Extremist Risk Assessment

FULL REPORT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. KEY POINTS

The evidence base underpinning extremist risk assessments is not yet established. Whilst risk factors associated with criminality have been extensively researched, those relating to extremism require a stronger empirical foundation. There has been little evaluation of the accuracy of risk assessment instruments specific to extremism, nor are there recognised standards for comparing their effectiveness. Further research is also needed to understand how these frameworks and tools are used in practice.

- Although there is broad consensus on the risk factors associated with violent extremism, in most cases they have not been properly evaluated. Few studies compare the prevalence of risk factors in the general population with extremists or potential terrorists. This makes it difficult to know how reliable the risk factors identified in the literature are.

- Structured Professional Judgment (SPJ) has become the principal method for carrying out extremist risk assessments. SPJ provides assessors with empirically based frameworks and tools to help support and organise their knowledge and inform risk assessment processes, including identifying opportunities for interventions or managing risk. SPJ involves some flexibility and supports, rather than supersedes, professional judgement.

- Risk assessment tools or instruments should not be considered complete solutions to the difficulties associated with interpreting risk. However, they can help identify and structure relevant information and make assessments as informed and consistent as possible.

- Even with specialist tools, the knowledge, experience and expertise of assessors remains critical. Whilst some SPJ frameworks contain 'relevance ratings' that highlight particularly significant factors, assessors must have the skills to weigh risk factors and put them in context as well as the confidence to apply discretion when using risk assessment instruments.

- Effective staff training is vital. Those conducting risk assessments need to be trained and supported to ensure tools are used accurately and consistently.

- The predictive ability of risk assessment methods has not yet been fully evaluated. The comparatively low number of terrorism offences makes predictive risk assessment difficult.

- Measuring changes in dynamic risk factors, or those that vary over time or in response to treatment, is a complex process. Doing so requires multiple assessments that can be compared over time. Research from non-terrorism related offending highlights that risk assessments should be carried out frequently to strengthen their capacity to accurately predict future risks, something known as predictive validity.

- Further research is needed to understand how risk assessment tools are used in practice and how they can best be integrated and combined in the evaluation and decision-making process. Guidance about how to integrate different tools would help support practitioners and avoid inconsistencies in how assessments are carried out.

This report is primarily based on academic literature from 2017 onwards. To help address the limitations of this research it draws on some literature from outside this period, grey literature and work from comparable fields, including risk assessments of violent offenders and sex offenders. The research included is international in scope, with an emphasis on work undertaken in the United States, the Netherlands and the UK.

2. INTRODUCTION

Given the different ways in which people can engage in extremism, risk assessment tools must be clear about what they aim to predict. [1]

Risk assessments for violent extremists are an informed estimate of the likelihood an individual will commit an offence in the future and its potential nature and severity. The challenge for practitioners in custodial, probationary, community or security contexts is to identify and weigh risks before an individual acts. Unlike non-terrorism related offending where previous violent behaviour is considered a reliable predictor of future offences, for many extremists their first engagement in violence will be when carrying out an attack. This poses particular challenges for risk assessment in the 'pre-crime' space.

When conducting risk assessments for violent extremists, the objective must be established at the outset. Individuals may engage or re-engage in a wide range of activities, both violent and non-violent, that relate to extremism. Assessors must be clear what it is they are attempting to predict: be this the risk an individual commits an act of violence, recruits others, or provides organisational, logistical or operational support to an extremist group. Whilst the motivations and circumstances that surround extremist offending are complex, robust risk assessment allows case management and operational resources to be administered appropriately and supports effective risk management.

3. STATIC AND DYNAMIC RISK FACTORS

There is broad agreement about the risk factors associated with extremism in the literature, but these have not yet been robustly tested. This makes it difficult to determine how reliable they are or whether they are unique to extremists. [2]

Risk factors form the basis of risk assessments and are variables associated with the increased likelihood of a negative outcome. They do not necessarily explain why an act has or might occur, but rather aim to interpret the risk of it taking place. Risk factors are often divided into 'static' or 'dynamic' factors:

- **Static risk factors** relate to an offender's characteristics or history and are not amenable to change. They include things such as age, gender or criminal record. A reliable relationship between

these factors and offending has been established. Because they are fixed, static risk factors cannot provide insights into psychological, behavioural or other changes. They are therefore less useful when assessing the impact of interventions or determining a change in risk.

- **Dynamic risk factors,** also often described as criminogenic needs, are variables that relate directly to offending and have the potential to change, leading to an increase or reduction in the likelihood of an individual committing a crime.

Risk factors associated with extremism have primarily been identified by academics using open-source case studies with input and feedback from practitioners. Whilst there is some overlap with risk factors relevant to other violent offenders, there are important differences because of the contrasting motivations and behaviours

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1 The unique challenges that extremist risk assessments face are highlighted in a number of studies (*Van der Heide et al., 2017*; *Richards, 2018*; *Lloyd, 2019*).
2 The use of static and dynamic risk factors as reliable predictors of future offending has been well established within criminology (*Caudy et al., 2013*; *Clarke et al., 2017*; *Heffernan et al., 2019*). The lack of comparative figures to help understand the prevalence of factors that appear to be related to extremism in the wider population has been noted in a number of studies (*Vergani et al., 2018*; Lloyd, 2019; *Clemmow et al., 2020*). Research has highlighted that standard risk assessments are not designed for those with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. A Framework to Aid Risk Assessment with Offenders on the Autistic Spectrum (FARAS) has been developed as a supplementary aid to support assessors working with this population (*Al-Attar, 2018*; *RAN, 2019*).

of these two populations. For example, substance abuse and addiction are less likely to be relevant for extremists compared with other offenders.

A systematic review of the literature found a broad consensus on the risk factors associated with extremism. They are generally broken down into push factors that drive individuals to extremism; pull factors, which strengthen the appeal of extremism; and the personal vulnerabilities of the individual. There is currently only sufficient evidence to demonstrate that these factors share an association with extremism. It is not yet clear which might be more or less important and under what circumstances.

Despite a consensus in the literature, the risk factors associated with violent extremism require much further empirical testing. Currently, they do not have the same evidence base found in research and practice with the wider offending population. Most risk factors are based on research with small sample sizes or in specific contexts. Studies testing the prevalence and validity of these factors are limited. A systematic review found that only 12 per cent of research on extremist risk factors used control groups to test whether the factors identified were valid indicators of risk and to determine whether they were also present in radical individuals without violent intent.

Research faces the problem of determining the base rates for particular risk factors. Base rates refer to the frequency with which particular factors are found in the wider non-offending population. Knowing this makes it possible to compare different populations and assess the reliability of individual indicators. Some research has sought to compare the prevalence of risk factors in samples of extremists and non-extremists, concluding that such rates require significant contextualisation because of the variety of forms extremism takes. The significance of particular risk factors is individualised, varying from case to case. The presence or absence of a single factor may be more significant than the collective weight of multiple other factors, which makes it hard to assess their impact. There has also been relatively little research on protective factors, or things that counterbalance or weaken risk factors and how they interact with risk factors.

PUSH	PULL	PERSONAL
Relative deprivation of a social group; injustice; inequality; marginalisation; grievance; social exclusion; frustration, victimisation; stigmatisation; state repression; poverty; unemployment; lack and/or type of education.	Consumption of extremist propaganda; search for belonging; the involvement of associates, peers and family; impact of charismatic leaders and recruiters; material and emotional rewards.	History of psychological disorder, mental illness or disturbance; history of depression; low self-esteem; personal alienation; isolation; loneliness; narcissistic personality; low tolerance of ambiguity; high personal uncertainty; favouring black-and-white thinking; being male; being young

Figure 1: Extremist risk factors identified in Vergani et al.'s systematic review of the literature (2018)

4. MODELS FOR IDENTIFYING AND USING RISK FACTORS

Structured Professional Judgment provides a flexible approach to systematically identify and assess the presence and weight of risk factors in extremists and those at risk of radicalisation. [3]

The presence of certain risk factors alone does not automatically mean an individual poses a significant risk. It must be determined whether these factors are relevant to the prospect of future violence. There are a number of approaches underpinning risk assessment practices for violent offenders:

Unstructured clinical judgment is based solely on an assessor's discretion and how they choose to amalgamate information. Whilst this approach allows for the development of individualised risk management plans, the absence of structure means that decisions can be subjective, may not consider all relevant factors, and there is little transparency about how they are made.

Actuarial approaches are a highly structured means of assessment where risk factors and their links to violence are identified through the statistical analysis of an initial sample. An equation, graph or table is then used to derive an expected probability of reoffending. Although able to produce consistent predictions, these approaches are less applicable for extremists due to the limited number of relevant sample groups and because the predicted outcomes often apply to groups rather than individuals.

Structured Professional Judgment (SPJ) is now the most commonly used risk assessment approach for extremists. SPJ relies on the discretion of the assessor whilst providing a basic, empirically informed structure to help guide their decision-making. All SPJ approaches contain a set of core risk factors derived from the scientific, theoretical, and professional literatures which are considered in all assessments. Some also include 'relevance ratings' that suggest how much weight should be given to different factors. Assessors use this framework and all available information to assess aggravating and mitigating factors to categorise individuals as low, moderate, or high risk.

Unlike actuarial instruments designed purely to predict recidivism risk, SPJ assessment instruments are designed to facilitate case management or treatment strategies. Given its flexibility, the SPJ model can take account of specific issues relevant to an individual's background or personal characteristics, such as gender, culture, race, ethnicity or disability. SPJ instruments are transparent. The reasons for each risk decision are clearly documented, helping to facilitate quality assurance processes and critical incident reviews. However, given the focus on dynamic risk factors, many SPJ instruments have a relatively short shelf life and require frequently updating.

The Steps of Structured Professional Judgement

1. Gather relevant information about the offender from multiple sources.

2. Assess the presence of core risk factors derived from the general SPJ guidelines and rate them as either definitely present, partially/possibly present, or absent.

3. Judge the relevance of each risk factor for the potential of violence, weighting each depending on the specifics of the case. Relevance ratings may assist in this process but the decision ultimately rests on the assessors' professional judgment.

4. Engage in individual case formulation, which involves producing a coherent explanation of an individual's use of violence.

5. Carry out scenario planning, which specifies concerns about what the individual might do in the future.

6. Disseminate their judgment about different facets of risk and steps for mitigating them.

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3 SPJ models for assessing individuals who pose a risk of extremist violence have become the norm. Their use is analysed in a number of studies (*Cooke, 2016*; *Logan, 2017*; Lloyd 2019).

5.   RISK ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORKS

Risk assessment frameworks are used in a range of extremism-related contexts. More work is needed to establish their predictive validity. [4]

At least 15 dedicated frameworks, instruments or tools for conducting extremism-related risk assessments have been developed. In practice, many are used concurrently. Virtually all are SPJ-based and most claim to be applicable to extremists of different ideological beliefs. Their intended purposes, objectives and users vary considerably. Some, like the TRAP-18 or IR-46 were developed to assess the risk of an individual committing a first offence. Others, such as the ERG22+ and VERA-2R are primarily used in prison contexts to help inform decisions about an offender's detention, supervision and potential for early release. See *figure 2*.

Assessment tools differ in the factors they include and the relative importance each is afforded. Some focus on an individual's engagement with extremist ideologies or try to assess their attitudes towards fundamentalism, radicalisation and authoritarianism. Others are more concerned with signals of violent intent or an individual's capacity to carry out a terrorist act. The degree to which protective factors are highlighted also varies. Whilst they are considered in regard to each risk factor highlighted in the ERG-22+, the VERA-2R is the only framework to mention them explicitly as distinct, additional factors. See *figure 3*.

A study that quantitatively analysed the presence of risk factors in 171 Islamist extremism-related offenders who had completed the ERG22+ found that the 'need to redress injustice' and 'identity, meaning and belonging' had a much higher presence than others across the sample. Other factors shared by a large proportion of individuals included 'access to networks, funding and equipment' and 'personal knowledge, skills and competencies to commit an extremist offence'. By

contrast, a history of criminal offences or mental health issues were rare.

The predictive validity of existing risk assessment frameworks has yet to be confirmed. Evaluations are extremely rare. One study evaluated the TRAP-18 by carrying out retrospective assessments on individual members of a sample of 'sovereign citizens' who had committed offences, including over half who had used violence. Researchers applying the framework correctly identified 76 per cent of the violent offenders.

QUESTIONS FOR ASSESSING THE SUITABILITY, STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESS OF RISK ASSESSMENT TOOLS

- Who are the intended participants?

- Can the tool be used for risk assessments at different points of an individual's engagement with extremism (i.e. pre-conviction and/or post-conviction)?

- What is the intended output of the assessment?

- Can the outcome of the risk assessment process inform intervention or treatment programmes?

- Who are the intended assessors and what skills and training do they require?

- Are protective factors considered either explicitly or implicitly?

- What level of data is required and can it feasibly be obtained?

- Has the tool been externally evaluated?

- What is the empirical evidence-base underpinning its development and testing?

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[4] A number of studies provide an overview of the risk assessment tools used to evaluate extremists (Van der Heide, 2017; Lloyd, 2019). The lack of evaluation of these assessment processes has been consistently highlighted (*Scarcella, et al., 2016*; Lloyd, 2019; *Klepfisz et al., 2019*). With the exception of the IR-46, all of the frameworks listed are said to be equally applicable for the assessment of individuals motivated by different extremist ideologies. However, studies that confirm this claim could only be identified for TRAP-18 (*Meloy & Gill, 2016*). The prevalence of the various factors contained within the ERG-22+ was analysed as part of a Ministry of Justice report (*Powis et al., 2019a*). The predictive validity of the TRAP-18 is analysed in *Challacombe and Lucas, 2018*. Another study has also produced broadly similar results by testing the TRAP-18 framework on a past terrorist attack (*Böckler et al., 2015*)

6. USING RISK ASSESSMENT MODELS TO MEASURE CHANGE

Employing assessments at multiple points improves their predictive validity and makes it possible to measure changes in risk. [5]

The most common way of measuring changes in the risk posed by violent offenders is to compare risk assessments at two or more points. In the case of actuarial approaches this often entails subtracting the second score from the first. Some extremist risk assessment frameworks, such as the VERA-2R, provide scores that can be used to help inform SPJ assessments. However, these are less able to assess how certain risk factors, for example those related to familial relationships, develop and change over time.

Measuring changes in dynamic risk factors is complex. SPJ assessment undertaken at multiple points in time can be used to calculate scores that highlight whether and how risk factors have changed. Assessments may be taken at the beginning and end of an offender's sentence, whilst in prison, pre- and post-treatment, or at more regular intervals. Rather than the binary choices imposed by actuarial approaches, SPJ allows assessors the flexibility to integrate individual and case-specific details into their appraisals of whether risks have changed. Emerging or strengthening protective factors may also be taken into account.

There is relatively little understanding of how changing assessments of risk correlate with extremist offender recidivism. This issue is not well understood in the wider literature on non-terrorism related offenders. Risk assessment tools are also not designed to evaluate how effective treatment programmes are; an individual may show changes but still have risk factors present.

One large-scale study of risk assessments from nearly 65,000 offenders in the US found those that took assessments at multiple points were significantly better at predicting recidivism than those taken at a single point in time. As the number of assessments increased so did their reliability. Offenders with increases in their risk scores were convicted of new crimes at a higher rate than offenders whose scores reduced or stayed the same. By contrast, offenders with reductions in their risk scores reoffended less often.

Whilst recidivism rates for terrorism-related offenders are extremely low (the global average is approximately three per cent), this research suggests that changes recorded over multiple risk assessments can help interpret the likelihood of further offending.

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5 For the study of reoffending of risk assessments and criminal reoffending in the US see *Cohen et al., 2016*. *Renard, 2020* provides a detailed overview and comparison of the recidivism rates of terrorism-related offenders by country.

Name	Target audience	Intended users	Ideology relevant	Training required
Extremism Risk Guidance (ERG22+)	All convicted extremist offenders in England and Wales are subject to ERG assessment	Chartered and registered psychologists or experienced probation officers	Generic	Two-day training course
Identifying Vulnerable People (IVP)	Individuals deemed vulnerable to radicalisation in the community	Local authorities, education staff, mental health care professionals	Generic	No formal training
Islamic Radicalisation Model (IR-46)	Individuals who show signs of radicalisation in the community	Police, security services, public prosecutors, probation services, care-providers, including mental health and youth protection workers	Specific (Islamist only)	Half-day training course
Terrorist Radicalization Assessment Protocol (TRAP-18)	Individuals deemed to have been or at risk of radicalisation by law enforcement or security services	Counter-terrorism analysts and investigators	Generic	6/7 hours online or in person
Violent Extremism Risk Assessment, Version 2 Revised (VERA-2R)	Extremist offenders and radicalised individuals	Forensic mental health experts, national security analysts, police, probation, prison staff	Generic	Different length courses by levels of prior experience

Figure 2: Extremist risk assessment frameworks commonly used in the UK, Europe and United States

Static/ Dynamic risk factors	Protective factors included?	Informs intervention/ treatment	Required information
Dynamic	Yes	Informs sentence planning, including recommending interventions to manage an individual's risk, and support their rehabilitation	Offenders are asked to participate in the assessment process, either through interview or in writing. Triangulating different sources of information is encouraged, including in some cases speaking to family. Less classified information is required than VERA-2R.
Dynamic	N/A	Designed primarily as an initial screening tool	Information is provided by public sector professionals, such as teachers or doctors, where there are concerns about an individual being radicalised
Dynamic	Yes	Dutch police have stated that an IR-46 would be undertaken for every person suspected of being radicalised	Case dependent and determined by how much information is required for a valid assessment. There is no minimum level of information that is required.
Dynamic	Although not formally included, there is space for them to be considered	Does not provide explicit risk management advice	The most reliable and valid TRAP-18 assessments draw upon interviews with the individual and those around them, alongside public records, including law enforcement and security intelligence if available
Dynamic	Six generic protective and risk-mitigating factors are identified	Can be used to inform the supervision, treatment and detention of individuals	The most complete picture possible should be developed with or without contact with the offender. Relevant information includes court records, professional reports (e.g. psychiatric evaluations), prison records, observations, surveillance, intelligence, and legal documents.

Engagement	Intent	Capability
1. Need to redress injustice 2. Need to defend against threats 3. Identity, meaning and belonging 4. Need for status 5. Excitement, comradeship and adventure 6. Need to dominate others 7. Susceptibility to indoctrination 8. Political, moral motivation 9. Opportunistic involvement 10. Family and/or friends support extremism 11. Transitional periods 12. Group influence and control 13. Mental health issues	14. Over-identification with group, cause 15. Us and them thinking 16. Dehumanisation of the enemy 17. Attitudes that justify offending 18. Harmful means to an end 19. Harmful end objectives	20. Personal knowledge, skills, competencies 21. Access to networks, funding, equipment 22. Criminal history

Figure 3: The 22 risk factors contained within the ERG22+

7. ASSESSMENT DATA

Risk assessment frameworks require different forms and levels of data. Where possible using data from multiple sources is preferable. [6]

The data required to carry out assessments varies between tools and depends on the purpose and context of the assessment. For example, face-to-face interactions with individuals threatening violence for the first time are rare, especially where intelligence gathering operations are ongoing. Fast-moving situations where assessments need to be made quickly preclude lengthy data-gathering processes. In other settings, such as prisons, there are more opportunities to collect information.

Most tools are completed by the assessor and virtually all employ multiple data sources. One exception is the

Significance Quest Assessment Test, used to assess violent extremists in the US. This is a self-evaluation questionnaire that only requires information from the individual being assessed. Where possible it is preferable to include the offender's input, for example, through an interview or observation.

The level and detail of information required to carry out assessments varies considerably across the frameworks. The developers of the IR-46 claim that a valid assessment can be undertaken with 95 per cent of unknown information; the data and analysis underpinning this conclusion is not in the public domain. By contrast, a Dutch study found that probation staff were keen to use the VERA-2R but in practice were rarely able to do so because of limited data.

8. THE USE OF RISK MEASUREMENT TOOLS IN PRACTICE

It is not clear how risk assessment frameworks are used in practice or the extent to which assessors rely on them to support decision-making. [7]

Despite its importance, few studies have investigated how risk assessments are employed in practice with extremism-related offenders. A central consideration is their reliability, or whether different assessors reach similar conclusions. Most tools rely heavily on the subjective judgement of the assessor to identify relevant risk factors, although the VERA-2R and ERG22+ include clear guidance about what these may look like.

A recent study comparing the conclusions of different assessors using the ERG 22+ in the UK highlights

the importance of professional expertise. There was 'excellent' convergence in the conclusions of two experienced researchers. By comparison, the level of reliability between 33 trained practitioners was 'moderate' moving towards 'good'. Even with specialist tools, the knowledge and experience of assessors is extremely important. This includes a strong understanding of the extremist group, cause or ideology as well as the political, cultural and social context being assessed.

It is commonly recommended that multiple tools are used to inform summary risk assessments. However, research on violent and sexual offenders has found that guidelines explaining how to integrate and weight

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6 The different forms of data required for assessment tools are discussed in *Pressman, 2009*; *Pressman and Flockton, 2012*; and Lloyd, 2019. The IR-46 has been subject to detailed analysis (Van der Heide et al., 2017), as has the use of the VERA-2R by the Dutch authorities (*Van der Heide & Schuurman, 2018*).
7 For details of the guidance provided in the VERA-2R and ERG22+ see *Lloyd and Dean, 2015*; Pressman, 2009; and Pressman and Flockton, 2012. A UK Ministry of Justice study investigated how assessors' knowledge impacts the outcome of risk assessments for extremist offenders (*Powis et al., 2019b*), whilst the detailed knowledge needed by assessors is also noted elsewhere (Lloyd and Dean, 2015).

different measures or findings are almost entirely absent. Even when compared against datasets of reoffending, identifying the best way of combining instruments to strengthen their predictive ability is difficult.

Comparatively few studies have shown that using multiple tools concurrently improves prediction of criminal reoffending. By contrast, a number of quantitative studies conclude that combining risk assessments does not offer a consistent advantage over the best single tool for predicting either serious violent or sexual recidivism. Combining and interpreting multiple risk instruments may also be inefficient because of the time it takes to carry out several assessments.

Studies of sex offenders indicate that risk assessment instruments are not always influential in the user's decision-making, even where their use is mandated. Interviews with professionals reveal that detention recommendations are commonly influenced by other factors. These include recognised predictors of recidivism, such as prior offending, and those without such an evidence base, for instance, whether an offender shows empathy to their victims or the reasons given for undertaking treatment programmes. Studies have found that probation staff override risk instruments when assessing sex offenders between 33 and 74 per cent of the time.

Quantitative research on sex offender risk assessments shows that in the vast majority of cases, assessment instruments were overridden to increase the perceived risk of these offenders. Those responsible for carrying out assessments can be motivated to make cautious judgements because of the serious consequences of reoffending. However, studies show that adjusting or overriding risk instrument results typically decreases their predictive validity.

Research on the use risk of assessment frameworks for extremists highlights that they should be used to support professional judgements rather than necessarily leading them. Given the complexities involved it is unlikely that any instrument can adequately capture and weigh all relevant factors. Assessors should exercise professional discretion whilst being aware of potential biases in their decision-making. Guidance about how to integrate different tools would support practitioners. [8]

DATA SOURCES FOR RISK ASSESSMENT

- *Information from the offender or suspected offender.*

- *Interviews with family or friends.*

- *Information from professionals with knowledge of the individual e.g. teachers.*

- *Court records.*

- *Professional assessments e.g. psychiatric evaluations or behavioural observation from prison.*

- *Law enforcement and intelligence reports e.g. with information on the individual's affiliations.*

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8 The use of multiple instruments in extremist risk assessment is noted in a number of studies (*Meloy et al., 2015*; Van der Heide et al., 2017; Lloyd 2019) as is the lack of guidance for integrating different tools in the assessment of violent and sex offenders (*Beech et al., 2015*; *Geurts et al., 2017*). *Schmidt, Sinclair and Thomasdóttir, 2016* found that assessors overrode predictive tools 74 per cent of the time when it came to sex offenders in their study of youth offenders who had committed sexual and non-sexual offences. Other studies have also identified the tendency of assessors to adjust the risks posed by violent and sexual offenders above those derived by risk instruments (*Storey et al., 2012*; Beech et al., 2015; Geurts et al., 2017). Whilst some studies find that using multiple tools improves prediction results for criminal recidivism (*Lehmann et al., 2013*) most others reach the opposite conclusion (*Seto, 2005*; *Boccaccini et al., 2009*; *Looman et al., 2013*).

9. ASSESSING THE EVIDENCE BASE

There is limited evidence as to how successful extremist risk assessments are at predicting future offending.

The evidence base on extremist risk assessment is fairly shallow. Whilst risk factors associated with violent extremism are well established in the academic literature, they have not been robustly evaluated against control groups. It is therefore unclear whether these factors are also present to the same extent amongst non-violent radicals or in the wider population. Though certain frameworks have become established for carrying out assessments on extremists and suspected extremists, their predictive validity has not yet been determined.

Very few studies examine how these instruments are used in practice. Further research is needed to understand the accuracy of these tools and if assessors working with extremists face similar problems to those found in comparable settings, such as the assessment of violent or sex offenders. These challenges include the extent to which assessors identify risk factors at the same frequency and how and when they utilise or override tools in reaching decisions. It is also important to understand if the potentially serious consequences associated with reoffending impact assessors' decision-making and use of risk assessment instruments.

READ MORE

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