

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

A comparative analysis between deradicalization programs in Arab states and Western states in terms of their underlying assumptions and scholarship.

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## **Statement of Originality**

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at Macquarie University or any other university or similar institution. I further state that no substantial part of this thesis has already been submitted, or is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at Macquarie University or any other university or similar institution except as declared in the text.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'E' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Emad Al-hammadin**

## **Abstract**

The war on terror has created more harm than good, largely confronting terrorism with a kinetic approach that has yielded undesirable outcomes. Increased numbers of foreign fighter returnees and home-grown terrorists have forced many countries to develop soft approach deradicalization programs, part of wider Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) initiatives, in response. These programs have been created to manage and deradicalize apprehended violent extremists, often within the correctional setting. Although many countries face the challenges of differing forms of radicalization, different states have approached the construction of these programs differently. In the Arab world the focus is on correcting deviant religious ideology through re-education and the support of normative Islam. In Western countries, on the other hand, there has been more focus on the adoption of social and psychological programs and processes to counter radicalized violent extremists. The aim of this study is to map, for the first time, the differences between Arab and Western deradicalization programs in terms of the fundamental assumptions upon which they are based. It will then explore how these assumptions have affected the structure and success of the programs. The research method adopted is an inductive theoretical approach using core qualitative components consisting of: 1) a literature review; 2) case studies; and 3) a comparative analysis. This research confirms that Arab programs do indeed focus on religious issues, while Western countries generally do not, although there is significant overlap in how the programs function. It is recommended that a mixture of religious and social approaches, with a focus on ideology, is crucial to success in the future.

## CONTENTS

<b>List of Figures and Tables .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>List of Acronyms and Abbreviations .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Chapter One: Introduction .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Chapter Two: Methodology .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Chapter Three: Literature Review .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Chapter Four: Arab States' Deradicalization Programs .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Chapter Five: Deradicalization in Western States .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Chapter Six: Findings and Discussion .....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Chapter Seven: Conclusion .....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>93</b>

## List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Research Design	13
Figure 2: Literature Review Pyramid	26
Table 1: Foreign Fighters per State	28
Table 2: Arab States Comparison	38

## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAG	Australian Attorney General
Al-Jihad	Al-Jihad Organization
AQ	Al-Qaida
COMPACT	Community Partnership Action
CONTEST	Counter Terrorism Strategy
CVE	Counter Violent Extremism
CTSA	Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
EXIT	Sweden Deradicalization Program
IG	Al-Gama 'a al-Islamiyah (Islamic Group)
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
ICSR	International Center for Study of Radicalization
ICV	Islamic Council of Victoria
IRA	Irish Republican Army
LOD	Lecture and Open Discussion Forum
MB	Muslim Brotherhood
PTE	Denmark Intelligence Department
PVE	Prevent Violent Extremism
SA	Saudi Arabia
SSP	School, Social and Police
WANA	West Asia North Africa Institute
4Ps	Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare

## Chapter One: Introduction

Since the attack of 9/11, terrorism has remained a consistent global threat. Despite the war on terror, terrorism offences around the world have increased. David Miliband, the UK's former foreign secretary, stated in 2009 that the "European officials and British officers stopped using the phrase war on terror because the war on terror has been mistaken and may have caused more harm than good" (Miliband, 2009). This kinetic approach has caused significant problems. Many foreign fighters from the war in Syria and Iraq have started the return journey to their home countries. Western and non-Western countries have faced a complex situation in dealing with these fighters. Unanswered questions include: What is the best approach to radicalized violent extremists – incarceration or reform? On what grounds should they be prosecuted? How best can we deal with the dependents of returnees? (Horgan, 2009, p.2; Hameed EL-said, 2013, p, 31). In addition, many attacks that have followed 9/11 have been from home-grown terrorists, including Madrid 2004, Amsterdam 2004, London 2005, Stockholm 2010, Brussels 2014, Paris 2015, and Australia 2015 (Koehler, 2017, p. 2). This apparent spread of violent extremism and terrorism may be the result of an over-focus on a hard and kinetic counter terrorism approach which has resulted in cumulative extremism and an increased population of prisoners on terrorism-related charges (Bjørge & Horgan, 2009). As a result, the international community have explored a variety of new and innovative approaches to countering terrorism in a non-kinetic and non-military manner.

These soft approaches, which have been labelled using terms such as 'deradicalization', 'counter-radicalization', 'disengagement', and 'rehabilitation', have been applied in different ways by differing states. Middle Eastern countries were some of the first to design and apply prison rehabilitation programs – for instance in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Yemen (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013, p. 3). These have relied on religious re-education – with religious scholars debating theologically with inmates in order to convince them of their wrong actions and misunderstanding of Islamic principles, and bring them back to a normative understanding of that religion (Brzuszkiewicz, 2017). In the Western countries, however, the strategies of countering violent extremism and deradicalization have focused on non-religious social and psychological contexts in order to address the issues that cause radicalized individuals to become antisocial and bring them back to a non-violent state. In many ways, Western states have also drawn on the work and experience of Middle Eastern countries in the construction of their prison-based deradicalization programs (Ashour, 2009; Boucek, 2008; Koehler, 2017).

There is a gap between how deradicalization programs are conceptualized and run in Arab states and in Western states, with a focus on Islamic factors in the Arab world and a focus on wider social dynamics in the West. The aim of this study is to map, for the first time, the differences between Arab and Western states' deradicalization programs in terms of the fundamental assumptions on which they are based. It then will explore how assumptions have affected the structure of these programs. While our knowledge on the root causes of radicalization has advanced, there is a clear gap in defining the priorities of factors that lead to members exiting from violent extremism (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013). It is worth noting that due to limitations of space this study does not evaluate the success of these programs, nor will it set standards for measuring that success. In addition, this study will only focus on Islamic violent extremism.

It is argued that, although the root causes of violent extremism are complex, deviance in ideology and the misunderstanding of religious principles are, in fact, the most important elements that drive Muslims to join terrorist groups. This conclusion is in line with researchers from the Muslim world who have argued that religious re-education is the most effective way to encourage individuals to disengage from violent extremism and terrorist groups (Al-Harthi, 2014; Mustafa, 2006).

This thesis will provide significant contributions to wider debates, both academic and practical. Academically, deradicalization studies is a relatively new field, and more research, both quantitative and qualitative, is required at micro and macro level to address this phenomenon (United Nation, 2015). Research drawn from different disciplines is needed to address the diversity of factors that lead to, facilitate, and promote disengagement from terrorism. In addition, this thesis will contribute to debates around whether to adopt either a primarily religious or social approach to deradicalization, or a mix of these approaches. Unlike Western researchers, Arab literature gives a different perspective on the ideology versus religious debate. This will in turn help facilitate social resilience and cohesion in vulnerable communities (Weine et al., 2013).

It should be noted that the author, as a Muslim and trained counter terrorism professional from an Arab state (Jordan), provides a unique and valuable perspective on these debates. Very few, if any, Western terrorism and deradicalization experts and academics have the necessary expertise in Arabic language and Islamic Sunni jurisprudence to successfully access and uncover the underlying scholarship and assumptions that support deradicalization programs in the Arab world. Hence, it is hoped this research will contribute to deradicalization studies in a novel and significant



manner. The author is researching this issue exercising extreme cautious not to be biased relating on his background.

## **Research Design**

This study will be conducted using a mixed qualitative methods design working in sequence, with each method building on the previous. The thesis is constructed in three parts: 1) Literature review detailing the most relevant studies in the field of deradicalization and mapping the gap between religious and non-religious approaches; 2) Case studies from Arab and non-Arab nations, in which the programs and scholarship upon which they are built are mapped in order to identify their underlying assumptions; 3) Comparative analysis. This last method answers the thesis aim and finds the differences between Arab and non-Arab programs.

The literature review completed in Chapter Two will highlight the efforts of notable and prominent researchers in the terrorism, radicalization and deradicalization fields in laying the foundation and basis for this study to operate. After critically examining the evolvement of important concepts and deradicalization programs, a gap analysis is conducted at the end of this chapter to assess the need for this study.

After a Method chapter, Chapter Three unpacks the anatomy of Arab deradicalization programs. Here the study will investigate the foundational assumption and how these programs work and run. Three countries from the Middle East region, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, have been chosen as case studies. Chapter Four maps deradicalization programs in three Western countries (the UK, Australia and Denmark) and unpacks the foundational assumptions they are built upon. In Chapter Five, a comparative analysis of the previous two chapters is conducted in order to identify the similarities and differences between the two approaches and how programs can be improved. In the Conclusion, it is recommended that although the underlying assumptions of both approaches are in a proximity relation, some key aspects are different due to a variety of factors. It is argued that the social factors adopted in deradicalization programs are in fact closely related to Islamic content due to the social nature of Islam as a socially embodied religion in the Arab world. Hence, it is recommended that the best approach to deradicalization would be a mixed approach with the adoption of a more religious focus in Western programs. It is imperative to notice that although

Arab deradicalization programs are based on religious content, it is not pure monolithic or rely on only religious materials.

An Appendix has been added that outlines the main religious errors adopted by Sunni Islamic violent extremists. These are the areas of religious re-instruction that need to be focused on in deradicalization programs. This Appendix is supplementary and beyond the formal word count of the thesis. It is added to supplement the thesis, rather than to contribute to its aim. Examiners are invited to read it for interest and supplementary completeness.

## **Chapter Two: Methodology**

### **Rationale**

Due to the nature of the question under investigation and the limited data and scholarship on this topic, the method has to meet certain requirements. First, it should be in line with the research aims and offer the best possibility for data collection. Second, owing to the many deradicalization programs available, it should represent the essential components of Arab and Western efforts without studying all programs. Finally, it then should allow the comparing and contrasting of these types of programs in a way that fits the limited word count of the MRes thesis.

As a result, the research method adopted is an inductive theoretical approach using core qualitative components consisting of: 1) a literature review; 2) case studies; and 3) a comparative analysis (Figure 1). Each method will address one aspect of the question and will build sequentially on the previous to address the thesis aim. Inductive theoretical approach aims to generate meanings from the data set collected in order to identify patterns and relationships to build a theory; however, inductive approach does not prevent the researcher from using existing theory to formulate the research question to be explored. (Research gate website)

Figure 1 below illustrates the research design, 1. The literature review. 2. Case studies are chosen. 3. Analyzing the case studies 4. Determine the underlying assumptions for each group. 5. Comparing the outcomes of the case studies analysis and 6. Discuss the finding of the research.

## 1. Literature review

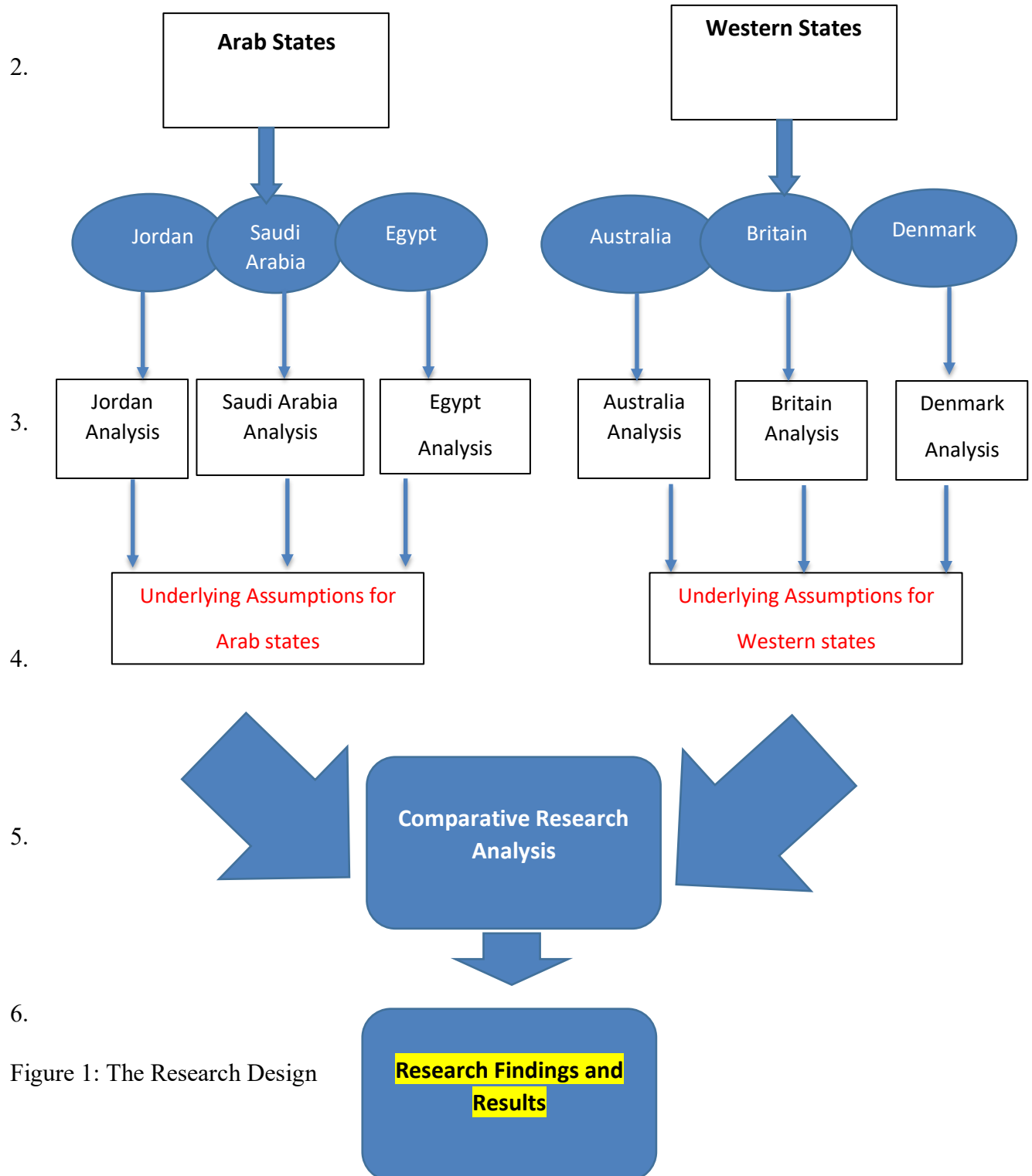


Figure 1: The Research Design

## **Literature Review**

The literature review will give the study the context it needs to operate and establish the significance of the research problem by constructively engaging with previous research (Badenhorst, 2015). It aims to engage with the latest scholarly debate and discussion in regards to counter-radicalization and disengagement in general and deradicalization in particular. It will also enable the researcher to understand and identify the gaps in these studies which need to be filled and how these concepts evolved since their introduction. Lastly, it will be narrowed down to outline the debate on religion versus social factors in regards to the best approach to deradicalize Islamic violent extremists (Badenhorst, 2015).

The data in this study has been collecting from primary and secondary resources. The primary resources include government documents, government websites, pro-government websites and holy transcripts such as the Quran and Hadith (prophet Mohammad says). The secondary resources include high-impact journals, books and media resources. In addition, resources from the Arab world and in the Arabic language have been included in this study, and in some cases translated out of Arabic for the first time. Indeed, the data collection has encountered some difficulties in terms of availability and validity because deradicalization programs have been newly introduced and need a long time to measure and assess results. The availability of data for the case studies also partly relies on government publications which makes verification difficult, especially in the Arab world.

## **Case Studies**

Case study is a qualitative method which has been increasingly used in social science as a credible research method (Gerring, 2006, p. 16). It gives an in-depth view on a particular research problem. It is also used to extract key themes and findings that help in forecasting future trends. "A case study paper usually examines a single subject of analysis, but case study papers can also be designed as a comparative investigation that shows relationships between two or among more than two subjects" (Becker et al., 1994).

This is the most suitable method to deconstruct the structure of deradicalization programs into their constituent components, and interrogate why and how the deradicalization programs function. Second, it is a proven method adopted by many notable researchers in this field such as Hamid El-Said, Koehler, and others. Third, one of the many usages of the case study is to describe and explore the nature of the program as a whole because it can examine it holistically (Bladi, 2013). Unlike

experimental methods which explore a fixed process, case studies continue to develop over time and can give unanticipated insights. Finally, the case study approach can narrow down a very broad research field to manageable and researchable examples (USC libraries, 2016).

The selection of countries for the case studies was neither arbitrary nor random. The programs needed to fit a series of criteria: they should be broadly representative of other countries which have similar programs (for example, programs in Egypt are similar to those in Algeria); and programs need to have been studied to some extent and have literature on them available to the researcher (for instance, Prevent in the UK, Arhus In Denmark and the Saudi program).

Some problems with the cases study approach were identified. A single or small number of case studies could limit the generalization of facts. The design could limit the identification of cause and effect. Finally, the criteria for selecting the case study needed to be strict and the programs chosen needed to be representative.

To overcome these limitations, the case studies were chosen depending on the criteria mentioned above. In addition, the chosen cases represent a wide range of other programs which have been run on similar principles. The countries that meet these criteria from the Arab world are Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. The countries from the West are Australia, the UK, and Denmark. However, this selection is not free of challenges. In the Arab programs, for example, the difference in a country's population, economics and politics, as well as level of democracy, is noted. In addition, there was found to be a shortage of available government publications about some Arab programs.

### **Comparative Research Analysis**

The third method used in this study is comparative analysis, a method used frequently in quantitative research (Rihoux, 2006). Although comparative research has long been adopted in political and international fields (Collier, 1993), few researchers in terrorism studies have adopted it. Comparison and contrasting should follow the analyzing of the case studies and identify the key underlying assumptions upon which they have been built. This method also has some shortcoming such as the comparing of some different terminology which could affect the subjectivity of the comparison process; for example, in the definition of terrorism.

This method is used because it is difficult to directly compare multiple deradicalization programs to each other, as if applied would yield insignificant outcomes due to the limited information in

each case study. So the comparison will be between the outcomes of analyzing the case studies. In this step, it will be determined whether there is a general difference between the focus of Arab and Western programs. And if there is, these two perspectives will then be contrasted in order to better understand this gap. In addition, areas of possible overlap and similarities between these two types of programs are explored and discussed in order to improve the success of existing programs.

Each one of the above research methods has its own shortcoming. As a consequence, this study has adopted a mixed methods approach which overcomes the individual restrictions of each method.

## Chapter Three: Literature Review

### Introduction

This literature review explores the academic context that deradicalization programs have been operating in and works as a basis for the subsequent chapters. It outlines and engages in the latest debates and scholarship on the evolution of these programs. The structure resembles an inverted pyramid (see Figure 2). Firstly, it distinguishes between the definitions of deradicalization, counter-radicalization, and disengagement and how these concepts have evolved and been used in both Arab and Western literature. Then, the key debatable issues and relevant theories in the fields of deradicalization and radicalization will be outlined including the social and religious factors that are hypothesized to lead to radicalization and deradicalization. In the second part, the study will discuss the importance of push and pull factors. These factors are then defined to outline the arguments surrounding an influence on the process of individuals making a decision to leave extreme groups. Finally, a gap analysis is conducted on the relation between social factors the Western programs have relied on and the Arab programs, which are more dependent on the religious factors. The below inverted pyramid shows the importance of the study gap through review most of the literature on its border context in the first line of the pyramid. The second level is second in importance where the push and pull factors are more relevant and more significant to this study. Third level is represent the unfold gap where this study will work to find out how to best answer the question of the study.

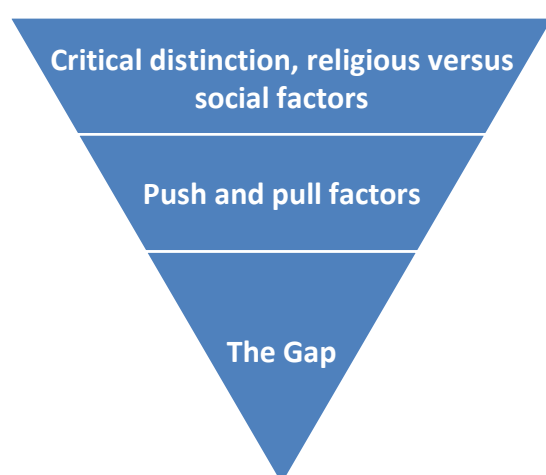


Figure 2 the Inverted Pyramid



The literature on deradicalization and disengagement suffers series of challenges. There is a shortage of studies on how and why individuals leave groups and disengage from violent behavior. Also our understanding of this complex and indeed contextual human behavior is not yet complete or wholly convincing (Barrelle, 2015). In addition, studies are mostly descriptive in nature; researchers describe the components and structures of programs and their *modus operandi*. For the most part studies have interviewed the staff members and the beneficiaries (Boucek, 2008; Rabasa, 2010). Other studies have looked at the rehabilitation process in prisons (Kruglanski, 2010, 2014; El-Said, 2015; Neumann, 2010; El-Said & Harrigan, 2013). Few studies have looked to the post-release or pre-radicalization of individuals. Finally, there is a divide between the literature that has focused on Middle Eastern countries, and that which has paid more attention to Western processes of deradicalization. Rarely has either side referred to the other when studying the deradicalization programs or combined both approaches (Koehler, 2017, p. 29).

Due to limitations of space, evaluating deradicalization programs and the process of measuring their success will be excluded from this review.

### **Critical Distinctions**

There are many concepts used to describe the process of turning from using and embracing of violence to abstaining from and exiting violence. The term ‘root causes’ has been widely used to describe the reasons behind terrorism, but, after many attacks on European cities such as London in 2004, claims that it implies an excuse and justification for terrorists to kill innocent people has shifted terminology towards the concept of ‘radicalization’ (Sedgwick, 2010). Bjorgo and Horgan assert that after the London attack in 2004 there was an increased interest among academics and politicians to understand the process of radicalization of young Muslims (Bjorgo & Horgan, 2009).

The European Commission has adopted a wide-ranging definition of radicalization as the “phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views, and ideas which could lead to acts of terrorism” (Butt & Tuck, 2014). However, Koehler defines radicalization as the process by which persons become terrorists or extremists where certain ideas and views leading to the use of violence are adopted (Koehler, 2017, p. 67).

While the term radicalization has been newly introduced after 2004 in the Western domain, in the Muslim and Arab world the word radicalization has different meanings and has a long presence in Muslim history. In the Arabic-English dictionary, for example, it has two meanings: ‘root’ or

‘extreme’, with the latter more dominant (Cambridge, 2015). Abdulrahman, asserts that radical or extremist means *tatarof* in the Arabic language. This word has been used recently in many meanings to describe someone who is: extreme in his views, not with his group, not ordinary, and on the edge of religious norms (Abdulrahman, 2013). However, the word *tatarof* has no presence in the Quran or Hadith or in the old Muslim books; there is an old word mentioned in one of the prophet's Hadith negatively describing the people who are too extreme in their devotion to worship. The word is *gholoo* الغلو:

*The Prophet said "... And beware of going to extremes (gholoo) in religious matters, for those who came before you were destroyed because of going to extremes in religious matters". ((an-Nasa'i(n.d)))*

Clearly, this does not mean the same as a person who holds violent extremist views as it is understood in Western discourse. For example, all Salafists in the Muslim world hold extreme views but the one who acts violently called Salafi Jihadist (Rumman, 2014).

Equally important, the terms counter-radicalization and deradicalization are very roughly defined in terrorism literature and problematic. Bjorgo and Horgan found that there is a lack of conceptual clarity in defining these. They defined deradicalization as "any efforts aimed at preventing radicalization from taking place" (Björgo & Horgan, 2009, p. 3). They asserted that change in behaviors and attitudes of the person who holds extreme views will not necessarily lead to terrorism. This is what makes a distinction between the violent extremists and extremists difficult. Because of that confusion, we have seen in the UK Prevent strategy for countering violent extremism that they consider even those who hold extreme views to be categorized under terrorism offences (Barker, 2015).

According to El-Said, counter-radicalization and deradicalization are defined as programs introduced to cause a change in views and behavior of detained and not detained militants to abandon permanently any commitment to violent activities (El-Said, 2015, p. 12). Alternatively, the UN has made clear distinctions between deradicalization and counter-radicalization: it defined the latter as “a package of social, political, legal and educational and economic programs specifically designed to deter disaffected, and possibly already radicalized, individuals from crossing the line and becoming terrorists”. Deradicalization is defined as “programs that are generally directed against individuals who have become radical with the aim of re-integrating them into society or at least dissuading them from violence” (United Nations, 2008). For the scope of this study, deradicalization is therefore defined as facilitating the exit from a group and refuting

extremist ideology, while counter-radicalization concentrates on early prevention of individuals from joining extremist groups.

In Arabic countries, the term deradicalization is not directly used as its translation to the Arabic language creates negative effects and feeling. In Arabic translation this term means abandoning Islamic belief. Many Arab and Muslim countries use the Arabic term *Munnasaha*, which means advice, *Alhiwar*, *adat tah'hil*, *Qanoun al Rahman* (mercy law).

## **Deradicalization Programs**

Programs have been established for rehabilitating detainees, preparing them to be integrated into communities and to permanently denounce violence. The importance of deradicalization is not only to save prisoners from further radicalization but also for the benefit of wider society and community (El-Said, 2015). Porges and Stern rightly argued:

"Deradicalization efforts must, therefore, be considered important not just for their effect on detainees but also for their secondary benefits beyond the walls of detention facilities. Saudi Arabia's rehabilitation program, for example, contributes to broader counter-radicalization efforts by facilitating government contact with those who are vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment, including detainees' friends and families". (Porges & Stern 2010 in El-Said, 2015, p. 79)

Koehler described the purpose of some Muslim states' programs as gaining specific intelligence for countering terrorism operations (Koehler, 2017, p. 95). He claims that most of these Middle Eastern and South Asian deradicalization programs were run by security agencies. While it might be true that intelligence gathering is part of these programs, it is perhaps more often a side product of such programs (Susan, 2012).

In terms of how the process is conducted, some researchers have focused on the collective disengagement of groups. The process in which entire groups reject and abandon violence includes the study of Egyptian, Algerian and Libyan groups (Ashour, 2009, p. 13; 2011, 2015). On the micro level, however, a small number of studies based on primary resources have been conducted. Dalgaard-Nelson was able to identify 16 academic articles and books published from 1990 to 2012, which were based on about 216 interviews with former militant members. This small sample of empirical studies indicates that the design and implementation of deradicalization programs and

counter-radicalization strategies could lack foundation and suffer significant limitations (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2013).

Equally important, the issue of the evaluation of the effectiveness of deradicalization programs is also contested. To date, there is no consensus on what constitutes success in terrorist rehabilitation or how to measure if the programs have achieved their goals (Horgan & Braddock, 2010). Much of the data on recidivism after deradicalization programs has come from unreliable resources with no empirical data to clarify their methods of evaluation. Horgan and Braddock conducted a one-year pilot study on established programs to investigate factors surrounding the effectiveness of these types of programs. They utilized Multi-Attribute Utility Technology (MAUT) (Horgan & Braddock, 2010). In five case studies, they recognized that there is no certain criteria for success associated with any initiative and what work in one region could not work on other region.<sup>1</sup> The outcomes of that study suggested that evaluation is difficult to measure and changes from one area to another (Horgan & Braddock, 2010).

### **Religious and Ideological Factors**

Religious factors in the radicalization and deradicalization process have been a debated and controversial issue when discussed from Western and Muslim perspectives. On the one hand, religious factors can be hypothesized as a source of radicalization and terrorism, while on the other hand they could be prominent and significant tools to combat terrorism. A conference in 2016 on the relationship between religion and CVE offers a key insight:

"The relationship between religion and violence is complex and defies any neat account of direct causation. In some cases of violent extremism, religion is not a primary driver, whereas in others it may be more prominent. Efforts to prevent or counter radicalization and extremism, therefore, need to 'right-size' religion as both a contributing factor and part of the solution". (Mandaville & Nozell, 2017)

The narrative of Salafi ideology relies on invoking fundamental principles which encourage Muslims to arm against Western powers. Western communities have been claimed to be morally corrupt and inflict this corruption on Muslim communities as well (Nasser-Eddine et al, 2011, p. 23). The only way to safeguard Islam is to invoke the prophet's time of 7th century apply the same

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<sup>1</sup> These case studies are Yemen, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Colombia's Disengagement and Reincorporation Program and Northern Ireland's Early Release Scheme.

principles in order to bring Muslims back to purity (Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011, p. 23). Deradicalization programs in the Arab world work to counter this ideology using the same invoked principles but in their correct context.<sup>2</sup>

Many Western researchers are skeptical of using the influence of religious content in the process of deradicalization (Koehler, 2017; Horgan, 2009; Seifert, 2010; Ebough, 1988). They assert that the programs that rely on theology debate are insufficient to sustain a long-term deradicalization process. Capstack contended the Saudi program focused exclusively on religion as a cause for radicalization, with the main objective to “persuade the inmates that their Jihadist interpretation of the Qur’an is incorrect” (Capstack, 2015). Other researchers such as Noricks stated that it is much more effective to exclude ideology from the process (Noricks, 2009).

Commonly, Western literature on deradicalization has criticized the use of clerics as part of the counter-radicalization strategy (Almaawi, 2016). Bjorgo and Horgan, while not opposing the use of theological debate to address deradicalization, asserted that it should be accompanied by social factors such as the support of family members, social groups, and friends (Bjorgo & Horgan, 2009).

There are many possible causes for this seemingly ingrained skepticism towards the role of religion in processes of radicalization and deradicalization: a lack of understanding of the mechanisms and subtleties of traditional Islamic concepts; and the conflation in the West between religious-based violent extremist groups and other extreme ideologies such as far right and far left supremacy may have obscured the importance of using the religious content in the process. In addition, the difficulty in evaluating ideology-based deradicalization programs, such as those adopted in Saudi Arabia and Singapore, has also engendered skepticism.

From an Arab Islamic perspective, deradicalization programs in particular and terrorism in general are more focused on correcting the misunderstanding of religious perspectives, religion being seen as the central factor in a successful deradicalization process (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2013). Many Islamic scholars refer to the reasons for terrorism being based on a political agenda, or political Islam, and that religion is thus used as a pretext (Alquleti, 2005,) (Almaawi, 2016). Almaawi argues that “socio-economic disparities are subsidiary elements in the radicalization process” (Almaawi, 2016). Saleh Al-Sadlan, a prominent scholar in the Muslim world, has elaborated on

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<sup>2</sup> For more information about the Salafi ideology and how it has evolved, see the Appendix.

the reasons behind extremism and violence from a religious perspective. He theologically denounces extremism and violence and considers them non-Islamic. Terrorism from his perspective has political, sociological, economic and psychological reasons (Al-Sadlan, 2010). Alazhar Alshareef, the highest and most prestigious religious entity in Egypt, has denounced the use of violence and called it un-Islamic. Interestingly, Alazhar has published an article in regards to the deradicalization programs around the world to benefit from the experiences of other countries (Aman, 2017).

### **Social Dynamic Factors**

Western programs, however, have approached radicalization differently, and chosen to downplay the Islamic perspective while focusing closely on social and psychological factors such as group dynamics, identity inclusion, and the quest young people go on to reach significance in life. Seeking refuge in group security has been considered by many researchers as a central cause of radicalization and needs to be addressed in order to reverse the process (Atran, 2014; Horgan, 2009; Silber & Bhatt, 2007). Sageman asserts that social relationships and bonds within terrorist groups are more important than ideology (Sageman, 2004). In Canada, for example, a qualitative study including interviews with participants from religious leaders, school counsellors and academics found that youths join extremist groups to feel secure (Ahmad, 2016b). Atran, on the other hand, focuses on the social causes of terrorism such as vengeance, humiliation, poverty, the significance quest, and others. He recognizes sacred values are a motivation for many terrorists in South East Asia and in the Middle East (Atran, 2014). Psychologically, the quest for personal significance also has its share as a critical motivation for joining terrorist groups. This means individuals joined ideological groups because they are searching for personal significance, a desire to be someone or to be respected, and this was seen in Western youth in particular (Jones, 2014). According to Rabasa and Benard, feelings of disaffection and a search for identity create an opening for radical ideas (Rabasa & Benard, 2015).

Detainee's classification system is said to have an impact on the successful of deradicalization process. This system has been working for a long time in prisons around the world where detainee imprisoned and categorized in regard to many factors such as the kind of crime, sentence period and the severity of their acts. However, many countries has adopted this process for the prisoners on terrorism related charge. For example in Australia, the detainee who have been sentenced on

terrorist offences are concentrated together. Gunaratna, Hussein have noted that if the detainees have been housed with other prisoners who have been jailed on other offences, the possibility of the latter to become radicalized is high. In Australia also six prisoners have been converted to Islam after they were mixed with terrorist's detainee in the backyard of prisons. In deradicalization realm this issue is debatable, while in Egypt for instance, the government have separated the hard-core terrorist prisoners from other who accepted the deradicalization process, that said to have worked well (Gunaratna, Hussin2018).

Many theories from social sciences such as sociology, psychology, and criminology have been employed by researchers to explain why some people are radicalized or deradicalized. Social identity theory, for example, has been used to explain that youth seeking refuge in a like-minded group to feel a sense of belonging (Bondokji & Harper, 2017). This theory explores how identity seekers find comfort in joining a group that makes them relate to the world through belonging (Hafal, 2016). In addition, rational choice theory has been used to explain why individuals join or leave terrorism groups on the basis of cost and benefit. Structural choice theory is a modified version of the rational choice theory where the focus here is on the benefit of the group as a whole rather than the individual (Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011, pp. 10-12). Also, social movement theories have indicated that frustration is the underlining trigger for radicalization. This theory has emanated from frustration–aggression theory (Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011). The many theories from different disciplines denote the complexity of understanding radicalization and deradicalization processes. Therefore, this difference indicates that social and religious factors cannot stand alone to explain de/radicalization.

However, recent years have witnessed increasing interest from Western countries in religious actors (Mandaville & Nozell, 2017). In a study in Canada about the role of community leaders in supporting belonging and education against CVE, the role of the religious leader came first before the role of school principals with 31 and 22 references respectively (Hafal, 2016).

Unfortunately, researchers have not yet agreed on which radicalization factors have been the most effective. This difference in orientation and vision came from many aspects including but not limited to the background of the researcher, the complexity of studying human behavior, lack of empirical studies and political and personal stance. The need for further study in these cases is

paramount. Arab deradicalization programs, on the other hand, have an agreement to some extent on the centrality of one cause (religious) and other variables (social) as dependents.

Arabs states have faced challenges when it comes to implementing the religious perspective in deradicalization programs (Almaawi, 2016). Using clerics, for example, with a modest knowledge of religion's divisive issues may harm deradicalization process (Sadlan, 2010). In addition, there is doubt in relation to the use of empirical and scientific methods in the theological dialogue. Indeed, religious leaders are using a rational and scientific argument when discussing the religious issues with extremism (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013).

While we have examined the religious and social factors that lead to radicalization and deradicalization in general, the next section is concerned with the push and pull factors that are specifically intended to explain the deradicalization process.

### **Push and Pull Factors**

Horgan (2004) has worked to develop a comprehensive psychological and social analysis to explain why individuals disengage from extremists groups. As a psychologist and officer in a security agency, he conducted numerous interviews with former IRA members in Northern Ireland and the Italian Red Brigade. His findings suggest that the process of disengagement is complicated (Horgan, 2004). In 2009, he added that these triggers were found in religious groups as well. Horgan identifies a number of psychological factors that might lead group members to exit violence. First, gradually developing negative feelings associated with unsatisfied qualities such as pressure, anxiety, and illusion. Second, a change in priorities that means the person's needs from the group have changed over time and another important thing has come first; for example, longing for a social relationship which was not a priority in the first place when joining the group. Finally, feeling betrayal or disillusionment in the group that he long supported (e.g. internal fighting, informants and constant change in the aims of the group). In addition, Horgan adds physical disengagement from the terrorist group, meaning leaving the violent group because of imprisonment or the group halt the operations , but this change is not related to a cognitive issues such feelings or emotions.

Oppenheim et al. found that the ideologically motivated violent group members are more likely to resist deradicalization efforts or defection from a group (Oppenheim et al., 2015). Bjorgo and Horgan's study found that changing the violent behavior of persons without necessarily changing



the radical attitudes is possible (Bjørge & Horgan, 2009). This appears mostly in individuals disengaging from an Islamic group. The logic behind that is the religious ideology is different from non-religious ideology; some Muslims can abandon ideology which is considered extreme by the majority of Muslim scholars and follow less extreme views, yet remain loyal to the Islamic faith. For example, Nasser al-Bahri was best known as Abu Jandal, Bin Laden's former bodyguard. Although he attended a deradicalization program in Yemen and denounced violence, he remained loyal to Bin Laden and continued to believe in al-Qaida ideology (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013, p. 7). Although Horgan's studies have great influence on most of the researchers of the deradicalization field, he was in support of the disengagement process instead of deradicalization. In addition, as a psychologist, his writings are always in support of the psychological aspects of deradicalization.

Push factors are defined as "the negative social incidents and circumstances that make it uncomfortable and unappealing to remain in the group". These social factors affect the mind and soul of the group members and lead them eventually to leave (Bjørge & Horgan, 2009, p. 36).

These include *negative social sanctions* – the kind of disciplinary sanctions imposed on the members when they commit sins. They range from minor sentences to major punishments from verbal abuse to harassment and sexual abuse (Koehler, 2017, p. 16). *Losing faith in the group ideology* – when the members feel that they fought for something that is not true or unachievable or is morally and politically wrong (Bjørge, 2016). Speckhard and Yayla have conducted interviews with former ISIS members who expressed that the reason for leaving the group was disillusionment with the ideology of the group (Speckhard, 2018). *Disappointment at the result of the armed conflict and its effects on the struggle outcomes* (Horgan 2009) – there are many examples of the effects of the wrong violent strategy by extremists groups; for instance, killing civilians in large numbers or attacking places of worship. In Egypt, for example, two large violent groups denounced violence after the 1997 massacre in Egypt because they probably started losing public support (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013).

Pull factors, on the other hand, are defined as "positive factors attracting the persons to a more rewarding alternative" (Bjørge, 2016, p. 234). These factors are related to influences outside the group. These include: *the urge to be normal and live peacefully; the age of the group member and the desire to be parents; and the pressure by family on the member to leave this life* (Horgan, 2009)). These human needs have been exploited successfully by the Saudi authorities when they first implemented their deradicalization programs (Boucek, 2008).

Although Push and pull factors have presented to some extent a satisfied answer to why individuals leave terrorists group, they have been criticized as insufficient in representing all exit factors. Many of these factors have been extracted from small samples and mostly from insignificant groups (Altier et al., 2017). Altier et al argues that push and pull theory does not give indication on which one is more associated with leaving terrorist groups. In addition, they conducted a study on 87 autobiography accounts and found that push factors are more cited than pull factors as playing a significant role in the individual's decision to leave. They found that the most important agents in push factors are the disillusionment with the group leaders or members, dissatisfaction with daily tasks, and burnout (Altier et al., 2017). Importantly, the study admitted that few studies have examined certain push/pull factors; many tend to focus on a specific group or region. Although, Altier et al have applied Caryl E. Rusbult's model from social psychology as methodology, their samples of study where mostly from non-religious groups, with religious groups making up only 4% of the sample. A similar study was conducted by a group of researchers who concluded that “disillusionment with the group’s belief system, the presence of positive social relationships (e.g., children, spouse) and disapproval of violent behavior” are the most important factors leading to disengagement (Steven et al., 2016). On the contrary, Altier et al. argue beyond pull and push factors; they have also investigated the same models from psychology and sociology (Altier et al.2014). Marita La Palm stated that each ideology group has its own push and pull factors, and that it is not true that one size fits all (Palm, 2017).

Unfortunately, correcting the misunderstandings in deviant ideology in violent religious groups such as ISIS and Al-Qaida has been downplayed, as has the possibility that religion could be the most important push factor. Although this factor has been used by religious scholars in deradicalization and counter-radicalization processes in Arab states, it has not been appropriately considered in Western deradicalization and CVE programs, nor in the scholarship does that underpin them. The problem might be that many researchers have referred to it as ideology without distinguishing between positive and negative 'ideology'. Yayla has interviewed more than 40 terrorists in four years and found that all of them had firstly relied on ideology as a motive for violence (Yayla, 2018). Yet Yayla has not differentiated between terrorism, which emanates from a wrong interpretation of ideology, and other correct and accepted ideology.

## Gap Analysis

It has been shown that the literature on push and pull factors has mostly focused on non-religious groups. The far right wing, white supremacy, and Neo-Nazi ideological groups have been subject to the research of notable authors such as (Bjørge, 2016; Bjørge & Horgan, 2009; Coolsaet, 2011; Horgan, 2004; Koehler, 2017; Noricks, 2009; Sageman, 2004), while other significant research has focused on the religious groups and in particular Islamic movements among other ideological groups such as (Ashour, 2011, 2015; Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2013; El-Said, 2015; El-Said & Harrigan, 2013; Oppenheim et al., 2015; Sageman, 2008; Speckhard, 2018). Unfortunately, most of the studies on push/pull factors make no distinction between the ideological religiously motivated groups and non-religious groups; studying dynamics in the latter such as the far right and applying the same findings on the religious groups has led to a conflation of the two and the relative misunderstanding of the role that religion may play in disengagement and deradicalization. The study of religious-based groups should be differentiated from that of non-religious groups.

However, as of now no comparison between deradicalization in the West and the Arab world has been made. El-Said, for example, has made a significant contribution to the body of knowledge in this field by examining the deradicalization programs in eight Muslim majority states. However, he expanded in each country to include the history of terrorism which made the comparison unclear and lost in the amount of historical information presented. Importantly, Koehler's 2017 recent book *Understanding Deradicalization Methods, Tools and Programs for Countering Violent Extremism* has indirectly compared Middle Eastern and East Asian programs and the West; his main focus was Western programs as he considers other countries as undemocratic and subsequently their programs as suffering from deficits.

## Conclusion

This review has sought to map the current state of scholarly debates around radicalization and deradicalization and illustrate that there is a gap in Arab scholarship that identifies religion (or at least its incorrect adoption) as an important factor, and the West where broader social and psychological factors are privileged. To start with, a critical distinction has been made between the main concepts in these fields such as deradicalization and radicalization. The role of push and pull

factors in deradicalization has also been examined. It has been shown how religion has been ignored or sidelined in most of these discussions on push and pull theory. Finally, the debate around the primacy of social versus religious factors has been presented. It has been shown that until now neither side has compared both approaches in order to ascertain opportunities for improvement. That is the gap that the remainder of this thesis aims to partly fill.

## **Chapter Four: Arab States Deradicalization Programs**

### **Introduction**

This chapter maps Arab deradicalization programs in terms of foundation, mechanism, objectives, successfulness, assumptions, and the scholarship upon which they are built. Since the programs in the Arab world have many similarities, three Middle Eastern countries have been chosen for the case study: Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan. These states were chosen because, first, they can to some extent represent all Arab deradicalization programs due to the many similarities they share. Second, Jordan and Saudi Arabia are the two highest contributors per capita to foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria (see Table 1) (Speckhard, 2017; Bremmre, 2017). Finally, Egypt represents a unique and interesting process of ‘self-deradicalization’. Although Yamen has a first pioneer program, it was not included in this study because its program was not expanded after Judge Hattar and was diminished after the revolution against the former president Abdullah Saleh. The importance of studying these programs came from the urgent need in current deradicalization studies to find the best solutions and practices to apply in different contexts. Understanding the mechanisms and principal foundations of these programs could lead to identify circumstances conducive to successful deradicalization programs (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013, p. 11).

This chapter draws in particular on the foundational work of Omar Ashour, Hamed El-Said, and Jane Horrigan – these writers have extensively documented deradicalization programs in Arab states. Ashour presented the first detailed study about self-deradicalization of major violent extremist groups in Egypt and Libya. El-Said and Horrigan have produced the first comprehensive account and partial evaluation of deradicalization programs in eight Muslim majority states. Although this chapter has benefited from the primary resources and data collected by these studies, it has distinguished itself by studying factors on the micro level that have not been researched before. Unlike the work of El-Said and Horrigan, this study has revealed the effects consequences of using misleading interpretations of Islam in justifying the violence and highlighted the role of credible Muslim scholars in Arab programs. It argues that, although social and psychological factors are important, the religious perspective is more important than any other factor in deradicalization programs in Arab states. The reasons behind that are first and foremost, the Islam religion is rooted and embedded in all of walks of life in Muslim countries and that is related to the kind of practice the Muslim exercise. For example, five times pray, Friday gathering pray, Pilgrimage to Mecca in massive numbers (Hajj) and Eid festivals. These practice and others keep Muslim connected to the Islamic principles which in turn give the Muslim scholars a power and

influence which are not available even for Muslim rulers. However, one side effect is that politicians in some countries could take advantage of this situation by using religious scholars for a political cause. Second, in all Arab programs the religious perspective and religious scholars are leading the process of deradicalization as in Jordan, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Egypt which give a strong indication of this cause significant. Third the kind of dialogue and debate between the detainees and the mentors will eventually lead to discuss the Jihad and other Islamic issues where it needs someone who has a knowledge in these topics. Final, many Western countries has adopted a form of religious mentors and expand in using the Islamic perspective in dealing with detainee in the deradicalization process such as Australia case. This chapter finds that religion has great dominance in the Arab programs due to many reasons. In addition, religious scholars have important roles in Saudi Arabia and Jordan but the effect is difficult to measure because the impact is varied between the independent scholars and state sponsored scholars. However, a point to notice here is that not all state sponsored are ineffective, nor all the dependent religious scholars are all of them effective in the overall process.

Table 1: Foreign Fighters per State (Richard Barret et al., 2015)

.	Country	Number of Foreign Fighters	No. of foreign fighters (on a per capita basis/ per million)	Rank
1	Saudi Arabia	1,500–2,500	69	3
2	Jordan	1,500–3,950	309	1
3	Lebanon	900	201	2
4	Israel/Palestinian Territories	112	26	4
5	Yemen	110	5	8
6	Kuwait	70	20	5
7	United Arab Emirates	15	2	9
8	Qatar	15	7	7
9	Bahrain	12	9	6

## **Case study 1**

### **Saudi Arabia**

#### **Introduction**

Saudi Arabia (SA) has produced the first comprehensive deradicalization program comprising religious counselling and social support. In 2006, the Saudi Minister of interior at that time, Prince Mohammad Bin Nayf, issued a directive to form a committee from a different aspect of scholarship, which combined religious, psychological and social counsellors (Porges, 2010). However, the committee heavily relies on religious consultation and dialogue; it has a range of expertise in psychology and social scientists.

SA and other Arab countries do not name the program deradicalization; rather, it has an Arabic name called *Munnasaha*, which means advising and counselling. The name is important: as a concept, deradicalization implies challenging and confronting the fundamentals of the religion.

#### **Objectives**

According to SA authorities, the aim is to win the battle of hearts and minds before changing the behavior and beliefs. The Saudi government has declared that the primary object of the program is to combat the corrupted ideology and wrong interpretation of Islam, which is conducted mostly in prisons during the sentence of the detainee (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013, p. 24). According to Assakina, a specialized website in counter-terrorism narratives, the aim of this is confronting the terrorism intellectually through using the war of ideas to correct the misguided people and integrate them into communities (Assakina, 2012). ‘Straying thought’ is a concept used mostly to describe the Saudi Rehabilitation Center inhabitants, as it implies of wrongdoings which lesser offenseive than using terrorists or prisoners. In addition, the center relies on the help of families before and after the release of misguided people through taking advantage of different programs to guide and advise them on their mistakes (Wlliams, 2016).

#### **Organizational Structure**

The structure of the center committee consist of three sub-committees: the religious committee which has seven legitimate specialists, and their main work is interacting directly with detainees through dialogue and debate (Ezzarqui, 2010). The psychology committee consists of five psychologists and sociologists, and the security committee consists of a number of professionals



such as psychology, sociology and law experts. In addition, each region's prison has a legitimate coordinator who oversees the function of the members of the central committee (Assakina, 2012).

### **Mechanism**

The modus operandi of the center is not static but flexible as it trying to improve its function depending on the outcomes of the participants. The committee of the center oversees two programs: short open discussions called guidance sessions, which last for two hours, and are in a comfortable place with plain clothes as there is no uniform. These sessions focus mostly on discovering the religious aspects that each individual considers important and needs more attention (Ekici, 2008, p. 255). In addition, it gives the counsellors idea about which of the individuals are committed extremists. The second program is a lengthy study session and consists of 20 persons for each; religious scholars and sociologists conduct ten courses for the six-week program, which cover the following topics: atonement (*takfer*) allegiance, disavowal, jurisprudence rules of Jihad, self-esteem, terrorism, and homage.

### **Social Rehabilitation**

The center uses a set of social rehabilitation programs designed to qualify the beneficiary and his family to engage and deal with real-life situations (Boucek, 2008). This could include lectures from specialists on how to deal with society outside the center. Beneficiaries also can visit their family for several weeks as the families of the participant have programs designed to support them during the imprisonment of their breadwinner. It is important to notice how SA uses the social factors to help to integrate the detainee in the community by stressing the role of family and the community at large. However, not all the Arab deradicalization programs have the same structure.

### **Successfulness**

Gauging the success of the program is reliant on the availability of statistical and empirical data, which in this case are not available or available in limited amounts. In addition, there is no agreement on what are the best methods to measure the success of deradicalization programs in general (Boucek, 2008, p. 25). Kurlantzick asserts that a good sign of success is measuring the terrorism events after implementing the programs; in the case of SA there was a sharp decline in terrorist incidents after 2004 (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013, p. 217). However, the decline in terrorist incidents can be related to more than one factor. According to Boucek, 3,000 detainees participated in the SA program between 2003 and November 2007, 1,400 of which were released, and only 35

of the detainees have been re-arrested on terrorism charges which equals 1–2% (Boucek, 2008, p. 21). Many researchers such as Harrigan (2013), House (2012), Boucek (2011), Lacroix (2011), Hegghammer (2010), and Stracke (2007) have empirically documented the SA approach, regarding it as worth understanding and copying (Almaawi, 2016).

The detainees who left the country after release and joined terrorist groups are not accounted for. In addition, Boucek asserted that the program needs a long time to measure success with every detainee.

Indeed, all figures in this program, according to El-Said, are SA government selective numbers including the rate of recidivism, although El-Said has not rejected them, researchers should be extremely cautious (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013, pp. 218-219). Saudi Arabia claims that it has gained success in this program. Although some researchers are very skeptical in terms of this success, they do not give an alternative nor do they have a strategy to measure this success (Sageman, 2017). Even if the success of such programs is insignificant, any rate of success is acceptable as long as it is in favor of lowering the number of violent extremists, and it is by far better than any military based solution and less cost in terms of money and time (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013). Indeed, the recidivism rate is tolerable unless the percentage reaches zero; researchers determine the success of deradicalization programs solely on this scale (Rom, 2013).

## **Case Study 2**

### **Egypt**

#### **Introduction**

Egypt is credited as the first Arab state to witness the establishment of the most organized and large-scale Islamic movement, namely the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in 1928. Under the leadership of Sheikh Hassan al-Bana, its main objective was countering the influence of Westernization in the Muslim community at the time. Hassan al-Bana had sought to do that through creating a Muslim community, which centered on Mosque activities (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013, p. 72). MB influence has reached beyond Egypt to almost every Islamic movement in the Arab world. Although MB was established as an apolitical movement, members of the group had been radicalized after WWII due to numerous factors. Of these factors, the most important was the British presence in the Suez Canal, the Zionist presence in Palestine, Arab states' defeat by Israel in 1948 and increased influence of Marxists and communists in the late 1940s (Rodenbeck, 2010).

Despite all the events that made the movement very radicalized, the MB witnessed a dramatic deradicalization in 1968 by rejecting the violence and dismantling its most important part, the armed wing. In 1969, the movement leader al-Hudaybi wrote a book called *Preachers, not Judges*, and used his high intellectual skills to denounce the violence through theological and ideological justification (Özdemir, 2013; Zollner, 2013).

### **Al-Gama' a al-Islamiyah (IG) and al-Jihad Organization (al-Jihad)**

The biggest deradicalization process in all the Arab countries was conducted in Egypt through self-deradicalization by its two biggest violent groups, as opposed to the norm of individual deradicalization. Between 1997 and 2007, the *al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah* Islamic group and al-Jihad organization (al-Jihad) banned the use of terrorism as a mean to achieve their goals. Blaydes and Rubin assert that there is "no no other religious terrorist group of this size to this date has offered a program of religious re-interpretation on the scale of the experience in Egypt" (Blaydes & Rubin, 2008).

The IG consisted of members disillusioned by MB politics and its ability to confront the Egyptian regimes. The IG has reinterpreted the writings of Sayd Qutb but in a more extreme and violent manner.<sup>3</sup> The result was developing an extreme version of Takfirism in which they considered all the participants in any democratic process as infidels who should be killed (Ashour, 2009, pp. 9-11). Al-Jihad group on the other hand developed from defectors of IG because of disagreement on leadership, ideology, and tactics (EL-Said, 2013, p. 79). The prominent leaders of this group are Ayman al-Zawahiri and Aboud Al-Zummur.

Several books have been written in volumes called *Tasheh al-Mafaheem* (the concepts correction) by the theologians of these groups in Egypt, which denounced the use of violence. In contrast to their previous publications, the new writings were more moderate and called the killing of civilians, security personnel and tourists is un-Islamic. These books clearly stated that it is not permissible to wage Jihad against the rulers even though they are not applying Sharia law (Hafez & Mohammad, 2002).

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<sup>3</sup> See the Appendix.

## **Foundation and Objective**

Despite the Egypt style of deradicalization being self-deradicalization, there is no structured program such as in SA. Ashour studied the deradicalization of these groups in 1970 and during 1997–2007. He found that the process of deradicalization started from within the groups themselves or self-deradicalization without the government intervention. In addition, he identified three dimensions to the deradicalization process: the behavioral dimension where the actual abandonment occurs, the ideological dimension where violence, in this stage becomes unjustified, and the organizational dimension where the change occurs in the structure of leadership and subgroups (Hameed EL-Said, 2013 p. 78; Ashour, 2009).

## **The Role of the State in Deradicalization**

Although the Egyptian violent groups had themselves rejected the use of violence, the state has staged a number of steps to encourage self-deradicalization (Ashour, 2009). Of these steps, the government made some moderate religious books available for inmates to read and comprehend where it realized that most of the prisoners were uneducated in Islamic jurisprudence and Islamic thought. In addition, the government used an intermediary to mediate between the government and prisoned movement leaders. Surprisingly, most of the intermediary figures were from the Muslim Brotherhood and other scholars from the Egypt's highest religious entity Alazhar (Rabasa, 2010). The government also facilitated the meeting between the leaders of the two groups and their followers to push the review forward (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013).

## **The Role of Religious scholars in the Egyptian Case Study**

Although the state sponsored scholars in Egypt was ineffective in the self-deradicalization process of the Islamic groups, the leaders of these groups are themselves scholars in Islamic jurisprudence and other Islamic sciences. So the leaders such as al-Hudaybi wrote a book called *Preachers, not Judges*, he denounced the violence through theological and ideological justification (Özdemir, 2013; Zollner, 2013). In addition, the mediators between the government and these group are mostly from trusted scholars who help in facilitating by convincing the leaders to abandoned violence as it mentioned above.

## **Successfulness**

Clearly, the success of the deradicalization process in Egypt is more apparent than any other programs and can be measured to some extent because of many factors. First, the leaders and members of these groups initiated the process of deradicalization without any direct involvement from the state (Rabasa, 2010). Second, although the government was not involved in the beginning, its role of facilitated and supported the process had a great impact. Finally, the re-interpretation of the role of Jihad by same theologians, who had supported the hardline previously, played a significant role. Additionally, Ashour (2009) attributed this success to four factors that played an important role in the success of the deradicalization of these groups: first, strong leadership, the group leader abroad delegated leadership to imprisoned leaders; second, heavy repression by the regime; third, interacting between the group members and outsiders, especially imprisoned leaders and liberal intellectual prisoners; fourth, incentives from the authorities (Ashour, 2009, p. 113). Neither IG nor al-Jihad have been responsible for a terrorist incident since 1997, until the uprising of the so-called Arab Spring, which gives credibility to the process (Hameed EL-said, 2013, p. 101). Ashour also claims that the program has removed more than 15,000 former IG members from being part of al-Qaida terrorist groups (Ashour, 2009, p. 2).

## **Case Study 3**

### **Hashemite Kingdome of Jordan**

#### **Introduction**

According to recent statistics, Jordan's population is almost 10 million; however, it has ranked either number one or two in the world for its contribution to Salafi Jihadist in Iraq and Syria, on a per capita basis – their number is around 3,000 fighters (Speckhard, 2017, p. 3). Jordan approaches deradicalization at macro and micro levels, where the country has acknowledged that terrorism does not stem from the political situation but from misguided youth and thus should be dealt with comprehensively (International Peace Institute, 2010, p. 6).

#### **Deradicalization Efforts**

Two major incidents rallied the Jordanian mainstream behind the government efforts to counter violent extremism more than any other government efforts. Firstly, the Amman hotels bombing in 2005 was a turning point in counter-radicalization efforts; the suicide bombers were sent by Jordanian born Abu Musa'b Al-Zarqawi to attack the hotels. Bombing a wedding party in one of

that hotels and killing the director of the most popular movie in the Muslim world about the life of Prophet Muhammad, *Al-Ressala* (The Message), was more effective than all the government efforts for countering terrorism (International Peace Institute, 2010). Before those attacks, the popularity of al-Zarqawi was on the rise as he was fighting the American occupation in Iraq as well as Shia who were killing Sunni Muslims (Speckhard, 2017, p. 24). This popularity indicated that the Salafi Jihadist had enjoyed a popularity among Jordanians which facilitated their recruitment process before they started attacking Sunni Muslims. The second most important incident that helped the government fight the propaganda of ISIS and other terrorists group was the burning of the Jordanian pilot by ISIS in 2014. This incident also had helped in deradicalization most of the Jordanians who had supported ISIS. The Jordanian opinion was against the Jordan government decision to join the war with American in Iraq; however, after that incident the perception changed dramatically (Counter Extremism Project, 2018).

## **Foundation**

The new program for deradicalization was established in 2015 and hosted its first 69 prisoners. Frank Gardener, BCC security correspondent in the kingdom, said that those prisoners were not the hard-core ones; the latter are useless for deradicalization. The Jordan prisons authority separates the unreformed Jihadists from those willing to change. Gardener also met one of the program beneficiaries who was sentenced to five years because he spent two weeks with ISIS. The beneficiary said that he thought he fulfilled his Jihad duty when his friend persuaded him to join the fight. However, after two weeks in Syria, he became disillusioned with the group and thought about escape because they only fought each other, not the Syrian regime (Gardner, 2015).

In addition, Jordan has designated a department for combating terrorism in the Ministry of the Interior. Similarly, in 2016 Jordan's army established a center for countering extremism in Al-Zarqa city, the place where AL Zarqawi had lived and where the majority of Jordanian Salafi Jihadist live.

## **Mechanism**

The country tackles radicalization through two approaches: the military approach, and education approach. The latter was taken up widely in the country, and combines many government and non-government entities (Speckhard, 2017). Jordan also introduced an anti-terrorism law and Fatwa (a ruling on a point of Islamic law given by a recognized authority) in 2006, which limited the Fatwa

issuance to the government appointed Imams. Some see Fatwa law as an ineffective tool; people do not trust some of these Imams because of their limited knowledge (International Peace Institute, 2010). The program is similar to Saudi Arabia's program where government-approved religious scholars interact and conduct theologian dialogue with prisoners and then correct the wrong beliefs.

Additionally, under the King of Jordan's (the King is the 43rd grandson of the prophet Mohammad) patronage in 2004, about 180 scholars representing a wide range of Islamic thought including Sunni and Shia convened in Amman and issued a message to the Muslim nation (Umma) called the Amman Message. The message aimed at delegitimizing the hardline interpretation of Islam and focused on the moderation and peaceful Islam (Amman Message, 2004).

Moreover, Jordan security has developed its own mobile apps that help in reporting any terrorism-related incidents. Colonel Rashid from Jordan's Special Branch stated that "this application ... can be easily used to report any single information by text or by recording or by voice message or by taking a snapshot and sending it to us" (Gardner, 2015).

### **Successfulness**

Speckhard in her long study about Jordan in 2017 has identified many factors that lead young people to join a terrorist group. According to her report, the most important motivation is the war in Syria and Iraq, the Syrian refugees, unemployment, the spread of militant Jihadi ideology and frustration with governance (Speckhard, 2017). All these factors in addition to the limited resources for the government to follow up and meet the social needs of the released detainee make the successfulness of deradicalization programs compromised. In addition, some security measures after releasing the beneficiaries hinder the efforts to integrate the detainees in societies, such as the travel restriction imposed on them or not granting them good behavior certificates to be employed in government sectors (Bondokji & Harper, 2017).

### **Summary**

The differences and similarities between Arab states' deradicalization programs are illustrated in Table 2 below. In terms of the location of the programs, in Jordan and Egypt, the processes are conducted in the prisons mostly, while SA conducted its programs in prisons and rehabilitation centers. In the objectives approach, Jordan and SA are the same – they are targeting individuals in

and out prison; Egypt, however, was targeting groups and individuals. For the interlocutors, the three countries are varied: Jordan is using state sponsored religious and non-religious scholars, while SA, in addition to its religious scholars, used former extremists as well. Egypt is a unique case: the group leaders had initiated the process with insignificant help from the state. The after-release care increased gradually in the three countries starting from zero in Egypt then minimum care in Jordan to reach SA with comprehensive after-release care services. Finally, in terms of the effective components, Jordan has insignificant help from the community, whilst in SA everyone is included from the family to the community in general and media as well. In Egypt, the internal discussion between the members of the violent groups in prison and their leaders are the most important components.

	Jordan	Saudi Arabia	Egypt
Location	Prisons	Prisons and Rehab Centers	Prisons
Size			
Objective	Individual deradicalization, counter-radicalization	Individual deradicalization, counter-radicalization	Group Deradicalization Counter deradicalization
Interlocutors	Muslim Scholars	Muslim scholars Former extremists	Groups leaders
After release care	Minimum help	Monitoring, family held responsible, follow-up with Scholars	NON
Affective components	NON	Family supports Wedding help	Intergroup discussions

**Table 2** is the difference between Arab deradicalization programs in terms of location, size, objective, interlocutors, after release care and effective components.





## **The Assumptions**

The Arab programs vary from each other in scope and intensity which can be possibly related to the differences in political system, community nature, education and economic resources, while the concepts and assumptions that the programs have built on are the same. The most noticed factors that shaped the Arab programs are *correcting the misleading interpretation, working to gain the community and families' cooperation, raise the awareness among the public, role of social factors and the role of credible religious scholars.*

## **Misleading Interpretation**

The first and most important of these assumptions is that nearly all Arab programs have agreement that terrorism is a deviation in understanding Islam and re-interpretation of concepts in Islam is necessary (Ashour, 2009; Koehler, 2017). They are relying on well-respected and knowledgeable religious scholars to correct the concepts and delegitimize violence in order to bring back the misguided youth to normality. It is noticeable that the Arab programs, therefore, do not attempt to change the deviant belief to match Western values or to accept democracy as some Western programs try to achieve (e.g. France) (Koehler, 2017, p. 83). Gaining ground on religious-based dialogue will have positive impact on facilitating the winning of the hearts and minds of those with distorted understanding. Koehler asserts that "only those programs including the ideological change or psychological disengagement can be called a 'deradicalization' program. (Koehler, 2017, p. 118). Therefore, Arab deradicalization programs tend to focus primarily on the correcting the misleading interpretation of Islam without neglecting other unreligious factors.

## **Religious Leaders**

Furthermore, the role of Muslim scholars is very crucial in supporting and in some cases leading the deradicalization process; however, credibility is essential. One could conclude that the effectiveness of religious scholars depends on three factors. First, if the scholars are government sponsored many detainees consider the government and any associated persons as enemies. The willingness of the detainee to participate in the discussion – many hard-core detainees do not accept the idea and consider those scholars traitors. Second, the knowledge of the scholars and their popularity among mainstream Salafi group. Third, the government support, however, this support should not associate with imposing certain values that walk only with the government policy. In fact, the most effective scholars in terms of deradicalization are those who are leaders to violent groups as we have seen in Egypt's case or former extremists. On the other hand, those

highly commitment people could not be rehabilitated without theology dialogue by scholars whom they trust.

In addition, Muslim scholars are depending on Fatwa or religious verdicts to allow them to denounce terrorism and work closely with their states to counter terrorism (Alqahtani, 2013). In Jordan, for example, the Salafi Jihadist have not accepted the scholars of the government and they called them the Mansions scholars, which mean they are working for the ruler (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013). It might be true to some extent that some Jihadists are themselves considered scholars from their followers and can argue in terms of correcting their beliefs, so sending poor and ill-educated Imams may harm the process. Jordan in 2014, for instance, used one of the famous Salafi Jihadists Abu Mohammad Al-Maqdisi to negotiate with ISIS to release the Jordanian pilot. Although he failed to secure the pilot's release, he succeeded in weakening their narrative among their followers Jihadists in Jordan and exposed their proclaimed legitimacy on national TV (Almaqdisi, 2015). On the other hand, in the SA program, the scholars are probably more successful in dealing with the detainees because they have the knowledge and the logical argument to convince the detainees and many of them were former extremists. However, in Egypt, the leaders of the terrorist group were themselves scholars and they were far more convincing than any state sponsored scholars. Because they are from within the group, we noticed that when the leaders of the two groups in Egypt were rejecting the violence the followers immediately obeyed, though not all of them. In addition, many distinguished scholars were themselves violence supporters before they announced repentance – using them in countering the terrorism narrative gives more credibility; this is clear in SA and Egypt more than in Jordan (Almaawi, 2016, p. 131). Therefore, without using Islamic scholars in the Arab program, it could not be sustained. In Yemen, for example, many scholars were reluctant to participate in the program although the president at that time supported it, which brought the Yemeni program to a halt.

### **Emotional Battle**

Winning the hearts and minds of the detainees and communities, which some called a soft approach, seems more important than any other security based measures (International Peace Institute, 2010, p. 1). In this regard, S A is mastering this concept more than any other program. The aim of this approach is not only the detainees but also their families and the wider community. The comprehensive approach that SA has endorsed, which combines religion, psychology, and security, has made it a role model, yet success is not guaranteed.

Moreover, the development of a country plays a significant role in advancing the deradicalization process – we find wealthy countries can apply very broad and comprehensive programs and mobilise its community to help in integrating the released detainee and to prevent more radicalization. The difference here is between SA and Egypt; in Egypt the role of the state in the deradicalization process is limited to facilitating, the process without any kind of incentives and suffered significantly from lack of post release care. However, in the SA case the country takes care of the detainee and his family as well. This can lead us to highlight the role of the family, especially wives and parents in exercising pressure on the detainee to accept the incentive from the government and return home as soon as possible.

This social welfare of the communities was used as an important recruiting tool by violent extremism movements. In Egypt, for example, people were suffering from economic marginalization, poverty, and unjust governance the violent movements have been available to deliver subsidies and help compensate for terrorism operations such as widows of martyrdom and their children getting a monthly payment (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013, p. 77). However, not all countries can provide these incentives to detainees. Jordan, for example, with its limited resources cannot afford it, but it could use international funding support through the United Nations. Hamed El-Said argues that the financial cost of winning hearts and minds of participants and their families is a great saving of public money in future (El-Said, 2015, p. 7).

## **Public Awareness**

Social media, internet, and TV in the Arab states have been employed in countering the narrative of terrorists and help in delegitimizing the use of violence against fellow Muslims. The media campaign has been used by Egypt to support the reform of its violent groups by TV shows and series that host scientists and religious scholars (Ashour, 2009). SA also has relied on social media and internet as statistics show that Arab pupils increasingly relied on social media to get information (Braizat et al., 2017). SA not only uses its local TV channels but also other popular channels such as MBC and AL-Arabia to broadcast TV series against the propaganda of terrorism, especially in the Holy month of Ramadan. Moreover, distinguished scholars were encouraged to have their own websites and emails to answer questions of their followers (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013). In addition, SA inaugurated a website called *Assakina* or tranquillity in many languages to publish Islamic content. The Ministry of the Interior used to censor the militant websites and

respond to their narrative (Murrajaat.com) (Assakina, 2012). However, the influence of these steps cannot be measured.

### **Social and Psychological Factors**

Social and psychological factors' role in the Arab deradicalization programs are an important part of the programs; however, they are not considered as motivations for terrorism by themselves. The reasons behind that that social factors such as group dynamics, marginalization, the quest for significance, issues of identity and belonging are addressed within the religious approach. In addition, in Arab countries these factors have not have the same weight for example poverty could not be considered a motivation for terrorism in Saudi Arabia but in Egypt for example the economic condition could motivate the religious people to wage violence or depression from the authorities could lead to terrorism. Unlike many other religions or ideologies, Islam is a way of life, not only spiritual but it also intervenes in all aspects of a Muslim's life, so even the psychologists dealing with radicalized people are using religious perspectives to support their argument. SA, for example, uses psychologists and sociologists to help in fostering the religious discussion and many of them have religious degree as well (Assakina, 2012). Jordan has recently relied on this option in supporting the religious approach.

Erica Harper from the WANA institute in Jordan found that there are many social and psychological factors that have been found in Jordan as motivation for terrorism such as social identity, desire for social significance, self-cleaning, grievance and social injustice. Most of Harper's data are from Anna Speckard's research in Jordan about young people. It's a wide range of factors that might lead to terrorism (Harper, 2017). However, in the same report, although they was considered social factors, we find the terrorist groups have used most of these factors as Islamic narrative. For example, "response to threat (that Muslim lands, Muslims, and Islam are under attack), duty (all Muslims are part of the Umma and are obligated to fight Jihad), enticement (the promise of wealth, sex and status), belonging (the Caliphate as a utopian paradise where all Muslims are welcome), righteousness (freedom from marginalization, corruption, and nepotism), and revenge (the desire to avenge the wrongs done to Muslims by the West and particular Arab leaders)" (Harper, 2017, pp. 9-10). Nevertheless, in Arab states Harper's factors are outlined in a form of religious treatment of terrorism, as will be further explored below.

## **Transferring the Knowledge**

Understanding how the deradicalization programs work in Arab states is of great importance for other countries to learn from because of many reasons. The success of some of these programs has made these countries safer, and in time the moderate ideology will prevail in place of the hard one. The many Non-Arab Muslim states such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore have implemented such programs and witnessed the same success. In addition, the experience that Arab states have gained from long years of dealing with terrorist movements has given them solid evidence that a hard approach alone is not sufficient to curb the terrorist activities. All the terrorist groups in Egypt and Algeria, which had embraced violent activities in the beginning, have abandoned them later in their life cycle. Hamed El-Said asserts that the Saudi program seems to have hindered if not reduced terrorism nationally and internationally (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013, p. 262). The Western countries also have sent officials to learn how to apply these programs to the Muslim minorities who live there (Boucek, 2008, p. 66).

## **Repentance Publications**

In addition, the publications of the terrorist groups in Arab states after they repented and denounced the violence could be a great opportunity to learn from. The uniqueness of these books issued by the same people who had earlier supported violence provides legitimacy to deradicalization programs and can be used as evidence in condemning the violence and weakening the current terrorist narrative. Not only these books gained a great credibility among repentant because they were not published by state sponsorship or by state scholars, they are using convincing rationale argument derived from the Quran, Hadith and history of Muslim. In addition, these books have no expiry or outdated publication period since they used the Quran and Hadith to delegitimize embracing violence and killing innocent people. Publications such as *the Concepts Correction by IG group's leader and Preachers not Judges* by Hassan Albanna the founder of MB are examples of this publication, which mainly use the theological argument to correct what its authors believe are wrong interpretation. It also gives credible evidence to the idea that religious support to any deradicalization program is vital and more important than any other factor. Moreover, the importance of using the media and the internet to rally support behind such programs is shown. Without a successful campaign led by academia, religious scholars and psychologists, the deradicalization program cannot survive.

Nevertheless, the questions are: What are the chances of a current terrorist group such as ISIS and al-Qaida conducting self-deradicalization through its leaderships? Is there a difference between local terrorism and global terrorism in terms of repentance?

## **Conclusion**

Deradicalization process in Arab states started after the MB emerged in Egypt in the early part of the last century then developed until the 1990s when the two Egyptians groups: IG and al-Jihad denounced violence. Few years later the deradicalization programs took a turning point when SA established its comprehensive program. The Arab deradicalization programs are two kinds: self deradicalization approach such as in Egypt, Libya and Algeria or state sponsored approach such as SA, Jordan, Morocco and Yamen. Because these programs have great similarities, the study has chosen three countries to represent the deradicalization programs in all Arab states – Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt. The study analyzed those three countries in regards to certain elements: the mechanism, successfulness, objective, scholarship built on and history of the programs. As Arab states' experience has accumulated during these years of religious-motivated violence, it was reflected in the programs they have initiated. Although the structure of programs between Arab states is varied, the assumption and the knowledge are almost the same. The programs built mostly on the principle that people get dragged into terrorism because they have been fooled by the terrorist propaganda that they are fulfilling their Jihad duty and thus they have to emigrate to the caliphate, a utopian place.

Although, the three states have a different political system, economic growth, community and education system, they have agreed on the importance of religious content in dealing with radicalized people. They have great differences in terms of after-release care and the role of families and communities in the deradicalization process. While SA includes the families and the community leaders such as tribe leaders, Jordan and Egypt do not have the capacity to expand beyond prisons. In addition, SA and Jordan deradicalization program are mostly state-based; however, the Egypt deradicalization process is self-deradicalization initiated by the violent groups themselves with insignificant state intervention. This, in turn, could be unique to Egypt and indicates a gap in researching the self-deradicalization process by groups and individuals which is

beyond the scope of this study. Arab states have greatly shaped the face of the deradicalization process to a degree that it should be conveyed to other parts of the world who suffer from the same terrorism phenomena.



## **Chapter Five: Deradicalization in Western States**

### **Introduction**

This chapter analyses the deradicalization programs in the Western states in terms of underlying assumptions and the scholarship built upon them. Finding how these programs are run and operated will contribute to answering the main question of this study. It argues that Western deradicalization programs are built on varying social and psychological factors such as identity, social inclusion and group dynamics and choose to lessen religion's role. These assumptions determined the shape and the process of the programs.

Three Western countries were chosen as case studies: Australia, the UK, and Denmark. Using multiple case studies will allow more diversity in representing a wide range of deradicalization programs in the Western world (Gustafsson, 2017, p. 179). In addition to geographical areas, these countries have other different aspects that have contributed to the chosen criteria. First, their origins: Britain is Anglo-Saxon and in Western Europe, Denmark is a Scandinavian country with a different language than the other two, and as well it has a unique program considered by many researchers as successful. Australia is one of the highest contributors (per capita) to foreign fighters from countries outside the Middle East (Levy, 2018). Second, in terms of the population, these countries represent different sizes. The UK has a large population size of 61 million, Australia is a middle size with 25 million and Denmark is a small size with 6 million. Last, these countries have a diverse cultural, ethnic, religious and ideological background which can represent, in this study, other Western countries who have the same minorities. In spite of its vital role in countering terrorism, the United States has not been chosen because it simply has no program of deradicalization yet. Although the three countries are of different geographical area, they have been facing almost the same challenges of applying deradicalization programs. However, adopting the same program is not applicable as many researchers have asserted (Rabasa, 2010); it is necessary to understand the strengths and limitations of programs through a compare and contrast process (Koehler, 2017, p. 135).

This chapter is divided into two parts: the first part is the anatomy and analysis of the three countries' programs and the second part is the analysis of the assumptions and the scholarship that these programs are built on.

In this chapter, the data was collected from primary resources through examining and evaluating the publicly published government documents for the three countries. In addition, government and pro-government websites have been closely studied. The findings of this chapter indicate that there

are underlying assumptions that missed being implemented in deradicalization programs which with more examination could be the reason why some deradicalization programs have failed to achieve their goals.

## **Case Study1**

### **Australia**

Australia has an average population size compared to other Western countries; however, its density per kilometre is small compared to its vast territory. According to the 2016 census, of its 24 million population, Muslims are 604,000 – 2.5% of the population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Although Australia had Muslim settlers of Afghani descent since 1880, it was not until 1970 that Australia widely opened its doors for Muslim immigrants and maintained a multiculturalism policy.

### **Terrorism in Australia**

Recent years have proved that terrorism in Australia is growing. In 2014 prime minister Tony Abbot declared that the number of known Australians who left to fight in Syria and Iraq was 60, then the official figure was doubled in 2015 to reach 120 (Levy, 2018; Barret et al., 2015). In June 2017 Yacqub Khayre killed a man and took a woman hostage in a Melbourne suburb. The police killed Khayre and freed the women after two hours of standoff; ISIS seized the moment and claimed responsibility for this operation. Its propaganda claimed that Khayre is a martyr and the operation was a response to Australian participation in the war on terrorism led by the US. In the same year, ISIS tried to down an Etihad aircraft flying from Sydney to Abu Dhabi, but thanks to information from a foreign country the plot was foiled (Dredge, 2017). Furthermore, in 2015, Farhad Jabbar, an ISIS operative, killed a policeman in front of the police department in Parramatta and later the police killed him (Ralston, 2017). Before these events, police conducted the largest counterterrorism operation in the country's history called Pendeniss in 2004–05 to arrest several new home-grown Jihadists, as well as the Neath operation which was conducted in 2009 to arrest five people in Melbourne. The terrorists were primarily targeting Holsworthy Barracks in Sydney (Quackenbush, 2017).

These events have a great negative influence on communal harmony. On the one hand, the Muslim minority has perceived these police raids and new anti-terrorism laws as targeting them and making

them feel disenfranchised. On the other hand, many Australians start blaming Muslims for terrorism offences which leads to an increase in Islamophobia and community division (El-Said, 2015, p. 69). In contrast, a growing body of knowledge has rejected this nationalism and jingoistic approach and questioned the underlying root causes of radicalization.

### **Deradicalization Efforts**

Although Australia has not yet had a comprehensive program for individual deradicalization, it relies on counter violent extremism programs and supporting community initiatives to address community resilience. To counter violent extremism, Australia is working on two levels – the federal and the state – and the two levels should work in a cooperative relation.

It better before the study delve in the western case studies to redefine the meaning of the terms deradicalization, disengagement and counter-radicalization. Deradicalization is a process that fosters an individual to change or abandon their extremist mind-set and adopt more mainstream views (Commonwealth of Australia 2011). UN has made clear distinctions between deradicalization and counter-radicalization: it defined the latter as “a package of social, political, legal and educational and economic programs specifically designed to deter disaffected, and possibly already radicalized, individuals from crossing the line and becoming terrorists”. Disengagement refers to an individual stepping away from involvement in, or material support for, violence as a method of achieving an ideological, religious or political goal (Commonwealth of Australia 2011; Harris-Hogan & Barrelle 2014; Nasser-Eddin 2015)

However, for the purpose of this study, we divide the efforts of counter-radicalization into two parts: in prisons and outside prisons.

### **In Prisons**

The efforts of deradicalization were started in 2000 by the Victorian police with a basic program in collaboration with the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) has been implemented. Although it has remained in its infancy, it grows all the time and is incorporating new elements. As a result, the ICV sends an Imam once or twice a week in collaboration with the prison authority, and the deradicalization takes the form of a series of lectures designed to meet the needs of inmates.

This cooperation with an Australian Islamic entity could yield significant mutual benefits. A study by Monash and Australian National University researchers has singled out this program as one of the rare successful deradicalization programs run in the country (Grand & Urban, 2017). Certainly, Victoria's rehabilitation program is so far seen to be as sophisticated as the one in Saudi Arabia in terms of scope and intensity.

While Victoria was the first to establish deradicalization efforts, New South Wales (NSW) is focusing more on CVE initiatives. In its Goulburn prison, part of which is called super-max, all detainees on terrorism charges have been incarcerated. The prison has a chaplaincy attached to it since it was built in 2003, as part of inmates' rights to have religious counselling, an Imam comes once a month for religious matters, mostly other than deradicalization (El-Said, 2015, p. 90). However, SBS news reported that the government will introduce a deradicalization program for the jailed youth similar to those in adult prisons, after an increase in their numbers in NSW. Although their number is five, the number is expected to increase (SBS News, 2018).

As a result, in 2016, NSW has introduced a new program called Proactive Integrated Support Model (PRISM) aimed at deradicalizing people vulnerable to radicalization and prison inmates who have charged with terrorism related offences. Cherny points out that PRISM is the only Australian program targeting individuals at risk of radicalization and after being released. The program starts as early as two years before the release of detainees (Cherney, 2018). It is a team of psychologists and health workers working in close relation with a Muslim Imam. Participation in the program is voluntary and referrals come from different units within the corrective authorities. This new approach is considered a turning point and gradually departing from the policy of not intervening in the ideology of a minority to more focus on the role of religious content in deradicalization.

Unfortunately, the role of family is missing in both states; neither Victoria nor NSW has any comprehensive family program to support inmates during or after release. The family is allowed to see their detainee once a week in NSW and allowed to stay one hour or two on the weekends only. But an empirical study from Australia suggests that family and friends could play a significant role: they might help in deradicalizing them and exert pressure to abandon violence or abstain from joining a terrorist group (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013, p. 90). In prisons also there are no well-structured vocational, educational or training programs to occupy the time of detainees and prepare them for life after prison.

Furthermore, none of the two states have a structure of social programs for integration of detainees after released from prison. The two states have procedures applied to all detainees no matter what the charge is; they inform the prisoners on how to apply for a job after release and how to claim unemployment benefits (El-Said, 2015, p. 94). Victoria has programs called Lecture and Open Discussion forum (LOD) established in 2010 by a joint project between the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV), Victoria police, and federal police to target former detainees using a series of lectures conducted in mosques or halls. In this forum, former detainees choose a topic and an Imam from ICV delivers the lecture followed by an open discussion. However, the latter procedures could not be named as social integration programs because of the casual nature of the lectures. Nevertheless, in the counter violent strategy and under 'Targeted work with vulnerable communities and institutions' the government has acknowledged that Victoria has a holistic approach to rehabilitation including pre- and post-release components (Parliament of Australia, 2017).

### **Outside of Prisons**

In 2010, the Australian Attorney-General's Department (AGD) engendered a Counter Violence Extremism task force (Parliament of Australia, 2017). The first mission of this force was to release a report on the gap between research centers and government departments in terms of the knowledge on root causes of terrorism (Department of Home Affairs, 2018). The recommendation to the government was to cooperate with research bodies in researching of various factors that lead to terrorism and find a mechanism for applying these outcomes to the ground incorporating government agencies. The report's outcome suggests the government should utilize the academia to enhance the understanding of the extremism. As a result, the counter-violence strategy built on four main paths of activities (Parliament of Australia, 2015).

First, 'Building strength in diversity and social participation' – the aim of this path is to prevent the radicalization process from occurring in the first place by addressing societal motivations that lead to disengagement.

Second, 'Targeted work with vulnerable communities and institutions' – here the government works with state and territory governments to rehabilitate people imprisoned on terrorism-related charges and ensure other inmates are not radicalized by extremists.

Third, "addressing terrorist propaganda online" – the government pledged to allocate \$18 million to counter-terrorism propaganda online. This will include establishing social media monitoring and analysis to better understand the trends in online radicalization and recruitment (Brandis, 2015).

Finally, "Diversion and deradicalization" – this stream is the intervention CVE program led by states and territories including funding and coordination. The aim of this stream is designing programs tailored to intervening and engaging with individuals at risk of radicalization. The activity of such aspects are mentoring and coaching, counselling, education and employment support (Parliament of Australia, 2017).

The state of NSW has implemented many programs aimed at increasing community resilience and social cohesion. Although the aim is to address social factors such as community engagement, social inclusion and community resilience, most of these initiatives included religious content represented by Imams. For example, *Peer to Peer: Building Capacity and Resilience*, and *Sharing Humanity* programs and others have the lion's share of the budget allocated for CVE, with a total of 50 projects and value of \$7 million (Akbarzadeh, 2013).

Community Partnership Action (COMPACT) is a NSW program aimed at enhancing cohesion and harmony between the diverse communities in Australia. COMPACT supports initiatives emanating from the people themselves directed at helping and integrating other people into the multicultural community (Home Affairs, 2018).

In addition, in 2009 a program of countering narrative by the Muslim community of NSW has been introduced. Here the Muslim community invited role model Muslims from around the world such as artist's soccer players and politicians to address youth on various topics. This project was initiated by the Imams and Mufti of NSW; many Muslim scholars had come from around the world such as Hamza Yousef, Aftab Malik, and John Esposito.

Equally important is the Living Safe Together Program aimed at finding activities for local communities to steer them away from violent extremism. It works through non-commercial, non-government and local government partners. These grants are set to help an organization design and develop new, innovative services, build more sustainable capacity in existing services and refocus existing services to address radicalization (Living Safe Together, 2018).

One of the significant aspects of CVE in Australia is the cooperation between the government agencies and the academic community. The government has funded many promising projects in

many Australian universities to find out best practice in CVE and deradicalization. Examples of the projects and the host universities in 2016 are Youth Resilience to Violent Extremism (Victoria University), CVE Evaluation (Victoria University), and Establishment of a Network of Civil Society Organizations (Deakin University) (Counter Extremism Project, 2017). Despite this, it is not clear if the government has taken the outcomes of these researches into consideration when planning deradicalization programs.

### **Successfulness**

Evaluating the impact of deradicalization efforts on communities or on detainees in any place is not an easy task. Australian deradicalization efforts are no exception, taking into consideration many aspects. First, the programs such as PRISM are in early stages and it's too early to judge the effectiveness of these new measures. Second, they are just measures and processes, which have not amounted to fully-fledged programs. Even the Victoria police religious based measures have not been supported by other non-religious factors such as social and psychological elements (El-Said, 2015, p. 99). Thomas called the Victoria program 'Imams chatting with prisoners' to depict its ineffectiveness. This cooperation has been ended by the Islamic Council of Victoria when it withdrew from this partnership (Pettingera, 2017).

Moreover, the number of released detainees is insignificant and they are under constant surveillance from police officers. However, recidivism does occur. Yacqub Khayre, for example, was acquitted of his role in a terrorist incident in 2010 and passed a deradicalization scheme; however, he killed a man and took a woman hostage and wounded three officers before being killed (Donnelly, 2017). Finally, the recidivism rate is difficult to establish and it is not easy to determine which factors could cause recidivism (El-Said, 2015).

### **Underlying Rationale**

Various underlying assumptions have influenced deradicalization efforts in Australia. Akbarzadeh asserts that the underlying assumptions of deradicalization programs in Australia are focused on the narrow understanding of Islamic principles by radicals; as a result, the deradicalization has emphasized educating people and teaching them about Islam. However, Akbarzadeh has downplayed the importance of this factor, claiming that other factors have not been considered in line with the religious narrative (Akbarzadeh, 2013). El-Said asserts that religion was not

considered in Australia, only a pilot scheme by Victorian police, and it has remained in its infancy (El-Said, 2015, p. 87).

Although many programs of CVE emphasize the role of ideology and especially theology in radicalized individuals, there are some underlying reasons that could prevent this from taking place (Butt & Tuck, 2014). First, many Western countries have distanced themselves from being involved in the religious affairs of its people – the democratic point of view emphasizes the separation of church and state. Second, the sensitivity of stigmatizing some minorities of violent extremism could endanger coexistence between cultures. Finally, the countries that have succeeded in implementing deradicalization programs on a wide scale have their people dominated by Muslims. Although the aforementioned reasons are true to some extent, the Western democracies have been involved in one way or another in religious affairs but in varying degrees between countries.

Furthermore, Muslims' socio-economic marginalization in Australia, which was not addressed, could lead to more violence and to hinder the deradicalization efforts. The Australian census office points to the discrepancy in terms of home ownership and living standards between Muslim and non-Muslim. The 2011 census data confirms that 2% of registered Muslims have no income comparing to 1.06% for non-Muslims (Hassan, 2008). Unfortunately, this was not addressed by the government-released documents and budget. Most of the CVE and deradicalization programs target short-range outcomes and have not addressed the root causes of the radicalization process, which makes these programs' influence limited.

Finally, better education on Islam might be the key for CVE – this view is shared between the academic scholars and government officials. The latter have supported research and funded centers in universities to find the reasons for radicalization and best practice to tackle the problem. This indicates the importance of education on Islam, not only for Muslims and Imams but also for the Australian people who need to know more about Muslim minorities (Akbarzadeh, 2013).

## **Case Study 2**

### **The UK**

According to the national statistics, the UK population is 66.5 million with 5% Muslims (World Population, 2018). The UK is one of the countries that have a long history in dealing with terrorism: it has faced the Irish Republican Army (IRA) during the civil war and later both sides signed a



peace agreement. In contrast, the contemporary terrorism led by ISIS and Al-Qaida shows no compromise. In 2005 the UK came under terrorist attack in the London bombing which shocked law enforcement and the community alike. Although it was partly expected because the Blair government was the strongest American ally in the war on terror, the casualties were very high and the time and place of the attack were not expected.

Before the attack, most of the UK counterterrorism procedures were reactive in nature but this attack forced counterterrorism efforts to be more proactive. One of these measures which have been missed before is community engagement (Godec, 2017). The idea behind community participation is that prevention is better than cure, or, as Griffith-Dickson terms it, “early intervention” (Gwen Griffith-Dickson et al., 2014). The government has sought the help of the Muslim community and civil society through conducting strategic partnership and engagement on a micro level. The early intervention strategy needs cooperation between different parts of the community in order to detect individuals at risk of radicalization and then intervene. However, the response from the Muslim community varied from sincerity to suspicion; as a Muslim said to a police officer, “we cannot be a partner and a suspect at the same time” (Gwen Griffith-Dickson et al., 2014).

## **Mechanisms**

Countering extremism strategy in the UK was developed according to terrorism growth on the national and international level. In 2003, the Home Office introduced a first Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST), which came into operation in 2006; the aim was to protect the interests of the country overseas, and the strategy has passed many stages and improvement until 2017. CONTEST has split into four main programs called the 4Ps: Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare (Government of the UK, 2018).

Prevent is the first and most important phase in all of the 4Ps; in this phase, the strategy was built on the notion that the process of deradicalization might happen at short notice, not more than weeks or months, which makes the time of intervention as crucial (Ali, 2015).

Part of the Prevent strategy is a program called Channel; this is multi-coordinated program led by the police. Its main aim is to identify the people who show signs of radicalization or at risk of radicalization, then assess the extent of that risk and determine the most appropriate response

procedures or plan to help the individuals involved before the damage is done. Police rely on the frontline workers for referral (Godec, 2017). Frontline worker is a wide concept: it comprises police officers, social workers, religious leaders and teachers, and the latter have the highest proportion of referrals. Workers identify the individuals at risk of extremism and decide if they need an intervention or not. Additionally, the mechanisms used to determine these vulnerabilities are engagement, intent to cause harm and capacity to cause harm (Ali, 2015).

The *Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015* (CTSA) has a statutory footing which means certain bodies have a legal obligation to prevent people from being drawn into any form of radicalization (Godec, 2017). The frontline workers should report any suspicion or sign leading to radicalization or they have to face legal action.

Clearly, the Prevent program has stirred sentiments among minorities and frontline workers alike. Frontline workers such as higher education teachers believe that universities are a place for discussion and dialogue, not for reporting people to security agencies (Quraishi, 2016). In order to succeed, this needs cooperation between the community, the government workers, and civil society; however, finding early signs of radicalization could not be attained without some innocent people mistakenly referred to police on the ground of terrorism (Lee, 2012). As a result, the government reviewed this strategy and acknowledged that there were some flawed and incorrect practices such as the disproportionate pressure placed on education institutions regarding the referral process. In addition the government suggested changing the name of the program to reflect more transparency and engagement with communities.

Moreover, the Prevent program has reached almost all tiers of the state which could be unique to the UK; even education institutions were ordered to report on people at risk of extremism. Many first respondents do not know what extremism is or how to detect radicalization among students. Shami Chakrabarti criticizes the strategy, calling it a spy agency aimed at collecting information about Muslims (Casciani, 2010). Prevent is also stigmatized as a tool to deny Muslims freedom of expression and will increase Islamophobia (Quraishi, 2016). In 2015–16, about 7,500 referrals were made to the program but no action was taken in 37% of the cases. In the ideology referral cases, one in every ten cases is from far-right extremism and in some areas of UK far-right has exceeded the number of Islamists (BBC, 2017). Although many Muslims in the UK have opposed the program, there is no evidence that the majority do: 50,000 individuals and almost 400 mosques voluntary have participated in these programs (Greer & Bell, 2018).

## **Successfulness**

While the Prevent program has been controversial, the government said that its program has stopped 150 people from traveling to Iraq and Syria (BBC, 2017). It claimed also that the program reached almost 42,000 people in 2015–16. However, the government has not explained whether this reaching means effectiveness or just people knowing about it.

Thomas described the program as both failed and friendless, because it focuses on a Muslim minority only and endangers the cohesion of the community. He accused the program of practicing surveillance on Muslims and trying to engineer a change in Muslim values (Thomas, 2010). The criticism of Prevent is that it doesn't incorporate the Muslim community at the local government level.

The Quilliam Foundation has presented a paper for the Cameron government and indicates that CONTEST2, the new version of the counter violence strategy, has expanded from the violent extremists to targeting non-violent extremism. The paper also noticed the lack of knowledge in Islam of first respondents (Rabasa, 2010).

Like other deradicalization programs, most of the evaluation of success came from a government body which increases the uncertainty of the program. In addition, the Prevent program like any other program observes a change in human behavior which cannot be measured in a short time period – it is dealing with issues needing a long time to change.

## **Underlying Rationale**

The UK has widely applied early intervention strategy on counter violence where all government agencies and private entities should report on radicalization, so this strategy open the door for marginalizing certain individuals depending on their beliefs and expression. It is noticed that Britain, unlike other countries, intervenes before radicalization occurs to deal with it as an early sign of violent extremism. However, this could generate many implications at all stages. Not only will it collide with freedom of expression protected by the constitution but also the early intervention mechanism has not been understood by the frontline workers which creates implication at the micro level (Government of the UK, 2015). The counter-terrorism strategy for 2017 indicated legal measures should be taken if extremist views have been expressed in

government and private institutions such as schools (Godec, 2017). Schoolteachers, for example, have a statutory duty to report on any student they believe might be prone to radicalization (Hooper, 2015).

The role of religion in the Prevent program has raised some tough issues such as that the government intervenes to shape some political views or it is changing the religious attitudes. The most important of these is that authorities support some strands of Islam over other strands. Ali emphasizes that the government neither aimed at changing the religious beliefs of individuals nor sided with sect of Islam against other sect. He argues that the program challenges the participants to rethink some Islamic issues which were already challenged by Muslim scholars (Ali, 2015, p. 8). Kundnani, on the other hand, accuses the government of supporting some sects of Islam over others such as Sufi over Sunni Islam (Kundnani, 2009).

One important aspect is that the Channel program's main concern is the vulnerable people or individuals at risk of radicalization. This in turn raises tough questions: How can frontline and police workers recognize those vulnerable people? Or what are the signs that make people prone to radicalization? (Bilazarian, 2016). The UK has addressed only the root causes of radicalization that served the goals of the programs. For example, it chose to neglect the marginalization of Muslim communities and socio-economic factors that lead young people to embrace terrorism. This leads us to think about the correlation between deradicalization programs and root causes of terrorism in certain contexts. Unfortunately, many programs do not reflect the real root causes; instead they reflect government policy (Kundnani, 2009).

Although the UK program is unique in the West in that it is working closely with Muslim minorities and use Islamic content, it was built on the social context. Commander Dean Haydon, head of the London Metropolitan Police counter-terrorism command, states that “work is done around cohesion, social integration, and engagement with civil society and the political system” (Silva, 2017). The UK strategy after 2010 has used funding of the programs as a tool to scrutinize the partners from Muslim communities against certain Western values which indicates that the Islamic content used in the program was not really intended for deradicalization (Gwen Griffith-Dickson et al., 2014).

In summary, the British programs are closer to using ideology than other programs through incorporating Muslim organizations in the early intervention strategy. However, the government

is using only what fulfils its targets without really addressing the underlying causes of radicalization. In addition, it made a mistake by supporting some sects over others in communities which are vulnerable and sensitive to such division.

### **Case Study 3**

#### **Denmark**

The country's population is 5.8 million; 4% are Muslim, most of them from the first generation of Muslim immigrants (live population, 2017). Radicalization and foreign fighters have caused an increasing cultural divide between Muslims and the other populations of Denmark (Rabasa, 2010). This dispute peaked when a publication by the newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* had a cartoon depicting the prophet of Islam in a bad manner, which upset not only the Muslims in Denmark but also in the wider Muslim world – Danish products were boycotted as a response (Fox News, 2015).

In 2009, the government published its first counter-extremism plan called *A Common and Safe Future: An Action Plan to Prevent Extremist Views and Radicalization among Young People* (Government of Denmark, 2009). Although the document has acknowledged that the researchers have not yet agreed on the root causes of radicalization, it has identified identity and sense of belonging in youth as the most important causes of radicalization (Government of Denmark, 2009, p. 8). It also refers to international ideology as one of the root causes of terrorism. Denmark is including other groups besides Islamic extremists in its counter-extremism strategy, which is more apparent than in the UK; for example, left-wing and right-wing extremists. The country tries to distance itself from being stigmatized as anti-Muslim; in fact, it's clear from the strategy that most of its efforts and initiative are directed towards Muslims. In addition, the religious and theology debates with extremists are not an option in its strategy. However, it works with the community in general to strengthen social cohesion rather than teaming up with Muslim representatives. Additionally, the government has initiated a program called 'Deradicalization – Targeted Intervention' (Government of Denmark, 2009) aimed at the radicalized people who have not violated the law. It is like many other European programs in that it is voluntary and applies crime prevention mechanisms.

Denmark is ranked as having the second highest number of foreign fighters per capita from Europe in Syria and Iraq (Escritt, 2016). Unlike other European countries, it has given the returnees a second chance through rehabilitation. Until January 2017, there were 135 Danish individuals who

left the country to Iraq and Syria to fight with terror groups (Counter Extremism Project, 2017). Jacob Bundsgaard, mayor of Aarhus, a city where the soft approach established, said that the returnees deserve a second chance to be integrated into the community (Higgins, 2014). The chief of police for the region, also said that "what we are doing is working well, he added that "our program works as crime prevention, though full deradicalization is extremely difficult"(Higgins, 2014).

In August 2015 the Copenhagen Anti-Radicalization Task Force presented an 'Action Plan' to Copenhagen municipality, which suggested close dialogue and relation with the religious community and strengthening citizenship through schoolchildren's education and community engagement. The plan, which was framed as a four-year span, suggested decreasing to a minimum the number of people who support Sharia Law. However, Hizb ut-Tahrir led a meeting dubbed 'Proud of Sharia' and wrote on his website that Denmark politicians have never stopped attacking Islam values and this plan was no exception (Counter Extremism Project, 2017).

### **Mechanism**

In the Aarhus program, the aim is to prevent extremism and offer an exit opportunity for extremists to reject violence (Bertelsen, 2015). The early intervention is designed to help people at risk of radicalization, especially the youth. The exit part in this program is to help people who are already radicalized or returned from overseas but have not committed an offense (Bertelsen, 2015). The returnee should be screened first by the police with the help from the domestic security service, known as P.E.T. However, none of those screened has been arrested; instead they have been offered mentors to clarify the difference between Islam and militancy (Higgins, 2014). The mentors are not limited to religious people – they can be anyone deemed trusted by a detainee; they might be family or friends. The rationale of not jailing the returnee is that they might get exposed to more radical views in prison which leads to more implications on a societal level (Higgins, 2014).

There are three important features associated with the Aarhus program: a close cooperation between several longstanding institutions and authority to help people at risk of radicalization, social inclusion and a scientific basis. It is based on preventing any outlaw activities and is not directed to any group or minority. Bertelsen stated that the program is organized as the SSP initiative (the SSP is an interdisciplinary collaboration between Schools, Social authorities, and

Police aimed at crime prevention) and added that SSP has operated in the country for 40 years now (Bertelsen, 2015).

The exit part of Aarhus program, on the other hand, is dealing with people who have radical views in regards to community and Western democracy. The Exit program provides help and support to men and women who want to abandon violence and go back to normal life. The authorities deal with the returnees case by case and determine the proper process to deal with everyone. As a result of the first assessment, the participant receives help such as employment, peers, school work, psychology, housing, healthcare, and education.

Some argue that although the program is giving a brighter picture of diversity, it looks like the UK model where social workers, teachers and first respondents became police informants. The BBC reported that school principals used to refer students to police when they noticed an extreme view (Mansel, 2015). The Aarhus program has more credibility than any other European program. This is partly because SSP has been working in the country for a long time so deradicalization and counter violence programs work together, and this makes the people accept it more easily than, say, in Britain (Koehler, 2015, p. 139).

### **Successfulness**

Assessing the successfulness of counter violent programs and policy in general and deradicalization in particular proves to be the most difficult in contemporary challenges (Sayed & Barnes, 2015). Many reasons have been attributed to this but the most important is that most of the researchers agree that these programs need a long time to see a result (Sayed & Barnes, 2015). In addition, every participant in deradicalization programs has their own way of denouncing the violence and resuming his normal life.

The Aarhus model has been considered by many researchers as successful because it was built on a very long cooperation between schools, social workers, and police. However, only in the Danish context, the old run SSP programs is designed for the Danish people and could not be transferred to other countries (Koehler, 2015). Yet, the program is run by police, making the credibility of the outcome undermined.

## **Western Deradicalization Programs Assumptions**

### **Introduction**

To determine on what underlying assumption and scholarship lead the Western countries to establish deradicalization and CVE programs is a difficult task in many ways. First, the indications that these countries have built programs on a solid evidence of root causes of radicalization are not clear. The logic behind that is simple: there are disagreements among researchers on the drivers of radicalization; consequently, the design of the programs has no clear vision on what to implement. Arab programs, on the other hand, have an ideology as a central driver, which makes their programs' objectives clear. Second, the government documents, which this study has scrutinized, give no clear evidence on the methodology of initiating these programs. Yet this study examines these documents to find out indications and evidence of how deradicalization programs have been approached. Finally, there is a gap between empirical research conducted by researchers in academic institutions and the way research is conducted by deradicalization practitioners.

Although foreign fighters and home-grown violent extremism are seen as a common challenge to Western countries, many European countries run their own programs in regards to their needs and they are different to other countries (Beers et al., 2016). This could be normal to some extent – Western countries are at variance with each other in terms of language, social-economic factors, minorities' size, culture, and many other variables. Despite this, the differences on state-level should not lead to differences in treating the root causes of radicalization at individual level or micro level. Almost all root causes of radicalization in Western countries have great similarities, despite the fact that the countermeasures to these causes are varied. The UK Prevent program, for example, is unlike the Aarhus in Denmark in terms of root causes of radicalization. While we find the Danish program emphasizes social inclusion and downplay religious perspective, we find Britain, on the other hand, gives weight to the role of religious leaders and Islamic organizations.

Additionally, the cooperation between the Western countries on CVE and terrorism issues is paramount. Not only have the governments recognized the importance of sharing intelligence and best practice, but academia and NGOs also share knowledge and new facts, which is rarely seen in Arab states. As a result, expert groups and specialized centers were established by the European Commission such as the International Center for the Study of Radicalization (ICSR) in London in 2008 (Koehler, 2017, p. 66).



## **Hearts and Minds**

Unfortunately, the CVE, counter-radicalization, and deradicalization efforts have not addressed the effects of ongoing events on the international scene that affect Muslim minorities in Western countries. The battle to win hearts and minds of the Muslim minorities is seen by many researchers as the best approach to counter radicalization. But how can the Western countries win the hearts and minds of Muslim minorities while its military troops conduct military operations in Muslim countries? For instance, Australia's participation in the war on terror campaign has increased the risk of terrorism and inflamed sentiments of its Muslims citizens, yet the government always denies this (Matthewson, 2016). In addition, the foreign policy of the West hinders the efforts of this approach.

Terrorist groups also use the battle of hearts and minds to their advantage – they have benefited from the suffering of Muslims in Western countries (El-Said, 2015, p. 11). Denmark may represent a good example of this battle. The foreign fighters returnee have been given a second chance through participation in EXIT; the deradicalization program. Denmark also is different than the UK in that it does not punish people because of what they believe but what they do. According to rehabilitator Steffen Nielsen, "You can *be* al-Shabab all you like, as long as you don't actually *do* al-Shabab" (Counter Extremism Project, 2017).

Moreover, some CVE strategies including deradicalization programs and anti-terrorism legislation are counterproductive (Jarvis & Lister, 2013). These could increase friction between the minorities and law enforcement which could lead to more extremism. For example, Prevent program in the UK was considered by many as a surveillance and intelligence tool rather than a counter violence program (BBC, 2017). Therefore, the Western government efforts to gain the hearts and minds of the detainees, people at risk of radicalization, families and community leaders are insignificant. Despite this principle being of great importance, it was not reflected in the programs aimed at reducing the radicalization of communities.

## **Religion, Security, and Democracy**

Using religious components in deradicalization efforts and programs in Western countries usually involves a great deal of debate and discussion. They exercise caution when it comes to discussion of the affairs of its minorities and especially the religious ones, as developed countries intervening in religious matters in order to shape views could be considered undemocratic, a violation of human rights or violation of freedom of expression and speech. However, the UK counter-

terrorism strategy has crossed the line of democracy and intervened in its minorities by two aspects; first, the then prime minister Mr. David Cameron acknowledged that the past tolerance strategy was wrong and it was time to act through supporting mainstream moderate voices – this diplomatic language means they will intervene in any minorities who do not follow Western values including non-violent extremists. Second, the same strategy has identified the ideology as the main cause of terrorism without differentiating between the ideology and religion. It makes no effort to distance mainstream Muslims and the ideology of violent extremism, which puts all Muslims on the same level (Government of the UK, 2015). In addition, this strategy has not only tried to shape the politics of Muslim minorities but also it intervenes in the social affairs of Muslims such as divorce in Islam. Finally, the strategy asserts that the target of its programs is not only those who hold and support violent extremism but also the non-violent extremists.

Still, there are reasons preventing Western democratic from supporting the religious approach widely. The UK and Denmark, for example, have drawn mostly on a pre-AQ and pre-ISIS experience of other violent groups such as the IRA and neo-Nazis, so religion was not emphasized in these programs. In addition, the West are very focused on home-grown radicalization and so the social aspects are more important. Finally, Western countries are unwilling to mandate correct Islam in democratic countries.

Indeed, the West applies double standards when it comes to discussing the role of ideology in deradicalization programs. On the one hand, they allow work to correct the ideology of the non-religious extremists such as the extreme right-wing and neo-Nazis. On the other hand, they consider religious approaches in deradicalization as not democratic and a violation of freedom of expression (Koehler, 2017, p. 226).

As a result, striking a balance between the democratic burdens and the security requirements is difficult and it could be a reason for a program failure. Koehler asserts that without a strong ideology component in any program it will not be called a deradicalization program (Koehler, 2017, p. 85). Hamed El-Said also highlights using misunderstood and narrowly applied religious scriptures by a terrorist group to justify the violence, so using a counter-narrative needs religious content (El-Said, 2015).

## **Identity and Belonging**

Searching for an identity by many young Muslims creates plenty of space for radicalization ideas (Rabasa & Benard, 2014, p. 192; Seifert, 2010; Nasser-Eddine et, al., 2011). This indicates that the person is unsatisfied with their current situation or suffers exclusion. Therefore, when he or she joins a terrorist group they became a new person in terms of name and alias, and for some the change reaches into their hearts and minds which makes their inclusion in the group total and any deradicalization efforts seem useless. In Western Muslim communities, identity crises is more apparent in third generations who lost the connection to their parent's place of birth. Salafi Jihadist movements have been aware of this with Muslim minorities in the West and present an alternative under the term *Umma* (Mahood, 2017). This could lead some to radicalization narratives (Murshed & Pavan, 2011). However, some researchers such as Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis claim that Islam as a religion is incompatible with Western values and will collide with democracy (Murshed & Pavan, 2011). Such a narrative is what Salafi Jihadist nourishes and feeds on in recruiting.

Have the Western deradicalization programs considered this factor when initiating the process? In fact, the Western governments have acknowledged the importance of identity and belonging in their counter violent extremism strategies; however, in executing the programs it is very sensitive publically and other activities have been used to cover the reasons behind these activities. COMPACT programs in Australia have acknowledged social dynamics through many initiatives aimed at increasing communities' engagement and support. For example, sports competition, camps, mentors programs, cooking activities and many other activities aimed at inclusion of youth. Although the UK counter-terrorism strategy (2015) has stressed the importance of belonging, it was mentioned only three times without a practical plan (Home Department, 2015). On the other hand, the Netherlands in 2007 presented a project called Polarization and Radicalization Action Plan to integrate Muslim youth in the Dutch community, but unfortunately this project was not renewed after 2011. It seems that the outcomes of these programs are difficult to measure which gives some the belief they are useless.

## **The Gap between Research and Practice**

Many Western countries have spent time and money on researching the causes of terrorism and radicalization in order to best understand and treat them. However, the application of these findings is seldom seen in practice by first respondents. In addition, training staff in dealing with a detainee

in prison is an important issue before implementing any program. Denmark has the best training of its staff in this scenario. The Channel program first-respondents learn how to deal with the sensitivity of some minorities. The research has demonstrated that unemployment, social exclusion, and lack of education and work opportunities are some of many examples of underlying factors leading to radicalization. However, these and other factors are underrepresented in CVE and deradicalization programs.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to analyse deradicalization programs in Western countries in terms of the operation, scholarship built on and assumption behind adopting such programs. The chapter is doing so in order to fulfil one of the objectives of this study which required a comparison between deradicalization programs in Arab states and Western states. Although these countries are different in language, geography, and size of the population, they have faced, to some extent, the same challenges of home-grown radical ideology and foreign fighters.

A detailed analysis of underlying assumptions reveals important insights on these programs. Most importantly, though Western countries have denied intervention in the religious affairs of Muslim minorities, these programs are varied from each other in using religious content. While Britain has sought help from Muslim organizations and individuals, Australia has exercised caution in applying such concepts. Denmark, on the other hand, deals with terrorism as criminal activities to some extent. Additionally, social factors such as group dynamics, identity, and belonging are considered the most important part of radicalization causes. These countries have dedicated programs and initiatives to handle such grievances; however, most of these programs have suffered from unsustainable funding and lack of ability to be evaluated. To conclude, despite the importance of ideology in the radicalization process, addressing it was almost missing from most of these programs.

## **Chapter Six: Findings and Discussion**

### **Introduction**

This chapter provides a comparison of the deradicalization programs in the Arab and Western world in terms of the assumptions that they are built upon. This is challenging for a number of reasons. Both regions are different; in terms of political systems, levels of democracy, economy, culture, language etc., and these differences are reflected in the deradicalization programs.

The overall objective of this method is to find the similarities and differences between these programs and why there are differences. It is observed from the outcomes of the previous two chapters that the assumptions of the Arab and Western deradicalization programs are clearly different which make the building and the way of operation of these programs different as well. Not only will the outcomes of the case studies be analyzed here but also the comparative aspect that we have generally found in the literature review on deradicalization.

### **Why is there a Difference?**

There are many factors that could lead to the difference in these programs, either religious or non-religious in focus. On the macro level, democracy, freedom of speech, secularism, media and politics play significant roles. In addition, there is a lack of appropriate understanding of theological dialogue, and a dearth of empirical studies on the deradicalization mechanism and the measuring process of evaluation and success. Koehler proclaims that the pressures of democracy are the main obstacles blocking the use of ideology in a wider scale (Koehler, 2017, p. 226). These in turn lead Western researchers to look for other variables to explain why group members leave their commitment to violence.

Another issue is cost. Even though some Middle Eastern programs could be appropriate to adopt in Western countries, the high cost of implementing them may be unacceptable. Tax payers in the Western countries and government opposition parties working in a democratic framework may be critical of government spending, particularly on religious issues. Unfortunately, there is no proper evaluation and auditing method to justify this spending. Therefore many countries, even for their own CVE strategy, have cut the budget for many programs because there is a lack of evidence around the success of these programs. Hence even many Arab states cannot offer the same detailed and high cost Saudi-style programs. On the other hand, it is argued that the budget of CVE, counter-radicalization and deradicalization is incomparable to the cost of the many wars on terror

that have not only led to spreading more terror and destabilizing countries but branching out of hard-core extremist and fanatic terrorists such as ISIS.

Importantly, what considered radical in the Western world should not necessary mean radical in the Muslim world. For example, from a Western perspective, rejection of democratic values such as human rights, gender equality and civil liberties are considered radical or extreme (Rabasa & Benard, 2015). In contrast, the social, political and religious context at the Arab world consider some of these unacceptable values -by the West- are normal such as applying Sharia law in some Muslim countries and gender repression.

Another reason for difference is that Arab programs are state-sponsored in most parts except in the case of Egypt. However, as long as the NGOs are ineffective in many Arab countries this intervention is necessary. El-Said has noticed that Jordan and other Arab states have less input from their civil society, which makes their deradicalization approach less successful (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013, p. 112). Arab states should learn from the experiences of the West, in including civil-society in CVE.

## **Commonalities**

One of the shared factors between the two regions' programs is the measure of success of these programs; it is hard to measure and programs are difficult to evaluate. Both parties have been in search of means to have solid evidence that their programs are working well, though, Arab states are more confident in their programs' success. Finding a way to measure the success could be the first step to develop a consensus on programs with an international presence.

In addition, the self-deradicalization process, which has been conducted by many violent groups in Egypt, Libya and Algeria, has been less considered by the both Arab and the West. It is barely studied by the two sides. This shortage in studying self-deradicalization comes from the difficulties in believing that a great number<sup>4</sup> of people have denounced violence forever simply because they reviewed their Jihad stance and found they were mistaken (Ashour, 2009).

A common aspect between the two approaches is the battle of the hearts and minds of the population in the Arab countries and the Muslim minorities in the West, although the means are different. Both parties aimed at winning the sympathy of their population to defeat the narrative of

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<sup>4</sup> Omar Ashour stated that 15,000 Egyptians have been removed from a violent track through self-deradicalization; see Egypt case study in the second chapter.

the violent extremist groups. Nevertheless, the difficulty in this approach is the variance between them. While in Arab states most of the population is Muslim Sunni, the Western countries have mixed minorities from all sects which make their efforts even harder. In addition, some of the Arab states have a control to some extent over media outlets which makes mobilization of these media easier than in the West.

### **Is There a Real Difference between the Two Regions in Terms of Assumptions?**

The first and most important differences between the two groups of the case studies is the use of religion. While increasing numbers of developed countries have partially and cautiously included religion in their deradicalization programs, such as Australia, other countries are still skeptical of such approaches. The reason behind that is that religious intervention through the use of clerics has been illustrated as attacking some ideologies in favor of others or supporting one sect of Muslims over another. In addition, this approach has been criticized on the basis that it is the official ideology of the state that sanctions this program. Answering these accusations comes from within Islam itself. Historically, in Islam this religious approach is not new and has been used by the prophet of Islam himself before the current states were formed. Secondly, the Sunni sect of Islam is widespread among Muslims and the great bulk of violent extremists are from that sect, which make the argument that supporting sect of Islam over another is invalid. In addition, many scholars who have participated in the programs were not associated with the states (Koehler, 2017, p. 226).

There is also no agreement in Western nations on the role of ideology in deradicalization. Although ideological issues may be addressed when working with far-right groups, there is often a reluctance to do the same when working with Islam. Cordesman states that “the real war on terrorism can only be won within Islam and at religious and ideological level” (Cordesman, 2006 in Nasser-Eddine et al. 2011).

Similarly, theological and ideological debate or dialogue have been criticized for not reaching large numbers of highly committed and radicalized individuals (Al-Hadlaq, 2015). Although the hard core terrorists are one of the main targets for deradicalization, the foot soldiers and new recruits are more important because they are the real fighter in battles. In addition, also important are many highly committed scholars of Wahhabism who had previously supported the Salafi Jihadi in Afghanistan and other places, but have repented from their Fatwa. Furthermore, key figures in the Muslim world have previously supported violence or participated in an act of terrorism, yet some

of them are now crucial elements in combating these narratives such as Alomar and Salman Alaudah (Bjørge & Horgan, 2009; Marsden, 2017; El-Said & Harrigan, 2013). Additionally, military defeat of ideology-based religious groups proves to be useless in many cases, because these groups keep emerging from time to time. As a result, without defeating this ideology by qualified religious scholars, it will rise again with each opportunity.

Another criticism is that Islam has no one form or correct form to generalize and apply (Koehler, 2017). There is no correct or wrong Islam that can be supported by state deradicalization programs in the West. There are two main sects in Islam – Sunni and Shia – the others are branches of those two sects. The larger terrorist numbers are from Muslim Sunnis and most if not all programs in Arab states are directed towards Sunni Islam. The scholars of Sunni are dealing only with the Sunni detainees in the deradicalization process; the other sects have their own scholars, if needed. Therefore, many of these criticisms emanate from the lack of knowledge of Islam in general and the theology debate in particular.

Secondly, although social dynamics are more apparent in Western approaches to radicalization and deradicalization than in Arab programs, the latter are not ignorant of the importance of these factors. However, after close examination of the literature on the influences of social factors such as group dynamics, identity inclusion and belonging, it can be said that, first, these social factors are, in the case of religious groups, very religious in their basis. The logic behind that is obvious: Islam is a holistic religion socially, economically, and psychologically, so dividing these approaches to religious and social or non-religious are in most part inaccurate (Mandaville & Nozell, 2017). In the Muslim world, such as in SA and Indonesia, the social actors play significant roles in reintegrating the released detainees in the communities (Boucek, 2008).

To illustrate, in Western perspective group dynamics, identity and disillusionment with group belief are some of the social factors lead to members leave terrorism group. However,, when examined closely they are very religious in basic. One could ask what these groups do, what are their principles, and where do they operate? The answer is a group of people building a close relation on a religious basis, which mean eventually they are together embracing violent extremism ideology and that was the reason for the group meeting. In addition, group dynamics is not limited to the West; it is found even in the Muslim world, with the difference being that they are subsumed within Islamic practice.

Group dynamics is misunderstood in most cases – not all group gatherings and bonds are violent; on the contrary, some groups are helping in satisfying the spiritual and social needs of individuals



and drive them towards non-violent and peaceful action, especially when non-violent religious leaders are available.

Identities inclusion also has a religious connotation, terrorists recruiting young people by using the Umma term that means identities inclusion to form one nation. However, many researchers have leaned on social factors to explain most of the radicalization in the West; they failed to explain how these factors could be responsible for mass-scale mobilization of terrorists in Iraq and Syria.

Third, the role of family in Western contexts in the deradicalization process is almost missing and neglected. Unlike in the West, the Muslim programs are more focused on the role of family and the parents in particular, as the latter have special Islamic status in Salafi Jihadist groups. In Indonesia, for example, family is involved in the dialogue with the detainee in line with the religious scholars (International Peace Institute, 2010). It was suggested that where parental control is weak, extremism more readily appeals. In contrast, in Australia for example, the family is allowed to visit their incarcerated relative once a week in the super-max prison in NSW and they are only allowed to communicate in English (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013).

Fourth, the sympathy from the wider population towards extremism is another aspect that the Arab programs are more concerned with and master better than Western programs. The researchers recognize that the more support from the communities for extremism the more recruits join terrorists groups (International Peace Institute, 2010). SA has faced this factor more than others in that it is a strict Wahhabism nation from which Salafi Jihadist has emerged (Boucek, 2008). The Saudi state has implemented comprehensive programs not only to deal with the ideology in the prison but also outside prison. In that regard, it mobilizes all the media outlets that it owns or has influence over to delegitimize the violent extremism narrative. In addition, it makes the tribe leaders, religious leaders and families' part of the programs through incentives and other motivations. This achievement makes the programs' creators deem it successful.

On the other hand, the relation between the Muslim minorities and authority in Western countries is sometimes based upon skepticism and mistrust. This also fails to build the kind of bonding and friendly environment that has been proved to be so important for successful deradicalization programs in other countries, such as Singapore, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013). Additionally, the majority of Muslim minorities in the Western countries see these programs as directed against their religion and as intelligence tools, so many of them are against all forms of CVE or deradicalization (BBC, 2017). Part of the blame for the failed relationship between the government and the Muslim minorities is on media coverage. In Australia, the One Path Network

has tracked and investigated the media coverage on Muslims for the year 2017 in the five biggest Australian newspapers. The aim was to see how media portrayed the 2.6% of the Australian population that identify as Muslim. The authors said, "In these 5 newspapers alone, we found almost 3000 articles, that's over 8 articles a day in the Murdoch press slamming Muslims. If all of those were put together, that would be a full double-page spread every single day" (One path network, 2018).

Moreover, post-release care is also missing from Western deradicalization programs which could greatly contribute to the high rate of recidivism. That might be related to the democratic value of dealing with all released prisoners equally, disregarding their charges. Korn, on the European CVE efforts, said "The focus is most often on prevention" (Korn, 2016). But not all Arab states have post-release services.

Finally, the Muslim grievances around the world is considered a significant cause for radicalization, such as the situations in Syria, Iraq, Burma and elsewhere. The Arab programs have acknowledged this important aspect and worked to address it. They do that through re-explaining the conditions of Jihad; one of the most important aspects in this is that the Jihad should be under one ruler and one banner (see Appendix). The Muslim should not travel to wage Jihad in another country as long as its people are able to do that. In addition, some Muslim schools of thought such as the Hanbali and Shafi stated that you need the ruler's permission to travel for Jihad (Web, 2018).

## **Recommendations**

Certainly, the two different approaches as practiced in the Western and Arab world have led to many consequences. First and foremost is the effect on the structure of these programs. In Arab programs the centrality of religion has made the religious scholars lead in the deradicalization process. Even in the Arab states which do not have structured programs, these scholars are an integrated part of the process. In Western countries, however, because the non-religious factors are prevalent, the structure is relying on social and psychological perspectives. Additionally, with these differences it is difficult for both approaches to build an evaluation mechanism which can be applied to both approaches.

Likewise, both regions' programs will miss the benefits of the other programs. None of these approaches alone will maximize the outcomes unless they have included other programs' components, and each approach could compensate for the other approach's shortcomings. For

example, the Arab programs could benefit from the Western experience in using the private sector and NGOs in applying successful programs.

Recommendations stemming from this study include:

- More understanding on how religious factors affect violent extremism will benefit CVE in general and deradicalization in particular.
- Religious scholars and leaders are an integral part of the Western-Muslim communities engaging them carefully in the process of deradicalization is needed.
- Recommendation to policy makers and practitioners for more community engagement activities including all faith followers and more understanding and differentiating between religiously devoted people and violent extremists.
- Last and most important, an inclusive approach which combines both approaches with some modifications could be effective and more significant. That means using the ideology narrative in addition of social factors.

## **Chapter Seven: Conclusion**

This thesis has sought to conduct a comparative analysis between the deradicalization programs in the Arab and the Western in terms of the fundamental assumptions and scholarship that they are built on. It has found that the two regions have many differences and similarities which make the methods of conducting deradicalization programs varied.

The literature review explored the academic context that deradicalization programs operated in and created a basis for the subsequent chapters. It outlined and engaged in the latest debates and scholarship on the evolution of these programs. The following chapter focused on Arab deradicalization programs. The study found that Arab programs are focus on the centrality of religious content and the role of religious scholars in the deradicalization process. Arab states also has exploited social dynamic factors to support this process, however, the religious perspective was always primary - and even the psychological consultants were often scholars of Islam.

Western deradicalization programs in the UK, Australia and Denmark was the focus of chapter five, these country were examined in terms of their underlying assumptions. A detailed analysis of these underlying assumptions reveals they have denied intervention in the religious affairs of Muslim minorities. These programs all use religious content to some degree, but to a much lesser extent than in the Arab nations.

Chapter six analysed the programs and their underlying assumptions in order to reach the following summary of findings:

### **Summary of Finding**

This study finds out that Arab and Western programs have many differences but also similarities. The methods of running these programs are varied, however, the goals are the same. The comparative analysis between Arab and Western deradicalization programs indicates that there are certain areas identified as the most important distinctions points, summarized as:

### ***The Use of Islamic Ideology***

The Arab deradicalization programs have been built on using the religious texts and religious scholars for countering the narrative of violent extremism. This is evident in the cases of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

In Western countries there is disagreement in the usefulness of employing religious ideology. This confusion and hesitation emerges from a number of factors including the difficulty of promoting Islamic religion within a democratic system. That said, some countries have cautiously started employing limited elements of religious ideology in their programs such as Australia. While other Western countries, except France as very protective to its secular system, have not rejected the use of ideology totally but they have not yet convinced of its effectiveness.

The Arabs states are clear in the type of Islam they promote in deradicalization programs, while in the West there is significant political disagreement on how and whether one particular type of Islam can be promoted by the state as opposed to any other. The latter debate should consider that in Muslim world the majority are Sunni Islam and the Muslim minority in Western countries are mainly Sunni Islam. Indeed, most if not all the deradicalization programs to rehabilitate the radicalized people are aimed at Sunni violent extremism.

What might be considered radical in the Western world should not mean radical in the Arab world. For example, fighting against the Americans in Iraq is considered by many Arabs as true Jihad, while at the same time they condemned killing civilians.

### ***Social Dynamics***

The majority of Western researchers have considered the social dynamics as root causes of radicalization and deradicalization. The social dynamics are comprising of many socially related factors including but not limited to group dynamic, social inclusion, quest for significance and identity inclusion. Although these factors are considered the most important by many researchers (Horgan, 2009) (Mink, 2015) (Sageman, 2004), there is no consensus on the priority of these factors or which set of these factors are most important, so the deradicalization programs can work on. Arabs, on the other hand, have acknowledged the importance of these factors; however, they have considered correcting the deviant ideology as more important. Some Arab states have better used social factors in the overall treatment, such as Saudi Arabia.

### ***Running the Programs***

Western countries run superior programs and CVE initiatives; they combine the efforts of the government with significant participation from civil society. Australia for example, has relied on the civic society and non-profit organization to run the P/CVE programs and great portion of counterterrorism budget is going to fund these initiatives, although the budget of CVE varied between the governments depending on which the kind of party run the country. Denmark also run its program relying on fourteen years' experience in social work and the cooperative between the police, school and social authorities. Bertelsen stated that the program is organized as SSP initiative (the SSP is an interdisciplinary collaboration between Schools, Social authorities, and Police aimed at crime prevention (Bertelsen, 2015) Most of the Arab programs are purely state-sponsored and this has many implications in terms of observing the funding process, auditing and evaluating the success. On the other hand, state sponsorship could lead to combining the efforts of media, religious scholars and government agencies to enhance success. The civic society participation in Arab programs are insignificant except for the religious leaders which in many cases they are not sponsored by the government which gives more credibility to the process,

### ***Post-release***

Western programs mostly do not include structured post release care. The importance of this service is illustrated in the Saudi case where they claimed the rate of recidivism is low because the authority of the program have constantly followed up with the detainees after release to prevent recidivism. Obviously, it is not understood yet how the western states follow up the detainees after release - whether through social workers and Muslim imams or security follow up such as intelligence and surveillance. Indeed, except Saudi Arabia, Arab countries have insignificant post release care. Indeed, except Saudi Arabia, Arab countries have insignificant after-release services to take care of the released detainees.

### ***Family and Societies***

In Arab programs, the families have special status because of Islamic considerations. The comprehensive approach used by Arab programs which combines most important elements such as families and societies are proved to be of great significance to this process. In addition, some

Arab parent have corrupted relation with their sibling which make it difficult to use them as deradicalization facilitators.

In Western programs, the Muslim minority is usually in disagreement with the government policy towards their religion, which makes applying a comprehensive approach difficult.

It can be said from the anatomy of the differences between the two approaches that there are common denominators between the two approaches more than separators. In the West, more countries either adopted forms of religious content in programs or are in the process of implementing this. This inclusion of ideology is accompanied by extreme caution, and it is not widespread such as in Middle Eastern countries. In addition, as we have seen in explaining the social factors such as group dynamics, identity inclusion and belonging, they are mostly in close relation to the religion, which makes separating these two approaches to either religious or social insignificant and inaccurate.

The principle outcome of this research is that an inclusive approach which combines both approaches with some modifications could be effective and have significant outcome. That means using the ideology narrative in addition of social factors. There are many reason could lend some credibility to why this approach has not been employed, first the Western countries as we noticed from Koehler description have perceived using ideology as not democratic to religiously shape the views of its citizen. Second, in my opinion the people who study Arb models of deradicalization have not has a full picture of the differences between religuse people in Islamic world and other religions. Finally, Arab countries has failed to present an empirical and tested result to its programs such as Saudi Arabia. It is hoped this study may enable further discussion of comparative deradicalization programs in other regions of the world.

تم بحمد الله

## Appendix

### Salafi Jihadist

#### Introduction

The study has revealed that Arab programs are heavily reliant on the religious scriptures and religious scholars in deradicalization programs; however, the limited scope of the study does not give further explanation to that. This chapter aims at investigating the reasons behind using religious content in deradicalization programs by Arabs, and how Salafi Jihadist employs these concepts to their advantage. How could rivals (*deradicalization forces versus radicalization forces*) use the same ideology but for different objectives? Although the sources of the religious understanding of both sides are the same (Quran and Hadith), the interpretation is different, which leads to categorizing Muslim and Non-Muslim alike to either believer or *Kufuor* (infidel). The poor understanding of these concepts could lead to violent extremism, while on the other hand understanding them correctly could help in deradicalizing the violent extremists.

This chapter uses a chronological order to portray how these concepts have been developed from the writing of Syed Qutb after WWII to the ISIS and Al-Qaida ideologues in current times. There are possibly many reasons which have affected and shaped the development of Salafi Jihadist ideology and make it rigid and hardline in the interpretation of some Islamic ideologies. These reasons could be characterized into three mechanisms: personally, nationally and internationally. Personally includes imprisoning or killing of a violent group's members, or suffering of the ideologue such as in the prison of Syed Qutib. Nationally includes the injustice, unemployment, lack of security and lack of freedom of speech. Internationally includes the reality of the Muslim world, the impact of Israel's presence and the many Arab's defeats by Israel, the impact of Western life on Muslims and the history of the Umma.

The sociological theory of fundamentalism has been employed for more understanding of the reaction of the ideologues writing in the Salafi Jihadist to protect Muslims from outside world. This theory indicates that believers are people who tend to react defensively and sometimes violently to the outside change imposed on their belief. Unfortunately, it gives no answer for why the same Salafi ideology using the same sources and text of interpretation has branched out to violent groups such as Jihadi Salafi and non-violent groups such as the peaceful Dawaa.



Understanding how this violent ideology has grown is in the interests of those who work in the field of CVE, PVE, counter-radicalization and deradicalization programs. Without a solid understanding of the violent extremist ideology, the practitioners will drift towards considering all Islam as violent which could lead to the deradicalization programs' failure. The findings of this chapter support the use of religious context to deal with and treat the deviations and wrong understandings of Islam.

### **Sayd Qutb and Islamic Solution**

There are many reasons why Islamism has manifested more in the politics and identity of society (Mahood & Rane, 2017, p. 5). These include the Arab states' defeat by Israel in 1967, the loss of Palestine and the failed project of Jamal Abdul Nasser in unifying the Arab states. In addition, many extremist ideologues, whose writings have been highly regarded by Salafist jihadists, made a significant impact on the current terrorism narrative and it was spread worldwide.

The writings of Sayed Qutb (died 1966), the foremost figure in reviving Sunni Islam, are the most influential in current terrorism literature; his famous book *The Milestone* (Ma'alim fi-l-Tariq) has been considered a template and sacred by the modern terrorist groups. Qutb offered his own Islamic vision to the world in stark contrast with other ideologies at that time, especially the nationalist, which made his views very attractive to those concerned with reviving Islam. He argues that Sharia law is the solution for the entire world's problems and suffering, and it should be extended to all aspects of life in order to alleviate this suffering (Sagar, 2015, p. 2). Furthermore, he claimed that since the Ottoman Empire collapsed, the influence of Islam has faded. The Muslim now is living under same circumstances before Islam (*Jahiliiah*) and the (*Umma*) one Muslim nation should be reborn again<sup>5</sup> (Qutb, 1958, pp. 6-9). According to Qutb, the Muslim states have currently distanced themselves from Islam; secular governments have corrupted them. In his vision, the governor should be the god (Allah) not a human; the home should be the earth, not the artificial borders made by colonization powers. Most importantly, he acknowledged that the distance between starting a resurrection and taking leadership would be very long, and he implies that the people who will initiate the process will suffer and endure great losses before reaching their goal, if they stay alive. Allah says:

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<sup>5</sup> Pre-Islamic era is called Jahiliiah (ignorance).

*You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. If only the People of the Scripture had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient. (3:110)<sup>6</sup>*

Through recalling the way that Islam had emerged in its early age by the prophet and small groups of his companions, Qutbism modus operandi on how the *Umma* are going to rise is full of suffering and loss – Qutb named this process milestone (Ma'alim fi-l-Tariq) (Musawi, 2009). A pious group of people with a set of qualifications should lead this transformation in the community – they will work as vanguard and role model for the rest of Muslims to follow. They have to be very determined and they should practice a kind of diplomacy through isolating themselves from corrupted communities to keep purity and engage in the community when needed (Musawi, 2009; Qutb, 1958, p. 5).

This actually is what most of the Salafists are usually doing now in communities: they are living in isolation from communities by structural means such as dress and by extreme practices and immersing themselves in religious education (Rumman, 2014).

Qutb himself and his writings have been under criticism from different factions – even Alazahr, the highest religious authority in Egypt, which called him deviant. Alshekh said that the book has given the terrorist groups a kind of legitimacy to divide the world into two groups: Muslims and the others (Aljazeera, 2016). Not all Muslims are included in his vision, as some Muslims have become deviant and lost their correct practising of Islam.

One could wonder what the correlations are between the vanguard in Qutb's book *Millstone* and the groups' dynamics and identity that many Western researchers have currently sought to explain as causes for motivating individuals towards terrorism. In fact, the Salafist Jihadist groups who have been inspired by Qutb's new interpretation of the term *Umma*, such as ISIS and Al-Qaida, have employed these ideas to recruit followers (Gendron, 2006, p. 14). Apparently, Qutb's writing was in line with the inspiration of thousands of young people who watch the retraction of the Muslim presence around the world. They also watch their governments do nothing for the increasing problems of poverty and unemployment and wasting the wealth of their nations on themselves

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<sup>6</sup> Quran surah Ali 'Imran 110 (QS 3: 110) in Arabic and English translation.

only. Hassan Abu Hanneh, a researcher in terrorist movements in Jordan, asserts that when he travels to the West to speak about terrorism he always encounters a question, "why do people become extremists", and he always answers 'Why do they not become extremists?'. He added that the economic situations, the oppressive regimes, and the Palestinian issue are all factors conducive to terrorism. (Rumman, 2014).

### **Social Fundamentalism Theory**

Fundamentalism as a term derived from Protestantism Christianity, which means the movement that opposes modernity and liberalism. It also means holding tight to the Holy Scripture and encouraging a separation from the world. It appeared in the writing of most ideologues in Islam as a reaction to the new world order where Muslims were left behind. The term *Umma*, the inclusion of identity, the writing of Qutb about a vanguard, which leads the change in the Muslim world, and defending Islam against the materialistic life of Western civilization, could be explained under the sociological theory of fundamentalism (Gregg, 2016). Although the theory has not attributed the violence only to Islam but also to other religions, it has not explained why the violence in the name of Islam is far more common than any other religions and why the other religions do not sustain the same rate of violence. In addition, why other Muslims who feel threatened on their religion from the West do not resort to violence. Nevertheless, this theory gives to some extent an explanation of Sayd Qutb's book *Millstone* which blamed the West for all Muslim problems.

*Millstone* is a Fatwa and religious permission for people to revolt not only against their corrupted government but also against the far enemy. Although Qutb was not educated enough in Islam, he smartly employed the Quran and Hadith as well as Islamic history which made his argument very convincing. He also used the term *Jahiliiah*, which means the pre-Islamic society, and the term vanguard, referring to the need for isolation from the corrupted materialistic communities. Some have said without Qutb's writing and ideology there would be no Al-Qaida. Mahood and Rane studied the ISIS propaganda on the internet and found that it uses terms in Arabic very close to groups in English to recruit young people: *tawhid*, *manhaj*, *Hijrah*, *jihad* and *jama'ah* all mean the oneness of the *Umma*, the one identity of all Muslims (Mahood & Rane, 2017, p. 5). In addition, the authors assert that the master narrative which was used by ISIS is the term 'crusader'. Therefore, the attractiveness of these groups to young people, in particular, came mostly from employing these principles.

Although Qutb has not openly supported the use of violence, his book *Milestone* was taken as evidence by an Egyptian court to convict him and later he was executed. The impact of Qutb's writing is seen in the later ideology called Qutbism where many extremist writers have been inspired by his revolutionary book to strongly advocate for and embrace terrorism such as. Mohammad Faraj, Abdallah Azzam and Abu baker Naji

## **Qutbism**

Among the prominent ideologues inspired by the writing of Qutb is Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam Faraj. He was not only taught Qutb's books in Mosques but also developed the ideas of Qutb to be more violent. Faraj is the author of one of the most influential books in the mainstream of Salafi Jihadist, *The Neglected Duty*. The duty that Faraj described as neglected or absent is *Jihad* which indicted that Jihad is one of Islam's pillars yet the Muslims have not fulfilled it as they do with other obligations such as fasting, Haj, prayer and Zakat (McGregor, 2003). Although Jihad is a very important issue in Islam, there is no Hadith or verses in the Quran which prescribed Jihad as one of Islam's pillars. Faraj brought that concept from the writing of medieval scholar Bin Taaymeh who was one of the most controversial scholars of his time. Faraj was also one of the founders of the most violent group in Egypt, *Aljihad Alislami*, and the one who gave the permission to kill the Egyptian president Al-Sadat (Orbach, 2012).

## **The Afghan War Hero**

Another ideologue and fighter considered the godfather for the Afghan war is Abdullah Azzam. He was of Palestinian descent and a Jordanian by citizenship who moved to Afghanistan in the early 1980s. His intellectual's ability as a professor in Sharia Law in Jordan and Saudi universities made him the ideal interpreter of the Slafi Jihadi ideology. Although Azzam embraced the writings of Qutb and Faraj, he himself became an ideologue and fighter so he applied what he preached. Unlike many Jihadist theorists, Azzam was a man of words and sword – he himself led the Mujahedeen and fought in Afghanistan which made his words very convincing in the Muslim world (Riedel, 2011).

Azzam's role in internationalizing the Jihad was very significant and how he transformed the Jihad from nationalism within borders to a worldwide movement was his great achievement. "Jihad and the rifle alone; no negotiations, no conferences, and no dialogues" was his slogan and recruitment tool to attract Muslims to fight in Afghanistan (Azzam, 1982). Through his books, *Join the*

*Caravan* and *The Defense of Muslim Lands*, Azzam portrayed the Jihad movement as the new world order that can defeat the Western and communist orders. In addition, he met Osama bin Laden and they together established the services office, which was the point where the fighters were enlisted before being dispatched to battlefields.

Moreover, Azzam made Jihad a collective duty, which means it is a religious obligation on each Muslim to fight when Muslim lands are occupied (Mcgregor, 2003). From his perspective, he saw that Muslim triumph will eventually arrive as a prophecy in the Quran:

*God has promised those of you who believe and do good works to make them masters in the land, as He has made their ancestors before them, to strengthen the faith He chose for them, and to change their fears to safety. Let them worship me and serve no other gods beside Me. (Quran 2, 55)*

### **Worldwide Jihad**

The most important thing Azzam had done was issuing a Fatwa that the Jihad is a global obligation (*Fard Ayn*) on the condition that a land of Muslims has been occupied. Surprisingly, this Fatwa was approved by all the Muslim scholars who had been consulted by Azzam including Ibn Baz, Saudi Arabia's most respected scholar at the time. Since then, it has been widely embraced and circulated by Salafi Jihadist around the world who are still using it to justify the violence they have endorsed. However, Azzam's Fatwa was aimed at combatants and Muslim land occupiers, it was not legalized the killing of non-combatant. He said in his book *Defense of Muslim Lands* that "if a piece of Muslim land the size of a hand span is infringed upon, then Jihad becomes Fard Ayn" (global obligation) (Azzam, 1982).

### **The Savagery of Violent Extremism**

In this century, Abu Baker Naji al-Qaida strategists have authored a book entitled *The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage through Which the Umma Will Pass*. This book has been considered a handbook for terrorist groups, because it laid a foundation for establishing the Islamic state (Naji, 2004). Jeff Sole asserted that the barbarian violence that we have witnessed from ISIS was not random or crazy fanaticism but deliberate to achieve the "vexing and exhausting" of the enemy (Sole, 2016). Naji has drawn on the experience of the previous Islamic movement and learned from their mistakes in establishing a state such as the Algerian fighting group. ISIS has

applied many principles that Naji had emphasized in his book such as working to spread Sharia law, using strategic media to attract youth to a newly established state, and justifying the war rationally and theologically. It stressed that using deviant religious ideology is the most important tool to attract soldiers to the Islamic state.

Most of the prominent writers of Salafi Jihadist have used their interpretation of Jihad to justify the use of violence. Moderate Muslim scholars have said that Jihad is not a goal by itself; however, it is a means to achieve noble goals, and if Jihad causes more harm than the good expected Jihad should be banned. Abdulaziz Bin al-AL sheikh, the grand mufti of Saudi Arabia and the head of the Muslim scholar's council, said that Jihad has many meanings and one of them is fighting the combatant but not killing innocent people (Assakina, 2012). Egyptian violent groups such as IG and al-Jihad have banned violence depending on this Islamic role and their book *Correcting Concepts* in eight volumes answers fanatics who want to kill people, including Muslims, to apply Sharia law (Hafez & Mohammad, 2002).

As a result, the main issues that Qutbism writers had formed through their own interpretations of the Quran and later became divisive mechanisms between Salafi Jihadist and other Muslim factions, are sovereignty (*Haakimiyya*), (*Jahiliyah*) ignorance and Takfer (Mahood & Rane, 2017). These issues are important to be understood by Western researchers and policy makers because they might shed some light on how to distinguish between the extremists and non-extremists. In addition, many radicalization factors, which have been found as motivation for terrorism in Muslim minorities in the West, could to great extent emanate from these issues. Similarly, these issues are mostly what Arab deradicalization programs rely on when in dialogue with terrorists. These issues are:

### **Sovereignty Haakimiyya** **الهاكمية**

According to violent extremism ideology, this concept means Islam should govern all aspects of life; there is only one governor, Allah, and he rules through the Quran and authentic Hadith; these two sources should be used respectively in any conflict arising or any judgment (Qutb, 1958). Rulers, government, and individuals who abide by non-Sharia law should be punished. In addition, human laws are rejected and the Muslim countries which not apply Sharia law are not Muslim, which indicates that these states have fallen under the category of apostates (Murtadd) and the sentence of this category in Islam is death. Terrorism groups also consider all rulers are apostates

because they ruled by other than what Allah had revealed as prophet, thus they are not Muslim and fall under the same previous category. Many attempts to assassinate some of them had been conducted, such as the attempt on the life of Egypt president Hosni Mubarak in Ethiopia and Pakistan president Pervez Musharraf. King Abdullah of Jordan as well was threatened by Al-Qaida (Hamzah, 2012, p. 14). In fact, some violent groups do not consider such Muslim communities infidel but only those who work with and support the government and rulers, such as security and military personnel and civic government workers. This deviant judgment explains most of the brutality and cruelty of terrorist groups against Muslim and non-Muslim alike. The *Haakimiyya* concept's role of recruiting youth should be highlighted – that it is used to convince individuals to immigrate (*Hijrah*) from the land of infidels to the Caliphate territories which are portrayed in terrorist media as the lands where Allah's laws prevail (Mahood & Rane, 2017, p. 19).

Individuals from different parts of the world have asked the Muslim scholars about the Muslim rulers and if they have an obligation to revolt against them. Shaikh Ibn Uthaymeen, the former head of Supreme Muslim Scholars Council and Grand Mufti for Saudi Arabia, explained that certain conditions should be met before any act of revolt is conducted. These conditions are: the authority has explicitly committed an act of heresy and witnessed *Kufuor* such as the ruler ignoring in public God or saying Allah does not exist or forbids his people from prayer (Iftaa, 2016). The second condition is “that the thing committed by the authority has to be ‘heresy’, for licentiousness and immorality do not warrant a revolt no matter how bad they are” (Bishy, 2013). Third, explicitly means unambiguous, no doubt and witnessed by many people. Finally, he said, “taken from the origin of the Islamic religion, which is the ability of those opponents to bring down authority, for if they lack the ability then the damage will be much greater than the damage caused by remaining silent” (Bishy, 2013). Al-Albaanee said that “the people who in present time came up with the term of Sovereignty *Haakimiyya* and tried to ascribe it to Allah are doing that for political cause only” (Burbank, 1997).

In addition, in Egypt the Islamic Group (IG) in 2002 issued many books called *Tashih al-Mafahimm* (Concepts Corrections) which presented theological and pragmatic reasons for abandoning violence, and arguing that it was wrong to oust a regime or wage Jihad against Muslim rulers who do not apply Sharia law (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013; Gunaratna & Ali, 2009; Majid, 2002, p. 82).

### **Jahiliiah or Ignorance** الجاهلية

Jahiliiah or ignorance of divine guidance means the world and especially Muslim world live in situations resembling the community before the Prophet Mohammad. Pre-Islamic societies lived a materialist life and they were infidel so the Muslims currently give up Islam and became apostates (*Murtad*). This concept has been manipulated by a terrorist group in order to persuade people to emigrate to Iraq and Syria. They use an old concept *Hijrah* which was used by the Prophet in his first journey from Mecca where the non-Muslim community at that time in *Jahiliiah* to Medina where Muslim communities had been established. Abualala Almododi<sup>7</sup> was the first to introduce this concept, then Sayed Qutb in Egypt who made it in conjunction with the oneness of Allah, then terrorist groups adopted it in their narratives. Moreover, should Muslim communities not repent through revolt against governments or immigrate to Caliphate land, they will be considered in ignorance of Islam and a government's partner (Qutb, 1958, p. 16). Through publication on social media and the internet, terrorist groups (e.g. ISIS) have used sacred scripts such as verses from the Quran and authentic Hadith to imply that this term is a religious imperative and an obligation needing to be fulfilled by all Muslims. *Dabiq* magazine, for instance, quotes from the hadith: "Allah's prophet says: 'Whoever dies while not having bay'ah [pledge of allegiance], dies a death of Jahiliiah'" [*Sahīh Muslim*] (Mahood & Rane, 2017, p. 11).

The aim of this confusion in using sacred scripts by a terrorist group is disillusion through tricking uneducated Muslim in Islam in Muslim and in West to convince them of their religious legitimacy. One of the aims of using religious perspective in deradicalization programs is to educate individuals on such concepts as a preventive measure.

### **Al-Wala wal-Bara (Loyalty and Disavowal)** الولاء والبراء

Al-Wala and wal-Bara (WB) are two Arabic words whose meanings contradict each other. On the one hand, Al-Wala means doing the good deeds that please Allah and his messenger, while on the other hand, Al-Bara means withdrawing from what displeased Allah and his messenger. Saleh Al-fawzan defines Al-Wala as allegiance and association with the people of Islam and Eman (belief) and Al-Bara means disassociation and enmity with the people of falsehood and disbelief in Islam (Al-Fawzan, 2010, p. 2). Additionally, all Muslims have to believe in and practice this obligation as it is a part of Islam testimony that there is none worthy to worship but Allah, and Mohammad is his servant and messenger (Dickson, 2017). Islam highly regards the relations between Muslims

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<sup>7</sup> Syed Abu A'la Maududi Chishti was a Pakistani Muslim philosopher, jurist, journalist and Imam.



and non-Muslim but on one condition: love and hate should be carried out for the sake of Allah and his prophet only. It comes before kinship. Allah says in Surat al-Muja'dilah, veres: 22, *“You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, making friendship with those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred (people) (Cited in Al-Qahtani, 2010, p. 11).* In addition, *Ibn Shayba reports that the Prophet said, “The strongest bond of faith is love for the sake of Allah and enmity for His sake.”*

Clearly, Salafi Jihadist maintains an extreme viewpoint towards WB through depicting that Muslim loyalty should be for Muslims only. They neglect and deny any identity built on nationalism. Similarly, terrorists aim from this strict view to restrict Muslim allegiance to Islamic states only, make defection between Muslim Minority lives in Western community, and to convince people to migrate to their land. Mohamed Bin Ali, who has a Ph.D. in this area, depicts that since Muslims increasingly live as minorities in Western countries it needs to be recognized that WB has a different meaning than what violent groups have demonstrated (Ali, 2012). He adds that applying a Salafi understanding of WB is insular and hostile to Western countries; this in turn contradicts the tolerance of Islam (Ali, 2012, p. 2). But Ali finds it unfitting to apply the Salafi understanding of WB in modern life (Ali, 2012, p. 196) Al Fawzan, who also has a master's degree in WB and is one of the extreme supporters of Wahhabism, forbade the befriending of Christians and Jews by Muslim. On the other hand, Abdur-Raheem Green, who has many lectures on social media, explains that this concept is very difficult to understand, very controversial and very much misunderstood because there are many verses in the Quran taken out of context. He divides the verses of WB in the Quran into two main themes: first the one where Allah generally warned Muslims not to see disbelievers as *Awlea*<sup>8</sup> or love them, but it is a special kind of love and it is wrong to translate *Awlea* as friends only where the term *Awlea* does not mean friends (Green, 2014). Loving non-Muslim people is natural as well as hating them; for instance, the Prophet Mohammad loved his uncle Abu Talib while the latter was an infidel (Al-Syyed, 2015; Green, 2014). The second part is the enemy, those you as a Muslim are entitled to hate and be disloyal to. Like other religious concepts, terrorists have used WB to imply a religious imperative. Although these concepts are part of Islamic beliefs, using them with one strict interpretation will cause significant damage (Ali, 2012, p. 198). These Salafist violent groups have asked people to pledge

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<sup>8</sup> *Walī* (Arabic ولي, plural *Awliyā* أولياء) is an Arabic word, its lexical meaning being “supporter”, “guardian” or “protector”. The word, in its different forms, appears in the Quran over 200 times.

allegiance as they representative of Islam and as the WB doctrine implies. However, they have not applied it either: in Iraq and Syria they are fighting each other and differ on worldly things such as land and leadership. Unfortunately, people who have lacked religious education are confused and thus became prey to a terrorist group.

### **Takfir** التكفير

Islam detests forced conversion; the people of the book; Christians and Jews, have lived in Islam for centuries and enjoyed the freedom of belief and religious practice. However, under Islamic states, those who have converted to Islam have no return. It is also found in Christianity that those who defect from their religion should be punished: "The Bible prescribes death by stoning for apostasy: 'You shall stone him to death with stones, because he sought to draw you away from the Lord your God'" (Deutonomy; 13:10) (Khan, 2014, p. 7). Apostasy is a major sin in Islam but the repentance path remains open until death. The ones who remain apostates and die with that status will be punished in the hereafter: Allah says in the Quran:

*"But those who reject faith after They accepted it, and then go on adding to their defiance of faith, never will their repentance be accepted; for They are those who have (of set purpose) gone astray."* (Qur'an; 3:86)

In Islam, a Muslim is permitted to be killed under three strict conditions: a Muslim kills another Muslim, a Muslim commits apostasy and does not repent, and a married Muslim who commits adultery with solid evidence presented. Narrated by Abdullah;

*"Allah's Apostle said, 'The blood of a Muslim who confesses that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that I am His Apostle, cannot be shed except in three cases: In Qisas [retribution] for murder; a married person who commits illegal sexual intercourse and the one who reverts from Islam (apostate) and leaves the Muslims'" [Sahih al-Bukhari Hadith; 9:17] (Nandwa & Hassan, 2016, p. 11).*

Nevertheless, who has the right to declare someone an apostate? Only a legitimate authority is to declare this (*Murtadd*) – an Islamic court established by the legitimate state. Here the concept of the legitimate state become contested and unclear on what is meant by legitimate (Khateeb, 2014). In Arab states, there is no Islamic state except Saudi Arabia to some extent, and as far as we know it has not applied this sentence to anyone. Some extreme violent groups credited themselves as the legitimate authority to declare that someone is an apostate or not; they do not abide by the three conditions mentioned in the Hadith previously.

Unfortunately, they kill Muslims without taking any legal action or differentiating between apostate and *Kufuor*. Even if they have established jurisdiction or an Islamic court, they appoint the most extremist with less education in Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh*). For instance, in 2014 Muath Kassasbeh, a Jordanian pilot, was captured by ISIS in Iraq after his plane crashed over Iraq. An Islamic court declared him an apostate and not only killed him but jailed him in a cage and burned him alive. In that particular case, the judge of that court ignored the prophet's Hadith: Ibn Mas'ud (May Allah be pleased with him) reported:

*We were with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in a journey when he drew apart (to relieve nature(use toilet)). In his absence, we saw a red bird, which had two young ones with it. We caught them and the red mother bird came, beating the earth with its wings. In the meantime, the Prophet (ﷺ) returned and said, "Who has put this bird to distress on account of its young? Return them to her." He (ﷺ) also noticed a mound of ants, which we had burnt up. He asked, "Who has set fire to this?" We replied: "We have done so." He (ﷺ) said, "None can chastise with fire except the Rubb of the fire." (Sunnah.com reference: Book 18, Hadith 100)*

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Arab states have been suffering from terrorism for a long time, more than any other nations. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire diminished Islam as the only source for legislation, which facilitated the advent of political Islam. After that, newly arrived Islamic movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood tried to fill the void and were advantaged by the failures of newly appointed governments. In addition, the ideologues and theologian writers played crucial roles in manifesting political Islam in communities and succeeded in portraying Islam as the solution for elevating the suffering of people. Unfortunately, they promoted the violent ideology as the only viable way to revive Islam. They have succeeded in this because Muslims generally have been suffering from numerous hardships, lack of political will to choose rulers, economic burdens, less education and plenty of poverty. Salafi Jihadi has developed their doctrine from the ideas of Sayd Qutb and Abdullah Azzam besides many other writers who follow the path of Qutbism.

Importantly, the main concepts that have been formed by the ideologues of Salafi Jihadist through their hardline and unusual interpretation of some Islamic holy scripts and the history of Umma are

Al-Wala wal-Bara (Loyalty and Disavowal, Jahiliyyah (Ignorance), Haakimiyya (Sovereignty) and Takfiri (Atonement). Although these issues have derived from the two important sources of legislation in Islam – the Quran and Hadith – the outcome is varied between the interpretation of Salafi Jihadist and other mainstream Muslims. The deradicalization programs in the Arab region have constructively confronted the terrorist narrative and succeed to some extent through utilizing the right interpretation of these beliefs

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