Youth Violent Radicalisation: European Realities

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What are my goals?

- Inform about the current challenges and opportunities in the European context – the educative part
- Challenge by introducing a new approach to dealing with the issue – the dodgy part
- Learn from a case study – the debating part
My Claim

The road that we have taken for security policy and practice in Europe and internationally is leading to further division and the erosion of our societal values.

This is by no coincidence
My argument

We are in a democratic deficit perpetuated by a number of challenges such as the economic downturn, fears of security, nationalism and the continuous marginalisation of the disempowered.

To maintain this deficit, control is exercised through fear:

✓ Security terror (terrorism & radicalisation)
✓ Financial terror (financial crisis)
✓ Identity terror (nationalism)
My assumption

There is an alternative vision for social cohesion that is built from the bottom up and in partnership with the powerful

As we explore new avenues, I ask:
✓ How?
✓ What is the role of society?
✓ What is my role?
✓ What is yours?
KEEP CALM AND BE PREPARED
How secure is our world today?
The new reality
Lets take a step back – how did we get here in the first place in Europe?

The ideologies that provide inspiration for extremist groups (see London, Brussels, Paris, Madrid, Manchester)

- religious inspired extremism
- left wing
- anarchist
- right wing
- nationalist and separatist ideologies
The new global face of terror since September 11

1. Terrorists are no longer seen to be acting alone. Terrorist powerful networks do exist.
2. The use of weapons of mass destruction is possible including nuclear and biological weapons
3. Terrorism as an act cannot be confined by time, place or nation.
The actual reality – kindness in the community
The actual reality – kindness in you and me

Over 1,000 phone calls were made within ten minutes of the first plane hitting Twin Towers. Some of the people who lost their lives that day were able to send one last message to the outside world. From flight attendants to World Trade Centre employees, firemen to the terrorists themselves:

“*You gotta think positive, because you gotta help each other get off the floor*”

“Hi baby. You have to listen to me carefully. I’m on a plane that’s been hijacked ... I want to tell you that I love you. Please tell my children that I love them very much”

“There’s three guys, they’ve hijacked the plane... we’re turned around and I heard that there’s planes that have been flown into the World Trade Centre. I hope to see your face again, baby. I love you. *Bye.*”
Yes, really!

... but before we make such a claim, I must ask:

✓ Who is the “victim”?  
✓ Who is the “offender”?  
✓ Can we afford to be kind?  
✓ Is kindness going to take us anywhere else?
The five victims of terror

- **Primary victims**: those who have been victimised physically

- **Collateral victims**: those who have witnessed the attack and are not physically wounded, but still might suffer from traumatic consequences

- **Secondary victims**: family members (relatives) and those who are very close (intimate friends, close colleagues, etc.) to the primary victims

- **Tertiary/ vicarious victims**: those who feel affected and concerned by what happened (the ‘public’)

- **The forgotten victims**: the relatives of the offenders and their community. They are terrified by what their son/brother/neighbour has done and they fear undergoing ‘collateral’ stigmatisation.
The target

- The essential victim (target) is the vicarious victim i.e. the public

- Attack = terrifying message -> to the public -> to disturb social life

- Making physical/ primary victims is just the tool/ message generators

- Achieving such high impact on the whole community is possible only through the help of the media, the message transmitters

- Without modern media, terrorism in its modern form would probably not exist.
The why

- The micro-level (the ‘vulnerability’ of youth)
- The meso-level (the supportive or even complicit social surround)
- The macro-level (the radicalisation of a part of the relevant public opinion).
The vulnerability of the young European and how to respond to it

- Vulnerability is defined as “the quality or state of being exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally”

- The conditions that have the greatest influence on vulnerability have a relational basis

- How we deal with vulnerability determines the nature of our relationships. Research suggests that those who experience vulnerability but feel they are worthy of loving and belonging have strong relationships.
Respond with empathy

“Where individual wrong doers are confronted within a continuum of respect and support, then a process of reintegration can begin’.
John Braithwaite

"If the hijackers had been able to imagine themselves into the thoughts and feeling of the passengers, they would have been unable to proceed. It is hard to be cruel once you permit yourself to enter the mind of your victim. Imagining what it is like to be someone other than yourself, is at the core of our humanity. It is the essence of compassion, and it is the beginning of morality”.
Ian McEwan
Empathy & the possibilities

✓ Em (in) – pathy (πάθος) = πόνος = pain (sharing the pain)

✓ Sym (with) – pathy (πάθος) = συμπωνώ (observing/acknowledging the pain)
Empathy & the possibilities

Terrorists meeting the children or family members of their victims many years later:

- Colombia (Bueno, 2013)
- The Israel-Palestinian conflict and in other examples described in Staiger [2010]
The theories and ubuntu (restorative justice)

✓ The pre-existence of a “social liaison” (Gavrielides, 2005; 2016)
✓ We derive our identity from being with others – African concept of “ubuntu” (restorative justice)
✓ “I exist because you exist”
✓ Dialogue that focuses on ‘harm’ rather than ‘blame’ is likely to strengthen relationships and reduce vulnerability
✓ Stronger relationships are likely to deter violent extremism.
Back to … the European reality

✓ The institutional context/ European criminal justice systems

✓ The political context – the rhetoric of safety (e.g. “refugee crisis”)

✓ The societal context – an eye for an eye

✓ The financial context – European financial crisis/ value for money
The role and the limitation of restorative justice

• The educative role of restorative justice

• Its contribution to strengthening the fabric of our societies

• Reforming the real terrorist within
Where do we go from here?

✓ The law alone cannot bring social justice!
✓ It is through the result of millions of small actions that we change *status quo*.
✓ The role of civil society has long been underestimated and it is now becoming clearer that without the NGOs, movements and campaigns that comprise it, governments and other vessels of power would not be held to account.

**Disadvantage thinking vs positive thinking**

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Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union
It is already happening!
The foundations of positive thinking

✓ People are not “risks” to manage
✓ People “at risk” have talents and it is those that we need to target for nurturing – not the “offender”! (Good Lives Model)
✓ Europe needs the hopes and ideals of young people more than ever. This cannot be a mere statement of intent and theory, but one of genuine and proactive action.
The user led model of social action projects

If “Youth-led” policy is constructed through youth-led research methods, then by default its content will be informed by the lived experiences of its target group.

However, this cannot be achieved without learning to share power with young people.
A European case study: The Youth Empowerment & Innovation Project (Erasmus KA3)

YEIP’s aim is to construct a policy measure that will help enhance social cohesion and prevent violent radicalisation of young people in Europe. To this end, it will construct evidenced-based tools (YEIP PREVENT model, toolkit, training programme) that will allow the delivery of direct interventions in 4 different environments that will be evaluated prior to rolling out the policy measure. To ensure that our results are translated into policy making at a national level, we put together a partnership of 7 EU member states consisting of:

- **1 Public Authority per country** that would be able to take strategic leadership in the Call’s area of PT7
- **1 Researcher per country** that would carry out in an independent and robust manner the action research/ field trials, while acting as the main point of contact between the Coordinator and the given Public Authority
- **2 examples of Target Groups** with practical expertise to ensure user engagement.
Steps for IARS model of youth-led research for policy

✓ **Step 1:** Relinquish power and remove hats
✓ **Step 2:** Reach out widely and recruit diverse groups with others
✓ **Step 3:** Empower through ad hoc and tailored accredited training that is flexible and adjustable to young people’s needs as these are defined by their diverse lives
✓ **Step 4:** Facilitate discussions on current topics that need change
✓ **Step 5:** Coordinate their action research and support to write evidence based solutions through peer reviewed processes (Youth Voice Journal), websites, social media, campaigns, videos, posters and other means that reach young people
✓ **Step 6:** Support the evaluation, monitoring, project management and control of all previous steps through youth-led tools and a standing Youth Advisory Board
✓ **Step 7:** Reward and accredit.
What is most challenging & innovative in YEIP?

- The project methodology which will be youth-led impacting on project management, evaluation, quality control but also research methods and content analysis and dissemination.
- The project scientific (state-of-the-art) and practical (implementation and validation) results which will
  - Move away from the RNR model and towards the GLM positive approach to dealing with radicalisation
  - Drill down into the realities of eight case study EU members in a multi-disciplinary way and with the intention of upscaling the YEIP policy measure locally, nationally but also EU wide
  - Create social action opportunities for young people across Europe and bring them closer to EU institutions increasing social cohesion.
European Social Policy impact indicators

Local, National, European levels target audiences:

✓ Professionals and volunteers from NGOs and public services working with young people at risk of radicalisation, exclusion and violence
✓ Educational providers (teachers, university staff, non-formal educational providers, schools)
✓ Decision makers and policy makers at the participating countries
✓ Local universities and research institutes
✓ The media for the purposes of increasing awareness about the project and its practical results.

Indicators at the EU level

➢ Support and help deliver the Youth Strategy’s aim of preventing social inclusion of young people and by mitigating the risks that lead to their radicalization
➢ Complement and help deliver Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy by focusing on young people with fewer opportunities and by paying particular attention to issue of gender, migration and socio-economic status.
➢ Integrate with the EU agenda on security and the further measures against radicalization presented by the EC in June 2016.

Indicators at the national level x 7 countries
Share power and this will allow young people from all walks of life to construct their own philosophies. This is not a conclusion based on a hunch but one that is founded in a number of theories including the constructivist philosophy of learning (Brooks & Brooks 1993), which asserts that students construct meaning for themselves.

If power and with it responsibility are shared, then young people will be left to develop their much needed autonomy.

However much money is thrown by the EU, the Council of Europe, government, trusts and donors for new policies, good schooling, textbooks, volunteering programmes, different curricula, improved parenting or even affirmative action schemes it won’t help address the real issues faced by young people and the widening gap between the powerful and powerless.
Thank You!

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