
Book Review: “The Routledge Handbook on Disengagement and Deradicalization” by Stig Jarle Hansen and Stian Lid (eds),

London and New York, Routledge, 2020 pp. 374, £152.00 (hardback)
ISBN: 9781138229969

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Article History

Received July 22, 2021

Accepted Dec 29, 2021

Published Dec 31, 2021

Keywords: Book Review, Deradicalization, Disengagement, P/CVE

The 9/11 attacks on the American homeland, the Syrian civil war of 2011, the increasing variety of violent actors, and the subsequent emergence and increase in the 'foreign fighter' phenomenon globally enhanced the need for programs that aimed to rehabilitate and reintegrate violent extremists (see Koehler 2016 on the number of deradicalization programs). However, despite the attractiveness of these initiatives/approaches, Hansen and Lid argue that they are primarily implemented from a hard-approach counterterror/countering violent extremism (CVE) perspective to the detriment of softer counter-terrorism community engagement options. Consequently, leaving open a doubling of knowledge gaps: first, there is a lack of research looking at how different violent actors (religiously motivated groups, left and right-wing groups) deradicalize, disengage and reintegrate; second, existing deradicalization and disengagement scholarship are predominantly descriptions of region-specific programs (see Omar Ashour 2011 and El-Said 2015, Koehler 2016). Stig Hansen and

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Stian Lid's comprehensive volume of 25 chapters helps to address these voids in the deradicalization and disengagement scholarship.

Hansen and Lid divide the volume into three parts: definitions, backgrounds and theories; actors; regional case studies. Embedded within this tripartite focus of the book is coverage of different topical and thematic issues within the deradicalization and disengagement field. One significant issue covered in the book's first part is the conceptual and definitional fluidity of deradicalization and disengagement. Contributors to this particular section present the extant conceptual differences and present arguments that highlight the fluid and sometimes relative nature of the concepts of deradicalization, disengagement, and other associated terms. Furthermore, this section shows the contested nature of these concepts, and reflects the hidden political elements lurking in definitions and conceptualizations of deradicalization. This is a significant contribution, as conventional scholarship on terrorism faces the challenge of conceptual clarification. Daniel Koehler's chapter calls for caution in differentiating between deradicalization and disengagement. Specifically, he argues that a simplistic differentiation between concepts that depends on the levels of ideological commitment to the use of violence might prove inadequate in conceptualizing or operationalizing the concepts. His contribution further brings to the surface the concealed logics of *othering* that is inherent in the concept of deradicalization.

The remaining parts of the first section address other essential questions such as: determining what success means in prison-based deradicalization (Jessica Stern and Paige Pascarelli), how foreign jihadi fighters are deradicalized in different political contexts, how dissimilarities between the organization/network from which an individual is to be deradicalized (Arie Perliger), and their territorial control could constitute problematic deradicalization and disengagement (Stig Hansen), accounting for how the similarities that exist between psychological approaches can expedite terrorist rehabilitation (David Webber, Marina Chenikova, Erica Molinaro, and Arie Kruglanski), how gender matters in deradicalization and disengagement (Jennifer Eggert), and how phase-based models can be used to explain the deradicalization process (Liesbeth Mann, Lars Nickolson, Allard Feddes, Bertjan Doosje and Fathali Moghaddam). These intersecting and essential issues could not

have been possible without expertise that cuts across multiple disciplines, a rare but helpful feature that this handbook benefits significantly from.

Part two engages with the broad range of actors involved in deradicalization and disengagement. The roles of local government, civil actors, religious education, the United Nations, the European Union, and the African Union constitute this section's components. Chapters 9-15 provide detailed descriptions and valuable overviews of the different roles of actors. The chapters examine the importance of collaboration and partnership between multiple actors in deradicalization and disengagement. It is somewhat disappointing that the volume does not dedicate a separate chapter to the very crucial role of the family as a deradicalization actor (see Sikkens, van San, Sieckelinck and de Winter 2017, El-Amraoui and Ducol 2019 on role of the family in deradicalizing jihadists extremists and broadly in countering violent extremism).

Part three provides insights and analyzes case studies from different regions and political contexts such as South Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, Scandinavia, Africa and Europe. The chapters in this part of the book encompass various case studies spanning democratic to pseudo-democratic and non-democratic contexts. By highlighting the variations in the process of deradicalization and disengagement in various political contexts, this part of the book reiterates existing arguments about the impossibility of having a "one size fits all" approach in Countering Violent Extremism (see Howell and Lind 2010). This part of the volume significantly contributes to the discourse on the dynamics and undercurrents of deradicalization in previously underreported political contexts such as China, hence underscoring the book's broad coverage. While this counts as a strength of the book, it is simultaneously one of its weaknesses in that a large part of the chapters on regional case studies yet again consists of predominantly descriptive analyses of deradicalization and disengagement programs absent of empirical data (qualitative or quantitative). This shortcoming might invite criticism from other scholars. This empirical weakness is, however, compensated theoretically.

The handbook does an impressive job of delivering on the promise to introduce the emerging topic of deradicalization and disengagement and its breadth of application to

contemporary readers. For one, it represents a significant reference for everything related to deradicalization and disengagement. One of the book's key characteristics distinguishing it from other volumes is its engagement with theoretical discussions that explain contemporary dynamic patterns and offer policy prescriptions. Another valuable aspect of this volume is how almost every chapter identifies a research gap that other researchers can further explore. This is a commendable effort by the editors because these research gaps help establish the basis for ongoing research in an area that has received much less attention. Another important strength of the handbook is the author's argument for deradicalization programmes to be tailored vis-à-vis contextual specificities to increase the likelihood of successful programme evaluations. However, how this is to be done remains ambiguous and unclear, specifically in light of limited or no access to required information. Notably, the editors assert in the book's conclusion that "...the need for individually tailored programmes – seemingly makes standardized approaches harder. Here there is a dilemma for future studies" (p. 345). Furthermore, the editor's impressive attempt to collect much information into a single and edited volume makes it a repetitive read on some occasions. Despite these weaknesses, the simplicity and accessibility of this handbook make it a worthy read for anyone interested in gaining a straightforward and nuanced understanding of the complex phenomenon of deradicalization and disengagement.

In conclusion, 'The Routledge handbook on disengagement and deradicalisation' represents a significant contribution to deradicalization research and practice. It provides one of the first attempts to comprehensively analyze how the intersection of major thematic and conceptual issues influences deradicalization processes in different socio-political contexts. Additionally, the handbook builds well on existing literature which merges theory and practice of deradicalization. By presenting perspectives on the deradicalization processes of different extremist groups from various regions in the world, this edited volume achieves to not only summarize the state of the art but also add new insights and evidence-based knowledge to the field. The collection of essays is equally relevant to practitioners in need of facilitation for new and empirically grounded approaches that might be utilized in deradicalization counselling. Specifically, the handbook serves well as a valuable resource for

an evidence-based analysis. Furthermore, since the development and expansion of deradicalization programs is currently ongoing in many countries, this book provides a useful opportunity to assess and improve already existing initiatives. Furthermore, this handbook has broader implications for the field of International Relations, since it touches upon specific arguments in the critical security studies approach – embedding the study of security and terrorism within other cognate fields – studying terrorism and counter-terrorism together with their impact on and relation with social movements, state structures, conflicts, history, and political contexts (see Toros and Gunning 2009, Wyn Jones, 1999).

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ISSN: 2363-9849

Editor in Chief: Daniel Koehler