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Stig Jarle Hansen, Stian Lid

Deradicalization or DDR?

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Stig Jarle Hansen
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The deradicalization and disengagement literature has to date tended to focus on disrupting the mechanisms that create loyalty to a small group and how to counter these (Horgan 2005; Sageman 2008; Bjørgo 2009; Noricks 2009; Barrelle 2015; Hwang 2015; Nesser 2015; Horgan, Altier, Shortland and Taylor 2017; Kruglanski, Jasko, Chernikova, Dugas and Webber 2017). In large part, these discussions have focused on situations where adherents were organized in small groups, rather than being a part of a wider and stronger organization. Moreover, these small groups were operating in a state with functioning institutions focusing on identifying, arresting and/or deradicalizing/disengaging those radicalized individuals (Hansen 2017). Al Qaeda’s attack on 11 September 2001 had set the focus on militant religiously inspired organizations and loose networks; future religiously inspired radicalism was seen by some as leaderless networks, by others as clandestine networks implementing terror (Sageman 2004, 2008). The territorial expansion of the Islamic State in many ways contributed to a change in the focus on jihadist organizations as clandestine illegal networks, as the wider field re-discovered that jihadist organizations could establish forms of territorial control, extraction and discipline mechanisms that go together with such control (Lia 2015; Hansen 2019).

Yet, this was not a new situation. Territorial control had been pioneered by organizations such as Harakat Al Shabaab (Hansen 2013) and the Taliban (Giustozzi 2009); these developments had to a certain extent been neglected in the deradicalization literature. Within the deradicalization and disengagement literature, right-wing groups are also generally seen as existing as public organizations facing a relatively hostile state in a society where the police in general can maintain law and order (Bjørgo 1995; Kaplan and Bjørgo 1998; Bjørgo and Carlsson 1999; Harris, Gringart and Drake 2018). Tentatively, they were seen as criminal clandestine networks, existing in hiding from state institutions that could prosecute, arrest and indeed deradicalize them (Goldwag 2012; Piazza 2015; Altier, Boyle, Shortland and Horgan 2017). However, as illustrated by Irina A. Chindea in this volume (see Chapter 24), Latin America clearly has right-wing groups de facto controlling territory and implementing violence as a tool of the state they exist in, sometimes supported by the state. Hof (2017)
illustrates the possible instrumental use of right-wing groups in Western Europe, and the conflict in Ukraine has put the spotlight on far-right militias, such as the Azov Battalion, which exists as militias, fighting conventional battles, with considerable independence from the Ukrainian state, sometimes protected by elements within the latter.

The cases described above present variations in the fundamental relationship of the organization/network from which an individual is to be deradicalized, and their territorial control, subsequently presenting a fundamental problem for deradicalization and disengagement efforts. A clandestine network of violent right-wingers operating in a hostile state is an entirely different type of challenge than deradicalizing from a right-wing militia, for example, supported by a government, or a right-wing organization controlling territory. In the case of Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Ukraine and others, deradicalization and disengagement had to take place in a conflict, or at best, a post-conflict setting, at worst dealing with large enclaves where a radical organization controls and governs territory. When a radical organization controls territory it has an entirely different repertoire of tools to hinder defections and prevent deradicalization, including the effects of having potentially stronger organization and a new set of income-generating possibilities, and a greater ability to sanction against enemies in the territory they control.

This chapter takes Koehler’s definition of radicalization as depluralization, presented in this book as a point of departure, and sees deradicalization as a process of individual repluralization of political concepts and values (e.g. justice, freedom, honour, violence, democracy) on the one hand and a decrease in urgency to act (violently) against a framed problem on the other. In this sense the chapter will focus on both a wider idea of deradicalization that aims to change both perceptions of the world and violent behaviour, as well as a narrower one, that focuses only on disengaging from violent behaviour. The latter focus becomes important for the many recruits who join a radical movement for instrumental reasons, profit and so on, rather than ideological reasons and, as will be argued later in this chapter, these causes become more important as territorial control expands.

The aim of the chapter is to analyse how variations in territorial control influence the strategies that may be applied to deradicalize or disengage individuals. Such strategies have in the past been branded as activities other than deradicalization, as ‘reintegration’, ‘re-education’, ‘desistance’ (primary, secondary and tertiary), ‘disaffiliation’ and ‘debiasing’. The process can be voluntary or involuntary; permanent or temporary; individual or collective and might be implemented by different actors (as described in the Introduction), security forces, police forces, non-governmental organizations (NGOs; including religious ones) and even individuals, yet the efficiency of the varying categories of implementers may vary according to variations in territorial control. If an extremist organization controls territory, regular police, for example, will be denied access; if the territories are fought over, NGOs engaged in deradicalization may be vanquished in military campaigns. This means that deradicalization can be quite different in a country that maintains territorial control, such as most Western European countries, compared to war zones such as Syria, Libya and Iraq.

Variations in territorial control have indirectly been explored in contexts related to deradicalization before; for example, cases where armed contestation of territories appears in the form of war or insurgency. For deradicalization and disengagement work in post-conflict and conflict scenarios, it could be argued that one might draw on previous work on demobilizing combatants. Disengagement from insurgents in armed conflict had been a part of the agenda for international actors for years, through so-called disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes. Traditionally, DDR was seen as attempts to integrate former combatants in civil wars into society in a post-conflict situation. Initially, DDR was implemented
after a peace agreement. ‘Reinsertion’ into the community was one of the major goals, sometimes in connection with United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations. In order to achieve this, transitional assistance was first offered, including cash payments, in-kind assistance (goods and services) and vocational training (Hanson 2007). The amplified focus on violent Islamists and conflicts such as in northeastern Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen increasingly also meant that there has been pressure to include a disengagement-deradicalization component. Notably writers such as Schmid (2013) and Moghaddam (2009) have defined parts of the DDR agenda as potential components in a deradicalization programme. Cockayne and O’Neil (2015, p. 8) suggested employing the term ‘demobilization and disengagement of violent extremists’ (DDVE). In many countries, the main effort against extreme groups takes the form of deradicalization components within wider DDR programmes, as illustrated by Botha’s and Chindea’s chapters in this volume (see Chapters 15 and 24).

Such a hybrid approach to deradicalization does, as the writers suggest, have the same problems as previous DDR programmes. According to Bhandari (2014), security sector reform often hinders DDR. First, DDR can be hampered by the lack of inclusion of oppositional forces in the armed forces, a problem that may increase if the organization from which those individuals to be included come is defined as extremist internationally. The DDR discussion is valuable, highlighting very important issues, such as the need for base-line economic research. Other problems that have been identified include work programmes training combatants for the ‘wrong’ types of civilian work, i.e. training for work that does not exist in the area. Additionally, economic advantages might create envy or ‘fake’ combatants who attempt to register for demobilization just to gain advantage. Other problems include lack of stable funding, the lack of a cross-border mechanism to handle militias that transcend borders, as well as a focus on output (demobilized militias) rather than outcome (how the combatants fare after the programme). Daniel Koehler (2016, p. 41) also highlights problems encountered with the cantonment of soldiers to be demobilized, how to measure the success of the programme and a lack of focus on females in these programmes.

Criticism of how DDR actually (mis)functions in a conflict zone was also raised. DDR was originally intended for a post-conflict scenario, and DDR during a conflict entails demobilizing soldiers who are still very much needed for the parties to win a war, and who may be a threat to the opposing side even when demobilized, and thus might face sanctions. The latter type of criticism perhaps illustrates that DDR also becomes strained when the nature of the organization from which individuals are to be demobilized changes. Through the 1990s, the post-conflict focus changed, and DDR was increasingly implemented when armed conflicts were still ongoing. Basically, the organization you were to be deradicalized from changed from an organization that was part of a peace process to an organization engaged in warfare, at times with territorial control, at times hostile to the entity doing DDR (Idris 2016; Richards 2017). Today, UN operations with DDR elements increasingly take place in situations in which one of the belligerents is seen as a spoiler and viewed with hostility by the DDR implementers. The DDR literature is thus valuable for organizations and governments doing deradicalization in conflict zones, as it increasingly has dealt with problems concerning territorial control. DDR has increasingly moved away from an activity you implement after peace, and where the implementer is neutral, to an activity that you do in war time, and where the UN is hostile towards a party involved in a conflict, often against local jihadist groups.

Notably, several of the discussions ongoing in the areas of countering violent extremism and deradicalization, including discussion on the need to change belief vs. the need to
change only patterns of violent action, have not yet been touched upon in the DDR literature, which can draw more on the countering violent extremism and deradicalization literature to enhance practical programmes. Some of the findings on disengagement from terrorist groups have not been fully considered (such as the works of Bjørgo and Horgan 2009). Similarly, the DDR literature suggests approaches in settings not normally dealt with in the deradicalization and disengagement literature. DDR focuses on organizations and factions that have stronger command hierarchy, conventional fighting power and strong disciplining mechanisms and not the type of legally accepted organizations, clandestine illegal cells and networks that very often are the focus of deradicalization and disengagement literature.

Yet, the DDR literature suffers from some of the drawbacks also seen in the disengagement and deradicalization literature. First, the exact limitation between post-conflict and conflict scenarios can be rather unclear and radical organizations can wield much stronger organizational tools than focused on in the deradicalization literature in situations where they wield stronger forms of control. Second, what is interesting in relation to deradicalization is the mechanisms that the organization from which one is to be deradicalized can bring in to counter deradicalization efforts, such as command hierarchy that can punish doubting members, or efficient sanctions against friends and relatives, or economic incentives provided to individuals in order to make them stay. Third, the span of organizational toolkits for recruiting increases in areas where radical organizations have control, recruits can be gained through promises of stable jobs, promises of economic rewards to control ‘taxing’, forced recruitments and through locals attempting to co-opt jihadists and right-wing organizations controlling territories to gain support in local conflicts.

The above-mentioned mechanisms of control and recruitment are present in a situation where deradicalization is to take place from a clandestine organization (or cells), operating inside a relatively functioning hostile state. However, the mechanisms grow much stronger in situations where the organization from which one is to be deradicalized is actually controlling territories, or if they are situated in a state that tolerates the organization, or even supports it. In many places, such as Northern Mali or Somalia, territorial control is of another kind where the presence of the organization in question is semi-permanent; they can come and go more or less at will, but not openly establish institutions in a given area, as the opposing forces may be stronger than them and will defeat them in open combat. Thus, even in areas ‘cleared’ of insurgents and militant actors, their influence might be high. A tense security environment might also force DDR implementers to ‘bunker up’ (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard 2011), losing control and monitoring capacity over their projects, including providing security to deradicalize them and their families.

How should one study variations of control mechanisms on behalf of violent extremist organizations, and their consequences for deradicalization and disengagement? Hansen (2019) focused on what territorial control entailed, arguing that in some cases such situations were providing so much stability that insurgency became a misleading term. For months, if not years, there could be no fighting in the core areas controlled by the jihadists. In other phases, territorial control could be limited, but jihadists might nevertheless be able to control the local population, partly because of minimal presence of rival entities amongst the local population. Such a situation is at the time of writing seen in Syria, parts of Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Congo and in Mali, to mention a few examples, and is far from the realities facing deradicalization actors in Europe, North America, Oceania and East Asia. This is perhaps best seen from the fact that the chapters in this book, for example, focusing on East Africa, the African Union and West Africa deal with DDR programmes, while the chapters discussing the Western context deal with more traditional deradicalization settings. Yet these
variations and what they mean for the structure of deradicalization efforts have not systematically been explored in the past.

**Variations over territorial presence and control**

Hansen (2017, 2018) launched a model of variations over territorial presence to understand the dynamics of various jihadist organizations in Africa. These models also tell us something about the capacities of jihadist organizations, and the types of tools needed to deradicalize their members. Rather than presenting a stable ‘essence’ of the organization, he argues that organizations and organizational dynamics change over time, represented by how much control the organization has in the territories where it has a presence. This will also lead to variations in the types of challenges deradicalization and disengagement programmes face, due to variations in organizational strength and in the original incentives for recruitment, and indeed the incentives for exit.

The model operates with four different ideal types of territorial presence. One type of presence is an accepted presence, meaning that an organization is accepted, in some cases even supported, by state elites. Boko Haram, Al Qaeda in Sudan and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (in Mali only) have all at times been tolerated by their host government, even used for governance purposes. In many ways, these organizations were part of a type of governance where non-state armed groups are used by rulers to save money and resources. In some cases, such a configuration would be part of a governance strategy of delegating violence to subgroups in society. Indeed, according to Metz, this has been perhaps one of the most common state strategies in the past (2014, p. 39). Local factions are seen as tools at times by local and central authorities, and their independence and potential/occasional disloyalty may be seen as tolerable (Ibid). This is not too far from the status of several right-wing militias in Ukraine and Russia today, as well as several right-wing militias in the recent past (see Chapter 24).

The results of such strategies were often mixed, and the bonds of loyalty between the parties are limited. In the case of jihadists, Al Qaeda, Ansar Dine and Boko Haram have had similar functions for hosting states in periods of their history; in the case of right-wing militias, we have seen similar scenarios in South America, Ukraine and Russia. Importantly, such organizations will have the potential for violence, but need not be violent in the state in which they are based; they can be tools for foreign politics.

The state can also be passive, avoiding supporting or encouraging the organizations. The organizations are so insignificant that they are not noticed by the state, and/or at times their level of violence is not large enough to merit a ban. In both cases, the organizations will most commonly enjoy some legal protection. Organizations are allowed to operate strong organizational hierarchies; they will in general be able to openly gather income locally, again as far as tolerated by the host state. This type of organization might present a considerable challenge for actors striving to do deradicalization and disengagement, as organizational mechanisms and/or economic incentives will be employed, openly and at times supported by the host state, against potential defectors. At times, the host state will even employ violence, or allow the organization in question to use open violence, targeting individuals attempting to leave the organization.

In other cases, the state might be hostile and relatively efficient in attempting to hinder, ban and prosecute the organizations. The most common deradicalization and disengagement programmes are perhaps designed for the last scenario, perhaps the most common scenario concerning illegal radical groups in North America, Europe and Eastern Asia. In this scenario, radical groups are forced underground by state-based law enforcement agencies. The
groups operate clandestinely, often based around small clandestine cells, with somewhat limited contacts, as described by Nesser (2015) in his work on European jihadists. Hansen (2019) branded this the clandestine network scenario.

The common denominator for the first two scenarios is that the radical group lives at the mercy of a state, a state that can hinder and curtail them, ultimately holding control, and attempts to surveil and control its own citizens as well. However, in other cases this is not always true. The radical organizations could have extensive mechanisms to surveil and control the local population, and rival the state in even providing governance. Such cases bring us closer to the scenarios described by academic works on DDR, with the existence of organized armed groups that operate more like armies than terrorists or activists. Newer versions of DDR programmes, deployed for a conflict rather than a post-conflict situation, seem more relevant. Yet, these scenarios are not necessarily scenarios of ongoing armed conflicts; rather they are scenarios of ongoing – if necessary, violent – control of the locals by radical movements.

Importantly, one does not necessarily need to control a territory on a permanent basis to control its inhabitants. Due to limited resources, at times because of military doctrine, casualty awareness, geography or a limited will, the enemies of violent extremists could keep themselves in restricted base areas. Odd patrols, time-limited campaigns to reduce numbers of checkpoints or limit enemy expansion, focusing on larger battles rather than controlling the countryside could be all enemy forces actually do. The extremist organizations in question can then have semi-territorial control, where their threats of sanctions are what maintains control rather than possibilities of daily sanctions. As long as the organizations in question manage to show that they can be present at relatively regular intervals, the presence need not be permanent. The groups in question will visit local villages on a regular basis, and have the ability to put up roadblocks, before hostile forces remove them. The ability to enter villages frequently and block transportation for longer periods of time means that villagers remain dependent on them; they need to maintain a good relationship to survive. It also to a certain extent creates a panopticon, where locals have to expect to be watched and to face punishment for disloyalty, even if the organization in question is not constantly present, as the latter can enter into the locals’ area on a regular basis and can easily coopt locals to surveil. This is the case in parts of Borno province in Nigeria, and in the Somali countryside.

The organizations in question would have the power to extract resources from locals, partly because of the threat of sanctions against members of the population who do not stay loyal. Yet, loyalty can go beyond the threat of sanctions. Locals need to hedge to avoid violence, and one way to do this is to integrate into the organization in question. By supplying daughters for fighters to marry, or by supplying recruits from a village, one hopes to make the organization in question friendly, even perhaps gain influence on the leadership, or through recruits rising through the ranks. In a semi-territorial scenario, local loyalty, created by integration into an organization, might go beyond a radical worldview, through networks of friends and families, even through forced involuntary recruitment. In some cases, the radical organizations might do governance in some form: traders who sell spoiled food can be stopped, Sharia courts can also implement verdicts in civil cases and thieves can be punished. In some cases, as depicted by Kilkullen’s (2013) theory of competitive control, the semi-territorial organization might be better than the alternative corrupt government in their governance. However, at some stages only predictability is needed to create forms of loyalty, with locals preferring a less turbulent and anarchic everyday situation, supporting organizations that provide this (ibid). The fact that the organization in question presents a power that will be there for the future means that the organization might be coopted by
locals to settle their own scores (Kalyvas 2003). Recruitment might thus reflect local animosities rather than some radical worldview. To join or integrate into an organization becomes a tool to settle personal and family grudges, with just a weak relationship to ideology. This has potentially great consequences for disengagement and deradicalization efforts. Recruits are not only motivated by the sense of belonging or thrill seeking, or ideological reasons often described by European scholars such as Nesser (2015); they may be inspired by the need for local security and safety, by the wish for better governance, by economic opportunism and indeed by the need to have allies in local conflicts.

The form of territorial control might also be of a more permanent sort. Stable areas are set up, reminding us about what Mapilly calls rebel rulers (2015), and indeed what Brynjar Lia (2015) defines as ‘jihadi proto states’. In this case, the group in question holds territorial control, establishing state-like institutions. The long-term target of most of these organizations is not always to be a state in the ordinary sense of the word, presenting a disdain for state borders; it was rather a resurrection of a wider Islamic ‘ummah’ as a political entity. Indeed the Islamic State announcement of their caliphate was literally called ‘breaking/shattering the borders’. While, as claimed by Mapilly (2015, p. 39), juridical statehood gives benefits, these benefits are normally not granted because of the capacity of the entity to govern, but rather because of friends in the international system. Radical right-wing organizations, and especially jihadists, might lack this today.

We are thus not really talking about attempts to capture a state, or indeed to build up a new ‘state’ in the normal sense of the word, but rather attempts to build institutions to manage territorial control – in the longer run, to create a new type of entity. At times, they can do governance, and sometimes better governance than rivals (Kilkullen 2013) can. Again Kilkullen’s theory of competitive control becomes useful, highlighting that ‘populations respond to a predictable, ordered, normative system, which tells them exactly what they need to do, and not do, in order to be safe’. At times, organizations will project this image actively in their propaganda (Hansen 2013). Yet, at times, the governance aspect would be less important. Importantly, as claimed by Kilkullen (ibid), ‘good governance’ is not needed to gain the loyalty of the locals; an entity providing regularity and predictability will often be seen by many as better than chaos and anarchy. And, as claimed by Mancur Olson (1993) in his discussion of stationary vs. rowing bandits, a more permanent type of territorial control does give the incentive to avoid looting and plan more long-term forms of taxing and mechanisms of extraction, since one needs to ensure that the income will be generated by locals also in the longer run. The scenario thus opens up for stronger forms of institution building. Moreover, as claimed by Kilkullen (2013, p. 125), support follows strength, echoing Kalyva’s (2003, p. 12) argument that when conflicts endure locals increasingly cooperate with actors controlling their area. Stable control also means that the organization in question can be seen as a stable income provider. It can be seen as an organization that provides possibilities for a carrier, for personal advance.

The above scenarios might change. It seems clear that a scenario with an ongoing civil war, or where the state traditionally had a weak presence in some of its territories, makes the two last scenarios more likely. The scenarios are not necessarily incremental; they do not resemble Mao’s stages of an insurgency (first controlling a rear area, second using terror and attacking isolated enemy units, then beating the enemy in battle). However, Mao holds valuable insights when claiming that a strategic point would be to lure the enemy into striking back so indiscriminately that the locals are provoked into supporting the insurgents (Rich and Duvesteyn 2014, p. 6). In fact, the four scenarios might be surprisingly stable, and even territorial control and semi-territorial control might involve little fighting. Yet,
Hansen (2018) observes a pattern amongst the African jihadists, where territoriality often transforms into semi-territoriality and semi-territoriality might transform back into territoriality, the two scenarios indicating a serious weakness of the states opposing the extremists in their area of operations. As shown by the defeats of the Islamic State, but also organizations such as the Shabaab and Al Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula before them, more permanent territorial control will often be challenged, especially if, like most jihadist organizations, you exist as a pariah in the international system, with many enemies. The institutions built up can be dismantled; permanent territorial control is lost. This does not mean that control mechanisms are fully lost. Jihadists cannot hope to defeat enemy military forces in large battles. However, their enemies fail to defend the local population against sanctions from the jihadists, often because the former lack a physical presence at a local level.

Semi-territoriality and territoriality have other consequences than an accepted presence, and a clandestine network-based presence. It means more permanent sources of income for locals who want to join an organization. The situation creates openings to join such organizations to gain, for example, administrative positions. Secondly, by joining an organization with more territorial control you can ‘hedge’ for security, that is protect your community from various types of risks from jihadist organizations, by joining them, or even by marrying into them, support could easily be a strategy for survival. Such cases will have consequences outside the areas of territorial and semi-territorial control. Business persons might need to transport goods through them, and thus at times need to pay tolls when transporting goods, and individuals outside the areas with relatives/friends inside these areas will be influenced by the threat of sanctions, or indeed support of extremists, by these relatives. ‘Deradicalizers’ might have to face dealing with recruits who may have family and friends living under jihadist-controlled areas, and these relatives might be sanctioned against, as well as having an interest in maintaining a stable relationship with the jihadists. Families, a tool that in Danish deradicalization programmes, for example, is used to facilitate deradicalization, become hard to tap into as a resource if they live in areas controlled by radicals, and might even become a tool that radical organizations use to prevent individuals participating in deradicalization programmes outside the organization’s zones of control. Families are a source to be punished and sanctioned if individuals don’t fulfil both economic and in other cases personal obligations to the extremist organization in question. In the words of a respondent from the Damboa area of the Borno state of Nigeria, who had experienced Boko Haram:

when they came to our area for the first time they were not powerful because they have not start the violence but later when they got their arms then they become violent and start to force people to give them money or properties or they may ask you to pay certain amount of money or force you to pay it and you have to or else they will kill you and leave or kill members of your family also.

In one sense, some of the challenges will resemble more ‘modern’ DDR programmes operating in conflict situations, rather than post-conflict situations. Similar situations have been discussed, such as by Vanda Felbab-Brown (2015). Yet the dynamics would be different from her work; in many ways Felbab-Brown neglects the organizational institutional strength of the jihadists and the possibilities for disciplining recruits (Hansen 2017). A deradicalization or disengagement programme operating in relation to areas where the presence of a group enables territorial control or semi-territorial control should in many ways be different from the deradicalization and disengagement programmes handling cases like the ones in the West where groups to be deradicalized from resemble clandestine networks.
One such difference is related to the strength of the organizational hierarchy of the radical organization, which is more likely to be stronger since it can operate more freely. Several of the factors leading to disengagement in the deradicalization/disengagement literature, such as dissatisfaction with the leadership of a group, personal conflicts, and so on, will face an organizational hierarchy with organizational tools to handle internal conflicts, replace poor sub-commanders and so forth. A stronger organizational hierarchy might also mean more tools for disciplining defectors, for screening communications with out-group members and controlling the information-reaching members.

Hansen (2017) illustrates how the jihadist organizations are easily able to maintain organizational hierarchies in such scenarios, being efficiently able to address potential defectors, still having the organizational ability to address personal conflicts within units and sub-groups, the major factor described by Horgan and Bjørgo (2009), such as bringing about defections from terrorist groups in a Western setting. In addition, loyalty towards the government is hard to maintain as the organizations are perfectly able to inflict serious damage on a hostile local population, by arriving in villages when their enemies are not there, sanctioning defections and opposition. In areas such as Somalia, deradicalization programmes operate in contexts like this. The deradicalization centre in Baidoa exists in a setting where the countryside around the city is plagued by rowing bands of Shabaab fighters. In one sense an MP from the city expressed it like this:

Not only NGOs working in Deradicalization but also other NGOs or communities at large have problems with AS [Al Shabaab] pressure. And the communities in the rural villages cannot participate in the efforts of AS pressurizing because they are forcefully controlled and threatened by AS. And AS has created that people have no confidence in each other, even among families are suspicious. In this case no one can be mobilized.3

In such a situation, the threat of sanctions becomes very real and close:

For instance, I have seen an escapee in this training and was trained for longer period, as he was in Baidoa, one on motto cycle met him in the streets and asked are you so and so? Then he said yes I am, then suddenly told to ride the motto cycle and after a distance he was slaughtered and his head cut off. Such incidence had happened in Baidoa.4

The essences of the two latter scenarios are organizational hierarchy, the need to hedge to protect relatives near radicals, against sanctions, the ability of the jihadists to gather funds, thus encouraging opportunists to join the radicals, and the lack of safety for dissidents to the radicals and their families. These differences will constrain the deradicalization and disengagement programmes going on in the close vicinity of the areas with territorial or semi-territorial control.

**Deradicalization/disengagement in accepted presence and clandestine network scenarios**

In many ways the standard scenario that deradicalization and disengagement theory focuses on has been the clandestine network scenario and many of the important issues influencing the success rate of deradicalization and disengagement activities in this scenario are discussed in depth in other parts of this book. Arguably, deradicalization and disengagement in an accepted
**presence scenario** with state support for radical groups are very different. Active state support for radicals ensures that the resources of the radicals are larger, that legislation and police might be used against actors engaged in deradicalization and disengagement. Yet, there are strategies that can be employed. First, foreign pressure can, as it did in Sudan with Al Qaeda in the 1990s, change the government’s attitude towards the radical entities. Second, different elites within the governance structures might have different ideas about the radicals, creating potential allies in deradicalization and disengagement work. This was indeed the case when the Harakat Al Shabaab grew under the protection of the Sharia courts in Somalia in 2006. Parts of the Sharia courts, such as the former warlord Inadaadde, were openly hostile to many aspects of the Shabaab ideology. Here the concept of re-pluralization becomes important, as a constraining government might curtail more traditional organized deradicalization programmes, yet similar activities can be organized more informally through discussion fora, broadcasts, and so forth, as happened in Somalia, and indeed Nigeria.

Third, some local institutions might enjoy so much legitimacy that they provide a platform to address ideological issues, or other issues within the radical organizations, such as in the case of Boko Haram. Maiduguri Sheiks managed to address Boko Haram leader Mohamed Yusuf in debates, and defeat him oratorically, despite the latter having ties with regional leaders (Hansen 2019). In Sudan the smaller Muslim Brotherhood, which remained allied to the Egyptian Brotherhood, challenged Turabi’s own credentials and could have functioned as a platform for ideological critique, since they had support within the government that protected them. Several NGOs, such as Somalia’s El Maan human rights group, also managed to exist and operate in parallel to extremists, although the latter were supported by the government in control (in the case of Somalia, the Sharia Courts (the Islamic Courts Union)).

Yet, the security risks for locals attempting to carry out disengagement/deradicalization attempts are larger than in a clandestine network scenario. At times mounting a direct challenge to radicals might be challenging, hence re-pluralization becomes a key word, as questioning ideological assumptions amongst radicals becomes a safer alternative than opening an outright deradicalization programme for defectors. In a globalized world, internet, and indeed radio and satellite TV, enable deradicalization and disengagement activities from afar, as online counter-narrative programmes also have their effects, as expressed in another chapter in this book. An organization could have an accepted presence even without being supported directly by the state, or in a period after a state ends its support. It could then be in a phase when it enjoys legal protection. In such situations, again the more common deradicalization and disengagement literature becomes more useful, as shown in studies of anti-sect programmes (see, for example, Langone 1993; Bromley and Melton 2002; Henson 2002).

The main actors doing deradicalization in an accepted presence scenario would normally not be a police force, law enforcement or municipalities, as the state remains friendly or neutral to the radicals. NGOs, in combination with external actors, have to be the locus of deradicalization and disengagement.

**Territorial/semi-territorial scenarios**

The territorial control scenario is also more challenging than a clandestine network scenario. A radical organization with territorial control, such as the Islamic State and Shabaab, will function as a beacon, an example of an ‘ideal’ state, attracting foreign fighters. It will also often have ‘state-like’ institutions, including police and intelligence, which can be used to
strike down dissidents and NGOs working to counter radical messages, and to identify and neutralize potential defectors. A strong command hierarchy will limit the possibilities for group and personal conflicts to spill over in defections, and will sanction against defectors, as well as limiting the abilities of potential defectors to communicate the need. In cases of full control it is hard to implement any deradicalization and disengagement activities, even when it comes to activities such as criticizing the ideas of the radicals. This was for instance illustrated by the brave example of Al Isha human rights group attempting to stand up to the Shabaab in Baidoa in Somalia when the city was controlled by the latter organization, which resulted in the arrest and severe torture of its leader Alin Hillowle, although the latter managed to escape.

Yet, there are potential advantages for deradicalization and disengagement projects within this scenario as well. Motivations beyond the wish for belonging, the wish for adventure and the belief in an ideology will be present. As illustrated by Kalyvas (2003), locals might, for example, join insurgents to gain advantages in local conflicts, and to improve the security of friends and relatives. Additionally, more permanent organizational structures make it more tempting to join to get a stable income. Third, the radical organization wielding territorial control might simply be better at implementing justice than neighbouring areas (Kilkullen 2013) and present a preferred alternative. Fourth, recruitment might be forced. In this sense, motivations for joining might go beyond motives such as thrill seeking; a wish for belonging and ideology, to seek income, to seek security and to seek stability gains in importance. These motives might present new opportunities to enhance and encourage defections and participation in deradicalization programmes.

While deradicalization and disengagement programmes cannot be established in the zones of control, they can still be established outside these zones, on the borders of territorial control and can attract defectors away from them. In Somalia the deradicalization centres in Baidoa, Mogadishu, Kismayo and Beled Weyne, in addition to NGOs working with deradicalization, operate outside areas controlled by the Shabaab working with defectors or prisoners of war. These centres ran or run deradicalization programmes focusing on challenging several of the advantages offered by Shabaab as an employer in the areas they control, including offering vocational skills training in order to offer alternative careers to Somalis who joined Shabaab to have an income. Yet these programmes, often mimicking the deradicalization programmes in the West mainly dealing with clandestine networks, in general fail to deal properly with potential sanctions facing the relatives of Shabaab defectors coping with local ruptures that create potential for Shabaab recruitment through the mechanisms described by Kalyvas (2003). Potential deradicalization programmes draw closer to DDR programmes, discussed previously in this chapter; indeed, these centres are demobilizing former combatants. Aspects of such deradicalization work will be to provide economic opportunities for defectors who flee, to provide possibilities for safe channels for defectors to flee away from the organization, and possibly strategies to get families out simultaneously with the defectors.

Deradicalization efforts taking place outside the zones of control of the radicals might not be the only applicable strategy. Again, a key word becomes re-pluralization, as described by Koehler in this book (see Chapter 2). Potential strategies become to encourage individuals to defect and escape the zones of control, if possible to establish secure channels to smuggle defectors away from them. This is to create doubt around the ideology, the use of violence, perceptions of the radicals as providers of income and security and perceptions of radicals as useful allies in local conflict. The borders of the territories of a radical group are seldom not porous and messages may penetrate. In Pakistan Sheik Muhamad Tahir ul-Qadri’s book on
fatwas on terrorism and suicide bombing circulated in the areas of Pakistani Taliban control, criticizing the latter’s religious assumptions. Books and publications from religious leaders outside the areas under territorial control by the radicals also served this function in Iraq.

Individuals with ties to the territorial zone might also face sanctions against their family and friends if they defect/disengage, or sanctions against families can at times be used as threats in order to use such individuals as agents for sabotage and assassinations. Inside the zone of control, mechanisms of cohesion in the radical organization can be systematically undermined and the army cohesion literature (Hansen 2017) might provide ideas on how to do this, including weakening organizational hierarchy and command and control systems; yet this is difficult.

Semi-territoriality reassembles the territorial control scenario in the sense that the radical organization wields influence outside the territory where semi-territoriality is wielded, both through the abilities of the radicals to implement sanctions against the friends and families of defectors at will, but also the business communities that need to pay to gain access to the areas. A semi-territorial scenario will also lead to recruits having motivations that differ from clandestine network scenarios. Some of these motives might resemble the territorial control scenario. Recruits might join because they are forcefully recruited; they might join because their families seek to protect themselves from violence by the radicals by having family within the radical organization. Additionally, they might join because of a wish to gain allies for local conflicts. But it becomes less tempting to join for economic reasons, as income generation and taxes become slightly harder than the open taxing in the territorial scenario. Yet, income-generating possibilities are stronger than in the clandestine network scenario.

Semi-territoriality is created by the lack of permanent security for villagers and locals in the countryside: in the words of then President Sharif Hassan of the South West Regional State in Somalia, the ‘fly over territories’ that few politicians care for, yet that you need to secure and protect to end a conflict. Normally, the police would be responsible, but the police are often focused on crime prevention rather than self-protection, and may have problems in facing rowing insurgents (Hill 2014, p. 101). Sadly, local security becomes very important for deradicalization and disengagement in such a scenario. Relatives, as well as the deradicalized, need to be protected against sanctions, including after leaving the deradicalization disengagement programme in question. Internalization of conflicts on behalf of the radical organizations also means that conflict resolution in regard to local conflicts that might lead to recruitment for radicals needs to be addressed. This means that a deradicalization disengagement programme needs to be more comprehensive, and requires knowledge of the local dynamics of ongoing conflicts, of which some are unrelated to right-wing, left-wing or jihadist extremism. Moreover, these conflicts might, because of the relatively weaker control semi-territoriality gives to the radicals, be more prominent, and more resembling armed conflict than in the territorial control scenario. Such a scenario becomes more and more important as, for example, the Islamic State increasingly becomes transformed into a semi-territorial organization in the Levant, yet focus on local security is often neglected.

As in the case with territorial control, semi-territoriality means that the radicals have control far outside the areas affected directly. Again, relatives of individuals who live outside the region can face punishment if the individuals in question act against the radicals, and relatives can be used as agents due to pressure against relatives and friends inside territories of semi-territorial control. Again, business community members might choose to pay off radicals to be able to trade in and transport through the areas of semi-territoriality. These issues, as well as the continued presence of radicals in semi-territorial areas, mean that security needs to be a very important priority. Local security is normally a police issue, but police
forces are usually too weakly equipped to challenge insurgent-like movements. Moreover, semi-territorial scenarios are often not seen as semi-territorial, as they often emerge after the defeat of a radical group transforming its control away from full territorial control into semi-territorial control, mistakenly being seen as being defeated. Often semi-territoriality is found in the periphery of the state, avoiding the attention that action in larger cities usually attracts to radical organizations. Lack of attention might transform into durability, and radical organizations such as the Shabaab, Lord’s Resistance Army and the Allied Democratic Forces have maintained themselves in such scenarios for years.

The DDR literature has much to offer practitioners running deradicalization/disengagement in semi-territorial/territorial scenarios. The importance of local security in the semi-territorial zone, and the necessity to understand internalization of local conflicts, remain some of the major drawbacks. In one sense, one size does not fit all when it comes to deradicalization and disengagement; one also has to take the toolkit of the opponent into account, as well as the causes for joining an organization. These two items vary depending on the type of control of territory, and thus variations from an accepted presence, a clandestine network, semi-territorial control and territorial control should be taken into account.

Notes
1 Notable exceptions were Daniel Koehler (2016), who allocated a whole subsection to the topic. Malet and Hayes (2018) also studied disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) in relation to deradicalization and disengagement in an otherwise very good article focusing on foreign fighters returning from Syria. However, their exploration of DDR uses few cases to draw examples from. The article also neglects the fact that DDR is intended for war zones, and ignores the fact that many of today’s DDR programmes have deradicalization and disengagement components focusing on ideology and worldviews of the former militia soldiers, suggesting that DDR focuses on behavioural changes only.
2 Interview with nickname ‘TALL’, conducted in Maiduguri, 1 August 2018.
5 Interviews with Sheik Sharif, Oslo, 20 July 2018.

References


