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REINTEGRATING EXTREMISTS

Deradicalisation and Desistance

Sarah V. Marsden

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For my parents.

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Contents

List of Figures

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Abstract This chapter explains the context for reintegration efforts, describing what we know about those who have been convicted of terrorism offences as well as providing an overview of existing accounts of deradicalisation. It looks first at how deradicalisation has been conceptualised, then examines practical efforts to support disengagement from extremism. Although progress is being made, the review highlights that the field is hampered by access to empirical data and limited conceptual tools. To understand reintegration better, it is important to acknowledge the complex range of factors implicated in successful disengagement, moving beyond often poorly defined concepts such as deradicalisation. Underpinning this effort should be greater focus on developing an understanding of reintegration in ways that situate former prisoners in their personal, social and political context.

Keywords Extremism · Deradicalisation · Disengagement · Terrorism · Former prisoners

> This person is probing you, analysing you. Has this guy really reformed? Y'see? And obviously, with every prisoner, he learns the right [answers] to the [questions], y'see? And obviously if you get the questions right, you don't get such a hard time, but if you get them wrong, they keep on analysing you. Why is this man become extremist? What is it in his life that prompted him to become – y'know – that screw become loose and he

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> become extremist? And they think it's some sort of, y'know, condition, some sort of illness, d'y'see? So now you've got two years of this, and if you don't comply, you end up back in prison. (Keeler 2013)

Sulayman Keeler, the author of these words, was the first white, British convert to Islam convicted for terrorism offences in the UK. Found guilty of fundraising and inciting terrorism in 2008, he had a long history of involvement in radical subcultures. As well as being a prominent member of the now banned radical Islamist group, Al-Muhajiroun, he was convicted for encouraging people to fight in Iraq, and had been arrested for assault at a rally at which he had been chanting 'Osama! Osama! Osama!', declaiming Tony Blair and George W. Bush to be terrorists. In 2014, after being discovered with 20 others in the back of a lorry trying to leave the country, he plead guilty to possessing false documents. Cleared of terrorism offences, he said he was desperate to rejoin his wife and children who had travelled to Turkey earlier that year. In 2016, he was jailed for two years after contravening a travel ban when was found in Hungary, again claiming to be trying to reach his family in Turkey.

On the one hand, Keeler's reflection on his experience illustrates the not uncommon ways people negotiate their involvement in the criminal justice system. On the other hand, his words bring into sharp relief both the conceptual and practical questions relevant to engaging with those involved in terrorism: Is it possible to determine, with enough certainty to ensure public safety, that someone is unlikely to re-engage in political violence? Is a conceptual framework for interpreting involvement in illegal activism focused on pathologies and risk the most appropriate model? How does a sustained commitment to radical subcultures influence the path away from extremism? What are the most effective ways of supporting the reintegration of politically motivated former prisoners? And what barriers do those convicted of terrorism offences face when they try to move on with their lives? These questions guide this book's enquiry into efforts to support the reintegration of those involved in extremism in the UK over recent years.

Against a backdrop of conflicts associated with the 'War on Terror', a growing legislative framework, and efforts to crack down on violent and increasingly 'non-violent extremism', more and more people are being convicted of terrorism offences. From training for terrorist purposes and possession of terrorist material to the actual commission of violence, the majority of these offences in the UK relate to militant

Islamism. Governments are therefore facing a mounting challenge of resettling those convicted of terrorism offences once they have served their custodial sentences. This book examines efforts to engage with former prisoners, and those considered 'at risk' of involvement in extremism, taking a close look at both community and statutory organisations' work with politically motivated former prisoners. In doing so, it makes three core arguments.

The first argument concerns the importance of taking account of the political, social and relational setting that informs the former prisoner's experience in the community. This context is at least as crucial, if not more important than, those ideas and attitudes widely considered relevant to politically motivated offending. Focusing on reintegration into this context shifts attention away from conceptually ambiguous notions of 'deradicalisation' to understanding the opportunities and barriers faced by these individuals. By extension, changing focus in this way implies a more holistic approach to the individual, taking account of the complex, unique and contingent nature of their journey into and out of extremism. Similarly, a more holistic, contextualised approach to reintegration suggests reducing the emphasis on efforts to advance ideological change. Such 're-education', or 'deprogramming' efforts, typically described as 'deradicalisation', largely neglect the wider environment, positioning the problem inside the mind of the individual, under-prioritising the range of contextual factors relevant to understanding reintegration experiences.

Second, by reframing the concept of 'community' common in much of the literature, the book argues that community-based organisations are well placed to support former prisoners and those considered 'at risk' of involvement in extremism. This position challenges two prominent arguments about the community and counterterrorism following the 'War on Terror'. The first argues that the 'Muslim community' is somehow responsible for terrorism and should therefore be called into service in responding to the terrorist threat. The other position suggests that community-based work should be discarded because of its stigmatising potential. Both of these arguments rest on a broad, somewhat undifferentiated conceptualisation of a 'Muslim community'. Instead, it is more useful to understand the community as a particular, bounded group of people able to facilitate a former prisoner's reintegration, first because they share an understanding of the issues he or she faces, and second due to their commitment to the community and the individual's place within it.

Finally, the book sets out a theoretical account of disengagement from radical settings, as well as those considered 'at risk' of involvement in extremism. It moves away from the risk-oriented model beginning to dominate the literature on deradicalisation efforts, and instead explores the benefits of a more clearly strengths-based approach. A full examination of these ideas follows, but in brief, the risk model attempts to identify measures of risk linked to the likelihood of reoffending, and tries to mitigate them through implementing interventions. Strengths-based accounts focus on supporting individuals to help them achieve their goals in non-criminal ways. It assumes human beings are motivated to pursue a range of goods, and that provided with the means to realise them, supporting prosocial goal achievement is a more robust way of sustaining desistance from crime. In the context of politically motivated crime, this involves acknowledging the goods people seek to achieve through involvement in illegal activism, and finding alternative ways of pursuing them; redirecting the initial motivation to offend, rather than necessarily trying to deconstruct it.

This chapter explains the context for reintegration efforts, describing what we know about those who have been convicted, as well as providing an overview of existing accounts of deradicalisation. It looks first at how deradicalisation has been conceptualised, then examines practical efforts to support disengagement from radical subcultures, arguing the need for greater focus on reintegration rather than deradicalisation. Despite the high profile and sometimes catastrophic nature of this offending, the introduction describes a field that is only just beginning to develop an empirical foundation. Chapter 2 describes how, in responding to the perceived need for community-based support for those 'at risk' of involvement in terrorism, and those who have been convicted of terrorism offences, the UK government has provided support for both statutory and, less consistently, third-sector organisations under the aegis of the 'Prevent' element of the UK's counterterrorism policy, known as CONTEST. This chapter describes how deradicalisation has been approached in the UK, and explores how success has been conceptualised in this arena, making the case that significant gains are possible by drawing on the wider criminological literature on desistance. After presenting a framework for appropriate outcomes with politically motivated prisoners, the chapter develops an interpretation drawing on the risk-based (what works) and strengths-based (what helps) models; this account brings into relief some of the tensions inherent in the work. The subsequent

discussion considers the advantages of the strengths-based approach with politically motivated crimes, speaking to the agency associated with involvement in extremism.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 each look at a central theme to emerge from the outcomes framework set out in Chap. 2: reintegration, resilience and redirecting the initial motivation to offend. Chapter 3 proposes that rather than beginning from often poorly conceptualised ideas around 'deradicalising' those involved in extremism, we are better served by learning how statutory and community-based organisations can focus on developing agency and supporting reintegration. Rather than heavily prioritising internal change related to the ideas and attitudes assumed to support violence, some of the most effective work with former prisoners approaches them holistically, aware of the wider context into which they are integrating, and the barriers they face in doing so. Here, reintegration is understood as re-entering a specific community setting and is distinct from wider debates about multiculturalism and the most appropriate relationship between different identity groups.

Chapter 4 explores the different methods probation officers and community mentors used to try and reduce the risk of reoffending, and support desistance. Ex-prisoners spend much of their time away from formal engagement with statutory or community-based interventions. As a consequence, developing resilience to negative peer influence, and the effect of political and social events that may inform the motivation to reoffend, is vital to long-term desistance. This chapter also looks at how the question of identity was interpreted and understood by those involved in this work. Developing a broader social identity rather than the single-minded focus on a narrow conception of identity related to the radical group was a central part of what practitioners believed was important in supporting reintegration. Again, interpreting this in the context of desistance-based models of reintegration offers a conceptual foundation for understanding why and how developing resilience is important.

Chapter 5 extends the theoretical discussion of the desistance-based approach to apply it more closely to work with politically motivated former prisoners. Moving away from crime is an individualised process, and an important implication of the research explored in this chapter is the need to reframe how this experience is understood. Instead of the broad process models or largely descriptive, often risk-oriented, categories of factors believed to be relevant to supporting deradicalisation currently

prevalent in the literature, the chapter argues we should instead consider how individuals may be encouraged to pursue primary human goods, such as relatedness, spirituality, community and agency, which have been recognised as important in the move towards and away from offending (Ward 2002). Rather than looking for discrete risk factors, attention is better directed towards reconceptualising the positive goals individuals seek to achieve through high-risk activism and attempting to redirect this motivation in prosocial ways.

In the concluding chapter, the empirical and theoretical insights developed in the book are drawn together to describe an alternative way of approaching the reintegration of those involved in extremism. Interpreting the multiple aims implicated in this work through the lens of criminological theory reveals some of the internal tensions and competing priorities practitioners face. On the basis of these insights, rather than the heavy focus on risk-oriented supervision that prevails, a desistance or strengths-based approach has significant promise. In particular, because of the unique features of politically motivated offending which are often informed by the desire to achieve a subjectively defined positive future, the approach reflected in the strengths-based model seems particularly well suited.

The concluding discussion also examines the implications of the barriers to reintegration faced by this population. These probationers face significant challenges around economic, social and political integration. Acknowledging these barriers and making efforts to reduce them, at both the practice and policy levels, is vital to supporting long-term desistance from extremism. Further recommendations emphasise the importance of prioritising reintegration and taking a holistic, contextualised and, above all, individualised approach. Finally, the implications of the research for those returning from fighting overseas are considered. In particular, the discussion underscores the need to maintain an inclusive approach, such that returnees feel they have a 'home' state that is willing and able to facilitate their reintegration back into society over the long term.

Terrorism in the UK

In 2015, the number of people arrested for terrorism-related offences rose significantly. Reportedly, as many as one person is being arrested every day, largely attributable to the conflict in Syria (Beake 2015). Against this

backdrop, the political discourse around terrorism remains as charged as ever, with the threat described by the Prime Minister as 'more acute today than ever before' (Cameron 2015). What then, do we know about the extent of terrorism in the UK?

The numbers are not perhaps as high as might be expected given the level of threat communicated by politicians and pundits. Between 2001 and March 2015, 466 people have been convicted of terrorism-related offences; of these, a little over 40 per cent remain in prison (Home office 2015). Although the UK government does not specify the ideological commitments of terrorism offenders, nearly 75 per cent were convicted for 'international terrorism', a byword for Islamist terrorism (Anderson 2014). The remaining 25 per cent were classified as either domestic or related to the conflict in Northern Ireland (Home office 2015). As well as an overall upward trend in the number of convictions since 2001, there have been a number of spikes. Notably, after 9/11 and the London bombings in 2005, there was a significant increase in arrests and convictions. There has also been a steady increase since the Arab uprisings in 2010, from 33 convictions in 2010 rising year on year to reach 48 by the end of 2104 (Home office 2015).

As well as large-scale terrorist attacks and geo-political events, the number of terrorism convictions should also be interpreted in the context of increasing layers of terrorism legislation. Since 2001, significant legislation has been passed, proscribing a wide range of behaviours.[1] As the most serious types of terrorism-related acts, such as murder, have long been illegal, more recent law has legislated against a range of less serious offences, such as possession of material useful for terrorist purposes, dissemination of information, and incitement to terrorism. As a consequence, the number and type of behaviours labelled, often tenuously, as 'terrorism' has increased. It should not, therefore, be a surprise that as the legislative framework has increased, so has the number of convictions.

Not only does the increasing legal framework around terrorism lead to conceptual confusion about what involvement in violent extremism entails, but it also means increasing numbers of people are being sentenced for less serious offences and then released into the community after relatively brief periods of incarceration. The result is a particular challenge for statutory agencies that are required to ensure public safety post-release, one approach to which has been to engage in what is loosely described as deradicalisation.

The Promise of 'Deradicalisation'

Against the backdrop of a persistent level of international terrorism and a steady number of so-called 'home-grown terrorists', efforts to mitigate threats to public safety have gained momentum. One of the concepts heralded as a potentially important part of the solution was 'deradicalisaton'. Once holding such promise that *Time* magazine proclaimed it one of the 'ten ideas that's changing the world' (Ripley 2008), the idea of deradicalisation has faced increasing challenges, not least to any claim to conceptual clarity. Commonly distinguished from disengagement, deradicalisation is generally understood as attitudinal and ideological change leading to a reduction in the commitment to militancy. Disengagement, however, encompasses behavioural change related to the move away from political violence (Horgan 2009). Beyond this, an array of constructs has become implicated in deradicalisation initiatives, from re-education to demobilisation, and deprogramming to rehabilitation (Horgan and Taylor 2011).

The empirical foundation for interpreting attempts at deradicalisation is limited. Although dozens of states have initiated programmes attempting to promote change (El-Said 2015), targeting both those considered 'at risk' of involvement in political violence as well as those proven to have been implicated in terrorism, we know relatively little about them; nor, crucially, do we understand how effective they are (Schuurman and Bakker 2016). A number of reasons inform what a relatively weak empirical evidence base is. Most fundamentally, terrorism is rare, making data equally sparse. Beyond this, governments are often not forthcoming about their security programmes, and access to such sites is difficult, as is access to participants. Together, this means many assessments of deradicalisation efforts have been carried out at a distance. It also means that some of the foundational questions about efforts to support the move away from terrorism remain unanswered: What is the theory of change that informs attempts to support disengagement from radical subcultures? What are the assumptions that guide programme development and implementation? By what measures might we understand whether progress is being made? And most fundamentally, what motivates people to move away from radical subcultures?

Answers to these questions are not easy to locate, although valuable work has been carried out across a range of contexts in trying to understand what motivates change, with disengagement from far-Right groups

(Bjørgo 2009), Islamist militancy (Horgan 2009; Ashour 2009), *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA) (Reinares 2011) and violent oppositional groups in Northern Ireland (Shirlow et al. 2010; Ferguson et al. 2015) all receiving attention. One way of conceptualising what influences the voluntary move away from radical subcultures is in the form of 'push' and 'pull' factors (Altier et al. 2014). Those issues that relate either to disaffection from the group, 'pushing' individuals to leave, or the lure of external 'pulls', drawing them away. Among the issues argued to drive disengagement are negative social sanction, losing faith in the group's ideology, a feeling things are 'going too far', growing disillusionment with the group, its leadership or tactics, losing status and exhaustion. Pull factors include the desire for a normal life, maturation, wanting a different future and new personal priorities, such as a family or relationship that draws the individual away.

Drawing these various push and pull factors together, three clusters of issues have been described as important in interpreting what informs the move away from violence: losing faith in the group's ideology, the perceived failure of the group or its leadership, and personal and practical factors related to living a clandestine lifestyle (Dalgaard-Nielsen 2013). A more detailed account by Kate Barrelle (2015) suggests five domains relevant to interpreting why people leave radical subcultures: social relations, for example, disillusionment with leaders or fellow travellers; coping with the clandestine lifestyle; identity issues, and the way personal, group and social identities change; ideological disillusionment and change; and action orientation, where radical methods become increasingly difficult to reconcile. Importantly, there are likely to be a number of interacting reasons why people leave militant groups. Similarly, the way 'push' and 'pull' factors relate to one another is complex: once disillusionment with the group sets in, other futures outside the group become more attractive, acting as incentives to leave. Although analytically useful, it remains important to understand these discrete factors in the context of the complex, contingent and dynamic nature of an individual's relationship with a wider movement.

Prioritising the complex and interacting nature of the factors that inform disengagement directs attention to another interesting and sometimes overlooked feature of existing interpretations of the route out of radical subcultures, that is, the importance of context. Factors internal to the individual, notably in the form of diminishing ideological commitment, constitute only one part of the disengagement story. Even when

ideological disillusionment is described as important in leaving radical subcultures, it is, as Anne Dalgaard-Nielsen (2013) suggests in her review of empirical work on voluntary disengagement, often about things other than the ideas themselves. These include the role of other people behaving in prosocial ways that undermine absolutist narratives about supposed enemy identity groups, or the opportunity to see their radical subculture from the 'outside', such as through increased contact with those external to the movement. Notably, what Dalgaard-Nielsen describes as the consequences of being confronted with 'the real, bloody consequences of violence' (2013, p. 102), is an important trigger for many of those who leave militancy behind. It is, therefore, as much the impact on other human beings and individual's interpersonal relationships as it is the ideas themselves, which are relevant to understanding exit processes.

Questions about how individuals relate to their social world therefore seem to be a more substantive part of the process by which people leave radical subcultures than the deradicalisation construct might lead us to believe. Wanting to live a 'normal' life, having a family, developing a different set of social relations away from those who fail to live up to expectations, it is here, in the wider context of the individual's life, that some of the more powerful features of disengagement lie (Schuurman and Bakker, 2016). As Kate Barrelle puts it '[s]ocial relationships are critical not only to the formation and maintenance of the group . . . but also in the motivation for disengagement . . . social relations are at the heart of how a person renegotiates relationships with the rest of society' (Barrelle 2015, p. 135).

Drawing attention to the importance of the individual's relational context underlines one of the major challenges facing the concept of deradicalisation, that is, the extent to which it positions the 'problem' in the head of the individual. Attributing behaviour to the ideas and attitudes a person claims to be committed to – as radicalisation and relatedly deradicalisation tend to do – atomises the individual, dislocating them and the values and beliefs to which they cleave from their wider context. Rather than understanding the ideological commitments people make in the context of a wider set of social, political and cultural relations, deradicalisation heavily prioritises questions of individual attitudes and beliefs. That is not to say that individual-level processes are not important, but rather that they need to be understood in the wider ecology that the individual inhabits, not least because the relationship between attitudes and behaviour is complex (Ajzen and Fishbein 2005). In particular, commitment to a specific ideological framework is a far-from-certain predictor of behaviour (Githens-Mazer and Lambert 2010). As René

Karpantschof demonstrates in an analysis of the radicalisation and deradicalisation of Copenhagen squatters, the move towards and away from violence was informed, not by ideas, but by 'collective, political interaction' with external actors informed by the perception of particular threats and opportunities (2015, p. 50).

Together, these issues suggest that reintegration is a more appropriate framework than deradicalisation. Reintegration reflects the process of becoming embedded in a network of social relations, most straightforwardly through a deepening commitment to a wider community, and also into other social networks, for example, reintegration back into the family. As well as social relations, there are other mechanisms that reflect effective reintegration, such as through education or work. Reintegration is relevant not only because it takes account of individuals in their wider social context, but also because it emphasises individuals' agency, and their role in determining their relationship with wider society (McEvoy and Shirlow 2009). Finally, reintegration reflects the two-way nature of the process: society must allow, and ideally actively support, the individual's reintegration as much as the individual demonstrates a willingness to reintegrate. The value of such reintegration-oriented approaches to former politically motivated prisoners has been recognised in other settings, not least in Northern Ireland, where former combatants have, in some cases, been instrumental in facilitating their own and their fellow traveller's reintegration into society through community-based organisations (Dwyer and Maruna 2011). Rather than the somewhat passive subject of deradicalisation efforts, reintegration recognises the agentic process of re-engaging in a wider network of social relations, providing a more holistic and contextualising framework by which to interpret the move away from violence.

Deradicalisation Interventions

Although accounts of voluntary disengagement such as those that largely inform analyses of 'push' and 'pull' factors are valuable, this is only one route out of illegal activism. While some leave voluntarily, others are forced through state sanction, and yet others change roles within the movement, either through coercion or choice (Horgan 2009). It remains to be seen what difference these varying trajectories have on individuals, their future and the likelihood of re-engaging in violence. What follows considers state-led responses to the reintegration of those involved in

radical subcultures. Before examining in more detail the underlying features of work with politically motivated prisoners, it's important to note that attention here is directed at individual rather than group-level disengagement. That is not to deny the important relationship between militant groups, demobilisation and individual experiences of disengagement (Ferguson et al. 2015). Important questions remain about how and why groups demobilise or are repressed, but they are not the focus here.

Importantly, deradicalisation does not always accurately describe what many interventions are trying to achieve. Most programmes have a range of aims, only some of which are concerned with the ideas and attitudes believed to underpin politically motivated offending (Horgan and Braddock 2010). Indeed, the emphasis on ideological change as a prerequisite for successful reintegration is a relatively recent development (Silke 2011). Previous efforts encouraging militants to relinquish their commitment to radical groups, such as in Italy with the Red Brigades or Spain with ETA, have focused far more on disengagement than attitudinal change (Page 1998). This is an interesting development in its own right, perhaps suggesting that the current threat – specifically from Islamist militancy – has led to states demanding more substantive change from those involved in radical subcultures. Whether this is a function of the perception of threat posed by Islamist violence, or a broader trend in state/non-state opponents remains to be seen. Either way, the result has been a flurry of work conceptualising, measuring and implementing deradicalisation interventions.

One of the challenges facing efforts to conceptualise the move away from extremism is the short history of work in this area, and the heterogeneous nature of the programmes currently trying to support former militants. Without long-term assessment and analysis, it is difficult to determine their aims and outcomes. Indeed, one of the major challenges in assessment across states has been the lack of a comparable strategy across programmes (Soufan Group 2013). What then, do we know about the mechanisms and conceptual underpinning of the various programmes currently active internationally?

Based on a review of publicly available information about existing interventions,[2] one of the more common features of the programmes is that they are rooted in the criminal justice system and are often prison based. That, much of the work takes place in prisons relates to the tendency for release to be conditional on successful change, raising obvious questions about the prisoner's motivation to express reformed

attitudes. Some of the more innovative programmes have a stronger relationship with the community, notably in Denmark, where a comprehensive programme linking schools, social services and the police works both with those considered 'at risk' of involvement in illegal activism, and those who have been involved in extremism (Agerschou 2014). Although some support in the community is offered in programmes in Saudi Arabia, Yemen and the Philippines, the focus tends to be on more practical issues with an emphasis on monitoring. Many of the programmes also retain the right to recall the individual to prison if they return to similar patterns of behaviour or are in touch with previous associates. Similarly, the Netherlands have instigated a post-release programme of monitoring and support in the community for those convicted of terrorism offences or those suspected of involvement (Schuurman and Bakker 2016).

Because most programmes are run by states, they can be understood as the primary agents of change. Some are extremely well organised and resourced, such as those in Singapore and Saudi Arabia, while others are more ad hoc and have evolved in line with the individual police or prison officials who have instigated the work, as in Indonesia. A number of the programmes use ex-militants, and some work with third-sector groups and state actors not directly implicated in criminal justice, such as social services. Where external actors are used, they are considered important as at least nominal independence from the state is believed relevant in conferring the legitimacy necessary to facilitate change. Where employees of the state are used, there is a perception that trust is more difficult to generate (Boucek et al. 2009), something that reflects the fact that trust development is both an important and challenging part of intervention work (Speckhard 2011).

There is significant variation in the mechanisms used to support disengagement across different settings, reflecting the context-specific nature of many initiatives. Interventions therefore incorporate a range of techniques including: addressing ideological issues; providing psychological support or counselling; improving the individual's socio-economic situation, for example providing jobs or education; and offering wider social support, for instance to the prisoner's family. Not all programmes include all of these elements, and most take a multimodal approach, addressing issues reflecting the local context and the particular militant setting the individual has been involved with.

In reviewing the various tiers of intervention, the first thing to note is that all of the programmes address ideological issues to some extent. Many

of the interventions are concerned with Islamist militancy, so this takes the form of religious instruction, ranging from one-to-one engagement with scholars or ex-militants, through to organised classes and group work. An interesting theme in a number of the programmes was the idea that the prisoners had been misled and needed help to return to the correct path; this was particularly the case in Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Indonesia. However, the importance of dialogue and providing education and information about Islam was seen in all of the programmes concerned with this ideological current.

Most commonly, this theme of ideological instruction, sometimes described as 're-education', is interpreted in the context of the relationship between attitudes and behaviour. If, the argument goes, ideas and beliefs will inform behaviour, changing someone's commitment to a particular set of beliefs will lead to a change in behaviour. As already touched upon, this implicit theory of change rests on somewhat unstable ground. Not only are attitudes good predictors of behaviour in relatively specific circumstances, as John Horgan and Max Taylor (2011) have rightly emphasised, but many of those who hold 'extreme' views never go on to break the law, and not all those who employ political violence are necessarily committed to radical ideas. Indeed, ideological commitments often develop after engaging in radical settings, for example following imprisonment.

When viewed from a slightly different perspective, individuals' commitment to society, and hence their desire to undermine it in the service of an alternative future, is informed by adherence to what are judged to be a maladaptive set of ideas. Such ideas and beliefs are considered sufficiently inimical to wider society that they must change if the individual is to reintegrate successfully. Here, it is the way ideological structures are interpreted in relation to the norms of a particular society that is important, as much as it is about how they inform behaviour. Recent moves in the UK to ban 'non-violent extremism' reflect this trend to target apparently maladaptive ideas in their own right because they in some way signal a threat to 'Fundamental British Values'. Looked at in this way, efforts to address ideological issues in reintegration initiatives are as much about demanding adherence to a particular set of norms that reflect dominant beliefs about what a 'good society' should resemble as they are about disrupting the supposed attitude-behaviour link.

Another common, although not universal feature, is support for prisoner's families. Many states provide financial assistance, help with healthcare

and schooling, as well as facilitating family visits to prisons and supporting the entire family financially post-release. Considered an effective route to bring about change, descriptions of a number of the programmes suggest this was one of the more valuable routes to supporting disengagement (Abuza 2009). It is important to understand this approach in the context of the groups the prisoners had been part of. In Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Saudi Arabia, family support was, in part, a response to concerns that the prisoner's families would turn to militant groups for financial support whilst their family member was in prison. To discourage this, governments helped the families, trying to prevent dependence on the organisation they were encouraging the prisoner to leave. Aside from this, families were encouraged to help with the prisoner's rehabilitation, in some cases eliciting their support to persuade their family member to relinquish group membership. On a practical level, support for families of detainees replaces individuals' or their family's reliance on militant non-state actors, reducing the possibility they will return to them for support. It also aims to develop an alternative set of allegiances, redirecting existing commitments towards the state and away from militant networks. In this way, state support for families reflects a wider effort to integrate the entire family into a more mainstream set of social structures through material incentives.

Training, education and employment are not as consistent features of disengagement programmes as family support and ideological instruction, but are offered by some states. In some cases – notably Yemen – government jobs were used as an incentive, and as a mechanism to continue monitoring. Money was also used to motivate change in some states, for example Malaysia and Egypt, where the individual renouncing political violence was provided with material support. Financial provision and help with education and employment act both as an incentive to disengage from violence and as a route into a more adaptive set of social roles. Through this, the aim appears to be to embed individuals into mainstream society, providing ways for them to feel part of a wider social system and offering the promise of a more positive future. One of the challenges explored in more detail later in this book is that of the particular stigma terrorism offences attract, often making it difficult for those convicted of politically motivated crimes to reintegrate into wider economic and educational systems. The result, as one of Clare Dwyer's (2013) interviewees in the Northern Ireland context put it, is that 'they might as well be walking around the inside of a biscuit tin' (p. 17), given the barriers to employment they face.

Finally, social and psychological support was provided, although by fewer of the programmes. One of the main examples is Saudi Arabia, where a social and psychological committee oversees prisoner rehabilitation, providing support where necessary. The relationship between the prisoners and those working with them was considered central to a number of the initiative's successes. In Saudi Arabia, the counselling programme is described as: 'based upon a presumption of benevolence, and not vengeance or retribution' characterised by a cooperative communication style (Boucek 2009, p. 216). In Denmark and the Netherlands, mentors – or 'intervention coaches' as they're described in the Dutch context – are a central part of the exit process for those who have been involved in militancy (Agerschou 2014). In Singapore, detainees are assigned a psychologist and a religious counsellor to support them. Such cooperative models are not universal, however, and some have been accused of using torture and solitary confinement to coerce prisoners into changing their views (Abuza 2009). Similarly, the fact that many programmes are prison based and release is often conditional on the individual expressing a commitment to change means the process is coercive by its very nature. Despite this, by developing relationships with prisoners, there is an assumption that change agents are able to exert a positive influence based on personal commitments of, if not always friendship, then mutual respect. In doing so, the intention seems to be to support change through the persuasion rooted in interpersonal relationships (Braddock 2014), and inform relational change. By developing more adaptive social ties and through modelling prosocial relationships, individuals are introduced into a more positive social network, facilitating greater synergy between the individuals, wider social norms and their attendant relations.

A call has been made to conceptualise these programmes as 'risk reduction' initiatives rather than deradicalisation efforts (Horgan and Braddock 2010). This has the advantage of more clearly specifying the aims and intended outcomes of interventions with those involved in extremism. However, it remains important to keep in mind the complex ways risk factors interact in the context of individual lives. One of the problems of focusing exclusively on indicators of risk is the tendency to neglect the wider ecology within which people live and the 'multifaceted and contextualised' way internal and external factors interact to inform whether and how someone re-engages in crime (McNeill and Weaver 2010, p. 24).

Taking account of what the various features of disengagement programmes imply about how the individual's relationship to wider society needs to change, they suggest that rather than trying to identify discrete 'push' and 'pull' factors, or indeed, specific risk measures, a more holistic approach to interpreting reintegration might be beneficial. This is not only because of how the list of factors identified as relevant to disengagement in the literature break down what are complex, dynamic and emergent processes, but also because it points the way towards a somewhat different way of interpreting the deradicalisation process. It suggests an approach that tries to identify and interpret shifting levels of reintegration across different social structures, rather than attempting to identify the likelihood of further violence in relation to discrete measures of risk. These ideas are developed further in the next chapter, but in brief, it seems more productive to take a holistic view of individuals and their relational commitments to social structures such as family, community and the norms of wider society instead of trying to dissect an individual's behaviour, background, relationships and ideological commitments, as risk assessment measures attempt to do. The approach developed in this book interprets individuals in their social contexts, taking account of the complex ways ideas, attitudes, relationships and events interact to inform behaviour, to offer an alternative way of interpreting the disengagement process.

Investigating Deradicalisation and Reintegration

The ideas set out in this book rest on several years of research learning from community-based and statutory organisations involved in work with those considered 'at risk' of involvement in violent extremism, and those who have been convicted for terrorism offences in the UK. The book draws on several periods of fieldwork between 2007, when the UK Prevent policy was just getting off the ground, and 2016. More specifically, the research relies on 33 semi-structured interviews with representatives of community-based organisations and members of the police, local councils and, in particular, the probation services, primarily in London and surrounding areas.[3] There was also significant contact with the Extremism and Hate Crime Unit, a small group of probation officers based in London who oversee the management of all those convicted of terrorism offences, and those considered 'at risk', in London and the South East of England. Because of the geographical concentration of those convicted of terrorism

offences in London – 70 per cent of those convicted of terrorism offences in England and Wales fall within their remit (Jones 2015) – they have developed significant expertise in this area.

Within probation services, I spoke with a number of Offender Managers whose role is to supervise and work closely with individuals on release from prison. Four Senior Probation Officers were also interviewed. While some of these individuals were involved in case management, they took a more strategic role, overseeing the work with those convicted of terrorism offences in the community. Alongside this, I interviewed all of those community-based groups working with probation in London whose role was to mentor and support former prisoners convicted of terrorism offences in the community. These groups were often also involved in work with those 'at risk' of involvement in extremism. As a result, their insights tend to refer both to former prisoners and those who have not been convicted. It's important to note that funding for the community groups has been cut significantly in the last few years. Some of the groups interviewed for this research did not survive this reduction in funding, which meant probation services have worked less extensively with community-based groups in recent years. To preserve the anonymity of interviewees, while indicating the organisational perspective they are speaking from, participants are referred to using codes: Offender Manager (LPOM), Senior Probation Officer (SPO) and Community Group (CG).

Additional fieldwork involved several periods of nonparticipatory observation of the work of both statutory and community-based groups, which in turn informed dozens of informal conversations with practitioners, local community members, academics and educators. Included in this were interviews with a number of beneficiaries of the community-based programmes, although not those who had been convicted of terrorism offences. The research was also informed by access to organisational documentation from both community-based groups as well as statutory agencies, including training resources, monitoring documentation, intervention programmes and internal reports. As such, what follows develops an account that focuses most clearly on practitioners' perspectives, rather than the experience of former prisoners. It is therefore a more clearly practice-oriented account than one that looks in depth at the experience of those who have been involved in illegal activism. Developing insights based on direct access to former prisoners remains an important part of moving the research agenda forward. Importantly, the vast majority of

cases being managed by probation services are related to militant Islamism. As such, this book is focused on how best to support this particular population in the community. It remains important to look across different ideological motivations to understand whether and how these commitments inform the reintegration process.

Although progress is being made, as this brief review demonstrates, the development of the field is hampered not only by access to empirical data, but also by limited conceptual tools. Nevertheless, there is a growing literature in this area, and increasing numbers of empirically informed studies are emerging, reflecting the growing attention being paid to how people move away from violent politics. In building on this valuable work, it is important to acknowledge the complex range of factors implicated in successful disengagement, moving beyond poorly defined concepts such as deradicalisation and broad categories of push and pull factors. Underpinning this effort should be greater focus on developing an understanding of reintegration in ways that situate individuals in their personal, social and political context.

In the chapters that follow, the intention is to develop the field in three directions. First, by setting out the conclusions of several years of research with those engaged with people convicted of terrorism offences, and those considered 'at risk', I hope to deepen the empirical knowledge base about such interventions, developing an account of what effective practice looks like. Second, by interpreting this work in the context of two contrasting criminological theories concerned with interpreting the move away from offending, the intention is to provide a more robust set of conceptual and theoretical tools by which to interpret the disengagement process, bringing into relief the problems facing existing accounts of deradicalisation. And finally, by developing the empirical and theoretical knowledge base, an alternative way of interpreting the processes implicated in disengagement from radical subcultures is suggested, focusing on the goods people seek to achieve through involvement in illegal activism, and how this can inform the reintegration process.

Notes

1. These include: Terrorism Act, 2000; Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001; Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005; Terrorism Act 2006; Counter-terrorism Act 2008; and Counter-Terrorism and Extremism Act 2015.

2. Review based on: Horgan and Braddock 2010; Ashour 2009; Abuza 2009; Barrett and Bokhari 2009; Noricks 2009; UN Working Group on Radicalisation 2008; Gunaratna and Mohamed 2009; Horgan 2009; Silke 2014; Soufan Group 2013; Neumann 2010; Zeiger and Aly 2015; El-Said 2015.
3. Most of the interviews were carried out by me. Three were conducted by Prof. Louise Ryan of Middlesex University. I am very grateful to Prof. Ryan and to Prof. Joanna Adler, who was also involved in the research that underpinned those interviews, for the permission to use them to inform this account of extremist reintegration.

CHAPTER 2

Reducing Risk and Encouraging Desistance

Abstract This chapter considers how the UK's counterterrorism policy, known as CONTEST, has tried to prevent terrorism, with a focus on the probation service's work and that of their community partners. Included here is a discussion of the aims of work with former prisoners. As intervention efforts with former terrorism offenders are in their infancy, reliable measures of appropriate aims and methods have yet to emerge. Developed from extensive interviews with practitioners, this chapter presents a framework for understanding what might constitute a successful outcome. Interpreting this framework using the wider literature on desistance from crime, three themes relevant to interpreting what success might 'look like' with this group are suggested: supporting reintegration, developing resilience and redirection of the motivation to commit terrorist offences.

Keywords CONTEST · Counterterrorism · Prevent · Desistance · Probation

Responding to the perceived need for community-based support for those 'at risk' of involvement in terrorism, and those who have been convicted of terrorism offences, the UK government has provided support for both statutory and third-sector organisations as part of the Prevent element of the UK's counterterrorism policy, CONTEST. This chapter considers CONTEST's role with a focus on the probation service's work and that

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of their community partners. Included in this is a discussion of the aims of work with former prisoners. As intervention efforts with former terrorism offenders are in their infancy, reliable measures of appropriate aims and methods have yet to emerge (Horgan and Braddock 2010). Developed from extensive interviews with practitioners, this chapter presents a framework for understanding what might constitute a successful outcome.[1] Representing one of the first empirically derived approaches to interpreting appropriate outcomes in this field, the chapter explores some of the complex and at times conflicting aims represented in the model by drawing on criminological theory. Developing some of the arguments in the wider literature relevant to terrorism offences, I suggest a reframing of how the disengagement and reintegration process might be understood. Through interpreting the framework of goals in the context of the wider literature on desistance from crime, three themes relevant to interpreting what success might 'look like' with this group are suggested: supporting *reintegration*, developing *resilience* and *redirection* of the motivation to commit terrorist offences.

Preventing Extremism

Most recently revised in 2011, CONTEST was launched in 2003 as a 'multi-dimensional counter-terrorism strategy'. The policy aims to take a comprehensive approach to countering terrorism, and is organised around four streams: to *Prevent* people becoming terrorists; *Pursue* those who wish to carry out attacks; *Protect* against attacks; and *Prepare* to mitigate the impact of an attack if it were to take place (Home office 2011). As part of the Prevent strand, a range of agencies are involved in trying to reduce support for terrorism, including amongst prisoners and probationers. The probation services are one of the bodies involved in this work, delivering 'counter' and 'deradicalisation' interventions both in the community and in prison.

Just as with other offenders, the primary mechanism by which interventions are organised is through the allocation of an OM who oversees and supports their resettlement in the community. To inform this work in London, a dedicated Extremism and Hate Crime Unit co-works cases, providing support to the OM and the probationer, trying to ensure supervision is consistent across the organisation and employs best practice. A further important tool in supervising former prisoners is Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). MAPPA bring

together various partner agencies with the aim of managing serious offenders under a MAPPA Responsible Authority (Ministry of Justice 2012). Through interagency cooperation, the aim is to maximise the effectiveness of risk assessments, ensure effective information sharing practices are in place and direct resources in ways that enhance public protection.

For those convicted of terrorism offences, and those considered 'of concern' or 'vulnerable' to extremist messages, an additional tier of interventions has been developed. Again assisted by the Extremism and Hate Crime Unit, OMs employ two additional mechanisms by which to support the probationer's resettlement: community mentors, and tailored interventions used during supervision to work on specific issues relevant to terrorism offences. These include the risk assessment measure ERG22+, Al Furqhan, a programme challenging religion-justified violence, and two related Healthy Identity Interventions (HII), the Foundation and Plus programmes. All have been specifically designed to support those convicted of extremist offences (Dean 2014). Both HII are rooted in the belief that identity is the central construct around which extremist offending pivots. As such, they aim to provide a setting where the individual can:

> reflect on who they are and where they are going with their lives [encouraging] them to reconsider whether the commitments they have made to an extremist group, cause or ideology really allow them to 'get on in life', meet their personal needs and allows them to be the type of person they want to be. (National Offender Manager Service 2013, p. 3)

The HII intervention is made up of a series of sessions selected for the individual, roughly organised around three themes. The first looks at *engagement and insight*, exploring various aspects of the individual's needs and values; the second concentrates on *mindfulness*, aiming to develop strategies to support individuals when they experience challenging feelings; while the third, *moving on*, addresses how the individual can take steps towards embarking on a more positive future (Dean 2014).

It is important to add that in HII interventions, mentors are used where the OM believes it would be valuable to have additional support. These are not mandatory and probationers who do not wish to work with a mentor are under no obligation to do so. The rationale for bringing in external mentors is rooted in the ideological, cultural and political nature

of the offence. Mentors are considered to be able to understand better those sociocultural factors relevant to the individual's experience, and have a clearer appreciation of the political grievances expressed by many of the probationers than statutory agencies (Jones 2015). Indeed, in many cases, they are able to demonstrate a commitment to those same concerns but without supporting violence. Although mentors work in different ways with the probationers, the various groups shared a commitment to taking an individualised, holistic approach to explore personal, social, cultural and religious issues, providing community-based support for individuals as they moved through the resettlement process (Marsden 2015; Spalek and Davies 2012). Importantly, this takes individuals on their own terms and does not assume that questions of ideology or theology are of primary concern. A participant in another study on mentoring those involved with militant Islamism commented on this:

> This isn't just about quoting lines from a particular holy book or a particular tradition, it's about understanding the individual you're faced with, and what that individual may have gone through may be far more complicated than actually a theological argument. Theology might be a very small part of it. Theology might be just a way of that individual expressing other issues that may have happened in their lives. (Spalek and Davies 2012, p. 357)

Together, these interventions reflect a number of years learning in the UK about what best supports those convicted of terrorism offences, or those considered 'of concern'. Efforts have been made to use an empirical foundation for developing interventions and, in contrast to earlier incarnations of Prevent initiatives, increased attention is being paid to ongoing evaluation and review (Dean 2012). However, in common with many initiatives to emerge from the Prevent stable (Dawson 2015), there remains much to learn about the impact of these interventions (Wilkinson 2014). In part, this is because their effectiveness needs to be understood over a relatively long period of time. Alongside this, more subtle challenges face efforts at evaluation. As an OM who worked in the Extremism and Hate Crime Unit points out:

> due to the fact that extremist-related offending, and the interventions used to address it, can both touch on things that are deep and sensitive

> expressions of an individual's identity – at the end of the licence it is not really a matter of 'case closed' or someone being 'fixed' by the criminal justice system, and personally I believe we need to be cautious before highlighting cases as successes for that reason. (Jones 2015, p. 180)

A further challenge lies in demonstrating that an individual has been prevented from engaging in illegal activism as a result of a specific intervention. Probationers spend only short periods of time in official programmes. This makes understanding the role of their wider ecology vital when interpreting what actually supports the move away from extremism. Further underpinning these challenges is the problem of determining appropriate measures of success and failure. Beyond the obvious stipulation that there should be no further incidence of extremist offending, what does success look like? What, if addressed, is likely to reduce the risk of reoffending? And what indicators might be relevant to determining whether an individual is likely to re-engage? This is an acute problem, as without a clear idea of what a programme is trying to achieve, it is very difficult to determine how effective it is, as Horgan and Braddock argued:

> Thus far, however, it has been practically impossible to ascertain what is implied by or expected from programs that claim to be able to de-radicalize terrorists. No such program has formally identified valid and reliable indicators of successful de-radicalization or even disengagement, whether couched in cultural, psychological, or other terms. Consequently, any attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of any such program is beset with a myriad of challenges that are as much conceptual as they are practical. (2010, p. 268)

It is not just a problem for academics, as practitioners are also facing a similar challenge in determining what might reflect an adequate reduction in risk. As one practitioner puts it:

> [Is] stepping somebody back from violent extremism to extremism – is that enough? Do you want them just not offending, is that enough? Do you want them to convert to become a Catholic? How far back do you want to go, how far is enough? [SPO2]

Conceptualising Aims

Europe's long history of political violence means that efforts to support disengagement from violent activism are not new (De Vito 2014). However, most historical efforts focused on behavioural change – or disengagement – in contrast to more contemporary efforts concentrating on inducing cognitive change: 'deradicalisation' (Silke 2011). Together, this means knowledge about what informs change is empirically weak and largely atheoretical (Altier et al. 2014). Similarly, valid and reliable measures of effectiveness remain elusive (Horgan and Braddock 2010). Even the most basic data on recidivism is not collated systematically (Veldhuis and Kessels 2013), which makes understanding the impact of any intervention difficult.

Even where efforts to evaluate outcomes have been approached thoughtfully, they have faced challenges. In a study examining the work of Dutch reintegration efforts, Schuurman and Bakker (2016) found it difficult to assess outcomes, in particular, because of the lack of a control group, the ongoing nature of the initiative they were examining and the need for extensive follow-up and monitoring. There was also a small sample size of only five individuals. While such challenges face efforts to understand the outcomes of non-politically motivated offenders, they are more acute with those convicted of terrorism offences (Demant et al. 2008; Dobash et al. 1999; McGuire 2010). For example, without reliable recidivism rates for this population, it is difficult to determine whether the fact that two of the five clients left for Syria reflects a success or failure. Similarly, in the absence of clearer outcome measures, the primary way of interpreting the work's impact was through practitioner perceptions of effectiveness, for example, whether they either claimed violence was justified or abided by the conditions of their parole. While valuable, these do not offer a systematic way to interpret outcomes.

There are, therefore, gaps in our knowledge about what motivates individuals to move away from radical activism, and what informs that process. The lack of a theoretical framework within which to position such initiatives and their assessment is also a stumbling block. Further, understanding the relationship between an intervention and the wider social, cultural and personal context in which the individual is situated is not well developed. More fundamentally, the measures by which we might understand progress and regress and what supports successful reintegration have been poorly conceptualised.

In an effort to develop a more robust set of measures by which to interpret outcomes, Horgan and Braddock (2010) proposed Multi-Attribute Utility Technology (MAUT). This was designed to frame evaluations of social programmes when quantitative data are difficult to access (Edwards and Newman 1982). It begins by developing an understanding, from practitioners, as to what the programme is aiming to achieve, breaking down the intervention into its constituent parts, enabling a finer grained assessment of outcomes. It has proven to be a valuable way of interpreting probation's work with former offenders. Through interviews with OMs, members of the Extremism and Hate Crime Unit and community-based mentors, I used MAUT to develop a set of measures reflecting practitioners' understanding of their work and what it was trying to achieve. Illustrated in Fig. 2.1, the result was a 13-measure framework grouped into two closely linked themes: public protection and reducing the risk of reoffending/encouraging desistance.[2]

The first theme of public protection encompasses three of the main mechanisms by which probationers are managed in the community: working with MAPPA, addressing problems through recall to prison or a warning, and attending and complying with the supervision process. Reflecting the inner boundary of what is acceptable in this area, these three measures focus on compliance and monitoring. The second theme of reducing the risk of reoffending and encouraging desistance is concerned with more positive rehabilitative goals, including probationers' attitudes to the supervision process and their OM. Personal attributes such as critical thinking, religious understanding, training and employment feature here, as well as outcomes related to wider social relations, including relationships with family members and the nature of their peer groups. Offence-specific issues address questions of denial and minimisation and coming to reject the legitimacy of violence in relation to grievance. Finally, the question of personal and social identity was recognised as important in successful reintegration. Here, work is aimed at broadening what was often described as a narrow, blinkered identity related to their former group, and to develop a more balanced, complex sense of self.

The second theme incorporates both reducing the risk of reoffending and encouraging desistance. These reflect somewhat different theoretical schools of thought about how best to support successful resettlement. They are explored more in the next section, but briefly, risk reduction efforts focus on trying to address criminogenic needs – those deficits and

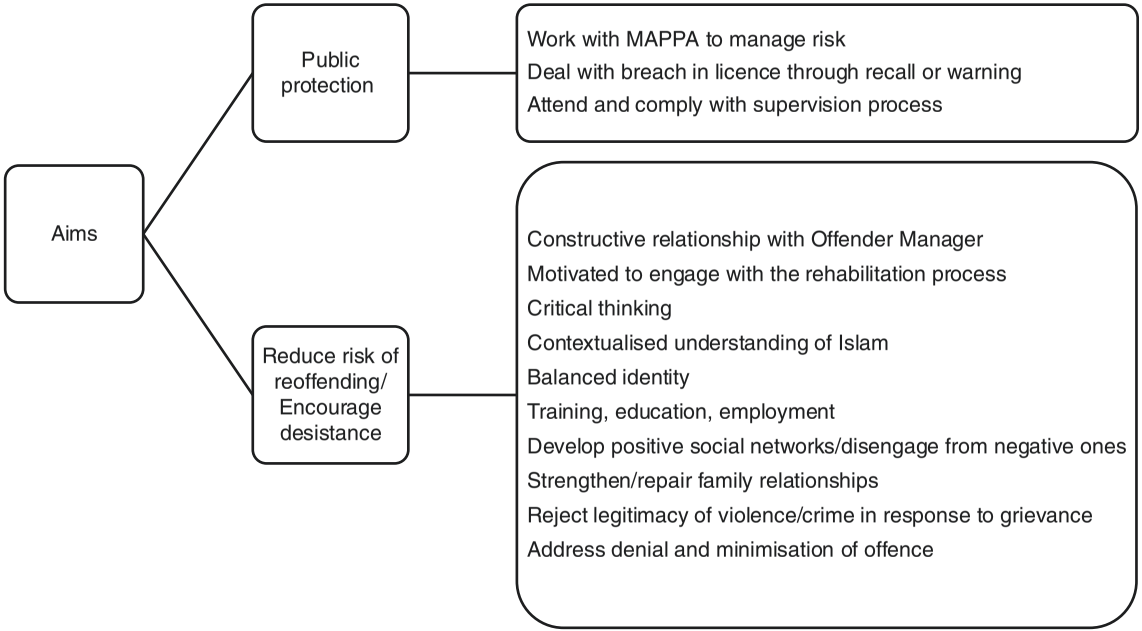

Fig. 2.1 A framework for understanding the aims of work with those convicted of terrorism offences

individual needs empirically linked to reoffending. Desistance-based approaches concentrate on developing personal strengths in ways that allow the individual to move towards a more positive future. Here, criminogenic needs are seen as obstacles that get in the way of individuals achieving their potential rather than as personal deficits. Although tensions remain between what have historically been antagonistic approaches, increasingly, the two models are being combined, including in terrorism cases (Dean 2014).

Although one of only a few empirically derived efforts to interpret appropriate outcomes, a number of challenges face this framework, both practical and conceptual. First, a number of these measures conflict. These tensions are reflected most clearly in the distinction between rehabilitative goals, such as finding education, employment or developing more prosocial networks, and those outcomes that reflect the control and monitoring element of work in this area. For example, the fact that most of those on probation face restrictions on their use of computers makes it difficult to gain employment or engage in education, despite the importance of encouraging the individual to re-enter the labour market. There are also wider impacts. Other electronic goods such as games consoles are frequently removed from the family home while the individual is on licence, having a knock-on effect on family relations. It also remains to be seen whether these factors are reflected in long-term desistance from ideologically motivated offending. Determining this will demand empirical testing and long-term monitoring. Finally and more conceptually, there is no clear account of motivation, and little theoretical heft to what is primarily a practice-based account of a range of factors believed to be relevant to supporting reintegration.

To contextualise the challenges facing this framework in relation to existing accounts of 'deradicalisation', the next section considers the wider literature theorising disengagement and reintegration processes. Drawing on the criminological literature informs an account of why and how the tensions within the framework emerge, and suggests a reframing of how to approach the reintegration process.

Theorising Reintegration

To help interpret the outcomes framework and explore the potential value of existing research about how and why people stop offending, what follows considers existing theoretical accounts of the disengagement process in the

literature on terrorism and political violence. Looking more carefully at the criminological literature, I draw on two approaches, commonly referred to as 'what works' and 'what helps' (Ward and Maruna 2007). Interpreting reintegration within these two approaches, I examine how the 'risk'-based (what works) and 'strengths'-based (what helps) models inform the framework for conceptualising goals with those convicted of terrorism offences, looking at the synergies and tension between them.

In the first chapter, we saw how existing accounts of what informs the reintegration process has established a set of categories – most commonly described as push and pull factors – describing what might influence the disengagement process. While valuable, these interpretations are perhaps less able to explain what underpins the move away from violence: How is motivation conceptualised? How might psychological and sociological change be interpreted? And by what mechanisms do social relations and change agents support or undermine positive change? These questions are difficult to answer, not only at the programme level, but also comparatively, in part because of the lack of data, and also because of the limited theorisation of the processes implicated in 'deradicalisation'. Indeed, the dearth of theoretical accounts in this area reflects not only the relative novelty of the field, but also the difficulty of theorising a complex, dynamic and heterogeneous process that implies internal change, shifts in social relations and a series of, sometimes simultaneous, coercive and aspirational goals.

'Deradicalisation' and Disengagement

Efforts to conceptualise the study of 'deradicalisation', in an attempt to develop more robust explanations for how and why people leave violent groups, are in their early stages. The few attempts to explore these processes theoretically have either tried, inductively, to develop a theoretical model of the reintegration process (e.g. Barrelle 2015), or attempted to apply wider social theories (e.g. Williams and Lindsey 2014). Applying theory from other fields has obvious advantages. Better established theories are likely to have stronger empirical foundations, allowing the assumptions that underpin both research and practice-based accounts to be made more explicit. However, the extent to which theories developed in other areas is valid for politically motivated offending remains to be seen.

Recent work has begun to apply existing theory to interpret quite specific mechanisms implicated in reintegration initiatives; for example,

Michael Williams and Samuel Lindsey (2014) use social psychological theory to interpret disengagement processes. Applying identity theory and frame alignment theory to the Saudi rehabilitation initiative, they find mixed theoretical support for the likely effectiveness of the programme's various stages. Rather than applying existing theory, Froukje Demant and colleagues (Demant et al. 2008) developed a theoretical framework inductively, using data from a comparative account of disengagement across different movements, exploring the implications for Islamist militancy. Based on voluntary disengagement from a number of different settings, including squatters, the extreme right and Moluccan radicals, Demant et al. highlight the importance of two axes of factors. First, the nature of the crisis individuals experience, understood in terms of a decline in normative, affective or continuance commitment, and second, the factors informing their 'deradicalisation', be they ideological disillusionment, doubts about the organisation and its activities, or practical issues, such as the desire to lead a 'normal' life.

Demant et al.'s account remains a valuable and empirically informed interpretation of the disengagement process. To develop it further, it seems necessary to account more fundamentally for why and how these issues become salient. When does a failing strategy, for example, become sufficiently significant that it motivates disengagement? Violent movements rarely succeed (Marsden 2012), so when and how does this realisation become relevant to interpreting the decision to leave? How should we interpret what Demant et al. describe as a 'changing *Zeitgeist*' in the reduced appeal of a movement? And what are the most useful ways of interpreting motivations for involvement and disengagement from radical settings? To develop an understanding of disengagement processes, it seems necessary to try and interpret more fundamentally what people gain from involvement in illegal activism and how those same motivations might be influential in determining why people disengage from radical subcultures. Criminological theory offers alternative models for interpreting causes of offending that can help shed light on the processes associated with disengaging from radical settings.

Risk-Based and Strengths-Based Approaches

Calls for greater appreciation of the value of criminological theory have been made for a number of years, and there is a small but growing literature at the intersection of criminology and research on political

violence (Altier et al. 2014). One area identified as having particular value in the area of violent extremism is that of desistance (LaFree and Miller 2008; Dwyer 2012; Lynch 2015). Desistance, or the process by which a former offender sustains a crime-free life, focuses less on a point of termination, but instead tries to explain continuity and the process by which someone sustains non-deviant behaviour (Maruna 2001). Studying desistance is therefore about understanding how, given the range of reasons someone may re-engage in crime – politically motivated or otherwise – they do not. The focus is on questions about *how* someone continues to desist, rather than *why* they stopped offending (Maruna 2001).

However, desistance or what is sometimes known as the 'what helps' approach to reducing recidivism is by no means the dominant approach in the criminal justice system. Far more common is the 'what works' paradigm. These approaches have crystallised in two models of practice: the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) approach, which is much better established (Andrews and Bonta 2003); and the newer Good Lives Model (GLM) (Ward and Brown 2004). The primary distinction between them is whether emphasis should rest on reducing the risk of reoffending by addressing criminogenic needs related to recidivism ('what works', operationalised through the RNR), or increasing the capacity of the individual offender to desist from crime by developing internal strengths ('what helps', applied through the GLM) (Polaschek 2010). Based on empirical evidence about what reduces the risk of recidivism, three assumptions informed the development and implementation of the RNR framework:

- Interventions should be based on the risk individuals pose, such that those considered high risk should have the most intensive treatment – the *risk* principle;
- Interventions should target dynamic risk factors, or criminogenic needs, which are empirically linked to offending – the *need* principle;
- Interventions should be matched to individuals' characteristics and be consistent with their ability, motivation, learning style etc. – the *responsivity* principle.

If interventions incorporate all three principles, reoffending rates seem to reduce significantly. Without RNR-based interventions, recidivism rates are around 55 per cent compared to 45 per cent for those who

take part in programmes (McGuire 2010). However, the RNR model has also faced criticism, specifically for its negative approach, focusing heavily on individuals' deficits rather than their competencies (Ward and Maruna 2007). It also implies a lack of agency on their part, and pays insufficient attention to the role of identity in rehabilitation, including the importance of developing a non-offending identity for sustaining a crime-free life. RNR approaches also underestimate the importance of the contextualised, embedded nature of people's lives, focusing too heavily on particular risk profiles – at its worst, treating people as a 'bundle of risks' – rather than understanding the individual in the wider context within which reintegration occurs. As a consequence, by focusing on risk, interventions are considered less attractive to prisoners, neglecting issues of personal motivation (McNeill and Weaver 2010). Thus, while risk-based approaches have significant advantages and sound empirical support, their focus on reducing risk has been criticised for failing to offer a route to attaining basic human needs.

There are further challenges facing the RNR approach in relation to politically motivated offenders. In particular, there is very little concrete evidence on which to draw as the dynamic risk factors associated with terrorism offending have only recently begun to be explored (Pressman and Flockton 2014). Given terrorism's high risk and high profile nature, this lack of knowledge has the effect of increasing the level of risk an individual is considered to pose, resulting in a more risk-averse approach to case management. Given the need to balance the goals of public protection, rehabilitation and reducing reoffending, front-line staff therefore have to juggle complex aims.

The GLM augments the RNR model, addressing some of the challenges it faces. Based on a more positive account of rehabilitation, the strengths-based model reflected in the GLM sees desistance from crime, rather than reducing recidivism, as a more appropriate focus (Bushway et al. 2004). It attempts to move beyond knowing '*what* works', to understanding *how* and *why* intervention operates to promote change (Maruna et al. 2004). Strengths-based approaches locate individuals in their social context. Given the limited amount of time a person is engaged with any particular intervention, they take account of the wider social setting and its sometimes neglected role in supporting or undermining desistance (Maruna et al. 2004). As such, strengths-based accounts call for a greater emphasis on the individual's wider ecology, focusing on

personal motivation, and concentrating on developing strengths rather than exclusively controlling risk.

Looking more carefully at the GLM, its founding principle is that people pursue a range of primary human goods (Ward 2002). Rooted in concepts of human dignity and human rights, it places greatest emphasis on our ability to identify goals, develop means of achieving them and ultimately have the freedom to pursue those goals. Underpinning this process is the assumption that people value and are motivated to achieve particular states and experiences that the GLM conceptualises as primary goods. Eleven human needs or 'goods' inform the GLM framework: healthy living, knowledge, excellence in work and play, excellence in agency including autonomy, power and self-management, inner peace, relatedness in the context of close relationships, and in a broader sense of community relatedness, spirituality, pleasure and creativity (Purvis 2010).[3] Rather than focusing on an individual's deficits, the GLM starts from the premise that there should be an attempt to develop an individual's strengths.

Interventions should therefore focus on first identifying individuals' goals, and work to develop their strengths so they are able to realise primary goods in pursuit of lasting desistance from crime. It is founded in the 'pursuit of a better life; ways of living that are constructed around core values, and concrete means of realising their goals in certain environments' (Ward and Maruna 2007, p. 24).

Primary goods are therefore the objects of individual and collective striving, and secondary or instrumental goods are those approach goals which facilitate the achievement of primary goods. For example, the primary good of relatedness may be achieved through different approach goals, either prosocially through close familial relationships or maladaptively through membership of a negative peer group, such as a criminal gang. Breaking the law therefore represents a flawed method of achieving primary goods, reflected not in those goods, but by the means through which they are attained. Here, criminogenic needs – those factors conceptualised in the risk-based model as factors that increase the risk of reoffending – are understood as impediments to achieving primary goods in prosocial ways, or are secondary goods in themselves (Ward and Maruna 2007; Laws and Ward 2011; Ward 2002). Offending therefore results from maladaptive ways of attaining primary goods, while interventions aim to support individuals as they find prosocial ways of doing the same.

Applying Criminological Theory to Extremism

There are, inevitably, a number of challenges facing the GLM and approaches rooted in the desistance framework when applied to terrorism offending. For one, they perhaps overstate the universality of human needs and the differing notions a 'good life' may have in different contexts. It is also the case that some goods may well be achieved by resorting to crime (McNeill 2009). Both these issues reflect the subjective and contested nature of illegal activism. Efforts to instigate political change are informed by the desire to bring into being a subjectively defined better future determined by a wider ideological framework. Ideology shapes what form that future should take and how it might be achieved and what values are important in committing to pursuing it. From the subjective position of someone involved in a radical movement, goods are commonly achieved by breaking the law. Supporting disengagement therefore involved developing a commitment to pursuing primary goods in the context of the wider ideological structure that is reflected in contemporary British society rather than global jihadism.

A further challenge is reflected in the expansion of criminal justice and security responses to terrorism and the lack of legitimacy these norms have, not only with those persuaded by radical ideas, but in some cases by many others in British society. These issues make the crime and the state's response to it inherently contested. In essence, much more ground needs to be covered with those committed to alternative political systems. This is because the distance between the opinions held by those committed to radical ideas and those reflected in society is greater than for those involved with 'ordinary' crime. To close this gap, it is necessary to explore the primary goods relevant to the individual, and the secondary goods, or approach goals they have used to pursue them and find ways of reconciling the two in prosocial ways.

The GLM's potential neglect of those structural factors relevant to interpreting individuals' experiences and their role in offending is also potentially problematic. For example, those issues often cited as 'root causes' of terrorism such as discrimination, experiences of disenfranchisement, the behaviour of repressive states and so on are largely overlooked in the effort to support an individual achieving a 'good life' as defined in a particular sociopolitical context. Similarly, whether broad labels such as 'excellence in agency' can adequately capture the complex nature of reintegrative experiences is open for question.

A potential challenge raised by Horgan regarding the utility of the desistance framework to terrorism is the extent to which the idea of desisting, or refraining from offending, can adequately reflect the agency typically associated with involvement in political violence (Horgan 2009). However, this problem might not be quite as acute as it first appears. Shadd Maruna (2001) makes a strong case that desistance is indeed an agentic process, one by which individuals are engaged in an ongoing process of negotiating their decision not to reoffend in the wider context of their lives. Rather than signifying a loss of control, both the processes of involvement and disengagement reflect choices made by agents in the context of a range of external factors, not least the social and economic consequences of offending. Described in a way that reflects the position of 'ordinary' and, I would argue, politically motivated prisoners, Maruna proposes:

> The bigger question [than *why* someone chooses to avoid crime] is *how* ex-offenders are able to make good in the face of widespread social stigma, limited career opportunities, and social exclusion. Abstaining from crime under these highly criminogenic circumstances requires some explanation. (Maruna 2001, p. 27, italics in original)

The question of agency and its role in desistance is usefully addressed by reflecting on the wider literature on involvement in terrorism, a striking feature of which is the dominance of process-based accounts. One process-based framework developed by John Horgan (2009), and extended by Horgan and Taylor (2011), interprets militancy as a process beginning with initial involvement, continuing engagement, disengagement, deradicalisation and finally the potential for re-engagement (Georgeon et al. 2010). In interpreting these processes, Horgan cautions about treating the phases as a straightforward process, suggesting that progression 'is not necessarily linear, not everyone experiences the same pathway, and . . . the disengaged terrorist may not necessarily be de-radicalised' (2009, p. 151). It is, as Horgan acknowledges, a broad account, and one which is explained in greater detail in a framework reflecting the 'psychological processes in the development of the terrorist' (Taylor and Horgan 2006). This model takes account of individual level factors, setting events relating to prior contextual experiences, and the wider social, political and organisational context. Perhaps the most comprehensive framework of the process of involvement in radical subcultures, by drawing on Hundeide's

concept of a Community of Practice, it offers a way of interpreting engagement and disengagement by framing how individuals become group members via a process of social learning, originally conceived through the idea of apprenticeship (Horgan 2009).

Horgan and Taylor's model is just one of a number of process models designed, however loosely, to conceptualise how people become engaged in violent extremism (e.g. see: Koehler 2015; Klausen et al. 2016). As Horgan argues, there has been a move from roots to routes, and profiles to pathways (Horgan 2008). Perhaps however, the emphasis on process-based approaches has neglected the discontinuities reflected in accounts of involvement in militancy. Of particular importance are critical incidents in the move towards and away from violence (Noricks 2009). The regularity with which accounts of involvement in militancy are punctuated by critical incidents that catalyse the move towards or away from militancy suggests that while an overall movement through a radical subculture might be adequately characterised as a process, once it is embedded in a particular setting, as Gilbert Ramsay (2012) has suggested, involvement might in some cases best be understood as an ongoing, stable state.

Ramsay (2012) makes the case with respect to internet jihadism that those engaged with jihadist discourses, most commonly in the context of online forums have, perhaps because of the material restrictions of the medium, contributed to a situation that sustains involvement in practices that do not necessarily facilitate the move to violence. More specifically, due to the inherent insecurity of the internet, populated as it is perceived to be by state security agencies involved in surveillance and subversion, it has become necessary to articulate, promote and justify a range of alternative, non-violent ways of contributing to the jihad. Such practices become invested with value and meaning which may actually serve to sustain involvement in non-violent practices, perhaps even protecting against violence.

It is not possible here to develop a full account of how a similar phenomenon may occur in the offline world, especially given the complex ways instrumental strategic objectives, ideological structures, social networks and socialisation processes inform the move to violence. Nevertheless, it remains instructive to consider the implications of Ramsay's argument – that 'jihadism' might be usefully characterised as a state for desistance from illegal activism, of which there appear to be four. The first is that it is possible to sustain commitment to a set of ideas that support radical action without ever actualising the violence on which it is

premised, making practices and the way they come to be valued, rather than ideas themselves, the most useful object when trying to support desistance. Second is the self-sustaining way particular practices linked to radical settings become invested with value, suggesting desistance may similarly be supported providing opportunities for legal ways of achieving similar outcomes are made available. Third, it is instructive to take account of the agency implicated in the process of negotiating a commitment to a set of ideas and practices both while individuals are embedded in radical subcultures and when they have left them. And fourth, greater attention should be paid to moments of rupture than has been the case to date. If jihadism, at least in some cases, can be usefully understood as one of stable engagement with a wider radical movement, then it is important to look in more detail at what happens when this experience is disrupted.

Looking more carefully at the state of involvement rather than the process of engagement draws attention to the agency associated with both remaining part of a movement, and being disengaged from one. Given the range of issues typically implicated in becoming involved with militant Islamist violence, from identity to political grievance and more, sustaining a non-interventionist stance in the face of those social, political, ideological and personal issues that remain unresolved seems likely to demand a highly agentic approach to the post-involvement experience. Rather than 'refraining' from radicalism, it is perhaps more appropriate to frame a former prisoner's experience as a process of sustaining a commitment not to re-engage and developing commitments to new practices and social settings. In this reading, the desistance paradigm seems particularly well suited, concerned as it is with the process of navigating the process of remaining disengaged from illegal behaviour. It therefore places human agency at the heart of its approach, accounting for both temporary and more sustained disengagement through the ideas of primary and secondary desistance.

The GLM's focus on strengths and personalised assessment, its ecological approach to the individual, as well as its coherence as an integrative framework for reintegration, supports the argument that it is an effective way of interpreting and structuring interventions, particularly if it is combined with risk-based approaches. Alongside these advantages, the GLM seems better able to reflect a growing recognition that involvement in illegal activism, including that of a violent kind, can be motivated by a subjective, constructed commitment to doing good, rather than a desire to inflict harm (Fiske and Rai 2015). Despite challenges, the GLM and the

broader desistance-based framework remains a useful set of conceptual tools to interpret disengagement from radical settings. The primacy given to questions of personal agency, the attention paid to interpreting reintegration in the context of an individual's relational, social, economic and cultural setting, and its greater intrinsic motivational appeal all speak to its potential for interpreting and supporting work with politically motivated former prisoners. Similarly, it has the advantage of de-exceptionalising a type of crime that is largely considered out of context, both of wider sociohistorical trends, and also out of the context of the individual's life. The image of the 'terrorist' separates and flattens out complex, contingent and embedded experiences and behaviour; the GLM seems able to resist this more than the existing emphasis on risk and threat.

Practitioners' work reflects the value of both approaches, and the probation officers' work with former prisoners convicted of terrorism offences straddles the 'what works' and 'what helps' paradigms (Dean 2014). Existing practice looks both to criminogenic needs such as education, employment and thinking skills, and speaks to the primary themes of desistance such as building resilience, pursuing human goods and working towards a positive future. Practitioners reflected the belief that change can be influenced by professional interventions, supporting personal agency and informal social networks (Maruna et al. 2004; Farrall 2002). To this end, the themes of relationships as a vehicle of change, developing agency and reintegration seem to distil the complex processes involved in encouraging desistance and reducing reoffending. Indeed, alongside theoretical interpretations of this work, practice-based knowledge rooted in the interpersonal relationship between the probationer and OM remains important.

Conclusion

To summarise, I have suggested that to interpret how and why people move away from radical activism, it is useful to first think about motivation more broadly and in relation to the pursuit of human goods. Second, it is important to contextualise efforts to pursue these goods in broader ideological systems, and third, to understand the move away from extremism as an agentic process of sustaining a commitment to not re-engage in radical activism in the face of the range of external and internal factors that might make this appear an attractive choice.

Interpreting these arguments in the context of a framework of goals described at the start of the chapter suggests a reframing of how to interpret 'deradicalisation' and disengagement. Looking more carefully at the indicators set out in the second part of the framework suggests the relevance of a particular series of goods. This includes pursuing excellence in the following areas: spirituality, by developing a more contextualised understanding of Islam; agency, by broadening out narrow conceptualisations of self-concept to incorporate a broader social identity; knowledge and work, through supporting education and employment opportunities, allied to deepening and broadening the object of critical thinking; and in relatedness, by strengthening and repairing family relationships and developing prosocial networks. These various measures inform the overall goal of developing the motivation to engage with the resettlement process. Framed as positive goals rather than addressing deficits and risks, such an approach seems likely to kindle personal motivation in a more meaningful and sustained way. Whether the offence was informed by a desire for close social ties, commitment to particular religious or ideological positions, or a wider community, this reading suggests we should concentrate on *redirecting* the initial motivation to offend, rather than necessarily trying to deconstruct it.

A number of ways an individual might sustain a commitment not to re-engage in radical activism are described in the framework of goals. The first is by developing a more sophisticated set of critical thinking skills in relation to the range of information used to inform and defend an individual's political and religious position. That is not to say those involved in radical activism are not critical in their thinking; there is likely to be a range of abilities in this regard. What they perhaps share is a narrow focus: critical faculties are only directed at opponents rather than towards the ideas and proofs they themselves cleave to. Developing a broader understanding of politics and religion seems likely to promote more positive futures in the same way that fostering critical thinking is likely to help in the workplace or in education. Together, these can usefully be conceptualised as mechanisms that support *resilience* in ways that help individuals pursue those human goods important to them in ways that do not violate the law.

Finally, a number of goals are also relevant to reinterpreting 'deradicalisation' as a process of *reintegration*. This speaks to the argument made above about competing frameworks determining how particular goods should be pursued. The challenge for those supporting reintegration is to develop a commitment not to undermine the framework of norms

reflected in contemporary British law. Developing a constructive relationship with probation staff is one way of supporting this process, by modelling adaptive interactions with agents of the state. Finding ways into education, employment and training, and developing positive relationships with family members and prosocial networks are all mechanisms by which the individual, by pursuing particular human goods, can reintegrate into wider social and economic systems. The reintegration process is also reflected on an intrapersonal level, in the way someone internalises a more complex social identity, whether that relates to their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, local area or community setting. Relatedly, developing a more contextualised understanding of Islam involves thinking through how to navigate religious commitment in a non-Muslim majority state, questions that are intimately related to how individuals relate to their social context. Finally, rejecting the legitimacy of violence and addressing denial and minimisation of the offence both speak to an ultimate acceptance of the laws governing acceptable behaviour in the UK. Together, these ideas support the importance of reintegration as an overarching framework by which to interpret and support those with a history of extremism.

Notes

1. A full account of the framework and the methodology used to develop it is set out in: Marsden, S. V. (2015). Conceptualising 'success' with those convicted of terrorism offences: Aims, methods and barriers to reintegration. *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*.
2. Details of the methodology used to support the development of the framework and a more detailed exposition of the model can be found in Marsden (2015).
3. See also: http://www.goodlivesmodel.com/information#General

CHAPTER 3

Supporting Agency and Facilitating Reintegration

Abstract Although a widely used concept, there are theoretical, conceptual and empirical problems embedded within the 'deradicalisation' construct. One of these problems is the risk that it strips the individual of agency and implies that things are 'being done' to passive, weak-minded recipients, thus prioritising the effort to change attitudes and beliefs. This chapter examines how statutory and community-based organisations addressed the question of 'deradicalisation', finding success by focusing on developing individual agency and facilitating reintegration, rather than a concerted effort to force internal change. Discussion draws attention to the two-way notion of reintegration, that is, the need for both society and the individual to play a role in producing successful outcomes.

Keywords Reintegration · Deradicalisation · Community · Agency

> The problem with [terrorism] offenders is to integrate people into a community; to bolster the community so they feel confident enough to say they may be a risk in the community but that they will accept them. Also to make people understand why being part of a community is a positive way forward. (SPO)

Much of the research on efforts to support the move away from violent contention draws on the notion of 'deradicalisation'. Although once considered to have significant promise as a counterterrorism tool

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(Ripley 2008), as discussed in Chap. 1, there are theoretical, conceptual and empirical problems embedded within the 'deradicalisation' construct. One of these problems is the risk that it strips the individual of agency and implies that things are 'being done' to passive, weak-minded recipients, thus prioritising the effort to change attitudes and beliefs. This chapter examines how statutory and community-based organisations addressed the question of 'deradicalisation', finding success with far greater focus on developing agency and facilitating reintegration than any concerted efforts to force internal change. Further, it is important to take account of individuals' wider social context and provide ways of repairing the often troubled relationship between themselves and the society they are re-entering. This chapter explores how community mentors and probation staff tried to help individuals 'discover' agency (Maruna 2001) in the context of a wider set of social relations.

Looking more carefully at the notion of reintegration in a terrorism context, offences draw attention to the two-way notion of reintegration, that is, the need for both society and the individual to play a role in producing successful outcomes. Examining the mechanisms by which individuals are supported in the reintegration process informs the argument, that by acting as a link to wider social and economic networks, both the statutory and community-based groups try and model positive, prosocial relations with wider society. The task of reintegration therefore demands change agents to act as bridges – behavioural, symbolic and practical – between the individual and society. In this way, they are able to support three types of reintegration: social – into positive social networks and the family; economic – into the labour market or training; and political – either 'softly' through acceptance of the British legal framework, or more concretely, through proactive involvement in the community. Importantly, this understands 'community' as a bounded group of specific people with whom the individual interacts, rather than the amorphous 'Muslim community' often referred to when discussing extremism.

Supporting Agency

The previous chapter challenged the idea that desistance and political violence are difficult to reconcile because of the agency associated with involvement in extremism and the difficulty in conceptualising former

radicals 'desisting' from terrorism (Horgan 2009). Here, agency is implicated in the process of negotiating an individual's social, political and relational setting in the face of a range of factors that might support re-engagement. The issue is less one of determining why someone refrains from carrying out further offences, but instead refers to how people navigate those factors that might support reoffending (McNeill and Weaver 2010). In the context of terrorism offending, this relates to unresolved political conflict, ideological frames that justify violence, those wider structural factors implicated in mobilisation processes and the challenges people face reintegrating back into society. Looking at the question of agency in these terms underlines the dynamic and potentially unstable nature of the desistance process, punctuated as it is with periods where remaining disengaged is difficult. For example, when external events make it difficult to reconcile a commitment to not reoffend in the face of deeply held political views, developing an agentic approach to their future was an important part of the resettlement process; as one practitioner noted: '[t]he about-turn needs to give them dignity, and give them the chance to change themselves' (field notes).

Developing, or in some cases, reinstating a sense of agency was particularly important where probationers felt they had been manipulated by recruiters or when they felt unable to extricate themselves from the network of which they had become a part. Supervision and structured interventions provided the opportunity for them to reflect back on how they came to become involved in extremism and determine who might have been implicated in that process. Coming to realise that recruiters often saw individuals as a means to an end was helpful in developing a more clearly self-directed approach to their lives. Interestingly, where probationers came to believe they had been manipulated, along with strong emotional responses of anger and surprise at the level of influence others had once held over them, they often blamed their recruiter for their predicament. The extent to which this reflected their actual experience was less relevant than the opportunity it provided to begin negotiating a way out of the 'extremist' identity to develop a more independent sense of self. This was disclosed by a practitioner:

> This young man was wondering how he'd gotten involved to that extent . . . [he's] kind of overwhelmed that he was seduced, and trying to understand how that happened, and what you're really trying to point out is that it was a

> mixture of group, and it was a mixture of charismatic forces, and it was a mixture of your own need at that particular time. [SPO2]

Significant challenges face efforts to support probationers in developing a more agentic approach to their futures. Most obviously, the extent to which they are actually able to exert control over their own lives is limited. While under supervision in the community, those convicted of terrorism offences are almost always subject to extremely strict licence conditions. These can limit where they may live, who they may see, the types of jobs they may assume and, because of often stringent curfews, the times they are allowed to move about freely. 'Discovering agency' under these circumstances is far from easy. Even when their licence expires, they often believe they are under surveillance. More pragmatically, they are subject to Terrorism Notification Requirements, which means they have to report any change in personal details or intention to travel overseas for a period of up to 30 years, making it difficult to move on from the offence. As one interviewee described it:

> He was asking a lot of questions and was being told no, and some frustrations crept in at that point, about him not being able to move forward with college, and employment applications . . . there was an element of frustration. [LPOM2]

This challenge of mediating between wider structural factors and personal agency is one reflected in many accounts of desistance (Farrall and Calverley 2006). Despite this, there can be a tendency to overstate the control former prisoners have over their lives, neglecting the 'structural reality that many would-be desisters face in their everyday lives' (King 2012, p. 331). It is particularly acute for those convicted of terrorism offences, both in the immediate post-prison period when they are subject to stringent licence conditions and further down the road when they can struggle to find a job or develop positive social networks because of the type of offending they were implicated in. Such issues underline the importance of the wider social context for effective reintegration, demonstrating how the 'deradicalisation' construct, with its emphasis on internal change, is only one part of the disengagement and reintegration process.

Interpreting Reintegration

> [The aim is] Reintegration, reintegration, reintegration, into British society. Where they can contextualise their religion in modern British society, without either side having to be compromised. [CG01]

'Reintegration' occurs at both the moment of re-entry and over a period of time as the individual re-engages with society. In criminological literature, at its broadest level, reintegration has been used to encompass 'everything – from literacy training to electronic monitoring – that is intended to reduce recidivism' (Maruna et al. 2004, p. 6). Drawing on the desistance literature in work on demobilisation following large-scale conflict, social reintegration has been described as operating across three different domains: social, economic and political (Torjesen 2013). In turn, these can be reflected in positive engagement with family and community, sustainable employment, and civic responsibilities (Özerdem 2012). Finally, work on the reintegration of those involved in smaller radical networks has interpreted reintegration in terms of social relations, identity, ideology, coping and action orientation (Barrelle 2015).

When interpreting post-prison experiences, it is important to recognise that 'reintegration has always been as much about the community as the offender' (Bazemore and Erbe 2004, p. 27). However, this is not the dominant view in criminal justice and particularly in work on violent extremism. Indeed, a problem with the 'deradicalisation' construct is that it atomises the individual, removing them from their wider social and political context, demanding that the individual is largely responsible for change. A similar claim has been made about 'traditional' approaches to interventions with prisoners and probationers, and that they involve:

> [T]hings being 'done to' or 'prescribed' for passive recipients who are characterised as ineffectual, misguided, untrustworthy, possibly dangerous, and almost certain to get into trouble again. (Harris 2005, p. 318)

In the context of terrorism offending, decontextualising the reintegration process risks neglecting those structural features of the environment that may be influential in the decision to become involved in radical action, for example, disenfranchisement, social exclusion and the desire for political change (Silke 2008). It also neglects society's role in the reintegration

process. As well as a commitment from the individual, society needs to allow the individual to re-engage positively with the wider community (Meisenhelder 1982). Without the mechanisms to reintegrate, such as access to the labour market, education or community acceptance, it becomes difficult to move forward. Ultimately, to reintegrate successfully someone needs to feel part of a wider social project. One mentor explained:

> Take for example, social exclusion, it might not be that we can say look right, in a year's time, you're gonna be moving to Hampstead or anything else, but it's just a kind of realistic look at . . . what small steps can be taken to get them on the road, if you like, to feeling like they've got a stake in society basically. So, if they haven't got a stake, they're not gonna feel like they've got anything to lose. [CG01]

What follows develops the argument that reintegration is a more holistic and appropriate framework than 'deradicalisation' by which to interpret the move away from extremism. Further, statutory agents and community-based groups are in a position to support former prisoners by acting as a bridge between them and wider society. By reflecting community acceptance, modelling adaptive relationships between the individual and statutory agencies, and providing practical support for reintegration, community-based change agents can, in some cases, support positive change.

Building Bridges

Reintegration often involves multiple sources of support. While most attention is paid to statutory agencies, both community-based interventions and informal support from friends and family are all important as well. One mentor explained: '[w]henever we have information about family, about peers, about education process, that's great, that really helps, somehow we found people willing to extend help, instead of completely losing or giving up on the guy' [CG7]. Together, these structures are, in the best cases, able to support the agentic process of change that is central to long-term desistance. Importantly, these interpersonal relationships are not only able to provide practical and emotional support, but they are also able to embody and initiate a more profound shift in the individual's relationship with wider society. First, by being representatives of wider society, and modelling adaptive relationships between former prisoners and statutory agents, they reflect the acceptance of the individual

by the community. Further, by demonstrating a personal commitment to the individual, they are able to provide practical support, navigating wider social, economic and bureaucratic structures about which they might appear to be suspicious or unsure. Finally, community groups in particular are able to model alternative ways of responding to shared grievances in ways that do not support violence.

Those who have become entangled in the criminal justice system can often have a strained relationship with wider social structures and doubt the legitimacy of the state. These issues are particularly acute for those convicted of terrorism offences. Not only does the offence imply a commitment to an alternative political and social reality, but the complex ways this interacts with experiences such as social exclusion, political grievance and personal circumstance also make the reintegration process particularly challenging. Putting the relationship between the individual and wider society on a more positive footing by demonstrating a commitment to the individual, and modelling appropriate citizen-state agency relationships are therefore valuable in supporting reintegration (Jones 2015). This is reflected in the words of one of the interviewees:

> They see what we're about and what work we actually do with them, that we do actually try to get to know them, and do explore their offending with them, and do talk about their plans for the future, and it's not just about restricting and trying to recall. [LPOM3]

Probation officers are in an almost unique position to develop a more positive attitude towards society in former prisoners. Although they have a role in monitoring and securing public protection, a central aspect of their work is to support and help probationers. As statutory agents, they are representatives of wider society. Demonstrating that the state is interested in supporting them can help to reduce the negativity often directed at wider society. Doing so enables probation officers to demonstrate commitment to an individual's rehabilitation despite the common differences between them, for example in terms of gender, ethnicity or religion. This is not always possible of course, and the ideological nature of the offence, as well as the often traumatic experience of the criminal justice system can mean few gains are made. But at the very least, probation is in a position to counter the stereotypes and negative attitudes this group of former prisoners have of the state, and indeed, British people more generally.

In common with most work with former prisoners, prosocial modelling or 'the way in which probation officers, or others who work with involuntary clients, model pro-social values and behaviours in their interactions with clients' (Trotter 2009, p. 142) was useful. Reinforcing prosocial behaviour, clarifying the purpose of supervision and exploring those issues that might undermine reintegration were all considered more helpful than a confrontational approach. Quite simply, 'being clear, being honest, being prosocial, turning up on time – common courtesy' [LPOM5] were all relevant. Reflecting on the opinions of a community group leader, a practitioner commented:

> [He] would say that that's where the probation officers can be very positive, because they are representatives of society, and if they're pro-social and helpful, and acknowledging, and not disrespectful . . . then that can be a very positive experience. [SPO2]

Change agents have an important task in supporting individuals as they navigate their relationship with society and, where possible, helping to strengthen their personal sense of citizenship. By acting as representatives of wider society, probation staff and community groups are also able to reflect back an acceptance of the individual by society in ways that speak to the two-way nature of the reintegration process. Together, this acknowledges the importance of providing a forum for restitution between the individual and mainstream society (Jones 2015). In cases where the individual's commitment and understanding of wider society is weak, community-based groups in particular were able to act as a bridge:

> [A] lot of the young people are very, very sceptical about mainstream society, even they might be scared about going to the job centre or something like that, you know, let alone, speak to the police or anything like that, so they know they can come to us and then we can, we can go with them. [CG01]

Developing a more positive relationship between individuals and society can happen at an interpersonal level through relationships between probationers and those they are working with. It can also take place on a more practical basis through discussions which look at denial and minimisation of the offence. By trying to explore what happened and encouraging them to accept responsibility for the offence, there is an explicit acceptance of the laws of the state that moves them a little closer to agreeing to abide by

society's norms. The supervision period was therefore a space to develop some of those relational bonds that might support long-term successful reintegration by demonstrating a commitment to the individual and repairing some of the fractures between them and wider society. In the words of one interviewee:

> [A]s a probation service, we only have them for a very short time, it's a window of opportunity, and I think within that opportunity is to give them a good experience, of proper relationships. [SPO2]

Personal Commitment

One of the features of politically motivated offending is that it is premised on changing the circumstances of a wider community of people in line with a subjectively defined, ideologically informed 'better' future. At heart, the foundation of these offences is therefore social, which makes personal relationships a particularly important influence to understand, one practitioner noting: 'relationships are absolutely critical' (field notes). However, high levels of mistrust between this particular group of former prisoners – some of whom said they were expecting the government to try and 'brainwash' them – and the state and its agents made developing positive relationships difficult. Developing trust, building legitimacy and being open and transparent were therefore central to nurturing positive relationships and influencing change, and are recognised as important features of supporting desistance more generally (McNeill 2009; Burnett and McNeill 2005).

The means by which relationships support change relate to developing a sense of obligation, so probationers do not want to let down those supporting them, and as a corollary, increasing the extent to which they are willing to be guided (Rex 1999). How this develops can differ, depending on the type of relationship, the individuals involved, and the opportunities available. It was sometimes done in quite creative ways: in one case, an OM worked through structured material with the probationer to develop a better understanding of Islam, which was weak in both men. As well as developing knowledge, the process provided a platform for their interpersonal relationship to deepen, involving an acceptance of the limits of their knowledge, uncertainty and a shared

experience of learning. At root, the aim is to develop a positive relationship with the individual to support desistance:

> You're starting to see them on a weekly basis, so you're starting to see someone and building a relationship – a rapport – which is really important with this type of offender, and with any offender really, but especially with this type of offender, it's important to build a relationship. [LPOM2]

Not all relationships with probationers developed positively and there was sometimes considerable resistance to supervision. Although this often broke down over time, some probationers did just ride the process out, having what was described as a 'finishing line mentality', not moving beyond basic compliance with the supervision process and waiting until they reached the end of their sentence. Nevertheless, while acknowledging its fragility, community mentors and probation officers did believe they were able to develop positive relationships to bring about change in some cases.

Community-Based Mentors

Increasingly, mentors are being trained to work with those involved in extremism (Spalek and Davies 2012). The relevance of these relationships is rooted in the connection between mentor and mentee and its capacity to support change. Probation services have long recognised the potential of community-based mentors in supporting reintegration efforts with those convicted of terrorism offences (Marsden and Adler 2008). Being based in the community and not being a statutory body means that, while still contested, they have greater legitimacy. A particular advantage is being able to speak to the faith needs of the probationers and others 'at risk' of involvement in extremism. They are also able to offer more flexible support in the community. As desistance largely takes place outside formal supervision (Maruna et al. 2004), the wrap-around support some of the community-based groups were able to provide was valuable, particularly when things went wrong.

> Something might happen, it could be anything, you cannot be with him, or with her, 24 hours, now there could be a serious change in circumstances from today to the evening, something can happen. The organisation needs to be able to adapt and change rapidly, and put a support network around that individual immediately, so they need to be very, very flexible. [CG8]

> Where he did need a wrap-around [they were there]; so he was there [at the centre] 24/7, he went every single day from morning to evening, and they were his salvation, and they helped him cope. [SPO2]

Mentors described the relationship with the former prisoner as one that took time to develop, and where successful, something that lasted beyond the formal period of supervision. Because the authorities were the ones to make the introduction, there were often low levels of trust, particularly early on, and some people refused to engage with them altogether. Trust took time to develop through working with the probationers over months and sometimes years. Few radical shifts in attitude or behaviour were reported. Instead, over the course of the mentoring process, practitioners tried to support incremental change, as reflected in the following:

> I mean, I think that when we're dealing with a young person, we expect it and we're geared up towards taking the long path with them. We won't expect to see results overnight. And we will, we'll happily engage with someone over the course of months, over the course of years, if necessary. And I think that it's about gradual, incremental change, and trying to isolate different factors which we think might be feeding into that young person's world view, and doing whatever we can to counter those. [CG6]

As well as dealing with specific issues relating to the offence and the individual's wider social context, the mentoring process was a structure to support change. As Fergus McNeill (2009) argues, it is 'the social networks and relationships within families and wider communities that can create and support *opportunities* for change' (McNeill 2009: italics in original). Importantly, the commitment to support the individual remains even when there are setbacks. One probation officer observed:

> Often respect grows more when there are problems and they stay with you. They say, what you're doing is not right, but we'll stay with you. This is what they see in the most successful approaches. Those rooted in faith and community linkages are stronger in this. They say, 'you are still important, even though we might not like what you're doing'. [SPO4]

In a similar way to statutory agencies, community groups can act as a bridge between the individual and wider society. Community-based groups were in a position to demonstrate individuals who had a stake in

society, and that society was willing to support them. In the words of one mentor explaining their aims:

> [we're trying to show them] this is what the system actually is; 'cos what your perceptions have actually been – we understand them, and we relate to them – but in actual fact, it's not, 'cos look, here, here, and here [the system is willing to help you]. [CG8]

For those with a history of extremism, to be willing to accept the support of community groups meant that the mentor had to be able to demonstrate they had developed credibility over time. This was not always easy and the government funding that supported them often caused a problem. Hence, the long-term nature of the relationship between the mentor and the individual was important, not only for the individual's own reintegration, but also because of the need to build trust and credibility. One of the main ways trust developed was through the grievances many of the groups shared with the probationers, and the sometimes long-term, often independent nature of the group's work in the community. Most of the groups would be working in their local area independent of state funding around extremism and often advocated for issues relevant to the probationers, including foreign policy, discrimination, gang involvement and social exclusion.

Together, the mentor relationship tried, through developing positive interpersonal relationships and providing a support network, to facilitate reintegration. Although it was not always successful, and sometimes faced irreconcilable questions over legitimacy and credibility, there was some optimism that community-based groups could support reintegration efforts by addressing issues statutory agencies were less well placed to explore. One practitioner claimed:

> [I]f I was working with women offenders, I would want to go to a women's support group, who will have the empathy and understanding of why, there's something about the female condition that's affected her offending; and therefore there's not a need to explain in the same way – they're going to a place where there's an understanding . . . what we're trying to do is put them in touch with people who are legitimate and who have their welfare at concern . . . so you're putting them back with a group who can speak to their condition. [SPO2]

Reintegration Mechanisms

Echoing work on disengagement from large-scale conflict (Torjesen 2013; Özerdem 2012), three aspects of reintegration emerged as important through the development of the framework of goals set out in Chap. 2: social, economic and political. Many of the issues implicated in these areas are relevant to non-politically motivated offending, both in terms of how statutory agencies try and address them, and some of the challenges former prisoners face when attempting to reintegrate. With those convicted of terrorism offences there are, however, important differences. The primary distinction is the political nature of the offence and the resulting need to find ways of developing and sustaining a stronger commitment to wider norms and sociopolitical relations. However, there are also particular challenges in the social and economic realms, primarily related to the perceived gravity of the offence and the related problem of securing employment and developing prosocial networks in the face of stigma, mistrust and marginalisation. In what follows, the question of what successful reintegration might mean for those who have been involved in extremism is considered, looking at how those working with them tried to support it, as well as reviewing some of the barriers to reintegration facing those convicted of terrorism offences.

Economic Reintegration

Education and employment are well-recognised criminogenic needs that, where addressed, can reduce the risk of reoffending (May 1999). Supporting the probationers as they tried to find a job or enrol in an education programme was therefore a central aspect of probation work. In general, motivation to find work or training was high, not least because of the added freedom it promised in the face of limited opportunities for productive activity. In addition, for some, there was a desire to begin to provide economic support for their families. Importantly, and in line with desistance literature, work and education were both ways of reinstating some control over their lives and taking a more agentic approach to their futures. In the process, this enhanced their belief in themselves, as one interviewee revealed: 'He's now achieving level one and two in English and Maths, which is very good actually – that will help to create a more appropriate confidence in him' [LPOM4].

Farrall has described having a job as providing 'a sense of "identity" and "a role in society"' (Farrall 2002, p. 152). In the context of terrorism offending, Horgan has argued reintegration involves more than just not reoffending, and includes 'desisting from a wide array of behaviours aimed at subverting the authority and legitimacy of the state' (Horgan 2009, p. 157). Working, paying taxes and submitting to the economic structures of contemporary society represent a form of acceptance of wider social structures administered by the state. Not only does getting a job reflect integration into the labour market, it also typically involves integration into often diverse social networks. The workplace can provide a forum for social interaction in ways that can encourage a greater sense of social connectedness to diverse others, and one practitioner commented on someone they were working with:

> He'll say: 'look at that stage, I was slightly off my trolley, you know; I was so in it [the offence], when I came home, I did think, the next day, gosh that was a bit extreme'. And will say, you know: 'I go out to work, I'm a tradesman, I go and I work with people, I'm not gonna come home in the evening and stab them in the back, these are my people, you know?' [SPO2]

Securing employment was a real challenge for most of the probationers, and a great deal of effort went into finding ways to balance licence conditions with getting a job. For three reasons this was not easy: first, because they often had to disclose their offence to potential employers which they believed reduced their chances of success; second, while on licence in the community, the conditions they had to abide by could preclude certain types of work; and third, the sometimes lengthy process by which jobs were approved could get in the way of securing a position.

Although many former prisoners face stigma while seeking work (Uggen et al. 2004), the problem seems particularly acute for those convicted of terrorism offences (Dwyer 2013). Given the high profile nature of the offence and the politicised and divisive tenor of wider debates about terrorism, even when convictions were for comparatively minor offences, significant barriers existed to entering the labour market. The disheartening experience of trying to find work impacted them not

only economically, but also in terms of motivation and self-esteem, as cogently explained by one practitioner:

> Pre-offence he had a job . . . he's pretty resilient, self-reliant, he's looking for work, and going to interviews. Now he's a bit disillusioned because he's not getting anywhere. He needs to disclose to the employers, and he says that's the end of it. He's done a lot of work on that. He's given it a good shot, but has given up a bit. We've reduced his curfew to get him into a college course, on a self-employment scheme, so he doesn't lose benefits . . . he's just not motivated. [LPOM5]

Most of the probationers had strict licence conditions attending their release from prison. These typically include not using electronic devices, including computers and the internet, not meeting co-defendants or others perceived likely to put them at risk, and often quite limiting curfews. Together these made it difficult to find a job, and while licence conditions were sometimes relaxed over time, it remained difficult to find an employer willing and able to accommodate these additional demands. Moreover, MAPPA that oversees the management of probationers in the community had to agree a job was suitable before it could be accepted. Members of the MAPPA panel would often visit the potential workplace and sometimes ask for additional checks from employers; for example, they might request to review internet logs or secure Wi-Fi connections. One consequence of these checks was a delay in reaching a decision about the suitability of a job. In one case, it took seven weeks for a decision to be made. While this enables MAPPA to scrutinise the job and consider any potential impact on public safety, it also made life difficult for the probationers. Finding an employer willing to acquiesce to additional checks and wait a number of weeks before taking someone on for what was typically a low-skilled job was difficult.

Together these challenges related to the stigma of the offence, and the significant practical barriers to securing a job meant that probationers often lost motivation. In some ways, the problem of finding a job or training had the effect of delegitimising the work probationers were doing to try and support individuals as they attempted to re-engage economically. Finally, there were repercussions in terms of integration into wider social structures, which, as the next section discusses, are particularly problematic for these probationers.

Social Reintegration

The relevance of group dynamics and their role in recruitment, mobilisation and developing an ongoing commitment to a violent group is well recognised in the literature (Post 2005; Silke 2008; Sageman 2004). The pattern of convictions in the UK reflects the importance of the group; most were part of a network of friends, with only a fifth of those under supervision at the time of the research convicted without a group of co-defendants. This makes the social reintegration of those convicted for politically motivated offences particularly important. However, significant challenges face the effort to support the development of more prosocial networks, revolving around fear of their former group, the stigma of the offence, mistrust and restrictive licence conditions.

Former prisoners were afraid, both of retribution from the group of which they were a part, and of *takfir*. As one practitioner explained about a probationer when asked why he hadn't left the group when he realised how serious things were becoming: '[he said] I couldn't, I couldn't leave, I thought they'd come after me' [SPO2]. *Takfir* was a concern for a small number of former prisoners, a term which, most straightforwardly, refers to the practice of excommunicating a fellow Muslim, declaring them to be an unbeliever (Hegghammer 2009). Concern was particularly acute among those who had entered a guilty plea leading to concerns over reprisals and being ostracised. In particular, because groups of co-defendants often came from the same area and shared a wider social circle often involving blood or marriage ties, the loss of their social network was felt more acutely. This was observed as: '. . . a difficult adjustment, coming back to the family environment, coming back to the area where they offended, where there's a lot of resentment' [LPOM2].

Not only was it difficult to support disengagement from negative social networks, but developing new ones was also challenging. Even informal opportunities to make friends were made more difficult because of restrictive licence conditions; in one case, MAPPA had to be consulted to determine whether an individual could play Saturday night football. Beyond some of the practical challenges, some former prisoners were wary of developing new friendships because of concern they may put them at risk. Generally, they believed they were under surveillance: if they met someone new, some reported concern that unbeknownst to

them, the new person may have links to extremist networks that might put them at risk:

> [He] says now he's terrified of forming the wrong friendship, he's a poor Muslim guy in West London, where there's a level of tolerance of terrorism on the street – even from non-[terrorism offenders]. He's saying 'how do I know if someone's like that?' He's phoning this guy, and it could be anyone; he sees it as a threat and a risk. [LPOM5]

Statutory agencies are less well placed to support the social reintegration of former prisoners into the community, which makes the role of the community groups particularly important in encouraging social reintegration and the development of a more prosocial set of norms (Giordano et al. 2002). They were a source of support in the context of a shared faith community, and were able to provide a way of introducing former prisoners to a more positive group of people, as one mentor recalls:

> Someone could be referred by the probation service, and I suppose one of the fears is gonna be, as soon as they're released, they might start making contact with some of their old acquaintances, which as well could get them back into trouble. Obviously, that's not gonna be ideal, so, if we can get them involved in the centre here, certainly with the sports as well, there is a more positive peer group here basically. So there'll be that effort to get them integrated into a different peer group . . . 'cause, you have to approach the problem holistically, you know, you can't just say, right you're not gonna do this anymore, do this, but then without providing the support and a new kind of network for them. [CG01]

Reintegration into the Family

The role of the family in extremism is complex and not well understood (Davies et al. 2015). However, family relationships are central to former prisoners' well-being and capacity to reintegrate (Visher and Travis 2003). In some cases, they can be an extremely positive influence while in other cases families are a risk factor, and almost always, they are negatively impacted by the offence. An important role families can play is in being part of a positive future. As Farrall points out: '[m]ost of these factors [associated with the ending of active involvement in offending] are related

to acquiring "something" (most commonly employment, a life partner or a family) which the desister values in some way and which initiates a re-evaluation of his or her own life' (2002, p. 11). Strong or developing family ties can therefore act as a 'pull' factor, drawing the individual away from negative networks (Bjørgo 2009). This was clearly expressed by one of the interviewees:

> When you talk to him about his offence, and the repercussions, it's very much about that impact on his family, and the lack of relationship he's had, and missing out on their early part of some of his children's lives because of going to prison, and you can see, that he very much values those things in his life. [LPOM3]

However, families were sometimes a negative influence. In some cases, there were concerns that family members were likely to undermine reintegration efforts. One interviewee explained:

> [T]he family dynamics are so important . . . [the probationer's] wife is very, holds very militant views, kind of extreme views around Islam . . . no matter what we say to him on a weekly basis in supervision, he will return to his wife . . . and I do think she will feed him those views. [LPOM2]

One of the less clearly recognised issues is the negative effect of the conviction on the family. Some were unaware of what their husband or son or daughter was involved with, which made coming to terms with the offence difficult. Similarly, families often experienced shame and stigma. Because arrests were often made in a very high profile manner with dawn raids and armed police, the family would become quite visible in the local community. In some cases, this had an extremely detrimental effect on the family and led to family members refusing to leave the house for extended periods. There were reports of children being bullied, and suffering because of the constraints on the family, for example, with the removal of electronic items including children's entertainment systems and computers. Together, this makes efforts to engage with the family important, as indicated by a practitioner:

> [I]t's important to include the families, because the disruption is also for the families, because he can't have any electronic devices in the house, so she had to get rid of everything; computers, the Nintendo machine, all these

> electronic devices for the children, she got rid of everything, and that was disruptive to her. And so to me, it's very important that we have that relationship, that we establish that relationship with the families. [LPOM4]

Political Reintegration

Although there are differences in the character of social and economic reintegration, the question of political integration most clearly differentiates those convicted of terrorism offences from other offenders. Quite simply, the distance those committed to alternative systems of governance have to travel in order to integrate more fully into the political system is greater than those convicted of 'ordinary' crime. Rather than framing the journey they have to take as one of 'deradicalisation', or a change in attitudes and beliefs, conceptualising this as a process of reintegration more adequately contextualises individual experience. Here, civic reintegration involves a change in the self-concept, so individuals come to understand themselves as citizens who accept wider social norms (Uggen et al. 2004). Where successful, this change is consolidated through an ongoing commitment to social structures and functions (Matsueda and Heimer 1997) bounded by the legal system. An example of this thinking was expressed by one of the mentors:

> It's not about deradicalising, it's actually about getting you to change the way you think, about Britain. I didn't say you have to accept and be a Christian, I'm saying that if you're living in Britain, then accept and respect the laws, and we're quite frank with that'. [CG8]

One of the main ways practitioners tried to encourage political reintegration involved reconceptualising citizenship, with a focus on the rights and responsibilities of being a British citizen. A community leader commented that there are 'key issues in and around citizenship, meaning that what is a Muslim's responsibility whilst living in England' [CG1]. Underpinning these arguments are not only a set of political and social commitments, but also religious debate about concepts like the covenant of security. That is, under circumstances where a Muslim is allowed to practice their faith and has been given refuge, they have an obligation to abide by the laws of their host country (Pargeter 2008). Broadening this out, the aim was to develop a more nuanced, complex understanding of their identity in the

context of the diverse social relations that define contemporary Britain. As one intervention provider explained:

> Our approach is more an approach of acculturising the individual so his understanding of his faith is more, more an understanding of an intrinsic spiritual pathway rather than a tribalistic religion. [CG4]

One interesting mechanism used by a number of the community-based interventions was to introduce former prisoners and others from the community, including those considered 'at risk' of involvement of extremism, to members of what might be loosely described as the British establishment. By inviting religious leaders, military personnel and politicians to engage with them, community groups tried to challenge the stereotypes that existed about those in power in Britain and demonstrate that there is often more shared ground than might be anticipated. As one interviewee stressed:

> [F]oreign policy has played quite a crucial role, and this guy he was affected by that, so what we do, is we invite a Bishop, and an Imam in the Mosque, and we talk about this issue. . . . So when a Bishop, a white man, a Christian, comes to the Mosque and talks about Israel-Palestine conflict, and when he says he's not happy about what happened to the innocent Palestinians; when he shows that look this is what we, the Christians, have done to stop that from happening, then these people they start thinking, 'we thought they were all Kuffar [unbelievers], they were all against Muslims, but what we see here is a Church leader, he's a Bishop but he's not supporting this war'. [CG7]

A final way that community groups in particular tried to facilitate political reintegration was through demonstrating alternative ways of responding to the grievances and concerns they often shared with their clients, for example on foreign policy, discrimination or social exclusion. Part of developing credibility and trust, most of the mentors were keen to demonstrate their commitment to these wider issues. This effort was by no means always successful, but at root it represented an effort to model more adaptive ways of engaging with political questions through a commitment to shared principles of justice. According to one mentor:

> So we are showing them, that, you know, it's not a battle, it's a debate, it's an argument, but we are taking the argument and the debate to different levels, of government and individuals around the world . . . so they can see

> that this organisation is not just about you know, having a youth centre, and deradicalising people; this organisation is about bringing change, promoting fairness and justice; not just for Muslims, but for everybody. [CG8]

Again, it is important to stress that this did not persuade all of those they tried to work with; however, where it did, three mechanisms seemed relevant. First, it offered a practical alternative to addressing shared concerns that operated within the boundaries of the law. Second, by raising contentious political issues, it created a space for debate and discussion so that ideas were open to challenge. And third, it encouraged individuals to consider where and how they fitted in to wider political structures that might be available to bring about change. One mentor elaborated:

> . . . if they want to talk about the foreign policy, we'll just join their argument, you know, I think you're right about Afghanistan or Iraq, why should other people go into Afghanistan or Iraq and kill innocent people, they've no right to go there – yes you're right. So then these people start thinking, well hang on we've got the same views, at the end then, when the conversation finishes on that particular subject, what we have both agreed is that, yes, we don't like it what's happening, but what is the action we can take, to stop that from happening? [CG7]

Conclusion

Supporting individuals as they developed a more positive, agentic approach to their future was a core feature of work with both those convicted of terrorism offences and those considered 'at risk' of involvement in extremism. Significant barriers faced this effort, including the difficulty of reintegrating into the labour market and into the local community because of the stigma of the offence. These issues underline the importance of society's role in providing an opportunity to reintegrate. Wider structural factors can limit the success of interventions with those with a history of extremism, making understanding the economic, social and political reintegration process vital to sustaining long-term desistance.

Statutory and community-based groups had an important role to play in facilitating successful reintegration. They did this first by modelling appropriate and positive relationships between the individual and society, second, by reflecting society's acceptance of the individual, and third, by

providing practical help to navigate those social, economic and bureaucratic structures that can be a barrier to reintegration. Underpinning this process are personal relationships able to support individuals as they negotiate the reintegration process. One final point on reintegration that has received less attention but seems relevant is the idea that reintegration can also be interpreted as a form of re-entry into individuals' own lives, in particular, to reintegrate back into a pathway marked by particular inflection points that have informed their journey into extremism. A probation officer disclosed:

> . . . when we were suggesting that he did a course, or went back to education . . . it was fantastic. And it's what he should have done back when he was 16, but because of things which had happened at school – his mother took him out and home educated him, and then he didn't do his GCSE's – so his journey had been fractured, which is another familiar profile: that we have people who've not carried on the journey they should have done . . . and therefore, if you can get them back, you know, it's a bit like the desistance literature really, they've stopped here, and the script's gone like that, and now you're going, well let's go back and do the other script, let's look at it. [SPO2]

Together, the concept of reintegration – into the family, local community, a job and wider political structures, indeed, into their own lives – reflects the central importance of approaching individuals holistically, taking account of the sociopolitical context they are interacting with. Contextualising individual lives in this way highlights the problems facing the 'deradicalisation' construct and its focus on individual level experience. It also demonstrates why developing resilience and individual strengths is important in order that the barriers to reintegration might be overcome. Despite such challenges, the perspectives of both community-based mentors and probation staff are cause for some optimism that they are able to act as a bridge, reconnecting the individual to wider society in ways that might, in some cases at least, support successful reintegration.

CHAPTER 4

Resilience and Belonging

Abstract Developing resilience to negative peer influence as well as to those political and social events that may inform the motivation to re-engage in extremism is vital to long-term desistance. In reviewing some of the methods tried by probation officers and community mentors to develop resilience, this chapter examines two issues: critical thinking and social identity. Nurturing critical thinking and critical consumption skills were considered vital to sustaining long-term disengagement. Similarly, developing a broader social identity rather than the single-minded focus on a narrow conception of identity related to the radical group was a central part of what practitioners believed was important. Interpreting these processes in the context of desistance-based models of reintegration offers a conceptual foundation for understanding why and how developing resilience is important.

Keywords Resilience · Desistance · Critical thinking · Social identity

One of the most important challenges for practitioners is to support reintegration in ways that develop resilience to those factors that might make re-engaging with the radical group more likely. This is especially the case since those referred for support following involvement in extremism will inevitably spend much of their time away from formal engagement with statutory or community-based interventions. Developing resilience to negative peer influence, and those political and social events that may

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inform the motivation to re-engage in extremism is therefore vital to long-term desistance. In reviewing some of the methods used by probation officers and community mentors to try and develop resilience, reduce the risk of reoffending, and support desistance, this chapter examines two factors practitioners identified as important in supporting successful reintegration: critical thinking and social identity. Nurturing critical thinking and critical consumption skills were both described as vital to sustaining long-term disengagement, enabling individuals to assess, critique and problematise new information they encounter. Similarly, developing a broader social identity rather than the single-minded focus on a narrow conception of identity related to the radical group was a central part of what practitioners believed was important. This helped to, as one Community Mentor described it, 'break down the "us" and "them" attitude' [CG05].

Interpreting Resilience

> They have to own the change. I can't go to them tomorrow and say 'suicide bombing is wrong, you should believe this, I'll see you later, I've got my money, I'm going home'. They have to own the change . . . eventually we wanna get to: 'I was wrong in understanding that, and now I can understand things in a better way'. Because the aim is not only to change this person, but to give them resilience, cause we're not there all the time. [CG01]

Resilience, commonly understood as the capacity to adapt positively in order to withstand adversity (Luthar and Cicchetti 2000), has received attention from a range of disciplinary perspectives (Bourbeau 2015). It has also been the subject of much critique, most notably the tendency to make individuals responsible for their success or failure in navigating challenging experiences, and the neglect of wider structural factors that inform this process. At its worst, this pathologises individuals, making them the sole authors of their fate, regardless of whether the resources are available to support positive outcomes or not (Joseph 2013). Increasingly however, resilience has been understood as an interaction between individuals and their social context. As Michael Ungar et al. (2008) suggest, resilience is 'the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to health-enhancing resources and the capacity of individuals' physical and social ecologies to provide these resources in meaningful ways' (p. 55).

The second challenge to the resilience concept is its fundamental subjectivity. As Kaplan argues:

> A major limitation of the concept of resilience is that it is tied to normative judgements relating to particular outcomes. If the outcomes were not desirable, then the ability to reach outcomes in the face of putative risk factors would not be considered resilience. Yet it is possible that the socially defined desirable outcome may be subjectively defined as undesirable, while the socially defined undesirable outcome may be subjectively defined as desirable. From the subjective point of view, the individual may be manifesting resilience, while from the social point of view, the individual may be manifesting vulnerability. (1999, pp. 31–32)

Kaplan's critique draws attention to the importance of context when interpreting resilience. Whether a particular behaviour is understood as indicating resilience is dependent on the criteria by which that action is judged and by whom. For example, while society might dictate stealing food is illegal, and those who do so are vulnerable individuals in need of help, from the subjective position of the thief, this may represent resilience in the face of limited opportunities to secure a meal and the efforts of the supermarket to prevent him stealing. The inherent subjectivity of the resilience concept is particularly relevant for those who have been involved with extremism. As already touched upon, it is possible to pursue human goods in ways that society defines as maladaptive; for example, resisting dominant power structures can be understood as a sign of resilience in the face of repression. Similarly, those who engage in political violence can demonstrate significant resilience in their pursuit of change, often tolerating hardship and isolation. Neither of these would normally be incorporated into traditional conceptualisations of resilience because they undermine social norms and test legal limits. Part of what defines whether an action reflects resilience is the ideological context by which it is judged, for instance, global jihadist ideology or liberal democratic standards. This wider context therefore determines which personal and collective goods are important and defines the different legitimate ways of pursuing them.

The three themes in this book, of developing resilience, redirecting the initial motivation to offend and reintegration, rest on conforming to a set of wider social norms and successfully desisting from re-engaging with extremism. Theoretically, the relationship between these different issues is supported by a number of synergies between desistance and resilience. Reviewing

the overlaps between these traditionally distinct frameworks, Claire Fitzpatrick (2011) argues the primary shared concern between desistance and resilience is the focus on a positive future. Further similarities lie in the importance of turning points and trusting relationships for supporting successful outcomes, as well as the dynamic and process-oriented nature of both concepts (Fitzpatrick 2011). Finally, both ideas have faced similar challenges, notably over how to negotiate the balance between individual agency and structural factors relevant to positive outcomes (LeBel et al. 2008).

In the context of extremism, resilience is demonstrated by the capacity to navigate appropriate responses in the face of truly held beliefs that may support the use of violence in pursuit of political change, and a legal framework that prohibits an increasingly wide range of behaviours. Some manage this process by relinquishing commitment to those ideas and networks that support violence. Others do this by developing ways of navigating competing commitments to 'radical' ideas and the requirements of living in contemporary British society and abiding by its laws, and the differing opportunities these offer for pursuing human goods. The most sustainable way of achieving resilience therefore seems to rest on providing support for people to pursue those human goods most important to them in prosocial ways. In line with the GLM approach, this is done by developing personal strengths and capacities to develop resilience to those factors that might make re-engaging in extremism an appropriate way to pursue collective and individual goods.

Critical Thinking

Practitioners identified developing critical thinking and a less dichotomous way of approaching issues as important parts of intervention work directed towards building resilience. Rather than trying to deconstruct attitudes related to particular issues such as foreign policy, intervention work generally tried to strengthen cognitive skills in order to encourage the individual to question information and recognise the complexity of social and political relations. The aim of this was to help the individual to question the evidence that had supported involvement in extremism. As one interviewee explained when describing progress: '[I]nstead of having this sort of simplistic approach, maybe in terms of how they understand their religion, or how they view society . . . that they're a bit more critical in their thinking' [CG1-2].

These cognitive skills are approached from different perspectives in the risk and strengths-based models. Rooted in the assumption that there is a deficit in an individual's thinking and reasoning abilities, the 'what works' agenda has long focused on developing cognitive skills through structured interventions (Roberts 2004). Significant reductions in reoffending rates and other markers of positive progress have been reported as a consequence (Lipsey and Landenberger 2006; McDougall et al. 2009). However, critics argue that this approach neglects the wider social context the individual is embedded in (Farrall 2002), overlooks the complexity of individual needs, and marginalises the relationship between the individual and the intervention provider (Atkinson 2004). There is also the observation that the sometimes mechanistic approach to delivering interventions can overlook the importance of personal motivation, with the implication that things are being 'done to' passive recipients (Matthews and Pitts 2000). By contrast, developing internal strengths through education in ways that support desistance reflects a more holistic and positive way of supporting change. Although elements of both approaches were reflected in practice, the dominant theme was of developing strengths in the service of a more positive future. This rested in developing the skills to deepen their understanding of politics, religion and ultimately better understand their place in the world.

Deepening Understanding

Despite the attention directed at the ideological content of extremism and the political focus on 'fighting terrorist ideology' (Cameron 2015), practitioners did not always try to challenge radical ideas directly, and instead there was an effort to improve cognitive skills. Both community mentoring work and structured interventions from probation staff attempted to develop thinking skills in order to foster resilience to the ideas, people and experiences that might undermine any growing commitment to remain disengaged from extremism. Probation staff used specific exercises to, in the words of the toolkit designed to support practitioners, 'develop ways of thinking that will empower their lives, learn how to generate ideas and consider alternative solutions to problems, differentiate between fact and opinion, and identify the consequences of their actions on others'; this was an approach the practitioners reported finding useful, commenting:

> for him [probationer] to base his opinions, ideas, thoughts on evidence. Because one of the exercises was, the distinction between fact and

> opinion; . . . and that was very good for him, to make that distinction. So it's about creating in him, in his mind, more understanding, more knowledge about the dynamics, more knowledge about the problem. [LPOM4]

While community mentors did report challenging specific aspects of former prisoners' knowledge and understanding in common with wider probation practice, they generally paid greater attention to developing internal strengths. Rooted in an appreciation of the limited time available to work with them, and the number of potential challenges facing those in the process of disengaging from extremism, mentors spoke of developing the motivation to challenge the ideas that had informed their involvement and 'ignite the thought process' [CG7]. Examining the evidence underpinning the ideas they held, the credibility of people who promoted those ideas, and challenging some of the stereotypes and negative attitudes towards the UK were all important parts of the intervention process. However, this was not an easy or quick process, as one interviewee explained: '[S]ometimes, the issue really is a person, he can't critically think for themselves. That's probably the biggest challenge' [CG1-2].

One of the ways practitioners tried to develop critical thinking skills was by probing the credibility of the ideologues who had often been influential on the path to extremism. The aim was to help individuals understand that the information they felt supported violence was not as well evidenced as they had come to believe. One group focused on the Islamic proofs and tools used to make judgements and to identify role models, guiding individuals to draw comparisons with the people who had recruited them. The aim was to help the individual come to understand that 'he [the ideologue] doesn't fulfil [the criteria]. So I say, 'then what's your answer'; and it's his answer, not my answer. So he owns it' [CG1]. The challenge to ideologues was generally made on their credibility as an interlocutor and the religious proofs they provided, rather than on an individual basis informed by personality. As two interviewees explained:

> As soon as I say, Abu Hamza's wrong, and Faisal's wrong and this person's wrong; it just becomes us and them. . . . I don't want to say that. I want that person to say that, 'I understand why that person's wrong'. The person makes the decision that he is wrong, not I make the decision that that person's wrong. All I'm doing is showing you, that this is the evidence. [CG1]

> [T]he reason why they've become deviated in their understanding of Islam, is because they've chosen to trust somebody over the other sources of information that [they] could have taken Islamic knowledge from. And they've then mistrusted the other sources of information. [CG5]

Contextualising Religion

Religion has played an interesting and often positive role in sustaining resilience against extremism. A leaked study of several hundred UK-based violent extremists conducted by the intelligence services concluded 'there is evidence that a well-established religious identity actually protects against violent radicalisation' (Travis 2008). The report went on to suggest that many had only a limited understanding of Islam. In a similar vein, few of those being supported by probation reportedly demonstrated deep religious knowledge, one mentor commented: '[S]urprisingly enough . . . none of our referrals have been massive – or certainly not from probation anyway – [have we] had sort of massive on-going religious arguments with' [CG01]. Although some, such as those described by interviewees as 'sermonisers' or 'propagators', were typically better versed in religion, in general, practitioners reported fewer ideologically committed individuals. For those currently being released into the community, developing a more contextualised and deeper knowledge of Islam was therefore an important part of intervention work, as one interviewee explained:

> We find, not quite a trend, but TACT [Terrorism Act] offenders don't tend to be massively ideologically driven to a degree. With a bit of an education, and an opening up of their understanding of Islam [things are] clarified really. I think just with a little bit of Islamic tutoring . . . it opens their eyes. [SPO3]

In common with probation's history of working with external agencies to address specific needs (Perry et al. 2006), community groups engaged with the probationers on a one-to-one basis, looking at issues of particular relevance to them, notably around religion. Community-based mentors were considered far better placed to address questions of faith and religious literacy (O'Connor and Bogue 2010) as on the whole,

probation staff felt ill prepared to work through religious issues, as one explained:

> I will look at the offence with them, and I will do victim work with them, and ultimately . . . help make an assessment around risk, but I won't get into discussing religion with them, because I don't feel well versed enough to do that. . . . I wouldn't go there myself, because I just feel that's not my place to do that, and I would rather get an intervention to come on board and ask those questions. [LPOM2]

Two features of engagement around religion were striking: first, there was no assumption of the relevance of religion; and second, there was generally not a concerted effort to promote a particular message about Islam from statutory agents. As one SPO explained: 'I'm not here to say that's the right type of Islam, that's the wrong type of Islam; we're just here to give them access to education and understand that what they take on board is up to them' [SPO3]. Probation staff tended to approach religious commitment by developing an understanding of the individual's specific faith needs, as one put it: '[Y]ou're giving them a forum to change' [LPOM5]. As far as possible, the approach was individualised and contextualised; one explained: 'It's a holistic thing that we are doing, and we try and help with everything. The reluctant ones are surprised we're not trying to push faith' [SPO4].

Similarly, at their best, the community groups tried to interpret what religion meant for the individual, and by working through the individual's questions, try and support the reintegration process. This included addressing factual inaccuracies and placing religious teachings in context. In particular, there was an effort to develop an understanding of the processes of sense-making and interpretation that are applied to theological texts. According to one interviewee:

> By just breaking it down, deconstructing the whole thing, some of them, themselves, come to the realisation that yeah, that's not really correct, to just pick out, pick up any book – especially, the Qur'an itself – and . . . give a kind of fatwa based upon what you've misread, and what you think is correct. [CG1-2]

However, there were some probationers for whom addressing religious questions was an extremely important part of the reintegration process.

In these cases, qualified Islamic scholars were brought in to explore particular issues and facilitate a conversation around contentious or sensitive subjects. All of the community groups had scholars on whom they could call to engage with and challenge the beliefs the individual was committed to. The legitimacy and credibility of the scholars was important in providing an independent perspective. Most reported this approach was effective in supporting change. In the words of one community group leader:

> [The influence of the scholars is] very high, very high, very high, very effective. My God! They've got a way of talking to them, and they're so good, they don't even know even realise they're challenging them, they don't realise that, the flow of conversation is such, they themselves say, 'oh yeah we didn't think that way', something like that. So it's very effective, very effective. [CG3]

Ultimately the aim was to gradually introduce the probationers to alternative ways of interpreting their religion and practice it in a way that strengthened their resilience to narratives that supported violence. This was not always successful, as considerable resistance is built into the process of engaging in extremist settings. In trying to overcome this resistance, practitioners generally felt that directly challenging or deconstructing the ideas or values believed to support extremism was not the most appropriate way of supporting desistance. Instead, the aim was to develop internal strengths in the form of knowledge, and intrinsic skills, notably around critical thinking, to build resilience to those factors that might undermine the commitment to remain disengaged from radical settings. Part of this was acknowledging the political and social issues they were concerned with, and trying to find alternative ways of addressing them. In the words of two interviewees – one from probation and the other a community mentor:

> I think that they'll be surprised by how far the youth workers are prepared to go with them, basically. But it comes to the point where it's like: 'no actually, *this* is where you've got it wrong'. So, again, that might be another thing which will help gain trust, you know, because if they went to an organisation who said, you know, you've got this 100 per cent wrong . . . - what I'm trying to say is there's an understanding of the predicament that these young people are in. [CG6]

> It's getting them away from those dangerous connections, not redefining the way they think, not attempting to do, to even deradicalise them really, it's just to get them to disengage, and to develop a less dangerous outlook. [SPO2]

Overcoming Resistance

There is very often resistance to attempts to question the evidence that underpins the commitment to radical settings. This is not only because of a reluctance to relinquish truly held beliefs, and a deep scepticism about the state and its agents, but also because resistance to change itself is part of the process by which people come to be involved in extremism. In the words of one mentor: 'These people that call to deviant ways in Islam, one of their first calls is that everybody else is wrong. So the person already has this wall built around them that will stop them from taking knowledge' [CG5]. A further mechanism that acts to resist efforts to support change is the esteem in which ideological and group leaders are held. Informed by the wider ideological frames that support global jihadism, such as the work of Sayyid Qutb (1964), ideologues are a self-styled 'vanguard'. Their mission is to lead Muslims towards a noble future, hence their appeal lies not only in their supposed knowledge, but also in their position. The result is a form of hero worship that can be difficult to undermine:

> They put these people up on a pedestal, where they think, they're on the front line, and they're the ones who understand the reality of issues like jihad and stuff. But when you actually, like, question that: 'well do they really actually understand? What are their credentials, sort of thing, to put themselves up there?' That makes a lot of people kind of, re-evaluate their attachment to them. [CG1]

Much ink has been spilt trying to determine the relative importance of ideology and politics in relation to violent extremism (Cavanaugh 2007; Juergensmeyer 2003) and whether these can be considered causal factors. Notwithstanding the fact that these various issues are likely to matter to different people in different ways, it seems more useful to ask how ideology and politics are interpreted in the context of individual lives. Understood in this way, the role of ideologues and recruiters is to link wider sociopolitical phenomena to personal experience in ways that help

individuals make sense of their circumstances in order to motivate action. Simplifying complex political, social and religious ideas is one way of doing this, acting to develop resistance to alternative interpretations of the social and political world and the individual's place within it. The challenge for practitioners was to gradually open up their world view in order to develop an acceptance of the complexity of the political context, and through this, some resilience to those simplifications used to mobilise people towards violence. As one interviewee explained when describing a positive outcome:

> . . . their thinking has to be a bit broader, their outlook, you know, how they comprehend reality, that's one thing. So, it's not all, instead of having this sort of simplistic approach, maybe in terms of how they understand their religion, or how they view society. . . . that they're a bit more critical in their thinking, so if they hear something, they're not so eager to just take it on, they might be a bit more analytical in terms of how they accept that information. [CG1-2]

Introducing new information and alternative ways of interpreting existing knowledge and experiences are both important ways of trying to overcome resistance through prompting cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957). The discomfort produced as new and old interpretations collide produces a space for practitioners to exert positive influence. Implicit in this effort is the importance of developing greater value complexity. That is, the ability to address the challenge of apparently conflicting values through differentiation, meaning to assess a value's strengths and weaknesses, and integration, in order to develop ways of connecting and reconciling different values (Tadmor and Tetlock 2007). Low levels of integrative complexity, or the inability to integrate alternative perspectives and recognise their interrelationships, are characteristics of violent group rhetoric (Conway et al. 2011). Conversely, extremism prevention initiatives that nurture and value pluralism show promise in developing prosocial, collaborative responses in ways that support positive outcomes (Liht and Savage 2013; Davies et al. 2015). Value complexity approaches are rooted in addressing the structure of thinking rather than the content of the ideas believed to support violence rather than a concerted effort to 'deradicalise' people by challenging global jihadist ideology. Much in this vein, practitioners tried to develop the skills to

enable people to do this themselves; one mentor explained a positive manifestation of this process:

> So now, if somebody else comes and wants to fill them with nonsense, they'll say, 'no, I've heard this before, I've heard that argument before, I understand the proofs that they use, and now I know that these proofs aren't correct'. So I've built up some resilience for them, so they're able to defend themselves against other radicals and extremists. [CG1]

Broadening the Direction of Critical Thinking

The preceding discussion offers support for the growing evidence base on the relevance of critical thinking in the move away from extremism (Bartlett and Miller 2012; UNESCO 2015). However, there are at least two important challenges to the arguments around thinking skills and their relevance for involvement in radical settings. First is the extent to which headlining the relevance of critical thinking paints a picture of vulnerable individuals falling prey to recruiters and ideologues, thereby neglecting the agency associated with involvement in extremism (Richards 2011). Second concerns whether it overlooks the individual differences likely to be reflected in those who make up radical Islamist activists and the uncertain relationship between education and involvement in terrorism (Krueger and Malečková 2003; Brockhoff et al. 2015). Importantly, although some may genuinely lack critical thinking skills, others who make up the militant milieu demonstrate an extremely critical, engaged approach to theological, political and social questions. The heated debates that take place within and between jihadists demonstrate this capacity for argumentation and debate (Moghadam and Fishman 2010; Meijer 2009). Moreover, a number of those involved in extremism in the UK have higher university degrees, which suggests the capacity to think critically and creatively about problems (Bakker 2006; Pantucci 2015), and seems to undermine the vulnerability thesis.

One of the features often left implicit in discussions about the role of critical thinking and extremism is the normative dimension relevant to assessing the way radical actors approach the object of thought. As Bailin et al. argue, 'critical thinking is in some sense good thinking' (1999, p. 288). In the context of extremism, the implication is that critical thinking produces similar answers to social and political problems as those reflected in dominant

social norms, at least as represented by the legal system. Thinking which produces conclusions that differ substantively from those norms is considered deficient. However, it seems more appropriate to recognise that different ideological systems reflect different evaluative criteria, and to some extent define what an appropriate object of critique is, as Bailin et al. suggest:

> Critical thinking always takes place in the context of (and against the backdrop of) already existing concepts, beliefs, values, and ways of action. This context plays a very significant role in determining what will count as a sensible or reasonable application of standards and principles of good thinking. (1999, p. 287)

Hence, in some cases, it might not be a lack of critical thinking skills that is relevant to interpreting how people move towards and away from extremism, but instead a commitment to a different framework by which information and arguments are evaluated. Those embedded in radical settings are often deeply critical of state practices and the dominant social and political order. The implication for those trying to support the move away from extremism is that the ultimate aim should be to deepen and widen the object of thought. In this way, those committed to radical ideas are encouraged to direct their critical faculties not only at those they do not agree with, but those with whom they share an identity, or ideological or organisational affiliation. Understanding an individual's identity commitments and the evaluative framework shared by that identity group is therefore important in working with those convinced of the need for violent radical change.

Balanced Identity

Although questions of identity have been widely discussed in work on extremism and radicalisation (Koomen and Van Der Pligt 2016; Hogg 2011; Silke 2008), only recently has identity been concertedly applied to interpreting the disengagement process. In one of the first comprehensive accounts of the role of identity in reintegrating former extremists, Kate Barrelle argues that 'disengagement is an identity transition from being an outsider to belonging . . . predicated on change across five areas of an individual's life' (2015, p. 6): social relations, coping, identity, ideology and action orientation. Here, identity change is reflected in '"reduction in group identification", "emergence of personal identity" and developing an

"alternative social identity"' (Barrelle 2015, p. 9). Barrelle's account echoes a number of the themes reflected in practitioner experience. Identity was a central feature across the work with those involved in extremism. Importantly, the aim was not to deconstruct the individual's identity, but to broaden it, to encourage them to explore alternative aspects of their self-concept. Supporting involvement in different social groups, often embodied by the community organisations, was one mechanism used to support the development of a broader identity. Probation officers also explored issues around identity in supervision through exercises and discussion.

In contrast to the risk model that tends to break down the individual into particular indicators of risk with a focus on individual deficits, the concern with identity in the context of the GLM reflects the importance of what Ward and Maruna describe as the 'relationship between narrative identity, primary goods (values) and lifestyle' (2007, p. 163). The relationship between identity and resilience is reflected in the way practitioners sought to broaden the individual's self-concept to incorporate additional identity commitments in ways that allowed them to pursue primary goods. The relationship between reintegration and identity is also informed by the relationship between social identity and ideological commitment, and how shifting commitments across both of these spheres can support positive outcomes.

Identity, Ideology and Resilience

Social identity informs well-being by defining spaces of belonging, providing a sense of security and purpose, and increasing self-efficacy and self-esteem (Haslam et al. 2009). One of the features of social identity as expressed in social identity theory (Tajfel 1978; Tajfel and Turner 1979, 1986) is the way it operates to achieve, sustain and protect a positive self-concept through differentiation from alternative, less positively appraised groups. Hence, where well-being was informed by negative attitudes towards non-Muslims, an important component of supporting reintegration was to find ways for individuals to feel positively about those alternative identities. A further component was to support individuals as they develop a greater commitment to those identities, even where they may have been antagonistic towards them. The way people pursue a positive sense of self is therefore informed by the ideological commitments they make, and related to this, the groups they identify with.

Importantly, social identity is argued to influence behaviour. Where individuals share a sense of identity with a group, they will try and coordinate their actions and strive to agree with that group, while the attitudes, values and norms reflected by the group will inform how they act. Shifting the individual's commitment to the identity embodied by the radical group therefore aims to support behavioural change and shifts in identity by providing an alternative referent group. This process is informed by the wider social setting within which such identities operate. This context informs the extent to which particular identities are likely to promote well-being and support resilience. For example, a strong commitment to jihadist ideology and identity is likely to sustain well-being in territory controlled by Islamic State, but undermine it in the UK. As already discussed, resilience is therefore a product of the interaction between individuals and their setting. The degree to which any particular social identity is likely to promote resilience is hence subjective and crucially informed by the context.

Different layers of identity are implicated in the move away from crime, from the changing relationship to the radical group, to more practical identities relevant to sustaining a crime-free life, such as mother or employee (Farrall 2004; McNeill and Whyte 2007). The literature on desistance also often interprets identity in terms of offending and non-offending identities (Maruna 2001; Shapland and Bottoms 2011; Bottoms et al. 2004). Changes in identity are also discussed in the context of the different phases of the desistance process (Maruna and Farrall 2004). Primary desistance describes a crime-free period; it is therefore a behavioural marker, and may describe little more than a lull between crimes. Secondary desistance, however, reflects a shift in identity so individuals come to perceive themselves as a 'changed person'. Most recently, Fergus McNeill and Marguerite Schinkel (2016) have proposed tertiary desistance to describe 'shifts in one's sense of belonging to a (moral) community' (p. 608), arguing that:

> since identity is socially constructed and negotiated, securing long-term change depends not just on how one sees oneself but also on how one is seen by others, and how one sees one's place in society. Putting it more simply, desistance is a social and political process as much as a personal one. (p. 608)

The idea of tertiary desistance is an important one that demands thoroughgoing investigation. The arguments in this book provide support for

the idea that belonging, moral communities, and identity commitments are intimately implicated in understanding and facilitating successful reintegration. Work with those with a history of extremism is ultimately concerned with working towards a shift in commitment related to ideological, political and religious beliefs alongside those informed by interpersonal relationships. In social identity terms, this involves supporting individuals as they explore alternative self-categorisations beyond the radical group. Doing this in a way that allows them to pursue goods relevant to relatedness and community is therefore important in supporting reintegration. The aim is to develop resilience to the circumstances that might make overidentification to the radical group an attractive and potentially adaptive response to pursuing human goods. For example, if someone feels there are no avenues to engage prosocially with wider society, or that the community has rejected them, engaging with negative peer groups may reflect not an unnatural way of fulfilling particular human needs.

Here, reintegration can be understood as the process of developing a commitment to a different ideological system – or moral community – through nurturing a more complex sense of self related to different identity groups that together inform moral evaluations and behaviour. Trying to support individuals as they develop a broader sense of self is therefore important in developing resilience in several ways. The first way is by providing an alternative set of resources on which the individual might draw, in particular those relating to social identity's role in providing a sense of meaning and sustaining resilience in the face of stressful or challenging events (Jetten et al. 2012). A second way is by offering an alternative, less socially contested identity and associated framework by which to determine how to respond to events or people that might undermine the motivation to remain disengaged from extremism. Reintegration into what McNeill and Schinkel (2016) describe as a 'moral community' is therefore supported through developing a broader, and ultimately a different set of identity commitments informed by the ideological system the individual feels part of.

Broadening the Sense of Self

Efforts to develop a broader set of identity commitments were operationalised in a number of ways. Practitioners tried to explore concepts like British-ness, London-ness or even Walthamstow-ness. The focus was therefore on developing a sense of belonging to one or more wider identity groups in ways that allowed them to navigate different identity

commitments successfully. The aim was in part to enable them to understand they could remain committed to their religion, and also conceive of themselves as an active participant in British society (Ryan 2013; Ryan et al. 2009). One interviewee described the relationship between identity and integration in the following terms:

> I think identity work, I think that's the key, the key . . . lever, maybe. Because, I think that when they were in the height of radicalisation, them being, a fighter for Islam, or whatever they would want to call it, was their dominant identity. In fact it was all encompassing, and what you're trying to build is a more balanced identity . . . [I would] talk about balancing their identities, developing multiple identities, and really promoting things like the social contract, and their British identity, so it's integration, integration, integration . . . it's about pulling back that radical identity which took them into such difficult places. [SPO2]

Community mentors were particularly well positioned to explore identity issues because they understood the challenges of navigating identities that sometimes felt incompatible. As well as a more authentic, empathic appreciation of their circumstances, community-based groups were also in a position to offer more practical support. One mentor noted: '[s]uccess would look like them becoming integrated into the projects. So they come down, they make friends, they're part of a more positive peer group. They, you know, they want to get integrated, themselves' [CG6]. The idea of integration took a number of forms related to the community group, identities relevant to the local area or broader notions of citizenship (Rex and Gelsthorpe 2004). As one interviewee explained: 'I think the key message is, there's no contradiction in terms following the Islamic faith, and also taking part in society . . . you can be Islamic and also be British' [CG01]. At perhaps its most successful, intervention work leads to graduation away from the community group prompted by a desire to integrate even further into wider society. In one case a probationer was reported as saying:

> 'I don't wanna work with a Muslim youth group, I want to work with everybody, I want to work with the whole community'. So, that integration is very palpable [in those] who you can see have done their journey out. [SPO2]

However, the discrimination and marginalisation Muslim communities experience and perceive as relevant to their own sense of identity was a

challenge to reintegration (Allen 2005; Cinnirella et al. 2010). The social identity approach suggests the opportunities available for developing alternative identity commitments are in part determined by how accessible they are perceived to be, how permeable the group boundaries are, and how stable and legitimate a group's position is in comparison to other groups (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Oakes et al. 1994). Where alternative identities are seen to conflict, be in opposition or exclude the individual from becoming part of them, the pathways out of extremism can appear extremely difficult to navigate. One of the challenges for practitioners, and something those involved in radical settings had to overcome, was therefore the perception that the boundaries between identity groups are largely impenetrable, inaccessible or irreconcilable. In the words of one practitioner describing some of the challenges working with those least responsive to intervention work:

> I'm trying to think of, why those who don't progress, don't progress . . . the refusal to give up the dominant identity; you know, where they are so heavily defended that you can't get a chisel in there. . . . I think it's because we've given them no gates, there is nowhere for them to go . . . We won't let him, we won't let them out, we won't let them off the surveillance, we had them down as they are, by all the security services and everything – they are like: 'they've crossed the line'. And of course, you know, who knows how dangerous they are, and that's the real difficulty, is that you're working against that fact that the risk is so different. [SPO2]

The overall aim was to support individuals as they developed a broader set of identity commitments and found ways of navigating the sometimes complex ways they came into conflict. Through structured interventions and with the community-based mentors, practitioners worked to develop additional commitments to friendship groups, community settings and broader notions of citizenship so that individuals felt a greater commitment to British society and could see a way to overcome the barriers that make this difficult. Developing internal strengths reflecting broader horizons and a more complex sense of self were important markers in this journey:

> If you notice that people are developing other focuses in life, and that this was moving them away . . . 'cause it seems like at the time of the offence, their sole focus was on what their religious or their political views were. [LPOM3]

Developing Strengths

An important part of work with the probationers involved developing strengths and extending and broadening identity commitments. This involved, first, facilitating a process of questioning that allowed individuals to explore their identity and its role in the offence. Second was supporting them as they developed a broader and more complex sense of self, considering the implications of this process for how they related to wider society. And third, it was important to find ways to connect individuals to those resources embedded in less contentious identity groups reflected in those groups that support more prosocial involvement with wider society and in so doing, address psychosocial needs relating to identity and belonging. The starting point was to develop an understanding of how individuals perceived their identity, as one interviewee explained:

> [It's important to get] an idea of his identity, for him, to see whether he knows his own identity, or whether he's explored it, or kind of understands it, or whether it was linked with meeting with these other people, or whether he was influenced by these other people because of his identity . . . it's more about gaining an understanding of him and going from there. [LPOM1]

Exploring and strengthening a personal understanding of identity was important because it supported a more agentic approach to individuals' futures by appreciating how others had influenced them. The groups the individuals had been involved with exerted significant influence in ways that practitioners believed impacted their identity and perception of self. Supporting them as they developed a more self-referential identity helped develop resilience by encouraging them to look beyond the radical group for affirmation and belonging. In the words of one practitioner, the aim was 'having an identity which isn't reliant on having respect from somebody, that you develop yourself, and to have your own script and your own journey' [SPO2]. Some of the most effective ways of addressing questions about identity in supervision were rooted in a positive approach that recognised and supported the individual's existing strengths and personal attributes. Through this, the aim was to help individuals mobilise their own resources to support their reintegration; one practitioner commented on what they had found particularly useful:

> When I asked him about his identity in a positive way, and he saw and acknowledged his background in a positive way. Asking about dual identity,

> and what makes this a good things – he relaxed a bit because it was more positive. I asked 'what are the good things about your identity'; not just criticising you and your identity. [LPOM5]

The aim of identity work was therefore to strengthen personal resilience towards those factors that might make radical settings appear the most appropriate and accessible way of pursuing human goods. Practitioners tried to do this by developing a broader set of identity commitments. This was so that individuals could draw on groups beyond the radical subculture of which they had been a part to inform a sense of security and belonging. Through this, the relationship between individuals and the ideological framework that contextualised their offending was challenged, with the aim of providing an alternative evaluative framework by which to determine appropriate responses to difficult social and political questions. Ultimately, the ambition was to develop a commitment to wider social norms facilitating political, social, economic reintegration, and also re-entry into a different 'moral community'. These ideas are reflected in one mentor's description of the ultimate aims of the work:

> Reintegration. Reintegration. . . . reintegration into British society, where they can contextualise their religion in modern British society, without either side having to be compromised. So they can be proud to be Muslim, proud to be British, if you like. So there shouldn't be a conflict there, basically. And I think that that's . . . the ultimate aim, basically. So there's, we're not saying that you can't be religious, and you can't follow your religion or anything like that basically. There shouldn't have to be a compromise either way. [CG6]

Conclusion

Work with those who have been involved with extremism sought, through a variety of means, to develop resilience to events, people and ideas that might undermine any commitment to disengage from radical settings. By developing internal strengths such as critical thinking and knowledge, in particular around their religion, the aim was to find ways of reintegrating them back into wider society. Implicated in this process was a shift in the level and focus of commitment to ideological frameworks and related identities that informed their involvement with the radical group.

Broadening their concept of self to incorporate wider, more socially accepted identity groups was an important part of this. It is possible to interpret this process by looking at how people gain a sense of belonging and security from the identity commitments they make. In turn, this helps to explain why particular identity groups inform appropriate responses to social and political questions. Nurturing a commitment to wider identity groups that support more prosocial responses to difficult issues is one way of developing resilience in the service of long-term change.

A further mechanism that supported desistance was to encourage individuals to direct their critical faculties, not only at those they disagreed with, but also at those with whom they had some sympathy. Broadening critical thinking skills in this way aimed to strengthen cognitive skills and develop resilience to any effort to encourage them to re-engage in extremist settings. There are significant challenges facing this effort, rooted not only in resistance to efforts to promote change, but also because of the actual and perceived barriers facing those with an interest in reintegrating in a more meaningful way. Understanding individual motivations for becoming involved in extremism and developing the resilience not to be overwhelmed by the barriers facing this effort therefore reflected an important challenge, and a central part of practitioners' work.

CHAPTER 5

Redirecting the Motivation to Offend

Abstract Significant barriers face those moving away from extremism, which in turn can have a tangible effect on the motivation to re-engage positively with the wider community. This chapter looks at how practitioners sought to elicit motivation from and provide support for those they worked with to build a more positive future. Developing the implications of this discussion, the chapter goes on to reframe how the process of moving away from extremism is conceptualised. Instead of the broad process models currently prevalent in the literature, the chapter argues we should instead consider how individuals may be encouraged to pursue primary human goods, such as relatedness, spirituality, community and agency, which have been recognised as important in the move towards and away from offending, most notably in the Good Lives Model.

Keywords Good Lives Model (GLM) · Barriers to reintegration · Human goods · Motivation

Significant barriers face those moving away from extremism. Social stigma, difficulty accessing the labour market, family tensions, pressure from negative peer groups, trauma resulting from involvement with the criminal justice system, and commitment to the ideas and values that support extremism can all make it difficult for those once involved in radical settings to reintegrate back into society. Together these issues have a tangible effect on the motivation to re-engage more prosocially with the

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wider community. For those reluctant to work constructively with change agents, in the words of one practitioner, it is vital 'to get him motivated to look at his rehabilitation not as a burden, but as a profit, as something that he will benefit from' [LPOM4]. This chapter looks at how practitioners sought to elicit motivation and support those they worked with to build a more positive future.

Returning to the goals reflected in the outcomes framework described in Chap. 2, it is worth noting that most of the aims are not absolutes. With the exception of no reoffending, there are degrees of reintegration, identity development, resilience and redirecting motivations to offend. It is here that the idea of a process of desistance (Maruna 2001) and a route out of terrorism (Horgan 2009) are most helpful. Moving away from crime is gradual, as McNeill comments: '[d]esistance is not an event but a process and, because of the subjectivities and issues of identity involved, the process is inescapably individualised' (2009, p. 4). An important implication of the discussion presented in this chapter is the need to reframe how we consider this process. Instead of the broad process models currently prevalent in the literature, typically in the context of 'radicalisation' towards violence (e.g. Rabasa et al. 2010; Silber and Bhatt 2007; Klausen et al. 2016), I argue we should consider how individuals may be encouraged to pursue what the GLM approach conceptualises as primary human goods. Some examples of goods are relatedness, spirituality, community and agency (Ward and Maruna 2007). Rather than looking for discrete risk factors related to stages in a 'deradicalisation' process, attention is better directed towards reconceptualising the positive goals individuals seek to achieve through involvement in extremism, and supporting ways of working towards those goals in legal, prosocial ways. Hence, the process is one of gradually moving towards positive goals relevant to reintegration, rather than deconstructing 'radical' attitudes or beliefs in the way the 'deradicalisation' construct implies.

To bring some context to this argument, what follows first describes the barriers facing those on the journey out of extremism, followed by some of the practical ways practitioners tried to overcome these obstacles. The chapter goes on to describe an alternative to risk-informed process models often used to interpret the 'deradicalisation' process. Drawing on the GLM, I argue a more sustainable and long-term approach involves redirecting the initial motivation to offend. Central to the GLM and the strengths-based approach is that people are motivated to fulfil particular goods and that this can underpin successful resettlement. Interpreting

work with those involved in extremism within this framework makes visible the positive goals their offending was often motivated by. A corollary of these positive motivations is the possibility of redirecting personal agency and channelling the motivation to offend in a way that does not involve breaking the law and instead supports positive outcomes. One example would be finding mechanisms to support individuals as they pursue alternative ways to achieve community through positive social networks, or address questions of social justice through legal forms of protest. By supporting people as they find legal ways of pursuing human goods, practitioners are in a position to facilitate both a 'way out' of their current situation, and a 'way in' to a society from which many feel alienated. An important part of this process involves addressing those things that interfere with reintegration, including taking responsibility for the offence and its consequences.

Challenges Facing Reintegration Efforts

Alongside the practical, identity-related and ideological factors that present challenges to successful reintegration discussed in previous chapters, there are important issues relating to the crime itself that need to be addressed. One of the more significant obstacles was denial and minimisation of the offence. Rejecting responsibility for a crime and denying its seriousness are not uncommon in non-politically motivated offending, particularly when the offence is informed by attitudes and beliefs (Dixon and Adler 2010). However, these are particularly acute issues with those convicted of terrorism offences. Informed by the political nature of the offence, and the limited legitimacy of the state and its agents, overcoming denial of the crime was a significant challenge. As one OM explained, 'I've got very few that admit their offending, or even, hold any, slight kind of culpability. It's very difficult to work with them when they're a closed book' [LPOM2].

Counterterrorism legislation has burgeoned in recent years. As a result, the space within which practitioners work on offence-related issues has become increasingly contested. Not only has this resulted in many more types of terrorism-related offences being introduced, it has perhaps made it easier for those convicted of these offences to argue they were not legitimate crimes. As an illustration, one individual was convicted of an activity which, when he had carried it out weeks earlier, had been legal. The legitimacy of the crime, particularly when it is for a more peripheral

offence such as possession of terrorist material or protesting, is therefore an easier target for probationers who are seeking ways to resist efforts to address the offence. A SPO explained:

> The crime itself is contested: [they say] 'we were just preaching, we were just in a training camp, and it was just, you know, like, boy scouts, outward adventure'; [that needs] a lot of the kind of preparation, of building legitimacy and credibility. [SPO2]

One of the features of the language surrounding extremist offences is its deeply contested nature (Jackson 2008; Ramsay 2015), and the pejorative identity that appends it. It is perhaps not surprising then, that the probationers resisted the 'extremist' or 'terrorist' identity. There is therefore an effort, both to contest the crime and the identity that surrounds extremism. This acts as an additional barrier that practitioners had to work through before being able to work on offence-related issues, as one explained: 'He says *they* were terrorists, [whereas] he sees himself as someone who got mixed up [in it], and it was afterwards when he was involved' [LPOM5].

Implicated in the denial of the offence and the identity associated with it is the distrust many practitioners were held in by the probationers. In some cases, they refused to engage with issues around the offence at all. As one explained: 'I've got other TACT [Terrorism Act] offenders who deny, and they're very cautious about their approach to probation, and they think we're profiling them, they think, they just see us as a figure of authority like the police' [LPOM2]. Given the high profile and deeply contentious nature of the crime, it is perhaps not surprising that addressing denial was a significant feature of supervision. However, rather than being abnormal, such denial is perhaps better understood as an adaptive response in the face of social and legal sanction, the significant costs associated with admitting the offence, and threats to self-esteem (Rogers and Dickey 1991; Lord and Willmot 2004). Navigating those issues that make denial appear to be the most appropriate way of dealing with the conviction is therefore an important part of practitioners' work. Together, denial of the offence and a belief probation staff were using the information received through supervision for law enforcement rather than rehabilitative ends represented significant barriers to supporting reintegration and ones that probation officers had to develop mechanisms for in order to try and overcome.

Addressing Denial and Minimisation

Two factors relevant to understanding how to work with those who have been involved in extremism but are reluctant to engage are the perceived position of the practitioner, and the practical tools they use to try and support reintegration and reduce the risk of reoffending. The first is crucially informed by the relationship between the probationer and the change agent and the extent to which the former prisoner believes in their rehabilitative ambitions. The second draws on established approaches to develop compliance and motivate the individual to engage with the supervision process.

The shifting nature of probation work over recent years has seen surveillance and monitoring play a greater role in day-to-day practice (Burnett and McNeill 2005). Perhaps unsurprisingly then, the perception that probation officers were more interested in gathering information and controlling their wards than supporting their reintegration into the community was a common problem. Practitioners had to be willing to continue to try and develop a relationship even in the face of antagonism and dissembling; one commented there is 'anxiety about being hoodwinked' [SPO2]. Developing trust and exploring the offence therefore demanded sensitivity, and importantly, a largely non-confrontational approach. Some reported drawing on information from the trial or their co-defendants to try and challenge the accounts provided by the probationers. However, taking this approach carried the risk of undermining any nascent relationship. As a consequence, a number of interviewees felt that it was often counterproductive to engage in a confrontation about specific features of the offence; one practitioner describing this process of learning:

> We tried that [direct] approach; [we told him that] we'd found out information that he hadn't given us, and we put that to him. He just closed up, he closed down, and that wasn't the way forward . . . it felt it became a police interview, where we're firing these questions at him, and he's just almost giving a no-comment interview, it wasn't the way – we had to change the way we went at it. So I've left that alone and just concentrated on . . . looking at the more practical issues . . . and then leaving the offence there, which we can come back to, maybe in the future, when we've built up a little bit more trust. If you haven't seen these people a lot, so often, if they are in denial, it's not always the right time to be doing that [work]. [LPOM2]

Developing a relationship took time, a non-judgemental attitude and a holistic approach. Where workable interpersonal relationships did develop, they were an important vehicle to support reintegration, address denial and learn more about what had influenced the individual (Rex 1999; Ward and Maruna 2007). As one SPO explained: '[T]his was a really difficult lad, that was in quite a lot of denial, but quite receptive, very vulnerable, and as time went on, and we built real rapport with him, we discovered he was one who was prepared to do shaheed' [SPO2]. Starting with the individual's specific needs, taking a 'client-centred' approach and trying to develop a relationship were important parts, both of probation practice (McNeill 2006; Burnett and McNeill 2005) and in the mentor relationships. In the words of a respondent discussing the approach of one community group:

> The mentoring-learning relationship and person-centric approach is not a single approach; i.e. political, religious etc. It is person-centred and eclectic, it is quite traditional, and owes more to person-centred approaches rather than behaviourism. There is mutual respect based on a non-judgemental attitude. [LPT1]

A number of techniques trying to address questions of denial and minimisation centred on taking a different perspective; one approach was to consider potential victims, another involved using case studies. The aim was to support individuals as they looked at the offence they were convicted of from the 'outside'. Given the contested nature of the offences, particularly less serious crimes such as protesting, practitioners worked to develop an understanding of the repercussions of their actions, as one explained: '[W]e've done a lot of work on his offending, and about who the potential victims might be. 'Cos I don't think he saw speeches about 'go and annihilate Americans and Britains' [as having victims]' [LPOM3]. Clarifying who the potential victims were and the consequences of their actions was therefore useful in enabling them to contextualise their offence.

Encouraging individuals to explore the offence indirectly from a third perspective, for example by using a case from the newspaper, a book or a film, provided a less contentious foundation for discussion. Using case studies therefore allowed practitioners to do offence-related work in a way that was less confrontational. This aimed to promote introspection, helped address denial, worked to develop empathy and perhaps

introduce individuals to alternative identity-informed perspectives relevant to extending and exploring their own sense of self. Using role models for those who had changed was also useful, as it gave the offender a potential way out, a future beyond the offence, which are both features of the cycle of change reported in successfully overcoming denial (Lord and Willmot 2004; Prochaska and DiClemente 1986). Respondents described the effect of these techniques in the following ways:

> [We're saying] look at these people who've redeemed themselves; people who've crossed over . . . there's a blue print for people crossing over, and coming back, you won't have blotted your copy book for ever . . . to give them role models of people who've done that. [SPO2]

> Case studies are really good with this type of offender because it allows them to take them out of their own offence, and then make a judgement on someone else's offence, and that works 'cause the ones that are in denial, obviously won't shift on their stance to their own offence, but will be quite open and vocal on other's offences, and sometimes, taking it right out of any TACT [Terrorism Act] offence, and just looking at something completely different, I think can be useful, can be beneficial. [LPOM2]

Although denial and minimisation are persistent challenges, they can be positively influenced through the relationship between the individual and the person trying to promote change. There are important barriers to developing an appropriate supervisory relationship related to the nature of the offence and the probationer's perceptions about the purpose of the process. In line with the wider literature, in the face of denial, forceful efforts to 'break down the client's defences' (Miller and Rollnick 2002, p. 182) were considered largely counterproductive. Instead, it was important to find ways of eliciting and supporting motivations to engage with supervision, taking a more positive approach to individuals and their future.

The Motivation to Engage

Developing and sustaining the motivation to work with probation officers and community mentors in the face of significant barriers to progress was challenging. Practitioners took a pragmatic approach, pursuing factors that helped facilitate and support the internal processes implicated in the

supervision and reintegration experience. As was explained: '[O]bviously he's got to be motivated, it's got to come from him, but we worked with that motivation' [SPO1]. In some cases this involved quite straightforward manipulation of goods, such as reducing the restrictions that made up the licence conditions. However, this form of external motivation, or what might best be described as gaining instrumental compliance, was only the starting point. Although offering rewards for specific behaviours was a useful way of working with those who were reluctant to engage with the supervision process, practitioners recognised this was only the first step in developing more meaningful motivation in the service of successful reintegration. One interviewee described in the following terms how she worked with a particularly reluctant individual:

> It's trying isn't it? Kind of working in every supervision, just trying to build up that relationship, for him to be open and honest with us, and kind of encouraging him: 'well if you tell us this, then we can give you [that]; we can understand a bit more about you; we can lighten your licence conditions' . . . and hope that that might motivate him to go from there. I think at the moment he's just a closed book. [LPOM1]

Motivational interviewing was an important method in the effort to develop the internal motivation to change. Defined as 'a client-centered directive method for enhancing intrinsic motivation to change by exploring and resolving ambivalence' (Miller and Rollnick 2002, p. 25), motivational interviewing is increasingly being recognised as relevant for those involved in extremism (Windfeldt 2014). Five elements inform this approach: (1) expressing empathy; (2) developing discrepancy; (3) rolling with resistance; (4) avoiding argumentation and (5) supporting self-efficacy (Miller and Rollnick 2002). The aim is to encourage individuals to accept the need for change, verbalise it and pursue ways of making that change real so they 'own' the process (Fleet and Annison 2003). Motivation is therefore 'engaged by eliciting from, rather than installing it in, the person' (Lopez-Viets et al. 2002, p. 17) and was described as a valuable way of supporting the reintegration process:

> The aim is to get him some structure, using motivational interviewing. If it comes from them it's solid gold, if he said he wanted to do volunteering,

> then that's perfect. Trying to pull it out of the offender isn't going to work, you're better off trying to push it in. [LPOM5]

Practitioners generally took an individualised approach, adapting their methods in ways they felt made sense for the person they were working with. Both probation and community-based mentors shared a forward-facing focus, trying to understand the type of future individuals aspired to and finding ways to support them as they pursued it. Again informed by motivational interviewing techniques, the aim was to create dissonance by highlighting the discrepancy between where they are now and where they would like to be, and in doing so, elicit motivation to change (Miller and Rollnick 2002; Miller 1983). At its best, this approach supported individuals' self-efficacy, trying to encourage them to broaden their identity commitments, develop their strengths and find a way towards a more positive future. According to one interviewee:

> Change happens internally, we can provide a forum for what happens, but they are in control of their own intervention. It's about someone realising that they're in control, not subject to reprogramming. It's about bringing things to the surface, and giving them the chance. This is similar to many [probation] programmes, in terms of motivational interviewing. It's about eliciting – getting someone to the point of saying, 'I'm unhappy with my offending', and getting them to repeat that: it's about those 'I' statements. You can't force them to use it, and you can't force them to change, it's about them changing internally. [LPOM5]

Supporting personal agency was central to this work. Although motivation may come from elsewhere, such as family commitments, the individual's sense of control was central to the change process (Burnett and McNeill 2005), as Jones (2015) argues 'people with TACT [Terrorism Act] convictions, like most of us, are autonomous beings who value their sense of their own agency' (p. 180). This resonates less with approaches that emphasise measuring and managing risk, and instead relates more clearly to desistance and strengths-based approaches that allow 'the person to rewrite a shameful past into a necessary prelude to a productive and worthy life' (Maruna 2001, p. 87). Focusing on a potential positive future, finding ways of eliciting motivation to pursue that future and channelling the individual's agency were all important aspects of supporting successful outcomes. These were informed by strengths-based accounts of

reintegration, as one interviewee reflected when describing what they felt was the most useful model for interpreting the journey out of extremism:

> Desistance. All the way. This really speaks to the desistance script. . . . I think the people are their own agents of chance, and anything we can do to support that makes sense, and the fact that people do need to rewrite their scripts, in terms of making sense of whatever it was that they did, in carrying the burden of shame . . . to have your own script and your own journey [is important]. [SPO2]

Redirecting Motivation

Risk-oriented approaches emphasise an individual's deficits, typically trying to understand and address criminogenic needs. As a result, some have argued they are less well equipped to motivate former prisoners to engage with rehabilitative interventions (McNeill and Weaver 2010). Because strengths-based approaches are concerned with finding ways of pursuing goals that are meaningful for the individual, they speak more clearly to personal motivation (McMurran and Ward 2004; Ward and Maruna, 2007), and were described implicitly and explicitly as helpful with those involved with extremism.

Described in more detail in Chap. 2, briefly, the GLM assumes we all have regard for particular experiences, values and attachments that are characterised as human goods. Evidence for 11 such goods have been identified: healthy living, knowledge, excellence in work and play, excellence in agency including autonomy, power and self-management, inner peace, relatedness in the context of close relationships, and in a broader sense of community relatedness, spirituality, pleasure and creativity (Purvis 2010). In this framework, criminogenic needs are understood as obstacles that get in the way of achieving goods, or fulfilling human needs in prosocial ways (Ward and Stewart 2003). Where such needs emerge, an individual may pursue maladaptive secondary or approach goals that fulfil the need, but in ways that attract social sanction. Practitioners using the GLM are therefore concerned with supporting the individual as they find appropriate ways of achieving primary goods in ways that do not break the law.

Previous chapters have considered some of the goods implicated in the move away from extremism. In Chap. 3, the importance of agency was emphasised, considering how this supports reintegration across social,

political and economic domains. Together, these speak to pursuing goods relevant to work, relationships and community. Chapter 4 explored the concept of resilience and how this could be supported so that individuals developed the attributes they may need in the face of events that might undermine any developing commitment to remain disengaged from extremism. This involved broadening their sense of self, relevant to agency, and developing more robust critical thinking skills, related to addressing needs relevant to knowledge and spirituality. In what follows, the political nature of the offence is considered in more depth by looking at how practitioners tried to find ways of enabling individuals to redirect the motivation to address questions of social justice in meaningful ways so they can 'utilise their own skills, resources and knowledge, to be a productive member of society' [SPO1].

Inevitably, the goods relevant to the GLM are related to one another in complex and dynamic ways, and understanding what motivates individuals and the kinds of future they aspire to is deeply individualised. There is not one single 'good' or human need that speaks to those political and social questions that can motivate involvement in extremism. Indeed, one of the observations regularly made in the literature on engagement and disengagement from terrorism is the heterogeneous nature of the individuals involved. While it is the case that the individual accounts of those involved in violent settings are often quite different, the heterogeneity argument also perhaps reflects the limits of the analytical frameworks that have been brought to bear on questions of 'radicalisation' and 'deradicalisation'. As argued earlier, many of the interpretations in the literature of these processes rest on a series of largely descriptive factors assumed to be implicated in the move towards and away from violence; perhaps a more satisfying account is possible by standing back from these specific factors to try and observe what categories they might be examples of. In doing so, it becomes possible to look beyond those specific, individual markers such as discrimination or foreign policy, to see these in terms of classes of motivation reflected in the GLM approach. Importantly, this does not necessarily mean that a successful outcome involves rejecting the ideas or political goals associated with the offence. In Northern Ireland, research has demonstrated the extent to which former IRA members remain committed to the same ideas, aims and principles they once pursued through violence. With the peace agreement, it was less that the political ideas changed, but the manner in which they were pursued. As Shirlow et al. argue:

> [F]ormer IRA prisoners contend that it is not the constitution of republican ideology that has shifted, but the practice of ideology and alternative

> methods that have been allied to what is a potentially more 'successful' political and community strategy. (2010, pp. 17–18)

The authors reject the idea that there has been 'ideological ditching', but instead, suggest there has been a significant rejection of violence in the pursuit of change (Shirlow et al. 2010, p. 18). In the context of the peace process, the aim was not to ideologically 'rehabilitate' those who had been involved in violence, but to find more cooperative ways of addressing the political and social challenges that informed the conflict and post-conflict settings (QIASS 2010). Important goods are implicated in this process of redirection. Most notably, involvement in post-conflict, community-based peace work confers a degree of social capital that in some cases extended, or replaced the forms of capital that participants experienced when embedded in violent opposition. In addition, Gordon Clubb (2014) highlights the fact that many of the former combatants recast themselves as community activists working in a range of capacities at the community level, for example, providing advice and working at the interface areas (Clubb 2014). The result was that 'their contribution was not something to be left in the past but instead was to be harnessed into future meaningful conflict-transformation work' (Shirlow et al. 2010, p. 30). Although the political ambitions of global jihadism are sufficiently different to make this parallel relevant only in the most general terms, the broader point is that individual trajectories are shaped by a series of personal and political goods that can play a role in sustaining the move away from violence.

Responding to Grievances

One of the implications of the GLM is that the motives which inform offending are 'normal'. That is, the GLM assumes we are all motivated to address particular human needs, sustain a sense of well-being and pursue primary goods (Ward et al. 2006). The difference is that offenders do this in a way that breaks the law. Applying these principles to terrorism offending de-exceptionalises an offence that is often approached as something quite distinct from 'normal' human experience. Recognising that 'some of their motivation came from a good place . . . there are legitimate grievances' [SPO2] was therefore important in developing, first, a more authentic dialogue around the offence, and second, a way of sketching out a more positive future. Drawing

on some of the positive motivations implicated in the range of political and social issues commonly referred to as grievances provided an opportunity to develop the motivation to work towards successful reintegration.

A range of issues are typically wrapped up in the notion of 'grievance' which together speak to the desire to bring into being an alternative vision of how society is organised. These can include local, national and global issues ranging from discrimination, social exclusion, foreign policy and Western social values. Alone, these issues are insufficient to explain involvement in extremism (Smelser 2007). Given the number of people subject to such experiences, if they were central to the 'radicalisation' process, there would be far more violence than we currently see. A further challenge facing explanations of 'radicalisation' that centre on grievance is the assumption high-risk activists hold 'radical' views. However, just as 'terrorists' are not always 'radical', 'radicals' are not always 'terrorists' (Horgan and Taylor 2011). This was something recognised by practitioners, as one probation officer explained: '[you need a] sense of where is the grievance: is it reducing? Because you can have grievances and not be a terrorist' [LPOM5]. However, the political claims of those involved in extremism are not irrelevant to their choice to become involved. Instead, stated grievances need to be understood in the context of individual lives. This was noted by one probation officer:

> Social exclusion, racism, things like that, you know, diversity's a big part of it, foreign policy, perceived injustice and grievance . . . grievance is an important part, foreign policy, it's about the impact factors; that people are seeing [Muslim] children dying on the TV, these can have big impacts on people. [SPO3]

The implication for those invested in trying to support positive change is that deconstructing the ideas and beliefs argued by some to inform involvement in extremism is less important than understanding the goods they seek to pursue, and finding ways of addressing those same issues in prosocial ways. Reflecting the concern with developing resilience through critical thinking and critical consumption skills, practitioners took more of an educational rather than dogmatic approach to addressing particular grievances. One community mentor observed that:

> [F]oreign policy . . . that's quite a good one in some ways, because no-one's gonna say, you know you're wrong in all your thoughts about what's

> happening in the world, but it might just be a case of just letting people know that things are slightly more complicated – that there isn't just this kind of two ways to look at things, there's an incredible amount of complexity to what's happening in the world . . . Just trying to kind of educate people to see the bigger picture of all that stuff. But it won't be just like: 'you're wrong, you're wrong'; you know? Just trying to educate them I suppose. [CG01]

On the question of whether it is necessary to deconstruct those ideas and beliefs thought to justify terrorism, practitioners had slightly different perspectives dependent on their respective positions, which in turn related to their overall aims. Community-based groups were more robust in tackling specific issues related to ideology and political grievance, while statutory agents were generally concerned with risk reduction and reframing the discussion in ways that were more directly relevant to their reintegration. One probation officer expressed this in the following terms: '[Y]ou're not there to get caught up in political debate. It's more about thinking if they do have these grievances, . . . it's about how you challenge that in a different way . . . you're not there to break down people's beliefs' [LPOM3]. For most practitioners, the behavioural indicators of high-risk activism were the most important issue, both in terms of the aims of interventions, and as markers of progress. This focus was described by two interviewees:

> I think a TACT [Terrorism Act] offender can change, but, the specific radical views won't change. Because . . . from their perspective, it's about us and them. . . . If I achieve rehabilitation with someone, who says 'OK, I'm against the war in Afghanistan, I'm against America, but, I keep my views to myself, and I don't commit violence, I don't kill anybody', [that's enough]. [LPOM4]

> He's always gonna have strong political beliefs, that's the way he is, and he's got a really strong sense of injustice, but I think what he's learned now, is that he can't channel those in the way he was. He now understands that the way he did was illegal, and harmful, and that now he needs to challenge those in a different way . . . He says he's not even gonna protest any more, but I think he kinda knows the limits. I don't think we can always change people's attitudes. I think it's unrealistic to think that we were gonna be able to change people's religious and political views, I don't always think that you can. [LPOM3]

As well as developing the skills to understand the complex nature of the issues the individual was most concerned with, there was an effort to redirect motivation in positive ways. One of the most obvious mechanisms was engaging with the political process more meaningfully. Practitioners discussed democracy as a social system and the opportunities it provided for effecting change. One interviewee described how he dealt with this issue: '[I]f you feel the need to complain about foreign policy, understanding that you can, there is a way to do it – you can go and vote for a party' [SPO3]. Engaging politically, rather than violently, can, in some cases, be 'part of the solution to radicalisation: it gives positive alternatives for those who feel disillusioned and voiceless, [and] it provides vehicles for solving deeply entrenched problems associated with deprivation suffered by many Muslims' (Briggs and Birdwell 2009, p. 27).

However, significant challenges face the effort to sustain more adaptive ways of pursuing social change, the first of which is the substantial gap between the individual and the broader community. Respondents reported a great deal of scepticism and distrust of wider society, reflected both in their unwillingness to engage with mainstream structures, and their lack of belief they might be able to instantiate meaningful change.

The community groups had the capacity to act as a bridge between the individual and society, as one youth worker explained: '[W]e kind of act as a conduit between them and the rest of the world' [CG01]. However, probationers still faced the challenge of those wider systemic and structural factors often reflected in their clients' original grievances. Although the extent and nature of Muslim political engagement, including around security issues, is complex, multilayered and dynamic (Hopkins and Gale 2009; O'Toole et al. 2016), practitioners' perceptions were that those they worked with could see little scope for positive political engagement. A lack of role models, the limited attention paid to public opinion, most notably over UK intervention in the Middle East, and the remoteness of parliamentary politics all inhibited a more proactive approach to promoting change. However, the community groups were able to discuss how to best engage with the reality of contemporary politics in ways that supported reintegration. Two SPOs explained this interplay between statutory and community-based groups:

> [T]he Muslim community knows that actually lots of people have straddled this very difficult idea – you know, what is jihad and how do

> you protest in a way that's legitimate . . . So, you're putting them back with a group who can speak to their condition, in the way that I don't think I speak to their condition. . . . I think I try and protect society from the offending that arises from an over commitment to that condition. [SPO2]

> [W]e're trying to build on what they [community groups] are doing; the ability of their mentors, to do the Islamic sort of aspects of it, and the cultural and street-end aspects of it; and we'll try and build on that in supervision, you know, talk about grievances, on the proper way of airing grievances, about voting and things like, that you know, normalise them, and get them back into mainstream society. [SPO3]

The two major themes set out in the previous chapters on the importance of reintegration into wider social structures and supporting resilience by developing internal strengths are both reflected in efforts to redirect the motivation to engage in extremism. Rather than attempting to deconstruct particular ideas or attitudes, practitioners first tried to develop a more critical approach to the information and ideas that underpinned their grievances. They then explored ways of supporting agency and alternative routes to addressing social and political concerns in ways that did not break the law. Making progress across both of these measures was described as success. However, challenges faced this effort, a central feature of which was the distance between the individual and wider society, and in particular, the political system. Here, community groups were able to provide a more accessible and tangible way of speaking to those political and social motivations by providing mechanisms to support change at the local level, through what are often described as generative activities.

Generative Activities

Providing a more immediate mechanism by which individuals might pursue goods was an important function of the community-based groups. This was supported in a number of ways. Some found avenues to discuss and debate particular political or social issues, while others tried to involve clients in their work. In most cases, there was an effort to reflect concern about global events at the local level. One group leader described how his organisation facilitated this:

> It's just a way of giving them channels to air their grievances as well basically. 'Cos it might well be that we'll say, 'ok, we understand that you've got issues with what's happening in Gaza, and to be honest, we perhaps might even agree with you, . . . but there's a way of channelling your anger about this and there's ways of dealing with it . . . the emotional response to it isn't the best way basically'. You can say that on the one hand but then providing channels to facilitate that sort of stuff as well. [CG06]

Two wider mechanisms were implicated in the effort to provide alternative outlets for political concerns: socialisation into and greater identification with the local community, and providing the opportunity for 'generative activities' – those behaviours concerned with sustaining or developing others' well-being (McAdams and St Aubin 1998). Beyond these mechanisms, it is worth noting the importance of contingency, those accidents of fate that allow the individual to imagine his or her future in a different way. The following is an example related by one of the community groups of how accidentally being in the right place at the right time allowed one individual to reflect on how he could contribute positively to society (some details have been changed to protect the anonymity of those involved):

> We've demonstrated to one of the individuals as to how effective he was by accident of being there. He prevented a young girl from being raped five times, well gang-raped by five young Muslims. And he was just there by accident . . . and he walked by, where these young girls were frequenting, all the other girls walked off except one, and five, six guys were there, trying to get her into a car, and he questioned them, and then he ran and called us out. So he got involved. So we said: forget what's happening in Afghanistan for a minute, that young girl could have got raped five times, not by British soldiers, by British Muslims, and this is the work we're doing.
>
> So I'm not taking your focus off Afghanistan, we are fighting that as well. I said, you don't have to be Muslim to understand the suffering of innocent people, I said, but there's ways and means of doing it, and we're taking that fight, we speak to the government, and we air our grievances, you know, 'why are you killing innocent people?' We understand that there's a war on terrorism, we understand that there's terrorism. But why are you killing innocent people, but also there's a war going on in our own streets, in our own community, that we're addressing so we're giving them that negative cause, and replacing it with a positive cause, and a justifiable one, but we have to demonstrate that to them, and in an environment like this, things

> happen on a daily basis, so they get exposed to certain realities that they weren't exposed to before, because, they've always believed that this has been an agenda by the British government, or the CIA, or Mossad, to undermine British Muslim communities, and we say, perhaps you haven't been exposed to this kind of environment before, well here is what's going on. . . . So we expose them to that, and that's what helps them make the change, makes them see reality. [CG09]

The accuracy of the details here are perhaps less important than the insight offered into what this community mentor believed was relevant in supporting change. First was the importance of providing the opportunity for someone to realise their own potential to bring about positive change; second, the relevance of central motivating factors – in this case relating to community protection and an agentic approach to being in the world; and third, the forum the community setting offered for individual exploration in a supportive environment able to reflect back the individual's actions in ways that facilitate change.

This account also speaks to the relevance of generativity, or the idea of giving back and supporting or caring for others, with a particular concern for the next generation (Maruna 2001). Such activities provide fulfilment, confer meaning to an individual's past and future, facilitate a feeling of exoneration and legitimacy, as well as acting as a form of therapy, ideally helping to support and maintain desistance (Maruna 2001). Although recognised in accounts of desistance from non-politically motivated crime (McNeill and Maruna 2007), the role of generative activities is particularly relevant for those implicated in extremism. Notwithstanding the range of motivations relevant to understanding how and why an individual becomes involved in extremism, this type of offending is fundamentally social, aiming to remake the social and political world in a different image. What is commonly described as extremist behaviour is therefore an inherently goal-oriented, normative project which links individual action with the route to achieving a minority view of a subjectively defined 'better future'. It therefore has a social and political motivation that can, if redirected, help to inform change.

The relevance of generative activities can be characterised by three aspects: (1) the importance of primary goods pertaining to community, relatedness and agency; (2) a shift in identity, so the individual moves closer to an identity more closely aligned with wider norms and (3) the positive

role community-based groups can play in providing a forum for an individual to pursue goods in socially acceptable ways. As McNeill and Maruna suggest: '[I]f we want to encourage offenders to "give up" crime, we would do well to create opportunities for them to engage in "giving back"' (2007, p. 234). These ideas are rooted in strengths-based approaches to reintegration, and crucially, they are a two-way process; not only does the individual need to be motivated to 'give back', but society must provide a forum for this as well as appropriate recognition when it happens (McNeill and Maruna 2007). In the same way, through mentoring and community-based work around extremism, there is the opportunity to develop local level resilience in ways that sustain and support more positive outcomes at the community as well as the individual level (Spalek and Davies 2012). The community groups represented an important set of resources that provided an alternative way of expressing concern about social and political questions. They also offered a different social network by which these might be realised and where individuals might feel they belong. In the words of one group leader:

> [We] made them feel a part of another network that's also anti-system. So what we'll do is we'll try and mirror the image, mirror the tactics, of his old network. When he feels comfortable in that network, it removes the barrier that he now believes – well he used to believe that we were part of the system. He now believes that: 'hang on a minute, these guys are alright, these guys are real people, these guys are taking a battle, they're fighting this cause in a different way', so we make them relate to that. [CG8]

The opportunity for alternative identity commitments to be recognised and celebrated is also important. As Giordano et al. (2002) argue, the environment provides the resources which an individual draws on to develop an alternative sense of self that is both attractive and informs life changes. As Dean (2014) suggests, when discussing the National Offender Management Services' work with those convicted of terrorism offences:

> Our experiences to date suggest that those individuals who've turned their backs on being involved in extremist activity and offending appear to have done so because it no longer fulfils their expectations, priorities or values in

> life. Perhaps most importantly, involvement no longer seems to reflect the type of person they want to be and therefore it becomes something they no longer want to identify with. (p. 90)

Perhaps the most substantive outcome reported by the groups which they believed reflected a positive outcome was 'by their involvement in our work; by their commitment' [CG8]. A desire to work with the community group or protect others from the consequences of extremism was described both as a goal the groups worked towards and also as a natural conclusion to the intervention work. This is illustrated by the following quote: '[W]e consider success, that a person feels confident to tell us that somebody's gonna do something, and at least we need, or somebody needs to know about it. . . . That [shows] we've turned him around' [CG1].

Not everyone achieves positive outcomes or engages in generative activities. More commonly, people continue navigating their social reality in ways that enable them to survive rather than necessarily thrive. There are, as discussed earlier, significant structural and individual level barriers that can inhibit involvement with the community and the pursuance of generative activities (Nugent and Schinkel 2016). Nevertheless, it remains vital to recognise the importance of providing opportunities to engage with the community in ways that 'give back' and reflect those primary goods relevant to the decision to become involved in extremism in the first place.

Conclusion

Although realistic about their potential impact, there was cautious optimism that in some cases practitioners may be able to facilitate a move away from extremism. In pursuing this, probation officers and community-based mentors worked to develop ways of redirecting the motivation to offend in ways that did not break the law. Interpreting these in the context of the GLM's concern with primary goods, this chapter has suggested that by understanding the kinds of goods relevant to the individual and finding alternative, prosocial ways of pursuing them, a more sustainable route to desistance might be reached. Motivation was developed by using techniques commonly applied in probation practice, including motivational interviewing. By focusing on potential positive futures, practitioners tried to encourage individuals to take responsibility

for their convictions. Finding positive ways of responding to those grievances that informed the offence was important in supporting positive outcomes. Similarly, generative activities played a role, as did the space community-based groups provided for an individual to become committed to a different identity relevant to the group and the local community. Together, there was some hope that these mechanisms enabled practitioners to support positive outcomes and overcome the not so insignificant barriers to reintegration.

CHAPTER 6

Reintegrating Extremists: Challenges and Opportunities

Abstract This final chapter draws together the empirical and theoretical insights developed through the book to describe an alternative way of approaching the reintegration of those involved in extremism. Interpreting the multiple aims implicated in this work using criminological theory suggesting a desistance or strengths-based approach, understood within an overarching framework of reintegration, seems to have significant promise. In particular, because of the specific features of politically motivated offending, often informed by the desire to achieve a subjectively defined positive future, the approach reflected in the GLM seems particularly well suited. This concluding chapter also examines the nature and implications of the barriers to reintegration faced by those with terrorism convictions. Finally, the implications for 'foreign fighters' returning from involvement in overseas conflicts are considered.

Keywords Desistance · Extremism · strengths-based approaches · Deradicalisation · Foreign fighters

Drawing on expert practitioner knowledge and criminological theory, this book has explored what supports successful reintegration. Despite the challenges facing those disengaging from extremism, including moving away from established social networks and adjusting to what can sometimes be a difficult family environment as well as trying to seek employment while carrying a terrorism conviction, practitioners were optimistic

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that in some cases, they could support successful outcomes. This final chapter draws together the empirical and theoretical insights developed through the book to describe an alternative way of approaching the reintegration of those involved in extremism. Interpreting the multiple aims implicated in this work using criminological theory suggests a desistance or strengths-based approach, understood within an overarching framework of reintegration, seems to have significant promise. In particular, because of the specific features of politically motivated offending, often informed by the desire to achieve a subjectively defined positive future, the approach reflected in the GLM seems particularly valuable.

Importantly, this concluding discussion also examines the nature and implications of the barriers to reintegration faced by those with terrorism convictions. As argued previously, they are 'positioned on the periphery of society, required to (re)integrate but stripped of many of the mechanisms that might make this possible' (Marsden 2015, p. 17). Acknowledging these barriers and making efforts at both the practice and policy levels to lower them are vital to supporting desistance from terrorism offending. Some of the challenges practitioners face with this population are also considered. Given the high profile and potentially high-risk nature of people with terrorism convictions, those on the front line trying to assess risk and ensure public protection take on a significant challenge. In the face of this, it remains important to prioritise reintegration and take a holistic, contextualised and, above all, individualised approach. Finally, the implications for those returning from involvement in overseas conflicts are considered. Recommendations focus on the need to maintain an inclusive approach, such that they feel they have a 'home' country willing and able to facilitate their reintegration back into society over the long term.

Reintegrating Extremists

The account of disengagement set out here rests on three themes implicated in the move away from extremism: *reintegrating* across social, political, economic and moral domains; *redirecting* the motivation to become involved in extremism; and developing *resilience* to those things which might undermine the motivation to remain disengaged. These themes are informed by a reinterpretation of the motivation to become involved in radical settings, and looking at the benefits people seek to achieve through extremism. Recognising the contextualised, embedded nature of people's lives brings into relief the challenges facing the 'deradicalisation' construct,

which tends to isolate individuals from their wider context. The position set out in the preceding chapters takes a holistic approach that develops and sustains personal strengths in ways that support positive outcomes by reshaping the way people pursue particular goods.

Underpinning these themes is an acknowledgement of the subjective nature of judgements concerning how society should be organised, how individual goods might manifest themselves and how resilience might be understood. Such assessments are in large part determined by the ideological structure within which the individual is embedded, be it global jihadism or the liberal democracy of contemporary British society. In the effort to ensure someone committed to jihadist ideology, and by extension, jihadist identity, does not break the law, successful reintegration is informed by a shift in ideological and identity-related commitments.

Understanding the process of moving away from extremism as one of *reintegration* rather than 'deradicalisation' contextualises the individual, taking account of their wider ecology in ways that do not over-prioritise questions of individual beliefs or ideology. Rather than being a direct causal factor in the engagement process, here ideology is understood as a wider framework that determines what is of value, how society should be organised, and how and which goods should be pursued. A successful outcome either sees the individual develop a commitment to an alternative set of ideas and nurture a different sense of self in ways that enable reintegration across social, political and economic domains, or involves that person developing the skills to navigate competing commitments in ways that do not pose a threat to public safety.

The motivation that informs involvement in illegal activism is a function of the effort to pursue shared human goods, but in ways that society considers maladaptive; *redirecting* that motivation promises a way of supporting successful reintegration. For example, the effort to address issues such as social injustice perpetrated against co-religionists might be carried out through violence or legal protest campaigns, or the need for social affiliation may be pursued through involvement with radical networks or positive social groups. These are of course, simplistic examples, while the motives for becoming engaged in extremism are complex, dynamic and likely to differ from case to case. Similarly, motives interact in important ways, making it necessary to take a holistic approach and avoid the temptation to break people down into measures of risk. Some of the ways practitioners spoke of supporting positive futures included: developing agency through a more self-referential identity; pursuing goods related to knowledge through

deepening religious understanding or nurturing critical thinking skills; and fulfilling goods related to community through generative activities, or relatedness by healing fractured family relationships. Understanding how these issues interact by taking into account the complex nature of involvement experiences, and asking what people seek to achieve through engaging in extremism, provides an alternative perspective to explanations that rest on personal deficits, needs or other negative phenomena.

Statutory agents and community-based mentors are in a position to facilitate an individual's re-entry into society in important ways. Most obviously, they can do this by providing resources and practical support, such as helping in the search for employment. However, change agents are also able to play an important symbolic role in modelling appropriate relationships between the state and the citizen. They are also in a position to reflect social acceptance of individuals in the wake of their conviction, or identification as being 'at risk of radicalisation'. By working with former prisoners in the service of reintegration, change agents have the capacity to act as a bridge between the individual and society, helping to develop connections to wider social systems. Moreover, community mentors are able to act as role models, both in terms of their own identity – particularly when they share a history of extremism – and also through their activism, reflecting ways of challenging and resisting the state that do not break the law. Finally, community mentors can demonstrate the permeability of identity and ideological boundaries. They are tangible examples that demonstrate, whilst it may not always be easy, it is possible to incorporate and navigate different identity commitments in ways that sustain well-being.

The strengths-based approach to reintegration that informs the GLM focuses attention on the importance of developing *resilience* by nurturing personal capacities. Rather than deconstructing individuals' sense of self or attacking particular ideas or beliefs, by building their strengths it is possible, in some cases, to develop resilience to those people, events or experiences that might undermine any growing commitment to remain disengaged from extremism. Together, the aim is to work towards a positive future through redirecting those motivations relevant to the engagement experience. Implicated in this process is the importance of fostering and supporting agency so that individuals feel empowered to be their own agents of change on their journey out of extremism.

Together, I have argued it is crucial to take account of the wider social, political and community context the individual is reintegrating into as well as the opportunities and risks this poses. Framing efforts to support former

prisoners and those considered 'at risk' of involvement in extremism in the context of reintegration, rather than 'deradicalisation', not only contextualises individuals, but also assumes a more holistic approach, looking at how their wider ecology, identity commitments and personal experiences interact to inform their journey into or out of extremism.

Prioritising reintegration draws attention to the role community-based mentors are able to play in supporting successful outcomes. Importantly, this conceptualises the 'community' as being a particular, bounded group of people who a former prisoner knows, interacts with and in time, can feel part of. Framing the idea of the community in this way pushes back against the idea of the amorphous, ill-defined 'Muslim community' that is the subject of much political and media commentary. Similarly, there is no assumption that any particular community is 'responsible' either for causing extremism or responding to it; both arguments have featured in public commentary about the 'Muslim community' position in the post-9/11 era. Instead, the idea of responsibility reflected by the community-based groups is closer to what one mentor described as 'a Muslim brother factors; where we are extending our help to them' [CG7]. As another mentor explained:

> We say very clearly that we're doing this because we believe it to be true. This is what Islam believes to be true. Not because we want to be on your payroll or to be a spy or anything like this. We're doing it because keeping the community safe is part of Islam, ensuring that people are safe and free from harm, it's for Islam. And that's why we help. [CG5]

Finally, by taking a strengths-based approach to disengagement and reintegration, I have also suggested an alternative way of thinking about the process of engaging in extremism. Rather than broad-based process models informed by particular risk factors typically related to negative phenomena, such as victimisation or grievance, I suggest that involvement in extremism can be understood as a maladaptive way of securing primary goods. The most appropriate way of achieving such goods is informed by the ideological setting the individual is embedded within. The capacity to actualise violence in the service of those goods depends on the presence of others able to mobilise the symbolic and material resources necessary to enable otherwise disparate individuals to act. Decisions to engage in extremism are therefore taken in the context of socially and culturally mediated ways of achieving particular goods. By implication, the desire to change the social and political

reality is not abnormal, but is instead inspired by the same drive to address common human needs that we all share. The difference is the ideological framework the individual is embedded within and how this informs the ways in which such goods might best be pursued alongside the accessibility of those practical mechanisms that make this a possibility.

Engagement in illegal activism can be understood as an effort to pursue primary goods in ways that are proscribed by wider society. Disengagement can be interpreted as a growing commitment to achieving primary goods in ways society does not deem illegal. The task of supporting desistance is therefore one of facilitating sustainable, prosocial ways of achieving particular goods, and developing resilience to people and events that might undermine any growing commitment to remain disengaged from extremism. Although possible to interpret these experiences in the context of broader categories of goods, the process is ineluctably individualised, informed by the context of people's lives, their experiences and the way these interact with wider ideological, operational and material structures.

Holistic and Individualised

Despite attempts to map different 'types' of extremists (Perliger et al. 2016), many practitioners resisted efforts to typologise probationers, one commented: 'they're not a typology, they're individuals. There are different motivations and it needs an individual approach' (field notes). As Tony Ward and Shadd Maruna suggest: 'human beings [are] essentially embodied agents existing within a network of social, cultural and physical relationships' (Ward and Maruna 2007, p. 163). By implication each individual needs to be approached holistically, with an awareness of the particularities of their experience, the way internal motives and external influences interact, how these interactions produce different outcomes over time, and how contingency and happenstance can also play a role. As one group leader explained, '[we're dealing with a] multi-dimensional problem, and we ought to provide multi-dimensional solutions' [CG7].

The community-based groups were particularly well positioned to address the complex and dynamic nature of what were deeply individualised experiences. As an OM suggested: 'the mentors show how to guide them holistically' [LPT3]. Rather than assuming specific factors such as religion or ideology were relevant, those issues of greatest salience to the

individual were prioritised, allowing the individual to guide the interaction. Two mentors explained:

> Because although, obviously, we are working with young people at risk of radicalisation, there's lots of other issues that they face as well, as you can imagine. In this area, there's large scale social deprivation and . . . all sorts of problems with gangs, guns, knives, all that kind of stuff. [CG6]

> So this is where the long haul comes in to it, of sitting there with him and, you know, tackling his, tackling his experiences . . . it's almost like opening a box with someone and going through that box with them: 'So, yeah, this is a valuable thing, but you should get rid of that. Or maybe you're assessing this thing in the wrong way.' [CG4]

The engagement process is multidimensional and led by the individual. It addresses particular issues of relevance to them in ways that are sensitive to their context, background, and current situation. Mentors differed as to how directive they were. Some were quite robust in engaging with the probationers, while others were more facilitative, guiding individuals as they explored their situation while providing support and discussing areas of contention. However, in most cases, there was an effort to avoid a coercive approach, allowing individuals to set the pace of engagement which involved 'feeling the way, and getting them to want to go' [LPT3]. In the words of one community group leader:

> If I'm coming to talk to you, and I've talked to you over a while, and I've realised that you've got some ideological issues, but you've also got some family issues, and there is also a person who is driving you towards being angry . . . I just can't come and say: 'I'm just going to talk to you about ideology today'. So I allow you to bring the subjects. . . . It's led by the individual. [CG1]

Although structured risk assessment measures that take a more uniform approach to interpreting needs are important, in order to develop an understanding of how best to support someone, it is more helpful to understand the person holistically, accepting the complexity of the individual's experience. A mentor explained this process: '[Y]ou make decisions looking at the complexity of the situation, and pick up one strand first, address that, undo that knot and then you move on to another one' [CG7]. The following account of desistance-based practice by Fergus

McNeill reflected important aspects of work with those involved in extremism, emphasising the need to take a holistic, individualised approach:

> Desistance-focused probation practice requires thoroughly individualised assessment, focused on the inter-relationships between desistance factors, which build towards clear plans to support change. It requires engaging, active and participative relationships characterised by optimism, trust and loyalty, as well as interventions targeted at those aspects of each individual's motivations, attitudes, thinking and values which might help or hinder progress towards desistance. Crucially, it also requires work to access and support opportunities for change, for example around accommodation and employment. (2003, p. 160)

What seems clear is that taking a monitoring and control approach based purely on assessments of risk is not enough to ensure long-term reintegration and secure sustainable positive outcomes. Factors internal to the individual and related to ideological and identity-related commitment need to be addressed alongside more standard criminogenic needs pertaining to employment, education or social relationships. It is less a question of either/or in terms of focusing on intrapersonal change, social context or criminogenic need, and instead more a complex interaction between shifting levels and types of motivation, dynamic personal circumstances, changes in attitudes and beliefs and the individual's socio-economic position and aspirations. As Maruna et al. argue:

> Both societal reactions and 'agentic' experiences are necessary, but neither is sufficient alone. Ex-offenders need to be morally and socially reintegrated, but they also have to feel that that this reintegration has been justified by their own efforts. (2004, p. 279)

Barriers to Reintegration

Even when applying a more holistic and individualised approach to reintegration, a series of barriers still face those attempting to move away from extremism. These are reflected in the individuals' resistance to change, the suspicion of efforts to support them, and the barriers that developed through the process of engaging in extremism. Importantly, social and

economic barriers also interfere with successful reintegration. These are informed by the stigma associated with the offence and the problems associated with reintegrating into a particular community or family setting, and alongside the difficulty of finding work. There can also be trauma as a consequence of involvement in violence, or through contact with the criminal justice system that needs to be navigated on the journey away from illegal activism. However, there are a number of further barriers that are important to consider which are embedded in the wider context of how those with terrorism offences are managed. There are particular sensitivities around multi-agency work relating to differing practices between the police and probation services that can make the supervision process more contentious than with non-politically motivated offences. There are also challenges relating to individuals' resistance to the interventions they are introduced to and difficulties in finding alternative ways of fulfilling some of the goods people secured through involvement in extremism.

Resistance to Interventions

Despite the hope that interventions from statutory and community-based actors can have a positive effect on reintegration outcomes, one member of probation staff noted about less engaged probationers: 'some of them do just ride the process out' [LPT3]. In some cases, probationers refused to engage with community mentors. This was in part explained by the suspicions some of the probationers had about the process; as one individual put it when describing his opinion of the group he was referred to after being convicted of a terrorism offence: 'I was entirely suspicious . . . as far as I was concerned it was a trap, an opportunity to spy on me' (BBC 2015). There were also occasions when the community groups were reluctant to engage with specific individuals: for example, if they believed them to be too entrenched in their views, or if they had come into contact with them before their conviction. As one group leader explained, both about their decision not to engage with an individual and a referral's choice not to work with them:

> When people are referred to us, and when we're deciding to work with somebody, we have to make this judgement, that we feel that we can actually help this individual. And there are some individuals who [probation] have given us, and we've said; 'Nah, it's alright, we're not gonna

> work with them, because we know them from before, we know their attitude from before'. [CG1]

> [Some of them] they don't want to interact with us . . . especially from the more hard end individuals, 'cos they know that when they interact with us, their whole thing is going to be pulled from underneath their feet, so they don't really want that to happen, and they also don't want other people, maybe who are in their peer group, to see that occurring: if we kind of totally deconstruct their whole thing, they will totally lose credibility. [CG1]

This second quote is interesting insofar as it illustrates the social capital that often attends involvement in a radical network and the way this can act as a barrier to change. Practitioners recognised that those who were more invested in the radical group were less able to move away from it, particularly where the alternative future being promoted by probation was unlikely to fulfil the goods they gained from being part of that group. For example, one ideologue, well-known for his sermonising and entrenched political views, reportedly offered to relinquish his commitment to jihadism if he were offered a high status role in a 'deradicalisation' programme. What this example seems to demonstrate is the importance of a particular form of capital in his decision to remain involved in the radical setting, and additionally, the need to take account of the goods relevant to him in the effort to support disengagement. His offer was not accepted, in part because bargaining is not always the most effective way of supporting successful resettlement, but also because of the potential risk he could have posed had his apparent willingness to walk away from extremism been inauthentic. In the words of one OM describing his decision not to place someone in a group including those considered 'at risk' of involvement in extremism: 'I would be loath to introduce someone to a group, because of the danger of [him] infecting that group and taking over' [SPO4].

A further barrier to reintegration can be the experience of imprisonment. First, being incarcerated can prove a difficult experience which can entrench negative attitudes towards statutory agencies. This can undermine the task of developing a productive relationship with the former prisoner. A second way prison can act as a barrier is through the capital that individuals gain as a consequence of imprisonment. The kudos can enhance their reputation, making it more difficult to find ways of fulfilling those goods related to social standing. The result can be a refusal to

engage with change agents in an effort not to lose this capital, as one mentor suggested:

> Those higher-end individuals, they view themselves as being at the forefront, the vanguard, so, obviously, they have to maintain a certain posture, a certain aura; you know they wanna remain unpenetrable [sic]. [CG1]

Probation staff and community mentors recognised the challenges of dealing with what one OM described as 'narcissistic preachers' [SPO4]. What made this issue particularly acute was the limited period of time they were available to work with; this was due to relatively short licence periods following conviction for what were typically lower-order offences. A further issue was the unknown nature of the risk they posed. Finding ways of managing risk in a multi-agency setting that included a range of different organisational perspectives, from counterterrorism police to community-based agencies, occupied a significant amount of time and, in some cases, represented a further barrier to reintegration.

Practice-Based Barriers

Terrorism is a persistent feature of political and media debate. This wider context creates an almost unique environment for those trying to support the reintegration of those convicted of terrorism offences. The highly politicised nature of the crime, the significant risk those convicted of such offences are believed to pose and the potentially catastrophic consequences of not assessing risk accurately, all contribute to a challenging working environment. In some cases, particularly in the early days of this work, the effect was to heighten perceptions of threat and increase stress: 'I think [my anxiety] was high when I was first given the case, because you hear terrorism, and you're thinking: Oh my God!' [LPOM1]. Practitioners were also conscious of the potential risk to themselves, and expressed considerable concern over the consequences of making a mistake. A senior probation officer described the experience when she had advised against recalling someone to prison:

> You've made a rational decision, a professional decision, and yet there's [nervousness]; and that could just be a lack of confidence, or just the organisation: the weight of the organisation's wrath and fury . . . staff have that all the time . . . but I think that's because it's a new area. [SPO2]

A further source of strain, and in many cases, an important source of support, was multi-agency collaboration. Typically in the context of MAPPA, practitioners from a range of different agencies would meet to make decisions about individual cases, including determining levels of risk. MAPPA are a central part of public protection, and are particularly important as a forum for sharing information, and for scrutinising and sharing responsibility for decisions. They were described as: '[c]hallenging. Reassuring. Cooperative. I think essential, you know, I think they are – they have to be there' [SPO2].

However, MAPPA also presented a number of challenges informed by the differing aims and cultures of the various organisations around the table, particularly between the police and probation. One interviewee explained: '[W]e come from different perspectives; we are for rehabilitation, they [police] are more for controlling and monitoring' [LPOM4]. Although probation staff recognised the importance of rehabilitation and monitoring, contention centred on how to determine the most appropriate balance, as the following quote demonstrates:

> Generally it [multi-agency cooperation] works well, but you come up against problems, with the police . . . they have a different viewpoint on things don't they? They're very much about keeping people – they're about restricting people, keeping people in prison, putting stringent licence conditions: it's about control; restrict. Whereas, whilst it's about that, it's also about rehabilitation as well, and actually working with the offender and resettling them, and so, I guess we come into conflict when those two different motives [meet]. [LPOM3]

Navigating these differing aims was made more difficult because they were informed by different organisational cultures with different priorities. For example, an important aspect of police work is collecting and assessing evidence, which, as one OM said, means they are 'quite protective of their information and don't trust probation perhaps' [LPOM1]. These tensions are found when MAPPA deal with other sensitive cases, for example, health professionals can be reluctant to share confidential information (Maguire et al. 2001; Kemshall et al. 2005). However, the national security implications of managing terrorism cases meant probation staff faced particular challenges when trying to work with the police. As a consequence, they sometimes had to be

quite strenuous in their insistence on information sharing. One interviewee explained:

> [MAPPA] works well, however, it doesn't work when it comes to sharing information, because especially Scotland Yard does not share information with us because they think it's secret, so top secret . . . So many times, I have to insist: 'sorry, I'm the offender manager'. What do they think? I'm not going to tell him [the offender]. . . . Clearly I'm pretty much aware of the confidentiality issues. [LPOM4]

These areas of contention were underpinned by stereotypes about the different agencies: probation staff were considered a 'soft touch' by the police, too willing to believe what the probationers told them. However, the police were described as paying too little attention to the importance of reintegration and rehabilitation, believing instead that former prisoners are unlikely to change. Without overstating the impact of these stereotypes, they were recognised by practitioners as relevant to the dynamics of multi-agency working, as the following quotes demonstrate:

> There's always potential to stereotype us: [that we] are a little bit gullible to listening and stuff. It's not huge, but it's there, it lurks around when we're trying to . . . promote reintegration. [SPO2]

> It's been quite difficult, working with them [counter-terrorism police], I've found anyway, because, they are 'Scotland Yard Policemen', you know? Who have a certain set way of doing things, and we are probation, kind of like, left-wing – you know what I mean? These stereotypes! . . . So, to begin with, they had a few individuals, from the control order end, which – and quite rightly so – they police these people very, very hard; and I got comments like: 'at the end of the day, we don't want anyone going bang in London'. And I'm like 'yeah, well we don't want that either, but we have perhaps got a different way of going at it!' [LPOM2]

It is always likely to be difficult to navigate the tensions between the importance of rehabilitating former prisoners and the need to control and monitor their behaviour in the service of public protection. This may not be a bad thing. Negotiating these differing priorities lies at the heart of effective supervision, helping to inform decision making. As one OM said: 'I do like Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements, because it's about different perspectives coming together and making

one decision, and that really helps' [LPOM4]. Indeed, there was some evidence that multi-agency working in the context of terrorism offences was evolving in a similar way to that of sex offenders. That is, MAPPA tend to impose external controls, such as licence conditions that restrict an individual's behaviour, while internal controls relevant to reintegration are developed through probation supervision and rehabilitative interventions (Wood et al. 2007). This development in multi-agency cooperation had not come easily, as two members of probation staff who had been involved from the start explained:

> Working with [police and prisons] was key to gaining trust and legitimacy.... Holding the line at, often quite volatile MAPPA meetings was also key. Showing we had the confidence in our skills but understood the support offered by the prison service and the police was essential in managing risk in the community. [SPO2]

> There can be a conflict between surveillance vs. rehabilitation... particularly with curfews. I mean, it's not normal to keep people on curfew for so long, I mean, we never keep curfews on for the length of time we do with these offenders. It's about trying to get that point across to the police, that it's not normal to do this, because they might think it's ok because it's in line with their aims, but for probation, we don't normally do it. [LPOM5]

There is evidence that through continued multi-agency cooperation, developing interpersonal relationships between police and probation staff, and ongoing learning about how best to manage these former prisoners in the community, significant expertise has developed about the most effective working practices. Consolidating this through strategic linkages between the police, probation and other agencies has helped to develop better institutional understanding and foster trust. One interviewee explained: '[trust has developed] through a million and one MAPPA meetings, watching each other closely through very stressful cases' [LPOM2]. MAPPA provides the space to mediate differing organisational aims and ultimately manage risk, facilitate defensible decisions and should anything go wrong, it offers an auditable account of how the case has been managed. When effective, multi-agency working provides a more holistic perspective for the individual than would otherwise be possible. Such expertise has an important role in informing how policy and practice

continue to evolve in the face of new challenges, such as those posed by returnees from overseas conflicts.

Implications for Policy and Practice

A range of challenges face practitioners, policymakers and researchers trying to understand how to support reintegration. These include the need to develop a stronger evidence base and a clearer set of conceptual tools to help interpret how interventions are believed to work. Alongside this, it's important to learn from and maximise the incorporation of practice-based knowledge and recognise the complex motivations that inform involvement. Finally, taking a holistic, contextualised approach that prioritises reintegration is important; for those 'at risk', those convicted of terrorism offences and 'foreign fighters' returning from overseas conflicts.

Because it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of work with those convicted of terrorism offences, long-term monitoring and a commitment to developing the evidence base are necessary to inform a better understanding of 'what works' and 'what helps' in producing successful outcomes. Certainly it is not always effective, as evidenced by the experience of Sulayman Keeler whose words opened the first chapter of this book. Despite his time spent with change agents trying to support his reintegration, he found himself back in prison and subject to state sanction on several occasions since his release following his first terrorism conviction.

Long-term monitoring and evaluation based on first-hand accounts from those convicted of terrorism offences are a vital part of this work moving forward. It is also important to make more explicit the theory of change applicable to interventions with those involved in extremism. That is, interventions should state how the change process is intended to unfold, the mechanisms that inform this process and what appropriate markers of change might be. The GLM is a potentially valuable way of interpreting and making visible the implicit theory of change at work in existing interventions. Further, praxis-based accounts are necessary to develop a better understanding of how the reintegration process unfolds.

Despite the relatively limited amount of concrete data available to inform this work, probation staff and community mentors have developed a practice-based understanding of how to support those involved in extremism. Practitioners therefore have a great deal of sometimes overlooked knowledge. Academics and others trying to understand the process by

which someone becomes involved with and disengages from radical settings have much to learn from those who carry out this work on a daily basis. Inevitably, there is disagreement between practitioners, and different organisations prioritise particular issues and neglect others; there is no single 'answer' that all of those involved in this work share. There are however, some important implications for the research literature and for policymakers of the perspectives shared in this book by practitioners.

Despite attempts, as mentioned earlier, to categorise and classify different types of people involved in extremism, and efforts to map journeys into and out of radical settings, it is more important to retain an individualised and holistic approach to this process. Motivations are dynamic, and the ways in which people navigate their way into and out of extremism are unique. Trying to break down individuals into measures of risk or even into types of offender therefore has only limited utility. Similarly, despite the relevance of risk assessment measures, it is important that these are used sensitively and flexibly.

Community-based groups have an important part to play in supporting reintegration. They are uniquely positioned to act as a bridge between the individual's past and future. By generating connections to a wider community of people, and by demonstrating their commitment to the individual, they can provide a positive platform for change. Community mentors are also able to support former prisoners as they navigate questions of ideology and identity, providing a forum to negotiate the tensions between differing commitments, as well as offering practical support in the community.

Ideology's role in both engagement and disengagement experiences should be treated carefully. The UK government's current Counter Extremism Strategy focuses heavily on questions of ideology. Despite this, ideology's role in countering, preventing or undermining individual commitments to radical settings differs from person to person, and should not be assumed to be a major motivating factor. Taking an individualised approach makes it possible to understand the role ideology plays for the individual, addressing it in a way that is appropriate for them.

The implication that ideas and beliefs have to markedly change in order for someone's risk to be reduced can make the work of practitioners more challenging. In the effort to support change, it can be helpful to focus on incremental gains and provide as many exit strategies as possible. Raising the bar to include a commitment to ideological change makes it more difficult to support the process of reintegration or the effort to divert

someone away from a radical network. In the same way that it is important to maximise the number of practical mechanisms by which someone can disengage, it remains important to focus on the most tangible features of experience, notably, behaviour. Negotiating changes in action rather than belief is a less contentious way of framing interventions and supporting desistance.

As far as possible, those factors that act as barriers to reintegration need to be lowered. Whilst remaining aware of the challenge from often unknown, dynamic and potentially high levels of risk, it is important to recognise the barriers reflected in wider social and economic structures and the importance of mitigating their impact in the service of desistance. This issue reflects the two-way nature of the reintegration process: just as the individual has to want to reintegrate, society has a role in making this possible. This is the case not only for those considered 'at risk' of involvement in extremism and those convicted of terrorism offences, but also those returning from overseas conflicts. Finding ways of reintegrating people who have been involved in foreign conflicts, so-called 'foreign fighters', is an important part of reducing the risk of political violence over the long term. Without being naive about the possibility that returnees may be intent on harm, a vital part of counterterrorism efforts involves supporting and facilitating reintegration, and this is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future.

A number of important issues demand further attention from the research community. Most fundamentally, reintegration experiences need to be understood through the eyes of those going through them; this makes research with those who have, or are in the process of navigating their way out of extremism, particularly vital. Importantly, this research should go beyond examining those 'background' factors often cited as important in the process of involvement in political violence. In the literature on disengagement these are commonly understood as a function of small group processes, political grievance or negative individual experiences such as discrimination, social exclusion or a crisis of identity. While valuable, they overlook those 'foreground' emotional and experiential factors which inform meaning making (Katz 2008). These subjective experiences are central to understanding why people move away from violence despite the potential difficulties they might face. They are also important in interpreting why people remain disengaged despite the potential barriers to reintegration, and the ongoing opportunities to respond to those factors implicated in the decision to become involved in the first place.

It remains important to develop a stronger understanding of the long-term, biographical effects of involvement in radical subcultures. Even the more established literature on social movements has not looked as carefully at the biographical outcomes of involvement in contention. This is particularly the case for movements that use violence, and those operating in non-Western contexts (Bosi et al. 2016). Although existing work has demonstrated a tangible effect of movement participation, for example in terms of an ongoing commitment to radical politics or in lifestyle choice (Giugni 2008), it is an area that demands far greater attention. This is not only to develop a better understanding of reintegration experiences, but also to learn how those who have been involved in violence overcome barriers to re-entering mainstream society. Given the challenges those involved in extremism face navigating the structural factors that undermine reintegration opportunities, it is important to learn more about the strategies they use in doing so (King 2012).

Recognising the benefits people seek to achieve through involvement in extremism is important, both to inform the design of interventions and to help support desistance and conceptualise the process of involvement. Rather than the more common approach to interpreting engagement through often retrospectively cataloguing expressed grievances, or inferring the importance of social networks through network analysis, it is useful to look more carefully at which goods are implicated in individual engagement experiences. Doing this might help address some of the challenges facing research in this area. Specifically, explanations which rely heavily on background factors such as grievance, foreign conflict and ideology vastly overestimate the potential for violence, while explanations focusing on individual experience often depend on retrospective accounts from individuals which are subject to post hoc rationalisations of personal experience.

Despite years of work trying to understand what informs the motivation to become involved in political violence, there remains no clear answer (Horgan 2016). One of the reasons existing approaches have perhaps been unable to provide a cogent explanation is because they often start with a somewhat limiting question, typically asking 'why' someone becomes involved in extremism. Starting with different questions might provide alternative and more illuminating accounts. For example, it could be more informative to ask such questions as: What goods did you seek through involvement? What values were important to you? How did involvement fulfil you? And what did being involved mean to you? Perhaps by asking these types of questions it might be possible to develop a more nuanced

understanding of why and how people become involved, remain engaged and, ultimately, why they move away from extremism.

Finally, we can return to the questions raised by an interviewee at the beginning of Chap. 3 about the aims of work with those convicted of terrorism offences:

> [is] stepping somebody back from violent extremism to extremism – is that enough? Do you want them just not offending – is that enough? Do you want them to convert to become a Catholic? [SPO3]

The answer, as far as practitioners seem to be concerned, is that supporting desistance involves equipping former prisoners with the practical, social and cognitive attributes to help them engage more positively with wider society. Thus, work needs to continue developing ways of facilitating the process of desistance by developing personal strengths, encouraging agency in the service of a more positive future, and enabling reintegration across social, economic and political boundaries informed by a broadening set of identity commitments. Ensuring that those who want to leave conflict and extremism behind are provided with the mechanisms to make this possible remains an important and ongoing challenge.

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Index

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