COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM:

THE EVOLUTION OF COUNTERING VIOLENT ISLAMIC EXTREMISM POLICIES IN WESTERN EUROPE

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ABSTRACT

While most Western European governments have growing concerns about the potential threat posed by Islamic terrorism, their responses greatly vary. This study aims at assessing and explaining the variation in countering Violent Islamic Extremism (CVE) policies across Western Europe over time. It shows that previous domestic experience with other forms of violent extremism does not systematically impact on emergence and evolution of CVE policies specifically addressing Islamic terrorism. It suggests a series of additional factors that come into play such as vote-seeking electoral dynamics, media attention and the political perception of the need for some national CVE policy. As a result, this study discusses a series of recommendation on CVE policies and proposes a number of policy instruments to adopt.

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THE CONTRADICTIONS IN THE POLICIES AGAINST ISLAMIC TERRORISM IN EUROPE

A CONSENSUS OVER CONCERN

Violent Islamic extremism is of great concern for many European governments. In 2010, Europol stated that "Islamist terrorism is still perceived as the biggest threat to most Members States" (Europol, 2010, p. 6). The vast majority of Western European countries have emphasised the Islamic terrorist threat over the past decade. For instance, the Dutch government considers Islamic radicalisation and right-wing extremism as its greatest social threats (DMIKR, 2007). According to France's General Secretariat of National Defence (2006, p. 146) the type of terrorism that France now faces and for which it must be prepared "is the lineage of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States". The UK, in turn, considers the threat to its national security as emanating primarily from four sources, all of which involve Al-Qaeda, groups and individuals inspired by or associated with Al-Qaeda, and groups and individuals who follow an ideology that is similar to Al-Qaeda's (Home Office, 2009, p. 11). Spain, in contrast, seems to be concerned about terrorism in general; preventing and defeating terrorism regardless of its origin is a government priority (Government of Spain, 2013). The issue of violent Salafists in Germany features prominently among the concerns of the German intelligence community (Hellmuth, 2013). Finally, Danish authorities have stated that the terrorist threat posed by those adhering to a militant Islamist ideology is still significant (PET, 2012).

Violent extremism, especially violent Islamic extremism, is a major concern for all the countries included in this study. Despite the fact that all these countries have expressed their strong concern about the threat posed by violent Islamic extremists, they have responded to this threat in different ways.

This study addresses the differences and similitudes in Western European policy responses to the threat of Islamic terrorism in terms of efforts to counter violent extremism. Violent Islamic extremism is defined in this study as an ideology within which it is considered acceptable to employ violent methods in order to achieve objectives in relations to one's Islamic beliefs. Countering violent extremism includes measures to prevent the radicalisation of a population, moderate the violent beliefs and attitudes of individuals, and promote the rejection of violent actions. This study focuses on such measures.[1] Some countries have developed and implemented comprehensive national strategies to counter violent extremism (CVE) while others have not. Among the countries with comprehensive national CVE strategies, the targets, policy instruments, and foci vary. This generates questions as to why policy responses to Islamic terrorism have varied so dramatically across Western Europe.

While some of the countries in this study, namely Germany, Spain, France, and the United Kingdom, have dealt extensively with violent extremism prior to 11 September 2001, they were presented with threats from different types of terrorism. The Basque separatists who formed Euskadi Ta Askatasuna have posed a serious threat to security in Spain since the 1970s. Germany, in turn, has tackled both left-wing and right-wing extremism. From the early 1970s to the late 1990s, the left-wing terrorist group known as the Red Army Faction operated in Germany. In addition, right-wing extremists and racist groups in Germany engaged in terrorist activities from 1979 to 1983 (Malthaner &

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[1] This study does not include legal or law-enforcement measures, such as arrests, deportations, or new anti-terrorism laws.

Waldmann, 2007). Irish-related terrorism has been an important security concern for the UK for several decades now. Finally, France began dealing with the group of Islamic extremists known as the *Groupe Islamique Armé* (GIA) since the 1990s. What is remarkable is that today most European countries (as well as many other European and non-European countries) are expressing concern over the *same* kind of threat while formulating responses that present some important variation. It is therefore important to investigate the variation in policy responses to one of the biggest threats to homeland security in the last ten years: Islamic terrorism.

THE IMPACT OF FORMER EXPERIENCE WITH TERRORISM AND THE SEVERITY OF ATTACKS

To explain this variation in national CVE strategies, this study examines the impact of two main factors: the country's history with terrorism and the occurrence of a severe Islamic terrorist attack on a country's home soil. A country's experience with terrorism is expected to have an impact on its decision to develop a national CVE strategy. This is because countries with a lengthy experience with terrorism should have a better understanding of the factors that contribute to radicalisation into violence and therefore should appreciate the need for a CVE strategy that can address these factors. Moreover, countries that have experienced severe (i.e. high-casualty inducing) Islamic terrorist attacks on their home soil are expected to have developed national CVE strategies insofar as terrorist attacks are focusing events that can push an issue, such as the need for a CVE strategy, onto the political agenda.

To assess the impact of these two factors, six European countries are included in the analysis: the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, and Denmark. All of these countries are European countries. They have all expressed a concern over

Islamic terrorism and all have experienced Islamic terrorism first-hand either at home or on their interests abroad. In addition, they all have significant populations that emigrated from Muslim-majority countries. However, they have not responded the same way to the threat of Islamic terrorism. While four of these countries (the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Spain) have developed a comprehensive national action plan to counter violent extremism, France has no programmes that are specifically or explicitly designed for countering violent extremism. Germany, on the other hand, has a colourful array of programmes and policies for countering violent extremism, but has yet to develop a national action plan for such purposes. Selected according to the Most Different System Strategy, the six countries present significant variation in the two explanatory variables.

The first explanation tested in this study emphasises that significant experience with terrorism in the past strengthens the likelihood of developing a CVE strategy. Indeed, countries which have already dealt with terrorism (or insurgency for that matter) should have a better understanding of the factors that contribute to the process of radicalisation into violence. They therefore should understand the need for a comprehensive strategy to address these factors in order to better ensure that terrorist attacks are prevented. With regards to this first explanatory factor, the selected countries vary as follow: France, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Germany all have substantial experience with some form of violent extremism while Denmark and the Netherlands do not.

The second explanation centres on the impact of a severe Islamic terrorist attack on the likelihood of developing national CVE strategies. Terrorist attacks constitute a focusing event and have numerous consequences that may result into pushing the issue of a CVE strategy issue onto the political agenda. It is assumed here that only a severe Islamic

terrorist attack (i.e. an attack with many casualties) will be sufficient to push the issue of a CVE strategy onto the political agenda. To further specify the impact of terrorist attack, we propose a distinction between attacks that took place on a country's homeland and attacks against the country's interests abroad, such as against one of the country's embassies. Terrorist attacks on the homeland are assumed to attract a higher level of media attention, raise serious concern among public opinion, and as such constitute a stronger reminder for governments that traditional counter terrorism measures do sometimes fail and emphasize that there is a need and urgency to adopt additional measures to minimize the risk of future terrorist attacks. Along this second explanatory factor, the selected countries vary as follow: while all of the selected countries have suffered from a terrorist attack motivated by violent Islamic extremism, only Spain and the United Kingdom have suffered from an attack that can be deemed severe. As a result of the bombings that took place in the London transportation network on the 7th of July, 2005, 52 people were killed (Home Office, 2006). The Madrid bombings, in turn, resulted in 191 casualties (Home Office, 2009). While the Islamic terrorist attacks suffered by Denmark, France, Germany and the Netherlands were certainly regretful, they mostly only generated one or two casualties. In the case of Denmark, six people were killed during an attack on the Danish embassy in Pakistan (BBC, 2010). Importantly, in the case of Denmark, the attack targeted a Danish embassy in Pakistan and thus took place *outside* of Denmark. This case selection allows for controlling other potential explanatory factors such as the size of the Muslim population.[2]

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[2] In all of the six countries included in this study, Muslims constitute a significant proportion of the total population. The proportion of the national population that is Muslim is highest in France (7.5%), followed by the Netherlands (5.5%), Germany (5%), the United Kingdom (4.6%), Denmark (4.1%), and Spain (2.3%) (http://features.pewforum.org/muslim-population/#, consulted 8 March 2014).

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

There are some trigger events and milieus of opportunity that make radicalisation into violence more likely to occur. While 'trigger event' initiate and reinforce the radicalisation process, milieus of opportunity provide the setting for this radicalisation. The final section of this paper discusses some policy recommendations on how to further develop CVE strategies and policy instruments that specifically target violent Islamic extremism. It is recommended that countries develop national CVE strategies that address all of the conducive factors and trigger events (where this is feasible) and target milieus of opportunity. This means that countries should address conducive factors, such as perceived injustices and grievances; the need to belong and to be accepted; identity crises; the need for status; insufficient debate and information regarding religion and the use of violence; and the desire for thrill and adventure. Countries should also target trigger events when possible. Some trigger events, however, are beyond the reach of government. Countries can help ensure that foreign-policy decisions do not end up constituting trigger events by explaining the rationale behind sensitive foreign-policy decisions and/or by avoiding certain foreign policy decisions altogether. Finally, milieus of opportunity should be monitored. Given that public resources are limited, partnerships between government and civil society will likely be essential for successfully monitoring such places and thereby preventing them from becoming places where radicalisation can take place. By addressing all of these conducive factors and trigger events and by targeting milieus of opportunity, a government can minimise the likelihood that its youth will be radicalised into violence.

OUTLINE

The first section discusses the various definitions and forms of violent extremism and reviews the main factors that are conducive for radicalisation as developed in the literature. The second section examines the variation in CVE strategies and assesses the impact of a country's previous experience with terrorism as well as the impact of severe Islamic terrorist attacks on a country's home soil on the decision to develop a national CVE strategy. While these factors are of some importance, they do not fully explain divergences in national trajectories. Alternative factors, such as media attention or partisan vote-seeking strategies seem to interact in the evolution of CVE policies over time. The third section develops a needs assessment that can be used to improve existing strategies to counter violent Islamic extremism.

SECTION I. CONTEXTUALIZING VIOLENT ISLAMIC EXTREMISM

WHAT IS TERRORISM AND HOW DO STATES RESPOND TO IT?

There are many definitions of terrorism; some academics recognise that there are over two hundred definitions of terrorism (Davies, 2008). Incidentally, some authors such as El-Said and Harrigan (2013, p. 4) use "violent extremism, violent militancy and terrorism interchangeably". Given that this study focuses on European countries, we define terrorist offenses according to EU legislation. All EU Member States have incorporated into their legislation an article that defines terrorist offenses as "intentional acts which, given their nature of context, may seriously damage a country or an international organisation when committed with the aim of: seriously intimidating a population, or; unduly compelling a government of international organisation to perform or abstain from performing an act, or; seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation" (Europol, 2013, p. 48).

In accordance with this definition of terrorism, there were several religiously-inspired terrorist attacks in EU countries in 2012 alone. A home-grown terrorist group in France attacked a kosher store in October using a grenade (Europol, 2013). In March, a Shi'i imam was murdered during an arson attack, which is believed to have been rooted in tensions between Shi'is and Sunnis (Europol, 2013).

There are several types of programmes and policies to counter violent extremism (CVE). The first type of CVE policy that is included in this study is **counter-radicalisation** efforts. These are measures that are implemented *before* individuals adopt a violent extremist ideology and are designed to prevent individuals from becoming terrorists or violent extremists in the first place (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013). For example, government

may attempt to prevent radicalisation by providing youth with employment and training opportunities; if status cannot be achieved through employment, individuals may seek status within extremist groups. Preventing membership in extremist organisations, by creating employment opportunities for example, can be a means of preventing radicalisation.

A second type of CVE policy is **de-radicalisation** efforts, which to some, are measures that aim to restore individuals or groups to a prior state of mind that is not radical or at least not supportive of violent extremism (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013). To others, de-radicalisation necessarily implies "moderating beliefs and rejecting extremist ideology" (Parent & Ellis, 2011, p. 11). In this paper, de-radicalisation refers to the process by which beliefs are moderated. Given that de-radicalisation efforts are attempts to realise cognitive changes, experts (including religious experts) are generally necessary for persuading beneficiaries of these programmes.

The final type of CVE policy promotes **disengagement.** Disengagement policies are associated with the rejection of violent means (Neumann, 2010). Disengaged individuals can still possess a radical stance, however, as disengagement simply involves the rejection of violence means and a withdrawal from radical organizations (Rabasa, Pettyjohn, Guez, & Boucek, 2010). Some countries attempt to disengage individuals through targeted interventions that involve individuals with religious credibility. These authoritative actors can use their religious credibility to discourage the use of violence while still promoting a radical, but non-violent, form of Islam. For the purpose of this paper, **countering violent extremism (CVE)** can involve counter-radicalisation, de-radicalisation, and disengagement efforts.

In studying countering violent extremism policies, an important distinction is made between radicalisation and radicalism (or extremism). **Radicalisation** is the process by which individuals are encouraged to move "from moderate, mainstream beliefs towards extreme views" (RCMP, 2009, p. 1). Radicalisation does not necessarily lead to the use of violence (El-Said & Harrigan, 2013). In this paper the term "**extremism**" is used to denote an extreme (or radical) stance, but not necessarily a willingness to use violence. This will allow the use of the term 'violent extremism' without creating any redundancy. Notably, radicalism and extremism will be used interchangeably in this study. While extremism and radicalism are perspectives, radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to adopt an extremist (or radical) stance. Of course, it should be noted that extremity is contextually-determined. For example, the typical Norwegian's stance on redistribution of wealth may be considered an extreme stance elsewhere.

With the basic terminology of the CVE community outlined above, it is now possible to explore in greater depth the concept of extremism. A brief overview of the various forms in which extremism can manifest itself is the subject of the next section.

THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF EXTREMISM

Violent Islamic extremism is but one form of extremism. European states, just like many other states, must deal with an entire spectrum of extremism. There are the **left-wing extremists**, who believe that society would benefit from an intrusive and powerful government that could "restrict the wealth of the few and increase the well-being of the many" (Woshinsky, 2008, p. 146). At the other end of the spectrum, there are the **right-wing extremists** who reject the notion of human equality (Saalfeld, 1993). Specifically, right-wing extremists believe that inequality should be institutionalized around

characteristics such as "nationality, race, ethnic group, gender, personal achievement and social background" (Saalfeld, 1993, p. 181). There is also **single-issue terrorism**, the perpetrators of which seek to alter a particular policy or practice (Europol, 2013). Furthermore, there are **separatist extremists** who seek independence from a given state. Spain, for example, has had to deal with separatist terrorist groups such as Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA) and Resistência Galega (Europol, 2013). Finally, there is the form of extremism that is of central importance to this study, that is, **Islamic extremism** (see Box 1 below). This section placed violent Islamic extremism into context. There are many different forms of extremism and violent Islamic extremism is but one form of extremism with which authorities must deal.

> **Box 1 Islamic extremism**
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> An **Islamist** is someone who is committed to ensuring that civil society and the government follow "Islamic religious doctrine [and] teachings" (Thomas, 2012, p. 12).
>
> **Salafists** advocate the adoption of the practices of first Muslims and have traditionally avoided politics, which they consider as being impure (Cuffe, 2012).
>
> A **violent Islamic extremist** (or **Islamic terrorist)** is willing to use violence to advance goals related to his or her particular Islamic belief system.
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> According to the UK's Home Office (2006, p. 8), Islamic terrorists justify the use of violence against the so-called "apostate" Muslim states that have, in their opinion, deviated from the true Islam. Moreover, Islamic terrorists seek to eliminate Western influences from the Muslim world and claim that Islam is under attack by the West (Home Office, 2006, p. 8).

Stages models and theories that seek to explain the process of radicalisation into violence

As a natural starting point, one might seek to ascertain if those who have come to espouse violent extremist views share common traits or characteristics. There seems to be a strong consensus in the literature, however, that such commonalities are non-existent as there is no terrorist profile (Horgan, 2009; Bartlett, Birdwell & King, 2010). This means that authorities cannot focus solely on individuals with mental health issues or individuals from a disadvantaged socio-economic background, for example. Terrorists can come from many walks of life. In Europe as well as in Canada, the only common trait that terrorists seem to have is their "ordinariness" (RCMP, 2009, p. 5-6). In other words, terrorists do not stand out from non-terrorists because they exhibit 'average' behavioural patterns. This can only complicate matters for authorities who need to determine who is being radicalised and needs support.

Several stages models have been developed by academics seeking to explain the violent radicalization process. Borum as well as Wiktorowicz have both developed models with four stages (Silke, 2011, p. 21-22). Moghaddam based his theory of the radicalization process on the metaphor of a "staircase", at the top of which are the individuals who have "overcome barriers to violent action" (Silke, 2011, p. 22). A report funded by the Danish Ministry of Justice argues that today it is assumed by security services that the typical radicalisation process is characterised by four distinct phases, which overlap with one another (Precht, 2007). According to this report, the first phase occurs before radicalisation has begun and concerns factors that make individuals

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receptive to extremist ideas; during the second phase, individuals alter their behaviour and identity in relation to a religion; during the third phase convictions are solidified (some will distance themselves from their former life); during the fourth phase the emphasis is on action and this phase "is characterised by each member accepting the obligation of carrying out a terrorist attack" (Precht, 2007, p. 34-37).

Some have employed rational choice models and have concluded that terrorism may be the result of a rational decision in that it can be the means with which a group or individual has the highest probability of achieving its goals (Bartlett, Birdwell & King, 2010). Others have made use of social movement theory, which has enabled them to conclude among others things that the objective of a movement is often not what draws in new members (Bartlett, Birdwell & King, 2010).

Silke (2011, p. 21) affirms that there is no single pathway or theory that can explain the process by which even most individuals begin to adhere to a violent extremist ideology. This seems logical given that people are as complex as they are diverse. It is difficult to believe that all individuals who become terrorists follow one particular stages model or that there is one overarching theory that can encapsulate the motive of all terrorists. It is easier to believe that individuals who actively or passively support terrorism do so for a variety of reasons and that these reasons differ across individuals and perhaps even over time.

Factors that increase the likelihood of radicalisation into violence

The literature seems much more appreciative of the insight that conducive factors have to offer in helping to understand the process of radicalisation into violence. To be clear, conducive factors are factors that are conducive to being drawn into terrorism. While it

cannot be said that these factors *cause* radicalisation, *they make it more likely to occur* by making individuals more susceptible to extremist messages. Conducive factors may also be referred to as vulnerabilities or risk factors. Borum writes of 'commonly occurring vulnerabilities' to terrorism (Silke, 2011, p. 20). Horgan (2009) stresses 'risk factors' that can draw an individual into terrorism. Ranstorp (2010) mentions internal and external factors that contribute to radicalization and susceptibility to terrorist recruitment. Bartlett, Birdwell, and King (2010) believe that there are five factors that make terrorism more appealing, such as the status it can provide, for example. By extension, individuals who have an unmet desire or need for one or more of these five factors should in theory be more susceptible to terrorist recruitment. All of this suggests that there are factors which make individuals more susceptible to being radicalised into violence. Moreover, there is somewhat of a consensus in the literature regarding many of these factors.

The first conducive factor is rooted in theories of frustration and deprivation; the literature suggests that perceived injustices and grievances contribute to radicalisation into violence (Silke, 2011; Horgan, 2009; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2011; Ranstorp, 2010). Klandermans (2004, p. 363) argues that movement participants, who are assumed to be aggrieved, participate in social movements because they believe they can bring about a change to their environment at affordable costs. He argues that it is "the experience of illegitimate inequality, feelings of relative deprivation, feelings of injustice, moral indignation about some state of affairs, or a suddenly imposed grievance" that prompts this desire for change (Klandermans, 2004, p. 362). By extending Klandermans's argument, one could argue that it is the *combination* of some form of perceived grievance and the

perceived possibility that one's involvement in a terrorist organisation might bring about change that make individuals more susceptible to being drawn into terrorism.

Second, the literature suggests that membership in a terrorist group may be the means with which youths seek to satisfy unmet social needs, such as the need to belong and to be accepted (Silke, 2011; Horgan, 2009). Della Porta and Diani (2006, p. 101) also suggest that the literature supports the idea that the sense of solidarity found within groups is one of the best predictors of individual participation in collective action. It is therefore important to ensure that the individuals who are simply seeking acceptance and a place to belong do not have to rely on terrorist organisations for these purposes.

The third conducive factor falls within the conceptual parameters of theories pertaining to identity. The need for an identity and identity crises are recurring themes in the literature on violent extremism, even though identity crises do not necessarily result in turning to terrorism (Silke, 2011; Ranstorp, 2010; Bartlett, Birdwell & King, 2010). Klandermans (2004, p. 364), on the other hand, suggests that there is reason to believe that an individual is much more likely to participate in collective political action if such action is taken on behalf of a group with which the individual strongly identifies. Thus, on one hand the literature suggests that individual may be more susceptible to participating in violent collective action if they seek an identity or in order to resolve an identity crisis and on the other hand, the literature suggests that participating in collective action may be due to a pre-existing identification with a group.

It is important to understand the phenomenon of identity crises among young Muslims in Western societies. Dual identity theorists, for instance, posit "that second or third generation Muslims in the West are unable to identify with either their national or

ethnic identity, and find comfort in the simplicity of extremist ideology" (Bartlett et al., 2010, p. 26). This suggests that young Muslims who cannot identify with any of the identities with which they grew up seek an alternative identity. Unfortunately, this also seems to suggest that from the perspective of a young person, violent Islamic extremism has an advantage in that it is simplistic. If having some sort of identity is a major reason for supporting terrorism, providing an alternative identity can make youths more resistant to recruitment. Positive role models arguably have an important role to play as they can provide the alternative identity that some young Muslims are seeking.

Fourth, the desire for status is a recurring conducive factor for being drawn into terrorism (Bartlett et al., 2010; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2011). Individuals need to feel that their contribution to the world is important and that they are respected by others. Ensuring that individuals can achieve status outside of terrorist organisations may be as simple as helping individuals gain employment or assisting individuals with learning difficulties.

Fifth, insufficient debate and information regarding the use of violence and religion has also been mentioned as a conducive factor for adhering to a violent extremist ideology (Ranstorp, 2010; Bartlett et al., 2010). Young Muslims need to not only be aware of the arguments that counter those of terrorist and affiliated ideologues, but they need the skills to challenge these ideas independently. There is also a need for credible voices to deliver religious information. This will be further explained below.

Sixth, adventure and thrill seeking have been identified as motivating factors for supporting terrorism (Bartlett et al., 2010; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2011). It is therefore important to note that the need for adventure and excitement is a reality. By extension, it

is important to provide alternative channels to satisfy this need so as to make violent Islamic groups redundant from the youth's perspective.

Trigger events and milieus of opportunity

The conducive factors mentioned above by definition make individuals more susceptible to radicalisation. However, the literature suggests that these conducive factors alone are not enough to explain why individuals begin the process of radicalisation into violence. Trigger events (e.g. divorce, unemployment, death of loved ones) and milieus of opportunity (e.g. mosques and schools and other places that can provide a setting for radicalisation), also known as places of opportunity, are crucial for explaining this (Precht, 2007). According to Precht (2007), the most common trigger events are the foreign policy of Western states and isolated provocative events; the presence of charismatic persons; and a combination of the myth of jihad (the fight between good and evil) and wanting a cause for which to fight. Trigger events and milieus of opportunity must therefore factor into any strategy that aims to prevent radicalisation or to revert the process. This will also help inform the guideline proposed in the third chapter of this study.

Who is most at risk of becoming radicalised into violence?
Interestingly, the UK, the Netherlands, and Denmark have all clearly framed the issue of radicalisation as a youth phenomenon. It is important to verify that this tendency in policy design is grounded in empirical evidence. According to Sageman (2008, p. 48-49), there have been three waves to Al-Qaeda membership. Moreover, Sageman argues that there are at most a few dozen people left from the first wave and a hundred or so left from the second wave (as cited in Cottee, 2011). The third wave, notably, consists mostly of "young, lower-class, second and third generation Europeanized Muslim males" (Cottee, 2011, p. 738).

Indeed, Precht (2007) also states that recent case studies in the UK, Denmark, and the Netherlands confirm that most home-grown terrorist are young Muslims from immigrant families. The knowledge that radicalisation into violence is primarily a youth phenomenon will inform the evaluation of national strategies in the final chapter of this study.

Gangs and terrorist cells: fulfilling similar roles for at-risk youth

Many of the factors that make youth susceptible to gang membership are also factors that make youth susceptible to terrorist organisation membership. Young individuals join gangs in order to achieve status, to experience excitement, to satisfy their need to belong, and because they lack an identity (Lafontaine, Ferguson & Wormith, 2005; RCMP, 2006; Blakemore & Blakemore, 1998). Because youths support or join terrorist organisations for the same reasons they join gangs, good practices for discouraging gang membership could inform policy to counter violent Islamic extremism. Discouraging membership in a terrorist organisation is especially important for those instances when membership precedes radicalisation. Moreover, the fact that the reasons youths join gangs or support terrorism overlap to the extent that they do would suggest that for some youths or even many, religion may not play an important role when deciding to support terrorism. It seems as if though youths could have just as easily joined a (secular) gang rather than a terrorist group.

The relationship between Islamic extremism and violent Islamic extremism

Many scholars and Western governments hold that individuals are more susceptible to being radicalised into violence if they interact with (non-violent) radicals. Before proceeding to the next chapter, it is necessary to explore the debate surrounding this issue. On one hand, some academics and commentators argue that radicals can be an important asset for countering violent extremism while others suggest that radicals encourage

intolerance that ends up supporting terrorist activity (Bartlett et al., 2010). Notably, Lambert (2013) argues that unlike other faith groups, such as Sufis, Salafis and Islamists (who are considered radicals) had enough religious credibility to tackle al-Qaeda propaganda. It cannot be denied that religious credibility is important for challenging the terrorist narrative and for this reason radicals do seem indispensable in some instances. While some radicals may promote intolerance and are therefore unsuitable as partners, Lambert (2013, p. 284) highlights how the radicals with whom he partnered had regularly protected over a long period "[n]on-Muslims, Jews, gays, and women". If Lambert is correct, Salafis and Islamists may actually be essential to inoculating individuals against violent extremist messages because they have religious credibility.

This section explored the various forms of violent extremism and the factors that are conducive to radicalisation. Moreover, it drew a parallel between gang membership and terrorist cell membership. The knowledge of the radicalisation process contained in this chapter will inform the needs assessment that will be presented in the third section. In theory, any strategy should target as many conducive factors and trigger factors as possible in order to minimise the risk of radicalisation. Milieus of opportunity should also be targeted.

Section II. Explaining Variations in Policy Responses to Counter Violent Islamic Extremism

This section addresses the variations in CVE policies. All of the countries being studied have significant Muslim populations. Thus, a small Muslim population is not a potential reason for not having a national CVE strategy. The two explanatory variables that were chosen are a country's history with terrorism and the severity and location of Islamic terrorist attacks experienced by a country.

PREVIOUS NATIONAL EXPERIENCE WITH TERRORISM

Countries which have already dealt with terrorism should have a better understanding of the factors that contribute to the process of radicalisation into violence. When a certain type of terrorism becomes a persistent threat, a government should naturally want to understand the individuals who carry out these acts. With regards to terrorism, understanding the terrorists, their motives, their support base, their weaknesses, and so on and so forth is important if only to be able to identify and apprehend them before they attack. It is assumed that any government that studied terrorists extensively would have encountered the conducive factors mentioned earlier in this study. Being aware of these conducive factors, a government should not only know how to help prevent individuals from being radicalised into violence, but should appreciate the need to develop a strategy to target these conducive factors and thereby prevent radicalisation into violence. Such a strategy should be considered necessary insofar as authorities would naturally want to minimise the likelihood that members of a population will be radicalised into committing acts of terrorism

There are four countries in this study that have had substantial experience with terrorism. These countries are Spain, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom. Spain

has had to deal with the terrorist Basque separatist organisation known as Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) for several decades. While the terrorist activities by the ETA intensified in the late 1970s, ETA started its decline in the 1980s (Reinares & Alonso, 2007, p. 117). The terrorist group remains an important threat, however. From the beginning of the 1970s to the end of the 1990s, Germany had to deal with the left-wing terrorist group known as the Red Army Faction. France, in turn, began its struggle with the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in the 1990s. However, the country had already seen its share of Islamic terrorist cases in the 1980s. Finally, the United Kingdom has had to deal with Irish-related terrorism for several decades. Indeed, the UK government claims that "between 1969 and 1998 over 3,500 people died in the UK itself as a result of Irish-related terrorism" (Home Office, 2009, p. 10). In contrast, Denmark and the Netherlands do not have substantial experience with terrorism. Indeed, according to Muller (2003, p. 147) "the Netherlands has known little terrorism over the past twenty-five years". In the case of Denmark, it is difficult to find any cases related to terrorism from a pre-9/11 context. It is difficult to prove a negative, but research indicates that Denmark has been quite fortunate in the past.

SEVERITY AND LOCATION OF ISLAMIC TERRORIST ATTACKS SUFFERED BY A COUNTRY

While any terrorist attack is a serious matter, some are more severe than others in terms of casualties. For example, the London bombings of 2005 resulted in the death of 52 people while the attack in the Frankfurt airport in Germany in 2011 resulted in the deaths of two American military personnel (Home Office, 2006, p. 6; Europol, 2012, p. 8). Thus, it is important to keep in mind that the degree of severity can vary across attacks. To be sure, this paper qualifies terrorist attacks that cause many casualties as being *severe* terrorist attacks. High-casualty inducing terrorist attacks, such as the London bombings, are

assumed here to be more shocking than those causing one or two deaths. Terrorist attacks like the London or Madrid bombings were arguably events that shocked the conscious of the citizens of those nations and beyond. However, it is assumed here that less severe terrorist attacks, on the other hand, not only receive less media attention, but do not have the same emotional impact as more severe terrorist attacks.

Terrorist attacks that are carried out at home are also assumed in this paper to be more shocking than terrorist attacks targeting a nation's interests abroad. For example, the attack on the Danish embassy in Pakistan would likely have less of an emotional impact on the Danish public than a similar attack carried out in Denmark. Terrorist attacks, when successfully carried out on a country's home soil, arguably contribute to a collective sense of insecurity as well as collective grief. An attack carried out on a country's interests abroad, on the other hand, generates grief, but does not create the same sense of insecurity. Insecurity, in turn, can lead to authorities being pressured to do *something*. Moreover, attacks carried out in a country where terrorist attacks are relatively commonplace are arguably not as shocking as attacks carried out in countries that have experienced little to no terrorism. The fact that suicide bombings in Iraq are now relatively unsurprising is a point in case.

Whether or not a terrorist attack is carried out by a country's own nationals or permanent residents is also important. It would be difficult to argue following a severe terrorist attack that the country in question should invest in an expensive CVE strategy to prevent radicalisation and to de-radicalise those who have already begun the radicalisation process if the terrorist attack was carried out by foreigners who would have never have benefited from the CVE strategy. It is much easier to advocate a CVE strategy if the

attackers were nationals or individuals who had been residing in the country for some time because those attackers could have potentially have been targeted by such a CVE strategy. Their radicalisation, the argument goes, could have been prevented or at least reversed.

Spain and the UK have both suffered from severe (i.e. high-casualty inducing) Islamic terrorist attacks. The former experienced the loss of 191 lives as a result of the Madrid bombings in March of 2004 while the latter lost 52 lives as a result of bomb attacks that targeted the London transportation network (Home Office, 2006; Home Office, 2009). Denmark, France, the Netherlands, and Germany have experienced Islamic terrorist attacks, but the level of severity of these attacks was substantially lower. For example, in Germany, two US troops were killed at an airport in 2011 (Europol, 2012). The Netherland's saw the murder of Theo Van Gogh (a Dutch filmmaker who was critical of Islam) in 2004 (Home Office, 2009). Denmark's embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan was attacked in 2008 and this resulted in six deaths (BBC, 2010). Finally, in 2012, seven were killed as a result of three separate attack carried out by a gunman in France (Public Safety Canada, 2013). While this is not a comprehensive list of all the successful terrorist attacks in the Netherlands, France, Germany, and Demark, it does exemplify the type of terrorist attacks that these four countries have been exposed to (i.e. less severe terrorist attacks).

POLICY OUTCOMES

Four of the six countries in this study were expected to have developed national CVE strategies. The United Kingdom and Spain were expected to have developed such strategies because they experienced severe attacks on their home soil and these attacks were committed by nationals. In the case of Spain, roughly one third of the convicted individuals were Spanish citizens (Wilner & Dubouloz, 2009). France, the United Kingdom, Spain,

and Germany were expected to have developed a national CVE strategy because they had lengthy experience with terrorism. Denmark and the Netherlands were not expected to have a national CVE strategy because they neither experienced a severe terrorist attack on their home soil nor had lengthy experience with any kind of terrorism. That being said, Denmark and the Netherlands developed national CVE strategies, even though they were not expected to have done so. In contrast, France and Germany did not developed national CVE strategies despite the fact that they were expected to have done so. Below is a table summarising the policy responses of these six countries in terms of the measures they adopted to counter violent Islamic extremism.

Table 2. Policy Responses to Violent Islamic Extremism in Six European Countries

	Policy response	Policy instruments
Denmark	Common and Safe Future: An Action Plan to Prevent Extremist Views and Radicalisation among Young People (2009)	This action plan has seven focus areas: support for at-risk youth and the authorities who must work with them; responsibilities of parents and the need to fight discrimination; countering the violent extremist narrative; the promotion of democracy, civic education, and integration; preventing the development of parallel societies and ghettoization; preventing radicalisation in prisons; and improving the knowledge of authorities regarding extremism, improving co-operation, developing partnerships, and improving communication in order to counter misinformation (Government of Denmark, 2009).
France	La France Face au Terrorisme: Livre blanc du Gouvernement sur la sécurité intérieure face au terrorisme (2006). This is a counter-terrorism (CT) strategy, but it does include a chapter that contains measures that can be considered CVE measures.	Mostly traditional counter-terrorism (CT) measures (e.g. surveillance, detection, and neutralisation) (General Secretariat of National Defence, 2006). This strategy does include a chapter that centres on the battle of ideas, but this is mostly limited to conferences and fora involving civil society leaders (General Secretariat of National Defence, 2006). This CT strategy also mentions teaching about discrimination and different religions as a way of preventing radicalisation (General Secretariat of National Defence, 2006). Outside of the official CT strategy, France believes integration efforts will help prevent radicalisation (Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2012).
Germany	No national CVE strategy	Although Germany does not have a national CVE strategy, many German federal states have developed their own CVE strategies. At the national level, Germany has modified many of its pre-existing policy instruments for countering right-wing extremism so as to prevent Islamic extremism (see appendix A).
The Netherlands	Polarisation and Radicalisation: Action Plan 2007-2011 (2007)	This national strategy is characterised by three levels: local, national, and international (DMIKR, 2007). Policy instruments may vary according to municipalities, which develop their own CVE strategies. At the national level, radicalisation is essentially mainstreamed as it is addressed in many policy areas, such as "employment, education, safety, integration, emancipation, health care, housing, youth policy, foreign policy" (DMIKR, 2007, p. 13 & p.16). At the international level, the Dutch government aims to share best practices among EU countries, build capacity in third countries, and ensure that foreign policy is sensitive to CVE-related goals (DMIKR, 2007).

Spain	La Estrategia contra el Terrorismo Internacional y la radicalización (2010) (The Strategy Against International Terrorism and Radicalisation)	Spain developed a CVE strategy in 2010, but it is classified as secret. Outside of this CVE strategy, Spain had been known to employ certain CVE measures. For example, promotes the integration of immigrant communities, seeks to prevent illegal immigration, and has also developed rehabilitation programmes for convicted extremists in prisons (Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2012).
The United Kingdom	Prevent component of CONTEST (2006, 2009, and 2011)	Policy instruments include measures to address structural problems leading to inequalities and disadvantages; the targeting of the environment in which radicalisers operate; challenging the terrorist narrative (i.e. winning the battle of ideas); and the Channel programme, which allows concerned individuals to report individuals they believe are in the process of radicalisation so that they may receive an intervention (Home Office, 2006; Home Office, 2009). The UK's Prevent programme also includes a community-led approach called the Preventing Violent Extremism programme (Home Office, 2009).

FRANCE – does not have a national strategy to counter violent Islamic extremism. Although scholars like Vidino and Brandon (2012) confirm that France has no counter-radicalisation programme, this does not mean that France has not done anything that contributes to preventing radicalisation. Indeed, the US Bureau of Counterterrorism (2012, p. 62) states that while "[t]he French government does not have any programs in place that specifically counter violent extremism, […] it considers its integration programs for all French citizens and residents a major tool in countering radicalization and extremism". In other words, France promotes the integration of immigrants for various reasons, one of which is to prevent radicalisation. France has, for example, promoted integration by attempting to "instil universal values in all French pupils" and provide vocational training for immigrants who did not go through the French educational system (Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2012, p. 62). France has also taken certain measures to prevent radicalisation within prisons, although it has not developed programmes to de-radicalise convicted terrorists (Neumann, 2010). Importantly, France's national counter-terrorism (CT) strategy does include a chapter with measures that would qualify as CVE measures, but these are mostly limited to conferences and fora involving civil society leaders (General Secretariat of National Defence, 2006). Moreover, this CT strategy mentions teaching about discrimination and different religions as a way of preventing radicalisation (General Secretariat of National Defence, 2006). That being said, France has in general terms "chosen to tackle radicalisation through a combination of tough, traditional counter-terrorism tactics and encouraging Muslim assimilation" (Bergin, 2011). Traditional counter-terrorism measures include tactics, such as surveillance, detention, questioning, and even inciting law-breaking so as to enable arrest. In sum, although France has decided

to implement some policy measures that can be considered CVE measures, it has generally favoured a more traditional counter-terrorism approach.

GERMANY – does not officially have a national counter-radicalisation strategy (Hellmuth, 2013). Germany does, however, have several policy instruments in place. Most of these policy instruments are actually modified versions of policy instruments used for countering right-wing extremism. For a complete list of the projects that have been modified for countering Islamic extremism, see Annex. Moreover, many German states have counter-radicalisation strategies, even though the federal government does not (Hellmuth, 2013). Thus, while Germany may not have a national CVE strategy, many of its federal states do have CVE strategies and many of the federal government's policy instruments for tackling right-wing extremism have been modified so as to tackle Islamic extremism.

SPAIN – does have a national strategy to counter violent extremism (la Estrategia contra el Terrorismo Internacional y la radicalización) despite the claim by some experts that it does not. This national strategy is secret, however, and therefore while the existence of this strategy is known, its contents are not. Some CVE efforts implemented by the Spanish government are known, however. In fact, it is understood that, in Spain, efforts to prevent Islamic extremism have been roughly synonymous with efforts to promote integration of immigrant communities and prevent illegal immigration (Tansey, 2009; Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2012). Spain has notably developed rehabilitation programmes for convicted extremists in prisons (Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2012).

DENMARK – introduced its national strategy to counter violent extremism, *A Common and Safe Future: An Action Plan to Prevent Extremist Views and Radicalisation*

among Young People, in 2009. This national action plan comprises 22 initiatives, all of which fall under one of the seven focus areas. The first area of focus emphasizes support for at-risk youth and the authorities who must work with them. The second area of focus emphasizes the responsibilities of parents and the need to fight discrimination. The third area aims to counter the violent extremist narrative. An array of programmes and policies to promote and strengthen democracy, civic education, and integration are the subject of the fourth area of focus. The fifth area of focus includes plans to prevent the development of parallel societies and ghettoization in vulnerable areas and support the youth who live in these areas. The sixth area of focus simply aims to prevent radicalisation in prisons. Finally, the seventh area of focus revolves around improving the knowledge of authorities regarding extremism, improving co-operation, developing partnerships, and improving communication in order to counter misinformation

THE NETHERLANDS – released its national strategy to counter violent extremism, *Polarisation and Radicalisation: Action Plan 2007-2011*, in 2007. This national strategy is characterised by three levels: local, national, and international. Local governments and municipalities bear the primary responsibility for preventing polarisation and radicalisation (DMIKR, 2007). They are responsible for implementing both a "hard" and "soft" approach, where the former consists of "disciplinary and legal measures" and the latter includes measures, such as organising debates and discussions as well as providing support to individuals (Vermeulen & Bovenkerk, 2012, p. 99-101; Rabasa et al., 2010). The national government is responsible for supporting local initiatives and implementing policies that can only feasibly be implemented at the national level (DMIKR, 2007). The third and final component of the Dutch strategy comprises policies

implemented at the international level, such as sharing best practices among EU countries, capacity building in third countries, and ensuring that foreign policy is in harmony with efforts to counter radicalisation and polarisation (DMIKR, 2007). The Dutch strategy, notably, puts emphasises polarisation and favours locally-tailored solutions (DMIKR, 2007). Finally, it should also be highlighted that the Dutch have been known to accept radicals as partners in their efforts to counter violent extremism inasmuch as these radicals have been used as mentors for at-risk youth (Vermeulen & Bovenkerk, 2012)

THE UNITED KINGDOM – first introduced CONTEST, its national counter-terrorism strategy in 2006. Not only does it include one of the most comprehensive CVE strategies in Europe, it has three versions. Thus, it is not feasible to enumerate the plethora of CVE programmes it had implemented. The first version of CONTEST was implemented in 2003, the second was published in 2009, and the third (and so far the last) was published in 2011. Of interest for this study is the Prevent component of CONTEST. Even though it may not be possible to mention even a fraction of the programmes that constitute the Prevent strategy, it will suffice to mention how the UK's Prevent major goals have evolved over time. One major goal of Prevent that has persisted throughout the years is that of challenging the terrorist narrative. Another major goal that has persisted is that of supporting the places where terrorists and terrorist recruiters operate. In the first two Prevent strategies, addressing structural inequalities, which can generate grievances, are seen as primary goals, but this is not the case with the last version. It is interesting that starting in 2009 there was a new emphasis on providing support for the individual. This can involve preventative measures such as facilitating employment or deradicalisation via individual interventions (Home Office, 2009). On a final note, it is worth mentioning that

in the 2011 version of Prevent, the UK government made it very clear that it would no longer work with those whom it deems as radicals (Home Office, 2011). This can be contrasted with the London Partnerships between Salafis and Islamists and the Metropolitan Police Special Branch's Muslim Contact Unit that existed prior to 2011. It would seem as if though the idea that radicals are not suitable partners in the struggle to counter violent extremism came out as the winning frame in 2011.

THE IMPACT OF A COUNTRY'S HISTORY WITH TERRORISM AND CERTAIN TYPES OF TERRORIST ATTACKS ON A COUNTRY'S DECISION TO DEVELOP A NATIONAL CVE STRATEGY

Spain and the UK were expected to have a national CVE strategy because in addition to having experienced severe attacks on their home soil, these attacks were committed by nationals. As previously mentioned, this type of attack is expected to be shocking enough to push the issue of developing a national CVE strategy on the political agenda. Both of these countries have indeed introduced national CVE strategies. Moreover, Spain, the UK, France, and Germany were expected to have developed a national CVE strategy because they all had substantial experience with terrorism. It is expected that throughout their experiences with terrorism, these countries have developed an understanding of the factors that contribute to radicalisation into violence. In this way, it is expected that these countries should have developed CVE strategies because they should appreciate the need of such a strategy in relation to addressing factors that can lead to radicalisation. Out of these countries, only Spain and the UK have developed national CVE strategies.

Spain and the UK had suffered from Islamic terrorist attacks of significant severity, each country having lost many dozens of lives in those attacks. These countries were expected to have developed national CVE strategies because the severity of the attacks

from which they suffered should have been sufficient to push the issue of a CVE strategy onto the political agenda. Indeed, both of these countries did develop national CVE strategies.

Denmark and the Netherlands have developed national CVE strategies, even though they were not expected to have done so. France and Germany did not develop national CVE strategies, even though they were expected to have done so.

The unexpected outcomes observed in this study could be explained by a variety of factors. Media attention can exaggerate threats and thereby inflate fears in relation to the terrorist threat a country faces. This can push a government to adopt a CVE strategy when it would have otherwise preferred to not invest in such a strategy because a government feels the need to show that it is doing *something*. The proposal and presentation of a CVE strategy can also be a vote-seeking tactic in a country where there are widespread fears regarding radicalisation and the violent activities to which it can lead. These two explanations could possibly be the reason why Denmark and the Netherlands developed a CVE strategy despite the fact that they were not expected to have done so.

Another possible explanation for the unexpected outcomes is related to the impact of a country's experience with terrorism on its counter-terrorism apparatus. A country's experience with terrorism might have made its counter-terrorism apparatus effective enough that a country does not feel the need for a less coercive CVE strategy. This is quite possibly the case with France. The French counter-terrorism apparatus has been described as successful (Rault, 2010), "fairly effective, although controversial" (Shapiro and Suzan, 2003, p. 68); and finally, "swift, ruthless, and effective" (Rankin & Cowen, 2012, p. 20). Such an impressive counter-terrorism body was not developed overnight, but rather over a

long period of dealing with terrorists, however. Moreover, it is possible that Germany may

think that the combination of state-level counter-radicalisation programmes and its federal-

level policy instruments may be sufficient in terms of CVE measures.

Section III. Needs Assessment for Countries Seeking to Counter Violent Islamic Extremism

This section develops a needs assessment evaluation to rely on for improving existing CVE strategies. This needs assessment evaluation is informed by the first section of this study, which argued that conducive factors, trigger factors as well as milieus of opportunity all contribute to making radicalisation more likely to occur. In order to minimise the likelihood that individuals will become radicalised, a government should seek to address all of the conducive factors and trigger events mentioned in this needs assessment and target milieus of opportunity. This section proposes at least one policy instrument to address each of the six conducive factors and minimise the likelihood that a country's youth population will become radicalised. It also recommends a policy instrument for one of the most common trigger events (i.e. foreign policy decisions). Thus, not only can policymakers verify that they have addressed all the well-known factors associated with radicalisation by referring to this needs assessment, they can also implement the policy instruments proposed therein. Notably, most of the recommendations included in this needs assessments can be applied to CVE strategies that target non-Islamic forms of violent extremism. Recommendations that are centred on religious matters, however, are evidently not likely to be transferrable to non-Islamic violent extremism, at least not directly.

What is needed?

Policy instruments that can address the conducive factors of radicalisation, prevent trigger events that are within the government's control, and disrupt milieus of opportunity.

Whom needs to be targeted by these policy instruments?

The first section of this study emphasised that, at least in recent times, radicalisation into violence has been a youth phenomenon. Specifically, home-grown terrorists are likely to be young, male, and from immigrant communities.[3] This paper argues, however, that policy instruments should target all young people when possible lest an entire section of the youth population be stigmatised and alienated. Regardless, it is well known that converts constitute some of the home-grown cases countries have seen. Targeting all youth will help ensure that all vulnerable youth are being targeted. With regards to some of the policy instruments proposed herein, there are no marginal costs and therefore targeting all youths does not have to necessarily be more expensive than simply targeting a subgroup of youths.

Trigger events

As mentioned in the first section, the most common trigger events are the foreign policy decision of Western states and isolated provocative events; the presence of charismatic persons; and a combination of the myth of jihad (the fight between good and evil) and wanting a cause for which to fight. While the government cannot address every trigger factor, it does seem to this author that it has an opportunity to address trigger events related to foreign policy. This trigger event is one of the most common and thus merits attention.

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[3] However, recent trends suggest that women are increasingly less constrained from being directly involved in Islamic terrorist attacks (RCMP, 2009, p. 11).

Recommendation: If a government cannot avoid a particular foreign policy decision that it thinks could likely constitute a trigger event, then it may be possible to prevent such a foreign policy decision from becoming a trigger event by discussing it openly. In this way, a government may want to design a website that explains its foreign policy. Given that youths should be the primary targets of CVE strategies, this website should be geared towards youths. Such a website would also be an opportunity for the government to demonstrate how often it cooperates with and assists Muslim states and organisations abroad as this would help dispel the notion that the West and Muslim states are at odds. This website would need be advertised in places frequented by youths, such as schools, youth clubs, and on television stations often viewed by youths.

Some countries have already conceived of a similar policy instrument. For example, in 2009, Denmark discussed its intent to create an online forum for youths that would include debate and information "related to democracy, extremism and international issues with relevance to these themes" (Government of Denmark, 2009, p. 20). A forum, however, may not be the ideal format as fora can easily be bombarded with violent-extremist and anti-government posts. A questions-and-answers section that provides answers to the difficult questions with which youths are preoccupied would be preferable to a forum.

Milieus of opportunity

Milieus of opportunity are places that provide a setting for radicalisation. They provide a place where likeminded individuals can meet and are a place where recruiters target youth (Precht, 2007). Public resources are limited and the government cannot monitor every milieu that is frequented by recruiters or where youths in the process of radicalisation

interact. There are, however, options that can help prevent certain places from being milieus of opportunity.

Recommendation: Teaming up with civil society is essential. Members of Muslim civil society are also concerned with the radicalisation of youth into violence. The government can develop partnerships with members of civil society so as to help ensure that milieus of opportunity are monitored when possible. Parents, teachers, religious leaders and other concerned citizens can help monitor places known to be places of recruitment for violent Islamic extremists, such as mosques, schools, and youth clubs. Involving Muslim civil society in this way has the benefit of making Muslims partners in the struggle against violent Islamic extremism. Engaging with Muslims as partners can potentially help mitigate feelings of stigmatisation felt within Muslim communities. Such partnerships could also help mitigate actual negative perceptions of Muslims among the non-Muslim population.

The experiences of Robert Lambert, a former detective for the Metropolitan Police Special Branch (MPSB), provide an excellent example of how Muslim civil society can be integral for ensuring that certain places cease to be milieus of opportunity. Specifically, members of the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB), with whom the MPSB teamed up, led a successful operation to reclaim the Finsbury Park Mosque in London (Lambert, 2013, p. 135). Prior to this operation, Abu Hamza had been using the first floor of the Mosque as a base to spread messages similar to those of al-Qaeda propagandists (Lambert, 2013, p. 83).

Conducive factors

In the first chapter, six conducive factors were mentioned: perceived injustices and grievances; need to belong and to be accepted; identity crises; need for status; insufficient

debate and information regarding religion and the use of violence; and a need for thrill and action.

(1) Perceived injustices and grievances

There are many reasons a person may feel aggrieved. One might feel aggrieved by the perceived injustice suffered by a group with which one identifies him or herself. One might also feel aggrieved because of an injustice that was suffered personally. Furthermore, we can distinguish between economic and political grievances. No one policy instrument can tackle every type of grievance. It is important that when people feel aggrieved that they believe that there are non-violent means of pursuing justice at their disposal.

Recommendation: With regards to grievances surrounding foreign policy, youths should be encouraged to channel their grievances through democratic channels, such as peaceful protests. Indeed, this is what members of London's Muslim civil society did; the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) and the Muslim Welfare House (MWH) encouraged young Muslims to channel their grievances "through the ballot box and in lawful protest" (Lambert, 2013, p. 149). However, Muslims need not spearhead such protests. Non-Muslim politicians and members of non-Muslim civil society can organise protests that could eventually draw in Muslims followers experiencing grievances. It would be ideal if Muslims and non-Muslims were encouraged to protest together as this would dispel the notion that there are not any Westerns who share their grievances. Moreover, such solidarity would make the radicalisation process more difficult as it would be more difficult to dehumanise non-Muslims. The UK has been considerably ambitious in terms of the array of sources of grievances that it seeks to address in its Prevent strategy. These sources of grievances include those arising from police operations as well as inequalities in health,

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education, housing, the criminal justice system, and employment (Home Office, 2009, p. 91).

(2) The need to belong and to be accepted

It is important to help ensure that youths' need to belong and to feel accepted does not lead to radicalisation. While the government cannot create friends, it can create place of opportunity for youth to interact and make friends. A government can also help communities as a whole (e.g. Muslim communities) feel accepted.

Recommendation: A government seeking to address these vulnerabilities could finance in whole or in part youth activity centres, where young people can meet and develop friendships. These places generally have board games, pool tables, television sets, or other things that young people can do together. They are also usually monitored by volunteers.

A government might also decide to subsidise recreational activities that would provide youths with an opportunity to develop friendships with others in their age group. These friendships are, in turn, expected to contribute to youths' sense of belonging and acceptance. The Kids Can Play Association of Cambridge, for instance, helps youths from low-income families participate in recreational activities by covering their enrolment fees, although this programme is not motivated by objectives related to countering radicalisation (Kids Can Play Association of Cambridge, n.d.). A government could help finance such an organisation so as to promote a sense of belonging and acceptance among youths.

Moreover, facilitating access to higher education and vocational training could also help address the need to belong and to be accepted. The assumption is that such education and training will help young citizens to obtain rewarding employment that will make them

feel as if though their country of residence accepts them and that they do have a role to play in that country's society (i.e. they belong to that country).

A national CVE strategy may also be able to foster a feeling of acceptance *at the group level* by consulting communities that might otherwise feel marginalised. Such communities could be consulted by means of town-hall meetings and/or online consultations tools. The mere fact that a government is seeking out their input should theoretically help dispel the notion that the government perceives these communities as unimportant segments of society.

(3) Identity crises

Identity crises are complex matters and one cannot expect a simple solution. There are, however, policy options that could help a young person through such a difficult time.

Recommendation: As previously mentioned, some young Muslims can neither identify with their ethnic identity nor their national identity and find simplistic violent Islamic ideologies alluring as a source of identity. It is therefore important to provide alternatives to youths struggling with identity issues. Mentors who also come from immigrant communities and have struggled with the same issues in the past could potentially be valuable in helping young Muslims through their identity crises. Financing agencies or programmes that can match young Muslims with mentors could prove costly, however. It might also be difficult to recruit enough suitable mentors for all the youths who need and would like to receive mentoring. An alternative to matching every young Muslim who requires mentoring with a mentor would be to create a website where individuals from immigrant families can discuss their personal experiences with balancing national and

ethnic identities. Importantly, these individuals could explain how they overcame their identity-related struggles.

In the United Kingdom, young Muslims seeking faith- and culturally-sensitive support can contact the Muslim Youth Helpline (MYH) by phone, e-mail, post, or through its website, which provides the option of chatting with someone online (MYH, n.d.). Such a policy instrument could be used to help Muslim youths from immigrant backgrounds in their struggle to balance multiple identities (as well as other issues they might be facing). Such services should be well advertised and the confidential nature of these services should be emphasised. A combination of interactive services of the type provided by the MYH and a more static website where youths can read about the experiences of others could prove promising.

(4) Need for status

There is more than one way to achieve status, but often a job of which one is proud is an important source of status. One does not necessarily have to be a solicitor to have status, however. For some, having a job where one feels needed could be sufficient for feeling good about oneself. If youths cannot achieve status lawfully, they might be tempted to achieve it by offering their services to gangs or jihadist groups that make them feel appreciated and needed.

Recommendation: Skill training for in-demand professions should be subsidised. Not only would this help fill labour shortage, it would mean that those who complete training programmes will have reasonable prospects of finding a job, which in turn could be an important source of status. More generally, facilitating access to higher education and vocational training could help address status-related issues inasmuch as it would help

youths find employment of which they can be proud. The United Kingdom has adopted such a policy insofar as it "has set up programs to work with young people in deprived areas to ensure better minority access to top universities" (Archick, Belkin, Blanchard, Ek & Mix, 2011, p. 36-37).

(5) Insufficient debate and information regarding the use of violence and religion

It is easy to find a particular position or idea attractive and convincing if you have not been exposed to alternative positions and counter-arguments. It is therefore important to ensure that youths are cognitively equipped to tackle violent extremist messages.

Recommendation: A website and/or hotline where youths can access information on Islam and all its sects should be created. If some sects are left out because the government does not approve of them, the website or hotline will likely lose its credibility and be rejected by many youths. Such a website or hotline should discuss the use of violence because otherwise youth may seek this information elsewhere and receive information that may be false and conducive to the goals of violent extremists. The layout should appeal to youth as well. There should be someone whom its users can contact if they have any unanswered questions. Danish authorities, for example, have decided to create "a special internet forum for young people" where they can access "debate and information related to democracy, extremism and international issues with relevance to these themes" (Government of Denmark, 2009, p. 20).

Furthermore, organising events where youths can asks a panel of religious experts questions regarding religious matters and the use of violence in relation to religious matters could be fruitful. Such a panel should be as diversified as possible so as to appeal to the maximum number of youths attending these information events.

(6) Need for thrill and adventure

Some individuals crave adrenaline rushes and the thrill of adventure. Youths who crave adventure might look towards jihadist groups to satisfy this need. Indeed, some individuals have been drawn into a violent extremist environment because of "other radicals' stories of excitement, exotic landscape and guns" (Bartlett et al., 2010, p. 34). While a government cannot propose policy instruments that could put the lives of minors at risk, there are still options at its disposal.

Recommendation: In order to keep some youths away from Islamic terrorism, governments and concerned members of civil society must compete with the opportunities for thrill and adventure that are being offered by extremist groups. In this way, after-school programs or summer programs could be created to help address youths' need for thrill and adventure. These can be fully funded or simply subsidised. They should likely involve competitive activities as these tend to be more exciting than non-competitive activities. The type of activities that such after-school programmes or summer camps should involve should vary depending on the age group. Youths may learn about how to survive in the wild, learn a form of martial arts, or play war-themed strategy games, for example. It would also help ask youths what they think would be a thrill. Moreover, recruiting events for high-risk occupations (e.g. a career in the military or the domestic police force) that target Muslim youths specifically could also potentially help divert youths (who are not minors) from jihadist groups.

There is a surprising amount of organisations that offer opportunities for youths to fulfil their desire for adventure. For example, the Centre for Outdoor Education in Canada provides youths with the opportunity to participate in summer adventure programmes that

involve activities, such as rock climbing, mountaineering, caving, exploring the mountain

wilderness, rappelling, kayaking, and crossing glaciers, among other things (COE, n.d.).

CONCLUSION

Although Western European countries all face the threat of violent Islamic extremism, the six countries included in this study have greatly varied in their policy response. In response to the threat of violent Islamic extremism, a country might decide to develop and implement a national strategy to counter violent extremism. In other words, a country might try to prevent radicalisation from occurring in the first place, de-radicalising those who have already begun the process of radicalisation, and/or modify the behaviour of individuals such that they do not employ violent methods. It was hypothesised that if a country has had a severe Islamic terrorist attack on its home soil or if a country has had extensive experience with terrorism, then such a country would have developed a national strategy to counter violent Islamic extremism. This is because it was assumed that severe Islamic terrorist attacks on a country's home soil are focusing events that can push the issue of a national strategy to counter violent Islamic extremism onto the political agenda. Moreover, countries with extensive experience with terrorism were assumed to have better knowledge of the factors that make radicalisation more likely to occur and were therefore assumed to have an appreciation of the need for a national CVE strategy.

The results of this study suggest that additional explanatory factors were at play when some the countries in this study decided whether or not to develop a national CVE strategy. For example, both France and Germany were expected to have developed a national CVE strategy because both have extensive experience with terrorism. However, these countries did not develop national CVE strategies and the most likely explanation for this is that both of these countries did not perceive a need for such a strategy. Specifically, France seems to possess a highly competent counter-terrorism apparatus such that less

coercive and more preventive measures might not be perceived as necessary measures for French policymakers. Germany, on the other hand, has modified many policy instruments that were designed to counter right-wing extremism so that they can be used to counter Islamic extremism. Moreover, many of Germany's federal states have their own counter-radicalisation strategies. It is thus certainly possible that Germany also does not perceive a need for a *national* CVE strategy. In contrast, Denmark and the Netherlands were not expected to develop national CVE strategies, but did indeed do so. The most likely explanation is that CVE strategies in these two countries were either brought about as a result of intense media attention and/or because implementing such a strategy was a vote-seeking tactic used by politicians anxious to satisfy the demands of constituencies.

The final section of this study made policy recommendations. It is recommended that countries seeking to minimise the likelihood that their youth population will become radicalised target all of the conducive factors as well as trigger factors. It is also recommended that governments seek partnerships with members of civil society so as to ensure that milieus of opportunity are properly monitored. In addition to these policy recommendations, the final section of this study proposed specific policy instruments that could address each one of the conducive factors and one of the most common trigger events. Modern media of communication are potentially powerful tools in the struggle to counter violent extremism as evidenced by the proposed policy instruments. The promotion of economic and social integration also appears to be an important tool as it can address more than one conducive factor.

This study restricted itself to CVE efforts, which meant that traditional counter-terrorism methods and legislative tools were not discussed. Of course, traditional counter-

terrorism methods can be important for preventing terrorist attacks. For example, a terrorist attack might be prevented because electronic communications were intercepted or because human intelligence (i.e. intelligence obtained through informants or undercover agents) was obtained. However, as the London and Madrid terrorist attacks demonstrate, authorities are not omniscient. This is why the CVE strategies discussed in this paper are needed. Strategies to counter violent Islamic extremism help compensate for the inherent weaknesses in traditional counter-terrorism apparatuses. Although important, CVE strategies are but one part of national strategies to keep our societies safe from violent Islamic extremism.

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Table 1. Projects from the National Action Plan of the Federal Republic of Germany to

Fight Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Related Intolerance that have been modified

to counter Islamic extremism

Projects to counter right-wing extremism	Projects to counter Islamic extremism
Diversity Is Good for You: Youth for Diversity, Tolerance and Democracy, which aims to support local strategies, mostly through preventive pedagogy (German Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2007).	The Prevention and Cooperation Clearing Point, which aims to help implement projects across Germany (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2011).
Competent for Democracy – Advisory Networks to Oppose Right-Wing Extremism, which aims, inter alia, to set up nation-wide advisory networks (German Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2007).	The Prevention and Cooperation Clearing Point, which aims to set up a nation-wide network of contact for security forces and Muslims (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2011).
Forum Against Racism, which aims to provide a platform for sharing experiences and dialogue between NGOs and government representatives (German Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2007).	The German Islam Conference, which is a forum between moderate Muslims and the German state representatives (Hellmuth, 2013). On a similar note, the Security Partnership initiative is a partnership between German authorities and Muslim civil society that focuses exclusively on preventing Islamist violence (Hellmuth, 2013).
Bans on skinhead and right-wing extremist associations (German Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2007).	Bans on Salafist movements in Germany (Eddy, 2013).
Programme run by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) to help right-wing extremists escape their milieu (German Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2007).	Programme run by the BfV for to help Islamist extremists leave their extremist environment (Spiegel Online, 2010).
The rehabilitation programme *Taking Responsibility* for young right-wing extremists (Mücke, Heitmann, Korn & Koschmieder, 2011).[4]	The rehabilitation programme *Taking Responsibility* for young right-wing extremists (Mücke, Heitmann, Korn & Koschmieder, 2011).

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[4] Although this rehabilitation programme was not part of the German National Action Plan, it is still another example of how the German state has modified its pre-existing programmes for right-wing extremists so that they may serve to counter violent Islamic extremism.