



## The Dynamics of a Terrorist Targeting Process

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▶ **The Dynamics of a  
Terrorist Targeting  
Process: Anders B.  
Breivik and the 22 July  
Attacks in Norway**

Cato Hemmingby

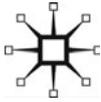
*Norwegian Police University College*

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# Contents

Foreword	vi
<i>Richard English</i>	
Preface	viii
1 Introduction	1
2 Theoretical Perspectives and Methodological Approaches	12
3 The Target Overview Dataset	19
4 Anders B. Breivik's Targeting Process	29
5 From Thinking to Acting	45
6 The Attacks and the Consequences	59
7 The Trial and Sentencing	77
8 Breivik in a Comparative Perspective	87
9 Conclusion	108
Bibliography	115
Index	124

## Foreword

Terrorist targeting remains an issue of analytical and practical importance, and it is one to which the skills of scholarly experts can contribute in vital fashion. By focusing on one egregiously shocking episode – the Anders Behring Breivik attacks in Norway in July 2011 – Cato Hemmingby and Tore Bjørgo have produced a rigorous and significant study of one important episode, and they have done so in a manner which illuminates a much wider set of problems relating to terrorism and our responses to it.

Much has been written on Breivik already. But the distinctive aspect of this book is its impressively close focus upon the operational aspects of this solo terrorist endeavour. How did Breivik set about selecting his targets, and what were the factors – long-term and more imminent – which affected this lethal process? The sources on which Hemmingby and Bjørgo draw are vivid and extensive, and they apply considerable analytical skill and contextual expertise to provide a persuasive – if sometimes distressing – set of answers to their important questions. They are open about the challenges that their sources embody, and they address these calmly and professionally.

Moreover, and significantly, they set Breivik in comparative perspective, which makes this short book of high value not merely to those with a Norwegian interest, but also to the wider community of scholars and states thinking about how best to respond to terrorism. The improvisatory aspects of Breivik's approach stand out, for example, as does his appalling empathy deficit. And – despite the things which make him, as the authors note, in some ways

atypical – there are indeed wider lessons to be derived here. Not the least of them is the need for all of us to be realistic about how far and how consistently even the best, intelligence-led responses to terrorism will be able to thwart attacks.

The subject of this book is sharp-edged and important; the skills brought to it by the authors are deeply impressive; and the calmness and rigour applied to the Breivik case and its ramifications should serve as a model for other scholars in the field. I recommend the book very strongly; it deserves to be widely read.

Richard English  
Director, The Handa Centre for the  
Study of Terrorism and Political Violence (CSTPV)  
University of St Andrews  
July 2015

## Preface

The main purpose of this study has been to provide a thorough insight in the decision-making and target selection process of Anders Behring Breivik, who conducted what might be considered the most horrific solo terrorist atrocity seen to date. In most cases an in-depth insight on these processes is not possible due to lack of information. However, access to unique source material, combined with a willingly talking perpetrator, made it possible to study this case in unusual detail. Aware of the fact that more research was needed in this area, we therefore found that this opportunity should be utilized. It is of profound importance to get a better understanding of complex operational processes – not least for the practitioners within law enforcement and security professionals.

Even though some characteristics of the 22 July 2011 attacks in Norway and the perpetrator are atypical, there is also a substantial amount of generic insights to be extracted from this case. All terrorists operate within a framework where they control some factors, but far from all. There are always a number of known and expected variables, but also less expected constraints, and not to forget pure coincidences, luck and bad luck. This is exactly why operational phases in general are so dynamic, possibly even chaotic, and indeed so unpredictable, up until the moment the attack actually is committed against the chosen target. This is very much what we wanted to learn more about with this study.

The authors have enjoyed inspiration, assistance, contributions and views from a number of people. We

want to express our thanks to Anders Snortheimsmoen, Tor-Geir Myhrer, Haavard Reksten, Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, Morten Sørensen, Andrew O. Bennett, Fathali M. Moghaddam, Odd Einar Olsen, Envor M. Bjørgo Skårdalsmo, Monicha J. Hemmingby, Håvard Walla, Bjørn Egeland, Anders Grønli, Petter Nesser, Brynjar Lia and our colleagues at the Norwegian Police University College. Special thanks to Asbjørn Rachlew, who was able to provide us with advice and insights about the interviews with Breivik and where to find the most relevant sequences, due to his central role in the police investigative interview team. We are also grateful to sources and other individuals, home and abroad, who have to remain anonymous due to their positions, for fruitful discussions and contributions on the subject.

Cato Hemmingby, also holding a position as senior advisor in the Norwegian Government Security and Service Organization (GSSO), would like to thank Jon Ivar Mehus, for supporting the Ph.D. run at the Norwegian Police University College and the University of Stavanger from the start. Thanks also to good colleagues at GSSO: SIBE. In addition, and for different reasons, gratitude must be expressed to Irene B. Fjeller, Roar Havneraas, Tor-Inge Kristoffersen, Julia Wanda, Tore Bekkevold and Arve Edvardsen, as well as Michael and Eskil who have a busy dad. Finally, co-author, mentor and friend Tore Bjørgo deserves a few special words. Many years ago he learnt from one of the best within terrorism research, Alex P. Schmid, before he stepped up to the elite division himself. Following in his footsteps, the way he includes and guides us, and generously shares his impressive knowledge, is no less than exemplary.

Finally, we want to dedicate this book to all the 77 victims of the 22 July attacks and their affected families, and also the emergency services and the volunteers making indispensable efforts to save lives after the attacks.