

Title: The efficacy and effectiveness of counter-extremism interventions

Jon Roozenbeek, Sander van der Linden and Neil Lavie-Driver

Abstract:

Preventing violent extremism remains a key societal challenge. Psychology and behavioural science have been instrumental in the design, evaluation, and implementation of individual-focused interventions and programmes to reduce the adverse impacts of extremist communication strategies and to promote pro-social behaviour (e.g., see Saleh et al., 2021; 2023; Mousa, 2020). However, the factors that make such interventions successful outside of the lab remain poorly understood. Roozenbeek et al. (2024; 2025) lay out a series of key challenges in the translation from *efficacy* (successful lab studies) to *effectiveness* (real-world intervention impact): a lack of understanding of why individuals might *reject* an intervention, and refuse to participate in it; the presence of testing effects, which impede intervention longevity and scalability; modest effects for small fractions of relevant audiences; low replicability in the Global South and a lack of audience-tailored interventions; and finally, an underappreciation of potential unintended consequences of intervention implementation. We end by proposing a series of actionable recommendations for researchers and practitioners seeking to maximise the beneficial impacts of their interventions.