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Research Report

Topic 3: Deterrence of political, religious and cultural radicalisation within states' domestic borders.

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Introduction

The radicalisation of political, social and religious attitudes has startled Western democratic societies, as it is becoming increasingly clear that extremist thoughts far breach the marginal societal phenomena they were obliviously dismissed as in the previous decade. Political uncertainties, financial crises and burdensome influx of refugees have provoked anxiety and fear in ordinary citizens, leading to the misplaced distrust towards traditional political authorities, allowing for a rise of radical actors ministering radical thoughts inside democratic states. Extremist feelings and attitudes manifested by violent behaviour have transcended the war-ridden hatcheries of terrorism. With millions dead each year by the hands of extremist-group-controlled puppets, the need for prevention is undoubtable. Prevention is lamentably always more complex and ambiguous than punishment though - every radical behaviour is preceded by a radical thought, but thoughts are rather hard to detect. As solving the problem at its root would involve tackling the countries internal financial and social issues as well as the complete normalisation and stabilisation of the Middle East, which nobody has the means or fortitude to do, and ,frankly, newly emerging preventative action plans focusing on disadvantaged youth seem ambiguous and dispersed in strategy, the idea that punishment in fact might serve as prevention seems invigorating. Deterrence strategy is a simple principal that has proved to work before - when used internationally. The fact that it has been theoretically established that deterrence principally requires several factors to be considered and met in order to effectively work, once again rises doubts, and perhaps the notion that a holistic approach is the sole measure that can be taken against this complex and multifaceted issue.

Key Terms

Deterrence – Discouraging an action through instilling doubt or fear of the consequences.

Radicalisation - A process by which individuals or groups adopt increasingly extreme, meaning straying far from the mainstream, political, social or religious ideas and concepts that reject or undermine the contemporary societal standards and expressions of their nation.

Terrorism - There is no universally agreed upon definition of terrorism, but most interpretations are based on organised acts of violence towards a government or civilians in order to coerce fear or disorder. In the context of radicalisation, it is important to note that while there is a strong link between the two phenomena, no interpretations of their definitions overlap completely and thus they can not be used interchangeably.

Main Body

The Origin of Radicalisation

Theoretically, radicalisation is signified by a change of feelings, thoughts and behaviour in the direction that justifies actions of an extreme nature against an opposition group or the mainstream society in order to reach the desired change, practically meaning the subjects commitment and loyalty to a group or ideology overtake their individual moral integrity. Loyalty to a group and the need to stay in line within that group can be identified as one of the mechanics of radical behaviour. Once a person is considered to be a member of a group or even an unorganised societal cluster, they are on a slippery slope of escalating behaviours with increasing gravity, caught in the vicious cycle of self-persuasion and justification in an attempt to balance a good sense of self with objectively bad

behaviour. Their line of conscientiousness is gradually and implicitly moved until it is parallel with the moral guidelines of the radical group, which are continually polarised and exacerbated.

As for why people join radical groups in the first place, research suggests the reasons are social rather then ideological. In fact, in most cases the ideology of a given group is usually adopted after an individual's affiliation, not vice versa. Most susceptible to social radicalisation remain to be individuals straying from the mainstream attitudes and values, unsatisfied, discontent with the current climate, looking for validation, purpose and belonging, which so often comes akin to victimisation, polarisation, scapegoating and sporadic, radical acts of violence.

That is not to say that radical groups are all that there is to radicalisation. Lone-wolf extremists do exist, and the likelihood of turning radical attitude into a radical violent action is actually higher among individuals than members an organised group, but their motivation is personal on a large scale. Individuals turn to radicalisation because they were personally victimised and seek revenge, making the impediment unattainable on a large scale.

Deterrence in Practice

Deterrence is a preventative strategy used to dissuade an action not yet started, on the basis of installing the fear of non-compliance. In response to the prominence the strategy has gained during the last century, many conceptual theorems have been drafted around deterrence, bringing to light the objectives that have to be met in order for this strategy to be effectual. First, the benefits of compliance and costs of non-compliance have to clearly exceed the benefits of non-compliance and costs of compliance. In the context of radicalisation, this would mean that the state would ensure moderation to be advantageous over extremism. Furthermore, the principals of proportionality, meaning that the measures taken must be adequate to the results sought, reciprocity, meaning that whatever is given up must correspond to the benefit obtained, and finally coercive credibility, simply meaning that the fact that non-cooperation has consequences must be firmly assured, serve as the groundwork of the deterrence theory. When applied to question of inter-state radicalisation of political or religious thought, the interpretation would consist of awarding strict punishments, within the countries legal framework, to convicts of radical violence standing in balance with the support and protection of minorities susceptible to convection.

Pragmatic, punishment-based strategies are frequently discussed among traditional conservatives, notably when it comes to religious extremism, but they also surface among those strongly condemning the new tendencies of populism and extremism in Western democratic governments. If we go by the annual numbers of acts of radicalised violence, as those can, contrary to the ever so growing radical tendencies in people's mindsets, societal attitudes and discourse, easily be counted and compared, these strategies frankly do not seem to be working, perhaps because deterrence not only requires the cost of non-compliance to exceed the cost of compliance, but also the benefits of compliance to even be considered.

Relevant Countries

France – According to the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, France has sent 1,200 fighters to Syria as of 2015, which is more than any other European country and it is feared that those who return might organise attacks within the French borders. The government has swore to dissuade and punish those who are even tempted to fight. Its anti-radicalisation campaign is reaching the youth through social media and ambiguous efforts to foster new communities.

UK - UK's official national preventative action plan against radicalisation, curtly called PREVENT, has been interpreted by many experts as the definition of what should not have been done. One of four components of a more complex plan CONTEST, Prevent sets it as its main objective to stop the radicalisation of British citizens before radical attitudes can escalate to extremist acts of violence and terrorism. While Prevent has objectively succeeded in spreading awareness about the cause, accusatory reports have emerged, stating that Prevent is discriminatory towards religious minorities and inhibits the freedom of speech and belief of the British Muslims.

Relevant Organisations

The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ)
CCPCJ is one of the functional commissions of The Economic and Social council of the United Nations. It is the primary policy-maker when it comes to the matters of crime prevention and justice, its priorities are majorly composed of improving the cooperation of the Member states in the efforts to combat national and transnational crime, but it also focuses on the fairness and efficiency of national criminal justice systems and offers a forum for sharing intelligence and resources between the Member States. The CCPCJ does not actually foster and judiciary matter, it only establishes frameworks under which the Member States own justice system should operate.

Relevant UN Resolutions

A Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Terrorism was presented in January 2016 to the General Assembly by the Secretary General. It analyses the impact and drivers of contemporary terrorism, focusing specifically on radicalisation of individuals within a group ant the link between radicalisation and terrorism, while proposing complex preventive measures on a local, national, regional and global level as well as essential security-based immediate measures.
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