the caliphate: foreign fighters and the threat of returnees</a>	Multi-country (global)	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	The Soufan Centre
Bartlett, J. and Miller, C.	2012	<a href="#">Preventing Violent Extremism: Measurement Paradoxes and Pitfalls</a>	Canada	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Canadian Issues
Bellis, M. A. and Hardcastle, K.	2019	<a href="#">Preventing violent extremism in the UK: Public health solutions</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Mixed	Public Health Wales
BMG Research	2017	<a href="#">BMG Poll</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	BMG
British Social Attitudes	2018	<a href="#">BSA 2018</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	NatCen

Commission for Countering Extremism	2019	<a href="#">Challenging Hateful Extremism</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Commission for Countering Extremism
Community Security Trust	2019	<a href="#">Anti-Semitic Incidents Report January-June 2019</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Community Security Trust
Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service	2022	<a href="#">Hate Crime in Scotland 2021-22</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service
Crown Prosecution Service	2019	<a href="#">Hate Crime Annual Reports, 2011-2018</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Crown Prosecution Service
Europol	2018	<a href="#">European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report</a>	Multi-country (Europe)	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Europol
European Commission	2019	<a href="#">Special Eurobarometer 493 – Report</a>	Multi-country (Europe)	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	European Commission
European Parliament	2018	<a href="#">The return of foreign fighters to EU soil</a>	Multi-country (Europe)	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	European Parliament
Global Terrorism Database	2022	<a href="#">Global Terrorism Database</a>	Multi-country (global)	Database	Practitioner	Empirical	University of Maryland
Hamilton-Smith, N., Malloch, M., Ashe, S. and Rutherford, A	2015	<a href="#">Community Impact of Public Processions</a>	UK	Report	Academic	Empirical	Scottish Government

Home Office	2018b	<a href="#">Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: Arrests, outcome and stop and search, Great Britain. Quarterly update to September 2018</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Home Office
Home Office	2018c	<a href="#">Individuals referred to and supported by the Prevent Programme, April 2017 to March 2018</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Home Office
Home Office	2019a	<a href="#">Hate crime, England and Wales, 2018 to 2019: statistical bulletin</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Home Office
Home Office	2019b	<a href="#">Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme, April 2018 to March 2019</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Home Office
Home Office	2020a	<a href="#">Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000: financial year ending June 2020: annual data tables</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Home Office
Home Office	2020b	<a href="#">Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme, April 2019 to March 2020</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Home Office

Home Office	2020c	<a href="#">Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2019/20</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Home Office
Home Office	2021c	<a href="#">Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme, April 2020 to March 2021</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Home Office
Home Office	2023	<a href="#">Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme, April 2021 to March 2022</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Home Office
Lakhani, S. and James. N.	2021	<a href="#">“Prevent duty”: empirical reflections on the challenges of addressing far-right extremism within secondary schools and colleges in the UK</a>	UK	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	Critical Studies on Terrorism
McKinney, S., Francis, L. K. and McKenna, U.	2019	<a href="#">Assessing sectarian attitudes among Catholic adolescents in Scotland</a>	UK	Report	Academic	Empirical	Journal of Beliefs and Values
Mills, C. E., Freilich, J. D. and Chermak, S. M.	2015	<a href="#">Extreme Hatred: Revisiting the Hate Crime and Terrorism Relationship to Determine Whether They Are ‘Close Cousins’ or ‘Distant Relatives’</a>	UK	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	Crime & Delinquency

Mulhall, J.	2019	<a href="#">Modernising and Mainstreaming: The Contemporary British Far Right</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Commission for Countering Extremism
Murray, A., Johnson-Mueller, K. and Lawrence, S.	2015	<a href="#">Evidence-Based Policing of U.K. Muslim Communities: Linking Confidence in the Police With Area Vulnerability to Violent Extremism</a>	UK	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	International Criminal Justice Review
NatCen	2019	<a href="#">British Social Attitudes: The 36th Report - Relationships and gender identity</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	NatCen
Institute of Economics and Peace	2018	<a href="#">Global Terrorism Index 2018: Measuring the impact of terrorism</a>	Australia	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Institute for Economics and Peace
Hinchcliffe, S., Marcinkiewicz, A., Curtice, J. and Ormston, R.	2015	<a href="#">Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2014: Public Attitudes to Sectarianism in Scotland</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Scottish Government
Ipsos MORI	2017	<a href="#">Ipsos Mori/Economist Issues Index</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Ipsos MORI
Police Foundation	2020	<a href="#">Public Safety and Security in the 21st Century</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Police Foundation
Police Scotland	2018	<a href="#">Prevent Referral Data, Scotland, April 2017 to March 2018</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Police Scotland

Police Scotland	2019	<a href="#">Prevent Referral Data, Scotland, April 2018 to March 2019</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Police Scotland
Police Scotland	2020	<a href="#">Prevent Referral Data, Scotland, April 2019 to March 2020</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Police Scotland
Police Scotland	2021	<a href="#">Prevent Referral Data, Scotland, April 2020 to March 2021</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Police Scotland
Police Scotland	2023	<a href="#">Prevent Referral Data, Scotland, April 2021 to March 2022</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Police Scotland
Rosie, M.	2016	<a href="#">Independent Report on Marches, Parades and Static Demonstrations in Scotland</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Scottish Government
Schuurman, B.	2018	<a href="#">Research on Terrorism, 2007–2016: A Review of Data, Methods, and Authorship</a>	Multi-country	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	Terrorism and Political Violence
Scottish Government	2021a	<a href="#">A Study into the Characteristics of Police Recorded Hate Crime in Scotland</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Scottish Government
Scottish Government	2021b	<a href="#">Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2019/20: main findings</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Scottish Government



Scottish Government	2016	<a href="#">Community Experiences of Sectarianism</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Scottish Government
Scottish Government	2015	<a href="#">An Examination of the Evidence on Sectarianism in Scotland: 2015 Update</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Scottish Government
Scottish Government	2013	<a href="#">An Examination of the Evidence on Sectarianism in Scotland</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Scottish Government
Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism	2012	<a href="#">Analysis of Factors Related to Hate Crime and Terrorism, Final Report to the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism</a>	USA	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	University of Maryland
Tell Mama	2019	<a href="#">MAMA Annual Report 2018: Normalising Hatred</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Tell MAMA
Thornton, A. and Bouhana, N.	2017	<a href="#">Preventing radicalisation in the UK: expanding the knowledge-base on the Channel programme</a>	UK	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice
YouGov	2018	<a href="#">MOPAC survey results</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	MOPAC
YouGov	2017	<a href="#">Politics and current affairs</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	YouGov

YouGov	2020	<a href="#">Poll carried out on behalf of Crest Advisory</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	YouGov
YouGov	2022	<a href="#">Poll - Has the threat of terrorism increased in the last 5 years?</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	YouGov
<b>Research question 3: The nature of extremism</b>							
Alaimo, M.	2020	<a href="#">Exploring the Typologies of Terrorism in the United States: Using Cluster Analysis to Group Terrorists Based on Their Individual Characteristics</a>	USA	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	International Journal of Peace Studies
Ballsun-Stanton, B. et al.	2021	<a href="#">Online Right-Wing Extremism: New South Wales, Australia</a>	Australia	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	Proceedings
Bonino, S.	2016	<a href="#">The Jihadi Threat to Scotland: Caledonian Exceptionalism and its Limits</a>	UK	Report	Academic	Theoretical	CTC Sentinel
Choudhury, T. and Fenwick, H.	2011	<a href="#">The impact of counter-terrorism measures on Muslim communities</a>	UK	Report	Academic	Empirical	International Review of Law, Computers & Technology
Collins, J.	2021	<a href="#">A New Wave of Terrorism? A Comparative Analysis of the Rise of Far-Right Terrorism</a>	Multi-country (Germany, Scandinavia, UK, USA)	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	Perspectives on Terrorism

Crosby, A.	2021	<a href="#">Policing Right-Wing Extremism in Canada: Threat Frames, Ideological Motivation, and Societal Implications</a>	Canada	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Surveillance & Society
Doering, S., Davies, G. and Corrado, R.	2020	<a href="#">Reconceptualizing Ideology and Extremism: Toward an Empirically-Based Typology</a>	USA	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	Conflict & Terrorism
Kamenowski, M. et al.	2021	<a href="#">Religion as an influencing factor of right-wing, left-wing and Islamist extremism. Findings of a Swiss youth study</a>	Switzerland	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	PLOS One
Knight, S., Woodward, K. and Lancaster, G.	2017	<a href="#">Violent Versus Non-Violent Actors: An Empirical Study of Different Types of Extremism</a>	UK	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	Journal of Threat Assessment and Management
Homes, A., McLean, C. and Murray, L.	2010	<a href="#">Muslim Integration in Scotland</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	British Council Scotland
Hope Not Hate	2022	<a href="#">State of Hate 2022</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Hope Not Hate
Hope Not Hate	2021	<a href="#">State of Hate 2021</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Hope Not Hate
Hope Not Hate	2020	<a href="#">State of Hate 2020</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	Hope Not Hate

Hussain, A. M. and Miller, W. L.	2006	<a href="#">Multicultural Nationalism: Islamophobia, Anglophobia and Devolution</a>	UK	Book	Academic	Mixed	Oxford University Press
Macklin, G.	2022	<a href="#">The Extreme Right, Climate Change and Terrorism</a>	Multi-country	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	Terrorism and Political Violence
Magarino, S. and Jimenez-Ramos, M.	2022	<a href="#">An Attempt at a Theoretical Explanation of Violent Islamist Radicalization in Spain</a>	Spain	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Religions
Morris, C. J.	2021	<a href="#">Can partnership approaches developed to prevent Islamic terrorism be replicated for the extreme right? Comparing the Muslim Brotherhood and Generation Identity as 'firewalls' against violent extremism</a>	UK	Journal article	Academic	Theoretical	Journal for De-radicalization
Michalski, J.	2019	<a href="#">Terrorism and lethal moralism in the United States and United Kingdom, 1970–2017</a>	Multi-country (UK and USA)	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	The British Journal of Sociology
Taylor, M., Holbrok, D. and Curie, P. M.	2013	<a href="#">Extreme Right Wing Political Violence and Terrorism</a>	Multi-country	Book	Academic	Empirical	Bloomsbury

Tin, D., Barten, D. G., Goniewicz, K., Burkle, F. M. and Ciottone, G. R.	2022	<a href="#">An Epidemiological Analysis of Terrorism-Related Attacks in Eastern Europe from 1970 to 2019</a>	Multi-country (Eastern Europe)	Journal article	Academic	Empirical	Prehospital and Disaster Medicine
YouGov	2021	<a href="#">Threat of Extremism</a>	UK	Report	Practitioner	Empirical	YouGov

## Appendix B – Definitions of extremism

Definition	Values	Lack of openness or receptiveness	Violence
<b>Descriptive</b>			
<b>Home Office (2011)</b> ‘vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas’	✓	✓	✓
<b>Berger (2018)</b> ‘the belief that an in-group’s [a group that a person identifies as being a part of] success or survival can never be separated from the need for hostile action against an out-group [a group with which an individual does not identify]’		✓	
<b>Martin (2011)</b> an ideology or viewpoint that is ‘radical in opinion, especially in political matters... characterised by intolerance toward opposing interests and divergent opinions’	✓	✓	
<b>Iterative</b>			
<b>Backes (2007)</b> ‘uniting extremists is a clear notion of what has to be rejected, including (1) pluralism (they have a preference for decision-making solely by a dominant individual or group), (2) orientation towards a common good of all people whereby different interests and worldviews are taken into consideration, (3) rule of law, and (4) self-determination (by the majority of people instead of outside determination)’	✓	✓	
<b>Schmid (2013)</b> ‘extremist groups tend to have a programme that includes many of the following elements: 1. Anti-constitutional, anti-democratic, anti-pluralist, authoritarian 2. Fanatical, intolerant, non-compromising, single-minded black-or-white thinkers 3. Rejecting the rule of law while adhering to an ends-justify-means philosophy 4. Aiming to realise their goals by any means, including, when the opportunity offers itself, the use of massive political violence against opponents’	✓	✓	✓
<b>Rowley (2018)</b> ‘1. Extremists reach into communities through sophisticated propaganda 2. Extremists create intolerance and isolation by exploiting grievances 3. Extremists reinforce this sense of isolation by generating distrust of state institutions 4. Extremists offer warped parallel alternatives that undermine our values of tolerance and diversity’		✓	



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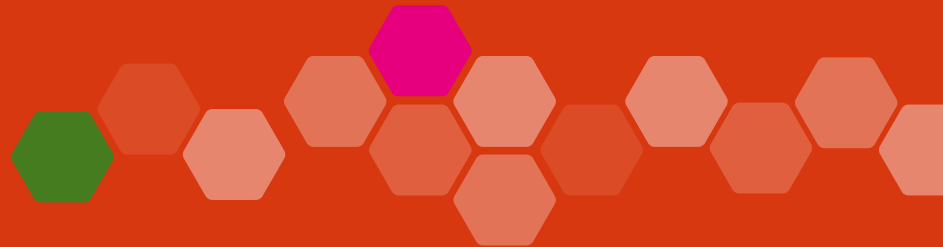
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This document is also available from our website at [www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot).  
ISBN: 978-1-80525-588-8

The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

Produced for  
the Scottish Government  
by APS Group Scotland  
PPDAS1251702 (07/23)  
Published by  
the Scottish Government,  
July 2023



Social Research series  
ISSN 2045-6964  
ISBN 978-1-80525-588-8

Web Publication  
[www.gov.scot/socialresearch](http://www.gov.scot/socialresearch)

PPDAS1251702 (07/23)