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**VIOLENT RELIGIOUS EXTREMISTS'
DERADICALIZATION: THE MALDIVES**

by

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**VIOLENT RELIGIOUS EXTREMISTS' DERADICALIZATION:
THE MALDIVES**

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ABSTRACT

A significant number of Maldivians have participated in Middle Eastern conflicts and upon their return, many display radicalized religious views. This thesis explores deradicalization programs in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Singapore to gather successful approaches and propose an optimal design for the deradicalization of violent religious extremists in the Maldives.

The study reveals that a successful deradicalization program requires a combination of several factors running concurrently to achieve the long-term goal of deradicalizing a violent extremist. The proposed Maldives' Religious Rehabilitation Program (MRRP) is designed around four main concepts: psychological, religious, and social rehabilitation and an after-care process. Within the proposed design, these concepts are implemented through disengagement, reintegration, and after-care stages to achieve the program's overall objective. The proposed MRRP allows those with violent religious ideologies to revisit their beliefs, revert to mainstream Islamic values, and reintegrate into society before completing their criminal sentence, and a part of their sentence would be suspended for those participants who successfully pass the program. This concept promotes repentance and rehabilitation for these individuals before they are punished for wrongdoings, which makes the program more attractive and enhances participants' cooperation.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACG	After Care Group
AQAP	Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
BNPT	Badan Nasional Penganggulangan Terorisme
CPF	Central Provident Fund
FTF	foreign terrorist fighter
IED	improvised explosive device
IS	Islamic State
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and Levant
JI	Jamaah Islamiya
MRRP	Maldives' Religious Rehabilitation Program
MUIS	Malis Ugama Islam Singapura
NCTC	The Maldives National Counter Terrorism Centre
NGO	non-governmental organization
NSP&CVE	National Strategy on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
PIM	Pro-Integration Model
PRAC	Prevention, Rehabilitation, and After-Care
RO	restriction order
RoE	review of the evidence
RRG	Religious Rehabilitation Group
RRP	Religious Rehabilitation Program
XCEPT	Cross-Border Conflict Evidence/Policy/Trends

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Maldives has contributed a significant number of foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) to conflict zones in the Middle East, revealing the spread of religious extremist ideology and the challenges facing efforts to prevent or deter terrorist activities in the archipelago. Some native FTFs have already returned home after the defeat of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in these regions. The remaining fighters still need to be repatriated, compelling the Maldives to find a way to reintegrate them into society. Several countries facing this same phenomenon of reintegrating returning FTFs have adopted and implemented deradicalization programs, with some success.

The Maldives inaugurated a rehabilitation and deradicalization center for FTFs in 2019 to reintegrate them into society. Nonetheless, the efficacy of the deradicalization program is doubtful as not all the returnees were taken to the center. Moreover, scholars discussing state-level deradicalization programs have neither mentioned the presence of such an effort in the Maldives nor studied the topic with respect to the Maldives in particular. From these studies, it is evident that deradicalization programs are explicitly designed for the states implementing them. Unlike many of the state programs studied by scholars, the Maldives is in the infant stage of reintegrating FTFs; it is essential to research this gap to assist in enhancing the initiative in the country. Hence, this research evaluates existing deradicalization programs to gather data to develop an ideal design for the country, answering the following research question: **What is the optimal design for a program aimed at deradicalizing violent religious extremists in the Maldives?**

Through a review of the relevant literature, this research first formulates a conceptual framework for the study. This theoretical framework is utilized as the baseline for analyzing three state-level deradicalization programs: those of Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Singapore. These countries are selected because, first, all three programs focus solely on the rehabilitation of violent religious extremists. Second, these countries have several cultural and traditional similarities with the Maldives. Saudi Arabia and Indonesia have majority Muslim populations; the Maldives' constitution mandates all residents be Muslims. Although Singapore is a minority Muslim country, the population shares Asian

ethnicity with that of the Maldives. Third, these three programs are extensively examined in similar studies and are well known for their success or completeness. Hence, it is believed that these programs have compelling factors that can be used to formulate a feasible model for the Maldives.

This study finds that a successful deradicalization program requires a combination of several factors running concurrently to achieve the long-term goal of deradicalizing violent religious extremists. Through analysis, the study identifies promising concepts that are utilized to propose an optimal design for a deradicalization program in the Maldives. The proposed Maldives' Religious Rehabilitation Program (MRRP) is formulated around four main concepts: psychological, religious, and social rehabilitation and an after-care process. The proposed program would implement these concepts through disengagement, reintegration, and after-care stages to achieve the program's overall objective. The study concludes that humane treatment throughout the program should be one of the main principles for the success of the proposed MRRP. Also, to effectively implement the program, the Maldivian government should amend relevant constitutional acts to facilitate suspending part of the criminal imprisonment for cooperative program participants, gather subject matter experts, and incorporate the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to run the program successfully.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Maldives, according to several sources, possesses the highest per capita number of foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) who have travelled to participate in conflicts in the Middle East,¹ revealing the spread of extremist ideology and the challenges facing efforts to prevent terrorist acts in the archipelago. Some native FTFs have already returned home after the defeat of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in these regions. Moreover, the remaining fighters still need to be repatriated, compelling the administration to find a way to reintegrate them into society. Facing this same phenomenon, several countries have adopted and implemented deradicalization programs to reintegrate returning FTFs and have had some success. Hence, this thesis examines some of these existing programs to identify important concepts for incorporation into a deradicalization program in the Maldives.

The Maldives has been a 100% Muslim nation since the introduction of Islam in 1153 AD, and religion has been an essential part of Maldivian national identity. Hence, the Maldivians have not been exempted from the influence of contemporary violent religious extremist ideologies. The Maldives National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), in its 2017 policy document, *National Strategy on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism* (NSP&CVE), stated that “the problem of violent religious extremism is especially acute for the Maldives given that the extremist ideology observed in the Maldives at present is largely associated with distortions and misrepresentations of Islamic religious ideology, spread by extremist terrorist groups such as Islamic State (IS) and Al-Qaida and their affiliates.”² Indeed, these ideologies have potentially exploited the Islamic religious attachments of the Maldivians.

¹ Antonia Gough, “The Maldives – An Unlikely ISIS Haven,” Global Risk Insights, March 22, 2021, <https://globalriskinsights.com/2021/03/the-maldives-an-unlikely-isis-haven/>.

² Maldives National Counter Terrorism Centre, *National Strategy on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism* (Male’, Maldives: NCTC, 2017), 3, <https://nctc.gov.mv/publications/documents/NSPCVE.pdf>.

The Maldives has experienced several terrorist incidents where police investigations revealed ties to violent religious extremists. The first recorded terrorist attack was a homemade improvised explosive device (IED) that exploded at the tourist attraction of Sultan Park in the capital, Male', in September 2007. Although no lives were lost, the blast generated fear in the population, and the police investigation discovered that the case was connected to Al-Qaeda affiliates in the Maldives.³

Since the first terrorist attack, escalating religious extremist ideologies leading to violence in the island nation have been concerning. Hence, various administrations have been striving to prevent the spread of violent extremist ideologies in the country. Nevertheless, the height of religious extremist-related violence was revealed when the Maldivian parliament speaker was targeted with a vehicle-borne IED in May 2021, which caused him to undergo multiple surgeries to save his life.⁴ The incident marked a turning point for authorities to be seriously concerned about the contemporary threat to national security.

Until recently, the various administrations hesitated, mainly from fear of losing popular votes, to discuss the rise of violent religious extremism and the consistent rise in the number of local FTFs; this might be the reason many Maldivians deny the presence of violent religious extremists within the populace. However, recent incidents related to religious extremists have compelled Maldivians to acknowledge the bitter truth of the high probability of terrorism threats in the archipelago. The current president, Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, remarked in December 2019, "we have accepted that extremist ideology is present in the Maldives. We must accept that people go to Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan to fight in the name of jihad. That is happening in the country, and our government has accepted it. We are taking on a difficult challenge, but the government's policy is to face

³ Ahmed Niyaz, "Terrorism and Extremism: A Threat to Maldives Tourism Industry," *Revista UNISCI* 24 (October 2010): 221–31, <https://www.proquest.com/openview/9017407694086ee6be3428b4e595840b/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=54637>.

⁴ Mohamed Sharuhaan, "Maldives Police Say Blast That Hurt Nasheed Act of Terrorism," *AP News*, May 7, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/maldives-democracy-e3b3dc9f6b2b9bff01ee4e5659b6eb34>.

this and find a solution.”⁵ Returning FTFs, if not adequately attended to, might create terrorist “sleeper cells” and render society highly vulnerable to terrorist activities.

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTION

As a small nation, the Maldives has been consistently striving to strengthen legal, strategic, operational, and tactical measures to counter terrorism threats. These efforts have assisted in maintaining a peaceful environment in the country for several years. Nevertheless, with the current increase in violent religious extremism cases and the country on the verge of repatriating native FTFs, the Maldivian government needs to enhance religious deradicalization efforts in the country.

The Maldives inaugurated a rehabilitation and deradicalization center for foreign terrorist fighters and their families in 2019 to reintegrate them into society.⁶ Yet, the efficacy of the deradicalization program is doubtful as not all the returnees were taken to the center. Moreover, scholars discussing state-level deradicalization programs have neither mentioned the presence of such an effort in the Maldives nor studied the topic with respect to the Maldives in particular. From those studies, it is evident that deradicalization programs are explicitly designed for the states implementing them, and the Maldives is in an infant stage of reintegrating FTFs; it is therefore essential to research this gap to assist in enhancing the initiative in the country. Hence, this research evaluates existing deradicalization programs to gather data to develop an ideal design for the country, answering the following research question: **What is the optimal design for a program aimed at deradicalizing violent religious extremists in the Maldives?**

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Maldives has very recently acknowledged the existence of violent religious extremists in the country and recognizes the importance of religious extremists’

⁵ Mohamed Junayd, “About 1,400 Extremists ‘Willing to Kill’ in Maldives,” *Maldives Independent*, December 2, 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/crime-2/about-1400-extremists-willing-to-kill-in-maldives-149692>.

⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2020: Maldives* (Washington, D.C.: White House, 2021), <https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2020/maldives/>.

rehabilitation. Hence, there is no literature on deradicalization specific to the Maldives. Conversely, there are extensive databases on the standard concepts of radicalization and deradicalization; so, this thesis draws from general literature to formulate a framework for analysis.

1. Defining Radicalization and Deradicalization

It is essential to understand radicalization before focusing on deradicalization, because to deradicalize people, we should understand why they become radicalized in the first place. Scholars explain radicalization in various ways. For some academics, radicalization is a process of identity building, encompassing several stages, varying from organization to organization.⁷ It is believed that the radicalization process occurs in every terrorist group regardless of a group's ideology.⁸ The process starts with grievances and feelings of discomfort, turning to finding a responsible party who is demonized and dehumanized, creating an impulse for violence and aggression.⁹ Despite these commonalities, the radicalization process neither always ends with a violent action nor do all individuals exploit religion as a necessity for violence.¹⁰

As the research reveals, some scholars have been viewing radicalization narrowly, associating it singularly with Islamic ideology, considering Muslims who commit notorious acts of violence against humanity as the only radicals.¹¹ This notion has become a general belief whenever “terrorism” is discussed as Islamic extremist ideologists were behind the notorious 9/11 attack. Also, with the birth of ISIL in 2014, violence in the name of *jihad* became popular. Religious extremist recruitment reached its height, and the number of FTFs increased drastically within months of ISIL's founding. Hence, in the

⁷ İhsan Bal, Suleyman Ozeren, and Mehmet Alper Sozer, “Multi-Faceted Approach to Radicalization in Terrorist Organizations,” in *NATO Advanced Research Workshop on Developing Prevention Strategies and Tactics in Countering Radicalization*, NATO Science for Peace and Security Series E: Human and Societal Dynamics, vol. 87 (Amsterdam, Netherlands: IOS Press, 2011), 1.

⁸ Bal, Ozeren, and Sozer, 1.

⁹ Randy Borum, “Understanding the Terrorist Mind-Set,” *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* 72, no. 7 (2003): 7–10, https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1227&context=mhlp_facpub.

¹⁰ Bal, Ozeren, and Sozer, “Multi-Faceted Approach to Radicalization in Terrorist Organizations,” 25.

¹¹ Bal, Ozeren, and Sozer, 1.

scope of this thesis, radicalization is defined as the process of taking up violence in the name of a sacred aim,¹² justified by the *takfir*¹³ ideology.

Considering the preceding definition of radicalization, the rehabilitation process of violent religious extremists should require proper ideological changes before reintegrating FTFs into mainstream society. Several scholars believe that terrorist rehabilitation should include both disengagement and deradicalization concepts. Disengagement changes “one’s behavior by refraining from violence and withdrawing from a radical organization”¹⁴ while deradicalization is a concept that denotes changes in one’s ideology and psychological state.¹⁵ In this context, individuals could disengage from a terrorist organization or from participating in acts of violence for some time but could still become active later if not adequately deradicalized. Hence, for this study, I focus on deradicalization; a process that brings about an individual’s cognitive change from an extreme violent identity to a moderate ideological and psychological state.¹⁶

2. Deradicalization Framework for Analysis

Scholars have extensively researched the radicalization process to conceptualize the disengagement and rehabilitation of terrorists, assisting in organizing and enhancing state-level deradicalization programs. One of the early deradicalization theories, known as the Pro-Integration Model (PIM), focuses on two fronts: disengagement from the terrorist organization; and re-integration into mainstream society.¹⁷ In the PIM model, the process

¹² Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 54.

¹³ *Takfir* is a belief that justifies violence against non-Muslims and Muslims who deny the radical ideology. Islam does not recognize this ideology and highly contradicts the true meaning of *jihad* and the peaceful nature of the Islamic faith.

¹⁴ Angel Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2010), 5, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA534160.pdf>.

¹⁵ Marco Lombardi, Eman Ragab, and Vivienne Chin, “Countering Radicalisation and Violent Extremism among Youth to Prevent Terrorism,” in *Countering Violent Extremism Among Youth to Prevent Terrorism*, vol. 118, NATO Science for Peace and Security Series E: Human and Societal Dynamics (Milan, Italy: IOS Press, Incorporated, 2014), 121, ProQuest.

¹⁶ Lombardi, Ragab, and Chin, 121.

¹⁷ Kate Barrelle, “Pro-Integration: Disengagement from and Life after Extremism,” *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 7, no. 2 (November 2014): 129, ProQuest.

corresponds to three identity changes in FTFs: “a reduction in the intensity of their commitment to the extremist group, development of a new self-identity, and finding a new person or entity to identify with.”¹⁸ The concern with PIM is that the research primarily focuses on developing a disengagement and deradicalization framework in a Western democratic environment,¹⁹ so the model could have generalizing challenges. Additionally, this model places little emphasis on the psychological aspect of the deradicalization mechanism, which is an important area when rehabilitating FTFs.²⁰ By contrast, PIM stresses re-engagement with mainstream society and serves as a baseline for advanced developments in the field.

Additional research on the topic has evaluated existing deradicalization programs to generalize the concept. Although these efforts show that each country has adopted these programs specific to its contextual settings, some scholars have drawn standard lines of effort that could be utilized for a successful program. According to RAND’s study, a successful “deradicalization program should include affective, pragmatic, and ideological components and considerable after-care process.”²¹ This model is quite promising as it was designed through the evaluation of various deradicalization programs worldwide. The model involves disengagement alongside deradicalization and includes a post-program process for proper monitoring and surveillance.

Rabasa et al., authors of the RAND study *Deradicalizing Islamic Extremists*, further conceptualized the deradicalization components (affective, pragmatic, ideological, and post-program) into four lines of effort: psychological rehabilitation, religious rehabilitation, social rehabilitation, and aftercare process.²² Figure 1 shows RAND’s theorized deradicalization model.

¹⁸ Daniel Koehler, *Understanding Deradicalization: Methods, Tools and Programs for Countering Violent Extremism* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 80.

¹⁹ Barrelle, “Pro-Integration,” 129.

²⁰ Koehler, *Understanding Deradicalization*, 80.

²¹ Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, 42–44.

²² Rabasa et al., 42–44.

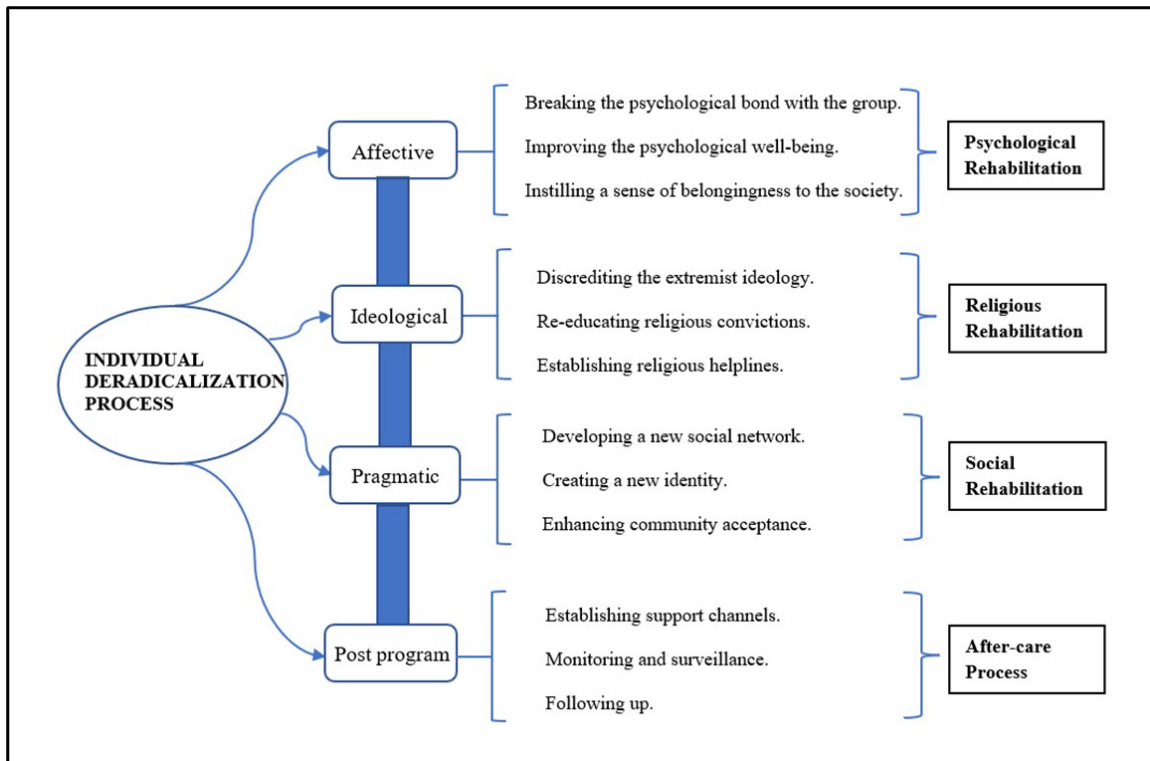


Figure 1. The conceptual framework for analyzing individual deradicalization process.²³

This thesis utilizes the framework detailed in Figure 1 as the theoretical basis for analysis. It is selected because this framework generalizes the concept of deradicalization, and the model is applicable to the Maldivian context.

C. METHODOLOGY

This study employs multiple case studies as the research design for two main reasons. First, the case study research design is ideal for organizational assessment as the methodology allows an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon under study.²⁴ As this thesis focuses on designing a deradicalization program mainly for religious extremists who are returning FTFs, this method facilitates the analysis of existing programs addressing the

²³ Adapted from Rabasa et al., 42–44.

²⁴ Thomas W. Lee, *Using Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998), 54.

same phenomenon. Hence, selected cases for this study are specifically of programs focused on religious extremists' deradicalization.

Second, this method facilitates scrutinizing data relevant to a specific contextual setting.²⁵ RAND stated in one of its major research projects that “culture matters and deradicalization programs reflected the social and cultural characteristics of that specific country.”²⁶ This being said, the Maldives also has unique socio-cultural characteristics, such as practicing the same religion and speaking the same language across the populace. Hence, analyzing cases with similar features could reveal viable concepts in the Maldivian context.

In light of the aforementioned considerations, this thesis studies deradicalization programs in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Singapore. Saudi Arabia and Indonesia are Muslim-majority countries sharing similar religious backgrounds with the Maldives. Although Singapore has a Muslim minority, its deradicalization program is focused on religious extremists and is famous for its effectiveness and success.

D. OVERVIEW OF SELECTED CASES

The forthcoming sections provide a brief introduction to the selected deradicalization efforts in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Singapore.

1. Saudi Arabia's Deradicalization Program

Following a series of attacks by Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in 2003, Saudi Arabia formulated a comprehensive strategy to address religious extremism in the country.²⁷ Under the scope of its counterterrorism strategy, in 2004 Saudi Arabia started its deradicalization program known as Prevention, Rehabilitation, and After-Care (PRAC), which focuses on religious, social, psychological, and educational factors.²⁸

²⁵ Khalifa Ababacar Sy Diop and Ersi Liu, “Categorization of Case in Case Study Research Method: New Approach,” *Knowledge and Performance Management* 4, no. 1 (December 2020): 7–9, ProQuest.

²⁶ Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, 192.

²⁷ Thomas Hegghammer, “Islamist Violence and Regime Stability in Saudi Arabia,” *International Affairs* 84, no. 4 (July 2008): 701, ProQuest.

²⁸ Koehler, *Understanding Deradicalization*, 259.

The prevention part of the program (“*al Munasah*,” or Advice) starts in prison and lasts for two weeks, focusing on religious and psychological counseling for extremist detainees.²⁹ In addition, educational lectures for groups of six to ten participants are conducted for up to six weeks.³⁰ At the end of the prevention stage, those with no serious crimes who pass the assessments are transferred to the rehabilitation phase.³¹ During the period at the rehabilitation center (Prince Mohamed bin Nayef Center for Advice Care), “participants undergo rigorous group and individual psychological and theological counseling, vocational training, and art therapy.”³² Through exams, participants are assessed for moderate Islamic views and are mandated to demonstrate internalization of these views before release.³³ As part of the “After-Care” program after release, extensive financial assistance for life settlement in society is provided and individuals are kept under surveillance for some time.³⁴

According to the Saudi government, PRAC is 80% successful and has received international attention regarding its concept of deradicalization.³⁵ Notably, the Saudi government claimed a 100% success rate “until 2009, when 11 former Guantanamo detainees and other graduates returned to Al-Qaeda.”³⁶ Until 2015, around 2,000 detainees had undergone the Saudi program, and 700 were qualified for release.³⁷ Only nine re-engaged in terrorist activities and were reportedly arrested during this period. As for the claim of success, the Saudi program has recently changed its focus from deradicalization

²⁹ Andrew Silke, ed., *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism: Critical Issues in Management, Radicalisation and Reform* (London: Routledge, 2014), 172.

³⁰ Hamed El-Said and Jane Harrigan, *Deradicalising Violent Extremists: Counter-Radicalisation and Deradicalisation Programmes and Their Impact in Muslim Majority States*, 1st ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2013), 216.

³¹ El-Said and Harrigan, 216.

³² Koehler, *Understanding Deradicalization*, 259.

³³ Koehler, 260.

³⁴ Koehler, 260.

³⁵ Rohan Gunaratna and Mohamed Bin Ali, *Terrorist Rehabilitation: A New Frontier in Counter-Terrorism* (London: Imperial College Press, 2015), 21.

³⁶ Koehler, *Understanding Deradicalization*, 259.

³⁷ Koehler, 260.

to a disengagement approach, acknowledging the ineffective ideological change among “hard-core” extremists.³⁸

2. Indonesia’s Deradicalization Program

Indonesia’s counterterrorism center, known as *Badan Nasional Penganggulangan Terorisme* (BNPT), adopts the soft power approach in countering terrorism based on the view that law enforcement must utilize the humanitarian approach to discredit the extremists’ view on government authorities.³⁹ BNPT’s deradicalization effort has two main focus areas. First, programs are intended for ex-militants and their families outside the prison to reintegrate them into the community and prevent them from re-engaging in radicalization.⁴⁰ Second, programs designed for terrorism detainees at the prison concentrate on ideological change through identification, rehabilitation, reeducation, and resocialization.⁴¹

The identification stage is an investigation effort to detect suspected terrorists and individuals with radical views among the arrested who have not yet been identified as terrorists.⁴² The rehabilitation program, then, begins in prison, focusing on ideological moderation, treatment patterns, and fostering the detainees and their families.⁴³ Those detainees who pass the rehabilitation program evaluation are transferred to the reeducation stage, where the emphasis is given to religious understanding, tolerance of different views, and vocational training.⁴⁴ As the final stage, resocialization addresses fostering individuals’ personalities and independence and prepares the community to reintegrate

³⁸ Koehler, 260.

³⁹ Nur Paikah, “Kedudukan Dan Fungsi Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme (BNPT) Dalam Pemberantasan Terorisme Di Indonesia,” [Position and Function of the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) in Combating Terrorism in Indonesia.] *Al-Adalah: Jurnal Hukum Dan Politik Islam* 4, no. 1 (July 2019): 1, <https://jurnal.iain-bone.ac.id/index.php/aladalah/article/view/214/311>.

⁴⁰ Bella Widya, “Deradicalization in Indonesia: Implementation and Challenge,” *Journal of Terrorism Studies* 2, no. 1 (July 2020): 34, <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/jts/vol2/iss1/3/>.

⁴¹ Widya, 34.

⁴² Widya, 34.

⁴³ Widya, 35.

⁴⁴ Widya, 35.

them into society.⁴⁵ Although Indonesia's deradicalization efforts have received criticism for the lack of facilities, its utilization of ex-militants as interlocutors and the moderate recidivism rate are promising.⁴⁶

3. Singapore's Deradicalization Program

The imprisonment of several Jamaah Islamiya (JI) members suspected of planning terrorist plots in multiple locations in 2001 led Singaporean authorities to initiate an ideological-based rehabilitation program to deradicalize these individuals.⁴⁷ Singapore's deradicalization program consists of several stages that focus on psychological rehabilitation, religious rehabilitation, social rehabilitation, community involvement, and family support.⁴⁸ These components are interconnected and are conducted by professionals in the field.

The rehabilitation process begins in prison with multiple sessions and periodic assessments to check individual improvements. Psychologists conduct individual counseling sessions to enable prisoners to manage their emotions and develop better cognitive tools.⁴⁹ Concurrently, the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG), a non-governmental association of Islamic clerics in Singapore, conducts religious rehabilitation sessions to discredit participants' radical interpretations of Islam and impart mainstream religious interpretations.⁵⁰ During rehabilitation, community groups run public awareness programs and attend to inmates' families to facilitate their proper reintegration into mainstream society. Participants are reviewed on multiple criteria every year, and those who are no longer deemed a threat to the community may be released.⁵¹ Those few released

⁴⁵ Widya, 35.

⁴⁶ Koehler, *Understanding Deradicalization*, 272.

⁴⁷ Muhammad Haniff Bin Hassan and Kenneth George Pereire, "An Ideological Response to Combating Terrorism – The Singapore Perspective," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 17, no. 4 (December 2006): 458–77, ProQuest.

⁴⁸ Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, 96.

⁴⁹ Rabasa et al., 97.

⁵⁰ Silke, *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism*, 202–3.

⁵¹ Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, 96.

are kept under strict monitoring and surveillance, which may contribute to the absence of recidivism in the Singapore deradicalization program.⁵²

Singapore's deradicalization approach has received international acclaim for its success and applicability as a model for other states. As RAND concluded, "Singapore's terrorist rehabilitation program comes as close as any program can to the ideal type. It is because the Singapore program includes efforts to break a radical's commitment to an extremist group, continued support and monitoring after the individual completes the formal program, and the use of credible interlocutors to discredit radical Islamism."⁵³

E. THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis adopts a qualitative, multiple case study methodology to answer the research question. This research first analyzes deradicalization theories to identify common factors contributing to a successful program to set the stage. (Figure 1). The tools extracted from this study are utilized to analyze various state-level deradicalization programs for their effectiveness and applicability in the Maldives. Lastly, evaluated state-level lines of effort are compared qualitatively to draw a viable design for a deradicalization program aimed at violent religious extremists in the Maldives.

Chapter II focuses on the psychological rehabilitation concept of the deradicalization process. The concept and procedures adopted to break an individual's affective commitment to the terrorist organization in each selected case (Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Singapore programs) are evaluated separately. Discussed procedures are finally synthesized at the end of the chapter to identify the best practices and promising concepts that could be applied to formulate the Maldivian program.

Chapter III examines religious rehabilitation concepts and procedures in each selected case used to sever an individual's ideological commitment to the radical organization and develop true Islamic interpretations. These concepts are compared at the end of the chapter to identify promising procedures for the final model.

⁵² Koehler, *Understanding Deradicalization*, 270.

⁵³ Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, 103.

Chapter IV evaluates cases under the social rehabilitation concept. Each case is scrutinized to understand the concept and procedures adopted to break an individual's pragmatic commitment to the terrorist organization and develop the social bonding required for reintegration after release. Those promising and workable practices are identified at the end of the chapter.

Chapter V discusses post-program aftercare processes adopted by selected cases for the individual's proper reintegration in the community after completion of the program. The monitoring and surveillance procedures applicable are discussed at the end of the chapter.

Chapter VI formulates the Maldivian deradicalization model referring to the studies conducted in Chapters II to V. This thesis concludes with discussions and recommendations for the effective implementation of the Maldivian deradicalization model.

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II. PSYCHOLOGICAL REHABILITATION CONCEPT

Once individuals join an extremist organization, they are brainwashed into accepting the violent ideology and become dependent on the group for basic needs, binding them to the cause.⁵⁴ Leaving an environment where militants have acquired an identity and standing and have developed a sense of belonging can be a traumatizing and painful process.⁵⁵ Hence, several deradicalization programs focus on breaking the individual's psychological attachments to the organization and developing alternative means to fulfill these requirements.⁵⁶ This chapter focuses on identifying psychological rehabilitation concepts adopted in the state-level deradicalization programs of Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Singapore.

A. SAUDI ARABIA'S PRISON AND CARE CENTER-BASED PROGRAM

Treating individuals humanely and enabling them to participate voluntarily in the program is one of the main principles of the PRAC, as Saudi officials believe that individuals should decide for themselves to change their beliefs.⁵⁷ Psychological counseling for detainees commences in prison during the *al-Munasah* program, where each participant individually meets with a group of three professionals: a psychologist, a religious figure or a cleric, and security personnel.⁵⁸ At this early stage, joint meetings are more beneficial than individual counseling sessions as they provide a dynamic counseling process.⁵⁹ The participants can attend up to six sessions for two weeks, each lasting 90 minutes to three hours.⁶⁰ Individual dialogue is rarely allowed at this stage and is permitted only for those in extreme need of one-on-one counseling.

⁵⁴ Rabasa et al., 42.

⁵⁵ Koehler, *Understanding Deradicalization*, 225.

⁵⁶ Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, 43.

⁵⁷ El-Said and Harrigan, *Deradicalising Violent Extremists*, 216.

⁵⁸ El-Said and Harrigan, 216.

⁵⁹ El-Said and Harrigan, 216.

⁶⁰ El-Said and Harrigan, 216.

More robust psychological rehabilitation starts when detainees pass final assessments of the *al-Munasah* and enter a care program outside the prison in Muhammed Bin Nayef Care Centre. At this stage, individuals constantly undergo psychological assessments and counseling sessions focused on controlling personal emotions and improving self-management.⁶¹ Additionally, individuals are also trained in positive thinking and how to handle psychological pressure, understand psychological abnormality, overcome anxiety, and develop self-confidence.⁶² The program managers keep close associations with the participants during the care program. Also, participants' families are extensively involved during this care phase to develop a strong bond before release. Those who successfully pass the assessments at this stage are eligible for release.

B. INDONESIA'S HUMANE TREATMENT APPROACH

Indonesia's National Counter Terrorism Agency adopts a "soft" approach in deradicalizing violent religious extremists to build trust between prisoners and officers. The program commences with a psychological assessment to identify the individual's level of radicalization and continues prison-based rehabilitation primarily aimed at ideological change.⁶³ Although the rehabilitation is conducted in prison, Indonesia's program is humanitarian-based rather than securitization based, focusing on treating detainees humanely and working with them to impart a positive attitude toward themselves and the community.⁶⁴ Additionally, this approach minimizes the impression of punishment and convinces and discredits beliefs that government officials are anti-Islamic.

The success of Indonesia's "soft" approach to deradicalization was evident when some former militants volunteered to cooperate with authorities in identifying and

⁶¹ Silke, *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism*, 174.

⁶² El-Said and Harrigan, *Deradicalising Violent Extremists*, 218.

⁶³ Mohammed Ilyas and Rayvinder Athwal, "De-Radicalisation and Humanitarianism in Indonesia," *Social Sciences* 10, no. 3 (March 2021): 1–17, ProQuest.

⁶⁴ Zachary Abuza, "The Rehabilitation of Jemaah Islamiyah Detainees in South East Asia: A Preliminary Assessment 1," in *Leaving Terrorism Behind*, ed. Tore Bjorgo and John G. Horgan (London: Routledge, 2008), 198–99.

rehabilitating their ex-companions.⁶⁵ The use of ex-militants as interlocutors is this program's most visible psychological aspect. These interlocutors reach out to their former colleagues, discrediting the terrorist cause and psychologically persuading them to abandon violence. For instance, Nasir Abbas, a former militant in Afghanistan, played an agent of influence role in convincing more than a dozen former JI members to cooperate with the government authorities. Hence, ex-militants' inclusion in Indonesia's program seems beneficial in compelling counter-narratives to bring a cognitive change in participants.

C. SINGAPORE'S STRICT ISOLATION CONCEPT

As an important area of focus in the Singapore program, individuals interacting with detainees are trained in psychology and counter-narrative techniques to establish a full-time rehabilitation engagement.⁶⁶ For instance, some RRG members undergo more than seven months of training on mastering counseling techniques and qualifying in psychology before actively contributing to the deradicalization program.⁶⁷ Psychological rehabilitation in earnest commences with a thorough vetting process by psychologists immediately after detainees' imprisonment to categorize and identify their level of radicalization and involvement in a terrorist organization.

The participants in the Singapore program are restricted from socializing with other groups, mainly to reduce radicalization within the prison and break their affective commitment to the terrorist group.⁶⁸ Psychological evaluation and counseling sessions are conducted in individual cells away from the group dynamic. Psychologists and scholars meet with individual detainees daily along with prison staff. Every session aims to evaluate the individual's psychological condition and understand his ethical reasoning for joining

⁶⁵ Kirsten E Schulze, "Indonesia's Approach to Jihadist Deradicalization," *CTC Sentinel* 1, no. 8 (July 2008): 8–9, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Vol1Iss8-Art3.pdf>.

⁶⁶ Hamed El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism: Designing and Evaluating Counter Radicalization and de-Radicalization Programs*, New Security Challenges, 2731–0329 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 159, ProQuest.

⁶⁷ El-Said, 159.

⁶⁸ El-Said, 160.

the group.⁶⁹ Concurrently, psychologists utilize acquired information to provide appropriate counseling to neutralize the radical ideology, initiate skills to cope with emotional instabilities, and assist the individual in developing better cognitive tools.⁷⁰ Although psychologists discuss detainees' situations and feelings, they do not force them to change their values; participants need to change them by themselves.⁷¹

Moreover, the Singapore program recognizes the importance of a family's psychological well-being during an individual's rehabilitation process. Authorities understand the difficult time families undergo when a relative is detained and hence provide emotional and psychological counseling to the participants' family members.⁷² Family visits are also allowed once a week to avoid participants' loneliness and separation from their families.⁷³ Eventually, a stronger psychological bond is developed between detainees and their families before the completion of the program.

D. FINDINGS AND SYNTHESIS

The main aim of psychological rehabilitation is to break individuals' affective commitment to the terrorist organization, improve their psychological well-being, instill a sense of belonging in society to disengage entirely from the terrorist organization, and bring about a cognitive behavioral change. As seen from the preceding discussions, these state-level programs include psychological components in their deradicalization programs for effective rehabilitation. Table 1 summarizes the study's overall findings.

⁶⁹ El-Said, 160.

⁷⁰ Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, 97.

⁷¹ Rabasa et al., 97.

⁷² El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism*, 161.

⁷³ Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, 97.

Table 1. Summary of the psychological rehabilitation concepts studied.⁷⁴

Country	Breaking the Psychological Bond with the Group	Improving Psychological Well-Being	Instilling a Sense of Belonging with Society
Saudi Arabia	- Starts the initial counseling program in the prison. - Conducts “care program” outside the prison in the care centers. - Categorizes into groups before enrolling in the care program.	- Conducts counseling sessions to help individuals control personal emotions and improve their self-management. - Trains individuals in positive thinking, handling pressure, overcoming anxiety, and developing self-confidence.	- Treats the participants humanely. - Keeps a close association with the participants. - Involves family in the care program.
Indonesia	- Conducts the entire program inside the prison. - Categorizes the individuals into groups.	- Conducts counseling sessions to impart a positive attitude toward themselves and the community. - Utilizes ex-militants as panelists to improve participants’ cooperation.	- Treats the participants humanely. - Keeps a close association with the participants.
Singapore	- Conducts the entire program inside the prison. - Categorizes individuals into groups and avoids mixing of groups. - Prevents socializing among the groups. - Conducts cell-based counseling sessions.	- Conducts counseling sessions for participants to cope with emotional instabilities and develop better cognitive tools.	- Conducts counseling for families to improve their psychological well-being. - Focuses on developing a strong family bond.

The following sections analyze the promising psychological rehabilitation concepts from the preceding discussions.

1. Breaking the Psychological Bond with the Group

The three programs reveal that breaking an individual’s psychological bond to a terrorist organization requires physical disengagement and psychological and emotional detachment from the terrorism causes. In all the cases analyzed, individuals are physically disengaged from the terrorist organization before enrolling in the deradicalization program. In Indonesia and Singapore, the respective programs are entirely prison-based. The Saudi

⁷⁴ Adapted from Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*; El-Said and Harrigan, *Deradicalising Violent Extremists: Counter-Radicalisation and Deradicalisation Programmes and Their Impact in Muslim Majority State*; Koehler, *Understanding Deradicalization*; Ilyas and Athwal, *De-Radicalisation and Humanitarianism in Indonesia*; Widya, *Deradicalization in Indonesia: Implementation and Challenge*; El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism: Designing and Evaluating Counter Radicalization and de-Radicalization Programs*.

program conducts its initial counseling stage in prison while its care program is conducted outside the prison, even isolated from mainstream society. This technique looks promising as this type of rehabilitation requires breaking one's psychological bond with the terrorist group and developing new bonds to fill the consequent void. It will be challenging for the FTF to create a new psychological bond with families, friends, or the community if the whole program is prison-based. A better technique might be to initially have strict prison-based isolation to confirm the effective breaking of psychological bonds with the terrorist group, followed by more lenient isolation for the last portion of the program. This will allow families to participate in the program's later stage, enabling them to develop a strong family bond with the deradicalized individual before his release. However, it is essential to follow strict categorization in both stages and implement steps to avoid mixing the groups to prevent further radicalization. Also, confirming that the associated family members do not possess a radical ideology is critical.

2. Improving the Psychological Well-Being

It is common for the participants to experience psychological breakdowns, loneliness, and boredom in the initial stages of the rehabilitation, so counseling plays a vital role in helping them manage their emotions. All these programs conduct psychological counseling sessions for the participants. The Saudi and Singaporean programs implement counseling sessions through professional psychologists and conduct formal classes to teach them to cope with psychological problems. The sessions in the Singapore program are more frequent and more individual-focused. One common concept in these two programs is having a group of professionals conduct sessions focused on providing counter-narratives. This concept looks appealing as group narratives are psychologically more convincing and are advantageous in winning a conversation. Similarly, Indonesia's program utilizes ex-militants as interlocutors to discredit terrorist ideology and provide counter-narratives.⁷⁵ In one sense, this concept allows participants to be convinced easily as it is psychologically effective to persuade "in-group" individuals. On the other hand, ex-militants' engagement throughout the program may minimize

⁷⁵ Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, 107.

breaking the individual's psychological attachment to the terrorist group and impact the development of a new bond with the moderate society away from the violent community. If former militants are utilized, it should be done in the early stages and only a few times.

3. Instilling a Sense of Belonging to the Society

One of the appealing concepts in instilling a sense of belonging to society is the “humanitarian-based” approach to dealing with detainees. This concept is also believed effective in building self-esteem, reducing grievances, and altering the feeling of revenge even after the deradicalized individual's release. The approach persuades participants to accept that government officials are not anti-Islamic, contrary to terrorists' basic ideology. In this approach, as the program continues, case officers build trust with the detainees, and in some instances, the relationship continues even after the individuals' release, creating a new social circle. Also, developing this affiliation during the program allows better monitoring of the participants through case officers when participants are released. Similarly, the Saudi concept of family involvement in the care program enhances family bonds. This technique compels participants to continue close ties with family members even after release. Also, family involvement in the program encourages participants to continue with the rehabilitation process and motivates them to meet the program requirements as soon as possible to get eligible for release.

4. What Works in Psychological Rehabilitation

The effectiveness of the psychological concept depends on the degree of participants' cooperation, for which they should possess a positive attitude towards the program. According to a recent review of the evidence (RoE) by Cross-Border Conflict Evidence/Policy/Trends (XCEPT), humane treatment and good communication play a constructive role in fueling participants' positive attitudes and desire for cooperation.⁷⁶ The survey, carried out with Indonesian program participants, showed their strong

⁷⁶ Rajan Basra, *Review of Evidence: Prison-Based Interventions Targeting Violent Extremist Detainees*, Cross-Border Conflict Evidence, Policy and Trends Research Program (London: XCEPT, 2022), 10, https://xcept-research.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/2022-07-19_RoE-Prison-Interventions-V4-Jul19.pdf.

inclination to humanism and humbleness.⁷⁷ The participants even desired to be called “beneficiaries” rather than prisoners or detainees.⁷⁸ Such individuals are more likely to cooperate, even in prison-based programs, if treated well. A better option is to have part of the program conducted away from prison, like in the Saudi program, so that participants will have a period of disengagement and time for their empowerment and reintegration during the process. The XCEPT’s review also identified utilizing former group leaders in these programs as an effective method to discredit violent beliefs.⁷⁹ This method can successfully disengage an individual from a terrorist group, but its effectiveness in changing the individual’s radical ideology is dubious. Also, extensive usage of ex-militants can hinder the process of breaking an individual’s psychological attachment to the terrorist organization. Hence, the most effective use of ex-militants may be limited to the early stage when convincing participants of the inaccuracy of their beliefs and making them more cooperative.

The study reveals that psychological rehabilitation plays a vital role in the overall success of deradicalization programs. Figure 2 summarizes the promising techniques of the psychological rehabilitation concepts from the studied state-level deradicalization programs.

⁷⁷ Zora A. Sukabdi, “Terrorism in Indonesia: A Review on Rehabilitation and Deradicalization,” *Contemporary Voices: St Andrews Journal of International Relations* 6, no. 2 (May 2015), <http://cvir.st-andrews.ac.uk/articles/10.15664/jtr.1154/>.

⁷⁸ Basra, *Review of Evidence: Prison-Based Interventions Targeting Violent Extremist Detainees*, 10.

⁷⁹ Basra, 11.

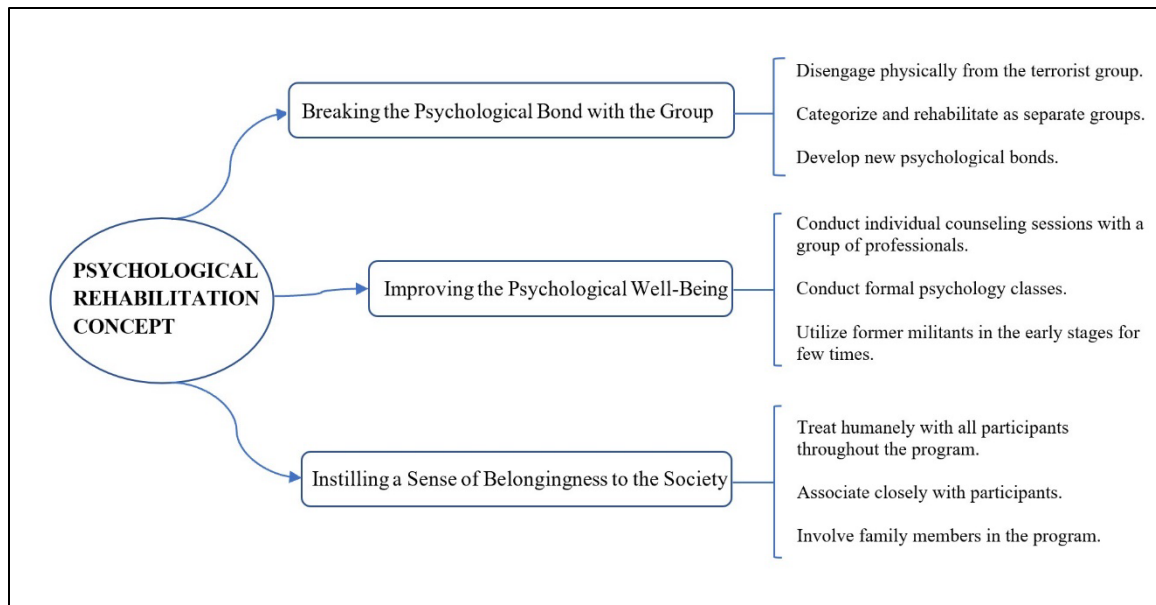


Figure 2. Promising techniques for psychological rehabilitation.

E. CONCLUSION

This chapter has analyzed the importance of psychological rehabilitation in breaking the affective commitment of a violent religious extremist to a terrorist organization in deradicalization programs. The study shows that these state-level programs have adopted concepts to break the participant's psychological bond with a terrorist organization, improve his psychological well-being, and instill in him a sense of belonging to society. Different techniques can be utilized to achieve these goals. Some of the appealing psychological concepts that can be used in other countries' programs are displayed in Figure 2. The following chapter discusses ideological rehabilitation concepts in state-level deradicalization programs.

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III. RELIGIOUS REHABILITATION CONCEPT

Religious rehabilitation is central for many deradicalization programs as they focus on individuals defined “by their endorsement of violence based on religious beliefs as their primary clientele.”⁸⁰ Often these ideologies are based on misinterpretations of religious concepts and ideals. Altering an individual’s ideology, once the justification for violence and killing, can be challenging and should address critical factors to reform. As part of religious rehabilitation, several deradicalization programs break participants’ ideological commitment to the terrorist group, discredit violent extremist ideology, provide religious reeducation, and establish religious helplines to assist participants even after their release. This chapter analyzes various religious rehabilitation concepts adopted in the state-level deradicalization programs of Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Singapore.

A. SAUDI ARABIA’S REPENTANCE-CENTERED APPROACH

The main focus of the *al Munasah* program is to discredit the misinterpretations of Islam and replace them with the authentic version of tolerant beliefs. The program provides advice for the participants, offering various options for them to decide on repentance.⁸¹ Even entry to the *al Munasah* program is voluntary as Saudi authorities disbelieve in the success of a forceful rehabilitation process. When an individual decides to participate in the program, the first two weeks consist of individual meetings with a group of professionals. This group includes a psychologist, a religious scholar, and a security official. These experts listen to the participants, encourage them to share their narratives, debate, and provide counter-narratives referring to the Qur’an and Sunnah to correct their ideologies and try to convince them to repent.⁸² Repentance is one of the major focus areas in the Saudi program. For some participants, repentance comes quickly, but for others, it takes the whole program until they are convinced. The latter portion of the *al Munasah* involves group classes focusing on religious debates and dialogues, including lectures on *jihad* in Islam, tolerance in diverse

⁸⁰ Koehler, *Understanding Deradicalization*, 83.

⁸¹ El-Said and Harrigan, *Deradicalising Violent Extremists*, 216.

⁸² Silke, *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism*, 171–72.

societies, issues of *takfir* ideology, authority to issue *fatwas*, and the responsibilities of the *ulema*.⁸³ Interestingly, individual cells have equipment installed for participants to watch religious television programs on advocated convictions and connect through intercoms with the scholars in case an individual needs to debate or has a query.⁸⁴ Also, detainees have access to the right kind of religious books, *fatwas*, and pamphlets to create interest in reading and self-education.

After completing the sentence and fulfilling the *al Munasah* standards, participants enroll in more structured classes in the care program focused on serious dialogue and debate.⁸⁵ Although these dialogues and courses aim to enrich and reinforce the *al Munasah* goals, the discussions involve a more significant number of credible scholars and cover the topics in more depth.⁸⁶ Throughout the care program, religious scholars focus on revisiting the radicalized religious ideals and promoting repentance, tolerance, and moderation.⁸⁷ The main objective is to reeducate participants about the conditions and circumstances for *jihad* in Islam, including the sole right of the ruler to declare *jihad* and the need for his permission for the same.⁸⁸ Those eligible for release are encouraged to continue meetings with the same scholars after release.⁸⁹ Reportedly as a success, most released participants in the Saudi program are seen not going back to violence as per their previous beliefs.⁹⁰

B. INDONESIA’S UTILIZATION OF FORMER MILITANTS IN THE PROGRAM

Discrediting the violent extremist ideology is one of the main focus areas of Indonesia’s prison-based deradicalization program. The majority of convicts are radicalized

⁸³ El-Said and Harrigan, *Deradicalising Violent Extremists*, 217.

⁸⁴ El-Said and Harrigan, 217.

⁸⁵ Silke, *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism*, 173.

⁸⁶ El-Said and Harrigan, *Deradicalising Violent Extremists*, 217.

⁸⁷ Silke, *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism*, 173–74.

⁸⁸ El-Said and Harrigan, *Deradicalising Violent Extremists*, 217.

⁸⁹ Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, 74.

⁹⁰ Christopher Boucek, *Saudi Arabia’s “Soft” Counterterrorism Strategy: Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare*, Carnegie Papers 97 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2008), 23, ProQuest.

on the *takfir* ideology promoting the establishment of a caliphate and labeling all who deny the belief as infidels. Even the most respected religious scholars have little credibility in the face of these militants because they believe these scholars have failed to establish a caliphate in Indonesia.⁹¹ In this case, detainees speak only to those they believe credible and trusted. Therefore, initially, Indonesia incorporated former militants as interlocutors to denounce extremist views on Islam and showed promising results.⁹²

The utilization of ex-militants in discrediting the extremist ideology seems quite effective in the Indonesian program as participants consider them credible and trust them. These former militants do not strive to change the detainees' view of an Islamic state but rather convince them, referring to the Qur'an and Sunnah, of a lesser need for a caliphate.⁹³ They explain to them the consequences that might arise from a caliphate, providing examples from their own experience. For instance, Nasir Abbas, a former Afghan militant, elaborated to detainees how the situation escalated when different militant groups fought to get into power, despite all having the goal of establishing an Islamic state in Afghanistan.⁹⁴ As a result, many agreed to leave violence and cooperate with government authorities.

Additionally, a more structured ideological rehabilitation approach occurs in BNPT's deradicalization program at the rehabilitation and reeducation stages, where prestigious religious scholars are utilized. During the rehabilitation phase, the participants can debate at counseling sessions, ultimately discrediting their views through actual Islamic teachings based on the Qur'an and Sunnah.⁹⁵ Discussions and dialogues at this stage are focused on the ideological moderation of an individual's perspective.⁹⁶ As the final attempt at religious rehabilitation, the reeducation phase aims to develop a sense of tolerance among participants, prompting them to accept and live with others outside the group.⁹⁷ Discussions and dialogues

⁹¹ Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, 107.

⁹² Schulze, "Indonesia's Approach to Jihadist Deradicalization," 1–2.

⁹³ Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, 113.

⁹⁴ Rabasa et al., 113.

⁹⁵ Widya, "Deradicalization in Indonesia: Implementation and Challenge," 35.

⁹⁶ Widya, 35.

⁹⁷ Widya, 35.

at this stage focus on enhancing religious understanding, strengthening ethical reasoning, and emphasizing norms, laws, and order as part of the religious reeducation process. Those who successfully pass the rehabilitation and reeducation process enter the final phase of deradicalization, the resocialization stage. In most cases, the established detainee and religious scholar affiliation through these stages continues even after the detainee's release.

Although the utilization of former militants in the Indonesian program initially assisted in onboarding many extremists, this method does not guarantee inmates' ideological reform.⁹⁸ In one of the interventions in 2013, BNPT utilized former militants and famous clerics from the Middle East to conduct a course for jihadist inmates, but the detainees revealed no apparent effect, according to some researchers who interviewed the inmates.⁹⁹

C. SINGAPORE PROGRAM'S GREATER EMPHASIS ON PREVENTING FURTHER DETAINEES' RADICALIZATION

The Religious Rehabilitation Program (RRP) of Singapore has made a consistent effort to disengage detainees from violent ideology and further initiation or spread of extremist views within the prison and through family members to avoid further radicalization of detainees. The participants of this program are carefully assessed before they are placed in individual cells to avoid mixing with other prisoners.¹⁰⁰ This categorization is based on their level of radicalization: hardcore radicals, those on the verge of deradicalization, and those who are neither hardcore members nor on the brink of deradicalization.¹⁰¹ Although family visits are allowed during the program, they are limited to a single meeting after two weeks in some cases.¹⁰² These interactions are avoided as much as possible to minimize the chance of spreading radical ideas from an already radicalized relative.¹⁰³ The RRG even conducts

⁹⁸ Basra, *Review of Evidence: Prison-Based Interventions Targeting Violent Extremist Detainees*, 11.

⁹⁹ Basra, 11.

¹⁰⁰ El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism*, 160.

¹⁰¹ El-Said, 161.

¹⁰² El-Said, 161.

¹⁰³ El-Said, 161.

family religious counseling sessions to identify and attend to the presence of extreme ideology among the relatives to avoid detainees being unexpectedly exposed to radical views.¹⁰⁴

The Singaporean authorities utilize a group of religious scholars and teachers with appropriate credentials and authority (RRG), and sometimes former militants, to conduct religious rehabilitation as part of the deradicalization program, re-educating detainees to instill in them more moderate views of Islam.¹⁰⁵ The RRG attempts to counter three main common extremist ideologies, including the notion of constant *jihadi* obligation against infidels, the establishment of an Islamic state for the actual practice of Islam, and the belief that Muslims must hate non-Muslims.¹⁰⁶ They also focus on correcting the misinterpretations of religious concepts “such as *al wala’ wal bara* (loyalty to God and Muslims and disavowal of infidels), *jama’ah* (community), *bai’ah* (the oath of allegiance to leaders), *ummah* (the Muslim Community), *jihad*, and *daula Islamiyah* (the Islamic State).”¹⁰⁷ The RRG aims to extricate and negate these misconceptions and misinterpretations through multiple counseling sessions and a theological dialogue model to bring a credible ideological rehabilitation.¹⁰⁸

D. FINDINGS AND SYNTHESIS

As seen from the preceding discussions, religious rehabilitation is essential when deradicalizing violent religious extremists, as misinterpretation of religious concepts is the primary factor for radicalization in these countries. Although the methods and concepts differ by state, every program strives to incorporate a religious component, which is the main factor in assessing an individual’s successful deradicalization. Table 2 summarizes the study’s overall findings.

¹⁰⁴ El-Said, 161.

¹⁰⁵ Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, 98.

¹⁰⁶ Rabasa et al., 99.

¹⁰⁷ Lawrence Rubin, Rohan Gunaratna, and Jolene Anne R. Jerard, *Terrorist Rehabilitation and Counter-Radicalisation: New Approaches to Counter-Terrorism* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2011), 41–42, ProQuest.

¹⁰⁸ Rubin, Gunaratna, and Jerard, 41–44.

Table 2. Summary of the religious rehabilitation concepts studied.¹⁰⁹

Country	Discrediting the Extremist Ideology	Re-educating Religious Convictions	Establishing Religious Helplines
Saudi Arabia	- Conducts individual counseling sessions through a group of professionals. - Holds debates to counter extremist ideology. - Corrects the detainees' ideals referring to the Qur'an and Sunnah. - Promotes repentance, tolerance, and moderation.	- Provides a counter-narrative from the Qur'an and Sunnah. - Conducts classes on special religious topics and terminologies like <i>jihad</i> and <i>takfir</i>. - Provides equipment to watch credible religious programs. - Provides credible religious books and pamphlets to the detainees.	- Connects detainees with religious scholars through intercoms during imprisonment. - Encourages detainees to continue meetings with religious scholars even after release.
Indonesia	- Incorporates former militants as interlocutors and credible religious scholars as counselors and educators. - Focuses on downplaying the importance of a caliphate. - Corrects the detainees' ideals referring to the Qur'an and Sunnah.	- Provides a counter-narrative from the Qur'an and Sunnah through credible religious scholars. - Focuses on ideological moderation and enhancing religious understanding through dialogue. - Educates on ethical reasoning, norms, law, and order.	- Establishes detainee and scholar affiliation, which continues even after release.
Singapore	- Categorizes individuals depending on their level of radicalization. - Focuses on strictly preventing further detainee radicalization. - Utilizes credible religious scholars as counselors and educators.	- Provides counter-narratives on main extremist ideologies. - Educates on special religious topics and terminologies like <i>Jihad</i> and <i>Ummah</i> through multiple counseling sessions and theological dialogue.	- Continues detainees' affiliation with RRG as they all belong to the same community in Singapore's multi-ethnic society.

The following sections analyze the various religious rehabilitation concepts based on the techniques adopted to discredit extremist ideology, methods of religious reeducation, and establishment of a religious helpline to identify promising practices.

¹⁰⁹ Adapted from Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*; Boucek, *Saudi Arabia's "Soft" Counterterrorism Strategy: Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare*; El-Said and Harrigan, *Deradicalising Violent Extremists: Counter-Radicalisation and Deradicalisation Programmes and Their Impact in Muslim Majority State*; Koehler, *Understanding Deradicalization*; Widya, *Deradicalization in Indonesia: Implementation and Challenge*; El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism: Designing and Evaluating Counter Radicalization and de-Radicalization Program*.

1. Discrediting the Extremist Ideology

Discrediting a detainee's extremist ideology requires physically isolating the detainee from other radicalized individuals and providing a counter-narrative from a credible interlocutor because influence depends on the level of trust the detainee has in the narrative that must not be eroded by the presence of contradictory views. In all the cases analyzed, the role of credible interlocutors in religious rehabilitation is essential because participants only listen to scholars they accept. The Saudi Arabia and Singapore programs employ prestigious religious scholars to debate with the detainees. On the other hand, Indonesia seems to utilize religious scholars and former militants as interlocutors to negate the extremist ideology. Former militants might be more credible voices for the purpose, but participants might not sufficiently isolate themselves from the radical ideology if this method is used throughout the program. Also, it can be ineffective to use interlocutors who have no theological credibility.¹¹⁰

Categorizing is another critical facet to focus on, as individuals can be radicalized to differing degrees, and their involvement in the violence might also differ. All three programs categorize the participants before enrolling them in the proper deradicalization process. The concept of categorizing looks promising, as every effort should be made to avoid FTFs' further radicalization and exposure to extreme views while they are in the process of deradicalization. The process should take place before imprisonment and continue throughout the program to bring successful results.

2. Providing Religious Reeducation and Religious Helplines

Religious reeducation is another area of focus for these deradicalization programs, as a true Islamic narrative should be provided to fill the gap when the extremist ideology is being countered. The Saudi program approaches participants directly through structured classes, discussions, and dialogues. They also attempt reeducation covertly by providing religious television programs, videos, books, and pamphlets to enhance religious knowledge and impart a mainstream narrative. Singapore and Indonesia also utilize a theological model to reeducate

¹¹⁰ Basra, *Review of Evidence: Prison-Based Interventions Targeting Violent Extremist Detainees*, 17.

detainees, but it is less comprehensive than that of Saudi Arabia. Religious education in the Saudi care center is more intensive and utilizes more religious scholars than any other deradicalization programs. This is possible because Islam was first revealed in Saudi Arabia, and the actual knowledge should still exist in their education system. Hence, Saudi Arabia has the option of gathering more credible religious scholars than any other country. In any case, it is crucial to confirm that the scholars possess actual Islamic knowledge directly from the Qur'an and Sunnah. Especially, references to the prophet's Sunnah should be readily available for everyone to submit throughout the program.

Additionally, the Saudi and Indonesian programs strongly emphasize the ongoing affiliation of participants with the scholars they meet during rehabilitation programs so that they continue meetings after release. In most cases, participants develop intense relationships with the clerics they meet in the program and continue the affiliation even after release.¹¹¹ This method of instilling trust between participants and scholars seems promising because individuals tend to refer to the scholars they trust most for religious clarifications. Some of their doubts might not be related to extremist ideology but be personal. Hence, the individuals obviously will have personal preferences in selecting a religious scholar. The concept provides options for the participants to choose by themselves rather than for authorities to attach them to any scholar strictly.

3. What Works in Religious Rehabilitation

The XCEPT's RoE shows that categorization and religious education have a positive impact on the success of deradicalization programs.¹¹² The study was carried out in Camp Bucca and Camp Cropper in Iraq. There was minimal screening and rehabilitation in both camps from 2004 to 2007, leading to a re-internment rate of 6.34%.¹¹³ From 2007 to 2008, these two camps categorized the participants and conducted religious rehabilitation programs to produce a re-internment rate of 0.33%.¹¹⁴ This shows that even rudimentary screening and

¹¹¹ Boucek, *Saudi Arabia's "Soft" Counterterrorism Strategy*, 24.

¹¹² Basra, *Review of Evidence: Prison-Based Interventions Targeting Violent Extremist Detainees*, 13.

¹¹³ Basra, 13.

¹¹⁴ Basra, 13.

basic religious rehabilitation produce a higher success rate. Hence, in any deradicalization program, categorization is essential to avoid further radicalization. Participants should be screened according to their level of radicalization and the degree of their involvement in the terrorist organization. Mixing these categories should be avoided at any cost throughout the program for a good result.

Religious teachings should also be tailored for individual categories, because each category requires a different level of education. For instance, the core militant will need a solid counter-narrative to discredit his ideology whereas peripheral extremists or sympathizers might easily be convinced even with a mild counter-narrative. Also, acknowledging the teachings depends on how open the participant is to accepting other voices and viewpoints. The most promising rehabilitation programs utilize credible religious scholars from the *ulema* for counter-narrative and religious re-education.

The study reveals that religious rehabilitation plays an essential role in the overall success of deradicalization programs. Figure 3 summarizes the promising techniques of the religious rehabilitation approaches from the studied state-level deradicalization programs.

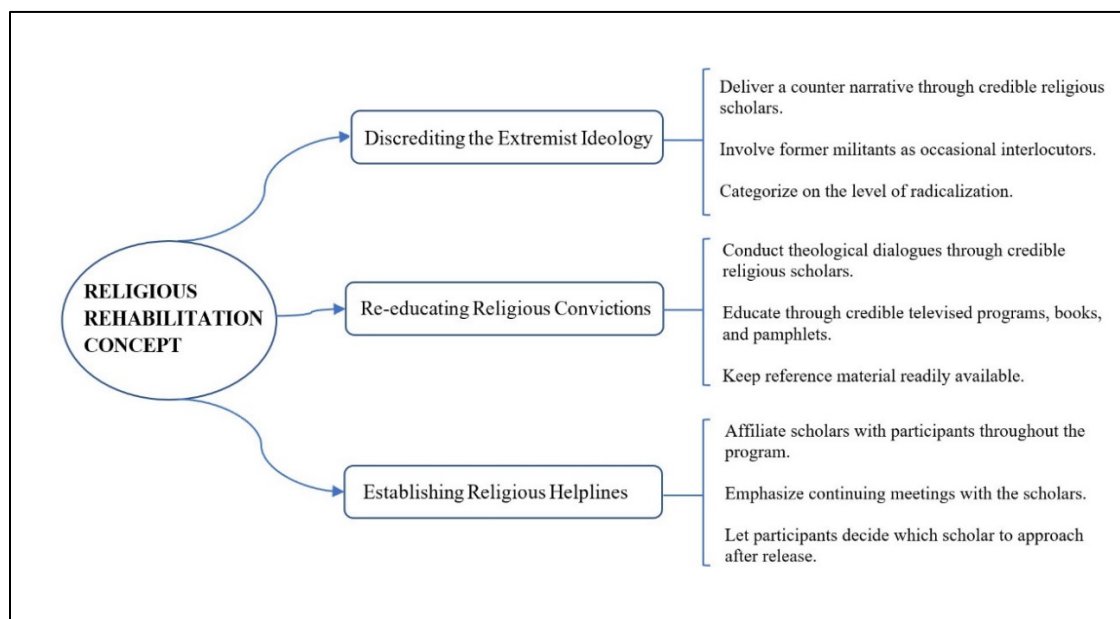


Figure 3. Promising techniques for religious rehabilitation.

E. CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the importance of religious rehabilitation in breaking the ideological commitment of a violent religious extremist to a terrorist organization during deradicalization programs. It is identified that discrediting and countering extremist ideology requires categorization, and using a credible scholar or interlocutor as the factor of trust is vital in convincing radical minds. If former militants are utilized as interlocutors, they should be well-educated on religious matters. Such individuals should be used to a limited extent, as breaking detainees from extremist ideology requires isolating them from like-minded individuals. The study also shows that along with discrediting the radical ideology, emphasis should be made on imparting the correct religious teachings through reeducation by credible religious scholars. Also, developing an affiliation between scholars and participants looks vital to establish a religious helpline even after participants are released from the deradicalization program. This might assist in continuously evaluating the individual's ideological status and attending to the individual well before his re-engagement with radical groups.

Some of the appealing religious education techniques that can be used in other countries' programs are displayed in Figure 3. The following chapter discusses social rehabilitation concepts in state-level deradicalization programs.

IV. SOCIAL REHABILITATION CONCEPT

Developing a new social network, creating a new identity, and enhancing community acceptance through rehabilitation are vital for successfully reintegrating those deradicalized individuals into mainstream society and for reducing the likelihood of their re-engagement with radical groups.¹¹⁵ When individuals enter a radical organization, they develop a sense of belonging within the group, attaching them firmly to the party and making it difficult for them to leave. Individual identities are created for them to pursue a cause and a purpose to work for the organization. Hence, disengaged individuals need family and friends to support them and a community that accepts them, where they can have a new identity and a purpose to live and belong to society.¹¹⁶ The chances of re-engagement are high if those released are not reintegrated adequately into a community that encourages a moderate ideology. Several countries have attempted to incorporate a social component into their deradicalization programs to reintegrate individuals into mainstream society. This chapter analyzes various social rehabilitation concepts adopted in the state-level deradicalization programs of Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Singapore.

A. SAUDI ARABIA'S INCLUSION OF EXTENSIVE FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROGRAM

One of the bases of the Saudi program is the detainees' reintegration process, where extensive social support is provided, and the family members are involved in the detainees' successful rehabilitation. In this way, the Saudi program emphasizes compassion and benevolence.¹¹⁷ Program organizers seek to offset hardship incurred to the family due to a relative's imprisonment and determine the needs the detainee and the family might have during custody and after release.¹¹⁸ During the detainee's incarceration, authorities attend to

¹¹⁵ Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, 20.

¹¹⁶ Rabasa et al., 21.

¹¹⁷ Christopher Boucek, *Leaving Terrorism Behind* (London: Routledge, 2008), 219, ProQuest.

¹¹⁸ Boucek, 219.

the families' health, education, and household necessities.¹¹⁹ The program managers believe that there is a high possibility that the terrorist groups might fulfill the family's needs if the government does not engage them and attend to their requirements.¹²⁰ Additionally, Saudi authorities encourage family visits to see the progress of their relatives by themselves and allow them to talk to the participants to moderate their views.¹²¹ The government even covers the expenses of these visits. Family members advise participants to repent and encourage them to complete the program. Moreover, to strengthen the social network, when qualified, participants are granted "family leave" once every two months and allowed to spend a day or two off for certain social events with a signed guarantee by family members.¹²²

The Saudi program also has incorporated several techniques to create a new identity for the participants as part of the effort to reintegrate them into society. The "care program" participants are encouraged to express their emotions and feelings through artwork and participate in culture and history lectures.¹²³ The participants engage in several non-curricular activities such as sports, social events, and competitions.¹²⁴ Those who qualify for the release are encouraged to get married under government coverage and receive a stipend of SR 2,000–5,000 a month for almost a year until they can support themselves.¹²⁵ Authorities also help participants to secure jobs, restore their previous jobs, or encourage them to further their education.¹²⁶

The Saudi authorities also engage the community to make the public more aware of the extremists' tactics in indoctrination to prevent further radicalization and enhance community acceptance of former militants.¹²⁷ The government also produces educational

¹¹⁹ El-Said and Harrigan, *Deradicalising Violent Extremists*, 218.

¹²⁰ Boucek, *Leaving Terrorism Behind*, 219.

¹²¹ El-Said and Harrigan, *Deradicalising Violent Extremists*, 219.

¹²² El-Said and Harrigan, 219.

¹²³ El-Said and Harrigan, 218.

¹²⁴ Silke, *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism*, 175.

¹²⁵ El-Said and Harrigan, *Deradicalising Violent Extremists*, 219.

¹²⁶ El-Said and Harrigan, 219.

¹²⁷ Boucek, *Leaving Terrorism Behind*, 220.

materials, pamphlets, and other written materials and even broadcasts television programs to deliver the message to a vast range of audiences.¹²⁸ Through extensive research, the program organizers identified delivering the narrative through *Jumu'ah* prayer sermons as one of the most effective methods to deliver the intended message to the community.¹²⁹ The main objective of the Saudi program's social rehabilitation process is to support participants in proper reintegration into society to ensure they thrive as community members without returning to their previous condition.¹³⁰

B. INDONESIA'S UNDERFINANCED SOCIAL REHABILITATION PROCESS

Unlike the Saudi program, Indonesia has an underfinanced program that faces challenges in incorporating extensive reintegration concepts, so family engagement, community involvement in the process, and the benefits provided are limited.¹³¹ However, every stage of the BNPT's deradicalization program includes some aspects to nurture social reintegration. The rehabilitation stage of the program focuses on fostering diversity, personality development, and independence for participants and their families.¹³² The detainees are exposed to personality and skill development courses during the reeducation stage to help detainees develop an identity and be more independent in society after release.¹³³ As the final stage of the program, resocialization engages the community through lectures, dialogues, and seminars to prepare the community to receive the participants as part

¹²⁸ Boucek, 220.

¹²⁹ Boucek, 220.

¹³⁰ El-Said and Harrigan, *Deradicalising Violent Extremists*, 219.

¹³¹ Yosua Praditya Suratman, "The Effectiveness of De-Radicalization Program in Southeast Asia: Does It Work?; The Case of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore," *Journal of ASEAN Studies* 5, no. 2 (December 2017): 144, <https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/63242>.

¹³² Widya, "Deradicalization in Indonesia: Implementation and Challenge," 35.

¹³³ Widya, 35.

of society.¹³⁴ Additionally, participants are involved in community support activities to enhance socialization skills among the detainees.¹³⁵

Moreover, incorporating public participation seems successful in Indonesia's program as it develops community confidence in the ex-militants.¹³⁶ In this concept, authorities provide information to the community, facilitate consultation with the participants, and allow active participation in the program to prepare society to accept released individuals.¹³⁷ However, Indonesia's deradicalization program must augment vocational, personal, social, and household skills training for greater success in social reintegration.¹³⁸

C. SINGAPORE'S INCLUSION OF EXTENSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN DERADICALIZATION

Singapore's RRP has limited family engagement in detainees' deradicalization process as the program restricts detainees' socialization to prevent mixing with already radicalized individuals.¹³⁹ The RRG believes that detainees' family members might already possess radicalized views that could jeopardize the detainees' rehabilitation process. Hence, the program includes sessions with family members to identify and attend to those radicalized individuals to minimize the chances of detainees' re-engagement with radical groups after release.¹⁴⁰ Program managers authorize a limited number of family visits in a month, and families are not encouraged to talk with the detainees during the latter's incarceration.¹⁴¹ Concurrently, the Singaporean program provides psychological and financial support to families to reduce their grievances because of a family member's detention.

¹³⁴ Widya, 35.

¹³⁵ Yaza Azzahara Ulyana and Ahmad Riyansyah, "De-Radicalization Program: The Case Study of Indonesia," *International Journal of Business, Economics, and Social Development* 2, no. 2 (May 2021): 82, <http://journal.rescollacomm.com/index.php/ijbesd/article/view/130/125>.

¹³⁶ Ulyana and Riyansyah, 82.

¹³⁷ Ulyana and Riyansyah, 82.

¹³⁸ Widya, "Deradicalization in Indonesia: Implementation and Challenge," 42.

¹³⁹ El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism*, 161.

¹⁴⁰ Kumar Ramakrishna, "A Holistic Critique of Singapore's Counter-Ideological Program," *CTC Sentinel* 2, no. 1 (January 2009): 10, ProQuest.

¹⁴¹ El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism*, 161.

Moreover, during the imprisonment period, detainees get educational advancement opportunities and vocational training to develop their knowledge and skills to assist them in securing a job after release.¹⁴² The Singaporean authorities even provide opportunities to complete a degree during detention. With an emphasis on work and work ethic, detainees get job opportunities within the prison and a voucher paid, which they can pass to their families as support or a gift.¹⁴³ This improves family bonding, enhances self-esteem, ignites work interest, and develops a sense of achievement.

Given the country's multi-ethnic society, Singapore's government extensively engages Muslim communities in RRP so that the non-Muslim majority should not highlight the minority ethnic group for terrorism. The Singaporean authorities depend on a group of credible Muslim scholars (RRG) to discredit the extremist ideology and communicate Islam's proper interpretation and teaching to the detainees.¹⁴⁴ RRG is not only actively involved in the detainees' deradicalization process but also conducts public forums, promotes counter-narratives, and runs a website that provides information about RRP.¹⁴⁵ The website also serves as a tool to raise public awareness about extremist ideology and is populated with scholarly publications, news, and interviews.¹⁴⁶ RRG, along with the support of the Islamic religious council of Singapore, *Malis Ugama Islam Singapura* (MUIS), conducts public forums, talks, and seminars in mosques and Islamic centers.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, MUIS has established an Islamic civilization museum, the Harmony Centre, to educate the public on the significant religions to counter prejudice between Muslims and non-Muslims in Singapore.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴² Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, 100.

¹⁴³ El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism*, 162.

¹⁴⁴ Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, 100.

¹⁴⁵ Rabasa et al., 100.

¹⁴⁶ El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism*, 164.

¹⁴⁷ El-Said, 164.

¹⁴⁸ Amanda K. Johnston, "Assessing the Effectiveness of Deradicalization Programs for Islamist Extremists" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2009), 54, <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/4420>.

D. FINDINGS AND SYNTHESIS

It is revealed that the state-level deradicalization programs focus on including a social rehabilitation aspect for the proper reintegration of deradicalized individuals into mainstream society because the re-engagement of these individuals sometimes depends on how well the community accepts them. The programs of both Saudi Arabia and Singapore have extensive techniques for social rehabilitation, while Indonesia's social reintegration component is limited, primarily due to low funding. Table 3 summarizes the study's findings.

Table 3. Summary of the social rehabilitation concepts studied.¹⁴⁹

Country	Social Network Development	Identity Creation	Community Acceptance Enhancement
Saudi Arabia	- Provide support and involve the family in the process. - Encourage family visits with government coverage. - Authorize family leave once every two months and allow a day or two off for family and social events.	- Include artwork activities with cultural and history lectures. - Conduct non-curricular activities such as sports, social events, and competitions. - Encourage marriage and provide a stipend of SR2,000 – 5,000 after release. - Facilitate securing jobs or restoring previous jobs.	- Produce educational materials and pamphlets and conduct television programs. - Provide state narrative through <i>Jum'ah</i> prayer sermons.
Indonesia	- Foster diversity, personal development, and independence for participants and families.	- Conduct personal and skill development courses.	- Engage the community through lectures, dialogue, and seminars. - Involve participants in socio-economic activities. - Incorporate public participation concepts.
Singapore	- Provide psychological and financial support to the families. - Conduct family counseling sessions. - Allow limited family visits.	- Provide educational advancement opportunities and vocational training during imprisonment. - Provide paid job opportunities within the prison premises. - Encourage detainees to gift and support families with their salary.	- Involve the Muslim community in the program. - Conduct public forums, promote counter-narratives, and run a website with extensive scholarly material. - Establish a Museum to engage non-Muslims.

¹⁴⁹ Adapted from Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*; Boucek, *Leaving Terrorism Behind*; El-Said and Harrigan, *Deradicalising Violent Extremists: Counter-Radicalisation and Deradicalisation Programmes and Their Impact in Muslim Majority State*; Koehler, *Understanding Deradicalization*; Widya, *Deradicalization in Indonesia: Implementation and Challenge*; El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism: Designing and Evaluating Counter Radicalization and de-Radicalization Program*.

The following sections analyze the various social rehabilitation concepts in order of their importance in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Singapore, concentrating on developing a new social network, creating a new identity, and enhancing community acceptance for released detainees.

1. Developing a New Social Network

Establishing new social bonds requires enhancing family relationships and engaging the participants with the community to give them a sense of belonging to the society and to deter deradicalized individuals from returning to their previous extremist networks. Extensive family involvement looks promising as it develops a strong family bond during the program. The technique also creates a sense of responsibility for family members for the smooth rehabilitation of their relatives. Compared to other programs, Saudi Arabia's family involvement in the process is extensive because their social rehabilitation occurs in another center outside the prison. Hence, Saudi authorities comfortably incorporate family participation in the process, encourage family visits, and even authorize family leave. Although family visits are allowed, the Singaporean program does not facilitate the development of a strong family bond during the program. This might be because the complete rehabilitation program is conducted within the detention facility, restricting access and movements within the premises. This further prevents extensive family interaction with the participants.

Another attractive concept is the participants' involvement in community support activities in the Indonesian program. This technique allows participants to develop community-accepted disciplines and acquire new friendships, which will assist them in adequately reintegrating into society after release. The technique also enhances the community's acceptance of the participants.

2. Creating a New Identity

Identity development is an important area that all these deradicalization programs focus on while reintegrating deradicalized individuals into mainstream society. It is essential that they feel their importance in the community to not re-engage. In all the programs analyzed, participants take courses on vocational training and skill development

which helps them find jobs after release. Besides these organized classes, the Saudi program incorporates extra-curricular activities such as sports, artwork, and social events. These wide-ranging opportunities look successful as they allow participants to identify their strengths and areas of interest. The participants can further improve these strengths during the program or even after release, which opens further opportunities for participants to start a new career.

Acquiring a job is another area where participants could assume roles as responsible citizens in the community. Working facilitates earning finances to support their family and fulfill their needs in the new community. Saudi Arabia and Singaporean programs assist participants in securing jobs, restoring their previous jobs, or encouraging them to further studies after release. The Singaporean program even provides detainees with employment during imprisonment to support their families. Opening job opportunities for the detainees looks promising as it develops a strong interest in employment. The participants would feel a sense of achievement when they can support their families with their earnings. Also, the concept might reduce government expenditure on the participants' families to some extent.

3. Enhancing Community Acceptance

When participants are released, community acceptance plays a vital role in reintegrating them into society. This is because it will be difficult for someone who has spent time with a terrorist organization to survive in a society where he is not accepted as a community member. Community engagement and public participation in discrediting extremist ideology and promoting mainstream Islamic teachings and interpretations are essential concepts in all the programs discussed. Community awareness of the deradicalization process plays a vital role in developing the participants' societal acceptance. Awareness programs, public forums, talks, and seminars are standard techniques practiced in state-level programs. Additionally, running websites with credible Islamic content, providing information about the state rehabilitation program, and conducting television programs to educate the community about the correct Islamic narrative are good concepts. One of the exciting techniques Saudi Arabia has adopted in reaching the community is incorporating state narrative in the Friday prayer sermons.

Friday prayers are a particular offering in Islam. Muslims carefully listen to and believe Friday sermons. This is an appealing concept any Muslim-majority state can adopt for successful community awareness.

4. What Works in Social Rehabilitation

The XCEPT's RoE reveals that family involvement in the deradicalization programs can have a positive impact on the overall success of the process.¹⁵⁰ The Saudi program seeks the assistance of families of FTFs in persuading them to participate in the programs. The organizers also allow families to actively participate in the program. This looks to be a good source of encouragement for the participants. Also, it improves family bonding and supports the participants in completing the program successfully.

The RoE also shows that it is effective to have family members as guarantors of released individuals.¹⁵¹ The Saudi program implements this concept throughout its care program. Participants are authorized with family leave and are allowed to attend community events through the guarantee of three members. Also, Saudi authorities keep the family responsible for the released individual. This way families will be more responsive to the participants and will inform the relevant authorities if the individuals violate the agreement. The participants will also probably not want their family members to face the consequences after the hard time they have already gone through. Hence, the technique seems quite successful and can apply to countries with a similar culture.

The study reveals the importance of social rehabilitation in the overall success of a deradicalization program. Figure 4 summarizes promising techniques for social rehabilitation in state-level deradicalization programs.

¹⁵⁰ Basra, *Review of Evidence: Prison-Based Interventions Targeting Violent Extremist Detainees*, 10.

¹⁵¹ Basra, 10.

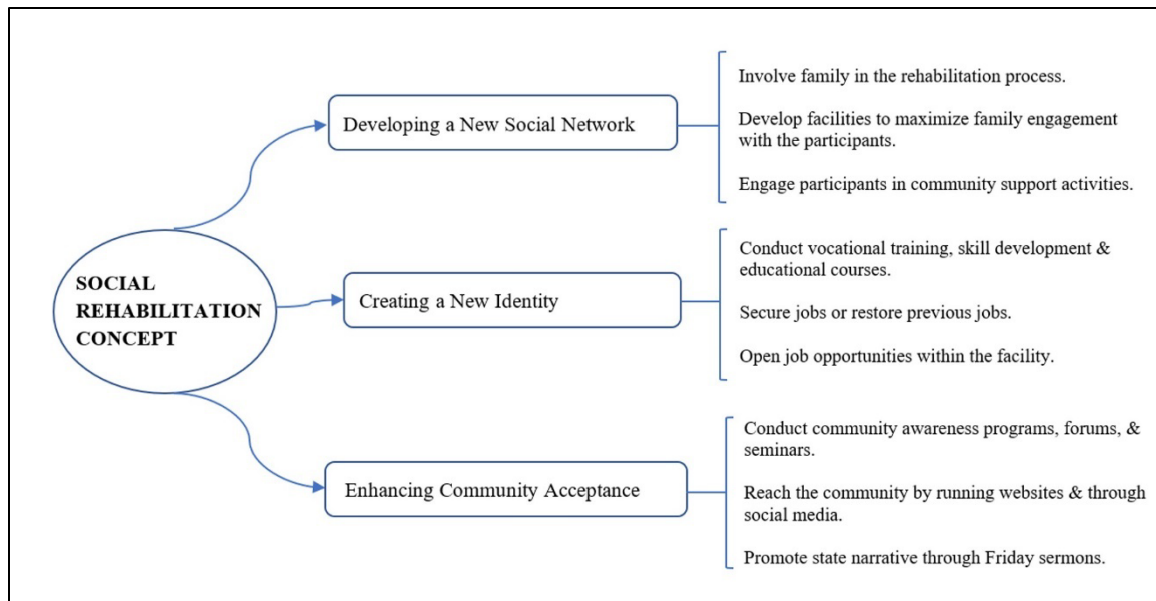


Figure 4. Promising techniques for social rehabilitation.

E. CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the importance of social rehabilitation in state-level deradicalization programs to reduce recidivism by developing a robust social network, creating a new identity, and enhancing community acceptance. The study shows that as much as possible, family and community involvement in the deradicalization program is essential for a successful reintegration process. Rehabilitation facilities should be designed so that participants can have maximum opportunities to engage with their families. Community engagement opportunities should also be allowed to create new relationships within the community.

Some of the appealing social rehabilitation techniques that can be used in other countries' programs are displayed in Figure 4. The following chapter discusses the after-care process in state-level deradicalization programs.

V. THE AFTER-CARE PROCESS

Effective deradicalization programs should include robust after-care processes that establish support channels, continue follow-up, and conduct monitoring and surveillance to ensure that the released individuals remain disengaged from terrorist organizations.¹⁵² Such post-care factors also contribute to these individuals' proper reintegration into mainstream society. After a comprehensive deradicalization program, participants might have challenges adjusting to the new environment, prompting them to seek further support from their previous radical contacts if they are not adequately reintegrated into the community. Hence, proper monitoring and surveillance systems should be in place to prevent released individuals from interacting with their former partners. Even a minor change in their behavioral pattern should be addressed immediately to minimize the likelihood of their re-engagement. Follow-up sessions are also essential to keep track of the individuals' psychological and ideological well-being.

Several deradicalization programs feature after-care processes to ensure proper support for the participants and keep individuals within the boundaries. This chapter analyzes after-care strategies in the state-level deradicalization programs of Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Singapore.

A. SAUDI ARABIA'S AFTER-CARE PROGRAM: AMPLE GOVERNMENT FUNDING

The Saudi government allots an extensive budget for released participants' after-care programs to reintegrate them into society and prevent their further engagement in terrorist activities.¹⁵³ The kingdom's financial support to the participants and their families starts during incarceration and continues even after release. Post-release support includes the government providing apartments, cars, stipends, and even assistance in

¹⁵² Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, 186.

¹⁵³ El-Said and Harrigan, *Deradicalising Violent Extremists*, 221.

finding jobs to settle their life.¹⁵⁴ The introduction of educational advancement opportunities during the care program has helped participants earn qualifications to secure better jobs than they previously had.¹⁵⁵ This initiative also assists participants in enhancing their professional skills to start businesses after release. Additionally, the Saudi government even covers participants' wedding costs by providing dowries and living expenses to start a new life.¹⁵⁶

The Saudi program also establishes monitoring and surveillance procedures to ensure the released participants stay disengaged from their previous terrorist organizations. Such a process is essential because the Saudi authorities understand that not every released participant becomes adequately rehabilitated.¹⁵⁷ Hence, there always is a possibility of recidivism if released individuals associate with their former partners. Therefore, before release, the Saudi authorities give detainees a list of names with whom participants must not interact and inform participants that they will be “monitored through both overt and covert” means.¹⁵⁸ Released individuals are also encouraged to continue follow-up sessions with religious scholars they met during rehabilitation and are obligated to check in regularly with the case officers after release.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, the Saudi government acquires participants' family and community support to keep them in line with the mainstream beliefs and holds families responsible if released individuals commit new offenses.¹⁶⁰ This technique functions well as it aligns with the Saudi cultural and traditional social responsibility beliefs and extended family hierarchies.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁴ Michael J. Williams and Samuel C. Lindsey, “A Social Psychological Critique of the Saudi Terrorism Risk Reduction Initiative,” *Psychology, Crime & Law* 20, no. 2 (February 2014): 138, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2012.749474>.

¹⁵⁵ Boucek, *Saudi Arabia's “Soft” Counterterrorism Strategy*, 20.

¹⁵⁶ Boucek, 20.

¹⁵⁷ Williams and Lindsey, “A Social Psychological Critique of the Saudi Terrorism Risk Reduction Initiative,” 139.

¹⁵⁸ Boucek, *Saudi Arabia's “Soft” Counterterrorism Strategy*, 20.

¹⁵⁹ Boucek, 20.

¹⁶⁰ Silke, *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism*, 177.

¹⁶¹ Boucek, *Saudi Arabia's “Soft” Counterterrorism Strategy*, 20.

B. INDONESIA'S AFTER-CARE PROGRAM: LIMITED GOVERNMENT FUNDING

The Indonesian deradicalization program needs more funds for a robust after-care process for reintegrating released participants. Nevertheless, BNPT assists in several ways to help participants settle back into the community and prevent them from backsliding and committing offenses. The program provides opportunities for participants to enrich their knowledge and skills through vocational and technical skills courses.¹⁶² This training helps participants get jobs or start their own businesses upon release. When it comes to program participants securing employment, many companies in Indonesia demand police clearance certificates before offering employment to individuals.¹⁶³ BNPT is essential in coordinating with relevant government agencies to assist released participants in obtaining jobs in these companies.¹⁶⁴ The problem arises for the individuals who do not approach BNPT but try on their own to get such a certificate.

Participants of the Indonesian program face difficulties in securing employment due to low acceptance in companies, and hence, individuals seek help from BNPT to acquire driver's licenses for motorbike taxi drivers.¹⁶⁵ Even though these taxi drivers gain enough money to sustain themselves, there is limited community acceptance for the participants opting for this business.¹⁶⁶ In the public eye, these individuals are not in proper jobs and will engage in violence again. Hence, released individuals face challenges in adequately reintegrating into mainstream society and tend to form their own group of released participants. This sounds alarming as there is a high possibility that these individuals will commit offenses again. Hence, authorities are supposed to keep track of these individuals after their release. For that, BNPT monitors participants

¹⁶² Ulyana and Riyansyah, "De-Radicalization Program," 82.

¹⁶³ Cameron Sumpter, Yuslikha K. Wardhani, and Sapto Priyanto, "Testing Transitions: Extremist Prisoners Re-Entering Indonesian Society," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 44, no. 6 (January 2019): 473–94, ProQuest.

¹⁶⁴ Sumpter, Wardhani, and Priyanto.

¹⁶⁵ Sumpter, Wardhani, and Priyanto.

¹⁶⁶ Sumpter, Wardhani, and Priyanto.

through security officers and religious scholars with whom the participants were affiliated during the program. Additionally, participants are required to report regularly to the case officers after release.¹⁶⁷ Even though these techniques help oversee the released individuals, the BNPT requires a sufficient budget to incorporate more robust after-care procedures into the program for a better reintegration process.

C. SINGAPORE'S AFTER-CARE PROGRAM: COMMUNITY FUNDING

The Singapore government, in 2002, formed an After Care Group (ACG) to support participants' families to ease the resentment due to a relative's imprisonment and to assist in reintegrating released individuals into society. Interestingly, the Singaporean government bears no cost for participants' after-care support; the ACG finances the process.¹⁶⁸ The group draws funds mainly from the Central Provident Fund (CPF), a Muslim community-contributed fund established in 1975.¹⁶⁹ These funds are utilized to provide financial support to the participants, conduct skill training for spouses, and offer educational opportunities for their children.¹⁷⁰ For the past few years, ACG has improved the living conditions of a good number of participants' families.

Singapore's RRP also focuses on proper monitoring and surveillance of released individuals to keep them away from terrorist organizations and attend to their psychological and ideological changes without delay. One of the preventive measures is the implementation of a restriction order (RO). In Singapore, all the participants undergo ROs before they are released.¹⁷¹ These orders obligate participants to report to responsible security officers regularly, and participants are not allowed to leave the country without a permit.¹⁷² About 80% to 90% of released individuals are still under ROs with constant monitoring indefinitely. Hence, these individuals are unable to return

¹⁶⁷ Widya, "Deradicalization in Indonesia: Implementation and Challenge," 36.

¹⁶⁸ El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism*, 162.

¹⁶⁹ El-Said, 162.

¹⁷⁰ Muhammad Haniff Hassan, "Counter-Ideological Work: Singapore Experience," in *The Ideological War on Terror*, ed. Graeme Herd and Anne Aldis (London: Routledge, 2006), 150.

¹⁷¹ El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism*, 167.

¹⁷² El-Said, 161.

to violent extremism.¹⁷³ The participants are aware that they are under surveillance and understand the consequences if they re-engage. This helps Singapore achieve a low rate of recidivism.

D. FINDINGS AND SYNTHESIS

The preceding discussions reveal that these states adopt after-care processes to adequately reintegrate participants into society and prevent them from reacquiring extremist ideologies. The Saudi Arabia and Singapore programs have robust after-care procedures, while low funding in Indonesia's program does not allow them to contribute sufficiently to the process. Compared to Saudi Arabia, where the state allocates a considerable budget for the program, Singapore holds the Muslim community responsible for financially supporting the participants and their families during the reintegration process. Table 4 summarizes the study's overall findings.

Table 4. Summary of the after-care processes studied.¹⁷⁴

Country	Support Channel Establishment	Monitoring and Surveillance	Follow-up
Saudi Arabia	- Provides extensive financial support to the participants and their families. - Introduces educational opportunities for the participants. - Encourages marriage by covering wedding expenses.	- Informs and keeps participants under overt and covert surveillance. - Holds the families and the community responsible for the released individual.	- Encourages participants to continue meetings with program religious scholars. - Mandates participants to check in with the authorities regularly.
Indonesia	- Provides opportunities to enrich participants' knowledge and skills. - Assists participants in getting a police clearance certificate to get a job or acquire a driving license.	- Monitors released individuals through security officials and religious scholars of the program.	- Obligates participants to regularly report to authorities.

¹⁷³ El-Said, 161.

¹⁷⁴ Adapted from Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*; Williams and Lindsey, *A Social Psychological Critique of the Saudi Terrorism Risk Reduction Initiative*; Boucek, *Saudi Arabia's "Soft" Counterterrorism Strategy: Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare*; Ulyana and Riyansyah, *De-Radicalization Program: The Case Study of Indonesia*; Sumpter, Wardhani, and Priyanto, *Testing Transitions: Extremist Prisoners Re-Entering Indonesian Society*; Widya, *Deradicalization in Indonesia: Implementation and Challenge*; El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism: Designing and Evaluating Counter Radicalization and de-Radicalization Program*.

Country	Support Channel Establishment	Monitoring and Surveillance	Follow-up
Singapore	- Provides financial support to the participants, skill training for spouses, and educational opportunities for children.	- Keeps participants with ROs under continuous monitoring and surveillance. - Restricts traveling, changing jobs, and joining political parties without a permit.	- Mandates participants with ROs to report responsible case officers regularly.

The following sections analyze the promising after-care processes determined from the previous discussions, concentrating on establishing support channels, monitoring, surveillance, and follow-up procedures.

1. Establishing Support Channels

All the programs discussed in previous sections have instituted support channels to assist families in coping with the difficulties of a relative's imprisonment and help participants reintegrate into society. It is clear that released participants and their families require financial support to settle in the community properly. The funds for the process can either come from the state budget or be acquired through community assistance. Like in the Singaporean program, the funds come from the Muslim community and the financial support is on a requirement basis. This concept seems more sustainable and adaptable for countries with limited budgets. These states can integrate non-governmental organizations (NGO) in the overall deradicalization effort and involve them in raising funds to support participants and their families financially.

Moreover, providing educational advancement opportunities for the participants and their spouses also looks promising as this approach assists participants in securing better jobs, enabling participants to become more responsible and start sustaining themselves more quickly. Like in the Indonesian program, instead of the state taking responsibility for sustaining the released participants, the government helps them to secure jobs and encourages them to function independently on their own. The adverse effect, in this case, might be the difficulty participants face in securing better jobs. As a result, released individuals might start working together, forming an "ex-militant" community. This kind of outcome may significantly undermine the efficacy of a de-radicalization program.

2. Monitoring, Surveillance, and Follow-Up

To achieve a low recidivism rate (the most common judgment factor for the success of a program), states keep released participants under continuous monitoring and surveillance to prevent their re-engagement with radical groups. Informing participants of covert and overt surveillance upon their release looks promising. This technique prevents them from associating with their previous partners. The participants understand that they are under continuous surveillance, and they know the consequences if they do break the rules. Moreover, mandating regular check-ins with case officers and affiliated religious scholars is also a good concept for overseeing the released participants. To effectively implement this concept, case officers and scholars should associate closely with the participants during the program. This affiliation will, in most cases, continue even after release and can be a valuable technique to monitor the individuals. Furthermore, the families, perhaps, can play a vital role in taking responsibility for the participants to keep them within the boundaries. The efficacy of this concept depends on the culture and tradition of the country. For instance, Saudi Arabia's culture allows the government to effectively hold the family and the tribe responsible for the released participants. This might not be the case in several other multi-ethnic countries. The extended family hierarchical culture adopted in Saudi Arabia comes from Islam. The religion mandates all Muslims to be responsible for their parents and children. Hence, this concept might resonate only with Muslim states.

3. What Works in the After-Care Process

The effectiveness of the after-care process depends on the social support provided and the level of monitoring and surveillance of the released individual. According to Stuart J. Smith, social support remains one of the components needed for a successful deradicalization program.¹⁷⁵ Even though the level of social support varies by state, this impacts the family and the individual in two ways. Firstly, the participants see that the state

¹⁷⁵ Stuart J. Smith, "A Comparative Analysis of Deradicalization Programmes; What We Think Works" (thesis, University of Essex, 2018), 14, https://www.academia.edu/38743222/A_COMPARATIVE_ANALYSIS_OF_DERADICALIZATION_PROGRAMMES_WHAT_WE_THINK_WORKS.

has supported their family when they could not help.¹⁷⁶ This will change the individual's attitude toward the state and will encourage him to continue with the program. Secondly, the family is less likely to associate with radicals for support. This reduces further radicalization of the family members and supports the participants throughout the program. The study reveals that the Indonesian program provides limited social support to the participants and their families compared to the Singaporean and Saudi programs. However, it seems these three countries will have the same success in the after-care process if they all can achieve the previously mentioned effects. The level of support might differ, but support of any level can bring a significant impact on the effectiveness of the after-care process and the ultimate success of the program.

Figure 5 summarizes some of the promising techniques of after-care processes from the studied state-level deradicalization programs.

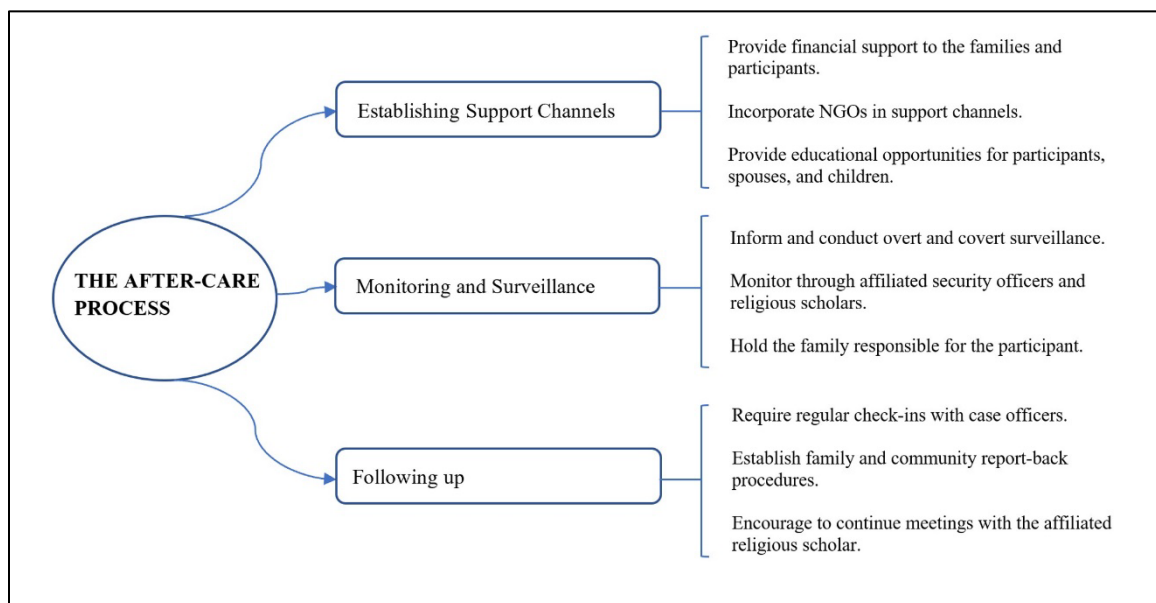


Figure 5. The promising after-care processes.

¹⁷⁶ Smith, 16.

E. CONCLUSION

This chapter has demonstrated how the three countries have adopted after-care processes that include establishing support channels, implementing monitoring and surveillance, and providing follow-up to properly reintegrate released individuals into society and to deter them from relapsing. The procedures and approaches differ state by state, depending on the budget allocated. Sometimes, a country's culture and traditions also play a vital role in the after-care process. Nevertheless, states with similar wealth, traditions, and cultures can adopt several standard techniques identified in this study (Figure 5).

Among the three analyzed programs, Saudi Arabia runs the most comprehensive after-care process. This is understandable because ample funds are available for the Saudi program to provide a wide range of financial assistance to the participants and their families. It is possible for wealthy countries to incorporate extensive after-care processes in their deradicalization programs, but it can be challenging for a developing country like the Maldives. However, some concepts can be adjusted for the Maldivian context and supported with minimum funding. The following chapter synthesizes the rehabilitation concepts to formulate a deradicalization program for the Maldives.

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VI. THE MALDIVES' RELIGIOUS REHABILITATION MODEL

A. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters analyzed some successful state-level deradicalization programs to identify workable concepts that other countries can utilize to rehabilitate violent religious extremists. It is recognized that all three relevant states (Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Singapore) incorporated four main components into their deradicalization programs: psychological rehabilitation, religious rehabilitation, social rehabilitation, and an after-care process. Although these are the main pillars of such programs, each country has customized how it implements these components to match its culture and tradition. Also, the funding available plays an essential role in executing these concepts. As seen from the previous chapters, some of the approaches are workable and can be utilized in other states' programs. This chapter aims to synthesize the workable concepts to propose a viable deradicalization program for religious extremists in the Maldives.

B. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The proposed Maldives' Religious Rehabilitation Program (MRRP) is built on the foundations of psychological, religious, and social rehabilitation and an after-care process to change the individual's radicalized mindset and behavior and to reintegrate deradicalized individuals back into society successfully. The collective objective of these pillars is to break the radicalized individual's "affective, pragmatic, and ideological commitment to an extremist organization"¹⁷⁷ and assist in moderating his conviction and conduct.¹⁷⁸ Also, each component incorporates several techniques to reintegrate rehabilitated individuals into society. These four components are correlated to form a full-fledged framework. The Maldivian deradicalization framework consists of suitable methods from promising concepts, and some are adjusted to meet the Maldivian context.

¹⁷⁷ Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, 42.

¹⁷⁸ Rabasa et al., 42–44.

1. Psychological Rehabilitation Component

Participants' initial assessment and categorization is a critical component that should be adopted in the proposed MRRP as individuals might be radicalized to different degrees in different countries, and individuals representing different categories should not be mixed in a deradicalization program. In the Singaporean program, participants are categorized into three main groups: hard-core radicals, those on the verge of deradicalization, and those in-between.¹⁷⁹

In the Maldivian context, individuals who have become radicalized and involved in violence to different degrees must be categorized before enrolling in the program. There are Maldivians who have traveled to conflict zones, trained, and physically participated in fighting. Some of these individuals have returned home, and others are believed to be in the refugee camps in Syria or Iraq. Another category consists of individuals who support violence and are willing to join a terrorist group but, for some reason, are unable to join the fighting. This category is believed to be the major group in the Maldivian context. The last group consists of individuals with radical mindsets who support violence but are unwilling to join a terrorist group. These individuals might be potential recruiters for terrorist groups.

For a small country like the Maldives, which has limited resources and facilities, isolating these three categorized groups in separate detention facilities might be challenging. Thus, the participants could be further classified into two main groups: FTFs and those intending to join in violence as part of a "hard-core extremist group" and those radicalized individuals having no intention to join in violence as a member of an "extremist sympathizers' group." A group of experts, including psychologists, religious scholars, and security officials, should spearhead the assessment and categorizing process. These categories must be isolated in separate facilities to prevent further radicalization in the prisons. This is important as there are reports that the Maldives detention facilities have

¹⁷⁹ El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism*, 161.

been a breeding ground for radicalization.¹⁸⁰ Given the lack of prisons in the country, prisoners of all categories have been detained together, facilitating the spread of radicalization. Hence, it is strongly suggested that separate detention facilities should be allocated for the proposed MRRP participants.

2. Religious Rehabilitation Component

Identifying credible religious scholars in the Maldivian context can be challenging as the country retains religious knowledge from different countries. Therefore, the government should be careful in selecting religious scholars for the proposed MRRP. It is strongly believed that Islam arrived in the Maldives through a saint from the Maghreb in 1153 AD. This might have two implications in the search for and screening of credible religious scholars. Firstly, Islam was not initially practiced in the country during the time it was first revealed in Saudi Arabia. Consequently, the Maldivian religious education system may be developed upon what it has received from scholars from different countries. Secondly, almost all Maldivian religious scholars receive their higher education abroad, in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan, and Malaysia.¹⁸¹ This brings different versions of religious convictions into the country. Hence, certain religious beliefs might differ among Maldivian scholars. The best way to solve the problem is for the government to introduce a state-level *ulema* council, *Fathuwa Majlis*, and mandate them to select religious scholars for the proposed MRRP. The Maldives Islamic ministry already possesses legal authority over the initiation and function of *Fathuwa Majlis*. This is an urgent and essential initiative that can streamline the many different Islamic convictions in the country and will directly contribute to the success of the proposed MRRP.

¹⁸⁰ Catherine Haswell, “Launch of Prisoner Classification & Risks Assessment Tool & Manual for Countering Violent Extremism in Prison,” United Nations Maldives, August 18, 2021, <https://maldives.un.org/en/176262-launch-prisoner-classification-risks-assessment-tool-manual-countering-violent-extremism>.

¹⁸¹ Anand Kumar, *Multi-Party Democracy in the Maldives and the Emerging Security Environment in the Indian Ocean Region* (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2016), 28.

3. Social Rehabilitation Component

Findings of this study indicate that family involvement in the rehabilitation process positively impacts the program's overall success as the participants are more motivated to proceed with rehabilitation with family support. In the Saudi program, family members are encouraged to spend much time with the participants in care centers. This is possible because radicalization may occur in Saudi Arabia individually, and family members might not be aware of a relative's involvement in religious extremism. Also, radicalized individuals might not have taken their close family along while traveling to the conflict zones.

By contrast, it is believed that group radicalization is common in the Maldives, so government authorities should be careful in involving families in the proposed MRRP. Most Maldivian FTFs traveled with their families to join ISIL, and some of these family members are still trapped in refugee camps in Syria and Iraq. It is most likely that radicalization occurs among close family and friends in the Maldives. Also, culturally, most Maldivians get along with individuals of similar mindsets. Hence, in the Maldivian context, it would be challenging to involve family members in the proposed MRRP, but it is possible. Like in the Singaporean program, Maldivian authorities can screen and check for radicalized views before family members engage with the participants. Those family members with radical mindsets can be counseled and, if needed, should be enrolled formally in the rehabilitation program as participants. Those without extremist ideology are the family members who should be involved in supporting the rehabilitation process. Above all, the proposed MRRP must prevent radicalized family members' access to the participants.

4. The After-Care Process Component

Financial and material support to the participants and their families through an after-care process is essential, so the Maldives should find ways to incorporate such a component in the proposed MRRP. It might not be possible for the Maldives' limited economy to provide extensive financial support to the participants and their families as done in the Saudi program. However, the Maldives can adopt the Singaporean concept of

acquiring community sponsorship for after-care support. One of the possible options in the Maldivian context is to utilize NGOs in the process. There are two ways Maldivian NGOs can be made responsible for after-care support. Firstly, the government can negotiate with the existing NGOs to identify possibilities for such an initiative. Some of the religious NGOs might accept the opportunity. However, the government should be confident that these religious NGOs do not support radical views and align with the *Fathuwa Majlis*' convictions on religious issues. Secondly, the government can introduce a new NGO with the help of volunteers. There is high confidence that many Maldivians will be willing to be part of such an NGO. In both cases, the government can provide a small fund to initiate the process until the organization starts functioning smoothly. In any case, providing financial support to the participants and their families is crucial for the success of the proposed MRRP.

Figure 6 summarizes the conceptual framework for the proposed MRRP.

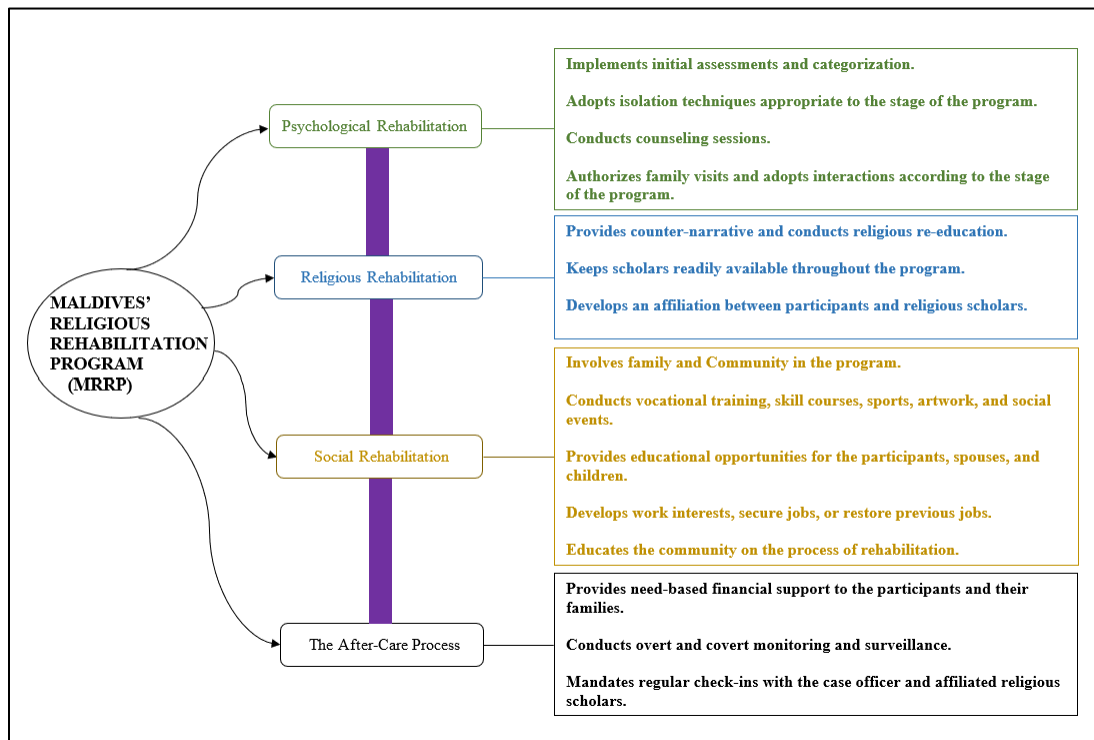


Figure 6. Proposed Maldives' Religious Rehabilitation Program's conceptual framework.

C. THE MALDIVES' RELIGIOUS REHABILITATION PROGRAM DESIGN

The proposed MRRP is designed to accommodate the conceptual framework (Figure 6) to achieve the program's primary objective: rehabilitate violent religious extremists and successfully reintegrate them into mainstream society. This program allows those with violent religious ideologies to revisit their beliefs, revert to mainstream Islamic values, and reintegrate into society before completing their full sentence. A part of their sentence can be suspended for participants who successfully pass the program. However, individuals who relapse after release must be taken to prison to complete the remaining sentence period. In that case, new charges must be made against these individuals who violated the signed release agreement. This concept is incorporated to promote repentance and rehabilitation for these individuals before they are punished for wrongdoings. Also, the technique is integrated to make the program more attractive and enhance participants' cooperation. That is because individual collaboration is essential for successful deradicalization,¹⁸² as seen in the previous chapters.

The proposed MRRP consists of three stages: disengagement, reintegration, and after-care, with individual assessments to complete the entire program. Enrolling in the proposed MRRP should begin with initial evaluations and categorization according to the level of radicalization and degree of involvement in violence, as discussed in the previous sections. For instance, returnees from conflict zones (hard-core extremist group) should be separated from those sympathizers of violent ideology who have no intention of joining a terrorist group (extremist sympathizer group). Notably, the categorized groups must stay consistent at all stages of the proposed MRRP. Furthermore, passing the assessments at each phase should be mandatory for participants to enroll in the next level. Those who successfully achieve the goals of the disengagement and reintegration stages will qualify for release and should become eligible for the after-care program. Figure 7 interprets the proposed MRRP design.

¹⁸² Mirra Noor Milla, Joevarian Hudiyana, and Haykal Hafizul Arifin, "Attitude toward Rehabilitation as a Key Predictor for Adopting Alternative Identities in Deradicalization Programs: An Investigation of Terrorist Detainees' Profiles," *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 23, no. 1 (March 2020): 15–28, ProQuest.

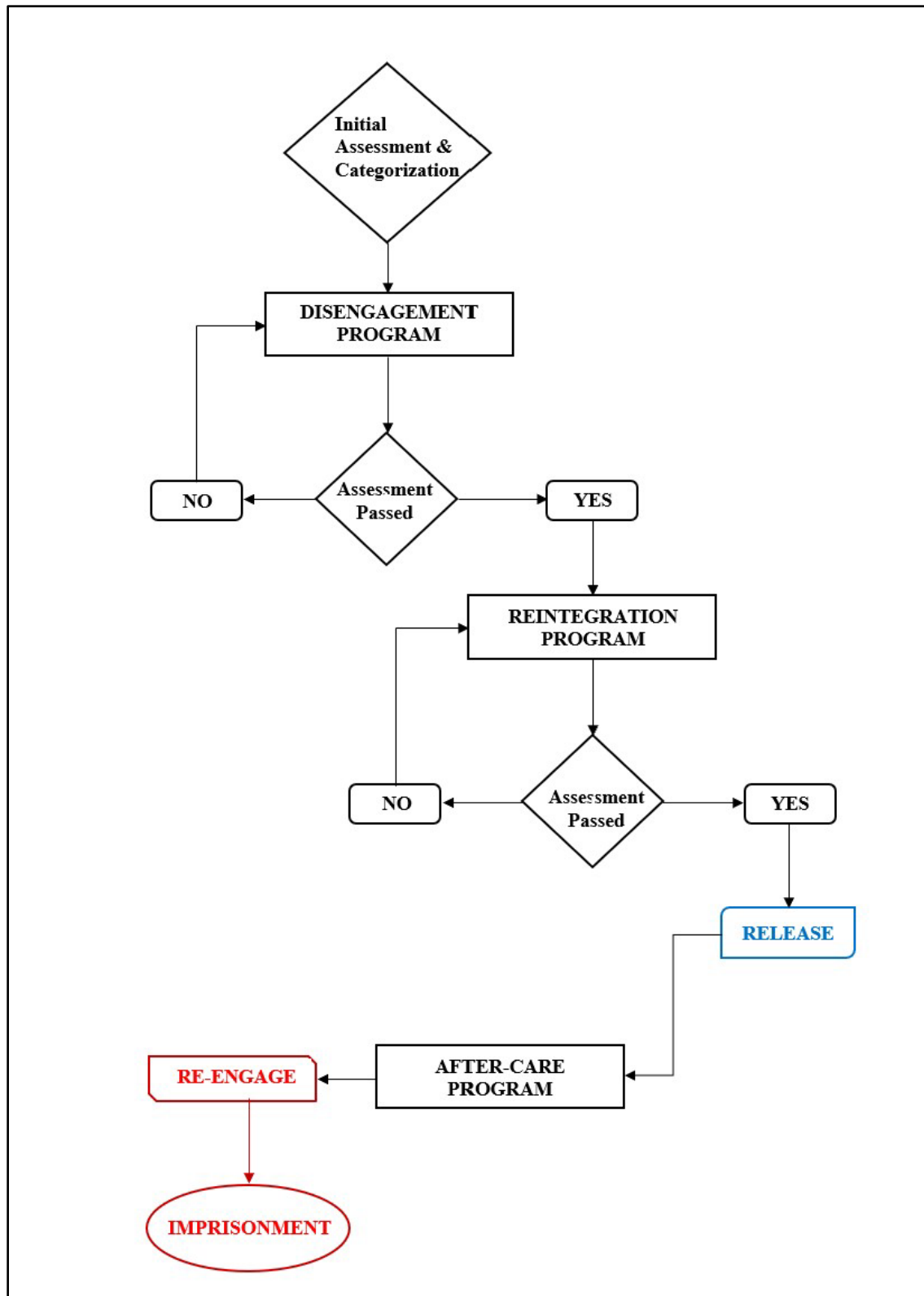


Figure 7. Proposed Maldives' Religious Rehabilitation Program design.

D. THE DISENGAGEMENT STAGE

The objective of the disengagement stage is to break the radicalized individual's "affective, pragmatic, and ideological commitment to the extremist organization"¹⁸³ and replace it with true Islamic belief. This stage should start in prisons immediately after initial assessments and categorization. The disengagement program should approach participants on two main fronts: psychological rehabilitation and religious/ideological rehabilitation to counter the radical narrative and promote repentance. The main aim is to convince participants of their mistaken convictions and repent before advancing to the next stage.

The first goal at this stage should be to acquire participants' cooperation to help deliver the desired narrative in the future. A group of experts (religious scholars, psychologists, and security officers) should conduct individual preliminary counseling sessions. A couple of initial meetings should focus on encouraging individuals to cooperate, discuss their views, and identify why they believe what they believe. As the participants become more comfortable with the team, meetings should focus on delivering a more robust counter-narrative. Subsequently, credible religious scholars should provide group teachings on proper Islamic conviction through lectures and dialogue. Also, religious scholars should be readily available to address participants' doubts.

These early days at the prison can be psychologically challenging for the participants, so the program managers should closely observe and attend to participants without delay. Family visits should be limited at this stage, and mixing with others should be minimal, even within the categorized group. With these restrictions, the participants might experience boredom and loneliness. Psychologists should conduct individual counseling sessions, and family visits can be authorized when a participant is exceptionally psychologically weak. Also, case officers, psychologists, and religious scholars should closely associate with the participants to encourage them to continue the program. These close affiliations will, in many cases, continue even after the release, providing an opportunity to oversee them.

¹⁸³ Rabasa et al., *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, 42.

E. THE REINTEGRATION STAGE

The reintegration stage aims to educate participants and prepare them to be released into society. This part of the program should provide more organized and decisive teachings based on the foundations laid in the previous stage. Those who pass the disengagement assessments should be categorized into new groups at this stage. Even at this stage, categorization is vital because individuals might arrive from different prisons with diverse accomplishments. Also, it is essential to put individuals of the same category together as this part of the program is proposed to occur outside the detention facilities, in rehabilitation centers with extensive family involvement.

The participants in this stage should have freedom of movement and to interact within the categorized group to enhance their self-esteem before release. Regular family leave with certain restrictions can be allowed at this stage to improve the family bond. Nevertheless, the program should continue with psychological and religious rehabilitation techniques commenced at the disengagement stage. Since this stage should focus more on strengthening individual psychological well-being, counseling sessions at this stage should more often be one-on-one rather than group interactions. These sessions should focus on imparting positivity and teaching individuals how to cope with difficult times and grievances in life. Lectures and dialogue focused on self-management can be of great value at this stage. Program managers should also continue closely associating with the participants at this stage to continuously assess the participants' improvements.

Religious rehabilitation at this stage should be reinforced based on the foundations from the initial stage so that the participants possess credible Islamic knowledge before their release. The theological teaching at this stage should be more open and focus on a larger group than in the previous stage. Discussions in the form of dialogues and seminars can be an excellent method to deliver the intended message to the group. Religious books and other written materials with true Islamic convictions should be immediately available. Participants should also have access to religious television programs, and scholars should be readily available to answer their questions.

Moreover, extensive family and community involvement in this stage are essential for the participants to prepare for proper reintegration into society. The program should accommodate the family's participation in the rehabilitation, and they should be allowed to engage with the participants more frequently at this stage. Also, participants in this program should be allowed to attend family and community events. However, in this case, family members must provide a written guarantee of the participant's healthy conduct and return to the facility on time. At the same time, the community should be made aware of the proposed MRRP in time to make them feel comfortable with the participants attending such events. Television programs can be an excellent way to reach the community on this. Also, Friday sermons can be focused on conveying the importance of accepting these individuals as part of the community.

Additionally, one of the goals of this program should be to enhance participants' educational level to assist in acquiring employment after release. Individuals should get the opportunity to participate in vocational training, skills improvement, and academic courses at this stage. Also, the government can provide educational advancement opportunities for participants' spouses and children. The aim is to make participants feel optimistic about the government and prevent terrorist organizations from reaching them. Also, this opens opportunities for the family to get jobs when the participants cannot financially support them.

Moreover, developing a strong work ethic and job enthusiasm is essential to attract participants for employment after release. One of the ways to achieve this is by allowing participants to perform paid jobs within the facility. This benefits the participants in two ways. First, they can financially support their family throughout the program. Second, this encourages employment after release, as the family depends on them during the rehabilitation program. Hence, participants will see working as an obligation to support their families financially.

F. THE AFTER-CARE STAGE

The main objective of the proposed MRRP's after-care stage is to support and monitor participants after release and to prevent them from re-engaging with violent

organizations. As part of the financial support to the participants, the Maldivian government might not be able to provide a stipend for the released participants. However, the authorities can facilitate securing jobs for the released participants or restore their previous jobs to make them financially stable. Also, the government should initiate NGOs' sponsored support systems, as discussed in previous sections. Notably, released participants must be financially stable to start a new life and support their families. Otherwise, there will be a high tendency for released individuals to associate with their former colleagues for financial assistance.

Monitoring and surveillance are other critical areas the after-care program must focus on to prevent released individuals from recidivating. Before release, all participants should be informed that they will be monitored through overt and covert means. This compels participants to avoid involving themselves in activities that violate the release agreement. This agreement must hold at least three family members responsible for the released participants and mandate them to inform case officers if participants infringe on the same. It must also demand that participants regularly check in with the case officer and continue meetings with an affiliated religious scholar. These are promising methods to oversee and monitor released participants and to attend to even small changes in their attitude immediately, reducing the possibility of recidivism.

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VII. CONCLUSION

This thesis has studied state-sponsored deradicalization programs to gather successful concepts to propose an optimal design for a deradicalization program for violent religious extremists in the Maldives. Through a review of the relevant literature, this research first formulated a conceptual framework for the study. This theoretical framework is utilized as the baseline for analyzing three state-level deradicalization programs: those of Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Singapore. These countries were selected because, first, all three programs focus solely on the rehabilitation of violent religious extremists. Second, these countries have several cultural and traditional similarities with the Maldives. Saudi Arabia and Indonesia have majority Muslim populations; the Maldives' constitution mandates all residents be Muslims. Although Singapore is a minority Muslim country, the population shares Asian ethnicity with that of the Maldives. Third, these three programs are extensively examined in similar studies and are well known for their success or completeness. Hence, it is believed that these programs have compelling factors that can be used to formulate a feasible model for the Maldives.

The study has revealed that an effective deradicalization program requires a combination of factors running concurrently to achieve the long-term goal of deradicalizing a violent extremist. Hence, the proposed Maldivian program is designed around four main concepts: psychological rehabilitation, religious rehabilitation, social rehabilitation, and an after-care process. Within the proposed framework, these concepts are implemented through the disengagement, reintegration, and after-care stages to achieve the program's overall objective. To implement this program effectively, this thesis makes the following recommendations.

Firstly, the Maldivian government should amend relevant constitutional acts to facilitate suspending part of the criminal sentence imposed on the program participants. It is essential to prioritize rehabilitation rather than punishment to acquire the participants' interest in the program. This research determined that if these individuals are given a chance to reduce their sentence for criminal charges by going into the rehabilitation program, they are more likely to accept the accusation and be more cooperative in the

program. The participants' cooperation is crucial for the program's success, as seen in this study.

Secondly, relevant authorities in the Maldives should gather subject matter experts and incorporate a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to run the program effectively. Most importantly, religious scholars selected for the program must be from the *ulema*. They must possess credible Islamic knowledge and good communication skills to turn these extremist minds toward true convictions. Also, all these scholars should agree on the religious issues addressed in this program.

Finally, humane treatment throughout the program should be one of the main principles to acquire participants' cooperation. As revealed from this study, participants are more interested in rehabilitation if they are treated well. Even the program's name and how the participants are addressed are vital in attracting them. Moreover, the program managers should closely associate with the participants throughout the process to develop an affiliation between the groups. This close relationship helps in monitoring the participants even after their release.

In conclusion, this study has achieved its objective and proposed an optimal design for a program, the Maldives' Religious Rehabilitation Program (MRRP), to deradicalize violent religious extremists in the Maldives. This program can be utilized to rehabilitate FTFs and individuals who possess violent religious ideologies but have not yet engaged in violence. It is important to note, however, the proposed MRRP does not seek to rehabilitate violent extremists' under-age children who might have been radicalized, as it is outside the scope of this study and can be an area for further research.

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