

Michael H. Becker

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Education

University of Maryland, College Park, MD

2015 – Present Ph.D. Student, Criminology and Criminal Justice

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

2009 – 2013 B.A. in Psychology and Spanish Studies

Minor, Sociology: Law Criminology, and Deviance

Research Interests

Terrorism; Counter-Terrorism; Countering Violent Extremism; Quantitative Methods.

Research in Progress

Control, learning, and vulnerability: An interactional approach to engagement in violent extremism

The study of terrorism and radicalization within the field of criminology remains in its infancy, with most scholars adopting atheoretical frameworks or providing risk factors without meaningful organization under well-supported constructs. This project uses a mixed-methods analysis of qualitative life histories and quantitative data from the Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States (PIRUS) database from the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) to investigate the relationship criminological constructs and violent extremism. This research aims to help provide a foundation for the broader criminological study of violent extremism and expand upon the limited extant theoretical explanations within the discipline.

Honors and Awards

2017 *Best Poster Award – Hot Topics in the Science of Security Conference, Hanover, MD.*

2015 *University Fellowship Recipient - Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Maryland.*

2010-2013 *Dean's List Scholar - College of Liberal Arts, University of Minnesota*

2013 *Graduate with Distinction, University of Minnesota*

Conference Presentations

- 2017 “Situational Factors as Determinants of Public WiFi Behavior.” Southern Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Greenville, SC.
- 2015 "Motor Vehicle Theft Following Homicide: Analysis of Motivational Undercurrents." Homicide Research Working Group Annual Conference, Clearwater Beach, FL.

Posters

- 2017 “Is the Guardian Capable?: A Routine Activity Theory Approach to Cyber Intrusion on Honeypot Systems.” Hot Topics in the Science of Security Annual Conference, Hanover, MD.
- 2016 “Investigating the Role of Religious Salience in Terrorist Violence” American Society of Criminology Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA.
- 2015 "Motor Vehicle Theft Following Homicide: Analysis of Motivational Undercurrents." American Society of Criminology Annual Conference, Washington, DC.

Research Experience

Graduate Research Assistant

2016 – Present University of Maryland, Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice

Worked under Dr. David Maimon and Dr. Michel Cukier. Performed data analysis of experimental data collected from the NSF grant “Protecting the Bazaar: The Ecology of Cybersecurity in Weakly Fortified Networks” and a second dataset supported by a National Security Agency grant. Responsibilities included data extraction, data cleaning, and the development of theoretically informed frameworks to investigate the experimental data.

Graduate Research Assistant and Project Manager

2016 – Present University of Maryland, Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice

Worked under Dr. David Maimon. Coordinating data collection for the NSF grant “Physical, Social and Situational Factors as Determinants of Public WiFi Users Online Behaviors”. Performed administrative functions such as hiring, training, and interviewing of potential data collectors, while evaluating the performance of those already employed. Other responsibilities included data analysis and coding of wireless network packet data and spatial diagrams.

Graduate Research Assistant

2016 – Present National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START)

Worked under Dr. Gary LaFree. Assisted in the development of a theoretically informed qualitative framework for the analysis of the life histories of individuals radicalized within the United States. Coded a sample of case studies pursuant to the developed codebook and consulted with Drs. Scott Decker and David Pyrooz on the coding of a comparison sample of gang member interviews.

Homicide Researcher

2014 – 2015 Center for Homicide Research, Minneapolis, MN

Performed open-source research on homicides for state and national databases. Conducted criterion-based data collection and descriptive analysis of homicide patterns in Minnesota. Further responsibilities included performing historical homicide research in collaboration with the Hennepin County Medical Examiner's office, cataloging all death records from the late 1800s and early 1900s. Developed research briefs and assisted senior staff in the training of incoming interns.

Undergraduate Research

University of Minnesota, College of Liberal Arts

2013 Assistant to Dr. David Pellow

2011 Assistant to Dr. Cheryl Olman

Teaching Experience

Graduate Teaching Assistant

2015 – 2016 University of Maryland, Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice

Worked under Dr. Sally Simpson and Jacqueline Lee for Introduction to Criminology (CCJS105) in Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 semesters respectively. Responsibilities included developing course material, leading discussion sections, assisting to proctor exams, grading student papers, and serving as a primary contact for undergraduate students.

Professional Experience

Legal Assistant

2014 – 2015 GoldenbergLaw, PLLC, Minneapolis, MN

Responsibilities included deposition document review, discovery analysis, and medical device and pharmaceutical research.

Legal Intake Specialist

2013 – 2014 GoldenbergLaw, PLLC, Minneapolis, MN

Responsibilities included client management, product research, monthly and quarterly analysis of marketing efforts, and communication with potential new clients.

Professional Affiliations

- 2015 – Present *American Society of Criminology*
- 2015 – Present *American Society of Criminology, Division on Terrorism and Bias Crime*
- 2015 – Present *Homicide Research Working Group*
- 2013 – Present *Phi Beta Kappa - Academic Honors Society, University of Minnesota*
- 2013 – Present *Psi Chi - International Honors Society in Psychology, University of Minnesota*

Language Skills

Intermediate/Advanced proficiency in Spanish.

Computer Skills

Proficient in: Standard office and research software, including Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint, SPSS, PSPP, MAXQDA, STATA 14.0, and Salesforce