The history of disengagement and deradicalisation is complex. The concept of deradicalisation is rather new, while the concept of disengagement is older, yet its use exploded after 11 September 2001, and the growth of the Islamic State in the Levant. Yet, to start an exploration of disengagement and deradicalisation practices and theory with 11 September 2001 is misleading and loses much of the conceptual and practical heritage of the field as it stands today. Yet, this historical analysis also has to be limited due to the number of pages available for this chapter in this volume, and this chapter will mainly focus on individual and meso-level disengagement, rather than collective disengagement at group level. Attempts to get individuals to end criminal behaviour, and/or to stop believing in specific ideologies or religious systems deemed to be dangerous for society, have been ongoing for more than a century, and some of the concepts and techniques used today can be traced back to programmes established between World War I and the turn of the millennium.

The belief that criminals and perpetrators of violence can be rehabilitated (vs. the idea that only containment or deterrence worked) was crucial for these activities, and indeed the deradicalisation and disengagement programmes of today. Yet, there are some notable differences between penal rehabilitation and today’s deradicalisation programmes. It should be remembered that the aim of a deradicalisation/disengagement programme is not necessarily to focus on a criminal or illegal context. The group from which the individual is to disengage might not have been criminalised; some deradicalisation/disengagement programmes may focus on the post-criminal space, while many others explicitly work in the pre-criminal space.

Often, but not always, a focus on pre-criminal space entails a different logic than a focus on the post criminal space. The pre-criminal space consists of actors that have yet to commit a crime, they are not in the care of law enforcement, and cannot, in general, be detained against their will. The early works on rehabilitation subsequently also influenced work on rehabilitation from criminal gangs, and the general field of criminology, and through these fields influenced today’s deradicalisation and disengagement programmes.
The idea of criminal rehabilitation gained credibility from the late 19th century (McLennan 2008, 177; Brockway 1883, 44). Education and re-education was seen as an important tool in the early phase. Rehabilitation (of which one of the main tools was education, both to gain a future economic income but also to gain empathy and understanding of, and sympathy with, both democracy and society) was in some cases seen as a way of breaking a “cage” that was created by previous habits, social learning from criminal family members and criminals, towards creating the “normal person”, a “citizen” with values supporting society (Brockway 1910; Winslow 1912), yet researchers also understood the weakness of the way success rates were measured (Kavanagh 1921; Tibbitts 1933).

The trend reached its high-water mark in the 1950s (Garland 2001). The larger field of rehabilitation and encouraging desistance (the cessation of offending or other antisocial behaviour) is a field with long traditions, although there was a period when related programmes were seen as inefficient by criminologists in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Cullen 2013; Halleck and Witte Ann 1977; Serrill 1975). Notable relevant experiences and indeed research were also gathered from the re-education programmes targeting National Socialists (Nazis), both as prisoners of war during World War II as well as in post-war Europe. Anti-cult programmes, programmes targeting criminal offenders and gang members, as well as the anti-right-wing programmes of the 1980s and 1990s clearly have influenced today’s deradicalisation and disengagement programmes. Although not applying the term “deradicalisation” and limiting the use of the term “disengagement”, “exit” programmes targeting right-wing groups were prevalent in the late 1990s, and lessons and concepts from these programmes were directly incorporated into the deradicalisation and disengagement programmes of today; indeed, some of the practitioners are the same. Indeed, all of the genres that deradicalisation and disengagement draw upon share some of the characteristics of the discussion of disengagement and deradicalisation, including disagreements about conceptualisations, discussions of the use and abuse of power and force, and discussions (in the fields of re-education, anti-cult work and programmes targeting right-wing organisations only) of the importance of change of ideology vs. change of behaviour.

Yet there are also noticeable problems with these genres that mirror gaps in today’s discussions, such as the western and Middle Eastern, and limited South East Asian focus of the research, and lack of focus on the paradoxes of the situations where groups that are to be deradicalised actually are drawn into power-sharing agreements to create peace, such as, for example, Latin American cases (see Chapter 24), and in cases where radicals actually control territories (see Chapter 7).

The interaction between politics and disengagement/deradicalisation has also often been avoided in discussions, yet this was a vital factor in ending re-education of Nazis after World War II, and today deradicalisation and disengagement face the challenges of being implemented for political purposes by totalitarian countries. The practices and discussions of these previous attempts at “re-education”, “deprogramming”, “rehabilitation”, creating “desistance” and facilitating “exit” all hold important practical lessons for today, with practical techniques as well as theoretical discussions of use for present-day practitioners.

This chapter will start with the “re-education” programmes targeting Nazis, and subsequently present “deprogramming” from cults, the history behind changes in thinking around desistance and rehabilitation of criminals and facilitating exit in right-wing groups, following the chronological order of when these fields were established, and the most important discussions within them.
Re-educating Nazis

During World War II and after, various allied countries and new regimes in the old axis countries engaged in re-educating Nazis. The target here was to both change an ideological world view (which was seen as dangerous in itself, also leading to racist behaviour that was not necessarily illegal) and a tendency to political violence. At first these programmes targeted prisoners of war. The army psychological warfare units were initially ascribed a great deal of the responsibility for what was to be defined as re-education (Hartenian 1987). Yet, there was scepticism towards re-education programmes, with the sceptics often assuming that the Nazi defeat in World War II and the punishment of Nazi leaders would be all that was needed to destabilise the ideology.

How did these efforts work? The American “idea factory” at Fort Kearney, for example, conducted “training of trainers” targeting oppositional German prisoners, already sceptical about the Nazi ideology, into producing a wider prisoner-of-war newspaper called Der Ruf (The Call), to be distributed to the wider prisoner-of-war population (Kandarian 2016). Yet the US had problems with identifying Nazi hard-line entrepreneurs in their prisoner camps, and at the start of the war some of these elements thwarted de-ideologisation, and were able to use cohesion to maintain the Nazis worldwide even in the camps (Bernard, O’Connell, Thurston, Villamizar, Loredo, Sullivan and Goulka 2011). In one sense, the US touched upon one of the neglected elements in present-day deradicalisation and disengagement studies, namely how counter-measures and organisational disciplinary mechanisms on behalf of extremists influence deradicalisation and disengagement work, as discussed by Hansen in this volume. The Americans learned to dismantle disciplinary structures by removing individuals deemed to be essential for maintaining them, a lesson that interestingly had to be relearned during the American deradicalisation and disengagement efforts in Camp Bucca in Iraq 70 years later. They discovered that such individuals should be separated from the prisoners.

The Soviets, on the other hand, attempted to use the German command hierarchy identifying older officers with anti-Nazi sympathies who held authority but at the same time were willing to counter the Nazi intelligence. The latter also set up ideologically focused Antifa (anti-fascist) classes. The Soviet approach was different in the sense that their programmes also educated cadres intended to be future leaders in a post-war Germany; this elite was intended to become a bulwark against fascist ideology, but also a future governing elite of Soviet-led Eastern Europe, as a cadre replacing Nazism with communism. Indeed, parts of the American re-education programme were impossible for the Soviets to adapt, as it would undermine their own ideology, such as the American emphasis on democracy training (ibid. 12).

The UK differed from the two other allies, in the sense that a lot of the responsibility for re-education was put on a civilian institution, the Political Intelligence department of the Foreign Office (Staff writer 1946). The British methods consisted of lectures, discussions, instructional films, books and newspapers. It is important to note that the British, as well as the Americans, attempted to stress collective guilt on behalf of Nazi Germany; a vital element was to highlight German violations of human rights. Indeed, later all three allies were to attempt this approach, to develop a German sense of collective responsibility through guilt, even at a collective national level (Janowitz 1946).

Peace led to change, and re-education had to be combined with the day-to-day workings of occupation. The new institutions thus emphasised cold and orderly governance, and stressed that propaganda should be based on the truth, yet a collective guilt was attempted to be induced (Hartenian 1987). The US emphasised a holistic approach: it was the whole
of their sector of Germany that was to be re-educated, yet in one sense the “collective guilt” approach contradicted a “cadre” approach focusing on individual allies amongst the German population, and the latter, in the interest of the ease of governing the occupied zone, was prioritised. Pragmatism, and the new world setting, the onslaught of the cold war, sabotaged US, Soviet and UK efforts at re-education; several former Nazis were incorporated in intelligence services, in governance and inside research; punishment become more lenient; the re-education programmes faltered, the US and Soviet zones gained more self-determination; and less importance was put on re-education. There are many signs that re-education had problems, as relatively extreme attitudes were maintained by many in the war generation, and the real change occurred when a new generation started to probe into what happened during World War II.

Re-education illustrates how political pragmatism might influence deradicalisation and disengagement today, because it shows how politics and opportunism play into such programmes in situations where former enemies are to be incorporated into new political arrangements (such as, for example, right-wing groups in Latin America, or indeed the Taliban in Afghanistan), and how a totalitarian regime has limited its repertoire in deradicalisation and disengagement work. Yet the lessons from “re-education” have tended to be lost in disengagement and deradicalisation programmes today, while there is a direct intellectual link to the criminal rehabilitation discussions going back more than a century.

**Deprogramming cult members**

From the late 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, there was a growth of alternative religious groups in the west. Smaller religious societies emerged, and in some cases non-western religions established themselves in the west (Robbins 1988; Thomas 2005). Some of these new religious groups were in many cases seen as isolating new group members from the outside world. In some cases the new groups were taking economic advantage of recruits and behaved in an authoritarian way – activities that spurred both private groups and various governments to develop anti-cult programmes. “Deprogramming” was put on the agenda (see, for example, Bainbridge 1978; Balch 1980; Damrell 1977; Festinger, Riecken and Schachter 1956; Keiser and Keiser 1987; Lewis 2012). Cult membership was defined as a problem to the extent that the American Psychiatric Association (2000) defined the “disorder” as a phenomenon “that may occur in individuals who have been subjected to periods of prolonged and intense persuasion (e.g., brainwashing, thought reform, or indoctrination)”. Yet, while psychiatrists viewed the problem as therapeutic and individual, sociologists tended to view the problem as a product of small-group dynamics (Lewis 2012: 163–164), and that the loyalties created through personal bonding were an obstacle to deprogramming.

Some of the deprogramming efforts drew on the works of Berger and Luckman (1966), seeing “deprogramming” as a social (re-)construction of subjective reality, questioning the plausibility structure of cult programming. Another popular model was Scheins’ (1961) deepening of Lewin’s (1951) concepts of unfreezing, changing and freezing concepts. Unfreezing meant the induction of a need or a motive to change; changing meant:

influence of information, arguments, models to be imitated or identified with, etc., which provide a direction of change toward a new equilibrium, usually by allowing
the person to learn something new, redefine something old, re-evaluate or re-integrate other parts of his personality or belief system.

Changing meant integration of the new framework into the person’s beliefs and practices, and freezing meant entrenching these. The idea was to contest the plausibility structure of the cult’s ideology. The ideology’s credible views of reality were to be challenged with “conversation fabric” and moral community through which a legitimating apparatus for the whole sequence of transformation is provided (Berger and Luckman 1966). Authors such as Wright (Wright 1988; Kim 1979, 201) suggested that this could be done through:

1. a breakdown in members’ insulation from the outside world;
2. unregulated development of dyadic relationships within the communal context;
3. highlighting the lack of success in achieving world transformation by the cult; and
4. highlighting inconsistencies between the actions of leaders and the ideals they symbolically represent.

In practical deprogramming this meant that programmes attempted to cause: (1) a breakdown in insulation from the outside world (by physically removing the member from her or his cult group); (2) a highlighting of the inconsistencies between group ideals and the actions of leaders; (3) the increased pull of family ties; (4) the presentation of an alternative belief system; (5) pointing out internal inconsistencies within the group’s belief system (as differentiated from inconsistencies between ideals and practices); and (6) offering an alternative explanation for the individual’s recruitment and membership – the exploitation/mind control ideology. Techniques mirrored the World War II era re-education, focusing on truth and rational argumentation, but also included isolation and sleep deprivation; physical discomfort and insults were a crucial part of most of these efforts; as were to a certain extent “brainwashing” techniques, although the latter were contested and alternative deprogramming techniques were developed. It should be noted that some of these theories, including the theories of Wright, who actually was one of the first to conceptualise disengagement, and sketched out theories of sequential withdrawal from cults, were to have a direct influence on both exit programmes for neo-Nazis and future deradicalisation and disengagement programmes for jihadists, for example through the works of Tore Bjørgo (Bjørgo and Horgan 2008, 6).

Deprogramming quickly became a lucrative business. Perhaps it was the profitability of the “business” that drove actors within the “business” to increase their scope, and define the churches and faith society to be targeted under the wider deprogramming agendas, including socialists and the Episcopal Church, as the scope expanded. The underlying problem was the definition of what was “normal”, what was the type of mind-set expected to be held, and the definitions of “normality” increasingly varied. In one sense “deprogramming” also held many important lessons for disengagement and deradicalisation; firstly, the perennial question of what a “radical” mind-set is, and how there is a thin line between deradicalisation and brainwashing for political purposes, and secondly, what commercial pressure and commercial interests can potentially do to deradicalisation and disengagement programmes and their scope.

Evaluations also found other faults with deprogramming programmes. Richardson and Kilbourne (1983) criticised the simplified assumption that deception by necessity was a vital strategy for cult leaders and the assumption that cult members lacked free will, as well as the inherent sampling bias created by an over-reliance upon the accounts of former, possibly
disgruntled cult members. Systemic evaluations also illuminated problems that today are mirrored in deradicalisation and disengagement programmes. Byong-suh Kim (1979) suggested that anger was felt by the participants even when they left deprogramming, partly after the use of force. Several evaluations also suggested that deprogramming seems to be much more effective at desocialisation (disrupting the old plausibility structure) than it is at resocialisation (providing a new system of meaning and attachments).

As the programmes expanded, several anti-cult “parent power” groups were established, beginning in local communities and spreading nationally and internationally. Mental health professionals became increasingly involved, as did lawyers; the toolbox was also enlarged, expanding from only focusing on traditional coercive deprogramming through “kidnapping” to rehabilitation (in “half-way house” settings where individuals had to come of their own free will) and overt and/or covert non-coercive “exit counselling” (Lewis 1986). The term “exit counselling” gained popularity and was later to emerge as an important concept in deradicalisation and disengagement (Crawford 1984, 1–7; Hassan 1990). In this sense there is a direct historical connection and continuity between the deprogramming efforts and current-day deradicalisation and disengagement programmes. Yet the kidnapping technique (which many deprogramming programmes did not practise) and the problems of establishing the success criteria for programmes encouraging voluntary defection all contributed to harsh critiques being raised against deprogramming in the 1970s and early 1980s.

Rehabilitation, desistance and anti-gang work

The criticism against deprogramming was mirrored by a general criticism of rehabilitation as a toolkit to prevent criminals from reoffending in the 1970s and 1980s, after several studies found such programmes to be inefficient (Lipton, Martinson and Wilks 1975; Martinson 1974). Several studies found no or little effect of these programmes (Martinson 1974). The research was in hindsight criticised for being based on meta-studies, that often were based poor quality non-random-sampled research, equalling them with random-sampled research drawing upon more rigorous research designs (Davis, Steele, Bozick, Williams, Turner, Miles, Saunders and Steinberg 2014). The new trend coincided with a political trend that focused on deterrence rather than rehabilitation, and with sociological theories pointing to the role of society over individuals in causing crime (Mullins 2010, 176). Yet, there were rehabilitation programmes that survived, and gang-related programmes continued.

Rehabilitation studies again gained in popularity by the 1990s. Many researchers saw changes in age cohorts as the most efficient way of preventing re-entrance into crime, a variable beyond rehabilitation programmes (Matza 1967). Others discouraged the view that the choice between crime and not offending was a binary choice, viewing desistance (the cessation of offending or other antisocial behaviour, although the precise definition is contested) as a long and complex non-linear process, similar to deradicalisation, but with former offenders at times reoffending while involved in the process (Farrall and Bowling 1999; Maruna 2001; Shadd and Farrall 2004; Sampson and Laub 1993; Warr 1998). Criminologists also discovered some of these effects, as the life cycle effect varied between types of criminals defined according to their type of criminal activity (Farrington 1986; Hirschi and Gottfredson 1983). Matza (1967) introduced the concept of drift to stipulate how individuals could drift in and out of crime, rather than leave crime forever. A general finding was that, while factors such as marriage (although the influence of marriage was seen as depending on the strength of the emotional bond created by marriage), education and even military training were related to reducing crime, these factors varied according to individual psychological

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traits, as well as the category of crime committed. Sampson and Laub (1993), suggested that strong social bonds in the form of employment, marriage, and so on, created bonds that prevented individuals from reoffending. Maruna (2001) focused on creating an enhanced reflective thought process amongst offenders, in addition to realistic opportunities; later McNeill, Farrall, Lightowler and Maruna (2012) expanded on this argument, stressing the difference between *primary desistance*, meaning a lull or crime-free gap in a criminal career, and *secondary desistance*, meaning a change in the way that an ex-offender sees him- or herself. Essentially, secondary desistance is about ceasing to see oneself as an offender and finding a more positive identity; it is about successfully changing identity and deconstructing the criminal label; in this sense the emphasis was put on self-reflection.

Later Don, Bonta and Wormith (2006) developed the principles of “risk”, “need” and “responsivity”, where service provision increases as estimates of the individual risk of reoffending increase, indeed suggesting that the targeting of high-risk reoffenders actually led to larger reductions in recidivism. The need principle states that interventions must target “criminogenic needs”, focusing on variables such as offence history, antisocial personality traits (such as impulsivity and aggressiveness), pro-criminal attitudes, social environment, substance abuse, school or work life. Social learning was encouraged, tailored to suit individual offender characteristics. In this sense it was suggested that there was no such thing as “one size fits all”. Yet, there was a general confirmation that one of the tools that had been employed over a long period of time (Hazard 1940; Nolan 1955; Seeman 1963), education (both academic and vocational), was of major importance, with studies finding up to 43% lower odds of recidivism (Davis, Steele, Bozick, Williams, Turner, Miles, Saunders and Steinberg 2014, 14).

Some of the findings from the study of rehabilitation and desistance from crime have also been found and led to implementation techniques for programmes designed to get gang members to leave criminal gangs. Gang membership usually had a shorter duration than the average time a person was doing crime (Thornberry 1998). Research also suggested that the reasons for leaving youth gangs were positively influenced by social bonds, such as emotional ties with outsider peers, family or friends (Bartolomé-Gutiérrez and Rechea-Alberola 2006; Vigil 1988). Work on youth gangs also illustrated that violence could lead to defections, but that social stigmatisation of a gang actually served to keep the group together (Hastings, Dunbar and Bania 2011).

S. Tonks and Z. Stephenson’s meta-study (Tonks and Stephenson 2018), studying the wider field of gang studies, suggested that *victimisation* (friends who were injured, personal injuries, fear of future violence from the gang), *disillusionment* (often arising from the lack of loyalty to an individual demonstrated by a gang), *maturation* (life cycle-focused), *physical removal* and *self-reflection* were the most important factors creating defections. Yet, other writers such as Klein (1995) suggested that many failures in anti-gang programmes often were caused by lack of attention and understanding of the group dynamics within the gang, indicating that strategies causing defection needed to take this into account.

Anti-gang projects to encourage defections from gangs were developed, and focused on physical forms of support, such as finding a safe place to go, and providing education, training, job opportunities and peer mentoring or addressing social determinants of health. Psychological counselling, cognitive-behavioural development and suppressive methods (e.g. arrest, incarceration) are widely used by such gang-focused programmes today (Hastings, Dunbar and Bania 2011, 9). Several of these anti-crime and anti-gang procedures are directly incorporated in today’s deradicalisation programmes. Importantly, some of these models, such as the Danish Aarhus model, building upon cooperation between schools,
social services and police, date back to the 1980s (Koehler 2016, 150), with their roots in crime prevention, today the Aarhus model, or important elements of it, form the foundation of many deradicalisation and disengagement efforts in Scandinavia (see Chapter 18). Notably, crime prevention efforts did not include ideological components, since crime often was seen as driven by the desire for profit rather than ideology; several of the programmes did however encourage self-reflection over individual identity and the individual’s position in life.

**Dissociati, “the third wave” and “social reinsertion”**

By the mid-1970s and 1980s several researchers also began to focus more explicitly on terrorism, in many cases studying how the organisations that had made up what Rapoport (2002) had branded the third wave of terrorism had met their end. In Ireland, the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation was founded in 1974, supporting dialogue between victims and former perpetrators in Ireland for peace and reconciliation purposes, but also becoming an element in a wider focus of restorative and retributive justice. Some claimed that it had a deradicalising effect, whereas others saw it as a vessel to promote Irish Republican Army (IRA) influence, through its use of IRA members (Alonso and Bada 2016, 984).

Italy launched pentiti (penitent) laws, reducing punishment for prisoners who turned state witnesses, and created a new category of dissociati (disassociated) prisoners, who cooperated with criminal investigations and showed regret, but were not expected to testify; this created defections from the Brigata Rosso (Red Brigade) (Geipel 2007, 448). Donatella Della Porta (1992) studied the Italian Government’s strategies of dissociati scheme, interestingly initiated by prisoners, and formalised in 1987.

In Spain “social reinsertion” policy was first introduced from 1982, when the ETA Político-Militar (ETA-PM) split into two factions, with one advocating non-violence while the other promoted a continuation of the terrorist campaign. Prisoners who identified with the non-violent faction could apply through the courts for early release if violence was publicly renounced, links with ETA were severed, a declaration of respect for the law was signed and there was a recognition of the misery caused. The conditions were met by signing a legal document (Silke 2011). The Spanish social reinserter programme was relatively successful, with Geipel (2007, 451) assessing that more than 300 individuals were released and reinserted into society – none rejoined ETA. Inside prisons Spain developed their own tactics. Spanish authorities split up the prisoners from ETA so that they avoided the build-up of ETA’s organisational hierarchies within prison that could pressurise individual ETA prisoners not to disassociate themselves from the organisation (Alonso 2011, 701). Interestingly, the active use of organisational cells to counter disengagement efforts within prison, even to run units outside prison, had been attempted by the German Rote Arme Faction (Red Army Faction) in the 1970s (Geipel 2007, 457), and Spain actively hindered such attempts. Yet, outside events, such as internal discord over the killings of civilians, and organisational discussions over the use of violence, also contributed to a more general organisational transformation (Ibid). Notably ETA also tried to take hostages to influence Spanish state prison politics, without success, and also, more successfully, attempted to put social pressure on the families of ETA prisoners, illustrating how an actor actually attempts to influence and interact with the deradicalisation policies targeting it (Alonso 2011, 701–702).6

A common theme for many of the attempts to counter the “third wave” of terrorist organisations was a mix of stick and carrot, an emphasis on programmes to create disengagement in combination with deterrence and punishment, and the more lenient policies of the
early 1970s hardened as time passed. Importantly, the social reintegration programmes of the third wave live on, for example in Sri Lanka’s attempt to reintegrate the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Kruglanski, Gelfand, Bélanger, Gunaratna and Hettiarachchi 2014), and there is direct continuity to today’s deradicalisation and disengagement programmes, as some of the institutions and individuals involved in the third-wave efforts are involved in deradicalisation and disengagement programmes today.

Yet the word deradicalisation was not used for projects dealing with the third-wave terrorist groups, and many of the European programmes dealt with groups in decline. Nor was the focus mainly on strategies to get individuals to leave these groups; academic work studying the end of third-wave terror groups mirrored this tendency (see, for example, Crenshaw 1991; Ross and Gurr 1989). This type of research seldom drew upon the wider fields of rehabilitation and desistance studies.

**Exit and disengagement from neo-Nazi and right-wing groups**

However, the increased studies of defections from neo-Nazi groups did draw upon ideas from rehabilitation and desistance research. Central to these developments was the emergence of exit counselling for neo-Nazis, to reduce recruitment and facilitate disengagement. Initially, cooperation between researchers and practitioners was close, and the anti-cult literature and anti-cult disengagement practices had influence, for example in the Swedish organisation Fri (Free) (Bjørgo 1997, 238). Some of the models from anti-cult work, mostly not focusing directly on deprogramming and the use of force, but rather on exit and exit counselling, were developed further by researchers such as Tore Bjørgo, based on the work of anti-cult experts suggesting that many members of right-wing organisations did not join because of ideology, but from provocation and anger, the need for protection, drifting (changing groups at random) and pure thrill seeking, as a substitute father figure, because of friends, as a type of youth rebellion and for status (ibid.). Reasons for exiting included losing faith in the ideology, losing status, becoming dissatisfied with the activities of the group (often because of partying), burn-out, getting older and limited career prospects.

However, the most important contribution of Bjørgo was perhaps his work inspired by Helmut Willems’ classic division of perpetrators of xenophobic violence into four categories: ideologically motivated right-wing extremists; xenophobic ethnocentrists; criminalised and marginalised youth; and followers (ibid. 48–50; Willems 1993, 1995). Bjørgo suggests that in these types the ideologically motivated right-wing extremist and the xenophobic ethnocentrist are less categorised by weak socioeconomic variables and family relations, and the first category is more ideologically motivated than the others.

Interestingly, Petter Nesser follows similar ideas (2015), launching his categories as *entrepreneurs*, *protégés*, *misfits* and *drifters*, illustrating the potential similarities between right-wing and jihadist structures. This categorisation had potentially great therapeutic consequences for potential deradicalisation attempts. Different elements of typical programmes simply fit different types of perpetrators differently, for example, with ideology being less important to *followers*. Importantly, Bjørgo advocated that the ideal types are distributed unevenly between various right-wing groups, and that they need different treatment.

The Norwegian exit programme highlighted the importance of parental networks, reinforcing parental efforts to create exit and to set borders. The strongest aspects of the Norwegian approach were probably that exit activities became integrated into the normal activities of established public agencies, such as municipalities; to some extent it drew on previous crime prevention experiences (Bjørgo, Halhjem and Knudstad 2001). The Swedish
programme, started in 1998 by former neo-Nazi Kent Lindhal, was mostly staffed by former participants in the neo-Nazi or White Power movement. In some cases, as with the youth house Fryshuset in Stockholm, the exit programme drew on older youth organisations as well (Christensen 2015, 101). The Swedish programme was reactive in the sense that former neo-Nazis who wanted out needed to make contact with the programme to be included. In all of these programmes the focus was on disengagement, focusing on individuals already in an extremist organisation, and on behavioural change rather than ideological change. It was often assumed that neo-Nazis had joined because of reasons other than ideology and that ideology was acquired after joining the group, and in some cases because of the habitual implementation of rehabilitation and desistance techniques adopted from criminology and crime prevention programmes. There is also a direct link to present-day deradicalisation and disengagement programmes, from exit programmes, with Germany’s Hayat programme being based on experiences gained from EXIT-Deutschland, a deradicalisation programme focusing on deradicalising neo-Nazis (Koehler 2016, 185).

Enter “deradicalisation”

While present-day practitioners in deradicalisation and disengagement would nod in recognition to terms such as “exit”, “exit counselling” and “disengagement”, the word “deradicalisation” was not used. The term “radicalisation” has only relatively (Sedgwick 2010) recently, post-11 September 2001, entered the mainstream political and scientific debate. Early attempts to do what we today call “deradicalisation” of jihadists were attempted in Yemen, which initiated religious dialogue with its returning foreign fighters through the Committee for Religious Dialogue in September 2002 (Willems 2004). In August 2003 Singapore acted, through their government Religious Rehabilitation Group from 2002, focusing on religious dialogue and counselling (Hassan 2007). In Saudi Arabia, their rehabilitation and demobilisation campaign started in 2004 after the 2003 domestic terrorist attacks (Boucek 2008), while Indonesia started their religious dialogue programmes from 2005, one of which was based on former jihadist instructors (Schulze 2008). Yet, none of these early programmes were branded “deradicalisation” or “disengagement”. In 2006 the Americans launched their Detainee Rehabilitation Program in their Iraqi prisons, designed by several experts (one of whom has written a chapter in this book), containing, amongst other elements, psychological counselling.

“Deradicalisation” was also used by the EU. The EU’s countering violent extremism framework was initially concerned with “radicalisation and recruitment”, developed by the EU Council’s Working Group on Terrorism in September 2005. However, the EU framework illustrates a wider problem with deradicalisation: the lack of proper conceptualisation. “Radicalisation” was not explicitly defined; it is described as the “practical steps an individual must take to become involved in terrorism” (European Union strategy for combating radicalisation and recruitment, 2005). In 2009 Germany launched their AG Deradikalisierung that also included subgroups working on countering violent extremism (focused on counter-narratives) (Endres 2014, 4). As more deradicalisation programmes started to emerge, on a relatively larger scale around 2011-2015, these programmes often contained elements from earlier crime prevention programmes and exit programmes, as well as often bringing elements from deprogramming. Several explicit attempts were introduced to strengthen the family as an alternative social bond. Germany pioneered family support as part of their counter-radicalisation strategy when they launched their family hotline in 2012 (Gielen 2015, 21–48), set up by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF).
In the footsteps of the expansion, discussions over how to measure success followed (Feddes and Gallucci 2015). Yet, as illustrated by Elshimi in this book (Chapter 17), the exact meaning of “deradicalisation” was not fully resolved, and even within various programmes the meaning changed over time, and was filled with new context. The discussion over the difference between “deradicalisation” and “disengagement”, with some researchers arguing for the merits of the latter and that the former should no longer be used (Bjørgo and Horgan 2008), also stirred up debate, although often not directly influencing practitioners. Some researchers, like Borum (2012), wanted to abandon the concept of radicalisation entirely, removing the usefulness of deradicalisation as an antonym.

**Lessons forgotten and topics neglected?**

There are lessons neglected, links neglected and gaps in knowledge identified by a study of the historic past of deradicalisation and disengagement programmes. Yet, the history of the wider fields relevant for disengagement and deradicalisation can give us clues as to the relevant dynamics, and the lessons that researchers and practitioners drew from these in the past. Ongoing discussions over conceptual clarity mirror similar discussions in the past. As was the case with many of the discussions in the past, these discussions will often not be settled fully, but contribute to increased understanding of the field. Operationalisation and the measurement of success, with classical criminology preferring to follow individuals for long periods of time (resource demanding), and changes in the estimates of how successful rehabilitation was, for example, suggest that caution is needed when trying to establish success rates of deradicalisation and disengagement programmes, and how studies over longer periods of time perhaps are needed to correctly assess such rates. Indeed, many of these debates have actually been ongoing within relevant subfields for more than 100 years. The paradox is perhaps that the wish for rapid progress and the sense of urgency hinder such studies; one wishes for success, and in some cases for support for new programmes.

The history of the wider field also illustrates how deradicalisation and disengagement could be politicised. There is a balance between a focus on ideology and faith in contrast to just changing behaviour, but perhaps also how this can and should vary according to the group dynamics and composition of the group from which individuals are to be deradicalised/disengaged. The de-nazification experience also suggests that deradicalisation and disengagement have to take into account the opposing command hierarchy and structures that can be used to sabotage such efforts, themes dealt with by Hansen in this book, also suggested by Spanish experiences in the 1980s, and lessons learned from other more recent efforts.

It could be argued that there are differences between present-day deradicalisation/disengagement and several of these fields, for example between criminal rehabilitation and disengagement from jihadist groups, where participation in criminal activities does not need ideological conviction. It should be remembered that programmes that contained self-reflection and reflection on identity were an important part of rehabilitation and desistance work, and that not all jihadists or neo-Nazis are driven by ideological conviction. Moreover, as argued by Mullins (2010), many of the jihadists of today are increasingly becoming similar in profile to many of the criminal profiles targeted for rehabilitation in the past, with a general tendency towards developing from cadre-based entities to a broader recruitment pattern.
It could be argued that perhaps the major lesson from the field is that internal group dynamics and personal traits vary, and that techniques to bring about disengagement and deradicalisation have to vary. There simply is no “one size fits all”. Yet, the history of the wider field illustrates some gaps in the discussions and some tendencies towards “one size fits all” discussions. One such weakness is the sole focus on western states and the lack of incorporation of lessons learned and understanding of local dynamics. Outside South East Asia, the Middle East, Europe and North America, this book attempts to address this by including the chapters of Zeuthen, Botha, Chindea, Diallo, Nawab and Singh on various regions and states around the world. A second weakness is perhaps the lack of focus on the role to be played by regional and global organisations, as addressed by Léonard, Kaunert and Yakubov, Botha and Schindler in this volume.

Notes
1 The watershed for the introduction of the rehabilitation principle was the so-called “Declaration of Principles” promulgated by the 1870 Congress of the National Prison Association.
2 In the end the Americans also emphasised cadre training, but only from 1945 onwards.
3 The reluctance towards “deprogramming” seemingly was greater in the United States than in Europe, highlighting a larger continental European will to define religious groups as inciting problematic behaviour (Robbins 2001).
4 The definition of “gangs” did however create controversy (see Ball and Curry 1995; Brown 2000; Gordon 2000; Hallsworth and Young 2004).
5 Indeed, some theorists (such as Tore Bjørgo) have been active within both fields.
6 In 2007 Spain launched another scheme, the “Nanclares scheme”, encouraging ETA prisoners to disengage themselves from the organisation in return for prison privileges, including early and temporary release (Alonso and Bada 2016, 987).
7 Ag Deradikaliserung was a part of the “Joint Counter-Terrorism Center” (GTAZ) in Berlin. The GTAZ itself had been set up in 2004 as a coordination and cooperation body for the German agencies and institutions involved in counterterrorism efforts. See Said and Fouad (2018).

References


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