

Conceptualising Finnish deradicalisation policies: Implicit or explicit, projectified or institutionalised?

di Kanerva Kuokkanen, Laura Horsmanheimo and Emilia Palonen

Abstract: We address the legal and policy framework of deradicalisation in Finland by taking the division into into ‘implicit’ and ‘explicit’ policies as our starting point. Many Finnish deradicalisation measures are implicit ones, not purposely targeted to potentially radicalising individuals or groups but related to the policies of the welfare state. The Finnish explicit deradicalisation policy is based on a combination of social and security issues and a pragmatic approach. The critical aspect of the policy is its ‘projectification’, or reliance on fixed-term projects, which affects its continuity. The impact of the new right-wing coalition government on the policy remains open.

Keywords: Deradicalisation, Radicalisation, Finland, Policies, Projects.

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1. Introduction

In this study, we address the legal and policy framework of deradicalisation in Finland. The country’s low levels of radicalisation despite a history of deep polarisation, the role of the welfare state in preventive work, and the pragmatic, collaborative and cross-sectoral nature of the current deradicalisation policies that address both the root causes and effects of radicalisation may also help to conceptualise deradicalisation in other contexts.

We use a division into ‘implicit’ and ‘explicit’ policies¹ as our starting point. Many Finnish deradicalisation measures are implicit ones, not purposely targeted at potentially radicalising individuals or groups at risk of radicalisation but concerning a functioning democracy and access to welfare services and education, targeted at the whole population. While current research on deradicalisation has taken a ‘whole-of-society’ approach on deradicalisation policies, emphasising the role of schools and youth and social workers in deradicalisation work², we aim to take a yet broader perspective by concentrating on the macro-level structures preventing

¹ Cf. J. Ahearne, *Cultural policy explicit and implicit: a distinction and some uses*, in 15 *Int. J. Cult. Policy* 2, 141–153 (2009); L. van den Berg, E. Braun, J. van der Meer, *Introduction and Research Framework*, in L. van den Berg, E. Braun, J. van der Meer (Eds), *National Policy Responses to Urban Challenges in Europe*, Aldershot, 2007.

² K. Vallinkoski, S. Benjamin, K. Elliot, *"By correcting disinformation and encouraging them towards tolerance": Finnish educators' considerations of PVE-E*, in 23 *J. Deradicalization* 33, 181–220 (2022).

radicalisation in the first place. Or, as the Finnish scholar Teemu Tammikko³ puts it, a good relation between the state and people affected by it – a functioning justice system, inclusive social services and a participative democratic culture – are central in preventing political violence.

We also use the concept of projectification to pinpoint the critical issue in the Finnish explicit deradicalisation policy. Many of the Finnish measures are based on fixed-term projects following one another. A projectified model allows flexibility and collaboration between the various administrative levels and between public authorities and civil society organisations (CSOs). In the best case, this allows the development grassroots level measures, and CSOs also reach individuals that mistrust public authorities. However, projects also lead to dispersed policies and the end of project funding may also mean an end to well-begun practices.

We first address the policy field of deradicalisation, its central concepts and approaches, before presenting the theoretical framework of this article. The subsequent sections consist of the methodological approach and data used in the study and the Finnish context at a general level. In the empirical analysis, we apply the theoretical framework on Finnish deradicalisation policies. Finally, we have a concluding discussion regarding our findings.

2. Deradicalisation as a policy field

The concept of radicalisation came to academic research from the policy sphere and partly replaced the older discussion on the ‘root causes of terrorism’, thus shifting the focus from social structures more towards the individual’s adaptation of a radical ideology and/or activity.⁴ Deradicalisation, in turn, can be described as ‘process of turning from a position of endorsing and using violence to abstinence from violent means and/or attitudes’ and has affinities with concepts such as disengagement, desistance and disaffiliation.⁵ Deradicalisation at the individual or group level must be distinguished from *policies* targeted at it. These policies are referred to with various concepts, such as deradicalisation policies⁶, Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) or Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)⁷, often grouped together as P/CVE⁸. Previous studies and policy documents have also used the concepts of primary, secondary and tertiary

³ T. Tammikko, *Vihalla ja voimalla. Poliittinen väkivalta Suomessa*, Helsinki, 2019, 5, 12.

⁴ L. Malkki, *Mitä tiedämme terrorismista*, Helsinki, 2020, 185–188; see also R. Coolsaet, *Radicalization: the origins and limits of a contested concept*, in N. Fadil, M. de Koning, F. Ragazzi (Eds), *Radicalisation in Belgium and the Netherlands: critical perspectives on violence and security*, London, 2019, 29–51; A. Kundnani, B. Hayes, *The globalisation of Countering Violent Extremism policies: Undermining human rights, instrumentalising civil society*, Amsterdam, 2018.

⁵ D. Koehlner, *Understanding Deradicalization. Methods, Tools and Programs for Countering Violent Extremism*, Abingdon, 2016, 2.

⁶ S. Kurtenbach, L. Schumilas, A. Kareem, J. Walecia, M. Zaman, *A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Deradicalisation: Results from Germany and Pakistan*, in 29 *J. Deradicalization*, 205–252 (2021/2022).

⁷ J. Sivenbring, R. Andersson Malmros, *Collaboration in Hybrid Spaces: The Case of Nordic Efforts to Counter Violent Extremism*, in 29 *J. Deradicalization*, 54–91 (2021/2022).

⁸ T. Baaken, J. Korn, M. Ruf, D. Walkenhorst, *Dissecting deradicalization: Challenges for theory and practice in Germany*, in 14 *Int. J. Confl. Violence*, 2, 1–18 (2020).

prevention as categories to classify the levels of deradicalisation strategies.⁹ Primary prevention targets the whole society, secondary prevention focuses on people who are noticed as being at a risk of becoming violently radicalised or affiliated with extremist groups and tertiary prevention is implemented with already radicalised people.¹⁰ Other scholars have employed the concepts of prevention (through social services and community projects), repression (through law enforcement and policing) and intervention (through deradicalisation programmes and alike) and/or macro, meso and micro levels of action instead.¹¹

Previous research on deradicalisation policies has largely been based on single case studies¹² and case comparisons¹³. While there is a growing academic interest in the topic of deradicalisation¹⁴, a significant part of the research consists of reports on the topic produced by think tanks and other organisations¹⁵. As many Western post-9/11-era deradicalisation policies have targeted Islamist communities, a significant part of the studies has concentrated on them¹⁶, but there is also an established research tradition

⁹ S. Brouillette-Alarie, G. Hassana, W. Varelaa, S. Ousmana, D. Kilinca, É. L. Savarda, P. Madriaza, S. Harris-Hoganb, J. McCoy, C. Rousseaud, M. Kinge, V. Venkateshf, E. Borokhovskif, D. Pickupf, *Systematic Review on the Outcomes of Primary and Secondary Prevention Programs in the Field of Violent Radicalization*, in 30 *J. Deradicalization*, 117–168 (2022).

¹⁰ H. Haugstvedt, T. Bjørgo, *What can democracies do to prevent extremist violence?* 7-9-2021 [Online]. Available at: www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/english/groups/compendium/what-can-democracies-do-to-prevent-extremist-violence.html (Accessed 14-9-2022)

¹¹ D. Koehlner, *Understanding Deradicalization. Methods, Tools and Programs for Countering Violent Extremism*, Abingdon, 2016, 115.

¹² S. Akbarzadeh, *Investing in Mentoring and Educational Initiatives: The Limits of De-Radicalisation Programmes in Australia*, in 33 *J. Muslim Minor. Aff.* 4, 451–463 (2014); L. Lindekilde, *Refocusing Danish counter-radicalisation efforts: an analysis of the (problematic) logic and practice of individual de-radicalisation interventions*, in C. Baker-Beall, C. Heath-Kelly, L. Jarvis (Eds), *Counter-Radicalisation: Critical perspectives*, London, 2014, 223–241; U. Sumbulah, *De-radicalisation of Indonesian Students: A Case Study of UINMalang*, in 25 *Pertanika J. Soc. Sci. & Hum.*, 155–164 (2017).

¹³ S. Kurtenbach, L. Schumilas, A. Kareem, J. Walecia, M. Zaman, *A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Deradicalisation: Results from Germany and Pakistan*, in 29 *J. Deradicalization*, 205–252 (2021/2022); K. Hardy, *Comparing Theories of Radicalisation with Countering Violent Extremism Policy*, in 15 *J. Deradicalization*, 76–110 (2018).

¹⁴ T. Baaken, J. Korn, M. Ruf, D. Walkenhorst, *Dissecting deradicalization: Challenges for theory and practice in Germany*, in 14 *Int. J. Confl. Violence*, 2, 1–18 (2020).

¹⁵ See M. Elshimi, *De-radicalisation interventions as technologies of the self: a Foucauldian analysis*, in 8 *Crit. Stud. Terror.* 1, 110–129 (2015); D. Koehlner, *Understanding Deradicalization. Methods, Tools and Programs for Countering Violent Extremism*, Abingdon, 2016.

¹⁶ S. Akbarzadeh, *Investing in Mentoring and Educational Initiatives: The Limits of De-Radicalisation Programmes in Australia*, in 33 *J. Muslim Minor. Aff.* 4, 451–463 (2014); L. Welten, T. Abbas, *“We are already 1-0 behind”: Perceptions of Dutch Muslims on Islamophobia, securitisation, and de-radicalisation*, in 14 *Crit. Stud. Terror.* 1, 90–116 (2021); K. Brown, *Influencing political Islam: Moderation, resilience and de-radicalisation in UK domestic counter-terrorism policies, 2005-11*, in G. Kennedy, C. Tuck (Eds), *British Propaganda and Wars of Empire: Influencing friend and foe 1900-2010*, London, 2014, 219–242.

on far-right extremism¹⁷. Comprehensive approaches and studies developing concepts and theory exist to a lesser extent.¹⁸

Deradicalisation policies in different countries are based on different definitions of radicalisation and ways to tackle it.¹⁹ Currently, the European Union (EU) and many European countries have opted for a strategy labelled ‘the whole-of-society approach’, broadening the policy scope from surveillance, the work of intelligence authorities and communities deemed to be suspect to fields such as education, social and health policies and youth work.²⁰ This approach underlines collaboration between various administrative actors and stakeholders.²¹ In the organisation of the hands-on deradicalisation programmes, there is also variation, as they can be organised by public authorities, CSOs or a combination of them, they can focus on ideologies or only violent action, and the participants can be actively recruited or seek to the programmes themselves.²²

3. The frame of reference in this study

In this article, we apply a political science, and more precisely, interpretive policy analysis perspective on Finnish deradicalisation policies. Instead of using the concepts of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention or P/CVE, we claim that the concepts of *implicit and explicit deradicalisation policies* are better suited for analysing the Finnish case, drawing on earlier research on policy fields such as cultural policy²³ and urban policy²⁴. Explicit policies are those directly labelled as addressing a certain policy field (‘cultural policy’ or ‘urban policy’). However, many other policies (e.g., economic, social or regional) can have an embedded cultural or urban dimension, and they can be called as implicit cultural or urban policies. For example, studying EU’s

¹⁷ T. Baaken, J. Korn, M. Ruf, D. Walkenhorst, *Dissecting deradicalization: Challenges for theory and practice in Germany*, in 14 *Int. J. Confl. Violence* 2, 1–18 (2020).

¹⁸ D. Koehlner, *Understanding Deradicalization. Methods, Tools and Programs for Countering Violent Extremism*, Abingdon, 2016, 2; M. Elshimi, *De-radicalisation interventions as technologies of the self: a Foucauldian analysis*, in 8 *Crit. Stud. Terror.* 1, 110–129 (2015); R. Coolsaet, *Radicalization: the origins and limits of a contested concept*, in N. Fadil, M. de Koning, F. Ragazzi (Eds), *Radicalisation in Belgium and the Netherlands: critical perspectives on violence and security*, London, 2019, 29–51.

¹⁹ K. Hardy, *Comparing Theories of Radicalisation with Countering Violent Extremism Policy*, in 15 *J. Deradicalization*, 76–110 (2018).

²⁰ A. Kundnani, B. Hayes, *The globalisation of Countering Violent Extremism policies: Undermining human rights, instrumentalising civil society*, Amsterdam, 2018; K. Vallinkoski, S. Benjamin, K. Elliot *"By correcting disinformation and encouraging them towards tolerance": Finnish educators' considerations of PVE-E*, in 23 *J. Deradicalization* 33, 181–220 (2022).

²¹ E. Christodoulou, S. Szakács, *Preventing Violent Extremism through Education: International and German Approaches*, Braunschweig, 2018.

²² D. Koehlner, *Understanding Deradicalization. Methods, Tools and Programs for Countering Violent Extremism*, Abingdon, 2016.

²³ J. Ahearne, *Cultural policy explicit and implicit: a distinction and some uses*, in 15 *Int. J. Cult. Policy* 2, 141–153 (2009).

²⁴ L. van den Berg, E. Braun, J. van der Meer, *Introduction and Research Framework*, in L. van den Berg, E. Braun, J. van der Meer (Eds), *National Policy Responses to Urban Challenges in Europe*, Aldershot, 2007.

cultural policy, Palonen has noted that while explicit cultural policies were a taboo for decades, implicit cultural policy has been done in terms of regional development.²⁵ Our article introduces this terminology for deradicalisation research. Although we use the concept of implicit deradicalisation policy in policy fields such as welfare and education policies and even the democratic system, the primary aim of these policies is not deradicalisation, and nor should it be so. Rather, the prevention of radicalisation occurs as a side effect of these policies, and vice versa, problems in these policy fields might increase polarisation and the risk of feelings of injustice, grievance and alienation, possibly affecting processes of radicalisation.²⁶

Besides the divide into implicit and explicit policies, we use the divide into *institutionalised and projectified policies* – previously not applied to deradicalisation policy – as our other analytical dimension. According to the literature on public sector projectification²⁷, a growing proportion of public policies is based on fixed-term projects. Projectification is connected to the new public management reforms of the late 1980s and 1990s applying private sector tools to public policies, but it also reflects a newer focus in administration on partnerships, networks and stakeholder involvement. For the EU Member States, the role of the EU is significant in funding projects and mainstreaming the project model.²⁸ Projects are also used in experimenting and creating models and tools for further action.²⁹ They are common in policy fields that new are still searching for their place in the policy structure³⁰ and may be institutionalised at a later stage³¹.

We use a matrix developed on the basis of the theoretical frame of reference to analyse the Finnish case (see Figure 1). The level of the implicitness versus explicitness, on the one hand, and the level of institutionalisation versus projectification, on the other, are used as analytical dimensions which help to position the different types of policy measures inside the Finnish deradicalisation policy.

	Level of institutionalisation/projectification
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²⁵ E. Palonen, *Multi-Level Cultural Policy and Politics of European Capitals of Culture*, in 13 *Nordisk Kulturpolitisk Tidskrift* 1, 87–108 (2010).

²⁶ See E. Lounela, L. Horsmanheimo, R.-M. Kylli, K. Kuokkanen, E. Palonen, *Trends of Radicalisation. Finland D3.2/D.RAD Country Report*, 2021.

²⁷ E.g., M. Jacobsson, B. Jałocha, *Four images of projectification: an integrative review*, in 14 *Int. J. Manag. Proj. Bus.* 7, 1583–1604 (2021); D. Hodgson, M. Fred, S. Bailey, P. Hall (Eds), *The Projectification of the Public Sector*, New York, 2019.

²⁸ S. Büttner, *The European Dimension of Projectification. Implications of the Project Approach in EU Funding Policy*, in D. Hodgson, M. Fred, S. Bailey, P. Hall (Eds), *The Projectification of the Public Sector*, New York, 2019.

²⁹ K. Kuokkanen, *Developing Participation through Projects? A Case Study from the Helsinki Metropolitan Area*, Helsinki, 2016.

³⁰ P. Saukkonen, *Suomi omaksi kodiksi*, Helsinki, 2020, 169–173.

³¹ N. Hertting, C. Kugelberg, *Representative democracy and the problem of institutionalizing local participatory governance*, in N. Hertting, C. Kugelberg (Eds), *Local Participatory Governance and Representative Democracy. Institutional Dilemmas in European Cities*, New York, 2018, 1–17.

Level of implicitness/ explicitness	Implicit institutionalised policies	Explicit institutionalised policies
	Implicit projectified policies	Explicit projectified policies

Figure 1: *The frame of reference*

4. Methods and data

The study is a qualitative policy analysis on the legal and policy framework of (de)radicalisation in Finland. It is based, first, on desk research on the existing scholarly literature, policy documents, the Internet pages of relevant organisations and media data relating to radicalisation, deradicalisation and the broader framework around them in Finland. Second, we use data from five interviews with six experts, who resented officials responsible for the Finnish radicalisation policy, actors conducting deradicalisation projects and experts in the topic of violent radicalisation and social and constitutional law in Finland³². The interviews were conducted in March 2021.

We set this study in the tradition of interpretive policy analysis (IPA), which addresses policies from a holistic and interpretive perspective and combines various kinds of qualitative data.³³ IPA can be seen as an umbrella concept for several kinds of interpretive and qualitative policy studies, and this study mainly represents the so-called qualitative policy research approach, referring to a hermeneutical study aimed at understanding a specific policy and what is ‘behind it’ on the basis of the policy actors’ experiences.³⁴ Our data consists of the perspective of the experts and practitioners. For practical reasons, we did not address the experiences of the targets of the policy, which would potentially provide a different description of the Finnish deradicalisation policies.

5. The Finnish context

Finland is a republic and a unitary state, an EU member since 1995 and NATO member since 2023. It is characterised by the Nordic (or so-called ‘social democratic’) welfare regime³⁵, meaning extensive welfare policies which are based on national legislation but implemented locally by the municipalities or the recently established regional-level wellbeing services counties. Social and economic divergences are narrowed with a progressive redistribution system, and public services are funded with tax money.

The Finnish population has traditionally been relatively homogenous.

³² Some of the interviewees wanted to be cited with their name and background organisation while others preferred to remain anonymous. We have respected this when referring to the interviews.

³³ D. Yanow, *Conducting Interpretive Policy Analysis*, Thousand Oaks, 2000.

³⁴ H. Wagenaar, *Meaning in Action: Interpretation and Dialogue in Policy Analysis*, New York, 2011.

³⁵ G. Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Cambridge, 1990.

Historical divides have existed between the urban and rural areas, the Evangelical Lutheran and the Orthodox religions, Finnish- and Swedish-speakers, and the Left and the Right.³⁶ Regional differences are moderate³⁷; the less well-off regions tend to be concentrated in the eastern and northern parts of the country.³⁸ The Evangelical Lutheran church and the Orthodox church have a specific position in Finnish legislation. Swedish is the other national language of Finland (approximately five percent of the population have Swedish as their mother tongue) and a compulsory curriculum in Finnish schools. Indigenous Sámi populations live in an area comprising parts of Northern Finland, Sweden, Norway and Russia. In February 2023, the Parliament debated a law proposition to reform the Sámi Parliament³⁹, connected to the rights and the definition of the Sámi people, but failed to pass it in time due to opposition from conservative parties.⁴⁰ Traditional ethnic minorities include Roma, Tatars, Jewish, Ingrian Finns and Karelians. Since the late 1980s, humanitarian and work- and family-related immigration has increased, and the change has been significant because of the low starting point.⁴¹

The Finnish electoral system is based on proportional representation. The traditional political parties include social-democratic and non-social-democratic left-wing parties, agrarian and conservative right-wing parties, and Swedish-speaking, Christian democratic and green parties. The 2011 election victory of the populist Finns Party, which criticised EU and the ‘traditional parties’, marked a change in the party landscape.⁴² It was one of the governing parties after the 2015 elections, but after its split in 2017, shifted towards a more nativist direction, with new splinter groups registering as political parties.⁴³ It received the second-most votes in the 2023 elections and is now in a right-wing coalition government led by Petteri Orpo from the conservative National Coalition Party. After ten days, one of the Finns Party ministers resigned because of his Nazi references,

³⁶ E. Allardt, *Samhället Finland: Omvandlingar och traditioner*, Helsinki, 1985.

³⁷ S. Sjöblom, *Finland: The Limits of the Unitary Decentralized Model*, in J. Loughlin, F. Hendriks, A. Lidström (Eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Local and Regional Democracy in Europe*, Oxford, 2011, 241–260.

³⁸ S. Fina, B. Heider, M.-W. Sihvola, M. Mattila, P. Rautiainen, K. Vatanen, *Unequal Finland: Regional socio-economic disparities in Finland*, Helsinki, 2021.

³⁹ Sámi Parliament Act (974/1995).

⁴⁰ R. Sundman, J. Aaltonen, A. Keski-Heikkilä, *Saamelaiskäräjälaki kaatui perustuslakivaliokuntaan*, in *Helsingin Sanomat* 24-2-2023 [Online]. Available at: www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000009414580.html (Accessed 8-3-2023).

⁴¹ J. Saari, L. Tynkkynen, *Still holding on its breath. The Finnish Welfare system under reform*, in S. Blum, J. Kuhlmann, K. Schubert (Eds), *Routledge Handbook of European Welfare Systems*, New York, 2019, 184–201.

⁴² D. Arter, ‘Taking the Gilt off the Conservatives’ *Gingerbread: The April 2011 Finnish General Election*, in 34 *West Eur. Polit.* 6, 1284–1295 (2011); E. Palonen, *Populismimuoto, diskursiivisuus ja retoriikka. Analyysi soinnilaisuudesta*, in 62 *Politiikka* 2, 125–145 (2020).

⁴³ E. Palonen, *Finland: Political development and data for 2017*, in 57 *Eur. J. Polit. Res. Political Yearbook* 1, 92–97 (2018); J. Lahti, E. Palonen, *The impact of the Russia–Ukraine war on right-wing populism in Finland*, in G. Ivaldi, E. Zankina (Eds), *The Impacts of the Russian Invasion of Ukraine on Right-wing Populism in Europe*, Brussels, 2023.

attendance in a far-right event and views on ‘climate abortions’ in Africa.⁴⁴

Political violence in present-day Finland is rare, but historically it took its most tangible forms in the 1918 civil war between the ‘Reds’ and the ‘Whites’⁴⁵ and during the era of the extreme-right Lapua Movement in 1929–1932⁴⁶. Incidents occurring after the Second World War have included skinhead violence and other far-right action, but also attacks on private property by anarchists and animal rights activists.⁴⁷ Public authorities currently see radical extra-parliamentary extreme right-wing activism and radical Islamism⁴⁸ as the biggest threats concerning violent radical action.⁴⁹ The conflicts in Syria and Iraq started in 2012 impacted radical-Islamist radicalisation⁵⁰, and the ‘refugee crisis’ in 2015 contributed to the activation of far-right movements⁵¹, which perpetrated attacks on asylum seeker centres.⁵² In 2016, a passer-by died after being assaulted by a member of the neo-Nazi Nordic Resistance Movement during their demonstration⁵³, and in 2020, there was a murder attempt of a Finns Party functionary by the extreme right.⁵⁴ Only one terrorism sentence has been imposed thus far, in a case in which a radical-Islamist Moroccan asylum-seeker stabbed two people to death and wounded eight others in Turku in 2017.⁵⁵ Moreover, several crime investigations, either ongoing or not leading to a sentence, have concerned the planning or funding of terrorist activities. A court case on the planning of an extreme-right terrorist attack to an asylum seeker centre in 2021 will probably begin soon.⁵⁶ During recent

⁴⁴ J. Gregory, *Finland's economy minister resigns after 10 days over Nazi references*, in *BBC News* 30-6-2023 [Online]. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-66066910> (Accessed 2-7-2023).

⁴⁵ T. Tepora, A. Roselius, *The Finnish Civil War 1918: History, Memory, Legacy*, Leiden & Boston, 2014.

⁴⁶ S. Koskelainen, T. Hjelm, *Christ vs. Communism: Communism as a Religious Social Problem in Finland's Proto-Fascist Lapua Movement in the 1930s*, in *30 J. Hist. Sociol.* 4, 768–788 (2016).

⁴⁷ T. Tammikko, T. *Vihalla ja voimalla. Poliittinen väkivalta Suomessa*, Helsinki, 2019, 10.

⁴⁸ We have used the concept of radical Islamism rather than jihadism in cases in which we do not directly refer to existing research using the concept of jihadism, as it is the most established one in the official Finnish discourse.

⁴⁹ Sisäministeriö, *Väkivaltaisen ekstremismin tilannekatsaus 2020. Arvio väkivaltaisen ekstremismin tilanteesta Suomessa vuonna 2019 ja kehityksen suunta*, Helsinki, 2020.

⁵⁰ T. Tammikko, T. *Vihalla ja voimalla. Poliittinen väkivalta Suomessa*, Helsinki, 2019.

⁵¹ D. Sallamaa, *Ulkoparlamentaarinen äärioikeistoliikettä ja maahanmuuttovastaisuus 2010-luvun Suomessa*, Helsinki, 2018.

⁵² T. Kotonen, H. Kovalainen, *Iskut vastaanottokeskuksiin Suomessa syksyllä 2015: terrorismia vai tihutöitä?*, in *51 Kosmopolis* 1, 72–87 (2021).

⁵³ E. Lounela, L. Horsmanheimo, R.-M. Kylli, K. Kuokkanen, E. Palonen, *Trends of Radicalisation. Finland D3.2/D.RAD Country Report*, 2021.

⁵⁴ M. Rautio, H. Kaski, *Pekka Katajan murhayrityksen avunannosta kuuden vuoden vankeustuomio – Kataja yllättyi hovioikeuden tuomiosta, mutta on tyytyväinen*, in *YLE Uutiset* 31-1-2023 [Online]. Available at: <yle.fi/a/74-20015595> (Accessed 12-3-2023).

⁵⁵ J. Sumiala, A.A. Harju, E. Palonen, *Islam as the Folk Devil: Hashtag Publics and the Fabrication of Civilizationism in a Post-Terror Populist Moment*, in *Int. J. Commun.*, (forthcoming).

⁵⁶ J. Joensuu, *Poliisi: Kankaanpään terrorismirikoksen epäillyt suunnittelivat räjähdyskua Niinisalon vastaanottokeskukseen*, in *YLE Uutiset* 30-6-2023 [Online]. Available at: <https://yle.fi/a/74-20039122> (Accessed 2-7-2023).

years, youth violence, including violent gangs, has also been on the rise.⁵⁷

Violent radicalisation was not a topic in the Finnish public discussion before the 2010s. This can be explained by low national levels of political violence⁵⁸, but also the Finnish way of understanding violent radicalisation and terrorism as something happening ‘elsewhere’⁵⁹. A bomb explosion in a shopping centre in 2002 and school attacks committed in 2007, 2008 and 2017 were not considered to be terrorism at the time, even if one of the school shooters had written a manifesto referring to himself as an *Übermensch*.⁶⁰ Since 2011, Finland has developed more explicit deradicalisation policies, treated in more detail below.

6. The Finnish legal and policy framework regarding deradicalisation

In the following section, we analyse the Finnish legal and policy framework regarding deradicalisation with the framework presented above. We divide Finnish deradicalisation policies into four categories depending on their implicitness or explicitness and institutionalised or projectified nature.

6.1 Implicit institutionalised deradicalisation policy

The Finnish Constitution forms the basis for the implicit institutionalised deradicalisation policy. It was originally written in 1920 as a compromise between rival political interests and social groups in a post-civil war country. The constitutional reforms in 2000 and 2011 strengthened the role of the parliament vis-à-vis the president and basic rights (including economic, social and civil rights, such as the right to education and social security). The constitution reflects a ‘consensus model’⁶¹ that was further consolidated in the post-World War II era and includes a proportional system of representation and a significant role for labour market organisations (and, to some extent, other civil society organisations), but also a more general way to address social and political issues.

The political culture and practices under the president Kekkonen’s reign (1956–1982) further integrated radical groups unlike in some other European countries in which far left terror spread. In his 1930s writings Kekkonen had already seen his Agrarian League (later Centre Party) as the solution for integrating people with bitterness and disappointment

⁵⁷ S. Hirvonen, *Väkivalta uhkaa levitä kouluista muualle yhteiskuntaan, varoittaa tutkija: ”Tältä ei voi enää sulkea silmiä”*, in *YLE* 14-3-2023 [Online]. Available at: yle.fi/a/74-20021928?utm_source=social-media-share&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=ylefiapp (Accessed 14-3-2023)

⁵⁸ L. Malkki, *Mitä tiedämme terrorismista*, Helsinki, 2020, 30; P. Saukkonen, *Erilaisuuksien Suomi: Vähemmistö- ja kotouttamispolitiikan vaihtoehdot*, Helsinki, 2013, 18.

⁵⁹ L. Malkki, D. Sallamaa, *To Call or Not to Call It Terrorism: Public Debate on Ideologically-motivated Acts of Violence in Finland, 1991–2015*, in *30 Terror. Political Violence* 5, 862–881 (2018).

⁶⁰ Ibid.; E. Lounela, L. Horsmanheimo, R.-M. Kylli, K. Kuokkanen, E. Palonen, *Trends of Radicalisation. Finland D3.2/D.RAD Country Report*, 2021.

⁶¹ A. Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, New Haven, 1999.

otherwise moving for radical parties (fascism, national socialism).⁶² As president he regularly met the radical youth in the 1960s and 1970s. Elected through exceptional legislation, Kekkonen's era cannot be claimed to have been the most democratic, but some of the reforms and practices could be seen as implicit deradicalisation policies. Kekkonen's successor, the social-democratic president Koivisto (1982–1994), saw the regulation of conflicts and good working conditions as central in preventing left-wing radicalisation, and he also addressed the issue in his research as sociologist.⁶³

Finnish political parties have reflected the central societal divides, and the system of proportional representation also gives middle-sized parties a representation in parliament. All parties and politicians other than those representing the most extremist views have traditionally been integrated into decision-making, including positions in the national government.⁶⁴ In the 2000s, attention has been put on the development of a 'democracy policy'⁶⁵, which can be seen as an implicit deradicalisation policy and response to far-right and anti-elitist mobilisation. The recent reform of the Local Government Act⁶⁶ urged municipalities, which are also traditionally sites of local democracy, to establish institutionalised structures for direct resident participation.

The legislation and policies of the welfare state, gradually expanding in the post-World War II era⁶⁷, are also crucial in implicit institutionalised deradicalisation policy. Central legislation in this field includes the Social Welfare Act, regulating the organisation and implementation of the welfare services, the Health Care Act, promoting and maintaining the population's health and welfare and access to universal health care services, and the Youth Act, focusing on the inclusion, equality and rights of the youth and their prerequisites to function in society⁶⁸. While the legislative power resides at the national level, the role of municipalities and the newly established wellbeing service counties is central in the implementation of the welfare legislation.

The role of schools and the welfare state's education system, including early child education and public day care, are equally a central part of implicit deradicalisation policies, as they maintain social cohesion and integration and socialise individuals to broader society.⁶⁹ The Finnish public elementary school was established in the 1960s as an implicit depolarisation

⁶² U. Kekkonen, *Historiallisia välttämättömyyksiä ja kansainvälistä väkivaltaoppia*, in *Maakansa* 28 June 1936.

⁶³ P. Koikkalainen, *Sosiologia kamppailuna ja sovituksena: Tiede, kommunismi ja konflikti Mauno Koiviston politiikassa 1950- ja 60-luvuilla*, 61 *Politiikka* 3, 192–222 (2019).

⁶⁴ P. Saukkonen, *Erilaisuuksien Suomi: Vähemmistö- ja kotouttamispolitiikan vaihtoehdot*, Helsinki, 2013, 18.

⁶⁵ Ministry of Justice, *Democracy policy* [online]. Available at: oikeusministerio.fi/en/democracy-policy (Accessed 21-3-2023).

⁶⁶ Finnish Local Government Act (410/2015).

⁶⁷ J. Saari, L. Tynkkynen, *Still holding on its breath. The Finnish Welfare system under reform*, in S. Blum, J. Kuhlmann, K. Schubert (Eds), *Routledge Handbook of European Welfare Systems*, New York, 2019, 184–201.

⁶⁸ Social Welfare Act (1301/2014); Health Care Act (1326/2010); Youth Act (1285/2016).

⁶⁹ P.-M. Niemi, S. Benjamin, A. Kuusisto, L. Gearon, *How and Why Education Counters Ideological Extremism in Finland*, in 9 *Religions* 12 (2018).

measure to offer equal opportunity to education for all children nationwide. The Marin government increased the age of compulsory education to 18 in 2021 to combat the exclusion of marginalised youth. The so-called inclusion policy in schools places most children with special needs into the regular classes nationwide. According to the official line of the Finnish National Agency for Education, schools prevent radicalisation by raising inclusiveness, offering place for open discussion and teaching critical thinking.⁷⁰ Although there is some differentiation between schools in different residential areas, particularly in terms of their reputation, the institutional quality of all these schools remains high.⁷¹

Implicit deradicalisation policies can also be related to the regular work of the police force, which enjoys a high level of trust in Finland in international comparison.⁷² The police force has a preventive strategy (ENSKA) aimed at addressing security-related issues at an early phase.⁷³ In criminal policies, Finland represents a Nordic ‘restorative’ tradition aimed at tackling background factors of criminality such as marginalisation.⁷⁴

According to our interviewees, the Finnish consensus culture is not optimal for detecting radicalised forces, and there has been an unwillingness to recognise violent radicalisation as a threat in Finland.⁷⁵ Also, the capacity of the traditional ‘consensus model’ to consider new issues and divides in limited.⁷⁶ Current research has highlighted Finland’s racist and colonial elements, bypassed in the Finnish national narrative.⁷⁷ According to a survey by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights⁷⁸, Finland was amongst the most racist countries in the EU. Scholars have also pointed the existence of ethnic profiling by the police and security and border guards, possibly affecting trust in the police amongst ethnic and racialised minorities.⁷⁹

Current debates have also concerned the functioning of the welfare and education policies. Labour shortage affects public services such as

⁷⁰ Opetushallitus, *Väkivaltaisen radikalisoitumisen ennaltaehkäisy kouluissa ja oppilaitoksissa*, Helsinki, 2018.

⁷¹ V. Bernelius, H. Huilla, I. Ramos Lobato, ‘Notorious Schools’ in ‘Notorious Places’? *Exploring the Connectedness of Urban and Educational Segregation*, in 9 *Soc. Incl.* 2, 154–165 (2021); V. Bernelius, S. Kosunen, ‘Three Bedrooms and a Nice School’— *Residential Choices, School Choices and Vicious Circles of Segregation in the Education Landscape of Finnish Cities*, in M. Thrupp, P. Seppänen, J. Kauko, S. Kosunen (Eds), *Finland’s Famous Education System*, Singapore, 2023, 175–191.

⁷² OECD, *Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions in Finland*, Paris, 2021.

⁷³ Sisäministeriö, *Poliisin ennalta estävän työn strategia 2019–2023*, Helsinki, 2019.

⁷⁴ T. Lappi-Seppälä, *Kriminaalipolitiikan perusteita*, in T. Lappi-Seppälä, K. Hakamies, P. Koskinen, M. Majanen, S. Melander, S. Nuotio, A.-M. Nuutila, T. Ojala, I. Rautio, *Rikosoikeus*, Helsinki, 2013, 55–66.

⁷⁵ T. Mankkinen, *Interview*, 2021.

⁷⁶ P. Rautiainen, *Interview*, 2021; see also P. Saukkonen, *Eri-laisuksien Suomi: Vähemmistö- ja kotouttamispolitiikan vaihtoehdot*, Helsinki, 2013.

⁷⁷ S. Keskinen, M.K. Seikkula, F. Mkvesha (Eds), *Rasismi, valta ja vastarinta. Rodullistaminen, valkoisuus ja koloniaalisuus Suomessa*, Helsinki, 2021.

⁷⁸ FRA, *Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey. Being Black in the EU*, Luxembourg, 2018.

⁷⁹ S. Keskinen, A. Alemanji Atabong, M. Himanen, A. Kivijärvi, U. Osazee, N. Pöyhölä, V. Rousku, *The Stopped: Ethnic profiling in Finland*, Helsinki, 2018.

kindergartens, hospitals and care of the elderly.⁸⁰ In education policy, resources targeted at the inclusion of children with special needs⁸¹ and the differentiation between schools in terms of the pupils' backgrounds and mother tongues⁸² have been actual issues. A recent report found that children placed in school groups with Finnish as a second language perform less well than those studying Finnish, Swedish or Sámi as their mother tongue.⁸³ The public discussion concerning these topics was particularly heated before the 2023 parliamentary elections.

6.2 Implicit projectified deradicalisation policy

Although the ground pillars of democracy and welfare state are institutionalised, a growing proportion of social policy measures and participatory initiatives takes the project form.⁸⁴ Many projects concern the social inclusion of the unemployed, people with an immigrant background, the youth and other groups deemed as 'vulnerable'. The EU and particularly its European Social Fund (ESF) have created a niche for a group of projects aimed at increasing the 'employability' of these vulnerable groups. Usually, the projects are implemented at the grassroots level and consist of inclusion and involvement in everyday life through methods and tools such as peer groups, the arts and sport, drama, local events and 'green care'.⁸⁵ Also, initiatives aimed at increasing citizen or resident participation are often project-based. They can consist of the co-production of public services or together with citizens⁸⁶ or develop new models and tools for citizen

⁸⁰ Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, *Occupational Barometer: Increase in labour shortages has slowed down but health and social services continue to account for top shortage occupations*, 1-11-2022 [Online]. Available at: valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/1410877/occupational-barometer-increase-in-labour-shortages-has-slowed-down-but-health-and-social-services-continue-to-account-for-top-shortage-occupations (Accessed 12-3-2023).

⁸¹ A.-M. Niemi, R. Mietola, *Exclusively Included? Finland's Inclusion Success Story and Hidden Dual System of Mainstream and Special Needs Education*, in M. Thrupp, P. Seppänen, J Kauko, S. Kosunen (Eds), *Finland's Famous Education System*, Singapore, 2023.

⁸² J. Helakorpi, G. Holm, X. Liu, *Education of Pupils with Migrant Backgrounds: A Systemic Failure in the Finnish System?*, in M. Thrupp, P. Seppänen, J Kauko, S. Kosunen, S. (Eds), *Finland's Famous Education System*, Singapore, 2023.

⁸³ A. Ukkola, J. Metsämuutonen, *Matematiikan ja äidinkielen taidot alkuopetuksen aikana – Perusopetuksen oppimistulosten pitkittäisarviointi 2018–2020*, Helsinki, 2023.

⁸⁴ K. Kuokkanen, *Hankeperustainen kaupunkipolitiikka ja kansalaisosallistuminen*, in M. Nousiainen, K. Kuloaara (Eds), *Monikasvoinen uusi hallinta: Näkökulmia hallintakäytäntöjen muutokseen*, Jyväskylä, 2016, 125–157.

⁸⁵ Ibid.; K. Kuokkanen, *Maahanmuuttaneiden osallistuminen ja osallisuus hankkeissa*, in P. Kettunen (Ed), *Näkökulmia maahanmuuttaneiden poliittiseen osallistumiseen Suomessa*, Turku, 2022, 71–90.

⁸⁶ T. Meriluoto, K. Kuokkanen, *How to make sense of citizen expertise in participatory projects?*, in 70 *Curr. Sociol.* 7, 974–993 (2022).

involvement⁸⁷. Projects are also widely used in the educational sector.⁸⁸

While it can be argued that these projects fill the gaps in the established welfare services and policies in the case of vulnerable groups, they have also been accused of dismantling the welfare state.⁸⁹ For groups deemed to be at risk of marginalisation such as immigrants or inmates, the temporality of these projects may augment precarity.⁹⁰ The overall picture regarding these projects remain mixed. They might cover the ‘cracks’ in the welfare state, but at the same time, they lead to dispersed policies and the discontinuation of many activities started in the projects due to the fixed-term nature of the funding.

6.3 Explicit institutionalised deradicalisation policy

Although the broad welfare and education policies and the newly emerging field of democracy and participation policy can be framed as implicit deradicalisation policies, Finland has an explicit deradicalisation policy, officially referred to as the prevention of violent radicalisation and extremism. The first National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism was published in 2012 to guide the local and regional work on the topic.⁹¹ As the establishment of the policy happened right after the extreme-right Utøya terrorist attack in Norway, the definition of violent radicalisation has been broad from the beginning, including all forms of violent radicalisation irrespective of its ideological background. The policy is based on a pragmatic approach, low hierarchical barriers and both formal and informal networks.⁹² Violent radicalisation is seen as both a social and a security issue, thus reflecting a ‘whole-of-society’ approach⁹³.

The Ministry of the Interior (MoI) coordinates the policy, the formal aims of which are to prevent all forms of violent extremism, to increase safety and people’s feeling of security and to reduce social polarisation and confrontation between different groups.⁹⁴ The Action Plan has been updated

⁸⁷ K. Kuokkanen, *Developing Participation through Projects? A Case Study from the Helsinki Metropolitan Area*, Helsinki, 2016.

⁸⁸ K. Brunila, *The Projectisation, Marketisation and Therapisation of Education*, in 10 *Eur. Educ. Res. J.* 3, 421–432 (2011).

⁸⁹ P. Sulkunen, *Projektiyhteiskunta ja uusi yhteiskuntasopimus*, in K. Rantala, P. Sulkunen (Eds), *Projektiyhteiskunnan kääntöpuolia*, Helsinki, 2006, 17–32.

⁹⁰ T. Kurki, K. Brunila, *Education and Training as Projectised and Precarious Politics*, in 6 *Power Educ.* 3, 283–294 (2014).

⁹¹ Sisäministeriö, *Kansallinen väkivaltaisen radikalisoitumisen ja ekstremismin ennalta ehkäisyn toimenpideohjelma 2019–2023*, in 1 *Sisäministeriön julkaisuja*, 12–13 (2020); M. Tiilikainen, T. Mankkinen, *Prevention of Violent Radicalization and Extremism in Finland: The Role of Religious Literacy*, in T. Sakaranaho, T. Aarrevaara, J. Konttori (Eds), *The Challenges of Religious Literacy*, Cham, 2020, 67–78.

⁹² T. Mankkinen, *Interview*, 2021.

⁹³ K. Vallinkoski, S. Benjamin, K. Elliot *"By correcting disinformation and encouraging them towards tolerance": Finnish educators' considerations of PVE-E*, in 23 *J. Deradicalization* 33, 181–220 (2022).

⁹⁴ Sisäministeriö, *Väkivaltaista radikalisoitumista torjutaan ennalta ehkäisevällä työllä* [Online]. Available at: intermin.fi/poliisiasiat/vakivaltainen-radikalisoituminen

twice, in 2016 and 2019, and its implementation is evaluated annually. A broad range of stakeholders was involved in drafting the plan, and the policy steering group includes the police and other crime officers, ministries, education specialists, researchers, municipal, immigrant, youth and religious organisations, and other CSOs. Young people are also involved in the work, but the challenge is to reach marginalised youth.⁹⁵ Finland has been part of the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), a multi-professional network across EU member states that works to prevent and counter violent radicalisation, since its establishment in 2011 and collaborates with the other Nordic countries. Although the Finnish policy concerning the prevention of violent radicalisation and extremism has existed for over a decade and is coordinated by an established public authority, much of its implementation is done through fixed-term projects, which will be examined in more detail below.

The work of the intelligence agency SUPO and the terrorism prevention policy, based on the legislation on the prevention of terrorism, forms one part of the explicit institutionalised deradicalisation policy. The original terrorism law from 2003 was reformed in 2018 after the first (and so far, only) terrorist attack in Finland resulting in a sentence, and again in 2021 after the return of people from Syria. In the second reform, encouraging someone to join a terrorist group or to commit a terrorist crime became punishable, and participation in the activities of a terrorist group became more widely sanctioned than before. The intelligence legislation was reformed in 2019 to combat security threats such as terrorism and espionage, which required changes in the Constitution and provided SUPO with more resources and authority.⁹⁶ The political debate on the topic concentrated on whether the new laws were a threat to privacy and guaranteed the supervision of intelligence officials.⁹⁷

The most explicit micro-level deradicalisation practice is Exit work targeted to disengage people from radical ideologies or activities⁹⁸ or more generally from criminality and/or criminal milieus. While most Exit work in Finland is projectified (and will be addressed below), the work conducted since 2018 by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), which is part of the police service, has been institutionalised to some extent. NBI oversees Exit work in prisons and in the organised crime scene. However, the external funding for the NBI's Exit work has not been stable, affecting the volume and possibility to develop the work.⁹⁹

The so-called Anchor work represents elements of both implicit and

(Accessed 14-12-2022).

⁹⁵ T. Mankkinen, *Interview*, 2021.

⁹⁶ T. Tammikko, T. *Vihalla ja voimalla. Poliittinen väkivalta Suomessa*, Helsinki, 2019.

⁹⁷ L. Horsmanheimo, R.-M. Kylli, K. Kuokkanen, E. Palonen, E. *Stakeholders of (De-) Radicalisation in Finland. Finland 3.1/R.RAD Country Report*, 2021.

⁹⁸ See A. Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Promoting Exit from Violent Extremism: Themes and Approaches*, in 36 *Stud. Confl. Terror.* 2, 99–115 (2013).

⁹⁹ STT, *Diakonissalaitos sai rahoitusta väkivaltaisen radikalisoitumisen ehkäisemiseen – keskusrikospoliisi jatkaa omaa exit-toimintaansa ilman uutta tukea*, 30-6-2020 [Online]. Available at:

www.sss.fi/2020/06/diakonissalaitos-sai-rahoitusta-vakivaltaisen-radikalisoitumisen-ehkaisemiseen/ (Accessed 14-12-2022).

explicit deradicalisation policies. It is a permanent practice to promote the wellbeing of adolescents, prevent crimes and offer deradicalisation services without age limits, and has been implemented since the beginning of 21st century.¹⁰⁰ The model is based on collaboration between the police and social, health and youth workers, and this approach has been compared to the renowned Aarhus model in Denmark.¹⁰¹ The minimum standards for Anchor work are defined at the national level, but it is implemented locally, which enables adapting it to the specific local context. Despite having the countering of violent radicalisation as one of its aims, Anchor work tackles various types of alarming situations at an early stage. In a recent evaluation, only four percent of the Anchor professionals responding to the survey answered that radicalisation occurred ‘often or very often’ as the reason for their clients to reach out to the service.¹⁰²

Preventing and tackling radicalisation in schools is also becoming more established than before, despite variations between schools.¹⁰³ The Finnish National Agency for Education has published manuals for elementary schools, early education and vocational schools, and it conducts training programmes for education professionals.¹⁰⁴ The school staff is advised to identify and address young people who show interest in radicalisation, still aiming to avoid creating ‘suspect’ communities.¹⁰⁵ The Faculty of Educational Sciences at the University of Helsinki coordinates an expert network, which produces research-based information on the treatment, prevention, and confrontation of ideological extremism and violence for the education sector and stakeholders.¹⁰⁶

The Supreme Court decision disbanding the Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM), a neo-Nazi association, in 2020¹⁰⁷ – a unique but emblematic event – can be labelled under explicit institutionalised deradicalisation policy. The Supreme Court ruled that the NRM had violated

¹⁰⁰ T. Moilanen, M. Airaksinen, M. Kangasniemi, *Manual on multi-professional Anchor work*, Helsinki, 2019.

¹⁰¹ J. Sivenbring, R. Andersson Malmros, *Collaboration in Hybrid Spaces: The Case of Nordic Efforts to Counter Violent Extremism*, in 29 *J. Deradicalization*, 54–91 (2021/2022).

¹⁰² M. Kaakinen, T. Vauhkonen, M. Tanskanen, T. Hoikkala, *Ankkuritoiminnan vaikuttavuus*, Helsinki, 2022.

¹⁰³ P.-M. Niemi, S. Benjamin, A. Kuusisto, L. Gearon, *How and Why Education Counters Ideological Extremism in Finland*, in 9 *Religions* 12 (2018).

¹⁰⁴ Opetushallitus, *Väkivaltaisen radikalisoitumisen ennaltaehkäisy kouluissa ja oppilaitoksissa*, Helsinki, 2018; 2020; Opetushallitus, *Väkivaltaisen radikalisoitumisen ennaltaehkäiseminen varhaiskasvatuksessa*, Helsinki, 2019.

¹⁰⁵ Saija Benjamin, Katja Vallinkoski and Pia Koirijärvi have created a research-based REDI model to identify and cope with violent ideologies in school environment. See K. Vallinkoski, S. Benjamin, P. Koirijärvi, *REDI – The dimensions of addressing, preventing and countering violent radicalisation and extremism in education*, Helsinki, 2020. Cf. M.J. Hickman, L. Thomas, S. Silvestri, H. Nickels, *"Suspect Communities?" Counter-terrorism policy, the press, and the impact on Irish and Muslim communities in Britain*, London, 2011.

¹⁰⁶ University of Helsinki, *Resilience and Prevention of Extremism*, 2022 [Online]. Available at: www.helsinki.fi/en/networks/resilience-and-prevention-extremism (Accessed 14-12-2022).

¹⁰⁷ H. Haugstvedt, T. Bjørge, *What can democracies do to prevent extremist violence?* 7-9-2021 [Online]. Available at: www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/english/groups/compendium/what-can-democracies-do-to-prevent-extremist-violence.html (Accessed 14-9-2022).

the Associations Act with its unlawful activities, the Constitution through abuse of rights and the provisions of European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), and its activities were contrary to the public interest as established in law.¹⁰⁸ However, Finnish authorities are cautious about applying such bans on other far-right organisations.¹⁰⁹

Combating hate speech is situated between explicit and implicit deradicalisation policies. In the administration, the Ministry of Justice coordinates the work. Although the concept of hate speech is not used in legislation, the part of the Criminal Code concerning so-called ethnic agitation, literally translated as ‘agitation against a population group’, forbids threatening, speaking ill of or insulting a group on the grounds of race, skin colour, national or ethnic origin, religion or conviction, sexual orientation or disability or any other equivalent reason¹¹⁰. The law has frequently been applied and has led to several pecuniary penalties for far-right actors, including state-level politicians. Moreover, defamation of character and illegal threats are penalised, and hate speech can fulfil the criteria of harassment as meant in the Non-discrimination Act and in the Act on Equality between Women and Men.¹¹¹

Overall, the Finnish explicit institutionalised deradicalisation policy can be characterised as being pragmatic, meaning close contacts and low institutional barriers between public authorities and other actors and solving issues as they arise without a high level of bureaucracy.¹¹² Besides the administrative praxis based on networks and cooperation, part of this policy has a strong legal backbone, particularly the work of the intelligence service SUPO in terrorism prevention, but also some of the measures against hate speech. However, a central characteristic of the Finnish policy is the projectification of many of the activities, which we will address below.

6.4 Explicit projectified deradicalisation policy

Despite the institutionalised elements presented above, many measures of the Finnish explicit deradicalisation policy can be labelled as projectified. Deradicalisation projects have covered various focus areas from youth communication on social media and education of professionals to the development of new forms of supporting people impinged on by violent radicalisation. The implementation of these projects mostly happens at the local level or online, although some projects are executed as a part of international networks or as national initiatives.

CSOs, many of which originally have a religious background and a long history in philanthropy, have a central role in the projects. The Deaconess Foundation (HDL), a non-profit organisation with a tradition of

¹⁰⁸ Finnish Supreme Court, *Disbandment of an association*, S698, ECLI:FI:KKO:2020:68, dated 22-9-2020.

¹⁰⁹ T. Kotonen, *Proscribing the Nordic Resistance Movement in Finland: Analyzing the Process and its Outcome*, in 29 *J. Deradicalization*, 177–204 (2021/2022).

¹¹⁰ The Criminal Code of Finland (39/1889), Section 10 - Ethnic Agitation (511/2011).

¹¹¹ Non-discrimination Act (1325/2014); Act on Equality between Women and Men (609/1986); A. Knuutila, H. Kosonen, T. Saresma, P. Haara, R. Pöyhtäri, *Viha vallassa: Vihapuheen vaikutukset yhteiskunnalliseen päätöksentekoon*, Helsinki, 2019, 11.

¹¹² T. Mankkinen, *Interview*, 2021.

social work with marginalised people, executes Exit work with project funding in the Helsinki metropolitan area, Turku and Oulu.¹¹³ Compared to the more established Exit work conducted by the NBI amongst criminalised people and prisoners, the threshold to be involved in HDL's programme is lower, as it is aimed at people concerned about being or getting radicalised.¹¹⁴ Experts in violent ideologies and psychological processes act as mentors and help these people with both practical and mental issues and guide them to other services if needed. The project also provides education for stakeholders and further develops its operating model. It is built on the basis of a previous project, the RADINET project implemented by Vuolle Settlement in 2016–2018. The aim is to build this work into a permanent practice.

Since 2013, Finn Church Aid's Reach Out projects have promoted cooperation between religious communities, CSOs and public authorities. They have developed practices to help people returning from conflict areas and to support families of radicalised people.¹¹⁵ Save the Children Finland's five-year-project RadicalWeb (2018–2023) educates adults working with the young to recognise radicalisation on the Internet and act to prevent online recruitment.¹¹⁶ The *Resilienssi* (Resilience) project (2021–2023), implemented in several Finnish cities, engages youth in preventing violent radicalisation through workshops and participatory practices.¹¹⁷ The Forum of Young Muslims promoted the inclusion of young immigrants and Muslim youth through the local Muvenna project in Turku.¹¹⁸ In Oulu, Vuolle Settlement ry implemented a project that aimed to increase young people's knowledge about radicalisation, violence, intoxicants and related phenomena by producing learning material for schools.¹¹⁹

In addition to CSOs, public authorities also implement projects. One example is the *Rajapinta* project, in which the MoI made observations and recommendations regarding the referral mechanism of persons of concern in

¹¹³ M. Cantell, L. Carlsson, O. Sarvela, A. Bain, O. Yousf (Eds), *Exit-tyo Suomessa. Tietoa ja tukea väkivaltaisesta ekstremismistä irtautumiseen*, Helsinki, 2021.

¹¹⁴ L. Horsmanheimo, R.-M. Kylli, K. Kuokkanen, E. Palonen, *Stakeholders of (De-) Radicalisation in Finland. Finland 3.1/R.RAD Country Report*, 2021.

¹¹⁵ Kirkon ulkomaanapu, *Reach Out. Tukea niille joita väkivaltainen radikalisaatio on koskettanut* [Online]. Available at: www.kirkonulkomaanapu.fi/osallistu/reach-out/ (Accessed: 10-6-2021).

¹¹⁶ Pelastakaa Lapset, *RadicalWeb-hanke* [Online]. Available at: www.pelastakaaalapset.fi/kehittamis-ja-asiantuntijatyo/radicalweb-hanke/ (Accessed 27-2-2021).

¹¹⁷ Pelastakaa Lapset, *Resilienssi-hanke* [Online]. Available at: www.pelastakaaalapset.fi/kehittamis-ja-asiantuntijatyo/digitaalinen-hyvinvointi-ja-lapsen-oikeudet/radikalisoitumisen-ja-ekstremismin-ennaltaehkaisy/resilienssi-hanke/ (Accessed 12-3-2023).

¹¹⁸ Nuorten Muslimien Foorumi, *Rinnalla kulkija muutoksessa*, 27-12-2019 [Online]. Available at: nmf.fi/projektit/muvenna/ (Accessed 10-6-2021).

¹¹⁹ Mun Oulu, *Radikalisoituminen on nuorille melko tuntematon – aihetta käsittelevä opetusmateriaali saanut suuren suosion Oulun yläkouluissa*, 12-7-2022 [Online]. Available at: www.munoulu.fi/artikkeli/-/id/radikalisoituminen-on-nuorille-melko-tuntematon-aihetta-kasitteleva-opetusmateriaali-saanut-suuren-suosion-oulun-ylakouluissa (Accessed 14-12-2022).

the aftermath of the Turku stabbing.¹²⁰ Projects conducted by public authorities have also spread information about violent extremism and radicalisation to the already existing organisations and actors who might face the issues in their working environments. One example is the Radik project of the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), a public authority and a research and development institute under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, conducted between 2021 and 2023, which develops web-based training targeted at social and health care professionals and a tool to help them recognise violent radicalisation.¹²¹ The Criminal Sanctions Agency had a two-year project aiming to augment knowledge about radicalisation in Finnish prisons which provided training for prison officers and civil servants.¹²²

Public authorities and stakeholders have had several projects on hate speech, which have provided information on good practices and legal measures, among others.¹²³ The police force is involved in a multi-actor project called Facts against Hate, coordinated by the Ministry of Justice, aimed at improving the prevention of hate speech and strengthening cooperation and trust between minorities and the Police.¹²⁴ The Shoulder to Shoulder project, coordinated by Finn Church Aid, aims to combat the hate speech and the hate crimes experienced by religious communities.¹²⁵

Projects are effective in developing tools, models and schooling material that will remain after the original project and can later be used elsewhere. However, even in these cases, the content might need to be updated, and this requires further resources.¹²⁶ Projects cause problems for the long-term funding of the activities, particularly in the case of CSOs whose funding differs from state institutions. From a humane perspective, the projectified practices might not be the most suitable for client work, particularly Exit work, since the contact might end before the problems are solved, which might also have an impact on the trust in the institutions and the system.

¹²⁰ M. Perukangas, T. Mankkinen, *Observations and recommendations for local collaboration on referral mechanism of persons of concern in local multi-stakeholder collaboration for preventing violent radicalisation. Report on experiences of the state of play of multi-professional Anchor work in case management practices and referral mechanisms for people of concern*, Helsinki, 2019.

¹²¹ A. Portman, S. Takkunen, *Interview*, 2021.

¹²² Rikosseuraamuslaitos, *Etelä-Suomen rikosseuraamusalueen projekti väkivaltaisen ekstremismin ja radikalisoitumisen tunnistamiseksi. Projektin lopullinen raportointi*, Helsinki, 2018.

¹²³ Ministry of the Interior, *Good practices for identifying and preventing acts of hatred: A guide for police officers and stakeholders*, Helsinki, 2021; Ministry of Justice, *Uusi käsikirja, podcasteja ja suosituksia viharikosten vastaiseen työhön*, 28-11-2019 [Online]. Available at: oikeusministerio.fi/-/uusi-kasikirja-podcasteja-ja-suositukset-viharikosten-vastaiseen-tyohon (Accessed 14-12-2022).

¹²⁴ Ministry of the Interior, *Good practices for identifying and preventing acts of hatred: A guide for police officers and stakeholders*, Helsinki, 2021.

¹²⁵ M. Tiilikainen, T. Mankkinen, *Prevention of Violent Radicalization and Extremism in Finland: The Role of Religious Literacy*, in T. Sakaranaho, T. Aarrevaara, J. Konttori (Eds), *The Challenges of Religious Literacy*, Cham, 2020, 67–78.

¹²⁶ A. Portman, S. Takkunen, *Interview*, 2021.

7. Discussion and conclusion

In this study, we have presented a new framework for analysing deradicalisation projects, based on a division between implicit and explicit as well as institutionalised and projectified policies. The main aim has been to show the broad framework of implicit policies affecting (de)radicalisation in which the more explicit and targeted measures are embedded. The consensual political culture, the Nordic welfare state and universal education policies are central elements in the Finnish case. However, there is also an explicit deradicalisation policy coordinated by the MoI, the aim of which is to tackle all forms of radicalisation through collaboration with the various administrative levels and stakeholders.

We have also wanted to pinpoint the issue of projectification in the Finnish deradicalisation policy. From an optimistic perspective, a policy based on both institutionalisation and projectification enables flexibility, a pragmatic approach, and the combination of long-term national-level coordination with locally contextualised projects. The prominent role of CSOs in these projects is crucial, as they can be perceived as being more ‘accessible’ by people with a low level of trust towards public authorities. However, the flip side of these projects is their fixed-term nature, which affects the continuity of the work and can pose problems in client work, particularly in Exit work. Projectified CSO-run policies can also be seen as ‘less important’ when compared to established public policies.¹²⁷

The categories presented in this study are not clear-cut ones. Institutions conducting implicit deradicalisation policies such as schools or the police may have more explicit deradicalisation programmes and projects. Projectified policies can also become institutionalised as they get established. Overall, it is important to ensure that the policy considers the various factors affecting radicalisation and has a certain level of continuity.

The impact of the new right-wing coalition government on Finnish implicit and explicit deradicalisation policy remains open. The cuts planned on public spending may affect institutionalised welfare services and project funding. The Minister of the Interior representing the Finns Party aims to strengthen measures targeted to immigrant youth gangs.¹²⁸ However, the recent political crisis shows the affinity of the party with the radical right. These developments may change the priorities of the deradicalisation policy, its current whole-of-society approach and its broad view on deradicalisation.

Kanerva Kuokkanen
University of Helsinki
kanerva.kuokkanen@helsinki.fi

Laura Horsmanheimo
University of Helsinki
laura.horsmanheimo@helsinki.fi

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Emilia Palonen
University of Helsinki
emilia.palonen@helsinki.fi