'De-radicalisation'

Scientific insights for policy

Lore Colaert (ed.)

flemish
peaceInstitute

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCC   Communist Combatant Cells (*Cellules Communistes Combattantes*)
C-M-Os   Context-mechanism-outcome pattern configurations
CUTA   Coordination Unit for Threat Analysis
CVE   Countering violent extremism
DDPs   De-radicalisation and disengagement programmes
ETA   Basque Homeland and Liberty (*Euskadi Ta Askatasuna*)
IRA   Irish Republican Army
IS   'Islamic State'
LIVC   Local Integrated Security Cell (*Lokale Integrale Veiligheidscel*)
MAUT   Multi Attribute Utility Technology
NGOs   Non-governmental organisations
OCMW   Public Centre for Social Welfare (*Openbaar Centrum voor Maatschappelijk Welzijn*)
RAF   Red Army Faction (*Rote Armee Fraktion*)
RAN   Radicalisation Awareness Network
RCTs   Randomised controlled trials
UK   United Kingdom
US   United States
VVSG   Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (*Vereniging van Vlaamse Steden en Gemeenten*)

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Lore Colaert is a researcher at the Flemish Peace Institute (Belgium) and part of the research group 'conflict and violence in society.' She focuses on 'radicalisation,' in particular on the local and regional policy responses to this phenomenon. She studied history and did a PhD on how Spanish citizens deal with the painful memories of the Spanish Civil War and Francoist dictatorship.

Bertjan Doosje is a Full Professor in Political Sciences and Psychology at the University of Amsterdam. He holds the Frank Buijs Chair on Radicalisation Studies, financed by the Verwey-Jonker Institute. He investigates terrorism and radicalisation for European research projects such as 'SAFIRE' and for the Dutch government, on resilience against radical influences, trigger factors in radicalisation processes, and the (im)possiblities to apply counternarratives.

Jan Jaap van Eerten is an independent social researcher and consultant on diversity, social cohesion and security. As a researcher for the University of Amsterdam he conducted a study on the possible uses of social media for the prevention of violent extremism as well as on means to measure the effectiveness of such undertakings. The study was commissioned by the Department of Scientific Research and Documentation Centre (WODC) of the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice and carried out in collaboration with Prof. Dr. Bertjan Doosje, Prof. Dr. Beatrice de Graaf, and Prof. Dr. Elly Konijn.

Allard Feddes is a social psychologist specialised in conflict and cooperation between social groups. He studied Social and Organisational Psychology at the University of Groningen (the Netherlands) and did a PhD in Social Psychology at the Friedrich-Schiller-University in Jena (Germany). He investigates the psychological processes of radicalisation. He currently works at the department of Psychology at the University of Amsterdam.

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Paul Thomas is Professor of Youth and Policy and Director of Research in the School of Education and Professional Development at the University of Huddersfield, UK. A qualified youth worker, Paul's research focuses on how multiculturalist policies around community cohesion and the prevention of extremism are understood, experienced and implemented by front-line professionals such as youth workers and teachers, as well as the young people and communities they engage with. Paul has researched Britain's Prevent programme from its inception and has published a book and a number of articles on Prevent.

Introduction
'Radicalisation': complex phenomenon, ambiguous concept

Lore Colaert[1]

In 2013 it became known that dozens of Belgian citizens had travelled to Syria and Iraq to fight against the regime of Bashar al-Assad. They were called 'foreign fighters'. Since then, Belgium has been heading the list in Western Europe of the numbers of foreign fighters per capita, followed by countries such as Norway and Sweden, which also have relatively high numbers of foreign fighters.[2] In May 2017, 478 were known to have left for the Syrian/Iraqi front. 119 of them have since returned, 115 were killed, and 80 were stopped while travelling. In addition, 144 'suspected aspirants' are followed by the security services.[3]

The age of these foreign fighters at their departure varied from 13 to 69 years, and most of them were between 20 and 24 years of age. The majority joined jihadi terrorist groups, such as the self-proclaimed 'Islamic State' (IS).[4] That is why within security circles they became known as 'foreign terrorist fighters'. In Syria and Iraq they have participated in extremist violence with various groups, in Europe foreign fighters from Belgium were partly responsible for the attacks in Paris and Brussels in 2015 and 2016. In more recent attacks, some of the perpetrators had never travelled to conflict zones but were inspired by IS. These individuals are called the 'home grown terrorist fighters'.

People from about a hundred Belgian municipalities have left for Syria. In some municipalities, this involved larger groups. Especially the district of Brussels (headed by Molenbeek and Schaarbeek), and the cities of Antwerp and Vilvoorde were affected. Tongeren, Kortrijk and Ghent each saw around ten foreign fighters depart. Only 52 of the foreign fighters came from the Walloon Region, mainly from the towns of Verviers, Liege, and Charleroi.[5]

The foreign fighters form a small group, but have a big impact on society in terms of anxiety, discomfort and polarisation. Prevention and security services felt swamped by the scale and speed that the Syria exodus assumed in 2013. Since then, parents in affected districts have feared the influence of recruiters; Muslims feel targeted by counter-terror policy; teachers do not know how to deal with radical expressions by young people, and debates about diversity issues, such as the integration of migrants or refugees, are held with fear of terrorist violence in mind. In addition, local authorities are reporting increasing tensions between communities.[6] These issues in the area of social diversity are now seen as security issues, in a debate driven by terrorist incidents.

Radicalisation as a policy concept

'Radicalisation' has been part of the Belgian political vocabulary since 2013. Internationally as well, the term 'radicalisation' emerged only recently in relationship to terrorism. Throughout modern history, armed groups of diverse ideological convictions and organisational structures have called on new recruits to commit violence. Western history is characterised by various waves of violence towards citizens by nationalist, ideological and religious groups: the anarchists in the late nineteenth century, anti-colonialist violence and ETA and IRA terrorism since the 1960s, extreme left terrorism by e.g. the RAF and CCC, neo-fascist groups in the 1980s and various waves of violent jihadism since 2001.[7] There have also been cases of single-issue terrorism in the name of animal welfare, and mass violence carried out by the state, such as under the Bolshevik and Nazi dictatorships in the first half of the twentieth century. This kind of violence for political reasons through inciting fear among citizens has been labelled as 'terrorism' since the 1970s.[8]

The concept of 'radicalisation' appeared in European counter-terror policy following the attacks on the WTC towers in New York in 2001. It only came into frequent use from 2004 when it became clear that the attacks in Madrid, and a year later in London, were carried out by 'home-grown' terrorists – people who had grown up in Spain and the United Kingdom. 'Radicalisation' came to be understood as a process whereby an individual gradually embraces radical ideas, is indoctrinated and recruited by foreign extremists and goes on to commit acts of terrorist violence.[9]

Every policy aimed to prevent radicalisation is based on ideas about root causes why and about the ways in which an individual embraces terrorism. Numerous explanatory models have been proposed since 2004, some more evidence based than others. Research focused on the process through which a 'normal' individual

becomes a terrorist.[10] Initially, that process was frequently illustrated as a stairway or pyramid, where all citizens with grievances about injustices are at the bottom, and some of them subsequently move upwards, via a series of cumulative steps, to the top, where they become terrorists. Researchers identified various push and pull factors that explain the attraction of extremist groups and involvement in ideologically inspired violence. They situated these factors at different levels: from individual motivations, through group dynamics, to wide contextual factors that form a breeding ground for terrorism and give individuals a motivation to take action. The life histories of terrorists appeared to vary greatly. By now, researchers above all agree that radicalisation is a complex issue in which many factors play a part. For recruits there are many different points of entry into terrorist networks, and fortunately also several possible exit points.

The concept of 'radicalisation' soon appeared to be an ambiguous one. By defining radicalisation as a process that starts with (Muslim) extremism and ends with violence, both 'radical ideas' and Islam became associated with terrorism. Checklists with indicators for recognising radicalisation related not only to behavioural changes and extreme political statements, but also to Islam-inspired clothing. And in the political and social debate, 'radicalisation' became a catch-all term for social challenges in the area of diversity: from integration to the reconciliation of Islam with European values. Use of the term 'radicalisation' for the phenomenon of Muslim terrorists cleared the way for the association of Islam with terrorism. Youth workers in Flanders therefore note that Muslim youths often have to justify themselves and find that they are perceived in a negative way.[11]

Research has since shown, however, that the focus on the religious factor in radicalisation does not correspond with reality. Outward signs of religion didn't turn out to be reliable indicators of radicalisation, and not every radical thinker is an advocate of violence. Radicalism is also not illegal, and can even be constructive. The word comes from 'back to the root' (*radix*), and means that you are striving for a major change. The American civil rights movement, the women's suffrage movement and the Flemish emancipation movement were all driven by ideas that went against the status quo and thus were considered to be radical.[12]

The social and political debate often flounders in mono-causal explanations for jihadi terrorism. One school of thought seeks the cause of the current wave of violent extremism mainly in Islam, while another cites feelings of injustice. There are also two schools of thought amongst academics. One school puts more emphasis on the role of a political or religious ideology as the driver, while the other puts the emphasis on contextual factors such as local socio-economic circumstances. The ambiguity of the concept of radicalisation, and the existence of the two schools

of thought, is also to be found in this book. Consequently, the authors were asked to explain their use of the term 'radicalisation'. The authors also never reduce the explanation of violent extremism to one single dimension.

The sense of urgency that arose following the departure of foreign fighters and their involvement in attacks, combined with the ambiguity of the concept radicalisation, is apparent in the policy response to radicalisation in different countries. A whole range of policy measures arose with very broad – and sometimes vague – objectives, without accompanying research to see what works and does not work.

Policy answers to radicalisation

All the policy levels in Belgium formulated a response to the phenomenon of 'radicalisation'. In this section, we outline these policy initiatives at European, Belgian-national, local and finally Flemish-regional level.

In the European Union, a new Interpol task force was formed. In addition, a Radicalisation Awareness Network was set up to bundle expertise, and projects were started to disseminate a counter narrative against extremist propaganda.

In Belgium, the radicalisation issue was already on the radar of the security services, but gained urgency from 2012 onwards. The government then rolled out Plan R, the Radicalisation Action Plan. The plan was updated in 2015 as part of twelve counter-terror measures that were adopted following a thwarted attack in Verviers. Those measures were extended to eighteen in 2016, following the attacks in Paris. Conjointly, they gave the intelligence and security services greater powers, and awarded (non-recurring) financial support to fifteen towns. Plan R is coordinated by a National Task Force and by Local Task Forces. In those Task Forces, various security services exchange information on foreign terrorist fighters and propose specific measures. The federal government also encouraged local authorities to set up Locally Integrated Security Cells (LIVCs) in which both security and socio-preventive services join. Those multidisciplinary round tables examine signals of concern about individuals in the municipality, and then decide together on eventual prevention or intervention trajectories.[13]

At the same time, municipalities with large numbers of foreign fighters developed their own policy. Antwerp, Vilvoorde, Mechelen and Maaseik developed a handbook in 2013, and exchanged experiences with cities in other countries.[14] Therefore they were dubbed 'pilot cities' in the area of radicalisation. Most of the expertise

was built up locally, where deradicalisation policy is effectively aimed to be an integrated endeavour.[15] Municipalities undertook to coordinate information sharing and interventions at the local level. The regional Flemish Government endorsed this local coordinating role.[16] Nine municipalities received project subsidies; the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG) assisted in the sharing of expertise among municipalities and the distribution of a 'manual for a local approach to radicalisation'.[17] In the meantime, others, including smaller towns, also developed a policy to deal with radicalisation.

The measures of the Flemish government were part of a policy that took shape in 2015. That same year the Flemish Parliament set up a committee 'to combat violent radicalisation' and adopted a resolution almost unanimously.[18] The resolution calls for support for local authorities in the implementation of an integrated security policy, across various policy domains. It proposes a policy that focuses not only on law enforcement, but also on community cohesion and liveability in certain districts, and calls for increased capacity for assistance and employment programmes. On 16 January 2015, the Government of Flanders approved the draft proposal 'prevention of radicalisation processes that can lead to extremism and terrorism'. The draft proposal provides the strategic framework for the preventive approach to radicalisation. From this, a specific *Action plan for the prevention of radicalisation processes that can lead to extremism and terrorism* was drawn which was approved four months later by the Government of Flanders.[19] In June 2017 the government approved a new action plan: *Action plan for the prevention of violent radicalisation and polarisation*.[20]

The policy of the Flemish government was geared towards local needs. The aim of the first action plan was to "detect as quickly as possible persons who run the risk of radicalising, and in this way, keep them engaged in our society".[21] The second action plan states this as: "to prevent persons from radicalising, and to detect signs of violent radicalisation as early as possible".[22] The plan is coordinated by the Minister for Local Government, in cooperation with the ministers of Welfare and Education. Specific measures also involve the policy domains of Employment, Youth and Integration. The new action plan provides for five policy lines: "coordination and cooperation in implementation, supporting local policy, organising individual programs, and engaging civil society". Specific measures include: training for frontline practitioners in recognising and dealing with radicalisation; a helpline for parents; a network of Islam experts that supports schools; projects to strengthen the resilience of young people and to support their search for an identity.

Two years on, much local policy experience has been gained throughout Flanders. New challenges are appearing, such as the reintegration of returnee or released

foreign fighters, 'lone actors', the policy response to radicalisation in small munici-
palities, the relationship between deradicalisation policy and regular policies of
e.g. prevention and integration, and the evaluation of the range of initiatives that
were launched in the last two years.

Aim and structure of this book

Practitioners and researchers stress that the key to prevention of violent extrem-
ism is to be found at local level. Policy, local and above, is ideally informed by sci-
entific research. The basis of this book is therefore both an encounter between the
international and the local, and between research and practice. The research field
of 'radicalisation' is relatively young, but booming. In addition, we can go back to
the older research field of terrorism studies, and existing insights from disciplines
such as criminology prove to be applicable as well to the present wave of violent
extremism.

The aim of this book is to apply research to local policy and practice. We asked
seven international experts to summarise the existing empirical research on
seven aspects of radicalisation. We brought those experts together with seven
practitioners from Flanders in a seminar on 3 March 2017.[23] There was a striking
willingness of academics and practitioners to learn from each other about this
subject: policymakers and researchers, and local and international actors. The
practitioners also demonstrated a remarkable feel for nuance, which they shared
with the researchers. The result of the fruitful dialogue during the seminar pro-
vided for the basis of the conclusions of this book, in which we apply the findings
per sub-theme to Flanders.

All of the authors in this book address very topical issues. Some chapters, such as the
one on Euro-Islam, are important because the theme forms part of the political debate
on radicalisation. Other themes, such as the evaluation of deradicalisation policy,
were chosen because of the importance of scientific validation in these matters.

A policy approach to violent extremism can use insights from a range of academic
disciplines. The authors of this volume indeed come from diverse backgrounds,
such as psychology, pedagogy, criminology, political science and sociology. They
have experience in deradicalisation policy in various European countries.

We begin this book with one of the most difficult debates within radicalisation
studies: that on the **drivers for radicalisation**. Carl Miller and Leah Selig Chauhan

summarise what research says about the factors that play a role in radicalisation processes. The central place ideology takes in the theories on 'radicalisation' is examined critically here.

Every policy response to radicalisation, from broad prevention to individual deradicalisation programmes, starts with a thorough **assessment of the risks**. There is, however, much uncertainty among front-line practitioners about how radicalisation can be recognised. Allard Feddes analyses the scientific validity of risk-assessment instruments, and describes how they can be used. To that end, he also discusses the factors that make people vulnerable for or resistant to violent extremism.

From chapter three, we zoom in on specific policy instruments for dealing with radicalisation. An important instrument are the so-called **'deradicalisation' or 'disengagement programmes'**. Such programmes are organised by a wide range of actors. Daniel Koehler made a comparative review of deradicalisation programmes in various countries, and draws important lessons from this for organisers, partners and co-ordinating governments of those programs.

Another policy instrument that attracts a lot of attention, both in European counter-terror circles and in Flanders, is the development of a **counter-narrative** against extreme ideologies. But can a counter-narrative be effective? Bertjan Doosje and Jan Jaap van Eerten reviewed the literature and outline a number of criteria for such projects.

It is not always known what effects preventive projects against radicalisation have, or whether they work at all. It is indeed not easy to 'measure' the impact of preventive policy. In her chapter, Amy-Jane Gielen proposes a realistic approach in order to **evaluate prevention of radicalisation**. She points to the importance of thinking about evaluation, even during the set-up of the policy.

From the sixth chapter we zoom out to wider social issues. While preparing this book it was found that many in Flanders, especially youth workers, worry about **the effect of 'deradicalisation policy' on young people**. An important issue, about which as yet no research is available in Flanders. The British Prevent programme, on the other hand, has been thoroughly researched on this aspect. Paul Thomas investigated the experiences young people and front-line practitioners had with Prevent. He summarised this research for this book. His chapter is the only one in the book that focusses on one national case. It also introduces the critical voice of youth workers and young people concerning the issue. This contribution points toward a number of potential unintended consequences of deradicalisation policy.

Finally, during the entire process of this book, the question regularly arose as to whether the debate on Euro-Islam should be held within the debate on radicalisation. The subject has remained in the book. In the first place because Islam is undeniably a recurring topic in political debates on radicalisation. Hence, we must ask whether that is appropriate. Secondly, because in research and in practice there is debate as to whether an individual's religious experience should be dealt with in a deradicalisation programme, and if so, how and by whom should that be done. And finally, because the way in which IS successfully uses elements from mainstream Islam to incite youths to commit extreme violence raises the need for reflection and debate with, and within, the Muslim communities. In the last chapter, Marcel Maussen and Merel Talbi therefore look at **the integration of Islam in Western Europe**.

The Flemish Peace Institute

It is the Flemish Peace Institute's mission to provide analysis and advice on peace and the prevention of violence. Accordingly, in 2015 we took the initiative to investigate the policy response to violent extremism. The phenomenon of 'radicalisation' relates to social conflict and security, both of which are main concerns of the Flemish Peace Institute. In 2015 we published a report *Dealing with radicalisation*. It offered four considerations on the interaction between the departure of Belgians to Syria, radical thinking and the social context. Following the attacks in Brussels and Zaventem on 22 March 2016, the Peace Institute took the initiative of making a new contribution on this subject.

In this book, we translate extensive international research to the Flemish context, in order to inform policy with scientific knowledge. In view of the complexity of the phenomenon of radicalisation, there is an urgent need to make the policy approach sufficiently knowledge-based. One of the measures of the Flemish action plan is therefore to encourage further research.[24] In this report, we bring together international research and local experience; but not in order to develop a ready-made deradicalisation formula. Research and practice show that there are no cut and dried recipes for ending criminal careers or involvement in violent extremism. Nonetheless, after two years of increased policy attention to radicalisation in Flanders, we can take a step back and look at what research can teach us about the policy response to violent extremism.

ENDNOTES

1   This text is a translation of Colaert, L. (2017), Inleiding. Radicalisering: Complex fenomeen, ambigu beleidsconcept, in: Colaert, L. (red.), *'Deradicalisering'. Wetenschappelijke inzichten voor een Vlaams beleid*, Brussel: Vlaams Vredesinstituut.

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7   Renard, T. (2016), Fear not: A critical perspective on the terrorist threat in Europe, *Egmont Security Policy Brief, 77, 3, http://www.egmontinstitute.be/wp-content/ uploads/2016/09/SPB77.pdf, consulted on 9 June 2017.*

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13 Federal Department of Internal Affairs, Het Plan R: Het Actieplan Radicalisme (20 July 2016), https://www.besafe.be/sites/besafe.localhost/files/u18/brochure_radicalisme_nl.pdf, consulted on 14 June 2017; Also see Lemmens, L., Federale projectsteun voor 15 risicogemeenten radicalisering wordt niet verlengd, Polinfo.be (16 May 2017), http://www.polinfo.be/NewsView.aspx?contentdomains=POLINFO&id=VS300525226&lang=nl, consulted on 13 June 2017; Federal Department of Internal Affairs, Actieplan Radicalisme (20 July 2016), https://www.besafe.be/kennisdatabank/livc-skrijgen-vorm, consulted on 14 June 2017.

14 Somers, B. et al. (2013), *Beheersen van moslimradicalisering: Handreiking voor beleid en praktijk*, Antwerp.

15   See for instance Soors, J. (2015), Hoe als samenleving reageren? Een internationaal conflict, een lokale uitdaging, in: Loobuyck, P. (red.), *De loktroep van IS: Syriëstrijders en (de) radicalisering*, Kalmthout: Pelckmans, 151-170.

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17   Flemish Government, *Actieplan ter preventie van gewelddadige radicalisering en polarisering*, 5. Van Broeckhoven, K. & Gielen, A. (2015), *Handvaten voor een lokale aanpak van radicalisering*, Brussels: VVSG, http://www.vvsg.be/radicalisering/Documents/Handvaten%20 Lokale%20Aanpak%20Radicalisering%20met%20bijlagen.pdf, consulted on 14 June 2017.

18   Sminate, N. et al, Ward Kennes, Bart Somers, Caroline Gennez, Elisabeth Meuleman, *Voorstel van resolutie betreffende de bestrijding van gewelddadige radicalisering, zitting 2014-15 stuk 366-1*, Flemish Parliament, 27 May 2015.

19   Flemish Government (2015), *Actieplan ter preventie van radicaliseringsprocessen die kunnen leiden tot extremisme en terrorisme*.

20   Flemish Government, *Actieplan ter preventie van gewelddadige radicalisering en polarisering*.

21   Flemish Government, *Actieplan ter preventie van radicaliseringsprocessen*, 2.

22   Flemish Government, *Actieplan ter preventie van gewelddadige radicalisering en polarisering*, 1.

23   The practitioners were: Maarten De Waele (VVSG), Cherif Al Maliki (Ceapire), Khadija Aznag (Agency of Integration), Christophe Busch (Kazerne Dossin), Alexander Van Leuven (city of Mechelen), Anissa Akhandaf (city of Antwerp), and Khalid Benhaddou (Netwerk Islamexperts).

24   Flemish Government, *Actieplan ter preventie van radicaliseringsprocessen*, 9; Flemish Government, *Actieplan ter preventie van gewelddadige radicalisering en polarisering*, 11.

Radical beliefs and violent behaviour

Carl Miller & Leah Selig Chauhan

Introduction

At the heart of any strategy aiming to prevent terrorism and de-radicalise terrorists is a judgement about causes: why people come to believe certain ideas, why people act on them in ways that are violent and, overall, the nature of the journey an individual takes into radicalism, extremism and a violent repudiation of the liberal values of a multicultural, multifaith society. It is here that academic scholarship seeking to identify these causes – and counter-terrorism policy attempting to disrupt, manipulate or reverse them –must meet.

Central to finding the causes and drivers of terrorism has been a debate about the relationship between beliefs and behaviour, ideas and action. It is worth recalling that the words we now use to understand the phenomenon of terrorism are fairly new. Since the mid-1970s the term that provided the dominant conceptual framework in which this issue was discussed was 'terrorism'.[1] It was only after the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington that a new body of terminology was created to understand al-Qa'ida and its disparate affiliates. That terminology came to understand their ideology as 'violent extremism', the people that believed it as 'extremists' or 'radicals' and 'radicalisation' as the process whereby someone becomes an extremist.

The implication of this framework was that the belief system of the individual was key: key to identifying them as a would-be terrorist, and key to understanding the journey that people went through in order to become one. Extremism and

radicalisation as systems of belief are often implied to be largely the same thing as terrorism, and violence understood to be specific kinds of acts.

This way of thinking about the problem is unhelpful for the academic understanding of terrorism and unhelpful for policies intending to disrupt it. Many of those who passionately desire radical change ('radicals') wholly reject violence. Many who believe in violence as a way of achieving a desired end ('violent radicals') do not act on it and provide no material support for those who do. Lastly, those who do commit acts of terrorism may do so for lots of reasons, and not primarily or even necessarily based on the beliefs that they have or say that they have. In other words, a crucial problem with the terminology that has dominated the study of terrorists and terrorism since 9/11 is that these new definitional categories have conflated exactly the issue that is often under scrutiny: the relationship between radical beliefs and violent behaviour.

This chapter aims to show how radical beliefs and violent action relate to each other. It summarises the current landscape of academic research that has, in different ways, attempted to identify the causes of terrorist action. In showing the current trends, areas of consensus and areas of dispute, the chapter aims to show the complex relationship between drivers based on ideas, ideologies and beliefs and drivers based on other factors. Terrorists, like normal people, are influenced on a number of different levels and in ways that they do not always realise or acknowledge themselves. Whether through social ties, the power of counter-culture, or the desire to seek thrills, status or recognition, the story of why people undertake political violence is more complex and subtle than simply a question of belief.

The drivers of radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism

The question of what makes people become radical, extremist, a violent extremist or a terrorist has been the subject of intense academic attention. At the height of scholarly output, there was one new book on terrorism published every six hours.[2] Researchers from backgrounds as diverse as social and cognitive psychology, international relations, psychiatry, qualitative and quantitative social science, theology and, of course, the field of 'terrorism studies' (not to mention 'critical terrorism

At the height of scholarly output, there was one new book on terrorism published every six hours.

studies') have all offered not only different answers to this question but also different ways of getting to the answers. Between 1988 and 2001, nearly 80% of articles on terrorism were published outside the core 'terrorism studies' journals.[3] And in each of these different journals, researchers brought with them different methodological preferences, conceptual terminologies and theoretical leanings.

Reflecting this, the academic literature describes the drivers of terrorism in a number of ways; 'causes', of course, but also 'permissive conditions', 'background factors', 'factors', 'dynamics', 'processes' or 'tipping points'. This is because drivers were identified in lots of different ways – from interviews and life histories to large societal correlations. The literature has often identified both 'push' and 'pull' factors related to radicalisation. These are different elements that can influence an individual's journey of radicalisation. Push factors are linked to negative socio-economic characteristics that 'push' people towards violent extremism, such as social, political and economic grievances to social isolation and frustration over marginalisation.[4] Pull factors are considered to be the positive attributes extremist organisations are perceived to hold, which 'pull' an individual towards them; these include engagement with the organisation's ideology, the promise of brotherhood or a search for excitement,[5] to list a few.

The scholarship has also tried to cope with explaining and researching a moving target. Changes to the way that society works, to how information is consumed and to the geopolitical and geostrategic environment have all added new challenges and disruptions to the standing theories of radicalisation. The rise of 'lone actor' attacks has led scholars to try to understand the process of self-radicalisation. The attack by Anders Breivik in Norway in 2011 led to a renewed interest in right-wing extremism. Criticism of counter-terrorism and security policies led to an increased interest in those policies themselves as drivers of extremism and violence. The fall of al-Qa'ida and the rise of Islamic State have led academics to try to understand a new wave of propaganda and messaging, as well as the role of transnational links between and within diaspora communities and the phenomenon of individuals leaving their home countries to travel to Syria and Iraq as foreign fighters. As the Internet and social media have become – generally – more important in the formation of beliefs held by young people over the last ten years, so too has their prominence within the understanding of radicalisation.

Simply put, the total scale of this scholarly output is too large, too diverse, and too scattered to be seen as a single scholarly conversation that has developed over time. What has happened, and what this chapter tries to reflect, is the emergence of dozens of different academic conversations in different places, at times leading to consensus, and at other times to fierce disputes.[6]

Explanatory models

A wealth of models have attempted to theorise the process of radicalisation. The majority describe a process consisting of sequential steps, each leading away from a state of apparent normalcy and toward a state of violent radicalism (see figure below).

Radicalisation as a process[7]

IDEOLOGICAL ENGAGEMENT   RADICALISATION   'CATALYST EVENT'   VIOLENT EXTREMISM OR TERRORISM
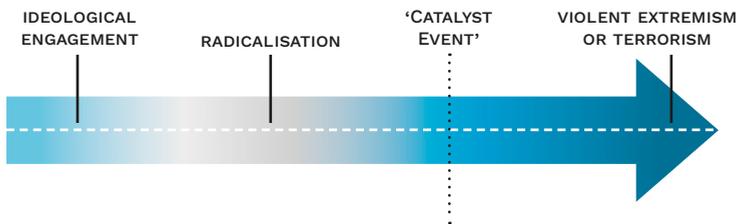
Moghaddam's 'staircase to terrorism' identifies various psychological stages, or 'floors' (see figure below). The 'ground floor' is the space in which an individual has feelings of injustice and so climbs to the first floor in order to counter these deprivations. The second floor, on failing to achieve this, is where aggression is displaced onto some enemy, often with encouragement from others and 'leaders'. On the third floor this sentiment evolves into engaging "with the morality of a terrorist organisation",[8] followed by recruitment into a terrorist organisation on the fourth. The fifth and final floor, reached only by a small percentage of individuals, results in the individual conducting a violent act of terror. Disaffected youth are central to this model, as Moghaddam argues they are most susceptible to the radicalisation process.[9]

The 'staircase to terrorism'[10]

Fifth Floor
The Terrorist Act and Sidestepping
Inhibitory Mechanisms

Fourth Floor
Solidification of Categorical Thinking
and the Perceived Legitimacy of the
Terrorist Organisation

Third Floor
Moral Engagement

Second Floor
Displacement of Aggression

First Floor
Perceived Options to Fight Unfair
Treatment

Ground Floor
Psychological Interpretation of
Material Conditions

The Federal Bureau of Investigation uses Borum's 'four stage model to a terrorist mindset' (see figure below). It was originally developed as a 'training heuristic for law enforcement', not as a formal social science theory.[11] The initial stage details grievances to a disagreeable condition; this is then framed as an injustice, which evolves into blame being positioned onto another group.[12] These sentiments eventually develop into the final stage, whereby the radicalised individual demonises a target group and thereby justifies violent acts toward them.[13]

The 'Four stage model to a terrorist mindset'[14]

**Distancing/
Devaluation**
"You're evil."

**Target
Attribution**
"It's your
fault"

Injustice
"It's not fair"

Grievance
"It's not right"
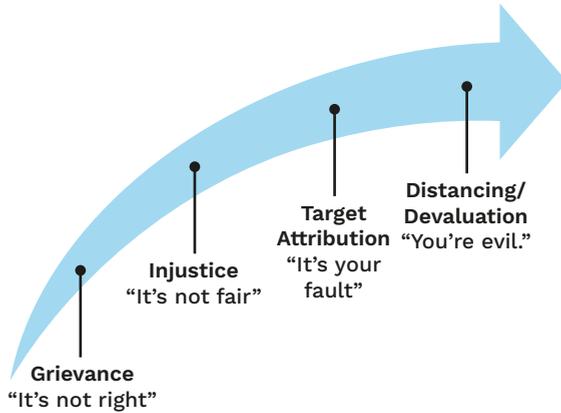
Similarly, the 'pyramid model' can be broadly divided into four separate stages (see figure below). Fewer people progress to each ascending level of the pyramid, and they become increasingly radicalised the closer they become to its apex. In this sense, the authors describe radicalisation as a "gradient that distinguishes terrorists from their base of sympathisers".[15]

The 'pyramid model'[16]

Level of Radicalisation

RADICALS
(Illegal/Violent Actors)

ACTIVISTS
(legal/Non-violent Actors,
Support Network & Potential Recruits)

SUPPORTERS
(Justify Illegal/Violent Actions)

SYMPATHISERS
(Agree with Cause but not Violent Means)
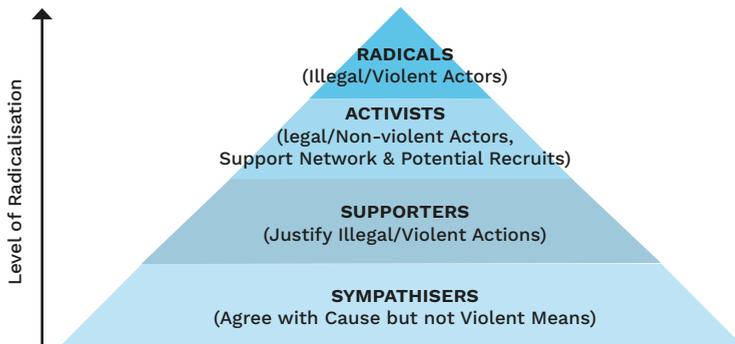
Other models have disputed a sequential process, however. Hafaz and Mullins propose a 'puzzle metaphor'[17] to explain the descent into violent radicalisation, disregarding the notion of a 'process' as too linear (see figure below). Their model is based on the combination of four components: "grievances, networks, ideologies, and enabling environments and support structures",[18] and they stress the interdependent relationship between the different variables. Likewise Sageman proposed a model containing four non-sequential elements: feelings of moral injustice, which are interpreted in a particular way, which resonate with an individual's reality and are mobilised through online and offline group dynamics.[19]

Radicalisering als een puzzel.

NETWORKS

GRIEVANCES

IDEOLOGIES

ENABLING
ENVIRONMENTS
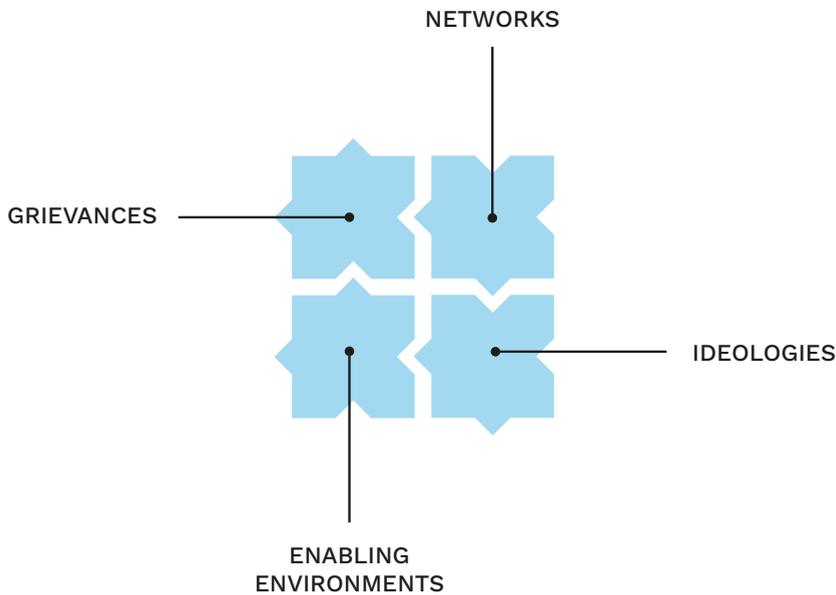
Geopolitics

At the broadest level, a number of academic studies have found that ideological interpretations of geopolitical conditions are factors in radicalisation. The most important is a perceived schism between the West, Christianity or secularism on the one side and Islam on the other, and this is often translated by perpetrators of terrorism. Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman conducted an empirical examination of

117 individual Islamic home-grown terrorists in the UK and the US, finding this perceived 'clash of cultures' to be a key driver for individuals engaging in terrorism.[20] The study of a dataset of 6678 Muslim respondents' attitudes from Muslim and Western countries found those in Western Europe who supported terrorism often linked these attitudes to 'Western economic dominance'. The authors also found that, among respondents from Muslim countries, the belief that 'Western democracy does not work well in the Muslim world' was associated with support for terrorist activities.[21]

The Internet and social media

The Internet has been an area of intense recent scrutiny, as both a global factor in radicalisation and also one that influences and changes many of the other drivers detailed in this chapter.[22] It is almost always at least present in the compiled backgrounds of both individuals who have come to hold violent radical beliefs and those who have perpetrated terrorist acts.[23] It allows social relationships to form in new ways. In 2014, Scanlan and Gerber analysed messages sent from extremist online fora and found that online communities enable violent extremists to increase recruitment by allowing them to build personal relationships with a worldwide audience capable of accessing uncensored content.[24] It has been found to facilitate not only bilateral relationships but also groups. A study critically analysing extremist websites found a number of group dynamics in operation, including discrediting opponents and the formation of common morals.[25]

The study of how online content is received, understood and acted upon (or not) has also become a key area in the understanding of the role of the Internet in radicalisation and terrorism. One study found that exposure to extremist content via social media only contributes to violence for those adults who have a strong 'propensity' towards political violence.[26] This has led to the idea of 'differential susceptibility' to online content; that the level of influence of external factors is conditional on particular socio-psychological states. Just like in social crime prevention, no one-size-fits-all model can either explain or solve online radicalisation.[27]

A study of 6020 Belgian students showed that online social relationships were more closely linked to radicalisation than the passive consumption of online extremist content.[28] A 2015 study of 218 college students in the US regarding their engagement with non-violent and violent ideologies online found that students' response to the website content was the key component that affected whether or not they engaged with material.[29] For example, websites that had a

high level of violent content received negative reactions from the students and were considered reprehensible, making the students less likely to engage with them. The majority of the 218 students surveyed rejected violent messages. When a website contains content that viewers deemed to be reprehensible by viewers, then, it can actually deter the viewer from engaging in radical or violent action.[30]

Social factors: Relative disadvantage, social, economic and occupational frustration

There is a large amount of evidence that relative disadvantage is a driver of radicalisation. In 2011, Piazza conducted a quantitative study of country-level data from 172 countries.[31] Across 3088 observations, the study concluded that countries that permit their minority communities to be afflicted by economic discrimination are more vulnerable to domestic terrorism.[32] In 2016, another comparative study across 50 countries found Muslim youth unemployment drives the foreign-fighter phenomenon.[33]

Across 3088 observations, the study concluded that countries that permit their minority communities to be afflicted by economic discrimination are more vulnerable to domestic terrorism.

Second, the perception of societal injustice, discrimination and marginalisation has also been identified as important.[34] Garland and Treadwell conducted a three-year ethnographic study of the appeal of the English 'Defence League' amongst disadvantaged white working-class communities in England. They found that marginalisation and a lack of integration between white working-class and Pakistani communities were important drivers of radicalisation.[35] Other studies have pointed to perceptions of discrimination as an important background factor. A qualitative ethnography of the perceptions of British South Asian Muslims from Birmingham found that perceptions of

A qualitative ethnography study of the perceptions of British South Asian Muslims from Birmingham found that perceptions of Islamophobia, a lack of effective theological and political leadership and the passage of regressive anti-terror legislation were principal factors in the radicalisation and the de-radicalisation of British Muslims.

Islamophobia, a lack of effective theological and political leadership and the passage of regressive anti-terror legislation were principal factors in the radicalisation and the de-radicalisation of British Muslims.[36] Path models have also empirically demonstrated how the complex web of relations between grievances (relative deprivation, group discrimination, low social integration) can translate into beliefs that are supportive of terrorist violence.[37]

Governmental security policy itself has been identified as a driver of societal exclusion, perceived discrimination and radicalisation. In 2016, a study of 209 Dutch jihadists from 14 jihadi networks found that government responses such as condemnations and prosecutions had the unintended consequence of driving radicalisation.[38]

Local context

Local context – for example, social surroundings – has also been identified as a factor conductive to violent extremism. A global study of more than 3500 ISIS members highlighted that unique local conditions acted as drivers for foreign fighters. The Libyan Derwani foreign fighters were found to have a lower average age than fighters from other regions, suggesting that they had "inherited the mantle of violent extremism from their parents".[39] A similar study of 1175 foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq found that complicit surroundings also enabled those who engaged in violent extremism; 22% of the fighters were recruited by a religious mentor; 50% by a group member and 10% by a friend.[40]

Group factors: social networks, group dynamics, sense of belonging, family and status

Beneath the levels of geopolitics and society-wide factors lies overwhelming evidence that social links are a crucial element in the radicalisation process for those who engage in group-affiliated violent terrorism.[41] Sageman's work has disregarded a number of broader explanations for radicalisation, such as poverty, various forms of brainwashing, youth, ignorance or lack of education, lack of employment, lack of social responsibility, criminality or mental illness. Instead, Sageman emphasises that social relationships, kinship and friendships are key drivers for radicalisation,

and he cites this as one of the most common features present in the radicalisation process.[42]

Social ties have also been found to be important reasons for people to reject violence. An analysis of the pre-attack behaviour of 120 'lone-actor' terrorists found that almost half of the perpetrators leaked their plans and intent, especially to members of their family.[43] Interviews and a survey of 600 youths in the West Bank and ten individuals who had been directly involved with political violence found family influence to be an important reason that individuals rejected violence.[44] Conversely, social isolation, rather than links, was found to be a significant feature of the backgrounds of lone-actor terrorists.[45]

Social isolation was found to be a significant feature of the backgrounds of lone-actor terrorists.

The dynamics of smaller groups have been identified as particularly important in the crucial shift from engagement with radical ideas to the commitment to perpetrate acts of actual violence. A 2012 study of 1086 young Dutch people found perceived 'in-group' moral superiority plays a crucial role in right-wing radicalisation.[46] A study of 275 far-right violent and nonviolent organisations in the US likewise identified a number of group-level factors correlated with violence – including charismatic leaders and links with other groups.[47]

Last, the sub- and counter-cultures prevalent within groups have come under greater academic focus as drivers of violent action. This field has emerged from the field of criminology and tends to draw relationships between the dynamics and processes prevalent in criminal gangs and violent extremist groups.[48] This approach tends to assert the social rather than political, religious or ideological drivers of radicalisation – including status and thrill-seeking. These are dealt with below as the emotional drivers of radicalisation and violent action.

Individual traits: Mental health, personality traits, criminality

A long-standing aim of terrorism studies has been to identify individual-level pathologies, essentially to see terrorism as a mental illness, as irrational belief. Some studies have found a higher incidence of mental illness in perpetrators than in the general population.[49] For instance, an analysis of an open-source dataset of

consisting of 370 foreign-fighter cases from Belgium and Holland in 2016 found psychological problems in 60% of individuals.[50]

However, a number of authoritative literature views have denied the empirical basis for psychopathological explanations. The two most significant scholarly reviews of the psychopathology position both agree that evidence supporting terrorist normality is more plentiful and of better quality.[51] Indeed, Martha Crenshaw, a political scientist and influential terrorism studies scholar, identifies *normalcy* "insofar as we understand the term" as the characteristic feature of terrorists rather than psychopathology or personality disturbance.[52]

The two most significant scholarly reviews of the psychopathology position both agree that evidence supporting terrorist normality is more plentiful and of better quality.

Instead, the literature has sought to identify personality types and traits common amongst terrorists. In a study of lone-wolf terrorists, Gruenewald argued that perpetrators could be split into two groups – those with 'caring-consistency profiles' and those with 'disconnected-disordered profiles'. Likewise Mccauley and Moskalenko's comparative analysis of school attacks and assassination attempts found two profiles: (1) the 'disconnected-disordered' profile of individuals with a grievance and weapons experience who are socially disconnected; (2) the 'caring – consistency' profile of individuals who felt strongly the suffering of others and a personal responsibility to reduce or revenge this suffering. This study implies that individual trajectories into terrorism requires different approaches toward radicalisation.[53]

Previous non-radical criminality has been increasingly linked with individuals who have committed terrorism. In some cases, the literature links difficult childhoods with an individual's desire to search for meaning and a new identity. In others, previous criminality is linked to the social networks the individual has (including those formed in prison) or is used to explain their ability or readiness to use violence and their capacity to access criminal networks to acquire weapons.[54] Previous criminality was also found to be a driver that was prevalent in lone-actor terrorists.[55] Life history interviews with 44 white supremacists in 2016 examined their childhood and adolescent experiences to explain factors that led them to become involved in violent extremism. It found childhood risk factors and adolescent conduct problems were precursors to participation in violent

Previous non-radical criminality has been increasingly linked with individuals who have committed terrorism.

extremism. An analysis of 79 European jihadists found a 'crime-terror nexus'; more than half had been previously incarcerated before they became radicalised.[56]

Religion

The nature and depth of religiosity has been a matter of longstanding scrutiny and debate by academics.[57] Many have consistently argued for the centrality of certain theologies, however warped and cherry-picked, as the key motivation and legitimation for especially Islamist and Christian fundamentalist terrorism.[58] Interviews with people who knew Dutch foreign fighters as they were radicalised found, for instance, an increased interest in religion before they left to join ISIL.[59]

A number of academic studies have, over the last decade, argued that religion is not necessarily as significant as it was once believed to be and that a causal link between the role of religion, ideology and narratives with extremist violence has not been empirically established. Aly and Striegher conducted a 2012 study, including interviews with Australia's first convicted terrorist, and found that religion plays a much more limited role in radicalisation than was widely supposed.[60] A study of the backgrounds of 1175 foreign fighters observed that religion was not an important part of their backgrounds – less than 15% of fighters included in the study have any religious backgrounds, and many, although Muslim from birth, were not particularly religious.[61] Focus group discussions with 15 previous al-Shabab members also found that a loss of sense of identity was important, but that many were not deeply religious.[62] Europol also identified characteristics of jihadists perpetrating acts of terror in the EU, and found that many perpetrators were not "strictly practicing their Islam religion".[63] They also identified that less than half of the individuals arrested for IS related incidents, such as supporting or joining the organisation, had pertinent understanding about their religion, making them susceptible to the group's interpretation of Islam.[64]

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Emotions, experience and identity

Rather than focussing on pathological biases and irrational decision-making, academic literature has increasingly emphasised the emotional and experiential experience of radicalism and terrorism; of what it feels like to be part of a radical group or plotting an attack and how concepts such as identity, status and thrill-seeking can shape moral understandings that come to justify violence.[65]

In understanding the attraction of the experience of violent radicalism, three factors are often identified: (1) the desire for excitement; (2) the desire for ultimate meaning; and (3) the desire for glory.

In understanding the attraction of the experience of violent radicalism, three factors are often identified: (1) the desire for excitement; (2) the desire for ultimate meaning; and (3) the desire for glory.[66] A 2012 study of right-wing extremism in Europe found that people drawn to it are more driven by 'a combination of "thrill seeking", opportunistic or criminal motivations' rather than 'by racial or overtly ideological' drivers.[67] Likewise a study by Van der Veen of 183 Dutch participants found a 'need for status' as the most significant driver of radicalisation.[68]

Identity in the Belgian context

In Belgium, the formation of identity is problematic, particularly amongst second- and third-generation migrant youth. A study found that Muslim immigrant youths (predominantly second generation) most strongly identified with their country of origin[69], and this was significantly higher than non-Muslim immigrants. Another survey found that Belgian Muslim youth feel especially marginalised – more than two-thirds of Muslim males aged 15 to 25, a demographic cited as particularly vulnerable to radicalisation, felt unaccepted by Flemish society; and more than 50% of Belgium Muslim youth believed they had experienced racism.[70] These feelings of alienation are therefore a combination of factors, some perceived and others based on real life experiences.

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Conclusions and implications

The literature reviewed in this chapter suggests that there is a causal link between ideas and behaviours, although not a straightforward one. It is clear that ideas and beliefs do matter. This includes anger at Western foreign policy (or, in the case of right-wing extremists, domestic policy), despair at the humanitarian costs of foreign conflicts (or, in the case of right-wing extremists, at humanitarian responses such as higher intakes of refugees) and loyalties tied to international regional instability. Similarly, a sense of being discriminated against and feelings of alienation and social exclusion are often factors experienced by those who use violence. Most of the explanatory models, for instance, draw a link between supporting violence and then committing it; many regard the former as a border 'pool' from which the latter emerge, or are drawn.

It is clear that ideas and beliefs do matter.

However, the key implication for policymakers from this literature is that countering radicalisation is not simply a battle of ideas. Radicals, like all human beings, are influenced on a number of different levels and in ways that they do not always realise or acknowledge themselves. Engaging in an idea considered 'radical' is not a definite precursor for those who eventually commit terrorist acts, and for those who do commit terrorist acts, ideas and ideologies are not always particularly important.

The key implication for policymakers from this literature is that countering radicalisation is not simply a battle of ideas.

The challenge for policymakers is to engage with, and reflect, this complexity in the counter-terrorism policies that they design and implement. They must confront radical ideologies and problematic belief systems, of course, but also must engage with the drivers of radicalisation that have nothing to do with the ideas that we consciously hold or argue for: the power and influence of social ties and networks, including criminal ones; of the influence of sub-cultures, counter-culture and group dynamics; and of emotional and experiential factors, of thrill- and status-seeking.

Effective counter-terrorism policy will have, at its heart, the most common conclusion of the literature: rejection of the idea that one key condition or driver causes people to become either extremist or violent. There is often a web of different, reciprocal and interacting drivers, some based on belief and others not. The process (if it is indeed a process, and this itself is disputed) is multilayered and multicausal,

and it almost always encompasses both ideological and non-ideological drivers, either together or at different stages.

Therefore:

- Counter-terrorism policies must make a clear distinction between radicalism and violence: the assumption that radical ideas constitute the first step on the road to violence risks securitising legitimate dissent and can be counter-productive, fuelling social exclusion and mistrust.

- Both the subjective perception and objective existence of unfairness, discrimination and injustice can be important drivers of violent behaviour both when it objectively exists and when it is perceived. Government must fight both discrimination and perceptions of it. This is a communications challenge for government, to counter perceptions that society and opportunity works less well for marginalised groups. In addition there is a much more profound challenge related to the structural inequalities of existing education, wealth and opportunity. Government should seek to counter these objective and subjective drivers in order to tackle prejudices and facilitate the empowerment of youth from migrant backgrounds.

In addition there is a much more profound challenge related to the structural inequalities of existing education, wealth and opportunity.

- Counter-terrorism policies should engage with the emotional and experiential pull factors of violent radicalism:

  – Violent radical groups, including ISIL, should be de-glamourised and demystified. Counter-narratives should emphasise, where possible, the theological ignorance and practical incompetence of terrorist groups where this is practicable and where the context permits.

  – Promoting other non-violent alternatives to thrill-seeking, a 'quest for significance' and the social and political activism will reduce the pull factors of violent radicalism.

- Successful counter-terrorism policies will necessarily have to disrupt and engage with both the pull and push factors of radicalisation on a number of different levels. The lessons and models of successful multiagency counter-gang

initiatives should be considered.[71] Approaches should also be customised for specific groups and individuals; variances in drivers and push and pull factors mean that diverse approaches should be central to the design of the most effective de-radicalisation strategies.

▼ Successful counter-terrorism policies will require the engagement of diverse partners, both statutory and non-statutory. Theological and community leaders are important, but so too are the families and friends of individuals at risk of radicalisation, the prison service and front-line workers with duties of care in schools and universities.

▼ Government counter-terrorism and security policy can itself be a push factor into either violent ideology or terrorist action. Government must be aware of the possibility of these unintended consequences and must evaluate the consequences of and reactions to these policies in vulnerable communities. Government may consider, for instance: clear restitution mechanisms for those who have been unjustly targeted; a space for individuals to criticise and disagree with counter-terrorism policy as loyal citizens of the state; the appointment of independent legal oversight to counter-terrorism powers, and continuous outreach and feedback mechanisms to identify unintended outcomes in timely ways.

▼ Counter-terrorism should be linked with other initiatives to disrupt criminal networks and fight serious organised crime. Given the background of previous criminality of many terrorists, counter-gang, counter-weapons and counter-narcotic activities should also be seen as structural responses to counter terrorism.

▼ De-radicalisation strategies should reflect that there is no single route into terrorist activity or violent radical belief. Mccauley and Moskalenko's work, for instance, points to different personality profiles of terrorists, which themselves suggest different approaches toward de-radicalisation.

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Risk assessment in integral security policy

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Risk assessment in integral security policy

In risk assessment, risk factors are identified to estimate the likelihood (or probability) of an outcome occurring in a population.[1] Risk-assessment methods are used for a range of purposes, such as determining the likelihood that individuals are at risk of joining an extremist group, the likelihood that an individual might use violence in the future and decisions about whether or not individuals should be allowed to leave prison. Risk assessment also serves the purpose of developing effective interventions.

This chapter discusses three issues in regard to risk assessment. First, it outlines different foci of risk-assessment instruments. Second, it describes demographic risk factors, factors related to underlying motives, trigger factors and protective factors that are distinguished in the literature on radicalisation, extremism and terrorism. Third, it gives an overview of several risk-assessment instruments as well as difficulties and challenges that researchers deal with when evaluating the quality of these instruments. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future policy. It is important to note that the focus in this chapter is mainly on the individual level. However, risk assessment can also be conducted for groups or on movements at a societal level.

Focus of risk assessment

Before describing what risk instruments are being used, first some issues are outlined that should be kept in mind when considering risk-assessment instruments. These include terminology issues and levels of analysis, typologies of radicals and terrorists based on their motives, and phases of radicalisation.

Terminology and level of analysis

When using a risk-assessment instrument, the focus must first be specified. A distinction can be made between a focus on, respectively, radicalisation, extremism and terrorism. Even though these concepts are related, there are some important differences. *Radicalisation* refers to a process in which individuals become increasingly motivated to use violent means to achieve their ideals.[2] *Extremism* refers to the support of a social movement that wants to change a society and that approves of violence.[3] *Terrorism* refers to actual acts of violence to intimidate the public, with the goal of causing political change.[4] An individual can be at risk of radicalising, but this does not imply that this individual will also turn toward extremism (supporting the use of violence to reach his or her ideals) or will actually conduct an act of terrorism by using violence.[5] In contrast, all terrorists have radicalised and have at one point turned to extremism. In risk assessment, a distinction should be made between determining whether individuals are at risk of radicalising towards the adoption of an extremist standpoint or whether they are at risk of committing a terrorist act.

A risk-assessment instrument can focus on an individual (the so-called micro-level), a group (the meso-level) or even a society or nation (the macro-level). It is important to distinguish between these levels when considering different instruments. For example, expressing changed priorities such as a desire for a 'normal life' is considered to be a protective factor that plays a role at the individual level.[6] An instrument that measures risk at a group level will, most likely, not capture this dimension. It is important to be aware of the fact that the selection of a risk-assessment instrument will, by definition, simplify the complexity of processes related to radicalisation, extremism and terrorism.

Terrorist type depending on motive of radicalisation

In addition to terminology and level of analysis, the different types of radicalising individuals must be distinguished. Four types are generally distinguished in the literature, as described below.[7] Each type of radicalising individual has its own *motive* (the underlying 'root cause'). Importantly, each motive has its own *symptoms,* which can be observed or measured. In turn, *observable events* can be distinguished, which trigger individuals to further radicalise or conduct violent acts.

First, *identity seekers* are those individuals who radicalise because of identity related motives. Symptoms of these motives include a strong need to belong to a social group or feelings of uncertainty. Events that may trigger radicalisation of these individuals are friends who radicalise or an extremist group providing social support when needed. Protective factors may be, for example, providing alternative sources of social support.

Second, *justice seekers* are motivated to radicalise in order to counter injustice. Symptoms of these individuals are that they express feelings of relative deprivation (feeling unequally treated in comparison to others) and feelings of anger, frustration or humiliation. Events that may trigger these feelings include experiences of discrimination or social exclusion or negative experiences with authorities. Protective factors may be offering alternative pathways for dealing with injustices or increasing resilience by instructing individuals how to better cope with negative emotions.

Third, *significance seekers* are motivated by a search for meaning in life. Symptoms include the need for clear objectives or a life purpose. Events that may trigger these needs may be highly stressful experiences such as a confrontation with the death of a loved one. Protective factors may be the offering of alternative objectives or focussing on strategies to cope with negative experiences.

Fourth, *sensation seekers* are mainly motivated by a need for adventure and excitement. Symptoms include a history of violence, glorification of violent actions and feelings of boredom. Triggering events may include calls for violent action by extremist groups, being given the opportunity to join in violent action or expressing interest in marrying foreign fighters. Protective factors may be providing alternatives or coping with emotions related to sensation-seeking.

A challenge of risk assessment, therefore, is to identify which motive drives an individual to radicalise or conduct terrorism-related behaviour. This is done by accurately measuring the symptoms and by determining observable events that
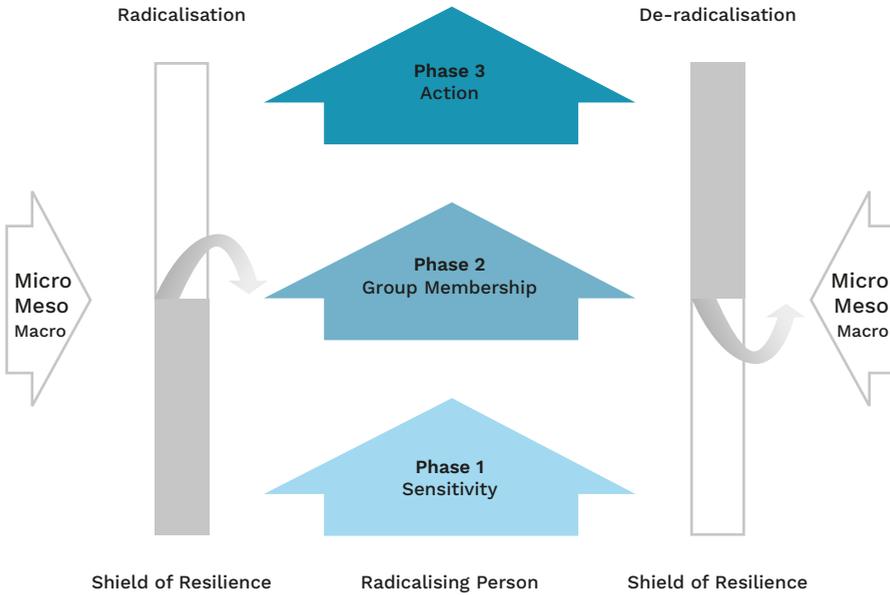
triggered the behaviour. To give an example: an individual joins an extremist group (the behaviour) from an identity-related motive that is a need to belong (the symptom). The observable event that triggered this behaviour was a recruiter offering friendship (the trigger factor). When the underlying motive is specified, interventions may focus on offering alternatives to meet this person's need to belong. To do so, underlying psychological mechanisms could be targeted, such as changing perceptions (i.e., by explaining the recruiter's motives and pointing out alternatives). Moral beliefs could also be targeted (i.e., pointing out the destructive consequences of this friendship for the individual and his social environment).

Phases of radicalisation

Results from a growing number of interview studies, observation studies and survey studies show that there is no single personality, typology or specific process that leads to radicalisation, violent extremism or terrorism.[8] General phase models can help us better understand the processes involved. An example is the *Staircase Model of Terrorism*, which distinguishes between different stages of radicalisation and uses the metaphor of a narrowing staircase to explain radicalisation.[9] On the ground floor are those individuals who perceive injustice and unfairness done to themselves or their social group. The top floor is where the terrorist act occurs. Whether a person moves from one floor to the next depends on a range of factors.

The figure below depicts the core idea of existing phase models of radicalisation.[10] Three broad phases are distinguished: (1) the phase of *sensitivity*, where individuals are considered at risk of radicalising; (2) the second phase that implies *becoming a member* of an extremist group; and (3) the third phase or *action phase*, where the terrorist act occurs. It should be noted that radicalisation can take a relatively long time (months, years), but cases have been reported of individuals radicalising in a matter of days or weeks. Often this speedy radicalisation from being sensitive to radicalisation to joining an extremist group or committing a terrorist act is impelled by a trigger event.[11] An example is the publication of cartoons ridiculing the Prophet Mohammed in Denmark (2006) that spurred violence.[12] In these cases it is often difficult to intervene or to make a risk assessment in such a short period of time.

The (de-)radicalisation process and its determinants [13]

Radicalisation   De-radicalisation

Phase 3
Action

Phase 2
Group Membership

Phase 1
Sensitivity

Micro Meso Macro   Micro Meso Macro

Shield of Resilience   Radicalising Person   Shield of Resilience

An additional aspect of radicalisation shown in this figure is that resilience plays a key role. In the early phases of radicalisation, resilience refers to the extent that individuals are able to resist the influence of extremist groups. In later phases, during group membership and the action phase, resilience refers to the extent individuals can resist attempts from the 'outside world' to convince them to leave the extremist group. In terms of risk assessment, it is valuable to determine the extent to which individuals are resilient.[14] Risk-assessment instruments often include protective factors such as rejection of violence to obtain goals and social support from the community or significant others (peers, family).

With respect to risk assessment of radicalisation, it is should be made explicit which phase of radicalisation is considered. For example, the focus of a risk-assessment instrument can be on the prevention phase in which individuals are sensitive to radicalisation and are at risk of joining an extremist group. Here risk assessment is used, for example, to get an indication of whether an individual is likely to join an extremist group. Alternatively, risk assessment may focus on the action phase when

individuals are involved in acts of terrorism. In this phase the focus lies on whether an individual is, for example, at risk of using violence to obtain goals.

It is important to note that radicalisation is a non-linear process. Individuals can, for example, take a long time to radicalise from the first to the second phase and then radicalise very quickly to the third phase. Also, individuals may move backward and forward between stages. This can further complicate risk assessment and intervention. Importantly, individuals' motives may also change over time. An individual may start out as an identity seeker (motivated to join an extremist group by identity-related factors such as a need to belong) and then, during membership, become motivated by injustice-related factors such as feeling anger or humiliated due to perceived injustice done to his or her group.

Risk factors and protective factors in radicalisation

What, then, are the risk factors that determine whether or not a person radicalises from one phase to the other? This section provides a concise description of risk factors that have been reported in the literature and can serve as input for risk-assessment instruments. When talking about risk factors, it is important to clarify the distinction between different kinds of factors. Some factors are related to demographics. Other factors are related to the underlying motives of radicalisation. Then there are trigger factors, events in the life of individuals that may bring about actions such as joining an extremist group or conducting an act of violence. Beyond risk factors, protective factors can be distinguished, which are also discussed.

Demographic risk factors

In regard to *gender*, men are considered to be at greater risk to radicalise than women.[15] However, women are present in radical groups and seem to fulfil typical female roles in the extremist group.[16] In this regard Von Knop points out that females in the extremist Islamic group IS typically support their men, raise children with the ideology and support terrorist operations. However, roles may differ across extremist groups.

In regard to *age*, it seems that terrorists typically are 20 to about 29 years old.[17] A recent study showed that the average age of Dutch foreign fighters in Syria was 25 years for men and 21 years for women.[18] The general picture in regard to *social class* contradicts the common assumption that terrorists are mainly from the lower

social class.[19] For example, the mainstream of Islamic extremists in the 1990s consisted of individuals with a university education but without an outlook on job prospects.[20]

Risk factors related to motives

A large number of socio-psychological risk factors of radicalisation have now been identified.[21] This section gives a short overview of key variables at the individual (micro), group (meso) and societal (macro) levels.

An often-mentioned risk factor at the individual level is *psychopathology*. In regard to psychopathology, a distinction can be made between individual 'lone-wolf' terrorism and terrorism in a group context. Severe mental disorders have been observed to play a role in individual 'lone-wolf' extremism.[22] In contrast, severe mental disorders seem not to be overly present in individuals in extremist groups.[23] In this respect Crenshaw points out that "the outstanding common characteristic of terrorists is their normality."[24] Whereas severe mental disorders are unlikely to be the main risk factor in radicalisation at a group level, a significant number of Dutch foreign fighters had mental health problems and were reported to have shown problem behaviour (i.e., past petty crime, involvement in violence).[25] Mental health problems and prior involvement in crime could therefore be catalysts in radicalisation.

Ideology is also often mentioned as a risk factor for radicalisation. It is striking that in the sensitivity phase, ideology is often not very well developed. This was found in studies on Islamic extremism (i.e., the 'cut-and-paste-Islam') and right-wing extremism.[26] Ideology seems to develop mainly during group membership in interaction with other group members. In addition, ideology seems to help individuals and groups to actually commit terrorist acts; it is a means to reach the goal.[27]

Identity-related issues are also often mentioned in the radicalisation process of young people.[28] A struggle to find one's place in society is related to feeling uncertain about oneself. An extremist group is a source of self esteem and can offer an individual protection as well as a sense of meaning.[29]

At the societal (macro) level, *socio-economic disadvantage* is considered a key background factor of radicalisation. Perceptions of being relatively less well off in comparison to others may feed into feelings of relative deprivation. In combination with the perception that one cannot climb up on the social-status ladder of society, this may result in greater receptivity for radicalisation.[30]

Trigger factors

Not only demographic factors and motivational factors lie at the foundation of radicalisation. It is often a concrete observable event that serves as a turning point in an individual's life or as a catalyst causing an individual to radicalise further. These so-called *trigger factors* play a role at the individual (micro), group (meso) and societal (macro) levels.[31] Examples of trigger factors at the individual level are the death of a loved one, loss of (perspective on) work or problems at school and direct experiences of discrimination, racism and exclusion. Negative experiences with authorities and detention have also been found to play a role in the radicalisation process.

Trigger factors at the group level are, for example, meeting a radical person, 'marrying into' an extremist group, participating in training, being confronted with propaganda and cutting existing social bonds. Individuals often join an extremist group because close friends or family join and 'pull' them into the group. This *bunch of guys* (or girls) phenomenon has been observed in Islamic extremism as well as right-wing extremism.[32]

Examples of trigger factors at the societal level are calls for action (i.e., IS calling for terror attacks using vehicles) or perceived attacks on one's own group (i.e., cartoonists who insult the Prophet Muhammad). Governmental policies can also be important trigger factors at the societal level. An example is the UK 'Preventing Violent Extremism' programme that seemed to mainly focus on the Muslim community.[33] A focus on one specific social group may cause the group to feel 'labelled' as a suspect community. This can trigger individuals of this community to actually radicalise in response.

Protective factors

Protective factors against radicalisation have also been identified. One key factor is social connectedness. By keeping individuals in touch with society (through family, friends, school teachers or first-line practitioners) they become less vulnerable to radicalisation in the sensitivity phase.[34] Other protective factors include creating a strong social identity (helping individuals to find their place in society and to have a clear objective in life) and developing empathy for others.[35] Protective factors in the group membership or action phase are aging (individuals are less likely to remain active in terrorism the older they get), experiencing a turning point event (trigger factors may also result in disengagement), being disillusioned by the movement and changing priorities (i.e., starting a family).[36]

Risk-assessment instruments

Different instruments exist for assessing the risk of extremism and terrorism. Reviews have evaluated their methodological strengths and weaknesses.[37] A comparison can be made between these instruments and the large number of instruments in other fields that assess antisocial risk, risk of using violence and sexual-assault risk.[38] For example, the Historical, Clinical and Risk Management 20 instrument (HCR-20) has been found to reliably predict propensity for violence in psychiatric patients. The Structural Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY) has been found to do very well in predicting future violence.[39] These instruments have been subject to rigorous empirical studies and have been proven to be reliable predictors.

Risk-assessment instruments that focus on risk of radicalisation, extremism and terrorism are often based on these instruments. However, as often acknowledged by developers, these have not been validated and do not meet empirical standards of reliability and validity that have been used in risk assessment of criminals and psychiatric patients.[40] The difficulty with determining the quality of instruments assessing risk of radicalisation and violent extremism is that prospective validation (i.e., the extent to which an instrument correctly predicts whether an individual will join an extremist group or conduct an act of terrorism) is unlikely to succeed. This is due to the relatively small numbers of radicals, violent extremists and terrorists and the difficulty in getting access to these populations. It is therefore not possible to draw strong conclusions about the reliability and validity of current existing risk-assessment instruments related to radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism.

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Beyond difficulty in getting access to the population, an additional obstacle in determining the quality of these measures is that they are often not publicly available for researchers. This is the case, for example, for the Extremist Risk Guidance 22+ (ERG 22+) instrument but also for the KiM-3.0 that is used by the Dutch National Police (and may therefore be of interest for policymakers in Belgium).

One instrument that has been subject to extensive research (in Canada) is the Violent Extremist Risk Assessment (VERA-2).[41] The VERA-2 is a specialised risk-assessment tool developed to evaluate the risk that an individual will commit acts of ideologically motivated violence (when at liberty). A second objective is to use

the information to develop counter-terrorism strategies and programmes for the individual while in detention. It entails features related to the motivation and commitment of an individual to terrorist acts, historical and contextual influences, friendships and affiliations but also possible protective factors. VERA-2 is based on the proposition that it is possible to craft a responsible and sensitive risk-assessment approach for terrorism by using evidence-based indicators of terrorism (such as the factors reviewed above). By focusing on a broad spectrum of violent political extremist and terrorists, VERA-2 further avoids a bias toward a specific ideology.

The VERA-2 consists of 31 indicators designed to be used by "trained psychologists and professionals charged with the responsibility of monitoring and managing individuals suspected or convicted of terrorist offences and who have knowledge of the field of terrorism and violent extremism." The VERA-2 includes indicators divided in four areas: (1) beliefs and attitudes (e.g., feelings of hate), (2) content and intent (e.g., perceived injustice, personal contact with violent extremists), (3) history and capability (e.g., early exposure to ideology, family of friends in extremist groups, prior criminal history of violence), and (4) commitment and motivation (e.g., glorification of violent action, driven by excitement or adventure). Protective factors are also included (i.e., reinterpretation of ideology in less rigid or absolute terms, rejection of violence to obtain goals). Each item is scored as high, moderate or low, based on interviews with the individual and/or records. The items are not combined (i.e., summing scores); the final risk estimate is a clinical judgement by a professional. The VERA-2 is specifically aimed at assessing the risk of terrorism by adopting a structured professional-judgement approach.

In line with the phase model of radicalisation (see the figure on p. 51), risk-assessment instruments can be distinguished based on the phase of radicalisation upon which they focus. Whereas the VERA-2 focuses on individuals in the membership or action phase, the Identifying Vulnerable People Guidance (IVPG) is a risk-assessment instrument for identifying individuals in the sensitivity phase.[42] It was developed as an instrument to provide public-sector frontline practitioners (school teachers, healthcare workers, police) with a checklist of key behaviours that could indicate an individual's vulnerability to recruitment into violent extremism. The checklist included 16 items such as 'cultural and religious isolation', 'isolation from family', 'risk-taking behaviour' and 'contact with known recruiter. It should be noted at this point that there is critique of this approach, based on

There is critique of these kinds of checklists, based on the notion that risk assessment should not be the responsibility of teachers but, instead, should be restricted to professionals.

the notion that risk assessment should not be the responsibility of teachers but, instead, should be restricted to professionals.[43]

With regard to effectiveness, the developers themselves note that "until agencies with access to more information [about radicalised individuals] are willing to either provide access to that information or conduct the screening themselves, it will be difficult to know whether the IVP guidance – or any other screening tool for violent extremism – is valid and reliable." The limitation stressed by the developers of IVPG is in line with the observation made earlier that at the moment it is not possible to draw strong conclusions about the reliability or validity of risk-assessment instruments of extremism and terrorism.

Conclusions and recommendations

Several instruments are currently in use to assess the risk of radicalisation and violent extremism. These instruments are mainly based on demographic factors, motivational factors, trigger factors and protective factors that have been identified in previous research. It is important to note that studies of the reliability and validity of existing risk-assessment instruments of radicalisation and violent extremism do not meet the high methodological standards that are used in, for example, risk assessment of violence in psychiatric patients and risk of future sexual abuse. To quote Scarcella et al.: "the instruments used by experts, and approved by their respective governments, are based on either minimal information or on un-critical information, which remains inaccessible to researchers to develop further."[44] Nevertheless, tools such as the VERA-2 seem to be valuable instruments that could serve as guidelines in identifying motives of radicalisation based on symptoms that are related to, for example, identity or injustice. Also, this instrument could help in identifying stressful events in an individual's life that could trigger further radicalisation or factors that could be protective against radicalisation. This information in turn helps to design interventions that are tailored to the individual.

Additional policy recommendations include:

❚ Governments, research institutes and security services should make public the information about risk-assessment instruments used as well as any empirical data that could help researchers to examine the reliability and validity of instruments used.

The objective of current existing risk-assessment instruments should be made clear. As no firm conclusions can be drawn about reliability and validity, great care should be taken with making judgements based on the outcomes of these instruments.

It should be made clear who is allowed to use the current existing risk-assessment instruments. Current instruments should be restricted only to professionals and may be useful as guidelines for making more informed decisions. Some instruments are currently available to teachers in schools. It is highly questionable whether teachers should bear the burden of risk assessment. Instead, teachers – but also parents – would benefit more from learning about strategies for engaging in dialogue with individuals whom they consider susceptible to radicalisation.[45]

Teachers – but also parents – would benefit more from learning about strategies for engaging in dialogue with individuals whom they consider susceptible to radicalisation.

Risk assessment currently seems to be mainly an undertaking of behavioural scientists; experts in psychology and other behavioural sciences have developed the majority of risk-assessment tools of radicalisation and violent extremism. Authors with a background in law, criminal justice and security but also those with a medical background are underrepresented. Risk assessment would benefit from a multidisciplinary approach.

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A typology of 'de-radicalisation' programmes

Daniel Koehler[1]

Introduction

Around the world in the last decades, numerous initiatives (called 'de-radicalisation' programmes) designed to facilitate individual defection from violent extremist and terrorist organisations have come into existence.[2] These programmes – being part of a broader attempt to counter violent extremism in general (i.e., 'countering violent extremism' [CVE]) – have gained intense academic attention and have become a cornerstone in counter-terrorism policies of many countries.[3] However, de-radicalisation programmes around the world are also vastly different in their organisational structure, methodological approach and goals. As no 'one-size-fits-all' solution to violent radicalisation and terrorism exists, the key question is: how can de-radicalisation programmes be characterised within a coherent typology in order to identify strengths and weaknesses for each programme type and to apply the adequate programme correctly in each setting? Hence, to understand different effects, target groups, methods and actors involved in de-radicalisation, one needs to recognise the basic characteristics of possible organisational and institutional programme settings if one is to design, evaluate and analyse such programmes effectively. In addition, to achieve potential counter-terrorism effects or to address the individual nature of different radicalisation processes and – more importantly – to effectively meet and interrupt recruitment networks of violent extremist groups, different forms and types of de-radicalisation programmes need to be differentiated according to their structural characteristics, making them more or less effective for specific goals and target groups.

Within the academic literature, some different types of de-radicalisation programmes have been suggested in the past, but without applying a coherent typology framework. Bjørgo and Horgan, for example, noted that de-radicalisation programmes can be run by governmental or non-governmental (NGOs) agencies.[4] Stone named six different forms of de-radicalisation programmes, although focusing more on the deliverables: education, vocational, socio-cultural, religious-ideological, psychological and extracurricular.[5] Nevertheless, the structural and methodological differences between clearly identifiable types of programmes based on empirical evidence (looking at those programmes which exist worldwide) is still lacking. In this chapter I provide a first comprehensive typology of de-radicalisation programmes.

Naturally, every typology needs to be based on a clear terminology. Within the practitioner and academic landscape the differentiation between 'de-radicalisation' and 'disengagement' has become a standard. Deradicalisation is understood as a change in attitudes and commitment to an extremist ideology; disengagement as a physical role change associated with a reduction of violent participation, without necessarily a change in conviction.[6] Beyond the aspect of individual change processes moving away from violence and commitment to a violent extremist ideology, Bjørgo and Horgan noted that the term 'de-radicalisation' is also oftentimes used to describe any effort to prevent radicalisation, which causes a not insignificant conceptual confusion.[7]

Deradicalisation is understood as a change in attitudes and commitment to an extremist ideology; disengagement as a physical role change associated with a reduction of violent participation, without necessarily a change in conviction.

The typology used here includes programmes from the sample according to several key features. First, the programme in question needs to be designed to target individuals or groups who are either self-defined 'radicals' – i.e., committed to a specified ideology considered to be 'extremist' – and/or use or advocate for politically motivated violence (such as acts of terrorism) and/or are official members of a group designated as 'terrorist' or 'extremist' by a legal authority. Second, these programmes need to have the goal of achieving a defined effect directed at reintegrating their target group into their surrounding societies on a long-term basis and eventually altering the above-mentioned criteria defining their target group (i.e., group membership, self-definition, advocacy or use of violence). Third, the programmes in question must not use direct violence to achieve that aim – i.e.,

coercion or torture – which would otherwise mean the programme is merely a form of repression.

Correctly used, this typology is explanatory in nature and not only describes the different types of de-radicalisation and disengagement programmes but also, more importantly, incorporates a theory about the mechanism and methods they use, the effects on their target groups and difficulties with their performance as well as strengths and weaknesses resulting from each type's main characteristics. In addition, this explanatory typology will allow one to draw conclusions about which type of programme might be best suited for a specified context, target group or goal, thereby making it more effective to plan, design and implement such programmes in the long run. Being an inductively won typology, all categories and underlying characteristics are the result of in-depth field studies of de-radicalisation and disengagement programmes around the world.[8]

Prevention, repression and intervention as counter-terrorism tools: the question of de-radicalisation as 'prevention'

Before it is possible to discuss different types of de-radicalisation and disengagement programmes, it is necessary to highlight the role and conceptual nature of de-radicalisation programmes within a society's counter-terrorism architecture. In general, every nation can apply methods and tools that address issues at three levels or scales of impact: macro-social, meso-social and micro-social; and every nation

> **When the three levels of impact are overlaid with the three classes of tools, it becomes possible to identify certain methods and tools that, ideally, will complement each other in order to address a potential threat related to violent radicalisation from every possible angle.**

had access to three general classes of tools: prevention, repression and intervention. The macro-social level includes tools that can be used on a nationwide, regional or city scale. The meso-social level includes affective social environments, such as work, family, school, community or peer group. The micro-social level focuses on the individual (sometimes including the closest adjacency). When the three levels of impact are overlaid with the three classes of tools, it becomes possible to identify certain methods and tools that, ideally, will complement each other

in order to address a potential threat related to violent radicalisation from every possible angle (see figure below).

Counter–terrorism network

	Macro Level	Meso Level	Micro Level
Prevention	Education, Research, Civil Society, Youth and Social Work	Community Cohesion Programs	Workshops with Former Extremists in Schools
Repression	National Law Enforcement Architecture	Community Policing, Group Banning	Incarceration, House Searchings
Intervention	Counter Narrative Projects	Family Counseling	Deradicalisation Programs

It is easiest to recognise repressive tools, as they are most commonly placed within the responsibility of government authorities within functioning modern nation-states. With the goal of containing a given security threat, law enforcement, judicial systems and the legal infrastructure are tasked with arresting, as well as punishing, individual offenders (micro-social level), prohibiting or arresting and punishing groups (meso-social level) and providing intelligence and investigations on a wider movement-specific level to protect borders, disrupt financial support mechanisms of terrorism and so on (macro-social). More positive aspects of repression have been introduced in many states, such as 'community policing' (meso-social level) or probation infrastructures (micro-social).

Preventative tools are designed to avert an extremist or terrorist threat from occurring in the first place.[9] Thus prevention includes those tools that work with a target group before any radicalisation process has taken place, to reduce the attraction of terrorist narratives and ideologies as well as provide specific support to certain groups considered vulnerable or 'at risk' of radicalisation. This is thought of to have a positive effect against potential future involvement in extremism or terrorism.[10] This is, in turn, based on the premise that certain socio-biographical factors – such as unemployment, lack of education, mental health problems and so on – are driving factors of radicalisation.[11]

On a macro-social level, preventative tools are typically the nation-wide educational system (regarding human rights, embedding the civic standards in the society, obedience for the law and authorities etc.) as well as the civil society at large, if allowed to participate in the national political system. Meso-social preventative tools can also be described as 'community cohesion' programmes. It is assumed that strong and positive communities are more resilient against terrorist recruitment attempts.[12] On the micro-social level, any tools that help to address and strengthen the individual perception of belonging and civic responsibility belong to the preventative family.

It needs to be said that prevention can be roughly differentiated into general and targeted prevention, depending on the level of strategic direction towards a specified extremist threat or ideology. While the first (general) type of prevention aims to educate broadly in favour of the established political system, targeted prevention aims to reduce the attraction of a specific terrorist or extremist group, which is why this type of prevention has been widely called 'counter-radicalisation' or 'countering violent extremism' (CVE).[13] However, de-radicalisation programmes and efforts have also been labelled as 'preventative', drawing on other classifications and conceptualisations of the term 'prevention'.[14] For example, it could be argued that de-radicalisation would fall either under the category of 'tertiary'[15] or 'indexed' prevention. 'Tertiary' prevention goes back to the typology designed by Caplan, who focused on the existence of a specified psychological element designated as problematic.[16] While 'primary' prevention would aim to prevent this element from occurring, 'secondary' prevention aims to avert its solidification. 'Tertiary' prevention, in turn, aims to prevent this element from recurring in the future. In this way, as was intended by Caplan, every rehabilitation intervention essentially aims to prevent recidivism or re-offending and can indeed be a potential component of post-de-radicalisation work. Another model applied to de-radicalisation was designed by Gordon and, in contrast to Caplan, examines a specified group of people who are currently not affected by a certain disease.[17] Universal prevention in this model aims to introduce wide, easy and cheap measures of preventative care – e.g., a healthier diet. Selective prevention aims to introduce more differential methods targeting a group with a higher risk of 'infection', while indexed prevention aims at those with a high risk. This, in turn, demands a clear set of established and measurable risk factors clearly associated with the specified illness.

For several reasons it is problematic to translate typologies of prevention stemming from, and designed for, the medical field of disease control to the areas of counter-radicalisation, counter-terrorism and de-radicalisation. To begin with, to do so implies that violent radicalisation equals a form of sickness or pathological abnormality that can be 'cured' with the adequate form of treatment. In this way, these

These prevention typologies inherently distort our understanding of radicalisation and terrorism into a perception of pathological phenomena and away from possible root causes.

typologies inherently distort our understanding of radicalisation and terrorism into a perception of pathological phenomena and away from possible root causes.[18] In fact, few approaches to explain terrorism have so unanimously failed as psychological disorder theories. As renowned counter terrorism expert John Horgan stated: "Overall, as attempts to assert the presence of psychological abnormality in terrorists, such accounts are, in the context of a scientific study of behaviour (which implies at least a sense of rigour), exceptionally weak."[19] This view was supported numerous times by other studies. Silke, for example, found in her detailed review that "most serious researchers in the field at least nominally agree with the position that terrorists are essentially normal individuals."[20] This position has been affirmed through scrutiny in various case studies of many different terrorist groups and individuals, such as the German Red Army Fraction (RAF),[21] the Irish Republican Army (IRA)[22] or various mixed samples.[23]

Consequently, the application of the above-mentioned clinical prevention classification schemes seems to be highly inappropriate and would require a risk-measurement tool that is effective in identifying a high chance of becoming radical. As Allard Feddes notes in the previous chapter, although several risk-assessment protocols exist, the implied causality in applying medical prevention schemes cannot be found in highly complex social processes such as radicalisation. In addition, these concepts also redirect the core mechanisms of de-radicalisation or disengagement away from *reducing current involvement or commitment* to *preventing potential future recidivism* – i.e., the rise of involvement and commitment after it decreased, both of which require different methods and approaches. By definition, de-radicalisation requires a subject who can be considered 'radical', while prevention – even tertiary prevention – is an important *a priori*, as well as *a posteriori*, activity.

Thus de-radicalisation and disengagement tools and programmes can best be understood as *intervention*, which does not mean that reintegration, rehabilitation or de-radicalisation programmes are not closely connected to preventative efforts. As outlined by Bjørgo in his nine mechanisms of preventing crime, encouraging desistance from criminal behaviour and rehabilitating former offenders is one essential tool to fight any form of crime.[24] More concretely, de-radicalisation programmes can reduce recruitment and the appeal of criminal activity.

On the macro-social level, intervention-type tools are, for example, nationwide or international counter-narrative projects. Like prevention tools, they aim to prevent involvement in extremism but also, ideally, induce doubt and reconsideration among those in the early stages of radicalisation (also see the chapter of Doosje and van Eerten in this volume).[25] Meso-social level intervention tools are designed to target the family or social environment of radicalising or radicalised individuals. Their goal is to stop or slow down the individual's commitment and involvement in terrorism and extremism and also (ideally) induce individual de-radicalisation and disengagement. Other meso-social intervention programmes and tools include those that aim to de-radicalise entire extremist terrorist groups.[26] Finally, micro-social intervention tools work with individuals and aim to assist them with leaving behind their radical milieus and/or ideologies.

As mentioned, all these specific tools on every impact level are more effective when combined. They complement each other by providing highly valuable resources and practical support for one another. One example would be former terrorists (micro-social intervention output) who give educational talks in schools or to the media to advocate against extremism and violence.[27] Another example might be the way law enforcement and the prison system are structured (repression all levels): do these allow, as well as support, prison-based rehabilitation and de-radicalisation programmes to work within their environment (intervention micro-social)? Law enforcement personnel and prison staff might benefit from specialised training, delivered by intervention experts, that focuses on recognition of radicalisation processes and methods of intervention. Such training is also highly useful for prevention providers such as teachers, social workers or mental health specialists. Knowledge about distinct forms of extremist ideologies, group structures, motives for attraction, recruitment campaigns and so on can be gained and shared with all the other fields in this network, to improve the effectiveness in their specific tasks.

Types of intervention (de-radicalisation) programmes at the micro-social level

Based on programme case studies[28] and a review of the existing literature, it was possible to identify three main characteristics of individual-level intervention programmes aiming to reduce commitment to, or involvement in, terrorist or extremist groups: (1) actor, (2) contact approach and (3) the importance of the ideological component.

Actor

As noted by Bjørgo and Horgan, de-radicalisation and disengagement programmes (DDPs) are usually run by either governmental or non-governmental actors (NGOs).[29] Differences between governmental and non-governmental actors mainly relate to financial resources and legal responsibilities as well as liabilities. Additionally, the role and importance of civil-society actors at large differs between countries, especially between Western democratic and Middle Eastern, as well as Southeast Asian, societies. While the inclusion of non-governmental actors or even the full execution of DDPs through NGOs is more common in Western countries, it is a rather new and carefully introduced aspect of Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian countries to work with civil-society actors.[30] In Saudi Arabia, for example, the inclusion of civil-society actors largely focusses on prevention and counter-radicalisation projects as part of the 'media subcommittee'.[31] One of the few exceptions is Singapore, where the 'Religious Rehabilitation Group' is a civil-society association whose members include leading religious authorities who conduct religious counselling in prison.[32] Sometimes private persons, such as former extremists, undertake ideological intervention – usually in the form of one-on-one debates; this happens, for example, in Indonesia.[33]

Governmental prison-based programmes might be seen as attempts by the 'enemy' – who, in fact, is responsible for the incarceration in the first place – to attack the group with another form of psychological warfare.

In addition to financial resources and legal obligations, the question of who carries out a DDP can also have a strong impact on a programme's potential credibility and effectiveness to reach the specified target group. For example, governmental prison-based programmes might be seen as attempts by the 'enemy' – who, in fact, is responsible for the incarceration in the first place – to attack the group with another form of psychological warfare. Religious authorities or staff in that programme might also be seen

as government-employed 'traitors', which might increase the chances of rejection by potential participants. Indeed, it has been shown that hard-core and highly ideologised inmates tend to be unimpressed or uninterested in many state-sponsored prison de-radicalisation programmes in the Middle East or Southeast Asia – for example, in Saudi Arabia,[34] Singapore[35] or Malaysia.[36] At the same time, it was seen in Germany, for example, that high-ranking right-wing extremists have considered governmental de-radicalisation programmes as the better choice; such programmes could better safeguard against acts of revenge by the former group and could provide more credible economic assistance than non-governmental programmes.[37] Economic and social support, as well as after-care components following prison release, are traditionally more effectively provided through governmental actors, simply because they have more substantial financial and logistical resources available.

Public-private partnerships can be seen as the most promising current innovations in the field of de-radicalisation work.

Public-private joint ventures have been rarely tested, but outcome was promising. Indeed, public-private partnerships can be seen as the most promising current innovations in the field of de-radicalisation work.[38]

In short, the type of actor carrying out a DDP might significantly influence the perception of the programme, its potential target group and its long-term success.

Contact approach

Another essential characteristic of DDPs is the way they intend to reach their target group or, more precisely, the communication strategy they follow. Roughly, one can distinguish between two approaches: active and passive. Active communication strategies proactively reach out to a specified target group and attempt to persuade or convince group members to participate in the programme and/or induce de-radicalisation processes. These contact approaches can range from non-coercive (e.g., offering benefits for participation) to coercive (e.g., torture) means to achieve compliance and require direct access to the target group (e.g., in prison). Passive strategies rely on the potential clients' initiative to reach out to the programme and ask for assistance with disengaging from his or her group. 'Passive', however, does not mean that these programmes do not conduct any public-relations work or media campaigns. On the contrary, as these programmes depend on their visibility and reputation within a specific target group (e.g., the neo-Nazi movement), campaigns

advertising the services of the programmes are spread throughout those areas and media outlets relevant for potential clients, such as right-wing extremist chat rooms, during demonstrations or in the general public.

Research has noted that the 'cognitive opening' might be essential for disengagement and de-radicalisation,[39] so it follows that those DDPs that follow an active contact approach might face severe resistance or at least a higher rate of failure in convincing individuals to participate. In addition, it is possible that those who participate (e.g., in a prison programme) do so because of benefits or early release, which logically means that active DDPs can be expected to have a higher rate of recidivism or rejection simply because addressed individuals might not have any cognitive opening or may have the wrong motivation for joining the programme. Importantly, it has

It has been argued that direct attempts to persuade through dialogue aiming to show ideological misconceptions might entail a higher risk of failing: such attempts tend to produce strong psychological defence mechanisms, such as rejection, and might even cause a strengthening of the previous beliefs in reaction.

been argued that direct attempts to persuade through dialogue aiming to show ideological misconceptions might entail a higher risk of failing: such attempts tend to produce strong psychological defence mechanisms, such as rejection, and might even cause a strengthening of the previous beliefs in reaction.[40] Some programmes, such as in Saudi Arabia[41] and Yemen,[42] for example, have directly attempted to invoke fear, anger and guilt within their programme participants in order to convince them to disengage, which has led to fundamental methodological critique.[43]

Passive DDPs, in turn, work almost entirely with those persons who express an interest in leaving a group and who have reached out, meaning that those programmes automatically work with a self-selected group of participants with a cognitive opening or at least a minimal motivation and reason to disengage.

Relevance of the ideological component

As noted in the academic literature, it is debated whether the ideology of participants should be targeted, how this should be done and whether this would be effective at all.[44] Strictly speaking, only those programmes that include ideological change or psychological disengagement can be called a 'de-radicalisation' programme. However, the present typology considers that many programmes do not

include direct attempts to break or disprove the participants' ideological conviction or commitment to their groups. Oftentimes this is seen as a side-effect of disengagement-related activities, or the ideological component may be included in a more subtle or covert way, without the presence of open ideological or theological debates. While this theological debate is more common in Middle Eastern or Southeast Asian programmes, covert or indirect attempts to induce a psychological disengagement or ideological de-radicalisation are more widely used in Western contexts.[45]

It is necessary to understand that this typology is a very dynamic framework without clear boundaries and with constantly shifting practical demands. Programmes usually adapt their approaches and need to be flexible with their core techniques.

Typology of de-radicalisation and disengagement programmes

= Targeting radical ideology is an essential part of the programme
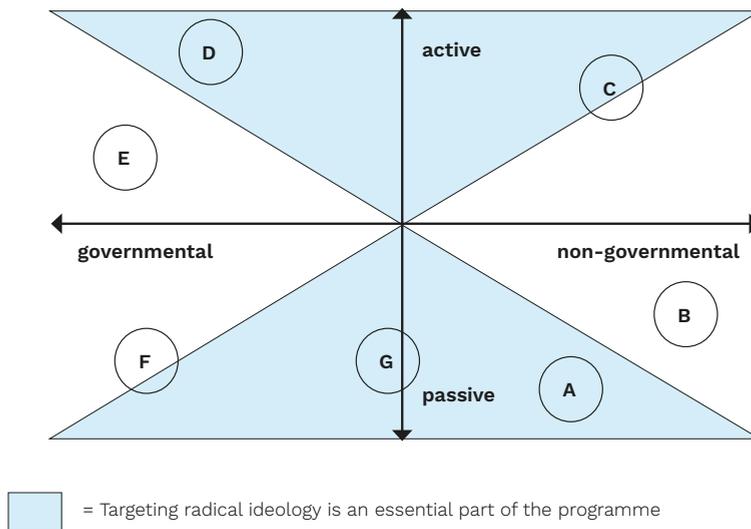
As the figure above shows, most de-radicalisation programmes in the world can be roughly categorised as one of seven main types. In the non-governmental field, those programmes working passively with and without addressing the participant's ideology (types A and B) are usually the well-known 'exit' programmes that work with individuals who have reached out to the programmes to ask for help in leaving

extremist groups. While most German non-governmental exit programmes at least claim to include an active dismantling of the participant's radical ideology, groups such as EXIT-Sweden exclude ideological debates.[46] Naturally, working only with individuals who reach out for help and who already have some sort of motivation to change reduces the risk of recidivism and abortion during the counselling. However, passive non-governmental programmes also need to maintain a strong visibility and presence in the public and the radical environment, which forces these organisations to create strong PR campaigns, which in turn can backfire and have a negative impact on the programmes' standing for potential clients.

Non-governmental and active programmes (type C) are rarely found in Western countries, because it is very hard for civil-society actors to legally obtain names and addresses of radicals and reach out to them without risking their own safety. In Germany, only one programme claims to use that approach.[47]

Governmental and active programmes (types D and E) are usually prison-based programmes, which have automatic access to potential clients and attempt to persuade the inmates to participate in the programme through a varying degree of voluntariness or even coercion. As the most common de-radicalisation programmes around the world, these types signify the strong difference between Western programmes on the one hand, which are very careful not to impinge on the individual's freedom of political opinion and religious conviction, and Middle Eastern/ Southeast Asian programmes on the other, which employ a very strong theological and authoritative approach.[48] In addition to their potentially limited credibility (being equal with the authorities who detained the clients in the first place, in their eyes) these programmes face the difficulty of creating cognitive openings for potential de-radicalisation while at the same time trying to minimise the risk of having clients who for tactical reasons only play along and only pretend to disengage.

Prison-based and active governmental de-radicalisation programmes therefore naturally have a higher rate of recidivism and abortion. Governmental passive programmes (type F) belong to the category of hotlines or helplines for relatives and other associate gatekeepers to detect and intervene in the violent radicalisation process. These have been created in numerous countries in the last years, for example, in France, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Singapore, Austria or Canada (Quebec). Nonetheless, however promising the first reactions to these family counselling hotlines have been so far,[49] none has undergone a significant academic evaluation, and the level of specialised training seems to be rather minimal.

Finally, type G programmes – public-private partnerships – attempt to combine the strengths of governmental and non-governmental actors, usually leaving disengagement-related activities to government agencies and de-radicalisation counselling to civil-society organisations. These partnerships

Quality standards for structural integrity are absolutely essential to facilitate and organise effective collaboration between governmental and non-governmental partners in the CVE field.

have been praised as the most promising future direction, but quality standards for structural integrity are absolutely essential to facilitate and organise effective collaboration between governmental and non-governmental partners in the CVE field.[50]

Conclusion and recommendation

Concluding this chapter, the key to impact in CVE and de-radicalisation is to be aware that different types of intervention programmes with different characteristics and performance expectations exist. As there is no one-size-fits-all solution in de-radicalisation, choosing the adequate programme type for a clearly defined target group and goal is the first and most essential step in building effective programmes and CVE strategies. Immediately after the decision about the programme type should come the establishment of structural standards and definitions, on which training and the development of protocols must be based. With a solid foundation, the chance that any CVE programme will have an impact can be maximised and effective sustainable de-radicalisation initiatives can be created. This role of structural standards is just as essential to CVE programmes as it is to regular crime prevention and rehabilitation programmes for ordinary offenders. Structural integrity checklists are well established, and the statistical evidence linking well-structured programmes to higher success rates pro-

As there is no one-size-fits-all solution in de-radicalisation, choosing the adequate programme type for a clearly defined target group and goal is the first and most essential step in building effective programmes and CVE strategies.

vides a solid basis for transferring that approach to the field of de-radicalisation and CVE.[51] Such integrity checklists provide the first and most essential groundwork for structural evaluations of CVE and de-radicalisation programmes, as they allow

> **Policy makers therefore are advised to focus closely on structural integrity standards of CVE and de-radicalisation programmes as early as possible.**

policymakers to determine a CVE programme's structural quality and thereby chance of achieving its defined goals. This approach is still very novel, and currently only one structural integrity checklist for CVE and de-radicalisation programmes exists.[52] However, as other evaluation procedures have been deemed very complicated, risky or ethically problematic (e.g., conducting comparison group experiments), structural integrity is easily and effectively measurable and has a much higher information value regarding a programme's quality than other approaches. Policy makers therefore are well advised to focus closely on structural integrity standards of CVE and de-radicalisation programmes as early as possible. Ideally, before any funding is granted, the programme should be scrutinised regarding its structural quality and chance of impact, because poorly structured CVE programmes are not simply a waste of important resources but can actually increase the risk of home-grown radicalisation and terrorism.

ENDNOTES

1   This chapter is based on Koehler, D. (2016), *Understanding de-radicalization: Methods, tools and programs for countering violent extremism*, Oxon/New York: Routledge, 111–144. Overlapping content is used with permission from Taylor and Francis.

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'Counter-narratives' against violent extremism

Bertjan Doosje & Jan Jaap van Eerten[1]

Introduction

All extremist groups possess an ideology: a set of well-articulated ideas that can explain and offer legitimacy to beliefs and actions of social, religious, political or corporate groups. Sometimes extremist groups use narratives to spread their ideology. Narratives can be described as stories that contain a strategic message. These messages might persuade youngsters to join an extremist group and support the group's aims. Important questions then are: is it possible to produce an effective counter-narrative campaign, that is, a campaign with a narrative that either directly opposes the extremist narrative or that provides an alternative for the extremist narrative? What are the criteria to consider when devising messages for such a campaign? What kind of people should bring these messages? And, finally, is there a potential role for the government in this context? We address these questions in this chapter.
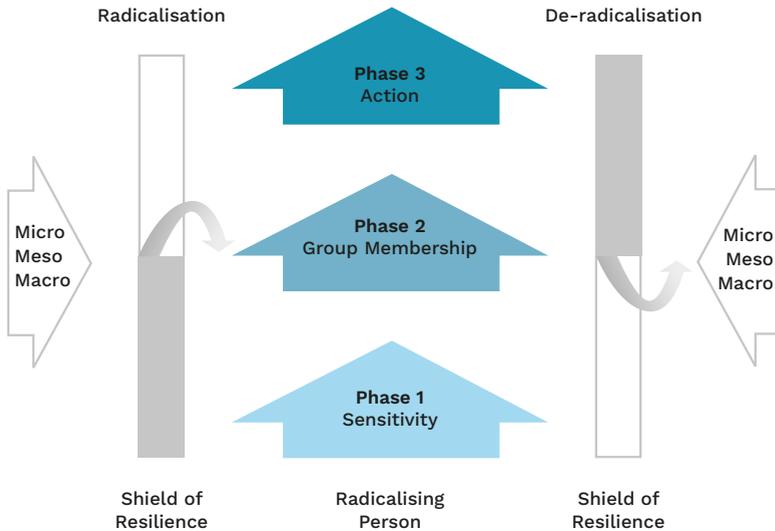
Narratives can be defined as "a spoken, written or filmed account of a sequence of events, containing (a) a difficult situation, (b) a potential agent who can deal with the difficult situation and (c) a resolution to the difficult situation".[2] Narratives often have a strategic element in that the messenger aims to convince an audience. This strategic element (in the form of information or arguments) is wrapped in a story. Counter-narratives may be understood as a "a presentation of a story that is aimed to undermine the strength of the dominant narrative of radical groups either by presenting information or arguments that counter the dominant attitude or by presenting a story in which an alternative coherent world view is being put

forward".[3] In the next section we consider the question of whether it is possible to produce an effective counter-narrative campaign.

Is it possible to produce an effective counter-narrative campaign?

The first question to address when one considers producing a counter-narrative campaign concerns the potential audience. This can be people who are vulnerable for radicalisation as well as people who belong to a radical group. Just like Allard Feddes in this volume, we use a model of the process of radicalisation and de-radicalisation (see figure below).[4] In this model we distinguish between three phases in a radicalisation process: (1) a sensitivity phase, (2) a group membership phase and (3) an action phase.

The (de-)radicalisation process and its determinants[5]

Radicalisation   De-radicalisation

Phase 3
Action

Micro
Meso
Macro

Phase 2
Group Membership

Micro
Meso
Macro

Phase 1
Sensitivity

Shield of
Resilience

Radicalising
Person

Shield of
Resilience

According to this model, the majority of people have a shield of resilience against extremist influences,[6] but there are micro (personal) factors, meso (group level) factors and macro (societal) factors that may threaten the resilience shield and make people vulnerable to radical messages. Importantly for the current question, from this model it is argued that radical people, once they belong to a group, will be made resilient against influence attempts to de-radicalise them. Why?

There are solid theoretical reasons to argue that, to the extent that people are radicalised, they become less susceptible to influence attempts in terms of counter-narratives. One can compare this with an attempt to persuade a strongly convinced left-wing person (e.g., a democrat or socialist) to consider reading arguments in favour of voting for a right-wing political party (e.g., a republican party). Most likely, this person is not interested in hearing such arguments and is likely to neglect such information. Based on several theoretical perspectives (e.g., Social Identity Theory[7] or Cognitive Dissonance Theory[8]), we argue that people who have invested in a particular group membership are less likely to be convinced by narratives that counter the positive aspects of that group membership. Thus, from this perspective, if any effect is to be expected at all, counter-narrative campaigns may best be targeted at susceptible people in an aim to prevent a further process of radicalisation from taking place.

If any effect is to be expected at all, counter-narrative campaigns may best be targeted at susceptible people in an aim to prevent a further process of radicalisation from taking place.

Still, it is important to note that *some* members of radical groups are able to change their attitudes and behaviour, as the literature on 'why people leave terrorism behind' suggests.[9] It is not always the case, however, that 'people who have left terrorism behind' abandon their radical attitudes; they may only have left the radical group and no longer consider violence as a useful option to achieve societal and/or political changes. In this context, it is possible to distinguish between disengagement (no longer member of a violent group, and no longer violent in behaviour themselves, but still radical in thoughts) and de-radicalisation (in which people also no longer believe in the ideology they once supported). Factors that can lead to disengagement can be disappointment in the leaders of the terrorist organisation or finding out that the members of the terrorist group are less trustworthy and friendly than originally envisioned.[10] For de-radicalisation to occur, people will have to experience an imbalance between their own ideas and the ideology – for example, because as an extreme right-wing person your new neighbour turns out

to be an extremely friendly and supportive 'immigrant', which undermines your group's ideology.

It is an interesting question to consider the extent to which counter-narratives can be influential in this context. What are the criteria to consider when devising such counter-narrative messages?

It is important to note that we do not consider counter-narrative messaging (as against a certain ideology) as the only, or even the most important, tool to consider in this context. As indicated in chapter one in this volume, people have different motives for joining a radical group. We argue that at least four motives can be distinguished: (1) search for identity; (2) search for meaning/significance; (3) search for justice; and (4) search for adventure/sensation. Countering these different motives may require different approaches or techniques. However, at the same time, all these different motivations may be triggered by radical propaganda – for example, via videos that trigger one or more motives. As such, it is possible in a counter-narrative campaign to pay attention to any or all of these potential motives that people might have for joining a radical group, not just the ideological motives.

What are the criteria to consider when devising counter-narrative messages?

In terms of criteria to consider when devising counter-narrative messages, it is useful to distinguish between factors related to the audience (first section below), the message (second section below), the messenger (third section below) and the channel to distribute the message (fourth section below).

Audience factors

To start with the audience, it is critical that counter-narrative producers carefully segment their target audience.[11] Audience segmentation involves dividing a heterogeneous audience into segments on the basis of meaningful attributes.[12] Segmentation is considered to be a prerequisite for developing messages that are responsive to the circumstances, predispositions and life experiences of the audience.[13] For example, a common segmentation approach is to segment an audience in terms of socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, race or ethnicity, social class and religion or across geographical boundaries (city, region, country etc.).[14]

In the field of countering violent extremism (CVE), some prevention programmes have also used socio-demographic and geographic variables to identify and target audiences deemed 'at risk'. However, by designating 'at risk' so broadly, programmes run the risk of targeting too large an audience. For example, some efforts targeting sections of Muslim communities, designated as socially marginalised, have mainly managed to reach mainstream Muslims.[15] Such initiatives run the risk of labelling entire sections of Muslim communities as 'suspect'. This action may well alienate Muslims who feel that they have unjustly been profiled.[16] As such, rather than countering violent radicalisation, such initiatives may be counter-productive.

Hence we recommend avoiding targeting large cross-sections of the general population and instead directing efforts to smaller and more narrowly defined segments of an audience as well as employing more sophisticated segmentation approaches that are more likely to distinguish individuals in terms of the issue at hand. In order to be able to do so effectively, it is essential to thoroughly study and understand audiences.[17] Careful and *rigorous audience analysis* is necessitated.

Interestingly, segmentation of an audience has important consequences, as it will drive the selection of message strategies, credible sources and communication channels[18] – topics of the following paragraphs.

Message factors

A second type of factor in the domain of counter-narratives involves the message itself. The literature on how to best design effective messages is extensive, and this section extracts only some aspects that may be most valuable to consider. Importantly, though, what may work best will depend upon the context.[19]

A first factor involves the question of whether or not to use *narratives* in a message. On the one hand, persuasive messages may include explicit arguments and reasons in favour of a certain position. On the other hand, it is also possible to construe and use narrative messages that tell a story and that, often in an implicit manner, include the persuasive message. In fact, a large portion of oral and written accounts of (historical, mythical or religious) events include narratives, in which a story is used to present an implicit (moral) message as well. For example, in most fairy tales, in most mythology (e.g., Greek myths) and in most religious books (e.g., the *Koran* and the *Bible*), stories are presented in an entertaining manner but in fact are intended to persuade people to think and/or behave in a certain manner.

Narratives can be powerful, because they do not overtly try to persuade an audience. Rather, the persuasive message is subtly intertwined with the story. In addition, because narratives are meant to be entertaining, people are not always aware of their persuasive aspect. This may help circumvent traditional barriers to belief and attitude change.[20] Transportation into the narrative (i.e., immersion in the story) and identification with the characters may be crucial for narratives to yield influence.[21] When message recipients are transported into the narrative, they are not sufficiently motivated to critically assess the persuasive arguments it contains. Furthermore, when message recipients identify with a character, they are more inclined to adopt attitudes consistent with those held by the character.[22]

A second message factor concerns the *'message sidedness'*, that is, the degree to which a message considers that opposing perspectives exist. A one-sided message presents only one side of an issue, whereas two-sided messages acknowledge the existence of opposing views. Which is more effective? Generally speaking, it seems that two-sided messages are more effective than one-sided messages – provided that the message refutes opposing viewpoints.[23] Furthermore, health promotion literature suggest that two-sided messages tend to be more effective when the audience is predisposed against the position being advanced and wary of the intention of the message to be persuasive.[24] It is possible to trigger this wariness of intention to persuade in an inoculation programme in which people are confronted with a message but are forewarned that it will aim to change their attitude and/or behaviour. This can bolster people's attitudes in an attempt to resist the intended attitude change.[25]

Researchers argue that instead of getting involved in an ideological confrontation, counter-narrative messages should "acknowledge the concerns that underwrite much of the sympathy toward extremist groups without validating the violent means that extremists advocate".

At the same time, *reframing* the original radical propaganda might work better than denying it. Some scholars argue that terrorist groups use framing techniques (e.g., in their diagnosis of the cause, the problem, the action and the motivation to pursue the act of violence). As such, framing theory can be useful as a guideline to develop counter-narratives. In line with these notions, researchers argue that instead of getting involved in an ideological confrontation, counter-narrative messages should "acknowledge the concerns that underwrite much of the sympathy toward extremist groups without validating the violent means that extremists advocate".[26] An example would be creating narratives that acknowledge the grievances of the

group but offer alternative (and legal) routes to dealing with the situation, in contrast to the violent solutions presented by extremists.[27] A strategy such as this, which takes people seriously in terms of their concerns, most likely makes them less inclined to counter-argue the counter-message.

In addition, as a fourth message factor, it is important to take into account the *emotional appeals* of a message. Most research has focused on fear-appeals: "there will be negative consequences if you do not follow my advice." However, in the fields of health promotion[28] and crime prevention,[29] fear appeals have often been ineffective and have even resulted in opposite effects. In the field of radicalisation, it is yet unclear as to whether fear appeals (e.g., showing the extreme violence displayed by ISIS) may deter people from going to Syria.[30] Another emotion that can persuade people is enthusiasm. For example, the extent to which people experience enthusiasm in response to the messages by Obama directly correlated with voting for him.[31] In the present context, the enthusiasm raised by the proclamation of the establishment of the caliphate in Syria/Iraq in 2014 may have triggered European-based Muslims to go to Syria.[32] Anticipated regret is yet another (anticipated) emotion that people can experience in response to a persuasive message that may influence behaviour in people. In particular, it has been shown how evoking anticipated regret can result in preventive health behaviour.[33] Although the strategy of anticipated regret in the domain of prevention of radicalisation has not yet been studied, it could potentially be useful by encouraging those who feel attracted to radical groups to consider the possible negative emotional consequences of their decisions.

Thus we argue that messages in terms of (counter-)narratives have the advantage of using subtle ways to influence people. In addition, double-sided messages (in which one side is being refuted), coupled with a strong emotional appeal (e.g., in terms of creating enthusiasm) may have persuasive advantages.

Messenger factors

A third type of factor that is relevant in the domain of counter-narratives is related to the messenger. An important idea is that in order for a message to be effective, people have to perceive the messenger as credible.

In the context of counter-narratives, several credible messengers have been suggested. Firstly, former extremists – after a proper vetting and selection procedure – may be potential credible messengers for a counter-narrative campaign.[34] Just as with former criminals, former alcoholics or former drug addicts, former radicals

seem to be perceived as 'street credible', as they have experienced the life as a radical first-hand.[35] They are in a good position to inform susceptible people about the ins and outs of life in a radical group and thus serve a preventive function. In addition, in some cases, ex-radicals may help radicals to leave the radical group or milieu. For example, 'exit organisations' (in Norway, Germany, the U.S., the Netherlands, etc.) often use former radicals (mostly former members of extreme right-wing groups) to help extreme right-wing radicals who want to exit their group deal with the transition to mainstream society.

However, there are clear limitations to the possibility of using 'formers' in a campaign: they might fear repercussions by members of the former group who find out what they are doing. Thus they may not want to have a public profile (in advertisement materials or on the Internet). In addition, they may experience stress having to relive their traumatic past life.

With proper support, assistance and training, the *victims* of terrorist violence may also be potential credible messengers, because they are perceived to be in a morally legitimate position to present their view as a survivor or witness of terrorist violence.[36] In some rare cases, former extremists and victims of violence join hands to present their stories to an audience. For example, IRA activist Patrick Magee killed the father of Jo Berry in 1984. In 2009, 25 years after the bombing, together they founded the non-profit organisation 'Building bridges for peace', whose aim was to promote a dialogue between different camps in divided societies. Whether such initiatives actually succeed in preventing people from joining a radical group is difficult to determine. When leveraging the voices of victims, as with former violent extremists, careful consideration should be given to their personal well-being and security.[37]

Other often-mentioned examples of potential messengers of counter-narratives include people close to the individual, such as peers and family members, but also people with some more distance, such as key members of the communities (e.g., authoritative religious or community leaders), important civil-society actors and organisations (e.g., representation groups, first-line professionals) and, finally, government actors.[38] The answer to the question of which of these actors may in fact be most effective in delivering the message depends largely on the target audience one wants to reach and the message one wants to relay.[39] However, governmental actors may not be perceived as credible messengers due to the gap between them and the target audiences. As such, it is commonly advised that they refrain from directly engaging in counter and alternative messaging efforts themselves.[40]

Thus messengers need to be perceived as credible to function as trustworthy messengers. Commonly mentioned candidates include former extremists, victims of violence, peers and family, as well as key members of communities and civil-society actors. The potential of the government to serve as a credible messenger might be limited.

Channel factors

The fourth set of factors to consider concerns the nature of the channel that will be used to distribute the counter-narrative message. A first decision is the number of channels. While it is important to carefully select the audience (see section 'Audience Factors' above), communication literature argues that multichannel campaigns are perhaps more effective than single-channel ones.[41] This might be caused by the fact that one increases the chances of reaching the intended audience when one uses multiple channels (e.g., social media, print, leaflets, oral communication etc.) rather than a single one.

Related to this decision is the choice between designing an online campaign versus an off-line one. The big advantage of an off-line campaign is that it is easier to include an inter-personal component. A review of Australia's online efforts in countering violent extremism found that face-to-face engagement strategies are likely to be more effective in both reaching and influencing susceptible individuals.[42]

In addition, while it is possible to control the content of the message directly in an off-line environment, two things are different in an online environment: (1) it is possible that the message that you have constructed will be altered or reduced when it is sent to other people; and (2) people can directly respond to your message, creating an interaction between group members that is absent in an off-line environment.

If one chooses an online environment, the options are numerous, both in terms of format and channel: from text (via WhatsApp, Facebook, SMS or email) to images and videos (via WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube etc.). (We do not discuss the dark web.) Messages that include images and videos may have more impact than messages that contain text only.

In an online environment, sometimes the source of a message or post can be diluted: who is the source of a message that was originally posted by organisation X but was picked up by a Facebook friend from a blog by another friend, who may or may not

indicate the original source? These multiple sources may confuse the reader: who is the original messenger?

To complicate things even further, all these sources may potentially add to, alter and/or rephrase the message, in an attempt to present their own perspective (e.g., by adding an introduction or a conclusion or by presenting a selection of the original content) and in this manner may change the meaning of the message. Given these concerns about online counter-narratives, it might be best to implement such initiatives together with a face-to-face campaign.[43]

Thus the final set of factors to consider when designing a counter-narrative campaign concerns the format and channels used to distribute the messages. In an offline setting it is possible to control your message more than in an online environment. In an online environment, it is easier perhaps to reach a larger public and to use videos, which may have more impact than text.

Taken together, this section has articulated which factors play a role in devising a counter-narrative campaign: the audience, the message, the source, and the channel. In an online environment, the interactive aspect of receiving a message versus sending a message makes it even more complicated to construct a successful counter-narrative campaign.

Is there a role for the government in this context?

Most radical groups distrust the government because, according to these groups, the government does not do enough to deal with their main grievances.[44] This seriously undermines, if not completely eliminates, the potential role of the government as a messenger in any counter-narrative campaign; the perceived credibility of any communication stemming from the government is limited. In line with this notion, it is interesting to note that governments are often the main antagonist in extremist messaging.[45] If the government, then, is not the ideal candidate to distribute counter-narratives due to limited trustworthiness, what role can the government play?

Given the fact that governments are often perceived as untrustworthy, they should engage in streamlining their own strategic communications.[46] In doing so, they should avoid creating a gap between what they say (e.g., "We adhere to Western values such as freedom and equality") and what they do (e.g., display discrimination towards Muslims in Europe); the say-do-gap.[47] Ideally, governments develop a

coherent and consistent strategic communication policy that addresses the challenge of the extremist message. Specifically, governments are advised to clearly and proactively communicate and explain their own foreign policies. In particular, they should explain their involvement in conflict zones such as Syria and Iraq.[48] This is important because anger about what is (perceived to be) happening in these conflict zones and empathy with the people being affected can play a role in radicalisation processes and, indeed, be a driver for foreign-fighter travel.[49] This makes an effective government's response all the more important.

Governments should avoid creating a gap between what they say (e.g., "We adhere to Western values such as freedom and equality") and what they do (e.g., display discrimination towards Muslims in Europe); the say-do-gap.

In this regard, it may be helpful for governments to make more visible what they are doing in terms of humanitarian aid and assistance to populations in Syria, Iraq and other regions. Additionally, it is advised that governments should identify and publish practical and legal alternatives for those who are motivated to help the 'Muslim cause'.[50]

A second strategy for governments is to strengthen civil-society organisations and grassroots networks. They can do so with respect to expertise and finances. Such organisations are generally well positioned to undermine extremists' agendas.

Governments can strengthen civil-society organisations and grassroots networks.

Moreover, they are commonly well aware of the sentiments in a given community and may best be able to channel others to become active in challenging extremist narratives. However, they often lack resourses (e.g., funding and capacity), specific expertise and competencies to carry out such work effectively and with scale. Importantly, though, governments should be aware that public association with initiatives may act as a so called 'kiss-of-death'.[51]

In addition, governments are well placed to encourage and broker partnerships between civil-society and private-sector industries (e.g., in technology, advertising and public relations). The latter may be able to provide valuable expertise and experience that can support and professionalise civil-society initiatives.[52]

Another strategy the government may consider is to support research on the effectiveness of counter-narrative efforts. While online counter-narrative programmes in particular are becoming increasingly popular as a means to address extremism, they have yet to prove themselves effective. Many programmes struggle to demonstrate that they manage to reach the appropriate audience. Furthermore, while it is possible to gain insights into the online impact of a campaign using web and social-media analytics, for instance by examining metrics such as reach and engagement levels, measuring the offline impact of counter-narrative campaigns in terms of long-term attitude or behaviour change is extremely difficult. To illustrate, in their analysis of the Against Violent Extremism (AVE) network, the One2One Program, Peer 2 Peer and the Online Civil Courage Initiative, Kim et al. contend that the latter two "fail to demonstrate that their content even reaches the right audience" and that "none of these four campaigns can effectively tie their initiatives to metrics that prove a reduction in extremist behavior among program participants."[53] In regards to the second point, they assert that, while programmes such as AVE and the One2One programmes produce metrics engagement levels with their campaigns, such measures alone are not necessarily indicative of any meaningful change. In order to prove their efficacy, it is important that counter-narrative programmes be evaluated on the behavioural and attitudinal changes they instigate.

Thus, while a government is not the ideal sender or source of a counter-narrative campaign, there are at least two ways in which government can operate effectively: (1) by having a clear communication strategy, in which they explain their own actions locally and in an international context; and (2) by stimulating civil-society organisations and grassroots networks in terms of funds or expertise (how to carry out a campaign and how to test the effectiveness).

Conclusions and limitations of counter-narratives

In this chapter we have focused on the potential role of counter-narratives in the process of radicalisation. Specifically, we have discussed the contours of such a campaign in terms of audiences, messages, messengers and channels. An underlying assumption of many counter-narrative programmes is that messages are able change people's attitudes and/or behaviour. While this may be the case, it is possible to question this assumption. Indeed, as we have argued, people who feel strongly attached to a radical group are not likely to change their attitudes or behaviour due to a counter-message. Thus we agree with Ferguson, who argues: "The theory that

the messages, myths, promises, objectives, glamour and other enticements propagated via violent extremism narratives can be replaced with, or dismantled by, an alternative set of communications is an assumption that remains unproven."[54]

However, we argue that counter-narratives may be most effective in a susceptibility phase of radicalisation, when people are in an early phase of a radicalisation process. At the same time, we do not know for sure, as there are no empirical data yet supporting this notion. This makes it all the more important to incorporate tests of effectiveness of campaigns (despite the fact that such tests are difficult).

While the attraction of a message (in the form of an ideology) is one reason why people may become susceptible to radical ideas, we argue that other factors may motivate people as well. Specifically, we argue that, in addition to ideological motives, people may be motivated by uncertainty, be it personal or as a group, that may stimulate them to radicalise.[55] In addition, for some people, the attraction of a radical group lies in their need for risk and adventure, including a fascination for violence and weapons. Finally, for some people, a radical group may provide answers in terms of their quest for meaning and significance.[56] Thus we conclude by indicating that counter-narrative campaigns may result in the intended effects but that it is too early to draw too strong conclusions about this. In addition, there are other routes to becoming an extremist that perhaps may be countered by narratives, but they arguably may need other measures to counter as well.

From our analysis, then, we draw the following policy implications with regard to the use of counter-narratives campaigns:

- The government might not be the best producer and distributor of counter-narratives, given the fact that they are mistrusted by radical groups.

- The government may want to streamline their own communication and avoid the "say-do-gap" (i.e., they have to do what they say).

- The government may want to strengthen civil-society organisations and grass-roots networks in the field of counter-narratives (e.g., by providing expertise and/or funding).

- The government may want to stimulate partnerships between civil-society and private-sector industries (e.g., in technology or advertising).

- The government may want to support research on the effectiveness of counter-narrative efforts.

ENDNOTES

1 Part of this chapter is based on a report commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Security & Justice (WODC-2607, by Van Eerten, Doosje, Konijn, De Graaf & de Goede, 2017), We thank Michael Kowalski, Frederike Zwenk, Casper van Nassau, Daniël Wigboldus, Reint-Jan Renes and Stijn Sieckelinck for their valuable input.

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Evaluating countering violent extremism

Amy-Jane Gielen

Introduction

Europe is increasingly confronted with violent extremism, and we have seen several member states implement additional criminal laws that extend police and intelligence powers and concentrate on further information-sharing. However, there is also the realisation that hard measures alone are not enough and that additional and alternative approaches are necessary to counter violent extremism (CVE). CVE is the catch phrase for 'softer' policy measures. In Europe these measures take on the form of educating young people, training first-line practitioners, community engagement and counter-narratives but also de-radicalisation and disengagement.[1] Whilst implementation of CVE programmes and interventions across member states have developed rapidly, evaluation of their effectiveness remains very limited.[2]

This chapter will start by discussing the difficulties in CVE evaluation, in particular highlighting the broad spectrum that CVE entails. It will then discuss several evaluation methods and also provide some concrete examples of studies that have applied these evaluation methods to CVE. Each method has merits, but also disadvantages. This chapter provides suggestions for how one can undertake such evaluations, including outcome indicators. The chapter concludes with a checklist for policymakers and practitioners who wish to conduct CVE evaluation.

What is countering violent extremism (CVE)?

Because CVE is such a broad concept, some scholars in the CVE domain have started to use a prevention classification that distinguishes three different forms of prevention: primary, secondary and tertiary.[3] Such a classification system was previously used in the health-care domain[4] and is currently still applied within the field of criminology, such as crime and violence prevention.[5] The premise of such a prevention approach is the focus on the causes of disease/crime/violent extremism rather than its effects. The aim of the approach is to reduce or eliminate the risk factors that can lead to crime/disease/violent extremism and enhance protective factors. Applied to the field of CVE, this classification system of prevention looks as follows:[6]

Primary prevention: entails broad prevention activities concentrated on taking away the breeding ground and root causes for violent extremism and increasing the protective factors. This is generally done via group activities (often via education) concentrating on citizenship, resilience, positive identity formation, community engagement etc.

Secondary prevention: is more individual oriented, focusing on vulnerable individuals and individuals who are already in a radicalisation process but have not committed any criminal offences, such as people who are considering travel to Syria to join ISIS. Interventions in this phase are directed to extremist *views* and risk factors and preventing them from leading to radical *behaviour* (e.g., violent extremism). This form of prevention is often tailor-made to the individual in question. Mentoring is often an intervention that is applied in this stage, in combination with interventions that try to influence the social context of the individual, for example, by providing family support and/or an alternative network. This thus requires multi-agency support. For this type of prevention to work it is also essential that practitioners be properly trained to identify vulnerable individuals at risk.

Tertiary prevention: the emphasis of tertiary prevention is also on individuals, but it focuses on those who have actually turned to *violent* extremism, such as foreign fighters, and concerns (curative) interventions. The ultimate aim of tertiary prevention is to convince the individual to abandon the path of violent extremism, but this can be achieved via different means and with different goals. Reintegration and rehabilitation tend to focus on achieving a form of 'normal life' via schooling or work. Disengagement concentrates on changing the extremist behaviour and aims for the cessation of violence. De-radicalisation is concerned with changing extremist attitudes and rejection of the violent

extremist ideology. Disengagement and de-radicalisation are often realised through exit programmes. Exit programmes are tailor-made and involve multiple interventions such as mentoring, practical and socio-economic support, ideological/religious counselling, family support, psychological support and providing an alternative social network.

Challenges in evaluating CVE

Scholars have identified different issues when evaluating CVE programmes.[7] Firstly, the nature of the problem, which refers to definitions and causes. There is no consensus on definitions such as radicalisation and violent extremism, nor is there consensus on what causes (violent) extremism. Scholars agree that there is usually an interplay of root causes (political, cultural, economic), network dynamics, trigger events, relative deprivation and personal factors,[8] but there is no consensus on how these factors interplay and when the tipping point occurs that turns extremist attitudes into (violent) extremist behaviour.

Secondly, the objectives of CVE also pose challenges, as CVE ranges from primary prevention such as educational programmes to create resilience against extremist attitudes, to tertiary programmes such as de-radicalisation (changing radical beliefs) or disengagement (the cessation of violence) of violent extremist individuals.

Thirdly, how do we measure success? We cannot measure the success of preventive efforts based on a counterfactual: the lack of terrorist attacks in specific cities and countries. Nor does the occurrence of an attack in a country then mean that their CVE strategy has been ineffective. Additional difficulties with measuring success include the lack of (randomised) control groups, no/ or limited access to the target audience and no clear goal of the CVE measures. Are we measuring the cessation of violence, as in the case of violent extremists? Or is it about changing extremist attitudes of radicalised individuals (de-radicalisation) or preventing those attitudes to develop in the first place, using, for example, an educational setting? Context also matters in evaluating CVE programmes. What might work in one city or neighbourhood in Europe might not

Are we measuring the cessation of violence, as in the case of violent extremists? Or is it about changing extremist attitudes of radicalised individuals or preventing those attitudes to develop in the first place, using, for example, an educational setting?

work in another. Also the political context and timing of CVE programmes influences their effectiveness. Implementing a community engagement programme right after a terrorist attack when politicians announce that 'we are at war' will have a different outcome than initiating such a programme in times of 'peace'. The above-mentioned challenges pose the question of how one can conduct evaluation research within the field of countering violent extremism.

Evaluating countering violent extremism

The answer is that one can undertake many different types of evaluation: pragmatic evaluation, programme evaluation, utilisation-focused evaluation, process evaluation, theory-driven evaluation, effect evaluation etc. These will briefly be discussed in terms of merits and disadvantages.[9]

Outcome evaluation

The outcome of a programme or intervention is the subject of outcome evaluation. It seeks to answer whether or not the programme has met its objectives. This type of outcome-evaluation research is, broadly speaking, divided into two groups. Positivists advocate quantitative methods in which randomised controlled trials (RCTs) are often considered the highest standard in evaluation research. (Quasi) experimental evaluation (randomly) divides the target audience of an intervention into an experimental group (in which the intervention is applied) and a control group (no intervention, or a placebo).[10] The merit of (quasi)experimental outcome evaluation is that it can assess the causal relationship between the intervention and the measured impact. However, CVE is implemented not in an isolated clinical environment but in a social context. Violent extremism in itself is a social phenomenon, and CVE programmes are influenced by and dependent upon the social context in which they are implemented.

This can occur on different levels. On the macro-level, for example, military interventions abroad can negatively impact CVE interventions at home; or CVE programmes that focus on preventing exclusion and alienation will have a different outcome in countries where a right-wing extremist party has won the elections. On a micro-level the type of family support an individual is provided can influence and affect the radicalisation process, both positively and negatively. To overcome contextual issues, one might use qualitative methods for outcome evaluation, also known as interpretivist or constructivst methods. Interpretivists emphasise the

role of context, in which data are often collected via interviews and observations.[11] This evaluation method aims to provide a very detailed description of a specific intervention. Its strength – the focus on context – is also considered its biggest disadvantage. An evaluation with qualitative methods cannot provide a causal relationship and make claims about the effectiveness in other contexts. So what might work in one neighbourhood might not necessary work in another neighbourhood or city.

In the field of CVE, no randomized control trials (RCTs) have been undertaken, only a quasi-experimental study by Aldrich that studied the effect of radio programming as part of a CVE strategy implemented by the United States in Kenya, Chad and Niger.[12] Interestingly enough, this study highlighted the importance of context. The countries in which radio-programming was evaluated are African countries in which relatively large parts of the population listen to the radio and lack other communication resources such as the Internet.[13] Despite the fact that the study showed that radio programming had positive outcomes on CVE, we cannot infer this outcome and promote radio-programming as a 'best practice' in countering violent extremism in general and in digitalised (Western) countries.

Non (quasi)experimental, quantitative methods have been applied to evaluate CVE programmes in a European context. Feddes et al., for example, researched a Dutch resilience training called Diamant (Diamond) aimed at preventing radicalisation. The Diamond training consists of three modules conducted over a period of three months, focused on dealing with a dual identity, intercultural moral judgement and intercultural conflict management. A total of 46 male and female Muslim adolescents and young adults with a migrant background participated. The project was evaluated using a quantitative longitudinal evaluation, which started with hypotheses based on existing theory on self-esteem and agency. The study shows that the Diamond resilience training significantly increased reported agency and to some degree increased reported self-esteem, empathy and perspective-taking. The data also supported the notion that the training counters violent radicalisation, as attitudes toward ideology-based violence and the participants' own violent intentions decreased significantly over time. An unintended negative consequence was reported: the data showed a marginally significant increase in reported narcissism. Longitudinal analyses show that empathy plays an important role in decreasing support for ideology-based violence. In short, the resilience training seems a promising tool as a way to counter violent radicalisation. If evaluations are able to say anything about effect, they are usually not able to report on the sustainability of those the effects, that is, the long-term effects. The longitudinal evaluation of Feddes et al. is therefore unique. The target audience of this training was individuals who were 'possibly vulnerable to radicalisation'. They did not belong to an

extremist organisation but were generally high school dropouts or unemployed people of Moroccan descent. It has yet to be investigated whether Diamant training is effective in de-radicalising actual violent extremists. The researchers therefore stress the importance of implementing and evaluating the training in different contexts.[14] In short, this evaluation teaches us that Diamant training has promising outcomes for vulnerable groups, but the study cannot draw any conclusions as to whether the training is also an effective tool for secondary and tertiary prevention and whether it can actually de-radicalise or disengage violent extremists.

An example of interpretive outcome evaluation is that of Kundnani, who evaluated the UK Prevent strategy, in particular focussing on community engagement. This evaluation used interviews and a roundtable discussion as data collection methods.[15] It highlighted that in the UK, community-engagement programmes have led to the singling out and stigmatisation of Muslim communities, and to polarisation. But such counter-productive results in the UK do not necessarily mean that no other European countries should apply community-engagement programmes as part of their CVE programme. Rather, this study should be viewed as a call for more research on community engagement, preferably comparative research looking at different programmes in different European contexts, highlighting relevant contextual conditions for (un)successful community engagement programmes.

Pragmatic evaluation

An alternative evaluation method is pragmatic evaluation. Advocates of this form of evaluation argue that evaluation should be oriented towards meeting the needs of programme decision-makers and stakeholders. They contend that evaluation should not be dedicated to meeting academic research standards but to providing the most useful information that the political circumstances, programme constraints and available resources allow.[16] The risk of such an approach is that it creates blind spots, as those who pay for the evaluation can steer the evaluation in a certain direction. As a consequence, the evaluation very much tends to limit itself to a technical analytical discourse: 'does the programme or intervention meet its objectives?' Little or no room is left to ask more contextual and societal research questions, such as 'are the programme's objective are actually the right or just objectives?'

Within the field of CVE, Horgan & Braddock are advocates of the pragmatic evaluation method. They propose Multi Attribute Utility Technology (MAUT) as the most suitable evaluation model for our field, as it includes a number of stakeholders in the process of *developing* a programme rather than only *ex post* evaluating one, thus

ensuring that multiple constituencies are accommodated.[17] Williams & Kleinman propose a similar evaluation method: utilisation-focused evaluation. Like the MAUT method, this type of evaluation also gives stakeholders a significant role. William & Kleinman argue that evaluation research should not revolve around the question 'does the programme work' but should ask 'for whom does it work the best (and worst)' and should then propose to let the stakeholders decide, which is at the heart of utilisation-focused evaluation research. Stakeholders are those who will use the evaluation's findings, those who support or maintain the initiative or those who are affected by the initiative's activities or evaluation results.[18]

Williams et al. have recently conducted an evaluation study of a US CVE programme. They evaluated the World Organization for Resource Development and Education (WORDE), a community-based Muslim-led organisation in the United States. Their CVE programme consists of three different pillars: (1) community education; (2) Islamic training for law enforcement and social services cooperation; and (3) volunteerism and multi-cultural programming. Williams et al. claim that it is the first evidence-based CVE-relevant programming in the United States and has the potential to be effective in other US municipalities.[19] Whilst the results are very promising, they argue that further research is needed to assess whether the programme can also work in other municipalities.[20]

Theory-driven evaluation

An alternative evaluation method to empirically evaluate actual programmes with qualitative and/or quantitative methods or asking stakeholders is the theory-driven evaluation approach. This evaluation method focuses on the 'theory of change' behind an intervention or programme, looking at how and why a certain intervention leads to a desired outcome. This method can be very valuable in assessing whether or not a programme or intervention has the potential to be effective.

Lub has applied this approach to look at the potential effectiveness of CVE interventions, drawing on meta-evaluations on the effectiveness of interventions in different fields (such as criminality, drugs/alcohol). He distinguishes the following types of interventions in the CVE domain:

> Social ecological interventions: multidisciplinary interventions on individuals within their social context, taking into account the interplay between individual, relationship, community and societal factors.

▎ *Peer mediation:* in which young people from the target audience are trained to educate young people to reduce tensions between different groups.

▎ Self-esteem enhancement: targeted at vulnerable young people with the aim to 'empower' them by providing individual counselling programmes and empowerment training in a group setting.

▎ Intergroup contact interventions: aimed to increase the tolerance between young people of different ethnic origins, religions or subcultures.

Inquiring into the scientific basis for their theory of change, Lub concludes that there is little scientific basis for several CVE programmes and interventions across Europe. The scientific basis for peer mediation and self-esteem enhancement is weak, and that for the social ecological approach is small. Intergroup contact on average reduces prejudices about other groups, but effect sizes are generally small, and there is no evidence of a long-term impact.

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The merit of Lub's approach is that it provides insight into what interventions and programmes might work in CVE, without the need to conduct an actual evaluation. Lub does note some challenges with this method of evaluation, however. The quintessence of these challenges is that what works in theory does not always correspond with practice. For example, the actual effectiveness of an intervention or programme is dependent on social, political and administrative constraints and contextual factors. Thus a theory-driven approach to evaluation of CVE interventions and programmes provides plausible hypotheses for what works and does not work but does not provide the definite answer. Empirical testing that takes into account socio-political and contextual factors will always be necessary.[21]

Process evaluation

A process evaluation is concerned not with impact or outcome but with *output*. A process evaluation revolves around the implementation process, investigating whether the intervention has been implemented as planned. This type of evaluation is concerned with questions that are useful from a project-management perspective. For example, how many workshops were organised, did the workshop

reach the target audience etc.? Thus a process evaluation cannot make any claims about the (causal) effectiveness of an intervention but does provide valuable information about the output and contextual conditions of an intervention.

Within the CVE domain, several process evaluations have been conducted, such as the evaluation by the UK Youth Justice Board, which looks at programmes aimed at preventing violent extremism in the youth justice sector.[22] Schuurman & Bakker have also conducted a process evaluation at the Dutch Probation Services. They provide a small-scale process evaluation concerned with the re-integration of formerly imprisoned violent extremists. Although this study cannot provide any hard conclusions about the impact of the Probation Services in terms of tertiary prevention, the evaluation is particularly helpful in illustrating crucial contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of an exit programme. Relevant contextual conditions include managerial support for probation staff and good cooperation with other stakeholders such as municipalities. It also highlights that stakeholders hold differing opinions about the theory of change and about the programme. In the case of the Dutch Probation Services, it led to too much focus on behavioural aspects (disengagement) instead of also applying cognitive interventions. This also had implications for the ultimate goal of the programme, as the behavioural interventions can only achieve disengagement and not de-radicalisation.[23]

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Realistic evaluation

The above discussion on evaluation methods makes clear that evaluations must take into account contextual factors and theories that underlie the programme or intervention. This is the essence of the realistic evaluation method as developed by Pawson & Tilley. They try to move away from the epistemological battle between positivist and interpretivst and instead advocate realism as the way forward for evaluating social programmes.[24] Realistic evaluation aims to identify the combination of mechanisms and contexts that lead to outcome patterns, also known as context-mechanism-outcome pattern configurations (C-M-Os), indicating how programmes activate mechanisms, amongst who and in what conditions, and how they thereby can cause change. In short, realistic evaluation revolves around the question of 'what works, for whom, in what circumstances and how?'[25] Realistic evaluation departs from theory on how mechanisms relate to certain contexts and how they can be combined to produce certain outcomes. The next step is the

development of hypotheses. Pawson & Tilley argue that hypotheses should be built around the questions of what *might* work, for whom, in what circumstances and how. The third step in the evaluation process involves observations. Realistic evaluation draws on multi-method data collection and analysis, and its core objective is to develop and test C-M-O configurations.[26] What ultimately follows is 'programme specification': "programmes work (have successful 'outcomes') only in so far as they introduce the appropriate ideas and opportunities ('mechanisms') to groups in the appropriate social and cultural conditions ('contexts')."[27]

Within the field of CVE, I have drawn on the realistic evaluation method to develop hypotheses on what might work, for whom and how for family support of foreign fighters.[28] For example, a telephone hotline is an easily accessible point that family members of individuals at risk (C1) or radicalised young people (C2) can contact for questions about (possible) radicalisation of their relative (M1) to prevent radicalisation (O1) or travel (O2). Additionally, to prevent radicalisation (O1) or travel (O2), a community-based telephone hotline might be more accessible for family members of individuals at risk (C1) or radicalised young people (C2) in which certain language (C3) or cultural barriers such as shame (C4) play a role. Veldhuis has done something similar but applied it to reintegration and rehabilitation programmes for terrorist offenders.[29]

Whilst realist evaluation is used to evaluate a specific CVE intervention or programme, realist review can be applied to synthesise existing CVE evaluations. As part of my PhD I have used the realist review method to synthesise 73 CVE evaluations. These evaluations vary in method – such as quasi-experimental, theoretical, qualitative etc. – and focus on different type of interventions with the broad CVE spectrum – such as CVE educational programmes but also on de-radicalisation and disengagement. The difference between a realist review and a traditional (systematic) review is that traditional reviews are often presented in a matrix with a mean size effect and a form of judgement with respect to the quality of the evaluation. The realist review method makes it possible to synthesise existing CVE evaluations without attributing hierarchy to evaluation methods in the studies. Attributing hierarchy to CVE evaluations has no added value, as most of the CVE studies are not comparable because the (limited) evaluations are on different CVE interventions and programmes. Rather, the method seeks to highlight relevant contexts, mechanisms and outcomes in order to answer the explorative question: 'what works, for whom, in which context and how?' The review I conducted highlights that CVE is an umbrella phrase for many different interventions and programmes and helps us gain a better understanding as to what CVE precisely entails. It also gives us some preliminary ideas about relevant contexts and mechanisms in different CVE interventions such as family support, exit programmes, resilience programmes etc. and

CVE programmes in general. The idea behind this review is that it can help future (realistic) evaluations in terms of theory building and help policymakers and practitioners assess what (does not) works, in which context and how, during the policy design process of CVE.[30]

Like all (other) evaluation methods, realist evaluation and realist review does not come without pitfalls. Because there is such a strong emphasis on (hypothetical) theory building, it requires that those who conduct a realist evaluation have a strong knowledge base and be up to date with the very fast-developing CVE literature.

Measuring success – outcome indicators

As previously discussed, one of the most challenging aspects of CVE evaluation is measuring impact. Preferably a baseline assessment or *ex ante* evaluation is undertaken prior the implementation of the CVE programme or intervention, but that requires an answer to the question of what and how to measure outcome. It is challenging to formulate indicators that can assess whether (violent) extremism has successfully been countered or prevented.

I have proposed the use of several existing questionnaires, scales and frameworks to formulate outcome indicators.[31] For an analysis of risk assessment scales and frameworks, see chapter two of this volume. One example is the 'radical belief system' questionnaire of Doosje et al. in which personal uncertainty, perceived injustice and group-threat factors are important determinants of a radical belief system. Doosje et al. argue

Using this questionnaire in an ex ante and ex post evaluation answers the question of whether or not the CVE intervention or programme has changed radical belief systems.

that radical belief systems predict attitudes toward violence, which is a determinant of an individual's own violent intentions.[32] Using this questionnaire in an *ex ante* and *ex post* evaluation answers the question of whether or not the CVE intervention or programme has changed radical belief systems. Alternatively, psychometric scales can be relevant for measuring the change in radical and/or extremist beliefs and intentions – for example, the Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale,[33] which is intended to be an indicator of fundamentalism, or the Violent Extremist Risk Assessment (VERA) Tool, designed to assess the degree of risk of 'violent political extremism' among persons with either histories of extremist violence or

convictions for terrorist related offences.[34] Alternatively, and in particular more suited for primary prevention projects, we can also learn from scales and frameworks developed in other domains. An example would be the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM) tool, which measures the protective factors (individual, relational, communal and cultural) available to youth aged 12 to 23 years old and may foster their resilience.[35]

Evaluations that draw on qualitative data collection can assess the outcome by drawing lessons from other type of programmes. Drawing lessons from the evaluation of peace-building projects for example, I learned to look at changes in attitudes, behaviour and context. This can also be applied in the CVE context. For example, CVE educational programmes focus on increasing resilience against extremist narratives by enhancing self-esteem, promoting civic rights and values and stimulating discussion and dialogue. When evaluating these programmes, we should not only look to see if certain attitudes on extremist narratives have changed but should also assess whether it leads to behavioural change (e.g., more contact with people from the 'out-group') and whether that in turn also leads to changes in context, e.g., less tension between groups in a specific neighbourhood.[36]

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To evaluate tertiary prevention projects, one can apply the pro-integration model that Barelle has developed for assessing the degree of 'disengagement', which can be particularly relevant for exit programmes. She identifies five different domains along which three levels of (dis)engagement can occur. The maximum outcome is: (1) positive social engagement (disengagement), which implies positive family relations (positive social relations); (2) ability to address personal issues and function in society, e.g., work, education (positive coping); (3) no longer identifies with extremist group (identity); (4) is unlikely to hold violent extremist views (ideology); and (5) does not consider violent and illegal methods as legitimate (action orientation).[37] This model can also be used as an assessment (*ex ante*) tool to assess the extent of 'engagement' with violent extremist networks.

Conclusion and way forward

The biggest gap in CVE research is the lack of evaluations. This chapter has addressed why these evaluations are lacking and has proposed different methods for evaluation that can be utilised in the field of CVE. Each method has is merits and disadvantages. We should no longer theorise on how (not) to undertake CVE evaluation but should start now. This requires policymakers and practitioners to think about evaluation at a much earlier stage: prior to the *implementation* of CVE programmes and interventions and during the *policy design* of CVE.

For evaluations to be successfully conducted, policymakers should consider the following when developing CVE policy:

This requires policymakers and practitioners to think about evaluation at a much earlier stage: prior to the implementation of CVE programmes and interventions and during the policy design of CVE.

> *CVE programmes should address the grievances, causes and risk factors that lead to violent extremism.*[38] Practitioners and policymakers can draw on different models that have been developed. Bakker, for example, has developed the Transnational Terrorism, Security and the Rule of Law (TTSRL). This model is a theory of change consisting of root causes (political, economic and cultural), identification processes, network dynamics, relative deprivation, trigger events and personal factors (psychological characteristics and personal experiences).[39] Ranstorp offers a 'kaleidoscopic overview' of nine risk factors related to violent extremism: individual (1) and social factors (2) such as frustration and alienation; political (3) and ideological factors (4) such as dissatisfaction with foreign policies or interference with religious practice; identity crises (5) reinforced by migration biography or post-traumatic stress disorder; group dynamics (7) and recruitment strategies consisting of groomers (8) and social media (9).[40] Any CVE programme should always address the different risk factors and root causes involved in violent extremism.

> *Make a clear distinction between CVE programme and interventions.* A CVE programme consists of multiple interventions in different stages of the prevention continuum (primary, secondary and tertiary) and is directed at different target audiences. Target audiences consist of individuals at risk, (violent) extremists, young people, communities and practitioners. Interventions aim to create behavioural or cognitive change in the target audience and include activities such as community engagement, awareness raising, family support,

counter-narratives, mentoring, ideological and/or psychological counselling, education, multi-agency support etc.

Formulate goals. What is the ultimate aim of the intervention or programme? What type of prevention – primary, secondary or tertiary – should the intervention achieve? What type of sub-goals should the intervention achieve? If the aim is tertiary prevention, is the goal of the intervention(s) re-integration, rehabilitation, disengagement or de-radicalisation?

Identify target audiences accordingly. Given the difference between primary, secondary and tertiary prevention, one should carefully select target audience and set realistic goals about what can be achieved for each target audience. An education programme (alone) will never de-radicalise (violent) extremists. It can, however, increase the resilience of 'vulnerables' at risk.

Formulate a theory of change for each CVE (sub)programme and intervention. What theory or mechanisms lie at the heart of this intervention, and how can they contribute to the outcome and address the root causes, grievances and risk factors of violent extremism?

Make use of existing theory and evaluations. Although CVE evaluations are scarce, the body of literature on CVE (evaluations) is starting to increase. One should always make use of the knowledge that is available in peer-reviewed journals, research reports and CVE databases available to practitioners and policymakers, such as the RAN Collection of Best Practices.[41]

Formulate smart indicators on three levels. Each intervention should be evaluated on the basis of three different type of indicators that are formulated at the outset of the interventions. *Structural indicators* revolve around essential preconditions that must be met. For example, a structural indicator for an intervention to increase the resilience of young people via education is the training of education staff to provide them with the tools to carry out such a project. A *process indicator* is that an X number of pupils have enrolled in the resilience training. An *outcome indicator* is that resilience might have increased by X percent.

Include researchers/evaluators prior to implementation. Often the evaluation of a CVE programme or intervention is not foreseen until the programme or intervention has ended. This seriously limits the options for thorough evaluation and rules out any form of outcome evaluation with pre- and post-measurements.

Demand a thorough project plan of external partners. If the interventions are carried out by external partners, policymakers should demand an extensive project plan that incorporates all of the abovementioned requirements.

Multi-method data collection. We should not lose ourselves in a methodological battle that prioritises quantitative over qualitative methods or vice versa. We should combine the best of both worlds.

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The perception of counter-radicalisation by young people

Paul Thomas

Introduction

"Youth are often framed as either perpetrators of violent extremism or as possible victims of recruitment into violent groups. However, this narrative fails to capture the fact that most young people are part of the solution."[1]

This chapter focuses on what empirical evidence tells us about the relationship between counter-radicalisation measures and young people. It discusses both the significant focus that counter-radicalisation measures enacted by Western states have placed on young people and how young people have perceived and experienced these measures in practice. This distinction between perceptions and experiences is identified because one key issue, as discussed below, is the extent to which young people are actually aware that counter-radicalisation measures are being enacted with and around them, and whether or not this is important. Evidence also indicates that perceptions of counter-radicalisation measures cannot be separated from perceptions of group stigmatisation and marginalisation in society.

The chapter discusses a number of interrelated themes:

1) The ways in which counter-radicalisation measures internationally have prioritised and approached young people as a target group;

2) The extent to which young people have been aware of these measures; and

3) Perspectives on the nature and impacts of such youth- targeted measures.

It then uses these discussions to conclude with evidence-based suggestions for constructive policy measures that can effectively engage with young people to promote resilience against extremism.

In doing this, the chapter draws particularly on evidence from Britain.[2] This is because Britain was arguably the forerunner in initiating these 'soft' preventative[3] counter-radicalisation measures through its 'Prevent' strategy[4] and one of the few states with a nationally coordinated, broad programme. Prevent has been significantly influential on the policy approaches developed in other states and, throughout its changing history, has had a strong and substantial focus on young people and the professional educators who work with them. Alongside this, the chapter draws on relevant empirical evidence from other Western states.[5]

The chapter argues that Prevent's approach has been problematic with respect to young people. Certain measures have sometimes seemed to deepen existing divides and stigmatisation in society by targeting only one ethnic/religious community (Muslims) as a policy concern, they have sometimes apparently involved subterfuge and surveillance[6] and often there has been a surprising lack of any meaningful educational processes that might actually enhance youth resilience against extremism.[7] Much of the empirical evidence considered here suggests that counter-radicalisation measures aimed at youth have struggled to promote resilience because of a lack of clarity over aims and over measures of success, alongside national state reluctance to trust the judgement of local authorities and ground-level practitioners. Consequently, policies may have created even further suspicion of, or an alienation from, the state, thereby damaging the 'human intelligence' vital to the defeat of domestic extremism and terrorism.[8]

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Counter-radicalisation's focus on (especially Muslim) young people

Young people, broadly understood as below 26 years of age, have indisputably been a key target group for preventative counter-radicalisation measures in different Western states.[9] In Britain, the government evaluation of the first year of the Prevent strategy proudly stated that they had worked with almost 50,000 people, mostly young Muslims.[10] This is primarily because this age group have been the key demographic actors in many of the incidents of domestic Islamist terrorism, for instance in Britain and, more broadly, in Europe.[11] Nesser particularly identifies young people as the "misfits","drifters" and "protégés" of Islamist plots, describing the latter as "usually young with limited life experience, … impressionable and quite easily manipulated by senior figures they respect and look up to (such as entrepreneurs, or other mentors, including militant preachers)".[12]

Whilst these young people have often been in their 20s, some even with higher education, there was in recent years a marked shift downwards in the age and educational status of youth who attempted to travel to (and often succeeded in reaching) Syria: they have increasingly been those in late teenage years and with limited education.[13] This alone would perhaps justify a policy prioritisation of young people, but there is a further, more pragmatic reason: that the state can effectively reach many young people via schools, universities and community-based youth projects, whereas it is much more challenging to persuade older adults in the community to engage in counter-radicalisation dialogue processes.

The British Prevent strategy has prioritised young people throughout but has done so in significantly changing ways. In the first phase (2007–2011), Prevent very much emphasised engaging young people through community-based youth work and only in schools in a very limited way, leaving schools unsure of their responsibilities.[14] In this phase funding was distributed to all local government areas with significant Muslim populations and to local Muslim civil-society organisations, and this funding was overwhelmingly used for youth-engagement activities through youth work projects.

In one area in the north of England (where two of the bombers of 7 July 2005 in London had lived[15]), the local youth work department led the initial Prevent work, utilising their existing citizenship-based curriculum, but they were forced to engage with Muslim youth only because of the national policy directives.[16] A study of Prevent work in three different cities of another region of England found that in one, Prevent work had enabled the city's youth workers to develop new contacts and relationships with larger numbers of Muslim youth: "City C recorded a

dramatic 87% increase in the uptake of youth services by Muslim young people: from 231 in February 2007 to 432 in February 2008."[17]

Empirical studies of Prevent activity in East London highlighted this priority focus on and work with Muslim young people through youth work.[18]

This particular British Prevent approach to young people came to a sharp halt following the 2011 Prevent Review,[19] when the new Coalition government largely cut Prevent funding for community engagement. This was replaced in 2015, however, with a new approach that still prioritises young people but in a very different way. Now all state professionals who work in the education and health sectors have a formal legal duty[20] to implement Prevent by monitoring individuals and referring those viewed as being 'at risk' of involvement in extremism to the 'Channel' anti-radicalisation counselling scheme.[21] This approach has involved all state teachers and youth workers who receive the 'Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent' (WRAP) training and has been highly controversial. Controversy has centred on the rapidly increasing numbers of young people referred to Channel and on the highly inappropriate content and manner of some of these referrals, as detailed in highly critical reports.[22]

Young people's awareness of counter-radicalisation measures

Despite this very prominent focus on young people within counter-radicalisation policies, those targeted have not always been aware of this process. Ground-level evaluations of the early Prevent implementation in Britain highlighted the fact that youth workers often deliberately avoided using the 'Prevent' label because of the programme's controversial nature. Instead, opaque titles were utilised, often leaving the young people and their families unaware that Prevent was the true funder of the work in which they were participating.[23] Early hostility to Prevent led youth workers in Tower Hamlets, East London to 'embed' Prevent within normal youth work sessions in order to get any participation: "we used the money for the worker to do a football game after the session as an incentive for people to attend it."[24] Similar embedding within 'normal' youth work was found in Kirklees, West Yorkshire,[25] with another commonality being the reluctance of youth workers to actually use the Prevent

"The work that we do would be discredited, doors would be shut in our face, if people knew that we were Prevent-funded."

name. Kundnani's 'Spooked' investigation of early Prevent practice quoted a youth project manager as saying: "The work that we do would be discredited, doors would be shut in our face, if people knew that we were Prevent-funded."[26]

This frequent lack of transparency about Prevent funding was exacerbated by the fact that existing youth projects were often utilised to implement Prevent, especially at a time when other national funding to local government and civil-society organisations was declining. This was central to accusations that Prevent was a front for 'spying' on young Muslims and their communities.[27] It led directly to a national Parliamentary Inquiry, which took oral evidence from local authorities, youth organisations, civil-society groups and police bodies involved in Prevent delivery.[28] When young people were fully aware of the Prevent funding, they challenged the assumptions of the counter-radicalisation programme. For instance, the UK Youth Parliament is the main national umbrella body for youth representation, drawing on local elected youth forums and councils. They received Prevent funding but refused to accept the Muslim-only basis of the national policy; instead they promoted cross-community political debate amongst young people before their funding was withdrawn.[29]

This lack of transparency towards youth within Britain's Prevent strategy has since been replicated in its latest phase. Here, young people are often unaware that teachers, youth workers or health workers have identified them as being 'at risk' of radicalisation and have either formally referred them or have 'informally' discussed them with external Prevent personnel. Evidence suggests so far that young people in schools are often unaware of referral until parents are summoned to school without explanation or even when police officers arrive at their house, causing predictable distress and social embarrassment.[30] The fact that the policy intent is to embed or 'mainstream' Prevent scrutiny within wider 'safeguarding' (child protection) approaches in schools, colleges and even nurseries (some of the Prevent referrals have been for very young children) heightens this lack of clarity.[31] Recent research suggests that educators are actually comfortable with this safeguarding dimension of Prevent but still see it as controversial because of the anti-Muslim image of the programme.[32]

Perspectives on the nature and impact of such youth-targeted measures

Stigmatisation and surveillance

International, national and local academic studies have all shown consistently both that faith identity is of prime importance to young Muslim people as a minority in Western countries and that, from the 9/11 New York attacks onwards, young Muslims have felt that their identity is negatively scrutinised. [33] In Britain, Muslims have been accused of failing to integrate into broader society and of placing loyalty to co-religionists above national loyalty. For young Muslims, media and political discourse has inflamed these social feelings, leading to frequent personal experiences of religiously based hate crimes. [34] In particular, the 'War on Terror' discourse and national counter-terrorism measures have left young Muslims feeling that they are a 'suspect community',[35] with real experiences of being stopped and questioned in public and when travelling on a basis that appears to be one of racial profiling.[36] This sense of being scrutinised and beleaguered has seemingly strengthened attachment to a distinct, arguably 'defensive', Muslim faith identity and visible displays of Islamic clothing, such as females wearing the hijab.

These Muslim youth perceptions of the broader social and political attitudes make both integration and, specifically, dialogue around counter-radicalisation more difficult. They highlight the importance for policymakers to be very careful in the language and tone that they use in relation to counter-terrorism. Britain substantially reconsidered its counter-radicalisation policy language – moving away from the phrase 'Islamic', for example, when discussing domestic 'terrorism' – through the work of its 'Research, Information and Communication Unit' (RICU).[37]

This broader societal reality also emphasises the need to view effective counter-radicalisation policies as inclusive and non-stigmatising, but that has not always been the reality. The fact that the first phase of the British Prevent strategy was officially only about Muslims, and targeted young Muslims on a very large scale whilst talking of the need for 'a demonstrable change in attitudes amongst Muslims',[38] resulted in many British Muslims being antagonistic to the programme from the start. Many Muslim community organisations in key target areas such as the north of England refused engagement whilst others argued fiercely about it.[39] Particularly resented was the fact that Prevent only focused on Muslims at a time when far-right political groups were winning local elections and when empirical analysis showed far-right violence was both increasing and not reducible to the dismissive 'lone wolf' theory.[40] This Muslim-only focus within Prevent was abandoned in 2011, but because of these origins the community perception continues to be that Prevent is

about Muslims. 'At risk' individuals with far-right/racist attitudes are now being referred to the Channel scheme, but analysis of how the 'Prevent duty' is being experienced in schools and colleges shows that all examples of highly inappropriate referrals of young people involve young Muslims.[41] Some of these examples also highlight stereotypical, perhaps even Islamophobic, attitudes

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amongst individual teachers and police officers, demonstrating that national counter-radicalisation policies are only effective when appropriate skills and understanding exist amongst the front-line practitioners who implement them. Often, teachers or youth workers make these judgements on the observed behaviour of a young person after one hour-long Prevent training session.

Closely associated with these concerns is the issue of who leads, directs and even delivers counter-radicalisation policies aimed at youth. For that reason, the strong role that the police have often played in preventative counter-radicalisation policies is very problematic for the credibility and effectiveness of such policies. Evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee Inquiry in 2010 showed great concern with the role of the police. Such disquiet was based on real examples, such as Kundnani's study of youth workers' testimony that Prevent allowed Security Service personnel to pressure youth workers for information on the movements and associates of certain young people. One youth work manager is quoted as saying:

You have to provide information if an individual is at risk. But you also need to give information about the general picture, right down to which street corners young people from different backgrounds are hanging around on, what mosques they go to and so on.[42]

In another case, when Prevent funding was approved for a youth project in a northern town, '"intelligence gathering" was stated as one of the rationales for the centre.'[43]

Empirical research around both the national and local operations of Prevent found that the police had become dominant players in its design and management.[44] This heightened the perception of 'spying', and Sir David Omand, architect of the British Prevent strategy, did not deny this reality in an interview given to the Financial Times: he suggested that it would be naïve of the state to not use any intelligence

from community-based Prevent activities, in the face of a very serious terrorist threat.[45]

Practitioners now perceive the first phase (2007–11) of Britain's Prevent strategy as more effective than later phases in that it allowed local decision-making, which foregrounded youth worker contact with Muslim youth. Funding for this was largely ended (although it may now be quietly growing again), however, and now Prevent foregrounds surveillance and reporting by teachers and other public servants.[46] Furthermore, funding is not available to Muslim community organisations with a strict, ultra-conservative social outlook, because such an outlook is not seen as consistent with 'Fundamental British Values',[47] even though these groups have a proven track record of reaching young Muslims attracted to violent extremism because of their theological interpretation.[48] Some local government areas are now trying to mediate this national approach by investing their own resources in a different strategy. One such area in the north of England has established a team of youth workers both to do preventive educational engagement and to lead on the Channel referral and assessment process of young people. This strategy believes that youth workers knocking on a family door, rather than police officers, will have a very different impact on the youth and family willingness to engage with an anti-extremism counselling process.[49]

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Radicalisation, resilience and education

Preventive counter-radicalisation youth policies obviously foreground the concept of 'radicalisation' and how to prevent it. The problem, however, is that the very concept of 'radicalisation' is questioned by many leading academic terrorism experts.[50] The problem here is the weak predictive power of the model and its inherent assumptions about a 'conveyer belt' that carries young Muslims through increasingly extreme political or theological circles towards terrorism. The reality shown by analysis of actual terrorist plotters is that many move through 'flash radicalisation' very rapidly toward violence with no involvement in such circles and little, if any, Islamic knowledge, whilst most people involved in such extreme (but law-abiding) groups do not go on to commit violence.[51] This danger of 'false positives' is problematic for 'pre-crime' policy approaches – such as in Amsterdam, Denmark and the British Channel scheme – that attempt to identify 'at risk'

individual youth and intervene.[52] Some (admittedly controversial) civil-society organisations are contesting this approach and its centrality to Channel in Britain, arguing that there is simply no scientific or evidentiary basis for this policy approach of spotting and referring young people for counselling.[53] Internationally, there is growing acceptance of a lack of evidence around why some young adults do *not* move towards violent extremism.[54]

Not accepting this reality of uncertainty can undermine the effectiveness of counter-radicalisation policies. The experience in Britain of reporting 'at risk' young Muslims discussed above is possibly creating both a defensive resentment and a 'chilling effect' on young Muslims' willingness to have open discussions with educators, although recent empirical evidence challenges this.[55] Here we can see how the pedagogical possibilities for creating genuine anti-extremism resilience amongst 'at risk' groups of young people can be undermined by the assumptions of the 'radicalisation' model and the securitised nature of the programme's conception. The dangers of the sort of assumptions flowing from the 'radicalisation' model can be seen from an empirical survey of young neo-Nazi activists in northwest England.[56] Contrary to the expectation that these youths were consistent haters on a journey towards racist violence, it became apparent that their 'extremism' was situational and contingent – they had Asian friends in other settings, and their open neo-Nazi membership seemed to be a reaction to street conflicts with local Muslim youth.

We see how the pedagogical possibilities for creating genuine anti-extremism resilience amongst 'at risk' groups of young people can be undermined by the assumptions of the 'radicalisation' model and the securitised nature of the programme's conception.

It is vital for effective counter-radicalisation policies to recognise the fluid and changeable thinking, even the 'showing off', behind much apparent youth 'extremism'. Significant policy efforts were made in British schools and youth work in the 1980s and 1990s to counter strong white racism, but the approach taken was often not effective, especially with marginalised working-class youths. Many such youth perceived 'anti-racism' to be professionals telling them off and disciplining them for their supposedly 'racist' language and behaviour. Hewitt's research in southeast London showed how such 'clumsy' educational work had actually hardened the extreme racism of some of these young people.[57] Echoing this research, empirical research with youth workers in the north of England found that their understanding of 'anti-racism' was to punish and silence the 'racist' young people, not to engage in the sort of open educational processes that might actually create attitude change and anti-extremist

resilience.[58] Despite this evidence, there has been only limited evidence of genuine educational content within the British Prevent strategy.[59] In its first phase, efforts were undermined by a lack of training for educators and by government refusal to invest in such training processes.[60] Beneath this was the lack of a clear policy direction as to whether educators were being licensed to have 'risky conversations' with young people about political and religious topics. The result was that, just as in the previous anti-racist phase, educators avoided such difficult topics.[61] Current research around how British schools and colleges are implementing the Prevent legal duty shows that educators are comfortable with the 'safeguarding dimension' of this duty in that they recognise the concept of individual vulnerability to extremist messages and see such vulnerability as similar to vulnerability towards sexual exploitation or gang violence.[62] They are unhappy, however, with the lack of state support or training for the pedagogical response, which they see as the most important contribution education can make. Some individual schools *are* taking the initiative to devise their own anti-extremism and pro-tolerance materials, partially in recognition of the danger that Prevent will stigmatise their Muslim students without such curriculum input. However, this confirms previous research that shows that educators need more training and support to feel confident in openly discussing difficult political and social issues.

Educators are unhappy with the lack of state support or training for the pedagogical response, which they see as the most important contribution education can make.

The best practice recounted in this recent research echoes the approach identified by anti-extremism educational researchers such as Lyn Davies.[63] Drawing on empirical research in areas of conflict and extremism around the world, Davies advocates the need for *more* radical ideas, not fewer, in schools and colleges. Young people must be encouraged to openly debate issues, she argues, and be able to express strong views without punishment but subject to interrogation by their peers. Such a pedagogical approach encourages youth appreciation of complexity, both of the identities of self and 'others' and of political issues. In the end, this embracing of complexity may well be the best source of resilience against extremist ideologies that offer youth simplistic explanations. Here, evidence calls for encouraging 'critical thinking'[64] through processes that look at issues from sharply divergent perspectives and that engage with both the emotional and cognitive levels of youth thinking.[65] An example of this was found in the Welsh-based 'THINK' project. Established by a Muslim-led civil-society organisation to address growing levels of racism and neo-Nazi support amongst local white youth, the THINK project involved open and robust educational debates with white youth that helped them alter their

attitudes to minorities and feel more positive about their own place in society.[66] Prevent was unwilling to fund such work.

An appreciation of complexity is one of the key aims of youth-mentoring approaches that enable youth and young adults identified as being 'at risk' for extremism. For some Western states, such as Denmark, such individual mentoring is a key part of their counter-radicalisation work and builds on their broader policy approach to youth disaffection.[67] For such mentoring to be effective, the mentor has to be credible. There is also the danger that such a rationalist and cognitive individual approach fails to address either the structural drivers of extremist sympathies or the group-based emotions that often carry small groups of young people together towards extremism,[68] especially as research around youth extremism increasingly focusses on sub-cultural understandings.[69] Arguably, a key part of building youth appreciation of complexity is the use of 'contact theory'-based processes of group association, whereby youth of different ethnic, religious and social backgrounds work together on educational projects to build dialogue and relationships that go beyond the superficial towards genuine attitudinal reconsideration. British research in an area of profound racial conflict found highly positive results when youth workers effectively used such approaches.[70] Whilst high levels of ethnic segregation and tension cannot be shown to directly cause terrorist involvement, there is clear evidence that such conditions breed fear and resentment of the 'other' as well as the acceptance of community norms that can have an extreme dimension.[71]

Young people must be encouraged to openly debate issues, she argues, and be able to express strong views without punishment but subject to interrogation by their peers.

Conclusion: Effective ways forward for policymakers and practitioners

There is clear evidence that young Western Muslims feel stigmatised and alienated by political and media discourse around the 'War on Terror'. Accordingly, for preventative counter-radicalisation measures to make progress, policymakers need to learn from previous international, and especially British, policy experiences that have informed the recommendations that this chapter proposes:

Counter-radicalisation policies, in both word and practice, need to address *all* types of political violence in society, not just Islamist extremism.

▌ They should also *not* be led by police and security-service personnel, as this will be counter-productive for efforts to increase youth and community willingness to cooperate.

▌ The state needs to trust educators seen by youth to be credible (which may include former extremists)[72] to do preventive work without dictating the precise content of this work and who is licensed to do it. Such trust and the stepping back of the police will address the gap of mistrust between youth workers and de-radicalisation policymakers.

The state must encourage educators to play their pedagogical role and have 'difficult conversations' but also must provide training and support to give those educators the confidence and the resources to do this vital work.

▌ Building on this, the state must encourage educators to play their pedagogical role and have 'difficult conversations' but also must provide training and support to give those educators the confidence and the resources to do this vital work.

▌ Youth work has a vital role to play here, because it can help young people feel that engaging is their choice. Evidence suggests that youth-work approaches that build cross-community dialogue and understandings based on 'contact theory' can contribute, particularly if they use public health and educational models rather than being focussed on law enforcement.[73]

▌ Given the Muslim youth feelings of stigmatisation, policy approaches that focus on citizenship education for all young people – the skills and practice of being a democratic citizen – are vital. Above all, educational approaches that encourage youth acceptance of complexity – of identity, of belief and of political issues – are central. Rather than monitoring the thoughts and utterances of young people, preventative policies need to encourage *more* youth engagement with radical ideas; real experience of democracy and of its power is the best hope for building youth resilience against violent extremism. Such an educational approach to young people embodies the reality of equal citizenship for young Muslims, not just the fine written constitutional words. Of course, if certain ethnic groups have less equal educational and employment experiences in society, it is harder for them to experience equal citizenship.

These recommendations suggest that the effectiveness of overt counter-radicalisation policies needs to be questioned, as they always risk counter-productive suspicions from communities. Such work may be done more effectively by trusting normal youth work in the community and citizenship work in schools – tools that policymakers already have.

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Islam in Europe and European Islam

Marcel Maussen & Merel Talbi

Introduction

In post-war Europe, immigration of Muslims developed in the context of decolonisation and guest-worker recruitment schemes. Religious needs and identities of the immigrant newcomers initially remained a trivial issue. In improvised ways, immigrants – together with employers, church organisations and municipal authorities – would create some basic facilities (prayer spaces, room for religious festivities). The early and mid-1980s marked a shift towards a phase in which organised Muslims demanded opportunities to raise their children as Muslims, resulting, for example, in requests for religious lessons, the founding of Islamic schools and the wearing of the headscarf in public schools. Despite the fact that Muslim demands often encountered societal hostility and political opposition, steps were taken gradually in the 1980s and 1990s to accommodate a 'new Islamic presence in Europe': prayer houses and proper mosques were created, as were Islamic schools (relatively early in Britain, the Netherlands and Belgium) and opportunities for ritual slaughtering, training programmes for imams, facilities for Muslim burial, and so on.

Without minimising the intensity of political and societal resistance against Islam in the 1980s and 1990s, we want to recall how in the mid-1990s a fairly optimistic discourse developed about the integration of European Muslims. It suggested that in the long run 'the emancipation of Europe's Muslims' was inevitable and that opposition and obstacles to Islam would be overcome. This discourse represented newly founded Islamic institutions as well as visible signs of Islamic identity (minarets, dress) as illustrative of emancipation and recognition. An important storyline in this discourse suggested that future generations of Muslims, born and raised in

West Europe, would adhere to a different type of religiosity compared to their parents. For many of the young, Islam would become a marker of 'identity'. Most of them would become more 'superficially religious', in line with the process of secularisation that has swept across Christian Europe since the 1960s, and would embrace the values that allegedly were widely shared in the 'host society', such as equal rights for men and women, tolerance for people of other faiths, gay rights and so on.[1]

We hasten to add that this was not the only discourse present in the 1990s. Some commentators argued then that the growing influence of Islam in Europe was a threat to liberal European values. And by the end of the decade, the critique of 'multiculturalism' had gained traction across Western Europe.[2] In the first two decades of the 21st century the 'optimistic' discourse seems to have lost much of its acceptability. In the context of violent Islamic extremism and fear of radicalisation, the religious development of 'the young' has become a cause for concern, not a carrier of hope. Political and societal mobilisation around the integration of immigrants and about Islam have deepened in all European countries.

> **'Societies of immigration' will need to learn to deal with the robust transnational ethnic, political, financial, cultural and religious ties that matter greatly to significant parts of their population.**

One important factor in changing the tone of the debate has been the growing importance of transnationalism, the durable existence of economic, cultural, social, political and communicative ties connecting societies and people across the world. Transnationalism has fundamentally altered the dynamics and meanings of immigration in two respects. First, migration will be a continuous phenomenon in the 21st century; it is no longer something that occurs in 'waves' of groups of people being transplanted from one society to another. Second, migration no longer entails a permanent geographical dislocation (from 'here' to 'there'), nor does it necessarily imply the disintegration of ethnic, cultural and family ties in favour of assimilation into a 'receiving society'. 'Societies of immigration' will therefore need to learn to deal with the robust transnational ethnic, political, financial, cultural and religious ties that matter greatly to significant parts of their population.

It is against this background that we want to discuss in this chapter what a process of accommodation of Islam in Europe can mean, and also how ideas about a 'European Islam' can function as parts of discourses of inclusion, also in relation to policy efforts aiming to halt the spread of radicalism and extremism. One might ask

whether framing this subject in terms of 'Islam in Europe and European Islam' is really helpful. The concept 'European Islam' has become loaded with meaning and is contested in various ways. Some say the very idea that Islam should be moulded into a singular entity (a 'European version') is not only unachievable but also an inappropriate, homogenising idea, based on misconceptions about the diversity that characterises Muslim populations in Europe and in tension with religious freedom. Others say that 'European Islam' is too strongly associated with the voices of some, including people such as Tariq Ramadan but also Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who advocates a 'Reformation in Islam'. For us it is important to engage with this debate, not because we 'believe' in European Islam but precisely because as a notion it functions as a crossroad where ideas about integration and assimilation, about transnationalism and autonomy of Muslim communities, and ideas about the development of Islamic institutions, doctrine and religiosity are articulated. Rather than discarding it as a concept we seek to help policymakers relate to the multiple meanings ascribed to it. Our aim is to give public officials active in the field of anti-radicalisation policies some guidelines when thinking about steps to accommodate Islam as a religion in a European context.[3]

Islam in Europe: State responses and trends

A substantial body of academic literature exist that describes the processes of institutionalisation of Islam in various countries in West Europe. Four domains can be distinguished: (1) institutions that are deemed necessary for the accommodation of religious needs and practices (mosques, halal food, funeral and burial facilities, circumcision clinics, religious personnel, Koranic schools, religious feasts and so on); (2) institutions related to education, including Islamic primary and secondary schools and opportunities for religious instruction in public schools; (3) the accommodation of demands for expressions of Islamic faith, in symbols and dress (headscarves, niqaabs, beards) and behaviour (fasting, requests for prayer, dietary requests, gender-related demands, for example, with regard to greeting members of the opposite sex); and, finally, (4) the domain of religious and faith-based organisations and initiatives (health care, poor relief).

Without attempting to summarise the vast literature on the institutionalisation of Islam in the various countries, we would like to highlight four broader findings that arise from this body of research. First, out of necessity and driven by their own institutional guarantees of religious freedom and equality, West European states have taken steps to create room for Islam and the needs and concerns of Muslims regarding their religion and faith. As long as European and national constitutional and legal guarantees exist, they are binding for societies and for governments at all

institutional levels, and they demand that basic religious rights be respected. Where states and governments take steps to more actively shape (or limit) the room for Islam and religious freedom for Muslims, they do so mostly by balancing demands and rights of Muslims with other principles, such as gender equality and non-discrimination, and with 'collective goods deemed worthwhile',[4] such as societal cohesion, security, good education, animal welfare and so on. Second, from the literature it becomes very clear that the involvement of governments with Islam varies dramatically by institutional level: at the state level, constitutional-legal arrangements, which are relatively robust and established, shape the opportunities for religious freedom and leave their imprint on policies. The local level is especially relevant with regard to the practical handling of issues concerning the founding and operation of institutions (mosques, schools) and balancing conflicting concerns and interests. Third, the idea that a country or a city can or should be pursuing some kind of coherent 'policy towards Islam' is at odds with the various types of involvement and regulation just mentioned. It is also a misnomer for the types of responses that are needed in practice. At times a state may invest in an effort to regulate a series of issues, as was the case in France when Minister and later President Nicolas Sarkozy introduced the so-called *Consultation on Islam in France* (2000–2003) that aimed at the creation of a Muslim platform organisation, the offer of prayer spaces across the country, halal certification and imam training. These should be understood as temporary phases of more intense involvement, not as illustrative of 'Islamic policies' that exist on a permanent basis. Fourth, there is a growing belief among many researchers that the development of Islam in Europe should no longer be thought about exclusively, or primarily, as about 'immigrant integration'.[5] The constant depiction of Muslims as immigrants is problematic in itself, because we are talking about second- or third-generation Muslims, as well as smaller number of people who converted to Islam. This does not mean that immigration from Muslim majority countries is not important; it remains substantial given the influx of refugees and chain migration (e.g., marriage, family reunification).

We suggest that public officials can be more reflexive about the framing of responses to Islam and that they can recognize that the real issue is to deliberate about how societies can regulate cultural and religious pluralism in a way that organises equality and freedom for all.

Still, rather than framing the debate on the accommodation of Islam in terms of 'newcomers' that need to 'assimilate', it could be framed as about the rights of minorities to shape and change the countries they have become part of or in which they are trying to be accepted.[6] Let us be clear at this point: this is not meant as a naïve suggestion that we should look away from the ways in

which social inequalities, processes of acculturation, transnational ties and identifications matter to the development of Islam in Europe, but it does question whether that process can be understood adequately by framing it as about 'them' (i.e., immigrants coming from elsewhere with a foreign religion and culture) adapting to 'us' (i.e., a presumed homogeneous nation sharing a set of values). We suggest that public officials can be more reflexive about the framing of responses to Islam in these terms and that they can recognize that the real issue is to deliberate about how societies can regulate cultural and religious pluralism in a way that organises equality and freedom for all.

Promoting a European Islam

As we mentioned, public-policy responses towards Muslim demands for recognition became less *ad hoc* and more planned since the 1980s, when public authorities at various institutional levels sought to develop measures that were in line with basic constitutional principles but also addressed all kinds of concerns about good education, public goods (food safety, spatial planning) and basic values. An important subset of these concerns involved the steering or shaping of Islam as a religion; using a combination of 'carrots and sticks' to see *particular types of institutions* emerge. Public authorities have been involved in shaping the type of mosques that would emerge, both by seeking to promote a certain architecture, thinking about suitable locations and about what types of functions should ideally be catered for in mosques located in European cities. Similar negotiations with Muslim organisations and other actors have developed around religious personnel, for example discussing the specific skills of imams working with Muslims in European cities and the training necessary to prepare them for these tasks. Public actors such as the Inspectorate of Education or the municipal government repeatedly become involved in the governance of Islamic schools, for example with regard to providing educational materials. But municipal authorities may also decide whether 'religious lessons' provided in public schools outside class hours should be subsidised or not, and they can base this decision on their own assessment about whether or not these lessons are of value for children.[7] Behind these efforts of public actors to become involved in shaping Islamic institutions are – more or less articulate – ideas about religious beliefs and values. As the American scholar Jonathan Laurence writes: "By taking the initiative to incorporate and nationalise Islam in their respective institutional orders, European states *have attempted to influence what kind of Islam the next generation of Muslims will encounter* …."[8] The Italian scholar Sara Silvestri speaks of endeavours to 'steer' existing Islamic institutions and forms of organisation "in order to adapt and incorporate them somehow into European society".[9] An

important motive thereby has been to promote in European contexts the relative *autonomy* of Islamic institutions and communities from their 'home countries' and from other transnational actors. A second important motive is the will to create a rift between the 'fundamentalist' or 'radical' Islamic doctrines associated with some countries in the Middle East and the type of Islam that could develop in Europe.

In itself it is inevitable that the processes in which 'opportunities and constraints' for Islam emerge entail negotiations in which non-Muslim actors, including public authorities, articulate their ideas and wishes. Whereas some suggest that public officials should simply pursue a strictly secularist approach and not deal with religion *at all*, we think this advice is misguided, because governance of religion in all its manifestations (expressions, buildings, practices, institutions, organisations, symbols, behaviour, needs) inevitably entails actions and interference by others, including those acting in a governmental capacity or in the name of some kind of public authority. Seen in this light, public officials are always involved in 'shaping' the development of religion, at least to some extent. Two distinctions can be of help to guide policymakers and officials in this regard. First, officials and policymakers could become more reflexive and transparent about their own agendas in 'shaping' or 'domesticating' Islam and could allow room for discussion and negotiation about the directions of transformation. Second, the principle of separation of state and church and the principle of religious freedom do imply that public authorities and public officials cannot mingle in every and any aspect of religion as they please. In the remainder of this chapter we will look empirically and normatively at ideas and practices around the 'domestication of Islam in Europe' by moving from the less to the more controversial aspects of involvement with Islam. We begin with the domains of institutions for Islamic practice, representative bodies and the social role of Islam and then discuss more controversial ideas about governments 'shaping' the development of Islamic culture, religious authority and doctrine in a European context.

Domesticating institutions for Islamic practice

In order for practices or institutions to be accommodated in a European society, city or neighbourhood they must function according to some basic rules and regulations. This means that all parties must learn about the needs and expectations of others and must be willing to adjust these expectations, at least to some extent. We propose to understand this in terms of a spectrum of efforts to 'domesticate' Islamic institutions that goes from a bare minimum of formal regulation to the extreme of

authorities seeking to regulate the looks, ways of operating and internal organisation of institutions. Take the example of mosques. A mosque will need to respect building standards, for example those related to safety of the construction and fire safety. As an institution operating in an urban context, it will also be subject to rules aiming to minimise 'environmental impact' in terms of parking space, access routes, noise, and so on. Mosque siting processes are subject to procedural routines that exist to guarantee that interests of all stakeholders can be taken into account, for example in relation to zoning plans and the location of urban functions. In Rotterdam, for example, the city took very deliberate steps in the late 1990s and early 2000s to develop a mosque policy that aimed to rationally plan the need for Islamic praying facilities. In that process the boundaries between minimal forms of regulation and ideas about the functions of mosques, about appropriate architecture, about public responsibilities and about the needs of mosque visitors became blurred. In such processes it is inevitable that Islamic institutions are being 'stamped' by the national and local contexts in which they develop. In France, the notion of creating room for 'neighbourhood mosques' (*mosquées de quartiers*) emerged a decade ago. As a concept it helped organised Muslim groups, non-Muslim residents and public authorities to find a common perspective on the ways an Islamic institution such as a 'prayer hall' could be conceived of as a normal 'function' in a French city.[10]

Our advice would be to be transparent about the direction of 'domestication' that the government aims at (and for what reasons) and to strive for dialogue and willingness to listen to alternative ideas rather than try to dictate what type of institutions should emerge.

The example of the accommodation of mosques could be replaced by that of Islamic schools, cemeteries, circumcision clinics, halal butchers, and so on. It is inevitable and legitimate that public authorities act as stakeholders in accommodating and shaping these institutions, also in view of articulating ideas about the ways in which these institutions can function well in the context of European societies. Our advice would be to be transparent about the direction of 'domestication' that the government aims at (and for what reasons) and to strive for dialogue and willingness to listen to alternative ideas rather than try to dictate what type of institutions should emerge.

Representative bodies and platforms

A second field in which public authorities have taken important steps in shaping the institutionalisation of Islam is around representative councils and platforms. At different institutional levels (state, region, local), public authorities have felt a need to have interlocutors, for example to discuss aspects of the institutionalisation of Islam (e.g., to make agreements on halal certification, discuss training programmes for imams or cooperate around anti-radicalisation programmes) or simply to have some kind of addressee on important symbolic occasions (e.g., when authorities want to talk to 'the Muslim communities' after a dramatic event). These platforms have been introduced to address more practical and organisational issues, but they also carried a symbolic weight as about recognition.[11] Countries have gone through learning processes in this regard. Initially, relatively spontaneous partnerships emerged, for example in Belgium, where in the mid-1970s the official management of Islam was given to an 'Islamic and Cultural Centre of Belgium' controlled by Saudi Arabia, which had no connection to the emerging Turkish and Moroccan communities. Countries such as France and Germany, and to a lesser extent Belgium, Britain and the Netherlands, have gone through long processes to have a kind of national 'consultative body' that can speak for Muslim communities in their religious and ethnic diversity. One important lesson learned from

One important lesson learned from these efforts has been that a state cannot and should not decide in a top-down manner who will be its interlocutors.

these efforts has been that a state cannot and should not decide in a top-down manner who will be its interlocutors. Islamic communities are and will remain fragmented, a variety of demands will be articulated and those engaging with platforms must remain alert for 'monopolization of groups and movements that have an agenda'.[12]

In terms of 'symbolic recognition', a national platform is of great value: it provides a venue to discuss policy issues that really are dealt with at this institutional level and it facilitates a dialogue on broader issues related to Islam and society, which is much needed in these times. [13] However, it has also become clear that the existence of this type of national platform organisation does not lead to the withering away of ties with 'home countries'. Recent developments around the Turkish communities in Europe show how strong the ties remain between Turkish Islamic institutions in Europe and the government in Ankara.

In our view it is wise for policymakers to try and spell out for themselves what precisely are their motives for engaging with this type of platform, and to communicate this to Muslim actors. The fact that sometimes issues must (or at minimum *can*) be arranged for the Muslim population as a whole (for example, regulations with regard to founding schools, ritual slaughtering, burial, religious feasts) is a legitimate motive, as is the motive to be in contact with the various 'communities'. But this is not the same as saying that via the platform public authorities want to monitor communities, control religious messages or use platforms as stepping stones for their own policies (even though partnerships are always possible, of course). In so doing, public authorities can also explain why in some cases there is a need to develop some kind of platform that represents the interests of 'all Muslims', irrespective of their ethnic or religious orientation, whereas in other cases strategic partnerships are set up with specific sub-groups and organisations.

Islam as a social force and visibility of Muslim identity

Whereas the first two examples were about the ways in which institutions for Islamic practice and Muslim representative organisations could become more incorporated, the idea of working towards more full inclusion of Islam in European societies can also be connected to how Islam becomes relevant for that society *as a whole*. After all, if the issue is to think about ways minorities have a right to 'shape the societies they have become a part of', it is not only Islamic institutions that should become 'domesticated' but society at large as well, in order to become more open to 'Islam' as a part of its shared, public imagery and social reality. Rather than thinking that increased religious pluralism means that all religious symbolism should be chased out of the public realm, as some radical secularists advocate, one can think of giving more room to Islamic symbols in public spaces and institutions, having Islamic broadcasting, imams being invited for interreligious public ceremonies alongside priests and rabbis, room for Islamic religious instruction in schools or organising public festivals in a city around important Islamic religious feasts. Over the past decade efforts such as these have been heavily criticised

> **If the issue is to think about ways minorities have a right to 'shape the societies they have become a part of', it is not only Islamic institutions that should become 'domesticated' but society at large as well, in order to become more open to 'Islam' as a part of its shared, public imagery and social reality.**

as illustrative of 'weak' and 'soft' multiculturalism, and public authorities are less keen to be associated with them, let alone sponsor them. However, if accommodation of Islam implies that European societies aim to include Islam as a part of their shared identity and collective life, it seems odd to argue that any noticeable Muslim presence should be seen as problematical. Also with regard to the presence of Islam in public debate, one can think about striving for inclusion. The German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, for one, has argued that religion may have a presence in the public debate if religious participants in political discussions are willing to 'translate' their beliefs into the language of secular modernity. Habermas suggests that this will also initiate a 'learning process' for religious groups to partake in discussions in the public sphere, and he claims that religious participants themselves can decide whether such a 'modernised faith' is still a 'true faith'.[14]

Again our aim is not to shy away from the difficulties and tensions that such a more inclusive stance may entail in practice. What to do when room for Islam-based arguments seems to imply welcoming demonstrations by Sharia4Belgium? When openness to Islamic dress becomes allowing for the wearing of Burkinis in public pools? Or when a willingness to accommodate religiously motivated behaviour seems to imply that Muslim schoolboys can refuse to shake hands with their female teachers? Obviously, in these cases a strictly secularist perspective provides a more simple guideline, namely, to ban religion and religiously motivated behaviour in all their manifestations from the public realm. Still, without ignoring how difficult it may be justify and explain publicly what trade-offs and balancing is being done and for what reasons, in our view the pluralist and inclusive perspective remains more attractive for three reasons. First, the willingness to provide room for and tolerate expressions and ideas of which one disapproves has historically been crucial for free and diverse societies. Banning what one does not like should not be set as the norm in free societies. Second, in our age, public

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expressions of identity (in language, dress, behaviour) are extremely relevant, and singling out religion in that respect is discriminatory and difficult to justify. Third, in the context of de-radicalisation policies, messages of inclusion have the strategic advantage of undermining the narratives that are actively being promoted by radical Muslim spokesmen about the way Muslims are being excluded and discriminated against by Western democracies.

Until now we have been discussing empirical strategies and normative considerations with regard to the shaping or 'domesticating' of Islam that were primarily concerned with 'regulation from the outside' (building requirements, regulations with regard to behaviour or dress in particular settings, thinking about ways to allow for Muslim burial rituals) and which avoided meddling with the content or core of religion. In view of the principle of religious freedom and separation of state and church, the following examples seem more difficult.

Islamic culture and knowledge

One of the ideas that has been associated with promoting a 'European Islam' is the suggestion that common ground can be found in the more 'cultural' aspects of the Islamic faith. In the context of increased hostility and fear of Islam, so the argument goes, there is a need for more cultural knowledge about the Islamic world. Ideally, this could also help (young) Muslims take more pride in the accomplishments of 'their culture' and help change the overall negative image that non-Muslims associate with Islam. Finally, it is thought that the more 'cultural' approach to Islam provides a welcome counterweight to the messages of religious fundamentalists. This type of idea has been articulated repeatedly in France, where the academic *Institut du Monde Arabe* in Paris stands as a potential example. In Marseille a debate about the need to build a Grand Mosque has been around almost 30 years and has often been linked to creating a large cultural centre, which would be financed with public money and would host activities open to 'non-Muslims', such as 'Arabic lessons', 'calligraphy', 'knowledge of the Muslim world', 'discussion evenings' and so on. Local Muslim organisations have remained sceptical of the idea of transforming the Grand Mosque into a kind of 'cultural centre'. In Amsterdam, plans to create a municipality-sponsored 'Islamic debating and cultural centre' called *Marhaba* stalled in 2007 because of disagreements on the precise goals of the institution and because of political opposition to the city 'mingling in religious matters'. These are examples of quite prestigious but ultimately failed projects to set up a radiating centre of Islamic culture with municipal support.

These discussions show that public authorities need to be extremely careful not to claim that support for cultural activities related to the Islamic world are somehow a part of their 'policies towards Islam'. Critics can quite easily understand this as a neo-colonial, 'Orientalist' attempt to culturalise Islam into history, buildings, imagery or calligraphy so that is accessible and 'of interest' to a more highly educated, white, non-Muslim audience. Moreover, Muslim organisations have often been sceptical, as the example in Marseille shows. Yet, on the other hand, there are

all kinds of motives for civil-society actors and authorities to believe that more opportunities for visible expressions of 'Islam and Islamic culture' are a good idea: it can be seen as a way of countering the abundance of negative depictions of and associations with Islam, which may be helpful for public opinion but also for positive identity among Muslims; it can be seen as a potential common ground where intellectual, academic knowledge can be linked to a religious- and identity-based discourse. It may help if governments and public institutions are more articulate about what type of event or activity they are supporting or facilitating and for what reasons. Cultural events can be supported, but they should not be presented as serving some kind of agenda with regard to the promotion of a more culturalised approach to Islam.

Religious education and training of religious authorities

Religious education, the training of religious personnel and the providing of chaplaincies in prisons or hospitals are traditionally domains where the boundaries between state involvement and religious freedom are complex. Whereas in some countries it is accepted that the state will employ and train religious personnel (e.g., countries with a State Church, such as Greece and Denmark, but also in Belgium or in Turkey), other countries think that the state should not directly mingle with religious instruction and religious authority (for example, in France and the Netherlands). Still, almost all countries allow for religious instructions in schools (usually on a voluntary basis and outside class hours), they provide religious care in prisons and hospitals and they are often willing to provide some publicly funded education to religious personnel. In addition, because of freedom of religion, nearly all countries allow immigration of foreign clergy if there is a lack of qualified religious leaders within the country. Traditionally, the main 'boundary' was that public authorities would not interfere with the *content* of religious instructions, training programmes, religious counselling or sermons. With regard to Islam, however, a series of concerns has made that boundary quite difficult to establish and maintain. In the 1970s and 1980s there was an obvious lack of qualified imams, but there was also the fear that countries such as Saudi Arabia were looking for opportunities to gain a foothold in mosques in Europe. Agreements with governments in Turkey, Morocco and Algeria (who promised they could provide 'qualified imams' who would not spread fundamentalist messages) resulted in imams being recruited in 'countries of origin' and being given work permits by European states. For example, the Turkish Diyanet, a governmental organisation, provides the 'official' Turkish mosques in Western Europe with imams, who are replaced every 5 years. For more

than 20 years, however, there has been discussion about the need to have more imams who are born, raised and educated in Europe – or at minimum to have imams educated abroad undergo proper training before they can start working in Europe, for example in mosques but also in schools. Imam training programmes have been set up in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and other countries.[15] A variety of educational programmes have been developed: some consisting of a compulsory programme for 'foreign clergy' that should serve to prepare them for their work in the European context; others providing a genuine programme that allows Muslims to start working as 'imams'; and still others consisting of university programmes in Islamic Theology. These initiatives have had mixed outcomes: despite rhetorical agreements on the shared need for good training, Muslim communities, mosque boards and public authorities may have very different ideas about what type of training an imam should have; those who control imam training abroad (e.g., in Turkey or Morocco) are reluctant to give up on their own programmes; and because of religious freedom, communities cannot be compelled to hire religious personnel they do not want, meaning that there is no guarantee that 'home-grown' imams will actually be employed.

New concerns recently were voiced about the ways in which radical Salafi preachers trained at the Islamic University of Medina are trying to gain control over mosques in Western Europe.[16] In our view this is an illustration of the ways in which the fact of transnationalism and the principle of religious freedom combine to make it very difficult for public authorities to intervene directly in shaping the way recruitment and training of religious personnel develops. Again we think that strategies of strict 'hands-off' non-interference are naïve if not dangerous, because there are good grounds to be concerned about these trends, and simply claiming that states do not mingle with religion will not help. Trying to stop young Belgian, Dutch or French Muslims from pursuing a training programme in Medina or using legal means to prevent 'radical preachers' from gaining influence in mosques could be a part of the solution, but they belong to strategies of securitisation and policing (which can be necessary and legitimate!). But public officials can also continue to explore partnerships with organised Islam to create facilities and to discuss appropriate expectations with regard to religious authority in Western Europe.

The role of the state in Islamic doctrinal learning

The last aspect of shaping Islam in Europe concerns the wish not only to shape the more 'peripheral' or 'outward' aspects of Islamic religion (its institutions, expressions, education practices and so on) but also to actively attempt to Europeanise *Islam itself*. Does this not violate what is at the heart of what principles such as religious freedom and separation of state and church are supposed to protect, namely, freedom of conscience and doctrine? Could we imagine liberal democratic states being involved in shaping religious doctrine in order to help realise a more 'European' Islam? At this point we cannot really turn to empirical policy examples, because developing something like 'a policy' in this direction is commonly seen as a violation of basic constitutional principles. However, we can look at the intellectual and normative debate with regard to what type of doctrinal changes may be visible and what the role of public authorities could be.

Answers to the question of how Islam can and should develop in European liberal democracies have been answered in various ways by different thinkers. The Swiss-Egyptian thinker Tariq Ramadan urges European Muslims to use their religion as a guideline that can and may be applied to living in current-day European states. When using Islam as a 'methodology' to cope with problems of their times, Ramadan strives for a dynamic Islam that is not fundamentally welded to any one historical understanding of it.[17] From a more scholarly background, Mohammed Arkoun has formulated an understanding of Islam as a social function that exists within other systems of meaning-providing such as other religions of the Book but also within 'secular religions' such as fascism and socialism. Islam here is one *'imaginaire'* amongst others, one that has a specific goal to provide meaning in a world full of various systems that can have the same function. By understanding Islam in such functional manner, dogmatic understandings of Islam become relative to social circumstance, context and function, and they lose their essentialist character.[18] On a very different note, Ayaan Hirsi Ali calls for religious reform among European Muslims: they must adopt to liberal values if they wish to stay in Europe.[19] Finally, in Belgium, we find Khalid Benhaddou, who proposes a rational Islam where critical thought and a re-appreciation for scholarly and religious study will allow liberal Europeans and Muslims to enter into discussions about shared values, thus allowing for mutual understanding and trust to build.[20] The issue is what kind of modes of thinking and understanding of Islamic doctrine are more or less desirable in the context of European rule-of-law liberal democracies. Some thinkers call for radical reform (Hirsi Ali) while others stress the inherent doctrinal dynamism of Islam (Ramadan, Benhaddou).

If we wish to link these intellectual discussions of thinkers who position themselves within or outside Islam to our question of what liberal democratic states in Europe may or may not undertake with regard to shaping, moulding or interacting with Islamic doctrine, we can think about them in terms of three normative positions. The previously mentioned German philosopher Jürgen Habermas holds a modernist, secular position, which demands that 'religions' transform themselves in order to function in a secular society and political system. Especially the necessity for 'learning processes' and for a modernised faith as initiated and steered by European non-religious institutions has led to the critique that Habermas' ideas echo a colonial project in which European powers are attempting to 'sanitise' Islam. A second perspective is articulated as a critique of a liberal-modernist framework, for example the work of the Belgian scholar Patrick Loobuyck, who wants to stimulate more equal dialogue, for example via integrative religious studies in all schools, regardless of the confessional background of the school itself.[21] Finally there are those who argue that liberal states should be more self-confident and should simply ensure that conditions for pluralism are upheld so that doctrinal changes can occur in civil society and the public sphere, not under the guidance of the state. The German-Dutch philosopher Veit Bader holds this position and points to ways in which, throughout history, decent liberal states have dealt with religious minorities by securing only the most basic civic and democratic virtues, such as tolerance of others and the will to solve conflict in a non-violent manner. Bader stresses that these virtues cannot be enforced through law but must, rather, be learned 'by doing', through minimally adequate institutions and decent social circumstances.[22]

Like Habermas, Bader states that this minimal morality must be 'learned' by religions. Much unlike Habermas, however, Bader seems largely unconcerned about the possibility that Islam specifically may not be able to undergo such a change to virtues of minimal morality. Pointing to historical examples of Catholicism and Protestantism, he has faith that Islam can and certainly will undergo a similar change but argues that this has been hindered so far by totalitarian regimes in Islamic countries in the Middle East. In the Middle East, precisely those decent social circumstances and adequate institutions are lacking. Since these authoritarian countries make up the Islamic heartland, their political and social context is crucial when thinking about minimal morality in an Islamic doctrinal context. Of course, such an optimistic view is strongly opposed by critics such as Hirsi Ali, who claims that a thorough modification of Islam is needed in order for it to exist comfortably in a liberal, European context.[23] For Bader, much more pluralism is possible, and Islam needs only to be minimally moral by adhering to basic principles of the rule of law. This relaxed stance also goes against the strong anti-Islamic populist wind that is currently blowing in many European countries, with the *Vlaams*

Belang in Belgium, Geert Wilders' *PVV* in the Netherlands and the *Front National* in France. Where these parties ask for thorough changes to Islamic doctrine and in the space that it ought to have in European countries, Bader proposes the installation of a favourable context and institutions, after which, necessarily, mild changes in doctrine will occur automatically.

Concluding observations

In the preceding pages we have offered an overview of how Islam has been existing and developing within Europe for the past decades. We have emphasised that us speaking of a 'European Islam' does not mean we endorse some kind of 'neo-colonial' project of reform but, rather, that we see it as enabling further discussion about ways to accommodate an Islamic presence within Europe in the longer run. We have argued that patterns of transnationalism mean that we can no longer automatically cling to the longstanding image of Muslim immigrants transplanted from 'elsewhere' and going through a process of assimilation into a homogenous European citizenry. Instead, we prefer to think about the ways in which Islam inevitably will be a part of Europe's future and how Islam itself will also be shaped by this. This, in turn, offers a way to approach discussions on anti-radicalisation from a different perspective. As we have seen, different countries, with their respective state-church traditions and policy histories with regard to immigration, have chosen different paths to accommodate and shape Islam in Europe.

> **We prefer to think about the ways in which Islam inevitably will be a part of Europe's future and how Islam itself will also be shaped by this.**

For public officials and policymakers, these considerations and developments lead to the following concluding thoughts. Above all, transparency and reflexivity are key. In discussions on accommodation of Islam, key constitutional and legal principles carry weight when responding to claims for recognition and concerns that are articulated by organised Muslims. But these claims will always be balanced with the rights, concerns and interests of others *and* with 'collective goods deemed worthwhile'. Public officials and policymakers should be clear about this and should explicitly discuss possible conflicts and trade-offs in view of justifying and accounting for their approaches. They can avoid presenting overly simplified solutions and empty declarations (e.g., that 'religion should be banned from the public realm') and instead can strive for discussions about how governance of societal pluralism

can be organised so that equality and freedom for all may result. Because of constitutional principles, public authorities should be reticent to intervene actively in matters at the 'core' of religions (doctrine, conscience, internal organisation, religious authority), whereas matters at the 'periphery' (faith-based activities, public expressions of religion, the role of religion in education) provide more room for manoeuvre

When all parties are willing to clearly explicate goals and expectations in this process, different perspectives can hopefully join the table, and a more open and equal discussion can take place.

and for partnerships that entail some 'give and take'. When all parties are willing to clearly explicate goals and expectations in this process, different perspectives can hopefully join the table, and a more open and equal discussion can take place.

ENDNOTES

1 This narrative is very prominent in studies on religiosity carried out by anthropologists in the late 1980s and early 1990s. See: Cesari, J. (1998), *Musulmans et républicains: les jeunes, l'islam et la France*, Paris: Editions Complexe; Khosrokhavar, F. (1997), *L'islam des jeunes*, Paris: Flammarion; Sunier, T. (1996), *Islam in Beweging: Turkse jongeren en islamitsche organisaties*, Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.

2 In the Dutch context, for example, the leader of the Liberal Right (VVD), Frits Bolkestein, argued already in 1991 that Islam was a threat to liberal values. In 1997 Pim Fortuyn published *Against the Islamization of our Culture*, and in 2000 the social-democrat Paul Scheffer published the essay 'The Multicultural Illusion'.

3 Our perspective is similar to that developed in Maussen, M.J.M. (2006), *Ruimte voor de islam? Stedelijk beleid, voorzieningen, organisaties,* Apeldoorn: Maklu, namely, that public officials are in need of tools for good 'contextual judgements' in which normative and constitutional principles that are important to the field of governance of religion are acknowledged and go hand-in-hand with a willingness to think about policy goals, effectiveness of measures and with balancing between various and often conflicting interests and goals. Good contextual judgements thus entail the difficult tasks of combining principled, strategic and pragmatic concerns at the same time, which is especially difficult in a sensitive field such as anti-radicalisation policies.

4 This phrase is used by Parekh, B. (2002), *Rethinking multiculturalism: Cultural diversity and political theory*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

5 Burchardt, M. & Michalowski, I. (ed.) (2015), *After integration. Islam, conviviality and contentious politics in Europe*, Wiesbaden: Springer.

6 Modood, T. (2012), Is there a crisis of secularism in Western Europe? *Sociology of Religion*, 73:2, 130–149.

7 See Gemeente stopt met vergoeden godsdienstlessen minima, *Het Parool*, 3 May 2017.

8 Laurence, J. (2012), *The emancipation of Europe's Muslims: The state's role in minority integration*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 245–246 (our emphasis).

9 Silvestri, S. (2010), Three public policies towards Muslims and the institutionalization of 'moderate Islam' in Europe, in: Triandafyllidour, A. (ed.), *Muslims in 21st century Europe: Structural and cultural perspectives*, London/New York: Routledge, 45.

10 Maussen, M.J.M. (2009), *Constructing mosques: The governance of Islam in France and the Netherlands*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam School for Social Science Research.

11 Laurence, *The emancipation of Europe's Muslims*.

12 Silvestri, Three Public policies towards Muslims, 45.

13 Contactorgaan Moslims en Overheid (created in the Netherlands in 2003), Comisión Islámic de España in 1992, Exécutif des musulmans de Belgique in 1996, Muslim Council of Britain in 1997, Conseil Français dus Culture Musulman in France in 2003, Italian Consulta in 2005, Islam Konferenze in Germany 2006; see Silvestri, Three Public policies towards Muslims, 50.

14 Habermas, J. (2006), Religion in the Public Sphere, *European Journal of Philosophy*, 14:1, 1–25.

15 Boender, W. (2013), Embedding Islam in the 'moral covenants' of European states: The case of a state-funded imam training in the Netherlands, *Journal of Muslims in Europe*, 2:2, 227–247.

16 Gratis studeren in Medina om hier de 'ware islam' te prediken, NRC-Handelsblad, 22–23 April 2017.

17 Ramadan, T. (1998), *To be a European Muslim: A study of Islamic sources in the European context*, Leicester: Islamic Foundation.

18 Arkoun, M. (2003), Rethinking Islam today, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 588, 8–39.

19 Hirsi Ali, A. (2015), *Heretic: Why Islam needs a reformation now*, New York: Harper Collins.

20 Benhaddou, K. (2016), *Is dit nu de Islam? Hoe ik als moslim voor nieuwe tijden ga: Rationeel, Europees en verzoenend*, Gent: Borgerhoff en Lamberigts.

21 Loobuyck, P. (2015), Religious education in Habermasian post-secular societies, *Global secularisms in a post-secular age*, 2:91, 91–105.

22 Bader, V. (2007), Religies, tolerantie en liberale democratie. En theorie van doctrinair, attitudineel en institioneel leren, *Ethiek & Maatschappij*, 8:4, 75–80.

23 Hirsi Ali, *Heretic*.

Conclusions
Translating research into policy

Lore Colaert[1]

How can we translate the foregoing academic insights to the local context? In what follows, we apply the research of the previous chapters per sub-theme to the regional policy in Flanders. In a concluding reflection we then draw lessons from the dialogue between research and practice.[2]

Relevant findings for Flanders

Ideology and other drivers

In their chapter, Carl Miller and Leah Chauhan outline how ideology as an explanatory factor for terrorism gained importance with the launch of the concept of radicalisation following the attacks on the WTC towers in New York in 2001. The role of ideology or more specifically of extremist Islam is, however, a controversial issue in the academic and social debate on radicalisation. Some point at Islam as a breeding ground for violent jihadism, others believe inequality to be the main driver of foreign fighters. The chapters of this volume provide important insights which may resolve this stalled debate.

The experts in this volume define ideology in the context of radicalisation as a threefold set of ideas: the diagnosis of a problem, a possible solution to this problem, and a vision for the future. The ideology can be based on a religious doctrine but also on other sources of inspiration. IS certainly holds to a jihadi ideology: 'Islam is

oppressed by the forces of disbelief, which is why every Muslim must wage the violent jihad, in order eventually to reinstall the caliphate'.

That jihadi ideology lends purpose and legitimacy to the use of violence, but is not necessarily the cause of the violence. An ideology is one of the conditions of extremist violence, but not the only one. Individuals are indeed susceptible to that jihadi ideology for different reasons, and according to experts in the field, this is more often based on their own social-psychological needs than on theological knowledge of Islam.[3] The ideology and comradeship of a group such as IS offer a framework that insecure young people cling to.[4] Various studies conclude that religious or political doctrine plays a much smaller role for the 'IS-generation' than for previous waves of jihadis, or earlier terrorist movements such as the Red Brigades or the IRA. Many Belgian jihadis with a background in broken families and street criminality appear more likely to be driven by a combination of personal motives. In interaction with the social, economic, political and cultural context, those motives can become an explosive cocktail, as the trigger-factor model in Allard Feddes' chapter explains. Rik Coolsaet summarises those motives as the "no future-subculture."[5] Olivier Roy calls the current jihadis "violent nihilists," because they share the characteristic that they pursue violence and their own death. IS offers a narrative framework in which to place their aspirations, an imaginary place where their needs can be fulfilled, and a 'super gang' to be part of. Rather than the 'radicalisation of Islam', Roy speaks of the "Islamisation of radicalisation",[6] and Europol talks of a "violent extremist social trend".[7]

Many Muslims today feel indignant by certain developments; in the Arab world many citizens are angry at the dictatorial regimes and frustrated over the failure of the Arab Spring. In the West, some Muslims are discontented with western interference in the Middle East and persistent discrimination in the West.[8] Jihadi groups make similar diagnoses, and pick up those feelings. But, if we look at the staircase model of radicalisation that Miller and Chauhan described in this volume, we need to realise that not every angry Muslim feels the need to take up arms, and even fewer of them project their frustrations on to a common 'enemy', as IS conceives all the 'disbelievers'. Besides, many jihadis are not themselves victims of injustice in the Middle East or the West, but express their solidarity with the suffering of others, such as the Palestinians. Lastly, violent jihadism enjoys little social and political support, as research shows.[9] That is important to note, because terrorist groups that do enjoy a high status within a population are more encouraged to commit violent acts.[10]

In other words, for many today, violent jihad begins with feelings of injustice or frustration, but not every frustrated person believes that all the 'disbelievers' should

pay for that; not every frustrated person channels those feelings into criminality or violence.[11] So, yes, ideology plays a role as motivator for the foreign fighters. And jihadis are generally religious in one way or another.[12] But they are rarely driven into the arms of the recruiters because of their knowledge of Islam. Daniel Koehler summarises this issue as follows: "You all believe in the Western constitution [...]. But that does not mean that you want to become a constitutional lawyer. [...] They believe in the same way."[13]

> **In other words, for many today, violent jihad begins with feelings of injustice or frustration, but not every frustrated person believes that all the 'disbelievers' should pay for that; not every frustrated person channels those feelings into criminality or violence.**

Profiles, processes, staircases, pyramids: in this volume various models for understanding radicalisation were presented. At the same time, authors pointed to the limitations of those models. The search for clear cut profiles of terrorists was quickly abandoned because of the diversity of terrorist biographies. And interpreting radicalisation as a linear process that starts with an extremist ideology and ends in violence also proved to be misleading. Many of the present jihadis were not radicalised by a religious movement before taking a criminal path. Radicalisation processes today are often erratic and fast, and cannot always be recognised by outward signs of radical ideas.[14]

From the chapter of Miller and Chauhan, we learn that we only know the pieces of the puzzle. Factors that drive extremism can be found at the individual level, the group level and in the broader context. They involve personal and collective grievances, networks of friends and family, an enabling environment, and political and religious ideologies. How those pieces fit together can vary, and depends on individual life paths, group dynamics and contextual factors. That is why researchers recently proposed the model of a complex puzzle, with many possible entries and exits.[15] If there is one thing they agree on, it is that the root causes of violent extremism are multifaceted. It is, hence, very risky to only work on the ideological factor in de-radicalisation programs.

Prevention and reintegration of violent extremists should therefore not *solely* consist of an ideological component. Just as in the prevention of criminality in general, individual factors should be dealt with along with contextual ones. Interventions should focus on a person's various and underlying problems and thus should be multidisciplinary. Experience has shown that it is very difficult to counter extremist ideas. Most de-radicalisation programs in the West therefore only try to

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achieve ideological de-radicalisation in an indirect way. As Koehler describes in his chapter, some programs, such as the Swedish 'EXIT'-program, do not even discuss ideology with the participants at all. These kinds of programs aim primarily at the reintegration of extremists by providing alternatives for the friendship, meaning, experience, status, etc. that extremist organisations offer.[16] Moreover, within the catch-all policy concept of radicalisation one can find different categories of radicalised persons, each requiring a different approach. There is a small group of violent extremists such as the 'home-grown' and 'foreign' 'terrorist fighters', as well as: violent persons without ideological aspirations, a large group of non-violent radicals from diverse ideological tendencies, and finally radicals who do not commit violence but who do sympathise with it. In addition, a person can support a violent act at one time and restrain from it at another time, or shift from criminally violent behaviour to ideologically inspired violence, and so on.

In Flanders, policymakers are still searching for the right place for the ideological factor in their response to radicalisation. In the political debate, Islamic institutions and texts are often accused of fuelling radicalisation, and Muslims in general are targeted as a vulnerable group for extremism. Local prevention workers, however, work on the different aspects a person's life, such as work or social network, and adapt their programs to individual needs.

The Government of Flanders has clearly adopted the prevailing approach to radicalisation as a *process* (see figure below).[17] The draft bill that preceded the action plan for the prevention of violent radicalisation (or shortly 'the action plan'), talks about prevention of "radicalisation processes that can lead to extremism and terrorism".[18] And the Government of Flanders adopted the definition of '(violent) radicalisation' of the federal government: "A process whereby an individual or group of individuals is influenced in such a way that this individual or group of individuals is mentally prepared or willing to commit terrorist acts".[19]

The engagement of policy domains such as Welfare, Education, Employment, Integration and Urban Policy indicates that the government looks beyond the ideological component of extremism. The department of Welfare states that its individual counselling programmes focus on a range of aspects.[20] The Flemish government indicated that "a diversity of ideologies, ideas, and beliefs," is welcome in society,[21] warns against "culturalising" radicalisation, and states that radicalisation processes "from different ideologies" "follow the same mechanisms".[22] At the same

Informative post card about the helpline for parents who have questions about radicalisation: "Concerned that your child is radicalising? Contact us (anonymously)."

time, the plan does partially focus on the ideological component, with measures concerning Islam education, imams, interreligious dialogue and education about Islam for young people. The action plan provides in social education for imams, a Network of Islam Experts that offers answers to teachers and students who have questions about Islam, and a helpline within the Muslim Executive of Belgium (or shortly 'the Muslim Executive').[23]

Practitioners argue that the ideological component of political violence can indeed not be fully neglected. Organisations such as Ceapire and the Network of Islam Experts therefore discuss religious aspects with persons vulnerable for extremism. Local de-radicalisation counsellors work with individuals on many different factors that can keep them away from extremist groups and integrate them into the local community. Depending on the needs of the individual, the counsellors contact relevant partners, such as a friend, a street worker or an imam, who can help the individual in his search for a social network, to repair family ties, to find a job, etc. In Antwerp, the prevention team sees the ideology of the current Muslim extremist groups as a coat under which other problems, personal and social, can hide, and they focus primarily on those problems. And if the person is really ideologically radicalised, they first of all try to achieve rejection of the use of violence.[24]

In principle, individual counselling in cities is intended to deal with extremism of various ideological tendencies, but other forms such as extreme-right radicalisation are less likely to be reported. The focus of the local authorities is apparently

also extending from violent extremism to tensions between communities, which they call 'polarisation'.[25] Likewise, the new Flemish action plan aims to address both radicalisation and polarisation.[26]

Risk assessment

In Flanders, front-line practitioners feel uncertain about their ability to recognise radicalisation and the assessment of certain concerning behaviour. Checklists limited to external signs of Muslim radicalisation are, however, insufficient. Even though many jihadis do indeed openly express their extreme ideas (offline or online) before taking action,[27] the use of such checklists can have unintended side effects. Certainly in the period following the attacks in France and Belgium, Muslims were often unjustly targeted on the basis of, for instance, wearing a beard or headscarf. Paul Thomas notes in his chapter that such lists have led to false positives in the United Kingdom, making many Muslims feel stigmatised and under suspicion, which led to a breakdown of trust between them and prevention workers.

Allard Feddes described the design, aims and use of risk-assessment instruments. Some of the instruments in use are rather screening tools to help identify if a person is susceptible to violent extremism. Others are real risk-assessment instruments that help to assess if a convict will resume his violent behaviour or not.

Allard Feddes showed that many risk-assessment instruments, such as the checklists mentioned, are not empirically validated. A number of instruments, such as the VERA-2 and the trigger-factor model that is available online, have nevertheless been validated to a certain degree.[28] Risk-assessment instruments are best used as tools to identify the risk and protective factors for various forms of violent extremism in the different domains of an individual's life. Besides the ideological convictions of an individual, they therefore also look at his or her behaviour and social network.[29]

In Flanders, front-line practitioners have been trained to recognise radicalisation, and various organisations use a range of screening or risk-assessment instruments. Social workers, youth workers, employment consultants and integration workers were given training on how to recognise signs of radicalisation.[30] Through a *Manual for the prevention and tackling of radicalisation within education,* the department of Education explains when a situation is cause for concern, and in so doing discusses ideological factors, behavioural factors and external signs of identity. Teachers are furthermore advised never to decide on their own whether concern is justified.[31] On the local level, various cities developed proper screening tools for their individual

counselling programs. For example, the city of Antwerp , together with partners from the welfare sector, police and public prosecutor's office, developed the Radix tool. This is not a genuine risk-assessment instrument, but it is a tool that helps to map the general well-being and susceptibility to radicalisation of persons who are reported to the radicalisation cell. The tool looks at various aspects of life: individual characteristics, family, environment and worldview. Both vulnerabilities and protective factors are considered. The Radix tool has since been shared with other local administrations.[32] Lastly, prison officers use the risk-assessment instrument VERA-2 to predict the risks of recidivism of extremist detainees.

However, the expertise in risk assessment present among some cities and the prison system has not been shared sufficiently. Front-line practitioners who have a responsibility in risk assessment still need to be trained in the current instruments.[33] It is not easy to carry out a thorough risk analysis. This is why in the Netherlands local task forces try to collaborate structurally with criminal psychologists.[34] In Flanders, the Expert Cel Radicalisation Education-Welfare also recommends to leave thorough risk analysis to partners who are trained in the use of scientifically validated risk assessment instruments.[35]

Even if the scientific basis of risk-assessment instruments is limited, a shared assessment of the situation is already crucial in setting up an effective intervention. The Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) therefore recommends to assess an individual's problems together with all the partners involved in a multi-agency collaboration.[36] In the Flemish pilot cities, too, 'de-radicalisation officers' find that a common assessment of a person's problems increases the quality of their intervention. The Radix tool, for example, is used to find a shared framework to cooperate with all partners. The tool is not to be used as a checklist or as an objective risk-assessment for a court case. The instrument serves to support front-line practitioners when they feel something is wrong: it helps to map different aspects of the life of a person in a structured way, for instance during a conversation. Such an instrument helps counsellors to look for various factors, to identify what information is still lacking, in which domains someone possibly needs support and what type of partner should be engaged.

Prevention starts with a sound understanding of the risk- and protective factors; This is a prerequisite to determine policy-goals. A risk assessment can also be made for groups and movements, neighbourhoods, or society as a whole. Pooling the data on individual extremists can lend insight into collective context factors, e.g. specific (offline and online) meeting places. In the United Kingdom the intelligence services gather data on extremists into so-called *heat maps*, and in the Netherlands, researchers developed an instrument to measure risk- and protective factors of

polarisation in neighbourhoods.[37] In Flanders, however, there is a limited availability of risk assessments done by the various municipalities. Many local authorities cite their limited view on the problem of radicalisation on their territory as one of the most significant obstacles to take a coordinating roll and to start up a Local Integral Security Cell (LIVC).[38] Only the sixteen municipalities that requested a project subsidy for radicalisation have had to make a risk assessment of radicalisation in their area. The call for the subsidy focussed on foreign fighters, but since municipalities without foreign fighters were also selected, it is not clear which risk factors were considered. The big discrepancy in problems that the municipalities target with their project subsidies, from preventing people from travelling to Syria to tackling general integration issues, also complicates a consistent overview at the Flemish level.[39]

Prevention starts with a sound understanding of the risk- and protective factors.

'De-radicalisation' programmes

In his chapter, Daniel Koehler describes various existing types of 'de-radicalisation programmes'. These programmes are also known as 'exit programmes', as they provide support for persons who wish to leave extremist groups and/or abandon their extremist ideas.[40] In practice they are also known as reintegration programmes, in accordance with their goal. Some programmes aim for a change in behaviour, in order to end engagement in violence ('disengagement'). Others aim for a change of attitude, in order to have the person abandon extremist ideas ('de-radicalisation'). Koehler categorises these programmes as 'interventions', because they aim to reverse radicalisation processes. Besides repression and prevention, intervention is an essential pillar of any approach to the problem of violent extremism.

In Flanders there is no central 'de-radicalisation centre', but there are various initiatives for getting people out of the hands of extremist ideologies or groups, to keep them away from violence and to reintegrate them into society. The first is organised by local authorities and aims to reintegrate individuals into society through multidisciplinary counselling. The second concerns a few private initiatives, such as CEAPIRE and Deradiant. In addition there are also individual programmes for (former) detainees.

Most individual programmes are organised by local authorities, who are experimenting with counselling programmes in the context of their prevention policy.

Vilvoorde, Antwerp and Mechelen have been offering assistance to individuals for some time. Recently, Ghent, Maaseik, Genk, Menen, Zele, Ostend, and Aalst also came on board. In those municipalities, a 'case manager' coordinates the coaching of young people who are considered susceptible for extremism or ideological violence. Voluntary counselling programmes are set up together with partners from existing social organisations in the city, persons in the social network of the person, and sometimes partner organisations that are specialised in issues such as diversity.

The prison system has so far focused mainly on containing radicalisation by isolating extremist leaders into two separate sections. In the meantime, the department of Welfare, which is authorised to assist detainees and persons under probation, has worked on a shared definition of disengagement programmes. That definition has 'social reintegration' as its aim and emphasises a multidisciplinary approach.[41] Two experts within the department of Welfare are developing a range of voluntary trajectories for radicalised prisoners. With their partners they coached a small selection of nineteen detainees by June 2017. In addition, people in probation are assisted by the *'justitiehuizen'* (houses of justice), with a mandate from the judge. Yet for this, the 'houses of justice' still require a clear mandate, training, and information on the persons in question. Finally, in every prison a Muslim consultant has been appointed by the federal government.[42] But they provide general religious counselling and can therefore not be responsible on their own for 'de-radicalisation' in the prisons.

Because of the fragmentation of de-radicalisation programs across various levels and actors, there is little oversight and people are concerned that not all known extremists are offered counselling. Less than half of the Flemish municipalities has an LIVC. Moreover, municipalities approach this issue in very different ways depending on the specific problems in their area, their institutional structure and budget, which further obstructs oversight. Local 'de-radicalisation officers' are for instance dealing with general integration or polarisation issues, rather than supporting the integration of (former) extremists in the community.[43] Fragmentation furthermore carries the risk that methods are being used that are not evidence-based. Ultimately, the expertise also remains fragmented. One private initiative, for example, may have much theological know-how, but may not have a lot of knowledge on behavioural aspects.

In a 'multi-agency' context, one needs clear coordination. From the work of Daniel Koehler and the RAN we can distil two tasks for the government. Firstly, a central body should bring all the partners round the table to assess problems, and to agree on the objectives of specific counselling trajectories and to decide how they will

work.[44] The government should therefore oversee the many initiatives in Flanders, to be able to train, support and evaluate the initiators, and close any gaps. Existing expertise among these partners should thereby be shared.

Secondly, the government can support organisations with the development of de-radicalisation programmes. These programmes are very difficult and as yet they lack scientifically validated quality standards.[45] Based on existing research and practical experience, Daniel Koehler nevertheless cites three elements that initiators should consider.[46]

First, they must think very carefully about how they intend to reach the target group. Some initiatives try to convince individuals (active programmes), while others are simply available for whoever needs them (passive programmes). Both have to work on their visibility, credibility and trust among their target groups. But in general one can say that the more voluntarily an individual participates in a programme, the greater the chance that a 'cognitive opening' will be reached. A discussion in which someone does not voluntarily participate and where trust is lacking, has more chances to fail.[47] In Belgium, both the counselling in prisons and in the cities operate on a voluntary and transparent basis. The local case managers offer individual programmes as an opportunity to persons considered susceptible for extremism. It should be noted that adults are much more difficult to reach, because they are less influenced by parents or school, are less visible in the local network of social workers, and because the assistance for adults is more limited.

In order to create the necessary trust with the participants in the programme, it is also important to hire accessible and credible mentors. Which partner of the program should make home visits? A social worker enters homes in a different manner than a police officer. Which conversation techniques are used? Who is the contact person, or which partner organisation provides for a helpline? It can be important to provide for contact possibilities other than the police, as family members of extremists are less likely to call them.

A second thing that initiators can learn from Koehler's chapter is that successful exit programmes do not solely focus on the ideology of extremists. As said, most western de-radicalisation programmes try to achieve ideological 'de-radicalisation' in a rather indirect way. Exit workers indeed do preferably not challenge the ideology of the participants directly. Theological conversations should not degenerate into a debate on standards and values. Exit workers can, however, ask non-judgmental questions and create doubt. The mentor has to work on his credibility by investing in his relationship with the participants, showing interest, being transparent about what information he shares, and with which authorities he

cooperates. For the sake of credibility, former extremists sometimes cooperate with exit work. However, exit organisers must think carefully about where to deploy 'formers', when they are ready, how they should be trained and what the potential risks amount to.[48] As said, the Flemish department of Welfare sees disengagement programmes as assistance in various life domains: from psychosocial counselling through employment

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to offering a counter-narrative by religious leaders.[49] This is in line with the recommendations of Koehler and the RAN. The local case managers as well think very carefully about the use of religion as an instrument in exit work. Civil servants dealing with de-radicalisation indeed try to avoid becoming a 'thought police' that criminalises radical opinions.

Thirdly, one should give careful consideration to the status of the organisers of de-radicalisation programmes. Government bodies have more resources, but non-governmental partners have more credibility. Accordingly, Daniel Koehler and the RAN conclude that cooperation between the government and other partners can combine the advantages of both. And as said, cooperation with different partners increases the quality of diagnosis and counselling. Multi-agency cooperation does, however, require strong coordination and sound agreements on information exchange.

Counter-narratives

Research on counter- or alternative narratives shows that the essential success factor here is the credibility of the messenger. This makes it difficult for authorities themselves to present a counter-narrative directly. They can, however, play an important part in this area.

Firstly, authorities must ensure that what they say corresponds with what they do, for example regarding foreign policy or integration policy. Accordingly, authorities should recognise collective grievances, such as inequality and discrimination, (and also the discomfort about

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migration in the case of right-wing extremism), and they should avoid approaching the entire Muslim community as a target group for counter-narratives, as that makes them a 'suspect community' and therefore feeds mistrust.

Secondly, the government can, albeit from behind the scenes, support civil society initiatives with financial aid, expertise or other forms of support. Non-governmental initiators often have better knowledge of the language and sensibilities of the groups that are vulnerable for radicalisation.

The second – and updated – Flemish action plan contains various initiatives for deploying counter-narratives. The minister of Domestic Affairs and Urban Policy will launch an appeal to 'mobilise civil society counter-narratives'. Municipalities will also be supported to take initiatives 'concerning norms and values, rights and duties, and active and shared citizenship'. In the rePresent project, youths from a migrant background talk with media makers about how they are represented in the media, and the public television shares testimonies of 'voices from the caliphate' online. And lastly, private organisations such as CEAPIRE, try to counter extremist arguments on social media and in discussions.[50]

Evaluation

In Flanders, an evaluation of the action plan will be organised in 2018.[51] The Government of Flanders reports twice yearly to the Flemish Parliament in the Committee for Combatting Violent Radicalisation. In the meantime, the action plan has been reviewed, following consultation with, among others, academic researchers. As yet there are no specific plans on who (internal or external, administration or parliament) will carry out the evaluation or how it will be done. The British Prevent programme, for example, has been evaluated by parliament based on written and verbal testimonies and a work visit. Equally, it should be clarified whether specific projects, such as the eight projects for 'positive identity formation among youths' should be evaluated as well. There is still a lot of uncertainty about the potential impact (intended and unintended) of these types of projects, which means there is a need for scientific research on them as well.

From Amy-Jane Gielen's chapter we learn that it is not evident to evaluate preventive policy. Nevertheless there is a 'realistic' evaluation method available, as she demonstrates, which can make preventive policy more knowledge based. The academic literature tells us that it is never too early to think about how you will find out whether a given policy is achieving its objectives. First of all because an empirically validated evaluation is a time-consuming task, and secondly, because thinking

– already during the set-up of a program – about what you plan to evaluate also helps to formulate what exactly you want to achieve, and what actions this requires. That is why policymakers should think about evaluation of measures and projects early on.

In the meantime, local authorities also think about ways to evaluate their measures for the prevention of radicalisation. This is relevant in order to decide where best to invest the subsidies they received. In the context of case management, evaluation can help to increase the quality of the interventions, to determine when the intervention can be completed, and to agree on a framework with all the partners, with shared objectives and methods.[52] All this will enhance the collaboration between partners. The pilot cities have by now developed various evaluation mechanisms. They formulate the goals of their case management as 'inclusion,' '(re-)integration,' or 'belonging to society.'[53] Accordingly, case managers estimate before the start of a case management how the person behaves in different circles, such as the family, work or school, social or sport environments. The counsellors consider both protective and risk factors. After the counselling, the same estimate is made again to decide whether further assistance is necessary.

Policymakers should have *a* model, according to Amy-Jane Gielen. Research and practice show the need to have a common understanding of what exactly the problem is that has to be addressed. The ambiguity of the concept of radicalisation makes is difficult to measure the impact of a broad action plan such as the Flemish one. Because local case management works with diverse target groups depending on the specific issues of each municipality, it is difficult, for example, to comprehensively analyse these data. Therefore it is very important to formulate clear objectives for all measures of the Flemish action plan, and subsequently, to make explicit how the government intends to achieve those objectives.[54] The successive action plans state the objectives as following: "to detect radicalisation as soon as possible among youths and young adults who are at risk of radicalisation and to keep them engaged in our society," and "to prevent persons from radicalising, and to detect signs of violent radicalisation as early as possible". The Flemish government considers the "majority of the measures" as "primary and secondary prevention".[55] It is however not clear which actions are conceived as primary prevention and which are aimed at those who are vulnerable for violent extremism; or how the policymakers define "youngsters at risk". If the

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target groups are not clearly defined, it is more difficult to assess the outcome of the measures, and chances are higher that entire Muslim communities will feel targeted.

When formulating objectives one needs to keep in mind that broad prevention of violent extremism largely corresponds with broad prevention of (youth) criminality. Local partners are confronted every day with structural needs of youth work for young adults, accessibility of aid, integration of families with a migrant background, discrimination on the job market, school drop-out, quality of Islam instruction and tensions between communities. Even if these are all potential elements in the breeding ground for extremism, tackling these issues structurally will not be achieved by an ad-hoc anti-radicalisation policy.

The experience of young people and front-line practitioners

Young people, and Muslim youths in particular, are considered to be an important target group in the Flemish action plan. We see this in measures such as training sessions on "identity formation of Muslim youths" and the projects of "positive identity formation of young people". Indeed, three out of these eight subsidised projects to work in young people's free time to prevent radicalisation explicitly cite Muslim youths as a target group.[56] Teachers are also taught how to recognise and share radicalisation among youths.[57] In this book, Paul Thomas wrote about the impact of de-radicalisation policy on young people. From his chapter, we obtain two conclusions for Flanders: one on tackling the breeding ground for radicalisation, and one on information sharing in the detection – intervention – reintegration chain.

The research on the British Prevent programme teaches us that, if we reduce youth work to prevention of radicalisation, we risk losing many opportunities for positive identity formation. Furthermore, this dynamic can even expand the breeding ground for radicalisation. In his chapter, Paul Thomas shows the consequences of placing prevention of radicalisation under the responsibility of the police. Within the broad policy domain of 'radicalisation', phenomena such as radical expressions by youths at school are interpreted as security issues, rather than as pedagogical ones. Paul Thomas therefore advocates a revaluation of youth work and community cohesion policies in their own terms, with their goals of positive identity formation and inclusion.

In Belgium too, Muslim youths sometimes feel that they are targeted by de-radicalisation policies.[58] Or, it is often unclear whether or not a youth project is part of the

prevention of radicalisation. This gives rise to alienation and fuels the argument of Muslim extremists that Muslims are oppressed. That is why with the call for youth projects of the action plan, youth workers feared for their relationship of trust with the target group. In view of the scarcity of subsidies in the field, however, some organisations felt compelled to request this project funding in order to retain their normal activities.[59] Practitioners in Flanders however point out the impor-tance of regular youth work, which shows gaps in for instance psycho-social assis-tance and local social work for young adults.[60]

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Regarding the place of radicalisation prevention in the administration, municipali-ties make their own decisions. In Antwerp, the de-radicalisation team comes under the 'Urban Department of Living Together' (Stedelijk Bedrijf Samen Leven), in Vilvoorde there is a separate de-radicalisation cell, in Kortrijk the policy on radicali-sation has long been placed with the mayor and local police. House visits are gener-ally not carried out by the police but by case managers or social services. In smaller towns, the prevention or integration officer is often the one given the responsibility for radicalisation. On the federal level, Plan R has now been placed under CUTA, the coordination body for threat analysis. However, local policy makers question the placing of preventive work under the responsibility of security services.[61]

A second issue that arises from the British Prevent programme is the role of front-line practitioners in detecting radicalisation. While some practitioners indicate that social organisations now discuss the subject of radicalisation with more open-ness, the sharing of information between socio-preventive services and police remains a controversial issue in Belgium too.[62]

Partners from the social services, such as youth workers or the social welfare centre (OCMW) employees, are somewhat reluctant to share information with law enforce-ment because they fear for the relationship of trust with their target group.[63] They point out that they cannot detect and assist at the same time.[64] On the other hand, front-line practitioners at times have been alarmed too soon and the police has intervened in schools without good reason. Conversely, front-line practitioners don't always receive feedback from the security services: was their concern over an individual justified or not? Or sometimes they are given no information on some-one's involvement in extremism, information that they need in order to support a

person adequately.[65] In yet other cases, information is not shared smoothly from e.g. schools to local police.[66]

Some cities can build on trust between socio-preventive services and police obtained over many years; others are just starting to build this trust with social services, schools and community partners after seeing people leaving their municipality to fight in Syria. In the field, there is talk of both *a fear of acting* and *an urge to act*; both demonstrate the reality that front-line practitioners often do not feel capable of dealing with signs of radicalisation. Because youths are seen as potential perpetrators (of terrorism) as well as victims (of recruitment), it is not always clear whether the front-line practitioners should protect them, or report them for radicalisation.[67]

In its circular of 21 August 2015 about information exchange on and the monitoring of 'Foreign Terrorist Fighters', the federal government encouraged local authorities to set up Local Integrated Security Cells (LIVCs) in which socio-preventive services and police share information. Many LIVCs, however, only include local administrative departments and security services, and invite socio-preventive services for specific cases.[68] The minister of Domestic Affairs therefore distributed a circular in 2016 to encourage socio-preventive actors to take part in the LIVCs.[69] The minister of Education on her turn distributed information on the cooperation between schools and police and made a database with police contact information available for all schools.[70]

In an integrated security policy, systematic monitoring of individuals and a smooth flow of information is crucial to enable intervention in sometimes very fast radicalisation or recruitment processes. Both security services and socio-preventive services have a role to play in that integrated security chain and are obliged to cooperate, but with respect for each other's distinctiveness. Internationally, multidisciplinary consultation is indeed seen as a cornerstone in the approach to radicalisation, and also the Flemish pilot cities emphasise this.[71]

On the basis of research and practical experience, we can indicate two levers for the promotion of cooperation between security services and social partners. First, there is a need for a clear legal framework for the sharing of sensitive information, from socio-preventive services to security services and the other way around.[72] Second, the trust between city

Transparency about the reasons why information about someone should be shared can remove mistrust, especially in case management where the aim is prevention.

council, socio-preventive services and security services at the local level can be built up through clear agreements within LIVCs or other platforms. It is important to agree clearly on what is *nice to know* and what is *need to know*, what should be reported and what front-line workers can tackle themselves, why information is gathered and how the information will be used. Transparency about the reasons why information about someone should be shared can remove mistrust, especially in case management where the aim is prevention.[73] It is important to give feedback to front-line practitioners on what has been done with their information and why it was important.[74] Moreover, security services must share the necessary information with social workers who have to assist the individuals concerned. And finally, in order to restrict rumours among youths, it is also important to make clear when cases are closed.[75]

Finally, front-line practitioners must receive training in assisting vulnerable youths, and in having conversations with them about radical opinions or societal conflicts. The government therefore has the important function of trusting front-line practitioners and empowering them to use their pedagogical and social skills when such problems arise. The government can map, connect and engage existing partners for this.[76] However, the precondition remains that front-line practitioners know or understand the pupils' social environment. This is a challenge in Flanders, where the body of teachers does not reflect the diversity of the pupils.[77]

Islam in the Flemish society

The Flemish action plan for the prevention of radicalisation contains measures such as the professionalization of Islam education, the training of imams, and inter-religious dialogue. For example, there is a pilot project that trains imams in Dutch and in Social Orientation in order to promote the integration of mosques into society. There is also the Network of Islam Experts that talks to young people, teachers and front-line practitioners about how students can be religious without disrespecting others.[78] This network is partly funded by the department of Education. The network works with volunteers and insists on its independence in order to retain its credibility with the target group and to show society that the Muslim community is a partner in the fight against extremism.[79] Together with the Muslim Executive, the department of Education set up a working group about education for Imams, and Islam teachers are trained on Islam, radicalisation and diversity.[80] The Muslim Executive was also supported to set up an helpdesk.[81] At the same time, in its introduction, the action plan warns that we must not 'culturalise' radicalisation and that the plan does not wish to stereotype Muslims.

The debate on 'Euro', 'rational' or 'mainstream' Islam, with counter themes such as the recognition of mosques, takes place today in the context of counter-terror policy, with the foreign fighters problem at the background. The first issue we need to address here is therefore that of the role of Islam in the current wave of violent extremism. The present jihad *is* linked to Islam. If experts say that violent extremism is islamised, an important question is why and how the current extremists find inspiration for their revolt in Islam. Research shows that most jihadis today turned to Islam shortly before taking action, and did not practice in their Mosque or family. Many jihadis explicitly isolate themselves from their parents and local communities, and radicalise in small groups of friends, or consult 'Sheikh Google' for advice.[82]

That means that imams, Muslim teachers and mosques cannot solve the problem of alienation and recruitment of these youths on their own, but that they *can* help to counter the Islamisation of extremism. That is why it is important for Islamic organisations to have something to offer youths who are in search of religious inspiration, to help ensure that they don't consort with extremist groups. Well-educated religious authorities, sound religious education and helpdesks, and Islam experts can meet this need.

IS makes prolific use of ideas from the heritage and texts of mainstream Islam. The fact that IS so successfully hijacks Islam raises questions among many Muslims: is this what Islam is now? Is this also Islam? Which Islam do I adhere to, based on what sources? The values of Islam are no breeding ground for extremism, but the lack of a critical sense to look at Islamic traditions and writings is a risk factor. Field experts therefore point to the need for more quality Dutch-language texts on Islam.

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In the meantime, teachers and imams, such as those of the Network of Islam Experts, are working on critical thinking. With the first word from the Koran, '*Iqra'*, 'Read', in mind, the chairman of the network, imam Khalid Benhaddou, teaches youths to interpret the Koran in its context. He also translates concepts such as 'jihad' – a catch-all term that can mean both holy war and striving for other goals – for youths of today living in democracy. 'Sword verses' are placed in their historical context, and Islam is placed in the context of today, with a legacy of migration to the West, and colonisation and dictatorships in the Middle East and North-Africa. Benhaddou wants to protect Muslims in Europe against forms of Islam that hold back political reform in the Muslim world. His colleagues use the flexibility of the Islamic religion to open up the dialogue between communities, to try to

understand each other's frame of reference, and to search for shared values.[83] That contrasts with the call to authority that IS uses in its version of Islam, and encourages instead a critical sense, which is a democratic competence in itself.

Not everyone in the field finds a focus on religion in education and youth work appropriate, but the fact is that religion is more important among Muslim youths than among other youths.[84] In Belgium, for example, religion appears to give Moroccan youths a grip to hold onto in their search for identity, since many among them have no close ties with their native country, but at the same time don't feel like true Belgian citizens because of discrimination.[85] Moreover, since 9/11, people with a migrant background are often confirmed in their religious identity. Debates on migration, refugees and diversity ever more tend to be framed as Islamic issues.[86]

At the moment, Muslims themselves are debating on the integration of Islam into society in Flanders. It is important that this debate is not held *about* Muslims but rather *with* Muslims, and with attention for the diversity within the Muslim communities. Indeed, Islam, a religion without a central religious hierarchy, has a wealth of diversity. That is also demonstrated by the various ways in which the religion is embedded in European countries, as Marcel Maussen and Merel Talbi outline in their chapter. In Belgium too, there are various branches, and Muslims often organise themselves according to country of origin. Different generations furthermore understand their religion differently: parents visit the mosque more often, while youths experience their religion more individually.[87] The Muslim Executive can therefore not be seen as a central body that represents and guides every Muslim in Belgium in every aspect of their religious experience.[88] It is important that a debate on the integration of Islam is held in a peaceful, safe environment for the various tendencies within the Muslim communities. And it is important that in the debate, Islam should be treated on an equal footing with other religions.

Ignoring this diversity within Muslim communities leads to a stereotypical view and feeds polarisation. The term 'Euro-Islam' in itself contains an implicit accusation. By placing an adjective in front of Islam you indicate that Islam without that adjective is inadequate. And secondly, many Muslims outside of Europe as well are proponents of a rational or moderate Islam.

Is there any role for the government in this debate? Maussen and Talbi sketch the limits of options for state interference in religions. As with other religions, the separation of church and state also applies to Islam. Consequently, debates about religious doctrine and internal organisation can only come from within. In legal terms, Islam is not at all obliged to be rational or European. The state can, and of course must, check that institutes such as mosques are not inciting violence or

cooperating in foreign espionage. On social aspects such as education, activities and public symbols, the state has more of a say. And the government can also support initiatives from below that promote the social integration of Muslim communities.

On the one hand, the current wave of violent jihadism has lent momentum to start a constructive dialogue about these kinds of challenges to the diverse society. On the other, it is difficult to hold an honest debate in a climate of threat.

The debates on Euro-Islam are about much more than the prevention of extremist violence. The rise of fundamentalist Islam, the recognition of mosques, the cash flows from Saudi Arabia to the Great Mosque in Brussels, the coordination of mosques from within Turkey, home education in Salafist families, religious conflicts at school, and so on, are also drawn in. On the one hand, the current wave of violent jihadism has lent momentum to start a constructive dialogue about these kinds of challenges in a diverse society. On the other, it is difficult to hold an honest debate in a climate of threat. An atmosphere of suspicion and polarisation furthermore fuels the agenda of extremists. It is difficult for IS to destroy democracy directly, so it tries to divide societies and play on the fear of Islam. For that very reason, it is important to protect our democratic institutions and constitutional state and not to allow our society to be divided. With every communication on terror and counter-terrorism, it is important to bear that in mind.

What do we learn from the encounter between research and practice?

Evidence based policy

Why do people commit extremist violence? How can they be reintegrated into society? Radicalisation is a complex maze, with many ways in and a few possible ways out. The Government of Flanders recognizes this and emphasises that no quick wins should be expected and that prevention works on the long term.[89] Precisely because of that complexity, a knowledge-based policy is necessary in order to address violent extremism as effectively as possible and to limit unintended consequences. But projects in this field are often started without prior research on possible effects; Or, good practices are copied without much information on why those practices are considered 'good'.

From this volume we draw at least two lessons: formulate specific and shared goals, and think in advance about how you will evaluate the effects of the measures. Because of the ambiguity of the policy concept 'radicalisation', it is crucially important to formulate clear objectives. Every municipality, sector, or political party has its own interpretation of the problem of 'radicalisation'. Lack of clarity on what 'radicalisation' means at the start of a project or during the creation of a risk-assessment instrument leaves the door open for unintended consequences, such as the stigmatisation of radical views, of youths, or of Muslims. Awareness of this in the field has resulted in less talk of *de-radicalisation* and more of *reintegration* into society.

> **Formulate specific and shared goals, and think in advance about how you will evaluate the effects of the measures.**

The development of a common framework is not only necessary to evaluate adopted measures, but is also necessary for the implementation of the measures. An common assessment of the problem and clearly formulated objectives will promote cooperation between the various partners at local, Flemish and federal level and across sectors.

Meanwhile, the research into the breeding grounds for terrorism continues. The key to effective counter-terrorism remains the gathering and analyses of information.[90] A lot of factual information is lacking, however. An information basis is needed to draw conclusions on the causes and risk factors of present and future waves of terrorism. The small size of the terrorist groups hampers quantitative research. Also, research into the life history of terrorists always takes place retrospectively, when their actions are already known. It is not possible to monitor individuals and see who will and who won't take up terrorism; in other words, there is no control group.[91] In the search for breeding grounds, risk and protective factors, it is equally important to study people who grow up in the same conditions and who *do not* end up in extremist circles. Data are moreover limited to interviews with people who have left extremist organisations, or to publicly available data such as messages that terrorists leave via the internet, or life histories that have been picked up by journalists.

In order to gather sufficient data, more cooperation is necessary: between local police, intelligence services, researchers and practitioners from e.g. exit programmes. If we want to make the policy answers to radicalisation more knowledge based, ways must be found to gather and share data in confidence. Individual information on foreign and home-grown terrorist fighters must be investigated, as well as results of risk-assessment instruments. This can help to detect terrorist

activities, map networks, collective drivers and context factors, and identify underlying trends.

Research into the (local) context

After twelve years of research into 'radicalisation' we know a bit more about the socialisation process that precedes terrorist acts, but we have learned little more about the root causes of terrorism in the political, social and economic context. The search of the original terrorism studies for the root causes of terrorism got rather lost in radicalisation studies.[92] In fact, we still know relatively little about the approximately five hundred Belgian citizens who went to Syria and Iraq, and why certain municipalities such as Molenbeek and Vilvoorde were affected so much more than others such as

Since their departure, little has changed in the possible root causes: the failure of the 'Arab Spring' made the Middle East unstable, and even though the IS caliphate is shrinking, the cocktail of frustrations is still a source that various extremist organisations can tap.

Mechelen. Besides, since their departure, little has changed in the possible root causes: the failure of the 'Arab Spring' made the Middle East unstable, and even though the IS caliphate is shrinking, the cocktail of frustrations is still a source that various extremist organisations can tap.

There appears to be no empirical basis for the use of screening of individuals on external signs in preventive policy. Scientists attach more credibility to determination of conditions and context factors that allow (various forms of) extremism to thrive. From IS files it appears that its foreign fighters often come from the same places. This indicates that we should place individual motivations of extremists into very specific local contexts.[93] Experts stress that context factors such as polarisation can play a significant role in radicalisation processes.[94] Consequently, research is necessary into the conditions in which terrorism takes root – naturally with attention for a range of factors, including online networks, the radius of action of the recruiters, and international politics. We should compare research in local Flemish neighbourhoods with international research in the neighbouring countries, where the foreign fighters often have other personal back-grounds.

The role of the Flemish government

From the dialogue between researchers and field experts that we organised in this project we take three elements for a Flemish policy against violent extremism.

Firstly, Flemish **socio-preventive services and local authorities play a crucial role in the integral security chain of detection – risk assessment – intervention – reintegration**. That chain is a necessary means to detect various violent extremists of different types, and reintegrating them back into the community if possible. This is a very specific policy, aimed at a small group of violent actors. For this policy to succeed, more coordination is needed, also at the Flemish level. In a *multi-agency* context in which diverse authorities and partners have a role to take up, coordination regarding risk assessment, objectives, quality standards and training for local and private partners is crucial. Other significant challenges for the integral security chain in Flanders are the multidisciplinary cooperation between socio-preventive and security services.

> **In a *multi-agency* context in which diverse authorities and partners have a role to take up, coordination regarding risk assessment, objectives, quality standards and training for local and private partners is crucial.**

Reintegration of extremists is work tailored to individuals in which local governments and partners are essential. Nevertheless, the existence of a shared framework at federal and Flemish level has proven to be necessary. One needs a shared diagnosis of what is problematic and what isn't, and shared goals. Both local policymakers and the Flemish government emphasise aptly that they are deploying existing services and do not wish to install a parallel structure.[95] Consequently, training for the strengthening of existing organisations is crucial as it helps them to take up a role in de-radicalisation programmes.

Secodly, the government can invest in **broad prevention of violent behaviour** in general. Numerous factors play a role in the breeding grounds for extremist violence. Many of those risk factors also apply to other forms of criminality, and criminality itself is a risk factor for violent extremism. By targeting prevention at various factors and not just at Muslim fundamentalism, we will thus have the best chance of effectively narrowing the breeding ground for violent behaviour. Moreover, this will avoid unintended consequences such as polarisation and alienation. This calls for a revaluation of broad prevention in regular policy areas such as integration, education, youth, welfare, employment and housing.

Thirdly, among many practitioners we hear the call for more efforts to create an **inclusive society**. Policy areas such as Education, Integration, Youth, Employment, Welfare and Housing could work on this. In recent years, 'de-radicalisation officers' have identified a number of problems in society: school drop-out, discrimination on the job market, life quality in urban neighbourhoods, accessibility of aid, support for parents, welfare services for young adults, and the diversity of teacher corps and local police. They have used the de-radicalisation policy to address these problems, in cooperation with local services and partners from the civil society.[96] The Welfare department as well and works on the interculturalisation of healthcare.[97] In both the draft proposal and the action plans about radicalisation, the Flemish government stresses the importance of investing in an inclusive society.[98] On the field however, needs remain pertinent.

> **A policy for social inclusion that is based on a positive objective cannot be replaced by a de-radicalisation policy that focuses on a negative objective, namely, preventing someone from radicalising.**

A policy for social inclusion that is based on a positive objective cannot be replaced by a de-radicalisation policy that focuses on a negative objective, namely, preventing someone from radicalising. Labelling projects of integration and positive identity formation under the title of de-radicalisation policy -- or with project money from that policy -- unjustly brands Muslim communities as a suspect group. Local de-radicalisation officers are the first ones to point to the importance of social cohesion as a policy priority.[99] They see the need for a positive project, not based on tackling a problem, but based on a vision of living together in a very diverse society in Flanders. Inclusive policy naturally has preventive effects. It gives people a perspective and a feeling of belonging to society, so that they are less inclined to be carried away by waves of extremism. But building an inclusive society with equal opportunities for everyone is a positive future project in itself, and one that shrivels if it is placed under the 'prevention of radicalisation'.

> **The society-wide problem of radicalisation therefore requires a society-wide answer.**

"Radicalisation occurs in everyday life", writes Rik Coolsaet.[100] The society-wide problem of radicalisation therefore requires a society-wide answer. There is a lot of expertise present at local level in Flanders. Local authorities indeed have the right contacts for the early detection of problems and for assisting alienated persons on their way back into society. But at the same time, supra-local dynamics fuel

extremism: violence in the Middle East and North Africa, online propaganda, polarising statements in the public sphere, structural discrimination and so on. Supralocal dynamics can therefore support or impede a local approach.

In the search for an answer to extremism we inevitably arrive at questions on how we want to shape society, and so we come to politics. Researchers too are part of society and propose various diagnoses and solutions, as this book as well has shown. But what particularly stands out from our meeting of researchers and practitioners, is a common commitment to grasp the momentum and constructively tackle the challenges of a very diverse society. The expert practitioners are using the sense of urgency around the foreign fighters as an opportunity to forge new

> **"Maybe the fear had to come close [...] in order to hold a fundamental debate that has not been held in recent decades."**

contacts and are noticing significant rapprochement in the field. During our seminar, imam Khalid Benhaddou told how he, while being wary of the polarisation that it could bring about, is employing the de-radicalisation policy in order to step outside of his mosque and community, to become acquainted with other points of view. "Maybe the fear had to come close [...] in order to hold a fundamental debate that has not been held in recent decades." [...] "I think that everyone, not only imams, [...] should perhaps ask themselves: 'how can I come to a different place, outside of our ivory towers, out of our comfort zone', in order to really make that dialogue possible." In addition to an effective approach to violent extremism, therefore, it is time to take on the challenges of a very diverse society and to continue working on cohesion and dialogue.

Brussels, 9 June 2017

ENDNOTES

1   This text is a translation of Colaert, L. (2017), Conclusies. En in Vlaanderen?, in: Colaert, L. (red.), *'Deradicalisering'. Wetenschappelijke inzichten voor een Vlaams beleid*, Brussels: Flemish Peace Institute, 163-197.

2   This conclusion compares international research with the Flemish practice, on the basis of the comments of practitioners on the seminar of 3 March 2017, organised by the Flemish Peace Institute in the Flemish Parliament. Those practitioners were: Marchen De Waele (VVSG), Cherif Al Maliki (Ceapire), Khadija Aznag (Agency of Integration), Christophe Busch (Kazerne Dossin), Alexander Van Leuven (city of Mechelen), Anissa Akhandaf (city of Antwerp), and Khalid Benhaddou (Netwerk Islamexperts). Besides, this conclusion is based on an interview with Jessika Soors of the city of Vilvoorde (Brussels, 5 January 2016), a training of Fedasil (Brussels, 1 March 2016), and an observation of the 'working group radicalism' with local prevention officers at the VVSG (27 May 2016). Lastly, we used literature and policy documents, that are mentioned in the endnotes.

3   Weenink, A.W. (2015), Behavioral Problems and Disorders among Radicals in Police Files, Perspectives on Terrorism, 9: 2, http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/416/html, consulted on 23 May 2017.

4   Coolsaet, R. (2017), (De)radicalisering tussen praktijk en ambiguïteit, Cahier Politiestudies, 1:42, 223.

5   Coolsaet, R. (2016), Deradicaliseringsbeleid en de IS-generatie, Politiejournaal, September, 15-16.

6   Roy, O. (2017), Who are the new jihadis?, The Guardian, 13 April, https://www.theguardian. com/news/2017/apr/13/who-are-the-new-jihadis, consulted on 23 May 2017.

7   Europol (18 januari 2016), Changes in modus operandi of Islamic State terrorist attacks. Review held by experts from Member States and Europol on 29 November and 1 December 2015, Den Haag: Europol, https://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-documents/ changes-in-modus-operandi-of-islamic-state-terrorist-attacks, consulted on 23 May 2017.

8   Perceived discrimination because of belief, language and skin color amongst Flemish youth is not a marginal phenomenon. Flemish Muslim youths and Flemish youths from African, Moroccan and Turkish roots experience most discrimination. See Van Droogenbroeck, F., et al. (2016) , Brussels: Free University Brussels, Department of Sociology, Research group TOR, http://socipc1.vub.ac.be/torwebdat/publications/t2017_9.pdf, consulted on 23 May 2017.

9   Roy, O., Who are the new jihadis?; EIP, What does Molenbeek think? – New EIP survey reveals drivers of violent extremism, http://eip.org/en/news-events/what-does-molenbeek-think-%E2%80%93-new-eip-survey-reveals-drivers-violent-extremism, consulted on 1 June 2017.

10 See Khalil, J. (2014), Radical beliefs and violent actions are not synonymous: How to place the key disjuncture between attitudes and behaviors at the heart of our research into political violence, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 37:2, 207.

11   See the model 'staircase to terrorism' of Moghaddam in the chapter of Carl Miller and Leah Selig Chauhan, and in Muro, D. (2016), What does radicalisation look like? Four visualizations of socialization into violent extremism, Notes Internacionals, 162, 4.

12   Roy, O. (2017), Who are the new jihadis?

13   Presentation Daniel Koehler, Deradicalisation and disengagement programs, Seminar Deradicalisation: Insights from international research, Flemish Peace Institute, Brussels, 3 March 2016.

14   Hafez, M. & Mullins, C. (2015), The radicalization puzzle: A theoretical synthesis of empirical approaches to homegrown extremism, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 38, 959-960; In the summer of 2016, the term 'flash-radicalisation' was coined to describe the phenomenon of 'homegrown' terrorists who change their behavior in just a few weeks before attacking. See Coolsaet, R., Deradicaliseringsbeleid en de IS-generatie, 14.

15   Hafez, M. & Mullins, C., The radicalization puzzle, 958-975.

16   Koehler, D. (2017), Understanding deradicalization: Methods, tools and programs for countering violent extremism, London & New York: Routledge.

17   Homans, L., Nota van de Vlaamse Overheid: Conceptnota over preventie van radicaliseringsprocessen, zitting 2014-15, stuk 239-1, Flemish Parliament, 9 February 2015, 3.

18   Flemish Government (2017), Actieplan ter preventie van gewelddadige radicalisering en polarisering: overzicht acties en maatregelen, 20.

19   From: Flemish Government, Bezorgd dat je kind radicaliseert? Contacteer ons (anoniem), https://www.vlaanderen.be/nl/publicaties/detail/bezorgd-dat-je-kind-radicaliseert-1, consulted on 9 June 2017.

20   Verslag over de stand van zaken van de uitvoering van de resolutie betreffende de bestrijding van gewelddadige radicalisering en over de stand van zaken van de uitvoering van het actieplan van de Vlaamse Overheid ter preventie van radicaliseringsprocessen die kunnen leiden tot extremisme en terrorisme, Verslag commissie voor de bestrijding van gewelddadige radicalisering, zitting 2015-16 stuk 579-3, Flemish Parliament, 16 December 2016, 13-14.

21   Flemish Government, Actieplan ter preventie van gewelddadige radicalisering en polarisering, 1.

22   Flemish Government, Actieplan ter preventie van radicaliseringsprocessen die kunnen leiden tot extremisme en terrorisme (2015), 3.

23   Flemish Government, Actieplan ter preventie van radicaliseringsprocessen, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16; Flemish Government, Actieplan ter preventie van gewelddadige radicalisering en polarisering, 8, 15, 16.

24   Presentation city of Antwerp SL/SI/ Akhandaf, A., Aanpak de-radicalisering Antwerpen, 26 January 2015.

25   In a survey of 105 Flemish municipalities by the VVSG, only three municipalities state that they also receive signals of extreme-right radicalization. "One respondent adds to this that "extreme-right sympathies seem to grow, but that this is reported less easily". VVSG (2017), Rapportage VVSG Vragenlijst Radicalisering & Polarisering, Brussels: VVSG, 2-3.

26   Flemish Government, Actieplan ter preventie van gewelddadige radicalisering en polarisering, 1.

27   Roy, O. (2017), Who are the new jihadis?. Also see the chapter of Paul Thomas in this book.

28   See chapter two of Allard Feddes in this book. For the VERA-2 model: Pressman, D.E. & Flockton, J. (2012), Calibrating risk for violent political extremists and terrorists: The VERA 2 structured assessment, The British Journal of Forensic Practice, 14, 237–251; Pressman, D.E. & Flockton, J. (2014), Violent extremist risk assessment development of the VERA-2 and applications in the high security correctional setting, in: Silke, Prisons, terrorism and extremism Expertise-unit Sociale Stabiliteit, Triggerfactoren, https://www.socialestabiliteit.nl/professionals/inhoud/triggerfactoren, consulted on 29 May 2017.

29   See for instance the Dutch Radicx tool for schools, in Spee, I. & Reitsma, M. (2015), Puberaal, lastig of radicaliserend? Den Haag, 40, https://www.schoolenveiligheid. nl/ po-vo/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/04/Puberaal-lastig-of-radicaliserend.pdf, consulted on 1 June 2017.

30   Verslag over de stand van zaken van de uitvoering van de resolutie betreffende de bestrijding van gewelddadige radicalisering, 16 December 2016, 6-7.

31   Department Education (2017), Handvatten voor de preventie, aanpak en omgang met radicalisering binnen onderwijs, Brussels: Departement Education, 7, https://www.onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/leidraad-helpt-scholen-omgaan-metradicalisering, consulted on 1 June 2017; GO, Tips om te praten met leerlingen over radicalisme en extremisme, http://pro.g-o.be/over-go/actuele-themas/preventie-radicalisering; https://www.klasse.be/radicalisering/aanpak.php#naar, consulted on 2 June 2017.

32   Verslag over de stand van zaken van de uitvoering van de resolutie betreffende de bestrijding van gewelddadige radicalisering, 16 December 2016, 6; Van Poucke, S., Vlaamse steden krijgen geld voor radix-tool tegen radicalisering (2 November 2016), http://deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws/binnenland/1.2809450, consulted on 2 June 2017.

33   Also see Expert Cell Radicalisation Education-Welfare, Adviesnota 1: Informatiedeling & opzetten vertrouwensnetwerken, 2. Little knowledge about radicalisation amongst local partners is cited as one of the obstacles for the establishment of an LIVC. See Federal Public Service of Internal Affairs, Overzicht LIVC, March 2017.

34   See Harbers, E. & de Vries, U. (2016), Een stukje van de puzzel! Over de contribution van de recherchepsycholoog bij de lokale aanpak van terroristische dreigingen en geweld, Cahiers Politiestudies, 4: 42, 191-204.

35   Expert Cell Radicalisation Education-Welfare, Adviesnota 1: Informatiedeling, 2.

36   RAN Exit, Exit Work in a multi-agency setting (1 November 2016), https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-exit/docs/ran_exit_work_multi-agency_setting_milan_01112016_en.pdf, 1, consulted on 2 June 2017.

37   See Broekhuizen J. & van Wonderen, R. (2010), Samenleven met verschillen. Over de ontwikkeling van een instrument om polarisatie en vertrouwen in buurten te meten, Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit; Contribution Thomas, P., Seminar Deradicalisation: Insights from international research, Flemish Peace Institute, Brussels, 3 March 2016.

38   VVSG, Rapportage VVSG Vragenlijst Radicalisering & Polarisering, 2 & 7; Federal Public Service of Internal Affairs, Overzicht LIVC, March 2017.

39   Agency for Domestic Affairs (2015), Toelichting bij de aanvraag van een projectsubsidie voor de ondersteuning van lokale besturen in het kader van de preventie van radicalisering, http://www.vvsg.be/nieuws/PublishingImages/Paginas/Ondersteuning- van-lokale-besturen-in-het-kader-van-de-preventie-van-radicalisering-/Toelichting_Oproep_radicalisering_LokBesturen.pdf, consulted on 2 June 2017; Homans, L.,

antwoord op de schriftelijke vraag 412 d.d. 3 March 2016 door Y. Kherbache, Schriftelijke vragen en antwoorden, zitting 2015-16, Flemish Parliament, 3 March 2016.

40   RAN Exit, Setting up an exit intervention (13-14 February), https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-exit/docs/ran_exit_setting_up_exit_intervention_berlin_13-14_022017_en.pdf, 1, consulted on 2 June 2017.

41   Verslag over de stand van zaken van de uitvoering van de resolutie betreffende de bestrijding van gewelddadige radicalisering, 16 December 2016, 13-14.

42   Verslag over de stand van zaken van de uitvoering van de resolutie betreffende de bestrijding van gewelddadige radicalisering, 16 december 2016, 13-16; Vandeurzen, J., response to the written question 434 d.d. 28 February 2017 by Bart Somers, Schriftelijke vragen en antwoorden, zitting 2016-17, Flemish Parliament, 28 February 2017; Sminate, N., oral question 2096 to minister J. Vandeurzen, Verslag commissie voor Welzijn, Volksgezondheid en Gezin, zitting 2016-17, Flemish Parliament, 16 May 2017; Presentatie en bespreking van het geactualiseerde actieplan van de Vlaamse Regering ter preventie van gewelddadige radicalisering en polarisering, Videoverslag commissie voor de bestrijding van gewelddadige radicalisering, zitting 2015-16, Flemish Parliament, 7 June 2017, https://www.vlaamsparlement.be/commissies/commissievergaderingen/1139350#volledige-agenda, consulted on 7 June 2017.

43   LIVCs sometimes also deal with social nuisance, domicile fraud, and integration issues. The project subsidies for local authorities of the Flemish government also went to municipalities without foreign fighters, while not all municipalities with foreign fighters received Flemish funding. See Federal Public Service of Internal Affairs, Overzicht LIVC, March 2017; Vandeurzen, J., response to the written question 442 d.d. 25 March 2016 by Yasmine Kherbache, Schriftelijke vragen en antwoorden, zitting 2016-17, Flemish Parliament, 28 February 2017.

44   RAN Exit, Exit work in a multi-agency setting, 1, 3.

45   RAN Exit, Setting up an exit intervention, 1.

46   Also see Köhler, D. (2017), Structural Quality Standards for work to intervene with and counter violent extremism, Baden-Württemberg: Ministry of the Interior, Digitisation and Migration.

47   Also see Coolsaet, R., Deradicaliseringsbeleid and the IS-generatie, 19.

48   RAN Exit, Setting up an exit intervention, 2-4.

49   Verslag over de stand van zaken van de uitvoering van de resolutie betreffende de bestrijding van gewelddadige radicalisering, 13-14.

50   Contribution Cherif Al Maliki, Seminar Deradicalisation: Insights from international research, Flemish Peace Institute, Brussels, 3 March 2016.

51   Flemish Government, Actieplan ter preventie van gewelddadige radicalisering en polarisering, 2.

52   Also see RAN Exit, Exit work in a multi-agency setting, 1.

53   See for instance Presentation city of Antwerp SL/SI/ Akhandaf, A., Aanpak de-radicalisering Antwerpen; CPS, CPS seminar: "Hoe geradicaliseerde personen lokaal (re)integreren? (4 May 2017), http://www.politiestudies.be/userfiles/Verslag%20CPS%20Studiedag%20Radicalisering_04_05_17.pdf, consulted on 6 June 2017.

54   This is called to formulate a 'theory of change'. See for instance Khalil, J. & Zuthen, M. (2016), Countering Violent Extremism and Risk Reduction: A guide to programme design and evaluation, Londen: RUSI, 26-27.

55 Flemish Government, Actieplan ter preventie van radicaliseringsprocessen, 2; Flemish Government, Actieplan ter preventie van gewelddadige radicalisering en polarisering, 1.

56 Flemish Government (2016), Actieplan ter preventie van radicaliseringsprocessen die kunnen leiden tot extremisme en terrorisme, Tweede rapportage, 48-51.

57 See for instance Department Education, Handvatten voor de preventie, aanpak en omgang met radicalisering.

58 There is no research so far on the perception of the antiradicalisation policy by young people in Flanders. Youth workers however do warn that Muslim youths are feeling stigmatized by the deradicalisation policy. See Kinderrechtencoalitie Vlaanderen vzw (November 2016), "Het zal wel aan mij liggen..." Omgaan met de effecten van discriminatie en racisme op kinderen, Ghent, 110; Presentation Henkens, N., Positieve identiteitsontwikkeling en de rol van de politie, CPS seminar: Radicalisering aanpakken: Nu of nooit!, Vilvoorde, 31 May 2016.

59 Henkens, N., Kastit I. & Debruyne P., Deradicaliseringsbeleid moet radicaal anders, Mo, 26 October 2015, http://www.mo.be/opinie/deradicaliseringsbeleid-moet-radicaalanders, consulted on 6 June 2017.

60 VVSG (2017), Rapportage VVSG Vragenlijst Radicalisering & Polarisering, 6; vzw Cachet & SOS Kinderdorpen (2017), "Wij zijn gewone jongeren in een ongewone situatie": Kernpunten uit een onderzoek rond jongeren die de jeugdhulp verlaten, Brussels & Anderlecht, 11, https://sos-kinderdorpen-wieni.netdna-ssl.com/sites/default/files/paragraph/attachments/sos_kd_cachet_visietekst_nl_lr_0.pdf, consulted on 6 June 2017; Interview with Jessika Soors (city of Vilvoorde), Brussels: Flemish Peace Institute, 5 January 2016.

61 See for instance Gom, 'Totale focus op veiligheid heeft nare effecten', *De Standaard*, 22 March 2017.

62 See for instance the parliamentary debates in: Verslag over de stand van zaken van de uitvoering van de resolutie betreffende de bestrijding van gewelddadige radicalisering, 16 December 2016.

63 Bonte, J., Je geheimen zijn (niet altijd) veilig bij mij, *De Standaard*, 5 May 2017.

64 Contribution Khadija Aznag, Seminar Deradicalisation: Insights from international research, Flemish Peace Institute, Brussels, 3 March 2016.

65 Verslag over de stand van zaken van de uitvoering van de resolutie betreffende de bestrijding van gewelddadige radicalisering en over de stand van zaken van de uitvoering van het actieplan van de Vlaamse Overheid ter preventie van radicaliseringsprocessen die kunnen leiden tot extremisme en terrorisme, Verslag commissie voor de bestrijding van gewelddadige radicalisering, zitting 2015-16 stuk 579-2, Flemish Parliament, 21 June 2016, 35.

66 Contribution Khadija Aznag.

67 Contribution Khadija Aznag.

68 VVSG (2017), Rapportage VVSG Vragenlijst Radicalisering & Polarisering, 4; Federal Public Service of Internal Affairs, Overzicht LIVC, March 2017.

69 Verslag over de stand van zaken van de uitvoering van de resolutie betreffende de bestrijding van gewelddadige radicalisering, 21 June 2016, 10.

70 In each municipality a contact person of the police is appointed. These contacts are collected in a secured and dynamic database, to which all schools and police have access.

Presentatie en bespreking van het geactualiseerde actieplan van de Vlaamse Overheid ter preventie van gewelddadige radicalisering en polarisering.

71   Soors, J. (2015), Hoe als samenleving reageren? Een internationaal conflict, een lokale uitdaging, in: Loobuyck, P. (ed.), De loktroep van IS: Syriëstrijders en (de)radicalisering, Kalmthout: Pelckmans, 153-155; RAN H&SC, Handbook on How to set up a multi-agency structure that includes the health and social care sectors? (18-19 May 2016, https:// ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisa-tion_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/ex-post-paper-handbook-ran-hsc-18-19-may-2016-copenhagen-dk_en.pdf), consulted on 8 June 2017.

72   In this regard, the Expert Cell Radicalisation Education-Welfare refers to the "Danish legislation that facilitates information sharing between partners (§ 115 of The Danish Administration Justice Act – (http://www.ft.dk/samling/20151/almdel/reu/bilag/248/ 1617692.pdf): Expert cell Radicalisation Education-Welfare, Adviesnota 1: Informatie-deling, 1.

73   Expert Cell Radicalisation Education-Welfare, Adviesnota 1: Informatiedeling, 1. Also see Presentation city of Antwerp SL/SI/ Akhandaf, A., Aanpak de-radicalisering Antwerpen.

74   To build trust between socio-preventive and security services in the United Kingdom, the police shared some anonimised cases of what it had done with signals of concern of front-line practitioners, and why these signals are important. Framing the detection of radicalisation as a signal of concern for the vulnerability of a person can help to con-vince front-line practitioners to share their information with prevention officers or local police. Contribution Thomas, P., Seminar Deradicalisation: Insights from international research.

75   Interview with Jessika Soors (city of Vilvoorde), Brussels: Flemish Peace Institute, 5 January 2016; Observation of the 'Working group Radicalisation' with local prevention officers at the VVSG, Brussels, 27 May 2016.

76   Expert Cell Radicalisation Education-Welfare, Adviesnota 1: Informatiedeling, 2.

77   Contribution Cherif Al Maliki, Seminar Deradicalisation: Insights from international research; VUB Today, Diversiteit in de klas? Amper kleur in het lerarenkorps (7 June 2017), http://www.vubtoday.be/nl/content/diversiteit-de-klas-amper-kleur-het-leraren-korps, consulted on 8 June 2017.

78   This network can "explain about Islam and Islamic norms and values to young people, classes and front-line practitioners." See Flemish Government, Actieplan ter preventie van gewelddadige radicalisering en polarisering, 7; And contribution Khalid Benhaddou, Seminar Deradicalisation: Insights from international research, Flemish Peace Institute, Brussels, 3 March 2016.

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'De-radicalisation'
Scientific insights for policy

Following the terrorist attacks in Madrid (2004) and London (2005), 'radicalisation' has become part of the political discourse in Europe. Many European governments took initiatives to counter violent extremism. But the range of measures often lacks conceptual clarity and empirical validation.

The aim of this book is to make policy answers to violent extremism more evidence-based. The Flemish Peace Institute asked seven international scholars to review the state of the art of empirical research on 'radicalisation'. These findings were then discussed with practitioners from Flanders (Belgium). This fruitful dialogue resulted in policy implications and recommendations, both at the end of each chapter and in the final conclusions of this volume.

The combination of insights from researchers and those working in the field makes this a relevant volume for decision makers, practitioners and researchers.

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