Scientific Process of Radicalisation

Tahir Mehmood

INDICATORS OF RADICALISATION

- Use of Indicators
- Why Indicators
- Frequency of Indicators
- Quality Control of Indicators
- Indicators as Detectors

PROCESS OF RADICALISATION

- Dynamic Process
- Complex Process
- Knowledge Assimilation
- Technical Composition
- Cognitive Procedure
The new ugly and dangerous acts of lone wolves, fighters traveling to Syria, returned fighters, the home-grown extremists and highly tactical restrained extremist groups don’t emerge with magic, but through a process called radicalization to violence. Many 1000s of innocents have been their victims in many countries and thank you to our Law enforcement for a faithful counter actions to dismantle extremists’ groups and terror plans on daily basis. Prevention measures include many initiatives and one of most vital initiatives is to use indicators of radicalization and identify early any vulnerable, effected and going through the radicalization process.

Risk Play—Any intelligent and systematic knowledge of developing and using indicators can save life of many and any weak or illogical or incompetent collections of indicators and application of using indicators can increase risks of being attacked for not identifying someone in the process at early stages before he turns a terrorist. Equally, new social and legal conflicts can emerge because of identifying someone who was not radicalized in reality but became victim of weak, non-systematic and ambiguous indicators.

The following article is highly reformative and informative presentation for our collective success and enlighten, how best quality knowledge-based indicators can help us in future as 3rd generation indicators.

Science Explore Truth—As a scientist, it’s very difficult for me to be “yes man” because science develops the logical reasoning and rational approach to every complex issue. No one can explore the unknown’s secrets, unless he or she is in search of truth with faithful intentions and correct procedure, and any truth finder cannot tell lies at all, because science establish the truth, based on logic, facts and scientific evidences as basic parameters of research.

Therefore, with all respects, this article might make my loving counter radicalization industry upset, because they had placed huge faithful effort for years since 9/11(I do appreciate) to collect experience and observation-based indicators and now I am pointing many weaknesses in the existing collection through this article. I wish to receive feedback from experts, with evidence or logical argument, if any contents in this article are not true, I shall appreciate for correcting my findings.

Finally, I fully declare according to best of my faith that this is not criticism but intentions to reform our progressive counter radicalization work and with clear intentions to get identified those radicalized at early stage, who can be a danger to our society and security through knowledge-based indicators and are living among us with the dark tunnel of radicalization process as a dynamic threat. At the end of the day, we all are looking forward for success to have peace for our societies, safety for our citizens and national security.
Use of Indicators - Indicators are piece of information that suggests a suitable line of action, identification in diagnosis, treatment or control. It’s like signs of appearance to know the existence of something, which would not have appeared, if something was not there and holds empirical value or existence of a truth. Finding correct indicators is one step forward toward identifying a problem. The other relevant part is to manage and assimilate those indicators to identify and find the knowledge of the problem and even reaching close to the process that runs the problem. This means clearly, the indicators are the end result of a process mostly hidden, not easy to see and what is cooked inside the process is exposed through the indicators.

Therefore, knowing the process is as important as knowing the indicators, because both have technical link like mum (process) and kids (indicators).

Logically in counter radicalization, indicators to identify are “Step 1”, reaching or connecting or confirming indicators origin to process is “Step 2”, to reform, stop, retard or reverse the process based on relevant indicator or indicators as interventions (as I have shown in 10 steps in picture for easy understanding) is step 3.

As short conclusion, indicators are meant for identifying the problem contents to solve the problem by linking indicators with the real process, to confirm the truth of process and process contents existence with its active and passive status and also finding best elements of cure to reform the abnormal or unwanted process and sub processes, by using counter contents as interventions.

Indicators of Radicalization - Indicators of radicalization to violence have been described by many Governments to solve the problem of radicalization as identifying tools to detect the radicalized and vulnerable minds as early traits in schools or prisons. Since 9/11, the researchers have been trying to find those indicators to identify a radicalized mind at early stages, before someone becomes dangerous.

There were many government-funded projects, institutional and academic research in this area. Different governments have published different patterns of similar indicators with different words or expression. Some have divided into groups and others into numbers as checklists. It’s found that the researchers mostly reach to similar types of indicator based on attitude, behaviour networking, identity, motivation, exposures, grievances and social interaction etc. For example, many programs in Scandinavia have its checklist of concerns/indicators, which is similar to other programs but published with different arrangements.

Similarly, the European justice and administrative authorities have described similar indicators with different approach including UK, France, etc. All these efforts are part of the preventive solutions. Mostly, it’s a simple list provided to public, educational institutions with expressions of unwanted attitude and behaviour to detect radicalized individual?
Why indicators—In reality, why indicators should be used in Government policy and have indicators helped to identify? Has been a quiz for many, because a) there had been many terror attacks since the indicators were launched, b) in most programs the indicators list is provided, but this list shows only objectives of identifying the radicalized individual at early stage and not much details about How to use? Procedures, Methodology or confirmations of origin of indicators with model (In every other field originality of indicators are always confirmed with a model as quality method).

In fact, the real purpose or use of these indicators is to,

(A) Identify a hidden truth of a process of radicalization, at early stage without false suspicions against any innocent and filter the person, who has been going through the dangerous process as early as possible, to save our society from any of his extreme or terror act or to be recruited as vulnerable by extreme group.

(B) User must learn correct methods to use these indicators, a method which should be more scientific and systematic without involving user’s personnel opinions or perceptions and could clear his mind from confusions and personal influences of making opinions or becoming panic. The method should compose all procedures with contents as decision making support system for operational value.

(C) After identifying a radicalized or vulnerable correctly, the user must evaluate the problem with identified contents of the problem, if can be solved by him or have to involve third party including parents, guardians, psychologists, social teachers, criminologist, Children protection experts, Police or others. Finding the contents of the problem from identified indicator or indicators to directly counter those unwanted contents to solve the problem with counter contents of the solution making.

Indicators from Dynamic and Complex Process—Radicalization is a complex process which produce highly complex indicators, because the process is based on interfacing of diverse external variables (so called root causes, triggers, catalyst or drivers by experts) with diverse internal variables linked with human mind space functions to run the interactive management of diverse unwanted messages and thoughts produced during the process. It’s not static process, but highly dynamic and indicators can emerge in diversity and many indicators can be dynamic indicators.

According to my research, there are over 110 important indicators, which are common traits gathered from the biographies, videos, interviews and information of over 2000 radicalized persons in the world and simultaneously study of normal people to compare the differences, because, if you don’t have study of normal people, surely you cannot find the difference of indicators belonging to radicalized person as deviation from normal behavior.

Indicators Frequency, Intensity, Direction and Range—The Indicators of radicalization are exposed, when and if the person is going through the radicalization process and have different types of frequency to appear, intensity in terms of its force, direction and range to see variability. For example, the anger can be seen in terms of some ugly words, eyes opened and turning red or it can be slapping to someone face, or completely ignoring the person. This shows that indicators of anger can be observed in many forms and each have its own force or intensity, direction and range. In short, the true indicators and method to
use as skilled expert are like a security guard, who is searching someone in a hall, and there is noise of thousands of people vocal sounds and he detects the desired individual voice from the mixture of thousands of voices, to find the wanted individual.

1-Quality control of indicators-Research Directions-If we analyse the existing international work, it can be analysed on simple basis that the direction of research was not correct (puzzle pond) to back up indicators composition and experts were not able to follow the effective pathway therein academic and institutional researchers were not able to open doors of corrections, because both researchers and indicators writers directly focused on the solution side and less to identify, understand the problem “Radicalization” as composite dynamic process for operationalization, with more scientific, systematic approach and tools as starting point.

Our honourable experts should have firstly, identified and understood the sole problem as Sole process, through some model or method or other technique, as sole investigation to explain-How process of radicalization runs or works? Because once the true process and its contents are known, the correct preventive methods can be organized and equally knowledge of the collected indicators can be related to the contents of the known process (if process of radicalization is running than indicators emerge and that’s why true systematic understanding of radicalization process is crucial) as I will explain later in this article.

In case of radicalization to violence, one of the foundation requirement to understand the radicalization process at micro or individual level is the Process science at human mind space used by us, to design a dynamic process model, which can facilitate our understanding to know, “how process works or runs?”. What are the external diverse variables, interfacing the human minds diverse internal variables of the mind space to run the interactive management of the complex process with a running system dynamic, before or during the process to link every emerging indicator, with the true unwanted content of the interactive management or process of radicalization.
As logical conclusion, if there is not any interfacing of radicalization external and internal variables there is not any unwanted interactive management running to produce the unwanted process and certainly unwanted indicators will not emerge. This huge gap as described above is the main reason that none of the model has been helpful as indicators finder through some logical mechanism and neither the indicators found have ever established an empirical or logical link with the models and the process, for confirming each indicators origin. This gap between the models and indicators or checklist of concerns witness absence of systematic and scientific approach in counter radicalization. It also reflects the real value of our global professional competence and expertise which has been surviving in the hollow orthodox box for years and no one have ever identified or challenged these gaps.

These existing indicators have survived because no one else have ever challenged the contents, quality and performance of these indicators or models with scientific/systematic testing parameters as advanced expertise and further many state administrations had only these available choices to use what was in the plate supplied by the experts as indicators. Also, the orthodox work with first generation indicators was highly marketed, until all these weak programs emerged like words of bible. The programs were highly sponsored in conferences and seminars and finally monopolizing many states resources and occupied public/political mind set claiming “yes we have solution now and this is only and only solution as Golden set of indicators”.

Therefore, it’s important to analyse and evaluate, these indicators seriously from all directions for reforming our existing initiatives, so that state administrations could find best solution as short and long terms quick fix to handle the problem for saving our innocent children from unwanted process and innocent citizens from radicalized attacks, who are still on risk until Manchester tragic event. Presently, in my opinion, there is not much available as correct preventive tools in the hands of our teachers in schools to identify a radicalized youth, retard, stop and reverse the process. This can be checked, if it’s asked from a school teacher, what radicalization is, how process runs and what method to use for provided indicators and why indicator 1, 2, or 3 emerge. Question is, how teacher can help the vulnerable, if he does not know the cause of the indicators to emerge?

As an example, a child starts wearing hijab or growing beard can be suspected as radicalized (cases are identified by media) under the existing indicators but cannot be guaranteed as correct judgment, if he is in fact radicalized process or not, because millions of youth and others having hijab or beard are not extremists. In other words, our indicators must be quality indicators and a complete systematic approach with a knowledge-based method must reach to cognitive end to evaluate and identify the truth that is what’s going on inside the mind of the suspect?

We have to understand all types of consequences for wrong judgment of a teacher because parents of suspected or concerned child can sometimes challenge the school authorities for wrong doing in the courts, and if courts have a simple question, how indicator is related to unwanted state of mind so called radicalization to violence? As a short conclusion, it’s only knowledge-based indicators which can lead to correct identifications and hold extremely stronger evidence as compared to existing experience and observation-based indicators, because of systematic confirmations of indicators originality and logical link with the process.

2-Quality control of indicators-Results and Observations- The productions of so many fighters produced in European countries as lone wolves and traveling to war zones including Syria and attacking on civilians in home country can witness the lose control, failures or irrelevance of these indicators or checklist of concerns to prevent the production of fighters or to identify them on early stages. Therefore, a more factual analysis can be organized based on the following questions to be answered.

➢ How much these indicators have helped in identifying the radicalized individuals or youth and how much these indicators can help (if any barometer available to evaluate the indicator)?
➢ How much these indicators have been applied and used in society, schools and prisons and is any method available to evaluate implementation verses result achieved of the indicators (results as difference-change factor observed before or after implementation)?
➢ How to evaluate indicators description in words and sentences to be meaningful for a user to understand the message of each indicator for correct understanding?
➢ How to evaluate indicators contents quality to describe correctly, in complete relevance to unwanted attitude or behaviour?
➢ Do these existing indicators express, what is the origin of each indicator and why, where from and how an indicator has emerged?
➢ Are existing indicators and user’s method able to categorize the degree of radicalization as running process, status, intensity, direction, range to define low risk process, medium risk process or high-risk process? (this is most important and sensitive characteristic of the indicators to assess the risk, find priority and decide quickly who to involve as third party like parents, social teacher, psychologist, sociologist or police based on factual situation because response time to some vulnerable can be a security concern).
➢ As indicator can be a pure flow of a single unwanted thought or it can be mixture of many unwanted thoughts, do present indicators explain the diverse mixing of unwanted thoughts?
➢ As indicator are output of a single variables or sum of many in a systematic approach, do present indicators explain the connection of these variables with indicators with some method?

Therefore, indicators have to witness the truth, not develop ambiguous false flags and suspicions and have to witness hidden process behind the truth that is running unwanted process, behind the attitude, behaviour, action and exposure that is Indicators must show clearly the change factor, from wanted to unwanted attitude, from wanted to unwanted behaviour, from wanted to unwanted actions and from wanted to unwanted exposures.

3-Quality control of indicators-Knowledge Assimilation-The indicators can also be evaluated with reference to the assimilation planning of logical, systematic, scientific and empirical knowledge, which has always provided reasonable results in all other fields. The existing research of finding indicators is missing assimilation planning, it has been random choices of experiencing an indicator/indicators or copying from other research banks. A knowledge-based set of indicators with good assimilated knowledge mean, the user knows, why a single indicator or more than one indicator have been exposed based on his understanding/knowledge of the sole process running within the radicalized human mind and even can project the possibilities of emerging indicators. It’s the tactical characteristics of this assimilation, which expand the advanced vision and predict to look quickly all possibilities of the future in connections to indicators found as a stringer screening tool.

4-Quality control of indicators-Technical Composition

4.1. Ambiguous contents filtering-The indicators can have ambiguous contents for many reasons, because school teachers, parents and others are not sociologists or psychologists. How the attitude and behaviour which has huge diversity and expansion in the human life expressions and exposures could be evaluated with set of few indicators. This ambiguity can victimize many innocent children who in fact are not radicalized at all and can ignore many who are in the process of radicalization to be highly dangerous in near future. Therefore, the indicator contents must be highly relevant to the contents of the process and should have ability to filter the ambiguities.

4.2. Intelligent Application-The indicator programs must have systematic application for end-users, because to apply any indicators or checklist of concerns, indicators must have systematic qualifications of its grading that is finding the frequency, intensity, direction, range and composite status, and identify the change factors to be found through well-organized checklists and method.

4.3. Empirical value- These indicators or checklist of concerns must have an empirical value, ability and understanding to produce an evidence or witness of pure link to the contents of problem or process contents.

4.4. Cognitive- The indicators must have a cognitive value, to understand the shapes of the symptom to link with the process and its diverse variables for complete understanding, reasoning and final satisfactory conclusion for operationalization.

4.5. Descriptive-The indicators or checklist must be descriptive to explain the phases of transitions, diverse entry points, exit points, state of satisfactions to show cognitive effect of single indicator or mixing of different indicators for understanding the total combined impact.

4.6. Integrated-The indicators should be able to integrate to find correct lines with directions of the driving forces of the variable along with the system dynamic of process with purity, clarity and not ambiguity.
4.7. **Systematic logic** - The indicators must be systematic for developing quick logic of understanding of the composite process and reduce the confusions. As radicalization process is highly sensitive concern, and therefore the systematic assimilation of the indicators with a systematic checklist can reduce panic situations of the user.

4.8. **Knowledge based** - The indicators must be knowledge based to present the logic to others and should have a backing of dynamic process model as knowledge. This backing is a complete understanding, reasoning and concluding of connecting interactive management of diverse functions, variables and dynamic system of the process model with the indicators involved or emerged. In existing indicators checklists, the users have no idea, why he is looking into indicator “A” or “B”? Why indicator “A” is emerging in one case and indicator “B” or “C” are not emerging in other case? This create huge gap of confusions against conviction of user, because all existing indicators are experience and observation based as random choices. These gaps are the main source of psychological pressure at user’s mind to involve his personal perceptions. The knowledge-based indicators mean that the user fully understand the use of the indicators and reasons to use based on his findings about the origin of the indicators which are confirmed with the process model before any final conclusion.

4.9. **Flexible mode** - The indicators must be flexible in its classifications as red-intensive indicators of radicalization (pure or master indicators) and yellow-ordinary indicators (which are also present in non-radicalized person of ordinary abnormal behaviour), this flexibility can help to evaluate the combination of the mix of both types of indicators or evaluate separately. According to our research, the addition of yellow indicators with red indicators (master indicators) increase the intensity and frequency of an unwanted attitude/behaviour, unwanted acts or exposures and if it's only yellow indicators present within an individual, it means he has abnormal behaviour without going through the process of radicalization. Therefore, it’s only red indicators which are concerns of radicalization process.

4.10. **Mathematical** - As advanced expertise, if the model is pure dynamic process model backed with mathematical logic in which process can be equated with the variables of radicalization and is made connected to the indicators, surely the model can be expressed in mathematical algebraic form, which can further create parallel mathematical structuring of the indicators in evaluation schemes. This can help us systematically to understand the flows and impacts of the unwanted external and internal variables and thoughts produced, even how complex those can be, even if emerging from mixed variables.

4.11. **Investigative** - The indicators must be defined correctly, to help the user for investigating and correctly identifying the driving and processing forces of the radicalized mind as external and internal variables, which can be a quick method to expand the tree of investigation based on the indicators for most appropriate and applicable solution making and evidence gathering. This characteristic of the indicators generates self-support system or users.

4.12. **Assimilation and clarity** - Indicators must be able to assimilate information and findings to reach to correct results and conclusions, without contradicting and disputing other indicator, it means indicators must be argument free.

4.13. **Legal protection** - The indicators and checklist of concern must provide a legal protection to the user as a teacher, prison officer, correction officer or first line practitioner. In existing indicators, the teachers have no legal protection, if parents of the suspected and accused radicalized child challenge in the courts. The teacher and all involved parties including the indicators producer have to take full responsibility for explaining, how indicator is linked with the radicalization process. The existing ambiguous style and collection of explaining the indicators cannot be always court standards of accepting as evidence of radicalization.

4.14. **User friendly** - Indicators must be expressed in correct easy words, phrases, sentences, so user can firstly fully understand and use without any difficulty, even if he or she is not sociologist, or psychologist. This user-friendly characteristic can facilitate the spread of this know how at all levels of society.

4.15. **Cost effective** - These indicators application in society, as an identifying tool must be cost effective in the form of accessible knowledge, easy and quick to transform to end user at very low costs and not consuming longer routines and valuable time of users.

4.16. **Decision making support system** - Indicators have a strong reasoning of emerging or exposing. If the indicators are knowledge based and linked to a process model, certainly, those indicators are full
decision-making support system to guide the user, what, where, when, why and how to respond as intervention for prevention? In connection to the contents of the problem.

4.17. Indicators as detectors- As process of radicalization is dynamic, therefore indicators must be written in combination with the systemic approach, to find the difference between the dynamic and static indicators. Similarly, indicators must show the increase and decrease to detect the increasing or decreasing of external and internal variables of the process. For more qualities of indicators, it’s very important to read my other articles in which dynamic process models’ qualities or characteristics are described because indicators emerge from the process, and qualities of process models describing the composite process can be reflected within indicators.

5-Quality control of indicators-Procedures of application- The indicators quality is not only just limited to above mentioned good characteristics’ but it also includes the procedures and technical handling of the indicators at application and implementation phase and using the correct method described for use. This helps user for a complete disciplinary control at his mind, desk and routines, while using these indicators, checklists, method journal etc.

Conclusion- The correct indicators and correct use as early traits to identify the process of radicalization at early stages in schools, refugees’ camps, prison’s, society are vital for our security and prevention. To identify the process of radicalization through indicators requires the knowledge of the process simultaneously, because this process confirms the true origin of the indicators as a logical link between the indicator and the contents of the problem or running process. Question is, are our existing indicators providing the systematic knowledge to be confirmed with the process? If yes, we must check, How? The truth is, unfortunately we are using experience-based indicators and not knowledge based that’s why, our users cannot understand why indicator A emerge and why not indicator B and cannot detect as early as possible, the lone wolf living next door, returned paid and unpaid fighter from Syria, asylum seeker from war zone who are in the radicalization process.

In every affair, the standard and certification are established by state administrations as public liability for public safety and security. Now it’s time to certify the counter radicalization industry each and every tool, which unfortunately has not been certified based on correct quality standards for years. Therefore, in my opinion based on these scientific findings, all Governments must have standards and control to filter the world of counter radicalization tools, methods, and collection of indicators in use and counter radicalization projects for a quick fix, if we have to save our citizens, resources and national security, AS BEST PRACTICES.
Also, it seems promising that we can now open new areas of research based on process science application at human mind space and can provide new scientific pathway and direction to existing research in counter radicalization for more result and goals oriented.

As indicators can be selected from open sources and social media, therefore above-mentioned contents of this article can be highly beneficial to all types of indicators collections and evaluations for quality of best operational value.

**About the Author:** Tahir Mehmood- Head of Scientific Methodology of De-radicalisation – Europe Desk (Norway)

Mr Mehmood is a researcher and expert in the field of radicalisation and terrorism. Tahir Mehmood has been attached with national projects in Norway, working as a consultant, developer and project director. With studies in CAD/CAM, Process Engineering and Commerce, conducted at the University College Salford, UK, he has developed projects and courses on counter-radicalisation in the NGO-Resource centre for Diversity, Integration and Peace of Drammen, Norway (Ressurscenter for Mangfold Integrering of Fred) – as well as knowledge-based indicators and barometers about the risk of radicalisation. Tahir is also the founder of the Dynamic Process Model of radicalisation for operationalisation, Algebraic equation of radicalisation, mapping methods for radicalisation, de-radicalisation dialogue model and the author of many publications about risk indicators, counter-radicalisation and Islamic religion. Presently, Tahir has designed DSS Decision making support system to identify radicalisation with prevention solutions and developing the software in partnership with the University College of South East Norway. He is also on the advisory board of European Justice Funded project -Risk Track.
ABOUT ITCT

ITCT is UK based organisation and founded in 2018. It is a non-political and non-profitable organisation and is a unique think tank in itself. There is not a single organisation around that specifically counters the narratives of Islamist terrorism by using the tools of Islamic Theology. ITCT exposes the root causes of Political Islam and works hard to eliminate it through introducing the actual concept of Islamic Theology.

ITCT conducts a comprehensive research to find out the key elements that draw the most vulnerable people of the society into the fire of religious extremism. ITCT works on three main factors in order to educate the Muslim community:

- That Islamist Terrorism is wrongly associated with Islam
- And is committed by misguided Muslims
- By manipulating religious texts to brainwash Muslims

ITCT has three pillars to stand on:

- MISSION
  Countering Islamist Terrorism
- VISION
  Educating Muslim Community
- OBJECTIVE
  Providing the Solution of Islamist Terrorism

ITCT is an independent organisation that generates funds through donations. ITCT warmly welcomes talented writers, researchers and experts and would like to publish their work.