

Preventing Violent Radicalization Among Young Muslims in Europe: The Moral-Behavioural Structure and the Role of Muslim Communities

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1. Introduction

Explaining the phenomenon of radicalization, particularly the kind that culminates in violence committed out of religious motivations, necessitates outlining a causal process of radicalization and identifying indicators of vulnerability to both such ideologies and recruitment strategies used by radicalizers.¹ This policy brief seeks to contribute to the prevention of violent radicalization, particularly among young Muslims in Europe, by, first, describing and applying an explanatory framework to understand violent radicalization in the name of Islām; second, addressing what community and religious leaders can do to prevent and reduce such violent radicalization; and, finally, suggesting state-level and religious-community efforts, including legal and non-legal governance measures.

2. Addressing the Causes of Violent Radicalization Among Muslims in Europe

2.1. Theoretical Models on Causal Elements

Most general theoretical efforts that try to causally explain violent radicalization have failed when tested against empirical evidence from different countries. This has led researchers to conclude that there is no single pathway to violent extremism or terrorism, though some have been more cautious.² There exists a general framework of factors that make radicalization possible: individual identity-based motivations, contextual factors, and macro-structural factors. This scheme is a good matrix to approach radicalization, but is too broad to explain the process accurately.³ Underlying all violent radicalization processes seems to be the idea that identity is above all else. Two types of theories have emerged which attempt to explain the individual trajectory of violent radicalization: stepwise and progressive theories. They propose that the person goes through critical stages starting from the same premise: that the person moves along progressive levels of radicalization, from normal to violent behaviour. Stages include exposure to radical ideas, adoption of a modified identity, association with radical groups, justification of violence, and planning and execution of small violent actions.

Pyramidal theories focus on collective dynamics.⁴ The first level of the pyramid is composed of politically neutral people. At the second level, there is a base of people sympathetic to the violent Islāmic cause.

Then, there is a third level where quite a few people justify the use of violence, and finally comes the fourth level of those who join terrorist groups or cells.⁵ A revised explanatory model emerged from the fact that only a tiny number of those who justify violence commit it. This ‘double pyramid’ proposes that cognitive radicalization (one pyramid) and behavioural radicalization (the other) are not connected, dissociating thought from action. In France, for example, many terrorists were not particularly religious and had undergone an abrupt conversion rather than a gradual process of radicalization.⁶

The ‘Attitudes-Behaviours Corrective Model of Violent Extremism’ (‘ABC Model’) aims to correct the explanations that dissociate thought from action in the violent radicalization process.⁷ The ABC Model outlines the path to terrorist action with two axes: one measures sympathy towards ideologies that advocate violent action for social change, and another measures involvement in violence. One approach that seeks to transcend the idea of the radicalization process is the “radicalization puzzle”.⁸ This framework accounts for four phenomena: grievances, networks, support structures and ideologies. In addition, a recent shift towards resilience-approaches reveals factors of individual and collective strength and vulnerability.⁹ Those with strong familial, social and community roots are less vulnerable,¹⁰ and those with more religious and scientific knowledge opt for contextualized versions of Islām that delegitimize violence.

Theoretical models are not only useful for academia but are also used as a basis for developing radicalization prevention and deradicalization programmes. It is therefore essential that the theoretical explanations that inform practices are well anchored in the empirical reality of how violent radicalization operates. For example, concentration on radicalization of thinking may produce prevention policies that focus on combating ideologies. If thinking is assumed to be not as relevant, prevention will remain focused on demobilizing people.

¹ Sergio García-Magariño, *Violence, Politics and Religion: A General Theory of Violent Radicalization*, Routledge, London, 2024, p. 32.

² Montserrat López Melero, “El perfil criminológico como técnica de investigación en el terrorismo islámico”, in *La Ley Penal: Revista de Derecho Penal, Procesal y Penitenciario*, 2017, vol. 126, p. 12.

³ Sergio García-Magariño and Victor Talavera-Cabrera, “A Sociological Approach to the Extremist Radicalization in Islam: The Need for Indicators”, in *The International Journal of Intelligence, Security and Public Affairs*, 2019, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 66–83.

⁴ See Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2004; Marc Sageman, “Understanding Jihadi Networks”, in *Strategic Insights*, 2005, vol. 4, no. 4; Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2008.

⁵ Christian Leuprecht *et al.*, “Containing the Narrative: Strategy and Tactics in Countering the Storyline of Global Jihad”, in *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, 2010, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 42–57.

⁶ See Olivier Roy, *Jihad and Death: The Global Appeal of Islamic State*, Hurst, London, 2017.

⁷ James Khalil *et al.*, “The ABC Model: Clarifications and Elaborations”, in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 2022, vol. 34, no. 3, pp. 460–467; James Khalil *et al.*, “The Attitudes-Behaviors Corrective (ABC) Model of Violent Extremism”, in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 2022, vol. 34, no. 3, pp. 425–450.

⁸ Mohammed Hafez and Creighton Mullins, “The Radicalization Puzzle: A Theoretical Synthesis of Empirical Approaches to Homegrown Extremism”, in *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 2015, vol. 38, no. 11, pp. 958–975.

⁹ William Stephens *et al.*, “Preventing Violent Extremism: A Review of the Literature”, in *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 2021, vol. 44, no. 4, pp. 1–16.

¹⁰ Mohammed Baobaid *et al.*, “Empowering Immigrant Families and Communities to Respond to Radicalization: Lessons Learned From the Work of the Canadian Muslim Resource Center”, in *Interventionen*, 2016, vol. 7, pp. 32–37.

2.2. The Moral-Behavioural Structure

Interpreting what leads a person to justify violence or act violently is not simple. The theory that will be proposed here is based on three assumptions and puts forth a hypothesis based on several concepts. The first assumption is that it is useful to differentiate between cognitive and behavioural radicalization. The second assumption is that thought and action are connected at some point. The third assumption is that, although different types of violent radicalization have common elements, the motivations are greater and cost-benefit analyses are no longer so fundamental when the inspiration is religious.

Beyond the explanatory theories, it is known that in all those who acted violently, there were very strong feelings of grievance. In most cases, these people experienced a kind of triple uprooting: from their family, society, and their religious community. The level of religious knowledge is often low, which makes the second generation of immigrants from Muslim countries particularly vulnerable. France is the European Union country that suffers the most from this phenomenon; these young people feel that they belong neither to their parents' religion nor to French society, as it does not give them opportunities. Radicalization agents offer a radical, simplistic response that gives meaning to their lives, casts them as victims, and creates an external enemy. These young people isolate themselves and develop a kind of permanent paranoia.

The first key concept of the hypothesis put forth here is that of the 'moral-behavioural structure'. This concept, accompanied by two auxiliary hypotheses, those of 'social control' and 'resilience', could bring together the multiple social and psychological factors that make a person choose the violent path. The second key concept of the hypothesis is that of a 'community of purpose', the second force in promoting or preventing radicalization. Let us begin with the moral-behavioural structure.

The moral-behavioural structure is not a psychological entity but is the result of the socialization process.¹¹ Moral structure entails concepts and convictions, patterns of behaviour, emotional regulation skills, virtues and a language that connects all the previous components. Social control plays a relevant role as well. For a person to decide to break all social conventions and opt for the path of violence, the natural mechanisms of social control must have broken down over a lifetime. This tends to happen to people who have little to lose from death or incarceration.¹²

Individual and collective resilience related to a solid moral structure – including scientific knowledge and religious insights – are normally the main protective elements in the face of external forces. A person may act violently because he has assumed patterns of violent behaviour, but violence for political and religious purposes has to be linked to convictions. Someone who has great self-control, peaceful behaviour patterns, and strong convictions that delegitimize violence would very rarely be radicalized. The social group is also essential since the moral structure is the fruit of a process of group socialization. Thus, family, religious and social roots act as a shield against agents of radicalization that try to satisfy vulnerable peoples' need for belonging.

The second key concept in the theoretical explanation presented here, which accompanies the notion of the moral-behavioural structure, is that of 'community'. Violent radicalization occurs mainly in the company of other people. *Real Instituto Elcano* highlights two fundamental factors in explaining radicalization, particularly in Spain: the radicalization agent and ties with those previously radicalized.¹³ Likewise, another important perspective in understanding vulnerability to radicalization is the aforementioned triple uprooting condition. What I propose here is that immersion in a community is one of two determining factors in the process of violent radicalization, as well as in prevention and deradicalization.

Human beings are social beings, and one social space that has acted as a basic organizational entity situated between the family and society is the community. There exists a distinction between traditional communities and modern communities. Traditional communities are small,

localized geographical enclaves, villages or towns, where social life is intense and collective identity strong. In countries that have experienced profound, urban-focused modernization processes, suburbs have not constituted a similarly close entity. These two dynamics, the modernization and individualization of life in cities, seemed to indicate that territory no longer mattered. Faced with this situation, the question arose as to how to respond to the human need to socialize and belong to a group larger than the family. The answer seemed to lie in membership communities, those that the person decides to join or leave voluntarily. However, those communities have not been able to serve as spaces to organize mutual support or basic economic activities, or as catalysts for a strong sense of belonging and identity.

The dynamics of violent radicalization align with these wider dynamics that have affected the community. Integration into or uprooting from a community is therefore critical. In the community, one learns guidelines that shape the moral structure of behaviour. This community element helps explain why young Muslims from immigrant families seem to be most vulnerable to violent radicalization. Young Muslims' moral structure is often characterized by not having strong convictions, being connected to identity circles and groups with eroded social control mechanisms due to the lack of financial or professional success. They have little to lose and much to gain if they attend to the Salafist-Jihádist ideology presented to them: a purposeful community in which to root their uprootedness.

There are crucial indicators that portray the phases of the violent radicalization process and allow for early detection. It is necessary to speak of geographical space. A violent radicalization indicator should be scalable from the smallest level, a district or large neighbourhood, to a broader level, that of a province. I take the case of jihádism and list the factors that appear to increase the risk:

- a. There is a mosque with Salafist ideology in the neighbourhood–district.
- b. There is a concentration of Muslims living together in the same district, exceeding the average population concentration.
- c. The neighbourhood–district has worse social and economic conditions than the rest of the city.
- d. Some people were previously radicalized or accused of terrorism in the neighbourhood–district.
- e. There have been allegations of hate speech against the Muslim population.
- f. The intelligence services have detected radicalization agents in the area.
- g. There have been previous operations against terrorists in the area.
- h. There is a sense of grievance in the Muslim population, expressed in surveys that can be conducted regularly.
- i. There is a high level of affective polarization that can be detected among the population.
- j. There are excessively homogeneous social groups that identify themselves by nationality and religion.
- k. There is a high percentage of unaccompanied minors.

2.3. Markers of Radicalization in the United Kingdom

Radicalization is a process through which groups or individuals adopt extremist political, social or religious ideas and then use them to legitimize the breakdown of the rule of law and the use of violence against property and individuals.¹⁴ Recent trends in extremist violence in Western democracies suggest that radicalization is increasingly homegrown.¹⁵ Moreover, radicalization tends to occur in socio-economically disadvantaged local areas, and extremist violence often occurs close to where perpetrators live.¹⁶

Although the socio-economic profile of radicalized individuals may vary widely, poverty at the neighbourhood level could increase the risk of radicalization by affecting the perception of inequality and the sense of

¹¹ Rhett Diessner, *Understanding the Beauty Appreciation Trait: Empirical Research on Seeking Beauty in All Things*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2019, p. 212.

¹² See Salvador Giner *et al.*, *Diccionario de Sociología*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 2013.

¹³ See Fernando Reinares, Carola García-Calvo and Álvaro Vicente, *Yihadismo y Yihadistas en España: 15 Años Después del 11-M [Jihádism and Jihádists in Spain: 15 Years After 11-M]*, Real Instituto Elcano, Madrid, 2019.

¹⁴ Radicalisation Awareness Network, "Responses to Returnees: Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Their Families", July 2017, p. 5.

¹⁵ Alex P. Schmid, "Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review", in *ICCT International Centre for Counter Terrorism*, 2013, vol. 4, no. 2, p. 49.

¹⁶ Hannah Stuart, "Islamist Terrorism: Analysis of Offences and Attacks in the UK (1998–2015)", in *The Henry Jackson Society*, 2017, p. 939.

belonging of its citizens.¹⁷ Scientific knowledge on this issue is especially prominent in the United Kingdom ('UK'), where the application of measures to prevent violent extremism is based on the risk of local radicalization.¹⁸ Two factors are considered as indicators of levels of radicalization in districts in England.

First, racially, religiously and ethnically motivated hate crimes, of which statistics are published annually by the UK Home Office.¹⁹ Hate crimes tend to be perpetrated locally, and hate crime hotspots can be correlated with local physical spaces.²⁰ More particularly, hate crimes could be seen as one of the most visible results of a previous radicalization process. Types of offences which have a specific racial, ethnic or religious motivation are criminalized by law in most European countries and constitute a set of offences that differ from their non-aggravated counterparts.²¹

Second, a consistently positive covariance between poverty and radicalization indicators. A self-coding of the profiles of the perpetrators of terrorist attacks that took place in the UK between 2015 and 2018 has been carried out, focusing on the location of their radicalization.²² If there was explicit information on where the perpetrators appeared to have resided prior to the attack, it was taken directly. If this information was not available, other evidence was sought to confirm that the perpetrators were local. As independent variables to capture the different types of severe local poverty in England, the developed indicators that make up the 2019 English Poverty Index were used.²³

The positive covariance between poverty and radicalization indicators may mean that the higher the level of poverty within a local district, the more manifestations of radicalization can be observed within it. This study highlighted that radicalization is not just an individual phenomenon, but that neighbourhoods can be observed where radicalized people are concentrated. There are objective and subjective sides connecting poverty and radicalization: quantifiable factors include life expectancy and per capita income. What is harder to objectify is grievance and victimization; but they are also crucial.

3. Recommendations for Preventing Radicalization

Almost all countries that have experienced attacks have radicalization prevention plans and, in many cases, deradicalization programmes. Prevention and deradicalization plans and programmes must take into account the two strategic dimensions related to our theory: first, to cultivate a solid moral structure that delegitimizes the use of violence for political purposes and provides competencies relevant to strengthening social cohesion and preventing violence; second, to foster the constitution of communities with a sense of mission and purpose, including individuals and groups in these communities.

The political violence that takes place in a territory resembles an iceberg, mostly submerged. The tip is most visible and corresponds to direct violence.²⁴ Structural violence and the socio-economic and cultural grievances experienced by different groups represent the layer connected to the tip but hidden beneath the surface. The deepest layer is cultural violence: stereotypes and prejudices that favour the exclusion of certain groups and ultimately legitimize the use of physical violence against cer-

tain groups. Hence, the prevention of violent radicalization must be part of a strategy to make structural and cultural violence disappear.

There is also a need for individual and social indicators. Violent radicalization towards jihadism in Western contexts is often associated with certain changes that indicate an incipient process, such as in clothing, beard, type of relationships, or attitude towards women. Some Spanish juvenile detention centres around the region of Madrid have a system to assess the vulnerability of young people to radicalization.²⁵ Lack of social and economic development has been the most extensive breeding ground for radicalization, but no country in the world has achieved a resilient model of development.²⁶ If such models are neither locally anchored with a global outlook nor focused on equitable well-being, the root causes of violence will continue to nurture possible radicalization processes.²⁷

Another area of preventive action has to do with narratives. Radicalization agents use simplistic explanations for highly complex phenomena. Those who find themselves in identity crises are more vulnerable to these narratives.²⁸ Preventive strategies include counter-narratives, such as working with Muslim theologians to generate interpretations that delegitimize violence in the name of Islám; or Muslim influencers or Artificial Intelligence to generate online counter-narratives grounded in humour and other audio-visual cues, mirroring the strategies of radicalization agents. There are two limitations to this method that should be emphasized: first, generating counter-narratives is a relatively simple exercise, the effectiveness of which needs to be evaluated. Second, if cognitive and behavioural radicalization are not so directly related, emphasizing counter-narratives too much may be wrong.

Furthermore, young people who have recently come from other countries face serious obstacles to social mobility. Those who progress through education and employment to follow a relatively normal life trajectory have had supporters by their side. The successful experiences in the field of social mentoring to prevent exclusion confirm this.²⁹ The Danish Centre for Documentation and Counter Extremism has made social mentoring a focal point in prevention programmes, receiving endorsement from the European Commission.³⁰ Creating communities of agents that can identify early episodes of radicalization is also crucial. The Institute for Societal Resilience at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam has advocated for cultivating aspects that make a community resilient, as resilience to overcome adversity would be a natural protector against radicalization.³¹

Despite the increasing importance of deradicalization programmes, proving their effectiveness is challenging. People who were already in deradicalization programmes perpetrated terrorist attacks in the UK in February 2020.³² One main idea that could inform deradicalization policies is that cognitive and behavioural radicalization must receive equal attention. Addressing only demobilization can lead to a situation in which people temporarily give up violence until they find a new opportunity

¹⁷ Tama Leventhal and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, "The Neighborhoods They Live In: The Effects of Neighborhood Residence on Child and Adolescent Outcomes", in *Psychological Bulletin*, 2000, vol. 126, no. 2, pp. 309–337.

¹⁸ UK, Home Office, "CONTEST: The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism", June 2018, CM 9608.

¹⁹ UK, Home Office, "Hate crime, England and Wales, 2022 to 2023 second edition", 2 November 2023.

²⁰ See Colin Roberts *et al.*, "Understanding Who Commits Hate Crime and Why They Do It", *Welsh Government Social Research*, 2013.

²¹ See, generally, Sergio García-Magariño and Ricardo García-García (eds.), *Libertad de Pensamiento, Conciencia y de Religión y Radicalización Violenta: Situación y Soluciones*, Síndesis Editorial, Madrid, 2020.

²² UK, Home Office, "Police Recorded Crime and Outcomes: Open Data Tables User Guide", October 2016.

²³ UK, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, "English Indices of Deprivation, 2019", 26 September 2019.

²⁴ Wilfried Graf, Gudrun Kramer and Augustin Nicolescu, "Counselling and Training for Conflict Transformation and Peace-Building", in Charles Webel and Johan Galtung (eds.), *Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies*, Routledge, London, 2007, p. 123.

²⁵ Comunidad de Madrid, "Organismo Autónomo Agencia de la Comunidad de Madrid para la Reeducación y Reinserción del Menor Infractor", 25 June 2026.

²⁶ Richard Heinberg, *Peak Everything: Waking Up to the Century of Declines*, New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island, 2010, pp. 121–122; Sergio García-Magariño, "Repensar la gobernanza de la globalización: una revisión crítica de la deslocalización de la producción y del comercio mundiales en tiempos de pandemia", in Juan José Álvarez Rubio, José Luis Iriarte Ángel and Unai Belintxon Martín (eds.), *Representación aduanera y comercio internacional en el siglo XXI*, Thomson Reuters Aranzadi, 2022, p. 203.

²⁷ Sergio García-Magariño and Unai Belintxon, "Cognitive and Energetic Sustainability for Development: Spain and Europe Before the Green Deal", in *Energies*, 2021, vol. 14, no. 13, pp. 1–21.

²⁸ Oscar Prieto Flores and Eila Prats Brugat, "La mentoría social como herramienta de prevención y reinserción social en procesos de radicalización violenta", in García-Magariño and García-García (eds.), 2020, pp. 83–84, see *supra* note 21.

²⁹ Lance D. Erickson, Steve McDonald and Glen H. Elder Jr., "Informal Mentors and Education: Complementary or Compensatory Resources?", in *Sociology of Education*, 2009, vol. 82, no. 4, pp. 344–367.

³⁰ Radicalisation Awareness Network, "Aarhus Model: Prevention of Radicalisation and Discrimination in Aarhus", 18 April 2024.

³¹ William Stephens and Stijn Sieckelincx, "Being Resilient to Radicalisation in PVE Policy: A Critical Examination", in *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 2020, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 142–165.

³² Patricia Rodríguez, "Último ataque en Londres plantea radicalización en la cárcel de terroristas", in *La Vanguardia*, 4 February 2020.

to carry it out. When someone assumes jihādism, their commitment to violence becomes a religious precept. This makes deradicalization more difficult, because the lie is theologically legitimized. In any case, if deradicalization is to be effective, it is necessary to cultivate an alternative moral structure and a resilient community of purpose.

4. The Role of Muslim Communities in Preventing Violent Radicalization

Muslim communities in Europe play a crucial role in preventing violent radicalization. It is, however, important to bear in mind that Islām as such does not represent a latent threat. Rather, the efforts of Muslim communities should be seen as an important contribution to the common good.

As was mentioned above, violent radicalization of individuals is linked to the lack of certain protective social factors, such as proper integration and scientific and religious literacy. Hence, the main approach should be the promotion of youth education, social mobility, mentorship to further higher studies, and economic and cultural integration. In addition to that, Muslim communities, especially through local entities and mosques, should collaborate with social, health, educational and security services to identify signs or risks of radicalization – such as marginalized and lonely youth surrounding the community, strange individuals whose motives are not clear but seem to be approaching vulnerable individuals, or sudden changes in the behaviour of believers that appear to be problematic (such as clothing, language, political attitude, gender relations positions, to name a few).

The selection and training of imāms is a crucial endeavour too. They should be trained nationally, and also labelled ‘National’. There is a bias, both within the Muslim communities and public policies, towards foreign and older imāms. However, these figures are not aware of the real challenges facing Muslims, especially the youth, in the European countries where those young people live and were probably born. Thus, younger and ‘National imāms’ should be prioritized. The communities must be autonomous in this respect, but collaboration with the government would be welcome. The government and public policies could incentivize these kinds of decisions.

The role of these new imāms would be important to reduce excessive perceptions, within Muslim communities and European societies, that Islām is something inherently foreign to Europe. Judaism, Christianity and other faiths that are considered part of Western culture actually originated outside Europe. However, Europeans choose their religion and develop cultural traits, embedded in the shared legal frameworks of each country, in dialogue with those individual and collective beliefs. This is a form of naturalization process that needs to occur with Islām, and Muslim communities in general – imāms in particular – could make an important contribution to it.

The integration of diverse groups, especially from immigrant backgrounds, is highly complex and calls for new perspectives on good governance, which emphasize the importance of inter-sector, multi-level, poly-actor collaboration and community approaches. Muslim communities and mosques (the vehicles to organize the spiritual and administrative affairs of the community) can adopt an open perspective aligned with this trend in order to establish diverse and multifaceted forms of collaboration with their surroundings – including the government, police, civil organizations, other religions, schools, social workers, health services, *et cetera*. The purpose of that web of agents is to foster prosperity, well-being, security and social cohesion in the locality. If a wide and strong poly-actor community were created, many constructive forms of collaboration around diverse social issues would emerge, such as preventing school dropouts, reducing unemployment, supporting mis-structured families and minors, identifying problematic forms of exclusion and responding

rapidly, to name a few. Muslim communities will be challenged to move beyond the inner community to attain this essential goal.

Another strategic area where Muslim communities could focus to prevent radicalization, and that was implicitly mentioned above, is the empowerment of the youth. As was suggested, the inter-generational rupture has been a historical and almost universal social pattern. This affects both the Muslim communities and those non-Muslim actors who try to work with them to prevent and combat radicalization. The empowerment of the Muslim youth to contribute to the societies they live in has many implications for the mosques and Muslim communities. First, in addition to Qur’ān and Arabic language classes, mosques could offer school support, organize professional and academic orientation, and provide the community with mentoring programmes. Although the situation varies between countries in Europe, the phenomena of unaccompanied Muslim minors and school dropouts are prevalent. If education, social protection and integration are to be considered the most important radicalization-preventing factors, the strategies outlined in this paragraph must be at the core of the mosque and Muslim communities’ endeavours in Europe.

Another implication of the above-mentioned approach is that youth need to be given spaces to take ownership of the spiritual, social and administrative affairs of the diverse Muslim national communities. In this respect, adults and older Muslims should emphasize the importance of being loyal to their countries too. This kind of loyalty will help the surrounding societies accept Islām and Muslims as part of their countries.

5. Conclusion

This policy brief has presented strategies currently under debate to prevent and combat the violent radicalization of Muslims. Once Muslim communities are aware of the strategies already in motion, mainly promoted by the public administration, they may collaborate in their implementation. These strategies include: (a) strengthening social cohesion amongst different groups; (b) religious, media, algorithmic and scientific literacy programmes to enhance resilience against radicalization forces; (c) institutional and professional collaboration; (d) community outreach; (e) government support for Muslim communities to train imāms; (f) the design of early warning indicators of individual and geographical radicalization risks; (g) not hiding mosques by locating them in remote outskirts; (h) special efforts to reduce economic, educational, labour and social inequalities affecting the Muslim community; (i) addressing Islāmophobia, through counter-narratives, digital monitoring, and laws on hate crimes; and (j) implementing intelligence, security and policing measures, without persecuting or criminalizing Muslim communities and individuals or undermining their freedom of religion and belief.

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