There is little doubt in my mind that no historian alive today could have done a better job than Lambert to assess Corbett's contribution to British maritime history and strategy and guide us through his eventful life and times. For any person interested in sea power, maritime strategy, and the British maritime experience before, during, and after World War I, this book is essential reading, providing a wealth of insights and knowledge. Ignore it at your own peril.

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Julia Ebner. *Going Dark: The Secret Social Lives of Extremists*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020. ISBN: 978-1-526-61678-4. Pp. 368. Hardcover: £15.29; paperback: £9.89; e-book (pdf/ epub/ mobi): £11.89.

In her second book, *Going Dark: The Secret Social Lives of Extremists,*[3] Julia Ebner takes a human-centred approach to explain the pathway towards online radicalisation, which ultimately leads to the emergence of digital extremists. Ebner, a Research Fellow at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue in London, spent two years undercover in a variety of extremist movements to observe and study the movements from inside.

As many scholars in radicalisation and terrorism studies work on assumptions, her efforts to gather primary empirical data are both admirable and ambitious. Especially in the realm of online far-right extremism, the availability of empirical primary data remains thin. Ebner adopted different false identities to blend in with her subjects of analysis, both online and offline. At times, this resulted in parts of the book becoming rather descriptive as she is essentially summing up disclosed content. However, the extremely captivating narrative of this book and the rich variety of scholarly literature that she engages with, make it an excellent read for those that want an introduction to the field of digital extremism, and the online realm of the far-right and jihadist-driven organisations.

A recurring theme throughout Ebner's book is gender. This perspective adds an interesting dimension, as the far-right is often associated with having predominantly male recruits. Ebner engages with multiple female

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[3] This follows her first monograph, *The Rage: The Vicious Circle of Islamist and Far-Right Extremism* (London & New York: I.B.Tauris, 2017).

extremist organisations, such as the so-called 'Trad Wives,' and the 'Terror Agency Sister chatting group.' Both groups are exclusively for women. The first group is embedded in the wider 'manosphere,' while the latter focuses on Indonesian jihadism. Besides, Ebner describes how female counter-extremist analysts and journalists are being harassed by extremists in the field. Ebner elaborates on this by, for example, explaining the 2014 Gamergate controversy.

By focusing on different extremist movements, the book sheds light on larger societal changes of the past years, such as the rising popularity of far-right and populist politicians, and the internet's influence on this shift. In 2017, for example, Ebner infiltrated the pan-European far-right Generation Identity movement, and attended their meetings on expansion plans in the United Kingdom. She met them multiple times and on different occasions, before eventually being exposed. There is an ethical stretch in conducting covert research and using sock puppets in this way, as the deception in her engagement is far-reaching. Such a negative experience with a researcher could have breached the trust and affected the attitude of affiliated members of the group towards future engagement with researchers or journalists.[4] Ebner explains how groups such as Generation Identity try to shift the so-called 'Overton window' to the right, which she describes as the 'range of ideas that are deemed acceptable in public discourse.' (p. 44) Extremists are thus exploiting the subconscious desire of human beings for extreme content, as well as benefitting from the growing online and offline mistrust in the mainstream. (p. 252) The author proceeds by arguing that everyone is vulnerable to extremist manipulation tactics when they are having a moment of weakness, and that the only way to protect oneself is knowledge in this field. (p. 72) By gradually and sequentially assessing recruitment, socialisation, communication, networking, mobilisation, and attack, Ebner examines different stages of online radicalisation. Eventually, she claims that all extremist organisations function similarly in the online realm, as their leaders create protected social bubbles where antisocial behaviour in the wider world is encouraged. (p. 3)

Even though not many theories have been developed that specifically focus on the pathways of digital radicalisation, there is no such thing as a single model or pathway to radicalisation or terrorism, as claimed by Ebner. It is important to consider that radicalisation is a relative, context-dependent, and subjective process. Moreover, she interchangeably uses top-down and bottom-up approaches to assess the radicalisation processes. By doing so, she repeatedly focuses on hierarchical structures, while continuously expressing the importance of the group. Ebner is thus indicating that approaches are mixed. However, this is not reflected by the pathway which she uses throughout the book. Furthermore, by only briefly touching upon two jihadist

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[4] Paul Spicker, "Ethical Covert Research", in *Sociology*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (2011), pp. 3-6.

organisations, Ebner does not provide the comparative added value she is aiming for. Rather, this research pathway results in arbitrariness.

The consolidation of the online realm and the 'real-world' has never been as prevalent as it currently is during the COVID-19 pandemic, making this book extremely topical. The implications that this pandemic will have on online extremism are still open to speculation, yet *Going Dark* gives insight into what has been going on for the past three years, predominantly in Europe. Moreover, it examines challenges that have been surfacing in mass media nowadays, such as the spread of the QAnon conspiracy theory.

While Ebner's book was published just a couple of months before the pandemic outbreak, she already then focused on the ultimately challenging sphere of digital dualism, claiming that the existence of two separate realities is a fallacy.[5] Online interaction, however, is a very low-commitment effort, and the anonymity that the online realm offers lowers the cost of dropping out of an extremist organisation. At the stage of mobilisation and attack, the interplay of the online and offline realm is becoming essential, and this particular, yet important step is being downplayed in her analysis.[6]

Ebner ends her book by first identifying ten predictions for 2025 that reflect the ideas of other counter-extremism experts who range from the director of the German Institute on Radicalization and De-Radicalization Studies Daniel Köhler, to the United States based cyber-terrorism expert Chris Sampson. She follows up by providing ten responses to the challenges in the realm of extremism. While it is admirable that she ends the book on a positive note, her solutions lack profound analytical grounding. For example, claiming that the creative industries have an 'underestimated potential' in countering extremism, and tapping into it, seems like a superfluous solution for the deeply rooted problems and developments she laid out before. (p. 279) The solutions that Ebner provides are predominantly focused on European and North American audiences. Besides, only one suggestion focuses on countering jihadists, suggesting tit-for-tat activism. As Ebner acknowledges herself, this strategy is ethically and legally questionable (p.278). To provide for a more comprehensive analysis, Ebner could have engaged more with the challenges formulated by other counter-extremism experts.

While Ebner's book provides an interesting insight into the world of online extremism, it lacks analytical grounding and a more elaborate justification for her bold methodological choice. However, the vast amount of primary data she uses, her incorporation of the gender-dimension, the readability, and the relevance of the online realm during this pandemic, make her book a topical and engaging introduction to the world of digital

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[5] Ibid., 240.

[6] Peter R. Neumann & Brooke Rogers, 'Recruitment and Mobilisation for the Islamist Militant Movement in Europe', in *European Commission: Directorate Freedom, Justice and Liberty* (December 2007), p. 90.

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David Wilson. *Suppressing Piracy in the Early Eighteenth Century: Pirates, Merchants and British Imperial Authority in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean.* **Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2021. ISBN: 978-1-783-27595-3. Pp. xx, 280; maps, tables, appendices. Hardcover: £75.00/ $130.00; e-book (epub/ pdf): £19.99/ $24.99.**

David Wilson's lucid, compelling re-assessment of the end of the 'Golden Age' of piracy in the decade following the end of the War of the Spanish Succession challenges the widely held argument that the British imperial state engaged in centrally directed and resourced 'Pirate Wars' to remove the threat of piracy to economic expansion. By tracking the pirates through the Caribbean, along the North American coast, into the Bight of Benin, round Cape Horn and up to the Red Sea this assessment stresses the economic opportunism, mobility, and limits of the threat, the changing character of piracy, and the wide range of actors engaged in dealing with the threat.

The British state lacked the economic power, resources, and focus to wage 'war' on such slippery and evasive foes. While a handful of warships were dispatched to affected areas, few were actually sent to address the rise of piracy. Most were stationed to protect the Colonies against more substantial threats. Few were effective against pirate vessels. Piracy flourished in ungoverned spaces, beyond the rule of law, notably around Caribbean islands like the Bahamas, which were not controlled by European empires, where grey area activities, including smuggling and wrecking, exploited loopholes. This phase of Caribbean piracy began with aggressive British mariners seizing bullion from the wreck of a Spanish treasure fleet, and taking control of the Bahamas. The collusion of local merchants was essential to dispose of pirated goods, more often tropical produce than gold and precious stones, while providing food and maritime supplies to sustain the maritime predators, often at inflated prices.

British responses to piracy were hampered by the massive debt burden incurred in major wars in 1688-1697 and 1702-1713, along with the ongoing Great Northern War, which only ended in 1721, and a brief war with Spain. These conflicts dominated contemporary naval deployments, leaving few ships to deal with piracy. The ships deployed to the Caribbean tended to be too big and slow to chase pirates and, until the 1720s, Captains tended to use