Does CVE Work?

Lessons Learned from the Global Effort to Counter Violent Extremism

BY PETER ROMANIUK

GLOBAL CENTER ON COOPERATIVE SECURITY

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ACRONYMS

CCRS	Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security (Canada)
CVE	Countering violent extremism
DCLG	UK Department of Communities and Local Government
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
EU	European Union
FTF	Foreign terrorist fighter
GAO	U.S. Government Accountability Office
GCTF	Global Counterterrorism Forum
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NSCOP	National Security Community Outreach Program (RCMP)
OSCT	UK Office for Security and Counterterrorism
PVE	Preventing violent extremism
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
TSCTP	Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Program (USAID)
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a field of policy and practice, countering violent extremism (CVE) has emerged rapidly in recent years and represents the most significant development in counterterrorism over that time. Ideologically driven violent extremists are a primary threat to national and human security in the developed and developing worlds, suggesting that, in some form or other, CVE will remain on the counterterrorism agenda in the short and medium terms. CVE stands at something of a fulcrum point. There is enough experience in "doing CVE" to expect that data about its effects and effectiveness can be gathered and analyzed; in turn, such analyses ought to inform future developments if policy is to be evidence based. This report advances this objective by asking, "Does CVE work?" It responds in four ways.

First, in light of the common observation that CVE lacks coherence as a field, this report offers a brief primer on CVE, providing a definition, a typology of CVE measures, and an ideal-type policy cycle. Regularizing understanding of the field is a necessary step in improving outcomes and enhancing the ability to determine what works.

Second, this report reviews publicly available evaluation research on CVE to derive lessons from CVE efforts. On the basis of the data on hand, these lessons pertain to initial efforts by governments to engage communities for the purpose of CVE. They are know your audience; avoid stigmatizing communities; send clear messages (e.g., so that "soft power" CVE measures are not conflated with or impacted by more traditional counterterrorism tools); and engage broadly and partner strategically. In part, practitioners learned these lessons through evaluation; but other mechanisms of policy learning, especially professional contacts, were likely more important.

Third, this report finds that governments have begun to integrate knowledge from their initial forays into the CVE space. A cluster of governments have completed the "CVE policy cycle" formally or informally, and this report distinguishes "first wave" and "second wave" CVE initiatives on this basis. Second-wave measures converge around a series of refined initiatives at the community level, alongside a stronger focus on individual-level interventions. Also, second-wave programs are more likely to target those most at risk of committing extremist violence and not simply those that may be sympathetic to extremist ideas—a welcome development. Yet, second-wave programs present a range of challenges; and this report recommends that practitioners—governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)—develop ways to institutionalize policy learning on CVE, including through committing to evaluation research. In particular, development of horizontal networks for NGO CVE practitioners should be a priority.

Fourth, this report surveys the state of play regarding the process of evaluating CVE measures. In a broadly defined field, there is some diversity within the modest body of completed, publicly available evaluation research. Practitioners increasingly exhibit an awareness of the importance of evaluation, and as a result, long-standing rhetorical support for CVE evaluation is beginning to translate into practice. Ideally, future evaluation research will be publicly available to facilitate comparison and analysis.

In sum, this report reflects critically on a field that has risen to prominence in a manner disproportional to its achievements. Practitioners in government and NGOs, among others, should use it to inform their understanding of CVE and guide their responses in a systematic and evidence-based fashion. The record offers some pointers for more effective programming going forward but commends moderate expectations overall. Among this report's key findings:

1. More precision and specificity are needed when defining CVE and classifying and evaluating CVE programming.
2. Contextualized assessments and stakeholder consultations are critical to effective programming

but remain underutilized. Ongoing investments in gathering and analyzing data need to be sustained and increased.

3. Community engagement on CVE can yield negative unintended consequences. To succeed, it requires integrative, broad-based state–civil society relationships in which governments and NGOs engage broadly and partner strategically.

4. Networks among CVE-relevant NGO partners need more investment and nurturing. NGOs face several barriers in self-initiating CVE measures, including resource constraints and knowledge gaps, and peer-to-peer contacts on this issue are underdeveloped.

5. On evaluation, although there is an absence of an elegant, agreed-on set of metrics, practitioners should build measurement opportunities into programming cycles. As much as possible, future evaluation research should be publicly available to facilitate comparison and analysis.

6. CVE has emerged very quickly but is maturing, and it will be here in some form for the foreseeable future. Resources allocated to CVE are modest compared to other, more traditional counterterrorism tools, such as military force and law enforcement. Experience with CVE commends moderate expectations. For CVE to be sustainable and effective, practitioners should integrate past lessons into current and future programming.

INTRODUCTION

In February 2015, ministers from more than 60 countries and representatives of regional and multilateral organizations gathered in Washington, D.C., to participate in the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism. Their statement was as close to a mea culpa as one is likely to find in such a document. The ministers "reaffirmed that intelligence gathering, military force, and law enforcement alone will not solve—and when misused can in fact exacerbate—the problem of violent extremism."[1] In response, they "reiterated that comprehensive rule of law and community-based strategies are an essential part of the global effort to counter violent extremism." They duly set out a broad and ambitious agenda. Countering violent extremism (CVE), they said, requires action on multiple fronts, including development assistance and the provision of economic opportunities, educational initiatives, measures to empower youth and women, the resolution of protracted conflicts, community policing, and the dissemination of counterextremist narratives, including through social media. Further, the ministers noted, governments cannot deliver this wide-ranging agenda alone, underscoring the role of civil society and "credible and authentic religious voices" in CVE.

The CVE summit and its ministerial statement are truly a sign of the times. In the past, counterterrorism officials and experts showed some awareness of the importance of such measures to prevent terrorism, and they deployed a limited range of strategies and tactics in this regard. An oft-cited example is the process of police reform and the shift to more community-oriented approaches in Northern Ireland.[2] Analysts previously defined "counterterrorism" broadly to include "psychological, communicational [and] educational" initiatives but generally argued that governments paid too little attention to addressing terrorist propaganda and to the communicative aspects of counterterrorism itself.[3]

This started to change, rhetorically at least, in the years after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States. For example, although the 2003 U.S. "National Strategy for Combating Terrorism" is best remembered for its single reference to the use of preemptive force against threats, it undertook to win the "war of ideas" and utilize "all the tools of statecraft" to prevent terrorism.[4] These themes were reprised in slightly different forms in the 2006 and 2011 iterations of that document.[5] The 2005 "European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy" set out four pillars: prevent, protect, pursue, and respond. The first of these entails an explicit focus on "conditions in society which may create an environment in which individuals can become more easily radicalized."[6] As part of the United Kingdom's response to the 7 July 2005 terrorist bombing in London, the CONTEST strategy similarly established a "prevent" strand to address "structural problems in the [United Kingdom] and overseas that may contribute to radicalization" and to challenge the "ideologies that extremists believe can justify the use of violence, primarily by helping Muslims who wish to dispute these ideas to do so."[7] The 2006 *United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy* also set aside a separate

1   Summit on Countering Violent Extremism, "Ministerial Meeting Statement," 19 February 2015, p. 1, http://www.state.gov/documents /organization/237887.pdf.
2   John Topping and Jonathon Byrne, "Policing, Terrorism and the Conundrum of 'Community': A Northern Ireland Perspective," in *Counter-Terrorism: Community-Based Approaches to Preventing Terror Crime,* ed. Basia Spalek (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 157–180.
3   Alex P. Schmid, "Towards Joint Political Strategies for Delegitimising the Use of Terrorism," in *Countering Terrorism Through International Cooperation,* ed. International Scientific and Professional Advisory Council of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme (2001) (proceedings of an international conference titled "Countering Terrorism Through Enhanced International Cooperation," Cormayeur Mont Blanc, Italy, 22–24 September 2000). See Paul R. Pillar, *Terrorism and US Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2001), ch. 7.
4   "National Strategy for Combating Terrorism," February 2003, https://www.cia.gov/news-information/cia-the-war-on-terrorism/Counter_Terrorism _Strategy.pdf.
5   "National Strategy for Counterterrorism," 2011, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/counterterrorism_strategy.pdf; "National Strategy for Combating Terrorism," September 2006, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/71936.pdf.
6   Council of the European Union, "European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy," 14469/4/05 REV 4, 30 November 2005.
7   "Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom's Strategy," Cm 6888, July 2006.

pillar on "conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism," elaborating a wide range of such conditions that may yield terrorism and that should be addressed as such.[8]

Further examples abound. Over time, strategic commitments to terrorism prevention have become the norm, entailing an ever-broader understanding of counterterrorism and a wider range of possible partners. When Canada announced its counterterrorism strategy in 2011, its commitment to prevention reflected and extended this consensus, including through the identification of three desired outcomes: "Resilience of communities to violent extremism and radicalization is bolstered," "[v]iolent extremist ideology is effectively challenged by producing effective narratives to counter it," and "[t]he risk of individuals succumbing to violent extremism and radicalization is reduced."[9]

Importantly over this period, CVE has gone from a rhetorical commitment to an increasingly prominent subfield of counterterrorism policy and practice. The term "CVE" itself is of relatively recent origin, but it has become institutionalized quickly, for example, through the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) CVE working group, the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, and Hedayah, the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism, and within many national bureaucracies. In 2014 the UN Security Council adopted the language of CVE for the first time in a resolution as part of its response to the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) volunteering to join the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Syria and Iraq. The council also charged its counterterrorism-related subsidiary organs to advance workstreams in the area.[10] Sometime in the last half of 2015, it is anticipated that the UN Secretary-General will add his own stra-

tegic-level document on CVE, calling for broad-based action to engage communities and enable the work of civil society organizations toward the goal of preventing terrorism.

Viewed in light of this flurry of activity, CVE is the most significant development in counterterrorism in the last decade—an idea whose time has come. That idea is also likely to be present for a while. Even the most cursory glance at the global threat environment suggests that CVE objectives will be high on the agenda for future counterterrorism practitioners. Governments across the globe face complex blends of terrorism and insurgency, especially in the developing world, alongside FTFs and homegrown threats, social media–savvy religious extremists, and resurgent right-wingers, all of which require flexible and innovative responses. Pragmatically, bureaucratic logic suggests that, having invested so much in CVE as a response to contemporary political violence, governments will not jettison the idea precipitously. For these reasons, one might expect that the uptick of interest in CVE will continue into the future and that the role of civil society actors will be extended and refined over time.

This report is premised on the idea that CVE stands at something of a fulcrum point. There is enough experience in "doing CVE" to expect that evidence about its implementation and effects can be gathered. Any findings derived on the basis of that evidence ought to be a timely input as CVE measures inevitably advance in the short and medium term. This report asks a simple question—does CVE work?—knowing that a straightforward answer is elusive. Rather, this report responds by extending the Global Center on Cooperative Security's past work with Public Safety Canada, which focused on evaluation as a tool for understanding the effects and effectiveness of CVE measures.[11] That response is set out in four parts.

8   UN General Assembly, *United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy*, A/RES/60/288, 20 September 2006 (adopted 8 September 2006).
9   "Building Resilience Against Terrorism: Canada's Counter-Terrorism Strategy," 2011, p. 14 (copy on file with author).
10   UN Security Council, S/RES/2178, 24 September 2014; Naureen Chowdhury Fink, "Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism: The Role of the United Nations Today and the Impact of Security Council Resolution 2178," Global Center on Cooperative Security, November 2014, http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Nov2014_UNSCR2178_CVE_NCF.pdf.
11   Naureen Chowdhury Fink, Peter Romaniuk, and Rafia Barakat, "Evaluating Countering Violent Extremism Programming: Practice and Progress," Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation (CGCC), September 2013, http://globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Fink_Romaniuk_Barakat _EVALUATING-CVE-PROGRAMMING_20132.pdf; Peter Romaniuk and Naureen Chowdhury Fink, "From Input to Impact: Evaluating Terrorism Prevention Programs," CGCC, September 2012, http://globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/CGCC_EvaluatingTerrorismPrevention.pdf.

First, knowing whether CVE works assumes that there is broad consensus about what CVE is. That assumption remains unjustified, and it is difficult not to be struck by the lack of coherence in the field. For example, it is common for observers to lament that

> [d]espite its impressive growth, CVE has struggled to establish a clear and compelling definition as a field; has evolved into a catch-all category that lacks precision and focus; reflects problematic assumptions about the conditions that promote violent extremism; and has not been able to draw clear boundaries that distinguish CVE programs from those of other, well-established fields, such as development and poverty alleviation, governance and democratization, and education.[12]

The first part of this report serves as a brief primer on CVE for current and future practitioners inside and outside of government. Defining terms is not merely a semantic matter but has implications for practitioners, who need to know whether their work counts as CVE, and analysts, who seek to compare and assess CVE measures. In addition to defining terms, the first part of this report offers a typology of CVE measures and an ideal-type policy cycle. The former provides a means of knowing how CVE works by elaborating causal mechanisms; these comprise a necessary input in evaluation research on CVE, which is premised on specifying a "theory of change" regarding CVE interventions. The latter is derived inductively on the basis of the finding that CVE as a policy process tends to involve four stages: assessment, policy development, implementation, and evaluation. This report finds that several states formally or informally have completed the CVE policy cycle and suggests that regularizing these four stages will improve outcomes, as well as the ability to know whether CVE works in the future.

Second, available evidence yields a better sense for what does not work than what does. The research for this report set out to illuminate the effects and effectiveness of CVE on the basis of evaluations that have been completed on initial efforts to advance CVE— the "first wave" of CVE programming. Yet, a dearth of CVE evaluations is publicly available. Many more have been undertaken but remain unreleased, and this report recommends that, to the greatest extent possible, future evaluation research be made available for public debate and analysis. To increase the data pool, research was expanded to include surveying and interviewing CVE practitioners and other experts, especially those that have been involved in evaluation research. There is evidence of policy learning through a variety of mechanisms, especially official networks and exchanges. That learning comprises mostly negative examples regarding the development and implementation of CVE programming by governments at the community level. The primary "teacher" has been the United Kingdom, whose Prevent strategy attracted sustained criticism in its first iteration, prompting a review and revision.

The second part of this report surveys the missteps and unintended consequences of CVE across the first wave of CVE. The key lesson is that CVE measures at the community level rise or fall on the basis of the vitality of prevailing state–civil society relationships onto which CVE measures are imposed, especially relations between governments and minority, most often Muslim, communities. Whether these relationships are good, poor, or barely existent, the evidence suggests that CVE can impede their further development. CVE is often described as a "soft power" approach to counterterrorism, but governments have not always used soft power softly to nurture relationships, build trust, and define shared objectives with community interlocutors. In other words, despite the rhetoric of partnership, actors in civil society have often felt to be the subjects of CVE measures.

Third, although this report cannot make an evidence-based claim about what works, it is possible to infer what policymakers think works. It is striking that different governments, especially among the advanced democracies of Europe, North America, and elsewhere, have arrived at fairly similar approaches to CVE. At the macrolevel (society-wide), many governments engage

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12   Steven Heydemann, "Countering Violent Extremism as a Field of Practice," *United States Institute of Peace Insights*, no. 1 (Spring 2014), pp. 1–4, http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/Insights-Spring-2014.pdf.

in CVE communications, i.e., public diplomacy and online interventions, to remove extremist content and counter extremist narratives, especially through social media. At the mesolevel (community), governments have developed a range of outreach and dialogue mechanisms with communities, including grants programs and capacity-building measures toward CVE objectives. Within governments, CVE training is being rolled out to an increasing variety of officials, beginning with law enforcement and extending to social workers, health care professionals, educators, and others. At the microlevel (individual), governments have developed or support a range of intervention programs designed to identify, dissuade, counsel, and mentor individuals at risk of committing to extremist violence. These programs have become particularly prominent in response to the growing concern about FTFs and the rise of ISIL. They share an affinity with the disengagement or "deradicalization" programs that have emerged over this period to reintegrate terrorist offenders.[13]

The third part of this report describes this contemporary suite of CVE initiatives—the "second wave" of CVE. This package of measures reflects in part the policy learning described above. Practitioners today are more sensitive to the horizontal integration of CVE with measures designed to address other social problems, which is a positive development, but there are known unknowns latent in these measures. Interview data and the secondary literature yield a series of questions and concerns about the kinds of macro-, meso-, and microlevel CVE interventions that are relatively common. For example, beyond being the subjects of CVE policy, rebuilding community relationships and engaging nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as CVE actors present certain challenges. Further, critics point out the lack of proof that these measures are effective. These points commend an ongoing commitment to evaluation and policy learning. Importantly, several of the practitioners interviewed for this report

indicated that evaluations are planned—an approach that should be supported.

Fourth, this report reviews publicly available CVE evaluations to glean some lessons about the evaluation process for future evaluators. A common narrative about CVE and evaluation has emerged: In order to ensure that CVE measures are evidence based, evaluation is vital; but evaluating CVE is challenging because measuring a negative outcome, such as terrorism prevention, is difficult and clear metrics are unavailable. Although this narrative remains relevant, there has been some progress in evaluating CVE measures. Indeed, existing evaluations reveal diversity and pragmatism in terms of the evaluation process and the research methods deployed. They show that, despite the challenges, evaluation is possible and beneficial. The fourth part of this report provides some pointers for future evaluators. Beyond technical know-how, commitment to evaluation, politically and in terms of resources, is key to achieving the goal of evidence-based CVE.

In sum, short of providing a definitive answer to the question of whether CVE works, a primary contribution of this report is to lay the groundwork for a more robust response. Further, existing evidence is leveraged to highlight what has not worked and what might be working. As one interviewee reflected, "CVE is slow [and] not easy or cheap." Contrary to this insight, the field of CVE has emerged with a sprint, but the threat environment surely requires that CVE proceed at a more sustainable pace. Among various audiences, this report is intended for practitioners in multilateral organizations and governments and especially in civil society to enhance coherence and effectiveness in what has been a contested field.

The research for this report was undertaken in four phases. First, a targeted review of the literature on CVE was undertaken, especially concerning matters pertaining to evaluation.[14] Relevant primary documents were

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13   Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan, eds., *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

14   For reviews of CVE literature, see Elanna Nolan and Daniel Hiebert, "Social Perspectives on National Security: A Review of Recent Literature," *TSAS Working Paper Series*, no. 14-10 (October 2014), http://library.tsas.ca/media/TSASWP14-10_Nolan-Hiebert1.pdf; Alex P. Schmid, "Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review," *ICCT Research Paper*, March 2013, http://www.icct.nl/download/file/ICCT-Schmid-Radicalisation-De-Radicalisation-Counter-Radicalisation-March-2013.pdf; Minerva Nasser-Eddine et al., "Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Literature Review," DSTO-TR-2522, March 2011, http://dspace.dsto.defence.gov.au/dspace/bitstream/1947/10150/1/DSTO-TR-2522%20PR.pdf.

identified, including 27 publicly available examples of evaluation research on CVE measures. The term "evaluation research" covers formal program evaluations of different kinds (e.g., formative, summative, and impact assessment) and meta- or strategic-level reviews such as the 2011 review of the UK Prevent strategy[15] and articles or reports in the secondary literature that describe and report on evaluations that are otherwise not public. In all cases, the original research set out in the documents reviewed for this study performed an evaluative function.

Second, a survey of practitioners with experience in implementing and evaluating CVE measures was undertaken. A modest number of responses (13) was received, and so, third, more than 30 interviews with respondents and others were conducted. About one-third of those interviewed have had direct experience in evaluating CVE measures. The fourth phase of research

comprised an April 2015 workshop in Ottawa that brought together scholars and practitioners with diverse experience across different aspects of CVE, including evaluation. Workshop participants gave presentations and engaged in a wide-ranging discussion about the state of play regarding CVE as a field, including through a cross-national comparison of key cases.

The interviews for this report and the Ottawa workshop were conducted on a not-for-attribution basis under the Chatham House Rule. Workshop presentations are cited directly where the author gave permission to do so. Where data about CVE in a particular country is publicly available, that country is named, and the relevant citation is provided. If specific data about national experiences were gathered through interviews or at the workshop, this is indicated in the text and the name of the country involved is not given.

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15 "Prevent Strategy," Cm 8092, June 2011, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf.

CVE AS A FIELD OF PRACTICE: DEFINITION, TYPOLOGY, AND PROCESS

For many observers, the turn to CVE has been a welcome development.[16] The attempt to use soft power, they suggest, is an overdue departure from the "global war on terror." The term "CVE" offers the possibility of opening up space to talk about contentious issues in a hotly politicized debate. Moreover, as the White House summit ministerial statement seems to indicate, CVE may facilitate critical reflection by governments regarding the meta-effects of counterterrorism policy itself, permitting the difficult view that counterterrorism may sometimes be part of the problem more than it is the solution to violent extremism.

Nevertheless, CVE bears the mark of the era in which it has emerged. Some commentators trace its origin to 2005 when the Bush administration sought to rebrand the global war on terror.[17] One possible replacement term discussed was the "struggle against violent extremism." Indeed, about that time, the lexicon of counterterrorism began to expand in other ways. This part of the report defines relevant terms, arguing that it is necessary to do so to delimit what all admit is a very broad topic. To that end, beyond a definition alone, this part sets out a typology of CVE measures. To compare CVE interventions across time and place, it is necessary to elaborate a scheme to classify such measures. One approach for doing so is to disaggregate the scope of the initiative, i.e., whether pitched at the macro-, meso-, or microlevel; the causal mechanism by which CVE interventions are proposed to work; the implementing actor; and the specific activities undertaken. This part also proposes an ideal-type CVE policy cycle comprising four stages: assessment, policy development, implementation, and evaluation. Although governments tend to approach CVE in this way, regularizing the policy process to better integrate the four phases would improve policy outcomes and learning.

What Is CVE?

Defining "terrorism" is at once a feast and a famine in that there is no shortage of definitions on offer but none of them has attracted consensus. Although the two are sometimes used interchangeably,[18] a principal virtue of the term "violent extremism" is that it is not "terrorism." They can be distinguished on the grounds that the former refers to "advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic or political objectives"; the emphasis is on mobilization toward ideologically motivated violence.[19] As this infers, violent extremism ought to be interpreted to be broader than terrorism alone, which it subsumes along with other forms of ideologically motivated violence. In this way, using "violent extremism" may permit practitioners and analysts to address the issues at hand with less politicization than has often accompanied "terrorism" and to look for commonalities across different forms of contemporary nonstate violence.

The process by which individuals may become violent extremists is now known as radicalization. On the basis of current understanding and as discussed further below, this process is acknowledged to be highly variable across cases, often involving several, nonlinear steps. Scholars have drawn on the social-psychological distinction among beliefs, feelings, and behaviors to disaggregate the radicalization process.[20] Most simply,

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16   See Alex P. Schmid, "Countering Violent Extremism: A Promising Response to Terrorism," International Centre for Counter-Terrorism - The Hague, 12 June 2012, http://icct.nl/publication/countering-violent-extremism-a-promising-response-to-terrorism/.

17   Schmid, "Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation," p. 10.

18   Nasser-Eddine et al., "Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Literature Review," p. 9.

19   USAID, "The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency: Putting Principles Into Practice," USAID Policy, September 2011, p. 2, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/VEI_Policy_Final.pdf.

20   Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Towards Terrorism," Terrorism and Political Violence 20, no. 3 (2008): 415–433.

they distinguish between cognitive radicalization (the possession of extremist beliefs and feelings) and behavioral radicalization (manifesting a determination to commit violence in the furtherance of extremist beliefs and feelings).[21] Another way of drawing this distinction is to define sympathizers, who agree with the "words and deeds" of terrorists, as separate from supporters, who act to promote them,[22] or to simply delineate violent extremists and nonviolent extremists.[23] These distinctions are consequential in determining the scope and objectives of CVE interventions, which may be designed to address ideas, behaviors, or both.

If violent extremism and radicalization are defined as the problem, CVE—sometimes called "counterradicalization"—is offered as the solution. There is some consonance among the few definitions of CVE that have been ventured. For example, Humera Khan defines CVE as the "use of non-coercive means to dissuade individuals or groups from mobilizing towards violence and to mitigate recruitment, support, facilitation or engagement in ideologically motivated terrorism by non-state actors in furtherance of political objectives."[24] Will McCants and Clint Watts simplify this further to define CVE as measures to "reduc[e] the number of terrorist group supporters through non-coercive means."[25]

As for what this means in practice, Peter Neumann observed that CVE captures the "potentially unlimited" range of activities that governments and others may pursue to prevent radicalization, which generally includes messaging, such as speeches, television programs, leaflets, and social media; engagement and outreach, such as town halls, roundtables, and advisory councils; capacity building, such as youth and women's leadership initiatives, community development, and community safety and protection programs; and education and training, such as of community leaders, public employees, and law enforcement.[26] Reflecting that the goals of CVE cut across a broad swath of government activities, Neumann suggests that CVE should be considered as a "policy theme" rather than a substantive policy domain. It is here that the breadth of what may be captured by CVE can raise problems. Observers have noted that the lack of a clear definition of CVE has led to "conflicting or counterproductive programs" that are more difficult to evaluate.[27] For this reason, several interviewees pointed out that defining terms is no mere academic concern. A concrete example of confusion in definition is described in a performance audit of CVE-related training administered through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Justice, undertaken by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO).[28] Among the issues under analysis, the GAO assessed the contributions of training opportunities led by each department to the implementation of U.S. CVE strategy.[29] This involved identification of training that should be considered to be CVE related, a task that elicited significant discussion within each agency without clear consensus. Among its findings, the GAO noted that grant makers within the DHS were empowered to provide funds for CVE-related training but that, in the absence of a clear definition of CVE, "it will be difficult for grantees to determine what training best supports" CVE objectives such that funds can be used appropriately for those efforts.[30] The GAO derived its own

21   For a concise discussion on this point, see James Khalil, "Radical Beliefs and Violent Actions Are Not Synonymous: How to Place the Key Disjuncture Between Attitudes and Behaviors at the Heart of Our Research Into Political Violence," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 37, no. 2 (2014): 198–211.

22   Will McCants and Clinton Watts, "U.S. Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism: An Assessment," *Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Notes*, December 2012, http://www.fpri.org/docs/media/McCants_Watts_-_Countering_Violent_Extremism.pdf.

23   Schmid, "Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation."

24   Humera Khan, "Why Countering Extremism Fails: Washington's Top-Down Approach to Prevention Is Flawed," Foreign Affairs, 18 February 2015, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2015-02-18/why-countering-extremism-fails.

25   McCants and Watts, "U.S. Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism."

26   Peter Neumann, "Preventing Violent Radicalization in America," Bipartisan Policy Center National Security Preparedness Group, June 2011, p. 18, http://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/NSPG.pdf.

27   McCants and Watts, "U.S. Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism," p. 1.

28   GAO, "Countering Violent Extremism: Additional Actions Could Strengthen Training Efforts," GAO-13-79, October 2012.

29   "Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States," August 2011, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/empowering_local_partners.pdf; "Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States," December 2011, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/sip-final.pdf.

30   GAO, "Countering Violent Extremism," p. 12.

definition of CVE-related training for the purpose of the audit, determining that training related to radicalization, cultural competency, and community engagement should be considered CVE related.

To avoid such confusion, a distinction is sometimes made between measures that are CVE specific and those that are CVE relevant. The former covers those measures designed to prevent or suppress violent extremism in a direct, targeted fashion. These measures are more likely to address behavioral and cognitive radicalization. By contrast, CVE-relevant measures are framed more generally, intending to reduce vulnerability to extremism in an indirect way. These measures, which primarily address cognitive radicalization, are more likely to be advanced through education, development, and women's rights and youth initiatives. More generally, the term "CVE relevant" is sometimes used as a catch-all phrase to cover a broad range of initiatives that are thought to impact violent extremism in some way. On this point, throughout this report, examples are noted wherein practitioners have considered the term "CVE" to be a liability, particularly in advancing CVE-relevant measures. It is not uncommon for practitioners to implement measures to counter violent extremism while seeking to avoid the CVE label. Either way, CVE-relevant measures often aim to build "resilience," which is the psychological, social, cultural, and physical capacity of individuals and communities to sustain their well-being and, in particular, to resist and respond to extremist influences.[31]

From Definition to Typology

The definitions of CVE cited above are apt to be adopted as standard in the field. A rigorous analysis and comparison of CVE measures, however, require an understanding of CVE beyond a definition alone. Some interviewees suggested that certain distinctions are pertinent in classifying and comparing CVE measures. For

this reason, a typology of CVE interventions across four dimensions is offered.

1. SCOPE (LEVEL OF ANALYSIS). CVE initiatives tend to be pitched at target audiences at different levels (e.g., to address vulnerable individuals or communities or broadcast to the general public). The kind of macro-meso-micro distinction referenced earlier would help classify the scope of CVE activities across different levels of analysis. Analogous distinctions are common in related academic literature, and criminologists and public health professionals, for example, often disaggregate between prevention measures directed at entire populations that are not exhibiting a given problem behavior, known as primary or universal prevention; those directed toward specific groups considered to be at risk, known as secondary or selective prevention; and those directed at small groups and individuals that actually exhibit the problem behavior, known as tertiary or indicative prevention.[32] This distinction leaves open the possibility of comparing CVE interventions of similar scope, i.e., at the same level of analysis, and those across different levels.

2. CAUSAL MECHANISMS. Although they are not often specified at the outset, different kinds of CVE measures imply different causal logics or pathways through which they are anticipated to bring about the desired change. In this regard, the concept of causal mechanisms can be drawn on, wherein a mechanism is simply "an account of how change in some variable is brought about."[33] Each CVE intervention implies such an account, for example, whether it is through the disruption of extremist messaging, persuasion by a mentor, disengagement from an extremist clique, enhancement of resilience to known correlates of vulnerability, or some other means. There is a connection to the idea of a "theory of change," which is the term used by evaluators to describe the specific hypothesized causal links among program inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes,

31   See Michael Ungar, "Resilience Across Cultures," *British Journal of Social Work* 38, no. 2 (2008): 218–235; Sara K. Thompson and Sandra Bucerius, "Collective Efficacy and Cultural Capital: Building and Fostering Resilience in Different Ethnic Communities," April 2014, pp. 4–5 (copy on file with author).

32   Tore Bjørgo, *Preventing Crime: A Holistic Approach* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming), ch. 1.

33   Aage B. Sørensen, "Theoretical Mechanisms and the Empirical Study of Social Processes," in *Social Mechanisms: An Analytical Approach to Social Theory*, ed. Peter Hedström and Richard Swedberg (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 240.

and impacts.[34] Indeed, for some interviewees, their first encounter with CVE was as an evaluator. At first, they were quite critical of the failure of policymakers to specify the causal mechanisms of the programs they analyzed, leaving them to retrofit a theory of change. On this basis, some were initially skeptical of CVE, although several subsequently found evidence that the programs in question had some of the desired effects.

Causal mechanisms are now being productively applied to the analysis of terrorism prevention.[35] The claim is straightforward: CVE practitioners should be able to describe in hypothetical terms how an intervention will cause a desired outcome in the target population. CVE measures can be typologized, analyzed, and compared on this basis. Multiple mechanisms may be elaborated for any particular intervention, and some mechanisms may be common to more than one type. For example, much CVE work proposes to dissuade target audiences from extremist ideas and persuade them toward non-violence. Yet, programming with different objectives (e.g., CVE-specific versus CVE-relevant measures or those intended to address behavioral as opposed to cognitive radicalization) entails distinctive causal logics. They should be specified and analyzed as such.

Furthermore, beyond identifying the specific causal effects that a CVE intervention will ideally yield, policymakers should be aware that target groups may react adversely. In the next section of this report, the unintended consequences and missteps of CVE interventions are discussed. According to Lasse Lindekilde, "backfire mechanisms" can be examined systematically and, in the case of CVE, may involve self-silencing, hushing, reactive pride, and disenchantment. The overall result may be that "responses to terrorism may contribute to … radicalization … and lead to security losses rather than gains," requiring that governments mobilize strategies to manage backfire.[36]

3. IMPLEMENTING AGENT(S). The third dimension of CVE pertains to the identity of the implementing agent, whether a government, an intergovernmental body, an NGO, a private sector company, or some kind of public-private partnership. There is no shortage of discussion in the field to suggest that the identity of the implementer matters. For example, the GCTF *Ankara Memorandum on Good Practices for a Multi-Sectoral Approach to Countering Violent Extremism* devotes a section to public-private partnerships. The memorandum sets out that, "[i]n order to reach out to the heart of the community and/or violent extremist groups, states should consider working with civil society, NGOs, and local leaders that often have developed strong ties in the relevant communities."[37]

The next section of this report describes the mixed record of governments in implementing such ideas. Relatedly, the rhetorical commitment to engage and enable civil society invokes at the very least a contrast between CVE and other areas of counterterrorism policy. For example, regarding the effort to suppress terrorism financing through the nonprofit sector, counterterrorism has been perceived to be restrictive, yielding conflictual relationships between governments and civil society.[38] CVE implies the opposite, that state–civil society partnerships are needed to enhance effectiveness. Against that background, the claim that civil society actors may make a difference where governments face challenges suggests that this dimension of CVE be included in any typology.

4. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN. The fourth dimension of CVE is the specific activity undertaken. Recalling Neumann, the range of possible activities is very broad but generally includes messaging, engagement and outreach, capacity building, and education and training. Different activities can be conceptualized as operating at different levels of analysis, implying that they work

34   Romaniuk and Chowdhury Fink, "From Input to Impact," pp. 9–10.
35   Tore Bjørgo, *Strategies for Preventing Terrorism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
36   Lasse Lindekilde, "A Typology of Backfire Mechanisms," in *Dynamics of Political Violence: A Process-Oriented Perspective on Radicalization and the Escalation of Political Conflict*, ed. Lorenzo Bosi, Chares Demetriou, and Stefan Malthaner (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2014), p. 51.
37   GCTF, *Ankara Memorandum on Good Practices for a Multi-Sectoral Approach to Countering Violent Extremism*, n.d., p. 5, https://www.thegctf.org/documents/10162/72352/13Sep19_Ankara+Memorandum.pdf.
38   David Cortright et al., "Friend Not Foe: Opening Spaces for Civil Society Engagement to Prevent Violent Extremism," 2nd ed., June 2011, http://www.hscollective.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Friend-not-Foe-2.pdf.

through different causal mechanisms. These activities may be pursued by a range of implementing agents. On the basis of this typology, CVE remains a broad and permissive concept. Yet, mapping CVE interventions by describing variation across these four dimensions provides a means for knowing with greater precision what counts as CVE and, in turn, what kinds of CVE measures work.

The purpose of setting out this typology is to aid in bringing coherence to the field and to acknowledge that, by virtue of its nature, it is unfeasible for anyone to claim that CVE does or does not work. Rather, efforts are better invested in analyzing the effects and effectiveness of one specific type of programming or another, wherein types vary according to the scope (level of analysis), causal mechanisms, implementing agent, and activities entailed in an intervention.

The CVE Policy Cycle

How do governments and other practitioners "do" CVE? As the practice of CVE has grown, some variation can be observed in terms of substance and process. Regarding the latter, at an aggregate-level view, an ideal-type CVE policy cycle can be discerned, similar to those in other areas of public policy, that is, states have tended to approach their responses to violent extremism through a four-stage process of assessment, policy development, implementation, and evaluation (fig. 1).

Assessment, as the initial phase, is premised on the very simple idea of "you can't fight what you don't understand."[39] It is an understatement to say that, in the post-9/11 period, much ink has been spilled toward the goal of describing, understanding, and explaining contemporary terrorism. The rapid growth of terrorism

Figure 1. The CVE Policy Cycle

studies as a field reflects the availability of governmental funding for research in this area. Perceptions of progress, however, are mixed; one senior scholar recently elicited debate by issuing the damning indictment that "we still don't know what leads people to turn to political violence."[40] Indeed, viewed in the aggregate, terrorism studies literature confirms that there is no "terrorist profile" or unitary set of radicalization indicators, but instead, there may be significant diversity in processes of radicalization across cases. Whereas some initial models of radicalization offered straightforward, almost linear accounts,[41] subsequent arguments about the drivers of violent extremism are more likely to elaborate lists of possible causal factors across different levels of analysis, which may combine in different ways to produce violent extremist outcomes.[42] For still others, the concept of radicalization itself is part of the problem because it is prone to multiple interpretations and manifests bias in that it oversells the role of ideology and elides other causal factors.[43]

39 Candace Karp, "You Can't Fight What You Don't Understand," Foreign Policy, 1 June 2015, http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/06/01/you-cant-fight-what-you-dont-understand-violent-extremism-islamic-state/.

40 Marc Sageman, "The Stagnation of Terrorism Research," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 4 (2014): 576.

41 Mitchell D. Silber and Arvin Bhatt, "Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat," New York City Police Department, n.d., http://www.nypdshield.org /public/SiteFiles/documents/NYPD_Report-Radicalization_in_the_West.pdf.

42 Guilian Denoeux and Lynn Carter, "Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism," U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), February 2009, http:// pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadt978.pdf; Guilian Denoeux and Lynn Carter, "Development Assistance and Counter-Extremism: A Guide to Programming," USAID, October 2009, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADT977.pdf.

43 Arun Kundnani, *A Decade Lost: Rethinking Radicalisation and Extremism* (London: Claystone, 2015); Arun Kundnani, "Radicalisation: The Journey of a Concept," *Race and Class* 54, no. 2 (October–December 2012): 3–25; Faiza Patel, "Rethinking Radicalization," Brennan Center for Justice, 2011, https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/RethinkingRadicalization.pdf; Mark Sedgwick, "The Concept of Radicalization as a Source of Confusion," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22, no. 4 (2011): 479–494.

CVE has coevolved with the debate about radicalization.[44] The elusiveness of knowledge about the problem of violent extremism is no small problem for CVE. According to Lindekilde, "[O]rganizations tasked with countering radicalization lack a shared understanding of the behaviors that constitute violent radicalization, clearly defined and validated lists of motivational and structural factors underpinning the processes of violent radicalization … and a shared understanding of what counter-radicalization programs are trying to achieve."[45] On this point, John Horgan memorably drew an analogy to being shipwrecked: "[S]taying put is not a feasible option [but] it can be impossible to know in which direction you should row."[46] With an imprecise understanding of the problem, a solution is unlikely. Not surprisingly, those who are most bleak about progress in terrorism research are often the most skeptical of CVE.[47]

Beyond supporting ongoing research, practitioners seem to have settled on three responses to this dilemma. The first and most common response is to continue regardless and act on the basis of prevailing knowledge. The kinds of problems this response can create are discussed in the next part of this report. The second response is to refine and apply risk assessment models that integrate knowledge about violent extremism while attempting to accommodate its fundamental variability. The use of such models necessarily involves a trade-off between parsimony and context specificity. Given the inability of any single approach to explain the emergence of violent extremism and define a series of reliable indicators, any inference that radicalization can be predicted should be greeted with caution. For this reason, risk assessment models for violent extremism succeed or fail on the basis of robust validation.

A third response seems more promising. Rather than seeking generic explanations of violent extremism and radicalization across time and place, some practitioners appear to be taking the idea of context specificity seriously. Observers recently have noted the utility of conducting national-level assessments of the drivers of violent extremism,[48] and the Ankara Memorandum devotes its first section to "identifying the problem." Although applied research to this end was rare when many governments initiated CVE programming, there is something of an uptick in this regard including assessment-related research on Tamil and Somali diasporas in Canadian cities;[49] Somali youth in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada;[50] Somalis in Minneapolis-St. Paul;[51] and perceptions of radicalization and extremism among Australian Muslims[52] and in Burkina Faso[53] and Kenya and Somaliland.[54]

Other examples exist too. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) conducted country-specific assessments as part of its Peace Through

44   Georgia Holmer, "Countering Violent Extremism: A Peacebuilding Perspective," *USIP Special Report*, no. 336 (September 2013), p. 2, http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR336-Countering%20Violent%20Extremism-A%20Peacebuilding%20Perspective.pdf.

45   Lasse Lindekilde, "Value for Money? Problems of Impact Assessment of Counter-Radicalisation Policies on End Target Groups: The Case of Denmark," *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 18, no. 4 (December 2012): 386.

46   John Horgan, "Theory vs. Practice," *United States Institute of Peace Insights*, no. 1 (Spring 2014), pp. 2–3, http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/Insights-Spring-2014.pdf.

47   Sageman, "Stagnation of Terrorism Research."

48   CGCC, "Countering Violent Extremism and Promoting Community Engagement in West Africa and the Sahel: An Action Agenda," July 2013, http://globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Action-Agenda-ENG.pdf.

49   Thompson and Bucerius, "Collective Efficacy and Cultural Capital."

50   Michael King and Ali Mohamed, "Youth Radicalization: Somali Identity and Support for Al-Shabaab in the U.K., the U.S., and Canada," Canadian Friends of Somalia, 2011, http://www.canadianfriendsofsomalia.org/component/docman/doc_download/8-somali-youth-radicalization-survey.html.

51   Stevan Weine and Osman Ahmed, "Building Resilience to Violent Extremism Among Somali-Americans in Minneapolis-St. Paul," National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, August 2012, http://www.start.umd.edu/sites/default/files/files/publications/Weine_BuildingResiliencetoViolentExtremism_SomaliAmericans.pdf.

52   Hussein Tahiri and Michele Grossman, "Community and Radicalisation: An Examination of Perceptions, Ideas, Beliefs and Solutions Throughout Australia," Victoria Police, September 2013, http://www.vu.edu.au/sites/default/files/ccdw/pdfs/community-and-radicalisation.pdf.

53   Augustin Loada and Peter Romaniuk, "Preventing Violent Extremism in Burkina Faso: Toward National Resilience Amid Regional Insecurity," Global Center, June 2014, http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/BF-Assessment-Eng-with-logos-low-res.pdf.

54   Liat Shetret, Matthew Schwartz, and Danielle Cotter, "Mapping Perceptions of Violent Extremism: Pilot Study of Community Attitudes in Kenya and Somaliland," CGCC, January 2013, http://globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Jan2013_MPVE_PilotStudy.pdf.

Development program, pursuant to the U.S. multiagency Trans-Sahel Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP).[55] Conducting such assessments constitutes something of a good practice. Importantly, assessments of violent extremism can utilize a wide range of qualitative and quantitative methods. These may include interviews, focus groups and research panels, survey research on perceptions of violent extremism or its drivers, content analysis of relevant media sources, and with due caution, participant observation and ethnographic methods. Researchers may also define a "case" in different ways, to cover the general population in a particular country or region or to focus on particular communities. Further, assessments can be extended to cover sources of resilience, which may be an important consideration in the policy development phase, with a view toward advancing CVE-relevant programming to build resilience. In the short term, assessment research along these lines is likely to be the most effective way to identify specific problems of violent extremism for which CVE constitutes a proportional and effective response. Moreover, as noted, assessment is linked to later stages in the policy cycle, for example, by providing a baseline against which data gathered in the evaluation phase can be measured.

In moving from the assessment to the policy development phase, practitioners move from diagnosis to prognosis. Clearly, practitioners have a wide range of options to consider in determining what types of measures to pursue. Guidance on what kinds of measures might be considered is emerging, covering the breadth of CVE[56] and specific thematic issues, such as community policing.[57] In deliberating such measures, practitioners should ensure that their decisions are informed by the evidence gathered in the assessment phase. With a view to implementation, they should consider stakeholder consultations, especially with members of civil

society affected by the measures, to raise awareness of forthcoming initiatives, refine plans, and gain buy-in.

A systematic, comprehensive mapping of CVE implementation, although of considerable value, is beyond the scope of this report. Lessons learned from CVE implementation are discussed in the next two sections, followed by a discussion in greater depth about evaluation. In reflecting on the policy cycle overall, some stages of this policy cycle are better developed than others. Policy development and implementation have advanced quickly at the national level, while assessments and evaluations lag behind. Elaboration of a CVE policy cycle permits practitioners and analysts to see connections across the different stages. For example, assessments can identify local sources of resilience to violent extremism that can be incorporated during the policy development phase. Similarly, assessments can bring to light the important social and cultural factors that provide the backdrop for CVE implementation. Further, robust assessments can function as baseline studies against which subsequent evaluations can measure the effects of CVE initiatives. Although some states have effectively completed a revolution around the CVE policy cycle, approaching CVE in this way underscores the importance of closing the loop and feeding empirical data and analysis back into the process of policy development and implementation.

This section has offered a brief primer on CVE. In a field that many agree lacks coherence, it has suggested ways of thinking more systematically about what CVE is and how to go about the business of "doing CVE." Of course, definitions, typologies, and policy cycles are easier to elaborate on paper than to observe in practice. For this reason, the CVE policy cycle is described as an ideal type, understanding that CVE, like other areas of counterterrorism, is part of the political process.[58] Yet,

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55   William F.S. Miles, "Deploying Development to Counter Terrorism: Post-9/11 Transformation of U.S. Foreign Aid to Africa," *African Studies Review* 55, no. 3 (December 2012): 27–60.

56   Radicalisation Awareness Network, "Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism: Strengthening the EU's Response; Approaches, Lessons Learned and Practices," 15 January 2014, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-best-practices/docs/collection_of_approaches_lessons_learned_and_practices_en.pdf; GCTF, *Ankara Memorandum on Good Practices for a Multi-Sectoral Approach to Countering Violent Extremism.*

57   Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, "Preventing Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Lead to Terrorism: A Community-Policing Approach," February 2014, http://www.osce.org/atu/111438?download=true.

58   Martha Crenshaw, "Counterterrorism Policy and the Political Process," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24, no. 5 (2001): 329–337.

as suggested, practitioners should seek opportunities to shield CVE from the vicissitudes of politics. Several significant developments in CVE have been advanced in response to events, such as the contemporary emphasis on microlevel programs following the uptick in concern about FTFs traveling to Syria and Iraq. Although it is appropriate to be responsive to such developments, counterterrorism should avoid being merely reactive. Regularizing understanding of CVE and the approach to developing, implementing, and evaluating CVE measures holds the promise of improving outcomes and enhancing the ability to determine what works.

THE FIRST WAVE OF CVE:
CONFRONTING DILEMMAS IN ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

Although some stages in the CVE policy cycle are better developed than others, several states have formally or informally completed the cycle and adjusted their programming in response. The British case is perhaps the best known example. The Prevent strategy was launched in 2006 and amended in 2009 before being subjected to a more sweeping review in 2011. Other examples include Australia, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Norway.[59] These and other states have revised or reissued strategic documents in recent years following reviews of some kind, refining their approach to terrorism prevention. Viewed at the aggregate level, a cluster of states are now in their second wave of CVE programming, which raises a question: what did they learn from the first wave?

Based on the data, it is premature to claim that one can "close the loop" of the CVE policy cycle in a conclusive fashion. Nevertheless, the publicly available evaluation research, alongside interview and survey data and desk research, enables some initial lessons to be gleaned. These emerged as negative lessons (what not to do) pertaining to government-led, community-level CVE initiatives. Recalling the typology elaborated earlier, much of the evaluation research identified assesses CVE measures advanced at the mesolevel. Although the causal mechanisms of the programs in question were not often specified in advance, the programs generally shared the objective of dissuading community members from extremist ideas and building resilience. In other words, they primarily addressed cognitive radicalization, although measures were often framed as CVE specific and were presented as antiextremism

initiatives. A range of activities was pursued to this end, including grant making, capacity building, training and information dissemination, educational initiatives, and youth programs. These activities often required community engagement. If there is a single lesson that can be learned from first-wave CVE programming, it is that community engagement on CVE can yield negative unintended consequences; to succeed, CVE requires integrative, broadly based, state–civil society relationships.

More comprehensive treatments of the topic of community engagement and counterterrorism are available elsewhere.[60] This section highlights four specific lessons from attempts at community engagement in the first wave of CVE with a focus on evaluation research. Prominence is given to the UK example, but the extent to which the experience of first-wave CVE measures in other states resembles that of the United Kingdom is also emphasized.

Using Soft Power Softly: Four Key Lessons

Prior to 2005, measures to prevent terrorism were widely endorsed in principle but largely untested in practice. In this sense, the "first mover" in this field faced something of a disadvantage because there were little experience and few off-the-shelf measures on which to draw. The United Kingdom initially elaborated its CONTEST counterterrorism policy in 2003, comprising four pillars: Pursue, Prevent, Protect, and Prepare. In light of its novelty, it is unsurprising that the Prevent strand remained underdeveloped in the

59   Australian Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, "Review of Australia's Counter-Terrorism Machinery," January 2015, https://www.dpmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/190215_CT_Review_0.pdf; Lasse Lindekilde and Mark Sedgwick, "Impact of Counter-Terrorism on Communities: Denmark Background Report," Open Society Foundations and Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2012, http://www.strategicdialogue.org/Country_report_Denmark_AD_FW.pdf; Netherlands National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, "National Counterterrorism Strategy 2011-2015," June 2011, https://english.nctv.nl/Images/nationale-ct-strategie-2011-2015-uk_tcm92-369807.pdf; Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security, "Action Plan Against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism," July 2014, https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/6d84d5d6c6df47b38f5e2b989347fc49/action-plan-against-radicalisation-and-violent-extremism_2014.pdf.

60   Basia Spalek, *Terror Crime Prevention With Communities* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013); Basia Spalek, ed., *Counter-Terrorism: Community-Based Approaches to Preventing Terror Crime* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

early going, but formative efforts to sketch out a pre-vention program were underway by 2004.[61] Those discussions acknowledged the complex nature of the problem and the wide range of possible responses and partners, while reflecting sensitivity toward perceptions of any terrorism prevention measures in Muslim communities. More dialogue and research were needed, it was said, to improve understanding of the problem and inform effective responses.[62]

The bombings in London on 7 July 2005 accelerated this process of policy development. By August 2005, the Preventing Extremism Together task force was convened, comprising seven thematic working groups, alongside ministerial visits and community discussions. Reports were published by November of that year. By October 2006, the Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund was established, providing £6 million to 70 local authorities to enhance partnerships among law enforcement and faith groups, including mosques and schools. In June 2008, the self-standing Prevent strategy was rolled out. Funding rose quickly, to £140 million by 2009, and was anticipated to go higher.[63] The elaboration of a reporting standard for local authorities—National Indicator 35 on building resilience to violent extremism—required them to account for their actions in this regard, even if they had reservations about Prevent. In a very short space of time, the Prevent agenda was disseminated across a wide range of official institutions, such as law enforcement, prisons, and colleges and universities, and communities with the promise of funding and the requirement to report. In retrospect, this was the biggest and most ambitious experiment in terrorism prevention in the history of modern counterterrorism.

The Prevent strategy was soon attracting criticism for "targeting … the whole Muslim community as potential terrorists" while enabling surveillance and otherwise being "confusing and unclear."[64] In 2009, Arun Kundnani showed that Prevent funding was apparently not risk based but rather correlated strongly with demographic indicators, i.e., money was disbursed proportional to the number of Muslims in an area.[65] This latter point is telling. In discussing lessons from Prevent with interlocutors, several noted that assessments of extremism in different locations were not undertaken, resulting in no evidentiary basis on which to take a risk-based approach. In turn, there was no baseline against which to assess the effects of Prevent programming down the track.

An initial lesson from the first wave of CVE is know your audience. In the absence of case-specific data, decision-makers must rely on their general understanding of the problem to be addressed. On this point, some interviewees confirmed the view that initial efforts at community engagement for counterterrorism made simplistic, linear assumptions about the radicalization process. Rather than targeted interventions, the initial tendency was to lapse into a one-size-fits-all approach. Although UK authorities took some steps to improve their knowledge in this regard, funded research returned the conclusion that there is "insufficient evidence to conclude that any particular intervention can cause a change in community attitudes"[66] and that the "evidence base for effective preventing violent extremism [PVE] interventions is very limited."[67]

61   Paul Thomas, "Failed and Friendless: The UK's 'Preventing Violent Extremism' Programme," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 12, no. 3 (August 2010): 442–458.
62   UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office and UK Home Office, "Draft Report on Young Muslims and Extremism," April 2004, http://www.globalsecurity.org /security/library/report/2004/muslimext-uk.htm.
63   Rachel Briggs, "Community Engagement for Counterterrorism: Lessons From the United Kingdom," *International Affairs* 86, no. 4 (July 2010): 971–981.
64   Khalida Khan, "Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) and PREVENT: A Response From the Muslim Community," An-Nisa Society, February 2009, p. 4, https://muslimyouthskills.files.wordpress.com/2010/05/pve__prevent_-__a_muslim_response.pdf.
65   Arun Kundnani, "Spooked! How Not to Prevent Violent Extremism," Institute of Race Relations, October 2009, ch. 4, http://www.irr.org.uk/pdf2/spooked.pdf.
66   Lawrence Pratchett et al., "Preventing Support for Violent Extremism Through Community Interventions: A Review of the Evidence," UK Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010, p. 8, http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/http://www.communities.gov.uk /documents/communities/pdf/1513881.pdf.
67   Kris Christmann, "Preventing Religious Radicalisation and Violent Extremism: A Systematic Review of the Research Evidence," Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, 2012, p. 4, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/396030/preventing-violent-extremism-systematic-review.pdf.

Some evaluation research supports the view that Prevent programs were ventured without fully understanding how Muslim communities think about the issues of violent extremism and counterterrorism. For example, the evaluators of the Pathfinder Fund programs in Birmingham "encountered some strong views from many respondents that PVE funding is driving attention away from the real causes of extremism, which are the Government's foreign policy that is anti-Muslim … and treatment and exploitation of Muslims in other countries" by the United States and the United Kingdom.[68] As this illustrates, agendas of governments and communities are mismatched sometimes. For the former, the primary purpose of outreach and programming has been counterterrorism, but community concerns are often much broader given the range of social problems that minorities face and their concerns about discrimination and bias.

Other countries faced a similar challenge in first-wave CVE programming. Some variation was detected because some governments have better-developed policies and devote more resources than others to community relations. Even in those cases, however, terrorism and violent extremism are contentious issues; and according to some interlocutors, governments have sometimes assumed that communities know more than they do about these problems or see them in the same way. In other states, there are few precedents for community engagement and a corresponding gap in understanding.

Clearly, the premise of Prevent and first-wave CVE measures in other countries was not uncritically accepted across communities affected by the implementation of such programs. To the contrary, interlocutors reported that communities, Muslim communities in particular, are concerned about terrorism and violent extremism and deeply so. Yet, they interpret and articulate these concerns in their own ways alongside other long-standing priorities and across a wide range of social issues. For the purposes of CVE, governments should engage communities as they are and make the necessary investments to do so productively.

The second lesson from first-wave measures—avoid stigmatizing communities—reflects a principal unintended consequence of CVE that emerged across states. There is no small amount of evidence attesting to the extent of Muslim stigmatization in response to implementation of the Prevent program,[69] including from evaluation research. For example, evaluators assessing Pathfinder programs in Kirklees found that staff considered the singular focus on Muslims to be problematic, leading to isolation and defensiveness. They added further that the focus on Muslims is "[a]llied to an apparent lack of policy concern about 'extremism' in other communities, such as significant support for racial harassment and the British National Party within some white communities, and fears that 'Muslim communities' are being viewed as homogenous and unified in a way that other ethnic/religious communities are not."[70]

The idea that the Prevent program had the effect of constructing Muslims as a "suspect community"[71] gained wide acceptance. The 2011 program review contained the frank admission that "[p]revious Prevent work has sometimes given the impression that Muslim communities as a whole are more 'vulnerable' to radicalisation than other faith or ethnic groups."[72] The evidence hints at the importance of the framing and labeling of initiatives and the use of the terms "Prevent" and "PVE" in particular. For example, the evaluation of the Pathfinder Fund programs in Birmingham suggested "dropping the term 'Preventing Violent Extremism' and replacing it with far more

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68   Waterhouse Consulting Group, "Preventing Violent Extremism: An Independent Evaluation of the Birmingham Pathfinder," 2008, p. 12, https://wallscometumblingdown.files.wordpress.com/2008/11/birmingham-pve-final-report-14-11-08.pdf.

69   See Rachel Briggs, Catherine Fieschi, and Hannah Lownsbrough, "Bringing It Home: Community-Based Approaches to Counter-Terrorism," Demos, 2006, http://www.demos.co.uk/files/Bringing%20it%20Home%20-%20web.pdf?1240939425.

70   Paul Thomas, "Kirklees 'Preventing Violent Extremism' Pathfinder: Issues and Learning From the First Year," April 2008, pp. 4–5, http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/16708/1/Kirklees_Preventing_Violent_Extremism_Evaluation_2008.pdf.

71   Kundnani, "Spooked!" p. 15.

72   "Prevent Strategy," p. 7.

acceptable phraseology" to attract "greater community involvement and confidence."[73]

A similar finding emerged from the evaluation of another Pathfinder Fund program, in which "PVE" was not used by program staff in implementing prescribed activities. They reported the "feeling that young people, families and communities would all feel that 'PVE' implied that they personally either supported such extremism, or were at risk from it, so providing a highly negative starting point."[74] Evaluation research highlighted the extent to which implementing partners, such as those in universities and colleges, were put off by the "Prevent" label. Evaluators reported that

> many professionals object to having their work subsumed within the Government's Prevent policy agenda because of serious concerns about the way it is being delivered: its single community focus; the burden it places on individual members of staff; the risks it generates for staff and institutions; and the way it has raised tensions on the ground. They also object to having their work instrumentalised; they are happy to contribute but do not wish to become "agents of the state."[75]

Again, stigmatization surrounding CVE has not been just a problem in the United Kingdom. For example, in response to recent efforts by the United States to implement its CVE strategy, including through pilot programs in Boston, Los Angeles, and Minneapolis, a range of community groups, Muslim and otherwise, signed letters of concern about the stigmatizing effects of CVE.[76] This points to the need to elaborate measures without isolating the very communities whose engagement is sought, including through considering alternatives to the CVE label, which has sometimes been a positive liability.

A third lesson concerns the need to send clear messages about what CVE is and is not. On the one hand, Prevent measures were often perceived to be a vehicle for harder-edged strands of the CONTEST strategy, especially Pursue, that is, the attempted use of soft power was interpreted as the further exercise of hard power. Prevent and Pursue are distinct parts of the CONTEST strategy from the point of view of implementing authorities, but it is incorrect to assume that communities see things in the same stovepiped way. The evaluation of the Pathfinder Fund programs in Birmingham recommended that "[l]ocal authorities and partners must take into account that there is both a suspicion and anxiety of police and security service involvement in the local Prevent programmes aimed at building Muslim community resilience against violent extremism."[77] Indeed, evaluators reported that respondents felt like they were being watched. This point was echoed in the 2011 program review, which noted that "one of the most damaging allegations made about Prevent … has been that it has strayed into the area of Pursue and become a means for spying on Muslim communities."[78]

On the other hand, in addition to confusion about the different strands of the CONTEST strategy, evaluations of the Prevent program reported the danger of tension between it and the preexisting emphasis on community cohesion. In particular, the program focus on the Muslim community was recognized to be contrary to community cohesion programming that had been introduced after incidents of urban violence a few years earlier. Those programs explicitly aimed to promote dialogue and bridge gaps across communities, taking steps to avoid singling out a specific community.[79] The 2011 review found that "the Government will not securitise its integration strategy. This has been a mistake in the past."[80]

73   Waterhouse Consulting Group, "Preventing Violent Extremism," p. 13.
74   Thomas, "Kirklees 'Preventing Violent Extremism' Pathfinder," p. 9.
75   Harris Beider and Rachel Briggs, "Promoting Community Cohesion and Preventing Violent Extremism in Higher and Further Education," Institute of Community Cohesion, March 2010, p. 10, http://www.safecampuscommunities.ac.uk/uploads/files/2013/05/promoting_community_cohesion.pdf.
76   See Junaid, "Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)," 9 March 2015, http://www.muslimadvocates.org/cve-countering-violent-extremism/.
77   Waterhouse Consulting Group, "Preventing Violent Extremism," p. 12.
78   "Prevent Strategy," p. 31.
79   Thomas, "Kirklees 'Preventing Violent Extremism' Pathfinder."
80   "Prevent Strategy," p. 6.

The mixing of community cohesion and counterterrorism agendas drew specific criticism from interviewees in discussing cases beyond the United Kingdom. It is a mistake, they said, to assume that community cohesion programs are an adequate or appropriate response to the threat of radicalization. Rather, the case for community cohesion work can be made without reference to CVE objectives. Moreover, for a field in which perceptions matter, interviewees recalled that governments have sought to engage communities without asking themselves how their efforts would be perceived by the communities with which they wish to work. Negative perceptions of other aspects of counterterrorism policy or negative experiences of state authority in general can affect the inclination of individuals and communities to engage on CVE. It is unlikely that even the most artful use of soft power will reverse negative perceptions shaped by the use of hard power.

A fourth lesson concerns relationships between government agencies and civil society groups. The idea of partnering with civil society on CVE enjoys strong rhetorical support today as it has in the past. Prior to implementation of the Prevent program, there were few if any examples of successful partnerships in this regard. The 2011 program review made clear that developing and maintaining such partnerships is far from straightforward. Among other things, the review noted that some Prevent program beneficiaries "have held views that are not consistent with mainstream British values," further conceding that "there have been cases where groups whom we would now consider to support an extremist ideology have received funding."[81] For this reason, in interviews in particular, research for this report explored the idea of CVE partnerships from the perspective of governments and NGOs. On both sides, actors face difficult decisions and mixed incentives in considering partnerships.

Governments apparently have found it challenging to answer the basic question of whom to engage. Some individuals and organizations are more likely to be rep-

resentative of the community than others. Among the CVE practitioners interviewed, it was common to hear the terms "so-called," "self-appointed," or "self-proclaimed" in describing the kinds of community leaders that have been willing to engage on CVE.[82] At the outset, it is problematic to assume that one can gauge the views of any community by talking only with elites, so determining with which elites to speak is problematic given that communities are often diverse. Although preexisting relationships between government and civil society have been utilized productively for the purpose of CVE in some cases, there is a risk that communities will be less likely to engage if they feel stigmatized. Several interlocutors noted that CVE has had the effect of souring good relationships between governments and Muslim groups in some countries.

Whether to engage with nonviolent extremists is a further consideration for governments. By definition, CVE-specific measures ought to target the most vulnerable individuals and groups, which include those whose views are contrary to mainstream values. As some interviewees noted, engaging "moderates" as a means of dissuading those interested in extremism is insufficient at the very least. Individuals attracted to extremism simply self-select away from voices of moderation while those that identify as moderates do not require CVE. At the same time, it is politically unfeasible for governments to appear to support extremists. Governments over time have learned more about their limitations as CVE actors. For example, the 2011 Prevent program review noted that "dealing with the theology of Al Qa'ida is only a role for Government in certain well-defined and exceptional situations. Although the Government may provide support and assistance, it must avoid seeming either to want or to endorse a particular kind of 'state Islam'. … The vast majority of this work can and should only be done by communities and scholars in this country or overseas."[83] In support of this view, several interviewees were very clear that governments are not well placed to compete directly against extremists in the "war of ideas." Nevertheless, the Prevent

81   Ibid., pp. 6, 58.
82   See Khan, "Why Countering Extremism Fails."
83   "Prevent Strategy," p. 47.

program review drew a distinction between theology and ideology, which it described as a major driver of violent extremism. The review underscored the importance of "challenging extremist (and non-violent) ideas that are part of a terrorist ideology."[84] A complex division of labor between government and civil society is implied here, wherein the former should challenge ideology while the latter can legitimately address theology. CVE partnerships must define roles accordingly.

From the civil society perspective, the prospect of working with governments on CVE can be similarly fraught. Beyond stigmatization and self-identifying as vulnerable, participating in government-led CVE measures may be resisted by some community members, leading to a loss of organizational support. Most community-level NGOs have limited capacity and need to make decisions about how to raise funds, allocate resources, and pursue their mandates. Certainly, the Prevent program triggered some damaging intracommunal dynamics, with groups divided over whether to accept program funding and accusations of complicity or being a sellout made against those who did.[85] Although the program was intended to be locally driven, evaluation research highlighted the extent to which communities did not feel a sense of ownership over initiatives or otherwise lacked confidence in the strategy overall.[86] In turn, the 2011 program review noted low levels of community trust in the strategy.

One method of building trust is nurturing of professional relationships between governments and NGOs. On this point, NGO-based interviewees expressed a concern about bureaucratic turnover.[87] Communities express frustration regarding policies of staff rotation within government agencies. Building relationships of trust in a short period of time is difficult, particularly where few precedents exist and the issues under discussion are so

contentious. The standard bureaucratic practice of staff rotation appears to undermine the effectiveness of the measures pursued. It is common to hear the refrain that, "[b]y the time the field officers have fostered ties with the community, it is time for them to take on a different role."[88] Moreover, with each rotation, there is a sense of valuable expertise being lost. Although CVE overlaps with other established fields of practice, it is new and different in many ways. Several interviewees made the case for suspending or discarding such practices to facilitate the accumulation of expertise, especially in the short and medium terms as CVE matures as a field.

In sum, governments and NGOs should engage broadly and partner strategically. Nonviolent extremists should not be excluded out of hand from all efforts at engagement, and decisions about partnerships should reflect assessments of risk as well as consultation. It is striking that there are many varieties of partnership for this purpose and that the rhetorical commitment to engaging civil society should contemplate a range of possible approaches across the stages of the CVE policy cycle. Overall, on the basis of the evidence reviewed, broad-based, integrative state–civil society relationships are more likely to yield positive partnerships for CVE.

Trial, Error, and CVE

Given the newness of community engagement for CVE, it would have been remarkable if initial forays into this space produced desired outcomes in a straightforward fashion. That has not been the case. It was perhaps inevitable that the first wave of CVE programming would be a case of trial and error. Past assessments of CVE measures drew attention to the "unintended or even counterproductive impacts," but these findings were "suggestive rather than strictly evidence based."[89] The main argument in this section has been that as the

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84   Ibid., p. 6.
85   Kundnani, "Spooked!" pp. 26–27.
86   Waterhouse Consulting Group, "Preventing Violent Extremism"; Thomas, "Kirklees 'Preventing Violent Extremism' Pathfinder"; UK Audit Commission and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, "Preventing Violent Extremism Learning and Development Exercise," October 2008, http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/media/preventing-violent-extremism-learning-and-development-exercise-20080930.pdf.
87   Researchers in the field can identify with this issue. The analysis and practice of CVE for a few years has involved cycling through multiple interlocutors in some governments and multilateral organizations.
88   Khan, "Why Countering Extremism Fails."
89   Lindekilde, "Value for Money?" p. 396.

evidence base has deepened over time, the same finding seems to pertain, yielding specific lessons.

In making this argument, evaluation research on the Prevent program and other first-wave programs described several successes,[90] while some key Prevent program elements, including policing, were found not to yield unintended consequences.[91] Prevent program critics were clear that "[t]he staggeringly high levels of deprivation in the Muslim community mean[] that there is every justification for the provision of capacity building, community development and community cohesion strategies to specifically target Muslims without delivering it through the PVE agenda."[92] In one evaluation of the involvement of colleges and universities in implementing the Prevent program, evaluators found a demand for knowledge about violent extremism and a willingness to act in response. Yet, they also noted that implementing actors "should be allowed to pursue these activities at a safe distance from Government [and] that Government should continue […] support through the prism of a broader framework."[93] For this reason, it is not argued that

governments should desist from community engagement efforts, especially with Muslim communities. Experience, however, furnishes lessons regarding the terms of engagement, which should reflect the breadth of concerns within communities, without signaling counterterrorism as the primary motivation for engagement.

A final point concerns the demonstrated value of evaluation as a tool for policy learning on CVE. Although advice on how to conduct Prevent program evaluations had been circulated by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in 2009,[94] the 2011 program review criticized the record of evaluating Prevent programming over time.[95] Those evaluations that were done, however, provided insights and added important empirical content to several of the criticisms of the Prevent program offered in the secondary literature. A stronger commitment to evaluation might have brought to light the dilemmas of community engagement on CVE in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in a more timely fashion.

90   For example, Waterhouse Consulting Group, "Preventing Violent Extremism," p. 10.
91   Martin Innes et al., "Assessing the Effects of Prevent Policing: A Report to the Association of Chief Police Officers," Universities' Police Science Institute, March 2011, http://www.npcc.police.uk/documents/TAM/2011/PREVENT%20Innes%200311%20Final%20send%202.pdf.
92   Khan, "Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) and PREVENT," p. 5.
93   Beider and Briggs, "Promoting Community Cohesion and Preventing Violent Extremism in Higher and Further Education," p. 14.
94   DCLG, "Evaluating Local PREVENT Projects and Programmes: Guidelines for Local Authorities and Their Partners and Resource Pack for Local Authorities and Their Partners," August 2009, http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/13060431.pdf.
95   "Prevent Strategy," p. 6.

THE SECOND WAVE OF CVE: CORRECTING COURSE?

The first wave of CVE programming traversed uncharted territory, especially regarding community engagement. A primary finding of this report is that having entered into the CVE space, a cluster of governments has made some effort to learn from experience and has adjusted course accordingly. By more or less completing the CVE policy cycle, those adjustments have yielded the second wave of CVE. Learning occurred through evaluation to some extent, and as one interviewee put it, those evaluations that were undertaken were successful in that they precipitated policy change. Other mechanisms of policy learning, however, were probably more important. Interviewees from across a range of states confirmed that the UK experience with the Prevent program was watched closely by others, in some cases directly, as a result of the mobilization of professional networks and contacts. Other institutions, such as the "Five Eyes" arrangement and the GCTF CVE working group, likely also contributed to information and experience sharing. A secondary literature comparing CVE measures across states began to grow at this time as well.[96]

This section traces the parameters of the second wave of CVE. Across a range of cases, states have tended to come to similar conclusions about CVE as a result of their first-wave experience, especially regarding community-level interventions. Moreover, they have generally responded in similar ways by refining the focus of their programming across the meso- and microlevels, as well as their methods for delivering it. In this regard, the second wave of CVE manifests a measure of policy convergence. Although these initiatives reflect a course correction to some extent, the available data does not support prescriptions about what kinds of measures to apply in any one case. To the contrary, much second-wave programming remains unevaluated, and several current and future challenges can be identified. This discussion also extends to cover some of the most evaluated CVE measures that have been advanced—those undertaken abroad by development actors—and some of the most opaque—macrolevel countermessaging initiatives.

Toward Community Engagement 2.0

A key change to come out of the review of the Prevent strategy has been the effort to disaggregate community cohesion programming from counterterrorism. This has been signaled to affected communities by a bureaucratic division of labor between the Office for Security and Counterterrorism (OSCT) in the Home Office, which now has carriage of the Prevent program, and the DCLG, which previously had the lead. The latter now defines its mandate in this field as "integration," of which "tackling extremism and intolerance" is a part; the DCLG maintains the objective of "[c]hallenging all forms of extremism and intolerance that deepen divisions and increase tensions." The Prevent program is described as being separate from but related to integration, which is framed more broadly to include responding to hate crimes, especially anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic hate crimes.[97]

Symbolically, this has been an important step. There is other evidence of change too, including new or revised guidance for frontline officials on the implementation of the Prevent program and reissued advice on the use

96   Stephen White and Kieran McEvoy, "Countering Violent Extremism: Community Engagement Programmes in Europe," Qatar International Academy for Security Studies, February 2012, https://www.counterextremism.org/download_file/369/134/695/; Neumann, "Preventing Violent Radicalization in America"; Brian Fishman and Andrew Lebovich, "Countering Domestic Radicalization: Lessons for Intelligence Collection and Community Outreach," New America Foundation, June 2011, https://static.newamerica.org/attachments/4354-countering-domestic-radicalization/Fishman_Lebovich_Domestic _Radicalization.e1f2d156744a4e12a2682f56b1e93ce9.pdf; Lorenzo Vidino, "Countering Radicalization: Lessons From Europe," *USIP Special Report*, no. 262 (November 2010), http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR262%20-%20Countering_Radicalization_in_America.pdf; Change Institute, "Study on the Best Practices in Cooperation Between Authorities and Civil Society With a View to the Prevention and Response to Violent Radicalization," July 2008, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/doc_centre/terrorism/docs/ecvr_best_practice_core_report_en.pdf.
97   DCLG, "Creating the Conditions for Integration," February 2012, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data /file/7504/2092103.pdf.

of Counter-Terrorism Local Profiles, a key tool for sharing information between police and communities.[98] Commendably, these refinements address the criticisms raised in the Prevent program review. How these and other adjustments have played out in practice remains unclear. Interviewees raised two concerns.

First, although all welcomed the separation of community cohesion from counterterrorism, some suggested that any gains from doing so would be offset by the renewed emphasis on British values that is contained in the revised strategy. For some, this keeps the government engaged in the "battle of ideas" with extremists in an unproductive way, as all the talk about values will likely elicit skepticism from those vulnerable to extremism. Also, the emphasis on values precludes any collaboration with nonviolent extremists, i.e., cognitive radicals, who are most likely to be in touch and hold sway with the most vulnerable individuals. In other words, according to some, the UK government's answer to the question, with whom to engage? remains misconceived. If some politically unpalatable radicals had benefited from the first iteration of the Prevent program, some suggest that the pendulum has swung too far in the other direction.

Second, although the 2011 review did not contemplate revisions to the legal framework for the Prevent program,[99] intervening events and the concern for FTFs in particular prompted the passage of the Counterterrorism and Security Act in 2015. This law imposes a statutory duty on "specified authorities," i.e., local government, criminal justice, education and child care, health and social care, and law enforcement actors, to "have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism" in the exercise of their functions. Some interviewees flagged this development

and foresaw the controversy that has ensued. On the one hand, this might be seen as an extension of the idea of safeguarding, wherein relevant professionals perform a preventive and protective role regarding other social problems, such as abuse and addiction. On the other hand, the imposition of a statutory duty risks adding to the confusion about the difference between the objectives of Prevent and Pursue, leaving the government open to the criticism that teachers and others are being required to act like "spies."[100] Recall that past evaluation research made clear that colleges and universities were willing to implement Prevent measures, but evaluators found that they preferred to do so "at a safe distance from Government" and "through the prism of a broader framework."[101] The imposition of a statutory duty seems inconsistent with that finding.

Indeed, other countries gleaned from their first-wave experience that, if anything, CVE at the mesolevel should focus more on behavior than on values. In other words, governments should desist from direct engagement in a "battle of ideas" with extremists because civil society is better suited to that task. Denmark provides an example of this general trajectory. The first wave of Danish CVE resembled the Prevent program in that it mixed a community cohesion agenda with counterterrorism.[102] In turn, similar problems were noted, including that broadly stated objectives provided insufficient guidance in developing programs and yielded stigmatization.[103] In response, the objectives were altered midstream; and one specific goal—"to maintain and further develop Denmark as a democratic society with freedom, responsibility, equality and opportunities for all"—was tacitly dropped.[104] Interviewees gave an upbeat appraisal of this change, noting that the risk of unintended consequences arising through community engagement has been reduced. As described below, the

98   UK National Police Chiefs' Council, "Counter-Terrorism Local Profiles," n.d., http://www.npcc.police.uk/NPCCBusinessAreas/PREVENT /CounterTerrorismLocalProfiles.aspx.

99   "Prevent Strategy," p. 6.

100   Martin Hall, "Teacher, Tutor, Soldier, Spy: Towards a Police State of Mind," *Times Higher Education Supplement*, no. 2185 (8 January 2015).

101   Beider and Briggs, "Promoting Community Cohesion and Preventing Violent Extremism in Higher and Further Education," p. 14.

102   Lasse Lindekilde, "Refocusing Danish Counter-Radicalisation Efforts: An Analysis of the (Problematic) Logic and Practice of Individual De-Radicalisation Interventions," in *Counter-Radicalisation: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Christopher Baker-Beall, Charlotte Heath-Kelly, and Lee Jarvis (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 223–241.

103   Lindekilde, "Value for Money?"; COWI A/S, "Mid-Term Evaluation of the Action Plan 'A Common and Safe Future,'" June 2011, https://ec.europa.eu /migrant-integration/index.cfm?action=media.download&uuid=FBC310B9-FB85-7C31-946D632BC120D3B7.

104   Lindekilde, "Refocusing Danish Counter-Radicalisation Efforts."

view that CVE should focus less on cognitive radicalization and primarily address those at risk of behavioral radicalization has led Denmark to develop innovative microlevel measures.

The Australian experience also can be considered here. Australia observed the UK experience closely before the federal government launched its initial CVE program, "Building Community Resilience," in 2010. As the title suggests, the focus of the program was very much on CVE-relevant programming, designed primarily to address cognitive radicalization by building resilience at the community level. This entailed a range of activities, including mentoring for youth vulnerable to extremist influences, intercultural and interfaith education in schools, and online resources and training.[105] Some evaluations from these activities are publicly available in different forms and suggest that, at the program level, some measures achieved their objectives.[106] Across the program as a whole, however, evaluations were more likely to be self-evaluations; and a range of familiar problems, such as concern about stigmatization and capacity gaps among implementing NGOs, were encountered.[107] Following a change in government and subsequent review, it was concluded that the initial range of activities missed the mark and did not respond adequately to the emerging threat: "Activities designed to build cohesive and resilient communities have not of themselves proven to be sufficient to stop all individuals heading down a pathway of radicalisation. Individuals within these communities are still being drawn towards extremist ideologies."[108]

In 2014 the "Building Community Resilience" program was replaced with the "Living Safe Together" initiative. This revised program has a stronger focus on diverting individuals from violent extremism through tailored intervention programs, education, and engagement activities and online initiatives. This entails a stronger emphasis on community-level partnerships. One innovation is a dedicated grants program for NGOs to build their capacity to act in this domain. The broader context is a strategic-level emphasis on behavioral radicalization. In its recent review of Australian counterterrorism efforts, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet undertakes to pursue actions at the macro-, meso-, and microlevels but makes very clear that effort and funding should be directly proportional to the threat from individual violent extremists.[109]

A final example of community engagement for CVE is Canada, which has evolved a multilayered approach over time and integrated lessons from the UK experience through observation and direct professional contacts.[110] In several ways, Canada sought to respond to events such as the 9/11 attacks and Maher Arar's arrest and torture by building on existing mechanisms, including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Community Advisory Committees.[111] Yet, past mechanisms were uncoordinated, and it was soon acknowledged that more would be needed to allay concerns within the Muslim community about the impacts of terrorism and counterterrorism. This occurred in several ways. At the elite level, a Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security (CCRS) was initiated in 2004 to enable dialogue and information exchange between community leaders and government (formally, the ministers of public safety and justice). Over time, the CCRS has been consulted on major legislative and policy changes, including CVE, and has provided a means of outreach to communities across the country. One interviewee described the CCRS as itself a "decade-long

105   Australian Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, "Review of Australia's Counter-Terrorism Machinery."

106   Anne Aly, Elisabeth Taylor, and Saul Karnovsky, "Moral Disengagement and Building Resilience to Violent Extremism: An Education Intervention," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 37, no. 4 (2014): 369–385; Kevin McDonald, Michele Grossman, and Amelia Johns, "More Than a Game Evaluation Report," Victoria University Centre for Cultural Diversity and Wellbeing, September 2012, http://www.vu.edu.au/sites/default/files/faehd/pdfs/More%20Than%20a%20Game%20Evaluation.pdf.

107   Sean Parnell, "$5m Lost Reaching Out to Islamists," *Australian*, 10 March 2015.

108   Australian Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, "Review of Australia's Counter-Terrorism Machinery," p. 31.

109   Ibid., p. 3.

110   Wayne Hanniman, "Canadian Muslims, Islamophobia and National Security," *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice* 36, no. 4 (December 2008): 277.

111   Wayne Hanniman, "A Community Based Multi-Faceted Response to the Terrorist Threat in Canada," in *Understanding and Responding to the Terrorism Phenomenon*, ed. Ozgur Nikbay and Suleyman Hancerli (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2007), p. 321.

learning process," but the longevity of this mechanism suggests that participants find it useful.

Another example is the RCMP-led National Security Community Outreach Program (NSCOP), formalized in 2006. The program was inspired by the London Metropolitan Police Muslim Contact Unit but with a title and mandate to cover all communities.[112] The program initially adopted a broad-based, trust-building approach prior to raising more contentious issues. Importantly, this program allowed the flexibility to engage with cognitive radicals, i.e., nonviolent extremists, on the grounds that "excluding outspoken, critical elements of a community is an ill-advised strategy. If critical individuals or representatives of critical groups are ignored by the RCMP and other law enforcement agencies, it will be considered proof that [the] RCMP equates critical and/or radical beliefs with terrorism or simply do not want to deal with those criticisms."[113] When the NSCOP in Ottawa was evaluated in 2008, it was found to have advanced its basic objectives of sharing information, increasing knowledge, and building trust, albeit with a few tensions surrounding the participation of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, apparent conflict between the advisory and outreach roles of the Community Outreach Committee, and the agenda for its future work.[114]

In the past, other police forces in Canada, such as in Calgary, invested significantly in community relations for purposes other than counterterrorism; they have been well placed to adapt existing measures to new demands. In some parts of the country, multiagency Integrated National Security Enforcement Teams have been a useful vehicle for engagement. In general, following the elaboration of Canada's counterterrorism strategy in 2011, forms of engagement have continued to diversify. For example, beyond partnering with NGOs on dialogue and capacity-building initiatives, a current initiative from Public Safety Canada involves the use of first-person narratives about specific radicalization experiences as a means of outreach.[115] These narratives cover forms of radicalization beyond Islamist violent extremism alone. In turn, the RCMP recently partnered with Muslim groups to develop a handbook for communities on extremism and measures to stop it.[116] Although the RCMP limited its endorsement to those sections of the handbook to which it contributed directly,[117] the exercise itself reflects an innovative attempt at partnership. The RCMP is expected to release a formal CVE strategy later this year.

Looking across cases, there are elements of learning and a willingness to experiment, even if community engagement remains a work in progress overall. Among NGO-based interviewees, several noted this more deliberate approach to community engagement among states alongside the consistently strong rhetorical commitment to partnering with civil society. In discussing possible responses from civil society, two countervailing trends were noted.

First, the missteps in the first wave of CVE programming have not been cost free; and some civil society actors, including within Muslim communities, remain hesitant about engagement and skeptical toward CVE. For example, numerous Muslim and non-Muslim NGOs have voiced concern about the CVE pilot programs currently being rolled out in the United States. In other countries, where CVE has been deleterious to the healthy state–civil society relationships that preceded it, there is a sense that trust must be rebuilt, which is no easy task and requires effort and resources. Recent integrative statements from governments about the importance of community engagement and the value of partnerships are prone to be interpreted merely as rhetoric unless they are accompanied by commitments, material and otherwise, to remain engaged over

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112   Hanniman, "Canadian Muslims, Islamophobia and National Security," p. 277.
113   Ibid., pp. 279–280.
114   Wade W. Deisman, "Evaluation Report: National Capital Region Community Outreach Program," July 2008 (copy on file with author).
115   Angus Smith, "Preventing Violent Extremism Through Community Engagement," *Police Chief*, no. 82 (February 2015), pp. 40–41.
116   Islamic Social Services Association, National Council of Canadian Muslims, and RCMP, "United Against Terrorism: A Collaborative Effort Towards a Secure, Inclusive and Just Canada," 2014, http://www.issaservices.com/issa/downloads/UAT-HANDBOOK-WEB-VERSION-SEPT-27-2014.pdf.
117   Douglas Quan, "Did Ottawa Prompt RCMP About-Face? Force Skipped Muslim Groups' Anti-Terrorism Book Launch," *Vancouver Sun*, 2 January 2015, p. B1.

time. Those commitments should be proportional to the problem and reflect the importance of civil society in responding to it. Frankly stated, governments should get serious: "To truly confront violent extremism and prevent extremist groups from preying on at-risk youth, tens of thousands of workshops need the requisite funding. They cannot be run as free or voluntary services. Expecting members of a specific faith community to become experts in radicalization and violent extremism so they can effectively do extremism prevention training is naïve and impractical."[118]

Second, at the same time, it can be observed that NGOs, especially within Muslim communities, are increasingly self-initiating in this field and developing their own CVE measures, even if they do not identify them as such. This reflects frustration with government-led CVE efforts and the desire to take more direct ownership and engineer the kind of course correction on CVE that many perceive is badly needed. It also reflects the extent of concern surrounding the rise of ISIL, which has shocked, saddened, and offended Muslim civil society around the world. Interviewees noted that NGOs face several barriers in self-initiating CVE measures, including resource constraints, knowledge gaps, and the underdevelopment of peer-to-peer networks. Despite the existence of relevant professional networks for governments and researchers (e.g., the GCTF CVE working group, the Radicalisation Awareness Network, the European Network of Deradicalisation, IMPACT Europe), specific efforts to put CVE-practicing NGOs in touch with each other to share information and experience have not been advanced. That gap could easily be filled. Clearly, self-initiation by civil society and among Muslim NGOs in particular is a potentially important development that would be welcomed by most governments. They should consider ways of nurturing it.

CVE at the Microlevel

Turning to individual-level CVE interventions, policy convergence among states is particularly striking. If CVE has been the most significant development in counterterrorism in the last decade, the emergence and spread of microlevel counseling and mentoring programs has been the signature development within CVE in the last few years, prompted by the rise to prominence of ISIL and its ability to attract FTFs. These kinds of interventions have a precedent in the deradicalization programs that have been ventured in many states to rehabilitate and reintegrate convicted terrorist offenders.[119] Although the precriminal context is different from targeting measures to prevent recidivism among terrorist offenders, deradicalization is apt to be known presently as "downstream CVE."[120]

The growth of microlevel CVE interventions reflects the emerging belief among some practitioners that the core business of CVE is to address behavioral radicalization through CVE-specific measures. Some pragmatism is latent in this response, in that reducing the pool of cognitive radicals has proven to be an uncertain and potentially vast undertaking whereas resources may be better focused on individuals that are most vulnerable. In this regard, the UK intervention program "Channel" was assessed to be relatively successful in the 2011 Prevent review. Similar kinds of programs now exist in Denmark (the Aarhus model); Germany (Exit, Hayat, and the Violence Prevention Network); Sweden (EXIT/Fryshuset); Singapore (Religious Rehabilitation Group); and elsewhere, and efforts are under way in several other countries to institute similar initiatives. Those interviewees with direct experience in developing and implementing these programs reported that they were fielding requests for information and assistance from a wide range of states.

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118 Khan, "Why Countering Extremism Fails."
119 Bjørgo and Horgan, *Leaving Terrorism Behind*.
120 Michael J. Williams, "Community Engagement and CVE in the United States" (presentation, "Workshop on Implementing and Evaluating CVE Measures: Comparative Perspectives," Ottawa, 8–9 April 2015) (copy on file with author).

A detailed assessment of microlevel programs in the context of CVE is beyond the scope of this report. The uptick of interest in microlevel CVE initiatives is a promising response to the dilemmas encountered in implementing mesolevel programs. The debate and literature on these programs is sure to expand in upcoming months and years. For present purposes, governments and NGOs should consider three issues in advancing initiatives in this field.

First, there are a variety of methods for referring vulnerable individuals into programs and vetting their admission. In the absence of predictive knowledge about who becomes a violent extremist and how, referrals and admission processes are critical to guard against underreaction (false negatives) and overreaction (false positives).[121] Currently, there is some variation in these procedures. Some NGOs that implement intervention and mentoring programs undertake outreach to relevant officials in schools, prisons, social service agencies, and elsewhere to raise awareness and share information about their work. On some occasions, they collaborate with local authorities to do so. These kinds of networks, however, take time to build, and that must be factored into project cycles. Some NGOs utilize a hotline as a way for community members to make referrals.

If there was a consensus among interlocutors, it was that the existing infrastructure of relevant social service providers should be drawn on and "up-skilled"[122] to ensure they have the capacity and knowledge required to refer individuals at risk of violent extremism. For example, Michael J. Williams shared a model "CVE-relevant service provider network," comprising an inner ring of law enforcement, counselors and social workers, interfaith partners, and schools and an outer ring of parents, clergy, peers, and the general public, although other actors may be included.[123] The idea that peers should be part of such a model reflects that, in some

cases, it is the friends of vulnerable individuals that are most likely to be aware of their interest in extremism. There is some initial research on the importance of "connectors"—individuals who are able to provide a bridge between government and communities in contexts otherwise characterized by low levels of trust—in counterterrorism.[124] Indeed, in light of past controversies and ongoing sensitivities, perhaps the most promising mesolevel CVE initiatives being initiated are those designed to support microlevel programs. It is not possible to determine presently whether the imposition of a statutory duty on such "connectors," as prescribed in recent UK legislation, will be useful in advancing the quality of referrals.

Regarding vetting procedures once referrals are made, one NGO provides specific training for staff and maintains an internal dialogue about the process and outcomes of admission decisions. Overall, it seems that such discussions are just beginning. Certainly, all interlocutors reported that the volume of referrals is significant, underscoring the demand for such programs, as well as the importance of screening.

Second, regarding mentoring-based programs, the mentoring process itself presents several challenges. For example, who should mentor those vulnerable to violent extremism? Mentors must be credible, possessing the knowledge and skills appropriate for the role. Yet, some evaluation research suggests that the identity of the mentor may also matter, especially regarding violent religious extremists. In that case, evaluators disagreed on whether mentors working with would-be jihadists should be practicing Muslims themselves and have a sufficient grasp of theology, in addition to understanding extremist narratives.[125]

Further, how should practitioners define the objectives of mentoring? For example, is it sufficient to

121 Lindekilde, "Refocusing Danish Counter-Radicalisation Efforts."
122 This term was helpfully suggested by Shandon Harris-Hogan.
123 Williams, "Community Engagement and CVE in the United States."
124 Basia Spalek, "Community Engagement for Counterterrorism in Britain: An Exploration of the Role of 'Connectors' in Countering *Takfiri Jihadist* Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 37, no. 10 (2014): 825–841.
125 Basia Spalek and Lynn Davies, "Key Evaluation Findings of the West Midlands (WM) 1-2-1 Mentoring Scheme," University of Birmingham, August 2010, pp. 28–29, http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/IASS/news-events/west-midlands-1-2-1-evaluation-findings.pdf.

dissuade behavioral radicals from their commitment to violence, or should programs aim to go further and disabuse them of radical ideas altogether? Once the broader objective is set, which midrange goals can be established in order to yield the desired outcome? The range of possibilities is considerable, and on this basis, evaluation research has noted that, among mentors in a particular program, goals were perceived differently. One suggestion is to set objectives on a case-by-case basis, accepting that the mentoring process is "the art of the possible."[126]

Among the other challenges that mentors confront is the dilemma about specific approaches to take, given the twin needs of addressing the mentee's extremism while maintaining his or her trust. Mentors must balance "hard," i.e., confrontational or interventionist, and "soft," i.e., empathetic or "befriending," approaches.[127] In addition, there are questions about training and supporting mentors and administering programs that are fundamentally preventative but may hew closely to the line between the precriminal and criminal spaces.[128]

These challenges point to a third issue near the top of practitioners' agendas as they advance CVE at the microlevel: evaluation. As interviewees pointed out, counseling and mentoring in the specific context of countering violent Islamist extremism remains unevaluated. Although analogous programs in the context of deradicalization or other kinds of extremism provide some precedent, evaluations in those fields have tended to be more process oriented or utilized basic indicators (e.g., recidivism) only. The main issue is to define the end point at which microlevel programs can be said to have succeeded and, on that basis, elaborate a series of observable indicators that that point has been reached.[129] There is some disagreement as to whether full-blown reintegration ought to be the standard or whether disengagement from violence is enough.

Among interviewees, none offered a perfect set of metrics to measure the impact of microlevel CVE programs. Yet, the commitment to evaluation that appears in strategic-level documents endorsing such programs is now echoed by practitioners on the ground, whose thinking on these matters is advancing. Indeed, in raising these three points, the objective is simply to note that, amid the sharp uptick in interest in microlevel CVE programs, it is important to consider whether these programs work and how that is determined. There is reason to think that second-wave CVE measures such as these will be better evaluated than first-wave measures.

CVE as Foreign and Development Policy

The second wave of CVE is characterized by efforts to refine community-level initiatives alongside a stronger focus on individual-level interventions. Over this time, experience in advancing CVE measures abroad has accumulated, not least because of the increasing role of foreign ministries in supporting and implementing CVE measures. These have often been advanced bilaterally, administered through capitals or embassies, and through increasing levels of multilateral engagement on CVE (e.g., through the GCTF CVE working group, the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, the United Nations, EU, Group of Seven, and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe). Most prominently, a series of meetings following the February 2015 White House CVE summit were scheduled to take place in different parts of the world. There is every reason to think that CVE will stay on the international agenda for some time to come, and the UN Secretary-General is expected to elaborate a strategy on the topic very soon.

Very little evaluation research on CVE initiatives advanced by foreign ministries is publicly available, and this report cannot offer an assessment on that

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126 Lindekilde, "Refocusing Danish Counter-Radicalisation Efforts."
127 Basia Spalek and Lynn Davies, "Mentoring in Relation to Violent Extremism: A Study of Role, Purpose and Outcomes," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 35, no. 5 (2012): 354–368.
128 Spalek and Davies, "Key Evaluation Findings of the West Midlands (WM) 1-2-1 Mentoring Scheme."
129 Spalek and Davies, "Mentoring in Relation to Violent Extremism," pp. 362–364.

basis. Among interviewees, several were familiar with these programs, having participated in developing and implementing them. They commented on the breadth of topics now covered by CVE measures advanced abroad, which include cultural, sports, women's rights, and youth empowerment programs; civil society and media engagement; development and educational initiatives; and a range of training and dialogue opportunities, including with religious leaders.[130] Contrary to the trend domestically where governments seem to be advancing more CVE-specific measures, programs abroad are often CVE relevant, such that CVE has spilled over into other established fields of practice. In this context, interviewees again noted the vague boundaries of CVE as a field of practice that, among other things, creates a demand for coordination and information exchange. Several made the case for a mapping exercise of CVE programs to avoid duplication of effort and identify priority needs.

On the whole, interviewees were quite upbeat about the utility of CVE measures led by foreign ministries. One quipped that her government has had a far easier time advancing community-level initiatives outside of the country than in it. Yet, interviewees noted that these claims are merely reflections and lack an empirical basis. Importantly, several governments are in the process of considering ways in which to evaluate these programs.

If the CVE activities of foreign ministries abroad have been underevaluated, there are several publicly available CVE evaluations pertaining to programs implemented by development actors. In line with the discussion of the definition of CVE above, there is a clear substantive overlap between CVE and development work. Some development actors have been reticent to engage directly in CVE out of concern that such programming may lead to politicization and negatively impact their

ability to deliver their core development mandate. Others have been less hesitant, viewing CVE as an extension of good governance and conflict prevention measures and, more generally, recognizing that the origins of violent extremism may lie in the kinds of socioeconomic conditions that are commonly addressed through development work. Among development actors, USAID is perhaps most deeply invested in CVE, for example, by supporting the production of key analytical reports, such as those on the "drivers of violent extremism" noted above in describing the "assessment" phase of the CVE policy cycle.[131] USAID has also contributed directly toward U.S. CVE initiatives in several regions. Formal evaluations of some of these programs have reported some positive findings while identifying clear constraints.

For example, beginning in 2006, USAID commenced pilot programs as part of the multiagency Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Program. Over time, these evolved to focus on three sets of activities: good governance, youth empowerment, and media and outreach support.[132] An evaluation of the programming in Chad, Mali, and Niger in 2011 found that the measures had produced positive impacts, especially regarding civic engagement. The methodology used in this evaluation involved the construction of a baseline, an experimental research design to compare the differential effects of programming in treatment and comparison groups, and the use of original quantitative (surveys) and qualitative (focus groups and interviews) data. In particular, the surveys gathered attitudinal data to measure the socioeconomic, political, and cultural drivers of violent extremism elaborated previously by USAID.[133]

A number of findings were notable. Among the different forms of programming implemented in the three countries, the development of peace and tolerance radio programs was best received. Evaluators reported that

130 For an example of the range of programming that can be advanced under the rubric of CVE, see Hedieh Mirahmadi, Mehreen Farooq, and Waleed Ziad, "Pakistan's Civil Society: Alternative Channels to Countering Violent Extremism," World Organization for Resource Development and Education, October 2012, http://www.worde.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/WORDE-Report-Pakistan-Civil-Society-Alternative-Channels-to-CVE.pdf.

131 See Denoeux and Carter, "Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism"; Denoeux and Carter, "Development Assistance and Counter-Extremism"; USAID, "Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency."

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

133 Denoeux and Carter, "Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism"; Denoeux and Carter, "Development Assistance and Counter-Extremism."

these programs, which cover advice on issues such as domestic violence, as well as building tolerance between Muslims and Christians, "demonstrated real impact on public attitudes and understanding about tolerance and peace."[134] Focus groups and interviews confirmed that the radio programs increased levels of civic engagement, such as through the convening of "listening clubs," which provide opportunities for discussion on a wide range of issues, including business and politics. Indeed, the evaluators claimed that radio programs "may be one of the most cost effective means of helping people find peaceful resolutions to conflicts and supporting dialogue between communities."[135] Further, they found that listenership increased where support for radio programs was complemented by other CVE measures, a finding noted elsewhere too.[136]

Positive results from these and similar measures were observed across a range of programs in East and West Africa.[137] This body of evaluation reports makes for interesting reading as the authors describe programmatic achievements in regions where extremist violence has persisted or increased. Indeed, they provide something of a test for the "development hypothesis" related to CVE, which is that "a decreased risk of extremism will result when the enabling environment for extremism is reduced."[138] Some evidence seeming to support this hypothesis has been greeted with enthusiasm, prompting the recommendation that "[f]uture attempts to curtail violent extremist groups around the world should deepen their connections to soft-side and development-based tactics and use social science-based

methods to measure their impact."[139] At the same time, evaluation research can be mined for lessons learned, and two stand out.

First, as the development hypothesis suggests, CVE measures in this context are often "CVE relevant," proposing to precipitate change indirectly, aiming to affect an intervening variable such as civic engagement[140] or civic culture[141] or to otherwise induce an attitudinal or behavioral shift that, in turn, is proposed to impact levels of violent extremism in some way. This prudent approach enables evaluators to build on existing literatures pertaining to specific intervening variables and utilize familiar research tools. Yet in several cases, change was most likely to occur only with regard to the lower-level program goals that are furthest removed from CVE objectives. For example, one evaluation found that radio programming induced change in civic engagement, but this was not matched by change in attitudes toward extremism.[142] Another found that youth-focused programming in Kenya appeared successful in getting youth to engage with local government officials but that perceptions of the legitimacy of using violence in the name of Islam were mostly unchanged.[143] In another example, again concerning radio programming, the evaluator endeavored to demonstrate an effect between listening and participation in local decision-making but found no effect on perceptions of the United States regarding its efforts against terrorism and al-Qaida.[144] In one study, the evaluator acknowledged the criticism that program content might be seen as too distant from CVE objectives.[145]

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134 Swedberg and Smith, "Mid-Term Evaluation of USAID's Counter-Extremism Programming in Africa," p. 3.

135 Ibid.

136 Jeffrey Swedberg and Lainie Reisman, "Mid-Term Evaluation of Three Countering Violent Extremism Projects," USAID, 22 February 2013, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pdacx479.pdf.

137 Daniel P. Aldrich, "First Steps Towards Hearts and Minds? USAID's Countering Violent Extremism Policies in Africa," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 3 (2014): 523–546; James Khalil and Martine Zeuthen, "A Case Study of Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) Programming: Lessons From OTI's Kenya Transition Initiative," *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 3, no. 1 (30 September 2014): 1–12; Swedberg and Reisman, "Mid-Term Evaluation of Three Countering Violent Extremism Projects"; Daniel P. Aldrich, "Radio as the Voice of God: Peace and Tolerance Radio Programming's Impact on Norms," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 6, no. 6 (December 2012): 34–60; Sharon Bean and Patty Hill, "USAID/West Africa Peace Through Development (PDEV): Program Assessment Report," USAID, March 2011, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pdacr829.pdf; Karen Greiner, "Applying Local Solutions to Local Problems: Radio Listeners as Agents of Change," USAID, 25 October 2010, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pdacs538.pdf.

138 Swedberg and Reisman, "Mid-Term Evaluation of Three Countering Violent Extremism Projects," p. 4.

139 Aldrich, "Radio as the Voice of God," p. 56.

140 Swedberg and Smith, "Mid-Term Evaluation of USAID's Counter-Extremism Programming in Africa."

141 Greiner, "Applying Local Solutions to Local Problems."

142 Swedberg and Smith, "Mid-Term Evaluation of USAID's Counter-Extremism Programming in Africa."

143 Swedberg and Reisman, "Mid-Term Evaluation of Three Countering Violent Extremism Projects."

144 Aldrich, "First Steps Towards Hearts and Minds?"

145 Greiner, "Applying Local Solutions to Local Problems."

On more careful consideration, the evidence so far has failed to substantiate the development hypothesis. Related assessments have underscored the importance of elaborating theories of change,[146] which would help clarify the specific links between interventions and desired outcomes related to violent extremism. Yet, the data also possibly provide a lesson about what to expect from CVE programming abroad, especially regarding CVE-relevant measures.

Second, evaluators in these cases sent a very clear message about the timeline for CVE interventions in the development context. For example, some evaluators concluded that "[c]ountering extremism is necessarily a long term goal and as such must be addressed with programs that help societies build the capacity to manage the drivers of extremism."[147] Building "civic culture," said another, is necessarily gradual and requires extensive input and consultation with communities.[148] Managing relationships over time can be difficult too. For example, evaluators noted the risk that some programs may raise expectations and lead to disillusionment, as in Niger, where the suspension of youth programming following a coup elicited a negative reaction "as though it were a betrayal" by the U.S. government.[149]

Highlighting these points should not throw doubt on the role of development actors in CVE. Rather, in moving forward, practitioners should be informed by the evaluation research that has been done and is publicly available, noting the specific challenges of development actors in translating programmatic outcomes into CVE impacts.

CVE Online

The use of media and the Internet by terrorists is the subject of its own significant literature,[150] especially in light of the recent increase in concern about the use of social media by ISIL and its role in attracting FTFs to theaters of conflict in Syria and Iraq. An extensive treatment of this topic is beyond the scope of this report, but a selective review of the current debate about CVE efforts online was undertaken with a focus on effectiveness and evaluation. Questions about these efforts were addressed to relevant interviewees. Four points capture the current state of play.

First, several governments have converged on a range of specific activities in advancing CVE online. For example, Rachel Briggs and Sebastien Feve describe a "counter-messaging spectrum," comprising government strategic communications to disseminate a positive message about government actions, alternative narratives to address extremist narratives by affirming social values, and counternarratives to deconstruct extremist messaging.[151] A similar typology of activities is offered by Erin Saltman and Jonathan Russell, who describe negative measures (blocking, censoring, filtering, or removing Internet content); positive measures (countermessaging, which may be specific or general); and monitoring.[152] If delimiting the range of activities that constitutes CVE has been a challenge at the general level, it seems online CVE is quite well defined.

Second, in pursuing these activities, practitioners have the benefit of an emerging subfield of research on

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146 Bean and Hill, "USAID/West Africa Peace Through Development (PDEV)."

147 Swedberg and Smith, "Mid-Term Evaluation of USAID's Counter-Extremism Programming in Africa," p. 43.

148 Greiner, "Applying Local Solutions to Local Problems."

149 Swedberg and Smith, "Mid-Term Evaluation of USAID's Counter-Extremism Programming in Africa," p. 41.

150 Judith Tinnes, "Bibliography: Terrorism and the Media (Including the Internet) (Part 2)," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 8, no. 6 (December 2014): 82–113; Judith Tinnes, "Literature on Terrorism and the Media (Including the Internet): An Extensive Bibliography," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 7, no. 1 supp. (February 2013).

151 Rachel Briggs and Sebastien Feve, "Review of Programs to Counter Narratives of Violent Extremism: What Works and What Are the Implications for Government?" Institute for Strategic Dialogue, July 2013, http://www.strategicdialogue.org/ISD_Kanishka_Report.pdf.

152 Erin Marie Saltman and Jonathan Russell, "White Paper - The Role of Prevent in Countering Online Extremism," Quilliam Foundation, 2 December 2014, https://www.quilliamfoundation.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/publications/free/white-paper-the-role-of-prevent-in-countering-online-extremism.pdf.

extremists' current use of the Internet.[153] Several points are emerging from this debate. For example, removal of extremist content from websites and social media has a displacement effect: material removed from one location can easily pop up elsewhere. This entails a risk of unintended consequences, i.e., that government actions fulfill extremist narratives (e.g., about bias, discrimination, and censorship), leading to more radicalization, not less. Displacement also carries the risk that extremists will become more difficult to detect. For some, this suggests that negative measures are ineffective. Others argue that "[a]ny balanced evaluation of current levels of suspension activity [in this case, regarding Twitter accounts linked to ISIL] clearly demonstrates that total interdiction is not the goal. The qualitative debate is over how suspensions affect the performance of the network and whether a different level of pressure might produce a different result."[154] For others still, the prevalence of negative measures as a tactic needs to be rebalanced with strategic approaches to disrupt the structures and behaviors of extremists online.[155]

Third, the research for this report across primary and secondary sources attests to a great deal of skepticism about the effects and effectiveness of governmental CVE efforts online. Regarding negative measures, content is so easy to develop and circulate online that governments face a seemingly endless task, knowing they are likely only to displace extremist messages. Regarding positive measures, many believe that govern-

ments lack credibility in engaging extremists and those vulnerable to extremism online, not least because of the "say-do" gap, i.e., the efforts of extremists to exploit apparent gaps between governmental messages and governmental actions.[156] Therefore, the message, the messaging, and the messenger all matter, and governments are less effective messengers than civil society.[157] On this point, Khan suggests that the messages themselves are sometimes misdirected: "An ISIS supporter recently tweeted, '#IS star recruiters are injustice and oppression,' during an exchange with me about what attracts the youth to terrorism. The objective of counter-extremism messaging should be to dissuade people from supporting violence, not to defend policy choices made by lawmakers and politicians. This messaging is best done by non-government actors, but they are unfortunately few and far between."[158] For this reason, it is common to hear that beyond working with tech companies to advance negative measures and monitor extremists online, governments ought to build the capacity of credible NGO messengers or act as a convener in this regard.[159]

Only a few examples of evaluation research pertaining to online CVE measures are publicly available. Of these, one study utilized content analysis to determine the extent to which governmental messages about extremism were gaining traction in online and other media.[160] Another example used interview research to gauge the views of young Muslims exposed to

153   J.M. Berger, "Social Media: An Evolving Front in Radicalization" (testimony before U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, 7 May 2015), http://www.hsgac.senate.gov/download/?id=7159cf49-4350-4953-b189-168af6edee79; J.M. Berger and Jonathon Morgan, "The ISIS Twitter Census: Defining and Describing the Population of ISIS Supporters on Twitter," *Brookings Project on U.S. Relations With the Islamic World Analysis Paper*, no. 20 (March 2015), http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2015/03/isis-twitter-census-berger-morgan /isis_twitter_census_berger_morgan.pdf; Ali Fisher, "Swarmcast: How Jihadist Networks Maintain a Persistent Online Presence," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9, no. 3 (June 2015): 3–20; Jytte Klausen, "Tweeting the Jihad: Social Media Networks of Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 38, no. 1 (2015): 1–22; Joseph A. Carter, Shiraz Maher, and Peter R. Neumann, "#Greenbirds: Measuring Importance and Influence in Syrian Foreign Fighter Networks," International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR), 2014, http://icsr.info/wp-content /uploads/2014/04/ICSR-Report-Greenbirds-Measuring-Importance-and-Influence-in-Syrian-Foreign-Fighter-Networks.pdf; J.M. Berger and Bill Strathearn, "Who Matters Online: Measuring Influence, Evaluating Content and Countering Violent Extremism in Online Social Networks," ICSR, March 2013, http:// icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/ICSR_Berger-and-Strathearn.pdf; Peter Neumann, "Options and Strategies for Countering Online Radicalization in the United States," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 36, no. 6 (2013): 431–459.
154   Berger and Morgan, "ISIS Twitter Census," p. 3.
155   Fisher, "Swarmcast."
156   Rachel Briggs and Sebastien Feve, "Policy Briefing: Countering the Appeal of Online Extremism," Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2014, http:// www.strategicdialogue.org/Inspire_Radicalize_Recruit.pdf; Briggs and Feve, "Review of Programs to Counter Narratives of Violent Extremism."
157   Saltman and Russell, "White Paper - The Role of Prevent in Countering Online Extremism."
158   Khan, "Why Countering Extremism Fails."
159   Briggs and Feve, "Policy Briefing"; Briggs and Feve, "Review of Programs to Counter Narratives of Violent Extremism."
160   TNS Media Intelligence, "The Language of Terrorism: Analysing the Public Discourse and Evaluating RICU's Impact," Stationery Office, 2008.

online CVE measures.[161] This latter study repeats the arguments about the limitations of governments as actors in this field, adding that online communication campaigns need to articulate with offline, face-to-face engagement, which may be more important in dissuading vulnerable individuals.

In turn, in the context of CVE, the Internet and social media offer the promise of evaluability because of the output data and metrics they yield. What that data means in practice is more difficult to interpret. As J.M. Berger recently noted, "[T]he study of social media is relatively new and rapidly evolving. Unpredictable outcomes are inevitable in highly interconnected networks. While social network analysis offers great promise as a way to understand the world, we are still at an early stage in determining which approaches work."[162] The aggressive online activity of ISIL and other extremist groups from across the ideological spectrum clearly requires a response. As in other areas of CVE, however, there is no proof positive that current approaches are effective. For this reason, recommendations offered by others to invest in monitoring and evaluation, to gather and analyze data, and to enhance digital literacy have merit.[163]

In moving from the first to the second wave of CVE, there is some evidence of policy learning, partly through evaluation but often through other means, and convergence. At the micro-, meso-, and macrolevels, governmental approaches to CVE are more similar than they have been in the past and perhaps better too. If there are broad trends, they comprise a stronger focus on behavioral radicalization, which manifests itself in an uptick in interest in microlevel intervention programs, alongside a corresponding decrease in community-level measures to address cognitive radicalization, which is a promising development. States seem to have learned from their first-wave experience that they should focus their efforts on those that would do harm.

Nevertheless, the second wave raises concerns of its own. Challenges have been identified at each level, pertaining to online CVE measures broadcast to a large audience, efforts to refine community engagement, and individual-level programs. Overall, the evidence base for the second wave remains too thin. Where they have done so, practitioners should be applauded for not repeating the documented mistakes of the past, but they should be reminded that evidence-based policy requires ongoing investments in gathering and analyzing data.

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161 Roslyn Richardson, "Fighting Fire With Fire: Target Audience Responses to Online Anti-Violence Campaigns," Australian Strategic Policy Institute, December 2013, https://www.aspi.org.au/publications/fighting-fire-with-fire-target-audience-responses-to-online-anti-violence-campaigns/Fight_fire_long_paper_web.pdf.

162 Berger, "Social Media."

163 Briggs and Feve, "Policy Briefing"; Briggs and Feve, "Review of Programs to Counter Narratives of Violent Extremism."

EVALUATING CVE MEASURES: PROGRESS AND PRAGMATISM

The idea that CVE measures should be subject to evaluation is popular in principle, but many statements about the importance of evaluation from practitioners and in the secondary literature are quickly followed by a list of challenges that confront those wishing to evaluate CVE. These have been documented previously.[164] Some are practical considerations, such as determining the objectives and scope of an evaluation and identifying an evaluator, while others are more conceptual, such as elaborating a theory of change. All agree on the difficulty of specifying metrics sufficient to measure a negative outcome.

Mindful of this prevailing contemporary narrative about CVE and evaluation, examples of publicly available evaluation research on CVE were reviewed. These include a range of different types of formal evaluations, such as process and impact, across the breadth of CVE programming. Many more evaluations have been undertaken but remain unreleased, and this report recommends that future evaluation research should be publicly available whenever possible to facilitate comparison and analysis. Even if unreleased evaluations are taken into account, the number of evaluations overall seems to confirm the view that evaluation is underdeveloped relative to other stages in the CVE policy cycle and that viewed in absolute terms, evaluation has not been pursued in practice nearly as much as it has been endorsed in principle.

The known challenges of evaluating CVE were discussed with interviewees, who confirmed that the

challenges persist in the field today. At the same time, interviewees reflected on a growing body of advice and experience in evaluating CVE measures, which indicates that, although difficult, these challenges are far from impossible to circumvent if not overcome. This report turns to the questions of what existing CVE evaluations reflect about the evaluation process, how evaluators have addressed the known challenges of evaluating CVE measures, and what lessons can be gleaned for future evaluators.

A range of resources now exists for evaluators in the field of CVE.[165] Practitioners evaluating CVE programs are no longer starting from scratch as they were until relatively recently. Practitioners should accumulate knowledge about the evaluation process in a systematic fashion, and there are now some signs of that.

In approaching the task of evaluating CVE programs, what have evaluators measured? A key challenge has been difficulty of elaborating metrics. Ideally, a unified set of metrics could be elaborated and applied across programs or at least across program types. In practice, the metrics differ by program and evaluation type while reflecting the extent to which evaluators have been resourced to do their work. In some cases, straightforward output measures and self-assessment questions are appropriate. For example, one large study used survey research to establish baseline data on levels of awareness of the Prevent program among schools.[166] In general, among the evaluations reviewed, a prevalence of output measures pertaining to basic programmatic deliverables

164 Chowdhury Fink, Romaniuk, and Barakat, "Evaluating Countering Violent Extremism Programming"; Romaniuk and Chowdhury Fink, "From Input to Impact."
165 Hamed El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism: Designing and Evaluating Counter Radicalization and De-Radicalization Programs* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Laura Dawson, Charlie Edwards, and Calum Jeffray, "Learning and Adapting: The Use of Monitoring and Evaluation in Countering Violent Extremism – A Handbook for Practitioners," Royal United Services Institute, 2014, https://www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/201406_Learning_and_Adapting.pdf; Michael J. Williams and Steven M. Kleinman, "A Utilization-Focused Guide for Conducting Terrorism Risk Reduction Program Evaluations," *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 6, no. 2 (2014): 102–146; Dianne van Hemert et al., "Synthesis Report on the State-of-the-Art in Evaluating the Effectiveness of Counter-Violent Extremism Interventions," IMPACT Europe, 2014, http://impacteurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/D2.2-Synthesis-Report.pdf; "Conference Handout; CVE Through Communications Seminar: Monitoring and Evaluation Techniques for CVE Communication Programs," 10–11 February 2013, http://www.hedayah.ae/pdf/cscc-seminar-handout.pdf; John Horgan and Kurt Braddock, "Rehabilitating the Terrorists? Challenges in Assessing the Effectiveness of De-Radicalization Programs," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22, no. 2 (2010): 267–291; Institute for Strategic Dialogue, "Comparative Evaluation Framework for Counter Radicalisation," *PPN Working Paper*, June 2010, http://www.strategicdialogue.org/2010-06-21%20PPN%20Working%20Paper%20-%20Evaluation_FORWEBSITE.pdf.
166 Chris Phillips, Daniel Tse, and Fiona Johnson, "Community Cohesion and PREVENT: How Have Schools Responded?" DFE-RR085, February 2011, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/182300/DFE-RR085.pdf.

was noted. Several interviewees were critical of this, warning against a tendency to highlight examples of apparent success without providing compelling evidence to attribute outcomes to interventions. Beyond recommending greater rigor in general, they specifically suggested that mixed research methods should be utilized to ensure that aggregate effects can be demonstrated and that causality can be attributed.

With regard to metrics, the importance of CVE evaluators attempting to learn from related fields of practice that share the goal of prevention, such as crime and public health, has been previously noted. Several interviewees endorsed this approach. For example, regarding the evaluation of mentoring programs, there are opportunities to glean lessons from the field of life psychology, where established concepts such as resilience and integration can be used. In this way, evaluations would measure the improvement of social-cognitive skills in mentees toward the goal of nonviolence. Others suggested that a range of specific indicators can be tracked through mentoring, such as a reduction in negative behaviors (renouncing membership of extremist groups, desisting from material support and recruitment activities, speech and behavioral change) and an increase in positive behaviors (entering education, gaining work experience, participating in community activities).[167]

Evaluators of CVE-relevant programming have the opportunity to draw on existing literature and evaluation practices to measure changes in the intervening variables that can impact levels of violent extremism or perceptions thereof. Examples include the evaluations of USAID-funded radio programming in West Africa that measured "civic engagement"[168] and "civic culture"[169] and endeavored to track attitudes, based on an

understanding of what drives violent extremism, over the life of the project cycle.[170] Similarly, evaluations of USAID programming in East Africa tracked civic engagement; efficacy, i.e., perceptions of the responsiveness of local governments; perceptions of youth associations; sense of identity; and support for violence.[171]

Overall, in the absence of an elegant, agreed-on set of metrics, experience suggests that many things can be measured, so how have evaluators gone about this task? Again, there is variation across program and type wherein no single approach to research design and methods holds sway. Rather, a sense of pragmatism seems to prevail, with evaluators gathering the data they can with the resources available. As one CVE policymaker said at a recent conference, "[D]on't let the perfect be the enemy of the perfectly adequate." Yet, there is an apparent consensus on the utility of mixed methods where possible. The prevalence of quantitative data is greater than expected but generally in the form of surveys gauging awareness of CVE measures, which provide insights into information dissemination and levels of knowledge among implementers but say little about the outcomes and impacts of the programs themselves. Survey research involving program participants and beneficiaries has been sparse.

Pre- and post-testing questionnaires have been used to assess education and training-based programming, including that designed to build cognitive resilience to violent extremism.[172] Process evaluations tend to use interviews to gather output data relevant to the establishment of business and management structures. In some cases, these also yielded substantive findings, for example, about the challenges of vetting, accrediting, and training mentors in this field.[173] Similarly, formative evaluations

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167 Spalek and Davies, "Mentoring in Relation to Violent Extremism," pp. 362–364.

168 Aldrich, "First Steps Towards Hearts and Minds?"; Aldrich, "Radio as the Voice of God."

169 Greiner, "Applying Local Solutions to Local Problems."

170 Swedberg and Smith, "Mid-Term Evaluation of USAID's Counter-Extremism Programming in Africa."

171 Khalil and Zeuthen, "Case Study of Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) Programming"; Swedberg and Reisman, "Mid-Term Evaluation of Three Countering Violent Extremism Projects."

172 Aly, Taylor, and Karnovsky, "Moral Disengagement and Building Resilience to Violent Extremism"; Jose Liht and Sara Savage, "Preventing Violent Extremism Through Value Complexity: Being Muslim Being British," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 6, no. 4 (Winter 2013): 44–66.

173 Spalek and Davies, "Key Evaluation Findings of the West Midlands (WM) 1-2-1 Mentoring Scheme."

tended to utilize qualitative methods to gauge implementation and venture some findings about effects.[174]

In the United Kingdom, several evaluations were undertaken pursuant to National Indicator 35, which required local authorities to report on the extent to which they have implemented Prevent programming and otherwise built resistance to violent extremism in their area. Some used surveys to do this whereas others used interviews and focus groups.[175] Interview and focus group research often took evaluators beyond a direct discussion of program objectives and led to some emphasis on how respondents felt about programming. Even when evaluators gave relatively upbeat appraisals, they issued warnings about the challenges of community engagement.[176]

In general, it seems that more advanced methods have been used by the best-resourced evaluators. The USAID evaluations of counterextremism programming in Africa provide an example. In these cases, baseline data was gathered prior to the implementation of a CVE intervention, and sometimes a formal assessment was undertaken. Evaluators then used an experimental research design to test the effects of an intervention in a treatment group and compare it with a control group. If researchers have baseline data and use an experimental research design, they can effectively compare the effects of interventions across time and space. Evaluators gathered quantitative data in the form of surveys and qualitative data in these cases.[177]

Some interviewees sounded a cautionary note, confirming that many of the known problems of evaluation research on CVE continue. For example, some noted that the use of local survey research firms in the developing world can be a mixed experience. Yet, there is a general awareness of such problems, including among

those tasked with doing evaluations. In turn, in advancing CVE evaluation, interviewees stressed the threshold issue of devoting resources to this task. Put another way, the challenges of evaluating CVE measures have best been met where sufficient investments in evaluation have been made. Some interviewees noted that donors that fund evaluations are relatively rare and that the funds they furnish for this task are often modest. Some interviewees suggest that 10 to 15 percent of program budgets be set aside for evaluation.

An important question has been who should evaluate CVE programs. There is no single profile among CVE evaluators. A range of consultants; academics from across the social sciences, with the strongest representation from social psychologists; and other practitioners have undertaken evaluations. More importantly, evaluators or teams need combined skill sets from the CVE and evaluation fields. More such expertise will be needed if today's new and emerging CVE programs are to be evaluated. For this reason, practitioners should consider ways of integrating evaluation into grant-making activities and project cycles to ensure that they are well placed to undertake evaluations. This consideration seems especially important for NGO practitioners because, as grant recipients, they are perhaps more likely to be subject to evaluation and those evaluations are more likely to be consequential. In general, however, NGOs may welcome evaluation as a way of demonstrating the importance and integrity of their programs.

A related point that emerged in interviews concerns the relationship between governments and practitioners and the evaluators. Interviewees shared their experiences in interacting with donors and policymakers on the findings of evaluations. Some reported a bias toward strategic-level outcomes among consumers of

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174 See Thomas, "Kirklees 'Preventing Violent Extremism' Pathfinder." Formative evaluations are "intended to improve performance, most often conducted during the implementation phase of projects or programs." Jody Zall Kusek and Ray C. Rist, *Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2004), p. 225.

175 For surveys, see Alex Hirschfield et al., "Process Evaluation of Preventing Violent Extremism Programmes for Young People," Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, 2012, http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/16233/1/preventing-violent-extremism-process-evaluation.pdf. For interviews and focus groups, see Waterhouse Consulting Group, "Preventing Violent Extremism."

176 Waterhouse Consulting Group, "Preventing Violent Extremism."

177 Aldrich, "First Steps Towards Hearts and Minds?"; Swedberg and Reisman, "Mid-Term Evaluation of Three Countering Violent Extremism Projects"; Aldrich, "Radio as the Voice of God"; Swedberg and Smith, "Mid-Term Evaluation of USAID's Counter-Extremism Programming in Africa."

evaluation research, eliding the subtleties of CVE at the tactical level. Even where evaluators delivered positive results at the program level, they have had to emphasize that CVE is often a slow and gradual process and not easy or cheap. Some interviewees underscored this point in light of the recent uptick in interest in CVE. CVE is not a panacea or silver bullet for the complex problems of violent extremism that exist, but the evidence from evaluations suggests that even when CVE achieves its objectives, advances may be incremental. Expectations about how much CVE can achieve should be duly modest.

A final point concerns what has not happened in the field of CVE evaluation. Even the best evaluated programs offer only snapshots with no sense of longer-term effects. Several evaluations note that "it is still too early to assess the long-term effects" of particular interven-tions.[178] Although understandable, it will not be "too early" forever, and there is a gap in gathering data about the effects of CVE measures over time. Some evaluators recommended the collection of longitudinal data to ensure that the positive impacts of programming that they observed would be sustainable.[179] As described above, survey research has been used to good effect, but there are no longitudinal studies that track changes in populations. They may usefully begin in the assessment phase and proceed through the policy and project cycle.

Two refrains are often heard on the topic of CVE and evaluation: it is vital that CVE measures be evaluated, but evaluating CVE is difficult to do. This research suggests that the former sentiment may finally be winning out over the latter. Progress is apparent but requires an ongoing commitment to evaluation on the part of policymakers.

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178 COWI A/S, "Mid-Term Evaluation of the Action Plan 'A Common and Safe Future.'"
179 Swedberg and Smith, "Mid-Term Evaluation of USAID's Counter-Extremism Programming in Africa."

CONCLUSION: TOWARD SUSTAINABLE AND EFFECTIVE CVE

CVE so far has been a mixed experience. Missteps and unintended consequences in initial community-level interventions prompted some policy learning among states, including through evaluation, that has yielded a second wave of CVE more focused on behavioral radicalization and better targeted across the micro-, meso-, and macrolevels. Although current CVE initiatives are more likely to be effective than those in the past, the achievements of CVE in practice are not yet proportional to its prominence in the public discourse, and practitioners face significant challenges.

Budgets for CVE are disproportional to some extent to CVE's newly heightened public profile. Indeed, CVE generally remains a minor line item in counterterrorism budgets. For example, in the United States, among the six programs administered through the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Counterterrorism, about 7.5 percent, or $41.1 million, of funding over fiscal years 2011–2014 has been spent on the CVE program. In contrast, more than 35 percent of funding is devoted to the long-standing Antiterrorism Assistance program.[180] In the United Kingdom, the OSCT received around 10 percent, or £1,237 million, of the Home Office budget during FY2012–13. In turn, the Prevent program was allocated less than 3 percent (£35 million) of OSCT budget in FY2012–13, or less than 0.3 percent of the overall Home Office budget.[181] Canada expects to spend nearly C$300 million over the next five years on counterterrorism intelligence and law enforcement agencies.[182] Yet, the budget for the RCMP's long-awaited CVE strategy may be approximately C$3 million.[183]

This budget data is not intended to suggest that an injection of funds is needed; this report has made the case for better programming, not simply more of it. Rather, the budget figures underscore that, given the state of knowledge on CVE, expectations should be moderated. To that end, the 10th anniversary of the 7 July 2005 London bombings was recently commemorated. As described above, those attacks accelerated the development of the Prevent program, which has influenced the trajectory of CVE ever since. Sadly, over the course of the last decade, terrorist violence has persisted and, by some accounts, worsened. Recent reports indicate that some 25,000 individuals from more than 100 countries have volunteered to join ISIL in Syria and Iraq[184]—a staggering development in light of the unprecedented effort on counterterrorism over this period. For this reason, it is not uncommon to hear that CVE just does not work or that existing programs should be discarded.[185]

Despite the skeptical case against CVE, the demand for CVE on the basis of the threat environment alone is strong. An important objective of this report has been to reflect on the aggregate evolution of the field, which remains in its infancy. On that basis, stakeholders should think prospectively about the evolution of the field in next decade. Will extremism problems be made better or worse by current CVE interventions, and how will those interventions impact tomorrow's extremism

180 Charles M. Johnson, "Preliminary Observations on the Bureau of Counterterrorism's Resources, Performance, and Coordination," GAO-15-655T, 2 June 2015, http://www.gao.gov/assets/680/670583.pdf (testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs subcommittee on terrorism, nonproliferation, and trade).

181 UK Home Office, "Home Office Funding of Prevent Programme From 2009 to 2013," 24 July 2014, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-funding-of-the-prevent-programme-from-2009-to-2013/home-office-funding-of-the-prevent-programme-from-2009-to-2013; UK National Audit Office, "Departmental Overview: The Performance of the Home Office 2012-13," December 2013, http://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/10330-001-Home-Office-Departmental-overview.pdf.

182 Department of Finance Canada, "Strong Leadership," 21 April 2015, ch. 4.3, http://www.budget.gc.ca/2015/docs/plan/budget2015-eng.pdf.

183 Amanda Connolly, "RCMP Countering Violent Extremism Program to Cost $3.1M," iPolitics, 1 April 2015, http://ipolitics.ca/2015/04/01/rcmp-countering-violent-extremism-program-to-cost-3-1m/.

184 UN News Centre, "At Debate, UN and Security Council Renew Pledge to Counter Foreign Terrorist Fighters," 29 May 2015, http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51005#.VdD6lJdhRps.

185 Kundnani, "Decade Lost."

problems? CVE has emerged very quickly but is maturing and will exist in some form for the foreseeable future. Therefore, practitioners should refine their understanding of the field, regularize its processes, and institutionalize learning, especially through evaluation, toward the goal of sustainable and effective CVE.

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