



The Eco-Terrorist Wave

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1. Introduction

In *The Causes of Terrorism* (1981), Martha Crenshaw suggests that Terrorism Studies can be organized around three segments: causes, development and sociopolitical consequences (p. 379). In *Causes of Terrorism: An Expanded and Updated Review of the Literature* (2004), Brynjar Lia & Katja Skjølberg concentrate on the causes. According to the authors, ‘Contagion Theories of Terrorism’ (See: Midlarsky, Crenshaw & Yoshida, 1980; Waldmann, 2005; Weimann & Brosius, 1988) ‘[...] have demonstrated that the occurrence of terrorist attacks is far from random, but that there is a clear trend of periodical cycle in the occurrence of terrorist attacks, or *waves* of terrorism’ [emphasis added] (p. 17). Indeed, in *The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism* (2004), David C. Rapoport argues that modern terrorism can be seen and understood in consecutive ‘Waves’. According to the author, these are periods linked to their concomitant generations, and characterized by ideological and tactical similarities across various organizations. Such movement composes trends that stand out over others around the globe: the ‘Anarchist Wave’ (1st) emerged in the 1880s, later replaced by the ‘Anticolonial Wave’ (2nd) in the 1920s, the ‘New Left Wave’ (3rd) in the 1960s, and the ‘Religious Wave’ (4th) since 1979 and likely to last until 2025 (p. 47).

Subsequently, several authors conducted research on Rapoport’s Wave Theory. Some test and corroborate it, such as Karen Rasler & William R. Thompson (2009) and Leonard Weinberg & William Eubank (2010). Jeffrey Kaplan (2007, 2008, 2016) goes beyond corroborating it to argue that there is an ongoing ‘New Tribalistic Wave’ (5th). Albert J. Bergesen & Omar Lizardo (2004), William R. Thompson (2006) and Mark Sedgwick (2007) develop their own Wave Theories. Interestingly, Rasler & Thompson (2009) recognizes

organizations committed to environmental protection in the International Terrorism: Attributes of Terrorist Events (ITERATE) database but decided not to include them, as these would not be within an original 'Wave' (p. 34). Sedgwick (2007) mentions organizations committed to animal rights but did not even consider them as being terrorist since they do not aim to overthrow the government (p. 103). Challenged by Tom Parker & Nick Sitter's (2016) Strain Theory, Rapoport (2016) conceded that the Wave Theory could be amended to cover '[...] single-issued groups [...]' committed to the issues neglected by Rasler & Thompson (2009) and Sedgwick (2007), such as the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) (p. 223).

Even though there are other single-issues (e.g., Anti-Abortion), Eco-Terrorism – the one represented by the ALF, the ELF and other ideologically similar organizations – deserves special attention. Once considered the biggest domestic terrorist threat in the United Kingdom and the United States (Monaghan, 2013, p. 941; Lewis, 2005, para. 22), Eco-Terrorism has emerged as the main single-issue in the European Union (EU) (Europol, 2017, p. 48). In Brazil in December 2018, the Wild Secret Society (*'Sociedade Secreta Silvestre'* in Portuguese) supposedly threatened to attack Jair Bolsonaro – then elected Brazil's President – during the presidential inauguration (Correio Braziliense, 2018). Hence, the present research heeds Rapoport's call to answer a relevant question that remains unaddressed by the Terrorism Studies literature: Was/Is there an 'Eco-Terrorist Wave'?

Before harmonizing Eco-Terrorism under Rapoport's Wave Theory, the present research presents the methods to be adopted and the main elements in Rapoport's Wave Theory. It is concluded by providing suggestions to advance the research agenda in Terrorism Studies.

2. Research Design & Methods

Methodologically, the present research is built upon a Time Series analysis on the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). Currently, the GTD is the largest database on terrorist events available, containing data on 181,691 occurrences perpetrated between 1970 and 2017. It is run by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) (START, 2019). By revealing trends over time, a Time Series analysis seems to be the most appropriate method to recognize an Eco-Terrorist ‘Wave-Like’ pattern. Unsurprisingly, Rapoport’s Wave Theory has been tested by Rasler & Thompson (2009) and Weinberg & Eubank (2010) through the same approach. Supplementary, the present research does historical research to shed light on the trends.

Like ‘Terrorism’, ‘Eco-Terrorism’ remains consensually undefined among scholars and the Eco-Terrorism Studies literature has been concentrating on challenging the ‘Eco-Terrorism’ label (See: Cooke, 2013, Hadley, 2009; Sorenson, 2009; Sumner & Weidman, 2013; Vanderheiden, 2005; Wagner, 2008).¹ On the political sphere, according to the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Eco-Terrorism is ‘[...] the use or threatened use of violence of a criminal nature against innocent victims or property by an environmentally-oriented, subnational group for environmental-political reasons, or aimed at an audience beyond the target, often of a symbolic nature’ (Jarboe, 2002, para. 6; See Also: Eagan, 1996, p. 2). However, to be aligned to the GTD, the present research adopts its ‘Terrorist Attack’ definition: ‘the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation’ (START, 2018, p. 10).

Since ideological categorizations are neither defined nor coded by the GTD, the ideological characteristics related to Eco-Terrorism had to be manually categorized. For this purpose, all 181,691 occurrences were extracted into an Excel sheet, where the terms ‘Animal’, ‘Earth’, ‘Ecolog’, ‘Environment’, ‘Forest’, ‘Hunt’ and ‘Tree’ were searched within the columns ‘Gname’ (i.e., Organization’s Name), ‘Motive’ (i.e., Motive of the Attack) and ‘Summary’ (i.e., Summary of the Occurrence). This approach is adopted because it is the same one used by Jennifer Varriale Carson, Gary LaFree & Laura Dugan (2012) to research on Eco-Terrorism in the United States between 1970 and 2007 (p. 301). As Founding Director of the START, LaFree is a leading expert on the GTD, thus it is pertinent to adopt this technique. By doing so, it is possible to recognize 25 organizations committed to Eco-Terrorism that perpetrated 252 attacks between 1970 and 2017 (Table 1):

(Table1)

3. Rapoport’s Wave Theory

According to Rapoport (2004), ‘Waves’ are catalyzed by one or several notable political events: In 1878, Vera Zasulich ignited the ‘Anarchist Wave’ by shooting a police commander dead. The ‘Anticolonial Wave’ is connected to the Treaty of Versailles in 1919; the ‘New Left Wave’ to the Viet Cong’s triumph over the U.S. troops in the Vietnam War in 1975; and the ‘Religious Wave’ to the Iranian Revolution, the Afghans’ triumph over the U.S.S.R. and an Islamic Century’s beginning in 1979. Once a ‘Wave’ emerges, ‘Revolution’ is its ‘[...] overriding aim [...], but revolution is understood in different ways’ and its name mirrors it.

For instance, during the ‘Anticolonial Wave’, ‘Revolution’ was understood as ending imperial possessions to establish independent States (e.g., the National Liberation Front [*Front de Libération Nationale* - FLN] against France in Algeria; the National Organization of Cypriot Fighters [*Ethniki Organosis Kypriou Agoniston* - EOKA] against Greece in Cyprus) (pp. 49-54, 56, 61).

Commonly, ‘Waves’ have similar spreading elements across them. Each ‘Wave’ had a main tactical book: *Revolutionary Catechism* (‘Anarchist Wave’ / Author: Sergei Nechaev); *Guerrilla War* (‘Anticolonial Wave’ / Author: Georges Grivas); *Mini-Manual of the Urban Guerrilla* (‘New Left Wave’ / Author: Carlos Marighella) and; *Military Studies in the Jihad Against Tyrants* (‘Religious Wave’ / Author: Osama bin Laden). In addition, in-person trainings open to individuals and/or parallel organizations, like those provided by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) (‘New Left Wave’) in Lebanon and al-Qaeda (‘Religious Wave’) in several locations, produced tactical similarities among organizations within the same ‘Wave’: assassination during the ‘Anarchist Wave’ and the ‘Anticolonial Wave’, kidnapping during the ‘New Left Wave’ and suicide bombings during the ‘Religious Wave’. Sometimes, achievements and internal developments are made possible through external support. For instance, Irish-American communities in the United States materially and politically supported the Irish Republican Army (IRA) (‘Anticolonial Wave’), which included sponsorship, volunteers, weapons and lobbying the U.S. government to endorse their aim to establish an independent Irish State. Eventually, ‘Waves’ reach their apogee. For instance, the ‘New Left Wave’ peaked between 1968 and 1982. Throughout this period, 951 individuals were made hostages during 409 occurrences. In 1970, Aldo Moro – then Italy’s Prime Minister – would be kidnapped and assassinated by the Red Brigades (‘*Brigata Rossa*’ in Italian), becoming the most representative incident during that period (Ibid., p. 49, 51-52, 55, 57-58, 64, 67).

Succeeding expansions and contractions phases, 'Waves' are expected to break 'when a wave's energy cannot inspire new organizations [...]. Resistance, political concessions and changes in the perceptions of generations are critical factors in explaining the disappearance.' Governments react individually to suppress a 'Wave', like the United States during the 'Religious Wave', but also pushing supranational organizations into action: the League of Nations sought to contain the 'Anticolonial Wave' and the United Nations (UN) did the same during the 'New Left Wave' and the 'Religious Wave'. Controversially, the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) supported terrorism against each other's interest abroad during the Cold War (Ibid, p. 48, 53, 55-56, 58, 61-61, 64).

It is worth mentioning that, even though organizations within a 'Wave' tend to dissolve prior to the 'Wave' itself, some organizations do not, like the IRA ('Anticolonial Wave'). Other organizations are incorporated by the subsequent 'Wave', like the PLO (From the 'New Left Wave' to the 'Religious Wave') (Ibid., p. 48).

4. An Eco-Terrorist 'Wave'?

Distributing all the occurrences throughout time and location, it seems that there has been a global 'Eco-Terrorist 'Wave' (Figure 1 & Table 2). Still, this Eco-Terrorist 'Wave-Like' pattern must present the above-mentioned elements to be harmonized under Rapoport's Wave Theory.

(Figure1)

(Table2)

4.1. The Starting Point

The 'Eco-Terrorist Wave' seems to have been ignited by the Band of Mercy's campaign in the United Kingdom in the early 1970s. Back in 1958, in spreading forged essences to confuse dogs trying to scent stags to be hunted, the League Against Cruel Sports (LACS) sabotaged the Devon and Somerset Staghound. In 1963, using the same tactic to achieve the same objective, the Hunt Saboteurs Association (HSA) sabotaged the South Devon Hunt (HSA, 2018, "1963 - Protest to Resistance"). In 1972, established by Cliff Goodman and Ronnie Lee – then Hunt Saboteurs Association (HSA) members – the Band of Mercy sought to advance animal rights. However, they aimed to protect not only the animals being hunted, but also those in laboratories, ranches or elsewhere (Monaghan, 1997, p. 109). Both moral and tactical reasons led them not to target individuals (Lee, 2006, para. 5). Using violent sabotage tactics against properties, their actions included damaging vehicles used to transport animals to foxhunt kennels and laboratories, damaging a boat used to slaughter baby seals, burning a vivisection laboratory under construction, and numerous other damages (Monaghan, 1997, p. 109). Having been arrested in the United Kingdom in 1974, '[...] in prison, Ronnie Lee learned to mimic the Irish Republican Army (IRA), adopting the organizational structure of decentralized, small, autonomous cells' (Liddick, 2006, p. 40). Such an organizational structure can be called 'Leaderless Resistance' (See: Beam, 1992, para. 15). Once released in 1976, Ronnie Lee rebranded the organization as 'Animal Liberation Front'. Ronnie Lee said:

I feared this could deter other people and put an end to this form of direct action. But when I came out of prison, I was pleasantly surprised at the number of animal protection campaigners who now wanted to become involved. It was at this point that it was decided

to change the name to the Animal Liberation Front (A.L.F.), in order to clearly reflect what we stood for. (Lee, 2006, para. 8)

Since then, the ALF has been something like a backbone in the ‘Eco-Terrorist Wave’. From the initial 30 adherents, the ALF expanded to about 1,500 by 1985 (Liddick, 2006, p. 41) and 2,500 by 1997 (Monaghan, 1997, p. 112). Other ideologically similar organizations, such as the Animal Rights Militia (ARM), the Hunt Retribution Squad and the Justice Department are rooted in the ALF (Liddick, 2006, p. 41; See Also: Hirsch-Hoefler & Mudde, 2014, p. 591; Monaghan, 1999, p. 161; Trujillo, 2005, p. 161).

Similarly, in the United States in 1972, established by Gary Blake, John Walker and Pat Salmon, the Eco-Raiders opposed rampant development in Arizona state to protect the natural environment. The organization cut down billboards, sabotaged construction equipment and sites, damaged newly constructed houses and numerous other properties. All Eco-Raiders members ended up having the same consequences as Cliff Goodman and Ronnie Lee (Smith, Damphousse & Roberts, 2006, pp. 213-215).

Still, the organization inspired *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975), by Edward Abbey, a book that would later boost ideological and tactical inspirations being established, such as the ELF and the Earth First! (EF!). In this novel, George Washington Hayduke III – a Vietnam War veteran – joined by a saboteur, a Wilderness guide and a billboard torcher, believes that the American Wilderness (See: U.S. National Park Service, 2018, “Wilderness”) must be protected against the industrial exploitation. Then, the characters launch a campaign, sabotaging machines, railways, tractors, etc. Even though Edward Abbey himself and other individuals cut down several billboards in New Mexico, United States, in 1958 (Long, 2004, p. 18), this plot is inspired by the Eco-Raiders (Liddick, 2006, p. 18).

In the late 1970s, 'The Monkey Wrench Gang' would become real. Under the Jimmy Carter administration (1977-1981), the U.S. Administration of Agriculture opened 36 million acres of the American Wilderness for commercial exploitation and reserved another 11 million acres to be exploited later, through the Roadless Area Review and Evaluation II (RARE II) in 1979. Only 15 million acres were protected from commercial exploitation (See: Bergland, 1979). It led Dave Foreman – then Wilderness Society's lobbyist in Washington D.C. – to leave the organization and establish the EF! in the United States in 1980 (Eagan, 1996, p. 5; Lee, 1995, p. 112). According to Lee (1995), the EF! had over 2,000 adherents across the United States by May 1982 (p.120). Dave Foreman's arrest by the FBI in the United States in 1989 (Ibid., p. 122) generated an unwillingness to carry out illegal actions within the EF!. It led a group to leave the organization and establish the ELF in the United Kingdom in 1992 (Hirsch-Hoefler & Mudde, 2014, p. 591). Buell (2009) sees *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975) as '[...] a catalytic inspiration for the Earth First! [...]' [emphasis added] (p. 153). Liddick (2006) argues that '[...] Abbey's book provided the operational model for later groups such as Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front is unmistakable [...]' (p. 3) and '[...] has become something of a bible to the radical environmental movement [...]' (p. 18). On the ELF website, an Eco-Terrorism timeline places this novel as the starting point (ELF, 2017). Given its prominence by that time, the ALF also inspired the ELF's establishment. In a communiqué, the ELF states: '[...] we take inspiration from Luddites, Levellers, Diggers, the Autonomie squatter movement, the ALF, the Zapatistas, and the little people - those mischievous elves of lore [...]' [emphasis added] (Pickering, 2003, p. 10). Based on the ALF, the ELF also adopted the 'Leaderless Resistance' as its organizational structure (Hirsch-Hoefler & Mudde, 2014). Other ideologically similar organizations, such as the Evan Mecham Eco-Terrorist International Conspiracy (EMETIC), are also connected to the EF! (Eagan, 1991, p. 7; Liddick, 2006, p. 60).

Inspiration might have also occurred between the ELF and the Environmental Life Force. John Hanna established the Environmental Life Force, produced, planted and detonated seven bombs of napalm in a crop-dusting aircraft in Salinas, California, U.S, on May 1, 1977. He was arrested at home by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and Santa Cruz Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) on November 22, 1977. On the Environmental Life Force website, it is written that ‘the original ELF (Environmental Life Force), disbanded in 1978 but the ELF name and its guerrilla tactics were copied in the early 1990’s by the Earth Liberation Front’ [emphasis added] (Environmental Life Force, 2001). On the ELF website, John Hanna is referred to as ‘[...] the founding father of the ELF concept, a philosophy that has been adopted by Earth Liberation Front and continues to this day’ and ‘as originally conceived by Hanna, the ELF would have no central leadership or chain of command’ (ELF, 2017). Still, inspiration has not been restricted to organizations committed to Eco-Terrorism. While the IRA belonged to the ‘Anti-Colonial Wave’ but inspired the ALF, the Zapatista National Liberation Army (*Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* - [EZLN] in Spanish) is not mentioned in the Wave Theory but inspired the ELF although belonging to the ‘New Left Wave’.

Summarizing, it is possible to argue that an Eco-Terrorist ‘Revolution’ would mean to advance animal rights and environmental protection, which can be observed since the phenomenon emerged.

4.2. The Spread

Despite the importance given to *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975), *Ecodefense: A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching* (1985), edited by Bill Haywood & Dave Foreman, is the main tactical book produced by the ‘Eco-Terrorist Wave’ or at least, the most similar to the those produced by the other ‘Waves’. In this manual, detailed guidance on several tactics (e.g., tree spiking, smoke bombing, fence cutting), complemented with propaganda (e.g., posters and silent agitators, spray paint slogans) and security advice (e.g., avoiding arrest, camouflage) are presented on more than three hundred pages. Nothing less than 11,000 copies had been sold by 1991 (Badolato, 1991, p. 238). Uncoincidentally, *Ecodefense: A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching* (1985) is dedicated to Edward Abbey, the preamble author.

Occasionally, periodicals reinvigorate tactical expertise. *Earth First! Journal* is a quarterly printed magazine in English that has been in publication since 1980. The August 2017 Issue advertising mentions technical articles, like *Breaking into Animal Labs and Carrying Out Boxes Full of Animals!* and the attempt to induce people to buy this issue with the claim that ‘this 72-page issue has everything an eco-radical could want [...]’ (EF! Journal, 2017, “Our Summer Issue is Now Available to Buy Online”). *Bite Back* is an irregularly printed periodical magazine in English that has been in publication since 2002. On its website, it is possible to order the printed version and to download the digital one. Its content is predominantly related to the ALF, including action reports, prisoner news, stories, etcetera (Bite Back, 2018).

Some organizations have also conducted in-person training. One commando-style training taught by Ronnie Lee inspired ‘Valerie’ (Pseudonym) to establish the ALF in the United States in 1982 (Best and Nocella II, 2004, p. 21). Later on, The Family, an umbrella organization originated through an alliance between the ALF and the ELF in the United States in 1995, hold ‘Book Clubs’, where the real intention ‘[...] was to provide training for new members, share lessons learned from recent actions, and plot the way forward [...]’ during its

campaign in the United States between 1995 and 2001 (Deshpande & Ernst, 2012, p. 17). Essentially, “‘Book Clubs’ were the mechanism to promote learning and teach tactics’ (Ibid., p. 20). The EF!’s preparation ‘[...] have included paramilitary training camps, training courses, and a network of advisers with technical expertise on the critical workings and vulnerabilities of the U.S. industrial infrastructure’ (Badolato, 1991, p. 238). Nowadays, the EF!’ ‘[...] hold[s] regular events (annual gatherings and training camps) that include training in various direct-action techniques. These events are publicized on the Internet and open to activists from any related organization’ (Trujillo, 2005, p. 162). Like other ‘Waves, the ‘Eco-Terrorist Wave’ has a signature tactic: ‘Facility/Infrastructure Attack’ (Figure 2):

(Figure2)

The GTD describes ‘Facility/Infrastructure Attack’ as ‘an act, excluding the use of an explosive, whose primary objective is to cause damage to a non-human target, such as a building, monument, train, pipeline, etcetera. Such attacks include arson and various forms of sabotage (e.g., sabotaging a train track is a facility/infrastructure attack, even if passengers are killed). Facility/Infrastructure attacks can include acts which aim to harm an installation, yet also cause harm to people incidentally (e.g. an arson attack primarily aimed at damaging a building, but causes injuries or fatalities)’ (START, 2018, p. 25). It is, in nature, sabotage under another nomenclature and was used by 17 (68%) organizations in 192 (76.19%) occurrences. Inextricably, this tactic composes the organizations’ strategies to impose economic damage on their targets, such as in the cases of the ALF (ALF, n.d., “The ALF Credo and Guidelines”) and the ELF (Pickering, 2003, “Guidelines”). Other tactics deployed include ‘Bombing/Explosion’ (8 [32%] Organizations; 32 [12.69%] Occurrences); ‘Unarmed Assault’ (4 [16%]

Organizations / 19 [7.53%] Occurrences); ‘Assassination’ (4 [16%] Organization / 7 [2.77%] Occurrences) and ‘Armed Assault’ and ‘Unknown’ (1 [4%] Organization / 1 [0.39%] Occurrence).

Regarding external support, the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) – the largest animal rights organization in the world – ‘has served as a media outlet for ALF and provided financial assistance to persons accused of or known to be involved in criminal activity’ (Liddick, 2006, p. 36). However, because strategies lead to the concentration on ‘Businesses’ (17 [68%] Organizations; 146 [57.93%] Occurrences), they have become a peculiar element to the ‘Eco-Terrorism Wave’. Ron Arnold – Executive Vice-President of the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise (CDFE) – is the person believed to have coined the ‘Eco-Terrorism’ label. Through the ‘Wise Use Movement’, the CDFE is highly bound to logging, mining, oil and other industries targeted by organizations committed to Eco-Terrorism (Smith, 2008, pp. 539, 545-547). In France in June 2018, Jean-François Guihard – President of the French Confederation of Butchers, Pork-Butchers and Caterers (CFBCT) (*Confédération Française de la Boucherie, Boucherie-Charcuterie, Traiteurs* in French) – addressed an open letter to Bernard Cazeneuve, then French Minister of Interior. Expressing the butchers’ concerns about vandalism acts perpetrated by vegans against their business, the CFBCT President stated that ‘[...] the attacks suffered by butchers and the whole industry are nothing more, nothing less than a form of terrorism [...]’² (Guihard, 2018, para. 5). Other targets include ‘Private Citizens & Properties’ (5 [20%] Organizations; 36 [14.28%] Occurrences); ‘Educational Institutions’ (5 [20%] Organizations; 35 [13.88%] Occurrences); ‘Government (General)’ (5 [20%] Organizations; 19 [7.53%] Occurrences); ‘Police’ (4 [16%] Organizations; 4 [1.58%] Occurrences); ‘Utilities’ (3 [12%] Organizations; 3 [1.19%] Occurrences); ‘Airports & Aircrafts’ (2 [8%] Organizations; 2 [0.79%] Occurrences) and ‘Food or Water Supply’,

‘Government (Diplomatic)’, ‘Journalists & Media’, ‘Maritime’, ‘Military’, ‘Telecommunication’ and ‘Utilities’ (1 [4%] Organizations; 1 [0.39%] Occurrences).

Eventually, the ‘Eco-Terrorist Wave’ reached an apogee. According to the GTD, it occurred between 1996 and 2006 (Figure 1). Such a period is quite conspicuous because it covers The Family’s establishment and campaign in the United States. There are 142 occurrences coded in the GTD throughout this period. Among them, The Family perpetrated 21 occurrences during its campaign, including the most symbolic and damaging to date: on October 19, 1998, The Family arsoned the Vail Ski Resort in Vail, Colorado, United States, opposing its expansion towards an area that could serve as lynxes’ habitat, an endangered animal (FOX News, 2006, “FOX Facts: Vail Firebombing Attack Timeline”).³

4.3. The Breaking Point (?)

Since 2016, there has been a reduction in the occurrences, which can be explained by their geographical concentration (Table 2) and Criminal Justice System responses to organizations committed to Eco-Terrorism in those areas. Not as broad as the League of Nations or the UN, the main international organization attempting to suppress the ‘Eco-Terrorist Wave’ has been the EU. In July 2011, in The Hague, Netherlands, Europol and Eurojust held a debate on animal rights extremism (Europol, 2011). However, no more incisive measures have been taken since then. In the United States, where 185 (73.11%) occurrences were staged, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)-led *Operation Backfire* (2005) arrested almost all The Family members (FBI, 2015). Despite such response, neither the ALF nor the ELF ceased to operate, which can be explained by their organizational structure (See: Brown, 2017; Gray,

2013; Joosse, 2007). Infiltrations and arrests usually do not compromise an entire ‘Leaderless Resistance’ (Gray, 2013, p. 658). Unsurprisingly, the ALF and the ELF, which are rooted in organizations that had their leaders arrested (Hirsch-Hoefler & Mudde, 2014, p. 591; Lee, 2006, para. 9), adopted the ‘Leaderless Resistance’ as their organizational structure. In the United Kingdom, where 30 (11.90%) other occurrences occurred, the U.K. National Domestic Extremism Unit (NDEU)-led *Operation Forton* (2005) and *Achilles* (2007) also targeted Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) members in the U.K, and even included phases in Belgium and the Netherlands, making the occurrences drop to zero in the United Kingdom in 2007 (Monaghan, 2013, p. 941).

Even though the ‘Eco-Terrorist Wave’ is experiencing a contraction phase, there are reasonable reasons to believe that it is just about to get bigger again. Firstly, while Rapoport (2004) argues that generations are inspired by their concomitant ideologies, Kirk Engdall, an U.S. FBI-led *Operation Backfire* leader, believes that such inspirations can transcend their generations:

It’s generational. People have a short-term memory. For a while, [Backfire] really quashed activity, but I think people are going to forget, and move forward anyway. There’s no long-lasting effect for deterrence and crime. People are young and dumb and think ‘well, I can do it better and quicker’. They don’t do the research. Nobody is a historian anymore. It helps for a little while – I think the conclusion of the case has helped – but I think in the end, they’re going to do it again. (Deshpande & Ernst, 2012, p. 27)

Recently, an article published by *Foreign Policy* suggested that thousands of ‘[...] hardcore activists [...]’ have all the necessary conditions set (e.g., Climate Change) to begin a ‘Green Wave of Extremism’ that governments are not prepared to confront (Bartlett, 2017, para. 4). Not that long ago either, John Jacobi conjectured that the ‘Eco-Terrorist Wave’ is on the rise and likely to become something more dangerous: ‘Militant Nihilism’ (Jacobi, 2019).

Finally, Eco-Terrorism is already reaching more locations than ever throughout the ongoing 2010s (Table 2).

5. Conclusions

Neglected by Rapoport's Wave Theory, the 'Eco-Terrorist Wave' presents similar characteristics as the other 'Waves'. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that, due to Eco-Terrorism's underreported aspect, it is unexpected that all occurrences related to the phenomenon are coded in the GTD. For instance, even though its temporal coverage predates the Band of Mercy's establishment, there are no coded occurrences perpetrated by the organization. On the other hand, the GTD is a more comprehensive database than the ones used by Rasler & Thompson (2009) (i.e., ITERATE) and Weinberg & Eubank (2010) (i.e., MIPT). It should be used to test Rapoport's Wave Theory, bearing in mind that only the 'New Left Wave' and the 'Religious Wave' can be examined due to its temporal coverage.

Future research on Eco-Terrorism could take a World-Systemic approach to provide an alternative explanation to its 'Wave-Like' pattern than the one provided by the Group approach in the present research. Following Durkheim's Social Fact reasoning, Bergesen & Lizardo (2004) argue that 'Global Wave of Terrorism' should have global explanations. For Eco-Terrorism, Climate Change might be a possible global explanation that given its magnitude, can make the current 'Eco-Terrorist Wave' look like nothing more than a 'Ripple' compared to what is to come.

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¹ Even though it does not necessarily reproduce the author's perspective on the phenomenon, the present research adopts ‘Eco-Terrorism’ as the standard label to avoid terminological discrepancies with Rapoport's Wave Theory.

² Original (French): ‘[...] Les attaques que subissent les boucheries-charcuteries et toute la filière sont ni plus ni moins une forme de terrorisme [...].’ (Guihard, 2018, para. 5)

³ GTD Code: 199810190004.