
How the War Was ‘One’: Countering violent extremism and the social dimensions of counter-terrorism in Canada.

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Abstract

The current global “war on terror” highlights a fundamental quandary for all liberal democracies seeking to counter the violent extremism of their own citizens while maintaining civic rights and freedoms. This challenge accompanies a transformation in international conflict from inter-state war and superpower rivalry, to homegrown terrorism, radicalization-to-violence, Internet propaganda, and targeting and recruitment of vulnerable persons. These new threats shift the battlefield, as traditionally defined, to the home front, as extremist violence is nurtured by and perpetrated within public spaces, such as schools, places of religious worship, civil society and the home. Today, violence emanates from *within* liberal democratic society and its extremist motivations bypass the very institutions that would otherwise support civic rights, freedoms and multiculturalism. As such, attempts to counter extremist violence must appeal to the political, social, cultural, religious and familial aspects of human behavior alongside a parallel shift in efforts to keep citizens safe within their own social spaces. In recent years, Canada has been introduced to home grown and lone individual terrorism with the cases of attack against armed forces personnel in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and Ottawa in 2014. This article identifies the social dimensions of counter-terrorism in the Canadian context, a propitious case by which to evaluate different approaches to countering violent extremism. Canadian initiatives - simultaneously proliferating and in their infancy – raise a host of questions about counter-terrorism in liberal democratic countries. For example, why do individuals radicalize-to-violence in rights-based and multicultural societies? How and when can the liberal democratic state best temper the radicalization process in ways that are effective and procedurally just? What state-society balance works best to counter radicalized viewpoints? Who are the appropriate stakeholders in mounting and monitoring counter radicalization programs? What risks accompany government engagement with communities against terrorist activity? And what are the appropriate measures of success? These questions lay the groundwork for an empirical analysis of prevalent programs in Canada against the background of the “war on terror”, multiculturalism, racial profiling, community policing and other contemporary Canadian values.

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Introduction:

The weak don't win wars, but lately neither do the strong.² The current global war on terrorism is marred by this unbearable stalemate. States can no longer rely on the sophisticated weaponry they used during the Cold War to fend off the kinds of attacks currently being waged. Emerging trends in terrorism and counter-terrorism (CT) have exposed new dimensions of international conflict for which conventional protection systems do not apply. The impetus for national security, once dominated by the logic of superpower rivalries and wars between states, has recently been offset by the acts of isolated civilians wreaking havoc in their own societies with little power, as traditionally defined, at their disposal. Today, topping the security agenda of states are threats of homegrown terrorism, lone actors, radicalization-to-violence, Internet propaganda, targeting and recruitment of vulnerable persons. These phenomena appeal to the political, social, cultural, religious and familial aspects of human behavior and as such, require comprehensive and multidimensional approaches towards their resolution. Societies currently struggle for security from *within* as attacks increasingly manifest as smaller, decentralized, local, diffuse, and perpetrated by individuals (often called "lone wolves") embedded in social networks but outside the institutionalized political process.

In recent years, Canada too has faced the threat of home grown and lone actor terrorism with the cases of attack against armed forces personnel in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and at the National War Memorial/parliament buildings in Ottawa in 2014. Alternatively, a growing number of Canadians have expressed interest in travel or have already travelled to join ISIS (Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria) in the Middle East.³ This new type of conflict zone

² The concept of asymmetry in warfare (the weak against the strong) is as old as the biblical mythology of David and Goliath. The Old Testament tells of a weak combatant who - through a combination of skill and cunning - overtakes a physically more powerful foe. "If power implies victory, then weak actors should almost never win against stronger opponents, especially when the gap in relative power is very large" Arreguin-Toft, Ivan, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict*, New York & Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005. Typically, power is measured by military assets, economic wherewithal and political legitimacy. However, recent experiences of terrorism show that weakness can be a strength and power can be a liability in the types of wars currently being waged.

³ Canadian Intelligence has counted some 130 Canadians who travelled abroad to fight with groups like ISIS and 80 of whom have returned home. Richard Valdmanis, "Canada's plan to defang would-be jihadists at home", Reuters, October 29, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/29/us-canada-attacks-deradicalization-idUSKBN0I1WG20141029>

presupposes a shift from the battlefield - as traditionally defined - to the home front, i.e., public spaces in which radicalization to violence occurs, such as in schools, places of religious worship, community centers, prisons, hospitals, and voluntary associations. These are places where the vast majority of citizens congregate during their free time, express their views, develop a sense of belonging and mold collective identities around fundamental belief systems. The recent spate of terrorist attacks has fundamentally altered discussions in Canada about *how* to combat the threat of terrorism *within* Canadian society, when to intervene in the process of radicalization, and who should be involved in operationalizing counter-terrorism and deradicalization strategy.

The purpose of this article is to identify the social dimensions of counter-terrorism in the Canadian context. Canada is a propitious case by which to evaluate different approaches to countering violent extremism since such programs are simultaneously proliferating and in their infancy. The Canadian context raises a host of important questions: Why do individuals radicalize-to-violence? How and when can the liberal democratic state best intervene in the radicalization process in ways that are effective and procedurally just? What state-society balance works best to counter radicalized viewpoints? Who are the appropriate stakeholders in mounting and monitoring deradicalization programs? What risks accompany government engagement with communities against terrorist activity? And what are the appropriate measures of success? This discussion refers to the threat of Islamist extremism in particular, but many of its principles can equally relate to other forms of extremism such as neo-Nazi hate and single issue groups, which are beyond the purview of this analysis. The remainder of this article is organized as follows: Part II provides an overview of the convergence of old and emerging trends in counter-terrorism as a foundation in Part III by which to analyze the social dimensions of deradicalization in Canada. Part IV critically evaluates deradicalization programs that have been launched in various Canadian cities and provinces in recent years. And the final part draws conclusions and directions for future research and public policy.

Part II: Old and Emerging Trends in Counter-Terrorism (CT):

Emerging trends in CT have culminated from the convergence of two longstanding paradigms in critical security studies that engendered broader and more inclusive understandings of

security: human security and asymmetrical warfare. Both paradigms offer alternative assumptions about the referent object and agent of security that have found firm footing against emerging threats and insecurities.⁴ Conventional protection systems that promote national security to defend citizens from external military attack have proven increasingly futile against prevailing threats. Over the last few decades, violence has spilled over and eradicated the boundaries of conventional battlefields, threatening the lives of ordinary citizens and complicating the routine functioning of their democratic institutions. Responding to these threats is highly problematic. Over time, democracies run the risk of mirroring the changes they adopt to fight conditions of violent attrition. Military, economic and even political power, do not then imply victory, particularly when the disparity in power is very large. Liberal democracies combat terrorism within the limitations of political, legal and social conventions. Fear-mongering, radicalization, suspension of civil liberties, emergency legislation, racial profiling, increased surveillance and political backlash are the unenviable side-effects of combating terrorism from within. These effects underpin the terrorist's very attempt to render routine life unbearable for the majority of society's members.

(1) Human Security:

Human security is a key concept in understanding the current focus of counter-terrorism efforts on the safety and security of individuals and communities. First coined in a 1994 report of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), human security was promoted throughout the 1990s by then Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy. Axworthy led like-minded countries through the United Nations in reinforcing human security as the cornerstone of a new foreign policy agenda including political, social, economic, environmental, military, and cultural issues. According to a 2012 United Nations policy statement entitled "Human Security at the United Nations", human security was characterized as (1) people-centered, (2) comprehensive, (3) context-specific, (4) prevention oriented and (5) protective (top-down) and empowering (bottom-up).⁵ These components link recognition of threats to the socially embedded individual and society's role in countering threats.

⁴ As an academic concept, human security was first outlined in Keith Krause & Michael C. Williams (Eds.), *Critical Security Studies*, University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1997.

⁵ "Human Security at the United Nations", *United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security*

The global community proceeded to operationalize the concept of human security in various endeavors, including the adoption in December 1997 of the Ottawa Convention banning the production, use, stockpiling and transfer of anti-personnel landmines, and the 1998 signing of the landmines treaty for which Mr. Axworthy was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.⁶ Human security incorporated a vast number of challenges including child soldiers, humanitarian intervention, Responsibility to Protect (R2P), establishment of an International Criminal Court and sustainable development. Then Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, defined human security in the context of civil wars throughout the world:

“In the wake of these conflicts, a new understanding of the concept of security is evolving. Once synonymous with the defence of territory from external attack, the requirements of security today have come to embrace the protection of communities and individuals from internal violence...We must also broaden our view of what is meant by peace and security. Peace means much more than the absence of war. Human security can no longer be understood in purely military terms. Rather, it must encompass economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratization, disarmament, and respect for human rights and the rule of law.”⁷

Although criticized for its overly vague and all-encompassing underpinnings,⁸ the people-centered and intra-state focus of Human Security propelled both concepts of individual safety and community integrity on to the security agenda within broader discussions about human rights, peace and sustainable development. Among the components of a human security agenda were various policy initiatives that focused attention on safety of the individual man, woman and child as opposed to exclusive focus on the national security of the territorial

Human Security Unit, OCHA, New York, 2012, P. 5,
<http://www.humansecuritynetwork.net/documents/125374024/128230464/UN+Human+Security+Brochure++UN+HS+Unit>

⁶ Lloyd Axworthy, *Historica Canada*, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/lloyd-axworthy/>

⁷ Kofi Annan. “Towards a Culture of Peace.” <http://www.unesco.org/opi2/lettres/TextAnglais/AnnanE.html>
08/22/01

⁸ S. Hataley & Kim Richard Nossal, “*The Limits of the Human Security Agenda: The Case of Canada’s Response to the Timor Crisis*”, *Global Change, Peace & Security*, Volume 16, Number 1, February 2004.

boundaries of the state. Ultimately, human security broadened the concept of security and integrated its soft precepts into the lives of human beings around the world.

(2) Asymmetrical Warfare:

Like human security, the concept of asymmetrical warfare has also sought to better understand the contemporary realities and complexities of international conflict.⁹ The concept of asymmetrical warfare can be traced to Carl von Clausewitz's theory of guerrilla warfare expressed in his lectures on small war at the War College in 1810 and 1811.¹⁰ More recently, the discussion about asymmetrical conflict was reinvigorated by the 1975 article in *World Politics* by Andrew J.R. Mack entitled "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars". Mack illustrated the inapplicability of material power in cases where significant disparity in power exists between parties to the conflict.¹¹ The American military took particular interest in this concept after the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

In practice, asymmetrical warfare involves small and lightly equipped attacks against points of weakness in an otherwise stronger opponent by unorthodox means including ambush, kidnapping, sniper fire, bombing, human shields and psychological warfare.¹² Asymmetrical warfare is a factor in the broader understanding of military and security threats as social and political threats in current conflicts being waged.¹³ Inter-state wars have increasingly given way to intra-state wars, civil wars and violence waged by non-state and ostensibly civilian actors as in the cases of Bosnia, Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq, Rwanda, Sudan, Libya and currently Syria. Retired American Air Force Colonel, Chester Richards captures the new character of war: "No longer are there definable battlefields or fronts. Indeed, the distinction

⁹ Wolff Heintschel von Heinegg & Volker Epping (Eds.), *International Humanitarian Law Facing New Challenges*, Springer: Heidelberg, 2007.

¹⁰ See Christopher Daase and James W. Davis (Eds.) "My Lectures on Small War Held at the War College in 1810 and 1811", *Clausewitz on Small War*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2015.

¹¹ Andrew Mack, Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict, *World Politics*, Volume 27 / Issue 02 / January 1975: 175-200.

¹² Andrew Mack, Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict, *World Politics*, Volume 27 / Issue 02 / January 1975: 175-200.¹³ Arreguin-Toft, Ivan, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict*, New York & Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

¹³ Arreguin-Toft, Ivan, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict*, New York & Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

between civilian and military ceases to exist”.¹⁴ This new reality breaks with traditional fault lines for conflict dominated by the Napoleonic tradition of the 18th-19th Centuries with its offensive combat, decisive battle, and projection of force. By way of contrast, modern warfare no longer squares off conventional field forces. States are pitted in low intensity conflict theaters in opposition to anonymous belligerents with neither uniform nor insignia who frequent and employ public institutions to develop their values and use unconventional tactics and weapons to target innocents – men, women and children – as they go about their daily lives.

Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr. suggests explaining asymmetric threats by the most basic asymmetry of all: disparity of interest.¹⁵ While western industrial democracies increasingly suffer from low voter turnout, political apathy, and decreased party affiliations, zealots operate as if the very survival of their fundamental belief systems, and thus their lives, are at stake. Individuals acting on their own have found in terrorism a propitious venue to operationalize their ideological, psychological, and criminal motivations. With dedication and the will to act, radicalized individuals can trump public policies geared towards inclusion, diversity and good government.

To some degree, human security was eclipsed by 9/11 and the subsequent “war on terror” as expressed through punitive policy measures at home and abroad. However, its precepts are more meaningful today than ever before in the asymmetrical conflicts currently being waged. Lone actor terrorism by radicalized individuals is the most asymmetrical war of all. It is a war of one individual or small group against society at large. It may be a fight against government or military personnel and symbols, but lone actor terrorism clearly harms innocent civilians and the routine functioning of their daily lives. To truly engage with this phenomenon, contemporary approaches to counter-terrorism must necessarily alter the level of analysis from the traditional “high politics” of statecraft and war to the “low politics” of economics

¹⁴ Qtd. in Harold A. Gould and Franklin C. Spinney, “Fourth-Generation Warfare is Here”, *Defense and the National Interest*, http://www.defense-and-society.org/fcs/gould_spinney_4GW.htm [accessed 11 August 2004].

¹⁵ Kenneth McKenzie Jr., “The Revenge of the Melians: Asymmetric Threats and the Next QDR”, *McNair Paper 62*, 2000, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, Washington, D.C., <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/ndu/mcnair62.pdf>

and social welfare. Targeting the “hearts and minds” of potentially radicalize-able individuals involves integrating communities more comprehensively into the democratic process, hopefully before violent behavior has taken place. However, suspects are contacted at many points on the spectrum of radicalization-to-violence in order to alter their cognitive frameworks away from violent behaviors and towards a law-abiding mentality.

Part III – Social Dimensions of Counter-Terrorism

Counter-Terrorism and Liberal Democracy:

Counter-terrorism in liberal democratic societies faces many challenges. The first challenge concerns the free flow of information and accompanying prospects for radicalization. Renowned terrorist expert Brian Jenkins defines radicalization as “the process of adopting for oneself or inculcating in others a commitment not only to a system of [radical] beliefs, but to their imposition on the rest of society”.¹⁶ In practice, the radicalization process tends to be gradual, with beliefs and habits changing slowly over time until the point of “consolidation”.¹⁷ The radicalized individual nurtures an “insular world view that is capable of developing rationalizations to refute any counter-arguments”.¹⁸ Open telecommunications can promote radicalized viewpoints as conflicts transition from the international arena into the politics of the home country. Social media has ensured that dissemination of ideas no longer has geographical limits.

Certainly, freedom of thought and expression are essential pillars of democratic society. Individuals expressing radical viewpoints do not constitute a problem in and of themselves.

¹⁶ Brian Michael Jenkins, “Outside Experts View,” preface to Daveed Gartenstein-Ross & Laura Grossman, *Homegrown Terrorists in the U.S. and U.K.: An Empirical Examination of the Radicalization Process*. Washington, DC: Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Center for Terrorism Research, 2009.

¹⁷ For background on standard radicalization models, see Jamie Bartlett and Carl Miller, “The Edge of Violence: Towards Telling the Difference Between Violent and Non-Violent Radicalization”, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 24(1), 1-21, 2012 and John Horgan, “From Profiles to Pathways and Roots to Routes: Perspectives from Psychology on Radicalization into Terrorism”, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 618, 80-94, retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40375777>

¹⁸ Lorne Dawson, quoted in Dylan Robertson, “RCMP may struggle to recreate the success of community groups in stopping extremism”, *Calgary Herald*, October 2, 2015, <http://calgaryherald.com/news/national/rcmp-may-struggle-to-recreate-the-success-of-community-groups-in-stopping-extremism>

Pluralist democracies have long offered legitimate space for unconventional and anti-establishment views to the point where civil disobedience and political protest have become an acceptable part of the political process. Protest has long been characterized as a legitimate form of democratic expression.

However, at the same time, advantage of these basic rights and liberties can be taken to incite violence and anti-democratic values. The capacity of states to avoid getting embroiled in international conflicts is decreasing proportional to the increase and availability of information about these conflicts. States must balance a society's "access to information" with the kinds of harm this information may engender. Today, with one click of the keyboard, anybody can access an online edifice of alternative information to what they have access to at home. Terrorist groups have become particularly active in direct marketing via social media – "soliciting participants among local citizenry".¹⁹ However, radicalized individuals don't need to join any group to support terrorism. They can raise funds, acquire weapons, network with likeminded individuals from around the world, learn, and imitate the acts of their predecessors from materials and statements posted online. This process of radicalization lies outside the democratic process and hurts the very society that protects the rights of citizens, i.e., the majority, minorities and the radicals themselves. Whether it takes the form of intimidation or extreme fear, the resultant social injury undermines the religious pluralism and political liberties democracies seek to uphold, including the very fundamental beliefs systems from which terrorism draws for its use.²⁰

As a result, states may impinge more heavily on their citizens during counter-terrorism campaigns, admonishing them to cede freedoms and protections to provide leverage in pursuing violent subjects.²¹ On one hand, counterterrorist campaigns have designated powers of preventative arrest and racial profiling, which have been seriously criticized by proponents

¹⁹ Wagdy Loza, "The Need for Effective Intervention Programs to Prevent Extremism and Terrorist Recruitment in Western Countries with Special Emphasis on Canada", *The Mackenzie Institute Special Report*, July 2, 2015, <http://www.mackenzieinstitute.com/need-effective-intervention-programs-prevent-islamic-extremists-terrorist-recruitment-western-countries-special-emphasis-canada/>

²⁰ Tami Amanda Jacoby, "Terrorism Versus Liberal Democracy: Canadian Democracy and the Campaign Against Global Terrorism". *Canadian Foreign Policy*, Vol. 11, No. 3, Spring, 2004. pp. 65-79.

²¹ Ibid.

of religious pluralism. On the other hand, attempts by the state to censor or even monitor the free flow of information threatens privacy laws and freedoms long established by and for everybody else. Deliberate suspension or limitation of civil liberty on the grounds of expediency can play into the hands of terrorists by eliciting an overreaction by government and thus increasing the anger and frustration of potential recruits. This is particularly the case with Muslim communities selected for partnerships with the police and intelligence services in rights-based cultures who already feel threatened by the broader political context of Islamophobia. Governments consistently balance this tenuous binary between public safety and political liberty.

Radicalization to Violence in Communities:

Of the significant threats to the human security of Canadians today is home grown terrorism. Lone actor terrorists commit violence after having undergone a process of radicalization-to-violence. As a result, the challenge of counter-terrorism is less an object of waging attacks against enemies and more about determining the root causes of violent behavior in society. This allows the state to intervene earlier in the process of radicalization-to-violence by seeking to rectify extremist narratives of individuals, offer alternative cognitive frameworks and provide support, in any way support can be given to an individual in crisis.

As home grown terrorists increasingly target random and innocent civilians, governments have “logically shifted” their efforts to focus on prevention within the framework of broad-based, public-private-government partnerships.²² This multidimensional strategy involves transferring in part, the role of counter-terrorism to communities, who they claim, are better positioned to root out radicalized individuals. These same persons are more often than not, recognized community members who have families, friends and associates familiar with their ongoing political transformations. Friends and family play a critical role in countering violent extremism.²³ This logic has generated a multitude of new ideas about counter-terrorism

²² Sliwinsky, 2013: 292.

²³ Michael J. Williams et al. “The critical role of friends in networks for countering violent extremism: toward a theory of vicarious help-seeking”, *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, 8:1, 45-65, 2016.

including “deradicalization”, “community resilience”, “civilianization of security²⁴” and “reintegration”.

In hindsight, events leading up to an attack are often replete with clues, information, warnings, and indicators of the process by which an individual radicalizes-to-violence.²⁵ Assistant Commissioner Kevin Brosseau of the RCMP in Winnipeg has found that “with all people radicalized to violence, somebody else has known.”²⁶ The key then is for the state to make meaningful inroads into society to approach those close to the person under suspicion, such as friends, family, community members and others, and act upon that information in a way that is procedurally fair and conducive to deradicalization.²⁷ This controversial strategy involves employing the family as a “source of information and intelligence”, which may or may not be perceived as legitimate depending on the particular circumstances of the intervention.²⁸

Canada became a specific target of terrorism at the start of 2015, when ISIS spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani urged his followers to attack Canadians over the Conservative government’s decision to join the anti-ISIS coalition.²⁹ He called upon extremists and other “disbelieving” Western countries to “target the crusaders in their own lands and wherever they are found.” Al-Adnani specifically counselled to use explosives, guns, knives, cars, rocks “or even a boot or a fist.”³⁰ In other words, no social space is immune from terrorist threat.

²⁴ Krzysztof Feliks Sliwinski, “Counter-terrorism – a comprehensive approach. Social mobilization and ‘civilianisation of security: the case of the United Kingdom”, *European Security*, Vol. 22, No. 3 288-306, March 1, 2012, 301.

²⁵ Paul Gill et al., Bombing Alone: Tracing the Motivations and Antecedent Behaviours of Lone-Wolf Terrorists”, *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, Vol. 59, No. 2, 425-435, P. 433.

²⁶ Interview with Kevin Brosseau, Assistant Commissioner and Commanding Officer, RCMP, October 6, 2015, Winnipeg.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Daniel Koehler, Hayat Canada Family Support, In Further Detail, <http://hayatcanada.webs.com/in-further-detail>

²⁹ At the time of writing, Prime Minister-designate Justin Trudeau announced that Canada plans to withdraw its jets from the anti-ISIS coalition, the implications of which are as yet unknown. See Joanna Plucinska, “Justin Trudeau Tells Obama That Canada Will Withdraw Jets From Anti-ISIS Coalition”, *Time*, October 20, 2015, <http://time.com/4080754/canada-syria-withdrawal/>

³⁰ Stewart Bell, “ISIS spokesman calls for more Ottawa-style attacks in Canada, warning ‘what lies ahead will be worse’”, *National Post*, January 26, 2015, <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/world/isis-spokesman-calls-for-more-ottawa-style-attacks-in-canada-warning-what-lies-ahead-will-be-worse>

Important to consider therefore, are the social dimensions of terrorism and counter-terrorism and the nature of their effects on local communities. Democracy relies on multiculturalism, tolerance, reform, security and peace to provide the foundations for a society to function smoothly. While terrorism fails to produce high casualty rates, it serves to destabilize the very political institutions, identities and symbols that uphold the values of a liberal democratic society. The important point is that asymmetrical terrorism results from a process of radicalization that can occur within democratic society itself, but which ends up rejecting every democratic value that allows for its conditions of existence. For example, freedom of speech provides adherents with the right to say what they want and yet the content of that speech may generate hate and incite violence.

The 2014 terrorist attacks in Canada, including such analogous cases as the Boston marathon bombing in 2013, the attacks in Norway in 2011, and the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris in early 2015, show that perpetrators are ideologically motivated by distorted and violent interpretations of acceptable political doctrines. Previously studied cases of lone actor terrorists showed individuals affiliated with white supremacism, right-wing extremism, and anti-abortion activism. The claim of today's lone actor terrorists to represent other religious, ethnic or racially motivated identities generally defies the interpretations of that identity by the wider community. Violent Muslim Jihadists, in particular, are vehemently scorned by mainstream Muslim communities even though they may share the same political grievances over such things as Western imperialism, military attacks in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan and resulting Muslim casualties.

The significant and distinguishing factor between a miniscule minority of perpetrators against the vast majority of average faithful is the willingness to commit violence against innocent people. This difference should not be underestimated. The perpetrators of recent attacks frequented politico-religious institutions in Canada, the United States, Norway and France but deviated significantly at the outer limits of the law. Recent terrorists operated, for the most part, on their own, disconnected from established political groupings, thus making it nearly impossible for the state to prevent the act. Robert Imre has argued that “modern and postmodern bureaucracies are very limited in their capacity to deal with the terrorist

phenomenon”.³¹ Locating the problem of terrorism in ideas, individuals and communities rather than the institutionalized political process begs radically new strategies of engagement for the liberal democratic state.

The politics and psychology of “Lone Actors”:

A majority of the current generation of Islamist terrorists is generally known to have “had no direct link to any terrorist organization and did not attend any terrorist training”.³² The fact of individuals acting in their own right is a concept that coincides with the nature of contemporary forms of terrorist organization (or disorganization for that matter). As opposed to the hierarchical structures of armed forces and police, terrorists are increasingly adopting the ideology but not the political organization of known terrorist groups. With Internet and social media, there is more opportunity for politics to be expressed without any form of leadership whatsoever. For violent opponents of the state, there is no longer a need for the “critical mass” historically engendered by guerrilla warfare. Instead, terrorist planning can be an isolated and individual process, resulting entirely from entrepreneurial indoctrination. The right mindset replaces organization as the key to terrorism, creating opportunities for what has been called “leaderless resistance”.³³ Peaceful grassroots movements such as Occupy and Idle No More represent this new type of horizontal politics. The same levelled organization works equally for violent behavior.

Without leaders and hierarchy, terrorists are unencumbered and more difficult to trace. Counter terrorist campaigns face the frugality and ease by which recent terrorist acts have been perpetrated. While governments and organizations like Interpol focus on the macro threats of nuclear, chemical and biological terrorism, lone actor terrorists increasingly use

³¹ Robert Imre, 2008: 181.

³² Sliwinsky, 2013: 290.

³³ George Michael, “Counterinsurgency and Lone Wolf Terrorism”, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 26: 45-57, 2014.

guns, knives and other light weapons, which can be purchased off the Internet. Kevin Brosseau, Assistant Commissioner and Commanding Officer of the RCMP in Winnipeg articulated the problem of dealing with radicalized individuals when compared to organized groups:

We are good at criminal organizations like outlaw motorcycle gangs. They have hierarchical networks; they dress the same. But this is different. Most are individuals with no criminal record.³⁴

The task of fighting terrorists has increasingly been reoriented from military to law enforcement and from law enforcement to community. Since the roots of terrorist activity are progressively internal, in domestic communities rather than international zones of conflict, it falls on that arm of the state involved in monitoring violent and/or criminal activity. Police and the criminal justice system are involved in the closest encounters with community members operating on the margins of the law. Now that terrorism has been clearly criminalized in domestic legislation, police are better equipped than armed forces to engage in community collaborations.³⁵ However, this task has been the focus of community policing efforts which network with residents to solve their problems together. In addition to police and the criminal justice system, a range of “helping professions” like psychiatrists, psychologists, educators and religious mentors are becoming an additional source of expertise on lone actor terrorists.³⁶

An additional and important consideration in countering the violent extremism of lone actors is the potential significance of mental illness. The recent attacks on Canadian soldiers in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and Canada’s National War Memorial in 2014 demonstrate that terrorism is not solely or even necessarily ideological, particularly in relation to the backgrounds of lone actors. Although there is no common terrorist profile, investigation in to

³⁴ Interview with Kevin Brosseau, October 6, 2015, Winnipeg.

³⁵ Dennis Forcese, *Policing Canadian Society*, Scarborough, ON: Prentice Hall Allyn and Bacon Canada, 1999, 3.

³⁶ Jill Lawless, “Authorities look for mental health clues in fight to stop ‘lone wolf’ attacks”, *Global News*, December 15, 2014, <http://globalnews.ca/news/1728327/authorities-look-for-mental-health-clues-in-fight-to-stop-lone-wolf-attacks/>

the backgrounds of Martin Rouleau-Couture and Michael Zehaf-Bibeau for example, reveals histories of mental illness, criminality and drug abuse. A friend recounted his conversation in the kitchen where Zehaf-Bibeau spoke of psychosis and suspicions that the devil was after him.³⁷ Individuals suffering from borderline personality or bipolar disorders can break with reality completely to engage in fantasy worlds in which their own impulsive or psychotic behaviors may seem normal to them.³⁸ With their social ineffectiveness and alienation, personality disorders may fail to integrate in to the strict operational frameworks of organized terrorism. However, the identity struggles they entail, along with isolation from family and society, can generate propitious circumstances for adoption of a radical ideology that gives meaning to an otherwise meaningless life. Framing problems according to a “high minded narrative” like struggling against an oppressor gives unacceptable behavior and thoughts new meaning.³⁹ This is not to suggest causality between mental illness and violence. As Kevin Brosseau, Assistant Commissioner of the RCMP warned:

Many in our profession jump to the connection to people suffering mental health issues. Those will be the ones to radicalize. But I’m not so confident to draw a correlative relationship. It’s hard to generalize, generalizations don’t exist.⁴⁰

The threat of this type of political violence stems from the combination of radical ideology and action. And in spite of longstanding and heated debate, some authors would add

³⁷ Jeet Heer, “The Line Between Terrorism and Mental Illness”, *The New Yorker*, October 25, 2014, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/line-terrorism-mental-illness>

³⁸ Ramon Spaaij, 2012. *Understanding Lone Wolf Terrorism: Global Patterns, Motivations and Prevention*, Springer: New York, 51.

³⁹ Jonathan Kay, “‘Lone wolf terrorism’ will pass”, *National Post*, December 29, 2014, <http://fullcomment.nationalpost.com/2014/12/29/jonathan-kay-lone-wolf-terrorism-will-pass/>

⁴⁰ Interview with Kevin Brosseau, Assistant Commissioner and Commanding Officer, RCMP, October 6, 2015, Winnipeg.

psychopathology as an additional ingredient.⁴¹ The implication for counterterrorism is that military, intelligence and police must increasingly coordinate, albeit in a cautious manner, with mental health systems and perhaps even addiction programs to intercept destabilized suspects who also express a radicalized ideological viewpoint.

The psychologist's potential contribution to combatting extremism was noted by the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA), which established in 2009 a Section on Extremism/Terrorism as part of its overall mandate.⁴² The professional training of psychology in radicalization and recruitment, leader-follower relations, personality variables and social network analysis places psychologists in an opportune position to engage in preventative treatment of radicalized persons through individual and group counselling. Dr. David Nussbaum, Chair of the CPA Section for the Study of Extremism and Terrorism describes his home base as an "ideal intellectual home" for professionals with scholarly credentials who seek to better understand radicalization and deradicalization. As an academic and empirical discipline, psychology has "followed the requisite signposts in producing explanatory explanations that can be supported or perhaps more importantly refuted by evidence".⁴³

Deradicalization versus Disengagement:

There is, as yet, no consensus about the proper definition of deradicalization. Urging clarity in counter-terrorism initiatives, Horgan, currently working at the Global Studies Institute and

⁴¹ For studies that reject the relevance of psychopathology to terrorism, see John Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism*, Routledge: New York and London, 2005 and Andrew Silke, "Cheshire-cat logic: The recurring theme of terrorist abnormality in psychological research," *Psychology, Crime and Law*, 4(1), 51-69, 1998. Additional case studies exemplifying this view include studies of the German Red Army by Wilfried Rasch "Psychological dimensions of political terrorism in the Federal Republic of Germany", *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 2(1), 79-85, 1979 and the Irish Republican Army by Ken Heskin, "The psychology of terrorism in Northern Ireland, In A. Yonah & A. O'Day (Eds.), *Terrorism in Ireland* (85-105), St. Martin's Press: New York, 1984. For brief reference to hypotheses about the role of mental health and terrorism, see Aaron Derfel, "Radicalization and mental health: Looking for Answers", *Montreal Gazette*, October 23, 2014, <http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/radicalization-and-mental-health-looking-for-answers>

⁴² CPA Section on Extremism/Terrorism, *Canadian Psychological Association*, Volume 1, Issue 1, <http://www.cpa.ca/aboutcpa/cpasections/extremismandterrorism/>

⁴³ David Nussbaum, Theory, Evidence and Translation: The CPA Section for the Study of Extremism and Terrorism, Canadian Psychological Association, Newsletter, http://www.cpa.ca/docs/File/Extremism/EandT_Section_Newsletter.pdf

Department of Psychology at Georgia State University, suggests distinguishing between deradicalization and disengagement. Disengagement from terrorism, he states, may or may not involve critical cognitive or social transformation, i.e., deradicalization. Those who leave terrorism behind may abandon the “shared social norms, values, attitudes and aspirations”⁴⁴ of the violent group, but they may also continue to hold these views while no longer participating in direct terrorist operations.

Disengagement from terrorist actions does not eradicate the grievances extremist individuals adopt during their journey towards radicalization. Disengaged terrorists may continue to support terrorism in indirect ways such as fundraising or promoting radical ideologies online. Furthermore, terrorism and its underlying grievances may continue to have a social or psychological hold on the individual long after the violent behavior has been repudiated and abandoned.⁴⁵ In other words, disengagement from terrorism does not necessarily involve a change in political attitudes, i.e., deradicalization. Refuting radical views is difficult given that individuals often believe that they are acting in the interests of a higher power. As Dr. Wagdy Loza, former Chief psychologist at Kingston Penitentiary and expert on disengagement has argued “it is extremely hard because you’re going to challenge somebody who has the unshakeable belief that they are doing this for God”.⁴⁶ Practitioners may successfully challenge an individual’s interpretation of faith or scripture. The individual may even renounce violence. But terrorists generally perceive their acts as part of a broader and legitimate struggle. As Alex Wilner, senior researcher at the Center for Security Studies in Zurich, Switzerland and renowned expert in prison radicalization attests, “Terrorists do not consider themselves as mere criminals but rather as foot soldiers in a global and cosmic conflict.... We need to be careful not to ignore the political, ideological and, in some cases, religious motivations” of terrorists.⁴⁷ The ultimate goal, according to John Horgan and Mary

⁴⁴ John Horgan, “Deradicalization or Disengagement? A Process in Need of Clarity and a Counter-terrorism Initiative in Need of Evaluation”, *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 2, No. 4, 2008, <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/32/html>

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Telephone interview with Dr. Wagdy Loza, October 21, 2015.

Alex Wilner, quoted in *Proceedings of the Special Senate Committee on Anti-terrorism, Issue 11 – Evidence, Parliament of Canada*, December 13, 2010, http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/403/anti/11rev-e.htm?comm_id=597&Language=E&Parl=40&Ses=3

Beth Altier, is to “cultivate a shared sense of victimization” and identify “pro-social ways of expressing the acknowledged and legitimate grievances” outside a punitive framework.⁴⁸

Formulating a viable approach to countering the extremist views of individuals is a delicate quandary for practitioners of counter-terrorism given that radical cognition is both a legitimate freedom of thought and expression in rights-based cultures, and an immediate precursor to violent behavior. This is the recognized “gray zone” between free speech and violence. Horgan has argued against any causal link between the two processes, i.e., extremist views and extremist behaviors.⁴⁹ A disengaged terrorist’s propensity for repentance depends, instead, on the specific circumstances in which the disengagement took place, point in the process of radicalization-to-violence that the individual was intercepted by authorities, whether it was voluntary or involuntary, an individual or collective process, and the broader social circumstances surrounding the abandonment of terrorist activity. Disengagement is ultimately a “narrow” approach to deradicalization which parts company with broader approaches targeting ideology as well. Circumstances may be sufficient to implore terrorists to renounce violence while not necessarily targeting the ideology that supported violence in the first place, although this represents an ongoing debate. These facets of deradicalization prompt new understandings of the relationship between counter-terrorism and the broader society in which it occurs.

Part IV –Countering Violent Extremism in Canada:

Canada lags behind other countries like the United Kingdom’s Channel program, with its decades-long experience with Irish Republican Army (IRA) fighters, Germany’s experience fighting neo-Nazis and other hate groups or authoritarian regimes such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Singapore in their longstanding and respective wars against terror and domestic

⁴⁸ John Horgan and Mary Beth Altier, “The Future of Terrorist Deradicalization Programs”, *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Summer/Fall 2012), PP. 83-90, 87.

⁴⁹ See John Horgan, “Deradicalization or Disengagement: A Process in Need of Clarity and a Counterterrorism Initiative in Need of Evaluation”, *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol 2, No 4 (2008), <http://terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/32/html>

opponents.⁵⁰ However, as the threat of home grown terrorism becomes better understood, Canada has responded with integrated strategies that incorporate all levels of government and civil society as stakeholders.

Growing awareness of the social dimensions of radicalization and deradicalization has led many governments to intervene earlier in the process of radicalization. Like Channel, Canada's terror prevention program will focus on those who haven't yet committed an offence or joined a group abroad. It also involves working, for the most part, with troubled youth, an area which many social groups (schools, police, community centers, mosques) have much experience with already.

However, countering violence extremism in the social realm presupposes government offloading of formerly bureaucratic functions associated with security and intelligence to citizens. This approach thus prompts new understandings of state—society relations and targeting of resources and personnel in countering violent extremism. Extrapolating from the British case, Krzysztof Feliks Sliwinski proposes the term “civilianization” as the arena of “non-military, voluntary organizations and the business/private sector, engaged by government but acting in their own right to prevent, protect and prepare in the context of a counter-terrorism strategy”.⁵¹ Indeed, governments have increasingly sought to share the burden of security with ordinary civilians who are given the “responsibility to act” on their own initiatives. “Families and community groups are the foundation of a safe and resilient Canada. Everyone plays a part in keeping our communities safe”.⁵²

Over the last twenty years, the concept of “community resilience” has been incorporated into urban planning models aimed at protecting cities while at the same time promoting greater

⁵⁰ For information on programs in other countries see Wagdy Loza, “The Need for Effective Intervention Programs to Prevent Islamic Extremists and Terrorist Recruitment in Western Countries with Special Emphasis on Canada”, *The Mackenzie Institute*, July 2, 2015: 5-7, <http://www.mackenzieinstitute.com/need-effective-intervention-programs-prevent-islamic-extremists-terrorist-recruitment-western-countries-special-emphasis-canada/>

⁵¹ Krzysztof Feliks Sliwinski, “Counter-terrorism – a comprehensive approach. Social mobilization and ‘civilianisation of security: the case of the United Kingdom”, *European Security*, Vol. 22, No. 3 288-306, March 1, 2012, 296.

⁵² Countering Violence Extremism, Public Safety Canada, <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrt/cntr-trrsm/cntrng-vlnt-xtrmsm/index-eng.aspx>

civic engagement in government practices, particularly relating to emergency preparedness. Writing about the “public city” in Europe, Jon Coaffee and Peter Rogers use Manchester, UK between 1996 and 2006 as a case study of new forms of securitization that rely on the citizens taking greater responsibility for their personal risk management.⁵³

Canada has yet to administer a comprehensive strategy for countering violent extremism at home.⁵⁴ Since 9/11, Canada’s most high-profile case of homegrown terrorism was the infamous Toronto 18, an al-Qaeda-inspired group of 18 terrorists who plotted against targets in metropolitan Toronto and Southern Ontario in 2006 and a miscellany of other isolated individuals whose plots were foiled or who were killed in combat.⁵⁵ Therefore, while Canadian deradicalization programs are in their infancy, much effort has been invested in development of appropriate intervention strategies to counter future threats. However, as outlined in its counter-terrorism policy, the prevention component stands to play a key role. Prevention means targeting an individual before he/she engages in violent activity. In other words, the focus is on an individual’s extremist attitudes rather than behavior. Civil society organizations have initiated their own programs designed to alter the ideologies and behaviors of potentially radicalize-able individuals. The plethora of approaches as it now stands, is underwritten by serious debate in Canadian politics about terrorism and counter-terrorism and the urgent and recognized need for definitional and operational clarity. Much like terrorism, there is no consensus about what deradicalization means. In common usage, deradicalization is an attitudinal shift among those with extremist views towards adoption of more moderate views. To what extent is altering attitudes a possible or desirable goal in an open and democratic society fighting terrorist threats? How do such strategies play out in a country that has been engaged militarily with violent extremists abroad for over 15 years against the background of growing Islamophobia and increasing powers to police and the criminal-justice system to profile, survey, and prosecute suspected terrorists at home?

⁵³ See Jon Coaffee & Peter Rogers, “Rebordering the City for New Security Challenges: From Counter-terrorism to Community Resilience”, *Space and Polity*, Vol. 12, Issue 1, 2008,

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13562570801969556>

⁵⁴ Dylan Robertson, “RCMP poised to roll out program to prevent radicalization”, *Ottawa Citizen*, December 17, 2014, <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/politics/rcmp-poised-to-roll-out-program-to-prevent-radicalization>

⁵⁵ For a list of post 9/11 terrorist plots in Canada, see Michael Zekulin, “Terrorism in Canada”, *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, Vol. 13, Issue 3, Spring 2011, pp. 1-19.

Programs currently underway in Canada approach the problem of violent extremism with different administrators from different professional backgrounds and expertise, employing different philosophies and targeting interventions on different points on the spectrum of radicalization-to-violence.

- (1) The first issue is what organization and expertise are brought to bear in countering violent extremism. Canada has many government-originated mandates, most of which function through partnerships between police, the criminal-justice system, and civil society. Alternatively, civil society has produced its own programs, through mosques, educational institutions and other voluntary organizations.
- (2) A second issue is the underlying ideology behind the program. Is the goal to change a radicalized person's view or a radicalized person's behavior? Whether the goal is deradicalization or disengagement, there must be additional clarity about whether the discussion will take a political, social, cognitive, theological or crime-prevention focus.
- (3) A third issue is whether the program's goal is to prevent radicalization in the first place, deal with it once it has occurred, or seek to rehabilitate political criminals by disengaging them from violent behavior after the fact.

The following section introduces and critically evaluates the spectrum of programs to counter violent extremism currently underway in Canada.

IV: Countering Violent Extremism in Canada – Programs and Approaches:

Canada's official counter-terrorism strategy was outlined in a 2013 document entitled "Building Resilience against Terrorism".⁵⁶ The policy is comprehensive and multidimensional, consisting of four mutually reinforcing dimensions: (1) prevent, (2) detect, (3) deny and (4) respond. The latter three areas seek to identify terrorists through policing and intelligence, deny them the means and opportunities to pursue terrorist activities by legislating

⁵⁶ "Building Resilience against Terrorism: Canada's Counter-Terrorism Strategy" Second Edition, *Public Safety Canada*, Government of Canada, 2014, 2-3, <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/rsln-cgnst-trrrsm/index-eng.aspx>

CT, cutting off support, and responding rapidly and proportionally through the criminal-justice system to convict and eventually reintegrate terrorists back into society and prompt as quick a return to routine life as possible.⁵⁷ These targeted strategies cater to individuals located at any point on the spectrum from pre-radicalization vulnerability through the radicalization-to-violence process, and extending to prospects for prison radicalization, recidivism and potential reintegration back into society as law-abiding citizens.⁵⁸

Canada's approach to building resilience against terrorism relies on "partnerships", including not only the Government of Canada but "all levels of government, law enforcement agencies, the private sector and citizens".⁵⁹ In fact, Canada has identified 21 government agencies mandated to take part in CT.⁶⁰ In the areas of detection, denial and response, the criminal-justice system and intelligence services have the most appropriate skill-sets and expertise to gather information on and apprehend suspects in cases where there is clear evidence that violence will occur or has occurred already. "This mission is principally implemented through the investigative activities of the RCMP-led Integrated National Security Enforcement Teams (INSETs) based in Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal, the RCMP-only National Security Enforcement Sections (NSES) in every other province and the Border Integrity Program".⁶¹ The mandate of INSETs is to facilitate increased collaboration among

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ For background on prison radicalization and recidivism see Alex Wilner, "From Rehabilitation to Recruitment: Canadian Prison Radicalization and Islamist Terrorism", *True North*, In Canadian Public Policy, The MacDonald-Laurier Institute, October 2010, <http://www.macdonaldlaurier.ca/files/pdf/FromRehabilitationToRecruitment.pdf>

⁵⁹ Building Resilience against Terrorism: Canada's Counter-Terrorism Strategy, Second Edition, *Public Safety Canada*, Government of Canada, 2014, 4, <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/rslnc-gnst-trrrsm/index-eng.aspx>

⁶⁰ The 21 agencies listed in Building Resilience against Terrorism are: Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA), Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), Communications Security Establishment Canada (CSEC), Correctional Services of Canada (CSC), Department of Finance, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), Department of Justice, Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces (DND/CF), Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis of Canada (FINTRAC), Government Operations Centre (GOC), Health Canada, Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre (ITAC), Privy Council Office (PCO), Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), Public Prosecution Service of Canada (PPSC), Public Safety Canada, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and Transport Canada.

⁶¹ Building Resilience against Terrorism: Canada's Counter-Terrorism Strategy, Second Edition, *Public Safety Canada*, Government of Canada, 2014, 37, <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/rslnc-gnst-trrrsm/index-eng.aspx>

government agencies, to collect, share and analyze intelligence and enhance enforcement capacity to combat national security threats.⁶²

The “prevent” element of Canada’s CT has received much fanfare and criticism in recent years. “There is an emergent consensus among counterterrorism analysts and practitioners that to defeat the threat posed by Islamist extremism and terrorism, there is a need to go beyond security and intelligence measures, taking proactive measures to prevent vulnerable individuals from radicalizing and rehabilitating those who have already embraced extremism.⁶³ As decentralized and diverse as the terrorist threat may be, counter-terrorism has been formulated as equally decentralized and diverse. Processes of radicalization and deradicalization occur in the most closely framed encounters between citizens and the state. For this reason, police services and other first responders have the most experience in dealing with violence and extremist behavior in communities. However, police can only succeed with broad public support. Canada has a long history of community policing and its approach to public safety involves promoting peace, rights and good governance.⁶⁴ For this reason, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), charged with national security law enforcement, and the Ministry of Public Safety have taken the lead. Both institutions have histories of ongoing collaboration with civil society.

Of all the provincial police services, Calgary’s Police have been touted as the most advanced in efforts to educate, raise awareness and prevent the radicalization of young people through its ReDirect program. ReDirect was announced on September 15, 2015 as a new program aimed at countering radicalization as opposed to deradicalization. The trajectory of ReDirect, according to Sgt. Paul Dunn, concerns “getting at youth before they are radicalized”.⁶⁵ The Calgary Police already has a significantly large youth services section with two special

⁶² Integrated National Security Enforcement Teams, RCMP, <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/secur/insets-eisn-eng.htm>

⁶³ Angel Rabasa, Stacie L. Pettyjohn, Jeremy J. Ghez, and Christopher Boucek, *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, RAND National Security Research Division: Santa Monica, 2010, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND_MG1053.pdf

⁶⁴ See James Chacko & Stephen E. Nancoo (Eds.), *Community Policing in Canada*, Canadian Scholars Press: Ontario, 1993.

⁶⁵ Interview with Sgt. Paul Dunn, ReDirect, Calgary Police Service, October 26, 2015.

programs running for 7-8 years: the Multi-Agency School Support Team (MASST) and the Youth At Risk Development (YARD). Based on strong state-society partnerships built up over time the Calgary Police Services is well positioned to build on past efforts to engage legitimately in the larger community. For now, ReDirect receives phone calls or appeals via an online referral process for clients who are concerned about vulnerable persons, generally loved ones. After contact is made, ReDirect conducts an individual assessment of the person's background, family and any other relevant information.⁶⁶ "We are looking for vulnerabilities and needs of the person, and the issues in life we can help out with and add resources to. It is still in process".⁶⁷

With the national Terrorism Prevention Program delayed, several civil society groups in Canada initiated their own programs aimed at countering violent extremism. It is logical to assume that those closest to radicalized individuals are best placed to identify suspicious behavior in the family or the community, at work or at the mosque. The goal then is for citizens, community organizations and other social networks to be proactive and pass along that information to the proper authorities in ways that are supportive rather than punitive.

Community groups in Canada have thus taken it upon themselves to educate the public, provide social services and liaise with government agencies. One area in which community groups have taken the initiative is by volunteering to train their own members on issues of deradicalization. Daniel Koehler, Director of the German Institute on Radicalization and Deradicalization (GIRDS) has conducted hundreds of workshops and lectures on deradicalization around the world in the last four years. His institute specializes in training of deradicalization professionals, evaluation of programs and counseling of governments to

⁶⁶ ReDirect hosts 3 full-time staff: Sgt. Dunn, a sworn police officer and his partner - a social worker (from the City of Calgary - Neighborhood Services).

⁶⁷ Interview with Sgt. Paul Dunn, ReDirect, Calgary Police Service, October 26, 2015. A Multi-Agency Panel is expected to be functional by January, 2016, which will consist of three parts:

- (1) Case planning team (with representatives from school boards, Alberta Health, Correctional Services, social workers from the Calgary neighborhood services and others)
- (2) Strategic committee
- (3) Citizens' Advisory committee (with representatives from within the Community of Calgary including theological leaders, charitable organizations and other groups).

design deradicalization initiatives.⁶⁸ Through training workshops, Koehler draws from his own educational background in e-learning with the use of test exercises and case studies. The curriculum of his week-long workshops focusses on the psychology of radicalization, jihadi ideology, case management, risk analysis, evaluation, etc.”⁶⁹ Another initiative worthy of mention is Extreme Dialogue, an organization established, designed and organized by the British Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) with Christianne Boudreau as partner. Boudreau, a native of Calgary, experienced first-hand, the tragedy of losing her own son, Damian Claremont, who died in January of 2014 fighting with Jabhat al-Nusra, an al-Qaeda-affiliated rebel group consisting of largely foreign extremists in Syria. Extreme Dialogue has mounted a website with information, videos and resources that spread the personal stories of radicalization-to-violence as told by affected families and individuals.⁷⁰

Koehler was approached to deliver two full training courses in Canada for staff of both the Islamic Social Services Association (ISSA) based in Winnipeg and the Hayat Canada Family Support Foundation based in Calgary.⁷¹ ISSA was established in 1999 as a “charitable and voluntary organization” under the directorship of Shahina Siddiqui to support Muslims in Canada through public advocacy and personal counselling.⁷² Christianne Boudreau also co-launched Hayat Canada with Daniel Koehler to target family counselling and outreach specifically for family or friends of persons in radical Islamic groups or who are clearly heading towards violent Islamic radicalization, including those traveling to Syria and other conflict zones. The education and training provided by Hayat Canada are based on partnering with different agencies, and serving as a “bridge between family and all institutions relevant

⁶⁸ The Mothers for Life Network, for example, is one of GIRDS’s projects directly involving affected families around the world (currently eleven countries). GIRDS also publishes the world’s first and only peer reviewed journal on deradicalization (www.journal-derad.com).

⁶⁹ E-mail exchange with Daniel Koehler, September 22, 2015.

⁷⁰ For more on the story of Christianne Boudreau, see Adrienne Arsenault, “Mother of dead Canadian jihadi launches deradicalization effort”, *CBC News*, September 9, 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/mother-of-dead-canadian-jihadi-launches-deradicalization-effort-1.2759170>

⁷¹ A third deradicalization centre is in the works in Montreal, having started receiving calls but as yet without staff or programs to deal with social needs. Catherine Solyom, “More questions than answers about new deradicalization centre”, *Montreal Gazette*, June 1, 2015, <http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/more-questions-than-answers-about-new-deradicalization-centre>

⁷² About ISSA, <http://www.issaservices.com/issa/aboutissa.html>

(e.g. police, courts, employers, schools, social services)”.⁷³ However, and importantly, Hayat’s approach is to “strengthen the family as a counterforce against radicalization in an equal partnership with the support provider and not on using the family as a source of information or intelligence for the authorities”.⁷⁴

Canada’s deradicalization programs intervene in the most personal and emotional aspects of family relationships. But they have grown organically out of the very communities they serve and thus have strong cultural, religious, linguistic and social tools to help families suffering the devastating process of dealing with troubled youth and wanting to reintegrate them back into their lives after engaging in extremism and/or violence. Writing on the family support role of Hayat Canada, Daniel Koehler illustrates three necessary levels of any deradicalization strategy: the pragmatic level, the affective level, and the ideological level. According to Koehler, the pragmatic dimension of deradicalization focuses on disengagement and the practical needs of the individual to achieve alternative goals, providing capacity building, job training, drug treatment, family therapy and other practical assistance necessary to discontinue the old and start a new life.”⁷⁵ The affective level addresses the individual’s need for emotional support and requirement to establish alternative “reference groups” and attachment figures, which is accomplished through family counselling. The ideological level involves “discrediting” of extremist ideologies by offering more nuanced views and alternative understandings.⁷⁶ Koehler believes this is the appropriate combination of ideas to promote successful deradicalization.

Finally, Canada is home to several faith-based programs that seek to counter violent extremism by incorporating theological discussions into the intervention process. Trained imam and former police chaplain, Muhammad Shahied Shaikh (with the help of Mohammed Robert Heft) established a legendary program at the Al-Noor Mosque in Toronto that offers a 12-step detox for young would-be radicals. Modelled on the prototype of Alcoholics

⁷³ Hayat Canada Family Support Network, <http://hayatcanada.webs.com/>

⁷⁴ Daniel Koehler, Hayat Family Support, In Greater Detail, <http://hayatcanada.webs.com/in-further-detail>

⁷⁵ Daniel Koehler, “Hayat Canada Family Support”, In Further Detail, <http://hayatcanada.webs.com/in-further-detail>

⁷⁶ Angel Rabasa et al. *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, RAND National Security Research Division, 2010, P. 43.

Anonymous, the detox program treats extremism like it would alcoholism or other addictions.⁷⁷

Both alcoholism and fanaticism have similar effects.... Those addicted to alcohol are locked within a certain thinking pattern that makes them rely on alcohol. The same applies to extremists who can only think about events around them in one way.⁷⁸

The 12-steps promote recovery by the same approach that leads alcoholics to give up drinking alcohol. At times, this involves medical and psychological treatment, which may end in a script for prescription medications.

Most of the 12 steps are pitched at the level of theology. Theological discussions aim to promote less rigid, less literal interpretations of Islam, seeking common ground instead when thinking about Allah, Mohammad, his Companions, Islamic scholarship and other Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic faiths. Moderate theology aims to retain the Muslim's identity while promoting Canada's open society. Masjid Al-Noor's program treats extremism like it would any other harmful dependency by seeking to alter patterns of thought and behavior that are deemed harmful and building the appeal of an alternative framework of religious observance that supports traditional interpretations of the Islamic faith. Traditional Islam, as practiced by a majority of the world's Muslims, completely rejects suicide bombings and extremism.⁷⁹

Mohammed Robert Heft, himself a convert to Islam of German and Irish background, has mounted a parallel program to counter violent extremism in Canada based on Da'wah (Islamic preaching) and community outreach. Although not trained as an imam, Heft prefers to describe himself as a "preacher", who came to Islam from a troubled background, having encountered people from different walks of life and places, including a brief sojourn in Iraq

⁷⁷ For a list of the 12 step-program see, Jonathan Wade, "Canada Needs a Stronger Deradicalization Program", *The Sentinel Analytical Group*, April 1, 2015, <http://thesentinel.ca/canada-needs-a-stronger-deradicalization-program/>

⁷⁸ Cairo (Marwa Awad), "Radical detox program in Canada draws reactions", *Al Arabiya News*, November 2, 2010, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2009/03/11/68204.html>

⁷⁹ Mohammed Shaikh quoted in Kathleen Foster, "Canadian Mosque Sets Up "Detox" Program for Would-Be Terrorists", *Fox New.Com*, February 26, 2009, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/2009/02/26/canadian-mosque-sets-up-detox-program-for-would-be-terrorists.html>

after being recruited by extremists to protest the American war in 2003 and act as human shield.⁸⁰ Upon return to Canada in 2004, Heft established the Paradise Forever (P4E) Islamic Centre in Toronto. Paradise Forever is a community organization that specializes in supporting newly converted Muslims and protecting them from being manipulated by extremist misrepresentations of Quranic teachings. Heft explains that his outreach seeks to counter what he calls “do-it-yourself-Islam”.⁸¹ P4E provides an assortment of services that includes counseling, psychotherapy, addiction counselling, mental health support and a range of financial and social services.⁸² Since 2009, Heft has expanded his involvement in counseling youth at risk of radicalization with the development of a 3-step detox program.⁸³ The program involves (1) theological detox, (2) social support and (3) community accountability. The three areas are mutually constitutive given that subjects can only undergo cognitive changes if they have practical support, whether that involves finding employment, getting off welfare, establishing more stable relationships, or finding peace within.

The theological dimension seeks to engage at a level that extremists understand, i.e., scriptures, fatwas, hadith. The rationale is to discover from what sources the extremists acquired their religious knowledge to begin with and then correct any misconceptions. “Many are reading the Qu’ran like a ‘choose your own adventure’ story, which involves interpreting for oneself what biblical stories are relevant and then acting on their teachings out of context.

They are re-applying the utopian understanding that never did exist. Their interpretations are inconsistent with over 1,400 years of Islamic history and jurisprudence. Their religion is fueled by their frustrations: disunity in the Islamic Umma (nation), the Arab-Israeli conflict and the violence going on in the Middle East. But Islam does not come back from killing people. It happens in the home. It is about being kind and caring towards your loved ones.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Telephone Interview with Mohammed Robert Heft on October 26, 2015.

⁸¹ Telephone Interview with Mohammed Robert Heft on October 26, 2015.

⁸² See Paradise Forever website, Social Services, <http://thep4e.com/services/>

⁸³ For background on Mohammed Robert Heft, see his personal homepage: <http://www.mheft.com/>

⁸⁴ Telephone Interview with Mohammed Robert Heft on October 26, 2015.

In other words, Heft tries to integrate theological discussions about Islam with humanistic understandings of faith and the family along with broader and more accepting approaches to community. Heft's program has been credited by the RCMP and other Canadian policing agencies for helping many youths escape the destructive state of radicalization.⁸⁵

Detox programs have been met with mixed reviews. Described as "deeply problematic" by Muhammad Fadel, Associate Professor & Research Chair for the Law and Economics of Islamic Law at the University of Toronto, Faculty of Law, the concern is that "we as a community cannot be responsible for the conduct of individual Muslims".⁸⁶ Seen in this way, community accountability can be misinterpreted as a means to simplify and repudiate the diversity within Islam and identify Muslim communities at large by their most extremist elements. This attitude is the very root of Islamophobia and all racisms.

Funding is also an ongoing challenge. Many grassroots organisations like the Islamic Services Association (ISSA), are urging the government to provide them more resources. Koehler's main criticism of the Canadian context to date is lack of government support for the few initiatives that are taking place on the ground.⁸⁷ However, Heft insists that government support can impede work at the grassroots level: "The government should step aside and not fund grassroots efforts. They don't understand the nuances".⁸⁸ Against the background of Islamophobia, conspiracy-laden ideas, and paranoia in the "war on terror", there is a need to improve relations between Muslim communities and Canadian society and government. Therefore, the extent to which the state should intervene in deradicalization represents an ongoing debate among different stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental.

⁸⁵ Wagdy Loza, "The Need for Effective Intervention Programs to Prevent Islamic Extremists and Terrorist Recruitment in Western Countries with Special Emphasis on Canada", *The Mackenzie Institute*, July 2, 2015: 5-7, <http://www.mackenzieinstitute.com/need-effective-intervention-programs-prevent-islamic-extremists-terrorist-recruitment-western-countries-special-emphasis-canada/>

⁸⁶ Rahemtulla quoted in Cairo (Marwa Awad), "Radical detox program in Canada draws reactions", *Al Arabiya News*, October 28, 2015, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2009/03/11/68204.html>

⁸⁷ Daniel Koehler, E-mail exchange, September 18, 2015.

⁸⁸ Telephone Interview with Mohammed Robert Heft on October 26, 2015.

Finally, detox must be understood within its broader political context. As voiced by Shadaab H. Rahemtulla, a Canadian doctoral student from Toronto in Middle Eastern and Islamic History at Oxford University: “it fails to address the root cause of militant activity, which is growing frustration with American imperialism within the Muslim world”.⁸⁹ Canada’s involvement in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and ongoing support for the State of Israel contributes to this highly charged atmosphere in which many Canadian Muslims feel that their values and identities are under threat. In the ongoing framework of the “war on terror”, Muslim responsibilities are being framed by anti-terror measures.⁹⁰ As a result, Muslim Canadians feel uncomfortable expressing their views for fear of being targeted as other or even “un-Canadian”. Thus far, the Canadian government’s progress in developing punitive measures through legislation and the criminal-justice system does little to alleviate such fears.

In a liberal democracy, the impetus for changing religious, political and social views must originate, at least in part, from within the communities themselves. However, extremism affects everybody. The question remains whether deradicalization can occur in the broader context of wars on terror, racial profiling, fear, paranoia and conflict. Without trust and common ground, Canadian and Muslims societies will not be in the position to heal their rifts and promote peaceful co-existence. A telling example of the failure to bridge barriers was seen in a joint effort by the Islamic Services Association, the National Council on Canadian Muslims and the RCMP to release in Winnipeg a 38-page handbook “United Against Terrorism”⁹¹ in 2014. The handbook aimed to provide information for young Canadians vulnerable to recruitment by extremist groups. The collaboration broke down when the RCMP withdrew its support for the booklet on account of its “adversarial tone”.⁹² The RCMP’s decision not to proceed with the initiative shocked their Muslim partners and exemplified the

⁸⁹ Rahemtulla quoted in Cairo (Marwa Awad), “Radical detox program in Canada draws reactions”, *Al Arabiya News*, October 28, 2015, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2009/03/11/68204.html>

⁹⁰ Basia Spalek and Robert Lambert, “Muslim communities, counter-terrorism and counter-radicalization: A critically reflective approach to engagement”, *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, 36, 2008, 257-270, p. 258.

⁹¹ To read a copy of *United Against Terrorism: A Collaborative Effort Towards a Secure, Inclusive and Just Canada*, go to <http://www.issaservices.com/issa/downloads/UAT-HANDBOOK-WEB-VERSION-SEPT-27-2014.pdf>

⁹² “Group stunned RCMP pulled support from anti-terrorism handbook”, *CBC News*, September 30, 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/group-stunned-rcmp-pulled-support-from-anti-terrorism-handbook-1.2783234>

kind of challenges that accompany partnerships between state and society, which in cases like these are essentially cross-cultural partnerships. Mutual recognition and understanding will require time and trust, attributes that liberal democratic societies aim to achieve through multiculturalism and diversity in spite of the difficult challenges they encounter in the face of contemporary threats.

Part V: Conclusions:

This article has established some parameters for studying the social dimensions of counter-terrorism in Canada. Drawing insight from the concepts of human security and asymmetrical warfare, it is useful to alter the level of analysis at which counter-terrorism is understood. Moving down from the level of statehood and inter-state conflict to the individual and community allows us to better understand the phenomenon of lone actor terrorism. This type of violence encapsulates the individual as typically both the perpetrator *and* the target of violence. This type of warfare cannot be analyzed on the basis of conventional indicators of power and force alone. Realizing this fact holds crucial implications for public policy.

In spite of their incredible wealth and resources, Western industrialized democracies have neither the wherewithal nor the intelligence to defeat the power of terrorism, once and for all. Asymmetrical warfare demonstrates that individuals without much power can cause considerable damage to modern industrial societies. And human security teaches that civilians bear the brunt of this violence. Societies fighting asymmetrical conflict in the form of lone actor terrorism experience the violence on a variety of levels and in ways that affect the lives of civilians in deeply personal ways. Furthermore, terrorism can no longer be understood as either an exclusively ideological or political process. Radicalized agents adopt values from a variety of different sources. The process of radicalization is complex and as a result, counterterrorism must support moderating forces, alternative and non-violent viewpoints in social, religious, civil and even psychological structures. There is no better route to understanding lone actors than to speak with the people they have been in touch with, whether at the mosque, the church, the hospital or the prison.

The principle motivating force behind terrorism today is fanaticism. Democrats have difficulty appealing to the hearts and minds of zealotry, which rejects democracy's very essence. Terrorism stems from different combinations of an open society with radical indoctrination, possible mental illness and the willingness to commit violence. Misplaced or inappropriate strategies to combat this phenomenon may ultimately reproduce the conditions which prompt terrorism in the first place as in cases of state overreaction or overreliance on punitive measures. Failure to recognize this fundamental reality of contemporary terrorism can only perpetuate and intensify its effects.

The most important question for future research and public policy aimed at countering violent extremism is how to discover and prevent future plots. However, the difficulty, if not impossibility of this task confronts the idiosyncratic nature of lone actors. For this reason, Bakker and de Graaf have suggested focusing not on the terrorist profile but on the "modus operandi".⁹³ Given that all lone actor terrorists learn to be radical, it is necessary to focus on the radicalization process itself. The terrorist act is generally a result of spiritual mentoring either in person or on the Internet. The need of lone actors for identity and even belonging will bring them into contact with other extremists and often people more moderate than their selves for guidance. Counterterrorist strategies would benefit from creating stronger links with spiritual authorities who preach short of committing violence and monitoring their means of communicating with disciples, either in person or on the Internet. It may be useful for governments, in collaboration with community groups, to increase a moderate Islamic presence online in the overall context of a more inclusive and democratic society.

Studies of terrorism must move from exclusive focus on the national and international level to the level of municipal and city governments in conjunction with police, the criminal justice system, mental health authorities and social institutions like schools, places of religious worship and communities. Only through these linkages will terrorists be separated from the average faithful, law abiding citizens enjoying all that liberal democracy has to offer. Studying these diverse and at times, disjointed relationships require measures by which to

⁹³ Beatrice De Graaf & Edwin Bakker. "Preventing Lone Wolf Terrorism: some CT Approaches Addressed", *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 5, No. 5-6, 2011.

determine success. There is as yet no consensus about the appropriate criteria for measurement of either radicalization or deradicalization. Ultimately, countering violent extremism in Canada is a new phenomenon that will undergo trial and error on the road towards more effective programming against extremism along with changes in foreign policy that better reflect Canada's multicultural society and commitment to public safety and human security both at home and abroad.