



DOI: [10.71317/jgst.2.6.2026.319](https://doi.org/10.71317/jgst.2.6.2026.319)

Journal of Global Social Transformation

Journal homepage: <https://rjsaonline.org/index.php/JGST>

Challenges to Prevention of Violent Extremism

Dr. Dayyab Gillani¹

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.

Email: dayyabgillani.polsc@pu.edu.pk

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Submission: May 16, 2026 Revised: May 30, 2026 Accepted: June 13, 2026 Available Online: June 25, 2026 Keywords: PVE, CVE, WOT, Terrorism, Violent Extremism. Corresponding author: Dr. Dayyab Gillani Email: dayyabgillani.polsc@pu.edu.pk	Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE), of late, has emerged as a dominant theme in the broader terrorism and political violence discourse. Despite this attention, engagement with PVE has mostly been superficial and cosmetic. Part of this is owing to the conflation of PVE with Counter Violent Extremism (CVE), but mostly however, it is due to relegating PVE as a mere strategy that can be taken up during kinetic and military operations. As a result of this confusion and a number of other factors, PVE faces a wide range of challenges that undermine its efficacy and hinder its ambitions. Understanding these challenges, as this article sets out to do, will help us unlock the true potential of PVE.

Introduction

At the very outset, it will be helpful to distinguish Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) from Counter Violent Extremism (CVE), especially since the two are frequently used synonymously and the academic discourse is largely silent over the distinction between the two. As opposed to PVE, CVE first and foremost focuses on countering the spread of violent extremist narratives by Violent Extremism (VE) and terrorist organizations through any and all means possible, including counter-narratives, censorship and even military action. Furthermore, CVE mainly focuses on individuals and entities that have already been radicalized.

Most importantly however, the discourse on CVE does not necessarily concern itself with how the said individuals or entities were radicalized in the first place and whether or not they have any legitimate or justifiable grievances. It is not concerned with the underlying factors and root causes responsible for VE and terroristic behavior. CVE, in effect, is essentially a product of the War or Terror (WOT) discourse that seeks to compliment kinetics and military action with no urge or intention to engage with the root causes of the problem.

In comparison, PVE takes a more broad and inclusive approach with the primary intention to identify and address the root causes of VE and terrorism. As opposed to already radicalized individuals, it focuses on individuals that are potentially at a risk of being radicalized. Among other things, PVE seeks to investigate the reasons why people resort to or are attracted to violent rhetoric and narratives in the first place.

Unlike its CVE counterpart, PVE categorically sets out to identify and subsequently address prevailing resentments and grievances that fuel VE and terrorist ideologies. Owing to its rationale and clearly laid out ambitions, PVE neither endorses

nor has any appetite for violence or kinetics. In fact, in strict contrast with CVE, the discourse on PVE in many ways sets out to replace and do away with the WOT paradigm altogether.

Throughout this paper, the terms PVE and non-kinetics will be used somewhat synonymously. Although, the word non-kinetic is understandably far more broad and inclusive, however in the context of terrorism and violent extremism, it can conveniently be substituted with the phrase PVE. This in part is due to the discursive shift that sought to replace the kinetic centric CVE thesis with a more pacifist non-kinetic PVE approach. Furthermore, PVE is first and foremost about prioritizing peaceful means and irrevocably rejecting violence, equating it with non-kinetics is therefore both intuitive and analytically helpful.

PVE needs space to breathe and that must be accomplished by first understanding what it truly entails. To do so, it will be necessary to undue its ill-footed conflation with the WOT thesis. Conflation of PVE with WOT has proven to be not only ineffective but also largely counter-productive. Any PVE undertaking that fails to understand its intellectual underpinnings and ideological parameters will only manage to yield negative outcomes. Before moving on to other challenges that are somewhat better acknowledged, it is therefore necessary to first discuss in detail the WOT paradigm itself and its erroneous conflation with PVE.

i. War on Terror Paradigm Confinement

The WOT paradigm has its roots in the notorious New Terrorism Thesis. Advanced first during the last decade of the 20th century, the New Terrorism thesis argues that there is a substantial qualitative and quantitative shift in the nature and character of terrorism. This shift was allegedly so radical and transformative that according to the proponents of the New Terrorism thesis, all past categories, theories, models, and frames of references were no longer applicable or even relevant.

Terrorism, which had traditionally been described as indiscriminate yet selective, violent but conservative and above all a rational political activity, was no longer believed to ascribe to any such categories. Instead, New Terrorism proponents argued that modern-day terrorism should be categorized as totally indiscriminate, massively destructive and completely immoral (See e.g. Laqueur, 1996; Kurtulus, 2011).

Described in such a manner, terrorism was completely stripped off its rationality and sanity. Terrorism was no longer a mean to an end, but in many ways an end in itself. Such a monstrosity did not deserve any understanding or empathy and had to be resisted firmly and unequivocally.

The New terrorism thesis gained significant impetus following the appalling 9/11 attacks in 2001. Policy makers and academics alike were completely dismissive of traditional and orthodox positions that viewed terrorism as a method or a tactic deployed strategically to achieve a certain socio-political end. Their uncompromising and rigid opposition to terrorism conveniently found resounding endorsement from the contentious New Terrorism thesis.

As the New Terrorism thesis granted no justificatory or explanatory space to terrorism, it conveniently provided an intellectual rationale for the War on Terror that sought to eliminate terrorism and its manifestations without any reservations or considerations. States were urged to resort to strict kinetics and military alternatives instead of engaging or exploring any possible drivers or root causes.

However, over time, as the War on Terror failed to achieve any of its stated objectives, academics began to challenge and question both its outrageous ambitions and intellectual underpinnings. Foremost amongst them was a profound critique on the refusal to acknowledge the root causes and drivers of terrorism and violent extremism. The discourse on Prevention of Violent Extremism can in many ways be regarded as a byproduct of this critique.

Despite the overwhelming failure of the War on Terror and in spite of the promise and potential of the PVE discourse, most of the countries have surprisingly failed to cast WOT aside as their sole or primary frame of reference. While this collective failure has had an impact on a global scale, it has proven to be particularly detrimental for countries that continue to struggle with violent extremism and terrorism. Pakistan, owing to being on the frontlines of the so-called war on terror, is amongst its foremost victims.

The WOT paradigm is thus both regressive and counterproductive that inevitably and somewhat deliberately impedes the goals and ambitions of the PVE discourse. For the sake of PVE, it is therefore imperative to cast it aside.

However, far from casting it aside, there is increasingly a practice to conflate WOT with PVE or worse relegating PVE to a mere strategy that can be taken up under the umbrella of the WOT paradigm. This gross oversimplification is not only counter-intuitive but is also at the heart of the discursive problem. It is necessary therefore to discuss in further detail this erroneous conflation of two very different and conflicting paradigms.

ii. Conflating PVE with WOT

Owing to the overwhelming failures of WOT and its excessively military centric approach, the academic and policy paradigm gradually shifted towards exploring proactive non-kinetics alternatives. The discourse on PVE is essentially a product of that very paradigm shift. Focused primarily on exploring, addressing and engaging with the root causes and drivers of terrorism and violent extremism, PVE in many ways is the antithesis of the WOT discourse.

While still somewhat in infancy, the discourse on PVE has the potential to provide long-term solution to the problems of terrorism and violent extremism, as opposed to the short-term temporary fixes provided by military actions alone. However, in order for PVE to be meaningful and impactful, it must be given the necessary space, freedom and confidence. Lukewarm initiatives or partial engagements that fail to appreciate and acknowledge the depth of PVE, end up being mere cosmetic smokescreen. Similarly, a confusion or conflation of PVE with counter terrorism/VE strategies that regularly demand kinetic actions can equally undermine the prospects and viability of the inherently non-kinetic PVE programs and initiatives.

Given that PVE is primarily an outcome of the desire to address the root causes and drivers of terrorism and violent extremism, it is necessary to realize that it will not accord any space or leverage to military actions, at least insofar as its own domain and scope is concerned. It is crucial to acknowledge this verity since societies that have long relied on kinetics alone (courtesy the WOT paradigm), fail to fully understand the dictates and demands of PVE. In fact, it is fairly common for such societies to either conflate PVE with ongoing military campaigns against terrorism or to simply misinterpret PVE as a mutation or an alteration of the Counter Terrorism (CT) discourse.

Just as it is crucial to not equate PVE with WOT or kinetics, it is equally important that PVE programs and initiatives are not undertaken or led by security agencies and military personnel. To begin with, PVE is primarily about community engagement and outreach, especially in vulnerable conflict ridden areas that have understandably become wary and skeptical of military operations and security personnel. It is therefore highly unlikely that the affected people will be comfortable participating in community engagement programs that are to be led by the same entities that were or are responsible for kinetics and military operations. As David Cortright notes, "Military forces are not appropriate providers of development assistance. Military service members do not have the mandate and are not trained or equipped to address problems of underdevelopment, alienation, and instability in marginalized communities" (2012, p. 246).

Secondly, just as a person of non-kinetic disposition cannot engage in kinetic matters or devise elaborate military strategies, a person trained in kinetics is neither qualified nor intellectually equipped to appreciate and acknowledge both the significance and varying contours of the inherently non-kinetic PVE discourse.

Failure to acknowledge the non-kinetic basis and premise of the PVE discourse leads to flawed policies and defective strategies. It also erroneously ends up raising questions about the feasibility and practicality of the entire PVE enterprise. As policymakers and analysts become skeptical of PVE, they inadvertently revert to the default WOT paradigm, which resets the vicious cycle of ignoring the root causes and drivers of VE and terrorism and instead encourages a reliance on relentless and ruthless kinetic alternatives.

Half-hearted, superficial and cosmetic engagement with PVE will not yield anything constructive or meaningful. In fact, its inevitable failure will pave way for the very kinetic-centric WOT discourse that it was supposed to replace.

iii. Myopic Understanding of Extremism

One of the most common mistakes committed by academics and policymakers alike is to conflate the different strands and manifestations of extremism and condemn them unequivocally. Such a practice is not only unhelpfully reductive but is also detrimental to the overall study of extremism.

The phenomenon of extremism is complex and multifaceted that not only comes in different shapes and sizes but is also open to varied interpretations. As Anna Williford points out, "The word 'extremism' can be tossed around in a variety of conversations, and with each utterance, its meaning fluctuates" (2019, p. 937). Owing to its complex and varied nature, it is

crucial to not take extremism at face value or attach any fixed disparaging value to it, which presupposes its meaning and prejudices its outcome.

While this may be so, the term extremism, owing to being terrorism's foremost drivers, has unfortunately acquired an overly negative and pejorative undertone. Not only is the term widely believed to be wrong and immoral but much like terrorism, extremism is also not accorded any justificatory or explanatory space. This blanket condemnation and compartmentalization of extremism creates a host of problems, which among other things, seriously hamper all PVE related programs and initiatives. It is therefore necessary to understand what extremism truly entails and where the problem is effectively stemming from.

To begin with, it is crucial to acknowledge that the problem essentially is with violent extremism and not extremism per se. In fact, extremism in and of itself is neither necessarily bad nor inherently wrong. This is because the notion of extremism has no fixed meaning or interpretation and what is judged to be extreme by one could verily be the prerogative of another to simply hold an opinion. As human beings, we are all entitled to holding different beliefs, viewpoints and convictions, even if they are judged by some to be extreme. To condemn someone for simply ascribing to an opinion believed to be extreme is therefore imprudent and wrong-footed. Furthermore, "...blanket rejections of each other's beliefs [on account of being extreme] subsequently lead to division, intolerance and bigotry" (Gillani, 2025, p. 41). In other words, an unqualified critique of extremism could end up having the exact opposite effect.

Secondly, even though people frequently conflate the two, it goes without saying that violent extremism is not the same thing as extremism. Where extremism can potentially be excused, justified and even defended, no such concession can be extended to violent extremism. It is important to also bear in mind that the discourse on PVE and even CVE is about preventing or countering violent extremism and not the stand-alone entity of extremism. Conflation of extremism and VE, as is typically the norm, is therefore not only analytically unhelpful but also intellectually dishonest.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, preconceived notions about extremism and its unqualified conflation with VE, is in particular problematic for traditional, conservative and pre-modern societies like Pakistan. As Matteo Vergani notes, "Research shows that among Southeast Asian community actors terms such as CVE, PVE, and social cohesion are delegitimized by some because they are intrinsically ambiguous and do not allow stakeholders to distinguish clearly between legitimate forms of non-violent radical or fundamentalist religious thought, which are part of the democratic political discourse in Muslim-majority countries, and violent extremism" (2021, p. 11).

PVE programs and initiatives, more often than not, are typically directed at communities that are fiercely protective of their longstanding values and beliefs. It is fairly likely that such values and beliefs may appear extreme to outside observers. To denounce extremism altogether could for that reason amount to denouncing the fundamentally held belief-systems of the said community. It will therefore not be surprising if the intended PVE initiative fails to have the desired impact in the community owing to the ensuing misgivings and mistrust between the two sides.

Anyone working in PVE must understand that the problem they are trying to address is violent extremism and not extremism itself. In fact, it will not be an exaggeration to suggest that there is nothing wrong with extremism per se since we all hold opinions, at different points in our lives, which can be deemed extreme by others. As Macnair and Frank have observed, "It is not altogether uncommon for several individuals to, at some point in their life, hold views or opinions that may be considered extreme" (2017, p. 149).

Accepting that there is nothing wrong with simply holding an extreme viewpoint, allows one to be more receptive and responsive towards local values and sensitivities, which subsequently helps with greater acceptance of the PVE initiatives. Such an acceptance also allows us to understand and address the real problem, which is the forceful imposition of one's extreme upon others. "Imposition of an extreme viewpoint upon others by any means possible is what really encourages one to resort to violence and even terrorism" (Gillani, 2025, p. 42).

This is of course not to suggest that certain extreme viewpoints are not regressive or even violence prone, but merely to point out that a blanket rejection of extremism is a logical fallacy that fails to offer any workable solution to the problem. It is also crucial to understand here that a mutual respect of each other's respective extremes does not entail a tacit approval or endorsement of dangerous and vile extreme viewpoints that can be harmful for the society.

Some extreme positions, whether left or right, indeed have an inherent propensity to not just denounce other positions or extremes but implicitly also encourage a resort to force or violence to achieve the desired objectives. Similarly, certain other

extreme positions are overly regressive and bigoted that constrain societal behavior and violate fundamental human rights in both theory and practice (such as the one espoused by the Afghan Taliban). While that maybe so, a blanket rejection of even such transgressional extremes will not achieve the desired PVE objectives. This is because, more often than not, such extremes are deeply ingrained in the very social fabric of the society. Rejecting them outright therefore will alienate the target population and have the exact opposite effect. Instead, what is needed is patience, a fair dose of prudence and a long-term commitment to gradually change and shift the attitudes and behavior of the community that has internalized some harmful extreme position that can inadvertently pave way for violence and terrorism.

To sum up, a narrow or one-dimensional view of extremism is a serious handicap in all PVE programs and initiatives. Such a view erroneously conflates extremism with its violent strands and leaves little to no room or justificatory space for facets of extremism that are not necessarily violent. Conflation of extremism with violent extremism inadvertently produces flawed policies and misguided strategies. Such a myopic view is all the more problematic for fundamentally religious societies like Pakistan where an overwhelming majority of the population subscribes to the tenets of Islam.

Blanket rejection of all extremes thus creates a blind spot which not only stops us from differentiating extremism from VE but effectively also prevents us from acknowledging and accounting for our own respective extremes. Such a superficial understanding of extremism prompts us to reject all views that are contrary to our own belief system and encourages us to forcefully impose our own extreme upon others.

Lack of proper understanding of what extremism is and how it is different from VE is a crucial challenge in all PVE related endeavors. Failure to respect and acknowledge the warranted extremes of a targeted community or the forceful imposition of some foreign or alien extreme on the said community can seriously jeopardize and undermine PVE.

iv. Lack of Sound and Viable Narratives

Although seemingly obvious and straightforward, the term narrative is both complex and elusive. As Tone Kvernbekk notes, “Despite the enormous body of literature on narratives that exists, both the concept and its scope or domain of application remain unclear” (2003, p. 268). Notwithstanding its complexity and elusiveness however, the word narrative is amongst the most frequently used words in the political and intellectual discourses today.

Imported, by and large, from literary theory (Kvernbekk, 2003), narratives “feature prominently as sense-making devices, through which events are not merely infused with meaning, but constructed and contested” (Gabriel, 2004, p. 62). In other words, narratives are rhetorical tools that help construct meaning of events and happenings in the social world. A single social event can potentially generate a number of competing narratives with each vying or claiming monopoly over its true representation and interpretation. In a sense therefore, narratives do not represent some objective truth or reality but effectively construct it by means of persuasive subjective interpretations. As Stefan Groth notes that a narrative “does not take the social as a given, ready to be observed and analyzed, but works with the assumption that perceptions of the world are mediated” (2019, p. 5).

Given its constructivist underpinnings, the discourse on narratives is essentially a product of the interpretivist school of thought that rejects the positivist premise of an objective, impartial and a detached world. Instead, the discourse sets out to account for competing truths over subjective interpretations of what appears or alleges to be reality. As Stefan Groth notes, “The “narrative turn” in the social sciences and the humanities is a turn away from positivist approaches to social realities and political processes” (2019, p. 5).

Narratives come in all shapes and sizes and are all around us. All aspects of the social world, be it religion, race, culture or gender, are influenced, in one way or another, by narratives. A “narrative can be influenced by our particular interests, our social concerns, the traditions of our society, or of institutions in that society” (Passmore, 1987, p. 72). Although narratives continue to change and evolve and we may find one more convincing than the other at any given time, our engagement with narratives is both constant and perpetual. As Philip Hammack explains, “I consider human development as a lifelong process of narrative engagement- a consistent encounter with the world of stories about the social categories we inhabit, such as nationality, gender, sexual identity, class, ethnicity, and race” (2011, p. 312).

The purpose of engaging with the philosophical and intellectual roots of the term narrative is to demonstrate that it neither exist in a vacuum nor does it necessarily correspond to some objective truth or reality. If a narrative claims to be completely objective and impartial, then frankly it is not aware of its own meaning and *raison d'être*. Narratives, in effect, are social

constructs that subsequently create both our truths and reality. The more powerful and persuasive a narrative, the more convincing is the perception and projection of alleged truths and reality.

Over the last several decades, “the concept of narrative has become very popular in academic discourse in various disciplines of the humanities and social sciences” (Shenhav, 2006, p. 245). Other than the post-modern discursive shift, this popularity, in large part, is owing to the rise of the digital age where narratives can be disseminated almost instantaneously over a range of different platforms. While this digital revolution has greatly facilitated the spread of peaceful and pacifist messages, it has however, also inadvertently assisted the spread of vile and dangerous propaganda. What has ensued, as a result, is a clash of narratives between vying entities. The winner of the clash gets to determine the subsequent construction and perception of both truth and reality.

Owing to its subjective nature, the use of the phrase narrative “suggests the existence of competing truths [with] each carrying persuasion for the group upholding it”. Furthermore, it also “implies that each version is not a neutral account of events, but an attempt to naturalize what is, at bottom, an ideological stance” (Rimmon-Kenan, 2006, p. 12). As each group seeks to advance its respective ideological stance through construction of a persuasive narrative, it inevitably leads to a clash or conflict of sorts. The winner of this clash usually gets to have monopoly over perception of both truth and reality.

The rise of terrorism and violent extremism in the last couple of decades, in part, owes to successful propagation of powerful and persuasive narratives that have not been adequately refuted or countered. Indeed, if unchecked and unhindered, such narratives have the propensity to shape truth and reality, which can significantly advance the cause of VE and terrorist groups. The success of the likes of Al-Qaeda, Islamic State and Tehrik-e-Taliban is in large part owing to their powerful narratives that resonated strongly with their target audience.

Once a VE or terrorist group manages to claim monopoly over perception of truth and reality, it is easily able to attract a large number of recruits and sympathizers. No amount of kinetics and military actions can defeat a group that has successfully constructed a social reality by means of powerful narratives that resonate strongly with the public at large. Even a seemingly successful military campaign will be superficial and short-lived. For a meaningful resolution and a long-term solution, it will be necessary to refute and reject the narrative of VE and terrorist groups by generating powerful and impactful alternate narratives that are able to sway the target audience away.

While creating a powerful counter or alternate narrative, it is imperative to keep in mind that narratives are not created in isolation or in a vacuum. For a narrative to sell and resonate strongly with the target audience, it must correspond to and take account of existing social realities, such as, cultural values, belief-systems, religious sensitivities and political preferences. A sound alternate narrative must also be able to successfully reject and refute the central assertions and alleged claims of terrorist organizations that the public finds particularly appealing and alluring. For that to happen, a deep and profound study of terrorist narratives is a compulsory prerequisite. Intellectual and critical engagement with the terrorist narratives will allow us to not only understand their appeal and allure but also how to dislodge and dismantle them with narratives of our own.

Thus, if a narrative does not resonate strongly and organically with a target audience, especially when it is divorced from prevailing social realities, it will neither have the desired effect nor any meaningful impact on the concerned society. Unfortunately owing to the prevailing one-dimensional view of extremism and the confining war on terror paradigm, we have adopted narratives that are incredibly restrictive and linear. Since such a narrative is typically borrowed from an overarching meta-narrative (such as the WOT thesis), which is largely divorced from indigenous context and ground realities, it largely fails to have the desired effect on the society.

Extremist and terrorist organizations, of late, have shown remarkable flexibility and adaptability. They appear to successfully read the pulse of the society and exploit its various handicaps and vulnerabilities by means of a carefully crafted indigenous narrative (unlike countries like Pakistan that are often tragically caught up in unrelatable, foreign and counter-intuitive meta-narratives). Such a deceptively clever narrative allows VE and terrorist actors to make inroads in the society, corrupt the impressionable minds of the youth and gain recruits for their violent activities.

Government reliance on overarching meta-narratives to counter and negate VE and terrorist propaganda in place of grounded indigenous narratives has largely proven to be ineffective and counter-productive. Generation of a viable counter/alternate narrative, which resonates with the target audience and displaces or replaces the VE narrative of extremist and terrorist organizations, remains a crucial challenge for countries like Pakistan that for the most part fail to understand and acknowledge the logic and rationale behind a successful and powerful narrative.

v. Security and Safety Concerns

Security and safety here “refers to the measures and strategies implemented to protect individuals, organizations, and sensitization programmes” (Wami et al., 2023, p. 142). Security and safety are amongst the chief pre-requisites for any PVE undertaking. In fact, PVE, or for that matter, any developmental program or initiative cannot be undertaken without adequate safety and security measures. As Eleanor Gordon notes, “It is generally agreed that security is necessary to sustainable peace, development and human rights” (2014, p. 2). It is therefore imperative that necessary security and safety measures are already in place before any planned PVE activity.

While that maybe so, PVE as a rule, is generally undertaken in areas that are directly affected by VE and terrorism, which understandably, is not a simple and straightforward undertaking. Regions affected by VE and terrorism are not only dangerous and volatile but are also particularly hostile towards any intervention from the outside. Any planned PVE program and initiative will almost definitely attract the attention of VE and terrorist organizations who will do everything they can to derail and sabotage the activity. This makes PVE, an otherwise non-kinetic enterprise, an extremely perilous and risk prone undertaking.

PVE, as we know, seeks to primarily address and ultimately resolve the root causes and drivers of terrorism and violent extremism. It is therefore not surprising that it invites the wrath of VE and terrorist organizations, who are otherwise fully aware of the implications of successful PVE programs. Ironically, in comparison, VE and terrorist organizations often tend to welcome kinetic and military responses from the state, which they know could potentially help alleviate grievances, increase resentment and most importantly, help them secure fresh recruits.

Owing to the risk involved, it can be fairly difficult to engage subject experts and field specialists who are otherwise indispensable and necessary for the success of any PVE program. In addition to experts and specialists, it can even be challenging to engage members of the vulnerable community who share the same sentiments regarding security and safety. Terrorists keen on derailing the PVE enterprise, will use everything in their arsenal to scare both the local populace and the PVE personnel, and without any adequate security arrangements, it is fairly likely that they will succeed.

In areas affected by VE and terrorism, there is also a general air of fear and mistrust that further compounds the security problems and prevents any fruitful and meaningful interaction between PVE officials and local community members. Terrorists thrive on this air of fear and mistrust and target any security apparatus that can alleviate the effect of such a suffocating atmosphere. Meanwhile, any well-intended PVE undertaking is severely handicapped and incapacitated.

Security and safety, of both the local populace and the PVE personnel, is of utmost importance and without it, any PVE undertaking is unlikely to bear any fruit. While that maybe so, there are three major limitations insofar as providing security is concerned. Firstly, PVE programs are typically carried out in underdeveloped and developing countries like Pakistan that cannot always afford the hefty pay cheque associated with security protocols. Providing foolproof security is indeed a costly affair and countries with struggling economies can understandably not always bear the immense expense.

The second limitation is regarding the compatibility of the security measures and the community values and belief-systems. As discussed already, communities vulnerable to terrorism and VE are usually very conservative and old-fashioned. It is likely therefore that modern security arrangements can seem fairly intrusive and invasive. It is necessary therefore that the planned security undertaking must not in any way undermine or clash with the local customs and traditions of the target community. If there is a clash of sorts between the security arrangements and community values, it is highly unlikely that the PVE undertaking will achieve any of its desired objectives.

Furthermore, if the security structure does not organically align with the community’s longstanding practices, it will not be durable in the long run and will in all likelihood fall apart following the conclusion of the PVE program. As Gordon points out, “If the new or reformed security structures are at odds with local customs, traditions and practices, it is highly unlikely that they will remain intact and functioning” (2014, p. 2).

The last major issue with providing security is regarding the parameters (or the lack of it) and the prescribed mandate of the security forces. As we know, security forces are primarily responsible for the safety of the PVE personnel and the overall security of the community that is a direct target of VE and terrorist organizations. While that maybe so, unfortunately in many of the developing and underdeveloped countries where PVE programs are characteristically undertaken, the security forces have a tendency to overstep, transgress and in some cases even hijack the entire PVE undertaking. Such transgressions not only undermine the spirit and rationale of PVE but can also easily render the entire enterprise useless.

This is of course not to say that the security or military personnel has no role to play in PVE but merely to point out that their primary and ideally only job is to manage matters of security and safety. Beyond this, they neither have the mandate nor frankly the ability to carry out PVE. Furthermore, assigning core PVE “tasks to military rather than civilian actors displaces the role of civil society and undermines the principles of local self-reliance and grassroots empowerment that are vital to genuine development and democratic governance” (Cortright, 2012, p. 247). Without genuine development and democratic governance, a community struggling with terrorism and VE will fail to make any meaningful transition.

vi. Resource Constraints and Limitations

PVE is a serious and long-term engagement that demands a fair amount of human and financial capital. Unfortunately however, countries like Pakistan that are urgently in need of PVE, do not usually (at least on the face of it) possess the necessary financial and human capital. Inability to allocate adequate resources can seriously jeopardize the entire PVE enterprise.

The contours of PVE are indeed diverse and wide-ranging demanding serious long-term investment. From employing highly trained personnel such as Psychologists, Sociologists and Anthropologists to carrying out developmental projects like building schools, colleges, hospitals and community centers, PVE incorporates a range of different ventures that require a fair amount of resources. It can therefore understandably be difficult for struggling economies to commit wholeheartedly to PVE.

While budgetary constraint is certainly a handicap, it is crucial to note at the very outset that developing countries suffering from VE and terrorism also feel that given their problems in general, they cannot afford to spend or invest heavily on PVE. Failure to prioritize PVE is owing to two standout reasons, both of which (as this discussion will demonstrate) are largely speculative and inexact.

Firstly, there is a general perception that PVE is a luxury, an eccentricity that only the rich countries can afford to indulge in. This perception, in part, is owing to the fact that the discourse/policy on PVE has its roots in the developed Western world. While that maybe so, it is important to also realize that the flawed discourse and policy of WOT (that PVE intends to displace) also originated from the Western hemisphere. Instead of the origins, it is the therefore the content and scope of the discourse and policy that should really matter. Moreover, PVE is entirely premised around acknowledging and accounting for local values and indigenous realities. Given its central assertions and fairly straightforward ambitions, its origins should be beside the point.

The perception regarding PVE being a luxury is also owing to a lack of understanding and clarity over what constitutes PVE in the first place. In comparison with one-dimensional kinetics and military alternatives, PVE is fairly multi-faceted and omnifarious. Since it involves a range of different ventures and employs experts and professionals from a number of assorted fields, PVE creates the impression that it is an expensive commodity. In reality, however, PVE does not even cost a fraction of its military counterpart.

Nevertheless, since a large number of developing and underdeveloped countries have a tendency to blindly invest a fortune in their respective militaries, they are never truly able to make an objective and dispassionate analysis of the non-kinetic alternative. Instead, they take the likes of PVE at face value and simply assume that it will be a costly affair, which owing to their preferences, they would not be able to afford. With the choice being reduced to a binary (between the kinetic and the non-kinetic) and with the priorities already pre-determined, it is perhaps not surprising that they struggle to muster the resources necessary for PVE.

The second interrelated reason why the developing world fails to prioritize PVE is due to a limited and largely erroneous understanding of what PVE is capable of achieving. The prevailing perception is that PVE is a painfully sluggish undertaking that fails to yield any results right away. This is considered as a massive handicap since the grave problem of terrorism and VE demands immediate respite. The desire for an immediate respite creates an obvious need for kinetics, which has a reputation for providing quick fixes.

Admittedly, PVE is a slow and time-consuming undertaking that takes a while to yield any meaningful results especially when compared to its kinetic counterpart. While that maybe so, it is worth noting that a long-term and permanent solution to the problem of VE and terrorism is only possible through direct engagement with its drivers and root causes. Anything short of that would only provide temporary fixes, which in the long run always prove to be counter-productive. Thus, even though PVE fails to offer immediate respite, in the long run however, it has the potential to provide permanent solution to the problem of VE and terrorism. This makes PVE both worth the wait and deserving of its more than fair share of resources. In

fact, given the inefficacy of kinetics in general, it will be advisable to reduce some of the military funding and redirect it towards PVE.

The purpose of this discussion is of course not to suggest that resource constraint is not a serious issue but merely to point out that it is often not what it is made out to be. In fact, more often than not, resource constraint is due to a lack of understanding over what constitutes PVE and our pre-existing preferences that prioritize the military over the non-kinetic alternative. Instead of putting the blame squarely on resource constraints and limitations, we need to therefore first reassess our existing priorities and understand what PVE truly entails and what it is actually capable of achieving.

vii. The Bystander Effect Handicap

It is often surprising how a very small fraction of people can corrupt and adulterate an entire community. It is also equally astonishing how an entire community can sit in silence and watch a tragedy unfold in front of its eyes. Anomalous and strange as they appear, there is an underlying psychology that can help explain the seemingly bizarre behavior. This branch of psychology can particularly be helpful for communities that appear to either appease or be indifferent to VE and terrorism.

Although context is crucial to understanding any strand of VE and terrorism, communities that fall prey to it do often possess certain characteristics that set them apart. Amongst them are some shared psychological traits that are not only a hindrance for PVE programs and initiatives but in some ways even assist the VE and terrorist organizations. The 'Bystander Effect' is one such trait. It must of course be noted at the very outset that the bystander effect is not essentially unique to communities vulnerable to VE and terrorism. On the contrary, it is a fairly prevalent shared psychological trait that helps explain the pronounced idiosyncrasies and sociological behaviors of a collective or an affected community. Nevertheless, the trait has the potential to accentuate the peculiarities and eccentricities of a community vulnerable to VE and terrorism.

The famous 'bystander effect' thesis was developed by John Darley and Bibb Latané following the brutal and very public rape-murder of Catherine 'Kitty' Genovese in 1964. Kitty's tragic murder took place in New York City and was witnessed by thirty-eight people for nearly forty minutes "without taking either active (e.g., trying to stop the perpetrator) or passive (e.g., calling the police) action" (Urschler et al., 2015, p. 203). This horrific incident was both shocking and appalling as researchers scrambled to explain this bizarre and insensitive behavior. As Darley and Latané observed, "Preachers, professors, and news commentators sought the reasons for such apparently conscienceless and inhumane lack of intervention" (1968, p. 377).

Darley and Latané postulated that "the witnesses failed to intervene because there were too many of them. Therefore, the bystander effect is defined by an increased likelihood that individuals are less willing to intervene in critical situations the more other passive people are present" (Urschler et al., 2015, p. 203). This subsequently begs the questions: why are people less likely to intervene in critical or dangerous situations when other people are also present? Why do people fail to help when they collectively witness a wrongdoing?

The bystander effect thesis helps answer these disturbing and unsettling questions as it clearly "explains why individuals are less likely to help in an emergency if others are present" (Hudson & Bruckman, 2004, p.165). The thesis attributes the inability or reluctance to help someone in need in the presence of other people to a number of psychological factors such as mutual denial, "diffusion of responsibility", and "pluralistic ignorance" (Hortensius & Gelder, 2018, p. 249).

The notion of mutual denial, in the context of bystander effect, refers to a shared psychological state where every individual is somewhat in a state of trance or denial about a wrongdoing being witnessed. It is often difficult to accept that something as vile, graphic or despicable could be happening in broad daylight in front of all the witnesses. This shock prompts a mental denial as the mind fails to accept that such a thing could even be happening, least of all in front of all these other people.

Similarly, diffusion of responsibility helps explain why individuals fail to respond to an emergency in the presence of other onlookers. If a wrongdoing is being witnessed by just one individual, then it goes without saying that it is entirely his/her responsibility to respond to it. The equation for responding to a crisis in the case of a single onlooker is thus fairly straightforward. This equation, however, becomes fairly complex when the crisis is witnessed by a crowd and the responsibility to act is diffused somewhat equally amongst the onlookers.

While witnessing a crisis as a collective, each individual has an equal responsibility to take action. This 'equal responsibility' creates a psychological barrier of sorts where everyone expects the other (equally responsible) to act first. Moreover, each individual is aware of the other observers and conveniently assumes that someone else, perhaps more qualified or relevant to the crisis at hand, would respond to it.

The diffusion of responsibility in a collective thus ends up preventing everyone from doing anything at all. As Darley and Latané note, “When there are several observers present, however, the pressures to intervene do not focus on any one of the observers; instead the responsibility for intervention is shared among all the onlookers and is not unique to any one. As a result, no one helps” (1968, p. 378). Moreover, each witness is aware of the other observers and assumes that someone else, perhaps more qualified or relevant to the crisis at hand, would respond to it.

This is of course not to say that individuals fail to act out of fear, apathy or indifference. On the contrary, the notion of diffused responsibility helps explain why even empathetic and compassionate individuals would fail to respond to a wrongdoing as part of a collective.

Much like mutual denial and diffusion of responsibility, the notion of pluralistic ignorance helps explain the peculiar bystander effect. Pluralistic ignorance or ‘collective delusion’ (as it is often called) is a socio-psychological phenomenon where an individual mistakenly presupposes or assumes that the opinions and beliefs of the others are different from his/her own. As Dale Miller notes, “Pluralistic ignorance is a situation in which group members systematically misestimate their peers’ attitudes, feelings, and private behaviors” (2023, p. 1). Rasmus Rendsvig similarly notes that pluralistic ignorance is a situation where “everybody believes that everybody else follows a given norm, while in fact no one follows it” (2014, p. 2474).

When an individual assumes or presupposes the beliefs and opinions of others, his/her own apprehensions and impulse to act are either suppressed or superseded. This prevents the individual to act on his/her own accord even when the original apprehension or impulse was clearly right all along. This socio-psychological trait explains why an individual fails to act in the presence of fellow onlookers even when a failure to act would visibly result in a tragedy.

In the context of PVE, the bystander effect has proven to be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, diffusion of responsibility coupled with pluralistic ignorance encourages people to conveniently shift responsibility or assume the worst of others, who as it so happens, end up doing the same. This creates an endless cycle of shifting responsibility and misreading peers that prevents individuals from actively engaging with PVE related endeavors.

On the other hand, provisions within the bystander effect prevent individuals in a vulnerable community from actively resisting VE and terrorism. Where mutual denial prevents individuals from even acknowledging the perversion of a segment of society or societal norms, there pluralistic ignorance reinforces their inhibitions and misgivings. Lastly, the provision of diffusion of responsibility not only effectively stops them from extending any active or passive support but conveniently also absolves the individuals of any potential accountability.

The bystander effect is thus a significant challenge and handicap for PVE. Acknowledging this verity alone can help us devise and modify PVE programs and initiatives.

viii. Resistance to Change

PVE, by virtue of its nature, demands significant change, revision or reevaluation of prevailing norms, practices and behaviors. This is of course not to say that PVE wants a complete overhaul of existing patterns of interaction in a community. On the contrary, the purpose of any PVE program or initiative is to strengthen communal bonds, reinforce positive behavior and only weed out negative, regressive and violence prone attitudes.

As honorable and transparent as its intentions may be, PVE can easily be misunderstood or misconstrued as a deliberate and somewhat elaborate assault on indigenous values and customs. Such misgivings regarding PVE is owing to a multitude of factors, foremost amongst which is a profound aversion to anything that may trigger an identity or existential crisis. Using Leon Festinger’s concept of cognitive dissonance, Dalgaard-Nielsen posits that “Resistance [to change] stems from a fundamental aversion against introducing dissonant themes into ones attitudes, feelings, and behaviors”. “People”, Dalgaard-Nielsen argues, “strive to see themselves, and to appear to others, as consistent and competent and harbor a dislike against going through a potentially painful and disorienting process of restructuring ideas and values that are closely tied up with their identity, life, and life choices” (2013, p. 107).

In addition to identity and existential insecurities, apprehensions regarding PVE is partly because of the somewhat foreign and ostensibly alien nature of PVE activities that may seem distant and unrelatable. Additionally, it could also be due to a lack of understanding regarding what PVE entails or what it is essentially setting out to achieve. Lastly, this perception could also be owing to lack of trust or a history of mistrust between the concerned community and the state. There are thus a good

number of reasons why any given community would be skeptical and apprehensive of PVE and the changes it wants to introduce.

Bringing about a change in the behaviors and attitudes of any community is understandably a tall order. The fact that communities vulnerable to VE are resistant to change, should therefore, not come as a surprise at all. The problem however is that this resistance is a serious handicap for any PVE venture, which simply cannot succeed without any meaningful change in the negative, regressive and violence prone attitudes of the target community.

Although introducing a change in any community can be difficult, it is however particularly challenging in conservative and traditional societies like, for instance, the tribal areas of Pakistan. This is not just because such communities are overly protective of their values and belief systems, but also because they are usually disconnected from the mainstream society. This cautious self-preservation coupled with mainstream disconnect prompts them to be skeptical of any venture that seeks to bring about a change.

As it so happens, PVE and the changes it seeks, is typically intended for exactly such conservative and traditional societies. This is because, more often than not, it is usually these very communities that are at the receiving end of VE and terrorism. Such conservative societies may find themselves at odds with modern PVE strategies, leading to reluctance and, in some cases, even outright rejection and opposition. As noted earlier, these communities tend to be fiercely protective of their values, customs and traditions. Therefore, as a result, they are fairly skeptical of foreign intrusion and tend to disregard and discredit any effort or attempt that even appears to undermine or challenge their longstanding practices and way of life.

Although the notion of 'resistance to change' is typically applied to the target community, its logic however, can easily be extended to government officials and organizations responsible for carrying out PVE programs and initiatives. In fact, prevention efforts may seriously be impeded by institutional inertia and 'group think' within government agencies and other concerned organizations. Government bureaucracies in particular, tend to be fairly conformist and resistant to change, much like the communities they intend to change. Their patterns of behavior and interaction are often far too rigid and unyielding, which can easily clash with proposed PVE initiatives that demand progressive change and innovative thinking.

Resistance to change is thus multifaceted and comes in different shapes and sizes. It is not just the target community that poses a challenge but even the convening and conducting authorities can be equally problematic. The challenge posed therefore needs to be taken seriously or else PVE will fail to have any meaningful impact.

ix. The Nuisance of Bureaucratic Red-Tapism

"Bureaucracy has existed since the civilization period, witnessing numerous changes in society, enduring through many millennia and achieving the longest existence and growth in the world" (Mai, 2016, p. 245). Bureaucracy indeed is one of the cornerstones of governance that helps a government rationalize and implement its policies and strategies. Anthony Downs, in an article on *A Theory of Bureaucracy* has gone so far as to suggest that bureaucracy makes "critical decisions which shape the economic, political, social, and even moral lives of nearly everyone on earth" (1965, p. 438).

Though seemingly straightforward, the term bureaucracy and what it entails can be fairly complicated. As Joseph Palombara points out, "bureaucracy does not appear to offer any difficulties of definition. On closer inspection, however, it is apparent that the meaning of this concept is far from self-evident" (2006, p. 196). Notwithstanding the confusion and intricacy surrounding the term, it is possible to interpret bureaucracy as the sum of its constituent actors, namely the civil and public servants. As Palombara notes, "it is reasonable to think of bureaucracy as encompassing all public servants" (2006, p. 196). The sheer breath and scope of bureaucracy becomes evident when understood in such simple terms.

Since civil and public servants constitute the very backbone of any government machinery, bureaucracy essentially incorporates the social, political, economic and all other key constituents of a society. Owing to its interwovenness into the socio-political fabric of the society, bureaucracy is particularly crucial for developing countries like Pakistan that are looking to change and transform themselves. As Palombara argues that bureaucracy is a crucial "independent variable that greatly influences any kind of transformation in the developing countries, be it social, economic, or political" (2006, p. 194).

Having already discussed the importance of progressive 'change' in the previous section, it should not come as a surprise that bureaucracy is crucial for the success of PVE. It is also worth bearing in mind that PVE, among other things, demands direct engagement with vulnerable communities, which is simply not possible without bureaucracy. As the linchpin between the government, NGOs, civil societies and community, bureaucracy is the quintessential partner of any PVE undertaking.

Bureaucracy is thus at the very heart of all PVE initiatives, especially community engagement programs. As officially designated civil servants, they have the foremost mandate to engage with the citizens directly. Citizen engagement in the context of PVE is therefore not possible without direct bureaucratic involvement. However, where on the one hand, bureaucratic involvement is necessary for successful PVE engagement, there at the same time, long established and deeply ingrained bureaucratic procedures and practices can also be a serious handicap.

Amongst the frequently recurring problematic bureaucratic practices, the culture of 'red-tapism' is the most standout obstacle, especially for an underdeveloped country like Pakistan (Rauf, 2020). Bureaucratic red-tapism refers to excessive paperwork, superfluous procedures, unnecessary delays, complex hierarchies, outdated processes, redundant practices and needless formalities. Red-tapism is not just a handicap for the bureaucracy itself, it is also a serious impediment for civil societies and non-governmental organizations that often get entangled in the complex web of bureaucratic inefficiency.

As a case in point, even seemingly simple and straightforward procedures, such as the process to register a civil society, can at times be so arduous and complicated that it could take several months, if not years, for an organization to register itself with the government (Rauf, 2020). Such an excessively complicated process can easily discourage aspiring civil societies and NGOs from taking on the much-needed lead and initiative. Since community engagement in the context of PVE requires full participation of both civil societies and governmental bodies, bureaucratic red-tapism is clearly a very serious problem.

Bureaucracy is indeed indispensable for the success of any PVE program and initiative. This success however is contingent on a positive and constructive role that prioritizes the goals and ambitions of PVE, especially over excessive rules and procedures that have of late become characteristic of bureaucracy.

Recommendations: Overcoming Challenges

Flexible, reflexive, indigenous and context-specific strategies are at the heart of navigating the challenges that have just been identified. Instead of a blanket or generalized policy and in place of foreign imported discourses, PVE initiatives must be tailored according to the unique needs and circumstances of the society they are being implemented in.

To begin with, it will be necessary to shed the one-dimensional view of extremism that fails to distinguish it from its violent strands. Instead, in its place, a deeper and richer understanding of extremism that carefully accounts for both our own respective extremes and the target community should duly be adopted. In the same vein, it will also be crucial to also do away with the confining and narrow WOT paradigm and replace it with a more inclusive post-war on terror paradigm, which lays emphasis on the non-kinetic alternative and denounces violence and blanket kinetic responses.

The WOT paradigm, as we know, encourages countries to rely either entirely or primarily on kinetic and militaristic responses to VE and terrorism. A kinetic response, by virtue of its nature, leaves little to no room for typical PVE programs like, community engagement, curriculum development, cultural reforms and other similar non-kinetic initiatives. This is not just due the fact that the WOT paradigm does not quite care for or acknowledges the causes and drivers of terrorism, but the fact that the paradigm largely rests on the fallacious assumption that terrorism does not have any root causes or drivers. This underlying assumption is essentially the problem since it renders any PVE undertaking largely redundant.

Moreover, it will be understandably difficult, if not impossible, to proactively engage a community or undertake any other peaceful PVE program in the middle of an active kinetic campaign. It is also worth bearing in mind that the term kinetic is the literal opposite of the word non-kinetic. To suggest therefore that kinetic policies and non-kinetic initiatives (PVE), can be undertaken simultaneously is therefore somewhat of a self-defeating argument.

Thus, in order for PVE to be meaningful and effective, it will be necessary to first abandon the WOT paradigm. For as long as this paradigm persists, militaristic policies and kinetic strategies alongside active rhetoric of war and violence will continue to be the default response of all obliging governments. Meanwhile, all non-kinetic PVE initiatives and any alleged attempt to positively engage with the root causes and drivers of VE and terrorism will be largely superficial and insincere.

It is crucial to also understand that the current age of information technology is increasingly reducing conflicts to a clash of narratives. A narrative that connects with the public and resonates strongly with its target audience is capable of overcoming tremendous odds. Government therefore have to invest heavily in crafting meaningful alternate narratives that keep the society together and prevent it from falling pray to discord, division and violent extremism. This however, will not be possible if we fail to distance ourselves from the one-dimensional approach to extremism and the confining WOT paradigm.

In order to deconstruct and dismantle the highly appealing and enticing narrative of extremist and terrorist organizations, it is vital for us to move past the bogus overarching meta-narratives, such as the one propagated by the WOT discourse. Instead, we must reconstruct fresh alternate narratives that take full account of indigenous context and realities. Only such contextually relevant alternate narratives will have the intellectual depth to displace the fallacious narratives of extremist and terrorist organizations in our society.

All essential needs of the community in the context of PVE can and should be assessed through the establishment of a consistent communication channel between government officials, concerned civil societies and community leaders, making programs responsive to local dynamics. Sustained dialogue with local leaders/elders will create a sense of ownership of PVE initiatives within the community, ensuring their sustainability and effective implementation in the long run. The 'triad' of community leaders, civil society representatives and government officials will be crucial to the success of PVE initiatives.

One standout obstacle in any PVE undertaking is the notorious 'bystander effect'. The fallout of bystander effect is very real as it could easily undermine PVE initiatives and community engagement. If not adequately addressed, it has the potential to make community engagement exercises ineffective or even redundant. Although there is no straightforward solution to this problem, however, awareness of what the bystander effect entails will be a crucial first step towards substantially mitigating some of its most profound repercussions. Furthermore, since it is essentially a psychological state that a community collectively struggles with, services of trained psychologists can be employed alongside other professionals.

Resistance to change has been identified as a standout barrier to PVE initiatives, especially in societies that are traditional and overly protective of their values and customs. Overcoming this challenge requires consistent efforts to raise awareness and empathetically demonstrate the effectiveness of modern approaches. To remodel modern PVE strategies according to the dictates and demands of indigenous realities, local leaders and regional subject experts must be engaged at all levels.

While it is true that change is often necessary for societies that have long been struggling with extremism and terrorism, it is however equally crucial to respect the longstanding traditions and customs of all such societies. In other words, it is necessary to tailor modern PVE strategies according to the customs, traditions and values of the affected regions, so as to make them more accessible, durable and impactful. In fact, a change should only be proposed when a certain practice or convention is highly regressive and dangerous for the society or if it happens to be completely incompatible with core PVE strategies. Even in such cases, change must not be rapid or rushed. Instead, it should be instituted after rigorous educational campaigns and communication strategies that first adequately alleviate and address the concerns of the community. In this vein, the 'Behavioral Change Communication' (BCC) model, can be particularly useful. BCC allows us to devise effective and persuasive communication strategies that encourage a community to voluntarily change and adopt healthier and sustainable practices over the course of time (See e.g. Bubeck, 2024).

Bureaucratic red-tapism, is similarly an impediment that can seriously hamper PVE. This pervasive practice can easily slow down an initiative that is highly urgent and time sensitive. As it so happens, most of PVE policies and strategies are highly time and space sensitive.

For PVE to be effective, it is imperative that the nuisance of bureaucratic red-tapism is duly addressed and accounted for. All bureaucratic processes and procedures in relation to PVE must be methodically identified and where possible adequately codified. This will allow the concerned personnel to identify gaps and loose ends at both the policy and implementation stages.

Furthermore, since PVE programs must be spearheaded by civil society organizations and NGOs, the process for engaging and registering all such non-governmental organizations must be streamlined and properly structured. Unnecessary delays and complicated paperwork must be substituted with clear and easy to navigate policies and procedures. Positive bureaucratic reforms will be at the heart of all successful PVE initiatives. The necessary push and drive for such reforms will have to be initiated from within bureaucracy itself.

In conclusion, while PVE is clearly marred with challenges, it can be successful through a well-resourced, strategic, culturally sensitive and contextually relevant approach. Through abandoning meta-narratives and one-dimensional lenses, establishing robust yet mindful security protocols, constructing viable and relatable alternate narratives, allocating all necessary resources, moderately and cautiously mitigating resistance to change, incorporating indigenous realities and sensitivities, and addressing bureaucratic inefficiencies, the government and all concerned stakeholders can in the long run effectively overcome the myriad of challenges.

References

- Bubeck, P., Pham, T. D. M., Nguyen, T. N. A., & Hudson, P. (2024). Disaster risk reduction on stage: An empirical evaluation of community-based theatre as a risk communication tool for coastal risk mitigation and ecosystem-based adaptation. *Progress in Disaster Science*, 22, 100323. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pdisas.2024.100323>
- Cortright, D., Millar, A., Gerber-Stellingwerf, L., Lopez, G. A., Wall, K., Fackler, E., & Weaver, J. (2012). Friend, not foe: The role of civil society in preventing violent extremism. *Notre Dame Journal of International & Comparative Law*, 2, 238–256. http://scholarship.law.nd.edu/ndjicl/vol2/iss2/3?utm_source=scholarship.law.nd.edu%2Fndjicl%2Fvol2%2Fiss2%2F3&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages
- Dalgaard-Nielsen, A. (2013). Promoting exit from violent extremism: Themes and approaches. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 36(2), 99–115. DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2013.747073
- Darley, J. M., & Latané, B. (1968). Bystander intervention in emergencies: Diffusion of responsibility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 8(4, Pt. 1), 377–383. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/h0025589>
- Downs, A. (1965). A theory of bureaucracy. *The American Economic Review*, 55(1/2), 439–446. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1816286#:~:text=https%3A/www.jstor.org/stable/1816286>
- Gabriel, Y. (2004). Narratives, stories and texts. In D. Grant, C. Hardy, C. Oswick, & L. Putnam (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational discourse* (pp. 61–78). SAGE. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781848608122.N3>
- Gillani, D. (2025). What is extremism? A conceptual and theoretical understanding. *Journal of Politics and International Studies*, 11(2), 34–44. <https://jpis.pu.edu.pk/45/article/view/1424>
- Gordon, E. (2014). Security sector reform, local ownership and community engagement. *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 3(1), 25. <https://doi.org/10.5334/sta.dx>
- Groth, S. (2019). Political narratives/narrations of the political: An introduction. *Narrative Culture*, 6(1), 1–18. <https://dx.doi.org/10.13110/narrcult.6.1.0001>
- Hammack, P. L. (2011). Narrative and the politics of meaning. *Narrative Inquiry*, 21(2), 311–318. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ni.21.2.09ham>
- Hortensius, R., & De Gelder, B. (2018). From empathy to apathy: The bystander effect revisited. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 27(4), 249–256. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721417749653>
- Hudson, J. M., & Bruckman, A. S. (2004). The bystander effect: A lens for understanding patterns of participation. *The Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 13(2), 165–195. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327809jls1302_2
- Kurtulus, E. N. (2011). The "new terrorism" and its critics. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 34(6), 476–500. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2011.571194>
- Kvernbekk, T. (2003). On identifying narratives. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 22(3), 267–279. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1022869204722>
- La Palombara, J. (2006). An overview of bureaucracy and political development. In *Research in Public Policy Analysis and Management, Comparative Public Administration*. Eds. Eric E. Otenyo; Nancy S. Lind. Emerald Group Publishing. Limited [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0732-1317\(06\)15006-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0732-1317(06)15006-X)
- Laqueur, W. (1996). Postmodern terrorism. *Foreign Affairs*, 75(5), 24–36. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20047741>
- Macnair, L., & Frank, R. (2017). Voices against extremism: A case study of a community-based CVE counter-narrative campaign. *Journal for Deradicalization*, 10, 147–168. <https://journals.sfu.ca/jd/index.php/jd/article/view/90>

- Mai, T. (2016). The power of bureaucracy. *Journal of US-China Public Administration*, 13(4), 244–255. doi: 10.17265/1548-6591/2016.04.003
- Miller, D. T. (2023). A century of pluralistic ignorance: What we have learned about its origins, forms, and consequences. *Frontiers in Social Psychology*, 1, 1260896. <https://doi.org/10.3389/frsps.2023.1260896>
- Passmore, J. (1987). Narratives and events. *History and Theory*, 26(4), 68–74. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2505045>
- Rauf, S. (2020). Effects of red tape in public sector organizations: A study of government departments in Pakistan. *Public Administration and Policy*, 23(3), 327–338. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PAP-06-2019-0013>
- Rendsvig, R. K. (2014). Pluralistic ignorance in the bystander effect: Informational dynamics of unresponsive witnesses in situations calling for intervention. *Synthese*, 191(11), 2471–2498. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-014-0435-0>
- Rimmon-Kenan, S. (2006). Concepts of narrative. In M. Hyvärinen, A. Korhonen, & J. Mykkänen (Eds.), *The travelling concept of narrative* (pp. 10–19).
- Shenhav, S. R. (2006). Political narratives and political reality. *International Political Science Review*, 27(3), 245–262. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512106064474>
- Urschler, D. F., Fischer, J., Kastenmüller, A., & Fischer, P. (2015). Bystander effect. *Psychology*, 29, 203–206. DOI: 10.1093/OBO/9780199828340-0172
- Wami, K. C., Kobani, D., & Douglas, P. (2023). Community engagement in internal security for peace building in Rivers State, Nigeria. *Nigerian Community Development Journal*, Vergani, M. (2021). *Community-centered P/CVE research in Southeast Asia: Opportunities and challenges*. 12, 139–153. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379601835_COMMUNITY_ENGAGEMENT_IN_INTERNAL_SECURITY_F_OR_PEACE_BUILDING_IN_RIVERS_STATE_NIGERIA/citation/download? tp=eyJjb25oZXh0ljp7ImZpcnNoUGFnZSI6InB1YmXPY2FoaW9uIiwicGFnZSI6InB1YmXPY2FoaW9uIn19
- Williford, A. C. (2019). Blurred lines: What is extremism. *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform*, 52, 937–974. <https://doi.org/10.36646/mjlr.52.4.blurred>



2026 by the authors; Journal of Global Social Transformation (JGST). This is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).