DEVELOPING CAPACITY FOR COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

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Submitted by Mike Girling
To Prof. Malvesti

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http://fletcher.tufts.edu

THE FLETCHER SCHOOL
TUFTS UNIVERSITY

Executive Summary

Following every horrific terrorist attack, the question is asked of the perpetrator: why? What leads someone to such brutal violence? The next question asked to governments and communities is: could they have been stopped? The field of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) was borne as an attempt to, in part, answer these questions. Protective security measures, deterrence and attack plot disruption can only do so much. Before those counter-terrorism measures take effect, CVE aims to prevent people wanting to engage in violence in the first place.

This is not easy. Governments and communities around the world continue to grapple with the inherent challenges of this work. The encapsulation of these efforts as a field of practice, denoted as 'CVE', is recognition of the added importance of this focus on prevention. Despite this increased prominence, the concept remains poorly understood, its usefulness in doubt.

This paper examines the meaning and purpose of CVE and seeks to offers guidance on how governments and communities can work together to develop CVE capabilities. Assessing different interpretations of the term and its connection to the broader field of counter-terrorism, this paper adopts the definition of CVE as activity designed to specifically reduce the risk of people becoming radicalised to commit acts of ideologically inspired violence.

Enacting effective CVE programmes requires an understanding of the process that leads someone to commit these brutal acts. This includes recognising that there is no single 'root cause' or standard 'pathway' to violence, but that multiple factors affect individuals in different ways. This papers charts how CVE work has developed and continues to evolve alongside advances in the understanding of radicalisation. Recognising the implications of the

current understanding of 'radicalisation' as a non-linear and highly contextual process lies at the heart of effective CVE work.

This paper charts the origins of CVE as a field of practice. The term itself stemmed from the U.S. government's attempts to win the 'battle of ideas' as part of the 'Global War on Terror'. Religiously-inspired attacks in Madrid and London undertaken by 'home-grown' terrorists forced governments to reassess their understanding of radicalisation, and CVE programmes began to be initiated in domestic communities and overseas. This background of being linked to reducing the risk of radical Islamist terrorism underlies some of the ongoing criticism of the field.

This paper sets out three phases in the development of CVE programming:

1) Initial experimentation with what works;

2) Internationalisation and the incorporation of lessons learned; and,

3) Adaptation and mainstreaming.

A key element of the third and ongoing phase is the increasing prominence of capacity development. The demand for expertise and sharing of best practice will increase as more governments and communities seek to undertake CVE work. It is important, however, that capacity development in this area is carefully considered. Poorly conceived CVE programming risks not just being ineffectual but, worse, it could be counterproductive. By drawing relevant lessons from previous capacity development projects, this paper seeks to minimise this risk and support more effective CVE work.

By selecting a framework to better understand the variety of different CVE programming, this paper focusses on recommendations relating to projects designed to directly target the process of radicalisation ('CVE specific' projects rather than a broader category of 'CVE

relevant' activity) and those of a preventative nature rather than those seeking to deal with the problem *post hoc.* Adopting a public health model, this paper focuses on 'primary' and 'secondary' interventions, rather than *de*radicalisation projects which would be classified as 'tertiary' programmes.

This paper identifies five features of CVE and examines the implications for successful capacity development efforts in this area.

Context is crucial

The foundation of any effective CVE project is a solid understanding of the specific form of radicalisation it is seeking to combat. Developing research skills is essential in assessing the problem, with 'systems thinking' a powerful tool allowing consideration of the most appropriate CVE strategies. Given that the drivers of radicalisation can occur at multiple levels and are likely to be interrelated, CVE interventions need to recognise the value of not just identifying the different radicalising factors but also the relationships and dependencies between them. Enabling and undertaking this type of 'systems thinking' investigation into the complexity of radicalisation allows for a common understanding of the threat faced, without which capacity development efforts often flounder.

'Whole of Society' approach needed

Governments need to recognise that the awareness and implementation of CVE work cannot be restricted to a single administrative department. Different elements of the state need to work in collaboration with local community groups to jointly address the risk of radicalisation. CVE capacity development needs to support cross-departmental collaboration, leverage existing drivers of reform and seek strong leadership to challenge power dynamics which impede governments working more closely with and through civil society. A key component

of this interaction is how government articulates the purpose of its CVE work. Careful consideration has to be given to messaging that does not alienate communities. For example, the labelling of any work as "counter-extremist" is unlikely to be helpful.

Role of civil society in delivery

Governments have a strategic view on the nature of violent extremist threats and have a responsibility to allocate resources to tackle them, but civil society is most effective at undertaking CVE work because of its credibility and localised knowledge. Capacity development efforts need to recognise the historical context affecting trust between civil society and government, and not jeopardise collaboration by unnecessarily securitising other areas of work. Facilitating 'South-South' cooperation allows mutual development of capabilities, helps engender political ownership, and embeds the 'training the trainers' principle, all of which are important for successful capacity development.

Evaluating success is difficult

The monitoring and measuring of impact of CVE programmes is challenging, with attribution of preventative effect impossible to demonstrate. Capacity development efforts need to mitigate against this difficulty by having a clear sense of purpose (which would be identified by undertaking the research highlighted above) and clarifying which elements of monitoring is conducted for the purpose of accountability and which undertaken for operational learning. They should also consider more innovative evaluation mechanisms designed for programmes where it is difficult to track the scale of change, for example highlighting 'process milestones' and using the 'most significant change' approach.

Fragile political environments

Countries emerging from political unrest or conflict are normally those most in need of CVE capacity development support. The nature of these fragile political environments mean that project management needs to be deliberately structured as flexible enough to adapt as circumstances change, lessons are learnt and unexpected opportunities present themselves. The fragmented nature of these environments underline the importance of quality leadership, with political knowledge and social capital, to bring a team together and articulate a binding vision necessary to implement successful CVE programmes.

As the nature of violent extremism and the patterns of radicalisation change over time, this should prompt a reassessment of these five features of CVE and their associated recommendations. This paper concludes by offering suggestions of some possible forms these changes might take and areas where further research would continue to advance understanding in this area.

The concept and field of practice of 'Countering Violent Extremism'

In February 2015, President Obama hosted a 'Countering Violent Extremism Summit' at the White House. Politicians, civil society leaders, journalists and activists from 60 countries across the world attended this three-day event. The summit marked a significant moment for a field of practice that was only beginning to emerge as a recognised concept a decade earlier. Despite this political prominence, CVE is still a contested and ambiguous term. To some it "represents the most significant development in counterterrorism" in recent years,[1] to others it is a "catch-all category that lacks precision and focus".[2]

To effectively examine how to develop capacity in CVE, it is first necessary to understand the term fully. What do people and organisations mean when they use the term? When and where did people start using it and what does this reveal about how it is currently perceived and used?

Accordingly, this section will examine some definitions for CVE currently in use, explore the term's origins, discuss the concept in relation to the associated terms of radicalisation and counter-terrorism, and refer to its principal critics. It will conclude by setting out an understanding of CVE for this paper.

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[1] Peter Romaniuk, 'Does CVE Work? Lessons Learned From the Global Effort to Counter Violent Extremism' (Global Center on Cooperative Security, September 2015), v.
[2] 'State of the Art - Countering Violent Extremism as a Field of Practice', USIP Insights (United States Institute for Peace, 2014), 1.

Definitions of CVE

Perhaps given its emergence as a "rapidly growing and evolving international community of practice" the concept of CVE has lacked definitional clarity.[3]

In 2012, seeking to end the "counterproductive" lack of precision about the term, terrorism expert Will McCants proposed the definition of "reducing the number of terrorist group supporters through non-coercive means".[4] Similarly frustrated by the still "astonishing range" of uses for the term CVE in June 2016, analyst and author J.M. Berger sought to propose a "working definition" as "a narrow process focused exclusively on disrupting extremist recruitment and radicalisation activities".[5]

An academic consensus may not have been reached, but there is greater agreement among policymakers. The U.S. Department of State and USAID published a joint CVE strategy in May 2016, in which the concept is defined as "proactive actions to counter efforts by violent extremists to radicalize, recruit, and mobilize followers to violence and to address specific factors that facilitate violent extremist recruitment and radicalization to violence."[6]

Similarly, CVE practitioners from the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), proposed a definition of CVE as programmes that "involve a broad range of non-coercive and

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[3] Georgia Holmer and United States Institute of Peace, 'Countering Violent Extremism: A Peacebuilding Perspective', 2013, 3, http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR336-Countering%20Violent%20Extremism-A%20Peacebuilding%20Perspective.pdf.

[4] Will McCants and Clinton Watts, 'US Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism: An Assessment' (Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2012), 1, http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/162046/ipublicationdocument_singledocument/4d6924b3-d722-47c1-8aea-e1d093d7f7ec/en/McCants_Watts_-_Countering_Violent_Extremism.pdf.

[5] J.M. Berger, 'Making CVE Work: A Focused Approach Based on Process Disruption', ICCT Research Paper (The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 26 May 2016), 3, http://icct.nl/publication/making-cve-work-a-focused-approach-based-on-process-disruption/.

[6] 'Department of State & USAID Joint CVE Strategy', May 2016, 4, https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/257913.pdf.

preventative activities that are united by the objective of counteracting the key drivers of violent extremism specific to the locations in which the programmes are taking place".[7]

These competing and in part overlapping definitions help reveal the contours of the debate. CVE is related to radicalisation, but towards what is it aiming to reduce the risk of people becoming radicalised towards? Violent extremism or terrorism? Is it tackling people supporting these acts and or also participating in this violence? CVE is preventative in nature, but how many contributing factors do you consider when focusing on what causes the problem? Is it just the "narrow process" of recruitment or the wider "key drivers" that lead to violent extremism?

Origins of the term 'Countering Violent Extremism'

Answers to these questions and further insight into the meaning of the term may be gleaned from its origins. A better understanding the original usage of the term allows greater clarity regarding its current perceptions and how programming, including capacity development efforts, is designed to encapsulate these views.

A restricted survey of policy papers, academic journals and press articles for this paper reveals where and how it was first used.[8] Following the 2001 September 11th attacks in the United States, American policymakers and politicians adopted a lexicon based around the "Global War on Terror". In 2005, this was expanded to include references to a "Struggle Against Violent Extremism" and some U.S. government documents referring to 'Countering Violent

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[7] James Khalil and Martine Zeuthen, 'Counting Violent Extremism and Risk Reduction: A Guide to Programme Design and Evaluation', Whitehall Report (London: Royal United Services Institute, June 2016), 4, https://rusi.org/publication/whitehall-reports/countering-violent-extremism-and-risk-reduction-guide-programme-design.
[8] The academic database JSTOR, the Department of Homeland Security's Digital Library, the United Nations Official Document System and the media database LexisNexis were all used.

Islamist Extremism' date back to 2007. [9] Media reporting at the time indicated that this move

reflected a shift within the administration to publically reframe the ongoing efforts against

radical Islamist and terrorist groups.[10] The lexicon was expanded to include greater use of the

term 'extremist' as a necessary corollary to what kind of person becomes a 'terrorist'. In

practical terms it reflected a gradual shift in programming, detailed below, to try and prevent

the emergence of terrorism. The precursor terms to CVE within the U.S. government,

therefore, stem directly from the Bush administration's counter-terrorism efforts and were

targeted primarily against radical Islamists.

The earliest documented use of the term CVE, referring to a specific field of practice[11], was by

the EastWest Institute (EWI), based in New York, who in January 2007 established a

"Countering Violent Extremism Initiative". The EWI was established as a think-tank in 1980 to

build bridges between the communist East and democratic West as part of a wider confidence

building effort during the Cold War. Its work continued in this realm of cultural bridge-building

following the end of the Cold War. For example, in addition to the CVE project, there was a

separate EWI project running in 2007 about how the US could better engage with the 'Muslim

world'. According to Prof. Stephen Tankel, who created the CVE initiative and was directing it

at the time, EWI staff had been talking with Department of State officials about the

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[9] See for example multiple references in the Senate report: 'Violent Islamist Extremism, the Internet, and the Homegrown Terrorist Threat' (United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, 2008), https://privacysos.org/sites/all/files/govradicalHS.pdf.

[10] See for example Bootie Cosgrove-Mather, '"War On Terror" Remake?', *CBS.org*, accessed 21 July 2016, http://www.cbsnews.com/news/war-on-terror-remake/. and Steve Inskeep, 'Shifting Language: Trading Terrorism for Extremism', *Morning Edition* (NPR.org, 27 July 2005), http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4772826.

[11] There are occasional sporadic instances of prior usage referring to the act of *countering* violent extremism, rather than classifying the type of work to do this. For example, in a U.S. Senate Hearing before the Subcommittee on European Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations on "Islamist Extremism in Europe" in 2006, Coordinator for Counterterrorism Henry Crumpton said "Countering violent extremism involves a world-wide effort. It will last decades, if not longer." Although Mr Crumpton's words may have been prescient, there is no further documentation showing wider usage of the term as an accepted concept denoting a collective understanding of a field of practice.

importance of language in terms of how to address terrorist groups at the time the CVE initiative was created. Specifically, these conversations revolved around the appropriate general nomenclature for groups like al-Qaeda that engaged in religiously motivated violence.[12] Prof. Tankel explained that the choice of words "Countering Violent Extremism" for the name of the initiative "was partially intended to choose terminology that did not feed into the dangerous narrative that the U.S. was at war against Islam, since this was both untrue and widely seen as contributing to the ability of groups like al-Qaeda to radicalize and recruit". Accordingly, one of the first reports published by the initiative with the term 'Countering Violent Extremism' examined religiously motivated violent extremism from the three Abrahamic faiths. [13]

From this starting point it took time to be adopted into wider usage. The term first appears in content archived by the academic database JSTOR in a book published in 2009 detailing the United Kingdom's efforts to tackle the rise of home-grown radicalisation of its Muslim communities.[14] It was not until June 2010, however, that the term first appeared in UN documentation, with three member states (United States, Canada, and Indonesia), the OSCE and the Counter-Terrorism Action Group mentioning "countering violent extremism" as part of their "inputs" to the General Secretary's Report on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.[15] The term was not used in the United Nations Security Council, however,

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[12] Prof. Stephen Tankel, Telephone Interview regarding the 'Countering Violent Extremism Initiative' at the EastWest Institute, Telephone, 28 June 2016.

[13] Stephen Tankel et al., 'Countering Violent Extremsm - Lessons from the Abrahamic Faiths', EWI Policy Research Report (New York: EastWest Institute, October 2007), http://isndemo.atlasproject.eu/asset_demo/file/7ddf3a64-0448-4a57-b5de-050b6af11870/d3b1d8a9-ecb6-4063-8b13-c4177bf822c0/2007-10-19_Countering-Violent_Extremism_Lessons.pdf.

[14] H. A. Hellyer, ed., 'Muslims in the United Kingdom', in *Muslims of Europe*, The 'Other' Europeans (Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 152, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1r22hk.10.

[15] 'General Assembly Sixty-Fourth Session 116th Plenary Meeting' (United Nations, September 2010), A/64/PV.116, https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/508/81/PDF/N1050881.pdf?OpenElement.

until 2014 when the body adopted a resolution as part of its response to the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters volunteering to join ISIS in Syria and Iraq.[16]

These origins of the term link it explicitly with the threat of Islamic-inspired terrorism against western nations and efforts led by the United States to combat it. Furthermore, the first use of the term as a specific field of practice reflect a recognition of the difficulties associated with how to label these efforts. Although claims are now made to the universal application of 'CVE' to all forms of violent extremism, the initial conception of the term suggests a more nuanced understanding. This shift in meaning explains some of the current concerns about the field of practice. Explained in more detail below, these concerns may impact the success of capacity development in this area and need to be taken into consideration when referencing the concept of CVE.

CVE and 'home-grown' terrorism

Although the term CVE can be seen to have emerged in the last decade, the ideas and aims of the concept can be traced back further. The expanded lexicon of the U.S. government's "war on terror" reflected shifting policy towards more preventative action. Understanding the evolution of this policy assists understanding the nature of CVE work today.

The 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy confidently predicted that the "great struggle for ideas" that had characterised most of the twentieth century was "over". The "militant visions of class, nation and race which promised utopia and delivered misery" had "been defeated and discredited".[17] By the following year, however, the U.S. National Strategy for Combating

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[16] There is no consensus about how to refer to the group in Iraq and Syria which calls itself "Islamic State". This paper will use the term ISIS, which refers to the group's original name "Islamic State in Iraq and Syria".
[17] 'The National Security Strategy of the United States of America', September 2002, 1, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/63562.pdf.

Terrorism had reversed this assumption and an "objective" had been set to "win the war of ideas".[18] This idea was strengthened in the 2006 updated strategy which stated that "from the beginning, the War on Terror has been both a battle of arms and a battle of ideas… In the long run, winning the War on Terror means winning the battle of ideas".[19] Former CIA Director and Defense Secretary, Leon Panetta, later summarised this shift in attitude within the security establishment to a more holistic approach to counter-terrorism:

> "We have to understand that we're not got going to be able to kill our way out of this challenge. We have got to be able to understand what are the root causes, what inspires people to get involved in extremism. Because ultimately if we're going to succeed here, we've got to be able to deal with those causes. Yes, we've emphasised hard power, I understand why… but we have got to simply build a more balanced approach if we're ultimately going to succeed in this effort".[20]

This shift is arguably still happening as governments continue to grapple not just with disrupting terrorist attacks, but also with how to minimise the prior risk of people acquiring the intentions to carry out terrorist acts.

This shift in strategy was not limited to the United States and may even have been prompted by events in Europe. In the aftermath of Al-Qaeda attacks in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005, conducted by citizens from those countries, policymakers became increasingly concerned with the threat of 'home-grown' terrorists. Both the United Kingdom and European Union counter-terrorism strategies published after the attacks included strands of work titled 'Prevent' reflecting the ambition to ensure policies were enacted to limit the numbers of people *seeking* to use terrorist violence.[21] Islamist terrorism was not just a tactic

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[18] 'National Strategy for Combating Terrorism', February 2003, 23, https://www.cia.gov/news-information/cia-the-war-on-terrorism/Counter_Terrorism_Strategy.pdf.

[19] 'National Strategy for Combating Terrorism', September 2006, 7.

[20] Center for Strategic and International Studies, *Voice of a CVE Commission Co-Chair - Interview with Leon Panetta*, On Violent Extremism, accessed 20 June 2016, https://www.csis.org/podcasts/violent-extremism.

[21] 'Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom's Strategy' (HM Government, July 2006).; 'The European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy' (Council of the European Union, November 2005), http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2014469%202005%20REV%204.

employed by foreign actors but also a phenomenon potentially used by a country's own citizens. Counter-terrorism policy had to reflect this reality.

What could and should be done to prevent people in domestic communities subscribing to Al-Qaeda's ideology and then seeking to cause harm? What were the differences between those who believed in the ideology of extremist Islam and plan to undertake violent acts and those who believed but decided not to commit violence? The answers to these questions led to intense research around the concept of 'radicalisation' and 'counter-radicalisation'.

CVE and (counter)radicalisation

The public and academic debate as to what causes someone to become 'radicalised' relates directly to the ambiguity of CVE work. Recognising the limited understanding of the radicalisation process, and how it has evolved over time, provides valuable insight into the current formulation of CVE policies and programmes.

The U.K. counter-terrorism strategy describes radicalisation as "the process by which people come to support, and in some cases to participate in terrorism".[22] CVE efforts can be seen as aimed at stopping this process, but there is limited understanding of the balance between personal agency and societal influencing factors. Scholar Rik Coolaset sets out how 'radicalisation' began primarily to be used in policymaking circles in relation to terrorism only after the September 11 attacks in the United States and concludes that the term "remains ill-defined, complex and controversial".[23]

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[22] 'CONTEST The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism' (HM Government, July 2011), 36, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97995/strategy-contest.pdf.
[23] Rik Coolsaet, '"All Radicalisation Is Local": the Genesis and Drawbacks of an Elusive Concept', *Egmont Paper* 84 (2016): 3, https://biblio.ugent.be/publication/7243264.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to review all the many suggested models that seek to explain the process of radicalisation.[24] Some of those most pertinent to the definition and practice of CVE work, however, will be highlighted to demonstrate the divergence of approaches.

Early attempts to understand how people become supportive or willing to commit acts of terrorism among Western nations included the 2007 New York Police Department's four-stage radicalisation process. Based on an in-depth analysis of 11 case studies of people in western democracies radicalised by Al-Qaeda, the model identified four stages individuals pass through: pre-radicalisation, self-identification, indoctrination and jihadisation.[25]

In the United Kingdom around the same time, the British police used another framework to model radicalisation within a society, but still with a similar focus on a linear process describing an escalating attachment to the cause.[26] The 'radicalisation pyramid' they developed symbolised greater commitment to the extremist belief at higher 'tiers', but these beliefs were held by decreasing numbers of individuals at each higher level as the pyramid reached its apex.[27] The bottom tier represented all members of the community, the next level up those considered vulnerable to radicalisation, until the top tier which represented the minority of individuals who are sufficiently radicalised to commit an act of terrorism.

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[24] For available reports setting out the multitude of models, see for example Kris Christmann, 'Preventing Religious Radicalisation and Violent Extremism - A Systematic Review of the Research Evidence' (Youth Justice Board, 2012), http://www.academia.edu/download/30873939/preventing-violent-extremism-systematic-review.pdf. and Harriet Allan et al., 'Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypotheses and Literature' (London: Royal United Services Institute, 2015), http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/pdf/outputs/Misc_Gov/Drivers_of_Radicalisation_Literature_Review.pdf.

[25] Mitchell D. Silber, Arvin Bhatt, and Senior Intelligence Analysts, 'Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat' (New York Police Department, 2007), http://moonbattery.com/graphics/NYPD_Report-Radicalization_in_the_West.pdf.

[26] The model was discussed in 2008 report reviewing the work of the government in this area, but it is unclear when it was first adopted.

[27] As cited in 'Preventing Violent Extremism - Learning and Development Exercise', Report to the Home Office and Communities and Local Government (Audit Commission, October 2008), 12.

Analysing patterns of radicalisation of individuals into the transnational Islamist group al-Muhajiroun in the early 2000s, the academic Quintan Wiktorowicz placed greater emphasis on social-psychological factors in his explanation of the process. Less important than a series of stages an individual passes through, he identified the importance of a cognitive opening during which a person becomes receptive to new ideas and then the subsequent gradual socialisation process by a group of an extremist ideology.[28]

Wiktorowicz's work was a precursor to development in the term's understanding, as the linear model became increasingly discredited. As understanding of the process broadened, radicalisation began to be increasingly seen as a "fluid, nonlinear, highly individualized process".[29] This prompted different frameworks for how best to interpret this variegated phenomenon. The U.S. National Counterterrorism Center's analysis suggested five levels upon which factors influencing radicalisation could be placed:

- personal-level (psychological issues, demographic backgrounds, personal history);

- group-level (social networks, group dynamics);

- community-level (alienation, marginalization, diaspora relationships);

- sociopolitical-level (collective grievances, foreign policy, and external events); and,

- ideological-level (appeal of a justifying narrative, charismatic ideologues).[30]

Schmid instead proposes just three[31]:

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[28] Quintan Wiktorowicz, 'Joining the Cause: Al-Muhajroun and Radical Islam' (Department of International Studies, Rhodes College, 2004).
[29] Holmer and United States Institute of Peace, 'Countering Violent Extremism', 2.
[30] 'Radicalization Dynamics - A Primer National' (National Counter-Terrorism Center, June 2012).
[31] Alex Schmid, 'Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review', ICCT Research Paper (The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2013), 3, http://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Schuurman-and-Eijkman-Moving-Terrorism-Research-Forward-June-2013.pdf.

- the micro (e.g. individual level, psychological factors);

- meso (most importantly the "radical milieu" in which an individual is situated); and

- macro (the influence of broader environmental factors relating to the government and society).

Using frameworks such as these, the debate has shifted as to the most prominent factors *within* and *between* the different levels. For example, regarding the phenomenon of foreign fighters travelling to take part in the ongoing conflict in Syria and Iraq, competing theories emphasise different factors. At the individual level, some academics maintain the vital importance of "sacred values" to the process,[32] others stress the predominance of group-level socialisation[33], while another theory maintains that the phenomenon of foreign fighters leaving European countries is a generational "youth revolt".[34] Any CVE strategy designed to combat foreign fighters therefore would have to recognise this complexity and be based on an assessment of which factors it judge most important in a particular context.

One useful distinction for CVE work is between cognitive and behavioural radicalisation. This division recognises that not every terrorist holds radical beliefs and not everyone who holds radical beliefs goes on to commit terrorist acts.[35] For example, some people only acquire radical beliefs after having joined a violent extremist group.

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[32] Center for Strategic and International Studies, *Voice of a Frontline Researcher and Anthropologist - Interview with Scott Atran*, On Violent Extremism, accessed 21 June 2016, https://www.csis.org/podcasts/violent-extremism. and explained in greater detail in Jeremy Ginges et al., 'Psychology out of the Laboratory: The Challenge of Violent Extremism.', *American Psychologist* 66, no. 6 (2011): 507–19, doi:10.1037/a0024715.

[33] Charles Mink, 'It's About the Group, Not God: Social Causes and Cures for Terrorism', *Journal for Deradicalization*, no. 5 (2015): 63–91.

[34] Oliver Roy, 'International Terrorism: How Can Prevention and Repression Keep Pace?', in *BKA Autumn Conference*, 2015, 18–19, http://www.bka.de/nn_256982/SharedDocs/Downloads/EN/Publications/AutumnConferences/2015/herbsttagung2015Roy,templateId=raw,property=publicationFile.pdf/herbsttagung2015Roy.pdf.

[35] John Knefel, 'Everything You've Been Told About Radicalization Is Wrong', *Rolling Stone*, 6 May 2013, http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/everything-youve-been-told-about-radicalization-is-wrong-20130506.

Another important feature of radicalisation necessary for CVE work is recognising that the varied, individualized routes through which someone can become radicalised reflects the fact that there is no archetype 'terrorist'. Moghaddam, for example, distinguishes nine specialised roles in terrorist movements: source of inspiration; strategist; networker; [bomb-making] expert; cell manager; local agitator and guide; cell member; fodder; and fundraiser.[36] The route of radicalisation to each of these very different roles, each attracting a different type of personality and requiring different skills, is unlikely to be the same.

Due to processes of radicalisation being influenced by so many different factors, effective CVE work is contingent upon developing a detailed understanding of the specific form and context of the violent extremism it is seeking to stem support of.

How is CVE defined in relation to counter-terrorism?

CVE then can be seen as a field of practice borne out of the policy response to the threat of radical Islamist terrorism and focussed on combatting the radicalisation of individuals to commit or support such acts. Further clarity can be sought from trying to distinguish it more clearly from the wider field of practice from which it emerged: counter-terrorism.

The connection between the terms CVE and counter-terrorism is contested: some view the terms as broadly synonymous, some view CVE as a sub-set of counter-terrorism or vice versa, while others seek a clear distinction between the two concepts.

As Schmid highlights, "many governments use the term 'violent extremists' as [a] quasi-synonym for terrorists and insurgents".[37] Countering violent extremism therefore is often

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[36] Fathali Moghaddam, 'De-Radicalisation and the Staircase from Terrorism', in *The Faces of Terrorism: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2009), 281.
[37] Schmid, 'Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review', 11.

viewed as the same thing as counter-terrorism. For example, in their report for the Australian government, Nasser-Eddine et al. admit that "no real distinction between violent extremism and terrorism has fully evolved" and therefore effectively treat the two concepts as the same in their report.[38]

Romaniuk, however, argues that not all violence committed by 'radicalised' people should be classified as terrorism. He suggests that violent extremism "ought to be interpreted to be broader than terrorism alone, which it subsumes along with other forms of ideologically motivated violence".[39]

Acknowledging that the term remains "unclear, ill-defined and elusive", Streigher in contrast argues that a categorical distinction should be made between violent extremism (VE) and terrorism on the basis of the former as being solely notional: "VE is purely an ideology; it is a belief system that advocates the use of violence for the furtherance of an ideological cause. VE is not the act, more the expression of the extreme sanction of religiosity, race, politics etc."[40]

The contradicting positions put forward by Streigher and Romaniuk serve to demonstrate the ongoing theoretical argument for how the two terms relate to one another. At a practical level, as demonstrated previously when analysing the origins of the field of practice, policymakers most commonly situate CVE work as a subset of a larger suite of activity designed to target the threat of terrorism.[41] For example, a review of developmental

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[38] Minerva Nasser-Eddine et al., 'Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Literature Review' (DTIC Document, 2011), 9, http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA543686.

[39] Romaniuk, 'Does CVE Work? Lessons Learned From the Global Effort to Counter Violent Extremism', 7.

[40] Jason-Leigh Striegher, 'Violent-Extremism: An Examination of a Definitional Dilemma' (8th Australian Security and Intelligence Conference, Edith Cowan University Joondalup Campus, Perth, Western Australia.: Security Research Institute, 2015), 79, http://ro.ecu.edu.au/asi/47/.

[41] For example, the Global Counter Terrorism Forum, established by 29 countries in 2011 lists CVE as one of its of 'Focus Areas' alongside other issues including tackling the foreign terrorist fighters problem, cutting down

approaches to CVE for the Danish government treated CVE as "part of the broader response to countering terrorism".[42]

Nasser-Edine et al. contend that the definitional obscurity of CVE stems from its origins "in government policy rather than scholarship".[43] This may be partly true, but just as important is the ongoing ambiguity associated with the terms 'terrorism' and limited understanding of radicalisation. There is still no consensus on what constitutes 'terrorism', with the identity, intentions and actions of the perpetrator all contested elements of which acts of ideologically inspired violence (or threat of violence) should be labelled as such (despite decades of academic study debate it still ongoing as to its most appropriate definition[44]). The corollary of this lack of precision is that the field of 'counter-terrorism' also contains "significant diversity among those strategies and tactics [that seek to thwart terrorism]".[45] For the purpose of this paper, it is not necessary to adjudicate between these competing definitions of terrorism except to recognise that as long as this uncertainty remain, the concept of CVE will similarly lack exactness.

This lack of semantic clarity has implications: positive ones in implementation but also negative consequences affecting policy precision. The words used to describe programmatic activity matters.[46] There is an operational advantage in some situations to not be working on

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on routes of terrorist financing, and rule of law-based and human rights compliant criminal justice policies. See https://www.thegctf.org/web/guest/focus-areas

[42] Julian Brett et al., 'Lessons Learned from Danish and Other International Efforts on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) in Development Contexts', Evaluation Study, (October 2015), 5.

[43] Nasser-Eddine et al., 'Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Literature Review', 16.

[44] See for example Leonard Weinberg, Ami Pedahzur, and Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler, 'The Challenges of Conceptualizing Terrorism', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16, no. 4 (January 2004): 777–94, doi:10.1080/095465590899768.

[45] James Forrest, 'An Introduction to the Study of Counterterrorism', in *Essentials of Counterterrorism* (Praeger Security International, 2015), 2.

[46] This is reflected in a recent debate that has arisen amongst policymakers about whether some CVE work should be re-labelled as 'Preventing Violent Extremism' (PVE). For example, the United Nations has largely adopted the terminology of PVE. Although the two terms are largely seen as synonymous, PVE's advocates

a project labelled as 'counter-terrorism'. The latter term is associated in many contexts with military force, clandestine security services and controversial coercive methods. Being connected to these elements can undermine the effectiveness of more sensitive work, for example community engagement. It can also risk the safety of those undertaking the work if they are seen as accomplices to these forces. The disadvantage is the ongoing policy confusion that arises from the lack of a clear distinction between CVE and counter-terrorism. This can lead to incoherent strategies and misdirected programming to tackle radicalisation. While it may serve some operational purposes for CVE to be perceived as slightly apart from the field of counter-terrorism, this masking of intention and definitional ambiguity means that the field has attracted many critics.

Criticism of the term CVE

Criticism has focussed on the manner in which the term, as a result of its impreciseness, is being used to describe an unrealistically broad range of programmatic activity. Another point of contention is the accusation that the term obfuscates the challenge it is trying to address.

In 2014, Heydemann lambasted the term as "a catch-all category that lacks precision and focus" and has "struggled to establish a clear and compelling definition".[47] Several years later the same criticism is still being levelled as "programmes proposed under the rubric of CVE can range from individual interventions to efforts to rewrite the script for entire societies, from the economy to social mores".[48] This expansion of programming nominally associated with

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would argue its emphasis is slightly different. Using the public health typology explained below, PVE would refer to 'primary' level interventions and only address risk factors of vulnerable individuals rather than engage in any efforts to directly counter radicalising influences. For the purpose of this paper, given the definition of CVE detailed below which would include PVE work, the two terms will not be disaggregated and separately examined.

[47] 'State of the Art - Countering Violent Extremism as a Field of Practice', 1.

[48] Berger, 'Making CVE Work', 3.

CVE has been caused by the term gaining additional political and bureaucratic prominence, and thus it has become advantageous for different practitioners and programmes to claim they are doing 'CVE' work. [49]

Notwithstanding criticisms of the efficacy and content of the CVE interventions[50], the naming of the concept has also been attacked by critics. There is a perspective that claims CVE understates the predominance of Islam in causing the threat it is combatting. Failing to acknowledge the allegedly crucial role played by Islamic ideology, it is argued, means the crux of the problem is not dealt with. Another opposing perspective claims CVE dishonestly represents activity that, it is claimed, unfairly targets at Muslim communities.[51]

Both viewpoints of CVE can be understood when assessed against the origins of the term. The debate as to the best, or perhaps more accurately *least damaging*, way to label CVE activity is ongoing, but the need for the work itself is not contested.

Conclusion – selecting a definition of CVE

Examining the historical roots of the term CVE as a field of practice, its relation to radicalisation and counter-terrorism and the continued contention regarding its labelling allows for more nuanced recommendations as to how most effectively undertake capacity development in this area.

To aid more focused recommendations, this paper will adopt the definition of CVE as activity designed to specifically reduce the risk that people become radicalised to commit acts of

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[49] For example, the Counter-Terrorism Bureau in the U.S. Department of State was renamed the Counter-Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism Bureau in May 2016.
[50] See for example: 'Coalition Letter to Obama Administration on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Program', *American Civil Liberties Union*, 18 December 2014, https://www.aclu.org/coalition-letter-obama-administration-countering-violent-extremism-cve-program.
[51] Michael Crowley, 'Obama's "Extremism" Language Irks Both Sides', *Politico.com*, 18 February 2015, http://www.politico.com/story/2015/02/barack-obamas-extremism-language-irks-both-sides-115304.html.

ideologically motivated violence. This borrows from Romaniuk's suggestion that CVE places the "emphasis on the mobilization toward ideologically motivated violence", which accurately captures the original meaning of the term while also side-stepping the insoluble issue of what is considered terrorism.[52]

Streigher's definition of violent extremism as purely ideological is too limiting and would mean types of programmes that stem radicalisation through means other than combatting extremist ideology, for example behavioural traits, would not be considered CVE activity. Broader definitions that decouple CVE from the *process* of individual radicalisation to include any condition that may contribute to reducing acts of terrorism become too unwieldy amidst the multitude of possible different causes.[53]

Efforts to dissuade current terrorists from committing further violence, often classified as 'deradicalisation', are not classified as CVE using this definition. Insights from counter-radicalisation efforts included under this conception of CVE will likely be useful to deradicalisation, and vice versa, but they are nonetheless dealing with two different intended processes of change. Similarly, broad-based development programmes to reduce levels of poverty in a country or increase literacy rates would not be considered CVE unless the activity was designed to reduce the risk of an identified pattern of radicalisation and specifically targeted at a vulnerable group.

Given this understanding of CVE, the next section will examine how programming designed to put this concept into practice has evolved and why capacity development in this field is set to become more important.

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[52] Romaniuk, 'Does CVE Work? Lessons Learned From the Global Effort to Counter Violent Extremism', 7.
[53] For example, 'The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research' identified more than 50 different alleged 'causes' of terrorism.

The development of CVE programming

Designing interventions aiming to stop a process that is only partially understood, highly individualised and context specific is necessarily difficult. It is not surprising therefore that CVE programming has seen a great deal of criticism and change in its first decade. As programmes have been designed, implemented and subsequently evaluated, lessons have been learnt about effective (and ineffective) CVE work. This broadening of knowledge through learned experience has been combined with further academic focus on case-studies of radicalised individuals.[54] In describing two broad phases of development for the field of CVE, Romaniuk describes how "CVE has coevolved with the debate about radicalisation".[55] This section will summarise the two phases as set out by Romaniuk, before adding a third phase which characterises the current state of CVE programme development.[56] It will conclude by explaining the important role to be played by capacity development projects in future CVE interventions.[57]

First Phase of CVE Programming – experimenting with what works

Largely ignored as a strand of activity in counter-terrorism policy prior to 2001, the attacks by 'home-grown' terrorists in London and Madrid in 2004 and 2005 raised the prominence of

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[54] As interesting and useful example in an area that remains under-researched is case studies of people who do *not* become radicalised. For example, see R. Kim Cragin, 'Resisting Violent Extremism: A Conceptual Model for Non-Radicalization', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 2 (April 2014): 337–53, doi:10.1080/09546553.2012.714820.

[55] Romaniuk, 'Does CVE Work? Lessons Learned From the Global Effort to Counter Violent Extremism', 12.

[56] The labels used for each phase are not used by Romaniuk, but are this author's characterisation of the phases he describes.

[57] Capacity development is more commonly known as 'capacity building'. This latter term is no longer used by most international organisations, e.g. World Bank, OECD, as it implies that capacity is mechanically constructed according to some preconceived design. This does not reflect the current understanding of how changes in capacity takes place and so 'development' is preferred to 'building'. This paper will use 'capacity development' but cite papers and references which may use the term 'capacity building' which will be treated synonymously.

radicalisation and how it might be stopped. A progenitor approach to the field of CVE was the *Prevent* strand of the U.K.'s counter-terrorism policy.[58] During its initial conception, counter-radicalisation efforts only focussed on Islamic terrorism but approached the issue at multiple levels. The strategy contained policies ranging from tackling the structural disadvantages faced by Muslim communities, combatting radicalisation within prisons, engaging with extremist Islam directly through the "battle of ideas" and supporting similar efforts internationally.[59]

From 2006 to 2010, different programmes were designed and implemented, building on the 'Preventing Extremism Together' initiative undertaken by government Ministers in the wake of the July 7th 2005 attacks, to promote "mainstream" Islam.[60] These included "national roadshows" of "mainstream Muslim scholars and thinkers" aimed at young Muslims, regional "Muslim forums against extremism and Islamophobia" to bring together Muslim community leaders with law enforcement and public service agencies, and supporting a "Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board" to produce guidance on issues like imam accreditation, mosque governance and inter-faith initiatives.[61] A pilot programme for a multi-agency system called 'Channel' was established in 2007 for dealing with individuals assessed at being "at risk of being drawn towards support for or involvement" in terrorism.[62]

As part of the same *Prevent* strategy, the U.K. Foreign and Commonwealth Office worked overseas to "counter extremists' false characterisation of the United Kingdom as being a place

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[58] The strategy, titled CONTEST, comprised four strands of work (Pursue, Prepare, Protect and Prevent) each covering a particular area of counter-terrorism policy.
[59] 'Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom's Strategy', 13–15.
[60] Ibid., 13.
[61] Ibid., 14–15.
[62] 'National Channel Referral Figures', *National Police Chiefs' Council*, accessed 1 May 2016, http://www.npcc.police.uk/FreedomofInformation/NationalChannelReferralFigures.aspx.

where Muslims are oppressed".[63] A team, called the Research, Information and Communications Unit (RICU), was established within the Home Office with Foreign Office staff to craft and disseminate these and other counter-extremism messages to domestic as well as international audiences.[64] Conducting work in Pakistan was an early area of focus for RICU given the strong connections between the terrorists who conducted the July 7th attacks and that country. There were concerns about radicalising networks between the large Pakistani diaspora community in the United Kingdom and the increasingly prominent extremist groups in Pakistan. As domestic terrorism in Pakistan increased significantly in 2007, following the siege of *Lal Masjid* ('Red Mosque') in Islamabad, political will and a coincidence of interests engendered cooperation between both governments on this issue.

The European Union (EU) published its counter-terrorism policy in 2005.[65] It borrowed its overall structure from the U.K.'s CONTEST strategy with a dedicated 'Prevent' strand of work, but there was hardly any programmatic activity because of the allocation of powers between the EU and member states. [66]

Other developed western nations were also considering how to combat the risks of radicalisation overseas by using their international development budgets. The Danish Foreign Ministry led the way in 2004 by linking security and development when it released a plan for

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[63] 'Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom's Strategy', 16.

[64] 'Intelligence and Security Committee Annual Report 2008-09' (House of Commons), 28–29, accessed 30 April 2016, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61297/isc-annualreport-0809.pdf.

[65] 'The European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy'.

[66] The EU Strategy contained four strands of work 'Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Respond' with only the last strand differing from the U.K.'s CONTEST. Although the EU document was published in 2005 before CONTEST (2006), the U.K.'s strategy was conceived in 2002 and remained unpublished until a revised version was released following pressure resulting from the 7th July 2005 attacks in London.

how its development assistance would be used to fight the "new terrorism".[67] USAID also conducted pilot programmes of activity designed to combat radicalisation as part of the multi-agency Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Program launched in 2006. Over time, the US government's efforts evolved to focus on three sets of activities: good governance, youth empowerment, and media and outreach support.[68]

The international context in which this phase of development took place was dominated by the United States-led coalition's occupation of Iraq in 2003. Conducted as part of the 'Global War On Terror', the war was used as evidence by extremist Islamists that 'the West', led by the United States, was 'at war with Islam'. Military manifestations of CVE in the form of strategic communication, information operations and psychological warfare were conducted as part of a larger effort to change public opinion in the theatres of war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Although some of the personnel involved in these efforts have transitioned into the broader field of CVE, there have been very few documented attempts to incorporate the learning from these well-funded and long-running campaigns into current CVE work. This remains an area where further research, much of which would need to draw upon classified material, could usefully inform the future development of the field.

Romaniuk describes the first phase of CVE programming as "a case of trial and error", and identifies four lessons from this period: knowing the audience being targeted by any intervention; avoiding stigmatizing entire communities through the interventions; communicating clearly with practitioners, policymakers and the public about the aims of the

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[67] As referenced in Eelco Kessels and Christina Nemr, 'Countering Violent Extremism and Development Assistance - Identifying Synergies, Obstacles and Opportunities', Policy Brief (Global Center on Cooperative Security, February 2016), 9.

[68] Jeffrey Swedberg and Steven Smith, 'Mid-Term Evaluation of USAID's Counter-Extremism Programming in Africa' (USAID, 1 February 2011), 7, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pdacr583.pdf.

programme to avoid damaging misunderstanding; and, exercising caution when selecting which groups and individuals to partner with for programming.[69]

Second phase of CVE Programming – learning lessons and international cooperation

The above lessons were being learned from the first phase of CVE programming just as the need for this type of work increased following the conflict and political turmoil created in the aftermath of the 'Arab Uprisings' in 2011.

In the United Kingdom, responding to relentless public[70], parliamentary[71] and academic[72] criticism of *Prevent*, the new Coalition Government announced a review of the policy upon assuming office in 2010. The revised policy, published a year later acknowledged the failure to include non-Islamist forms of radicalisation, the damaging effect of being seen to "securitise" community cohesion efforts, criticised working with unsuitable and non-credible organisations and individuals, and the lack of demonstrable results.[73]

Romaniuk suggests that both the Canadian and Australian governments "observed" and "integrated lessons from the U.K. experience" when designing their own domestic CVE programmes.[74] The United Kingdom's experience was also studied in the United States, for

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[69] Romaniuk, 'Does CVE Work? Lessons Learned From the Global Effort to Counter Violent Extremism', 16–20.
[70] Douglas Murray, 'The Prevent Strategy: A Textbook Example of How to Alienate Just about Everybody', 31 March 2010, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/7540456/The-Prevent-strategy-a-textbook-example-of-how-to-alienate-just-about-everybody.html.
[71] 'Preventing Violent Extremism' (House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee, 16 March 2010), http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmcomloc/65/65.pdf.
[72] Paul Thomas, 'Failed and Friendless: The UK's "Preventing Violent Extremism" Programme', *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 12, no. 3 (5 July 2010): 442–58, doi:10.1111/j.1467-856X.2010.00422.x.
[73] 'Prevent Strategy' (HM Government, July 2011), 44–45, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf.
[74] Romaniuk, 'Does CVE Work? Lessons Learned From the Global Effort to Counter Violent Extremism', 25.

example by the Bipartisan Policy Center's National Security Preparedness Group's landmark report about domestic counter-radicalisation policies.[75]

CVE programming internationally also developed significantly in 2011. The Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF), established that year, led by the United States and its partners, established a CVE Working Group, co-chaired by the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates, to "strengthen measures to counter all forms of violent extremism that pose a threat to members' interests".[76] This led to the inauguration the following year of an international centre of CVE best practice, called Hedayah, based in Abu Dhabi with ambitions to become the "premier international institution for dialogue and communications, capacity building programs and research and analysis to counter violent extremism".[77]

Even if not all European countries were convinced about the merits of CVE work,[78] the EU created the Radicalisation Awareness Network as "a hub for connecting, developing and disseminating expertise" amongst "practitioners around Europe working daily with those vulnerable to radicalisation, as well as those who have already been radicalised".[79]

Political and constitutional restraints may have restricted similar efforts focussed on domestic audiences in the United States,[80] but in September 2011 the Obama administration

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[75] 'Preventing Violent Radicalization in America' (Bipartisan Policy Center National Security Preparedness Group, 2011), 21–26.

[76] 'Countering Violent Extremism - GCTF', accessed 28 June 2016, https://www.thegctf.org/countering-violent-extremism.

[77] 'History of Hedayah', accessed 22 June 2016, http://hedayah.ae/about-hedayah/history/.

[78] See for example, the report of a delegation visiting different countries in 2010 to gather views on CVE work which found "the French government explicitly dismisses the potential value of such programs as being unworthy of the time or resources required to develop and operate them." in 'Risk Reduction for Countering Violent Extremism - Explorative Review by the International Resource Center for Countering Violent Extremism' (Qatar International Academy for Security Studies, 2010), 42.

[79] 'Radicalisation Awareness Network - About Us', accessed 22 June 2016, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/docs/ran_leaflet_en.pdf.

[80] Lorenzo Vidino and Seamus Hughes, 'Countering Violent Extremism in America' (Progam on Extremism, The George Washington University, June 2015), 4, https://cchs.gwu.edu/sites/cchs.gwu.edu/files/downloads/CVE%20in%20America%20.pdf.

established by an Executive Order the Centre for Strategic Counterterrorism Communication (CSCC) to effect CVE change overseas.[81] Housed within the Department of State, the unit was tasked with developing narratives and public communications strategies to confront and discredit the extremist messages radicalising people overseas.

Third and current phase of CVE programming – adaptation and mainstreaming

Following the internationalisation of CVE programming in the years following 2011, current CVE efforts since 2015 can already be seen to have adapted from both the learning generated during this period and the changing landscape of radicalisation following the rise of ISIS.

The large number of recruits pledging allegiance to ISIS, drawn to join the group in Iraq and Syria or carrying out attacks in other countries, prompted a reassessment of priorities and tactics by CVE practitioners. High quality and multifaceted media production, an unprecedented presence on social media platforms and an ideology with broader appeal than offered by their Islamist predecessors encouraged between 27,000 and 31,000 people from at least 86 countries to travel to the region.[82] In response, CVE efforts have had to adapt to using new technological platforms to better target their audience, reach out through a more diverse network of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and develop campaigns that respond to the psychological vulnerabilities exploited by extremist recruiters.[83]

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[81] 'Executive Order 13584 --Developing an Integrated Strategic Counterterrorism Communications Initiative', *Whitehouse.gov*, 9 September 2011, https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/09/09/executive-order-13584-developing-integrated-strategic-counterterrorism-c.

[82] No official figures exist; this estimate from The Soufan Group, accurate up to the end of 2015, also includes foreign recruits drawn to other extremist groups operating in Iraq and Syria but does not include combatants nominally pledged to ISIS in other active conflicts (e.g. Afghanistan, Libya, Nigeria and Yemen). For more details see: 'Foreign Fighters - An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq' (The Soufan Group, December 2015), http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate_FINAL.pdf.

[83] See for example, the type of counter-radicalisation work being conducted by the United Kingdom's RICU as revealed in Ian Cobain et al., 'Revealed - UK's Covert Propaganda Bid to Stop Muslims Joining Isis', *The*

Reflecting this need for a shift in tactics, at the start of 2016 the U.S. government responded by "revamping its counter-violent-extremist communications efforts" and remodelling the CSCC into the 'Global Engagement Center' (GEC).[84] Stopping the production of their own content in English, one of the goals of the GEC is to instead "enhance the capacities and empower third party, positive messengers". This was likely motivated not just by extra understanding of what works but also by the fact that previous efforts were known to have been "derided by its critics" in the media,[85] as well as by industry experts.[86]

While CVE efforts by western countries changed in response to the threat from ISIS, the concept continued to develop and has become a more mainstream concept amongst international policymakers. The United Nations Secretary General published in January 2016 a 'Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism' which called for an "All-of-UN" approach to prevent violent extremism, as well as the development of "National Plans of Action" by all member states.[87] This preceded the addition, in February 2016, to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee's 'Overseas Development Assistance' guidelines of text to specifically include 'Preventing Violent Extremism' activity. This means that "non-coercive, intentional and targeted use of development assistance approaches aim[ed] at providing positive alternatives to those most at risk of violent extremism in partner countries and countering the narrative of violent

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Guardian, 2 May 2016, sec. UK news, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/may/02/uk-government-covert-propaganda-stop-muslims-joining-isis.

[84] 'A New Center for Global Engagement', Press Release|Fact Sheet, *U.S. Department of State*, (8 January 2016), http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/01/251066.htm.

[85] 'Obama Administration Plans Shake-up in Propaganda War against ISIS', *Washington Post*, accessed 19 July 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/obama-administration-plans-shake-up-in-propaganda-war-against-the-islamic-state/2016/01/08/d482255c-b585-11e5-a842-0feb51d1d124_story.html.

[86] 'Panel Casts Doubt on U.S. Propaganda Efforts against ISIS - The Washington Post', accessed 19 July 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/panel-casts-doubt-on-us-propaganda-efforts-against-isis/2015/12/02/ab7f9a14-9851-11e5-94f0-9eeaff906ef3_story.html.

[87] 'Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism' (United Nations, 15 January 2016), 11–13, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674.

extremism that incites support for violence" is now eligible to be categorised as development assistance.[88]

Conclusion – The upcoming importance of capacity development

Over ten years since governments first began to design interventions to counter radicalisation, the practice of CVE has evolved and been mainstreamed into the lexicon of the international community. CVE's evolution has reflected the greater understanding of the challenge of radicalisation and the changing nature of the threat it is combating. This process of change is unlikely to stop and will likely intensify as more programming is commissioned, evaluated and lessons learned. Wide-ranging and well-funded CVE programmes like the EU's Strengthening Resilience to Violence and Extremism ('STRIVE') multi-country programme[89] and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF),[90] are currently funding innovative interventions which will provide further understanding of how best to undertake CVE work. Buttressing these efforts, initiatives like the RESOLVE Network[91] and the International Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism Capacity-Building Clearinghouse Mechanism[92] have been established with the purpose of gathering data, examples of best practice and disseminating knowledge to advance learning in the field.

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[88] 'Development Assistance Committee High Level Meeting Communiqué' (OECD, 19 February 2016), 16, https://www.oecd.org/dac/DAC-HLM-Communique-2016.pdf.

[89] *STRIVE for Development - Strengthening Resilience to Violence and Extremism* (European Commission, 2015).

[90] GCERF was established in 2014 as a public-private partnership "to serve as the first global effort to support local, community-level initiatives aimed at strengthening resilience against violent extremist agendas". For more information, see: http://www.gcerf.org

[91] Launched in September 2015 under the aegis of the United States Institute for Peace, the RESOLVE Network's primary goal is to "generate, facilitate, aggregate, and synthesize methodologically sound, locally informed research on the drivers of vulnerability and sources of resilience to violent social movements and extremism." For more information, see: http://www.usip.org/programs/projects/resolve-network-researching-solutions-violent-extremism

[92] In 2015 it was announced that the International Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism Capacity-Building Clearinghouse Mechanism (ICCM) was to be established to "develop and manage an up-to-date database of recent and ongoing counterterrorism and CVE capacity-building assistance, identify gaps in programming, de-conflict overlapping programs, and mobilize and coordinate donor resources by making non-

With expertise concentrated in countries and institutions that have more experience undertaking CVE work and the expectation that more countries with little exposure to CVE work will be developing national action plans as recommended by the United Nations, international collaboration on CVE is set to increase. Although some of this collaboration will take place within international fora like the GCTF and United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, some will also be situated in the countries concerned in the form of capacity development programmes.[93] This emphasis was evident in the communiqué on "Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism" issued following the meeting of the G7 group of nations in Tokyo in May 2016. The third listed action in the published "Action Plan" was specifically regarding "Capacity Building" to "maximise the impact of CT and CVE assistance".[94] Furthermore, the second strategic objective of the 2016 U.S. Department of State and USAID Joint CVE Strategy is to "encourage and assist partner governments to adopt more effective policies and approaches to prevent and counter the spread of violent extremism".[95]

There are no reports or papers, however, specifically examining the challenges associated with CVE capacity development. This paper was written to highlight and begin the process of filling this gap in understanding. In addition to incorporating the lessons from previous CVE projects, it is important that attempts to develop CVE capabilities also consider the experience of capacity development efforts in related, relevant fields of practice. Having examined the

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binding recommendations for specific donors and/or implementers." For more details, see:
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/09/247368.htm.

[93] Kessels and Nemr recently highlighted this opportunity for CVE capacity development in their recent work forecasting the direction of the field: Kessels and Nemr, 'Countering Violent Extremism and Development Assistance - Identifying Synergies, Obstacles and Opportunities', 14.

[94] 'G7 Action Plan on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism', 27 May 2016, 4, http://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000160278.pdf.

[95] 'Department of State & USAID Joint CVE Strategy', 6.

historical roots of the term CVE and the evolution of its programming, this paper can use this

contextual information to inform the most appropriate lessons for future CVE interventions.

CVE Interventions: frameworks and features

Given the broad range of interventions that may be classified as CVE, what frameworks are available to helpfully segment the different approaches that might be adopted? What are the pertinent characteristics of CVE work that need to be considered when identifying useful lessons from the field of capacity development? This section will review several frameworks put forward to categorise CVE interventions and suggest an amalgamation of two frameworks. It will then present a summary analysis of the most relevant features of CVE for capacity development. It will conclude by using the selected framework to specify what form of CVE capacity development interventions will be considered in the remaining sections.

CVE frameworks

As described above, given the nature of radicalisation, the range of work that can be considered as 'CVE' is very broad. By setting out a framework in which to understand these efforts, it allows greater specificity as to the type of CVE capacities intending to be developed. Several different typologies of CVE will be examined before, for the purpose of this paper, an amalgamation is adopted.

Approaching the challenge of terrorism as a "severe" form of crime, Bjørgo borrows from criminology to propose "nine preventative mechanisms": building normative barriers against terrorism, reducing radicalisation and recruitment, deterrence, disruption, incapacitation, protecting vulnerable targets, reducing benefits to terrorists, reducing harm and facilitating disengagement from terrorism.[96] Further analysing each measure at the micro, meso and

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[96] Tore Bjørgo, 'Counter-Terrorism as Crime Prevention: A Holistic Approach', *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 8, no. 1 (2 January 2016): 25–44, doi:10.1080/19434472.2015.1108352.

macro level, his categorisation is a useful reminder of the expansive range of responses available to policymakers seeking to 'prevent' terrorism. For the purpose of this paper, however, it is too broad in its conception of prevention and does not relate to the more limited definition of CVE adopted.

The authors of a document proposing best practice CVE evaluation for the U.S. Department of State, categorised CVE programming into groups based on three different objectives:

1. Counter violent extremist narratives;

2. Provide positive, alternative social networks, decrease psychological conditions, and/or increase economic opportunities for at risk individuals, empower communities to prevent violent extremism; and

3. Reduce political grievances, strengthen government capacity to curtail violent extremist activity and support nonviolent solutions to grievances or conflict.[97]

The difficulty of this framework is that too much CVE activity is likely to fall into more than one category. For example, why not empower communities (second objective) to counter violent extremist narratives (first objective)? Furthermore, a key element of strengthening government capacity to curtail violent extremism (third objective) is developing their ability to work with local communities (second objective) on this common threat. While perhaps useful bureaucratically if there is a need for a single *primary* objective for a particular programme, these categories are too overlapping to provide a useful typology for this paper.

A useful binary distinction is made by Romaniuk in his division of CVE programming into that which is 'CVE relevant' and that which is 'CVE specific'. In doing so, he tries to distinguish

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[97] 'CVE Evaluation: An Introduction and Tips for Practitioners' (Development & Training Services Inc. on behalf of the US Department of State, 2015), 5.

between activity which is "designed to prevent or suppress violent extremism in a direct, targeted fashion" (CVE specific) and activity which is "intending to reduce vulnerability to extremism in an indirect way" (CVE relevant).[98] CVE specific interventions are more likely to address both cognitive and behavioural elements of radicalisation, whereas CVE relevant projects are more likely to primarily address cognitive radicalisation, by reducing vulnerabilities through education, development, women's rights and youth initiatives,.

Another innovative framework that draws from another field of practice is provided by Harris-Hogan, Barrelle and Zammit, who overlay a public health model of disease prevention to classify different CVE programmes (see side bar).[99] Public health policy is a useful comparator because in addition to incorporating the fusion of

THE PUBLIC HEALTH MODEL OF DISEASE PREVENTION TO CLASSIFY CVE PROGRAMMES

Treating violent extremism as if it were a disease requiring interventions to combat it, the model outlined by Harris-Hogan, Barrelle and Zammit consists of three levels: primary, secondary and tertiary:

Primary prevention is designed to address the risk of radicalisation in a large group of people or the population in general. Such projects could take the form of "awareness campaigns and non-targeted (general) education programs".

Secondary interventions are designed to target people who are at specific risk of radicalisation. In the public health formulation of the model, individuals may become the subject of a secondary intervention if they are exhibiting specific signs or symptoms of a disease. CVE projects in this category would include the United Kingdom's CHANNEL programme for those individuals referred to the authorities as exhibiting signs of radicalisation.

Tertiary-level CVE programs "are designed to work with radicalisation 'after the fact'". Projects more specifically referred to as deradicalisation, for example, projects run in prisons for convicted terrorists, would be included in this level of analysis.

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[98] Romaniuk, 'Does CVE Work? Lessons Learned From the Global Effort to Counter Violent Extremism', 9.
[99] Shandon Harris-Hogan, Kate Barrelle, and Andrew Zammit, 'What Is Countering Violent Extremism? Exploring CVE Policy and Practice in Australia', *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 8, no. 1 (2 January 2016): 4–8, doi:10.1080/19434472.2015.1104710.

individual agency and socio-cultural factors, it "involves diverse disciplines relevant to CVE such as psychiatry, psychology, sociology, communications, education, and public policy".[100]

This paper will combine the public health model with Romaniuk's classification between CVE relevant and CVE specific interventions. The former provides useful clarity as to the scope of the intervention, while the latter division gives greater focus on the expected causal mechanism intended. Together they represent a helpful typology that clearly and intuitively classifies CVE activity.

In accordance with the definition of CVE adopted above, this paper will consider how best to develop capacity for CVE *specific* programmes at both the *primary* and *secondary* level. To include all CVE *relevant* interventions, which would include any development projects combatting the drivers to violent extremism, would broaden the scope of the analysis beyond which any meaningful generalizable lessons could be drawn. The nature of tertiary level interventions, in contrast, are so specialised in their focus on the psychological counselling of radicalised individuals that they would require specific capacity development lessons. These would likely be different in kind than those related to primary and secondary level interventions.

Features of CVE relevant for capacity development

Drawing from evaluations of previous policies and projects, and based upon the current understanding and patterns of radicalisation, four connected features of CVE can be derived that are most relevant to capacity development:

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[100] Stevan Weine et al., 'Addressing Violent Extremism as Public Health Policy and Practice', *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, 28 June 2016, 4, doi:10.1080/19434472.2016.1198413.

1) **Context is crucial**: radicalisation is a complex phenomenon, motivated and enabled by different factors at multiple levels of analysis.

2) **Single sector, siloed efforts are insufficient**: a multi-method, 'whole of society' approach is needed to combat this complexity.

3) **Civil society has a special role in delivery**: NGOs are essential partners in this process, as they are better able to access and influence the social networks which play prominent roles in radicalisation.

4) **Evaluating success is difficult**: demonstrating the impact of CVE interventions remains very challenging.

These features will, in turn, be explained in greater detail before then being assessed in specific relation to their implications on how to best develop capacity in CVE.

Context is crucial

The process through which an individual is motivated to commit acts of ideologically motivated acts of violence is dependent on factors operating at many different levels. For example: the individual; the community in which they operate; and, the larger social and political environment that conditions the opportunities and views of that individual. The complex interplay and relative importance of different factors need to be identified as much as possible if interventions intended to counter radicalisation are to be effective. Recognising the complexity of the process, which may materialise over different periods of time and for many different reasons, means accepting there is no standard pathway to violent radicalisation which can then be blocked. In a comprehensive multi-disciplinary assessment of CVE strategies prepared for the U.S. Military, this was acknowledged by the summarising author of the collection who concluded "there is no 'silver bullet' strategy for countering

violent extremism. Strategies are needed at different levels (national to local, group to individual) that are tailored for the target (type of role…), and local grievance and generation (especially youth)."[101]

Single sector, siloed efforts are insufficient

The multiple factors that lead to radicalisation mean that countering the process cannot be confined to any one area of public policy or single section of a society. For example, if one part of a government is working hard to promote an inclusive vision of how people of different faiths can peacefully coexist, this effort could be cancelled out if another part of the state, the security forces for example, fuel grievances by discriminating against a particular religious community.

This is the problem Fink identifies when calling for "whole of government" approaches.[102] The United States Institute for Peace defines this as "an approach that integrates the collaborative efforts of the departments and agencies of a government to achieve unity of effort toward a shared goal".[103] This all-encompassing approach can mean that it is difficult to bureaucratically situate the coordination of CVE efforts. This problem was evident by the shifting of different functions of the United Kingdom's *Prevent* strategy to different government departments as the strategy evolved.

In its assessment on "creating counter violent extremism infrastructure" and setting out the value of a "multi-agency approach", the EU's Radicalisation Awareness Network recognises

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[101] Laurie Fenstermacher, 'Countering Violent Extremism: Scientific Methods and Strategies' (U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory, July 2015), 20.
[102] 'State of the Art - Countering Violent Extremism as a Field of Practice', 8.
[103] 'Whole-of-Government Approach', *United States Institute of Peace Glossary of Terms for Conflict Management and Peacebuilding*, accessed 24 July 2016, http://glossary.usip.org/resource/whole-government-approach.

this issue and emphasises the importance of working across institutional barriers, facilitating information sharing and cross-jurisdictional cooperation.[104]

Civil society has a special role in delivery

A key element of a 'whole of society' approach is the important role played by non-state groups. In so many settings, the often blunt tool of the state is unable to effect the attitudinal or behavioural change required by CVE at an individual or group level. As Briggs and Feve stress "credibility of message and messenger is paramount, and while governments have conducted counter-narrative operations, they tend to be better suited to facilitating other credible messengers to do this work".[105]

It is civil society and NGOs that are much more likely to better understand the complex dynamics at play in their communities as well as having greater legitimacy to intervene and challenge radicalising influences. These groups have greater ability to access the networks of influence that play an often overlooked social element of radicalisation. Whether offline or online, identity and values are shaped by social contact. The crucial role played by the people someone interacts with on a daily basis should be considered a key part of any CVE strategy. Recognising this means the 'whole of government' approach in fact needs to be expanded for CVE to incorporate 'whole of society' perspectives that also take into consideration civil society and the private sector.

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[104] 'Prevening Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism - Approaches and Practices' (Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2016), 285–87, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-best-practices/docs/ran_collection-approaches_and_practices_en.pdf.

[105] Rachel Briggs and Sebastien Feve, 'Review of Programs to Counter Narratives of Violent Extremism: What Works and What Are the Implications for Government?' (Institute of Strategic Dialogue, 2013), 16, https://www.counterextremism.org/resources/details/id/444/review-of-programs-to-counter-narratives-of-violent-extremism-what-works-and-what-are-the-implications-for-government.

Emphasising this point, Schmid suggests that "too exclusive focus on radicalisation and de-radicalisation on the micro-level has kept us from looking at the wider picture on the meso-level – namely the radical milieu of so-called non-violent extremists who are far from harmless".[106] Emphasising the same point but stressing the conversely positive role which the group level can have, Williams, Horgan and Evans set out the "critical role of friends in networks" as part of a comprehensive CVE strategy.[107]

Caution, however, is required when working with these groups. Experience of previous programming has shown that the effectiveness of this approach and the credibility of the wider CVE strategy can be damaged if the local groups feel they are being instrumentally 'securitised'. If communities sense that the governments are utilising civil society to gather intelligence and inform security operations, then the reputation of both the government and the groups can be critically damaged. In reviewing the United Kingdom's experience of *Prevent*, Briggs make recommendations about how most effectively to undertake CVE community engagement and concludes that "lines need to be drawn more clearly between activities aimed at preventing violent extremism and those seeking to achieve broader aims in order to guard against the creeping securitization of all manner of areas of policy".[108] As more development actors adopt CVE objectives, the drawing of these lines to avoid the instrumentalisation of local partners will become more important. This is especially important

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[106] Schmid, 'Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review', 54.

[107] Michael J. Williams, John G. Horgan, and William P. Evans, 'The Critical Role of Friends in Networks for Countering Violent Extremism: Toward a Theory of Vicarious Help-Seeking', *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 8, no. 1 (2 January 2016): 45–65, doi:10.1080/19434472.2015.1101147.

[108] Rachel Briggs, 'Community Engagement for Counterterrorism: Lessons from the United Kingdom', *International Affairs* 86, no. 4 (2010): 981.

in more conflict-afflicted countries where such a perception could risk the safety of people working for NGOs and undermine wider developmental objectives.[109]

Demonstrating the impact of CVE remains challenging

The preventative nature of counter-radicalisation work means that demonstrating a causal link between an intervention and its results is inherently difficult, if not impossible. To assign precise attribution of CVE work, it would be necessary to show that something extremely complicated and impossible to measure (a measure of radicalisation) did *not* happen, and furthermore that it did not happen *because* of a specific intervention. Other areas of counter-terrorism policy also struggle to find accurate metrics of success but there are at least some proxy indicators available to guide evaluation, for example the number of attack plots that were disrupted or convictions secured. It is unsurprising therefore that in a review of the methodology used in evaluating effects of preventive and deradicalisation interventions, Feddes and Gallucci conclude that as of July 2014 "hardly any empirically based evidence of preventive or de-radicalisation interventions exist".[110]

The monitoring and evaluation expertise of the increasing number of development practitioners working on CVE programmes, however, is helping to contribute to a more sophisticated understanding of how proxy indicators can be used to estimate impact.[111] Nevertheless, policymakers will have to maintain pragmatic expectations about the extent to which impact can ever be fully measured.

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[109] For a comprehensive overview of the intersection between CVE and development programming see Kessels and Nemr, 'Countering Violent Extremism and Development Assistance - Identifying Synergies, Obstacles and Opportunities'.

[110] Allard R. Feddes and Marcello Gallucci, 'A Literature Review on Methodology Used in Evaluating Effects of Preventive and De-Radicalisation Interventions', *Journal for Deradicalization*, no. 5 (2015): 17.

[111] See for example 'CVE Evaluation: An Introduction and Tips for Practitioners'.

Where may CVE capacity development be needed?

In addition to the inherent features of CVE work listed above, it is useful also to consider where there is likely to be demand for its counter-radicalisation efforts. The location and type of communities in which CVE interventions are needed should also inform the lessons to be drawn from previous capacity development efforts.

The current threat from violent extremists stems predominantly from radical Islamist groups that are seeking recruits across Muslim-majority countries and minority Muslim communities in other countries.[112] Geographically CVE programmes are being implemented all over the world: Europe, North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, South East Asia and North America. The wide-ranging and dissimilar set of countries undertaking or seeking to start CVE programming means it is not possible to derive generic insights about the best way to conduct capacity development based on geography, culture or level of economic development. The nature and diversity of Muslim communities also varies greatly across these countries so even the commonality of Islamist extremism is unlikely to be of relevance.

The countries most likely to seek capacity development support, however, are those currently with weaker state capacity; that is those states with institutions and staff less capable of providing services and goods to their citizens. Many of these will be conflict-affected or fragile states. It is with these countries primarily in mind that this paper was written. Although it seeks to provide useful lessons for capacity development of CVE in any country, the recommendations will be of most use to those states in greatest need of developing

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[112] Violent extremists other than radical Islamist groups of course pose threats to many other communities and countries, but radical Islamist groups are currently involved in more conflicts and undertaking terrorist attacks in more countries than any other single cause. Monthly updates are provided by the Tony Blair Foundation's Global Extremism Monitor: http://tonyblairfaithfoundation.org/religion-geopolitics/reports-analysis

indigenous CVE capability. Considerations about the nature of capacity development in conflict-affected and fragile states will therefore also be included in the analysis below.

Conclusion – relevant features of CVE for capacity development

Successful CVE capacity development will need to be clearly articulated by and to the communities and governments involved, with an understanding of the specific factors assisting or hampering success. Overcoming the difficulty of agreeing a strategy and explaining CVE will be aided by understanding the evolution of the understanding of radicalisation over time and the associated development of CVE programming. Success will also require taking into account the four highlighted inherent features of counter-radicalisation work explained above and the fragile environments in which the efforts are likely to be required.

Given this understanding, the next section will set out more broadly the theory underpinning successful capacity development before then explaining in a practical sense what successful CVE efforts in this area should look like.

What is capacity development?

The concept of 'capacity development' is a modern re-labelling of the more commonly known concept of 'capacity building'. The latter term stems from efforts in the 1970s by the U.S. federal government to improve the performance of state and local governments. The concept has since been adopted by the development sector, rising to prominence in the 1990s.[113] Giving aid, in the form of money or equipment, is not sufficient to lift communities out of poverty it was suggested, so enhancing the 'capacity' to efficiently spend that money or effectively use that equipment, must also be part of the aid effort. This led to "a surge" in the use of the concept in the early 1990s "driven significantly by the UNDP and the World Bank" as they worked with state authorities to reform and become better able to fulfil their public mandates.[114] Such was its apparent ubiquitousness, the term has been accused of being a "buzzword"[115], a "cliché"[116] and used "so widely and imprecisely in so many contexts that its usefulness is questionable".[117] Yet the underlying principle contained in the concept remains an accepted crucial element to effective development efforts. It is likely because of this importance that the term has become overused. The central idea of what capacity development seeks to achieve is still very relevant, but programmes trying to embody this require careful precision in purpose to ensure this idea is not lost.

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[113] The adoption of the concept in relation to development assistance is detailed in Mary Venner, 'The Concept of "capacity" in Development Assistance: New Paradigm or More of the Same?', *Global Change, Peace & Security* 27, no. 1 (2 January 2015): 85–96, doi:10.1080/14781158.2015.994488.

[114] Ibid., 87.

[115] Deborah Eade, 'Capacity Building: Who Builds Whose Capacity?', *Development in Practice* 17, no. 4–5 (August 2007): 631, doi:10.1080/09614520701469807.

[116] C. Potter, 'Systemic Capacity Building: A Hierarchy of Needs', *Health Policy and Planning* 19, no. 5 (1 September 2004): 336, doi:10.1093/heapol/czh038.

[117] Venner, 'The Concept of "capacity" in Development Assistance', 96.

Accordingly, this section will briefly review several definitions of capacity development, set out some of its features as understood in current practice and explain its ongoing importance to the development sector. It will conclude by looking at what CVE capacity does and should look like.

For the UNDP, capacity development "is the 'how' of making development work better" through "the process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own developments over time".[118] For the OECD, it is the "process whereby people, organizations, and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt, and maintain capacity over time", where capacity is defined as "the ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully."[119]

Its importance to the development sector was underscored by its inclusion in the 2005 Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness, where donor countries agreed to "pursue their implementation through country-led capacity development strategies where needed."[120] The follow-up 2008 Accra Agenda for Action document contained further commitments relating to capacity development including that "donors' support for capacity development will be demand-driven and designed to support country ownership."[121]

As acknowledged by a landmark report evaluating capacity development supported by the United Nations, "a common definition or approach to capacity building is only possible at a

[118] 'Capacity Development - Practice Note' (United Nations Development Programme, 2008), 4,
http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/capacity-building/capacity-development-practice-note.html.
[119] 'The Challenge of Capacity Development: Working Towards Good Practice', DAC Guidelines and Reference Series (OECD, n.d.), 12.
[120] 'Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Accra Agenda for Action' (OECD, 2008), 4,
http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/34428351.pdf.
[121] Ibid., 16.

high level of abstraction."[122] Further clarification, however, can be gained from confirming the unit of analysis: precisely whose capacity is being developed? Furthermore, what is the nature of that capacity?

On the first question, the UNDP, in common with other leading international research on the issue[123], offers three levels of analysis:

- the enabling environment,

- the organisational; and

- the individual.[124]

Greater differences emerge relating to the second question about the type of capacity being developed. Baser and Morgan, for the European Centre for Development Policy Management, offer a widely adopted framework of five "core capabilities" that are "critical to capacity".[125] (see Table 1 for greater detail):

1. To commit and engage

2. To carry out technical, service delivery and logistical tasks

3. To relate and to attract resources and support

4. To adapt and self-renew

5. To balance diversity and coherence

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[122] 'Capacity-Building Supported by the United Nations: Some Evaluations and Some Lessons' (New York: United Nations, 1999), 16.

[123] See for example, Arne Dirsch, Karstein Haarberg, and Adom Baisie Ghartey, 'Synthesis Study on Best Practices and Innovative Approaches to Capacity Development in Low-Income African Countries', Synthesis Report 1/2008 (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, 2008).

[124] 'Capacity Development: A UNDP Primer' (UNDP, n.d.), 11.

[125] Heather Baser, Peter Morgan, and others, 'Capacity, Change and Performance' (European Centre for Development Policy Management Maastricht, 2008), 27–33.

Baser and Morgan's Core Capabilities		Skills/Abilities Required
To commit and engage	The capability of a complex adaptive system to be conscious and aware of its place in the world, to configure itself, to develop its own motivation and commitment and then to act: • Does the system have the collective drive, confidence and ambition to build its capabilities? • Is it trapped or immobilised by internal conflict or external forces? • Does it have a high level of organisational optimism and confidence?	• To encourage mindfulness • Willingness to persevere • To aspire • To embed conviction • To take ownership
To carry out technical, service delivery and logistical tasks	The most common way of thinking about capacity issues, where the emphasis is on functional, instrumental ways of meeting a set of objectives and fulfilling a mandate: • Is there agreement about which technical or logistical capabilities are crucial to generating results over time? • Needs to be supplemented and combined with the four other capabilities to enable sustainable capacity to emerge.	• To deliver services • Strategic planning and management • Financial management
To relate and to attract resources and support	Being able to craft, manage and sustain key relationships needed for the organisation to survive: • Engage with stakeholders to produce new sources of funding, staff and learning. • Gain the legitimacy, operating space, control and buffering needed to sustain themselves in a difficult context.	• To earn credibility and legitimacy • To combine political neutrality and assertive advocacy
To adapt and self-Renew	Environments in which capacity development take place are often facing rapid and sometimes destabilising change, requiring organisations: • Being able to take advantage of windows of opportunity in fast-moving, dynamic environments. • Shape the nature of the tasks to fit the changing context.	• To improve individual and organisational learning • To foster internal dialogue • To map out a growth path
To balance diversity and coherence	Balancing the different capabilities that are often in tension with one another: • Taking advantage of the benefits of diversity to build resilience but also reining in the fragmentation to prevent the system losing focus, or worse, breaking apart. • Encouraging both stability and innovation. • Being able to manage trade-offs between being focused externally versus internally, short-term versus the long-term.	• To manage diversity • To manage paradox and tension • To build connections

Table 1: From Baser and Morgan's European Centre for Development Policy Management.

The UNDP offers five "functional capabilities" of their own: capacity to engage stakeholders; capacity to assess a situation and define a vision and a mandate; capacity to formulate policies and strategies; capacity to budget, manage and implement; and, the capacity to evaluate.[126] The UNDP also seeks to strengthen "technical capacities" associated with particular areas of expertise and practice in specific sectors such as climate change and HIV/AIDS, although currently no such technical capacities exist for CVE.

Although precise methods of assessing capacity differ, there is nonetheless general agreement about the nature of the term if interpreted at a high level of abstraction. Fortunately, it is not necessary for this paper to adjudicate between different frameworks and specific definitions of capacity development. Instead, based upon the broad understanding of the term and drawing from the cited frameworks, this paper will use the specific features of CVE set out above to provide a description of what CVE capacity development should look like.

What should CVE capacity development look like?

The 'whole of society' approach has already been identified as an essential element of any successful CVE strategy. Efforts for CVE capacity development need to reflect this. At the level of the 'enabling environment', successful CVE work will require government and NGOs to work in partnership. The modalities of how this works in practice may require support in setting up, especially in those countries and communities where there may be mutual suspicion between government and non-government actors.

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[126] 'Capacity Development - Practice Note', 12.

At the organizational level, government bodies and civil society actors need to be able to constructively engage on the issue of extremism. This means understanding the nature of radicalisation, the different options available to counter it and the sensitivity in approach needed to implement that activity.

Similarly, at the level of the individual, talented and passionate people need to have their skills and understanding strengthened to lead this effort. This is especially true for people in NGOs who, in doing the work in the communities, need to have the legitimacy with the target audience for the CVE work to be effective.

Based upon the complexity of CVE, the ability to undertake in-depth research and analysis, would be a required functional capability. For example, commissioning and analysing the results of research tools such as in-depth interviews, focus groups and polling to accurately gauge the views and reactions of target demographics. Also, within government, CVE practitioners would need to have the institutional reach to collaborate with relevant contacts in the security forces and external stakeholders. This would allow the drawing together of as complete a picture as possible of the most probable pathways to radicalisation in different communities.

An additional functional capability would be the articulation and communication of the objectives of the CVE work. This is important for internal stakeholders who may not know the details or be supportive of CVE work, but also externally. The most effective CVE work requires that the involved communities do not feel unfairly targeted or discriminated against. For example, countries like the United Kingdom, based upon the perception of *Prevent* in its first phase of implementation, can share examples of mistakes to avoid when communicating

about this type of work. For example, publically labelling any programming as designed to "counter extremism" is unlikely to be helpful.

Strategic communication will be part of most comprehensive CVE strategies. The development of skills within government and NGOs to shift the framing and appeal of radical ideologies, and the ability to produce effective counter-narrative products would therefore be another required functional capability.

More prosaically, governments, either centrally or at sub-national levels, may need support in establishing the bureaucratic coordinating function to coordinate, fund and direct all the relevant CVE activity taking place. Similarly, non-governmental actors may also need support in project management or technical skills as they expand the scope and reach of their work.

Projects already implemented demonstrate the value of CVE capacity development and indicate what further work in this area will likely be commissioned and undertaken in the coming years. Using the typology explained above, assistance is being provided to develop capacity at both the primary and secondary level for CVE specific interventions. For example, the European Commission has a small team of consultants based in Brussels that builds the capacity of member states to develop their CVE communication and community engagement capabilities. The U.K. government has worked in partnership with the Pakistan government to develop the CVE capabilities of different elements of their state institutions, and is also engaging with other Muslim-majority democracies on similar work.

For civil society, the Hedayah centre hosts regular capacity-building conferences in Abu Dhabi for groups coming from member countries. These conferences share research on radicalisation and effective counter-radicalisation methods. Aid programmes funded by

USAID and the EU Commission also support the ability of NGOs in Nigeria, Somalia and Pakistan to conduct CVE work.

At the individual level, the United States Institute for Peace is running a programme called 'Generation Change'. Although not labelled as CVE work, its intended objective is relevant as it focuses on developing the capacity of "civically engaged" young leaders to take forward peace promotion and conflict management programmes in their communities.[127]

The lessons and recommendations outlined in the following sections are intended to inform efforts such as these and others planned for the future.

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[127] For more information see, 'Generation Change, a Program for Emerging Leaders', *United States Institute of Peace*, accessed 29 June 2016, http://www.usip.org/programs/projects/generation-change-program-emerging-leaders.

Lessons from previous capacity development efforts

With decades of experience, the field of practice of capacity development has built up a detailed understanding of what works, what does not, and why. Based upon the relevant characteristics of CVE to capacity development outlined above, this section will draw from this literature and available evaluations of capacity development projects to provide lessons for policymakers and practitioners working in this area.

Context is crucial

Due to the complexity and localised nature of the radicalisation process, any successful intervention will need to invest resources to, as much as possible, understand the problem it is seeking to address. The research skills needed to do this may not exist indigenously and could therefore form a strand of any capacity development programme. Best practice guidelines for collaborative capacity development in the field of research have been developed and could be adapted for use by CVE researchers. For example, the Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries' periodically updated guide for transboundary research partnerships includes principles and questions for actors seeking to engage in this form of work.[128] It includes guidance on setting a research agenda, challenges on how to enhance specific capabilities, promoting accountability and how best to disseminate results.

In addition to understanding the nature of radicalisation in a particular context, it is also important that a common understanding is developed between the relevant stakeholders of

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[128] 'A Guide for Transboundary Research Partnerships - 11 Principles' (Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries, 2014).

the capacities that need developing. This aligns with frequently cited capacity development advice that emphasises the need to align expectations to the objectives of a particular project.[129] Stalker and Sandberg, in their report proposing best practice for capacity development of advocacy skills for civil society organisations suggest that "a quality diagnosis is vital".[130] To facilitate this, they propose developing a customised tool or framework, crafted in a participative way, as one means to achieve this.

The terminology and methodology used, however, must be chosen carefully. As James and Wrigley explain in their overview of reflections from capacity development practitioners, the very term capacity building "is not easily translated into other languages", so especially when operating in very different environments it is helpful to explore "what capacity building means in each particular culture".[131] Also, participatory techniques, although considered best practice due to their ability to engender local engagement and ownership, may for some people be so unfamiliar as to "create confusion and heighten people's resistance to new ideas and change".[132] As Jackson explains in his analysis of the impact of culture on capacity development, the way change should be managed needs to be analysed for different "cross-cultural implications", especially if operating in "hierarchical, uncertainty-avoiding or

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[129] For example, in Kennard T. Wing, 'Assessing the Effectiveness of Capacity-Building Initiatives: Seven Issues for the Field', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (1 March 2004): 157, doi:10.1177/0899764003261518. the author suggests "all parties to a capacity-building program need to spend time articulating their goals and sharing them with the others."

[130] Chris Stalker and Dale Sandberg, 'Capacity Building for Advocacy', Praxis Paper (International NGO training and research centre (INTRAC), January 2011), 20, http://www.intrac.org/resources.php?action=resource&id=698.

[131] Rick James and Rebecca Wrigley, 'Investigating the Mystery of Capacity Building', Praxis Paper, 2007, 3, http://cd3wd.com/data/100032_eldis_health_misc_/_misc_eldis_Investigating_the_mystery_of_capacit_g_civ il_society_donor_evaluation_leadership_NGO__507890_.pdf.

[132] Ibid., 16.

communalistic cultures" which may differ greatly from those of the donor or organisation engaging in the capacity development work.[133]

This challenge is not limited to the concept of capacity development. The gap between different cultural perspectives of key issues in CVE work may also present problems. With so much debate around what constitutes 'terrorism' and 'extremism' within academic and policymaking bodies in Europe and North America, the differences in opinion will only widen when including other countries and their perspectives. Frankly discussing these differences and reaching a common understanding is a difficult but important step therefore for CVE capacity development.

A common emerging theme in the capacity development literature of special relevance to CVE is the importance of 'systems thinking' and an appreciation of what Baser and Morgan call "Complex Adaptive Systems".[134] To fully understand the processes of change necessary for successful capacity development, it is necessary to try to understand and map how different actors have dependencies and linkages with other actors, and where they fit into a larger system. There is some evidence that CVE practitioners have begun to incorporate this approach to analysing a situation when designing interventions,[135] but most programmes are still based upon linear results-based frameworks. Given that the drivers of radicalisation can occur at multiple levels and are likely to be interrelated, CVE interventions and the capacity development projects enabling them, need to recognise the value of not just identifying the different radicalising factors but also the relationships and dependencies between them. The

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[133] Terence Jackson, 'Why Is a Cross-Cultural Approach Necessary?', Praxis Paper (International NGO training and research centre (INTRAC), March 2003), 4, http://www.intrac.org/resources.php?action=resource&id=112.
[134] Baser, Morgan, and others, 'Capacity, Change and Performance', 15.
[135] See for example James Khalil and Martine Zeuthen, 'Counting Violent Extremism and Risk Reduction: A Guide to Programme Design and Evaluation', 14–16.

approach developed by systems thinking, identifying patterns of positive change already taking place as well as the interacting factors reinforcing negative outcomes, allows this and provides a powerful lens through which to fully assess the context of the problem. As Brinkerhoff and Morgan conclude, the "systemic perspective on capacity and capacity development is important…because it increases understanding of how the parts interact by clarifying both the boundaries and the linkages among them."[136]

'Whole of society' approach is needed

Systems thinking provides a valuable tool with which to analyse the challenge of violent extremism. It also reinforces the need for a 'whole of society' approach when implementing effective CVE work. How best then to develop capacity to adopt such an approach?

At a mundane administrative level, as the solution requires action and collaboration across the 'whole of society', where should the coordinating bureaucratic body be situated? The answer may have significant implications for the effectiveness of CVE interventions. For example, if viewed as too closely linked to the security elements of the state, it can reduce the ability for effective community engagement work by risking securitising such efforts. The U.K. government realised this in their 2011 review of *Prevent*. As a result they split off community integration efforts from the more targeted CVE communication campaigns and intervention programmes, with each housed in separate government departments.[137]

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[136] Derick W. Brinkerhoff and Peter J. Morgan, 'Capacity and Capacity Development: Coping with Complexity', *Public Administration and Development* 30, no. 1 (February 2010): 10, doi:10.1002/pad.559.

[137] The review of the Prevent Strategy set out how counter-radicalisation efforts "will depend on wider Government programmes to strengthen integration and should be carefully coordinated with them" but "other than in exceptional circumstance, *Prevent* should not fund these programmes and should be distinct from them." The division of responsibilities between the Home Office and the Department of Communities and Local Government is set out in Chapter 10 'Prevent Strategy', 82.

In their meta-review of capacity development activities undertaken by the United Nations in the 1980s and 1990s, Maconick and Morgan found that efforts which produced results and were sustainable fell into two categories: first, "programmes or organisations in the public sector that were set up outside the main structure of government or which had their own operating space" and second, "those non-state actors such as NGOs that were characterized by a committed and energized leadership."[138]

The first finding begs further scrutiny. Establishing new institutions is instinctively appealing and may work in some situations, but later assessments of how to successfully develop capacity highlight the need to integrate with existing national processes[139] and capitalise on political will by connecting with wider reform in the state sector.[140] The appropriate approach will necessarily be context specific, but the contrasting recommendations do reinforce the need to assess how best to impact change at a systemic level. The incentive structures and power dynamics of particular bureaucracies may be such that a new institution is the best way to break through vested interests and establish new ways of working. Or perhaps there are movements of change already taking place within a system so that the optimal way to enact organisational change is to amplify these.

The second finding is a useful reminder that while considering the importance of different structures and organisational change not to lose sight of the potential influence wrought by strong leadership. CVE practitioners, especially when dealing with civil society actors, should be alert to the ability of charismatic individuals that can drive this change at a personal and

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[138] 'Capacity-Building Supported by the United Nations: Some Evaluations and Some Lessons', 40–41.
[139] 'Capacity Development: A UNDP Primer', 31.
[140] Nick Chapman and Charlotte Vaillant, 'Synthesis of Country Programme Evaluations Conducted in Fragile States' (DFID, 2010), 27, http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.566.6189&rep=rep1&type=pdf.

group level. As an article containing recommendations for the future of capacity development concluded, "do not underestimate the power of personal interaction."[141] As CVE interventions at the community level require credible and persuasive messengers for delivering counter-narratives, identifying and strengthening the ability of individuals with this potential should be part of a capacity development strategy.

Civil society and other non-governmental groups are essential partners

A key part of creating the enabling environment in which effective CVE interventions can take place as part of a 'whole of society' approach is creating the conditions in which civil society and NGOs can work alongside and with government. While partnership between the state and non-state actors is vital for successful CVE work, the pre-existing dynamics of these relationships will differ greatly across interventions. As Nolan and Hiebert suggested in their literature review of 'soft security' responses to terrorism, because "trust in the state" is such a key element of security policy "state agents must be particularly attentive to their contextual histories in particular locations and with particular communities."[142] For example, an NGO representing a minority religious group in a Western country may be suspicious of a central government ministry which previously was not interested in its work, fearful that its work is being instrumentalised for security purposes. In contrast, an NGO in a conflict-affected state may view the state as corrupt and part of the problem leading to radicalisation, complicating its ability to work in partnership. Finally, an NGO in a recently democratic or authoritarian state may be fearful of the intentions of the government because it is has

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[141] Tricia Petruney et al., 'Informing the Future of Capacity Building: Lessons from an NGO Partnership', *Development in Practice* 24, no. 3 (3 April 2014): 439, doi:10.1080/09614524.2014.897687.

[142] Elanna Nolan and Daniel Hiebert, 'Social Perspectives on National Security: A Review of Recent Literature Elanna Nolan and Daniel Hiebert', Working Paper Series (Canadian Network for Research on Terrorism, Security and Society, October 2014), 39, http://tsas.bronze.it.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/TSASWP14-10_Nolan-Hiebert1.pdf.

previously only perceived state institutions as instruments of oppression. Part of the CVE contextual analysis as set out above will need to consider the nature of these relationships before engaging in any capacity development.

Previous capacity development efforts in the field of civil society strengthening provide some guidance to this process. For example, Pathfinder International have developed tools to assist in assessing "partner capacity", including specifically in the field of behaviour change, which is particularly relevant to CVE work.[143] These tools provide a basis to assess areas such as organizational fit, human capacity, social connectedness and absorptive capacity. Without this clear picture of what assistance is required by the organisations targeted for assistance, capacity development efforts may be inefficient or perhaps even counter-productive. Using these examples as a starting point, specific CVE capacity assessment tools could be developed for NGOs and state bodies as a means to more accurately target capacity development activity.

This type of tool is especially useful in guarding against the risk seen in previous projects where disproportionate *internal* capacity is developed. Incentive structures can lead NGOs into becoming experts at winning contracts for projects and working with funding organisations, rather than experts at working with the target audiences they are meant to be supporting. For example, in their review of a capacity development project for Indonesian NGOs, Wetterberg et al. found "some strengthened capacity, but improvements were

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[143] For example see 'Assessing Partner Capacity for Behavior Change Activities', Straight to the Point (Pathfinder International, n.d.). and 'Assessing Partner Capacity Building Needs', Straight to the Point (Pathfinder International, n.d.).

concentrated in capabilities related to complying with donors' requirements rather than capabilities enhancing performance."[144]

A proposed mitigation strategy against this effect is proposed by NORAD's report synthesising best practice capacity development that suggests using "intermediary agents".[145] It argues that the bias donors may show to organisations that may be more proficient at securing money than at delivering results is minimised by using an "umbrella NGO or a more professional management NGO, UN agency or a private company". This approach is not without its own concerns, not least the added transaction costs, but does offer other potential benefits. When conducted between a host government and NGOs it may contribute to overcoming any lack of trust between the respective actors.[146] When capacity development is being conducted between actors from very different cultural backgrounds, for example international donors strengthening civil society in a different country, this approach can also help bridge the "socio-cultural distance represented by differences in mode of communications".[147] This distance may not only exist in instances of international collaboration but may also exist between a government and CSOs in the same country, especially if the society is markedly fragmented.

Although the Hedayah Centre brings NGOs conducting CVE from different countries together to receive training at its Abu Dhabi headquarters, another approach it might trial is adopting

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[144] Anna Wetterberg, Derick W. Brinkerhoff, and Jana C. Hertz, 'From Compliant to Capable: Balanced Capacity Development for Local Organisations', *Development in Practice* 25, no. 7 (3 October 2015): 966, doi:10.1080/09614524.2015.1073224.

[145] Dirsch, Haarberg, and Ghartey, 'Synthesis Study on Best Practices and Innovative Approaches to Capacity Development in Low-Income African Countries', 55.

[146] The U.K. government's RICU effectively use this approach by subcontracting work to external communication consultancies who then work with grassroots community organisations that may otherwise be sceptical of working with the national government (as detailed in Cobain et al., 'Revealed - UK's Covert Propaganda Bid to Stop Muslims Joining Isis'.).

[147] Dirsch, Haarberg, and Ghartey, 'Synthesis Study on Best Practices and Innovative Approaches to Capacity Development in Low-Income African Countries', 12.

Japan's approach in facilitating 'South-South' capacity development. It seeks to bridge the 'socio-cultural' gap by funding third country dispatching of experts and training programmes from countries that otherwise may not engage in development work overseas. In his review of this method for the World Bank, Tejasvi finds that "reviews of technical cooperation suggest that South-South learning is often more effective in developing capacity than one-way knowledge transfers from the North."[148] This form of capacity development could also act as a means to inculcate ownership and self-reflection which are two cited functional capabilities for enhanced capacity. Moreover, facilitating the mutual learning between organisations and or governments from two countries also acts be an innovative method of embedding the principle of 'training the trainers' which lies at the centre of most capacity development projects.[149]

Demonstrating the impact of CVE is very challenging

Both CVE and capacity development have had difficulty demonstrating the impact of their work in a development sector that is increasingly looking for quantifiable assessments of effectiveness and value for money. What can CVE capacity development learn from previous capacity development efforts to deal with this challenge?

One clear recommendation is to seek clarity in purpose. In his critique of the capacity development sector, Rick James critiques how "there is little evidence of stakeholders taking sufficient time to reach joint definitions of terms... consensus is achieved by not clearly

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[148] Ajaj Tejasvi, 'South-South Capacity Development: The Way to Grow?', Capacity Enhancement Briefs (World Bank Institute, February 2007), 1.
[149] See for example the train the trainers approach outlined in Jenny Ross and Isobel Wilson-Cleary, 'Advocacy Capacity Building Using Blended Learning in Complex and Fragile Contexts' (International NGO training and research centre (INTRAC), 2015), 7.

identifying the goal."[150] Yet a core premise of effective programme design and evaluation is to precisely set out the nature of change sought by the intervention. With concepts as potentially amorphous as CVE and capacity development, it is even more important to reach a joint understanding of the purpose of a programme.

Simister and James suggest that clarity should also be agreed about the purpose of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of a programme, as "M&E designed for accountability to donors and supporters is not the same as M&E designed to learn and improve."[151] While the two goals can be pursued concurrently, it is important to distinguish which elements of a system of M&E is meant for which purpose.

Practitioners should recognise that it will never be possible to disaggregate the precise preventative effect of a particular CVE intervention. Any activity will inevitably only be one part of a whole host of social influences that may reduce the risk of radicalisation. For example, the successful work of a CVE project could quickly be nullified by the effect of an unexpected international conflict which bolsters feelings of grievance and strengthens the appeal of an extremist group. Having a target for a reduced number of radicalised individuals, for example based on some behavioural or attitudinal indicator, therefore can only be of limited use for either learning or accountability.

Brinkerhoff and Morgan recognise that for complex systems any "results-based management and other output-centered approaches may not fit", with the risk that capacity development

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[150] Rick James, 'Vices and Virtues in Capacity Development by International NGOs', *Institute of Development Studies Bulletin* 41, no. 3 (2010): 17.
[151] Nigel Simister and Rachel Smith, 'Monitoring and Evaluating Capacity Building: Is It Really That Difficult?' (International NGO training and research centre (INTRAC), 2010), 28.

becomes disproportionately focused on "lower risk activities that lend themselves to being counted" while missing the "hard-to-measure capacity intangibles".[152]

Alternative, more appropriate methods for evaluating impact are available and have been suggested for capacity development programmes. James and Wrigley suggest that "process milestones" rather than fixed targets are more suitable for programmes where the exact scale of the change achieved may be difficult to track. For example, to tackle the problem of extremist content online, the establishment of a system whereby governments have an agreement with social media companies to remove any referred violent extremist content from their networks could be a first milestone. Expanding this system so that members of the community are themselves referring extremist content which is then removed could be the next milestone. However, setting targets for the amount of content removed by different social media companies would not make sense. In such a dynamic environment, the volume and placement of content can vary massively month by month. The important impact which should be recorded is the creation of the system in which governments and communities are empowered to combat this radicalising influence.

Another form of monitoring and evaluation used in different complex systems environments is the 'Most Significant Change' method. First developed to evaluate a complex social development programme in Bangladesh by Rick Davis in 1996, it has evolved and been formalised by evaluators to record and analyse change in projects where it is not possible to precisely predict changes beforehand.[153] Deliberately eschewing quantitative indicators, the approach involves generating and analysing personal accounts of change of stakeholders

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[152] Brinkerhoff and Morgan, 'Capacity and Capacity Development', 9.

[153] For greater explanation of this methodology see, Jessica Dart and Rick Davies, 'A Dialogical, Story-Based Evaluation Tool: The Most Significant Change Technique', *American Journal of Evaluation* 24, no. 2 (2003): 137–155.

involved in programmes and deciding which of these accounts is the most significant and why. Recognising that capturing the impact of capacity development is inherently difficult, Simister and Smith recommend Most Significant Change as part of a "combined approach using different M&E tools, methodologies and approaches to build up a picture over time of what has changed, why it has changed, and how learning can be applied in the future."[154]

Capacity development experience from fragile political environments

Countries emerging from political unrest or conflict are normally those most in need of capacity development assistance. Many countries blighted by the threat of extremism and terrorism, and thus in need of developing their CVE capabilities, also fall into this category. This section will present some general lessons about how best to conduct capacity development in these environments.

Three different approaches to capacity development are described by Brinkerhoff and Morgan: planned, incrementalism and emergent.[155] The planned approach prioritises establishing targets, and tactics for achieving them, before implementation starts. Among other features, it is suggested that this approach is most effective when there is "a shared consensus about policy and direction" and "tangible objectives, especially technical and functional". Incrementalism is "based on the principles of adaptiveness and flexibility in implementation" and the emergent approach is a "largely undirected process of collective action" with capacity emerging "out of the multiple inter-dependencies and interactions among actors within the system". They suggest that while elements of all three will likely be present in every capacity development effort, the incremental approach "tends to work best

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[154] Simister and Smith, 'Monitoring and Evaluating Capacity Building', 18.
[155] Brinkerhoff and Morgan, 'Capacity and Capacity Development', 4–5.

in situations where contexts are unstable and the choice of strategy is difficult to clarify". This suggestion matches a recommendation from an report drawing lessons from a public health system strengthening programme in Uganda which suggested designing "flexible capacity building strategies that can accommodate periodically cycling back through to the early project steps, re-assessing needs and adapting related strategies, and leveraging unexpected opportunities."[156] It is clear that in the dynamic, intangible field of CVE, the flexibility of the incremental approach is most suitable. This is especially so when capacity is being developed in fragile states with higher levels of uncertainty which impinges upon planning and implementation.

In McKechnie's survey of capacity development in post-conflict societies for the World Bank, two key features stressed are that "leadership matters" and "build on what exists".[157] Finding people, with the right mix of subject matter understanding and practical ability to progress projects in often trying circumstance, is an additional challenge in post-conflict situations. Talented individuals in workforces depleted by emigration and poor education systems are especially sought after by organisations from all sectors, making it difficult to find the quality of leadership needed. As discussed above, while issues like sufficiently analysing the nature of the problem and aligning organisational expectations are important, it is difficult to underestimate the importance of leadership to a project's success. Especially in the "hyper-politicized"[158] and fragmented political arrangements of a post-conflict or weak state, finding someone who is able to articulate a vison, galvanise a team and pragmatically advance the

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[156] Petruney et al., 'Informing the Future of Capacity Building', 439.
[157] Alastair McKechnie, 'Building Capacity in Post-Conflict Countries', Capacity Enhancement Briefs (World Bank Institute, March 2004), 3.
[158] Derick Brinkerhoff, 'Dilemmas and Directions', *Capacity.org*, no. 32 (December 2007): 4.

cause of CVE work among the many other competing priorities of the state can be very difficult.[159]

There is a risk that the possible cost of employing a leader with the requisite skills could make a project financially unsustainable after the formal capacity development project ends. The joint UNDP-DPA assessment on how to build national capacities for conflict prevention recognises this and recommends cost-sharing, with support tapering off over time, as a means to mitigate this risk.[160]

Other lessons for CVE capacity development given its specific characteristics

Other important lessons gained from past experience of capacity development are available to assist the design of CVE capacity development programmes. This section will briefly outline the most relevant of these.

Many guides to capacity development emphasise the importance of 'ownership' of the project by the organisation or government which is having its capacity developed. This aligns with the broader movement towards aid ownership embodied in the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. This agreement was conditioned on the basis that for aid to be effective, a country's leadership has to be committed to the aims of any particular development project. This same principle is evident in reviews of capacity development conducted years before the Paris Declaration which stressed that success requires capacity development to be 'demand' not 'supply driven'. This means that the country, organisation or individual that is having their

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[159] The articulation of "vision" is listed by Kaplan as the most important element of what constitutes 'capacity' in his highly regarded article calling for a shift in capacity development from "tangible to intangible". See Allan Kaplan, 'Capacity Building: Shifting the Paradigms of Practice', *Development in Practice* 10, no. 3–4 (2000): 519–20.
[160] 'Joint UNDP-DPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention', Issue Brief (UNDP, September 2015).

capacity developed, should be leading the process. This manifested itself in the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action declaration which characterised what demand-driven capacity development should look like: "developing countries and donors will i) jointly select and manage technical cooperation, and ii) promote the provision of technical cooperation by local and regional resources, including through South-South cooperation".[161]

This is often difficult to achieve in practice. James highlights the mixed incentives of international NGOs who undertake development capacity work[162] and Fisher suggests ownership may not be as instrumentally beneficial as the Accra Agenda suggests and describes the "fine line between pragmatism and idealism".[163] This issue becomes especially difficult if there is a poorly conceived theory of what drives radicalisation in a particular community. Demand led capacity development is important for political ownership and sustainability, but practitioners should ensure that the demand it is based upon a clear understanding of the problem. This again reinforces the need for a joint understanding of the nature of the risk resulting from a solid research base.

These limitations to the concept of demand driven capacity development notwithstanding, the importance of local ownership is self-evident. Sustainable change cannot be imposed. As the synthesis of nine country programme evaluations conducted for the U.K.'s Department for International Development concluded about public sector capacity development "political will was identified as the largest contributing factor."[164] The often controversial nature of CVE work, whether from libertarians in developed countries or from politicians in developing

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[161] 'Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Accra Agenda for Action', 16–17.

[162] James, 'Vices and Virtues in Capacity Development by International NGOs', 18–19.

[163] Catherine Fisher, 'Between Pragmatism and Idealism: Implementing a Systemic Approach to Capacity Development', *Institute of Development Studies Bulletin* 41, no. 3 (2010): 115.

[164] Chapman and Vaillant, 'Synthesis of Country Programme Evaluations Conducted in Fragile States', 27.

countries that may rely electorally on not upsetting certain religious communities, means that political will may not always be apparent or uniform across a country's political system. This needs to be taken into account when considering the viability of CVE capacity development programmes in different countries and communities.

With a key element of capacity development comprising training teams of people with particular skills and expert knowledge, a frequently cited challenge is the subsequent departure of these then newly-skilled people to better-paid jobs elsewhere. The damage can be mitigated, however, by the benefit of enacting the broader multi-level form of capacity development set out above. In an evaluation of a civil society strengthening project in Mozambique, the authors found that the "improved organizational systems enable the organizations to recover more quickly when staff and volunteer attrition occurs."[165] CVE projects within governments, where staff may be less likely to leave the civil service but reassigned internally, could agree recommended periods of time for trained staff to continue on the project.

The same approach should also be taken for those *conducting* the capacity development. The joint UNDP-DPA (Department of Political Affairs) Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention has an average deployment of approximately two years for the principle advisor working on the project.[166] The advantages are clear: it engenders a much better understanding of the local context and recognises that facilitating sustained change is not a quick process.

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[165] 'Making the Difference: An Intensive Model for Strengthening Civil Society Capacity in Mozambique', Technical Brief (Pathfinder International, May 2015), 11.

[166] 'Joint UNDP-DPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention'.

The time allocated to achieving results can also be crucial. Effecting sustainable change may not coincide with the time period, and thus associated resources, allocated to a particular programme. CVE programmes, often instituted as a reaction to a specific tragic event, are often under political pressure to deliver results quickly. The careful deliberation and articulation of a joint vision and goals for a project before implementation is an important buffer to this effect. Instituting a system of regular process milestones to demonstrate impact, as discussed above, is another method to fulfil the need for accountability to political pressures and those funding the programme.

As James laments, often the "timeframes used are based on artificial project cycle deadlines, not what pace of change is possible."[167] While the OECD recommends "quick wins" as a favouring condition to solidify support for change and encourage further progress, it is important that stakeholders have a realistic assessment of the extended length of time required to achieve sustainable change.[168]

Ultimately, those developing CVE interventions will need to recognise that no length of time will be sufficient to 'defeat' radicalisation. The nature of the threat is such that CVE programmes are only ever engaging in risk reduction; it is simply not feasible to have the elimination of the risk as the goal.

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[167] James, 'Vices and Virtues in Capacity Development by International NGOs', 15.
[168] 'The Challenge of Capacity Development: Working Towards Good Practice', 18.

Conclusion

There has never been a greater need for international cooperation to tackle radicalisation. Extremist groups do not recognise state borders in their increasingly sophisticated attempts to recruit people to their cause. Governments and organisations seeking to stop them must also work together across borders to be effective.

Successful CVE requires a detailed understanding of the risks and radicalising factors faced by individuals, leading to tailored responses undertaken in host communities. CVE capacity development empowers governments and civil society to work collaboratively to respond to that challenge. The inherent nature of both CVE and capacity development, however, means that engaging in this process will be complex, politically sensitive and difficult to demonstrate impact.

Fortunately, the experience of previous capacity development provides useful lessons on how best to approach this complicated subject. This paper has sought to highlight these lessons and offer guidance to those undertaking capacity development efforts in this area. These lessons have included, among many others, how to jointly agree what capacity requires development, the benefits of systems thinking when analysing the problem and how to overcome the challenge of measuring progress. Referring to relevant features of CVE work, and its relation to the processes of radicalisation and the broader field of counter-terrorism, a summary of the lessons learned from previous capacity development efforts is presented below:

Feature of CVE work	Relevant capacity development lessons
Context is crucial	• Developing research skills is essential to understand, as much as possible, the localised drivers of radicalisation in a particular community. • Using 'systems thinking' assists in identifying the relationships and dependencies between different radicalising factors and opportunities for social change. • Locally developed and analysed research allows for a common understanding of the threat, which is important to bridge socio-cultural gaps and inform demand-driven capacity development.
'Whole of Society' approach is needed	• Coordination is needed at governmental level to ensure coherence of cross-departmental CVE programmes and oversight of broader work with CVE implications. • Careful articulation needed when explaining the purpose of CVE engagement, avoiding wording that may be detrimental. • Take advantage of existing internal institutional reform or identify strong leadership to enhance the ability of government to work more closely with and through civil society groups.
Special role played by civil society in delivery	• The broader perspective and resources of government needs to be leveraged with the credibility and localised knowledge of civil society groups in affected communities. • Recognise the historical context affecting trust between civil society and government; special care should be taken not to unnecessarily 'securitise' CVE activities. • Facilitated 'South-South' cooperation between countries developing their CVE capabilities engenders political ownership, self-reflection and embeds the 'training the trainers' principle.
Evaluating success is difficult	• Clarify which elements of the programme's M&E are for accountability and which are for organisational learning. • 'Process Milestones', rather than indicator targets, are more suitable for CVE programmes where the scale of change achieved is difficult to track. • Recognise that exact attribution of causality in reducing radicalisation is impossible so utilise innovative M&E mechanisms to track impact e.g. 'Most Significant Change'.
Fragile political environments	• Adopt deliberately flexible project management to ensure the strategies adopted can be adapted as circumstances change, lessons are learnt and opportunities present themselves. • Quality leadership is vital to advance CVE programmes in the fragmented environment of a fragile state, with the ability to bring a team together and cogently articulate a binding vision for the programme. • Sustainable change may require longer periods to embed than the time allocated in donor-set project funding cycles.

New extremist groups will likely innovate and use new tactics to solicit support and seek recruits. Practitioners working in the field of CVE will always have to be alert to shifting patterns of radicalisation which will then impact the nature of their work. The lessons summarised above are based upon a current understanding of the threat, emanating primarily from radical Islamist groups which challenge the writ of whichever state they operate in using religious ideology. Political violence and the tactics of terrorism existed before radical Islamist ideology and will continue to be used by emerging new groups adhering to different causes. A return to ethno-nationalist inspired terrorist violence, for example, would force a reassessment of some of the assumptions underpinning many of these recommendations.[169] A 'whole of society' approach to approaching the problem may no longer be the most suitable way to reduce the risk. Depending on the nature of the grievances espoused by ethnically based extremist groups, support from across all different sectors of a society may unintentionally further alienate individuals who may be reacting to a perceived threat to their minority identity.

An increasing role of technology in radicalisation could lead to a demand for more technocratic and functional capacity development.[170] Although Western governments are themselves still learning to navigate the public policy challenges in dealing with radicalising content online, they may be called upon to assist partner countries in the drafting of

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[169] See, for example, the historical perspective on how terrorist violence morphs with different generations and changing social forces as detailed in David Rapoport, 'The Four Waves of Terrorism', in *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy* (Washington D.C., USA: Georgetown University Press, 2004), 46–73.
[170] For example, new technology is being developed to identify all forms of extremist content present on social media through automatic algorithms, or to use data-mining of Twitter accounts to predict when users begin to adopt "pro-ISIS behaviour". See: 'Counter Extremism Project Unveils Technology to Combat Online Extremism', *Counter Extremism Project*, 17 June 2016, http://www.counterextremism.com/press/counter-extremism-project-unveils-technology-combat-online-extremism. and Matthew Rowe and Hassan Saif, 'Mining pro-ISIS Radicalisation Signals from Social Media Users', in *Proceedings of the 10th International Conference on Web and Social Media*, 2016, http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/staff/rowem/files/mrowe-icwsm2016.pdf.

regulation or advise on the best way to collaborate with large technology companies regarding this issue. While the focus of this paper has been on CVE strategies based primarily through collaboration between governments and civil society, further research could usefully investigate the implications of capacity development in the regulation of the technology industry, and the roles which could be played by private companies in this sector.

While media reporting often overstates the role of the internet and its ability to produce so-called 'lone-wolf' self-radicalising terrorists,[171] new forms of extremism may develop, specifically based upon an ideology of radical individualism, which may change this. Ethno-nationalist or radical religious groups are inherently embedded in the concepts of the larger social movements they pertain to be fighting on behalf of. This inherent element of their ideology implies at least some minimal level of connection between group leaders, members and supporters. The importance of socialisation by like-minded people, whether in person or online, is thus often a prominent element of the radicalisation process. Consequentially, this paper focussed on CVE strategies which combatted this socialisation process through localised, community-level efforts.

Future forms of extremism may not be linked to pre-existing, wider social movements and be much less dependent on group-level socialisation in gaining support. More individualistic forms of radicalisation emanating online could lead to a need for more technological counter-radicalisation strategies, which in turn would rely less on community groups acting as key actors as outlined above.

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[171] An empirical study of convicted UK terrorists for example concluded that the internet was not responsible for a rise in terrorism but that "radicalisation is enabled by the internet rather than being dependent upon it" Paul Gill et al., 'What Are the Roles of the Internet in Terrorism? Measuring Online Behaviours of Convicted UK Terrorists', 2015, 35, http://doras.dcu.ie/20897/.

The ideas above are just thought experiments as to how the field of CVE work may change. Although the precise direction and pace of the change is unclear, it is inevitable that the processes of radicalisation will evolve. There is still also much more to be learnt about the current patterns of radicalisation. Lessons will need to be learnt from ongoing interventions and it is hoped that the international cooperation borne of CVE capacity development can aid this process of continual improvement.

Donor governments and organisations funding capacity development programmes must recognise, however, that although they may have the money, they do not have the answers. It is by listening to inspiring leaders in vulnerable communities and facilitating closer interaction between them, NGOs and their governments, that the best responses to radicalisation will become apparent. Incorporating the lessons identified in this paper into CVE capacity development projects, it is hoped, will assist this process and help stem the radicalisation that leads to so much human suffering.

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