De-radicalization and Counter-radicalization: Valuable Tools Combating Violent Extremism, or Harmful Methods of Subjugation?

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Abstract

This article debates the justifications behind the practice of counter-radicalization and de-radicalization. It emphasizes the concepts as shrouded in confusion, and highlights that the practices continue to develop and expand despite claims of counter-productiveness, wholly subjective evaluation, and significant doubt around their premises. The aim of this article is to encourage a greater awareness of the potential costs to society of promoting policy with no rigorous basis of evidence. Focussing on both (rehabilitative) prison counter-radicalization schemes and (preventative) non-prison based de-radicalization, the discussion explores the evaluative methods that remain chaotic despite a growing need for 'evidence-based' public policy-making, examines the tenuous link between terrorism and ideology which upholds the principles behind attempts to combat radicalization, and then analyses the possible outcomes for society of relying on these schemes to minimize extremist violence. It concludes that taking the link between terrorism and ideology as causal is deeply flawed, and that by persisting with no systematic method of evaluation combating radicalization in these ways will continue to fail. Indeed, in prisons, they have been found to be distrusted, ineffective and even detrimental. Outside of prisons, where preventative counter-radicalization programmes exist, these will continue to divide societies among the lines where suspect communities are drawn. It takes the view that whilst we continue to elevate de-radicalization as a 'useful tool' in combating terrorism, we will also continue to associate certain people groups with terrorism and only add to grievances that exist in our societies.

Introduction

Given the consistency of terror attacks around the world, the slow defeat of Daesh, and the growth of domestic anti-terror policies, how do we deal with those who have carried out

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violent extremism, and how do we protect our societies from further atrocities whilst treating them justly? This discussion examines the use of, and the power exerted by what are known as de-radicalization and counter-radicalization programmes that have developed over the last two decades. Accused of rarely focussing on actually practising de-radicalization,[2] and with expert Daniel Koehler accepting that "the fail rate is great,"[3] such programmes are beset by problems of definition, objective, evaluation, manipulation and discrimination. A 'cottage industry' is being established; money being poured in to counter the perceived threats has ensured the arrival of hosts of inexperienced practitioners.[4] However, these schemes are also said to be an "essential tool to combat terrorist and extremist threats."[5] How useful are they in delivering results, are they built on rational conceptions of risk, and what are the consequences for society? As chronic confusion over the language exists, the following discussion firstly explores the definitions of important terms. The paper then moves on to exploring the value of de-radicalization and counter-radicalization as public policy, and how they are informed and measured. It then moves on to examining the consequences on society, and finally shows how these anti-terror policies could be differently approached.

This paper establishes a distinction between Muslim-majority states which employ largely post-crime rehabilitation practices to deal with often low-level militants (but whose evaluative methods are dubious), and secular states that engage in preventative measures who involve themselves in the pre-crime space. Although not focussing solely on Britain for the preventative cases, the country's approach is emphasized as a case study for its pervasiveness and growing influence (on Australia, the USA and Canada for example). The discussion

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[2] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (2009), *Addressing the Effectiveness of Current De-radicalization Initiatives and Identifying Implications for the Development of US-Based Initiatives in Multiple Settings*, https://www.start.umd.edu/sites/default/files/publications/local_attachments/De-radicalization%20Programs%20Final%20Report.pdf, START, published Sept 2009, accessed 23/06/17
[3] Davis, M. (2016), *De-radicalization Expert Finishes Testimony in ISIS Case*, https://www.mprnews.org/story/2016/09/21/de-radicalization-expert-finishes-testimony-minnesota-isis-case, MPR News, published 21/09/16, accessed 27/04/17
[4] Zerofsky, E. (2016), *The Growth of a De-radicalization Industry in France*, http://pulitzercenter.org/projects/growth-de-radicalization-industry-france, Pulitzer Center, published 02/09/16, accessed 19/06/17
[5] Koehler, D. (2014), *The Routledge International Handbook on Hate Crime* (Routledge: London), pp. 420-9

challenges not only the notion that de-radicalization is practised with any consistency,[6] but that its developing use may not successfully address the incidence of terrorism but instead enable its continuance, by focussing on countering ideologies that aren't causally linked to extremist violence. It takes the view that practising de-radicalization and counter-radicalization entrenches the idea that extremist violence is an individual-level phenomenon based on a warped ideology rather than encouraging rational discussions about risk.[7] It concludes that the use of 'de-radicalization' as a term and in practice augments the belief and reality that certain groups are being profiled and further stigmatized. Such policies also discourage the ability to hold and discuss radical views within a society, with governments determining what acceptable religious and political views can be. Ultimately, the discussion suggests that we should reform the way we use the terms, and questioning their very validity as methods of securing ourselves against actual levels of threat. These policies remain flawed practice based on flawed theory, compounding discrimination against those at the fringes of our societies at the expense of considering rationally the level of risk we face.

Definitions

The term 'de-radicalization' has been consistently misused and misunderstood; it has, for example, been used to refer to community-based initiatives aimed at preventing engagement in radical violence, to policies effecting the demobilization and reintegration of insurgent groups, and to programmes aimed at counter-radicalization practices curtailing radical thoughts and utterances in those who have not engaged in violence. Despite emphatic calls for the different terms to be deployed with consideration and caution,[8] even in literature considering the concepts explicitly the terms are often treated as one or are at least

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[6] Horgan, J., Braddock, K. (2010), 'Rehabilitating the Terrorists?: Challenges in Assessing the Effectiveness of De-radicalization Programmes', in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 22, pp. 267-91

[7] Schmid, A. (2013), *Radicalization, Counterradicalization: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review*, https://www.icct.nl/download/file/ICCT-Schmid-Radicalisation-De-radicalisation-Counter-Radicalisation-March-2013.pdf, International Centre for Counter-terrorism - The Hague, published March 2013, accessed 23/06/17

[8] Koehler, D. (2014), *loc. cit.*

inadequately separated from one another.[9] This section looks at the definitions of pertinent terms, including ideology, establishing a difference between preventative, pre-crime counter-radicalization and schemes which rehabilitate individuals who have committed violent crimes ideologically.

Ideology

Targeting the radical 'ideology' held by individuals is the focus of programmes combating radicalization; ideology has been portrayed in discourse as a key motivating factor. This discussion takes the framing process theory in "understanding the character and course of social movements."[10] The theory suggests that ideology does play a role in individuals' and groups' movements towards political violence but it should not be thought of as a homogenous entity that motivates similarly across these individuals and groups. It should instead be seen and explained through 'frames', or stages of interaction of thought and articulation that influence an actor's behaviour.[11] Rather than just stating that 'ideology' mechanically causes terrorism, the theory proposes that the process of movement mobilization includes diagnostic framing (i.e. the identification of a problem and the defining of why a movement exists), prognostic framing (i.e. exploring what can be done to rectify the problem), and motivational framing (i.e. mobilizing affected individuals to join the cause and expanding the potential pool of recruits).[12] The paper takes the view that ideologies are actively acquired by subjects, and are dynamic and "more complex than often presumed."[13] David Snow and Scott Byrd write that it is fallacious to consider ideology as "tightly coupled, inelastic set of values, beliefs, and ideas";[14] within both individuals and movements the

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[9] See: El Said, H. (2015), *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism: Designing and Evaluating Counter-Radicalization and Dr-Radicalization Programs* (Palgrave Macmillan: London), p. 21

[10] Snow, D., Benford, R. (2000), 'Framing Processes and Social Movements', in *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 26, pp. 611-39

[11] Ibid.

[12] Snow, D., Byrd, S. (2000), 'Ideology, Framing Processes, and Islamic Movements', in *Mobilization: An International Quarterly Review*, Vol. 12, Issue 1, pp. 119-36

[13] Snow, D. (2004), 'Framing Processes, Ideology, and Discursive Fields', in eds. Snow, D., Soule, S., Kriesi, H., *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (Blackwell: Oxford), pp. 380-412

[14] Snow, D., Byrd, S. (2000), *loc. cit.*

ideologies are constantly changing depending on the circumstances and those engaging in framing.

De-radicalization vs. Disengagement

The notion of psychological reform for those who have committed acts of terrorism has consistently defined as de-radicalization, though far more frequently (even within academic literature) de-radicalization is confused with behavioural disengagement. For the purposes of this discussion, I will emphasize the difference between disengagement and de-radicalization, taking disengagement as the group-based "physical cessation of some observable behaviour"[15] in this context acts of terrorism, and taking Horgan's definition of de-radicalization from his seminal 2009 work *Walking Away from Terrorism* as:

> "the social and psychological process whereby an individual's commitment to, and involvement in, violent radicalization is reduced to the extent that they are no longer at risk of involvement and engagement in violent activity".[16]

Daniel Koehler, the internationally renowned de-radicalization expert, contends that to ensure the minimization of recidivism, programmes should place "ideological reassessment as the basis of practical work".[17] In other words, he promotes the idea that the most effective method of countering the threat of extremism from subject participants is to walk them through ideological reform (or otherwise challenging the diagnostic framing element of the acquisition of an ideology), alongside more practical rehabilitation methods like skills training and social integration. The logic driving this perspective is that if purely mechanical behavioural change is achieved, the conditions for re-engagement in violence could easily occur. But if a subject was ideologically reformed through de-radicalization to a point where they "abandon the

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[15] Horgan, J., Braddock, K. (2010), *loc. cit.*; also see: Szmania, S., Mastreo, C. (2016), *Surveying CVE Metrics in Prevention, Disengagement and De-radicalization Programmes*, https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_SurveyingCVEMetrics_March2016.pdf, START, published Mar 2016, accessed 10/09/17

[16] Horgan, J. (2009b), *Walking Away From Terrorism: Accounts of Disengagement from Radical and Extremist Movements* (Routledge: London), p. 153

[17] Koehler, D. (2014), *loc. cit.*

radical worldview that justifies the use of violence",[18] then the likelihood of them turning to violence if the same conditions were present is far smaller.

History

The current wave of what are perceived or claimed to be de-radicalization programmes - which target ideology as a primary cause of terrorism - began in earnest when Yemen commenced its own initiatives, following al Qaeda attacks on US and French interests in the country. Fearing Western intervention after the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the Yemeni government felt it had to adjust from its failing and unpopular policy of hardline suppression of al Qaeda, to include 're-education' of captured militants: the Yemeni Committee for Dialogue was born.[19] The prisoners were challenged by the Religious Dialogue Committee (RDC, comprised of five religious scholars) on their views and beliefs. The RDC used the Quran to debate with them, "not on the content but on their *understanding* of the verses and hadiths".[20] Although it was discontinued by 2008 as a result of controversial decisions (like releasing some of the USS Cole attackers), the ideas developed in this programme were exported across the region, notably to Saudi Arabia, but also as far as Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia.[21] Horgan argued that the Yemeni programme would "most closely resemble what one would expect of 'de-radicalization': a softening of views, an acceptance that the individual's pursuit of his objectives using terrorism were illegitimate, immoral and unjustifiable".[22]

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[18] Rabasa, A. (2012), *Angel M. Rabasa - De-radicalizing Islamist Extremists*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24O5FjHG2AA, YouTube, hosted by RumiForum, published 26/04/12, accessed 11/06/17

[19] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (2009), *loc. cit.*

[20] Ibid.

[21] Rabasa, A., Pettyjohn, S., Ghez, J., Boucek, C. (2010), *De-radicalizing Islamist Extremists* (RAND Corporation: California)

[22] Horgan, J. (2009), 'De-radicalization or Disengagement? A Process in Need of Clarity and a Counter-terrorism Initiative in Need of Evaluation', in *International Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 24, Issue 2, pp. 291-8

Pre-Crime Counter-radicalization and Post-Crime De-radicalization

Programmes which deal with those who have not yet engaged in violent crimes are also often referred to as 'de-radicalization' schemes,[23] although by taking Horgan's definition of de-radicalization being a post-crime process, then dealing with pre-crime individuals holding radical views could be called 'counter-radicalization'. Participants of these programmes can be those who possess a radical ideology, or those who are seen to be developing a radical ideology. Largely these take pre-crime schemes place outside of prisons, whereas de-radicalization mostly occurs with people actually convicted of crimes and in prisons. The effects of counter-radicalization and de-radicalization (with different levels of subjects' criminality) are similar in curtailing the ability to hold radical views in a society, the Othering of groups of citizens, and so on, hence the parallel analysis of the two processes.

There is a somewhat stark difference between what are known as 'de-radicalization programmes' that operate inside prisons, and those that operate outside. Schemes that target prisoners largely function to de-radicalize former militants, whilst those that target civilians in a pre-crime space function to prevent radicalization from occurring in the first place.[24] Prison-based de-radicalization programmes range from informal 'chats' between prisoners and imams (as in Victoria, Australia, until the Islamic Council of Victoria recently ended their partnership with the prison), to two-week intense 'courses' teaching prisoners basics of Islam (as in Mauritania), to years-long integrated programmes (as in Saudi Arabia). Most famously Saudi Arabia has engaged in constructing a comprehensive programme; alongside the ideological focus upon which it was first built, it now incorporates "political education, vocational training, painting, physical education and social and economic programs to facilitate reintegration of detainees".[25] It has even tried to find spouses for its prisoners when they are released.[26] The Saudi scheme has been perceived somewhat as a model programme,

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[23] Koehler, D. (2017), *Structural Quality Standards for Work to Intervene with and Counter Violent Extremism*, http://www.kpebw.de/wp-content/uploads/Handbuch-KPEBW-engl.pdf, Counter Extremism Network Coordination Unit, published 2016, accessed 08/09/17

[24] Schmid, A. (2013), *loc. cit.*

[25] El Said, H. (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 256

[26] Rabasa, A. (2012), *loc. cit.*

involving both ideological de-radicalization and continued disengagement through reintegrating them into their communities.[27] Former militants are often used where possible in prison programmes to encourage the de-radicalization of subjects, and it runs classes on a wide range of areas to educate detainees, readying them for eventual rehabilitation.[28] Indonesia's de-radicalization efforts include ensuring that captured Jemaah Islamiyah members spend time with a former commander, Bin Abbas, who challenges their justification for violence against civilians even before the police become involved with the process.[29] However, the Indonesian scheme is far less organized than the Saudi programme: Abuza remarks it remains "underfinanced, understaffed, and not terribly institutionalized".[30] At possibly the lowest level of institutionalization is the Australian de-radicalization initiative, in Victorian prison Goulburn, where imams came and chatted to inmates on an informal basis, and gave lectures on the basic tenets of Islam.[31] The prison authorities are so uneducated on Islamic culture though, that "conversion is not only a cause for concern [for them], but is also taken as a sign of radicalization."[32] Another signifier of the lack of formality of the Victorian scheme was that instead of being allowed to talk in their mother tongue, the prison required that inmates' visitation discussion took place in English, reinforcing "distrust between families and detained relatives on the one hand, and incarceration authorities on the other".[33] Given differences in approach to the prison-based programme and dissatisfaction with other

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[27] Neumann, P. (2013), *How Do Prison De-radicalization Programmes Work?*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5WKyn6nQEs, YouTube, hosted by ICSR, published 09/12/13, accessed 21/06/17

[28] al-Hadlaq, A. (2015), *Saudi Efforts in Counter-Radicalisation and Extremist Rehabilitation*, in eds. Gunaratna, R., Bin Ali, M., *Terrorist Rehabilitation: A New Frontier in Counter-Terrorism* (Imperial College Press: New Jersey), pp. 21-39

[29] Abuza, Z. (2009), 'The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in South East Asia: A Preliminary Assessment', in eds. Bjørgo, T., Horgan, H., *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement* (Routledge: New York), pp. 193-211

[30] Ibid.

[31] El Said, H. (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 29

[32] Ibid., p. 87

[33] Ibid., p. 84

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forms of extremism not being treated in the same way as Islamist violence, the Islamic Council of Victoria in 2017 ended its role in the programme.[34]

Outside of prison settings, *counter*-radicalization is practised even less systematically. Where Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian countries have tended to emphasize the counter-radicalization of individual captured fighters who have engaged in illegality and violence, European efforts (with a couple of notable exceptions) have been aimed more at tackling radical beliefs and 'ideologies' before the threshold into physical violence and crime has been crossed. Although they are often called de-radicalization programmes,[35] by Horgan's definition these preventative schemes are not technically de-radicalization,[36] nor are they disengagement as they intervene before crimes have been committed. Technically counter-radicalization, they could be described as 'risk prevention' schemes (this point is discussed in more detail below). Efforts to keep individuals from engaging in radical violence are much more focussed on the prevention of radical ideologies and encourage the integration of 'at-risk communities' (which are primarily taken to be 'Muslim communities').[37] Some genuine ideology-centred processing does occur outside of the prison setting, however: EXIT-Germany requires that its subjects progress through a "successful challenge of the old ideology… An exit is successful when the fundamental ideologies and purposes of the previous actions have been resolved."[38] Voluntary, non-prison-based programmes mostly target those who have not yet committed crimes, but are those who the authorities consider at-

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[34] Le Grand, C. (2017), *Muslim Mentors Walk away from Jail De-radicalization Programme*, http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/policy/muslim-mentors-walk-away-from-jail-deradicalisation-program/news-story/9411aadf130f14ed39f0254975d53782, The Australian, published 09/06/17, accessed 07/09/17

[35] Della Porta, D., LaFree, G. (2012), 'Guest Editorial: Processes of Radicalization and De-radicalization', in *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, Vol. 6, issue 1, pp. 4-10

[36] For an introduction to the debate around radicalization, de-radicalization and definitions of related concepts, see: Demant, F., Slootman, M., Buijs, F., Tillie, J. (2008), *Decline and Disengagement: An Analysis of Processes of De-radicalisation* (Institute for Migration & Ethnic Studies: Amsterdam); Schmid, A. (2013), *loc. cit.*

[37] Institute for Strategic Dialogue (2010), *PPN Working Paper: De-radicalization*, https://www.counterextremism.org/resources/details/id/115/channel-process, Institute for Strategic Dialogue, published June 2010, accessed 15/06/17, p. 185

[38] European Commission (date unknown), *EXIT-Germany*, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/node/7420_en, European Commission: Migration and Home Affairs, published unknown, accessed 20/06/17

risk of committing crimes.[39] The Channel programme in the UK for instance (technically counter-radicalization) is known as a 'de-radicalization' programme[40] despite extremist violence not having taken place, focusses on the ideology of those referred to it, who move through a series of interventions by officials.

Value of De-radicalization and Counter-radicalization as Practice

The main arguments put forward in support of combating ideological radicalization (often alongside more mechanical disengagement) are that it reduces recidivism from former militants more assuredly in the long-run and, where no crimes have been committed, it reduces the risk of individuals engaging in violence in the first place. Overall its proponents claim that, where successful, combating ideological radicalization is "more enduring, resilient and immune from recidivism"[41] than schemes where ideology is not challenged and reformed. Hamed El Said suggests that de-radicalization programmes save significant sums of public money, because "'wining hearts and minds' is less [financially] costly than waging wars",[42] and consequentially anger at the country's foreign policy is limited, meaning fewer individuals see turning to violence as legitimate. The programmes are also praised, where they accompany rehabilitative practices, for working with friends and families of the individuals on their return to normal life, to ensure that the supporting contacts are vigilant against "radicalization and recruitment",[43] such as is the practice in Saudi Arabia. De-radicalization of the individuals can also be supported by families; in Kuwait, Guantanamo Bay returnees remarked that their families could help to persuade them to abandon violent extremism.[44] This section explores and criticizes the value of de-radicalization against its own claims of success and internal justifications.

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[39] Institute for Strategic Dialogue (2010), *op. cit.*, pp. xx-xxi
[40] BBC (2015), *De-radicalization Programme Referrals on the Rise*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-34469331, BBC, published 08/10/15, accessed 19/06/17
[41] El Said, H. (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 7
[42] Ibid., p. 263
[43] Porges, M., Stern, J. (2010), *Getting De-radicalization Right*, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/persian-gulf/2010-05-01/getting-de-radicalization-right, Foreign Affairs, published 2010, accessed 19/06/17
[44] El Said, H. (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 37

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Measures of Evaluation

The principle justification though for developing and expanding such schemes is that they are claimed to 'work'. Though there is debate about the ideal outcomes of de-radicalization, rates of recidivism are understood to be legitimate markers of a programme's success, and indeed, they are consistently referred to when discussing the effectiveness of programmes and initiatives.[45] Sometimes startlingly and "suspiciously"[46] low rates of recidivism are reported by programme administrators; German right-wing extremism programme EXIT-Germany, which focusses explicitly on countering the subject's extremist ideology, boasts a 3% recidivism rate over 500 cases, for instance.[47] For several years Saudi Arabia remarkably claimed its scheme resulted in 0% recidivism,[48] and the Mauritanian programme led to only 1 arrest from 37 cases of 'de-radicalization'.[49] Claims of overwhelming success, like these, are not uncommon.[50]

However, the stats produced are arguably misleading for a number of reasons. Often the results are misreported: Saudi Arabia moved its estimate from zero to 5-7% of the participants of its comprehensive (de-radicalization and reintegration) programme being re-arrested,[51] later made an admission that actually 10-20% recidivism was more accurate,[52] but the director of the University of St. Mary's Center for Terrorism Lt. Col. Jeff Addicott states the figure is more likely to be nearer 30-40%.[53] Furthermore, the Saudi Security Subcommittee places "tight restrictions on what [programme participants] may do and with

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[45] Koehler, D. (2017), *Understanding De-radicalization: Methods, Tools and Programs for Countering Violent Extremism* (Routledge: New York), p. 172

[46] Horgan, J., Braddock, K. (2010), *loc. cit.*

[47] EXIT-Deutschland (date unknown), *EXIT-Germany: We Provide Ways out of Extremism*, http://www.exit-deutschland.de/english, EXIT-Deutschland, published unknown, accessed 22/06/17

[48] Koehler, D. (2014), *loc. cit.*

[49] El Said, H. (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 134

[50] Porges, M. (2010), *The Saudi De-radicalization Experiment*, https://www.cfr.org/expert-brief/saudi-de-radicalization-experiment, Council on Foreign Relations, published 22/01/10, accessed 21/06/17

[51] Gardner, F. (2008), *Saudi Jails Aim to Tackle Terror*, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/7220797.stm, BBC, published 31/01/08, accessed 22/06/17

[52] Koehler, D. (2014), *loc. cit.*

[53] Lt. Col. Addicott, J., in Fox News (2010), *More Guantanamo Detainees are Returning to Terror upon Release*, http://www.foxnews.com/us/2010/03/29/gitmo-detainees-return-terror.html, Fox News, published 29/03/10, accessed 16/07/17

whom they may associate"[54] even after they have 'graduated'. Had these individuals been truly de-radicalized and really come to believe in the ideals of the state, they would not need such stringent governmental oversight. As well as the 'spinning' of actual data, Ferguson notes that recidivism rates amongst political terrorists can be consistently and significantly lower than 'normal' criminals, regardless of their participation in ideologically-based reformative programmes.[55] More structurally, the real incidence of reoffending is hidden through different understandings of who the subjects of de-radicalization are. EXIT-Germany, for example, demonstrates a 2% reoffending rate, but the individuals subjected to the programme are in fact volunteers, and have contacted EXIT to help them leave the extremist groups they've been involved with.[56] These individuals are *actively looking to remove themselves from the groups*, and can therefore be counted as 'soft' targets for de-radicalization. This is not even accounting for 'abortions', or those who don't make it through the programme.[57] Other programmes' alleged low level of recidivism should also be questioned; El Said notes in his study examining de-radicalization and disengagement programmes that "the most radical [individuals in the Mauritanian programme]… refused even to participate in the dialogue process."[58] Had the scheme represented all of the militants, the rate of recidivism may have been far higher than that which was reported. Similarly, despite relatively low levels of reported recidivism in the reputed Saudi Arabian programme, its de-radicalizing efforts are focussed not explicitly on violent extremists, but lower-level supporters who "are said not to have blood on their hands."[59] The Institution for Strategic Dialogue comments that it directs its efforts towards

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[54] Braddock, K. (2013), 'The Talking Cure: Communication and Psychological Impact in Prison De-radicalization Programmes', in ed. Silke, A., *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism: Critical Issues in Management, Radicalization and Reform* (Routledge: London), pp. 60-74

[55] Ferguson, N. (2016), 'Disengaging from Terrorism: A Northern Irish Experience', in *Journal for De-radicalization*, Vol. 6, Spring Issue, pp. 1-29

[56] European Commission (date unknown), *EXIT-Germany*, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/node/7420_en, European Commission: Migration and Home Affairs, published unknown, accessed 20/06/17

[57] Koehler, D. (2017), *op. cit.*, p. 172-4

[58] El Said, H. (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 134

[59] Rabasa, A. (2012), *loc. cit.*

"reforming terrorist sympathizers and supporters, not hard-core militants. This has become increasingly apparent in light of the number of Saudi Guantanamo detainees who have returned to terrorism upon their release."[60]

This method obviously distorts the perceived potential impact of de-radicalization, but it poses some tough questions: does this esteemed de-radicalization model (that has shaped the formation of others) deem some individuals as unable to be 'brought back from the brink'? Is the process deemed only to work on those who haven't committed actual violence? Programmes that intervene in the purely pre-criminal space also suffer from the inherent problem of measuring recidivism. How is the level of threat they were deemed to pose effectively measured against the new, lowered risk, and at what point do they return to posing a threat and are said to have experienced or committed 'recidivism'? This is surely an overwhelmingly subjective - and therefore poor - metric for understanding perceived risks against the state.

As well as the problem of de-radicalization schemes often focussing on pre- and low-level criminals, the case of Northern Ireland demonstrates how figures can also not accurately represent the truth; the Independent Monitoring Commission reported only on murders that took place, none of which were carried out by groups involved in the political peace settlement that had disavowed violence. But a far higher number of non-fatal shootings and assaults took place in the country, and Horgan and Braddock suggest "it is likely that some shootings and assaults"[61] were ultimately carried out by these groups. The murder rate in Belfast is consistently around 50% higher than that of London, and has seen the second highest rates only to Glasgow across the whole of the UK over time.[62] The Saudi programme has been reported to challenge the validity of attacks in Saudi Arabia as it is not occupied by a foreign power and enjoys an Islamic government (de-radicalization), but simultaneously has

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[60] Institute for Strategic Dialogue (2010), *op. cit.*, p. xvi
[61] Horgan, J., Braddock, K. (2010), *loc. cit.*
[62] Irish Examiner (2009), *Dublin Ranks 6th Among European Capitals for Murder Rates*, http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/icrime/dublin-ranks-6th-among-european-capitals-for-murder-rate-81103.html, Irish Examiner, published 02/01/09, accessed 16/07/17

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not discouraged 'jihad' outside the borders in occupied or apostate states.[63] This tactic helps to reduce the domestic rates of recidivism and obviously helps to bolster security, but de-radicalization (and disengagement) is not truthfully being achieved.[64] Pakistan has faced similar criticism; violent extremists are dissuaded from attacking Pakistanis, but of Indians are told "it's not wrong to want to kill these infidels or apostates."[65] Taking recidivism figures at face-value is therefore short-sighted and inadvisable; as a metric these statistics may not be a useful representation of the effectiveness of de-radicalization programmes, given the diverse variables involved.

Moreover, relying on recidivism rates of subjects to demonstrate relative successes implies that the de-radicalization (and disengagement) programmes in question are a variable and therefore *the* - or at least *a* - *cause* of the avoidance of further violence. In Australia, the prisoners once released are subjected to constant surveillance, and the risks involved in re-engaging in criminal activity are therefore very high.[66] Evaluating the impact of their ideological reformation is consequentially very challenging. Though Neumann suggests that the best programmes take a comprehensive approach, incorporating both ideological and rehabilitative practices,[67] Rabasa emphasizes that ideology remains the "glue that holds [the groups] together [and] provides an explanation for the grievances",[68] a position assumed by governments that has driven a perceived need for ideologically-based counter- and de-radicalization initiatives. However, demonstrating actual *causality* rather than merely explanations of the acquisition or possession of a radical ideology on the engagement in terrorism appears futile. As most programmes consist of both psychological and practical

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[63] Rabasa, A. (2012), *loc. cit.*
[64] Institute for Strategic Dialogue (2010), *op. cit.*, p. xvi
[65] Shahin, S. (2015), *De-radicalization: Sharing Best Practices - ICT15*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=426pLAaFjco&t=373s, YouTube, hosted by International Institution for Counter-terrorism (CT), published 20/12/15, accessed 23/06/17
[66] El Said, H. (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 92
[67] Neumann, P. (2010), *Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalization and De-radicalization in 15 Countries*, http://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/1277699166PrisonsandTerrorismRadicalisationandDe-radicalisationin15Countries.pdf, International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence, published 2010, accessed 15/06/17, p. 47
[68] Rabasa, A. (2012), *loc. cit.*

aspects, it remains onerous to determine "which part of these efforts produces moderation."[69] The Yemeni approach, which was almost entirely focussed on countering prisoners' ideology,[70] was not renowned for its low recidivism; Mustafa Alani, the Gulf Research Centre's then Director of Security, noted that the programme suffered from 70% recidivism (those being arrested for terrorism-related offences).[71] Ferguson elucidates the difficulty of using recidivism rates to demonstrate the effectiveness of such programmes: "What would be a successful recidivism rate for terrorists, and how would we know the program created this low rate of recidivism?"[72] Until these questions have been answered, evaluating their value will remain as speculation, rather than science.

Though recidivism has been taken as a default metric of success of de-radicalization (at least by its practitioners), in an area so beset by opacity some consider it appropriate to challenge what success could even mean.[73] After all, how could what is essentially deemed a psychological process be measured in practical results? How can those who have only supported - rather than engaged in - radical violence be deemed successfully de-radicalized by not engaging in an activity they were never engaged in? Koehler himself notes that "the de-radicalization field globally is more or less completely free of any working standards".[74] Evaluative methods *have* been suggested by various academics and the discussion is slowly but surely moving forwards.[75] Those like Koehler are driving a conceptual approach, such as in *Structural Quality Standards for Work to Intervene with and Counter Violent Extremism*, where he urged minimum working standards in the field to allow for greater consistency in

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[69] Institute for Strategic Dialogue (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 184
[70] Neumann, P. (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 51
[71] Gardner, F. (2008), *Saudi Jails Aim to Tackle Terror*,
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/7220797.stm, BBC, published 31/01/08, accessed 22/06/17
[72] Ferguson, N. (2016), *loc cit.*
[73] Horgan, J., Braddock, K. (2010), *loc. cit.*
[74] Koehler, D., in Koerner, B. (2017), *A Controversial New Programme Aims to Reform Homegrown ISIS Recruits back into Normal Young Americans*, https://www.wired.com/2017/01/can-you-turn-terrorist-back-into-citizen/, Wired, published 24/01/17, accessed 13/02/17
[75] For a discussion on evaluation methods, see: Szmania, S., Mastreo, C. (2016), *Surveying CVE Metrics in Prevention, Disengagement and De-radicalization Programmes*,
https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_SurveyingCVEMetrics_March2016.pdf, START, published Mar 2016, accessed 10/09/17

evaluation.[76] Alongside this standards-driven movement, in-depth, case-based evaluations are also taking place: Michael Williams, John Horgan and William Evans examined a single US-based programme that, whilst accepting its limitations in terms of scale and measuring the causality of different variables, showed that a flexible and localized approach to measuring the countering of violent extremism could prove valuable.[77] In what Horgan and Braddock considered a viable method by which to analyse risk-reduction programmes, the Multiattribute Utility Technology,[78] its authors Edwards and Newman proposed that such programmes should be evaluated using actual data, and the building of similar new programmes should be informed by statistics.[79] Likewise, Williams and Kleinman have developed a 'roadmap' by which schemes can be evaluated, including a greater role for stakeholders to determine the meaning and validity of a programme's success.[80] However, serious issues around the evaluation of programmes still exist. Who measures a programme's success is also a matter of debate; Szmania and Mastreo remarked that a Yemeni judge oversaw the evaluation of a programme, but that a "psychologist, a teacher, or a family member"[81] could determine success very differently. Furthermore, if statistics and practices are country- and even programme-specific, based on how they each calculate their successes differently, it remains problematic to attempt to encourage coherent practice with highly disparate contexts. Compared to far more mechanical disengagement efforts to rehabilitate former militants on both an individual and collective level, such as FARC or AUC militants in Colombia[82] where the metrics of success are more clearly gauged (the laying down of arms,

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[76] Koehler, D. (2017), *Structural Quality Standards for Work to Intervene with and Counter Violent Extremism*, http://www.kpebw.de/wp-content/uploads/Handbuch-KPEBW-engl.pdf, Counter Extremism Network Coordination Unit, published 2016, accessed 08/09/17

[77] Williams, M., Horgan, J., Evans, W. (2016), *Evaluation of a Multi-Faceted US Community-Based, Muslim-led CVE Programme*, https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/249936.pdf, National Criminal Justice Reference Service, published 2016, accessed 09/09/17

[78] Horgan, J., Braddock, K. (2010), *loc. cit.*

[79] Edwards, W., Newman, J. (1982), *Multiattribute Evaluation* (Sage: London), p. 10

[80] Williams, M., Kleinman, S. (2013), 'A Utilization-Focused Guide for Conducting Terrorism Risk Reduction Program Evaluations', in *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, Vol. 6, Issue 2, pp. 102-46

[81] Szmania, S., Mastreo, C. (2016), *loc. cit.*

[82] Fink, N., Hearne, E. (2008), *Beyond Terrorism: De-radicalization and Disengagement from Violent Extremism*, https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/beter.pdf, International Peace Institute, published 2008, accessed 20/06/17

for example), the chronic shortage of evaluative processes in de-radicalization schemes - let alone consideration of what could constitute consistent evaluation methods[83] - only highlights the distance to go regarding the practice of de-radicalization. Though Koehler's landmark 2017 volume *Understanding De-radicalization* systematized knowledge on existing counter- and de-radicalization schemes, it highlighted the diverse approaches to challenging ideologies in the various countries.[84] It is often unclear why those deemed de-radicalized have been released from prison in different regions, and programmes suffer from a lack of evaluative processes by which they could offer their justifications or be judged.[85] Abuza writes that in some 'de-radicalization programmes', there is in fact no evidence indicating the released prisoners encountered any de-radicalizing processes whatsoever.[86] A core element of policy making is that "policy makers clearly define the outcomes the policy is designed to achieve,"[87] but Horgan and Braddock conclude that it is "practically impossible to ascertain what is implied by or expected from programs that claim to be able to de-radicalize terrorists."[88] In France, a cottage industry has arisen of activists and non-experts who successfully apply for portions of the abundant funding to practise counter- and de-radicalization; this scenario has been encouraged by the lack of standards and evaluation of such practice.[89] France24 reported that amongst a "basket of hustlers"[90] one activist had personally acquired €60,000 out of government de-radicalization grants, and who had been involved in over a dozen cases of fraud and scamming. The country's approach has been

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[83] El Said, H. (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 6
[84] Koehler, D. (2017), *loc. cit.*
[85] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (2009), *loc. cit.*
[86] Abuza, Z. (2009), *loc. cit.*
[87] UK Cabinet Office (1999), *Professional Policy Making for the Twenty First Century*, http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/6320/1/profpolicymaking.pdf, Strategic Policy Making Team, published Sept 1999, accessed 15/06/17
[88] Horgan, J., Braddock, K. (2010), *loc. cit.*
[89] Troendle, C. (2017), *'Disentanglement, De-integration and Reintegration of Jihadists in France and in Europe': The Fact-Finding Mission of the Senate's Law Commission Presents its Progress Report*, https://www.senat.fr/presse/cp20170222a.html, French Senate, published 22/02/17, accessed 09/09/17
[90] Jacinto, L. (2017), *France's 'De-radicalization Gravy Train' Runs out of Steam*, http://www.france24.com/en/20170801-france-jihad-deradicalisation-centre-closes-policy, France24, published 02/08/17, accessed 09/09/11

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described as a "total fiasco"[91] as the only one of the twelve planned de-radicalization centres has been closed down due to lack of demand. Offering space for 25 individuals, it only ever welcomed 9 and none of those ever completed the programme.[92] Similarly, in Australia, it has been reported that an industry emerged almost overnight, proliferated by previously unknown groups and individuals with little research track record or access to radicalized youths."[93] Expert in extremism at Edith Cowan University Anne Aly notes that the Australian CVE field "has become an enterprise… It's cut throat."[94] Programmes have been found largely to be self-evaluated, and like France, possessing little - if any - governmental oversight, with no standardized working practices or methods of evaluation.[95] With the development of the field still taking place and only the very beginnings of working standards starting to form, it is crucial that a field relatively saturated by non-expert practitioners should be driven by the principles outlined in the works mentioned above. Otherwise misallocation of resources, and practice-driven failure will continue.

Whilst this learning progresses, we must ask whether the practice of combating ideological radicalization and its consequences be better understood so that policy more appropriately deals with threats to our societies. This article aims to accomplish exactly that - to move the debate forwards, and hopefully contribute to a better method of countering the risks of terrorism, taking into consideration an accurate level of threat it poses. Those currently attempting to combat radicalization, in a time where understanding of the causes of terrorism and the effects and success of anti-terror policies in their infancy, often promote the

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[91] Senator Bas, P., quoted in McAuley, J. (2017), France's Deradicalization Centers Seen as a 'Total Fiasco', https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/frances-deradicalization-centers-are-a-total-fiasco-lawmakers-say/2017/02/24/218a8072-fa97-11e6-aa1e-5f735ee31334_story.html?utm_term=.9c03c0a9b7e4#comments, Washington Post, published 24/02/17, accessed 09/09/17

[92] Moore, J. (2017), *France, Worst Hit by ISIS Attacks in Europe, to Close only De-radicalization Centre*, http://www.newsweek.com/france-worst-hit-isis-attacks-europe-close-only-de-radicalization-center-643260, Newsweek, published 28/07/17, accessed 08/09/11

[93] Olding, R. (2016), *The Multi-Million Dollar De-radicalization Business*, http://www.smh.com.au/national/the-multimillion-dollar-deradicalisation-business-20160212-gmske3.html, The Sydney Morning Herald, published 12/02/16, accessed 09/11/17

[94] Aly, A., in ibid.

[95] Harris-Horgan, S., Barrelle, K., Zammit, A. (2016), 'What is Countering Violent Extremism? Exploring CVE Policy and Practice in Australia', *Behavioural Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, Vol. 8, Issue 1, pp. 6-24

concept that its value - though not truly understood - is greater than the risks of not 'de-radicalizing' individuals.[96] John Horgan alludes to this notion in the foreword to Koehler's *Understanding De-radicalization*, commenting that

> "those who care about the extraordinary social and psychological toll associated with terrorism cannot sit idly by while academics and politicians pontificate on whether we are using appropriate definitions, language, and terminology."[97]

However, although the argument put forward by Horgan and others criticizing ivory-tower debate[98] is persuasive, it could be seen to suggest that *any* attempt at finding a solution is valid and necessary, and that results are unimportant. In a field where respective successes or failures have been impossible to assess, it is incumbent upon academics to challenge policy makers and practitioners in order to improve policy, and move the debate forwards in search of better practice. Considering other alternatives encourages the development of better practice, and helps to understand the consequences for relevant groups within society. More information, where there exists largely only policy makers' assumption and practitioners' intuition,[99] can only be a step in the right direction. Policy makers consistently call for an emphasis on evidence-based policy informed by previous practice and "robust evidence".[100]

More importantly, the hegemonic discourse (a society's dominant narrative driven through speeches, policy and practice for instance) changes how policy in the future is approached. For instance, the discourse on terrorism before the 9/11 attacks, which highlighted its apocalyptic nature and indicated its existential threat,[101] helped to enable the West to wage its 'War on Terror'.[102] If the narrative had existed where 9/11 was viewed as an anomaly rather than a harbinger of devastating terrorism, the wars in Afghanistan and later

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[96] Koerner, B. (2017), *loc. cit.*
[97] Horgan J., in Koehler, D. (2017), *op. cit.*, p. xii
[98] Koerner, B. (2017), *loc. cit.*
[99] Koehler, D., in ibid.
[100] HM UK Government (2012), *The Civil Service Reform Plan*, https://www.epims.ogc.gov.uk/CollaborationGPU/public/CSRP-web.pdf?id=15507f72-cad6-45f7-8b50-56d688ff4edc, published June 2012, accessed 15/06/17, p. 14
[101] Laqueur, W. (1999), *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction* (Phoenix Press: London), p. 127
[102] Tsui, C-K. (2016), *Clinton, New Terrorism and the Origins of the War on Terror* (Routledge: London), pp. 32-50

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Iraq may never have happened. Policy makers must be careful how they approach the causes of extremism and how extremists are treated following the cessation of their crimes, because as we allow these discourses (through practice) to become hegemonic, they affect how we approach policymaking in the future. Taking a practitioner-driven rather than an academic approach can contribute to current practices or perspectives not being challenged, and result in policy makers developing policy without understanding the potential consequences for society.

Ideology as a Cause?

As part of deducing how legitimate the aims of combating ideological radicalization are, we much challenge its internal justifications. It takes ideology as a central cause of terrorism, or *the main* risk factor in encouraging individuals to turn to violence to accomplish their goals. Whilst many prison-based programmes focus on social rehabilitation, they often also attempt to perform ideological transformation, and schemes aiming to prevent violence outside of prison settings also endeavour to counter their subjects' 'radical ideologies', focussing emphatically on their beliefs and the frame through which they view the world. The National Consortium for Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, after undertaking quantitative research on better understanding terrorism and disengagement, found there was "no empirical support"[103] upholding many ideologically-focussed approaches. However, are practices that target ideology justified in principle? How far does a radical ideology actually cause terrorism to a point where it becomes desirable to spend public money, time and effort countering it?

The logic of de-radicalization rests upon the ability to reverse 'psychological processes' and violent ideologies, however, academics have seriously contested the ability of practitioners to reverse these processes. Horgan asks, "Can this actually be done in the ways

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[103] START (2011), *I-VEO Knowledge Matrix*, http://start.foxtrotdev.com/#, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, published 2011, accessed 22/04/17

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that such initiatives suggest? The answer to this is, very simply, *no*."[104] Furthermore, the argument that "ideas do not necessarily lead to violence"[105] has been championed by Horgan and Bjørgo as the preeminent scholars in the field. They challenge the perception of any causal link between ideology and radical violence, rejecting the assumption that individuals can be effectively dissuaded from partaking in terrorism by reversing some radical ideological stance.[106] Instead, rather than a fundamentalist world view causing engagement in violence, they suggest that a fundamentalist ideology is acquired only *following* the individual's incorporation with a group.[107] Although there are cases where leaders who have quit their respective movements attempt to 'de-radicalize' their former comrades by denouncing terrorism as a method by which to attain their goals,[108] it does not necessarily follow that de-radicalization and disengagement from violence are causally associated; an individual can abandon violence without relinquishing their extreme perspectives.[109] Indeed, Atran suggests that "people don't simply kill and die for a cause. They kill and die for each other."[110] Evidence supports the position of these scholars; where groups have participated in collective disengagement, some fighters retain their allegiance to the aspirations of the group whilst it was actively in combat; exploring Colombian insurgent groups, the Human Rights Watch notes that "while [former fighters] may be disengaged, they are not necessarily 'de-radicalized'."[111] Horgan emphasizes that in all of his interviews from 2006-2008, whilst the vast majority were physically disengaged, none of them was actually truly de-radicalized;

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[104] Horgan, J. (2010), 'De-radicalisation or Disengagement? A Process in Need of Clarity and a Counterterrorism Initiative in Need of Evaluation', in *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 2, Issue. 4, pp. 3-8

[105] Heath-Kelly, C. (forthcoming 2017), 'Is Counter-radicalization an Effective Counterterrorist Tool?: NO' in *Contemporary Debates on Terrorism, 2nd Edition*, eds. Jackson, R., Pisoiu, D. (Routledge: Abingdon), Ch. 14

[106] Bjørgo, T., Horgan, J. (2009), *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement* (Routledge: Abington), p.28

[107] Ibid., pp. 1-13

[108] Clubb, G. (2009), 'Re-evaluating the Disengagement Process: the Case of Fatah', in *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 3, Issue 3, pp. 25-35

[109] Della Porta, D., LaFree, G. (2012), *loc. cit.*

[110] Atran, S. (2011), *Talking to the Enemy: Violent Extremism, Sacred Values and What it Means to Be Human* (Penguin: London), preface

[111] Human Rights Watch (2005), *Smoke and Mirrors: Colombia's Demobilization of Paramilitary Groups*, from http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2005/07/31/smoke-and-mirrors?print, Human Rights Watch, published 2005, accessed 20/06/17

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each had retained the views they had possessed whilst being active in their respective groups.[112] Studying Northern Irish former combatants, Ferguson found that despite whilst they now denounced violence and worked with counter-radicalization programmes, many subjects "had actually become more radical through their time in the organization or especially whilst in prison rather than less".[113] This finding suggests that to attempt to 'de-radicalize' these individuals would not necessarily be productive and could even be *counter*productive; if they were to become less passionate or 'ideological', it could result in them losing interest in preventing further violence and working towards more political solutions. Is encouraging such militants to consider alternatives to violence whilst they become more passionately ideological still an act of de-radicalization? If so, the aim of ideologically-de-radicalizing an individual becomes even more questionable. Afghanistan has developed its own disengagement programme, which sees incoming Taliban fighters as having "little ideological baggage".[114] The Indonesian 'de-radicalization' programme reportedly subjects its participants to minimal ideological assessment,[115] and those that disavow violence are said to base their renunciations on financial incentives and early-release rather than actually believing that terrorism is not legitimate. Money and personal freedom, it appears, plays more of a role in disengagement than the inmates' religious ideologies that justify the radical violence.[116] One study of individuals who were recommended to be researched by the authorities (including the police) for their exemplary behavioural transformation from terrorism to disengagement and for promoting an anti-violence message, found that these individuals were fervently critical of the Indonesian de-radicalization scheme. One participant who had passed through the programme said that "de-radicalization

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[112] Horgan, J. (2009a), *loc. cit.*
[113] Ferguson, N. (2016), *loc cit.*
[114] Neumann, P. (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 51
[115] Horgan, J., Braddock, K. (2010), *loc. cit.*
[116] Crisis Group (2007), *'De-radicalization' and Indonesian Prisons*, https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/indonesia/de-radicalisation-and-indonesian-prisons, Crisis Group, published 19/11/07, accessed 24/06/17

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is good if it is successful in performing social re-integration"[117] - a perspective that misunderstands the academic definition of de-radicalization but that ultimately rejects the importance of ideology in causing terrorism, or the importance of a de-radicalized ideology on recidivism rates. All of these examples show that attempting to change a former violent extremist's ideological stance may not be the most appropriate method to reduce recidivism; in some cases retaining a radical ideology even encourages the abstinence from violence and a move towards political solutions.

De-radicalization is often confused for mechanical disengagement,[118] resulting in many rehabilitative programmes being labelled 'de-radicalization' initiatives. However, they often do engage in religious discussions, or touch on issues that could be considered ideological. However, Porges and Stern note that this occurs to cultivate an environment where behavioural reform could be effected; exploration of an individual's ideology is therefore sometimes only a vehicle to more mechanical disengagement.[119] It can therefore be argued that the priority of schemes that look after imprisoned former combatants is to ensure a smooth transition back into their families and communities, through their practical training and education.[120]

Shaping Discourse

This section pertains largely to those programmes that are considered to practice de-radicalization, though are more scientifically defined as counter-radicalization; they are preventative, risk-minimizing schemes that step in and prevent crimes from taking place. Being one of the most internationally recognized and approaches in countering violent extremism and whose ideas have been exported across the globe,[121] the British model

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[117] Participant N, in Sukabdi, Z. (2015), 'Terrorism in Indonesia: A Review on Rehabilitation and De-radicalization', in *Journal of Terrorism Research*, Vol. 6, pp. 36-56
[118] Della Porta, D., LaFree, G. (2012), *loc. cit.*
[119] Porges, M., Stern, J. (2010), *loc. cit.*
[120] El Said, H. (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 32
[121] Koehler, D. (2017), *op. cit.*, p. 243

(operating in the "pre-crime"[122] space) has placed a discriminate focus on individuals espousing significantly critical perspectives. When such programmes operate preventatively, because of limited resources they will necessarily discriminate, prioritizing the targeting of individuals who possess characteristics that correlate with people who have committed terrorist attacks in the past. In Britain this has tended to be Muslims; since the 7/7 bombings committed by individuals confessing an allegiance with the Islamic faith, Muslims have been the priority target for British anti-terror efforts, under which the practice of counter- and de-radicalization falls. The following discussion, taking the British model as the principal case study, makes three distinct arguments: firstly that such practices silence legitimate grievances from being discussed within societies; secondly that this vacuum of silence allows states to promote their preferred version of religion and ideology; and thirdly that the perceptions over de-radicalization programmes encourage an Othering of groups within society who share characteristics of those being 'de-radicalized'.

Silences Discussion

Where preventative programmes exist to step in before a 'radical ideology' develops into physical terrorism, they encourage - and even necessitate - the profiling of individuals based on their correlations with previous (and high-profile) attacks. The most potent example is Channel, the intervention arm of the UK's Prevent programme that attempts to minimize the threat of violent extremism. Since 2015, those in UK public institutions are required to refer those they suspect of harbouring extremist views to the Channel programme, at which point officials then step in and walk through the individual's ideology with them.[123] At the same time, criminal charges are now being brought for far lower-level threats, and the entrapment overwhelmingly of Muslims has become standard practice. Those deemed vulnerable or capable of engaging in terrorism are duped "into committing crimes that would

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[122] Ibid., p. 6
[123] UK Government (2014), *Counter-terrorism and Security Act*, https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/counter-terrorism-and-security-bill, Home Office, published 26/11/14, accessed 12/02/17

never have occurred [without the authorities'] inducement".[124] Kundnani talks about the Demographics Unit established in America, where undercover officers and informants are paid to visit what are essentially thought to be 'high-vulnerability' locations - largely mosques - and listen out for "hostility to the US".[125] In 2008, the FBI had at least 15,000 informants on their books.[126] This phenomenon is no secret; Muslim organizations and mosques are well aware that their conversations may be being recorded and reported.[127]

This profiling that results from authorities targeting certain people-groups to assist either their preventative counter-radicalization (in the UK) or their arrest (in the US), has the effect of silencing the profiled targets. The Muslim Council of Britain points out that children have been deemed to be threats and referred for preventative ideological 'de-radicalization' for a range of absurd reasons, including the possession of a 'boycott Israel' leaflet and 'Free Palestine' badges.[128] Since the attacks of 9/11 and the consequential development of preventative programmes, mosques have been pressurized to expel those demonstrating radical views (even about their opposition to Western foreign policy), rather than to encourage discussion and debate, meaning that in public settings, radical views are rarely aired.[129] Though the UK Government has expressed its desire for controversial topics to be debated in classrooms,[130] it is also mandatory for teachers to refer children for 'de-radicalization' for bringing up their "concern about British policy in the Middle East"[131] as a potential sign of radicalization. How does thought-provoking debate take place where the

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[124] Sageman, M. (2016), *Misunderstanding Terrorism* (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia), p. 56
[125] Galati, T. (2012), *Handschu v. Special Services Division*, US District Court, Southern District of New York, 28/06/12, p. 31, quoted in Kundnani, A. (2014), *The Muslims Are Coming: Islamophobia, Extremism, and the Domestic War on Terrorism* (Verso: London), p. 136
[126] Kundnani, A. (2014), *op. cit.*, p. 97
[127] Ibid., p. 199
[128] Muslim Council of Britain (2015), *Meeting Between David Anderson QC and the MCB*, https://www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/20150803-Case-studies-about-Prevent.pdf, Muslim Council of Britain, published 2015, accessed 28/06/17
[129] Kundnani, A. (2014), *op. cit.*, p. 288
[130] UK Government (2015), *The Prevent Duty*, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/439598/prevent-duty-departmental-advice-v6.pdf, Department for Education, published June 2015, accessed 19/06/17, p. 7
[131] Shabi, R. (2016), *De-radicalizing Britain: The Activists Turning Young Muslims Away from Extremism*, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/mar/18/de-radicalising-britain-the-activists-turning-young-muslims-away-from-extremism, The Guardian, published 18/03/16, accessed 11/06/17

terms of engagement are so restricted? Teaching unions have opposed the legal duty to report their students, claiming that such an approach "encourages lecturers to spy on their students and will inhibit academic discussion."[132] If preventative de-radicalization is accelerated and more definitively enforced, which seems to be accelerating - the UK is developing a mandatory rather than purely voluntary scheme, and US President Trump has indicated that its preventative focus will confront solely 'Islamist extremism' - then this trend is only likely to continue.

This emphasis on counter-radicalization validates the perception that radicalism itself is dangerous, and suppresses the communication of radical thoughts and ideas in our societies. The Saudi Religious Subcommittee, a part of the Saudi approach to de-radicalization, is comprised of state-approved individuals (clerics, university scholars, religious experts) who discuss with detainees their interpretations of religious texts "with the goal of persuading them to adopt a more moderate ideology";[133] in effect seeking to suppress radicalism. Individuals and groups who have historically been perceived as radicals, like the suffragist movement or those campaigning for civil rights in the US, have ensured a more equal society.[134] If we quash the ability even to hold radical views, there is a danger we quash opportunities for social and systemic reform. Had the practice of preventative de-radicalization existed when the Suffragette movement in the UK was active, it is not inconceivable that they may have been subjected to such programmes. Where preventative measures are becoming mandatory (as in the UK, which has typically exported its counterradicalization policies abroad), parallels can be drawn between current programmes and the process of silencing of the political objectives of Italian left-wing militants following their defeat and imprisonment in the 1970s. Heath-Kelly, in studying the political violence of the 'Years of Lead' in Italy, explores the rewards such as early release or employment

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[132] EIS (2016), *ULA Annual Conference 2016*, https://www.eis.org.uk/print.asp?id=3348&dbase=, EIS, published 18/07/16, accessed 20/06/17

[133] Braddock, K. (2013), *loc. cit.*

[134] Fitzgerald, A. (2014), *Being Labelled a 'Radical' Is Meant to Be an Insult. History Tells Us Otherwise*, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jan/20/we-need-radicals-for-social-change, Guardian, published 20/01/14, accessed 25/06/17

presented to militants who denounce violence, writing that "the significance of renunciation seems to relate to the reintegration of the militant into the reach of the administration."[135] She found that whilst in prison, those who had been involved in killing, maiming and bombing during the political turmoil in Italy had organically organized discussion and decided to abandon armed struggle. Following their shift in perspective, the state viewed these very same individuals completely differently; despite still having the exact same history, the sentences of 'the disassociated' as they became known were ended and they were released.[136] This appears to be a similar technique deployed under contemporary programmes that combat radicalization: radical stances that challenge the state's power are solved by the state by re-imposing its hegemony through paternalistic targeting of imprisoned subjects' personal values and political outlook, and rewarding them when 'divergents' align themselves with the state's view of what is acceptable to believe. The Italian state, in forgiving its opponents who had (at least outwardly) realigned with its own values was employing this pastoral power to bolster its legitimacy and curtail criticism. In a similar way, current de-radicalization efforts encourage citizens to retain mainstream, non-radical mindsets that don't challenge its hegemony. They are undertaken to ensure the continuance of the dominant narrative that the state 'knows best', and that violent extremism is only ever destructive and has no aims. Where radical mindsets *are* found (in violent and non-violent individuals), they are subjected to a discourse that states that the acceptance of the "authority of any elected Government in this country"[137] is mandatory and any rejection of which is a sign of radicalization. This could become a dangerous precedent; if genuine discrimination is occurring - as happened against women in previous times - and some turn to violence as a result, rather than addressing the actual issues, governments may rely more on de-radicalization than debate within society to fix the problem.

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[135] Heath-Kelly, C. (2013), *Politics of Violence* (Routledge: London), p. 147

[136] Ibid., p. 119-49

[137] HM UK Government (2010), *Channel: Supporting Individuals Vulnerable to Recruitment by Violent Extremists*, http://tna.europarchive.org/20100419081706/http:/security.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-publications/publication-search/prevent/channel-guidance?view=Binary, HM Government, published March 2010, accessed 15/06/17, p. 9

This comparison highlights that combating perceived radicalization allows a state to impose its dominance by spreading its version of acceptability, and especially in prison programmes to enforce a state-sanctioned version of *religion* on the participants. Officials from the Victorian prison scheme noted that they had "two other imams and we had to let them go too because they were not doing and saying the right things. We are now looking for new imams."[138] Saudi Arabia has developed a counter-radicalization approach whereby its Ministry of Culture and Information "sends religious experts to schools and mosques to preach the dangers of radicalism."[139] The power of the state is concisely described by Braddock as he discusses the options put before individuals caught for terrorist offences:

> They may either take part in a rehabilitation process and renounce their loyalty to the terrorist movement of which they are a part, or they can face prosecution for terrorist-related offences and be sent to a Saudi prison. If the individual chooses to undergo rehabilitation, Saudi officials ask participants what they did and why they did it… Members of the Advisory Committee respond by showing how participants' interpretations of Islam are incorrect, and offer a more moderate interpretation of the Qur'an upon which the remainder of the rehabilitation programme is based.[140]

So they can either choose to lose their freedom for years for the crimes they committed, or accept the Saudi Arabian government's interpretation of the Qur'an, much like the case in Italy. Governments in Muslim-majority countries, or where Islam is the official religion, are often willing to involve themselves in promoting the country's official doctrine, or a doctrine that doesn't harm its interests. This can lead to previously mentioned complications whereby the prisoners are ordered not to attack their own Islamic societies, but attacking others is not necessarily wrong. Where countries adopt counter-radicalization schemes, they approach interlocutors - organizations who could appeal to the profiled groups - to convey their desired

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[138] High-ranking Goulburn Prison officer, in El Said, H. (2015), *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism: Designing and Evaluating Counter-Radicalization and Dr-Radicalization Programs* (Palgrave Macmillan: London), p. 83

[139] al-Hadlaq, A. (2015), *Saudi Efforts in Counter-Radicalisation and Extremist Rehabilitation*, in eds. Gunaratna, R., Bin Ali, M., *Terrorist Rehabilitation: A New Frontier in Counter-Terrorism* (Imperial College Press: New Jersey), pp. 21-39

[140] Braddock, K. (2013), *loc. cit.*

message that emphasizes unity, shared resilience and values supporting the maintenance of the status quo.[141] In these countries - often being liberal democracies - it should be regular practice to stimulate rather than curtail debate. A healthy, functioning liberal society should be able to critically challenge differences in perspective rather than attempt psychological reform on those who don't conform to the hegemonic patterns of thought. But such a trend has not been set by the UK Government; it shunned the organization that could most emphatically claim to represent Muslims,[142] the Salafi-controlled Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), and was "said to have more credibility on the street."[143] The MCB saw its previously held favour and funding with the UK Government lost, largely over its vociferous opposition to the Iraq War, and was replaced by the much less critical Quilliam Foundation and the Sufi Muslim Council (SMC).[144] This episode showed that differences of opinion were more important than collaboration. Kundnani writes that it also is an "unstable"[145] practice, setting one group or set of beliefs as state-approved and another as state-disapproved puts "moderate Muslims in the precarious position of continually being scrutinized for evidence that they really have distanced themselves from [the state-disapproved set of beliefs]."[146] So promoting the practice of de-radicalization logically brings a state-sanctioned version of religious beliefs, with the consequence of securitizing certain groups who don't necessarily conform to a state's (changing) definition of acceptable beliefs.

Othering

Othering divergent and critical perspectives is said to be a negative side-effect of programmes that seek to counter and de-radicalize citizens.[147] The pre-emptive silencing of

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[141] Institute for Strategic Dialogue (2010), *op. cit.*, p. xxi
[142] Yaqin, A., Morey, P. (2011), *Framing Muslims: Stereotyping and Representation after 9/11* (Harvard University Press: Massachusetts), p. 82
[143] Rabasa, A. (2012), *loc. cit.*
[144] Kundnani, A. (2014), *op. cit.*, p. 171
[145] Ibid., p. 108
[146] Ibid.
[147] Edwards, P. (2015), 'How (not) to Create Ex-Terrorists', in eds. Baker-Beall, C., Heath-Kelly, C., Jarvis, L., *Counter-Radicalization: Critical Perspectives* (Routledge: London), pp. 54-70

criticism by minority groups or people on the fringes of society with legitimate grievances[148] can occur through the practice of combating radicalization; radical perspectives are gradually sidelined with a consequence of legitimizing their perception that the state and society are set against them, compounding the 'us versus them' perspective. Edwards notes that

> Labelling certain political ideologies as illegitimate; as unacceptably extreme, or as inherently violent; will inevitably lead some believers of those ideologies to adopt illegitimate means of expressing those ideologies and pursuing their goals, including illegal and violent means. Isolating and condemning holders of views seen as unacceptably extreme is likely to lead to the stigmatisation of individuals, with direct personal and social costs.[149]

Whilst de-radicalization programmes existed in Europe first to help rehabilitate right-wing extremists, many countries' schemes, like those in France and the Netherlands, were developed in the wake of attacks perpetrated by Muslims.[150] They therefore are frequently and overwhelmingly aimed at either preventing the spread of some fanatical Islamist ideology, or attempt in to de-radicalize Islamist extremists in prison. With European countries having faced decades of left- and right-wing, territorial and religious terrorism, a perception exists that terrorism perpetrated by Muslims is being treated radically differently given the often discriminatory practices that combat radicalization.[151] EIS, an education trade union in Scotland (which therefore has a duty to refer suspected students for preventative de-radicalization), says that "The Prevent Strategy equates 'extremism' almost completely with Islam, this will encourage Islamophobia and racism on campuses."[152] Australian counter-radicalization practices almost entirely aimed at Muslim 'communities' have contributed to

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[148] Kundnani, A. (2014), *op. cit.*, p. 199
[149] Edwards, P. (2015), *loc. cit.*
[150] Zerofsky, E. (2016), *How to Stop a Martyr*, http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/09/01/how-to-stop-a-martyr-france-de-radicalization/, Foreign Policy, published 01/09/16, accessed 01/07/17; for a comprehensive breakdown of global practice, see: Koehler, D. (2017), *op. cit.*, pp. 240-89
[151] Muslim Council of Britain (2015), *Meeting Between David Anderson QC and the MCB*, https://www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/20150803-Case-studies-about-Prevent.pdf, Muslim Council of Britain, published 2015, accessed 28/06/17
[152] EIS (2016), *ULA Annual Conference 2016*, https://www.eis.org.uk/print.asp?id=3348&dbase=, EIS, published 18/07/16, accessed 20/06/17

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the perception that they are set apart from the rest of Australian society, and increasing levels of distrust between Muslim minorities and the authorities in the country have been reported.[153] The effect has been a stigmatizing one[154] that is reputedly encouraging some young Muslims to engage in radical violence.[155]

Whilst anti-terror policies do not themselves create these discourses of Muslims or as the Other (it being a millennium-old narrative),[156] targeting specific groups through counter-radicalization corroborates the meaning and strength of such divisive narratives within societies. Directing 'cohesion funding' at areas of high Muslim populations as though they were a separate, definable and distinct group ensures that those perceived to be Muslims are thenceforth potential threats as a 'suspect community', to be blamed as one for future attacks.[157] There are clearly regions of higher Muslim population, such as Luton in the UK (25%)[158] or Molenbeek in Belgium (41%),[159] that are targeted for recruitment by so-called Islamist terrorist groups. Whilst this is clearly a concerning state of affairs, targeting these areas through counter- and de-radicalization as a policy with no scientific track record and claims of counter-productiveness may only enhance the perceived chasm and distrust between people groups. Requiring that civil society (nurses, teachers and social workers) be consciously alert to terrorist threats only ensures the unabated continuance of the narrative; 70% of referrals to counter-radicalization programme Channel are Muslims.[160] The

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[153] Harris-Hogan, S., Zammit, A. (2014), 'The Unseen Terrorist Connection: Exploring Jihadist Links Between Lebanon and Australia', in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 26, Issue 3, pp. 449-69

[154] Harris-Horgan, S., Barrelle, K., Zammit, A. (2016), 'What is Countering Violent Extremism? Exploring CVE Policy and Practice in Australia', *Behavioural Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, Vol. 8, Issue 1, pp. 6-24

[155] El Said, H. (2015), *loc. cit.*

[156] Lyons, J. (2012), *Islam Through Western Eyes* (Colombia University Press: New York), pp. 44-9

[157] Hickman, M., Thomas, L., Nickels, H., Silvestri, S. (2012), 'Social Cohesion and the Notion of "Suspect Communities": A Study of the Experiences and Impacts of Being "Suspect" for Irish Communities and Muslim Communities in Britain', in *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, Vol. 5, Issue 1, pp. 89-106

[158] Office for National Statistics (2011), *Religion: Table Population*, https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/qs208ew, Office for National Statistics, published 2011, accessed 05/09/17

[159] Cohen, R. (2016), *The Islamic State of Molenbeek*, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/12/opinion/the-islamic-state-of-molenbeek.html?mcubz=0, New York Times, published 11/04/16, accessed 05/09/17

[160] Gadher, D. (2016), *Warning over Rise of Hitler Youth*, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/warning-over-rise-of-hitler-youth-79pkwnfkl, The Times, published 20/11/16, accessed 11/06/17

relationship "between the state and some of its ethnic minorities, is characterized by distrust and suspicion [based on the] unequal approach to violence emanating from their communities compared to others."[161] It is widely reported to encourage a 'them and us' pattern of thought,[162] ironically the very ideology the Government wants to defeat.[163] The scheme is perceived to be so harmful - called an "Islamophobic, toxic policy that claims to be working towards de-radicalization but is targeting the community and de-Islamising Islam"[164] - that the MCB is reported to be starting its own 'preventative de-radicalization' programme in 2017.[165] Other countries report similar patterns; El Said comments that US policies countering terrorism are "among the most frequently cited 'grievances' of Muslim Americans".[166] From 9/11 until the Orlando nightclub shooting,[167] there were more deaths from other forms of extremism than so-called Islamist attacks, but the US looks likely to move towards a system where all community-based counter-radicalization efforts are aimed solely at Muslims.[168]

Whilst Muslims have felt 'Othered', numerous programmes are also aimed primarily at non-Muslims such as the EXIT strategy employed in several European states, or Crossroads in Germany. Although a proportion of these programmes do focus on the behaviour and social integration of subjects, many concentrate on the subjects' (extreme right-wing) ideologies.[169] These individuals may have legitimate grievances - such as concern about the scale or make-

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[161] El Said, H. (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 43

[162] Dodd, P. (2016), *Muslim Council of Britain to Set up Alternative Counter-terror Scheme*, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/oct/19/muslim-council-britain-set-up-alternative-counter-terror-scheme, The Guardian, published 19/10/16, accessed 11/06/17

[163] HM UK Government (2012), *Channel: Vulnerability Assessment Framework*, http://course.ncalt.com/Channel_General_Awareness/01/resources/docs/vul-assessment.pdf, HM Government, published 2012, accessed 05/06/17

[164] Sheikh, N., in Shabi, R. (2016), *loc. cit.*

[165] Dodd, P. (2016), *Muslim Council of Britain to Set up Alternative Counter-terror Scheme*, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/oct/19/muslim-council-britain-set-up-alternative-counter-terror-scheme, The Guardian, published 19/10/16, accessed 11/06/17

[166] El Said, H. (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 23

[167] New America (2017), *Part IV: What Is the Threat to the US Today?*, https://www.newamerica.org/in-depth/terrorism-in-america/what-threat-united-states-today/#americas-layered-defenses, New America, published 2017, accessed 02/07/17

[168] Ainsley, J., Volz, D., Cooke, K. (2017), *Exclusive: Trump to Focus Counter-extremism Programme Solely on Islam - Sources*, http://uk.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-extremists-program-exclusiv-idUKKBN15G5VO, Reuters, published 02/02/17, accessed 02/02/17

[169] Ramalingam, V., Tuck, H. (2014), *The Need for Exit Programmes*, Institute for Strategic Dialogue, published 2014, accessed 08/09/17, p. 8

up of immigration - but are set against mainstream society through counter- and de-radicalization practices. In sum, programmes that target ideology designate subjects' views as unacceptable and illegitimate, and cause those who harbour such perspectives to be seen (and to see themselves) as separate from the rest of society. With the practice of combating radicalization being gradually extended, will this expansion of state capacity - like the British attempt - entrench divisions in societies further and even cause some to turn towards radical violence?

Individualizing Causes

The practice of performing ideological transformation is based on the theory of radicalization, which takes the individual as the highest unit of concern, and the cause of violent extremism. The narrative has individualized the debate to a point where discussion around government policy as causal (most notably foreign affairs) is often derided as unpatriotic and those raising the issue are roundly condemned.[170] This silencing of the idea that politics could cause terrorism has occurred gradually: academic debate through the turn of the millennium shifted from macro analysis down onto the individual, examining in particular their personal psychology. Theories of how individuals became 'radicalized' abounded[171] as the defeat of left-wing terrorism, the end of the Cold War and a series of attacks from 'home-grown' extremists like the Oklahoma City bombing and the sarin gas attack in Japan, brought an end to the dominant discourse around the term 'terrorism' to mean 'state terrorism' or a 'state of warfare', and its use developed instead for individuals and small groups of like-minded extremists.[172] The beginning of the depoliticization of terrorism was borne of this era; US President Clinton claimed attacks like those mentioned were

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[170] Corbyn, J. (2017), *Corbyn: UK Wars to Blame for Terror*, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/05/25/jeremy-corbyn-suggests-britains-wars-abroad-blame-manchester/, Telegraph, published 26/05/17, accessed 26/05/17
[171] Rabbie, J. (2007), 'A Behavioural Interaction Model: Toward a Social-Psychological Framework for Studying Terrorism', in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 3, issue 4, pp. 134-63; Post, J., Ruby, K., Shaw, E. (2002), 'The Radical Group in Context: 1. An Integrated Framework for the Analysis of Group Risk for Terrorism', in *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 25, Issue 2, pp. 73-100
[172] Tsui, C-K. (2016), *Clinton, New Terrorism and the Origins of the War on Terror* (Routledge: London), pp. 32-6

"random"[173] rather than being explicitly political. Over time, this idea has taken hold, and the role of ideology rather than political aims is seen to drive terrorism. Despite anecdotes that indicate foreign policy is a matter of huge concern to some and the cause of young Europeans travelling to fight for IS,[174] and comprehensive academic studies which conclude overwhelmingly that challenging military interventions is a key priority for terrorists,[175] politicians consistently ridicule the idea that their decisions have a part to play.[176] Schemes countering radicalization, in attempting ideological reform of individuals behind closed doors, embeds this perception that ideology rather than political aims cause terrorism. Mark Sedgwick eloquently states,

> The concept of radicalization emphasizes the individual and, to some extent, the ideology and the group, and significantly de-emphasizes the wider circumstances - the 'root causes' that it became so difficult to talk about after 9/11, and that are still often not brought into analyses. So long as the circumstances that produce Islamist radicals' declared grievances are not taken into account, it is inevitable that the Islamist radical will often appear as a 'rebel without a cause'[177]

The schemes in question, being based on the doctrine of radicalization and therefore re-emphasizing the individual's ideology, contributes to the silencing of the relationship between states' policy choices and the causes of terrorism. There remain huge gaps in our knowledge of the causes of terrorism, and predicting such deviant behaviour remains an ill-fated venture. The root causes perspective (personal grievances, political instability, economic hardship) has little empirical backing, as does any claim regarding the causes of terrorism. However, de-radicalization being based on an approach underpinned by an individual's ideology and the

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[173] Clinton, B. (1996), *Remarks to the Disabled American Veterans Convention in New Orleans*, https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PPP-1996-book2/html/PPP-1996-book2-doc-pg1209.htm, US Government Publishing Office, published 28/07/96, accessed 26/04/17

[174] Sabeel, in Shabi, R. (2016), *loc. cit.*

[175] Pape, R. (2006), *The Problem of Suicide Terrorism*, http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people6/Pape/pape-con3.html, University of California, published 2006, accessed 15/06/17

[176] Morrison, D., Oborne, P. (2015), *Proving the Link Between British Foreign Policy and Domestic Terrorism*, http://www.middleeasteye.net/essays/proving-link-between-british-foreign-policy-and-domestic-terrorism-516596279, Middle East Eye, published 26/07/15, accessed 22/06/17

[177] Sedgwick, M. (2010), 'The Concept of Radicalization as a Source of Confusion', in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 22, Issue 4, pp. 480-1

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predictiveness of terrorism is equally scientifically-unsupported. If we continue to engage in de-radicalization, or at least framing it as de-radicalization, we will continue to believe terrorism can be predicted and that it is driven by radical ideology, and remain unable to consider rationally the level of threat we face.

Risk

It is incumbent upon policy makers to ensure that public policy (and therefore the use of public money) is based on rationality, and on a "realistic understanding of the facts".[178] Governments have a responsibility to their constituents to ensure security is reasonably maximized, but that risks against them aren't artificially magnified. The premise upon which counter-radicalization, epitomized by the British approach, is built is that the individuals pose a physical risk to society, however, the threat of terrorism has been consistently overstated, and the unproven role that ideology has in causing terrorism made central to countering the threat of terrorism, particularly from Muslims.[179] Across Europe, there grew a perceived need to act to anticipate and prevent further Islamist attacks following 7/7 in London, and the murder of film producer van Gogh,[180] and so began the perceived importance of counter-radicalization in helping to prevent these threats. In developing its ideology-based programme, French Senator Esther Benbassa commented that "the government was in panic as a result of the [Charlie Hebdo] attacks. And it was the panic that guided [its] actions. Political time is short, we had to reassure the population [that something was being done]."[181] The narrative on the risk of terrorism has been consistently built by academia, and politicians through both their words and policies. Scholars in the 1990s, such as Walter Laqueur,

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[178] Sunstein, C. (2006), 'Misfearing: A Reply', in ed. Olin, J., *Program in Law and Economics Working Paper no. 274* (University of Chicago Law School: Chicago), p. 18

[179] Mueller, J. (2015), *What Are the Risks of Terrorism?: Free Thoughts Podcast*, ep. 112/191, https://www.libertarianism.org/media/free-thoughts/what-are-risks-terrorism, Libertarianism.org, published 11/12/15, accessed 13/06/17

[180] Heath-Kelly, C., Baker-Beall, C. (2014), *Counter-Radicalization: Critical Perspectives* (Routledge: London), p. 38

[181] Benbassa, E., in Bouanchaud, C. (2017), Report on De-radicalization: "There Will Be No Miracle", http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2017/02/23/rapport-sur-la-de-radicalisation-il-n-y-aura-pas-de-miracle_5084014_3224.html, Lemonde, trans. Google, published 23/02/17, accessed 19/06/17

influenced the debate through their assertions in the context of Islamist extremism that "megaterrorism has not *yet* arrived" (author's emphasis).[182] Coupled with narratives like these, the 9/11 attack - which was emphasized as a harbinger rather than an outlier[183] - emphasized the perceived "existential"[184] threat, and predictive profiling and surveillance of 'those who fit the bill' was promoted as a rational and pressing policy decision. Ever since, trillions of dollars has been spent across the world in preventing terrorism,[185] an aspect of this being the focus on ideological de-radicalization, and the preventative securitization often of Muslims by teachers, social workers and peers - even for merely expressing disagreement to UK foreign policy.[186] 'De-radicalization' has become so synonymous with Islam and Muslims that articles in the media about any form of extremism cannot help but maintain the association between de-radicalization and Islamist extremism.[187] The Extreme Risk Guidance principles that underlie counterradicalization efforts produce unproven claims as to who is likely to engage in terrorism,[188] but which have enabled authorities to "monitor and profile Muslim citizens for the signs of radicalization and then intervene to prevent the drift to extremism"[189] through de-radicalization practice.

Though risk aversion is necessary to some degree in public policy, it should take a scientific approach, especially where it can impact negatively on citizens. Where certain

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[182] Laqueur, W. (2004), *The Terrorism to Come*, http://www.hoover.org/research/terrorism-come, Hoover Institution, published 01/08/04, accessed 26/04/17

[183] Mueller, J. (2014), *Responsible Counter-terrorism Policy*, https://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/pa755.pdf, CATO Institute, published 10/09/14, accessed 10/06/17

[184] Blair, T. (2004), *Blair Terror Speech in Full*, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/3536131.stm, BBC, published 05/03/04, accessed 11/05/17

[185] Mueller, J., Stewart, M. (2011), 'Balancing the Risks, Benefits and Costs of Homeland Security', in *Homeland Security Affairs*, Vol. 7, https://www.hsaj.org/articles/43, accessed 11/06/17

[186] Khaleeli, H. (2015), *'You Worry that They Could Take Your Kids': Is the Prevent Strategy Demonizing Muslim Children?*, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/sep/23/prevent-counter-terrorism-strategy-schools-demonising-muslim-children, The Guardian, 23/09/15, accessed 19/01/17

[187] This particular article, about the rise in right-wing extremist referrals to de-radicalization programmes, was accompanied by one picture, which showed an ISIS fighter with a flag with Arabic writing: Yorke, H. (2017), *One in Four "Extremists" Reported to Government's De-radicalisation Programme Are Far-Right Sympathisers, Figures Show*, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/02/15/one-four-extremists-reported-governments-de-radicalisation-programme/, The Telegraph, published 15/02/17, accessed 11/06/17

[188] Royal College of Psychiatrists (2016), *Counter-Terrorism and Psychiatry*, http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/PS04_16.pdf, published Sept 2016, accessed 11/12/16

[189] Heath-Kelly, C., Baker-Beall, C. (2014), *op. cit.*, p. 16

groups within society are targeted, overstating or understating risk can cost unnecessary money, expose citizens to preventable dangers, and cause discrimination to occur. The burden of proof should fall on the government to show its policies are based on evidence[190] and are not causing 'market failure' - otherwise an inefficient allocation of resources - within risk management. It must be shown as prudent for three- and four-year-olds to be 'de-radicalized' as well as all other cases; should the burden of proof remain with the intuition of non-experts, policy implementation will remain prejudicial. 9-year-old British schoolboy 'Haroon' was required to undergo 'de-radicalization' with a Prevent officer because he had watched IS videos and pronounced his sympathy with the group whilst at school. It appeared there were others who were also watching similar videos, and he felt it was "unfair [that] other people got away with it".[191] As a result of his watching the graphic videos - in which he was not alone among his peers - and the declaration of sympathy - which could have resulted from him being bullied - the state stepped in to 'de-radicalize' this 9-year-old child over the course of a year. How and why do governments determine first of all the boundaries of an individual being a 'risk' (how much of a threat did this child pose?), at what point do individuals cross that line (why were his peers not similarly 'de-radicalized'?), and after such a process, what is the point at which they do *not* pose a threat (how is it determined that this child no longer poses the previously perceived threat)? These questions must be answered by governments in their risk-management strategies, rather than leave non-experts in terrorism risk-management (teachers, social workers and nurses) to assume that responsibility. Similarly, Umm Ahmed, a British Muslim, was jailed for 12 months for the possession of Inspire Magazine which she had obtained to keep updated with her brother's trial. In sentencing her the judge said that Umm posed no threat, that she had no intent to harm, that she was not a terrorist - and even that she was a good Muslim - but that he had to imprison her based on her possession of the

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[190] Hardaker, B., Fleming, E., Lien, G. (2009), 'How Should Governments Make Risky Policy Decisions?' in *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 68, Issue 3, pp. 256-71
[191] 'Haroon', in BBC (2017), *The Boy Who Watched IS Beheading Videos*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-38959615, BBC, published 14/02/17, accessed 14/02/17

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magazine.[192] The MCB writes that "80% of Channel referrals between 2006 and 2013 were rejected by Channel panels, demonstrating that children are being viewed through the lens of security and practitioners are finding threats where none exist in many cases".[193] French sociologist Farhad Khosrokhavar said that to add value to a society, programmes should admit only those who would actually pose some threat, such as returned foreign fighters or people who could be convicted of incitement to violence, rather than children who have divergent views but clearly do not pose a risk, for example.[194] The distortion of risk in the field of preventing terrorism, only heightened by the exercise of referring thousands of schoolchildren for de-radicalization, has produced discrimination by civil society and the securitization of young children. Aside from it being hard to conceive that these minors would actually pose a threat and carry out destructive terrorism, statistically all of them are highly unlikely to engage in violence themselves. The West spends trillions on domestic (let alone foreign) counter-terrorism efforts taking this scientifically unproven and highly presumptuous ideology-based explanation and to minimize the threat from their constructed suspect communities; a frightening consequence of this drive is that particularly within the US, in borrowing predictive principles from the widely-criticized British Prevent Strategy, there has developed a network of 15,000 informants to target Muslims (in "Stazi-scale"[195] surveillance), and the practice of entrapment has burgeoned. Aside from moving towards an oppressive and discriminatory surveillance state in which Muslims feel they cannot criticize their government's policies without personal risk of being informed upon, the FBI has actually killed Americans on American soil based on opportunities the agency itself has provided to 'vulnerable' Muslims. Judges have recurrently noted that these entrapped individuals would

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[192] Qureshi, A. (2015), *Exclusive Interview with Umm Ahmed: The True Face of Counter-terrorism*, https://cage.ngo/article/exclusive-interview-umm-ahmed-true-face-counter-terrorism/, Cage, published 27/01/15, accessed 24/06/17

[193] Muslim Council of Britain (2015), *Meeting Between David Anderson QC and the MCB*, https://www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/20150803-Case-studies-about-Prevent.pdf, Muslim Council of Britain, published 2015, accessed 28/06/17

[194] Khosrokhavar, F., in Marmouyet, F. (2017), *France 'Must Change Its Approach' to De-radicalizing Islamists*, http://www.france24.com/en/20170223-france-report-de-radicalisation-centre-approach-islamists-jihad, France24, published 23/02/17, accessed 19/06/17

[195] Kundnani, A. (2014), *loc. cit.*

not otherwise have engaged in such deviant activities had the FBI not placed them in the 'wrong place' at the 'wrong time'. Judge McMahon, sentencing the Newburgh Four, said,

> "Only the government could have made a terrorist out of Mr Cromitie, a man whose buffoonery is positively Shakespearean in its scope… I believe beyond a shadow of a doubt that there would have been no crime here except [that] the government instigated it, planned it, and brought it to fruition."[196]

Seen as an integral part of preventing extremist violence is the practice of combating radicalization, the money spent on it must be justified in terms of violence prevented or lives saved. With currently spending levels preventing violent extremism many, many times greater than other potential hazards (like health and safety precautions, preventing car accidents),[197] we must vehemently challenge its existence, particularly considering that its underlying premises - of ideology creating risk and the ability to predict future terrorists - are highly disputable.[198]

(Re)Framing the Debate

Reframing the debate on how to deal with radicalness in our societies is crucial, and pressing. The expansion of programmes across the world will affect how millions of people experience society and their existence within a state. The consideration of the effects of counter-terrorism policy, over continuing blindly with a strategy that has no provable record and costing millions upon millions of dollars, must take place. Here, I explore possible alternative approaches to both the practice of and understandings behind schemes that 'tackle radicalization'.

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[196] McMahon, C., in Shipler, D. (2012), *Terrorist Plots, Hatched by the FBI*, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/29/opinion/sunday/terrorist-plots-helped-along-by-the-fbi.html?mcubz=0, New York Times, published 28/04/12, accessed 22/06/17
[197] Paté-Cornell, E. (1994), 'Quantitative Safety Goals for Risk Management of Industrial Facilities', in *Structural Safety*, Vol. 13, Issue 3: 145-57
[198] Horgan, J., Braddock, K. (2010), *loc. cit.*

Prison-Based 'De-radicalization'

Inside prisons where de-radicalization is said to be carried out - most notably in countries like Saudi Arabia and Malaysia, though others like France followed suit - there are actually few instances where prisoners' ideological positions are systematically challenged. Where they *have* been challenged in the past, the countries are now gradually concentrating more on inmates' economic and social rehabilitation.[199] In such programmes that now overwhelmingly prioritize training the inmates and helping them develop skills for the job market, and ultimately where they place little emphasis on an ideology which seems to typify many current approaches,[200] it may be helpful to frame these programmes as 'post-crime rehabilitation' schemes. The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism suggests "risk reduction"[201] as an effective alternative. Other terms that deemphasize the causal relationship that ideology has with terrorism whilst highlighting the normalcy of the individuals concerned would be appropriate, to help ease their reintegration into society upon release.

In schemes that incorporate religious discussion, it is often from a point of basic education; El Said writes that "evidence shows that most violent extremists have weak or no rigorous religious knowledge."[202] Corroborating this, a study by Tahiri and Grossman found that "education was identified by all participants as the most critical element in reducing the appeal of violent extremism."[203] If this is the case, portraying the schemes as educative rather than de-radicalizing could be helpful, by reducing the emotive element of the definition. It would help to illuminate that rather than being committed to (often fanatical Islamic) ideologies, that in fact they are merely under-informed or lacking in effective critical thought. This could be especially helpful in European or non-Muslim-majority countries where

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[199] El Said, H. (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 256
[200] Horgan, J. (2009a), *loc. cit.*
[201] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (2009), *loc. cit.*
[202] El Said, H. (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 27
[203] Tahiri, H., Grossman, M. (2013), *Community and Radicalization: An Examination of Perceptions, Ideas, Beliefs and Solutions Throughout Australia* (Counter-terrorism Coordination Unit: Victoria), p. 14

Islamophobia has led to revenge terrorism against Muslims,[204] to discredit the narrative that there is a causal association between Islam and terrorism.[205] This concept was substantiated by Zora Sukabdi's study; she found that "all participants [thought] that most religious terror activists find the term 'de-radicalization' irritating"[206] for similar reasons, and for presenting the idea that Islamic radicalness is only pejorative. French practitioner Marik Fetouh concurs. She commented that the term de-radicalization is negatively understood, that it implied oppression rather than the development of critical thought.[207] It is clear that new definitions for prison-based practice, as an absolute minimum, are required.

However, it is imperative to continue to challenge the actual principles behind de-radicalization where it does occur, for their ability to shape narratives. Importantly, prison schemes have allowed governments to impose their own religiously acceptable views and control the discourse within the country. In some cases these programmes have appeared merely to function as legitimacy-builders for the government in question, with subjects required to declare their allegiance to the state following their completion of a de-radicalization scheme whilst in prison.[208] Without internationally-recognized and -upheld standards, these exercises will continue unabated. Criticism of existing practice therefore, including the underlying principles that drive such programmes and the state's motivations is needed as countries expand their prison-based de-radicalization arsenal.

Evaluation is a further element of such schemes in dire need of consideration. Attempts to assess de-radicalization programmes have failed miserably, with wild variance in who the schemes are dealing with, their concentration on psychology and ideology, and their very aims and objectives. Without the rigor of traditional forms of evaluation (after a complete reconsideration of what success could even look like), the practice will continue to

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[204] BBC (2017), *Man Questioned on Suspicion of Terrorism*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/uk-40323279, BBC, 19/06/17, accessed 19/06/17
[205] Schmid, A. (2013), *loc. cit.*
[206] Sukabdi, Z. (2015), 'Terrorism in Indonesia: A Review on Rehabilitation and De-radicalization', in *Journal of Terrorism Research*, Vol. 6, pp. 36-56
[207] Fetouh, M., in Zerofsky, E. (2016), *How to Stop a Martyr*, http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/09/01/how-to-stop-a-martyr-france-de-radicalization/, Foreign Policy, published 01/09/16, accessed 01/07/17
[208] Koehler, D. (2017), *op. cit.*, p. 202

consume public money and time with no scientifically discernible success or failure rates. El Said's comprehensive study shows that according to academic conceptions of 'de-radicalization', many of the so-called de-radicalization programmes are little more than "a general improvement in prison management and environment"[209] with their practice in use already elsewhere targeting gangs and drug addicts, but not considered to be de-radicalization. He points to the Shock Incarceration Treatment some inmates receive, which is similar in style to some so-called de-radicalization practices, the main different being its more coherent structure and evaluation.[210]

Non-Prison-Based / Preventative Programmes

Outside of the prison schemes, governments around the world are engaged in preventing terrorist attacks often through voluntary so-called de-radicalization programmes (in fact counter-radicalization) that attempt to reduce the perceived threat certain individuals pose.

Practising the art of encouraging fighters returned from conflict zones like Syria, or terrorist attackers captured domestically, to think critically, educate them and discuss religion if appropriate, would be a justified approach, as they clearly have posed a physical threat and may still do. If they retain their violent perspectives and see no other alternatives (thereby rejecting Koehler's notion of "re-pluralization"),[211] they should remain locked up as they still pose a genuine risk to the rest of society. However, to treat individuals in the pre-crime space, before they have engaged in violent activism it is impossible to prove would have happened, only risks alienation between the state and these individuals, and others who empathize with those targeted and profiled by such policies. It has so far been overwhelmingly Muslims that have borne the brunt of preventative radicalization-based efforts, which only leads of a

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[209] El Said, H. (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 255
[210] Ibid.
[211] Koehler, D. (2017), *op. cit.*, pp. 80-3

vicious circle of stigmatization of Muslims, attacks on Muslims as a constructed suspect community, and further division: "terrorism begets terrorism".[212]

Without significant criticism and challenge, the development of further preventative efforts will accelerate; states are addicted to enhancing security until it becomes violated, at which point politicians reiterate the state's resilience and securitize further.[213] The premise of counter-radicalization is massively misjudged (in terms of risk and the unproven link between ideology and terrorism), and has significant consequences for society to a point where those being silenced are developing policies to compete with what they see as the state's oppressive version.[214] If the pattern of securitizing and discriminate profiling can be effectively challenged, our societies might begin to be able to have rational discussions about the causes of terrorism, and how best to combat it.

However, ceteris paribus, renaming such programmes and practices could help to illuminate the disparity between the perceived risk posed by those subjected to 'de-radicalization' and the actual level of threat. 'De-radicalization' as a definition also cements in public discourse the notion that ideology is the overriding cause of terrorism, rather than an associated factor that is also associated with non-violence. If the British programme Channel was called a 'risk reduction' programme, it would help to show teachers and others required to report those 'vulnerable to radicalization' that three- and four-year-old children should probably not be referred for posing a realistic terrorist threat, or at least implement a checklist system whereby the risk they pose should be graded. The policy Channel is derived from, Prevent, was previously called 'Preventing Violent Extremism' but this was considered to have stigmatized Muslims, and so the government changed it.[215] However, reviving such a title (or using the term "risk reduction") and with it the associated consequences of perceived

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[212] Primoratz, I. (2004), *Terrorism: The Philosophical Issues* (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke), p. 184

[213] Heath-Kelly, C. (2016), *Death and Security: Memory and Mortality at the Bombsite* (Manchester University Press: Manchester), p. 171

[214] Dodd, P. (2016), *Muslim Council of Britain to Set up Alternative Counter-terror Scheme*, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/oct/19/muslim-council-britain-set-up-alternative-counter-terror-scheme, The Guardian, published 19/10/16, accessed 11/06/17

[215] Thomas, P. (2010), 'Failed and Friendless: The UK's 'Preventing Violent Extremism' Programme', in *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 12, Issue 3, pp. 442-58

discrimination would help to highlight where and how far racist practices are in fact taking place. Overturning the oppressive term 'de-radicalization' (by which it is often referred, despite being counter-radicalization) is critical, as it helps to construct suspect communities, definable by their skin colour or choice of clothing, and encourages a silencing of deviant and contrary perspectives which a democracy needs to be able to cope with.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In sum, if there exist better ways to fail at public policy, these should be sought after rather than tinkering with an imperilled strategy that only entrenches unscientific attitudes and narratives behind the causes of radical violence. The practice of combating radicalization consolidates the perception that terrorism is caused by a fanatical religious ideology and that the holding of radical ideas within a society is only a detrimental attribute. Counter- and de-radicalization have shown themselves to be an unreliable and divisive policy choice that shows no scientific basis for reducing risk against societies. Programmes that have asserted de-radicalization success have focussed on low-level or non-criminal individuals and have largely ignored the problems around their evaluation. Future expansion of de-radicalization programmes should be taken extremely seriously, on the basis of unfounded claims of success.[216] As Foucault suggests, "Power exists only as exercised by some on others, only when it is put into action"[217] - discourses and terminology have real world consequences, which affect individuals and society as a whole. When these are based on unscientific and politically-based assumptions, and the intuition of practitioners, rather than considered thought, it is easy to see how divisiveness and stigmatization in society becomes established, and a lack of foresight as to what such practice hopes to accomplish. This paper, therefore, recommends that:

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[216] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (2009), *loc. cit.*
[217] Foucault, M. (1982), 'The Subject and Power', in *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 8, Issue 4, pp. 777-95

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- As a minimum, schemes that operate both as inside and outside of prisons are renamed away from the "unhelpful term"[218] 'de-radicalization', to more accurately represent how they function. This will in turn help to disassociate the role of ideology in causing terrorism, which has been a significant cause of stigmatization for Muslims around the world.

- "Post-crime rehabilitation schemes" is an appropriate alternative name for schemes based in prisons, and "risk-reduction schemes" where preventative policy exists outside of prisons.

- The practice of securitizing alleged risks should be reformed to be driven more by science than presumption. Governments should legislate for what they consider to be threatening behaviour so the responsibility for risk-management doesn't fall on the shoulders of non-terrorism experts. There should be requirements for referrals to be made based on evidence of risk rather than intuition and prejudice.

- In the meantime, if practice based around countering ideology is to continue, debate should accelerate on what constitutes success.

- Expanding programmes based on existing practice is at best flawed, and at worst, a stimulant for division and racism.

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[218] Horgan, J., Braddock, K. (2010), *loc. cit.*

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