

Preventing and countering violent radicalization

A guide for first-line practitioners

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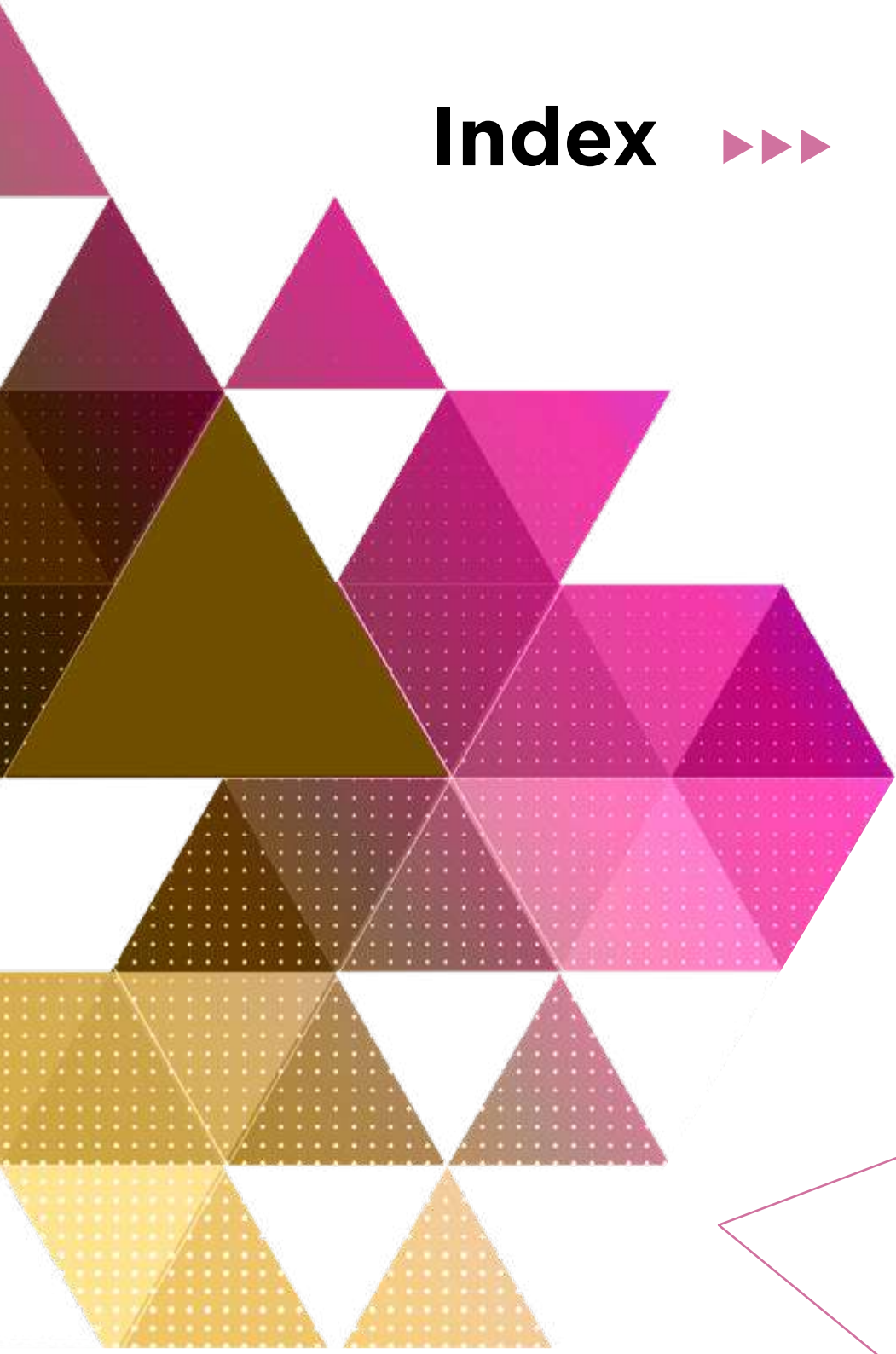
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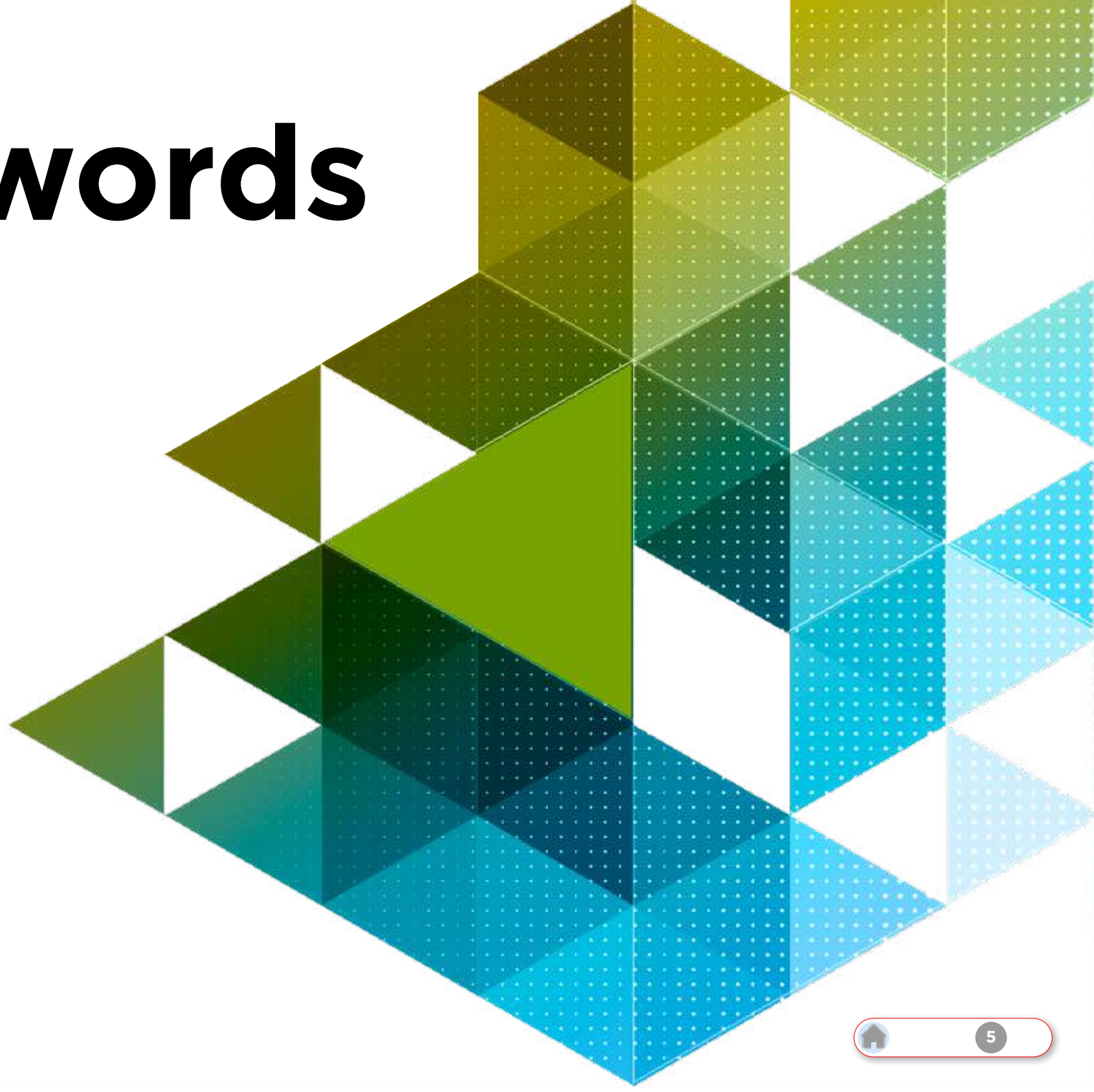
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Forewords





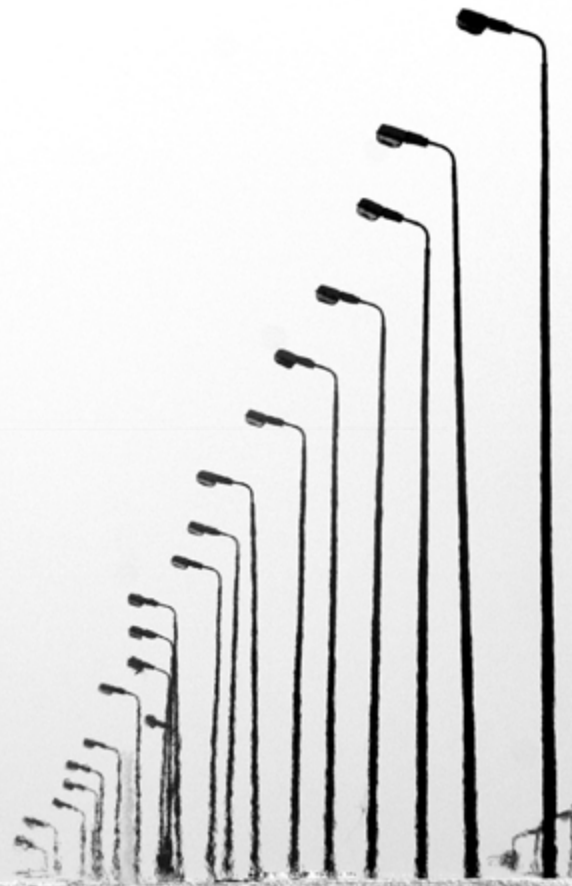
21st-Century societies have a globalized, digitalized, and interlinked character. However, they have also brought along relevant challenges for humanity. The Spanish Universities Rector Conference (CRUE in its Spanish acronym), in its document about Universities in 2030, remarks some of the global issues we are facing nowadays. These issues include the refugee crisis, global warming, extreme poverty, inequality, or illiteracy. Universities in general, and the University of Cordoba in particular, cannot ignore this reality. Therefore, it must become a leader in knowledge creation and sharing, especially in areas concerned with well-being, democratic coexistence, peace and social justice. The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be taken as a reference in terms of actions to be taken and aspirations to look forward to.

The two most relevant issues affecting our societies nowadays are lack of peace and inequality. These are often caused by an imbalance in the distribution of wealth, as well as by drug and human trafficking, organized crime, hegemonic nationalism, cultural and religious conflict, migratory flows, and violent radicalization, which justifies the use of violence to achieve certain goals.

The guide we are honored to present here is endorsed by the University of Cordoba. It is a tool sustained by scientific evidence that includes both theoretical and practical content and is designed to tackle the complexities of violent radicalization from a global and interdisciplinary viewpoint. In this way, it provides psychosocial and educational resources, as well as specific interventions to prevent and tackle violent radicalization. The guide also emphasizes the need to act upon this phenomenon in a comprehensive and integrated way.

This wonderful resource will be part of the *Diversidad* series, which is coordinated by the Diversity Service at the University of Cordoba. This series aims to enhance our understanding of human diversity. It also provides relevant guidelines for the articulation of an inclusive education that will respect and value differences, remarking their role in enriching human interaction and fostering progress and social welfare.

José Carlos Gómez Villamandos
Rector at the University of Cordoba



P*reventing and Countering Violent Radicalization* is more than a guide for first-line practitioners. It might be described as a full manual dealing with one of the most relevant issues nowadays: violent radicalization. This is a phenomenon that has increasingly acquired a global character, despite being articulated around religious, nationalist or extremist ideologies. The link between radicalization, on the one hand, and polarization and terrorism on the other, forces us to counter this phenomenon not only from a reactive security-oriented perspective, but also from a comprehensive and preventive one. Thus, this guide intends to help prevent more individuals, especially amongst our youth, to be attracted by extremist ideologies that justify the use of violence to impose their worldviews.

The following pages assemble the most relevant aspects on violent radicalization and its prevention. In order to do this, the authors provide an explanation of the psychosocial factors behind violent radicalization with a very practical orientation. Furthermore, it reviews the most relevant and most recent radicalization models, which can help educators, psychologists, social workers, criminologists, healthcare professionals, police and army officers, prison guards and legal practitioners, in the identification and countering of this problem.

This piece of work has been coordinated by a group of experts who, after years of research, have a vast knowledge of the wide implications this problem has. It is only because of their intellectual generosity and their responsibility that they are offering us the results of the most recent scientific studies. They are therefore providing us with a very useful tool to detect radicalization processes early and develop preventive interventions.

Inmaculada Marrero Rocha

*Professor at the University of Granada
Executive Secretary at the Euro-Arab Foundation for Higher Studies*





We are living difficult times. Our planet is facing global threats and we require new strategies to confront them. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a clear opportunity to transform Humanity and confront new challenges. We should not forget that this Agenda is a call for dialogue amongst different civil society actors to contribute collectively to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the urgency to tackle these challenges. A more developed and resilient world will be able to confront adversities and overcome global challenges in a better way. Issues like poverty, inequality, lack of education, fragile healthcare systems and lack of work opportunities provide a perfect setting for criminal and terrorist organizations to indoctrinate and recruit their mainly young members.

In this developed world, we need to anticipate events and improve our response capabilities. To do this, we need to invest in training and preventive policies, as well as in new early-warning mechanisms to balance inequalities and foster cohesion. On the other hand, radicalization processes also happen in our surroundings. Therefore, cities need to develop and implement multidisciplinary strategic plans that include objectives, goals and indicators measuring the impact of the Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism social policies.

It is necessary to work on the creation of new public-private ventures that incorporate technological advances, research, prospective analysis, and community participation initiatives in international networks. These networks will be crucial in sharing good practices and transferring knowledge. The initiatives mentioned above will create opportunities so that no one is left behind while we are protecting our planet, creating safer spaces, and ensuring a prosperous future.

And finally, I would like to congratulate the experts participating in this guide. I have no doubt it will be extremely useful for first-line practitioners.

Julio Andrade Ruiz

Fellow at UNITAR and Director of the International Centre for Training of Leaders and Authorities (CIFAL Málaga), an institution under the UNITAR Agency

1. Introduction



Today's world is facing many challenges. Governments and institutions implement programs that deal with education, health, the economy, the environment, inequality, security, and defense, in order to leave a more liveable place to the coming generations. Some important challenges come in the shape of threats to social coexistence, specifically through extremism and violent radicalization.

As a matter of fact, just in 2019:

15.952 people died as a consequence of political violence instances around the world (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2019);

71 countries suffered, at least, one lethal attack. On top of the list we find countries like Afghanistan (with 46% of the attacks), Nigeria, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Pakistan, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo, India, and Yemen. These countries summed up to 87% of the total attacks in the world (START, 2020).

The most lethal terrorist groups, according to the number of victims caused, were the Taliban in Afghanistan, the so-called Islamic State, Houthi extremists in Yemen, and Boko Haram in Nigeria. These four groups were responsible for most victims in the world (START, 2020).

Lone-wolf attacks, that is, attacks carried out by individuals without logistic and organizational support, are increasing significantly. Almost half of the most lethal attacks carried out in the USA in 2019, were lone-wolf attacks (START, 2020).

In Europe, a total of 119 attacks were carried out in 2019 (some of them succeeded, some others failed). More than a thousand in-

dividuals were arrested for terrorism-related crimes in 19 EU states. Belgium, France, Spain, and UK were the states with the largest number of attacks.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified certain tendencies that were already present in our societies for years. Aside from the jihadist threat, we should not underestimate the growing social polarization in many countries and the irruption of

different kinds of populist social movements (conspiratorial, neo-luddites, incels...) which could also become real threats.

Political extremism has also significantly increased in the West. For example, in the last four years, there have been more terrorist attacks related to extreme right-wing political movements than in the previous 50 years (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2020). It is also remarkable that





in 2019 alone, this kind of extremism caused 77 victims in the USA (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2019). In the same way, Europe has also witnessed the emergence of violent right-wing extremism. Lithuania and Poland were attacked by this kind of groups for the first time in their recent history. In other cases, these attacks were frustrated before they were carried out (EUROPOL, 2020). On the other hand, most attacks in Europe (around 64%) were performed by separatist or nationalist movements (EUROPOL, 2020).

Researchers have also found relevant connections between terrorism and organized crime. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2020), the activity of organizations like Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb, Al-Shabaab in Somalia, Boko Haram in Nigeria, or the Taliban in Afghanistan would not be possible without the trafficking of cocaine and heroin (in the case of the first three), and opium (in the case of the Taliban).



In fact, most attacks perpetrated by the Taliban in Afghanistan were funded by drug-trafficking. However, it is also striking to notice the high percentage of terrorism-linked detainees in Europe that have criminal records for drug-trafficking (UNODC, 2020).

Violent extremism is thus a dynamic phenomenon also with important consequences for the economy. The budget devoted to the implementation of states of emergency and anti-terrorism measures and countering the harm caused to the victims at the same time, has become increasingly relevant for the countries affected (START, 2020).

The indicators exposed above illustrate the current relevance of the problem at stake. Even if violent radicalization is considered a really complex topic, there is a general agreement amongst experts of all disciplines, that prevention should be the priority. This involves anticipating events and sharing integral strategies that can prevent bigger problems be-





fore they emerge. This assertive and clear approach to the problem is the path to follow. Training and cohesion-fostering initiatives are resources we can use to pre-empt scenarios where polarization, division, and violent confrontation can emerge. In this way, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN Sustainable Development Goals represent a shared framework and a horizon to look forward to.

This guide intends to be a useful tool in order to deal with the challenges exposed. Some of its objectives include: 1) offering basic information; 2) defining basic concepts; 3) identifying the basic components of the violent radicalization process and some of the contributing factors; 4) providing a scientific basis for prevention on different levels and scenarios; 5) providing resources and confronting strategies for professionals and the general community; and 6) offering examples of actions to take and good practice, case studies, and lessons learned.

This guide is intended to be especially useful for professionals on the ground who have at stake the prevention and countering of violent extremism. It is especially intended for professionals dealing with early-detection processes, countering, and direct interventions with groups and individuals at risk. Some of these professionals might include teachers, educators, social workers, criminologists, healthcare professionals (nurses, doctors, psychologists), justice, prisons, and youth offending professionals, and security experts.



2. What is radicalization?



Although there is no consensus on its definition, radicalization refers to a process that involves psychological and social changes (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral) in support of one of the parts in an inter-group conflict or ideology. Sometimes this process can be so intense that it leads to the justification or use of violence to achieve a social, economic, political or religious goal.

It often happens that when individuals and groups become radicalized:

- There is a deterioration of communication and trust.
- They are anchored in inflexible positions and negative stereotypes and prejudices are generated.
- Intragroup cohesion and polarization around opposing identities take place.
- People adhere to worldviews that dehumanize others, and promote and justify violence.
- In extreme cases, it can lead to chronic inter-group conflicts, and even political violence that can manifest itself in different forms (terrorism, war, genocide).

Other elements to consider in order to understand radicalization are the following (for a more extensive development see Bélanger et al., 2015; Moyano, 2019; Moyano & Trujillo, 2013):

- **Radicalization implies the existence of a real or perceived conflict.** It is usually the starting point, or at least the scenario, in which radicalization can most easily take place. Social conflicts become a particularly serious problem when they become chronic and the parties involved opt for violence as a legitimate form of action.
- **Radicalization does not necessarily imply the use of violence.** Thus, we can find many people with extremist ideas who will not carry out any violent action throughout their life. Radicalization is not a crime, nor does it have to be associated with necessarily negative aspects. In fact, on occasion, social progress has been achieved because people have shown a certain degree of “radicalization” to promote socie-





tal changes. The problem arises when people act violently to achieve certain ends.

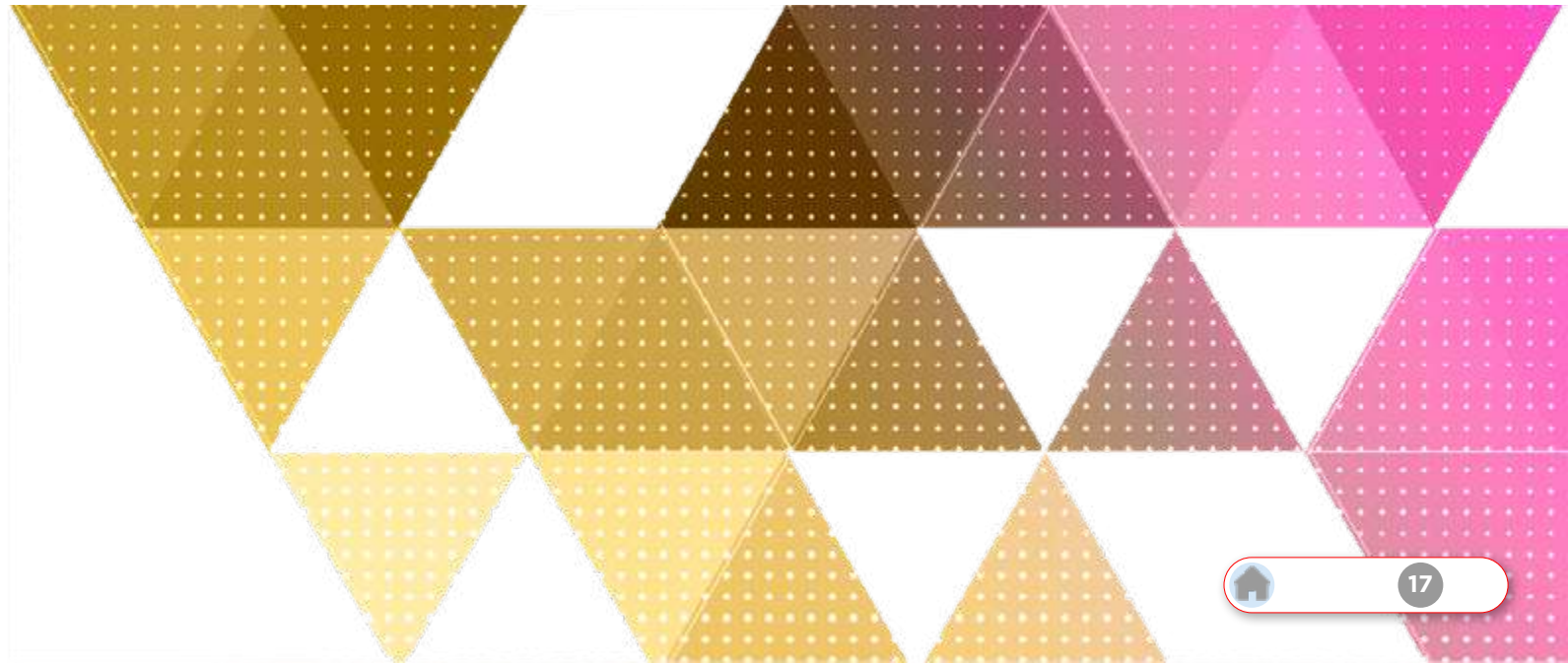
- **Radicalization is a process.** Radicalization does not usually occur “overnight,” but it rather develops progressively. Sometimes it takes a few weeks or months for a person to become radicalized; at other times, it can take years.
- **Radicalization is not an “all or nothing” issue.** It should not be considered in absolute terms. It is rather a continuum of increasing intensity.
- **There is no single profile.** Although one might think that the majority of violent radicals are “young men,” the truth is that there is a heterogeneity of profiles. Therefore, the establishment of typologies must be done with caution. At present, when it comes to interventions, it seems more useful to focus on the psychosocial contributing factors and on the life trajectories of individuals, rather than on establishing a perpetrator profile.
- **Psychopathology does not explain radicalization.** For years, it was common to link radicalization with different personality disorders (e.g., psychopathy). However, the evidence available so far does not support that approach. Violent radicals are not, strictly speaking, “crazy.” It is possible that psychopathology may contribute to certain cases, but, on its own, psychopathology is not sufficient to explain violent radical behavior or the collective mobilization that legitimizes it.
- **There is no single cause.** Everything points to the fact that the process of radicalization is influenced by various contributing factors and that there is not a single root cause to explain the process of radicalization. Likewise, each process of radicalization could be driven by a different combination of factors.
- **Radicalization is a contextual phenomenon.** The processes of radicalization always take place within a specific context. It is important to consider the sociocultural elements in which people are embedded. Furthermore, the radicalization of one group can foster the radicalization of another group, so that both are radicalized in a parallel way; something known as reciprocal or cumulative radicalization.



Below, we outline other fundamental concepts related to violent radicalization:

Associated concepts	
Aggressiveness	Tendency to act or respond violently. It is a behavior with phylogenetic implications of defense; an innate human response to certain threatening situations.
Violence	Violence is considered any act that involves the instrumental use of aggression, whether physical or psychological. What makes the difference from aggressiveness is that violence, fundamentally, is learned. The use of violence is partly a choice.
Fundamentalism	Opposing attitude to any change or deviation from the doctrines and practices that are considered essential and immovable in an ideological system.
Fanaticism	Exaggerated, excessive, irrational, and tenacious passion in the defense of an ideology.
Extremism	Attitudinal or behavioral tendency that is considered outside the norm, far from what most people consider correct or reasonable. Obviously, this is something subjective and dependent on the culture, since something will be considered “extremist” depending on a group, culture, or ideology of reference.
Violent Extremism	Attitudes and behaviors that support or use violence to achieve ideological goals, usually of a political or religious nature. This includes terrorism and other forms of political violence. Generally, violent extremism identifies a hypothetical enemy who is the object of hatred, dehumanization, and violence.
Terrorism	It is a type of political violence, usually perpetrated by non-state actors, designed to achieve goals and influence society through terror, threat, and intimidation.

3. Risk and protective factors



For years, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, different root causes were proposed to explain violent radicalization (poverty, education, personality, or psychopathology, among others). Today, there is a certain consensus that violent radicalization is a complex and multivariate process that occurs due to the interaction between the characteristics of an individual and his or her environment. It is assumed that there are numerous variables involved in the process, which can become contributing factors (e.g., of risk and/or protection). However, to date, we know relatively little about such contributing factors.

Psychology and criminology have identified dozens of factors that could be at the root of terrorist behavior. Among them, we can highlight factors such as activism, crime and aggression background, gender, or educational level (Emmelkamp, Asscher, Wissink, & Stams, 2020). Likewise, there are psychosocial factors that can foster radicalization, such as oppression, humiliation, uncovered needs, the perception of conflict, perceived injustice, or sensation-seeking (Moyano, 2019; Moyano & Trujillo, 2013).

On the other hand, there are other factors that can protect against violent radicalization and vulnerability to recruitment. Among these factors we find social inclusion, social support, development opportunities, personal significance, self-esteem, empathy, critical thinking, cultural intelligence, and a moral education an-

chored in values of coexistence, tolerance, and respect.

Both protective and risk factors are structured in different social spheres. These spheres are important for the intervention since they delimit the contexts in which it is more appropriate to carry out an intervention and the factors on which to act in each context. Some of the most prominent spheres are: 1) the individual sphere, both the characteristics of individuals and their perceptions; 2) the family sphere, related to parenting styles and the influence of family members; 3) the school sphere, from academic success to involvement in school; 4) the peer group, which can have both a positive and a negative influence; and 5) the community sphere, which delimits the degree of social integration (Lösel, King, Bender, & Jugl, 2018).

From the above we could draw several conclusions:

- There are a large number and heterogeneity of factors potentially contributing to radicalization and terrorism.
- It is necessary to continue advancing in the knowledge of these factors in order to determine how they contribute to radicalization.
- Scientific progress in this area could optimize actions to prevent radicalization and anti-terrorist strategies.
- From an applied point of view, it is fundamental to understand the functional rela-



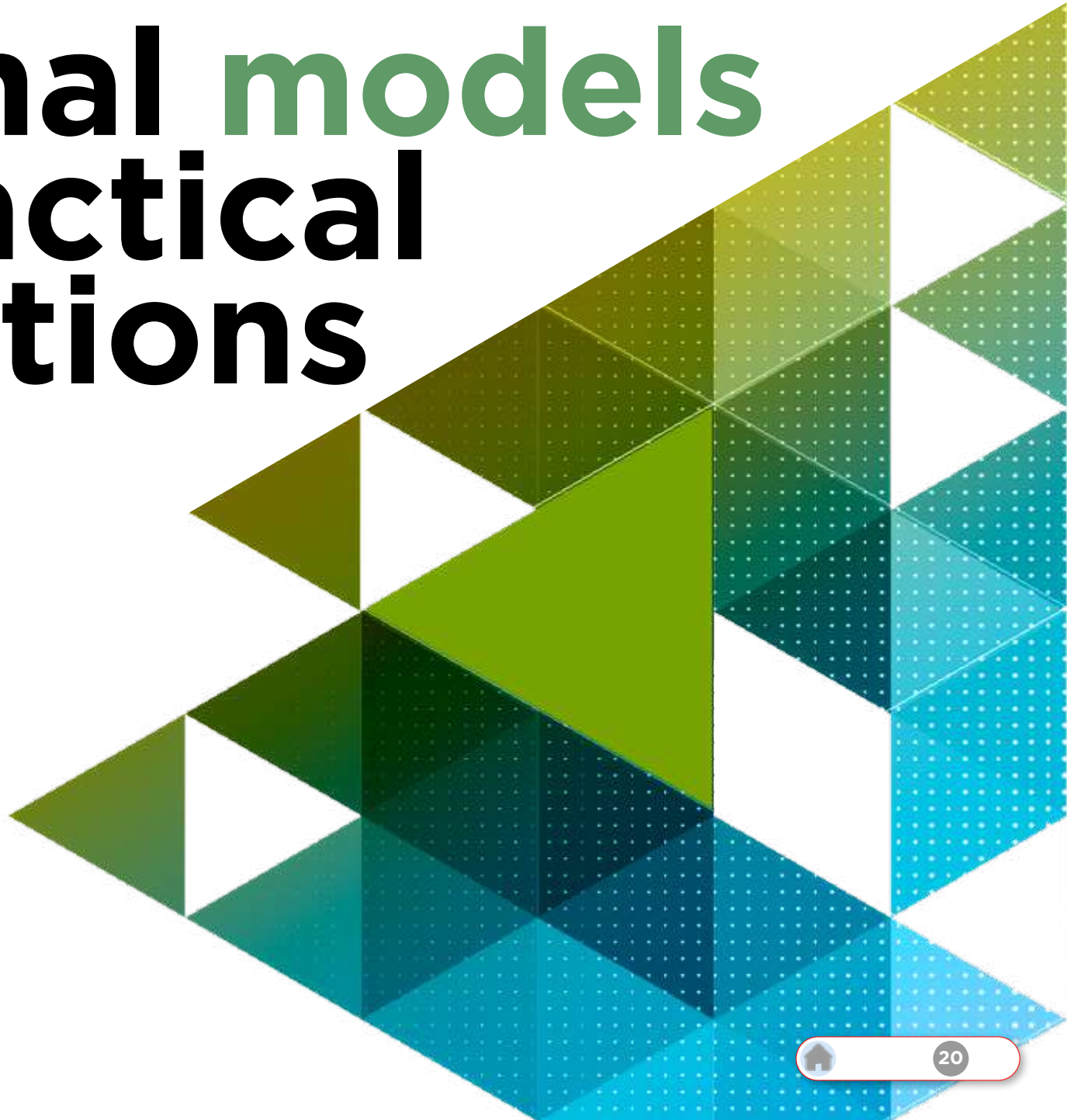


tionships of all these variables. This is especially important if we intend to guide practices (policies, programs, communication strategies) to counter and minimize violent extremism and youth radicalization while fostering cohesive, safe, and resilient societies (Bélanger et al., 2015; Moyano, 2019; Moyano & Trujillo, 2013; Trujillo & Moyano, 2019). However, until recently, not all these potentially contributing factors had been integrated into theories with a minimal empirical support. In this regard, the following chapter reviews some of the most solid theoretical models nowadays.

If you want to know more

Within the scientific literature we find various works that have compiled the main factors related to violent radicalization. For example, Sieckelinck and Gielden (2018) examined different risk and protective factors. Lösel, King, Bender and Jugl (2018), after a thorough review, grouped the main protective factors according to various levels. More focused on the factors that affect young people, Campelo, Oppetit, Neau, Cohen and Bronsard (2018) reviewed the main psychological and social factors. Wolfowicz, Litmanovitz, Weisburd and Hasisi (2019) carried out a meta-analysis on risk and protective factors, grouping them into attitudes, intentions and behaviors. More recently, Emmelkamp, Asscher, Wissink, and Stams (2020) conducted another meta-analysis to determine which factors have a greater impact on radicalization. These five works are a deep synthesis (see references in the bibliography).

4. Formal models and practical implications



As we have seen, there is some consensus on identifying radicalization as a process. Understanding this process is fundamental to intervene in it and ultimately prevent it. The following sections show some of the most solid and well-received models. However, it is necessary to keep in mind that these models are representations and simplifications of a complex reality.

4.1. Two-pyramids model

McCauley and Moskaleiko (2017) make a distinction between narrative (the ideas, what is thought) and actions (what is manifested). Based on this dichotomy, they propose various levels of radicalization in terms of the intensity of the narratives and actions, which are represented in a hypothetical population pyramid. In this way, two pyramids would exist: the pyramid of the radicalization of the narrative and the pyramid of the radicalization of the action (see Figure 1).

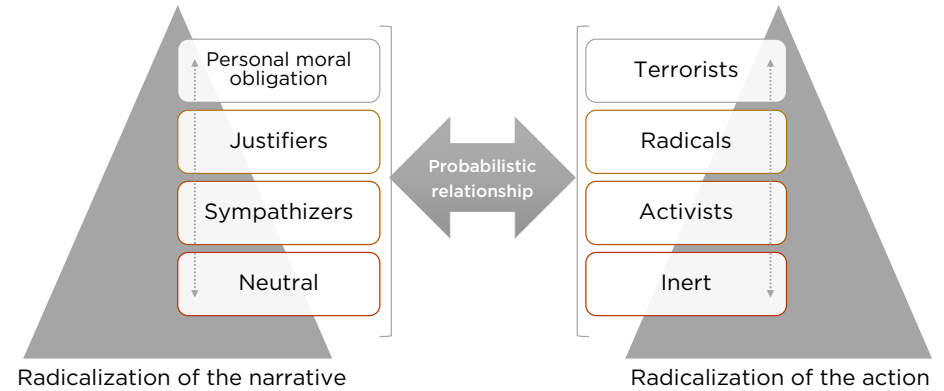


Figure 1. Representation of the two pyramids of radicalization model. Own elaboration adapted from the two-pyramids model by McCauley and Moskaleiko (2017)..



The pyramid of the radicalization of the narrative has four levels: 1) neutral, 2) sympathizers, 3) justifiers, and 4) personal moral obligation. At the base of the pyramid are those who do not accept any radical narrative, the neutrals, who correspond to the majority of the population. At a higher level are those who sympathize with some of the radical ideas, the sympathizers. Next, are those who consider that radical actions are morally justified, the justifiers. Finally, at the top of the pyramid are those who believe it is an individual duty to support and participate in the defense of their ideas, those who have a personal moral obligation.

The pyramid of radicalization of the action also has four levels: 1) inert, 2) activists, 3) radicals, and 4) terrorists. At the base of the pyramid are those who do not engage in any kind of supportive action, whatever their beliefs or feelings, the inert. At the next level are represented the activists committed to legal and non-violent political action. At a higher level are the radicals, who would be involved in illegal political actions that may include the use of violence. Finally, at the top of the pyramid are the terrorists, who are radicals who direct violence at civilians.

The boundaries between the different levels of the action pyramid represent the most important action points: from doing nothing to doing something, from legal political action to illegal political action, and from this to killing civilians. It is important to note that this metaphor does not assume that radicalization occurs in a linear form and that individuals

always move from a certain level to the next higher one. Thus, individuals can either move to non-consecutive levels or descend to lower levels.

The key is in the relationship between the two pyramids. The acceptance of narrative elements is related to levels of action, so that the acceptance of a personal moral obligation is very likely among terrorists and less likely among the inert. Similarly, disbelief in any

aspect of the narrative is more likely among the inert and less likely among the terrorist. Therefore, the relationship between both pyramids is probabilistic, not deterministic. Consequently, for example, it is possible to encounter ideologically inert individuals who consider the narrative to be a personal moral obligation and terrorists who do not have a specially elaborated ideology, but mere sympathy for certain ideas.



Xabi

Xabi grew up in a village in Guipúzcoa, Basque Country (Spain). Although his family did not speak Basque at home, he had no trouble learning it. When he was 16 years old, everything revolved around his gang. He was a studious and restless boy, but he was becoming more and more involved in what his colleagues called street fighting (kale borroka). He began to frequent taverns and hang out with Itziar, the sister of Joseba, one of the leaders of the group. One Friday afternoon, hooded and loaded with Molotov cocktails, Xabi and his gang burned several containers. When the police were about to arrest one of their own, Xabi attacked an Ertzaina (policeman) from behind with an iron bar, leaving him badly wounded. Reading the news in the press, Xabi could not stop thinking about the police's children for a few days. However, he was comforted to see how the group valued his act. He gradually became involved in ETA. He left his vocational training studies to become part of one of the commands of the organization. Shortly after, he participated in a terrorist action that killed two civil guards. Gradually, Xabi's attitudes and behaviors became more violent.

Practical implications

Radicalization implies a continuum, rather than an "all or nothing" issue. In this sense, the two-pyramids model proposes a fundamental distinction between narratives and action (which do not always have to be related) and different degrees of radicalization. Based on these assumptions, some of the practical implications are as follows:

- It is necessary to intervene at the base of the pyramid to delegitimize violence and minimize its social support. This base is fundamental, as it contains the population that can provide coverage. Likewise, this support base will serve as a reservoir to recruit people willing to execute the violent actions of the movement.
- It is fundamental to keep in mind the distinction between narrative and action. The priority is to act on radical actions to avoid the use of violence, but without forgetting ideology and that this does not have to lead to violence.

4.2. ABC model

Khalil, Horgan, and Zeuthen (2019) propose the Attitudes-Behaviors Corrective model (ABC). According to these authors, there are two main axes: attitudes and behaviors. The attitude axis represents the degree of sympathy for ideologically-justified violence. The behavioral axis represents the degree of involvement in ideologically-justified violence. The movements along both axes would be determined by different factors. Structural elements (contextual factors that may be relevant in specific places, such as state repression, political exclusion, corruption, poverty, inequality, or dis-



crimination) and enabling factors (factors that enable, facilitate, or channel movements, such as mentors, recruiters, access to weapons and other technologies, or territorial control maintained by extremist groups) favor greater sympathy for violence. On the other hand, individual incentives (economic, security, and psychosocial benefits such as material incentives (wages), protection, status, sense of adventure, belonging, revenge, or meaning) and also enabling factors make the engagement in violence possible.

Therefore, we can find people who sympathize with violence but do not exercise it, others who sympathize and use violence, and others who do not sympathize with violence but exercise it due to material incentives such as economic benefits. That is, there is a partial disconnect between attitudes and behaviors. However, those who sympathize with this violence are more likely to become engaged. Likewise, this model does not represent a linear radicalization, but rather a two-way street along both axes, as can be seen in Figure 2. This model also indicates that both sympathy for and participation in ideologically-justified violence can be driven by different factors or combinations of factors.

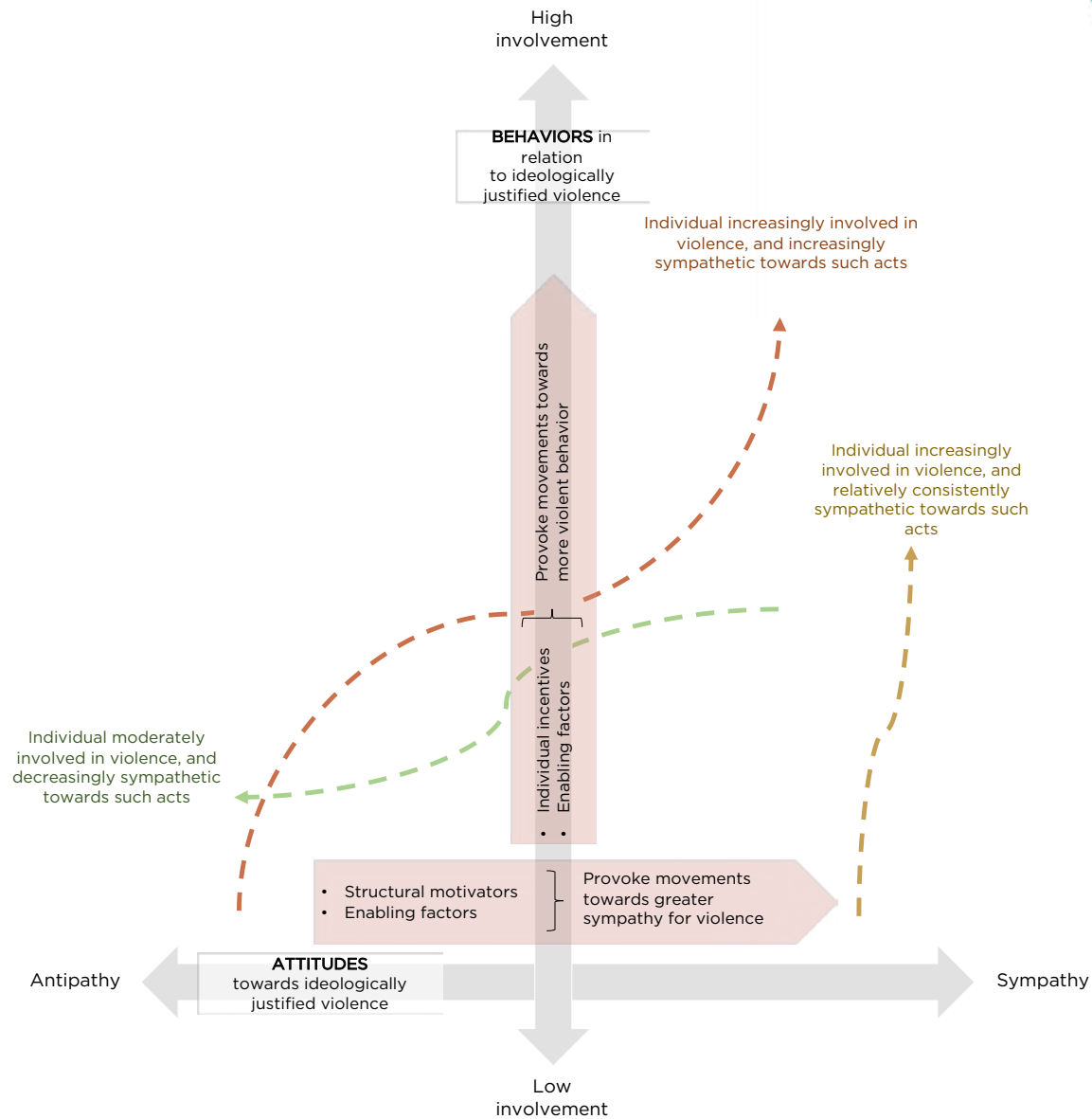


Figure 2. Representation of radicalization process according to the ABC model. Own elaboration adapted from the ABC model by Khalil, Horgan, and Zeuthen (2019).

Orell

For Orell, it all started in Stockholm one summer afternoon in 1995. He was then an insecure 15-year-old boy with divorced parents and struggling at school. He was frequently bullied by a gang of boys with an immigrant background. The only place where he felt comfortable was a youth club, where he discovered heavy metal. His favorite music groups wrote passionate songs about the conquests of the Vikings. Two far-right recruiters took advantage of these hobbies and the grievances suffered by Orell to link him to an extremist group. Every weekend, Orell and his new colleagues went to harass ethnic minority youth, whom they beat to death. The immigrants who had bullied him at his school were now, according to him, threatening his culture. Soon after, he dropped out of school and everything got worse.

Practical implications

The ABC model reflects the dynamism of the processes of radicalization as opposed to the linear radicalization models. It also suggests that each process of radicalization is unique and that there is not a single type of trajectory. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account the specificity of each case of radicalization and the different factors that can slow down or inhibit the process in each situation.

4.3. 3N model of radicalization

Kruglanski and collaborators (Kruglanski, Bélanger, & Gunaratna, 2019; Webber & Kruglanski, 2017) propose that the process of radicalization is due to the intersection of three variables that they call the 3Ns: 1) the individual's needs or motivations (*needs*), 2) the ideological narratives of the individual's culture (*narratives*), and 3) the interaction between group pressure and social influence that occurs within the individual's social network (*networks*). These are briefly described below:

- **Needs.** Over time, radicalization has been associated with different motivations (e.g., honor, social status, revenge, or loyalty). From the 3N model, these motivations share a common factor: the need to achieve personal significance. This quest for personal significance refers to the need to make the difference, to matter, to be someone. This motivation, however, is not always dominant. For the quest for significance to become dominant there must be a catalyst, a trigger event. Specifically, there are three events that can trigger it: 1) the loss of significance caused by humiliation and social alienation; 2) the perception of a threat to significance, such as the possibility of being excluded or discriminated against; and 3) an opportunity to gain considerable significance, such as becoming a hero or a martyr. Once any of these events occur, it is more likely that the quest for significance will become a dominant force leading to different actions to recover or enhance personal significance.
- **Narrative.** People articulate their sense of reality around shared stories that give them significance and certainty. The ideological component tells us what are the valid and culturally accepted means of achieving personal significance. In the case of extremist ideologies, these often offer a polarized view of society (“we” versus “they”), which in some cases legitimize the use of violence as a means to achieve significance.
- **Network.** It refers to the group of people or collective that subscribes to the narrative. The social network, in addition to validating the narratives, can empower its members with material resources and, above all, offer a sense of belonging and prestige. When the narrative identifies violent means as the only ones to restore or gain significance, and this narrative is supported by a social network, we find a cocktail that can lead to violent radicalization.

As can be seen in Figure 3, the confluence of these three psychosocial factors could lead to violent extremism.



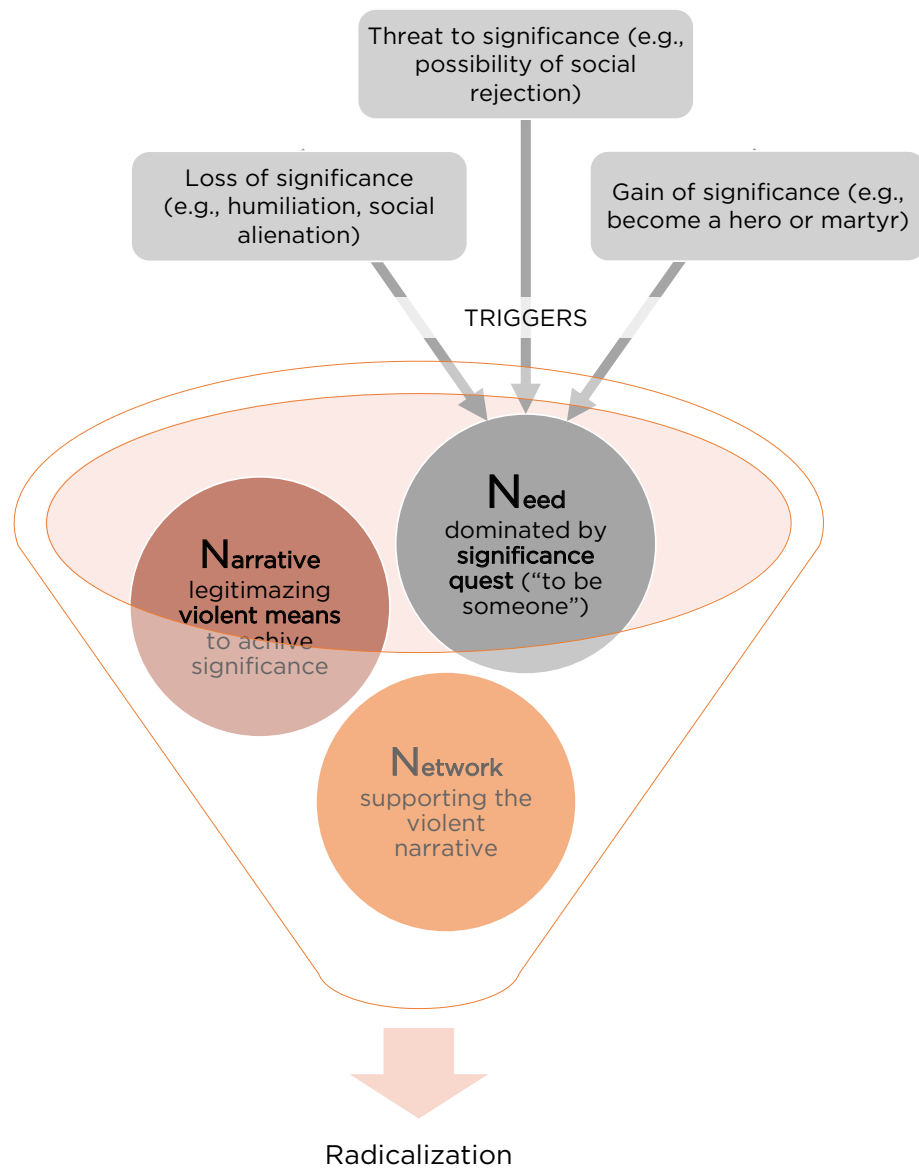


Figure 3. Graphic representation of the 3N model of radicalization. Own elaboration adapted from the 3N model by Kruglanski and collaborators (2017, 2019).

Aidan

Aidan was a charismatic young man. He had many goals in life: to become an athlete, a scientist, an artist, a politician... But his conservative parents constantly rejected his ambitions. He soon began to close in on himself; he spent less time with friends and more time wandering the city streets alone. One day he came into contact with an old acquaintance who had become radicalized. In a matter of weeks, the behaviour of the dreamy Aidan's changed. Soon after, he disappeared. However, his parents realized the transformation he had experienced and offered him an alternative: if he worked part-time in a family business, he could spend the rest of his time pursuing his professional dreams. As soon as the possibility of having a life with a goal reappeared, the flirtation with extremist ideology disappeared. Some time later, he told us how well life was going for him and that he finally felt that he really belonged here. Aidan suffered a loss of significance by not being able to pursue his dreams, which the acquaintance took advantage of to offer him a radical option. However, the parents were able to offer him alternative options for significance when it was still possible to lessen the appeal of violent choices.

Practical implications

The 3N model suggests intervening on the three proposed factors: needs, narratives, and networks. In some way, if through the actions we develop we positively influence the elements of the model we will be minimizing the risk of violent radicalization. Specifically, Kruglanski and collaborators suggest the following options:

- Try to restore the motivational balance of those people in a situation of imbalance (loss of personal significance). This implies addressing issues related to education, employment, and life opportunities.
- To delegitimize violence and promote alternative non-violent ideologies.
- To weaken extremist groups and their influence, seeking to support individuals at risk through support networks and alternative (non-violent) social models.

4.4. Devoted actor model

Most models that try to explain the processes of radicalization assume that they are based on rational choices. This implies that individuals make decisions based on a cost-benefit calculation. Following this approach, it is more likely that individuals will choose the path of radicalization when the benefits (e.g., material or immaterial rewards) outweigh the costs. However, the sacrifices made by some extremists do not seem to follow this pattern. The devoted actor model, developed by Gómez, Atran, and their collaborators (Gómez et al., 2017), attempts to respond to this paradox and to explain how and why individuals can become willing to fight and die for a cause. The devoted actor model integrates two concepts: identity fusion and sacred values.

Identity fusion is a visceral feeling of unity with a group. As can be seen in Figure 4, it occurs when the personal-self and the social-self merge, so that the boundaries between them become permeable. The result is a strong tendency towards behaviors in favor of the group. In addition, the bonds with the group members become stronger and this fusion will tend to be maintained over time.

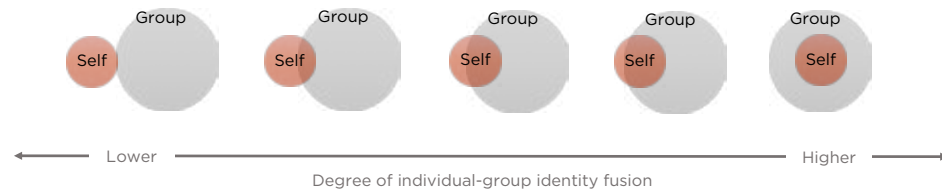


Figure 4. Pictorial scale of identity fusion. Own elaboration adapted of Swann and collaborators (2009).

On the other hand, some people believe that some things or ideas are not simply preferences that can be quantified, negotiated, or exchanged. They are sacred values that must be absolutely respected and protected. When a preference becomes a sacred value, this preference is placed ahead of all other values. At that moment, the sacred value is no longer interchangeable for material or immaterial goods and must be protected above anything or anyone.

By integrating both concepts, individuals who fuse their identity with a group and share its sacred values become devoted actors (see Figure 5). These devoted actors are guided by a priori irrational schemes that place the members of their group and their values above other beliefs. In this way, they would be willing to sacrifice themselves for their group, their ideas, and their values when they perceive a threat. They will do all of this, regardless of the personal costs that such defense would imply, being the most extreme degree self-sacrifice or immolation.

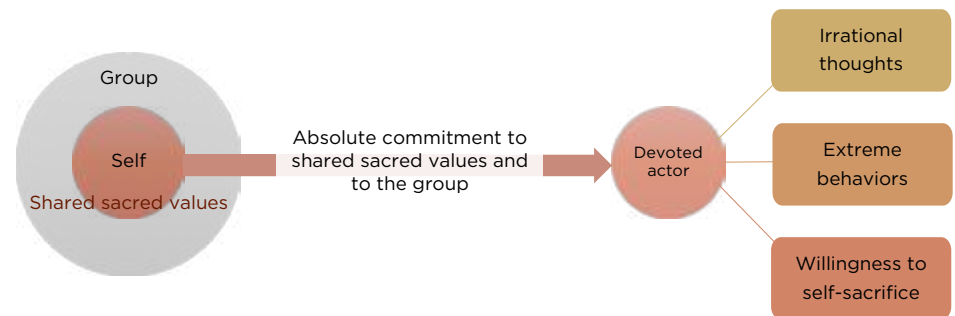


Figure 5. Graphic representation of the devoted actor model. Own elaboration.

Ahmed

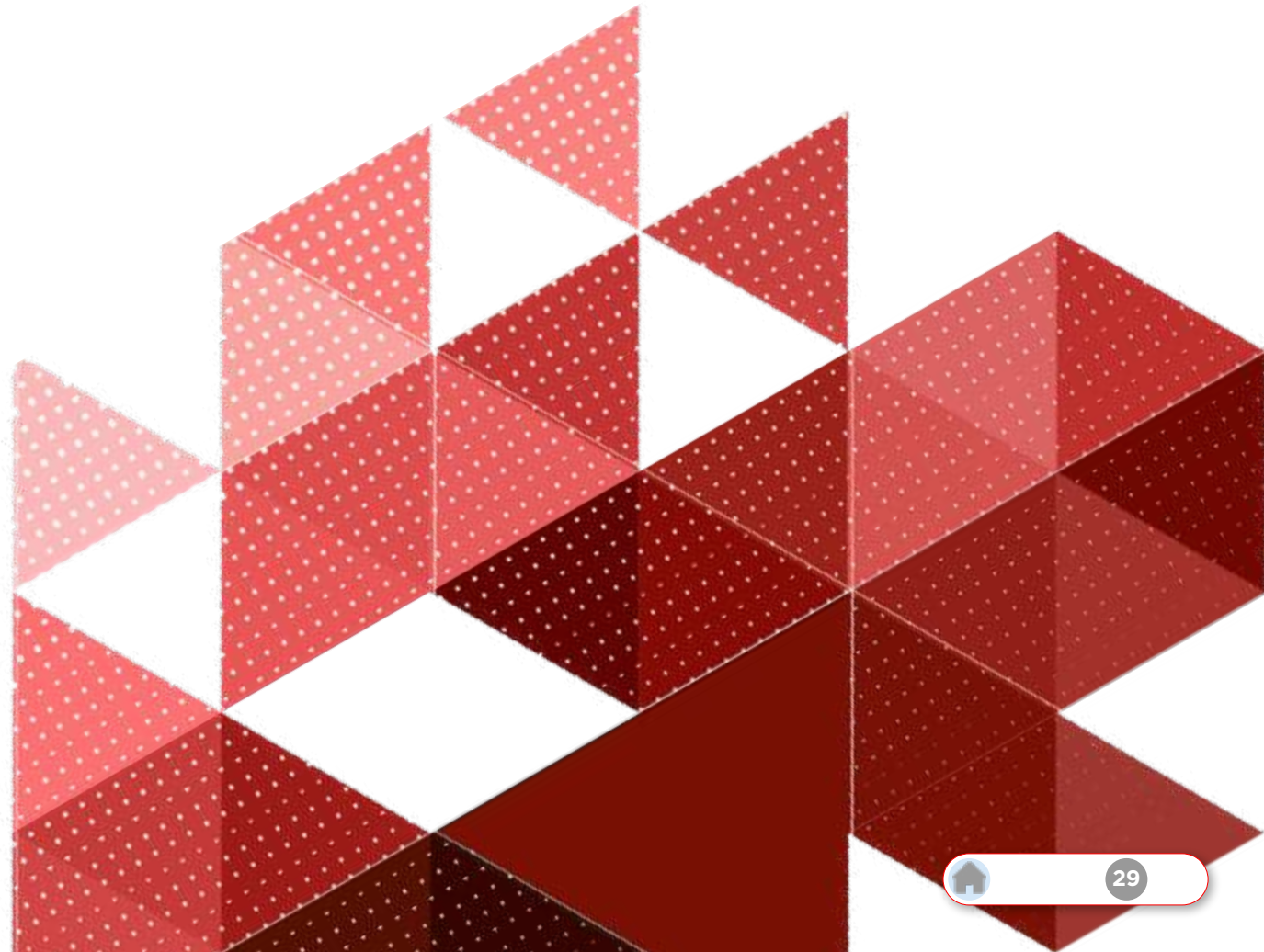
Born and raised in London, Ahmed always supported the local soccer team and listened to what he called “white music.” He grew up with his two brothers in a middle-class neighborhood where they were the only children whose parents professed Islam. At school, the other children called him racial slurs and threw chipped tiles at him because he was “Muslim.” This led him to join an extremist gang to defend himself and take revenge. One day, at the mosque, he met someone who told him that Britain was Dar Al Harb, the land of war, and that he was a soldier. A month later he joined the security wing of Hizb ut-Tahrir, an international Islamist organization dedicated to establishing a caliphate in the Middle East. However, he ended up meeting an imam who told him that Islam and violence were incompatible. After thinking about it again, he soon left the group. In this case, Ahmed internalized the identity of a Muslim and, influenced by whom he considered a leader of that group, he defended the values he associated with this identity by using violence against his “enemies.” However, he ended up changing the values associated with that identity for peaceful ones under the influence of the imam he considered a new leader.

Practical implications

The devoted actor model shows how commitment to a group and its values can explain the fact that people make great sacrifices and are even willing to kill or die for a cause. From an applied point of view, it is important to emphasize that the perceived threat to sacred values or the group itself can be a catalyst for radical mobilization. Therefore, proactive actions that minimize perceived humiliation, injustice, or conflict could reduce the intention to sacrifice for a cause. Similarly, when there are conflicts related to sacred values, material incentives in a negotiation will be less effective and may produce a rebound effect. Conversely, symbolic incentives involving equitable gains or losses on those values will be better accepted.



5. The active role of **recruiters**



In general, individuals become radicalized under the influence of third parties, who facilitate the processes of radicalization. In the case of extremist groups and terrorist organizations, the role played by recruiters is essential, as they are responsible for identifying and integrating new members into their ranks.

One of the most useful models for understanding the work of recruiters is the psychosocial model of recruitment and violent mobilization, developed by Trujillo and collaborators (Trujillo, Lobato, & Moyano, 2020; Trujillo & Moyano, 2019). According to this model, in order to recruit an individual it is necessary for him/her to transit, induced and guided by recruiters, through different phases: 1) Identifying an individual in a critical environment (marginal scenarios); 2) Approaching the individual, who is insecure (first approach to the potential recruit); 3) Acting on the individual in order to facilitate their psychological alienation; 4) Providing the individual with political and religious ideological background (doctrinal alienation); 5) Contributing the individual's disinhibition towards violence through the application of strategies that legitimize it; 6) Giving the individual the necessary technical skills to carry out violent attacks; and 7) Supplying them with the necessary logistical support for the execution of violent actions.

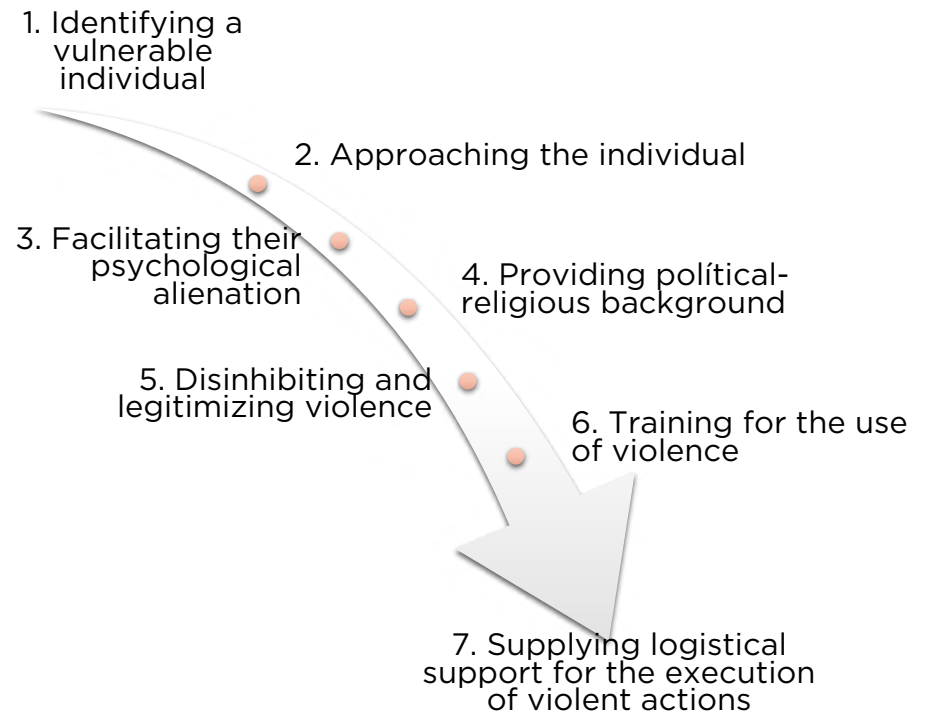


Figure 6. Phases of the recruitment process according to the psychosocial model of recruitment and violent mobilization. Own elaboration adapted from the model of recruitment and violent mobilization by Trujillo and collaborators (2020).

In the first instance, recruiters identify the most vulnerable individuals. This identification is usually done in enabling environments, such as prisons, vulnerable urban environments, universities, leisure contexts, or online.

Once recruiters have identified these most vulnerable individuals, who are usually characterized by a high psychological affectation and a low psychological autonomy that allows them to make useful and adaptive decisions, the recruiters make the first approach. The goal is to gain their trust, so they will resort to rewarding perks that make them feel special and supported. In this phase, risk and protective factors will determine the degree to which the recruiter succeeds in recruiting the individual.

¿Did you know that...?

Recruiters often make use of new technologies and, in particular, social networks. The use of platforms such as chat rooms, Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube is aimed at finding people, mainly youth, who sympathize with extremist content. The strategy is based on identifying interested people, that is, those who interact, either positively or negatively, with the material that recruiters share in the networks. Once they have identified those who show some initial interest, recruiters move on to using more individualized techniques to seduce and persuade this first base of potential supporters. In this way, they will try to increase personal interaction with those who show more interest or are more vulnerable to radicalize them.

In the next phase, recruiters will want the individual to lose their psychological autonomy by entering a state of learned helplessness and becoming completely dependent on their new friendships. To this end, recruiters use different manipulation strategies such as social isolation, inducing physical weakness and confusion between reality and fantasy, balancing fear and hope, and emotional imbalance.

Then comes the indoctrination phase, which is characterized by the use of active psychological manipulation strategies (coercive persuasion) and the reform of individual and group thinking. The aim is to establish new repertoires of behavior based on new beliefs (thoughts considered as true), roles (expected and accepted behaviors), norms (rules that regulate behaviors, beliefs, and emotions desirable in a culture), symbols (elements with a common meaning and relevance for a group) and values (goals and principles to be followed that serve as a reference of the good and that guide the beliefs, emotions, and accepted behaviors). The result of this phase is an extreme radicalization with the acceptance of a political or religious ideology.

After being indoctrinated, for someone to go one step further and become a violent extremist, the individual must firmly believe in



the legitimacy of violence. To do this, recruiters often use narrative-based strategies that legitimize violence, such as dehumanizing the perpetrators or displacing responsibility for the use of violence. Finally, the last step is to train the radicalized individual in the use of violence and provide him or her with the necessary logistical support to execute violent actions.



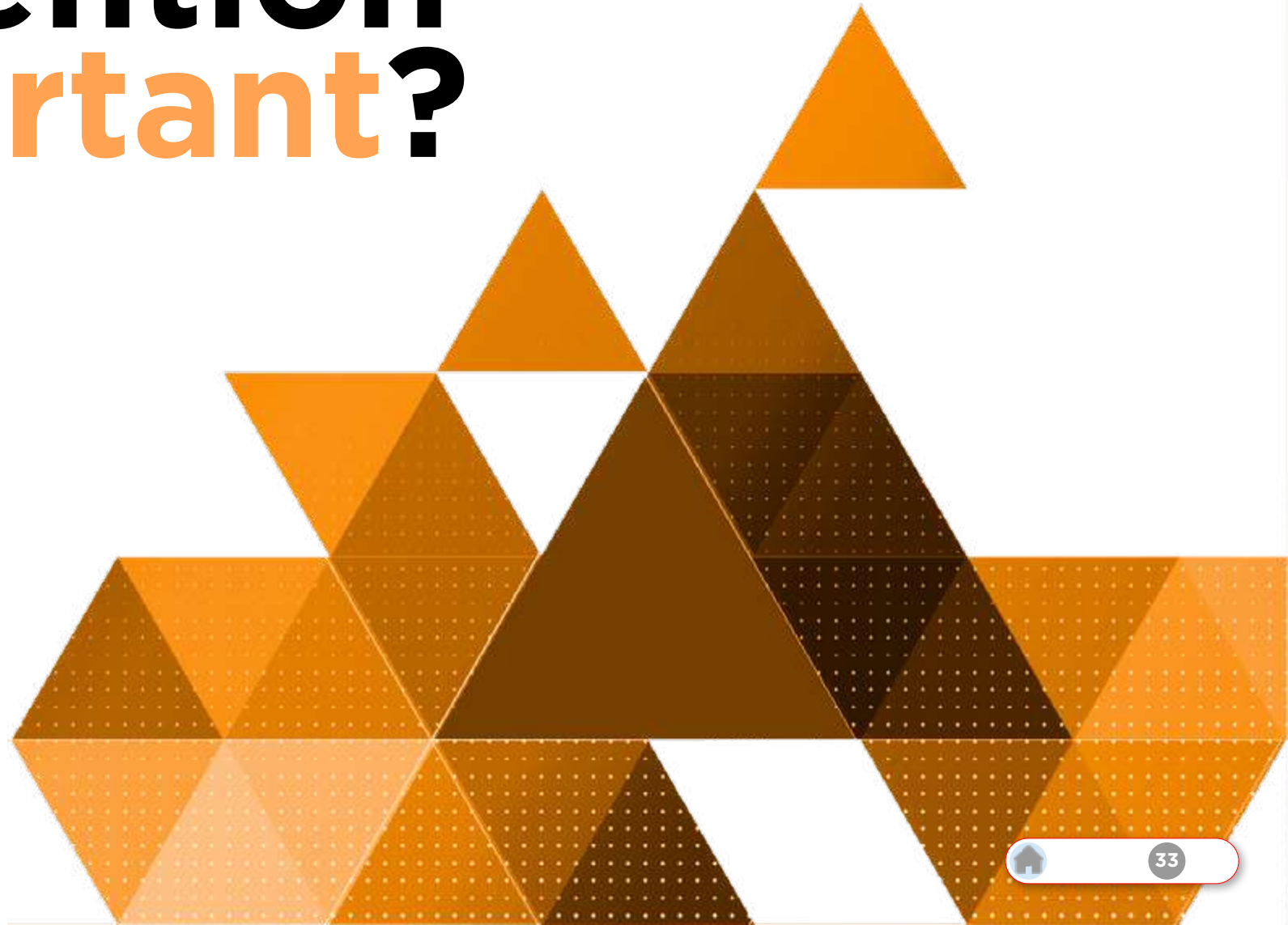
Maysa

Maysa was a teenager of Moroccan origin, a lover of music, and a brilliant student. Her family settled in Brussels. Maysa uploaded a photo dressed in the hijab to social networks, which she initially started wearing to hide some of the weight she had gained. As a result, she was contacted by another young woman attracted by her new look, with whom she formed a friendship and started to meet up to go shopping. This new friend began to introduce Maysa to a group of girls she began to meet often. First, they chatted about Islam and the repression suffered by Muslims, and finally, they ended up reinforcing the idea that the Islamic State is a salvation. Maysa was shown the Islamic State as an idea of freedom, respect, and non-discrimination. Her discourse became progressively more radical and she chose to travel to Syria. However, her parents realized this and prevented her from doing so, so the radical group began to threaten her. Maysa realized what was happening and cut her ties with the group. In this case, the recruiters took advantage of the anonymity of the social networks to identify, capture, and inculcate a radical ideology in Maysa.

Practical implications

The psychosocial model of recruitment and violent mobilization emphasizes the work done by recruiters. Although people can be radicalized, at least apparently, on their own, there are usually third parties who will directly or indirectly influence the process of radicalization. One of the main practical implications of this model, in terms of prevention, is to provide individuals with the necessary resources to avoid being vulnerable. In this vein, some of the main factors that should be promoted through proactive actions are: self-efficacy and self-esteem, personal control in different social contexts, personal coherence (i.e., the equivalence between thinking, saying, and doing), skills for commitment and problem solving, cultural intelligence, social skills, locus of internal control, resistance to suffering, tolerance to uncertainty and frustration, emotional well-being, personal meaning and sense of existence, and behavioral repertoire for individual decision-making. Taken together, the promotion of these factors would improve psychological robustness or resilience, which would reduce individuals' vulnerability to recruitment.

6. Why is prevention important?



The effects of violent extremism and terrorism are pernicious for individuals who become radicalized and for the victims. In addition, violent extremism encourages polarization, erodes social cohesion, and makes it difficult to coexist. With respect to the abandonment of violence, it must be emphasized that it is a complex phenomenon and one on which the necessary bases have not yet been established to carry it out with guarantees. Faced with this scenario, and prioritizing a precautionary logic, prevention is postulated as the priority option in terms of intervention.

6.1. Levels of prevention

The prevention of violent extremism could be classified in three levels, similar to the medical model of health prevention: primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. These three levels, in turn, have certain similarities with the metaphor of the two pyramids explained previously (see Figure 7).

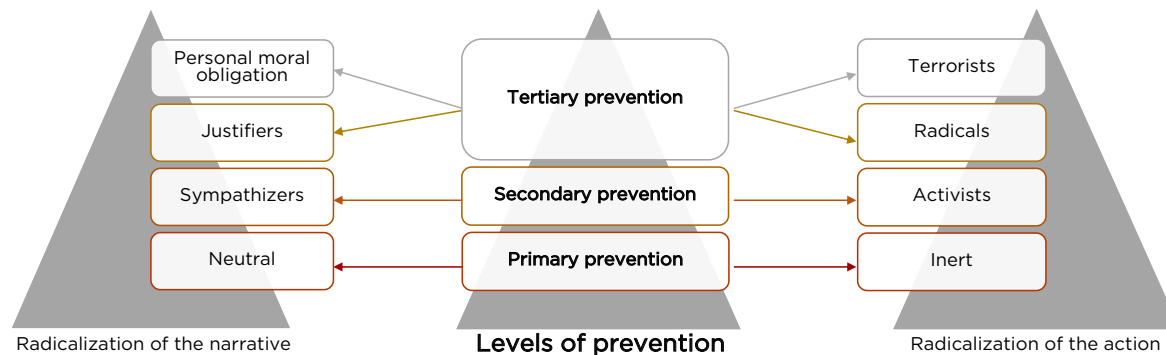


Figure 7. Levels of prevention of radicalization according to the different levels of radicalization of narrative and action. Own elaboration.

Primary prevention includes interventions that focus on preventing individuals and communities from sympathizing with violent extremism before they become immersed in a process of radicalization. Using the metaphor of the pyramids, primary prevention targets the base, those “inert” or “neutral” who do not sympathize or act in favor of an ideology.

Secondary prevention includes interventions that target individuals or communities “at risk” of becoming involved in violent extremism. In this case, the objective of the in-



tervention would be directed, as a priority, to the upper echelons of the pyramids by addressing “sympathizers” and “activists.”

Tertiary prevention corresponds to initiatives that aim to positively influence the attitudes and/or behavior of people who are (or were) involved in violent extremism. These interventions correspond to the promotion of the abandonment of violence (de-radicalization and/or dissociation). Following the scheme of the metaphor of the two pyramids, these would be those actions directed at individuals in the upper echelons, that is, those who justify or make use of violence.

Morton

Jesse Morton was a jihadist propagandist (then known as Younes Abdullah Muhammad) who led Revolution Muslim, a New York City-based organization active in the 2000s and connected to several terrorism cases. Morton created propaganda in English and collaborated with the most notorious jihadi preachers of the time.

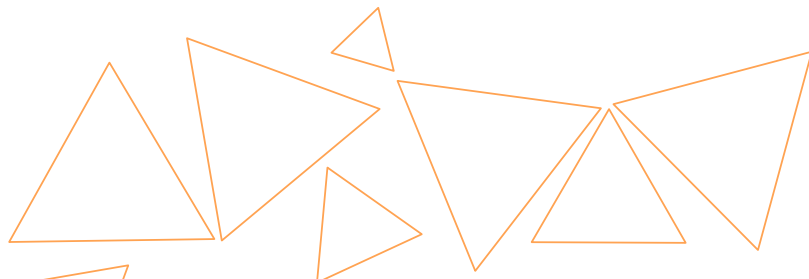
Morton progressively disassociated himself from the violence starting in 2011, after his arrest in Casablanca and subsequent imprisonment in the United States. According to his words, he realized the inconsistencies of the ideology he was following. Since then, he has worked to become a leading commentator and researcher on jihadist extremism, both extreme right and extreme left, and the radicalization of each other.

Currently, Morton heads Parallel Networks, an organization he co-founded with Mitch Silber, the former NYPD official who imprisoned him. Parallel Networks consults on international projects with a special focus on the reintegration and rehabilitation of terrorist-related criminals and foreign terrorist fighters and their families, as well as the fight against the transnational jihadist movement. In addition, Morton is a researcher at the International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism.

6.2. Vectors of prevention

Any social context where personal interactions and group dynamics take place can become a vector to intervene proactively. Some of these vectors are briefly described below:

- **Family.** The family is a very relevant primary socialization environment in the prevention of violent radicalization. In fact, it is estimated that around two thirds of individuals who are linked to an extremist group are introduced to such groups through family and friends. The attachment, influence and affection that come out of these social relations is key in the moral determination of an individual to be actively involved in defense of a cause.





- **Prisons.** The role of prisons in violent radicalization has been widely debated in the last years. Most countries around us have been implementing measures to minimize the vulnerability of inmates to recruitment. This is because the prison environment may favor certain factors that make certain individuals particularly vulnerable. Several actions for the abandonment of violence, rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremists have been implemented, although there is quite a lot left to be done in this regard.

- **Educational system.** The educational context is a fundamental vector in favor of social inclusion, promoting democratic values and training in personal resources that make individuals and groups resistant. Likewise, it is a priority to promote universal prevention from this area by involving young people. With a broad strategic view, the school should be the socializing environment where citizens acquire shared values, contrary to violence, as a way to achieve objectives.
- **Cyberspace.** Cyberspace occupies an increasingly large part in our lives. The expansion of the Internet and smartphones has made it easier for us to spend more time online. Nowadays, we communicate, consume information, work, and even make purchases from our mobile devices. For this reason, extremists consider this vector particularly conducive to proselytism, identification of vulnerable individuals, and recruitment, which in turn makes prevention and training essential to prevent the Internet from becoming a platform for the dissemination of hate messages, misinformation, and social polarization.

Rodger

Elliot Rodger, at age 22, committed a massacre near the University of California, Santa Barbara campus, in 2014. The attack left seven people dead, including Elliot, and thirteen injured. Previously, Rodger had uploaded a video to YouTube titled *Elliot Rodger's Retribution*, in which he laid out the details of his upcoming attack and the motivations behind his killing. It describes his desire to punish women for rejecting him and also the desire to punish sexually active men for living a better life than he did.

Rodger was a follower of the INCEL (Involuntary Celibacy) subculture. This movement, which emerged on the Internet, is based on male supremacy and advocacy of violence against women. Rodger's acts of violence were the first in the name of the ideals of this group and, since then, other violent acts have followed glorifying Rodger's figure, such as Alek Minassian's attack in Canada in 2018. Followers of this movement focus much of their activity on channels and blogs such as 4chan.

- **Urban environments.** It is necessary to work for the social integration of people and groups living in vulnerable urban environments. In such settings, social exclusion, intercultural polarization, and perceived discrimination can foster the social alienation of individuals and groups, as well as vulnerability to potential recruiters. Therefore, it is essential to foster the necessary conditions to integrate these people by providing them with better living conditions and access to the labor market and by extending their social networks.

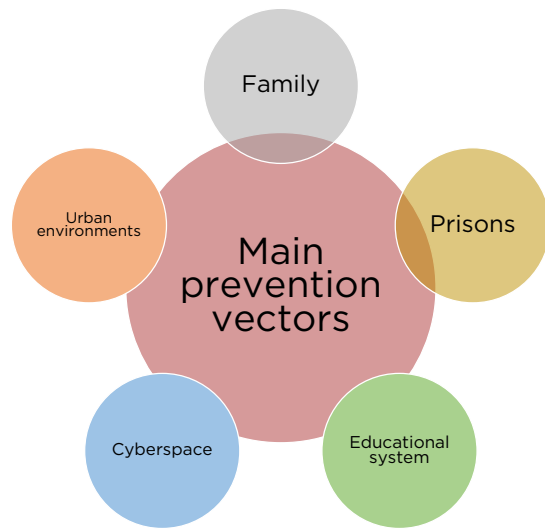


Figure 8. Main vectors for the prevention of radicalization. Own elaboration..

6.3. Actions aimed at prevention

Actions aimed at prevention usually address the following generic objectives:

- **To increase awareness.** Awareness consists of explaining the dangers, consequences and processes underlying radicalization and violent extremism. It is based on the premise that having knowledge about radicalization will help individuals to recognize and reduce their own processes of radicalization.



- **Fostering resilience.** We could define resilience as the capacity of an individual or society to overcome challenges that have a negative impact on their well-being and stability. In the context of radicalization, this implies the capacity to resist and counteract tendencies that legitimize hatred and violence. Developing this protective factor will allow individuals and groups to be better prepared to detect and positively influence violent radicalization and its consequences.
- **Generate social cohesion.** Strengthening ties and relationships between individuals in the same community increases social cohesion. This union of individuals provides networks of mutual help and promotes the existence of shared norms and values. Likewise, such connections would avoid the influence of extremist values and norms.

#SomosMás

The campaign “We are more against hate and radicalism” aims to promote an active engagement of young people against violent radicalization. It is divided into two main lines of work: one of training, in which workshops are given to schools and centers throughout the country, and another of awareness raising, through a communication campaign. The project is carried out with the collaboration of Spanish and European institutions, and Google, through the initiative YouTube Creators for Change.

Handbook to support the prevention of racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance in the classroom

Manual developed by the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security, and Migration of the Government of Spain. It is a useful resource to raise awareness among teachers and provide them with resources aimed at preventing and intervening in acts of intolerance within the classroom (racism, xenophobia, hate speech, and radicalization). It provides information about the causes of the processes, the risk factors, the main prevention strategies employed in educational contexts and the effects that derive from them. It also presents practices carried out, highlighting the main conclusions and aspects that can be improved.

Role Models

Proposal of the European Commission aimed at combating youth radicalization from education. To this end, it makes use of “role models” who have a positive influence on diversity, coexistence, and multiculturalism. This initiative aims to provide tools and arguments to young people to reject radical narratives, promote inclusion and exercise the values of active citizenship. It is especially aimed at young people in situations of risk and vulnerability.

Virtual Erasmus+ Exchanges

Initiative developed by the European Commission to encourage the relationship and intercultural dialogue between countries of the European Union and southern Mediterranean countries, promoting the exchange of knowledge and acquisition of skills for online learning. These exchanges give rise to debate and dialogue seeking to encourage critical thinking and the promotion of values that empower young people for employment, coexistence, and the exchange of interests.

Soliya

This is a non-governmental initiative that aims to promote dialogue between societies with diverse identities through the Internet. Its flagship project (Connect) was initiated among university students in the Middle East and Asia, Europe, and North America. It consists of video conferences in groups of 6-8 people in which they openly discuss different topics, no matter how controversial they may be, but always led by a facilitator. The objective is to promote critical thinking and understanding between cultures and ways of seeing the world. The program encourages young people themselves to become facilitators of intercultural dialogue for other young people.

Education for peaceful coexistence

Program developed by the Granada City Council and the Andalusian Association for the Support of Children (ALDAIMA), whose objective is the prevention of violent extremism in the educational context. It aims to raise awareness and provide tools that enable the educational community to prevent violence and hate speech. It covers topics such as conflict resolution, identity, inclusion, active citizenship, communication skills, critical thinking, and interculturality.



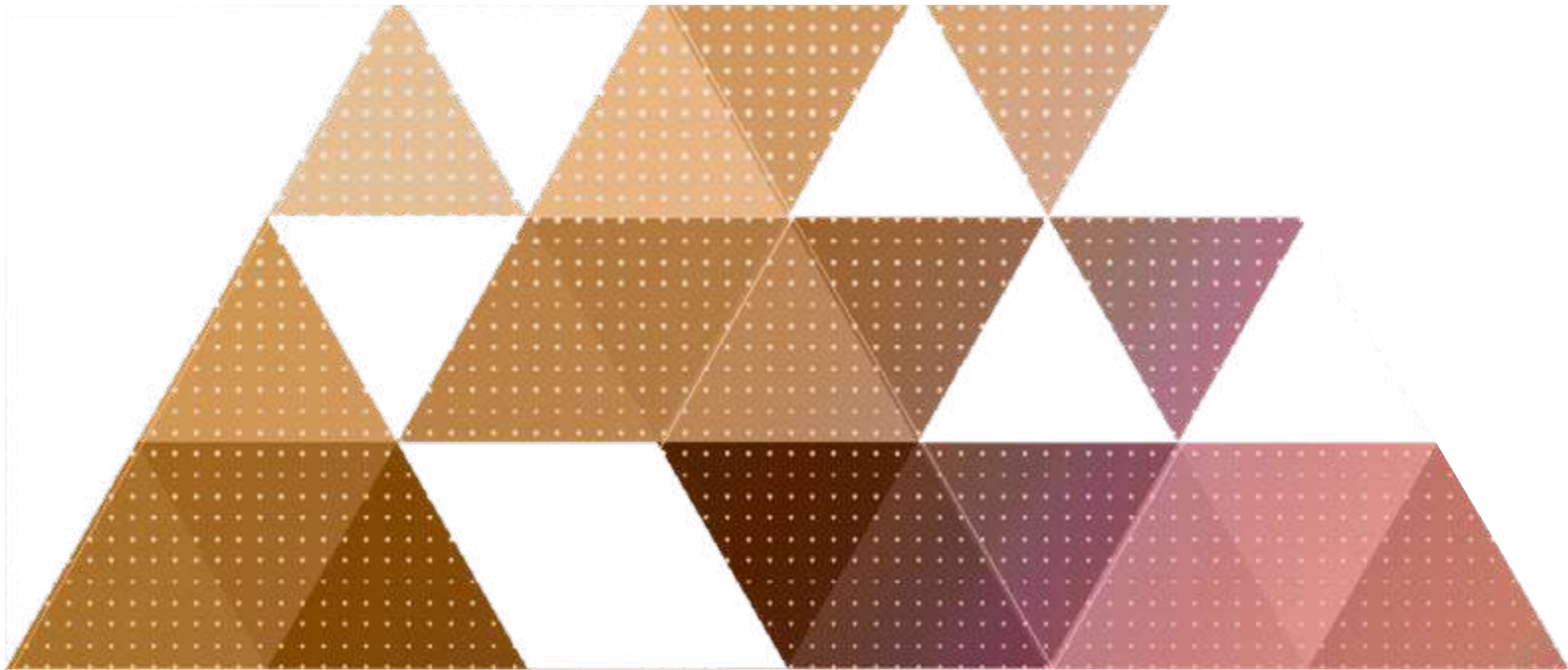


6.4. Preventing radicalization in times of pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic represents a major challenge that has resulted in thousands of human losses and an unparalleled impact in social and economic terms. Addressing it involves stringent measures such as the closure of schools, public places, and recreational environments, as well as severe confinement throughout the world. This situation has affected children and young people, who have been seen in situations of isolation and exclusion, often in vulnerable environments and without adults of reference to offer social support. Meanwhile, extremist groups and recruiters have continued to develop their actions of proselytism and mobilization. In view of this scenario, some principles of intervention are offered for professionals in psychosocial and educational intervention:

- It is crucial that youth at risk of dropping out of school do not lose connection with the educational system, their peers, teachers, and other adults who can be positive role models.
- Detect and compensate situations of inequality in access to technological devices that allow access to education and social support.
- In this context, if we want to access and influence young people, it is necessary to assume that social networks such as Snapchat, Instagram, Tik Tok, Telegram, or WhatsApp, are essential tools. We must adapt to this situation and know the strengths and weaknesses of these communication channels.
- Encourage cooperation and coordination between different professional profiles.
- Offer positive models to counteract possible negative experiences.
- Train young people in personal skills and critical thinking to interpret and better understand a complex world where there is misinformation.
- Create safe spaces to facilitate communication and intervention.

7. Early detection of radicalization



Detecting the first symptoms of radicalization is crucial in order to prevent it. The lesser the radicalization degree of an individual, the easier it is to intervene. Here are some of the most common behaviors that can be shown during the process:

- **Intolerance.** Individuals adopt a system of beliefs where everything is polarized into good or evil. This vision of the world provides a division between what is seen as pure or impure and good or bad, causes conflict between individuals and their close environment (family, community, social networks).
- **Transformation of the social network.** Individuals stop spending time with whoever they used to, they get distant from friends and family. At the same time, they create close relationships with a new group, which is often concealed from family and friends.
- **Ideological discourse.** Individuals adopt the role of the victim and are unable to compromise when expressing their ideas through ideological speeches and conspiracy theories. They repeat memorized clichés, glorify their group, dehumanize the others, and give legitimacy to violence in order to avenge the offenses suffered by their group.
- **Mass media consumption.** Individuals start making use of materials promoting hate speech and violence. They justify and spread hate speech through social media. They watch violent media and promote it amongst others that share their beliefs.
- **Changes in appearance and style.** Despite not being a determining factor, individuals can show external signs of their radicalization, for example having tattoos with cryptic symbols, adopting a certain beard or hairstyle, and wearing certain clothing items that allows group identification. Some groups, however, adopt casual looks and use their unnoticed appearance to look as part of the society.



Did you know that...?

Taqiyya refers to the act of concealing religious beliefs when one fears for one's life, the lives of family members, or the preservation of faith. Historically it has been used by minority groups within Islam such as the Shiites or the Khariyis to safeguard their lives. However, jihadi ideologues promulgate its use so that individuals radicalized in jihadism can use it in order to remain undetected when planning a terrorist attack. We find some recent examples in the jihadists who have attacked in France in recent years and who were seen drinking alcohol, wearing typically Western clothes, or engaging in any other activity prohibited by jihadist ideology. Their interpretation of *taqiyya* is their way of ideologically justifying the realization of activities they consider prohibited in order to fulfill their objectives.

- **Readiness to sacrifice habitual activities.** Individuals consider the cause to be demanding and need sacrifices. Because of this, they stop participating in activities they used to enjoy doing.
- **Proselytizing or recruitment activities.** Individuals spread extremist and violent ideas and encourage others to join them.
- **Traveling to conflict areas or areas known to be used by violent extremist groups.** It is common that individuals prepare the trip meticulously, getting ahold of the necessary materials and changing certain habits (food, sleep, physical appearance).
- **Having an interest in getting weapons and learning to use them.** Showing interest in weapons, how to get them, or looking for information online on how to use them, can be indicators of the individual's readiness to engage in violent acts.
- **Illegal and/or violent acts.** Engaging in illegal activity, crime, and having criminal records can be related to the radicalization process.

It is important to analyze new behaviors (what individuals do or say that they did not do or say before, and what they stopped doing or saying). It is also useful to watch out for new social relationship patterns (who they hang out with now and who they stopped hanging out with). This information can be very relevant when planning an intervention.

Throughout this section we have reviewed some signs that can be considered more or less worrying indicators of the incipient process of radicalization. It is important to take into account the complexity of the processes and understand that they do not always happen in the same way. Common sense and assessing all known aspects of the person and their context can give us a more realistic picture of what is happening. We must also remember that extremist thoughts are not illegal as long as there is no violent act or intent to do so.

It is important to emphasize that the fact that a person shows some of these indicators does not mean that there is a process of radicalization, but they will be relevant aspects to attend to in order to give an adequate response.

Finally, we cannot end without reflecting briefly on how to deal with a possible case of radicalization and who to contact for help. If there are suspicions of any indication of violent radicalization it is important to communicate it to trusted people within the circle of relatives of the person at risk, friends or professionals. Within the educational field, both the management team and the school counselors can be references to communicate risk situations. In the local context, within the community there are various professional profiles that can be drawn on. We can highlight social workers or social educators who work with young people. Religious leaders can also be allies to collaborate in early intervention on certain radicalization processes. Ultimately, if it is considered that there is a real possibility that a person or group will use violence, it is necessary to inform the police and security forces.

Did you know that...?

Many European countries have specific communication channels with the authorities to let them know about possible ongoing radicalization processes and act preventively on them. In Spain, the Ministry of Interior has developed a safe and confidential channel through a website, a phone number, an e-mail address and even a phone-app called *AlertCops*.

If you want to know more

The Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence (CPRLV) has created a "[Behaviour Barometer](#)" for spreading awareness about how to identify violent radical behavior. This barometer is divided into four behavior categories, according to the seriousness of the observed behavior:

Insignificant: the behavior is based on peaceful actions and democratic means of expression.

Troubling: the behavior has both a personal discomfort factor and a growing identification with the cause or ideology.

Worrisome: the behavior matches the initial stages or the radicalization process, linking both lack of trust and legitimization of violence.

Alarming: the behavior proves loyalty to a cause or ideology and the individual sees violence as the only legitimate method to fight for it.



8. Assessment of the risk of radicalization



The assessment of the factors associated with extremism and violent radicalization should be a priority in the contexts of intervention. There are times when it is especially useful to do so. Thus, at the start of a program, at the end of it, or during the process (e.g., in criminal enforcement contexts), professional practice should be guided by this assessment. This will allow indicator-based decisions and will make criteria available.

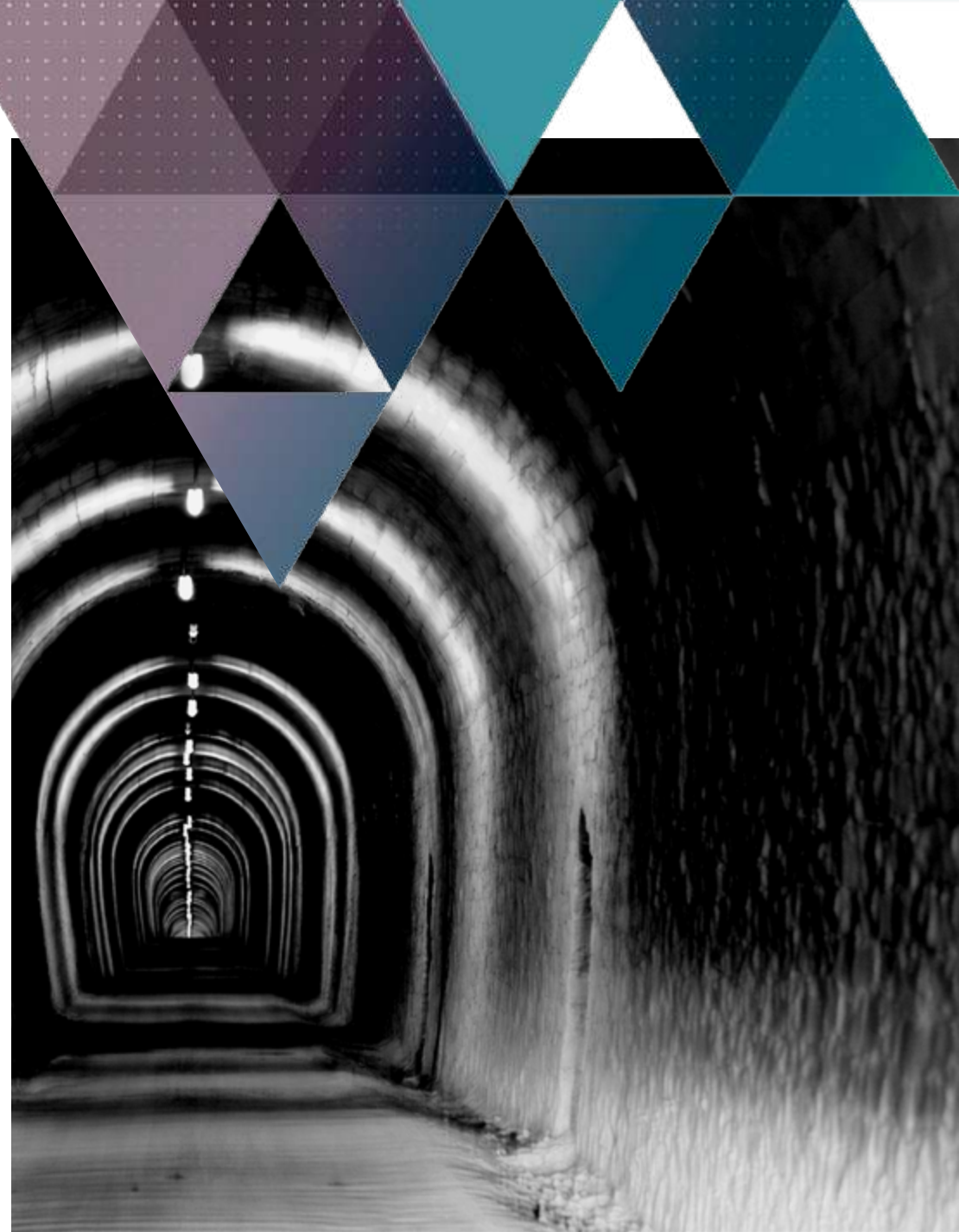
Did you know that...?

Scarcella, Page, and Furtado (2016) conducted a systematic review of the instruments developed to identify risk factors associated with extremism, radicalization, or terrorism. The authors carried out a literature search in order to identify the existing instruments as well as the studies developed to validate them. Among the most outstanding results of the analysis it was found that, generally, there was a lack of transparent and quality methodological information, as well as information regarding the psychometric properties (reliability and validity) of the existing instruments.

Although some of the existing tools are still at an early stage of development, great progress has been made in recent years in this area and different tools useful for both professionals and researchers have been developed. Some of them are listed below.

Violent Extremism Risk Assessment (VERA). A tool widely used in the prison context of several European countries. The most recent version, VERA-2R (Pressman, Duits, Rinne, & Flockton, 2016), includes mental health indicators as well as multiple risk factors (ideology, background, triggering events, motivations, or capabilities), and protection. It emphasizes the dynamic and interactive character of radicalization and encompasses different ideological spectrums.

Extremism Risk Guidelines 22+ (ERG22+). Tool used in the UK in the Prevent anti-terrorism strategy. It includes 22 factors that potentially contribute to radicalization. They are divided into three blocks: 1) commitment; 2) intention; and 3) capabilities.



Did you know that...?

In July 2015, the UK government established a legal obligation for all public sector workers to be involved in detecting signs of radicalization. However, both the ERG22+ guide and its approaches have not been exempt from criticism. A paper by Qureshi (2016) rebukes the government for secretly developing these detection strategies and for using questionable empirical evidence. This author raises far-reaching questions about the evidence and credibility of the counter-terrorism strategy, receiving the support of more than 140 academics who signed a joint letter criticizing the lack of scientific foundation in government policies on the social problem that is radicalization.



IR46. Assessment protocol developed in the Dutch context. The instrument is divided into two blocks: ideology (intention) and social context (capacity). In total, 46 risk indicators are offered to be assessed through structured professional judgment.

TRAP-18. Protocol developed by Meloy and collaborators (2016; 2019). It combines proximal (e.g., identification, fixation, and aggression) and distal (e.g., personal grievances or psychopathology) alarm indicators. This tool is specially designed to assess so-called lone actors, individuals who, from an operational point of view, are not integrated into a group.

HCR-20. One of the most widely used tools in assessing the risk of violence and widely used in prison contexts. Basically, it is a protocol based on structured professional judgment, it is simple to apply and has evidence of validity. It has therefore been a widely used and adapted tool for assessing the risk of terrorist radicalization.

Extremism Monitoring Instrument-20 (EMI-20). Schmid (2014) drew up this proposal of twenty risk indicators including the rejection of democratic principles, the justification of violence, the dehumanization of certain social groups, the intolerance or rejection of diversity, and pluralism. More than a risk assessment tool per se, it should be seen as a compilation of indicators to be addressed.



RADAR-ITE. Tool developed in the German context. Risk factors such as Salafist tendencies, antisocial behavior, previous history of violence, criminal history, and psychopathology are assessed. It offers a three-level risk assessment.

Questionnaire on the Risk of Islamic Radicalization in Young People (CRRIJ).

This instrument, developed by Moyano (2011), assesses the following risk and/or protective factors: 1) religious extremism; 2) essential needs covered; 3) psychological affectation; 4) resilience; 5) perceived conflict; 6) social integration; 7) relative deprivation; 8) disinhibition to violence; 9) social support; 10) patriotism; and 11) legitimization of terrorism.

Activism and Radicalism Intention Scales (ARIS).

Based on the two-pyramids model, Moskalenko and McCauley (2009) developed the Activism and Radicalism Intention Scales. These scales assess: 1) the intent of legal and non-violent political action (activism); and 2) the intent of illegal and violent political action (radicalism). Each of the scales consists of four items and is applicable in a wide variety of groups. As a brief tool, it can be very useful for psychosocial research aimed at exploring the processes of violent mobilization in critical contexts. Trujillo, Prados, and Moyano (2016) carried out complementary research on these constructs and adapted it to Spanish.

9. Scenarios and principles of intervention



Nowadays, it is assumed that preventing and countering violent radicalization requires comprehensive approaches that have an impact on different scenarios. Basically, the concept of scenario is understood here as the place and circumstances in which a certain event occurs or develops, in this case, violent radicalization. Such scenarios are potentially modifiable and are not irrevocably condemned to a negative drift. In other words, one could intervene on them through proactive actions.

Linked to the concept of scenario, one can find the different actors operating on it. Such actors may be policy makers, frontline practitioners, or community or family members, who may have a key role.

Some of these scenarios are briefly listed below, and basic principles of intervention are proposed. This display does not intend to be exhaustive, but it establishes a useful action scheme for first-line practitioners (a more developed presentation of these can be consulted in Moyano and Trujillo, 2013).

9.1. International relations

Extremism and violent radicalization are global problems. Consequently, a geopolitical and international relations approach is required. Some principles to take into consideration:

- To support cooperation and multilateral initiatives with other countries and supranational institutions (e.g., United Nations, European Union, NATO).
- To fully develop the Sustainable Development Goals in a coordinated manner among different countries.
- To unify criteria in migratory policies, being fundamental the respect of Human Rights as well as the sustainability in the middle and long term of the measures adopted.
- To jointly address conflicts, insurgency scenarios, or the instability that exists in certain countries.
- In those unstable contexts potentially at risk of insurgency and terrorism, it is important to work towards safety, but also to facilitate reforms that favor equality, participation, and democratic values.



- To implement measures aiming to reduce prejudice and inter-group discrimination, promote equal rights, and the socio-economic development of societies.
- From a communication point of view, it is important to understand those cultural and religious keys that can be present in international relations. This will lead to the need of developing new skills and strategies to interact.



9.2. Armed Forces

Sometimes, reactive measures of military nature have been prioritized to deal with violent radicalization and terrorism. However, one must bear in mind that this approach is limited and has drawbacks. For example, it can foster cohesion and legitimacy in terrorists, personal stories of humiliation, perceived outgroup threat, and instability. In general, one must advocate for multidimensional approaches, and it is a mistake to confront violent radicalization and terrorism from exclusively military approaches. If the military option is a possibility, the following principles should be taken into account:

- The use of force should be the last resort and only be used when benefits are expected to far outweigh harms.
- Prioritize multilateral approaches and strategic alliances

9.3. Police, judicial, and intelligence services

Some of the aspects that can be highlighted in this area are the following:

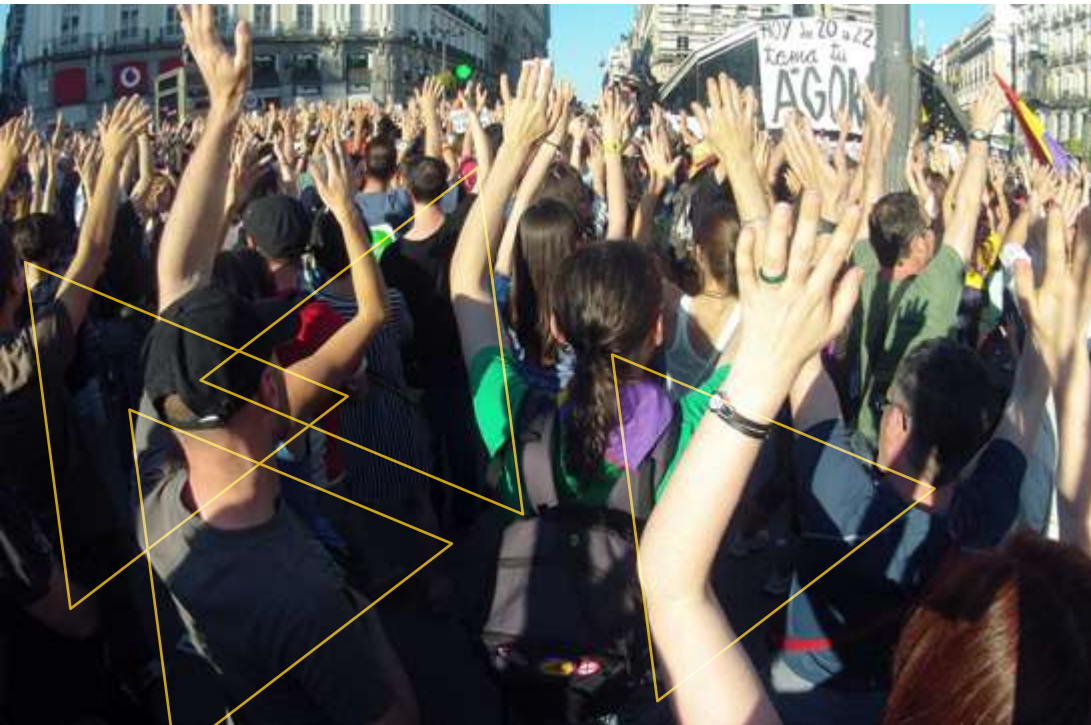
- To promote cooperation, coordination and exchange of information between States and between the different intra-State agencies.
- To adapt and update the legislation in order to respond to the threat when necessary. It must always be taken into account that terrorism is innovative. Therefore, the State's response must have a certain flexibility and adapt to new scenarios. Some legal aspects that should be especially addressed are those related to the advocacy of terrorism, dissemination of propaganda, proselytism, terrorist recruitment, and disinformation.
- In relation to the aforementioned, it is necessary to continue improving the quality of the information based on human intelligence (HUMINT), signal intelligence (SIGINT), and open-source intelligence (OSINT) sources).



9.4. Urban environments and geographical spots of strategic interest

Certain urban environments and geographical spots can favor inter-group polarization and the risk of violent radicalization. Because of that, it would be convenient to have the following intervention references:

- To promote policies that favor the real inclusion of individuals and groups.
- To promote strategies and specific actions aimed at reducing prejudice and discrimination in all actors, which can be fundamental for preventing violent radicalization.
- To develop actions aimed to reduce ethnic and cultural concentration (e.g., in neighborhoods) that may be associated with social exclusion, marginality or structural poverty. These variables, although not considered a direct cause of radicalization, may favor it.
- To become aware of the fact that certain geographical spots or symbolic enclaves may be particularly sensitive to polarization.



- Likewise, it is necessary to protect infrastructures, heritage, and critical environments that could be attacked, especially those with emotional value for the groups involved. Certain critical incidents that may occur in them could be instrumentalized to influence perceptions and thus polarize social groups.

9.5. Cyberspace

In the last decade, the role of the Internet has been crucial in the processes of radicalization and terrorism. This vector can be used, among other things, to spread propaganda, recruit terrorists, plan violent actions, or establish cooperative relationships. In addition, the Internet can be the target of attacks (cyberattacks) that can cause significant damage.

Therefore, actions in this scenario are critical at different levels:

- Cybersecurity.
- Cyber intelligence.
- Dissemination of alternative narratives.
- Prevention of hate, antisocial behavior, and polarization.
- Disinformation.

9.6. Temples and religious centers

Temples and religious centers have a cardinal role in the socialization of young people. It is therefore necessary to promote preventive measures so that the message conveyed does not hinder integration and, instead, reinforces coexistence and acceptance. Some measures that should be adopted are:

- To prevent radical groups and leaders from taking control of such scenarios.
- To encourage religious leaders to be proficient in the language and informed about society.
- To have the collaboration of the cultural and religious communities' leaders, as well as the local authorities.



9.7. Prisons

Prisons are environments where psychosocial and contextual conditions favorable to violent radicalization processes can be found. The following are a series of specific intervention proposals:

- To seek to avoid subordinate hierarchical links between leaders and inmates in prison and, therefore, prevent groups of radicals from organizing themselves into groups with high vertical cohesion.
- To promote horizontal cohesion between inmates, without extremist leaders being involved in the process. Consequently, to avoid indoctrination actions that promote inter-group polarization.
- To avoid uncertainty and the perception of insecurity by inmates.

- To prevent inmates from having accessible information about terrorist leaders so that they do not develop prototypes (beliefs and attitudes) that praise them as exemplary members of the group that should be admired and imitated.
- To prevent vulnerable inmates from being isolated from the rest of and highly cohesive in order to avoid group conformity, intergroup differentiation, stereotypical perception, and an excessive positive attitude towards the rest of the members of the same group.
- To prevent, as much as possible, the continuous movement of inmates through different prisons, especially radical leaders.
- Exercise rigorous control over the media (mobile phones, internet, books), mailings, and visits received from spiritual leaders that Muslim inmates have.
- Keep radical leaders isolated from those inmates over whom they may have a negative influence in terms of recruitment.

9.8. Abandonment of violence

In the European context there are sensitive scenarios in which actions promoting the abandonment of violence could be carried out in order to intervene. The abandonment of an ideologically motivated violent path is not easy. Additionally, the details of what has been called de-radicalization have yet to be empirically explored. However, targeted and planned actions should be sought to modify the behavior of violent extremists in their early stages or in contexts from which rehabilitation and/or reintegration should be promoted (e.g., youth reform centers or prison context). Being aware of this complex reality in view of which, we have to adopt proactive positions, the following principles of intervention are listed:

- Prioritize primary prevention initiatives before individuals have been able to carry out violent acts. Despite the obvious difficulties, carry out tertiary prevention actions with those people who already show a certain degree of radicalization or have come to use violence for political purposes.



- Family, friends, community, and first-line practitioner are key figures in helping people leave violence behind. The collaboration and coordination of these actors is essential.
- There is a need to promote the participation and adherence of violent extremists in rehabilitation and/or reintegration programs. This is a major difficulty since without a real motivation to get involved it is difficult to achieve an effective abandonment of violence.

9.9. Educational system

Schools are one of the most influential institutions for any young person, beyond the primary socialization offered within the family. Therefore, it is convenient to carry out preventive measures in the school centers that favor inclusion, critical thinking, and education in values. Possible actions could include:

- To have protocols for welcoming and incorporating foreign students into the system, as well as to favor early language learning, and the assumption of basic coexistence rules.
- To provide training opportunities and mediation resources for community agents and families in order to foster coexistence.
- To work towards building social identity and inclusive symbols and values around democratic values, the legal system, and Human Rights.
- To develop preventive protocols for coordination and action against risk indicators.



9.10. Children and young people at risk

Children and young people, especially those at risk, should be the main targets of preventive actions. Some of the intervention principles to be followed in this area are:

- To offer psychosocial support and training for the development of personal coping resources.
- To encourage positive approaches towards young people, avoiding stigmatization: they are part of the solution.
- To pay special attention to unaccompanied foreign minors. These young people are a particularly vulnerable group that can fall into the hands of manipulative groups and exploitative networks of different kinds. Therefore, systematic psychosocial support and accompaniment are needed in order to facilitate their social inclusion.

9.11. Rule of law, social cohesion, and victims of terrorism

In order to strengthen the rule of law and improve social cohesion, it is essential to: 1) continue to strengthen democratic values and institutions, and social justice, 2) continue to work towards the improvement of coexistence and perceptions among social groups, and 3) work to promote social inclusion and cohesion.

Governments should promote the integration of social groups and movements into the mainstream political debate and democratic dialogue. All this, as long as violence is condemned without disregard and there is a verifiable commitment with the respect for Human Rights, the rule of law, and democracy. A clear distinction should be made between the violent and non-violent tendencies of certain social movements. Furthermore, it is essential that in a global framework priority attention is given to the victims in order to deal with this social problem.





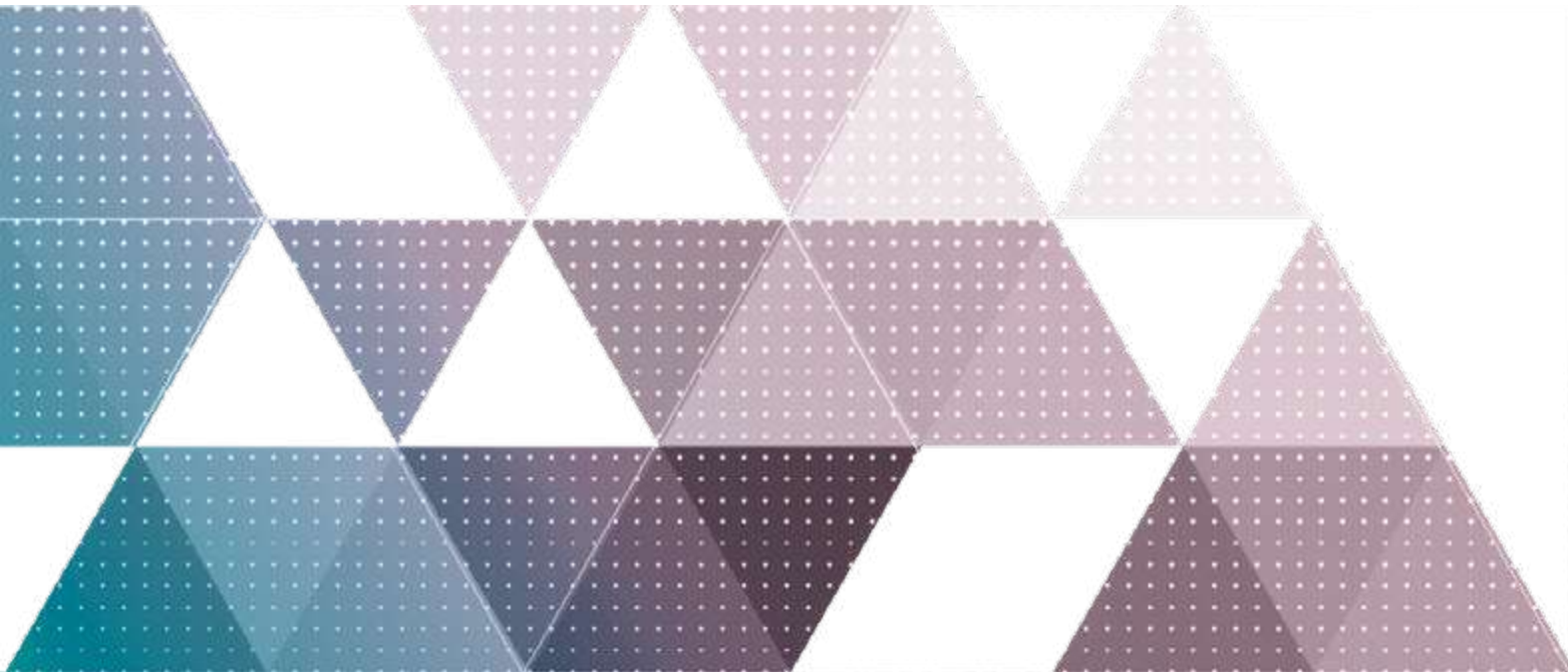
9.12. Communication

Below are some suggestions regarding social communication:

- To not manage communication as a cultural or religious clash; to not promote communication strategies that disregard, aggravate, or threaten cultures, religions, or groups, and clearly condemn messages that go in that direction.
- To give visibility to positive narratives that show democratic attitudes, non-violent positions, and are favorable to coexistence.
- To avoid, as far as possible, disproportionate action taken by law enforcement, with the consequent escalation of action-reaction-counteraction.
- To encourage social media to collaborate with strategic communication in order to solve problems and never to amplify them.



10. Design and evaluation of prevention programs



Once we have understood the main concepts about the radicalization process, the intervening factors, the evaluation tools, and the preventive actions to be taken, it is necessary to explore the necessary principles to design prevention programs. In this sense, one of the most widely used perspectives is the Theory of Change (ToC), based on the work of Chen, Rossi, and Weiss on program evaluation. Currently, both organizations focused on the defense of Human Rights like UNICEF, and organizations focused on the prevention of violent radicalization, like the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), use its principles in some of their projects' rationale.

The ToC intends to improve the how community intervention projects are evaluated, both in theory and in practice. It explains how the proposed activities and the results contribute to the expected impact. The ToC is therefore a necessary tool to evaluate the impact of a prevention program.

Goals of the ToC. The ToC can be used for various things very much related to each other. The main ones are listed in Figure 9:

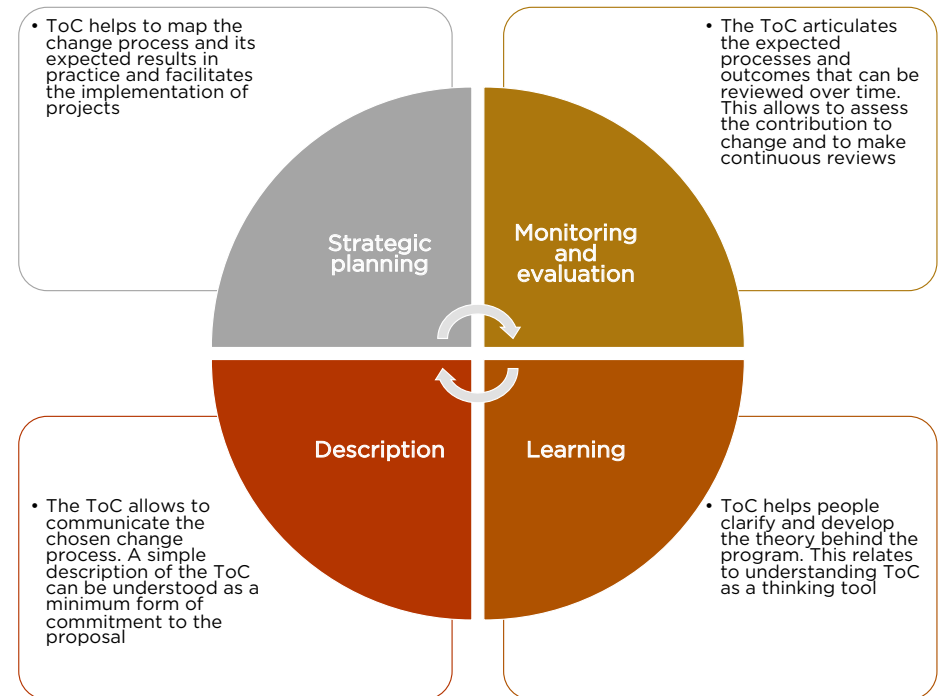


Figure 9. Main purposes of the ToC. Own elaboration.

How to develop a ToC. The main steps to develop a ToC are the following:

- **Diagnose the situation.** In this first step we need to determine the problem to be tackled, its causes, and its consequences. It is also important to also examine opportunities, possible synergies with other initiatives, and available resources. In the same way, we should also look for the specificities of the problem, which will be important when thinking about specific interventions.
- **List objectives, results, and impact.** In this second step we need to define general and specific objectives. Specific objectives should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-oriented). In this way, the time frame for the outcomes (either short-term, medium-term, or long-term) should also be stated.

- **Create a theory that can explain how the change to the desired situation will take place.** This will include the mechanisms, activities and interventions that will cause the desired change. We should also explain the specific paths that will go from the objectives, through the activities planned, and leading into the outcome.
- **Define evaluation indicators.** We should define indicators for each of the results expected. This step is very important, since it will affect the implementation of the intervention and it will also help us see if the ToC is working as expected.

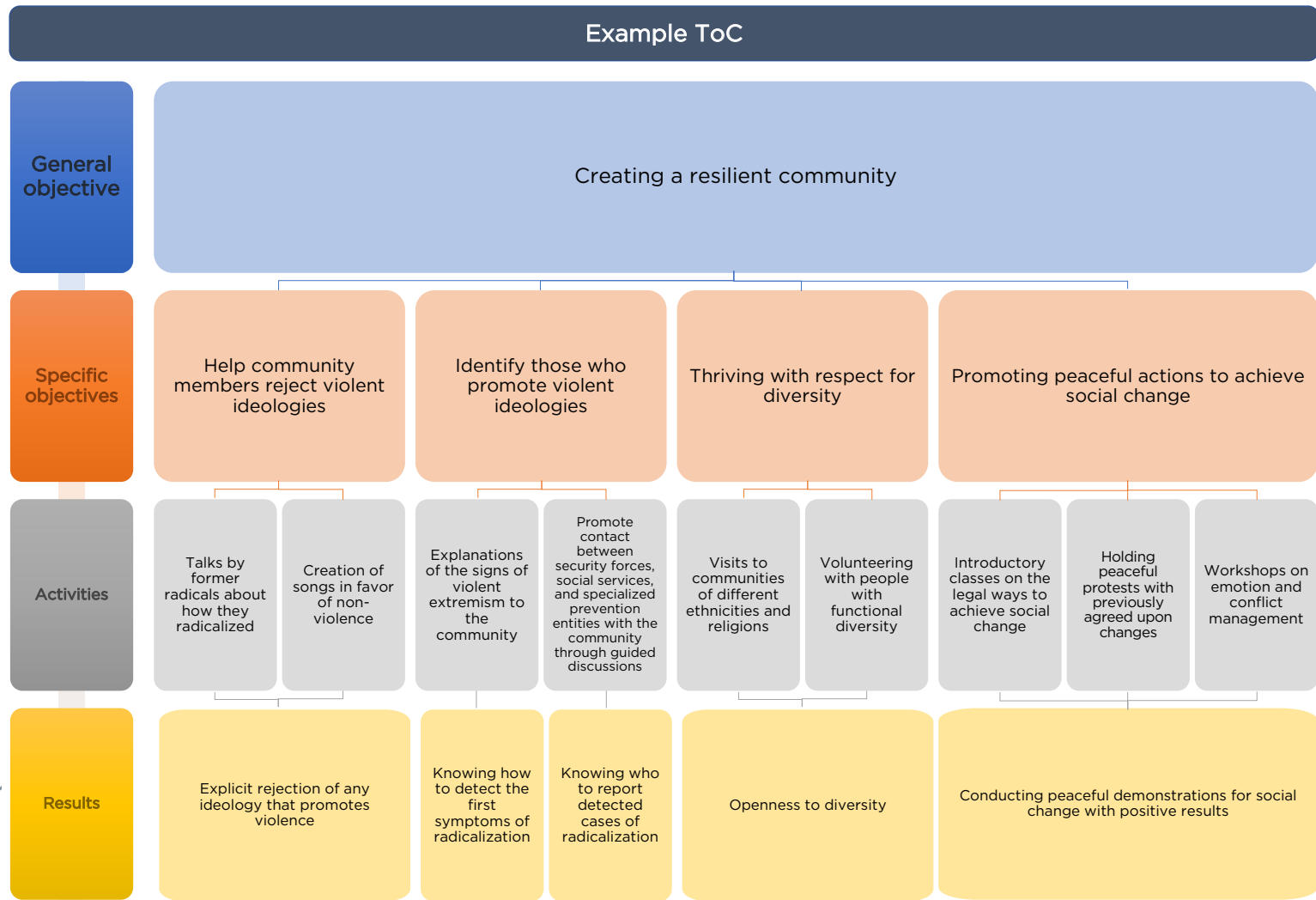
Reflections

The following task list will help us create a more solid ToC:

- Set objectives that have been previously documented.
- Revise previous research and theories on the topic.
- Ask experts for their opinion.
- Include the beneficiaries' viewpoint.
- Include all relevant stakeholders in the development of the ToC.
- Involve state institutions in the development of pre-emptive actions.

Theory of Change diagram. In order to clarify the ToC, it should be represented graphically. This can be done in a wide variety of ways, including matrices, flowcharts, and diagrams. The goal of this graphic depiction is to allow all stakeholders to understand the ToC, by clearly seeing the paths represented. The following parts should be present in a good Change Diagram: general objective, specific objectives, activities, and expected results. You can see an example of a ToC diagram in Figure 10.





Summary

A Theory of Change explains how we envision the activities to contribute to the results that will cause the end impact. There are different ways to develop and represent a Theory of Change. In the evaluation process, the Theory of Change will be examined and revised as many times as needed, in order to inform stakeholders about the need to gather and analyze data and present reports.

Figure 10. Own elaboration from the objectives proposed by Bélanger et al. (2015).

11. Resources



11.1. Recommended readings

Talking about terrorism: Responding to children's questions (2017)

Authors: Alison Jamieson and Jane Flint

Publisher: Brilliant Publications

Synopsis. This guide is intended for adults to explain terrorism to children. It is structured with 40 possible questions that children might ask, with their answers. This book is especially interesting as a teaching resource.

Prevenir la radicalización de los jóvenes (2018)

Author: Jean-Marie Petitclerc

Publisher: Editorial CCS

Synopsis. This book provides the reader with different life stories and activities. It is a very good tool for educators in order to spread awareness, prevent and confront violent radicalization.

Radicalización terrorista: Gestión del riesgo y modelos de intervención (2019)

Author: Manuel Moyano

Publisher: Síntesis

Synopsis. Throughout nine chapters and several case studies, this book presents the latest research findings, theoretical perspectives, intervention models, and risk evaluation tools. It also addresses the main principles of applied knowledge to prevent violent radicalization and to foster violence rejection.

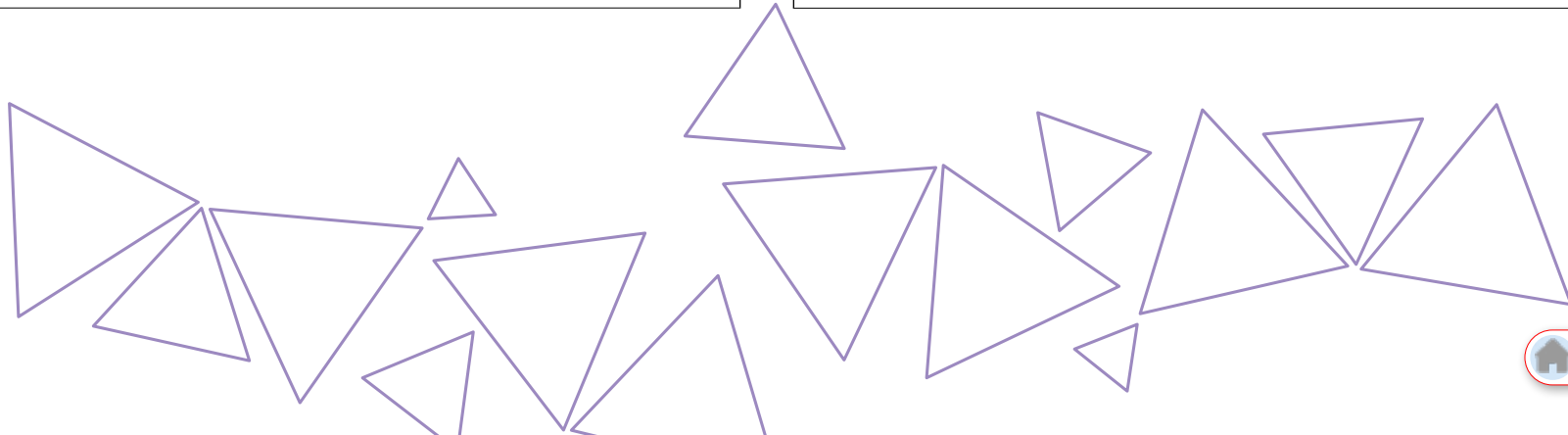


Talking to the enemy: Faith, brotherhood, and the (un)making of terrorists (2011)

Author: Scott Atran

Publisher: Ecco

Synopsis. This book compiles a number of interviews with violent extremists from around the world. It explains the main concepts of the Devoted Actor Model and provides some ideas to tackle violent extremism.



Radicalización islamista y terrorismo: Claves psicosociales (2014)

Author: Manuel Moyano y Humberto M. Trujillo

Publisher: Editorial Universidad de Granada y MADOC.

Synopsis. In this book, the authors extensively review the different theoretical explanations for terrorism and radicalization. They also provide a comprehensive framework of social and political measures to be implemented in order to tackle these problems.

The psychology of terrorism (2014)

Author: John Horgan

Publisher: Routledge

Synopsis: This book analyzes the main psychological processes and mechanisms involved in terrorism.

The three pillars of radicalization: Needs, narratives, and networks (2019)

Authors: Arie Kruglanski, Jocelyn Bélanger, and Rohan Gunaratna

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Synopsis. This book provides a thorough explanation of the 3N Model of Radicalization. Consequently, some important conclusions for prevention and deradicalization are derived from it. The book also reviews recent research from this theoretical framework and provides tools and ideas for preventing radicalization and fostering deradicalization.

Friction: How conflict radicalizes them and us (2016)

Authors: Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Synopsis. This book explores different radicalization processes at the individual, group and wide community levels. These are also illustrated with real examples. The authors introduce the Two-Pyramids Model in the last two chapters of the book.





Extremismo, radicalización violenta y terrorismo (2019)

Editors: Ángel Gómez and Alexandra Vázquez

Publisher: Sanz y Torres

Synopsis. This book compiles the ideas of various authors. It is an attempt to summarize the most recent research and its practical implications.

Jihadism, foreign fighters and radicalization in the EU: Legal, functional and psychosocial responses (2019)

Editors: Inmaculada Marrero and Humberto M. Trujillo

Publisher: Routledge

Synopsis. Collective work that overviews the radicalization process. It also explores the possible political and legal response, and the specific ways to tackle jihadist militance and the presence of foreign terrorist militants in the European Union.

Horses of God (2013)

Author: Mahi Binebine

Publisher: Granta

Synopsis. This novel presents a free interpretation of the story behind the attackers of the Casablanca terrorist attacks in 2003. It describes life in a poor neighborhood where a youth gang is offered a “direct way to Paradise.”

Confessions of a terrorist: A novel (2014)

Author: Richard Jackson

Publisher: Zed Books

Synopsis. In this novel we learn about the life story of a terrorist that is being questioned in prison. The book puts question marks on many commonly accepted ideas about terrorism and the factors that contribute to one’s radicalization.

Dawla: La historia del Estado Islámico contada por sus desertores (2019)

Author: Gabriele del Grande

Publisher: Oriente y Mediterráneo

Synopsis. The book compiles different life stories of members of the so-called Islamic State that deserted and abandoned the organization.

11.2. Case study

The following story is based on a real case. It can be used, along with the questions below it, to facilitate a reflection on the materials provided in this guide.

AJC

Our main character is an 18-year-old man, a non-practicing Christian. He will be referred throughout the story as AJC. His mother, his father and his sister describe him as a sensitive and affectionate boy, but quite unsure about himself and lacking in self-esteem. AJC moves on October 1st 2017 to a new city to start his university degree. He lives in a shared flat with three other guys: ARS, NAU, and ACH, who are between 19 and 23 years old and come from the Middle East and North Africa.

AJC starts university and during the first months devotes most of his time to studying and getting close to his roommates (especially with NAU, with whom he spends most of his time). At the end of 2017, AJC's academic performance goes down and he starts staying home with his roommates, smoking marijuana, and drinking alcohol. Sometimes he also goes to nightclubs. Since December 2017, ARS starts insulting him daily without any apparent reason, using terms like "asshole" and "retard." One day he confronts him and asks him to stop it. It is useless, though. He still insults him every day.

In December, AJC goes back home for a weekend. He tells his family about his roommates, and how they are teaching him some Arabic song lyrics. He also shows his family the Arabic music he is listening to. He



mentions that ACH has "the kind of life of a real Muslim," since he spends all day in his room, alone, barely leaving the house. His other roommate NAU thinks ACH is a normal guy, though. He also mentions ACH ignores him and when he talks to him, he speaks only Arabic. Also, he mentions NAU and ACH often argue in Arabic in front of him. Apparently, NAU is asking ARS to stop insulting AJC. NAU is the one trying to keep the group together.

According to AJC's family, his behavior during the Christmas holidays of 2017 is strange. He is always worried and distant from his family, and reacts aggressively when someone has a different opinion (in the middle of a conversation, suddenly, he says "I don't want...I said I don't want," and leaves the house). On January 13th and 14th, 2018 he repeatedly accuses his family of having bad thoughts about him. After that, he stops going on social media, something he used to do daily, especially on Instagram.

On February 3rd, 2018, after having spent two weeks in his hometown, AJC shows up at a family lunch with a skinhead haircut. He does

not finish his food and removes himself from the family, sad, worried, and thoughtful. On February 4th he moves back to his university town with the plan of staying there until February 16th.

On February 10th, in the evening, AJC sends his father some Whatsapp messages telling him “dad, I want to leave this flat... I can’t stay with these guys here... they are abusing me... I don’t want to be here... I feel overwhelmed”.

Later at night, he sends Whatsapp messages to his sister: “hey, I can’t stop thinking about something. I’d like to come to your flat to study, to get my driver’s license, to work and earn some money... I don’t know, I’ll think about it. Tomorrow I’m packing my suitcases.” At 3.10 am, AJC’s sister receives another message from him asking him if she is ok and feeling well. At 3.25 am he sends her another message: “I hope you can read this message tomorrow morning. I thought about it and I decided I will stay here.”

During that morning, he sends his mother messages with similar content: “I think I’m coming home tomorrow, this is killing me, and I don’t want to end up in a bad way. I really want to go home... I’m coming, please come pick me up... Mum, can you come pick me up tomorrow? ...Mum, please, understand that I’m not this way.”

The next morning AJC’s sister calls him and he answers whispering he can’t talk but he wants to leave the flat, so he asks her to go pick him up. He says he had some problem with the “Arabs,” but he cannot explain it because they are listening. At this point, his sister suggests talking through Whatsapp. AJC then explains to her that he is overwhelmed with the “Arabs,” and that one of them keeps talking to him about “weird Arab things.” His sister tells him not to “spill the beans,” but he answers that it is already too late for that. He really wants to leave since, as he said the day before, he cannot stand “that stupid guy.” Ten minutes later he texts them again: “don’t come pick me up, don’t come, please stop and don’t come... everything is ok... No, sister, no... stay there, turn back right now.” However, despite these messages, AJC sends his sister his current GPS location.

At 2.30 pm, AJC’s sister arrives in the city where he studies. She texts him to come down and AJC leaves with her in the car. At the beginning, AJC’s sister asks him what has happened, but AJC pretends nothing happened. In the end he confesses one of the roommates is obsessed with him, in love with him. He then yells desperately that “he can’t see I’m not interested! He can’t! He insists that I give him oral sex.” He then confesses he has been forced to do it. He also explains he has been in bed unable to move, probably roofied up, for the last four days.

After this conversation in the car, they go to the mall to have lunch. There he says he wants to go back to his family because he can’t be there anymore. He starts wondering “Should I really bear with this?” And then he continues: “I really need to go back to the flat, it’s ok, I’m ok...” He keeps his head down and looks around nervously, especially at men walking by. He is scared that someone might show up.

On the way back to his parents’, AJC tells his sister that his roommates NAU and ACH keep coming into his room in the middle of the night and start shouting to wake him up. So much he had to lock his door to keep them out. They also insist every day that he needs to commit suicide, to wear a bomb and they shout at him “booooo!!!” They also mock him calling him “faggot” and then telling him that they are not a couple. “He is just by himself.” He is unable to understand why they attack him like that. AJC states that he is not like that. He needs to go back to his previous self. He also says: “I’m alone, I’m really alone.” AJC and his sister get home. He keeps repeating the previous comments with fear, nervously. He cries and shouts that “he doesn’t want, he doesn’t want.”

AJC explains he had to get his skinhead haircut because NAU told him to and then he explains “he has to change because of him.” However, he cannot say more because they threatened him with hurting his family members. On the way to his mother’s home, where he stays normally, he says again, contradictorily that he left the other city because he wants to give up his studies. Once at his mother’s, at around 10pm, he states that

His friends tell his family that he looks confused, brainwashed and scared. He said he left desperately the other city “to avoid bigger problems”.

he is completely alone and that he might not be able to go back to his previous self.

The next morning, AJC tells his sister that NAU broke the TV after an argument with him on February 9th. He has been very aggressive and has forced him to give him oral sex in exchange of marijuana. NAU used to whisper to him, so that the others would not hear them. The neighbors downstairs used to yell at him to leave the flat or his roommates would make him go crazy. On the other hand, his roommates insisted that he should commit suicide. He repeats that he does not know if he has been roofied and sexually aggressed. AJC's relatives decide to take him to hospital for a checkup. He agrees but then says he cannot go to hospital, since he will be questioned on what happened to him. "I am gay with NAU," he says, and then he goes on to say desperately while he is crying "I'm not gay, that's what they want me to say, you need to believe me." In the next two weeks he does not leave the house or his room.

He sends a message to his sister on February 14th 2018 at 00.48, asking her how she is, even if he has spoken to her just two hours before. Later, he sends another message saying: "you know, if anything happens, I'm here for you." On February 20th, he tells his sister he cannot go shopping with her because he is "working, fixing stuff in his computer." On February 26th, AJC sends some messages to his sister saying he is overwhelmed and needs a new life, probably abroad, and asks her for help to do it as soon as possible. He tells has repeatedly mentioned his intention of leaving Spain in front of his parents as well.

On March 12th, after getting examined at the hospital, he is diagnosed with "deprivation anxiety disorder" with no psychotic symptoms. On March 18th, AJC is found looking at himself in the mirror while

making strange gestures, trying to turn his sideburns and touching his beard compulsively. Later at night, AJC tells his sister he will buy Arabic food for dinner and pronounces some words in Arabic with unknown meaning for her. She answers that she despises that food, and he tells her not to ever say that again.

During Easter Week in 2018, AJC gets in touch with his old friends and goes out with them day and night. His friends tell his family that he looks confused, brainwashed and scared. He said he left desperately the other city "to avoid bigger problems". AJC's friends say he declares having become Muslim. Some days before, he has told his mother the "Arabs" tried to convert him to Islam.

On March 28th, his friends tell his family that AJC mentioned having deleted all his pictures with someone else besides him, for no apparent reason. On March 29th, his friends mention that he still gets isolated and does not answer when is talked to. He just stares at a fixed point and goes in and out of the party very nervously, without talking to anyone. At the end of Easter, his friends say he seems a bit better, but he still seems isolated.

On April 2nd, after having spent a weekend with his father, AJC says he cannot get up because he has been all night chatting. His father takes his phone and laptop and hands them to the police. He then goes to his mother's and asks her for her phone. He goes out with it and spends 15 minutes making calls from the street.

On April 6th, he asks his sister to let him listen to a song called "Labios del guero" by a rapper called Prok (see trial against Ajax and Prok). After listening to it for some seconds, he tells her he will actually listen to it another time when he is alone.



In the next days, AJC has long conversations with his family, but he does not disclose anything else. He is scared, cryptic and cries continuously, while repeating he cannot say anything because things are very complicated. He says he will be able to speak when the situation is calmer. He seems calm but gets tense from time to time. AJC also asks his sister not to cease in her inquiries, since he would do the same with her. He also asks her for help again.

On April 9th, after some hours of conversation trying to convince him to say what is wrong, he accepts to explain what is causing this conflict with himself and this suffering. He explains NAU and ACH had been continuously talking about their religion and tradition. He was forbidden from eating pork and forced to join other Muslim guys his age to talk about Islam. The day he asked his parents to pick him up urgently he had realized his roommates' intentions: they had asked him to blow himself up. They kept insisting, threatening to kill his sister should he not do it. They told him they would give him the explosives to do it but did not mention when it would happen. Since AJC is back home, he has had to tell NAU and ACH his whereabouts, so that they could give him behavior instructions that he had to follow in front of his family. They did this through Whatsapp messages that he deleted right after. AJC's family had remarked that every time they were asking him anything, he would hesitate and say he would have to "think about it." He likes Prok because he used to listen to his songs (that include hate speech and insults against the police) with NAU. His family also remarks that he has suddenly started hating dogs, even though he used to love them. ■

Some questions we can ask ourselves **to reflect on this case**:

- Do you think AJC suffered from a "mental illness"? Why?
- Which changes can you identify in AJC's behavior?
- In relation to the 3N model, which needs does AJC show? What is the Narrative his roommates provide? Which Networks does AJC have? Which Narratives do these Networks provide? In which order do these elements occur and how do they interact with each other?



- Using the Recruitment and Violent Mobilization model, which phases can you detect in this case? Are NAU and ACH recruiters? Why? Which vulnerabilities does AJC present? Which recruitment strategies do NAU and ACH use? Do they manage to brainwash AJC? Why? Does AJC justify the use of violence in the end?
- Which prevention methods could help AJC? Which specific interventions could work? Which protective factors could have been reinforced in AJC?
- Which signals could be detected in this case?
- Regarding AJC's family: could they detect his radicalization? Which steps should they have taken? When could they have realized what was happening? To whom could they have talked to?
- Which evaluation tools and procedures could have been used to measure AJC's radicalization?

11.3. Evaluation tools

There are different techniques to collect information about the radicalization process, such as systematic observation, interviews or discussion groups. In the section 8 (“Assessment of the risk of radicalization”) some tools were presented. Below, are concrete examples of instruments that may also be useful.



Social Inclusion for Adolescents Scale (Moyano, Lobato, Ventsislavova, & Trujillo, 2020).

Indicate how much you agree with each statement.		1	2	3	4	5
Number 1 indicates <i>full disagreement</i> and number 5 <i>full agreement</i> with the statement.						
Needs covered	1. My family has the security of having a house to live in					
	2. At home, I have a room where I can study and rest					
	3. I am receiving good training and education					
	4. I have all the material things that I need (videogames, records, laptop, television set, clothes, etc.)					
	5. I have a family that understands me, loves me and gives me affection					
	6. My relatives have the security of having a job to earn their living and live decently					
Self-efficacy	7. I can successfully overcome the hard moments of my life					
	8. I usually face the important changes in my life quite well.					
	9. In general terms, I feel satisfied with myself					
	10. In my life, I am a strong-willed person and I usually get what I want					
	11. I feel able to overcome the problems I have					
	11. I feel able to overcome the problems I have					
	13. I consider myself a hard-working person who can go through hard times					

Social support	14. There are several individuals I trust to help me solve my problems						
	15. When I feel lonely, there are several individuals I can talk to						
	16. I have several friends who respect, love and help me						
Job training	17. I expect to finish my studies						
	18. I am currently learning positive things for improving as a person and being able to find a job						
	19. I consider myself a good student						
	20. I have a good chance of having a good job in the future						
Social integration	21. When the moment comes, I would like to have a family and live here in Spain						
	22. If I ever have children, I would like them to receive an education based on Human Rights and democratic values						
	23. In the future, I will follow the rules and laws that I must follow as a citizen						
	24. When I grow up, I will be part of this society and I will be away from marginal environments						

Social Alienation Scale (Bélanger et al., 2019).

Indicate how much you agree with each statement. Number 1 indicates <i>full disagreement</i> and number 6 <i>full agreement</i> with the statement.	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. I avoid social gatherings and activities associated with my country						
2. I refuse to be part of society						

3. I strive to be distant from the average citizen of my country						
4. I fit in well with my country's values and beliefs						
5. I have stable and positive interactions with other members of my country						
6. I identify strongly with my country's culture and values						

Note: items 4, 5, and 6 are reverse scored.

Activism-Radicalism Intention Scales (Moskalenko & McCauley, 2009; adapted to Spanish by Trujillo, Prados, & Moyano, 2016).

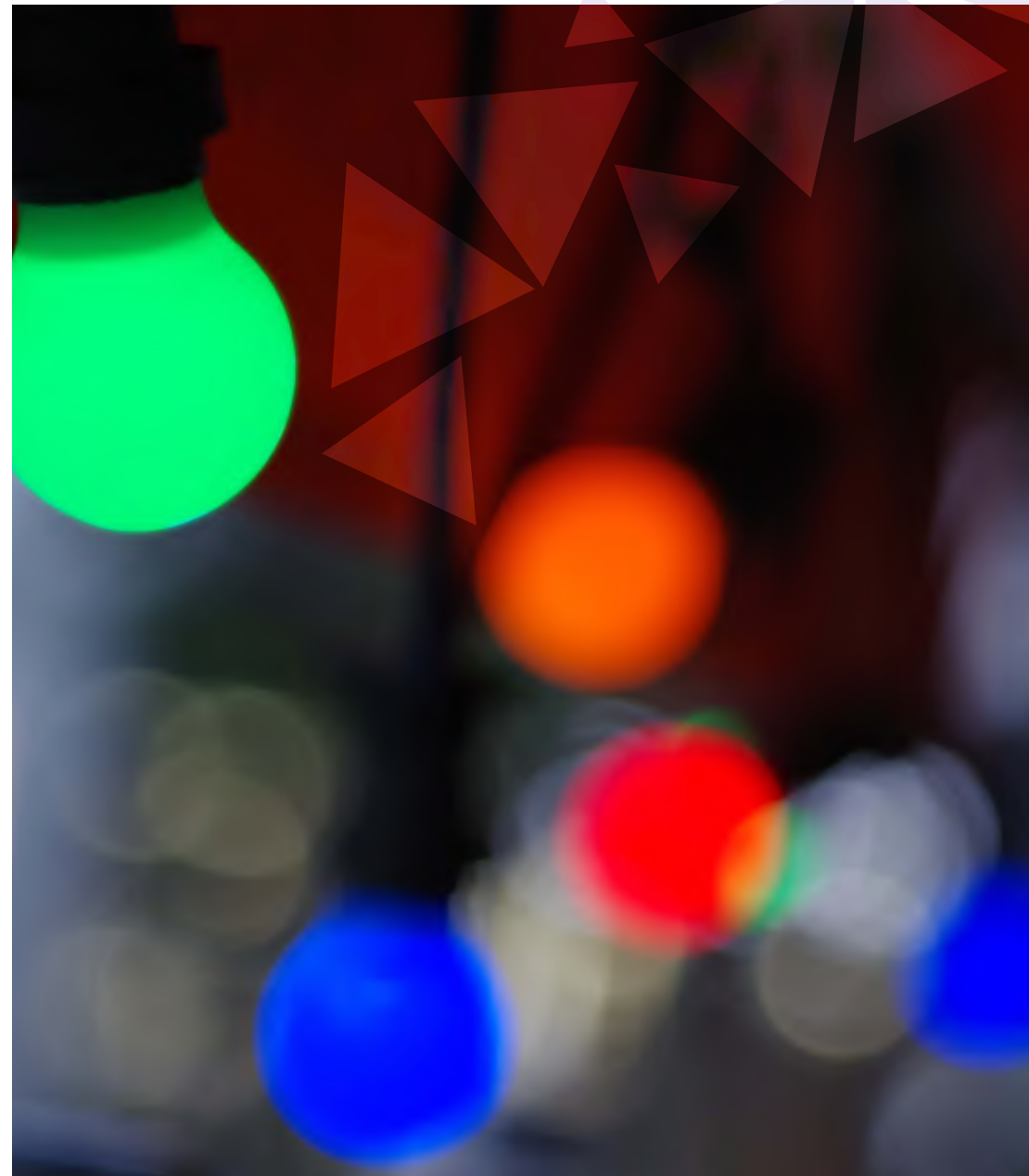
Indicate how much you agree with each statement. Number 1 indicates <i>full disagreement</i> and number 7 <i>full agreement</i> with the statement.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Intention of activism	1. I would join/belong to an organization that fights for my group's political and legal rights							
	2. I would donate money to an organization that fights for my group's political and legal rights							
	3. I would volunteer my time working (i.e. write petitions, distribute flyers, recruit people, etc.) for an organization that fights for my group's political and legal rights							
	4. I would travel for one hour to join in a public rally, protest, or demonstration in support of my group							

Intention of radicalism	5. I would continue to support an organization that fights for my group's political and legal rights even if the organization sometimes breaks the law									
	6. I would continue to support an organization that fights for my group's political and legal rights even if the organization sometimes resorts to violence									
	7. I would participate in a public protest against oppression of my group even if I thought the protest might turn violent									
	8. I would attack police or security forces if I saw them beating members of my group									

Support for Political Violence Scale (Bélanger et al., 2019).

Indicate how much you agree with each statement.						
Number 1 indicates <i>full disagreement</i> and number 6 <i>full agreement</i> with the statement.	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. When using violence to further a just cause, everybody is fair game						
2. Violence is necessary for social change						
3. It is acceptable to retaliate against someone who insults my values and beliefs						
4. I would never consider physical violence to further a just cause						
5. We should never use violence as a way to try to change society						
6. There are effective ways to try to change this country's society other than resorting to violence						

Note: items 4, 5, and 6 are reverse scored.



Self-Sacrifice Scale (Bélanger, Caouette, Sharvit, & Dugas, 2014).

Indicate how much you agree with each statement. Number 1 indicates <i>full disagreement</i> and number 7 <i>full agreement</i> with the statement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. It is senseless to sacrifice one's life for a cause							
2. I would defend a cause to which I am truly committed even if my loved ones rejected me							
3. I would be prepared to endure intense suffering if it meant defending an important cause							
4. I would not risk my life for a highly important cause							
5. There is a limit to what one can sacrifice for an important cause							
6. My life is more important than any cause							
7. I would be ready to give my life for a cause that is extremely dear to me							
8. I would be willing to give away all my belongings to support an important cause							
9. I would not be ready to give my life away for an important cause							
10. I would be ready to give up all my personal wealth for a highly important cause							

Note: items 1, 4, 6, and 9 are reverse scored.



11.4. Films for Debate

The following films, documentaries and TV shows can be used to debate some of the contents explained in this guide.

Films to analyze radicalization processes	
Young Ahmed (2019; directed by Jean-Pierre Dardenne and Luc Dardenne)	Questions to debate: Could we identify any radicalization model?
Horses of God (2012; directed by Nabil Ayouch)	Which risk factors are present? Which protective factors are present and absent?
Layla M. (2016; directed by Mijke de Jong)	Are there recruiters? What are their techniques?
Films to analyze radicalization processes	
Young Ahmed (2019; directed by Jean-Pierre Dardenne and Luc Dardenne)	Questions to debate: Could we identify any radicalization model?
Horses of God (2012; directed by Nabil Ayouch)	Which risk factors are present? Which protective factors are present and absent?
Layla M. (2016; directed by Mijke de Jong)	Are there recruiters? What are their techniques?
Films to analyze deradicalization processes	
American history X (1998; directed by Tony Kaye)	Questions to debate: What causes or facilitates the rejection of violence?
Paradise now (2005; directed by Hany Abu-Assad)	What psychological and social factors are seen in the process of rejecting violence?
Heaven will wait (2016; directed by Marie-Castille Mention-Schaar)	

Films that dramatize real events related to radicalization	
The wave (2008; directed by Dennis Gansel)	Questions to debate: Could these situations happen again?
The Stanford prison experiment (2015; directed by Kyle Patrick Alvarez)	Can “normal” people radicalize, like in these movies? Could we explain these events with the radicalization models explained in this guide?
Hannah Arendt (2012; directed by Margarethe von Trotta)	
Documentaries	
1916: The Irish rebellion (2016; directed by Bríona Nic Dhiarmada, Pat Collins, and Ruan Magan)	Documentary divided in three episodes that explains the events leading to the Easter Rising, the confrontation between the UK and Ireland and the consequent creation of the IRA.
The challenge: ETA (2020; directed by Hugo Stuvén)	Documentary miniseries that explains the history of the Basque separatist group ETA, from their first killing in 1968, to their end in 2018. It also shows the counter terrorist measures applied by the Spanish Government against ETA.
Children of the revolution (2010; directed by Shane O’Sullivan)	Documentary film about Ulrike Meinhof and Fusako Shigenobu, leaders of the Red Army Faction and the Japanese Red Army, two far left terrorist organizations.
Rebuilding Utøya (2018; directed by Carl Javér)	Documentary film about the attack that took place on July 22nd 2011 on the Utøya island in Norway. It is narrated by the victims.

My trip to Al-Qaeda (2010; directed by Alex Gibney)	Documentary film based on the work of Lawrence Wright, Author of <i>The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11</i> , about the origins of Al-Qaeda.
The jihadis next door (2016; directed by Jamie Roberts)	Documentary film about the members of Islamic State. Told by a mole within the organization.
Un terrorista vive al lado (2016; directed by Jamie Roberts)	Documentary that shows how the members of the Islamic State live using an undercover journalist.



TV shows	
Kalifat (2020; directed by Wilhelm Behrman, Niklas Rockström, and Goran Kapetanovic)	In this TV series, we can observe some radicalization processes and the role recruiters play in them. It shows the stories of different youths, some of whom are radicalizing, while some others are militants trying to leave the so-called Islamic State.
Patria (2020; directed by Aitor Gabilondo, Félix Viscarret, and Óscar Pedraza)	In this TV series we can observe the impact terrorism has on the families of both terrorists and victims. The show talks about the story of two close families that are affected by their close relations with ETA.
Black crows (2017; directed by Adel Adeeb, Hussam Alrantisi, Kinan Iskandarani, Saeed Rayed, and Hussein Shawkat)	This TV show talks about the lives of women and children under the so-called Islamic State. It shows the manipulation of religious discourse, the recruitment process through social media, and the contrast between the publicity and the reality within the areas dominated by the terrorist organization.
Rise of the nazis (2019; directed by Julian Jones)	This series analyzes how Hitler and the nazis took power in Germany and marked the end of democracy. It combines the use of old images and dramatic reconstructions to show how Hitler convinced Germany that, with him, it would be great again.

11.5. Online resources

The following institutions and online resources can be relevant for tackling violent extremism and radicalization.

ConnectFutures

It is a collaborative community working for social tolerance. One of their lines of work involves facilitating updated information on the process of violent radicalization and its prevention. They offer trainings and capacity building for professionals working on the ground. They also have reports, e-books on good practices, real stories, international data, and education ideas against violent extremism. They have also made films based on the stories of former extremist militants and their environment.

Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)

This network of experts works with radicalized individuals and individuals at risk of radicalization. They link very diverse stakeholders in the field, and based their work on sharing knowledge, experiences, and good practices.

Terrorism and Radicalisation (TerRa)

This is an European project that intends to remark the positive role of victims and former militants in preventing radicalization, giving practical orientations, and training specific groups of professionals. On their website, we can find different kinds of resources, like manuals and training videos.



First-line-practitioners

This web portal provides updated information, guides, workshops, and resources for professionals on the ground fighting against prejudice, discrimination, polarization, radicalization, and violent extremism. Furthermore, the portal has a list of professionals that can be accessed and used to contact practitioners.

Hermes

Learning platform that integrates workshops on the prevention of violent extremism and organized crime, developed within different European projects.

Hedayah

Hedayah is the main international organization using knowledge and experience to counter violent extremism (CVE). They do this through dialogue, communication, capacity-building programs, research, and data analysis. Their website provides some resources that go from counter-narratives to guides to help create intervention programs.

Centro Internacional de Formación para Autoridades y Líderes (CIFAL)

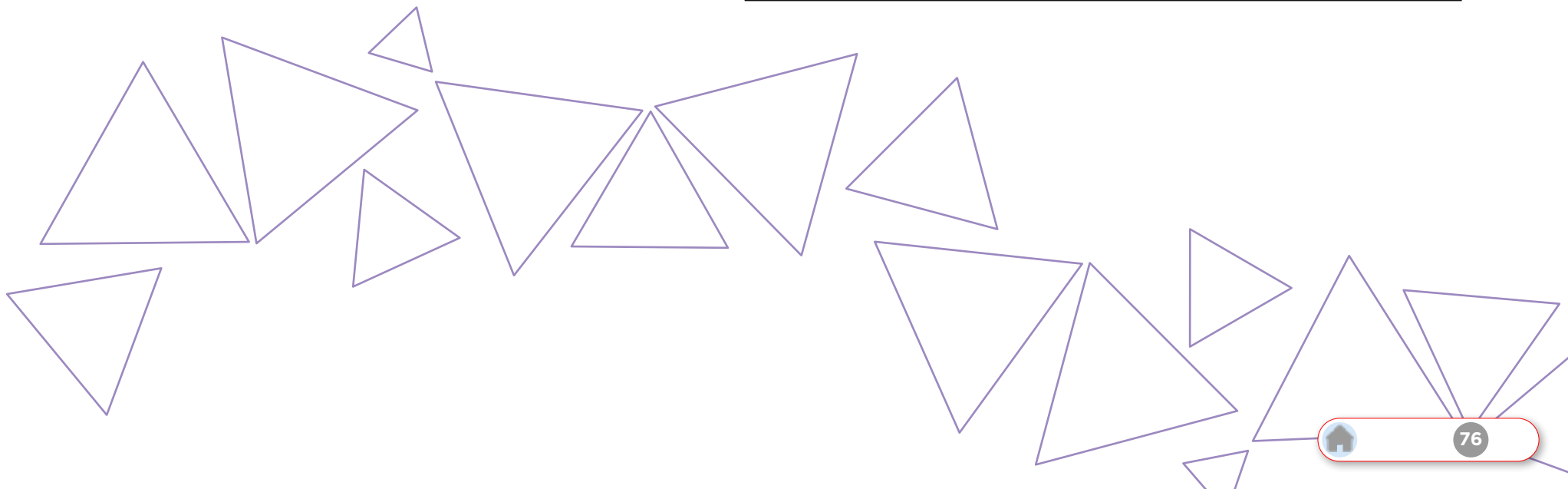
CIFAL is a world network that comprises 20 capacity-building centers for authorities and civil society members. They mostly work on sustainable development and other mandates and objectives of the United Nations. Each center offers different resources and training courses. One of these centers, for instance, [CIFAL Málaga](#), contributes with their knowledge and experiences to a methodology to the creation of prevention plans.

Strong Cities

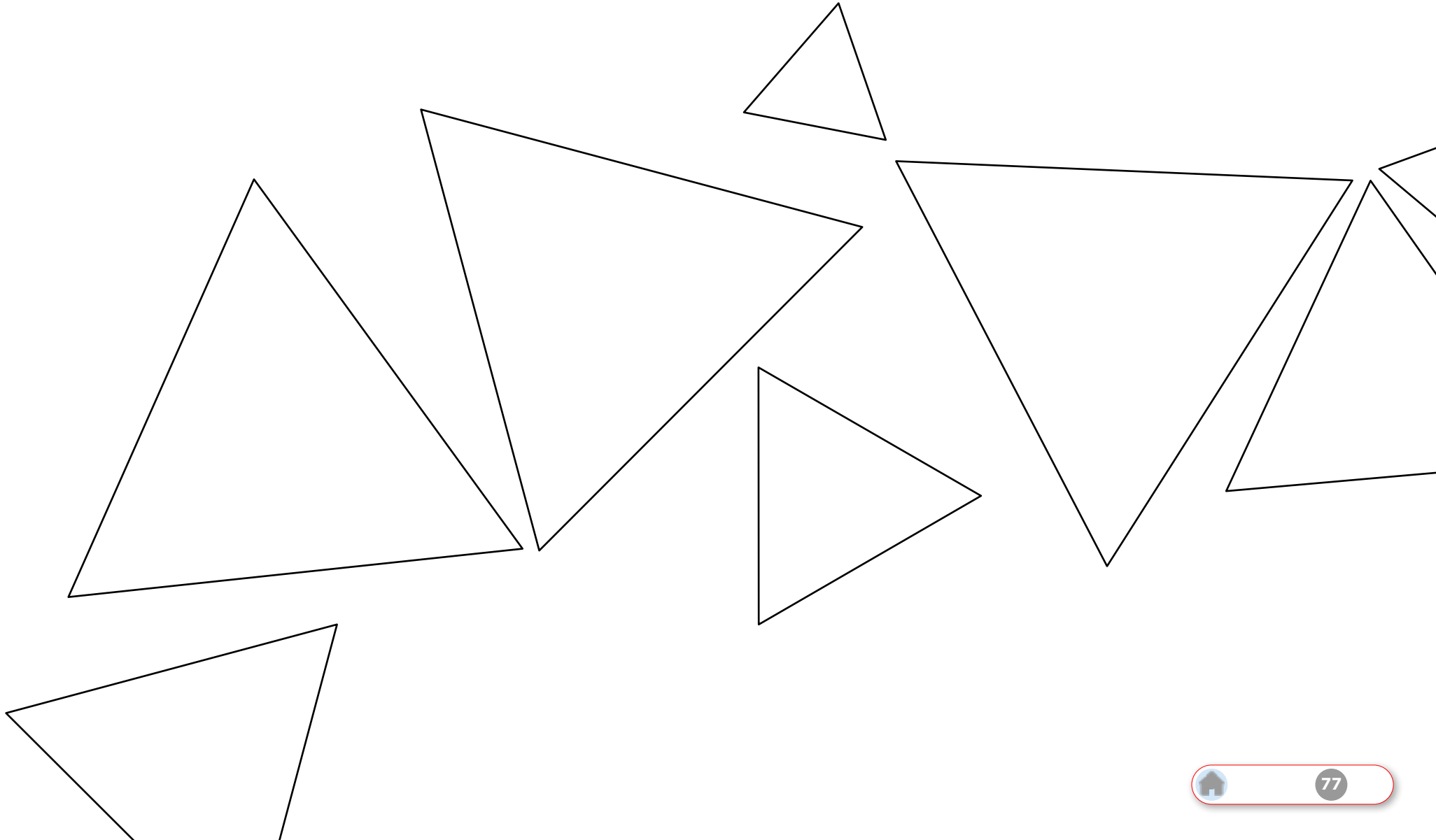
The Strong Cities Network links mayors, local policymakers, and professionals in order to increase social cohesion and community resilience from violent extremism. This network offers different kinds of groups, workshops, and resources to foster resilience.

The Science of P/CVE

This portal brings together several scientists that are devoted to the prevention and countering of violent extremism. They provide assistance in the design, development, and evaluation of prevention programs.



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