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RADICALISATION, VIOLENT EXTREMISM, AND TURKEY'S FIGHT



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RADICALISATION, VIOLENT EXTREMISM, AND TURKEY'S FIGHT

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PREFACE

Radicalization and violent extremism has gradually and consistently occupies a much greater space in the literature on security studies for all good reasons. They threaten not only people's lives, national and regional stability and states' monopoly over the use of violence as a key pillar of statehood, but they also pose dangers for universal values of tolerance, the ability to coexist, pluralism and respect for differences. Regardless of the mindset to which terrorist groups refer in order to justify their cause, the grievances of the victims of their inhumane terror attacks go unchanged.

In order to cope with radicalization and violent extremism more effectively, this study seeks to have a better grasp of existing conceptualisations, approaches, models, and also gaps in the literature. Without having a clear idea about the basic concepts, confronting these phenomena in a cooperative way will be a difficult task. Considering the fact that neither radicalization nor violent extremism can be attributed to a particular religion, ideology or value system and different forms actually feed into each other, it is obvious that we need to have a comprehensive and holistic approach which avoids overemphasizing a particular form. Turkey, with its decades of experience of dealing with different forms of radicalization and violent extremism from far-left to ethno-separatist and religiously-motivated ones, is a perfect case to show these different faces of radicalization and violent extremism. Therefore, this research will have a closer look at Turkey's fight over decades against different terrorist groups along with its more recent efforts to tackle this serious challenge, also providing some success stories and good practices that could be utilised in other cases by other actors.

In this research, ORSAM Visiting Researcher Dr.Göktuğ Sönmez provides a comprehensive discussion about radicalization and violent extremism and their different forms along with his own models and conceptualisations. Following that a historical account of Turkey's fight against radicalisation and violent extremism will be presented. Lastly, some of the country's recent efforts from several socio-economic steps to counter-messaging efforts and from youth projects to the military steps including the more recent Euphrates Shield Operation will be mentioned.

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ABSTRACT

Radicalisation and violent extremism has been posing great challenges at the national, regional, and international levels. In order to address these phenomena, it is essential to make sense of them by having a closer look at the drivers of radicalisation and push and pull factors. Considering the socio-political as well as economic and security-related factors which are also subject to occasional changes due to the shifting and fluctuating dynamics on the ground, understanding this phenomenon requires a comprehensive analysis. Accordingly, fighting them necessitates a comprehensive, clear, and flexible road map that is applied not only at the national but also regional and international levels. Turkey, on its part, has been fighting radicalisation and violent extremism for decades through its struggle against different violent extremist groups with ideological, ethnic-separatist, and religious references. In this paper, after analysing the major driving factors and conceptualisations related to radicalisation and violent extremism, Turkey's experience, its current efforts to tackle these threats including social measures, active participation in international efforts and information sharing, and cross-border military activities will be discussed. The steps required to improve Turkey's own capability along

with the ones that need to be taken by its international partners would be briefly touched upon in the conclusion.

Turkey, due to its geographical position neighbouring Syria and Iraq, its long land border, and cross-border transitivity, has been a major country affected by radicalisation of different actors. Turkey has a long experience of fighting radicalisation and violent extremism stemming from its fight with ASALA and DHKP-C in the past. The country still fights PKK, DAESH, and DHKP-C. In the post-Cold War era, first with the Gulf War, then to improve the effectiveness of its fight against PKK, and then in the aftermath of the Iraq War of 2003, Turkey increasingly revised its economic and political relationship with the Middle East and engaged more deeply with it. This new atmosphere enabled Turkey to directly affect the developments in the region. As a consequence, at the same time this new positioning made Turkey an actor that can be easily affected by those developments directly or indirectly. Relatedly, PKK and DAESH attacks which can be regarded as acts of transboundary terrorism have been the primary security issues requiring effective and urgent mea-

tures. In this report, first the literature on radicalisation will be discussed referring to main conceptualisations, push and pull factors. It will be followed by a discussion on some common ways to fight radicalisation. After that, different dimensions of Turkey's fight and its performance so far with numerical data will be presented.

Radicalisation: Conceptualisations, Main Motivations and How to Fight Them

Conceptualisations

Radicalisation is defined by the European Commission as "a process where an individual's beliefs move from being relatively mainstream to seeking a drastic change in society. Radicalisation does not necessarily mean these people will become violent. But once an individual decides that terror and violence are justified to achieve ideological, political, or social change, he/she has become a violent extremist." (European Commission, 2017).

In line with this promising definition and further elaborating on the concept, in this study, radicalisation is defined as a process of ideational transformation. In this process, the individual rigidly distances itself from alternative ideas and opinions and came to regard the group with which he/she affiliates as "us" and the groups and individuals that come up with alternative approaches as "them". Besides rigidly clarifying his/her own position in this way, the process of radicalisation dons the individual with the idea that all alternative approaches are bad, twisted, distorted etc. and they are the enemies against which fighting is necessary and even obligatory even if they are not actively promoting

their views or directly challenging his/her group and/or ideas.

The process of radicalisation can occur either via conventional or social media activities of radical groups as well as through individual contacts. The actors that manage this process of disseminating propaganda underlines the legitimacy of their own ideational positioning and thus, run the process of "affirmation". Moreover, they also do "image sharpening" regarding the "enemy" and run a process of "negation" with respect to the legitimacy of the idea/group/individual which they regard to be on the opposing front.

The process of radicalisation can be reinforced by the current developments in the region(s)/country(s) where the individual lives, subsequent grievances stemming from these developments, socio-economic difficulties, exclusion from socio-economic and/or political system, marginalization, and the feeling of nostalgia about the eras before major traumas. Historical or current enmities both provide a narrative beyond time and give the feeling that the movement is not a temporary reaction. Such enmities also deepen the image of enemy and strengthen in-group ties and keep their members under discipline.

Both structural factors (**push factors**) and individual ones (**pull factors**), therefore, work together in the process leading up to radicalisation. Some key enabling factors such as having access to online radical groups over social media, connections with radical figures in person or being part of social networks funding or facilitating extremism also needs to be analysed in depth in order to devise effective counter strategies.

<p>Structural motivators /Push factors</p>	<p>Repression, corruption, unemployment, inequality, discrimination, a history of hostility between identity groups, external state interventions in the affairs of other nations</p>
<p>Individual incentives/Pull factors</p>	<p>Sense of purpose, adventure, belonging, need for acceptance, status, material enticements, fear of repercussions from violent groups, expected rewards in the afterlife.</p>
<p>Enabling factors</p>	<p>Extremist mentors (extremist religious figures, right or left-wing charismatic leaders), access to extremist online communities, social networks with VE associations, access to weaponry or other relevant items, lack of state influence, an absence of family support</p>

(Khalil and Zeuthen, 2016)

The ideational background of a radical group can be derived from any ethnic, ideological, religious, sectarian or philosophical basis. The concept of radicalisation can be defined as “being positioned in the extreme point of any ideology in such a way that freedom of expression of opposing views and approaches and right to live for the people affiliated with them can be targeted”. Therefore, any group affiliated with ideological, ethnic, religious, etc. references conforming to this pattern can be named as being radical. From IRA to ETA, and to ASALA, DHKP-C, Al-Qaeda, Boko-Haram, Al-Shabaab and DAESH, history shows that radicalisation cannot be explained by focusing on a single particular ideational context or basis and thus cannot be attributed to a single motivation or value system. For instance, Turkey, with its struggle against ethnic, ideological, and religious radicalisation and violent extremism, has been a major target of multiple forms of radicalisation.

Extremism and radicalisation similarly opposes the established value systems and principles of the society (Borum, 2011). At the particular point where the process of radicalisation proceeds and results in a criminal activity, there appears the need to draw a clear line regarding this tipping point. Where this cognitive positioning moves further and steps into the realm of armed struggle, this process turns into a criminal activity and security forces and law-enforcement bodies as well as law-

makers became key actors in the struggle in this further stage. This further stage is referred to as **violent extremism (VE)**. Violent extremism is “The use of and support for violence in pursuit of ideological, religious or political goals.” (European Commission, 2017). VE, along with the obvious dimension of directly being part of an attack, also covers the efforts that support, legitimise, and encourage such attacks or violent acts. In the “lifecycle of radicalisation” devised by the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF), this journey of an individual was investigated and the possibility of a radical individual who can in time either directly involve or provide operational support for armed acts was also focused on (Yalçinkaya, 2014; Yalçinkaya, October 2015).

Radicalisation and violent extremism have used different ideational references and presented themselves in various forms in different geographies throughout the history. They also succeeded in transforming, producing and re-producing themselves, giving way to an important concept, namely the concept of Foreign Terrorist Fighter (FTF). United Nations Security Council’s resolution 2170 in 2014 was an important attempt to define and address the concept. The resolution focuses on Al-Qaeda and DAESH only within the context of the FTF phenomenon. UNSC 2178 of the same year, however, broadened the scope of the former. In the UNSC 2178, the concept of FTF is defined as “indi-

viduals who travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict” (UNSC 2178 -http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/docs/2015/SCR%202178_2014_EN.pdf). With this effort to broaden the scope of the definition, it was expected to be used as a mile-

stones document to monitor and prosecute more effectively both terrorist groups from al-Shabaab to Boko Haram and from DAESH to YPG and recruited people joining these groups from abroad.

According to UNSC 2178, the points regarding which countries need to take necessary measures are listed as follows:

- The disarmament of FTFs and prevention of their participation in all armed conflicts and terrorist attacks,
- The obligation of countries to provide passenger information to their airlines for the identification of the designated terrorists in the UN list,
- To avoid FTFs' to militarize, organize, travel, equip, be financed for their travel, and carry out terror attacks
- Having required legal regulations to prosecute these people and activities:
 - Their own citizens and others travelling in the country for the purpose of terrorism,
 - Its citizens who collect funds or make preparations for FTFs' travels,
 - Institutions that are deliberately helping such travels in their country or their citizens facilitating it,
- To prevent the entry or transit passages of individuals who are believed to be traveling for terrorist purposes,
- International and regional co-operation with other countries, including information sharing to prevent FTF travel
- The need to comply with existing obligations relating to co-operation in criminal investigations linked to terrorism,
- The need for INTERPOL to concentrate its efforts to respond to FTF threat,
- To assist other countries to build capacity to address FTF threat

Since 2011, around 30,000 people travelled to Iraq and Syria as FTFs to join DAESH from many different countries. Considering the fact that around 6,000 of them came from the West, it is clear that the idea of a single analytical scheme applicable to all FTFs is unrealistic (Kirk, 2016). Therefore, the next section will focus on some particular motivations and push and pull factors that play important roles in the radicalisation of an individual/ a group as well as pushing them towards VE.

Main Motivations and How to Fight Them

Even though each and every case related to radicalisation, violent extremism, and FTFs has their own characteristics, we can still talk about some common points psychologically and sociologically. Still, empirical studies focusing on particular countries and regions need to be further supported. With such a support capacity building would enable regional initiatives to see beyond the common features which will be mentioned in this section.

Considering the complex and multi-dimensional nature of the phenomena, the need for a comprehensive, flexible, and holistic approach to fighting them is obvious. Even though the security dimension is essential, unless social, economic, political and psychological dynamics are properly analysed and required steps are taken, only short-term and limited achievements can be made. Therefore a comprehensive approach to the dynamics and driving factors providing recruitment opportunities and financial resources to terrorist groups is as important as defeating the active armed actor in the field. In line with this comprehensive approach, **preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE)** is defined as “a broad range of non-coercive and preventative activities that are united by the objective of counteracting the drivers of violent extremism specific to the locations in which these initia-

tives occur. P/CVE includes activities that target individuals specifically identified as ‘at risk’ of being drawn into violence to the extent that this is feasible in each location.” (European Commission, 2017).

Some of the common motivations that push individuals towards violent extremism are weak or failed state mechanisms, lack of trust in politics and politicians, and corruption which can surface due to political or security-driven crises. We can see the role of these motivations especially in the cases of Syria and Iraq. Failing security mechanism within the country, lack of actors who can gain people’s confidence, and act as role models, and the emergence of various armed actors acting on their own basis of legitimacy provide a fertile ground for terrorist groups. This collapsed link between the state and the people provides precious material to be utilised by radical groups since it does not only offer propaganda tools, but also cause discontent by itself and mentally prepare potential recruits. Especially in the countries where democratic norms, rule of law, and human rights are not internalized or not actually in effect, this correlation manifests itself more. Thus, provision of security both at the regional and national level and working state and security mechanisms need to be encouraged and supported.

Besides the particular economic difficulties stemming from the failed state mechanisms in the above-mentioned examples, in the Western countries where FTF and homegrown terrorists are some key threats, lack of equal economic opportunities, humiliation and marginalisation also stand out as important motivations of radicalisation. Individuals frequently try to compensate their economic dilemmas and social exclusion with belonging to a group and sometimes even carrying out violent acts for it. Lack of clear and universal notions of belonging and citizenship can easily feed into an identity crisis. Moreover, the groups with financial resources and the ability to produce regu-

lar/irregular income can also provide economic opportunities to their supporters and active fighters. Therefore, on the one hand, engendering an economic mechanism enabling different parts of the society to feel involved and benefit from, and on the other, prevention of unequal access to opportunities due to ethnic, religious, sectarian differences are some important steps that need to be taken. In addition to that, in order to cut terrorist groups' access to financial resources, effective monitoring of financial transactions both at the individual level and among and to and from NGOs are some other important measures.

Research on the people who are radicalised and actively involved in violent acts suggests the lack of primary knowledge and literacy regarding the ideational system over which their radicalisation take place. The people who lack basic ideological and/or religious knowledge in their childhood or youth can undergo important ideational transformations following traumatic incidents. As a result of such incidents, if their affiliation with an ideational system is deepened and if they take part in a group which in their opinion, represents that ideational system, they can show a tendency to carry out more sensational attacks in order to *fight their own past*. Therefore, starting from the major FTF-producing countries, providing the youth, who are regarded to be most vulnerable to radicalisation, with the basic knowledge on such concepts is an important component of a strategy to fight radicalisation and violent extremism (Nünlist, 2015; McCauley&Moskalenko, 2008; Aly, Balbi & Jacques, 2015; Zeiger&Aly, 2015; Neumann, 2013; Horgan, 2008; Borum, 2011; King&Taylor, 2011).

Another important concept, namely "homegrown" terrorists, refer to the people who are drawn into violent extremism especially with religious references and who are grown up in the West and has experience of living there and even got

their education there. However, they felt marginalised in terms of access to economic and political opportunities and tended to radicalize and take part in violent acts. Here, the other side of the coin is rising Islamophobia and accompanying anti-refugee rhetoric. Such approaches, mostly accompanied by hate speech against a particular group of people with a particular religious affiliation and the values they deem regard as sacred generate a vicious circle with radicalisation especially religiously-inspired radicalism. Therefore, a clear line between hate speech and freedom of expression needs to be drawn which was not the case in some incidents such as the famous "cartoon crisis" in Denmark in the past. The people who are marginalised and had to live in ghettos can have a higher tendency to take part in violent activities and their disadvantageous position out of the system are transferred beyond generations, pushing the next generations into a fighting atmosphere, too. Within the context of the refugee crisis, extreme right propaganda and the circumstances under which refugees have to live in the countries they did not felt welcome paint a risky picture for the future tendencies of these people who are themselves victims of radicalisation and state violence and had to move towards the West. This atmosphere does not only help radicalisation of these people in the countries where they moved to, but also the radical groups to legitimise their positioning and rhetoric based on Islamophobic and xenophobic rhetoric and incidents.

Another key factor behind radicalisation is the use of illegal methods and or disproportionate use of force without properly carrying out investigation or interrogation stages by law-enforcement officials. In some cases such as in the aftermath of the Paris and Brussels attacks, principal of "individual criminal responsibility" was widely reported to be ignored and relatives and friends of the perpetrators were also punished. Moreover, in Kenya and

Somalia, in the fight against al-Shabaab, without proper investigation and interrogation processes, there were reports about punishments carried out in an illegal and disproportionate way, providing terrorist groups the chance of utilising on the rhetoric of victimization afterwards. Such measures, on the one hand, damage the people's trust in the state mechanism. On the other, they provide radical groups with precious propaganda material, strengthening their discourse directed at their target audience. Therefore, law-enforcement officials need to be clearly and thoroughly informed about investigation and interrogation procedures and maximum attention needs to be paid to some key concepts such as human rights and the rule of law. Otherwise, the fight against such groups might easily cause side-effects and backlashes. Related to that point, empirical research on jail systems and necessary regulations and amendments regarding them is an important aspect of the fight against radicalisation and violent extremism. Jails are one of the most important places where radicalised individuals can find a receptive audience. One of the main components of jail sentence, isolation from the outside world, then, can lose its efficacy and on the contrary, jails can serve as places where would-be terrorists are being subject to radical propaganda. Therefore, revisiting jail system and cell structures is an important dimension of this fight in a way that both avoid such possibility and contribute to the rehabilitation of radical individuals utilising innovative ways such as peer support groups, dissemination of counter-narratives to those individuals, providing them with caregiver services if necessary and gradually offering them chance to interact with other people with different cultural, ethnic, ideological backgrounds via sports or cultural activities or being part of self-help groups.

In the fight against radicalisation and VE (and as a sub-heading of the latter, FTFs), another emphasis needs to be laid on the concept of "Gatekeepers". "Gatekeepers"

are the people who have direct contact with the vulnerable groups including the youth who are highly possible to be subject to radical propaganda. They can be parents and relatives as well as teachers, sports coaches or opinion leaders in communities. By taking into account the particular dynamics of the target country, clans and/or religious micro-structures can be added to this list. Local NGOs' importance with direct access to vulnerable people can also be highlighted here, too. These people and structures can realise the individual's radicalisation process as a first line of defence and can have an active role in taking necessary steps to prevent it. Moreover, in the case that the process could not be stopped and the radical individual steps into the realm of violence, these individuals and/or structures can contribute to the return of the individual and/or to the efforts to reach the people/groups which pushed the individual towards radicalisation and violent acts or providing FTFs with their much needed financial and travel support. Related to that point, an important step can be to design curriculums that focus on preventing radicalisation, and when necessary, on how to deradicalise people in the schools where these gatekeepers can take part in part of an extra-curriculum activities. Such activities could socialise the youth and channel their energy to the areas where people with different social and cultural backgrounds and value sets can gather and enjoy together. Raising awareness activities for families and the social structures surrounding the youth as well as the effective use of the concept of community policing can play vital roles in that regard, too. Combined, these efforts would bear an important potential for building resilience and improving it over time with a multiplier effect through personal contact.

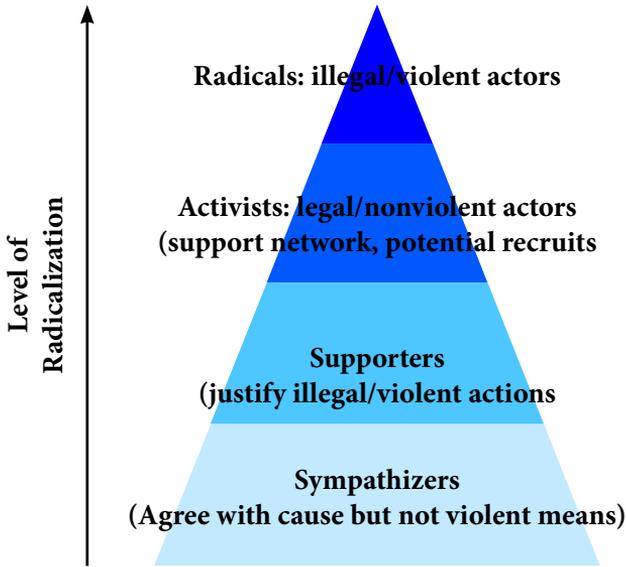
Referring to radicalisation as an ideational transformation, and counter-messaging efforts towards the radical and/or violent extremist group's/individual's ethnic,

ideological, philosophical, or religious discourse stand out as an indispensable part of any strategy. These counter measures need to be disseminated through social and conventional media tools. Youth camps, training programs, and social activities can also be utilised in order to reinforce the individual's line of defence and damage the radical groups' one of the main tools to survive, namely their claims to be representing a legitimate ideological stance and being the embodiment of undisputable truth. In order to devise an effective counter-narrative, identifying the particular propaganda tools and concepts that are used by radical groups is an essential first step which would be followed by using the same tools and concepts more effectively than them. With respect to radicalisation with religious references, considering the vulnerability of the people without basic religious literacy and knowledge, such a critical counter-narrative focusing on the twisted religious references radical groups use would be an important ideational line of defence. In such an effort, counter-narrative and counter-messaging should not only be directly disseminated by the state, but by NGOs, local social and political actors and their opinion leaders. The people who are formerly radicalized, took part in violent acts, fought as FTFs, and rehabilitated could also prove quite effective. The reason for such a strategy is that the position and respectability of the actors conveying the message and narrative are as important as the message and narrative themselves. As a last step regarding the "lifecycle of radicalization", designing and managing the rehabilitation phase properly in order to re-integrate the ones who returned to their home countries or deradicalized¹ is of great importance. Evaluating the delicate balance between security-related concerns and rehabilitation and re-integration is the first and most important phase of such an effort.

These people do not only pose a security threat for the country they left, but also to the transit country and their country of destination. With their return, regarding the processes they need to be part of (either rehabilitation or punishment or their contacts with the society), they also pose great challenges for policy-makers, law-makers and security forces, requiring new and carefully tailored approaches. These people can radicalise others or act as masterminds of terror attacks in the countries where they returned to. The delicate balance here, requires coordination between law-enforcement officials and the people with expertise on psychology and sociology. After this, the two following steps would be designing the rehabilitation process and close monitoring of it. Since rehabilitation process could start with **disengagement** where the individual leaves the group or diminish its role in it even though he/she keeps the same value set, whether this process gradually transforms into an ideational journey back to the society would require a comprehensive and detailed monitoring with a significant amount of engagement with sociologist and psychologists.

Radicalisation and Violent Extremism: Some Models Explaining the Phenomena

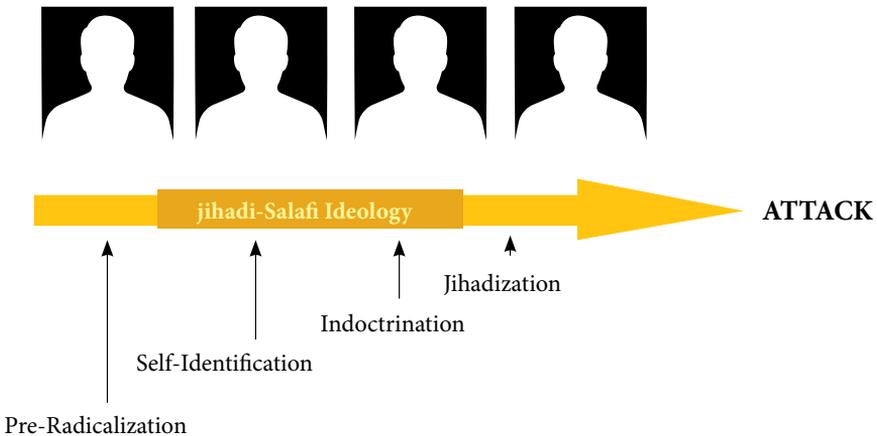
In order to make sense of the process and the phenomena, some of the models for radicalisation and/or with respect to the journey towards violent extremism will be presented here. For instance McCauley's pyramid model regarding the levels of radicalisation makes a distinction between sympathizers, supporters, activists, and radicals and argues that each of them would consist of fewer individuals than the one preceding it and thus radicals are only a small portion of all the sympathizers of a radical group (McCauley, 2007).



However, the problem with McCauley's pyramid is the absence of a tipping point between radicals and violent extremists since he refers to radicals as illegal and violent actors, which does not necessarily the case. Another stage in McCauley's pyramid with violent extremists, again consisting less people than the previous

one which is radicals might significantly contribute to an already promising model.

Silber and Bhatt proposes another model focusing on not the group of individuals with different levels of engagement or affiliation with a radical group, but rather, the stages through which an individual is radicalised (Silber & Bhatt, 2007).



Even though the model puts a step forward in differentiating between radicalisation and violent extremism, the absence of which was the weak spot in McCauley's model, the obvious issue with the model

is the sole focus on the radicalisation with religious motivations, and even more specifically Jihadi-Salafi ideology. Putting aside the vast theological literature on the proper meaning and use of the concept of

“jihad” and the problematic “religiously-motivated terror attacks=jihad” equation, such a narrow focus does not only ignore other forms of radicalisation. It also contributes to the consolidation of the vicious circle mentioned earlier between religiously motivated radicalisation and extreme-right movements. Furthermore, such a narrow focus could easily be taken advantage of by religiously motivated violent extremist groups for propaganda purposes as showing the “enemy’s” fear pushing it to focus on “us” only, and the “enemy’s” negligence about ideologically or ethnically motivated violent groups showing its hypocrisy against which the intensity of attacks needs to be increased.

Moghaddam offers a more detailed scheme in his “staircase” model where he focuses on the cognitive process through which the individual travels. He starts his analysis with the psychological interpretation of material conditions, referring to the interpretations of an individual who are not necessarily impoverished or uneducated or lacking equal opportunities but still *perceives* the absence of a just and fair system. Those perceptions, according to Moghaddam, pushes this individual towards a search for the ways to fight the system and s/he might gradually end up carrying out a terrorist attack if s/he would climb all the steps up in Moghaddam’s staircase (Moghaddam, 2005).

5th Floor: Terrorist Act & Sidestepping Inhibitory Mechanisms

4th Floor: Solidification of Categorical Thinking & Perceived Legitimacy of Terrorist Organisation

3rd Floor: Moral Engagement

2nd Floor: Displacement of Aggression

1st Floor: Perceived Options to Fight Unfair Treatment

Ground Floor: Psychological Interpretation of Material Conditions

Being a more detailed and comprehensive model in itself, Moghaddam’s starting point, which is the argument that the lack of equal opportunities or unfair treatment or disadvantageous material conditions do not exist in the personal backgrounds of many radicals but what matters is what they perceive bears a major risk. Such an approach could overlook the actual marginalization, glass ceilings due to cultural, ethnic or religious reasons, and subsequent economic difficulties experienced by many Muslims in the West for instance, and the economic and social implications of failed or failing states which are the truth rather than perceptions in several countries. Starting the analysis without a proper understanding of the selected key catalyst or the “ground floor” as Moghad-

dam calls it would pose great challenges for devising a strategy regarding the main motivations or driving factors.

Besides, none of the models propose a post-radicalisation or deradicalisation and rehabilitation phase without which any understanding of the process of radicalisation would not offer any route maps for devising effective counter strategies and to challenge the phenomenon for good.

Here, another model for the journey towards radicalisation and reversal will be provided acknowledging the fact that as in the cases of the above mentioned models, there is and will always be room for improvements and revisions as well as alterations based on particular journeys in different contexts:



In each and every model presented here, drawing from the “pre-radicalisation” phase of each causal chain, we can derive a common understanding that in order to get long-term results, it is essential to devise strategies addressing push and pull factors or drivers with an eye on socio-political and economic dimensions of the process. Effective application and monitoring of this strategy are however, quite complex tasks that cannot be completely accomplished by the efforts of a single country. Here, regional and international information and experience sharing and cooperation are important. Since not only movement of people, but also of ideas, financial resources, and arms became highly transboundary phenomena, it would not be realistic to leave the whole process to the efforts of a particular country and. Brussels and Paris attacks which will be mentioned below and Turkey’s counterparts’ lack of responsive and timely attitude in the face of its early warnings are some key examples of the consequences of such a lack of effective cooperation.

Relatedly, within the context of Turkey’s efforts to comply with the international regulations and effectively cooperate with its international partners, one of the most important documents related to FTF was conveyed by the Prime Ministry to the Parliament on February 2, 2016, entitled “The Bill of Approval of the Ratification of the Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism”. Here, in line with the UNSC 2178, travels with the aim of joining terrorist groups, organising and financing such travels and helping facilitation of such efforts were proposed to be subject to relevant legal regulations and to make amendments to include training for terrorist purposes, too the existing regulations in order to avoid any loopholes. (The Bill of Approval of the Ratification of the Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism, February 24, 2016). It should also be noted that Turkey, which was the

co-chair of the Global Counter Terrorism Forum with the US, played a quite active role in the production of the resolution 2178.

Besides such documents, decisions and legal efforts by decision-makers, Turkey’s own practical experience of fighting radicalisation needs to be emphasised. Turkey can vastly contribute to the international community’s efforts thanks to its substantial experience not only regarding radicalisation process and necessary measures to reverse the process via pedagogic, legal, social and economic tools, but also regarding radicalisation’s violent face, violent extremism. Drawing from this assumption, the next section, therefore, would investigate Turkey’s fight referring to the military efforts on the field as well as socio-political measures along with some successes with an eye on suggestions for the future in order to further increase Turkey’s capability to fight radicalisation and VE.

Turkey’s Fight against Radicalisation

Turkey, as briefly mentioned above, has been a target of various forms of radicalisation and has a longer experience of fighting it than many other countries. From ASALA to PKK, and from DHKP-C to DAESH, several groups, with different ideological, ethnic, and religious references have positioned at the extremes of their value set whatever it was/is and carried out terror attacks violating the fundamental rights including the right to live of the people with opposing views including civilians. Still, for the time being, Turkey continues its fights against ethnic, radical, and ideological radicalisation and violent extremism. Therefore, the Turkish case is also an important one pushing us to revisit the disproportionate focus on radicalisation with religious references in the literature. Starting from the 1970s, first, ASALA and almost simultaneously THKP-C and since 1994, the latter’s splinter group DHKP-C, posed important challenges

for Turkey. In addition to those, fighting PKK which carried out its first terror attack in 1984 has been a major dimension of Turkey's fight with VE. Regarding the current situation, even though ASALA's leader was killed in the late 1980s and the group was split before completely lost its ability to carry out attacks, with the new-comer DAESH, Turkey still carries out a demanding fight against multiple forms of radicalisation.

ASALA, in addition to quite sensational terror attacks in Orly and Esenboga Airports, is widely known for its terror attacks against Turkish diplomats abroad. The terror group was formed in 1975 by Agop Agopyan and in 84 terror attacks carried out by the group, 46 people of which 42 were Turkish diplomats lost their lives and 299 people were injured. Following the Orly Airport attack in 1983, the group gradually went towards split and in 1988 Agop Agopyan was killed after which the group lost its ability to carry out attacks or even exist. Turkey's fight with the group was an important source of experience considering the fact that the group was a clear example of not only ethnic, but also ideological radicalisation and it has the ability to carry out attacks in different countries, and thus posing a transboundary challenge.

PKK terrorism which can be regarded as started in 1984 with the Eruh attack claimed more than 35 thousand lives of which around 6 thousand were civilians whereas in this period around 25 thousand PKK terrorists were neutralized. Financially, the cost of the fight against PKK has been around \$300-350 billion. Moreover, due to the deteriorated security circumstances in the region where PKK is extensively active, economic conditions also got worse in time and the fight against PKK also had direct and indirect impacts on Turkey's relations with its neighbours. For instance, Syrian harbouring of Öcalan in 1998 brought Turkey and Syria to the brink of a war, the need for advanced

weaponry significantly contribute to the Turkish-Israeli rapprochement in the second half of the 1990s, and Turkey's cross-border operations was a major topic in the Turkish-Iraqi relationship for decades. In addition to the fight against PKK within Turkey, with the advances of YPG in Syria, PKK's Syrian off-shoot, cross-border dimension of the fight has come to the fore. The fight against PKK has long been the major component of Turkey's fight against radicalisation and violent extremism with both ideological and ethnic references. Moreover, even though the nature of the relationship is defined in different ways, Kurdistan Freedom Falcons/ Teyrebazên Azadiya Kurdistan (TAK) of which organic ties with PKK is recognised by both Human Rights Watch and the White House, too (Human Rights Watch, 2012; White House, 2016), have been carried out more deadly attacks recently. These more deadly attacks especially since 2010 includes the more recent attacks in Beşiktaş² (December 10, 2016) and Kayseri³ (December 20, 2016). The recent urban operations carried out by the Turkish security forces in Sur, Nusaybin and Cizre should also be included in the fight against PKK.

The split of the Turkey People Liberation Party-Front (THKP-C) established in the early 1970s first gave birth to the Revolutionary Way (Devrimci Yol/Dev-Yol) in 1972. The group gave birth to another smaller faction called the Revolutionary Left (Devrimci Sol/Dev-Sol) emerged in 1978 due to an in-group disagreement among the elading cadre of the Revolutionary Way. The group, in 1994, evolved into what we know as DHKP-C as a party-front. Between the 1970s and early 2000s, the group carried out mostly sensational terror attacks targeting some important people whereas after this era, the group turned to bomb attacks directed at critical buildings (political party's branches, police stations, etc.) and armed attacks against higher number of targets. The most tragic terror attack carried out by the group was the murder of prosecutor

Mehmet Selim Kiraz in 2015 in his office in the courthouse. Even though the attacks carried out by Dev-Yol and Dev-Sol) can also be attributed to this movement due to almost identical human resources and ideological line, here, the attacks carried out by DHKP-C, and thus in the post-1994 period will be touched upon since the group still poses a security threat. Retired Lieutenant Colonel Ata Burcu, Deputy Provincial Police Chief of İstanbul Şakir Koç, three US citizens in the İncirlik Airbase, retired army general Memduh Ünlütürk, retired admiral Kemal Kayacan, Executive Board Member of the Sabancı Holding Özdemir Sabancı and head of Toyota SA Haluk Görgün were some of the important people the group attacked in the 1990s. With the late 1990s and early 2000s, the group turned to some different tactics such as suicide attacks, bomb attacks against political party branches, diplomatic missions, police stations and headquarters. The most important exception of this bloody journey from the attacks targeting particular people to the ones targeting buildings and crowds was the attack which claimed Prosecutor Mehmet Selim Kiraz's life on March 31, 2015. Turkey's fight with DHKP-C provided the country both with the experience of dealing with an ideologically-motivated terrorist group with international connections over decades.

In addition to PKK and DHKP-C which Turkey has long been fighting against, especially since mid-2014, DAESH has been regarding the country as a high priority. Some of the most sensational and tragic terror attacks carried out by DAESH are as follows:

- Storming the Turkish Consulate Building in Mosul (June 11, 2014): 49 people were kidnapped and held captive for 101 days including Turkey's Consulate General
- Suruç attack (July 20, 2015): Claimed 34 lives, left 104 people injured
- Ankara Train Station attack (October 10, 2015): Claimed 103 lives, left more than 400 people injured
- İstanbul Sultanahmet Police Station attack (January 12, 2016): Claimed 13 lives, left 14 people injured
- İstanbul İstiklal attack (March 19, 2016): Claimed 4 lives, left 39 people injured
- İstanbul- Atatürk Airport attack (July 28, 2016): Claimed 45 lives, left more than 230 people injured
- Gaziantep wedding attack (August 20, 2016): Claimed 51 lives, left more than 94 people injured
- İstanbul- Reina attack (December 31, 2016): Claimed 39 lives, left more than 65 people injured

Moreover, between January and May 2016, in almost 20 mortar/rocket attacks Kilis was hit around 60 rockets/mortars, claiming the lives of 19 residents and 70 people were injured. With the Operation Euphrates Shield, Turkey successfully eliminated the possibility of such attacks by clearing its border from DAESH presence. In addition, DAESH, in the mosques it controls, in Friday sermons, repeatedly mentions Kilis, Gaziantep, and Karkamış as high priority targets, further highlighting the terrorist group's intention to target Turkey and its border areas.

According to the figures announced by the Chief of Staff General Hulusi Akar, in its fight against PKK between July 2015 and June 2016, 7740 terrorists were neutralised, 779 terrorists were arrested and 766 terrorists within Turkey surrendered. With the cross-border operations, PKK and YPG-affiliated 467 terrorists including FTFs had to surrender, too. (Sabah, 2016).

In terms of Turkey's fight with DAESH, since the beginning of the Syrian Civil

War, has a no-entry list of 37,000 people; has banned almost 52,000 terror suspects from entering the country; prevented 7,500 people coming to Turkey from Europe; has deported 3,719 people and detained 700 more; prevented 40,000 people from joining IS; and stopped 223,000 people entering Syria illegally. In its efforts to curb cross-border militant activities, Turkey – which listed IS as a terrorist group in 2013 and has been a member of the anti-IS coalition since 2014 – has built a 561 kilometre (km) wall and placed 161 km of barbed wire fencing along its border. It has dug 356 km of ditches, erected 74 km of barriers and installed or upgraded lighting along all 422 km of the Turkey/Syria border so that it can be patrolled more effectively. Turkey has also established Risk Analysis Units at its border with Syria, which have investigated 6,000 people and added 1,300 of them to a no-entry list. Turkey also formed Risk Analysis Units along its Syrian border in order to better monitor people's movement back and forth, which helped arrest of more than 700 DAESH terrorists. (Hurriyet Daily News, September 8; Anadolu Agency, April 7; Habertürk, March 23). Moreover, with the Operation Euphrates Shield, Turkey further deepened its fight with PYD and DAESH militarily with a cross-border component. With the operation, Turkey cleared its border from DAESH presence. In the late February 2017, an important stronghold of DAESH in Syria, namely al-Bab was also controlled. In addition to the fight against DAESH, Turkey also underlined its intention to avoid a merger of PYD-controlled cantons in Northern Syria and its position that PYD presence in the west of Euphrates is unacceptable for Turkey. Disagreement between Turkey and its anti-DAESH coalition partners still persist at the time of writing this report.

Besides this “counter-terrorism” dimension referring to “the use of ‘hard’ or coercive measures” (European Commission, 2017), drawing from the definition of P/CVE presented earlier, focusing on non-coercive means to tackle violent extrem-

ism, how Turkey performed in terms of using non-military means in its P/CVE efforts so far will be briefly mentioned.

In terms of non-military measures put forward by Turkey, there are several points which deserve a great deal of attention both in terms of best practices and efforts to reach out people via direct contact as well as counter-narratives. Some of these efforts are directly directed at radicalisation whereas some of them are expected to engender indirect achievement and some underlines the fact that the country has both expertise and practice (know-how) within this context. The infrastructure to reach the target audiences that is utilised on for the efforts that are not particularly directed at radicalisation can be easily enriched and/or transformed and shows the country's overall know-how that would significantly contribute to the efficacy of tailored programmes with a clear focus on radicalisation.

In 2015 only, 921 thousand people were reached by the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Youth and Sports as well as the police and military within the context of briefing and information activities aimed at weakening the ideological and social base of radical groups. Social and cultural projects, which has long been believed to be a key component of any smart power strategy aiming at inflicting a major blow to radical groups' especially young human capital succeeded to gather more than 65 thousand people.

The Presidency of Religious Affairs act as a key institution to produce and spread counter-narrative. In order to produce and publicise religious counter-narrative, 700 preachers are charged by the Presidency of Religious Affairs in prisons where radicalisation can produce and reproduce itself. Moreover, the Presidency of Religious Affairs published two reports, entitled “The Fundamental Philosophy and Religious References of DAESH” and “Religious Exploitation and Terrorist Or-

ganization ISIS” in August 2015 and October 2016 respectively. The two reports published by the Presidency of Religious Affairs on making sense of the religious references and narrative used by DAESH is also an important endeavour. The reports do not only cover the DAESH’s religious references and its historical background, but also shows how the terrorist group distorts religious concepts and abuse them in order to gain legitimacy and how to respond this distortion. Nevertheless, as mentioned in earlier sections, a state institution disseminating counter-messaging and counter-narrative could easily suffer from legitimacy issues in the eyes of radical groups. The institution itself as well as the scholars, academics etc. who took part in the production of such reports could be labelled as the “state’s mere tools” to fight “us” and “only serving the state’s interests” which is the “enemy” itself. Moreover, even the inconsistency in the titles of the reports regarding ISIS/DAESH seems further weakening its intellectual reach.

Personnel in the prisons are also trained specifically to get better equipped in terms of the ways that can radicalize people and how to prevent them. Hotlines 183 and 144 have also been effectively used. Turkey’s massive immigrant population has also been subject to education programmes and personnel in the refugee camps were also educated in areas including personal communication, law, economics, media and health. The youth camps organised by the Ministry of Youth and Sports succeeded in attracting around 60 thousand youth only in 2015. In 352 projects directed at the youth run by the Ministry, around \$9 million was spent and 328 thousand youth could benefit from them (Radicalisation Awareness Network Meeting, Ankara, May 31, 2016). Even though these youth camps and projects were not organised/run for the goal of preventing radicalisation, the youth camps are one of the key measures in the literature on preventing and countering

violent extremism (P/CVE). Therefore, either incorporating brief curriculums regarding the fight against radicalisation or designing individual camps or projects to that end could be quite useful measures which are absent in the case of Turkey for the timebeing.

In terms of Turkey’s international efforts and cooperation, even though the Brussels and Paris attacks and the information Turkey provided to the concerned European countries beforehand was surprisingly ignored, these two cases shows Turkey’s active efforts in terms of international efforts to fight radicalisation, violent extremism and foreign terrorist fighters. Turkey had officially warned the French government twice about one of the attackers, Omer Ismail Moustaïf, who in 2013, entered Turkey. These warnings were made in December 2014 and June 2015, quite earlier than the attack. In response, let alone any precaution taken, no contact was made in return by the French government up until the “information request” they demanded after the attacks took place (IBTimes, November, 16, 2015). Similarly, before the Brussels airport attack, Turkey informed not only Belgium, but also the Dutch government about one of the attacker Ibrahim El Bakraoui, who was in Turkey’s suspected FTF list already, travelled to Turkey twice in July and August, 2015. He, after detained in Gaziantep, deported by Turkey (one of his two deportations) to the Netherlands from where he then moved to Belgium. Following his deportation, Turkey warned both governments about Bakraoui’s suspected attempt to Access Syria. Turkey also warned the Belgian government about Najim Laachroui following his trip to Turkey as well as İbrahim El Bakraoui’s brother, Khalid. By the Belgian government, both individuals were said to be “clean” and “had no terror links”. The Belgian government issued INTERPOL red notice only 3 weeks before the attack due to suspected “terrorist” links for Laa-

rouchi and Khalid el Bakraoui (Daily Mail, March 26, 2016; FT, March 24, 2016).

Due to the multiple radicalisation threat along with its long shared land border beyond which numerous international, regional and individual actors are actively involved, the future of Turkey's fight against radicalisation and violent extremism would be affected by international and regional coordination and information-sharing as much as its own national success. In that regard, Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism put forward by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon and the significant place of fighting radicalisation and violent extremism in the OSCE's Belgrade Ministerial Council meeting of the last year are some of the most important efforts in terms of international measures and coordination (OSCE, 2016). It should also be noted that amidst such a difficult atmosphere, it is important to have a clear national strategy which would not only formulate and declare Turkey's CVE&PVE strategy, but also act as the ba-

sis of interagency coordination. Considering the fact that even the countries such as Kosovo, Macedonia, Australia and Bosnia and Herzegovina with relatively much less direct threat felt the need to produce such documents, Turkey needs to have a clear, comprehensive, holistic and effective national strategy agreeable to all concerned institutions. Even though there might always the possibility of having some difficulties due to different repertoires of bureaucrats, law-makers, law-enforcement officers, and experts on the field, the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina with 14 constitutions, 10 cantons and 23 law-enforcement institutions is an important one in terms of achieving the agreeable optimum in terms of inter-agency coordination. (Regional Cooperation Council, 2016). By doing so, Turkey would not only have the chance to revise and if necessary amend and improve its own capability, regulations, and practices, but also would further to the international and regional literature on the subject its experience and fight.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 Deradicalisation is defined as “the social and psychological process whereby an individual’s commitment to and involvement in violent radicalisation is reduced to the extent that they are no longer at risk of involvement in violent activity.” (European Commission, 2017)
- 2 The attack on December 10, 2016 claimed the lives of 44 people and more than 150 people were injured.
- 3 The attack on December 20, 2016 claimed the lives of 14 people and 55 people were injured.