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Samuel J. Mullins

University of Wollongong, smullins@uow.edu.au

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Abstract

There is continued investment and attention being paid to programs of disengagement and deradicalization (D&D) for Islamist terrorists. Whilst there is some evidence of positive effects of different programs, it is widely acknowledged that rehabilitative efforts with terrorists are in their infancy and that there is a great deal of potential for learning, development and refinement. The present article examines rehabilitation programs for Islamist militants in light of the literature on rehabilitative interventions for "ordinary" criminal offenders, which have been in development now for more than 50 years. Principles of best practice as well as challenges in the field of criminal corrections are outlined, and the extent to which these may be applicable in the context of dealing with terrorists is discussed. Although the content of criminal and terrorist rehabilitation programs will always differ, criminology can help to clarify issues, improve practice, and develop realistic expectations for rehabilitation of Islamist terrorists.

Keywords

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Rehabilitation of Islamist Terrorists: Lessons from Criminology

Sam Mullins

University of Wollongong

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Abstract

There is continued investment and attention being paid to programs of disengagement and deradicalisation (D&D) for Islamist terrorists. Whilst there is some evidence of positive effects of different programs, it is widely acknowledged that rehabilitative efforts with terrorists are in their infancy and that there is a great deal of potential for learning, development and refinement. The present article examines rehabilitation programs for Islamist militants in light of the literature on rehabilitative interventions for 'ordinary' criminal offenders, which have been in development now for more than fifty years. Principles of best practice as well as challenges in the field of criminal corrections are outlined, and the extent to which these may be applicable in the context of dealing with terrorists is discussed. Although the content of criminal and terrorist rehabilitation programs will always differ, criminology can help to clarify issues, improve practice, and develop realistic expectations for rehabilitation of Islamist terrorists.

Rehabilitation of Islamist terrorists

Whilst processes of radicalisation have long been the subject of investigation, there is a steadily growing interest¹ in examining the opposite end of the spectrum of terrorism- how organisations and individuals come to abandon violence and ‘deradicalise.’ The goal of such research is to learn how we might facilitate the decline of terrorist movements. One strategy that has been gaining ground and publicity in recent years involves the implementation of rehabilitative programs of disengagement and deradicalisation (D&D) for individual Islamist militants.² In particular, following pioneering efforts in Egypt, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Singapore, rehabilitation-style interventions have been established in Malaysia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Iraq, Great Britain and the Netherlands, and are at various stages of planning and implementation in Afghanistan Thailand, Pakistan, and elsewhere around the world.³

Given that one of the leading figures of al-Qaeda in Yemen, Said Ali Shari (featured in claims of responsibility for the December 25th, 2009, attempted attack on Northwest Airlines Flight 253 by Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab) is a former Guantanamo detainee who went through a Saudi-run ‘art-therapy rehabilitation program’⁴ there is a pressing need to assess existing efforts at rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation programs for jihadists are diverse, they are at different stages of development, and have released limited details of their operation. They nevertheless share the underlying assumption that it is possible to engage radical individuals and to persuade them to desist from involvement with terrorist organisations, and to relinquish existing commitment to violence. Barrett and Bokhari note that “[w]hile all [D&D] programmes have achieved progress, even despite growing experience it is still too early to say with any certainty that any have been fully successful. *There are no established criteria of success and no standards that apply across cultures*” [emphasis added].⁵

Given the relative infancy of the concepts of disengagement and deradicalisation within the field of terrorism studies, combined with the evident eagerness of governments to

implement such interventions and the need to identify areas of best practice, the current article seeks to explore what can be learned from the more established practice of rehabilitation with ‘ordinary’ offenders. Although the relevance of theories of criminal desistance to understanding terrorist disengagement has previously been explored,⁶ parallels between respective rehabilitative interventions have not.

First I consider distinctions between disengagement and deradicalisation at the individual and collective levels, with a view to placing individual processes of withdrawal from terrorism in context. Then I provide an overview of existing D&D programs, identifying common themes in practice as well as specific issues that require further attention. Following on from this, I describe rehabilitation efforts with ordinary offenders, including guidelines for best practice and organisational implementation. Finally, I consider the degree to which criminological theory and practice are relevant to working with Islamist militants, and offer tentative recommendations for the future development of rehabilitative programs for Islamist terrorists.

Disengagement and Deradicalisation

Building upon earlier work by Horgan,⁷ recent discussions of the decline of terrorism emphasise the importance of making analytical distinctions between interrelated behavioural and psychological, and individual and collective processes.⁸ The distinction between the behavioural and psychological refers to the fact that decisions to abandon violence may sometimes be behavioural only, e.g. for practical or involuntary reasons. Such cases do not necessarily include an ideological reappraisal of the use of violence or related extremist beliefs.⁹ Conversely, a person or group may come to believe that violence is not the answer but remain involved, at least temporarily, for other reasons such as a sense of loyalty or for self-preservation.¹⁰

Here the term ‘disengagement’ will be used as by Bjørgo and Horgan¹¹ to refer to the behavioural process, (which may or may not include changes in ideological commitment), while ‘deradicalisation’ is used more specifically to refer to changes in belief, with a particular emphasis on the rejection of violence. It is important to note, however, that the relationship between behaviour and cognition is complex, and acting in a certain way can often give rise to supportive beliefs, rather than it necessarily being the other way around.¹² Intervention programs for Islamist extremists tend to place a general emphasis on trying to alter beliefs –whether or not they are successful- but they vary widely in practice and the ‘bottom line’ or ultimate aim is to bring about behavioural change- i.e. cessation of terrorist involvement and abandonment of violence. They can thus be thought of as ‘risk reduction initiatives’¹³ and will be referred to throughout this paper either as D&D programs or as rehabilitation programs for Islamist terrorists.

Collective Disengagement

Numerous case-studies of different types of terrorist group have detailed the decline of particular campaigns of violence and thereby contribute to the growing knowledge-base about what factors are involved in collective disengagement.¹⁴ Based on an analysis of events in Egypt and Algeria, Ashour¹⁵ distinguishes between three levels of ‘deradicalisation’. Ideological deradicalisation involves a reasoned and justified rejection of violence, in accordance with the above definition. Behavioural deradicalisation involves the cessation of violent action as per ‘disengagement.’ Finally, organisational deradicalisation involves collective acceptance and adherence to a strategy of disengagement within a particular organisation or movement. Ashour builds upon this to identify three types of collective ‘deradicalisation’, which here will be termed disengagement: 1. Comprehensive disengagement, involving all three levels, i.e. an ideological, behavioural, and successful organisational rejection of violence, (e.g. the Egyptian Islamic Group) 2. Substantive

disengagement, involving ideological and behavioural levels, but with organisational disagreement and factionalising, (e.g. the Egyptian Islamic Jihad) and 3. Pragmatic disengagement, involving behavioural and organisational disengagement, but lacking an ideological component (e.g. the Algerian Islamic Salvation Army).

Collective disengagement can occur for a variety of reasons¹⁶ and is best understood as a complex, contextually unique set of interactions between groups of terrorists, governments, their respective sympathisers and supporters, and competing groups.¹⁷ At the same time, internal organisational interactions are equally important.¹⁸ Among the factors that can contribute to the decline of terrorist organisations and decisions to disengage are both state repression and inducements, loss of public support, loss of leadership, unsatisfactory social relations within the organisation, failure to attract new members, recognition of failure to achieve goals, achievement of goals, and transitioning to alternative avenues of action (most notably political inclusion).¹⁹

While it is possible to distinguish between these factors according to whether they are voluntary/involuntary or external/internal to the organisation, it is also quite obvious that they are all deeply interrelated and affect one another. Moreover, many variables can have multiple, contradictory effects regarding likelihood of disengagement (e.g. it is well known that repressive measures can also be counterproductive²⁰), and so must be viewed in relation to other variables within the overall sequence and timing of events. To single out the leadership variable at the collective level, Demant, Slootman, Buijs and Tillie²¹ point out that disillusionment with leadership can lead to waning commitment and organisational disintegration. Meanwhile, Ashour²² identifies strong, charismatic leadership as the most crucial component of deliberate collective disengagement. Even when other variables were present (external and internal communication, repression, and selective inducements), disengagement in Egypt and Algeria was not successful unless directed by strong leaders.

In addition to the nature of leadership, other key variables that are likely to be relevant across different scenarios of collective disengagement include:²³ 1. Organisational structure (a more united structure should facilitate internal communication and decrease the likelihood of factionalising), 2. Clarity of goals (more concrete goals are more negotiable and it is easier to recognise when they are not being achieved), 3. The nature of public support (widespread condemnation is highly influential to a group's failing attractiveness, while being tied to a particular ethnic/social identity may increase longevity), and 4. The existence of competing groups (the extent to which other violent or non-violent groups represent attractive alternatives). As Cronin observes, from a counter-terrorism perspective, "[t]he key is to work synergistically with the dynamics of terrorist groups [and] to recognize the conditions under which the [different factors identified] are either relevant or irrelevant to the exact circumstances and nature of individual terrorist campaigns."²⁴

Individual Disengagement

Within the broader context of collective functioning it is also vitally important to have an appreciation of the concerns of individual group members (and especially so for planning programs of intervention that target individuals). As with collective disengagement, Horgan points out that individual processes can take many forms and may be physical and/or psychological, (either of which can arise in consequence from the other) as well as voluntary or involuntary.²⁵ Furthermore, disengagement does not necessarily involve outright exit from a group, but can refer to role changes within an organisation (e.g. from combative to logistical or supportive).²⁶ Hence disengagement at the individual, as with the collective, level must be seen as a process, not an event,²⁷ and may involve numerous 'failed' attempts before being successful.

Based upon research and intervention with violent, right-wing youth groups, Bjørgero²⁸ highlights a number of factors affecting individual disengagement, which are also relevant to

terrorism. These are divided into 'push' factors, which represent dissatisfaction with the group, and include: 1. Negative experiences (stigmatisation, legal sanctions), 2. Loss of faith in ideology or politics, 3. The feeling that things are going too far, especially regarding violence, 4. Disillusionment with life inside the group (lack of loyalty, paranoia), 5. Loss of status within the group, and 6. Exhaustion or 'burn-out' under pressure. At the same time there are 'pull' factors, or alternative attractions, including: 1. Longing for a normal life, 2. Feeling 'too old' for high-risk, demanding activity, 3. Concern for career/future, and 4. Family/relationship responsibilities.

In researching extremist groups in the Netherlands, Demant et al²⁹ choose to dispense with the distinction between 'push' and 'pull', but nevertheless draw attention to similar factors. 'Normative' (ideological) factors include rejection of violence, the realisation that the desired future is not attainable, and a changing view of society (no longer seeing it as the enemy, feeling a sense of belonging). 'Affective' (social) factors affecting individual disengagement include a grim atmosphere within the group, disappointment with peers or leaders and internal disagreements. Finally, 'continuance' (practical) factors are divided into those with a direct effect and those with an indirect effect. Practical factors with a direct effect include stigmatisation, external pressure and isolation (Bjørgero's push factors), whilst being drawn to establish one's own life exerts an indirect effect (Bjørgero's pull factors).

Combined, the above authors³⁰ also identify the following potential inhibitors or barriers to disengagement: 1. Positive characteristics of the group (social-psychological dependence, also highlighted as a major barrier at the collective level³¹), 2. Fear of negative reprisals from other group members, 3. Loss of protection from former enemies, 4. Fear of legal sanctions (being 'snatched' on, pressure from police), 5. Perceived lack of social, educational or vocational alternatives, 6. Loyalty to one's community and/or the cause, and 7. 'Sunk cost,' i.e. not wanting to feel like effort and costs so far have been for nothing.

Alternatively, individual decisions to disengage can be facilitated by triggering events (often a reaction to the use of violence and the futility of this as a tactic), and by significant others who discourage violence.³²

Implications

Even from a brief review of the different variables which affect collective and individual disengagement it is clear that in reality these two processes cannot be separated. Individuals are affected by actions of and upon their group, while the group as a whole is also affected by the individual experiences of its members. Likewise, both are affected by, and in turn affect, the wider environment in which they operate.³³ From the point of view of designing a program of intervention in order to facilitate individual disengagement and deradicalisation, it is of course individual-level analysis that is of most interest. Whilst considering individual motivations, however, it would seem prudent to pay close attention to group-members' organisational backgrounds, the current status/activities of the group or organisation(s) to which they belong(ed), and any ongoing changes that might affect individual perceptions. Having a broader contextual awareness is likely to prove invaluable to cultivating individual disengagement, (and by the same token, any assessment of program efficacy must also involve an appreciation of the wider social and political context³⁴)

Bjørgero's³⁵ 'push'/'pull' distinction is useful in terms of emphasising the fact that people may disengage (and ultimately deradicalise) both as a result of 'things that are bad' about being engaged in high-risk collective action, and as a result of 'things that are good' about alternatives. The suggestion that 'push' factors have a more direct effect on decisions to disengage is intriguing.³⁶ This implies that interventions should focus on attempting to make negative aspects of organisational involvement salient before presenting attractive alternatives.

Demant et al's³⁷ identification of overlapping ideological, social and practical concerns are also valuable. Firstly, rejection of ideology does seem to occur in some instances but appears to play a very mixed role. For example, they report that individual reassessments of worldview played a major role in individual disengagement from the Dutch-based Moluccan nationalist movement (no longer viewing violence as effective or legitimate, no longer regarding the Dutch as their enemy, and reassessing the necessity and feasibility of an independent Moluccan state).³⁸ Likewise they report that among a small sample of former (non-violent) Islamic radicals, rejection of the austere Salafi worldview and lifestyle and a feeling of belonging to Dutch society were important.³⁹

However, specific ideological concerns played less of a role for members of the left-wing squatters movement, and seemingly no role for former right-wing political activists whose views had changed little, and only then as a result, rather than a cause of disengagement.⁴⁰ This echoes Bjørgo's assertion, commenting on violent right-wing groups, that "it is probably more common that beliefs change *after* leaving the group, and as a consequence, rather than before, and as a cause of leaving the group."⁴¹

Since the focus here is upon rehabilitative intervention, it must be recognised that in cases where participants are in custody, they are involuntarily physically disengaged. Simply being removed from their former environment may increase susceptibility to 'cognitive openings'⁴² that challenge their existing worldview, though conversely, beliefs may be sustained via other detainees or a stubborn resolve inspired by the experience of detention itself (and especially if treated harshly). A focus on ideology alone would therefore appear to be a limited approach.

Social concerns appear to be at least as important as ideology with regards both to radicalisation⁴³ and disengagement (including potential barriers to disengagement).⁴⁴ Hence social attachments to other group members often precede ideological commitment and may

exert a sense of obligation to continue even when disillusioned with the cause. On the other hand, unsatisfactory group relations can sew seeds of discontent which ultimately lead to decreased commitment and deradicalisation. Horgan⁴⁵ points out in this regard that a perceived mismatch between one's idealised preconceptions about life in the group and the far less romantic reality can be a powerful experience.

From the point of view of intervention, again it is significant that participants may be physically distanced from former comrades in that this may remove an important boost to their resolve. However, in order to maximise the potential of this situation, a useful tactic would be to use questioning techniques that lead individuals to reassess their old relations and to realise where there is disparity between what they expected or were promised and what they actually experienced. Moreover, the importance of social ties suggests the potential utility that these may have within D&D programs, (perhaps in a similar manner to 'peer group therapy' interventions with ordinary offenders, which encourage a mutually supportive culture among participants).⁴⁶ This is in line with della Porta's suggestion that "[a]bove all...exit paths from underground organizations appear to be influenced by the social relationships of individuals... [and] departure is made easier when collective paths are favoured."⁴⁷ This further implies that if old social ties are to be abandoned, new ones are likely to be necessary to fill the void, and there is considerable agreement on this issue.⁴⁸

This brings us to the closely related practical dimension of disengagement. At its simplest this involves observation of the fact that people get tired of demanding and risky activity, and at some point desire to attend to their individual prospects and other social relations outside of the group (most notably partners and family). Hence it will make sense for intervention programs to make alternative avenues in a security detainee's life salient, attractive, and attainable. At the same time, some form of motivational assessment would likely be useful. If an individual remains highly motivated towards their cause at the

continued expense of a possible ‘normal’ life, then there is less likelihood of being induced by ‘pull’ factors. The challenge then appears to be in reliably identifying when an individual is beginning to experience ‘burn-out,’ or alternatively how to foster such feelings, and how best to capitalise on this.

Existing Rehabilitation Programs for Islamist Extremists

The uniqueness and complexity of the different existing programs necessarily makes meaningful evaluation impossible without taking an in-depth look at each individual program. However, this level of detail is beyond the scope of the present article. Instead, rather than describing individual intervention programs in great detail, the aim here is to identify common themes in practice and areas for potential development. Interventions can be and are implemented at three points in time⁴⁹: 1. Prior to an offence being committed, 2. During detention, and 3. Post-release. However, these distinctions are by no means always clear since in some countries individuals are often detained despite having committed no actual offence, and interventions that begin during detention often continue in some capacity after release. Broadly speaking, it still makes sense to distinguish between preventive and ‘rehabilitative’ programs, and the focus here will primarily be upon the latter, which are aimed at strongly suspected and incarcerated (if not convicted) Islamist ‘terrorists.’

Barrett and Bokhari⁵⁰ identify four main themes in current D&D programs. These are: 1. Re-education and rehabilitation, involving efforts to dissuade Islamist radicals from their religious/political ideological beliefs and narrative, 2. Providing a legitimate lifestyle by way of promoting family commitments and facilitating educational and vocational opportunities, 3. Use of amnesty and restorative justice, whereby lesser crimes are forgiven and extremists sometimes meet with victims of terrorism, and 4. Creation of legitimate opportunities to vent or address grievances, e.g. via group discussion. In addition to these a fifth theme is the use of psychological counselling, and a sixth theme refers to program organisation (see below).

Re-education and Rehabilitation

The first theme, addressing ideology through religious dialogue, has been heavily emphasised in published accounts of most high-profile D&D programs for Islamist militants⁵¹ and appears to have been a key concept behind the inception of ‘deradicalisation’. Typically, ideological persuasion involves using credible figures such as Islamic Sheikhs or scholars (e.g. Saudi Arabia⁵²) or former terrorists (e.g. Indonesia⁵³) to discuss and debate individual religious beliefs. The aim is to highlight ‘incorrect’ beliefs, explain why they are mistaken and show the ‘true’ meaning of such key concepts as jihad, *takfirism* (denouncing other Muslims) and living with non-Muslims. Most often the focus is upon the lack of theological legitimacy for acts of terrorism and intolerance.⁵⁴

It is important to note that the particular style of intervention and the emphasis that it takes might vary for different individuals and is also likely to some extent to be culturally unique. Hence programs being run in Europe appear to be employing slightly less –though varying- emphasis on religion. For example, Vidino⁵⁵ reports that in the Netherlands (a more preventive program) more weight is given to promoting democratic values, and Demant⁵⁶ and colleagues see the promotion of alternative religious values as problematic for a secular state. Nevertheless, reporting on the Amsterdam municipal approach, Mellis⁵⁷ reports that radical religious ideology is addressed in cases of more advanced radicalisation (similarly, in the US program in Iraq, these efforts are reserved more for ‘hard-core’ militants, based on the reasoning that religious ideology is less relevant to ‘moderate’ detainees⁵⁸). Religious beliefs are also targeted in pre-emptive interventions in Great Britain⁵⁹ under the rubric of the ‘Prevent’ element of the national counter-terrorism strategy.⁶⁰

Ideology has been highlighted in studies of ‘naturally occurring’ deradicalisation (see above) and has accordingly been targeted by intervention. The relative importance of this component nevertheless remains debatable, as for example, one senior Indonesian police

officer (whilst acknowledging individual differences) commented that socio-economic approaches appear to be more effectual.⁶¹ Interestingly, disengagement efforts with right-wing extremists in Scandinavia and Germany pay little attention to ideology, and focus far more on individuals' social and life circumstances.⁶² This brings us to the second major theme of providing a legitimate lifestyle, and also highlights the fact that multi-modal approaches (which do characterise many programs) are likely to be most effective.

Providing a Legitimate Lifestyle

Providing a legitimate lifestyle addresses practical, 'pull' factors and involves an appreciation of the importance of social networks. As with most themes covered by D&D programs, the Saudi initiative seems to represent the most comprehensive, well-funded approach (not to mention being the best-documented).⁶³ Beginning with a subject's detention, the needs of their family are assessed and a government stipend is provided based on the rationale that detainees would otherwise be more resentful and uncooperative, and their family would be more susceptible to radical influences. Families are also included within the rehabilitative process, e.g. in forging a pact of mutual accountability such that family members will be held responsible if a former detainee absconds or re-offends.⁶⁴ Once the main counselling segment of the program is completed and an individual moves from detention through a halfway house (called the 'Care Rehabilitation Centre') and on to being released, he is offered education, vocational training, benefits, help finding accommodation, access to a vehicle, and even help getting married.⁶⁵

Of course –ethical/philosophical debates aside- the level of assistance that is offered is greatly dependent upon available resources, which are generally not as abundant as in Saudi Arabia. Singapore has also put together a rather comprehensive intervention package, extending many of the same benefits as the Saudis by way of numerous non-governmental partnership agencies.⁶⁶ The US program in Iraq provides literacy training, basic education

and vocational skills.⁶⁷ Meanwhile in the Netherlands and UK, multi-agency networks have been established to tackle radicalism in communities, widely incorporating non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as part of locally coordinated projects.⁶⁸ Among the services offered for at-risk youths are vocational skills training, mentoring programs and ‘diversionary’ trips and activities.

The need to establish a legitimate life has not gone unappreciated, but a balance is required. The Saudi approach seems to involve a ‘no-expenses spared’ attitude that is arguably over-rewarding their detainees and may be an inefficient use of resources. For those with less comprehensive funding (or who are simply less organised) there is also the danger that failing to provide benefits –especially if promised- will lead to a backlash in militant or criminal activity, whether for ideological or financial reasons.⁶⁹

For example, Ribetti reports that the demobilisation scheme for paramilitaries in Colombia, whilst still having positive effects, suffered in its early stages because of “an absolute lack of planning on the part of the government”.⁷⁰ Benefits were not available according to schedule, leaving many ex-militants in difficult financial circumstances, and there was poor matching of individuals to appropriate training programs (e.g. many were unable to complete vocational training since they lacked necessary basic education). Similar concerns have been raised by Islamist ex-militants in Yemen⁷¹ and in Algeria, with one former fighter remarking, “I know militants who repented who have resumed Jihad because they were unable to work and live”.⁷² Another Algerian, a former local commander of the Green Death Phalanx described the situation as “administrative terrorism” commenting that “[it] prevents you from having access to basic things such as getting a passport (or) a birth certificate for your child who was born in the mountains... We feel excluded and no one wants to listen to us. This is not fair”.⁷³

Amnesty and Restorative Justice

Descriptions of the use of amnesty and restorative justice within the context of D&D programs for individuals have been much less comprehensive. Amnesty appears to be employed more often as a large-scale demobilisation tactic (e.g. as in Italy, Colombia, Egypt, or Algeria). In such cases the widespread offer of amnesty has been either the basis of first contact between governments and militants wishing to disengage, or else has affected the release of imprisoned militants in recognition of collective disengagement.

The use of amnesty within D&D programs in order to influence individual psychology and behaviour is less clear. For example, Boucek⁷⁴ reports that detainees who successfully complete the Saudi rehabilitation program are then eligible for release, except for those with 'blood on their hands'. He goes on to say that those with time left on their sentence will not be released early.⁷⁵ This implies that only those who have not been formally sentenced are eligible for 'amnesty,' and for those who have been sentenced, there is less incentive to bother taking part, but also less incentive to feign genuine participation if they do.

The general rule appears to be that clemency may apply to less serious crimes only,⁷⁶ and is used at the discretion of the relevant authorities. It may involve not only legal pardoning but may also necessitate protection or relocation of individuals in order to avoid persecution or reprisals from enemies.⁷⁷ Theoretically, amnesty shows compassion and has the potential to change individual 'us and them' worldviews. In accordance with labelling theory,⁷⁸ it also offers a fresh start, a chance to focus on a new life ahead. In practice, its effects are likely to be difficult to assess and must strike a balance between goals of deradicalisation, which it is indirectly related to, and the need for justice, most notably the concerns of victims of terrorism. This latter point links in with the notion of restorative justice and the potential to address the needs of victims whilst potentially furthering individual rehabilitation.

Barrett and Bokhari mention that some programs do employ restorative justice tactics, however, they do not provide details. Ali Imron has publicly stated that he will “never stop” asking for forgiveness from victims and their families,⁷⁹ but detailed descriptions of meetings between terrorists and victims of terrorism are lacking. Beg and Bokhari⁸⁰ mention an initiative in Iraq where jihadis were encouraged to confess to their crimes and meet with the mothers of people they had killed. Carroll⁸¹ describes one such meeting:

““You burned my heart!” wailed the mother of a murdered son, jabbing a large, unshaven man in the chest. “May God burn your heart! What kind of religion do you have?” He stared at his feet, avoiding her eyes.”

Yet this particular initiative is a rather controversial televised affair, sometimes clearly involving elements of coercion⁸² (and does not appear to be related to the US-run program for security detainees⁸³). In Northern Ireland it has also been reported that efforts at restorative justice have been “largely unsuccessful” and have sometimes caused “significant tensions”.⁸⁴ Shenk’s⁸⁵ description of restorative justice with ordinary criminals gives more insight into how these sorts of meeting might be productive. She argues that victim-offender mediation, where the two parties engage in a series of supervised meetings and work together towards a mutually acceptable reconciliation, has great potential in the sphere of hate-crimes. In particular it may help offenders realise the impact of their crimes and humanise their view of the ‘enemy,’ making repeat offences less likely, whilst giving victims a sense of emotional ‘closure’. This provides some support as well as guidelines for application with terrorists, but has yet to be firmly established in this field, or indeed with hate-crime offenders.⁸⁶ As with D&D programs in general, it is imperative that such efforts are described in more detail and made available for assessment.

Creation of Legitimate Opportunities to Voice Concerns

This is another strategy that has been more obviously applied as part of large-scale government efforts to combat terrorism. In particular this is seen in dealings with specific terrorist organisations by facilitating the inclusion of political wings in mainstream politics, such as in Northern Ireland. It seems to be something that numerous Islamist groups at varying stages of disengagement desire, but that has rarely been granted.⁸⁷ As a counter-terrorism strategy, it is supported by the fact that for many, terrorism is the first resort.⁸⁸ Often terrorists will not have tried alternative means of affecting change, and may therefore be open to less harmful and more effective strategies.

Regarding D&D interventions, the only example utilising this strategy cited by Barrett and Bokhari⁸⁹ is the Tajik Secular-Islamic Dialogue Project. The Tajik project brings together different groups within society to seek “means of coexistence and to identify and discuss issues that create mistrust and tension”⁹⁰ and to establish solutions. It apparently does not, however, include more radical, violent Islamists. Efforts in the Netherlands and UK also try to create legitimate opportunities in so far as they promote democratic participation. These are more preventative projects though, and so the encouragement of legitimate means of protest remains untested within the realms of individual rehabilitation. In addition it is important to bear in mind that if such opportunities are essentially ‘empty’ and do not result in any change, they may simply fuel frustration and eventually lead to a return to violence. It is thus important for ex-militants to have realistic expectations about the nature of non-violent political activism.

Psychological Counselling

A number of programs utilise mental health professionals to evaluate participants and to address any needs or disorders that they may have. For example, the Saudi program includes a team of psychologists responsible for assessing psychological well-being and genuineness of program participation as well as establishing relations with detainees’ families.⁹¹ In the

more intensive program they also help provide courses on self-esteem.⁹² Psychologists are also involved in Singapore's program and about eighty percent of the Religious Rehabilitation Group that plays the primary role there has undergone training in psychological counselling to improve their ability to understand and relate to participants.⁹³ Meanwhile in Iraq, the US program addresses a host of potential psychological traumas experienced by many individuals during the course of the conflict as well as their incarceration, and further attends to their "sense of identity, meaningfulness, life mission and future purpose".⁹⁴

The role of psychological expertise is clearly quite varied according to context but seems to focus on building relations, evaluation and treatment. On the one hand these efforts have intuitive appeal; however regarding treatment in particular, it is pertinent to note that there is no clear relationship between psychological disorder and terrorism.⁹⁵ Although this may be significantly different in conflict zones, there is a general risk of developing a 'shotgun approach' to rehabilitation: selecting issues to assess and treat without reference to their theoretical relevance to terrorist behaviour, and thereby losing focus and wasting resources. Psychological counselling, in common with other areas of terrorist rehabilitation, thus warrants a great deal more research before it can be evaluated in any meaningful way.

Program Organisation

In addition to the above themes of content it is necessary to review organisational aspects of intervention. As mentioned already there is some variation in terms of governmental involvement. Pragmatically speaking this is likely to affect funding. For right-wing extremists, Bjørge et al⁹⁶ report that government programs also tend to exert more control over participants and have a greater capacity to monitor them for signs of recidivism (making 'failures' all the more visible). They advise that it is important to strike a balance between control and trust, the latter being more forthcoming in non-governmental programs.

Government involvement may thus affect initial levels of trust in the scheme from program participants. It is obviously less likely that militants will listen to the ideological or religious interpretations of people they believe are their opponents. In reality though, even non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in this context must have government approval to be involved and are arguing for a position that is in line with state reasoning vis-à-vis terrorism. Even NGOs are not beyond suspicion.

The key to overcoming this scepticism appears to be how detainees are treated and how messages are communicated to them. In Indonesia, where the police play an important role in the initiative, officers are courteous and respectful, and take time out to pray alongside extremists as fellow Muslims. This helps to break down misconceptions of the police as *thoghut* or un-Islamic, which may be an important first step to opening up lines of communication.⁹⁷ Similarly, in Saudi Arabia there is a clear distinction between interrogation and later stages of ‘help,’ but a persisting emphasis upon ‘being nice’ to prisoners. The idea is to get across to them that they are not being punished, but rather that they have been led astray and need to be helped back onto the correct Islamic path.⁹⁸ This appears to be a common approach in the Muslim world.⁹⁹ Western authorities can also try to erode misconceptions through compassionate actions, and employ Muslims in combating extremism.¹⁰⁰ But the challenge is slightly different in that the government itself is not Islamic and it may therefore be harder to close the distance between them.

In line with the psychology of persuasion, it is thus important to attend to both the content and the source of the messages being advocated.¹⁰¹ Program staff members must be credible, and therefore tend to include Muslim scholars or Sheikhs, and sometimes ex-extremists. Generally speaking though, D&D programs are a multi-disciplinary affair. In addition to security personnel and Islamic ‘counsellors,’ professionals with a psychological background are also directly involved in some interventions (see above). This is likely to be

an important component of best practice in order to ensure a thorough approach. However, it will be vital for multi-disciplinary teams to show effective coordination for continuity in any program. Moreover, multiple agencies –both governmental and non-governmental- may be involved at different points throughout a detainee’s procession through the state system.

There is thus likely to be varying levels of communication and coordination, and the potential for competing interests between different parties.

Continuing Issues in the Rehabilitation of Islamist Militants

Perhaps the three biggest, interrelated issues for D&D programs concern who the participants are, risk assessment, and definitions and measurement of success. It seems that across the board it has so far primarily been relatively low-level militants who have not been involved in actual terrorist attacks who have participated and been released. This is not to say that more committed, hard-core extremists with a history of violence have been entirely excluded,¹⁰² but they appear to have been very much in the minority, and are far less likely to be offered early release.¹⁰³ The questions which hang over these programs then, are how extreme participants so far have really been, what risk they have presented, and what behavioural and psychological changes have resulted from taking part?

Adequate data to begin answering these questions are not yet available. Beyond very limited descriptions of detainees (young men, mostly held for minor offences such as possessing or distributing Islamist propaganda), there has not been any publicised breakdown of particular offence-frequencies, of period of involvement with Islamist militants, roles played within organisations, or specific attitudes and beliefs that are held. As argued by Kruglanski and Gelfand,¹⁰⁴ there is a need to develop repeat attitudinal measures in order to assess changes over time. They also point out that factors such as personal history, organisational embeddedness, current conditions, family situation, and personality variables (such as need for social dominance or tolerance for ambiguity) may all affect resilience to

change. Likewise, Speckhard asserts that programs must develop reliable ways of classifying program participants according to their level of radicalisation and that this requires an assessment tool to be used before, during and after treatment.¹⁰⁵ Unless such data are recorded and measures of change are devised, program appraisals will remain relatively unsophisticated.¹⁰⁶

At present, risk-assessment generally appears to be a case of clinical judgement by those responsible for implementing specific programs and involves taking stock of a number of different factors which do not necessarily involve any clear, standardised system of measurement, nor do they necessarily relate to one another –or to theoretical explanations of terrorism- in any systematic way. In both mental health practice more generally, and in rehabilitation efforts with ordinary offenders, clinical judgement has been shown to be inferior to actuarial assessment using standardised tools that are structured, quantitative, and linked to relevant criteria.¹⁰⁷ There is clearly a desperate need for improvement in the assessment of terrorists (more below) and accordingly, current research is addressing this issue. Speckhard, and Kruglanski and Gelfand are clearly pioneering in this respect but precise details of their methods have yet to be published. Of particular note in this area is Pressman's work in developing the Violent Extremism Risk Assessment (VERA), which is an attempt at establishing a Structured Professional Judgement (SPJ) tool for use with terrorist populations.¹⁰⁸ Pressman's approach is a prime example of the underlying argument in this paper (i.e. that terrorism researchers can learn from criminology) in that it is inspired by existing, validated SPJ tools for violent offenders, and yet the particular content of the assessment is appropriately informed by theory and research on terrorism. Although still in the early stages of development this is a step in the right direction.

Program success is undoubtedly related to who participants are, and what risk they pose. It may also incorporate varying levels of intermediate and superseding goals.

Rehabilitation of Islamist terrorists

Intermediate goals might include behavioural changes whilst incarcerated (e.g. increased interaction and openness with staff) as well as changes in self-reported attitudes. The ultimate, ideal goal is of course permanent behavioural disengagement from involvement with Islamist terrorists- no collaboration with them, no supporting or promoting them, and especially no violence. The focus thus far has been upon recidivism in terms of committing a security-related offence; however details have been vague and it is unclear whether the distinction is always made between suspicion, arrest, conviction or some other form of confirmation. Table 1 below illustrates known numbers of participants, releases and repeat offenders in current D&D programs where some information is available.¹⁰⁹

Table 1. Numbers of participants, releases & repeat offenders in current D&D programs up until the end of 2007 (mid-2008 for Iraq).

Country	Terrorism detainees	Program Participants	Released	Still Incarcerated	Repeat Offenders
Indonesia	300	20 (Offered to 400)	150	150	Unknown (14 as of June 2010)
Iraq	20,000	Unknown	6,000	Unknown	12 (0.2%)
Malaysia	115	Unknown	76	40	Unknown
Saudi Arabia	>3,000	3,000	1,500*	1,000	35 (2.3%)
Singapore	73	Unknown	44	29	Unknown
Yemen	>360	910 (Estimate)	364*	Unknown	2 (0.5%)

* Release confirmed as direct result of D&D program.

It is important to note that only in the cases of Saudi Arabia and Yemen¹¹⁰ are the releases explicitly cited to be a direct result of program participation (e.g. the 150 released in Indonesia were largely part of general amnesties¹¹¹). These two cases and that of Iraq are the

only ones for which rates of recidivism have been reported (it was more recently made public that at least 14 individuals jailed for terrorism offences in Indonesia have reoffended, but it is unclear whether they were among those released prior to 2008¹¹²). In the case of Saudi Arabia these numbers refer to individuals re-arrested for security-related offences.¹¹³ Meanwhile in Yemen recidivism figures refer to two former program participants killed in Iraq¹¹⁴ and it is unspecified what the 12 Iraqis listed were rearrested for. These translate into extremely low rates of recidivism, and although figures are not reported for the other cases it is worth noting that there are high levels of monitoring and continued restrictions on the movements of former detainees in these countries.

Nevertheless, since base-rates of re-offending are unknown for populations of terrorists, and there are no control groups for comparison, these rates do not necessarily reflect a significant effect of the respective interventions. Speckhard reports that prior to the implementation of the program in Iraq, “the usual recidivism rate from previous years [was] close to 200”,¹¹⁵ which is encouraging but this by itself cannot be considered a measurement of efficacy. The period of time since released –especially without supervision- is also unknown, but likely no more than two or three years in the longest cases. Finally, offences committed in relation to original offences are unknown- for example an increase in severity might indicate a detrimental effect of intervention for those individuals, whilst a decrease might still be considered a positive effect despite ‘failure.’ Degrees of recidivism therefore need to be defined.

Summary of Existing Programs

In summary, existing programs vary a great deal in almost every respect. A focus on ideology and religion has so far been the most promoted aspect of programs, and a great deal of effort has been put into enlisting credible *sources* of information or program interlocutors¹¹⁶, and developing convincing arguments. Based on theoretical understanding of involvement in

extremist organisations, and accounts of why people leave them, it is also vitally important to address social concerns, which most programs do. It is tempting to compare these two approaches and ask which is most useful, however this would be counterproductive and miss the point that both are important, and it is the *combination* that is most likely to be effective. Other approaches, such as restorative justice techniques, and providing alternative avenues of expression are certainly promising but are as yet underutilised and poorly documented, while psychological counselling techniques, although potentially valuable, are not always clearly theoretically relevant or coordinated.

A commendable point is that programs do appear to some extent to utilise the potential for *groups* of individuals to support each other's *individual* rehabilitation. This is apparent in the fact that intervention seems to typically involve a good deal of group interaction. However, there may yet be further opportunities to cultivate mutual self-helping (e.g. by way of enlisting the help of detainees who are further along in the program to welcome newcomers). Equally, the potential for negative influences within groups must be recognised and plans for dealing with this developed.

Referring to other theoretical implications, discussed above, there are no reports that the collective situation of relevant terrorist organisations are monitored in order to be exploited in facilitating individual reform (although this might still take place in practice). Also, there is only limited evidence that program staff attempt to highlight negative aspects of extremist involvement (though again, intuitively this seems likely). One example is the Saudi effort, which includes an emphasis upon ways in which recruits are manipulated by terrorist organisations.¹¹⁷

There is a continued need to improve risk assessment and to be able to identify and cultivate feelings of burn-out, neither of which are dealt with in detail in existing descriptions of D&D programs. Finally, from an academic and perhaps idealistic perspective (since this

conflicts with security-related and political concerns) there is a great need to improve the quality of available information in order to facilitate more accurate evaluation. Indeed, the preceding overview belies the complexity involved in each program and detailed case studies are required in order to advance current levels of understanding. Moving beyond individual assessments in the search for common factors relating to positive outcomes, analysts will also be faced with the challenge of coming up with a framework that is able to accommodate the vast differences between programs. Horgan and Braddock suggest that Multi Attribute Utility Theory (MAUT) might be useful in this regard, although they acknowledge that it is a daunting task.¹¹⁸

Initial, optimistic impressions of these interventions have been based on extremely limited data and an understandable enthusiasm for a new and exciting area of innovation in counter-terrorism. However, as practitioners and analysts come to grips with the complexity of conceptual issues involved, the general outlook has become more critical.¹¹⁹ Although rehabilitation programs for ordinary offenders are by no means free from controversy, there is a wealth of relevant experience, theoretical development and research that can be drawn upon, that may help clarify certain concepts and inspire new ways of thinking about rehabilitating terrorists.

Rehabilitation Programs with Ordinary Offenders

Having described key themes in practice with Islamist terrorists, it is useful to consider how these programs compare to the rehabilitation of ordinary offenders. Whilst this is an extremely diverse field¹²⁰ that is far from being an exact science, there is over fifty cumulative years of research to build upon. Of course working with 'everyday' criminals and terrorists is not the same, and rehabilitation programs cannot simply be cut and pasted from one context to the other. But with careful consideration for similarities and differences (in terms of subjects, content, organisation and culture), it is possible that those with an interest

in D&D programs can learn from the experience of criminology. In particular this may help to highlight the multitude of conceptual and practical issues involved, to mould realistic expectations about the challenges ahead, and to generate ideas for improving current practice and evaluation. Specific offender rehabilitation programs (such as Reasoning and Rehabilitation, Sex Offender Treatment Programs) are of interest and are worth examining on an individual basis. However, the nature of offences and the specific content of programs will always be different. Therefore the aim here is to give an overview of principles of best practice in criminal rehabilitation, as well as relevant challenges. This will be followed by a consideration of the extent to which these principles might apply to working with Islamist terrorists.

A Brief History of Criminal Rehabilitation

Psychological approaches to offender rehabilitation gained momentum in the 1950's and '60's. However, from the 1970's onwards the idea that 'nothing works' took hold, based upon a particular review of treatment by Martinson.¹²¹ This conclusion was later recanted and the original paper criticised,¹²² but at the time it gelled with a shift to the political right in the US and UK, and with sociological theories pointing to the role of society over individuals in causing crime (criminology's 'root causes').¹²³ There was a resurgence in the rehabilitative ideal in both policy and practice during the 1990's, inspired by a growing body of meta-analytical reviews demonstrating a consistent impact upon recidivism.¹²⁴ Since then a plethora of rehabilitative programs has emerged, some targeting specific types of offender, others more generalised.

Efficacy

Amidst the diversity of programs in existence there is variation in subjects (different types of offenders) content, organisation, setting, quality of implementation, and 'dosage' (average time spent in treatment). Program evaluations are similarly diverse, methods of measurement

and chosen criteria vary widely, and detail is often lacking, making it difficult to discern meaning from individual assessments or to compare multiple studies. In trying to overcome the shortcomings of individual studies criminologists have used meta-analysis to quantitatively assess program efficacy at the aggregate level. This enables calculation of an overall effect size¹²⁵ on recidivism despite varying operational definitions in different studies, and further enables researchers to establish correlations between factors of interest (e.g. different types of offenders) and the overall result, thus indicating whether or not they have a moderating effect on treatment.¹²⁶ Although this is not currently feasible to evaluate D&D programs (a *minimum* requirement is a significant number of detailed assessments with relatively large samples)¹²⁷ it is widely used in criminology. The average effect size produced in meta-analytical review is a reduction between ten and twelve percent in recidivism across different types of offenders compared to matched control groups.¹²⁸

This may not seem impressive but nevertheless represents a significant impact in terms of costs to individuals and society. Moreover, meta-analysis of the effects of punitive approaches and incarceration consistently demonstrate that this does not reduce recidivism, and in fact often *increases* rates of re-offending (Lipsey and Cullen¹²⁹ found this kind of boomerang effect in 5 out of 7 meta-analyses of incarceration). Furthermore, programs which adhere to increasingly established principles of best practice (see below) have been shown to reduce recidivism on average by 17-35%.¹³⁰ The context of this result is that studies often report quite high rates of recidivism among criminal populations- it is not uncommon to come across reports of more than 40% of control groups being rearrested or even reconvicted within 12 months of release, with increasing likelihood of recidivism over the next couple of years.¹³¹

In a UK Home Office study examining the effects of Cognitive Behavioural Treatment (CBT) for a variety of different adult offenders, reconviction rates at two-year

follow up among the control groups ranged from 8% to 80% depending upon risk-level (for the treatment groups this range was 5% to 75% but with larger reductions occurring in medium risk-level groups).¹³² Recidivism is thus a serious problem among criminal populations and is not easily overcome: indeed, despite continued efforts to improve criminal rehabilitation –and even under ideal circumstances- it is taken as a given that an often significant proportion of criminals will reoffend. What’s more, precisely who will and will not reoffend cannot be predicted with absolute certainty.¹³³

Despite overall consensus that criminal rehabilitation can be effective, there are some important caveats. Critics of the findings from meta-analysis point out that these results are potentially misleading since they are mostly based on programs which have been set up specifically for demonstration and research.¹³⁴ As such they have adequate resources and are often run by the researchers who designed the program, along with appropriately trained staff (‘therapeutic integrity’ - see below), while ‘real life’, ‘routine’ programs face numerous organisational difficulties, they experience ‘drift’ away from the original plan over time, and have been found to produce a mean effect size half that of research programs.¹³⁵ Similarly, Lowenkamp¹³⁶ found that the vast majority of almost 400 individual offender treatment programs assessed using the Correctional Program Assessment Inventory (CPAI-2000) did not receive a passing grade, and Gendreau, Goggin and Smith¹³⁷ report that seventy percent of 282 programs assessed using an earlier version of the CPAI also ‘failed’. The gap between theory and research on one hand, and practice on the other, is thought to be “enormous” (see Gendreau et al¹³⁸ for specific program deficits) and one of the greatest challenges for researchers in this field is trying to bridge that gap.¹³⁹

A related point that is important to appreciate is that the positive effects found in meta-analysis are at the aggregate level. Lipsey and Cullen thus point out that “no [particular] programs or program types have been identified that *consistently* produce positive effects”¹⁴⁰

[emphasis added]. Criminologists are thus still striving to improve their understanding of rehabilitation and have devoted considerable effort to identifying factors which relate to more successful treatments (larger effect sizes on recidivism) within meta-analyses. This had led to the identification of several principles of best practice.

What Works and What Doesn't

Despite an inability to come up with the 'perfect' program, general agreement has now emerged as to the components of more (and less) effective rehabilitative interventions.¹⁴¹

Less effective –sometimes even counterproductive- practices include psychodynamic or non-directive therapies, a focus on punishment, and a failure to address issues related to offending.

The following are consistently cited as being more effective at reducing recidivism:¹⁴²

- Adherence to principles of Risk, Need, and Responsivity (RNR, see below).
- Cognitive-behavioural interventions (focus on rewarding appropriate behaviour, behavioural practice and role-play, addressing pro-criminal attitudes, enhancing relevant cognitive skills).
- A firm-but-fair and interpersonally sensitive approach to participants.
- A structured, well-designed program based on empirically validated theory (usually incorporating elements of social learning theory).
- High quality training of staff.
- High treatment integrity (the extent to which the program is conducted according to theory and design).
- A conducive setting (community-based programs are often found to be more effective).

The Risk Principle

The principles of ‘Risk’, ‘Need’ and ‘Responsivity’ have been developed by Andrews and colleagues and are believed to lie at the heart of best practice.¹⁴³ Thus Bonta and Andrews¹⁴⁴ found that programs adhering to all three RNR principles produced larger reductions in recidivism (which were further increased in community settings).

The Risk principle states that more intense levels of service provision should be reserved for higher-risk offenders since there is more room for change and this results in greater reductions in recidivism. Treatment of higher-risk offenders has been found to relate to larger reductions in recidivism in meta-analysis,¹⁴⁵ while focussing efforts on lower risk offenders can sometimes result in *increased* rates of reoffending (since this increases their criminal peer-associations)¹⁴⁶. However, Smith et al’s¹⁴⁷ review of meta-analyses reveals that the support on this issue is inconsistent as compared to other factors, which they suggest is due to varying definitions of risk-level and paucity of available information in studies.

Risk-assessment tools have advanced from ‘first generation’ (unstructured clinical judgement) through to ‘fourth generation’ (theoretically and empirically derived, including both static and dynamic factors for repeated measurement, and designed to inform the rehabilitation process through identifying specific ‘criminogenic needs’, i.e. issues relating to offending behaviour, which can be targeted in intervention).¹⁴⁸ The improvements over clinical judgement are unquestionable¹⁴⁹, and researchers are generally able to distinguish between high, medium and low-risk categories of offenders¹⁵⁰; however the overall predictive ability of risk-assessment tools remains only moderately accurate, no single instrument or type of assessment has been found to be superior¹⁵¹ and practitioners have been slow to adopt new technology.¹⁵²

The Need Principle

The Need principle states that interventions must target ‘criminogenic needs’, i.e. factors which directly relate to offending behaviour (and therefore are indicative of risk).

Andrews, Bonta and Wormith identify eight empirically supported risk/need factors, which they refer to as the 'Central Eight'. The 'Big Four' among these 'criminogenic' variables include:

- Offence history,
- Antisocial personality traits (such as impulsivity and aggressiveness),
- Pro-criminal attitudes (including rationalisations for crime), and
- Social support for crime (criminal associates, lack of 'pro-social' associates).¹⁵³

Among these variables, only offence history is static and therefore unchangeable. The inclusion of dynamic factors enables repeated assessment of change and therefore of treatment impact over time. The remaining four risk/need factors are also dynamic and include: individual substance abuse, family/marital relationships, school or work life, and leisure activities.¹⁵⁴ Importantly, several minor, 'non-criminogenic' needs are also identified, which if targeted in intervention may improve an individual's well-being, but are unlikely to affect offending behaviour. These include self-esteem, personal/emotional distress, major mental disorder, and physical health.¹⁵⁵ Smith et al report that although relatively few meta-analyses have been conducted which specifically examine the need principle, the current evidence is strongly supportive.¹⁵⁶

The Responsivity Principle

Lastly, the principle of Responsivity states that programs must be implemented in a style that maximises learning potential. General responsivity calls for the use of cognitive-behavioural techniques and social learning, utilising such methods as modelling, gradual shaping of behaviour through reinforcement and identification and modification of maladaptive thought patterns via cognitive restructuring. Specific responsivity suggests that

treatment delivery (including matching subjects to suitable staff members) must be adapted to suit individual offender characteristics.¹⁵⁷ Smith et al's recent review of meta-analytical studies reveals that cognitive-behavioural interventions for offenders have been *consistently* found to result in greater reductions in recidivism than interventions that do not employ these methods. Specific responsivity, however, remains under-researched.

Program Design, Implementation and Evaluation

RNR principles and other recommendations relating to style of delivery can be considered *content* variables. Meanwhile, organisational variables relate to issues of design, implementation and evaluation. Cooke and Philip¹⁵⁸ provide an extremely useful breakdown of how to ensure treatment integrity through solid organisation and although some of their advice might seem generic (e.g. need for adequate resources, potential negative impact of intra-organisational conflict) a thorough approach avoids making assumptions and ensures that details are not overlooked. Three key areas stand out as particularly relevant: 1. The *theoretical framework* should be empirically validated, and what exactly will be targeted – and how- must be clearly identified; 2. There must be a comprehensive *program manual* that is well-researched and details the design, setting up, running and evaluation of the program (including such details as number of planned sessions, and how to achieve stated objectives); and 3. *Monitoring and evaluation* of all aspects of the programs are fundamentally important to its success. The latter helps maintain program integrity and assessment of whether the intervention is affecting a) short-term *process* variables, b) *outcome* variables or ultimate goals, and c) whether it is cost-effective.¹⁵⁹

Gendreau, Goggin and Smith¹⁶⁰ take an equally detailed approach in offering advice on the implementation of programs in the 'real world' and identify four key areas to attend to relating to organisational factors, the program itself, the agent of change (who is responsible for running the program), and staffing activities.¹⁶¹ They also emphasise the importance of

program evaluation and suggest the use of the CPAI for this purpose. The latest version of this tool, the CPAI-2000,¹⁶² includes 131 items and assesses eight different domains: 1. Organisational culture, 2. Program implementation/maintenance, 3. Management/staff characteristics, 4. Client risk-need practices, 5. Program characteristics, 6. Core correctional practices, 7. Interagency communication, and 8. Evaluation. CPAI scores have been found to relate to reductions in recidivism, thus adding validity both to this assessment, and by proxy to the ‘what works’ literature on which it is based.¹⁶³

How Might General Principles of Criminal Rehabilitation Apply to D&D Programs with Islamist Terrorists?

Although the potential relevance of criminology has not been overlooked,¹⁶⁴ there has not previously been any systematic attempt to explore how principles of best practice in ordinary rehabilitation might apply to similar efforts with Islamist terrorists. Before elaborating on what specific lessons might be learned from criminology it is useful to briefly consider in what ways populations of criminals and terrorists are similar and different, with an eye to assessing transferability.

Comparison of Populations

In terms of profiles, terrorists are overwhelmingly males. Although females do make up a larger comparative proportion of criminal populations, males are responsible for more crime overall –especially violent crime- and most research is with male offenders.¹⁶⁵

It is generally accepted that terrorists on the whole are free from psychopathology and rates of disorder are low.¹⁶⁶ While “a third or more of prisoners show some form of mental disorder...this is mainly a reflection of high rates of alcohol and drug abuse and personality disorder...[and] these are the disorders whose status as mental illnesses is contentious within

psychiatry.”¹⁶⁷ Although it is sometimes reported that prisoners’ rates are higher,¹⁶⁸ overall “[i]t is unclear whether the rates of disorder in prisoners are significantly different from general population rates.”¹⁶⁹ Criminologists may be faced more often with the added difficulty of treating some form of disorder as part of rehabilitation. However, except for antisocial personality traits, these are likely to be secondary goals, while primary targets remain ‘criminogenic needs’ (see above) and the overall design of these programs is aimed at being *generally appropriate* for human consumption.¹⁷⁰

A further concern might be to do with socioeconomic background. We are reminded time and again that terrorists are extremely heterogeneous and many often come from middle or even upper classes, with good education and sometimes a professional career. Criminal populations are also extremely diverse, but tend to be typified as being from lower classes with poor education and below average IQ.¹⁷¹ This might imply that style of intervention should be quite different to suit apparent differences in learning ability.

However, it should be noted that upper class Islamist militants were more prevalent at the beginning of the movement, and have become less prevalent over time, so that the majority of ‘foot soldiers’ (likely to make up the bulk of participants in D&D programs) are lower or middle class.¹⁷² In the Saudi program, only a very small proportion of participants have come from more affluent backgrounds, and in a study of 639 of these, around a quarter had a criminal background.¹⁷³ This is the same proportion reported among Bakker’s sample of operational (‘hard-core’) Islamist terrorists in Europe.¹⁷⁴

Hence there is considerable overlap in criminal and terrorist populations. Based on this, there is no evidence to suggest that criminals and terrorists have fundamentally different cognitive styles with respect to capacity to learn or resistance to change, and the limited evidence that does exist suggests that if there are differences, they may well be marginal. Indeed, the definitive nature of participants should not be assumed one way or the other, but

assessed at intake and dealt with accordingly (hence the need for some flexibility and individual tailoring of treatment).

It is also worth noting that criminals and terrorists show a great deal of similarity in a number of other ways. In particular they show similar systems of social influence and organisation, they show similar pathways into their respective illegal activities, and their specific sense of social identity is also important.¹⁷⁵ Perhaps the most significant difference from a psychological perspective is in particular aspects of social identity. The fact that terrorists feel that they represent a wider collective, and that they often have altruistic, politicised motivations, separates them from most criminals. However, this should be looked upon as a potential asset to be exploited in rehabilitative interventions, for example in promoting alternative avenues of pro-social action.

Finally, LaFree and Miller¹⁷⁶ recently explored the utility of criminological accounts of desistance in ordinary offenders for understanding similar processes in terrorism, and found this to be a useful theoretical approach. Similarly, Horgan¹⁷⁷ explores the concept of ‘secondary’ (i.e. long-term) desistance in ordinary criminals for understanding terrorist disengagement. Hence there are parallels apparent in criminal and terrorist desistance/disengagement, and they may cease their respective activities for some of the same reasons.

As a caveat, it is not the intention here to suggest that criminal and terrorist populations are the *same* (even within broad samples), that differences are not significant, or that practice with offenders will directly apply to Islamist militants. Rather, the aim is to demonstrate that there is *sufficient similarity* that lessons learned from working with ordinary offenders will be relevant to working with Islamist terrorists, although the exact structure and content of programs will always be context-specific. Indeed, even though Pressman

emphasises the *differences* between the two populations, she comes to the same conclusion in this respect.¹⁷⁸

Applicability of Principles of Best Practice

Firstly, in terms of what *doesn't* work with ordinary offenders, the same seems likely to hold true for terrorists. There is no reason to believe that psychodynamic or nondirective approaches, a punitive approach, or failing to address needs directly related to militant behaviour will be effective in D&D programs. These are important lessons to learn given that such approaches can sometimes *increase* recidivism, which would be disastrous. 'What not to do' is thus crucial, and although it applies across different areas of intervention, it may be particularly relevant to psychological counselling with Islamist terrorists. The issue is not only *how* any psychological disorders or deficits are addressed but also whether or not they are relevant to offending behaviour, and whether they represent appropriate targets for intervention aimed at reducing recidivism. This will likely be context-specific and will require careful research. We now turn to 'what works' in criminology.

Risk

Regarding the Risk principle, the question remains as to whether it would be more productive to focus upon higher risk (more committed) cases. Of course, as with criminals, there are those who are beyond rehabilitation, but "[e]ven the beliefs of deeply committed extremists may be subject to more change than we have expected."¹⁷⁹ Yet D&D interventions so far seem to have shied away from higher risk cases (except for those who have seemingly 'self-rehabilitated'), and there is thus a good possibility that resources are being used inefficiently. Accounts of the programs in Singapore and Iraq do mention that different levels of risk are distinguished;¹⁸⁰ however, in order to assess whether the Risk principle applies in terrorism, it is first necessary to develop reliable and valid risk-assessment tools. This follows Kruglanski and Gelfand's¹⁸¹ argument for a 'deradicalisation index' and Pressman's¹⁸² efforts

to develop a risk-assessment tool for ‘violent political extremists’. Risk-assessment must take into account issues such as militant history (roles played and length of time in the organisation), which is static, but also dynamic factors such as specific patterns of ideological belief, (which may be reflected in use of language as reflected in ‘explanatory styles’ or ‘personal narratives’¹⁸³). It should include an assessment of motivations for initial and continued involvement (economic, ideological/ religious, and social), as well as motivation for changing one’s current situation (‘readiness’ for disengagement). This should form the corner stone of treatment design for specific individuals.¹⁸⁴

Without detracting from the importance of developing systematic risk-assessment for Islamist militants, it is equally important to have realistic expectations about what such tools might achieve. Decades of research and practice with ordinary offenders has achieved only moderate predictability and part of the problem here –in addition to the complexity of human behaviour- are the relatively low base-rates of criminal behaviour, which necessarily reduce the likelihood of predictive ability. As Roberts and Horgan¹⁸⁵ point out, it depends upon context and the specific behaviours that are being predicted, but the generally very low rate of violent terrorist activity (the ‘tip of the iceberg’) means that this will be exceptionally difficult to predict, perhaps even more so than criminal violence. This is not to say that terrorist risk-assessment will be impossible or fruitless –indeed it should be expected to produce significant advantages over unstructured ‘clinical’ judgements- but it will be far from infallible.

Need

As for Need, it seems equally important for D&D programs to focus upon factors which directly relate to involvement in Islamist terrorism. Descriptions of these programs do indicate that this is the case. Both cognitions (ideology, beliefs), and social circumstances (peer associations, family) are addressed. In terms of the ‘Central Eight’ and ‘Big Four’

(above) identified by Andrews et al¹⁸⁶ as lying at the heart of risk/needs assessment, the relevance of these in the context of working with terrorists requires testing. Nevertheless, despite less obvious relevance of antisocial personality traits and substance abuse (which might both still affect amenability to intervention when present) the remaining six criminogenic factors (offence history, attitudes, social situation, family, school/work, and leisure) are attended to in D&D programs. The next step will be to examine the empirical relationships between these different variables and offending-related behaviours of interest, which will help inform risk-assessment and targets of intervention.

Responsivity

The principle of Responsivity is also relevant. However, it is unclear to what extent existing programs employ cognitive-behavioural techniques (as suggested in order to maximise learning and adaptation), or to what extent individual ‘tailoring’ is employed. As a general rule, and with ideological argumentation in mind, it should be noted that verbal, logical argument is unlikely to be a universally well-received format for learning. With regards to cognitive-behavioural techniques, it is not necessarily the specific content used in offender rehabilitation programs that is relevant, although this will vary. For example, self-control or impulsivity are often targeted in criminal offender interventions, which may have limited significance in terrorism. On the other hand, problem solving skills, critical reasoning and social perspective taking are also popular,¹⁸⁷ and these may have some applicability to terrorists. It will, however, very likely prove useful to adhere to more general principles of cognitive-behavioural treatment in practice with Islamist militants. This might include rewards for appropriate behaviour, and cognitive rehearsal and behavioural practice in role plays for dealing with certain situations. For example, in preparing individuals for release, it might help to rehearse strategies for dealing with ‘bumping into’ old associates or known

radicals. Efforts to maximise potential for learning and persuasion will likely bolster existing and future efforts at terrorist rehabilitation.

Organisation and Evaluation

Organisational principles of best practice may have direct applicability in many cases. The contributions from criminologists on this topic provide a framework for thinking about how to design and run a rehabilitative program for terrorists. These and other accounts (such as how to go about assessing cost-effectiveness¹⁸⁸) should be referred to and then adapted according to the unique circumstances and treatment setting. In particular, the three key points discussed above are especially relevant; namely the need for an empirically validated theoretical framework, the need for a detailed program manual, and the need for built-in evaluation as a means of monitoring program integrity and validity. Adopting these measures –although by no means a straightforward affair- will help to professionalise rehabilitative practice with Islamist terrorists and will be fundamental to assessing efficacy and improving practice.

With these principles in mind it is of course important to recall that there is a vast variation in current D&D programs, some of which are ad hoc and have little in the way of discernible structure. Just as there is a deep and persisting gap between theory and practice in offender rehabilitation, there is likely to be an even greater one in the field of terrorism.

Summary and Conclusion

The present article has offered an overview of current practice in rehabilitation of Islamist terrorists, and has added to the pioneering work of numerous others by examining the potential for the rehabilitation of ordinary offenders to inform parallel practice with terrorists. Individual and collective processes of disengagement and deradicalisation are intimately related to one another. Existing D&D programs for Islamist extremists are aimed at the individual level of disengagement and deradicalisation, but should also show an awareness of

how this might relate to the wider collective. Existing interventions focus on two main areas:

1. Re-education and rehabilitation, and 2. Providing a legitimate lifestyle (ideological and social components, respectively). Psychological counselling is also a component in more developed programs. Restorative justice practices and providing legitimate opportunities for protest or action show promise but as yet appear to be underutilised. Organisationally, programs show mixed governmental and non-governmental involvement, and often there is multi-agency cooperation. Continuing issues in D&D practice include the (low) level of militancy of participants, initial and ongoing risk assessment, and program transparency and evaluation.

Rehabilitation programs for ordinary offenders are extremely diverse, with diverse outcomes. However, a greater level of knowledge exists about what does and doesn't work, and how principles of best practice *should* be implemented. The specific content of these programs compared to working with terrorists will always differ, but there is sufficient similarity between participant populations and program aims that lessons may be learned from the criminal context. The principles of Risk, Need and Responsivity all show potential application in the rehabilitation of Islamist terrorists, and to some extent are already being implemented, or are in development. D&D programs may face many of the same organisational challenges and may learn directly from principles of best practice in this regard, although unique contexts will also present substantial challenges. It is equally important to be aware of practices which may be detrimental to rehabilitative efforts, and lessons learned from criminology are also relevant here.

In addition to providing a framework for understanding and increasing awareness of the multitude of different issues involved in rehabilitative practice, criminology's value is that it also illuminates many of the same conceptual and practical obstacles that will plague parallel practice with Islamist terrorists. This in itself is sobering; however it is even more

daunting to consider that many of these obstacles (e.g. difficulties in defining such fundamental criteria as offences, recidivism or desistance; lack of data; coming up with viable methodologies for research and evaluation; having to cope with organisational politics) are amplified with terrorism. A comparative perspective is thus also important for comprehending the *scale* of certain challenges and for shaping realistic expectations about what might be achieved. In the long run this may be crucial to the continued survival of these programs.

The rehabilitation of Islamist terrorists is a practice in its infancy. It faces many unique challenges but can equally learn from related practices. It also presents unique opportunities to understand more about extremism, and –given the special status of terrorists and currently high level of resources being invested- may feed back into what we know about rehabilitation more generally. As with crime, both ‘reform’ and ‘relapse’ are processes, not single events, and failures will be inevitable. The enormity of the task should not deter researchers from striving to advance the field; rather it is an indication of the necessity for a concerted and thoughtful drive towards progress.

Finally, as a caveat, it should be emphasised that this has been a very general review. Principles of best practice with offenders are based primarily upon white, male, adult offenders in the Western world (thereby limiting transferability), and information on the specific content of D&D programs is generally lacking. What is needed is a detailed, in-depth consideration for how specific techniques might apply in culturally unique situations, along with greater theoretical development in order to build a more comprehensive understanding of individual disengagement and deradicalisation.

Notes

¹ See Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan, eds, *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009); John Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism* (Oxon: Routledge, 2005), 140-157; John Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism: Accounts of Disengagement from Radical and Extremist Movements* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009).

² Richard Barrett and Laila Bokhari, "Deradicalization and Rehabilitation Programmes Targeting Religious Terrorists and Extremists in the Muslim World: An Overview," in *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement*, eds. Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan. (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009), 170-180.

³ Ibid; International Conference on Terrorist Rehabilitation, February 24-26, 2009, Singapore; Peter Neumann, *Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries* (London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, 2010), accessed September 5, 2010, <http://icsr.info/publications/papers/1277699166PrisonsandTerrorismRadicalisationandDeradicalisationin15Countries.pdf>; Lorenzo Vidino, "A Preliminary Assessment of Counter-Radicalization in the Netherlands," *CTC Sentinel*, 1 (2008) 12-14, accessed June 30, 2009, <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/sentinel/>.

⁴ Brian Ross, Joseph Rhee and Rehab El-Buri, "Al Qaeda Leader behind Northwest Flight 253 Terror Plot Was Released by U.S." *ABC News*, December 28, 2009, accessed December 31, 2009, <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/northwest-flight-253-al-qaeda-leaders-terror-plot/story?id=9434065>.

⁵ Barrett and Bokhari, "Deradicalization and Rehabilitation Programmes Targeting Religious Terrorists and Extremists in the Muslim World" 174.

⁶ Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism: Accounts of Disengagement from Radical and Extremist Movements*, 139-162; Gary LaFree and Erin Miller, "Desistance from Terrorism: What Can We Learn from Criminology?" *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, 1 (2009): 203-230.

⁷ John Horgan, "Leaving Terrorism Behind" in *Terrorists, Victims and Society: Psychological Perspectives on Terrorism and its Consequences*, ed. Andrew Silke. (London: John Wiley, 2003) in Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism*, 151; Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism*, 140-157.

⁸ See Omar Ashour, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamist Movements* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan, eds, *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009); Froukje Demant, Marieke Slootman, Frank Buijs and Jean Tillie, *Decline and Disengagement: An Analysis of Processes of Deradicalisation*, (Amsterdam: Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, 2008), accessed June 20, 2009, <http://english.nctb.nl/search.aspx?simpleSearch=Disengagementandzoekknop=Search>; Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism*, 20-39, 151-154; Darcy Noricks, "Disengagement and Deradicalization: Processes and Programs" in *Social Science for Counterterrorism: Putting the Pieces Together*, eds. Paul Davis and Kim Cragin (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009), accessed September 5, 2010, http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2009/RAND_MG849.pdf; Anne Speckhard, "Prison and Community Based Disengagement and De-Radicalization Programs for Extremists Involved in Militant Jihadi Terrorism Ideologies and Activities" in *Protecting the Homeland from International and Domestic Terrorism Threats: Current Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Root Causes, the Role of Ideology, and Programs for Counter-Radicalization and Disengagement*, eds. Laurie Fenstermacher, Larrie Kuznar, Tom Rieger and Anne Speckhard (Washington: DC: Department of Defense, 2009) 347-362, accessed September 5, 2010, http://www.start.umd.edu/start/publications/U_Counter_Terrorism_White_Paper_Final_January_2010.pdf.

⁹ Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan, "Introduction" in *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement*, eds. Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009), 1-14; Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism*, 140-157; Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism*, 20-39, 151-154.

¹⁰ See below for barriers to disengagement.

¹¹ Bjørgo and Horgan, "Introduction"; Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism*, 140-157; Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism*, 20-39, 151-154.

¹² Bjørgo and Horgan, "Introduction", 3; Demant et al, *Decline and disengagement*, 13.

¹³ John Horgan and Kurt Braddock, "Rehabilitating the Terrorists?: Challenges in Assessing the Effectiveness of De-radicalization Programs" *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 22 (2010): 267-291.

¹⁴ For example, see Donatella della Porta, "Leaving Underground Organizations: A Sociological Analysis of the Italian Case" in *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement*, eds. Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009), 66-87; Diaa Rashwan, "The Renunciation of Violence by Egyptian Jihadi Organizations" in *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement*, eds. Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009), 113-132; Marcella Ribetti "Disengagement and Beyond: A Case Study of Demobilization in Colombia" in *Leaving Terrorism*

Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement, eds. Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009), 152-169.

¹⁵ Ashour, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists*.

¹⁶ See Audrey Kurth Cronin, "How al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups" *International Security*, 31 (2006): 7-48; Audrey Kurth Cronin, "How Terrorist Campaigns End" in *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement*, eds. Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan, (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009), 49-65; Demant et al, *Decline and disengagement*; Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism*, 20-27.

¹⁷ Clark McCauley, "Group Desistance from Terrorism: A Dynamical Perspective" *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, 1 (2008): 269-293.

¹⁸ Ashour, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists*; Demant et al, *Decline and disengagement*.

¹⁹ Ibid; Ibid; Cronin, "How al-Qaida Ends"; Cronin, "How Terrorist Campaigns End"; McCauley, "Group Desistance from Terrorism."

²⁰ Ibid; Ibid; Ibid; Ibid; Ibid.

²¹ Demant et al, *Decline and disengagement*.

²² Ashour, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists*.

²³ Ashour, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists*; Demant et al, *Decline and disengagement*; Cronin, "How al-Qaida Ends"; Cronin, "How Terrorist Campaigns End"; McCauley, "Group Desistance from Terrorism".

²⁴ Cronin, "How Terrorist Campaigns End" 65.

²⁵ John Horgan, "Individual Disengagement: A Psychological Analysis" in *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement*, eds. Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009), 17-29; Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism*, 140-157.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism*, 156-157.

²⁸ Tore Bjørgo, "Processes of Disengagement from Violent Groups of the Extreme Right" in *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement*, eds. Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009), 30-48.

²⁹ Demant et al, *Decline and disengagement*, 111-118, 119-156.

³⁰ Bjørgo, "Processes of Disengagement from Violent Groups of the Extreme Right"; Demant et al, *Decline and disengagement*.

³¹ Max Abrahms, "What Terrorists Really Want: Terrorist Motives and Counterterrorism Strategy" *International Security*, 32 (2008): 78-105.

³² Demant et al, *Decline and disengagement*, 154-156.

³³ See della Porta, "Leaving Underground Organizations: A Sociological Analysis of the Italian Case".

³⁴ Neumann, *Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries*.

³⁵ Bjørgo, "Processes of Disengagement from Violent Groups of the Extreme Right".

³⁶ Demant et al, *Decline and disengagement*, 155-156.

³⁷ Ibid, 119-156.

³⁸ Demant et al, *Decline and disengagement*, 119-156.

³⁹ Ibid, 126-130.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 129.

⁴¹ Bjørgo, "Processes of Disengagement from Violent Groups of the Extreme Right" 37.

⁴² See Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005).

⁴³ E.g. John Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, "Individual and Group Mechanisms of Radicalization" in *Protecting the Homeland from International and Domestic Terrorism Threats: Current Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Root Causes, the Role of Ideology, and Programs for Counter-Radicalization and Disengagement*, eds. Laurie Fenstermacher, Larrie Kuznar, Tom Rieger and Anne Speckhard (Washington: DC: Department of Defense, 2009), 82-91; Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

⁴⁴ Bjørgo, "Processes of Disengagement from Violent Groups of the Extreme Right"; Demant et al, *Decline and disengagement*, 155-156; Horgan, "Individual Disengagement"; della Porta, "Leaving Underground Organizations: A Sociological Analysis of the Italian Case" 66-87.

⁴⁵ Horgan, "Individual Disengagement".

⁴⁶ See John Gobbs, Granville Potter, Albert Liao, Angie Schook and Steven Wightkin, "Peer Group Therapy" in *Handbook of Offender Assessment and Treatment*, ed. Clive Hollin. (Chichester: John Wiley, 2001), 259-268.

⁴⁷ Della Porta, "Leaving Underground Organizations" 85.

⁴⁸ Neumann, *Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries*; Noricks, “Disengagement and Deradicalization: Processes and Programs”; Speckhard, “Prison and Community Based Disengagement and De-Radicalization Programs for Extremists Involved in Militant Jihadi Terrorism Ideologies and Activities”.

⁴⁹ Gill McIvor, “Treatment in the Community,” in *Handbook of Offender Assessment and Treatment*, ed. Clive Hollin. (Chichester: John Wiley, 2001), 551-556.

⁵⁰ Barrett and Bokhari, “Deradicalization and Rehabilitation Programmes Targeting Religious Terrorists and Extremists in the Muslim World”.

⁵¹ E.g. Zachary Abuza, “The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in South East Asia: A Preliminary Assessment” in *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement*, eds. Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan. (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009), 193-211; Mohamed Bin Ali, “De-Radicalisation Programmes: Changing Minds?” *RSIS Commentaries* (2008), accessed June 30, 2009, <http://www.pvtr.org/commentaries.htm>; Christopher Boucek, *Saudi Arabia’s ‘Soft’ Counter-Terrorism Strategy: Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare*, (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Middle East Program Report 97, 2008), accessed June 23, 2009, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/cp97_boucek_saudi_final.pdf; Christopher Boucek, Shazadi Beg and John Horgan, “Opening up the Jihadi Debate: Yemen’s Committee for Dialogue” in *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement*, eds. Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan. (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009), 181-192.

⁵² Boucek, *Saudi Arabia’s ‘Soft’ Counter-Terrorism Strategy*.

⁵³ Abuza, “The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in South East Asia”; International Crisis Group, ‘*Deradicalisation’ and Indonesian Prisons*, (International Crisis Group: Asia Report 142, 2007), accessed June 30, 2009, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=2959andl=1>.

⁵⁴ An exception to the rule are the more controversial arguments of Ali Imron in Indonesia, who defends the ideology but renounces terrorism on practical terms since precipitous action may harm Muslim communities rather than help them (International Crisis Group, ‘*Deradicalisation’ and Indonesian Prisons*, 12-13.

⁵⁵ Lorenzo Vidino, “A Preliminary Assessment of Counter-Radicalization in the Netherlands” *CTC Sentinel*, 1 (2008), accessed June 30, 2009, <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/sentinel/>.

⁵⁶ Demant et al, *Decline and disengagement*, 184.

⁵⁷ Colin Mellis, “Amsterdam and Radicalisation: The Municipal Approach” In *Radicalisation in Broader Perspective*, (The Hague: National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, 2007), 40-48, accessed June 30, 2009, <http://english.nctb.nl/search.aspx?simpleSearch=Radicalisation+in+Broader+Perspective>.

⁵⁸ Speckhard, “Prison and Community Based Disengagement and De-Radicalization Programs for Extremists Involved in Militant Jihadi Terrorism Ideologies and Activities”.

⁵⁹ Demant et al, *Decline and disengagement*, 175-177; Tony Heal, “Extremist Disengagement in the UK: Context, Scope, Method and Results” (paper presented at the International Conference on Terrorist Rehabilitation, Singapore, February 24-26, 2009); HM Government, *Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare: The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering International Terrorism*, (London: The Stationery Office, 2009), accessed July 6, 2009, <http://security.homeoffice.gov.uk/counter-terrorism-strategy/>.

⁶⁰ For a discussion of this debate in the UK context, see Raffaello Pantucci, “British Government Debates Engagement with Radical Islam in New Counterterrorism Strategy” *Terrorism Monitor*, 7 (2009): 9-11.

⁶¹ International Crisis Group, ‘*Deradicalisation’ and Indonesian Prisons*, 13.

⁶² Tore Bjørgo, “Reducing Recruitment and Promoting Disengagement from Extremist Groups: The Case of Racist Subcultures,” in *A Future for the Young: Options for Helping Middle Eastern Youth Escape the Trap of Radicalization*, ed. Cheryl Benard. (RAND National Security Research Division, 2005) 1-30, accessed June 30, 2009, www.rand.org/pubs/working_papers/2006/RAND_WR354.pdf; Tore Bjørgo, Jaap van Donselaar and Sara Grunenber, “Exit from Right-Wing Extremist Groups: Lessons from Disengagement Programmes in Norway, Sweden and Germany” in *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement*, eds. Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan, (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009), 135-151.

⁶³ Boucek, *Saudi Arabia’s ‘Soft’ Counter-Terrorism Strategy*.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 19-21.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*.

⁶⁶ Abuza, “The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in South East Asia”; International Conference on Terrorist Rehabilitation, Singapore, February 24-26, 2009.

⁶⁷ Speckhard, “Prison and Community Based Disengagement and De-Radicalization Programs for Extremists Involved in Militant Jihadi Terrorism Ideologies and Activities”.

⁶⁸ Demant et al, *Decline and disengagement*, 175-178; Heal, “Extremist Disengagement in the UK”; *Policies on Integration and Prevention of Radicalisation in the Netherlands: A Progress Report* (The Minister

of Immigration and Integration, 2006), accessed June 25, 2009, <http://english.nctb.nl/search.aspx?simpleSearch=%22Policies+of+Integration+and+Prevention+of+Radicalisation+in+the+Netherlands%22andzoekknop=Search>.

⁶⁹ See Ashour, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists*, 140-141.

⁷⁰ Ribetti “Disengagement and Beyond: A Case Study of Demobilization in Colombia”.

⁷¹ Boucek, Beg and Horgan, “Opening up the Jihadi Debate” 190.

⁷² “Algeria Ex-Rebels Say Cash Key to Weakening Qaeda” *Reuters*, July 15, 2009, accessed July 30, 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSLF115023>.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Boucek, *Saudi Arabia’s ‘Soft’ Counter-Terrorism Strategy*, 11.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 22.

⁷⁶ Barrett and Bokhari, “Deradicalization and Rehabilitation Programmes Targeting Religious Terrorists and Extremists in the Muslim World” 176.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ At its most basic this asserts that negative stigma creates a self-fulfilling prophecy. For a more thorough, critical deconstruction, see Charles Wellford, “Labelling Theory and Criminology: An Assessment” *Social Problems*, 22 (1974): 332-345.

⁷⁹ Natalie O’Brien, “Terrorists Who Say No to Terror” *The Australian*, June 6, 2009, accessed June 12, 2009, <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,22623960-28737,00.html>.

⁸⁰ Shazadi Beg and Laila Bokhari, “Pakistan: In Search of a Disengagement Strategy” in *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement*, eds. Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan. (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009), 224-242, 241.

⁸¹ Rory Carroll, “Trial by Television: In Iraq, Captured Rebels are Shown Confessing Live on Air” *The Guardian*, March 28, 2005, accessed October 6, 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2005/mar/28/mondaymediasection.Iraqandthemedia>.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ See Speckhard, “Prison and Community Based Disengagement and De-Radicalization Programs for Extremists Involved in Militant Jihadi Terrorism Ideologies and Activities”.

⁸⁴ Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism*, 162.

⁸⁵ Alyssa Shenk, “Victim-Offender Mediation: The Road to Repairing Hate-Crime Injustice” *Ohio State Journal of Dispute Resolution*, 17 (2001): 185-218.

⁸⁶ For example, restorative justice techniques are not mentioned by Bjørgo and colleagues, (Bjørgo, van Donselaar and Grunenberg, “Exit from Right-Wing Extremist Groups”).

⁸⁷ E.g. see Ashour, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists*.

⁸⁸ Abrahms, “What Terrorists Really Want”.

⁸⁹ Barrett and Bokhari, “Deradicalization and Rehabilitation Programmes Targeting Religious Terrorists and Extremists in the Muslim World”.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 178.

⁹¹ Boucek, *Saudi Arabia’s ‘Soft’ Counter-Terrorism Strategy*), 11-14.

⁹² Ibid, 17.

⁹³ Rohan Gunaratna. “Example Cases and Programs: Battlefield of the Mind: Terrorist Rehabilitation” in *Protecting the Homeland from International and Domestic Terrorism Threats: Current Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Root Causes, the Role of Ideology, and Programs for Counter-Radicalization and Disengagement*, eds. Laurie Fenstermacher, Larrie Kuznar, Tom Rieger and Anne Speckhard (Washington: DC: Department of Defense, 2009), 363-368.

⁹⁴ Speckhard, “Prison and Community Based Disengagement and De-Radicalization Programs for Extremists Involved in Militant Jihadi Terrorism Ideologies and Activities” 356.

⁹⁵ E.g. Arie Kruglanski and Shira Fishman, “The Psychology of Terrorism: ‘Syndrome’ Versus ‘Tool’ Perspectives” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 18 (2006): 193-215.

⁹⁶ Bjørgo, van Donselaar and Grunenberg, “Exit from Right-Wing Extremist Groups” 150-151.

⁹⁷ International Crisis Group, *‘Deradicalisation’ and Indonesian Prisons*, 13-14.

⁹⁸ Boucek, *Saudi Arabia’s ‘Soft’ Counter-Terrorism Strategy*, 11.

⁹⁹ Barrett and Bokhari, “Deradicalization and Rehabilitation Programmes Targeting Religious Terrorists and Extremists in the Muslim World”.

¹⁰⁰ An example of an Islamic counter-extremism organisation in Europe is the London-based Quilliam Foundation, founded by former militants including Maajid Nawaz and Ed Husain. See <http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/> (accessed August 10, 2009).

¹⁰¹ For a discussion of this in relation to processes of radicalisation see Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West*, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 135-165.

¹⁰² In Egypt, the government has engaged most with organisational leaders. However, the peace process, which includes ideological deradicalisation, appears to have been initiated by the Gamaa Islamiyah leadership. This is distinct to entering into a pre-designed rehabilitative program.

¹⁰³ Boucek, *Saudi Arabia's 'Soft' Counter-Terrorism Strategy*; Boucek, Beg and Horgan, "Opening up the Jihadi Debate"; Speckhard, "Prison and Community Based Disengagement and De-Radicalization Programs for Extremists Involved in Militant Jihadi Terrorism Ideologies and Activities".

¹⁰⁴ Arie Kruglanski and Michele Gelfand, "The Radicalisation and Deradicalisation Index" Paper presented at the International Conference on Terrorist Rehabilitation, February 24-26, 2009, Singapore.

¹⁰⁵ Speckhard, "Prison and Community Based Disengagement and De-Radicalization Programs for Extremists Involved in Militant Jihadi Terrorism Ideologies and Activities" 359.

¹⁰⁶ Note that high, medium, and low-risk participants are distinguished between in Singapore, and in Iraq a distinction is made between 'hard-core' and 'moderate' detainees; however, it is unclear exactly how this is determined (Gunaratna. "Example Cases and Programs: Battlefield of the Mind: Terrorist Rehabilitation"; Speckhard, "Prison and Community Based Disengagement and De-Radicalization Programs for Extremists Involved in Militant Jihadi Terrorism Ideologies and Activities".

¹⁰⁷ James Bonta, "Offender Risk Assessment: Guidelines for Selection and Use" *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 29 (2002): 355-379; Also see William Grove and Paul Meehl, "Comparative Efficiency of Informal (Subjective, Impressionistic) and Formal (Mechanical, Algorithmic) Prediction Procedures: The Clinical-Statistical Controversy" *Psychology, Public Policy and Law*, 2 (1996): 293-323, cited in Bonta, "Offender Risk Assessment".

¹⁰⁸ D. Elaine Pressman, *Risk-Assessment Decisions for Violent Political Extremism* (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Security and Intelligence Studies, 2009), accessed September 10, 2010, <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/res/cor/rep/2009-02-rdv-eng.aspx>.

¹⁰⁹ Figures were derived from the following sources: for Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, Abuza, "The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in South East Asia"; for Saudi Arabia, Christopher Boucek, "Extremist Re-Education and Rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia" in *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement*, eds. Tore Bjørge and John Horgan, (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009), 212-223; for Yemen, Boucek, Beg and Horgan, "Opening up the Jihadi Debate"; and for Iraq, Speckhard, "Prison and Community Based Disengagement and De-Radicalization Programs for Extremists Involved in Militant Jihadi Terrorism Ideologies and Activities".

¹¹⁰ Note that number of program participants in Yemen is calculated by the assertion that 40% of the total were rehabilitated (364 = 40% of 910). See Boucek, Beg and Horgan, "Opening up the Jihadi Debate" 190.

¹¹¹ Abuza, "The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in South East Asia" 200-201.

¹¹² "Indonesian Chief Warns Terrorism Spreading" *Lateline*, June 3, 2010, accessed September 4, 2010, <http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2010/s2917836.htm>.

¹¹³ Boucek, "Extremist Re-Education and Rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia" 222.

¹¹⁴ Boucek, Beg and Horgan, "Opening up the Jihadi Debate" 191.

¹¹⁵ Speckhard, "Prison and Community Based Disengagement and De-Radicalization Programs for Extremists Involved in Militant Jihadi Terrorism Ideologies and Activities" 357.

¹¹⁶ Neumann, *Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries*.

¹¹⁷ Boucek, *Saudi Arabia's 'Soft' Counter-Terrorism Strategy*, 11, 13.

¹¹⁸ Horgan and Kurt Braddock, "Rehabilitating the Terrorists?: Challenges in Assessing the Effectiveness of De-radicalization Programs".

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