~~Introduction~~ Pushing Radical Agendas to the Extreme

How an Extremist Ideology Takes Root (and How It Is Spread amongst the Masses)

Katie Jane Patterson and Encarnación Hidalgo-Tenorio

1.   Background

On the morning of the 6th of January 2021, over a period of several hours, hundreds of Trump supporters breached police perimeters of the US Capitol, ransacking, and vandalising the government building, and violently attacking police officers. The mob gathered there to protest the results of the 2020 general elections. Many people were injured, and the scene turned deadly when one of the rioters, 35-year~~-old~~ Ashli Babbitt, was fatally shot, after having attempted to climb through one of the doors of the building; two more individuals died from heart conditions and another from amphetamine intoxication; furthermore, the following day, Police Officer Brian Sicknick passed away, after suffering two strokes, having been physically attacked during the riot.

Just some hours before the most severe assault on the Capitol since the British sacked the building in 1814, the same Trump allies had attended the Save America Rally at the Ellipse~~; there,~~ a number of incendiary speeches were delivered, one of these given by the President himself; Trump urged the crowd to "stop the steal" of the election; the latter incited rioters into action with hostile, inflammatory, deceitful directives~~, to "fight like hell",~~ and ~~threatening~~ "if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore!".[1] Whilst the speech was still being delivered, Capitol Police had responded to reports of individuals overrunning the perimeter of the US Congress, and an explosive device (later confirmed as a pipe bomb) was also found. What is obvious is that, whether Trump's message was intended to be taken figuratively or not, the rioters thought that it had been used with its most simple (or basic) meaning and had come prepared for the carnage that was to ensue.

That day, the US (and the rest of the world, too) witnessed with terror a (probably pre-meditated) act of extremism unfold at the seat of US

democracy. It was a clear sign that, through those violent actions, largely led by QAnon,[2] extremism had become embedded ~~in~~ home-turf politics of a well-established democratic, civilised nation. The preparation had been taking place not only in the days before the riot, but through social media platforms and news feeds in the months, and even years, leading up to it. What is perhaps not surprising is that the turmoil took root from seemingly innocuous conspiracy theories and fake news. In times of global crises like the current situation in Gaza, the Syrian and the Afghan-Taliban wars, the Brexit referendum, the Covid pandemic, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, to name but a few, disinformation feeds into human deepest-seated emotions, creating polarisation, and an environment of anger, hatred, and scepticism, which can finally be translated into extremist behaviour (Mason et al., 2022).

Backed by the anonymity of online content ~~sharing~~ platforms, unchecked facts, misinformed beliefs, and hypothetical speculation create a collective sense of distrust and fear. This can be exacerbated through potent algorithms and a lack of content moderation, leading to deeply disquieting narratives becoming both widespread and normalised. The concern is that these singular views (or distorted news stories) have the potential to develop collectively into radical ideologies, something far more challenging for a society to deal with, as is seen the world over. Research has shown how social media has been used as a very efficient platform for both left-wing populist, and far-right, neo-fascist discourses, and the kinds of social practices that are shaped by them (García-Marín & Luengo, 2019; Hidalgo-Tenorio et al., 2019; Gounari, 2021). Likewise, Islamic terrorists ~~are experts~~ at mobilising individuals via online methods (Europol, 2022). In many ways, the 2019 Capitol riots, just like the tension following the 2019 Catalan illegal independence referendum (Vakarchuk, 2020), or the 2023 Bolsonarist threat to democratic rule in Brazil and the anti-LGBTQ Ugandan bill, can be seen as a symptom of the prevailing times; it is largely through the spread of disinformation (by local or international agencies), together with economic and social instability, and disenchantment in mainstream politics, that global populist movements have flourished. The radicalisation of such a population (whether small or large, organised or seemingly random) has paved the way to more dangerous acts of extremism.

2.   Defining Extremism

When we think of extremism as an act, together with 9/11, a number of other major terrorist attacks are brought to mind: (a) chemical terrorism (e.g., by LTTE in Sri Lanka in 1986, by Saddam Hussein's regime in 1988 against his civilian Kurdish population, or by Aum Shinrikyo in Japan in

1995); (b) mail bombs like Kaczynski's from the late 1970s to 1990s in the US; (c) train bombings like those in Madrid in 2004; (d) mass shootings such as the ones in Christchurch (2019) or the Norwegian Island of Utoya (2011); (e) the suicide bombings that shocked Sri Lanka in 2019 or Kabul in 2021; (f) vehicle ramming in Nice and Berlin (2016), and Barcelona and Stockholm (2017); (g) sieges on schools (e.g., Beslan in 2004) or shopping malls (e.g., Westgate, Kenya, in 2017); and (h) cyberattacks like 2015 Russia's Ukraine power grid hack. Whilst some of these were carried out by (mentally unstable and socially isolated) lone wolves (Lazzari, Nusair & Rabottini, 2021), others were orchestrated by (well-organised) cells, sometimes led by supremacists or fundamentalists, or even sponsored by governments or political organisations.[3] Irrespective of motive and justification, such atrocity is generally driven by a common desire to right a (perceived) wrong, and subsequently to inflict harm on those who are claimed to cause it or, whose views are not in line with those of the (alleged) victim. More often than not, victimisers tend to otherise and dehumanise those people conceived of as their enemies (Scrimin & Rubaltelli, 2019), construing them as animals, or things, and depriving them of individuality or even human attributes. Consequently, such people are rendered expendable, standing in for a problem in the behaviour of society at large.

Acts of terror such as those above are often the ultimate manifestation of a complex web of persuasion, manipulation, cognitive radicalisation and, finally, violent radicalisation (Wolfowicz et al., 2021). They are the physical representation of a pervasive extremist ideology; a set of extreme beliefs or values, whose expression requires an extreme act to gain a platform for attention. In a literal and de-contextualised sense, the term *extremism* carries the meaning of pushing a value, or a set of values, to the limit. In a social context, extremism refers to the radical views and actions against prevailing social norms and rules that are globally recognised, accepted, and endorsed by most actors in a certain environment, for instance, in an ideological, religious, or political domain (Mölder, 2011). According to Kilp (2011, p. 16), the term refers primarily to the nature of commitment to (rather than content of) the cause or goal of an extremist individual or group. This commitment can be realised as much in words as in (violent) actions. Whilst religion and politics have traditionally been seen as the backdrop to many forms of extremism (through fundamentalist doctrines, far-right or far-left political parties, or government regimes), the expression and realisation of extreme and militant ideologies is manifest in a number and wide variety of settings: Even abolitionism, veganism, nationalism, feminism, or climate change activism may also be regarded as examples of extremism, if their supporters draw on civil unrest and armed insurrection, interfering with institutionalised power and police action, and turning violent against citizens and property.

The propagation and proliferation of disinformation are linked directly in some cases to this phenomenon, and, as shown by the European Commission's Radicalisation Awareness Group (RAN),[4] have become an ongoing and systemic risk in current societies. In recent years, extremist and terrorist groups have increasingly utilised conspiracy narratives as a tool for the recruitment, indoctrination, and radicalisation of vulnerable individuals; exploiting their angst, fears, uncertainties, and doubts.[5] They provide extremist narratives with black- and- white, or seemingly orderly, explanations of events and cause-and-effect relationships, eroding the trust between people, institutions, and governments; spreading hate speech, sexism, racism, xenophobia, and the like, far and wide; and, in some cases, inciting and encouraging the use of brute force.[6]

Not all radical narratives result in violence or terror, though. Pickets and sit-ins, marching, rallies, and protests can be peaceful and managed without disruption. Some extremist content is never realised physically, other than the act of communication itself, which, however, is not something trivial. When we read our Twitter newsfeed, whose algorithms are reported to be manipulative,[7] it is easy to see how this online social media, a "sewer of disinformation",[8] has become the very locus for the public spilling of hatred,[9] where (very democratically) both minorities and celebrities are lynched indistinctly by (almost always) anonymous users.

We are aware that discourse can have the power to distort an individual's sense of reality and spread beyond the computer screen. Polarisation and otherisation do naturally divide society, encourage revenge, hamper critical thinking, and stop public debate (even in a democratic setting), compromising the very foundation of democracy. According to RAN,[10] the latter can provide an enabling environment for the rise of extremist ideologies and movements; the reason is that extremism propagates a system of beliefs based on the (moral) superiority of the "in-group" over an "out-group" that lacks all the positive traits of the former.[11] We are beginning to witness such discourse in more mundane channels, not least through social networking sites. The digital transformation that we are currently undergoing has instigated an algorithmic accelerationism which has made it possible for extremist narratives to reach a global audience online, with violence never far behind.

3.   The Discourse Structure of Extremism

Once we understand discourse as a social practice, it is easy to view language as both a product of our values and belief systems (collectively and individually), and a tool for legitimating, communicating, disseminating, and reinforcing those beliefs and values within society (van Leeuwen,

2016), through ~~institutionalised~~ education and power. As such, discourse analysis as a very flexible and comprehensive approach provides us with various frameworks to study the relationship between language usage and our environment, conceptually and relationally. Through these frameworks (Fairclough, 2001; van Dijk, 2009; van Leeuwen, 2016), we can investigate exhaustively how mental representations are socially shared and articulated, through what we say as well as how we say it; paying special attention to the discursive manifestation of all sorts of ideologies, including, for instance, extreme ideologies (Gounari, 2021), on the one hand, and counter terrorist narratives, on the other (MacDonald & Hunter, 2013). This makes the abovementioned frameworks valuable for exploring not only the language extremists employ to instil a needed sense of belonging in the community they are addressing, but the bigger societal consequences of their mental constructs becoming action.

Our language choices can serve to unite people around social, cultural, or political values, and, naturally, our moral code (O'Regan & Betzel, 2015). These help to create an "us" versus "them" dichotomy, a sense of safety, which is construed around what we believe to be right or wrong, true or false, normal or abnormal, legal or illegal, natural or alien. Unexpectedly, governments and other power centres in many parts of the world can decide what is allowed to think and what has to be censored, playing thus a significant role in this sense. The media, whether mainstream or small~~ scale~~, can be seen as a (sometimes critical) part of the information cycle, largely responsible for framing all sorts of issues, by not only informing the general public about key events, but also shaping their understanding of those events (O'Keeffe, 2013; Viola & Musolff, 2019).

Pushing an extremist agenda requires astute acts of linguistic persuasion and manipulation. Propaganda, in its varying forms, is capable of disrupting public opinion, and creating a cognitive dissonance, "influencing the thoughts, emotions, and behaviours – that is, the psychology" of their readership (Aggarwal, 2019, p. 6). This has been explored in a number of settings, through a host of discourse strategies. Research has shown, for instance, that authors of extremist material often focus their rhetoric on "themes of morality, social proof, inspiration and appeals to religion" (Prentice, Rayson, & Taylor, 2012, p. 260). Furthermore, exploiting religious imagery through metaphor allows jihadist recruiters to justify evil acts of violence as religiously sanctioned end goals (Matusitz & Olufowote, 2016; Patterson, 2022). Narratives of personal wrong (see Benítez-Castro & Hidalgo Tenorio, 2022), or the glorified accounts of suicide bombers as martyrs and heroes (Aggarwal, 2019) are yet other strategies which have been shown to successfully incite individuals emotionally towards extreme beliefs. By creating a shared discourse community, a group (or an

individual) can construe a coherent identity which will justify any act of terror, if on behalf of the very existence of that identity. Our motivation to research extremist discourse ultimately lies in the desire to reveal the innermost working of this coherent mental identity, and subsequently reflect on how to cope with the threat of extremist narratives.

Discourse analysis can also provide an abundant toolbox in the challenge to de-escalate, de-radicalise, and even prevent radical action from taking place. Narratives can offer us insight into the various forces behind extremism taking root. These may be deeply personal motivations, but collectively they paint a picture of a number of prominent driving factors, related to our particular sense of justice and a sense of community, and the societal and cultural pressures that conflict with this (Benítez-Castro et al., 2023). In addition, language also plays a prominent role in the laws criminalising terrorism or hate speech and equally defines how we construe what constitutes extremist content in the first place. It is important to consider that creating guidelines for how extremism is both defined and dealt with is a task not only for governmental policy makers; it should also be informed by the knowledge of linguists, psychologists, and political scientists, amongst other specialists. The legal and official discourse surrounding extremism propagates society's attitudes towards it, having the power to instil, challenge, or promote certain beliefs.

Additionally, findings support the idea that preventing individuals with extremist ideals from becoming violently radicalised necessitates tailored, rather than broad or generalised policies. Consequently, if multiple trajectories into violent extremism exist, so too should there be multiple policies to encourage prevention. We believe in a multitrajectory approach in our research, too. Whilst the main aims of this volume are centred on discourse, the contributions do not approach their data from the same methods or frameworks, but instead draw on a variety of techniques to analyse extremism. The collection of papers brings together some of the latest studies at the forefront of their respective areas including psychology, political science, education, and discourse analysis, to explore a number of diverse text types and contexts. It is our hope that they can offer a multifaceted, multidiscipline outlook to extremism, with the aims of detecting it, challenging its momentum, and ultimately preventing it.

4.   Reasons for Writing This Book

The idea of this book germinated when organising an international workshop at the University of Granada in May 2022, entitled *Discourse, Politics and Extreme Ideologies*. On that occasion, we explored current research in extremism, to determine what and how we could learn from each other. The event was successful in bringing together a number of both scholars

and practitioners working in a wide range of disciplines and fields. Thus, clinical psychologists, social and political scientists, linguists, government strategy analysts and members of the Spanish Police Forces came together to present cutting-edge investigation in their fields. From here, we understood that it would be more than interesting to publish a volume where to showcase the relevance between individual and often parallel strands of research.

At the time, the editors were leading two projects: "Nutcracker: System for the detection, tracking, monitoring and analysis of terrorist discourse on the Internet", funded by the Spanish Ministry of Research (FFI2016-79748-R); and "ISCID: Exploring the linguistic identity construction of Islamic State members in online discourse", funded by the European Commission (H2020 MSCA-IF-2019-ID:882556). In ISCID and Nutcracker, we combined our common interest in spotting the discursive strategies employed by radical Islamic terrorist organisations to recruit and indoctrinate all sorts of individuals from anywhere via the Internet. Whilst analysing the language of jihadists in online propaganda, we could observe that current findings from our research offered insights that can be of significance beyond the context of Islamic extremism, beyond linguistics, more generally; and that they even potentially extend beyond a scholarly setting. For instance, in the Computer Science Department at the University of Granada, colleagues led by Juan-Luis Castro-Peña have been working on groundbreaking work in the area of radical profile detection through machine learning, and have concluded that their semi-supervised algorithm improves current systems on offer (see Francisco et al., 2022). On their part, the linguists in the team were able to offer support in the design of the algorithm, the ontologies it draws on, as well as the categorisation and manual tagging of Tweets in several languages, paying special attention to features such as gender, speech act category, pragmatic function, document sentiment, and finally, the radical nature of the text (or not). In the lens of psychology (see Panksepp 1998; Plutchik 2003; Power & Dalgleish 2008; Fontaine, Scherer & Soriano 2013; Barrett 2017) and along the lines of Reilly and Seibert (2003), there is a conviction that a model explaining the way emotion works can be of use for the construction of another whose goal is to describe the operational principle of the act of persuading in the context of jihadism. Terrorism is not only performance, but also an act of communication (De Graaf, 2020), where the speaker seeks to convince any listener logically and, in particular, emotionally. At the other end of the scale, language plays an important role post-event, allowing us to make sense of acts of terror or why radicalisation may have occurred. To be able to discover the patterns of such a type of communicative act is not only a challenge for the academe, but also a necessity for society as a whole. The final outcome of this research has the potential to be adopted by border

forces and counter terrorism practitioners as a tool to detect and monitor extremist content with the aim of prevention. Additionally, and in parallel, the Psychology Department in the University of Cordoba were focusing on the terrorist cell that committed a terrorist attack in Barcelona in 2017; their contention is that their analyses of the materials the terrorists produced and the spoken interviews with those close to them can help determine the specific social frictions and identity conflict factors that led to those young men's radicalisation and endorsement of violence (González et al., 2022).

The coming together of multidisciplinary teams epitomises the many benefits of joining efforts with scholars from various areas to reach a more thorough understanding of such a non-monolithic phenomenon in our current globalised and fractured societies. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge here that we are not making the over-ambitious claim that our contributions can be directly applied to the numerous fields of expertise mentioned. Instead, the intention is that our findings and discussions can filter through to clinicians working with de-radicalising youths, to policy makers, or to social media companies, through further research in the respective areas. Thus, the aim of this volume is to open a dialogue between disciplines in which extremism infiltrates. With this in mind, the first section of this volume focuses on extremist narratives in a number of settings, including populism, the far right and religious fundamentalism. The second one presents a case study on Islamic extremism; and the third section discusses policies, measures, and strategies to detect, prevent and deal with extremism in its various forms.

5.   Structure of the Book

Section 1 is entitled **Extremism as a mainstream narrative: Politics and religion**. Its seven contributors explore how this phenomenon is articulated in its more mainstream forms (such as politics, religion and media discourse) and in very different geographical contexts (from Europe to Brazil through to the US). **Teun van Dijk**'s paper on far-right political parties examines the relationships between socio-political and discourse structures in terms of personal and social cognition. The author contends that the far right does not constitute a group defined by a specific ideology, as is the case with (anti)racists, feminists, or socialists; instead, it represents a political stance drawing on different attitudes of different ideologies. Van Dijk provides examples such as racism, nationalism, neoliberalism, and anti-feminism, each of which relies on the socio-political context of each country. Thus, an ideology can emerge merely as a response to an existing ideological threat.

Similarly, **José Javier Olivas Osuna, Eduardo Ryo Tamaki**, and **Jocelyn J. Belanger** investigate the discourse of populism and the far right within the US context. They argue that, in a deeply polarised country, as noted by Gidron et al. (2020), and one with a history of racism and recurring mass shootings, there exists an intricate relationship between politics and attitudes towards gun ownership. Using data from a recent Qualtrics survey distributed via MTurk, these authors demonstrate that populist attitudes and right-wing ideology form the conceptual foundations for resistance against both gun control and immigration.

Francisco José Sánchez García explores the radicalisation facilitated by the populist far right in the Spanish context. He argues that, in our current global climate, marked by the emergence of new parties in response to disillusionment and a lack of trust in the status quo, it is imperative to attend to the radical messages disseminated through the social media. Through an analysis of the strategies employed by the extreme right to coalesce its followers on Twitter, this research identifies their most frequent conceptual frameworks; it also raises concerns about this platform, which can have the capacity to globally influence the younger generation at an unprecedented pace.

By employing automated image classification analysis, **Ignacio-Jesús Serrano-Contreras and Javier García-Marín** examine political leaders of the radical populist right, including Donald Trump, Giorgia Meloni, and Javier Milei. The researchers illustrate the existence of visual patterns in emotion, characteristic of a certain populist ideology, and assert that their study lays the groundwork for a multidisciplinary approach in which the audiovisual format plays a significant role in large-scale reviews. Their findings contribute to the use of algorithms in the examination of extensive image datasets. Once perfected, this capability will offer immense benefits in the analysis of propaganda videos and various other datasets.

In its analysis of Russian and German conservative populism in relation to the ongoing war in Ukraine, **Polina Zavershinskaia**'s paper combines Civil Sphere Theory and Multilayered Narrative Analysis. This shows how German and Russian conservative actors utilise discourses of liberty and repression in their efforts to portray Russian military actions as a purportedly legitimate struggle to protect their territory and culture against the collective West and NATO.

Extremism, in this context, is not only a political manoeuvre to advance radical policies or justify acts of war; it also manifests at the individual level. For instance, in the realm of religious ideology, extremist discourse plays a fundamental role in recruiting vulnerable individuals into fundamentalist sects. In his chapter on the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, **Michele Martini** uses Network Text Analysis to see the effects of

the post-Covid rise of alternative online forms of communication and new devotional figures, such as religious webmasters. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of how these figures reach, indoctrinate and radicalise members. While these online communities create a sense of togetherness, there is also the potential to incite division and polarisation.

In a similar vein, the concluding chapter of this section by **Ruth Breeze and Saqlain Hassan** delves into the role of social media in fostering division of opinions and driving the dynamics of extremist language. Drawing on corpus-assisted sentiment analysis on Twitter, the authors examine how, in the aftermath of Mahsa Amini's death during her incarceration by the Iranian Morality Police, interactions concerning the use of the hijab, and other related topics in that network, became increasingly polarised and polarising. However, amidst this polarisation, there also emerged a distinct space for a certain discourse of contestation.

Section 2, entitled **Extremism as a fundamentalist ideology: The case of jihadism**, brings together research from various collective projects exploring Islamic extremism as a religious ideology. In contrast to mere political affiliation, religious fundamentalism taps into something more profound within the individual. Religion can serve as a lens through which people perceive the world and dictate their actions; it can be wielded as a tool to provide the necessary justification for extreme beliefs and behaviours, including violence and terror. Unlike the recent rise of populism, religious ideology tends to resonate with a community's sense of tradition through historical literature and sacred books. Actions promoted or supported by a fundamentalist group carry a divine authority, warranting an all-or-nothing ultimatum with the additional promise of reward or punishment in the next life. This section focuses on the ways in which language is manipulated and exploited for the purposes of jihadist radicalisation and recruitment. It begins with a purely theoretical paper by **Federico Aznar Montesinos and Katie Patterson**, outlining how, at the extreme end, the nature of terrorism as a theoretical concept crucially depends on the media and gains its power from the media and the State's framing of it.

Djallil Lounnas and Massimo Ramaioli posit the thesis that multiple myths associated with jihad exert a compelling influence on individuals, irrespective of their backgrounds. Through insights gleaned from interviews with jihadi returnees and psychologists engaged in de-radicalisation programmes, three key magnets were identified, namely, the idealisation of the Muslim community, redemption through jihad, and Manichaean reasoning. The authors argue that these three myths should be differentiated from more personally experienced grievances.

The paper by **Pascual Pérez-Paredes and Tony McEnery** explores the term "Muslim" within a collection of jihadist magazines. Using corpus

linguistic methods, and informed by representation theory, and keyword and colligational analyses, their findings suggest that representation strategies in their dataset are driven by recruitment and indoctrination purposes. The authors explain that these texts contribute to the overarching narrative of violent jihad (Matusitz, 2020), by constructing reality through framing and perspectivation strategies, wherein Muslims are portrayed as instruments and facilitators of jihad.

Drawing on the same corpus, **Michael Pace-Sigge's** chapter applies Michael Hoey's lexical priming theory to elucidate how primings create and reinforce a closed discourse instilling a mental framework of group-belonging. He concentrates on lexical items conveying power relations and contends that, within the community of readers, the collocation, colligation, and semantic association divergence of such items form a distinctive lexical set of characteristics. These forced primings affiliate members and readers with the aims and philosophy of grievances employed by the Islamic State, simultaneously fostering a clear idea of, and stance against, a perceived other.

Jonatan Morillo Losada underscores that Islamic extremism and the resulting radicalisation have not only evolved but continue to adapt to changing contexts. This chapter illustrates how radicalisation can take root through subcultures such as rap music. The author observes the recurring presence of violent rap in the daily lives of the individuals responsible for some major terror attacks in Europe. And concludes the following: Considering that the latest wave of jihadists consists of youths raised amidst Western traditions, and acknowledging that a culture of violence is already established in rap music, it is apparent that individuals who regularly interact with such music could be at a higher risk of radicalisation. This is particularly true for those already familiar with narratives that justify violence, as they may be more prone to recruitment by extremist groups.

The concluding section, titled **Extremism as an act: Detection and prevention strategies**, reflects on policy development, peace education, and conflict resolution, aiming to discuss ways to undermine radicalisation and to explore future research that builds upon these efforts. One of its central goals is to demonstrate the feasibility of subverting and even eradicating radicalised discourses. The section begins with **Andrea Coccini**'s chapter, which documents the existing international legal framework addressing a frequent act of extremism, namely, hate speech. This paper elucidates that, whilst hate speech against certain groups is frequently recognised as a precursor to crimes against humanity, such as genocide and terrorism, there is still no clear, legal definition, due to concerns about its potential infringement on free speech. Freedom of opinion and expression constitutes a fundamental element of International Human Rights Law, and is a

cornerstone of every liberal democratic society, as it reinforces other basic rights, such as freedom of thought. Coccini's primary objective is to precisely delineate the (thin) line between legitimate and prohibited opinion.

The focus of the paper by **Francesc Torras and Jordi Collet** is on a specific region in Spain, Catalonia, where, prior to the pandemic, de-radicalisation programmes were actively promoted (and achieved some success) in various local Muslim communities. The authors present one specific grassroots prevention model that engaged various stakeholders, across formal, non-formal and informal education spaces; it also addressed the challenges of the 3N model of analysis for radicalisation (Kruglanski et al., 2019), with an emphasis on identifying and eliminating different types of barriers and inequalities – social, legal, institutional, familial, and personal. Its final goal was to co-construct conditions for the successful integration of those at risk and foster a sense of belonging.

In her chapter, **Lynn Revell** examines the UK's approach to preventing extremism in education through various policies, including the Prevent Duty, the 2015 Counter Terrorism Act, and the requirement for schools to promote fundamental British values. The Prevent strategy has garnered attention in the UK, being successfully integrated into all areas of education since its inception in 2011. Internationally, it is recognised as one of the most successful soft power initiatives addressing extremism. As research indicates, designing and implementing processes of de-radicalisation is complex (Horgan & Braddock, 2010; Dugdale, 2017; Walanda, 2020); therefore, prevention emerges as one of the most important tools to mitigate and avoid extremism.

It is hoped that the collective academic effort in this edited volume will be relevant to other researchers and practitioners in the field. In particular, we are convinced that, through further research and collaboration, education experts can leverage this material to design programmes of de-radicalisation, disengagement, and reintegration. The hope is that these experts will empower young, vulnerable individuals to fact-check questionable assertions about topics such as Islam, the West, democracy, and gender equality, just to name a few, and critically assess acts of violence. As a consequence, these experts will be well-equipped to formulate counter-narratives for deconstructing jihadist discourse both in substance and in form (Miravitllas, 2015), ultimately leaving room for alternative approaches to addressing extremism in both its discursive and physical manifestations.

Notes

1 See https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-55640437
2 See https://apnews.com/article/twitter-blocks-70k-qanon-accounts-171a5c9062 be1c293169d764d3d0d9c8

3 See https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/GTI-2023-web-170423.pdf
4 Seehttps://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-12/spotlight_on_conspiracy_narratives_disinformation_122021_en.pdf
5 See https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/nov/19/extremists-using-online-gaming-and-covid-conspiracies-to-recruit-youngsters
6 See https://unicri.it/news/article/hate_crime_speech_violent_extremism
7 See https://businessinsider.mx/musk-and-dorsey-argue-over-manipulative-twitter-algorithms-2022-5/
8 See https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/07/15/elon-musk-twitter-blue-checks-verification-disinformation-propaganda-russia-china-trust-safety/
9 See https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/02/technology/twitter-hate-speech.html
10 See https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-04/ran_spotlight_polarisation_en.pdf
11 See https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/whats-new/publications/media-and-polarisation-europe-strategies-local-practitioners-address-problematic-reporting-may-2023_en

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