The Fifth P of Resilient Campuses

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The university can be regarded as a space and time to constitute a public by gathering people around matters of concern, and to make something a public concern for people.
(Masschelein and Simons, 2009, p. 236.)

Introduction

All over the world, higher education institutions are called upon to manage the threats of radicalization[2] and terrorism. Many of the developed policies seem to follow a generic scheme of four Ps: protecting the public against harm; preparing to mitigate the damage caused by an attack; pursuing the perpetrators; and

preventing students from being lured into extremism[3]. Although this approach is logical and defendable from a managerial point of view, it risks overpowering a valid pedagogical-political argument: that higher education can contribute to the prevention of extremism by unleashing the democratic potential of education. In this chapter, the introduction of a fifth P is explored: educating for the public goodwill helps higher education institutions deal with two extremism-inducing challenges—alienation and polarization—that remain largely unaddressed by the managerial policy.

Back in 2015, in response to heightened anxiety over politically and/or religiously motivated violence, The Radicalisation Awareness Network of the EU launched an Education Working Group (RAN EDU) directed at school professionals all over Europe. RAN claims that schools are important places in which to empower young people and to build resilience against radical ideologies leading to violence, whether driven by far-right, far-left, religious, or single cause ideology. What is more, RAN puts schools and teachers on the front line to help identify and safeguard youth at risk of radicalization. Hence, in accordance with various research outcomes (see O'Donnell, 2017, pp. 177–193; Sieckelinck, 2018, pp. 1375–1387, and many others), education is considered an essential tool in addressing and countering violent radicalization at early stages.

Over the years, the importance of education in prevention strategies has been widely recognized but has not always been translated into effective policy or practice. In RAN's synthesizing report of the EDU working group activities, various challenges are identified at the school, school environment, and school policy level (Nordbruch and Sieckelinck, 2018). Generally, it was found that educational professionals are increasingly faced with radicalization-related tasks: the (sometimes statutory) duty to flag deviant behaviour of pupils; the responsibility to reassure

their pupils in the wake of attacks or in enduring conflict; the confrontation with pupils' polarized opinions and conspiracies about collective identities and global politics, sustained by preachers and provocateurs. Moreover, the expectation that schools (re)act to these challenges is only occasionally met by investment in extra support or training for staff members. Finally, beneath the surface of these tendencies, a looming democratic deficit is sensed, which possibly represents an even bigger challenge to schools and a long-term threat to our societies.

Next to primary and secondary education, universities, polytechnics, and other institutes for higher education (HEIs) seem to have a unique and indispensable role to play in preventing and countering extremism. Several terrorism offences have been committed by students studying at universities, and it has been suggested that a number of graduates of universities involved in terrorism-related offences were partly radicalized during their studies (Sutton, 2015). All over Europe, campuses are located in countries that have suffered from violent, politically motivated attacks—both large and small. Some university students and staff have personally known victims—or attackers. These dynamics, which can change overnight, define the local context for discussions on the prevention and countering of violent extremism (P/CVE) at EU level.

The same P/CVE strategies on campus also touch on the discussion around free speech (Thompson, 2019). As schools are potential places of alienation and polarization, student group manifestos and political or religious debates are getting monitored more frequently than before. And even though the debates around free speech and campus safety are not unique to our era, the extra scrutiny is legitimate. The democratization of higher education combined with post-truth politics all over the political and ideological spectrum have confronted policymakers and university boards with new challenges when it comes

to maintaining public standing as institutions that serve the broader community and public interest, not just a small group of loud voices (Ben-Porath, 2016). The question, then, is: what is the most effective role universities can have in preventing students from radicalizing violently?

'When landscapes of security, intelligence and education start to shift, this may reduce educational possibilities unless a feasible educational outlook is developed' (Sieckelinck, 2018, p. 1375). So, the question I would like to raise here is: what are the elements of a pedagogical approach towards the HEIs role in tackling polarization and radicalization? This chapter consists of three main sections. The first section is on the phenomenon of radicalization on campuses and explores the question: who is to speak on campus? The second section explains the generic model of P/CVE—the four Ps—and argues for a pedagogical response to polarization and radicalization. The third section presents the fifth P to compensate for the dominant managerial approach of P/CVE and illustrates my own university campus policy. The chapter concludes with some topical issues to keep in mind when cultivating campus resilience as a buffer against polarization and radicalization.

Radicalization at HEIs: who gets to speak on campus?

Since our societies started to develop protection programs against terrorist threats (politically inspired indiscriminate violence against innocents), HEIs are considered critical places for tackling this radicalization process. Already in 2005, in a publication called 'When students turn to terror. Terrorist and extremist activity at British campuses', radicalization was presented as a real and serious problem in higher education.

The report argued that 'they [the universities] have become recruiting grounds and training areas for terrorists' and raised a fundamental question with serious pedagogical ramifications: 'do academics know what their students are doing?' (Glees and Pope, 2005). On a number of occasions in the UK, higher education has been identified as one of the vulnerable sectors—including by the 2011 review of the Prevent strategy, the Home Affairs Select Committee, and by the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism (Sutton, 2015). While jihadist recruitment, in particular, turned out to be more popular among students of higher education in some countries than in others, we broadly see similar mechanisms all over campuses in the western hemisphere: several campuses have been used as recruiting grounds for a variety of extremist movements. Many explanations can be found: the kids of the first generation of (lower educated) immigrants are attending HEIs; the resurgence of religion and nationalism in identity construction and the polarization in the public debate about hot topics such as security, immigration, and identity; and last but not least, the democratization of higher education which brings students with experiences of discrimination and strong identification with peers in less affluent areas straight into HEIs. Underlying all these explanations is the fact that most students are in adolescence, which is the developmental stage when the cognitive opening for (political or religious) ideals is most apparent.

What are the implications for the debate on freedom of speech? Does the fear of extremism determine who is to speak on campus? This question, although today it mainly invokes images of preachers and agitators on campus stages, reminds me of a remarkable passage in the abovementioned British report from 2005, that warned against a curriculum with texts critical of Western civilization. 'Why [Let Them] Read Marx? This may produce dangerous ideas in their heads as students who already

feel resentful towards contemporary neoliberal society may be even more convinced after reading Das Kapital', we were warned. In the same vein, today, HEIs are called upon to prevent students from becoming influenced by polarizing narratives. But, to what extent should universities shield their students? Should we warn against inviting far-right provocateurs or Islamist guest speakers who come to campus because they might plant illiberal, dangerous ideas in the heads of already resentful students? Are there perhaps better reasons for banning? Or is it always better to keep the campus open for debate? In this section, the pros and cons are weighed.

A response solely based on shielding students from messages is problematic in multiple ways. Firstly, as in many deficient anti-terrorism programs, it overrates the role of ideology in the radicalization process. A conveyed set of ideas that university staff or a part of the student body see as repulsive will not necessarily lead to recruitment resulting in hate and crime. There are always certain social-psychological factors that come into play to convince an audience of subversive ideas. Narratives are social constructs. It takes an active reception of the message to be meaningful in someone's life. For example, only when combined with (perceived) injustices to the ingroup, will radical ideas find traction. Propaganda works best when alienation is present and left unaddressed by other (mainstream) parties or institutions. Similarly preventing or saving youth from radicalizing into violence requires more than shielding them from harmful content. What is needed is a fundamental commitment to the grievances expressed and amplified by partisan groups.

Secondly, the 'shielding from content'-response disregards the pedagogical nature of higher education. Prevention does not only take place in education but through education. Education itself can be a powerful antidote against extremist influencing

(Sieckelinck, Kaulingfreks, and De Winter, 2015, pp. 329–343). Nordbruch and Sieckelinck (2018, p. 26) state:

> Research on extremism and terrorism is unequivocal on the role of education: while an individual's education level is not a causal factor for radicalization, the democratic quality of education can definitely make a difference. Children and young people who are taught to handle conflict in a peaceful way, who have been supported and guided in their identity development, and who feel their voices are heard on key issues for them, will less likely be seduced by socially harmful propaganda.

Thirdly, the 'shielding from content'-response ignores the distinction made in Anglo-Saxon literature between two types of extremism: violent and non-violent. Or, put differently, radicalization does not always lead to violence (Bartlett and Birdwell, 2010). The distinction between radicalism of ideas and radicalism of actions is a critical one. Shielding reflects an underlying assumption that extremism always functions as a pathway into terrorism. This assumption has been used to legitimize counterterrorism measures against both violent and non-violent extremism. These measures, however, no longer focus on the behaviours or support for political violence—instead, they focus on the ideologies which do not conform to the state's definition of 'normal' values. Targeting non-violent extremism as if it were terrorism is a problem because it directs counterterrorism efforts against people's political identities instead of political violence. Doing so closes off possible opportunities for dialogue. In responding by shielding students, this possibility of non-violent radicalization is ignored.

Having said all this, there still may be very good reasons to be prepared when preachers and provocateurs choose the campus as a locus of action. Most HEIs will draw the line when students, staff, or others actively promote violent extremism. Arguably,

radical or extreme views, as long as they remain peaceful, might be tolerated under the pretext of free speech and academic freedom. Nevertheless, one of the key problems is that some individuals or organizations, while not inciting their audience to engage in violent action, help to create an insurmountable gulf between certain individuals and the rest of society, which may, under certain conditions, lead to violent action. They deliberately operate in the twilight zone between extremism and violent extremism. There is not always a clear distinction between radical ideas, radicalizing narratives, or propaganda that might incite people to embrace terrorism. Speakers might not always be open about their extremist ambitions or connections; they usually send out a message that looks acceptable at first, but that in hindsight might have led people towards the path of violent extremism. These speakers could, therefore, be labelled as 'agents of radicalization'.[4] The Montreal-based NGO Centre de Prévention de la Radicalisation Menant à la Violence (CPRMV, 2017) states:

> An agent of radicalization, is a person who uses extremist rhetoric to attract individuals with different degrees of vulnerability and who may exhibit feelings of victimization or rejection, identity malaise, or certain personal or social vulnerabilities. In response to the questions such individuals may have about their place in society, agents of radicalization offer a simplistic, black-and-white worldview that portrays certain beliefs as irreconcilable and diametrically opposed to one another.

Importantly, the CPRMV observes, apart from the message conveyed through the extremist rhetoric, radicalizing agents, can be recognized by their methods of 'recruitment':

> Agents of radicalization, whether in the real or the virtual world (i.e. over the Internet), seek to manipulate the thoughts and

> legitimate perceptions of people in order to further a particular set of ideological concerns or a political agenda. Little by little, they get their audience to draw direct connections between tragedies or personal situations and broader social, economic, cultural or identity issues.

Young people will always be interested in explanations of their grievances, power imbalances, and gaps in society. It helps them to build an identity. That is why we have to know who is talking to our students and how they are doing it. Our concern here is still mainly pedagogical, and only in case of escalation, are more security-oriented measures to be put in place. Not only the content of the messages, but also the way the narratives are co-constructed with their audience, plus their strategies for recruitment, explain the success of some anti-social organizations. For example, some Dawa (missionary) initiatives 'inviting people to Islam' in Europe were long perceived as organizations inviting people to join the religion or asking for recognition of grievances and societal injustice. However, some represented, in reality, a conveyor belt taking individuals towards joining an extremist group or even committing terrorist attacks. Examples are the British al-Muhajiroun and the Sharia4Belgium. It was not until their pupils started travelling to warzones that teachers and staff realized how they had been misled. By now, judiciary evidence is collected to bring the agents of these organizations to court. With what we know now, shielding off students would have been better than neglecting its impact. However, as Niconchuk and Dietrich (2018) state in their report on the overlap between radicalization and empowerment, a resilient response invests also in empowering students to see where the extremist point of view is misleading and to help build a genuine political or religious identity towards or away from the extremes. The crucial question is: how can states and wider civil society create a

context whereby non-violent forms of political expression are considered preferable to violent alternatives? In other words, how can we make 21st century politics function in a way that draws people with (an inclination for) these views in, rather than alienates and isolates them? (Kirkpatrick, 2017)

Are current university policies adequate to meet this challenge? In the following section, we will explore the dominant strategy to prevent and counter extremism on campus, what is here called 'the managerial response'.

The four Ps of CVE policies

CONTEST is the name of the United Kingdom's counterterrorism strategy. It was first developed by the Home Office in early 2003, and a revised version was made publicly available in 2006. Further revisions were published three years and five years onwards. Reports on the implementation of CONTEST were released in 2010 and in 2014. In 2018, the fourth and most recent version of the strategy was published. This strategy sets out how the UK Government aims to reduce the risk to the UK and its citizens and interests overseas from terrorism. While originally developed in the UK, elements of the CONTEST program can be recognized in many EU and national policies of member states. Modern counterterrorism on campus seems to be built upon four pillars, all conveniently starting with the letter P. I will explain the four pillars by illustrating how they play out in colleges and universities.

1. Protect the public. E.g. universities have security staff, monitor online activities with micro-intelligence capacities and have become securitized spaces where staff has personalized access passes to get into certain campus buildings.

2. Prepare to mitigate the damage caused by an attack. E.g. universities raise awareness by sharing posters and videos of 'what do in case of . . .', they organize calamity emergency drills (although, as of yet, actual violent attack drills are rare and school shooting drills are still considered controversial by many, compared to in the US).

3. Pursue the perpetrators. E.g. zero tolerance towards extremist ideologies and its advocates, cooperation with police and judiciary to bring offenders to court.

4. Prevent people from being lured into violent extremism. E.g. forbid events were extreme points of view are aired; monitor online activities of students on campus.

The most pedagogical of the Ps is probably 'Prevent'. And although it represents the 'softest' approach, it is also arguably the most problematic P. As many researchers have uncovered, of all the four Ps which frame the UK's counterterrorist strategy, 'Prevent' is 'by far the most controversial' (Greer and Bell, 2019). It aims to stop people from becoming terrorists, or from supporting those who already are by countering terrorist ideology and challenging those who promote it ('counter-radicalization'), steering vulnerable individuals away from it ('de-radicalization'), and working with sectors and institutions where these risks are considered high.

According to a recent literature review (Stephens, Sieckelinck, and Boutellier, 2019), a large number of papers with the keywords 'preventing violent extremism' are critiques of the PREVENT agenda in the United Kingdom. The first major line of criticism concerns the emphasis of the PREVENT program on Islam and the 'Muslim community' (Heath-Kelly, 2013). There is a strong feeling that the primary focus of attention in countering violent extremism is on Islam. This has led to the argument that the

policy agenda portrays an entire community as a source of risk, or of being 'at risk', suggesting an opposition between an identity as 'British' and 'Muslim'. The second line of criticism concerns the extension of security procedures into social associations. In particular, the need for instructors and youth workers to 'flag' those at risk of radicalization (O'Donnell, 2017). Such polices have been criticized for 'securitizing' these social institutions, undermining their primary functions of education and care. The third line of criticism concerns the way in which the Prevent policy approaches went hand-in-hand with a social cohesion agenda (Briggs, 2010). This led to a loss of confidence in cohesion work and a sense of suspicion towards some social projects (Spalek and Weeks, 2017). It was even suggested that the focus on preventing violent extremism both weakened and took resources from work that was building community cohesion (Thomas, 2016).

Where the Prevent duty aims to safeguard people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, its activities on campuses are often perceived as highly controversial. The Prevent Strategy for Higher Education

> prescribes particular counter-terrorism practices associated with the hegemonic discourse of terrorism which, when extended to extremism, risk alienating, dehumanizing and motivating the very people deemed to be 'at risk' of extremism (Onursal and Kirkpatrick, 2019, p. 1).

Indeed, in the higher education context, researchers have claimed that Prevent seriously threatens academic freedom, stifles campus activism, requires staff to engage in racial profiling, and jeopardizes safe and supportive learning environments. Some, such as the University and College Union (the academics' trade union) and the National Union of Students, advocate a boycott until it is abolished.

Prevention policies in HEIs will have to consider these flawed assumptions and (partly unintended) effects of the scrutinized Prevent strategy. They will have to ask: are we spying on students or seeing them? Do we work around identity issues, or do we securitize campus? Is a safe campus a place where separated communities do not bother one another, or is it a forum with a democratic ethos where disagreement over conceptions of the good life can be discussed? According to the professional experts in RAN, preventing extremism on campus is also caring for the wellbeing of students by seeing them as human beings beyond their student identity. The life-event or transitional phase that students tend to be in—starting new studies, leaving their parents' home, changing town—can make students vulnerable. It is not uncommon for students to experience new socio-psychological challenges during this period. Therefore, PVE on campus lies in being aware of students' risk of dropping out, becoming isolated or developing other socio-psychological issues. It was emphasized that safeguarding students from the risk of being radicalized or recruited has a large overlap with existing student welfare. Many of the risk factors and signs of changing or worrying behaviour can be indications of a process of radicalization but could also be outward signs of other problems. In this sense, mainstreaming the safeguarding of vulnerable and susceptible students and staff is an important aspect of the professional, pedagogical response.

This more holistic view to the challenge of supporting and protecting students may help build the kind of resilience needed for HEIs to recover and learn from radicalization-related issues in a way that sits better with their educational DNA. According to Ungar (2012; 2015), most commonly, the term resilience has come to mean an individual's ability to overcome adversity and continue his or her normal development. However, a more ecological and culturally sensitive definition is desirable. Ungar has

suggested that resilience is better understood as follows: 'In the context of exposure to significant adversity, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways' (Ungar, 2012). Drawing from this ecological notion of resilience, it becomes clear that giving students sufficient provision of care and meaning can announce a more pedagogical and ethical alternative, compared to the managerial model of preventing violent extremism described above.

Towards a public pedagogy of preventing radicalization on campus

Before we go to possible alternatives, we need to reconsider the definition of radicalization (as defined by the Dutch secret service) for educational purposes. The following definition by Sieckelinck, Kaulingfreks, and De Winter (2015) may inform educational professionals' decision-making.

> Radicalization calls for a pedagogical response when a child or adolescent starts to develop strong political or religious ideas and agency that are so fundamentally at odds with the educational environment or mainstream expectations that the pedagogical or educational relationship is increasingly put at stake.

This definition was constructed in an attempt to be more attentive to the meaning experienced by actors in an educational environment (youth and teachers alike) and puts the pedagogical relationship at the heart of the matter. As we will see in the following section, my university has adopted this alternative

definition to help staff and officials with signalling while steering clear from an over-securitized agenda.

How then can individual institutions deal with extreme voices and extremist speakers, while protecting vital liberal democratic values like inclusion and freedom of speech within their walls? How can they deal with conflicting core values such as freedom of speech for radical revolutionary ideas and the promotion of democracy? How can they safeguard students from being lured into extremism, without spying on them and losing their trust? The challenge is for uncharted educational potential to be unleashed.

The search for educational answers to the challenges of extremism led to a call for the expansion of the four Ps of prevention to include a fifth P, the P of the public. This additional, positive P stands for promoting a positive and constructive range of activities to boost the public domain and the promotion of vital democratic values. If campus staff is properly trained and supported, formal and informal educational programs have the unique potential to boost democracy and help enhance societal resilience (Dullemen, Santos de Carvalho, Sieckelinck, Slootman, and Rijbroek, in press). The recent push for HEIs to contribute more to P/CVE could offer a window of opportunity to invest more attention, time, and other resources in democracy, inclusion, and diversion. In other words, the fifth P helps to invest in civic resilience by fostering democratic agency in students, bringing ideas and practices of concern out into the public realm. Democratic attitudes are developed by offering students occasions for meeting across differences. There is enormous democratic potential in students engaging in P/CVE, with other students as their target audience. The sheer power of peer-to-peer approaches lies in the fact that students know how their peers feel, communicate, and stay informed.

The contrast to the other Ps of the managerial approach cannot be overstated: while campus security services look primarily

for suspects, teachers aim to educate and transform their students. Although there may be an overlap between these two approaches, they are clearly distinct (Sieckelinck, 2018). The difference is best illustrated by the way both domains approach radical youth. Intelligence and security services cannot but approach them as suspect and dangerous, whereas educational institutions approach their students at least as worthy of education. In this light, society' s inclination to come after these young people with a repressive agenda from the first indication of problematic behaviour on appears problematic if all available educational cards have not been played. This reflex characterizes what Ben-Porath (2006) has called 'belligerent' citizenship, in which education is reduced to an instrument for public safety. A thriving democracy, Ben-Porath argues, requires expansive citizenship education, in particular when public safety is at issue. If we agree that it is important for HEIs to foster democratic agency in their universities, it cannot be limited to learning to say 'no' to propaganda but must involve learning to say 'yes' to deliberating about the public good.

From this perspective, there is not one overall solution to the free speech dilemma, but three potential answers may be:

1. Using every opportunity to highlight the importance of academic freedom and start a public discussion on the challenges it embodies, including the limitations to free speech and academic freedom. A highly controversial event can be seized as an occasion to communicate about core values and involve staff, students, and the outside world in a debate. This is living democracy in action. If done right, it convinces agents of various opposite groups that their cause actually benefits from the fundamental freedom of speech, as it offers a podium and protection to all parties with different views.

2. Campuses should offer occasions to open up echo chambers or information bubbles, by, for example, introducing alternative speeches at the same time and place, and making sure the conditions for democratic and academic debate are met. In one of the cases in Britain, the police or HEIs have been reluctant to allow a speaker to visit on several occasions, and it was Prevent that pleaded for the event to go ahead under certain—well-organized—conditions. This approach could involve adding a counter-speech speaker to the list of speakers. Offering opposing speakers their own event in a different place or at a different time will only feed the echo chambers of like-minded audiences. Freedom of speech is a very ineffective principle if it allows everyone to stay inside their own 'bubble' and speaking becomes preaching to the already converted.

3. The risk of potential polarization highlights a need to invest in the democratic potential of the middle ground. When polarizing speakers visit, there is a risk that attention is focused on these polarizing individuals.[5] The RAN Polarization Management Manual, based on the work of Bart Brandsma, recommends not balancing a polarizing speaker with the opposing polarizing pusher, but to invest in the middle ground. What do non-polarized students and staff members care about? What are their concerns and values? This external threat of polarization is an opportunity to boost the shared democratic values of the people in the middle ground.

The question of whom to allow to speak on campus cannot be answered generically. It will have to be weighed in every situation. A basic rule, though, is to establish personal and institutional

contact with civil society organizations that want to speak on campus and to focus not solely on the content of their message but also on their eventual techniques for recruitment, that is their modus operandi. Investing in contact will always pay off. One should not wait to do this until a confrontation takes place. Meanwhile, collective, participatory, investment in democratic campus resilience is usually worth every penny. In resilient, democratic universities, the focus is not merely on containing controversial viewpoints, but on promoting an exchange of different views and advancing dialogical practice. A heated debate or confrontation in class or during a break requires educational staff to think beyond order and safety, rules, and regulations. Instead of temporarily pacifying the public sphere upon an incident, universities could better invest in sustainable peacebuilding activities all year round. Universities should see these occasions as learning opportunities, for staff and students alike. An entire campus community can suffer severely from conflict but also learn a tremendous amount: learn where they stand, where others stand, how to confront each other without destroying the other, and practise democratic conflict resolution in an everyday context. Richard Sennet (2017) in exploring the nature of cooperation, why it has become weakened, and how it could be strengthened, has demonstrated the urgency of working together across differences: 'Caught between the "us-against-them" ethos of our gang, group or community, and the "you-are-on-your-own" individualism of the unforgiving marketplace, we are', he believes 'losing the skills of cooperation needed to make a complex society work' (Sennet, 2017, p. 5). Collaborating across differences is a vital ingredient of democratic citizenship and why universities should step up their game and transcend the managerial approach of P/CVE. To illustrate this extra focus, I draw from my own university's recent policy changes around polarization and radicalization.

An example

> 3D is the result of discussions with representatives of the various groups who work and study at the VU. A board was formed to ensure a free debate that is conducted with respect and a feeling of security (Ad Valvas, 2018[6]).

The Vrije Universiteit is located in Amsterdam, the very diverse capital of the Netherlands. The university not only tolerates but has great pride in its diversity and works hard to create an open and inclusive atmosphere. On the university website, one can read:

> Like society at large, our university community has a wide variety of genders, sexual orientations, nationalities, cultures, ways of thinking, and religions. We train and educate our students to deal with these differences. So that they, as professionals, are able to view matters from a broader perspective, enabling them to make a difference in society as future leaders. We strive for 'inclusive excellence' through four pillars, whereby students, teachers, lecturers, and employees within VU use their differences to stimulate creativity and talent development (Vrije Universiteit, 2019).

Not only is the campus home to a very diverse population of students, it also harbours the largest Islamic Student Association in the country (as of 2019, 800 members). Meanwhile, in Amsterdam, new audiences—with more people with higher education than before—are drawn towards alt-right and far-right ideologies. Confronted with identity politics on local, national, and international level, the university takes the risk of radicalization and polarization seriously by implementing policies for signalling and prevention that are frequently updated and evaluated. In an update (2018), the challenge of campus polarization was highlighted:

> Over the past few months, feedback has shown that perhaps not every student and employee experiences openness to the same degree. To get more insight into this, discussions were held with representatives of different student groups. One with a mixed group of students and one with a diverse group of employees. In the interview with employees, the focus was on the student interviews and whether their statements were recognizable. Specific personnel issues were also discussed (experiences with discrimination, prejudices). Experiences were shared related to study climate, social security, and possible confrontations within and between different cultures, religions, and political views.[7]

The latter shows that the diversity on campus is not only a source of pride but also, at times, a source of concern: encounters between students (and employees) can sometimes be abrasive or even confrontational. The university wants to act proactively, and the intention is that both students and employees are actively engaged. By establishing a 3D board group (Diversity-Dialogue-Debate) of employees and students, initiatives around controversial and identity issues should be facilitated within the framework of active plurality. The 3D board advises the Executive Board—upon request and unsolicited—regarding events and developments within and outside the university that may cause polarization and tensions between students and employees and among themselves. In addition, the 3D board has an active role in initiating debates and dialogue meetings where 'controversial subjects' affecting the academic community are addressed and discussed. The purpose of these meetings is to find common ground between diverse perspectives and opinions. The 3D board represents the breadth of the characteristic diversity of the VU.

The initiative is openly backed by the chair of the executive board:

> We have formed a 3D board consisting of students from a rich diversity of students and staff who will assist with organizing debates, dialogues, and pizza sessions. They will reflect on questions such as: how do we ensure that everyone participates? How do we openly communicate with each other and can we work towards mutual understanding? And how do we ensure that topics are explained and substantiated from different angles? We want to permeate the entire campus with such activity, from the bottom-up.[8]

This looks like a well-needed response to the complex challenges of fostering diversity on campus. On paper, at least, the 3D board is an ambitious diversity project, geared towards all groups and individuals on campus. In reality, the 3D board still suffers from some growing pains. Based on limited observations, we found three points of attention for the future of the initiative. First, the promise to invite people from the whole spectre of groups on campus was not entirely met. We assume that, unintentionally, the board attracted participants from groups that were already represented in other spaces of power. In order to realize real diversity in the 3D board, active recruitment of students from different (gender, class, ethnic and religious) groups and walks of life is needed, with a special focus on reaching those who are far from decision making. Second, in order for participation to avoid being tokenistic, the meetings should not be prepared and led by faculty members. If one wants to create genuine equality in decision-making, it is better for the agenda to open up and have more interactive meetings. If not, it will be hard to explain and substantiate topics from different angles. Third, the final promise from the chair of the executive board is to act 'bottom-up'. Unfortunately, to this date, the discussions are carried out by staff; students are only asked for their agreement or disagreement with plans that are designed and distributed in

advance of the meeting. Active participation might be harder to realize than expected. Maybe campus democracy and resilience cannot be entirely controlled from above?

Resilience anno 2020: some reminders

Having argued for a pedagogical alternative to the managerial approach, a resilient response goes beyond the risk that P/CVE policies usually refer to (Stephens, Sieckelinck, and Boutellier, 2019). Such a response goes beyond shielding people from controversial content by enhancing an educational culture that aims to empower students to find their place among peers and in society, take a stance, interact, and constructively engage with others. 'Recognizing one's potential as well as one's limits, being aware of one's emotions and knowing how to articulate them: these skills make engaging with others and handling difficult social relations easier, thereby rendering the adoption of conflictual attitudes and recourse to violence less likely' (Nordbruch and Sieckelinck, 2018). A comprehensive program against alienation, polarization, and violent radicalization aims to reduce the impact of risk factors by strengthening protective practices while respecting democracy-promoting values. This is where the idea of resilience can be particularly useful: it provides an overarching, strength-based framework to stimulate protective factors at different aggregation levels, with respect to the individual student, the community of students and the campus as a whole (Sieckelinck and Gielen, 2018).

Regarding the fast-changing nature of radicalization a final reminder is in order. As a hyper-mediatized concept, radicalization is associated by most Europeans with Islam. This is understandable given the panic around jihadism-inspired attacks on European soil. However, recent events show the threat posed by

the far-right movement. This potentially represents—Norway of all EU countries has experienced this most bitterly—as serious a threat to our societies as the one legitimized by Islamist propaganda. In spite of their similarities, the rise of the far right must be examined through a different lens than the existing CVE instruments developed in reaction to the rise of Islamic extremism. I want to stress the following dimensions as they call for this shift and suggest new directions for better analyses:

- For decades, far-right supporters' online presence was limited to relatively secluded chatrooms. Today, on practically every moral topic that matters to us, far-right narratives are pushed into the public (online) debate—with increasing efficiency—whether the topic of discussion is immigration, gender equality, or climate change. This way, the Overton window (the range of ideas tolerated in public discourse) is moved in a non-violent way as part of a deliberate alt-right strategy (Maly, 2018).

- Islamic extremism, with the massacre at Charlie Hebdo as the most notable example, is trying to limit what we can say or draw, especially with regard to Islam. Amongst far-right supporters, an obsession has grown with its counterpart: free speech. Everyone who qualifies this right is considered inimical. Moreover, humour and irony ('just joking!') are widely used to discredit adversaries and demonize outgroups.

- Where Islamic extremism, especially since the rise of Daesh, was often used as an escape by young citizens with personal and mental problems looking for protection, the far right caters more to higher-educated, critical citizens with a thirst for knowledge and power. If a person is genu-

inely convinced by criticisms against current democratic institutions, so-called cultural Marxism and dogmatism around certain controversial issues in the mainstream, he or she is likely to consider a far-right position on these issues. At least as one of the viable options for analysing contemporary society.

- Islamic extremism has declared war on democracy. The far right, however, instead of attacking the democratic model, embraces (their conception of) democracy, pretends to be reclaiming democracy, governed properly, saving it from the so-called elites who let it degenerate. Institutions deserve to be challenged, but what if the alternatives undermine their very functioning? For example, through infiltration and mostly legal propaganda? Even where law-breaking and violent actions remain exceptions, the crisis of constitutional democracies is notable.

With the global mainstreaming of far-right narratives in mind, these remarks deserve attention if campuses are to remain spaces of diversity and democratic free speech. Nordbruch and Sieckelinck (2018) state: 'Tackling social and political polarisation has become a key priority in support of educational prevention strategies.' This relates to the root causes of populism and extremism and their impact on radicalization but also to the immediate effects of populist and extremist currents on youngsters. As a 'vicious circle of Islamist and right-wing extremism' (Ebner, 2017), the recent rise of extremist violence from different groups and individuals illustrates the urgent political need to limit its impact on youngsters and young adults. Using resilience as a guidepost implies that campus policy is not aimed at preventing polarization at all costs. Nonetheless, as soon as polarization takes place, it can activate the necessary protective practices.

No campus policy can prevent social alienation from occurring, but it can, in its response to this alienation, exclude or include students. Violent radicalization, finally, can be prevented, not by suppressing every dissenting opinion but by recognizing the need for voicing dissent. Campus resilience does not develop according to the laws and wishes of the university management. Sure, campus resilience can be organized and monitored but is not easily managed or controlled. Resilience is not primarily found within the security staff of universities, although staff members can play an important role in creating and protecting the necessary conditions. The most critical resilience that protects against social alienation grows rather in alliances of students and their educators where matters of public concern are made present.

Notes

1. The author would like to thank the reviewers and editors for their valuable feedback.
2. According to the Dutch Intelligence Service, AIVD, radicalization comprises 'the pursuit or support of profound changes in society, that may cause danger to the existing democratic rule of law (goal), eventually by using undemocratic methods (means), that may hamper the functioning of the democratic rule of law.' Radicalization can broadly be understood as a dynamic process through which groups or individuals grow in commitment to engage in conflict, adopting more radical or extreme positions. Usually, radicalization increases feelings of empathy with the ingroup and feelings of hate towards members of the outgroup.
3. The UK Government defines extremism as: the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. In the Dutch language, the word *extremisme* is used about ideas or actions that are seen as extreme. The word is used to describe a political ideology far from the political centre or societal mainstream. *Extremisme* is also used where persons or groups deliberately violate laws and pursue illegal actions to reach their goals.
4. It is important to see that 'agents of radicalization' are spreading an enraged or sometimes simply concerned message, without always being open about an intent to incite a call to action to commit violence towards another group or specific people. Therefore, it is very difficult to point out what is criminal in their activities.
5. This is exactly the kind of attention they want. They want to be seen and they love opposition, because it will build the case for their supporters.
6. Ad Valvas is the local University Magazine of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.
7. Internal letter to the University staff.
8. Internal communication.

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