MATES

MULTI AGENCY TRAINING EXIT STRATEGIES FOR RADICALIZED YOUTH

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL MIGRATION AND HOME AFFAIRS

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PROFILES OF EXTREMISM AND COUNTERNARRATIVES

TOOLKIT FOR A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Understanding and tackling Radicalisation

November 22, 2018

PROFILES OF EXTREMISM AND COUNTERNARRATIVES

TOOLKIT FOR A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

YOUNG JIHADISTS:
PROFILES OF EXTREMISM

profiling
for better understanding

1 section

YOUNG JIHADISTS: PROFILES OF EXTREMISM
SYMBOLIC VS REAL-LIFE BREAK UP WITH SOCIETY

Khosrokhav (researching on terrorist attacks in France from 1995 to2015) draws profiles of perpetrators as so-called "homegrown terrorists". His taxonomy outlines two types of extremists:

1. Commuters coming from the banlieues (*banlieusards*): low literacy rates, embracing radical Islam ostentatiously, with no real compliance to Islam's precepts and little of no knowledge of either Arabic or the Qur'an.

2. "Middle class" Jihadists.

In the light of the above, **hate** towards the global society/wider community underlies the choice by both commuters and middle-class Jihadists to break up with society in a symbolic way (Salafism) or by acting violently in real life (Jihadism).

The "intimate tension" typical of the youth, along with the more generalised need to find one's place in the society lead them to a so called identity crisis. The sense of emptiness and the will to detect the core characteristics of their very selves lead young Muslims to look for what can be defined as a more fitting "pan-identity" that can fill every aspect of their life. Hence, radical Islamic identity is most likely appealing for young people in that "it provides a personal sense of safety, security and self-worth" (Costanza 2012: 19).

YOUNG JIHADISTS: PROFILES OF EXTREMISM
THE COMMUTERS ACCORDING TO KHOSROKHAV

- Radicalised commuters – mostly long-term unemployed or having never performed paid work – have a profoundly alienated vision of life and suffer from disaffection.
- "*I consume, therefore I am*". Their urgency of consuming outweighs other needs in their quest for emancipation. Wealth is their measure for dignity, poverty for humiliation. Whether legally or illegally, they must put an end to indigence: this leads to a strongly individualistic standpoint. "*On vit dans un pays de consommation, tout le monde consomme, mais alors pourquoi pas moi? Donc je n'existe pas!*" (We live in a country of consumerism, everyone consumes, so why not me? It means I do not exist!).
- Youth commuters seek to move quickly – and effortlessly – up the social ladder towards wealth. They want to *even the score* and their relations with the global society start from what they call **hate**.
- Being put away is what may be called an *occupational hazard* (as **outlaws**) until an alternative arises, the latter not being citizenship (their parents' desire for social inclusion in host countries), but rather the recovery of *their own identity through Islam.*

YOUNG JIHADISTS: PROFILES OF EXTREMISM
THE COMMUTERS: DESIRE FOR EMANCIPATION AND INHERENT CONTRADICTIONS

- Young commuters in jail see <u>Salafism as the alternative to consumerism</u>, unlike their 1968 predecessors who pursued social revolution. A sectarian quest for purity that labels consumerism as sin and unfaithfulness. As a flip side to this, they repudiate their parents' choice to achieve <u>dignity through low wage work</u> – they'd rather *not be included* but *move up through easy opulence* and <u>rehabilitate themselves through consumption</u>.
  Therefore, serving long terms in prison seems a reasonable price for even short period of "high life".

- Though claiming to find in religion the ultimate moral authority they never experienced before, they cheat. They go around Ramadan sneaking drinks just like they lie to their parents, or skip classes. A different frustration from that of their fathers, who at times returned to their countries of origin, abandoned their wives and/or children, or sought shelter in the bottle.

YOUNG JIHADISTS: PROFILES OF EXTREMISM
THE COMMUTERS' PATH TO RADICALISATION

The commuters' radicalisation process follows a trajectory usually described through different stages.
These stages are to be considered as interlinked, each element should not be splitted from the rest and be given an independent explanation.

1. Life in the banlieue/ghetto/poor district where delinquent activity seems to be the only one leading to middle-class' level, for those refusing to follow the path of their parents considered to have been exploited. *Growing hate towards society.*
2. A splintered family, marked by the father abdication or by his actual absence. They had a deprived childhood, often placed in foster care, mind wandering resulting in forms of mental disease from an early age.
3. Prison is included in the «existential risk» of youth which, although they rail against the evils of prison life, they integrate prison in their life project as a topical stage.
4. Nearly all of them were not-Islamic and became Muslim (born again) or converted jihadist under the influence of a cult leader/friends or through the internet or prison. The discovery of a radical Islam marks the sacralization of their hate for society. Joining radical Islam they globalise and ennoble their uprising, recover their dignity and rise to a «negative-hero» bringing fear into society.
5. The initiatory journey in the countries where civil war is raging is a symbolic breakup with the nation of origin. In this way, they lose any empathy with godless France which wages war on Islam and countries where authentic Islam is developing (Syria, Afghanistan, Mali).

YOUNG JIHADISTS: PROFILES OF EXTREMISM
THE COMMUTERS' PATH TO RADICALISATION

The key concept is their hate towards society because of the feeling of deep social injustice.
Young commuters experience exclusion as an ineluctable stigma. Their accents, their slang-rich language
and English-Arabic expressions with twisted meaning, their gestures are frequently perceived
as threatening by other citizens. Often they are aggressive towards their family, parents
and younger brothers/sisters.
Parents are blamed for trading their dignity and identity for a somewhat diminishing social
and economic integration. Their *watered down religion* is frowned upon, as are moderate Imams,
corrupted to the bone by values of the Western world.

They develop an antagonistic identity against those who are "included" in society, whether French or
North African, who have achieved middle-class dignity. The banlieue/ghetto is experienced as an inner
prison. Youths find a way out in crime and pursue easy money to live up to middle-class standards, even at
the expense of reiterating offenses, which becomes progressively criminal.
Self victimisation is most frequent, crime perceived as the only way to access middle class wealth,
they blame society for having shut all doors in their faces..

Finally, **hate funnels into crime** – yet, for a small minority, *deviance alone does not make up for frustration:*
they need to <u>assert their superiority on others to gain their dignity back</u>.

YOUNG JIHADISTS: PROFILES OF EXTREMISM
THE COMMUTERS' PATH TO RADICALISATION

In the path of young commuters to Jihadism, prison plays an essential role, both because radicalisation happens during their termsthere and because prison is where their hate towards the others – and therefore against society – grows in the daily interactions with prison custody officers and staff.

Furthermore, the growing **influence of Salafi extremism on Muslims** in prison is like an initiation to a <u>membership of a sectarian brotherhood apart from society</u>.

In most cases, Salafists are not Jihadist, but preach an elitist version of Islam which contributes to marginalise youths by introducing a gap between the believer and unbeliever that is impossible to bridge,
the **real Muslim devout** in religious practice and the **false Muslim** with his little regard to holy precepts.
In prison, the power of attraction of radical Salafism leads to a role reversal that restores
the self confidence of the prisoner, now being a noble person in charge of enforcing divine rules.

YOUNG JIHADISTS: PROFILES OF EXTREMISM
THE COMMUTERS' PATH TO RADICALISATION

By channeling hate into jihadism, anger is sanctified and the mal de vivre *is raised to the largest exponent – radicalized individuals view themselves as knights of faith while others are despised as unholy, unworthy to exist.*

Thereby the feeling of <u>irrelevance and lack of vocation</u> is overcome. Once again self-confident, noble agents of God's will. Jihadism – in both the *banlieusard* and the middle-class version, is closely associated with a **subjectivity with a heroical tension**. Jihadist youths face *death in an imaginative way* exalting the hero – a ***zero to hero*** process that brings **fame – if of an infamous nature**. Khosrokhavar's definition of **negative hero** well explains the status of the Jihadis. Nevertheless, being someone requires recognition by others, in particular by the media, whose coverage can turn these obscure young knights of faith into globalised anti-heros.

Media spotlight is a reason for pride and sense of superiority on others – a symbolic inversion of social hierarchies (instilling *fear for their potential to take the lives of those who had despised them*).

The negative heroes' array of countervalues includes violence as a viable means to achieve their goals – while **harming dehumanized victims no longer leaves room for regret**.
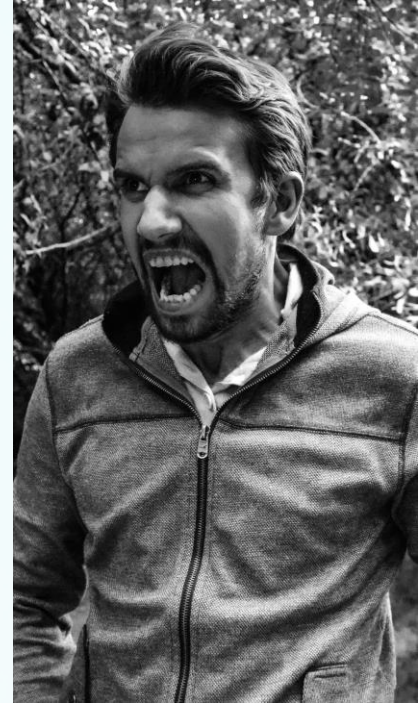
The last step in the radicalization process is the initiatory journey to a Mediterranean country where holy war is fought daily and "institutionalised" jihadist groups are willing to welcome and train would be foreign fighters.

In most cases, this reinforces the jihadists' new identities, almost *mystically reconnecting* them to the *universal Muslim brotherhood*, even if they do **not** speak the **language** nor comply with **the costumes** of their *new homeland*.

YOUNG JIHADISTS: PROFILES OF EXTREMISM
MIDDLE CLASS JIHADISTS

Estimates have it that – from 2013 and 2015 – approximately 4,000 to 5,000 young Europeans reached Syria. The most recent breakthrough in the jihadist model is that along with disaffected youths from poor districts, young middle-class jihadists travel to countries of holy war.

Among them, some are of Muslim origin, **yet many are converts**. Often with little or no criminal record and have **never been jailed**. Unlike jihadists from poor districts, they do **not** live the drama of **victimisation**. They embrace Islam not because of hate towards society, but following an identity crisis.

They search for **authority** in a context of **watered-down social standards** and **decline of the parental authority**. **"Hardcore" Islam** offers an explicit and **sacred set of rules**, far from the ideals of May'68 and the political project of secular citizenship.

YOUNG JIHADISTS: PROFILES OF EXTREMISM
MIDDLE CLASS JIHADISTS

*Jihadism represents the chance to pursue a **noble collective goal** (i.e. rescue Syrians slaughtered by Assad's government) and build a new **identity based on heroism and sacred precepts**.*

Their reasons for joining the fight fall within a *naive revolutionary romanticism* and the *search for a purpose in life* through the experience of the sacred and adhesion to a collective project full of hope.

In this new group of jihadism, followers increasingly include young girls and women, as well as adolescents and post-adolescents. Most of them, before enrolling as soldiers of the holy war, are in a phase that Khosrokhavar calls "pre-jihadism".

So far, this model of middle-class jihadism mostly attracted youths that travelled to Syria; nonetheless, the 13 November 2015 attacks in Paris were perpetrated by a group made up of commuters and middle-class jihadis – a first for France.

Virtually all perpetrators of attacks or attempted attacks have an immigrant background. Most are second-generation immigrants, but also be found 3gs can be found, as is the case of Abdelhamid Abaaoud.

YOUNG JIHADISTS: PROFILES OF EXTREMISM
EUROPEAN VS MIDDLE-EASTERN JIHADISTS

- In Middle Eastern countries, Islam is deeply rooted in culture. Most jihadis are middle-class, with college education, Qu'ran readers. The radical interpretation of religious texts is conveyed by Jihadi ideologists such as Maqdisi, Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, Tartussi or Abou Qatad. They agree on pointing at the perverse nature of laicity and the Western imperialism, and promote a sort of neo-patriarchalism they deem capable of giving dignity back to families.

- Unlike the above, most European radicalised youth do not speak Arabic nor read religious texts – their knowledge thereof is mainly indirect, deriving from friends and Internet research, the latter providing very approximate translations in various European languages.

- Substantial differences emerge between radical Muslims from Europe and their fellows in Middle East and the Arabic world as a whole.

- Nonetheless, as soon as youths from Western countries travel to the lands of Jihad, no matter where they come from, all Jihadists seem to converge; most become "hardcore" fighters through war experiences, the training in the use of weapons and – last but not least – religious conditioning on-the-spot.

YOUNG JIHADISTS: PROFILES OF EXTREMISM
THE ISSUE OF FOREIGN FIGHTERS, SENTBACK/STOPPED, REMAINED, RETURNED (EUROPE)

- In July 2017, the Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN) estimated that about 30% of the approximately 5,000 residents of the European Union supposed to have gone to Syria and Iraq had returned home.
- In some cases, for example in Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom, the number was closer to half. Earlier that year, in February, President Putin said that 10% of the 9,000 foreign fighters from Russia and former republics of the Soviet Union had returned.
- Other countries, for example in South East Asia, have not only seen an influx of returnees, but also a certain number of foreign fighters who appear to have chosen to go there rather than returning to their own homes, whether or not advised to do so by IS leaders.

Barrett (2017) has recently published his research on "Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees" where he stressed that:

- While returning Foreign Fighters have not as yet added significantly to the threat of terrorism around the world, the number of attacks inspired or directed by the Islamic State continues to rise. All returnees, whatever their reason for going home, will continue to pose some degree of risk.
- There are now at least 5,600 citizens or residents from 33 countries who have returned home. Added to the unknown numbers from other countries, this represents a huge challenge for security and law enforcement entities.

YOUNG JIHADISTS: PROFILES OF EXTREMISM
THE ISSUE OF FOREIGN FIGHTERS, SENTBACK/STOPPED, REMAINED, RETURNED (EUROPE)

State of Origin	# FF	Sentback/Stopped in Turkey	Remained	Returnees
Austria	296	31/204	~ 150	90
Belgium	~ 528	85/1,519	~ 275	> 123
Denmark	> 145	23/196	~ 35	67
Finland	> 80		~ 43	~ 43
France	1,910	254/2,622	~ 700	302
Germany	> 915	133/657	~ 450	~ 300
Italy	110		57	13
Netherlands	280	22/520	< 190	50
Norway	90		40	> 30
Spain	204	21/325	129	30
Sweden	~ 300	55/300	112	106
Switzerland	~ 70			14
UK	~ 850	106/1,172	~ 400	~ 425
Overall	5778	730/7515	2581	1293

Foreign Fighters who have gone to Syria or Iraq; been stopped in, deported from, denied entry to, or watch-listed by Turkey; remained to fight; and returnees.

YOUNG JIHADISTS: PROFILES OF EXTREMISM
THE ISSUE OF FOREIGN FIGHTERS, SENTBACK/STOPPED, REMAINED, RETURNED (EUROPE)

- At least initially, those who have traveled to Syria are less likely to see themselves as domestic terrorists than those IS sympathizers who have stayed at home. Whether or not encouraged or directed by returnees, the domestic terrorist threat from IS supporters who did not go to Syria, Iraq or another IS front, will remain real for many years to come.

- Between the declaration of the caliphate in June 2014 and February 2017, IS conducted or inspired around 143 terrorist attacks in 29 countries, causing the death of over 2,000 people and injuring many more.

- It has been estimated that in Western Europe, North America, and Australia in the first year of the caliphate there were 'over twice as many ISIS sympathizer plots (22) as plots involving foreign fighters who returned from Syria (9). Since then, ISIS has appeared to seek more control on such attacks and evidence shows that attackers who have made contact with IS have received encouragement, advice and even detailed instructions on how to put their pledge of allegiance to the Caliph into use.

YOUNG JIHADISTS: PROFILES OF EXTREMISM
THE ISSUE OF FOREIGN FIGHTERS, SENTBACK/STOPPED, REMAINED, RETURNED (EUROPE)

- It is highly likely that despite the territorial shrinking of the caliphate and its progressive downgrade to covert operations, its leadership will look for overseas supporters, including returnees, to keep the brand alive. Most returnees will be unlikely to experience anything in their lives at home that matches the intensity of their experience as a member of ISIS, but If upon return they start feeling as rootless and purposeless as they used to before they left, then they will unlikely slip back into 'normal' life, and as IS increases its external campaign, both through actions and propaganda, returnees may be particularly vulnerable to contact from people who were part of the network that recruited them, or appeal for help from ex-comrades in arms. It seems probable that the influence and involvement of returnees will grow as their numbers increase.

- A group that falls outside the definition of returnees, but comes close, comprises those people who have been stopped on their way to Syria or Iraq, either by their own authorities or those of a transit country. The members of this group have their own particular features, as they had geared themselves up to join the caliphate only to see their motivations frustrated.

YOUNG JIHADISTS: PROFILES OF EXTREMISM
THE ISSUE OF FOREIGN FIGHTERS, SENTBACK/STOPPED, REMAINED, RETURNED (EUROPE)

Returnees fall broadly into five categories, each presenting a different level of risk:

1. those who left early or after just a short stay and were never particularly integrated with IS
2. those who stayed longer, but did not completely agree with IS positions or actions
3. those who had no qualms about their role or IS tactics and strategy, but decided to move on
4. those who were fully committed to IS but forced out by circumstances, such as the loss of territory, or were captured and sent back to their home countries
5. those who were sent abroad by IS to fight for the caliphate.

- Research conducted on early returnees suggests that they left because they did not find what they were looking for and retained little sympathy for the group. Encouraged by the false memories of nostalgia, some may re-invent themselves in that image and decide to continue the fight from a new base, even if no longer associated with IS.
- Those who stayed longer may still believe that Jihad can only be achieved through violence, and they will have become more accustomed to blood and gore through their experience of fighting with IS. Apart from the very few veterans of other wars, foreign fighters will have witnessed violence at a level for which most were completely unprepared; not only may this lead to unpredictable and uncontrolled behaviour, but it will also have created a greater tolerance for extreme action.
- Many recruits will have joined IS because they were attracted by the heroic image of its fighters portrayed by the group, compounded by a sense of adventure. Some of those whose search for adventure takes such an extreme form as joining IS, may well seek even more extreme stimulus upon returning home. These recruits may also decide to seek new theaters of jihad once they have rested and recuperated.

YOUNG JIHADISTS: PROFILES OF EXTREMISM
THE ISSUE OF FOREIGN FIGHTERS, SENTBACK/STOPPED, REMAINED, RETURNED (EUROPE)

- While the caliphate collapsed, most IS members who were fighting were probably happy to die for the cause, and many did. But some will have survived, and others surrendered. Many of these will be local IS members who will in due course and if they can, follow their leaders underground and commit terrorist attacks in Iraq and Syria. But some foreigners who escape or are captured and then deported will move on to fight elsewhere. Some will join other violent groups.

- From the earliest days of its formation in 2014, IS developed and maintained a cell of foreign fighters that could plan and carry out attacks abroad. Recruits from Belgium and France seem to have formed the early core of this cell, and were responsible for the attacks in Paris in November 2015 and in Brussels in March 2016. Another major attack in this category was against the Istanbul airport in June 2016 when 45 people died including the three Central Asian attackers from IS. Given the impact of these attacks, it is likely that over time, IS will try to recruit terrorists from other nationalities to plan similar attacks elsewhere. An alleged IS fighter captured in 2017 claimed that as of February that year, IS continued to offer European recruits the option of joining a group to receive training over a seven-month period to carry out terrorist attacks abroad.

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Returnee women and children represent a particular problem for States, as they struggle to understand how best to reintegrate these populations.
Proper mental health and social support mechanisms will be especially relevant in the case of children.

According to the Soufan Group, from 2014 to 2016, IS is believed to have recruited and trained more than 2,000 boys between the ages of nine and 15 as Cubs of the caliphate.

The countries with the most '*children of ISIS*' are Belgium (~118), France (460), Kyrgyzstan (>130), and Russia (>350). Other European countries counting *children of ISIS* are Austria (40), Germany (56), Sweden (45), UK (50).
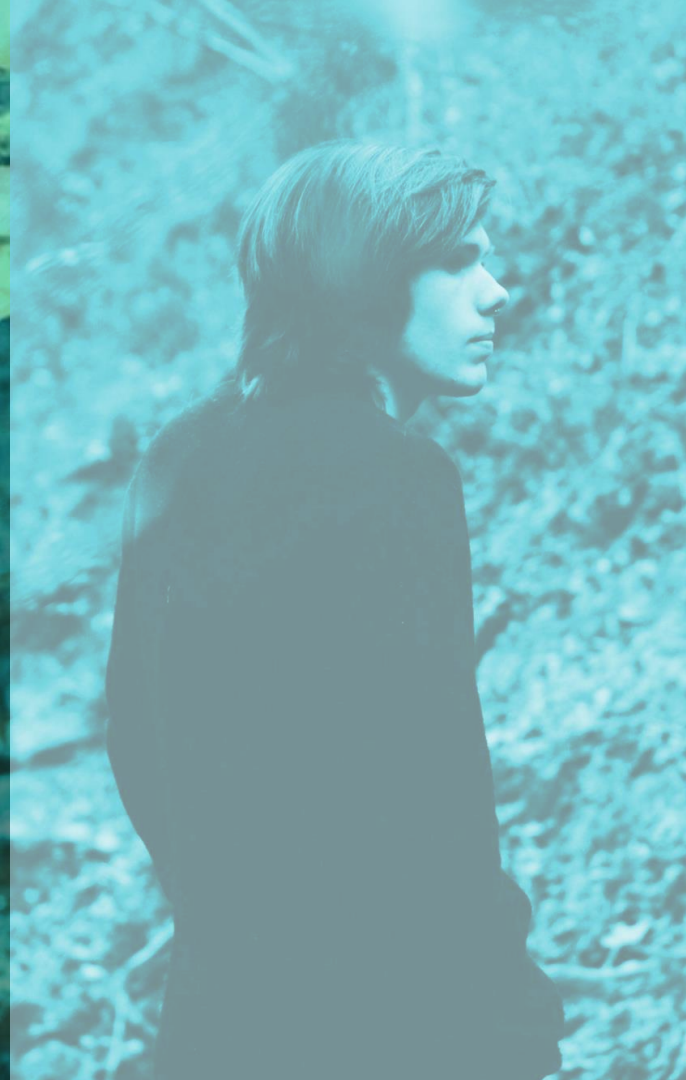
YOUNG JIHADISTS:
PROFILES OF EXTREMISM

gender and age

section 2

GENDER AND AGE
ISIS'S GENDERED NARRATIVES

- *Ümit Necef makes reference to a research, carried out by Dallin Van Leuven and his associates (Van Leuven at al. 2016), on ISIS's "strongly gendered narratives", which promise the potential recruits a life under the Caliphate, in which they can live according to the idealized roles of "real men" and "real women".*

- They observe that ISIS shapes and manipulates masculinity to draw in male foreign fighters and places emphasis on traditional and rigid feminine roles in supporting "real men" in ISIS. In the "ideal society", Muslim men and women can practice idealized masculine (the fighter/husband/father/protector) and feminine (the wife/mother/protected) gender roles.

- Van Leuven et al. (2016) have especially studied ISIS's media output and have observed that its media presence is largely structured and calculated to draw young men as recruits by employing "hyper-militarised, hyper-masculinised and particularly violent motifs to portray its fighters as the epitome of 'real men'".

- Fantasies of glories and excitement of being involved in apocalyptic battles between good and evil can be particularly appealing to young men who feel unmanly, who have lost control over women and their own lives. ISIS recruiters and media outlets identify and feed this desire for violent and 'righteous' male domination and empowerment over women and infidel men.

- The traditional Islamic reaction against modern gender ideology and sexual morals can also be seen in a manifesto entitled Women of the Islamic State, which was uploaded in 2015 by the all-female Al-Khanssaa Brigade. According to this manifesto, Muslim women cannot realize their inner and authentic femininity because Muslim men are emasculated both in the westernized Muslim countries and in the West itself. This unacceptable situation is due to "Western civilization" and universal human rights such as gender equality.
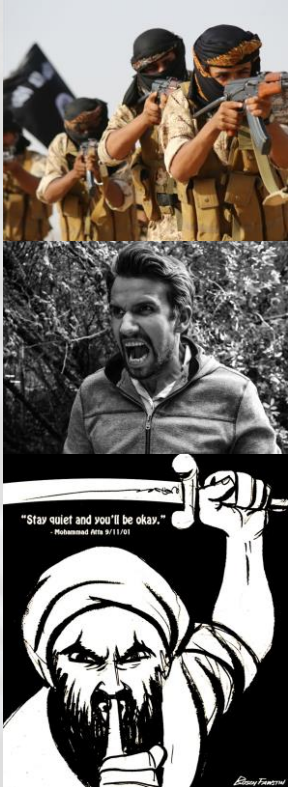
*The concept of **masculinity** is believed to be an important driver for men. Degerald, in particular, refers to **toxic masculinity** "that is to say a sense of what it means to be a man, including domination and the idea that men are superior to women and need to assert themselves as such. :*

These men think that showing weakness, passivity or acceptance of women taking charge are signs of weakness. This often, but not exclusively, manifests itself in extreme attempts to develop strength, fight other men or sometimes in domestic violence". He then refers to Hadley Freeman, writing in The Guardian on "lone attacker" terrorists, showing how many of these attackers were men with a history of domestic abuse toward their partners, while others had rape, stalking and harassment of women in their backgrounds.

To put it with Farhad Khosrokhavar, "Islam restores the family and social bonds on a sane basis, according to men's needs. According to the Koran, a man has the right to marry up to four wives, on condition of being 'just' toward them; he can impose, in the name of Allah, 'modesty' on women and exert his authority toward children within a patriarchal family. In the Jihadists' minds, this dimension is connected to another, the rejection of Western sexual and, more generally, gender ethics".

GENDER AND AGES
MAIN DRIVERS FOR WOMEN

- In their recent publishing on European young radicalised women, Khosrokhavar and Benslama point out that, since 2013, Europe has seen an unprecedented increase in female jihadis; of the some 5,000 aspiring jihadis who have left for Syria and Iraq, **more than 500 are women**. Among them, **young girls (12-19 years) form a minority**, that varies from one country to another, but is probably between **10 and 20%**.

- These young women are **often model students**. They are **mostly (small) middle class**, possibly from **suburban areas**.

- A large **majority** of them are **converts** - from Christianity, Judaism (a few cases), or even Buddhism, or come from agnostic or atheist families. These radicalised adolescents and post-adolescents are a new phenomenon in the jihadi world, since during the time of Al-Qaïda, underage girls (and boys) were uninteresting to the jihadi cause and were not at the centre of the fighting.

- Today, everything points to the fact that joining ISIS is part of what could be qualified as a "pre-jihadi" phase: a combination of more or less ambivalent desires, the common thread of which is the **desire to grow up early**. Some of them also show a **propension to dwell in fantasies** which have little to do with the reality of the ideological and mental world of radicalisation in the strict sense. At best, this is the proto-radicalisation and even fantasising of young girls and post-adolescents l**ooking for love or their ideal hero**. The desire to copy girlfriends, **"do stuff together"** and the **"pioneering" role** of those who have already left, are an essential source of motivation in the departure of some young girls. The departure of an adolescent can have a contagious effect, fueling the imagination of others, and pushing them to take the leap and fly off to Syria to **prove that they are not faint-hearted**. Adolescent socialisation, fully exploited by the propaganda machine of the Islamic State, also plays a driving role.
- As well as these motivations, these young girls (or women) often share a **desire for early marriage**. They do not accept it unwillingly, as a sacrifice to be paid to access the Caliphate - except in a small minority of hard-line believers from traditionalist families. More, it is real impatience to marry, shown in their desire to blossom **outside the control of parents**, seen as an embarrassment. Departure for Syria is a rite of passage that is made possible by marrying and then by having a child, meaning that they are at last recognised as a **fully-fledged adult** who will finally be taken seriously. Running against feminist culture which has delayed women's first pregnancy and allowed them to work, taste life's pleasures and assert their independence, the juvenile adolescent culture inspired by ISIS promotes a model of the subjugated woman, who becomes a mother young.

- The chosen **husband** must be a knight of faith who fights to the death for his ideals. Sought after values are **virility, seriousness and earnestness**. For **young radicalised women**, they provide a substitute for the **father and/or brother**, whom they **despise as emasculated** in the modern world. This position – idealising virility, nostalgia for a family united under a man's authority (father or brother) – is an expression of serious **disappointment with the liberal economy** (whose battering has annihilated the father's authority and forced women to work), and with the **feminist ideal** supported by their mothers' and grandmothers' generation (which called into question the man as the sole holder of authority).

- Through their attitude, **these young women are trying to reverse the ideals of traditional feminism**. They are also trying to create the conditions of a **new "post-feminist"** autonomy, where the place of the **man-husband** (to which **they submit**) is relativised. How? On the one hand, by embracing the idea of a possible future life without their husbands, lost on the jihadi battlefield against miscreants and infidels. On the other, by accepting the idea of a new married life for themselves after the disappearance of the fighting husband.

- Prior to departure, all this is wrapped up in a **naive humanitarian vision**. This is based on the idea that the religious brothers in Syria (the Sunni) need help against the heretical and evil power of Bachar el-Assad, and that they need to sign up to help the former against the latter. The young woman imagines herself as the **heroine** of a saga in which she becomes an agent **saving the Muslim victims** of violence from **the unfaithful killers that are the Syrian government members** (but she can view herself **also as an adult woman**, in control of **her sexuality** and able to make the decision to **marry before coming of legal age**).
- This naively **romantic** vision, of **love and commitment**, is combined with the **seduction of war** and even **violence** for some **young radicalised girls**. Within ISIS, **women are allowed to participate in violence**, at least indirectly, **exercising it against other women seen as heretics**. For example, against Yazidi or Assyrian women reduced to slavery and used to satisfy the sexual appetite of combatants - in this case, management of these "Islamic brothels" is entrusted to young Western women members of the Al-Khansaa brigade.

GENDER AND AGES
MAIN DRIVERS FOR WOMEN

- Jihadist Islam meets **two contradictory needs** in the young European middle class; it has an **anti-imperialistic** vision on the one hand, and a **hyper-patriarchal** vision on the other. Those who have had enough of the world order dominated by the United States find in it ideological resources, and those suffering from a crisis of identity with a need for absolute transparency find in it a bottomless source of repressive sacralisation.
- Young women, battling with post-feminism disenchanted reality with an existence in which they must earn a living and still keep the home fires burning, find in this version of Islam a new life in which they are "complementary" to men. They can play the **"noble"part of looking after the family without worrying about the finances**, managed by the man. And above all, they feel once again honoured by the **new role assigned to them as mothers of future Jihadis**, whose **postulated nobility reflects favourably on the women** and their new social role.
- **Women are now part of jihadism in Europe. Adolescent or adult, middle or working class: there is no unique profile.** Each type is responding to different aspirations. They include the victims of family violence trying to forget. by changing the world. They include those who want to measure up to men by assuming a role within a new, revised Muslim community (the "neo-umma"). They include women looking for heroes in unbridled romanticism. And they include women trying to break with a hopeless world, and find meaning in religious belonging, in a form that is richer in meaning the more it is radical and repressive. Some characteristics correspond to those of men, but there are also entirely distinctive traits.

PSYCHOPATHOLOGY
AND PERSONALITY TRAITS
personal vulnerability
as risk factor

3 section

PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY
RECURRING TRAITS

Radicalised individuals show common psychological characteristics such as:

- Psychological vulnerability;
- Psychological Rigidity;
- Difficulty adapting to change;
- Tendence to violence/violent behaviours;
- Sadism and impulse control disorder with lack of empathy;
- Low stress tolerance threshold and need to compensate through violence claims;
- Depression;
- Malignant narcissism;
- Identity search (be it negative – the superman complex);
- Seeking certainties through support from the group (pseudo-certainties);
- Utopian vision of the world;
- Need to identify oneself with a charismatic leader (sense of belonging to achieve certainties);
- Seeking to identify oneself with certain social groups and political-religious, cultural and ethnic ideologies;
- Urge to express heroical and missionary behaviours at any cost;
- Extreme commitment and sense of omnipotence;
- Seeking one's social identity and power through possession of material goods and wealth (= empowerment).

PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY
DEPRESSION, LOSS AND PERSONAL TRAUMA

Most often, terrorists' motives to act violently are not collective or strategical, bu rather personal. These include:

- Penalising losses;
- Suffering;
- Personal vicissitudes and suffering
  (e.g. divorce, loss of child custody, abandonment);
- Social injustice (real or perceived);
- Humiliation and failure;
- Depressive history of marginalisation and exclusion

"Personalità e Psicopatologie", G. Palermo –V. Mastronardi in *Il profilo criminologico, dalla scena del crimine ai profili socio psicologici* –Giuffrè Editore 2005)

PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY
MENTAL DISORDERS

Following a recent survey by Corner and Gill (2017), out of 55 attacks in the West where the 76 perpetrators were possibly influenced by ISIS, according to media, 27,6% had a history of apparent psychological instability, a percentage comparable to that found in the general population.

However, they believe the percentage is likely overinflated for poor reporting, low benchmarcks, and a tendency to overuse mental health problems as an explanation for terrorist involvement. The relationship is, in fact, far more complex.

So far, very few scientific analyses have focused upon relationship between mental health and terrorists involvement, therefore is too early to come to a definitive answer.

What we see from the existing research is that:

a. Mental disorders appear more prevalent among those inspired by Islamic State than those directed by it;
b. Lone-actor terrorism is usually the culmination of a complex mix of personal, political, and social drivers that crystalize at the same time to drive the individual down the path of violent action.

E. Corner. P. Gill, *Is there a nexus between terrorist involvement and the mental health in the age of the Islamic State?*, January 2017, retrieved from https://ctc.usma.edu/app/uploads/2017/01/CTC-Sentinel_Vol9Iss1119.pdf

PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY
MENTAL DISORDERS

Corner and Gill emphasize that the development of radicalisation and attack planning behaviours is usually far more labyrinthine and dynamic than one single factor can explain, be it mental disorders, online radicalisation, or root causes that encompass socio-demographic characteristics.

They also point out that many perpetrators will develop mental health problems as by product of involvement. There will also be a generation of children who were born within the IS and/or trained as fighters, many of whom will return to their parents' country of origin in the coming years. Thus we will likely be called to assess the risk of whether someone will become a terrorist but also to make actions to safeguard and treat him/her

Making reference to Anton Weenink's research (2015), 6% of a sample of 140 Dutch individuals who became foreign fighters or sought to travel abroad for the purpose of terrorism had diagnosed disorders. An additional 20% displayed signs of undiagnosed mental health problems such as ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), AD/HD (Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), autism spectrum, narcissistic, schizophrenic (2%), PTSD, and psychotic disorders.

Evidence also suggests that some terrorist roles may be more likely to experience particular mental disorders. Suicide bombers, by example, obtained significantly diagnoses of Avoidant-Dependent Personality Disorder, depressive symptoms and more readily displayed suicidal tendencies. Suicide bomber organizers scored higher in ego-strength, impulsivity, and emotional instability than would-be suicide bombers.

According to some studies, when evaluating the risk
of sectarian isolation and extremism, a significant variable
is the so called *locus of control,* or measure of influenceability,
connected to the individual's perception of the origin
of her problems and the solutions thereto:
if the particular *locus of control* is a personal factor,
the individual is capable of finding causes
and prospecting solutions
within the scope of one's action;
whereas if it is perceived as external,
responsibilities are immediately delegated to others.

Locus of control tests evaluate the invidual's level of influenceability.

Source: http://www.riprogrammazione.it/articoli-news/comenasceunestremistaviolento_438.html

PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY
THE ROLE OF SHAME AND THE EMOTIONAL MECHANISM IN THE RADICALISATION PROJECT (M. KRINER)

- As the study of radicalization has largely shifted from examining what people believe, to how they come to believe it, there is clear value in considering shame as an emotional mechanism within a process of incremental adoption and commitment to a radical identity and worldview. Emotional mechanisms provide a strong understanding of how someone comes to believe something, and in ongoing conflicts, they can shed light on the contributing radicalisation factors within an individual or within communities .

- The power of shame comes from its ability to deeply challenge the core self with or without public exposure, separating it from other selfconscious emotions like humiliation and guilt, which are social reactions to an exposure of wrongdoing or failure. And according to Thomaes, et al., shame can leave people feeling "strongly devalued, inferior, and exposed." It is commonly associated with internal attributions for a failure of the stable self, but also with external attributions of a failure of the self. It is connected to a need to prevent public exposure, or the potential exposure, of a self-failure. Shame evokes action tendencies such as "defensiveness, interpersonal separation, and distance." In the context of the socialized radicalization analysis model proposed by Costanza, shame's role within the social-self interaction makes it a highly valuable emotion from which to assess radicalization process.

PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY
THE ROLE OF SHAME AND THE EMOTIONAL MECHANISM IN THE RADICALISATION PROJECT (M. KRINER)

- Another aspect of shame that lends promise to the study of radicalization is its long-term impact, or its emotional sentiment. According to Halperin, emotional sentiments exist as a baseline state toward a "person, group, or symbol that is unrelated to any specific action or statement by this object." Discrete emotional responses and long-term sentiments can take the same form, suggesting that long-term communal failures of identity can imprint and be 'spiked' by recurring events that mimic traumatic shame-incidents in a collective identity's shared history. This is supported by Tracy & Robins' research, which found that individuals routinely exposed to shame, "may learn to regulate it by making external attributions." Essentially, shame-prone individuals will escape the conscious acknowledgement of shame within the self, and instead will unconsciously blame others for their failure.

- The implications of shame's role as a strategically employed mechanism for radicalization by terrorist organizations is apparent in relation to ingroup-outgroup dynamics and identity formation tactics. Exploitation of this condition of shame may be best understood through theories such as: framing theory, which holds strong value in cognitive psychological processes; and uncertainty-identity theory, which suggests that when individuals are uncertain in their identity of the self, they may turn toward more extreme sources of identity to achieve closure.

- It is important to note that shame is often used interchangeably with guilt or humiliation (including within the clinical setting), and distinctions from guilt and humiliation stem from the individual assessment of a shame inducing event. According to June Tangney, differentiation between the two emotions is delicate, but important, and when people feel shame, "they feel badly for themselves; when people feel guilt, they feel badly about a specific behavior.

- What we can infer from the assessment of shame's emotional uniqueness is that shame is an immensely powerful and formative emotion. Moreover, shame-based narratives are powerful for pushing individuals toward accepting a new worldview, particularly if the social pain derived from non-conformity is amplified with a threat to an individual's safety, stemming from moral transgressions and norm violations. Second, when an individual's social value derives from an ingroup that is beset by a terrorist narrative that seeks to divide the ingroup into adherents to their worldview and those that are in a state of impropriety, conditions for the utilization of shame as a recruitment and radicalization mechanism emerge

- Terrorist organisations, like al- Qaeda or the Islamic State, routinely engage in use of emotion-based narratives in their recruitment and radicalisation strategies. For example, in an online statement released in March 2010, al-Qaeda's infamous radicaliser, Anwar al-Awlaki, posed the following question to American Muslims:
  "*With the American invasion of Iraq and continued U.S. aggression against Muslims, I could not reconcile between living in the U.S. and being a Muslim, and I eventually came to the conclusion that jihad against America is binding upon myself just as it is binding on every other Muslim....To the Muslims in America, I have this to say: How can your conscience allow you to live in peaceful coexistence with a nation that is responsible for the tyranny and crimes committed against your own brothers and sisters?*"

- Such questions within jihadist recruitment narratives are designed to stoke uncertainty within the dual identity nature of Muslim Americans. In referencing the conscience and juxtaposing a shared proto-Muslim worldview against the framed immorality of the host nation (in this case, America), al-Awlaki and his fellow jihadist ideologues hope to shame listeners into abandoning their attachment to the American identity and taking up arms to rectify its wrongdoings. Such pleas are supported by an internal 'awakening' by al-Awlaki who determined that his identity could not support both American and Muslim values in his total self. On the other hand, Muslim Americans who believe the teachings of al-Awlaki to be repugnant, may find it shameful to learn that there are Muslim Americans who agree with him, or that he himself was American.

The discrimination suffered by Muslims and their integration conditioned by their socio-economic level in many European countries notwithstading they have lived there for two or three generations are significant factors that fuel radicalisation dynamics, even in most violent forms.

Resentment not rarely arises for personal, intimate histories, yet most often group discrimination is felt within communities. Think of the low level of Muslim parliamentary representation at the local, national and EU level.

"We just want to be treated as any other European is. We want equal chances regarding education, career or job opportunity. We don't want social help, we want the same rights as all the others."
(Interview to Ibrahim Delić)

This video was produced by second generation immigrants with Muslim background and can be used as counter narrative:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QE0sLzaB440

PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY
SELF VICTIMISATION

Another relevant factor that fosters participation in group terrorism and provide narratives supporting this participation is the victimisation aspect and all experiences related thereto perceptions, and narratives of victimisation often inspire the perpetrators' behavioural choices.

The feeling of revenge for the wrongs suffered in the past often paves the way for violence – a sense of entitlement induced by self victimisation can provide adequate justification for one's own acts.

The above seems especially true for group-based violence, as is the case of political violence and terrorism: narratives of self victimisation highlighting the wrongs suffered back over time can ultimately provide motive and cover for violence and bloodshed in the present time.
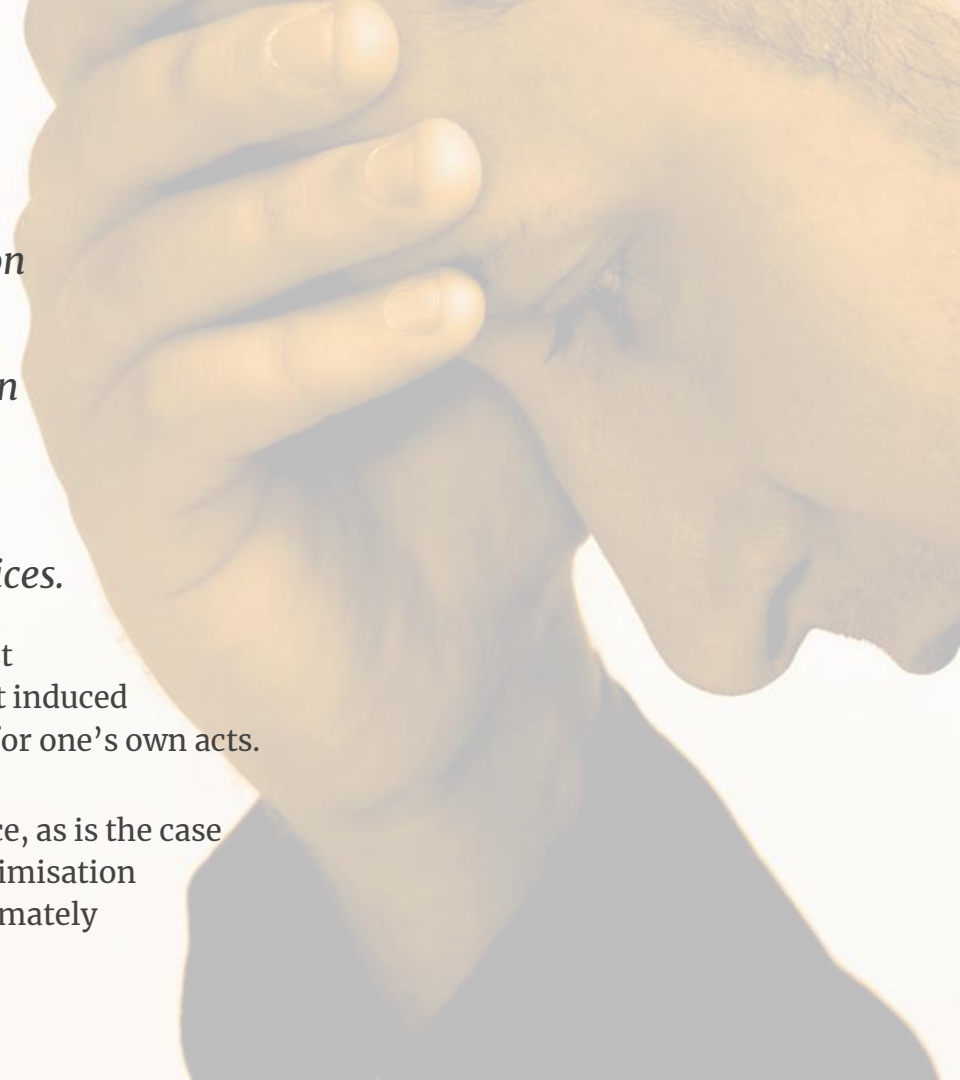
PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY
GROOMING AND RECRUITMENT

The early approaches of extremist recruiters approach their candidates using the grooming technique, not unlike that used by pedophiles. They listen to problems, try to win over their trust while studying their attitudes, habits, discomfort and grudges. Thus, they lay out a classification of would-be fighter that include three main categories:

- Lovers of war;
- Lovers of martyrdom;
- Lovers of justice

The communication approach changes accordingly, influencing the process of radicalisation of each and every target individual.

- For lovers of war: rigorous narration, with traits of grandeur – videoclips are shown featuring military scenes in shooter videogame style;
- For lovers of martyrdom: the great battle is narrated with end-of-the-world scenarios;
- For lovers of justice: the Jihad is narrated as humanitarian mission to save the children, victims of the enemies of Isis.

In any of the above cases, recruiters try to justify violence, insinuating the idea that only the chosen ones are worth living while increasing the candidates' sense of guilt should they not feel up to their assignments. Brainwashing techniques are used to replace culture and education with new, farfetched expectancies.

PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY
GROOMING AND RECRUITMENT

Before embarking in their journey, would be fighters plan out in the dark. They create fake Facebook profiles, adapt to their reference environment while preparing false documents, keep constant dialogue with parents, hang out, comply with the average dress code. They are now ready for Daesh. Once arrived there, they fall prey to coercive persuasion:

- Through isolation, they are made dependent from charismatic figures;
- They are physically undermined by means of a high carb diet and sleep deprivation;
- They are exposed to constant questioning and contempt of their usual system of values;
- They are exposed to new values and behaviours through indoctrination (with the promise of a higher status consequent to embracing radicalisation, implicitly turning those who have already undergone this process into role models).

This particular kind of brainwashing couples violence (of both physical and psychic nature) with religious conditioning (repetitive prayer verses), generating a "logical/critical/analytical power vacuum" (Mastronardi) which in turn leads them to

1. Consider rage and wrath as an expression of social strength and standing;
2. Consider critiques as marks of disgrace and attacks, to which they react in every possible way;
3. Lose their sense of responsibility – a locus-of-control shift ("everything happens inshallah, if Allah so wills"),
4. Consider intolerance as a sign of superiority.

PATHS DOWN
TO RADICALISATION
indicators,
factors,
promises,
drivers

section 4

PATHS DOWN TO RADICALISATION
THE BAROMETER

Known cases of violent radicalization confirm that no single profile fits all radicalized individuals. However, there are a number of behaviours that are frequently associated with the process of radicalization.

The **Canadian Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence** (CPRLV) developed a prevention tool, the "Behaviour Barometer", baseed on these behaviours to help the public differentiate between behaviours that are cause for concern and those that are not. https://info-radical.org/en/radicalization/recognizing-violent-radicalization/

While certain behaviours may be good indicators of radicalization, it is important to point out that there is no standard profile for individuals undergoing radicalization, nor is any factor associated exclusively with this particular phenomenon.
Every case of radicalization is unique and is shaped by the particular context and environment of the individual in question. However, the following behavioral, cognitive or emotional changes in an individual are often signaled as possible signs of radicalization:

- Gradual withdrawal by the individual in question.
- Contact with radical or extremist individuals or networks, either online or in real life.
- Breaking with or distancing from friends and family.
- Abrupt or unexplained loss of interest in professional or school activities, or recurrent absenteeism.
- Repeated expression of feelings of victimization, identity stigmatization, or persecution.

(follows over)

PATHS DOWN TO RADICALISATION
THE BAROMETER

- Difficulty dealing with ambiguity, and adoption of an intransigent worldview.

- Strong preoccupation with conspiracy theories pertaining to institutions,

  the State or certain international events.

- Harsh attacks on certain groups or individuals based on their origin, skin-colour,

  gender, sexual orientation, or religion.

- Hateful (xenophobic, anti-Semitic, homophobic, anti-Muslim, misogynist, etc.) discourse

  that leaves no room for dialogue.

- Legitimization of violence designed to promote the victory of a cause, ideology,

  or militant platform.

- Sudden interest in weapons.

Behaviour Barometer – *How to recognize radicalisation behaviours leading to violence*

*(**Center for the prevention of Radicalisation Leading to Violence**, Canada)*

PATHS DOWN TO RADICALISATION
A (NON-EXHAUSTIVE) TAXONOMY OF RADICALISATION FACTORS

The path to radicalisation is usually represented as a process originating from several factors, some inherent to the individuals and their environment as perceived, others connected to events that abruptly steer the direction towards radicalisation (with a more or less active involvement of the individuals).

Factors may affect the process at different stages, each with different effects. A basic taxonomy may classify factors as:

1. predisposing
2. facilitating
3. precipitating

Reconstructing each individual process helps highlighting the aspect on which disengagement actions may hinge:

- Individual personality traits (Cognitive intransigence, Low critical thinking skills)
- Social opportunities and perceived extent of integration
- Quality of connection to others/to the Community, quality of relationships
- Critical events

PATHS DOWN TO RADICALISATION — A (NON-EXHAUSTIVE) TAXONOMY OF RADICALISATION FACTORS

Factors that may trigger radicalisation

- Failure at school or work
- Estrangement from family
- Difficult life event (job loss, death, etc.)
- Encounter with an agent/source of radicalization
- Political/social event that harms the group to which the individual belongs

Factors that increase vulnerability to radicalisation

- Lack of work prospects
- Family problems

RADICALISATION
Leading to violence

PRECIPITATING factors

FACILITATING factors

PREDISPOSING factors

Factors that increase vulnerability to radicalisation

- Identity or existential issues
- Feeling of lack of recognition/humiliation
- Polarizing discourses in public and in the media
- Feeling of being stigmatised or discriminated against
- Feeling of injustice or frustration

- Cognitive intransigence
- Low critical thinking skills
- Psychological fragility/mental health problems
- Relational or social isolation
- Socioeconomic status

The Broken Promise of Togetherness- Living together
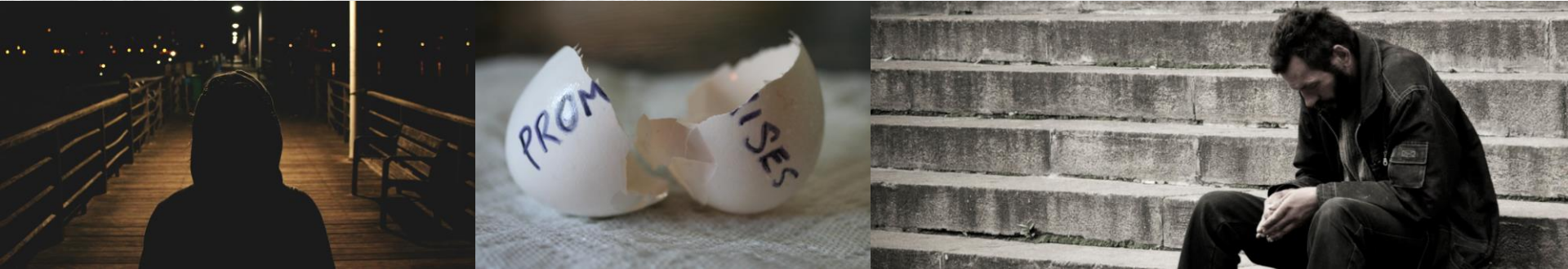
A number of sociopolitical and socioemotional elements can play a part in shaping situations in which certain individuals experience social malaise.

Since they resonate with personal experience, issues, social debates, and international and local events may all act as breeding grounds for radicalization leading individuals to question their place in society and their identification with the collective values of shared community.

PATHS DOWN TO RADICALISATION
INTEGRATED OR ISOLATED?

The Promise of Togetherness (Living together)

Sociopolitical Circumstances
- Global events
- The State's positioning and engagement
- Public and media discourse

Socioemotional Circumstances
- Social vulnerability
- Economic vulnerability
- Precariousness of family ties

Social, Political, and /or Economic Unease (real or imagined)
- Feeling of frustration and discomfort
- Feeling of injustice and indignation
- Lack of recognition / humiliation
- Feeling of failure and helplessness
- Stigmatization and identity crisis
- Discrimination/Marginalization

Questioning the Promise of Togetherness (Living together)

PATHS DOWN TO RADICALISATION
INTEGRATED OR ISOLATED?

The social environment can act as a barrier

or a driver for radicalisation.

Individuals who experience identity malaise, or perceived injustice

or marginalization, may sometimes seek answers and remedies for situations they deem to be unfair

or in need of redress.

Depending on the settings and social environments in which they find themselves, different factors may

offer them worldviews with either a prosocial or, on the contrary, a radicalizing perspective —some even

going so far as to embrace violent engagement.

PATHS DOWN TO RADICALISATION
PROTECTIVE VS PREDISPOSING FACTORS?

All individuals have their own personal protective factors against radicalisation (e.g. tolerance of ambiguity, broad-mindedness), while other protective factors are tied to their environment (e.g. stable relational environment).

Some people exhibit certain characteristics that tend to make them more fragile (e.g. lack of critical thinking skills, difficult life events), or are exposed to environmental factors (radical social network, weak social or emotional ties) that cause them to be more vulnerable to radicalisation.

Protective factors

- Non-violent social network (face-to-face or online)
- Ability to handle emotions
- Quality relationship with a positive role model
- Tolerance towards ambiguity (grey area)
- Critical thinking and broad-mindedness
- Opportunity for positive social advocacy
- Stable relational environment
- Empathy towards others

Search for Answers

- Family
- Friends
- School environment
- Mentors
- Sports and cultural environments
- Internet and social media
- Work environment

Vulnerability factors

- Difficult life events
- Lack of critical thinking skills
- Precariousness of social connections
- Isolation
- Intolerance towards ambiguity
- Radical social network (face-to-face or online)
- Impulsiveness
- Precariousness of emotional ties

PATHS DOWN TO RADICALISATION
FACILITATING FACTORS

As pointed out above, many descend into the spiral of radicalism in moments of discomfort and bewilderment: be it psychological discomfort or dire straits, such circumstances do not directly explain radicalisation yet increase the risk.

They might have suffered the death of a beloved one, personal vicissitudes and discomfort (e.g. divorce, loss of child custody, abandonment), failures, or may simply find themselves isolated from friends, families and communities – for instance, al Qaeda fighters were often recruited when living abroad as foreign students, workers or refugees.

PATHS DOWN TO RADICALISATION
THE PROSOCIAL APPROACH TO DISENGAGEMENT

A prosocial attitude may be the foundation of disengagement actions.

Protective factors prevail and answers are found among the individual's reference persons

Pro-social Orientation

- Socio-communitarian involvement
- Sociopolitical engagement
- Participation in public debate
- Rejection of violence

Prosocial engagement

Hope vis-à-vis

the Promise of Togetherness

PATH TOWARDS DISENGAGEMENT
VULNERABILITY FACTORS AND TYPES OF ENGAGEMENT

Vulnerability factors prevail and no answers are provided by the individual's network of relevance

Indoctrination process/ideology

Violent acts Committed or encouraged

Radical / Violent Orientation

- Social and family rupture
- Legitimisation of the use of violence
- Concealment of a lifestyle or an allegiance
- Association with violent radical individuals
- Examining extremist documents or websites
- Dehumanising others and loss of moral reference
- Obsession with messianic and end-of-the-world discourse
- Sudden loss of interest in school and professional activities

Justifying Engagement

NEEDS	MOTIVES
Sense of belonging	Altruism / Solidarity
Identity affirmation	Heroism
Self esteem / Pride	Rebellion / Revenge
Recognition	Recognition

Types of Engagement

Level of Engagement

- Self-sacrifice
- Participation
- Active support

PATHS DOWN TO RADICALISATION
VULNERABILITY VS PROTECTIVE FACTORS

When vulnerability factors outweigh protective factors, some

may opt for a simplistic – quite Manichean – worldview

and discourse.

For individuals undergoing a process of indoctrination,

all interpretations of the world necessarily become ideological

with a 'good' and a 'bad', an 'us' and a 'them', a 'pure' and an 'impure' group.

Through this progressive dichotomisation of the world, individuals start to dismiss systematically

any competing explanations or alternative views of society.

In the indoctrination process, ideology supplies the justifications and explanations that encourage devotees

to take part in more radical forms of action, including active support for or participation in violent action.

ONE-TO-ONE
COUNTERNARRATIVE
personalised strategies
for disengagement

5 section

It is generally agreed upon that along with repressive measures aimed at tackling violent radicalisation the need arises for prevention policies that enact non repressive interventions.

- This requires the implementation of network structures for psychological and social assistance and their exchange with institutions in charge of prevention.
- It also requires building up a network of new professionals in the social (mediators) and communication field (counternarrators).

ONE-TO-ONE COUNTERNARRATIVE STRATEGIES

Counternarrative paths aimed at rehabilitating radicalised individuals must necessarily take into account

a support plan, which in turn requires:

- identifying the individuals' profile from the above taxonomy (Commuters, Middle-class jihadists, European and Middle-East jihadists);
- understanding which socio-cultural factors lead them down the path of extremism;
- understanding the psychological drives which pushed them into radicalisation and recognise pthologies (if any);
- finding out what radicalising messages they have been exposed to and understading what meaning they found in such messages;
- roll out strategies that include a series of actions targeted at the individuals and their families (if applicable): actions include psychological support, spiritual guidance or mentorship, but also recreational and/or vocational training activities.

Possible strategies include:

- Severing the individuals' connections with network and social contexts that lead them to violent radicalisation;
- Deconstructing messages with radical and violent content;
- Identifying the best suitable mentors among all those involved in the process of their social reintegration, and consequently establish a one-to-one counternarration relationship. The best mentor may be selected according to several parameters: matching interests, being a religious model, a respected sports coach, et al.

A message that offers a positive alternative to extremist propaganda, or alternatively aims at deconstructing or questioning extremist narratives.

The term 'counter-narrative' has come to be used in relation to a very wide range of activities, everything from government strategic communications to targeted campaigns to discredit the ideologies and actions of violent extremists.

These different activities require different approaches in terms of messages, messengers, tactics, partnerships, and so forth. Counter narratives are designed and performed by civil society organizations.

ONE-TO-ONE COUNTERNARRATIVE
TYPES OF COUNTERNARRATIVE

What	Why	How	Who
Alternative Narratives	Undercut violent extremist narratives by focusing on what we are 'for' rather than 'against'	Positive story about social values, tolerance, openness, freedom and democracy	Civil society or government
Counter Narratives	Directly deconstruct, discredit and demystify violent extremist messaging	Challenge of ideologies through emotion, theology, humour, exposure of hypocrisy, lies and untruths	Civil society
Government strategic communications	Undercut extremist narratives by explaining government policy and rationale	refuting misinformation, and developing relationships with key constituencies and audiences	Government

Briggs, Rachel and Feve, Sebastien (2013), Review of Programs to Counter Narratives of Violent Extremism, Institute for Strategic Dialogue. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/issue_paper_cn_oct2015_en.pdf

ONE-TO-ONE COUNTERNARRATIVE
A TWO-STEPS PROCESS: MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS AND FALSE POSITIVE

*Dedicated programmes identify two steps in the deradicalisation process, both being the result of a **grieving process**.*

One-to one approaches take into account

1. The first step is **disengagement from the group**, achieved when radicalised individuals elaborate the cut of their bonds to the reference group;
2. The second is **disengagement from the jihadist** (*i.e. violent*) **ideology**, achieved when the radicalized elaborated the mourning of the violent project, whilst keeping the utopian aspect.

This is the most challenging step because of the intrinsically subjective nature of one's perception of the ideology.

Furthermore, many programmes have highlighted the serious issue posed by faking that can return false positives while assessing deradicalisation processes.

The issue of reparation and regret should be regarded as distinct and separate from the process.

(Khosrokhavar, Bouzar, 2017)

ONE-TO-ONE COUNTERNARRATIVE
REQUIREMENTS OF THE ONE-TO-ONE APPROACH

The action requires some preparation: the interviewer is to be aware of the target individual's belongings, history and group of reference, as well as to seek and treat any psychopathological aspects; most often, the "adept" is no psychopath, yet may suffer from some disorder.

One-to one approaches take into account

- The individual's needs within her reference framework;
- Any personal traits (e.g. existential and emotional fragility);
- Stressful experiences that lead to violent radicalisation (such as penalising losses et al.);
- Explicit or at least elicitable motivations (social claims in response to abuses, torts, social exclusion);
- Each target individual's potential;
- Weak points the counternarrative may hinge on;
- Fears, anxieties, fantasies, likes and dislikes;
- In situations of risk, such as radicalisation, relying on a trusted person can gain special relevance;
- Especially in the case of youth belonging to minorities who find it difficult to recognise the authorities in charge of their process in the Justice System. This is where a mentor comes into play as a liaison figure between the youth, their community, and the security services.

ONE-TO-ONE COUNTERNARRATIVE
USING DISILLUSIONMENT AS A FACILITATING FACTOR FOR DISENGAGEMENT

RAN has singled out reasons for disillusionment that potentially favour disengagement: the individual finally recognises that the underlying ideal is a lost cause, fail to be granted proper roles within their groups, or spot the preach-practice contradictions, infighting, the leaders themselves breaching the declared moral precepts – as returnees from Syria often witness – or again become aware of manipulations suffered by others (if unaware of those against themselves).

Last but not least, she discovers that anger outbursts in the name of radicalism are pointless and solve no problems – she might even get tired of waiting for repeated promises to turn into action, or plainly be schocked by so much violence.

One of the possible approaches is to include the disillusioned Salafists (those who „have been there before") and recruiters into the process of de-radicalisation and re-socialisation. They are the one knowing the cultural and social context behind radicalisation and are more likely to have success in de-radicalisation.

ONE-TO-ONE COUNTERNARRATIVE
COUNTERING THE RELIGIOUS MESSAGE

Such a counternarrative strategy requires tailored approaches to be effective. It suits most those individuals with a deeply rooted religious background who had been mislead by a radical interpretation of the religious message, on which they might have based their Weltanschauung.

An Imam can turn out invaluable in such cases, both at the preliminary and in the subsequent stages, to highlight contradictions between different interpretations of the Qu'ran.

As for other individuals – mainly youths – with a con un profilo psicologico già a rischio (harsh histories, mentally unstable, histories of violence) religion can still be placed at the end of their radicalization process as a moral excuse to the violent option they had already picked.

In these latter cases, counternarrative based on religion will be of no use: as a moderate Imam cannot provide them with the answers they look for, they'll keep looking for other guides that will feed them an interpretation they feel more at home with.

ONE-TO-ONE COUNTERNARRATIVE
PROFILING COUNTERNARRATORS

Working effectively as counternarrators does not allow for improvisation,

and requires proper training and awareness of one's role.

Prerogatives of a good mentor include:

- Good social adaptability
- Genuine interest for problems of the others
- Rich inner life
- Inclination to introspection
- Excellent listening capacity and ability to contain silence, thus avoiding panic resulting from inability to speak out/voice one's discomfort
- Ability to inspire trust (Rogers) through discretion, critical spirit and warm friendliness (which is a far cry from cheap political correctness).

ONE-TO-ONE COUNTERNARRATIVE
PROFILING COUNTERNARRATORS

Mentors/imams need to:

- clarify that ideology is different from religiosity
- improve the ability to communicate and connect in real conversations and engaging on daily life subjects, especially those of particular concern to the s.c. «generation wired» (12-18) such as social relations, sex, integrating into a group
- identify the appropriate counterpart to engage discussions with *Salafists by culture* on one hand and *identitary Salafists* on the other, being the imam in the first case and mothers and formerly radicalised role models in the second.
- understand the power of language, both in radicalization and deradicalization processes. Language is the means by which are built specific identities and to manifest one's own singularity (*Jean-Loup Amselle, 2008*). Language is just as well linked to existing societal, economic and ideological systems conveyed through education (*Golovko, 2018*).

ONE-TO-ONE COUNTERNARRATIVE
PROFILING COUNTERNARRATORS

Mentors/imams need to:

- Show respect and empathy for the individual, as well as a willingness to listen without any preconceived judgments: this will help create an atmosphere conducive to developing a trusting relationship and meaningful connection.
- Avoid calling the person's values and beliefs into question, or confronting him or her about them; otherwise, you may cause the person to become defensive and completely closed off to your intervention.
- Show empathy and deep, genuine understanding not only for the target individuals' weak point but also for what link such weaknesses to their social claims.
- Based on your assessment of your mutual relationship, choose an appropriate time and place for an open and compassionate conversation.
- Adopt a communicative approach to collect the desired information tactfully and sensitively without arousing distrust or causing the individual to withdraw into him- or herself.

(closes from previous slide)

ONE-TO-ONE COUNTERNARRATIVE
LISTENING AND INTERPRETING

Listening must not be limited to what target individuals want to say, but rather be extended to what they'd rather omit, or are unable to say without help.

A key ability is non verbal behaviour analysis (gestures, mimicry, movements, attitudes – to put it with *V. Mastronardi, Manuale di Comunicazione non verbale per Operatori, Carocci –faber ed. 2017*) without ever disregarding their cultural identity.

Plus, other fundamental elements that might emerge during the interview include:

- Connections/associations of ideas;
- Abrupt topic switching, including strong rhetoric to avoid unveiling unpleasant revelations (misdirecting);
- Opening and closing statements;
- contradictions, blanks, between-the-lines.

ONE-TO-ONE COUNTERNARRATIVE
IMPACTS OF COUNTERNARRATIVE – LOOKING BEYOND

It is a neurologically proven reaction to simplify thoughts and actions in presence of a perceived threat, consequently radicalising one's standpoints.
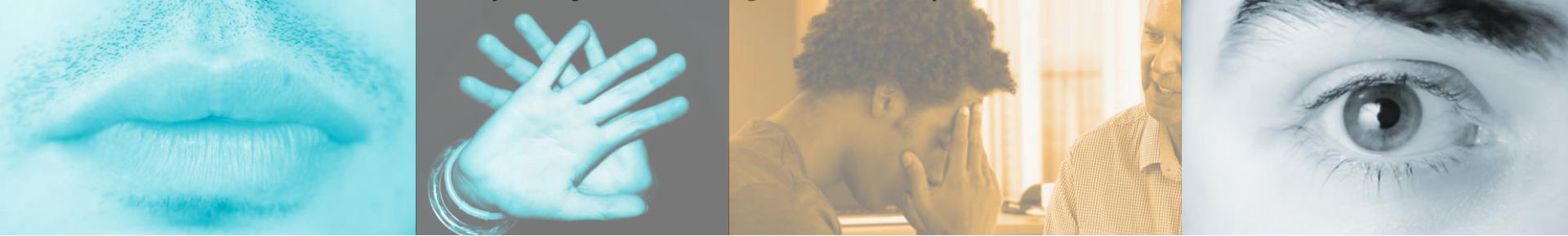
To make an impact on such cognitive processes, focus must be shifted from single contents to the way of thinking in general: inducing a more complex reasoning reduces vulnerability to simplistic slogans.

Therefore, dialogue must be promoted over persuasion and judgment; likewise, difficult arguments are to be tackled and precanned answers avoided.

ONE-TO-ONE COUNTERNARRATIVE
SPORTS AS INSTRUMENTS FOR DERADICALISATION

*Sports – especially martial arts –
can be effective tools
for deradicalisation.*

Nonetheless, counternarrative is still
of great importance, since it is ascertained
 that many foreign fighters recruited by ISIS
were also martial arts.

Contact sports that channel aggression,
imposes hierarchy, discipline and respect,
raises self-esteem and self-image of the
individual can be taken in consideration.

*Any idea you've got of yourself
will be challenged as soon
as you come in here.*

*Once that the idea of yourself
is challenged and that breech
opens, we are able to go in
and start dismantling perceptions.*

http://edition.cnn.com/2012/07/20/world/europe/uk-caging-terror-main/index.html

ONE-TO-ONE COUNTERNARRATIVE
DISILLUSIONMENT OF ROLE MODELS AS A DISENGAGEMENT ENABLER

Ibrahim Delić used to be on of the most appealing recruiters for would be foreign fighters wishing to get to Syria.

Then he realised that in ISIS there is no unity. "The Islamic state got fractioned in para-military criminal groups, each fighting for their own purpose. Furthermore, kids and women are being slain, terrible things are happening. We Muslims do want to have our state, but not that way. It is unrealistic to expect that Europe could ever be all Islamic – why don't they give us a cleric state, like for example Israel has been created as a by-product of Holocaust?"

Izet Hadžić stated that alongside of hardcore supporters of the Islamic state and the enforcement Sharia law, many criminals were recruited from prisons to fight for ISIS.

Consequently, different Jihadi groups got in conflict, so they are not fighting for the highest purpose anymore. They kill, rape and rob among themselves. The main motive of their fighting is money and power."

> *The young should educate themselves in Islam and seek to find equal status in European society through education and work. Finding the opportunities is much more worth than receiving compassion and help.*

Izet Hadžić

Imams clearly state that radicalisation is not inherent to Islam.

Yet, they admit that youngsters are running away from "moderate" mosques and are more inclined to join those where Imams lectures are more radical. Since Islam doesn't have elaborated clergy, the interpretations of Quran Messages are different among different Imams. One of Imams pointed out the problem of silent complaining back home, which generates the resistance toward western socio-eco-political systems and so called democracy. Such youngsters would start searching for radical ideas and would be easily drawn to the path of violence and death.

Islam is not the religion of hate and Jihad is not a violent struggle in war, it is rather a protection of Islamic thought and people. Jihad can be performed on educational and spiritual level.

APPENDIX

the risk assessment questionnaire

As appendix here is the risk assesment questionary that can be used by penitentiary officers, parole officers and others involved in the deradicalisation processes.

The results of interviews provide the starting point to design effective, customised counternarratives and exit strategies.

Before presenting the questionnaire, some directions are made available to the interviewer, along with general indications already provided that concern the interactions between the mentor and the target subject. Whereas the mentor plays the leading role in the counternarrative action, the interviewer that receives the above special direction is in charge of designing the action and evaluating results thereof.

In the starting phase of the interview process, the target subject's behaviour may vary according to the particular context (as in Mastronardi V. 2012 p.52). From time to time, one may face a subject who:

- speaks and tell;
- does not speak;
- speaks without telling (hardest challenge)

When dealing with the above subject types, the interviewer is best to adopt a Rogersian setting – a non authoritary attitude without «directing» the subject. In particular, the mood during the interview should result from:

- The interviewer acting genuinely;
- The target subject being at ease, safe from any harassment. The interviewer is to convey the impression of having all the time in the world (no looking at watches), an investment totally directed to the good of the target subject, is to communicate a sincere desire to help and appear qualified to provide the best advice.

Mistakes to avoid (highlighted by Passi-Tognazzo in *Metodi e tecniche nella diagnosi della personalità – Methods and techniques in diagnosing personality disorders*, Giunti Barbera 1964) include:

- Yes/no questions – tend to achieve no results

- Suggestive question – impair the authenticity of answers

- "Why" questions – it is the interviewer's responsibility to discover causes and reasons

- Jotting down notes during the interview;

- Remaining extremely impassive;

- Making target subjects feel as if they are a "case"; the interviewer should rather show genuine interest.

A Proposed Questionnaire Template

1. Can you tell us shortly something about yourself?
2. What about your childhood? Who was the most important person when you were a child?
3. Describe your childhood? What are the most positive memories? What are the most negative memories?
4. How would you describe violence/violent person? Do you think violence sometimes can be justified?
5. Are you religious? Do you come from religious familiar background?
6. Do you frequent the church/mosque? How often?
7. How was the relationship with your parents?
8. What about your friends? Are they religious, do they go to the church/mosque and how often?
9. What role does religion have in the European society?
10. How do you see yourself in 5 years, 15 years, 30 years?
11. What are your biggest concerns regarding the future?
12. How would you describe the modern western world?
13. How would you describe the ideal society?
14. Do you think that some people have the ability to convince the others about promoted ideology? Do you know someone like that?
15. How important is for you what your friends think about you?
16. What do your friends think about the European society?
17. How important is for the youngster to be accepted among peers?
18. Do you know what is initiation into the adult's world? How does it look like?

19. Do you think that some people would be ready to do something really dangerous to be respected among peers? What would such dangerous action be?
20. Why do you think there is so much violence in the world? Do you think there is enough justice for everyone in modern societies?
21. How would you describe the ideal society? Is the European society such?
22. How would you create such a society?
23. What do you understand under the words: vengeance, jihad, crusade, terrorism?
24. Have you ever heard about ISIS? How would you describe it?
25. In your opinion, who is the most important leader in ISIS?
26. Would you fight for a good cause?
27. Do you know anybody that went to fight for ISIS? How did you meet him?
28. Do you know how was or is possible to depart for the battlefield?
29. What about those performing suicide attacks in Europe? How would you describe such people? Is there a difference between the foreign fighter and suicide killer?
30. How would you describe God and his role?
31. What do you understand under radicalisation, extremist violence?
32. How do you justify violence in the act of divine?
33. Do you see people using violence for achieving religious purposes as radicalised?
34. What person could radicalise them? What about you, could you be radicalised? Why? How?
35. Under your opinion, is there a chance to de-radicalise the radicalised one?
36. How would you perform de-radicalisation?
37. How do you see Europe and its society in 10/30 years?
38. How can you contribute to such society?

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PROFILES OF EXTREMISM AND

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