



INTERNATIONAL LAW
JOURNAL

**WHITE BLACK
LEGAL LAW
JOURNAL**
**ISSN: 2581-
8503**

Peer - Reviewed & Refereed Journal

The Law Journal strives to provide a platform for discussion of International as well as National Developments in the Field of Law.

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THE ANDERS BREIVIK ATTACKS – LONE-WOLF TERRORISM, IDEOLOGICAL CRIME AND PENAL RESPONSE

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Abstract

In 21st century most important example of lone wolf terrorism is 2011 Norway attack done by Anders Behring Breivik. In this case study I will try to explain the attack in detail, my focus is on offender ideological motivation, psychological and socio-political environment that influenced him. How a single man planned everything, operate alone and execute a large scale of violence that resulted in deaths of 77 people with social trauma.

Then I will try analyses concept ideological crime and process of self-radicalization, focusing on online environment. It shows the growing importance of digital platforms with violent behaviour. And with the response of Norwegian criminal justice system how they give unique approach to punishment and with preventive detention.¹

Finally in last I will examine this case through criminological theories like strain theory, social learning and control theory and routine activity theory. This shows deeper understanding of case with causes and dynamics of lone wolf terrorism and then I will conclude with importance of criminology with relation with modern forms of ideological violence and with effective preventive strategies.

1. Introduction

Terrorism is getting very higher in past few decades. Earlier, it was something like organized groups that do everything together like planning operations, structured and clear objectives. In recent years, there is very big shift toward lone wolf terrorism, where individuals act alone without support from any people or organization. This transformation is big challenge for law enforcement agencies and policy makers. The most important example of lone wolf terrorism is 2011 Norway attack² carried out by Anders Breivik. His act shocked everyone not only

¹ Norwegian Police Service, *Report on the 22 July Terror Attacks* (2012)

² 2011 Norway Attacks: *Government of Norway Official Report* (2012).

Norway but the entire world. The level of violence, the vulnerability of victims and ideological motivations behind his attack made this case a subject of academic and criminological study.

³This case provides a comprehensive examination of Breivik attacks by analyzing offenders' mind, background, nature of crime and also try to connect with criminal theories to understand this case and such act in better way.

2. Background

Anders Behring Breivik was born on 13 February, 1979, in Oslo, Norway. His childhood and also upbringing have a big role and have been widely analyzed to understand the factors that may have contributed to his later actions.⁴

His parents separated when he was young and he was raised by his mother. Relationship with father was normal which have contributed to feelings of abandonment and identity confusion. According to reports his upbringing involves emotional instability, although it not includes any kind of extreme abuse or neglect.

When he was in his teenage years, Breivik struggled socially. He was not able to form lasting relation with anyone and withdrew himself from social interactions. A very significant turning point in his life was his attraction towards online communities. He spent so much time on internet; he tries to engage with forums and reading material that promoted extremist ideologies. This type of platforms provides him a kind of sense of belonging and validation that he lacked in his real life. After time, Breivik developed a rigid ideological framework characterized by strong anti-immigration and anti-Islamic action was necessary to this threat.

3. Ideological Development and Manifesto

The most important thing is in the case is Breivik ideological preparation. He alone authored a lengthy manifesto titled 2083 A European Declaration of independence, in this all his plan and beliefs was justified.

The manifesto is very good and highly structured and detailed. He portrayed himself as a movement or we can say a larger movement aimed to defend European culture. His action was framed and form against what he perceived as cultural invasion. All his desire was in the document for legacy. He was very smart and constructed a narrative in which he was not a criminal but a political actor engaged in broader struggle.

³ Anders Behring Breivik, 2083: *A European Declaration of Independence* (2011).

⁴ Norwegian Ministry of Justice & Public Security, *White Paper on Terrorism Response* (2013).

From criminology perspective, manifesto serves like an evidence of premeditation and with ideological commitment. It explains how someone beliefs can motivate individual to commit this type of violence act.

4. Detailed Account of the Attacks

Attack done by Breivik on July 22, 2011, and this were done by him in two phases, with smartness and carefully planned with coordination.

4.1 Preparation and Planning

He spent so much time for preparing this attack. He collected materials for explosives, arranged everything, planned his action. He uses some legal means to avoid detection. This type of preparation shows high level of organization and determination.⁵

4.2 Oslo Bombing

This was the first phase of attack and this involved a car bomb placed in the government district of Oslo. This explosive cause so much damage to buildings with death of eight peoples. This bombing done multiples purposes. It created chaos, diverted attention and also demonstration of Breivik capability that he can can do something like this large-scale violence.

4.3 Utøya Island Massacre

Then he moved to Utøya island where a camp was organized by labour party. Disguised a police officer, he gained access to island. He began shooting participants. This attack last around an hour in these 69 people were killed. Majority was young individuals, this phase of the attack highlights the calculated and targeted nature of Breivik action.⁶

5. Lone-Wolf Terrorism: Concept and Challenges

This terrorism refers to very violence act and this was operated independently by individuals.

5.1 Characteristics

- Ideological motivation
- Self-radicalization

⁵ Andrew Silke, *Terrorists, Victims and Society* (John Wiley & Sons 2003).

⁶ Jerrold M. Post, *The Mind of the Terrorist* (2007).

- No direct organizational support
- Independent planning

5.2 Challenges in Prevention

Lone wolf attackers are very difficult to detect because they:

- Operate in secrecy
- Do not communicate extensively with others
- Use legal means to prepare

6. Psychological and Behavioural Analysis

His psychological profile becomes debate topic.⁷

6.1 Personality Traits

- Lack of empathy
- Narcissism
- Desire for recognition

6.2 Mental Health Debate

His doctor evaluated him with mental illness, but after it was detected that he was legally sane. This shifts the focus from mental illness to ideological motivation.

7. Role of Society and Online Radicalization

His action was influenced by online environments. Internet given him access to extremist content and communities that reinforced his beliefs.

8. Criminal Justice Response

Norwegian system of law responded in a very well manner that reflected its commitment to rule of law with human rights and a rehabilitative approach of punishment. Despite giving him a hard punishment after this much of brutality and scale of crime, Norway chose to uphold its legal principles rather than adopt purely punitive or emotionally driven response. Breivik was subjected to comprehensive legal process included psychiatric evaluations with trial

⁷ Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Univ. Pa. Press 2008).

proceeding and judicial review. One more legal issue was during the trial whether he was legally insane at time of attack or not. While assessment mental illness evaluation concluded that he was legally sane and he was criminally responsible of his actions. Now after this determination court allowed with sentencing under standard criminal framework.⁸

He was sentenced for 21 years of preventive detention, this is the maximum sentence available under Norwegian law but it differs from other countries. In preventive detention it extends to five years if individual is considered as a threat to society. Now it means that Breivik will remain in prison for life if he is not safe for society or safe to release.

Primary objective of this type of punishment is not retribution but a kind of risk management and for social protection. Only focusing on the punishment is not work, Norwegian system emphasizes rehabilitation for serious offenders. He held in high security condition but still retains some rights, including access to education, healthcare and controlled social interaction. Now this shows that after all the crime individual treated with dignity.

Now this approach come with international debate. Critics argue that this type of punishment is very lenient for this type of offender, supporter contended this maintaining humane standard of justice even after this type of case its important to save democratic value and prevent justice system. Norwegian response gives commitment to legal consistency with principles

9. Criminological Analysis

In the case of Breivik provides various significant criminological theories, it helps to explain how individual belief, their social connections and other factors can also contribute to criminal behaviour.

9.1 Strain Theory

This Theory talks about individuals that hoe they turn to crime when they experience frustration due to expectations and reality. In this case strain was not economic but cultural and ideological. The value of European was like threat by immigration and multiculturalism.

9.2 Social Learning Theory

In this theory this type of criminal behaviour is learned with interaction from others. But in this case Breivik alone acted, his touch with the online extremist communities played very important role in shaping his plans. After repeated exposure to such ideas reduced his moral

⁸ European Commission, *Radicalisation Awareness Network Report* (2016).

act and made violent action.

9.3 Control Theory

This theory emphasizes importance of strong social bonds so people can prevent their deviant behaviour. People those who are connected with their family, institution or with society they are less engaged in crime. Breivik was not connected with the group or socially active and type of thing give more power to act without fear.⁹

9.4 Routine Activity Theory

This is king of offender activity theory it explains crime as three types: motivated offender, suitable targets, absence of guardianship. In Utoya attack, he was highly motivated the victim was in very bad stage, and a different location lacked protection. This all mixed and make an environment where crime can be easily committed and impact society.

9.5 Radicalization Theory

Modern criminology place strong side on radicalization processes. In this case self radicalization, where individual independently adopts criminal behaviour. Continuous exposure to ideological content he developed mindset

10. Prevention and Lessons

This case need for:

- Early intervention
- Community
- monitoring online radicalization.

11. Advanced Criminological Perspectives on Lone-Wolf Terrorism

To under the action of Anders Behring Breivik, it is important to understand some criminal theories and examine perspective that talks about modern crime those involving ideology and individual radicalization.

11.1 Differential Association Theory

Given by Sutherland, this theory talks about criminal behaviour and interactions with other

⁹ Robert K. Merton, Social Structure and Anomie, 3 *Am. Soc. Rev.* (1938).

people, but in this case Breivik alone acted he was so much in online communities.¹⁰

- Framed extremist actions as necessary
- Justified violence
- Dehumanized certain groups

11.2 Anomie and Cultural Conflict

This is given by Durkheim and developed by Merton, and it talks about social norms.

- Political systems failed to protect cultural identity
- Traditional European values were under threat

This creates conflict between social norms and values.

11.3 Labeling Theory

This suggests deviant behaviour of individuals when they labelled as deviant by society. This theory is less connected with this case, it can still offer insight into how he viewed himself. Breivik not see him as criminal. He thought himself like protector or warrior. This theory only justifies his actions.

12. The Role of Technology in Modern Crime

In this case Breivik significant shift in online platform and connect in technical advancement.

12.1 Internet as a Tool for Radicalization

Internet played crucial role in this case

- Platform for reinforcement of beliefs
- Source of ideological content
- Space for planning and research

12.2 Digital Echo Chambers

Online environment create echo where individuals get exposed only with information that confirms beliefs.¹¹

- Reduced exposure to opposing viewpoints
- Increased polarization

¹⁰ *The People v. Anders Behring Breivik* (Nor. 2012).

¹¹ Travis Hirschi, *Causes of Delinquency* (1969).

- Strengthening of extremist ideologies

This case express so much that how can environment intensify beliefs.

13. Comparative Analysis with Other Lone-Wolf Attacks

To understand this case we have to understand the other case related to lone wolf attackers.¹²

13.1 Similarities

- Targeting civilians
- Ideological motivation
- Independent planning
- Self-radicalization

13.2 Differences

This case stands out because:

- He produced a detailed ideological manifesto
- He carried out **two coordinated attacks**
- He prepared extensively over several years

This case makes a significant role in criminological study because of planning and documentation.

14. Risk Factors and Warning Signs

This is an important aspect of criminology as it identifies risk factors and this sows criminal behaviour of individual.

14.1 Individual Risk Factors

- Desire for recognition
- Social isolation
- Strong ideological beliefs
- Identity crisis

¹² Lawrence E. Cohen & Marcus Felson, Social Change and Crime Rate Trends, [volume] *Am. Soc. Rev.* (1979).

14.2 Behavioural Indicators

- Preparation activities (e.g., acquiring weapons or materials) ¹³
- Sudden withdrawal from society
- Consumption of extremist content
- Obsession with political or ideological issues

Almost all of these warning signs and behaviour was present in Breivik behaviour.

15. Failure of Preventive Mechanisms

There are gaps in existing preventive systems.

15.1 Intelligence Limitations

In our history traditional intelligence focus only on organized groups. But in lone wolf an individual operates everything independently and does everything alone.

15.2 Legal Constraints

Focusing on individuals without any clear evidence with the intention of crime and it raises concerns about liberty, privacy and civil liberty.

15.3 Lack of Early Intervention

In Breivik case there is no effective mechanism to identify radicalization process.

16. Societal Reaction and Collective Response

Norwegian society response related to the attack was notable for their unity and uniform resilience.

Instead of responding with hatred or with fear, public demonstrated solidarity. And this response is very important and played a very crucial role in this case:

- Supporting victims and their families
- Preventing further division
- Upholding democratic values

If we try to see with a criminological perspective, society's answers and reactions can influence the future pattern of the crime by either reinforcing or discouraging extremist narratives.¹⁴

¹³Robert K. Merton, *Social Structure and Anomie*, 3 *Am. Soc. Rev.* (1938).

¹⁴ Paul Gill, *Lone-Actor Terrorists* (Routledge 2015).

17. Media Representation and Its Impact

Media plays a very crucial role in shaping and changing mind with perception of the public.

17.1 Positive Role

- Highlighting the impact of crime
- Raising awareness
- Informing the public

17.2 Negative Effects

- Providing attention that offenders may seek
- Risk of glorifying offenders
- Spreading fear

Breivik case gets so much media coverage, which raised a lot of question about balance between information.

18. Ethical and Legal Questions

This case gets so much several important ethical and legal issues. Like nature of justice, rights of offender and limits of state power

18.1 Nature of Justice

Justice should only focus on punishment or also focus on rehabilitation.

18.2 Rights of Offenders

Even in extreme worst case, offenders get retain human rights. Norway's approach reflects principle.

18.3 Limits of State Power

It balances security and freedom of individuals and it is a key challenge.

19. Criminology-Centered Conclusion

This case of Anders Behring Breivik provides deep significance example with complex criminological study. It mainly explains how the crime should be understood through single lens but it requires multidimensional approach like psychological, social, and with ideological

factor.¹⁵

From criminological perspective:

- Modern crime is increasingly influenced by technology and global narratives
- Crime can be driven by ideology rather than material gain
- Learning processes, even in virtual environments, play a crucial role
- Social isolation and weak bonds increase the risk of deviance

In this case most important thing is evolving nature of terrorism. Most important lone wolf attackers is a new challenge that need updated theoretical framework and preventive strategies.¹⁶

Criminology as discipline plays important role in addressing challenges. By analyzing cases like:

- Informing policy and law enforcement practices
- Understanding the root causes of crime
- Developing effective prevention strategies

In conclusion Breivik attack are not isolate incident but also reflects broader change in nature of crime. This also underline importance of criminology analysis to the change and ensuring safer society.

20. Conclusion

Anders Behring Breivik case shows one of the most significant and disturbing examples of lone wolf terrorism in this modern history. His plan and actions very clearly show how combination of ideology, personal isolation and broader societal influences come tighter and produce act of extreme violent act. And unlike traditional forms of the terrorism Breivik rely on organized groups, in this case it shows growing threat by individuals who alone operates everything independently, and makes detection and prevention more difficult for law enforcement agencies.

An important aspect of this case is role of ideology as driving force behind Breivik criminal behaviour. Breivik was not motivated by his personal gain or with emotion, only his actions were rooted deeply in rigid belief system. Breivik was opposed to multiculturalism and immigration, and this were combined with perception of cultural threat, and this allow him to do violence against innocent individuals. This shows ideological convictions, changed over

¹⁵ Norway Attacks: Breivik Sentenced to Preventive Detention, BBC News (2012).

¹⁶ United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime, *Handbook on Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism* (2017).

time, and override moral boundaries lead to extreme outcomes.¹⁷

And this is important role of social isolation in shaping his behaviour. Breivik limits social connections and he withdrawal from society reduced his influence of conventional social controls that give deviant behaviour. He was totally dependent on online platforms and this creates an environment where there is no challenge. This type of isolation gives him sufficient time to prepare and this played a crucial role in transforming his thought into violent actions. From criminological perspective this case gives very important insights into causes of such crimes. Theories like strain theory gives knowledge about social and cultural pressures can give side effects like frustration and aggression. Social learning theory says how extremist ideas, even in virtual spaces can normalize deviant behaviour. Control theory gives importance of strong social bonds in prevent crime and also prevent action and this is notably absent in criminal actions. These theories explain his actions that his action was not random but influenced by identifiable patterns and processes.¹⁸

This case underscores challenge involved in preventing lone wolf terrorism. Like traditional policing methods, this focus on organized networks, and this less effective in identifying individuals who act alone. This approach includes monitoring online radicalization, promoting awareness in community, and developing early intervention strategies. Breivik was opposed to multiculturalism and immigration, and this were combined with perception of cultural threat, and this allow him to do violence against innocent individuals. This shows ideological convictions, changed over time, and override moral boundaries lead to extreme outcomes.¹⁹

In conclusion Breivik case gives a powerful reminder of evolving nature of crime in contemporary society. It shows need for a deeper criminological understanding of individual driven violence and it also highlights importance of adapting theories and practices to address new types of threats. By studying all this criminology not only helps explain these crimes occur but it also plays a crucial role in developing strategies to prevent them in future and it gives community awareness with developing early intervention strategies.²⁰

¹⁷ Europol, *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT)* (2017).

¹⁸ Stuart Hall, *The Work of Representation* (1997).

¹⁹ Yvonne Jewkes, *Media and Crime* (2015).

²⁰ Human Rights Watch, *Norway: Justice Response to Terrorism* (2013).