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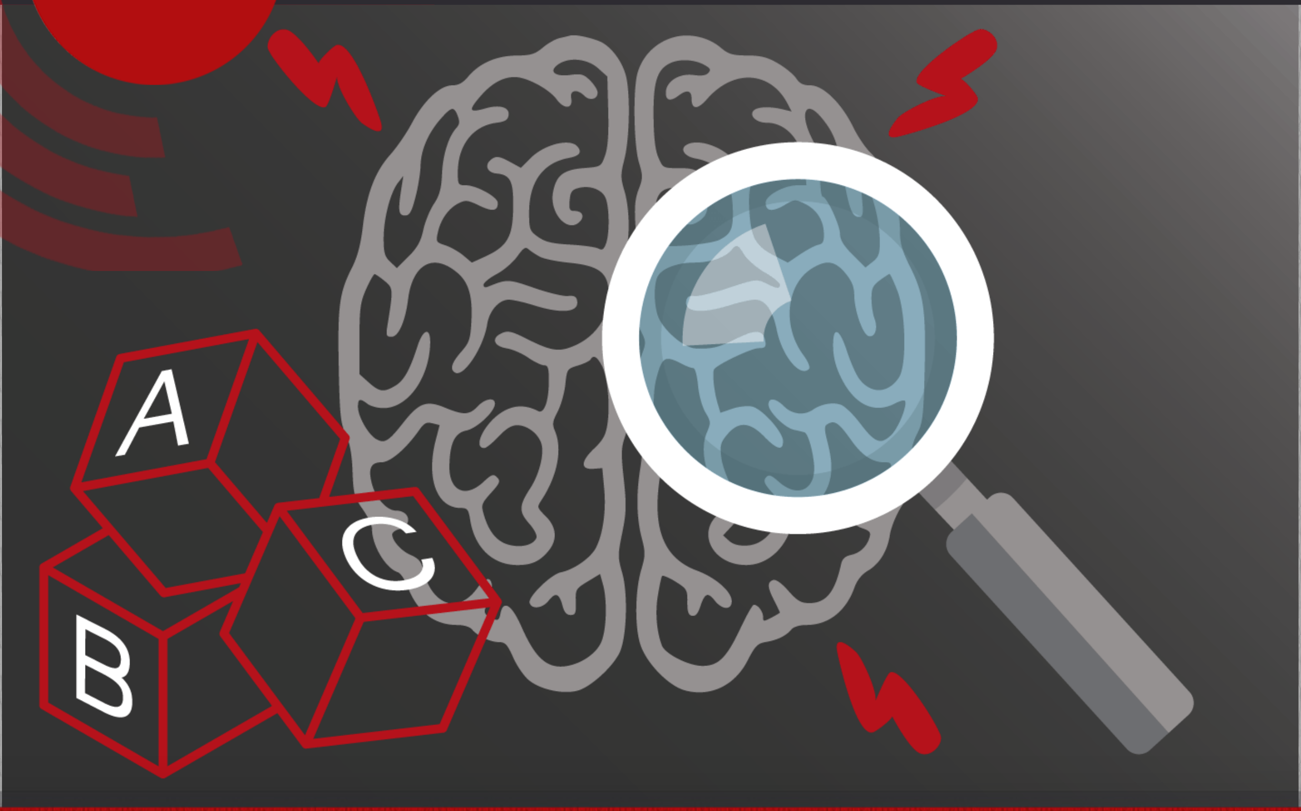

# A Guide to Deradicalisation & Disengagement Programming:

## Designing and Implementing Interventions through the Lens of the ABC Model

**FULL REPORT**

JANUARY 2023

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## Designing and Implementing Interventions through the Lens of the ABC Model

### FULL REPORT

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This is an independent report that was not directly funded by CREST. Its findings are relevant to the Countering Violent Extremism: Methods, Processes and Outcomes project. You can see more outputs from this project at: *www.crestresearch.ac.uk/projects/countering-violent-extremism.*

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report focuses on **interventions designed to promote and facilitate exits from ideologically justified violence – often referred to as 'tertiary' interventions.** The beneficiaries of these programmes include individuals convicted of terrorism charges, as well as those who voluntarily disengaged. Relying on the authors' *Attitudes-Behaviours Corrective (ABC) Model of Violent Extremism* (Khalil et al., 2022), and drawing from their extensive professional experiences of providing technical support to such interventions, **this report presents a novel framework to help practitioners develop and implement these programmes.**

There is considerable disagreement among thematic experts as to whether these interventions should treat disengagement or deradicalisation as their overarching objective. While the former refers to voluntary exits from violence, the latter is widely (although not universally) interpreted in relation to attitudinal change. We incorporate both of these concepts into our framework of change (our 'results chain' using Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) language), treating disengagement as the uppermost objective (our desired 'impact'), and deradicalisation as a subordinate aim (an 'intermediate impact'). Viewed in this manner, **attitudinal change provides only one of several avenues through which disengagement may be achieved.** Below these uppermost objectives, our framework also incorporates the following mid-level aims ('outcomes'):

- **Outcome 1 - Networks:** Reduced ties to malign influencers and enhanced ties to prosocial alternatives
- **Outcome 2 - Identity:** Diminished salience of social identities associated with violence
- **Outcome 3 - Ideology:** Enhanced willingness to question beliefs that legitimise and justify violence
- **Outcome 4 - Needs:** Enhanced ability to achieve personal needs through nonviolent means
- **Outcome 5 - Wellbeing:** Improved psychological wellbeing

As shall become apparent, many different initiatives ('activities') can contribute to these desired outcomes, including basic education, vocational training, religious guidance, family support, psychological support, and so on. We make no a *priori* assumptions about which of these are most likely to help achieve any particular outcome, with this varying substantially between contexts and clients. Indeed, it is for this reason we argue that **these programmes should reflect local contexts, and be tailored to the needs of each beneficiary.**

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Our key recommendations are as follows:

- **Treat deradicalisation as one avenue through which to achieve disengagement:** As already observed, there is considerable disagreement among experts as to whether tertiary interventions should treat disengagement or deradicalisation as their overarching aim. Departing from these interpretations, we instead argue that attitudinal change provides one of several avenues through which disengagement may be achieved. As such, all programmes should incorporate interventions that promote deradicalisation, and these should be available to beneficiaries at suitable junctures and in appropriate 'doses' during their rehabilitation. This applies even in locations (most often in the Global North) where it may be considered expedient to avoid framing tertiary interventions in terms of deradicalisation.

- **Promote change in relation to the social networks, identity, ideology, needs, and psychological wellbeing of clients:** Research has identified the five outcomes in our results chain as key leverage points through which individuals can be supported or incentivised to move away from violence. These outcomes often operate as collaborators in pursuit of sustained disengagement, particularly where they generate mutually reinforcing effects. For instance, the establishment of prosocial networks (Outcome 1) may provoke identity change (Outcome 2), which may then further strengthen these new social connections (Outcome 1), and so on. However, there are also contexts in which they are better interpreted as alternative avenues through which disengagement may be pursued.

- **Ensure programmes reflect local requirements, conditions, and cultures:** A core underpinning premise of the approach presented in this paper is that programmes must be context specific. Perhaps most obviously, while prison programmes should place a heavy emphasis on addressing identity and ideology (Outcomes 2 and 3), these factors are often less critical for interventions with 'low risk' individuals involved in this violence who were never actually sympathetic to its objectives or identified with those involved. It is also important to recognise that many programmes are constrained by resource restrictions and capacity issues, limiting the extent to which they can provide comprehensive services under each of the outcomes listed above.

- **Ensure interventions are tailored to individual clients:** For instance, educational and vocational provisions should reflect the existing skillsets of each beneficiary, their personal preferences, and the labour market in the community where they will return. For clients motivated by religious ideologies, the timing and extent of religious engagements should also be carefully considered, and only gradually introduced in certain contexts. Perhaps most obviously, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) provisions must also be tailored to personal needs. To help personalize these services, interventions should be delivered through an integrated case management system that includes a means of assessing client needs; develops tailored case management plans; coordinates information from all stakeholders involved in programme delivery; and supports exit processes.

- **Ensure that intervention providers are suitably qualified and experienced, and that they maintain supportive relationships with their clients:** While this report primarily focuses on what needs to be achieved, rather than how these interventions should be undertaken, it is difficult to understate the importance of the relationship between intervention providers and their clients. Indeed, trust and rapport are routinely identified as a critical determinant of programme success. These providers must also be suitably qualified and experienced in their specialist areas (as psychologists, social workers, mentors, and so on), and have a sufficient understanding of the causes and manifestations of ideologically justified violence.

- **Invest in measuring programmatic success as a matter of urgency:** Unfortunately, there remains limited empirical evidence demonstrating the extent to which tertiary interventions actually achieve their desired objectives (however stated), and the mechanisms through which any successes are achieved. This represents a critical concern that must be addressed. Those tasked with implementing tertiary programmes should be aware that there are many different methods through which these interventions may be evaluated, all with prominent strengths and weaknesses.

## Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| **ETA** | Euskadi Ta Askatasuna |
| **HII** | Healthy Identity Intervention (UK) |
| **IC** | Integrative complexity |
| **IED** | Improvised explosive device |
| **LTTE** | Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam |
| **MHPSS** | Mental health & psychosocial support |
| **M&E** | Monitoring & evaluation |
| **OPSC** | Operation Safe Corridor (Nigeria) |
| **PCVE** | Preventing & countering violent extremism |
| **PRISM** | Proactive Integrated Support Model (Australia) |
| **PTSD** | Post-traumatic stress disorder |
| **RC** | Rational choice |
| **RCT** | Randomised controlled trials |
| **SIP** | Social identity perspective |
| **UNODC** | United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime |

# 1. INTRODUCTION

**This first section presents a broad outline of our framework to help practitioners develop programmes to promote and facilitate exits from ideologically justified violence. It draws from the authors' extensive professional experiences of conducting research on this topic, and providing technical support to these interventions.**

## REPORT AIMS

Recent years have witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of programmes designed to facilitate and help motivate exits from ideologically justified violence. These are often referred to as 'tertiary' interventions (see Box 1). They commonly occur in prison, probation, and community settings, including in countries such as Australia, Belgium, Germany, France, Indonesia, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Spain, and the UK.

They also include rehabilitation programmes for 'low risk' individuals who voluntarily disengage from active insurgencies, with the National Defectors Programme in Somalia (which includes the Serendi centre) and Operation Safe Corridor (OPSC) in Nigeria among the best-known examples. Perhaps more ambiguously, they can also include interventions such as Exit Sweden, which are designed to help individuals leave extremist networks, irrespective of their relationship to violence.

### Box 1: The Public Health Classification System

Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) interventions are often classified through a distinction that draws from public health models (e.g., Harris-Hogan et al., 2016). This differentiates between primary interventions that aim to prevent diseases and disorders before they occur (for instance, immunization campaigns and educational initiatives to promote healthy habits), secondary initiatives designed to identify existing conditions through screening (for example, blood pressure testing and mammograms), and tertiary responses that aim to treat or manage existing conditions.

Translating this to ideologically justified violence, primary programmes can be interpreted as those designed to influence broad communities, principally aiming to inhibit sympathy for ideologically justified violence. Secondary interventions are those that aim to prevent individuals identified as being 'at risk' from becoming involved in this violence. Meanwhile, tertiary programmes (the subject of this report) are those designed for individuals already involved in this violence, attempting to promote and facilitate a sustained end to their participation.

Unsurprisingly, tertiary programmes draw considerable attention from the media on occasions when their clients return to violence, as was the case when Usman Khan fatally wounded two individuals at London Bridge in November 2019. Kujtim Fejzulai was also participating in an intervention when he killed four and injured twenty-three others in Vienna the subsequent year. With such cases in mind, it is perhaps unsurprising that tensions often exist between efforts to rehabilitate those involved in this violence and the more immediate aim of public protection. For instance, this relates to the conditions frequently imposed on clients during their probation or parole, with these including curfews and restrictions on Internet usage, personal associations, and travel (Marsden, 2017; van der Heide & Schuurman, 2018/19). While such restrictions are obviously designed to help prevent individuals returning to violence in the short-term, they can also inadvertently undermine their prospects for sustained disengagement by adversely affecting their social reintegration and employment opportunities. Perceptions that security agencies have used tertiary programmes for intelligence gathering can also reduce the extent to which beneficiaries are willing to participate in these interventions.

This aside, there is also considerable disagreement among thematic experts as to whether these interventions should treat disengagement or deradicalisation as their overarching objective (as discussed in greater detail in Section 2). While the former refers to voluntary exits from this violence, the latter is widely (although not universally) interpreted in relation to attitudinal change. We incorporate both of these concepts into our framework of change (our 'results chain' using Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) language), treating disengagement as the uppermost objective (our desired 'impact'), and deradicalisation as a subordinate aim (an 'intermediate impact'). Viewed in this manner, attitudinal change provides only one of several avenues through which disengagement may be achieved. Below these uppermost objectives, our framework also incorporates the following mid-level aims ('outcomes'):

1. **Networks:** Reduced ties to malign influencers and enhanced ties to prosocial alternatives
2. **Identity:** Diminished salience of social identities associated with violence
3. **Ideology:** Enhanced willingness to question beliefs that legitimise and justify violence
4. **Needs:** Enhanced ability to achieve personal needs through nonviolent means
5. **Wellbeing:** Improved psychological wellbeing

As shall become apparent, many different initiatives ('activities') can contribute to these desired outcomes, including basic education, vocational training, psychological support, religious guidance, family support, and so on. We make no a *priori* assumptions about which of these are most likely to help achieve any particular outcome, with this varying substantially between contexts and clients. Indeed, it is for this reason we argue that these programmes should reflect local contexts, and be tailored to the needs of each beneficiary.

## REPORT STRUCTURE

Following on from this introduction, Section 2 of this paper considers personal trajectories in and out of ideologically justified violence, drawing from our *Attitudes-Behaviours Corrective (ABC) Model*. It then outlines the core features of our approach to tertiary programmes, including our emphasis on both disengagement and deradicalisation as objectives, and the five outcomes presented above. Section 3 focuses in more depth on these outcomes, where in each case we first explain why they are important, before considering how influence can be exerted through these leverage points. The final section presents our conclusions, with a particular emphasis on programme evaluations.

# 2. TERTIARY PROGRAMME DESIGN

**This section first considers personal trajectories in and out of ideologically justified violence, drawing from our Attitudes-Behaviours Corrective (ABC) Model. From there, it outlines the core features of our approach to tertiary programmes, treating disengagement as the uppermost objective (the 'impact'), and deradicalisation as a subordinate aim (an 'intermediate impact'). Continuing down our results chain, we then discuss our five mid-level aims ('outcomes') designed to contribute to these top-level effects.**

## ENTERING AND EXITING VIOLENCE

### BECOMING INVOLVED IN VIOLENCE

The academic and policymaking communities have produced a variety of models and metaphors to interpret involvement in ideologically justified violence, with these including staircases, conveyor belts, and pyramids (Khalil et al., 2022). While these have certainly helped frame our understanding of this violence, it is important to recognize their weaknesses and limitations. For instance, they are often insufficiently clear that the pathways to and from violence are non-linear and reversible. Several (although not all) also downplay the importance of ideology, and how belief systems help channel sympathy and actual involvement in violence.

More importantly for our immediate purposes, most of these frameworks fail to emphasize the prominent disconnect between attitudes and behaviours in relation to this violence. On the one hand, many individuals who sympathize with ideologically justified violence remain uninvolved in its creation. On the other, some participants are actually unsympathetic or at least indifferent to its ideology and objectives, and instead primarily act in pursuit of status, adventure, security, material incentives, and so on. While many notable commentators have highlighted this critical disconnect, it has yet to be systematically incorporated into our frameworks of understanding.

With such issues in mind, our approach to tertiary interventions relies on the *Attitudes-Behaviours Corrective (ABC) Model* (Khalil et al., 2022). As its title suggests, this model places a primary emphasis on the important distinction between sympathy for and involvement in ideologically justified violence, as shown schematically in *Figure 1*. Of course, sympathisers are more likely to participate in violence in most contexts, as represented by the greater number of individuals above the x-axis located to the right of the diagram (including Individual D). Nevertheless, the key point of *Figure 1* is that many sympathizers remain uninvolved in violence (Individual E), and conversely that participants are not necessarily supportive of its objectives (Individuals A, B and C). In considering what drives participation, researchers often rely on a distinction between so-called *push* and *pull factors*. The ABC Model instead differentiates between structural motivators, individual incentives, and enabling factors.[1] The lists presented in *Table 1* are not intended to be exhaustive, but instead offer a sample of frequently identified drivers from the relevant literature (e.g., Denoeux & Carter, 2009; Post et al., 2002).

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[1] The lists in Table 1 have been slightly modified from those in the original ABC Model article.

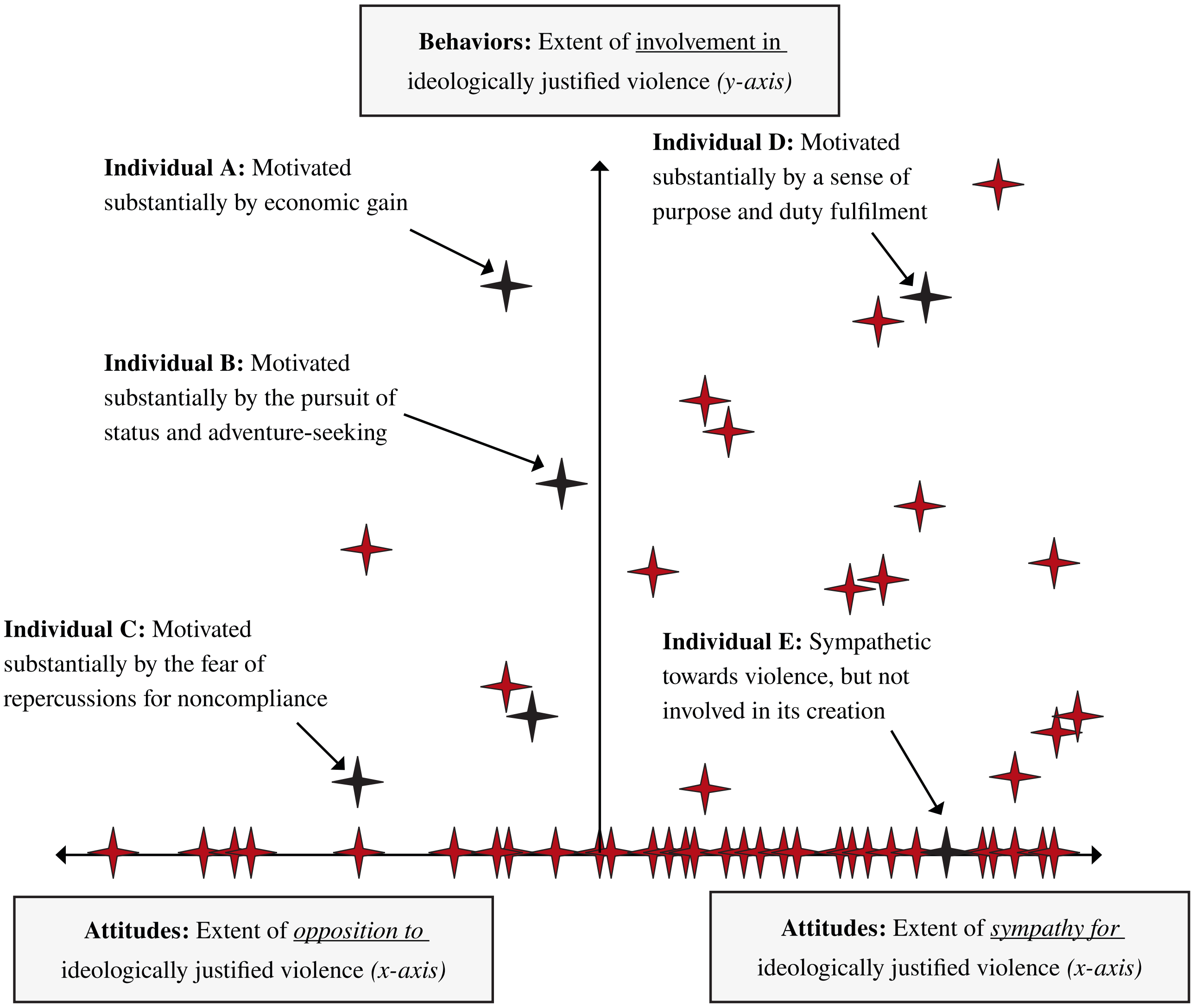
**Behaviors:** Extent of involvement in ideologically justified violence *(y-axis)*
**Individual A:** Motivated substantially by economic gain
**Individual D:** Motivated substantially by a sense of purpose and duty fulfilment
**Individual B:** Motivated substantially by the pursuit of status and adventure-seeking
**Individual C:** Motivated substantially by the fear of repercussions for noncompliance
**Individual E:** Sympathetic towards violence, but not involved in its creation
**Attitudes:** Extent of *opposition to* ideologically justified violence *(x-axis)*
**Attitudes:** Extent of *sympathy for* ideologically justified violence *(x-axis)*

*Figure 1: The (Partial) Disconnect between Attitudes and Behaviors*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Structural motivators** | This first category of drivers is comprised of contextual factors, including state repression, political exclusion, social discrimination, corruption, economic deprivation, inequality, and so on. Depending on the ideology and aims of the perpetrators in question, it may also include an absence of Sharia law, the presence of migrant communities deemed harmful to existing communities and cultures, and other structural factors. |
| **Individual incentives** | This second category is composed of economic, security, and psychosocial rewards that are contingent on the individuals in question contributing to violence. These include material rewards, security, status, a sense of identity, purpose, belonging, self-esteem, adventure, duty fulfilment, vengeance, salvation, and so on. |
| **Enabling factors** | This third category is comprised of factors that channel, facilitate or predispose sympathy for violence or involvement in its creation, rather than motivate these phenomena per se. These often include peers, family members, mentors, and other online and offline contacts. At a personal level, they can include certain mental health problems, self-control issues, cognitive rigidity, sensation-seeking, and other psychological factors. In terms of settings, they can include locations over which the groups involved in this violence exert influence or control, detention facilities that house radical agents, and certain online forums. |

*Table 1: Common Drivers of Ideologically Justified Violence*

## LEAVING THIS VIOLENCE BEHIND

Switching our attention to exits from this violence, it is helpful to distinguish between the dual concepts of disengagement and deradicalization. The former is generally interpreted in behavioural terms, often in relation to individuals exiting organizations involved in violence. For instance, focusing on *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA), Fernando Reinares (2011) asserts that 'disengagement is considered to have occurred when an individual ceased belonging to the terrorist organization and no longer felt subject to the discipline imposed on militants.' However, this interpretation is problematic in contexts where the notion of 'belonging to' is ambiguous. With this in mind, we suggest it is preferable to treat disengagement simply in terms of an end to involvement in ideologically justified violence (as shown in *Figure 2*). By contrast, the concept of deradicalization is widely interpreted in relation to positive attitudinal change. As observed by Sarah Marsden (2017), while disengagement 'encompasses behavioural change related to the move away from political violence,' deradicalization is 'generally understood as attitudinal and ideological change leading to a reduction in the commitment to militancy.'

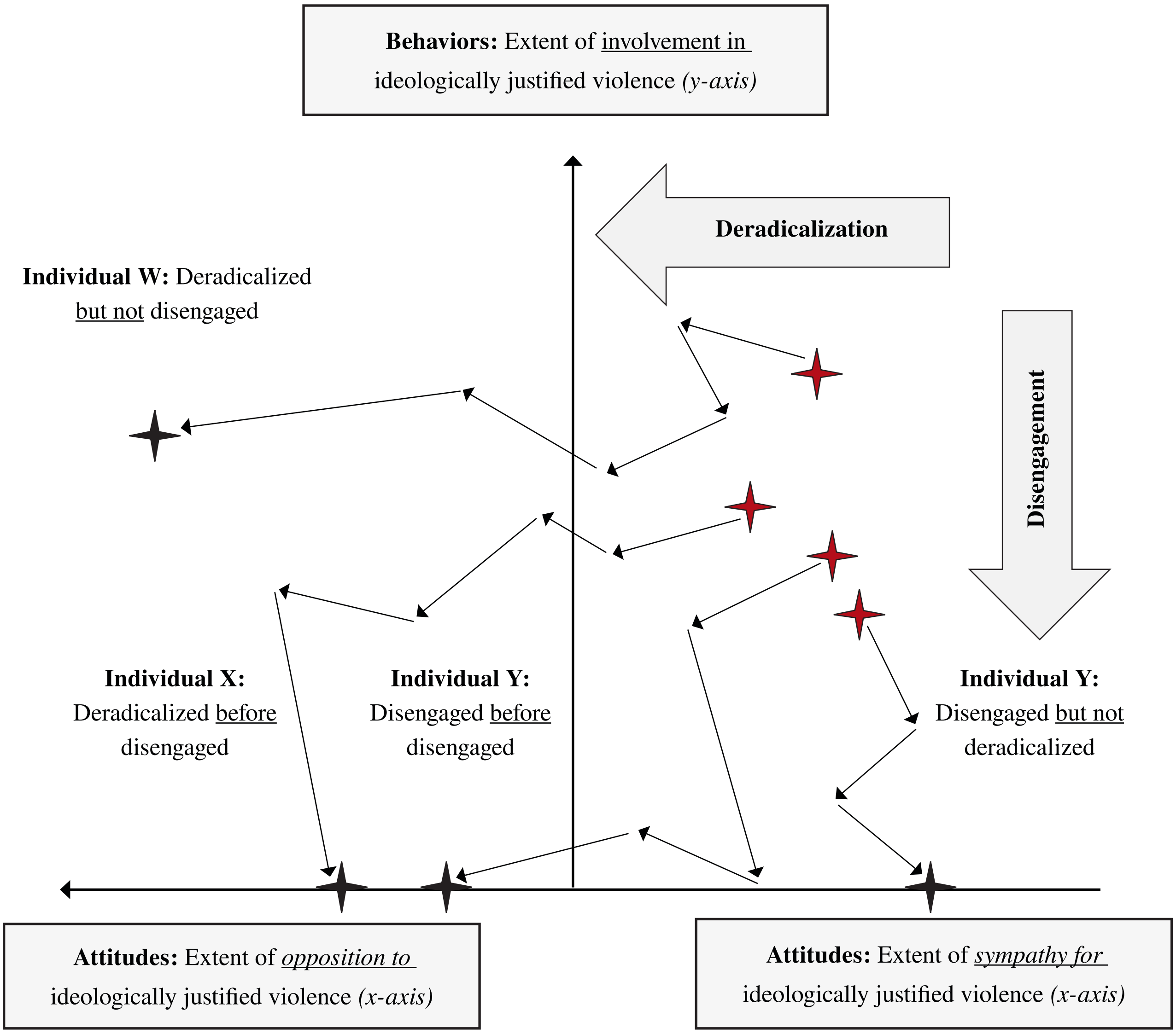
**Behaviors:** Extent of involvement in ideologically justified violence *(y-axis)*
**Deradicalization**
**Individual W:** Deradicalized but not disengaged
**Disengagement**
**Individual X:** Deradicalized before disengaged
**Individual Y:** Disengaged before disengaged
**Individual Y:** Disengaged but not deradicalized
**Attitudes:** Extent of *opposition to* ideologically justified violence *(x-axis)*
**Attitudes:** Extent of *sympathy for* ideologically justified violence *(x-axis)*

*Figure 2: Deradicalization and Disengagement Pathways*

Yet, this is by no means a consensus understanding, with others instead asserting that deradicalization can refer to both attitudinal and behavioural change. For instance, Hamed El-Said (2015) maintains that it 'can include a cognitive change (change in ideology and attitudes), simple disengagement (behavioural change to abandon violence while remaining radical), or both.' We reject this interpretation on the grounds that it is necessary to decouple attitudinal and behavioural change for analytical clarity. Not least, this is because deradicalization often occurs in the absence of disengagement (as represented by Individual W in *Figure 2*), and vice versa (Individual Z.) The former often occurs when individuals who no longer sympathize with violence remain socially dependent on those still involved in violence, or are prevented from exiting by the threat of retaliation. The latter transpires when individuals are detained by security forces, if they suffer from emotional or psychological exhaustion (or 'burn out') as a result of their clandestine and dangerous lifestyle, or if they decide to dedicate more time to their families. The following quote from a former member of ETA (quoted in Reinares 2011), neatly demonstrates this latter pattern:

> **I realized that I was causing a lot of grief to my own people, you know, by my being involved with ETA. And the people who got the worst end of the stick were the same ones who should have been on my side, no? My sheer pig-headedness meant that my life as a militant always took precedence over my personal life – being with my family or my girlfriend. … And so the very next year I left, I put it all behind me. Look, though, my way of thinking about the armed struggle, my attitude towards the political situation, those things haven't changed in the least. But, I'd done my fair share, I'd given three years of my life to them as a militant, always at the expense of my personal life.**

In seeking to understand what drives these processes, the ABC Model again distinguishes between structural motivators, individual incentives, and enabling factors, with *Table 2* providing a sample of drivers commonly identified in the literature (e.g., Altier et al., 2014).[2] Of course, research must also consider factors that inhibit the processes of deradicalization and disengagement. These obstacles are often psychosocial in nature, with Tore Bjørgo (2008) observing the following about far-right groups in Scandinavia:

> **There are several positive characteristics of the group which may be considered too valuable to leave behind. High investments have been made in terms of friendship and social support. The racist group provides community, a substitute 'family', identity, security against external threats and enemies, excitement, and adventure. Even if a person has completely lost faith in the group's ideology and politics, ties of friendship and loyalty may for some individuals constitute more than sufficient reasons for staying with the group.**

As already observed, threats of retaliation against those attempting to disengage represent another common inhibitor. For instance, Michael Jonsson (2014) notes that in Colombia 'there was intense fear of execution inside FARC if someone attempted to defect but was caught.' This was also regularly reported by residents at the Serendi centre in Somalia and OPSC in Nigeria, with these beneficiaries stressing how al-Shabaab and Boko Haram applied violence against those attempting to disengage (Heide-Ottosen et al, 2022; Khalil et al., 2019; Khalil et al., 2022). To be clear, this is not a universal pattern, with former members of the Provisional IRA (e.g., Collins, 1998; O'Callaghan, 1999; O'Doherty, 2011) attesting to fact that individuals could freely exit the group if they so desired, provided they did so in a manner that did not compromise security.

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[2] The lists in Table 2 have been slightly modified from those in the original ABC Model article.

# OUR APPROACH TO TERTIARY INTERVENTIONS

## DERADICALISATION AND DISENGAGEMENT

Before introducing our approach to tertiary interventions, it is worth briefly observing that thematic experts, policymakers, and practitioners often advocate for disengagement as an overarching programme objective, rather than deradicalisation (e.g., Silke, 2011; UNODC, 2016). Several European prison programmes also exhibit this preference, including in Spain where the objective is reportedly 'to stop violent behaviour without focusing on refuting the religious and ideological foundation of extremist ideas' (García-Calvo & Vicente, 2020). In the Netherlands, such efforts are also 'mainly focussed on disengagement (behaviour), which means that de-radicalisation (beliefs) is not a primary goal' (van der Heide 2020).

Placing this in perspective, it is worth briefly considering the key arguments against deradicalization as a potential objective. Perhaps most obviously, some experts suggest that it represents an unrealistic aim (e.g., Silke, 2011), particularly with 'hardcore' clients. Others also highlight concerns about states interfering with personal freedoms of thought and religion (Elshimi, 2020; Koehler, 2017), with this being most prominent in the Global North. Of course, the emphasis on this principle reflects the political context and policy framework used to support deradicalization efforts, as seen in the UK (Edwards, 2014). In responding to these arguments, it is worth first observing that there is now sufficient evidence to show that tertiary programmes *can* help provoke attitudinal change in at least certain cases (e.g., Cherney 2018/9; Khalil et al., 2019; Marsden, 2017), making the pursuit of deradicalization worthwhile. Of course, the timing and 'dose' of engagement should be carefully considered for each client – for instance, ideological content can be gradually introduced within mentorship interventions as trust and rapport develop. Regarding freedoms of thought and religion, while this represents a legitimate concern for programmes that bluntly attempt to impose the 'correct' interpretation of religion or politics on their clients, we believe it is far less relevant for those that rely on subtler or more indirect means to influence attitudes (as discussed below).

| | |
|---|---|
| **Structural motivators** | In the contexts of exits from violence, these contextual factors often relate to the violence perpetrating organizations in question, including disillusionment with their ideology, objectives, strategy, tactics, or personnel. They can also include broader structural changes, including decreased state repression, increased political openness, enhanced community sympathy for reintegration, and so on. |
| **Individual incentives** | This second category is again comprised of incentives that are contingent on personal behaviours, which in this case involves ending participation in violence. Depending on the context, these rewards may include greater personal safety, improved living conditions, enhanced financial prospects, improved personal relationships with those outside the group (spouse, children, etc.), the fulfilment of familial obligations to exit, and so on. |
| **Enabling factors** | This third category is again distinguished from the previous two by being comprised of factors that enable, facilitate or channel disengagement and deradicalisation, rather than motivate these phenomena per se. These can include the influence of 'moderate' religious leaders, family members or other personal connections able to facilitate exit. In terms of contexts, they can include prison environments that enable inner reflection, a loss of territorial control by groups responsible for this violence, and so on. |

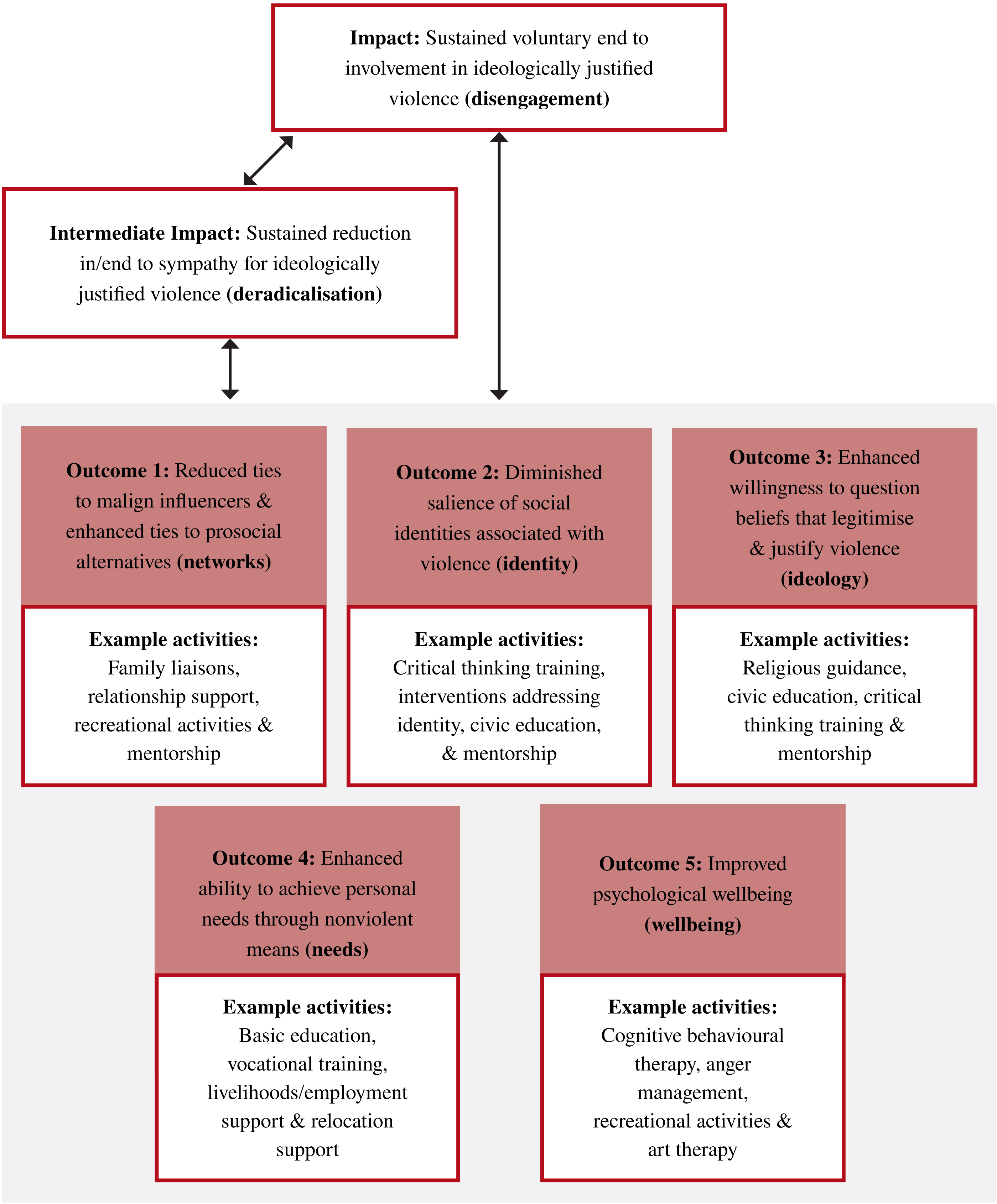
*Table 2: Common Drivers of Deradicalisation and Disengagement*

## OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

With such considerations in mind, we incorporate *both* disengagement and deradicalisation into our results chain (*Figure 3*), treating the former as the uppermost objective (the 'impact' in M&E terminology), and the latter as a subordinate aim (an 'intermediate impact'). Our stance is certainly not that deradicalisation is a necessary condition for disengagement, as shown by the arrow traveling directly from the subordinate outcomes to the impact statement in *Figure 3*. As already clarified, certain individuals disengage without a corresponding attitudinal change (such as Individual Z in *Figure 2*). Others do not require deradicalising *per se* as they were never sympathetic to violence in the first place (including Individuals A, B and C in *Figure 1*). For instance, this applies to most beneficiaries at the Serendi centre in Somalia and OPSC in Nigeria who were motivated to involvement by peer pressure, fear, material incentives, and other non-ideological drivers (Khalil et al., 2019; Khalil et al., 2022). Nevertheless, we incorporate this intermediate impact on the grounds that certain individuals *are* motivated to disengage by prior deradicalisation (for instance, Individual X in *Figure 2*), and because exits are more likely to be sustained if underpinned by attitudinal change.

Continuing down our results chain, we incorporate five 'outcomes' that respectively focus on the networks, identity, ideology, needs, and psychological wellbeing of clients. As considered shortly, research has identified these as key leverage points through which individuals can be supported or incentivised to move away from violence. These outcomes often operate as collaborators in pursuit of the higher-level impact statements, particularly where they generate mutually reinforcing effects. For instance, the establishment of prosocial networks (Outcome 1) may provoke identity change (Outcome 2), which may further strengthen these new social connections (Outcome 1), and so on. However, there are also contexts in which these outcomes are better interpreted as alternative avenues through which disengagement may be pursued. For instance, this may be best achieved through focusing on the belief systems (Outcome 3) of certain clients, but the needs (Outcome 4) of others. Some of these outcomes are designed to contribute directly to disengagement (most obviously, Outcome 4), whereas others aim to help achieve this uppermost objective via attitudinal change (for instance, Outcome 3).

The 'activities' in *Figure 3* (many of which are considered in detail in the subsequent section) are drawn from existing tertiary programmes across the globe. Many of these contribute to multiple outcomes simultaneously. For instance, livelihood and employment support activities often help clients generate an income (Outcome 4), establish prosocial connections through new work (Outcome 1), and develop alternative identities associated with their new roles (Outcome 2). This is also true for mentorship initiatives, which often aim to assist with a broad range of practical and psychosocial matters. For instance, the 'Back on Track' intervention in Denmark helps clients adapt their social networks (Outcome 1), strengthen their psychological resilience to setbacks (Outcome 5), and support with practical matters such as employment and housing (Outcome 4) (UNODC, 2016). The sequencing of activities is also worth considering, for instance, with certain programmes offering recreational interventions before other services to help generate 'buy-in' from beneficiaries at the outset.



**Impact:** Sustained voluntary end to involvement in ideologically justified violence (**disengagement**)

**Intermediate Impact:** Sustained reduction in/end to sympathy for ideologically justified violence (**deradicalisation**)

**Outcome 1:** Reduced ties to malign influencers & enhanced ties to prosocial alternatives (**networks**)

**Example activities:** Family liaisons, relationship support, recreational activities & mentorship

**Outcome 2:** Diminished salience of social identities associated with violence (**identity**)

**Example activities:** Critical thinking training, interventions addressing identity, civic education, & mentorship

**Outcome 3:** Enhanced willingness to question beliefs that legitimise & justify violence (**ideology**)

**Example activities:** Religious guidance, civic education, critical thinking training & mentorship

**Outcome 4:** Enhanced ability to achieve personal needs through nonviolent means (**needs**)

**Example activities:** Basic education, vocational training, livelihoods/employment support & relocation support

**Outcome 5:** Improved psychological wellbeing (**wellbeing**)

**Example activities:** Cognitive behavioural therapy, anger management, recreational activities & art therapy

*Figure 3: Tertiary Programme Results Chain*

It is worth reiterating that a core premise of our approach is that tertiary interventions must reflect local requirements, conditions, and cultures. Perhaps most obviously, while prison programmes should generally place a heavy emphasis on addressing identity and ideology (Outcomes 2 and 3), these factors are often less critical for interventions with 'low risk' individuals involved in this violence who were never actually sympathetic to its objectives or identified with those involved. To the extent possible, interventions should also be tailored to each individual beneficiary. For instance, educational and vocational provisions should reflect the existing skillsets of each client, their personal preferences, and the labour market in the community where they will return. Similarly, for clients motivated by religious ideologies, the timing and extent of religious engagements should be carefully considered, and only gradually introduced in relevant cases. To help personalize these services, interventions should be delivered through an integrated case management system that includes a means of assessing client needs; develops tailored case management plans; coordinates information from all stakeholders involved in programme delivery; and supports exit processes.

While this report primarily focuses on what needs to be achieved, rather than how these interventions should be undertaken, it is difficult to understate the importance of the relationship between intervention providers and their clients. Indeed, trust and rapport are routinely identified as a critical determinant of programme success (e.g., Barkindo & Bryans 2016; Marsden 2017). For instance, Tina Wilchen Christensen (2020) observes that trusting relationships are ‘essential in any effort aimed at disengagement and deradicalisation, as trust is what makes people become open to input from an outside party, which is necessary for change to occur.’ Focusing on those responsible for radicalised offenders within the probation service in the Netherlands, Liesbeth van der Heide and Bart Schuurman (2018/19) similarly maintain that:

> **A core principle underpinning the team’s work is their dedication to building a strong working relationship with clients. Establishing a bond of trust is seen as a prerequisite to an effective analysis of the client, their social network and ideological views, and thus as essential to any attempt at recidivism-risk reduction, disengagement or deradicalization.**

# 3. INTERVENTION AREAS

**Having outlined the main elements of our approach to tertiary interventions, we can now consider the five outcomes in our results chain in greater depth. In each case, we first explain why these outcomes are important, before focusing on ways in which practitioners can exert influence over these leverage points. It is worth briefly recalling that our focus is on interventions in prison, probation, and community settings, rehabilitation programmes for 'low risk' individuals such as the National Defectors Programme in Somalia and OPSC in Nigeria, and (perhaps somewhat more ambiguously) initiatives such as Exit Sweden.**

## OUTCOME 1: INFLUENCING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

**Outcome 1:** Reduced ties to malign influencers & enhanced ties to prosocial alternatives.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Unlike certain other topics considered in this report, the importance of social connections is relatively uncontroversial in relation to ideologically justified violence. Indeed, it is now recognised that even the actions of most so-called 'lone actors' are motivated and/or facilitated by personal networks, to the extent that Bart Schuurman and his colleagues (2019) convincingly argue that this supposed category of perpetrators should be fundamentally reconsidered.

In particular, it is often observed that peers and familial networks play a prominent role in encouraging and enabling involvement in this violence. For instance, drawing on interviews with incarcerated members of Hamas, Hezbollah, and other Middle Eastern organisations, Jerrold Post, Ehud Sprinzak and Laurita M. Denny (2003) observe that 'in many cases it was a friend or acquaintance in the group who recruited the subject.' Marc Sageman (2008) similarly emphasizes the 'bunch of guys' phenomenon, in which group interactions create 'an echo chamber, which progressively radicalized them collectively.' This process can also be more 'top-down' in nature, for instance, with al-Shabaab sending recruiters to towns and villages to encourage local youths to accompany them to enlistment centres, where they are briefed about the nature of the campaign and pressured to join (Khalil et al., 2019).

Once within these organizations, membership also provides individuals with important psychosocial rewards that can inhibit disengagement (as discussed in Section 2). For instance, John Horgan and his colleagues (2017) report the following about 'Sarah' (a pseudonym), who was involved in far-right violence in the US:

> **Sarah eventually admitted to herself that she was disillusioned with her involvement … This growing toll of concealment combined with the gradual increase of Sarah's self-awareness to external world norms led her to consider leaving outright. Yet she acknowledged having had a difficult time successfully exiting the groups to which she belonged because, in her words, she lacked 'the resources' to do so. Despite the negative consequences of continued involvement, to her the group still provided self-worth, validation, and protection.**

Of course, personal connections also often play a pivotal role in encouraging and facilitating exits from violence. For instance, research at the Serendi centre revealed that certain parents promised to find wives for sons who disengaged from al-Shabaab (a 'service' also frequently provided by al-Shabaab), or threatened to disown them if they remained with the group (Khalil et al., 2019). In other cases, family members helped enable their disengagement by providing hiding locations or arranging safe passage with the security forces (Heide-Ottosen et al., 2022). Peer and familial connections also often play a critical role in helping former members secure livelihood opportunities during their reintegration (Cherney, 2021). For instance, a former Serendi resident highlighted that an influential uncle arranged work for him as a fishmonger upon his release from the centre (Khalil et al, 2019).

## INFLUENCING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

With the above in mind, Outcome 1 of our results chain aims to reduce connections to malign influencers and to enhance personal ties to prosocial alternatives. In pursuit of such aims, the relevant authorities in Belgium, Germany, Spain, and other locations adopt a policy of dispersing terrorism convicts across their prison systems (García-Calvo & Vicente, 2020; Renard, 2020; Said 2020), rather than concentrating them in specialised facilities. This deprives these individuals of the personal networks that often help sustain their involvement in violence, while also providing them with opportunities to interact with a wider circle of individuals from different backgrounds.[3]

For instance, Sarah reports that she established friendships with women of colour while serving time in a US federal prison (Horgan et al, 2017). She adds that they treated her 'like any other person', despite her swastikas and other Neo-Nazi tattoos. Having bombed a mosque while with the Norwegian Nasjonalt Folkeparti, 'Lars' similarly observes that (quoted in Horgan, 2009):

> **Well, I think for me, prison was a good thing because I was moved away from the movement. Prison was the best thing that happened to me then. I didn't meet people in the movement, and I was not around them anymore. They did come to visit me sometimes, but I did make some new friends in the prison from at least two other different countries. Normal people. One was from Sierra Leone. … But, it was when I was in prison that my world completely changed. I discovered that everything I had done, and everything that I was thinking about before, was completely wrong. In prison, meeting these people, I realized how very wrong I was. [The man from Sierra Leone] and other people I had talked to in prison were nice people. It was a different world.**

Efforts to sever connections to malign influencers can continue into probation, with offenders often being prohibited from contacting particular individuals through their release conditions. As reported by Liesbeth van der Heide and Bart Schuurman (2018/9) regarding the case of the Netherlands, 'prohibitions on meeting former extremist friends, visiting neighbourhoods or cities where those networks were still active, or accessing extremist material online, were intended to prevent clients from being pulled back into a radical social milieu.'

Certain tertiary programmes also attempt to achieve this objective through the 'softer' approach of simply encouraging beneficiaries to disassociate from these networks. This includes the Proactive Integrated Support Model (PRISM) intervention in the Australian state of New South Wales, where practitioners emphasize the negative effects of such associations (Cherney 2018/9). As highlighted by María Teresa García Membrives and Rogelio Alonso (2022), this is also the case for a tertiary programme for juveniles in Spain. The Healthy Identity Intervention (HII) in England and Wales likewise encourages clients to challenge particular relationships 'that have caused problems in their lives as well as those which support offending' (Dean, 2014).

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[3] Of course, there are also strong counterarguments against such policies, with the obvious risk being that by dispersing these inmates the authorities may inadvertently enhance their opportunities to radicalise others within the prison system. The 'dispersal' versus 'concentration' debate is considered in more detail in Silke & Veldhuis (2017) and Copeland & Marsden (2020).

Regarding efforts to enhance prosocial alternatives, emphasis can be placed on establishing new social relations. For instance, an intervention provider in England and Wales explains their approach as follows (quoted in Marsden, 2017):

> **Someone could be referred by the probation service, and I suppose one of the fears is going to be, as soon as they're released, they might start making contact with some of their old acquaintances, which as well could get them back in trouble. Obviously, that's not gonna be ideal, so, if we can get them involved in the centre here, certainly with the sports as well, there is a more positive peer group here basically. So, there'll be that effort to get them integrated into a different peer group … because, you have to approach the problem holistically, you know, you can't just say, right you're not gonna do this anymore, do this, but then without providing the support and a new kind of network for them.**

More commonly, programmes also attempt to strengthen connections to supportive family members by facilitating their visits and helping to re-establish ties that have been lost. In the case of the National Defectors Programme in Somalia, clients are also granted weekend leave to visit their home communities, further reinforcing such connections (Khalil et al., 2019). By contrast, the assistance provided through the Counselling Program in Saudi Arabia is notably more elaborate, with this reportedly including 'support for weddings or other family celebrations, and financial support for family members' (Porges, 2014).

## OUTCOME 2: INFLUENCING IDENTITIES

**Outcome 2:** Diminished salience of social identities associated with violence.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF IDENTITY

Having discussed the subject of personal connections, we can now consider the closely related theme of social identity as the second outcome of our results chain. While there are many theories of identity, our understanding of this term is primarily anchored in the dual social identity and self-categorization frameworks, which are collectively referred to as the social identity perspective (SIP). The SIP recognizes that individuals have multiple identities, emphasizing a core distinction between superordinate human identities, intermediate social identities (of which most people have many), and subordinate personal identities. SIP views these as functionally antagonistic, so that as one becomes more relevant in particular contexts, others tend to decrease in salience. For instance, the context of a football match enhances certain social identities (fans of particular teams) at the expense of human and personal identities, and other forms of social identity. This process of social categorization creates and reinforces stereotypes by enhancing perceived similarities within both 'ingroups' and 'outgroups', while also increasing apparent differences between them. Such apparent distinctions underpin the spectrum of violence encompassed by concepts such as terrorism, insurgency, and violence extremism.

Regarding what drives these social identities, commentators who draw from SIP tend to emphasize the importance of structural motivators of violence (the first category of ABC Model drivers presented in Table 1) such as state repression, political exclusion, social discrimination, and economic deprivation. For instance, focusing on the Palestinian Territories, the Basque Country, and other cases, Jerrold Post (2007) highlights how ‘oppression by the dominant group and the government led to a defensive intensification of the identity of the minority group.’ Focusing on Northern Ireland, Neil Ferguson and James McAuley (2021) similarly observe that experiences of discrimination and injustice enhance ‘feelings of similarity and groupness in the threatened group.’ More broadly, drawing from a range of historical and contemporary cases, Marc Sageman (2018) identifies the following recurring pattern:

> **A politicized social identity is activated when people with a serious grievance realize that they have more in common with one another in terms of the grievance than they do with the rest of the population. The collection of people with a politicized social identity creates a vague and diffuse political community. … politically violent actors often did not originally view themselves as political. Many were students, workers, or citizens with some sort of grievance whose peaceful demonstration was violently repressed by the state. This aggression against the group, for instance, using the police or army to crush a peaceful crowd, shocked its members into experiencing this attack not as neutral observes but as threatened members of a collective.**

This dynamic often becomes self-reinforcing, as escalating hostilities increase the salience of these social identities, which further escalates hostilities, and so on. For instance, this was the case in Northern Ireland, where reciprocated violence between Catholic and Protestant communities spiraled from 1969, with the enhanced salience of these identities being both a cause and an effect of ‘the troubles.’ Of course, not everyone involved in such violence is driven by social identity, with this being particularly the case for those motivated by adventure, status, economic incentives, and so on (Individuals A, B and C in *Figure 1*). Nevertheless, these social identities are sufficiently prominent to warrant inclusion as Outcome 2 in our results chain.

## ADDRESSING IDENTITY

With the above in mind, the Healthy Identity Intervention (HII) in England and Wales incorporates a series of sessions for clients who identify (or have identified) with a particular group or cause. As reported by Christopher Dean (2014), these include meetings focussed on group involvement that ‘encourage participants to explore the nature of their relationship to the group (or shared identity),’ and help them consider ‘commitments that have caused them problems in their lives as well as those which support offending.’ Practitioners in the UK also more explicitly aim to counter the issues described above, for instance, by encouraging their clients to view themselves as members of the local community or as British citizens. As reported by Sarah Marsden (2017), ‘practitioners tried to explore concepts like British-ness, London-ness or even Walthamstow-ness.’ Considering jihadist violence specifically, one practitioner (quoted in Marsden, 2017) observed that ‘I think the key message is that there’s no contradiction in terms of following the Islamic faith, and also taking part in society,’ adding that ‘you can be Islamic and also British.’ A UK Probation Officer (also quoted in Marsden, 2017) similarly asserted that:

> **I think identity work, I think that’s the key, the key … lever, maybe. Because, I think that when they were in the height of radicalization, them being a fighter for Islam, or whatever they would want to call it, was their dominant identity. In fact, it was all encompassing, and what you’re trying to build is a more balanced identity … [I would] talk about balancing their identities, developing multiple identities, and really promoting things like the social contract, and their British identity.**

Other interventions attempt to counter identities of concern through less direct means, including through civic education initiatives. In the Serendi centre, for instance, this service was designed to foster a shared sense of responsibility to democratic principles and to the resolution of conflict through nonviolent means, as well as to enhance the extent to which the beneficiaries identified as Somalis (Khalil et al., 2019). The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2016) elaborates on the content of such interventions as follows:

> **Space should be provided within the wider education curriculum for learning about citizenship, reinforcing the values, rights, duties, and responsibilities of individuals towards each other and in relation to the State. Learning about law, justice, fairness, human rights and ethics in public life, democracy, the role of government, critical thinking and constructive debate is essential in countering subjective interpretations of the world propagated by violent extremists. Civic responsibility and citizenship may also build a shared sense of culture within a society that consists of a diverse mix of ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds.**

Interventions that aim to enhance critical thinking can also play an important role in relation to identity given that the entities responsible for this violence rely on black-and-white interpretations of reality that distinguish between clearly defined ingroups and outgroups. One promising approach revolves around the notion of integrative complexity (IC), which encourages individuals to incorporate shades of grey into their reasoning. This method was applied to young males at the Sabaoon centre in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) who had been detained for their association with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). As reported by Feriha Peracha and her colleagues (2022), 'before the IC intervention, participants' written responses about their ingroup and outgroup were mainly structured simply, dichotomously, and in black-and-white, categorical terms.' However, 'after the intervention, their written responses show more complex, qualified evaluations of both the ingroup and outgroup as having both some good and bad qualities.' Of course, such measures may also play a pivotal role in countering the ideologies of concern, a subject to which we now turn.

## OUTCOME 3: INFLUENCING IDEOLOGIES

### THE IMPORTANCE OF IDEOLOGY

**Outcome 3:** Enhanced willingness to question beliefs that legitimise & justify violence.

While the concept of ideology is notorious for its 'semantic promiscuity' (Gerring, 1997), thematic specialists generally interpret it as referring to collections of ideas and values that help explain or challenge existing social or political arrangements (e.g., Hamilton, 1987; Snow, 2007; Wilson, 1973). Of course, in the context of this paper we are primarily interested in belief systems that explicitly advocate or justify violence, rather than ideologies more broadly. For the purposes of the current discussion, it is helpful to distinguish between the diagnosis, prognosis, and mobilization elements of these belief systems (Snow & Benford, 1988; Wilson, 1973). Considering these in turn, the first of these components involves identifying and attributing blame for real or perceived grievances (channelling the first category of ABC Model drivers presented in Table 1). For instance, this is apparent in jihadist assertions that the U.S. and her allies have attacked or oppressed Muslims across the globe over recent decades. Osama bin Laden himself made the following assertion shortly after 9/11 (quoted in Ibrahim, 2007):

> **Look at America – filled with terror from north to south, east to west – all praise be to Allah! What America is tasting today is but a fraction of what we have been**

> **tasting for decades: Our *ummah* has been tasting this humiliation and contempt for over eighty years. Its sons have been slain, its blood has been shed, and its sacred places have been defiled – all in opposition to what has been revealed by Allah.**

This component is also clear in Brenton Tarrant's Great Replacement (n.d.) manifesto, released shortly before he fatally shot fifty-one Muslims in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 2019:

> **We are experiencing an invasion on a level never seen before in history. Millions of people pouring across our borders, legally. … This crisis of mass immigration and sub-replacement fertility is an assault on the European people that, if not combated, will ultimately result in the complete racial and cultural replacement of the European people. … Mass immigration will disenfranchise us, subvert our nations, destroy our communities, destroy our ethnic binds, destroy our cultures, destroy our peoples. … We must crush immigration and deport those invaders already living on our soil. It is not just a matter of our prosperity, but the very survival of our people.**

While the prognostic components of these ideologies are often less developed, they invariably emphasize the necessity or effectiveness of force. As observed by Donald Holbrook (2016), al-Qaeda holds a 'fundamental belief in the utility of violent attacks,' with bin Laden citing examples such as the 1993 'Black Hawk down' incident in Somalia in support of this stance. Regarding Northern Ireland, Gerry Adams (quoted in O'Brien, 1999) similarly declared that 'there are those who tell us that the British Government will not be moved by armed struggle,' but 'the history of Ireland, and of British colonial involvement throughout the world, tell us that they will not be moved by anything else.' The relevance of violence is also emphasised in the following passage from Anders Breivik's (2011) manifesto, released shortly before he claimed seventy-seven lives in Oslo and on the Norwegian island of Utøya in 2011:

> **The only way we can then prevent Sharia law from being implemented as the only standard will be to suppress the Muslim majority through military force … This can only be accomplished by overthrowing the current Western European multiculturalist regimes by seizing power through armed resistance and a military coup when the time is right. This is the only way to safeguard democracy long term. Sure, it will be bloody. But if democracy, our homelands, and people aren't worth certain sacrifices then what is?**

Echoing the distinction between attitudes and behaviours at the heart of the ABC Model, the mobilization component of ideology relates to actions rather than beliefs. The relevant ideologies invariably attempt to encourage participation in this violence through impassioned pleas and an emphasis on personal obligations (e.g., Berntzen & Sandberg, 2014). For instance, statements from al-Qaeda apply 'emotive appeals resting on notions of common identity,' while reminding Muslims of their 'duties, responsibilities, and obligations' (Holbrook, 2016). Of course, it is worth recalling that sympathy for such ideologies is certainly not a necessary condition for direct involvement, with many individuals instead largely motivated by status, adventure, material incentives, and other rewards that can be attained irrespective of beliefs (as represented by Individuals A, B and C in *Figure 1*). Nevertheless, such sympathies often do play a pivotal role in participation, and it is on this basis that we include efforts to address violence justifying ideologies as Outcome 3 in our results chain.

## ADDRESSING IDEOLOGY

Tertiary programmes attempt to influence the belief systems of their clients through various means, including by enhancing connections to prosocial networks, civic education, and training in critical thinking (as previously discussed in relation to Outcomes 1 and 2). Perhaps unsurprisingly, many also incorporate political, religious, or spiritual guidance as a more direct route to achieve this same objective. As observed by Daniel Koehler (2017), programmes for those involved in jihadist violence in the Global South often bluntly attempt to 're-educate' beneficiaries by providing them with the 'correct' interpretation of their faith. For instance, this is the approach adopted by the Counselling Program in Saudi Arabia, with Christopher Boucek (2008) observing that:

> **Most of the prisoners have been found by the [Advisory] Committee to have an incomplete understanding of Islam … The Counselling Program, therefore, seeks to 'correct' this misunderstanding by reintroducing and reinforcing the official state version of Islam. Because these individuals did not correctly learn then tenets of their faith originally, they were susceptible to extremist propaganda. As a result, the programme seeks to remove incorrect understandings of Islam and replace them with correct understandings.**

The prison-based programme in Nigeria adopts a somewhat less rigid approach, with Atta Barkindo and Shane Bryans (2016) reporting that:

> **Faith-based interventions required understanding violent extremist ideologies and countering them with superior scholarly arguments. The narratives applied for countering extremist ideologies were not dictated by the views of any particular Islamic or Christian sect. Rather, they were directed by the central messages of Islam and Christianity with regards to tolerance, balance, the spirit of coexistence and social etiquettes that guide good relationships with others and bring peace and security in society. Basic tenets of both Islam and Christianity were reiterated with prisoners.**

As already observed, programmes in the Global North are often more constrained by concerns about the extent to which states should intervene in personal affairs, particularly in relation to the personal freedoms of thought and religion (Elshimi, 2020; Koehler, 2017). Certain programmes in the North also view this violence largely through a social or psychological lens, effectively downplay the perceived importance of ideology. Consequently, these programmes often adopt 'soft' approaches that avoid challenging these belief systems directly. For instance, probation officers in the Netherlands merely encourage clients to question their ideologies by discussing their involvement in violence through reference to identity formation (van der Heide & Schuurman, 2018/9), as considered through Outcome 2. By contrast, intervention providers in the UK urge beneficiaries to reflect upon 'the credibility of the ideologues who had often been influential on the path to extremism,' helping them comprehend that 'the information they felt supported violence was not as well evidenced as they had come to believe' (Marsden, 2017). Alternatively, imams involved in the PRISM programme in Australia simply aim to help clients 'understand the plurality of views and schools of thought evident within Islam' (Cherney, 2018/9).

# OUTCOME 4: ACHIEVING NEEDS

**Outcome 4:** Enhanced ability to achieve personal needs through nonviolent means.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF INCENTIVES

The 'free-rider problem' features prominently in the literature on political violence (although less so in terrorism studies specifically), to the extent that Stathis Kalyvas and Matthew Adam Kocher observed in 2007 that 'recent studies invoke canonically the assumption that rebels face a collective action problem that must be overcome.' For instance, this is apparent in Elisabeth Jean Wood's (2003) excellent *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*, which relies on extensive ethnographic research. The free-rider paradox also features heavily in Quintan Wiktorowicz's (2005) account of al-Muhajiroun, in which he concludes that 'high-risk activism' represents a rational choice, even though 'it may seem like blind fanaticism to outsiders.' In all cases, the pertinent question is essentially: Why do individuals choose to participate in ideologically justified violence if they can free-ride on the actions of others, gaining from the apparent collective benefits it aims to deliver (the expulsion of migrant communities, the introduction of Sharia Law, and so on), while also avoiding the personal costs (imprisonment, injury, and even death)?

According to the rational choice (RC) framework, free-riding is the default option, even for those who are sympathetic to the objectives of this violence (Khalil et al., 2022). This is because: (1) the collective benefits cannot be withheld from nonparticipants (they are nonrival and nonexcludable); (2) the prospects of the group achieving these benefits are usually slim; and (3) most individuals only contribute negligibly to attaining these benefits in any case. Of course, participation in this violence is an empirical reality, and so analysts ascribing to the RC framework seek solutions to this apparent paradox. For instance, targeting the third of these reasons, certain scholars rely on the so-called efficacy solution, which argues that some engage in this violence in the belief that their personal participation enhances the chances of a successful outcome (e.g., Popkin, 1979). This applies particularly to those with in-demand attributes or resources, such as leadership skills or the technical ability to construct IEDs. Other researchers focus on the second reason, emphasizing the extent to which organizations can convince their followers that victory is inevitable.

An arguably more compelling solution to the free-rider hurdle emphasizes rewards that are contingent on personal contributions to this violence, with these corresponding to the ABC Model category of individual incentives (see *Table 1*). As discussed in our original ABC article (Khalil et al., 2022), narrow variants of this approach gravitate toward economic rewards, including salaries and payments-in-kind. In certain locations, members of such organizations are also able to exploit their status through plunder or by embezzling funds collected for the cause (although many groups have strict policies against such activities and severely punish transgressors). Somewhat broader interpretations also encompass security incentives, with organisations in locations as diverse as Colombia, Nigeria, Somalia, and Sri Lanka relying on coercive methods to 'encourage' involvement.

Even broader versions of the RC framework include psychosocial rewards such as purpose, status, belonging, self-esteem, adventure, revenge, duty fulfillment and salvation. For instance, Mauricio Florez-Morris (2007) observes that many involved in violence in Colombia, were on 'a personal journey of self-improvement,' and driven by the desire to 'to have a meaningful existence.' Eamon Collins (1998) similarly maintains that many of his comrades in the Provisional IRA fought because 'by doing so they gave themselves power, status and influence which they could never have achieved otherwise.' Regarding his involvement in violence in Derry in 1969, Brendan Hughes, who led the first hunger strike during 'the troubles' in Northern Ireland, also notes that (quoted in Taylor, 1998):

> **My old school was being attacked by loyalist crowds with petrol bombs. One of the IRA men who were there at the time had a Thompson submachine-gun and asked if anybody knew the layout of the school. I did and I went with this fella. … It gave me a sense of pride and a feeling that we had something to protect ourselves with. I wanted to be involved in that too because our whole community felt that we were under attack. I wanted to be part of that defense.**

To be clear, not all participants in this violence are necessarily driven to involvement by personal incentives, as the relevant social identities (as described in relation to Outcome 2) can theoretically motivate involvement even in their absence. Indeed, the SIP essentially sidesteps the free-rider hurdle by observing that individuals often act in accordance with the perceived interests of their ingroup, as opposed to their own. Nevertheless, such personal rewards indisputably do play a critical role in motivating many to become involved.

Of course, individual incentives also often help drive disengagement from ideologically justified violence, with it again being helpful to distinguish between those of an economic, security and psychosocial nature (see Table 2). For instance, former members of al-Shabaab reported that they were motivated to disengage by the need to earn more money, with the salaries provided by the organization deemed inadequate (Khalil et al., 2019). Alongside former members of Boko Haram, many also claimed to have been driven by a desire for greater personal safety (Khalil et al., 2019; Khalil et al., 2022). Individuals from both groups similarly emphasized their wish to disassociate from the guilt provoked by their involvement in violence, as well as the importance of familial obligations. Switching attention to the Basque Country, Fernando Reinares (2011) also highlights the extent to which a desire to spend more time with the family often contributed to exits from ETA. As reported by one of his respondents:

> **You see, I got married when I was in prison. I had a son while I was in prison, and he was three years old by the time I got out. I told myself at this point in time, I am not totally convinced that I want to be part of this organization, that I want to be in jail … Then I've got this wife and a family that I've got to help support. I have got to work for them, and I say: That's it, I'm out of here. You see, there are good reasons for leaving and good reasons not to leave, but the reasons for leaving are that much more convincing than the reasons for staying in.**

## PROVIDING NEEDS

The widely used concept of 'criminogenic needs' refers to factors associated with criminal behaviour, with these frequently including attitudes and beliefs, personality traits, and contextual factors. We adopt a somewhat narrower interpretation of 'needs' for the purposes of Outcome 4, which largely corresponds to the economic, security and psychosocial incentives discussed immediately above. However, we intentionally exclude needs relating to social networks (including the sense of belonging derived through these), identity and psychological wellbeing, as we considered these to be sufficiently important to warrant their own branches in our results chain (comprising Outcomes 1, 2 and 5 respectively).

Considering specific needs in turn, many tertiary programmes try to improve their beneficiaries' prospects of generating an income. This is of particular relevance in locations such as Somalia and Nigeria where many clients were previously reliant on the material incentives provided by groups such as al-Shabaab and Boko Haram. As such, residents at Serendi can choose between vocational training in welding, tailoring, and auto-mechanics, whereas the options available to clients of the prison programme in Nigeria can choose between carpentry, bead-making, tailoring and electrical work (Barkindo & Bryans, 2016; Khalil et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the Sabaoon programme in Pakistan offered training in 'computer skills, basic electrician skills, appliance repair, refrigeration, tailoring, carpentry, and masonry,' before it ceased operating (Khyber et al., 2022). Certain programmes offer additional support through identifying work opportunities for their clients, establishing connections to potential employers, providing entrepreneurship training, and so on (Boucek, 2008; Khalil et al., 2019; UNODC, 2016).

Regarding security needs, the Serendi centre provides funding to help relocate beneficiaries who have few reintegration options other than to return to home communities that remain heavy influenced by or under the control of al-Shabaab (Khalil et al., 2019). Of course, the facilities themselves provide most beneficiaries with a far more secure context than that they experienced while still 'in the bush.' Although rarely framed in this manner, many tertiary activities are also designed to satisfy psychosocial needs. For instance, while efforts to enhance livelihoods prospects are most obviously designed to satisfy economic needs, they also often provide beneficiaries with status and esteem. 'Generative activities' similarly offer beneficiaries a sense of purpose or fulfilment, as has been observed regarding desistance from crime generally (Maruna, 2001). As maintained by Sarah Marsden (2017), 'it remains vital to recognise the importance of providing opportunities to engage with the community in ways that "give back."' An example of particular relevance for our purposes is the work conducted by networks of former combatants from across the sectarian divide in Northern Ireland who cooperate to help diffuse tensions when these escalate (Clubb, 2014).

## OUTCOME 5: IMPROVING PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING

**Outcome 5:** Improved psychological wellbeing.

### THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING

Research on the causal link between mental health problems and involvement in ideologically justified violence has a turbulent past (Gill & Corner, 2017; Horgan, 2014). While early studies pointed to the role of disorders such as psychopathy and narcissism, many of these findings were subsequently overturned as methodological issues with this research became increasingly clear. As expressed by John Horgan (2003), this early research was 'built on unsteady empirical, theoretical and conceptual foundations.' Indeed, by 1998 Andrew Silke was able to assert that 'most serious researchers in the field at least nominally agree with the position that terrorists are essentially normal individuals,' despite some continued 'dissension in the ranks.' Twelve years later, Ariel Merari clarified that 'the only scientifically sound conclusion for now is that *we do not know* whether terrorists share common traits, but we cannot be sure that such traits do not exist' (quoted in Corner et al., 2016). Adding to the general scepticism about the role of mental health issues, many commentators (e.g., Corner & Gill, 2015; Horgan 2014) also highlight the potential influence of selection effects, with candidate members with such problems often being 'weeded out' during the recruitment process on the grounds that they may be less reliable, committed, discrete, disciplined, and so on.

However, more recent studies have revived this debate and added nuance by exploring mental health problems among particular subsets of those involved in this violence. This includes research conducted by Merari and colleagues (2010) with fifteen "suicide terrorists" and twelve "non-suicide terrorists" in the

Palestinian Territories. While the former sample included individuals “who had been arrested in the process of trying to carry out a suicide attack,” the latter consisted of those who had participated in other acts of political violence. This research found that the majority of would-be suicide attackers had avoidant and dependent personalities, whereas those from the comparison group tended to be impulsive or emotionally unstable. Meanwhile, Emily Corner and her colleagues demonstrated that ‘lone-actors’ are more likely to exhibit mental health problems than either ‘group-actors’ involved in this violence or the general population (Corner & Gill, 2015; Corner et al., 2016). Of particular note, they conclude that the prevalence of schizophrenia is several magnitudes higher among lone actors (Corner et al., 2016). Nevertheless, the point remains that there is certainly ‘no common diagnosis,’ with Paul Gill and his colleagues (2021) observing that those involved in this violence are ‘marked by their diversity rather than their homogeneity.’

We should also recall that mental health problems can occur as a consequence of involvement in this violence, rather than only acting as a potential contributing factor. The influence of depression provides a constant thread throughout the autobiography of former member of the Provisional IRA, Eamon Collins (1998). After contributing to the killing of an innocent man, he describes his mental state in the following terms:

> **Depression gripped me but it also carried me along. I thought of Hanna often, and each time his image entered my mind I felt a stab of pain and guilt. But in the turbulence of my mind at the time there were two conflicting ideas: first, theoretically, politically, and emotionally I supported the IRA’s armed struggle and, second, at some human level I regarding Hanna’s killing as a foul act. … I look back now and realize that I resolved the ensuing mental crisis by hardening my heart towards those I perceived as enemies.**

Drawing from interviews with former jihadists, far-right extremists, and Tamil separatists, Kate Barrelle (2015) notes that at least one respondent from each of these groups reported ‘anxiety, depression, trauma, paranoia, burnout, psychotic breakdown, and emotional breakdowns.’ Focusing on child soldiers in Sierra Leone, Theresa Betancourt and her colleagues (2010) similarly highlight the prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, and other issues. Seeking to quantify such matters through an assessment of autobiographical accounts, Corner and Gill (2020) reveal that forty-six percent of these testimonies described forms of ‘psychological distress’ during involvement in violence, and forty-two percent after disengagement. Even acknowledging the potential sampling and reporting biases (as the authors do), these figures are striking.

## IMPROVING PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING

With the available evidence suggesting that mental health problems help explain why at least some individuals become involved in ideologically justified violence, Outcome 5 is designed to contribute to the uppermost objective of our results chain by alleviating such issues. Given the contentious nature of debates on this topic, however, we should clarify that in adopting this interpretation we are certainly *not* suggesting that there is a particular ‘terrorist personality’ or even that mental health problems provide a ‘core’ explanatory variable (Corner et al., 2021; Gill et al., 2021). Rather, some of these issues help propel particular individuals towards this violence, when combined with other structural motivators, individual incentives, and enabling factors (see *Table 1*). That said, even in cases where mental health problems play no obvious causal role regarding participation in violence, improved psychological wellbeing can contribute to the top-level objectives of our results chain by enhancing the extent to which clients may benefit from the other four outcomes. As noted by Adrian Cherney (2018/9), beneficiaries ‘have to be in a functional psychological state to help facilitate self-reflection about their behaviour, beliefs and plans for the future.'

Outcome 5 interventions are often placed within the broad umbrella of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS). While offered within tertiary programmes in locations such as Belgium, Denmark, England and Wales, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Somalia, and Sri Lanka, little information is generally provided about the content of such interventions beyond brief references to counselling, anger management, cognitive behavioural therapy, and other standard approaches and techniques. The PRISM programme in Australia provides a partial exception, with Cherney (2018/9) reporting that psychologists encouraged their beneficiaries to keep themselves occupied through work and hobbies, and recommended techniques such as drawing the obstacles that they faced. As observed by one beneficiary:

> **My mind, all my attention was on my daily routine, I got employed in jail, in the bakery, they [i.e., PRISM] got that … It was important in keeping me occupied … It helped pass the day, occupy my mind, I was focused, helped me with a routine … I remember she [in reference to a PRISM staff member] helped me to try and get things out of my head, told me to picture a river in my head, and to picture my thoughts going up the river … They [i.e., PRISM staff] encouraged me to keep up my art, reading, playing the guitar … This helps to take your mind off things, especially when you're in a cell.**

Some details are also available about such support in a tertiary programme for juveniles in Spain, with María Teresa García Membrives and Rogelio Alonso (2022) observing the following about the treatment received by one particular beneficiary:

> **Through examples provided by the practitioner, the girl identified and analysed the main features of anxiety, its consequences and how to handle it. Sheets on learning to breath, learning to relax, changing, and controlling of thoughts, structured the intervention on this facet. … The exercises of anxiety control were practiced at least three times, applying them to situations that had cause nervousness at that particular moment or had caused it in the past.**

By contrast, the psychosocial support delivered at the Serendi centre includes solution-focused counselling and group work (Khalil et al., 2019). However, with psychology remaining a nascent field in Somalia, this is administered by social workers who are essentially trained 'on the job.' Many interventions also include recreational and creative pursuits for their therapeutic value, for instance, with the Nigerian prison programme offering music, drumming, dance, and handicrafts. As reported by Atta Barkindo and Shane Bryans (2016), these elements 'enabled the communication of feelings and emotions associated with significant life events.' In Indonesian prisons, clients are provided with interventions that focus on emotional expression and cognitive flexibility, with evidence suggesting that these enhance their acceptance of 'the idea of democratic life' (Muluk et al., 2020).

# 4. THE WAY FORWARD

We present this paper as a novel framework to help practitioners develop and implement tertiary interventions in prison, probation, and community settings, rehabilitation centres for 'low risk' individuals such as the National Defectors Programme in Somalia and OPSC in Nigeria, and (somewhat more ambiguously) initiatives such as Exit Sweden. Irrespective of the framework adopted, all such programmes should be subject to rigorous evaluations to determine the extent to which they achieve their desired effects (however interpreted). Unfortunately, there remains limited empirical evidence demonstrating the extent to which such interventions succeed, and the mechanisms through which identified successes are achieved. This is often because of: a lack of policymaker 'buy-in' to the necessity of evaluations; concerns over what evaluations may actually reveal; insufficient technical expertise to design and implement such evaluations; and genuine methodological challenges associated with research on this challenging subject. This represents a critical concern that must be addressed.

While still viewed by many as the 'gold standard', the prospects for randomised controlled trials (RCTs) remain slim given the obvious ethical issues associated with deliberately withholding interventions to establish a control group (even if only temporarily). In particular, the concern is that individuals selected for the control sample may go on to commit atrocities. Quasi-experimental methods offer a somewhat more realistic alternative, with David Webber and his colleagues (2018) providing a well-known example from Sri Lanka. These scholars applied a longitudinal survey to assess the levels of extremism of former members of the LTTE at various rehabilitation centres. This involved asking them about their support for the LTTE's objectives, whether they perceived violence to be legitimate, and other related themes. The treatment sample (the 'full treatment' group) included clients who received the complete rehabilitation package of basic education, vocational training, psychosocial support, spiritual guidance, family visitation, mediation services and recreational activities. The control sample (the 'minimal treatment' group) included clients at a separate centre who benefited only from the final three of these elements for logistical reasons.

With the full treatment sample demonstrating a greater reduction in the measures of extremism over time, the authors concluded that the Sri Lankan programme was successful. Yet, lingering doubts remain about the validity of these findings precisely because the authors were unable to control for all possible external influences in the absence of randomisation. For instance, it is also plausible that the minimal treatment sample demonstrated a lesser reduction in their extremism scores as they originated from communities that experienced particularly brutal acts of state violence, or because they lost greater numbers of family members to the conflict. Put simply, the commitment of this sample to violence may have been more enduring for such reasons. The point is that methodological limitations prevent Webber and his colleagues from rejecting these alternative hypotheses. Another widely acknowledged limitation of quasi-experimental methods (as well as RCTs) is their inability to explain how and why particular programmes work (Stern et al., 2012), with this certainly also applicable to the Sri Lanka study. To be clear, our objective is not to be unduly critical of this otherwise insightful research by Webber and his colleagues, but instead to highlight the inherent limitations of their approach.

In practice, tertiary programmes more often rely on a cluster of evaluation methods collectively referred to as theory-based approaches, with these including realist evaluations, contribution analysis, and so on (Glazzard 2022; Stern et al., 2012). While the absence of comparison groups limits the extent to which these can reliably demonstrate causality, they offer far greater ability to explain how and why programmes generate change. There are also far fewer ethical and practical constraints to their application, which helps explain why they are actually mandated by various agencies responsible for these programmes (although the findings are rarely made public). As their name suggests, these methods revolve around the development of theories that explain how these interventions are expected to deliver their results. This generally includes a results chain (with our Figure 3 providing an example of this), and details regarding the expected mechanisms of change and programmatic assumptions. These approaches then collect evidence to determine the extent to which the intended effects have been achieved, and to test the broader programme logic. Of course, the broader point is that those tasked with delivering these interventions should be aware that all approaches to evaluation have clear strengths and limitations.

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