



PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

A GUIDE FOR THE
OBSERVATION OF
RADICALIZATION PROCESSES





Internal Intelligence and Security Agency
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INTRODUCTION

Due to its global, hybrid and multi-faceted character, jihadist terrorism continues to represent one of the great challenges for the security of our country and of Europe, also after the decline of the Islamic State parable.

The European Commission, already in 2005, identified prevention as one of the four pillars of counter-terrorism action, providing its support to the Member States to implement appropriate multidisciplinary and multi-actor initiatives and hoping for the full involvement of civil society (*Council of Europe, 2005*).

This guide has been developed in continuity with the prevention initiatives promoted in the European field, as it proposes a multi-agency approach for the observation of the processes of radicalization of teenagers and young people, through a model that involves different actors in direct contact with vulnerable individuals.

Schools, local social and health services, prisons, security forces and civil society can in fact communicate in a new “community of knowledge”, by sharing different expertise, languages and sensitivities to intercept radicalization process in the bud and lay the foundations for early, effective and protective intervention in a multi-agency perspective.

This guide was drafted keeping in mind the concept of a “toolbox”: in the first chapter we find some defining elements of violent extremist radicalization and the main interpretative models developed over the years in the academic and operational fields.

The second chapter focuses on how the concept of prevention changes according to the disciplinary sectors involved as well as to its phases, and presents the multi-agency approach. The third chapter introduces the GREG-4D model and the GREG-T grid for the observation of radicalization processes of teenagers and young people, which are tools developed to encourage acquisition and analysis of useful information for assessing risk and planning a disengagement path.

The fourth chapter presents a selection of jihadist narratives linked to radicalization processes to facilitate the focus on those doctrinal, semiotic and symbolic elements that are useful both for identifying weak signals and for starting preventive activities on individual cases.

This guide is meant to be an opportunity for theoretical and operational reflection to support the observation of radicalization processes at the individual level. Therefore, at the methodological level, although briefly mentioned, the more general sociological, economic, geopolitical and cultural aspects, which contribute to defining the interpretative models of radicalization understood as a social phenomenon, are not addressed.

In general, the text is to be considered “open”, in the sense that it will require and may include punctual updates of the topics covered, of the tools proposed, of the narratives as will emerge from the continuous comparison in the field and from the developments of academic research that will be incorporated and integrated in future editions.





RADICALIZATION: MODELS COMPARED





RADICALIZATION: MODELS COMPARED

The definition of radicalization adopted in this guide is that of a progressive transformation process whereby “a person acquires a system of mixed extremist values, including the willingness to use, support, or facilitate violence, as a method to effect societal change” (Allen, 2007).

Before going over the most widespread interpretative models in the scientific literature, it is important to recall the fundamental difference between “**cognitive radicalization**” (non-violent) and “**violent radicalization**”. In the first case, the change of the individual is limited to adopting radical ideas and belief systems, while in the latter “the individual takes the additional step of employing violence to further the views derived from cognitive radicalization” (Vidino, Brandon, 2012).

In other words, if all the terrorists who took action have become radicalized, not all radicalized individuals take part in terrorist attacks (Clutterbuck, 2015) or join **violent extremism** by advocating, supporting or committing acts that can lead to terrorism (Council of Europe, 2015).

In the scientific literature there is a widespread consensus on the fact that there is no single or prevalent cause nor a unique path that leads individuals from radicalization to terrorism. The main theoretical models available have been largely developed starting from the analysis of the profiles of the individuals who have taken action and differ between them as they focus on different aspects of the process.

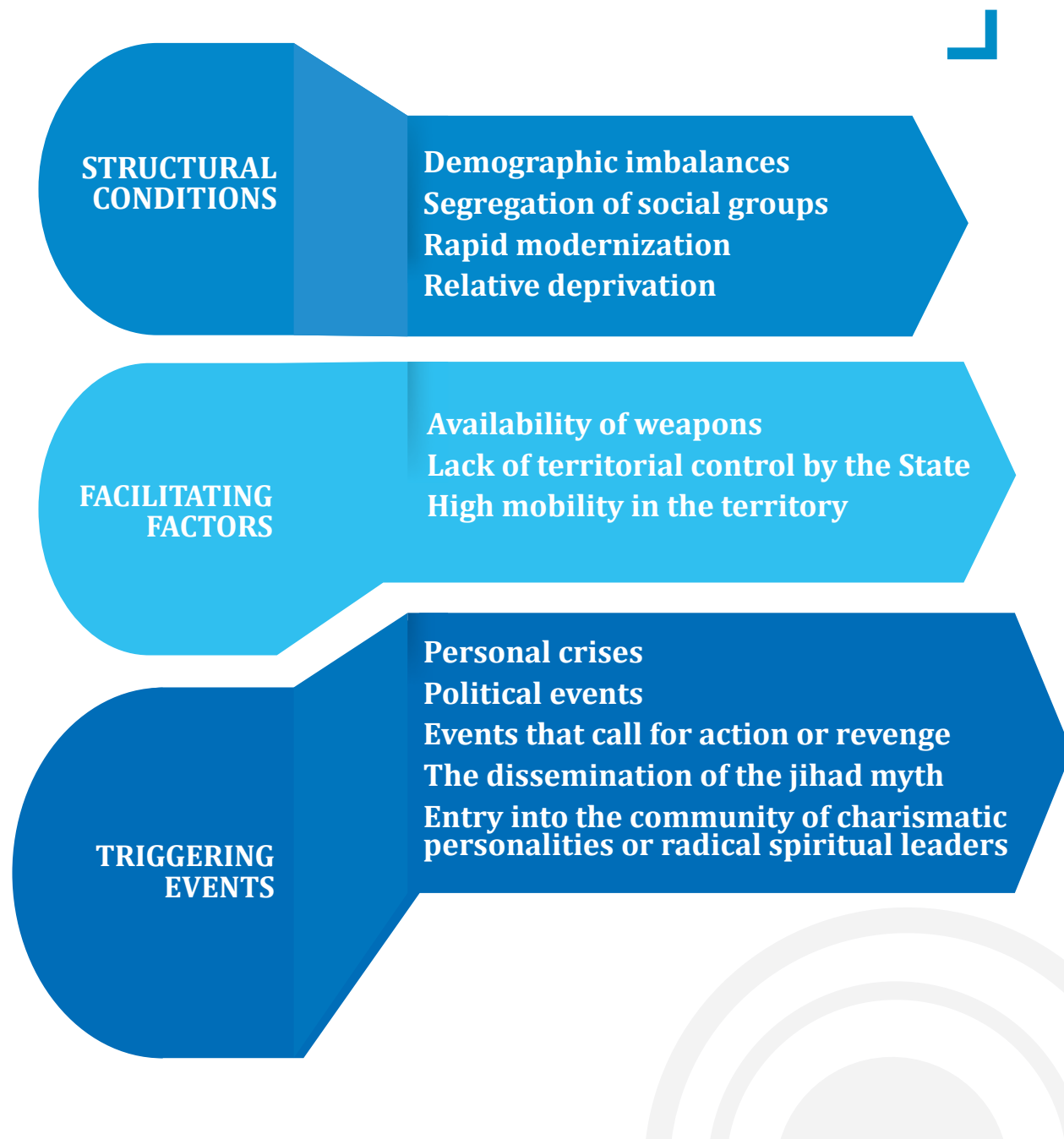
In general, we can identify a group of studies that considers the radicalization path as a more predictable process, such as those who are inspired by the *conveyor belt* model, and a second group that tends to keep separated the radicalization of ideas from that of actions and is generally observed in less predictable radicalization routes.

Finally, others place emphasis on self-radicalization and help define its more individualized and unpredictable aspects.

Most of the models highlight the **dynamic and multifactorial character of radicalization**, with the aim of identifying those contextual or structural elements that can advance, slow down or reverse the process.

Such dynamics of progress or regression can occur when single **push factors**, i.e. conditions that make the individual receptive to the radical message, like biographical vulnerability, personal path, claims - intersect with **pull factors**, i.e. the strategies used by the radical group for the recruitment and mobilization. These strategies respond to different motivations, such as an individual search for meaning, the desire to belong to a social network, the desire to be part of an elite, the need to obtain redemption or social rescue and even to find a heroic death - **within an environment favourable to radicalization or in the presence of favourable external influences**.

Often, in fact, certain **structural conditions** as well as group dynamics and triggering events can act as a catalyst or facilitate and accelerate this process (Bjørge, 2005).





1. Linear or conveyor belt models

In these models, radicalization is seen as a gradual process in which the individual passes from a pre-radicalization status, often characterized by individual elements of vulnerability, to a subsequent self-identification status featuring a violent radical message, followed by a third polarization status by adopting a violent mindset, which justifies assaulting specific individuals up until the last status, which reaches to the terrorist attack, accelerated by a catalyst event (Horgan, 2005; Moghaddam, 2005; Wictorowicz, 2005; Silber, Bhatt, 2007).

THE MOGHADDAM'S STAIRCASE

Iranian psychologist Fathali M. Moghaddam describes the radicalization process using the “**staircase**” model which, one step at a time, leads through six evolutionary stages up to the top of a building, where the terrorist act takes place.

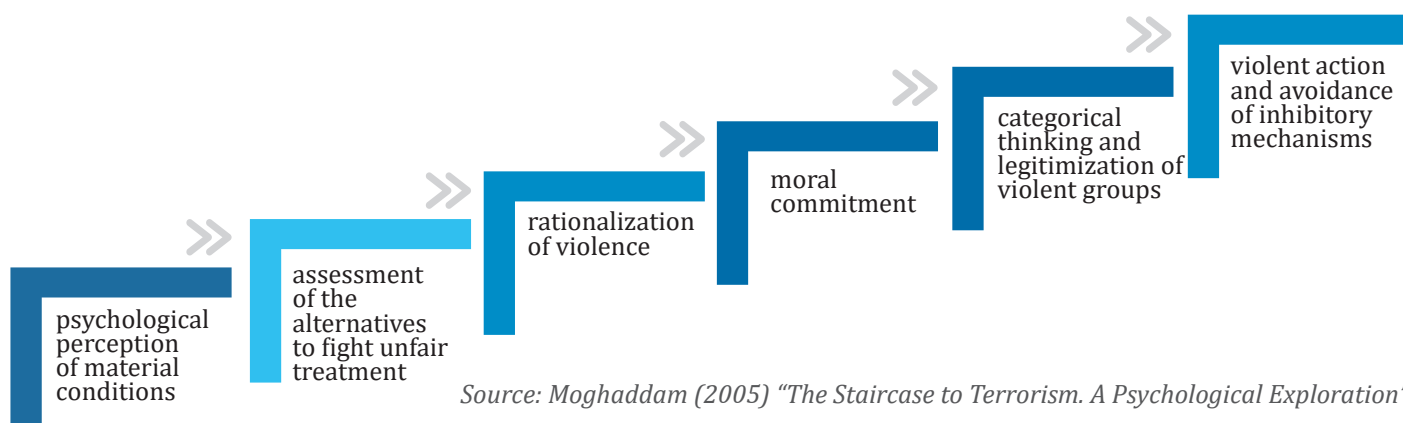
On the **ground floor**, we find all the Muslim individuals questioning the fairness of the treatment received by the society in which they live. Among them, some individuals rise to the **first floor** of the building, evaluating possible alternatives to react to what is perceived as an unfair treatment.

All those subjects who consider both the mechanisms of social mobility and access to the decision-making process as being stuck continue to climb towards the **second floor** and identify some external culprits towards whom they direct their frustration, rationalizing the use of violence.

Those who begin to positively consider the terrorist strategy go up to the **third floor** and join a group assuming a sort of moral commitment to pursue its purposes.

The individuals who go up to the **fourth floor** consolidate the ties within the group, extending their moral disengagement from society.

Finally, the **fifth floor**, which marks the failure of prevention and counter-strategies and symbolizes the terrorist attack, is reached by very few individuals.



The “staircase” seems to suggest that individuals progressing in radicalization feel they have fewer and fewer alternatives to carrying out the violent act: the pressure of the group contributes to weakening the inhibitory mechanisms. This model traces the root cause of radicalization back to the individual’s search for answers to perceived discrimination, even if it leaves unanswered the fundamental question related to the mechanisms that make individuals move from one step to the next on the staircase.

THE WIKTOROWICZ’S MODEL

In 2005, Wiktorowicz proposed a model according to which, at the origin of the radicalization process, we observe a discontinuity or an existential or identity crisis of the individual who creates the conditions for a **cognitive opening** towards the radical perspective.

This model also places emphasis on the **socialization process** that takes place within the militant group: the individual progressively becomes the drive belt of the ideology and the guarantee of survival of the group through the activity with which he engages in the recruitment of other members.

1. COGNITIVE OPENING OF THE PERSON TOWARDS NEW IDEAS



2. SEARCH FOR A MEANING WITHIN A RELIGIOUS FRAMEWORK



3. ALIGNMENT OF THE NEWBIE TO THE GROUP'S FRAMEWORK OF VALUES AND BELIEFS



4. SOCIALIZATION (INSTRUCTIONS, INDOCTRINATION, TRAINING ETC.)





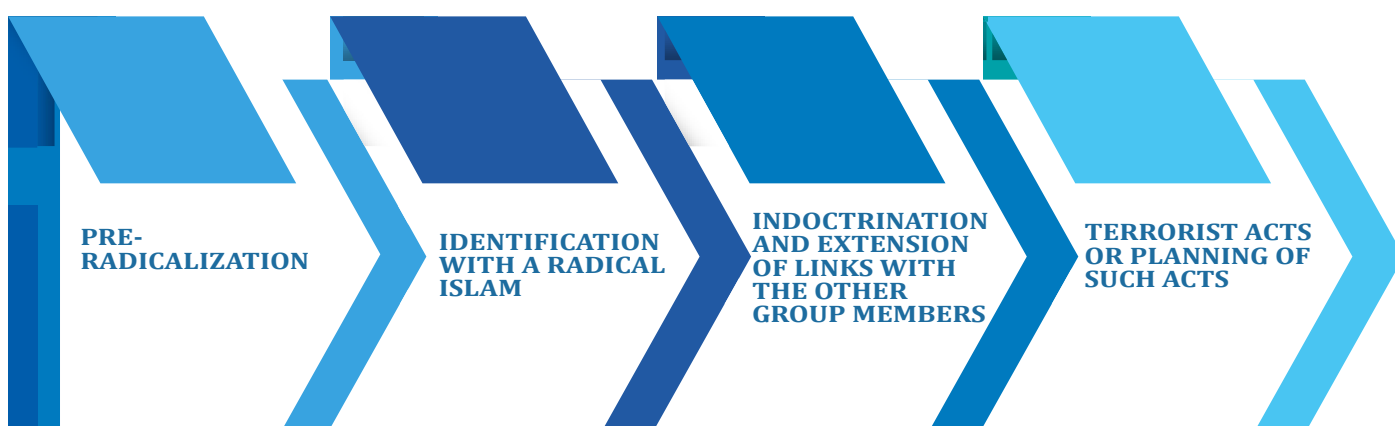
PRECHT'S LINEAR MODEL

The model elaborated by Thomas Precht in 2007 focuses on the external factors that influence *home-grown* terrorism and violent Islamist extremism in Europe in order to identify both the specific characteristics and the respective counter-measures. Precht considers radicalization as a sociological phenomenon in which issues like membership, identity, group dynamics and values are relevant elements in the transformation process. Religion, as such, plays an important role, but for some it probably only serves as a vehicle for other goals.

Among the elements that contribute to radicalization, this scholar places some **fundamental factors** (e.g. Muslim identity crisis, discrimination experiences, alienation and perceived injustices), **triggering factors** (Western foreign policy, presence of a charismatic leader and glorification of jihad), and **opportunity factors** (e.g. access to physical places such as mosques, schools, prisons and virtual spaces such as the Internet in which subjects influence each other and are recruited).

As in other linear models, also according to Precht's model the individual must go through all the stages to arrive to violent actions, but often stops at intermediate stages and does not go as far as to the terrorist act.

From the point of view of prevention and counter-measures, radicalization processes developing in accordance with a linear model facilitate interventions because of the potential predictability of their development.



Precht's linear model (2007)

2

Non-linear models

Models that **separate the radicalization of thoughts from violent mobilization** assume that, on the one hand, someone may develop radicalized thoughts without ever mobilizing and, on the other, immediately pass to a mobilization phase while only then being indoctrinated.

Among the non-linear models, the most representative is the two-pyramids model (McCauley, Moskalenko, 2008; 2009; 2011; 2017): the first pyramid concerns the “opinions” (thoughts) and the second one regards the “actions”, both are divided into four stages. The model assumes that every individual simultaneously occupies a stage in both pyramids and fluently moves between levels, facilitated by transition factors, both internal and external, which act as activators (internal), catalysts (external), inhibitors (internal) and “interveners” (external).

This model tries to explain the autonomy between extremist thinking and radicalization of action by focusing on other mechanisms that can lead even an inert individual to climb the pyramid up to violent action (e.g. “the power of love”, which induces the person to follow an individual with whom they are in a significant relationship, such as a relative or friend, in embracing more extreme positions).

In these cases **it is more difficult to identify the path of the radicalization process**, and the mechanisms that determine it could be other than the sole embracing of violent radical thinking: mobilization could be facilitated by a culture of violence, in-group peer pressure, and an internal code of honour that make mobilization functional to being awarded a status (Bartlett et al., 2010).



The two-pyramids model (McCauley, Moskalenko, 2008; 2010)



3

Self-radicalization

Models that refer to **self-radicalization** (Sageman, 2004; 2008; Hafez, Mullins, 2015; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2014) place emphasis on the process through which an individual or a small group become radicalized, almost always through social media, even reaching the point of mobilizing independently and without a terrorist organization behind (lone wolves). As for the latter case, it is important to underline that the typical individual is described as someone “caring-who feels morally obliged” by an unusual sympathy for the victims of injustice, rather than “disconnected-disordered”, as it is more frequent in the cases of armed assaults in schools.

Sageman suggests four factors to explain this radicalization process:

1. Feeling of moral outrage caused by the perception of having suffered unfair treatment and discrimination.

The conflict situation in predominantly Muslim regions such as Iraq, Palestine, Syria, but also in some ghettoized communities in Europe, is perceived as a real moral outrage by some individuals.

2. A specific interpretation of the world.

“There is a real war against Islam”: this is an emotional interpretation, which encompasses several thematic cores including the Palestinian question, personal discrimination experiences, a representation of Islamic communities in the media that favours a deviant or marginal image.

3. Resonance with personal experiences.

The perception of humiliating events involving Islamic communities around the world resonates with the humiliation felt locally or personally and helps build a powerful narrative of global victimization of Muslims.

4. Mobilization through the Internet.

The radicalization process can start and be boosted through the Internet and social networks that provide social spaces where individuals can meet up, share radical points of view, develop recruitment strategies and offer mutual support.

Sageman’s model, also known as “**Jihad without leadership**”, shifts the focus from the threat posed by organizations like Al Qaeda (AQ), to that posed by small groups and the influence they exert on their members, emphasizing the emotional aspects of radicalization: competing for a status, anger at perceived injustice, love for the mates of one’s select group and shame for being outdone by those who die as martyrs.



CONCLUSIONS

The different models that describe the radicalization process identify at least three critical moments for its initiation and development: a phase of **individual change** (e.g. an increase in religiosity, the search for identity, the cognitive openness, the perception of deprivation), a second phase which is activated in a radical sense by **external factors** (e.g. discrimination suffered or events that are interpreted as an attack against Muslims) and a third one involving the **transition to violent radicalization**, which generally occurs when the individual socializes with like-minded people, on a real or virtual level.

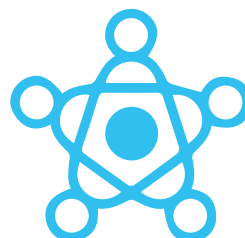
It is important to highlight that these phases are not necessarily sequential and can also overlap, meaning that a person can skip a phase and directly take action or, alternatively, disengage at any time and abandon the process altogether.

Prevention today therefore faces the challenge of acquiring observation and intervention tools to react effectively both in regard to predictability of certain linear paths, in which the strength of the radical group is still the propulsion engine, and in the face of the unpredictability of the paths of single individuals who, driven by strictly personal motivations, can adopt individual violent solutions even in the lack of a real radicalization process.



2

PREVENTION: TERMINOLOGICAL ISSUES AND AREAS OF INTERVENTION





PREVENTION: TERMINOLOGICAL ISSUES AND AREAS OF INTERVENTION

Initiatives for **Preventing** Violent Extremism (PVE) are put in place in the initial stages of the radicalization process and differ from **Countering** Violent Extremism (CVE) activities which instead involve interventions to stop or control the identification of a person with jihadist ideology, when it is already underway.

PVE intervention measures address radicalization at **macro, meso and micro levels**, and are therefore divided into activities both for the population in general, and for sections of it, or even for specific individuals, using, depending on the recipients, different methodologies, tools and approaches.

Over the years, it has been observed that the strength of the jihadist movement has been that of exploiting the dissatisfaction of young Muslims by massively spreading simple and convincing answers within the cyber-social ecosystem (Antinori, 2020). In response to this phenomenon, for example, **macro-level** initiatives seek to fit into the supply/demand dynamics of radicalization to reduce the appeal of the jihadist narrative, by promoting online “**counter-narrative**” and “**alternative narrative**” campaigns.

Meso-level initiatives, on the other hand, aim to reach specific society sections through direct contact with individuals and groups considered as vulnerable in order to increase their resilience in regard to the radical proposal. Among the most critical age groups in terms of radicalisation, teenagers are the most exposed; **school** is therefore one of the main environments to which this type of initiatives are addressed.

The extremely varied approaches are implemented by a broad range of actors and can focus on developing psychosocial skills reinforcing values such as tolerance, democracy and civic sense, on aspects relating to the Islamic religious tradition, on programmes trying to overcome barriers and prejudices of the various players involved. The initiatives may include roundtable discussions on topics of interest, theatre activities, visits to places of worship, meetings with successful Islamic figures, awareness-raising and training on related topics. Targets can range from preteens, teenagers and young adults, to families, especially mothers.

In the wake of the PVE experiences made in Europe and beyond, it has been observed that the presence of a strategy at the national level has the advantage of setting guidelines and common methodologies for harmonizing interventions in a given country.



However, the most effective practices have also highlighted that the **local level** - be it regional, provincial or municipal - is the most appropriate and strategic one to coordinate meso and micro intervention levels, in a multi-actor and multi-agency perspective.

It is on this level, in fact, that it is possible to have a greater knowledge of the local issues and to build a local network of contacts by connecting with all the actors involved, or raise the awareness of an already existing one and train it to recognize the weak signals of radicalization and to use prevention tools *“to favour an approach that responds accordingly to the specific characteristics of the territory”* (Dambruoso, Graziano, 2018).

Micro-level approaches, also called direct interventions, include actions aiming at the detachment of an individual from a radicalized mindset or at disengagement from a violent extremist group. This category can include several types of interventions that are customized according to the single cases and to the risk and protection factors each time identified as prevalent.

In the psycho-social field, when focusing on goals, it is preferable to talk about **primary, secondary and tertiary prevention**. Primary prevention seeks to prevent the start of the radicalization process; secondary prevention aims at disengagement or at preventing the individual from moving from a radicalized mindset onto action; finally, tertiary prevention is implemented after the individual has committed violence or a crime, in order to prevent recidivism and encourage their reintegration into society.

1

Primary prevention

Primary prevention is **general** if it is meant for a large population, with interventions designed to mitigate those push and pull factors that may activate radicalization processes, and aimed to increase social cohesion and resilience against disruptive influences. These are generally educational and vocational activities that aim to increase the acquisition of psycho-social skills to foster the emotional and psychological well-being with which to manage one's emotions, mitigate the conflict and negative influences of radical narratives, and acquire marketable skills for jobs. Prevention projects are developed by a large number of public and private actors, educational institutions or local welfare and mental health services, also with the involvement of local communities.

Primary prevention is **specific** if the beneficiaries are individuals showing vulnerabilities (e.g. unemployment, disability, recent migration, etc.), even if not specifically linked to radicalization, and the program is tailored to the needs of the individual.

In this case, vulnerability corresponds to a risk of adopting deviant behaviours, and prevention tries to respond to this issue by taking into consideration both assets and weaknesses of the person.

For example, specific prevention interventions can consist of educational activities that increase personal resilience, psychosocial support or vocational training, and can also be implemented by making the individual join a group that includes a population that is not vulnerable or does not have the same vulnerabilities.

2

Secondary and tertiary prevention

Secondary prevention is aimed at all individuals who seem attracted to a violent narrative, but have not moved onto mobilization. It is a broad category which includes both those who have begun to express an interest in extremist ideology and those who have continued to follow the path of radicalization and may have already come into contact with violent extremist groups or expressed a wish to do so. In the first phase of the radicalization process, an early intervention (see par. 3) could favour the disengagement of these individuals, reducing the risk threshold.

Even if at the time of the analysis they have not necessarily committed violent actions, the beneficiaries of secondary prevention are individuals who potentially pose a threat to society. Therefore, the secondary prevention approach sets the goal of promoting disengagement, reducing the possibility of mobilization of the individual (see paragraph 4 for the disengagement action).

Tertiary prevention concerns the individuals who have already taken action or have been convicted of a terrorism-related offence. The goal of tertiary prevention is to **discourage the return to mobilization** after the person has served a sentence in a prison context or through community or alternative sanctions.

Typical tertiary prevention approaches are the promotion of disengagement (see paragraph 5) and/or deradicalization (see paragraph 4) and, if these were successful, rehabilitation with subsequent reintegration.

These are important challenges because the prison experience can amplify the perception of having suffered an unfair treatment and reinforce the idea of being a victim of the system (Caparesi, 2019).

3

Early intervention

Early intervention takes place when the individual shows attraction to the violent extremist message, with the aim of distracting him, providing him with effective alternatives at an early stage of the radicalization process.

In this case, the necessary information can be collected using the “Grid for the observation of radicalization vulnerabilities, GREG-4D Model” (see chapter 3 and annex 1), for further:

1. analysis of the critical areas as regards the possible progression of the radicalization process;
2. identification of risk profiles for the community;
3. detection of action strategies to manage the case.

The interventions, although depending on the personal and social context in which the individual is placed, aim to prevent the progression of radicalization by focusing on the individual’s needs through pro-social activities or by providing alternative proposals that help him achieve his personal goals. Early interventions may also require activities that directly address the deconstruction of radical narratives.

4

Deradicalization

The term initially spread to indicate programs developed in prisons to prevent recidivism and facilitate the reintegration of former prisoners into society. Only later it came to indicate the psychological and social processes through which individuals progressively reduce their involvement and commitment to extremism up to the adoption of more moderate positions, which do not involve the use of violence, and also the programs that seek to forward these processes.

Even though it is used as a synonym for the term disengagement (see chapter 5), the two concepts define two different moments in the process of detachment: deradicalization refers to the **rejection of violent ideology**, while disengagement indicates **the detachment from the violent group**, not necessarily from radical beliefs (Della Porta, Lafree, 2012).

Deradicalization interventions are generally carried out by **mentors** and/or by religious figures, and aim at the deconstruction of the violent religious or ideological message in the hope that, by embracing values shared by society, the radicalized individual will be safe from future recidivism (Rabasa et al., 2010).

In practice, the change in thinking is a **difficult goal to reach** and for this reason many European programs do not have deradicalization as their objective, but disengagement, understood as a change in behaviour and as detachment from the radical group. The stories of many former militants demonstrate that a reconsideration of beliefs and radical values mainly occurs as a result of a strong disappointment towards, for example, the methods of the extremist group, or as a consequence of a more general disillusionment about the suitability of violent ideology for the achievement of the objectives for which they had joined the group (Harris, 2015).

MENTORING

Mentoring is the coaching that is offered to a radicalized individual by a professional who, due to his/her biography and knowledge, is believed to be able to develop and support a positive change and the rehabilitation of the person with whom he/she is entrusted. Mentors address ideological or religious issues with the radicalized individuals in order to lead them to reconsider their extremist positions and the possible involvement with the violent group. They act as role models and guides for dealing with the transition from radicalization to reintegration into society.

5

Disengagement

The term “disengagement” is used to indicate that a person is no longer active from the violent radical point of view, regardless of what their current ideological orientation is. Detachment from a violent extremist group or path can be voluntary or involuntary. In the first case one detaches oneself, for example, in relation to a general maturation, the entry into a new phase of life, disappointment towards the group or its leadership, new and different interests. Sometimes the person can completely break bonds with the organization or take a less active role in the group, which could indicate the start of disengagement.

Involuntary detachment generally occurs as a result of countering efforts by the police forces, due to detention or even following an expulsion measure. Annex 5 contains a summary of the legal and administrative aspects of the fight against international terrorism.



Disengagement can also be promoted through a series of interventions which are developed on the basis of the mindset type, urges and influences from the context in which the individual is located, the presence of actors who can hinder or favour detachment (Caparesi, 2018; Millar, Caparesi, 2017).

Some individuals' cognitive acceptance of the violent message is very advanced and it is a priority to specifically address the radical narrative, for example through the inclusion of a religious mentor.

For other individuals, the material component is prevalent, and in these cases vocational and welfare programs tend to be more effective. In other cases, the radicalization process is facilitated by psycho-social vulnerabilities and therefore it is necessary to intervene also with the support of mental health professionals.

For example, psycho-social interventions that can be promoted are those that:

- (a) facilitate behavioural change;
- (b) improve relational and coping skills;
- (c) increase decision-making and problem-solving skills;
- (d) build self-esteem;
- (e) develop emotional growth;
- (f) sharpen critical thinking skills;
- (g) provide skills to improve socio-economic status.

PROMOTING DISENGAGEMENT IN EUROPE

Since 2007, after the jihadist attacks in Madrid and London, a number of deradicalization, disengagement and rehabilitation programs have been launched in some northern European countries: Great Britain, Denmark and the Netherlands, followed, after 2010, by Sweden, Germany, Austria, Belgium and France. The various models have highlighted different approaches between centralized programs, programs implemented with the involvement of local entities or programs that entrust also third sector organizations with disengagement activities. Many of these models resort preferably to the multi-agency and multi-actor methodologies. The English program named Channel is emblematic of the involvement of local entities. It was created within the Prevent strategy and launched in an experimental form in 2007, to then become permanent starting from 2015.

The program is implemented in a "pre-criminal" space and takes on cases of radicalized individuals, regardless of their violent ideology (Islamist, neo-Nazi etc.).

The law requires that a multidisciplinary working group - generally made up of representatives from universities, police, prisons and probation, military, schools, social and mental health services – meets monthly to share information on the single case, carry out risk assessments and prepare a project tailored to that individual.

The Danish strategy, also known as “the Aarhus model”, was developed in 2007 through the creation of the National Center for Prevention of Extremism (NCPE), set up within the PET Intelligence Service. The National Council of Social Services and the NCPE make up a national structure whose activity involves cooperation with different local entities (info-houses) including some already existing networks: SSP (schools, social services and police), PSP (psychiatric sector, social services and police), KSP (prison and probation, social services and police). This model envisages three intervention levels: a) militant extremism, b) individuals and groups at risk of radicalization, c) social pre-conditions; and has developed the two programs below:

- - “Deradicalization and personalized interventions”, implemented in the **pre-criminal** context for those individuals who have moved onto extreme ideologies, and applying two tools: mentoring and interviews to support the abandonment of the extreme ideology;
- - “Deradicalization: back on track”, implemented in the **criminal** context, taking place in prisons and aiming at supporting the inmate’s reintegration and abandonment of violent extremism, assigning a mentor to each inmate detained for terrorist offenses or hate crimes.

RADICALIZATION AWARENESS NETWORK – RAN

The RAN (Radicalization Awareness Network) is a network established in 2011 by the European Commission to connect teachers, educators, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, representatives of the security forces (police and prison staff) and third sector organizations involved in primary, secondary and tertiary prevention of violent extremism, on top of representatives of local authorities committed to ensuring the security of cities, as well as scholars and communication experts.

Since its creation, the network has involved over 6,000 operators from all EU Members States in ten thematic working groups to facilitate the sharing of experiences and first-hand knowledge on violent extremism, disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration of former violent extremists. Moreover, it produces publications and videos that it disseminates on its website describing the lessons learned, insights on specific topics and recommendations emerging from the meetings of the working groups.

https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/radicalisation-awareness-networkran_en

6

Areas of intervention: the web

The **Internet** is an ideal environment for the development and dissemination of extremist narratives, such as jihadist ones. First of all, the radical contents available online can be “consumed” easily, for free (or at a low cost) and potentially at any time. In fact, cases of radicalization in which there is no component linked to the web, at least in terms of occasional consumption of propaganda, are not frequent.

Furthermore, as many scholars have observed, anonymity on the web tends to produce a disinhibition effect, reducing the user’s sense of responsibility and ability to control, at the same time favouring the adoption of hostile and aggressive attitudes, with the risk to increase the polarization, hostility and extremism levels.

Moreover, visiting certain online channels can facilitate the user’s **isolation** from the surrounding context and the entry into closed circles of users in which interests, beliefs and information (even of radical nature) can be further strengthened and amplified, through the so-called “echo chamber” effect. In turn, when the algorithms employed by websites selectively offer users the information they expect through search result personalization systems, this issue can be exacerbated as a consequence (an effect often known as the “filter bubble”, Pariser, 2011).

The Internet is a real operational tool for jihadists (Marone, 2019) and can be used for various purposes, including: **spreading** propaganda and **indoctrination**; **recruiting** new militants; remotely **direct** and guide the action of sympathizers (“cybercoaching”); **transmitting information** and instructions (also of operational nature); **raising funds**.

This operational potential has been widely exploited by the so-called Islamic State. It is not the first armed group, even of jihadist nature, to make massive use of various online means of communication, including social media and apps, but it does so with an unprecedented level of sophistication and professionalism (Marone, 2015). Furthermore, its propaganda combines “official” and an “unofficial” communication.

On the one hand, the organization makes use of special communication structures, often characterized, especially in recent years, by a high professional level. On the other hand, the Islamic State can count on a number of supporters and sympathizers who have spread messages in support of the self-proclaimed “Caliphate” through various communication channels and social media, also in Italian.

To counter radicalization online, the main interventions designed for the general population are developed through the dissemination of “counternarrative” or “alternative narrative” messages.

Counter-narrative aims to provide arguments against a specific topic of jihadist propaganda, while alternative narrative has the task of offering points of view and interpretations, that differ from the violent radical perspective (details in [CHAPTER 4](#)).

Anti-extremism communication strategies aim to undermine the foundations of jihadist propaganda by promoting as an alternative such values as tolerance, citizenship, democracy, intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

Internet Service Providers (ISPs) such as Facebook, Microsoft, Google, Twitter, YouTube help prevent online radicalization by removing radical content and materials inciting violence and hatred as well as by launching counter-narrative campaigns in cooperation with governments and specialized NGOs, in compliance with the commitments made within the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism created in 2017.

Toolkits and documentation can be found at the following web addresses:

PLAY YOUR ROLE

Project that aims to counter hate speech online

<https://www.playyourrole.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/PYR-toolkit-ITALY.pdf>

PRECObIAS

How to make students more resilient to extremist content online

<https://www.precobias.eu/it/risorse-pedagogiche/>

ONE BRAVE THING

How to build alternative narrative campaigns

<https://onebravething.eu/it/>

ALTERNATIVE CAMPAIGN

<http://www.rethinkproject.eu/>

TOOLKIT RANI

Create a counternarrative campaign

https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/radicalisation-awareness-network-ran/civil-society-empowerment-programme/training-material_en

HANDBOOK OF ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVES

manual on how to build alternative narrative campaigns

https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Counter-narrative-Handbook_1.pdf

STORIES OF FORMER EXTREMISTS

<https://www.youtube.com/user/extremedialogue>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_usgevtEppg&list=PLddsRoCKISPXnO45tE8wlaJA96NOWGgp&index=3



7

Prevent radicalization of young people

Several studies have shown a progressive lowering of the starting age for radicalization processes. Since 2010, a new radical group model has established itself in Europe, smaller in size, less hierarchical and mainly made up of young homegrown Muslims.

These studies highlight the fact that the young age, adolescence in particular, is per se a risk factor for radicalization. Being considered as a phase of agitation and reorganization due to the detachment from the main attachment figures and the need to find one's own identity, adolescence and early adulthood can be accompanied by insecurity and sometimes by fear of loneliness and abandonment, especially when the young person is not part of a structured and supporting environment.

As a response to this sense of unease, **joining a radical group gives a sense of belonging, meaning and support**, and its ideology, which tends to simplify complexity into a dichotomous vision, is an easy and reassuring choice.

A recent French study analyzed data from a sample of 150 French individuals who strove to join the Islamic State between 2014 and 2016, and followed them for an average of two years (Oppetit, Campelo, Bouzar, et al., 2019). This analysis made it possible to observe that in the group of minors (70 individuals, average age 15.82 years old), compared to a corresponding group of adults (80 individuals, average age 23.32 years old), there are significantly more female individuals (81.4% vs 55%), with frequent experiences of abuse, whose main motivation for radicalization is the search for an ideal husband/love. Minors have more frequently experienced self-harm before radicalization (44.3% vs 16.2%). Furthermore, they make far fewer attempts to involve close friends and family (24.3% vs 50.0% in adults). Another important difference found by the study is the role of the web. In the case of adults, radicalization also occurs through proximity networks (neighborhoods, friends and relatives, physical encounters), for young people it occurs mainly **through the Internet and virtual contacts**.

The internet gives young people more opportunities to engage with violent extremist content for two main reasons. As digital natives, they consider virtual communication and relationships as much more natural than previous generations. Furthermore, young people trust online contacts more than face-to-face ones. As stated in chapter 6, the echo-chamber or filter bubble effect of social networks acts as a sounding board as it only shows content shared by one's friends and coming from favorite pages, and blocks everything else, especially alternative voices, working as a social confirmation mechanism (Cialdini, 1984, 2015).

Extremist groups further benefit from what technology offers through games and gamification, a term meaning “the use of game design elements applied in non-gaming contexts” (Deterding et al., 2011). It is a reference to the PBL triad (points, badges, leaderboards) with which to award scores and medals, climb the ranks, level up: an effective mechanism to push towards a progressive change of behaviour which is facilitated by the comparison with others and the social approval one receives online. Gamification facilitates radicalization of very young people because it satisfies their need to appear more competent, shows clearly the objectives to be achieved, increases the sense of autonomy and facilitates relationships. It is easier to teach and make extremist ideology and behaviours look “normal” and acceptable while doing something fun. The transmission of the ideology therefore moves from books and training camps to videos, social media and apps. In this way, extremist groups are able to expand their outreach including also primary school children.

In addition to building virtual realities in which to familiarize minors with radical content, video games offer useful tools for propaganda: **chats** to exchange information, **tournaments** in which entertainment times and the number of participants are expanded, **digital platforms** in which users interact in different ways, sharing media, files, games and also launching live streaming ([FOCUS AT PAGE 32](#)).

Various programs of deradicalization, disengagement from violent action and reintegration of former radicalized youth are currently ongoing in several countries of the Islamic world, including Algeria, Morocco, Malaysia and Indonesia, and in Western countries, including Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom. The most significant experiences start from the **theories of change** which link the causes of radicalization to the desired goal to be reached through the intervention, trying to identify the specific areas on which to act in order to interrupt or reverse the radicalisation path.

The interventions focus, for example, on dichotomous thinking and on the lack of complexity by valuing pluralism and integrative complexity; on boredom, the desire for status and the sense of isolation by providing possible alternatives, such as sports, music or participation in youth groups; on the susceptibility to grooming through understanding of propaganda and social media; on prejudices and intolerance through multiculturalism and intercultural contact; on the lack of understanding of religious texts through religious education or knowledge of other religions (Davies, 2018).

From a methodological point of view, the actions are carried out both in the school environment through ad hoc projects and/or curricular programs, and in the environment outside the school in cooperation with other local educational agencies.

Starting from different theoretical models, the interventions promote, for example, **life skills**, i.e. those social, cognitive and personal skills and abilities that are necessary to face the problems and pressures of everyday life; **moral action**, which aims to portray violent extremism as unfair and inhumane, building empathy with the victims and developing self-efficacy and resilience against extremist influence; **emotional control**, i.e. awareness, understanding and management of one's emotions; **negotiation** between conflicting viewpoints (Gielen, 2017).

The programs developed through **non-formal education** appear to be promising, as this creates a synergy between the cognitive, emotional and practical learning dimensions, and in which one **learns by doing**, through intercultural exchanges and encounters, role-playing and theatre activities, debates and webinars, focus groups in which young people act as main players, also in planning and delivery (peer education).

Examples of non-specific interventions

- Training on the use of the media
- Training on psycho-social skills
- Vocational activities
- Professional training
- Involvement in pro-social activities
- Volunteering

Examples of specific interventions

- Mentoring
- Deconstructing the radical message
- Offering neutral spaces to express one's frustrations
- Psychological support (individual intervention)
- Specific resilience programs for radicalization
- Family counseling

The different roles played by **family**, the **Islamic community**, the **peer group** and the **media** are taken into consideration in the various youth radicalization prevention programs, and constant emphasis is placed on the importance of **school**. The education system can play a decisive role in prevention: the primary socialization processes that take place in the classroom lay the foundations of participation in social life and of successful integration of young Muslims, the diaspora as well as second generation Muslims and especially unaccompanied minors (Bresciani, 2018).

The school environment plays a crucial role in identifying, since the beginning, behaviours and attitudes indicating the risk of radicalization. Taking on a new name, new clothes, identifying oneself with new symbols or practices are signs which, associated with the glorification of martyrdom, the justification of violence and a certain social isolation, may suggest the possibility of an ongoing recruitment action on a young person (Amiterno, Neri, 2018).

The involvement of the education system mainly implies the organization of **awareness-raising and training courses** on the general PVE and CVE issues, on recognizing the signals of radicalization and on designing specific and non-specific interventions. The earlier these signals are detected, the more effective and protective the intervention can be. Reaching this strategic goal, identifying the radicalization process at its start is only possible with the active **participation of the teachers and the school environment**, which play a crucial role in primary as well as secondary and tertiary prevention (Caparesi, 2020).

The use of observation tools is an important step to evaluate situations at risk, as proposed with the **GREG-4D Youth Radicalization and Extremism Observation Grids**, a model specifically tailored to detect radicalization indicators to be used by teachers, community educators, social and health care workers in contact with the youngest, tutors of unaccompanied minors ([CHAPTER 3 AND ANNEX 1](#)).

Among groups that are vulnerable to radicalization processes, the case of **unaccompanied foreign minors (UFMs)** certainly deserves to be explored.

It is primarily linked to the migratory phenomenon and relevant to radicalization processes since these young people, who do not have any affective bonds and have often faced traumatic experiences, can more easily be recruited by extremist and/or criminal organizations or independently take violent action, due to their high vulnerability. The story of the young Moroccan national Tarik Abulala is emblematic: he arrived in Italy as an unaccompanied minor and joined a host community which he then left together with Monsef El Mkhayar ([CASE STUDY 4](#)), another guest of the community, to join the Islamic State when he was just 19 years old, losing his life in Syria. These stories call for reflection on the importance to detect radicalization and mobilization indicators at an early stage and involve the **voluntary tutors** and other reception professionals in the training on PVE and CVE topics.

In prevention and counter-activities for young people, **Juvenile Justice's tools** are one of the main resources for implementing secondary and tertiary prevention programs, especially when the radicalization process has already started and it is necessary to adopt re-educational measures to promote disengagement and social reintegration. A synthesis of these interventions is proposed in [ANNEX 4](#).

Toolkits and documentation can be found at the following web addresses:

https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/radicalisation-awareness-network-ran_en

<https://osce.org/unitedCVE>

PRACTICE- Preventing radicalism through critical thinking competences.

<https://danilodolci.org/project/practice/>

RADICALS FOR FUN

Terrorist organizations have long understood how to transmit ideologies to young and very young people using more engaging methodologies. For example, the Islamic State had launched the Huroof App which asked children to match the letters of the Arabic alphabet to drawings of bombs, tanks and other military images, making more enjoyable the contact with the propaganda of future Caliphate fighters (Schlegel, 2020).

Even though the inclusion of gamification among the terrorists' tools is still at an early stage, it is already possible to identify two forms that have become popular in the last few years: the top-down and the bottom-up ones. In top-down gamification, extremist organizations are proactive players who use technology to catch young people in their forums. For example, they apply metrics by which they calculate reputation or award virtual medals: scores can be assigned based on the number of contacts acquired in the extremist context, when specific virtual places are visited, when one takes part in events organized by the group or even when political or cultural events of the opponents are disturbed. Being able to climb the steps to reach the highest levels increases one's reputation, sense of expertise and of agency, and allows to achieve high satisfaction which increases the time the minor spends in contact with these networks.

In bottom-up gamification, individuals who have been radicalized or are on the path to radicalization share their activities in a playful way. An example is the use of live streaming in which, as in the case of FPS (first-person shooter) games, the violent action is commented using a video game language typical of certain videogames, like Call of Duty.

Elements of popular video games have often been used by extremist groups to reach the youngest, both by creating "tailor-made" video games, such as Salil al-Sawarim 4, set in the Caliphate, and by modifying existing ones, as in Call of Duty, which was changed to "Call of Jihad, Operation Assad" or Grand Theft Auto (Tugendhaft, 2021).

The live attack is integrated into popular online video games and made into a fun and addictive action game for the whole virtual community, offering the participants also a space to interact in real time with the protagonists. In this way, not only is a large space given to the action in front of a wider audience, but also the popularity and status of the actors increase, levelling them up with celebrities. However, the bottom-up mechanism can also be used at lower levels of radicalization by inciting to commit raids against individuals perceived as enemies, without leading to their killing (Schlegel, 2020).

Another way of recruiting young and very young people is the role play, a very popular element in our culture considering that 1/3 of the world population, about 2.5 billion people in 2019, was listed on at least one platform (FinancesOnline, 2020). As in the Jumanji series, the identity of the players is redefined by the role they play and the players become their own avatars as they are transported to a parallel world away from society.

8

The gender perspective

In recent years, the number of women who have undertaken Islamist radicalization processes has increased, also due to a renewed attention shown by jihadist organizations towards women.

The Islamic State group has invested in particular in the recruitment of women, who are crucial to the realization of the Caliphate's utopia, by producing and disseminating "gender-sensitive" propaganda with narratives specially created to attract a female audience. Since its proclamation, between 6,797 and 6,902 women (Cook, Vale, 2019), some of whom still underage, have left from all over the world to reach the territories of the Islamic State. 17% of these muhajirats came from European countries. In total, women accounted for approximately 13-15% of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), highlighting a previously unknown activism. In the Italian list of FTFs there are fourteen women, accounting for about 10% of the total: among these, eleven have Italian citizenship while seven have left from Italy. So far, seven have returned to Europe, some with underage children born in the Sham.

According to a model often used by scholars (Bigio, Vogelstein 2019; Sadiqi 2020), women can influence or be influenced by violent extremism following three possible paths: as **victims**, as **actors/perpetrators** and as **mediators**. They can be victims of violent extremist groups: lured into organizations by force or blackmail, manipulated by web recruiters or coerced into membership and, in some cases, into mobilization by parents, partners, or husbands.

However, despite the stereotypes seeing them exclusively as unaware victims, women are often aware actors and can adopt various roles within Islamist organizations or movements: logistical support, financing, dissemination of propaganda, indoctrination, recruitment and incitement to carry out terrorist acts, up to the point of perpetrating the attacks themselves. Precisely because they draw less attention from the security bodies, women have also been used for suicide attacks. For this reason, the possibility that they may turn to violent mobilization and, therefore, the danger they pose should not be underestimated.

But at the same time, women can play an important role in countering and preventing violent extremism. In fact, they can find themselves in a privileged position to identify signs of radicalization in the bud and act on them in a significant way, **by supporting, educating and setting a positive example to vulnerable individuals**, especially the youngest. This kind of role can be played by ex-members who, after having completely disconnected from the extremist group, can serve as a role model and be employed as mentors for radicalized women or women who are in the process of becoming radicalized.

9

The role of Islamic communities

In the context of prevention activities at the meso and micro levels, a crucial role is played by the involvement of local Islamic communities, a local contact point where the weak signs of a radicalization process in the bud can be recognized.

The growth of Islam in Europe has involved in its development a number of cultural traditions and crossed different religious styles and theological orientations. This variety of experiences goes hand in hand with as many identity approaches to Islam, where jihadist propaganda and proselytizing activities can also find space, with the aim of presenting itself as the only authentic interpretation of the religious message. In this context, the role of imams is increasingly conceived as functional to consolidate the inclusion of Muslims in host societies (Rhazzali, Pace, 2018), preventing conflicts and above all offering a positive image of the Islamic religion, diametrically opposed to that provided by the radical groups' propaganda.

In the current scenario, especially in "migrant" Islam, which lives as a minority religion, the role of the imam acquires a largely unprecedented nature, acting not only as a link between the community and the mosque, but also as a leader and representative of the community in the public space. Imams start from providing essential liturgical services to progressively leave the religious field and deal with wider problems such as assisting the sick and prisoners, as well as representing their religion and community as experts (Hashas, de Ruiter, Valdemar Vinding, Hajji, 2018). This evolution is progressively creating an unprecedented space also for the enhancement of women (Rhazzali, 2018), especially in the social field as well as in religious and cultural mediation, where women taking on the role of guide (murshida) are establishing their credibility.

Since the 1970s, initiatives aimed at promoting a correct interpretation of Islam as well as dialogue between communities and host societies have appeared in some European national contexts. Primarily driven by the need to encourage the development of richer and more productive relationships between the new Muslim presence and the host societies, they contribute to the resolution of conflicts at a local level, above all in conjunction with the most sensational acts of Islamist terrorism or on the occasion of manifestations of acute Islamophobia, countering the spread of stereotypes and prejudices.

With a view to prevention, Islamic associations and community leaders can play a crucial role in activating processes to counter religious radicalism.

The sensitivity of those who live in Islamic communities, guide and represent them, can be an exceptional tool for the prevention of Islamic radicalism and play a crucial role both in early recognizing the weak signs indicating the start of a radicalization process and in highlighting the need to activate a multi-agency prevention path for individuals at risk, thus substantially contributing to the containment of the social costs of radicalization not only for society in general but also for their own communities (Rhazzali, 2020). Through a consolidated partnership with local Muslim communities, it is possible to start disengagement activities with individuals who have undertaken a radicalization path, both through religious mentorship and by promoting counter-narratives and alternative narratives.

THE PRIMED PROJECT

Among the activities developed by the Ministry of University and Research that can offer an important contribution to prevention, it is worth mentioning the PriMED Project, Prevention and interaction in the Trans-Mediterranean space, launched by the three-year competition notice “Establishing Italian university networks to implement cooperation agreements between Italian universities and those of States participating in the Organization of Islamic cooperation” (Directoral Decree no. 3089 of 16/11/2018 – ID 82382). Twelve Italian universities and ten universities belonging to the countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) participated in the project under the coordination of the University of Eastern Piedmont. The main objective is the training and upskilling of religious workers so that they can act as guides in the religious communities, but also as facilitators and mediators in relationships between worshippers, as well as between worshippers and local public and private organizations. In particular, it promotes:

- 1) scientific cooperation between Italy and OIC countries on integration and radicalization issues through the establishment of an inter-university network of students, researchers and lecturers based on learning by sharing;
- 2) training for the main actors in integration and counter-radicalization policies, especially staff from local entities, prefectures, penitentiary administration, public security, schools, social and health care centres, as well as economic operators;
- 3) training for the people playing the roles of imam and murshida (female religious leader) within Muslim communities.

10

The multidisciplinary and multi-agency approach

Preventing a radicalized individual from taking action is a specific task of security and justice professionals; however, many researchers and professionals from other fields, ranging from political science to sociology, psychology, criminology and psychiatry, are constantly engaged in understanding radicalization processes.

Researches and experiences from different areas of knowledge have confirmed that there is no single profile by which individuals vulnerable to radicalization could be indentified: individuals who have taken action have different origins, come from different socio-economic contexts and different family beliefs. Social factors such as the education level, employment and professional integration play a certain role, but are not sufficient to explain the phenomenon, since all these elements depend above all on the specific cultural contexts in which they develop, as well as gender and age.

In addition, this complex dynamics are also affected by other more general factors associated with social exclusion, migration dynamics and conflicts ongoing in other parts of the world. It is also worth mentioning that the recruitment strategies implemented by the various terrorist organizations differ significantly from each other, just as the narratives through which they promote the call for mobilization.

For all these reasons, preventing radicalization is a complex challenge, in which **no single actor**, be it security forces, education, welfare, health, justice, scientific research, **has sufficient information and knowledge to solve the problem autonomously**. No one has a full picture allowing them to define strategies and identify the necessary measures nor a fairly extensive leeway to autonomously manage the risk posed by an actor possibly taking action.

This risk cannot be completely predicted and eliminated: it can only be **progressively reduced** through cooperation strategies involving several actors who commit to sharing knowledge, skills and experiences in order to identify the individuals, prioritize interventions, plan actions, asses their effectiveness.

As already mentioned, reducing the risk requires to early identify the individuals vulnerable to radicalization, which underlines the primary importance of the local and community level, the professionals in direct contact with vulnerable groups and individuals among whom it is necessary to establish structured cooperation forms and stable alliances over time.

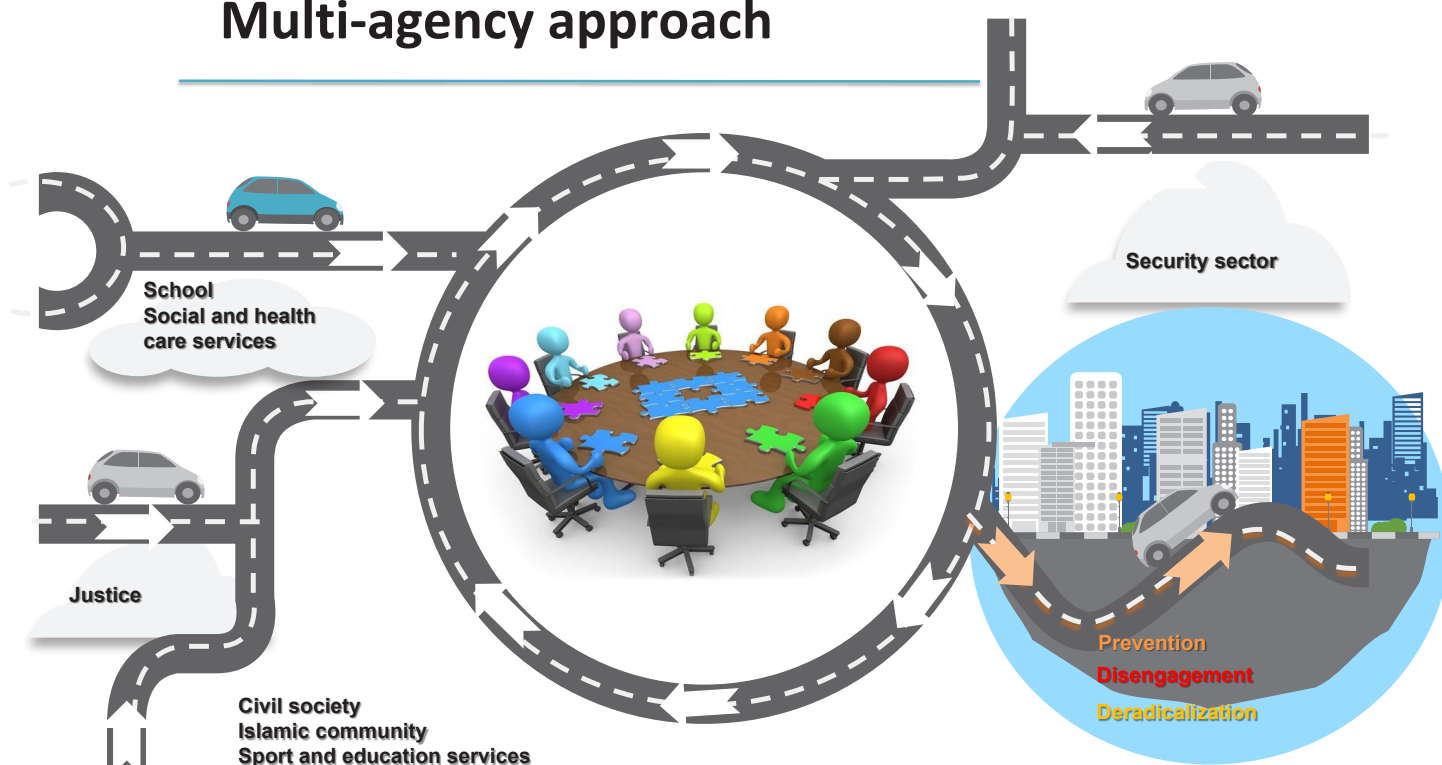


At the micro-level, prevention or disengagement can be promoted within a **“multi-disciplinary working group - MWG”**, established by an institutional partner tasked with assessing the risk and taking charge of a radicalized individual implementing specific interventions.

Depending on the complexity and particular features of the case being dealt with, it may in fact be advisable to include in the project team some specific professionals (psychologists, psychiatrists, Islamologists, legal experts, analysts, language experts, computer scientists, etc.) or other public or private actors who hold information about the person or are in direct contact with him/her in order to appropriately assess the case and initiate subsequent disengagement measures.

This model is particularly effective with vulnerable **individuals**, such as those **suffering from mental health issues**, for whom risk assessment and interventions will possibly be integrated into therapeutic-rehabilitative projects developed by the professionals who are already treating them. It can also be useful in the case of **minors** while involving the family members, the school and the host community in proposing and implementing initiatives and activities.

Multi-agency approach



The first step in this process is the **observation** phase, which is developed in a spread manner by the network of professionals who are in contact with the vulnerable individuals.

At this stage, it is possible to use **first-level observation grids**, like the GREG-T model (CHAPTER 3.5 AND ANNEX 2) to **triage** and evaluate, firstly, whether there is an **imminent danger** or behaviours constituting **criminal offences**, all elements that imply the direct involvement of police forces and justice.

In the triage phase it may also come clearly to light that the **case is not related** to a radicalization risk. However, it could still be necessary to involve the competent local services so that they could take charge of vulnerabilities of a different nature before closing the process.

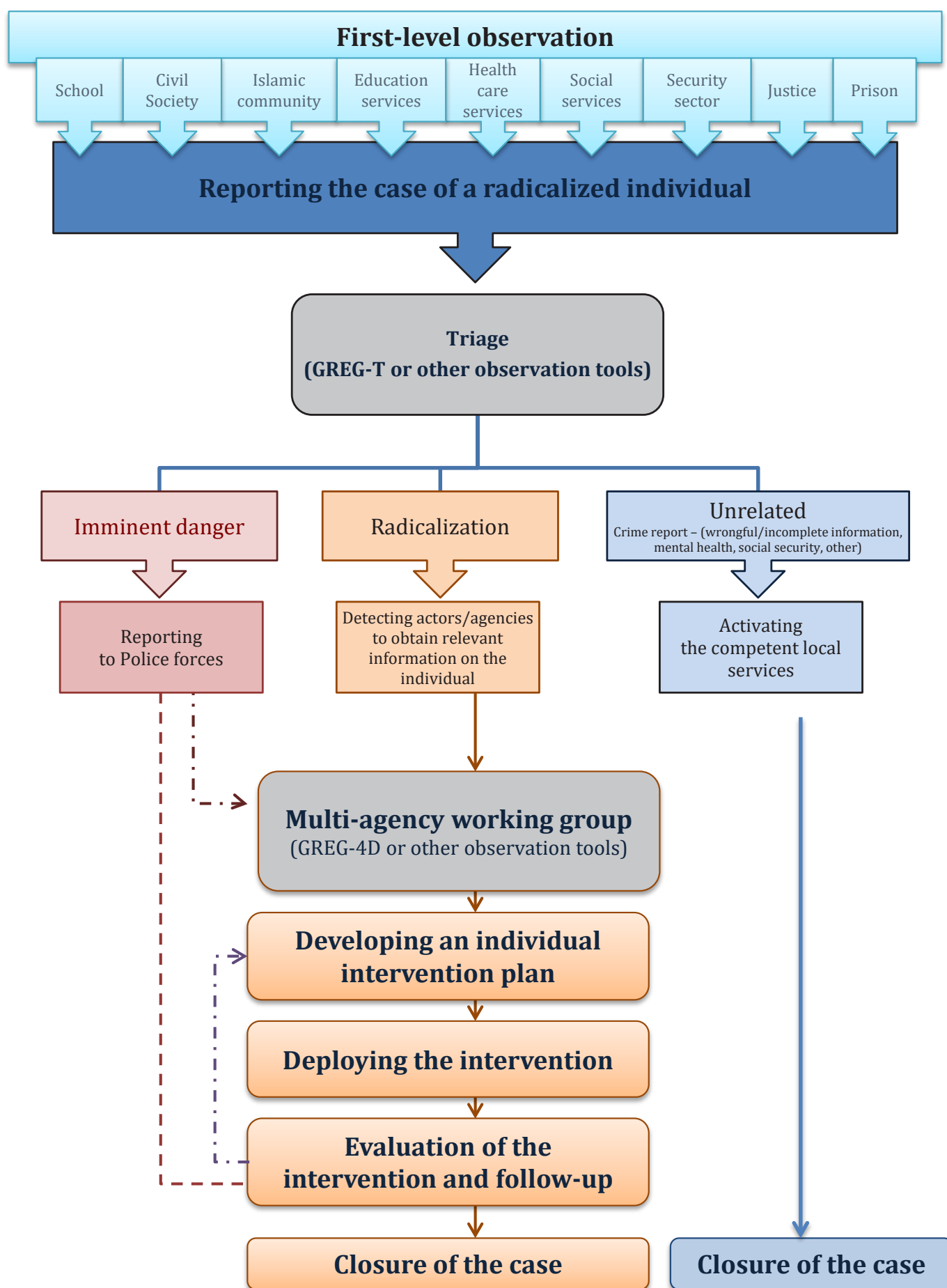
If, on the other hand, it is a **case of radicalization**, the next step is to identify the actors and agencies that could contribute to integrating the information necessary to plan the subsequent intervention. For this reason, mapping the local service networks, the functional relationships that connect them in wider networks, as well as identifying the key points of contact that connect different networks and raising awareness on the importance of prevention and on radicalization indicators is a prerequisite for any prevention initiative.

Once the relevant people and services have been identified, it will be necessary to organize a **second-level MWG** within which to develop the case, appropriately describing the radicalization indicators recorded, the risk and protective factors, as well as involving the other participants in the design of the **individual intervention plan**. In this phase, the use of observation grids such as the GREG-4D model, proposed in chapter 3, may come in useful.

This model offers many opportunities to improve the effectiveness of preventive action, although it is necessary to bear in mind that the professionals who gather to discuss often have **different levels of responsibility** and come from **different organizational and professional cultures**.

In order to fully grasp the added value that arises from this cooperation, it is necessary to promote communication focused on the **mutual recognition** of knowledge and on the integration of skills, roles and specific technical-professional actions.

The entire process can be facilitated by constantly maintaining the focus on the final objective for which the MWG was launched: **preventing violent actions, i.e. protecting the individual and the community**. A flow diagram is proposed below which may be useful for visualizing the management process of a report, starting from the first-level observation which is developed by the professionals who are in contact with the individual at risk of radicalization, up to the closure of the case.



CONCLUSIONS

Detecting the radicalization process at a very early stage is crucial to slow down or divert its path. The intervention requires a **coordinated action of several actors capable of operating at the social, educational, health care, welfare and justice level**, involving specialized local entities and agencies, each in its own sector and in relation to its specific competencies.

The preventive practices described in this chapter rely on two of the ongoing experiences' cornerstones: the multi-agency approach and the training of the professionals involved. The adoption of a trans-disciplinary perspective has proved to be suitable in starting an invaluable process of inter-organizational and interdisciplinary cooperation able to respond effectively to such a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon as radicalization, in which the roles of various agencies may easily overlap.

This new form of civil society involvement makes it necessary, primarily, to build a shared language for a common approach to both risk assessment and goal setting. The next step will be the training of all the professionals who are in contact with vulnerable or radicalized individuals and will be able to implement their own strategies and tools in the various sectors' scope for an increasingly integrated and holistic approach.





3

THE GREG-4D MODEL FOR THE OBSERVATION OF RADICALIZATION PROCESSES





observe > collect > identify > decide



1

Methodological premise

The main challenge of prevention activities is to **identify** the individuals at risk, i.e. those who start a radicalization path but have not yet mobilized in a violent way.

For the early detection of radicalization signs, a number of indicator models have been developed that can be used by front-line operators as a guide to observe the subjects of interest.

The GREG-4D model that we propose here is an **observational grid of vulnerabilities to violent radicalization** divided into dimensions and indicators that were elaborated on the basis of scientific literature and empirical research developed on individuals who have passed from radicalization to mobilization. The grid has the objective of serving as **guideline and support for decision-making processes as well as** prevention and disempowerment **initiatives**.

Unlike risk assessment tools, such as the Extremism Risk Guidance 22+ (NOMS, 2011) or the Violent Extremism Risk Assessment- VERA 2 R (Pressman, et al., 2016), this observation tool does not provide scales with numerical values or specific cut-offs allowing to assigning a score to radicalized individuals depending on their risk of taking action.

The assessment of a greater or lesser danger posed by a profile is entrusted **to the sensibility and knowledge of the multidisciplinary work group** which, being able to rely on a standardized tool, will be assisted in the collection of information useful for making decisions.

It is important to underline that a single indicator is hardly able to point out something concrete about the potential radicalization of an individual: **only the overall picture**, defined on the basis of a whole system of indicators, can provide useful elements for evaluating the information necessary to decide what kind of **intervention or measure** should be undertaken.

In the decision-making phase it is essential to act with caution since red flags, if not properly managed, risk to generate **false positives and incorrect reports** that can have a negative impact not only on the people suffering from stigma and suspicion, but also on the operators and the working group, thus compromising trust in the prevention tools and therefore the possibility of intervening promptly in the event of a real threat.

The grid we propose also includes items that scientific research has identified as related to violent behaviour in general, even if not specifically to violent extremism.



If these indicators, related to recidivism, appear in the profile, the mobilization risk could increase and for this reason they are reported as **critical indicators**.

For further details strictly on the violence factor, there are specific tools, such as SAVRY for minors aged 12-18 (Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth, Borum et al. 2002; Italian version Sabatello et al. 2018), and HCR-20 for adults (Historical Clinical Risk Management-20 v.3, Douglas et al. 2016; Italian version, Caretti et al. 2019) or other protocols that may be used by mental health professionals to assess the risk of violence through a structured professional judgment (SPJ).

The GREG-4D model is not only a tool to aid observation, analysis and evaluation of the individual case, but also an important link for the activation of the multi-professional and multi-agency collaboration network that can be created to promote the disempowerment of the radicalized individual.

The effectiveness of a Multidisciplinary Working Group is indeed enhanced by the **creation of a common language** between professionals from different agencies, often bearing very varied professional and organizational cultures.

The GREG-4D separates the **individual vulnerabilities** of the person, which can also be non-specific, the **cognitive radicalization** and the involvement in a group or an ideology (polarization), and the **violent behaviour** (mobilization). This makes it possible to easily recognize which dimension the observed data belong to, making decisions about an imminent danger that the subject may take violent action and on the immediate need to report the case to police forces. It is worth underlining that some indicators included in the mobilization dimension - such as proselytizing activities and violent extremist propaganda or the production of radical material online and offline - **are crimes and must be promptly reported** to police forces (see [ANNEX 5](#)).

The observational grid is mainly calibrated for the early identification of individuals at risk from pre-adolescence and adolescence to young-adulthood (12-20 years) and from young-adulthood to early adulthood (21-35 years), regardless of the gender.

Finally, it is necessary to underline that, when operating with this observational grid, one is not using a **static tool, but rather a tool that is constantly evolving** as scientific research continually offers new elements for understanding the phenomenon, identifying new dimensions and indicators. Furthermore, the more individuals advance in the process of turning to violent extremism, the more they are aware of the existence of tools that detect their behaviour and adopt every possible measure to go unnoticed, thus making it necessary to periodically update the observation criteria.





2

The GREG-4D model: dimensions and indicators

In order to observe the fundamental moments of individual radicalization paths, this model takes into consideration four dimensions composed of 48 items, structured as follows:

D.1 Individual vulnerabilities: 22 items, including behavioural, biographical and critical indicators;

D.2 Polarization: 12 items, including those that define the in-group/out-group dynamics and those related to information and support aspects;

D.3 Mobilization: 6 indicators for proselytizing activities, connection with a violent extremist network and the move to action;

D.4 Factors supporting disengagement: 8 indicators, differentiated for young students and workers.

The indicators are variables that allow to carry out quantitative and qualitative operational surveys and therefore measure the extent and direction of the process, suggesting which information is useful to be investigated in order to systematically evaluate the single case.

RISK FACTORS AND INDICATORS

Although these terms are sometimes used in an interchangeable manner, it is important to note that “risk factors” and “indicators” are not the same thing. While a **risk factor** increases the **likelihood** of an individual becoming radicalized, an **indicator** can provide **insights** into whether that individual is indeed heading towards violent extremism. To take an example unrelated to radicalization, being overweight and living a sedentary lifestyle are considered risk factors for diabetes, but having a fasting blood sugar level above 126 and an excessive thirst are symptoms, i.e. indicators that the disease has already developed. Some indicators, such as the blood sugar level, are quite specific, while others, such as an excessive thirst, are very general, although the more specific ones can as well be associated with many different types of pathology or not indicate a pathological condition at all. This is why it is so important to take into consideration multiple risk and protection factors together rather than analyzing them separately. The idea that the presence of a single risk or protective factor may be sufficient to determine whether an individual has radicalized into violent extremism or is immune from it, is to be considered as excessively reductive and potentially dangerous.

D.1

Individual vulnerability to radicalization

The items of the first dimension concern **individual vulnerabilities** that can make the subject particularly sensitive to the extremist message. Behavioural indicators (e.g. lack of identification, resentment, etc.) highlight issues with identity and positive acceptance of society by an individual who begins to show external and narrative changes. The biographical indicators (e.g. early separation from attachment figures or criminal records) focus on those non-modifiable biographical aspects that can have an impact on radicalization processes. The critical indicators (e.g. absence of parental figures or weak support from them, highly degraded social environment, mental health disorders, etc.) include those items that are not specific for radicalization, but are detected in individuals who took action.

The concept of vulnerability

- » When we talk about vulnerability in psycho-social analysis we refer to a concept closely related to risk factors and we mean those characteristics, that, if present for a given individual, make it more likely that just this individual, rather than someone selected from the general population, will develop a specific disorder (Werner & Smith, 1992; Garmezy, 1983).
- » Risk factors can be found in the individual or within the family, community or institutions they are part of, and can be biological or psycho-social in nature. Incorporated into this definition of risk factor is the concept of vulnerability, which is a predisposition to a specific disease process.
- » Vulnerable individuals are considered to be those who, by virtue of genetic predisposition, chronic illness, hardship, deprivation, or abuse, are more susceptible to life stressors than others. Thus, “they are at risk for failure to master, mature and adapt” (O’Grady, Metz, 1987).
- » Vulnerability traits are identifiable and measurable. They are not intrinsically the disease, but they may be necessary (but not sufficient) for a specific mental disorder to develop. Having vulnerability traits may increase an individual’s risk for developing a specific disorder (Mrazek, Haggerty, 1994).
- » Referring to the concept of vulnerability when examining a case is important because it clarifies that **there is no deterministic cause-effect link** between the presence of a certain risk factor (e.g. post-traumatic stress disorder) and the initiation of a radicalization process: this remains only a **possibility**, not a necessity.

Scientific literature and empirical research have highlighted that **future violence** related to these items is **highly predictable** both in adults and teenagers (Borum, 2000; Borum et al., 2006; Sabatello et al., 2018), even if the items are not only specific for radicalization.

These indicators are mainly clinical and contextual and have dynamic characteristics that can undergo modifications, especially in adolescence.

THE CONCEPT OF PREDICTABILITY APPLIED TO VIOLENCE

Assessing the risk of a person developing diabetes by detecting blood sugar is a fairly simple and easily accessible concept, while assessing the danger posed by an individual based on certain behaviours is a rather complex activity and the objective is not immediately achievable.

In fact, blood sugar is a continuous quantitative variable with cardinal values which gives the possibility of carrying out the measurements and the related statistical processing to calculate its impact on the disease.

Assessing the danger, instead, is not as simple because it is a complex concept: it is detected through a number of indicators and continuous variables (different levels can be observed in different individuals) that cannot be cardinal variables due to the difficulty of applying a unit of measurement to human attitudes.

Studies on violence take recidivism as a predictive factor which, in relation to risk assessment, can be classified as low, moderate, high.

The assessment of the risk for violence today is mostly carried out using the structured professional judgment (SPJ) model through which a systematic assessment is performed based on a series of relevant factors matched to an evaluation criterion related to **violence recidivism**. This allows the evaluator to focus on the relevant data to be collected during the interviews and in the examination of the documentation so that the final judgment takes into account the best available researches (Sabatello et al., 2018).

To this end, two guides have been developed to help professionals assess the type and level of risk that an individual may pose in relation to certain behaviours: the SAVRY model, for adolescents aged 12 to 18, consists of 24 items taken from researches and professional literature on adolescent development, violence and aggressiveness in young people, and 6 items for the assessment of protective factors. SAVRY's Italian version was validated on the basis of a sample made up of 151 male adolescents, perpetrators of various crimes (among the main ones: sexually-based offences, gang rape, violent crime, robbery) (Sabatello et al., 2018).

Instead, the HCR-20 model, designed for adults, consists of a 20-item scale.

These two tools can only be used by specially trained psychologists and doctors.

A

BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

CODE D.1.1

DEFINITION: **LACK OF POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION WITH SOCIETY/COMMUNITY AND REJECTION OF ITS DEMOCRATIC VALUES**

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual rejects norms and values commonly accepted as valid
- Shows a scarce positive identification with the community
- Does not socialize with individuals who are not part of his ethnic group
- Shows the need for a collective identity that he/she does not find in the community one
- Expresses disappointment for the customs and habits of the society or community, considering them as incompatible with Islam
- Criticizes women for too unrestrained behaviours that would not be tolerated in an Islamic country

DESCRIPTION

The search for identity is the central aspect on which the radicalization process is structured. Specifically, by "identity" we mean the representative construction of one's self in the relationship with the others and with society. It includes personal self-esteem but also the extent to which an individual identifies with a particular social group or community. The stronger the identification with the group/community, the more easily the person will be willing to follow its rules and will identify with its shared values. The presence of **identity ambiguity** (not knowing exactly "to what" one belongs) or the absence of positive identification with the community lead to dissatisfaction and absence of positive feelings, rejection of norms and values commonly accepted as valid. This condition could be followed by an active search for a social belonging that the individual does not find in the society and community in which he/she lives. The item is consistent with the **need for belonging** which can push the subject towards a strong and clearly-defined group.

In 2002, to explain this **cultural and generational disconnection**, the sociologist Abdelmalek Sayad developed the **"double absence"** category which defines the condition of migrants who find themselves caught in the paradox of being "out of place" both in the society of origin, in which they are no longer present, and in that of immigration which does not recognize or fully integrate them. This condition makes young people particularly vulnerable to radical Islam which, through the idealized and pure vision of the Caliphate, offers them an identity that is independent of the different cultures and different nationalities and allows them to overcome the sense of alienation and non-belonging that results, indeed, from the double absence. In some way, joining jihad gives the possibility of breaking free from an inferior status, inserting violence into a framework of religious "legitimacy" and into a heroic dimension.

IN ANNEX 3: CASE 1: KHALID, CASE 6: ZAHID; CASE 8: MARIA GIULIA

CODE D.1.2

DEFINITION: **HATRED AGAINST WESTERN SOCIETY AND ITS SYMBOLS**

Examples of observable behaviours

- The individual believes that Western culture and values pose a threat to Islamic ones
- Shows hatred towards Western society and blames it for various evils
- Carries out acts of vandalism against social, cultural, religious symbols



DESCRIPTION

The item detects the presence of feelings of hostility, hatred, repulsion towards Western society and/or the community of belonging which can be expressed through aggressive behaviour towards some of its symbols (e.g. boys who vandalize Child Jesus statues or Crucifixes). In these cases, it is important to check for particularly polarizing events and experiences that have reinforced a dichotomous “us versus them” thinking, Muslims versus non-Muslims. Abdelhamid Abaoud, an attacker in Paris in 2015, declared a year earlier: *“In all my life I have seen the blood of Muslims flow. I pray to Allah that he exterminates those who oppose him.”*

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 6: ZAHID

A study compared the profiles of 58 jihadist terrorists and 28 radical **non-violent** Muslims. The radical individuals had one or more of the following opinions:

- desire for the establishment of the Caliphate,
- desire for the application of the Shari'a,
- support for Muslims fighting Western forces in Iraq.

The two groups of individuals were similar in some degree of societal exclusion, distrust of government, hatred for foreign policy, disconnection from their local community. However, the terrorists were the only ones who felt repulsion for Western society and culture and had a simple and shallow conception of Islam. (Bartlett, et al., 2010).

CODE D.1.3

DEFINITION: RESENTMENT FOR ECONOMIC, SOCIAL OR POLITICAL REASONS

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual expresses resentment for his/her own personal or his/her family's material conditions
- Accuses society of not providing him with adequate means of livelihood (e.g. a stable job) due to his/her origins
- Expresses the need for political changes in favour of Islamic values (e.g. opposes democracy and calls for the application of the Shari'a)
- Opposes international politics, considering it as unfair to the Ummah
- Has a simplistic view of how Islam can solve social problems
- Believes that Muslims are oppressed by Western politics

DESCRIPTION

The push factors of the psycho-social models by Moghaddam (2005) and Borum (2003) include also the psychological perception of unsatisfactory material conditions, and highlight frustration and anger at deprivation as a possible driver. These individuals show resentment because they don't have, or don't feel they have, the same opportunities as others.

The idea of not being able to influence one's condition by legitimate means can lead to a cognitive opening towards a deviant morality. A central issue that unites most of the radicalized individuals is foreign policy in relation to the fate of Muslim communities in the world, as they feel responsible for the global Muslim community, the Ummah. Any attack on the global community is perceived as a personal attack and becomes a source of anger towards countries accused of oppressing Muslims all over the world. Resentment can be expressed by blaming society for an overall anti-Muslim feeling and, in general, Islamophobia.

CODE D.1.4

DEFINITION: **FEELING OF BEING A VICTIM OF INJUSTICE AND GRIEVANCES CAUSED BY SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS OR THE COMMUNITY**

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual believes to be treated unfairly, threatened personally or to be a victim of violence by extremist groups (e.g. neo-Nazis) from which he/she needs to defend him/herself
- Blames specific subjects (e.g. Jews, Sufis, Shiites or others) for the injustices he/she believes to be a victim of, as a person or as a member of the Ummah



DESCRIPTION

The individual becomes convinced that he/she is treated as a second-class citizen for being a Muslim and experiences a **profound sense of injustice and humiliation**. The sense of injustice is exacerbated by the idea of having been discriminated as a Muslim and this feeling can be further aggravated if the individual or his/her family or close friends have been victims of judicial errors or racist incidents. The individual identifies specific groups or individuals as being responsible for the injustice suffered and believes they have hostile intentions against him/her.

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 1: KHALID; CASE 7: AMINA

CODE D.1.5

DEFINITION: FRUSTRATION FOR ISOLATION, SOCIAL EXCLUSION, MARGINALISATION AND ALIENATION

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual claims to be intentionally excluded from activities due to his/her religious beliefs
- Believes to be marginalized because of aspects that identify him/her as a Muslim (e.g. headscarf)
- Shows frustration with not being able to build relationships with non-Muslims outside of school or work commitments

DESCRIPTION

The perception of being rejected by society accentuates the feelings of estrangement and alienation. These conditions of marginalization, humiliation, real or perceived frustration, can lead to the loss of meaning (and self-esteem) and to a **cognitive openness** towards the proposals of violent extremist groups. The motivation is the search for meaning, understood as *"that fundamental desire to be respected"* and *"to count something to someone"* (Kruglanski et al., 2014).

The consequence of marginalization is social alienation which literature defines as a sign of personal dissatisfaction with certain structural elements of society. Psychologically, it is a condition that results from feeling ostracized and not having genuine attachments to others. The person feels **detached from the context and inadequate**. It is possible that the individual has had few positive experiences with non-Muslims and tends to see all non-Muslims in the same way. In such cases, prejudices reinforce negative stereotypes.

CODE D.1.6

DEFINITION: **EXHIBITION OF CHANGES IN HIS/HER PHYSICAL APPEARANCE, HABITS, CLOTHING, NARRATIVES**

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data	• The individual uses a language focused on political, religious, ideological topics in a different way than usual • Shows changes in personal narrative • Exhibits significant changes in diet, clothing and physical appearance • Looks for male or female role models to conform with that are approved by extremist groups
Aspects to be further analyzed	• How has his/her narrative changed in terms of content (focused on selective topics), form (use of clichés, persuasive redundancies), style (aggressive, manipulative)? • Were there other types of changes in his/her emotional experience (e.g. more nervous, aggressive, spiritual) or more explicitly in his/her habits?



DESCRIPTION

Changes in physical appearance, clothing, habits can overlap with a process of conversion to a more rigorous, but not necessarily violent, Islam and should therefore always be considered with caution.

These changes may include, for example, growing a beard, wearing traditional Islamic clothing, refusing to wear shorts, refusing tattoos or hiding them for religious reasons, changing nutritional habits, removing or destroying photos, rejecting music or being obsessed with certain rituals. These signals may partly coincide with a growing religiousness, and in this case they do not necessarily have to cause alarm; they have to be considered as significant only if they occur together with other indicators.

Nowadays, radicalized individuals are more aware of the external aspects that most affect both the community and the security apparatuses. Therefore, the person is usually more careful when it comes to concealing his/her change, in an attempt to hide his/her own radicalization.

It is worth underlining that the change in terms of narratives, due to its symbolic dimension, may not be hidden as easily. For a focus on the main jihadist narratives, please see [CHAPTER 4](#).

[IN ANNEX 3, CASE 5: MONCEF; CASE 7: AMINA; CASE 8: MARIA GIULIA.](#)

B

BIOGRAPHICAL INDICATORS

CODE D.1.7

DEFINITION: **EARLY SEPARATION FROM PRIMARY ATTACHMENT FIGURES**

Examples of detectable data

- The individual is part of a single parent family
- Lost a parent in early childhood (death or parental separation)
- Is an unaccompanied foreign minor – UFM
- Is placed in a host community

DESCRIPTION

Much evidence shows a high correlation between early separation (from 0 to 12 years of age) from one or both parents and the risk for future violence and criminality. There is a link between living in a broken family with only one parent or leaving the parental home before age 16 and an increased risk for subsequent violent actions. One of the main reasons is presumably the fact that, in such cases, an influence is exerted by factors like physical abuse and neglect, parental criminality or inability of the remaining parent to provide for the needs for care, support and love or for essential vital needs, such as nutrition or education.

The poor parental ability to supervise the minor, the inconsistency of disciplinary practices and the lack of personal support can be critical elements that make the individual look for safe guidance as he/she lacks stable points of reference. This item is observable both in broken families and in some unaccompanied foreign minors (UFMs). A high percentage of individuals who actually took action with terrorist purposes grew up in single parent households, often with the presence of the mother alone. The absence of the father can lead to a search for attachment relationships with adult men with whom to replace the father figure.

IN ANNEX 3: CASE 1 KHALID; CASE 5: MONCEF

CODE D.1.8

DEFINITION: EXPERIENCE OF TRAUMATIC EVENTS

Examples of detectable data

- The individual has personally been close to death or has witnessed the death of a close person
- Has witnessed violent actions committed against very close individuals
- Has been a victim of physical or sexual assaults
- Has lived in war zones witnessing violent and brutal incidents (e.g. is a returnee)

DESCRIPTION

Traumatic events are those personal and direct experiences of a situation that causes or may result in death, serious injury or other threats to one's physical integrity or that of another person (e.g. natural disaster or serious accident, physical and/or sexual violence and assaults, life in war zones, etc.). The individual tolerance threshold for this suffering has an impact. Some individuals develop a set of symptoms known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which can occur immediately after the event or weeks, months and even years later. Studies conducted in several countries on war veterans have highlighted a high suicide rate, the inability to maintain employment, the propensity to be involved in violent actions and the transfer of trauma from parents to children (transgenerational trauma), a phenomenon already studied in the grandchildren of Holocaust survivors and in countries that have been in conflict situations for years (Atkinson, 2002). Although it is not possible to establish a causality between trauma and radicalization, evidence has been acquired on how violent extremist groups exploit the psychological condition of traumatized individuals by trying to heal their insecurities with certainties to hold on to.

It is an indicator that has to be taken into consideration whenever the individual has been exposed to serious traumatic situations. According to Gill et al. (2014), 33% of the individuals who took action suffered from permanent stress.

Migrants are to be considered as a vulnerable population since the condition of insecurity and possible violence suffered during their journey can lead them to isolation, to a sense of alienation, detachment and danger and, therefore, to look for a sense of belonging within an extremist group.

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 7: AMINA



CODE D.1.9

DEFINITION: **EXPERIENCE OF (COMMITTED/SUFFERED/ASSISTED) VIOLENCE AT A YOUNG AGE**

Examples of detectable data

- The individual has experienced physical violence and/or severe neglect as a child
- Was placed in out-of-home care due to family violence
- Has committed violent acts at a young age (before age 14)
- Was a victim of sexual abuse
- Has witnessed violence in the family

DESCRIPTION

This indicator brings together the different ways in which the subject may have experienced violence.

A COMMITTED VIOLENCE

Research on adults and teenagers shows that there is a correlation between past and future violence. The risk of committing violent actions increases over the years immediately after having committed violent actions and decreases over time. The initiation into violence at a young age (before age 14) is associated with the risk of recidivism. This item is considered as relevant and specific to radicalization if **the violent act has been committed for political, nationalistic, ethnic, religious reasons**. A lot of researches underline the relevance of a criminal background. According to Gill et al. (2014), 41.2% of lone perpetrators had a criminal history, while 37.8% were already known to the police for violent acts. The percentage only drops as regards Al-Qaeda perpetrators, among whom only 27% had a criminal record.

B SUFFERED VIOLENCE

Research indicates that young victims of domestic violence will be three times more **likely to report substance abuse and propensity to physical assault as well as to cause damage to property owned by others**. Research shows that physical violence and neglect in childhood increase the risk of criminal and violent involvement by 40%.



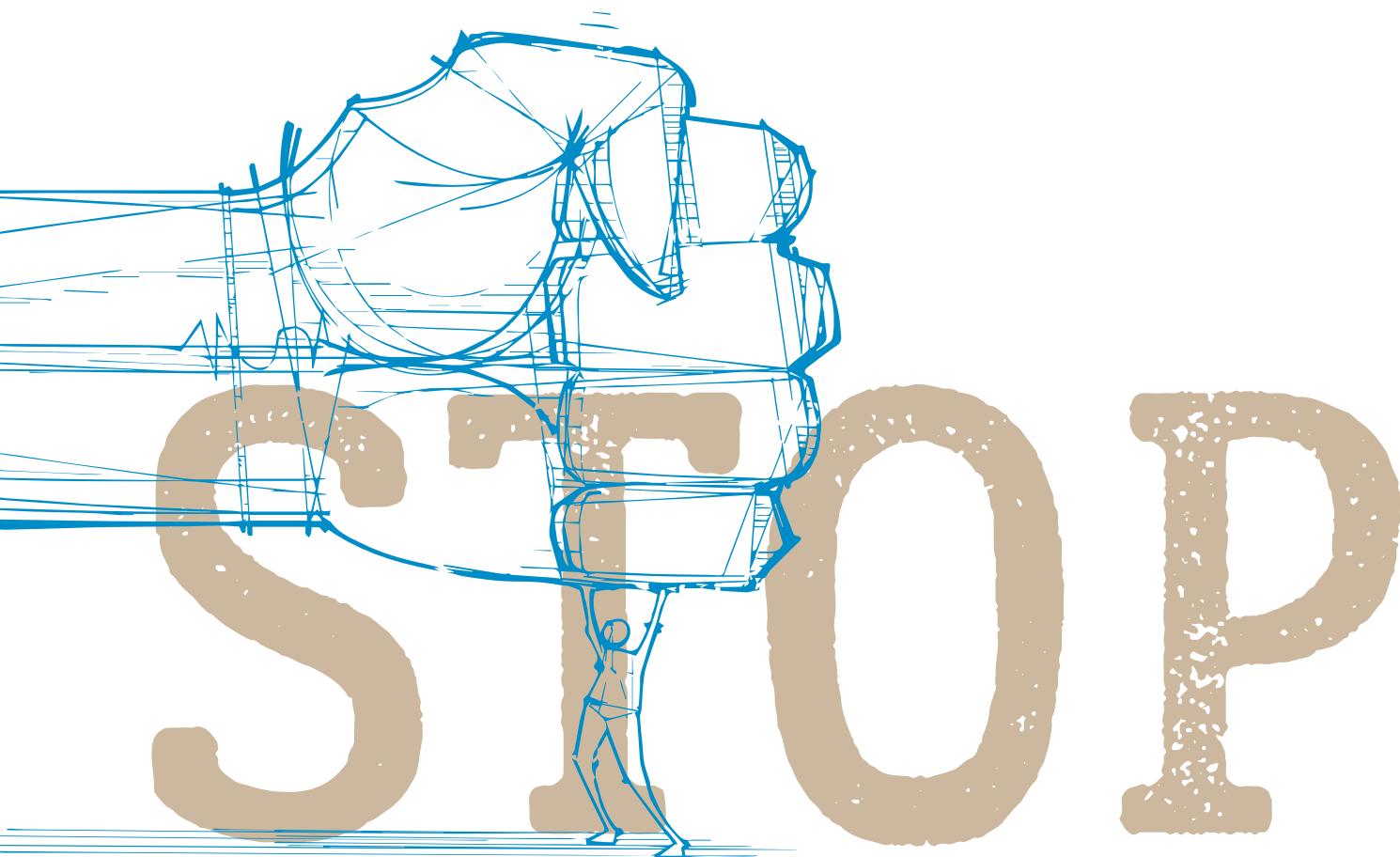
Ultimately, serious forms of physical and sexual abuse are comparable to traumatic events. The outcome of cumulative interpersonal traumas commonly experienced during development by children who suffered severe maltreatment and/or neglect during childhood has been in fact identified with Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (C-PTSD) by researches. Current field research indicates that children raised in the Islamic State have developed a set of symptoms corresponding with a C-PTSD.

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 1: KHALID

C ASSISTED VIOLENCE

Witnessing violent incidents increases the risk for perpetrating violent crimes in adolescence and adulthood. In particular, exposure to domestic violence, i.e. every physical or violent assault between parental figures or between them and another child, makes the child **consider physical assault as an acceptable method of managing interpersonal conflicts**. Abuse and domestic violence are frequent in jihadists' biographies. In such cases, the reason for joining a violent group is a search for restorative social justice. The risk of developing violent behaviour makes the individual more vulnerable to recruitment by groups in which violence can be expressed.

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 3 IMAD; CASE 7: AMINA



CODE D.1.10

DEFINITION: **ABSENCE OF PARENTAL FIGURES OR POOR SUPPORT FROM THEM**

Examples of detectable data

- Parental inadequacy in managing children's education and behaviour with excessively strict or inconsistent (sometimes strict, sometimes permissive) disciplinary methods
- Lack of parental support and communication
- Lack of supervision
- Difficulty in mediating the relationship of teenage children with the society

DESCRIPTION

The item includes different forms of parental inadequacy, such as the **absence or the poor support of the parents, or educational inconsistency**. Research on parental behaviour has shown that this can be predictive of future forms of criminality and substance abuse. In particular, with respect to radicalization, second generations often experience an identity conflict and are also particularly disconnected from their parents who represent traditions and cultures very distant from the Italian one. Families often fluctuate between the imposition of the traditions of the countries of origin, in some cases even with violence, and the opposite push towards total homogenisation, in the desire to lead the children towards a better future (Versari, 2018). In many cases, the parents' lack of adequate cultural tools (from the linguistic knowledge to understanding the Italian culture) puts the children in a position of power, increasing the disconnection between the two generations and depriving the minors of real protection from social dangers, including those posed by violent groups.

IN ANNEX 3: CASE 1: KHALID, CASE 7: AMINA, CASE 6: ZAHID

CODE D.1.11

DEFINITION: DEVIANT BEHAVIOURS OF PARENTS OR CAREGIVERS

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- Illegal and anti-social behaviour of parents or caregivers, even if they have not always led to their arrest (*e.g. petty theft, petty acts of vandalism, personal use of drugs*)
- Substance abuse by the parents
- Parents' mental illness
- Tolerance of the child's violent behaviour

DESCRIPTION

Deviant behaviours of parents or caregivers include **antisocial behaviour and crime, mental illness, substance abuse**.

These risk factors can lead to different reactions ranging from the tolerance of the parent towards the child's deviant attitude, to abuse or neglect.

Unemployment and the possibility of violent behaviour in the family can also be associated with these critical conditions.

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 1: KHALID, CASE 3: IMAD

CODE D.1.12

DEFINITION: SUICIDE ATTEMPT OR ENGAGEMENT IN SELF-HARMING BEHAVIOURS

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual has attempted suicide
- Shows suicidal ideation
- Threatens or calls for suicide or death as a way out of his/her problems
- Engaged in self-harming behaviours
- Shows pictures of self-inflicted body cuts on social media
- Accessed health facilities for events related to inappropriate/excessive intake of medication
- Talks ceaselessly about or implements high-risk challenges with the peer group

DESCRIPTION

Suicidal and self-harming behaviours, in both teenagers and adults, are related to increased violence towards others. A survey (Borum et al. 2006) has shown that out of 1801 young people detained in 39 holding facilities, 22% had thought about suicide, 20% had planned it and 16% had attempted it.

Within a sample of teenagers who had committed suicide, 43% had had anti-social behaviour in the past. Borum suggests that the item is probably related to violence through other variables such as anger, impulsivity and substance abuse, and that is the basis for both violence and suicide.

Suicide terrorists (kamikaze attackers) have been the subject of a large number of surveys. Some focused on the fact that this is a minority group among the individuals who took action, as most terrorists prefer to **plant bombs instead of wearing them** (Pape, 2005; Merari, 2010; Crenshaw, 2007).

Other analyses have instead highlighted that this is a subgroup of the suicide population (Monahan, 2011; Townsend, 2007).

[IN ANNEX 3, CASE 3: IMAD](#)

CODE D.1.13

DEFINITION: STRONG TIES WITH RADICALIZED INDIVIDUALS

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data	• The individual is supported morally and materially by sympathizers of violent extremism • Receives approval and admiration from his network of social contacts that encourages him/her towards violent extremism • Finds a "bad teacher" in his/her network of social contacts who serves as a role model • Family members, friends or members of his/her network of social contacts glorify violent extremism
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DESCRIPTION

The support of the community or primary network of social contacts (family, friends, neighbourhood) who sympathizes with jihadist topics **plays an empowering role**. The attachment to subjects who, while not being violent extremists, approve the violent action for religious and political purposes, risks "normalising" violence presenting it as something good, admirable and desirable. This concept is confirmed by cases of wives who motivate their husbands to become martyrs, parents who express their satisfaction in the enrolment of their children, motivating the others to follow in their footsteps.

The item also includes cases in which the family, while being aware of the intentions of their dear one, does not care or does not think they should interfere in his/her life.

In the "Talis Pater" investigation by the DIGOS in Milan and Como in 2018, which led to the expulsion of the subjects involved, the father, a former mujahidin who had fought in Bosnia, had convinced his twenty-three-year-old son to leave for Syria, marking a hand-over that had filled him with pride.

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 1: KHALID

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY BONDS IN RECRUITMENT

Hafez and Mullins (2015) consider four important elements that lead an individual to action: wrongs done to them, network of social contacts, ideology and favourable environment. The move to action often happens through friendship and family connections. Ideology, including religion, provides the framework that justifies the use of violence.

But it is the environment, including the connection with individuals online and in training camps, that facilitates its implementation. In a survey by Bakker (2006), 50 (20%) out of the 242 jihadists of a sample were linked by a family relationship.



CODE D.1.14

DEFINITION: CRIMINAL RECORD FOR VIOLENT AND NON-VIOLENT CRIMES

Examples of detectable data

- The individual has committed crimes which do not involve the use of violence against persons (e.g. theft, drug dealing, damage)
- Has committed crimes which also involve the use of violence against persons

DESCRIPTION

General anti-social behaviour, such as theft, destruction of other people's property, drug dealing, even if not directly resulting in violence against persons, can be strongly associated with the possibility of subsequently committing violent acts.

Individuals with a criminal history have often developed certain "skills" that can also be useful in terrorism. For example, criminals have greater experience in dealing with law enforcement agencies and know the limits for their actions. They have a greater ability to hold their nerves and can handle pressure more easily. They also tend to have more easily access to weapons, are good at staying "under the radar" and able to plan actions more discreetly. Finally, being familiar with violence lowers the psychological threshold for involvement in terrorist acts.

A research by King's College London was conducted between March and July 2016 on an initial sample of 158 jihadists, then reduced to 79 (from Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) on whom it was possible to collect detailed information (Basma et al. 2016).

The population had an average age of 25, all males; 67% had travelled to Syria or had attempted to and 38% had also been involved in terrorist actions in the national territory. 30% of the sample had had experience with weapons and only 6% had committed offenses of fraud (with credit cards or identity theft). 68% of the sample had committed minor crimes (e.g. trespassing, theft, drug dealing, financial fraud) and 65% also violent actions (e.g. robberies and assaults).



57% had been arrested at least once and, out of these, 31% had become radicalized in prison. The percentage of jihadists with a criminal history is significant throughout Europe: 66% in Germany, 33% in Spain, 48% in France, 50% in Belgium, 60% in Norway, 64% in the Netherlands and 44% in Italy.

The jihadist narrative clearly expresses the idea that some criminal actions are lawful, if carried out in the name of jihad which also purifies from the deviant conduct displayed in the period preceding the membership, thus offering an opportunity for redemption.

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 2: MARGHERITA



THE LINK BETWEEN JIHADISM AND CRIMINALITY

(Basma et al., 2016).

REDEMPTION

“Jihad is a purification: it doesn't matter who you are and what you have done. No good deeds are required to be able to do it”

“Sometimes people with the worst pasts create the best futures”



THE LEGITIMIZATION OF CRIME

“Instead of paying for jihad out of their own pockets, Muslims should make their enemies pay”

(Anwar al-Awlaki)

“Open bank accounts, take the money and leave”

“It is spoils of war and it is halal”

CODE D.1.15

DEFINITION: DETENTION EXPERIENCE

Examples of detectable data

- The individual was detained for common crimes
- Was detained for terrorism

DESCRIPTION

The prison experience tends to strengthen the radicalized mentality: prisons are places where one can develop an extremist vision of Islam (Zaccariello, 2016).

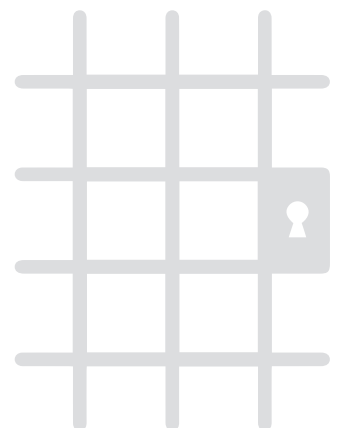
The possible causes of radicalization in the prison context are manifold and documented in a number of European countries, including Italy. They include resentment towards the surrounding society, a desire to change one's life and atone for guilt through the religious path, a search for identity and the comradeship that belonging to a new group implies.

When we talk about radicalization in prison we refer to the cases of inmates detained for common crimes who adhere to jihadist proselytizing activities while in detention. Such membership could also have an opportunistic nature, as it would offer the prisoner a support network once the prison experience is over.

Also the analysis of the profiles of Italian foreign fighters, 125 individuals in 2018, indicates that 44% (55 individuals) had a criminal history and 22.4% (28) had spent time in prison before leaving for conflict zones in Syria and Iraq or, to a lesser extent, in Libya.

Although in some cases deradicalisation programmes are envisaged during detention, certain short sentences do not allow for a critical processing of the experience: individuals who have been detained for terrorism, therefore, especially if they have not shown any signs of repentance, may consider imprisonment as a medal of valour or a persecution for their beliefs, especially if they don't have a solid external network able to support them.

[IN ANNEX 3, CASE 5: MONCEF](#)



C CRITICAL INDICATORS

CODE D.1.16

DEFINITION: **REJECTION BY THE PEER GROUP**

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data	• The individual is bullied and picked on • Is often mocked • Has no friends and is marginalised • Maintains relationships only on the Internet • His/her only reference points are people with whom he/she has a big age gap
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DESCRIPTION

Individuals who have experienced rejection by their peers **tend to display an increase in violent and aggressive behaviours**. Although the causes can be very different, the result is that the fact of being marginalised, made fun of, ostracised causes difficulties in mediating in interpersonal relationships, especially if the rejection is constant.

The young person may experience relatively strong social isolation, lack relationships with individuals of the same age, regardless of the number of contacts on the Internet, end up at the margins of the social or relational network, or being considered as too "extreme" by the peer group, meaning the opposite situation in comparison with the special role possibly offered by the membership in a radical group (Zierhoffer, 2014).

[IN ANNEX 3, CASE 6: ZAHID](#)

CODE D.1.17

DEFINITION: EARLY SCHOOL DROPOUT OR LOW LEVEL OF SCHOOLING

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual dropped out of school before age 15
- Has reported frequent truancy
- Has experienced school failures and poor school performance
- Has experienced underachievement at school
- May suffer from a cognitive impairment or a learning disorder

DESCRIPTION

Completion of upper secondary education or vocational education and training is generally regarded as a minimum qualification for effective access to the labour market, as well as for admission to subsequent education levels.

Since those who quit their studies or training early are more prone to the risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion, school dropout is considered as a vulnerability factor to pay particular attention to, especially if it occurs before age 15.

A very low level of schooling has been observed in many jihadists' profiles, often due to school failure or dropout. School failure can result not only from the absence of positive interest in school, but also from cognitive impairment or other undiagnosed factors. On the contrary, positive attachment to school as well as the diagnosis and early treatment of learning disorders are important protective factors.

Another education-related phenomenon is that of homeschooling. It can indicate the presence of an ongoing radicalization process within the family.

Even if it only marginally occurs in Italy (like in the recent case of no-vax schools in South Tyrol), this trend is more widespread in other European contexts where it often becomes a way to maintain autonomy from the national school system, also circumventing its checks. In the controversial Danish program "*No ghetto for 2030*", families who receive financial allowances and those who choose homeschooling have the obligation to send their children to a day care center for at least 25 hours a week (starting from age 1) to learn the language and culture, or else they will lose their financial aid.



CODE D.1.18

DEFINITION: **HIGHLY DEGRADED SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT**

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual lives in an area with a high crime rate (drug dealing, theft, domestic violence, substance abuse)
- Lives in a financially highly marginalised environment
- Is part of a culturally degraded environment
- Lives in a disorganised community
- Lives in inadequate housing conditions in criminal contexts
- Lives in an area where the presence of crime is widely perceive.

DESCRIPTION

Primarily socialising in a context where the crime rate is high **affects young** men's and women's **propensity for violence**.

Drug dealing, offences, gangs, unemployment, poor relationships are all factors that can increase the likelihood of engaging in criminal actions, finding in violent radicalization a noble cause to pursue in order to purify and legitimise one's actions.



CODE D.1.19

DEFINITION: **SUFFERING FROM A MEDICALLY CERTIFIED OR PRESUMED MENTAL DISEASE**

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual is being treated for a confirmed mental disease
- May have a high-functioning pervasive developmental disorder
- Is a member of a therapeutic community
- Has attempted to escape from a health facility or institution of confinement
- Displays maladaptation at school, in the family or in the society in general, even if a specific diagnosis is not present

DESCRIPTION

On the whole, people with mental disorders do not commit a higher percentage of crimes than the general population. 3% of them show aggressive and antisocial behaviour and this figure is also in line with that of the rest of the population.

In organizations such as the Red Brigades or Al Qaeda, people with mental disorders are usually not considered suitable for carrying out structured and complex attacks, and they are usually employed for marginal roles, as they are considered too fragile, weak minded and difficult to manage.

A characteristic of the Islamic State was instead that of enlisting anyone, even the most vulnerable individuals, as they are easier to recruit and mobilise, offering them a simplistic understanding of the world through online propaganda, and integrating them directly into its strategy of improvised, low intensity attacks.

Mental disease appears to have **an increased incidence among lone actors** (approximately 30%), a percentage that drops (to 25%) in the case of religiously motivated attacks (Gill et al., 2014). Overall, the number of mentally challenged individuals among lone wolves is 13 times higher than among those who act in groups.

Receiving appropriate diagnoses and treatment is the first way to prevent radicalization and the most effective protection factor. For this reason, the cooperation with the local mental health services for taking charge of these subjects is the first step in defining a prevention or disengagement strategy.

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 2: MARGHERITA, CASE 3: IMAD

CODE D.1.20

DEFINITION: USE OF DRUGS

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual uses drugs
- Drinks alcohol
- Has taken drugs while committing a violent crime
- Regularly attends drug dealing environments

DESCRIPTION

Empirical data show that a large number of radicalized individuals were already known to law enforcement agencies because of their link to petty crime (often drug dealing). Jihadist recruiters have often relied on drug addicts' sense of guilt by promising them forgiveness for their sins.

Several studies also highlight the co-morbidity between drug abuse and mental disease. In general, individuals suffering from anxiety, psychotic and mood disorders are twice as likely to abuse alcohol and drugs as adults.

Although there is no causal relation between the use of drugs and the radicalization process, the violence risk can be a side effect. The role of psychoactive substances in triggering violent behaviours has been verified, including psychostimulants such as fenethylline (Captagon) and synthetic opioids such as tramadol.

[IN ANNEX 3, CASE 5: MONCEF](#)

In 2018, two-thirds (518) of German FTFs (778) who travelled to Syria were known to the police before departure. Out of these, 10% (52) were involved in drug-related crimes. In France, 40% of the individuals detained for terrorist offences had a criminal record, mostly for drug dealing.

19% (24) of the 125 Italian FTFs used drugs. Drug use before the radicalization phase corresponds with the general European framework, meaning more than one quarter of the individuals aged 15-64 used drugs: 14.1% used cannabis, 1.9% cocaine, 1.8% ecstasy/MDMA, 1% amphetamines.

In some cases, radicalization makes the individuals stop taking drugs, but this is not always the case. Numerous examples breach this principle and there are cases of radicalized individuals who have continued to use drugs even later or have used drugs before an attack (Basra, 2019).

CODE D.1.21

DEFINITION: LACK OF EMPATHY AND REGRET

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual shows a lack of identification, understanding and sharing of thoughts, feelings and intentions of other people
- Shows little care for the suffering of others
- Does not take responsibility for own actions and tends to blame others
- Engages in bullying, cruelty, harassment, showing indifference about the suffering of others or enjoyment of it
- Shows displeasure at being caught red-handed attacking someone, but not at the act itself
- Does not appear genuine in expressions of regret, displaying inconsistencies between verbal and non-verbal messages
- Exploits the weakness of others for personal gain

DESCRIPTION

The lack of empathy and regret are generally connected to each other and predictive of future violence. People without empathy cannot put themselves in other people's shoes and do not care about their feelings and thoughts, nor do they feel guilty about causing them damage and pain.

They don't feel regret, which is the suffering for having behaved in such a way as to harm others. In the most extreme forms, the lack of empathy can lead to several forms of mental disorder (narcissistic disorder, borderline disorder, psychopathy).

According to certain studies, the presence of traits implying insensitivity and lack of affection can be predictive of future criminality, aggressive actions in the following years, subsequent violent crimes and shorter latency periods in recidivism, that is in the repetition of violent crimes by antisocial youth who have already committed them (Borum et al., 2002, Italian adaptation of Sabatello et al. 2018).

This type of indicator can be detected especially by people very close to the subject, like family members, teachers, the peer group or by psychodiagnosticians within a structured observation.

CODE D.1.22

DEFINITION: **AGGRESSIVENESS, HOSTILE BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS AUTHORITIES, ISSUES WITH ANGER MANAGEMENT**

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual displays anger outbursts or aggressiveness
- Has excessive reactions to the behaviour of others because he/she tends to interpret them in a negative way and as personal attacks
- Under the influence of drugs, expresses excessive anger in a sharp way
- Destroys things following anger outbursts (by punching, kicking, etc.)
- Has hostile behaviour towards the authority
- Bullies others
- His/her aggressiveness was observed by various subjects (e.g. friends, teachers) in different contexts (e.g. at school, at home)

DESCRIPTION

Difficulty in managing anger **is associated with an increase in violence** especially in terms of reactive aggressive behaviours due to an increased physiological activation. In the absence of mediating cognitive mechanisms, the individual could perceive hostile signs in others even when they are not present. Drug abuse can increase the aggressive behavioural response.

Provocative hostile behaviours, opposition to the authority and to imposed rules, as well as refusal to comply with the rules or requests of adults can be indicators of behavioural disorders, such as the oppositional disorder or the conduct disorder, which, if already experienced in childhood, can lead to antisocial personalities in adulthood.

[IN ANNEX 3, CASE 5: MONCEF](#)

D2

Polarization towards violent extremist ideologies or orientations

This dimension brings together those indicators which suggest that the individual has a radical mindset, with which he/she tends to dehumanise the outgroup, gather information on the jihadist *mouvance* and seek privileged relationships with radical mentors.

This is a very important dimension to explore because expressions of support to violent ideas, radical or terrorist organizations, or their dissemination often are **the first symptom that activates the observation and the possible taking charge of the radical subject**.

This is why it is crucial to keep up to date with the recurring elements with which radical groups identify enemies (outgroup) and incite action against them. These **narratives** are often characterized by an evocative symbolism that draws on a cultural heritage with which we are not always familiar: the very specific language that conveys this violence undergoes continuous evolutions and transformations, often requiring support by an Arabist and an Islamologist. The essential topic of **jihadist narratives** will be further developed in [CHAPTER 4](#).

An important sign of polarization in lone actors is the tendency to hold monologues or to preach instead of using arguments to convince others of their point of view. They hold a hard line in terms of language and react aggressively to expressions of opposing opinions.

They are prisoners of a dichotomous ideological thought (good guys versus bad guys, us against you) and unable to verbalize emotions. They react to people who think differently with anger, then with contempt and disgust, according to a mechanism of moral disengagement that leads to the dehumanization of the enemy (Meloy & Yakeley, 2014).

TERRORISM

A INGROUP / OUTGROUP

CODE D.2.1

DEFINITION: TENDENCY TO DEHUMANISE SPECIFIC GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual advocates hate speeches against specific groups
- Builds up speeches focusing on anger and fear towards specific groups
- Uses a language marked by dehumanization, insulting others and calling them by derogatory names, comparing them to underdeveloped beings, demons, beasts, and depriving them of any human qualities

DESCRIPTION

Moral disengagement (Bandura, 1999) is a set of socially learned and constructed internal cognitive tools of individuals which free them from self-condemnation feelings that are harmful to self-esteem, when they implement an inhuman behaviour. This set acts through different mechanisms (see CODE D.2.6), operating a **split between thought and action** that allows the individuals to implement immoral behaviour and to feel at peace with their conscience even when they betray their own principles.

When the focus of the aggressive action is on the victims, two situations will arise. The first one is **dehumanization**, the mechanism that leads to the denial of the others' human qualities, comparing them to underdeveloped beings, objects, animals, freeing the perpetrator of the violence from the anguish he/she would feel before their suffering. The second one is the **attribution of blame**, that is, the belief that the victims deserved the violence they were affected by.

While talking with her father, the foreign fighter Maria Giulia Sergio reproaches him for keeping to work for the unbelievers, who indeed should be the slaves of the Muslims: "[...] But subhanallah, what do you have to do, go and work for these damned *kuffars*?... you go and work for these damned *kuffars* who kill our brothers? We can't go and work for them ... it's them who must be our slaves, not us".

From the proceedings against Moutaharrik Abderrahim (2016): " [...] you have to take revenge on them, revenge for the Muslims. You have to spit in their face, get your *knives* out, you must never pity them, I swear they don't deserve it, they are enemies of God and his prophet, they fight the followers of God, they trample on and leave people homeless."

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 8: MARIA GIULIA

A DEMON an animal
A MONSTER

CODE D.2.2

DEFINITION: ISOLATION FROM THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND INTENTION OF BREAKING OFF WITH OWN ENVIRONMENT

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual stops hanging out with subjects that are part of his environment and community
- Believes to possess a superior morality and therefore detaches from the community of belonging
- Claims the need for own purification
- Believes to be part of an avant-garde elite
- Considers the extremist group like a family to which he/she expresses total loyalty
- Hangs out with new people whom he/she appreciates for an alleged superior morality, knowledge, wisdom
- Does not hang out with subjects who are not Muslims outside of school or work commitments
- Does not want to be friends with non-Muslims



DESCRIPTION

Breaking off with the environment is a symptom of an advancement in the radicalization process and of the development of a **new morality**. This happens when individuals become convinced that it is not possible to renew society and it is at this point that they approach a violent extremist group (third floor of Moghaddam's house).

Breaking off with the everyday environment is one of the most significant indicators of a radicalization process. There is a lack of positive identification with the surrounding community. Individuals abruptly change their habits: they could break up with their friends, reduce or stop school attendance or work activities and even move away from their relatives to engage in a relationship increasingly focused on the radical group and its "mission", both on a real and virtual level.

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 6: ZAHID; CASE 7: AMINA



CODE D.2.3

DEFINITION: **LITTLE TOLERANCE TOWARDS NON-COMPLIANCE WITH RELIGIOUS RULES**

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data	• The individual appears to be extremely dedicated to orthopraxis and accurate in distinguishing what is halal from what is haram, but immature in religious knowledge • Reacts angrily to minor deviations or shortcomings in the compliance with religious obligations by co-religionists • Constantly searches for online/offline confirmation of the legitimacy of daily actions • Openly reproaches co-religionists in order to make them comply with the precepts • Is disconnected from his/her parents whom he/she accuses of not being good Muslims and defines them, for example, "servants of the Westerners"
---	--



DESCRIPTION

The religious rules that Muslim worshippers must follow build up the shari'ah (literally the "we--trodden path", the "way to the water source", also translated as "law"), whose main sources are the Koran and the Sunna (i.e. the stories about the life of the Prophet) together with the consensus of the community of believers (ijma') and the legal analogy (qiyas).

For the implementation of righteous behaviours in the earthly life, the Muslim's deeds are classified into five categories: mandatory (fard); recommended (mustahabb); allowed (mubah); not recommended (makruh); and prohibited (haram).

Committing a prohibited action is considered as a sin just like not performing a mandatory action without valid justification. Examples of mandatory actions are prayers or the pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj) at least once in a lifetime; prohibited actions include adultery (zina') or the consumption of unlawful food and drinks.

An overdedicating or even obsessive attitude towards what is lawful (halal) or unlawful (haram) can indicate an ongoing radicalization process. A radicalized subject will tend to respect religious obligations very strictly, constantly wondering about the classification of own actions, and will judge the actions of other believers ending up showing intolerance or anger towards those who do not comply with religious dictates as thoroughly.

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 1: KHALID

CODE D.2.4

DEFINITION: FRUSTRATION OR INTOLERANCE FOR OTHER RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF ISLAM

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual shows low tolerance towards religious beliefs other than the own one
- Takes a distance from Islamic centres or mosques considering their guidelines as too moderate or too integrated
- Rejects a moderate religious ideology accusing it of not being able to protect the Islamic community
- Describes the extremist group as the only one practicing true Islam
- Rejects other Islam currents (e.g. Sufism, Shiism)
- Considers as kuffar all those who do not support the ideology of his/her own group

DESCRIPTION

The process of creating a group identity also faces the ideological separation from other groups whose way of thinking is perceived as ideologically opposed and irreconcilable with the own one. The development of in-group/out-group dynamics involves, in the case of Islamist radicalization, the **perception as enemies of both other religions' worshippers and Muslims who do not follow the same interpretation of Islam.**

In the jihadist narrative the **takfir** is extensively used, meaning the act of declaring a person as non-believer. Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, believers of other religions and cults, agnostics and atheists are identified as **kuffar** (non-believers; **kafir** singular). Furthermore, according to the extremist ideology, also Shiite Muslims and all those Sunni Muslims who do not comply with what the jihadists consider as the correct interpretation of Islam are to be considered kuffar. As a result, anyone who does not support the ideology of the extremist group is classified as a non-believer.

A further step in this sense is the principle according to which **the worshippers who do not pronounce the takfir against the non-believer are to be considered as non-believers too.** This extreme concept of takfir, which risks leading to a series of "excommunications", is embraced for example by the current of the Hazimites, followers of the Saudi Arabian preacher Ahmad ibn Umar al-Hazimi, and has created a real split even within the supporters of the Islamic State.

CODE D.2.5

DEFINITION: PERCEIVED MORAL OBLIGATION TO SACRIFICE FOR A VIOLENT CAUSE

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual describes himself/herself as a fighter, a predestined, a soldier
- Refers to a general call to arms, for which responsibilities are widely distributed
- Holds responsible for the violent action an external situation that forces him/her (displacement of the responsibility)
- Attacks any in-group member who does not support the same fight
- Feels obliged to defend the Ummah from attacks by non-believers
- Believes that living in a non-Muslim country should go along with being ready to fight
- Feels an urgency to sacrifice for the cause

DESCRIPTION

In the two-pyramid model (McCauley, Moskalenko, 2008), moral obligation is considered as the extreme version of the thought which, according to the authors, does not necessarily lead to mobilization. However those who act in the name of a violent extremist group consider their cause as glorious and just: something sacred that responds to a **moral obligation**.

A moral order has its own intrinsic value, not comparable with other values. The model of sacred values (Tetlock, 2003) supposes that, if individuals perceive that their sacred values are threatened, they try to implement strategies to repair the moral outrage suffered. In Sageman's model of *jihad without leadership* (2004, 2006, 2008), **moral outrage** is the starting point for radicalization.

The moral obligation to sacrifice oneself for the violent cause could be an **expression of identity fusion** with a violent extremist group (Gómez, Vàsquez, 2015; Swann et al., 2009; Swann, et al., 2012; Gómez, et al., 2016). In this case, a threat to the person's own group is perceived as a **threat to themselves** and it is possible that those who live in symbiosis with the group may be ready to sacrifice themselves to "protect their brothers".

CODE D.2.6

DEFINITION: **JUSTIFICATION OF VIOLENT ACTIONS IN THE NAME OF A GREATER GOOD**

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual justifies violence by calling on a greater good
- Considers own actions as less serious in comparison to a hypothetical worse behaviour of others (advantageous comparison)
- Uses a language that tends to minimize the violent action or its consequences by considering it as a moral duty (euphemistic labelling)
- Looks for and mentions Quranic and doctrinal references to support violence

DESCRIPTION

Moral disengagement, as mentioned previously (D.2.1), is a set of different expressions depending on whether the focus is on the action, the actor, the consequences, or the victim.

If the focus is on the action there will be: **moral justification**, which refers to higher purposes to overshadow the reprehensible conduct; **euphemistic labelling**, through which the true meaning of the action is distorted (e.g. "collateral damage" instead of "innocent casualties"); **advantageous comparison** through which one's own action is compared to the worse conduct of others ("he is worse than me").

If the focus is on the actor there will be: **displacement of responsibility** onto an external third party or onto the situation (e.g. obedience to an order); **diffusion of responsibility**, meaning that everyone is to blame.

When the focus is on the consequences there will be a **distortion of consequences**, through which the seriousness of the effects of one's own actions is ignored or minimised.

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 8: MARIA GIULIA

collateral damage THE ENDS JUSTIFY THE MEANS
 DISPLACEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES
THEY DESERVE IT
 they have done much worse
 THE SITUATION FORCED ME

B INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

CODE D.2.7

DEFINITION: **LEARNING RELIGION ONLINE OR THROUGH UNOFFICIAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual searches for information on Islamic doctrine online
- Quotes verses, hadith or religious concepts in an approximate manner, referring to the Internet
- Is not known within the Islamic community
- May not know where recognised Islamic places of prayer are, while proving to be observant



DESCRIPTION

When individuals look for information to investigate religious topics online, they can easily run into jihadist websites, which disseminate impactful books, comics, audio files, CDs, webinars, anashid (religious hymns) and recorded lectures.

Many jihadist sites focus their teachings only on the principles and rules of jihad and on the Quranic passages which are related to jihad and to the use of weapons.

Learning about religion directly and independently online can pose a risk for both native Muslims and converts. As regards converts, the language barrier sometimes prevents socialization with other Muslims or gaining a deeper knowledge of the religion directly with the imam of the Islamic community of reference.

If no specific path is provided for Italians, the web can therefore become the main resource for them to refer to, carrying the risk that they start a radical path.

[IN ANNEX 3, CASE 5: MONCEF](#); [CASE 8: MARIA GIULIA](#)

CODE D.2.8

DEFINITION: IDENTIFICATION WITH A VIOLENT GROUP OR IDEOLOGY

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual expresses his/her affiliation to a violent ideology or group
- Considers attacks on the extremist group as personal attacks
- Embraces violent extremist practices
- Shows an obsessive focus on jihad as a way to obtain salvation
- Talks about himself/herself using expressions such as: I belong to Isis... I belong to Al Qaeda

DESCRIPTION

Jihadist groups are considered by radical subjects as the only ones to defend the Muslim cause implying that without them and their activism Muslims would be lost.

Being part of an avant-garde movement fulfils both a **sense of belonging** and the **idea of having been called to be part of an elite**, a condition that helps overcome humiliation and sense of helplessness.

The identity crisis deriving from belonging to a group perceived as "inferior" can lead some individuals to join groups deemed as "superior" that give a sense of power through a morality of dominion.

People usually look for a membership that makes them proud. Therefore, belonging to social groups that they consider as "superior" increases their self-esteem. The Islamic State, for example, was perceived as a powerful, inspiring group that strikes fear and inspires respect among the enemies, which made its members powerful as well.

CODE D.2.9

DEFINITION: **NON-OCCASIONAL SEARCH OR USAGE OF JIHADIST MATERIAL ONLINE/OFFLINE**

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual searches for jihadist information/messages regularly and not occasionally
- Stores jihadist material on multimedia support



DESCRIPTION

As mentioned in [CHAPTER 2.6](#), the Internet is now the primary means to come into contact with the jihadist ideology, investigate it, interact with other individuals who are in the process of becoming radicalized or have already become radicalized, and finally mobilize and seek operational support.

The use of social media has in fact **made radicalization grow up to a mass phenomenon** and the risk of falling into the recruitment trap has become a widespread threat. Jihadist propaganda uses different interactive platforms or social media to disseminate its material, such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Telegram, Instagram, WhatsApp, Tumblr, Snapchat, Viber, to name the most common ones.

These means, albeit virtual, are essentially **similar to traditional psychological conditioning techniques** because they allow to recruit and exert influence and continued pressure on the subject. In fact, almost all scholars recognize the role played by the Internet as an effective tool to propagate jihadist narratives which, in addition to facilitating the dissemination of the radical message, has made possible the establishment of a virtual community of recruiters (who can also resort to offline meetings if necessary) who consider this activity as an alternative call to armed jihad.

[IN ANNEX 3, CASE 3: IMAD; CASE 5: MONCEF; CASE 6: ZAHID](#)

CODE D.2.10**DEFINITION: EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT FOR JIHADIST IDEOLOGY ONLINE/OFFLINE**

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual glorifies violent action
- Mentions a terrorist attack or terrorist groups positively to friends or on social media
- Pays tribute to perpetrators/martyrs after an attack and expresses a desire to be like them
- Expresses other ways to incite to attack

DESCRIPTION

Depending on the level of indoctrination, individuals may show expressions of support for jihadist ideology, or try to conceal them, especially if they think that they could be monitored.

Elements of interest are: the expression of typical narratives such as being a victim of the West; the expression of feelings of hatred, frustration, anger and intolerance towards the community up to dehumanization of the enemy; the alienation and the rejection of democratic values up to the glorification of armed jihad and martyrdom.

This support can also be conveyed through images of animals or colours referring to jihadist symbolism (see [CHAPTER 4](#) below).

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 2: MARGHERITA; CASE 7: AMINA

FARD AL-'AYN-TAKFIR
HIJRĀ, DĀ'WA
KUFFĀR-KHILĀFA
AL-WALĀ WA-L-BARĀ'



ABDERRAHMANE KACHIA (2016)

"[...] I greet you, I am Abderrahmane, brother Ossama Abou Moussab, the Italian national was killed in combat, in the land of heroes, during the bombing of a crusader, we ask the Lord to welcome him, I'm his brother, he had suffered persecution in this country and had tried to defend the state in the home of the Crucifix, the Lord had helped him immigrate for istishhad."



MARIA GIULIA SERGIO (2015)

"[...] I make dua' every day that Abu Bakr al Bagdhadi gives and when he gives the confirmation, I will leave you. Because... I can't wait to die shaheed. Because the shaheed goes to the first level of heaven".



LASAAD BRIKI

After having sworn allegiance to the so-called Caliphate, he carried out continuous public incitement activities, by publishing tweets with the profiles of homar_moktar and homar_moktar2, inciting to commit violent acts for terrorist purposes against Italian nationals, mentioning how the IS was in the Italian streets with knives out and ready to commit serious crimes to conquer Rome. He wrote: *"[...] we are already in Rome... It's almost time, our knives are sharp and ready for slaughter. #Islamic_State_in_Rome. Expect a surprise...we are everywhere, we are in your streets...we are soldiers of Allah". ..."Oh people of Rome, you have three solutions: 1-accept Islam; 2-pay jizyah; 3- our knives (Jihad). The choice is yours!!!#Islamic_State_in_Rome". "now we are taking action with the photos in your streets...soon we will take action with our sharp knives...the future is not far...#Islamic_State_in_Rome".*

CODE D.2.11

DEFINITION: **SEARCH FOR A PRIVILEGED RELATIONSHIP WITH A RADICAL MENTOR
ONLINE/OFFLINE**

Examples of observable
behaviours and detectable data

- The individual seeks a relationship with someone whom he/she considers as an expert in violent ideology to ask for advice or guidance
- Declares loyalty to a radical emir

DESCRIPTION

The search for a radical mentor indicates the will to deepen and direct the information gathering, also with the aim of building a more intimate and closer relationship with someone who is considered to have superior knowledge.

If it is a charismatic person from the same community of origin, or with whom the subject has a parental tie, the influence can be even more profound.

The search for this link could also be a sign of a dependent character that needs someone to lean on. The risk, in this case, is not only that of a growth in usage and identification in the jihadist narrative, but it can also be the premise for an asymmetrical relationship in which the mentor, as recruiter and more experienced person, can slowly train the subject to the point of including him/her in an operational network.

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 4: OMAR; CASE 7: AMINA; CASE 8: MARIA GIULIA

CODE D.2.12**DEFINITION: PARTICIPATION IN ONLINE/OFFLINE FORUMS THAT PROMOTE RADICAL AND VIOLENT VIEWS**

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

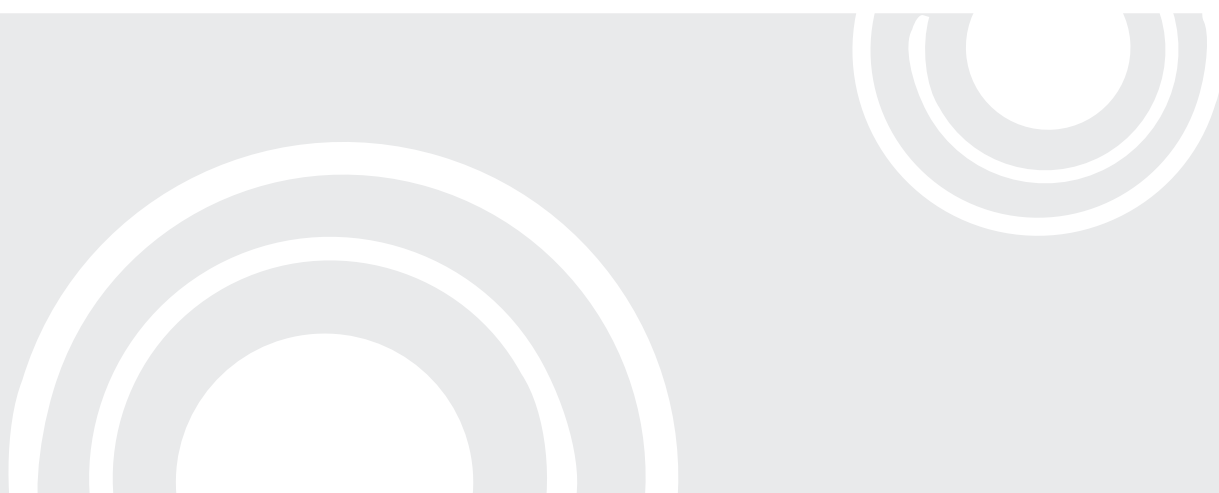
- The individual joins groups that promote violent extremist content
- Acts as a facilitator towards other individuals encouraging them to participate in violent extremist groups

**DESCRIPTION**

Online chat groups and forums tend to be exclusive and to condemn opposing points of view. Therefore, single thought prevails and a different opinion is hardly tolerated. People outside the closed group are viewed with suspicion and distrust. Those who oppose or criticize are also viewed with suspicion and often accused of betrayal and ousted.

However, this dynamics also recurs in offline groups in which opposing ideas are generally rejected and those who are against tend to remain silent, for fear of being ousted.

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 4: OMAR; CASE 8: MARIA GIULIA



D.3

SHIFT TOWARDS VIOLENT ACTION

The indicators of this dimension complete the collection of information by focusing on the subject's cognitive openness to the concrete possibility of perpetrating violence. This dimension includes all those indicators that highlight the already present intention and ability to mobilize through contacts with criminal networks, access to finance and/or facilities.

Importantly, the advent of the Islamic State and its powerful call to action everywhere and by any means have made some of these indicators less significant, above all, those that refer to the **possession of technical-military skills**: since the symbolic value prevails, the attack can be launched against the "non-believers" with any object or means, which therefore are not detected by these items.

Gathering information on these aspects of mobilization also helps us better define the nature and extent of the subject's affiliation to the terrorist network, given that **most of the actions described herein constitute a crime in themselves**. [ANNEX 5](#) provides a brief summary of the legislation on international terrorism.

We are at the **inflection point between prevention and disruption efforts**, but this, concretely, does not compromise the possibility to conduct disengagement activities, together with the judiciary and the police in charge of the investigations, in particular in the presence of minors or persons with reduced capacity.

In this regard, see [ANNEX 4](#) relating to the interventions of the Juvenile Justice.



A

PROSELYTIZING ACTIVITIES AND LINKS TO A VIOLENT NETWORK

CODE D.3.1

DEFINITION: **PRODUCTION AND DISSEMINATION OF JIHADIST PROPAGANDA ONLINE/OFFLINE**

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual disseminates jihadist propaganda, videos or messages via social networks
- Delivers lectures or other jihadist material in person or online
- Translates material and operations manuals from others languages
- Tries to involve others through proselytizing actions



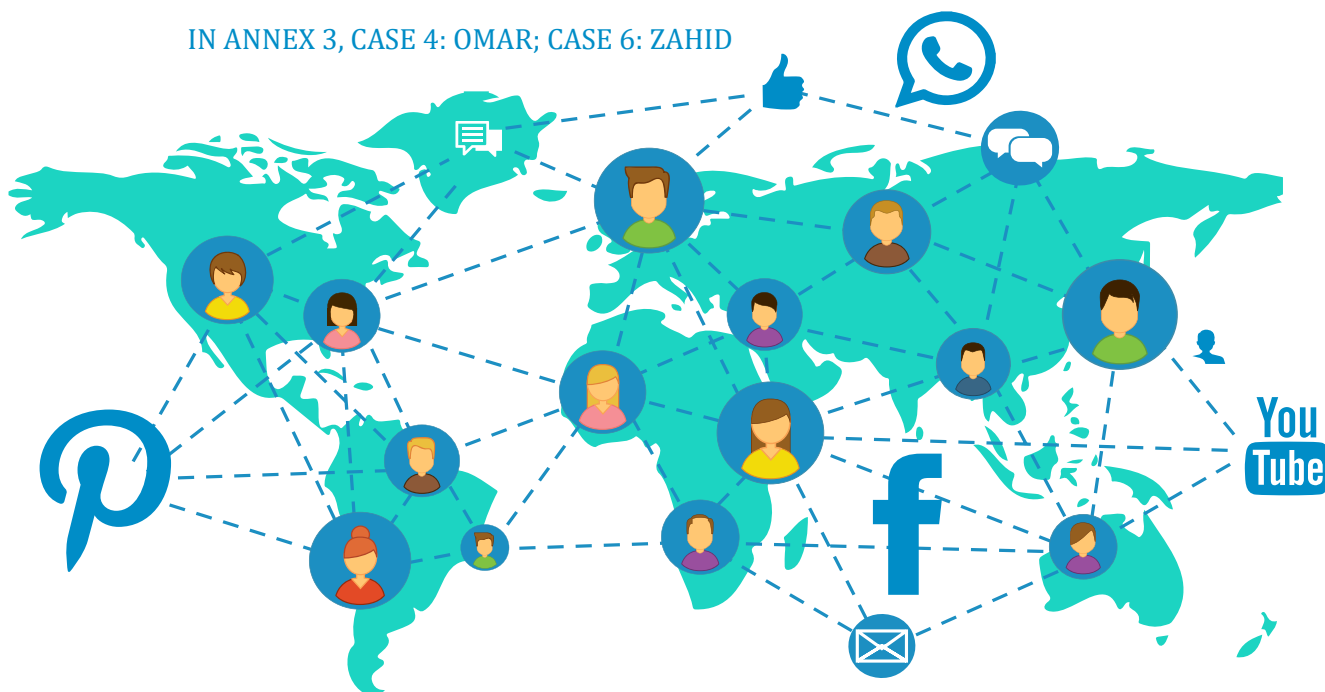
DESCRIPTION

Not all those who search for jihadist content are just passive consumers of propaganda, some also take on a more active role and can thus respond to the requests of the virtual community by **publishing material, translating texts, teaching jihadist contents**, seeking and offering support to those who wish to train or specialize in the operational field.

An example of this activity is the translation into Italian of technical manuals and speeches by radical preachers, the creation of dedicated servers in which to store videos or anashid propaganda to make them available to a specific community.

Being recruited for this kind of activities can be the first step towards an increasingly active involvement in other operational and illegal functions, such as testing for availability to mobilize in favour of the group.

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 4: OMAR; CASE 6: ZAHID



CODE D.3.2

**DEFINITION: ATTEMPT TO RECRUIT OTHERS INTO A VIOLENT IDEOLOGY
ONLINE/OFFLINE**

Examples of observable
behaviours and detectable data

- The individual uses emotionally impactful grooming techniques to create addiction
- Looks for common points of contact and interests with the person to be recruited (e.g. Islam, politics, personal issues etc.) avoiding differences to create greater compliance
- Tries to use a personal connection to obtain the trust and influence the choices of the people addressed
- Supports ideological indoctrination, by expressing doubts about other schools of thought, considering the theses by certain scholars as the only credible source and pointing out the danger posed by other schools of thought
- Tries to focus on people perceived as vulnerable
- Avoids people who know too much or who are critical and perceived as being able to counter his/her ideological proposal

DESCRIPTION

In trying to narrow down the nature and characteristics of a recruiter, several scholars have identified traits that we can consider as inclusive and present at the same time because recruitment is not a punctual action, "once and for all", but it implies an involvement in phases, in which the membership goes along with useful evidence to measure the reliability of the subject before he/she can be entrusted with important missions (McCauley, Moskalenko, 2008).

This top-down view gives the idea that recruiters are able to discern the quality of the subjects recruited, monitoring and supporting them until the task assigned is accomplished (Horgan, 2005).

Not supporting the idea of top-down brainwashing, Sageman (2004) identifies recruitment as "the request for admission to an elite course of study" and therefore recruiters as "guardians" in charge of the borders and attentive to the quality of the subjects to be recruited. An English research (ICSR, 2007) has highlighted the role of non-violent activist organizations and/or radical imams who act as "guardians" and facilitate the first contact with militant Islamism. The analysis of 113 British jihadists (Bryson, R., 2016) revealed that more than three quarters of them had joined non-violent radical Islamist groups *before* moving on to terrorist organizations.

[IN ANNEX 3, CASE 8: MARIA GIULIA](#)

CODE D.3.3

DEFINITION: **PARTICIPATION IN RALLIES OR COURSES TO TRAIN IN COMBAT**

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual attends courses where fighting and/or martial arts are practiced connected to front groups of radical organizations
- Uses his/her influence as a martial arts athlete to disseminate his/her radical thought



DESCRIPTION

Already in July 2015, French analyses revealed that many gyms offering judo, MMA, kickboxing and other martial arts or combat sports, in France, had been attended for years both by would-be terrorists, to prepare for combat, and by recruiters, to bolster the ranks.

The same phenomenon has also been observed in other European realities, especially in Germany, where fundamentalists target vulnerable young people who seek refuge in these environments as a response to dysfunctional families and discomfort school.

Many known or would-be attackers (including kick boxer Abderrahim Moutaharrik in Italy) were combat sports athletes.

Sometimes, however, the ring was also used as a method of de-radicalisation; like in the case of Usman Raja, in London, who has taken charge of some of the most die-hard individuals in the UK to promote disengagement.

In Italy, similar approaches were adopted by some boxing gyms in the fight against crime (Orizio, 2021).

CODE D.3.4

DEFINITION: SEARCH FOR LEGAL AND/OR ILLEGAL FINANCING CHANNELS

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual has contacts with financial groups /individuals that can make available movable/ immovable resources
- Seeks contact with a criminal group
- Is in contact with platforms managed by front groups that can fund violent extremist activities

DESCRIPTION

Terrorist networks can count on various forms of funding, from the taxes that they impose on the occupied territories, to ransoms for kidnappings, donations, proceeds of crime, such as drug dealing and other illegal activities.

In the following short interview with Omar (see [CASE STUDY 4: OMAR](#)), accused of incitement to commit a crime, we can observe how fundraising is a very common practice in which not only jihadist organizations participate.

FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH OMAR ON HIS INVOLVEMENT IN JIHADIST CHANNELS

Interviewer: Even if one does not go to war, you also said that there are many ways to participate. Participation can take place through the dissemination of ideas, on the Internet, as well as raising money to help jihadists.

Omar: *The last point was a discreet thing, it was even more closed and those who invited to such a thing were even more suspicious. If there were prisoners around the world, or someone else in Italy went to jail, or in the Middle East, and was a famous person and there was the possibility of paying their bail, a campaign was organised.*

Interviewer: so the funds were raised on online platforms?

Omar: *Yes, but it wasn't done for a specific person. It was said that on such-and-such a day in that place a number of people were arrested, or else that during this span of time some people were arrested and those who have the possibility to pay bail and want to...*

Interviewer: And how was the money sent?

Omar: *I don't know that. It was usually done by not only jihadist organizations. They were mixed. Sometimes they talked about...prisoners of various kinds. The bail in the sense that maybe the organization wasn't really jihadist...it was trying to help the prisoner's family with financial support.*

CODE D.3.5

DEFINITION: **EXPRESSION OF THE INTENTION TO PERPETRATE VIOLENT ACTS AND/OR TO TRAVEL TO THE JIHAD THEATRE**

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual declares the intention to commit violent actions against specific targets
- Confides in his/her online/offline network of relations an upcoming great event during which justice will be done
- Claims to have learned from an unspecified confidant that an attack is about to occur
- Makes or disseminates a video testimony about his/her intentions to commit a violent act and displays loyalty to a violent cause
- Expresses the intention to move to a jihad area

DESCRIPTION

Radicalized subjects can sometimes explicitly express their intentions, issuing statements of intent or concrete attack plans that may sound like general and apparently random expressions (Robertz, Wickenhäuser, 2010).

A large number of studies analyse the frequency and type of information disclosed by the subject short before an attack. In 44% of cases, the lone actor **disclosed in advance** his/her intention to take action against third parties and 21% of them even disclosed the details of their own plans to attack third parties (Ellis, et al., 2016).

Hamm and Spaaij (2015) even conclude that more than 76% of the authors examined revealed their intentions to others more than once, for example via Facebook and Twitter.

A particular aspect connected to violent jihadism is the choice of **making a video testament** on the upcoming intention to mobilize, which can be seen as a way to acquire a sort of "immortality", but which also responds to the need to mark one's membership to a certain organization which can subsequently claim responsibility for the action, thus inspiring other individuals.

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 5: MONCEF; CASE 7: AMINA; CASE 8: MARIA GIULIA

CODE D.3.6

DEFINITION: ACCESS TO WEAPONS OR ATTEMPT TO PROCURE THEM

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual's speeches focus on the use of weapons
- The individual has a gun license or the concrete possibility to have access to own arms through other subjects
- Is in touch with individuals/groups that may have access to own weapons (e.g. criminal groups)
- Looks for information on how to turn a common object into a weapon
- Attempts to obtain information to make a weapon with a 3D-printer

DESCRIPTION

This activity can constitute a crime. The difficulty in identifying it lies in the extreme variability of elements, equipment and substances that can be used to create an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) or other harmful means.

The concrete possibility that a radicalized subject may have access to a weapon must always be given special attention. The presence of individuals in possession, for various reasons, of gun licences, in the closest network of relations requires some assessment of the concrete possibility that the subject has access to pistols or rifles. An element that should also be evaluated in this respect is any report of theft or loss of weapons by people close to him/her.

Interest in weapons is an indicator that always needs to be contextualized, in relation to the attitude that the subject concretely displays and in relation to the prevailing culture in the country of origin: publishing a photo on social profiles holding a weapon is in fact quite common in some countries, as it corresponds to a certain type of traditional culture which does not necessarily indicate having been part of a militarily constituted radical or criminal organization.

In the United States, where the possession of weapons is very common, this indicator does not imply a particularly significant risk. Instead, **attention must be paid to the behaviour associated with this interest**, the frequency with which photos of weapons are posted, the relating comments, the words that the subject uses while talking about them (if they express violence, a desire to abuse power, or the reference to specific targets or groups).

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 4: OMAR; CASE 5: MONCEF



D4

PROTECTIVE FACTORS AND SUPPORT TO DISENGAGEMENT

The assessment of risk factors cannot disregard the analysis of protection items, i.e. those **elements or characteristics that increase the subject's or context's own resilience to radicalization** and which can reduce or mitigate the probability that someone will surrender to violent extremism.

To date, the number of researches on risk factors far exceeds that on protective factors, but most scholars agree on the importance of evaluating both to determine the level of danger posed by a radicalized person: focusing on the risks alone can lead to generalizations based on stereotypes rather than on real data.

Focusing on both risk and protective factors not only improves the evaluation accuracy of a subject, but can also provide additional insights for designing effective interventions. For example, "anger" (which is a risk factor) is a common element in almost all adolescent transitions: countering this factor (i.e. problematising, medicalising or criminalising) will often prove counterproductive (Ranstorp, 2016). A disengagement programme could instead **strengthen or exploit the protective factors, identifying the pro-social skills or competences of the subject or the positive networks of which he/she is part**, trying to strengthen them as a barrier against the possibility that he/she takes on or goes on with the unwanted behaviour (for example by placing him/her in a training course that improves the ability to manage anger).

Protective factors may already be present at the start of the case assessment, or change during the observation period, if the individual turns to less firm positions, also following interventions to promote disengagement. For this reason, it is important to regularly undertake a review of the observation of the subject.

The indicators are divided between those shared by students and workers and those that only concern young workers ([CODE D.4.7 AND CODE D.4.8](#)).



CODE D.4.1

DEFINITION: STRONG ATTACHMENT TO INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE NOT LINKED TO ANY VIOLENT EXTREMIST NETWORK

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual has significant ties with individuals outside the violent extremist group
- Is the only reference for a vulnerable subject to which he/she is deeply attached

DESCRIPTION

Strong emotional relationships with individuals who are not linked to a violent extremist network (parents, other family members, but also teachers, imams or other people) are a protective factor against the mobilization risk.

These people can in fact play a role in promoting disengagement by acting in an informal way to positively influence the young person through intervention on his/her antisocial drifts. The positive influence of a spouse or family responsibilities can convince the radical adult to take a distance from violent extremist behaviour.

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 1: KHALID; CASE 4: OMAR; CASE 6: ZAHID; CASE 7: AMINA

CODE D.4.2

DEFINITION: STRONG SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK WHICH IS NOT LINKED TO ANY VIOLENT EXTREMIST NETWORK

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual is part of a positive social context that is not linked to violent extremism
- Is supported by the community which makes available resources or facilities that distance him/her from violent extremism
- Starts visiting places or hanging out with people that are not linked to extremist networks

DESCRIPTION

A social network that offers emotional support and concrete help in times of need has a beneficial and positive effect on an individual who is attracted by the radical narrative, especially if it is a community that does not support violence. A supportive community helps develop resilient traits that ward off the risk of radicalisation.

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 6: ZAHID; CASE 7: AMINA

CODE D.4.3

DEFINITION: PROACTIVE AND PRO-SOCIAL INTERESTS

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data	• The individual engages in social and volunteer activities that are not linked to violent extremism • Develops vocational skills that interest him/her • Attends sport or game groups • Is committed to the welfare of his community • Engages in new activities that can improve his/her ability to cope with violent extremism
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DESCRIPTION

Engaging in pro-social and proactive activities (sports, volunteering, etc.) **allows individuals to develop skills** such as empathy, cooperation, ability to express feelings and emotions, understand other people's suffering and concern for others, make sacrifices and respect others.

If a low level of social involvement is a strong predictor of the violence risk, positive inclusion in a social network mitigates it.

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 3: IMAD

CODE D.4.4

DEFINITION: STRONG SCHOOL OR WORK COMMITMENT

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data	• The individual is very interested in the school or work activity which is an important long-term goal • Obtains good results from school or work commitment • Believes that success in school or at work is one of the most important things to achieve, even at the cost of sacrifices
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DESCRIPTION

Engaging in educational and school activities, or work in the case of adults, is linked to a **decrease in the violence risk** for these individuals because it provides a motivation to succeed, to imagine a positive and satisfying future, and could also decrease the attractiveness of the radical choice. Self-confidence as well as confidence in own abilities and motivations could remove the need to bond with a radical group or leader to satisfy the need for belonging.

IN ANNEX 3, CASE 1: KHALID; CASE 7: AMINA

CODE D.4.5

DEFINITION: REJECTION OF THE USE OF VIOLENCE

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual is disappointed with violent methods
- Is active in building the democratic process
- Rejects expressions of violence as these are not in line with his/her values
- Has learned how to express dissent with non-violent methods

DESCRIPTION

Factors relating to **disillusionment with the experience lived within the radical group** probably play a stronger role for those who leave it and often lead the individual to reject the use of violence as a tool to produce political and social changes.

Also the **disappointment with the models of masculinity and femininity** conveyed by jihadism, characterized by dynamics of subjugation, can lead to a revision of the one's own behaviour, way of being and expressing one's activism.

The change could be marked by the individual's desire to engage in the life of the community, exercising functions or taking on social positions, or even to enter the democratic political process by rejecting violence, or by overcoming the idea that non-violent protests are useless in promoting change.

CODE D.4.6

DEFINITION: **CHANGE TOWARDS LESS FIRM IDEOLOGY AND/OR BEHAVIOUR**

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual expresses the own ideology in a less firm and exclusive way
- Considers positively the right of other individuals and groups to think differently
- Also approves religious forms other than the own one
- Decreases or ceases attendance at places and/or relationships with people characterized by extremist profiles
- Decreases or ceases engagement in extremist activities



DESCRIPTION

A change in the perception of the enemy, who is no longer considered as a target in the subject's intentions, is a positive evolution which could indicate the start of a reconsideration phase of the violent ideology.

The individual may display a **decrease in or termination of personal involvement** with an extremist network and begin to engage in other activities or start new relationships away from the violent network autonomously or as a consequence of a disengagement programme.

CODE D.4.7

DEFINITION: **BELONGING TO A WORK ENVIRONMENT CHARACTERIZED BY POSITIVE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual works in an organization that cares about workers' rights
- Is part of a social network that supports him/her with solidarity and appreciation
- Is considered as an asset in his/her work environment in which he/she has strengthened the positive and collaborative atmosphere between workers



DESCRIPTION

A good work environment in which satisfactory social relationships are established is an alternative support network to that of the violent group and favours the integration of the individual into the community and society.

When these conditions are created, an increased self-esteem of the subject is observed and a feeling of personal dignity prevails which binds him/her more strongly to the working group.

CODE D.4.8

DEFINITION: STEADY AND REWARDING JOB

Examples of observable behaviours and detectable data

- The individual has a steady job
- Is satisfied with his/her job
- Has a rewarding job
- Receives satisfactory remuneration

DESCRIPTION

Having a satisfying job normalizes the individual and decreases the likelihood of violent behaviour. A satisfying job means a job offering remuneration perceived as consistent with one's position.

Carrying out unsatisfactory (poorly paid, precarious, temporary or unwanted) jobs generates negative feelings that could bring individuals to seek a role or join a violent group.

This element is **particularly important for returnees and for the reintegration of former terrorists in general**. A change such as a work or education opportunity can indeed lead to disengagement because the new style and way of life could prevail over the old one.

If, instead, returnees keep staying within restricted social circles, do not work or study, are not exposed to new relationships, ideas, lifestyles, it will be more difficult to neutralize the social contacts established in wartime and replace, for example, the respect for brothers in arms with that for the community (Nilsson, 2018).



3

Gender and risk indicators

The factors and motivations that push women to approach violent extremism are generally similar to those of men (Schmidt, 2018). However, gender can influence radicalization paths and, although the differences between men and women in this regard have not yet been systematically studied, it is possible to report some examples taken from the existing literature (Neri, 2020).

In a 2019 study of a group of radicalized people, women proved to have a higher schooling level and lower drop-out rates. Within the same sample, however, the unemployment rate was higher among women. Indicator **D.1.17** may therefore not be as relevant for women as for men, while the lack of access to the labour market, which could be voluntary or involuntary, should be considered both as a possible cause of dissatisfaction and resentment and as a lacking protective factor (indicator **D.4.8**), capable of affecting the radicalization process (Brugh, et al., 2019).

As regards Italian foreign fighters, female Italian FTFs have not abused drugs (indicator **D.1.20**) in the past, have no criminal record (indicator **D.1.14**) and have not been detained (indicator **D.1.15**) (Marone, Vidino, 2018).

All these characteristics, which are generally considered as risk indicators, must therefore be taken differently into consideration if the analysed subject is a woman.

A factor that needs careful examination is the experience of discrimination, infringement of rights and violence suffered, which have been recognized as an important radicalization driver for women (CTED, 2019). The latter are in fact more exposed to discrimination and violence incidents as compared to men, due, for example to the hijab, which makes them more easily visible and identifiable as Muslims (Jacobsen, 2017).

Other motivational factors with a greater impact on women than on men are the feeling of power and control given by the fact of belonging to the group and the search for independence from the family context (Kneip, 2016). Also, second- and third-generation women living in western countries feel more the difficulty of belonging to two different cultures, in which the concepts of femininity and gender-related expectations can differ significantly between the household and the society (Conseil du statut de la femme, 2016).

Finally, it is necessary to take into account the fact that the radicalization processes they are involved in develop more easily online than offline (Pearson, Winterbotham, 2017) (indicators **D.2.9** and **D.2.12**) and usually occur within markedly isolated and restricted groups of women only, which makes these processes less visible than those in which men are involved.

4

Use of GREG-4D grids

GREG-4D grids can be used by various types of professionals conducting observation in specific contexts, such as teachers in schools and educators in communities/youth centres, UFM's voluntary tutors, social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists, security staff in criminal justice.

The minimum requirement is that those who use the grids have specific skills (in terms of knowledge, training and experience in using) on assessment in general, on violent radicalization and group dynamics, as well as on specific radicalization and violent extremist ideologies contexts. Professionals must have been trained in the use of the grids and must conduct the observation within the scope of their skills.

As already mentioned in the premise, this observation tool does not include scales with numerical values or specific cut-offs that make it possible to assign a score to the radicalisation risk. The decision is left to the sensitivity and knowledge of the observer or the project team who, being able to count on a standardized tool, will be assisted in the collection of information useful for making decisions.

The tool entails **frequencies** that can be detected after a minimum observation period of one month in which an assessment of each item and of its frequency will be carried out through the related scores: never (the event never occurred) = 0; rarely (the observed event occurred once in the entire observation period) = 1; sometimes (the observed event occurred twice) = 2; often (the observed event occurred at least once a week) = 3; always (the observed event occurs regularly) = 4. Items that do not fall within the dimensional categories will be indicated as yes, no, not detected.

The observation of radicalization processes through grids can be advanced from several points of view, using three approaches: 1) participant observation; 2) semi-structured interview and clinical interview; 3) document analysis (Corbetta, 1999).

The **participant observation** makes use of the narrative description, through the diary-type recording of sequences of significant activities that are suitable to be analyzed and discussed later. It's about observing behaviours directly, avoiding altering their spontaneity and concreteness through stimulation forms.

The observer records verbal/non-verbal behaviours, crucial events, attitudes and behaviours, refusal or request to do something, external (topics, language, clothing, habits) and internal (e.g. interests, moods, affectivity) changes, the relationships of the individual in the group and finally the general trends.

It is also necessary to detect those behavioural changes towards a less radical mindset that will be listed in the items of the fourth dimension, particularly in the item "Change towards less firm ideology and/or behaviour" (CODE [D.4.6](#)).

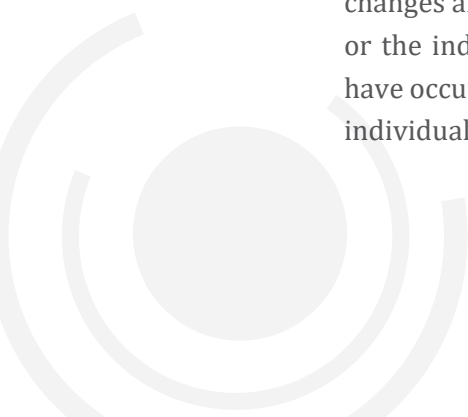
The second observation mode is the **interview**, with which to gather information about personal data, behaviours, opinions and attitudes related to the items of the guide. We recommend a **semi-structured approach**, in which the topic to be addressed (corresponding to one or more items of the grids) is only a stimulus and the questions can be modified and adapted. Once the topic has been proposed, the interviewer will let individuals develop their own viewpoint, keeping the conversation going and encouraging the subjects to give more details when they touch upon interesting topics. This approach could also reveal unexpected sub-topics.

In addition to the semi-structured interview, a psychologist could use the tool of the **clinical interview** starting from the items of the grid to re-analyse in depth the individual's path.

Another method of acquiring information is the **document analysis**. Documents can be personal, for example compositions written by the individual, or institutional such as judicial data, reports from host communities, schools and social workers. In these cases documents will be analysed with the observational grids, noting all the items that can be detected and deciding whether to further investigate later with another approach (e.g. interview and/or observation).

The indicators choice is important because it will make it possible to reconstruct the weaknesses and needs of the person on which to act through tailored activities. It will also be important not to interpret behaviours in an inferential and deductive way when supporting data are missing, but to stick to the content. In general, the grids should not be filled in the absence of clear data that highlight the presence of a behaviour among those actually considered as a risk.

In consideration of the dynamic nature of radicalization, especially when it involves minors, it is necessary to repeat the surveys, after an initial assessment, whenever changes are observed, or in cases in which disengagement processes have been started, or the individual has become more mature or, again, because changes to the context have occurred. For a practical example on the use of GREG-4D, some cases of radicalised individuals posing different levels of risk have been included in [ANNEX 3](#).



5

GREG-T 1st level triage

From GREG-4D grids, 14 indicators have been chosen among just the three dimensions of individual vulnerability, polarization and mobilization, and they have been grouped in two sections named: **“OBSERVE”** and **“REPORT”**.

It is an easy-to-use grid for carrying out a first-level triage, with the aim of quickly detecting the presence of an upcoming dangerous event for the individual or the community, or a crime.

The first-level grid does not allow for the development of a prevention or disengagement intervention programme because it is based only on risk levels.

The **GREG-T** first-level triage (included in [ANNEX 2](#)) is a quick-to-use tool that can be used in all those situations in which one wants to start the observation to quickly decide whether or not to report the case to the police.

The tool does not require specialized training and makes it possible to focus immediately on the most obvious aspects of the radicalization process, such as overt hostility towards society, isolation from the social context, dehumanization of specific groups and external modification of narratives and language which are all significant signs of an ongoing process of change.

The tool provides for the detection of the item after a minimum observation period of one month, unless an emergency situation arises that requires an immediate notification. In case one needs to further investigate the situation to set up an early intervention or disengagement, the use of GREG-4D is recommended.

The triage grid bears the same numbering as the GREG-4D to facilitate the descriptive consultation of the tool, to which reference should be made for more detailed information.



CONCLUSIONS

The GREG-4D model is divided into 4 dimensions and 48 indicators and it is an aid tool for the observation, analysis and assessment of cases that can direct and support decision-making processes and guide prevention and disengagement interventions. The time-changing nature of radicalization processes makes it important to repeat the assessment on a regular basis, gradually focusing on the changes occurred that could increase or decrease the risk.

Transition factors at a personal, community, social or political level can act as activators and amplifiers increasing the risk that the individual advances in radicalization, or they can serve as inhibitors, slowing down and decreasing this possibility. An overall examination of the individual mediated by structured tools, on top of helping focus on the different areas, could have the advantage of also suggesting the most appropriate time to act, setting up the type of intervention that is most likely to be successful.

In case of activation of a Multidisciplinary Working Group (MWG), the cooperation with individuals from different professional cultures could be facilitated by sharing a common language and methodology which, although it is based on the dimensions on which to focus the research, remains open and interactive with the observation object, which is always the single case, to which it tries to adapt.

In fact, the combined use of tools typical of qualitative techniques, such as observation, interviews, document analysis, together with the tools and methodologies offered here, refer to the adoption of a multidisciplinary operational approach which, by exploring the details, tries to reconstruct the overall picture to respond to the need to handle a complex and multifaceted phenomenon.

Finally, the adoption of observational grids, on the one hand, is a requirement linked to the need to focus on elements originated from scientific research and professional practice in the field, and, on the other, does not exclude the possibility that the characteristics of the individuals observed also suggest different paths not envisaged by the indicators, which the sensitivity and the experience of the operators involved will be able to grasp and integrate.



4

JIHADIST NARRATIVES





4

JIHADIST NARRATIVES

As mentioned previously, a number of scholars and experts distinguish two forms of radicalization: on the one hand, "**cognitive**" **radicalization** refers to acquisition of radical attitudes, values and beliefs; on the other, "**behavioural**" **radicalization** implies the adoption of a variety of actions up to direct participation in violent terrorist acts. In short, it can be stated that the "cognitive" radicalization concerns words and is therefore linked to the wider theme of freedom of expression, while "behavioural" radicalization concerns deeds.

If, on the one hand, those who actually reach behavioural radicalization, and therefore perpetrate violent actions, are a minority among the radicalized individuals, on the other, these subjects have usually gone through some more or less intense and sophisticated experience of cognitive radicalization, often on the Internet. In other words, in radicalization processes, "the deeds" (for example, the perpetration of violent actions) usually follow "words" (for example, the consumption and/or possibly the production of propaganda material). Hence, it is necessary to take into consideration cognitive radicalization and the narratives on which it is based, especially in the virtual context on the internet.

It is widely recognized that extremist groups and movements, including terrorist organizations, use a wide range of communication strategies to promote their goals, and violence, including terrorist one, is portrayed as the privileged tool to achieve the goal of radically changing the established order.

Among these strategies, one of the most relevant ones certainly concerns the use of narratives (Braddock and Horgan, 2016). **Narrative** is generally meant as a **relatively consequent and compact set of stories - of narratives, precisely - which, being connected to each other, provide a relatively consistent view of the world** to motivate and support individuals, groups or movements with a view to pursuing a vision or purpose.

Through a mix of more or less simple stories, often with a strong emotional charge, narratives have the function of conveying ideological orientations, values and justifications to sympathizers, militants and the public.

Some extremist narratives can be invented from scratch, but many others are creative and selective re-interpretations and re-makes of topics and themes already existing in a certain cultural environment (for example, a certain religion), specially adapted to extremist objectives. Such narratives, based on instrumental re-interpretations, have the advantage of being able to more easily ring true to the ears of the target population.

Within the vast and diverse Islamic world, jihadist extremists are reinterpreting and elaborating on some deeds of the Prophet Muhammad (Muhammad) with a view to militancy, in the awareness that such stories are naturally well familiar to most of the Muslims. For example, the **Battle of Badr** (624 AD), the first major military victory of Muslim believers against a much more larger enemy army coming from Mecca has been used by modern jihadists, starting from the mujahidin engaged in Afghanistan against the Red Army in the 1980s, to promote the "just" fight against an opponent with apparently overwhelming forces (Halverson et al., 2011).

Narratives, precisely as the result of a dialogic construction, tend not to be static and rigid, but they **can be continuously shaped and re-elaborated**, also to be adjusted to current events and developments, so as to be applied to different individuals, situations and contexts.

As an example, the so-called Islamic State has taken up the concept of **Hegira** (hijrah in Arabic) – the transfer of the Prophet and his comrades, known as muhajirun (in Arabic "emigrants"), from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD – a crucial event in the religious tradition (also marking the beginning of the Islamic calendar) to represent the migration of the so-called foreign fighters from their countries of residence to the Syrian-Iraqi war zone.

According to the analogy (riskily) proposed by the jihadists of the Islamic State, just like the first Muslims led by the Prophet seized the opportunity to abandon their native city of Mecca, in which they were harassed, to reach the new oasis-city of Yathrib (later renamed Medina) where Muhammad would become a political leader and military commander of the community, so the foreign fighters left their countries of origin which were hostile to them, to land in the territory of the self-proclaimed "Caliphate", the only "State", according to them, where Islamic law was properly applied.

An even broader narrative refers to the concept of **jahiliyyah** ("age of ignorance"), which traditionally indicates the period and conditions prior to the advent of Islam in the seventh century. This concept has been used by Islamist extremists in recent decades, not only by violent ones, to represent and condemn the alleged modern process of corruption and decline of Islamic civilization, due to detachment from the strict application of the Shari'ah and the importation of western values, cultural models and customs, because of formally Muslim rulers, to be actually considered as "apostates". The idea is therefore that most Muslims have fallen into a new status of "ignorance", barbarism and polytheism, similar to the one which characterized the pagan society of the Arabian Peninsula before Revelation (Halverson, et al., 2011).

It is clear that narratives can therefore be very powerful means of promotion of forms of extremism, including violent ones, by fostering and encouraging acceptance of radical ideologies, membership to groups that produce and/or disseminate them and, in extreme cases, even perpetration of violent actions, such as participation in terrorist attacks.





1

Countering jihadist narratives

Narratives per se are only a tool and their **persuasion effect** can be used both to promote violent extremism and to counter it.

In other words, just as a number of extremist groups or single militants can produce and disseminate narratives aimed to convince other individuals to adopt their radical views and/or engage in the use of violence, it is likewise possible to produce and disseminate narratives to achieve opposite goals (Braddock, Horgan 2016; Beutel et al., 2016). **It is therefore possible to challenge extremist narratives on the same battlefield**, so to say.

In this regard, experts and scholars sometimes analytically distinguish two types of narratives aimed at countering violent extremism. **Counter-narratives** are designed and developed to challenge the information and arguments that fuel and support already existing extremist narratives. As an example, it could be possible to develop a counter-narrative to deny the legitimacy of the use of terrorist violence against non-Muslim targets by armed jihadist groups.

Alternative narratives, instead, are conceived and developed to provide new information, arguments and topics, in order to actively convey an alternative vision to the extremist one, without necessarily evoking it. If counter-narratives therefore present themselves as more or less punctual interventions to react, "in negative", to dangerous messages, alternative narratives are instead "positive" constructions, of a proactive nature. For example, in the fight against jihadist violent extremism an alternative narrative can aim at promoting the values of cultural pluralism and religious tolerance.

Scholars, experts and counter-terrorism professionals have long recognized the relevance narratives have in advancing an extremist cause and in inspiring sympathizers or recruiting militants. Similarly, the relevance of counter-narratives and alternative narratives in programmes and measures aimed at preventing and countering violent extremism developed in many countries has been recognized in the awareness that at the basis of the jihadist phenomenon "there is above all a type of culture or, if preferred, of subculture (as for any other terrorist and criminal expression on an organized basis)" (Galzerano, 2018).

The lack of commitment on this cultural front can in fact reduce the effectiveness also of the other prevention activities, especially in the medium and long term. It should be emphasized that the meaning we have given to the term "narrative" also includes the communication practice and the interaction between individuals in a given communication, social and cultural context. The organization of what is told, understood as a system of facts, a chain of events and underlying structures, acquires socio-anthropological and semiotic features, typical of their communities and groups of belonging.

In this sense, in order to develop a project of counter-narratives and alternative narratives it is necessary to take into account the background and the cultural and linguistic specificities of the national Islamic communities and of the individual groups of the diaspora based in Italy, and learn about the events related to the current situation that normally polarize the positions of these groups on certain topics.

2

The topics of the jihadist imagination

A

DOCTRINAL PRINCIPLES OF RELIGIOUS ORIGIN AND RELATED NARRATIVES

1 'AQIDA (ISLAMIC CREED) - THE SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUE ISLAM

This category embraces questions relating, on the one hand, to the correct practice of the Islamic worship and, on the other, to the prohibitions that are or would be prescribed by religion, such as polytheism or idolatry (shirk) and, especially from a Salafi point of view, religious innovations (bida'). In fundamentalist circles it is usually characterized by considerations that can be traced back to the work of Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), founder of the so-called Wahhabism. This author's reflection on the 'aqida is connected, in addition to the concept of tawhid (see below), to the definition of the 10 "nullifiers of Islam" (against the orthodox position according to which there are no sins that nullify faith).

2 TAWHID - THE UNITY AND UNIQUENESS OF GOD

Tawhid is the concept of the unity and uniqueness of Allah, it falls within the discipline of 'aqida and is the first pillar of Islam. Associating something with the only divinity implies shirk, a sin that cannot be forgiven. This religious principle has become particularly crucial for jihadists, also in its political application. In this sense, the sovereignty (hakimiyya) cannot belong to the people, as entailed by the principle of constitutional democracy, but only to Allah and there can be no laws other than those revealed precisely by the divinity.

3 MILLENNARIANISM - THE THEORIES ABOUT THE END OF THE WORLD

Some jihadist groups – and especially the so-called Islamic State / Daesh – have made extensive resort to apocalyptic topics to support their political-religious cause. In doing this, they have taken up and interpreted for their extremist cause essential concepts of Islamic eschatology, such as those of Janna ("heaven") and Jahannam ("hell"), Shaytan (Satan / devil) and jinn (genie, usually evil), the signs of the Hour, Al-Masih ad-Dajjal (the False messiah, i.e. the "antichrist"), Al-Malhama Al-Kubra (The Great Battle) and the Day of Judgment. The Islamic State has given great emphasis to a millenarist literature which is controversial in the Islamic world. Such a narrative on the end of the world, defined as certain and impending as well as associated with a Manichaean logic, can foster an even violent radicalization process.

4 QURANIC REFERENCES USED IN RADICAL ISLAMIST NARRATIVE

The radicals have selected and interpreted some verses or suras of the Koran in order to instrumentally justify their cause and their extremist actions. For example, the suras most mentioned by jihadists include the VIII Al-Anfal (the Booty) and the IX At-Tawba (the Repentance), in which several verses can appear, at least if isolated and de-contextualized, as aggressive and violent.



B

CONFLICT-RELATED NARRATIVES

5 VICTIMISM - FEELING OF INJUSTICE AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY

A particularly relevant and wide radical narrative concerns the evocation of (alleged) serious injustices against Muslims as such. This category can involve: armed conflicts where a majority-Muslim party is opposed to one that is not, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; conditions of human rights violations, such as those relating to the Islamic minorities of the Uyghurs in China and the Rohingyas in Myanmar; but also inequality, discrimination and injustices in daily life in the West, due to alleged Islamophobic prejudices.

6 THE WEST AS AN ENEMY - CRITICISM ON WESTERN SOCIETY AND THE WEST

A separate narrative depicts the West, generally defined as a monolithic entity, as a die-hard enemy of Islam. The West is criticized and condemned without appeal for some of its political doctrines and institutions, such as democracy and nationalism; for some principles, such as gender equality; but also for the foreign policies of some countries that are part of it and even for some practices and customs that can directly or indirectly involve Muslims, such as celebrating the Christmas season. Furthermore, jihadist rhetoric claims that in the West it is not possible to practice the “true Islam”.

7 THE WAR AGAINST ISLAM

Once the in-group (Islam, depicted as a victim of serious injustices) and the out-group (the enemies of Islam, starting with the West) have been defined, it is possible to mention a true Manichaean existential conflict between Islam and the rest of the world and incite “true Muslims” to personally take part in it. In this perspective, Islam must first of all be defended at all costs from the alleged subjugations and aggressions by its enemies – in particular, by the Christian West (the “Crusaders”) as well as by Israel and the Jews (the “Zionist Entity”). The existence of this war implies that not only Muslims cannot ally with Christians and Jews, but they are even authorized to attack and persecute them.



C

CONCEPTS AND NARRATIVES INCITING TO ACTION (ORIGINATED FROM DOCTRINES, IN A CONFLICT CONTEXT)

8 JIHAD - UNDERSTOOD AS WAR AGAINST NON-BELIEVERS

Jihad ("effort" in Arabic) is a polysemous term that takes on several meanings. Essentially, it is related to the idea of "a personal or social effort to conform to the divine will. Contemporary jihadists have attached fundamental importance to this concept, presenting it, in its armed sense, as a fundamental individual duty (fard al-'ayn) for all "true" Muslims, with almost no restrictions in its use. Fulfilling this duty ensures rewards in the afterlife as well. The most radical circles - in the wake of the militant and extremist ideologue Muhammad Abdal-Salam Faraj, executed in 1982 - have not hesitated to raise jihad even to a "sixth pillar" of Islam. The practice of martyrdom can also be traced back to this extremist narrative.

9 TAKFIR

Takfir is the name of the controversial - popular in jihadist circles, albeit to varying degrees - principle according to which it would be possible and even necessary to "excommunicate" - or more precisely to declare non-Muslims as kuffar ("non-believers") - and even punish with violence those who are accused of not recognizing the "true Islam". This extremist practice can be invoked against Shiites and Sufis, but also against "moderate" and/or non-practicing Sunnis and even against Madkhali Salafists. The practice of takfir can be invoked and exercised even against those who, in turn, do not pronounce the takfir towards the "non-believers".

10 AL-WALA' WA-L-BARA' - "LOYALTY AND DISACKNOWLEDGMENT", OR TO LOVE THE BELIEVERS AND HATE THOSE WHO ARE NOT BELIEVERS

The most radical circles have taken to extremes this concept which is of particular relevance for Salafists, proposing the idea that loyalty (wala') to Allah should be understood as loyalty to one's group and that the disacknowledgement (bara') of what is opposed to Islam should turn into hatred towards unbelievers and all those who are not considered as "true" Muslims.

11 CALIPHATE (KHILAFAT)

In the Islamic tradition, the Caliphate represents the Islamic State par excellence, governed by a Muslim ruler who is considered as the successor of the Prophet Muhammad and the guide of the whole Ummah. On 29th June 2014, following the sensational conquest of the Iraqi city of Mosul, the Islamic State organization (al-dawla al-islamiyah) unilaterally declared the establishment of the "Caliphate", devoid of national borders in their modern sense, and called on all "true" Muslims to fulfill the duty of hijrah towards its territory (see below). The one relating to the Caliphate has therefore become one of the most important narratives of the armed group.



12 HIJRAH – THE EMIGRATION TO AN ISLAMIC STATE

The hijrah (Ėgira), the crucial transfer of the Prophet Muhammad and his Comrades from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD, becomes a symbol of emigration to an Islamic State. In this context, and especially after the establishment of the self-proclaimed "Caliphate" in 2014, the hijrah has been interpreted as a duty, even for women, in a world hopelessly divided, also in terms of space, into two parts, the dar al-Islam (literally House of Islam) and the dar al-harb (House of the War).



D

RELEVANT EVENTS AND ACTORS OF THE JIHADIST CAUSE

13 THE WAR IN SYRIA

The civil war that broke out in Syria in 2011 is an event of great importance for jihadist groups and militants. The Ba'athist government of Alawite President Bashar al-Assad, presented as a non-believer and condemned as unjust and brutal, is in many ways a perfect enemy for jihadist propaganda. Furthermore, the violent incidents against the country's Sunni majority, especially against children and women, have been widely disseminated and made public, and they have produced feelings of indignation, anger and vengeance that were exploited by the jihadist rhetoric.

14 ATTACKS AND ATTACKERS

In recent years, especially following the proclamation of the self-styled "Caliphate" in 2014, there has been a significant growth in the number of terrorist attacks performed in the West as well as their relative lethality rate. The references to the attacks, with particular attention to the most serious and symbolic ones (Charlie Hebdo, Bataclan, San Bernardino, Brussels, Orlando, Nice, Berlin Christmas markets, Manchester Arena, Barcelona and Catalonia, Strasbourg), and also to their attackers, especially the most well-known ones (including the brothers Chérif and Saïd Kouachi, Amedy Coulibaly, Ayoub El-Khazzani, the brothers Khalid and Ibrahim El-Bakraoui, Omar Mateen, Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel, Anis Amri, Khalid Masood, [Italian-Moroccan] Youssef Zaghba, Abdelbaki Es Satty, Ahmed Hanachi [who lived in Italy], Cherif Chekatt) are frequent in jihadist propaganda.

E

ACTORS, ENTITIES AND INSTRUMENTS OF ISLAMIST AND JIHADIST PROPAGANDA

15 ISLAMIST OR JIHADIST REFERENCE FIGURES

Leaders and prominent figures of jihadist armed groups, influential ideologists as well as extremist - but not strictly jihadist - thinkers and preachers recur in the material shared by radicalized individuals. These include, for example, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi, Abu Hamza al-Qurayshi, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Abu Muhammad al-'Adnani, Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Anwar al-'Awlaki, 'Abd Allah al-'Azzam, Abu Qatada.

16 REFERENCE MEDIA FOR JIHADIST NARRATIVE

As it is known, militants and jihadist groups have paid great attention to the tools and to communication and propaganda channels, also online, sometimes with very high levels of technical sophistication. Among the jihadist media it is worth mentioning the "press agency" Amaq for the self-proclaimed Islamic State, the magazine Dabiq, published in several languages from 2014 to 2016, or the weekly bulletin Al-Naba in Arabic.

17 NASHID - MUSICAL HYMN/POEM WITH RELIGIOUS CONTENT

In general, in the Islamic tradition, anashid (sing. nashid) are hymns or poems sung *a cappella* or, at the most, with some percussion instruments, to respect the opinion quite widespread among radical Islamic scholars according to which the use of most musical instruments is haram (forbidden). Even extremist groups have resorted to this musical genre in order to build and consolidate a jihadist identity and culture and to motivate their sympathizers and incite them to take action. The Islamic State, in particular, has used this effective form of expression extensively combining it precisely with lyrics and music, focusing on a relatively limited number of topics, including war exploits, jihad as a solution to the problems of the Ummah, rewards for martyrs, the establishment of the "Caliphate".

3

Female narratives

The topics of the jihadist imagination listed so far have a transversal impact and are aimed at a diverse audience. Narratives, however, can be adjusted based on gender: an example of this is the propaganda of the Islamic State – an organization that more than any other has been able to manipulate gender stereotypes – leveraging the traditional concepts of masculinity and femininity (Neri, 2020).

The Islamic State propaganda is gender-sensitive and addresses the female audience in a different way than the male one, using specific topics and narratives, some of which can also be found in other Islamist groups (Jacobsen, 2019).

These narratives - which represent the woman at times as submissive to the man and relegated to the domestic life, at times as an active part capable of playing a number of roles within the group - are wisely adapted both to the target to which they are addressed and to the contingent needs of the organization. **The woman is therefore a recruiter and fundraiser when the organization is expanding, she is a wife and a mother when the organization is strong, she is a fighter when the existence of the organization is threatened** (Sadiqi, 2020).

Please find below some of the main topics of Islamist propaganda addressed to women (Kneip, 2016; Mattheis, Winter, 2019, Ozeren, et al. 2018, Ingram 2017).

1 THE ISLAMIC MODEL OF EMPOWERMENT

Islamist propaganda questions Western feminism and the idea that Muslim women are oppressed and submissive to men. It does this by creating the image of the "true female Muslim", a strong woman committed to the cause, who is at the same time a mother, a wife and a mujahida. This woman is a new empowerment model for Muslim women, contrary to the generally secular one offered by western feminism. The topic of the hijab is often linked to this narrative, as it is seen as a symbol of identity that the Muslim woman must be proud to wear.

Furthermore, especially for young women, the process of empowerment that passes through the adoption of the Islamist model is an opportunity to express one's rebellion against parents and claim own independence and ability to take control.

2 THE REGRESSIVE UTOPIA OF WOMEN AT THE TIME OF THE PROPHET

The echo of the state of purity and perfection in which Muslims lived at the time of the Prophet runs through all the jihadist propaganda, also the one aimed at women. Muslims are encouraged to follow the example of “women of the past”, who “fought and died for their beliefs” (Jacobsen, 2019), sacrificing everything for Islam. Among the women of the past, the most frequently mentioned one is Umm 'Umara Nusayba who allegedly fought valiantly in a number of battles, to the point of being praised by the Prophet himself. Another important figure is that of Khawla bint al-Azwar, the leader who, in the seventh century, allegedly participated in the campaigns for the conquest of the territories of present-day Syria, Palestine and Jordan, who is praised because of her particular determination in battle. The example of the female fighter is used not only to encourage women to adopt an active role but also to humiliate men who do not take up arms against the “enemies of Islam” and are therefore to be considered less brave than those women whom, according to the propaganda addressed to men, they have the prerogative and duty to defend.

3 THE CALL TO JIHAD

Defensive jihad (jihad al-daf'a), as understood by Al Qaeda ideologist Abdullah Azzam, is fard al-'ayn (the duty of every Muslim) including women, who can take part even without the authorization of their father or husband. The muhajida can play various roles within the organization: supporting and treating fighters, spreading propaganda, recruiting new members, raising funds, educating women and children, and even enforcing the law (as in the case of the Islamic State with the creation of the Al-Khansa' brigade). Finally, in exceptional cases, a woman can participate in fighting or commit suicide attacks. A real call to arms for women by an Islamist organization, however, usually only occurs when its existence is threatened: for example, the Islamic State began encouraging women to actively take part in fighting only starting from 2017, when it was already losing its territories.

4 THE EXALTATION OF "TRADITIONAL ROLES"

Islamist propaganda places a strong emphasis on the need for men and women to return to their traditional roles, respectively as fighters/heads of the family and wives/mothers. The "true Muslim woman" is fulfilled in the context of the home where she can serve and support her husband/fighter and give birth to, raise and educate a new generation of fighters and martyrs for Islam.

"The greatness of the position of the woman, the purpose of her existence is the divine duty of motherhood" (from the so-called Al-Khansa' Brigade Manifesto published in 2015): children are a real weapon with which women fight in favour of the cause. This topic also includes the romantic idea of marriage with a mujahideen, which has been a pull factor for some of the women who left for the IS territories.

5 THE SISTERHOOD

Mirroring the concept of brotherhood proposed to men, Islamist propaganda offers women the opportunity to belong to a community, to be recognized, welcomed and understood by other women with whom they share the same ideology and the same value system. Finding belonging and purpose within this "sisterhood" is a motivational lever all the stronger the more the woman feels discriminated and excluded by society and the community in which she lives.

6 THE VIOLENCE AND THE VIOLATION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

In the Islamic State narrative, the Caliphate is the place where women finally can be respected and enjoy their rights. The safety of women is guaranteed by the application of the Shari'ah and is opposed to the state of danger and insecurity in which Muslim women live in the West. The issue of violence against Muslim women living in non-Islamic countries is a strong radicalization driver for the female population (as described in the in-depth study "Gender and risk indicators"), especially for those who have experienced or witnessed violent incidents and discrimination on an ethnic-religious basis.

CONCLUSIONS

Knowledge of Islamist narratives is becoming increasingly relevant for understanding radicalization processes. The concept of "narratives" refers to the more general one of "culture", of which narratives are an expression in the contexts of communication, social interaction and symbolic construction. Preventing Islamist radicalization means therefore "also accepting that we are faced with a new "culture" that we must analyse and study in depth in order to be able to stem it" (Dambruoso, 2018).

The horrifying attacks and social system that the Caliphate has established between Iraq and Syria are in fact the products of a "culture" that persists through identity membership with jihadism; it is able to define and shape the experience of radicalized individuals, even daily, and in some cases activate their mobilization to action.

The challenge posed by terrorist organizations is also at stake on the web which is increasingly used for recruitment, financing, training and incitement to commit violent acts, but also for the creation and dissemination of radical narratives.

The web offers a great opportunity because it permits to act, on the one hand, on countering the dissemination of jihadist propaganda on the web, on the other, on the promotion of alternative narratives and counter-narratives. The synergy in action on these two levels can help promote prevention not only on a virtual level; it is in fact necessary to keep in mind that "there is no clear distinction between the real and virtual world in terms of self-representation and sense of belonging" (Lombardi, Burato, Maiolino, 2015).

Prevention professionals are therefore called upon to carry out a continuous synthesis between the real and virtual world, contextualizing different identities of the individuals, attaching meaning to the various levels of interaction and recognizing the points of contact between individual paths and radical narratives. The latter intervene – albeit, as mentioned before, at different degrees and levels – at each stage of the radicalization process, thus constituting that cultural and symbolic weak point where individual push factors can find a foothold for the identity construction of the radicalized individual within the construction of a "meaning" which is possible to detect with increasing intensity starting from the observation of the first weak signs of radicalization up until mobilization.

ANNEX 1

GREG 4-D MODEL

Observational Grid on
Radicalization and
Extremism of
Young people
4 Dimensions





Observational model for teachers, social workers, child guardians, community educators, psychologists, psychiatrists.

Name/Code	Sex M ☐ F ☐	Age dd/mm/yyyy
Detector name/Code	Date of detection dd/mm/yyyy	Office/Organization/ Structure/School

D1. INDIVIDUAL VULNERABILITIES						
indicators		frequency				
A	BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS	NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS
D.1.1	Lack of positive identification with society/community and rejection of its democratic values					
D.1.2	Hatred against western society and its symbols					
D.1.3	Resentment for economic, social or political reasons					
D.1.4	Feeling of being a victim of injustices and grievances caused by specific individuals or the community					
D.1.5	Frustration for isolation, social exclusion, marginalization and alienation					
		NO	FEW	SOME	ENOUGH	MANY
D.1.6	Changes in his/her physical appearance, habits, clothing, narratives					
B	BIOGRAPHICAL INDICATORS	YES	NO	NOT DETECTED		
D.1.7	Early separation from primary attachment figures					
D.1.8	Experience of traumatic events					
D.1.9	Experience of (committed/suffered/witnessed) violence at a young age					
D.1.10	Absence of parental figures or poor support from them					
D.1.11	Deviant behaviours of parents or caregivers					
D.1.12	Suicide attempt or engagement in self-harming behaviours					
D.1.13	Strong ties with radicalized individuals					
D.1.14	Criminal record for violent and non-violent crimes					
D.1.15	Detention experience					

C	CRITICAL INDICATORS	YES	NO	NOT DETECTED		
D.1.16	Rejection by the peer group					
D.1.17	Early school dropout or low level of schooling					
D.1.18	Highly degraded social environment					
D.1.19	Suffering from a medically certified or presumed mental disease					
D.1.20	Use of drugs					
D.1.21	Lack of empathy and regret					
D.1.22	Aggressiveness, hostile behaviour towards authorities, issues with anger management					

D2. POLARIZATION TOWARDS VIOLENT EXTREMIST IDEOLOGIES OR LEANINGS

A	INGROUP/OUTGROUP	NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS
D.2.1	Tendency to dehumanize specific groups or individuals					
D.2.2	Isolation from own social environment and intention of breaking off with own environment					
D.2.3	Little tolerance towards non-compliance with religious rules					
D.2.4	Frustration or intolerance for other religious denominations and/or different interpretations of Islam					
D.2.5	Perception of moral obligation to sacrifice for a violent cause					
D.2.6	Justification of violent actions in the name of a greater good					
B	INFORMATION AND SUPPORT	NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS
D.2.7	Learning religion online or through unofficial educational institutions					
D.2.8	Identification with a violent group or ideology					
D.2.9	Non-occasional search or usage of jihadist material online/offline					
D.2.10	Expression of support for jihadist ideology online/offline					
D.2.11	Search for a privileged relationship with a radical mentor online/offline					
D.2.12	Participation in online/offline forums that promote radical and violent views					

D3. SHIFT TOWARDS VIOLENT ACTION

A.	PROSELYTIZING ACTIVITIES AND LINKS TO A VIOLENT NETWORK	YES	NO	NOT DETECTED
D.3.1	Production and dissemination of jihadist propaganda online/offline			
D.3.2	Attempt to recruit others into a violent ideology online/offline			
D.3.3	Participation in rallies or courses to train in combat			
D.3.4	Search for legal and/or illegal financing channels			
D.3.5	Intention to perpetrate violent acts and/or to travel to the jihad theatre			
D.3.6	Access to weapons or attempt to procure them			

D4. PROTECTIVE FACTORS AND SUPPORT TO DISENGAGEMENT

A	COMMON INDICATORS	YES	NO	NOT DETECTED
D.4.1	Strong attachment to individuals who are not linked to any violent extremist network			
D.4.2	Strong social support network which is not linked to any violent extremist network			
D.4.3	Proactive and pro-social interests			
D.4.4	Strong school or work commitment			
D.4.5	Rejection of the use of violence			
D.4.6	Change towards less firm ideology and/or behaviour			
B	ONLY WORKERS	YES	NO	NOT DETECTED
D.4.7	Belonging to a work environment characterized by positive interpersonal relationships			
D.4.8	Steady and rewarding job			



ANNEX 2

GREG T MODEL

Observational Grid on
Radicalization and
Extremism of
Young people

TRIAGE





Observational model for teachers, social workers, child guardians, host community educators.

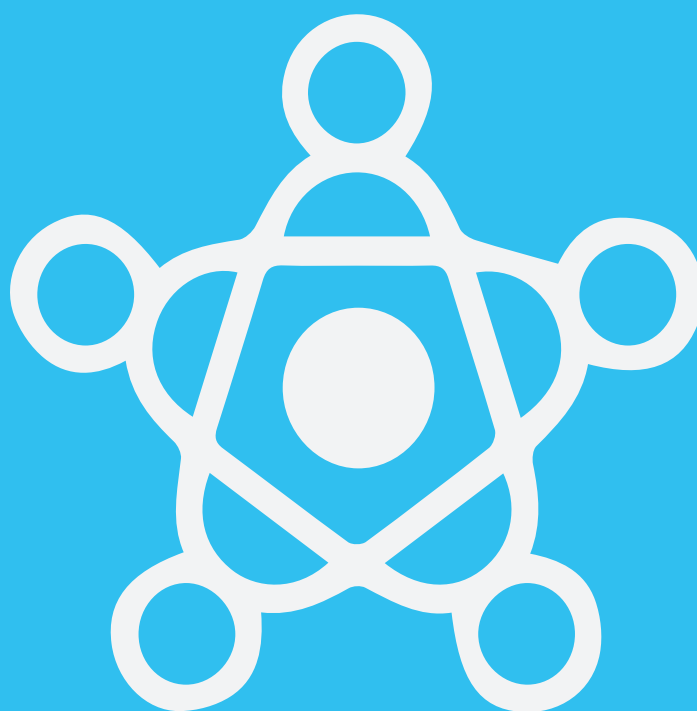
Name/Code _____	Sex M ☐ F ☐	Date of detection dd/mm/yyyy
Detector name/Code _____	Age dd/mm/yyyy	Office/Organization/Structure/School

indicators			data gathering		
N.	Indicator		Yes	No	Not detected
OBSERVING	D.1.2	Hatred against western society and its symbols			
	D.1.4	Feeling of being a victim of injustices and grievances caused by specific individuals or the community			
	D.1.6	Exhibition of changes in his/her physical appearance, habits, clothing, narratives			
	D.1.13	Strong ties with radicalized individuals			
	D.1.16	Rejection by the peer group			
	D.1.22	Aggressiveness, hostile behaviour towards the authorities, issues with anger management			
	D.2.1	Tendency to dehumanize specific groups or individuals			
	D.2.2	Isolation from own social environment and intention of breaking off with own environment			
REPORTING	D.2.8	Identification with a violent group or ideology			
	D.2.10	Expression of support for jihadist ideology online/offline			
	D.3.1	Production and dissemination of jihadist propaganda online/offline			
	D.3.2	Attempt to recruit others into a violent ideology online/offline			
	D.3.5	Intention to perpetrate violent acts and/or to travel to the jihad theatre			
	D.3.6	Access to weapons or attempt to procure them			



ANNEX 3

CASE STUDIES





CASE 1 KHALID

STORY

Khalid is a 13-year-old boy from Morocco who arrived in Italy at the age of 11 and grew up in Libya, where his family had settled while searching for work. Starting from the age of 7 years he has received his religious education from his paternal uncle, a radical individual who educated him from the religious point of view by committing violent acts against him to make him learn the Koran, but at the same time treating him as a "budding sheikh" in front of the community.

A year after his arrival in Italy, the father is removed by the Court for domestic violence, while he, his mother and his sisters are hosted in a reception centre. Subsequently, the father finds them and convinces his wife to follow him to France.

A few months go by and the wife changes her mind, leaving her husband again and taking the children with her. At that point the Court also removes her, as she appears unable to take care of the children, and entrusts the minors to a religious entity. The little boy feels a great pain before these removals and admires the figure of his father.

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

As soon as he arrives, Khalid displays impatience with the entity where he is located. He is convinced that he is being served forbidden food, he makes disrespectful gestures to the crucifix, he addresses the Catholic worshippers calling them sinners, and believes he is the only one who knows the right way.

Khalid has an individual vulnerability to radicalization, due to the violence suffered and witnessed from his very early childhood, the incapacity of the parental system to take care of him and his sisters, the radical education received and the inadequacy of the context in which he is placed. It is plausible to assume that the religious entity in which he is placed provokes in him conflicts of loyalty and dissonances with his personal history.

Although he does not appear radicalized at the moment he is taken in charge, he risks an exposure to the call of violent extremist recruitment, if no early action is taken regarding the factors that cause the overt polarization, the intolerant dichotomous mindset and the identity crisis he is going through. Protective factors indicate resilience characteristics that could be used to mediate criticalities.

In the context of a Multi-Agency Working Group, a prevention strategy is defined which envisages the transfer to a secular community, into which he manages to integrate better with his peers. At the same time, a religious mentoring activity is launched through the imam of the local mosque which progressively deconstructs the radical teachings imparted by his uncle in Libya. The community services also identify a person who maintains contact with his mother, initiating her to a path of integration into work and society, to prepare her to subsequently regain custody of the children.

INDICATORS DETECTED

D.1.1 MALACK OF POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION WITH THE COMMUNITY AND REJECTION OF ITS DEMOCRATIC VALUES

He rejects the rules of the hosting facility and displays oppositional attitudes towards educators.

D.1.4 FEELING OF BEING A VICTIM OF INJUSTICES AND GRIEVANCES

He is offended with the Court because of his parents' removals.

D.1.7 EARLY SEPARATION FROM ATTACHMENT FIGURES

Khalid lives without his father after his removal by the Court due to violent acts. Subsequently, he is also removed from the mother and placed into a community with his sisters.

D.1.9 EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE AT A YOUNG AGE

His uncle beat him to make him learn the Koran. He was a victim of violent acts committed by his father, and witnessed the violence perpetrated by his father on his mother and sisters. He commits violent acts on his younger sisters, beating them when he thinks they misbehave.

D.1.10 POOR SUPPORT FROM PARENTAL FIGURES

At the start of the activity, his mother showed little attention towards her children, claiming that she wanted to find another man and start a new life. Currently, she definitely appears to be poorly focused on her children's needs.

D.1.11 DEVIANT BEHAVIOURS OF PARENTAL FIGURES

The father used to consume alcohol and hashish and then commit violent acts on his wife and children.

D.1.13 STRONG TIES WITH RADICALIZED INDIVIDUALS

A radical uncle has educated him from the religious point of view since he was 7 years old.

D.2.3 LITTLE TOLERANCE TOWARDS NON-COMPLIANCE WITH RELIGIOUS RULES

He violently reprimands women underlining that they should not have short hair and generally adopts a condescending and superior attitude towards female persons. He reproaches his mother for having a too westernized lifestyle and blames her for breaking up the family.

D.2.4 FRUSTRATION OR INTOLERANCE FOR OTHER RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS

He displays disrespectful attitudes towards the crucifix and pretends to shoot it.

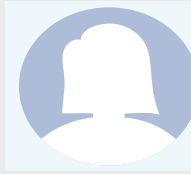
PROTECTIVE FACTORS

D.4.1 STRONG ATTACHMENT TO INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE NOT LINKED TO ANY VIOLENT EXTREMIST NETWORK

Khalid has gradually developed a good relationship with the imam of the local mosque who is mitigating the radical teachings he received as a child.

D.4.4 STRONG SCHOOL OR WORK COMMITMENT

Although he is part of a class of students who are younger than he is, he has been attending school, obtaining excellent results, is well integrated with his classmates and does not seem to be in any distress.



CASE 2 MARGHERITA

STORY

Margherita is a 26-year-old Italian national who converted to Sunni Islam at the age of 23. She was a troubled teenager, with numerous criminal records for crimes against properties and persons.

She lives with her mother and has a brother and a sister who do not live with them, whom her mother had from a previous marriage and who appear completely detached from her and her life. Margherita seems to be constantly looking for reference figures, a role which she has never attached to her parents and which, instead, she often entrusts to her partners.

At the time of observation she is detained for petty crimes.

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

She attracted institutional attention as an internet user in contact with Facebook profiles associated with radical Muslims, some of which have jihadist connotations. Margherita displays numerous risk factors linked to an individual vulnerability (both for her biography and for the clinical aspects), which make her easy to manipulate. Some factors also emerge in the dimension of polarization due to the extreme beliefs, in the presence, however, of an ideological confusion (she combines elements of the Sunni and Shiite traditions).

Margherita's approach to religion appears superficial and contingent upon the search for affiliation and social recognition, while the majority of the deviant attitudes that she displays can be associated with her psychopathological profile. Borderline features expose Margherita to sudden attacks of anger, intense and episodic anxiety, feelings of emptiness, instability in the self-perception and the perception of others as well as impulsive behaviours, including suicide risk and a propensity to commit violence, as also highlighted by her biography.

The disengagement strategy, at the moment, implies the involvement of the mental health services with integrated assessment and ongoing monitoring of her observance of therapeutic protocols.

INDICATORS DETECTED

D.1.7 EARLY SEPARATION FROM PRIMARY ATTACHMENT FIGURES

Her father has been almost absent during her adolescence and, on some Facebook posts, Margherita accuses him of having mistreated her.

D.1.10 ABSENCE OF PARENTAL FIGURES OR POOR SUPPORT FROM THEM

The father is absent and the mother passes from times of strictness to times of almost total abandonment, especially in summer, when she moves away for work.

D.1.14 CRIMINAL RECORDS

Margherita has held a long list of criminal records since she was still underage for crimes related to drugs, theft, robbery and grievous bodily harm which brought first to her arrest and then to her placement into a community, within the same year.

When she was twenty years old, she was placed under house arrest for a robbery committed in complicity with her boyfriend. Immediately afterwards, she escaped the house arrest and was then arrested and imprisoned for a few months, until she was sentenced to two years' detention for complicity in grievous bodily harm and in aggravated robbery. The subsequent year she was sentenced again for aggravated theft of clothing.

D.1.15 DETENTION EXPERIENCE

She was arrested and stayed in prison for a few months in 2012. She is currently under arrest.

D.1.19 SUFFERING FROM A CERTIFIED MENTAL DISEASE

The girl suffers from a certified borderline bipolar disorder. She does not take her medication regularly and continues to face relapses risking to make the bipolar disorder escalate to a schizoaffective disorder.

D.1.20 USE OF DRUGS

She has long been taking drugs.

D.2.3 LITTLE TOLERANCE TOWARDS NON-COMPLIANCE WITH RELIGIOUS RULES

She criticizes Muslim women who come to terms with the Western culture.

D.2.10 EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT FOR JIHADIST IDEOLOGY ONLINE

She is in touch with Italian Islamic extremists online and cries out: *"we are at war...it's time to choose a side."*



CASE 3 IMAD

STORY

Imad is a young Moroccan aged 30, naturalized Italian, who arrived in Italy aged 2. He is a guest of a therapeutic community diagnosed with “schizo-affective disorder with manic episodes”. The young man's mental problems began at the age of 13 coinciding with bullying incidents at school. In childhood he was affected by violent arguments between his mother and his natural father (even with scissors), who separated when he was 8 years old. Imad attempted a rapprochement with his biological father in recent times but he was rejected. He has a brother diagnosed with the same disorder, violent, with multiple reports of crimes against the person and addicted to alcohol, with whom he does not seem to have any contacts. Before entering the therapeutic community, he had always lived with his mother and stepfather. He has an obsessive attitude towards compliance with the precepts of the Shari'ah. He does not separate the concept of sinner from that of unbeliever and believes that every sin can make him a kafir.

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

He attracted attention because he allegedly said to the psychiatrist: “[...] Why do you prevent me from using the computer whenever I want, like others do? Are you afraid that I will become a terrorist? Make me explode?[...]” Imad had come into contact with a radical imam, subsequently expelled from the national territory on grounds of terrorism. The goal and obsession of this individual is the conquest of Paradise. According to the imam who was caring for him at the time, if someone pushed the young man to become shaheed to immediately access the Paradise, he could follow this advice. The psychiatrist agrees that if he were given a shorter route to Paradise, he would choose to take it.

The approach to this individual took into account the fact that the delirium must not be deconstructed with an immediate reality check, since it is through the delirium that Imad has maintained a certain self-identification. The choice was to maintain a balance between denying delirious beliefs and replacing them with sustainable real perceptions, enhancing his own passion for pastry. In addition to adequate medication coverage, the learning of pastry techniques was promoted through a course in the community, aiming to urge him to look for halal cooking methods, and to foster his relationships with other guests. The spiritual assistance of the imam was also supported with whom he has established a relationship of trust.

INDICATORS DETECTED

D.1.7 EARLY SEPARATION FROM PRIMARY ATTACHMENT FIGURES

His father left when he was only eight years old and subsequently rejected him when Imad tried to reach out to him.

D.1.9 EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE AT A YOUNG AGE

He was a victim of witnessed violence due to the continuous fights between his father and his mother including physical clashes.

D.1.10 ABSENCE OF PARENTAL FIGURES OR POOR SUPPORT FROM THEM

His father does not want him with him and his mother passes from times of closeness to times of abandonment.

D.1.11 DEVIANT BEHAVIOURS OF PARENTAL FIGURES

His mother is depressed and threatened to commit suicide because of her son's condition. She is also being treated for her psychological disorders.

D.1.12 SUICIDE ATTEMPT

He has attempted suicide once and that is why he was placed in the community

D.1.16 REJECTION BY THE PEER GROUP

In school he was estranged by his peers. Currently he does not have a good relationship with the other guests of the community, he is made fun of and lives pretty isolated, also because of his obsessiveness and his attachment to religion.

D.1.19 SUFFERING FROM A CERTIFIED MENTAL DISEASE

His disease entails delirious and obsessive thinking, he displays manic elements, including grandiosity and restlessness, and is easy to manipulate. However, he has clear goals and is able to organize complex activities.

D.2.9 NON-OCCASIONAL SEARCH AND USAGE OF JIHADIST MATERIAL

Following the contact with the radical imam, he started reading radical theological texts, in spite of having a very low cultural level and very little knowledge of the Islamic religion.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS**D.4.1 STRONG ATTACHMENT TO INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE NOT LINKED TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

He has developed a relationship of trust with a non-radical imam of a local mosque who helps him understand the Koran better.

D.4.3 PROACTIVE AND PRO-SOCIAL INTERESTS

He is a cooking enthusiast to the point that he would like to become a pastry chef, but he does not want to work in bakeries in which non-halal ingredients are used.



CASE 4 OMAR

STORY

He is the eldest son of a couple from the Maghreb, the father is a worker and the mother takes care of the house and children.

Omar was born in Italy and went to school there, except for some time during his childhood, when he was taken to his father's country of origin where he was entrusted to his grandparents for one year.

When he was 12, the family, who had lived in a small village up to that point, where the boy had friends and hobbies, moved to a bigger city, thus making him lose his friendship networks.

In this new context, Omar has been unable to build new friendships and has begun a parallel life on the web, while being not interested in any activity that he is not obliged to carry out. At school he has obtained good but not excellent results.

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

At the age of sixteen he was investigated and then indicted for the crime set forth in art. 414 of the Italian criminal code, last paragraph, i.e. incitement to commit a crime with the double aggravating circumstance relating to '*terrorism-related crimes or crimes against humanity*' and as committed '*through IT or electronic means*', procedure suspended due to the start of the probation.

At the time of the intervention of the judicial authority, Omar appeared to be an isolated, little empathetic boy, with a poorly defined identity and devoid of social references such as peers or adult figures to refer to for the acquisition of psycho-social skills.

The promotion of disengagement focused on an educational intervention to develop empathy by carrying out pro-social and pro-active activities in support of peers with disabilities. He was assigned an educator with whom he has established a good relationship. The structured intervention ends by passing the probation and upon conclusion of the judicial intervention.

INDICATORS DETECTED

D.1.7 EARLY SEPARATION FROM PRIMARY ATTACHMENT FIGURES

During his childhood, the boy was left one year in his parents' country of origin without them. No information has surfaced on this matter. When asked about this period of his life, he replied that he adapted himself but that he would have never imagined to live there.

D.1.10 POOR SUPPORT FROM PARENTAL FIGURES

Although the family is present, the educational practices of the father seem to be excessively authoritarian and there is no dialogue at all within the family.

D.2.2 ISOLATION FROM OWN SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND INTENTION OF BREAKING OFF WITH OWN ENVIRONMENT

He highlights the will to self-isolate, probably because he believes to possess a moral/religious superiority.

D.2.7 LEARNING RELIGION ONLINE

He tells the Islamologist that he was trained by the Islamic State before being stopped by the judicial authority.

D.2.8 IDENTIFICATION WITH A VIOLENT IDEOLOGY

He supports the Islamic State's ideology and appreciates its social and justice system.

D.2.9 SEARCH/USAGE OF JIHADIST MATERIAL ONLINE

When he was 12, he was hooked on the web when, after viewing a propaganda video of the Islamic State, he found some links directing him to jihadist websites where he found the answers to questions he did not dare asking to his family.

D.2.11 SEARCH FOR A PRIVILEGED RELATIONSHIP WITH A RADICAL MENTOR ONLINE

It is possible to understand from what he tells that he is religiously assisted by an Islamic State's mentor online.

D.2.12 PARTICIPATION IN ONLINE/OFFLINE FORUMS THAT PROMOTE RADICAL AND VIOLENT VIEWS

He follows several Telegram groups with jihadist content.

D.3.1 PRODUCTION OF RADICAL MATERIAL ONLINE/OFFLINE

The young man disseminates and translates into Italian Islamic State's propaganda material on different platforms.

D.3.6 ACCESS TO WEAPONS OR ATTEMPT TO PROCURE THEM

He posted a link of a video containing instructions on how to make a bomb and is interested in how to pass through a metal detector hiding an explosive belt.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

D.4.1 STRONG ATTACHMENT TO INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE NOT LINKED TO ANY VIOLENT EXTREMIST NETWORK

The young man is close to his family who seems to be foreign to violent extremist networks, and has been worrying since the beginning about the consequences of his actions on his parents and brothers.

D.4.6 CHANGE TOWARDS LESS FIRM IDEOLOGY

He admits that he holds responsibility for the crime he was charged with by the Public Prosecutor.



CASE 5 MONCEF

STORY

Moncef was born in Morocco and after his parents separated, his mother moved to Italy. He was raised by his grandparents and a maternal aunt, who later moved to Italy. The father remained in Morocco, but did not take care of him. Moncef arrived illegally in Italy in 2009, aged 14, but did not contact his mother. He lived on the street in Turin where he was found and entrusted to his mother, but living together turned out to be not possible. In 2010, after various placement attempts, he arrived in a community where he began to use drugs and became close to a Moroccan peer, Tarik Aboulala. He also started dealing drugs and was imprisoned, just come of age, in San Vittore prison in Milan, from October 11th to November 25th, 2013.

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

On 17th January 2015, after the jihadist attacks in Paris, he and Tarik left for Turkey from Orio al Serio airport, and from there they reached Syria *"Travelling the path of Allah"*. On 18th March 2015, while he was in Syria, Milan Public Prosecutor's Office issued an order for remand in custody.

At the end of 2016, Moncef, at this point married and with two children, expressed to his family the wish to return to Italy from Raqqa, out of disillusionment with the horrors he witnessed in the Caliphate. On 13th April 2017, the Milan Court of Assizes sentenced him to eight years' imprisonment also ordering his expulsion once he will have served his sentence.

INDICATORS DETECTED

D.1.2 HATRED AGAINST WESTERN SOCIETY AND ITS SYMBOLS

His speeches show hostility against the West which is deemed as responsible for economic and social inequalities in the World.

D.1.6 CHANGES IN HIS PHYSICAL APPEARANCE, LANGUAGE, CLOTHING, HABITS

After the detention period, his appearance has changed, including clothing and eating habits, and he strongly refuses non-halal food.

D.1.7 EARLY SEPARATION FROM PRIMARY ATTACHMENT FIGURES

He was left in the care of his grandparents and a maternal aunt at an early age. His father remained in Morocco, but was distant.

D.1.10 ABSENCE OF PARENTAL FIGURES OR POOR SUPPORT FROM THEM

None of his parents took care of him: as a teenager, Moncef told the educators that he *"didn't love his parents"* and that his mother was just *"the woman who gave birth to him"*.

D.1.11 DEVIANT BEHAVIOURS OF PARENTAL FIGURES

The social assistant noted in a report that *"the mother poorly takes care of him"* and is an alcoholic.

D.1.14 CRIMINAL RECORD FOR NON-VIOLENT CRIMES

He was convicted for dealing drugs.

D.1.15 DETENTION EXPERIENCE

He was detained in San Vittore from October 11th to November 25th, 2013. When he went back to the community, he was described as “unrecognizable” and he abandoned both drug and even tobacco consumption.

D.1.20 USE OF DRUGS

He started using drugs in the Kayrós community in Vimodrone (Milan), even though he was ashamed of these habits as he was aware that they do not comply with a “good Muslim”.

D.1.22 AGGRESSIVENESS AND ISSUES WITH ANGER MANAGEMENT

In the community, Moncef displayed a strong rejection towards any authority; he was quick-tempered, contentious and violent to the point that he tried to stab another guest.

D.2.7 LEARNING RELIGION ONLINE OR THROUGH UNOFFICIAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

He learns religion by himself, has low religious literacy and is not particularly observant of the obligations related to praying and Ramadan. His religious view is extremely firm and simplified, focused on death and sin.

D.2.9 NON-OCCASIONAL SEARCH/USAGE OF JIHADIST MATERIAL ONLINE/OFFLINE

He regularly visits radical websites and social networks.

D.2.10 EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT FOR JIHADIST IDEOLOGY ONLINE/OFFLINE

Since his release from prison, his speeches have increasingly focused on the shaheed figure. From Syria, Moncef disseminated jihadist messages on social networks and contacted former comrades from the community to invite them to follow him. On 4th December 2015, he wrote to one of them: *“When I’ll arrive there I’ll cut off your head. Did you see what happened in France!.”*

D.3.1 DISSEMINATION OF JIHADIST PROPAGANDA ONLINE/OFFLINE

Moncef shared jihadist material with the other young people in the community.

D.3.5 INTENTION TO PERPETRATE VIOLENT ACTS

He allegedly expressed with his comrades in the Vimodrone community the intention to perpetrate an attack in case he was ordered to do so.

D.3.6 SEARCH FOR WEAPONS

Some comrades from the community reported that Moncef, already before leaving for Syria, allegedly tried to procure firearms in Milan, even though unsuccessfully.



CASE 6 ZAHID

STORY

Zahid is a sixteen-year-old of Bangladeshi origin, who lives with his family, reported by security forces for his radical messages on the web. Radical messages, anashid and videos praising Isis were found on his cell phone. Proceedings were opened against him at the Juvenile Prosecutor's Office. The attention of a Multidisciplinary Working Group was drawn to the minor when he was 17.

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

After the case was reported, a first working group was activated at the Juvenile Prosecutor's Office consisting of: Juvenile Prosecutor, Court Judge, representatives of the security forces, and psychologist consultant of the prosecutor's office specialized in radicalization processes. The goal of the group was to determine the level of risk and develop a disengagement plan for the minor. Subsequently, both the headmaster of the school attended by the minor and a child psychologist will also join the group. The Prosecutor opened both civil and criminal proceedings, thus initiating an investigation phase.

The analysis revealed that the individual displayed an identity and value conflict made more complex by the reported experiences of discrimination, with depressive states expressed by feelings of apathy and continuous references to death. In this context, embracing the Islamic State's ideology allowed him, on the one hand, to remain in line with the radical religious beliefs of his father, and, on the other, to release from the family, unsupportive of the work of the terrorist organization.

The implemented disengagement strategy envisaged the participation of the minor and the whole household in meetings with a psychologist specialized in radicalization processes.

Subsequently, Zahid received neuropsychiatric and psychological support which ended with an educational project aimed at facilitating his integration into the social context.

The disengagement process of the boy also revealed the spontaneous and decisive role of his older sister and a virtual girlfriend of his, who have helped to discourage him from hanging out with radical individuals online. Subsequent investigations confirmed the young man's exit from violent networks.

On the basis of the results, a neuropsychiatric and/or psychological support program was started, followed by a relational training. The Juvenile Prosecutor eventually closed the civil and criminal proceedings against Zahid.

INDICATORS DETECTED

D.1.1 LACK OF POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION WITH SOCIETY

The young man tells his classmates about the lack of a positive identification with the Italian society and, at the same time, also criticizes his country of origin, expressing hatred against Bangladesh's politics, considered as corrupted. He says that he wears two masks: one with his classmates and the other one with his family, and that he struggles to find a synthesis at the moment.

D.1.2 HATRED AGAINST WESTERN SOCIETY AND ITS SYMBOLS

Zahid expresses resentment towards the Italian society and says that he hates it because he is criticized, but he is generally angry at mankind. He feels different than the native population but also than the foreigners on whom his comments are as offensive. He justifies his sentiments with the fact that he was the victim of racist insults as a child, on which he claims to have reacted by beating everyone indiscriminately.

D.1.4 FEELING OF BEING A VICTIM OF INJUSTICES

He attended the 1st year of the classical studies secondary school and did not pass it, so he decided to change for another school. This was his worst school experience, marked by racist incidents, in which he had to make people laugh in order to be able to talk to someone.

D.1.10 ABSENCE OF PARENTAL FIGURES OR POOR SUPPORT FROM THEM

There appears to be a difficult relationship between the family members. The children's matters, the economic hardship and the father's poor health conditions provoke conflicts and fights among the family members and highlight tensions with parents who are not able to understand and handle their children, despite their attempt to control them in an exasperating way. The father embraces a traditional culture of the country of origin proposing values that are incompatible with the Western culture (e.g. he says that he approves Islamic societies in which homosexual people are "thrown off buildings") and tends to discredit some aspects of the Italian culture. The parents speak very basic Italian.

D.1.16 REJECTION BY THE PEER GROUP

The teachers describe him as a boy pretty isolated from the formal group and even when he seems to be provoking (e.g. he shows the Isis flag), nobody cares.

D.1.18 HIGHLY DEGRADED SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

His older brother is the subject of proceedings for possession of drugs. His younger brother stole some bikes.

D.1.19 SUFFERING FROM A CERTIFIED OR PRESUMED MENTAL DISEASE

The interviews revealed a depressive profile marked by hatred against himself and mankind. He repeatedly expresses the desire to die, but also the need to feel emotions, also negative ones, anything just to feel something. He says that he does not like his own appearance and is often diminishing himself.

D.2.1 TENDENCY TO DEHUMANIZE SPECIFIC GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS

He tends to dehumanize different groups of people, especially foreigners.

D.2.2 ISOLATION FROM OWN SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND INTENTION OF BREAKING OFF WITH OWN ENVIRONMENT

The last observation period has revealed a deterioration and a greater isolation from the others, who are perceived as mean, as profiteers and exploiters, and from whom it is therefore necessary to defend oneself by self-isolating.

D.2.5 PERCEPTION OF MORAL OBLIGATION TO SACRIFICE FOR A VIOLENT CAUSE

He refers to martyrdom and to the fact that if Allah called him he would leave everything to “go to Allah”.

D.2.8 IDENTIFICATION WITH A VIOLENT EXTREMIST IDEOLOGY

He told a peer that, when he was born, his father allegedly dreamt of a man clothed in light who told him that his son would become a Caliph, a predestined. He supports the Islamic State’s methodologies.

D.2.9 NON-OCCASIONAL SEARCH OR USAGE OF VIOLENT MATERIAL ONLINE/OFFLINE

He was found in possession of a lot of Isis video materials downloaded from the Internet.

D.3.1 PRODUCTION AND/OR DISSEMINATION OF VIOLENT PROPAGANDA ONLINE/OFFLINE

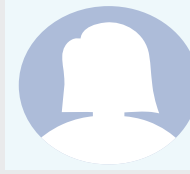
He shared with a Muslim peer a pen drive containing anashid and Islamic State’s propaganda videos.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS**D.4.1 STRONG ATTACHMENT TO INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE NOT LINKED TO ANY VIOLENT EXTREMIST NETWORK**

He is particularly attached to his older sister who works as a cultural mediator. The girl takes up a mediation role even within the family where she tries to mitigate the parents’ strictness in applying Islamic orthopraxis.

D.4.2 STRONG SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK WHICH IS NOT LINKED TO ANY VIOLENT EXTREMIST NETWORK

His virtual network of social contacts includes some female figures with whom he is constantly in touch. These girls’ chats highlight the contradictions of the radical narrative and urge him to review his most radical positions.



CASE 7 AMINA

STORY

Amina is a 16-year-old Pakistani girl attending the 2nd year of a classical studies high school. Her father arrived in Italy as a young man to complete his medical studies and, during one of his trips back to his country of origin, he married her mother, Khadija.

Amina was born in Pakistan and, at the age of two, she moved to Italy with her mother where, in the following years, the two younger sisters were born. But the mother struggled with living far away from her family of origin and alternated periods spent in Pakistan with periods spent in Italy. Also for this reason the relationship between her parents was stormy and at some moments, at the end of violent arguments, the father exercised violence on his wife, then immediately repenting and apologizing to her. The woman, however, supported by her family, decided to return to her homeland, and obtained a divorce. The two reached an agreement on how to handle the daughters: Khadija returned to Pakistan with the daughters aged 11 and 6, while Amina stayed in Italy because her father wanted her to continue her studies in order to then enrol at university. At the time of the events, Amina hadn't seen her mother and sisters for about a year and missed them a lot. Although she has always gotten along with her father, who is a brilliant doctor very committed both to patients and research, in her heart she began to accuse him of not having been able to keep the family together. This general malaise worsened after the girl was harassed by a group of boys while going back home from school. Amina got very scared and reported that she feared for her life. Despite the reporting, the culprits were not identified and Amina is full of anger and indignation and believes that the institutions did not work hard enough because she is not from the West.

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The case attracted the attention of the school psychologist through Amina's best friend, Maria, to whom she confided that she wanted to go to Syria, to join the Islamic State and finally obtain the justice she has been deprived of in the West. Later it came out that, during a web search, the young woman was engaged by a boy in whom she placed more and more trust, to the point that she told him of her sufferings and disappointment with the situation in which she lived. The young man took advantage of this by praising the perfect life in the Islamic State, from the point of view of both family relationships and justice, in accordance with the precepts of Islam. The boy manipulated her and told her that her father proved himself too weak towards both her mother and her harassers and assured her that, if she reached him in the Islamic State, these things would not happen and that she could rely on a real man. Maria tried to discourage Amina from maintaining this relationship, but felt helpless because she noticed that her friend was changing her language and behaviour.

She also began to dress traditionally, which she had never done until then. Even her school performance, which had always been more than good, began to be impacted and, at times, Amina proved not to be prepared. In Maria's eyes, Amina began to withdraw into herself, and sometimes did not answer her phone calls or invented excuses for not seeing each other after school.

The school psychologist, as well as suggesting the girl to propose to Amina to turn to him, reported to the Juvenile Judicial Authority the dangerous situation that was burdening the minor. Following the report, the police forces were activated and they began to carry out investigations, also involving community services and the school, and it turned out that the father was totally unaware of Amina's discomfort and intention to leave. A Multidisciplinary Working Group was activated with all the professionals involved, and an intervention strategy was defined which envisaged the involvement of the whole "family system", making both parents to feel responsible for the needs of the girl. Both Amina and her father were summoned to the Prosecutor's Office to deal with the situation and subsequently the mother and the two sisters were invited to return to Italy for a holiday. Further intervention actions were planned within the Working Group, such as a program to deconstruct the ideological message through a religious mentor and individual psychological interviews, also focused on the sexual harassment suffered, as well as very strict prescriptions on the use of IT means by the girl.

INDICATORS DETECTED

D.1.4 FEELING OF BEING A VICTIM OF INJUSTICES AND GRIEVANCES CAUSED BY SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS OR THE COMMUNITY

Amina accuses Italian Authorities of not having worked hard enough to identify the perpetrators of the sexual harassments because she is a foreign national.

D.1.6 CHANGES IN HER PHYSICAL APPEARANCE, CLOTHING, HABITS, NARRATIVES

The girl's language and attitude has changed and she started wearing more traditional outfits, which she had never done until then.

D.1.8 EXPERIENCE OF TRAUMATIC EVENTS

She suffered sexual harassments by a group of boys.

D.1.9 EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE AT A YOUNG AGE

She witnessed the attacks of her father on her mother.

D.1.10 ABSENCE OF PARENTAL FIGURES OR POOR SUPPORT FROM THEM

After her parents separated, Amina remained with her father but lost contact with her mother and younger sisters. Even if they continued to talk on the phone, they have not seen each other since her mother went back to Pakistan. Her father, with whom Amina has a good relationship, is very busy with work and is not able to spend enough time with her.

D.2.2 ISOLATION FROM OWN SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND INTENTION OF BREAKING OFF WITH OWN ENVIRONMENT

Since the moment Amina started a virtual relationship with a young man of the Islamic State, even her school performance, which had been good until then, has been impacted. The girl cannot study anymore and has withdrawn into herself. Sometimes she does not take her friend's calls and comes up with excuses not to meet up with her after school.

D.2.10 EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT FOR JIHADIST IDEOLOGY ONLINE/OFFLINE

Amina was fascinated by the apparent perfect life in the Islamic State, from the point of view of both family relationships and justice, to the point that she tells her best friend about it. She supports all positive aspects of a State in which Shari'ah is applied, being convinced that it would solve all the evils in the world. For this reason, she expresses her intention to leave everything behind and move there making hijrah, as it should have been her duty.

D.2.11 SEARCH FOR A PRIVILEGED RELATIONSHIP WITH A VIOLENT RADICAL MENTOR ONLINE/OFFLINE

During a web search she was approached by a recruiter of the Islamic State. Their relationship grew and Amina started to place more and more trust in him, to the point that she confided to him her thoughts and feelings, asking him for guidance on what she should do with her life.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

D.4.1 STRONG ATTACHMENT TO INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE NOT LINKED TO ANY VIOLENT EXTREMIST NETWORK

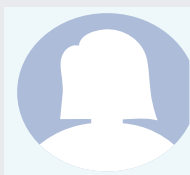
She is strongly attached to her family who is not linked to any violent extremist network.

D.4.2 STRONG SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK WHICH IS NOT LINKED TO ANY VIOLENT EXTREMIST NETWORK

Maria is definitely a friend who loves her very much and tries to support her. After her revelations to the school psychologist and the beginning of the proceedings, the relationship between the two girls has been stormy at the start and Amina accused her friend of having betrayed her. Over time, Maria has anyway remained a person of reference.

D.4.4 STRONG SCHOOL OR WORK COMMITMENT

Amina had always studied hard until then, setting very high goals and embracing the mandate fixed by her family to obtain a university degree.



CASE 8 MARIA GIULIA

STORY

Maria Giulia was born in Torre del Greco in 1987 into a humble Catholic family. In 2000, she moved to Lombardy with her parents and older sister. After high school, she started studying biotechnology at university, while working to pay the expenses.

Around 2009, she converted to the Islamic religion together with her sister and took on the name Fatima Zahra. In the same year, she married a Moroccan national going through an Islamic ceremony. She divorced him shortly after, disappointed by his lack of religious faith.

In September 2011, together with her mother and sister, she signed a petition addressed to life senator and former President of the Italian Republic Carlo Azeglio Ciampi requesting him to block a law proposal banning the use of the niqab in public places and said that she felt like being a victim of religious discrimination. At the time, the woman took increasingly radical positions and was influenced by online contacts with Bushra Haik, a Canadian national of Syrian origin and supporter of the Islamic State, later convicted of her recruiting activity. Bushra Haik managed the radical Skype group called "Aqidah and Tafsir" to which several women belong, including Maria Giulia and her sister.

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

In September 2014, Maria Giulia married the Albanian national Aldo Kobuzi with whom, a few days later, she left for Syria. She was the first Italian woman to leave as a foreign fighter. The couple settled in the Aleppo area joining the contingent of Albanian fighters based in the area. During her stay in Syria, Maria Giulia received military training and expressed several times her wish to fight. She stayed in touch with her parents and sister, whom she strongly invited to leave Italy and reach the land of the Caliphate.

In the tapping of her conversations with her family on the phone and Skype the woman said that all those who deny jihad should have their heads cut off, because they are responsible for having "brought Islam to its current standing, for example in Italy". She also said that it is necessary to live under Shari'ah, the Islamic law, and not under democracy. She accused her father of working for the unbelievers, whom she defined as "animals", and supported the obligation to perform the hijrah, understood as the migration to the territories of the Islamic State. Finally, addressing her father, she urged him to drag her mother along to Syria, even by force ("you have decided for the hijrah, so grab mum by the hair and come here to make hijrah"). In another tapping, Maria Giulia organized the trip together with her mother, discussing practical issues such as the weight and type of suitcases to bring along. The mother and the daughter also talked about the house in which the family should settle and whether or not to bring a cat. In July 2015, just before their departure for Syria, the parents and sister of the foreign fighter were arrested on the charge of international terrorism.

In 2019, Maria Giulia received a definitive sentence to 9 years in prison. However, there has not been any news from the woman for years.

INDICATORS DETECTED

D.1.1 LACK OF POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION WITH SOCIETY/COMMUNITY AND REJECTION OF ITS DEMOCRATIC VALUES

Maria Giulia criticizes the Western society and believes that Muslims should live under an Islamic State where Shari'ah is applied rather than in a democratic State.

D.1.6 CHANGES IN HER PHYSICAL APPEARANCE, CLOTHING, HABITS, NARRATIVES

In 2009, Maria Giulia appeared on a TV program during which, wearing hijab, she claimed that women should dress in such a way as to not attract men's attention. Subsequently, the woman started wearing niqab, the full black veil covering the whole body with only a slit for the eyes.

D.2.1 TENDENCY TO DEHUMANIZE SPECIFIC GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS

Maria Giulia expresses her hatred against those who do not embrace what she considers as the "true Islam", defining them as non-believers, animals, and wishing they had their heads cut off.

D.2.6 JUSTIFICATION OF VIOLENT ACTIONS IN THE NAME OF A GREATER GOOD

The woman supports the obligation to engage in jihad, meaning a war against non-believers aimed to impose the own idea of Islam.

D.2.7 LEARNING RELIGION ONLINE OR THROUGH UNOFFICIAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The whole affiliation process to Islam first and to jihadism then happened online through visits to blogs and communities as well as closed groups in which the Koran and the Islamic doctrine are taught.

D.2.11 SEARCH FOR A PRIVILEGED RELATIONSHIP WITH A RADICAL MENTOR ONLINE/OFFLINE

Maria Giulia was influenced by the online contact with Bushra Haik, a Canadian national of Syrian origin supporting the Islamic State, later convicted of her recruiting activities.

D.2.12 PARTICIPATION IN ONLINE/OFFLINE FORUMS THAT PROMOTE RADICAL AND VIOLENT VIEWS

Maria Giulia takes part in radical groups on social networks and in closed groups reserved for women only in which the jihadist ideology is disseminated.

D.3.2 ATTEMPT TO RECRUIT OTHERS INTO A VIOLENT IDEOLOGY ONLINE/OFFLINE

Maria Giulia works hard to make her family follow her choice and make hijrah to the land of the "Caliphate".

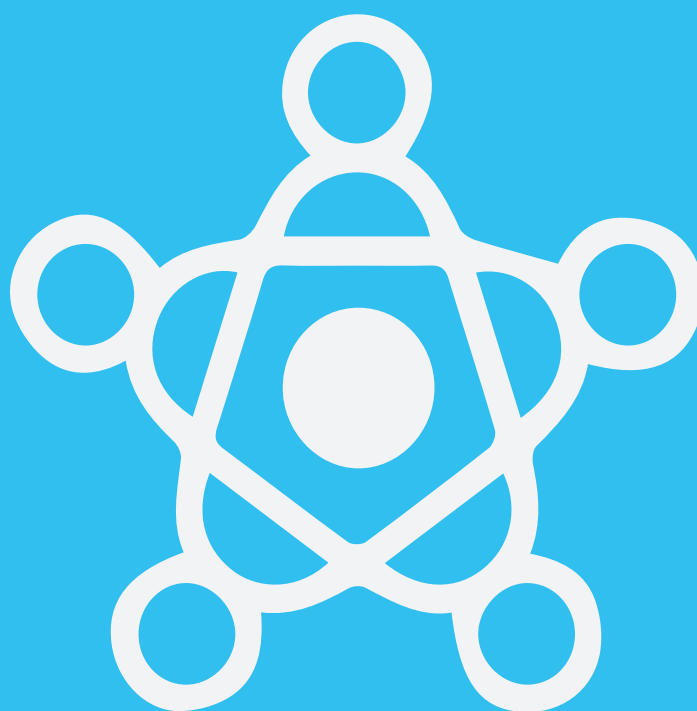
D.3.5 INTENTION TO PERPETRATE VIOLENT ACTS AND/OR TO TRAVEL TO THE JIHAD THEATRE

When she was still in Italy, Maria Giulia admitted to her contacts her intention to reach the Islamic State's territories and resorted to a girlfriend's help in order to find a man willing to marry her and travel with her.



ANNEX 4

INTERVENTIONS OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE



INTERVENTIONS OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE

The Italian juvenile justice system has provided for rehabilitative measures aimed at preventing juvenile crime by favouring the reintegration of young people who have committed crimes or are at risk of deviance, or in cases where a parent displays a detrimental conduct.

REHABILITATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES

Art. 25 of Royal Decree no. 1404/1934 (converted into law no. 835 of 27th May 1935) regulates the administrative preventive measures, defined as rehabilitative, which the Public Prosecutor may ask the Juvenile Court to apply when the young person is at risk of deviance, i.e. engages in conduct that is illegal or likely to lead him/her to live in illegal conditions. These are non-criminal measures, since they disregard the verification of the actual commission of crimes. The provision can impose regulations or even provide for placement in an educational community.

DISCHARGES FROM THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

The intervention model of juvenile justice in the event of the commission of a crime is aimed at restoring the minor and protecting his/her personality, as well as reaching rehabilitative rather than punitive pedagogical objectives (Presidential Decree 448/1988 Juvenile Criminal Procedure Code).

The idea is to make the minor stay as little as possible in the justice system and make him/her responsible for the judicial consequences of his/her actions. To this end, the process is not limited to verify responsibilities, but must promote responses, interventions and projects of a change in an educational and socializing way, avoiding the effects of stigmatization and the entrenchment of criminal behaviour.

The tools associated with this purpose are those that allow the judge to avoid the debate and the continuation of the process, if re-education of the minor and his/her reintegration into the social fabric are assessed as positive.

This is known as the verdict of no case to answer due to insignificance of the act (art. 27 Juvenile Criminal Procedure Code), suspension of the proceedings with probation (art. 28 Juvenile Criminal Procedure Code) and youth pardon (art. 169 Criminal Code).

SUSPENSION OF THE PROCEEDINGS AND PROBATION

Adopted in several countries and demanded by the United Nations and the Council of Europe, it is a provision with a strong innovative drive, which enables the implementation of criminal mediation and other restorative justice strategies (Patrizi, Cuzzocrea, 2016).

By actively participating in his/her project, the minor has the opportunity to co-build a path for the re-composition of the conflict originated through the criminal action.



The proceedings are suspended for a period not exceeding three years and the minor is entrusted to the Juvenile Justice Services for carrying out a program defined by the judge.

It is usually divided into three main lines: the re-elaboration of the criminal conduct, a restorative activity in favour of the community, and the start of a positive growth path (school, work, etc.). In the first phase a shared project is built with the teenager, the family, community services and judicial authority. The project can be remodelled on the basis of the needs or emergencies arisen, it must be feasible and verifiable, as well as innovative with respect to the lifestyle and close to the current socialization skills of the minor. The second phase involves the application of the measure with the participation of all the actors in a multidisciplinary perspective through shared operational protocols. The objectives to be developed are: motivation for change; self-regulation ability; empathic skills; sense of social solidarity and responsibility.

At the end of the probation, the outcome is evaluated by the same judge who issued the ruling. If it is deemed as positive, the crime is annulled, if negative, the proceedings continue in a standard form.

Studies show that, after seven years, in most cases (68.7%) the measure helps to disrupt recidivism, producing changes. It is therefore considered a protective factor against recidivism in adulthood.

Probation has recently also been extended to the proceedings under the jurisdiction of the ordinary judge, but with many limits that are not applicable for minors. For the latter, for example, the probation can be repeated and used for every type of crime, including murder.

SUBSTITUTE AND ALTERNATIVE PENALTIES TO DETENTION

Legislative decree 121/2018 provides for specific measures to be applied to individuals convicted of crimes committed by minors in order to avoid their imprisonment and favour their social reintegration.

Community measures are regulated by articles from 4 on, and are the following: custody to community services, custody to community services with home detention, home detention and semi-freedom.

Such measures can be requested when the offender is served with a notification of the imprisonment order. However, already upon conviction and usually for particularly short sentences, the judge can apply alternative measures to imprisonment, such as supervised probation or fines.

The measures are also envisaged for those convicted of crimes committed after coming of age, but the scope of application is more extensive for minors.

THE APPLICATION OF REHABILITATIVE MEASURES AND PROBATION TO COUNTER VIOLENT RADICALIZATION.

An example of the application of rehabilitative measures in the context of a criminal judicial proceeding and subsequent probation is that of the Juvenile Court of Trieste (Caparesi, Tamborini, 2019), in which a minor aged 15 was investigated for proselytizing activities and support to the Isis group, as he disseminated and translated jihadist propaganda materials on Telegram. The court proceeding was activated for the crime provided for by the last paragraph of article 414 of the Criminal Code which punishes public incitement to commit a crime doubly aggravated since it relates to "terrorism-related crimes or crimes against humanity" and committed "through IT or electronic means", crime later confirmed in the request for indictment (Article 414 of the Criminal Code, second paragraph).

The peculiarity of this experience consisted in the immediate start of a rehabilitation program in the preliminary investigation phase, which provided for: 1) prohibition of the use of IT means for accessing the Internet; 2) involvement of the minor in social volunteering activities; 3) re-elaboration of radical narratives with the deconstruction of the violent extremist message.

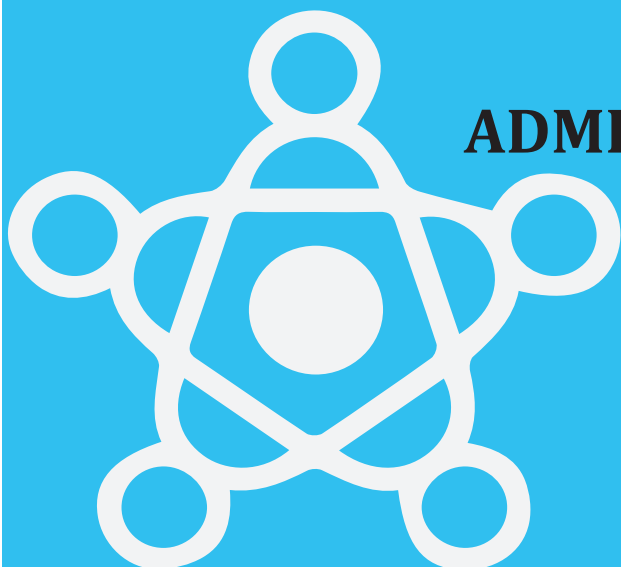
Two years after the beginning of the legal process, the accused minor requested to be elected for the suspension of the proceedings with probation. The request was followed by an educational project which aimed to help him understand his conduct, detach himself from radical extremist intentions and engage in restorative activities (art. 28 of Presidential Decree 448/1988). The probation ended positively and the crime was annulled.

The experience of the Trieste Juvenile Court illustrates how it is possible to achieve results through a personalized program, which has deployed several educational interventions and was already initiated in the preliminary investigation phase, with the aim of reducing time and avoiding exacerbation of the problem with the procrastination of the recovery action. The involvement of a minor in jihadist terrorist propaganda is not an exceptional case, but it is due to the familiarity of teenagers with IT means and the web, to the weak resistance to external influences and to the growth of the population of young and very young second generation immigrants, particularly vulnerable for religious reasons and due to the difficult or unsatisfactory social integration.

ANNEX 5

COUNTERING INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS





THE RESPONSE OF THE LEGAL SYSTEM TO INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

The decree law no. 7 of 2015 (converted into law no. 43 of 17th April 2015): «*Urgent measures for the fight against terrorism, including international one, ...*», (15A02961) (OJ General Series no. 91 of 20th April 2015) contains urgent measures to counter terrorism, punishing new matters deemed as crimes .

THE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM CRIME (ART. 270 BIS CRIMINAL CODE)

Legislative Decree 374/2001 (published in the Official Journal no. 244 of 19th October 2001) amended art. 270 bis to make it applicable in cases of terrorist attacks against other States: “Whoever promotes, establishes, organizes, directs or finances associations that aim to commit violent acts for the purposes of terrorism or subversion of the democratic order is punished with seven to fifteen years’ imprisonment. Whoever participates in such associations is punished with five to ten years’ imprisonment. In criminal law, the terrorist purpose also occurs when the violent acts are directed against a foreign State, an international institution or organization”.

RECRUITMENT FOR THE PURPOSES OF TERRORISM, INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL ONE (ART. 270-QUATER CRIMINAL CODE)

Whoever, except for the cases referred to in article 270-bis, recruits one or more persons to carry out acts of violence or sabotage of essential public services for terrorist purposes, even if directed against a foreign State, an international institution or organization, is punished with seven to fifteen years’ imprisonment.

Except for the cases referred to in article 270-bis, and save for the case of training, the recruited person is punished with five to eight years’ imprisonment.

The term recruitment must not be understood as a formal entry of the individual into a hierarchically organized military group, but as the **conclusion of a serious agreement** between the one who proposes the organized perpetration of violent acts for terrorist purposes and the one who accepts it.

Before the amendments introduced by Legislative Decree no. 7 of 2015, only the active profile of the recruiter was of criminal relevance, while no sanction was envisaged for the passive profile of the recruited individual, i.e. the one who concretely makes himself/herself available to carry out terrorist acts.

The Supreme Court has also specified that the crime of recruitment for the purposes of terrorism, including international one, **also** comprises the **relevant attempts** (Criminal Cassation, Section I, 9th September 2015, no. 40699).

Upon conviction of the crime pursuant to art. 270-quater.1 of the Criminal Code, in the event that a minor is involved, the ancillary penalty of deprivation of parental authority is mandatory (Art. 1, paragraph 3 bis, Legislative Decree of 18th February 2015, no. 7).

THE ORGANIZATION OF TRAVELS IN THE TERRITORIES OF JIHAD (ART. 270-QUATER 1 Criminal Code)

Except for the cases referred to in articles 270-bis and 270-quater, whoever organizes, finances or advertises travels to foreign territories aimed at carrying out terrorist acts as referred to in article 270-sexies, is punished with five to eight years imprisonment.

TRAINING FOR ACTIVITIES FOR THE PURPOSES OF TERRORISM, INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL ONE (ART. 270-QUINQUIES CRIMINAL CODE)

Whoever, except for the cases referred to in article 270-bis, trains or in any case provides instructions on the manufacturing or use of explosive materials, firearms or other weapons, harmful or hazardous chemical or bacteriological substances, as well as any other technique or method for carrying out acts of violence or sabotage of essential public services for terrorist purposes, even if directed against a foreign State, an international institution or organization, is punished with five to ten years imprisonment. The same penalty applies against the trained person as well as the person who, having acquired, even autonomously, the instructions for the fulfilment of the deeds referred to in the first sentence, engages in actions uniquely aimed at committing the acts referred to in article 270-sexies. The penalties provided for in this article are increased if the crime of training or instructing is committed through IT or electronic means.

This provision also makes self-training punishable, overcoming the need for a relationship between the trainer and the trained one, and was introduced to cope with the threat posed by the so-called “lone wolves” (Legislative Decree of 18th February 2015 no. 7, amended and converted into Law of 17th April 2015, no. 43). Self-training means the preparing to carry out terrorist acts by researching individually and learning autonomously the skills and competencies needed to perpetrate such acts.

However, only the person who «performs behaviours uniquely aimed at committing acts for terrorist purposes» is punishable.

The Supreme Court has in fact established that «the crime of training for activities for terrorist purposes does not include the mere information and proselytizing activity which does not produce in those who receive the message sufficient technical knowledge to prepare or use weapons, explosives or harmful or hazardous substances, or to carry out acts of violence or sabotage, since it cannot be considered as teaching, but rather as mere dissemination or ideological proposal» (Criminal Cassation, section I, 6th November 2013, no. 4433).

Lastly, the Court clarified the role of the mere “informed person”, i.e. the one who remains an occasional receiver of information outside of a learning relationship, albeit informal, and who does not himself/herself act as an informer/trainer (Criminal Cassation, Section I, sentence no. 38220 of 24th October 2011).

THE FINANCING OF ACTS FOR TERRORIST PURPOSES

(ART. 270-QUINQUIES.1 CRIMINAL CODE)

Whoever, except for the cases referred to in articles 270-bis and 270-quater.1, collects, distributes or makes available goods or money, of any kind, intended to be fully or partially used for carrying out acts for terrorist purposes as referred to in article 270-sexies, is punished with seven to fifteen years' imprisonment, regardless of the actual use of the funds for committing the aforementioned acts.

Whoever deposits or stores the goods or the money indicated in the first paragraph is punished with five to ten years' imprisonment.

Collection means an activity aimed at obtaining the availability of goods or money to carry out acts for terrorist purposes. In application of the offense-related principle under art. 49 of the Criminal Procedure Code, the goods and the money collected must be materially suitable for contributing to the fulfilment of the conduct referred to in art. 270 sexies.

The **distribution** conduct consists in allocating to third parties a sum of money or goods of which the active individual has availability.

Making available, on the other hand, means allocating a sum of money or goods so that they can be used to support the commission of terrorist acts. Making them available does not assume that the sum of money or goods are transferred to the end user but only that the latter is placed in a position to be able to access it.

Deposit means the contribution in money or goods by the depositor for financing terrorism.

Lastly, the **storage** consists in providing for the custody of the good with a view to its use for the intended purpose.

AUTOMATIC ADAPTATION OF THE ITALIAN SYSTEM TO THE POSSIBLE FURTHER DEFINITIONS DEVELOPED IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA AND BINDING ON ITALY.

(ART. 270 SEXIES CRIMINAL CODE)

Conducts for terrorist purposes are those which "by their nature or context can cause serious damage to a country or an international organization and which are carried out for the purpose of intimidating the population, forcing the public authorities or an international organization to perform or omit any act, destabilize, degrade the fundamental political, constitutional, economic and social structures of a country or an international organization, as well as other conducts defined as terrorist by conventions or other rules of international law binding on Italy".

INCITEMENT TO COMMIT A CRIME THROUGH IT OR ELECTRONIC MEANS

(ART. 414 CRIMINAL CODE)

Whoever publicly incites others to commit one or more crimes is punished, for the mere fact of inciting, with a sentence of one to 5 years, if it concerns the incitement to commit crimes. If it concerns terrorism-related crimes, the sentence is increased by half. The sentence is increased up to two thirds if the crime is committed through IT or electronic means.

The objective element of the apology of one or more crimes does not concern the mere expression of thoughts; the action must have the **concrete capacity to cause the immediate execution of crimes** or, at least, the probability that they will be committed in the more or less near future (Section 1, 11578/1998). As for incitement through translation and dissemination of jihadist manuals online please see, in particular, the sentence Section 1, 47489/2015.

DEPORTATION TO PREVENT AND COUNTER TERRORISM

The Italian legal system provides for four different types of deportation of a foreign national which can be applied to prevent and counter extremism.

1

Administrative deportation **on grounds of national security or public order** is ordered by the Minister of the Interior (art. 13 paragraph 1 of Legislative Decree 286/1998) who gives prior notification to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The measure is independent of a criminal conviction and the recipient can be a non-EU foreigner, residing or not residing in Italy, even if he/she holds a long-term residence permit. The prohibitions against deportation provided for by art. 19 paragraph 2 Consolidated Act on Immigration [TUI] do not apply to this type of deportation. For example, even a minor can be deported upon decision of the Juvenile Court, as well as the spouse or a relative of an Italian national up to the second degree.

2

Deportation on grounds of **terrorism prevention** is ordered by the Minister of the Interior or, by his/her delegation, by the Prefect *"when there are well-founded reasons to believe that the stay of the foreigner in the national territory can in any way facilitate terrorist organizations or activities, including international ones"* (Art. 3 of Legislative Decree No. 144/2005). The measure is immediately enforceable, since neither judicial validation nor precautionary suspension are envisaged. These first two types of deportation are characterized by **high** discretionary power which limits their possibility of judicial review. The Regional Administrative Court (T.A.R.) of Lazio (Rome office), is the competent judge, and the code of administrative procedure is applied (art. 13, paragraph 11, of Legislative Decree 286/1998). Any judgment before the T.A.R. of Lazio is suspended for two years in case the State secret is invoked.

3

Administrative deportation can be ordered by the Prefect if the foreigner's entry or stay in the national territory is illegal or **for reasons of social danger**, if the individual belongs to one of the categories targeted by preventive measures. The regulation of this type of deportation was revised by decree law 89/2011, which implemented the so-called "repatriation" directive, and by the European law 2013-bis (l. 161/2014). The profiles envisaged include those who *"put in place objectively relevant preparatory acts to commit crimes for the purposes of terrorism, including international one, or to take part in a conflict in foreign territory in support of an organization that pursues the terrorist purposes referred to in art. 270 of the criminal code"* (art. 4 paragraph 1 letter d., amended by decree law no. 7/2015, converted into Law 43/2015).

4

Finally, deportation can be **ordered by the judge** once the sentence is served, or as a substitute or alternative sanction to detention. These provisions can perform an important preventive function when they concern foreign nationals involved in terrorism-related crimes (art. 312 Criminal Code) and are applicable both to non-EU and EU nationals, in which case the provision is called **removal from the territory**.

The use of this measure after the release of individuals who showed signs of radicalization while in detention has become a trend. The Prison Officers prepare weekly reports on their impending release and their profiles are analyzed to determine the level of social danger they pose and evaluate the deportation order.

All deportations, both ministerial or prefectural, are managed by the Central Directorate of Immigration and the Border Police to which reports are transmitted for a first assessment and the request is subsequently sent to the Cabinet of the Minister. The implementation provides for the local Chief of Police to coercively accompany the foreigner to the border, after the deportation has been validated by the Justice of the Peace. Once the procedure is completed, the relevant measure is included in the Schengen Information System (S.I.S.), which announces to the other EU countries the ban on entry into Italy for that individual. The measures last for a minimum period of five years which is often extended to ten years. In 2019, for example, 98 people were deported for terrorism-related reasons of security and public order; the top 5 countries of origin being Tunisia, Morocco, Albania, Kosovo and Algeria.

Under no circumstances may a person be deported to a country where he/she may be subjected to persecution for reasons of race, gender, language, citizenship, religion, political opinions, personal or social conditions, or could risk being sent to another State in which he/she is not protected from persecution (Art. 19, paragraph 1, Consolidated Act on Immigration). Finally, the European Court of Human Rights has reiterated, in a number of sentences, the prohibition for States to deport a foreigner to a country where he/she is at risk of suffering torture or inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment (European Court of Human Rights, Grand Chamber, 28.2.2008, *Saadi v. Italy*, 37201/06.).





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