
Mandatory participation in programs to counter violent extremism: A review of evidence for and against

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Abstract

Dealing with released convicted terrorists and returned foreign fighters is a major policy challenge. One option is to mandate their participation in intervention programs. This paper will review evidence relating to mandatory participation in interventions targeting convicted terrorists and individuals at risk of radicalisation, consider the benefits and drawbacks of mandating participation and explore relevant implementation issues relating to the adoption of mandatory programs. The following methodology was adopted: (1) a rapid scoping review across the fields of countering violent extremism, sex and violent offender rehabilitative programming; (2) a review of relevant policy documents and legislative sources; and (3) consultations with international experts. The conclusion drawn is that mandated participation may offer some benefits, but these need to be weighed against the drawbacks of such an approach.

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Introduction

How to deal with convicted terrorists and returned foreign fighters is an ongoing policy challenge. A key concern for governments is to reduce the future risks that such individuals may present, particularly when released into the community. Responses have entailed legislative approaches that allow for the ongoing detention of convicted terrorists beyond their release date, or provide opportunities to expel and deport individuals and strip them of their citizenship so they can no longer return to specific countries (Hardy & Williams, 2016;

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Walker & Cawley, 2021). Another option relates to ensuring that radicalised individuals are exposed to interventions that divert them from further engagement in violent extremist acts and address individual risks and needs. While the evidence-base surrounding the impact of interventions targeting individuals at risk of radicalisation or known terrorists is limited (Cherney, 2018b; Koehler, 2017), an additional question relevant to program effectiveness is whether participation should be mandatory to guarantee individuals are exposed to some type of support/diversionary scheme. While the general consensus in the literature is that participation in interventions to counter violent extremism (CVE) should be voluntary (see below) - what exactly is the evidence for and against mandatory participation and what might be the broader lessons for the design of interventions? The current paper aims to address these questions.

We define mandatory participation as referring to the parameters of involvement and entry into a program and whether it is linked to legislation or some other condition (e.g., accessing parole) that stipulates participation and treatment as a requirement. This may involve, for example, a radicalised offender being mandated as part of a court order to participate in a support program. There are variations across jurisdictions as to the mandatory nature of CVE programs (ICSR, 2020; Koehler, 2017). Some involve voluntary participation, such as the PRISM intervention in New South Wales, Australia (see Cherney, 2018b). Other approaches can be more coercive and are explicitly linked to legislative conditions, such as participation in the UK's Desistance and Disengagement Programme (DDP) (Elshimi, 2020). Hence, participation in a CVE program can potentially span across mandated/mandatory involvement, which means individuals have little choice but to participate and risk a sanction if they do not comply, to voluntary involvement where clients freely consent to participate. Even in contexts where program participation is voluntary, there may be implicit forms of coercion to be involved given the unequal relationships between offenders and official agencies.

This research involved a rapid review of evaluation evidence and literature pertaining to mandatory participation in CVE rehabilitation and reintegration interventions targeting

convicted terrorists and individuals identified as at risk of violent extremism. To complement this analysis, evidence and literature on mandatory conditions relating to offenders who have committed physical and sexual violence was examined. This area provides potential useful lessons as to the viability of mandatory program participation and whether it reduces risk, given this has been a key area of debate relating to the efficacy of programs targeting sexual and violent offenders (Grossi, 2017).² Scholars have acknowledged the usefulness of examining other policy fields that can provide potential lessons for responses to violent extremism (Decker & Pyrooz, 2015; LaFree, & Freilich, 2016). In combining different areas of scholarship, this paper aims to review existing evidence to identify the effectiveness of mandatory conditions in rehabilitation and reintegration, and consider applicable issues pertaining to the implementation of mandatory participation in CVE interventions. This will allow for consideration of the key benefits and drawbacks of such an approach.

This research involved a rapid scoping review of the existing evaluation research in the areas of CVE and violent and sex offender programs. It also involved consultations with international experts (i.e., an informal consultative group based on the first author's academic and professional contacts), which entailed requesting via email country-specific information relating to mandatory participation in CVE programs. This exchange did not involve any formal interview, but asked contacts to respond to a series of questions related to mandated conditions in their specific country. The project also included a review of policy documents and legislative sources and an examination of identified ancillary literature that considered issues relating to the behavioural science and effectiveness of mandatory participation in correctional and community-based interventions.

The paper is organised as follows. We first provide results from our rapid evidence review on CVE, sex, and violent offender programs. Next we examine how various countries have addressed the issue of participation in CVE programs and the use of mandatory

² Given the need to set parameters to contain our review on crime related program areas, we acknowledge as pointed out by one of the reviewers, that forms of psychotherapy or psychiatric treatment occurs in non-voluntary situations (mental health admissions), with professionals having to work with clients who feel reluctant to participate (Trotter, 2015). These fields also provide potentially useful lessons.

conditions. This is followed by consideration of the implementation issues relating to the adoption of mandatory participation in CVE interventions, and the various benefits and drawbacks of such an approach are considered. The paper ends with outlining key findings and considers if mandatory participation is a viable option.

Rapid Evidence Review

To reduce bias and guide the rapid review component of our study, we developed a search, screening, and coding protocol. The PRISMA procedure for conducting systematic reviews³ informed this process, but we do not report our results here according to PRISMA. That would require significantly more detail and an assessment of the risk of bias and a different way of reporting the results. Our method was a rapid scoping review, informed by rigorous systematic review methods, which is potentially a limitation with our approach.

We searched⁴ two databases of evaluation studies that are built using comprehensive searches and screening processes and have been used to conduct systematic reviews on criminal justice programs: the Global Policing Database (GPD) and a Corrections Database (CD) (see Higginson, Eggins, & Mazerolle, 2017; Sydes, Eggins & Mazerolle, 2018). These databases were chosen because members of the team had used them to conduct systematic reviews on CVE approaches (see Mazerolle et al 2020, 2021) and due to our focus on evaluated interventions that target convicted terrorists and at-risk individuals, and which typically involve correctional agencies and police as lead agencies or partners. The GPD and CD were also utilised because they provide comprehensive coverage of both published and unpublished grey and academic literature and include high-quality experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations of interventions relating to policing and corrections.⁵

³ See <https://www.bmj.com/content/372/bmj.n71> for an outline of the PRISMA statement.

⁴ For more detail on the search terms used please see Appendix A in Cherney et al (2021).

⁵ For more detail on the GPD and the protocol underpinning it see *Higginson et al., (2014)* and <https://gpd.uq.edu.au/s/gpd/page/about>. See Sydes, Eggins & Mazerolle, (2018) for further information on the

The full-text for each study captured by the search was assessed according to the following inclusion criteria: (1) a publication date between January 2001 and December 2018⁶ and written in English; (2) the evaluated intervention directly related to CVE, violent and/or sex offenders; (3) the intervention participants were offenders who may have been detained in prison, other custodial settings, within the community (e.g., probation or parole), or in the re-entry phase; (4) the impact evaluation of a mandatory intervention based in a custodial or community setting; (5) the evaluated eligible intervention was assessed for impact using a randomised or rigorous quasi-experimental design and reintegration, rehabilitation, behavioural change, or cognitive change outcomes (including risk reduction or reduction of offending). Eligible studies were then coded based on the characteristics of the study and other features such as type of intervention, participants, comparison groups, outcomes, evaluation design, and setting. This information was then narratively synthesised for the final review.

CVE interventions

Our search of the GPD and CD identified 14,793 potential studies, which represents the number of records captured across both databases prior to any systematic processing that is conducted to identify impact evaluations that are ultimately indexed in these databases. Given the small search result for the CD database ($n = 147$), all were assessed for relevance for this review regardless of the research design. Of the GPD search results, a total of 307 were randomised controlled trials or quasi-experiments and were assessed for eligibility. After removing duplicates across the databases, the full-text of 311 studies captured by the searches were assessed according to the inclusion criteria outlined above, and none of the studies met the eligibility criteria. That is, no quantitative impact evaluations of mandatory interventions for terrorist offenders/at risk individuals aiming to rehabilitate/ change offender behaviour or

CD. The GPD systematic search covers 42 academic databases. The CD covers a combination of databases, websites and individual journals, covering 22 indexed locations.

⁶ This comprised the most recent 17 years indexed in both databases.

cognitions were identified, despite a comprehensive search and screening process. This result highlights the fact that few CVE interventions have been evaluated. Hence, to supplement the review, we conducted an additional search for academic literature and policy documents that focused more generally on discussing the issue of CVE program effectiveness and client participation.⁷

A small body of literature exists that specifically considers the issue of mandatory participation in CVE interventions (e.g., Bell, 2015; Global Counter-terrorism Forum, n.d; Morton & Silber, 2018; Veldhuis, 2012). It needs to be emphasised that this identified corpus of literature and documents did not present evaluative evidence on the effectiveness of mandatory participation, but were descriptive policy review papers, theoretical accounts, or opinion pieces. The consistent theme in this literature is that participation must be voluntary for a CVE intervention to be effective. This view is based on the premise that mandatory participation is unlikely to achieve either the desired forms of cognitive or behavioural change and may actually serve to further entrench the radical views of those mandated to participate (Veldhuis, 2012). Morton and Silber (2018, pg., 19) state that “forcing individuals to participate in a program that requires cognitive openness to new ideas is unlikely to yield successful results and further antagonize these extremist offenders”.

The assumption that involuntary participation will only reinforce negative attitudes and behaviours does have merit when considering experience with de-radicalisation programs in countries such as Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Indonesia. Interventions targeting terrorist offenders in countries such as Morocco, Yemen, Sudan, Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia tend to have some form of coercive element (i.e., clients are given little choice to participate) when it comes to facilitating client involvement.⁸ Programs in these nations can rely on persuasive techniques (dialogue, counselling, religious re-education) that aim to

⁷ This included searching Google Scholar; Web of Science; PsycInfo and Social Science indexed databases, as relevant to the CVE field. Search terms included those used in the CVE rapid evidence review. See Cherney et al., 2020. We did not record the number of included vs excluded studies from these additional sources.

⁸ Information provided by members of the consultative group: Daniel Koehler (German Institute on Radicalization and De-radicalization Studies) and Idhamsyah Eka Putra (Persada Indonesia University).

actively invoke feelings of anger and guilt in order to influence participants to accept their mistakes, develop remorse, and become open to non-violent worldviews (Braddock, 2014; El-Said, 2015). While this intends to change thoughts and attitudes by eliciting negative experiences and cognitive change around offending behaviour it can backfire. That is, it can create an effect known as reactance, which refers to the process of creating resistance to persuasion (Braddock, 2019). Its relevance to the issue of CVE has gained attention, given many forms of counter-radicalisation strategies have some type of persuasive element aiming to influence behaviour and attitudes (Braddock, 2019, 2020). Resistance to persuasion can occur in the mind of offenders when exposed to arguments against their behaviour, creating immunity against attempts to change their behaviours or attitudes. This constitutes a significant risk to the reintegration and disengagement goals of CVE programming that has mandatory or coercive elements, as individuals may feel and are resentful, that they have no choice but to participate (creating a perceived sense of unfairness in their minds) and hence only become more entrenched in the views they have (Braddock, 2014; Cherney & Belton, 2018). The consequence is that this can further impact future attempts to induce de-radicalisation making it more difficult or even unachievable (Braddock, 2014, 2019; Koehler, 2017). However, empirical evidence on whether this is the case is not yet available.

The specific topic of mandatory interventions delivered in prison/custodial settings has been given some attention within the literature. It has been argued that the nature of custodial environments and the conditions to which inmates are subject, may actually facilitate antagonism and resistance against cooperating with de-radicalisation efforts and inmates willingness to participate in an intervention (Cherney, 2018a; Mullins, 2010). On the other hand, within a prison context, some level of coercive or mandatory element to facilitate client participation in particular elements of a program may be necessary in order to prevent deviation from program activities, or free riding amongst participants (Koehler, 2017). That is, these outcomes are minimised given clients are compelled to comply with mandatory conditions and hence the integrity of the program is maintained. Additionally, it can be the case that custodial environments may create barriers to ongoing contact with other radicalised

individuals or associates, thus decreasing their influence, which may, therefore increase susceptibility to “cognitive openings” that can challenge extremist views and promote offence insights (Wiktorowicz, 2005). In such a context, mandatory participation may therefore carry some benefits. However, some scholars argue that such cognitive openings are more likely to occur when voluntary strategies are utilised, because they have a better chance of promoting a willingness to hear alternative ideas and accept support (Bell, 2015).

Violent and sex offender programs

The violent and sex offender search in the GPD and CD identified 62,106 potential studies, which represents the number of records captured across both databases prior to any systematic processing that is conducted to identify impact evaluations that are ultimately indexed in these databases. After removing duplicates across the two searches, a total of 549 randomised controlled trials or quasi-experiments and were assessed for eligibility. A total of 14 studies met the eligibility criteria for document synthesis and analysis. These studies covered programs concerned with addressing intimate partner violence and high-risk violent offenders released into the community. Limitations in space only allow us to provide a summary of these findings.⁹

Ten studies directly related to violent offender programs (Akoensi et al., 2013; Babcock, Green & Robie, 2004; Feder and Wilson 2005; Ferrer-Perez and Bosch-Fiol 2018; Hogan, Lambert & Barton-Bellessa, 2012; Hyatt & Barnes, 2017; Loeffler et al., 2010; Mills, Barocas & Ariel 2013; Smedslund et al. 2007; Stewart et al., 2005; Taylor, Davis & Maxwell, 2001). In reviewing the evidence of violent offender interventions, some themes emerged from the evidence. First, across both the meta-analyses and individual program evaluations, the effectiveness of mandating treatment is mixed and inconclusive. In some instances, mandatory programs exhibited positive effects on reducing rates of reoffending (Smedslund et al., 2007; Stewart et al., 2005; Taylor, Davis & Maxwell, 2001). However, the nuances of

⁹ For more detail on the individual studies included in the review see Cherney et al. (2021).

such findings should be kept in mind. For example, in reference to studies that adopted quasi-experimental designs, Feder and Wilson (2005) found that domestic violence abusers who were mandated to treatment and completed their program reoffended at a substantially lower rate than offenders who were mandated and did not complete their treatment. Also one common element among successful mandatory interventions was the presence of CBT or similar styles of rehabilitative programming (e.g., Smedslund et al., 2007 Loeffler et al., 2010 as it pertains to domestic violent offending and Hogan, Lambert & Barton-Bellessa, 2012 as it relates to high risk inmates). In relation to the mandated supervision of high-risk offenders in the community, Hyatt and Barnes' (2017) U.S study found that the strategy of mandating probationers to an increased level of supervision - in this case it included weekly face-to-face meetings with their probation officer and drug testing - had no statistically significant effects on reoffending. One problem noted by some studies was the high dropout rate amongst individuals in mandated programs (Ferrer-Perez & Bosch-Fiol, 2018). In specific reference to court-mandated treatment for domestic violence offenders, Ferrer-Perez & Bosch-Fiol, (2018) stated that a lack of motivation on behalf of perpetrators undergoing involuntary treatment is a cause of high dropout rates. However, participant attrition is noted as a common problem for violent offender treatment programs regardless of whether they are mandatory or voluntary (Olver, Stockdale & Wormith, 2011).

In relation to sex offender programs varied results were also found. A series of systematic reviews found that whether an offender entered treatment voluntarily or on a mandatory basis made no difference to any observed sexual recidivism (Losel & Schmucker, 2005; Schmucker & Losel 2015, 2017). The authors suggested that other factors such as the provision of individualised treatment, CBT-based interventions, and therapeutic settings were more likely to have an impact on sexual reoffending than the role of mandated participation. Lambie and Stewart (2012) study examined the recidivism rate of individuals mandated by the courts in New Zealand to three community-based child sexual offender treatment programs. Their study included a probation only comparison group who did not receive treatment. The program included various components focused on individual treatment (e.g.,

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individual and family therapy) and group components (e.g., relationship skills and relapse prevention). Their results showed no significant difference between the recidivism rates for any of the three programs. However, differences were found between the treatment versus no treatment groups, in that recidivism occurred less and at a delayed rate amongst the treatment group compared with the probation only comparison group.

In summary our evidence review across violent and sex offending programming indicated mixed results as to the effectiveness of mandating participation in rehabilitation programs. Some studies found that voluntary programs had an impact on rates of reoffending, while other mandatory schemes did not. Hence, the violent and sex offender literature indicates that the impact of mandated participation on behavioural and cognitive change is, at best, inconclusive. That is, studies could not identify whether mandatory participation did or did not make a difference to program effectiveness, rehabilitative outcomes, or reoffending. The benefits of exposure to rehabilitative programming under mandatory conditions, however, was not dismissed. Possible features of effective programming included the presence of CBT and therapeutic interventions.

Country specific approaches and experiences

In this section we review country level experience and policy to understand how different jurisdictions have dealt with the conditions surround participating in CVE programs targeting convicted terrorist and at risk individuals. We limited ourselves to countries we were able to obtain specific information on relating to the mandatory nature of participation. This section draws on our findings from our policy and legislative review and information provided by international experts that comprised our informal consultative group.

Europe

Our review of the existing literature indicates variations across European countries as to the use of mandatory conditions relating to CVE programming. The specific case of the United Kingdom (UK) is discussed below.

In France a pilot program in 2016 was developed and implemented in secret called the French Research and Intervention in Violent Extremism (RIVE) (Recherche et Intervention sur les Violences Extremistes). It is reported that the pilot involved 14 men and women for whom attendance was mandatory (Lahnait, 2018). Mandatory attendance was required through judicial control or request by a judge (France 24, 2017; France Inter, 2017). The program targeted people already sentenced or awaiting sentencing for a terrorism-related offence or who were reported for being radicalised (France 24, 2017). The program aims were disengagement and reintegration and to provide support specific to the individual needs of participants. In some cases a client might meet with an expert on Islam (France 24, 2017) and a Muslim chaplain would provide religious guidance if required (Lahnait, 2018). There is no published research on the effectiveness of the RIVE. The intervention was discontinued because the contract with the intervention provider was not renewed (Letto, 2019).

The RIVE initiative in France was replaced by another scheme termed PAIRS (Programme d'Accompagnement Individualisé et de Réaffiliation Sociale) in 2018 and is still in operation (Hecker 2021). The scheme involves a mix of mandated and voluntary clients and is covered by a legal and institutional framework that allows a judge to order participation, with non-compliance risking a person being placed in custody. Hecker (2021) undertook an evaluation of the PAIRS initiative. Hecker's (2021) presents findings that some individuals who are under a legal obligation to participate, can express a hostile and indifferent attitude when attending meetings. Hecker (2021, pg., 40) states that, "In general, voluntary participants willingly follow the program and see it as helpful".

In the Norwegian prison system a mentoring scheme is provided to radicalised inmates on a voluntary basis (ICSR, 2020). It is reported that only 9 of the 34 possible target group inmates are registered in the mentoring-scheme (ICSR, 2020, pg. 71). However, all inmates

though will have mandatory requirements to participate in regular prison activities and programs (e.g., work or cognitive behavioural change programs).

The Dutch Team TER (Terrorists, Extremists and Radicals) initiative is run by the Netherlands government. The nationally operating Team TER helps the Dutch Probation Service to prevent radicalisation amongst Dutch probationers. It aims to disengage radicalised individuals (Muslims, right-and left-wing extremists) through the use of tailored approaches to influence individual behaviour (Radicalisation Awareness Network, [RAN], 2019). The Team includes 18 trained probation officers and has a legal mandate to work with clients who can be directed to engage the Team TER as a condition of their impending release and supervision in the community (van der, Heide & Schuurman, 2018; Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2019). A Dutch study by Weggemans and de Graaf (2017), into the reintegration of jihadist detainees in the Netherlands included interviews with professionals involved in the delivery of reintegration initiatives. One issue raised by interviewees was that given the voluntary nature of these initiatives they felt powerless to compel former detainees to participate. The best practitioners could do was to use forms of assistance in housing, welfare, employment and psychological care as leverage to encourage participation. Some interviewees commented that it was difficult to implement voluntary programs and that if participants failed to attend appointments for example, there was little they could do (Weggemans & de Graaf, 2017, pg. 109-110).

In Sweden, the Swedish Prison and Probation Service does not use parole boards and all inmates are automatically released after serving two-thirds of their sentence. Over the next nine years it is reported that Sweden is set to release 32 extremist inmates (ICSR, 2020). Once released these inmates will be subject to the mandatory condition of attending regular meetings with their probation officer. All clients must participate in these sessions regardless of their attitude or motivation for change and can be directed to participate in other treatment programs (ICSR, 2020).

Reports from Germany indicate that participation in programs to rehabilitate convicted terrorists or radicalised individuals is generally not mandatory.¹⁰ In Belgium, individual participation in a de-radicalisation/disengagement program may be mandated as part of an individual's probation or in cases of a suspended sentence when certain conditions are imposed.¹¹ CVE efforts in Belgium can often be divided by Francophone (French speaking regions) and Flemish (Dutch speaking regions) differences and distinctions. On the Francophone side, some individual cases are under judicial mandate, typically probation, which can include certain mandated conditions such as attending a CVE intervention. In some instances, individual cases under judicial mandate have been taken over by other agencies (e.g., local prevention officials, or NGOs).¹²

Asia and the Middle East

As already noted above CVE schemes in Asia and the Middle East targeting convicted terrorists or radicalised offenders while voluntary, can often involve forms of coercion to participate. One common approach is the use of de-radicalisation centres (referred to as rehabilitation centres in Sri Lanka and Saudia Arabia; see Boucek, 2008, Hettiarachchi, 2018; Perliger 2020), where program beneficiaries are all housed in the one location and receive therapeutic support and other forms of assistance such as job training. While offering the opportunity to deliver targeted interventions to large numbers of individuals, participants have little choice but to consent to participate (hence are underpinned by implicit coercion). In Indonesia there is legislative provision relating to the delivery of de-radicalisation programming to terrorist convicts or those exposed to terrorist views (Institute for Criminal

¹⁰ Information provided by consultative group – Daniel Koehler (German Institute on Radicalization and De-radicalization Studies); and Sofia Koller (Research Fellow, Project Leader InFoEx, German Council on Foreign Relations DGAP).

¹¹ Information provided by consultancy group – Thomas Renard (Egmont Institute. Royal Institute for International Relations. Belgium).

¹² Ibid.

Justice Reform, 2018). Recent amendments to these laws make reference to these interventions being mandatory for prisoners and individuals seeking parole.¹³

Canada

Based on information provided from academic contacts in Canada,¹⁴ mandatory participation in Canadian CVE programs has not been adopted in any universal fashion. It has only been used in a limited number of cases in relation to conditions imposed by the Canadian parole board relating to the release of convicted terrorists (Bell, 2020). In 2016, for example, an individual named Aaron Driver, a covert to jihadism and who was shot dead by police in the act of perpetrating a terrorist offence, was placed on what is termed a “peace bond” due to his extremist behavior (Amarasingam, 2016; McKeon, 2017). A peace bond is used by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police against people who they think are likely to commit an offence, but where police lack evidence to charge the individual (Canadian Department of Justice, 2015). It can impose a range of conditions on the offender. In the case of Driver this included that he had to participate in some religious counselling to correct his understanding of Islam.¹⁵ This was seen in Canada, however, as an infringement of his constitutional rights and was subsequently challenged and dropped (CBC online, 2016). A recent case is that of Mohamed Hassan Hersi, who was charged with trying to leave Canada to join a terrorist group (Bell, 2020). A number of special conditions will be imposed upon Hersi when he is released, which include the condition that he undergo treatment for his extremist beliefs and behaviours (Bell, 2020). Another example is that of Pamir Hakimzadah, who was convicted of attempting to join ISIS and was released on parole in 2019, with him subject to a range of conditions including a requirement that he attend counselling and meet weekly with an Imam (Bell, 2019).

¹³ Information provided by consultancy group - Idhamsyah Eka Putra (Persada Indonesia University); and Fajar Erikha (Lecturer, Deputy Director, Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Indonesia).

¹⁴ Information was provided by Professor Lorne Dawson (University of Waterloo); Dr Amarnath Amarasingam (Queens University), and Professor Sarah Thompson (Ryerson University).

¹⁵ Email communication with Professor Lorne Dawson 1-12-2020.

The UK Desistance and Disengagement Programme

The UK Desistance and Disengagement Programme (DDP) targets convicted terrorists and terrorist related offenders. This includes what are referred to as ‘TACT’ offenders (in reference to individuals convicted under the U.K. Terrorism Act) and non-TACT individuals. It provides support for individuals in prison and in the community. It is a case-managed intervention, funded and sponsored by the UK Home Office. It provides a range of interventions spanning mentoring, theological and psychological support, plus a discretionary practical fund to support participants. It aims to address the drivers of radicalisation around needs for identity, self-esteem, meaning and purpose, and personal grievances. Its objectives include de-radicalisation, rapport building, changing mindsets and strengthening protective factors, social integration, employment and training, improving family and personal relationships and broader support (DDP Operating Guide, 2020). The DDP case management process involves case identification and referral, client case assessment and acceptance, intervention provider selection and commissioning, intervention delivery, case review and evaluation and case exit and closure. Intervention providers (including government and non-government agencies) are the main mechanism of delivering the DDP (DDP Operating Guide, 2020).

The DDP is offered to those in prison that have been convicted of a TACT or terrorist related offence and ‘at-risk’ non-TACT individuals. Those approaching their release date are prioritised with a view of their transition onto probation. The DDP is also offered to TACT/related offenders on probation in the community and can be a condition of their license. The same conditions can apply to individuals who have been subject to what are called Terrorism Prevention Investigation Measures (TPIMs) and Temporary Exclusion Orders (TEOs). The DDP can be mandated for individuals subject to TPIMs and TEOs. TPIMs target individuals who present a terrorist risk but have not been prosecuted and whom the UK Home Secretary believes to have engaged in terrorist related activity, but where it is

assessed as not feasible either to prosecute or deport the individual (Anderson, 2014).¹⁶ TEOs are legislated under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015¹⁷ and target individuals who are suspected of being involved in terrorist-related activity outside the U.K (e.g., returning foreign fighters). Individuals subject to a TEO who return to the UK have to agree to a range of conditions relating to their movements, reporting and attendance at appointments. Where the DDP is mandated for individuals on probation or subject to court-approved conditions, non-compliance can lead to the individual being charged for breach of their conditions, which may result in them being recalled to prison (if on probation) or given a prison sentence (if in breach of a TPIM or TEO) (DDP Operating Guide, 2020).

The DDP is located within the Prevent strand of the UK's Counter-Terrorism Strategy CONTEST. Not a lot is known publicly about the program and there are few open-source documents on its content and implementation, with it currently not having been subject to any evaluation (Elshimi, 2020). Figures reported in the media are that in 2019 about 110 convicted and suspected terrorists were participating in the DDP (Drury & Barrett, 2019).

Recent cases of radicalised individuals who have been required to participate in the DDP have called into question its effectiveness and capacity to reduce ongoing risk. For example, one case includes that of Usman Khan (London Bridge attacker). Khan was sentenced in 2012 along with other co-offenders for plotting a terrorist attack. When released on licence he was subject to a range of conditions standard for terrorist offenders in the UK (e.g., electronic monitoring, community supervision and banned from certain associations), which included participating in the DDP. Khan received assistance under the DDP which included mentoring. Khan travelled to London in November 2019 to participate in a Cambridge University prison rehabilitation event. During the event Khan left and put on a

¹⁶In 2020 there were proposals to create “enduring TPIMs”. Enduring TPIMs are to focus on long-standing subjects of interest who are engaged in radicalisation rather than attacks. It proposes to remove the two-year limit on the use of TPIMs (Grierson, 2020b).

¹⁷ See <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/section/2/enacted>

fake suicide vest and also attacked and killed two delegates and injured three in a knife attack. He was shot dead by police (Casciani, 2019; Warrell, 2019).

There is varying information about whether Khan had been “gaming” the system and appearing cooperative when participating in the DDP (Casciani, 2019; Warrell, 2019). One former Scotland Yard officer who mentored Khan during his participation in the DDP stated he had a “suspiciously rehearsed persona” and reported he witnessed Khan losing his temper during a meeting with him, and was angry about his licence conditions (Kerbaj, 2019). Other details about how Khan was dealt with include reporting that Prevent officers responsible for monitoring Khan had no training in dealing with a terrorist offender. Police who visited Khan two weeks before the attack reported that Khan was jobless, living alone and antagonistic during the visit. His mentoring had also ceased. It was reported at a pre-inquest inquiry into the attack that there were questions about the effective monitoring and supervision of Khan (Grierson, 2020a). A full inquest into the attack begin in May 2021.

The Khan case raised questions about the effectiveness of CVE interventions such as the DDP, and whether mandated participation makes a difference when offenders may just decide to deceive intervention staff – referred to as disguised compliance (Acheson, 2020). It should be noted though that this problem has not been confined to the UK. There was the recent case in Germany of the Dresden knife attacker, Abdullah al H. H., who had been provided counselling by one of Germanys largest non-government de-radicalisation providers and who it appeared deceived staff about his extremist beliefs and actions (Reinhard, 2020). Another example includes the Vienna case of an Islamic State supporter, who in 2020 shot 4 people and injured 23 individuals in central Vienna. This individual had tried to enter Syria, was deported back to Austria and receive a reduced sentence, which included the condition of participating in a de-radicalisation program. It would appear this individual was able to deceive his mentors that he presented no immediate risk and had renounced his radical beliefs (Oltermann, Connolly & Burke, 2020). In reference to the Khan case, Renard (2020) argues that it needs to be placed into a broader perspective and that it should be seen as an outlier

given the number of radicalised offenders who have been released into the community in the UK.

Summary of international experience

In summary our review of country-specific experience and policy indicates that mandated participation in an intervention or support scheme is most commonly utilised as part of community supervision conditions (probation/parole) when radicalised offenders are released from prison. Internationally, most CVE programs are voluntary. However, some schemes do involve implicit forms of coercion to promote participation. The United Kingdom's Desistance and Disengagement Programme (DDP) and the French PAIRS intervention were the only specifically named schemes that we identified as linked to mandated legal conditions. Anecdotal experience from the U.K. indicates that mandated participation does not guarantee success. The problem of disguised compliance is a risk, and some offenders may attempt to deceive staff. Having adequate quality assurance processes to monitor client participation, well trained staff, multiple data sources to assess client progress and comprehensive risk assessments that are completed regularly, are all essential to addressing this problem.

Implementation issues and drawbacks and benefits

In this section we expand on the findings above to further explore the drawbacks of mandating participation in CVE interventions, along with consideration of the possible benefits of mandated treatment, and other types of issues that need to be considered.

A consistent argument made by CVE scholars is that disengagement programs should be based on respectful and non-coercive approaches, ideally to avoid participant resentment and resistance (Cherney, 2018c; Koehler, 2017). Hence, as we indicate above, it is generally argued that programs should be implemented in a voluntary fashion. Regardless of mandatory or non-mandatory conditions, the broader literature on the rehabilitation of serious offenders

(violent and sexual) suggest that programs targeting them suffer from high rates of participant dropout and attrition (Ferrer-Perez & Bosch-Fiol, 2018; Hanson, Broom & Stephenson, 2004). Mandated intervention may help to minimise this, but the problem then arises as to what do with those who do not comply with mandated conditions. An appropriate response and punishment for non-compliance needs to help generate genuine motivation to participate. While sending individuals back to prison might be one response to violations of mandated conditions, this does not help prepare them for eventual release into the community.

One drawback of mandated interventions pointed out in the literature, is that it does not inspire the needed motivation necessary for treatment to be effective (Lambert, et al., 2007). Drawing on a study of offenders in maximum-security, Lambert et al. (2007) notes that candidates who voluntarily participate in a program are often more susceptible to treatment compared with those who are forced. Additionally, investigations of coercive treatment in correctional settings suggest that even when involuntary participants do not necessarily resist treatment, the presence of someone who absolutely does not want to participate can have a negative impact on the treatment environment (Miller et al., 2010). Also, inmates who are forced to participate in treatment can consume a disproportionate amount of time and resources relative to offenders who voluntarily consent given the need to deal with episodes of noncompliance, poor attendance and motivation (Miller et al., 2010). In effect, the implication arising from arguments presented in the literature is that mandating treatment can carry risks to the success of programs that aim to rehabilitate radicalised offenders.

Research has also drawn attention to how mandated interventions can have an impact on client and intervention-provider interactions and relationships (Hachtel, Vogel & Huber, 2019). For example, research on the topic of criminal justice mandated treatment for mentally ill individuals has indicted how it can change the therapeutic relationship between clients and treatment providers (Manchak, Skeem & Rook, 2014; Skeem et al., 2007). The concern is that in such a context, the relationship can move beyond the provision of care to that of control and compliance. The risk is that too much of a focus on the latter can lead to anger and resistance amongst clients and slow or halt progression towards treatment goals, as well as

create a sense of helplessness that detrimentally impacts on therapeutic engagement (Manchak, Skeem & Rook, 2014; Monahan. et al., 1995). This can undermine the quality of care provided and make clients resentful and resistance to change.

A key theme within correctional research is how the quality of the relationship between parole/probation supervisors and the individuals they supervise impacts reoffending (Kennealy, et al., 2012; Skeem, et al., 2007). It is argued that mandated treatment or involuntary programming can potentially undermine the quality of such relationships (Skeem et al., 2007) and finding a balance between providing care and focusing on compliance can be challenging for supervisors or practitioners (Manchak, Skeem & Rook, 2014).

These issues need to be considered in the context of agencies working with convicted terrorists or individuals who have radicalised to violent extremism. For example, it is argued that anti-authoritarian and anti-government sentiment in part drives radicalisation in combination with grievances about perceived injustices (van den Bos, 2018; Hafez & Mullins, 2015). Hence radicalised offenders in prison or under community supervision, may perceive mandated interventions as an example of authorities treating them unfairly by forcing them into a program, thus increasing the grievances about how they are treated. This can potentially make it harder to engage radicalised inmates in programs aimed at de-radicalisation and community reintegration.

While finding evidence against the benefits of involuntary treatment, Manchak, Skeem and Rook (2014), found that even in the context of criminal justice mandated treatment (court ordered) for mentally ill individuals, this does not always negatively influence client and therapist relationships or intervention outcomes and that this will vary on a case-by-case basis. At best, there may be a neutral effect of mandatory programming (Farabee, Prendergast & Anglin, 1998; Prendergast, et al., 2002). Also the literature continues to demonstrate that high-risk offenders do benefit the most from some form of rehabilitative programming (Andrews, Bonta & Hoge, 1990; Lipsey, 1999). However, this group is the least likely to volunteer for treatment (Andrews, Bonta & Hoge, 1990; Lipsey, 1999). This presents a critical challenge for voluntary participation. While it is beneficial to include motivated and

invested participants, if offenders are largely hesitant to volunteer, participation rates may be so low in a program that it produces little benefit.

Hence, while the literature does find fault with mandated treatment, even in such contexts authors concede to the importance of exposing individuals to interventions. For example, a study by Miller et al. (2010), indicated that offenders can become motivated to change through coerced treatment via the simple introduction of rehabilitative services. Additionally, mandated treatment does not necessarily have to result in the perception of a coercive environment or a sense of anger and resentment towards participation. A key argument is that if approaches use supportive, responsive and personalised tailored treatment styles, this often creates favourable working alliances, therapeutic outcomes and a sense of motivation to change (Hachtel, Vogel & Huber, 2019). This does demonstrate that encouraging offender participation and change, while difficult to elicit via mandated efforts, can still be facilitated under involuntary conditions.

This points to the need for intervention providers to have a clear understanding of how specific motivations influence the quality of participation and willingness to engage in an intervention. It needs to be acknowledged that a lack of motivation and an unwillingness to change is not a permanent state of mind among extremist offenders subject to interventions (Cherney, 2018c; Walkenhorst, et al., 2020). A recent Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) rehabilitation manual on working with terrorist offenders, recommended that addressing factors like self-confidence and trust in others over time can create key cognitive openings for change amongst program participants (see Walkenhorst, et al., 2020). Targeting motivations is concerned with strengthening and supporting positive behaviours and helping individuals to avoid extremist associates and environments. Other third parties such as partners, family members and mentors have an important role to play in facilitating and supporting motivations to change (Butt & Tuck, 2014; Cherney, 2018c; Koehler, 2017; Koehler, & Ehrt, 2018). While these observations are relevant to either voluntary or mandatory programs, the implication is that it is the content of an intervention that matters a great deal rather than simply whether it is mandated.

Conclusion

A rapid review of the evaluation literature across the fields of CVE, violent and sex offender schemes finds arguments and evidence for and against mandated participation. The evidence from studies on sex and violent offender schemes indicate there is mixed evidence for mandated interventions. While evidence does not clearly support the effectiveness of mandated participation, the exposure of offenders to treatment under mandated schemes may offer some benefits. Hence the situation is far more complex than simply rejecting it as a viable approach.

The literature indicates that the implementation of policy, or legislative schemes, that mandate CVE program participation in the prison or community context must consider a range of issues that will impact on the viability and effectiveness of such an approach. Consideration needs to be given to how target groups will respond to being forced to participate in an intervention, given it may only create resentment and a sense of unfairness which will make client engagement harder. There must be a focus on ensuring quality therapeutic relationships can be developed between clients and intervention providers so that tailored intervention plans can be collaboratively developed and progress towards intervention goals is achieved. Authorities and intervention providers need to avoid an emphasis upon simply enforcing compliance, control and surveillance, given this is not conducive to facilitating genuine engagement and motivations to change. Developing responses to incidents of non-compliance cannot simply punish participants, but need to look at factors and motivations contributing to such incidents. Interventions must be tailored so that they address specific motivations for change and focus on protective factors against radicalisation. Finally, it needs to be accepted that progress on a mandated intervention will vary amongst participants with their success and failures.

Across different international jurisdictions participant involvement in CVE programs varies from voluntary interventions to those that involve implicit coercion to participate, as

well as to schemes imposing mandatory conditions. To date there is no strong evaluative evidence that one approach is more effective than the other, or that mandated schemes offer any specific advantages above voluntary schemes. There are challenges and drawbacks with any approach. Based on the evidence and literature reviewed here, it remains unclear whether mandating participation in CVE interventions offers greater overall benefits compared to voluntary programming and participation. This conclusion is cautionary considering the limited evidence that directly and rigorously evaluates programs in the CVE context.

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