
Cyber-radicalization: Combating terrorism in the digital era

“The Internet is becoming the town square of the global village of tomorrow”. With these words Bill Gates, the principal founder of Microsoft Corporation, has assessed the endless opportunities the cyber space is currently offering to society, emphasizing on its power of connecting people and blurring geographical boundaries. The drastic advances in digital technologies and communication have acted as a foundation of modern society, by governing its dynamics and deflating concepts such as time and distance. Alongside with the Internet, mass media and social media outlets have facilitated the processes of globalization, removing any previously perceived barriers. Yet, the very same mechanisms, which have transformed our community and have catalyzed socio-economic and political movements, have also been recognized by terrorist organizations and exploited in the pursuit of their objectives. From the expansion of terrorist groups and their worldwide recruitment policies, it has become evident that the threat of terrorism is not restricted to its region of origin anymore. The mass use of Internet and social media has obscured the borders of extremism and has imposed an undeniable menace to global peace. Modern technologies have moved forward groups’ objectives and accelerated the process of radicalization. Information sharing has assisted in the dissemination of extremist beliefs across the globe at a faster pace and has appeared as an important tool in the radicalization of individuals and their subsequent recruitment as terrorists. Owing to the accessibility, availability, affordability, and wide reach of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and YouTube, extremist organizations have progressively taken advantage of these platforms to convey their agenda and achieve their goals.

This paper will describe the interlink between cyber space and radicalization through exploring the genesis of social media platforms and the operations of terrorist groups, which utilize them to advance their aims. It will examine the different layers of indoctrination and radicalization, relying on several theoretical foundations, highlighting their multiple roots, factors and stages. The paper will further illuminate the power and extensive reach of social media and will analyze why such applications are perceived as favorable platforms for the spread of radical ideas by extremist groups. It will draw parallels with the expansionist media strategy of the Islamic State (IS) and Al-Qaeda, in order to generate forecasts for the security implications of South Asian countries. It will analyze several case studies of ‘lone wolf’ terrorist attacks and incidents, which have been heavily influenced and made possible due to the presence and convenience of internet information channels. Finally, it will assess various strategies for countering the extremist narrative and put forward solutions for efficiently addressing the precarious nexus between digital technologies and terrorist radicalization. Overall, the paper will meticulously study the evolution of the terrorist propaganda machine, examine the employed terrorist practices, especially concerning online radicalization, and propose an integrated approach for tackling the issue from its root causes.

Theoretical Framework

Terrorism is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. It is a global challenge and its threat has increased since the tragic incident of 9/11. Since then the major role of global communication technologies in the perpetration of terrorist attacks, the manifestation of extremist views and the recruitment of individuals has come to the attention of criminal justice bodies, policy-makers, scholars and governmental officials. The strategic use of mass and social media outlets is taking a prominent part in the amphitheater of conflict. The distribution of certain '*terrorist narratives*' has underlined the necessity of generating counter-radicalization ones in order to ideologically overcome the issue. Nevertheless, the backbone of any counter-radicalization and counter-terrorism endeavors lies in understanding and rigorously analyzing the theoretical frameworks, which explain the radicalization phenomenon and subsequently the role of communication technologies in the genesis of violent extremism.

Multiple theoretical models that attempt to explain the factors leading to the radicalization of individuals have emerged from the fields of psychology, social and political sciences. The following section will review the already existing literature and look closely at several theories, which examine the origins and development of terrorism, capturing the different stages of indoctrination, radicalization and jihadization.

For example, Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, co-director and research fellow at the National Consortium for Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (NC-START), argue that radicalization processes should be divided into three sub-categories based on the factors, which attract individuals. These are *Micro-*, *Meso-* and *Macro-* factors. *Micro-* factors refer to individual grievances, such as personal victimization, perceived injustice, poverty, unemployment, discrimination and marginalization. Dr. Randy Borum, a forensic psychologist and professor in the Department of Mental Health Law and Policy at the University of South Florida, further elaborates using a four-stage model and explains how some people experience a certain **context**, where they go through particularly adverse and deleterious event. Then, during the second stage, **comparison**, their situation is juxtaposed with that of others, and thus deemed unjust. In the third stage, **attribution**, the individual assigns responsibility for his/her perceived injustice on a target person, group, nation or government. Second and third stages are recognized as the course of **indoctrination**. Lastly, in the fourth stage, **reaction**, the agent, on whom the blame has been imposed, is vilified in order for the individual to justify the subsequent aggression. This last stage is considered **extremism**. With the growing outrage and wrath against the enemy, others might also endorse the violent extremist ideology of the terrorist group. Therefore, by giving them legitimacy, some of those sympathizers would subsequently also engage in terrorist activities.

Meso- factors relate to group grievances and aspects affecting the community identity. People could join a radical group either through self-persuasion or through connection with others (friends, loved ones, family members, like-minded people). Groups often compare themselves with other groups in order to demonstrate injustice and establish us-versus-them mentality. This further generates strong cohesion, where members only trust each other. In

this context, group thinking appears as a very mighty force in leading an individual or a group to commit a terrorist attack.

Finally, *Macro*- factors refer to the major global aspects, which influence a group or an individual's decision-making and affect their performance and strategies. Typical examples are the globalization phenomenon, under which falls the utilization of the Internet and social media platforms. Radical groups take advantage of such communication technologies to further nourish the us-versus-them mentality.

Overall, the term '*radicalization*' could be summarized as the series of actions through which a person acquires a system of beliefs, which legitimizes the application of violence in order to bring about a desired political or social change.

ISIS and Al-Qaeda's Social Media Strategy

In the beginning of 2015, the American President Barack Obama, declared that terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State were using the Internet and social media platforms to radicalize and recruit young Muslims to their ranks:

"The high-quality videos, the online magazines, the use of social media, terrorist Twitter accounts – it's all designed to target today's young people online, in cyberspace."

His statement illustrates how terrorist groups are increasingly taking advantage of social media outlets to lure marginalized young individuals, indoctrinate them with extremist ideologies and encourage them to carry out terrorist operations, such as '*lone wolf*' attacks. Internet blogs, chat rooms and applications provide the practical skills and know-how to users, for whom the only necessity is to make a quick browsing or ask for additional information, and most likely also receive an immediate answer.

This could create a snowball effect, where the attitudes and behaviors of populations worldwide could be influenced with only one social media status update or a message, which transmits the information quickly and efficiently and connects a great number of users at a global scale. Such a dynamic environment creates a movement of like-minded people, where often a leader is not even needed, because once ideas and objectives are exchanged, individuals easily find supporters with whom to act.

One of the biggest pioneers in making great use of the Internet and recognizing the utility of social media platforms for terrorist purposes is the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Since its very establishment, the members of the extremist organization started taking advantage of online platforms to promulgate their ideology and foster others, especially young disaffected individuals, to support their cause, travel to the Middle East and participate in acts of terrorism. The group further encouraged sympathizers to engage in terrorist attacks in other places around the world, often through the dissemination of elaborate high-quality video propaganda, which glamorized their actions and constructed around them an aura of eminence and mightiness. Often the propaganda involved pictures and videos of dead children or fellow Muslims, in order to represent their fight as a holy war against the West or

any other force considered oppressive. Their success was additionally fueled by their ability of rebranding the whole Jihadi phenomenon and promote it as ‘cool’ - turning it into an appealing subculture through the use of online magazines, clothing, rap videos, memes, political humor and other trending currents, which intrigue the young audiences.

A study conducted by Colonel John M. Venhaus, a career psychological operations officer for the U.S. Army, who commanded the Joint Psychological Operations Task Force, gives another comparison with individuals joining the ranks of Al-Qaeda. According to him, young people often search for purpose after finding themselves utterly lost and confused.

“Al-Qaeda’s ability to turn them to violence is rooted in what each seeks: Revenge seekers need an outlet for their frustration, status seekers need recognition, identity seekers need a group to join, and thrill seekers need adventure”.

The terrorist group presents itself as the only path towards satisfying those needs, by providing a narrative, which appeals to their concerns. As a result, their media content is deliberately fashioned in a way, which exploits these yearnings. Videos on YouTube stress on romantic concepts of brotherhood, holy war, revolution and martyrdom in the struggle for an Islamist utopia.

Hence, Al-Qaeda attempts to give birth to a pan-Islamic identity using a revengeful, provoking and downtrodden narrative in which the Muslim community is under the constant threat of the West in order to augment its credibility in the minds of its target audiences.

According to Col. Venhaus: “Al-Qaeda uses terrorism as a ‘genre of symbolic communications’ rather than a military tactic. The psychological impact of the deed is more important than the physical results of the fight”.

Apart from being ideologically seductive and cunning, these groups have also emerged as highly innovative and entrepreneurial in terms of techniques of advertising themselves. One of ISIS's most successful ventures was the Arabic-language application for mobile devices called ‘*The Dawn of Glad Tidings*’, or simply ‘*Dawn*’, which for a while was available for download in Google and Apple App stores and allowed its followers to keep up with the latest activities of the group in real time. Downloading the app enabled ISIS to gain temporary control over the Twitter account of the user and post tweets on his behalf, the content of which was determined by a member of ISIS’s social-media operation team. The tweets included text, links, hashtags, and images, and the same content was re-tweeted by all the accounts signed up with the application. This ‘*Dawn*’ app is a vivid example of how ISIS succeeded in generating a considerable amount of traffic on Twitter and exploit the accounts of its users in order to expand the reach of its agenda.

Another notable example of the massive ISIS takeover of social media accounts is the infiltration and hacking of the Twitter and YouTube accounts of the US Central Command (CENTCOM) in the Middle East and South Asia following the terrorist attack on the Charlie Hebdo magazine. The hackers replaced the official profile’s avatar showing the American emblems with an image of a masked militant carrying the ISIS flag and the slogans “*CyberCaliphate*” and “*I love you ISIS*”. The account further shared messages, which

supported the objectives of the terrorist group and implied that ISIS militants have entered US military installations. The embarrassment, which stemmed from this form of cyber vandalism, was substantiated by the irony that simultaneously to the hacking, the President Barack Obama was delivering a speech in Washington on cyber security.

In September 2013, at least four militants of Al-Shabaab, a Somalia Al-Qaeda ally, perpetrated a terrorist attack in a shopping mall in Nairobi, which was live-tweeted on the social media platform. Although Twitter shortly after shut down the account, almost immediately another Twitter profile administered by those militants was created. A year after, in October 2014, the Twitter CEO Dick Costolo revealed how he and other Twitter employees have continuously received death threats from ISIS whenever they have tried to close down accounts connected to the extremist organization. What becomes evident is how terrorist groups are highly technologically savvy and often manage to outsmart the opponent, which leads to an infinite game of cat and mouse.

In addition to that, the two organizations have progressively sought to establish themselves and ascertain influence outside of the Middle East, particularly in South Asia. Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent and Islamic State have been supported and strengthened by the failure of South Asian States to deal effectively with the conditions within their own countries that give rise to Islamic fundamentalism. This implies that their social media propaganda, which targets fundamentalist and disenfranchised segments of society, will now be expanded to countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh.

ISIS especially has manifested an extremely transient and resilient control strategy, relocating from place to place as circumstances require or allow. Thus, the group cannot be simply vanquished physically; it must be vanquished as a concept. A successful counter terrorism strategy must defeat the psychological appeal of the terrorist brand by decomposing and removing the sentiments, which draw young individuals towards it.

[The South Asian Paradigm](#)

Nevertheless, ISIS and Al-Qaeda are not the only jihadist groups, which have resorted to the cyberspace to distribute their narrative or carry out terrorist operations. The radical online milieu is not in the hands of only one jihadist group; it comprises of a multitude of overlapping, and occasionally colliding, violent extremist opinions or beliefs, which eventually lead to the genesis of radicalized cyberspace. Therefore, this section will examine the underexplored topic of other terrorist groups operating in the region of South Asia, which use the Internet and various social media networks to polarize the society, create us-versus-them mentality, radicalize vulnerable individuals, recruit them and perpetrate terrorist attacks.

The region of South Asia has a strategic location from regional connectivity perspective and has a history in terms of political integration in relation to terrorism, which inevitably has grave repercussions for the stability of the entire world. Globalization has provided increased opportunities for South Asian terrorist groups and individuals to strike across greater distances against any external actors that they perceive as enemies.

According to the Global Terrorism Index, overall 75% of all terrorist attacks occur in 5 countries (Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Nigeria), and are perpetrated by 4 groups, which include Boko Haram, Al Qaeda, the Taliban and ISIS. 99.5% of all terrorist attacks take place in countries with armed conflicts or in situations where human rights or political rights are neglected or ignored.

Therefore, the growing radicalization in the Indian subcontinent does not come as a surprise, since the countries there have an extensive history of serious socio-economic and political issues, corruption, weak criminal justice system, unemployment, and oppression of free speech. The youth's frustration and discontent often stems from the governments' failure to provide the basic living conditions, and the internet has emerged as a convenient milieu for expressing their dissatisfaction, asking questions and seeking answers. For instance, Facebook has proven to be the most used platform for connecting people, which also has been recognized by terrorist organizations as a suitable gateway for sharing their extremist narrative and technological knowhow in closed groups or pages. Another example, in November 2015, the Islamic State online magazine '*Dabiq*' gave a list of its future planned attacks in Bangladesh in an article titled '*The Revile of Jihad in Bengal*'.

Yet, apart from the purposes of radicalization and dissemination of propaganda, platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have been callously exploited by terrorist organizations as mechanisms for sharing intelligence and countering the efforts of law enforcement bodies to detect them. One prominent example is the opportunistic utilization of social media platforms during the Mumbai 2008 attacks by its perpetrators. In November 2008, a group of young men from the terrorist organization Lashkar-e-Taiba attacked numerous parts of the city of Mumbai. The attacks were considered egregious and unprecedented since the attackers exercised a mixture of various different tactics such as coordinated bomb explosions, open gunfire, hostage taking and arsons. The attacks took place between 26 and 29 November, and resulted in the deaths of 164 people and injuring of 308. The terrorists were using social media to their advantage in order to send and receive information in real time, watch how the events were unfolding, make decisions of where and how to conduct their attacks, and whom to kill with precision. They were monitoring the social media activity of civilians, who were tweeting the movements of the police, which in return helped them decrease the effectiveness of the operational plans of the law enforcement. Citizens who were hiding were using their social apps in order to inform friends and relatives about their state and to understand what was going on. The terrorists were reviewing these social media applications and if those who were hiding revealed their locations, they were targeted by the attackers.

The Mumbai 2008 attacks portray how terrorist groups are increasingly using cyber platforms for the purposes of operational communication, information sharing and intelligence gathering. Another example how the introduction of information technologies in South Asia has transformed the nature of the ongoing warfare, is the emergence of the so-called '*WhatsApp warriors*' in the region of Jammu & Kashmir. Whenever terrorists are barricaded in certain premises and security forces attempt to cordon off the area, these terrorists use WhatsApp groups to send messages to supporters in the neighborhood, explaining to them how they have been encircled and that a battle is imminent and inevitable. They encourage

youngsters to come out, disrupt the security operation by pelting stones and creating havoc, and eventually help them flee. Hence, terrorists exploit young disillusioned people and use them as human shields in order to prevent their own apprehension by the security forces. Many of these youngsters join those groups and engage in stone pelting under social duress.

As SP Vaid, the Director General of the Jammu & Kashmir police service, has argued: *“Social media is creating havoc here in Kashmir, it is being used by Pakistan to brainwash the children”*.

Although the indignation and disgruntlement on behalf of terrorists against the State of India in Jammu & Kashmir is decades old, the proliferation of social media networks appears as a dire new aspect in the fight with terrorism in the region. As a response, in April 2017 the State government of India declared a suspension of social media in the Kashmir Valley. More than 20 social media platforms were shut down, yet youngsters were soon back online using VPNs (virtual private networks), which increase the confidentiality and privacy of the user.

Terrorists in Jammu & Kashmir are further using the cyberspace to attract youngsters to join their ranks by playing upon their vulnerabilities. According to Ayesha Siddiq, a Pakistani military scientist, author, political commentator and Research Associate at the SOAS South Asia Institute, *“It’s a fight which is now being carried out by media. What was Burhan Wani actually doing? It wasn’t firing his gun. He was basically very vocal: arousing sentiments and encouraging people his age to come out into the street, to pelt stones and completely frustrate the security establishment”*.

In another example from March 2018, ISIS terrorist from the Balochistan province in Pakistan, Imran alias Saif-ul-Islam, was arrested by the Pakistani Federal Investigation Authority (FIA) in Karachi, after being found grooming young girls through social media platforms, such as Telegram, to preach the ideology of ISIS and join the terrorist organization. The arrested terrorist was the administrator of an Internet page, which was operated from a location somewhere on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

Lone Wolf Attacks

Although recruiting members is one of the major objectives of terrorist groups, whenever proximity does not allow it, extremist organizations manipulate the digital space in order to encourage people to perpetrate ‘lone wolf’ attacks. ‘Lone wolf terrorism’ stands for the violent activities of an individual who prepares and commits extremist acts alone, outside of a command structure and without the material support of a group. Nevertheless, those individuals are often influenced by the ideology of a certain extremist group and act in support of it.

For example, in September 2008, Hamaad Munshi, at the age of 16, declared *“Britain’s youngest terrorist”* was found guilty of possessing materials related to plotting a terrorist attack. Munshi was a member of a British group of ‘online jihadists’ who were sharing extremist videos online and planned to travel to Pakistan in order to die as ‘martyrs’. His brother subsequently joined the ranks of ISIS.

Khuram Shazad Butt, one of the perpetrators of the 2017 London Bridge attack, during which eight people were killed and 48 were injured, was a Pakistani-born British citizen, who was also inspired by ISIS YouTube propaganda.

The perpetrators of the 2015 San Bernardino attack, in which 14 people were killed and 22 others were seriously injured, were also from Pakistani descent and allegedly radicalized over several years by consuming violent extremist information from the internet, expressing a commitment to jihadism and martyrdom in private messages to each other. In a December 2015, English-language broadcast, ISIL referred to the perpetrators as "*soldiers of the caliphate*", implying the couple had been supporters of their cause.

In another case, in June 2016, Omar Mateen, a 29-year-old security guard from Afghan origin, killed 49 people and injured 53 others in a terrorist attack in a nightclub in Orlando, Florida, United States. In a police-call shortly after the shooting began, Mateen swore allegiance to the leader of ISIS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, arguing that the US killing of Abu Waheeb in Iraq the previous month, motivated the attack.

During the FBI investigation of the 2016 New York and New Jersey bombings, the attacker Ahmad Khan Rahimi, who was a native Afghan, was also found to have been influenced by the extremist Islamic ideology espoused by Al-Qaeda.

These examples illustrate how with the development of digital technologies sympathizers of jihadist ideologies do not have to be in contact with terrorist organizations, since they can get radicalized remotely and commit attacks without even entirely understanding the underlying motives of the terrorist organization in question. Terrorist organization such as ISIS might be indeed losing grip in some of their biggest strongholds, yet they still hide one strong card up their sleeve: the power of social media.

[Countering Social Media Radicalization: Strategies](#)

The current overview shows there is a pressing need for a multi-faceted approach coupled with synchronized media literacy strategies to effectively counter radicalization among vulnerable populations. It is pivotal for the mainstream public to gain a thorough understanding about social media's role in the radicalization process, and the challenges and successes on combating radicalization without compromising Internet related freedoms. The development of competent and comprehensive media literacy tools needs to be considered a vital strategy against youth radicalization since mass media today plays a significant role in forging social representations, conditioning perceptions and shaping people's attitudes and behaviors. Understanding about the dangers of social media and the Internet is crucial - both to identify the signs of indoctrination and to respond accordingly.

Furthermore, existing theories of radicalization need to be integrated in the development of counter-terrorism strategies, which attempt to identify and prevent growing extremism. One such strategy is the introduction of a counter-narrative in the digital space that subverts and counters every facet of the extremist narrative, more specifically the religious, social, political, historical, psychological and economic aspects. However, crafting the '*right*' message will not

simply solve the problem. Far from being simply stories or rhetorical tools for the dissemination of information, narratives are socially constructed – they are born during social interactions and carry the purport of the social network. Narratives are knitted by personal experiences and a person’s understanding of the world around him. Narratives do not exist in a vacuum: They are constantly recreated by the individuals who belong to that social network. Therefore, conveying a counter-extremism message, without having the right network to re-convey it, will be futile. Social media platforms indeed have the power of sharing and promoting a counter-extremist narrative, yet they need to target the correct network, which will respond to it. Telling terrorists, they need to suspend any terrorist actions, might serve only a minute minority, however, aiming at their non-radical network, might alter the narrative of their own extremist network and slowly change their identity.

Critical thinking and reading become essential skills in the fight with extremist content online. Digital literacy classes must be promoted especially among the youth in order to encourage their analytical thinking and critical media content analysis. Considering the omnipresence of the internet, people will inevitably stumble across questionable or upsetting materials, however it is the attitude to those materials which will define their actions – whether they will engage with it or report it.

The reason for that is the current inefficacy of social media censorship policies. Although communication networks have crafted various policies for suppressing extremist or hate speech online, often the suspension of accounts or elimination of violent content takes place after the materials have been already uploaded and reached hundreds of people. In addition to that, like the cutting off of a Hydra’s head - with the closure of one account, multiple others arise. Nevertheless, regulating the cyberspace while not jeopardizing one’s online liberties should still remain a major priority for governments.

Yet, taking down websites, filtering materials and other forms of blocking online content bear several hurdles. Not only democratic governments are wary of the political repercussions and potential loss of legitimacy if the internet is censored, but they might not be even in a position to achieve that. If the website is hosted outside the country, the government might not be in a position to exercise authority over the hosting company. In any case, such measures often imply huge financial costs and considering the immensity of the cyberspace, it is not realistic to expect that all potentially radicalizing content would be removed from the internet, or at least not on time.

Therefore, this paper argues that suspension of extremist websites should indeed take place alongside with legal measures in order to send a message to terrorist groups that cyberspace does not prevent them from facing the iron fist of justice; yet, there must be a greater focus on the promotion of comprehensive media literacy strategies and online content analysis, since takedowns of websites and prosecution of terrorist deal with the symptom, not with the cause.

One of the cardinal strategies in preventing radicalization online is discrediting the image of terrorist organizations and discouraging individuals who pursue membership and affiliation. Such efforts should expose the treacherous narrative of extremist outfits and impeach their

authority in the eyes of those who seek to join their ranks. This could happen by publicly depicting their activities as inglorious and despicable. The ugly truth of fighting for a lost cause and having an undignified death must be conspicuously manifested in order to dissuade potential supporters.

Civil society organizations should also use social media platforms to reach out disenfranchised young individuals and tackle the grievances, which lead to their subsequent recruitment and exploitation; communication networks should be on the frontlines of any counter-extremism programs.

Schools, universities and other educational establishments could play an essential role by developing a curriculum, which would equip children and young people with the necessary skills and tools for dealing critically with extremist propaganda. In order to reduce the appeal of terrorist groups, users' ability to analyse and evaluate online content must be strengthened. By far, efforts at promoting media literacy have been concentrated only on issues related to child abuse and sexual exploitation; therefore, there is a pressing need of broadening the scope of such strategies, since youth radicalization is a progressively growing phenomenon and the internet has emerged as one of the key instruments of religious indoctrination in the terrorist toolbox. Such educational classes would encourage young people to think critically vis-à-vis extremist messages: to question and compare sources of information; to undertake independent and objective online research; to learn how to detect propaganda, censorship, and bias; and to examine texts, audio and visual information which could be radical and provoking, in order to establish a framework that reaffirms their positive values, strengthen their respect for human rights, social justice, mutual understanding and peace.

Conclusion

Given the multiplicity of drivers of radicalization, countering violent extremism appears as a complex venture. The phenomenon has even aggrandized due to the exploitation of outstanding characteristics of the current interconnected world, such as the availability of digital technologies. Consequently, extremist activities have become harder to detect and predict, making traditional law enforcement techniques alone insufficient to deal with these trends, particularly in relation to tackling the root causes of the problem. Therefore, with the rise of terrorist incidents related to online radicalization, generating counter-narratives and promoting media literacy strategies appears vital to the protection of human rights, freedom of expression, universal access to information and intercultural dialogue.

The intricate media and information landscape are in need of critical minds in the public in order to continue to serve its purpose properly. More attention should be paid to critical online content analysis in order to strengthen young people's safeguarding mechanisms vis-à-vis extremist messages.

Whatever one's mind consume, has a direct impact on their life. Therefore, young people should be encouraged, especially those highly susceptible to radicalization, to deflate the heroic narrative of Islamic jihad produced by terrorist groups, question the origins and

intentions of the information they read online, gain theoretical basis and practical skills in recognizing signs of radicalization and preventing its spread, and leverage the influential role of communication technologies to promote the inclusive and egalitarian civic engagement online and offline in their pluralistic societies.

The narrative based on propaganda, willful misinterpretation and lies used by terrorist organizations, can only be countered by a counter-narrative based on truth and facts.



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