

Cross-Border Terror Networks: A Social Network Analysis across the Canada-US border

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Overview

- Mythmaking & reality at the Canada-US border
- The paradox of securing open borders
- Paradigm shift: Networks, not terrorists
- Dark networks with lots of light
- Modelling cross-border interaction by politically motivated violent extremists
- Policy implications/questions/debates
- What we know that we don't know, and why it matters that we don't know...

- US Senators Ask Military to Patrol Canadian Border — Toronto Star, February 10, 2011
- Integrated border proposal looms as key election issue — Globe and Mail, February 6, 2011
- Northern Border not Secure Enough — Fox News, February 5, 2011

- **CANADA PREPARING TO 'HARDEN' BORDER WITH UNITED STATES** — Buffalo News, December 4, 2002.
- **Once Porous Northern Border becomes a Challenge to Secure** — Dallas News, October 21, 2001
- **Attorney general seeks to strengthen border security with National Guard, military helicopters** — Associated Press, December 2, 2001

Networks...

- Create countervailing transaction costs?
- Create markets of opportunity?
- Increase marginal costs?

Apply Social Network Analysis to

- (1) identify the drivers, nature and direction of Canada-US extremist cross-border traffic;
- (2) generate hypotheses from a limited dataset that can be subjected to further empirical scrutiny with the aim of modeling cross-border extremist networks more generally
- (3) assess the risk they pose by measuring the extent to which such networks increase or reduce marginal costs

Group	Year	Ideology	Border	Reason
Ressam	1999	Jihadi	Can—US	Attack US
Warsame	2003	Jihadi	US— Global	Resources
Thurston	2005	Animal Rights	Can—US	Attack US
Thanigasalam	2006	LTTE	Can—US – Sri Lanka	Resources
Daher	2005	Jihadi	Can – US – Global	Ideology, resources
Toronto 18	2006	Jihadi	US—Can	Resources, ideology,
				attack Canada
Rana	2009	Jihadi	US—Global	Attack Denmark

Subjects	Motivation
Ressam	attack vector, logistical support
Warsame	finance (US to AQ), training
Thurston	attack vector, recruitment
Thanigasalam	materiel acquisition (US to Sri Lanka)
Daher	collaboration, materiel provision (US to AQ), finance (US to AQ)
Toronto 18	ideological support, materiel acquisition (US to Canada)
Rana	materiel provision (US to Denmark)

Drivers

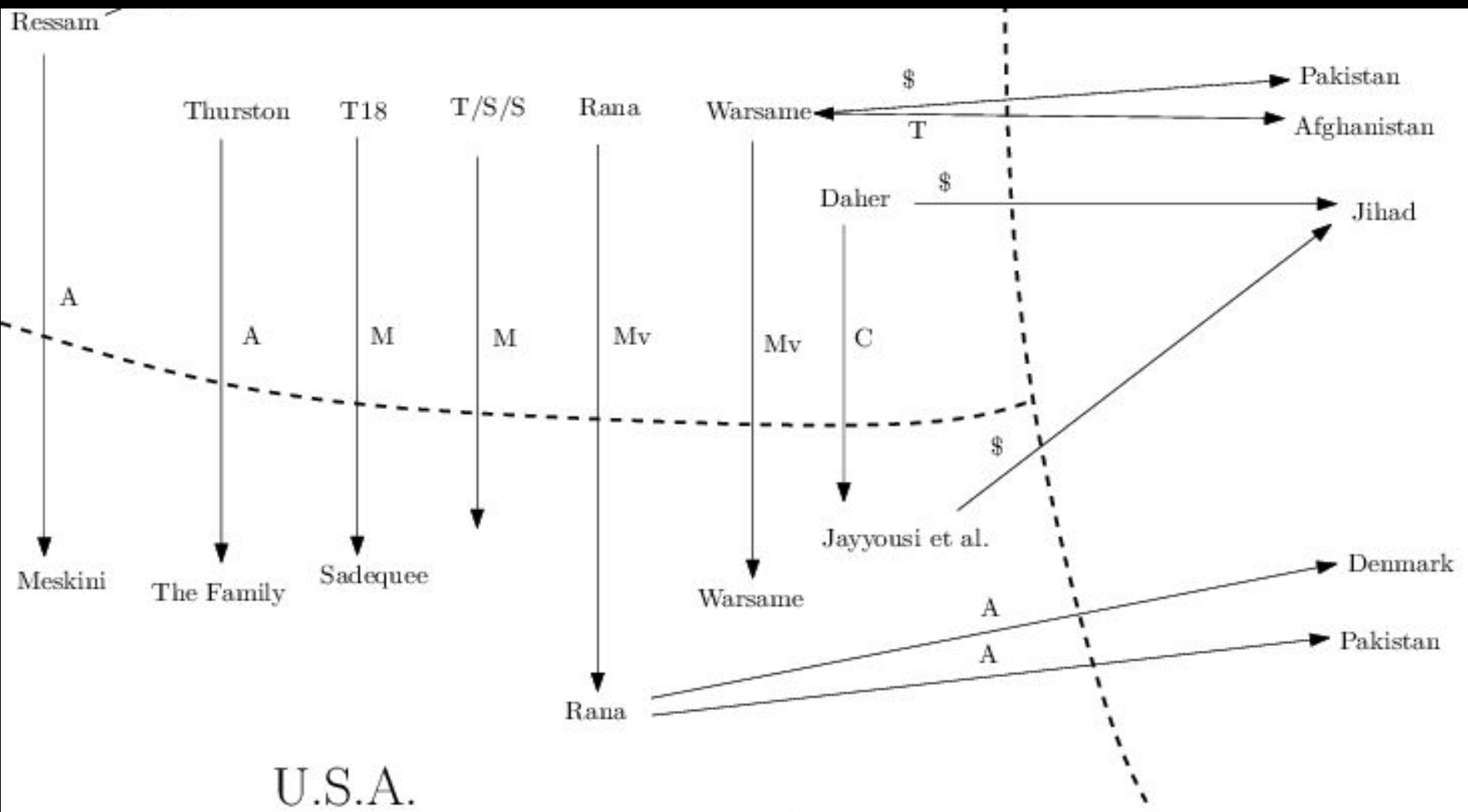
- Attacks on the US from Canada by Canadians (Ressam – jihadi, 2000)
- Attacks on the US by a Canadian recruited from the US (Thurston – animal rights, 2005)
- Drawing on support from the US to increase capabilities of Canadians to carry out violent extremism in Canada and potentially facilitate domestic attacks (Toronto 18 – jihadi, 2005);
- Support for global terrorism from a joint Canada-US base (Daher – Jihadi – al-Qaeda, 2005; Thanigasalam – LTTE – Sri Lanka, 2006)
- Support for global terrorism from a US base by Canadians legally residing in the US (Warsame – jihadi – 2003; Rana – jihadi – Denmark, 2011)

Metcalfe's Law

whereas the cost of a network grows linearly with the number of connections, *the value of a network is proportional to the square of the number of members of a network*

Strength of Weak Ties:

the greater the number of inter-connected users, the greater is the threat: a proliferation in the frequency of and capability to maintain bridging ties



M - materiel
 \$ - financing

SNA

- two cross-border networks are between large groups on one side of the border and one or a few on the other (The Family – Thurston and Rubin, Toronto 18 – Sadequee and Ahmed);
- five are between small groups on both sides of the border (Ressam, Warsame, Thanigasalam, Daher, Rana);
- four are for the purpose of enabling attacks in other countries (Thanigasalam, Warsame, Daher, Rana);
- four derive from connections stemming from a country other than Canada (Ressam, Thurston, Thanigasalam, Rana) as countries of origin or places of terrorist training or propaganda.

Modelling politically motivate cross-border violent extremism

- H1: The existence of similar policies with regards to individual rights and freedoms enables the development of cross-border networks: Similar laws concerning freedom of association, speech, and so forth make it easier for individuals and groups with like-minded goals and values to establish connections;
- H2: Differences in policy create markets of opportunity on either side of the border;
- H3: Those bent on extremist violence exploit the countervailing transaction costs thus created for material and ideational gain;
- H4: Social, ethnic and diaspora capital acts as an enabler in the exploitation of countervailing transaction costs;
- H5: Borders impose costs that limit the development of large, well-connected networks: large networks on one or other side of a border tend to interact with small units on the other side;
- H6: The actors involved behave strategically, and cross-border networks are a means to an end.

Observations/Questions

- No systematic threat emanates from Canada
- It's a two-way street
- Canada lives next to the world's largest weapon's market: What's the solution? Policy harmonization? Higher inspection rates?
- Terrorists cross legally at points of entry; we wouldn't detect them, certainly not because of more technology
- Why enforce between ports of entry when terrorists don't cross there?
- Is terrorism really the problem? Would all this money not be better spent on intel and investigations? Why not get rid of land-border inspections altogether?
- Who are we trying to protect?

Ongoing & Future Research

- Terrorist are thought to leverage org crime networks; but rational choice suggests their networks are different
- Networks are functional: differentiation determines the structure and composition of the network
- The counter-intuitive effects of more security at the border