Preventing Violent Extremism: A Review of the Literature

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth in research directed toward preventing violent extremism has resulted in a rich but fragmented body of literature spanning multiple disciplines. This review finds a number of themes that cut across a range of disciplinary approaches and suggests that the concept of resilience could provide the basis for a common framework for prevention. However, thus far the notion of resilience to extremism has often focused on the individual, and insufficient attention has been given to the role of contextual structures and institutions. We suggest that a social–ecological perspective on resilience could re-orientate the discourse on resilience to extremism.

Combating terrorism through addressing radicalization and violent extremism has become a ubiquitous feature of national strategies, resulting in the emergence of many policies and practices directed toward countering and preventing violent extremism. These soft-power approaches aim at intervention before violence occurs,[1] and have given rise to a new vocabulary: "preventing violent extremism," "countering violent extremism," and "preventing radicalization to violent extremism." A recent development has been to bring together the notions of Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) under the single banner of Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE).[2] In many ways this seems a logical development given that the terms are often used interchangeably, making it difficult to discern any conceptual distinction in their application. However, although these terms are often used interchangeably, there is an important subset of literature on addressing violent extremism that focuses on upstream preventative approaches that position themselves explicitly outside of a security-driven framework. These approaches have largely emerged in response to the extensive criticism of approaches to CVE that extend the security-agenda into the realms of care, social work, and education.[3] Particular criticism has been directed toward the impact these approaches have had in stigmatizing Muslim communities and rendering them both a source of risk, and as a "vulnerable group" at risk of "radicalization."[4] It is in this context that a discourse on PVE through approaches outside of a security framework, has found particular traction. This has involved interventions such as improving citizenship education and addressing issues

such marginalization and discrimination that are suggested to be drivers of violent extremism.[5]

The body of literature addressing upstream prevention that might most naturally be referred to as "PVE" has grown rapidly and is emerging from a multitude of fields and disciplines, including psychology,[6] psychiatry,[7] public health,[8] education,[9] social work,[10] and criminology.[11] The breadth of the literature base, and the many different frameworks and perspectives through which prevention is addressed, means that rather than there being one conversation on prevention, there are multiple conversations within and between different fields. Naturally, much of the psychology literature focuses on individual-level analysis, whereas from a public health or social work perspective, primary attention is given to community- or societal-level factors. This results in interesting work, but makes it challenging for a coherent, shared discourse on prevention to emerge. Given the current trend to subsume the issue of prevention into a general body of "P/CVE" approaches and given the wide-ranging and rapidly expanding body of literature, there is an urgency to gaining a clearer picture of the current status of the prevention literature. This article seeks to make a contribution to clarifying the existing perspectives on and approaches to PVE by tracing the major themes and concepts currently drawn on. In this context, prevention is defined as efforts to influence individual and/or environmental factors that are suggested to create the conditions in which violent extremism can flourish, using social or educative, rather than *explicitly* security-driven measures.

Defining PVE and preventing radicalization can be challenging in part due to the breadth of literature drawing on these terms and in part due to ambiguities around the definition of both violent extremism and radicalization. An important conceptual distinction is often posited between idealistic and behavioral definitions of extremism, meaning it can be used to refer to "*political ideas* that are diametrically opposed to a society's core values. … Or it can mean the *methods* by which actors seek to realize *any* political aim."[12] The concept of "violent extremism" tends toward a more behavioral than idealistic definition, in that it places focus on violence as a means, rather than the holding of extreme views themselves[13]—in other words, it would be possible to hold "extreme views" in that they are in opposition to societal values, but not to be a "violent extremist." However, much of the PVE and CVE literature focuses on addressing extremist ideas rather than actions, therefore this distinction does not necessarily play out in the literature. For the purposes of this review, any article referring to PVE was included regardless of the specific definition of violent extremism adopted. In a number of instances papers refer to preventing radicalization rather than PVE. Radicalization is generally used in reference to a process through which groups or individuals grow in commitment to engage in conflict, adopting more radical or extreme positions.[14] The exact nature of this process, why and how it occurs, is the subject of much research and discussion.[15] Again, for the purpose of this review, all papers referring to preventing radicalization were included regardless of how radicalization was defined.

Seventy-three papers were reviewed, drawing on papers from any discipline that addressed prevention of violent extremism or radicalization. Papers that offered a critique of approaches to prevention, but offered no alternative strategy, were excluded

from the review. The papers were read in depth and key themes or concepts were noted for each paper. Based on this analysis, four recurring themes emerged that cut across the literature: (1) the "resilient individual," (2) identity, (3) dialogue and action, and (4) connected or resilient communities. Each of these themes capture recurring ideas that emerge across the disciplines, which are articulated in a variety of ways but seem to share underlying perspectives on what is required to prevent radicalization.

Four Themes

The resilient individual

One prominent theme in the literature is that violent extremism can be prevented by developing some capacity, skill, or characteristic in individuals that prevents them from being drawn toward violent extremist ideologies or groups. The image evoked by the theories and approaches that fall within this "resilient individual" orientation is that of creating strong, critical, or flexible individuals.

Within this overarching orientation toward prevention, a number of different approaches can be identified, largely reflecting differing conceptions regarding the primary driver(s) of violent extremism, and consequently where preventative interventions should be targeted. The major approaches focus variously on: (1) developing cognitive resources, (2) fostering character traits, and (3) promoting or strengthening values.

Cognitive resources

One approach focuses on prevention through developing certain cognitive capacities in order to provide individuals with resources to assess and question messages, ideas, and propaganda, and in doing so, resist the attraction of such messages. The logic underlying this strand of prevention would seem to be the assumption that ideology and messaging plays a primary role in drawing individuals toward violent extremism, and that the attraction of such messages and ideas can be undermined through developing certain ways of thinking.

This perspective, focusing on the way of thinking rather than the message itself, is well exemplified in Liht and Savage's report on the "Being Muslim Being British" intervention.[16] This intervention builds its preventative approach on the understanding that a common feature of extremist ideologies is "black/white" thinking in which simple distinctions are made between "us and them," "right and wrong." Therefore, the intervention focuses on developing the ability in pupils to think with complexity. As stated by Liht & Savage, the focus is explicitly not on addressing the ideologies themselves, but on "facilitating an individual's normal development pathway towards value pluralism."

Aside from complexity in thinking, the most common cognitive capacity referred to is that of "critical thinking." Critical thinking is generally understood as the ability to assess information, messages, ideas, and content, questioning and analyzing the source and content of ideas.[17] While Mattson and Säljö advance a scathing critique of the impact of the discourse on radicalization on educational institutions, they do suggest that education can play a role, not in teaching pupils *what* to think, but in developing the ability of pupils to understand who they are and to develop "critical skills,"

"strengthening their critical thinking to resist attraction to extremist messages."[18] Similarly, Davies argues for an approach that builds on the ability to engage critically with messages and ideas, extending this to argue for an engaged, critical, political citizenship.[19]

Character traits

Another strand of thinking focuses on fostering certain character traits. The underlying logic of this perspective would seem to be that certain psychological qualities and traits, such as empathy, can be stronger than factors pulling individuals to engage in violent extremism.

The Beyond Bali intervention[20] approaches prevention through seeking to target a process of moral disengagement that is theorized to facilitate the engagement in violent extremism. It is suggested that in order to be able to commit acts of violence against other humans, individuals go through a process of dehumanizing the "other"—disengaging from their normal internal moral sanctions that would otherwise prevent them from engaging in violence. The intervention therefore seeks to develop empathy for the victims of terrorism, develop the self-efficacy of youth, and their moral perspective of violent extremism as "unjust and cruel."

From a different theoretical perspective, Feddes, Mann, and Doosje propose that developing self-esteem and empathy can prevent individuals from being drawn to violent extremism.[21] This research paper, interesting in being one of the very few longitudinal intervention studies, presents results of a study on the effect of self-esteem and empathy training on reducing support for ideology-based violence. They found an increase in empathy was related to "less-positive attitudes towards ideology-based violence"; however, they also indicated that the self-esteem training increased narcissism, and that higher levels of narcissism were associated with more positive attitudes toward ideological violence.

Promoting/strengthening values

A somewhat different strand of thought, yet still within the general orientation of building resilient individuals, is the focus on the promoting or strengthening of certain values or ideas. Rather than focusing on traits or characteristics, this strand of thinking builds on the underlying assumption that the attraction of an extremist ideology or group can be assuaged through holding to a stronger, alternative framework of values.

Most prominently advanced in this regard is the notion of citizenship and human rights. Davies argues for a comprehensive human rights education that influences both content and action of teaching, arguing that the values of human rights "foster an inclusive culture."[22] Similarly, Miller argues that the human rights agenda offers the possibility of a shared values base from which to build moral development.[23] It is suggested that human rights education and the "values of citizenship and diversity" provide a values framework that equips young people to speak against extremism.[24] This focus on human rights is generally linked to developing the skills of critical thinking as described above; human rights then is advanced as providing the underlying framework on which

this critical thought can be built. Paul Thomas, who has been highly critical of the UK PREVENT agenda, similarly regards the role of education to be to promote a human rights–based citizenship education.[25]

Macnair and Frank propose a more explicit "battle of ideas," arguing for the promotion of "the values of community, tolerance, and togetherness" to counteract the hatred and polarization of extremist narratives.[26] Davydov also proposes "inculcating tolerance" in students and teachers, indicating that by tolerance she means more than putting up with something that is unusual, but rather referring to a "willingness to accept a diversity of views of the world."[27]

Identity and identities

Identity is often drawn on as an explanation for why young people engage with violent extremism. Two important ideas developed in this regard are that adolescence is a period of identity search, and that a sense of threat or marginalization of one's group identity creates openness to extremism. From these ideas, two related forms of prevention are addressed: creating opportunities to discuss issues of identity and strengthening and validating identities.

Adolescence as a period of identity search

Adolescence is posited as a period of identity development during which young people are searching for who they are, what they believe, and where they belong.[28] From this perspective the identity-related questions arising during the period of adolescence are suggested to create an opening to extreme groups or ideologies as sources of answers to these identity-related questions. In this regard there are two, related ideas that emerge: the extreme *ideas* provide a sense of certainty around what one believes[29] and the extreme *groups* provide a sense of belonging through a clear group identity.[30]

Identity threat and belonging

A closely related idea is that openness to extremist groups or ideas emerges when there is a sense of threat or marginalization of one's group identity. This is often addressed in relation to Muslim youth experiencing a conflict between their religious and national identities.[31] From this perspective, a social context in which certain group identities are demonized, marginalized, or lack status, is argued to create openness to extremist groups or ideas as a source of social identity. It is partly on these grounds that securitized approaches to tackling radicalization are criticized, as by rendering certain identities as a source of threat the very conditions are created that fuel an attraction to extremism.[32]

Creating space to explore identities

Arising from the idea that young people are engaged in a search for identity and that many experience a disconnect between a national identity and other ways in which they

identify themselves, giving space to explore and address identity-related questions is proposed as a preventative measure. Suggested approaches to prevention include creating spaces to explore "what it means to be human and what we understand by identity and community,"[33] to discuss "multiple identities and how to prioritize them,"[34] to "discuss and debate religious identity and respect and celebrate the diversity of Muslim youth"[35] and to use dialogue to "foster new ways for individuals to understand identity."[36] The logic of this perspective would seem to be that spaces to explore and address fundamental questions of who one is and what one believes in reduce the pull to extremist groups or ideas as a source of answers to these questions.

Strengthening and validating identities

Another identity-related approach to prevention involves the validation of the identities of minority groups, giving them a voice and a place within society in order to avoid experiences of marginalization. Such a line of thought arises particularly in light of arguments that the general discourse on radicalization and associated policies have contributed to the demonization of Muslim identities or the essentialization of Islamic identity. Building from such an argument, Akram and Richardson advocate prevention through an inclusive approach to citizenship education that gives greater voice to Muslims and a clear sense of identity and belonging within the United Kingdom, as citizens with rights and responsibilities.[37] Alongside this they highlight the need to address prejudice against Muslims. The sum total being that young British Muslims are able to forge strong identities that acknowledge Islam. Similarly, McDonald argues that the forces of Islamic extremists and the British state are "battling" for the identities of young British Muslims.[38] She argues that preventing extremism can be achieved through support provided to address this identity challenge, in which the role of Muslims in the development of the British state can be acknowledged, and voice given to political and theological issues. Taylor and Soni argue schools need to promote a "sense of belonging and positive identity for all pupils of all heritages."[39]

Dialogue and action

The role of dialogue and discussion appears throughout the literature with calls for "critical discussion,"[40] "hard dialogue,"[41] "discussions of extremism,"[42] "frank and honest discussion,"[43] "open political dialogue and debate,"[44] and "non-judgemental discussion."[45]

One of the most prominent roles ascribed to discussion in the literature is creating the space and opportunity for the exploration and critique of ideologies. It is suggested that censoring or avoiding discussion around controversial issues means there is no opportunity to challenge or alter "extreme" views.[46] In this context attention is given to the environment required for such dialogue, referring to the need for safety to explore and discuss issues without fear of condemnation—often encapsulated in the idea of "safe spaces."[47] Quartermaine indicates that the kind of dialogue intended cannot involve the condemnation of radical views as this will only serve to silence views rather than create the space for change.[48] The suggested outcomes of creating the space for such discussion are various, including: creating understanding of "what it means to be

human, what we understand by identity and community, how to live in our rapidly changing societies and how to promote what is just and honourable"[49]; fostering "new ways for individuals to understand identity"[50]; or for the critical assessment and restructuring of ones "assumptions and perspectives."[51] The logic that would seem to underlie such an approach to prevention is that extreme views or perspectives can be overcome through an acknowledgment of a certain legitimacy behind these views, and an opportunity to discuss and question and explore these views—that in doing so the mind is opened to alternative ways of viewing the situation. It seems to be suggested that being able to air these views openly serves to defuse their power.

Beyond discussing controversial issues, some papers argue that space needs to be created for frustrations and grievances to be aired in relation to the institutions of power—that there must be the possibility of having a political voice.[52] That is, there is the need to ensure that the possibility is created for criticism of the government and the prevailing social order, and the assertion and airing of grievances without censure. Further, this criticism needs to be able to reach the institutions of power. This differs then from a more general call for the need for dialogue and concerns the ability to have one's voice heard within the channels of political power. The underlying logic to promoting political voice as prevention would seem to be that having a legitimate channel for expression and contribution to political discourse decreases the motivation to engage with extreme groups in order to be taken seriously and to have one's voice heard.

Some authors extend this argument beyond the need for political voice and discussion, suggesting that engagement in action—not just discussion—can serve to prevent violent extremism. In some cases, this is articulated as engaging in political action through attending protests and other forms of civic political engagement.[53] In other cases, the engagement in action is conceived of less overtly politically; for example, the idea that being involved in the planning and construction of peace parks enables young people to exercise moral agency, developing resilience to radicalization.[54]

The role of engagement in action as an approach to prevention is developed more extensively by Weeks.[55] Building on the notion that engagement in violent extremism is a social problem arising from disaffection, he argues for "empowering the social and political agency of young people." Rather than directing energies toward protest, this agency finds expression in social voluntary projects, such as caring for the homeless and visiting the elderly. This social and political empowerment is suggested to reduce vulnerability to extremist messaging.

Engaged, resilient communities

The first three themes focus their attention primarily at the level of the individual. However, a final theme directs attention to the level of the community as the primary locus for intervention. Communities are argued to be able to play a unique role in protecting young people from radical influences and in tackling the grievances that may give rise to radicalization.[56] There are two main ideas within the literature on the role of communities: "community engagement" and "community resilience."

Community engagement

The notion of community engagement appears in a wide range of the PVE literature.[57] It is often used in the context of community policing,[58] but also includes partnerships between community organizations and the government. At the core of the community engagement perspective is the strengthening of relationships between citizens and the institutions of the state. Therefore, much attention is given to the quality of the relationships between a community and the police.[59] This includes recommendations such as that police officers should be able to spend extended periods within a community, gaining a deep cultural understanding of the community they are serving.[60] This extends in some cases to the recommendation that police officers engage in partnership with those who may be regarded as holding extreme views.[61]

Community organizations are argued to be able to play a role that the apparatus of state is unable to do, regarded as having more "legitimacy" in the eyes of community members.[62] Building on criticisms of previous efforts at community engagement, there is a call for ensuring the partnerships are real and meaningful rather than tokenistic, and that community organizations need to be able to continue to operate at arms-length from the state in order to maintain their credibility.[63]

The resilient community

A more expansive perspective on the role of the community is evident in the idea of "resilient communities."[64] Although community engagement features in discussions of resilient communities, the notion of "resilient communities" extends beyond the idea of engagement with the apparatus of the state. The idea is that a community can have features that render it able to prevent the members of that community (or the community as whole) from engaging with violent extremism. This is reflected in the language of communities being "resilient enough to respond to, and challenge, extremists from within"[65]; of "building community resilience" in which individuals are "resilient to extremist views,"[66] "enhancing community resilience to violent extremism,"[67] and of "communities that come together in such a way that their members are no longer vulnerable to the threat [of being recruited to violent extremism]."[68]

The "resilient communities" perspective focuses less on specific interventions, and more on the features and characteristics of communities that, it is suggested, prevent their members from being drawn into extremism. One prominent focus in the literature is on the quality of relationships and social connection in communities.

The centrality of relationships in "resilient communities" is developed in greater theoretical depth by Ellis and Abdi who draw on the rich literature on community resilience in the face of disasters to seek to articulate what community resilience to violent extremism means.[69] The major component of the work focuses on the relationship within communities (social bonding), between communities (social bridging), and between communities and institutions (social linking). Strengthening these relationships, it is suggested, renders a community more resilient to radicalization, in that it reduces vulnerability to being recruited to violent extremism. In a somewhat similar vein, Dalgaard-Nielsen and Schack turn to the concept of "social capital" as being at the heart

of resilient communities, defining this as "the existence of stable, trust-based relationships and networks among local actors, including local government."[70]

Discussion

The four major themes that are outlined in this review of the literature aim to highlight the major contours of the current PVE discourse and highlight common ideas that cut across the different disciplines that are addressing the question of PVE.

Given that the literature on prevention aims to avoid a securitized approach to prevention, the major themes in the literature can be seen as a response to some of the major critiques leveled at security-driven prevention approaches. The emphasis on resilience-building at both the individual and community level may be understood as an effort to overcome criticism of policies and approaches that have cast individuals or whole communities as either victims of pernicious ideologies, or as potential sources of national security risk to be monitored and controlled. Resilience, associated with a strengths- rather than deficit-oriented perspective, becomes an attractive concept in seeking an alternative to explicitly security-driven approaches. The focus on open dialogue and discussion seems to speak to critiques of approaches that have led to people who air grievances or radical ideas being flagged as a source of threat. Calls for engaging young people in political action in response to their frustrations may be seen as a response to critiques of approaches that deny the political agency of young people. Similarly, the focus on validating and strengthening identities is often explicitly cast as a response to approaches that have been critiqued for marginalizing communities or rendering religious, cultural, or ethnic identities a source of risk.

However, talking about prevention is no guarantee for tackling all these counterproductive tendencies. In sociological debate on preventative measures in the neoliberal welfare state, it was argued that preventative policies often result in pre-oppressive measures, so-called prepression.[71] We therefore suggest that these ideas require careful scrutiny if we are to ensure that the rhetoric of a strengths-oriented preventative approach is to live up to its promise of overcoming the critiques leveled at efforts to counter violent extremism. To this end, we will address particularly the general orientation toward resilience-building evident in the literature.

An orientation toward resilience

The frequency with which the idea of resilience emerges in the PVE literature is notable, if not surprising. It reflects a similar trend evident in other areas of social policy in which the idea of resilience is being increasingly drawn on as a solution to complex challenges.[72] The notion, inherent in resilience, of focusing on strengths rather than deficits is perhaps particularly attractive when seeking to avoid approaches that portray individuals or communities as victims, or as sources of risk. It may also sit more easily with those most often charged with carrying out the work of PVE (teachers, social workers, youth workers) than explicitly security-driven concepts such as flagging risks.

However, this orientation toward resilience requires some examination. Resilience is notoriously difficult to define, with the widespread acceptance that there is no shared

definition of the concept.[73] The most basic definition of resilience as the ability to "bounce back" after trauma or hardship has been criticized for having a "profoundly depoliticizing effect," due to the fact that the individual (or group) is expected to adapt to fit the existing order rather than questioning and seeking to effect change.[74] Indeed, Altermark and Nilsson's recent critique of resilience-building approaches to addressing violent extremism point directly to the depoliticizing and individualizing effects of such programs.[75] They indicate that such programs are directed toward changing the mindset of individuals rather than addressing institutional or systemic issues or injustices. Such criticisms are clearly troubling when considering the prevention of such a profoundly political issue as violent extremism.

A wide range of more nuanced definitions of resilience have emerged, including definitions in which resilience is conceptualized as the ability not only to bounce back but the ability to transform or change toward a positive outcome in response to stress or trauma.[76] Such perspectives on resilience can potentially overcome the challenge of depoliticization if it means that standing up against injustice and seeking to effect social change is regarded as a resilient response. However, as the discourse currently stands, it is not clear that such responses would be regarded as resilient. What becomes clearly apparent is that when drawing on the concept of resilience, no "common-sense" shared definition can be assumed. Therefore, drawing on the concept of resilience in relation to violent extremism requires us to define *who* is being resilient to *what* and what exactly is considered to be a resilient, positive outcome. Defining what constitutes a resilient, positive outcome is clearly normative and needs to be recognized as such. Recognition of this enables an opening up of the conversation and transparency about what is being sought in the name of resilience-building.

A second pertinent issue in relation to the concept of resilience is addressed in Luthar and Cicchetti's influential work on the use of "resilience" to inform social interventions.[77] They emphasize, among other things, the dangers of treating resilience as "an attribute of the individual."[78] Conceptualizing resilience as an individual trait can lead to blaming the individual for not possessing certain characteristics rather than turning attention to the wider context. They suggest avoiding terms such as "resilient youth" or "fostering resilience," referring "instead, to resilient adaption, profiles, or trajectories."[79] In relation to PVE, if such issues are not given attention, there is the possibility that "resilience" becomes a rhetorical device, directing focus on individuals and communities as the locus for change without giving due attention to important structural challenges related to injustice, discrimination, polarization, and disaffection. In effect, a focus on resilience-building at individual and community levels can move beyond a laudable recognition of the potential and strengths of individuals and groups, and rather become a tool for relieving the state of responsibility for conditions and injustices that may be giving rise to extremism.

Although these challenges with the concept of resilience are significant, they are not integral to the concept itself. The fact that resilience offers the possibility of thinking of prevention in a way that recognizes individuals and communities as sources of potential and agency rather than either victims or sources of threat, makes it worthwhile to seek a framework for resilience to violent extremism that overcomes the potential challenges highlighted.

In this light, a social–ecological perspective on resilience offers a particularly promising approach. At the heart of this perspective is a shift in resilience thinking from looking at the individual as the locus of change, to placing primary importance on the social and physical context for enabling positive growth in adverse conditions.[80] As Michael Ungar argues:

> Shifting the focus from the child to the child's social and physical ecology positions the discourse of resilience as one of process and resource provision. The compounding effects of risk are more easily explained as they compromise the capacity of environments to provide what they need.[81]

The question of resilience from such a perspective then becomes less about whether someone possesses a certain trait, and more concerned with the extent to which the environment facilitates their access to the resources to respond and adapt positively in the face of hardship. Drawing on this conception of resilience would entail a shift in the discourse on resilience in relation to violent extremism to give far greater attention to the question of addressing systemic injustices and the role of institutions in creating the conditions and environment in which individuals and communities can develop and utilize their resources and strengths.

Approaching the complex social challenge of violent extremism in this way enables a shift in perspective. Rather than focusing on preventing problems and protecting vulnerable individuals, the same ends may be achieved through focusing on what is required for a positive process of identity development that does not become derailed through divisive or polarizing forces. This can shift the focus from protecting youth from extremist ideas, to providing the resources which enable youth in divisive and polarizing environments to address positively the questions of their values, where they stand in relation to others and society, and what realms of choice and action are available to them.

Conclusion

The recent trend toward subsuming preventative approaches within the broader heading of "preventing and countering violent extremism" comes at a time of a continued rapid growth in the literature. Although the combining of these terms may be natural given the ways in which they are currently deployed in practice, it does call us to consider how the question of *prevention* is currently addressed if we are to avoid losing clarity on the distinct work focused on upstream, non-security driven, preventative measures.

The concept of resilience is significant in the prevention discourse and is important in that it offers a view of prevention that recognizes the potential and agency of individuals and communities. However, there currently lacks a clear framework for resilience in relation to violent extremism. A social–ecological perspective on resilience offers a promising foundation that must be built upon if such a framework is to emerge. In doing so particular attention must be directed toward ensuring attention is given not only to possibilities for change at the individual and community level, but more particularly, what is required at an institutional and social level.

Limitations

One of the primary limitations of this review is the exclusion of papers critiquing approaches to prevention that did not offer alternative perspectives or approaches. However, given the scope and focus of this review, it was not possible to also adequately review the critiques of approaches to prevention, particularly as these critiques have been widely discussed elsewhere.[82]

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Notes

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Endnote

The literature was reviewed using a keyword search for "preventing violent extremism" or "preventing radicalization." The results were scanned by title for relevance, followed by a closer reading of abtracts to determine relevance for the review.

As the distinction between CVE and PVE are not rigidly adhered to in the literature a review of the abstracts was used to exclude articles that focused on explicitly security-based approaches to CVE or on de-radicalization.

Following the review of the abstracts, eighty-five relevant papers were identified. Seven papers had to be excluded as they could not be accessed. After closer reading, a further seven were excluded as they explored drivers of violent extremism but did not address approaches to prevention. A final follow-up search was conducted using the same search criteria in the Web of Science Social Science Citation database, which resulted in two more articles being included in the review, meaning a total of seventy-three papers were reviewed.