

Proposal for Expert Review and advice

RAN offers practice owners throughout Europe the opportunity to receive advice on how to improve the quality and impact of his/her project/tool/method from an expert of the RAN expert pool. This advice is only meant for the practice owner, on a voluntary

Name of practice: The Framework of Radicalisation Risk Indicators

Date of review: 29/11/2020

Review author / expert:

1. What is the theoretical basis / implication of the practice? What theoretical aspects could be specified?

Answer:

In the short description provided by the authors, it is emphasized that the proposed solution was developed based on a thorough review of the literature on the currently used typologies of risk factors for radicalisation. It was then tested and validated through an empirical verification process involving practitioners involved in preventing radicalisation. This professional approach certainly deserves recognition as it allows the practice to be placed among the solutions subject to formative evaluation, i.e. one that tests a solution on a small population before being proposed for use in practice by large general populations.

However, in search of more detailed theoretical foundations of the entire research process, it was needed to reach for a detailed description of the practice in the form of the Report available at <http://old.csd.bg/artShow.php?id=17916>. In the Report, we can find references to the theoretical foundations in the 'Introduction', and a more extensive theoretical grounding in the chapter devoted to 'The nature and manifestations of radicalisation'. It reviews the available definitions of Islamist and far-right radicalisation very nicely. This content can certainly be used by practitioners to better find themselves in the tangle of many currently available definition considerations and to properly define the problem they are facing.

One thing that is missing from this Report is the methodological foundations, including the theoretical framework and paradigm adopted for the very scientific research process leading the authors to the final conclusions contained in the quoted document. Unfortunately, the Report lacks even a brief description of a detailed methodological workshop, including the adopted methods, research techniques, describing the research population or the hypotheses. It is worth including such a description in the future, at least in the footnote to the text.

2. Is there a clear understanding what this practice should contribute to/which problem is being tackled?

Answer:

The proposed Report on 'Monitoring Radicalisation: A Framework for Risk Indicators' can be used as training material during trainings addressed to policy makers and first line practitioners involved in the process of preventing and combating radicalisation. Moreover, it can be used as a practical handbook for these people in their daily work.

The publication provides an overview of existing approaches and tools for identifying, monitoring and assessing radicalisation in Europe and beyond. In addition, it provides a conceptual framework for risk and radicalisation vulnerability indicators and their interpretation as a basis for developing early warning mechanisms for frontline practitioners in countries that have not yet developed detailed strategies to prevent and counter radicalisation. The target audience of the guide is policy makers at national and EU level, as well as practitioners directly involved in preventing radicalisation in Central and Eastern Europe and beyond.

3. To what extent are the practice owners able to explain the mechanism at work: how are the particular activities leading to achieving the desired objective? (i.e. theory of change)

Answer:

The Report cited above describes very interesting the radicalisation process and the role of risk factors in influencing an individuals and making them take the radicalisation path. The authors use popular models to explain to practices how radicalisation can occur. They also list the aforementioned risk factors divided into useful categories. In the process of designing preventive actions based on the so-called logical model, they can be used as common causes of radicalisation on which the designed actions should be focused and aimed. It is because effective prevention is not only about diagnosing 'What's happening', but also 'Why is it happening?'. The examples of observable indicators of radicalisation proposed in the Report can therefore be very useful in the process of constructing practical solutions oriented towards real social needs.

4. Are there clearly defined quality standards to ensure the quality of the practice? What other resources or mechanisms should be elaborated on in order to improve the practice?

Answer:

Promoting quality and exchanging good practice is recognized as an important strategy both to improve the effectiveness of interventions to prevent and counter radicalisation leading to violent extremism and to ensure the efficient use of existing resources. In particular, guidelines and standards are among the most commonly used tools for promoting quality by translating knowledge into daily practice in the PVE / CVE area.

However, it is not always necessary to publish new solutions and standards. Existing good quality guidelines can be adapted to a specific national or local context. This is also the case with 'The Framework of Radicalisation Risk Indicators', which is the result of a review of the existing solutions for identification and monitoring risk factors used in Western countries and their adaptation in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The only suggestion is to consider increasing the possibility of using the proposed Report as training material, by translating it in more detail into typical training materials by, for example, adding case studies or scenarios for testing the proposed tools by practitioners during training activities.

6. To what extent has there been either an evaluation on process and/or effect to better understand the quality and impact of the practice? What recommendations can you give in order to increase success factors of the practice?

Answer:

The solution was subjected to the so-called formative evaluation, allowing for the validation of the solution before its finalization. However, as the authors of the practice informed, unfortunately no funds were provided for monitoring and evaluation after its proper implementation. Due to the fact that the developed practice was used to develop further training, it would be worth preparing an evaluation of the results of a wider implementation, because only it would enable the dissemination of this solution on a really large scale. Especially that it is proposed that the solution could be used by other Central and Eastern European countries that have not participated in the process of its development.

It would be very interesting, and even advisable, to prepare a project enabling re-validation of the proposed solution by practitioners from a greater number of Central and Eastern European countries. Several years have passed since the preparation of the described solution (2015 - beginning, 2017 - finalization), during which in this part of Europe a more professional approach to the growing problem of right-wing radicalisation leading to violent extremism has started. The actual adaptation of the solution in this part of Europe would be favoured by the involvement of practitioners from countries such as Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, but also Lithuania or Latvia, and not only the Czech Republic in re-validation.

7. To what extent does this practice introduce new working methods or tools, or a new perspective to preventing radicalisation?

Answer:

The authors reviewed existing practices in monitoring and assessing the risk of radicalisation. They showed that there are a number of approaches to identification, monitoring and evaluation both the weaknesses and the risk of radicalisation; and the scope and nature of violent extremist acts.

They proposed a very practical and more comprehensive approach to assessing radicalisation trends and threats, including levels of analysis (1) society as a whole, 2) vulnerable or vulnerable people 3) groups or extremist actors and perpetrators), possible sources of information and assessment methods, and potential analytical methods and practical results.

The proposed framework provides some basic categorization a possible approach which - taking into account local circumstances - could be used by practitioners from different countries, including these from Central and Eastern Europe.

Summary of the review (max. 200 words):

'The Framework of Radicalization Risk Indicators' is a practice developed as a result of a review of existing solutions in the field of monitoring and assessing radicalisation risk in the Western Europe. It focuses on a very practical and comprehensive approach to assessing trends and threats of radicalisation by conducting analyzes at different levels, using all possible sources of information and potential analytical methods and achievable practical results. A comprehensive and theoretically grounded 'Report on Monitoring Radicalization: A framework for risk indicators' is a valuable compendium of knowledge on the definition of radicalisation, categorization of risk factors and available tools for assessing the risk of radicalisation addressed to the policy makers and practitioners dealing with PVE / CVE. After adaptation, it can also be used as an educational material supporting the training process of first line practitioners working not only in Western countries, but also dealing with the risk of rdicalisation in Central and Eastern Europe.