



CE AR

COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT
AGAINST
RADICALISATION

TOOLKIT

FAMILIES AGAINST RADICALISATION
AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

TOOLKIT

FAMILIES AGAINST RADICALISATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

This CVE & Campaigning Toolkit is dedicated to improving the understanding of front-line practitioners, activists and professionals working in the field of youth-facing counter-violent extremism (CVE) efforts.

It acts as a simple guide to the field, starting with definitions and theory surrounding CVE, providing some tips for identifying and countering extremism amongst youth, and offering a step-by-step project-development process that CVE practitioners can deploy in their communities.

While comprehensive, this guide is not meant to be deployed alone, and so we recommend utilising the full breadth of readings, tools, case studies and resources we offer throughout the toolkit.

It is important to remember that the field of CVE is constantly evolving, and we hope that this guide will be a useful addition to the arsenal of practitioners, bringing together some of the best practices available to date.

Disclaimer

This document has been produced in the context of the project CEAR.

The sole responsibility for the content of this publication lies with the authors. It does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the European Commission. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

PROJECT DETAILS

Programme:
ISFP -2018-AG-CT-RAD

Project number:
871078

Acronym:
CEAR

Title:
Community Engagement Against Radicalisation

Start date of project:
1 December 2019

Duration:
24 months

Coodinator:
COFAC - Lusófona University - Portugal

Consortium Partners:
**Centre D'action et de Prevention contre
la Radicalisation des Invidus (CAPRI) - France**

Centre for Social Innovation Ltd (CSI) - Cyprus

CESIE - Italy

Fundacja Techsoup (TECHSOUP) - Poland

MULTIKULTURELL - Austria

**Peace Action, Training & Research Inst
of Romania (PATRIR) - Romania**

**Synergasia Enegon Politon
(ACTIVE CITIZENS) - Greece**

Syrien Ne Bouge...Agissons (BONS) - France

Szubjektív Ertekek Alapítvány (SVF) - Hungary

Uppsala Universitet (UU) - Sweden

Editors:
**Anastasiya Maksimchuk, Margarida Oliveira,
Phaidon Vassiliou**

Contributors:
**Afxentis Afxentiou, Athanasia Defingou,
Bianca Rusu, Célia Quico, David Ruah,
Dominique Bons, Dulmaa Ochir,
Francesco Perconti, George Bekiaridis,
Guido Savasta, Idalina Oliveira, Jonathan Hall,
Kate Strezishar, Katerina Theodoridou,
Laura Arrijuria, Mário Alcântara,
Miguel Real Mendes, Noemi de Luca,
Omer Duzgun, Ovagem Agaidyan,
Paulo Mendes Pinto, Sarah Bowman,
Sotiris Themistokleous, Wassef Lemouchi,
Xabisa Xala**

Graphic Designer:
Rute Muchacho

Supervisor:
José Paulo Oliveira



This project is co-funded by
the Internal Security Fund-Police
of the European Union.



Center for Social
Innovation



INDEX

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE TOOLKIT

CHAPTER II - DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTUAL TENSIONS

2.1. MY SON, THE RADICAL: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN 'RADICAL' AND 'RADICALISED'?

2.2. A PATH TO HATE AND MURDER: WHAT IS THE POINT
AT WHICH SOMEONE CAN BE CALLED AN 'EXTREMIST'
AND WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THAT?

CHAPTER III - THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY

3.1. YOUTH AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF COGNITION:
WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE BECOME RADICALISED?

3.2. STRONG FAMILIES: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF PARENTS
AND FAMILIES?

3.3. WAYS TO SUPPORT FAMILIES

CHAPTER IV - ENGAGING AND WORKING WITH FAMILIES IN P/CVE

4.1. STEP ONE: OUTREACH AND IDENTIFICATION

4.2. STEP TWO: ENGAGEMENT

4.3 STEP THREE: ONGOING SUPPORT

4.4 FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

CHAPTER V - CASE STUDIES & EXAMPLES

5.1 EXTREMISTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

5.2 PRACTICE EXAMPLES

ENDNOTES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit aims to support key practitioners and those working with families whose relatives have been radicalised or show signs of extremism. Families play a critical and central role in preventing extremism early and engaging with their children and siblings to assist in the process of disengagement and de-radicalisation.

Their role in early prevention is primarily to build resilience, by providing them a sense of belonging and purpose, by grounding their moral compass and instilling discipline, giving them a sense of identity within their community while respecting others' cultures and identities, helping them overcome personal trauma and loss, teaching them critical thinking and raising awareness of the dangers of the internet.

Families are also important actors to be involved in the process because of the risk of them causing more harm when not engaged. Therefore, families have the potential to have an opposite effect on all of those factors mentioned above. In any case, they are often an extremist's safety net – and should be there to turn to when they seek to disengage from extremism or extremist groups. Properly equipped, families are arguably the most important influencers in an extremist's journey away from hateful ideologies.

This toolkit guides the practitioners on how to instil best-practices in their work with families: touching upon the nuances of definitions and signs of extremism; explaining the role that families can play; providing step-by-step processes on identifying, engaging and supporting families; and presenting some useful case studies of real life examples of violent extremists and their relationship with their families, as well as some good practices from across Europe.

CHAPTER II

DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTUAL TENSIONS

2.1 MY SON, THE RADICAL: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 'RADICAL' AND 'RADICALISED'?

At times, the terms a 'radical' and 'radicalised' individual have been used interchangeably. This is a misnomer, and it is of the utmost importance that we differentiate the two, so as to ensure that relevant fields of study and practice - such as psychology, law, anthropology, history and political philosophy - can be as nuanced as possible.

As an easy point of reference, a radicalised individual (otherwise known as an extremist) is always a radical. **But not all radicals are extremists.**

Radicals are characterised by their resistance to the legitimacy of established norms, policies and institutions. But radicalism does not, in itself, lead to violence.¹ Some radicals have openly advocated for the overhaul of an established political order, but actively advocated for the use of non-violence. Famous examples of course include **Mahatma Gandhi**, **Martin Luther King Jr.** and **Nelson Mandela**. The forms of radicalism adopted by these figures are arguably positive, encouraging political dialogue, civic mobilisation and resorting to non-violent protests only when deemed necessary.

Other radicals may take a philosophical approach to challenging world orders, sometimes seeing violence as a natural progression of political society, but never engaging in violence themselves nor believing that it was a necessary course of action. Both **Karl Marx** and **Franz Fanon** were radicals who believed violence to be

a natural or justified course of action, but also advocated for alternatives where possible - emphasising the value of human rights, freedoms, equality and social justice.

An extremist or radicalised individual, on the other hand - while also resisting the legitimacy of established norms, policies and institutions - actively advocates for, or justifies, violence as a legitimate means to achieve a specific goal. Furthermore, their belief systems are not based on egalitarian values, but 'us-versus-them' thinking, where they seek to establish dominance of their in-group over another out-group.² They may not always engage in physical violence, but their value and belief systems are inherently violent in and of themselves.

A violent extremist, or terrorist, is also radicalised. But they exhibit violent behaviours and actively seek to engage in violence in order to achieve their goal. It might be said that a 'terrorist' is someone that additionally seeks to inspire terror as a legitimate means to achieve their goal, but, as is the case with all of these definitions, that is a hotly contested debate. We will discuss this further down.

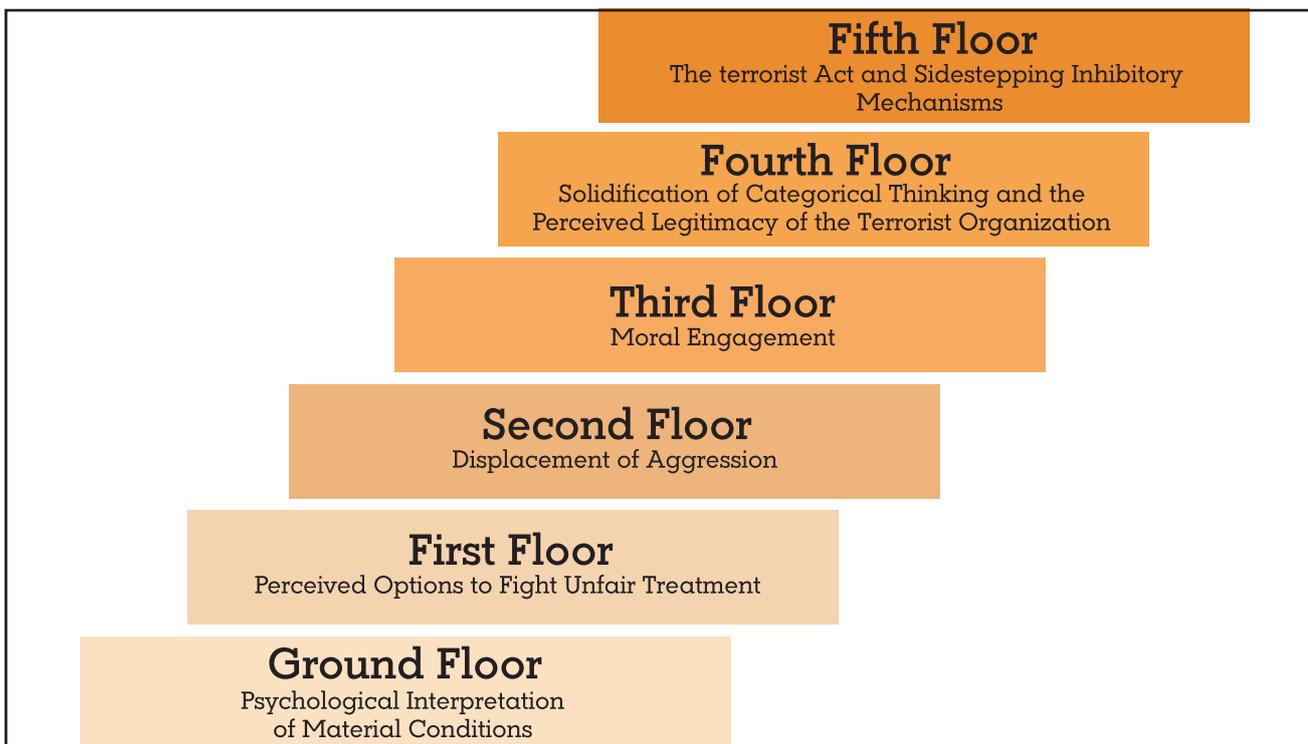
As is clear, differentiating the point at which one has changed from a radical to being radicalised into extremism or violent extremism is extremely challenging. This toolkit will not be able to fully capture the nuances of these differences, but may go some way in helping families to draw more nuanced conclusions with regard to their children or relatives.

Importantly, whether an individual may justify or condone violence as a part of their radical views may be a crucial issue at home, but may also be entirely legal in the eyes of the law. And, ipso facto, under many regimes

and legislations around the world, an individual may advocate for non-violent resistance or protest, and be designated a terrorist or extremist.^{3,4}

And lastly, a radical can very easily become radicalised under the right conditions. In chapter 3 we discuss some

of these conditions. Fathali M. Moghaddam, one of the pioneers in modern study into the phenomena of extremism and terrorism, explained the possible psychological steps one may take from feelings of material injustice ('Ground Floor') through moral engagement ('Third Floor'), to eventually committing a terrorist act ('Fifth Floor').



Herein we will provide some case studies of three individuals that may help clearly delineate where the lines of radicalism, extremism and violent extremism are drawn, but while making clear the nuances that exist at the nuances of the three definitions.

2.1.1 Case Study: Ted Kaczynski

Ted Kaczynski, otherwise known as the Unabomber, is now notorious for his decades-long campaign of domestic terrorism in the promotion of his anti-technology ideology.

Kaczynski studied Mathematics at Harvard at the age of 16, where he was subjected to a 'disturbing [and now] ethically indefensible' psychological experiment designed

by Henry Murray to measure how people react under stress. Murray himself described the interrogation as "vehement, sweeping, and personally abusive".⁵ Essentially, Kaczynski was tortured in the name of scientific advancement.

It has now been argued that these events at Harvard shaped his later rejection of society, believing it to be an inherently unjust space, where science and technology have increasingly merged to become a machine of oppression and of limiting human potential. His ideas evolved to become one where technology, industrialisation and science should be overthrown as part of a revolution in order to bring about profound, meaning-

ful change for human civilisation, and the return to a state of nature.

Inherently, his ideology in and of itself was radical but not necessarily extremist. As he mentions in his manifesto:

*"The only way out is to dispense with the industrial-technological system altogether. This implies revolution, not necessarily an armed uprising, but certainly a radical and fundamental change in the nature of society."*⁶

The issue, however, is that this manifesto was published in full in the Washington Post at the end of a string of fatal bombings he had carried out between 1978 and 1995. These bombings, posted in the mail, had killed 3 and injured 23, mostly targeting scientists and academics at universities.

So while Kaczynski actively advocated for radical change and attempted to himself live a relatively quiet existence - he lived in a remote cabin in rural Montana from 1971 until his capture - he was actively participating in a campaign of domestic terrorism; thus he had transitioned from being a radical seeking fundamental change, to a violent extremist and terrorist, utilising violence and terror as a means to achieve his ideological end.

2.1.2 Case study: Paul Watson

Paul Watson is a Canadian American citizen who, after having played a seminal role in the foundation of Greenpeace and its anti-whaling efforts but eventually expelled for his radical actions at the organisation, founded the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society.

The SSCS is a non-profit, marine conservation organisation whose radical means of resisting various marine and fishing industries - such as whaling, seal hunting, commercial fishing or shark poaching - has led to them being labelled an 'eco-terrorist' organisation by some,

including the Japanese and US governments, as well as Greenpeace.

Paul Watson has referred to himself as an aggressive non-violent activist, for he believes "a few changes on this planet have taken place solely because of non-violent action (...)"⁷ These attitudes permeate the SSCS organisation, where tactics or methods employed to achieve their ideological ends include boarding, ramming and sinking whaling vessels, destroying critical infrastructure involved in those industries and harassing individuals they see as responsible.

However, there have been no reports that SSCS have injured or killed anyone in their activism (which they themselves affirm on their website).⁸ Non-violence is, therefore, a central tenet of their ideology and praxis. They, and Paul Watson, are a great example of how a designated 'terrorist' organisation does not fulfil the criteria for being such, and that actually a radical group or individual is not necessarily radicalised.

2.1.3 Case study: Anders Breivik

Anders Breivik, on the other hand, is a much clearer cut case. At the age of 32, the Norwegian committed one of modern history's most notorious incidents of terrorism. On 22 July 2011, he detonated a bomb outside of the Prime Minister's office, killing 8, before going on to shoot dead 69 and injure over 300 more dressed as a police officer on the Island of Utoya, where the Workers Youth Party were hosting an annual summer camp. Most of his victims were 18 years old or less, with the youngest being 14.

Hours before the attack, Breivik e-mailed a manifesto entitled *2083: A European Declaration of Independence* with over 1500 pages, which cited various ethno-nationalist, accelerationist ideas circulating online, railing against multiculturalism, 'cultural Marxism', Islam, 'leftists', feminism and black people.

His ideology is not particularly coherent - containing themes of neo-Nazism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, the concept of an inevitable Race War, and a desire to revert back to an imagined ethnic societal homogeneity, where men are superior - but follows an internal logic only known to him and those like him in the digital space. As Dr. Aran Kundnani argues, "It would be easy to dismiss Breivik's beliefs as the ramblings of a man gone insane. But that would be to ignore the danger they represent."⁹

Indeed, Breivik is a clear manifestation of when certain types of radicalism can absolutely be equated to violent extremism and terrorism. He not only justified and used violence to achieve his ideological ends, but believed that it was firstly inevitable, secondly a mechanism to accelerate that inevitability, and thirdly that its primary purpose was to instil fear in a future generation of policy-makers and thought-leaders.

As he states in his manifesto: *"Some innocent [people] will die in our operations as they are simply at the wrong place at the wrong time. Get used [to] the idea. The needs of the many will always surpass the needs of the few."*¹⁰

2.2 A PATH TO HATE AND MURDER: WHAT IS THE POINT AT WHICH SOMEONE CAN BE CALLED AN 'EXTREMIST'? AND WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THAT?

2.2.1 Evolution of the Definitions and Concept of Terrorism

The word terrorism first came to English as a translated word (from the Latin *"terrere"*, "to scare"), arising from the French historical period known as the Reign of Terror

(1793-1794), when the provisional government punished those they perceived to be against the French Revolution by committing a series of massacres and executions.

Robespierre, one of the most influential figures in the French Revolution, claimed that terror was a necessary mechanism for state governance and achieving ideological ambitions:

*"virtue, without which terror is baneful; terror, without which virtue is powerless. Terror is nothing more than speedy, severe and inflexible justice; it is thus an emanation of virtue; it is less a principle in itself, than a consequence of the general principle of democracy, applied to the most pressing needs of the [fatherland]"*¹¹

So terrorism was originally a descriptor of state-sanctioned violence designed to inspire fear, but evolved over the 19th and 20th centuries to be increasingly applied to violence aimed against the state, direct or indirectly, in an effort to influence policy and politics.

Between the 1960s and 1970s, the subject of finding a working definition started to gain traction among academics and policy-makers, in the context of a wave of political and insurgent violence internationally - in the Middle East, in Europe, in South East Asia and in South America.

There was clearly a need to define the concept, in order to make effective policies, laws and decisions on these issues, both domestically as well as internationally. It proved, and continues to prove, to be difficult, however. This is principally because - as the now infamous adage goes - *"one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter"*.

Where one group may see guerrilla tactics being applied strategically and with minimal civilian casualties, another might see terrorism aimed at causing maxi-

mum disruption, carnage or unnecessary suffering.

Despite these limitations, during those decades and since, academia and international policy-making bodies such as the United Nations and EU have managed to come to increasingly nuanced agreement and specificity on the definition of terrorism.

In 1994, the General Assembly, in the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate international Terrorism, describes terrorism as *“the criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes”*.¹²

The Security Council, in 2004, added for the subject of *“criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a Government or an international organisation to do or to abstain from doing any act”*.¹³

In 2017, the European Parliament and the Council defined a terrorist group as *“a structured group of more than two persons, established for a period of time and acting in concert to commit terrorist offences; “structured group” means a group that is not randomly formed for the immediate commission of an offence and that does not need to have formally defined roles for its members, continuity of its membership or a developed structure”*.¹⁴

Even though there is not unanimous or global consensus on a definition, there is an agreement in many elements and key messages - for example that terrorism is the use of violence to achieve political and ideological motives, while threatening particular groups or individuals with fear, death and injury.

2.2.2 Extremism as a concept

Rather than a focus on the means toward an end, the definition and concept of extremism is more focused on the *end itself*.

By their very nature, extremist ideologies reject the notion of diversity, inclusion, multiculturalism and any other ambition which seek to bring groups together rather than divide them. This is because, as mentioned above, extremists seek dominance of their in-group over a particular out-group (or more than one).

At high level of extremism, along with this extreme intolerance, an individual can use or justify violence for achieving their goal - that is destroying another group, demolishing their ideologies and furthering their own. At this point, the individual has transgressed from extremism to violent extremism.

Some inherent qualities of being an extremist include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A duty to protect and defend their nation or group - based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion or other.
- A self-perceived or designated victimisation of their in-group at the hands of other out-groups, on the basis that the out-group's existence or actions are limiting their freedom or superiority.
- A particularly zealous faith in a unified theory of the world - this could be religious, political, or social - which the extremist uses to defend and justify their beliefs and actions.
- An identification and sense of belonging with their in-group and perceived allies, and an absolute vilification of all groups outside of these.
- A sense of purpose and moral correctness to all actions they undertake, deep in the belief that in 'the end' - either through history or as a religiously-inspired outcome, such as going to heaven - they will be vindicated.

-
- A sense of adventure or struggle with likeminded individuals (a sense of camaraderie), who together will achieve these ultimate ambitions, and whose joint status will be elevated through their actions.

2.2.4 (Violent) Extremism to Terrorism

Although violent extremism and terrorism are both qualified by their beliefs that violence is a justified and morally correct method to achieve their goals, terrorists can be separated by the actual implementation of violence as a tactic of warfare, insurgency, resistance or seeking radical change. That is, terrorists, as opposed to violent extremists, actively pursue and enact violence to spread terror and achieve their objectives, rather than merely justify violence.

Their actions are therefore rational calculations (cost-benefit or utilitarian) to use violence as a tool to spread fear, undermine legitimacy or destroy critical infrastructure. A violent extremist has evolved into a terrorist when they start seeking and using these means and methods.

ENDNOTES

¹ Michel, D., & Schyns, C. EIP Explainer: Understanding radicalisation. Retrieved 17 August 2020, from <http://www.eip.org/en/news-events/eip-explainer-understanding-radicalisation>

² ISD Approach. Retrieved 17 August 2020, from <https://www.isdglobal.org/isdapproach/>

³ 'A beehive of terrorists': Donald Trump threatens to deploy national guard in Portland – video. (2020). Retrieved 17 August 2020, from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/video/2020/jul/31/a-beehive-of-terrorists-donald-trump-threatens-to-deploy-national-guard-in-portland-video>

⁴ Carmody, B. (2020). Local poets protest Duterte regime's anti-terror laws. Retrieved 17 August 2020, from <https://www.smh.com.au/culture/books/local-poets-protest-duterte-regime-s-anti-terror-laws-20200730-p55gzn.htm>

⁵ Tenner, E. (2020). Bloody-Minded Philosophers. Retrieved 17 August 2020, from <https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2010/09/bloody-minded-philosophers/62418/>

⁶ The Unabomber Trial: The Manifesto. (1997). Retrieved 17 August 2020, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/unabomber/manifesto.text.htm>

⁷ Watson, P. (1993). *Earthforce!*. Los Angeles: Chaco Press.

⁸ Watson, P. The Death of a Whaler. Retrieved 17 August 2020, from <https://www.seashepherd.org.uk/news-and-commentary/commentary/the-death-of-a-whaler.html>

⁹ Kundnani, A. (2012). The Anti-Islamist: Anders Behring Breivik's Manifesto. Retrieved 17 August 2020, from <https://icct.nl/publication/the-anti-islamist-anders-behring-breiviks-manifesto/>

¹⁰ Berwick, A. (2011). 2083: A European Declaration of Independence. Retrieved from <https://info.publicintelligence.net/AndersBehringBreivikManifesto.pdf>

¹¹ Linton, M. (2006). Robespierre and the Terror. Retrieved 18 August 2020, from <https://www.historytoday.com/archive/robespierre-and-terror>

¹² Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism (1994). United Nations. Retrieved 18 August 2020, from <https://legal.un.org/avl/ha/dot/dot.html>

¹³ Resolution 1566 (2004). United Nations Security Council. Retrieved 18 August 2020, from <https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/n0454282.pdf>

¹⁴ DIRECTIVE (EU) 2017/541 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL. (2017). Official Journal Of The European Union, 88(6). Retrieved 18 August 2020 from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32017L0541&rid=6>

CHAPTER III

THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY

3.1 YOUTH AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF COGNITION: WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE BECOME RADICALISED?

There are a multitude of reasons why an individual may become radicalised, and they often interact and it is not a simple process. It is important to remember that while certain factors may trigger or contribute to this process, each individual will exist in their own unique context. Two people may therefore share more or less the same traits, history and community and one may be radicalised and not the other.

Before explaining this process of radicalisation, or some specific factors that might be particularly influential, we must first try to disaggregate 'pull' from 'push' factors.

Pull factors are cognitive, psychological processes that draw an individual towards an organisation, individual or ideology. They are motivators as to why an individual would choose this path over an alternative one. These could include a need for belonging, financial incentive, a desire to help one's community, rectify grievances, resonating with similar cultures, seeking authority figures or likeminded people.

Push factors are the environmental conditions that enable pull factors to be effective. They are literally what push an individual towards extremism. These could include lacking socio-economic status, coming from a marginalised community, experiencing discrimination, existing in a country with poor governance, corruption or other government failures.

Push and pull factors interact, and together lead to an individual being radicalised. For example, someone who has experienced discrimination and marginalisation by their host community may feel drawn towards an organisation that can provide an explanation and a means to rectify that feeling of vilification. It has been shown that those individuals that are in a situation of alienation and social isolation are more vulnerable to these push and pull factors.¹⁵

3.1.1 The Quest for Belonging and Significance

A 2006 study by Andrew Silke (2008)¹⁶ resulted in an incredibly important finding that was to be seminal in shaping modern understandings of extremism. It found that British Muslims who identified more as Muslim than British were more sympathetic towards extremist Islamism. The paper concluded that it was their association with Islam and the disassociation with Britain - the belonging conferred by their identity - that shaped their worldview. We all seek belonging. It helps ground us in our social environment, gives us status and significance.

The importance of significance cannot be understated. As renowned psychologist Ariel Kruglanski emphasises:

"All individuals have a fundamental desire to matter, to merit respect, and to be someone. The need for significance encapsulates other needs that [are] definitive of the human condition, including the desires to gain respect, competence, esteem, and meaning in life".¹⁷

When you feel you belong, you also feel you have gained that significance; the two are co-dependent. Those that find themselves on a journey of seeking belonging and significance are at that point vulnerable - they have a propensity toward joining extremist groups because they prioritise this need.¹⁸

Around this need, an extremist group can build a narrative - a story that enables the individual to explain the world, that gives them purpose and meaning, that provides a path toward belonging and the significance that they crave. This process is not linear. It relies on a set of push factors that reinforce the narrative, various pull factors that provide added justification, as well as a convincing ('credible') messenger delivering the narrative. Often, but not always, these messengers have something in common with the person they are trying to recruit - they speak the same language, do the same activities, grew up in the same environment or have similar experience.

Why someone feels the need to seek significance can depend on a number of factors. The only necessary factor is that they do not feel like they belong or have significance in the current environment they are in. The reason behind this could be that they feel marginalised in their society - outcast, or ignored by the government or by their community; it could also be that they have had traumatic experiences at school or during childhood. While these factors are certainly not exhaustive, interviews with former extremists often show that in extremist groups, they found a group of likeminded people who they could look up to, or from whom they were given respect and a sense of purpose in life. They often also show that the ideologies of these groups help to solve internal conflicts such as a struggle for one's identity, or not finding meaning in the world.

3.1.2 Identity and Culture

Identity and culture both play large roles in the process of radicalisation. Identity is a construct and qualifier we attribute to ourselves in the context of our external environment. When situated in a society that marginalises an individual, they feel they have less significance to that society, less purpose within it, and gravitate towards another perceived in-group. For example, Lyons-Padilla et al. found that among Muslims that perceived higher levels of discrimination in America, the less attached to that society they felt.¹⁹

Conversely, Tahir Abbas - Senior Research Fellow at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) - has previously noted that multiculturalism, dislocation and conflicts of identity affect Muslims as much as they do the 'left behind' white working classes. These internal conflicts, manifesting as external us-versus-them thinking, can lead young men especially vulnerable and 'pliable to external influences'.²⁰

Culture, in turn, influences how individuals express this need for identity and belonging. Increased perceptions of, and importance given to, social cohesion among certain groups have proven to be factors in increased in-group / out-group thinking.²¹ Furthermore, research has shown that cultures with higher levels of patriarchal values - such as in Pakistani and Turkish families, where a man is head of the household - encourage masculinist values and traits in their sons, seeking status and belonging through the establishment of further dominance.²²

As social creatures, identity and its context in wider culture are inherent to human psychologies and our sense of belonging. We connect through shared values, purpose and meaning. The problem arises when individuals begin to interpret our senses of identity as meaning that we exist apart and distinct from other groups, and this distinction in turn justifies attempts at violent domination or subjugation of any group that is not ours.

3.1.3 Personal Trauma and Loss

The feeling of loss is a deeply unsettling experience for an individual to go through. Losing a relative, for example, to war or a medical condition, can be devastating to an individual as they have not just lost a loved one, but a part of themselves. Other types of loss can result in a similar feeling that one has lost something: for example, losing a parent, when coming from a broken family; losing a childhood when facing abuse or bullying growing up; losing financial security when someone has lost a job; or losing status when one feels humiliated.

These experiences can make us question the world - the purpose of life, why there is so much pain, or why we deserve to feel like this. And as a result, many people can come to entirely different conclusions: maybe that pain and trauma are natural, and that one is justified in inflicting them on others; blaming a certain group for making an individual feel this way; an individual feeling that they are worthless and need to seek significance.

These feelings of loss - traumas - are very powerful motivators in radicalisation, as extremist ideologies can help alleviate much of the fear or guilt or anguish, explaining the reasons behind pain and providing convenient scapegoats to blame. Extremist groups can also provide spaces of mutual comfort and support, and, for many of those that have lost fathers, these groups can also act as patriarchal, authority figures that an individual may long for. They may also reinforce pre-existing notions that violence is a natural and normal characteristic of human existence.

3.1.4 Influence of Peers, Families and the Community

Throughout a child's developmental years, they go through a process of 'socialisation' - where many of the values, behaviours, attitudes and beliefs of their family, their community and others they interact with - such as peers or teachers. While this is more powerful in early years, people will constantly experience a degree of socialisation throughout their lives, changing their beliefs and values according to their environment.

Therefore, if an individual grows up in a household or community where others hold certain extreme values or beliefs, they are more likely to harbour them too. This is the 'network theory' of radicalisation, first proposed by Marc Sageman for the NYPD in understanding how Muslims were more likely to radicalise in Muslim communities with grievances against the US. Through exposure to 'radicalising settings and agents', there is a cyclical reinforcement of radical views.²³

Therefore, a key vulnerability in the radicalisation of

youth especially is their environment - the influence of their family or friends and the community in which they find themselves. It is important to identify what an individual's situation is, and how it shapes their worldview.

3.1.5 The Role of the Internet

To what extent the internet acts as a radicalising agent in and of itself is a topic of much debate. Maura Conway suggests that there are two main reasons why we might see the internet as responsible for a new wave of extremism (although, it should be noted, she argues that there is a great need for new research into this idea): firstly, that social media plays an extremely important function in financing through fundraising, recruiting new members and disseminating propaganda or communicating; and secondly that the internet provides a degree of anonymity when conversing and meeting other extremists, which helps to bolster the face-to-face offline activities of terrorist cells, for example.²⁴

In a RAND exploration paper focusing on the role of the internet in radicalisation in the 21st Century, the authors further identify five key themes in a review of the literature on the matter:

- **The internet creates more opportunities to become radicalised**, as individuals are exposed more frequently to radicalising agents and content.
- **The internet acts as an 'echo chamber'**, as users seek to reinforce their own beliefs and share their views with likeminded people - creating a self-perpetuating cycle of radicalisation.
- **The internet accelerates the radicalisation process**, as individuals may have already had tendencies to radicalise offline, but are now exposed frequently to material and resources that pushes them further along the process.
- **The internet allows radicalisation to occur without physical contact**, as individuals can connect instantaneously across borders and distances, including into conflict zones and anonymously.
- **The internet increases opportunities for self-radicalisation**, as radicalising material and content is widely - and often publicly - available for download and consumption.²⁵

3.2 STRONG FAMILIES: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF PARENTS AND FAMILIES?

From these factors, and others, it is quite clear that families have the opportunity to play a great role in helping young people be more resilient to extremism or radicalisation.

3.2.1 Building resilience

'Building resilience' is the notion that a young person can be supported in becoming less vulnerable to radicalisation efforts or the ideologies of extremism. And it is a fundamental role of families, especially close family members to whom we attach legitimacy, credibility, authority and the desire to impress, to help build that resilience rather than undermine it.

Families, unfortunately, can unknowingly be agents for radicalisation themselves. They can be responsible for:

- Denying love, affection or value to their child - thus enabling feelings of insecurity or a need to find belonging elsewhere.
- Replicating inherently violent or negative cultural tropes, such as patriarchal dominance, that influence the child to replicate it themselves elsewhere in their life.
- Instilling in their child a sense that they belong only to their in-group (their religion, their culture, their ethnicity etc.) and that out-groups threaten them in some way.
- Exposing their child to trauma, either directly or indirectly. This trauma might arise from being a victim or witness to domestic violence and other kinds of abuse, putting them in harmful situations, or neglecting them.
- Allow children to use and abuse the internet without supervision, and without being taught critical consumption skills such as fact-checking, reporting incidents of extremism online, or having open conversations with parents about digital harms.

These are all very serious factors in the radicalisation process, and one or any number of them together could be a major trigger in a child eventually choosing extremism. That being said, they therefore conversely can play a major role in preventing this. The ways of doing this include helping their child in becoming more emotionally stable, giving them sense of purpose and belonging, instilling a sense of pride in one's cultural identity without feelings of inferiority or superiority with regards to others', supporting them in coming to terms with any personal trauma and loss - as well as giving that loss or trauma a different, positive significance - and not exposing them to any more, influencing them to be more morally grounded and with discipline and respect for others as key tenets in the household, and finally by helping them to improve on their digital literacy.

3.2.2 The Role of Mothers

Mothers play a unique role in the family, providing a sense of belonging and security, of nurturing core principles and values from a young age, and can provide a level of insight into their child that other family members might not be able to.

Since - as is the case for many women around the world - mothers may be the primary caregiver, they are the ones responsible for a child's early developmental years. They are therefore the person that most influences how a child behaves later in life, and on whom a child can rely on when facing difficulties in life.

Educating mothers on recognising signs of radicalisation is a good first step, but furthermore building their capacities to (a) instil qualities of self-worth and belonging in their child, and b) support their child through disengagement and de-radicalisation processes can be equally beneficial.

3.2.3 The Role of Fathers

Fathers, traditionally, play a slightly different role. Though this has been very much changing in some parts of the world in recent decades, the father still plays the role of the disciplinarian, the protector and the role model for many young people around the world.

If a father is absent, is abusive, replicates trauma from his own childhood, raises his child with a worldview in which the world is unfair or unjust, expects masculinity and dominance in their sons, or in turn expects femininity and subservience in their daughters, he may end up making their child more vulnerable to extremism and radicalisation later in life.

Encouraging fathers - especially in patriarchal societies - to exercise **responsible authority**, with an emphasis on compassionate discipline, free from gender stereotypes, may be one of the most important ways to engage this group. They are also key figures in instilling a positive moral compass and a respect for others, by acting as positive role models in their family..

3.2.4 The Role of Siblings

Siblings confer a legitimacy and credibility that parents might not be able to. Especially if siblings are roughly the same age, they are much more in touch with the factors and trends that influence the other. They can also themselves be nurturing figures and role models, without the complex parent-child dynamics that may come with mothers and fathers.

Lastly, they are also much less likely to be judgmental of their siblings' actions, and are therefore reliable resources of anonymity and trustworthiness for each other, and can be deployed as effective influencers in the family.

3.3 WAYS TO SUPPORT FAMILIES

3.3.1 Reporting Mechanisms

Reporting mechanisms are those which give family members the space to engage with trained professionals, law enforcement or social services anonymously and without fear of retribution or punishment. They are often in the form of online platforms or telephone hotlines - one example of both of these is the French Interior Ministry's dedicated site which helps guide concerned families through the process of identifying signs of radicalisation and then providing them either a form or a hotline to call.²⁶

3.3.2 Counselling and Grief Support

When an individual becomes radicalised - especially when it means that they commit terrorist acts, travel to fight abroad, are arrested and imprisoned, or vilified by a community - the parents and families both of the victims as well as that individual become victims too. Helping families come to terms with the personal loss they have now experienced is a major step in helping to repair tears in societal fabric, where blame and further entrenchment of community tensions are very easy traps to fall into.

3.3.3 Coaching and Training

Sometimes parents, especially those with personal issues - such as cycles of violence, drug or alcohol abuse, personal trauma or experiences of racism - need more direct and longitudinal support. Helping to build the capacities of parents directly can have an indirect positive impact on their children.

This might include (but is not limited to) building parents' abilities to:

- Identify tendencies and signs of radicalisation or extremism in their children, and know how to respond.

-
- Improve and stabilise their relationship with their child through better listening and engagement.
 - Generally, improve their parenting skills, including better and more compassionate discipline and care.
 - Reduce feelings of shame and guilt for previous mistakes in their relationship, helping to encourage forgiveness and build healthier and stronger bonds going forward.
 - Recognise trauma or negative emotions in themselves and to respond behaviourally in a more appropriate and self-reflective way, often involving the deployment of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.

3.3.4 Networks

As mentioned, families can both be victims as well as positive agents of change. However, when isolated, they lose out on the ability to share information, connect and learn from each other - which can diminish their role and make the experiences they are going through feel lonelier.

Building networks, in communities or globally, can help empower families by enabling spaces or platforms for shared expression, mutual grief and tips on how to best support extremists and victims of extremism.

3.3.5 De-Radicalisation & Integration Support

Finally, when an individual decides to leave their extremist network, group or ideology, usually it is to the family that they must turn. Giving families the ability not only to help their children or siblings move away ideologically and integrate back into society, but also the ability to manage external factors such as community backlash or media attention, is extremely important.

ENDNOTES

¹⁵ Saltman, E. (2015). Sociologický Časopis / Czech Sociological Review, 51(3), 559-562

¹⁶ Silke, A. (2008). Holy Warriors: Exploring the Psychological Processes of Jihadi radicalisation. European Journal of Criminology, 5(1), 99-123

¹⁷ Kruglanski, A., Jasko, K., Webber, D., Chernikova, M., & Molinaro, E. (2018). The Making of Violent Extremists. Review of General Psychology, 22(1)

¹⁸ Borum, R. (2014). Psychological Vulnerabilities and Propensities for Involvement in Violent Extremism. Special Issue: Terrorism in the 21st Century, 32(3)

¹⁹ Lyons-Padilla, Sarah, et al. "Belonging nowhere: Marginalization & radicalisation risk among Muslim immigrants." Behavioral Science & Policy, vol. 1 no. 2, 2015, p. 1-12.

²⁰ Abbas, T. (2017). Ethnicity and Politics in Contextualising Far Right and Islamist Extremism. Perspectives On Terrorism, 11(3).

²¹ Moyano, M., & Trujillo, H. (2014). Intention of activism and radicalism among Muslim and Christian youth in a marginal neighbourhood in a Spanish city / Intención de activismo y radicalismo de jóvenes musulmanes y cristianos residentes en un barrio marginal de una ciudad española. Revista De Psicología Social, 29(1), 90-120.

²² Siraj, A. (2010). "Because I'm the man! I'm the head": British married Muslims and the patriarchal family structure. Contemporary Islam, 4(2), 195-214.

²³ Sageman, M. (2004). Understanding Terror Networks. University of Pennsylvania Press.

²⁴ Conway, M. (2016). Determining the Role of the Internet in Violent Extremism and Terrorism: Six Suggestions for Progressing Research. Studies In Conflict & Terrorism, 40(1), 77-98.

²⁵ von Behr, I., Reding, A., Edwards, C., & Gribbon, L. (2013). Radicalisation in the digital era: the use of the internet in 15 cases of terrorism and extremism. RAND Europe. Retrieved from https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR453.html

²⁶ Ministère l'Intérieur. (2019). Assistance aux familles et prévention de la radicalisation violente. Retrieved 18 August 2020, from <https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Dispositif-de-lutte-contre-les-filieres-djihadistes/Assistance-aux-familles-et-prevention-de-la-radicalisation-violente>

CHAPTER IV

ENGAGING AND WORKING WITH FAMILIES IN P/CVE

When engaging with families, it requires work. This is because gaining access to some communities might prove difficult - especially among particularly close-knit ones, or those with extensive experience of marginalisation. Furthermore, many might not know how to seek help, or who to trust with the sensitivity of information being passed on about their relatives. To begin and continue working with them, we have identified three major steps that might be helpful:

- Step One: Outreach and Identification
- Step Two: Engagement
- Step Three: Ongoing Support

With these steps, it is possible to find and work with families in a space that all parties find safe and trust.

4.1

STEP ONE: OUTREACH AND IDENTIFICATION

The first step is to find the families that you need to work with. Because many forms of extremism proliferate in the communities and spaces that are less visible to security services, it can often be quite challenging to reach the most vulnerable. And furthermore, even working for neutral or benign organisations can still be met with resistance or mistrust from some communities - especially if there is any suspicion that sensitive information might get passed onto security and state services.

4.1.1 Community Engagement

To establish trust with families in need, it is important to

first establish trust with the community at large. When it is commonly known among neighbours and friends that the organisation you represent is acting in their best interest, it will be a lot easier to identify which families might need help. Then, building relations with community leaders - religious figures, patriarchs or matriarchs, youth workers and activists - will help to establish the legitimacy and credibility of your actions. Finally, as your organisation and work becomes more visible among the community, families in need will be more likely to independently approach you with issues they are facing. Good marketing of your organisation and community outreach is absolutely crucial as a first step.

4.1.2 Identification of Families in Need

Once relationships have been established with critical community leaders and members at large, it is essential to begin identifying the families that are the most in need. This is to say, one must try to map the extent of the problem in the community, find where the hotspots are, what issues the community faces that might lead to young people being more susceptible to radicalisation, and use these indicators to establish higher probabilities.

With enough trust established, it might be the case that families or community members independently approach your organisation asking for help. Otherwise, another approach would be to work closely with youth workers, religious figures and other community leaders to encourage affected families to come forward. It is important that they approach your organisation voluntarily, otherwise trust may never be established and information not freely shared.

4.1.3 Risk & Vulnerability Assessments (Triage)

After several families have been identified as the most in need, it is also important to prioritise. Depending on the capacity of your organisation it might not be possible to work with all families simultaneously. This means that some children or family members might be further along the process of radicalisation, or pose more of a threat to the wider community or themselves.

Equally, an individual might be less progressed along the process of radicalisation but show higher levels of vulnerability, or might be younger and more malleable than other, older individuals.

Deciding on your triage (prioritisation) of the situation will require a combination of subjective judgement and consideration of the role you want to play in the community. Some organisations focus on de-radicalisation efforts, and so their focus will be on those who already show clear signs of radicalisation. Others work specifically on prevention of extremism among adolescents, and may therefore consider vulnerable youth to be the most important.

4.2 STEP TWO: ENGAGEMENT

After families and individuals have been identified and prioritised, the next crucial step is to begin engagement. As mentioned, this should, as much as possible, be a voluntary act on the part of the families, without coercion from state or security services. This is because for families to work most effectively, they should trust your organisation and want to share information freely, seeking the best help for their child. Any perception of ill-will or danger may force them to withdraw from seeking help, to cease communications or dialogue, and may mean that their relative has little oversight from trained professionals.

4.2.1 Trust-Building

To build trust, open and regular communication is key. That is to say, they must believe that you will not abandon them, that you are committed and dedicated to helping them, that they feel safe in sharing information with you openly (perhaps it is necessary to create non-disclosure or confidentiality agreements before engaging), and that you will continue to support them throughout the process. Establishing this trust may take a long time, but with enough community support or endorsement - giving your organisation a sense of legitimacy and credibility - it may also be a rapid process. Patience, therefore, is critical.

4.2.2 Safe Spaces - Anonymity and Confidential Support

Once trust is established, it is also advisable to ensure that anonymity is provided to the family. This enables a much more open space for sharing information and issues that need addressing, without the fear of punishment, retribution or future coercion by state security services, or from members of the public. Anonymity can be provided through simple mutual Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs), verbally or by establishing 'Chatham House Rules' in any discussions - meaning that no individual can be cited in what they discuss.

Confidential support, in addition to anonymity provided through mechanisms such as NDAs, can be given by: using hotlines or web chats, rather than in-person meetings; ensuring all material is encrypted and password protected on internal servers and laptops; all physical evidence - such as forms, letters, notes and others - is digitised and subsequently destroyed; and that any offline meetings take place at a neutral, ambiguous or otherwise indiscernible location - rather than, say, at the individual's house or your organisation's office.

4.3 STEP THREE: ONGOING SUPPORT

4.3.1 Multi-agency buy-in and the development of support networks

Gaining multiple agencies' support to your work can be very helpful in making the impact and capacity of your work that much greater. These agencies might include, but are not limited to, schools and educational institutions, psycho-social support and mental health services, medical services, survivors and victims' institutes, social services, security and law enforcement. As mentioned in the next sub-chapter, families may face a much more extensive range of issues than just extremism or radicalisation, and getting these services to collaborate can help to address them from multiple angles. Be aware, however, that bringing on State security or law enforcement can have a detrimental effect on trust-building and establishing relations. A degree of separation should be put in place between law enforcement and yourselves, and it should be demonstrable that information is not passed along. In this case, law enforcement and intelligence agencies should be involved only as a preventative capacity or to protect the general public only in cases of critical danger.

4.3.2 Indirect Support

It might be that families are not only facing radicalisation or extremism of their relatives, but indeed face the same structural, cultural, economic or societal challenges that left their relatives vulnerable to extremism in the first place. These might include unemployment or financial disempowerment, political disenfranchisement, ghettoisation of the community or high levels of crime in their immediate environment, or perhaps a strong influence of radicalising figures in their community or place of worship.

It is not enough to simply assist in the work with individuals without looking at the context in which they live. However, it is also understandable that organ-

isations have different levels of capacity and scope, and this is why it is extremely helpful to have the buy-in of, and collaboration between, multiple agencies that can try to address the context of the extremism rather than just the extremist or families themselves. When an organisation has more capacities and capabilities to work with communities - in training, in financial empowerment (such as in entrepreneurship), in countering gang or criminal violence more generally, or working with the community as a whole - then direct interventions become more effective.

At a smaller scale, organisations should be creative - using networks and trying to think of ways to help the families addressing the wider issues they face. The contact details of services such as mental health support, addiction clinics, educational and extra-curricular activity groups and others can be passed onto families to enable them access where they might not have had it before, or even known about their existence.

4.3.3 Disengagement

At some stage, it will be necessary to stop working with families directly in order to prioritise others or because funding has ceased. It is important that sufficient preparation has been done before this point - both for your organisation and for the family. Ideally, the family has successfully addressed the issues of extremism that they are facing, but this will not always be the case. Using networks and other agencies for support may be one way of ensuring continued support. Keeping regular communication with the family might be another.

In any case, the most important thing is to ensure that families remain safe upon disengagement from them. This safety extends to the most high-risk individuals - such as extremist relatives and their affiliates - but also to the community at large, who might be aware of the reasons you were working with them. Close cooperation with law enforcement to ensure their protection is a critical step, and maintaining close ties with community leaders and religious figures could also prove to be useful.

4.4 FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

4.4.1 Implications and Risks

In the field of practical work on countering violent extremism, there are many risks to consider:

- Risks to the practitioner: by engaging with extremists in the attempt to de-radicalise, or working with families to prevent extremism, a practitioner may be targeted both by extremist-affiliates or sympathisers, a suspicious community, or vexed members of the wider public.
- Risks to the family: for the same reasons, a family may be targeted. This is especially true when a community might have more sympathy for extremist ideologies, and/or be resistant to outside interference.
- Risks to the (extremist) individual: their affiliation with extremism might make them a particularly controversial figure in the community or wider public. Furthermore, the fact that they have certain vulnerabilities that led them to be radicalised in the first place might make them a threat to themselves - perhaps because of issues to do with mental health, their desire to carry out terrorist activities, or perhaps the risk of them travelling abroad to fight in a conflict zone.
- Risks to the wider public: obviously, the main reason why we work in this field is to prevent further violence in the community or to the wider public. There is a significant risk that those we work with intend, and have the potential, to harm others.

In all these cases, it is important to firstly have a good sense of what the risk is at the beginning and throughout. Accurately assessing risk can be done by establishing good relationships within the community, with the family and with religious and social institutions that might be privy to more grounded information.

If threats prove to be severe or of high probability, it is important that the appropriate authorities - intelligence services, police or law enforcement, and community leaders - are contacted to inform them of the threat.

Breaking confidentiality or anonymity in these cases is a necessary step to protect those most at risk.

4.4.2 Practical Boundaries

There are always, and should always be, limits to the engagement in the field of countering extremism. As mentioned above, this work carries many risks to the practitioner, to the family, to the individual involved and to the general public.

When engaging with families, the following practical boundaries - as expounded by the European Commission's Radicalisation Awareness Network report on family support - might be considered:

- *Clear rules and boundaries for conduct should be established from the outset. In support groups, for instance, family members should talk about their relatives but it should not be a forum for blame.*
- *Some families may not want to talk about what their relatives are doing as they do not want to think about the shame or stigma associated with their actions. In these cases, it can be helpful to include a psychologist, who can dispel taboos and encourage them to talk about these issues in meetings.*
- *It is crucial that meetings are as private and confidential as possible. For instance, avoid note taking during sessions with family members. Practitioners have found that explicit note-taking diminishes trust and creates an atmosphere of unease.*
- *Quite often there is 'institutional blaming': Parents might blame the security services for not preventing their children from becoming engaged with known extremists. It can be helpful to include those 'blamed' when engaging. This can be done by including (willing) persons from government departments such as the security services or the foreign policy office in bilateral meetings, or in support groups with families.*
- *Adding an interpreter to the group talks might overcome some language barriers, but might not necessarily create the right atmosphere. Experience has shown that parents can also translate for each other and that they are more actively engaged and trusting if there is no interpretation.²⁷*

ENDNOTES

²⁷ Radicalisation Awareness Network. (2019). Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism: Family Support. European Commission. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-best-practices/docs/family_support_en.pdf

CHAPTER V

CASE STUDIES & EXAMPLES

5.1 EXTREMISTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

After the 2017 Manchester attack, among other attacks between 2015 and 2017 (notably, in France, Denmark, Germany and the UK) a number of newspapers, both European and American ones, were concerned with the question of what makes people turn from ordinary young people to individuals with the capacity to murder others on a mass scale.

It is always easier to label a terrorist as a monster, to think of them as someone societally defective. Alienating an individual who had committed horrible actions might be the most comfortable approach for society. However, it doesn't encourage research into the background and reasoning of terrorist's action, therefore, does not give any clues on how to recognise the rise of radicalisation among those around who seem to be "normal" people. This is why it is necessary to look closely at the stories of radicalisation and study their prerequisites. Importantly, we will examine the role of families in each of the cases.

5.1.1 Case Study: 'The Manchester Bombing' (May 2017), Salman Ramadan Abedi

On May 22, 2017, a 22-year-old Salman Ramadan Abedi committed a terrorist attack by activating a self-made bomb at the Manchester Arena, UK, killing himself along with 22 others - injuring dozens more. At the moment Ariana Grande was singing the last song of her concert, and the City Room lobby filled up with people leaving and their parents waiting to greet them, Abedi detonated the bomb in a crowd of mostly teenagers. After the attack, ISIS claimed responsibility for directing it.

In the case of Abedi, family circumstances played a significant role in what had happened. Salman was born in 1994 in Manchester, shortly after his parents, Ramadan Abedi and Samia Tabba, moved there from Libya. The relocation had a political reason behind it. Ramadan had to escape from Gaddafi's regime because of his connections with members of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, which was regarded as an al-Qaeda affiliate and banned as a terrorist organisation. The family settled in a Libyan community neighbourhood in South Manchester where Salman was born and grew up with his five siblings. One of the brothers, Hashem, was later implicated as an accomplice in the preparation of the attack.

During the 2011 uprisings in Libya, Abedi's family returned to Tripoli. Salman and Hashem began participating in the protests against Gaddafi, and eventually helped in delivering aid to rebels who were fighting the regime. According to photo evidence, Ramadan took his sons to the front lines and exposed them to weapons and violence. Afterwards, Salman and Hashem came back to Britain in order to proceed with their studying while the rest of the family stayed in Libya.

In the spring of 2017, right before the attack, Salman travelled out of the UK for five weeks. There are no accounts of where exactly he was, however it is known that prior to the trip his parents came to Manchester in an attempt to take their children back to Libya. By the time the parents visited, the siblings had already prepared most of the material for their improvised bomb and the plan for their attack.

After the attack, the father said to the press:

"I was really shocked when I saw the news, I still don't believe it. As we were discussing news of similar attacks

earlier, (Salman) was always against those attacks, saying there's no religious justification for them. I don't understand how he'd have become involved in an attack that led to the killing of children. Every father knows his son and his thoughts, my son does not have extremist thoughts."

To understand Salman Abedi's case, it is also important to consider the role his family played in radicalising him and his brother. There have been suggestions that Ramadan was a major figure in the militant UK-Libyan community and in providing the groundwork necessary to radicalise his sons. Their mother, on the other hand, tried to warn the authorities about her sons. She has made a claim they were "dangerous" and out of control before the accident happened. Unfortunately, these reports were not relayed appropriately and rapidly enough to the necessary authorities on time.

But of course, there were other factors at play too: their local community was composed of first- and second-generation refugees from Libya and Somali, with childhood experiences of racism and exclusion by some peers. When they returned to Libya, these experiences might have made them feel more of an urge to reinforce their identity.

5.1.2 Case Study: 'The Nice Truck Attack' (July 2016), Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel

On 14 July 2016, Bastille day, a 19-tonne truck moving at 90 km per hour hit a crowd of people out celebrating the French national holiday. 86 people were killed and 434 injured. According to reports from a regional Islamic association, around one third of the killed people turned out to be Muslims. The attack was deliberate and was carried out by Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel. ISIS has confirmed their responsibility in directing the attack afterwards.

The 21-year-old Tunisian was not a known jihadist. He came to France from Msaken, a small town in the north of Tunisia. His family was respected and wealthy. He was "a treasure for his father", a friend of the family he claimed.

The father himself, Mohamed Mondher Lahouaiej-Bouhlel, confessed that his son had been showing signs of being depressed and lonely. Between 2002 and 2004, he suffered a mental breakdown and had to receive medical treatment. Mohamed suffered from clinical depression and had anger issues, expressed aggression towards his family which his father called "troubling behaviour of a psychopathic nature".²⁹

Eventually, he moved to France with his wife, where he got a job as a delivery man, and also became a father. Problems began when Bouhlel started being violent towards his wife. Calm, shy and a decent person, as described by the people who knew her, she asked for a divorce after an incident when, according to a family acquaintance "he defecated everywhere, cut up his daughter's teddy bear and slashed the mattress". Since then, the man moved away from his wife and settled alone in a separate apartment in a working-class neighbourhood of Nice.

Bouhlel was never religious. He drank alcohol, ate pork, took drugs and led an active sex life with multiple partners - both male and female. He also had issues with law, and at different times was reported for theft, and violent behaviour. At some point, one of these incidents resulted in him receiving a six-month suspended sentence.

Up until weeks before the tragic incident, Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel did not show any signs of Islamist radicalisation. The French authorities had not detected any ties to a jihadist movement or its members. A week before the attack, however, he grew a beard, justifying it on religious grounds. The authorities believe that Bouhlel's radicalisation happened as a result of another mental break-down; therefore, his actions may have been impulsive and his preparations hasty.

It was thought that a 2014 audio-message was spread by IS spokesmen which encouraged followers of the ideology to "manage by themselves" was the primary reason he

chose this approach. In the audio clip, a truck attack was suggested as a legitimate means for those who do not have the relevant networks, connections or capabilities to carry out a more sophisticated attack. Afterwards, however, some connections with Islamists were found: photos and chats retrieved from his phone detect communication with terrorist supporters and weapon suppliers, some of which he had known for at least a year. The loner had very well hidden his beliefs and intentions.³⁰

This could be why his family did not know of the danger or threat that he posed as a potential jihadist. They were very aware that he was a violent and unpredictable individual which they wanted to distance themselves from - for legitimate reasons - but they did not suspect the involvement in violent Islamism. They are a good example of how families could be better equipped and empowered to recognise the signs of radicalisation, and know when and how to report any suspicions to the appropriate authorities.

5.1.3 Case Study: 'The Paris Attacks' (November 2015), Abdelhamid Abaaoud

During the series of coordinated attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015, three suicide bombers blew themselves up outside of the stadium in Saint-Denis during a football match. Afterwards mass shootings and another suicide bombing happened at a number of cafes and restaurants of the city centre. One more shooting took place at Bataclan Theatre where a death metal concert was being performed. In total, the attacks resulted in 130 deaths, and more than 400 more people were injured.

Eleven men were identified as responsible; among them Abdelhamid Abaaoud was considered the leader. On 18 November, five days after the attack, the terrorist was found and killed by police.

Abdelhamid's father, Omar, had moved from Morocco to Belgium in 1975 following his father who went there to work as a coal miner. Omar was able to open a clothing

store in Molenbeek, a predominantly Muslim neighbourhood in Brussels. His business grew successfully which eventually gave decent opportunities for his family and his six children. His oldest, Abdelhamid, was born in 1987. He grew up in relative privilege and the opportunity of receiving good education. According to his family, up until he was radicalised, Abdelhamid was never religious and never attended the mosque.

His circle of friends was a particularly negative influence on the teenager. In his teenage years, he joined a local gang and committed a number of petty crimes well into his twenties. Among these friends were brothers Ibrahim and Salah Abdeslam, who would eventually become his accomplices in the Paris attacks. He also established contact with a Franco-Algerian jihadist, Mehdi Nemmouche.³¹

Omar Abaaoud believes his son got radicalised in 2013. This is when the first "red flag" emerged: Abdelhamid told his father he should stop educating his younger brother Younes in a European way, and promised he himself would give Younes a "Muslim education". At least twice, Abdelhamid travelled to Syria where he received training from terrorist jihadist groups there. Abdelhamid's influence on his brother turned out to be very strong, and in 2014 he recruited and radicalised him. The 13-year-old Younes eventually received a media nickname as "the youngest jihadi in the world". In 2018, it became known that Younes Abaaoud had died in the Iraqi-Syrian zone controlled by ISIS.

Abdelhamid himself explained his reasoning for his own radicalisation as follows: "it's not fun seeing blood spilled, but it gives me pleasure from time to time to see blood of the disbelievers run because we grew up watching the blood of Muslims being spilled in the whole world on TV."

However, for cases like Abaaoud's, Belgian counterterrorism official and academic Alain Grignard established a term "Islamised radicals" underlining the fact that religion played a role of excuse rather than the reason.

The family had lost contact with both sons while they were in Syria. Their sister Yasmina gave testimonies about phone calls the family received during that time. In those calls, unknown people told them Abdelhamid had been killed in a battle. She also claimed that her mother prayed for it to be true. However, it was not, and later on it emerged that those calls were used as a means to mislead investigators tracing Abdelhamid, who, with his companions, was in fact planning to carry out the November attacks.

After the tragic incidents happened and Abdelhamid was indeed killed, his father confessed it made him relieved. The father carried a deep disappointment and hatred towards his son; he considered him psychopath and devil. Omar joined a state prosecutor's case against Abdelhamid. He had to move back to Morocco and put his property in Brussels up for sale.

In this case, it was clear that the family knew of Abdelhamid's radicalisation, but were absolutely powerless to stop it. They had opportunities for dialogue with their son, but were not equipped with the tools and skills to engage with him at his level, nor were they able to help dissuade him from the attacks, nor could they prevent their other son (Younes) from being radicalised. Cases such as these highlight that giving parents the ability just to identify and report radicalised individuals is not enough; instead, it is vital that they know how to deal with various situations as they unfold.

5.1.4 Case Study: 'The Halle Synagogue Shooting' (October 2019), Stephan Balliet

The attack on a synagogue in the German city of Halle happened on 9 October 2019. In German newspapers it acquired the title of "the most horrible anti-Semitic act in Germany since the Second World War". On Yom Kippur, the Jewish holiday, an armed terrorist, Stephan Balliet, tried to enter the synagogue where more than fifty worshipers were celebrating their religious holiday. He had a camera attached to a helmet and was

livestreaming his attack to Twitch, a platform for online gaming and live streaming, akin to the Christchurch attacker 7 months earlier. The gun and the explosives he carried with him were both self-assembled. Having served in the German army, he had substantial experience with the use of small arms and combat tactics. Witnesses claim his handling of his weapon looked professional, as if he was properly trained.³²

Fortunately, his attempt to enter the synagogue failed, as he was not able to break the locked doors even after setting off his explosive.

Frustrated, the young man shot dead a 40-year-old lady who had happened to have been passing by him. Afterwards he attacked a kebab shop in front of the synagogue killing another person, and injuring two more. The video shows Balliet swearing at himself, calling himself a loser, a failure and an idiot. After he was shot by the police, Stephan apologised to his online audience for what he perceived to be a failed mission.

A week prior to the attack, Balliet had written and published online a "manifesto" which described his racist, anti-Semitic and violent views. It was written in English, which led Peter Neumann, a terrorism expert at King's College London to conclude that it was intended for a global audience online.

27-year-old Stephan Balliet was not known by the police, he had not participated in any cases related to extremism before. He was born in Eisleben, a village in the German region of Saxony-Anhalt, and was raised by both parents before their divorce when he was 14. He moved with his mother to Heldbra, another village around 30 km away from Halle, where he lived up until the attack. Not much is known about Stephan's relationship with his mother.

His father lived in Benndorf, which is just a five-minute ride from Stephan's house, so the young man kept in regular contact with his father. According to his father's testimonies, there was never a proper understanding between him and his son and they had lots of conflicts. In fact, they met the day before the attack - his father claimed that his son was frustrated and erratic.

Importantly, Stephan led an isolated lifestyle. He was obsessed with video games, spent most of his time with the computer, online, as his parents testified. Police claim that he was radicalised online, and he was not in personal contact with any right-wing extremist groups in person. He therefore adopted a white supremacist ideology purely through the Internet.

His trial is still ongoing at the time we write this toolkit.³³ He has refused to talk about his childhood in court, claiming it was personal and had nothing to do with his actions. Germany's chief federal prosecutor claims that the terrorist was trying to copy similar acts which had happened in the past and encourage others to follow his lead. If found guilty, he faces life imprisonment.³⁴

His case highlights two important aspects. The first is that personal relationships with parents, and between parents, may have a lasting and negative effect on children - that can make them especially vulnerable to extremist ideology. The second is that his unfettered access to the internet in this vulnerable state, with limited communication with his family and little oversight from them, meant that he could become radicalised without being noticed. If families are given the support they need to identify extremism and to establish closer, more familial bonds with their children, they have more capacity to confront and manage the situation early - preventing cases like these arising.

5.2 Practice Examples

5.2.1 The Family Counselling Centre Enerhaugen

Enerhaugen Family Counseling Centre was established in 2015 in Norway as a service to help families in crisis. It works with families whose members show signs of radicalisation or have become radicalised. It also provides therapeutic support for those whose children or siblings have committed crimes of an extremist character, or travelled to a conflict zone for reasons related to radicalisation. Among the practices of the centre are counselling, support, interventions, family therapy and follow-up of the relatives of the concerned person.

The Family Centre cooperates with municipalities and authorities, in particular the Norwegian Police Security Service, on the prevention of radicalisation and works closely with families personally. It is publicly financed and is, therefore, free at the point of access. Based in Oslo but providing its services for the whole country, the Family Counselling Centre is just one measure in the government's National Action Plan against radicalisation and extremism.

So far, the Centre has received good feedback from their users. In 2017, it organised a training session for all the other Family Counseling Centre offices of Norway, thereby widening their practice and exchanging experiences.

Contact details:

Enerhaugen familiekontor
Smedgata 49, 0651 Oslo, Norway
Margrethe Treider and Kirsti Foss
Margrethe.treider@bufetat.no
+47 466 16 496

5.2.2 The National Institute for Right-Wing Extremism and the Family

The National Institute was launched in Germany to help families whose children or other relatives have become involved in right-wing extremism or are at risk of becoming involved. It provides counselling for families as well as training and supervision for professionals who work with such families. Its collaboration with youth and social work structures and educational institutions is one of the main priorities. The main topics covered by the Institute in its research and practice are: the problem of neo-Nazism spreading among families, family socialisation and attitude formation, the effects of prejudice and discrimination on parents' behaviour with children, and legal issues surrounding child endangerment.

The program was launched in 2015. Among the results are a number of lectures, training modules and other educational materials created for NGOs, educators and families. The Institute produced a handbook which provides professionals with methodology and best practices in counselling of families and professionals who deal with right-wing radicalised individuals.

Located in Bremen, the organisation works nationwide. The training and educational centre is named Lidice-Haus, after a village in Czechoslovakia known for a tragic and brutal incident in 1942 when Nazi SS troops and the Wehrmacht committed a massacre there.

Contact Details:

LidiceHaus
Weg zum Krähenberg 33a 28201 Bremen
Lisa Hempel
hempel@lidicehaus.de
(0049) 0421/6927213
www.lidicehaus.de
www.rechtejugendliche-ratloseeltern.de

5.2.3 Formers and Families

Between 2011 and 2016, extensive research was carried out in the Netherlands, Denmark and the UK examining different types of extremism and the process of radicalisation. 30 former extremists from Islamist, far-right and far-left backgrounds were studied from a pedagogical perspective. The investigation revealed the role of families and socialisation in relation to value formation and the adoption of extreme ideologies. Questions of de-radicalisation and the empowerment of families within that space were researched as well.

The research revealed the role played by mothers was crucially influential. The connection with children that parents, and especially mothers, share is usually the last one to be severed, and the first one to be restored. This becomes an essential component in the de-radicalisation practice. Another important point is that parents find it extremely complicated to handle the control over the radicalisation process alone. This is why organisations which work with families on such issues are so crucial. Teachers, youth workers and NGOs play an important role here.

The organisation has produced videos presenting their insights for those individuals and organisations. It received positive professional feedback from Dutch experts and beneficiaries.

Contact Details:

Formers and Families
Saskia Tempelman
s.g.tempelman@nctv.minvenj.nl

5.2.4 Mothers' School

According to research, most often the process of radicalisation among youth can be detected by their mothers at an early stage. In 2012, the first Mothers School was founded. Its mission is to empower mothers, raising their awareness to the early signs of radicalisation in youth and equipping them with the tools for influencing their kids. Its approach is to implement a series of workshops for mothers where women discuss psychology, social factors, confidence-building, communication skills and ways of promoting values of peace, democratic and equality.

The feedback received after the students' graduations was positive. The women felt more in control over the pedagogical approaches to detect and counter extremist ideologies in their children. A number of positive examples and success stories were collected. The first Mothers School was initiated in Austria and launched in Tajikistan in 2012. Since then, the practice has been implemented in a number of countries in Africa, Asia and Europe - India, Pakistan, Tanzania, Indonesia, Nigeria and Austria, to name a few.

Contact Details:

Media Tower
Taborstrasse 1-3
1020 Vienna, Austria
Edit Schlaffer, Founder and Director
office@women-without-borders.org
(+43) 69918587699
www.women-without-borders.org

5.2.5 Families Against Violent Extremism (FAVE)

In 2018, Alexandra Bain, a professor of Islamic studies from Canada, launched her NGO, Families Against Violent Extremism (FAVE). Her connection with the issue is both professional and personal. A member of her own family had been radicalised and killed in Chechnya, Russia in 2004. Bain is very well aware that extremist recruitment is something that can affect any family.

FAVE is operated by volunteers. Their mission is to help families whose members got radicalised, exposed to extremism or are in danger of such. In particular, they work with a number of Canadian families whose relatives were held in Syria. The organisation provides counselling and help for families to contact social workers, mental health facilities or lawyers.

Families Against Violent Extremism welcomes volunteers to join the team and accepts donations.

Contact Details:

Alexandra Bain
fave.director@gmail.com
<https://favecanada.wixsite.com/website/contact>

5.2.6 The Manchester Attack Support Group Programme (MASGP)

MASGP is a program that was created after the Manchester bombing in 2017. It was established specifically for working in the context of the aftermath of the incident. Its mission is to offer help and counselling to the victims of the attack and their families.

A team of independent consultants and psychologists work to provide help in coping with trauma for individuals and their relatives affected by the bombing. Among the objectives of MASGP are strengthening social support networks, addressing radicalisation and polarisation, raising awareness to the prevention of extremism and establishing positive community dialogue.

The geographical scope of the program is Northern England and Scotland, where 15 regional groups work. They hold regular gatherings and carry out assessments and follow-ups.

MASGP has confirmed the effectiveness of tailored practices for supporting victims of this specific incident. The program benefits from the possibility of targeting a precise geographical location, and individualises its approach to help users in coping with a specified trauma.

Contact Details:

MASGP,
c/o P O Box 4495,
Coventry, CV3 9BQ
Dr. Anne Eyre
anne.eyre@traumatraining.com
(+44) (0)2476-505262
<https://manchesterattacksupport.org.uk/>

ENDNOTES

²⁸ Parveen, N., & Stephen, C. (2020). Where is the father of the Manchester Arena bomber?. Retrieved 18 August 2020, from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/mar/18/where-is-the-father-of-the-manchester-arena-bomber-ramadan-abedi-hashem>

²⁹ France 24. The Nice attacker's road to terror. (2016). Retrieved 18 August 2020, from <https://www.france24.com/en/20160718-nice-attackers-road-terror-Mohamed-Lahouaiej-Bouhlel>

³⁰ BBC News. Who was Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel?. (2016). Retrieved 18 August 2020, from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-36801763>

³¹ Graham, D. (2015). The Mysterious Life and Death of Abdelhamid Abaaoud. Retrieved 18 August 2020, from <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/11/who-was-abdelhamid-abaaoud-isis-paris/416739/>

³² Connolly, K. (2020). German suspect in deadly Halle synagogue attack blames refugees. Retrieved July 27, 2020, from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/21/german-man-goes-on-trial-for-deadly-halle-synagogue-shooting-stephan-balliet>

³³ Courbet, D. A. (2020). Man on trial for synagogue attack that shocked Germany - Europe. Retrieved July 27, 2020, from <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/283927>

³⁴ Eddy, M. (2020). Trial Begins in Germany Over Synagogue Attack on Yom Kippur. Retrieved July 27, 2020, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/21/world/europe/germany-synagogue-attack-trial.html>

