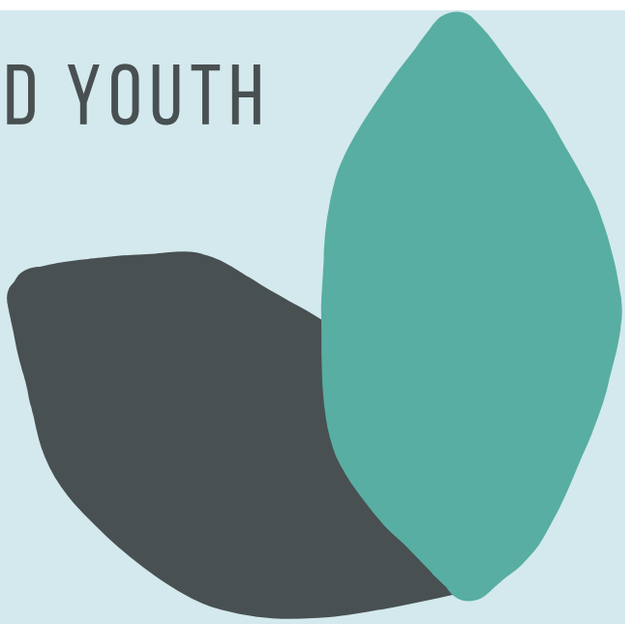
(T)ERROR VIOLENCE

ROLE OF GENDER AND YOUTH



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rojekte Vullnetare Ndërkombëtar

01

CONTENTS

Introduction 02

Violent extremism, freedom of expression, and hate speech 03

- Human rights VS violent extremism 06

Youth and VERLT 08

GENDER and VERLT: Understanding gender perspective in VERLT 09

- Role of gender in hate speech and violent extremism 10
- Gender-based motivation for violent extremism 12
- The role of masculinity and femininity in violent extremist mobilization 13
- How increased gender equality can help counteract VE 15

Victims and reintegration opportunities for those who have been radicalized 16

Counternarratives: What are counter-narratives? 18

Conclusions and recommendations 19

References 20

About 21

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02

INTRODUCTION

No one is born a violent extremist – they are made and fueled. Disarming the process of radicalization must begin with human rights and the rule of law, with dialogue across all boundary lines, by empowering all young women and men, and by starting as early as possible,

UNESCO

The global outbreak of violent extremism has affected most Western countries, but the Western Balkans region is more susceptible to extreme ideologies as the region is marred with post-conflict disagreements with pronounced violent narratives. In addition, factors such as the existence of large quantities of illegal weapons, the activities of individuals and groups who took part in the war in the Western Balkans during the 1990s or joined terrorist and armed groups in Syria, Iraq, and Ukraine, organized crime and migrant crisis, pose an additional security risk for embracing the ideas of violent extremism. The role of women in the prevention of violent extremism in a predominantly traditional society, such as the Western Balkans, is significant, but women are still not recognized or systematically supported as an important prevention factor, especially in recognizing early factors of radicalization.

The local context and the traditional gender role of women in the community and family, especially in rural areas of the Western Balkans, indicate that women are often excluded from the decision-making process for male family members. For this reason, some mothers have not been able to dissuade their sons from accepting extreme ideologies that have led to a phase of approval of violent actions and a willingness to participate in them.

With this manual, we are presenting some contacts of VERLT, how it is connected with human rights, gender, and youth. We want to confirm the significance that the role of women has in detecting the early signs of radicalization because women are naturally sensitized to be the first to feel changes in behavior and attitudes in family members.

Also, we want to argue the role of girls and women presenting the institutions, and how this topic is related to hate speech.

03

VIOLENT EXTREMISM, FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, AND HATE SPEECH

Defining Violent Extremism:

Violent extremism and radicalization are global phenomena of today. The problem of defining violent extremism itself is an issue that has been addressed by many researchers, and day by day this problem is becoming more pronounced and ubiquitous in the world public.
Approaching the development of the definition of extremism and the problem of violent extremism, certain key characteristics should be noted:

- Extremism is not synonymous with violent extremism. It only occurs when radical ideas or beliefs are forcibly imposed on others, be they family members, the wider group / social community, or society as a whole, as the only correct code of conduct and action.

- Perpetrators of violent extremism try to obtain an identity that will provide them with broad support and justify or legitimize violence. In this sense, identity is most often sought through affiliation with a particular religion, race, ethnic or national group, movement, etc.

- The right to one's own attitude or idea, even extreme, is associated with violence. Regardless of how an attitude can be justified by generally accepted human rights and freedoms, the forcible imposition of such attitudes cannot be justified.

- Acts of violent extremism often aim to cause loss of life, economic or material damage, or simply create discomfort or fear.

04

The problem of defining and determining violent extremism is based on many issues, of which we single out the following: Who is behind the element of violence; are they individuals, groups, international organizations, how to distinguish extremists from others who break the law in conflict situations, what are the elements that separate violent extremism from other forms of radical behavior? Does violent extremism always have to be ideological - can it be, for example, a serious crime with consequences, or even without a specific, subordinate goal? Is the term violent extremism just synonymous with terrorism? What are the ideologies related to violent extremism? Can religion and religious elements be linked to violent extremism and on what grounds? How to specify which foreign fighters are also terrorist foreign fighters?

We could enumerate some other issues, which can be seen after reading research papers by various authors (depending on which country they come from) or media reports on violent extremism, radicalism, and terrorism. In any case, before examining how state institutions and civil society organizations can work together to combat violent extremism, it is crucial to clarify what is “violent” for individual societies and how actors threaten or use violence to propagate extremist agendas. Like the notion of terrorism, there is no universally accepted definition of violent extremism, even among institutions such as the United Nations, the European Union, or NATO. Violent extremism is generally considered as a broader term than terrorism, but these two terms are sometimes used as synonyms and equated. Thus, violent extremism, given its causes, manner of implementation, and consequences, is a complex phenomenon and a challenge that requires the efforts of all of us. Regardless of any alleged motivations, violent extremism has no place in any society.

Together, we must do everything we can to prevent it and be strong enough to withstand the effects of violent extremism. Extremism per se exists in all societies and political systems, in democratic societies as well as in dictatorships. The theory advocated by a large number of people familiar with the nature of violent extremism states that violence begins where democratic processes cease. In democratic societies where there is a culture of dialogue in which opposing and even extreme opinions can be discussed, the space for violent extremism is greatly reduced. In such societies, extreme events are subject to greater control and improved mutual understanding. In the absence of such open and free communication, extremists isolate themselves, impose restrictions on themselves or resort to violence instead. In this sense, the openness of the state and society has a direct impact on the prospect of extremism taking a violent form.

05

A shift towards violence by individuals or groups is not inevitable, but is increasingly likely under the following conditions:

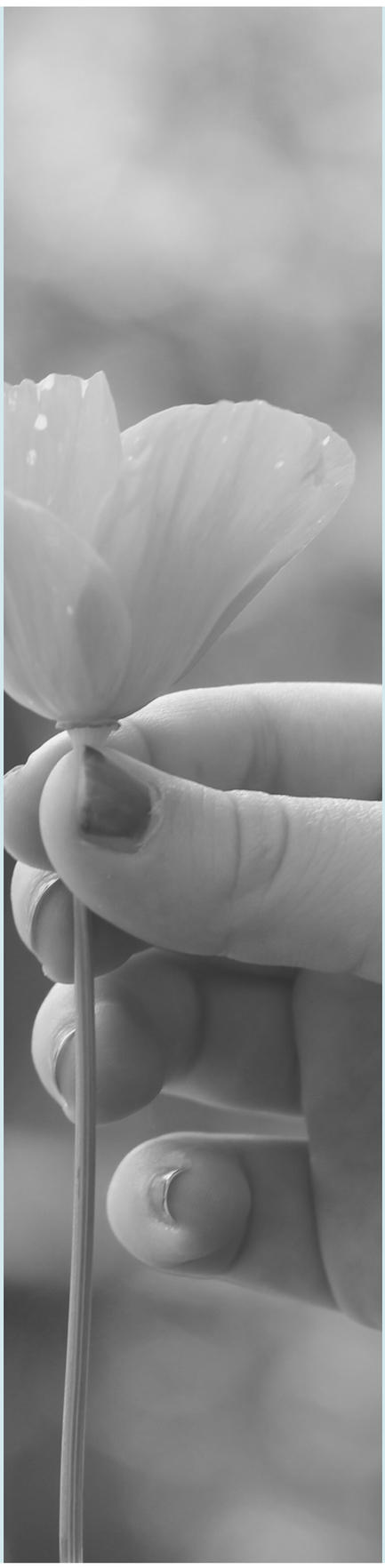
• high unemployment rate,
• economic crisis, and
• social isolation.

In combination, these conditions can often lead to:

• anger over status in society and dissatisfaction with the state apparatus, and
• a deep sense of injustice and a sense of playfulness by the system.

The emergence of violent extremism and radicalism, especially that which leads to terrorism, is not a new form of socially destructive behavior but is conceptually and terminologically adapted to the time in which it manifests itself in its various forms. The psychological view of the problem of violent extremism leading to terrorism is guided by the realization that the link with psychology is an inseparable element in the emergence, existence, and consequences of extremism, and special importance is attached to psychological interpretations.

Experts offer some answers, including that terrorist instigators are just stalking those who feel disenfranchised, who see themselves as victims, or those who have a desire for action and believe in violence.



HUMAN RIGHTS VS VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Its link to hate speech and new trends

There is a thin line between freedom of expression and hate speech. This is a sentence that everyone has probably heard many times. To be able to determine where that thin line, that is the border, is, we must first know what freedom of expression implies and what hate speech is. Freedom of expression is one of the basic human rights, which is protected by numerous laws and conventions. Article 10 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms guarantees the right to freedom of expression, which states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right includes the freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This article shall not prevent States from requiring licenses from radio, television or film companies." However, notwithstanding the guaranteed right to freedom of expression, it is also subject to certain formalities, conditions, restrictions, or sanctions provided by law. They are necessary for a democratic society in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public security, the prevention of disorder or crime, the protection of the health and morals, reputation or rights of others, the prevention of dissemination of confidential information or the preservation of judicial authority and impartiality.

Freedom of expression as one of the basic human rights experienced its absolute application only with the mass appearance of the Internet and social media. The Internet as a medium enables the simultaneous exchange of data with an unlimited number of users in real-time, which so far no information technology has achieved at the level at which the Internet achieves this. In that sense, the importance of using social media in a negative context should be emphasized.

Although there is no universal definition of hate speech, the Council of Europe understands hate speech as "all forms of expression that spread, encourage, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination hostility to minorities, immigrants or people of immigrant origin". We know that today there is an extremely wide selection of social networks, and they are consumed by all generations, however, not everyone uses them only in a positive sense. It is clear that despite the many advantages, the Internet has become a favorite means of exchanging unwanted or illegal content, and committing many criminal behaviors.

07

As social media grow, so does radicalization, which refers to a process in which the individual increasingly advocates or supports extremist ideas. Sometimes this term is used in a way that implies an implicit link between radical ideas and violence. It is a concept with different interpretations that are problematic, not only because not everyone who has radical ideas will get involved or support violent action, but also because the possibility of representing ideas, regardless of their nature, is guaranteed and protected as a fundamental human right. The prevalence and availability of social media today facilitate a lot of things, and this is reflected in the fact that they make it easier and faster to access information. However, the question is whether everything is so positive, given that the Internet and social media have both positive and negative sides.

Researcher Safet Mušić (2018) states some characteristics of problematizing radicalization:
- The current use of the term "radicalization" refers to the systemic process of adopting extremist beliefs;
- A person who has adopted extreme beliefs is "radicalized". For example: when the term “radicalization” is used in North America, the use of violence is not implied.

Radicalization is a process, and all those who start this process can be radicalized, but they do not have to be involved in violent actions;
"The intensification of extremist beliefs arose through the process of radicalization, which is a basic aspect of the period of radicalization."
Violent extremists have developed a wide range of digital media such as websites, forums, and social media platforms to fulfill their radical agenda. As their use of social media expands, so does the scope and types of information that violent extremists can share. In many ways, this gives violent extremists a platform to take control of the content of their messages. In addition to Facebook and Twitter as the most popular networks for disseminating various information, there are a number of others, some of which are used in a negative context. As such, the Parler and Gab platforms stand out, social networks that are especially popular among people of conservative beliefs, and this also applies to ultraconservatives.

The fact is that social networks are often misused to spread illegal content, and the development of society in the field of information and communication technologies is not monitored. Such activities create the conditions for the development of inflammatory Internet portals and groups on social networks that publish content that can easily provoke user comments in which they express hateful, radical, and unacceptable views.

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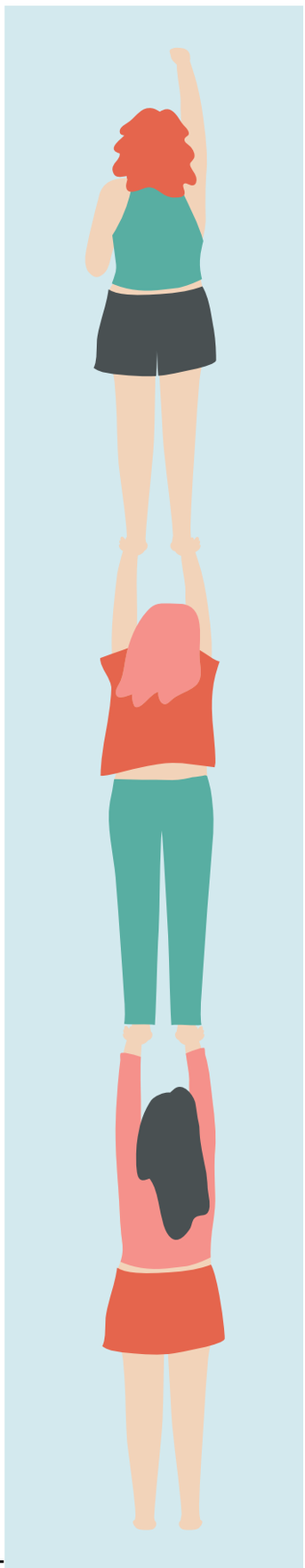

YOUTH AND VERLT

Everyone can be prone to extremism consequently violent extremism, however, the studies show that young people tend to easily get radicalized and embrace extremist views.

Terres des Hommes in their 2018 report: Reconceptualizing the drivers of violent extremism: An agenda for child & youth resilience" maintains that: Characteristic of today's violent extremist networks is the disproportionate participation of youth. While this is not uncommon in violent extremist groups, it is unusual that the demographic is so heavily skewed towards young people, and at the same time so geographically dispersed.1Meaning that not only young people are more susceptible to extremist views and acts but there is no difference whether you belong to a fully-fledged country or a developing country or whether you come from rural or urban areas. What pushes young people to admit themselves to extremist groups might be of various nature. Thus, some become part, by virtue of identity crisis, speaking of children of migrant families as they do not feel welcomed in the host country, they feel culturally distant, etc. Young people become part of extremist groups merely because a family member or a friend is part of it, criminality as they might have previously been engaged in criminal acts or they see it as a way to make a financial profit out of it as it is well known that the unemployment rate among youth is high, etc. Nevertheless, extremist groups tend to recruit as they are "cheap, effective, and obedient fighters."

Conversely, young people can be important actors to counter and prevent violent extremism. The United Nation Security Council, conceding the role youth have in preventing and countering violent extremism, adopted the first-ever resolution on youth, peace, and security that urges greater representation of young people in the prevention and resolution of conflict amid the rise of radicalization to violence and violent extremism amongst youth, which can be conducive to terrorism.

Nonetheless, a resolution is often not enough to tackle such a subtle issue thus palpable actions should be taken, such as awareness-raising among youngsters by young people themselves that can be achieved through "civic and political engagement". Also, to create opportunities to volunteer and serve the local community, ensuring that young people are consulted as part of policy-making processes and initiatives to encourage young people to register to vote. Thus, young people should feel that they belong to the community, are heard, and are part of the decision-making process for the community they live in or wider society and youth should be treated as actors and contributors and not as a burden, trouble---maker and passive beneficiaries.

09

GENDER AND VERLT: UNDERSTANDING GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN VERLT

“Gender” refers to the socially constructed and conditioned roles, attributes, opportunities, and norms that in a given society at a given time considers appropriate based on gender. Gender affects the relations and power dynamics between people, which are reflected in access to and control over resources, responsibilities assigned, and decision-making opportunities. Gender relates not only to women and structural gender inequality but also to men and concepts of masculinity.

ROLE OF GENDER IN HATE SPEECH AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Democratic societies are tolerant and open to all kinds of dialogue, but still, there is one form of communication that needs more attention, and that is hate speech. We are witnessing the spread of hate speech against women, and this has taken on wide proportions in recent years. While several women are indeed victims of violent extremist organizations and are predominantly in the roles of wife and mother, some women act as protagonists, and their participation in violent extremism is growing rapidly, yet such a growing trend is often underestimated.

Online sexism is widespread across Europe, and women are disproportionately affected, especially young women and girls, journalists, politicians, public figures, and women human rights defenders. One type of hate speech against women on the internet is negative comments on expressed attitudes or opinions. Although attacks on men are more often based on their professional opinions or expertise, women are more often victims of sexist and sexualized abuse and insults, the extremity of which can be increased thanks to the anonymity provided by the internet. These attacks not only affect the dignity of women but can also prevent women, both in the workplace, from expressing an opinion, resulting in their exclusion from the internet. This undermines the right to freedom of speech and opinion in a democratic society, limits professional opportunities, and strengthens a gender-specific democratic deficit. Another aspect is that the digital age has deepened control over women's bodies, speech, and activism.

In addition, sexist abuse of social networks, such as posting intimate visual content without the consent of those shown, is a form of violence that must be suppressed. Sexism is based on the idea that some people, most often women, are inferior because of their gender. The Internet provides a new dimension to the expression and transmission of sexism, especially sexist hate speech, to a wide audience, although the roots of sexism do not lie in technology, but in enduring gender inequalities. Sexism and sexist behavior occur in the daily life of a woman or a group of women. No woman is exempt from such speeches no matter what kind of work she does and how much income she has.

One of the burning issues is comments on social media. The root of sexism does not lie in technology and social networks but has only been transferred from 'offline' to 'online'. Sexist behavior, such as, for example, sexist hate speech, can escalate or incite openly offensive and threatening acts, including sexual abuse or violence, rape, or potentially deadly acts.

Addressing sexism is part of the positive obligation of states to guarantee human rights, gender equality and to prevent violence against women and girls in accordance with international human rights law and, for signatory states, the Istanbul Convention. Every direct hate speech, as well as every form of violence, should be reported to the competent institutions so that the one who does it gets a clear message that such a thing is not allowed, that it is punishable, and that he can be held accountable for it.

Exposure to sexism via the Internet can have serious and long-term consequences for a woman, can lead to feelings of insecurity, inferiority, shame to move, fear that someone will recognize her and thus be further exposed to insults and condemnation, all of the above can greatly affect her self-esteem and functioning in general.

There is an insight that the role of women in violent extremism is not limited to fulfilling the obligations of wife and mother, and that joining extremist groups is not exclusively imposed against the will of women who join extremist organizations.

It is important to emphasize that there is a brutal attitude towards women in such organizations and that these women are often "lured" by professional online PR techniques to promise women empowerment and a better life.

Recruitment through social media is extremely important because of the reach and impact it has on people in general, and on women in particular who are dissatisfied with their position in society and who have very problematic family relationships. In one respect, the online recruitment of women can be compared to disavowal whose main drivers are women.

GENDER-BASED MOTIVATION FOR VIOLENT EXTREMISM

VEO groups understand gender dynamics well and manipulate gender norms and stereotypes to their advantage in their recruitment and propaganda messages, messages that often specifically target men or women. For instance, the German alt-right campaign '#120db' (120 decibels — a reference to the volume of pocket alarms carried by some women as a defense against street harassment) blames immigrants and refugees for sexual violence in Europe. The campaign's website89 invites women to share their experiences with "imported violence" and join the "resistance" against the "replacement" of (white) Europeans with migrants.

In ISIL/Daesh's propaganda, the claim to constitute the "true" Muslim community (Ummah) in its territories in the Middle East has appealed to female European recruits who have suffered forms of discrimination on religious grounds in their home countries. For example, women who choose to wear the hijab or niqab have experienced forms of verbal and physical abuse in public due to the more visible marker of their Muslim identity.

Such feelings of isolation within a larger non-Muslim community were cited by some as motivation to join ISIL/Daesh, as well as the desire to have a sense of belonging within a Muslim community. Many have referred to the camaraderie and sisterhood among ISIL/Daesh women as being superior to the shallow relationships they had in European societies. The need for belonging has also been cited as motivation for enlisting in the ranks of far-right groups, groups that often appear to have healthy and family-like structures.

In VEOs across the spectrum, women have also been drawn by the prospect of becoming mothers to a future generation of children holding the group's ideology.

Statistics globally / locally of radicalization of women, girls:

"According to a 2018 study undertaken by the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, women comprised 13% of ISIL/Daesh FTFs or affiliates, and on average 17% of the nearly 20,000 FTFs accounted for as coming from the OSCE Region."
(Understanding the Role of Gender in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Lead to Terrorism)
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13

THE ROLE OF MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY IN VIOLENT EXTREMIST MOBILIZATION

In their recruiting and propaganda VEOs also take advantage of the notions of masculinity and femininity. In many traditional societies, "a good man" is often equated with being a strong family patriarch, defined in comparison to other men whom one seeks to surpass in status, wealth, and social standing. Men who have difficulty meeting traditional expectations of masculinity — such as being the main income earner, being respected and honored, or having access to sexual partners of choice — may find that VEOs offer a compelling substitute for confirming their masculinity. For example, ISIL/Daesh propaganda tends to portray fighters as hyper-masculine defenders of the faith or community, surrounded by attributes of wealth and sexual gratification.

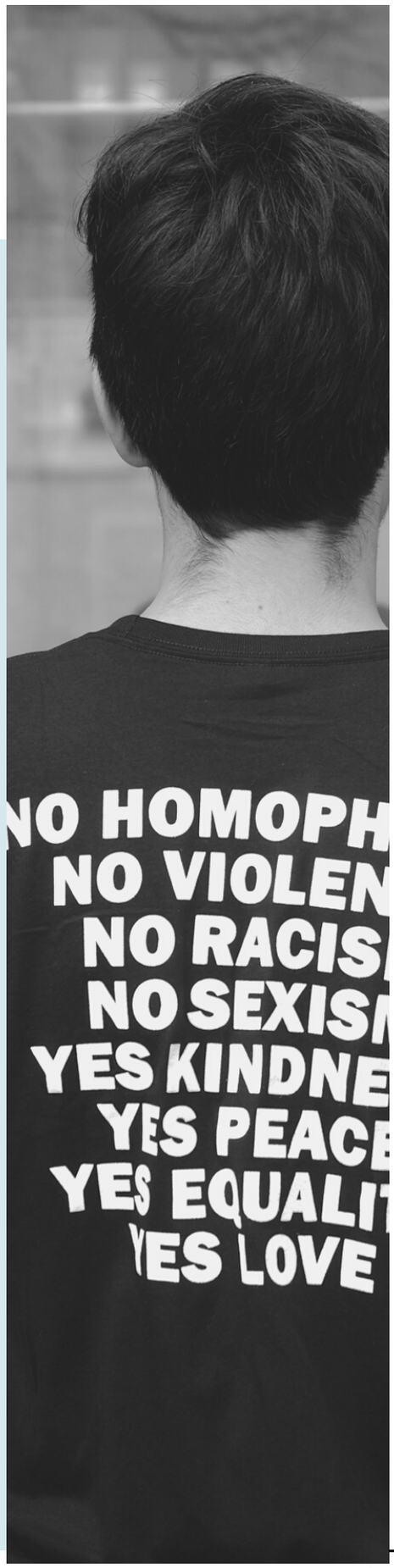
The acceptance and use of violence applied by violent extremist groups correspond to the masculine ethos of physical strength. Additionally, far-right violent extremist networks often appeal to historical narratives, of times when "men were men", fought on battlefields, and died in glory.

The element of battling for "what is right" in some VEO ideologies intends to project the image of a strict military order in which blood and honor are prime values, even if in reality this is not the case.

Additionally, alt-right extremist mobilization often relies on gender roles93 in which men are protectors and belong to the front-line, while the function of women is relegated to caring for the family. Some female members willingly subscribe to this dogma and actively oppose feminism, viewing the notion of equality between the sexes as challenging the mainstream of their (Western European or North American) societies.94

For instance, the notion of "trade wives" (traditional wives) in some alt-right movements, related to the "traditional" (white) family, defines the role of women as fulfilling domestic duties only. Emphasizing the "whiteness" of this image, the movement spreads racist views and opposes immigration.

In VEOs, strict adherence to men's and women's "traditional" gender roles often impacts how they establish their social order. VEOs are intimately familiar with how sex-based oppression and sexual and gender-based violence can be used to their advantage. This is done in many ways, including sexual slavery, human trafficking, rape and gang rape, restrictions on women's rights and access to basic social services, forced breeding, and even punishing women as "the enemy".



As is expressed in UNSCR 2331 (2016), the UN Security Council has found “that acts of sexual and gender-based violence, including when associated to trafficking in persons, are known to be part of the strategic objectives and ideology of certain terrorist groups, used as a tactic of terrorism and an instrument to increase their finances and their power through recruitment and the destruction of communities.”

The strict and systematic control of assigned gender roles also applies to men. Those who are not deemed mentally or physically strong enough to fight may be ostracized or even forcibly used as human shields. In certain terrorist groups, elements of sexualized violence are used to galvanize male fighters and entice recruits. In Europe and North America, such gendered narratives appeal to men who see violent forms of misogyny as a retribution for their own limitations.

The increasingly popular narrative of white men as victims of feminism has become the focus of the Men’s-Rights Movement (MRM) and is rife in far-right movements. The MRM voices hatred and resentment of women, and views feminism and the emancipation of women as emasculating and undermining “male dominance”. This misogynistic rhetoric ranges from disrespect to the promotion of violence against women.

Some MRM online chatrooms entertain arguments such as the inexistence of date rape or marital rape, while others celebrate and encourage misogynistic violence. For instance, so-called “involuntary celibates” (Incels) see their inability to find a sexual partner as a form of female oppression.99

They advocate violence against women, whom they hold accountable for their aggrieved entitlement. “Incel rebellion” was cited as motivation by the perpetrator of the April 2018 terrorist attack in Toronto, in which women were the primary targets. In policies, programs, and the media, the social construct of femininity has often been expressed as one of subservience and inferiority to men in the context of VERLT. The result is an inaccurate presentation of the extent to which women participate in VEOs. Media coverage of women affiliated with these groups often portrays female recruits solely as silent followers of their partners. It is a stereotype, however, that does not give justice to the full picture, since many women have initiated, supported, and incited the extremist cause.

The generic qualification of women as “harmless” and unlikely to perpetrate violence has undermined the accuracy of VERLT policies and operational responses. It also has clear counter-terrorism implications. For example, there have been cases of male VEO members dressing as women to escape crime scenes or gain access to restricted spaces, since they know that guards at security checkpoints are more lenient towards women, or that there are often not enough female personnel at such checkpoints to conduct searches of women.

15

HOW INCREASED GENDER EQUALITY CAN HELP COUNTERACT VIOLENT EXTREMISM

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS :

“PVE plans should foster gender equality and empower women by: Including a thorough gender analysis in assessing the drivers and impact of radicalization and violent extremism that leads to terrorism; Recognizing the broad range of roles women play in preventing, supporting, and as victims of violent extremism and mainstream gender throughout; Addressing the concepts of masculinity and femininity, gender norms, and stereotypes that are exploited by violent extremists; Supporting women’s leadership and participation including such areas as government, security, and civil society with specific commitments for doing so; Ensuring that women’s rights are not encroached upon in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism; Creating a safe environment that protects against and pursues accountability for sexual and gender-based violence and violations perpetrated by violent extremists; Aligning commitments in PVE plans with those in any national or regional action plans on women, peace, and security; Working to promote gender equality in all communities regardless of social, cultural, or religious factors; and Facilitating information exchange on the integration of gender perspectives as well as women, peace, and security perspectives into PVE policies and programming at all levels.

VICTIMS AND REINTEGRATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN RADICALIZED

The UN Plugom for action (1995) described how girls and women are especially affected by armed conflict because of their unequal status in society and their sex.

Among the specific effects experienced by women of all ages are displacement, loss of home and property, loss or involuntary disappearance of close relatives, poverty and family separation and disintegration, victimization through acts of murder, terrorism, torture, involuntary disappearance, sexual slavery, rape, and sexual abuse. If one intends to destroy a culture, women are tactical targets of special significance because of their important roles within the family structure (Seifert, 1993).

Compounding these gender-specific effects are the lifelong social, economic, and psychologically traumatic consequences of armed conflict and foreign occupation and domination (UN, 1995).

17

Women's responsibilities during and after armed conflict are formidable. They hold families and communities together through their key roles in food production, economic activities, caring for children and other family members (Bennett, Bexley, & Warnock, 1995), and they act to preserve the social order (UN, 1995). They risk their lives by crossing minefields and braving shelling and bombing while seeking food, water, and firewood (Gardam, 1997). Although not often involved in the decisions leading to conflict or its end, women serve important roles in nurturing values of reconciliation in their children (El-Bushra & Lopez, 1994).

In some war-tom countries, such as Rwanda (where women now make up 70% of the population), there may be so few men that women are called upon to assume the responsibilities of both mother and father, in addition to dealing with their deep wounds (Human Rights WatcWAfrica, 1996). Because armed conflict often requires women to take on expanded and sometimes new roles and responsibilities, they may experience greater equality with men. After fighting stops the resumption of normal life and traditional roles often curtails progress made in elevating women's status.

The Machel Study eloquently addresses how girls and women are differentially affected by armed conflict and describe the tremendous challenges in responding to gender-specific violence. Although statistics are increasingly available on sexual violence against women during warfare, they are not generally available for the other ways that women suffer during armed conflict (Gardam, 1997). Gardam observed that this is hardly surprising because, traditionally, men compile the data and inevitably assign women to categories used for male civilians, thus ignoring, and consequently obscuring, the unique suffering of women. Gardam (1997) argued that [girls and] women suffer under a double disability compared to combatants because women possess inferior status not only as civilians but more so as women civilians. For example, although 38% of residents suffered from malnutrition in Kabul in 1995, the figure was much higher among girls, because in Afghan culture boys are fed first and girls frequently receive leftovers.

El-Bushra and Lopez (1994) observed how few support systems exist at the community level for women suffering psychosocial effects of conflict and how most governmental agencies do not consider psychosocial assistance as part of their work. NGOs seldom focus on women's psychosocial problems resulting from armed conflict (El-Bushra and Lopez, 1994).

COUNTERNARRATIVES: WHAT ARE COUNTER-NARRATIVES?

Counter Narratives are written, oral, and visual representations that allow us to examine alternate perspectives that may be missing or underrepresented. For any given topic, you could select resources that represent a wide range of viewpoints, challenge stereotypical assumptions, and illustrate the diversity and complexity of our world. Young people can develop critical reading and thinking skills by exploring and analyzing experiences and perspectives that differ from the traditional narrative. The idea of “counter-“ itself implies a space of resistance against traditional domination. A counter-narrative goes beyond the notion that those in relative positions of power can just tell the stories of those in the margins. Instead, these must come from the margins, from the perspectives and voices of those individuals. A counter-narrative thus goes beyond the telling of stories that take place in the margins.

The effect of a counter-narrative is to empower and give agency to those communities. By choosing their own words and telling their own stories, members of marginalized communities provide alternative points of view, helping to create complex narratives truly presenting their realities. In addition - to provide resources, young people can also construct Counter Narratives themselves.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Every democratic society needs an aware critical public and free media, but over time these needs are abused and directed toward achieving individual, political, or other degrading goals. It often happens that hate speech reappears on the public scene and in the media and society in general. The right to free expression is very often abused, and national, religious, and racial intolerance come to the fore, primarily in virtual form. Physical conflicts are often generated based on frequent hate speech, which poses a threat not only to the development of democracy in the country but also to the general security of citizens.

It is, therefore, necessary to work to systematically eliminate the social and economic conditions conducive to the emergence and spread of violent extremism, as well as to take measures to prevent and combat violent extremism. Early intervention to prevent violent extremism is essential, but it is also a challenge. In terms of promotion and recruitment, which is mainly done via the Internet, violent extremist groups have a modern concept of acting similarly to strong global brands. Through online advertising and active social media profiles, such groups are largely able to attract and register new members in the same way as global corporations.

Given this situation, additional initiatives and cooperation are needed to address this issue, which should include practitioners, academics, policymakers, connecting the public and private sectors, and encouraging international cooperation and exchange of best practices. Radicalization on the Internet, which leads to violent extremism, and even terrorism, is a complex phenomenon and its prevention requires long-term efforts of all relevant actors, various policy areas, and activities at the local, national, regional, and global levels.

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