

TRI Thesis Award Winner Announcement

Finalists and Winner of the Award Competition of the Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI) for the Best Doctoral Dissertation on Terrorism- and Counter-Terrorism completed in 2021 or 2022.

The mission of the Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI) is to “Enhance Security through Collaborative Research”. Beginning in 2014, in support of this mission, TRI has organised a competition and award for the ‘Best Doctoral Dissertation on Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism’, meant for young scholars who have recently completed their doctorate at an academic institution.

For this year’s competition, a jury of five scholars evaluated doctoral theses completed and successfully defended during the year 2021 or 2022, which were submitted to this competition by either the authors or their academic supervisors. The members of this jury are:

- *Dr Clark McCauley* (Research Professor, Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania, USA),
- *Dr Rasmi Singh* (Associate Professor at the Department of International Relations of the Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais, Brazil),
- *Dr Anneli Botha* (Extraordinary Professor, North West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa),
- *Dr James J.F. Forest* (Professor, School of Criminology & Justice Studies, University of Massachusetts Lowell, USA) and
- *Dr Alex P. Schmid* (Chairman, TRI Award Jury and Director, Terrorism Research Initiative)

The jury utilised a standard set of criteria to assess the quality of the submissions we received. These included whether or not the thesis under consideration was the product of in-depth research, whether it showed originality in terms of introducing new data, theory or methodology, and whether it showed novelty/uniqueness in its findings.

From the doctoral theses that were submitted and/or defended in 2021 and 2022 at academic institutions, the jury identified, after several rounds of deliberations, the following authors and theses as finalists:

- *Dr Devorah Margolin*. *How Do Governing Violent Islamist Organizations Conceptualize the Roles of Women*. London: University College, 2022.
- *Dr Levi J. West*. *Violent Propaganda: Violence, Communication and Technology – The Strategic Logic of Terrorism*. Melbourne: Victoria University, 2022.
- *Dr Bettina Rottweiler*. *Risk- and Preventive Factors for Violent Extremist Intentions*. London: University College, 2021.
- *Dr Marnie Lloyd*. *Persisting Tensions: The Framing of International Debates on Foreign Fighting*. Melbourne: Melbourne University, 2021.

While all four finalists produced remarkable theses, the jury concluded in the end that *Dr. Levi J. West* (Lecturer Terrorism Studies, Australian Graduate School of Policing, Charles Sturt University) should be the WINNER of the 2023 TRI Thesis Award for the Best Doctoral Dissertation on Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism.

His thesis, drawing to a remarkable extent on primary source material for its three paradigmatic case studies, revisited the theoretical approaches of older seminal terrorism studies and developed a generalisable framework for understanding the strategic effects of terrorism.

The chairman and the jury members of the TRI Thesis Award congratulate Dr West for this outstanding achievement.

Dr West will be invited to prepare an article based on his thesis for publication in the December 2023 issue of *Perspectives on Terrorism*. In addition, he will receive a monetary award of US \$1,000, provided by the Terrorism Research Initiative (Vienna) and the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (The Hague).

The chairman and the jury members of the TRI Thesis Award also congratulate the authors of the other three finalists chosen in this competition, who are listed in alphabetical (i.e. unranked) order:

- *Dr Marnie Lloyd* (currently a Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Law at the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand);
- *Dr Devorah Margolin* (currently the Blumenstein-Rosenbloom Fellow at The Washington Institute and an Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University); and
- *Dr Bettina Rottweiler* (currently a Research Fellow in the Department of Security and Crime Science at University College London, UK).

Their doctoral theses were all outstanding in their own way.

Dr. Lloyd's doctoral thesis is a wide-ranging exploration of international legal regulations (1907-2014) and policy framings of volunteer fighters in foreign conflicts that places the terrorist "foreign fighters" phenomenon in a historical context.

Dr. Margolin's thesis stood out for its remarkable original dataset and the demonstration that gendered beliefs can lay at the heart of violent extremist ideologies.

Dr. Rottweiler's Ph.D. thesis, which looked not only at factors facilitating violent extremism but also at protective factors preventing radicalisation, stood out for its mastery of advanced statistical techniques and use of original large-scale data for Germany and the UK.

These three finalists will be invited to have an Abstract of their doctoral thesis published in the December 2023 issue of *Perspectives on Terrorism*. All finalists will receive a Certificate of Achievement, signed by the chairman of the jury of the Terrorism Research Initiative.