Distribution Agreement

In presenting this thesis as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter now, including display on the World Wide Web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis.

Sania Chandrani April 9, 2019

De-radicalizing and Reintegrating Foreign Fighters: Why do some cities succeed while others fail?

by

Sania Chandrani

Carrie Wickham
Adviser

International Studies

Carrie Wickham

Adviser

Richard Doner

Committee Member

Frank Lechner

Committee Member

2019

De-radicalizing and Reintegrating Foreign Fighters: Why do some cities succeed while others fail?

By

Sania Chandrani

Carrie Wickham

Adviser

An abstract of
a thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences
of Emory University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

International Studies

2019

Abstract

De-radicalizing and Reintegrating Foreign Fighters: Why do some cities succeed while others fail?

By Sania Chandrani

In 2014, ISIS and Al-Qaeda ramped up their recruitment efforts, and young Muslim men and women from around the world left home to join their ranks in Syria and Iran. As these extremist organizations recede and may fighters return home, some are faced with harsh punishments including imprisonment and revocation of citizenship. However, a few cities like Aarhus and Copenhagen in Denmark work to reintegrate their returnees and help those at risk of leaving to deradicalize and stay home. What allows some cities like Aarhus to respond to this problem with robust programming despite being smaller and less well-resourced than their larger neighbors like Copenhagen? Based on existing research in sociology, psychology, and institutional change, I hypothesize that preexisting institutional cooperation, local autonomy, high public perception of risk, and critical actors can make the difference. After fifteen interviews, and further analysis, I conclude that institutional cooperation and local autonomy are critical for a city to establish reintegration programs while a critical actor is helpful, and public perception may have no influence. Institutional layering appears to be an effective method for establishing strong reintegration institutions rather than starting from scratch. As such, countries seeking to build reintegration programs should seek to build upon existing institutions and leverage partnerships, focus on resilience building at a local level, and develop local capacities to respond to issues autonomously. They should encourage cross-talk between agencies as this has shown to be effective in not only PVE but also public health and education interventions. Finally, policy entrepreneurs can continue to look for windows where their expertise on the topic of PVE will be used by their governments, especially at the local level where they have the most influence. Further investigation into favorable conditions for effective institutional layering, comparison of reintegration of right-wing, left-wing, and religious extremists, as well as the role of public opinion in counter-terrorism policy warrants further research.

De-radicalizing and Reintegrating Foreign Fighters: Why do some cities succeed while others fail?

By

Sania Chandrani

Carrie Wickham

Adviser

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences
of Emory University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

International Studies

2019

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my thesis adviser, Dr. Carrie Wickham, for inspiring me to pursue an honors thesis in the first place and supporting me over any obstacles, including the Pacific Ocean. Thank you for helping me balance research methods with compelling and narrative writing.

To Dr. Richard Doner for teaching me rigor in qualitative methods. I spent many hours thinking about how to make an argument or explain a concept, and your advice helped me make sense of it all. To Dr. Frank Lechner for coming on board, remaining tremendously flexible throughout this process, and helping me understand the value of a good table.

Thank you to the Political Science Department and Dr. Jeffrey Staton for supporting me through the IRB process and for the grant that allowed me to travel to Aarhus and Copenhagen to conduct fieldwork. Thank you also to Dean Andrea Hershatter and the Goizueta Business School for funding my fieldwork as well.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my family for supporting me in pursuing whatever interested me. I'm incredibly thankful for your trust and confidence in me, even when I go abroad on a week's notice.

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

Ten years ago, a small city in Denmark called Aarhus started seeing dozens of people leave their homes to fight in foreign conflicts in Syria and Iraq. Around the same time, dozens of other cities across the world began seeing the same problem—Paris, Brussels, London, Copenhagen, Tunis, Marakesh and more. Copenhagen, the largest city in Denmark was among those with many young men departing. In 2007, the Danish government tasked its municipalities with figuring out a solution to this problem—get people to stay home and figure out what to do about the radicalization problem. Aarhus and Copenhagen were the cities most plagued by the issue in Denmark, so they both set out to find a solution. Aarhus, the smaller, less-well-resourced, more homogenous city came up with a solution which became the acclaimed "Aarhus Model." Copenhagen, which had a larger pool of resources, more potential contributors and idea-generators, and easy access to the national government as the capital city, lagged a few years behind. Why was Aarhus able to come up with a robust reintegration and deradicalization program before its more institutionally well-endowed municipal counterpart? This puzzle is the focus of this thesis.

In 2009, Abdullah nearly left his home in Aarhus, Denmark to become a foreign fighter and travel to Syria and Pakistan for his Jihad. Instead, he was meeting a researcher for hot chocolate and to share his story on an icy morning in Aarhus. I was the researcher, and I was not sure what to expect, but the story I heard taught me why Abdullah was still in Denmark, and how others might learn from how his city made that happen.

We settled down with hot chocolates and Abdullah began telling me his story. Abdullah moved from Somalia to Denmark as a child. He described his upbringing as regular: he went to school, played with friends, and spent time with his family. When Abdullah turned 18, his family embarked on the Hajj. After his pilgrimage, Abdullah felt connected to Islam in a way he never

had before.

Several weeks later, he was participating in class debate about Islam when one of his classmates asserted that Muslims terrorize the West, kill people, and stone women. Abdullah lost his temper and said, “People like you should never exist.”

In that moment, everything changed for Abdullah. His classmates reported they felt unsafe, and that same evening, the police knocked on Abdullah’s family’s door looking for him. His father called him and told him to come home immediately. For hours, his father interrogated him about what he had done that day to which Abdullah responded that he had only gone to school and played soccer after. Abdullah’s father made him promise to go to the police first thing in the morning.

“Am I arrested? I was so shocked and I was so scared about when the next shipment to Guantanamo would be.” These were the thoughts that ran through Abdullah’s mind that night. The next morning, he went to see the police officer. Of this meeting, Abdullah said, “He asked me these questions that were so provocative. ‘Are you Sunni or Shia? You went on a pilgrimage; you completed the five pillars; are you thinking about taking it to the next level or something?’” What next level? Abdullah thought. The officers then asked him to sign a paper so they could search his home. If he refused, the officers would get a warrant and he would be held for 24 hours. So, Abdullah signed the paper.

When they arrived at his home, Abdullah recalls, “It was very humiliating in front of my mother and father. They were throwing everything to the east and west.” First, they searched Abdullah’s room, and when they found nothing, they moved on to his family’s belongings until they were satisfied. Abdullah was shocked by the way they had humiliated his mother and four younger siblings. “I couldn’t attend school because of the case for two weeks—I didn’t sleep or

eat and everything was ruined. When you are stressed, you can't focus on anything." Eventually, the principal called and told him the investigation was over and that he was clean. However, the investigations had caused Abdullah to miss his exams and the retake period had lapsed. The principle told him he would have to redo the year or find another school.

"I thought they were cruel bastards who needed punishment. I could see no empathy on their faces, and so I lost my empathy for them. If they wanted a terrorist, I will give them a terrorist. But my father said, 'Don't give up; don't be angry; find a new school." So, he tried. But that summer, Abdullah's mother had a heart attack. "When someone that close to you passes away…I thought I had nothing to live for; I was so angry," Abdullah said.

After the funeral, a man he knew from the Somali community approached him in the mosque to comfort him. Abdullah told him everything about school and the investigation. "He introduced me to his young brothers from the ghetto neighborhood and they welcomed me as if they had known me for their whole lives," Abdullah thought back, "We cooked together, talked about religion, watched Danish news to confirm they didn't like us." During this time, they also watched YouTube videos with radical sentiments like those of Awlaki, an Al-Qaeda recruiter they found relatable and inspiring. Slowly, his group's resentment toward the authorities grew and some of the friends, now roommates, began planning to leave for Syria.

A few weeks later, Abdullah got a call from the police. The first thing the officer said to him was, "I'm very sorry, and I want to have a cup of coffee because yours wasn't a fairly handled case." Abdullah was confused but still furious. "I don't care what you say, you ruined my life. I don't care. The case is over. I don't want to have anything to do with you," he thought. The officer again apologized and finally, Abdullah agreed to meet the officer in person.

"This big guy shakes my hand and brings me a cup of coffee," Abdullah chuckles. At the

time, he was still angry and told the officer he didn't care if the police had messed up and that it was their own fault. He was going to leave this country for good. Before the meeting ended, the officer asked Abdullah if he would do him a favor and meet with a young Muslim. "Who is this snitch?' I remember thinking. I should meet him and warn my brothers and sisters," Abdullah thought.

The man to which the officer was referring was Memet, an Islamic religion scholar of Turkish descent. Memet was part of a cohort of mentors from the Danish Muslim community who had been selected to work with potentially radicalized youth who were contemplating leaving Denmark for a conflict zone. Police officers in Aarhus would introduce young people of concern to mentors like Memet as part of the city's crime prevention and deradicalization program.

A week later, Abdullah met the stranger and debated intensely about religion. When Abdullah talked, Memet, who would become Abdullah's mentor, did not interrupt; he listened. "In the beginning, I didn't trust the mentor. I searched for hidden mics and cameras. He would tell me to take my time." Over the next six months, Abdullah continued to meet with Memet and debate him. He grew to trust Memet and referred some of his friends to the authorities' help as well.

Eventually, Abdullah finished college and at the time we met was training to become a financial controller. He and his mentor worked hard to achieve these goals. "Slowly, I got away from the group [of friends]. When you're busy, you don't have time for all this [radical/extremist activity]." As Abdullah was progressing through the deradicalization process, Aarhus continued to expand its interventions. By the time Abdullah finished the program, the Aarhus model included police officers, social workers, several cohorts of mentors, and other civil society

organizations. When Abdullah finished the mentorship program, he along with his father were invited to meet the Minister of Social Affairs. “They were rebuilding the trust with my family. They messed up, but they were trying,” Abdullah said.

When Abdullah and I met to talk about his story, he himself had become a mentor for a young person and was soon to be married. He was charismatic and funny and even gave me a hug in proper Muslim style before leaving the coffeeshop. Though Abdullah is thankful his life turned around when it did, he wishes they could have reached his friends too back in 2010. At the time, there was not enough manpower, and some of his roommates left and died in the conflict. One is still alive there.

Introduction

Abdullah and his roommates’ narratives became increasingly common during the last decade, as the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Shaam (Daesh) and Al Qaeda ramped up their recruitment efforts targeting socially-isolated young Muslims. Abdullah’s story of isolation and family tension is common among Daesh’s recruits across Europe.[1] Luckily, Adbullah was from the Danish city of Aarhus, which had recently created an approach to intervene and **reintegrate** him back into society. Aarhus’s approach to Abdullah represents a series of soft power tactics that strive to intervene before violence occurs.[2]These efforts are indicative of an emerging trend directed toward countering and preventing violent extremism. Importantly, the intervention occurred after Abdullah was alienated, but before he departed to a conflict zone. This distinction

[1] Christensen, Tina Wilchen, and Tore Bjorgo. 2017. “How to manage returned foreign fighters and other Syria travellers?” Oslo, Norway: Center for Research on Extremism: The Extreme Right, Hate Crime and Political Violence.
[2] Owen Frazer and Christian Nunlist, “The Concept of Countering Violent Extremism,” CSS Analysis in Security Policy, no 183 (2015): 1-4

in timing is what differentiates Aarhus's deradicalization efforts from broader integration and assimilation efforts.

In 2007, when Aarhus began seeing the radicalization of isolated youth who left to fight in foreign conflict, its prevention strategy was unique even within Denmark. France, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and other countries historically took and continue to take a much more punitive approach to terrorist recruits and/or returnees.[3] In the past decade, other governments such as the Netherlands and Norway have attempted deradicalization, yet others continue to follow punitive paths, adopting a reactive rather than a proactive strategy. Of those governments that have attempted deradicalization and reintegration, some cities like Aarhus established robust programs early on while other cities even in the same country, such as Copenhagen, were slower to adapt. Other efforts, such as several in France, are short-lived or collapse altogether. As noted, deradicalization interventions tend to occur through national-level policies and/or local-level initiatives. I will focus on the variation in the robustness of municipal initiatives. **Namely, what factors allow some deradicalization programs to function robustly while others collapse?**

I will examine the political and institutional factors that allow a city to create a robust deradicalization program. While published studies in psychology and sociology have examined the effectiveness of and approach to deradicalization on an individual and community-level, they have not fully addressed the question of how a city can build institutions and policy to prevent extremism. I argue that in order to build a robust deradicalization and reintegration program, cities must have high institutional cooperation, high local autonomy, a critical individual/group

[3] Higgins, Andrew. 2014. "For Jihadists, Denmark Tries Rehabilitation." The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/14/world/for-jihadists-denmark-tries-rehabilitation.html (December 17, 2018). Eddy, Melissa. 2014. "Nations Ponder How to Handle European Fighters Returning From Jihad." The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/24/world/nations-ponder-how-to-handle-european-fighters-returning-from-jihad.html?module=inline (December 17, 2018).

actor, and a populace that perceives improperly reintegrated individuals as a threat.

In this paper I will: (1) survey the established literature on Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) as well as the scope of the foreign fighter problem; (2) discuss psychological and sociological theories of deradicalization and reintegration along with theories of institutional formation and change; (3) outline how these theories shaped my hypotheses and the variables I used to test them through interviews in a comparative case study between the Danish cities of Aarhus and Copenhagen; (4) analyze my research findings, address validity of my original hypotheses, and suggest further ideas; and finally (5) provide recommendations for future practitioners seeking to prevent violent extremism.

Literature Review

The terms Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) and Combatting Violent Extremism (CVE) are often used interchangeably; however, PVE falls into a subset of the violent extremism literature that focuses on "upstream preventative approaches" that incorporate ideas of care, social work, and education that distinguish themselves from an explicitly security-driven (CVE) method. The Aarhus model, which Abdullah's story introduces, is an example of a PVE approach that steps out of a security framework and applies a holistic crime-prevention style. The body of PVE efforts and literature largely originated as a response to criticisms against CVE tactics and assumptions of CVE literature that stigmatized Muslim communities as a source of risk.[4]

Of course, PVE's "compassionate" approach to terrorism draws a fair amount of skepticism, which the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) researcher Ann-Sophie

[4] Charlotte Health-Kelly, "Counter-Terrorism and the Counterfactual: Producing the 'Radicalization' Discourse and the UK Prevention Strategy," British Journal of Politics and International Relations 15, no. 3 (2013): 394-415.

Hemmingsen has systematically reviewed. She classifies the criticisms into three areas: fundamental criticisms, political criticism, and danger of self-fulfilling prophecies. Fundamental criticisms of the reintegration approach contend that it too easily merges very different criminal acts—that is, extremism is different from drug abuse and it should be treated as such, not normalized. The political criticism questions whether radicalized individuals deserve to benefit from the welfare state and whether crime prevention in general, including extremism or otherwise, should be combatted more punitively. Finally, some worry that by focusing its deradicalization efforts on specific segments of society such as young Muslim men, the Aarhus approach is further polarizing and ostracizing these individuals leading to their radicalization.[5] Some of the empirical questions that derive from these criticisms are: Does a deradicalization approach really work in deterring people from leaving and/or preventing people from recidivating when they return home? Are these PVE approaches really an effective way to reintegrate foreign fighters back into civil society as opposed to more punitive methods?

An overview of the PVE literature reveals a highly interdisciplinary research field spanning from psychology and psychiatry to social work and criminology.[6] Yet, very little political science literature exists on how these PVE policies and institutions are created and sustained. For example, the psychology literature provides an individual-level analysis whereas public health studies focus on communities as units. Neither individual nor community-level studies can adequately explain the development of PVE policies and institutions, which are the focus of this study. Existing studies broadly seeks to identify that makes an effective deradicalization program—what kind of intervention works to prevent violent extremism? I

[5] Hemmingsen, Ann-Sophie. 2015. 15 The Danish Approach to Countering and Preventing Extremism and Radicalization. Copenhagen, Denmark: Danish Institute for International Studies. rep.
[6] Stephens, William & Sieckelinck, Stijn & Boutellier, Hans. (2019). Preventing Violent Extremism: A Review of the Literature. Studies in Conflict and Terrorism. 10.1080/1057610X.2018.1543144.

argue that even the formula for the "right" curriculum will be insufficient. Researchers must examine broader institutional, contextual factors that enable such programs to emerge and thrive.

In my view, the existing literature on how institutions are built and how they evolve over time provides a useful lens to examine municipal PVE programs. The objective of this thesis is to identify how politics, policy, and institutions influence the development of policy specifically geared toward Preventing Violent Extremism. **That is, it addresses the question, why are some cities able to establish robust PVE policies and programs while others fail?**

Theoretical and Causal Questions

The broad causal questions this paper will address are: What national and local political factors lead to the creation of robust de-radicalization and reintegration institutions? Why do some cities succeed in establishing robust programs while others fail? What lessons from more robust programs are portable to different contexts? These questions lend themselves to more descriptive questions: What does the de-radicalization and reintegration process look like programmatically? Do strategies that have worked to prevent radicalization and/or offer a path of reentry from other groups (neo-Nazis, radical leftist groups, etc.) offer a useful template for the deradicalization of young Muslims who are attracted to or have participated in militant Islamist groups such as Daesh and Al-Qaeda? What, if any, adjustments are needed to adapt previous models for this purpose?

Scale and Political Importance of Issue

To address these questions, we must first grapple with the scale and context of the foreign fighter problem and then delve into the existing literature on prevention and deradicalization.

The Soufan Group, a security consultancy, has compiled global statistics on the flow of foreign fighters. Since the early 2000s, between 17,000 and 31,000 men and women from more than 86 countries have left their home countries and flocked to join extremist organizations such as Daesh and Al Qaeda.[7] These individuals are labeled "foreign fighters," defined by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as "individuals who travel to a State other than their State of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetrating, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict."[8]

As these terrorist organizations recede, individuals leave their ranks to return to home where they are usually faced with hostile governments. In the worst cases, the home countries no longer consider these returnees one of theirs, revoking their citizenship and barring them from entry creating the threat of potentially stateless violent actors. Some are jailed immediately upon return. Still other returnees are allowed back into their home countries where they usually return to their families but are not properly reintegrated into society. A large portion of these people continue to live in isolation and some fall back into crime. Very few individuals are actually given a second chance through support services designed to help reintegrate them into society upon their return home.[9] According to several news sources and experts in the field, one example of this approach is the "Aarhus model" named after the city in Denmark where it originated.[10]

---

[7] FOREIGN FIGHTERS An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq. 2015. The Soufan Group. http://soufangroup.com/wpcontent/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate3.pdf

[8] Resolution 2178 UNSC "Foreign Terrorist Fighters" definition

[9] Ibid. The Soufan Group

[10] Rosin, Hanna. 2016. "How A Danish Town Helped Young Muslims Turn Away From ISIS." NPR. https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2016/07/15/485900076/how-a-danish-town-helped-young-muslims-turn-away-from-isis (December 17, 2018).
Higgins, Andrew. 2014. "For Jihadists, Denmark Tries Rehabilitation." NYT
Christensen, Tina Wilchen, and Tore Bjorgo. 2017. "How to manage returned foreign fighters and other Syria travellers?"

To further elaborate on the scale and importance of the issue, I spoke to a former Obama administration staff member, who discussed the high priority placed on this problem by the Obama administration. The reintegration question entered their radar late in the presidency, but by the end of President Obama's term, it nearly topped the administration's list of global security concerns. The administration believed it ought to be a U.S. priority to provide guidance on effective methods to deal with reintegration of returnees moving forward as detention, given its high risk of recidivism, was not in the international community's best interest.[11]

Reintegration, deradicalization, and prevention continue to be pressing issues today. The United States had at least 59 individuals travel to Syria to join Daesh, many of whom have been repatriated to the U.S.; however, at least 13 American women and children have not yet been permitted to re-enter the country. Moreover, France, Britain, and Germany are seeing similar attempts at re-entry which they, like the U.S., have yet to determine how to approach.[12] If these governments choose a reintegration approach, the robustness of the policy and institutions they develop will be essential to successful reintegration.

Finally, while Daesh in Syria has receded to a few city blocks,[13] radical groups continue to expand in other parts of the world such as the Philippines, where recent recruitment efforts and attacks on civilians have ramped up, sparking military retaliation.[14] Strategic approaches to prevent extremism and radicalization of their populations will be key in limiting the number of people Daesh is able to recruit in the future.

---

[11] Peter Mandaville; Professor George Mason University; Obama Administration Official; Interview. October 2019

[12] Callimachi, Rukmini, and Catherine Porter. "2 American Wives of ISIS Militants Want to Return Home." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 20 Feb. 2019, www.nytimes.com/2019/02/19/us/islamic-state-american-women.html.

[13] Daesh territory currently exists between areas controlled by Syrian Government and allies and the American-aligned Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces

[14] Beech, Hannah, and Jason Gutierrez. "How ISIS Is Rising in the Philippines as It Dwindles in the Middle East." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 9 Mar. 2019, www.nytimes.com/2019/03/09/world/asia/isis-philippines-jolo.html.

While the research for this thesis is exploratory, its implications are profound. With thousands of people now returning to their homes in Europe and the Middle East, how national, local, state, and non-state actors approach their return will determine public security and safety in the long term. *If the Aarhus Model works, other cities will wonder how they can emulate it. The answer will not lie in simply replicating the curriculum, which is the easier side of the effort; the solution will require cities to establish the appropriate institutional framework, a much longer-term and more arduous endeavor.*

Defining Deradicalization and Reintegration

Before diving into the literature, I will first explain my rationale for focusing on both deradicalization *and* reintegration programs. For the purposes of this research, deradicalization is defined as the process of changing attitudes including values, beliefs, and worldviews. A similar term, "disengagement," is often used synonymously, but disengagement focuses specifically on changing the actions, rather than the thoughts or attitudes, of individuals.[15] Reintegration is defined as resocialization at home through an adoption of identity and the development of strong social relationships outside the extremist group such as with employers, mentors, friends, family etc.[16]

The modern foreign fighter problem is a relatively recent one, starting in the early 2000s, and the returnee problem is an even newer one, starting in the 2010s. As foreign fighters return home, governments have compelling reasons to re-socialize returnees to prevent future harm. The extensive literature on prisons shows that they often function as breeding grounds for further

[15] Bjørgo, Tore and John Horgan, eds. *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement*. New York: Routledge, 2009.
[16] Christensen, T. W., (2015). *A question of participation - Disengagement from the extremist right. A case study from Sweden.* Roskilde: Roskilde University.

radicalization—a risk that governments are taking seriously.[17] Similarly, governments around the world are also noticing their role in preventing at-risk youth from being radicalized and leaving in the first place. Only by stemming the flow of fighters leaving and quelling the risk of terrorism when these fighters return can governments put an end to the foreign fighter problem. Importantly, the types of cities who focus on deradicalization of folks prior to leaving will be different in many ways than the ones who will attempt to rehabilitate returnees. Paris, London, and Brussels, for example all have assimilation, resilience, and deradicalization efforts for those they consider to be a flight risk. The Hedayah program, a global counter-terror forum, has identified dozens of programs worldwide that reintegrate returnees and hundreds geared toward deradicalization of at-risk youth, few programs intersect enough to do both.[18]Aarhus and Copenhagen are both examples of cities that do work with individuals both prior to departure and after they return. Although theirs is a unique subset of PVE programs, and there may be some slippage when discussing pre-departure versus post-return participants, Aarhus and Copenhagen were the best comparison I could use. Moreover, I believe that the most robust PVE programs will actually focus on both populations, deradicalizing youth pre-departure, and reintegrating those who return.

Psychological Sociological Theories of Preventing Violent Extremism

In order to address what kind of program can handle returnees, we need a basic understanding of why the returnees left and why they are returning. Tina Christensen and Tore Bjorgo, researchers at the University of Oslo, have analyzed several such trends. The motivation

[17] Speckhard, A. & Shajkovci, A. 2018. The Balkan Jihad: Recruitment to Violent Extremism and Issues Facing Returning Foreign Fighters in Kosovo and Southern Serbia.
[18] The Hedayah Center 2017 list of publications features PVE efforts throughout Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. http://www.hedayahcenter.org/publications/89/report

to leave can be explained in terms of both "push" factors away from their home country and "pull" factors toward Daesh and Syria. One of the primary pull factors toward Daesh comes in the form of an ideological narrative that Muslims are under attack around the world and that they have a duty to support one another by combatting these injustices.[19] Other push factors are explored by Thomas Hegghammer, who described what it is like to be part of the so-called caliphate. Daesh propaganda materials tout the idea that people who abide by the rules will be awarded a rich spiritual life imbued with music and poetry in a harmonious and equitable community.[20]The push factors, on the other hand, often stem from social isolation and economic marginalization. Most of Norway's departees, for example are first generation immigrants to Norway with low education and high unemployment.[21] Anne Speckhard, a psychiatrist and researcher at Georgetown, delves into the recruitment process for foreign fighters and circumstances that make people vulnerable such as unemployment, lack of religious or social identity, and low socioeconomic status.[22] Social and economic contexts of recruits varies somewhat through Europe, but tend to feature loneliness, frustration, and poverty.

Once individuals buy into the extremist narrative to the point where they become fighters, what prompts them to leave the extremist group and return home? Several researchers have examined why individuals exit from extremist groups and turn their backs on violent extremism. John Horgan proposes that a foreign fighter must first disengage from the extremist organization

---

[19] Christensen, Tina Wilchen, and Tore Bjorgo. 2017. "How to manage returned foreign fighters and other Syria travellers?"

[20] Hegghammer, T. (18 December 2015). The Soft Power of Militant Jihad. The New York Times. Opened 5 May 2017 at: https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/20/opinion/sunday/militant-jihads-softer-side.html
Hegghammer, T. (2017). Jihadi Culture: The Art and Social Practices of Militant Islamists. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[21] Ibid

[22] Speckhard, A. & Shajkovci, A. 2018. The Balkan Jihad: Recruitment to Violent Extremism and Issues Facing Returning Foreign Fighters in Kosovo and Southern Serbia.

and only then can he be deradicalized.[23] Most often, individuals begin to have doubts while they are still in the conflict zone, but some are triggered after they have returned home with the help of an exit program. Three issues that prompt exit and provide an opening for disengagement shed light on the gap between propaganda and reality: (1) doubt of the simplistic "us versus them" extremist ideology, (2) group fragmentation and selfish leaders who consider fighters' lives dispensable, and (3) personal and practical issues relating to lack of social relationships and thoughts of a "normal" life and future.[24]

As an individual is cognitively disengaging[25] from the extremist narrative, he may seek ways to return home. Many fighters returning home face the prospect of going to prison. For example, Speckhard and Shajkovci discuss the issues facing foreign fighters when they return to their home countries in the Balkans, where they face incarceration, violence, and added social isolation, which only heightens the security threat.[26] However, some cities seek to reintegrate these returnees without or after prison through exit programs and deradicalization and reintegration efforts. Exit programs can begin the process of persuasion and attitude change by intervening in the following ways: act kindly toward the target who may presume authorities are the enemy; help the target to redevelop personal relationships with authorities friends or family; amplify existing doubts by highlighting the bloody consequences of violence and the practical and personal costs of an extremist lifestyle; and/or subtly distance individuals from extremist beliefs by providing immediate social, practical, and economic support.[27]

---

[23] Horgan, J., & Altier, M. B. 2012. "The future of terrorist de-radicalization programs." Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, 13(2), 83-90.
[24] Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen (2013) Promoting Exit from Violent Extremism: Themes and Approaches, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, 36:2,99-115.
[25] Horgan, J., & Altier, M. B. 2012. "The future of terrorist de-radicalization programs."
[26] Speckhard, A. & Shajkovci, A. 2018. The Balkan Jihad: Recruitment to Violent Extremism and Issues Facing Returning Foreign Fighters in Kosovo and Southern Serbia.
[27] Dalgaard-Nielsen, Anja "Promoting Exit from Violent Extremism: Themes and Approaches."

While the above processes occur once an individual has been radicalized, become a foreign fighter, or returned from the battlefield, research suggests that intervention is also possible *before* radicalization occurs. The PVE literature features four conditions that researchers find beneficial to prevent radicalization.

The first is *a resilient individual* with cognitive resources such as critical thinking and the ability to understand nuance that can counteract the black and white "us versus them" language used in recruitment material. A resilient individual also possesses traits such as self-efficacy and empathy and holds closely notions of human rights and citizenship.

The second key element to prevention is the creation of a strong *sense of identity*. Adolescence is a period of uncertainty and identity search, not only for Muslim youth but for all young people. Effective prevention will offer spaces in which to explore identities and harmonize national and religious components of them, something that requires mentorship and a "sense of belonging and positive identity for all pupils of all heritages."[28]

The third prevention technique is the opportunity for *dialogue and action* in a comfortable and safe environment. These spaces cannot simply condemn radical views, which only silences these perspectives rather than create space for reflection and change.[29] Allowing young people to air their views openly can sometimes defuse the power of the extremist narratives; moreover, the possibility of having a political voice through civic engagement or volunteering can empower people and reduce their vulnerability to extremist messaging.[30]

---

[28] Laura Taylor and Aniti Soni, "Preventing Radicalization: A Systematic Review of Literature Considering the Lived Experiences of the UK's Prevent Strategy in educational Settings," *Pastoral Care in Education* 35, no. 4 (2017): 241-252.
[29] Angela Quartermaine, "Discussing Terrorism : A Pupil-Inspired Guide to UK Counterterrorism Policy Implementation in Religious Education Classrooms in England," British Journal of Religious Education 38, no. 1 (2016): 13-29.
[30] Lynn Davies, "Security, Extremism, and Education: Safeguarding or Surveillance?" British Journal of Educational Studies 64, no. 1 (2016): 1-19.

The final element is a community-level intervention rather than an individual one—*engaged, resilient communities*. Community engagement involves community organizations who meaningfully partner with the government or police over time, and not simply in a surveillance or tokenistic context. Resilient communities serve as credible spaces where social bonding within the group, social bridging between communities, and social linking with institutions can occur.[31] Essentially, if people feel a sense of community at home, they will not leave to seek it out.

Overall, the concept of resilience features centrally in the PVE literature. Even speaking in terms of "empowerment" and "resilience" invokes a strength rather than a deficit-oriented conversation, which is particularly attractive to teachers, social workers, youth volunteers, the very people who will carry out the prevention work. Resilience-based approaches also warrant additional scrutiny and rigor in implementation beyond functioning as a rhetorical device; they must also address issues of injustice, fragmentation, and disillusionment in order to create a systematic impact.[32] Dalgard-Nielsen and Schack's interviews on community resilience against violent extremism picks up on trends among radical right-wing, left-wing, and Islamist recruits and their communities. They ask, "*which local actors and community characteristics are central to community resilience to militant Islamism*?" They focus on the presence of social capital defined as "stable, trust-based relationships and networks among the actors of a community, including local authorities." These actors, in order of significance to the respondents, fall into the following categories: personal networks[33] (e.g. friends and family), local government (schools

---

Douglas Weeks, "Barking Mosque and Quintessential Insight: Overcoming the Problematic Government/ Community Counter-Terrorism Partnership in the UK," Studies in Conflict & Terrorism 0731 (2018): 17.

[31] Ellis and Abdi, "Building Community Resilience to Violent Extremism through Genuine Partnerships"

[32] Stephens, William & Sieckelinck, Stijn & Boutellier, Hans. "Preventing Violent Extremism: A Review of the Literature"

[33] Daalgard-Nielsen actually uses the term "civil-society" here to describe personal networks and connections such as friends and family, but I have modified it here to "personal networks" for clarity.

and youth clubs), and local businesses (colleagues and workplace).[34] Many individuals express a lack of trust between local authorities and residents of minority neighborhoods. Because a majority of the interventions we have discussed thus far occur at the individual and community level, trusting relationships with local authorities are essential. “The ability to show a human face and not just a uniform are the key to local government’s ability to contribute to resilience.”[35] Especially when national discourse surrounding terrorism is perceived as stigmatizing, it is crucial for local authorities to act as a buffer and tailor solutions to local context rather than following a one-size-fits-all model. Local governments can also resist the tendency of national governments to criminalize more actions and behaviors which limits local governments’ autonomy to create non-punitive solutions.

Finally, similar to the resilience research discussed above, in social work, a grass-roots intervention team built around, designed by, and centered around at-risk youth is referred to as a "wraparound." A wraparound is developed on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with the youth, their family, and their community through four steps: (1) engagement with the individual, (2) individualized plan development and team preparation, (3) implementation, and (4) transition. Young people in wraparounds tend to have better outcomes than youth undergoing more 'traditional' interventions for significantly less time and financial resources.[36]

While the psychological and sociological literature illuminates the journey of a foreign fighter from recruitment to reintegration, it lacks a macro perspective on the political process of building institutions that make reintegration policies possible. However, there exists a general body of political science literature on the creation and growth of policy and institutions.

---

[34] Anja Dalgard-Nielsen and Patrick Schack. “Community Resilience to Militant Islamism: Who and What?: An explorative Study of Resilience in Three Danish Communities,” Democracy and Security 12, no. 4 (2016): 309-327.
[35] Ibid.
[36] https://nwi.pdx.edu/wraparound-basics/

Together, the literature in these different but interconnected fields will help me set up some interdisciplinary hypotheses.

Historical Examples of Government Policy to Handle Terrorism

While foreign fighter reintegration is a new problem, governments throughout history have dealt with a similar one: reintegrating soldiers following wars. In 1946, England created an educational program seeking to "retrain" about 4,000 Germany Nazi prisoners of war. In the 1970s the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) dismantled the terrorist group "Black September," and offered the young men marriage, cash, and homes in exchange for surrendering. Then in the 1980s, Italy offered reduced sentences to the imprisoned members of left-wing radical group "The Red Brigades" if they left the group and testified against other members.[37] Reintegration of terrorists including Neo-Nazis (though not foreign fighters) has been attempted in past decades with varying degrees of success. Ireland and the UK worked to reabsorb members of the IRA through a similar process in what psychologists have described as a cognitive separation between members and the organization.[38] The above interventions came in the form of legislation, court decisions, and partnerships between public and private stakeholders.[39] Having dealt with similar problems before, such countries may be able to leverage lessons from the past to address this new problem.

Paul Wilkinson, a terrorism expert at the University of St. Andrews Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence, has examined how state governments have historically

---

[37] Dechesne, M. (2011) 'Deradicalization: not soft, but strategic' *Crime Law Soc Change*, (55), 287–292.
Bjørgo, Tore and John Horgan. *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement*.
Della Porta, D. (2009). Leaving underground organisations: A sociological analysis of the Italian case.

[38] Muro, Diego. 2010. Counter-terrorist Strategies in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis of Germany, Italy, Spain, and the UK." European University Institute, Florence. http://diana-n.iue.it:8080/bitstream/handle/1814/13520/MWP_2010_06.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

[39] Christensen, Tina Wilchen, and Tore Bjorgo. 2017. "How to manage returned foreign fighters and other Syria travellers?"

approached violent civil conflict in an attempt to quell violence and promote non-violent democratic politics. Based on his analysis of the Spanish government's initiative of "social reinsertion" of the ETA, a Basque paramilitary group, it appears that for the more moderate individuals, the social reinsertion approach of renouncing violence in exchange for participation in the democratic process was an attractive avenue. While tentative in his conclusions because of a lack of empirical study, Wilkinson asserts that peace is contingent upon the involvement of external mediators, internal consensus between parties to negotiate with external bodies, and individual leaders mobilizing and guiding their community.[40] Wilkinson's conclusions can be extended to the foreign fighter deradicalization problem as well. Potential foreign fighters and returnees are not the same as a domestic rebel groups, but they do pose a similar threat of violence, and authorities will have to cooperate to confront them.

When governments like the ones mentioned above were creating policy to respond to the threat of fighters, they were building institutions with a very specific problem in mind. Because I am focusing on the development of a specific type of policy that involves the formation of institutions, both the process of creating policy and building institutions is important to understand. The study of the creation of institutions can be separated into practical and theoretical subsets. How, where, and by whom is policy created? I examine literature on these topics in the upcoming sections.

How policy is formulated: A practical breakdown of the policymaking process

In his book, Michael Howlett breaks down the policy-making process of democratic systems into five components: (1) agenda-setting, (2) policy formulation, (3) decision-making, (4) policy implementation, and (5) policy evaluation. It is useful to examine the role of

[40] Wilkinson, Paul. "Politics, diplomacy and peace processes: Pathways out of terrorism?" Terrorism and Political Violence (2009), 11:4, 66-82, DOI: 10.1080/09546559908427532

institutions, ideas, and actors in each step of this process. While Howlett specifically analyzes democratic systems, some of these concepts may be adaptable to authoritarian systems.

Table 1: The Four Communities of Policy Advisors

	Proximate Actors	Peripheral Actors
Public/Governmental Sector	Core Actors Central Agencies Executive Staff Professional Governmental Policy Analysts	Public Sector Insiders Commissions, Committees, and Task Forces Research Councils/Scientists International Organizations
Non-Governmental Sector	Private Sector Insiders Consultants Political Party Staff Pollsters Donors	Outsiders Public Interest Groups Business Associations Trade Unions Academics Think Tanks Media International Non-Governmental Organizations

Table 1: Page's four policy communities

Who creates policy?

One direction we can look to understand why policy turns out in a given way is to focus on the actors that contributed to the policy. Obviously, the actions of policy actors are structured by their political, economic, and social surroundings. As much as decisions are based on context, administrative leaders, policy entrepreneurs, and street-level bureaucrats[41] play a critical role in the policymaking process.[42] Critical actors such as policy entrepreneurs are the ones who notice policy windows and shepherd through policy solutions.[43] Additionally, while political elites (elected officials in democracies) are ultimately the ones who approve policy, they most often do so by following the advice of civil servants and field experts whom they trust.[44] Usually, out of the four communities of policy advisors, political insiders—labeled "core actors" in the chart above, tend to be the key

[41] Street-level bureaucrats are individuals employed by public agencies who are on the ground interacting with constituents and implementing policy. Examples include police officers, social workers, municipal workers

[42] Howlett, M., Ramesh, M., & Perl, A. (2009). Studying public policy: Policy cycles & policy subsystems. Don Mills, Ont: Oxford University Press.

[43] Kingdon, J. W. Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies. Boston: LittleBrown, 1984.

[44] Macrae, DD., and D. Whittington. Expert Advice for Policy Choice: Ana-lysis and Discourse. Washington DC: Georgetown U P, 1997

Heinrichs, H. "Advisory Systems in Pluralistic Knowledge Societies: ACriteria-Based Typology to Assess and Optimize EnvironmentalPoilcy Advice." Democratization of Expertise? Exploring NovelForms of Scientific Advice in Political Decision-Making, Eds.S. Maasen and P. Weingart. Dordrecht: Springer, 2005. 41-61.

influencers of policy design in the policy formulation and decision-making segments of the policy process.[45]

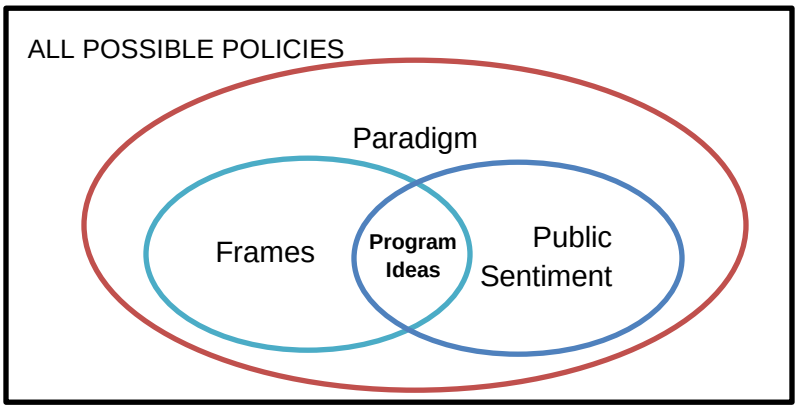


Figure 2 Campbell's police ideas framework visualized

How do they design policy?

Which policies these experts and civil servants propose is based on larger *ideas* of what might work in a certain context. These concepts can be categorized into *program ideas, symbolic frames, policy paradigms, and public sentiment*.[46] Program ideas are concrete policy recommendations that are based on an expected causal relationship. These are often proposed by actors in the policy process to policymakers (i.e. to raise taxes, reduce spending, etc.). Program ideas are usually defined by how these policy initiatives are framed and the public sentiments surrounding them. For example, general public perception of the waste and corruption of "big government" is reflected in the public opposition of higher taxes, so ideas that expand the government's reach may simply not be proposed in some contexts. Moreover, if media and politicians portray policy as aligned with central cultural values, that is, frame it in a positive light, that idea is likely to gain more traction. While frames and public sentiment define what kinds of policies may be perceived as "correct," paradigms are a set of background assumptions or worldviews that constrain what policymakers consider to be within the realm of possible alternatives. It is

[45] Page, Edward C. "Bureaucrats and Expertise: Elucidating a ProblematicRelationship in Three Tableaux and Six Jurisdictions." Sociologiedu Travail [In Press, Corrected Proof (2010)]. http://www.sciencedirect.com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/science/article/B6VR1-4YXKFTC-C/2/4acd8cf9546d3a0c8a53cc10dd9d2265.

[46] Campbell, John L. "Institutional Analysis and the Role of Ideas in Political Economy." Theory and Society 27, no. 3. (1998), 377-409.

important to note that public pressure plays an uncertain role in policy development in representative systems. On one hand, citizens generally do not weigh in on specific policies but rather vote for representatives who do not heed constituent preferences on every policy.[47] On the other hand, public opinion is an important consideration in representatives' decision-making and therefore matters greatly.[48]

Where is policy implemented?

The structure of a political system plays an important role on a state's policy capacity, that is, its ability to implement a desired policy. Whether a government is unitary or federal is one of the most significant aspects of political systems affecting policy. In unitary systems such as Britain, France, and Japan, the national government holds all legal authority, though it can choose to delegate some power to lower levels. Federal systems such as the U.S., India, or Brazil contain at least two autonomous levels of government that are non-hierarchical and whose jurisdictions are defined by the constitution. Federalism is cited as a major cause of weak policy capacity due to competition, time-consuming negotiations, and overlapping jurisdictions between the levels.[49]

How do policies and institutions change?

Because I will be examining how cities' existing institutions were adapted to address deradicalization and reintegration, I must understand the process of institutional change. Within the field of historical institutionalism, there are two types of theories that try to explain why institutions are created and how they change over time: constant-cause and path-dependence theories of institutional formation and change. Constant-cause explanations suggest that the same

[47] Birch 1972, Soroka 2002
[48] Howlett, M., Ramesh, M., & Perl, A. (2009). *Studying public policy: Policy cycles & policy subsystems*. Don Mills, Ont: Oxford University Press.
[49] Ibid.

factors that prompted the creation of an institution will explain how they evolve over time. Path dependence theories are slightly more flexible and argue that institutions are long-lived and outlast the circumstances of their origin; therefore, the factors that affect how an institution functions over time are frequently different than those that initially gave rise to the institution. Nevertheless, the initial impetus for an institution are sticky and "lock-in" certain elements of institutions while others remain more malleable to the changing needs of societies.[50] Both of these theories are limited, however, in that neither specifies the mechanisms or processes by which institutions actually evolve.

The existing literature largely subscribes to the idea of a "punctuated equilibrium" of institutional change, wherein long periods of inertia are interrupted by "critical junctures" during which an exogenous shock provokes institutional transformation.[51] Thelen departs from this model and suggests that institutions more frequently evolve through an incremental process which continues through periods of stability.[52] She addresses two possible mechanisms by which institutional change unfolds: institutional layering and institutional convergence.

Institutional layering occurs when a constant set of actors renegotiate some elements of a given set of institutions while leaving others in place.[53] This can occur when new coalitions design new institutions to their ends, but are unable to replace existing institutions, so they add onto existing structures. An example of this process in welfare state regimes occurs when public pension systems create lock-in effects that entrench them in constituencies in a way that make

---

[50] Thelen, Kathy. 2003. "How institutions Evolve: Insights from Comparative Historical Analysis." In *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, edited by J. Mahoney and D. Rueschemeyer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[51] Baumgartner, Frank, Bryan Jones, and James True. 2006. "Punctuated-Equilibrium Theory Explaining Stability and Change in Public Policymaking" In *Theories of the Policy Process*, 2nd Edition Edited by Paul Sabatier.
[52] Beland, Daniel. "Ideas and Institutional Change in Social Security: Conversion, Layering, and Policy Drift." Social Science Quarterly 88, no. 1 (2007): 20-38.
[53] Schickler, Eric. 1999. "Disjointed Pluralism and Congressional Development: An Overview." Paper read at the 95th annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Atlanta, September 2-5.

them incredibly difficult to eliminate. Instead of dismantling these old systems, conservative parties in both the U.S. and Scandinavia have promoted the development of privately funded pension systems to function alongside public systems.[54] Changes to existing constitutions likewise reflect a process of layering which "preserves much of the core while adding amendments through which rules and structures inherited from the past can be brought into synch with changes in normative, social, and political environment."[55] **Simply put, layering is adding new elements on top of old institutions to shift their focus.**

By contrast, institutional convergence is when an existing institution's purpose is almost completely changed to the point where it looks like a new institution. It occurs when institutions created with one set of goals in mind redirect or expand to involve new actors, add new problems, and meet new goals.[56] Convergence can occur when a previously excluded group is incorporated into an institution that then evolves to meet their demands. For example, Lyndon Johnson's Great Society program was created as a nonracial policy; however, because it coincided with a rise in racial unrest, President Johnson adapted the program to provided resources specifically to disaffected black communities.[57] Another common example of conversion is when military enterprises are repurposed to manufacture civilian products following war.

Both the layering and convergence mechanisms suggest that institutions rarely stay the same in form or function but are unlikely to be completely uprooted and replaced. Additionally,

---

[54] Ibid
Rothstein, Bo. 1998. Just Institutions Matter: The Moral and Political Logic of the Welfare State. New York: Cambridge University Press.
[55] Thelen, Kathy. "How institutions Evolve: Insights from Comparative Historical Analysis."
[56] Ibid
[57] Weir, Margaret. 1992a. "Ideas and the Politics of Bounded Innovation." Pp. 188-216 in Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis, edited by. S. Steinmo, K.Thelen, and F. Longstreth. New York: Cambridge University Press.

both processes emphasize that some core components of evolving institutions are "locked-in" though the policy landscape or societal changes may alter the institutions' function in some significant way. Finally, the process of institutional change must be placed in a specific temporal context to understand its evolutionary mechanisms.[58] The key distinction between the two is that layering involves "grafting" new elements into an otherwise stable institution which can alter the institution's trajectory, while conversion involves adopting new goals or incorporating new actors that shift the institutions' core objectives. **Both layering and conversion are different from pure institution creation, though conversion can effectively function as creation.**

In what follows, I apply these institutional change frameworks to the issue of PVE policies and institutions. I argue that the processes of institutional *layering* onto an existing Danish Schools, Social Services, Police (SSP) system allowed Aarhus to respond quickly and build a comprehensive approach to its foreign fighter problem. Because SSP is a national process, Aarhus and Copenhagen both used it; however, because Aarhus is smaller, it was able to adapt its institutions more quickly and smoothly build upon its historical encounters with other extremist groups. Conversely, Copenhagen has a much larger bureaucracy and needed to get more actors on board and build new institutions to deal with this new problem. I suspect the process of *building new institutions and converting* existing ones to involve new actors and stakeholders into the reintegration process hindered Copenhagen city officials from addressing the same issues.

Hypotheses

In the past several sections, I dove into the individual-level psychological research,

[58] Pierson, Paul and Theda Skocpol. 2004. "Historical Institutionalism in Contemporary Political Science." In *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*, edited by H. Milner and I. Katznelson. New York and Washington, DC: W.W. Norton and the American Political Science Association; as referenced by Kathy Thelen in "How institutions Evolve: Insights from Comparative Historical Analysis." Pp 231.

community-level sociological research, and institutional-level political economy research. By combining disparate theories from each of these fields, I have developed four hypotheses to explain why some cities have been able to develop stronger deradicalization and reintegration programs than others. These four hypotheses can be summarized as (1) Pre-existing institutional cooperation between police, social services and civil society, (2) National support of local autonomy, (3) Public risk perception of improperly deradicalized fighters, and (4) critical actors and policy entrepreneurs. Below, I will narratively explain the mechanisms that tie these hypothesis together and then elaborate on each hypothesis in turn.

Based on the literature, it is evident that the process of establishing a reintegration program requires governments, law enforcement, local institutions and individuals to be on board. The process for coordinating such a structure must be political, and I have begun to think about it using the following process:

(H2) Local autonomy and national support→ (H1) pre-existing strong institutional cooperation → Incidence of foreign fighter problem → (H3) public perception of risk → (H4) Critical actor → leverage institutional cooperation → robust reintegration program

Ideally, when a national government allows its municipalities some autonomy in how they approach security, the local police powers will be the foundation upon which these cities create strong institutional networks. Institutions within the city, including government and political officials, neighborhood organizations, law enforcement, criminal justice systems, religious leaders, educational institutions, and business associations will all join in a cooperative system. Once these networks are established, and a city is faced with a new problem such as foreign fighters, neo-Nazis, or white supremacist radicals, they will leverage these institutional connections to solve the problems.

When all of these factors exist in the context of a high-risk climate when hundreds if not

thousands of individuals have gone to fight for Daesh or are at risk of doing so, these cities will begin to take action leveraging their local networks. If a local population believes the threat can be minimized by re-socializing the returnees, they will partner with institutions to establish efforts to prevent them from leaving and properly reintegrate them into society once they return. Iteratively, the city will grow its network and continue to strengthen its increasingly robust deradicalization institution.

This is the ideal process by which I expect a local government like Aarhus to have approached the PVE process. Through the literature discussed above and the mechanisms just described, I hypothesize the following.

Hypothesis 1: Institutional Cooperation

City governments with strong pre-existing ties to civil society organizations and institutions will be better able to sustain a robust deradicalization program than those without these ties.

The psychological literature on deradicalization emphasizes the need for multipronged intervention. Dalgaard-Nielsen's research regarding exit suggests the importance of social, practical, and economic support in promoting exit.[59] Taylor and Soni argue that a strong positive sense of identity that harmonizes national and religious components is crucial in PVE work.[60] Ellis and Abdi contend that community resilience promotes "social linking" of communities and surrounding institutions, which requires *collective action* between civil society actors and governments.[61] This positive framing of resilience will be attractive to teachers and social

[59] Dalgaard-Nielsen, Anja "Promoting Exit from Violent Extremism: Themes and Approaches."
[60] Laura Taylor and Aniti Soni, "Preventing Radicalization: A Systematic Review of Literature Considering the Lived Experiences of the UK's Prevent Strategy in educational Settings."
[61] Ellis and Abdi, "Building Community Resilience to Violent Extremism through Genuine Partnerships"
David D. Brown and Judith C. Kulig, "The Concept of Resiliency: Theoretical lessons from Community Research," Health and Canadian Society 4, no. 19 (1996/97): 29-50:43

workers who will be at the forefront of conducting interventions, Dalgaard-Nielsen emphasizes. Dalgaard-Nielsen and Schack's ranking of actors involved in resilience-building includes many institutions from personal networks (friends and family), local government (schools and clubs), and local businesses (colleagues and workplace).[62] Horgan's work implies that there must be a balance of personal (cognitive) and social (reintegrative) approaches to deradicalization,[63] which will require different types of interventions by various actors toward the same target. Social work's "wraparound" method of intervention similarly highlights that multiple parties and several stages of interaction are necessary for holistic support of at-risk youth.[64]

Wilkinson's insights with peace negotiations could also extend to the deradicalization problem. Wilkinson emphasizes the role of external mediators, internal party consensus, and the importance of an individual leader who negotiates between a government and a radical group[65]. This series of conditions might also be applied to deradicalization efforts where "external mediators" in deradicalization could represent an actor that bridges the divide between authorities and the radicalized individual. In a domestic context, mediators could be social workers, an NGOs, or psychologists. The need for "internal bipartisan consensus" applied to deradicalization implies that the government of a city will need to provide bipartisan support for a deradicalization program to thrive. Finally, the "individual leader" conclusion could apply to a friendly figure, mentor, or religious leader who encourages the radicalized individual or group to shift away from violence. Yet again, Wilkinson's theories highlight that disparate and multiple actors who would all need to cooperate toward deradicalization efforts.

---

[62] Anja Dalgard-Nielsen and Patrick Schack. "Community Resilience to Militant Islamism: Who and What?: An explorative Study of Resilience in Three Danish Communities."
[63] Horgan, J., & Altier, M. B. 2012. "The future of terrorist de-radicalization programs."
[64] https://nwi.pdx.edu/wraparound-basics/
[65] Wilkinson, Paul. "Politics, diplomacy and peace processes: Pathways out of terrorism?"

Taking all of these arguments together, it is evident that dozens of actors would need to be involved. Deradicalization is a holistic and multifaceted process. Practically speaking, if a program wants to teach personal cognitive disengagement, it will need a network of psychologists and social workers to cooperate with law enforcement. Social reintegration will require outreach to families, schools, and local businesses. The four themes of resilient individual, strong identity, dialogue and action, and resilient communities point to several types of actors that must be present to implement processes of deradicalization. That is, if a government expects to instill these qualities, schools, religious communities, after school programs, and others will need to be involved.

All of these overlapping relationships and resources imply a strong cooperative institutional network.[66] These implications translate well into my "strong institutional cooperation" hypothesis. Only a system of strong interagency cooperation would be able to satisfy all of these requirements: social, practical, and economic support; social linking; religious and national harmony; involvement of youth workers whom youth trust; and participation of businesses, government, and civil society. *If connections between these institutions are pre-established and strong, the cities' reintegration plans are more likely to be robust than if the institutional foundations are weak or haphazardly built*.

In Denmark, the site of my two case studies, a process for institutional cooperation actually exists throughout the country. In the 1960s, Esbjerg Police Chief Lars Rand Jensen observed that schools, police, voluntary agencies, and external bodies were working in isolation toward the same goals of youth crime prevention. Called SSP (Schools, Social Services, and Police), a cooperative process was established in 1971 to respond to the rise in youth crime rates

[66] Ibid Hemmingsen 2015

across the country.[67] If this system is national, why do I expect stronger cooperation in Aarhus than Copenhagen? I argue that Aarhus's SSP process was more (1) flexible, (2) had better collective action, and (3) changed institutions more effectively. I explain each of these predictions further below

The first answer lies in the flexibility of the SSP system. "SSP does not work from a structured or imposed set of activities or inputs but from a principle of intervention and support which is deliberately intended to be flexible and responsive to the varying needs of local authorities' populations and situations."[68] Because the process is adaptable to local authorities' interpretation of their needs, the system can be stronger in some municipalities than others, depending in part on how frequently they need to use it. I argue that because Aarhus schools, police, and social services had to work to deradicalize Neo-Nazis in the late 1980s,[69] these institutions built a strong trusting relationship early on. I expect that Copenhagen had a wider variety of problems in addition to Neo-Nazis and its agencies worked more frequently in silos, which made flexibility and transfer of knowledge more challenging.

The second answer lies in the need for collective action for SSP to work. The SSP approach varies in each city depending on its size and level of homogeneity. The larger and more diverse a local population, the larger the support organization must be to ensure all relevant agencies are involved. In larger towns, this may even include specialized agencies created for particular problems such as drugs and alcohol,[70] or in the case of deradicalization in Copenhagen, organizations such as VINK, a hotline where the public can report individuals of

[67] Pedersen, Jorgan and Blaine Stothard. "The Danish SSP model—prevention through support and cooperation," Drugs and Alcohol Today 15, no. 4 (2015): 231-242.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Higgins, Andrew. 2014. "For Jihadists, Denmark Tries Rehabilitation."
[70] Ibid.

concern. Additionally, I expect the incorporation of religious leaders to be particularly critical when it comes to the issue of Daesh given the importance of religion and religious leaders in extremist recruitment.[71] The collective action literature posits that the smaller and more homogenous a group is, the easier it is for them to work together.[72] Because Aarhus is smaller (330,000 inhabitants) and has a more homogenous population, I argue that its SSP process was more fine-tuned and better able to adapt to the issue of foreign fighter deradicalization by simply adding some leaders from local mosques to the conversation. Copenhagen, with a more heterogenous population almost twice as large in size (602,000 inhabitants),[73] faced greater challenges in bringing together the actors and agencies needed to build its PVE approach.

A final answer lies in the theories of institutional change brought up by Thelen. How do Thelen's theories of institutional layering and conversion map onto a hypothesis of institutional cooperation? I argue that when Aarhus went through the process of layering institutions on top of one another to create its deradicalization program, it built on preexisting relationships between the schools, police, and social services on which it layered religious officials, housing authorities etc. By nature, the process of layering involves strengthening institutional links and building on existing processes to address new problems. When a city has a strong pre-existing network of social institutions like Aarhus, it is able to combine them more smoothly and add on as needed. Moreover, I contend that a reintegration program will be more robust not when it is attempted from the ground up but rather when it builds upon existing institutional relationships. As such, I predict that Aarhus was purely *layering* its PVE approach into its pre-existing system of

[71] Christensen, Tina Wilchen, and Tore Bjorgo. 2017. "How to manage returned foreign fighters and other Syria travellers?"
Wilkinson, Paul. 1999. "Politics, diplomacy and peace processes: Pathways out of terrorism?"
[72] Olson, M. (1977). The logic of collective action: Public goods and the theory of groups. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
[73] Population sources: UN Data

institutional cooperation for crime prevention which allowed it to respond more quickly and robustly to this new type of crime prevention issue. By contrast, I predict Copenhagen had to go through a process of conversion which consists of building new institutions and constructing new relationships specifically targeted at the foreign fighter issue as opposed to building upon existing systems. This process of institutional *conversion* inherently takes longer as the new systems have to not only fit with existing ones but change their trajectory toward new goals. Essentially, conversion (Copenhagen) is slower than layering (Aarhus) because it is starting from the ground (building new institutional relationships) rather than grafting onto an existing structure (strengthening and modifying existing relationships).

A limitation of this hypothesis is it would seem to suggest that if institutions have not historically cooperated, it is futile to try. This is not the case. Institutional cooperation is the crux of this hypothesis, and while new partnerships may take longer to create robustness, it is still possible and an important step.

Hypothesis 2: National Support of Local Autonomy

The more decision-making autonomy a local government has from its national government, the more able it will be to establish a robust program. If a central government is involved in a supportive manner, this will further enable a city.

The PVE literature emphasizes that local authorities are the best equipped to build community resilience (proactive) and deradicalize returnees (reactive). For example, it is important for young people to have spaces to civically engage, reflect, and promote change.[74] This type of engagement is more likely to occur at a local level than on the national stage.

[74] Angela Quartermaine, "Discussing Terrorism : A Pupil-Inspired Guide to UK Counterterrorism Policy Implementation in Religious Education Classrooms in England."
Lynn Davies, "Security, Extremism, and Education: Safeguarding or Surveillance?"

Additionally, in order for a community to become resilient to violent extremism, its members must trust local authorities. These authorities ought to be a familiar and friendly face and be able to tailor solutions to the local context. On the deradicalization front, personal relationships with local authorities can aid in the exit process. [75] Each of these elements of trust-building are more feasible at the municipal level as there is more interfacing between local authorities and communities.

While PVE interventions should be carried out by local authorities, in order to perform their duties and tailor solutions effectively, local authorities must have a high level of autonomy. Autonomy is necessary especially if local authorities are expected by vulnerable communities to counter criminalizing national policies.[76] I argue that the best case occurs when local authorities are able to respond to the needs of their city with relative freedom but can request support from the national level when they need it.

In a unitary system, certain powers are delegated to the local level while others are held at the national level, making the policy implementation process smoother.[77] This argument makes Denmark an interesting case to test the "local autonomy" hypothesis. Denmark's government is a decentralized unitary system, an interesting hybrid of the unitary and federal systems. While the national government holds ultimate decision-making authority, municipal governments have historically exercised autonomy in many areas such as policing, social policy, healthcare, and budgeting. In the 1980s, Denmark implemented the Free Local Government Initiative (FLGI) to promote local government autonomy. Since 2007, in response to international pressures to meet the demands of globalization and competitiveness, the parliament

[75] Anja Dalgard-Nielsen and Patrick Schack. "Community Resilience to Militant Islamism: Who and What?: An explorative Study of Resilience in Three Danish Communities."
[76] Ibid.
[77] Howlett, M., Ramesh, M., & Perl, A. (2009). *Studying public policy: Policy cycles & policy subsystems*.

passed legislation called the Structural Reform which reduced 275 municipalities to 98 and abolished 14 counties, merging them into enlarged municipalities. Nonetheless, municipalities still possess high levels of autonomy, especially in the fields of welfare and social services.[78]

I believe Denmark is a good place to test the "national support" component of this hypothesis as well. When Speckhard noted the importance of "soft" security measures, she discussed the Balkan approach to counter terrorism, which combined strict surveillance and punishment for violence (hard measures) with community-based efforts to re-socialize returnees (soft measures). The Danish approach to crime in general places emphasis on rehabilitation. The Prison and Probation System and Danish Security and Intelligence Service regularly cooperate to train their staff in these methods, and national authorities work with local ones on certain issues like extremism.[79]

I found it useful to examine how punitive Denmark's criminal justice system was by comparing its relative prison total and foreigner population to other countries'. Denmark's total prison population is 3,635, which figures to 63 per 100,000 of the population. This figure is one of the lowest in the world (#184 highest prisoner rate out of 222). By comparison, the US prisoner rate is 655 of 100,000 (#1 highest prisoner rate). Denmark has a total of 47 prisons.[80]

Only 0.3% of Denmark's prison population is under the age of 18. About 28.6% of the prison population however, is not of Danish national origin. This places Denmark #34 on the list of countries with a high foreigner prison population. For comparison, 5.2% of the United States' (#92) prison population is of external origin, and 71.7% of the Swiss (#7) prison population is

---

[78] Hans Thor Andersen (2008) The emerging Danish government reform – centralized decentralization, Urban Research & Practice, 1:1, 3-17, DOI: 10.1080/17535060701795298

[79] Holmer, Georgia, and Adrian Shtuni. 2017. "Returning Foreign Fighters and the Reintegration Imperative." usip.org. https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2017-03/sr402-returning-foreign-fighters-and-the-reintegration-imperative.pdf (December 17, 2018).

[80] http://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/prison_population_rate?field_region_taxonomy_tid=All

foreign.[81] These statistics show that Denmark is relatively unlikely to use prison as a consequence for crime, especially for children. However, it is much more likely to punish an individual of foreign origin with prison than an ethnically Danish person.

I argue that if a country takes a hard/punitive approach to crimes at the national level, then the local level will have less autonomy to institute softer approaches to significantly more serious crimes such as extremist violence. Therefore, my second hypothesis, supportive national government, centers on the idea that the more autonomy a municipality has, and the more rehabilitative the approach its national government takes on crime, the better positioned a city will be to start a deradicalization program. Denmark appears to be a good case to study the incidence of such programs due to its generally low incarceration rates.

Take the following quote from a European politician to the New York Times: "We need to make it crystal clear that you will be arrested if you go out to Syria or Iraq without a good reason." Compare that to, "We cannot afford not to include them back in our society and make sure that their path of radicalization is changed, so they can be an active part of our society." It seems obvious that the approaches of these two people would be vastly different, and they are. The first quote is from Mayor Boris Johnson of London who advocates the imprisonment of any potentially risky individuals. Conversely, Jacob Bundsgard, mayor of Aarhus, Denmark, takes a rehabilitative approach.[82]

These politically-charged statements provide evidence that support from local political leaders can make or break deradicalization efforts at the local level. Reintegration efforts that address the psychological needs of the individual are a key intervention. Yet deradicalization and reintegration programs are inconceivable without a political environment where rehabilitation is

[81] http://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/foreign-prisoners?field_region_taxonomy_tid=All
[82] Higgins, Andrew. 2014. "For Jihadists, Denmark Tries Rehabilitation."

part of the paradigm.[83] Denmark is an excellent case for this investigation because it generally provides its local authorities with autonomy while its national intelligence agency, PET, monitors developments in radicalization closely. PET generally uses a laissez-faire approach until local authorities request support or it perceives an imminent threat, which fits well into the "autonomous with support" concept of my hypothesis.

I expect Aarhus to have more autonomy due to its distance from most national agencies as well as its history of dealing with problems on its own. Because Copenhagen is the capital city, I predict that the national government frequently intervenes in its efforts across all fronts despite the general decentralization of Denmark. Because the municipal government of Copenhagen and the national government of Denmark may have overlapping jurisdictions when crime shades into the area of national security, national authorities may limit the level of freedom Copenhagen municipal leaders have to conduct their own prevention efforts. In contrast, Aarhus, due to its distance from the capitol and national authorities, is subject to a certain level of supervision but enjoys greater autonomy as well. The crux of my logic is that local plans of a city are more impactful when the city is farther away from the capital because local autonomy is higher. I expect this to hold true even if national policies are important and consistent across municipalities.

This hypothesis would seem to rule out the possibility of strong PVE programs at the municipal level in systems where the national government holds all power or in centralized authoritarian regimes. In Morocco, for example, the monarchy claims to be the ultimate authority on religion, and local authorities and mosques are on a tight leash in terms of the religious conversations they can have. Because religious dialogue is often a used as a deradicalization tool,

[83] Holmer, Georgia, and Adrian Shtuni. 2017. "Returning Foreign Fighters and the Reintegration Imperative."

local leaders require the autonomy to have religious debates with target individuals. If the Moroccan national government adamantly precludes its localities from having these conversations, are its deradicalization efforts doomed to fail? While this is out of the scope of this paper, I would argue that autonomy lies on a spectrum. Even if levels of autonomy in Moroccan cities do not reach Danish levels, there is room for tailored solutions and local intervention if the national government recognizes the role and capacity of municipalities to help organize religious conversations, tailor national efforts, or build local coalitions.

Hypothesis 3: Public risk perception of improperly reintegrated fighters

If residents of a city believe the radicalized youth and/or returnees pose a greater threat if they are not reintegrated properly, a city is more likely to rehabilitate than to imprison (Mueller & Stewart 2018).

The scholarly literature is varied on the level of impact public perception has on policy. Though public opinion may not determine policy directly, it is something politicians and decision-makers consider. It is also useful to consider national thoughts and opinions when analyzing the political landscape of a city. In fact, Howlett suggests decision-makers' perception of public opinion may constrain their choices of which policies are acceptable options.[84]

If the population of a city favors a tough stance on crime, for example, citizens may mobilize against the idea of a "hug a terrorist" program which might completely derail such policy initiatives. In fact, reintegration programs may not even take place in some cities because of public resistance. On the other hand, if the public is generally trusting of the government's decisions, then teachers, police, and businesses might be more willing to go along with their efforts. In the case of PVE policy which may be considered dangerous, the public must be

[84] Howlett, M., Ramesh, M., & Perl, A. (2009). *Studying public policy: Policy cycles & policy subsystems*.

willing to participate in or at least tolerate the existence of such policy rather than attempt to derail such efforts.

The loss frame here is interesting. People generally perceive the risk of terrorism in a negative frame. Rather than thinking, (1) *if there is no terrorism, life will be good,* people think, (2) *if there is terrorism, life will be very bad*. I argue that the latter rationale will make the public more likely to support their authorities in a PVE program because of the loss-framing. Because people tend to be highly loss-averse, they are more likely to act in order to avoid a loss than maintain a status quo.[85] This inclination to avoid crime/loss in a society with high trust in authorities such as Denmark is likely to result in a public that supports the authorities in creating deradicalization programs.

Hypothesis 4: Critical actors/policy entrepreneurs

The involvement and advocacy of a critical actor or policy entrepreneur with area-expertise in the early stages of political debate surrounding the foreign fighter issue will lead to the development of a stronger deradicalization program.

Page's argument in the literature about who creates policy suggests that decision-makers listen to the interests of actors around them, especially experts whom they rely on to craft their policies. In the context of PVE, I argue that due to the lack of generally accepted research and rules on how deradicalization and reintegration works, most cities will lack the expertise necessary to create such program from scratch. A city would be taking on a tremendous risk if novice and unknowledgeable policymakers were creating a program to stop terrorism without being experts in the field. In many areas, punitive approaches like imprisonment are the status quo consequences of crime. In the absence of someone who argues otherwise, governments are

[85] Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (1979). Prospect theory: An analysis of decision under risk. *Econometrica, 47*, 263-291.

likely to simply run returnees or those at risk of departing through the criminal system. I argue that the presence of a policy entrepreneur who is close to the decision makers and passionate about PVE can be the key to a city creating a robust intervention and stepping outside of the status quo. Logically, if a city has a set of experts on extremism, terror, or crime who are passionate and involved in the creation of PVE policy, a city is more likely to pursue a policy innovation and institute a deradicalization and reintegration program.

Dependent Variable: robustness of institution

During this thesis I choose on the dependent variable which is the robustness of reintegration programs within a city. I define a robust program as one that is built upon a strong institutional foundation with substantial human capital and resources; the ability to get various actors to work together; adaptiveness, flexibility, and responsiveness to social and policy changes.[86] An important component of my definition of robustness is time—Aarhus instituted a robust reintegration and deradicalization program before Copenhagen did, so it qualifies as the "stronger program."

An important distinction here is between robustness and success. The two concepts are inevitably linked—a program perceived as successful will receive more resources and will therefore be more robust. However, it is too soon to cite the outcomes for participants of one of these reintegration and deradicalization programs (returnees specifically and, to an extent, other at-risk youth as well) in any given city. Additionally, determining the efficacy of these programs is outside the scope of this thesis and falls more into the realm of social psychology. Social psychologists have yet to empirically determine which policies are effective and which are not; therefore, I will adhere to an program robustness definition for this paper.

[86] Thelen, Kathy. "How institutions Evolve: Insights from Comparative Historical Analysis.

Independent Variables:

My four hypotheses lend themselves to the following independent variables:

Hypotheses & Variables		
Hypothesis	**Independent Variables**	**Relationship to DV**
Hypothesis 1: Institutional Cooperation	**IV1:** Strength of cooperation (weak/ strong)	Strong → +
	IV2: Length of cooperation (new/old)	Old → +
	IV3: Number of agencies cooperating	more agencies → -
Hypothesis 2: National Support of Local Autonomy	**IV4:** Level of municipal autonomy (high/medium/low)	High → +
	IV5: Level of support from national government (high/low)	High → +
	IV6: national crime general rehabilitative approach (yes/no)	High → +
Hypothesis 3: Public risk perception of improperly reintegrated fighters	**IV7:** Perceived potential risk (high/low)	High → +
	IV8: Number of returnees	More returnees → +
Hypothesis 4: critical actors/policy entrepreneurs	**IV9:** Presence of critical policy entrepreneur (yes/no)	Yes → +

Figure 3 This table provides an operationalization of the independent variables and their impact on the dependent variable

H1: **IV1: Strength of institutional cooperation** between Muslim and other religious communities, business associations, law enforcement, social agencies, and neighborhood organizations (Wilkinson 1999). This could be measured through personal relationships, past partnerships in civil society programs, shared budgets or leadership (Hemmingsen 2015).

H1: **IV2: Length of institutional cooperation** will be measured by how long these institutions have been working together—were they partners before the deradicalization program began or did these relationships begin because of the program?

H1: **IV3: The number of agencies cooperating** within a given city will determine how difficult it is to orchestrate collective action. I predict the more actors involved, the more difficult cooperation will be.

H2: **IV4: Level of municipal autonomy** can be measured by the ability to adapt to changing local conditions and govern on a range of issues such as crime prevention, welfare, policing as

well as a lack of national intervention. The less frequent the interventions and mandates and the more flexibility local authorities have, the higher their autonomy.

H2**: IV5: Level of national support** for the autonomy and independence of local crime prevention and PVE efforts lies on a scale from no support (i.e. complete local autonomy) or too much support (i.e. overbearing and taking away autonomy), both of which are non-ideal. If a national government has a few mandates but gives the municipality significant freedom to self-govern and ask for help when necessary, it will reach the sweet-spot of national support.

H2: **IV6: National rehabilitative approach to other types of crime** (Speckhard 2018). I will measure this by examining the current justice system both at a local and a national level and to what extent the central government dictates how municipalities deal with crime.

H3: **IV7: High perceived potential risk** is the idea that imprisoned or improperly reintegrated returnees and at-risk youth (or other potentially violent populations) will pose a higher risk to society than if they are safely rehabilitated. I will attempt to locate a public opinion survey of Danes at the local level on this topic. I will also explore what the public's views are on Denmark's existing approach to crime intervention.

H3: **IV8: High absolute risk & scale:** the number of youth at risk of radicalization, number of foreign fighters, and the number of returnees present and expected

H4: **IV9:** The **Critical Individual Actor** variable comes from the extensive literature about collective action problems in a political science context and argues a policy expert or political insider (Page 2010) will be key in launching a deradicalization program. This variable will be dichotomous and will be measured by whether or not a critical actor(s) was present. If a plurality of interviewees can indicate that the same individual or group was instrumental in developing the city's deradicalization program, it will support the critical actor hypothesis.

Research Design: Case Selection

My units of analysis are municipalities. I am interested in why some cities are better able to establish robust reintegration programs than others. What is unique about the conditions in Aarhus that allowed it to create this program instead of Copenhagen or Paris or Amsterdam? A given country can have dozens if not hundreds of attempts at reintegration, but a city will have a few at most, making it a more feasible level of analysis. Additionally, to examine civil society and the interplay between levels of government, cities are the ideal unit. Finally, the resilience literature points to the key role of local authorities in facilitating cooperation in civil society, and these authorities are the ones who primarily interface with returnees and potential departees and thus will be the ones carrying out interventions.

I chose Denmark as the location for my case studies choosing on the dependent variable of robust deradicalization and reintegration institutions. The Aarhus model has been acclaimed by media and researchers as a relatively successful case in its PVE efforts. The rehabilitative model this story briefly introduced, one in which a mentor worked with an at-risk youth or a returnee, is part of the Aarhus model named after the city of Aarhus, Denmark where it began. The Aarhus model's approach to the growing problem of terrorism prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration has been acclaimed as both unique and effective by organizations like the U.S. Institute for Peace and researchers globally.[87] Since 2012, of the 31 people who left Aarhus for Syria, 5 were killed, 10 are still there, and 16 have returned to Denmark.[88] All of these 16 returnees participated in the Aarhus program (at varying levels from counseling to social

[87] Holmer, Georgia, and Adrian Shtuni. 2017. "Returning Foreign Fighters and the Reintegration Imperative."
[88] Higgins, Andrew. 2014. "For Jihadists, Denmark Tries Rehabilitation."

readjustment) along with 330 other young people at risk of being radicalized.[89] During a time when the outflow of foreign fighters from the rest of Europe to Syria was spiking, Aarhus's number of departures has dropped. For perspective, after Belgium, Denmark has the highest number of foreign fighters per capita in Europe, but the Aarhus program appears to be an effective intervention. Since the beginning of the Aarhus program, the number of fighters leaving Aarhus has dropped steadily to one or none in the past three.[90]

Despite many similarities at the national level, Copenhagen created its later and is viewed as less robust than Aarhus's. Additionally, Copenhagen is highly similar to Denmark in its history, composition, and obviously, national setting, that it provides a convenient most-similar-systems counter-case. Yet, both cities are varied in the independent variables (population diversity, political compositions, levels of autonomy, number and type of agencies cooperating).

Denmark as a whole has variability among the independent variables with its interesting *history of institutional cooperation*, *variation in local autonomy*, and *engaged public*. Additionally, Aarhus and Copenhagen are both English-speaking cities and would be both convenient and safe for an undergraduate traveling alone for fieldwork.

Design: Interview-Based Comparative Case Study

I conducted a most-similar-systems comparative case study between Aarhus and Copenhagen where my primary sources of data were interviews. Figure My primary focus is local politics and institutional systems, and individuals play a critical role in these institutions; therefore, I interview individuals in religious institutions, businesses, law enforcement, and educational institutions to learn about patterns in their political and institutional system. Because

[89] Ibid.
Rosin, Hanna. 2016. "How A Danish Town Helped Young Muslims Turn Away From ISIS."
[90] Rosin, Hanna. 2016. "How A Danish Town Helped Young Muslims Turn Away From ISIS."

current knowledge on institutions to prevent violent extremism is limited, I opted for an exploratory approach to my research. My starting point for data collection will be the four broad hypotheses which begin to explain the process by which strong reintegration institutions are created (cooperation, local autonomy, willing public, critical actor). I chose two cases that are relatively similar in composition and share the same national government—Aarhus and Copenhagen, two cities in Denmark. Both cities have seen recruitment and radicalization of youth and plots of violence have stemmed from both areas.[91] Responses from organizers and participants in these two cities' deradicalization programs will allow me to examine my hypotheses in the following ways: refine when necessary, test for validity, and potentially add to based on patterns in responses regarding which factors in fact lead a city to create a robust deradicalization system. Upon conclusion of these case studies, I will have tested the validity of my original hypotheses and potentially added factors to be tested in the future.

The table below illustrates on what dimensions Aarhus and Copenhagen are similar and how they are different.

	Aarhus	**Copenhagen**
Population[92]	237,551	602,000
Population Density (inhabitants/Km^2)	697.6	6226.1
Country	Denmark (Central Jutland)	Denmark (Capital Region)
Average Monthly Salary[93] (after taxes)	20,000.00Kr	20,900.96Kr
Average age	37	35
Homogeneity (Religious Composition)[94]		62% Lutheran 11% Muslim .6% Jewish
Homogeneity (Immigration Rates)[95]	8.8% immigrants (4.37% male)	15.8% immigrants (7.92% male)
Political composition	Social Democrat mayor (all terms since	Social Democrat mayor since 2013

[91] Anja Dalgard-Nielsen and Patrick Schack. "Community Resilience to Militant Islamism: Who and What?: An explorative Study of Resilience in Three Danish Communities."
[92] https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/which-are-the-biggest-cities-in-denmark.html
[93] https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/compare_cities.jsp?country1=Denmark&city1=Copenhagen&country2=Denmark&city2=Arhus
[94] http://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/copenhagen-population/
[95] https://ugeo.urbistat.com/AdminStat/en/dk/demografia/stranieri/copenhagen/20368667/4

	1919 except 2001-05) Jacob Bundsgaard since 2011	Frank Jensen
Size of bureaucracy[96]	1 mayor, 5 aldermen, 31 city council 6 departments: ***Health and Care*** ***Technical Services and Environment*** ***Children and Young People*** *Social Affairs and Employment* *Culture and Citizens Services* *Mayor's Department*	1 "Lord Mayor", 55 city council 7 departments: ***Health and Care*** ***Technical and Environmental Admin*** ***Child and Youth*** *Employment and Integration* *Culture and Leisure* *Social Services* *Finance*
Number of prisons	1	2
Number of Police stations	3	6 (some national some municipal)

Figure 4 Comparison of Copenhagen and Aarhus local features

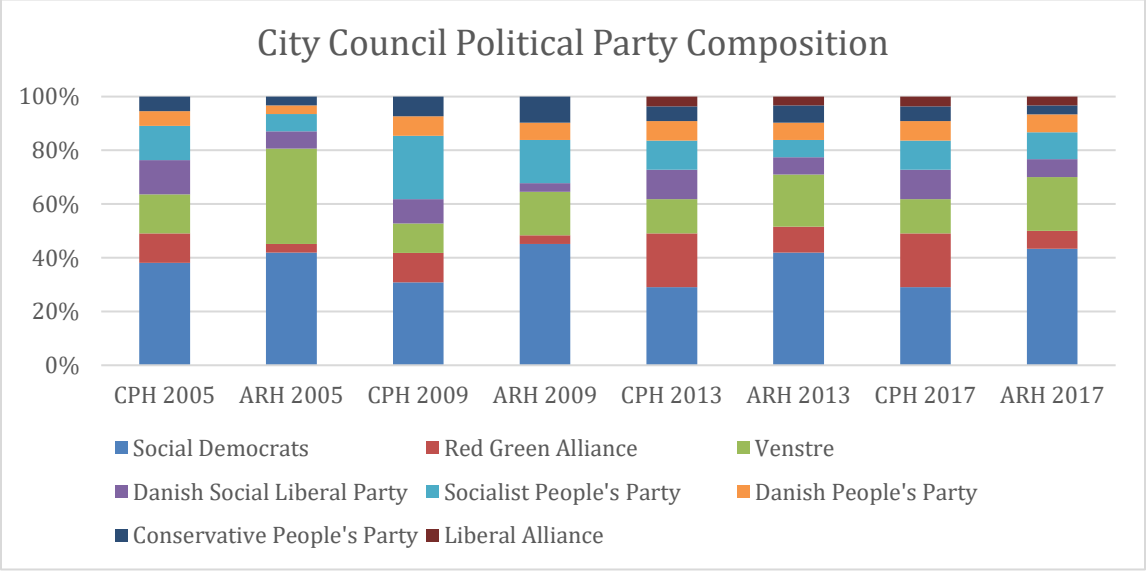


Figure 5 Comparing Copenhagen and Aarhus's political compositions. The cities have similar ideologies though Aarhus has a higher proportion of Social Democrats in its city council.

Key similarities between the cities originate from their shared national politics. Aarhus has a slightly higher proportion of its city council representing the Social Democrats, but both Copenhagen's and Aarhus' city councils are relatively socialist and liberal—social democrats, Red-Green Alliance, and Vestre make up most of their city councils. Both cities have the same prison and police stations to population ratio. The average age in both cities is roughly the same

[96] "Kontakt en forvaltning" (in Danish). Københavns Kommune & Aarhus

and the monthly salary is comparable, especially given the cost of living in Copenhagen. Both cities also have roughly similar proportions of their populations who are young single men—30.3% Aarhus and 33.14% Copenhagen. Their demographic density curves are nearly identical as well. Key differences between the cities are that Copenhagen has a larger bureaucracy, significantly higher proportion of immigrants, and is much more densely populated than Aarhus.

The high levels of similarity in number of prisons, schools, and police combined with different ethnic compositions and bureaucratic sizes makes comparing Aarhus and Copenhagen's approach to foreign fighters an interesting comparison.

Data collection took place during two weeks in January and February 2019. I carried out a total of 15 interviews. My respondents were located through snowball sampling. I initially identified one contact in the Danish intelligence community through personal contacts who then helped me contact several individuals who are highly involved in the deradicalization efforts in both Aarhus and Copenhagen. These respondents were then asked to help me arrange others potential interviews through their personal and professional networks. This process allowed me to begin with only two individuals and contact political officials, police officers, and program participants who would have otherwise been inaccessible given their position and lack of public-contact information. This process is not intended to be a representative sample of people involved in the deradicalization process in either municipality by any means, yet the information gathered from these "elite interviews" gives important insight into the factors that led Aarhus and Copenhagen to create their deradicalization programs.

My group of respondents consisted of individuals in the municipal government of Aarhus and Copenhagen, the national intelligence service (PET), the National Center for the Prevention of Extremism (NDPE), University professors and local police officers in both cities, religious

leaders, and one mentor and mentee of the program in Aarhus, whose story began this piece. These individuals were often involved in the creation of their respective programs in Aarhus or Copenhagen from the beginning and served as a good staring point for a process-tracing approach in some cases.

The interviews were semi-structured and broken into two sections. During the first half, I asked the individuals about their roles in their communities and their involvement in deradicalization and reintegration work in the respective city. The second half focused on their thoughts on what structural and systematic elements were important in creating a robust program as well as what obstacles stood in the way of creating these institutions. Questions were open ended, but I followed up as necessary if I required elaboration. For example, I started by asking generally what structural elements were necessary to establish an infohouse, and if the topics of multiple agencies came up, then I would ask them to delve into how the parties all first came to the table. If the idea of multiple agencies did not arise, I would ask if that was important. A similar process followed for my other hypotheses. At the end of the interviews, I asked the respondents to tell me what parts of their city's institutional model was the most important and in their expert opinion, necessary for replication of specific curriculum.

I carried out the interviews myself, typing verbatim notes supplemented by an audio recording with the signed permission of each respondent. All identities were anonymized. I used closed coding where I ranked my hypotheses in level of importance based on the responses and open coding where I compiled the various themes that emerged from my conversations to be validated by future researchers. Some of the most important themes were trust between institutions, an openness of the authorities with first-line workers and the public, and reasonable autonomy from intervention.

Ultimately, the goals of the case studies will be to trace the development of deradicalization and reintegration programs in both cities to test the validity of hypotheses and generate new ideas. Some of the objectives of this case study will be to: 1) gather a comprehensive history of the Aarhus Model of deradicalization and reintegration including key dates and steps in the process of establishing the programs and 2) interview civic leaders, participants, mentors, and other stakeholders in the program to gain their perspective on what institutional and political elements were important in establishing Aarhus and Copenhagen's programs as well as what stood in the way.

Limitations

This sort of research design of course presents several limitations. First, the PVE field has not yet defined what a successful PVE approach looks like, which makes it challenging to rely solely on robustness of institutions without weighing in on the outcomes for participants. The three primary reasons for why evaluating effectiveness of programs is unviable are: (1) reentry is a relatively recent phenomenon occurring within the past decade, and as such returning populations are not yet of the size they will be in upcoming years. Aarhus, for example, has only about 30 returnees, only half of which participate in their program. (2) Secondly, most reintegration programs are rather young as they were created in response to the foreign fighter phenomenon. Aarhus in particular, one of the most robust programs, was adapted to focus on this issue in 2006 and does not have a breadth of data on this topic. (3) Finally, logistically speaking, the time horizons for measuring the outcomes of program participants and tracking their activities following Aarhus or other reintegration programs falls outside the scope of this political science thesis. Nevertheless, Aarhus demonstrates a city that has a more involved and robust reintegration system than almost any other city in Europe. It was also one of the earliest to

begin its efforts and provides an interesting glimpse into what makes it politically possible for a city to PVE that other cities could learn from.

Next, in discussing robustness and institutional strength, the ability to withstand an exogenous shock is important; however, Aarhus has not experienced an incidence of violent extremism yet that would test its PVE institutions. Nonetheless, the national and international spotlight on Aarhus has generated political scrutiny. The changing political landscape of Denmark has also exerted pressure on all Danish cities to potentially adopt a more punitive approach, especially with new legislation that criminalizes traveling to conflict zones.[97]

Practical elements of the case studies place limits on their viability as internally valid. Because of the limited time for fieldwork, which took place by one individual over the course of two weeks, the interviews were limited in scope and length. With more time and resources, more interviews would be necessary with key individuals in the reintegration process in both cities, some of whom were unavailable during the fieldwork timeframe. I was able to interview key individuals in both Aarhus and Copenhagen that did provide useful perspectives in tracing the causal links between my independent variables an PVE robustness in the city. That being said, the majority of my interviews took place in Aarhus—only five were with Copenhagen officials. As a result, there are some gaps in my understanding of how Copenhagen's leaders approached their foreign fighter populations early on.

To the question of external validity, both Aarhus and Copenhagen are highly wealthy cities within the Scandinavian welfare model, which poorer and more populated cities/countries would struggle to mimic. One might argue that successes in Denmark are due to their socialist system and large social safety net. I would respond that Denmark is experiencing a shift to

[97] 2016 Legislation adding to the Danish Code makes going to a warzone like Syria a crime punishable by jailtime and the forfeiture of travel documents by suspecting authorities

rightward in its national politics and rhetoric that resembles a general European and global shift, which makes it similar in political landscape. Additionally, while other cities and countries may not be able to devote the same level of resources to the PVE issue, the general approach of a city like Aarhus will be helpful to learn from. Ultimately, the independent variables provide explanations for varied outcomes in cities that attempt PVE. They may be able to explain why cities may or may not be able to create a robust PVE system although they are using the same curriculum as a city like Aarhus. My efforts also encourage practitioners to look deeper than their psychological and policy approaches at the political structure of their cities and countries that enable policy to be successful. The broad lens and long time-horizons needed for structural analysis and change are often absent from policy decision-making but often have a noticeable impact on outcomes.

Finally, much of the policy change and formulation literature I draw from is focused on Western Democracies, and I use their insights to construct hypotheses *about* returnees to western countries. Therefore, pulling lessons from these Western Liberal Democratic contexts to other regime types is not a one-to-one transfer and the processes for reintegration might look different for returnees to Arab and Middle Eastern countries. Nonetheless, some of the insights gleaned from Aarhus and Copenhagen might be portable and serve as a starting point for analysis in other systems.

Ultimately, while it is too soon to tell whether any of these programs are truly successful in deradicalization or reintegration and preventing recidivism, Aarhus is an example of a robust program that has operated since 2006 and has worked with over hundreds of individuals (330 at risk youth and 18 returnees). Examining the processes and actors that were instrumental in building the Aarhus program will allow me to get a preliminary bearing on whether these

hypotheses have merit and warrant further study. If some or all of the independent variables: civil society cooperation, supportive state governments, perception of potential risk, and critical actors do not appear in the Aarhus case, it is worth uncovering which factors did matter in the Danish example, so future programs can be tested against these new variables.

Data & Results

I began my interviews with both Aarhus and Copenhagen officials by asking what kind of elements were important in establishing a deradicalization program. My data analysis came in three levels. (1) First, I tallied how frequently concepts encompassed by each hypothesis were mentioned by the interviews collectively (in both Copenhagen and Aarhus) to indicate if these hypotheses had any initial validity in assessing cities' approaches. (2) Next, I reviewed each interview and drew out quotes that I could compare across cities. These quotes allowed me to compare how important the independent variables within each hypothesis were in either Copenhagen or Aarhus's approach. (3) Finally, I pieced together a timeline of each city's approach to deradicalization from about 2006 to present. This sequencing will help trace the process behind each hypothesis to understand why Aarhus was able to establish a stronger program.

The table below shows how frequently the multiagency key words were mentioned, by every individual unprompted by specific questions about any given variable.

Hypothesis	***Key words***	**Mention Count**
Hypothesis 1	*Cooperation/ together/partner*	24
	Multiagency/multifaceted	8
	Existing/already	7
Hypothesis 2	*Local/infohouse/municipal*	30
	Autonomy/freedom	2
Hypothesis 3	*Danger/risk/threat*	14
	Public/popular opinion/influence	2
Hypothesis 4	*Specialist/small group*	8

Figure 6 Tallies of how frequently words were mentioned

The table above indicates that all of the variables might have some weight, but that the Institutional Cooperation and Local Autonomy variables have the greatest clout. I then dove into specific quotes to understand whether the relationships between these concepts such as cooperation and autonomy are positive or negative within each city. The quotes below are taken from my interviews and serve as examples of when individuals either confirmed or rejected the four hypotheses.

Quote Examples for Corresponding Hypotheses		
	Aarhus	Copenhagen
Hypothesis 1: Institutional Cooperation	• Focus on these issues should be a broader perspective. Muslim communities [in Aarhus] are fractured. The authorities need to be invited in and shake each other's hand. The solution comes when people come together. • When we met, it was a mentor and a police officer, and now it's grown to be the social workers as well. • We saw that it was the same with some young men, but when we began to meet radicalization, it was exactly the same factors, and for the girls and the young boys who were beginning to have an unhealthy way of living, we had the ambition to help them to be re-socialized. Some of these guys and girls began to be radicalized—we have religious radicalization and right/left wing radicalized youngsters. It was a natural approach and the interventions according to this model. • We were working together before—I am a member of a steering group together with the chief of police and schools and childcare • We are the second largest city in Denmark, so we have been challenged with problems over time with problematic subculture and yearly action plans on different topics, so it's unique that there was some tradition for working together on an operational level that was trust between people in different orgs who have been working together for a long time—strategic, political, and operational. • It's a multiagency approach! You can't just develop this in police or social affairs—you need to have a multispectrum intervention • [There are more than] 100 professionals working in crime prevention, they knew they wouldn't reinvent the wheel, so they redefined radicalization as crime (crime prevention needs	• **In Copenhagen, VINK works for itself, and then they made an Infohouse in the police. These different units try to exchange information, but they don't sit together in the Infohouse—** • There are so many actors and you could compare it to little gears who have to play together in a machine rather than just 2-3 wheels who just rotate together [like in Aarhus] • They developed a course for the municipality to learn to talk to people and interview people instead of allowing people who are involved with this in their daily work. • People are coming and going, but there's no continuity • **VINK started their cooperation with mosques and the mayor supported it—it's one of the only municipalities dealing with mosques** • Copenhagen didn't have as much outreach—we more conservative with outreach • Our infohouse is wider – represented by a group of leaders (job center, SSP, Police, integration admin, social services, and police) and the meetings are based on scale of the problem. And SSP has its own board and their directors in Copenhagen—too many cogs in the machine. • Because there were all of these riots, it became clear that Copenhagen needed to make a change

	to be early, multiagency, and coordinated) • Multiagency cooperation and exploring existing possibilities and systems… • We needed the society to cooperate with us (the school) to let him back in. • SSP organization between Aarhus and the police was solid, and the approach was based on not the organization itself but the principals • We could use the existing institutions—we would need to infuse the radicalization in the risk factor, and the front-line workers didn't enjoy that. • We have a tradition in working in that system and we have a history of working together on crime in youth especially • Don't build a new system—work in the [existing] system • There's an institutionalized way of dealing with crime prevention that cuts across agencies and that collaboration was the starting point of these efforts, which helped the policies of prevention to take hold, develop, and receive legitimacy as well as the front-line personnel.	
Hypothesis 2: Local Autonomy	• We had people meeting every year and how to address common issues—some years it was some problems in this area and we asked some of the people to develop this method of prevention and different interventions. When we started the police came and told us we have some severe problem of radicalization and we started discussing what we do. We told our political chiefs and they decided what we would develop interventions but there was no big discussion in 2010 and 11. • It has a lot to do with local politics—underestimated how important it was that when municipality and police set out to build a program, they were left alone and to develop and implement the policies through trial and error without politicians intervening, wanting to see results, or critically challenging the program. They were able to get far in developing these approaches and correct mistakes before it got politicians' attention. • Space & quiet time! And a good degree of support. • **[In response to] pressure from nationals, - local politicians backed us on our diverse strategy, we are hard on crime but we are soft or ambitious to reintegrate** • In 2007 we didn't know anything about terrorism, but 40-year tradition of local crime prevention • In 2007 White pride was the initial problem so we created a program for the religiously and	• Our [Denmark's] municipalities are strong and independent, but Copenhagen has more actors and more organizations • The national infohouse secretariat, NCFE, PET, are all in Copenhagen, and many more national agencies • **For a long time the national level policy development on this issue was lacking behind what was going on locally and all the experts were local, and those in the national office who were in charge weren't the experts and didn't have the recognition from local authorities that they could actually help** • If the approach is fast, top down and across the board, there is no ownership and no institutional platform and no trust plus not everything fits all when you try to institutionalize the solution when there's no problem—shooting little birds with big guns, doesn't fly • Copenhagen was part of a project at the center: the municipality of CPH had an action plan with weaknesses: people were coming home from conflict areas—how are we supposed to handle this? The process was facilitated by [National Center] with management from the municipality, the PET, and police. The outcome was a paper.

	politically motivated crime because it was a home-grown problem not just a national mandate • The local political backing was unanimous, but now one person in the city council thinks it's a bad idea • We had adamant local political backing—the mayor was a social democrat, the Department of Social Services and Youth was right wing, and the head of social services who was a socialist all thought it was a good idea locally • The network was very useful in youth crime prevention—we don't have to create a new relationship and collaboration would have been harder to establish later • The national program is "watered down" because there is no outreach—the info houses will just be info centers for the national program	
Hypothesis 3: Risk Perception	• Nationally, we have a diverse group of people who were speaking about this. Whether they were pro or against was dependent on who was in the government • People are influenced by the government debate	• Before [fighters] left for Syria, people didn't have it on their radar—it was a professional discussion and it was a core team of the prevention unit and they were insulated • We were more worried about risk in Copenhagen
Hypothesis 4: Critical Actor	• "This big guy shakes my hand and brings me a cup of coffee" • skilled individuals working on this, different professional backgrounds coming together, pushing each other, taking pride and identity in this, core group been there from beginning who have invested a lot professionally, matters not just in terms of success, but also support from politicians who are committed. • We were working together before—I am a member of a steering group together with the chief of police and schools and childcare • Proportionately narrow expertise • "I studied cognitive, multiagency solutions to crime prevention since the 90s and became a consultant" • We needed to have a small group of people who knew about the problem then the front-line workers and then whom to contact [2 experts] • We wanted a proportionate response to the problem—a small group with expertise and large group with awareness who were the eyes • We had been working together for 30 years and now we had to invent something new	• CPH's approach was more trying to train many people to spread the word about anti-radicalization on second line • There was more of a political approach in Copenhagen—the focus was training local professionals (teachers and social workers job consultants), so it is harder to pinpoint a couple people

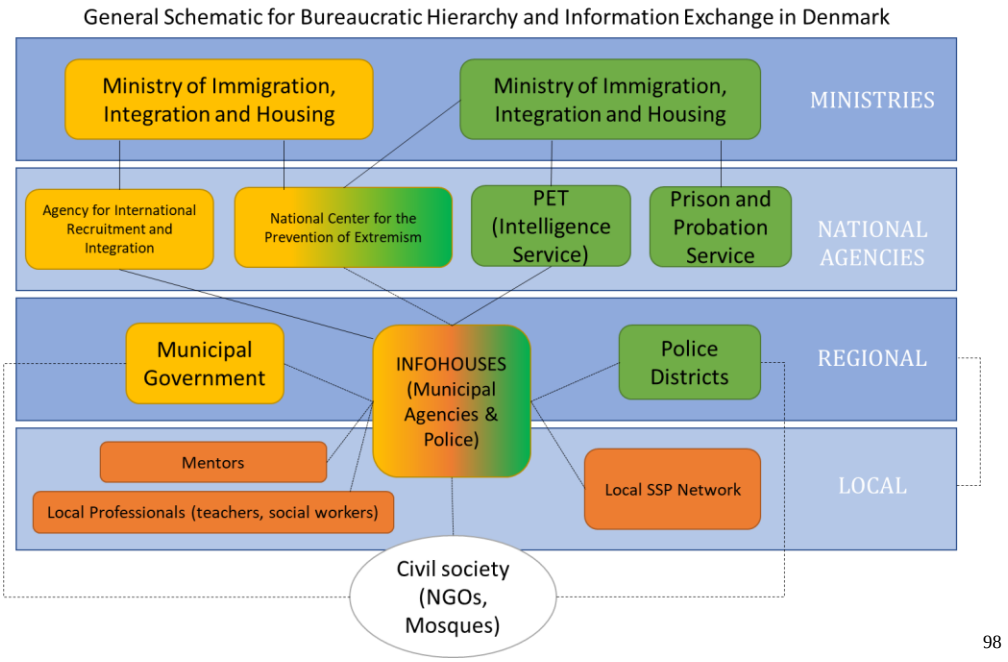
Figure 7 This table shows quotes from officials in Aarhus and Copenhagen which speak to the validity of my four hypotheses.

The above quotes indicate that the Institutional Cooperation was an important factor that was attempted in both Aarhus and Copenhagen to various extends. At a glance, it appears that

Aarhus had more success in bridging institutions than did Copenhagen, which strove to build new systems to handle the deradicalization issue. It also appears that the Copenhagen authorities were inundated with other protests and riots and may not have been able to focus their attention as heavily on the radicalization until it became a more pressing issue. Copenhagen did, however, have success in building relationships with several of its mosques, creating an infohouse, and launching a separate organization, VINK, to handle radicalization. It seems that the major impediment for Copenhagen must have been in linking all of these parties together. In Aarhus, it seems like Local Autonomy was largely achieved because the authorities were able to begin working on the radicalization problem years before it was pressing on the national agenda. By the time it began to receive national pressure in 2014 in 2015 (see quote), it had established its program, and its local city council members managed to support the program's efficacy to national scrutiny. Because Copenhagen was preoccupied with other issues, its major thrust toward PVE began in 2014. By then, deradicalization was on the national and global radar, and the municipality's efforts appear to have been co-opted or preempted by the national government's agencies. This interaction was not necessarily hostile, but the addition of new actors may have limited the iterative, insulated, policy innovation process that Aarhus was able to take advantage of. Regarding the Critical Actor, in general, the interviews in Aarhus indicated that the Aarhus model had a few "director" figures that had carried it through from beginning to present. In Copenhagen, the actors were more fluid and there was more turnover in who worked on the deradicalization issue on behalf of the police, ministry, and social services at varies times. This lack of continuity may have caused the process to slow. Finally, the above quotes indicate that Public Risk Perception did not play a role in the decision-making of officials in either city. Several of the officials indicate that if they were beginning deradicalization programs today,

when the country is experiencing a general rightward shift, they may have experienced more of a challenge. But in 2011, when Aarhus was finalizing its deradicalization structure, the issue was not even on the public radar. It appears that the public did not have much of an opinion on the issue of foreign fighters until after the peak of the problem in 2014. If anything, public views are influenced by political discourse rather than the other way around. These quotes only provide preliminary insight into the validity of my hypotheses. Next, I explore the specific sequence of how each city approached its radicalization issue.

During my interviews, I asked specific questions about the steps each city took to build its deradicalization program. Below is a narrative pieced together based on the interviews from that city on how each respective program was established. My conversations brought to light several organizations and institutions that worked together in targeting radicalization in each city. The diagrams below outline what each of these organizations are and model how they worked together.



[98]

Figure 8 shows the relationships between various agencies involved in reintegration projects from the national down to the local levels. Note: Infohouses are ideally a partnership between local and regional government, but not always. Adapted from Hemmingsen 2015.

The general framework Hemmingsen lays out for cooperation across different systems is similar across municipalities, but becomes more or less complex in different contexts and when new actors are introduced. In the diagrams below, I attempt to explain and visualize the bureaucratic links between disparate actors in both Aarhus and Copenhagen.

Infohouse: A coalition of partners in the city who meet on a regular basis (2x per month in Aarhus, and 1x per month in Copenhagen) to problem solve and info-share regarding radicalization
SSP: Schools, Social Services, Police relationship framework created in 1971. Copenhagen has an official ministry while Aarhus has its "triangle" between the police, school, and municipality.
PET: Danish National Intelligence Service
NCPE: National Center for the Prevention of Extremism is the Danish national effort to coalesce various municipal efforts and help cities strengthen their deradicalization responses.

[98] Hemmingsen, Ann-Sophie. 2015. The Danish Approach to Countering and Preventing Extremism and Radicalization

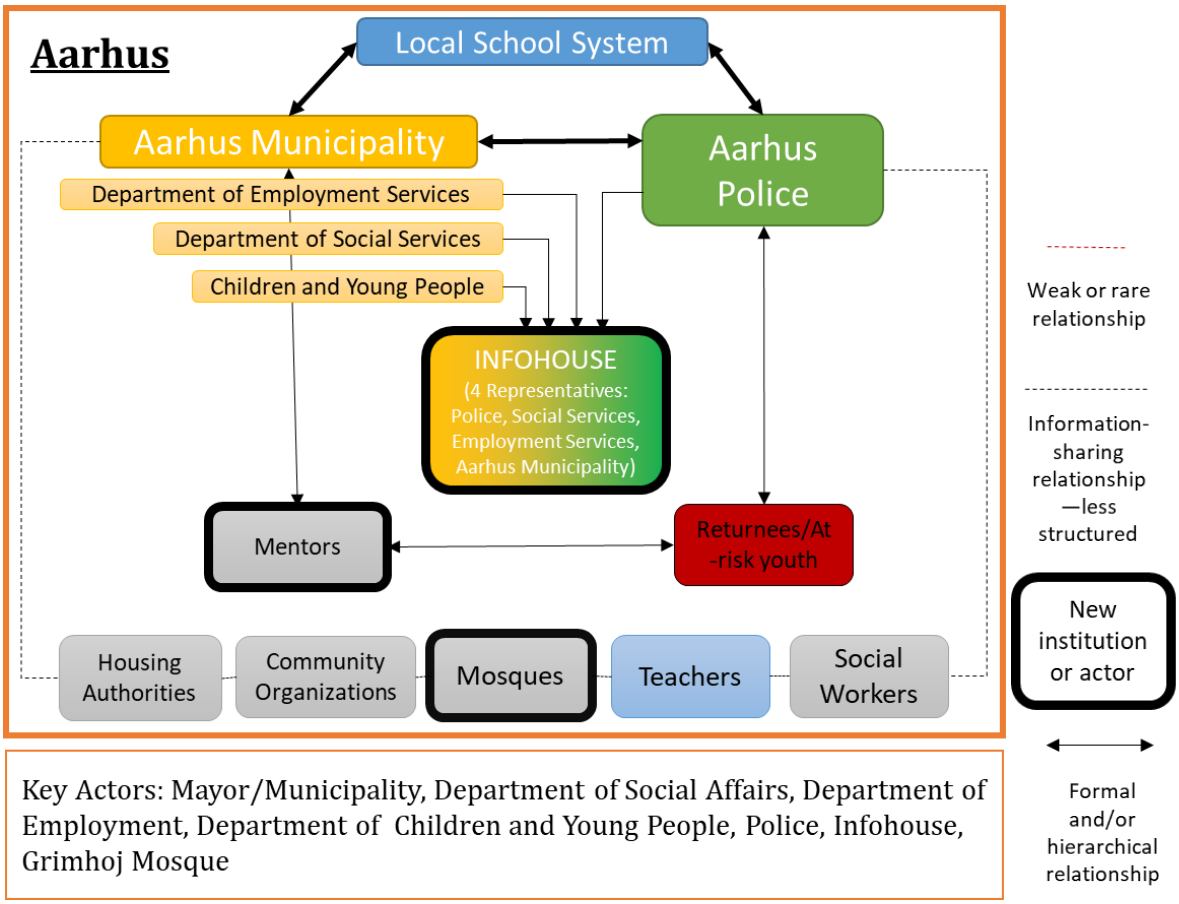


Figure 9 This diagram visualizes the relationship between policy actors in Aarhus. It demonstrates a circular path that both information and relationships follow with the police and municipality remaining the primary linking actors throughout the process.

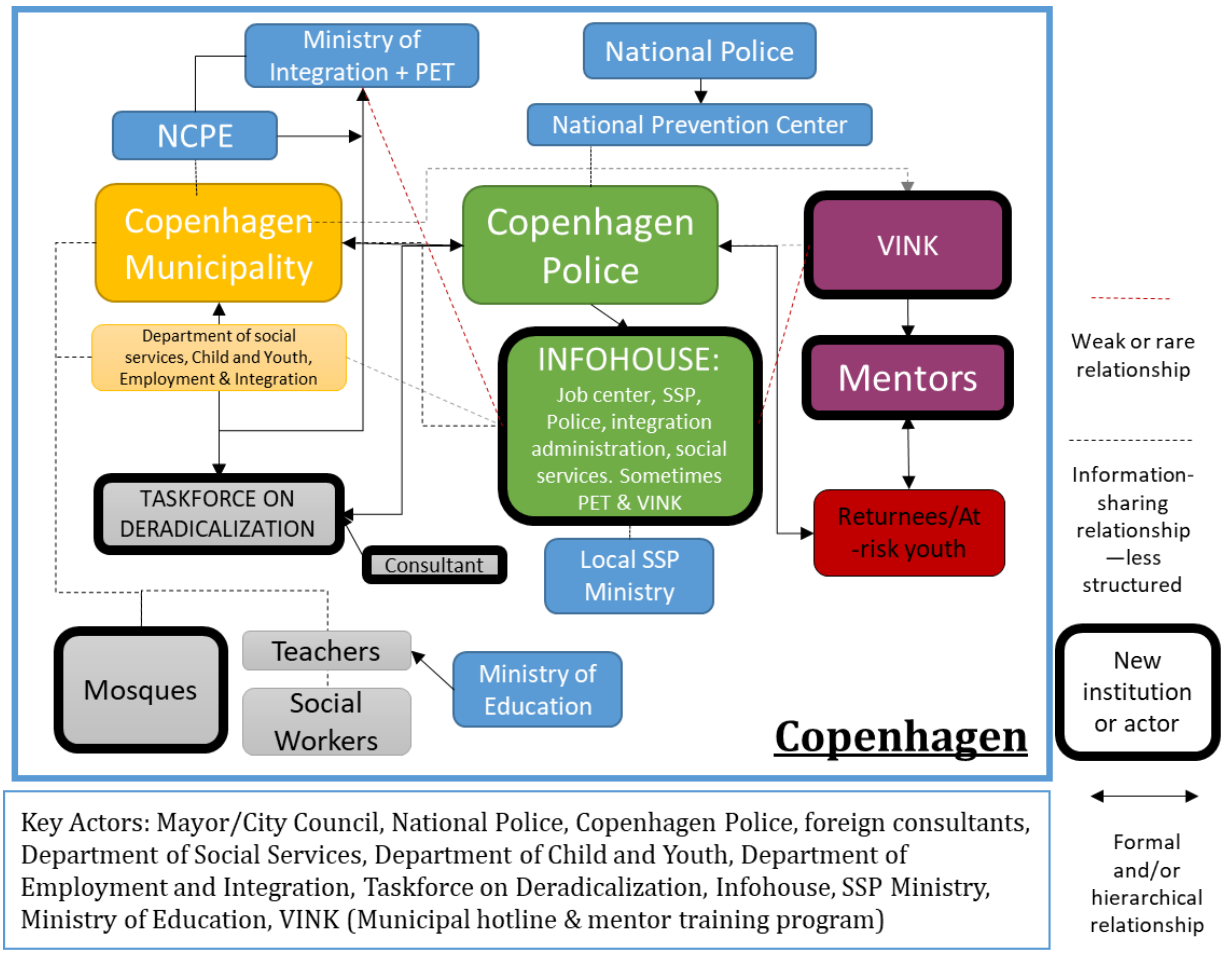


Figure 10 This schematic attempts to represent the complex bureaucratic relationship between entities working on the radicalization issue in Copenhagen. There are effectively three large actors: the municipality, police, and VINK all simultaneously working on the issue. However, there are many other relationships the Copenhagen authorities must manage and, in some cases, create for this structure to work.

In the next section, I will trace my interviews to understand how and when these institutional links were established and how these actors came to work together on the issue of radicalization. As a disclaimer, some of the links mentioned were pre-established, and I was not able to collect information on specifically how these relationships were created.

The Creation of the "Aarhus Model"

Following 9/11 and the London subway bombings as well as the Jylland's newspaper's political cartoon on Prophet Muhammad in 2005 that caused a bit of uprising in Muslim communities, the issue of terrorism was on the Dansh national radar. In 2006, the Danish

government approached all of the municipalities of Denmark and brought the issue of radicalization to the radar of local authorities. It charged the city council with coming up with ideas of how to handle radicalizing youth as these individuals may become "homegrown terrorists" and could cause harm to Denmark. At the time, the national government was less concerned with the idea of foreign fighters leaving Denmark to fight elsewhere, and more worried that there was danger lingering at home.

Combatting Neo-Nazis

At the same time in 2007, Aarhus was experiencing its own issues with extremism, not with Islamist radicals, but with a white supremacist neo-nazi group called White Pride. This organization had seen an upswing in membership as the older, retired members of the group sought to stoke young people to take up their torch. Aarhus's resident expert on youth crime in the municipal government, Mr. Alekson, had been working with the local police on how to combat this issue for several years at this point. Detectives on the team would track down the suspected members of White Pride, sit them down, and talk to them about the potential consequences of their actions. Ultimately, these young men were only interested in gaining some attention and finding a group of friends, and within a couple years, the municipality and the police had managed to quash the issue.

At the tail end of eliminating White Pride, Mr. Alekson was approached by his superiors and informed of this national effort toward deradicalization. From the start, Mr. Alekson be default reached out to his partner on the White Pride intervention, the head detective of the Aarhus Police. Having dealt with issues like White Pride and the issue of youth crime using the SSP system for over a decade, the detective and the bureaucrat had an instant connection between this new issue of Islamist radicalization and the radicalization of white nationalists. In

the 2006 street attacks from the right-wing radicals, the police and municipality had noticed that the young perpetrators had often lost a parent and lacked an adult mentor. They saw a parallel in other radicalized youth, and began to approach this new charge similarly. This is not to say their responses were identical, there were some new elements, which they sought to incorporate into their approach. In 2008, the police detective and the bureaucrat applied for a grant from the European Union to create a pilot mentorship program wherein well-integrated and successful Muslims from the Aarhus community would be trained to respond to radicalizing youth. Copenhagen joined into this grant as well, but used it differently, as I will discuss later.

Creating mentorship

By 2008, the police and municipal government in general had been working together for years. Since about 2006, the municipality had a steering committee that discussed issues like youth crime. Thus, when the issues of homegrown terrorists was brought to their attention, the Department of Social Services also got on board. Once Aarhus received its grant, the detective and the bureaucrat reached out to people they thought would make good mentors. “We wanted a mentor corps that was diverse, so we could match them with people,” Mr. Alekson said. They reached out to people through their personal and professional networks to find these semi-volunteers who were interested in making a difference and “happened to get some money.” Over the next 3 months, the municipality, police, and local departments from the steering committee began working together to train these mentors.

The Aarhus Coalition’s first test

In early 2009 came one of the first tests of this young coalition. During a routine meeting between the police and Department of Social Services, the case was brought up of a young man thought to be at risk of radicalization. Immediately, a police officer stated that should report the

case to PET. A social worker responded that they had to talk to the at-risk youth and intervene immediately. Initially, even though they had worked together before, the social workers and the police officers were not speaking the same language. The detective and the bureaucrat facilitated a long conversation among those in the room about how to address such reports in the future, and they reached the conclusion that they ought to report when this individual absolutely and certainly posed a threat. In the meantime, they would respond locally and meet the person themselves. This interaction informed how social workers and police worked together in the future. It also affected how the police framed the issue to teachers and other "first-line workers"[99] in the future.

Yet because the police were the primary outreach arm, a similar problem occurred in 2010. Through their SSP partnership with local schools, the Aarhus police and municipality had gathered dozens of teachers to discuss reporting mechanisms for when they suspected a young person of radicalization. Initially, they used a risk-frame and encouraged teachers to report anyone they were concerned would be a threat. By the looks on the teachers' faces, it was clear that this language did not resonate with them. Over the next days and weeks, the bureaucrat and detective realized they needed to use the same language and approach they would for other youth crime to get teachers on board—it needed to be an inclusive approach targeted at safeguarding Aarhus's youth, something the teachers could buy into.

Adapting structures to create the Infohouse

By mid-2010, Aarhus officials had created most of the relationships they would need to tackle radicalization. It was not explicitly clear when this occurred in my interviews, but Mr. Alekzon reached out the Employment Services when he realized that these young people often

[99] Individuals who directly interfaced with potentially at-risk youth such as teachers, social workers, youth workers

needed housing and a job in order to return to "normal" life. The Employment Agency, which was part of the steering committee and had historically been part of Aarhus's youth crime prevention work, also became a part of the coalition. Because Aarhus had all of these different parties working on this issue: Child Services, Social Services, Police, and Employment Services, the detective and bureaucrat wanted a formal structure for them to meet and talk on a regular basis. In Amsterdam, similar coalitions met regularly in "Infohouses" where all parties involved could share information and discuss their cases. Aarhus adopted the Infohouse, layered it onto its existing coalition structure, and began meeting on alternate weeks.

As I mentioned earlier, this entire structure was created to deal with homegrown terrorists who might cause harm in Denmark. However, in 2012, Aarhus began seeing handfuls of young Muslim men depart for Syria—cue the start of the foreign fighter issue, which the Infohouse and deradicalization model was easily adapted to address. Through each of my conversations in Aarhus, the officials repeated the sentiment, "We have a system already, so let us adapt it," and other thoughts along those same lines. It was clear that layering was the name of the game in Aarhus.

Getting the mosques on board

Over the next two years, Aarhus saw over 36 young men and women depart for conflict zones in Syria and Iraq. The Aarhus Model had worked with dozens of other youth and prevented them from leaving, like Abdullah whom we discussed early on. But by 2014, both the media and the Aarhus authorities were noticing a trend. About 25 of the 36 young people to depart from Denmark attended a mosque called Grimhoj, a Salafist mosque in west Aarhus. This realization was probably the most critical point in Aarhus's intervention, and the detective and the bureaucrat sought out one more key ally. One afternoon, a police officer, the head detective,

and the bureaucrat drove to the Grimhoj and knocked on the door, asking to meet with the mosque's youth group, which they suspected was the breeding ground for radical sentiments that were causing people to leave. The mosque's Imam greeted the authorities and brought them into an office space. The detective explained that the Grimhoj had a big problem and the media would begin to talk about it soon because 26 young people from the mosque had gone to fight in Syria. While there were no explicit threats, there was a strong sense that if the mosque did not wish to be condemned by the media for breeding terrorists and see calls for a shut down, it should cooperate with the authorities. The Imam did not wish to see young people in his mosque go to jail, "They said they needed help, and we are willing to help our country and our people and society. We do not want our youths to go to jail."

In the coming weeks, the mosque served as a connector and arranged meetings between MUC (the youth group), the mosque's leaders, and the authorities. At first, the young people were hesitant and distrusting of the authorities, and as the Imam said, "They didn't want to be used for some political agenda." The Imam and the leaders of the mosque went about explaining a more quietist form of action for the youth by referring to family: "As much as you want to help in Syria, you ought to help your people in Denmark. In order to do this, you must understand that we respect your idea of going to Syria, but think of your family here and of someone were to hurt your family here in Denmark at the train station or whatever." Eventually, the reluctant young men began speaking to the authorities. The Imam emphasized this as an opportunity to show that the community was "serious about helping and not making a terror center." He also gave an aside on how important he thought dialogues with the mosques were as hard measures like imprisonment of suspected youth would only foment anger. "Hard measures will give a bad reaction. When people are treated badly, the reaction is not that the violence is stopped, rather

they create a new kind of people who want to make a revolution."

By 2014, with the incorporation of the mosques, Aarhus's coalition of deradicalization partners was complete. One official described Aarhus's system as a few gears rotating in sync as the diagram sort of depicts. Copenhagen, the larger city, has a much more complex series of institutional interactions that do not line up in one cycle of communication. Unfortunately, because I only had five interviews in Copenhagen, these descriptions are less specific and detailed.

Copenhagen's Deradicalization Approach

Copenhagen's deradicalization program is a complex machine which took longer to get started and was less flexible as a result. Both cities had the same starting point, which was in 2007 when the national government placed the onus on cities to devise a way to counter radicalization of homegrown terrorists. Just like Aarhus, Copenhagen's municipality was dealing with another issue at the same time. But theirs was not just one group, Copenhagen between 2006 and 2008 had protests and the occasional riot constantly. When a building that had become like a community center on the poorer side of town, Mjaelner Park, was set for demolition, violent protests broke out. In another part of the city, a biker gang was defacing buildings and destructing property. The local officials and police were pre-occupied and were unable to immediately divert attention to the issue as a early as Aarhus.

The creation of an independent VINK

In 2009, a group of individuals from the municipality did create an independent reporting hotline, VINK, where civilians and front-line workers could report concerns about radicalized youth. This hotline was an independent body that worked autonomously, but was still linked to the municipal government structure. Individuals who work for VINK exclusively work on

deradicalization issues unlike in Aarhus, where deradicalization is enveloped into the existing jobs of local social workers and police, perhaps due to the lack of personnel. In 2010, Copenhagen joined Aarhus on the European Union grant for a mentorship program. VINK used these funds to create a public awareness campaign among front line workers and train them to become mentors and interveners. During this process, the city attempted to train hundreds of officials, teachers, and officers in direct intervention rather than general awareness training for the many and intervention training for the few, which was Aarhus's approach.

In 2011, when the city actually began to see people departing, it coincided with additional extremism organizations like Kaldet til Islam, Millatu Ibrahim ramping up their calls for violence in Denmark, specifically Copenhagen. At this point, Copenhagen still had not established its cross-agency network in the Infohouse. While the police created an Infohouse in 2012, it was not a space for easy collaboration and information-sharing as the meetings often became large, yet somehow excluded potential partners, as the diagram illustrates. Meanwhile, the local SSP agency had been working to create a dialogue on the issue between the schools, police, and social services. Yet people continued to leave Copenhagen. While exact numbers are unclear, it ranges between 60 and 100.

In 2012, VINK was working in its own silo without the support of other necessary agencies who were unsure of how to partner on the issue. There was an example of a young man who the social services intercepted and determined to be at risk of leaving. PET, the national agency, also knew about this individual. Yet, the police and city government were not informed in a case of lack of transparency and overlap between these agencies. In 2014, the issue of deradicalization continued to gain attention as the Aarhus model grew in prominence. The national intelligence agency, PET, pressed Copenhagen to create a preparedness group for

returnees from Syria and other countries. This in combination with other demands from national agencies resulted in NCPE providing VINK additional funding for 2015-2018.

Creation of a Taskforce

To further accelerate Copenhagen's approach, in 2015, the Copenhagen municipality created a Taskforce to focus on issues of deradicalization. According to a NCPE official, the initiative was created by the NCPE, but was facilitated by the municipality, police, and SSP. The Copenhagen Anti-Radicalization Task Force was led by a Swedish expert consultant, and focused on questions like how the municipality could improve their system and incorporate civil society and parents. Simultaneously, the municipality was reaching out to several mosques around the city indiscriminately to see where they might latch on.

National Interventions

I mentioned that the NCPE created Copenhagen's Taskforce, but they also created materials and trainings which they distributed to Copenhagen and other Danish cities to help them assess risk and structure interventions. Aarhus incorporated some elements of these new materials, but chose to maintain their established method. One individual described these items as unnecessary as Aarhus had already created these for its locality. Copenhagen was still establishing its program and used these items as guiding documents.

This is not to say that Aarhus never experienced any unwanted pressure. In 2014 and 2015, when the issue of foreign fighters was on the national radar, Aarhus was receiving similar pressure as Copenhagen to create certain preparedness programs and make changes where the national government saw fit. However, because the Aarhus Model had so far proven robust, the local authorities were able to insulate the practitioners from much scrutiny, which explains one of the bolded quotes in Figure 7.

Ultimately, Copenhagen's plan focused on reducing the number of Copenhageners who support Sharia law to fall. Aarhus, on the other hand, focuses on preventing action rather than thought-policing in line with its other crime prevention methodology. In the past three years, the rates of foreign fighters has tapered to few as Danish legislation made the act of traveling to a warzone illegal. In these few years, Copenhagen has begun to work with Aarhus and the national government to solidify its VINK program. Unfortunately, it was unclear how the partnership between Aarhus and Copenhagen manifested beyond the mentorship grant from the EU. Even still, it is clear that Copenhagen's approach is more fragmented than Aarhus's.

The table below synthesizes how prevalent each of my independent variables were in both cities. I will discuss their implications in the next section.

Results of coded interviews in Aarhus and Copenhagen

Hypotheses	Variables	Aarhus	Copenhagen
Hypothesis 1: Institutional Cooperation **	**IV1:** Strength of cooperation (weak/ medium/ strong)	Strong	medium
	IV2: Length of cooperation (new/old)	Old	Old
	IV3: Number of agencies cooperating	4	7+
Hypothesis 2: National Support of Local Autonomy **	**IV4:** Level of municipal autonomy (high/medium/low)	High	Medium
	IV5: Level of support from national government (low/medium/high/too high)	Medium	Too high
	IV6: national crime general rehabilitative approach (yes/no)	Yes	yes
Hypothesis 3: Public risk perception of improperly reintegrated fighters	**IV7:** Perceived potential risk (high/low)	n/a	high
	IV8: Number of fighters (since 2007)	35 fighters, 330 at-risk youth	70 fighters
Hypothesis 4: critical actors/policy entrepreneurs *	**IV9:** Presence of critical policy entrepreneur (yes/no)	Yes	No

** = significant *=possibly significant

Figure 11 This table codes interviews to compare the cities

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the sequence of program establishment in both cities and feedback on the hypotheses in both cities, I found strong support for Hypotheses 1 and 2 and weak support for Hypothesis 4. I found evidence against Hypothesis 3. I further break down each of these conclusions and how they interact with existing literature.

Institutional Cooperation and Theories of Layering

It seems clear, based on the overwhelming results that institutional cooperation is *the* key factor in creating robust reintegration institutions. Aarhus was largely able to do this because of its small size and the relatively isolated source of the Grimhoj mosque which it succeeded in incorporating into its network. Some might say that Aarhus got lucky because Copenhagen's sources were more varied and required more outreach. Aarhus might have been lucky to discover one major source, but Copenhagen was also slower to build capacity around outreach.
Both of these elements were likely important.

My hypothesis of institutional cooperation predicted that Aarhus was more successful because it is smaller and because it layered rather than converted or built new institutions. *My findings confirm that Aarhus used institutional layering to create its deradicalization program because the Aarhus authorities used existing relationships from SSP to coordinate their deradicalization intervention, and they simply added a partnership with mosques and named their coordinated meetings "Infohouses."* Almost none of the Aarhus Model was completely unique to the deradicalization issue, and the bureaucrat, a police officer, a professor, and several city employees referred to the process of "adapting" and not "reinventing the wheel" when it came to radicalization because they already had certain structures in place.

Copenhagen did not attempt layering. It also did not, as I had hypothesized, attempt to convert existing institutions. *Rather, the authorities in Copenhagen sought to create new institutions including the Infohouse, a Taskforce, and VINK.* While the Infohouse and Taskforce somewhat leveraged exiting partnerships, they were essentially new creations that stood independently of any preexisting function and were created for the explicit purpose of deradicalizations. Oftentimes, new people were hired for Copenhagen's programs whereas Aarhus's efforts were generally folded into existing programs and job responsibilities.

Aarhus's effective use of layering has interesting theoretical implications and raises new questions. Namely, why was Aarhus able to layer and why did Copenhagen not even attempt it? Based on the interviews, I would hazard two guesses: necessity and habit. Aarhus is a small city without the same level of bureaucratic manpower as Copenhagen. Whereas in Copenhagen, the issue of Salafist groups is sent upward to NCPE to deal with, Aarhus has to deal with it themselves. Thus, Aarhus may have chosen to layer out of necessity because it cannot afford to create a new agency for every issue due to limited resources and manpower, and especially when the agency would only target a few hundred individuals. Moreover, it seemed like Aarhus's authorities were habituated to building on their preexisting systems because the relationships are already in place. Their default decision is to try what they already have through their SSP and other partnerships before building something new, which would likely take substantially more effort and resources. If size and habit are both accurate, then it might indicate some level of path dependence where smaller cities that tend to follow the same policy pathways will result in layering. While that view may have some merit, I argue that if it is true that layering is a more effective and faster way to deal with a new problem in some circumstances, then policymakers can choose to layer rather than build anew.

Another possibility is that Copenhagen was unable to layer because its authorities were inundated with several other problems and simply too busy. It takes time, critical thinking, and overlap of several disparate actors to decide how a layering approach might work in any given context. If local authorities are too busy to coordinate, it might be easier to create a new program and hand it off to those eager to implement it. Perhaps layering actually has a higher "adjustment cost" in time and human capital that institutional actors may not be willing to bear and would rather pay the additional "startup cost" in capital to create a new institution.

To the question of how to layer: it seems impossible for a city to align the interests of teachers, social workers, police, and intelligence without a high level of trust or at least a working relationship between people in these institutions. Although this appears to be best built over time, even new efforts can be possible if common goals and metrics can be established between seemingly disparate agencies, which can allow them to layer. For example, Aarhus's tight institutional network allowed them to integrated the PVE effort into the city's crime prevention unit at large within a year. Copenhagen on the other hand tried to reinvent the wheel by building new institutions from the ground up, which made its response slower. Building VINK and trying to integrate it into its existing SSP network took years, and because the city is so much larger, there were more people who needed to be informed and buy in. Despite its size, if Copenhagen had tried to layer its approach as opposed to creating new organizations, it may have built its intervention more quickly and more robustly.

One important question regarding institutional cooperation that I do not have sufficient detail on is the incorporation of mosques into the Copenhagen approach. Based on conversations in Copenhagen, it was evident that authorities had reached out to mosques around the city but they did not leverage these partnerships into any of their existing programs other than reporting

mechanisms. It was unclear how exactly those relationships were built and why they were relegated to a reporting role rather than an active partnership.

Local Autonomy and Concepts of Resilience

Local autonomy was also strongly supported by the interviews. Copenhagen, though extensive in its ability to deal with welfare and other local jurisdictions, is often limited in its decision-making regarding PVE. This may have been because initially, when it would have had the autonomy to make some unilateral decisions, it lagged behind Aarhus due to other priorities. This raises the very real issue of political bandwidth and the limited capacity of any political entity, no matter if it carries the force of the Scandinavian Welfare Model, to deal with too many things at once. Though local authorities are the ones directly interacting with returnees and at-risk populations rather than the national government, the Danish government tends to intervene or at least overlap with the Copenhagen authorities much more than in Aarhus. This seems to have reduced the level of flexibility Copenhagen has in adapting solutions when PET and the NCPE frequently intervened to provide guidance. Some of this might have to do with the timeline. As one of my interviewees discussed, Aarhus intervened early which gave it the chance to build its program and adapt it without national intervention. Copenhagen, with a wider swath of issues, did not commit the effort early on before foreign fighters became an acute problem. As a result, it was under constant scrutiny where Aarhus was granted a more hands-off approach by the national government. When Aarhus was placed under pressure, its local council managed to insulate it from intervention because the program had proven itself by then.

A large part of the argument for the need for local autonomy comes from the resilience literature. Resilience can be built through personal relationships with civil society and local authorities as well as structural opportunities to think critically, engage civically, and build

identity in healthy spaces. Most of this is best facilitated at the local level. While my research did not focus on the effectiveness of the resilience approach in the success of the program, I do have some conclusions on the importance of a resilience frame. Assuming the key actors in intervention are families, religious leaders, mentors, teachers, social workers, and police officers because they are the ones interacting directly with the participants, why might resilience be important? A risk frame will only win over police officers who are foremost concerned about the safety of their constituents. All of these other figures: families, religious leaders, mentors, teachers, and social workers will only partner with the police on this intervention if they accept the framing. Thus, resilience-framing is a tool that can be used to build cooperation and something that the local authorities are better equipped to use than national counterparts. As Aarhus learned, an inclusive, resilience-based frame is important to create local buy in with these partners. Rhetoric from the national level tends to be more security-focused and inherently uses more language like risk, danger, terror. This is precisely why, local authorities must have the autonomy to bring in partners with positive, resilience framing, something Aarhus learned to do quickly. Copenhagen on the other hand, surrounded by national agencies may have found that more difficult a task.

Public Opinion and the Policy Process

Public opinion did not seem to play a role in the decision-making of local authorities. I know this both because it was barely touched on as a factor that influenced the officials' actions and because of the delayed reaction of the public in the timelines of both cities. Interestingly, in both Copenhagen and Aarhus, authorities stated that national discourse actually set public opinion on issues like extremism. As the national political tone shifts more right, politicians speak in terms of punishment and risk, which seems to instill a sense of fear in the public. Did

public opinion affect Copenhagen or Aarhus's approach to deradicalization? Timing is important here. Because the foreign fighter issue was not in the public eye when Aarhus began dealing with the issue in 2007, it could not have influenced the officials' actions. In fact, the policy experts behind the Aarhus model were strictly focused on the SSP methodology and insulated from political reverberations that public opinion would have created, had it created any. Copenhagen's population had dozens of other issues to focus on, so the foreign fighter issue was not on the public radar until about 2016 when the Washington Post released a scathing article. By then, VINK and the mentorship program had already been established and it was a matter of combining institutions, bureaucratic exchanges that were separated from public scrutiny though not from national and local political scrutiny. Authorities do worry that if prejudices and fears increase too much in public, they could counteract the progress in resilience work. In response, some suggested incorporating an anti-islamophobia effort into their PVE approaches; however, these are only ideas for the time being. One viable option on this front is, as relationships and civic engagement of mosques with the public increases over time, exposure will reduce any public resistance.

These negative findings make an important case against public opinions' weight in policy decisions. In my discussion of preexisting literature, I examined Campbell's policy-making process. Within his arguments, he asserts that public opinion often plays a critical role in what policy entrepreneurs consider as options. The findings I discussed above refute that point, and I will content two things based on my findings. First, when it comes to matters of security or specific subject-matter expertise, such as crime prevention, leaders will tend to use their discretion in policy decisions, even if the public disapproves. Second, if a policy or system is already established before it is on the public radar, it is unlikely to be destroyed in the short term,

even if public opinion goes against it. This is to say that if deradicalization programs are "proven" effective, then public officials are likely to implement these programs in favor of national security even if the public somewhat disapproves. This is another testable hypothesis for the future.

Critical Actors and the Policy Process

While I found evidence against the importance of public opinion as a key factor in policy decisions, my findings on this critical actor hypothesis support Campbell's theories. Essentially as Campbell and Page argue, public officials are likely to listen to their "core actors" who are political insiders and experts to help them make decisions. As such, the presence of local advocates in the crime prevention sphere was pivotal to the development of the Aarhus program. Without the two key players, the detective and the bureaucrat, Mr. Alekson, the Aarhus model would likely have not followed the same path. Both of these actors were referred to by name by every single interviewee in Aarhus and all but two in Copenhagen as key decision-makers in the Aarhus approach.

Similar key actors were not mentioned for Copenhagen. Each of the Copenhagen efforts was led by a different person. The leader of the Copenhagen taskforce was Swedish, not Danish, and early on, not much learning occurred between the municipalities. The Infohouse was led by the police, and VINK by yet another director. Moreover, because of Copenhagen's higher level of fragmentation and employee turnover, there were fewer people who have been part of Copenhagen's deradicalization approach from the beginning. All of these things could have limited the emergence of a critical policy actor and may have deterred Copenhagen from the same level of robustness as Aarhus.

While the presence of critical actors in Aarhus and the absence of them in Copenhagen

were not the only reasons Aarhus's program was more robust, they seem to have played a critical role, especially in coordinating parties and problem-solving.

Considering Openness as a factor

In addition to the trends discussed above, one more component to the underlying politics of the cities was openness. Aarhus, more than Copenhagen, has an open and adaptable system. For example, while I was able to interview several of the authorities in Aarhus, even those that were key in developing the Aarhus model, Copenhagen's municipality and police were much more closed off from questions. If residents of the cities noticed the same trends as I did, they may be less inclined to trust and engage with the authorities in Copenhagen than those in Aarhus. This could have been one of the factors in why Aarhus was able to be adaptable and conduct outreach toward deradicalization before Copenhagen began its efforts.

Limitations of Findings

A recurring limitation of conducting a case studies on these two cities is their scale. Even though I begin with the assumption that Aarhus is more robust than Copenhagen, I cannot substantiate that by claiming it has reintegrated more individuals. In fact, the Aarhus model only directly engaged with about 15 returnees (though it did work with over 300 other at-risk youth). Unfortunately, the Copenhagen municipality would not release these numbers for its efforts, so I can only estimate that Copenhagen had about 60-100 departees. I also recognize that my descriptions of the relationships that were built in Copenhagen are much sparser than in Aarhus. This could be due to the fact that the relationships are weaker or that there are too many of them to keep track of, but it could also be because I had too few interviews in this city.

Additionally, while I did find strong support for my institutional coordination and local autonomy hypotheses, not all of the evidence supports them and produces some ambiguities. For

example, in the quote table, I highlight an example of a Copenhagen official stating they had expertise at the local level. Additionally, I by no means can conclude that Copenhagen lacks a strong preexisting system of institutional cooperation for all issues. As is evident in Figure 10, Copenhagen's system is larger and much more complex than Aarhus's; however, I do claim that Aarhus was better able to leverage these partnerships in its institutional layering approach than was Copenhagen, partially due to Aarhus's simplicity.

Finally, there may be some link between the ethnicities of departees and the ability of the municipality to coordinate to respond. In Aarhus, for example, at least 6 of the fighters and dozens of the at-risk youth come from the Somali community. Aarhus has a large Somali community, with over 12 different clans who rarely, if ever, will even exchange words with one another. Nonetheless, the Aarhus bureaucrat has presented over a dozen times to the board of elders in many of these communities and was able to set up a preliminary meeting despite the fragmentation of the Somali population. Copenhagen, however has a high population of Pakistani and Turkish immigrants. The difference in levels of fragmentation between each of these groups may have had some influence on the city's ability to create coalitions that incorporate them. However, like in the example I mentioned, the Somali community is frequently considered one of the most fragmented, and Aarhus has at least begun the process of coordinating with them. Copenhagen, on the other hand, has lacked the political will to conduct significant outreach efforts up until now, though this is something the NCPE is actively working on in Copenhagen at the national level. Perhaps because they were preempted by national efforts, Copenhagen has not attempted as much community outreach. I hesitate to attribute any failure to build coalitions in Copenhagen to the ethnic differences between the cities at this point, especially as Copenhagen has fallen short of trying.

Immigrants by country of origin (Q42017)[97]	
Nationality	Population
Pakistan	9,065
Turkey	7,627
Iraq	6,973
Poland	5,952
Germany	5,682
Morocco	5,307
Somalia	5,248
Lebanon	4,959
Sweden	4,937
United Kingdom	4,462

Figure 12 Copenhagen

Main immigrant groups, 2017[112]	
Nationality	Population
Lebanon	5,030
Somalia	4,554
Turkey	4,370
Iraq	3,688
Iran	2,577
Vietnam	2,551
Germany	2,261
Poland	2,235
Afghanistan	2,092
Romania	1,983

Figure 13 Aarhus[100]

Portable Lessons and Key Takeaways

Clearly, as more and more foreign fighters and their families return home, how countries deal with these people may very well determine their risk for extremism in the future. If a country constantly rejects returnees or throws them in jail, it could have the effect of deterring people from leaving, but it seems more likely that it will create angry, stateless actors who may seek retaliation in the future. It has become more important than ever to consider alternate approaches to handling violent extremism, and reintegration and deradicalization programs offer one such possibility. But how can they effectively construct such programs?

Overall my research shows that strong interagency cooperation, local autonomy, and a critical actor will be important in instituting robust deradicalization and reintegration programs. By and large, institutional cooperation is the variable that maps cleanly onto psychological, sociological, and institutional theories of a strategy that works to build a deradicalization program. In every interview, the importance of cooperation was treated as instrumental. As a result, I believe that if a city (or a country) has a high level of institutional cooperation already,

[100] "FOLK1C: FOLKETAL DEN 1. I KVARTALET EFTER OMRÅDE, KØN, ALDER (5-ÅRS INTERVALLER), HERKOMST OG OPRINDELSESLAND". Statistics Denmark

this will be both necessary and sufficient to create a robust deradicalization program. Local autonomy and a critical actor are not sufficient. Local autonomy though may be necessary as the importance of tailored intervention is also highlighted in the literature and in my interviews. A key takeaway in Denmark is that the officials in both cities rarely mentioned autonomy or freedom explicitly, especially in Aarhus, which implies that it was not something out of the ordinary. Rather, they simply spoke in terms of what their cities did and rarely mentioned the national government because the municipalities themselves were responsible for the interventions. If these assertions are accurate, they have broad implications of how countries should conceptualize creating their PVE interventions moving forward.

In Western Democracies like Denmark, national governments should seek to place the onus on their local governments to innovate solutions that might be helpful in a local context. Such a responsibility can create ownership for a city as it is empowered to be creative and sustain an iterative dialogue not only with the national level but with other municipalities to share knowledge and methodology. Local initiative not only creates a tailored intervention, but it can help catch warning signs in the population early on and potentially prevent harm. Moreover, local authorities should endeavor to build trust with their local communities, so these interventions can be possible. Rather than policing all the mosques, which can brew discomfort and distrust, authorities should begin dialogues for what young Muslims in these communities need holistically. The same approach likely applies for other populations who are at risk of radicalization and criminalization. Understandably, neither the entire social service system nor the entire police force can become a trusted face, especially on short notice, thus a small group of passionate experts may be key in starting and maintain the core of a city's approach while a larger group of "first line workers" like teachers and police officers provide information and

support. Governments handling this issue should seek out experts in related fields like crime prevention and social services to help conceptualize what an intervention might look like for a specific local or even national context. Policy entrepreneurs can seek these windows where their expertise on the topic of PVE will be used by their governments, especially at the local level where they have the most influence. Most importantly, both at the national and local level, agencies must be willing to find a common ground and approach intervention together. A strong foundation of trust across agencies will help in developing not only this program but future efforts as well. While this type of trust cannot be created out of thin air, governments can seek out where some overlap or even professional relationships between individuals in different agencies exist and build upon those. Legislation that allows a freer flow of information between agencies can help establish credibility and a smoother overlap of jurisdiction where a lack of transparency would have otherwise created an impasse. If a local government happens to come across the issue of radicalization before it is on the national radar, it should begin its policy innovation process as earlier is the best time for a city to learn and adapt before national surveillance and scrutiny slow its progress.

The portable insights from my research that I shared above apply to Western Democracies with a strong agency system and stable local governance. Most countries have neither the same level of intuitional endowment as Denmark nor do they place as high a priority on deradicalization efforts. How can some of these lessons be used by governments of countries like Tunisia or Egypt which are dealing with thousands more people with a fraction of the resources? Based on my interviews, it still appears that national governments might be able to find local structures that both at-risk youth and returnees trust as entry points into deradicalization. In many cases, these will be mosques and youth groups rather than local

government. Nevertheless, by reaching out to these mosques and groups, national governments can begin a dialogue and help train some of the leaders in these groups on how to handle at-risk youth and returnees. Often animosity between local religious institutions and the national government makes even that outreach a challenge, which is where mediators and NGOs can help facilitate dialogue. At an interagency level, governments can help set up connections between these mosques and youth groups' leaders and housing, education, or social service ministries to establish trust and begin to provide a social safety network for target individuals. Oftentimes, these agencies have simply never considered working together, so the opportunity might even be welcomed in some cases.

My research only provides preliminary insight into how these governments can develop institutional cooperation and encourage local autonomy. Further research would help shed light on what the process of creating interventions in authoritarian and developing countries. Case studies into efforts in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, and Turkey would be a good start. Additionally, I compared interventions targeting radicalized Muslim youth in two similar cities, but one question that remains is how this solving this type of radicalization is similar or different from right-wing or left-wing radicalization or even other types of crime. It would be interesting to compare the processes of preventing and combatting extremism in all of these forms within one city. If these processes are similar, it could provide a framework for other cities to build upon their existing structures in similar ways. Research could also compare deradicalization to crime-prevention programs in general within a city to see if the processes and institutions are in fact as identical as the officials in Aarhus stipulated.

Western Democracies, young democracies, or more authoritarian systems can potentially all learn from the importance of layering. My findings indicate that institutional layering will be

helpful for the issue of deradicalization. By layering a deradicalization program onto existing institutions with similar functions, such as the care of young people, general crime prevention, or crime rehabilitation, governments can not only save resources, they can build stronger programs. While an existing system with similar priorities, high coordination, low capital, but high willingness to invest time would be ideal environments for layering, it can happen elsewhere as well. For example, in a lower-resourced, authoritarian country with weak local governing institutions like Morocco existing systems can still be layered upon. Mosques have historically been the touchpoint for these interventions, and if the local mosque has ongoing initiatives and partnerships with the school, perhaps that partnership can be leveraged to add a session on critical thinking or religious dialogue that may not already exist. Granted, a weak institutional backdrop provides sub-ideal conditions for layering, layering might still provide better opportunities than will attempting to create anew, especially with low resources.

While there was not enough information to conclude that public perception of risk influenced officials to create deradicalization programs, perhaps as the issue is more on the public radar, popular influence might change officials' thoughts. This warrants further exploration. Each of my other three hypotheses: institutional cooperation, local autonomy, and critical actor ought to be tested in other contexts as well. A final insight I gleaned from my interviews and experiences in Aarhus and Copenhagen was Aarhus's greater sense of openness. If possible, I would have added degree of openness to my variables. Not only were officials immediately and overwhelmingly willing to discuss their efforts, they were open to feedback and constant iterative change. Each individual I spoke to knew of the others, and it was clear to me how much cross talk there was among agencies and individuals immediately. In Copenhagen, on the other hand, the officials were understandably more difficult to access and more unwilling to

spend time discussing this issue. Perhaps because it is larger, there appeared to be more silos and less crosstalk among Copenhagen agencies. I frequently heard things like “Well, VINK does that,” or, “The National Center can talk to you about that,” rather than the high level of overlap I encountered in Aarhus. These anecdotal experiences indicate to me that openness was perhaps a part of the equation in the Aarhus and Copenhagen comparison and warrants further study in other contexts.

While ISIS may have lost all of its territory in Syria, the issue of terrorism and violent extremism has not waned. New cells and groups will continue to grow as they have through human history, and it falls on the governments of an increasingly globalized world to keep their people safe. I suggest that this is done most effectively not through incarceration and criminalization, though these may have some role. It seems as though an orientation toward resilience and inclusive approaches to PVE will create a safety barrier around vulnerable youth that not only protects them from radicalization creates a sense of belonging and identity. However, a national declaration and a shiny new agency will not solve the problem. As I have discussed, the process of building a deradicalization and reintegration program is complex and requires specific political conditions and contexts.