



EXPANDING RESEARCH ON **COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

SARA ZEIGER | EDITOR

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ABOUT HEDAYAH

Hedayah was created in response to the growing desire from members of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF) and the wider international community for the establishment of an independent, multilateral center devoted to dialogue and communications, capacity building programs, research and analysis to counter violent extremism in all of its forms and manifestations. During the ministerial-level launch of the GCTF in New York in September 2011, the U.A.E. offered to serve as the host of the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism. In December 2012 Hedayah was inaugurated with its headquarters in Abu Dhabi, U.A.E. Hedayah aims to be the premier international center for expertise and experience to counter violent extremism by promoting understanding and sharing of good practice to effectively serve as the true global center to counter violent extremism.

ABOUT GIPCEN AND ECU

The Global Issues Practice Centre (GIPCEN) was established by Professor Anne Aly in 2015 at Edith Cowan University (ECU) in Perth, Western Australia. Partnering with international institutions and organizations, GIPCEN undertakes a range of research projects and activities that explore various facets of the relationship between violent extremism and the internet. The objectives of GIPCEN are: 1) the creation of a critical mass of innovative research activity across different disciplines in the subject matter of violent extremism including online forms; 2) the collection of information, research and evidence about the phenomenon of online violent extremism; 3) dissemination of research through conferences, seminars and workshops both nationally and internationally; 4) influencing research agendas in Australia and the region in key aspects of violent extremism; 5) developing understanding of online violent extremism and how to counter it informed by effective, valid and robust research; 5) ensuring that Australian strategies and programs targeting violent extremism are based on evidence and knowledge and not untested assumptions, thereby increasing the likelihood of success. For any questions regarding the Global Issues Practice Centre, please email gipcen@ecu.edu.au.

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Sara Zeiger is a Senior Research Analyst at Hedayah where she supports the Director of Research and Analysis in implementing Hedayah's research programs. Her recent publications include an edited volume titled *A Man's World? Exploring the roles of women in countering terrorism and violent extremism* and a report titled *Undermining Violent Extremist Narratives in South East Asia: A How-To Guide*. She was Hedayah's liaison with the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) to support the development and drafting their framework document, the Abu Dhabi Memorandum on Good Practices for Education and CVE. Zeiger previously served as consultant for the Strategy and Delivery Unit that was tasked with standing up and launching Hedayah in 2012. Prior to moving to the UAE, she worked as a Research Assistant at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. She also served as a Head Teaching Fellow for the Harvard Extension School where she taught courses on Middle Eastern politics. Zeiger holds an M.A. in International Relations and Religion (with a focus on Security Studies and Islam) from Boston University and a B.A. in Psychology and Religion from Ohio Northern University.

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INTRODUCTION

Countering Violent Extremism Research Landscape

Sara Zeiger

Background

This edited volume contains a selection of essays and contributions derived from the presentations made at the International Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Research Conference-2015, which was held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates from 6-8 December 2015. The Conference was hosted by Hedayah, Edith Cowan University and New York University Institute Abu Dhabi. Other sponsors and organizers included the European Commission, Rabdan Academy, TRENDS Research & Advisory, Swansea University, CT MORSE, People Against Violent Extremism (PaVE), the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism—the Hague (ICCT), the Global Center on Cooperative Security (GCCS), the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), and the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI). The views expressed in this edited volume are the opinions and research conducted by the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of any of the abovementioned organizers or sponsors.

Countering Violent Extremism

The role of prevention efforts in counter-terrorism (CT) policies is a subject that has gained significant momentum in the security policy community over the course of the last several decades. Governments have recognized that there is a need to address the “root causes” or “drivers” of radicalization, and to design programs and policies that can help to eliminate or mitigate these drivers as part of a comprehensive CT strategy. The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy supports efforts to counter “conditions conducive” to terrorism in Pillar 1 of the Strategy. Similarly, the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF), a multilateral platform aimed to better share good practice in CT, convened an active working group dedicated to CVE when it launched in September 2011, and has since resulted in several initiatives dedicated to CVE

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efforts, including Hedayah (the International Center of Excellence for CVE) and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF).

As was the case for the first edited volume from the CVE Research Conference-2014, CVE refers to:

...programs and policies for countering and preventing radicalization and recruitment into violent extremism and terrorism as part of an overall counter-terrorism strategy and framework. This definition is inclusive of strategic, non-coercive counterterrorism programs and policies including those involving education and broad-based community engagement; more targeted narrative/messaging programs and counter-recruitment strategies; disengagement and targeted intervention programs for individuals engaging in radicalization; as well as de-radicalization, disengagement and rehabilitation programs for former violent extremist offenders (Zeiger & Aly, 2015, p. 2).

As such, this “softer” side of counter-terrorism involves non-traditional security actors such as teachers, social workers, community leaders, youth and women in addition to the traditional CT actors such as policymakers, senior government officials, police officers and intelligence officials. Thus, a CVE approach also requires coordination between government bodies that are not traditionally linked, as well as a recognition that labeling a program as “CVE” could potentially jeopardize the credibility or safety of non-, -traditional security actors on the ground. Moreover, CVE presents an additional challenge because the “drivers” of radicalization vary significantly across different cultures and contexts, meaning that solutions and interventions must be tailored to fit the local context as much as possible. These potential challenges to CVE efforts have created the need for better and more comprehensive research on CVE to be conducted across a variety of contexts, regions and local circumstances.

CVE Research: Current Efforts

While CVE has a small but growing body of literature on the drivers of radicalization as well as solutions and interventions that prevent violent extremism, CT and CVE policymakers and practitioners have recommended that further research needs to be done to develop a strong evidence base for what works

and what does not work. This precedent was emphasized, for example, at the White House CVE Summit in February 2015, which prompted the Follow-On Action Agenda to promote research and information-sharing on local drivers of radicalization and violent extremism. Moreover, this initiated the stand-up of a network of local researchers focused on CVE, Researching Solutions to Violent Extremism (RESOLVE) Network in September 2015, on the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York City. As such, RESOLVE has been tasked with enhancing the CVE research effort by linking and building the capacity of locally-based researchers interested in furthering the field.

In the field of CVE research, two related strands of research are emerging that are important to the design and re-design of CVE programs and policy. The first strand of research addresses the drivers of radicalization or “push” and “pull” factors, derived from a framework developed through the US Agency for International Development (USAID, 2011). “Push” factors are structural factors that contribute to the conditions conducive to terrorism and violent extremism. Some examples may include social/cultural/political/religious/ethnic marginalization, corruption, poverty, lack of employment, lack of opportunity and/or poor governance. “Pull” factors refer to the conditions that have a direct individual impact that include psychosocial and/or personal incentives that attract individuals to join terrorism and violent extremism. Some examples of “pull” factors include a sense of identity or self-worth, support for family or other economic incentives, sense of duty or honor, and/or a sense of power, adventure or desire to commit violence. Recent literature (including authors in this volume) has referred to these types of factors as “structural motivators” and “individual incentives” (See Khalil & Zeuthen’s chapter). Moreover, it should be noted that also affiliated with risk factors (push/pull factors) are “enabling factors” such as mentors or online forums that may catalyze and exacerbate the process of radicalization and/or recruitment (Khalil & Zeuthen, 2016).

A number of studies have emerged since the White House CVE Summit in February 2015 that have aided in contributing to the field of CVE research. For example, the edited volume that was produced out of December 2014’s CVE Research Conference also contributed to the field of CVE research (Zeiger & Aly, 2015). This volume elaborated on push and pull factors leading to radicalization and recruitment across several contexts (foreign terrorist fighters from the West and the Middle East, Horn of Africa, Burkina Faso,

Central Asia, and right-wing extremism in Canada); built on current literature regarding countering the terrorist narrative; investigated disengagement and reintegration programs in several contexts (Philippines, Northern Ireland, Colombia, Denmark and Germany); and showcased two relevant case studies for CVE programs in the United States. Notably, since the December 2015 Conference, the European Commission through its CT Morse project also conducted an assessment of the regional coordinating bodies and the status of CVE research by these bodies (European Commission, 2016). The report highlights the key international and regional actors in CVE research, and recommends future directions for CVE research. Furthermore, there are a number of additional studies that have emerged since the December 2015 Conference, but they are too exhaustive to list here.

As was the aim of the first edited volume from 2014's CVE Research Conference, the purpose of this edited volume is to further enhance and develop and contribute to the field of CVE research through a series of short research papers. The volume is divided into four sections. The first section discusses some relevant research on the design and methodology necessary for program and research related to CVE. The second section looks at some of the local push and pull factors in two contexts (Tunisia and Syria). The third section highlights three relevant CVE programs across three contexts (Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria) and analyzes the impact of these programs through some preliminary results and data from the field. The fourth section gives some insights into counter the narratives of violent extremists. The first essay focuses on countering the narrative of Daesh, the second on the use of online magazines by terrorist groups, and the third focuses on countering narratives in the Horn of Africa. The edited volume then concludes with a number of program and policy recommendations for a variety of actors that can be applicable for CVE research.

Section 1: Design and Methodology: Developing Standards for CVE

In this section, two chapters provide some insight on how to develop better methodologies for CVE, one for programming and the other for research design.

The chapter by James Khalil and Martine Zeuthen entitled *Countering Violent Extremism: A guide to programme design* aids CVE practitioners in effectively fram-

ing the logic of their program design. They specifically argue for results framework and Theories of Change (ToC) approaches to CVE program design in order to avoid problematic assumptions and promote critical thinking about how to best achieve CVE objectives. Their essay provides critical advice to the design phase in order to lay the foundations for monitoring, measurement and evaluation of the program throughout. The essay also provides considerations for identifying “at-risk” individuals as well as factors leading to radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism.

In *Experimental Methods for CVE: Countering Extremism via Elite Persuasion in India*, Kunaal Sharma presents an experimental design methods (randomized control trials) for CVE that has not yet been tested. While the results of his experiment are not yet available, the proposed methodology and experimental design is an innovative advancement in the field of CVE. In particular the methodology tests whether or not specific social factors (in this case religious identity of Sunni or Shi'a) is a motivator for violent extremism. The methodology also potentially tests how persuasion can be effective in reducing conditions conducive to violent extremism related to social constructions of identity in terms of in-group and out-group symbolism for strategic purposes.

Section 2: Investigating Push and Pull Factors to Violent Extremism

The next section contains three essays that investigate the local push and pull factors that lead to radicalization and recruitment in four contexts: Tunisia, Syria, Somalia and Kenya. The essay titled *The Making of a Foreign Terrorist Fighter: Tunisia as a Case Study* by Emna Ben Arab outlines the push and pull factors in Tunisia relevant for recruitment to *ad-Dawa al-Islamiyyah fi al-Iraq wa as-Sham* (Daesh). She highlights the challenges facing the Tunisian context, including an environment with many political grievances, a strong ideological narrative that is particularly persuasive to young Tunisians, a unique recruitment strategy for the Tunisian context, and the potential for exacerbating the push and pull factors in prison settings among non-radicalized populations. She also makes some recommendations for better CVE strategies, including identifying signs for radicalization at an earlier stage, being more active in counter-recruitment (e.g. in the streets), and for an aggressive counter-narrative campaign strategy in Tunisia.

Wieste van den Berge presents a case study based on interviews with Syrian political activists in Iraq in 2014 in order to reveal potential tendencies towards violence or non-violence in his chapter titled *The Cleavage in Syrian Kurdish Politics: Equality versus Non-Violence*. Although the results were based on a small sample size, the study provides some context and background for future study and investigation on how Syrian Kurds may become violent, and what the key influences are in terms of political activism. In terms of results, many respondents to the interviews were engaged in political activism due to some connection to their families, and charismatic leaders were also significant influencers on political party choices.

Anneli Botha reports on a risk assessment conducted in Kenya and Somalia that addresses the “push” and “pull” factors of As-Shabaab in her essay titled “Factors Facilitating Radicalization in Kenya and Somalia.” The results are based on interviews conducted in Kenya and Somalia of over 250 as-Shabaab members or relatives of as-Shabaab members. Some of the key “pull” factors identified were absent parents and the influence of friends. High frustration in terms of lack of opportunities and a sense of responsibility were other key pull factors. Some of the key “push” factors included economic inequality combined with political or ethnic marginalization.

Section 3: Case Studies in Countering Violent Extremism Programming

This section builds out the research on CVE by reporting on data from existing CVE program examples and case studies. Feriha Peracha, Rafia Raees Khan and Sara Savage present a case study from Pakistan on how education can help to prevent violent extremism in their article *Sabaoon: Educational methods successfully countering and preventing violent extremism*. The Sabaoon program seeks to facilitate rehabilitation in adolescent and pre-adolescent males that had been apprehended in Swat by the Pakistan army for participation in violent extremism. The program uses an innovative model rooted in sociology and psychology that seeks to increase the integrative complexity (IC) of the students in order to decrease “black and white” thinking and improve critical thinking skills. The program is also based on theories that disengagement and “exit” factors from violent extremism are affiliated with those factors (push and pull) that motivate individuals to join the groups in the first place. The Sabaoon model provides concrete evidence of a methodology of effective reintegration for young people, one of the few programs of its kind.

In the chapter titled *Does Youth Employment Build Stability?: Evidence from an Impact Evaluation of Vocational Training in Afghanistan?* by Jon Kurtz, Rebecca Wolfe and Beza Tesfaye, the authors investigate the relationship between youth employment and violent extremism in the context of Afghanistan. The study was conducted to evaluate the INVEST program, which is a development program that seeks to increase youth employment in Helmand by offering vocational and technical training to young people (males and females) throughout the Province. This research piece has significant implications for youth education and youth employment programs for CVE in particular, because it tests the hypothesis that higher employment rates will reduce violent extremism. The study found that there was not a significant correlation between employment and propensity towards political violence, despite an increase in employment status after participating in the INVEST program.

Jonah Ayodele Obajeun’s chapter titled *Radicalization Drivers and De-radicalization Process: The Case of Tolerance Academy in Nigeria* examines a case study of a CVE intervention in Northern Nigeria through education. Obajeun sets the context of the CVE program by identifying two push factors regarding radicalization in Nigeria: poverty and lack of education (including non-attendance despite enrollment). The data in his chapter is partially reliant on a set of interviews conducted by his organization in Northeastern Nigeria amongst the youth population. Obajeun then describes a CVE intervention designed to address some of these factors through his work at Tolerance Academy, an alternative education program that builds resilience amongst youth. During the program, “Tolerance Ambassadors” are equipped with knowledge and skills against violent extremism, and are encouraged to set up clubs and recreational activities in their own schools to provide fellow students with alternative ways of learning and interacting with each other.

Section 4: Countering Terrorists’ Narratives

The final section of this edited volume highlights three cases of countering violent extremist narratives. Haroro Ingram’s chapter titled *Understanding ISIS Propaganda: Appeal, radicalization and counter-strategy implications* analyzes the messaging by ISIS (Daesh) in the broader context of its politico-military campaign strategy and makes recommendations for how to develop better counter-strategies. He argues that there needs to be a more nuanced understanding of ISIS’ (Daesh) propaganda and campaign strategies, and warns that a lack of

understanding may lead to “blowback” effects. He also argues that anti-ISIS/Daesh messaging needs to be far more coordinated with military efforts in the air and on the ground in Iraq and Syria.

Stuart Macdonald’s chapter titled *Terrorist Narratives and Communicative Devices: Findings from a Study of Online Terrorist Magazines* analyzes a number of violent extremist magazines for their content. In this analysis, he notes important differences between the strategic communications of each of the magazines, both in terms of content and presentation. Contrary to the assumption that violent extremists such as Al Qaeda and Daesh are primarily motivated by religious ideology, Macdonald found that despite the “look and feel” of Islam as a primary motivating factor, Al Qaeda and Daesh in particular did not always refer to the Quran or Allah to justify religious legitimacy or authority (scholars, leaders and public opinion were also quoted). Macdonald also revealed that complex narrative patterns are often used in terrorist magazines, and that each group has a slightly different tactic to gaining supporters.

The chapter by Hawa Noor Mohammed titled *Online Religious Extremism in the Horn of Africa* evaluates how violent extremists utilize internet tools to promote their propaganda and messages in the Horn region. While Internet access is not as high as other locations, the increasing use of the Internet (especially through mobile and smart phones) in the region has meant that violent extremists are increasingly utilizing social and online media platforms. The research in this chapter is based partly on focus group discussions and interviews with young people in Mombasa, Kenya from May to December 2015. The chapter argues that greater attention in terms of CVE should focus on countering online messaging in the region, as the online platforms will be a significant recruitment tool moving forward.

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CHAPTER TWO

Countering Violent Extremism: A Guide to Programme Design

James Khalil and Martine Zeuthen

Introduction

This article is a revised version of one section of a wider RUSI essay entitled *Countering Violent Extremism and Risk Reduction: A Guide to Programme Design and Evaluation* (Khalil & Zeuthen, 2016). The broader essay elaborates on a range of additional themes, including best practices for research into the drivers of violent extremism (VE), evaluation questions, indicators of programme success, and so on. In contrast, this shorter paper initially focuses on how CVE initiatives should identify and implement with individuals specifically deemed to be “at-risk” of becoming directly involved in the creation of violence, to the extent that this is feasible in each given location, through providing them with mentoring, livelihoods training, and other types of programming. We argue that CVE initiatives that instead focus exclusively on the broader community will likely underachieve in the degree to which they contribute to their desired CVE aims. Furthermore, while male youths are candidates for the “at risk” label in most contexts, we discuss how to achieve greater precision in this targeting.

The second area of focus is on techniques that should be applied during the design phase to help maximise the extent to which CVE programmes contribute to their intended aims. Specifically, we argue that the *results framework* and *Theories of Change* (ToC) approaches should be employed to expose potentially problematic assumptions in the programme logic, e.g. perhaps including the supposition that ideological factors are the primary driver of VE in any given location, or that state and civil society actors are willing and able to collaborate sufficiently against a common enemy. Of course, the key point is that entire lines of programming may fail to contribute to the intended CVE objective if even only one assumption is misguided, and thus the broader function of these techniques is to promote critical thinking about potentially superior routes to the desired end. While beyond the scope of this paper (but not the wider RUSI

article), *results frameworks* also provide the foundation for programme monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

Identifying “At Risk” Individuals

A key consideration for designers of CVE programmes is the extent to which a specific emphasis should be placed on individuals identified as “at-risk” of being attracted to violence, as opposed to the broader community. In many or most cases the actual perpetrators of violence are far less numerous than their supporters. For instance, those sympathetic to suicide or martyrdom attacks in the Palestinian Territories have often far outnumbered those involved in delivering such violence, with the former reportedly reaching as high as 66 per cent in 2005 (Gunning, 2007, p. 127). Addressing support for violence should certainly be a consideration for CVE programmes, at the very least as supportive attitudes may predispose individuals to subsequent direct involvement in violence. Such attitudes are also likely to provide a key determinant of whether communities bestow status on the current perpetrators of violence, i.e. contributing indirectly to violence via encouragement. In particular, CVE initiatives with the wider community may be applicable in contexts in which:

- Support for VE is widespread, and thus long-term solutions necessarily involve extensive efforts to change attitudes.
- The perpetrators of violence are highly dependent on local communities for material resources, shelter, information on the security forces, and so on.
- The narrower targeting of those deemed to be “at risk” of becoming perpetrators is highly likely to provoke an excessively hostile response from VE entities, and thus a focus on the broader community must be adopted out of necessity.

However, in a wider sense we also argue that CVE programmes that fail to target individuals narrowly identified as being “at risk” (to the extent that this is feasible in any given location) will likely be inefficient or even ineffective. As VE typically only appeals to relatively limited subpopulations in the locations in which the security conditions actually allow for CVE interventions to occur, practitioners must deal with a “needle in a haystack” problem. While male youths are candidates for the “at risk” label in most contexts, greater precision in targeting can potentially be gained, for instance, through additionally focusing on those with existing familial or social links to VE entities, individuals from specific “radical” mosques, churches or other places of worship, recent religious converts, school drop-outs, and those involved in criminal activities. Of course,

such a focus is only applicable if research adequately demonstrates that such individuals are disproportionately associated with VE in the societies in question, rather than basing such efforts on anecdotal evidence that may simply reflect existing preconceptions and prejudices.

The 2014-2016 EU-funded *Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism* (STRIVE) programme (managed by one of the co-authors of this paper, Martine Zeuthen) established a novel approach through which to identify and implement with “at risk” individuals in specific parts of Nairobi. A series of community workshops were undertaken by the STRIVE team, focussing on prominent local issues such as violence and crime. Drawing from a pre-existing knowledge of the community, the team conducted interviews with individuals broadly identified as being “at risk” during the workshops, in particular focusing on:

- Those believed to be perpetrators or supporters of VE, or to have peers associated with VE
- Those believed to be involved with crime, or to have peers associated with crime
- School drop-outs
- Recent converts to Islam

While the first of these factors requires no elaboration, there is some evidence that the remaining three are correlated with (but not necessarily causal to) future involvement in VE in the selected regions of Nairobi. Not all of the candidates were willing to be interviewed, but the process fortuitously coincided with an amnesty period in Kenya, offering a relatively open environment for such discussions. To further narrow the initial “at risk” list the following topics were discussed during the interviews:

- Role models of the respondents
- Sources of news / information
- Identification with the Kenyan nationality
- Perceptions of the legitimacy of the Kenyan intervention in Somalia
- Perceptions of violence in the name of religion

The responses to these questions collectively gave further insight into the mindset of the selected individuals, providing a basis on which the STRIVE team was able to select forty of the most “at risk” respondents for individual mentorship. The team recently received additional funds from a second donor to scale-up these efforts, and the intention is to subsequently release a comprehensive account of the impact of this programming.

However, among the CVE community there is substantial resistance to such efforts, particularly from practitioners arriving from development programming, and this is partly based on the observation that attempts to create terrorist profiles have been unsuccessful to date (see, for instance, Horgan, 2009, p. xxii; and Sageman, 2008, p. 17). We argue that this resistance is misguided as the objective should not be to precisely identify individuals by “type,” but to more modestly narrow targeting efforts on a probabilistic basis (as previously discussed in Khalil & Zeuthen, 2014, p. 7). The former implies an accurate ability to identify individuals according to specific traits, whereas the latter is less ambitiously about marginally increasing the chances of identifying “vulnerable” targets on the basis of evidence that individuals are *somewhat more likely* to be “at risk” if they have specific characteristics or demonstrate particular behaviours. In any case, CVE programmes already routinely focus on male youths, and thus efforts to achieve greater precision in targeting essentially extends an already existing logic.

More pertinent concerns relate to the extent to which efforts focused on those “at risk” may contribute to the stigmatisation of specific groups. This concern routinely features in the UK debate, for instance, with the official *Prevent Strategy* review (2011, p.40), asserting that previous iterations of this initiative inferred that specific communities “were collectively at risk of radicalisation and implied terrorism was a problem specific to Muslim communities.” While this argument may be taken to suggest that less targeting would be appropriate, we adopt the contrary stance – at least in the Global South where we have gained our professional experiences. Through focusing initiatives on individuals narrowly deemed to be “at risk” it is possibly to clarify that the targets of CVE programmes are within given communities, as opposed to being the communities themselves. Of course, this is not to suggest that it is possible to entirely mitigate negative effects (see below), and indeed certain groups will undoubtedly take issue with this programming irrespective of how it is implemented. Programmers can help minimise the extent of such negative effects through establishing suitable relationships with the relevant community leaders, and by satisfactorily explaining their intent.

Shortlisting Programme Components

A second key consideration for CVE programme designers is to ensure that efforts address the critical drivers of VE in the locations in question. As noted by Guilain Denoeux & Lynn Carter (2009, p.9), “programming must reflect the distinctive features of the specific environment in which a particular VE group or movement operates.” While this may sound obvious, we argue that at present undue emphasis is often placed on poverty, unemployment, and other such “structural” factors, partly because many practitioners operating in the burgeoning CVE field

have arrived from a background in development programming. While such factors may be of considerable relevance in particular locations, they are certainly not sufficient conditions for VE, and in specific contexts they are not even necessary. Put simply, the CVE community should ensure that the framework develops into a holistic preventative measure, rather than a rebranded form of development programming. Alongside such “root causes” it is also necessary to consider the relevance of social networks, “radical” mentors, revenge-seeking, the pursuit of status, and a host of other motivating and enabling factors.

Figure 1: Key Drivers of VE in a Hypothetical Location and Candidate CVE Responses

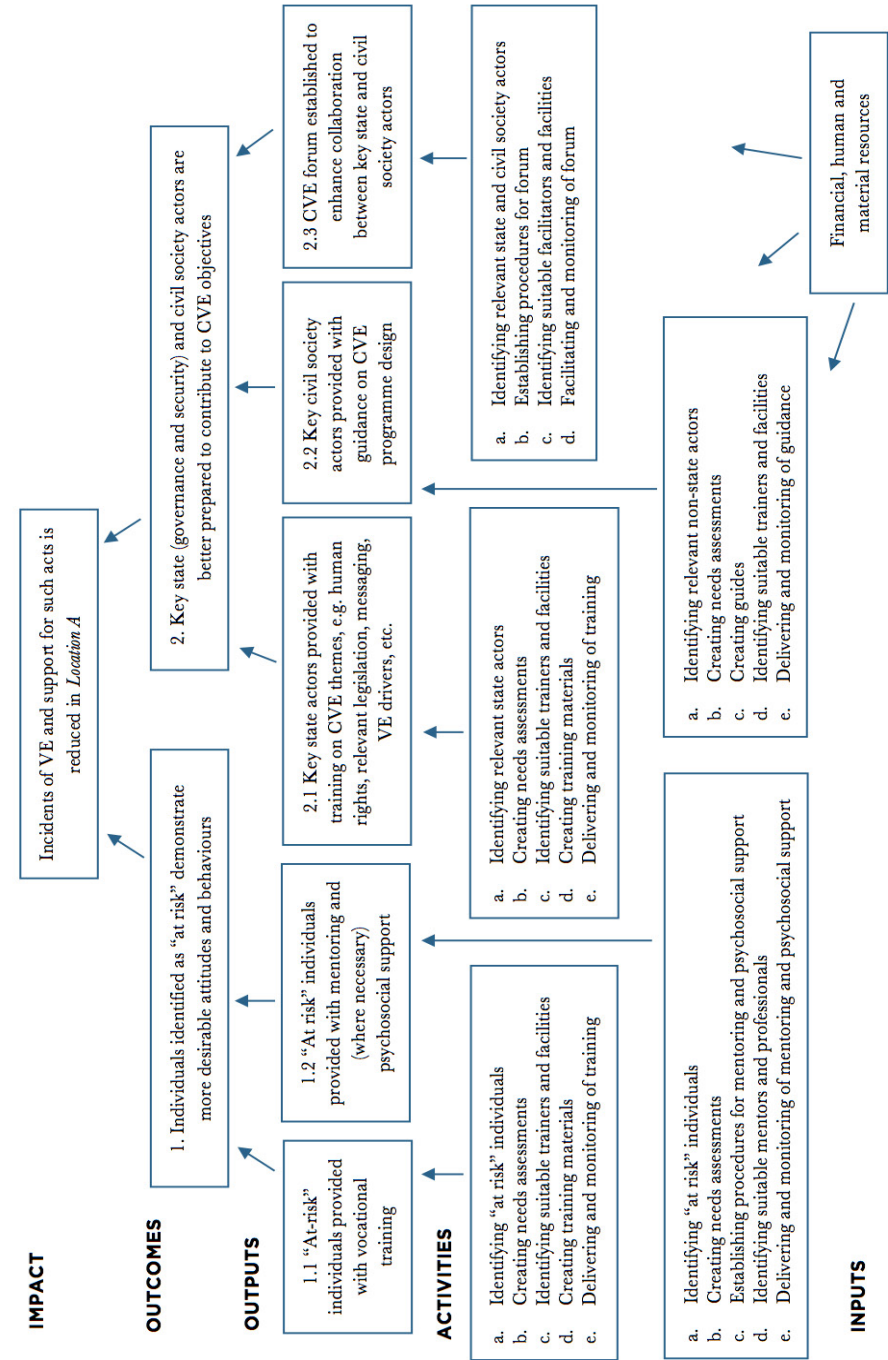
CANDIDATE CVE RESPONSES	
Key identified <i>structural motivators</i> in <i>Location X</i>	
State repression	Advocacy for institutional reform, training of state actors, community awareness-raising of rights, state-community forums, etc.
Limited economic opportunities	Education and vocational training, careers guidance, financial literacy schemes, credit schemes, etc.
Historical tensions between identity groups	Inter-community forums and events, interfaith dialogues, support for moderate religious leaders, civic and peace education, etc.
Key identified <i>individual incentives</i> in <i>Location X</i>	
Status	Mentoring of individuals, education and vocational training, careers guidance, financial literacy schemes, credit schemes, etc.
Material incentives	Education and vocational training, careers guidance, financial literacy schemes, credit schemes, etc.
Revenge	Messaging initiatives, support for moderate religious leaders, civic and peace education, psychosocial support, etc.
Key identified <i>enabling factors</i> in <i>Location X</i>	
“Radical” mentors	Individual mentoring, support for moderate religious leaders, etc.
Online “radical” forums	Online messaging initiatives, etc.
<i>The classification of drivers into structural motivators, individual incentives and enabling factors is discussed in greater detail in the wider RUSI paper from which this article is drawn.</i>	

A simple technique that can be applied by programmers is to list the key drivers of VE in the location in question (see *Figure 1*), and to identify candidate responses that correspond to each of these factors. While this may initially be considered a “brainstorming” exercise, the available literature should be consulted and at least some attention should be paid to the extent to which these responses are likely to contribute to the desired CVE objective in an effective and efficient manner. There are common calls for gender-based programming as an element of CVE, with the underpinning arguments including (a) that mothers may have elevated influence over “at risk” children, (b) that women may be more attuned to notice behavioural changes amongst other family members, and (c) that women are of course also involved directly in violence. However, in reality little or no empirical evidence exists to demonstrate that that gender-based activities actually contribute to CVE objectives in an effective and efficient manner (leaving to one side other potential positive effects of such efforts). This is not to suggest that such programming is ineffective or inefficient, but rather that it remains necessary to demonstrate that this offers a valuable use of resources. Of course, this applies equally to all other elements that may fall under the CVE framework, including, for instance, community debates, media messaging, inter-faith initiatives, and mentorship programmes.

The Results Framework and Theories of Change

Once an initial list of candidate programmatic responses has been established, the process of selection of course involves assessing the feasibility of the various options in light of existing political, economic and security-based constraints in the location in question. In converting this list into an implementable programme it is also necessary to articulate the intended programme *impact*, and to simultaneously establish a results framework. A generic example is provided as *Figure 2* for the purposes of demonstration, with the relevant terminology offered in *Box 1*. As observed above, *results frameworks* are necessary as they enable implementing teams to test the logic of their planned initiative, and as they provide a structure against which programmes can subsequently be monitored and evaluated.

Figure 2: Generic Results Framework for a CVE Programme

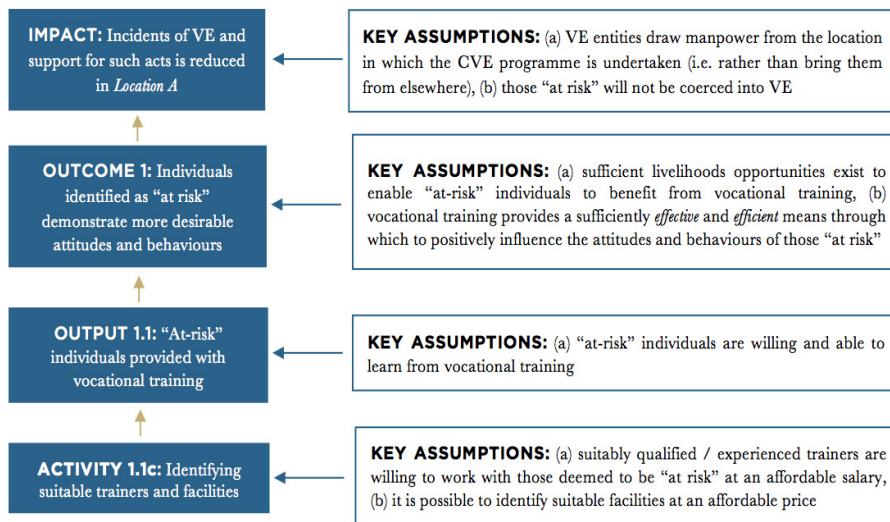


BOX 1: OECD DAC Evaluation and Results-Based Management Terminology

While many agencies use alternative terminology, OECD DAC terms (drawn from OECD DAC, 2002) have been adopted in this paper on the basis that they are widely used within the industry. While several of the below terms are expressed in the language of development, they are equally applicable to CVE interventions.

- **Impacts:** Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.
- **Outcomes:** The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs.
- **Outputs:** The products, capital goods and services, which result from a development intervention.
- **Activities:** Actions taken or work performed through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other types of resources are mobilised to produce specific outputs.
- **Inputs:** The financial, human, and material resources used for the development intervention.

Figure 3: Theories of Change applied to a 'Branch' of Figure 2



The *Theories of Change* (ToC) approach offers a standard technique through which to test the programme logic. While often presented in overly "technical" terms, ToC are simply articulations of the intended pathways from activities to the desired programme *impact*, with a particular focus on the key associated assumptions (the latter is demonstrated in *Figure 3*). The purpose is to help identify aspects of programme design that may be problematic, and implementing teams should aim to test *all* identified assumptions as soon as practicable

(including once programming is actually underway where necessary) through collecting empirical evidence. Of course, the critical point is that entire lines of programming may wholly fail to contribute to the intended *impact* if even only one assumption is misguided, and thus the wider function of the ToC approach is to promote critical thinking about potentially superior routes to the desired end. In practical terms this may involve anything from subtle changes to specific components of the initiative up to the replacement of entire programme "branches." With this in mind, it is worth highlighting a number of potentially tenuous assumptions that are implicit to *Figure 2*:

- State actors are willing and able to learn about CVE themes.
- State and civil society actors are willing and able to collaborate against a common enemy.
- Conditions requiring psychosocial support may contribute to future acts of VE.
- Psychosocial support can be offered in a manner that overcomes local taboos with this treatment.

Of course, programme effects are not necessarily all positive, and implementing teams must also consider potential deleterious consequences through the ToC process. Particularly pertinent negative effects of CVE initiatives may include:

- Beneficiaries or other stakeholders are threatened or physically targeted as a consequence of their involvement in the programme.
- Specific communities are stigmatised if programmes appear to target them (although see the above discussion on "at risk" individuals).
- VE entities are better able to rally support through highlighting evidence of "Western meddling" in cases of externally-funded initiatives occurring in the South.

Implementers should obviously aim to mitigate against such undesirable effects, and altogether avoid programming in a manner that may produce excessively negative consequences. That said, implementers must also evade the converse temptation of becoming overly risk-adverse as this will impinge on their ability to achieve their intended CVE aims. In particular, to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of programmes it is often necessary to develop modalities through which to operate in relatively insecure environments, and to target those specifically deemed to be 'at risk' (as discussed above). In this sense, a strict adherence to the principle of *do no harm* (e.g. as suggested by Denoex & Carter, 2009, p. 45) will likely provide a recipe for underachievement. Put another way, it is necessary for CVE practitioners to take calculated risks

in order to maximize their likelihood of success, and the unfortunate reality is that on occasion this will result in negative effects.

Conclusion

In this paper we argued that CVE efforts to influence the broad community of actual or potential supporters of VE are of substantial relevance, for instance, where such support is critical to the perpetrators of this violence. However, such initiatives should also aim to target those specifically deemed “at risk” of being directly drawn to violence to the extent feasible in each location, as a failure to concentrate efforts in this manner will likely result in underachievement against the desired CVE objectives. In any case, CVE programmes are routinely designed to target male youths, and thus efforts to more precisely focus on those involved in criminal activities, individuals from specific religious, ethnic or clan communities, recent religious converts, and so on, simply extend an already existing logic. Of course, this approach is only applicable if research adequately shows that such individuals are disproportionately associated with VE in the communities in question, rather than being based on anecdotal evidence that may simply reflect existing preconceptions and prejudices. The EU-funded STRIVE programme in Kenya developed a novel approach through which to focus such efforts.

The article also focussed on selected techniques that should be applied during the design phase to help maximise the extent to which CVE programmes contribute to their intended *impacts*. Specifically, the *results framework* and ToC approaches should be applied to encourage practitioners to articulate the programme logic, thereby helping them to identify questionable assumptions and other potential design issues. The key point is that entire lines of programming in specific locations may wholly fail to contribute to the intended *impact* if even only one assumption is misguided, e.g. perhaps including the supposition that ideological factors are the primary driver of VE in any given location, that state and civil society actors are willing and able to collaborate sufficiently against a common enemy, and so on. While beyond the scope of this paper (but not the wider RUSI article from which it has been drawn), the former technique also provides the foundations for programme M&E.

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CHAPTER THREE

Experimental Methods for CVE: Countering Extremism via Elite Persuasion in India

Kunaal Sharma

Introduction

How to reduce radicalization of a religious identity? This essay introduces a research design that can be used to evaluate the true cause-and-effect relationship between any CVE intervention and outcomes of interest. In particular, the essay discusses how the research design will be used in evaluating a real, individual-level intervention implemented among young Sunni and Shia adult men in northern India.

This essay aims to make several contributions to researchers and practitioners working in the counter-extremism space. First, the essay aims to outline one example of the type of research that can expand the evidence on base on “what works” in reducing religious extremism. Nearly fifteen years after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, little is known about the effectiveness of methods to reduce radicalization – a surprising feature, given the extensive literature on radicalization. The vast majority of the literature has focused on the causes of radicalization – including psychological factors (Silke, 2006; Horgan, 2005; Post, 1998), economic marginalization (Bakker, 2006; Krueger & Maleckova, 2004), political marginalization (Dickson, 2005; Richards, 1996), and process-oriented factors like religiosity (Ansari et al., 2006) or conversion. In contrast, there is little evidence on the reverse process as to how individual-level radicalization can be reduced. Policy experts have emphasized the importance of filling this gap (Atran, 2010; Global Center on Cooperative Security, 2014).

This essay will present an experimental research design that enables the recovery of the true causal effect of a particular intervention on extremist attitudes *and* behavior. And by examining if effects endure six weeks after exposure to the intervention, the study discussed in this essay will expand evidence on whether persuasion interventions can lead to counter-extremism effects that persist in the medium-term.

Second, the research design presented in this essay represents an example of how interventions can be designed to test factors emphasized in the social science literature as motivating extremism. In particular, the presented design involves randomly assigning young adult Sunni or Shia men to listen to audio content that consists of either an in-group religious cleric emphasizing religious norms that prohibit violence or an in-group shopkeeper emphasizing material considerations that prohibit violence. These two types of persuasion types – emphasizing either norms or material considerations – are derived from the literature on religious extremism and political violence more broadly. The research design thus allows one to examine whether one persuasion type is more effective in reducing extremism than another. Since broader interventions in the real world are often based on either of these general types of persuasion, the essay presents a design that has significance for CVE programming more generally.

Third, the essay outlines a research design that helps practitioners understand whether pro-peace persuasion from in-group elites can actually overcome realistic counterarguments from local provocateurs. The proposed methodology here is that some subjects who heard a pro-peace audio are randomly assigned to hear another audio recording from an in-group peer who provocatively emphasizes sectarian difference. Such a manipulation is akin to the way in which real-world provocateurs seek to hinder pro-peace speakers in conflict settings. By randomly varying this second recording in the experiment, the research design allows one to examine whether the pro-peace audio recording actually overpowers a provocative counterargument.

The essay discusses the implementation of the research design in the specific case of the Sunni-Shia conflict in Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh, India's largest state. Violence between Sunni and Shia has afflicted Lucknow since the early twentieth century, and extremism within both communities continues to define a central political conflict in what is often considered India's most important political capital after New Delhi. The experiment involves randomizing audio content to 480 young adult Sunni and Shia men in the most violence-prone neighborhood of Lucknow – the Old City.

Policy Motivation

Policymakers generally lack sufficient causal evidence on the effectiveness of programs seeking to reduce religious radicalization (Atran 2010; Global Center on Cooperative Security 2014). Although some efforts have been made to bring statistical measurement to CVE program evaluation (Aldrich 2010), significant

obstacles remain. First, existing techniques that use baseline and endline surveys or only endline surveys do not overcome correlation versus causation concerns. Second, evaluation techniques are overwhelmingly focused on attitudinal measures and too rarely include behavioral measures of change. Third, studies seeking to evaluate extremism programs often lack longitudinal designs, making it impossible for researchers to learn whether program effects persist over time once subjects return to their ordinary lives. Finally, the existing body of research faces significant external validity concerns, meaning that donors and program managers have little insight into whether a program that works in one particular locale will yield similar effects in other areas.

The experimental design described in this paper seeks to yield some of the first-ever causal estimates of a counter-extremism program that involves a longitudinal design and behavioral measures. I do so using Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs), a scientific procedure used to isolate and quantify the true cause-and-effect relationship of an intervention on outcomes of interest. RCTs, which were first developed in the medical sciences, are used widely today by psychologists, economists, and political scientists. Yet to date, RCTs have scarcely, if at all, been used to evaluate CVE programs.

In their most basic form, RCTs work as follows. First, subjects – i.e., the observable units who receive the intervention (“treatment”) are randomly assigned to one or several treatment groups and often, a pure control group that does not receive the treatment. In expectation, the random assignment of subjects to experimental groups generates balanced groups, i.e., groups whose average background characteristics are statistically indistinguishable from one another. In generating such balanced groups, the randomization process allows the researcher to “back out” the effect of a particular intervention by comparing its effect among otherwise similar groups of subjects. Next, the intervention is administered to the treatment group(s) but not to the control group. Upon the full administration of the intervention, the researcher then measures the outcomes of interest. In social scientific work, including on extremism, outcomes are usually measured by means of a survey and in some cases, behavioral tasks. The final step in the process is for the researcher to collect, clean, and analyze the data to calculate the average causal effect of the intervention on outcomes of interest. In leveraging the RCT approach, my project will deliver clear results on a particular program in a particular locale that has direct relevance to significant policy needs on countering violent extremism.

Beyond its policy contributions, this study described in this essay will make several theoretical and empirical contributions to multiple literatures in social science.

First, the broader study expands the empirical literatures on *political persuasion*, mostly in American politics, and prejudice-reduction, mostly in *social psychology*, to a context rarely examined in those literatures: violent conflict between religious groups. Political persuasion studies focus almost exclusively on the context of U.S. policy issues, including race, but not on violence *per se* (for reviews, see Chong & Druckman, 2007a; Druckman & Lupia, 2000). In psychology, the closest analogue to counter-radicalization is prejudice-reduction. A recent review of some 900 published studies on prejudice-reduction emphasized the scarcity of experimental evidence on interventions in cases of extreme intergroup conflict overseas (Paluck & Green, 2009).

This work expands these literatures in three ways. First, the structure facilitates new experimental evidence from settings of violent religious conflicts. Second, the theoretical framework for persuasion to reduce radicalization in violent religious conflicts is a novel concept. Third, in testing if pro-peace messages can overpower counter-arguments, this framework also draws on the literature on persuasion in competitive political settings (Sniderman & Therifault, 2004; Chong & Druckman, 2007a; Lazarev & Sharma, 2015).

This project also expands the literature on the social construction of ethnic violence. As observed by Fearon & Laitin (2000; p. 853), most constructivist scholars explain ethnic violence as the result of elite manipulations of in-group symbols for strategic purposes (Tambiah, 1996; Brass, 1997; Kaufman, 2001; Wilkinson, 2006). Yet, there has been comparatively less examination as to when and why some persuasive appeals resonate more with followers than others.

Finally, the experimental design addresses the comparative strength of theological versus material causes of radicalization. The experiment discussed here directly tests if theological arguments for nonviolence are more persuasive material arguments. It will bring new causal evidence to a significant and unresolved debate in the radicalization literature. To date, there is no direct experimental test comparing the effects of these messages on radicalization. While some scholars find that religiosity correlates with support for religious violence (Ginges, Hansen, & Norenzayan, 2009; Ansari et al. 2006; Tessler & Nachtwey, 1998), others find no relationship (Fair, Malhotra, Shapiro 2012: 689). Regarding the effect of economic motives on radicalization, some studies find a relationship between poverty and violence (Scacco 2010) while others find little or no relationship (Blair et al, 2013; Krueger & Maleckova, 2003).

Social Context: Lucknow

Lucknow is the capital of Uttar Pradesh. Located in northern India, Uttar Pradesh boasts a population of nearly 200 million people, making it India's largest state. Events in Lucknow, which is home to 4 million residents, thus exert significant effects on state-wide and national politics.

Unlike other Indian cities where Hindu-Muslim cleavages dominate local politics, the primary religious cleavage in Lucknow is between its Sunni and Shia Muslim populations. Some thirty percent of Lucknavis are Muslim, with about sixty percent of that population belonging to the Sunni Muslim sect and about forty percent belonging to the Shia sect.

Over the past century, Lucknow has been home to more Sunni-Shia violence than any other Indian city in the past century. Interestingly in the Indian context, the city has never experienced a major act of Hindu-Muslim violence for at least the past century (Sinha, 1978; p.1841). The city's Sunni-Shia violence is a relatively recent phenomenon: the first riot took place in 1905 (Ahmad, 1983, p. 340). Ever since, sectarian violence has almost exclusively coincided with particular Muslim holy periods when Sunni and Shia public rituals direct attention toward contentious religious symbols traditions. Most sectarian violence in Lucknow occurs during Muharram, the first month in the Islamic calendar that lasts for either 68 or 69 days in South Asia. As in many parts of the Muslim world, Muharram heightens the political salience of Sunni-Shia divisions in Lucknow due to the month's historical significance to the Shia faith. Muharram is the period when Muslims believe that Husayn, the son of Ali (the fourth caliph) and the Prophet Muhammad's favorite grandson, was killed alongside his 72 companions at the battle of Karbala, Iraq, by the Sunni caliph Yazid. In Lucknow, Husayn's death is mainly mourned by the Shia, whose religious beliefs include honoring Husayn as an Imam and the son of the revered Ali, whom the Shia insist was denied his role as the rightful successor to the Prophet Muhammad as caliph.. Muharram rites feature highly organized acts of public piety, such as religious processions (jaloos) that involve chest-beating (marsiyah) and, sometimes, self-immolation (matam). Many pious and conservative Sunni Muslims reject such Shia practices as highlighting a historical act that divides the Muslim community (ummah). Such Sunnis believe that devout acts of mourning for Husayn, as well as for his father Ali (whose murder is commemorated by the Shia in separate rituals during Ramadan) constitute apostasy by questioning the oneness of God (tawhid). Due to its religious rituals and broader symbolic importance to the Shia community, Muharram is regularly exploited by Sunni and Shia locals who seek to engender sectarian divisions for strategic purposes.

During this month, sectarian violence tends to occur when ‘extremist’ Sunni and Shia groups engage in highly contentious rituals that are considered explicitly offensive by one another. Extremist Sunni clerics in Lucknow organize rituals (called madh-e-sahaba processions) to provocatively praise the first three caliphs of Islam but not the fourth, Ali. Madhe-sahaba rituals can take place on the street in response to a Shia Muharram procession or at a Sunni mosque, and draw ire from many local Shia. For their part, extremist Shia clerics in Lucknow organize rituals (called tabarra, which literally means ‘disassociation’ in Urdu) to emphasize their rejection of the first three caliphs, often using phrases that many Sunni find offensive. Ever since Lucknow’s first Sunni-Shia riot in 1905, the Sunni practice of reciting Madh-e-Sahaba and the Shia response of retaliating with tabarra has served as a substantive aspect of Muharram processions that is also a proximate cause of violence between the two sides (Hasan, 1998, p. 351-353).

Experiment 1: Design

The experiment varies two aspects of the persuasive appeal: (1) whether a subject hears an in-group religious elite emphasize religious norms that prohibit violence or hears an in-group economic elite emphasize material considerations that prohibit violence and (2) whether or not a subject hears a counterargument from another in-group elite that provocatively emphasizes religious differences between the groups. The experiment thus not only tests if elites can persuade young male adults to non-violence, but whether such an appeal can overpower the types of realistic appeals for intolerance to which youth are simultaneously exposed. The advantage of this design is that it mimics real-world dynamics in Lucknow, where individuals often hear competing information that advocates either tolerance or intolerance toward the outgroup.

The experiment involves a random, representative sample of 240 Shia and 240 Sunni young adult males (i.e., ages 18 to 35). Enumerators (Sunni enumerators for Sunni subjects and Shia enumerators for Shia subjects) approached subjects on side streets of the Old City. Subjects were randomly assigned to one of five experimental groups as per a pre-made randomization schedule that I enumerators were trained to use. The five experimental groups were generated by the combination of the two treatment arms (2 x 2) plus one pure control group whose members were not exposed to either a pro-tolerance message or counter-argument.

Upon giving informed consent, subjects assigned to one of the four treatment groups will be asked to listen to a 5-minute, Urdu-language audio us-

ing the enumerator’s smartphone and headphones. I created audio recordings by working directly with real Sunni and Shia clerics and shopkeepers in Lucknow’s Old City. Separate audio content was prepared for Shia subjects and Sunni subjects, but the duration, content, and speaker attributes were designed to provide for maximum symmetry between the audio content delivered to both groups.

Attitudinal and behavioral outcomes were measured post-treatment by two endline surveys: one immediately after the intervention and the other six weeks later. Subjects were asked to provide cell phone numbers to facilitate the second endline. Difference-in-means estimation were used to test for the causal effects of the interventions on religious extremism, as well as the effects of the pro-peace audios and the counterargument taken together. The analysis was conducted on the second endline to determine if effects endured. The basic setup is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Experiment 1 Basic Setup

	Material Considerations	Religious Norms
No Counterargument	30	30
Counterargument	60	60

Pure Control: 60

Total N per sample: 240

Overall N: 480

Measuring Outcomes

Causal effects on religious extremism will be measured by means of three indexes: an attitudinal index (“*ATTITUDES*”) index consisting of four items; a social distance (“*SOCDIST*”) index consisting of seven items; and a real behavior (“*TRUEBEHAV*”) index consisting of three items.

ATTITUDES consists of four questions that obtain measures of support for acts of hypothetical violence committed by an in-group member against an out-group member. Responses to each question were scored on a 7-point Likert scale (1: lowest support for violence; 7: highest support for violence). Each subject was told to imagine that an in-group member in Lucknow heard that an outgroup religious cleric insulted his sect and considers taking part in four behaviors: (*vignette 1*) using a loudspeaker to call the outgroup non-Muslims; (*vignette 2*) throwing a stone against outgroup members who are participating

in a religious procession; (*vignette 3*) attacking an outgroup friend who made an anti-ingroup Facebook post; (*vignette 4*) attacking an outgroup member's store.

SOCDIST consists of seven questions that obtain measures of social distance toward the outgroup. Responses were scored on a binary scale for each question. Each subject was asked to state whether or not they would accept an outgroup member as: (1) a relative by marriage; (2) a neighbor; (3) a co-worker; (4) a close personal friend; (5) a new Indian citizen; and (6) a visitor to Lucknow. The seventh question asked respondents whether they wanted to exclude all outgroup members from Lucknow.

TRUEBEHAV is a three-item index consisting of binary measures of whether the subject engages in three actual behaviors proxy non-radicalized behavior: (*task 1*) signing an Urdu petition condemning those who create sectarian divisions in Lucknow; (*task 2*) accepting and pledging to wear free wristband stating Sunni-Shia unity in Urdu; and (*task 3*) providing the phone number of a friend to invite them to a future intergroup peace gathering.

Endline 1 collected both attitudinal and behavioral measures. Six weeks later, subjects were contacted by enumerators via SMS to administer the second endline. Endline 2 will administer the same four attitudinal questions and behavioral measures, with task 2 consisting of whether or not the subject was still wearing the wristband six weeks later.

Average treatment effects were calculated for Endline 1 and 2 in order to test the effect of the interventions on attitudes, social distance, and true behavior six weeks later.

Implications

This project will make several core contributions to research and practice on conflict management and peace-building in four primary ways.

First, this study will yield much-needed quantitative, causal evidence regarding a social norms CVE intervention. Results of different manipulations will provide specific recommendations on the type of elite persuasion (religious norms from an in-group religious cleric or material considerations from an in-group shopkeeper) that is most effective in reducing extremist attitudes and behavior. These findings will offer novel insights on CVE program design for governments, inter-governmental organizations, NGOs, and civil society associations. The measurement of effects on actual behavior as well as effects over

time will inform policymakers with quantitative estimates of intervention effectiveness and durability over time. Such results can also inform decisions on funding and budget allocation regarding various proposed CVE interventions.

Second, this project will make a methodological contribution to evaluate CVE programs that has practical relevance to USIP and governments. Experimental research is increasingly used to design and evaluate interventions in development economics, street crime, and gender-based violence. By contrast, the use of experimental methods in the CVE context is in its earliest stages. This project offers a template as to how to conduct such experiments in counter-radicalization contexts and how to leverage designs that include behavioral measures and test effects over time. I hope to work with other scholars and academics increasingly bringing such methods to the CVE policy space so that policy makers can soon have greater transparency about the effectiveness of various interventions. Experimental research can and should be viewed as a supplement to various other methods of evaluation that are already beginning to bring evidence to bear on CVE effectiveness. Experimental designs can help NGO program managers by helping to evaluate pilot CVE programs in order to devote limited financial and staff resources to the full-scale interventions of the pilots that work best.

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CHAPTER FOUR

The Making of a Foreign Terrorist Fighter: Tunisia as a Case Study

Emna Ben Arab

Tunisia, although the smallest and most progressive North African country, has become one of the main sources of recruitment for transnational terrorist groups and has allegedly exported the highest number of foreign terrorist fighters (henceforth FTF¹) to Syria and Iraq. Past experiences with FTF in Tunisia have shown that their war is not a “one-way street.” Many of them return home with a mission to carry out a mission in Tunisia. Having acquired advanced terrorist fighting skills and having significantly expanded their transnational extremist networks, they become themselves deeply involved in the radicalization and recruitment processes.

This chapter attempts to understand the root causes of the FTF phenomenon and the making process of a foreign combatant in the Tunisian context of radicalization and recruitment, seeks to identify possible profiles prone to radicalization and suggests a threefold strategy that involves prevention, pre-emption and response.

Although this chapter does not claim to be based on frontline research, as collecting primary data through conducting face-to-face interviews or paper questionnaires with a representative sample of jihadists, returnees or their families proved strenuous,² it will use, as an empirical research base, the findings of two fact-finding missions based on observation and informal talk with jihadists and young sympathizers conducted in two low-income neighborhoods in Greater Tunis (Sidi Hassin and Douar Hisher) known for the spread of the jihadist ideology among its youth.

¹ Estimates differ as to the exact number of Tunisian FTF. While the latest data from the US House Homeland Security Committee suggests that of the 25,000 fighters thought to be working for ISIS in Iraq and Syria, 5000 are from Tunisia, Tunisian government estimates that around 3,000 Tunisians have been to Iraq and Syria. This does not include the 9,000 that the interior minister said had been thwarted from traveling to Syria by the Tunisian authorities. According to SITE Intelligence Group, which follows extremist and jihadi organizations, ISIS-linked Twitter accounts are putting out “calls for Tunisians to ‘follow their brothers.’”

² A jihadist field study requires time and resources, and establishing contact with Jihadist leaders and sympathizers proved difficult because of their mistrust of all those who do not embrace their ideology, objectives and lifestyle.

References to the Islamic State of Iraq and as-Sham (ISIS) communication and recruitment strategy will be made because:

- the phenomenon is not squarely framed by the Tunisian local context given the global nature of ISIS message
- ISIS is the major recruiter of Tunisian FTF
- Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia (AST) and Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigade pledged allegiance to ISIS and embraced their message, objectives and strategy

Motivating Factors for FTFs in Tunisia

As Syria and Libya are becoming the main jihadist destinations providing both a rallying point and a training ground for radical Islamists from other nations, the phenomenon of FTF in Tunisia has become part of a global jihadist movement that poses a potential security threat.

FTF are driven by a wide range of motives. According to James Forest in his *Confronting the Terrorism of Boko Haram in Nigeria*, decades of research on grievances, defined as “structural reasons for why the ideology resonates among a particular community” (Forest, 2012, p.30) have shown two primary factors for engaging in terror activities: “pre-conditions” or “things that exist,” and “triggers” or “things that happen” (Forest, 2012, p.29).

In Tunisia, pre-conditions are identified in relation to socio-economic grievances and disillusionment with the promises of the 2011 uprising. Gurr (2015) demonstrated that there is “a linear causal relationship in which [socio-economic] strains produce psychological discomfort which, in turn, produces collective action” (In Ashour, 2009, p.6). In Tunisia, there is some empirical support to socioeconomic explanations of radicalization. According to the fact-finding missions conducted in Sidi Hassine and Douar Hisher (Salem, 2014), FTF are largely the product of widespread socioeconomic insecurities (Fatnassi, 2014).³ They are usually very dissatisfied with the status quo and have come to believe in the need to use violence because they see no other way for change. Foster’s study showed (as cited in Mack, 2003, p. 13) that they draw on “a reservoir of misery, hurt, helplessness, and rage from which the foot soldiers of terrorism can be recruited” (Forest, 2012, p.31).

³ Most recruits are younger than 30, and they are attracted to the mantra of jihad for more than ideological reasons. James Clapper, the U.S. director of national intelligence, warned in the 2015 Worldwide Threat Assessment that Tunisia, with “one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world,” will continue to “struggle to meet public expectations.”

In fact, Tunisia’s predatory economy, which has for a long time favored politically connected elites while the wider population, particularly in disadvantaged rural regions, was suffering from rapidly declining living standards, fed a perception of us versus them found in all ideologies associated with violence. Research has, indeed, shown “that the ones who are involved, whether returning exiles or local activists, are all Tunisians reacting to Tunisian conditions” (Torelli, Meroni & Cavatorta, 2012, p.144).

The fact-finding mission in Douar Hisher has shown that most young jihadists suffer from social vulnerability. Unemployment rate in Douar Hisher reached 18% in 2012, 3% higher than the national unemployment rate, the number of job applications filed reached 24,000 while job vacancies available did not exceed 5000 and poverty rate was around 16%. In response to *International Alert* interview of some jihadists from the neighborhood, 58.4% declared that their main problem was providing money to their families, 52% mentioned unemployment as their major predicament, and 81,1% stated that their mothers were out of work.⁴

Although the socio-economic approach is sometimes downplayed in the scholarship about terrorist radicalization and recruitment claiming that there are few or no links between poverty and lack of education on the one hand and mobilization on the other hand, (Hewitt & Moore, 2009), and that research should look beyond the causal linearity of this approach, the fact-finding mission in Sidi Hassine revealed that, material benefits rather than theological or ideological involvement are what have drawn youth to the Salafist Jihadist groups in the neighborhood. Contrary to their beliefs and understanding of piety, some of them for the sake of having an income, run shops that sell lingerie and are agreeable in their interactions with girls and women. Others sell “Celtia,” a Tunisian beer brand, and beer cans for recycling.⁵ Poverty and oppression seem to explain, at least in part, why people in countries like Tunisia embrace violent extremism, but may not explain the flow of Western volunteers to foreign war zones.

Disillusionment with the promises of the 2011 uprising has provided further motivation for recruits. The so-called Arab Spring brought with it high expectations related mainly to alleviating widespread poverty, unemployment and an overall lack of political or socioeconomic opportunities. However, four years into the revolution, Tunisia’s economy is contracting. After 2.3% growth in 2014, the World Bank and the IMF project GDP growth for 2015 at a

⁴ The suicide bomber who carried out the attack in Tunis on the presidential guards’ bus on November 23rd, 2015 based on fact finding mission conducted in Douar Hisher.

⁵ This is the case of the Bilal Mosque’s Imam at AlJayara

measly 1%. Overall unemployment is at 15.2% and at an alarming level of 31.4% for university graduates (World Bank, 2016; Barungi, Ogunleye & Zamba, 2015). These unmet expectations added another layer to the resentment and to the fragile relationship between the state and its citizens. This theme of dissatisfaction has been readily exploited by violent extremists who have organized charity activities and aid distribution in order to gain support and lure people to their cause and to brush up their reputation. This is also clear from the mantra “hear from us not about us” that was repeated by Salafists during their manifestations.

These preconditions for radicalization and recruitment are amplified by “triggers” which, defined as “specific actions, policies, and events that enhance the perceived need for action within a particular environment” (Forest, 2012, p.7), contributed to the unprecedented number of young Tunisian men and women joining foreign wars. In this case, triggers include government laxity in relation to youth radicalization and recruitment and the dismantling of the security apparatus.

Islamist governments in Tunisia ascending to power after the 2011 uprising provided a favorable political climate for radicalization. Under this regime, recruitment in jails and mosques increased significantly, and violent extremist networks expanded, to include fundraisers for violent extremist movements, arms dealer, and training cells. According to the 2015 Report of National Observatory “ILEF”, as post-2011 Tunisia opened up to freedom and democracy, an unprecedented number of NGOs which reached 17000 were created, 48% of which did not abide by their declared scope and objectives and 19% were operating as religious and charity organizations. Some of these NGOs were funded by unknown sources and operated as facilitators for arms and fighters smuggling and provided logistical support to religious figures that amplified narratives of violent extremism.

A number of these religious figures were welcomed to Tunisia by government officials⁶ (e.g., interim President Marzouki) and party leaders (e.g., Ghannouchi) and given plenty of opportunities to raise awareness of what was happening in Syria and impact potential volunteers. Similarly, the so-called “proselytizing tents” became a major public recruitment channel for violent extremists in Tunisia between mid-2011 and July 2013 (when they were banned). These street tents were a space for violent extremists to hold meetings and distribute flyers and booklets. A 30-year old interviewee in Douar Hisher claimed that three to

four youths were recruited every day through the “proselytizing tents” and a 27-year old member of the movement, who accepted to be interviewed, proudly argued that the tents were a Tunisian invention and Tunisians who answered the call for Jihad took the concept with them to Syria (Salem, 2014, p. 231).

Post-uprising, the security apparatus was more or less dismantled, which led to a deterioration of the security environment in Tunisia. For example, one of the very first decisions of the post-uprising government was the dissolution of the secret service responsible for domestic intelligence collection and information sharing. This *corps d’élite* was also a target of the protesters after the uprising and were under heavy criticism for their connections to the previous regime.

This situation in Tunisia was aggravated by the new opportunities created for FTF in Libya where the environment gave rise to greater freedom of movement, training and funding combined with the ready availability of weapons which proliferated in the lawless desert on the Tunisian-Libyan border. The situation in Libya also provided space and mechanisms for violent extremists to train new recruits on their way to Syria. For example, the attackers of the Bardo museum were returnees from Libya where they were trained and there have been speculations (by intelligence officials) that they have been in contact with Shabab al-Tawhid, an extremist group based in the east of Libya and largely composed of Tunisians with extreme views regarding the use of terrorist attacks.

Narratives of Violent Extremism in Tunisia

If preconditions and triggers have motivated Tunisian FTFs to travel to unfamiliar war zones and engage in high-risk behavior instead of fighting for political and socio-economic opportunities in their own country, the “making” of a Tunisian FTF comes from the combination of a number of factors: the potency of the recruitment message, direct engagement with previous foreign fighters (for example, in the prison system), and the sophisticated use of social media.

Recruiters in Tunisia (now mainly for those joining ISIS) use several tactics in defining their narratives for recruitment. First, recruiters appeal to potential recruits’ sense of religious duty through an emotionally charged ideological narrative. Interviews in Douar Hisher and Sidi Hassan revealed that primarily the narrative is **a religiously inspired** powerful gradualist message that starts with religious teachings related to the everyday behavioral code (dress, drinking alcohol, praying...) to ultimately embrace a jihadist political agenda

⁶ The extremist preacher Wajdi Ghounim was given the opportunity by Tunisian authorities during his visit to Tunisia in 2012 to address an audience in El Ghofran mosque from which one of the Bardo attackers, Maher Geidi, emerged.

and a holy war against anything “Other.” Recruiters connect emotionally with their targets by highlighting their desire to see their salvation through Islam.

The main message of the recruiters in Tunisia is framed in terms of how locally-contextual hardships are the fault of the “Other,” and portrays a situation in which a Muslim population is oppressed by non-Muslims (mainly in relation to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict). In this regard, recruiters create an **existential threat** that activates a sense of obligation to the common group (fellow Muslims) to which they both belong, and a duty to defend persecuted co-religionists.

The notion of justice is, therefore, central to their doctrine-related message. It legitimizes their brutality and aggressiveness toward their opponents and at the same time strengthens their inward solidarity. Indeed, “ISIS’s vision of resurrecting an idealized caliphate gives them the sense of serving a sacred mission,” (Gerges, 2014, p.343) and of “keeping the group’s sense of mission alive, contributing to cement its spirit as a single entity and stressing its otherness vis-à-vis third-party subjects” through “dehumanizing” and “de-Islamizing” the enemy (Plebani & Maggiolini, 2015, p.39). Their recruitment messaging, therefore, emphasizes the necessity to take action to preserve the existence of the community.

The narratives used by recruiters to ISIS aim at a double radicalization. Their multimedia releases showcase their brutality as an act of defense in reaction to Western airstrikes killing innocent civilians. This serves as a radicalizing message because brutality tends to be interpreted by Muslim youth as justice being rendered. In contrast, for Westerners, the brutality is understood as an act of aggression that requires an equally brutal reaction creating new openings for extreme ideas that are gaining ground with the broader Western public. This can be seen in the anti-Islamic impulses of the right wing politicians and base in the USA and Europe (e.g., the rhetorical excesses of Republican candidates for the 2016 Presidential elections such as Donald Trump and Ben Carson; the rise of right-wing parties in France, the Netherlands and England) that serve to intensify the conflict by allowing angry and reactive attitudes against Muslims in the West to take root.

In Tunisia, the recruiters’ narrative also underpins a social movement that provides potential recruits with a **tight-knit community**, offers them an outlet in which to express their grievances, **a sense of belonging** to cling to, and eventually the prestigious **status of a martyr**. The utopian nature of their new world is also emphasized in the recruitment message and it is one major

explanation of the unprecedented number of FTF in Iraq and Syria compared to previous wars (conflicts in Chechnya (1994-2009), Somalia (1993-2014) and Afghanistan after 2001 could not count on more than a few hundred foreign combatants). Duyvesteyn & Peeters (2015) argued that the huge differences in the number of transnational insurgents in foreign wars is due to accessibility to the battlefield, the cohesion of the insurgent group and the chances of success. ISIS’ version and claim of **an Islamic utopia** that achieves a divine promise and an appealing vision of the future (in sheer contradiction to their reservoir of misery) is central to their propaganda. It is portrayed as the incarnation of the ideal “Islamic state,” a full state with a global political project, a corresponding territory and a normal daily life inspired and guided by strict Sharia law. ISIS magazine *Islamic State News* published by Al Hayet Media Center celebrates the success of this “statehood” by emphasizing its efficient and fair governance and the opportunities for development it offers and by showcasing the quality of life in a state that cares about its people for the purpose of attracting the families of FTF. For example, Al Baghdadi promised, in this context, marriage grants, fully equipped houses and free goods to ISIS fighters (“ISIS leader offers marriage grants,” 2014).

Related to this is ISIS’ **message of strength and victory**. By presenting itself as a state with global ambitions, as opposed to the localized projects of rival groups, and by publicizing its ultraviolent videos of battles, mass executions, beheadings and burning, ISIS gives the potential recruits the impression that they are playing for a winner, a “powerful vanguard movement capable of delivering victory and salvation” (Gerges, 2014, p. 342).

The way and the channels through which the message is transmitted is of importance particularly in relation to offline physical contact (via returnees or jihadi sympathizers and exposure to preachers’ sermons), and online self-recruitment especially through social media (Facebook in particular). In this regard, brother-to-brother and friend-to-friend recruitment strategies have been effective in the making of Tunisian foreign fighters. Narratives and messages of current recruiters are reinforced by previous foreign fighters in mosques and jails. Young predisposed men and women are exposed to individuals who engaged in foreign wars in the mid-2000s and are now linked up with outside jihadists (Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya and Iraq), who act as boosters of the radicalization process and whose experience has been formative for younger generations. According to a report by the Ministry of Interior of Tunisia, the strategy of recruiters consists of three stages⁷:

⁷ 2015 Report by the Counter-terrorism Security Pole, Ministry of the Interior (Tunisia)

1. Having “watchers” at mosques and other places where people can express their grievances (e.g., barbershops) to detect individuals liable to change their attitudes and embrace a potentially deviant behavior based on a radical ideology;⁸
2. Isolating their targets by discussing their plights and those of fellow Muslims and the duty to intervene on their behalf;
3. Exploiting their weaknesses and subjecting them to psychological assessments to test their willingness to die for their cause. Those who pass are entrusted with a mission inside the country or smuggled out of the country for further indoctrination and training prior to entering the conflict.

For Tunisia, jails represent a major incubator where the process of radicalization can occur among the average population; there is no separation between prisoners jailed for terrorism crimes and the average prison population. According to official reports and interviews with family members of detainees, intermixing prisoners in the Tunisian context increases exposure of the “average” prison population to radical ideas, and exacerbates the radicalization process. According to a report released by the General Directorate of Prisons and Correction Facilities in October 2015, among all the detainees at one of the Tunis jails, 1179 are in jail for terrorist charges among whom 83% are aged between 20 and 35, 63% are working class, 37% are from western borderline regions, 35% are from interior regions (mainly Sidi Bouzid, Kasserine and Medenine), 23% from Greater Tunis and 18% from coastal area,⁹ which testifies to the psychological and socio-economic vulnerability of the group.

Especially when it comes to ISIS, FTFs are a “dotcom era” generation known for their effective and sophisticated social media expertise, recruiting additional FTFs through their propaganda videos using shock-and-awe methods. They also utilize tactics to display brutality to frighten the average citizens and attract new young men and women¹⁰ to their ranks. In his analysis of ISIS media releases, Lombardi identifies three characteristics of their communication strategy, which includes:

1. *Gamification*, a concept implying that daily cumbersome behavior can be influenced and made easier to endure by pleasant activities and games,

⁸ This is the case of Yassine Labidi, one of the Bardo Meuseum attackers.

⁹ 2015 Report by the Counter-terrorism Security Pole, Ministry of the Interior (Tunisia)

¹⁰ Estimates of Western women who joined ISIS are around 550 according to Bakker and De Leede, whereas there is no data available on the overall number of women known as “Jihadi Brides”

so gamification is “a communication facilitator that helps accepting such routines” (Lombardi, 2015, p.100). Games become a substitute for real everyday life and used as such to inform, influence and give users the opportunity to experiment new possibilities and therefore maximize the relationship between the virtual and the real worlds through role games whereby the infidels are the enemies.

2. *Convergence*, a concept that refers to the confluence of different media channels to disseminate specific messages to a wide public.
3. Dramatization and Hollywood cinematic style that supports their strategy of emotional communication.

Arnaboldi and Vidino (2015) in their analysis of ISIS propaganda strategy argue that the main characteristic of their communication style is *the bottom-bottom approach* which allows every addressee to become a content creator and to operate through personal Twitter or Facebook accounts producing and sharing materials leading to a staggering increase in the number of followers. This approach is by nature interactive, decentralized and empowering to the bottom. But, although free from hierarchical structures, it is based on reference models traced by major international Jihadist groups. This is known as the *swarm dynamics*, a concept that describes the activities, behavior and ideology of terrorists as being shaped by “a few individuals... whose influence guides the collective flight of the swarm” (Arnaboldi & Vindino, 2015, 131).

ISIS also makes use of state-of-the art communication techniques, paying attention to detail and technical quality to maximize their outreach and impact. Their recruitment through social media is supported by storytelling and first-hand reports by FTFs, which sometimes go viral on the net and receive extensive media coverage that affects Tunisian youth looking for a meaning to their life.

The complexity of the FTF phenomenon stems from a deep process of radicalization that involves an ideological/theological component and a structural-psychological component (socio-economic, cultural and identity-based, and political in essence). Confronting radicalization and pushing toward moderation¹¹ requires garnering resources and putting in place ideological frames that resonate with Muslim culture in Tunisia.

¹¹ “Moderation is associated here with the practical abandonment of violence,” Ashour, 25

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Between mid-2014 and March 2015, evidence has suggested that US-led coalition airstrikes had not slowed down the flow of foreign recruits to Syria. The Washington Post reported that more than 1000 foreign fighters are streaming into Syria each month” (Gerges, 2014, p. 342). In order to confront the rapidly changing landscape of FTF recruitment, both online and off, as quickly as the terrorists do, a three-fold strategy that consists of preventing, preempting and responding, should be put in place for Tunisia.

First, “Prevention” depends largely on timely accurate intelligence collection and information sharing. The continuing problem of reciprocal intelligence sharing resulting in the lack of data remains an obstacle to identifying returnees and potential recruits and preventing them from traveling for ideological indoctrination, military training and participation in foreign conflicts.

Prevention also includes intercepting transport and border crossing, monitoring FTF during participation in conflict and bringing them to justice. Building a counter-information system that uses tools and techniques that appeal to youth and provide information outside official information networks that provide counter-narrative actions must necessarily involve the whole media system (theirs include videos such as Al-Furqan and Al-Hayet series, social media accounts, e-books such as *Islamic State 2015* and the *Black Flags* series and e-magazines such as *Inspire* and *Dabiq*).

Second, identifying people of risk of violent extremism and diverting them away from that course of action is an essential first step in the preemptive strategy. Part of this is achieved through investing in knowledge. In relation to education, 22% of the Douar Hisher neighborhood population were illiterate in 2012. 21.6% of respondents to *International Alert* dropped out of elementary school, 54.2% were high school dropouts and only 22% reached university. According to Haj Salem, all of this leads to social rejection and stigmatization (Salem, 2014, p. 231). Of all university graduates involved in terrorist actions in Tunisia, the overwhelming majority have a scientific background. This suggests gaps in the education system that downplays culture, history and philosophy. It leaves young people with no intellectual legacy to build on, a gap that should be filled in with alternative ideas and theories and counter narratives that emphasize non-violence, tolerance and a modernist interpretation of religion.

Psychologists, in their attempt to identify a specific set of FTF attributes, have revealed the absence of any unique cross-regional generalizable pattern or iden-

tifier that would distinguish one individual from another, and that individuals from any background can choose to engage in terrorist activity. Tunisians involved in terrorism come from a diversity of social, professional and educational backgrounds (e.g., unemployed, students, doctors, civil servants...) and have undergone different processes of radicalization. Therefore, profiles of terrorists do not work as a tool to identify actual or potential terrorists as such profiles fail to capture that diversity. Torelli claims that rather than identifying profiles of predisposed recruits, it is more important to research “pathways to radicalization” or “staircase to terrorism” to figure out the psychological development that leads an individual to be part of a terrorist activity.

Responding to “returnees” is the third pillar of a comprehensive strategy. This type of response is two-fold: a soft approach in the real world and a kinetic approach in the virtual world.

A purely state-centric approach is insufficient for combating these non-state security threats. Mass persuasion tools and efforts to mitigate underlying conditions that facilitate radicalization must be emphasized. This requires empathizing with grievances and addressing them. If dire socio-economic conditions are reversed, insurgents’ appeal and potency will wither away. De-radicalization, which includes “renouncing (behavioral de-radicalization) and de-legitimizing (ideological deradicalization)” and reintegration efforts include multi-actor support such as education, psychological counseling, mobilizing religious authorities and providing job opportunities.

The key to weakening recruiters’ capabilities to recruit and mobilize youth is to dismantle the social base by working with local communities to rebuild trust between the government and its citizens. That is, a useful strategy is to adopt a “bottom-up approach that requires considerable material and ideological investment” (Gerges, 2014, p. 343). This soft approach, though inevitable, takes hard work, resources and time, which all play to the recruiters’ advantage especially in an environment of political polarization, economic stagnation, terrorism, and deep socioeconomic challenges, which all help fuel radicalism.

As ISIS has stood out for its sophisticated and highly professional use of the web that allowed it to carry out its psychological war successfully on a multitude of battlefields, and to bring to its ranks an unprecedented number of FTFs, fighting its pervasive presence in cyberspace must be *institutionalized* and *systematic* rather than accidental. For example, the 77th Brigade of the British army known as the “Twitter Troops” was created for constant monitoring of Internet content in order to collect information and respond accordingly

is what. For the first time kinetic force in the virtual world was formally announced, which is a novelty in military strategies.

It is, finally, fatal to assume that the FTF phenomenon only affects the local context in Tunisia, with limited implications for other countries. In this regard, regional as well as international forces ensuring collective responses to new security threats become vital. This necessarily goes through stronger interstate cooperation that transcends unsolved political issues.

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CHAPTER FIVE

The Cleavage in Syrian Kurdish Politics Equality versus Non-Violence¹

Wietse van den Berge

Introduction

Following turmoil in other Arab countries late 2010, the Arab Spring reached Syria early 2011. Initially, it consisted of secular demands for freedom and democracy. In Syria, the Arab Spring eventually evolved into a civil war fought along sectarian and ethnic borders (Bowen, 2012; Hokayem, 2013). Almost three years into the Syrian conflict and a lack of regional control by the Assad regime, the Syrian Kurds have established a de facto autonomous state, although unrecognized by the government of Syria (“Charter of the social contract,” 2014). Therefore, Rojava – the Kurdish name for Syrian Kurdistan – is relevant as a potential regional political actor and the second autonomous Kurdish area after the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq (KRG, 2014).

Two major blocs have dominated politics in Rojava since its semi-autonomous state began: the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD; *Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat*) and the Kurdish National Council (KNC; *Encûmena Nîştimanî ya Kurdî li Sûriyê*, also ENKS) (Hevian, 2013). It should be noted here that the status of Rojava as an autonomous state is contested internationally, and Rojava is currently unrecognized in the United Nations. It should also be noted here that the status of the PYD is also highly contested in the international sphere—its historical links with the PKK have resulted in the PYD being designated as a terrorist group by certain countries. This essay does not seek to define which organizations are terrorist groups, but rather examine how Syrian Kurds choose their political affiliation and the implications of that choice on violence or non-violence.

Both blocs strive for an autonomous and democratic – without defining both concepts – Syrian Kurdistan in which minority rights are guaranteed (Ho-

¹ An earlier paper on the study was published in META-Journal 4 (2015), available via www.meta-journal.net.

kayem, 2013). While the objectives are the largely the same, their resources differ greatly: “Although the KNC is a coalition of more than a dozen Kurdish parties, it wields no real power in the region. It lacks, above all, the military force and other necessary means [...] to counter the well-organized PYD” (Hevian, 2013, p. 47).

This study addresses why Syrian Kurds based in Iraqi Kurdistan choose to join a specific political group, noting that one group (PYD) tends to utilize violence, whereas the other political group (KNC) is traditionally non-violent. The insights from the study could give some indication as to why people choose violence over non-violence. The theoretical framework to evaluate the interviews is based on Social Movement Theory.

In order to better contextualize the data, a concise history of Kurds in Syria will be provided, followed by a description of the current situation. Then findings of a research among Syrian Kurdish political activists will be presented.

The Syrian Kurds remained a relatively unknown group until recently (Lowe, 2006; Tejel, 2009). Jordi Tejel (2009) studied the Rojavan 2004 Qamishli revolt using an implicit model of Social Movement Theory, focusing on macro-level (Tejel, 2009). Political mobilization involves a reciprocal process in which both macro- and micro-level are concerned (Opp, 2009). It makes this research – that does include the micro-level – a necessary complement to Tejel’s.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Social Movement Theory explains why people are politically active, either individually or collectively. It contains different schools (Buechler, 1995; Jasper, 2010; Morris & McClurg-Mueller (eds.), 1992). The four most prominent are Framing Theory, Collective Identity Approach, Political Opportunity Structure and Resource Mobilization Theory. According to Framing Theory, individuals interpret situations according to a certain reference framework, the *frame*, influencing their consequential behavior (Benford & Snow, 2000). Collective Identity Approach assumes the more an individual feels to belong to a group, the bigger the chance that the individual participates in politics on behalf of the group (Klandermans, 2002). Political Opportunity Structure states “exogenous factors enhance or inhibit prospects for mobilization” (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004, p.1457). Finally, Resource Mobilization Theory focuses on societal support and assets within society that need to be mobilized (McCarthy & Zald, 1977).

Theoretical Framework: Structural-Cognitive Model

Karl-Dieter Opp (2009) combined the main Social Movement Theory schools into a comprehensive model. He assumes micro-macro-level dynamics (between individuals and groups) are essential in understanding political mobilization. Opp’s (2009) Structural-Cognitive Model focuses on how and where the different Social Movement Theories can reinforce each other:

The framing perspective deals with macro-to-micro relationships (effects of social movement activities on frame alignment) and ...with the relationships of framing and incentives. ...The *resource mobilization and political opportunity structure perspectives* focus on the macro model and – implicitly – adumbrate macro-to-micro relationships. ...The *identity approach* is mainly a micro model, although there a hints of effects of macro structures on identity formation. The micro-to-macro relationship from individual to collective protest is not addressed by any perspective. (p. 335. Italics in original)

The result is a cyclical model in which macro-aspects influence the individual, but in which the individual’s preferences also affect the macro-level.

Methodology: Literature Reviews and Semi-Structured Interviews

The study’s contextual base is a literature review on Syrian Kurdish politics. In order not to rely completely on secondary or tertiary sources (Schuurman & Eijkman, 2013), interviews in the region take place. The interviews are conducted among Syrian Kurdish political activists in Iraqi Kurdistan in spring 2014. The interviews took place as a feasibility study for a larger project. The Kurdistan Region in Iraq was chosen as the situation in Syrian Kurdistan not only was more tense, but also hard to enter, as Syrian borders closed due to the Syrian presidential elections and the rise of Islamic State of Iraq and as-Sham (ISIS).

Limiting the interviews to Syrian Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan, affects generalizability of the research. Eventually, only members of Syrian political parties were interviewed, who also came from Syria (which was checked by asking interviewees about their backgrounds). Although a certain bias was present within the study, the potential new insights nevertheless were thought to be a good starting point for further research.

Syrian Kurdish History and Present Situation

Ancient sources mentioned the Kurds in Sumerian (Nasidze et al., 2005), and ancient Greek (Pirbal, 2012) texts, which allows tracing back the origin of the people until approximately 5,000 years ago (Aziz, 2015; McDowall, 2004). Still, oftentimes modern Middle Eastern history starts with the First World War (1914-1918) leading to the fall of the Ottoman Empire (1918) (Fisk, 2005; Tejel, 2009). Strictly speaking, this is correct in the case of the *Syrian* Kurds, because Syria as a modern political entity only came into existence as a French mandate region after the First World War (Barr, 2011). Before only *Kurds* exist, not Iranian, Iraqi, Syrian or Turkish Kurds (Aziz, 2015; McDowall, 2004). Obviously, the same goes for other minorities living within the country.

Historically, it is important to notice that Kurds had experienced some kind of autonomy within ruling empires, like the Saljuk (Black, 2011) and Ottoman Empires (Nezan, nd). Kurds were ruled indirectly by their own principalities and kingdoms. This history, together with a culture distinctive from that of the neighboring Arab, Iranian/Persian and Turkish people, led to including the Kurds into the 1920 Sèvres Treaty (Aziz, 2015; Khidir, 2003; Noi, 2012). The Sèvres Treaty promised “local autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish areas” (art. 62) and spoke of “an independent Kurdish state of the Kurds inhabiting that part of Kurdistan which has been hitherto been included in the Mosul vilayet” (art. 64). The major powers did not ratify the Sèvres Treaty and the 1923 Lausanne Treaty sealed its fate by granting Turkish borders (Khidir, 2003). Meanwhile Iraq and Syria came under control of Great-Britain and France respectively, following the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement (Barr, 2011).

France acknowledged the sectarian difficulties of its Syrian mandatory area and divided it into several autonomous areas, but did not include a specific area for the Syrian Kurds (Dorin, 2013). As Syria gained independence in 1946 (Chaitani, 2007), the official name of the country became Syrian *Arab* Republic, neglecting the people considering themselves non-Arab Syrians, such as the Kurds. The Ba’th-party seized power in 1963 and it implemented a secular, strong Arab-nationalist agenda. It enforced Arabization programs upon non-Arabs, whom it considered a threat, and according to Tejel (2009), harsh repression of Kurds occurred. The Arabization policy also frustrated Kurdish political ambitions to unite the different Kurdish areas and create a Kurdish state, as was the ideal of Mustafa Barzani (Hevian, 2013), leader of the Kurdish National Movement (Khidir, 2003). Barzani’s political party from Iraq formed the blueprint for the first Syrian Kurdish political party, the Kurdistan Democratic Party in Syria (KDPS), established in 1957 (Hevian, 2013; Tejel, 2009).

Under Ba’th-party rule, Syrian Kurdish political parties went underground. This appears in sharp contrast with Ba’th-party’s aid to Turkish Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK, *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*): “[I]ts [Ba’th-party] support was not due to its love for the Kurds in Turkey; but rather was the result of its adversarial policies with Turkey” (Hevian, 2013, p. 46). Until 1998, PKK-leader Abdullah Öcalan lived in the Syrian capital Damascus (Hevian, 2013). This shows how the Syrian regime used the Kurds in its regional power play, leading Tejel to label the rule under Ba’th-party leader Hafez al-Asad (1970-2000) “the years of exploitation” (Tejel, 2009, p. 62).

Hafez al-Asad was succeeded by his western educated son Bashar in 2000. In 2004 a short popular revolt happened among Kurds in Rojava, later named the Qamishli revolt, after the city where the center of gravity of the protests was. Eventually the uprising stopped, but the Syrian regime became aware of the Kurdish population’s capability for collective action. With no active civil society organizations, the Kurdish parties were important for culturally framing the people of Rojava. This also allowed these parties a pivotal role among regime, local security forces and the Kurdish people. As Tejel (2009) points out:

In addition, the pacification of the protests led by the Kurdish parties themselves was a prelude to a new balance between the Kurdish movement and the regime. The former has gained a certain freedom of action to create space for protest where Kurdish ethnicity can be openly displayed. The latter seems to confirm the selective withdrawal of the state. ...Bashar al-As’ad [sic] seems prepared to tolerate the consolidation of a Kurdish space (cultural and symbolic), at least for the time being. (pp. 136-137)

In the wake of uprisings in other Arab countries small-scale protests occurred in Damascus in February 2011, without much effect (Hokayem, 2013). Only when regime forces cracked down hard on protests of schoolchildren in the southern city of Dera’a in March 2011 an escalating process started that eventually leads to the Syrian Civil War (Bowen, 2012). During it, Syria’s Kurds initially kept low profile. Only when regime forces withdrew from Rojava mid-July 2012 (Tanir, van Wilgenburg & Hossino, 2013), did Kurdish militias fill the power vacuum and hence became a prominent actor within Syria (International Crisis Group, 2013).

Current Syrian Kurdish Politics: PYD and KNC

When Kurdish militias of People's Defense Corps (YPG, *Yekîneyên Parastina Gel*) – affiliated to PYD, estimated to be up to 50,000 strong (Olivesi, 2013) – replaced regime forces in Rojava, rival Kurdish groups raised their suspicions of cooperation between PYD and the Syrian regime. Rivals argued that these militias belonged to Syria's branch of PKK, and that the regime has hosted (Tejel, 2009) and shared the same organizational principles and Marxist ideology as the PKK.

Furthermore, YPG-militias have been trained by PKK. Also, PYD demonstrations characteristically were more pro-PYD than anti-regime (Hokayem, 2013). YPG provided PYD the necessary military means to control Rojava in order to administer political power as the area's best-organized political party (Hevian, 2013).

Formed in October 2011, the KNC is a coalition of around twelve minor parties.² Most of these had their roots in the KDPS, and political and personal rivalries made KNC prone to internal struggle. Therefore it lacked effective political power (Hevian, 2013, p. 47; International Crisis Group, 2012).

Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government's president Masoud Barzani tried to create alliances between KNC and PYD (Tanir et al., 2013), and both parties would have benefitted from cooperation. KNC has "international partners and legitimacy, it is increasingly divided internally and lacks a genuine presence on the ground; conversely, the PYD's strong domestic support is not matched by its international standing" (International Crisis Group, 2012, p. iii). However, because of its historical link with the PKK, it was difficult for the PYD to create an alliance with the KNC, and therefore the partnership suffered. Notwithstanding the mutual gains for both KNC and PYD, conflict remained, illustrated by assassinations, harassments, kidnappings and violent clashes. Not stated explicitly, the only similarity between the two camps seemed the ideal for an independent Kurdish entity (Hokayem, 2013). The ways to achieve that aim differ dramatically though: where KNC-affiliated parties typically choose a political and diplomatic way, PYD and its affiliates were willing to accept a more violent way to achieve a Kurdish autonomous area (Hevian, 2013).

² At the time of the research, these are: Kurdish Democratic Party in Syria (KDPS), Kurdish Union Party (Yekiti), Kurdish Freedom Party (Azadi), Kurdish Democratic Progressive Party in Syria (KDPP), Kurdish Equality Party, Kurdish Patriotic Party in Syria, Kurdish Democratic Leftist Party in Syria, Kurdish Democratic Union Party in Syria, Kurdish Democratic Party in Syria, Kurdish Democratic Party in Syria (al-Parti), Kurdish Democratic Wifaq Party, Syrian Democratic Kurdish Party. The number of parties involved fluctuates depending on which parties and factions to count. Both Azadi party and Wifaq have different factions that operate quite independent of each other. Also two Kurdish Democratic Progressive Parties exist. (See: Hevian, 2013; Hossino & Tanir 2012; KurdWatch 2011; Tejel, 2009)

Interviews

Using the above sketched theoretical framework and situational context, interviews with Syrian Kurdish political activists give insight into the main question *why they choose a specific political party*. What is of special interest is that the two political blocs – PYD with their affiliates and KNC – are assumed to be quite similar with respect to ethnical composition, overall goal to achieve, and experiences with marginalization.

Twelve interviews took place in Iraqi Kurdistan among Syrian Kurdish political activists in 2014. Contacts with political activists were established either through the researcher's academic network or by contacting the Syrian Kurdish political parties directly. Participants proved helpful in introducing new interviewees, often from other – and sometimes even from rival – parties.

Interviewees' Backgrounds

The interviews concerned people of seven different parties and two independent activists (both with clear sympathies though). Eight interviewees were high in party hierarchy (including the two independent activists), three middle, and one low. The interviews totaled ten men and two women, of whom nine of middle age and three in their twenties and thirties. The eight interviewees that mentioned their highest education, finished elementary school once and secondary school six times. One respondent owned a doctor's degree.

Interviewees' Motivations: Why Politically Active?

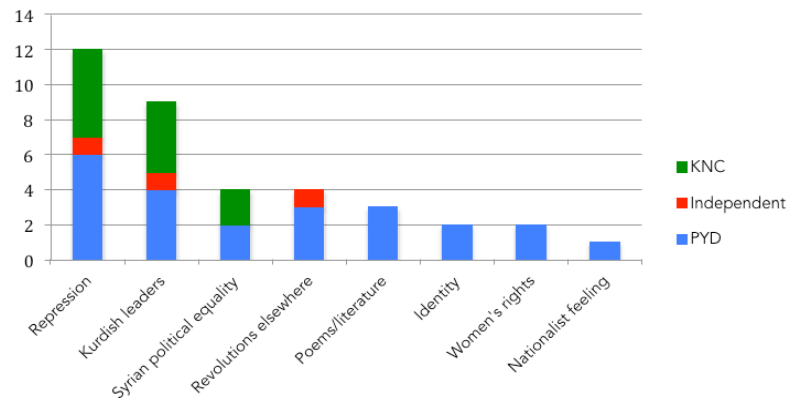
Education proved one of the fields where the interviewees experience repression by the Syrian regime. This took the form of being prohibited from attending university, being forced to study Arabic literature, or not being answered questions regarding Kurdistan or Kurdish identity. On the other side of the spectrum, one interviewee became politically active by receiving a grand from his father's political party. Of ten people talking about their school experiences, six mentioned becoming politically active during secondary school. Other factors that made people politically active include the regime's agricultural policies (that discriminate Kurdish farmers), the fight for women's rights and the emergence of an individual Kurdish national feeling.

The interviewees all shared awareness of the regime's repressive measures towards the Syrian Kurdish population and indicated that this was key for becoming politically active. For both female interviewees women's emancipation

was an additional aspect. In a broader context four interviewees emphasized their activism was for Kurdish rights in particular, but for Syrian rights in general as they recognized the Syrian regime discriminated more ethnic groups.

Also important were the political ideas of Mustafa Barzani (for the KNC-affiliated politically involved) and Abdullah Öcalan (for the PYD and their affiliates). Together these were named nine times. Sometimes the respondents mentioned additional political thinkers. Especially among PYD and their affiliates, left wing writers are popular: Marx, Lenin, Gorki and Tsjechov. Nietzsche and Rousseau both were mentioned once. Two – both PYD – named Kurdish nationalist poet Cigerxwin among others as a main source of inspiration.

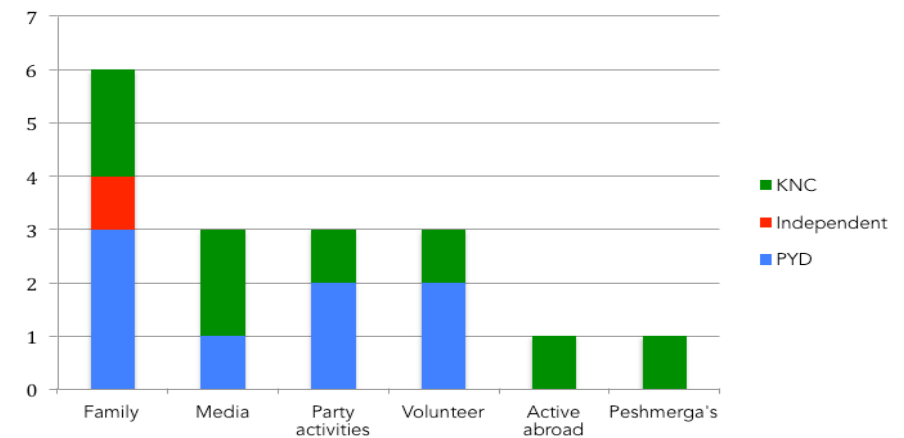
Poems and other cultural expressions played an important role in the lives of many interviewees. Singing and dancing and the Kurdish new-year celebration of Newroz proved important as well. Finally, Marxist revolutions inspired solely the left wing Kurds. They see Angola, Cuba and Vietnam as examples of peoples freeing themselves of their colonizers (when asked, they considered the Syrian Arabs colonizers of Rojava). The al-Wifaq member also used these revolutions as examples, but then to emphasize violent revolutions eventually led to no result. These findings are categorized and visualized in graph 1.



Graph 1: Respondents indicating why they become politically active, categorized according to party affiliation. Scores in absolute numbers, $n = 12$. Respondents usually gave more reasons for becoming politically active.

Interviewees' Leverage: How Politically Active?

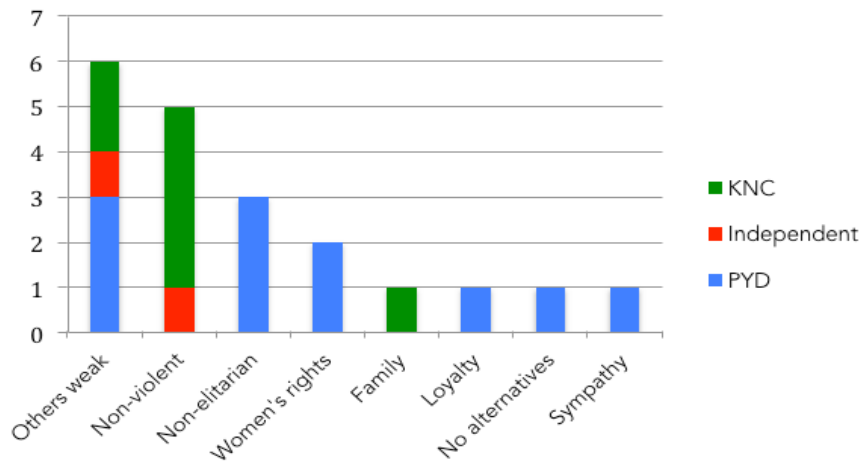
Six respondents answered that they became party members because family members are politically involved, five in the same parties as their family members (the sixth family member was not a member of a political party). Three interviewees became acquainted with political ideas through media. Education appears to have played an important role because it created awareness about the regime's repression of Kurds. In one case, apart from radio broadcasts, Peshmerga – the Kurdish militia – passing through the village triggered political activism. Graph 2 visualizes the categorized findings.



Graph 2: Respondents indicating how they become politically active, categorized according to party affiliation. Scores in absolute numbers, $n = 12$. Respondents usually gave more reasons for how becoming politically involved.

Interviewee's Choice: Why Member of a Specific Party?

As most respondents were of middle age, most answered that the choice was limited when becoming politically active. Speaking in these cases of the 1970s, only two or three Kurdish political parties were active. One interviewee said he simply remained loyal to his party. Four people supporting PYD and its affiliates emphasized its focus on the whole of society – in case of the female activists including women's rights –, not just an elite. Five non-PYD-affiliated respondents claimed the choice for their party depended on its non-violence. In four cases choice was a matter of no other alternatives, either because only one party is active in the village of origin, or that other parties are deemed worse. Five people joined the parties in which relatives were already active. These answers are categorized and shown in graph 3.



Graph 3: Respondents indicating why they support a specific party, categorized according to party affiliation. Scores in absolute numbers, $n = 12$. Respondents usually gave more reasons for supporting a political party.

Overall Findings

Although twelve respondents is a small number for a statistically significant test, some observations are interesting and appear a good starting point for further research. Respondents referred to either Mustafa Barzani or Abdullah Öcalan nine out of twelve times for inspiring to become politically active. Therefore, it appears these charismatic leaders and their thinking have had great influence on Kurdish political life, even though Barzani is dead – his son Massoud succeeds him politically – and Öcalan is imprisoned in Turkey. Another important factor is family, which appears to be of great influence for someone to become politically involved and also for which party. Finally there is the reason why people join a specific party: PYD-members and their affiliates emphasized preference for a party to be based upon societal equality, while KNC-affiliates mentioned they choose non-violent politics. While other factors appear to be evenly distributed between both sides, these preferences seem mutually exclusive. The only other aspect where it showed and which seems to confirm that a difference between acceptance of violence and rejection of violence exists, is that only PYD-members and their affiliates regarded (Marxist) revolutions as positive examples for becoming politically active themselves.

Framing Theory

From a Framing Theory perspective, an individual's choice for either Barzani and a KNC-affiliated party or Öcalan and PYD or a PYD-affiliated party is a dynamic process between the micro- and macro-levels. That helps explain why politically active family members (macro-level) were an important factor in shaping – or mobilizing – the individual (micro-level). The same goes for the cultural expressions that emphasized Kurdish identity and made the individual aware of the regime's repression against the group. In case of PYD and its affiliates this feeling is enforced by class awareness (itself reinforced by left wing literature), creating an image of the colonized people whom need to free themselves from suppression.

The findings in this research confirm the findings of Tejel (2009), who stated that in the absence of civil society Kurdish political parties play an important role in what he labels “cultural framing” (pp. 107-108), using cultural expressions to contribute to a Kurdish identity as part of the “politicization of Kurdish ethnicity” (p. 148).

Collective Identity Approach

The same behavior of adapting to a group can influence Collective Identity Approach with individuals acting as is expected of the group. Again, cultural expressions – and for the female respondents their gender – emphasizing the group's uniqueness and offering the individual a feeling of belonging, can provoke political activism. Although not clearly stated regarding the Structural-Cognitive Model (Opp, 2009), family fits in this approach as it concerns the group an individual might want to belong to. Family is a political factor social sciences struggle with for a long time (Barner-Barry & Rosenwein, 1985).

Political Opportunity Structure and Resource Mobilization Theory

In all twelve interviews respondents mentioned repression of Kurds as a key factor for becoming politically active. Some scholars use Political Opportunity Structure as explanation for the Kurds political activism during the Syrian Conflict: “The weakening of a state that proved oppressive, manipulative, and oblivious to their needs presented new political options for them” (Hokayem, 2013, p. 78).

Resource Mobilization Theory interprets the “cultural framing” (Tejel, 2009, pp. 107-108) elements as necessary instrumental assets for creating popular

backing. Due to its dynamic reciprocal relationship with Political Opportunity Structure, Resource Mobilization Theory and Political Opportunity Structure identify the same factors.

Findings placed into the Structural-Cognitive Model

Situating the empirical findings into the theoretical framework proves quite difficult as the different elements of the Structural-Cognitive Model overlap. Therefore, some factors appear on multiple positions within the model. In general the answers on the question *why did you become politically active?* are assumed to belong to the Framing Theory. These elements typically are macro-level topics that influence micro-level. The answers to the question *how did you become politically involved?* are considered an intervening variable on micro-level as they differ for each individual. Finally, the question regarding *party preference* is the outcome. It belongs on micro-level, but influences the macro-level as it concerns membership of or affiliation to a political organization, thus closing the Structural-Cognitive Model cycle. Figure 1 shows the implications.

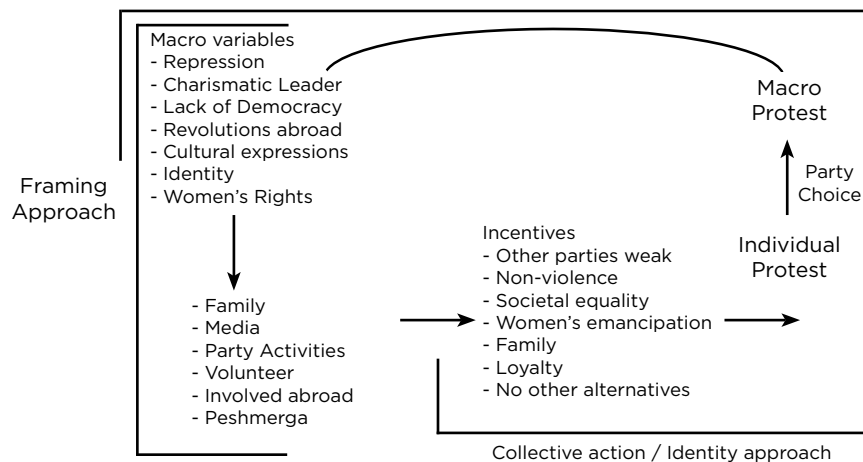


Figure 1: Opp's Structural-Cognitive Model in a simplified form combined with findings from the interviews.

Conclusion

Apart from the Kurdish repression by the successive Syrian regimes, leadership is an important factor for individuals for becoming politically active. Individuals in half of the cases became involved through family members who are already party members, followed by media exposure. Why they choose

their specific party is mainly due to regarding the other parties weak or incapable, and therefore simply unattractive. Both sides are fairly similar in their opinions on these issues. The big difference shows with the other reasons for choosing their party: KNC-affiliated party members clearly choose for non-violence, while PYD and their affiliates' members choose for societal equality. Although this research so far has limited generalizability, this implies that in order to guide individuals away from accepting violence as a legitimate means to achieve political goals, these individuals should be offered the opportunity that their ideas can also be achieved in a non-violent way. Talking to the group could be a first step. Accepting them as a partner for negotiations another. As historical research on politically motivated violence (Jones & Libicki, 2008; Kurth Cronin, 2009) indicates, involving a violence-accepting group into the political process usually has the best chance of countering violence. Although it is too early to draw final policy recommendations from this research, it does indicate that any political solution to the conflict in Syria that involves Syria's Kurds, needs to address emancipation of the Kurds in Syria. It indicates that it is societal equality that the main political actor in Rojava aims for.

Further research is necessary to gain more insight in political mobilization processes among Syria's Kurds. In that respect this research was intended and should be seen as a feasibility study. Upcoming research needs focus on the distinction between the choice for non-violence versus the choice for societal equality. A possible explaining factor might be the ideologies of Barzani and Öcalan respectively and the way individuals interpret these ideologies. Anyhow, attention needs to be paid to which extent that factors such as cognitive dissonance and peer pressure influence the ideas of the members of political parties in Rojava. Also it would be interesting to research to what extent Syrian party-members in the Kurdistan Region in Iraq are biased compared to party-members who remained in Syria.

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CHAPTER SIX

Factors Facilitating Radicalization in Kenya and Somalia

Anneli Botha

Introduction

While the international community is still engaged in a political debate that attempts to formulate a universally accepted definition of terrorism, its impact on countries in Africa is already very real. Scholars and practitioners are responding to this reality by trying to understand the threat terrorism poses to state and human security, and by trying to find ways and means to prevent incidents of terrorism.

In their search for explanations for the process of political radicalization, scholars, among others, refer to ‘pull-and-push’ factors to explain why and how people become involved in terror organisations. Although these attempts are useful – especially when governments have to formulate domestic and foreign-aid budget priorities – they are made with specific case studies in mind. African governments and practitioners often borrow from these case studies, as well as from statements made by politicians, to formulate their own understanding of why individuals resort to terrorism, predominantly blaming poverty and poor socioeconomic conditions. But to understand why people are susceptible to extremism is far more complex than blaming one factor, such as poverty. Countermeasures and policies have proven to be ineffective and even counterproductive, simply because they are not formulated or implemented based on a clear understanding of what causes drive individuals to be susceptible to extremism.

Preventing and combating terrorism should start with understanding what drives an individual to resort to terrorism, taking into consideration that not all people experience the same external circumstances – not even people growing up in the same household. In order to understand radicalization, this essay intends to briefly unpack the factors that facilitated radicalization in Kenya and Somalia.

Methodology of this Research

The methodology and research findings in this essay are based on an existing study titled “Radicalisation to Commit Terrorism from a Political Socialisation Perspective in Kenya and Uganda.” In it, I supported the theory that political socialization is a continuous process, where early lessons influence a person’s predispositions and that the individual is a product of the socialization process. Understanding the political socialization process a series of questions were asked: (a) who (b) learns what (c) from whom (d) under what circumstances and (e) with what effects. Through these questions, the effect of external (macro) factors on the individual shine new light on the debate regarding “push” and “pull” factors in the radicalization process. While this research in Kenya and Uganda was conducted, Finn Church Aid approached the ISS looking for a partner to conduct a study on radicalization in Somalia. Consequently, 95 interviews were conducted in Somalia while 95 interviews were conducted with members of al-Shabaab in Kenya. A further 45 interviews were conducted with members of the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) and 46 interviews with family members of al-Shabaab members in Kenya. Including the MRC gained traction in testing allegations that the MRC had links with al-Shabaab in Kenya. Standardize questionnaires were used that also included a few open-ended questions.

Psycho-social factors of radicalization (Pull Factors)

The study identified a number of personal factors that contributed to the radicalization process of the individuals joining violent extremism in both Kenya and Somalia.

Absent parent

Starting with the theory that an absent parent, especially a father figure contributes to later radicalization, the study in Kenya found that within the sample group, 18% of al-Shabaab and 31% of MRC respondents grew up without a father, while 16% of al-Shabaab and 20% of MRC respondents grew up without a mother. In the case of al-Shabaab, 11 respondents grew up without both parents present. In Somalia, 34% grew up without a father, 16% grew up without a mother.

What is particularly telling is the age when the respondent lost his or her father and mother respectively: 23% lost their father and 8% a mother when they were younger than five, 68% lost their father and 69% a mother between

the ages of 16 and 18, while 9% lost their father and a further 23% lost their mother between 19 and 20. Similarly in Kenya, 19% lost their father and/or mother (13%) when they were younger than five, 81% lost their father and/or mother (40%) between the ages of 16 and 18, while 47% lost their mother between 19 and 20. In the case of the MRC, 17% lost their father when they were younger than five, 75% lost their father and/or mother (75%) between 16 and 18, while 8% lost their father and/or mother (25%) between 19 and 20. Most al-Shabaab and MRC respondents lost a parent(s) between early adolescence and early adulthood, at a time individuals are particularly vulnerable to a loss of this magnitude. The majority of respondents interviewed in Kenya however had a father (82% in al-Shabaab and 69% in the MRC) and mother (84% in al-Shabaab and 80% in the MRC) present in their lives.

Role of friends

The role of friends in joining the organisation was unmistakable, as friends were identified as the most active role players in introducing MRC (66%), and, to a lesser extent, al-Shabaab (38%) respondents to the organisation. Secondly, 60% of MRC and 54% of al-Shabaab respondents indicated that they had recruited other friends. Friends were also the biggest group that was informed by 34% of al-Shabaab and 33% of MRC respondents’ decision to join the respective organisations. In Somalia 30% of respondents were introduced by friends, while a further 22% indicated that they had recruited other friends. Friends were also the biggest group that was informed by 42% of respondents’ decision to join the organisation.

Additional Pull Factors

Respondents from all three organisations, but especially al-Shabaab in Kenya and Somalia, specifically targeted the youth and young adults between the ages 15 to 25. Being naturally impatient, their frustration can easily lead to action. Young people are not only more susceptible to indoctrination; they are also more inclined to get physically involved. In contrast to older generations, the youth is furthermore inclined not to think of the consequences of his or her actions. This is as relevant in young men and women signing up for military service or recruited into a paramilitary or terrorist organisation/cell resorting to violence to achieve an objective. Irrespective of this, young people are particularly vulnerable for the following basic reasons: in addition to those looking for adventure, most young people also search for a place in society (belonging). Often as a result of a lack in experience, young people do not always have the discretionary power or ability to judge people and their

influence on his/her life. Young people also see the immediate, believing that they can change the world around them. An unfulfilling family life introduces another element that will not only impact on young people (although they are particularly vulnerable) but also older individuals, contributing to the need to belong. In addition to an organisation and the social impact it might have, terrorist organisations/cells involve a strong leader that might compensate for a father figure. It is equally interesting to note the influence friend and family ties have in cell structures and terrorist organisations.

Based on above, respondents were asked to rate their level of frustration at the time of joining: 96% of al-Shabaab in Kenya and 87% of MRC respondents rated their level of frustration between 5 and 10. Breaking this figure down among al-Shabaab respondents, 48% rated frustration levels between 5 and 7, with a further 48% indicating their frustration levels between 8 and 10. With reference to MRC respondents: 54% rated frustration levels between 5 and 7, and 33% indicated their frustration levels between 8 and 10, while only 13% of MRC and 4% of al-Shabaab respondents reported lower frustration levels of between 1 and 4. In contrast to al-Shabaab members in Kenya the majority (56%) of al-Shabaab members in Somalia, rated their levels of frustration between 1 and 4, followed by 42% who referred to frustration between 5 and 7, while only 2% recalled frustration levels between 8 and 10. Considering that the majority of respondents did not recall high frustration levels confirm that those interviewed either wanted to minimize their commitment and involvement in al-Shabaab or was not driven or accepted the cause presented by al-Shabaab.

Reasons for joining al-Shabaab and the MRC are only one part in understanding why people get involved in these organisations; the second part deals with why a person would want to stay. In answering this question, the majority of both al-Shabaab (61%) and MRC (59%) respondents considered it their responsibility, followed by belonging (32% of MRC and 16% of al-Shabaab respondents). A further 13% of al-Shabaab and 7% of MRC respondents indicated that they stayed for the adventure, while 8% of al-Shabaab respondents referred to a combination of adventure and the sense of belonging they had experienced. The remaining 2% of both al-Shabaab and MRC respondents referred to a combination of responsibility and belonging.

Asking al-Shabaab respondents in Somalia to rate their sense of belonging when they joined and again being a member the sense of belonging increased slightly for 5% of respondents, although the majority (73%) rated a very low sense of belonging (between 1 and 4). Although economic circumstances were

identified as a prominent reason why respondents joined al-Shabaab in Somalia, 40% of those interviewed cited belonging and responsibility as prominent reasons why respondents stayed in al-Shabaab.

Political, Economic and Social Marginalisation (Push Factors)

One of the most controversial aspects when discussing the conditions conducive to terrorism is the potential role economic circumstances - especially poverty - plays in radicalization. It is particularly politicians who tend to be convinced that there is a positive link between poverty, radicalization and terrorism. On the contrary, a number of academic studies found a negative or limited correlation between economic circumstances and activism and even discovered that some individuals involved in acts of terrorism came from professional and economically privileged backgrounds (Botha, 2014:19).

Respondents were asked to identify the most important reasons for joining. While the majority of al-Shabaab respondents in Kenya referred to religion, 6% combined religion with economic reasons, while a further 4% referred to economic reasons. In contrast, MRC respondents gave a very different picture: purely ethnic reasons were the most prevailing (25%); political reasons (21%); followed by combinations of ethnic and economic (14%), religion and economic reasons (14%); and ethnic and political (2%). A further 12% of MRC respondents (in contrast to 4% among al-Shabaab respondents) referred to economic reasons.

Economic circumstances

This confirms that economic frustration linked to ethnic and political marginalisation is the driving force behind the MRC. In contrast to al-Shabaab in Kenya, religious, but especially economic conditions were central in explaining why respondents joined al-Shabaab in Somalia. For example, 15% of respondents specifically identified religious reasons and 27% of respondents identified economic circumstances as the main reason for joining al-Shabaab. A further 25% combined religious and economic reasons. These respondents thought by joining these groups, membership would become a career. This calls into question the ideological commitment of these individuals. In other words, if respondents had access to other employment opportunities they perhaps would not have joined al-Shabaab.

Although the link between economic circumstances and al-Shabaab in Kenya is less defined (only 10% referred to economic reasons in any way), extremist

movements have used poverty and unemployment, the growing gulf between rich and poor, inadequate government services, political corruption, and perceived government subservience to American demands to their advantage. Through sometimes providing humanitarian assistance, Islamists offer a solution: a return to core religious values would bring social justice, good government and a higher level of moral life.

Despite the fact that economic circumstances, and most notably poverty is not a cause of terrorism, the relation between socioeconomic circumstances and other forms of marginalisation – most notably political, ethnic and religious circumstances and differences – requires closer scrutiny as highlighted above. Despite the immediate correlation policy makers often make between poverty and terrorism, the discussion of economic conditions extends well beyond only poverty. It is these other indicators that rather “facilitate” or provide favourable circumstances for recruitment. These for example include, unequal access to resources, the growing divide between rich and poor and limited education and employment opportunities.

Although linking radicalization and poverty is unfounded, the introduction of the concept “relative deprivation” by Ted Gurr holds more water in explaining why people turn to violence. According to Gurr the relative deprivation theory consists of two key components: Firstly, the perception of inequality, or a perceived discrepancy between one’s own position and that of others; and secondly, the implication of related to perceived inequality or, to put it differently, the intensity or degree of inequality. These circumstances contribute to defining in- and out-groups. If what is expected exceeds that which a person has or experiences, the next question in that formula will be: what will the costs be to balance the scales? (Gurr, in Konings, 2011).

In this regard, relative deprivation alone is however not sufficient, it requires another element in addition to the difference between the rewards people expect versus which they receive in transferring “I” to “us.” This comes in the form of marginalisation based on ethnic, religious or class differences in which the group feels that collective violence is a legitimate and considered the only response available to balance the scales. When economic progress and political representation visibly divide people based on ethnic or tribal and religious differences, the possibility for violence and terrorism increases. Considering that immediate circumstances often serve as the trigger, it is not surprising that based on these differences, self-determination groups are formed. In addition to relative deprivation, the possibility of success further contributes to vulnerability. Thus explaining why it is commonly accepted that weak, failed and

collapsed states are particularly more vulnerable to the possibility of political violence and terrorism. The possibility of achieving its objectives increases when the state no longer has a monopoly on the use of force, and that is when the probability of resorting to violence becomes plausible especially under the youth.

Uneven development and subsequent relative deprivation, played a prominent role among MRC respondents in joining these organisations, with 14% of MRC respondents referring to a combination of ethnic and economic reasons. Respondents who mentioned economic circumstances specifically referred to situations where increased economic disparities occur within identifiable ethnic, religious and geographic groups. Education and the type of employment provided additional insights and should be used as valuable indicators, considering that when respondents were also asked to indicate their level of education, 67% of MRC and 47% of al-Shabaab respondents only had a primary school education. It was therefore not surprising that 75% of MRC and 46% of al-Shabaab respondents in Kenya were in low-income careers. These two factors had a direct impact on upward mobility, especially when the perception exists that these discrepancies are based on a religious, ethnic or geographical divide. The MRC in Kenya most prominently referred to a comparison between the economic circumstances of coastal people versus those in other parts of the country, but more specifically the discrimination they experience in comparison to outsiders living in ‘their’ region. This is the best example of how relative deprivation became a political issue and a driving factor behind frustration and radicalization. Therefore, monitoring socioeconomic trends in preventing radicalization will be useful where there are economic disparities within identifiable ethnic, religious and geographic groups.

Political circumstances

Assessing whether respondents trusted politicians and the political system, none of the MRC and al-Shabaab respondents indicated that they trust politicians. Despite not trusting politicians, 22% of MRC respondents still believed that elections could bring change, while only 4% of al-Shabaab respondents had the same trust in the political process. In Somalia, 39% of the respondents indicated that they trust politicians while 82% expressed trust in clan elders, while a further 69% of respondents had the same trust in the political process through elections despite the fact that only 2% participated in the election process before. However, the same criticism was raised amongst the remaining 18% of respondents that elders were only looking after their own personal interests and that of close family members. When asked why respondents did

not think that elections would bring change, 37% did not consider elections to be “free and fair,” while a further 55% did not consider elections to be “free and fair” and not being able to register as a political party.

Despite positive perceptions that elections can bring change, the vast majority of respondents in Somalia and all respondents in Kenya agreed with the statement that “government only look after and protect the interests of a few.” When asked to clarify or to provide additional information that finally “pushed” the person to join, the majority of both al-Shabaab and MRC respondents referred to injustices at the hands of Kenyan security forces, specifically referring to “collective punishment.” When asked to identify the single most important factor that drove respondents to al-Shabaab, 65% specifically referred to government’s counterterrorism strategy. Comments included: “Government and security forces hate Islam,” and “All Muslims are treated as terrorists,” to more specific examples: “the assassination of Muslim leaders,” or the “extra-judicial killing of Muslims.” One respondent even referred to a specific incident (although the date was not provided): “Muslims were beaten badly by GSU at Makadara grounds,” while others referred to Muslims being arrested (for no apparent reason). All of these enforced the perception that government, with specific reference to its security forces (government’s representation in their day-to-day lives), hate them, leading to injustices (referred to by name) and marginalisation.

This led to indiscriminate responses, further fuelling sentiments of marginalisation, as many of the arrests appear to have been discriminatory and arbitrary in nature. Even after the Paradise Hotel blast in 2002 – at a time when extremism was not well known and before the creation of al-Shabaab – local Muslim leaders feared for their community. This would provide further justification for the increasing radical faction. According to Najib Balala, the former mayor of Mombasa: “Harassment and intimidation [by the government] have always been there for us. Now we are already branded as second-class citizens because we are Muslims and Arabs (BBC Monitoring Newsfile, 2002).” Similarly, according to the director of Muslims for Human Rights, Khelef Khalifa, police harassed Muslim residents in Mombasa in response to the attacks. Instead of pursuing the key suspects, the police arrested their relatives when they failed to arrest those directly involved in the attacks (“Kenyan police say,” 2002). Talking to Kenyan Muslims, especially in the coastal region, one notices a growing perception of being treated as second-rate citizens. People complained and gave examples that, despite being born and regarded as Kenyan nationals, fellow Kenyans and especially police officers treat them as “foreigners.” Especially following growing insecurity in Kenya since the intervention

of Kenyan forces in Somalia, people are told to “go home,” are often disregarded as fellow Kenyans at government buildings, and are arbitrarily arrested without due cause. This further contributed to a sense of not being Kenyan.

Perceived injustices and marginalization of Kenyans with Somali backgrounds have been reinforced at times by the actions of Kenyan security forces. For example, during the period 4-10 April 2014, Kenyan authorities arrested 4,005 Somali-looking individuals as part of Operation Usalama Watch in an attempt to root out al-Shabaab or al-Shabaab al-Mujahidin, or “The Youth,” that could be traced back to al-Itihād al-islāmiyya and Ittihād al-mahākīm al-islāmiyya, commonly known as the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). The ICU has its origins in a coalition in 2006 between local Sharia courts and Islamists in Mogadishu. The operation was launched following two attacks in which gunmen shot dead six worshippers at the Joy in Jesus church in Likoni, Mombasa on 23 March 2014; and a week later on 31 March 2014 six people were killed and ten others wounded in the California area in Eastleigh, Nairobi when attackers hurled explosives into a food kiosk and a bus stop. This was probably one of the most visible examples of mass arrests based on racial profiling. Confronted with a problem of insufficient holding areas, suspects were held at a sport stadium in Nairobi to give authorities an opportunity to verify an individual’s status in the country before being released. Authorities however released 3,010 after they were interrogated and ascertained to be Kenyans without any criminal record. Those considered to be in the country illegally were almost immediately deported back to Somalia.

Strategies based on mass arrests and racial profiling of Somali-looking Kenyans are counterproductive because they reinforce the perceived grievances of individuals who might be susceptible to recruitment. Additionally, police-led criminal justice responses to terrorism based on rule of law are more effective than an arbitrary and hard-handed response. One of the most prominent and recent examples occurred following the killing of three soldiers in November 2012 in Garissa. After the incident, attackers reportedly fled to the Bumula Mzuri area, resulting in an operation to pursue them. Although the incident is under investigation, according to reports, Kenyan troops retaliated by burning markets and opening fire on a school that left civilians dead, including a local chief, women and children (Boniface 2012).

The violent nature of the Kenyan security sector response to this incident sparked a public debate on how the state should respond to a very challenging security threat. While security forces (police and military) have experienced constant threat of attacks since its intervention in Somalia, public discussion

condemned the use of excessive force without proper cause. In this regard, there are significant risks that those not originally involved in the conflict in affected communities might see the need to defend themselves against security sector forces attacking their communities, and therefore “driving” individuals to violent extremism.

Discrimination against Somali-looking Kenyans also occurs in Kenyan communities more broadly; there is an established perception that al-Shabaab only consists of Somali nationals or those who are visibly Muslim. In some cases, there have been instances of violence committed against Kenyan Somalis as a response to violent extremist attacks. For example, Kenyan nationals turned against and attacked Somali and Kenyan Somali nationals following the detonation of an explosive device on 18 November 2012 in Eastleigh, Nairobi. This was not the first occasion on which people retaliated. Earlier, on 30 September 2012, ordinary people attacked Somalis living in Eastleigh after a grenade attack on St. Polycarp Church that killed one child and injured nine others. During this retaliation incident, at least 13 Somalis were injured and property destroyed.

‘Us versus them’

Consequently, it was not a surprise that the “us” for al-Shabaab respondents referred to members of the organisation (68%) and Muslims (32%). When asked to identify “them,” al-Shabaab respondents referred to other religions (67%) and government (30%). For al-Shabaab respondents, “them” extends well beyond other religious groups in Kenya: 3% even specifically referred to Ethiopia (following its intervention in Somalia) and the US and other countries that fall in the category of being anti-Islam. One respondent categorically stated that imposed Western values finally drove him to join the organisation. For MRC respondents “us” referred to members of the organisation (84%) and a combination of organisational members and ethnic or coastal people (14%), versus “them,” who are the Kenyan government (52%), other ethnic groups (43%) and a combination of government and other ethnic groups (5%). Similar to al-Shabaab, MRC respondents referred to arrests and mistreatment on the part of security forces, but the vast majority specifically referred to: “Fighting for our tribal rights and the rights of coastal people,” “land grabbing on the part of government and other ethnic/tribal groups” and “resource distribution.”

In Somalia, al-Shabaab managed – even amongst respondents that indicated that they were forced to join – to establish a sense of belonging, despite the role

economic benefits played in joining and staying in the group. Considering that 58% of respondents decided to group al-Shabaab and being Muslim within the same category (us), gives the impression that al-Shabaab is represented as the defender of Muslims against other religions (with specific reference to Christians) and other countries (them). It was also not surprising to note that none of the respondents referred to a Somali national identity as “Somalis.” It is clear that only a small percentage of respondents interviewed were completely integrated into the organisation or truly believe in al-Shabaab as an organisation and what it represents (23%) or regarded al-Shabaab as being the solution to Somalia’s problems (17%). Instead, the majority of respondents were drawn to al-Shabaab as the organisation is feared and respected (99%) and being armed brings with it respect (94%).

Policy Implication and Advice

In Kenya, the inequality of social upward mobility based on religious, ethnical or even political differences was identified as a contributing factor to violent extremism, and therefore requires serious attention in communities at risk. Indicators that will be particularly useful are population growth, access to public service, uneven development, urbanisation and uneven unemployment and education opportunities – especially if these are based on religious, ethnic or any other identifiable categories. These factors will contribute not only to social conflict, but also to that country or community’s vulnerability to radicalization. In addition to encouraging economic development, government also has to step up to its responsibility to provide basic services for all people, and especially to communities that are regarded as marginalised.

Governments need guidance and assistance in creating an environment that encourages innovation. Much is still needed to equip young people, not only to be better educated, but also to recognise their role in the financial health of their country. Although low-interest loans are often referred to as a solution, the ultimate success of these and other initiatives will depend on the level and the type of education and the prospect of a better future not determined by a person’s religious or ethnic association. Despite the current emphasis on science and technology, children from a very young age also need to develop the ability to think critically.

Despite the positive role civil society can play in CVE, enhancing the national identity and creating an inclusive society where all nationals irrespective of ethnicity and religion rests with government and its security forces. Although Kenya - similar to many countries in the region are confronted by diversity -

since 2011, security in Kenya increasingly became politicised. This is particularly evident in the manner the Kenyan government responded to terrorism. For example, following the attack on the village of Poromoko, near Mpeketoni on the Kenyan coast on 15 June 2014 that resulted in the death of at least 15 people, President Kenyatta blamed official political opponents, even though al-Shabaab accepted responsibility (Kenya's president denies, 2014). Instead of bringing people together, harnessing political divisions presents an additional danger of further damaging national unity. As a result, the Kenyan government did not step in to address growing radicalization when it could still make an impact in preventing the current manifestation of recruitment and subsequent increase in attacks in Kenya. Instead, local conditions enabled growing frustrations to deteriorate, later enabling al-Shabaab to strengthen its foothold in Kenya. The consequences of Kenya's inability to address growing radicalization did not only enable al-Shabaab to recruit foreign fighters in Kenya, it also facilitated the spread of al-Shabaab within the country and the broader region. Confronted with this growing threat, both policy makers and practitioners are urged to carefully reassess its strategy and tactics employed in responding to al-Shabaab and MRC. Starting with building an inclusive society not by statements of inclusiveness, but by its deeds. A central component of an effective counter strategy rests on investigation- and intelligence-led operations.

Instability in Somalia was initially motivated by clan politics and the inability of previous leaders to build an inclusive Somali state. Although al-Shabaab managed to gain a foothold across the different clans, areas recovered from al-Shabaab again show signs of falling back in the devastating reality of clan-based politics. It is however important to recognise - based on above research - that those interviewed showed greater trust in clan elders than politicians. For Somalia to recover, the current Somali government in partnership with clan leaders urgently need to initiate a nation building strategy.

Education and skills are key components in securing employment breaking the cycle in which joining al-Shabaab and other similar organisation is the only viable option to economically provide for themselves and their families. Being at school also provides a valuable opportunity for especially young people to be introduced to different ideas through topics presented in the curriculum.

Somalia still has a long way to go to effectively control and govern in shedding the ranking as one of the most failed states in the world. While governance and providing essential services were referred to as crucial components in securing popular trust, none of this will be possible without security. Although

Somalia still requires the presence of AMISOM, dedicated and sustained assistance in building a functioning security apparatus is an urgent priority. Similar to Kenya, the intelligence capacity should be streamlined as part of an effective proactive strategy. The second component of an effective counter strategy against al-Shabaab should be based on the ability of security forces to investigate and successfully prosecute acts of terrorism.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Sabaoon: Educational methods successfully countering and preventing violent extremism

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Introduction

The presentation, and this paper, highlight the educational methods used at Sabaoon (the facility established for the deradicalization and rehabilitation of adolescent and pre-adolescent males in KPK, Pakistan). Sabaoon has endeavored to facilitate learning in young boys predisposed towards violent extremism who demonstrated limitation in their critical thinking and logical reasoning. Based on the evidence collected from the Sabaoon project presented here, recommendations for Countering and Preventing Violent Extremism (C/PVE) in education are discussed through four case studies that show individual differences comparing intellectual ability with emotional/social intelligence as it impacts cognition. The means by which social intelligence and empathy can be developed to leverage critical thinking are discussed in the final sections. Sabaoon was established in Malakand region in September 2009 after a counter insurgency operation by the Pakistan Army. The facility was specifically established for the deradicalization and rehabilitation of adolescent and pre-adolescent males belonging to and apprehended in Swat and surrounding areas due to involvement in violent extremist (VE) activities. The program was developed and implemented by a local NGO (SWAaT for Pakistan) consisting of a team of clinical psychologists belonging to civil society, and with the required expertise.

Findings from Sabaoon encouraged the organization to work towards prevention of VE through mainstream educational institutes within the region. SWAaT focused on targeting the mainstream public schools in the regions where the recruitment for militancy was the highest. Five main locations were shortlisted, and supplemental support (in terms of well-equipped resource libraries and IT laboratories and initiation of teacher training programs) was extended in order to inculcate critical thinking, by encouraging an interactive classroom environment, permitting out-of-the-box-thinking and problem solving opportunities.

The following paper focuses on the Sabaoon program in terms of its contribution to critical thinking and logical reasoning skills, as well as the need for inculcating empathy and pluralistic perspectives in this population particularly. In addition, it also emphasizes the need to address the variables found to be linked to violent extremism (from the Sabaoon population) to the larger canvas, at the education level in communities, for primary prevention of violent extremism.

Sabaoon Program Background

The program adapted the model of basic rehabilitation including mainstream education (including remedial and accelerated learning modules to facilitate slow learners and high achievers respectively), vocational training, psychosocial intervention and support (in terms of individual, group and family counseling sessions) and extra-curricular (sports) activities. The addition of Corrective Religious Instruction (CRI) was deemed to be important due to the indigenous factors that had led to the militant insurgency, such as lack of verification of religious texts, misuse of verses out of context and lack of religious understanding. The religious curriculum was specifically designed to focus on moderate religious beliefs, with an emphasis on humanism, tolerance and harmony between all faiths.

Sabaoon's current population is 40 inductees, with indication of further referrals to the facility from the Security forces. The facility itself has the capacity to house up to 200 individuals at a given time.

Sabaoon has successfully reintegrated 175 individuals back to their communities in eight batches between March 2010 and December 2015. As the reintegrated population increased, a Monitoring Center was established in Mingora (central Swat) to continue with regular follow-up monitoring visits with continued psychosocial support for the reintegrated population to ensure that they do not re-engage in militancy or violent extremism, and to ensure that the reintegrated population continue with their chosen goal directed activities as part of their alternative lifestyle. The Monitoring Cell was effective in highlighting seven reintegrated individuals for re-induction to Sabaoon (in April 2013), due to raised concerns regarding their re-radicalization and possibility of re-engagement. All seven have since been reintegrated (in subsequent batches).

As of December 2015, ***there has been no recidivism from the reintegrated population.*** The success of the Sabaoon model, which has received

international acclaim, has been in the individualized profiling and subsequent support offered for each inductee at the center. This support and monitoring continues at the post-reintegration level, in order to facilitate and resolve post-reintegration challenges. This has allowed for the reintegrated population to continue with their goal-direction, thereby changing the trajectory for their future.

Push and Pull Factors in Sabaoon Population

Before outlining the objectives and goals of the Sabaoon project, it is first important to highlight the methodology of the project development and some of the underlying assumptions to the program. As with any CVE program, the program directors of Sabaoon assessed the psychological profile of the individuals entering the program in order to determine the reasons why these individuals were compelled to join violent extremist groups. Psychological assessments, which includes objective (Ravens Progressive Matrices, subtests from Wechsler's Intelligence Scales for children and Adults, Wechsler Nonverbal Assessment, Trauma Assessment Scales, etc), subjective (intake narrative and subsequent psychological/counseling session notes) and projective techniques (House-Tree-Person & Bender Gestalt Test) of the initial 10 individuals apprehended by the Pakistan Army and interviewed in Mingora, Swat, A number of common variables (push and pull factors) were identified as to reasons why individuals partook in militancy. Subsequent assessments (in terms of interviews, family narratives & community visits) of 200 inductees reinforced the following set of variables:

1. Low Socioeconomic Status/ High Poverty
2. Lack of logical reasoning/critical thinking
3. Large family size
4. Absence of biological father (mostly working abroad, in Middle East and Saudi Arabia)
5. Middle child (of large families)
6. School drop outs
7. Lack of supervision on activities
8. Head injury / Possibility of soft neuropathology
9. Truancy/ ran away from home (because of morbid trends and or dropped out of school)
10. Impulsivity, aggressive impulses, anxiety and insecurity
11. Lack of religious understanding (or selective religious understanding)

The most significant finding was that *these children are not dangerous in themselves, but can be made to behave in very dangerous ways*. That is, these individuals lacked the ability to think and reason in a manner that would have allowed them to question the militant narrative, and the reasons for so-called “Jihad” against the state. For example, verses were misquoted from the Quran to reflect them as saying “Oh people of Swat, rise up and fight against the Police, Frontier Constabulary and the Army”. In addition, anyone wearing trousers was considered an “infidel,” similarly, the Pakistan army was portrayed as an army of Indian soldiers financially supported by the West. Both statements seemed to be largely accepted by the inductees, without attempting to assess or understand the factors that would make such a statement valid.

Hierarchy of Militancy

A second factor to consider concerning the program design of Sabaoon were the experiences of the individuals while in the violent extremist group. Figure 1 shows the extent of involvement in militancy in terms of tiers, and the overlapping roles that a recruit sometimes undergoes through the experience of his involvement (as per our understanding from the Sabaoon population). This was established based on information collated from the assessments of the inducted population (as mentioned in the previous section).

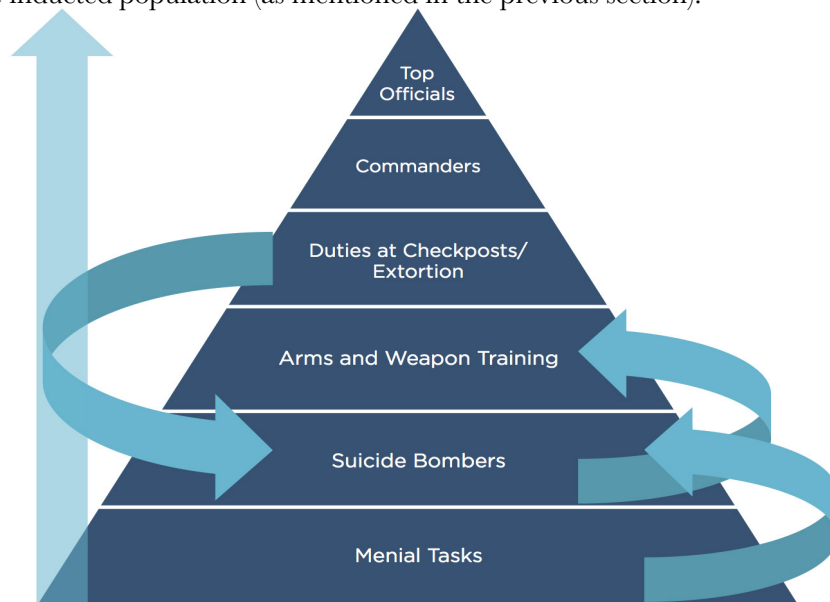


Figure 1: Hierarchy of Militancy in Sabaoon population

Figure 1 also indicates that the majority of the individuals who are recruited are initially assigned menial tasks (cooking, cleaning, collecting food and water supplies, digging tunnels, etc.). Once they are observed to be loyal to the concerned commander (of that training camp/area), they are considered for further training and possible roles they may partake in the militant group. Suicide bombing is considered to be the next tier. In that, those who are considered to have low intellectual or cognitive abilities are assigned to suicide bombing training. These individuals are often considered to be “cannon fodder” as they are dispensable and may only be utilized once for the group’s mission. Similarly, those who are considered to have the mental capacity to contribute to the groups goals and mission on a more productive and long term basis are given physical and weapons training, which in turn helps assign them roles in the next tiers, such as patrolling the community, guarding check-posts or they may be utilized for activities such as extortion, ambush, informants and similar active militant roles (related to combat). Once competence is established through achievement in each of these roles, the individual may then be assigned as a commander of the group in a particular location.

In addition, the dots and circles within the diagram suggest the movement through the tiers. The slanting arrows on the right-side of the diagram signify the progress through each tier, while the slanting arrow on the left suggest demotion due to change of heart or change in loyalty due to disillusionment with the movement (hypocrisy, double-standards, etc., observed in the commanders and senior officials).

Structure and Objectives of Rehabilitation Program

Taking into consideration some of the factors previously mentioned, four modules were determined to be key components of the Sabaoon rehabilitation program: 1) Academic Study, 2) Corrective Religious Instruction, 3) Vocational Training and 4) Sports and Recreation. As the initial interventionists at Sabaoon were psychologists, it was inevitable that assessments and psychosocial intervention would be a strong feature from the start. The Psychosocial module continues to be of great significance, in terms of identifying risk-related variables, and working to address the underlying psychological aspects related to involvement in militancy.

It is important to take into consideration that this is the only project for children and adolescents that is structured for the needs for both deradicalization and also to fulfill the deficiencies that these children had faced prior to their joining militancy (pre-morbid tendencies).

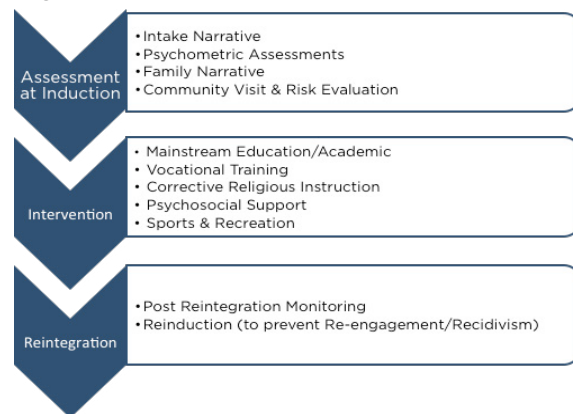
The model of Sabaoon was built to achieve the following objectives:

- To provide a positive, supportive, protective environment for the rehabilitation of adolescent males affected by militant groups.
- To deliver psychosocial support for adolescent males affected by militant groups and other sources of distress as well as facilitating their ability to differentiate and integrate information (especially related to values, morals and ethical dilemmas).
- To deliver mainstream education, vocational skills training to adolescent males affected by militant groups, in order to ensure that the vulnerable youth are goal directed.
- To provide corrective religious education to the adolescent males affected by militant groups.
- To ensure, where possible, a positive protective environment for the re-integration of adolescent males, for their families, and for a supportive community and society.

Methodology

The criteria for induction are the age range and involvement in violent extremist activities. The initial narratives are taken by the Mental Health Team (MHT) in collaboration with the senior psychologist and supervising psychologist. The initial narrative is followed by psychometric assessments, family narrative, initial academic assessment and medical examination. The decision for induction is made mutually by MHT and Senior & Supervising Psychologists, and Project Director.

Sabaoon's stepped process for deradicalization and rehabilitation is set out in the following diagram:



Lessons in terms of Reasoning and Emotional Abilities

Our experience with children involved in militancy was informed by and reinforced the theory argued by Morris et al. (2010), Decker and Pyrooz (2011) and Horgan (2005, 2009): that factors motivating “entry” may and should target the “exit” trajectory of those involved in violent extremism. Some of the common themes or motivating factors found across a variety of terrorist groups and organizations include: gradual socialization, group factors (such as role), positive features of being involved, rapid acquisition of skill, increase in sense of power, self-importance, monetary benefits and a sense of acceptance. Individuals at Sabaoon who were either abducted into militancy, or motivated to be involved in militancy because they were not goal-directed (e.g. dropped out of school because of learning difficulties, morbid trends or financial constraints), once reintegrated yield the best follow-up reports once they find meaningful goals in life. Our concern remains for those who are not gainfully occupied or achievement-oriented after reintegration, and those who lack strong positive bonds with their family or peer group.

A significant number of the Sabaoon inductees became involved in extreme movements through friends or relatives who persuaded them to comply, although they personally did not have much interest in politics of any kind. These factors remain as potential stimuli for re-engagement, post reintegration. The continued presence of personal relationships within militant groups, social networks and lack of citizenship awareness that contributed to inductees’ motivation, recruitment and radicalization, are contra-indications for re-integrating the remaining (approximately 20% of the) inducted population. Our social workers are limited in having access and ability to address these issues on such a large scale. Up until this stage we have been able to address the individual-level factors (lack of goals academic or otherwise) at Sabaoon, and the post reintegration support of MHT has been conducive to fostering new bonds and relationships, challenging intellectual discourse in follow up visit sessions, and maintaining goal-direction amongst the graduates, with encouragement from family and communities.

These findings prompted the psychologists to devise the psychosocial module to include aspects of Integrative Complexity (IC), which would allow a new medium for thinking and contemplation prior to decision-making or deciding on a specific course of action. The aim here is to provide the individual with the tools required for taking an informed decision. This includes the ability to not only see polarized ends (black-and-white) but also take into account the complete spectrum of values related to a topic under discussion – otherwise

known as the “grey areas.” An understanding of IC can allow one to not only appreciate the differences between two perspectives, but also acknowledge the existence of common beliefs and values that underlie each perspective. This allows for a more expansive understanding of why views differ, and how even these differences can be seen to have similar underlying beliefs, hence allowing for development of social intelligence and empathy, rather than aggressive reactivity.

Four cases are provided below to highlight the variation in profiles (for example, comparing the intellectual with social/emotional intelligence) and to give an example of the kind of individual psychosocial intervention required for each:

1) *Markee*

This individual gives an indication of the vulnerability in individuals who lack intelligence (low cognitive functioning / lacking critical thinking and logical reasoning). His family works in bonded labor in a brick kiln and he was handed over to a militant group as the family was unable to pay off the loan. He had been trained as a suicide bomber and was being sent to conduct a suicide bombing mission when he was apprehended by the security forces. His narrative suggests that he still is unable to understand why he was a part of this mission and what he/his family would have gained from this act.

He has never had exposure to school or schooling, and his expressive and receptive language abilities are limited. Soft neuropathology in terms of partial seizures have been observed. This individual is being given neuroleptics in order to address the brain dysfunction, which in turn enhances his ability to accommodate new learning at Sabaoon.

His final statement (at the end of the video clip) shows clearly his low cognitive functioning and the kind of intervention that is required, as he states that he would have personally received financial reward afterwards for conducting the suicide mission, without the understanding that he would also have died, and no financial benefit could be enjoyed after death.

Cognitive ability: Borderline or lower (eg subnormal). IC (integrative complexity, Suedfeld et al 2005, explained below) is also low.

His lack of critical thinking and low intelligence are critical aspects that need to be addressed through academic modules for basic literacy, in terms of abstract and verbal learning, vocational modules (for skill acquisition as well as perceptual learning), religious learning (to help correct religious concepts related to violent extremist activities, to allow for him to understand verses within their context), psychosocial intervention and support (aimed at encouraging him to assess his thoughts and behaviors as a result of his underlying beliefs, and or due to impulsivity, which present impediments to helping him inculcate empathic and pluralistic values). With pharmacological protocols to address his underlying neuropathology (seizures), his ability to learn and accommodate new information improved substantially, allowing him to improve his academic achievement, resulting in an improved self-concept (esteem, confidence and future aspirations). Measurement of his IC (integrative complexity) demonstrates a black and white structure of thinking that is simplistic and binary (low IC) that screens out seeing any qualifications (shades of grey) or validity in different points of view, evident in his categorical, complete acceptance of what was told him by militants.

2) *Marty*

He ran away from school at age 10 years. Has had a truant childhood and lacked bonding with his parents and siblings. He was keen on educational goals, but mood lability (eg changeable moods) led to inconsistency in his ability to achieve. He is currently defensive about revealing details of past experiences, although he has shared them with pride on previous occasions (as observed in the video clip). He expresses a need to be in denial about his own involvement and is presently unwilling to accept what he has previously confessed. His involvement highlights a need for bonding and acceptance with authority figures, which was his immediate commander, and a close ally of the TTP leader (Mullah Fazlullah). His narrative reveals the changing perspectives and/or stance that the inductee takes in the gradual process of deradicalization and rehabilitation at Sabaoon, especially through the process of coming to terms with his allowing of the ‘metaphoric murder’* of his previous ‘selfhood’ by militants, and thus allowing himself to re-establish a new personality (self-resurrection) through the process at Sabaoon.

Cognitive ability average. IC low.

His academic progress has been maintained through the supportive environment at Sabaoon, which allowed him to undergo remedial learning classes, in order to enroll in the grade at par with his age. He, since then, has been allowed to join the mainstream academic modules and has now completed his matriculation. His social empathy and ability to see another's perspective (an element of IC) is limited and requires continued intervention at the individual and group level.¹

3) *Haseeb*

He had joined voluntarily at the behest of his friend and was involved in militancy for approximately 2 years. He had received physical and weapons training, and had been actively involved in ambush, extortion, planting explosive devices, and other acts combating the security forces as well as the civilian population. He believed in the extremist ideology until time that he noticed the hypocrisy in the senior commanders' statements as he moved from one militant group to another. This discouraged him to continue his active support for the movement and he expressed a need for a parting of ways, or take some time away from the group by visiting his family. This request was denied and instead he was threatened with training for suicide bombing to be carried out at a Shia mosque, otherwise he and his family would be killed.

He went to the mosque wearing a suicide vest, along with a pistol and a hand grenade. He expressed that he did not want to conduct the act, and this was reinforced when he saw the people praying in the mosque. He surrendered himself at an Imaam Bargah (Shia) in DI Khan from where he was taken by the security forces. He remained at Sabaoon for approximately 2 years and since has been reintegrated via the Monitoring Centre, as his community is still not safe (for him particularly) and he lacks educational and work opportunities. His narrative gives an indication of the nature of hypocrisy in the militant groups, as well as the varying perspectives in the subsequent groups he was handed over to and the disillusionment this causes in the recruits (indicating a moderately low IC, the ability to perceive some qualification - 'not all militant leaders are always good; not all Shias are bad' - a first step towards empathy).

¹ **Metaphoric Murder:** The process of recruitment during which new names or an alias is assigned, in order to develop new personalities aimed at detaching the individual from his past life in order to become a part of a greater cause. These changes tend to be observed in individuals at the time when their religious understanding has increased and they are in conflict with their past beliefs (in terms of their understanding of the religious war and the roles they had taken on, the support they had offered, and the ideology that they promoted), which results in a dissonance and promotes new roles ("self-resurrection") and goals in terms of assessing how they would like to change their future trajectory, and assessing what is required for them to achieve this successfully. This makes our ongoing assessment and intervention difficult, as fluctuations in a stance regarding past involvement indicates that the individual may not be taking complete responsibility for his actions.

The fact that he had negative experiences with the militant groups has been a facilitating variable in his deradicalization and rehabilitation process. He continues to guide his younger brothers and other youth to focus on goal directed activities and has shared the difficulties he faced as a result of his involvement.

He has undergone treatment for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), as well as symptoms of depression and anxiety. He has accommodated healthy coping strategies and continues to work to improve himself even after RI, as he seeks his case manager frequently to seek guidance and feedback.

Cognitive ability: Slightly above average. IC moderately low.

He was reintegrated from Sabaoon in 2013 and has since completed his intermediate studies and is currently looking to take admission in a bachelor of arts degree as a private candidate while he works to earn a living and support his family. He is unable to reside in his own community, as it lacks any colleges and or universities. Schools that existed there have been destroyed by the militants, and the community is still unstable in terms of security and law enforcement.

His social empathy continues to improve, and he benefits from the support offered at the MC, in terms of close proximity with his case manager and the remaining mental health team. He takes part in discussions actively, and tries to contribute to the facility by exhibiting "helping behaviors".

4) *Omar*

He has very high intelligence and reported not being interested in school, as he did not find it challenging, and therefore was irregular in attending school. A very high risk individual, especially as he has undergone intensive ideological training by an Imam in individual sessions while his father continues to work abroad (providing explanations for Quranic texts) and his family's religious inclination is also evident.

He was recently inducted and has been facilitating the capture of other militants by revealing information about aliases, roles, locations, etc. He is an individual who has the characteristics to rise to the Commander level, and exhibits the ideological compulsion to do so. Leadership qualities are also evident in his stance of preaching and quoting texts from the Holy Quran (in or out of con-

text). This suggests the kind of serious beliefs/narratives we have to counter as part of the deradicalization and rehabilitation process. That is, his ability to deduce events and experiences in terms of religion is disturbing as it indicates the tendency to oversimplify and absolutise concepts and groups to justify violent extremist acts (a feature of low IC). For example, the individual discusses how the Holy Quran discourages usury. He explains this through his understanding that Muslim states should “not be friendly with Non-Muslim (Mushrikeen) states,” and being friendly with these states means disrespect to Allah. When asked why, his justification was oversimplified as the following equation:

Non-Muslims promote usury. Usury is not allowed in Islam. Permitting the use of usury in any Islamic state (that is, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan) therefore, means that one is disrespecting Allah, and equating others with or above Him, pleasing Non-Muslims at the expense of compromise with God, which can be seen as Shirk. Since Shirk is the most disliked act by Allah, Jihad is obligatory against such individuals who promote usury (a chain of black and white mono-causal reasoning, eg low IC). Omar is highly intelligent however lacks empathy and social intelligence, therefore would score low on IC.

Most significantly, the statements and discussions with this individual gives an indication of his high intelligence, which at times is challenging when seeking to counter his perspective, as he holds on to it rigidly and with extensive (if low IC) reasoning. His ability to quote verses from the Quran, and presenting related Ahadith (words of the Prophet, PBUH) to provide explanations for the Quranic verses is, at best, over simplified.

Cognitive ability: Exceptionally high, IC low.

Analysis

Extensive work is needed, in terms of presenting differing perspectives or alternate situations in which interpretations such as the above are be seen to be flawed. However, providing a new perspective within one context has so far been successful, enabling him to assess the range of perspectives that need to be taken into account, rather than oversimplifying and using only deductive abilities, instead of inductive and integrative abilities (indicating the possibility for raising his IC through perspective taking).

As the above four cases suggest that Sabaoon’s success, in its ability to rehabilitate these young individuals, is due to its individualized and holistic program. In order to cater to the unique characteristics and personalities of these indi-

viduals, detailed psychometric assessments and ongoing individual and group sessions allow for identifying gaps (goal direction, personality characteristics, underlying beliefs and values), providing appropriate intervention and support. While goal direction is enabled through the intellectual abilities, successful deradicalization is also based on the ability to take multiple conflicting perspectives into account, assessing factors that are common as well as those that are different, finding links and integrations between these differing views, without feeling threatened or sparked to react in violent or aggressive ways (eg higher IC, integrative complexity).

Sageman (2008), Horgan (2009) and Bjoerjo (2005) have all contended that ideology is usually not the primary motivating factor, and adoption of the terrorist organization’s ideology usually occurs after the individual has joined their organization. This applies to a large number of our students. There is much consensus with the thesis espoused that “the human capacity to care about large and impersonal collectives, as if they were an extended family, is the foundation of mass politics and the prerequisite for national ethnic and religious group conflict” (McCauley et al., 2008). In line with this, we have found that our population at Sabaoon was generally assigned new names (aliases) by the militants in order to develop new personalities aimed at detaching the individual from his past life (including family members) and become a part of a greater cause and larger “collective.” We have theorized this as “metaphoric murder” of the former self-identity (and personal attachments that are the foundation of identity). In short, the individual’s existing identity is removed or extinguished (de-individualization) to give way to a new identity. This loss of self-identity in a group setting has the tendency to lead to conformity, apathy (lack of agency) and obedience to authority (Milgram, 1963; Zimbardo, 1971). Sabaoon attempts to rebuild this original personality or self-identity through efforts leading to “self resurrection,” re-establishing a cohesive personality with a better understanding by reframing the experiences to date (a form of high IC, integrating changing temporal perspectives).

Schools Intervention Program

The success from Sabaoon rests on its ability to encourage intellectual discourse, in terms of aspects of IC thinking (described previously under the section of “learnings”) in the inducted population by discussing topics that allow individuals to use reasoning in terms of a spectrum of values as well as facts to arrive at a justification of their decisions, while identifying all possible consequences. Reactions are then based on informed reasoning, including differentiation and assimilation or integration of opposing views.

The singularly didactic education method adopted in Pakistan makes it easy for the teachers as students are only required to rote learn right or wrong answers. However this raises students' anxiety for being "wrong" and therefore they shut down their thinking, hesitating to ask questions. Independent thinking is discouraged, in any case, in classrooms in Swat that at times exceed 70-100 students per classroom. Therefore it is not surprising to find an inability in most students to engage in logical, much less, critical reasoning.

Keeping the above in mind, the organization initiated work in five secondary and high schools in the Swat region where the recruitment of children and adolescents was the highest (based on the findings from the Sabaoon population). Basic intervention was aimed at providing exposure to the variety of perspectives. For this, a resource library was provided to each of the schools. Resource material included, but was not limited to, encyclopedias, classic and modern literature, activity based workbooks for understanding the course material (especially related to science and geography) using everyday practical examples in terms of individual and group projects. Similarly, an IT laboratory was also established. This not only encouraged the students to improve their technological competence, but also served to provide computer courses (Microsoft office, coral draw, typing in Urdu/Pushto, etc) to the community members, after school hours. This allowed for a common medium of communication and acquiring technological skills aimed at opening additional job opportunities.

Teacher Training workshops were arranged in order to allow the teachers to plan their lessons in a manner that promoted interactive discussions aimed at providing multiple perspectives to help expand the thinking modalities of the school population. The modes of teaching to engage the student population's attention, and that critical thinking was encouraged through questioning, research assignments and group projects. Within a two-year period, SWAaT has been able to observe marked improvement in both grade achievement (as per the annual examinations) and through comparison on pre- and post-intervention on non-verbal assessment of reasoning and logical thinking through the SPM (Standard Progressive Matrices).

Logical reasoning skills as assessed by SPM

An overall improvement of 12% in logical reasoning (as assessed by the SPM) was found across the 5 boys schools. This suggests that where 66% of the students were at or below the 10th percentile rank (PR), currently 35% fall at or below the 10th percentile rank (PR). Additionally, where only 12% were

achieved 50th or above 50th PR, currently, 39% are achieving 50th or above PR. Additionally, none of the students were able to achieve the 95th PR, and currently 17% are at the 95th PR. This is suggestive of a marked and significant improvement within one year from baseline assessments taken in December 2012 to current assessments conducted in December 2014.

Suggestions and Recommendations for Prevention

It has been an interesting and significant observation from our sample population at Sabaoon, that mothers (who are mainly the decision makers, as fathers are mostly abroad) tend to send those offspring, who have dropped out of school, to madrassas instead; in addition, these offspring also tend to have organicity and or morbid trends (psychosocial difficulties such as disruptive behavioral problems). In these cases, families tend to utilize these offspring (who are not in school) for additional income to support the family/household. Offspring who cope with the academic demands of schools continue to achieve subsequent goals, if the family's finances allow.

In the schools where SIP has been practiced (nearly 4,500 students) with minimum intervention, we have managed to halt the student drop-out rate to negligible levels (current dropout rate is 0.5%, as opposed to 32% at the start of 2012). In addition, reasons for drop out suggest that a major proportion of these individuals have enrolled in schools which were upgraded (from Primary school to Middle School and from Middle school to secondary and high school), due to the increased enrollment in the SIP schools supported by SWAaT.

We foresee that these efforts will encourage our existing population to act as ambassadors for such positive changes in their own communities, and the larger canvas, in terms of whom they interact with and how well they are able to accommodate the support offered through SWAaT. With our current reintegrated population, we find that more than 50% are currently pursuing academic goals and hope to establish careers related to justice and law, social sciences (focusing on Psychology), medicine (doctors, nurses, anesthesiologists) and civil, mechanical, electrical and or computer engineering. Many are taking part in welfare activities proactively in their respective environments by educating the youngsters in their neighborhoods about their own experiences in militancy, then rehabilitation, and how they project their futures. Others with training in vocational skills are providing free services (electrical repairs, painting, welding, construction) when and where possible, in their own communities.

SWAaT is working to initiate similar modules in these schools to increase religious and secular tolerance. SWAaT is also working to encourage non-violent behavior and social cohesion through a program to raise the IC (integrative complexity) with Sara Savage and the IC Thinking (Cambridge) team. One method that the IC Thinking team uses is to present a dilemma relevant to extremism viewed from four different Muslim viewpoints, and to involve participants in discovering the value spectrums that underlie the differing viewpoints. By using multi-media, role play and other group learning activities, participants are enabled to see at least some validity in the different viewpoints, and to grow beyond polarized, black or white, right or wrong categories (Savage et al., 2014; Savage, 2013). This approach taps into the values of each individual, and helps them to understand others' values and perspectives, but without "de-selfing" or sacrificing their own important values. Participants are enabled to engage with difference, and because they can maintain their own values through collaborative solutions, they are enabled to tolerate difference and change without resorting to aggression and or violence. This process has been studied by Savage (2013) through empirically assessing 25 *Being Muslim Being British* group interventions, all of which have shown through pre and post testing that the initial low IC is raised from black and white thinking to the ability to see some validity in other's perspectives, e.g. moderately high IC.

The theory of change here assumes that because individuals are more receptive to messages with a complexity level similar to their own when thinking about conflicted social issues (based on persuasion literature), **increasing** complexity in thinking and valuing builds **resilience** to the very low complexity communications and recruitment efforts of extremists. Low IC ideology provides no other means to resolve grievances apart from mobilization and violent confrontation. But raised IC expands the 'problem space' along with improved cognitive flexibility and critical reasoning, supported by emotional management and social skills (including empathy for self and other) that are fostered in the IC intervention, so that participants can see more options for resolving conflicts in pro-social ways. In contrast, lowered IC with its limited options constricts the problem space, heightening inter-group conflict and violent mobilization. Raised IC also resources intergroup dialogue and cooperation at the local level, in line with core aims of social cohesion and citizenship values.

It is value complexity, having a broad range of values in tension applied to a conflict, that is the needed foundation for IC (Tetlock 1986). People will not expend the extra effort to think complexly unless they care about and can maximize two or more values that are both important to them as individuals, and are in dynamic tension with each other. Working with participants' own array of values

within their own cultural worldview, and giving them practical skills in maximizing their own values while respecting the values of others, is core to the IC method. Value complexity enables empathy for self and other. Participants can now see some value in different viewpoints, as shared values can "rehumanise" the Other. Thus participants begin to think critically, in more flexible ways, and to 'see through' extremisms with their low IC structure.

IC interventions works with brain processes and are designed to overcome threat-related cognitive biases and defensive commitment to pre-existing schemas that prevent perceiving the social world with greater complexity. The IC method is now undergoing extensive research and development to be tailored to ages 11-14 in Swat, and Pakistan more widely. In addition, using the IC coding frame (Baker-Brown et al., 1992), which shows 40 years of robust empirical results predicting the outcomes of real world conflict (promoting violence when IC drops, and predicting peaceful solutions to conflict when IC raises, Suedfeld & Tetlock, 2014) will enable us to measure the success of the IC program in Swat. IC is a relatively unfakable measure of the structure of thinking (held at a less than conscious level). In conjunction with SPM measures, pre and post the IC program in Swat, we will be able to track progress using this predictive measure.

The challenge of large class sizes in Swat is sparking new creative methods, to be delivered by specially IC-trained teachers. IC Thinking methods have also been successfully applied to other inter-group conflicts such as sectarianism (please see www.iseescotland.org), and thus it is envisaged that this new collaboration between IC Thinking and SWAaT will provide an antidote to extremism where it is applied - one that builds upon the success of the Schools Intervention Program to address key vulnerabilities identified by the work at Sabaon.

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About IC Thinking, please see www.ICCambridge.org.



CHAPTER EIGHT

Does Youth Employment Build Stability? Evidence from an Impact Evaluation of Vocational Training in Afghanistan

Jon Kurtz, Rebecca Wolfe and Beza Tesfaye

Introduction

Promoting stability is one of the primary objectives of nearly all major development actors operating in Afghanistan. The United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID) defines stabilization as an approach used in violent situations where it is difficult or impossible to pursue conventional programs; its aims are explicitly political: to help establish and sustain a legitimate government. Aid actors have long seen employment to be the primary means for addressing the myriad of challenges facing stabilization in Afghanistan. As such, many employment and job training programs have been tied to stability-related outcomes, such as reducing support for armed extremist groups. Stabilization through economic development and employment programs in Afghanistan and other conflict-affected contexts relies on the assumption that improving economic opportunities will reduce young people's incentive to be mobilized by, or support, violent movements. In other words, the basic assumption for many of these development programs is that increasing economic opportunities will have secondary effects of preventing further emergence of political violence and violent extremism. However, recent studies have begun to question the link between the economic incentive offered through employment and a reduction in political violence (e.g. Humphreys & Weinstein, 2004; Berman et al., 2011; Blair et al., 2011; Beber & Blattman, 2013).

Starting in late 2013, Mercy Corps carried out research to test the theories of change that link unemployment, poverty and economic deprivation to support for political violence, terrorism and insurgency. The study was conducted as part of Mercy Corps' *Introducing New Vocational Education and Skills Training* (INVEST) program in Helmand Province in Southern Afghanistan. The INVEST program, funded DfID, increases youth employment in Helmand by offering vocational and technical training courses in nine technical vocational

education and training (TVET) centers across Helmand Province. Since its inception in 2011, over 25,000 students have graduated from the program, including 7,700 young women, with an average postgraduate employment rate of over 65 percent.

It is important to note that the INVEST program's original theory of change hypothesized a relationship with economic outcomes only; the social, political, and violence-related outcomes were not conceived as part of the program's original design. However, given Mercy Corps and DfID's shared interest in understanding how interventions like INVEST may contribute to broader stability goals in the region by targeting a population that is traditionally sympathetic to the Taliban, the program provided a unique opportunity to determine if improved economic outcomes could decrease individuals' propensity towards political violence. In the context of Southern Afghanistan, this implies support for the Taliban insurgency and violent extremism.

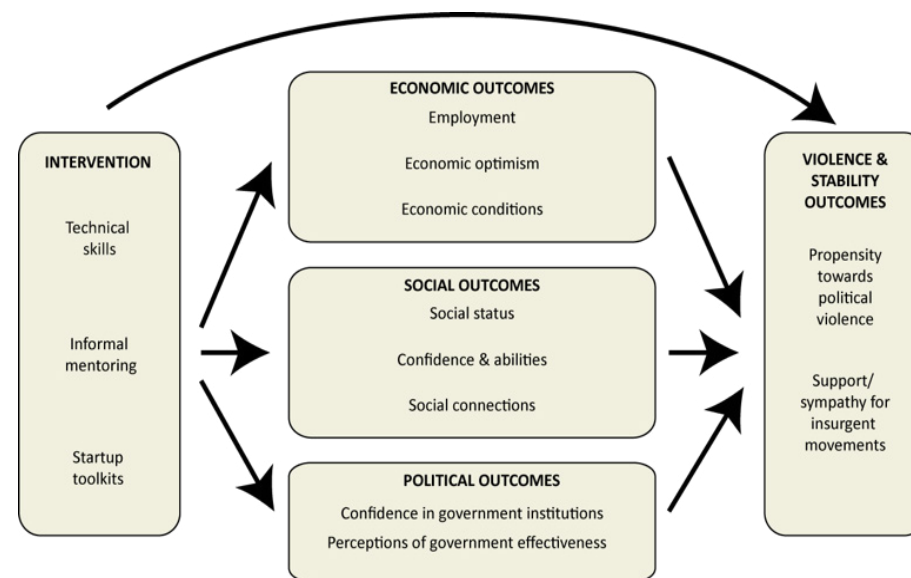
Objectives and Hypotheses

The goal of this research was to examine the causal relationship between participation in youth employment programs and propensity towards political violence and violent extremism in Afghanistan. To achieve this, we tested if the INVEST program impacted broader economic, social, and political outcomes that are often considered to be drivers of violent extremism. In order to generate findings applicable to other programs and contexts, the study examined three specific mechanisms through which the program is hypothesized to have had an effect on young Afghans' propensity toward political violence and support for the Taliban insurgency:

- H₁:** Participation in a TVET program will improve young people's employment status and economic conditions, thereby decreasing their financial incentive to support or engage in violent extremist movements.
- H₂:** Participation in a TVET program will improve young people's connection to and status within their community, thereby decreasing their social incentive to support or engage in violent extremist movements.
- H₃:** Participation in a TVET program will improve young people's confidence in and perceptions of government performance in fulfilling basic functions, thereby decreasing the likelihood they will use violence or support violent extremist movements to address grievances towards the government.

These hypotheses are illustrated in the conceptual framework for this research presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Methodology

The study utilized a quasi-experimental, mixed methodology impact evaluation design to test the program's hypotheses. Surveys were administered to a treatment and comparison group of male and female INVEST participants from February to April 2014. The treatment group consisted of recent graduates from the INVEST program while the comparison group was comprised of incoming students who had enrolled in the program but had not yet started classes. Propensity score matching was used to create treatment and comparison groups that were similar along observable characteristics in order to establish a valid counterfactual. Additionally, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with employed male and female INVEST graduates, current INVEST students, teachers, business owners and community and religious leaders.

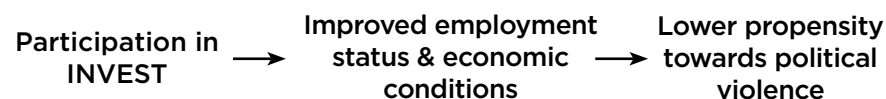
The research first assessed if there were any direct program impacts on outcomes of political violence. Then turning to the three hypotheses, the analysis worked in two stages: first, we estimated INVEST's impact on economic, social, and political outcomes; second, the analysis tested the relationship between

these factors and two political violence outcome measures. By combining an impact evaluation of the INVEST program with an assessment of mechanisms of change underpinning the expected stabilization outcomes, the study was able to assess both the attributable effects of the program while identifying the mechanisms through which attitudes and behaviors towards political violence can be influenced.

Key Findings

The INVEST program had strong positive impacts on most of its intended economic outcomes, as well as on several of the social and political outcomes explored in this study. However, based on the tests of program effects, INVEST had limited impacts on participants' willingness to engage in political violence or their belief that violence is sometimes justified in Afghan politics. The research unpacked these findings by testing the individual hypotheses linking INVEST to propensity towards political violence. The findings on all three hypotheses were mixed and produced little evidence to support the major assumptions tested. Overall, the results suggested that the INVEST program did not contribute to stabilization through decreasing support for political violence and the Taliban.

Hypothesis 1:



The greatest impacts of the INVEST program were on economic outcomes. Participation in the program was associated with decreased unemployment, increased income and greater economic optimism amongst participants. Analysis showed a highly significant and positive effect of INVEST on employment status: those that participated in INVEST were 35.7 percentage points more likely to be employed than those who had not yet participated. INVEST participants were 12.7 percentage points more likely than the comparison group to have undertaken paid work in the past month. They also reported higher levels of satisfaction with their main job. Additionally, INVEST was linked with a 0.17 point increase in participants' 1-5 scale of economic optimism and a 19.5 percentage point increase in the likelihood of engaging in economic activity with another tribe. Given the counterfactual analysis, the study can confidently attribute the increase in employment among INVEST graduates to the program as opposed to any other outside events, such as growth in the local economy. These were notable results within the context of

other youth TVET programs, which have been shown on average to produce far lower effects on paid employment (Tripney, et al., 2013).

However, few of the economic outcomes to which the program contributed were found to be strong predictors of support for political violence and armed opposition groups. Based on the quantitative analysis, neither employment status nor cross-tribal economic activity was linked to young people's reported willingness to use violence for political or other causes. Only economic optimism was found to be significantly related to a lesser acceptance of the use of violence.

Taken together, these results suggest that young people's current economic circumstances are not a major driver of propensity towards political violence within the context of Southern Afghanistan. However, improving youth's perceptions of their future economic prospects may hold potential to decrease their support for or participation in violent movements.

Hypothesis 2:

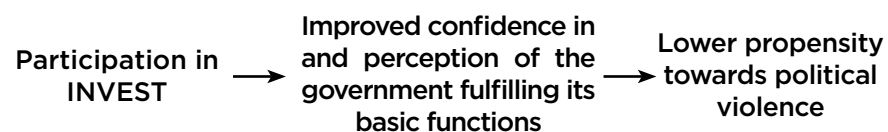


The INVEST program had mixed impacts on social outcomes. The program contributed positively to participants' social connectedness, increasing the likelihood that respondents felt they had more friends to turn to for help or advice by 10.7 percentage points. The program strongly impacted participants' probability of identifying as an Afghan above a tribe or religion, increasing it by 8.1 percentage points. INVEST had a slightly significant positive effect on participants' social interactions with people from other tribes, as well as a positive effect on a measure of discrimination—frequency of being treated unfairly or with prejudice decreased by 0.22 points on a 4-point scale. But the program had no impact on participants' feelings of being respected, personal confidence, or their perceived social standing in their community.

Many of the social factors analyzed were found to be linked to respondents' attitudes towards the use of political violence, though the relationships were often opposite than expected. Contrary to assumptions, respondents with higher personal confidence, more social connections, and who identified as an Afghan before a tribe or religion were more likely to be willing to use violence for a political cause and believe violence was sometimes justified.

These results show that employment programs can contribute to increasing participants' social networks and social identities. In the context of Helmand, such impacts may not be desirable, as they appear to be perversely associated with propensity towards political violence. Furthermore, it is perhaps unrealistic to expect interventions focused exclusively on economic outcomes to address deep and systemic issues around social status. Interpreting the findings as a whole suggest that even though employment programs impact a number of social outcomes, it is unlikely that those outcomes will alter social status motivations in such a way that reduces propensity towards political violence.

Hypothesis 3:



Participation in the INVEST program was associated with a 0.125 point increase in the 1-5 scale of perceptions of local government institutions—particularly their ability to create job opportunities. This may be because program participants gave some credit to the local government for improving vocational education opportunities. However, INVEST had no impact on participants' views of the national government's effectiveness in fulfilling its basic functions.

Increased confidence in local, informal institutions, including traditional leaders (*shuras*), civil society organizations and religious leaders was not found to predict lower support for and willingness to engage in political violence. Likewise, no such relationship was found between people's confidence in formal Afghan institutions—including the national, provincial, and local government—and their willingness to engage in political violence.

These findings do not support the assertion that young Afghan's negative views of the effectiveness of local or national government bodies are a major driver of support for insurgent movements. The results also raise doubts regarding the ability of employment generation programs to influence young Afghans' propensity towards political violence and support for the Taliban by creating more confidence in the government.

Conclusions and Implications

Many stabilization policies and programs are based on the assumption that one of the main drivers or contributing push/pull factors of political violence, terrorism, and insurgencies lies in poverty and economic deprivation. In response, millions of dollars have been spent on employment and job training interventions, especially for youth. Following the recent White House Summit on CVE, the U.S. Government's Eight Point Action Agenda continued to emphasize economic factors, asserting that "VEOs use economic incentives to help recruit unemployed or underemployed individuals from poor and marginalized areas" and advocating for "piloting technical and vocational education and training, job matching, and other jobs programming and initiatives that specifically target populations at risk of radicalization and recruitment," (Draft Follow-on Action Agenda, 2015). However, the results of this impact evaluation of a large scale youth vocational training program in Helmand, Afghanistan bring into question the efficacy of such interventions in reducing violence and promoting stability.

Our findings demonstrate that joblessness is not the primary driver of propensity towards violence among Afghan youth, nor does preventing joblessness contribute to the prevention of political violence or violent extremism in Afghanistan. While the INVEST program had positive effects on participants' employment status, this did not significantly impact their support for political violence or violent extremist groups. Rather, young Afghan's sense of respect and dignity stand out as important leverage points for promoting stability. This aligns with the growing body of theoretical research from social psychology that points to subjective feelings of shame, alienation and lack of significance as underlying factors that drive youth—both poor and well-off—to engage in violent extremism (See Moghaddam, 2005; Horgan, 2008; Kruglanski, et al., 2014). Improving these factors appears to hold the potential to lower young people's risks of supporting violent groups and causes. Other Mercy Corps studies on youth and conflict in Afghanistan, Somalia, Colombia, Kenya, and across sub-Saharan Africa also point to similar results (Proctor, 2015; Tesfaye, 2014; Wolfe and Kurtz, 2013; Kurtz, 2011).

The research presents new evidence on young Afghan's micro-level motivations for political violence. The results of this study shed light on the potential and limitations of economic development programs in fragile and conflict affected contexts. The insights generated have important implications for improving the effectiveness of investments in youth employment and stability interventions in Afghanistan and similar fragile states.

Recommendations for policy makers:

1. **De-couple employment and stabilization interventions.** Our evidence cautions against assuming youth employment achievements will increase stability. Specifically, stabilization interventions that are based on cash for work and economic reintegration for young people may not produce the desired reduction in violence. Further, tying employment programs to stabilization outcomes may force such interventions to pursue the political goals at the expense of economic objectives, potentially achieving neither. Before investing significantly in stabilization programs in complex crises, more in-depth analysis is required to understand and respond to the drivers of conflict, why individuals support violent extremism, and the roles that employment and poverty play.
2. **Replicate models for youth employment that have been successful in complex, kinetic environments.** Policy makers should not expect economic development interventions alone to address deep and systemic issues that drive violence and instability. Yet supporting job creation for youth is important to economic development and growth in and of itself. The INVEST model has proven that it is possible to foster job creation, even in highly kinetic environments. This success was achieved by directly addressing the needs of the local market, employing local master trainers and business owners and providing practical, hands-on skills training. Future TVET programs should endeavor to adapt and include these strategies into their designs.

Recommendations for researchers:

1. **Invest in studying the long-term effects of employment on violent extremism.** The significance of increased economic optimism on lower propensities for political violence suggests that employment programs like INVEST could have long-term effects on stability if their successes continued. Panel and longitudinal studies on trends of employment and impacts of employment programs are needed to fully assess the roles of long-term employment and improved economic conditions on political violence and violent extremism.
2. **Examine the counterintuitive drivers of violence.** Contrary to our expectations, having more business and social connections, being more confident, and identifying as an Afghan before one's tribe or religion were all associated with greater propensity towards violence. Programs that affect

these outcomes, which are often viewed as positive, may inadvertently exacerbate instability.

Further research should be conducted to confirm or deny these relationships, better understand the underlying reasons for them, and help programs determine how they can, at a minimum, do no harm in these areas.

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CHAPTER NINE

Radicalization Drivers and De-radicalization Process: The Case of Tolerance Academy in Nigeria

Jonah Ayodele Obajeun

Introduction

The Boko Haram insurgency in Northern Nigeria has decimated the continued survival of people and continues to be the largest violent extremist threat in West Africa. Initially, the sect's leadership did not call for violence; its followers engaged in periodic clashes with security during its formative years (Blanchard, 2014). However, from 2009 to 2015 Boko Haram insurgency claimed the lives of more than 13,000 people (Salisu et al., 2015). The group has since intensified its attacks on security agents and their formations, top governmental establishments, schools, Mosques, and the general populace. For example, the group kidnapped 250 schoolgirls in Chibok in April 2014. The threat posed by the group is undermining the existence of Nigeria as one sovereign political territory. Moreover, according to Salisu et al. (2015), on August 2014, the sect leader declared areas under their control as new "Islamic Caliphate," which would be governed according to strict Islamic laws. All the territories have been reported to have been recaptured by the Nigerian Army. However, the group keeps propagating its extreme narratives in order to recruit more people. More than 1.5million people have been displaced from their settlements, about 30% of this population is estimated to be young people (Crisis Monitoring Group, 2015).

This research essay is centered on the understanding of the pull and push factors of extremism and radicalization among vulnerable population and subsequent recruitment into radical groups, especially in the Northeastern part of Nigeria. Principally driven by the deliberate misleading objectives of radical groups in the region, various players in the field of countering violent extremism (CVE) in Nigeria are confronted with these confusing objectives and have since made recourse to conjectures to drive their interventions.

Direct interactions with escapees, survivors and former members of radical sect who have denounced their membership of Boko Haram added credence to

the real factors that are pulling and pushing people into violent extremism, as rightly documented in this research essay. This research draws on primary data from a field visit conducted in the conflict zone of Northeastern Nigeria. This field visit showed that while it is important to use local lens to examine pull and push factors of radicalization, it is becoming increasingly vital to also consider the global dimension of recruitments, membership benefit offerings, and social status among terror peers. As concluded in the essay, and with specific focus on Boko Haram group, this evidence-based approach to the examination of radicalization process makes cases for the use of education-based approaches to halt radicalization process and expand the frontiers of counter narratives against violent extremism. This essay concludes with a case study of the Tolerance Academy as one potential intervention to addressing the push and pull factors in Northeastern Nigeria.

Local drivers of radicalization in Northeastern Nigeria – Poverty Theory

There are schools of thought that believe that radicalization drivers are multifaceted, especially when viewed from the global outlook that terrorism had assumed. The Poverty Theory is often referred to as the main driver of radicalization in Northeastern Nigeria. For example, according to Liolio (2012), successful recruitment depends on the nature of the economic and poverty levels in the area of recruitment. Insurgents gain members by claiming their struggle is “for the people” and that they would provide basic necessities for the general population if supported. The insurgents may succeed if such society has high rates of poverty, illiteracy, ineptitude, corruption, and discrimination against modernization and globalization. Liolio also explains that; it is significant to know that the root causes of the insurgency often relate to a long cloudy set of problems culminating into uncontrolled grievances and exploding violence. Such problems are socio-economic and political, which is why insurgencies are sometimes more rampant in underdeveloped countries or countries engulfed by corrupt regime, ethnicity, social prejudices religion and disparities in the distribution of resources or even lack of it.

Furthermore, Olojo (2013) contends that one significant factor that has stimulated the drive towards violent extremism; recruitment and support for Boko Haram are economic deprivation. Several scholars believed that poverty and longstanding economic disparities in the northeast part of the country have been significant motivating factors for why youth join the sect.

Similarly, Adesoji (2010) stresses that in Nigeria the marginalization and imbalance distribution or implementation of the resources made some radicalised

scholars to preach against the government and democratic setting, which later gave birth to the present Boko Haram insurgency. The Poverty Theory further suggests that domestically the politicization of religious traditions and the radicalization of religious communities are especially likely in times of economic decay or state collapse. People below the poverty line with little hope, strong religious ideology, and who are marginalized or under physical threat may often turn to their religion in search of an alternative order that satisfies their need for welfares, recognition, and security. Here, a successful recruitment narrative combined with economic incentives makes the alternative order more appealing.

Nigeria is a country with more than 160 million people nearly 330 ethnic more than 250 languages with 50% Muslim and 40% Christian as well as 10% traditional beliefs. Poverty is what is seen by many observers and analysts as the root that causes most of the ethno-religious crisis in northern Nigeria which Boko Haram insurgency is among. With the death of infrastructure development, 90% of Nigerians are permanent of crippling poverty (Salisu et al., 2015).

The country was ranked 153th out of 177 poor economic countries on the human development index (2008), despite its rich cultural endowment and abundant human and natural resources (Adenrele, 2014). Northern Nigeria in particular has the highest figure of relative poverty in comparison with southwest and south-east zones that have relative poverty of 67.0% and 59.1% respectively. The northeast and north-west zones have the higher figure of 76.3% and 77.7% relative poverty respectively (NBS, 2012).

A country with legacies of economic stagnation, a higher level of unemployment and uneven economic development such country is a fertile ground on which terrorist seed can flourish (Umar, 2013). Moreover, individuals and group grievances such as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, discrimination, and economic marginalization can be used as mobilizing instruments by violent extremists to get support and recruit for terrorist violence. This explains how economically deprived youth can easily be recruited by the extremist group, due to the economic hardship in the region (Umar, 2013).

The increasing rate of unemployed youth in the region, most of which were economically deprived, has been the main target of Boko Haram's recruitment tactics. Some scholars pointed out that the connections between poverty, illiteracy and terrorism are indirect and complicated. The huge number of young people living on the margins of Nigeria society intensified these linkages (Olojo, 2013). In 2013 the federal government released some detainees of Boko Haram mostly wives and children of the sect members, some children confessed of

providing kegs of fuel to Boko Haram to set school and other buildings ablaze in Maiduguri for the sum of 5000 naira (17 dollar) (Olojo, 2013). These show how the people in the area were living in absolute poverty due to the failure of the government to provide education and economic opportunity in the area for more than a decade. These socio-economic problems contributed to the escalation of Boko Haram violence in Northeastern Nigeria.

Local drivers of radicalization in Northeastern Nigeria – Alternative Education Since most young people are not in school, they get “educated” elsewhere – in their communities, by peer groups, by families, by online and social media sources, and inevitably by violent extremist groups, recruiters and violent narratives. The vacuum created by the “out-of-school” situation predisposes young people to alternative education which has been largely hijacked by violent extremists in the region.

The average age of Boko Haram fighters is between 15 and 27 (Obajeun 2015). This is not a deviation from the configuration of Nigeria. Approximately 70% of the population of the country is less than 30 years of age. Percentage of unemployed youth in rural settlements is around 55%. More than 70% of this population is in the Northern part of Nigeria (Liolio 2012). According to UNESCO (2011), school enrollment rate in Northeastern Nigeria for young people less than 20 years of age is 20%.

According to Obajeun (2015), of those in schools, more than 80% of them have school attendance rate of less than 30%. This means that almost 80% of young people in this age bracket are not attending school, and are vulnerable to agitations and violent extremism. Obajeun (2015) posited that this educational exclusion fuels socio-economic exclusion among them and they gradually get exposed to violent narratives. This is made more complicit by the low inclination of schools towards countering violent extremism, which is estimated to be 17% among the sampled 100 publicly and privately owned secondary schools in Northeastern Nigeria. Various interventions have been around internally displaced people in camps, but this educationally excluded population that is outside IDP camps and is thus vulnerable to ease of radicalization, are not getting the right level of attention.

As described in the results from the field study conducted by this author, illiteracy, poverty and misconception of religion are the major local drivers of radicalization in Northeastern Nigeria. The study reveals that young people want to go to school, but there are no incentives for school enrollment, there is no social mainstreaming opportunities in school, and they do not feel a sense of belonging

in the school. Often, the situation could be marked by a poor education system stratified along socio-economic lines and disparate economic opportunities across segments of Northern Nigeria. Frustrated expectations and relative deprivation of mainly educated youth represents a danger zone. Moreover, the study shows that perceptions of social exclusion and marginality in an environment of a youth bulge are a recipe for radicalization. These are warning signals that could increase the likelihood for young members in Northeastern Nigeria being lured towards violent extremist causes. Individuals grievances such as poverty, unemployment and illiteracy, have been used as mobilizing instruments by Boko Haram group to get support and recruit for extreme violence.

In a broad sense of it, the Alternative Education Theory can be used to explain local drivers of radicalization – also as a root cause to unemployment, which in turn leads to poverty and low economic status. Vocational education as an alternative education can serve as an option to violent education as far as a vulnerable person is concerned. Psychosocial and civic education as alternative education could also sway people away from extreme education. So in essence, a lack of an alternative education in the community can actually potentially aid the radicalization process.

Results from Field Research in Northeastern Nigeria

Population size: n=526

Target Geography: Northeastern Nigeria

Respondent Profile: Out of school young people less than 18 years old

Research Methods

From January 2015 to June 2015, a field study was conducted to assess the drivers of radicalization and recruitment in Northeastern Nigeria among young people. The field study consisted of series of direct and indirect interviews, aimed at understanding what and why young people stay out of school.

Below describes two of the main findings from the field study:

Attraction to school: 83% of the sampled population attributed their disdain for school to lack of attraction in school, claiming school environment is too boring and unnecessary regimented. They feel that a school community lacks inspiration and motivation to appeal to them. They feel “caged” in school and nurse a grave perception about their freedom being limited in schools. 98% of them feel that streets offer them unrestricted reach and opportunity to mainstream themselves with the norms they have grown and crave to experience, especially

when sometimes, their economic needs are met. They will rather engage themselves in anything that can enhance and guarantee their happiness. For instance, 92% of the respondents would rather join a group where they can find attractions. Which thus means that chances are high that these kinds of people can be influenced by violent extremism. In essence, these are easy recruits for Boko Haram which comes with promises of security, food and survival as well as the ultimate end of entering “Al-Jannah” (heaven) through suicide bombing.

Assistance from Governments: The respondents have split takings as to the level of support coming from the government, in terms of the provision of attractive free educational model for the most vulnerable. 58% of them hold government responsible for their presence on the street and the state of their community. Long years of negligence, economic disparity and lack of social amenities are some of the elements the respondents made reference to. More importantly, the respondents frown at the politicization of the issues threatening their continued survival in their community. 42% of them are of the opinion that government’s presence in their community is somewhat noticeable based on the successes recorded so far in battling Boko Haram. 76% of them are looking forward to friendly interventions that can keep them away from the streets. 9% of them will always want to stay away from school.

Over the years, Boko Haram has leveraged on the presence of these young people on the streets by luring and sometimes kidnapping them while offering them economic and social security opportunities. This is done in order for Boko Haram to advance its extreme cause through, for examples: international collaborations to travel and join other fighters in another part of the world, guarantee of social security, elevation of social status among peers and as well as the ultimate end of entering Al-Jannah.

Tolerance Academy Model – Alternative Education

Tolerance Academy is the flagship project of Youth Tolerance for Peace Development Initiative which is a boot-camp dedicated to grooming young people through a comprehensive curriculum spanning: religious integration, intercultural dialogue, forgiveness, and psychosocial engagement.

The key objectives of Tolerance Academy are:

- To enhance the resilience against violent extremism and boost the integrative complexity of teenage students with low school attendance rate in Northeastern Nigeria;

- To provide social association and civic engagement alternatives for at-risk youth with wide area of influence and are exposed to radical narratives; and
- To increase the inclination of government owned secondary schools in Northeastern Nigeria towards countering violent extremism.

A Case Study for CVE: Summary of Intervention

There are advocacy visits to the Ministry of Education to secure partnership with the government and facilitate collaboration with government owned secondary schools to drive CVE programming. There are series of advocacy visits to selected secondary schools in Northeastern Nigeria. The visits are to secure partnership and collaboration with the schools to facilitate the implementation of CVE programs in the schools.

Young teachers are selected from across the schools. Young and highly inspired community leaders less than 25 years old are also selected. These people are called Tolerance Ambassadors. The Tolerance Ambassadors are camped together and taken through a psycho-social training curriculum using music, dance, sports, video modelling, storytelling and instructional classes. They are equipped with countering violent extremism knowledge through another curriculum that spans: resilience building, intercultural integration, narratives and counter narratives development, relational leadership, conflict resolution as well as critical thinking. This designed is aimed at increasing their integrative complexity.

The teachers are dispatched back to their respective schools. The young leaders are placed in groups of five across the schools as interns. During the internship program, interns and the teachers, based on the knowledge they acquired at the residency training above, will develop a framework curriculum for countering violent extremism in the schools, aimed at building the resilience of students against violent extremism and boost their integrative complexities. The countering violent extremism framework is adapted from a template. The interns and the teachers groom peer educators among the students and drive the setting up Tolerance Clubs in school and the construction of Peace Parks within the premises of the schools. The Peace Parks have recreational segments for social mainstreaming and association where students can play games that can enhance their critical thinking. The Peace Parks are run by peer educators among the students and facilitated by the interns and the trained teachers.

Lessons Learned: Some Quick Wins

Of a population sample of 188 students, 72% of them have their class attendance rate improved by 66%. 10% of them have their class attendance rate increased by 80%. Of the sampled population, 94% of them show signs of stability in school. Only 12% of them show signs of going back “to the street.”

In addition, of the sampled population, 85% of them show readiness and interest for progressive education from one level to another. However, only 45% of them have actually progressed from one class to another. The import of this is that this model has the potential of providing an alternative educational approach that can make students stay back in schools as it provides the attractions needed to facilitate engagements and social mainstreaming within the walls of schools.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the drivers of radicalization assessment conducted in Northeastern Nigeria and the lessons learned from the implementation of the Tolerance Academy Program, the following recommendations are made:

Educational Policy

- Use existing educational models for CVE programming, e.g. use of madrassas for CVE messaging and narratives.
- Train and re-train teachers in CVE subjects for onward transfer of knowledge and resilience and to make messaging trickle down to students.
- Enhance existing educational curriculum to accommodate for CVE objectives.
- Incentivize education with respect to social security support to parents for their children.

Security and Counter-Terrorism Policy

- Re-evaluate military interventions alone and embrace a multi-stakeholder approach to counter violent extremism.
- Create safe places for CVE practitioners to operate through partnerships with local, regional and national government security frameworks.

Socio-Economic Policy

- Design an attractive framework to provide social security for unemployed youth.
- As much as possible, localize economic interventions to encourage local content development in order to downsize unemployment rate.

Conclusions

The discourse on Boko Haram insurgency clearly revealed that Nigeria is confronted with security challenges. This is made manifest in the Boko Haram murderous campaigns against securities, government institutions, religious cleric and members of the general public. The escalation of the violence, with increasing suicide bombing attacks and kidnapping has in past months cost government a lot of resources to respond. It is worthy of note that the group transformed from a local *salafis* militia into a regional terrorist group, with linkages and support from other Islamic insurgent in Africa like Al Qaeda in the land of Islamic Magreb (AQIM) and Al-Shabab.

This paper has shown how people are made vulnerable to recruitment into violent groups, especially on the basis of their absence from school and how their previous experience of formal education created voids in their thinking methodologies. It showed that the presence of an alternative educational approach that can create social mainstreaming in school and provide an opportunity to expand their educational aspirations has been proven to be a workable use of education as a tool to counter violent extremism.

Furthermore, the paper recommends a holistic educational based approach to counter violent extremism. For instance, the use of existing educational model, incentivizing schooling, empowerment of teachers on CVE framework, development of socio-economic interventions in schools that can provide engagements for students are emphasized.

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CHAPTER TEN

Terrorist Narratives and Communicative Devices: Findings from a Study of Online Terrorist Magazines

Stuart Macdonald

Terrorist use of the Internet is a “rapidly growing phenomenon” (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2012, p. v). Terrorists’ online activities range from recruitment, propaganda and attack planning to training and fund-raising (Macdonald & Mair, 2015). As well as utilising mainstream social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, terrorist groups also use a range of other lower profile social media (including Flickr, Instagram and SoundCloud) as well as numerous file, text and video upload sites (including Justpaste.it and Vimeo) (Conway, 2016). Several groups also publish online magazines, and these publications appear to play an important role in recruitment efforts online. Weimann (2015), for instance, states that “Numerous international and domestic Islamist extremists have been influenced by [al-Qaeda’s *Inspire*] magazine and, in some cases, reportedly used its bomb-making instructions to carry out attacks” (p. 32). A notorious example is the Boston marathon bombing in 2013. The perpetrators, brothers Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, had viewed *Inspire* magazine online – as well as various other extremist writings and videos – and claimed to have learnt how to make a pressure cooker bomb from an article in the magazine’s first issue entitled “Make a bomb in the kitchen of your Mom” (Gunaratna & Haynal, 2013).

Whilst some researchers have analysed the content of online terrorist magazines (see, in particular, Kirke, 2015; Lemieux, Brachman, Levitt & Wood, 2014; Page, Challita & Harris, 2011; Sivek, 2013; Vergani & Bliuc, 2015), this remains a relatively under-researched site. Moreover, existing analyses have tended to focus on the magazine of a particular group, most commonly al-Qaeda. This essay, by contrast, presents the initial findings of a research project which compares five different magazines. This cross-cutting approach generates important insights by aiding the identification of subtle differences between the narratives and communicative devices employed by the different groups.

Methodology

This research project focussed exclusively on magazines, so other online publications such as flyers, newsletters, transcripts of speeches and manifestos were excluded. The study also focussed on English language magazines, so excluded ones such as *Ṣadā al-Malāḥim* (al-Qaeda's Arabic language magazine) and *Istok* (Islamic State's Russian language magazine). In total, there were five magazines which met the criteria for inclusion. All were published by groups that follow a jihadist ideology. Table 1 below presents an overview of this dataset by year of publication.

Table 1

Overview of online English language terrorist magazines by year of publication.

		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	JAN-JUN 2015	TOTAL
Magazine	Azan					4	2		6
	Dabiq						6	3	9
	Gaidi Mtaani				2	2	2	1	7
	Inspire		4	4	1	2	2		13
	Jihad Recollections	4							4
	Total	4	4	4	3	8	12	4	39

Note: In the second half of 2015 a further six issues were published: three issues of *Dabiq*; one issue of *Inspire*; and two issues of a new magazine called *Al-Risalah*, published by *al-Nusra*.

The first of these magazines, *Azan*, is published by the Afghan Taliban. Publication began in 2013 and appears to have stagnated in 2014. *Dabiq* is published by Islamic State. Its first issue was published in 2014. *Gaidi Mtaani* is published by al-Shabaab. Publication began in 2012. *Inspire* magazine, published by al-Qaeda, is the longest running of the five magazines, having first published in 2010. The final magazine, *Jihad Recollections*, was also published by al-Qaeda. It was published in 2009 only, and appears to have been a forerunner to *Inspire*. In total, the five magazines published a total of 39 issues between 1 January 2009 and 30 June 2015. These contained a total of 892,174 words of content and 3869 images (Macdonald et al., 2016).

This essay is the first of a series of publications that will examine: the use of images within these magazines; the justifications, motivations and use of

violent discourse within the text of the magazines; and, the magazines' construction of "us" and "them" identities by the use of Othering. This essay focuses primarily on quantitative data relating to the magazines' use of images and the justifications and motivations found within their text. It will be supplemented in due course by future publications containing more fine-grained qualitative analysis, as well as by work examining the other issues listed above. Given the success the self-proclaimed Islamic State has enjoyed in recent years in recruiting foreign fighters – such that as of March 2015 more than 22,000 foreign fighters had travelled to Syria and Iraq (United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee, 2015) – the essay focuses in particular on findings relating to *Dabiq*. Whilst this is not to suggest that *Dabiq* is the main reason for this success, analysing its contents offers the opportunity to consider whether there is anything distinctive about the narratives constructed, and communicative devices employed, by the self-proclaimed Islamic State.

Findings and Discussion

This part of the essay begins by examining data on the length and composition of the five magazines studied. It then moves on to consider the grounds advanced in the magazines' articles to justify the groups' activities and the motivations underlying these. Finally, it considers the content of the images found within the magazines.

Length and Composition of the Magazines

Table 2 below shows the average length of each of the five magazines.

Table 2

The length of the magazines

	AVERAGE LENGTH OF MAGAZINE, BY NUMBER OF PAGES	AVERAGE LENGTH OF MAGAZINE, BY NUMBER OF WORDS	AVERAGE NUMBER OF WORDS PER PAGE
Azan	49	35,317	721
Dabiq	55.67	20,415	367
Gaidi Mtaani	26.86	11,273	420
Inspire	47.85	23,372	488
Jihad Recollections	68.5	28,449	415

In terms of number of pages, on average *Dabiq* is the second longest of the magazines (55.67 pages per issue). But in terms of number of words, on average *Dabiq* has fewer words per issue than *Azan*, *Jihad Recollections* and *Inspire* (20,415 compared to 35,317, 28,449 and 23,372 respectively). When combined, this greater than average number of pages per issue and lower than average number of words per issue mean that *Dabiq* has the fewest number of words per page of any of the magazines. Its average of 367 words per page is significantly lower than the equivalent figures for the other magazines, in particular *Inspire* (488 words per page) and *Azan* (721 words per page).

Turning next to images, table 3 shows the average number of images per issue and per page for each of the magazines.

Table 3

The number of images contained in the magazines

	Average number of images per issue	Average number of images per page
Azan	82	1.68
Dabiq	84	1.52
Gaidi Mtaani	55	2.05
Inspire	132	2.76
Jihad Recollections	128	1.86

It is *Inspire* and *Jihad Recollections* – the two al-Qaeda magazines – that on average contain the greatest number of images per issue (132 and 128 respectively). *Inspire* also has the highest average number of images per page, at 2.76. Interestingly, *Dabiq* has on average the lowest number of images per page (1.52).

So on average *Dabiq* has both the fewest words per page and the fewest images per page of any of the magazines. One explanation for this is *Dabiq*'s frequent use of large (often whole-page) poster-like images which are designed to be visually striking. For example, the most recent issue of *Dabiq* in our dataset (issue nine) includes an article entitled “The Virtues of Ribat: For the cause of Allah”. This article outlines the virtues of, and patience required for, ribat – describing it as part of “the roadmap every mujahid should grasp so as to maximize the fruits of his jihad” (p. 13). Although six pages in length, this ar-

ticle contains just three images: one whole-page photograph with an in-focus jihadist in the foreground standing behind sandbags, looking into the distance through binoculars with a rifle on a strap over his shoulder, and blurry, out-of-focus wilderness in the background (p. 8); and, two half-page photographs showing an elderly jihadist cleaning a rifle (p. 10) and a masked jihadist sitting behind a wall of sandbags holding a rifle (p. 12). All three photographs are stylised and of a high quality. A few pages later in the same issue appears a three-page article entitled “Healthcare in the Khilafah”, which outlines the health infrastructure of the self-proclaimed Islamic State and culminates in a call for “Muslim students in the lands of kufr” (p.26) to live and work in the Islamic State as the performance of their hijrah. This article also begins with a whole-page, high-quality photograph, this time a close-up of a doctor wearing surgical scrubs concentrating on the procedure he is performing. But whilst *Dabiq*'s use of images attests to the importance of how messages are presented, as well as their content, it would be wrong to simply assume that the more slickly presented a counter-narrative, the more effective it will prove to be. It is essential that counter-narratives are regarded as credible and legitimate by their target audience, and anecdotal evidence suggests that campaigns with a Hollywood feel could generate suspicion amongst Arab communities and be perceived as “Western attempts to influence Arab affairs” (Aly, Weimann-Saks & Weimann, 2014, p. 44).

The Justifications Employed in the Articles

The 39 issues contained a total of 346 articles (this excludes other types of textual item, such as poems, interviews and eulogies). A total of nine justificatory grounds were identified, using an iterative, data-led process. First, a list of potential justifications was produced based on prior background reading. During the first reading of the magazines this list was amended and adapted in the light of the content of the articles. The list of justificatory grounds was then finalised, and each of the articles was read a second time and re-coded where necessary to ensure consistency. The findings are in table 4 below.

Table 4

The justifications employed in the articles.

	Total number of articles	Allah	Quran	Scholars	Hadith/Fatwa/Religious text	Leaders	Retaliation	History
Inspire	117	98 (83.8%)	74 (63.2%)	31 (26.5%)	25 (21.4%)	32 (27.4%)	41 (35.0%)	22 (18.8%)
Dabiq	84	55 (65.5%)	42 (50%)	35 (41.7%)	30 (35.7%)	36 (42.9%)	15 (17.9%)	10 (11.9%)
Azan	74	66 (89.2%)	55 (74.3%)	32 (43.2%)	24 (32.4%)	13 (17.6%)	9 (12.2%)	15 (20.3%)
Jihad Recollections	54	31 (57.4%)	21 (38.9%)	21 (38.9%)	4 (7.4%)	0	6 (11.1%)	12 (22.2%)
Gaidi Mtaani	17	8 (47.1%)	6 (35.3%)	4 (23.5%)	2 (11.8%)	0	3 (17.7%)	4 (23.5%)
Total	346	258 (74.6%)	198 (57.2%)	123 (35.5%)	85 (24.6%)	81 (23.4%)	74 (21.4%)	63 (18.2%)

Note: This table does not include the figures for two other justifications. The first is *personal opinion*. This was used as a justification in a total of 30 articles, 17 of which were published in *Dabiq*. The second is *public opinion*. This was used as a justification in a total of 18 articles, 14 of which were published in *Dabiq*. It should also be pointed out that since many of the articles used more than one justification the percentages in each row of the table add up to more 100%.

For the purposes of this essay, two important points emerge from this data. First, by far the most frequent justifications were Allah (roughly three-quarters of all the articles) and the Quran (over half of all the articles). The category Allah includes those articles which advanced quotes and/or messages attributed to him as justificatory grounds for the group's activities. For example, issue one of *Dabiq* contains an article entitled "The concept of imamah (leadership) is from the millah (path) of Ibrahim" (pp. 20-29). The final part of this article – entitled "The Islamic State is a true imamah" – states that Islamic State "has carried out the command of Allah – as much as it can – in the best possible manner" (p. 27). The article states that no-one "dreams of convincing the lowest ranking, sincere soldier of The Islamic State to abandon this mission for the sake of some ambiguous initiatives or for the sake of nothing at all" (p. 27), before adding that Allah states in the Quran that "{And who would turn away from the religion of Ibrahim except one who makes a fool of himself. Truly, We chose him in this world, and indeed in the Hereafter he will be among the

righteous.} [Al-Baqarah: 130]" (p. 27). The article then goes on to conclude that scholars should

... understand that The Islamic State – on account of what Allah has blessed it with of victory, consolidation and establishing the religion – is regarded as an unquestionable imamah. As such, anyone who rebels against its authority inside its territory is considered a renegade, and it is permissible to fight him after establishing the hujjah against him (i.e. clarifying his error to him with proof) (p. 27).

Similarly, the category Quran includes those articles which employed quotes from the Quran and/or direct references to it as an authoritative source in support of the group's activities. The article just outlined was therefore counted in the Quran category as well as the Allah one.

The second point to highlight is that there are significant differences between the five magazines' use of the various justificatory grounds. For the dataset as a whole, 74.6% of the articles used Allah as a justification. The figures for *Inspire* and *Azan* were significantly higher than average, at 83.8% and 89.2% respectively. By contrast, the figure for *Dabiq* was below average, at 65.5%. Similarly, 50% of articles in *Dabiq* used the Quran as a justification. This is considerably lower than the figures for *Inspire* (63.2%), *Azan* (74.3%) and below the average for the dataset as a whole (57.2%). For two of the categories, however, the figure for *Dabiq* was higher than for any of the other four magazines, namely: hadith/fatwa/religious text (35.7%, compared to an average of 24.6% for the dataset as whole); and, leaders (42.9%, compared to an average of 23.4% for the dataset as a whole). The full significance of these findings becomes apparent when combined with the data on the articles' underlying motivations.

The Motivations Underlying the Articles

In addition to justifications, the motivations underlying each article were also assessed. Across the dataset, a total of eleven different motivations were identified using the same iterative process outlined previously. The findings are in table 5 below.

Table 5

The motivations underlying the articles published in online terrorist magazines

	Total number of articles	Hatred towards kuffar	Religious obligation	Hatred towards the West and its allies	Geographical	Hatred towards other religions	Unity	Revenge
Inspire	117	67 (57.3%)	56 (47.9%)	70 (59.8%)	34 (29.1%)	33 (28.2%)	29 (24.8%)	18 (15.4%)
Dabiq	84	41 (48.8%)	53 (63.1%)	43 (51.2%)	44 (52.4%)	16 (19.0%)	28 (33.3%)	11 (13.1%)
Azan	74	51 (68.9%)	33 (44.6%)	26 (35.1%)	12 (16.2%)	28 (37.8%)	6 (8.1%)	12 (16.2%)
Jihad Recollections	54	20 (37.0%)	22 (40.7%)	18 (33.3%)	2 (3.7%)	8 (14.8%)	2 (3.7%)	4 (7.4%)
Gaidi Mtaani	17	10 (58.8%)	7 (41.2%)	11 (64.7%)	2 (11.8%)	3 (17.6%)	1 (5.9%)	5 (29.4%)
Total	346	189 (54.6%)	171 (49.4%)	160 (46.2%)	94 (27.2%)	88 (25.4%)	66 (19.1%)	50 (14.5%)

Note: This table does not include the figures for four other underlying motivations: day of judgement (38 articles); economics (33 articles); hatred towards other ethnicities (29 articles); and, hatred towards other terrorist groups (13 articles). Again, the figures on each row of the table do not add up to 100% because many articles were assessed as having more than one underlying motivation.

One point which emerges from table 5 is the role played by the emotion of hatred. As well as hatred towards kuffar – which was identified as underlying 54.6% of the articles and was the most common of the eleven motivations – two of the other top five motivations also involved hatred: hatred towards the West and its allies (46.2% of articles); and, hatred towards other religions (25.4% of articles). The two other most common motivations were religious obligation (49.4%) and geographical concerns (27.2%).

Table 5 also suggests some respects in which *Dabiq* may be distinctive. First, the proportion of articles in *Dabiq* that were identified as being motivated by religious obligation (63.1%) was significantly higher than for all of the other magazines. An example is the article “The Islamic State before al-Malhamah (the Immigrants to the Land of Malahim),” published in issue three of *Dabiq* (pp. 5-11). Part two of this article discusses the question “Who are the stran-

gers?” (p. 6). After stating that “The companions of the Prophet (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) believed in both what they witnessed and what they could not see” (p. 7), the article explains that “The last part of this ummah believes in what the first part of the ummah believed in of the unseen, and believes in what the first part of the ummah believed in as eyewitnesses” (p. 7). Describing them as “the most wondrous people in faith” (p. 7), this part of the article ends by saying:

Thus, the strangers are those who left their families and their lands, emigrating for the sake of Allah and for the sake of establishing His religion. In the era of ghuthā’ as-sayl (the feeble scum), they are the most wondrous of the creation in terms of faith, and the strangest of them all (p. 8)

It is also worth pointing out that, whilst *Dabiq* had the highest proportion of articles that were motivated by religious obligation, we saw in table 4 above that in terms of justificatory grounds it had below average figures for both Allah and the Quran. Together, these findings suggest that whilst Islamic State is religiously motivated it appears to ground its claims to religious authority in a wider range of sources than other jihadist groups. Indeed, across all five magazines there were a total of 15 articles that were determined to have religious obligation as an underlying motivation but did not employ either Allah or the Quran as justificatory grounds. Seven of these (46.7%) were published in *Dabiq*. The most common justificatory grounds in these seven articles were: leaders (five articles); public opinion (four articles); and, scholars (three articles). These findings support Aly’s contention that the Internet presents a new frontier for the decentralisation of traditional structures of religious authority in Islam (Aly, 2016). It follows that counter-narratives will not be effective simply because they are grounded in traditional religious authorities; Muslim audiences today have the power to prefer one religious authority over another.

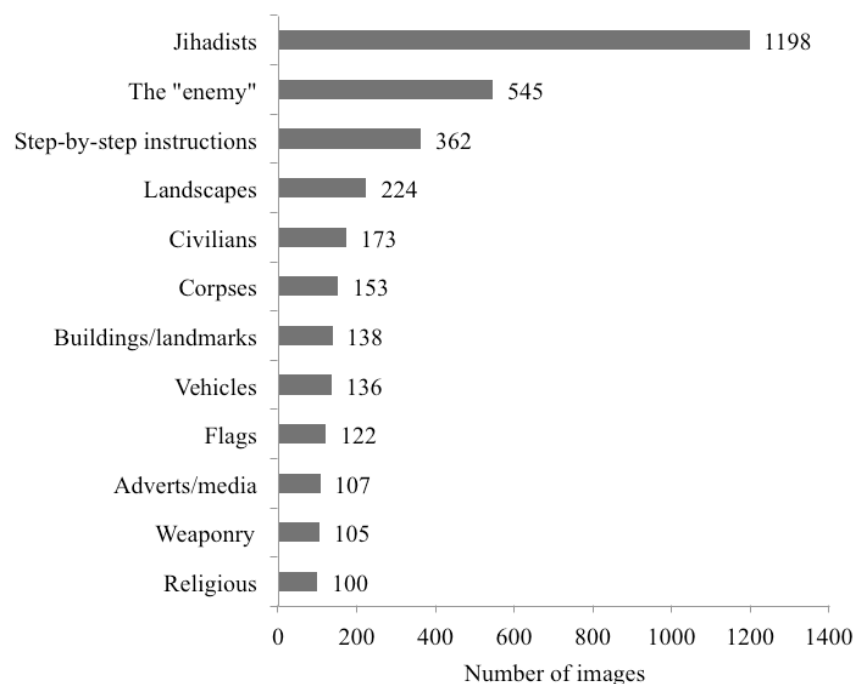
There are three further points from table 5 which are worthy of note. First, the proportion of articles in *Dabiq* which had geographical concerns as an underlying motivation (52.4%) was considerably higher than for any of the other four magazines. These articles tended to detail how Islamic State had captured a new piece of land – such as the article “The Liberation of Biji” in *Dabiq* issue six (pp. 32-33), which described how Islamic State had “liberated the town in its entirety” and emphasized its “strategic value due to its neighboring oil refinery” (p. 32) – or describe how it planned to capture swathes of territory in Syria and Iraq. Second, the proportion of articles in *Dabiq* which had unity as an underlying motivation (33.3%) was significantly higher than for the other

four magazines. And, third, whilst only thirteen articles had hatred towards other terrorist groups as an underlying motivation, the vast majority of these (11) appeared in *Dabiq*. This suggests a desire to create a unique identity and differentiate Islamic State from other jihadist groups.

The Use of Images

Having considered the articles published in the magazines, this part of the essay focusses on the use of images. Between them, the 39 issues contained a total of 3869 images. Figure 1 below presents an overview of the content of these images.

Figure 1
Images content analysis



Note: This chart contains only those categories for which there were at least 100 images. There were an additional seven categories which contained fewer than 100 images, including symbolic images (72) and prisoners (56).

It is noteworthy that the two most common types of image content involved pictures of people: jihadists, which was by far the most common image type;

and, enemies (which included amongst others politicians, military and law enforcement personnel and apostates). This emphasis on images of people as opposed to objects suggests that the narratives expounded are not impersonal or depersonalised.

Table 6 focuses more closely on the images of jihadists, breaking down the data presented above into three sub-groups: lone jihadists; groups of jihadists; and, jihadist leaders.

Table 6
Breakdown of the images of jihadists

	Lone jihadist	Group of jihadists	Jihadist leader	Total
Inspire	305 (70.0%)	114 (26.1%)	17 (3.9%)	436
Dabiq	99 (34.7%)	148 (51.9%)	38 (13.3%)	285
Jihad Recollections	153 (69.5%)	47 (21.4%)	20 (9.1%)	220
Azan	72 (47.7%)	39 (25.8%)	40 (26.5%)	151
Gaidi Mtaani	68 (64.2%)	31 (29.2%)	7 (6.6%)	106
Total	697 (58.2%)	379 (31.6%)	122 (10.2%)	1198

Across the dataset as whole, over half of the images of jihadists were of lone jihadists (58.2%). This was particularly pronounced in *Inspire* (where 70.0% of the images of jihadists were of lone jihadists) and *Jihad Recollections* (where the figure was 69.5%). What is striking about *Dabiq* is that it was the only one of the magazines that had a higher proportion of images of groups than of lone jihadists. Over half of the jihadist images in *Dabiq* were of groups, whereas for all of the other magazines the figure was below 30%. Conversely, only 34.7% of the jihadist images in *Dabiq* were of lone jihadists, whereas for the other magazines the figure was close to 50% or higher. This resonates with the earlier finding that a higher proportion of articles in *Dabiq* had unity as an underlying motivation than in any of the other magazines.

The third highest figure in the image content analysis was for step-by-step instructions. Table 7 presents a breakdown of this category.

Table 7
Breakdown of the images from step-by-step instructional guides

		Bomb-making	Technology	Exercise	Firearms	Destruction of or using vehicles	Targeting enemies	Military tactics	Travel	Destruction of buildings	Avoiding prosecution	Breaching security	Q&A	Total
Inspire	Number of guides	8	4	0	4	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	27
	Number of instructional images	283	13	-	40	9	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	346
Jihad Recollections	Number of guides	0	2	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	7
	Number of instructional images	-	0	11	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	13
Gaidi Mtaani	Number of guides	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Number of instructional images	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Azan	Number of guides	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Number of instructional images	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Dabiq	Number of guides	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Number of instructional images	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Total	Number of guides	9	7	4	4	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	36
	Number of instructional images	285	14	11	40	9	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	362

As table 7 shows, two of the magazines (*Azan* and *Dabiq*) did not contain any instructional guides at all. In fact, over 90% of the guides (34 out of 36) were found in al-Qaeda's two magazines *Inspire* (27) and *Jihad Recollections* (7). Moreover, most of the guides that appeared in *Jihad Recollections* and *Gaidi Mtaani* focussed on how to use modern technology and keep-fit. With the exception of just one guide in *Gaidi Mtaani*, the only magazine that contained guides on bomb-making, firearms, destruction of or using vehicles and destruction of buildings was *Inspire*.

Conclusion

The quantitative data presented in this essay has shown that the narratives and communicative devices of jihadist groups are not homogeneous. Important differences exist. Al-Qaeda's *Inspire* magazine, for example, contains a high proportion of images of lone jihadists and is the only one of the magazines which seeks to equip readers to perpetrate attacks through the provision of instructional guides. This is consistent with other analyses which have concluded that al-Qaeda is committed to "lone-wolf terrorism" in readers' home countries" (Kirke, 2015, p. 290). In *Dabiq*, by contrast, the self-proclaimed Islamic State is motivated by geographical concerns and unity to a greater extent than the other groups, with the emphasis on unity reinforced by a proportionately greater use of images of groups of jihadists. Given this heterogeneity, it is essential that campaigns to counter the narratives expounded by each group are carefully tailored and nuanced.

In addition to the content of narratives and counter-narratives, the essay has also highlighted the significance of how they are presented and by whom. Whilst the narratives expounded by Islamic State are both religiously motivated and accompanied by visually striking images, it would be mistaken to assume that counter-narratives should seek to compete in both these respects through the production of even slicker materials underpinned by more established religious authorities. What little research that has been conducted on the audience effects of counter-narrative campaigns suggests that such an approach may be perceived as lacking legitimacy and so prove counterproductive. So whilst the findings presented here help advance understanding of the narratives and communicative devices employed by jihadist groups, much work remains to be done in terms of examining other forms of media, other types of violent extremist groups (particularly the far right) and the effect of counter-narratives on their target audience.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

Understanding ISIS Propaganda: Appeal, radicalisation and counter-strategy implications

Haroro J. Ingram

How national and global security threats are understood fundamentally shapes the strategies that are developed to address and combat them. A dominant school of thought has emerged that explains the appeal of ISIS propaganda and its ability to radicalise supporters by pointing to its graphic violence, use of social media and the slick production value of its media releases. Yet these three factors are relatively superficial when it comes to understanding the appeal of ISIS's propaganda compared to the most significant factor: the message and the psychosocial factors it is designed to leverage.

Two trends highlight the potency of ISIS propaganda, its transnational reach and its apparent ability to radicalise supporters towards action. The reported doubling of foreign fighters traveling to support ISIS in the 18 months since June 2014 suggests that its ability to attract supporters to its so-called caliphate has increased despite counter-terrorism efforts (The Soufan Group, 2015). Similarly, ISIS has acted as the catalyst for not only a surge in Islamist-inspired "home grown" terrorism in the West but shifts in modus operandi that has seen, for example, ISIS-connected plots being twice as likely to be executed compared to non-ISIS connected plots (Hegghammer & Nesser, 2015, pp. 19-20). While these trends are indicative, to varying degrees, of the success of ISIS propaganda, they are equally reflective of the failings of counter-strategy efforts. Advancing the academic and strategic-policy fields' understanding of the strategic rationale that drives the design and deployment of ISIS propaganda will be essential to developing more effective counter-propaganda strategies.

This study examines the overarching strategic logic of ISIS propaganda and, based on this analysis, identifies key implications for developing counter-strategies. It begins by placing ISIS's propaganda efforts into the context of its broader politico-military campaign strategy. Drawing on English and Arabic primary sources, this study presents a framework through which to understand the top-down strategic rationale of ISIS propaganda arguing that ISIS deploys an enormous array

of messaging that leverages both rational- and identity-choice appeals to shape the perceptions and polarise the support of contested populations. This paper concludes by arguing that effective counter-propaganda strategies need to (i.) be based on a far more nuanced understanding of ISIS propaganda, its appeal and ability to radicalise constituents, (ii.) take into consideration the potential “blow-back” effects of misguided strategic communications, and (iii.) ensure that anti-ISIS messaging is synchronised with politico-military action in the field.

ISIS’s campaign strategy & the role of propaganda

ISIS’s overarching campaign strategy broadly reflects some key principles of modern insurgency strategy (Tse-Tung, 2000; Taber, 2002; Guevara, 2007). For instance, ISIS’s own literature calls for a phased politico-military strategy consisting of the *hijrah*, *jama’ah*, destabilise *taghut*, *tamkin* and *khilafah* stages (“From hijrah to khilafah,” 2014, p. 38). In practice, this has been a major contributor to misinterpretations of the ISIS phenomenon. Like other modern insurgencies, ISIS looks extraordinarily state-like in areas like Raqqa and Mosul, much more like a guerrilla movement outside these strongholds and, on the peripheries of its reach, like a diffuse terrorist network. In fact ISIS are willing to engage in forms of “hybrid warfare” and “hybrid governance” while demonstrating a willingness to swing between phases of its strategy as conditions require. Consequently, it is deeply problematic to lose sight of the broader ISIS phenomenon by focusing disproportionately on only certain aspects of its campaign.

Modern insurgencies are also characterised by two distinct but deeply interconnected competitions. The first is the competition between rival politico-military apparatuses which Bernard Fall (1998) described as *competitive systems of control*. The second is the competition for the perceived credibility and legitimacy of one’s “cause” which this study describes as the battle of *competitive systems of meaning* (i.e. a lens through which to interpret and give value and meaning to the conflict). Propaganda efforts are typically afforded a central role in insurgency strategies as a means to maximise the appeal of *both* the competitive systems of control and meaning. This helps to explain why ISIS uses propaganda messaging to shape the human environment (supporters and enemies alike) to promote both its politico-military actions and cause. In many respects, ISIS’s propaganda is a means to sustain and compound effects in the field – a “force multiplier” for itself and a “force nullifier” against its opponents at local, regional and even transnational levels.

The strategic logic of ISIS propaganda

The appeal of ISIS propaganda and its role in radicalising potential supporters cannot be adequately explained by pointing to any single factor. Rather its potency lies in the cumulative impact of a range of strategies and levers it deploys as part of its propaganda efforts. At the most basic level, ISIS appear to be very conscious of ensuring that the “3 Rs” of an effective strategic communications campaign are in place: use appropriate means of communication to *reach* the target audience (e.g. social media for transnational audiences, billboards for locals), ensure the message is *relevant* by being timely and drawing on contextual factors, and ensure the message *resonates* by leveraging deeper psychosocial forces pertinent to target audiences (Ingram, 2014, pp. 4-7). ISIS understand that without these basics of a communications strategy, the impact of its propaganda would be greatly diminished.

As graphically illustrated in Figure 1, the central purpose of ISIS messaging is to shape the perceptions and polarise the support of contested populations via messaging that appeals to both pragmatic and perceptual factors (Ingram, 2015a). Security, stability and livelihood are key pragmatic factors which ISIS leverages in its messaging to promote its system of control and highlight the synchronicity of its narrative and action. Put simply, ISIS does what it says. ISIS also appeal to pragmatic factors as a means to denigrate its enemy’s politico-military efforts and highlight the gap between what its enemies say and do. This type of messaging is crucial to convincing target audiences that ISIS has a narrow say-do gap and, despite impossible odds, is addressing the needs of the local population with a full spectrum system of control:

In the midst of a raging war with multiple fronts and numerous enemies, life goes on in the Islamic state. The soldiers of Allah do not liberate a village, town or city, only to abandon its residents and ignore their needs. (“A window into the Islamic State,” 2014, p. 27)

By appealing to pragmatic factors ISIS seeks to compel its audiences to engage in rational-choice decision-making – i.e. decisions based on a cost-benefit consideration of options.

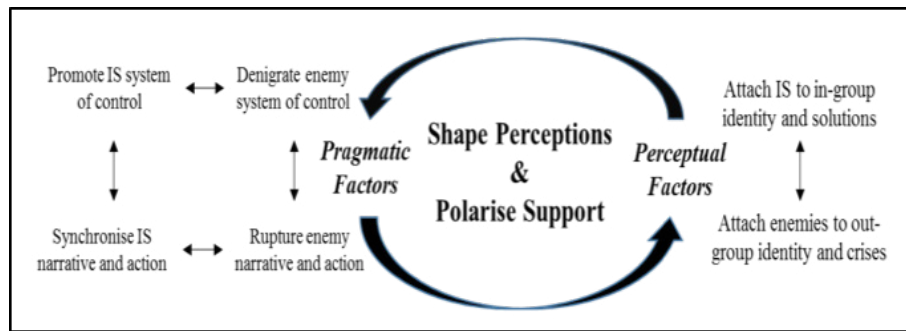


Figure 1: The strategic logic of ISIS propaganda

In addition to rational-choice appeals, ISIS draws on perceptual factors via narratives that play upon identity, crisis and solution constructs as a means to shape how contested populations understand the conflict (see Figure 1). The core narrative of this type of messaging is simple: ISIS are the true champions and protectors of Sunnis (the in-group identity), ISIS’s enemies are malevolent Others (out-group identities) who are responsible for Sunni crises that ISIS are the only hope for solving. This is epitomised by Al-Baghdadi’s declaration that, “[t]he world today has been divided into two camps and two trenches, with no third camp present: the camp of Islam and faith, and the camp of *kufri* and hypocrisy” (Al-Baghdadi, 2014). ISIS deploys this type of messaging in the hope that its audiences will engage in identity-choice decision-making, i.e. judgments that reflect one’s identity. ISIS’s appeals to perceptual factors are designed to leverage powerful, mutually reinforcing psychosocial forces.¹ By exacerbating Sunni perceptions of crisis and framing its enemies as responsible for this malaise, ISIS seek to convince its audience – whether a local in Raqqa or a couple in California – that extreme crisis requires extreme solutions which only it has the legitimacy to prescribe.

Applicability of the framework

This framework for understanding the strategic logic of ISIS propaganda complements the findings of comprehensive analyses by scholars such as Charlie Winter, Aaron Zelin and Alberto Fernandez. Winter’s (2015) exhaustive study of over a thousand official ISIS messages identified brutality, mercy, victimhood, war, belonging and utopianism as key propaganda themes. Zelin (2015) identified eleven themes – based on a dataset of official ISIS propaganda released in April 2015

– that characterise ISIS strategic communications: military, governance, da‘wa, hisba, promotion of the caliphate, enemy attack, news, martyrdom, execution, denying enemy reports and other. In contrast, Fernandez (2015), the former Director of the US Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC), argued that themes of urgency, agency, authenticity and victory feature prominently in ISIS propaganda. What these three studies highlight is the sheer diversity of themes in ISIS’s propaganda campaign. Importantly, the model presented in this study provides an overarching framework that encapsulates *all* these themes giving veracity to its analytical applicability as a means through which to understand ISIS’s propaganda efforts.

The model presented here also provides a framework through which to explore specific features and trends in ISIS propaganda messaging. For example, extreme violence is a trademark of ISIS messaging and is often highlighted as a major factor in the appeal of its propaganda campaign. Certainly, gory footage has a “shock value” that helps to increase the reach of a message because it tends to capture the attention of audiences and, depending on the victim (e.g. westerner), may result in global media attention. Such imagery is also a way for ISIS to both intimidate its enemies and provoke them into misguided politico-military and counter-propaganda responses. However, the model presented here suggests that the bloody imagery in ISIS messaging, in being driven by that fundamental strategic logic of shaping perceptions and polarising support, is designed to appeal to its supporters as well. Mere bloodlust is insufficient as an explanation. Analysis of scenes showing extreme violence in ISIS propaganda – e.g. captives being burnt alive, beheaded or drowned – reveals that such footage is inevitably preceded by narratives that justify the act on the basis of *reciprocity*. While almost all executions are inevitably justified by ISIS with reference to their interpretation of Islamic jurisprudence, ISIS propaganda will often stress that the method of execution itself was selected to emphasise that it is an act of reciprocity for actions committed by their captive. For example, a captured pilot is burned to death and the body covered in rubble from demolished buildings because, according to ISIS narratives, this is what the pilot has inflicted upon Sunnis. The result is ISIS’s extreme violence manifests as a “propaganda of the deed” designed to appeal to supporters as an act of reciprocity and retribution against enemies *and* of intimidation and provocation designed to lure opponents into misguided responses. More broadly, this example highlights a further application of the framework presented here.

Three key trends in ISIS propaganda output

Having analysed the official messaging of ISIS’s central and provincial media units, three important trends emerge that have significant implications for devel-

¹ This framework is part of a much broader multidisciplinary psychosocial approach to understanding how propaganda messaging seeks to appeal to and radicalise contested populations by fuelling, for example, *cyclical cognitive reinforcement* - the cognitive domino effect that triggers self-perpetuating cycles of justification (Ingram, 2013, pp. 54-55).

oping counter-strategies. First, ISIS places greater emphasis on pragmatic factors when appealing to local populations and prioritises perceptual factors when targeting regional and transnational audiences. This makes perfect strategic sense because local audiences need to be convinced (and regularly coerced) to support ISIS's politico-military efforts rather than those of its enemies. During the author's interviews with Syrian groups opposed to Assad, as well as Syrian and Iraqi migrants from ISIS controlled areas, many spoke of ISIS's ruthless pragmatism in both their politico-military actions and propaganda messaging. Moreover, ISIS's references to Islam were often referred to as a "cloak" or "cover" to increase the appeal of what were fundamentally politico-military decisions driven by strategic imperatives on the ground. However, at a broader regional and transnational level, perceptual factors are more likely to resonate with transnational audiences that are outside of ISIS's direct sphere of control. Take the following excerpt from *Dabiq*, ISIS's English language magazine produced for Muslims in the west, as an example:

The modern day slavery of employment, work hours, wages, etc., is one that leaves the Muslim in a constant feeling of subjugation to a *kafir* master. He does not live the might and honor that every Muslim should live and experience. ("Hijrah from hypocrisy to sincerity," 2014, p. 29)

Second, and perhaps most significant for explaining the seemingly magnetic appeal of ISIS's propaganda and its ability to rapidly radicalise supporters towards action, ISIS tends to interweave appeals to pragmatic and perceptual factors in its messaging. This may have the effect of aligning its audience's rational- and identity-choice decision-making processes. The more rational-choice decisions are processed through identity 'lenses' (and vice versa) the greater the perceived imperative of that decision for the individual or group. One way in which ISIS achieves this is by framing its socio-political successes as manifestations of its divinely-ordained status (and vice versa) thus providing potential supporters with dual motivations for joining its supposed caliphate:

The revival of the Khilafah gave each individual Muslim a concrete and tangible entity to satisfy his natural desire for belonging to something greater. The satisfaction of this desire brought life back to the zeal latent in Muslims' hearts... ("The extinction of the grayzone," 2015, p. 57)

This trend of interweaving rational- and identity-choice appeals is most notable when contrasting ISIS's propaganda with that of other groups. For example, a comparative analysis of ISIS's *Dabiq*, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's *Inspire* and the Taliban in Khurasan's *Azan* revealed that while *Azan* and *Inspire* were dom-

inated by identity-choice appeals, *Dabiq* tended to balance between identity- and rational-choice appeals (Ingram 2015b, 2016).

Third, there is no single factor that explains the appeal of ISIS messaging because the strength of ISIS propaganda lies in the cumulative impact of a broad and diverse range of strategies and levers. By seeking to synchronise its messaging and actions (and vice versa), ISIS are attempting to ensure that its politico-military actions manifest as forms of communication unto themselves. In doing so, ISIS appear to understand what many counterinsurgency and counterterrorism architects are yet to fully appreciate: actions do not speak louder than words if your adversary controls how those actions are perceived by the populace. This is especially pertinent at a local level where politico-military actions – from building schools to holding elections or bombing a city – may appear to be "speaking for themselves." Yet, if your adversary is dominating the perception war, even the best intended actions may be seen by the population through the lens of your adversary. During interviews organised by the author, former Mosul residents were asked whether they preferred ISIS or the Iraqi government. The interviewees immediately said "neither" but when pressed answered "Daesh" because they believed that while ISIS were harsh, their often brutal approach to governance created certainty. Moreover, ISIS were perceived as being more effective at running the city than government authorities. This reflects one of the fundamental premises of the conceptual framework: in the clash of insurgency and counterinsurgency forces what is *most* important is what one says and does *in comparison to* what one's opponents say and do.

Ultimately, the sheer array of different strategies (e.g. "fissure issue") and levers (e.g. "branding," "social norming," "positivity") used by ISIS are enormous (Ingram, 2014; 2015a). Two micro-strategies are especially pertinent for counter-strategy development. ISIS's counter-narrative strategy not only responds to the criticisms of its enemies with waves of counter-narrative messaging but proactively primes its audiences for the potential criticisms of opponents. Also significant is ISIS's use of "baiting" as a strategy in its IO which is designed to coax opponents into predictably misguided counter-narrative efforts which ISIS then responds to in waves of presumably pre-planned messaging. As a Syrian activist told the author: "Daesh set a trap and the west walked into it."

Counter-strategy implications

So what are the implications of this study's findings for counter violent extremism (CVE) efforts, especially relating to counter-narrative strategies? To start, a far more nuanced and empirically-based understanding of extremist propaganda,

why and how it appeals, why and how it radicalises, is desperately required. This means both top-down strategic logic analyses and bottom-up audience perception studies. There is a lot being done but more is required. In interviews with Syrian opposition activists, but also former fighters from Afghanistan and the Caucasus, it was the perception war – the struggle to shape the perceptions and polarise the support of contested populations – that was seen as the strategic imperative during the conflict. Politico-military successes in *the* field were in part reliant on who dominated the perception war but, almost inevitably, the sustainability and resilience of those successes was reliant on dominance in the perception theatre.

A particularly important implication of this research is that Western governments need to fight the urge to engage in a counter-proselytising campaign to counter ISIS propaganda because such initiatives will more than likely be counter-productive. Non-Muslims preaching to Muslims about what is and is not “real” Islam is hubristic and likely to fail. Put simply, such efforts have almost no credibility (especially amongst those most vulnerable to radicalisation) and tend to inadvertently give credibility to extremist conspiracies that western (supposedly secular) governments are trying to change Islam. Moreover, ideology-centric counter-strategies can lead to “moderate” Muslim voices being delegitimised as government lackeys promoting the state-sanctioned version of Islam, especially by those most vulnerable to radicalisation. The result is compounding negative returns. Alternatively, this research suggests that counter-propaganda strategies would benefit from taking the ISIS playbook and reversing it with messaging that attaches ISIS to crisis, exposes ISIS’s say-do gap, attaches anti-ISIS actors to solutions and highlights their narrow say-do gap. This approach is designed to undermine the veracity of ISIS’s assertions and use the strength of ISIS propaganda, i.e. the deep interconnectedness of its messaging, as a means to unravel its claims.

The US State Department’s sarcastically delivered “Welcome to the ‘Islamic State’ Land” (2014) is a pertinent example of counter-propaganda messaging that attempted to highlight the disparity between what ISIS says and does. Unfortunately many potential benefits of this approach were diminished, if not negated, by several potential problems. Most notably, the video inadvertently highlights western hypocrisy (i.e. the west’s say-do gap). For instance, western governments have been very sensitive about imagery showing westerners being killed by ISIS and yet, in “Welcome to the ‘Islamic State’ Land,” at least twenty-five dead or mutilated bodies are shown. The Middle East’s victims of ISIS crimes should be afforded the same respect as westerners. Moreover, starting a counter-narrative with ISIS’s central argument – with an image of Al-Baghdadi being shown with his declaration that “Syria is not for Syrians and Iraq is not for Iraqis” – is a sentiment that is more likely to appeal to potential ISIS supporters than deter them. This example high-

lights how *potentially* effective counter-narrative messaging can be inadvertently undermined if the nuances of its contents are misguided. This leads to another important implication for CVE strategies.

There is broad recognition of the potential blowback effects of poor politico-military strategies (e.g. flawed military operations may result in collateral damage). However, it is equally important for strategists to recognise that misguided strategic communications efforts can have an equally devastating impact on objectives by compounding the negative repercussions of imprudent politico-military efforts and/or undermining the benefits of robust politico-military actions. To avoid such negative repercussions, the answer is not to completely disengage from strategic communications because the resulting *meaning void* will be filled by other actors (e.g. insurgents) such as organically generated by the population. On the other hand, just doing “something” can be just as fruitless. Sober calculated thinking is required to devise effective counter-propaganda messaging that is calibrated to not only generate a specific effect but considers the “second” and “third” order effects that may follow.

Finally, all CVE efforts, including counter-narrative strategies, must be synchronised with politico-military actions in the field. Measuring the efficacy of strategic communications in a conflict zone is very difficult – the perpetual problem is one of “causation or correlation,” did the message drive the change or was it the conflict itself? What is certain is that action without narrative is very risky. In the battle against ISIS in its heartland of Iraq and Syria (or any of its transnational *wilayats*), strategic communications need to be coordinated with political and military action in the field. Equally, counter-propaganda efforts domestically must also be synchronised with broader CVE and counter-terrorism activities. Without the mutually reinforcing efforts of anti-ISIS narratives and action, ISIS will continue to appeal to and radicalise potential supporters towards its cause.

Conclusion

ISIS messaging is characterised by a mix of rational-choice (persuading its audience to make decisions based on a cost-benefit consideration of options) and identity-choice appeals (coaxing its audience to make decisions based on identity) that are delivered via an extraordinary volume of messaging covering a diverse array of social, political, economic, ideological, philosophical and military issues. ISIS’s mix of rational- and identity-choice appeals may have the effect of aligning decision-making processes in its audiences resulting in a significant increase in the perceived imperative of a particular decision or action. This goes a significant way towards explaining the rapid radicalisation of ISIS supporters from “ordinary citi-

zens” to members of the Caliphate or lone wolf terrorists. Based on these findings, this study recommends that counter-messaging should focus on showing how ISIS are responsible for crises and how non-ISIS forces are responsible for solutions via simple, pragmatic-appeal messaging. Additionally, western governments need to do more to resource and give space to local actors to develop and implement their own anti-ISIS messaging because they will inevitably have a far more nuanced understanding of what is most likely to resonate amongst local populations. To defeat ISIS, much more needs to be done to understand and ultimately counter its propaganda campaign.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

Online Religious Extremism in the Horn of Africa

Hawa Noor Mohammed

Introduction

The increased use of Internet is one of the most obvious evidence of increased globalization; information technology has not only reduced distance between people, but has also facilitated development and made work easier through increased trade and development. The Internet, however, also comes with its challenges such as cybercrime cases, misunderstanding in information transmission especially because in the real sense, limited control in interpretation of information in different contexts exists as opposed to live exchanges. In the current threat of global terrorism this problem has become even more pronounced, hence calling for more scrutiny. Groups such as Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) have used the Internet to spread their ideology and win support beyond their physical locations and recruited individuals from various parts of the world to execute attacks in far targets.

Al-Shabaab, the main terror group in the Horn of Africa region, has equally used this tactic to mobilize support for its narratives especially among Muslims. A case in point is the recent arrest of three young women in Elwak by Kenyan Authorities, on the Kenya-Somalia border on their way to Somalia, allegedly to become Al-Shabaab brides. These young women were allegedly recruited through the Internet by a female contact ("How this girl," 2015). More and more of such cases where individuals are radicalized online have been recorded in the recent past in the Horn of Africa region, hence the demand to understand how it happens and why the Internet has proved to be an effective tool for radicalization to violent extremism in the region.

This essay will start with an understanding of the background of al-Shabaab and its threat to the region, followed by factors that make its online radicalization strategy effective before concluding with some policy recommendations. This essay derives its conclusions from both primary and secondary data. The secondary data

comprises journals and other Internet materials while primary sources comprise information acquired during field visits between May 2015 and January 2016 in the region. It will attempt to answer the question; *What makes online radicalization and recruitment effective in the Horn of Africa Region?* While radicalization and violent extremism are relative and sometimes controversial terminologies that can apply not only religiously motivated violence but also political contexts, this essay will confine itself to radicalization to violent extremism in relation to the activities of al-Shabaab. The adopted operational definition for online radicalization according to the U. S. department of Justice is:

The process by which an individual is introduced to an ideological message and belief system that encourages movement from mainstream beliefs toward extreme views, primarily through the use of online media, including social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. (“Online radicalization,” 2014, p.1)

Regionalization of violent extremism in the HOA

The 1998 attacks on the US embassies in Kenya and Dar es Salaam marked the first significant manifestation of the growing threat of extremism in post-independence East Africa (Botha, 2014). Since then, radicalization to violent extremism has been on the increase, culminating in the rise of al-Shabaab as the main terrorist organization linked to Al-Qaeda in the East and Horn of Africa region. Although the group still has no official allegiance to ISIS, recent reports allege the latter’s linkage with some of its factions (Azman & Othman Alkaff, 2015).

Al-Shabaab’s rise can be traced back in 2006 following its defection from the Islamic Courts Union (ICU): a coalition of Islamic courts led by Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed that aimed to offer an alternative to the weak Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia. Fearing its growth and with the backing of the USA, TFG and its Ethiopian ally, launched a military campaign against it in 2006. As a result, the group lost all the territories it controlled by the end of 2006, the last one being the port city of Kismayu in 2007 leading its members to split into Hizbul Islam and al-Shabaab. The former was the moderate faction that went to exile in Djibouti and Eritrea to form the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) that later integrated into the TFG, while the latter was the hardline and military wing that proceeded to Ras Kamboni and vowed to wage guerilla warfare against the government of Somalia and its allies (Wa Ngugi, 2016). The exit of Ethiopian troops from Somalia in 2007, the entry of Kenyan troops in 2011 following an abduction of two western tour-

ists in Kenya, and eventually their integration into the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in 2013 gave Al-Shabaab new momentum in its war albeit with changing dynamics (Dualeh, 2015).

Al-Shabaab’s appeal has to date spread fast in the region especially amongst Muslim communities and has been successful in waging attacks on its neighbors especially Kenya while justifying it with the country’s military invasion in Somalia and marginalization of Kenyan Somalis and Muslims at large. The worst of such attacks was in 2013 on Westgate Mall that led to the death of 64 and the Garissa university attack in 2014 that led to the death of 147 and injuring many others. Numerous smaller scale attacks were also executed in Kenya’s transport system, churches and other public facilities, including the Mpeketoni attacks in 2014.

In Uganda, although much of terrorism activities was until recently attributed to the Lords Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel group promoting a hardline Christian oriented ideology, active in the northern part of the country since the late 1980s, current threats of such violence was evidenced in 2010 when Al-Shabaab and its affiliates using hand grenades and automatic rifles staged an attack on FIFA World Cup finals fans in two locations in Kampala, killing 74 people and injuring 70 others. This was al-Shabaab’s first successful attack outside Somalia that it linked to Uganda’s military involvement in the country. The ambitions of the militant group has also underpinned the rise of the Islamist Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), based in Western Uganda and has been declared a terrorist organization by the Ugandan government.

An almost similar trend is recorded in Tanzania whereby, although the country has for long been recognized as a hub of peace, attacks have taken place since 2012 albeit not having resulted to mass casualties as the case of Kenya and Uganda. In 2015, a number of incidents were recorded one of them leading to the death of eight police officers (McKnight, 2015). This is interpreted as a resulting effect of regionalization of al-Shabaab activities in Kenya and Somalia through the Ansaar Muslim Youth Centre (AMYC) and Al-Hijra networks into Tanzania. Justification for attacks in Tanzania is seen to be driven by perceived marginalization of Zanzibar by the mainland and radicalization of Muslim youth by two main movements, namely: UAMSHO (Association for Islamic Mobilization and Propagation or The Awakening) in Zanzibar and Simba wa Mungu (God’s Lion) in Dar es Salaam (Bergmann, 2013).

Ethiopia on the other hand has generally been perceived to be the safest from terrorist activities, given the minimal number of attacks that have taken place within its territory. However, in October 2013, two people were killed in Addis Ababa

after a bomb went off before reaching its intended target. In November the same year, security officials reported that al-Shabaab was planning an attack on Ethiopia; and in 2014, a large group that was alleged to be members of al-Shabaab were arrested after a failed bombing attempt. The threat on Ethiopia is believed to be descendent from the ethnic Somali-dominated Ogaden region, that is neighboring Somalia where the threat of kidnapping is also high and whose control is also the root cause of the historical bone of contention between Somalia and Ethiopia that has extended to date. The integration of Ethiopia's 4,500 troops into the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) has also increased Ethiopia's vulnerability to the militant group.

Overall, although often denied and not a new problem, radicalization to violent extremism related activities in the Horn of Africa region has increasingly involved locals, both as perpetrators and sympathizers (Pflanz, 2014). Their increased mobilization and recruitment continue to raise fears that these individuals will eventually return and likely launch attacks in their countries of origin. More astonishing however is the ready acceptance of militants' version of Jihad, particularly amongst the youth that is not only a threat to the region but the world at large that has mostly been made possible through the internet (Botha, 2014). The following section looks at the role of the Internet more critically.

Enablers of online radicalization

The Internet is a major tool for spreading terrorism propaganda. Al-Shabaab's increased use of the Internet has ensured its narratives reach a wide audience particularly through social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) and its periodic newsletter; the *Gaidi Mtaani*. Like their ISIS counterparts, the group has used the Internet to recruit, mine data, coordinate its actions and solicit money to fund its activities (Weimann, 2014). Online platforms are particularly effective because it offers anonymity in guerilla-like warfare and situations where military and police crackdown prevent physical gatherings. A good example of this is during the attacks on Masjid Musa and Sakina mosques in Majengo, Mombasa in 2014 when a curfew was imposed on Majengo residents. Police crackdown during this period culminated into the creation of the Facebook group that is still active to date: "Where is Hemed, let us police the police" whose aim is to mobilize fellow constituents to seek justice following the disappearance of Hemed (alleged to have been an electrician at work at the time of the raid) in the hands of police.

Online platforms are (can be used both for the good and bad) and are used differently by different individuals. In the context of radicalization to violent extremism, the trend of success by Al-Shabaab and its affiliates in reaching out to the youth

online prompts deeper scrutiny on why it has recorded such huge success. The following factors can help understand the effectiveness of online radicalization:

i. Access to Internet and modern Internet-enabled devices

According to rough estimates from the Internet World Stats, a website that features Internet usage across the world, the number of Internet users in Africa was 9.8% in 2015 which equals to 330.9 million (Internet World Stats, 2015). This puts it on the fourth rank after Asia's 48.2%, Europe's 18.0% Latin America and the Caribbean's 10.2% and above North America's 9.3%, Middle East 3.7%, and Oceania/Australia's 0.8%. Within the continent, Morocco, South Africa, Egypt, Mauritius and Seychelles are leading in terms of Internet infrastructure and connectivity (Internet World Stats, 2015).

Based on this dataset, although infrastructure is lowest in Africa compared to the rest of the world, Africa's Internet usage still ranks high. With some of the fastest growing economies in the world, the role of the Internet in the daily lives of its residents is predicted to continue to increase (Holodny, 2015). The growing use of information technology, and Internet enabled devices particularly the mobile phone and its applications translate to an equally growing information exchange, business and efficiency (Macharia, 2014). According to Macharia (2014), "Aside from providing voice and internet access, mobile networks in some African countries now facilitate more individuals and small businesses financial transactions than the banking industry" (p. 18). Based on focus group discussions with ten youths in Mombasa, Kenya between May and December 2015, it was found that the multiplier effects of sharing one device between more than one user and some companies in the regions efforts (such as Coca Cola) to market their products by offering free Internet bundles as a result of a product's purchase ensures more people have access to the Internet.

Besides these incentives, some challenges are associated with increased use of the Internet key among them, the sophistication of cyber-crime incidents and terrorism (Tamarkin, 2015). Easy access, non-regulation, large audience and platform for sharing information and ideas, can be manipulated by terrorist groups to mobilize support among unsuspecting individuals and groups. A USIP report points that all terrorist groups have an Internet presence with hundreds of websites serving terrorists goals (Weimann, 2014). Like dating sites, the internet provides opportunities for interaction with individuals who would otherwise not be reached by conventional means such as terrorists to broadcast their views, provoke negative sentiment, incite, glorify martyrs, create virtual communities with like-minded individuals, provide religious and legal justifi-

cations for proposed actions, and communicate with and groom new recruits (Online Radicalization to Violent Extremism, 2014). Diverse mobile phones applications such as WhatsApp are also convenient to use for messaging, photos and video sharing, and so with no proper mechanism to filter such information, some can motivate unsuspecting individuals towards extremist causes. Focus group discussions in Mombasa also revealed that games such as Shoot to Kill and Call of Duty have also been mentioned as secret tools for al-Shabaab recruitment. In a nutshell, the growing use of the Internet brings with it a large amount of unregulated information, some of which can be customized for criminal purposes and terrorism propaganda without the knowledge of the unsuspecting user.

ii. Unregulated and well packaged online information

The Internet creates a virtual world in a global community hence unlimited access to information products and reactions (Katzen, 2009). It functions like a typical marketplace and provides anonymity and platform for interaction of various individuals and entities and in the process, an exchange of different kinds of information. Unlike mass media that has measures in place for regulating its standards, the Internet hardly benefits from such regulation; translating to a huge traffic of both good and bad information including contents from terrorists. With low levels of education as in Horn of African region, limited ability to filter facts from propaganda exists and this provides fertile grounds for radicalization of vulnerable consumers. Worse still, when individuals in influential positions such as the clergy consume Internet propaganda, they replicate the same to their constituents that leads to increased tensions and reason for mobilization to extremists actions. Such became evident during interviews with a sample of Imams (Muslim preachers) in Kenya who indicated that they treated social media information in their smartphones as facts, because they trusted that “someone was entrusted with regulation” (personal communication, 2015).

On their part, extremist groups also package their information well that it is able to penetrate and influence recipients’ actions through its exploitation of grievances and use of charisma and persuasion to boost its appeal amongst its target. A case in point is the recent al-Shabaab’s use of a video clip of US presidential candidate Donald Trump’s remarks against Muslims, reinforcing the narrative that the USA is a racist and anti-Muslim country (McDowall, 2016). Such materials make it easy to mobilize support against “anti-Islam and anti-Muslim” ideas and actions within Muslim communities. A focus group discussion in August 2015 with a group of Kenyan Muslim youths revealed

that anti-Islam information fuels anger in them and feelings of wanting to revenge such as the treatment of Palestinians and Muslims in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Afghanistan and Syrian conflict respectively, discrimination of Muslims in western countries and mocking of Prophet Muhammad through cartoons in Denmark among others.

Overall the level of illiteracy is still high in the region and this translates to the tendency to wholly accept the agenda in various digital marketplaces including mainstream media and online messages as facts without understanding underlying dynamics (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2016). Unregulated and uncensored information then serve as fertile grounds for extremist causes.

iii. Unemployment, poverty and desperation to seek alternatives

One of the major long-term risks affecting the African continent is unemployment. Young people, between 15 and 24, commonly known as the youth bracket represent more than 200 million people in Africa. With an expanding youth population, Sub-Saharan Africa in particular will have the youngest and poorest population in the world by the year 2050. Whereas creation of opportunities can turn a young population into a dividend, the same also poses threats if the situation remains the same. According to the World Bank, more than 60% of Africa’s youth are unemployed and with 40% of those who join rebel movement saying they are motivated by unemployment and social economic deprivation, future stability is even more threatened particularly in the current context of emerging threats such as terrorism (Ighobor, 2013).

In the Horn of Africa region, various factors, key among them unemployment and lack of opportunities especially for youth act as drivers of violent extremism (“The predictable rise of al-Shabaab in Kenya,” 2015). According to a regional study in the Horn of Africa by the International Labour organization, “Continued population growth, and the decreasing availability of natural resources constitute prime ingredients for conflict unless employment led economic growth is spurred” (IGAD, p.13). In an increasing globalizing world characterized by growing use of communication technology, the challenge that this poses is the vulnerability of opportunity-seeking youths to criminals, such as extremists who are armed in one hand with knowledge of strategic use of information technology and grievances in the other. The youth, who are the main target of extremists recruitment like their peers across the globe are curious and willing to explore new ventures around them including modern devices and gadgets hence their accessibility to diverse contents of raw information

that they are often unable to filter and so they end up absorbing them as they come. This can inform their next actions. Focus group discussions in Mombasa and Kwale between May and December 2015 revealed that in an increasingly dynamic and "mysterious" world, young people in the region are in constant search for guidance and role models including religious guidance that might land them on extremists' information unknowingly.

Conclusion

This essay has attempted to analyze the factors that promote the effectiveness of online radicalization to violent extremism. Somalia, the breeding ground of al-Shabaab propaganda is still unstable hence providing fertile grounds for increased radicalization to violence in the Horn of Africa. What is worrying is its increased influence in the region mainly as a result of its strategy to manipulate local grievances among the Muslim population in order to win support. Perceptions (whether right or wrong) of governments' laxity to equally deliver services to its citizens and build national unity and counter-terrorism strategies has therefore led to increased feelings of collective punishment of Muslims and alienation that has further popularized al-Shabaab's ideas. Although the role of the Internet is mainly that of facilitation as opposed to being the root cause of the problem, its increased usage promotes the spread of these narratives hence calling for well thought-of interventions that consider the double edged role of the media namely: a tool of democracy as well as a significant propaganda tool for criminal groups.

Strategies to countering online extremism should first of all acknowledge that the problem is real and therefore solutions should be real and informed by root causes and experiences in specific contexts. Governance challenges in the Horn of Africa region, the primary driving factor of violent extremism according to the statistical and anecdotal evidence presented in this essay, should be addressed real-time. At the same time, strategies to curb the continued flow of unregulated information should be made. Information technology is here to stay and plays a central role in the lives of many people, young vulnerable individuals included; and so control as opposed to censorship is not an option because hundreds of new Facebook and Twitter accounts are being opened regularly and so it is difficult to quantify online material.

The threat posed by the gap between low level of education and influx of unregulated information can also be intervened by investing in media literacy. Although it can only be effective to a limited extent because not all cases of violent extremism are driven by ignorance lack of knowledge, a better understanding of the position of media in society and that not all information should be treated as facts, can help

mitigate effects of attractive and well-developed propaganda that taps into local grievances. Also, promoting critical thinking and analysis of extremists messages amongst stakeholders in the society such as parents, religious leaders and teachers, and coming up with counter-narratives of such messages can bring some significant results, addressing root causes of extremism violence should be prioritized as opposed to restricting facilitating factors such as the internet (Botha, 2014).

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CONCLUSION

Program and Policy Recommendations for CVE Research

Sara Zeiger

The essays provided in this edited volume present a wide range of perspectives on how violent extremism and efforts to counter violent extremism can be addressed across a number of contexts. While some of the solutions to violent extremism need to be tailored to the local contexts, there are also a number of cross-cutting recommendations that can be drawn from the existing field of CVE research. The International CVE Research Conference 2015 convened over 200 participants from a wide range of countries, and the discussions after each panel and during small group sessions also generated a number of program and policy recommendations for CVE research moving forward. The recommendations collected during the conference proceedings as well as the key points from this edited volume are summarized below:

For Researchers

1. **Test underlying assumptions about the drivers of radicalization and/or push and pull factors that lead to radicalization and recruitment.** For example, low employment rates are often cited as “push” factors leading to radicalization and recruitment. However, the evidence supporting this varies across different contexts. Obajeun’s chapter gives evidence that Boko Haram actively recruits impoverished youth, specifically those without employment, in Northeastern Nigeria. On the other hand, the chapter by Kurtz, Wolfe & Tesfaye suggests that training for students to increase employment rates in Afghanistan, while successful at reducing unemployment, had little impact on violent extremism or extremist attitudes. Another example could be a common misunderstanding about the effect of religious ideology to extremist narratives in some cases. Macdonald’s chapter on terrorists’ online magazines reveals that the predominant narratives contained in their propaganda are not necessarily based on religious ideology—rather the magazines adopt a “look and feel” that their messages are Islamic, but the primary narratives are more

tactical, or based on perceived “public opinion.” Botha’s chapter reveals that the local push and pull factors that lead individuals to join as-Shabaab vary between radicalization in Kenya versus Somalia.

2. **Test existing theories of change for measurement, monitoring and evaluation frameworks.** This includes an increased focus on reporting results from existing CVE programming. Khalil and Zeuthen’s chapter provide one model for measurement, monitoring and evaluation, including a robust theory of change framework based on good practice in program design for development and CT work. Moreover, Sharma’s chapter provides a methodology for testing CVE assumptions using randomized control trials (RCT) in India. However, neither of these frameworks and methodologies have been rigorously applied to the CVE context. Researchers focusing in this area will be conducting research that has acutely practical applications to CVE policymaking and programming.

Some of the chapters regarding case studies for existing CVE programs have begun to develop this body of literature testing theories of change. For example, the chapter by Peracha, Raees Khan & Savage tests an existing model that enhancing integrative complexity (IC) can reduce violent extremism in Pakistan. The IC Thinking model has been tested in several contexts, and is built on the premise of reducing “black and white” thinking by enhancing the ability of an individual to value others’ opinions and viewpoints.

3. **Utilize more quantitative data in addition to qualitative data and anecdotal evidence.** While quantitative data is difficult to collect for CVE, it is important that larger-scale studies are conducted that include quantitative data. However, it is also recognized that large data collection is difficult in the context of CVE due to a relatively low sample size (of radicalized individuals) to begin with. There are also challenges with reaching that low sample population due to a lack of willingness to participate in research related to crime or terrorism. In this case, researchers should emphasize methodologies that best anonymize data collection points, but also use mixed methodologies to attempt to glean data from multiple different sources. Kurtz, Wolfe & Tesfaye’s chapter on Afghanistan, for example, begins to collate larger-scale data sets in this way and provides a model for future CVE research. Moreover, Botha’s study utilizing interviews with as-Shabaab members from Kenya and Somalia help to build up the statistical evidence collected about this violent extremist group.

4. **Focus on how the push and pull factors relate to the recruitment methods and narratives of violent extremist groups.** One of the biggest intervention points for CVE practitioners is related to developing effective counter and alternative narratives to the recruitment narratives of violent extremists. However, counter-narratives do not always focus on the recruitment narratives being utilized by violent extremists and suggests different alternatives to addressing grievances. Lessons in this regard can be drawn from Ben Arab’s chapter in the Tunisian context, where the recruiters are actively promoting aggressive messaging and recruitment campaigns in the streets to encourage young Tunisians to travel to Iraq and Syria. Similarly, Noor’s chapter highlights ways in which the recruitment narrative of as-Shebaab is related to push and pull factors in Horn of Africa, relating radicalization not only to religiously-inspired narratives, but also political narratives.

On a related note, discussions at the International CVE Research Conference 2015 emphasized the need to focus more on how local narratives often form in relation to broader, global contexts. For example, Ingram’s chapter contextualizes Daesh messaging within broader counter-terrorism campaigns, and argues that the counter-messaging needs to be better coordinated with military efforts in Iraq and Syria to prevent possible “blow-back” effects.

5. **Adapt research topics of shorter-term studies to cover new and evolving social issues (such as, for example, refugee crisis).** One challenge that researchers often face is that their research projects are long-term and time-consuming—and therefore not as adaptable to fast-changing political, social and cultural environments that often relate to emerging threats. Discussions during the International CVE Research conference indicated there was an ongoing need to develop shorter-term research projects that addressed the emerging and changing threats. Van den Berge’s chapter provides one method of doing this—through smaller-scale studies with a lower number of participant responses. While the results of that particular study may not be adaptable to the larger population, the results may help to tailor future research projects to address more specific questions relevant to the local context.
6. **Increase the accessibility of CVE research to ensure the results reach the right audiences (including program designers and policymakers).** In this regard, it is important to translate research results into concrete and practical solutions for existing programming or

policy. While research outcomes should continue to be published in academic journals or book publications, researchers should also consider alternative mechanisms of distributing results such as short briefing papers, policy briefs, blogs, and graphs/charts. Hedayah's annual International CVE Research Conference or the RESOLVE network may be alternative ways in which relevant research outcomes can be shared with the CVE community.

Often times the important research results are not digestible by policymakers or practitioners that have limited time and capacity, and therefore the potential lessons or evidence gleaned from existing research results are lost. Moreover, it is important that researchers also share the relevant outcomes with CVE practitioners to ensure future research questions are well-informed through practice and that CVE practice is well-informed by solid research.

Accessibility also includes a practical element of translation into multiple languages. In this regard, researchers may share responsibility with donors in including funding allocated for final translation of the research results into a language that is useful for policy or program application.

For Practitioners and Program Designers

1. **Learn from the “negative” results to CVE research.** Sometimes testing the results of CVE or CVE-relevant programs do not achieve the expected or anticipated results, but this can still be valuable to program and policy changes. For example, Kurtz, Wolfe & Tesfaye reported that the INVEST program did not achieve the aim of preventing violent extremism by increasing employment opportunities in Afghanistan (although the initial aim of the program was to reduce unemployment). This does not mean the program itself is a failure, but that it simply did not achieve its CVE objective. In this regard, program designers can adapt and change their existing programs to match with the results of previous studies.
2. **Learn from studies in conflict prevention and conflict resolution, peace-keeping, development and humanitarian responses.** While development goals do not always achieve CVE objectives, there is much that can be learned from the development field for the purposes of CVE. Often development programs have access to large-scale data and analysis, awareness of the local context, connections with relevant government officials (e.g. in ministries of labor or education), and resources on the ground.

For Policymakers

1. **Dedicate the time or staff members to read and digest CVE research.** Although it was acknowledged by the participants at the International CVE Conference that policymakers are often pressured to make policy decisions with limited information and have limited time to digest complicated material, the researchers at the conference also encouraged policymakers to dedicate time to more effectively digest the research results produced. While researchers in CVE recognized the need to better translate research results into shorter, more digestible material, researchers also argued that CVE research is complex and complicated, and cannot always be summarized in short “bullet points.”
2. **Emphasize programs that build capacity of local researchers.** Participants at the conference suggested to build capacity by matchmaking between well-known academics and local researchers and local research institutions. Locally-based researchers have access to the target population, and are often more culturally aware than outside researchers. Participants at the conference suggested that programs to build capacity of locally-based researchers could be coordinated through bodies such as Hedayah or RESOLVE. This point was also emphasized in the EU's report mapping international coordinating bodies for CVE Research (European Commission, 2016).
3. **Share relevant data and information with researchers.** Although not all data collected through formal government channels is able to be released to the general public, it is important that policymakers and government officials make the unclassified data more accessible to researchers that could benefit from this data. Governments and researchers should emphasize partnerships that enhance data-sharing between government bodies and researchers that can combine and analyze this data with additional sources.

For Donors

1. **Increase funding available for CVE research.** This can be done through a number of mechanisms ranging from smaller-scale grants to larger-scale research projects. Donors may also consider embedding research funding into the cost of capacity-building or development programs. For example, donors may consider requiring a risk assessment of the local push and pull factors to be conducted prior to a program activity, and the results publicized and shared with the CVE community.

2. **Ensure funding is available for comprehensive monitoring, measurement and evaluation.** As the participants at the International CVE Research Conference and a number of authors in this publication indicated, there is not enough known about which programs work and which programs do not work in CVE—and why/why not. In order to overcome this challenge, donors should consider dedicated program funding to conduct assessments of CVE programs. This will ensure to save time, resource and energy by applying most workable programs.
3. **Ensure funding is available for translation of results into practical languages as well as English.** As CVE research results have the potential to impact programming and policymaking, it is important that relevant research on drivers of radicalization and efforts to eliminate and mitigate these drivers are available in local languages.
4. **Ensure funding is available to share research results.** This includes dedicated funding for production and design cost for research publications, dedicated funding for travel to conferences and workshops to disseminate information, and allocations for communications and marketing strategies to ensure the research results are reaching the appropriate audiences.

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This edited volume contains a selection of essays and contributions derived from the presentations made at the International Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Research Conference 2015, which was held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates from 6-8 December 2015. The Conference was hosted by Hedayah, Edith Cowan University and New York University Institute Abu Dhabi. Other sponsors and organizers included the European Commission, Rabdan Academy, TRENDS Research & Advisory, Swansea University, CT-MORSE, People Against Violent Extremism (PaVE), the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism—the Hague (ICCT), the Global Center on Cooperative Security (GCCS), the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), and the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI).

The purpose of this edited volume is to further enhance the field of CVE research through a series of short research papers. The volume covers research on four topics: 1) the design and methodology necessary for program and research related to CVE; 2) local push and pull factors in four contexts (Tunisia, Syria, Somalia and Kenya); 3) the results and impact from relevant CVE programs across three contexts (Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria); and 4) research and recommendations regarding countering the narratives of Daesh, Al Qaeda and Al-Shabaab. The edited volume then concludes with a number of program and policy recommendations for a variety of actors that can be applicable for CVE research.

