

## Abstract

Terrorism is a centuries old problem that has had catastrophic effects on communities around the world. America has been locked in a war on terror for more than two decades now and as gains might be considered to be seen on one front such as the international stage renewed threats in other areas such as domestic terrorism/extremism can be seen. These ongoing threats suggest that the current strategy needs to be shifted with more emphasis on breaking the recruitment capabilities of these groups. While it has been long believed that the young minds on college campuses are a fertile recruiting grounds for extreme groups the scope of the efforts are largely unknown. This project utilizing an online survey tool examines the extent to which terrorism recruitment happens on college campuses. It is believed that by understanding the frequency and the methods in which recruitment is conducted on campuses by extreme groups that better defense mechanisms can be put in place by university leadership. It is further believed that with a reduction in recruits to extreme ideologies and organizations that the level of terrorist violence will be decreased.

## Purpose

While extremist and terrorist materials have been found on campuses across the country, the true extent of the problem is unknown. This project will examine over different class iterations to what extent college campuses are being utilized as extremist and terrorist recruiting sites. Additionally this project will give students practical experiences in desk research, survey data and practice utilizing critical thinking skills in order to determine real world threats and opportunities for college campuses. .

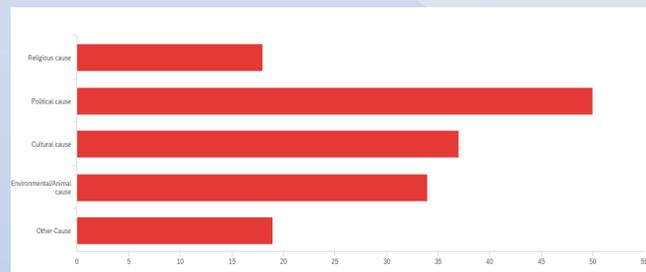


Fig. 2. Shows participant responses to what they could have seen themselves protesting for in college.

## Methods

This collaborative class research project using College Undergraduate Research Experience (CURE) practices, allowed each student to choose a terrorist or extremist group at random to study and provide background literature on. The students also helped to recruit participants in an ECSU IRB approved, anonymous questionnaire administered electronically. At the time of this report 209 respondents answered the survey instrument.

The survey instrument asked the participants about their demographics such as gender, race as well as their college experience such as private, public etc. The raw data was then analyzed by students to determine to what extent recruitment by extreme groups on college campus is a problem.

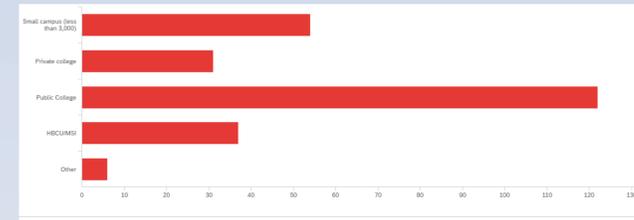


Fig. 3. This graph represents the diversity of college types represented by the participants for this study. The breakdown of culture, gender and age was also well diversified.



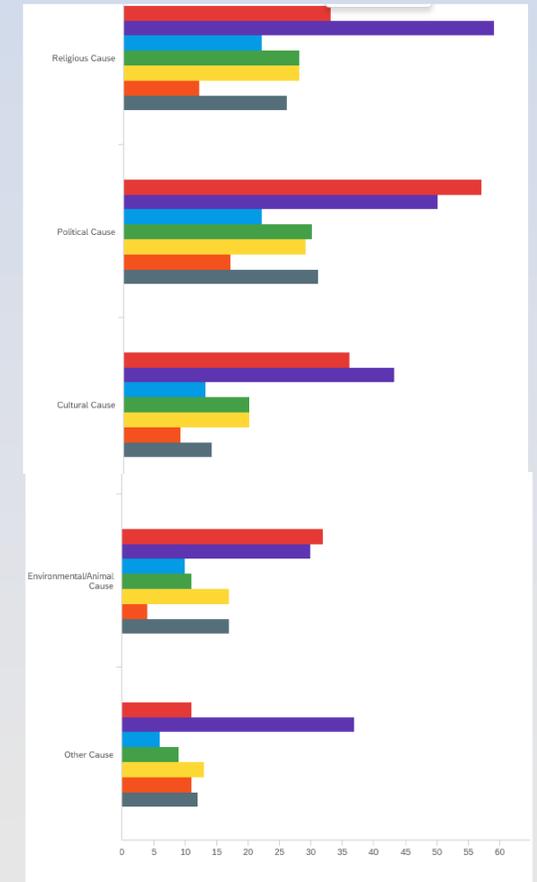
Fig. 4. Boston Marathon Bombing investigations found college student ties in perpetrators and those found guilty of helping hide evidence from college dorm rooms.

## Preliminary Findings

This iteration of the project is still underway through the end of SP 21 semester, but there are some preliminary findings that are coming to light already.

For example it was obvious to the students that there is recruitment activities going on within college campuses. It also appears that in asking students what decade they attended college that this is not necessarily a new concept, but possibly a more frequent one in modern times.

It is appearing that recruitment on campuses is an area of concern and in need of mitigation and prevention actions. The majority of participants, 70%, feeling that extremist recruiting was a problem or serious problem on campuses and another 10% not sure. Less than 10% of the participants reported seeing any kind of anti-extremist recruitment messaging while going to college. The majority of participants did believe that younger adults are more susceptible to the extremist ideas than older adults.



- White in college were you ever approached by anyone to protest for (Select ...
- White in college were you ever approached by anyone to join a group/club/or...
- White in college were you ever approached by anyone you thought to be an ex...
- White in college did you know anyone that was approached by an extremist in...
- White in college did you know of or hear of anyone that was approached by a...
- White in college did you know of anyone that was a member of an extremist g...
- White in college did you come in contact with any extremist viewed literatu...

Fig. 5. This graph represents responses from participants towards their college experiences with extremists or extreme ideology

## References

- Lavoie (2015, June 5). Two college friends of Boston Marathon Bombers sentenced to prison. AP Retrieved from <https://www.ctvnews.ca/world/two-college-friends-of-boston-marathon-bomber-sentenced-to-prison-1.2408864>
- SPLC (2021). See hate in your state. Southern Poverty Law Center Retrieved from <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map>

## Contact Information & Acknowledgements

This project was made possible as a class project in EM 490 Global Terrorism at Elizabeth City State University with Dr. Kupietz as the instructor. For more information concerning this project or other information concerning preparedness for disasters contact: Dr. Kevin Kupietz EM Program Coordinator [kdakupietz@ecsu.edu](mailto:kdakupietz@ecsu.edu) This project also would thank the ECSU IRB board as well as the Survey tool Participants for their help in this project.

IN 2020, WE TRACKED 838 HATE GROUPS ACROSS THE U.S.

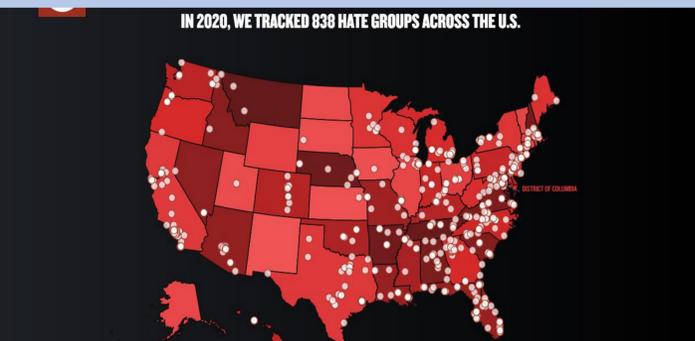


Fig. 1. Map from the Southern Poverty Law Center showing active Hate groups in 2020.