**Research Report: Centre for European Studies (CES) Travel Grant**

By Ottilie Grisdale

Thank you once again for your support of my research project, *Populist Cultural Production: Part of the Dutch Radicalization Puzzle.* As an MA student, the opportunity to conduct field research abroad was an invaluable and deeply enriching learning experience. The research conducted during my time in the Netherlands has significantly improved the quality of my thesis, and would not have been possible without a CES research-travel grant.

**‘Expert as Source’ Interviews**

As outlined in this project’s grant application, ‘expert as source’ interviews were the primary aim of the field research. After arriving in the Netherlands, I coordinated an interview with a senior representative of the European Union Radicalization Awareness Network (EU-RAN). This interview led to new insights and further questions regarding the EU’s role in combatting radicalization from a transnational perspective. A key research takeaway from my time at EU-RAN, was that the involvement of health care practitioners and teachers in combatting Islamist radicalization appears to be under represented within the academic literature on this topic.

At EU-RAN, I also became aware of a wealth of source materials for the EU component of my research. These included public research reports from specific EU-RAN projects, and also a greater understanding of the network’s broader research community.

At the University of Amsterdam (UvA), political science and humanities researchers specializing in Dutch populism were also interviewed. The interviewee’s provided many points of clarification regarding how electoral support of populism in the Netherlands is currently being measured and its estimated significance.

At the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism Studies (ICCT), University of Leiden, I had the distinct privilege of speaking with the leading academic researchers on counter-terrorism narrative research. The importance of counter-terrorism narratives to radicalization is a developing research area within security studies and is the guiding thematic framework of this research project. At present, this project has not conducted interviews with Dutch intelligence officials. However thanks to the generosity of researchers at the ICCT, negotiations are currently underway to help me secure an interview with a representative from the Dutch National Intelligence Coordinator.

I was subsequently invited by the IICT to attend their seminar on Al-Qaeda’s Resurgence in North Africa, which took place on Tuesday December 17th, 2013. While attending the seminar, I became aware of a key distinction between Canadian and European research perspectives on radicalization. Intriguingly, even domestic instances of radicalization (within European countries), are viewed primarily as a global process; the role of domestic social issues receives less attention. In particular, the number of reported Dutch nationals who have allegedly participated, and returned from, jihadist training groups in North Africa is significantly higher than I would have expected.

At the seminar I was able to make new professional connections with security practitioners, and researchers from a variety of Dutch research institutions of which I was previously unaware such as H*i*vos People Unlimited.

**Amsterdam City Archive**

After consulting the Netherlands’ National Archives, it became apparent that materials relevant to this research project were located at the Amsterdam City Archive. From the archive, I was able to request copies of the initial sketches for the Theo van Gogh memorial monument. Murdered in 2004, Theo van Gogh was a key player in the Dutch populist movement. The sketches narrate Dutch reactions to the political situation following the murder, and provide an important documentation of local reactions, which could only have been accessed in country.

Similarly, while visiting the city archive, I came across an exhibit on influential Dutch thinkers located in the archive’s new permanent collection. Here, I discovered that Theo van Gogh was selected post-mortem to represent “Freedom of Speech” within the exhibit. On display were thank-you letters written to van Gogh following his death. Over a series of visits, I was able to transcribe and translate the letters and take photos of the exhibit.

This research trip to the Netherlands was my first experience conducting archival work. As an inspiring historian, speaking with archivists and conducting interviews embarking on the learning process of archival research was of tremendous value to my growth as a researcher. Having a greater understanding of how research interviews are conducted, will also allow me to conduct more thoughtful and critically engaged analyses of the field research materials gathered during this research trip.