On the Trail of Counter Radicalisation: An Examination of Strategies to Prevent the Threat of Islamist Extremism

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Abstract

The problem of Islamist inspired terrorism is a challenge that states around the world are struggling to deal with. This thesis focuses on the process of Islamist radicalisation that leads to this form of terrorism. It analyses strategies and programs that seek to counter or reverse the process of Islamist radicalisation. This thesis provides an explanatory model of radicalisation, a key component for first understanding how this process emerges and for analysing policies and programs. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to solicit best practices, lessons learned and challenges from key practitioners and policy makers in the area of counter radicalisation and deradicalisation in the United Kingdom, The Netherlands and Morocco. Also, this thesis provides new data concerning Australian Islamist terrorists and their educational status. These data show an overrepresentation of Australian terrorists in the STEM fields, particularly engineering. One of the key findings of this thesis is that radicalised individuals tend to lack particular epistemic skills, which have implications for pedagogy in general, and particularly counter radicalisation and deradicalisation programs. This thesis concludes with recommendations for counter radicalisation and deradicalisation policies and practice in Australia, drawn from broader contexts.
This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

(Signed) Shane Satterley
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Introduction

The Threat of Global Islamist Extremism

The problem that is contemporary jihadist terrorism is hard to keep in perspective. News of the latest terror attack spreads instantly to all corners of the globe, which gives the impression that the problem is constant and getting worse. As Pinker (2011) argued in his seminal work on the history of violence, we are living in the most peaceful time in human history (Pinker, 2011). This fact is easily lost due to the ease with which one can remember the latest terrorist incident – an incident designed for shock value, remembrance and one that generates the “oxygen of publicity” (Wilkinson, 1997, p. 53). Studies of those in the West who are at risk of becoming violent extremists are often so low in number as to be statistically insignificant. Australia for instance has an estimated 0.2% of its Muslim population at risk of turning to terrorist violence (Rane, 2015). This would appear to be good news. However, in 2014 it was reported that Australia had the highest per capita export of foreign fighters to Middle East conflicts – 150 foreign fighters, according to the Australian Foreign Minister (Uhlman & Glenday; 2014, Bourke; 2014). The numbers of Western recruits to terrorist groups is concerning, but perhaps more concerning is when these radicalised individuals seek a violent expression of their grievances at home – what has become known as home-grown terrorism. Of course, this problem is not restricted to the West. What we are witnessing today is worldwide Islamism jihad or a globalised Islamist insurgency (Kilcullen, 2010). It is pertinent to highlight the fact that there is an ideology at play which has captivated varying segments of Muslim communities around the world and which can express itself through violence. From Bali to Madrid or from Kenya to Brussels, the problem of Islamism and jihadism persists.

Definitions

It is essential to first define some key terms which are central to this discussion but highly contentious in scholarly, media and political discourses. Radicalisation is hard to define but is generally defined as a process by which individuals or groups become more extreme or radical in their views (Bokhari, 2009). Mandel puts forward this definition: “Radicalisation refers to an increase in and/or reinforcing of extremism in the thinking, sentiments, and/or behaviour of individuals and/or groups of individuals” (Mandel, 2009, p 111). Another definition by Precht (2007) proposes that for it to be radicalisation, the
individual or group must be looking to affect changes in society. The changes in society depend largely on the ideology that the individual adopts but usually consist of a combination of political/religious activism which can be expressed in various ways.

Radicalisation can culminate in an act of terrorism which has some general definitional features such as: “the use of illegal force, subnational actors, unconventional methods, political motives, attacks against civilian and passive military targets and acts aimed at purposefully affecting an audience” (Martin, 2006, p. 47) The term ‘home-grown’ terrorism is predicated on the fact that the individual or group engaging in political, religious, or ideologically motivated violence was born and raised in a Western state (Ali, 2011). These types of violence may be carried out within the state in which they were raised or by the export of attacks to other states. As opposed to individuals who may have been born in failed or failing states, or non-Western states, ‘home-grown’ terrorists have had their “formative phase, upbringing and cultural influence take place in the Western world” (Precht, 2007, p 15).

This thesis focusses on terrorism that is inspired by the ideology of Islamism. Islamism is more generally understood as ‘political Islam’. The ideology of Islamism strives to adopt concepts inherent to Islam, such as Sharia law, and to create a state or society based upon such principles (Precht, 2007). The former Islamist, Maajid Nawaz, defines Islamism as “an ideology that seeks to impose any version of Islam over society. When expressed through violence, I call it jihadism” (Nawaz, 2015). Islamism, when implemented as a political system, is by definition intolerant, repressive and violent. However, not all Islamist groups seeking power will use violence—for example, Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) whose members, in some cases, are willing to use the mainstream political process in order to attempt change (Nawaz, 2013). Jihadi groups such as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), al-Qaeda, and al-Shabaab are Islamist and jihadist, meaning they are willing to use violence to affect change. The terms ‘violent extremist’ and ‘jihadist’ are used interchangeably in this paper, as the thesis has a focus on this strain of terrorism – underpinned by an ideology of Islamism as defined above. However, the concept of Islamism is complex and contested and therefore Islamism is looked at in greater detail in Chapter Two.

A term such as ‘jihadist’ can also be contentious due to the fact that it can be used to describe the legitimate use of force under certain conditions such as foreign occupation. However, this thesis focusses on the jihadism epitomised by groups such as ISIS, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram and on individuals that are inspired by these groups. These groups are nihilistic and have transnational aspirations which differentiate them from a group with a local
grievance. These jihadi groups have been described as ultra-Wahhabists, taking ideas in Wahhabism such as ultra-conservatism, regression (longing for the purity of the first generation of Islam), and excommunication (takfir) to extreme conclusions (Al-Ibrahim, 2015, *The Telegraph*, 2017). Wahhabism derives much of its ideas from the broader concepts within Salafism, both schools of thought within Sunni Islam (Lauzière, 2015). Most jihadi groups, as defined above, hold ideas that spawn from these schools of thought. The modern ideology of Islamism is characterised largely by these ultra-conservative, excommunicative and regressive notions inspired by Salafi/Wahhabi Islamic interpretation.

Key terms such as ‘counter radicalisation’, ‘deradicalisation’ and ‘disengagement’ will surface throughout this thesis. When each term is used is important as it highlights a divergence in focus, intentions and outcomes where policies and programs are concerned. This thesis will adopt the following definitions of counter-radicalisation, deradicalisation and disengagement. Counter radicalisation: “a package of social, political, legal and educational and economic programmes specifically designed to deter disaffected (and possibly already radicalised) individuals from crossing the line and becoming terrorists” (United Nations, 2008). Deradicalisation: “programmes that are generally directed against individuals who have become radical with the aim of re-integrating them into society or at least dissuading them from violence” (United Nations, 2008). Within terrorism studies when “counter” is used, it is describing preventative measures being implemented, for example in such terms as ‘countering violent extremism’ (CVE) or ‘counter terrorism’ (CT). Deradicalisation at the level of the individual is a change in orientation and outlook, a “reduction of commitment to the focal, ideological goal, or to the recommended means (of violence and terrorism) to that goal” (Kruglanski, 2014). Deradicalisation as a policy or program attempts to reverse the process of radicalisation by repudiating the extremist ideology and expediting removal from the group. “Disengagement entails a change in behaviour (refraining from associating with potentially violent groups or employing the use of violence) but not necessarily a change in political or ideological beliefs” (United Nations, 2008). As we shall see, various policies and programs around the world place their focus on the different concepts defined above, whilst some attempt a more holistic approach.

**Purpose and Direction**

The purpose of this thesis is to study the process of radicalisation into violent Islamist extremism, the process of deradicalisation out of violent extremism and to and to discover what prevention measures can help reduce the likelihood of radicalisation occurring. This
starts with an examination of the empirical evidence of these three aspects. By analysing and summarising the research, this thesis can then ask pointed questions with regard to the methodology, outcomes and telos of different policies and programs. This will help to identify areas of success and failure which can point those charged with counter terrorism policies and programs towards evidenced based solutions, or at least evidenced based conclusions. To do this, field research was conducted by way of semi structured interviews with those who are implementing counter/deradicalisation policies and programs. By analysing their responses, stated goals of the organisation and state policies this research will aim to add to a growing body of literature of “what works” in the broader field of counter terrorism and security studies.

Research Aims

This research will start with a literature review that will be vital in addressing the first two research questions:

1. What is known about the process of radicalisation into Islamist extremism?
2. What is known about deradicalisation and preventing radicalisation?

These research questions will guide the literature review. An extensive review of empirical studies of radicalisation will aim to give an evidence based background of knowledge to the subject. This can then be used to inform the field research which will be guided by the following research questions:

3. What can UK, European and Moroccan counter/deradicalisation programs tell us in relation to best practice and lessons learned?
4. Do these counter/deradicalisation programs align with the scholarly literature on radicalisation counter/deradicalisation?

This research aims to identify best practices or what works with regards to radicalisation that is informed by the literature. In a similar vein, it also seeks to identify best practices or what works with regards to counter radicalisation and deradicalisation policies around the world. Of course this type of research will also identify what does not work or is counterproductive. This type of research can help inform civil societal institutions, governments, and communities around the world of best practice in this field, and developing an evidence based approach for addressing Islamism and jihadism.
Chapter One: The Australian Context

Australia has not seen the level of violence as a result of terrorist attacks that many other Western states have. Nevertheless, an attack like the Bali Bombings (88 Australian deaths), the Sydney Hostage Crisis (three deaths, including the attacker), and foiled plots like Operation Pendennis (22 arrests) and Operation Neath (five arrests) show how Australia has not been immune to Islamist terrorism (Zammit, 2013). Arguably the most alarming data surfaced during 2014 in relation to the numbers of Australian foreign fighter exports to ISIS. In June of 2014 the number was reported at 150 Australian foreign fighters placing Australia as the highest per capita exporter (Jenkins, 2014). Furthermore, in Australia between 2014 and 2016 an estimated 11 other terror attacks were foiled by authorities (Palin, 2016).

Zammit (2013) contended that the contemporary trend in Australia is that plots are self-starting; meaning that external guidance (support, funding, and command-and-control) is not the trend. This would appear to be further evidenced by the foreign fighter phenomenon of 2014: rather than externally guide plots in Australia, ISIS attracted many extremists to the cause in Iraq and Syria. Whilst ISIS undoubtedly provided the radicalising influence (online propaganda, recruiters and notion of the caliphate), the energy of the radicalised individuals went in the way of fighting overseas. Concerns arise when these fighters come back to Australia and about the fact that so many fighters could be actualised so quickly – particularly as a percentage of the Australian Muslim population, which is slightly less than 500,000 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

Examining the characteristics of Australian jihadis will add to the understanding of radicalisation in the Australian context. Before the Syrian war, the devolution of Iraq and Syria and the rise of ISIS some research on Australian jihadis had been conducted. Mullins (2011) analysed 36 individuals and reported the following:

- The average age was 28, and 29 at the time of their arrests.
- 94% were Australian citizens; 86% had non-Australian heritage (more than half being Lebanese); 57% were born in Australia.
- 12% of 36 individuals were Muslim converts.

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1 The selected cases had to involve individuals who espoused justification for their actions in terms of Sunni Islamist, jihadi ideology and who had been convicted of a criminal offense.
• Most had not progressed much beyond high school in terms of educational achievement.

• Only 5 of 24 individuals could be classified as having a skilled education.

• 17 of 23 individuals for whom data were available were married (74%).

• A relatively small percentage had a criminal background.

• Among the 12 individuals for whom information on criminal background was available, there were no confirmed cases of mental illness (Mullins, 2011).

Using similar data over the same time period (pre Syrian war), Zammit (2011) reported the following:

• Average age of 27.

• 77% were married.

• 60% had children.

• 62% did not complete secondary school.

• The majority were undertaking, or had completed, an apprenticeship or TAFE course.

• 28% were unskilled labourers, 59% skilled labour.

• 55% born in Australia, 30% immigrated as children.

• 60% Lebanese, 10% Anglo, usually of Australian background; three were of Somali and two of Pakistani heritage, and individual of Jordanian, Bangladeshi and Algerian backgrounds.

The most recent wave of jihadist activity in Australia came with the rise of ISIS. As noted, this was particularly pronounced in 2014. Bergin (2015) has thus far the most comprehensive account of this latest wave, 54 people were examined in his study. Although it should be noted that this number only begins to highlight the extent of the phenomenon of Australian terrorists and foreign fighters, as the author noted:

The government stated in early May 2015 that, in the eight months from August 2014 to April 2015, new counterterrorism units operating at eight major Australian international airports 'assisted in offloading 267
passengers of security concern’ from air flights. In evidence presented to a Senate Committee on 25 May the number of passengers offloaded had grown to 284 persons, pointing to a steady increase in the numbers of people motivated to travel that present security concerns (Bergin, 2015, p.8).

This new trend could have, in part, come from increased focus by security officials at the boarders who were on the lookout for individuals travelling to certain areas. However, given the numbers of Australians that ended up in Iraq and Syria, it seems appropriate to assume many more tried to go. With this in mind, we turn to the findings of the Bergin report:

- The average age was 24 – 25 (there were more teenagers but statistical outliers raised the average.

- Country of birth: 42.59% Australia, 16% unknown, 7.41% Afghani, the rest were evenly from around the US and MENA regions.

- Notable ethnic/family backgrounds included: 18.52% Lebanese, 9/26% Anglo-Australian, 7.41% Somali, 7.41% Afghani, 5.56% Turkish.

- Educational levels varied considerably as there were school drop outs, high school graduates, TAFE students and university graduates, although it was more common that individuals had completed school education.

- Three of the 16 with detailed profiles were reported to have mental health problems.

- Some communities act as geographic clusters for radicalisation along with personal relationships (family, friends and associates), although a social network is not always necessary.

- Australian actors featured consistently in ISIS propaganda videos.

- 79.6% (of the 54) had some form of social media presence that showed a link to Islamist extremist beliefs.²

- 27.8% of the sample had Twitter accounts, which is more than twice as high as the 11.4% average for Australia (Bergin, 2015).

² Islamist extremist beliefs consist of such notions as imposing a caliphate governed by Sharia law, the rejection of liberal values such as democracy and the rule of law and the idea that there is a war on Islam.
The first trend to notice is that the number of known Australian jihadists increased in more recent years. The average age dropped and there was a slight increase in mental health problems. Most notable was the shift to an online presence with recruitment and propaganda. In relation to schooling, more had completed at least a school aged education. Australian terrorists and their educational status in particular, deserves more attention, given recent research into known jihadis and their overrepresentation in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) areas\(^3\). These data are discussed further below; for now though, it is instructive to take a closer look to see if this trend of STEM educated jihadists surfaces in the Australian context.

By examining the existing datasets of Gambetta and Hertog (2016) and Bergin (2015) along with information from open source media with Australian jihadi demographic profiles, the author was able to assemble a preliminary list of 78 known Australian jihadis\(^4\). Of the 78 individuals, 32 have a known educational and/or training status. Known educational status is defined as ‘attended or graduated from high school; attended or graduated from university; or had some vocational training’. Of the 78, 18 have either been educated, trained in, shown proclivity for, or displayed interest in the STEM fields (23.07%). As a percentage of those with known educational status, this rises to 56.25%. Given how 46 had an unknown educational status, these percentages could easily rise with more information. These data begin to mesh with what we see at the international level in relation to educational status, namely STEM education and recruitment to Islamist/jihadi groups. The profile of the Australian jihadi is a hard to grasp concept; many are high school drop outs, and many more have a proclivity for STEM. However, what the data do not show are individuals that have a proclivity for or are trained in the humanities - only one was a student of political science (again meshing with existing literature). This thesis goes in to more detail about possible reasons for this below; it is salient to note here, however, that Australia fits within recent research in this area in relation to the similar numbers of jihadists educated in STEM areas (Gambetta and Hertog, 2016, Rose, 2015).

**Australian CVE and Deradicalisation**

\(^3\) Gambetta and Hertog (2016) noted that of those with post-secondary school qualifications, engineers account for 45% of the membership of jihadist groups recruited from among Muslim-majority countries and 59% from among Muslims from Western countries. This provides an example of how highly the STEM fields rate among known jihadists. See more below in the section entitled “Epistemological Failure”.

\(^4\) See Appendix.
The Commonwealth of Australia has invested in countering violent extremism (CVE) programs through the Attorney General’s Department, more specifically through the Living Safe Together website and related programs. The government initiatives include strengthening community relationships with particular attention given to:

- **Community engagement**—working with communities so they can help prevent at-risk individuals from moving down the path of radicalisation to violence

- **The CVE intervention framework**—early intervention and counter-radicalisation activities to help support at-risk individuals to deradicalise and disengage from violent ideologies, including through diversion activities such as mentoring, education and employment support and counselling (Bergin, 2015).

These are its areas of work according to the CVE Unit:

- Identification and information sharing
  Identifying violent extremist ideology at an early stage and sharing information and intelligence.

- Motivation, recruitment and containment
  Understanding the motivations of recruits, methods of recruiters and containing the influence of violent extremist ideology.

- Referral and support, diversion and rehabilitation
  Establishing appropriate referral mechanisms for services that support individuals to choose non-violent forms of expression and participate in society.

- Education
  Building community resistance to violent extremism by equipping communities with the skills and resources to understand and address extremism and reduce marginalisation.

- Communication
  Developing key messages that inform and empower communities to challenge extremist ideologies and support the non-violent expression of views. Encouraging the
dissemination of counter-narratives, and providing appropriate communication channels for delivering them. (Attorney General’s Department, 2017).

Furthermore, as part of the Living Safe Together Grants Program (2014 – 15), the government accepted applications for funding from those involved with CVE intervention work. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) received funds to work in the CVE space, areas including: “religious and multicultural mentoring; specialised mental health services; education and employment counselling; youth and community work; case management; and telephone and online counselling” (Bergin, 2015, p. 48). Sums of $50,000 were handed out to 34 groups (The Guardian, 2015). These included Mosques, sporting groups and community organisations. One such organisation, the Australian Muslim Women’s Association, is using the funding to develop a formal qualification for Muslim mentors. As oversight, training and skills in this area of work is seen as lacking, the group seeks to boost skills in identifying problems in the community, such as anger management, domestic abuse, issues with family breakup, depression, as well as skills in being able to tackle the Islamist narrative and be more knowledgeable about peace building within an Islamic context (Safi, 2015). It should be noted that these are broad categories and the degree to which these programs actually counter radical influences, intervene in or deradicalise, is questionable and of course empirical testing of these programs is challenging. It is perhaps fair to say that we simply do not know the extent to which these broad CVE initiatives have achieved the government’s goal of countering violent extremism.

More direct one-on-one intervention is provided through the Australian Federal Police, more specifically the National Disruption Group (NDG). Under the government’s CVE intervention framework the AFP-led NGG contains, among other thing, a Diversion Team: “diversion and intervention activities focus on working with vulnerable individuals, particularly young people, to prevent them from committing terrorist-related activity or travelling overseas to fight with a terrorist group” (Australian Federal Police, 2017). The purpose of this program is to provide services so that people can disengage from violence or radicalising influences. Through the national security hotline, concerned teachers, social workers, health care professionals and or citizens can refer individuals to the NDG Diversion Team. The Diversion Team can then attempt “targeted countering violent extremism strategies to address issues such as identity, social relations and ideology, or more traditional services such as assistance with housing, schooling, employment, and mental health” (Australian Federal Police, 2017).
With regard to deradicalisation in Australia, funding has been provided for a Corrective Services NSW pilot [program] for the Proactive Integrated Support Model (PRISM – a disengagement model that aims to target inmates who are at risk of radicalisation) and has previously funded the first four years of a prisons-based program in Victoria (Australian Parliament, 2017). The Australian Parliament (2017) website explains:

The success of disengagement programs can be difficult to quantify. As with other areas of anti-social and criminal activity, there is no guarantee that prison based disengagement programs will work in every case. Success requires behavioural change and an acknowledgement by the individual that violent extremist activity is not the appropriate solution to their grievances. Some individuals will continue to actively engage, promote or support extremist activity. However, some participants for existing intervention and rehabilitation programs have successfully altered their behaviour.

Prison deradicalisation programs in Australia are very much in their infancy.

Conclusion

This chapter provided the Australian context in relation to terrorism and radicalisation. It showed the scale of the threat of Islamist terrorism, for example, how the level of radicalisation among Muslims is significant, particularly in relation to those willing to fight in Iraq and Syria in recent years. Within this chapter demographic/biographical information was highlighted along with instructive data with respect to known educational achievement and proclivity among Australian terrorists. Whilst merely a preliminary list, it is the first to document the proclivity for STEM among solely Australian terrorists, raising important questions about predispositions for education and pedagogy more generally. In relation to counter and deradicalisation in Australia this chapter also identified the major programs and initiatives developed by the federal government to combat radicalisation, including funding of NGOs, the AFP-led NGD Diversion Team and the Corrective Services NSW pilot deradicalisation prison program. This thesis will give policy recommendations with regard to counter and deradicalisation work; thus it was necessary to take a closer look at the Australian context.
Chapter Two – Understanding Muslim Radicalisation, Countering and Rehabilitating

This chapter captures and evaluates scholarly literature concerning radicalisation, counter radicalisation and deradicalisation. These concepts are addressed in three respective sections below. There is an expanse of scholarly literature on the topics of radicalisation and counter radicalisation, of which, the most often cited and seminal studies will be examined. As deradicalisation is understudied relative to the other two, the section addressing this concept will be more comprehensive in the scope of the scholarly literature it covers.

Section One: Radicalisation

This section provides a general five-part model as a way of understanding radicalisation, laying a foundation of knowledge necessary before looking at counter and deradicalisation initiatives. The five-part model consists of a) identity crisis; b) grievances; c) social network; d) ideology; and e) epistemological failure. This model and related concepts will be discussed and justified. This literature review will focus on radicalisation wherever it arises and is not restricted to Western research, although there is a focus on the Western context.

Background Factors – The Individual (Identity and Grievances)

Islamists and jihadis have come from various backgrounds and social contexts. From poor, uneducated “accidental guerrillas” who have been recruited to the Taliban, to the rich and highly educated jihadi leaders like Osama bin Laden (al-Qaeda) and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) (Kilcullen, 2009). Capturing the profile of a jihadi or terrorist in general has proven elusive for those engaged in studying the phenomenon. This is not to say that nothing is known. Perhaps the most common reoccurring demographic attributes of a terrorist is the propensity to be young and male. These are broad background factors but nevertheless provide an important place to start.

Youth is a common theme for sociologists and criminologists. It is understood that young people are susceptible to crime, extreme political views, and radicalisation (Bokhari, 2009; Stolzenburg, 2008; Watts, 2009). Within criminology, the age/crime curve is a well-researched concept for understanding the propensity of adolescences and young adults
(particularly young men) to commit crime: “when age is plotted by crime rates, the slope of the relationship ascends rapidly during adolescence, peaks in early adulthood and then falls thereafter” (Stolzenberg, 2008, p. 66). Similarly, youth that are cognitively impulsive and intelligent are predictors of the age/crime curve (Loeber, Menting, Lynam, Moffitt, Stouthamer-Loeb, Stollings, Farrington, Pardini, 2012). Moreover, since 2011 Australian jihadists are, on average, younger and better educated than the previous generation (Bergin, 2015). On the subject of radicalisation, Bokhari (2009, p. 23) noted how young people “often go in search of groups, movements, or other young people to belong to, to listen to or to be heard”. Watts (1999) makes the contention that youth are highly actionistic at a time when they have a surging interest in politics but little knowledge. Watts provides research on German youth (15-25) in the 1990’s that shows they were more supportive of “hard” political tactics and civil disobedience. Also, young men with feelings of failure, despair, guilt, grief or sometimes mental illness are susceptible to the Salafi jihadist narrative – “often powerless and marginal, men, merely by subscribing to this narrative, become “warriors” and meaningful social actors just by embracing jihadist notions” (Roose, 2016, p. xiii). When reoccurring themes with regard to youth come in to play such as: peaks crime rates in early adulthood, political ambition and cognitive impulsivity, they can play a crucial role as a background factor in relation to who radicalises into political violence. The coming of age period for an adolescent is also a time when personal and social identity is formed, which has proven to be another significant element that must be considered.

Formation of identity in the early years of adulthood can have a negative impact on an individual and society if the identity adopted involves violent extremism. General assumptions for why one might come to embrace such an identity as stated by Angel (2008, p. 18), is that “the problem of extremism is tied up with the experience of social, cultural and economic exclusion”. Others, such as Roy (2007) have argued that the terrorist profile has no clear sociological characterisation and that background factors such as poverty, exclusion, racism and acculturation are insufficient as explanations. Roy (2007, p. 55) noted that the Islamist movements in Europe are built on a “significant amount of frustration which is indicative of an underlying psychological dimension rather than a social/economic one”. A crisis of personal identity has been well documented as a precursor to extremism. For example, Precht (2007), when discussing background factors of home-grown radicalisation highlighted: a Muslim identity crisis, experience of discrimination, alienation and perceived injustices, living environment, neighbourhood, family [and] personal traumas. Post (2006)
argued that rather than being crazed fanatics, terrorists are psychologically normal and for some, the primary motivation is to give power to the powerless or to gain a *sense of significance*. Ex Islamist Maajid Nawaz has emphasised this point: “The faith I had inherited was no longer some backward village religion to be ashamed or apologetic about. It had been re-branded as a form of resistance, as a self-affirming *defiant identity*” (Nawaz, 2013, p. 22). Ed Husain a former member of Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) explained how, after being exposed to the ideology of Islamism, his identity was updated: “I am now part of an *ummah* transcending, colour, nationality, and language” (Husain, 2007, p. 92).

Perhaps the two forms of identity (personal and social) work in unison5. In order for an Islamist narrative to become operational, there need to be feelings of social, cultural and economic exclusion, as noted by Angel (2008). However, it would appear that Roy (2007) had a strong argument that the above feelings are insufficient and that in fact there needs to be a psychological element in order for the Islamist to be actualised. For instance, if social, cultural and economic exclusion were sufficient for radicalisation, then we should expect minority groups such as the Tibetans under Chinese rule, and Indigenous Australians to have exhibited some form of well-organised political violence throughout their decades of severe state repression. Both groups have had legitimate grievances within their social, cultural and economic situations and grievances have also been noted as essential in the process of radicalisation to Islamism.

In order for a criminal act of violence to be labelled as terrorism, there must be an underlying grievance (political, religious or ideological) that differentiates the attack from other forms of violence. Terrorism, by the vast majority of definitions, contains political change as a key factor (Martin, 2006). This is important when looking at background factors of the individual Islamist or jihadist as a political/religious grievance is central to how terrorism is defined. Grievances can come in many forms and may contain legitimate instances of repression, marginalisation, racism, discrimination or injustices. However, the mere perception of these grievances can have the same behavioural outcomes (terrorism) under certain conditions (when viewed through the lens of the Islamist ideology) (Cronin & Ludes, 2004, pp. 25 – 26).

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5 Evidence from psychological research indicates that when one harbours a personal or social identity, attitudinal biases become noticeable when evaluating evidence that contradicts one’s beliefs. This is salient for this paper’s five-part model of radicalisation, specifically “epistemological failure” and will be discussed below.
In the West there has been a prevalence of recruits to Islamist or jihadist groups that have come from second or third generation immigrants (Ali, 2011, p. 91). Furthermore, Roy (2007, p. 55) called Western radicals a “lost generation” which is “frustrated by a Western society that does not meet their expectations”. Also, O’Duffy (2008, p. 37) noted how “not only is British foreign policy a significant source of alienation among young British Muslims, but that attitudes towards British foreign policy interact with and often reinforce domestic social, cultural, and economic sources of discontent”. To complicate this issue further though, O’Duffy (2008) was influenced by the work of Pape (2005) and Sageman (2004) whose seminal work in terrorism studies have a focus on recruits to terror groups in conflict zones. Thus the question arises: are the same background factors uniform across vastly different regions (contexts)? The experience of a young Palestinian Muslim in Gaza or the West Bank is much different from that of a second-generation young Australian Muslim in Queensland or Victoria. However, the research shows that when either experiences a real or perceived grievance, it has the ability to promote action. We can see how the experience of exclusion or any other form of grievance relates to the aforementioned personal or social identity crisis. However, it is also important to note how notions of exclusion and grievance are instrumental and insufficient as explanatory factors. A grievance may be perceived as social (an experience of the community, minority group or state) or perhaps more personal (racist attack, bigotry or discrimination). One may also experience both, which seems likely given how the two are mutually supportive.

Another way in which identity and grievance interact is through the experience of a personal trauma or crisis. Rambo in Borum (2011, p.23) explained how typically in the process of religious conversion there is an element he labelled “crisis” where the individual experiences a “state of personal disequilibrium typically caused by personal or social disruption”. Borum (2011) noted how this is consistent with what we see with Islamist radicalisation. Precht (2007) agreed, noting how with home-grown radicalisation family and personal traumas can play a significant role. Moreover, in the seminal and often quoted Silber and Bhatt (2007) research on home-grown American jihadis the authors identified a four phase model of radicalisation which includes: pre-radicalisation, self-identification, indoctrination, and jihadisation (Silber & Bhatt, 2007). The element of self-identification may include external or internal trauma; this is further evidenced by two Australian studies that both highlighted personal crisis or trauma as part of the radicalisation process in some cases (Aly & Striegher, 2012; Porter & Kebbell, 2011). Examples of trauma include divorce,
alcoholism and death of a family member, which were background factors in the Nice, France attack in 2016 and of the Australian recruit to ISIS, Jake Bilardi (Samuel & Morgan, 2016, Rubinsztein-Dunlop, 2015).

This section has highlighted factors relevant at the individual level of analysis with regard to radicalisation. More specifically, it has captured the first two elements of the five-part model: a) identity crisis and b) grievances. Note how these factors, particularly when combined with youth, work together to provide a subversive mix, which can prime one to be more inclined towards radicalisation. However, these factors can and do lead people down different avenues, even constructive ones. Perhaps the individual may find activism, art, politics or a benign spiritual experience as an expression of their lived experience; or, on the negative side, they may find themselves in a new religious movement or cult, a gang, or some other destructive group. Recruits to new religious movements in particular have shown strikingly similar background factors (to terrorists) before joining the group (Dawson, 2009; Satterley, 2016). How they end up expressing themselves largely comes down to whom they meet or the peer group they are involved with. Moreover, Islamist violence tends to be associated with Wahhabist and Salafist interpretations of Islam, which tend to proscribe against various forms of artistic expression such as music, dance and drama, and may in turn contribute to directing adherents towards destructive rather than constructive outlets.

Socialisation - The Group

There are, of course, numerous ways one can find oneself as part of a destructive group it may be because of family or close friends, the Mosque, the sports club or because of an online site. In order for one to adopt the ideology of a terrorist, there must be a point of contact with a recruiter or in some cases just the ideology (self-radicalised or “lone-wolf”). The various models of radicalisation recognise this. The aforementioned Rambo model of conversion cites ‘Interaction’ as the process by which the ‘seeker’ and the ‘spiritual option’ (person or ideological influence) become more acquainted, usually by the seeker requiring more information. In stage three of the Silber and Bhatt (2007, p. 3) four-part model (Indoctrination), the authors explain how, in order for the individual to subscribe to a new worldview, “a “spiritual sanctioner” plays a leading role in this phase of radicalisation”. Wiktorowicz in Borum (2005) cited a four-component developmental model for radicalisation, of which stage four is a process of socialization through which the individual becomes fully indoctrinated into the movement. Moreover, as part of the Precht four phase
model of radicalisation, the author cited *Opportunity*, which involves the individual’s exposure to ideas: the Mosque, the internet, school, youth clubs or work, prison, sport activities, and conversing with family and friends (Precht, 2007). Thus, as we can see, one does not radicalise in a vacuum; integral to the process, is some exposure to a group or charismatic leader with a well-honed ideology and perhaps deep personal affection.

A personal connection with an existing terrorist is a common way by which a new member can be recruited. McCauley and Moskalenko (2008) explained how a way to ensure group loyalty is by recruiting from friends, lovers and family. The authors noted: “trust may determine the network within which radicals and terrorists recruit, but love often determines who will join. The pull of romantic and comradely love can be as strong as politics in moving individuals into an underground group” (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008, p. 421). So whether it is a “spiritual sanctioner” or charismatic leader, a deep trust, love and connection appear to be common factors for radicalisation to extremist groups. Dawson (2011) emphasised this point further by arguing that the social dynamics at play are key to understanding why people join and stay long term (most do not) with regard to terror groups and cults (new religious movements). Dawson (2012, p. 7) noted “much hinges on understanding how the personal bonds are formed and sustained, the bonds that help to create the group loyalties which in turn motivate the self-sacrifices required to meet the objectives of radical religious and political leaders”. To anchor these studies more to Islamist and jihadi radicalisation (in the West) we can look at examples of “family” terrorism such as the Tsarnaev brothers (Boston Bombers) in the United States, the Jamel brothers in Australia (three have been arrested for involvement with terrorism), and the Nawaz brothers in the United Kingdom (Hizb ut Tahrir members and recruiters) (Volpp, 2014; Harris-Hogan, 2014; Nawaz, 2013). These examples merely scratch the surface of the trend of close personal connections and radicalisation, but it is important and instructive to note the role of the social network more generally.

The contemporary engine for radicalisation is of course online social networking. The way in which the internet has changed the game with regard to recruitment and dissemination of ideological propaganda is hard to overestimate. Since the time of the 9/11 attacks, the advances in online technology have drastically altered the way in which people communicate. According to Sageman (2008) the threat now comes from radicalised individuals that have most likely never been to a terrorist training camp and do not answer to leaders like Osama bin Laden, but instead are radicalised and recruited through the internet (Sageman, 2008). At
one stage recruitment material was pamphlets and VHS video whereas now it is in the form of PDFs and YouTube clips. Since Sageman noted this new trajectory, we have seen the rise of ISIS who have taken online media to a level of sophistication that would be the envy of many publishers\(^6\). This is the new environment in which a large amount of terrorist recruitment takes place. This is evidenced particularly in the West where diasporas there are seeking information about conflicts abroad and there is some evidence that they access online propaganda more than those in the MENA region (Conway & McInerney, 2008). For the purposes of this thesis, it is instructive to simply note that “political extremists and terrorists are using the internet as an instrument for radicalisation and recruitment” (Stevens & Neumann, 2009, p. 1).

**Ideology - Islamism**

Up until this point, if we accept the aforementioned individual and social background factors, this could lay the groundwork for radicalisation into various sorts of groups. As we saw, these background factors are similar for those that join cults, gangs, right-wing extremist groups and left-wing terror groups. In order for the contemporary Islamist or jihadist to become actualised the individual needs to subscribe to Islamism as an ideology. Islamism, as defined above, is an ideology that seeks to impose any version of Islam over society. Horgan (2008, p. 85) discussed predisposing risk factors for involvement in terrorism: “The person has to believe that engaging in violence against the state or its symbols is not inherently immoral. This belief, while it may be fine-tuned by a religious figure, is usually held by the time the person has decided to become involved to the point of engaging in terrorism”. The salient aspect here is the “not inherently immoral” element. What Islamism does is provide a black and white moral binary that has an answer to all of the frustrated young Muslims questions (Nawaz, 2013; Husain, 2015). This has theoretical underpinnings in social movement theory and more specifically frame theory:

The concept of “frame” relies on the work of sociologist Erving Goffman and refers to an individual’s worldview or “schemata of interpretation,” consisting of values (notions about right and wrong) and beliefs (assumptions about the world, attributes of things, and mechanisms of causation). This schema helps an individual make sense of and organize his or her experience, and guide his or her action (Snow, 1986 in Dalgaard-Neilsen, 2008, p. 6).

\(^6\) See Farwell, J. P. (2014). The media strategy of ISIS. *Survival*, 56(6), 49-55 for more on the level of media sophistication of ISIS.
Thus, according to frame theory, the Islamist leader, group or perhaps online messages:

Diagnose[s] problems and attribute[s] responsibility, offer[s] solutions, strategies, and tactics (prognostic framing), and provide[s] motivational frames to convince potential participants to become active. Key to mobilization, according to this perspective, is whether the movement’s version of the “reality” resonates or can be brought to resonate with the movement’s potential constituency (Dalgaard-Neilsen, 2008, p. 6).

In other words, the message (Islamism) can resonate strongly when the aforementioned background/risk factors are at play. Islamism either constructs or builds upon notions of causation and assumptions about reality (real or perceived) and beliefs about right and wrong (morality).

It should be noted that ideology as a factor of radicalisation is cited in the various models/phases listed above. For Rambo (1993) it is the interaction stage of conversion where the seeker and the proponent develop more information about or introduction to the spiritual option. Silber and Bhatt (2007, p. 7) recognised the indoctrination stage as when the “individual progressively intensifies his beliefs, wholly adopts jihadi-Salafi ideology and concludes, without question, that the conditions and circumstances exist where action is required to support and further the cause”. Precht (2007, p. 55) stated that in the final stages of radicalisation “the ideology of radical Islam appears to be giving young people, who are wanting to do something against perceived Western wrongdoings, a “legitimate” cause of action and excuse to act”. Islamism, and hence the ideological factor in the process of radicalisation, is arguably the most important. It builds upon, exploits and utilises the other aforementioned background factors, which is individually and socially damaging when expressed through violence.

It is instructive to take a brief look into Islamism as an ideology as a way of seeing how the radical sees the world and what he or she wants to implement. As was noted above, the Islamist wishes to impose a version of Islam onto society. Furthermore, Islamism as an ideology, political movement and political system is contemporary. The Muslim Brotherhood of 1928 in Egypt is regarded as the beginning of the ideology being brought into practice; more specifically it was the writings of Sayyid Qutb the Egyptian dissident that came to be
known as the “ideologue of Islamism” who cemented these views (Martin, 2010). An Islamist “is one who believes that Islam as a body of faith, has something important to say about how politics and society should be ordered in the contemporary Muslim World and who seeks to implement this idea in some fashion” (Fuller, 2002, p. xi). Some have argued that Islamism or Islamic activism have a long tradition in Islamic practice more generally; however groups described as Islamist are usually a modern phenomenon (Martin, 2010). The year 1979 is important as it “is often seen as the point when Islamism became consolidated as a global political force following the Iranian revolution, the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan and the consequent jihad of the Afghan mujahedeen” (Crowder, Griffiths, & Hasan, 2014, p. 120). Defining Islamism as global and contemporary is echoed by Desai (2006) and Mozaffari (2007, p. 21) who concisely defined it as a “religious ideology with a holistic interpretation of Islam whose final aim is the conquest of the world by all means”. Mozaffari goes on to note how “‘Islam’ is a general, elusive and ambiguous phenomenon, ‘Islamism’ as an ideology represents a coherent, specific and identifiable construction” (2007, p. 22). Here we see both how the background factors in the process of radicalisation prime the individual, and that Islamism provides answers for those that are predisposed to seek them intently – a black and white worldview, expressly clear on life, death, martyrdom, paradise, jihad and morality and ethics in this life. A key factor that is missing for the “at risk” potential recruit is the ability to assess new information in a critical way which would generate doubt to the narrative presented. This indicates a lack of critical thinking, or what this thesis calls, epistemological failure.

**Epistemological Failure**

Unreliable or failed paths to knowledge are a component of radicalisation. Part of the reason why some individuals are more resistant to belief change or belief revision is due to the personal and social identity they construct. As noted above, data from psychological research indicates that when one harbours a personal or social identity, attitudinal biases become noticeable when evaluating evidence that contradicts one’s beliefs (Pomerantz, Chaiken, & Tordesillas, 1995; Ahluwalia, 2000; Cohen, 2003; Munro, Ditto, Lockhart, Fagerlin, Gready, & Peterson, 2002; Unsworth & Fielding; 2014). The identity crisis that we see in data about radicalisation indicates how construction of a new identity is paramount. As the new identity is political/religious in nature, when we attempt an honest evaluation of disconfirming or contradictory evidence we expect to see various cognitive biases. Political
beliefs have been shown to be resistant to change when challenged with contradictory evidence, and correlated with the brain’s system of emotions which “appear also to be engaged when protecting the aspects of our mental lives with which we strongly identify, including our closely held beliefs” (Kaplan, Gimbel, Harris, 2016, p. 8). Thus, this is part of the problem from a psychological perspective; however for an Islamist mindset in particular to arise, we need to look at the wider society and culture.

Many in the field, ostensibly disregard education as a tool for countering extremism. For example Krueger (2007, p. 89) explains how “educational attainment and involvement in terrorism, at both the individual level and the country level, are either uncorrelated or positively correlated”. Berrebi (2007, p. 1) highlights this point further with data from Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), noting that both “higher education and standard of living are positively associated with participation in Hamas or PIJ and with becoming a suicide bomber”. What also complicates these data is the decline in religious affiliation throughout history as educational levels rise (Albrecht & Heaton, 1984; Caplovitz & Sherrow, 1977). When we analyse Islamism, we are examining a political/religious ideology; therefore the educational attainment of its adherents in many cases may help to explain a surge in political interest (central to Islamism); however this is less helpful when examining the religious commitment of its adherents. What might be useful is to look at the type of pedagogy usually experienced by jihadists.

Recent research has shown how in both Muslim-majority countries and the West there has been an overrepresentation of Islamists and jihadists that have been educated in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Gambetta and Hertog (2016) note that of those with post-secondary school qualifications, engineers account for 45% of the membership of jihadist groups recruited from among Muslim-majority countries and 59% among Muslims from Western countries. Furthermore, Schwartz (2008) noted an over representation and targeting of medical students in and by Islamist and jihadi groups. These data are quite alarming, and contrast with the numbers of graduates from the humanities and social sciences, which are “almost in complete absence” (Rose, 2015). A scientific worldview should, at its best, raise one’s ability to think critically; however according to these studies the hard sciences are failing while the social sciences are providing resistance to Islamism/jihadism. This may be indicative of the type of education the humanities and social sciences deliver.
Ontology, epistemology and morality are the impetus of philosophy, which lays the foundation of the humanities and social sciences. As we saw above, how one comes to knowledge helps to inform subsequent moral considerations and behaviour in the world (ethics). Instrumental in the radicalisation process is a failure of epistemic thinking. Nawaz (2013) and Husain (2007) in their autobiographical accounts both describe how they adopted the ideology of Islamism. Their accounts explain how recruiters had an “answer to everything” and black and white thinking was central to the ideology’s allure. They lacked ability at this stage in their lives to think critically about the new information coming in. This lack of critical thinking skills may be indicative of various cultures putting more value on certain types of education (STEM) and less on the humanities and social sciences. Moreover, the defunding of philosophy departments throughout the Muslim world, lack of comparative religious study, and a tradition of anti-colonialist sentiment particularly towards education, all appear to be playing a role (Rose, 2015) in susceptibility to Islamism. Additionally, in many parts of the world, particularly in the Muslim world, education systems were developed in such a way as to appreciate STEM fields of study over the humanities and social sciences as a means of achieving modernisation and development goals. Students with the ability to memorise and recall content, rather than the ability to think critically and analyse, are rewarded with the highest grades upon graduation and entry into university programs in the socially-esteemed STEM fields (Rose, 2015).

To make matters worse, this lack of pedagogy and education in the Muslim world may not only be helping the fundamentalist/Islamist mindset but the sometimes subsequent move to violence: “though engineers are over-represented in both [violent and non-violent Islamic groups], holders of ‘Other Elite Degrees’ (i.e. medicine and natural sciences) are much more strongly represented among the latter. Islamism seems to be appealing to both, but engineers seem much more prone to take the step to violence.” (Gambetta & Hertog, 2016, p. 35).

Rose (2015, p. 7) cited research by Kandil which is instructive and useful to quote in full:

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7 It is important to note that not all agree with this line of reasoning. Haidt argues that moral intuition precedes rationality; see Haidt, J. (2001). The emotional dog and its rational tail: a social intuitionist approach to moral judgment. Psychological review, 108(4), 814.
A recent writer on the non-jihadist and historically rather less violent Muslim Brotherhood, Hazem Kandil, says that “One look at members’ educational backgrounds reveals that highly educated Brothers (including 20,000 with doctoral degrees and 3,000 professors) come overwhelmingly from the natural sciences.” He notes that there are clerics, lawyers and businessmen, and even a handful of literature students. “Absent, however, are students of politics, sociology, history and philosophy [emphasis added].” Kandil analyses the Brotherhood’s top leadership, finding veterinarians, agronomists, engineers, geologists and doctors, but virtually no social scientists. He quotes one former Brother as saying, “In social sciences one learns that someone made an argument; another criticized it; and history validated or disproved it. Questioning received wisdom is welcomed. In natural sciences by contrast, there are no opinions, only facts. This type of matter-of-fact mentality is more susceptible to accepting the Brotherhood’s formulas which present everything as black or white.

The example of Tunisia, the top exporter of fighters to ISIS is instructive. According to Ahmed Al-Zawady, leader of the General Union for Tunisian Students:

The Tunisian educational curriculum in science, math and technical disciplines does not generally give students analytical or research skills or the ability to do critical thinking. Teaching is dominated by what are regarded as proven facts with no room for discussion. That makes those students easy prey for recruitment, while literature students, who are more inclined to debates, discussions, and research in their theses, are less susceptible (Abdul Nabi, 2015).

Here the problem of epistemological failure becomes noticeable. No jihadist lacks the ideology of Islamism; thus in a river of Islamist thought, streams of jihadism will develop. In essence there is a problem within scientific education in the Muslim world, which is not producing scientific thinking. A certain percentage lacks the ability for belief reflection or revision. Whilst the jihadist recruitment pool draws from intelligent, curious and educated individuals, at the same time they exhibit binary thinking and an acceptance of arguments from authority – they are simply not social scientists. Hussien (2008) argued that this is in fact a broader problem within the Muslim world and a crisis of education and pedagogy, as Islam itself has been reduced to totalistic ideology (hence the appeal of Islamism?) and the notion of shariah has been equated with the Divine. This is described as the Islamisation of knowledge, which stands in stark contrast to Western critical pedagogy and it is therefore “imperative to reconstruct critical pedagogy from an Islamic worldview” (Hussien, 2008, p. 101).
Given the data from the cases of Western Islamists and jihadis cited by Gambetta and Hertog (2016) and the Australian data cited in Chapter One, even Western critical pedagogy does not appear to be sufficiently optimised to guard against the trend of overrepresentation of terrorists educated in the STEM areas. Pedagogical theory in the West usually falls within the dichotomy of behaviourism or constructivism. Behaviourism and its philosophical influence, positivism, focus on objective notions about external observation of lawful relations and “the positivist believes that relationships are discovered only by observation and experiment. Both ways of looking at the world (behaviourism and positivism) have been termed ‘objectivist’ because of the belief that there is a ‘God’s eye’ view, or privileged external viewpoint that one can obtain” (Boghossian, 2006a, p. 715). Behaviourism’s notion of a single reality external to individuals is at odds with a constructivist’s idea that truth is constructed by the subjective experience of the individual. Constructivism, part of the more broad postmodernist turn in Western intellectual thought, argues generally that there “are multiple perspectives, interpretations and truths, and that each perspective has its own validity” (Boghossian, 2006a, p. 715). Boghossian (2006a) contended that both these educational theories (behaviourism and constructivism) are insufficient theories but nevertheless have something salient to add. By taking elements from both theories (although leaning more towards behaviourism), Boghossian (2006) noted how the Socratic method can play an instrumental role as a third option in assisting in student learning, particularly in relation to critical thinking. The Socratic practice agrees with behaviourism that there is an objective truth to be known, but claims this can be known through discourse. Whilst “contemporary Socratic practice is often used less as a way to find the truth and more as a method for teaching critical thinking” it nevertheless starts from a position that there is a reality to be known irrespective of the knower (Boghossian, 2006a, p. 717). The Socratic method shifts attention towards the learner, which is more aligned with constructivism; however as a method of inquiry, the Socratic method is at odds with a constructivist approach due to the fact that counter examples or the elenetic process\(^8\) is shut down upon the assertion that this is ‘true for me’.

Gambetta and Hertog (2016) explain the overrepresentation of engineers among jihadis in the Muslim world using Relative Deprivation Theory. However, they concede that

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\(^8\) The elenches is a systematized question and answer process that is directed by the teacher and depends upon student involvement. Its purpose is to help those engaged in a dialogue discover true propositions through a sustained inquiry (Boghossian, 2002).
the theory has less explanatory potential in the context of Western jihadis to the extent that in the West those with such qualifications can be absorbed into the existing labour market. Viewing counter and deradicalisation policies and programs through this hybrid but unique lens of behaviourism and constructivism, needs more empirical evaluation. However, given the susceptibility of Islamists and jihadis to a black and white world view with an answer to everything, Socratic pedagogy ostensibly meets at least part of the needs for tailored intervention strategies in relation to deradicalisation and broader preventative measures surrounding education, pedagogy and training to guard against radicalisation.

Section Two: Counter Radicalisation

Traditionally, responding to terrorism, particularly in a Western context, has amounted to a security, policing, boarder protection and intelligence led focus, generally described as counter terrorism. Policy instruments of the state have been intelligence, law enforcement, and military force and they were not just at the top of the list, they were the only tools discussed in the campaign against international terrorism (Cronin & Ludes, 2004). Radicalisation and counter radicalisation are not mentioned in classic counter terrorism textbooks. However, in more recent times there has been a significant emphasis on preventive measures that aim to steer susceptible individuals away from the process of radicalisation – sometimes referred to as “soft power”. State policies are now starting to show that there is an understanding that preventative measures are the most important with regards to counter terrorism (Wormeli, 2014). As we shall see, in places like the UK, Australia and various European states, preventative policies and programs are on the rise. This section will describe the various policies and programs that governments have generated, along with the literature that looks at such preventative measures. It is salient to keep in mind the focus of this thesis is the “soft power”, community focused, civil society-led, grass roots efforts to counter radicalisation; thus less focus will be directed towards the traditional approaches to counter terrorism listed above. This will aid in drawing out lessons learned, best practices and challenges from counter radicalisation work.

Whilst being notoriously hard to empirically evaluate, a counter radicalisation policy is deemed imperative to countering terrorism and extremism of an Islamist nature. In Europe there are two broad categories for counter radicalisation: general preventive initiatives and targeted interventions. The former is “aimed at challenging extremist ideas and influences in

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society, promoting tolerant, moderate and democratic principles, and addressing factors that can increase vulnerability to radicalisation” (Vidino & Brandon, 2012, p. 164). Most countries follow the Dutch example, which seeks to make segments of the population at large resilient to radical ideas or reduce intra-societal tensions. This is done by implementing educational programs, traineeships, and personal development programs. As the Dutch National policy states:

The policy that is aimed at reinforcing the demand side is known as target group specific prevention. This means that specific measures are taken to reinforce the resilience of those groups which are the target of jihadist recruitment and propaganda, and groups which are or may be sensitive to the extremist supply. Examples of such measures are creating social networks, setting up programmes to increase the capacity for critical judgement, reinforcing democratic awareness, providing resilience training, and cooperating with role models and leaders (National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security, 2011, p. 165).

The Netherlands has introduced psychological/cultural programs for its large Muslim community. The titles of these programs included: “Deal with Disappointment”, “Deal with Dissent”, and “Learning to Deal with Criticism of your Faith”. The purpose was to foster fact-based critical thinking and constructive discussion which undermine stereotypes and misconceptions (Vidino & Brandon, 2012). For example, one of the programs was an essay contest for high school students in which they were encouraged to vent about what made them angry and what their ideal society would look like, which was then followed by non-confrontational discussion. Programs like this in a sense take the temperature of the youth; they can bring forth any myths and misconceptions about the state, foreign policy, racism or religion. Similarly, Danish foreign and other governmental officials meet with schools and other civil societal organisations to “explain Denmark’s position on various foreign policy issues and seek to dispel myths and misconceptions surrounding them” (Vidino & Brandon, 2012, p. 167). Furthermore, the UK and the Netherlands are leaders with investment in significant human, financial, and political capital in their initiatives in relation to counter radicalisation. Their initiatives include: “interfaith meetings, the creation of Muslim magazines and TV programs, government-sponsored lectures from moderate Muslim clerics, field trips to Auschwitz, professional development seminars, and soccer matches with police officers” (Vidino, 2010).

Targeted interventions usually are initiated when the authorities are informed of an “at-risk” individual. Training is provided to those in civil society, such as; those in police
services, schools, colleges and universities, health services, social work, housing, prisons, and probation services, who are on the lookout for individuals that are displaying signs of radicalisation. The training educates those involved about the process of radicalisation, “explaining its manifestations, why it occurs, and why it is dangerous” (Vidino & Brandon, 2012, p. 168). The Dutch tend to focus on interventions that do not involve the police; this as we shall see, is due to an understanding that the state, and particularly the police, can be seen as counterproductive. The assigning of a mentor to an at-risk individual is favoured, someone that can build trust and provide critical reflection on radicalising ideas.

Despite the difficulties in empirical analysis of such counter radicalisation polices, European and UK authorities appear content with the programs. Vidino and Brandon (2012) quote from “Sir Norman Bettison, who as Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Lead for Prevent Policing is the British police’s de facto overseer of national Prevent work, stated in late 2010 that: ’Thus far not one of the 1,500 people that have been intervened with [under the Channel Programme, the UK’s targeted intervention program] have been arrested for any terrorist-related offence’” (Vidino & Brandon, 2012, p. 168). In Europe there is recognition that the Muslim community must be partnered with the state and that there has to be a diversity of Muslim voices heard when and for developing policies and programs. Finally, three main lessons are highlighted in the European context: 1) There needs to be good communication with the public on the strategies and aims of any counter radicalisation program – and use of language matters; 2) Those involved in counter radicalisation programs need to be as knowledgeable as possible due to the complexity of the radicalisation process; 3) Measuring the effectiveness of counter radicalisation programs is hard if not impossible, which can have an impact when applying for resources and funding (Vidino & Brandon, 2012).

The International Centre for Counter Terrorism (ICCT) developed comprehensive research on counter radicalisation. The report (2013) states how counter radicalisation is about strengthening the community, rather than the individual, in an effort to stop a recruited pool of potential extremists. According to the report counter radicalisation should target extremism rather than terrorism per se (Schmid, 2013). Thus, within an Islamic context, this would include a focus on the Muslim community specifically targeting Islamism rather than jihadism. Schmid distinguished between “radicals”, who are generally open minded, and “extremists”, who are dogmatic; and he noted that extremists positively accept violence. This is complicated by ostensibly non-violent Islamist groups; however it is important to keep in mind that these groups are “in favour of the use of force to obtain and maintain political
power, although they might be vague and ambiguous about this in their public pronouncements, especially when they are still in a position of weakness” (Schmid, 2013, p. 10). The ICCT research cites the following as steps, as stated by advocates of counter-radicalisation programmes, with regards to violent Islamism, to be instrumental:

- Expand focus from violent to non-violent extremism;
- Empower mainstream Muslim voices;
- Address local grievances, not global ones;
- Rejuvenate efforts to promote prosperity, reform and democracy in Arab countries;
- Portray the al-Qaeda threat realistically and emphasize the group’s bankrupt ideology;
- Employ nuanced, non-combative rhetoric;
- Challenge extremists in cyberspace;
- Broaden Muslim outreach (Schmid, 2013, p.50).

The ICCT research also highlights the importance of challenging the ideology (Islamism, although the report generally uses the term “extremist ideology”), noting that this is considered key in a counter radicalisation. The report states:

If violent extremists seek to promote extremist narratives and make their ideology resonate, the purpose of counter-radicalisation is to expose and counter such ideas, educate communities and thereby strengthen their defences against the extremists’ narrative; and empower community leaders to speak out against violent extremists and their ideas (Schmid, 2013, p. 51).

When the community and community leaders can do this (strengthen counter narratives) they can start to weaken the ideology. Four key ways of challenging the ideology: challenge assumptions, beliefs, and meanings behind the ideology; target contradictions and push them into the open; engage subgroups and their leaders, pointing out the differences in interests that ideology tries to smooth over; target rules and resources in the social system that preserves an ideology and places stress on the structures and/or promote alternatives that might replace, undermine, or circumvent them (Schmid, 2013).

One of the main ways the Islamist ideology is promoted is through the internet and thus social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter have taken steps to take down propaganda and recruitment accounts on behalf of the U.S. Government (Greenburg, 2016). As Greenburg explains, this is the first part of a three-part CVE strategy (in the U.S.) of using the internet as a counter measure for purposes of disruption, diversion and counter
messaging. Diversion includes the promotion of ads via Google from NGOs’ that have an alternative (CVE) message when one searches “violent jihad” for example. Counter-messaging generates “discussions of Islam that correct misreadings of the Koran and the Muslim religion10” in the online (and offline) sphere (Greenburg, 2016, p. 172). As well as promoting online posts that highlight the hypocrisy of ISIS particularly with regards to life inside the Caliphate and returning foreign fighter testimonials which debunk the ISIS ideology/narrative (Greenburg, 2016).

As Europe has the longest experience with counter radicalisation, other nations look to the European strategies and tactics in this field. In places like the UK, The Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden, the following activities have been carried out as part of counter radicalisation initiatives:

• Interfaith meetings;
• The creation of Muslim magazines and TV;
• Government-sponsored lectures from moderate Muslim clerics;
• Field trips to Auschwitz;
• Professional development seminars;
• Soccer matches with police officers;
• Development of tools/measures to better enable teachers and public authorities to address radical and negative opinions;
• Establishment of a national idea catalogue of counter measures, including preventative measures (jointly produced by different actors);
• Establishment of a helpdesk to which public authorities and public actors can turn for information on radicalisation and effective methods;
• Creation of a mentoring system for young people to establish face-to-face dialogue and the existence of resource individuals and role models; counteract distribution of radical material via TV, CD-ROM, books and the Internet;
• Dialogue forums aimed at disseminating information on foreign policy in the Muslim world;
• Courses for citizens on rights and duties of citizenship and democratic principles;
• Education programmes on extremism for correctional treatment staff;

10 One of the most common contended concepts within the Quran is the notion of jihad which, it has been argued, has been misused by both Muslims and non-Muslims (Al-Saidat & Al-Khawalda, 2012).
Development of awareness training for individuals who work with young people to enable easier identification of radicalisation indicators (Vidino, 2010 in Schmid, 2013, p.51).

With these in mind, Vidino went on to formulate ten recommendations to U.S. policy makers to help deal with home-grown radicalisation. They are as follows:

1. Know your client: No counter-radicalisation program can be effective without a deep knowledge of the ‘targeted’ community and the process that leads some in it to radicalise;

2. Be flexible: No single approach will work in all cases and everywhere – and, in many cases, no solution at all will work. What sways one individual might leave another unfazed;

3. Set clear metrics: It is imperative for a program to establish from day one what it seeks to achieve. In particular, the program must determine whether it seeks to target simply violent individuals or, more broadly, the intellectual framework of radicalism that might (or might not) give rise to violent behaviour;

4. Choose many partners: Working with the Muslim community is critical. Yet, given its fragmentation and lack of unified leadership, finding partners is no easy endeavour. Government cooperation with nonviolent Islamists, such as offshoots of the Muslim Brotherhood and political Salafi groups, is particularly controversial;

5. Work at the local level: Europeans have learned that, though central government can provide general guidelines and funds, actual counter-radicalisation work is done at the local level;

6. Trained personnel are key: A network of competent law enforcement officials, social workers, teachers, and community leaders is considered the best front-line defence against radicalisation;

7. Play down counterterrorism: security services have to be involved – but their visibility must be minimal;

8. Be open: Consult with academics, civil liberties organisations – anybody with expertise. Inform the public. Get feedback from the Muslim community (and not just its most vocal self-appointed leaders);
9. Find ways to evaluate success and failure: Finding ways to empirically measure results might be the only way to manage external expectations and maintain the program;

10. Have a thick skin: Given the difficulty of measuring its success and the controversial actions that must be taken to implement it, a counter-radicalisation program is likely to be the subject of widespread criticism. The most immediate critics will include Islamists, conservatives, and civil libertarians. Policymakers must keep in mind that, despite all the mistakes they are bound to make and the setbacks they will experience, a counter-radicalisation program is a necessary component of a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy. (Vidino, 2010, p. 20-21).

The community or larger society is seen as key for counter radicalisation policy, as radicalisation to violent extremism is seen as a social phenomenon. Aly (2015) provided Figure 1, which highlights the importance of prevention.

![CVE Pyramid](image)

Figure 1 CVE Pyramid (Aly, 2015).

Again, traditional approaches to terrorism focus largely on the “reaction” or “hard” policies to combat political violence. The shift to preventative or soft approaches, as we also saw in the European examples in particular, is noticeable within various state policies. Aly (2015) argued that whilst hard and soft policies both have a role, they need to be organised into a single cohesive agenda. Aly noted how the traditional hard power approaches are still influencing the soft power approaches due to the way in which these policies are top-down. Aly (2015, p. 3) explained:
Reconceptualising CVE in ways that recognise and give precedence to soft power measures and that facilitate the participation of civil society through grassroots-driven initiatives in the policy-making process, a smarter, more comprehensive form of CVE can emerge, both at the national and international level.

The challenge is that soft power resources usually lay outside areas of governmental expertise: thus balancing soft power with hard power is challenging, but necessary. The goal for CVE, according to Aly, is to harness “the power of grassroots civil society movements in ways that address the shortcomings of institutionalised power” (2015, p 3). Hard power is, of course, still necessary, but as Figure 1 shows, it is the soft power preventative measures that start and inform subsequent actions. Whilst there might be disagreement on the specific content of each level of the pyramid, Aly delivers a conceptualisation of CVE which allows us a place to start.

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) developed a paper (2013) that focussed on best practices and risks associated with community-policing. The paper summarised its key points by firstly noting how international human rights standards must be adhered to with regard to policing as the effectiveness and legitimacy of the state is eroded if this standard is not met (Wuchte & Knani, 2013). The research went on to highlight how the radicalisation process is complex and claim that a multidisciplinary approach is needed to counter it, which should be addressed in its own right and not specifically for security concerns. Furthermore, while the state has the obligation to protect its citizenry, there has been a growing recognition that partnerships with communities and the public at large is beneficial. This allows the generation of “locally tailored and locally driven initiatives” which can utilise civil society, the media or businesses (Wuchte & Knani, 2013, p. 20).

Community policing, however, should only be considered part of a broader strategy for CVE. The following are a list of benefits and risks highlighted by the OSCE in relation to community policing:

Benefits:
- Anchoring policing into respect for human rights and the rule of law;
- Improving public perceptions of, and interaction with, the police;
- Improving communication with the public on counterterrorism;
- Increasing public vigilance and resilience;
- Enhancing police understanding of communities as a basis to better engage and cooperate with them;
• Helping to identify and address community safety issues and grievances;
• Facilitating timely identification and referral of critical situations; and
• Improving relations between the police and individuals and groups that have been hard to reach or not yet engaged with.

Risks:
• Over-reliance on community policing;
• Stigmatizing particular communities through selective engagement;
• Securitizing their relationship with communities;
• Using community policing to “spy” on communities;
• Risks to individuals engaging with the police; and
• Unintentionally giving the appearance that the police support particular individuals or groups, which could either undermine the legitimacy of those in a position to exercise a positive influence within the community or alienate other community members or communities (Wuchte & Knani, 2013, p. 21-22).

The authors also added that adequate training for community police officers as well as good knowledge of the community and clear and timely communication with both the media and communities themselves, should be best practice.

The think-tank Hedayah, in consultation with OSCE, developed general guidelines for national CVE strategies which confirm and add to the best practices already noted; they include: a strategy should be first informed by the evidence in relation to the drivers of violent extremism; it should draw from other national strategies; at the governmental level, clear roles and responsibilities must be established along with coordination of efforts; there must be clear coordination between the public and private sector CVE initiatives; assess what could become unintended consequences or be counterproductive; identify constructive means of addressing grievances (real or perceived); promote and foster the role of NGOs and civil society to engage in CVE and ensure the CVE strategy complements the rule of law (Hedayah, 2016). The Hedayah paper is useful as it is designed to be a “living” paper, continually being updated with new national, regional and international strategies additional to the ones already included. Therefore, the general guidelines are drawing from a wealth of information of CVE strategies. This is useful for this thesis, as summarising all national CVE plans would exhaust space restrictions; instead, highlighting general guidelines, best practices and lessons learned will help to address the research questions.
The Australian Government through the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) commissioned a report (2011) which reviewed and analysed the literature on countering violent extremism. The report explains how most of what is written about CVE is governmental and policy driven in nature and that academic works are not as prominent. The recommendations it suggests are a reflection of this, as almost all are recommendations for further research in particular areas such as: building an empirical research base, investing in social science, research on the role of the media, research on why some people become radicals and others do not (Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011). What is noticeable in the report is that “hard power”, or top-down CVE, approaches are reviewed and analysed first and might be a reflection of how Australia sees its CVE policy – as per the Aly contention above. These include military, legislation, “hard” policing (as opposed to community policing), intelligence and border security.

Addressing CVE from a soft power framework, the report first highlights how the ideological battle might be won – promoting religiously moderate ideology through selected community leaders or through religious dialogue, counselling, education and mentoring (Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011). Also, pulling the ideology (Islamism) into a space where it can be discussed, challenged, exposed and opened to critical examination. The media, but more specifically online blogs and social networking sites, to promote counter narratives are mentioned, as well as campaigns, televisions series, documentaries and interviews with those that have “moderated” their thinking.11 The report also touches on deradicalisation and disengagement, which this thesis will examine in the next section. It is important to note however, that the report cites the evidence for how people leave terrorist groups:

- familial and social influences; frustration with the group’s leadership or tactics; and longing for a “normal” civilian life separate from clandestine activities and the threat of punitive actions by law enforcement (Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011, p. 56).

A “shaken ideology” is mentioned as a way in which one can disengage from violence. Thus, policies should remove obstacles to extremists leaving groups and provide exit strategies. This is described more below when deradicalisation is examined more closely.

It is instructive to point out that with regards to preventative programs, evaluation is inherently difficult (Perl, 2007; Spencer, 2006). Few states have developed methodologies to evaluate their CT policies and programs (Romaniuk & Fink, 2012). Attempting to measure a

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11 For example, in the UK the Research, Information and Communications Unit (RICU) is exploring blogs and social networking sites to propagate counter-narratives; Saudi Arabia’s ‘Advocacy and Advisory Strategy’ features television interviews with scholars who have recanted fatwas that support terrorists (Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011).
non-event (the absence of terrorism), is obviously a great challenge for states and key stakeholders looking to invest resources. Whilst there may be some encouraging programs like the various European EXIT initiatives which will be looked at more below, in general, the literature lacks empirical evaluation of counter radicalisation measures.\textsuperscript{12}

Section Three: Deradicalisation

This section surveys literature by various scholars that have a specific focus on deradicalisation. The deradicalisation field is a young and understudied discipline. Almost all studies reference John Horgan and Tore Bjorgo, whose works have laid the bedrock for other studies. There is a general format to the deradicalisation literature: most research starts with definitions of disengagement and deradicalisation and then shifts to analyse deradicalisation programs around the world. This chapter focuses on deradicalisation studies regarding Islamist and jihadists and will be assessing this literature to see what the empirical basis of knowledge is, to draw out best practices and lessons learned. It is important to keep in mind that there is no clear line between counter radicalisation and deradicalisation work. Intervention programs like those cited in Section Two inevitably will involve attempts to deradicalise or disengage individuals from ideology, groups and violence. Thus, sometimes the two terms are used interchangeably; however as an academic concept, state policy or program there are clear distinctions between the two that will become evident below.

In 2008, \textit{Time Magazine} labelled “deradicalisation” as one of the most revolutionary ideas of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century (Ripley, 2008). This undoubtedly captured the shift in attention noted earlier where preventative measures were starting to been seen as imperative in relation to the broad notion of counter terrorism. As noted in Chapter One, deradicalisation is generally understood to consist of “programmes that are generally directed against individuals who have become radical with the aim of re-integrating them into society or at least dissuading them from violence” (United Nations, 2008). Therefore, this might include fostering a reorientation in outlook, a change in beliefs, attitudes and values; or to “disengage” the individual, to remove them from the group or to persuade them to stop using violence. However, disengagement and deradicalisation are not the same concept, whilst they might be part of the same policy or program. Disengagement has been argued to be the more realistic goal as deradicalising someone is considered to be a longer, harder and more complex task (Bjorgo & Horgan, 2008; Horgan, 2009). Additionally, there is the contention that whilst

\textsuperscript{12} Romaniuk & Fink (2012) address this issue by arguing that a fusion of data from various sources (focus groups, polls, interviews, cultural insight, intelligence) confidence is high that the “direction of travel is heading in the right direction” in relation to counter radicalisation work.
some individuals can cease terrorism as a tactic, they still harbour the same beliefs and attitudes, as described by Horgan: “In the sample of individuals I interviewed from 2006-2008, while almost all of the interviewees could be described as disengaged, not a single one of them is ‘deradicalised’” (Horgan, 2009). Others have noted that deradicalisation is of strategic use, that it is understudied and more insights from psychology and social psychology are needed so that cognitive change can be generated (Dechesne, 2014). Rabasa et al. (2010) in a comprehensive RAND research project, explained how one of the key conclusions in this research was the importance of deradicalisation; this is in contrast to other academics whose focus is on disengagement. The authors argue that attempting to change the worldview of Islamists is essential for a comprehensive counter terrorism strategy. The broad strategy must contain a counter ideological component. Amidst the various policies and programs in the field of deradicalisation there is usually a disengagement element due to the fact that most are part of prison rehabilitation policy and thus the individuals are forcibly removed from the Islamist or jihadi group. This is complicated however, if the prison population has a significant extremist segment and prison policy lacks capacity to deal with prisoners remaining in contact with other extremist and/or radicalising others.

Whether a deradicalisation program is delivered in prison, by a community based NGO, a state community outreach initiative or perhaps using the internet to affect change, when dealing with individuals it is useful to cater to differing typologies. Bjorgo (2011) showed some of the typologies of terrorists particularly in relation to motivations for joining and remaining in the group. This type of categorising can “aid to develop more specific and targeted strategies for preventing violent radicalisation” (Bjorgo, 2011, p. 277). Bjorgo broke up the typologies into three main groups: ideological activists, drifters and followers, and socially frustrated youths. This then allows for the more targeted strategy of disengagement or deradicalisation. For example, ideological activists may be more susceptible to a counter narrative, disillusioned when group goals are not met or vulnerable when their leadership is challenged by perhaps leaked information. Drifters and followers are in the group for a sense of belonging, thus social pressure may facilitate leaving (friends, family or love interest) or the recognition that they are being used by the leaders for their own ends. Socially frustrated youths are those with negative social backgrounds, (broken homes, exposure to violence, or anger with regard to discrimination); this demographic would benefit from policies of social integration of minority populations and from educational initiatives. As we saw with counter
radicalisation, where in-depth knowledge of the community was critical, the same can be said for deradicalisation in relation to in-depth knowledge of the individual.

One of the often quoted scholarly works in the deradicalisation literature is that of Bjorgo (2003) who described the various deradicalisation programs of Europe starting in 1996-97 in Norway. These initiatives, entitled Exit, were aimed at right-wing extremist groups (predominantly neo-Nazi) and had strong results. In a discipline where strong results are rare, the Exit programs are often referred to, even though the interventions were not aimed at Islamists or jihadis. The Bjorgo (2003) article highlights “push” and “pull” factors\(^{13}\) for leaving the group. Push factors include: negative social sanctions (social isolation, stigmatisation); loss of faith in the ideology and politics of the group or movement; things are going too far (with regards to violence); disillusioned with the inner workings and activities of the group; losing confidence, status and position in the group; after a while they become exhausted and can no longer take the pressure (Bjorgo, 2003). Pull factors include: a longing for the freedoms of a ‘normal’ life; getting too old for what they are doing; One of the strongest motives for leaving a militant racist or nationalist youth group is to establish a family with new responsibilities for spouse and children (Bjorgo, 2003). Whilst this work was seminal, it is important to keep in mind that racist right-wing groups are not the same as Islamist or jihadi groups and therefore there is no reason to think that all the same measures will be equally transferable and successful. With this in mind, Butt and Tuck (2014) set out to evaluate the European deradicalisation programs (these programs included counter radicalisation work but several had targeted interventions) in the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Germany. These included the Exit programs and various Islamist/jihadi focussed initiatives. The authors summarised some of the key findings which include: programs must be context specific; there must be working relationships and trust between project partners and stakeholders; the sharing of information between projects is vital; tailored programs for individuals; commitment of staff; fostering of personal relationships between practitioners and participants; former extremists seen as crucial voices in programs, whilst perceived state influence can be counterproductive (Butt & Tuck, 2014).

In Muslim-majority countries various deradicalisation programs have been implemented. Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, Jordan, Malaysia, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen are eight such places which were examined by El-Said (2012). His report aimed to

\(^{13}\) Nordicks (2009, p. 303) agreed and added to this list of push and pull factors, although without a significant focus on Islamism or jihadism. See Noricks, D. M. E. in Davis, P. K., & Cragin, K. (Eds.) (2009). *Social science for counterterrorism: Putting the pieces together.* Rand Corporation.
highlight best practices in counter radicalisation and deradicalisation by analysing the various state responses to violent extremism. The main findings that were noted as conducive to success were: the role of popular support combined with a committed, charismatic, political leadership; the role of families; the role of civil society; and the role and quality of the clerics and scholars involved\(^\text{14}\) (El-Said, 2012). Johnston (2009) examined Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Singapore and their related programs and noted what was important to success: reform within prison structures has to be on the table, knowledgeable and well respected Islamic clerics are vital as interlocutors, cultural norms play a role, monetary support to families of detainees is important and after care (post release) programs are essential. The Yemeni deradicalisation program (discontinued in 2005), has been called a failure, Porges described how the program was underfunded, lacked a comprehensive approach (focused only on ideology revision) and was part of a social and political environment not conducive to success (Porges, 2010). Thus, the Yemeni case is instructive, a holistic approach to CT includes a deradicalisation program that is equally so.

Saudi Arabia is often cited as having the longest running and most well-funded of the deradicalisation programs. Casptack (2016) explains that the prison program “target[s] individuals’ religious convictions, psychological states, socio-economic positions, family groups, and even romantic lives, [this enables] the Saudi government to reshape all aspects of the detainees’ lives, offering them a complete break with their jihadist pasts” (Casptack, 2016). The Saudi program is considered to be a holistic approach to deradicalisation, by strengthening all aspects of a detainee’s life and compelling the family to be involved - from an academic perspective it ostensibly ticks all the boxes. Casptack states the Saudi program is generally considered a success despite some “hardcore” jihadis not taking to the program. Although the literature does cite the Saudi program as tentatively successful, reports have surfaced which show the program in a different light. One report cites how “the [deradicalisation] centre is actually a front to train jihadists to "fight under their cloak - under the royal Saudi cloak, under the religious establishment cloak” (Osbourne, 2016). Also, detainees that have been through the program have ended up in senior al-Qaeda positions (BBC News, 2015).

\(^\text{14}\) For example, the Saudis made use of sahwaist elements, a group known to have collectively deradicalised after imprisonment in the 1990s. It was mostly from this group that credible clerics, psychologists and scientists were drawn in the formulation of a comprehensive counselling program.
In Sri Lanka researchers have developed a deradicalisation program with sorely needed and promising empirical results. Kruglanski et al. (2014) first set out to present a theoretical, empirically supported analysis of radicalization into violence. The theory of violent radicalization is based on the notion of the “quest for significance”, which is described with reference to various psychological motivations and the adoption of extremist ideology. This theory informed the subsequent deradicalisation initiative in Sri Lanka with relation to captured Tamil Tigers (former insurgents/terrorists). The authors argued a program without a focus on ideological reorientation can have at least a positive short term effect. The program focused on separating leaders from followers, a strong individualistic focus on spiritual activities (art and yoga), and vocational education as a means for regaining personal significance. This is useful as it provides some empirical evidence of deradicalisation with a specific focus based on a specific theory. Whilst this is not focused on jihadis, the underlying psychological motivations suggest that their approach may have a broader use. Figure 2 shows how support for armed struggle by the Tamils dropped after completion of the program.

![Figure 2. Support for armed struggle as a function of time and rehabilitation (Kruglanski, 2014).](image)

On the subject of prison rehabilitation in relation to terrorists, it has been argued that restraint (with regards punitive attitudes), patience and resources are key to success – this then paves the way for the creation of one of the best resources in the fight against terrorism, which is ex-terrorists (Gunaratna, 2011). Gunaratna (2011, pp. 73-76) gave us a working model of prison rehabilitation paraphrased here:
Those selected to undergo rehabilitation should be viewed as beneficiaries and no longer as inmates or detainees;

- Rehabilitation should begin on day one of arrest;
- Rehabilitation is a collective effort not only by investigative officers and operations officers but by the clergy and the academia;
- As religious justification was used to bring about the concept of hate and violence, counselling by the clergy should be an essential part of the program;
- Successful rehabilitation requires the continuous study of the evolving terrorist narrative and ideology as well as their perceived and real grievances and aspirations;
- Constant training and education of the professional and support staff at the rehabilitation centre is essential;
- Trained, dedicated, and expert staff is needed to classify and profile the detainee and inmates;
- Resources are needed to create an environment conducive for counselling;
- No rehabilitation program will achieve its desired impact unless the government works to counter the extremism dormant in the community;
- No one can guarantee that a person’s mindset can be changed through rehabilitation (post release monitoring);
- It has already been mentioned that the government and the ulema have to work together for a successful rehabilitation program;
- Formulate, implement, and manage a comprehensive security framework to rehabilitate the detainees and inmates.

This working model has a heavy focus on “religious re-education”, which can be contentious in Western states where the government does not wish to get involved in matters of religion. Also, as we have seen, some programs and initiatives place far less emphasis on religion per se. Nevertheless, Gunaratna (2011, p. 77) contended that religious rehabilitation is key and “the [any] government should understand that religious justification was used to bring about the terrorist mind”. Furthermore, the ulema (Muslim scholars) need to have a deep understanding of the ideology and psychology at play with Islamist inmates.

In summary, the deradicalisation literature, whilst in its infancy, does highlight specific actions that may be conducive to reversing radicalisation. Empirically, more work is needed as Schmid (2013) showed because there is but a handful of reliable empirical work. For example, the highest rated hypotheses include:
• Social interaction between the VEO [Violent Extremist Organisation] and ‘the other’ helps chances for deradicalisation;
• Deradicalisation/disengagement is more likely to succeed when efforts are initiated by the VEO leadership;
• Deradicalisation/disengagement of VEO actors is often preceded by traumatic/significant event;
• The more psychological and emotional support that an ex-member of a militant group has access to post de-radicalisation/disengagement, the less likely he/she is to rejoin the extremist group in the future;
• On the whole, positive inducements seem more effective than negative ones in de-radicalising/disengaging (Schmid, 2013, p. 30).

Finally, this section was able to solicit some general best practices from across the literature with regard to counter terrorism and deradicalisation:
• It appears that perceived government involvement in a program can be counterproductive and NGOs may have a better chance at success;
• Popular support combined with a committed, charismatic, political leadership is conducive to success;
• Initiatives must contain a counter-ideological component;
• Prison reform must be on the table where needed;
• Programs should, where possible, acquire the help of respected Islamic scholars but partnerships should be considered carefully;
• Programs should be holistic, focusing on all aspects of the radicalised individual (psychological, social psychological, religious and vocational);
• Funding of programs is required to meet the standards of a holistic approach;
• Families and civil society have a place in deradicalisation programs and are instrumental for counter radicalisation;
• Foster personal relationships between practitioners and participants; former extremists are seen as crucial voices for deradicalisation and counter radicalisation narratives;
• Top down group denunciation of violence is possible and can have wide reaching effects;
• All programs should take into account the specific local context and reveal a thorough understanding of the community;
• The precursor to policy or programs has to be a deep knowledge of the process of radicalisation, ideally with a working model or theory;
• Develop awareness training for individuals who work with young people to enable easier identification of radicalisation indicators.
• Find ways to evaluate success and failure.

Conclusion

This chapter surveyed the literature on radicalisation, counter radicalisation and deradicalisation. It started by organising the literature on radicalisation into a five-part model, which helped to explain the process and will also assist this thesis to analyse counter/deradicalisation programs. The five-part model consists of identity crisis, grievances, socialisation, ideology and epistemological failure. The key contribution of this model is that it is explanatory in nature and can be a useful tool for counter/deradicalisation work; it utilises the various and most recent scholarly work in this field and is also multidisciplinary in approach. The Socratic method, based on elements of behaviourism and constructivism, was specifically highlighted as a way to address epistemological failure in the Islamist radicalisation process. Key findings in relation to counter and deradicalisation strategies were highlighted, such as: having a deep knowledge of the community you are trying to help; moving counter and deradicalisation work into civil society (providing some distance from the state or the perception thereof); ensuring that Islamism is first understood by practitioners and then challenged; ensuring those on the front line are sufficiently trained; funding and resourcing requirements as necessary, which is often not done; and recognising that success will be hard to measure. This chapter cited various scholarly and governmental sources in order to draw out what is known about counter terrorism and deradicalisation, which will be useful when analysing the selected organisations described in Chapter Three, and Chapter Four.
Chapter Three: Diving Deeper into Programs and Policies

Introduction

This chapter will introduce the selected counter/deradicalisation organisations and programs that have been chosen for inclusion in this thesis. These organisations and programs have the goal of mitigating terrorism and radicalisation through prevention or deradicalising individuals that display signs of radicalisation. This chapter was able to solicit useful information from these organisations through the use of semi-structured face-to-face interviews and where possible, through site visits. These data were able to be complemented with other resources that the organisations generate themselves, for example, website information and research papers available on their websites. Further information on Australia is also presented in this chapter. The goal of this chapter is to present the information gathered in a largely descriptive format, which will then provide the next chapter with a foundation for analysis (noting reoccurring themes, anomalies, best practices, lessons learned, how the data relates to the literature and the five-part model of radicalisation). Presenting the data descriptively in this chapter will allow others to potentially draw different conclusions from them or see different trends. This chapter provides the data which can then be used to address the following research questions:

1. What is known about the process of radicalisation into Islamist extremism?\(^{15}\)

2. What is known about deradicalisation and preventing radicalisation?\(^{16}\)

3. What can UK, European and Moroccan counter/deradicalisation programs tell us in relation to best practice and lessons learned?

4. Do these counter/deradicalisation programs align with the scholarly literature on radicalisation counter/deradicalisation?

As noted by research question three, this chapter looks to the UK, Europe and Morocco in order examine the realities of individuals’ undergoing of counter radicalisation and deradicalisation work. The interviewees and their organisations are on the front line in relation to soft power approaches to counter terrorism. The following provides an overview of the organisations that were selected. Access to members of the organisations was fortunately successful at first attempt. This was achieved by direct messaging on Twitter and by email, with the exception of Morocco. The meeting with the director of the Institute for

\(^{15}\) This question is largely addressed in previous chapters, however where appropriate this chapter will inform this research question.

\(^{16}\) Ibid.
the Training of Imams, Mourchidins and Mourchidats in Rabat and the site visit was
organised by my thesis supervisor with the support of the university, EGE Rabat. As
previously mentioned, all interviews were face-to-face at the premises of the organisation.

The interviews took place in quiet meeting rooms and lasted from between 45 – 60
minutes. The data collected reflects the views of the interviewees, thus a differing list of
potential interviewees in this line of work may have solicited a different overall perceptive,
particularly given that some topics covered are sensitive and politicised. However, these
organisations were specifically chosen (as noted below) due to their level of expertise and
front-line experience in this area. Moreover, they reflect the positions from three different
geographic regions and cultures. Furthermore, within this field or counter radicalisation and
particularly deradicalisation finding experts delivering programs is challenging, this adds
weight to the interviewees selected, as least until their perspectives can be situated into a
larger body of knowledge on these subjects.

The following is a list of countries and organisations that were selected for inclusion.
More information will be added below. This next section explains why these organisations in
particular were chosen. These organisations and countries were selected due to the following.

The United Kingdom:

The UK has had a continuous struggle with Islamist terrorism since the 7/7 central
London bombings in 2005 and more recently the 2017 Westminster, Manchester and London
Bridge attacks. Furthermore, it saw an estimated 760 foreign fighters recruited to ISIS, some
of whom have returned home (Kirk, 2016). Beginning in 2003, the UK implemented its now
long standing government policy entitled Prevent, which is part of the broader Contest
counter terrorism policy. Developed by the Home Office, Prevent is the UK counter
radicalisation policy, within Prevent entails the governments targeted intervention policy,
entitled Chanel (which is defined in this thesis as a deradicalisation policy). The policy has
since been refined, once in 2009 and then again in 2011 and its budget just for 2008-11 added
up to £140 million (Thomas, 2012). Whilst the policy continues to be revised, its aim is
generally understood to be “a ‘hearts and minds’ preventative approach to reducing the long-
term terror threat by ‘draining the pool’ of potential terrorists” (Thomas, 2012, p. 55). These
state policies are instructive for the purposes of this thesis; they provide a Western context,
and represent a long standing approach to counter terrorism and deradicalisation.

The two organisations that were selected were the Active Change Foundation (ACF)
and Quilliam. ACF (est. 2003) is a grass roots youth centre that works within Prevent with
practitioners working to steer young people away from the process of radicalisation and in
some cases towards deradicalisation. As ACF works at the local level, this then provides this chapter with useful information about putting policy into practice. According to its website, Quilliam is the world’s first counter extremism organisation. It is a well-funded and resourced think tank based in London. It is named after William Quilliam, a British convert to Islam who founded Britain’s first mosque (Nawaz, 2013). Quilliam has significant influence as a policy advising organisation and not just within the UK. As yet, no organisations compare to Quilliam in relation to work in the counter and deradicalisation area, due to its funding and initial partnership with the UK Government. Also, its founders and their testimonies were influential in developing the wider UK counter terrorism policy (Thomas, 2012). As part of the data gathering process for this thesis, the researcher visited the offices of ACF and met with a representative from Quilliam in November 2016 and conducted interviews with Mike Jervis from ACF and Jonathon Russell from Quilliam.

Europe:

Due to the time and space restrictions of this thesis, it was not possible to conduct interviews across European counter and deradicalisation organisations. In order to attempt an overview of European initiatives in this field, the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) in Amsterdam, The Netherlands was chosen. As its name suggests, it is a collaborative network of those working in this field from all across Europe. RAN was founded in 2011 and has attracted over 2 000 professionals from all EU Member States. Its main goal is to connect first-line practitioners around Europe working daily with those vulnerable to radicalisation, as well as with those who have already been radicalised (Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2017). The main office in the Netherlands was visited in November 2016 and an interview was conducted with the representative, Wessel Haanstra. This provided the researcher with relevant information concerning the research questions as RAN also seeks to answer these questions in a European context.\footnote{The researcher did not expect one representative from RAN to speak on behalf of all of Europe. However due to the fact that RAN is a collaborative network with professionals from all EU member states, its voice is nonetheless a critical one in the European context.}

Morocco:

Morocco provides an important Muslim-majority country perspective in the area of counter and deradicalisation. Through participation in a university-organised study tour of selected Muslim-majority countries, including Morocco, which took place in December 2016, the researcher was able to gain access to the Institute Mohammad VI of Training Imams, Mourchidins and Mourchidats. The centre is a well-funded training institute for aspiring
imams, Muslim community leaders and service providers (males and females). An initiative of the King of Morocco, Mohammad VI (inaugurated in 2015 by the King), this is an attempt at counter radicalisation, and in some cases deradicalisation for Morocco and some other African and European countries through the provision of instruction and training pertaining to the study of Islam. Students are also trained in a range of areas, such as electronics, agriculture, textiles and social media, so as to enhance their potential for employment upon graduation. The program is inter-governmental and graduates are expected to return to their various countries of origin after graduating. Being affiliated with the prestigious al-Qarawiyyin University in Fez, Moroccan graduates often find employment within the country as imams and in other positions that require religious knowledge. In this way, a Moroccan perspective can aid in providing an Islam-West comparison.

More information on the selected organisations will appear below along with an explanation as to why these particular organisations are important. It is important to note how there is a limited number of organisations within the area of counter and deradicalisation work across the globe. Therefore information provided by the selected organisations is in critical need.

**Data Collection and Evaluation**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with leaders or representatives of the selected organisations in all three countries. The list of questions, was more of a checklist of topics to be dealt with (Corbetta, 2003). This provided a guideline for the interviewer, which kept the discourse within the relevant framework needed for data acquisition, whilst at the same time allowing the respondent ample freedom. As Corbetta (2003, p. 5) explained “Questioning can be regarded both as a means of collecting information and as a means of understanding social reality. The qualitative approach uses questioning in order to collect information on people, their behaviour and social features”. This chapter presents information collected to understand a social reality as well as present information collected on people, their behaviour and social features. The interviews are a way of gaining a deeper understanding of the social reality of policy and programs within the counter and deradicalisation field; more specifically, of how the organisations are doing this work, what works and what the challenges are. Rather than seeking a deep understanding of the personal experience of the interviewee, the interview instead draws out relevant data in relation to the functions of non-governmental organisations and institutions of the state. However, in all cases, the interviewees are involved directly with those within the communities or working
for the communities. Thus, critical feedback was able to be acquired from these communities and those working within civil society.

This qualitative approach has been established within the field. El-Said (2012, p. 2) undertook similar research: “…by studying the counter-radicalisation and de-radicalisation policies implemented in eight Muslim-majority states (Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, Jordan, Malaysia, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Yemen), the [El-Said] report identifies certain key factors which can be considered as conducive to successful de-radicalisation programmes”. These key factors include a national consensus behind a particular state policy, committed leadership, engaging civil society, and a recognition that religious counselling is insufficient in itself. El-Said’s report (2012) went on to note that its goals were to identify lessons learnt and best practices from these eight states which could help to inform the international community. El-Said (2012) visited many of the states and conducted interviews. This thesis was influenced by this methodology and seeks to replicate and add to this type of existing research. Identifying and analysing various counter and deradicalisation programs and policies has also been utilised in earlier research such as Johnson (2009), Porges (2010) and Neumann (2010). Johnson (2009) implemented a case study approach which examined Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Indonesian and Singapore. Neumann (2010) also used case studies written by experts on the particular country being analysed, which focussed on France, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom, the United States, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, Algeria, Egypt, Indonesia, Saudi-Arabia, Singapore, Israel and Yemen. These studies help to provide comparative analysis between different state policies and programs. In doing this, the goal is to learn from other states, to understand what works and to avoid costly or counterproductive practices. This type of research is important particularly in the relatively new field of deradicalisation and of course learning how to rehabilitate terrorists provides insight in to what prevention policies or programs could be generated. This thesis will not only add to the literature on this subject, but provide updated and new data on the continuously changing landscape of Islamist radicalisation and contemporary international terrorism. For example, with the emergence of ISIS in 2014 and the foreign fighter phenomenon, states constantly have to evolve with the nature of the threat.

The interviews were audio recorded and subsequently mined for the relevant information as guided by the interview questionnaire. This ensured that information was recorded accurately and was available to be used later for comparison with the responses of

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18 From transcribed notes of the audio recordings.
other interviewees. The questionnaire was heavily informed by the literature review and therefore consisted of open questions such as: “What are the goals of your organisation?”; “How does the state influence the work of your organisation?”; “What role do families and civil society play?”; “Do you make use of Islamic scholars/leaders?”; “What are the challenges?”; and, “How do you measure success?” The next section will articulate this information and will be predominantly descriptive. Once this information is set out, it then allows for an analysis of what was learned. The analysis will be guided from what was learnt in the literature review, specifically the five-part model of radicalisation as well as what is known about processes of counter/deradicalisation. The analysis took influence from the Colaizzi method of phenomenological enquiry, namely, transcription, extracting significant statements, and aggregating theme clusters for analysis (Edward and Welch, 2011). This chapter uses similar methods to the other studies in counter and deradicalisation cited above, drawing out best practices and lessons learned, adding to the literature on this subject. This chapter builds on this approach though by analyzing the programs through the five-part model and what we know about counter/deradicalisation already. Grounding the analysis in an understanding (explanatory model) of radicalisation places this chapter in a better position to examine counter and deradicalisation programs. The five-part model has the potential to assist in the evaluation of other policies and programs not included in this thesis.

The Interviews

Active Change Foundation, London, United Kingdom

The Active Change Foundation (ACF), a youth leadership organisation, was established in 2003 by Hanif Qadir. “Hanif’s vision back in 2003 was to create a safe space where young people could come and chat about the issues that were troubling them and where messages of hatred and violence could be challenged” (ACF Website). ACF is holding to this initial vision according to the Strategy & Interventions Director.19 ACF has over 2000 young people enrolled in the youth centre, mostly male and mostly from Muslim backgrounds. The foundation has a relationship with the state with regards to the UK Government’s Prevent policy; it works within Prevent but “negotiates its own terms and the charity comes first”.20 ACF is constantly negotiating different strategies and approaches with state institutions such as the police. One issue of contention, according to ACF, is attempting to apply a one-size-fits-all policy into practice. As the individuals are the focus, there need to

19 Interview with Mike Jervis, 21/11/16.
20 Interview with Mike Jervis, 21/11/16.
be tailored prevention and intervention strategies. Also, whilst it does not seem to matter which side of the political spectrum is in power at any given time, ACF will (and has) broken ties with state support and sponsorship when it feels policies are counter-productive or alienating for the Muslim community, stating: “we cannot rely on their dictates when ACF sees things differently”.21

Social context: The counter and deradicalisation work of ACF starts with breaking the ties of the individual to the recruiter, whether online or offline. The interviewee reported that the former tends to be easier than the latter. This disengages the individual from the group and the ideology which then allows the focus to shift back to the individual. “If the offline recruiter is hard to break ties with, ACF will then report to Chanel which then forces the recruiter into self-preservation mode which disengages the youth”.22 The security services are sometimes involved to help identify the “at risk youth” or to inform ACF as to the possibility of this individual or group being dangerous. This possibility, it was noted, should be made clear by the security services to keep community relations respectable. ACF attempts to tailor strategies for differing communities by generating bonding and bridging capital, which allows the ‘community arm’ to go out and deal with hate and xenophobia wherever it surfaces. This can then translate into community resilience.

Inter-community relations: Hate and xenophobia were highlighted by the Director as key ingredients for radicalisation – this is where the focus sits for prevention and intervention for ACF. ACF addresses these traits through workshops (for people who may be flirting with the idea of extremism), which involves conversations that explore where the hate lies, why it has emerged and the source of the influence. As the representative stated: “It’s like a “penicillin jab”, a small dose of how the ideas manifest, then we can look at what the individual’s values and belief systems are”.23 For example, perhaps the individual hates immigrants or white people; ACF drills down into exactly where such hate is coming from and why - “the defining factor for the radicaliser or the radicalisee is hate; this can either be grown or reduced”.24

Self-actualisation: ACF uses a “well-being model” which is defined as asking the individual what they want; how they can get it, and what is standing in the way. Hate and xenophobia, ACF contends, sit within your “non-well-being” model; and more prosperous things such as education should be sought. To prevent radicalisation, ACF looks

21 Interview with Mike Jervis, 21/11/16.
22 Interview with Mike Jervis, 21/11/16.
23 Interview with Mike Jervis, 21/11/16.
24 Interview with Mike Jervis, 21/11/16.
at the way in which the person is processing the (ideological) information coming in, the pathway of the information coming in, whether it is through a friend, family or perhaps online. Once all these factors are examined, this then allows ACF to deliver an intervention plan. The most significant aspect of individuals’ coping strategies is what ACF calls “emotional logic”, which is defined as being unable to cope with a problem and a subsequent slip into “depression”25. Following this, a recruiter steps in with answers - to which the individual receives the information ‘unfiltered’. The intervention looks at raw emotions in terms of management, not necessarily solutions, to deal with grievances. ACF helps the individual to look at the same situation from a different perspective. “Emotion is always going to block the solution until you make it benign”.26 No case is really closed for ACF. The intervention may be over, but the relationships still exist. ACF is always monitoring for slippage, by bringing individuals back in if necessary.

Support networks: According to the foundation, families play a benign role in the intervention process as they are unfamiliar with how to help and this is the reason they contacted ACF in the first place. They are incorporated into the program only to the extent they can help the individual and family cope with the outside pressure of extremism. In some instances the families are counter-productive due to their beliefs and have become a case for intervention as well. Whilst families are largely dismissed, it should be noted that as part of preventing radicalisation they were vital for the initial identification of the at-risk individual and in many cases are a point of contact for an individual in a terrorist group. ACF has had cases where they have brought people out of terror cells – success in deradicalisation. The foundation has staff in Syria trying to bring people back home and non-UK citizens have contacted ACF to try an attempt “long arm intervention”. ACF does have an international presence largely in relation to training. The very successful #notinmyname campaign is an example of the influence and wide ranging appeal of the ACF’s international presence and community engagement.

Islamic reference: Religious counselling is not central to the ACF program; the Director cited only two cases were the foundation used religious figures to help with intervention: “usually the problem is the processing of information, “how you know what you

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25 The representative noted the nebulous nature of the term “depression”. “Anomie” may better define the circumstance that Mr Jervis was describing.

26 Interview with Mike Jervis, 21/11/16.
know”, what is the value of that knowledge and where will it lead you”?

When discussing the foundation of empirical research that ACF relies on, the term “active research” was used, which was defined as using differing academic models of intervention/counselling depending on the case. Measuring success for an individual case is predicated on ACF firstly cutting ties with recruiters and the family, providing coping mechanisms to insulate the individual from falling back into old patterns, whilst keeping an eye out for certain factors. Success for the community means building the capacity of the voluntary sector so that it can implement strategies when it sees hate arising.

**Major challenges:** When asked what the biggest challenge to the work of ACF is, the respondent spoke of human resources, thus funding and training is a major concern. Also, the representative spoke of parallel “Prevents”, the emergence of other overarching counter radicalisation strategies by segments of society; this, he argues, kills the greater attempt at counter radicalisation and counter terrorism strategies.

**Outreach:** ACF ran a very successful campaign under the hashtag #notinmyname which was praised in a statement by US President Barack Obama. The campaign’s mission statement is:

Islam teaches peace, respect and love. ISIS/Da’esh is hiding behind a false Islam. ISIS has nothing to do with what we stand for. Tell ISIS that they can’t murder in the name of your faith, in your name. Denounce their violence in your own words, let your voice be heard by rejecting their ideology of hate and show people what true Muslims stand for (ACF Website, 2017).

Also, the ACF Young Leaders Program’s “aim is to turn young people into community leaders by teaching leadership skills, crisis management and critical thinking within a problem-solving environment” (ACF Website, 2017). The program has a holistic telos by teaching “skills which help [vulnerable youth] combat street, drug and gang crime, domestic violence and bullying, as well as being given the tools to assist them in preventing radicalisation and violent extremism” (ACF Website, 2017. Finally, ACF runs a One-Day Prevent Training course, which is perhaps best described by the learning outcomes:

- Understand extremists’ narratives, ideologies and views;
- Recognise the current threat picture and how it evolves;
- Identify recruitment processes;
- Characterise people’s vulnerabilities to extremism;

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27 Interview with Mike Jervis, 21/11/16.
Formulate counter-narratives to extremism narratives;
Fulfil your roles and responsibilities as part of the Prevent Duty;
Create an intervention plan to counter radicalisation (ACF Website, 2017).

Quilliam, London, United Kingdom

The counter extremism think tank, Quilliam, was established by the former Islamists Ed Husain and Maajid Nawaz. These two were influential in UK policy in relation to counter terrorism. As noted above, their testimonies were sought after by the UK Government, and hence Quilliam was seen to be an important development for the UK. Both Husain (2007) and Nawaz (2013) wrote seminal autobiographical accounts of their processes of radicalisation and subsequent deradicalisation. Nawaz in particular has gone on to be a public figure in this field, championing liberal values, particularly through his radio show.

The Quilliam website expresses it operations as follows:

We aim to generate creative, informed and inclusive discussions to counter the ideological underpinnings of terrorism, while simultaneously providing evidence-based policy recommendations to governments, and building civil society networks and programmes to lead the change towards a more positive future (Quilliam, 2017).

Social relations: Quilliam brings together around 50 other NGOs from across Europe and is beginning to expand into North Africa and North America. According to Jonathon Russell, Quilliam’s Head of Policy, the work of the foundation is primarily preventative in nature. Quilliam is actively working towards moving the work of counter radicalisation towards civil society and away from law enforcement. Quilliam has a focus on counter-speech and building the capacity of civil society. The foundation notes how the best people to provide counter-speech are families, friends, teachers and trusted voices. But these people didn’t have a tool kit for addressing the issues and didn’t see it as their role (they thought it was the government’s role).

“These trusted voices were afraid of putting a foot wrong, and didn’t know how to avoid mistakes. Or didn’t have clear in their own minds answers to key questions. For example, they don’t understand the Islam – Islamism distinction or the difference between becoming more religious and heading towards extremism”.

28 Under the UK’s Counter Terrorism policy if you are a government worker or certain members of civil society you may be required to take part in Prevent training.
29 Interview with Jonathon Russell, 24/11/16.
30 Interview with Jonathon Russell, 24/11/16.
31 Counter-speech, like counter narratives aim to undermine the extremist ideologies.
32 Interview with Jonathon Russell, 24/11/16.
**Outreach:** Quilliam partnered with a Dutch psychological training organisation and a Spanish victims of terror organisation to develop a tool kit for teachers, families, journalists, youth workers, religious leaders and community leaders - what is now known as the TERRA Tool Kit. The TERRA Tool Kit was challenging for some people at first, as they resented being given more work to do. But when it was communicated that there is a shared responsibility between all civil societal front line workers, this then helped with the initial apprehension of carrying out the work. It was first rolled out in the UK, The Netherlands and Spain.

The Netherlands received it well, Spain thought they didn’t have a problem and thus didn’t see the necessity. The UK and The Netherlands saw the need, and the UK was hesitant but The Netherlands said yes straight away noting how “this makes sense, we do this for drugs, we do this for sexual abuse, we do this for bullying”.

**Major challenges:** It was noted that the apprehension of adopting Prevent by the wider society in the UK may have been due to early mistakes, over securitisation and scepticism over Prevent. Also, softer Islamist organisations (Cage, Hizb ut-Tahrir) implemented a strategy to undermine Prevent. They were successful in co-opting some on the left side of politics by using human rights language, and claiming moral equality between incarcerated inmates at Guantanamo Bay and Prevent. They were making the claim that there is a war on Islam which is not unlike the claims within the Islamist ideology. It was further noted that some of these “softer” Islamists were hiding their Islamism from the public space. This was evidenced by the Trojan Horse Affair, where authorities discovered a secret Whatsapp group which was attempting to subvert six Birmingham schools by manoeuvring members into leadership positions and to influence the curriculum – a standard gradualist infiltration strategy. This was the first instance which showed coordination by groups that promote a “moderate” grievance narrative with those that are using the explicit Islamist ideology.

**Support networks:** “It is all very well to say that civil society should take a more active role in CVE, but most people don’t understand what that means”. Hence the creation and partnership with FATE (Families Against Terrorism and Extremism). An organisation such as FATE, it was argued, can play a powerful role in counter and deradicalisation because everyone knows what family means and you can thus potentially talk more

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33 The TERRA Tool Kit consists of counter radicalisation training manuals for teachers and youth workers, police officers, prison officers, religious leaders and journalists.
34 Interview with Jonathon Russell, 24/11/16.
35 Interview with Jonathon Russell, 24/11/16.
emotionally about the effects of radicalisation and terrorism. Moreover in the UK it is your duty under Prevent (as a teacher for example) or it is your prerogative as a family member to be trained and aware of the important of counter radicalisation. Families have the reach to prevent radicalisation or to notice the early indicators, for example someone who has withdrawn from society.

Quilliam helps the NGOs in its network to create videos and develop counter narratives online, building the capacity of the network to run counter speech campaigns. This involves the use of social media and knowing how to use it and how to use the right words. Also, what to expect from the media and how to talk with media outlets when these issues of language arise. Quilliam also advises organisations with respect to funding, or for example, how to get advertisement credits on Facebook. Quilliam has been successful at getting access to funding and therefore is useful at teaching the network how to lobby government. “The network has access to real people however and that’s their strength. Quilliam doesn’t just want to spend money in London it seeks, for example to help Casablanca or Marrakesh”.

Quilliam has also partnered and worked with the Kofi Annan Foundation - Extremely Together. This CVE project used what was described as a Champion Model. Extremely Together ran a competition for young counter extremism leaders with the goal of creating and promoting role models and raising their profiles. The representative noted how “ten [young leaders] were chosen from various countries with the goal of creating hubs of CVE work and for them to go on and train more people. Replicating the role model leadership that terrorists have and making CVE sexy”.

Islamic reference: The representative from Quilliam discussed some of the overarching strategic problems that have been problematic for Britain, namely, the effort to co-opt non-violent Islamists and to tacitly support their ideas about jihad, but to argue that they do it elsewhere, outside of Britain, in a similar way to what Saudi Arabia has done. “The ideas need to be challenged so that a group like ISIS isn’t a draw. The trouble is these relationships were built and now we are dealing with the problem of trying to challenge Salafism”. Quilliam has five different theological researchers from five different denominations, with the aim of promoting religious pluralism, and the notion of being British and Muslim.

36 The use of language and a clear definition of terms are important. For example, using Islamism instead of Islam.
37 Interview with Jonathon Russell, 24/11/16.
38 Interview with Jonathon Russell, 24/11/16
39 Interview with Jonathon Russell, 24/11/16
**Evaluation:** Most Quilliam departments are conducting research and update best practices by running programs then evaluating, which then feeds back into the research.

“FATE will continue to change as it is based on results of the research. For example, they started out treating the family as a single unit, as time went on they realised that mothers are great crime preventers, older brothers are better interveners, fathers particularly in the North African context are better at challenging some of the narratives that the extremists generate”.

**Further information:** Quilliam, as a think tank, has a wealth of research papers behind a pay wall available on its website. It is beyond the capacity of this chapter to include this wealth of information. However, it is useful to highlight where Quilliam places its attention, this is indicative of what is sees as important, as it is informed by their own research. For example, this statement sums up its current action:

Quilliam Global runs programmes that combine civil society capacity-building and communications to prevent violent extremism. We currently coordinate the Families Against Terrorism and Extremism (FATE) network, support Extremely Together for the Kofi Annan Foundation in partnership with One Young World, and have contributed to TERRA, a European Commission-funded partnership of European organisations that provides training for frontline workers, creates robust educational resources, and evidence-based policy advice (Quilliam Website, 2017).

As a way of examining how Quilliam puts its research into action, it is instructive to look at the TERRA tool kit. As noted above, these manuals provide those who are potential witnesses of radicalisation with information on how to address the issue. The manual for teachers and youth workers, for example, emphasises and makes the reader aware of background factors which may increase the risk of radicalisation:

- Searching for an identity. Although all teenagers are to some degree undergoing this process, those who feel a lack of belonging may be especially vulnerable. Radical groups, which deliver clear rules on how to behave and dress, and even what kind of music to listen to, can be very attractive to a young person who is seeking a way to belong.
- Connected to someone within a radical group. If a sibling, parent or close friend is known to be a member of a radical group, the influence on the individual within your group will be much stronger. It is always important to be aware that this person runs a higher risk of becoming radicalised.
- Experiencing discrimination, real or perceived. If a young person has experienced racism or seen that another ethnic, religious or political group has received

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40 Interview with Jonathon Russell, 24/11/16
preferential treatment, they are likely to feel resentful. If no legitimate solution for this state of affairs is provided, this person may feel drawn to a radical group, in the hope that a solution can be found through that channel instead.

- Introverted, lacking in friends, and the victim of bullying. Adolescents who are socially isolated may seek out the comfort and protection of a group identity (terratoolkit.eu, 2017).

Throughout the various manuals for different sectors of society, these background factors are highlighted. The manuals differ slightly in their content given the target audience and the differing levels of potential contact with a radicalisee. Some of the suggestions to mitigate the radicalisation process include: providing support in forming a stronger positive identity; making yourself available for support and advise; being aware that a young person who has social or familial connections to a radical group; respond proactively to any reports of racism or discrimination; keep communication open and tolerant; challenge and question the perception of discrimination; connect the vulnerable person with role models from within their own group; teach critical thinking on relevant issues and be aware that the radicalisation process may cease by itself (terratoolkit.eu, 2017). The manuals go on to include what to do if the process worsens, such as how and when to contact the authorities.

Radicalisation Awareness Network, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Established in 2003 by the European Commission, RAN provides a hub for practitioners and experts from around Europe, thus information from RAN provides a useful overview of counter and deradicalisation in Europe. According to the RAN website:

RAN is a network of frontline or grassroots practitioners from around Europe who work daily with people who have already been radicalised, or who are vulnerable to radicalisation. Practitioners include police and prison authorities, but also those who are not traditionally involved in counter-terrorism activities, such as teachers, youth workers, civil society representatives, local authorities representatives and healthcare professionals (RAN Website).

Coordination: The representative for RAN was able to explain how this network of practitioners share their experiences in nine working groups, each consisting of around 30 practitioners. These practitioners are often at the grass roots level.41 There is, for example, a working group on policing, education, and social/youth work. The practitioners gather first-hand information from the field and disseminate that information to each other and online. As

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41 The RAN philosophy is that “local is key” but they do some work advising at the national level and even with Jordan and Tunisia.
RAN is funded by the European Commission, it aims to support member states on a national strategy for CVE work and by hosting workshops. RAN combines information from the field and academia which it uses to advise the various member state governments. For each working group, RAN hosts four meetings a year and representatives attend the meetings from all over Europe. These meetings discuss long-term goals, for example if/when the “caliphate” falls in Iraq and Syria how member states can prepare for returning fighters, also what the refugee crisis means for radicalisation and terrorism in Europe. The main way of disseminating knowledge and sharing knowledge between practitioners is the working group meetings themselves and also the production of the various research papers.

Challenges and strengths: According to RAN most of the working groups have a focus on preventive work but some do address deradicalisation and exit programs in prisons; also some projects do address right-wing extremism, but they are in the minority. One of the challenges the representative noted was that due to the network being far reaching and a lot of people involved, defining terms is sometimes an issue. “RAN is trying to develop a list of terms so everyone is on the same page”. It was also noted that RAN has some distance from the local community as they only deal with the professionals in the area, meaning there is perhaps some distance between the funding and the community programs, which shows less state involvement (or perhaps the perception of less), which in turn may add legitimacy to the local programs. A strength of RAN is that the networks learn from one and other, thus when a particular member state has an issue with which they have no experience, RAN can facilitate a solution.

When discussing challenges that RAN has identified, it was noted how obstacles differ per location and working group. One big challenge was instances of multi-agency approaches to a case where the different groups were not working together, “a further hiccup is when there is weak coordination between the local and national levels, funds are at the national level but the work has to be done at the local level”. Information sharing is also a challenge in general. RAN works to keep prevention work on the table but explains how it is hard to quantify: “We see cases where it is working but we can almost never say look we stopped that person from becoming a terrorist - which is a challenge”. RAN just started
working with IMPACT\textsuperscript{47} which has a focus on evaluation. The representative stated that the numbers are usually very low for quantitative evaluation of counter radicalisation and deradicalisation programs and that unfortunately “often you just have stories”.\textsuperscript{48} A key point that practitioners should highlight when applying for funding and resources was that radicalisation is just one path that a person with the relevant background factors might go down, hence the importance of preventative work.

\textit{Islamic reference:} The representative noted how there is “a disconnect” between religious leaders and young people, and that the youth have questions and concerns. Spaces are needed where they feel safe to explore these questions and concerns, he explained. Sometimes, “depending on the case, a credible religious voice may be helpful with intervention/deradicalisation”.\textsuperscript{49} However, at the prevention level, it is more about discussing underlying issues and safe spaces to discuss these, rather than going on a theological tangent.

\textit{Support networks:} It was noted that many member states have been investing in training programs to raise awareness of radicalisation and some states have training programs where they train teachers, social workers and prison staff about the process of radicalisation, how to notice it and what to do if it gets to a point. Some practitioners find the work challenging as it is not in their area of expertise: “teachers for example have so many concerns and now they have to focus on radicalisation as well”.\textsuperscript{50} Families were explained as being crucial, as many of those that have travelled to Iraq and Syria still call their mothers. The representative argued the importance of “formers”, (ex-extremists) as being the most crucial and credible voices in counter and deradicalisation work.

\textit{Further information:} Much like Quilliam, RAN produces a wealth of papers that come out of the collaboration of professionals and practitioners from around Europe, which includes papers on foreign fighter returnees, the root causes of violent extremism, the role of gender in violent extremism and a handbook for the victims of terrorism. As a way of further understanding the outputs and recommendations, let us look at the \textit{RAN Issue Paper: The role of education in preventing radicalisation}. The paper states:

Institutions of formal education are key actors in preventing radicalisation. They foster shared values and critical thinking, and help students develop basic life skills and social competencies that are essential for active citizenship in democratic societies (Nordbruch, 2016).

\textsuperscript{47} IMPACT Europe is an organisation that works to analyse why certain approaches have succeeded or not, in order to develop expertise on what makes for successful interventions.
\textsuperscript{48} Interview with Wessel Haanstra, 28/11/16.
\textsuperscript{49} Interview with Wessel Haanstra, 28/11/16
\textsuperscript{50} Interview with Wessel Haanstra, 28/11/16
The paper goes on to note that teacher training in radicalisation awareness is essential but that teachers do not have to “reinvent the wheel”; they are used to dealing with difficult situations and conflicts and thus this will serve them well as a starting point for the prevention of radicalisation (Nordbruch, 2016).

Teachers should critically reflect on their own attitudes to the relevant issues surrounding radicalisation and consider what messages they are sending to students. In some cases the school and teaching environment might be the problem as they might foster discriminatory and stereotypical predispositions. The paper stresses that no student is invulnerable to radicalisation and that teachers “bear a particular responsibility to notice early signs of alienation and retreat and to respond appropriately” (Nordbruch, 2016, p. 13). Teaching should be fostering the students’ identification with society whilst at the same time reflecting the diversity of biographical, cultural and religious backgrounds. Furthermore, ‘us versus them’ narratives should be met with counter narratives. Creating a bond with the institution of teaching helps to prevent alienation and frustration among students. The paper states how social media, first-hand accounts and peers are effective strategies to reach the mind-set of the vulnerable student. Finally, the RAN Issue paper touches on the key issue of critical thinking which it is instructive to quote in full:

Schools provide ideal settings to empower students against discrimination and marginalisation, and to encourage critical thinking about controversial and sensitive issues (i.e. identity, religiosity, gender roles and international conflicts). While these topics might provoke strong emotions and heated debates, schools allow students to be introduced to various perspectives and experiences that would otherwise go unheard. Providing students with alternative messages is a means of challenging easy answers and ideological claims promoted by violent extremist actors (Nordbruch, 2016, p. 14).

Institute Mohammad VI of Training Imams, Rabat, Morocco

Goals and major challenges: In March 2015 King Mohammed VI of Morocco inaugurated in Rabat, the Institute Mohammad VI of Training Imams, Mourchidins and Mouchidats, a well-funded training institute for aspiring imams of all ages (some as young as 15) both male and female (women train to become community workers). According to the director of the institute, the imams will be taught a "correct understanding of Islam". The ideas promoted are inspired by the Malikite doctrine and school of thought, which aims to be centrist if not progressive in its ideas. Additionally, students are taught Islamic principles according to the particular school of thought (madhab) prominent in their respective communities or country. By training thousands of imams from Africa, Europe and elsewhere,

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51 Interview with the director, 20/12/16.
the King seeks to spread a moderate interpretation of Islam throughout the world, as an antidote to takfiri notions that have been prevalent for the last few decades. Takfir is an Arabic word that is the closest equivalent of excommunication in Islam; it is a pronouncement against a Muslim, declaring him or her to be an unbeliever. Takfir is prominently used by adherents to the Salafist and Wahhabist brands of Sunni Islam. It is these particular brands of Islam that the Institute has identified as a central challenge in the fight against Islamist extremism. The school has around 1000 students with 300 more to come, which includes women. It is funded by the King and thus is an overt and state sponsored counter radicalisation initiative.

The director cites the institution’s main goals as “rectifying religious precepts, such as falsely understood concepts like jihad and to train imams for community preaching”. In six cases the institute had to deal with aspiring imams that had radical views. To counter this, these particular imams were made to take an oath to moderate. The director argued that much of the problem is superficial understandings of Islam and that those with deep and correct understandings should be held up as role models. Former extremists are not used at the institute; however they, too, are held up as examples of successful moderation and deradicalisation.

The director explained how the notion of takfir has only become prevalent since the 1970s. He was reluctant to say why and where the ideas surfaced but appeared to be making the point that this trend (takfirism) could be reversed given the right education. Education and training at the institute can generate graduates who go on to be imams or community workers. Community workers need to have a Bachelor of Arts and good communication skills, and women can apply for this program. Graduates are educated across a wide range of subjects including: history of religions, geography, ethics, and human rights and are not limited to Islamic studies. The institute also has vocational training facilities for its students and classes on social media.

**Inter-community relations and evaluation:** The director argued that “traditional imams are out of touch and don’t answer concerns of the community”; having young students helps with this, the director noted. At the institute they discuss contemporary issues; however the director asserted that there were “no incidences” or disputes. This begs the

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52 Interview with the director, 20/12/16
53 A common theme throughout various conversations in the field from Oman to Morocco was the influence of Wahhabism from Saudi Arabia. This was often acknowledged as a problem but there was sometimes a reluctance to explicitly point it out.
54 Interview with the director, 20/12/16.
question of whether a critical investigation of the issues is actually happening. The director noted that in relation to radicalisation in Australia, he could not help; he argued that the local context is key - not being familiar with Australia made him sceptical that he could help. With regard to measuring success, the director simply stated: “Success means an absence of terror groups on the ground in the various communities where the imams preach”.

Graduates at the institute include: 1650 Moroccans with 600 women, the director cited some numbers of graduates from specific countries which included: 106 from Mali, 36 from Tunisia, 35 from Guinea, 50 from Nigeria, 48 from Chad, 20 from France. The director made the point that his trained imams and community workers have been especially well received in Mali and Nigeria.

Further information: The case of Morocco and its state sponsored imam training school has a vastly different context from the programs addressed above. To examine this policy further, it is useful to briefly highlight some of the trends and political realities of Morocco. The reason the king and therefore the state is able to enact this program for the training of moderate imams, is largely due to the regime’s “complete monopoly on religious and political legitimacy” and therefore it can promote the ideas inspired by the Malikite doctrine and school of thought with significant impact (Cavatorta & Merone, 2016, p. 94). As the regime subscribes to this school of thought as opposed to Salafism or Wahhabism, its subsequent state policy appears much different from that of other Muslim-majority countries. In fact, the influence of Salafis has been successfully marginalised in Morocco and even to the point of moderation and participation in politics, previously considered haram by the ultra-conservative Salafis (Cavatorta & Merone, 2016). Having continuity of leadership as opposed to the fractured leadership of other countries in the region during the Arab Spring, has also allowed Moroccan leadership to keep expressing this school of thought. What we see in Morocco is the promotion of a different interpretation of Islamic doctrine, different in relation to the Saudi interpretation so prevalent around the world. Morocco is in a unique position because of its political and geo-political circumstances.

The Australian Context

In Australia, the AFP is partnered with the Attorney General’s Department and its Living Safe Together initiative. The Attorney General’s Department has produced a publication that is available to the public via the Living Safe Together website. This publication is entitled Preventing Violent Extremism and Radicalisation in Australia.
paper seeks to inform the reader on what radicalisation is, understanding the signs of radicalisation, what violent extremism is, what deradicalisation is and dispelling myths in this area. Whilst this publication has not been generated by the AFP and its community liaison officers, it nevertheless provides useful information on the Australian context.

The publication states that “most individuals begin the radicalisation process in one of three areas of their lives: their social relations, ideology or criminal activity” (Attorney Generals Department Paper, 2017, p. 6). Social relations refer to close personal relationships which foster the tendencies to join a group and share specific beliefs - this may take hold online. The paper then refers to ideology:

In the process of radicalisation, a person can experience a significant ideological shift which changes the way they view the world. Ideologies are only concerning if they advocate the use of violence or other unlawful activity to promote particular beliefs. As the radicalisation process builds, some people will promote an increasingly strict and literal understanding of a given belief. They may increasingly use ideological language that vilifies or discriminates against others. In Australia, the small numbers of people who radicalise and promote violence often do not have a genuine understanding of the ideology they claim to represent (Attorney Generals Department Paper, 2017, p. 6).

The paper goes on to note how extreme ideology becomes part of a person’s identity and that ‘hate’ rhetoric and dehumanisation of opposing groups usually occurs.

The paper cites criminal activity as part of the radicalisation process in Australia. Activities like vandalism, minor property damage, trespassing or protesting in a violent way may be a way of ‘acting out’ to draw attention to their beliefs. The paper provides a list of behaviours that illustrate increasing levels of intensity in the radicalisation process; this includes such things as behavioural changes, isolation, commitment to ideology, disregard for opposing views and changes in the language they use. It is also noted how the internet plays a crucial role and that identifying someone through what they are posting online can be critical. When discussing deradicalisation and leaving a group, the paper explains how the “most common reason for a person moving away from violent extremism is disillusionment, typically with:

- leadership and internal politics within the group
- hypocritical behaviour of group members, or
- ineffectiveness of violent or illegal methods” (Attorney General’s Department Paper, 2017, p. 17).

What the paper also stresses is the importance of family and friends to help someone leave the group. Also, the importance of maintaining open communication and:
rejecting the hatred / behaviour but accepting the person
helping them to relate to people in a positive way
helping them learn about genuine beliefs and non-hateful ideologies
helping them find constructive and lawful ways to pursue their cause
helping them get professional support for any physical or emotional issues, and
helping them discover who they are and what they identify with (Attorney Generals Department Paper, 2017, p. 20).

Dealing with issues in one’s life early is seen as paramount within the paper, as this may push someone into the process of radicalisation. For example, issues may be:

- changes in living or employment
- anxiety, depression, paranoia, suicidal thoughts or other mental health issues
- personal issues such as health problems, addiction, anger or social problems
- dropping out of school or university
- negative changes in friendships and/ or personal relationships
- confrontations with family members
- discrimination and social unfairness
- exposure to hateful attitudes and actions, either as victim or perpetrator, and
- overseas events that may harm their community (Attorney Generals Department Paper, 2017, p. 22).

Finally, the paper provides actions that can be taken in response to social, ideological and behavioural issues. Social responses may include talking with the individual, providing a mentor, getting them involved in a social activity or reconnecting them with a role model. Ideological responses may include using respected leaders to provide guidance on the issues they are concerned with, having philosophical, spiritual and religious discussions, getting involved in political activities, helping them question ideas, texts and leaders respectfully, and interacting with different belief systems. Behavioural responses may include helping them find an avenue for their grievances that is legal and peaceful, helping them use their time differently (for example a sporting team), promoting their life goals and helping to enrol them in educational or training initiatives.

As the representative from Quilliam recently had an Australian visit, he offered some insight in relation to CVE work in Australia:
“The take-away from the Australian visit was that the Victorian Government has partnered with the Islamic Council of Victoria which claims to have contact with the “Muslim Community” but didn’t have half the reach it claimed. For example, are you engaged with the Somali community, the Shia community? Self-appointed community leaders with no reach and are not role models for young people are not good enough. Thus, a strategy of community cohesion and engagement with this sort of focus is not enough. These very select groups can just tell you just what you want to hear”.

More creative work in CVE needs to be done in Australia which was argued to be about where Britain was around ten years ago.

**Conclusion**

This chapter presented information from counter and deradicalisation organisations in the UK, The Netherlands and Morocco, solicited through semi-structured interviews, site visits and through additional information about the organisations or generated by the organisations themselves. This chapter identified key reoccurring themes such as the involvement of the state in counter and deradicalisation programs, methods of intervention, the role of the family, international presence and youth leadership, the role of religious leaders or voices, and evaluating success. It identified major challenges for these organisations, including the challenge of funding and resources, lack of a coherent and consistent state policy, lack of coordination of efforts and the influence of Wahhabism. The importance of networks was highlighted, whether for sharing expert information, for social support or the promotion of young leaders as role models. The information was scribed in a largely descriptive format, which thus allows the next chapter to discuss and analyse what was said and learned.

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56 Interview with Jonathon Russell, 24/11/16.
Chapter Four: Discussion

With the data from Chapter Three, it is now possible to analyse this information in order to draw some conclusions and implications. More specifically, this chapter will address Research Questions Three and Four:

3. What can the UK, European and Moroccan counter/deradicalisation programs tell us in relation to best practice and lessons learned?

4. Do these counter/deradicalisation programs align with the scholarly literature on radicalisation counter/deradicalisation?

To answer these questions, the information from the interviews and organisations will be gleaned for reoccurring themes in order to solicit the best practices and lessons learned from these expert practitioners in the area of counter and deradicalisation (El-Said, 2012). This will enable this thesis to answer research Question Three. This chapter will analyse the interviews and organisations to see how they align with the scholarly literature on radicalisation and counter/deradicalisation. This will address Research Question Four. This chapter will use the five-part model of radicalisation as an analytical tool to assess the work of the organisations, as well as refer to the greater literature on counter/deradicalisation. This process will illuminate where the organisations seem to be addressing the known factors in relation to radicalisation, as well as situating their approaches within the greater literature within this discipline. This chapter will end with policy recommendations for Australia.

State Involvement

As we saw in Chapters Two and Three, how the state designs and implements its counter and deradicalisation programs is important. Community perception is key, Vidino (2010) noted how the visibility of counter terrorism measures should be minimalised and Aly (2015) argued that it is not just the community perception that is important but that reconceptualising CVE policy with a pivot to facilitate civil society and grassroots initiatives is the smarter and more comprehensive approach. Moreover, this was also a conclusion in Chapter Two regarding deradicalisation; with Butt and Tuck (2014) noting how perceived state involvement can be counterproductive. It is of course useful to keep in mind the difference in the application of state policies in liberal democracies versus authoritarian regimes.
ACF cited how working with the state was important for their work but it was also noted how the state involved was constantly being negotiated (usually involving public perception and funding) and that it was imperative that ACF put the charity and its methods first. The perception of the greater community is important for ACF in order for them to do their work, thus state involvement and funding is always an area about which ACF stays vigilant. This was a theme briefly touched upon by the representative from Quilliam, with respect to early mistakes under the broader counter terrorism policy in the UK, particularly in relation to securitisation which contributed to the further alienation and marginalisation of the Muslim community. This tainted early efforts by Quilliam, particularly when aligned with the fact that they initially received government funding. Also, the policy of co-opting non-violent Islamists was argued to be making counter radicalisation work much harder. RAN is funded by the European Commission and therefore there is some distance between the funding and the grassroots programs. The degree to which these funds reach different local programs around Europe is unknown; however what a structure like this does is provide the perception of less state involvement. The imam training school in Morocco is rather different as the state has complete control over the institute and the broader policy on extremism. Morocco is in a unique position where it can project an alternative ideology to Salafism. Thus, in a Western context, the perception of state involvement can be unhelpful at best; in Morocco, however, given the political realities, a coherent policy that marginalises extreme and divisive ideologies is arguably preferable.

Best Practice/Lesson Learned:

How the state devises its counter terrorism and counter radicalisation policy is important. In liberal democracies the state needs to use “hard power” selectively. A theme of this thesis is that counter radicalisation work is best done by non-state actors in liberal democracies. This is not to say that the state does not have to play a significant role; non-state actors need safe spaces to conduct their work, along with funding and resources.

Intervention

In Chapter Two it was noted how tailoring an intervention strategy to each specific case for your interlocutor was of paramount importance for disengagement or deradicalisation. Assessing why the individual is in the group or attracted to the ideas is essential and Bjorgo (2011) argued that there are certain typologies that members tend to fall in to. Deep knowledge of the individual, the community, the process of radicalisation and the ideology is also salient for those charged with interventions, thus they should be trained
accordingly (Butt & Tuck, 2014; El-Said, 2012; Bjorgo, 2003). Chapter Two also highlighted the need for critical thinking and pedagogies of epistemology to guard against Islamist radicalisation. Boghossian (2006b) applied an example of such pedagogy of inmate education and critical thinking (hybrid but unique application of behaviourism and constructivism). Whilst this study was not specifically aimed at Islamists or jihadis, it is an example of applying a prison based educational program for critical thinking. This study appears to be similar to what ACF is attempting.

The representative from ACF explained how for an intervention to be successful it was necessary to break the ties with the recruiter and the ideology. Severing this tie is seen as key, as then ACF can start to personalise a strategy for the individual. Through its workshops and in depth discourse with the individual/s, ACF is able to first provide a safe space to discuss contentious ideas and to examine why the individual is feeling the way they are. By asking pointed questions like “How do you know what you know” ACF dives deeper into the individual’s epistemology. Best practice, according to ACF, is to break the tie with the recruiter and discuss why the recruiter and the ideas were influential in the first place; to deal with the source of hate through extended discourse and then continue to monitor how the individual progresses.

**Best Practice/Lesson Learned:**

Severing ties with recruiters and the ideology is paramount for intervention work. It is necessary to personalise a strategy for the individual, for example, to examine their family and peer group environment, assess whether a religious expert would help and deal with their hate and xenophobia through in-depth discussion and an examination of their epistemology. Following-up and monitoring the individual to make sure they do not fall into old habits is important also.

**Families**

The role of the family as instrumental in countering Islamist violence is increasingly becoming recognised. For instance, a Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) report focussed on the role of families in combatting violent extremism, with particular focus on women. The report (GCTF, 2014) contended that women serve as institutional memories of their local communities, which positions them well to identify signs of radicalisation and to help the community reject the phenomenon. As gate keepers of their communities, the report goes on to show how the involvement of mothers can assist in reducing gang recruitment and concludes that families should be offered opportunities and resources to help them communicate their influence effectively (GCTF, 2014). Chapter Two cited Bjorgo (2003) in
relation to “pull factors” for disengagement or deradicalisation, arguing that the family can be instrumental; Johnson (2009) also explained how the family can be important post-release from a program.

The importance of the family was a reoccurring theme of the interviews. Whilst ACF described families as benign during the intervention, this was after they had contacted the organisation to begin with – a crucial step. ACF noted how the families can be part of the problem along with the individual, but the point that RAN made was that the family was often still in contact with fighters that have left for Syria. Quilliam recognises the importance of the family and has gone as far as to partner with FATE, whose work is focussed on the family unit and has progressed with research examining which family member is better at delivering different parts of counter radicalisation and intervention work.

Best Practice/Lesson Learned:

Empowering families should be seen as key for counter radicalisation policies and programs. Loved ones need to know the signs of radicalisation, how they can get help or who they should contact if violence looks likely. Ideally having a network of concerned families like FATE is preferable. Networks can learn from each other and provide support.

International Presence and Youth Leadership

Whilst having international outreach and programs promoting youth leadership were not common themes that came out of the scholarly literature, it was noted by Vidino (2010) that the “creation of a mentoring system for young people to establish face-to-face dialogue and the existence of resource individuals and role models” was important. Vidino (2010) also stated the salience of “dialogue forums aimed at disseminating information on foreign policy in the Muslim world”. What surfaced in the interviews, however, was how important both of these concepts are.

A theme that came out of all the interviews was the organisation had actively reached out to other states and organisations. ACF has had successful international campaigns along with providing training to other states, long arm intervention and community engagement. Quilliam, along with its European network, is aiming to build a counter extremism network across Africa with such initiatives as the young counter extremism leader competition. ACF also runs a young leaders’ program. RAN is by its nature an international collaboration, bringing together experts from across Europe. The Moroccan imam training school also brings together aspiring imams from various states across Africa and Europe and these graduates then return home.
Best Practice/Lesson Learned:

Whilst intimate knowledge of the local dimension is key for counter and deradicalisation work, having a network of those in your field appears to be paramount. Not only do networks learn from one another, but perhaps more importantly it is a way to champion counter narratives to Islamism. This is evidenced particularly in the Moroccan case where the policy is counter-ideological in nature – sending trained imams back to their home countries without divisive or excommunicative interpretations of Islam. Also, developing young leaders has the goal of creating positive role models with influence.

Using Religious Leaders or Voices

Chapter Two cited some ways in which discussing religion (Islam) can have a positive effect in countering radicalisation by providing counter-messaging (Greenburg, 2016) which can help to correct for “misreadings” or fundamentalist interpretations of Islamic doctrine. Also, promoting religiously moderate ideology through selected community leaders or through religious dialogue was highlighted by Nasser-Eddine (2011). Moreover, in relation to deradicalisation, Johnson (2009) noted the importance of respected Islamic clerics as interlocutors. Having deep religious knowledge is necessary for prevention and rehabilitation purposes; however, what the research in Chapter Two also articulated, was the notion of epistemological failure and the importance of addressing not merely the belief of the individual, but how they got to that belief.

When and how to use religious leaders or voices was a theme that came out of the interviews. In relation to intervention work, ACF cited only two cases where this proved to be beneficial and RAN noted that only sometimes, and depending on the case, this tactic can be helpful. Quilliam has theological researchers that actively promote religious pluralism and the notion of being British and Muslim. In Morocco the entire policy takes place through the lens of Islam. Therefore we see a wide range of insights on the issue. Often traditional imams are seen as out of touch, a common theme in the interviews. Of the programs included in this study, the institute in Morocco is making the greatest strides in this regard. Its capacity above others in the West is largely derived from the credibility it receives among Muslim populations as a legitimate, authentic institute for higher education in the study of Islam. The absence of such in Western countries will continue to make Western Muslim communities dependent on overseas-trained Imams who are unlikely to have the appropriate levels of education, socialisation and enculturation to be more effective in countering radicalisation among Western Muslims. Indeed, as some research suggests, imams and religious leaders
who ascribe to a Salafist or Wahhabist perspective of Islam, may be contributing to the problem through their promotion of ideas that position Western people, values and institutions as the antithesis of Islam (Rabasa & Benard, 2015).

**Best Practice/Lesson Learned:**

It appears that in the West counter/deradicalisation work does not necessarily have to involve religious leaders or voices at a grassroots level. This does depend on the individual case; however what seems to be more important, is analysing the individual’s social situation, and epistemology in intervention work. Promoting religious pluralism in liberal democracies is also crucial and thus having credible voices in this sphere is key for the broader community. In a Muslim-majority country the creation and promotion of credible and moderate religious voices may be the most pragmatic way of countering extremism.

**Using Evidence**

As was noted in the Kruglanski (2014) research on deradicalisation in Sri Lanka, having a sound theory or model that the program uses as it empirical base, is important. However, finding ways to empirically measure results is a goal of counter/deradicalisation work, but also challenging (Vidino, 2012). Nevertheless, as was noted above in relation to intervention, there needs to be deep knowledge of the process of radicalisation, for which there are sound models and theories.

Within the Western context, all the organisations explained how basing their actions on evidence and evaluation were important. ACF used the term “active research” which described using different academic models depending on individual cases. Quilliam, as a think tank, conducts much research but as an example noted, the research on the family unit and adjusting practices where need be upon seeing results, suggesting respect for evidenced based practice. Quilliam and RAN both provide advice to governments and other organisations in the field, which is based on the research they generate, which then informs their training programs and advisement.

**Best Practice/Lesson Learned:**

As the counter radicalisation field is notoriously hard to empirically evaluate, it is imperative that programs and policies constantly refer to scholarly work in the area. Having an organisation that both conducts research and provides initiatives, training, programs and advice would be ideal. Organisations must be willing to change practice when the evidence contradicts it.
Defining Success

In Chapter Two Vidino & Brandon (2012) quoted from the Lead for Prevent Policing (UK) who argued the success of Prevent, this was due to the fact that of the 1,500 interventions not one individual had gone on to commit any terrorism related offense. Of course the recent string of attacks in the UK, and the fact that some of the attackers were known to authorities, complicates notions of success in the UK context (Evans, 2017).

ACF noted how for the organisation to know it has been successful, firstly, it must be evident that the referred individual has cut ties to the recruiter, the family knows about and uses “coping mechanisms” that help the individual be resistant to old patterns and the voluntary sector is trained to deal with issues as they arise. The director of the imam training school noted how success lies in seeing no extremist groups on the ground in the areas that the school seeks to influence, for which there have been encouraging early signs. Whilst RAN actively attempts empirical evaluation, its representative noted that often success is common, but not scientific.

Best Practice/Lesson Learned:

The interviewees were largely convinced that the work they were doing has been successful but measuring a non-event (no terrorist attack) is challenging, if not impossible. How we define success in the area of counter radicalisation may have to be looked at in a more nuanced way. For example, is a social program that helps young people find a job a success in preventing one from joining a gang? Possibly, but in each individual case we will never know. Those conducting intervention work and implementing broader counter radicalisation policies and programs, have to make the case that this work is important even if the various individuals were never going to join a terrorist group, as having disaffected, alienated, traumatised, marginalised, grievance stricken, ideologically motivated young people in society should be guarded against.

Challenges

Funding and resources are challenges, particularly for the grassroots local level organisations, according to ACF and RAN. ACF also noted how having a consistent and uniform strategy at the national level is important. This was echoed by Quilliam when the representative noted the challenge of dealing with an old tactic of attempting to co-opt non-violent Islamists, or clandestine Islamists aligned with some on the left side of politics, which is now proving to be a challenge when dealing with the underlying ideology. As we saw with the information coming from Morocco and the contention of Rabasa and Benard (2015), the Salafi and Wahhabi ideology which underpins Islamism has been heavily funded for decades.
and is a huge challenge. Western states need to recognise this challenge and meet the funding, resources and educational requirements of this challenge head on. Information sharing and coordinating multiple agencies was highlighted by RAN as challenging. Perhaps more strikingly, the biggest problem according to the imam training school in Morocco is dealing with the notion of *takfir*.

**Best Practice/Lesson Learned:**

A coherent strategy for counter and deradicalisation is paramount. This strategy needs to address Islamism (which includes *takfirism*) in all its forms. Organisations and programs need to be well funded and resource rich. Networks of experts need to coordinate for information sharing and to avoid working the same cases in parallel.

**Training**

The literature in relation to counter and deradicalisation initiatives explained how training those on the front-line and anyone that might be in a position to help, is an important goal (Vidino, 2012; Wuchte & Knani, 2013; Kruglanski, 2014). A particular goal is radicalisation awareness training; whether it is for teachers, police officers, family members or prison staff, civil society needs to be informed of the challenge.

All the organisations visited are involved in training. Radicalisation awareness training was a constant theme; it is seen as important for those that have contact with potential Islamist recruits that they are equipped with a tool kit and skill set to make a positive difference in the radicalisation process. In the Western examples, this involves building the capacity of civil societies, families and communities. In the case of Morocco, it is training religious leaders with the ideas, skills and leadership to then return to their communities.

**Best Practice/Lesson Learned:**

Evidenced based training initiatives broaden the approach to counter terrorism and counter radicalisation by making it everyone’s prerogative. Relying on law enforcement alone is problematic. Those on the front line need to understand what Islamist radicalisation is, how to see the signs and what to do about it.

**Using the five-part model of radicalisation**

In Chapter Two, this thesis provided an explanatory model of radicalisation. This consisted of five factors: identity crisis, grievances, socialisation, ideology and epistemological failure. Also in Chapter Two, the literature was surveyed for best practices in the field of counter and deradicalisation. Equipped with this information, this discussion
section will look at ACF, Quilliam, RAN, and the imam training school in Morocco to see how they align with the five-part model and the broader scholarly literature.

Identity Crisis

Forming one’s identity in the coming-of-age period, or perhaps taking on a new identity after a traumatising event such as the death of a loved one or a divorce, was shown in Chapter Two to be instrumental in the radicalisation process. What ACF and Quilliam are doing in relation to the young leaders’ programs may help, by providing role models for young Muslims to look up to. Islamists and jihadists have their leaders they look up to, so providing a “champion model”, can increase the likelihood of a positive role model/leader having an impact on young Muslim lives. ACF provides a physical location where young people can come to get together, discuss problems and have fun; this may help with feelings of isolation or marginalisation that accompany many would-be extremists. Having a positive group to belong to, may aid in the ability of the individual to be comfortable in his or her own skin. This type of support group ostensibly deals with the potential identity crisis possibly experienced by young British youth. RAN understands the importance of creating safe spaces for the discussion of contentious ideas for which the religious leaders in the various communities have typically been disconnected from. Particularly for young people who want to have these discussions, this is important, as they will seek the answers to difficult questions elsewhere if not dealt with. Rather than let Islamists step in and help form the identity of the individual, RAN sees the importance of getting out in front of this issue. The imam training school in Morocco trains young imams, which undoubtably provides them with a personal and social identity to help shield them against radicalisation. These young people are not simply given an alternative ideology to Salafism, but are educated in various fields, including the social sciences and they are given vocational training. Alone, these measures are insufficient, given what we know about terrorist demographics; however they do provide a sense of significance along with a rejection of Islamism. These measures combined, appear to be a positive measure to address any arising crisis of identity for the young Moroccans and international students.

Grievances

Chapter Two highlighted how grievances (political/religious), whether real or perceived, are part of the radicalisation process. In much the same way as dealing with identity crisis, dealing with grievances can only come through extended discourse with the individual and providing counter narratives to the Islamist ideology that are widely available. ACF does this at a personal level through its workshops and interventions, by allowing the
expression of a grievance to unfold and then examining why the person feels this way. Quilliam does the latter; it provides counter narratives or counter speech aimed at the rest of society, which challenges the Islamist ideology by providing contradictions and an interpretation of Islamic doctrine inconsistent with Islamism. As noted above, RAN also recognises the need for interventions that provide extended discourse on a range of topics. The imam training school in Morocco was not inclined to have discussions about contentious ideas and noted that there were “no disputes”. Also, if an imam was found to have radical views, they were made to take a vow to moderate. This seems less than ideal. Islamist ideas need to be out in the open so they can be challenged and thus if the institute is shutting down discourse on contentious issues, this may plant seeds for radicalisation.

It is salient to cite what Quilliam highlighted in relation to the grievance narrative among Islamists. The representative noted that it was important to examine Muslim groups which espouse the notion of a “war on Islam” and emphasise political grievances as the single factor in the radicalisation process. As one case highlighted, this was simply a way of co-opting some on the left side of the political spectrum sympathetic to this message and who were later exposed to be clandestine Islamists.

Socialisation

Interaction with or exposure to the extremist group, leader, or simply to the ideology was also shown in Chapter Two to be instrumental in the radicalisation process. ACF starts every intervention with breaking the tie to the recruiter and providing the individual with a safe space to visit. The imam training school houses aspiring imams on campus; therefore they are completely removed from their communities for the duration of their studies. In this respect, these two organisations confront the socialisation aspect of the radicalisation process. However, online radicalisation is harder to mitigate according to ACF. It is not just the connection to the group or leader that needs to be severed, it is the ideology which is widely available. Self-starting, would-be jihadists simply need access to the ideology to cause much damage. As noted above, Quilliam builds the capacity of its network to run counter speech campaigns. This is important to erode the influence of the Islamist ideology. Finally, the training programs of ACF, RAN, and Quilliam all aim to provide some consciousness raising with regard to spotting the signs of an individual disengaging with society, or joining a group and espousing Islamist ideology.

Ideology

Islamism, the wish to impose any version of Islam over the rest of society, is central is the process of radicalisation (Precht, 2007; Nawaz, 2015). Online campaigns, youth
leadership programs and building the capacity of civil society to deal with hate, as ACF, RAN and Quilliam do, all attempt to undermine the Islamist ideology. Again, any program that provides space for dialogue, particularly for young people to discuss issues related to Islam, politics, state policy or international affairs (as examples) will undermine Islamism when those involved in the dialogue have an understanding of radicalisation and Islamism. ACF and RAN recognise this and actively promote it; Quilliam has the expertise to generate influential counter narratives which then can be implemented within its network. King Mohammad’s imam training centre in Morocco incorporates a state policy for undermining Salafism. However, the Moroccan case is different and must be looked at objectively. A state policy which attempts to impose an interpretation of Islam over the rest of society is in fact how Islamism is defined. Whilst this interpretation of Islam is different from Salafist style Islamism, it nevertheless is authoritarian and the rest of society is vulnerable to the interpretation of the state. This may be pragmatic and it may be even be successful in the short term; however it is easy to see how in the long term the political and social situation could change, rendering this strategy inept. As the representative of Quilliam noted about aligning with non-violent Islamists, broad strategies can have long lasting and challenging effects.

Epistemological Failure

Chapter Two contended that a failure of epistemology is evident within Islamists and jihadists. A lack of critical thinking skills that makes one more susceptible to all-encompassing ideological narratives which prescribe what to believe and how to act. ACF appears to be tackling this part of the radicalisation process head on. Through its workshops/interventions, probing questions are asked of the young attendees. “How do you know what you know”? “Who told you this”? “What is the value of that knowledge”? “What is the source of your hate”? Questions such as these begin to address the epistemic situation of the individual. RAN’s proscription for the role of education in preventing radicalisation cited critical thinking in schools to be important. Encouraging discussion and providing alternative messages in school was noted as being an antidote to extremist ideological claims. Quilliam, as noted above, is involved in generating counter speech to challenge or contradict extremist ideology. Providing alternative messages or counter speech and having open discussion is important; the literature on counter/deradicalisation reinforced this. However, simply providing an alternative message does not address the ways in which one comes to knowledge and more importantly how one may revise a belief. As we saw in Chapter Two, when a belief becomes part of one’s identity, not only does it become hard to revise, but at
the level of the brain we are not assessing the information objectively. The imam training school in Morocco may be addressing this issue as the school does provide further education on Islamic studies, history of religions and ethics. However, the fact the “no disputes” were said to have happened in class appears to show a lack of critical reflection on concepts and issues. Furthermore, there is the suspicion that the educational lens is strictly through an interpretation of Islamic doctrine (even whilst being a moderate variant). Due to the lack of funding for philosophy departments in the Muslim world, any pedagogy in the humanities and social sciences, such as history of religions or ethics, should be welcomed.

**Conclusion**

This chapter provided an analysis of the interview data and related information generated in Chapter Three. In Section Three of Chapter Two, some general best practices were highlighted from across the literature. It is instructive to briefly summarise the themes that came out of the interviews and note the relation to the greater literature on counter/deradicalisation. The first was state involvement; this was a theme within the literature: perceived government involvement in a program can be counterproductive and NGOs may have a better chance at success. All the organisations seem to align with this, with the exception of the imam training school in Morocco. Shifting the responsibility away from the state to carry out counter/deradicalisation work was a theme amongst the Western organisations. Empowering civil society appears to be paramount.

In relation to the themes of intervention, families and religious leaders, ACF showed how breaking ties to recruiters is key. This was not a theme easily derived from the literature surveyed; however tailoring an intervention for specific individuals was (Butt & Tuck, 2014; Bjorgo, 2011). The role of the family, peer group and religious leaders is important here; whilst counter radicalisation work can be greatly aided by these actors, deradicalisation work largely depends on the individual case. This is reflected in the literature in relation to the general best practices for counter/deradicalisation work.

The literature made reference to mentoring, which may aid in the fostering of a role model for young people (Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011; Schmid, 2013). This may be a positive step at that one-on-one grassroots level. What the organisations highlighted however, was the need for young leaders or “champions” that can be held up for all to see around the world. This theme of international youth leadership as champions of liberal values is therefore a best practice that should be incorporated in the literature as best practice.
Finding ways to evaluate success and failure was a general best practice identified within the greater literature and reflected by the Western organisations in this chapter. This situates the organisations within the greater literature on this issue.

Challenges such as funding and resources are also a theme for some, but not all of the organisations. This theme is also reflected in the general best practices in Chapter Two. The challenge of inconsistent or damaging state policy is not easily reflected within the literature; however it was identified in the interviews.

As noted above, all the organisations have training as a significant part of their organisation’s functions. This is also reflected in the best practices within the greater literature. For example: development of awareness training for individuals who work with young people to enable easier identification of radicalisation indicators and the precursor to policy or programs, has to be a deep knowledge of the process of radicalisation, ideally with a working model or theory. The organisations are a great reflection of this best practice.
Chapter Five: Policy Recommendations and Conclusion

Visiting and interacting with experts in the field of the selected organisations for this thesis provided valuable insight into counter and deradicalisation programs. Being guided by the literature and a model of Islamist radicalisation helped to solicit relevant information about the programs in the UK, Europe and Morocco. The respondents from the UK explained how the government’s counter terrorism policy Prevent was important, but that it had to evolve and learn from mistakes. Challenging Islamism was seen as vital as part of a counter radicalisation strategy in the UK, whether through broad campaigns of counter speech, promoting young liberal Muslim voices, or directly intervening in the lives of young people that may be susceptible to radicalisation. One of the key lessons from the European context is that those in the field of counter/deradicalisation work felt that collaboration was critical, learning from one and another, sharing knowledge of what works and what is counterproductive. These practitioners met regularly to share ideas as well as produce research material that is available to all online. Also, having a shared lexicon and a convergence of understanding of key concepts was also seen as vital. From a Moroccan perspective, the promotion of moderation within religion was viewed as paramount. This was viewed as a counter narrative to the divisive and intolerant concepts that have come out of Wahhabism. Educating aspiring imams with this moderate and tolerant interpretation of Islam and spreading this message around the region was seen as the way to tackle violent extremism. These themes and concepts (among others) that surfaced from the various regions visited, was then used to generate policy recommendations.

Policy Recommendations

This thesis set out to provide some policy recommendations for Australia. The following recommendations can of course be utilised elsewhere; however policy should be guided by research, which could be different in different national contexts.

1. Counter/deradicalisation programs should begin to move away from law enforcement. Empowering civil society appears to be the most efficient way to maintain community cohesion and to reduce feelings of marginalisation and securitisation within Muslim communities. How the state interacts with the public and NGOs should be examined closely and soft power should be promoted. Programs need to be funded and resourced to meet the standards necessary to carry out their work. Currently Australian counter/deradicalisation programs are non-existent, in their infancy,
underfunded or pilot studies. Moreover, civil society has not been empowered to do the work; it is mostly handled by law enforcement.

2. Counter/deradicalisation programs need to address the five-part radicalisation process: identity crisis, grievances, socialisation, ideology and epistemological failure. Simply addressing some of these factors will render a policy or program impotent.

3. Trained practitioners need to tailor intervention work to the individual in need. The practitioner needs to assess whether the family, peer group or a credible religious voice will help or hinder; and ties to the recruiter and ideology need to be severed. The individual’s epistemic situation needs to be assessed, not just by asking where the information (Islamist narrative) is coming from, but how the information is being processed. The Socratic method may aid in this attempt.

4. Islamism needs to be challenged comprehensively and consistently. The ideological component of the radicalisation process, as we saw, is arguably the most important. Australian policy and related discourse should have a clear understanding of the difference between Islam and Islamism, of where Islamist ideas come from, and challenge these ideas both domestically and internationally.

5. Finding ways to evaluate success should be a goal upon the implementation of counter/deradicalisation policies and programs. However, it should be recognised that this is a challenge in this line of work. Instead, policy makers need to be aware of the importance of the programs. Where possible, evaluating success should be done through empirical data, but anecdotal evidence might be influential.

6. Training programs need to be implemented. Those at the grassroots level who are more likely to come across the signs of radicalisation should be trained to have an understanding of what radicalisation is, how to recognise the signs and what to do about it. In Australia this should be aimed at the Australian Federal Police, state police, prison officers, teachers, youth, social and charity workers.

7. Australian terrorists have been shown to be educated, trained in or to have had a proclivity for the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). This reflects a world-wide trend of known Islamist/jihadists. Australian educational institutions need to implement pedagogies that help to mitigate this trend. The STEM fields should produce graduates with clear critical thinking skills. Curricula should be amended with these facts in mind, whether at primary/secondary school education or at university level. This may include the wider promotion of and encouragement for study in the humanities and social science to build capacity among a new generation
of Muslims to be able to challenge and offer counter narratives to those espoused by Islamist extremists.

8. Mentors and role models can play a positive role in counter/deradicalisation work.
   However, the goal should be to promote young Muslim leaders as champions of liberal, democratic values who challenge Islamism.

This thesis began by providing an overview of the problem of Islamism and jihadism in Australia and around the world. Highlighting this trend shows the importance of policy and programs in the field of counter terrorism and deradicalisation. At present we are seeing battlefield defeats for ISIS in Iraq and Syria and returning foreign fighters may try and use violence in their home countries. As long as the ideology is available and influential, states will continue to struggle with Islamism and jihadism. Chapter One provided an overview of the situation in Australia, with regard to known terrorists and policies and programs aimed at countering or rehabilitating terrorists. It also presented new data which showed that Australian terrorists have been overrepresented in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. These new data are a significant contribution to the wider literature in this area; they showed how Australian terrorists fit within the global trend of known educational status among Islamists and jihadis. Chapter Two presented a five-part model of radicalisation: identity crisis, grievances, socialisation, ideology and epistemological failure. The notion of epistemological failure, as part of the Islamist radicalisation process, has major implications for pedagogical policy and theory. It also has implications for how counter terrorism, counter radicalisation and deradicalisation policies and programs should be designed. The Socratic method was cited as a way to address epistemic failures both at an individual level through intervention and through broader counter radicalisation efforts. Chapter Two also surveyed the literature on counter radicalisation and deradicalisation. Here it was shown that for Australia or any Western state, the perception of state influence is an important factor when implementing counter/deradicalisation policy and programs. At present in Australia, the AFP handles most intervention work and the broader counter extremism work is done by the Attorney General’s Department. The question has to be asked whether, given what we know about perceived state involvement in this work, is this optimal or sustainable? Empowering NGOs to concentrate their efforts in this area may be more effective and sustainable. This sentiment was echoed in Chapter Three, which introduced the counter/deradicalisation organisations that were visited and the related field work data that were collected through semi-structured interviews, along with complementary information gleaned from their respective websites.
This type of methodology attempted to replicate previous research in this field and thus the findings add to the wider literature on the subject, and also provide updated information in the field of counter/deradicalisation, a field that is constantly evolving due to international trends. The knowledge compiled in Chapters Two and Three was then used in Chapter Four to generate findings and a discussion which provided best practices and lessons learned, along with analysing how the procedures of the organisations visited fit with what we know about radicalisation, counter radicalisation and deradicalisation.

One of the strengths of this thesis was that interviews were able to be conducted with experts in this field. However, more data needs to be collected; the conclusions of this thesis need to merely sit within the greater literature. This thesis was limited in the number of expert practitioners and facilities it was able to visit and cite, thus there is room for further research in this area. Another avenue for further research should be evaluating the epistemic situation of known extremists. One could devise an epistemological intervention similar to the work of the Active Change Foundation, but instead have the explicit purpose of providing a tool kit for critical and reflective thinking. Research such as this, when based on sound academic theories and carried out by professionals, may help to prove or disprove the utility of such an intervention. Such an intervention could measure the confidence of beliefs before the intervention and after, this would measure the confidence of beliefs and the ability for belief revision at different intervals over a period of time. This could potentially render the Islamist ideology moot if one’s ability for critical thinking were enhanced.
### Appendix

*Australian Terrorists by Education*

Table 1. Gambetta and Hertog (2016) Dataset:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Educational/Training</th>
<th>Proclivity for STEM:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Hicks</td>
<td>High school dropout</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdul Nacer</td>
<td>Aviation Engineering</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezzit Raad</td>
<td>High school plus</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TAFE Graduate, Electrician(^{57})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aimen Joud</td>
<td>High school drop out</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fadal Sayadi</td>
<td>High school graduate,</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TAFE Graduate (Plumbing)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amer Haddara</td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed Raad</td>
<td>High school dropout,</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>started TAFE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shane Kent aka Yasin</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdulla Merhi</td>
<td>Apprentice</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electrician</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Izzzydeen Atik</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khaled Cheikho</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moustafa Cheikho</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohamed Ali Elomar</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammed Omar</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdul Rakib Hasan</td>
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<td>N</td>
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Table 2. *Bergin (2015)* Data:

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<td></td>
<td>Status</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahmoud Abdullatif</td>
<td>Expelled from high school</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammed Ali Baryalei</td>
<td>High school education</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jake Bilardi</td>
<td>Exelled in Mathematics</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyler Casey</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Dahman</td>
<td>High school drop out</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amira Karroum</td>
<td>High school graduate, went on to graphic design</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tareq Kamleh</td>
<td>Medical school graduate</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostafa Mahamed</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil Prakash</td>
<td>Attempted to recruit engineering graduates</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suhan Rahman</td>
<td>Studied building</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khaled Sharrouf</td>
<td>Expelled from high school</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed Succarieh</td>
<td>Attended high school</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdul Numan Haider</td>
<td>Was enrolled in electro-engineering at TAFE</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man Haron Monis</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caner Temel</td>
<td>Construction engineer</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tara Nettleton</td>
<td>High School Student</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmad Moussalli</td>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
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Omar Al-Kutobi  Computer Science\textsuperscript{60}  Y
Mohammad Kiad  Studying for forklift licence  N

Another 33 listed  Unknown  N = 33


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<td>Mostafa Farag</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erdem Yanar</td>
<td>Interest in computer</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real name unknown (Abu Mounzir al-Lubnani)</td>
<td>Aviation</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real name unknown (Abu Ubaida al-Lubnani)</td>
<td>Computer Engineer</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadi Jabar Khalil</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yusuf Toprakkaya</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abu Ousama</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustapha Al</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majzoub</td>
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Table 4. Other Data Sources:

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<th>Educational/Training Status</th>
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<tr>
<td>Real name unknown</td>
<td>Computer Engineer(^61)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Abu Oubeida Al Loubnani)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name Unknown</td>
<td>Electrical engineering(^62) student</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abu Terek Mohammad Tajuddin Kausar</td>
<td>Computer science and engineering graduate(^63)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Tables 1 – 4 account for a total of 78 known Australian terrorists. Those with a confirmed proclivity for STEM equals 18 (23.07%). Those with a known educational/training status equals 32, and thus as a percentage of known educational/training status the percentage rises to 56.25%. If more was known about the educational and intellectual proclivities of those marked as unknown, it is conceivable that this number would rise further. These tables provide a much needed list of known Australian terrorists for academia and a first attempt at adding known educational status to a more comprehensive list. There is room for further research in this area.


References


the root causes of radicalisation among groups with an immigrant heritage in Europe (Vol. 60). Ios Press.


