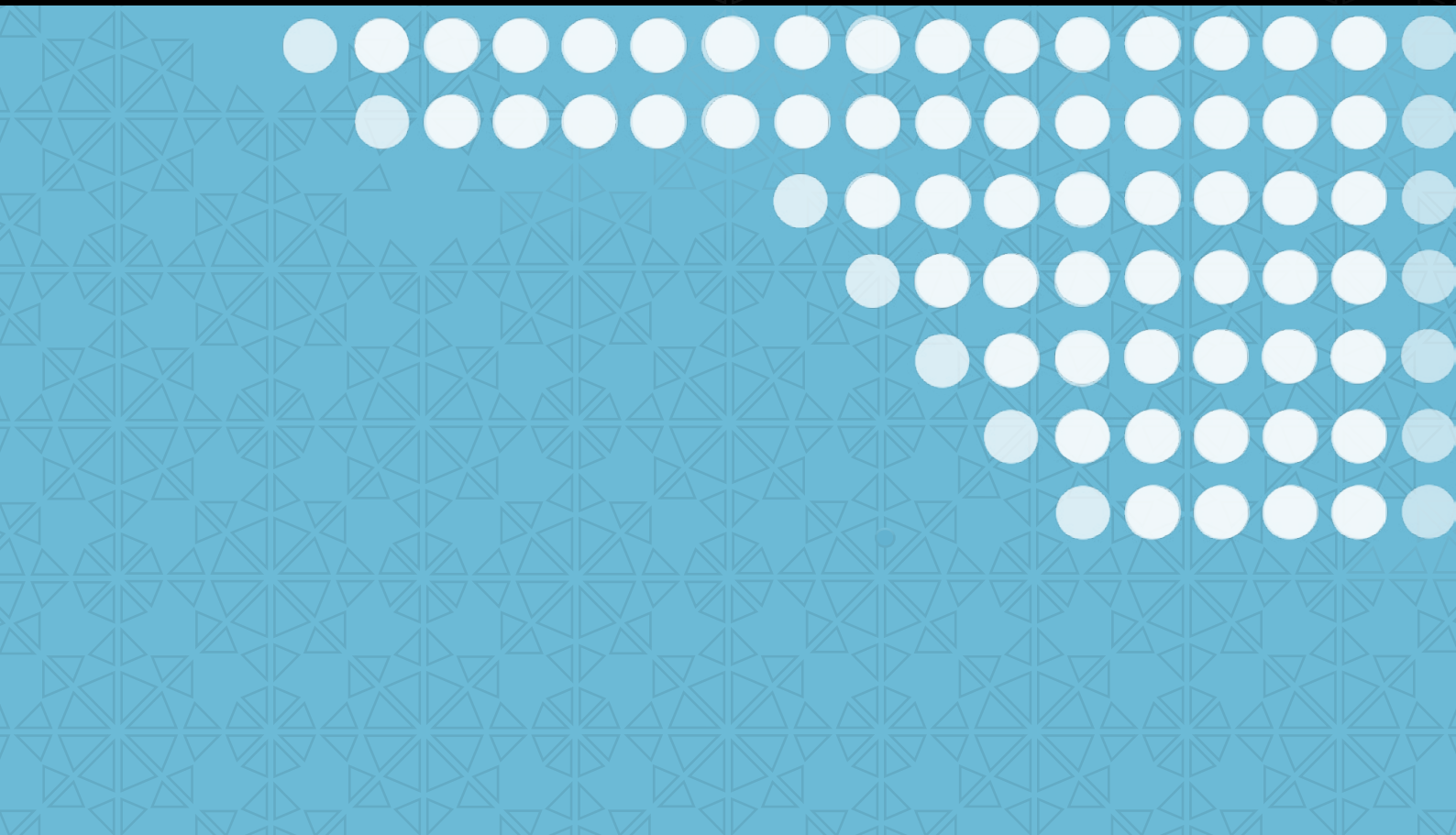
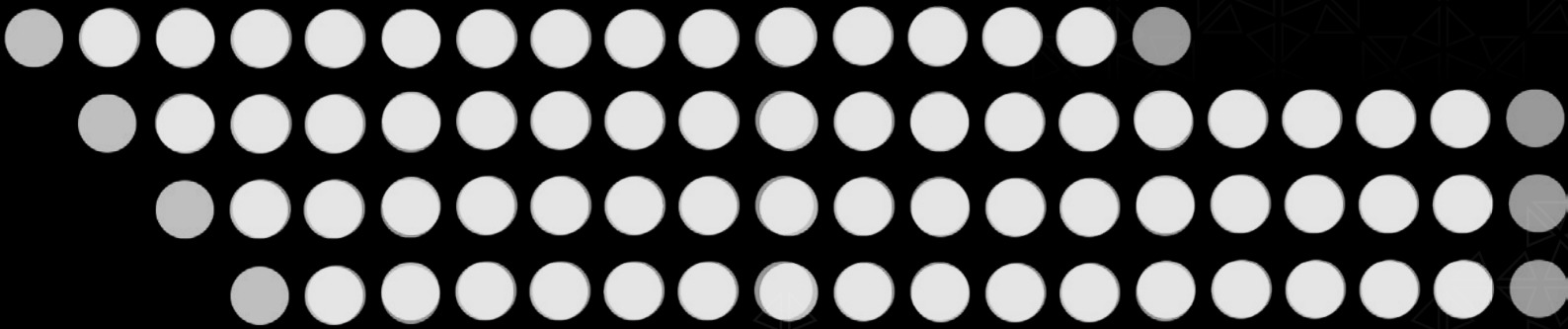


BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL RADICAL RIGHT COUNTER-NARRATIVE CAMPAIGN

A HOW-TO GUIDE



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DR. WILLIAM ALLCHORN



The *CARR-Hedayah Radical Right Counter Narratives Project* is a year-long project between CARR and Hedayah that is funded by the EU STRIVE programme. It is designed to create one of the first comprehensive online toolkits for practitioners and civil society engaged in radical right extremist counter-narrative campaigns. This How-to-Guide provides guidelines and advice on how to develop an effective and ethical radical right counter-narrative, based on different overarching and region-specific reports on violent right-wing extremist narratives, and case studies of radical right counter-narratives. The Guide may serve as a training material resource for practitioners and other frontline workers dealing with counter-narratives.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. William Allchorn is a specialist on anti-Islamic protest movements and radical right social movements in the UK and Western Europe. His PhD thesis mapped political, policing and local authority responses to the English Defence League in five UK locations. William has recently finished his first academic monograph with Routledge – looking at policy responses to the EDL and Britain First over the past decade. His previous published work has looked at the dynamics of activism within anti-Islam movements and counter-extremism responses towards such groups. William has taught undergraduate courses and given lectures on the radical right in Western Europe; both at the social movement and party political level. Previous consultancy has included delivering counter narrative engagement sessions in the North East of England and putting together a ‘Countering Radical Right Narratives’ educational pack. As of April 2019, William Allchorn is the Associate Director of CARR.

The views expressed in this practical Guide are the opinions of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the views of Hedayah, the Centre for Analysis of the Radical Right or the European Union.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, counter-narratives—defined as messages that can “[de-mystify], deconstruct or delegitimise extremist narratives”¹—have become a key part of western efforts to combat terrorism. Placed at the softer end of counter-terrorism (CT) tactics, the use of communications in order to disrupt organisations committed to violent extremist causes has come to occupy the ‘upstream’ space of preventative measures available to governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and civil-society actors wishing to counter political violence at the ideational level. Such a communications-focused approach has become especially important as terrorist organisations have become more adept at using social media in order to radicalise and recruit. The internet and social media have been used to circumvent traditional forms of media and face-to-face encounters in order to spread messages using targeted propaganda techniques. As radical right terrorism picks up momentum, a ‘war of words and ideas,’ in addition to counter-terrorism activities on the ground, is much-needed in order to combat the threat of radical right extremist violence. In particular, and as seen through the examples of attacks in Christchurch, El Paso, Halle, and Hanau,² the use of manifestos, online meme culture and conspiracy theories has knit together disparate, transnational groups of radical right actors in favour of accelerationist, political violence.³ The seemingly sporadic and solo actor nature of the attacks has posed a key challenge to Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) practitioners at the time of writing in July 2020.

Despite this renewed challenge and imperative, little guidance is available to practitioners, civil society, and NGOs on how to design successful counter-narrative campaigns specific to the radical right. Indeed, the majority of handbooks, guidance notes, and briefing documents on the topic tend to privilege either an ideologically agnostic approach, or one specific to Islamist extremism.⁴ This training guide is designed to take practitioners and NGOs step-by-step through the stages of building, executing, and evaluating a successful radical right counter-narrative (RRCN) campaign, with annexes at the end devoted specifically to effectiveness and ethics. This report was informed by recommendations from a group of experts and practitioners that convened in York, UK, from 24-25 September 2019; the latest research on radical right extremism; counter-narrative campaigns and techniques; and Hedayah’s 9-step model for constructing a counter-narrative campaign.⁵ Notably, the structure of this Guide follows the 9-step model of Hedayah’s regional “How-To Guides,” and therefore, some of the

¹ Tuck, H. and Silverman, T., ‘The Counter-Narrative Handbook’, London: ISD, 2016, 65, online at: https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Counter-narrative-Handbook_1.pdf.

² Helsel, P., ‘Suspect in Christchurch mosque shootings charged with terrorism’, NBC News, 21 May 2019, online at: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/suspect-christchurch-mosque-shootings-charged-terrorism-n1008161>; Romo, V. ‘El Paso Walmart Shooting Suspect Pleads Not Guilty’, NPR, 10 October 2019, online at: <https://www.npr.org/2019/10/10/769013051/el-paso-walmart-shooting-suspect-pleads-not-guilty>; BBC, ‘German Halle gunman admits far-right synagogue attack’, 11 October 2019, online at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50011898>; Hucal, S., ‘Racially motivated terror attack in Hanau puts Germany’s right wing extremism into focus’, ABC News, 27 February 2020, online at: <https://abcnews.go.com/US/racially-motivated-terror-attack-hanau-puts-germanys-wing/story?id=69128298>.

³ For a good overview of the 2019 wave of radical right extremist attacks, see: Macklin, G., ‘The El Paso Terrorist Attack: The Chain Reaction of Global Right-Wing Terror’, CTC Sentinel, December 2019, online at: <https://ctc.usma.edu/app/uploads/2019/12/CTC-SENTINEL-112019.pdf>.

⁴ See: Briggs, R. & Feve, S., ‘Review of Programs to Counter Narratives of Violent Extremism’, London: ISD, 2013; Tuck, H. & Silverman, H., ‘The Counter Narrative Handbook’, London: ISD, 2016; Reynolds, L & Tuck H., ‘The Counter Narrative Monitoring and Evaluation Handbook’, London: ISD, 2016; Silverman, Stewart, Amanullah and Birdwell, ‘The Impact of Counter Narratives’, London: ISD, 2016; & Hedayah/ICCT, ‘Developing Effective Counter-Narrative Frameworks for Countering Violent Extremism’, Hedayah/ICCT: Abu Dhabi/Hague, September 2014.

⁵ Zeiger, S., ‘Undermining Violent Extremist Narratives in South East Asia: A How-To Guide’, Abu Dhabi: Hedayah, August 2016, online at: <https://s3-eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/hedayah-wp-offload/hedayah/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/17120110/File-3182016115528.pdf>

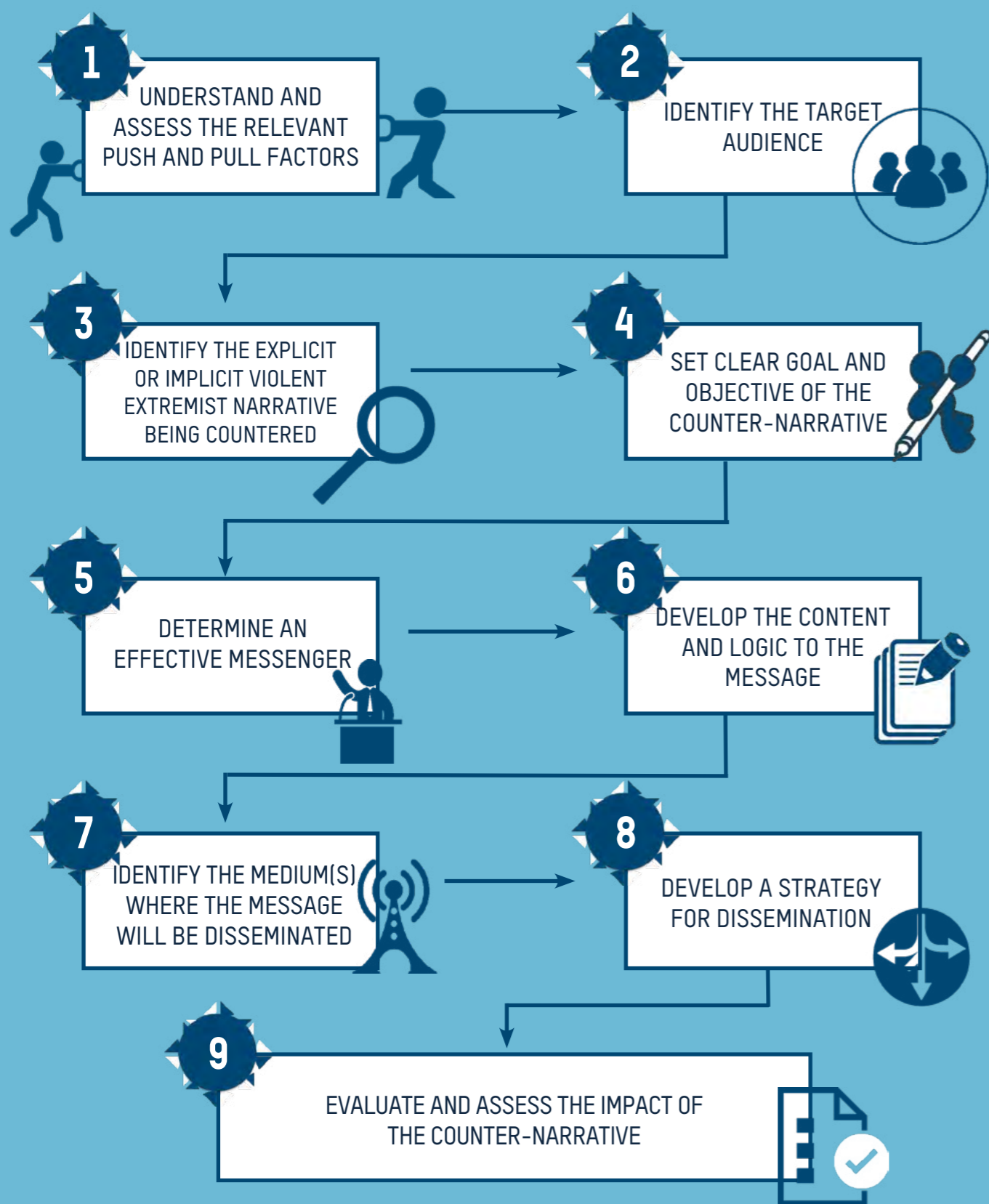
logic and flow of this document mirrors those previous documents.⁶ Coupled with three training videos, this guide intends to play an essential part in building capacity for on-the-ground personnel in under-resourced contexts. It also intends to provide fresh focus to countries in more established CT contexts on how they can match counter-messaging with the metastasising nature of radical right terrorism.

⁶ For more examples, see: Elsayed, L., Faris, T., & Zeiger, S., 'Undermining Violent Extremist Narratives in the Middle East and North Africa: A How-To Guide', Abu Dhabi: Hedayah, December 2017, online at: <https://hedayah-wp-offload.s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/hedayah/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/17114835/File-18122018114055.pdf>; Zeiger, S., 'Undermining Violent Extremist Narratives in South East Asia: A How-To Guide', Abu Dhabi: Hedayah, August 2016, online at: <https://s3-eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/hedayah-wp-offload/hedayah/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/17120110/File-3182016115528.pdf>; Zeiger, S., 'Undermining Violent Extremist Narratives in East Africa: A How-To Guide', Abu Dhabi: Hedayah, August 2018, online at: <https://hedayah-wp-offload.s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/hedayah/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/17113555/File-18201819229.pdf>.



DEVELOPING A COUNTER-NARRATIVE

In accordance with Hedayah’s previous series of “How-To Guides,” there are 9 steps to developing a counter-narrative for CVE (Zeiger, 2016):



1 UNDERSTAND AND ASSESS RELEVANT PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

For any countering violent extremism intervention, including those aimed at countering the core messages of violent extremists, the first step of the process in designing such interventions is to understand the key drivers of radicalization. In the context of the radical right, there are multiple push factors on the one hand (i.e. environmental & psychological “negatives” that drive them into becoming active) and pull factors on the other (i.e. internal “attractions,” “offers” or “needs” that draw someone into violent forms of activism).⁷ However, it should be noted that there has been recent literature by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) that has defined these drivers of radicalization as “structural drivers” and “individual incentives.”⁸ As such, in the below framework, all two categories are used to more articulately differentiate between push and pull factors.

Added to this, there are also ‘enablers’ (or ‘enabling factors’) that seize on these push and pull factors in order to escalate a grievance (preyed upon by online sympathisers and offline actors) into violent ideas and action.⁹ In the context of radical right extremism, this might be in a more active vein by so-called online alt-right ‘influencers’ or in a more passive vein through the availability of certain neo-Nazi or Identitarian texts and conspiracy theories depicting an inevitable acceleration towards a ‘racial holy war’ or a ‘Great Replacement.’

In any case, the chart below summarises the main drivers of radicalisation among violent radical right extremists. This is based on key academic studies into the drivers of radical right violent activism and terrorism. Such a list should not be treated as exhaustive and there may be more specific factors, which are more prominent among some audiences, local contexts and radicalisation pathways than others. The proposed list paints a picture of the unique vulnerabilities present within this form of extremism that any radical right counter-narrative campaign will have to engage with and ultimately tackle during design, implementation, and evaluation.

FIGURE 1 Push and Pull Factors in Violent Radical Right Extremism

PUSH FACTORS / STRUCTURAL MOTIVATORS	PULL FACTORS / INDIVIDUAL INCENTIVES
<p>Social/Psychological</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of Religious, Ethnic or Cultural Marginalisation, Loss & Endangerment (related to Religious, Ethnic or Cultural Changes)¹⁰ 	<p>Psychological</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‘Buzz’¹¹ or Thrill Seeking¹² within Direct Action Activism Attractiveness of Violent¹³ and/or Performative Masculinity¹⁴

⁷ USAID, ‘The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency’, Washington, D.C: USAID, September 2011, online at: https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pdacs400.pdf.

⁸ Khalil, J., & Zeuthen, M., ‘Countering Violent Extremism and Risk Reduction A Guide to Programme Design and Evaluation’, London: Royal United Services Institute, online at: https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/20160608_cve_and_rr.combined_online4.pdf.

⁹ Hamm, M.S. and Spaaj, R., *The Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism*, Columbia University Press, 2017, pp. 115.

¹⁰ McClaren, L. & Johnson, M., ‘Resources, Group Conflict and Symbols: Explaining Anti-immigration Hostility in Britain.’ *Political Studies*, 55: 709-732, 2007; Mudde, C., *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 205; & Rydgren, J., ‘The Sociology of the Radical Right’, *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 33, 2007, pp. 249.

¹¹ Pilkington, H. *Loud and Proud: Passion and Politics in the English Defence League*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016 & Hartleb, F. *Lone Wolves: The New Terrorism of Right-Wing Single Actors*, SAGE Press, 2020, P.112.

¹² Bubolz, B. & Simi, P., ‘The Problem of Overgeneralization: The Case of Mental Health Problems and U.S. Violent White Supremacists’ *American Behavioural Scientist* 2019 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764219831746> & Hartleb, F. *Lone Wolves: The New Terrorism of Right-Wing Single Actors*, SAGE Press, 2020, P.112.

¹³ Busher, J., *The Making of Anti-Muslim Protest: Grassroots Activism in the English Defence*, London: Routledge, 2015.

¹⁴ Schumpe, B.M., Belanger, J.J., & Moyano, M., ‘The Role of Sensation Seeking in Political Violence: An Extension of the Significance Quest Theory’, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 118 (4), 2018.

PUSH FACTORS / STRUCTURAL MOTIVATORS	PULL FACTORS / INDIVIDUAL INCENTIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broader Processes of Social Fragmentation, Isolation and Disintegration¹⁵ • Childhood Trauma (e.g. Bullying, Abuse and Emotional Disintegration)¹⁶ • Poor Mental Health (e.g. Autism, Depression, & Personality Disorders)¹⁷ <p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden Global Economic Change or Upheaval—either through Recession or Substantial Shift in means of Production¹⁸ • Unemployment, Low Levels of Educational Attainment & Career Success¹⁹ <p>Political</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of Political Trust in Mainstream Actors around Handling of Migration, as well as associated Cultural and Security Politics²⁰ • Sense of Political Silencing & Exclusion from Mainstream Political Institutions²¹ 	<p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer of Brotherhood, Belonging, & Comradery²² • Offer of Social Empowerment and/or Social Engagement²³ <p>Political/Ideological</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractiveness of Control or Sense-Making over 'Outside Forces'²⁴ • Attractiveness of Alternative Outlet for Political Engagement and Activism²⁵

¹⁵ Druxes, H. and Simpson, P.A., 'Introduction: Pegida as a European Far-Right Populist Movement.' *German Politics and Society* 34 (4): 1–16, 2016 & Hartleb, F., *Lone Wolves: The New Terrorism of Right-Wing Single Actors*, SAGE Press, 2020, P.112.

¹⁶ Pilkington, H. *Loud and Proud: Passion and Politics in the English Defence League*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016 & Hartleb, F. *Lone Wolves: The New Terrorism of Right-Wing Single Actors*, SAGE Press, 2020, P.112.

¹⁷ Bubolz, B. & Simi, P., 'The Problem of Overgeneralization: The Case of Mental Health Problems and U.S. Violent White Supremacists' *American Behavioral Scientist* 2019 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764219831746> & Hartleb, F. *Lone Wolves: The New Terrorism of Right-Wing Single Actors*, SAGE Press, 2020, P.112.

¹⁸ Betz, Hanz-Georg, *Radical Right-wing Populism in Western Europe*, Houndsmill: MacMillan, 1994, pp. 28.

¹⁹ This has been especially the cases with far right solo-actor terrorists, the most prominent being Anders Behring Breivik (2011) and Patrick Crusius (2019).

²⁰ Hartleb, F., *Lone Wolves: The New Terrorism of Right-Wing Single Actors*, SAGE Press, 2020 & Huggler, J., 'Fear of Islam not a major motivation for German 'Islamisation' protesters, study finds.' *The Daily Telegraph*, 19 January 2015: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/germany/11348612/Fear-of-Islam-not-a-major-motivation-for-German-Islamisation-protesters-study-finds.html>.

²¹ Pilkington, H. *Loud and Proud: Passion and Politics in the English Defence League*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016.

²² Busher, J., 'The Making of Anti-Muslim Protest: Grassroots Activism in the English Defence', London: Routledge, 2015 & Virchow, F. 'Performance, Emotion and Ideology: On the Creation of "Collectives of Emotion" and Worldview in the Contemporary German Far Right', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 36(2), P.155.

²³ Abbas, Tahir. 'Ethnicity and Politics in Contextualising Far Right and Islamist Extremism.' *Perspectives on Terrorism* 11, no. 3 (2017): 54–61.

²⁴ Hartleb, F., *Lone Wolves: The New Terrorism of Right-Wing Single Actors*, SAGE Press, 2020.

²⁵ Ibid.

ENABLING FACTORS

- Contact with 'Person of Influence'²⁶ or activists within Radical Right Extremist Milieus, either online or offline
- 'Calls to action' by extremist groups after particular flashpoints (e.g. child sexual exploitation, inter-racial rioting or Islamist terror attack)²⁷
- Availability of Extremist Texts (such as William Pierce's Turner Diaries or Renaud Camus' Great Replacement)²⁸
- Online Forums and Communities (such as Iron March, 8kun, and neo-Nazi Telegram Channels)²⁹

2 IDENTIFY THE TARGET AUDIENCE

The next step in the process of developing a counter-narrative to radical right violent extremism is to identify the main target audience your campaign wants to address. Like with any other marketing campaign,³⁰ it is important to target and version different messages directly with a concrete sense of the audience in mind. A description of the specific target audience should include age, gender, education level, localization (i.e. the "spaces" and "places" they occupy), as well as their priority interests and the online activities and habits they engage in.³¹ During the September 2019 workshop, an expert from a leading, global advertising agency highlighted the importance of knowing exactly what you want from your audience before starting a counter-narrative campaign and using a simple model of "getting someone, to do something, by saying something."³²

Here, when defining and researching your target radical right audience, it is good to be as specific as possible about the demographics, habits, interests, and idioms used within the milieu where the intervention will take place. For example, if you are putting together a radical right counter-narrative campaign in the wake of a neo-Nazi terror attack, it is highly likely that you will be aiming to reach young men between the ages of 18–35 using alternative online social media platforms (e.g. 4chan, 8kun, Neinchan or Telegram) to access violent, neo-Nazi propaganda. This is because studies suggest that attackers are usually young males between the ages of 18–35, with particular difficulties occurring during adolescence and among individuals who have experienced some kind of social isolation compounded by some type of personality disorder or an underlying mental-health issue.³³ Additionally, these individuals often use the act of terrorism to achieve a form of notoriety or empowerment. Your goal in this case might therefore be to divert them away from such forums through sowing seeds of doubt about the racially nationalistic and dehumanising aspects of their ideology that lead to violence. By knowing your audience, it will be much easier to think about the type of intervention that is appropriate to them.

²⁶ This has been especially the cases with far right solo-actor terrorists, including Copeland (1999), Sonboly (2016), Osborne (2017), Tarrant (2019), & Crusius (2019).

²⁷ These examples are especially the case on more culturally nationalist scenes who tend to emerge from extremely local antagonist extremist milieus.

²⁸ Hamm, M.S. and Spaaj, R., *The Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism*, Columbia University Press, 2017.

²⁹ Macklin, G., 'The El Paso Terrorist Attack: The Chain Reaction of Global Right-Wing Terror', *CTC Sentinel*, 12(1), 2019—especially when it leads to the Lowering of Moral Thresholds to Violence within Particular Online Extremist Milieus.

³⁰ Here, 'marketing campaigns' are defined as any strategic form of communication that is designed to persuade an audience into adopting a certain attitude or pursuing a certain action. Examples of other marketing campaigns (besides that used in a CVE context) would include those designed to promote commercial product or service, or send an important public health message to citizens.

³¹ For further examples of these items, see: Miller-Idriss, C., *Hate in the Homeland: New Global Far Right*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2020) & Tuck, H. & Silverman, H., *The Counter Narrative Handbook*, London: ISD, 2016.

³² CARR-Hedayah Radical Right Counter Narratives Project, 'Expert Workshop Report', London/Abu Dhabi: CARR/Hedayah, pp. 16.

³³ Mental health should not, however, be used as an excuse to explain away the agency of these attackers. See, for example: Bubolz, B. F. & Simi, P., 'The Problem of Overgeneralization: The Case of Mental Health Problems and U.S. Violent White Supremacists', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764219831746> & Hartleb, F., *Lone Wolves: The New Terrorism of Right-Wing Single Actors*, SAGE Press, 2020.

When designing a radical right counter-narrative campaign, it is, therefore, highly useful to engage in a sustained period of ethnographic research of the group you are focusing on. This research can be conducted through assessment of online presence but also through offline focus-group research, with a representative sample of those outside of, but still sympathetic to, viewpoints harboured in radical right extremist milieus. Such research is required in order to get a real sense of their demographic profile, attitudes, opinions, likes, and dislikes, as well as online habits (e.g. platforms frequented, content most shared and messengers that they trust the most).³⁴ Moreover, more innovative campaigns might attempt to blend both approaches, with an online call to action being measured in offline results and data, or vice versa.³⁵ Learning, therefore, about the online platforms and offline spaces that your audience inhabits, and reading up about the language, ideology, worldviews, and cultures of the group you are targeting, will help you scope out what ‘cuts through’ and what does not for that particular audience.³⁶

To give some flavour of a radical right counter-narrative campaign, below is a list of possible scenarios, audiences, and interventions a practitioner or NGO might wish to use in this space:³⁷

FIGURE 2 Examples of Radical Right Counter-Narrative Scenarios

BACKGROUND SCENARIO	
You have been tasked to put together a radical right counter-narrative campaign in the wake of a neo-Nazi terror attack.	
TARGET AUDIENCE	COUNTER-NARRATIVE CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE
Young people using alternative social media or gaming platforms between the ages of 18-35.	Peer-to-Peer online counter-narrative interventions designed to delegitimise forms of violence.

³⁴ For example, if your target audience is people between the ages of 40-65, you might think more about a community-led newspaper campaign, whilst if the target audience are younger people aged between 18-25, say, then using new social media platforms (such as Tik-Tok, Snapchat and Instagram) and a set of well-placed videos might be more appropriate.
³⁵ For an example of this in the radical right space, see: Counter-Narrative Toolkit, ‘Hours Against Hate’ Case Study, online at: <http://www.counternarratives.org/html/case-studies-entry?id=19>.
³⁶ For more on online and offline methodologies when researching radical right groups, see: Ashe, S.D., Busher, J., Macklin, G., & Winter, A. (eds.), *Researching the Far Right: Theory, Method and Practice*, London: Routledge, 2020, & Littler, M. & Lee, B., *Digital Extremisms: Readings in Violence, Radicalisation and Extremism in the Online Space*, London: Palgrave MacMillan.
³⁷ N.B.: These are based on recent campaigns and examples from recent trends in radical right extremist activism. They are not a replacement for thorough market research into your own specific context.

BACKGROUND SCENARIO	
You have been tasked with diverting people away from online clandestine neo-Nazi networks.	
TARGET AUDIENCE	COUNTER-NARRATIVE CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE
Young people (aged 18-35) involved in online clandestine neo-Nazi networks but exist normally in the ‘outside world’.	Platform-endorsed messaging targeting such users and aimed at delegitimising racially nationalist and dehumanising language.

BACKGROUND SCENARIO	
You are situated in an area with a high frequency of sizeable anti-Islam protests.	
TARGET AUDIENCE	COUNTER-NARRATIVE CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE
Young adults (aged 11-18) who live in a peripheral or post-industrial town who might get sucked into these protests.	Social media and offline schools-based educational programmes designed to highlight risks of engaging in such protests.

BACKGROUND SCENARIO	
You are situated in an area with a high frequency of commemorative marches that glorify Nazism.	
TARGET AUDIENCE	COUNTER-NARRATIVE CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE
Older people (aged 40-65) who live in a relatively affluent but homogeneously white Western city who have low levels of political education.	Innovative offline advertising campaign at site of protest highlighting donations to anti-racist charities for each mile marched.

BACKGROUND SCENARIO	
You are situated in an area with a recent increase of refugees and asylum seekers.	
TARGET AUDIENCE	COUNTER-NARRATIVE CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE
Older people (aged 40-65) who live in such areas.	Innovative offline billboard advertising campaign highlighting stories and similarities with refugees and asylum seekers.

BACKGROUND SCENARIO	
You are situated at a University with a high frequency of Identitarian activism and 'stickering' ³⁸ campaigns.	
TARGET AUDIENCE	COUNTER-NARRATIVE CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE
University students (ages of 18-25) who are situated in such an area.	Creative counter-'stickering' campaign involving humorous depictions of hipster Nazi's.

BACKGROUND SCENARIO	
You are situated in a country with a large number of returning radical right extremist fighters.	
TARGET AUDIENCE	COUNTER-NARRATIVE CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE
Young radical right extremist foreign fighters (ages of 18-35) who have been or are returning from the Ukraine.	Peer-to-Peer offline counter-narrative interventions designed to delegitimise forms of violence.

³⁸ Here, 'Stickering' is defined as the act of putting up small poster-like stickers conveying radical right propaganda. It has become especially popular with Identitarian groups (such as Generation Identity, Identity Australia, and Action Zealands) and Neo-Nazi cells (such as National Action) as stickers can be easily downloaded and printed from templates online.

BACKGROUND SCENARIO	
You are situated in an East German town with an annual White Power Music festival.	
TARGET AUDIENCE	COUNTER-NARRATIVE CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE
Young radical right extremist heavy metal fans (ages of 18-35) who visit White Power Music festivals.	A clandestine distribution of counter-narrative T-shirts that reveal a counter-narrative message once washed.

FIGURE 3 Types of Radical Right Extremist Target Audiences

GENERAL AUDIENCE	KEY INFLUENCERS
Counter-narratives aimed at a general audience may emphasize shared cultural or historical values, may underline common themes of humanity, or may emphasize peace, tolerance, and solidarity. ³⁹ In the context of the radical right, campaigns aimed at a general audience may include online debunking videos, offline newspaper campaigns or humorous counter campaigns. It is important to note here that the counter-narrative for a general audience should still be as localised (to a particular media platform or geographical area) as possible and tailored to fit the interests and needs of that community. Offline grievances, challenges and interests a community faces will vary from country to country and region to region within the same country.	This type of target audience refers to influential community actors such as celebrities, teachers, peer groups, family members or social workers. Key influencers are the individuals that have the best ability to impact "vulnerable" individuals. However, key influencers may lack knowledge of how to engage and counter-message. For example, mothers of victims of terrorist attacks may have powerful stories but may not be trained on how to deliver their message. Therefore, campaigns aimed at key influencers can incorporate elements of building the knowledge and skills necessary for effective message delivery.
SYMPATHIZERS	
This category refers to individuals who do not actively or publicly/vocally support violent extremism but may be sympathetic to some of the arguments made in terrorist propaganda due to the online channels they follow or offline economic, cultural, social and historical disintegration in their own particular area.	
Sympathizers are passive in their support for violent extremism; they may not act when faced with messages of violent extremism, but silently agree with those messages. This category also includes individuals that are "at risk" of radicalisation or actively viewing radical right terrorist propaganda online. ⁴⁰	

³⁹ Briggs, R. & Feve, S., 'Review of Programs to Counter Narratives of Violent Extremism', London: ISD, 2013, online at: <https://core.ac.uk/reader/30675430>.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

JUSTIFIERS

The category of “justifiers” includes individual who actively justify the arguments and actions of terrorist groups in a public or semi-public way. This encompasses, for example, an alt-right group or online influencers that actively support secessionist immigration policies, circulate accelerationist ideology or endorse demographic replacement conspiracy theories.

PERPETRATORS AND TERRORISTS

This is the most challenging target audience to reach for counter-narratives as they are comprised of dedicated individuals that are actively participating in terrorism or inciting violent activities to achieve their political, ideological or religious objectives. In the context of the radical right, this would include recent lone-wolf actors but also vigilante type groups and committed activists of violent street-based protest movements.

3 IDENTIFY THE EXPLICIT OR IMPLICIT IDEOLOGY, CONSPIRACY THEORIES AND NARRATIVES BEING COUNTERED

The next step in the process is to identify the main message of radical right extremist propaganda that the counter-message will address. The narrative that is countered can be either explicitly or implicitly and indirectly addressed (i.e. providing an alternative narrative or solution to a grievance). Often described in policy-making circles as “red-teaming exercises” it is important to adopt the mind-set of a radical right protagonist and think about the messages they use when they try to influence and manipulate their target audience. This is not an exercise in replication but rather one of becoming aware of how your messaging might compete, ‘rub up against’ or engage with their messaging, assessing the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats afforded both to your campaign as well as that of the extremist actors.

When it comes to the radical right, there is a wide range of messages that actors use to persuade individuals into violent activism. These might be around notions that irreversible demographic trends are leading to the endangerment of Western culture or that a racial holy war between different ethnic groups is somehow inevitable, with the latter being accelerated through acts of terrorism, political violence and the destruction of the prevailing liberal democratic system.⁴¹ Building on the Radical Right Counter-Narratives (RRCN) Project’s Expert Workshop and Country Reports,⁴² the most prevalent narratives within radical right extremist circles at the present moment (in 2020) are:

Cultural-Threat Conspiracy-Theory Narrative

Example: ‘Cultural identities are under threat, elites are complicit in this, and this will end in either a clash of civilisations and/or a “great replacement” of indigenous European culture.’⁴³

One of the most common radical right narratives identified by participants in the RRCN Project Expert Workshop and Country Reports is related to a cultural-threat conspiracy theory, a threat perceived as being especially to the ‘Christian West’ from Islam and ‘Islamisation.’ Cultural-threat conspiracy theories connected to demographic-based conspiracy theories are circulated by Identitarian groups such as Generation Identity, and centre around ideas of a ‘Great Replacement’ or ‘Eurabia’ whereby elites (often dubbed ‘cultural Marxists’) are complicit in the replacement of Christian culture by an ‘Islamic Other.’ Cultural-threat conspiracy theories, participants noted, are connected with anxieties around the ‘push factor’ (noted above) of sudden change or loss of culture and/or national identity.

Participants noted that this sort of narrative connected to micro-level narratives related to the ‘threat’ of: the subjugation of women, the imposition of sharia law, the building of mosques, the presence of halal food and concerns around child sexual exploitation (often referred to by the radical right in the UK context as ‘Muslim Grooming Gangs’). On the more violent end of the spectrum, these con-

⁴¹ Here we can see how conspiracy theories act as a radicalisation multiplier to radical right extremist narratives. See for more information: Emberland, T., ‘Why conspiracy theories can act as radicalization multipliers of far-right ideals’, CREX Right Now! Blog, 24 February 2020, online at: <https://www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/english/news-and-events/right-now/2020/conspiracy-theories-radicalization-multipliers.html>.

⁴² The RRCN country reports are one of many resources as part of Hedayah’s Radical Right Counter-Narrative Collection. They give an up-to-date look at radical right extremist trends, groups, narratives, and counter-narrative interventions in nine countries and regions (UK, US, Canada, Germany, Ukraine, the Balkans, New Zealand, Australia and Scandinavia), surveying issues related to radical right extremism globally. To access these reports, register for Hedayah’s Counter-Narrative Library at: <https://www.cn-library.com/login/>.

⁴³ This (and narratives #2, #4, #5, & #7) have been adapted from CARR-Hedayah Radical Right Counter Narratives Project, ‘Expert Workshop Report’, London/Abu Dhabi: CARR/Hedayah, pp. 3-6.

cerns were linked to the idea of a modern-day “crusade” against the East, using memory of previous military battles to justify the use of violence.⁴⁴

Ethnic-Threat Conspiracy-Theory Narrative

Example: ‘Ethnic identities are under threat, elites are complicit in “white genocide”, and this will end in holy racial war.’

Another common radical right conspiracy-theory narrative identified in both in the RRCN Project Expert Workshop and Country Reports centres around an ethnic threat, a more ‘blood and soil’ form of racism that tends to map onto ethno-nationalist parts of radical right extremist ideology. This ethnic-threat conspiracy-theory narrative can also be further connected to both antisemitic and white-supremacist conspiracy theories circulated by openly neo-fascist and neo-Nazi groups, such as the Azov Battalion in the Ukraine and Combat 18 in Europe more generally, as well as (democratically elected) illiberal authoritarian regimes in Eastern and Central Europe that use anti-Soros conspiracy theories.⁴⁵ Specific issues connected with ethnic-threat narratives include the use of nationalist histories and ‘golden-age’ nostalgia, attachment to a homeland and anxieties over ‘degeneracy’ connected with non-EU migration’s ‘erosion’ of separation between different ethnic groups (i.e. ideas of ethnopluralism). In relation to this form of xenophobia, it can be noted that welfare-state nationalism (or welfare chauvinism) was a “winning formula” of radical right political parties, with a classic example being the French Front National’s fusing of anti-immigration and economic nationalist sentiments.⁴⁶

On the more violent end of the spectrum, such narratives can escalate into the idea of the need for a ‘racial holy war’ (or RaHoWa), in which essentialised and mutually incompatible racial and ethnic groups come into conflict with each other. Variations between mainstream notions of antisemitism (e.g. global elites dictating the ‘rules of the game’) and xenophobia (e.g. ‘migrants taking our X’) can be compared to the more extreme narratives of fringe, extremist far-right subcultures (e.g. the idea of Zionist Occupied Governments in the West being controlled by the ‘Jews’). In the light of the radical right terror attack in Hanau, Germany, some analysts have suggested that such conspiratorial narratives serve as “radicalisation multiplier” for those involved in violent extremist milieus, locking violent extremists into a form of thinking that explains their marginality compared to mainstream society.⁴⁷ It is advised that practitioners involved in deconstructing such conspiratorial narratives do so with great caution, carefully researching the content, structure and logics of such conspiracies before attempting to counter them.⁴⁸ In other words, by attempting to deconstruct these narratives, the narratives of marginality may actually be reinforced, rather than countered.

⁴⁴ An example of this is Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orban’s claim that global financier, George Soros, has a secret plot to flood Hungary with migrants and thereby destroy their nation. For other examples see: [bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-49584157](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-49584157).

⁴⁵ For academic examples of a “winning formula” for radical right extremist parties, see: Rydgren, J., ‘Is extreme right-wing populism contagious? Explaining the emergence of a new party family’, *European Journal of Political Research*, 44(3): 413-437, online at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2005.00233.x>.

⁴⁷ Emberland, T., ‘Why conspiracy theories can act as radicalization multipliers of far-right ideals’, CREX Right Now! Blog, 24 February 2020, online at: <https://www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/english/news-and-events/right-now/2020/conspiracy-theories-radicalization-multipliers.html>.

⁴⁸ For an indicative example, see: Baele, S., ‘Conspiratorial Narratives in Violent Political Actors’, *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 38(5-6), 2019, 706-734, 2019.

Accelerationist Narrative

Example: ‘The Western capitalist system is degenerate and corrupt. We must therefore engage in violent socio-political and economic conflict in order to bring about the revolution and race war that will hasten in a new “pure” & “white” system or world order.’⁴⁹

One emergent narrative that was found in the country reports being used by radical right extremists at the current time is the idea of a revolutionary-right overthrow of democratic systems through a race war or even more apocalyptic scenarios. Attributable to the ‘Siege Culture’ works of James Mason and adopted by a number of fringe neo-Nazi terror cells, accelerationism has its origins in an anti-democratic neo-reactionary doctrine from the 1990s found in Nick Land’s Dark Enlightenment, which has since been massaged and adopted by radical right extremist terrorists to justify hastening the overthrow of democratic order. In particular, several groups reviewed within the RRCN country reports subscribed to this doctrine, including Atomwaffen Division and the Base in the US, Sonnenkrieg Division in the UK, Antipodean Resistance in Australia, and Feuerkrieg Division in the Baltics. All of these groups are explicitly nihilistic and violent in their scope and have conceived several plots and attacks in the US and Europe in the past two years alone.⁵⁰ In the UK, for example, Sonnenkrieg Division activists suggest that: “When the day comes, we will not ask whether you swung to the right or whether you swung to the left; we will simply swing you by the neck.”⁵¹ Similarly, Antipodean Resistance have talked about the need to “Legalise the execution of Jews.”⁵² Added to this, links to neo-Nazi satanic and occult groups in their respective locales act to further radicalise individuals involved in these movements, connecting them to an even wider ecosystem of dark and nihilistic viewpoints.

Anti-Establishment Narrative

Example: ‘Governments, the EU, NATO, the UN & multinational companies have too much power over us, their role is to ostensibly keep “the people” down, we therefore need to rise up against them.’

One key narrative animating radical right extremism at this time, and connected with narratives 1 & 2 above, is a sense of anti-establishment sentiments by radical right groups aimed against certain policies and elites for letting down so-called ‘ordinary people.’ Connected with racialized perceptions of economic deprivation and a sense of ‘losing out to globalisation,’ this radical right narrative taps into a wider range of grievances to do with multiculturalism, political correctness, political corruption, and the government not providing for ‘ordinary’ (white) citizens.

⁴⁹ This narrative was found to be particularly prevalent among emergent violent radical right extremist groups in the Radical Right Counter-Narrative project’s Country Reports for the US, Australia, and New Zealand.

⁵⁰ Thompson, A.C. & Hanrahan, J., ‘Inside Atomwaffen As It Celebrates a Member for Allegedly Killing a Gay Jewish College Student’, *ProPublica*, 23 February 2018, online at: <https://www.propublica.org/article/atomwaffen-division-inside-white-hate-group>; Hawkins, D., & Knowles, H., ‘Alleged members of white supremacy group “the Base” charged with plotting to kill antifa couple’, *Washington Post*, 18 January 2020, online at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2020/01/18/the-base-white-supremacist-arrests/>; & BBC News, ‘Teenage neo-Nazis jailed over terror offences’, 18 June 2019, online at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-48672929>.

⁵¹ Subcommandante, [Brief] New Sonnenkrieg Division Propaganda Shared on Fascist Forge’, 16 January 2019, online at: <https://medium.com/americanodyssey/new-sonnenkrieg-division-propaganda-shared-on-fascist-forge-forum-bb488cefbe53>.

⁵² Nathan, J., ‘Antipodean Resistance: The Rise and Goals of Australia’s New Nazis’, *ABC News*, 20 April 2018, online at: <https://www.abc.net.au/religion/antipodean-resistance-the-rise-and-goals-of-australias-new-nazis/10094794>.

Both the expert workshop and RRCN project country reports picked up specific instances of this narrative being mobilised. In particular, this anti-establishment narrative were found to exist: 1) in a more diluted version as antisemitic tropes and conspiracy theories (i.e. a nefarious global banking elite); 2) through the idea of a 'deep state' or 'hidden strong powers' who (supposedly) advocate entrenched interests against the 'will of the people;' and 3) through (perceived) covert collaborations deemed to advantage Muslim or migrant communities over the native, white community. On the more violent end of the spectrum, such narratives were said to escalate to the idea of the need for attacks against government institutions and officials (supposedly and symbolically) connected with resistance to policy programmes or positions deemed 'against,' or a 'threat' to, the 'people.'

Misogynist Narrative

Example: *'Societies are under threat because men cannot live "according to their nature," feminists are traitors, we must return to a heteronormative past.'*

Another narrative that has gained popularity among radical right extremist groups stems from an endangered form of masculinity. Participants of the RRCN workshop connected this with nostalgia and traditionalism call back to times where culturally expected norms around the family, gender, and sexuality were of a fixed and heteronormative variety. More extreme manifestations of male supremacy were noted by participants, emanating from the alt-right involuntary celibate movement (i.e. 'incel') as well as online gaming subcultures (e.g. Gamergate) as part of a larger online ecosystem of alt-right activism.

While patriarchal ideology runs through all sections of the radical right, it was also noted that divisions exist between different sections. For example, while some sections of the extreme radical right are more firmly patriarchal and traditionalist, others give the appearance of being more progressive. This latter trend can be seen in the leadership of gay (e.g. Pim Fortuyn) and female members (e.g. National Rally's Marine Le Pen and Brothers of Italy's Georgia Meloni), and/or advocating for LGBT and women's rights issues. This use of progressive language is often done, however, in order to counterpoise Western civilization against an essentialised and 'regressive' Muslim 'Other,' leading back to the nativist core of radical right ideology.⁵³ Examples of where more extreme male-supremacist ideas have played a role in recent acts of radical right violence include the Toronto Van Attacker Alek Minassian⁵⁴ and Florida Yoga Club Shooter Scott Beierle, who were ultimately enacting violent fantasies on a gendered 'other.'⁵⁵

⁵³ See Chapter 1 of Mudde, C., *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007., pp. 11-31.

⁵⁴ Zaveri, M., Jacobs, J. and Mervosh, S., 'Gunman in Yoga Studio Shooting Recorded Misogynistic Videos and Faced Battery Charges.' *NY Times*, 3 November 2018, Hyperlink: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/03/us/yoga-studio-shooting-florida.html>.

⁵⁵ BBC, 'Alek Minassian Toronto van attack suspect praised 'incel' killer', 25 April 2018, online at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-43883052>.

⁵⁶ This narrative was found to be particularly prevalent among Identitarian radical right extremist groups in the Radical Right Counter-Narrative project's Country Report for New Zealand.

Environmental Narrative

Example: *'The earth is running out of resources. Overcrowding by the overbreeding of non-whites is a tangible threat. Not everyone will be able to hold out. It is therefore vital to ensure that "our" (i.e. white) people survive.'*⁵⁶

One other emergent narrative being used by radical right extremists is the idea of demographic endangerment related to theories of overpopulation by non-whites and the depletion of an ethnically 'pure' homeland as a result. Coming to prominence in radical right solo-actor manifestoes of the Christchurch and El Paso shooters, so-called 'eco-fascists' portray ecological decay and crisis as a threat to the racial integrity of the white race with the only possible resolution being an end to mass immigration and uncontrolled urbanization under a form of authoritarian leadership.⁵⁷ In New Zealand, for example, the RRCN project found groups like Action Zealanda and the (now defunct) Dominion Movement talking about how more established left-wing and right-wing actors have failed to be "environmentally conscious in their governance," and therefore betrayed 'the people' in favour of multiculturalism and capitalism.⁵⁸ Here, we can see how radical right extremists try to use wedge issues, such as the environment, to exploit a niche within public discourse into which they insert their own exclusionary narratives and anti-democratic processes.⁵⁹

Victimhood Narrative

Example: *'Governments favour ethnic and religious minorities over the majority white population. Anti-Politically-Correct (PC) comments lead to persecution. Ordinary people are being silenced.'*

One final narrative, largely connected with the above anti-establishment sentiments, evinces a sense of victimhood, marginalisation or silencing in political affairs. This victimhood narrative is a recent cause célèbre among radical right actors concerning 'free speech' and the idea of certain unorthodox viewpoints being stifled by 'political correctness.' Compared to more mainstream, populist grievances, however, this victimhood narrative has a more ethnic and religious hue to it—blaming deprivations on elites (allegedly) listening to one racial or religious community over another. As one workshop participant pointed out, re-inforcement of this narrative is seen in local 'folklore' around priority housing, criminality, and lenient prison sentences for minority communities, while 'white' citizens are viewed by the elites (including the media) as an underclass of 'bad people.' A particular UK-based example given of this victimhood narrative was the summer 2018 'Free Tommy' protests at the trial of former EDL leader, Tommy Robinson (aka Stephen Yaxley Lennon), for contempt of court charges.⁶⁰ Other

⁵⁶ This narrative was found to be particularly prevalent among Identitarian radical right extremist groups in the Radical Right Counter-Narrative project's Country Report for New Zealand.

⁵⁷ Bernhard, F., 'Eco-fascism: justifications of terrorist violence in the Christchurch mosque shooting and the El Paso shooting', *Open Democracy*, 13 August 2019, online at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/countering-radical-right/eco-fascism-justifications-terrorist-violence-christchurch-mosque-shooting-and-el-paso-shooting/>.

⁵⁸ Power, G., 'Nationalism and the Environment', Action Zealanda Website, 26 August 2019, online at: <https://action-zealanda.com/articles/nationalism-and-the-environment>.

⁵⁹ See the following for examples: Callahan, D., 'How New Wedge Issues are Dividing the Right', *Demos*, 7 November 2013, online at: <https://www.demos.org/blog/how-new-wedge-issues-are-dividing-right>.

⁶⁰ Staff Reporter, 'Far-right activists stage violent protest calling for Tommy Robinson to be freed.' *The Independent*, 9 June 2018, online at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/tommy-robinson-protest-london-far-right-police-arrest-geert-wilders-a8391596.html>.

examples are the 2011 and 2016 court trials against Geert Wilders⁶¹ and the 2017 campus tours carried out by alt-right influencer Milo Yiannopoulos, whereby both these radical right actors were able to frame opposition to their viewpoints in terms of denials of free speech.⁶²

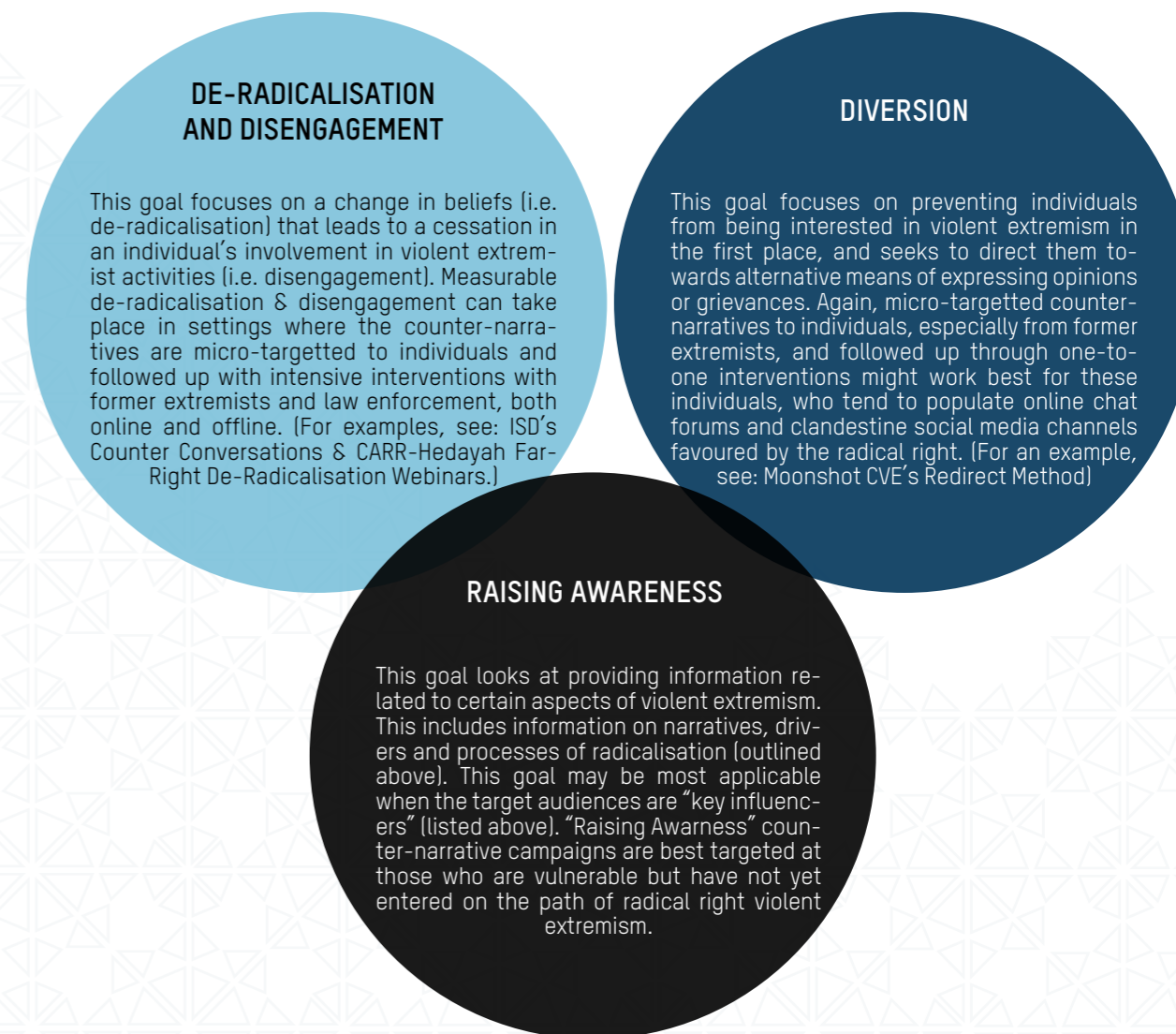
⁶¹ See BBC News, 'Dutch anti-Islam MP Geert Wilders goes on trial.', 4 October 2010, online at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11464025> & Boztas, S., 'Trial of anti-Islamic politician Geert Wilders begins in Netherlands over his 'fewer Moroccans' comment', *The Telegraph*, 31 October 2016, online at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/31/trial-of-anti-islamic-politician-geert-wilders-begins-in-nether/>. Date Accessed: 31/10/2019.

⁶² Svrluga, S., 'UC-Berkeley says 'Free Speech Week' is cancelled. Milo Yiannopoulos says he's coming anyway.' *Washington Post*, 23rd September 2017, online at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2017/09/23/uc-berkeley-says-free-speech-week-is-canceled-milo-yiannopoulos-says-hes-still-coming-to-campus/?utm_term=.2086d6df7ad7.

4 SET CLEAR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE COUNTER-NARRATIVE

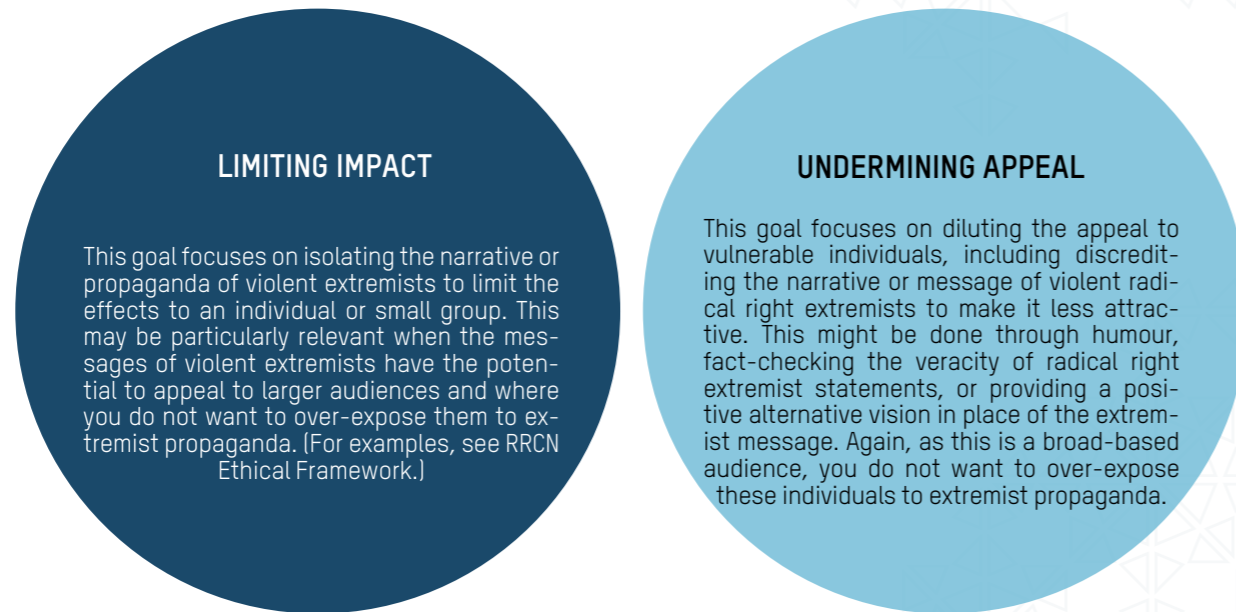
After assessing the drivers, audience and narratives that the counter-narrative campaign will address, the next step is to identify your goals and objectives. These should outline clearly the change in attitude or behaviour in the target audience that is desired.⁶³ The framework below describes possible goals and objectives for a campaign aimed at tackling radical right extremist narratives:⁶⁴

FIGURE 4 Possible Goals & Objectives of a Radical Right Counter-Narrative Campaign



⁶³ For a good introductory overview of this, see: Helmus, T.C. & Klein, K., 'Assessing the Outcomes of Online Campaigns in Counter Violent Extremism: A Case Study of the Redirect Method', RAND Corporation, 2018, online at: https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2800/RR2813/RAND_RR2813.pdf.

⁶⁴ These are adapted from: Zeiger, S., 'Undermining Violent Extremist Narratives in South East Asia A How-To Guide', Abu Dhabi, UAE: Hedayah, September 2016, online at: <http://www.hedayahcenter.org/Admin/Content/File-3182016115528.pdf>, pp. 12 & El Sayed, L., Faris, T., & Zeiger, S., 'Undermining Violent Extremist Narratives in the Middle East and North Africa', Abu Dhabi, UAE: Hedayah, December 2017, pp. 14, online at: <https://www.stratcomcoe.org/download/file/fid/78358>.



After the goals and objectives of the counter-narrative are set, it is important to determine the messenger or messengers that will deliver the message. The experts at the workshop in Kigali emphasized that when considering a messenger, the personal attributes and characteristics such as the cultural, ethnic and religious background of the individual messenger needed to be taken into consideration.

⁶⁵ Radicalisation Awareness Network, 'Effective Narratives: Updating the GAMMA+ model', Ex Post Paper, Brussels: RAN, November 2019, online at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-c-and-n/docs/ran_cn_academy_creating_implementing_effective_campaigns_brussels_14-15112019_en.pdf.

⁶⁶ See Harris-Hogan, S., Barrelle, K. & Zammit, A. (2016) 'What is countering violent extremism? Exploring CVE policy and practice in Australia', *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, 8:1, 15, DOI: [10.1080/19434472.2015.1104710](https://doi.org/10.1080/19434472.2015.1104710).

⁶⁷ For another version, see: Abrioux, B., 'Setting objectives: better than SMART is SMARTER', *Leader Syndrome*, 24 March 2015, online at: <https://leadersyndrome.wordpress.com/2012/02/13/setting-objectives-better-than-smart-is-smarter/>.

FIGURE 5 SMART-ER Analysis of Radical Right Counter-Narrative Goals

SPECIFIC

- Who is your target audience?
- What change do you want to achieve?
- How are you going to achieve this?

MEASURABLE

- What metrics (e.g. clicks, likes, follows or interaction rates) will you use to evaluate the outcome of your intervention?
- How will you measure attitudinal impacts and behavioural changes for future funding cycles

ATTAINABLE

- Are these outcomes attainable in the time allocated?
- What are the obstacles to meeting these outcomes?
- What shifts in attitudes and behaviour are realistic?

RELEVANT

- Is the intervention relevant to the goal and to the audience in mind?
- Are the materials produced relevant to the audience in mind?
- Does my team have the skills relevant to the project envisaged?

TIME BOUND

- What is the time frame for the intervention—including time for preparation, testing and evaluation?
- What are the obstacles to achieving this?
- What capacity needs to be freed in order to achieve the project in a timely manner?

EVALUATE

- At what intervals will the campaign re-evaluate it's goals in light of evidence gather?
- What staff will be engaged in this and when?

READJUST

- What actions will be carried out as a result of this?
- How will this influence future campaigns or projects?

Case Study for Goals and Objectives

Australia's Community Action in Preventing Extremism (CAPE) 'Exit White Power' Project (2013-2015)

Description:

Started by the New South Wales-based NGO, All Together Now, Australia's Community Action in Preventing Extremism (CAPE) project was a website, www.exitwhitepower.com, with a Facebook forum also established ("White Power? Discussion Page") for those involved in radical right extremist movements online. One of the key innovations of the project was the tailored nature of the online discussions, alongside CAPE's openness to incorporating feedback from police, academics, and former radical right extremists. This responsiveness to participants and professionals led one of the project's managers to suggest that the number of Australians engaging with CAPE's website and forum "significantly exceeded" the numbers originally anticipated: there were 22,000 unique views of its website between 2013-2015 and 2000 'likes' of its Facebook page in the first year alone.

For more about the "Exit White Power" Project, see: <https://cape.alltogether-now.org.au/>

STEP 1 ASSESS PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

Push factors:

- Sense of Religious, Ethnic or Cultural Marginalisation, Loss & Endangerment (related to Religious, Ethnic or Cultural Changes)⁶⁸
- Broader Processes of Social Fragmentation, Isolation, & Disintegration⁶⁹
- Loss of Political Trust in Mainstream Actors around Handling of Migration, as well as associated Cultural and Security Politics⁷⁰
- Sense of Political Silencing & Exclusion from Mainstream Political Institutions⁷¹

Pull factors:

- Offer of Brotherhood, Belonging, & Comradery⁷²
- Offer of Social Empowerment or Engagement⁷³
- Attractiveness of Control or Sense-Making over 'Outside Forces'⁷⁴
- Attractiveness of Alternative Outlet for Political Engagement and Activism⁷⁵

Enabling factors:

- Online Forums and Communities (such as Iron March, 8Kun, and neo-Nazi Telegram Channels)⁷⁶

⁶⁸ McClaren, L. & Johnson, M. Op Cit; Mudde, C., Op Cit.; & Rydgren, J., Op Cit.

⁶⁹ Druxes, H. and Simpson, P.A., Op Cit. & Hartleb, F., Op Cit.

⁷⁰ Hartleb, F., Op Cit. & Huggler, J., Op Cit.

⁷¹ Pilkington, H., Op Cit.

⁷² Busher, J., Op Cit. & Virchow, F. Op Cit.

⁷³ Abbas, T., Op Cit.

⁷⁴ Hartleb, F., Op Cit.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Macklin, G., Op Cit.

STEP 2 IDENTIFY TARGET AUDIENCE

Sympathizers and Justifiers:

The target audience were Australian men aged 14-25 at-risk of involvement in radical right extremism, with advancing commitment to white supremacist belief systems through engaging in discussions on race hate pages.⁷⁷



STEP 3 IDENTIFY VIOLENT EXTREMIST NARRATIVE BEING COUNTERED

According to a recent study of the CAPE Project,⁷⁸ the top ten conversation topics covered in the Facebook page revolved around not just the ideological claims of white nationalists (e.g. multiculturalism and immigration lead to moral degeneracy) but also social messages around the importance, effects, and outcomes of the extremist's involvement in white nationalist movements. These social messages included the effects of activism on future prospects, sharing their opinions with friends and family, and whether involvement in white nationalist movements affected their future prospects.



STEP 4 SET CLEAR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1:

De-Radicalisation & Disengagement of Australian men aged 14-25 active in online hate pages through increasing the number of positive, critical engagements with CAPE's campaign Facebook and Exitwhitepower.com pages in the duration of the 3-month campaign.

GOAL 2:

Diverting those Australian men to alternative websites (provided by CAPE's Facebook page and Exitwhitepower.com webpage) to express their opinions and grievances around race, migration, and the legitimacy of democratic government in a carefully managed and maintained online environment.

GOAL 3:

Undermining Appeal among those Australian men (as described above) through outlining the potential pitfalls and inconsistencies of white nationalist movements by spelling out contradictions within their messages and risks of violent activism.

⁷⁷ Aly, A. and Zeiger, S., 'Countering Violent Extremism Online in Australia: Research and Preliminary Findings', in Aly, A. and Zeiger, S., eds., *Countering Violent Extremism: Developing an Evidence-base for Policy and Practice* (Hedayah and Curtin University, 2015), p.83

⁷⁸ Ibid, pp. 81-89.

5 DETERMINE EFFECTIVE MESSENGER

After the goals and objectives of the radical right counter-narrative are set, it is important to determine the messenger or messengers that will deliver the message. Experts at the RRCN workshop in September 2019 emphasised that ‘everyday individuals’ (i.e. non-government actors) were the most credible messengers in delivering radical right counter-narratives.⁷⁹ This credibility was based on their lived and/or practical experience of supporting or being affected by extremism, and the emotional quality of their testimony that can be respected by the recipients as an authentic first-hand account. As elites are a much maligned (if somewhat imaginary group) in radical right extremist circles, some examples of key counter-narrative messengers suggested by participants included testimonies by former radical right extremists and/or victims of radical right extremism that share experiences of the societal harms of violent extremism.⁸⁰

FIGURE 6: QUESTIONS TO DETERMINE THE RIGHT MESSENGER

- ✓ What is the relationship between the messenger and the target audience?
- ✓ What is the credibility of that messenger with the target audience?
- ✓ What is the potential for that messenger to change attitudes?
- ✓ What is the potential for that messenger to change behaviours?
- ✓ What are the potential negative effects or risks associated with choosing that particular messenger?

Source: El Sayed, Faris, & Zeiger (2017)

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Family and pressure from friendship groups can provide a key catalyst for disengagement (and ultimately de-radicalisation) from radical right extremist milieus. In the testimonies of two out of three former radical right extremists who took part in CARR-Hedayah’s radical right de-radicalisation webinars, it was a choice or ultimatum given by a family member that served as a key catalyst for their exit.⁸¹ As noted above, fractures (or distancing from these close, personal networks) are often early signs of radicalisation towards violent extremism on the radical right. Added to this, the voices of families with experience of radical right extremism can be very pertinent and powerful. A particular example of this is ‘Families and Extremism Support,’ an online initiative that uses the voices and stories of families who have been touched by radical right extremism in order to aid other families encountering similar traumatic experiences.⁸² Finally, another powerful leveraging device, or source of resilience against radical right extremism, are the voices of friends or friendship circles that can act as a protect factor against involvement in radical, violent activism. A particular counter-narrative example of this is the British Broadcasting Corporation’s recent drama ‘The Left Behind’ that

⁷⁹ CARR-Hedayah Radical Right Counter Narratives Project, ‘Expert Workshop Report’, London/Abu Dhabi: CARR/Hedayah, p.16.

⁸⁰ Below adapted from: Elsayed, L., Faris, T., & Zeiger, S., ‘Undermining Violent Extremist Narratives in the Middle East and North Africa A How-To Guide’, Abu Dhabi: Hedayah, December 2017, online at: <http://www.hedayahcenter.org/Admin/Content/File-10122017161331.pdf>.

⁸¹ These experiences were recounted by two speakers, Brad Galloway and Nigel Bromage, and can be found as part of the Radical Right Counter-Narrative collection on Hedayah’s Counter-Narrative Library: https://www.hedayahcenter.org/resources/interactive_cve_apps/counter-narrative-library/.

⁸² Families Against Extremism website, homepage, online at: <https://www.faesupport.co.uk/>.

focuses on a young man, Gethin’s, pathway into extremism and ultimately the fictive fire-bombing of a Halal butchers.⁸³ Here, we see Gethin being sucked into a negative peer group—outlining the dangers of peer group echo chambers in compounding grievances and radical narratives.⁸⁴ Prior to Gethin’s involvement, we see his positive cross-cultural relationships as protective factors to radical right extremism—only to be taken away by life circumstances outside of his control.

FORMER VIOLENT EXTREMISTS

Former violent extremists, or those who have been involved in radical right extremist milieus can act as powerful messengers regarding what it is like to be in such movements and to be reaching out to those involved who are either questioning their group’s legitimacy or considering leaving the movement altogether. In terms of prior radical right counter-narrative projects, former extremists have been involved in creating ‘counter-narrative magazines,’ for example, or telling their stories on video or talking to those who are in the process of radicalising online through targeted, off-ramping campaigns. For example, Light Upon Light recruited Canadian formers to highlight their stories into and out of the movement for their recent Ctrl+Alt+Delete Hate magazine initiative,⁸⁵ whilst the US-based Freed Radical movement used a website compiling statistics and case studies of prominent radical right extremists to elucidate the fallacies of activism (e.g. high moral standards of leadership and extent of comradery) within such movements.⁸⁶

Similarly, two other campaigns put on by UK and US-based counter-extremism organisations, EXIT USA and ISD, piloted a method that directed advertising and messaging at individuals perceived to be at risk of online radicalisation who were met with an offer of follow-up sessions from trained formers who acted as counsellors, similar to those hired by the UK government counter-radicalisation programmes like Prevent.⁸⁷ Former extremists were recruited from their own (or existing professional networks, such as Against Violent Extremism) to talk to participants using the direct messaging features of Facebook and Twitter. Reports based on these interventions suggest that Formers were the most likely to receive responses from participants and that this responsiveness of formers within these peer-to-peer campaigns boosted engagement among participants.⁸⁸

In terms of credibility among target audiences, it is important to vet formers, making sure that they are affiliated with a credible organisation that can monitor their personal progress, and have had at least two years continuous desistance (or ‘cooling down’ period) from violent activity. It is also good to note that the testimony of formers poses a crosscutting appeal—having stories with a certain ‘cool’ factor among younger audiences, but also with relevance to older audiences with high level of risk factors.

⁸³ Glynn, P., ‘The Left Behind: TV drama shows the face of the far right’, *BBC News*, online at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-48723274>.

⁸⁴ Knight, S., ‘An exploration of far-right extremism in the UK today’, *The Psychologist*, online at: <https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-32/september-2019/exploration-far-right-extremism-uk-today>.

⁸⁵ *Light Upon Light*, ‘Ctrl+Alt+Del-Hate E-Magazine Issue 01’, 1 November 2019, online at: <https://www.scribd.com/document/433021364/Ctrl-Alt-Del-Hate-E-Magazine-Issue-01>.

⁸⁶ The actual website is now offline, but it can still be accessed on the Internet Archive. See: <https://web.archive.org/web/20190809043606/http://wearefreeradicals.net/index.html>.

⁸⁷ See: Davey, J., Birdwell, J., and Skellett, R., ‘Counter Conversations: A model for direct engagement with individuals showing signs of radicalisation online’, (London: ISD, 2018), online at: https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Counter-Conversations_FINAL.pdf & Silverman, Stewart, Amanullah and Birdwell, ‘The Impact of Counter Narratives’. London: ISD, 2016, online at: https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Impact-of-Counter-Narratives_ONLINE_1.pdf.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Added to this, the notion has been entertained by researchers that trained formers, intervention providers or moderators could pose as radical right extremists on related forums and social media sites (such as Storm Front, Telegram, or Neinchan) in order to initially gain trust and then start disseminating counter-narratives.⁸⁹ Obviously, this comes with great risk to the intervention provider (e.g. potential doxing attacks and retaliation) but might offer a new avenue into 'hard-to-reach' online environments that have been associated with violent radical right extremist groups.

VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

Victims and survivors of terrorist attacks, or the family members of victims of terrorism, can be powerful messengers who can appeal to the emotions of potential perpetrators by showing personal consequences of terrorism by 'humanizing' the results of the perpetrators' violent actions. Like with formers, such stories are key examples of a strong and effective narrative, one that provides a coherent story from start to finish and has enough human and emotional resonance to be impactful for a broad range of individuals beyond extremist milieus.⁹⁰ In terms of prior radical right counter-narrative projects, victims and survivors have lent their stories to educational resources, video campaigns and narrative histories recounting their ordeals at the hands of radical right extremist violence. For example, survivors have traditionally been used in Holocaust educational initiatives,⁹¹ YouTube attempts at fostering empathy for migrants⁹² and through newspaper accounts of hate-crime survivors.⁹³ Like with formers, a duty of care to messengers should be a paramount concern of campaigns with a clearly articulated plan to ensure the security and safety of people already traumatised by the actions of violent extremists. Victims' stories also undercut the 'us vs. them' rhetoric of most violent extremist groups because they put faces and stories to what are otherwise seen as the 'other'—and objects. They are no longer the enemy—they are people.

POLITICAL LEADERS

Political leaders can play an important role in strategic communications campaigns directed against violent radical right extremism and terrorist attackers where the audience is 'everyday' individuals and citizens. The tone and level of attention given by elites to radical right extremists and terrorist attackers can often set an example for the rest of the country in how such movements and attacks are treated. Here, coming up with an alternative narrative that shows empathy for, and involves talking about (and to), the victims, and which offers a different and positive vision of nationhood, is important. A keynote of recent best practice highlighted in the New Zealand RRCN report was New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's response to the March 2019 Christchurch terror attacks. As opposed to focusing on the ideology or background of the terrorist perpetrator, a

⁸⁹ See: Braddock, K. & Horgan, J., 'Towards a Guide for Constructing and Disseminating Counternarratives to Reduce Support for Terrorism', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 39(4), 2015, p.392 & Braddock, K., *Weaponized Words: The Strategic Role of Persuasion in Violent Radicalization and Counter-Radicalization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.95-96.

⁹⁰ See: Fisher, W.R., *Human communication as a narration: Toward a philosophy of reason, value, and action*, Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1987.

⁹¹ See: Holocaust Educational Trust, 'Survivor Stories', online at: <https://www.het.org.uk/education/outreach-programme/survivor-stories>.

⁹² See: Flying Object, '#MoreThanARefugee' Campaign, online at: <https://weareflyingobject.com/projects/more-refugee>.

⁹³ See: Kurdy, N., 'The Power of Forgiveness', *Open Democracy*, online at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/power-forgiveness/>.

key element of Ardern's strategic communications campaign was to foster a new sense of belonging and acceptance, refusing the anti-Muslim, exclusivist ideology of the terrorist perpetrator, and instead placing a new emphasis on including migrant members of New Zealand's national community,⁹⁴ and using specific language to demonstrate inclusive notions of New Zealand as a nation (i.e. the idea that 'you are one of us').

One caveat regarding using political elites in radical right counter-narrative campaigns is that often these leaders draw the ire of such groups. Moreover, in environments where there is particularly low trust in certain leaders, this level of suspicion is only likely to be amplified. It is therefore important to approach using elites in these campaigns with extreme caution. Here, and like with any of the other suggested messengers above and where the opportunity presents itself, it is recommended that you test the messenger with a representative sample of your target audience using focus groups before conducting the campaign, assessing the positive and negative characteristics of the messenger, and whether they will limit or boost the effectiveness of the message you are trying to put across.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ This was further seen in the media and society through the wearing of the Burqa in the week after the attack, as well as the use of Arabic greetings, customs and calls to prayer in public spaces. See: Morrison, S., 'New Zealand women wear headscarves in powerful display of solidarity after mosque attacks', *Evening Standard*, 22 March 2019, online at: <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/headscarf-for-harmony-new-zealand-women-cover-their-hair-in-solidarity-with-muslim-community-in-a4098196.html>.

⁹⁵ Zeiger, S., 'Undermining Violent Extremist Narratives in South East Asia A How-To Guide', Abu Dhabi, UAE: Hedayah, September 2016, online at: <http://www.hedayahcenter.org/Admin/Content/File-3182016115528.pdf>, pp. 19.

6 DEVELOP THE CONTENT AND LOGIC OF THE MESSAGE

The next step is to identify the content of the counter message that is being delivered. According to participants at the RRCN expert workshop, radical right counter-narratives need to be simple, emotive and impactful, affecting people's convictions and beliefs in order to motivate sustained change.⁹⁶ It was also noted that it is important to break down extremist narratives into their constituent parts in order to question the veracity of each component. For example, literary scholars break down narratives into orientation (i.e. who, what, where, how, and when), action (i.e. evaluation of the orientation statement) and resolution structure (i.e. prescribing a course of action).⁹⁷

FACTUAL AND HISTORICAL COUNTER-NARRATIVES

This type of counter-narrative responds to the factual veracity of conspiracies, descriptions, and communications distributed by radical right extremist groups, with historical narratives being crucial for breaking down nationalist animosities. Below are some examples:

Example: *'Seeing society through a racialized lens breaks down bonds of togetherness which ultimately leads to a worse outcome for everyone. By seeing what unites us, we can move forward, stronger together.'*

EXAMPLE CAMPAIGNS:

EUROCLIO (2014)

'ONCE UPON A TIME...WE LIVED TOGETHER' RESOURCE

In the Balkans, alternative historical narratives are important for breaking down nationalist animosities built up between countries in the region and from which radical right extremist activism takes succour. One example of this is EUROCLIO's 'Once Upon a Time...We Lived Together' Resource aimed at pupils in the final grades of primary school as well as the early grades of secondary schools to instil critical thinking about the "glorious past" and how other nations in the region might not have the same interpretation of this.

Country: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia

<https://bit.ly/38pAGhS>



UK HOME OFFICE (2018)

'TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER' NEWCASTLE PROJECT

Part of a broader 'Building a Stronger Britain Together' programme and in collaboration with Safe Newcastle, the 'Together We are Stronger' campaign in Newcastle used nine 'everyday local heroes' to highlight positive attributes of 'Geordie' identity through asking them about what it meant to be from Newcastle, their pride in their city and their efforts to help their community. The campaign was designed to instil a strong sense of local identity against more nativist expressions being developed by radical right extremist actors in the area, and was rolled out to Leeds and other big UK cities, using historical identities of local areas in order to provide resilience in the face of extremism.

Country: UK

<https://bit.ly/38lFeWt>



⁹⁶ CARR-Hedayah Radical Right Counter Narratives Project, 'Expert Workshop Report', London/Abu Dhabi: CARR/Hedayah, p.19.

⁹⁷ This is a simplified version of a similar schema, laid out in: Labov, W., & Waletzky, J., 'Narrative analysis: Oral versions of personal experience', *Journal of Narrative & Life History*, 7(1-4), 1997, 3-38, online at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/jnlh.7.02nar>.



IDEOLOGICAL COUNTER-NARRATIVES

This type of counter-narrative refutes ideological claims and provides interpretations of social and economic trends that do not justify extremist activism and violence. Below are some examples:

Example: *'Social separation between different ethnic and faith groups is what fosters misunderstandings and hatred between different people and groups. Mixing between different ethnic and faith groups fosters understanding and shows that shared activities, projects, and endeavours work. Notions of ethnic and religious superiority fail to recognise the good in other cultures and religions and the bad in our own.'*

EXAMPLE CAMPAIGNS:

TIM PARRY AND JOHNATHAN BALL FOUNDATION FOR PEACE

'COMBAT HATE' RESOURCE

Designed as a multimedia programme to tackle far right narratives, Tim Parry and Johnathan Ball Foundation for Peace's 'Combat Hate' Resource draws on first-hand experiences of people who have engaged in extreme groups and those who have also been impacted by radical right extremism. Through an accompanying set of workshops, students are allowed to critically explore far right ideology, recruitment tactics, symbolism, and mobilisation by following the story of 'John', a teenage former far right activist. The programme is mainly targeted at secondary school age pupils at risk of radical right radicalisation.

Country: UK



<https://bit.ly/3percMu>

FREE RADICALS

'FINDING OUR WAY AGAIN' WEBSITE

Another example of an online counter-narrative campaign directed at extremists is Free Radical's 'We are Free Radicals: Finding Our Way Again' website. This scrollable resource starts by engaging users at a social level by talking about belonging and identity, before presenting real life case studies and statistics on the topic of radical right violence. It then points out the risks, things such as "fear, familiarity, and fake news," of engaging in radical right ideology and activism before linking the user to the Free Radical's homepage, which includes a form available for extremists or associates to request help.

Country: US



<https://bit.ly/3lqla10>

ECONOMIC COUNTER-NARRATIVES

This type of counter-narrative provides economic justifications for not joining violent radical right extremist groups and alternatives that alleviate some of the economic drivers that inform this form of extremism, such as economic inequality and globalisation. Below is an example:

Example: *'Being subject to impersonal economic forces is trying for citizens, especially those at the lowest rung of society. We are all negatively affected when our fellow citizens are hit by economic disadvantage because of this, pulling apart the fabric of our society. The solution is working together to make sure that globalisation and the economic system works for all.'*

EXAMPLE CAMPAIGNS:

JEAN-YVES BULTEAU'S (2014)

'EN FINIR AVEC LES IDÉES FAUSSES PROPAGÉES PAR L'EXTRÊME DROITE' MANUAL

Launched two years after Marine Le Pen's relatively meagre success in France's 2012 Presidential race, French journalist, Jean-Yves Bulteau's (2014), 'En Finir avec les idées fausses propagées par l'extrême droite' manual dissected 73 "misconceptions" about immigration, the EU and the euro, insecurity, Islam, and competition among workers propagated within the (then) Front National's policy platform.⁹⁸ This included notions that "Getting out of the euro would return to the franc and have more competitive prices for exported products" and that "Undocumented workers do not pay social security contributions or taxes."⁹⁹ Key narratives provided to counter this include stipulations about how foreign workers pay more in contributions and tax than they receive in kind (€60.3 billion versus €47.9 billion in 2014) and how France has received €1.7 billion euros in contributions from the European Social Fund to finance Roma integration. This sort of meticulous fact checking is a major asset of the manual.

Country: France



<https://bit.ly/3pcfnpJ>

JOHN DENHAM'S (2009)

'CONNECTING COMMUNITIES' CAMPAIGN

Launched by former Communities Secretary, John Denham, in order to instil greater community trust in the government from those susceptible to the political and economic grievances of radical right extremism, the £12 million 'Connecting Communities' fund aimed to give local people the space to air grievances and ensure that the way housing, education, healthcare, jobs, and training were allocated do not cause resentment. As part of the media campaign for the programme, Denham made it clear that the government was committed to making sure that every community in every corner of the country know it was on their side ("No favours. No privileges. No special interest groups. Just fairness," he promised), aiming to tackle anti-government sentiments built up around economic grievances.



<https://bit.ly/3p7DNRo>

⁹⁸ Bulteau, Jean-Yves, 'En Finir avec les idées fausses propagées par l'extrême droite.' Paris, France: Editions de l'Atelier, 2014.
⁹⁹ Equy, L. 'Un petit manuel pour s'attaquer aux «idées fausses» de l'extrême droite', *La Libération*, 14 April 2014, online at: https://www.liberation.fr/france/2014/04/14/un-petit-manuel-pour-s-attaquer-aux-idees-fausse-de-l-extreme-droite_997255.

POLITICAL COUNTER-NARRATIVES

Below are some examples of counter-narratives that address political grievances that provide the basis for populist claims put forward by radical right extremist movements:

Example: *'There are problems and deficits within all democracies. Governments and elected officials provide a directly accountable individual for each citizen. By standing for office or voting in elections, you will be able to change the system from the inside.'*

EXAMPLE CAMPAIGNS:

US STATE DEPARTMENTS (2011)

'2011 HOURS AGAINST HATE' CAMPAIGN

Spearheaded by the US Secretary of State, Special Representative to Muslim Communities and Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, the campaign was designed as a 'call to action' for young people to engage in offline activism and pledge an hour to help someone different to them.¹⁰⁰ In addition to posting a picture of their pledge online, young people were asked to help to at a women's shelter, a religious charity or homeless shelter.¹⁰¹ Such a 'call to action' as part of the campaign and tackling prejudice through intergroup contact could be replicated in other initiatives.



<https://bit.ly/3eDUJKm>

JACINDA ARDERN'S (2019)

POST-CHRISTCHURCH STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN

One of the best examples of radical right counter-narratives, or strategic communications relating to radical right extremism, came in the wake of the Christchurch terror attacks. Following the mosque shootings in March 2019, priorities in the immediate aftermath explicitly related to nation shaping through narratives and messaging ('what it means to be a New Zealander'), with a strict emphasis on inclusivity and tolerance. This campaign demonstrated the importance of authentically-advanced narratives and extending the notion to the local Muslim community that 'you are one of us' in the wake of such radical right attacks and atrocities.



<https://bit.ly/3gUjEKX>

¹⁰⁰ Counter-Narrative Toolkit, 'Hours Against Hate' Case Study, online at: <http://www.counternarratives.org/html/case-studies-entry?id=19>.

¹⁰¹ US State Department, '2011 Hours Against Hate', 10 February 2011, online at: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/s/srnc/156531.htm>.

HUMOROUS COUNTER-NARRATIVES

This type of counter-narrative knowingly pokes fun at elements of radical right ideology, activist and propaganda campaigns. Below are some example counter-narratives and radical right extremist focused campaigns:

Example: *'Before they targeted the Southern Italians, now they target the foreigners, who will they choose to exclude and scapegoat next?'*

EXAMPLE CAMPAIGNS:

ITALIAN

'STREET-ART, STREET-FOOD!' CAMPAIGN

An independent graffiti artist named 'CIBO' embarked on a campaign to paint over racist, Nazi or antisemitic messages, and symbols with food, thereby embracing a unifying theme of Italian civic life and culture. In an interview for his project, CIBO suggested that Italy's food culture is a source of pride for him, while its divisive, racist, and hateful tendencies are a source of shame. "It's more than what we like to eat," he says of the local cuisine. "It represents who we are."

Country: Italy



<https://bit.ly/2InqATq>

UK

'MUSLAMIC RAY GUNS' YOUTUBE CAMPAIGN

In the UK, a viral video of an EDL protestor talking in an interview about "Muslamic Ray Guns" (as opposed to 'Muslim Rape Gangs') is a widely cited example of satire against a prominent radical right extremist street protest group, the English Defence League. Aggregating over 2 million, unique YouTube views and remixed to music, it shows the power of informal campaigns in spreading humorous counter-messages.

Country: UK



<https://bit.ly/2GGtvWY>

ALTERNATIVE AND POSITIVE NARRATIVES

These counter-narratives are proactive and alternative messages that are aimed at being more attractive than terrorism.¹⁰² Positive and alternative narratives are most effective when they provide an alternative action to address grievances. Below are some example counter-narratives and radical right extremist focused campaigns:

Example: *'X is a Muslim but engages in other everyday activities, the same as you and I do. They are engaged in social activism as a way of improving society as a whole. Their activism helps increase the pool of rights we all enjoy.'*

'X is a former radical right extremist. They realised the effects on others and risks of being involved in violent extremism. Come and be part of the solution rather than the problem.'

EXAMPLE CAMPAIGNS:

¹⁰² Please note that several of the political, factual and historical counter-narrative examples above could also serve as examples of positive and negative counter-narratives (i.e. they are not mutually exclusive).

LIGHT UPON LIGHT (2019)

'CTRL+ALT+DEL-HATE' E-MAGAZINE

Designed as an e-magazine and part of the www.LightUponLight.Online ecosystem, the magazines are designed to “provide positive alternatives for those susceptible to or engaged in radical movements.”¹⁰³ Including testimonies of former violent extremists, survivors of extremist violence and researchers, the magazine also attempts to “prevent interest in extremist ideologies and movements and to provide positive alternatives for those susceptible to or engaged in radical movements.”¹⁰⁴

Country: US & Canada



<https://bit.ly/2IIVKLk>

MEDIA CULTURED

'COMBINATIONS' VIDEO

One important example of an alternative narrative aimed at humanising potential victims of radical right extremists is Media Cultured's 'Combinations' Video. Following the story of Imran Naeem, a Muslim athlete and boxer from Middlesbrough, the video breaks down religious and racial stereotypes about the connections between 'Muslimness' and assumptions around violence and radicalisation sometimes connected with Islam. Screened at several film festivals and with several thousand views, it demonstrates the emotive power of a documentary in breaking down assumptions that might lead to radical right extremist activism.

Country: UK



<https://vimeo.com/48519016>

OSCE

'VOICES AGAINST EXTREMISM' CAMPAIGN

Launched in September 2016 and backed by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the VAE counter-narrative campaign was aimed at challenging extremist beliefs while simultaneously promoting awareness and education about how these issues of extremism impact the community.¹⁰⁵ As part of their intervention, students at Simon Fraser University in Canada embarked on a video campaign (titled 'Stories of Resistance') that interviewed a wide profile of individuals (e.g. refugees, immigrants, law enforcement officials and formers) who had been affected by extremism and their thoughts on community and Canadian identity.

Country: Canada



<https://bit.ly/2Im0e2M>

7 IDENTIFY THE MEDIUM(S) THROUGH WHICH THE MESSAGE WILL BE DISSEMINATED

The mechanism by which the counter-narrative is disseminated can be crucial to ensuring the campaign's effectiveness. The medium should be one that reaches the target audience in a natural and simple way and one that the target audience uses regularly. As such, radical right counter-narrative campaigns should assess the realities of what media extremist groups are using to propagate their own propaganda and messaging at present, but also look at emerging forms of media which the radical right might consider using in the near future. Mediums useful in the context of the radical right include:

MAINSTREAM AND ALTERNATIVE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

A key medium populated by mainstream actors in contexts where radical right extremists are active nowadays are mainstream social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok but also alternative platforms such as VK (VKontakte), Gab, Parler, Telegram, KiwiFarms, and BitChute. These latter platforms often support the agenda of such groups or take a less restrictive approach to censoring individuals, groups, hateful content, and monetising their activities. Recent research reports have suggested that radical right extremists have been able to exercise an “opportunistic pragmatism” when using online platforms, creating new bases of convergence, and inspiring acts of political violence in such disparate places as Germany, Britain, the US, and Norway.¹⁰⁶ Such instances demonstrate a shift away from parochial concerns in the use of the internet towards greater transnational ambitions, with ‘inward-facing’ Telegram channels and Chan boards becoming the most attractive platforms for racially nationalistic content versus more ‘outward-facing’ mainstream platforms that have been used by cultural nationalists to propagate more sanitised radical right extremist messages to wider, non-aligned audiences.¹⁰⁷

A first step in identifying what medium you want to use, therefore, is becoming aware of the type of radical right extremist narratives you are wanting to target on which platforms, and whether you will be targeting those who are non-aligned or more significantly ideologised in radical right extremist content. For example, alternative narratives giving a positive alternative vision might work better on non-aligned audiences on mainstream platforms versus counter narratives unpicking the fallacies and inconsistencies within the belief systems of more ideologised audiences on fringe internet platforms.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, it is also helpful to think of a broader radical right ecosystem on the internet, in order to provide more joined up thinking of a campaigns effects between different platforms. As the graphic spells out below, radical right extremists use some platforms for active radicalisation and others for mobilisation and mainstreaming of their messages. It is good to think about how counter-campaigns might leverage these dynamics to their advantage. For example, by disrupting and disconnecting radicalisation pathways through counter messages, thus stopping extremist propaganda from being ‘unleashed’ on more mainstream platforms [see Figure 7].

Whether the online media you choose to present your radical right counter-narratives are videos, text, fact sheets, games, emoji's, platform stickers or a well-placed set of memes, it is also best to version content that takes in the logics and strengths of the platform that you are using. This might need to be subtler when it comes to more clandestine platforms (e.g. Telegram and password protected message boards).

¹⁰³ Light Upon Light, 'Ctrl+Alt+Del-Hate E-Magazine Issue 01', 1 November 2019, online at: <https://www.scribd.com/document/433021364/Ctrl-Alt-Del-Hate-E-Magazine-Issue-01>.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

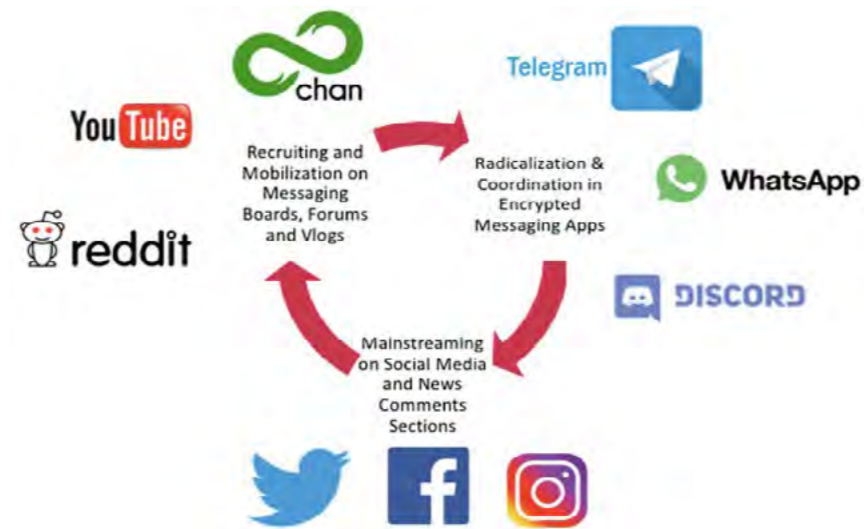
¹⁰⁵ Macnair, L. & Frank, R., 'Voices Against Extremism: A case study of a community-based CVE counter-narrative campaign', *Journal for Deradicalization*, (10), 2017, P.155.

¹⁰⁶ Ebner, J. & Davey J. (2017) 'The Fringe Insurgency: Connectivity, Convergence and Mainstreaming of the Extreme Right.' London: ISD; Ebner, J. & Davey J. (2018) 'Mainstreaming Mussolini: How the Extreme Right Attempted to 'Make Italy Great Again' in the 2018 Italian Election.' London: ISD & Colliver, C., Pomerantsev, P., Applebaum, A. and Birdwell, J. (2018) 'Smearing Sweden: International Influence Campaigns in the 2018 Swedish Election.' London: ISD.

¹⁰⁷ Froio, C. & Ganesh, B. (2018) 'The transnationalisation of far right discourse on Twitter.' *European Societies*, DOI: 10.1080/14616696.2018.1494295 & Caini, M. & Kröll, P. (2015) 'The transnationalization of the extreme right and the use of the Internet.' *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*, 39(4): 331-351.

¹⁰⁸ RAN Issue Paper (2017) 'RAN Guidelines for Effective Alternative and Counter Narrative Campaigns (GAMMM+)' RAN Europe, online at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-c-and-n/docs/ran_cn_guidelines_effective_alternative_counter_narrative_campaigns_31_12_2017_en.pdf.

FIGURE 7 Ebner's (2019) Visualisation of Radical Right Online Ecosystems¹⁰⁹



An example from a more mainstream platform of how to engage in a counter-narrative campaign is (again) CAPE's 2013-2015 'Exit White Power' project that directly entertained conversations with white nationalists on Facebook in order to get them to question their activism and worldview. Another site of innovation prior to this was EXIT USA's 2015 video campaign consisting of four video testimonies that highlighted personal stories and falsities propagated by radical right extremist groups.¹¹⁰ Using short and emotionally-charged messages tailored for social media to sit alongside its day-to-day offline intervention work, the videos ('No Judgement Just Help', 'There is Life After Hate', 'Oak Creek,' & 'The Formers') were targeted at violent white supremacists across the broadest geographical area, using keywords and hashtags in order to capture a large cross-section of the extremist scene. The aim of the campaign was not just to garner views but also to encourage engagement through comments.

WEBSITES AND DISCUSSION FORUMS

A less popular but still relevant part of online radical right extremist communities are group websites, image boards, and discussion forums (such as on Twitch, Discord, Daily Stormer, Storm Front, 4Chan, 8Kun, and Neinchan). As indicated in the graphic above, these are often used for recruitment and mobilisation purposes. Quite a number of anti-fascist and anti-hatred groups often get involved in naming and shaming individual's activities on these forums in order to bring to light the murky and often extreme side of the fringe and mainstream radical right extremist groups operating on these platforms. Whether anti-hate interventions, and the infiltration of such platforms, is effective at changing the attitudes and behaviours of more ardent posters is still open to question. Examples of counter-narrative campaigns on such platforms are rare. However, and as suggested above in Step 5, such platforms might become the frontline in future efforts to tackle forms of terrorist violence. Key suggestions here could therefore be using covert tactics to gain trust of audiences on these platforms and subsequently delegitimise racially nationalist and dehumanising language on such platforms by seeding doubts as to their veracity.¹¹¹ This will ultimately help heighten the moral thresholds to violent activity against target groups and thus reduce the potential for further terroristic violence from happening in the first place.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Ebner, J. (2019) 'Counter-Creativity: Innovative Ways to Counter Far-Right Communication Tactics.' In: Fielitz, M. & Thurston, N. (eds.) Post-Digital Cultures of the Far Right: Online Actions and Offline Consequences in Europe and the US. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag. Hyperlink: <https://www.transcript-verlag.de/en/detail/index/sArticle/4371?number=978-3-8394-4670-6>, pp. 172.

¹¹⁰ Counter-Narrative Toolkit, 'Exit USA' Case Study, online at: <http://www.counternarratives.org/html/case-studies-entry?id=17>.

¹¹¹ See: Braddock, K. & Horgan, J. Op Cit & Braddock, Op Cit.

¹¹² For more on moral thresholds to violence, see: Macklin, G., Op Cit.

CREATIVE/ARTISTIC OFFLINE INTERVENTIONS

Another medium that has been harnessed by counter-narrative provides in tackling problematic forms of radical right extremism has been using smart, and sometimes humorous and subversive, offline creative and artistic offline interventions. A key offline example of innovative practice in this regard was EXIT Deutschland's 2011 Trojan T-Shirt initiative that issued 250 counter-narrative t-shirts (see below) at a neo-Nazi rock concert in Gera.¹¹³ Another successful EXIT Deutschland campaign, 'Nazis against Nazis', was also innovative in its use of clever involuntary charity walks to respond to a radical right-wing marches in East German towns designed to glorify Nazism, whereby for every metre the extremists walked €10 would be donated to EXIT-Germany.¹¹⁴ Other examples of offline interventions designed to delegitimise and demystify violent extremism in the UK include Hope Not Hate's efforts in 2011 of devising news sheets and community events in four areas vulnerable to anti-Islam protest activity by the anti-Islamisation group, the English Defence League, in order to generate a strong and positive local identities that included ethnic minorities.¹¹⁵ Another was Show Racism the Red Card's (2011) set of UK interactive seminars with young people between the ages of 11 and 18 to reject problematic narratives around Islam and violence perpetuated again by anti-Islam groups in the early 2010's. A final example of creative or artistic mediums for counter-narrative campaigns are counter-propaganda efforts that use radical right propaganda as the basis for interventions.¹¹⁶ Examples of this include: 1) Anonymous's (2011) 'Operation Unmanifest' campaign that saw activists alter versions of Anders Breivik's manifesto that used humour to mock its author and discredit his violent ideology,¹¹⁷ and 2) the so-called 'meow movement' who turn radical right extremist 'stickering' on its head by covering up racist propaganda using pictures of cats.¹¹⁸

PEER-TO-PEER INTERVENTIONS

One tried and tested medium of intervention, especially when it comes to radical right counter-radicalisation, are peer-to-peer interventions by trained counsellors and former extremists with those in the process of radicalisation. Examples of successful counter-narrative campaigns include Moonshot CVE's Redirect Method and ISD's Counter Conversations methodology. Both of these campaigns used targeted messaging via Facebook, Google, and YouTube in order to invite those reconsidering their involvement to talk to a professional. Such invitations to face-to-face interventions could be replicated in the offline world for those who do not readily use online platforms or in more developing contexts where social media penetration is weak through billboard advertising or direct-mail campaigns.

¹¹³ Dafnos, A. (2014) 'Narratives as a Means of Countering the Radical Right; Looking into the Trojan T-shirt Project.' Journal EXIT Deutschland. PP. 176-77.

¹¹⁴ EU Commission, 'Exit Germany - Nazis against Nazis', 2016, online at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/node/7492_en.

¹¹⁵ HC Written Statement 154 (18th December 2014) 'Integration Update.' Hyperlink: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2014-12-18/debates/14121843000023/IntegrationUpdate>. Date Accessed: 03/09/2019.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Counter-Narrative Toolkit, 'Operation Unmanifest', online at: <http://www.counternarratives.org/html/case-studies-entry?id=11>.

¹¹⁸ Gubitosi, B., 'Cat posters are covering up racist messages in Manchester', *New York Post*, 5 March 2020, online at: <https://nypost.com/2020/03/05/cat-posters-are-covering-up-racist-messages-in-manchester/>.

8 DEVELOP A STRATEGY FOR DISSEMINATION

TELEVISION, FILM, AND CINEMA



Another powerful medium that would be useful for targeting radical right sympathetic audiences includes television, film, and cinema. As older cohorts tend to access traditional media more frequently, semi-mainstream media channels have a significant audience for the radical right.¹¹⁹ Well-placed advertisements on these channels could help cut through the filter bubbles and echo chambers of social media. In addition, on-demand content and public screenings of counter-narrative films could be used when targeting younger audiences. An example of this are documentary-style dramas that discuss issues around radical right extremism, include: '22 July' (2018), 'Jo Cox: The Death of an MP' (2017), and 'Imperium' (2016). Added to this, there are a whole host of documentaries (both Anglophone and non-Anglophone) that are friendly to wider audiences from which excerpts might be drawn as part of a counter-narrative advertising or (offline) educational intervention campaign.¹²⁰

Next, a counter-narrative needs an associated campaign to help distribute the message. Some recommendations for strategic dissemination of messages include the below:¹²¹



Determine the appropriate language and dialect of the campaign to ensure the message will resonate in the local and/or subculture-specific 'dialects' of the groups that you are trying to reach. The original message is best delivered in a language that is as localized as possible. This may involve including idioms or colloquial phrases that may be perceived as more 'neutral' by the target audience.

Consider counter-narrative campaigns that include an element of audience participation and two-way communication between the messenger and the recipient. Campaigns with a 'call to action' or an opportunity to discuss or debate the message may have more impact on people considering exiting radical right extremist movements and the target audience in general.



Utilise short, concise messages that draw in the target audience as an entry point. Follow up with slightly longer messages and provide additional information and platforms for engagement when the target audience is interested.

Link the timing of the campaign to existing events (such as protests, rallies, 'white power' rock concerts and other formally advertised occasions) that are already occurring in the community and try to spread versions of the same message over a discrete time period for added exposure.



¹¹⁹ This is especially the case in unregulated and highly partisan mass media contexts, such as the United States. See: Jouet, M., *Exceptional America: What Divides Americans from the World and from Each Other*, University of California Press, p.69.

¹²⁰ For more examples, see: C-REX, 'Documentaries about the far right' webpage, online at: <https://www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/english/topics/online-resources/bibliographies/documentaries-and-fiction/documentaries.html>.

¹²¹ This list has been largely adapted from other Hedayah 'How-To' Guides. See: Zeiger, S., 'Undermining Violent Extremist Narratives in South East Asia A How-To Guide', Abu Dhabi, UAE: Hedayah, September 2016, online at: <http://www.hedayahcenter.org/Admin/Content/File-3182016115528.pdf>, p.29.



Supplement offline campaigns with an online presence to provide additional information. Consider including hashtags as part of the broader campaign and link to relevant websites and online resources.¹²²

Field inquiries from newspaper and online press but only in a way that furthers your campaign objective and goals.

As noted above, radical right extremist actors and fringe milieus tend to be notoriously wary of establishment actors so if you are a formal organisation this might not be the best strategy for you as it might over-expose your identity to a distrustful audience. Moreover, and despite increasing reach among a wider audience, it might not further attitudinal or behavioural change among your target audience.



For more tips and ideas on how to optimise your Strategy of Dissemination, see **Annex A**.

9 EVALUATE THE IMPACT

Evaluating the impact of counter-narrative campaigns starts with linking back to the goals and objectives that were set in Step 4, and articulating the desired Theory of Change (ToC) of the campaign.¹²³ Good evaluation of impact may also include ongoing monitoring and assessment of the campaign throughout at pre-designated points on the campaign timeline. Monitoring, measurement, and evaluation of counter-narrative campaigns are important for several reasons:¹²⁴

FIGURE 8: WHY MONITOR, MEASURE, AND EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF COUNTER-NARRATIVES

- ✓ Ensures the message is being received by the target audience in an intended way.
- ✓ Ensures the message is achieving the goal or objective that leads to the desired change.
- ✓ Provides opportunities to alter the message to boost engagement and better fit a changing context.
- ✓ Provides information on how to better craft future campaigns in order to boost effectiveness in the future.
- ✓ Provides feedback to interested parties about the project for accountability; both to donors and funders but also CVE practitioners at large.

(Source: Zeiger 2018:29)

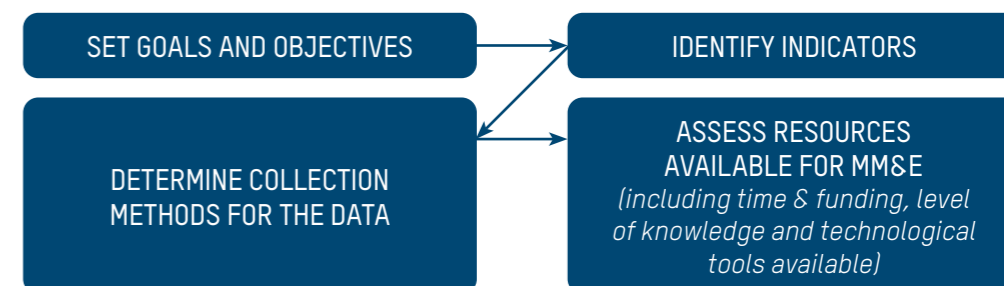
¹²² For more on the 'Backfire effect', see Cook, J. & Lewandowsky, S. (2011) 'The Debunking Handbook' St. Lucia, Australia: University of Queensland, online at: <http://sks.to/debunk> & Lewandowsky, S. (2012) 'Misinformation and Its Correction: Continued Influence and Successful Debiasing.' *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 13(3), 106-131.

¹²³ For more about constructing a 'Theory of Change' as part of your RRCN campaign, see: Alliance for Peacebuilding, 'Theories of Change', Policy Brief, March 2015, online at: <http://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/FINAL-Theories-of-Change-in-PB.pdf>.

¹²⁴ Below from: Zeiger, S., 'Undermining Violent Extremist Narratives in South East Asia A How-To Guide', Abu Dhabi, UAE: Hedayah, September 2016, online at: <http://www.hedayahcenter.org/Admin/Content/File-3182016115528.pdf>, p.29.



Hedayah has developed a framework for monitoring, measurement, and evaluation (MM&E) of P/CVE programs that can also be applied to radical right extremist counter-narrative campaigns.¹²⁵ While explaining the entire framework is outside the scope of this Guide,¹²⁶ the basic steps for developing good MM&E can be described as follows:



The sections below will highlight some of the key components of this process for developing counter-narrative evaluation metrics in more detail. They should not be seen as a comprehensive framework, but rather as guidance on how to better evaluate radical right counter-narrative campaigns.¹²⁷ For more ideas on boosting ‘awareness’, ‘engagement’, and ‘impact’, see **Annex A and B**.

Identify Indicators

Good monitoring, measurement, and evaluation involves articulating the measure of change through clearly defined indicators that can be monitored and evaluated over time. Having such indicators in place will help evidence the goals that you are working towards and will make data collection easier further down the line once the campaign has started. As has been outlined in other handbooks on putting together a counter-narrative campaign, there are three ways in which counter-narratives might best be measured: awareness, engagement, and impact.¹²⁸ While it might be tempting to stick to simply looking at awareness statistics (e.g. likes, views, shares, and retweets), it is advisable to build a more thorough form of analysis of attitudinal change, such as a post-intervention survey, for example, to be able to assess more closely sustained engagement and the lasting attitudinal and behavioural impact of the campaign. Moreover, and if campaign practitioners feel confident, the use of a survey experiment to scientifically test the set of counter-narratives used within campaign on a subset of the target audience might be a neat way of systematically mapping the effectiveness of your message or messages.¹²⁹ Below is a case study with examples of indicators matched to a specific goal and a number of parameters that you might think about designing in at an early stage of a radical right counter-narrative campaign:¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Mattei, C. & Zeiger, S., ‘Evaluate Your CVE Results: Projecting Your Impact’, Abu Dhabi, UAE: Hedayah, online at: <https://capve.org/en/component/eshopping/product/view/9/313>.

¹²⁶ More on this in: RRCN ‘Assessment Framework 2: Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Radical Right Counter-Narrative Campaign’
¹²⁷ This has been adapted from other Hedayah ‘How-To’ Guides. See: Zeiger, S., ‘Undermining Violent Extremist Narratives in South East Asia A How-To Guide’, Abu Dhabi, UAE: Hedayah, September 2016, online at: <http://www.hedayahcenter.org/Admin/Content/File-3182016115528.pdf>, pp.29-31.

¹²⁸ El Sayed, L., Faris, T., & Zeiger, S., ‘Undermining Violent Extremist Narratives in the Middle East and North Africa’, Abu Dhabi, UAE: Hedayah, December 2017, online at: <https://www.stratcomcoe.org/download/file/fid/78358> & Tuck, H. and Silverman, T., ‘The Counter Narrative Handbook’, London: ISD, 2016, online at: https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Counter-narrative-Handbook_1.pdf.

¹²⁹ For more examples of using experiments in the testing of CVE programmes, see: Braddock, K., ‘A Brief Primer on Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Methods in the Study of Terrorism’, The Hague: ICCT, January 2019, online at: <https://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/ICCT-Braddock-Brief-Primer-on-Experimental-Methods-Study-of-Terrorism-January2019.pdf>.

¹³⁰ Adapted from Reynolds, L. & Tuck, H., ‘The Counter Narrative Monitoring & Evaluation Handbook’, 2016, London: ISD, online at: <https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/CN-Monitoring-and-Evaluation-Handbook.pdf>.



Case Study of Indicators & MME: Violent Radical Right Extremist Battalion

In Country X, there is a problem with a large number of radical right extremists joining a violent extremist battalion, Group G, from abroad and engaging in raids against domestic military units and populations. Group G aims to support the overthrow of a democratically elected government in Country X and (at least theoretically) institute a fascist, authoritarian political system where white people will 'reign supreme.' Group G recruits young people on the internet on alternative social media platforms and bulletin boards that are popular among neo-Nazi's (e.g. Telegram, VK, 4Chan, 8Kun, and Neinchan). They also expand their recruiting efforts through infiltrating other radical right extremist groups in other countries within the region.

COUNTER-NARRATIVE PROGRAM

Counter-narrative developers decide to develop a campaign to raise awareness of negative consequences of joining Group G in Country X.¹³¹ This will be done through three channels:

1. Posting on Chan-type image boards connected to Group G, including the re-mixing of their propaganda in a satirical and humorous fashion;
2. Social media information campaigns designed to delegitimise the proxy war in the eyes of white nationalists (both in Country X and elsewhere);
3. Warnings posted to radical right extremist VK and Telegram groups warning of infiltration by 'Group G' in the wider regional context.

GOAL: Significantly decreasing the number of neo-Nazi's wishing to join the violent radical right extremist battalion to under 100.

¹³¹ Zeiger, S., Op Cit.,p.30.

AWARENESS INDICATORS

- Number of Views & Reposts of Re-mixed Content on VK, Telegram, & Chan boards;
- Number of 'Likes,' 'Shares,' and 'Forwards' of warning messages on Twitter, VK, Facebook, & Telegram;
- Number of 'Impressions' on Twitter and 'Reach' on Facebook & VK of social media information campaign.

ENGAGEMENT INDICATORS

- Number of Reposts & Replies to Re-mixed Content on VK, Telegram, & Chan boards;
- Number of Responses to warning messages on VK, Facebook, & Telegram;
- Number of Comments and 'Subtweets' on Facebook and Twitter social media information campaign.

IMPACT INDICATORS

- Decreased support for proxy war by target audience based on qualitative analysis of Chan Replies, Telegram Conversations, Facebook & VK Comments, and Subtweets on Twitter;
- Decreased support for proxy war by target audience based on sentiment analysis of Chan replies, Telegram Conversations, Facebook & VK Comments, and Subtweets on Twitter;
- Decreased support for proxy war by target audience measured based on quantitative decrease of supportive content on Chan boards, Telegram and VK.

RADICAL RIGHT COUNTER-NARRATIVE CASE STUDIES



CASE STUDY #1: EXIT GERMANY TROJAN HORSE T-SHIRT CAMPAIGN (2011) | Germany

The Trojan T-Shirt Project was a 2011 campaign by EXIT-Germany in collaboration with a Hamburg-based advertisement agency, Grabarz and Partner, who manufactured and distributed 250 T-shirts with skull and crossbones symbols reading the slogan: “Hardcore Rebels - National and Free.” These were given out to attendees at a rock festival in Gera and, once washed, revealed the message: “If your T-shirt can do it, so can you - we can help you to get free of right-wing extremism. EXIT-Germany.” Nicknamed the Trojan Horse T-shirt campaign, the initiative became widely reported, with over 300 newspapers reporting the story worldwide, free publicity equivalent to approximately €500,000 and a tripling in EXIT-Germany’s organisational caseload.¹³² As noted by Dafnos (2014), the campaign itself was smart, innovative and creative.¹³³ It stepped outside of the traditional bounds of public health advertising video or poster campaigns and subverted the control of gatekeepers within a particular extremist milieu.

1. PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

Push factors:

- Sense of Religious, Ethnic or Cultural Marginalisation, Loss & Endangerment (related to Religious, Ethnic or Cultural Changes)¹³⁴
- Broader Processes of Social Fragmentation, Isolation, & Disintegration¹³⁵
- Loss of Political Trust in Mainstream Actors around Handling of Migration, as well as associated Cultural and Security Politics¹³⁶
- Sense of Political Silencing & Exclusion from Mainstream Political Institutions¹³⁷

Pull factors:

- Offer of Brotherhood, Belonging, & Comradery¹³⁸
- Offer of Social Empowerment or Engagement¹³⁹
- Attractiveness of Control or Sense-Making over ‘Outside Forces’¹⁴⁰
- Attractiveness of Alternative Outlet for Political Engagement and Activism¹⁴¹

Enabling/Social Networks:

- Contact with ‘Person of Influence’ or activists within Radical Right Extremist Milieus, either on-line or offline¹⁴²

¹³² Dafnos, A. (2014) ‘Narratives as a Means of Countering the Radical Right: Looking into the Trojan T-shirt Project.’ Journal EXIT Deutschland. P.175.

¹³³ Ibid. P.171.

¹³⁴ McClaren, L. & Johnson, M. Op Cit; Mudde, C., Op Cit.; & Rydgren, J., Op Cit.

¹³⁵ Druxes, H. and Simpson, P.A., Op Cit. & Hartleb, F., Op Cit.

¹³⁶ Hartleb, F., Op Cit. & Huggler, J., Op Cit.

¹³⁷ Pilkington, H., Op Cit.

¹³⁸ Busher, J., Op Cit. & Virchow, F. Op Cit.

¹³⁹ Abbas, T., Op Cit.

¹⁴⁰ Hartleb, F., Op Cit.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² This has been especially the cases in far right solo-actor terrorists, including Copeland (1999), Sonbol (2016), Osborne (2017), Tarrant (2019), & Crusius (2019).

2. TARGET AUDIENCE

The immediate target audience were young, right-wing rock festivalgoers in Gera, Germany, but the wider aim was to raise the awareness of the public and wider neo-Nazi scene in Germany regarding the existence of EXIT-Germany.

3. NARRATIVES COUNTERED

The violence extremist narratives being countered was around: 1) the implicit control radical right wing extremist actors had over their activities and organisations, 2) the personal narratives of concertgoers that activism enabled them to be ‘free’, and 3) that there was no alternative to being involved in an edgy sub-cultural milieu.

4. GOAL OF COUNTER-NARRATIVE

The T-Shirts had several aims:

- to increase the awareness and popularity of EXIT-Germany in the scene;
- to plant a ‘seed of doubt’ in the minds youths that had not yet firmly settled in the radical right extremist scene;
- to bring the message into the home or safe space of the recipient with no correction from extremist groups, therefore evading group censure and peer-pressure.

5. MESSENGER

The T-Shirts themselves were the main messengers but so were the press and actors in the radical right extremist scene themselves—with several news outlets covering the story and numerous extremists reacting (both positively and negatively) to the act of infiltration.

6. CONTENT AND LOGIC

The main goal of the campaign was a ‘call to action’ for those considering leaving the radical right music scene to ‘exit’ and seek support from trained intervention providers at EXIT-Germany. According to Bernd Wagner, the co-founder of EXIT-Germany, however, the main goal for the message was to be as simple, concise, and powerful as possible, combatting the narratives radical right extremist movements put out in terms of their control among adherents and personal, micro-narratives of why individuals get involved in these movements in the first place (e.g. brotherhood, comradeship, and social engagement). A second key aim of the message was to be both an alternative and counter-narrative, planting a seed of doubt about the authority of the movement’s leadership whilst also offering an alternative way of life for those involved at a grassroots level. A third aim was to publicise the work of EXIT-Germany, extending a direct offer of help to those who felt stuck and hopeless within the milieu.

7. MEDIUMS

Again, the T-shirts themselves were the main messengers but so were the press and actors in the radical right extremist scene themselves. There is something to be said about the creativity of using a washable T-shirt instead of a video or billboard, with washing physically enacting the action that EXIT-Germany wished the recipient to undertake.

8. STRATEGY FOR DISSEMINATION

EXIT-Germany initially wished to carry out their plan on February 13th 2011 in Dresden during the commemoration day of the city's bombing by Allied forces in 1945. It was, however, deemed too risky due to the charged atmosphere of the event and the likelihood of violence between fascists and anti-fascists.

EXIT-Germany and its partner therefore decided to pause the campaign for several months until August, where it was decided that the sixth annual Rock for Germany festival would be the appropriate forum. EXIT-Germany contacted festival organizers via email and after several days of non-response were finally able to deliver the package five days before the opening of the festival.

9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The metrics used to measure the success and effectiveness of the campaign were mostly based on the number of right-wingers that contacted the group for consultation about exiting the scene and level of public engagement for EXIT-Germany and its activities, with the latter measurements based on interactions on EXIT-Germany's Facebook and EXIT-Germany's website, page views of press articles on the host website and number of press agencies covering the story. Another element of monitoring was gauging the reaction within the German extremist milieu itself, that is observing responses on radical right online discussion forums and on the Facebook fan page of the Rock for Germany festival itself:

- Numbers of Extremists referring themselves to EXIT-Germany
- Number of Facebook interactions (e.g. likes, comments & shares)
- Number of Visitors to EXIT-Germany Website
- Number of Press Articles & Press Agencies covering campaign
- Qualitative Sentiment Analysis of Radical Right Discussion Forums & Facebook Pages

CASE STUDY #2: CAPE 'EXIT WHITE POWER' PROJECT (2013-2015) | Australia

Started by the New South Wales-based NGO, All Together Now, Australia's Community Action in Preventing Extremism Project was an exitwhitepower.com website, with a subsequent Facebook forum established ('White Power? Discussion Page') for those involved in radical right extremist movements online. One of the key innovations of the project was the tailored nature of the online discussions, alongside CAPE's openness to incorporating feedback from police, academics, and former radical right extremists. This responsiveness to participants and professionals led one of the project's managers to suggest that the number of Australians engaging with CAPE's website and forum 'significantly exceeded' the numbers originally anticipated: there were 22,000 unique views of its website between 2013-2015 and 2000 'likes' of its Facebook page in the first year alone.¹⁴³

1. PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

Push factors:

- Sense of Religious, Ethnic or Cultural Marginalisation, Loss, & Endangerment (related to Religious, Ethnic or Cultural Changes)¹⁴⁴
- Broader Processes of Social Fragmentation, Isolation, & Disintegration¹⁴⁵
- Loss of Political Trust in Mainstream Actors around Handling of Migration, as well as associated Cultural and Security Politics¹⁴⁶
- Sense of Political Silencing & Exclusion from Mainstream Political Institutions¹⁴⁷

Pull factors:

- Offer of Brotherhood, Belonging, & Comradery¹⁴⁸
- Offer of Social Empowerment or Engagement¹⁴⁹
- Attractiveness of Control or Sense-Making over 'Outside Forces'¹⁵⁰
- Attractiveness of Alternative Outlet for Political Engagement and Activism¹⁵¹

Enabling/Social Networks:

- Online Forums and Communities (such as Iron March, 8Kun, and neo-Nazi Telegram Channels)¹⁵²

2. TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience were Australian men aged 14-25 at-risk of involvement in radical right extremism, with advancing commitment to white supremacist belief systems through engaging in discussions on race hate pages.¹⁵³

3. NARRATIVES COUNTERED

According to a recent study of the CAPE Project,¹⁵⁴ the top ten conversation topics covered in the Facebook page revolved around not just the ideological claims of white nationalists (e.g. multiculturalism and immigration leading to moral degeneracy) but also social messages around the importance, effects, and outcomes of their involvement in white nationalist movements (e.g. its effects on friends and family). These social messages included the effects of activism on future prospects, sharing their opinions with friends and family and whether involvement in white nationalist movements affected their future prospects.

4. GOAL OF COUNTER-NARRATIVE

The CAPE project had three key goals as part of its counter-narrative campaign:

- De-Radicalisation & Disengagement of Australian men aged 14-25 active in online hate pages through increasing the number of positive, critical engagements with CAPE's campaign Facebook and Exitwhitepower.com pages in the duration of the 3-month campaign.
- Diverting those Australian men to alternative websites (provided by CAPE's Facebook page and Exitwhitepower.com webpage) to express their opinions and grievances around race, migra-

¹⁴³ Voogt, S., 'Countering far-right recruitment online: CAPE's practitioner experience', Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism, 12:1 (2017), 34-46, cited pp. 39.

¹⁴⁴ McClaren, L. & Johnson, M. Op Cit; Mudde, C., Op Cit.; & Rydgren, J., Op Cit.

¹⁴⁵ Druxes, H. and Simpson, P.A., Op Cit. & Hartleb, F., Op Cit.

¹⁴⁶ Hartleb, F., Op Cit. & Huggler, J., Op Cit.

¹⁴⁷ Pilkington, H., Op Cit.

¹⁴⁸ Busher, J., Op Cit. & Virchow, F. Op Cit.

¹⁴⁹ Abbas, T., Op Cit.

¹⁵⁰ Hartleb, F., Op Cit.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Macklin, G., Op Cit.

¹⁵³ Aly, A. and Zeiger, S., Op Cit., p.83

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, pp. 81-89.

tion, and the legitimacy of democratic government in a carefully managed and maintained online environment.

- Undermining Appeal among Australian men (as described above) through outlining the potential pitfalls and inconsistencies of white nationalist movements by spelling out contradictions within their messages and risks of violent activism.

5. MESSENGER

The main messengers were trained moderators at CAPE tasked with engaging those at-risk individuals who accessed the Facebook page. This was supplemented by articles researched and written by CAPE staff that were lodged on the 'Exit White Power' website (such as "Are you being manipulated", "Why I left White Supremacy," & "Nobody tells me what to do")—with most aiming to be humorous and colloquial in tone.

6. CONTENT AND LOGIC

As noted above, the content and logic of the messages—both the Exit White Power website and Facebook page—was to both address the ideological claims made by radical right extremists but also the hypocrisy of radical right movements themselves. This was in order to foster critical thinking and sow early seeds of doubt rather than create antagonism and argumentation. Examples of conversation starters used on the Facebook strand of the project included: "Is multiculturalism the death of White Australia?", "How often do you question what you read?", & "How do you think being a white nationalist affects your future prospects?"

7. MEDIUMS

Counter-narratives were delivered through articles published on the 'exitwhitepower.com' website & the 'White Power? Discussion Page.' The visual design and choice of article titles used within the website, and in advertisements for it, were deliberately chosen to echo those of white supremacist websites.

8. STRATEGY FOR DISSEMINATION

The CAPE project initially began with the static exitwhitepower.com website; however, following the piloting of the project it was extended to include a Facebook online discussion forum. This was to boost interaction as well as the ability to tailor counter-narrative interventions to topics of interest amongst the target audience—allowing CAPE staff to alter the content, language, and style of response chosen.

9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The metrics used to measure the success and effectiveness of the campaign were mostly based on awareness and engagement statistics gathered from website and Facebook page views, such as likes and comments but also impact surveys and questionnaires with the audience and CVE experts. For example, the exitwhitepower.com website attracted over 22,000 unique Australian users between 2013 and 2015, while the Facebook forum gained 2000 Facebook 'likes' within its first year.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, and buttressing CAPE's own figures, Zeiger and Aly (2015) also found that there were 24,323 visits to the Facebook page, and a total of 3,086 comments in response to the 24 discussion starters left there.¹⁵⁶

- Number of Visitors to the exitwhitepower.com website
- Number of 'White Power?' Facebook page views, likes, and comments
- Qualitative Analysis of User and Expert Post-Intervention Surveys

¹⁵⁵ Voogt, S., Op Cit, pp. 39.
¹⁵⁶ Aly, A. and Zeiger, S., Op Cit, pp.81-89.

CASE STUDY #3: EXTREME DIALOGUE (2015) SZABOLCS HORVÁTH'S STORY

Launched in 2015 by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue and combining multimedia educational resources with short documentary films, Extreme Dialogue produced one particularly powerful video of a victim of radical right extremist attacks, Szabolcs Horváth, in Hungary. In 2012, he and his community were targeted by a radical right anti-Roma march in their hometown of Devecser, Hungary. Horváth's film, along with others, tells a personal story of people affected by violent extremism and includes testimonies from former members of extreme groups, in addition to survivors of hate crimes and terror attacks.

1. PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

Push factors:

- Sense of Religious, Ethnic or Cultural Marginalisation, Loss, & Endangerment (related to Religious, Ethnic or Cultural Changes)¹⁵⁷
- Broader Processes of Social Fragmentation, Isolation, & Disintegration¹⁵⁸
- Sudden Global Economic Change or Upheaval, either through Recession or Substantial Shift in means of Production¹⁵⁹
- Unemployment, Low Levels of Educational Attainment & Career Success¹⁶⁰

Pull factors:

- Attractiveness of 'Buzz'¹⁶¹ or Thrill-seeking¹⁶² within Direct Action Activism
- Attractiveness of Violent¹⁶³ and/or Performative Masculinity¹⁶⁴
- Offer of Brotherhood, Belonging, & Comradery¹⁶⁵
- Offer of Social Empowerment or Engagement¹⁶⁶
- Attractiveness of Control or Sense-Making over 'Outside Forces'¹⁶⁷
- Attractiveness of Alternative Outlet for Political Engagement and Activism¹⁶⁸

Enabling Factors:

- 'Calls to action' by extremist groups after particular flashpoints (e.g. child sexual exploitation, inter-racial rioting or Islamist terror attack)¹⁶⁹

2. TARGET AUDIENCE

The main target of the video, and an accompanying resource, were young people aged 14-18 as an opportunity to further explore issues surrounding extremism and radicalisation, and to boost resilience to such processes.

3. NARRATIVES COUNTERED

Key to Horváth's Story was an attempt to disentangle extremist and mainstream narratives in Hungary around the Roma population as a homogenous community that emphasises crime, poverty and families in need of support, as well as other, negative racist tropes.

4. GOAL OF COUNTER-NARRATIVE

The overall aim of the video, and accompanying educational resource, was to develop students' critical thinking skills and resilience to radicalisation, explore shared values, and challenge radical extremist propaganda.

¹⁵⁷ McClaren, L. & Johnson, M. Op Cit; Mudde, C., Op Cit.; & Rydgren, J., Op Cit.
¹⁵⁸ Druxes, H. and Simpson, P.A., Op Cit. & Hartleb, Op Cit.
¹⁵⁹ Betz, Hans-Georg, Op Cit.
¹⁶⁰ This has been especially the cases in far right solo-actor terrorists, with the most prominent being Anders Behring Breivik and Patrick Crusius.
¹⁶¹ Busher, J., Op Cit..
¹⁶² Schumpe, B.M., Belanger, J.J., & Moyano, M., Op Cit.
¹⁶³ Treadwell, J. & Garland, J., Op Cit.
¹⁶⁴ Pearson, E., Op Cit.
¹⁶⁵ Busher, J., Op Cit. & Virchow, F. Op Cit.
¹⁶⁶ Abbas, Tahir. Op Cit.
¹⁶⁷ Hartleb, F., Op Cit.
¹⁶⁸ Ibid.
¹⁶⁹ These examples are especially the case on more culturally nationalist scenes who tend to emerge from extremely local antagonist extremist milieus.

5. MESSENGER

Horváth is a Hungarian citizen of Romani gypsy extraction from Devecser, whose community was portrayed as starting a clash between the Roma and non-Roma that led to radical right street movements (the Hungarian Guard and the Army of Outlaws) linked to Jobbik. He can be classified as a victim of radical right extremism and of hate crime due to the threat posed to him based on his ethnicity.

6. CONTENT AND LOGIC

The content and logic of the video's message is the story of the demonstration interspersed with Szabolcs' everyday life as a second-hand merchant. Such a story was meant to elicit empathy for the victims of the demonstration and the humanity of the individuals being targeted. The video is narrated by Szabolcs and tells of his hopes after the protest for a more united future within Hungary and his community.

7. MEDIUM

The video itself was intended to be played alongside activities laid out in an accompanying resource pack.¹⁷⁰ The resource pack takes students through how the Roman community are treated in Hungary, using factual counter-narratives.

8. STRATEGY FOR DISSEMINATION

Extreme Dialogue began in Canada in 2015, and was also launched in the UK, Germany, and Hungary in 2016 with new films and resources featuring the stories of people from those three countries.

9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The metrics can mostly be ascertained based on the scale of reach and impact that the video had. These include the number of views (1,316), likes (2), and comments (0) on YouTube. Extreme Dialogue as a whole also has solicited post-intervention surveys with education providers and interested parties, with a feedback questionnaire available on their main website.

- Number of YouTube video views
- Qualitative Sentiment Analysis of Expert Feedback Surveys

¹⁷⁰ Extreme Dialogue, 'Szabolcs Horváth', YouTube, 25 November 2016, online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-y1t_jrPHo.

CASE STUDY #4: ISD'S 'COUNTER CONVERSATIONS' PROJECT (2017)

A large follow-on project from ISD's original 'one-to-one pilot', 'Counter Conversations' also used Facebook in order for former radical right extremists to communicate counter-narratives to 800 individuals showing clear signs of radicalisation. This effectively is one step on from counter-narratives and posits a 'hybrid' model by challenging people one-to-one in order to help persuade individuals to exit online extremist milieus. Its results found that the approach was largely effective in sustaining conversations (64% of radical right extremist interactions) and providing a lasting positive impact on the trajectory of individuals selected for the pilot (10% of sustained conversations between Islamist and radical right extremist respondents overall), with individuals expressing an interest to take their conversation offline, believing that their beliefs had been changed or challenged and demonstrating that the counter-message had a positive impact on negative online posting behaviour.¹⁷¹

1. PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

Push factors:

- Sense of Religious, Ethnic or Cultural Marginalisation, Loss, & Endangerment (related to Religious, Ethnic or Cultural Changes)¹⁷²
- Broader Processes of Social Fragmentation, Isolation, & Disintegration¹⁷³
- Loss of Political Trust in Mainstream Actors around Handling of Migration, as well as associated Cultural and Security Politics¹⁷⁴
- Sense of Political Silencing & Exclusion from Mainstream Political Institutions¹⁷⁵

Enabling Factors:

- Online Forums and Communities (such as Iron March, 8Kun, and neo-Nazi Telegram Channels)¹⁸⁰

Pull factors:

- Offer of Brotherhood, Belonging, & Comradery¹⁷⁶
- Offer of Social Empowerment or Engagement¹⁷⁷
- Attractiveness of Control or Sense-Making over 'Outside Forces'¹⁷⁸
- Attractiveness of Alternative Outlet for Political Engagement and Activism¹⁷⁹

2. TARGET AUDIENCE

The main audience were older individuals (above 45) who tended to reside in key urban centres of the UK and whose Facebook profile indicated that they were positively engaged with extremist groups and/or materials online.

3. NARRATIVES COUNTERED

The main narratives expressed on the seed pages used to generate candidates for the study were typical of the radical right at the time of the research in 2017. These included anti-Muslim narratives (79.3% of seed pages), anti-migrant narratives (9.1% of seed pages), white supremacist narratives (9.1% of seed pages), and to a lesser extent Identitarian (1.5% of seed pages) and anti-paedophile narratives (0.7%). In terms of the specific issues discussed in relation to Islam, issues mentioned revolved around a perceived physical endangerment (e.g. involvement in child sexual exploitation and posing a violent, terror risk) or cultural threat to British or Western identity (e.g. common tropes being ideas of 'creeping Sharia,' and 'Islamisation' of certain areas).

¹⁷¹ Davey, J., Birdwell, J., and Skellett, R., 'Counter Conversations: A model for direct engagement with individuals showing signs of radicalisation online', (London: ISD, 2018), online at: https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Counter-Conversations_FINAL.pdf P.7.

¹⁷² McClaren, L. & Johnson, M. Op Cit; Mudde, C., Op Cit.; & Rydgren, J., Op Cit.

¹⁷³ Druxes, H. and Simpson, P.A., Op Cit. & Hartleb, F., Op Cit.

¹⁷⁴ Hartleb, F., Op Cit. & Huggler, J., Op Cit.

¹⁷⁵ Pilkington, H., Op Cit.

¹⁷⁶ Busher, J., Op Cit. & Virchow, F. Op Cit.

¹⁷⁷ Abbas, T., Op Cit.

¹⁷⁸ Hartleb, F., Op Cit.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Macklin, G., Op Cit.

4. GOAL OF COUNTER-NARRATIVE

The project's main aim was to use direct, online outreach to see if radicalised individuals could be engaged in conversations with the aim of initiating a process of de-radicalisation and disengagement.

5. CONTENT AND LOGIC

HoLike with the one-to-one pilot, there was no central co-ordination of particular messages for the project as it was deemed important that each messenger build on their own unique messages based on intervention experience and personal background.

Through the trial, it was, however, found that argumentative (followed by casual and medita-

tive) tones worked best at driving engagement with radical right extremists as well as messages that contained a personal question or that highlighted the negative consequences of their actions. A sustained engagement is measured as five or more exchanges between an intervention provider and intervention candidate.

7. MEDIUM

The project used Facebook's messenger function in order to allow the intervention providers to message accounts of candidates. Overall, 64% of approaches to radical right candidates led to sustained conversation.

8. STRATEGY FOR DISSEMINATION

Facebook was chosen for the richness of the publicly available data on user demographics and user interests. Compared with other platforms, Facebook offered greater potential to construct a more complete profile of a potential candidate prior to outreach and therefore generated a more fine-grained picture of when an individual met the threshold for online intervention.

9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The metrics used to evaluate the success of the counter-narrative messaging mainly revolved around the tone (e.g. antagonistic, meditative, scholarly, reflective, sentimental or casual) and content of the messages (e.g. highlighting of negative actions, personal question, ideological challenge, personal story or offer of assistance) and whether they lead to an initial response rate (e.g. brief, sustained or none). The coding was comparatively more sophisticated compared to the 2015 pilot with more categories added regarding the tone (e.g. argumentative) and message content measures (e.g. general question, mention of a shared interest, mention of extremism, mention of the programme). They also attempted to quantify the positive impact that a conversation had.

- Number of Responses received as a result of outreach
- Quantitative Content Analysis of tone and content of responses
- Qualitative Sentiment Analysis of shift in attitude and/or behaviour after the campaign intervention

CASE STUDY #5: UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA'S (2017) 'WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE?' CAMPAIGN

A student-led counter-narrative initiative used to combat radical right extremism in the wake of a terror attack in Edmonton, Alberta, the 'What do you want to be?' Campaign is a the six minute video—entered into Facebook's 2017 Peer-to-Peer: Global Digital Challenge project—that takes the viewer through the process of an individual being groomed into radicalisation as a result of the attack and their realisation of the simplistic and binary narratives of radical right extremists. It then leaves the viewer with the question of "Who do you want to be?"—allowing the viewer to make up their mind after sowing a seed of doubt.¹⁸¹

1. PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

Push factors:

- Sense of Religious, Ethnic or Cultural Marginalisation, Loss, & Endangerment (related to Religious, Ethnic or Cultural Changes)¹⁸²
- Broader Processes of Social Fragmentation, Isolation, & Disintegration¹⁸³
- Loss of Political Trust in Mainstream Actors around Handling of Migration, as well as associated Cultural and Security Politics¹⁸⁴
- Sense of Political Silencing & Exclusion from Mainstream Political Institutions¹⁸

Enabling Factors:

- 'Calls to action' by extremist groups after particular flashpoints (e.g. child sexual exploitation, inter-racial rioting or Islamist terror attack)¹⁹⁰

Pull factors:

- Offer of Brotherhood, Belonging, & Comradery¹⁸⁶
- Offer of Social Empowerment or Engagement¹⁸⁷
- Attractiveness of Control or Sense-Making over 'Outside Forces'¹⁸⁸
- Attractiveness of Alternative Outlet for Political Engagement and Activism¹⁸⁹

2. TARGET AUDIENCE

The main target audience for the campaign were those on the fringe of a radical right organization who were disgruntled with the world they see around them and were flirting with racist ideology. In particular, young men who were considered most vulnerable to radical right propaganda.

3. NARRATIVES COUNTERED

The main narratives that are tackled and targeted in the campaign were racist assumptions about Islam and refugees that arise after Islamist terror attacks, and might lead someone into violent radical right activism.

4. GOAL OF COUNTER-NARRATIVE

The goal of the campaign was to break down simplistic and binary narratives and to sow a seed of doubt concerning the validity and legitimacy of radical right appeals in the wake of an Islamist terror attack—precisely at a time when individuals might be rallying to such groups in order to make sense of the situation.¹⁹¹

¹⁸¹ McMaster, G., 'Class project questions racist assumptions that can lead to violence', Organisation for the Prevention of Violence, 5 December 2017, online at: <https://preventviolence.ca/publication/racist-assumptions/>.

¹⁸² McClaren, L. & Johnson, M. Op Cit; Mudde, C., Op Cit.; & Rydgren, J., Op Cit.

¹⁸³ Druxes, H. and Simpson, P.A., Op Cit. & Hartleb, F., Op Cit.

¹⁸⁴ Hartleb, F., Op Cit. & Huggler, J., Op Cit.

¹⁸⁵ Pilkington, H., Op Cit.

¹⁸⁶ Busher, J., Op Cit. & Virchow, F. Op Cit.

¹⁸⁷ Abbas, T., Op Cit.

¹⁸⁸ Hartleb, F., Op Cit.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ These examples are especially the case on more culturally nationalist scenes who tend to emerge from extremely local antagonist extremist milieus.

¹⁹¹ McMaster, Op Cit.

5. MESSENGER

The main messengers profiled in the video are members of minority communities and the political mainstream in Edmonton performing acts or speeches aimed at combating negative portrayals of migrant communities.¹⁹² Added to this, we follow the journey of an unnamed young man who communicates with radical right activists online but ends up challenging the polarising narratives of the radical right.

6. CONTENT AND LOGIC

The video follows the journey of a young man from open flirtation with the radical right towards challenging the simplistic and binary narratives of such movements. These are interspersed with speeches and snippets of news coverage outlining the response by minority communities to the Edmonton terror attack. The video is firmly in the style of an alternative narrative—showing the everyday acts of kindness and solidarity promoted by Edmonton’s migrant community in the face of the terror attack.

7. MEDIUM

The main medium used for the campaign are short and long form versions of the ‘What do you want to be?’ video posted on ‘Our Alberta’s’ Facebook page.¹⁹³ The page has 576 likes and 607 followers.

8. STRATEGY FOR DISSEMINATION

The project used the University of Alberta’s YouTube page and a dedicated ‘Our Alberta’ Facebook page to disseminate the video. It was subsequently picked up by Canada’s Organisation for Prevention of Violence.¹⁹⁴ Ultimately, the campaign was part of a wider counter-narrative project, Facebook’s Peer-to-Peer Global Challenge.

9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The main metrics used to assess the effectiveness of the campaign were not stated on the campaign’s pages but, due to the online nature of the campaign, it can be surmised that number of views, likes, and engagements with the associated Facebook page are vital statistics. While no independent evaluation has been done of the video and its impact, the overall reach and engagement metrics are promising—with combined views for the short and long form versions of the video pegged at 13,600 along with a number of shares, likes, and comments for the videos posted on ‘Our Alberta’s’ Facebook page.¹⁹⁵ Despite this traction, a qualitative assessment of audience reaction on Facebook tells a more mixed picture—with the majority of comments on the videos voicing scepticism and derision towards the video’s core message.¹⁹⁶

- Number of Facebook Video Views
- Number of likes and engagements with the associated Facebook page
- Qualitative Sentiment Analysis of Comments associated with Facebook Videos

ANNEX

Annex A

Top Tips for Successful Radical Right Counter-Narrative Campaigns

Annex B

Integrating Ethical Practices and Boosting Impact: Further Tips on Leveraging MM&E for a Radical Right Counter-Narrative Campaign

¹⁹² University of Alberta, ‘Who do you want to be?’, YouTube, 28 November 2018, online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=V3mekPXGY1Q&feature=emb_logo.

¹⁹³ Our Alberta Facebook Community Page, online at: <https://www.facebook.com/OurAlberta/>.

¹⁹⁴ McMaster, Op cit.

¹⁹⁵ Our Alberta Facebook Community Page, Op Cit.

¹⁹⁶ Our Alberta Facebook Community Page, ‘It’s Not That Simple’ Video, online at: <https://www.facebook.com/OurAlberta/videos/155430945072753/>.

ANNEX A: TOP TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL RADICAL RIGHT COUNTER-NARRATIVE CAMPAIGNS

A. Navigating the First Ten Days: Crucial Tips to Continued Success

Building on the advice elaborated in Step 8 (Develop a Strategy for Dissemination) & 9 (Evaluate the Impact) above, the first ten days of a campaign will be crucial in testing how successful your campaign has been in reaching your target audience and the initial wider impact of your intervention. You will start to know early on whether your intervention is gaining traction with your target audience and whether you might need to boost its reach through more concerted pushes in the conventional and/or social media. As part of your MMSE, there should initially have been some projected or target results stated that can be used as a yardstick to measure the progress of the campaign. It is therefore good to have a plan before hand of key actions and milestones you will attempt to accomplish proportionate to the measurable goals you set in Step 4 (Set Clear Goal and Objectives for the Counter-Narrative) in order to keep focused and moving towards your clear, realistic, and measurable goals. In the final instance, therefore, it is important to then to compare to actual results and see why and how things did or did not work.

Below are some suggested pieces of advice collated from actors who have engaged in radical right counter-narrative campaigns previously.¹⁹⁷ This is not designed as an exhaustive list but rather as a provisional roadmap for things to look out for in the first ten days of your campaign:

- Spend the first few days after the launch of the campaign monitoring both mainstream and extremist responses, having a press release, media contacts and influencer-type figures or organisations ready to talk about your campaign.
- Collect data for your initial online and offline reach and engagement – make sure you are creating interest with your target audience and be careful of over-exposure at this stage. It is better to provide your audience with multiple smaller exposures than one large ‘hit.’
- As highlighted in Step 8 (Develop a Strategy for Dissemination), field inquiries from newspaper and online press but only in a way that furthers your campaign’s objectives and goals. As noted in Step 5 (Determine an Effective Messenger), radical right extremist actors and fringe milieus tend to be notoriously wary of establishment-type actors so if you are a formal organisation this might not be the best strategy for you.
- Be ready for an uptick in calls, inquiries and social media following as a result of your ‘call for action’ – employ extra staff and volunteers (including public relations professionals and moderators) if needed.
- As noted in Appendix B (below), make sure you are ready for raids, trolling, and negative reactions. It is best to prepare several mitigation plans in place before you begin (i.e. whether you will ignore, delete malicious comments or engage), but also see whether there are any afoot by conducting counter-intelligence on radical right online platforms (e.g. VK, Gab, Parler, Telegram, KiwiFarms, and BitChute). Moreover, you can also see how you can harness these negative reactions for your campaign goals, what aspects of the campaign you might need to recalibrate and the benefits of engagement with negative counter campaigns.
- Conclude the first ten days of activity by collecting information about the campaign up to that point, assessing whether you are on track to meet your projected, quantifiable targets and planning the next steps moving forward.

¹⁹⁷ A special thanks needs to be acknowledged here for EXIT Germany and Resisting Hate for their insights into an effective counter-narrative campaign. os.155430945072753/.

B. Boosting Awareness: Moving from Paid to Organic Reach

Depending on the financial and personnel resources of the campaign, you are working on, paid-for advertising – both in the offline and online space – may be a relatively efficient way to spread the word regarding your campaign and therefore drive up awareness and engagement.¹⁹⁸ In many cases, this might be provided free of charge by platforms themselves for counter-speech campaigns and cut out a lot of legwork for staff who can be freed up to operate on the campaign elsewhere. In order to sustain a campaign over the long-term, however, it is wise to think of creative and innovative ways to generate organic forms of reach from an interested set of messengers (e.g. celebrities or the news media) and/or user-base (e.g. grassroots NGOs or campaign organisations). Best practice shows that informal actors are more likely to be trusted than elite messengers.¹⁹⁹

CASE STUDY: #STOPISLAM (2016) CAMPAIGN

The #StopIslam hashtag started as a forum for spreading racialised hate speech on Twitter in response to the March 2016 terror attacks in Brussels – with 412,353 tweets (including both posts and retweets) using the hashtag in the 24 hours after the attack. It was then however ‘hijacked’ by counter-speech campaigners to subvert and challenge the hashtag’s original anti-Muslim message – gaining significant traction as a way of defending Muslims and Islam in the days after. 22 of the top 100 Twitter accounts disseminating information about the hashtag were prominent news organisations. 64% of these institutions reported on the counter-narrative. A nodal analysis of information sharing networks, for example, found that radical right extremist activist networks were more tightly integrated and better established when compared to the #StopIslam counter publics – suggesting the need for more sustained efforts to bring together such informal activists in order to sustain such counter-messaging campaigns across several waves of radical right actors using such hashtags.

Such opportunities might come around topical or salient events (such as a prominent terrorist or hate crime incident) that generate the use of specific hashtags and speak to the core issues discussed in your campaign. One example of best practice when it comes to seizing on such social media hashtags is the 2016 #StopIslam counter-messaging campaign (shown in the above case study) whereby a large number of counter-speech campaigners were able to subvert and challenge the hashtag’s original anti-Muslim message in order to promote their own positive narrative about Islam.²⁰⁰ Another way of generating organic reach may also be from approaching news organisations and relevant esteemed messengers directly in order to profile your efforts. If time permits and your campaign is of a more broad-based nature, furthermore it might also be helpful for you to create your own ‘activist army’ of sympathetic social media users who can be responsive to developing events. Such users might help generate momentum going forward and sustain the campaign’s reach after an initial spike in interest. They might also help defend your campaign from counter-campaigns and attacks.

¹⁹⁸ One caveat to this might be for campaigns directed at those who are in the processes of radicalisation toward violent radical right extremism – in which case you will want to make your interventions as targeted and inconspicuous as possible, with direct engagement prioritise instead of awareness.

¹⁹⁹ See: Lee, B.J., (2019) ‘Countering Violent Extremism Online: The Experiences of Informal Counter Messaging Actors’, Policy & Internet 12(1), 2019, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.210>.

²⁰⁰ Poole, E, et al., ‘Contesting #StopIslam: The Dynamics of a Counter-narrative Against Right-wing Populism’, Open Library of Humanities, 5(1): 5, 2019, pp. 1–39. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16995/olh.406>.

C. Boosting Engagement: Moving from Passive Viewers to Active Participants

Finally, in order to make the highest level of impact on your intended audience, it is often best practice to think of strategies, interventions and methodologies within your campaign that break the so-called ‘fourth wall’ and show that you are being responsive and communicative to your audience. For more broad-based campaigns, this might be including a ‘call to action’ in your campaign that users can be asked to perform in the online and offline space or offering opportunities for them to comment on or feedback on core themes of the campaign to the organisers. Such data might be helpful in further refining your approach and making sure that the right people are receiving your message. For radical right extremist actor targeted campaigns, as demonstrated in the CAPE project example (below), it might also involve hiring an army of trained moderators and intervention providers to steer difficult conversations and offer support to individuals actively wishing to disengage from activism. In both cases, it is important to consider what extra capacity you might need in order to make this happen.

CASE STUDY: AUSTRALIA’S CAPE ‘EXIT WHITE POWER’ PROJECT (2013–2015)

Action in Preventing Extremism Project was an exitwhitepower.com website, with a subsequent Facebook forum established (‘White Power? Discussion Page’) for those tempted by radical right extremist movements. One of the key innovations of the project was the tailored nature of the online discussions, alongside CAPE’s openness to incorporating feedback from police, academics and former radical right extremists. This responsiveness to participants and professionals led one of the project’s managers to suggest that the number of Australians engaging with CAPE’s website and forum ‘significantly exceeded’ the numbers originally anticipated: there were 22,000 unique views of its website between 2013–2015 and 2000 ‘likes’ of its Facebook page in the first year alone.

ANNEX B: INTEGRATING ETHICAL PRACTICES AND BOOSTING IMPACT: FURTHER TIPS ON LEVERAGING MM&E FOR A RADICAL RIGHT COUNTER-NARRATIVE CAMPAIGN

As with any research project or intervention involving human participants, counter-narrative campaigns inevitably expose engaged individuals to certain risks. It is therefore important at the initial stage of any counter-narrative project to include sound ethical practices into the design and assessment of any campaign. This includes consent, anonymity and privacy concerns, but also extends to a duty of care to staff, messengers, and recipients involved in your intervention. These safeguards are vital when dealing with counter-narrative campaigns on the radical right, where material presented might be of a sensitive, personal or radicalising nature. Moreover, it is also important to ensure that you are not creating any sort of stigma among your target audience. Below are some tips on how to ensure that staff, messengers, and recipients are able to mitigate negative effects involved in conducting such a radical right counter-narrative campaign.

A. Harnessing Campaign Metrics: Reducing Ethical Risks

A first, key method for reducing risks in a radical right counter-narrative campaign is through the choice of statistics used to monitor, measure, and evaluate such a campaign. For example, and as noted in Step 9 (Evaluate the Impact), awareness and engagement metrics (such as views, likes, shares, and comments) might be easier to gather than other information, but might not necessarily reveal how the campaign impacted upon the target audience (either positively or negatively).²⁰¹ In contrast, a poorly targeted message failing to utilise appropriate demographic and attitudinal information or statistics about the target audience might end up being counterproductive, potentially exposing uninterested or unaligned audiences to extremist messages or narratives. Similarly, an online campaign that is re-shared and propagated beyond the intended audience might have similar effects, again normalising extremist content among a wider audience. Finally, tuning your campaign to a specific audience through the use of as many data points as possible therefore saves jeopardising the campaigns proximate impact and potential embarrassment down the line.

B. Anonymising Data: Protecting a Target Audience and Practitioners from Negative Effects

Another way to reduce ethical risk for staff and target audience in any radical right focussed project is to consider measurable negative effects when initially designing the campaign. For example, how might a particular message generate negative comments or backlash? Could the risk of such a backlash compromise the results of a campaign? Added to this are anonymity and target audience protection considerations regarding MM&E, particularly about how collecting and (re-)presenting data about recipients’ habits, interests, and attitudes in publicly available results reports could pose risks of counter-campaigns for those involved.

The prime (and most obvious) counter-strategy here is harvesting and presenting data when reporting on the results of a radical right counter-narrative campaign anonymously. This approach will also help in collecting other de-anonymised contextual information in such a way as to abide by legal frameworks and online platforms’ rules on data retention and privacy. It is always good practice to securely store and anonymise the content of messages, emails, posts, tweets or other material that make an individual user identifiable. This process involves more than simply removing so-called meta-data (such as account names and

²⁰¹ For a good overview of different types of statistics, see T.C. Helmus and K. Klein, ‘Assessing the Outcomes of Online Campaigns in Counter Violent Extremism: A Case Study of the Redirect Method’, RAND Corporation, 2018, online at: www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2800/RR2813/RAND_RR2813.pdf.

other forms of personally identifiable information). It also involves changing the text of the excerpt used in reports and public briefings to prevent malicious search engine activity. This can be done by changing two or three words in a sentence to comparable words in order to prevent retrieval of the original message. Similarly, geo-tagged location data should also be removed from reporting – or should only be included when information is at a sufficient level of abstraction (e.g. a country or region), in order to avoid unintentionally ‘doxing’ users.

C. Sustainable Campaigning: Looking beyond the Life Cycle of Your RRCN Campaign

Another way of boosting the impact of a radical right counter-narrative campaign is to consider the long-term commitment your team and/or organisation has to seek out the sustainability of your project and audience engagement beyond the main cycle of your radical right counter-narrative campaign. At a minimum, radical right counter-narrative campaigns should always have staff on hand to interact with audiences during a campaign. This might boost the outcomes and attitudinal changes sought as part of a project. Another option is to partner with a CVE organisations specialising in longer term interventions to build resilience and de-radicalise vulnerable or at-risk individuals. In the radical right space, projects might start by partnering with reputable EXIT programmes or civil society organisations that specialise in helping people to leave extremist movements. Serious ethical challenges face those who work among radical right-sympathetic sections of the population, and having a mentor organisation able to offer advice can be invaluable in knowing where to refer campaign recipients who reach out for extra support and guidance. Likewise, adding an ongoing resilience element (such as attitudinal inoculation) to your counter-narrative interventions is proven to have long-term effects. By acting in a diligent way, your team is not only discharging a duty of care to your target audience, but is demonstrating a human rights, person-centred commitment to the goals of your campaign that might have further positive ripple effects in countering violent extremism going forward.

²⁰² For more on attitudinal inoculation in relation to the radical right, see K. Braddock, ‘Vaccinating Against Hate: Using Attitudinal Inoculation to Confer Resistance to Persuasion by Extremist Propaganda’, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 2019, DOI: [10.1080/09546553.2019.1693370](https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2019.1693370); and K. Braddock, *Weaponized Words The Strategic Role of Persuasion in Violent Radicalization and Counter-Radicalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.

