

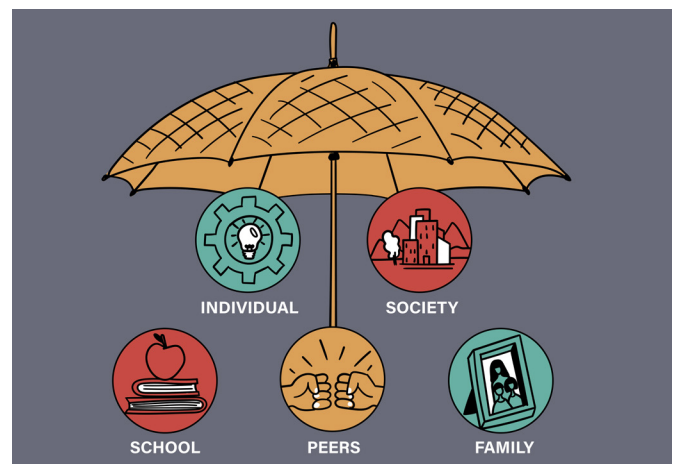
Protective Factors for Violent Extremism and Terrorism: Rapid Evidence Assessment

Sarah Marsden & Benjamin Lee

Research into factors that may reduce the likelihood or prevent people from becoming radicalised or engaging in terrorism is underdeveloped. This report provides an overview of how protective factors have been conceptualised and an evidence map identifying empirical studies that have contributed to the field.

INTRODUCTION

1. Work on protective factors is in its infancy.
2. The majority of work has focused on risk factors, largely neglecting those factors which reduce the potential for negative outcomes or promote positive ones.
3. Paying greater attention to protective factors offers opportunities for more effective case management, including:
 - Enhancing rapport between individuals and clinicians.
 - Nurturing motivation in offenders.
 - Better support for intervention planning.
4. There is a lack of consensus around how protective factors should be conceptualised.
5. Approaches to protective factors have conceptualised them as:
 - Reducing risk factors.
 - The absence of risk factors.
 - Buffers that work to mitigate risk factors.



- Conceptually distinct factors in their own right, unrelated to risk factors.
6. Researchers have emphasised that protective factors are likely to operate in complex ways, for example by exhibiting non-linear effects on risk factors, interacting with other factors, or changing over time.
 7. These complexities have led to calls to view risk and protection holistically rather than as individual factors or in isolation.

EVIDENCE MAP

1. The evidence map is a visual guide based on 51 papers which analyse protective factors relating to violent extremist attitudes, intentions, and behaviours.
2. The map should be seen as a top-level guide to the research landscape, which should be interpreted alongside the narrative summary of the evidence which lays out the complexities of the relationships and factors identified in the literature.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM

3. Relatively few studies set out to look at protective factors explicitly. Protective factors are typically identified as a by-product of research looking at risk factors.
4. Individual-level factors were the most common type of protective factor in the literature. These were further sub-divided into subgroups encompassing: psychological, socio-demographic, religious, activism and civic attachment factors.
5. Additional protective factors were identified under the headings of family, peers, school, and society.
6. There are caveats to the evidence map:
 - Research focused on different outcome variables, differentiating between extremist attitudes, intentions, and behaviours. Studies focused on extremist attitudes were most common.
 - In some cases, the relationships between factors and violent extremism described in the evidence map were not straightforward, for example the relationship between variables may not be linear or may be the result of an interaction between variables.
 - Studies often drew from very different contexts, with distinctive features unlikely to be present in other settings. This may limit the potential to generalise findings.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS EVIDENCE MAP

This evidence map illustrates a review of research on different factors which protect against violent extremism.

Each box represents one factor and factors are clustered according to different levels of influence. These include individual factors such as those relating to psychology, socio-economics, religion, activism, and civic attachment, and factors linked to the family, society, school and peer group.

A single factor could be identified in multiple studies, and each study typically refers to more than one protective factor.

Studies are numbered and are colour coded based on the outcome that is being assessed in each study. These include violent extremist **attitudes**, **intentions**, and **behaviours**.

Although it provides an overview of the factors researchers have identified to date, it does not include details on the strength or direction of the relationships, or provide other relevant information about non-linear relationships or approaches to sampling.

KEY



BEHAV-



INTEN-



ATTITUDE

INDIVIDUAL

PSYCHOLOGICAL	SELF CONTROL 37 40 41	EMPATHY 18 21	DEATH OF CLOSE PERSON 7	MENTAL HEALTH 12	AGREEABLENESS 22	LIFE DISATISFACTION 14	SOCIO-ECONOMIC
	LIFE SKILLS 34	CONFLICT COPING SKILLS 31	EMOTIONALITY 33	EMPLOYMENT 32 1 25 26	AGE 47 1 32	GENDER 47	
ACTIVISM	LEGIT POLITICAL PROTEST 7 3	CHARITABLE DONATION 7	VOLUNTEERING 7	FIRST GEN MIGRANT 6 28	ETHNICITY 13	INDIVIDUAL WEALTH 4	RELIGION
	BOYCOTTING 7	POLITICAL DISINTEREST 14	PEACEFUL RELIGIOUS ACTIV- 39	DEMOCRATIC VALENCE 27	RELIGIOSITY 11 10 42 30 51	LOW IMPOR-TANCE OF 6	
CIVIC ATTACHEMENT	ACCEPTANCE OF POLICE LEIGIT- 35 36	TRUST IN GOVERNMENT 13	TRUST IN POLICE 11	ACCEPTANCE OF CT LAWS 11	RELIGIOUS STUDY 3	QURANIC AUTHORITATIVE- 1	
	PERCEIVED GOVERNMENT 20	OBSERVER JUSTICE SENSITIVITY 23	LAW RELEVANT MORALITY 40	POS ATTITUDE TO RESTORATIVE 43	LOW ID INCOMPATIBIL- 44	ANXIETY AT INCARCERATION 14	

FAMILY

POSITIVE PARENTING 17 18 48	MARRIED 5 26	PROPERTY OWNERSHIP 2	NON-VIOLENT PARTNER 24	NON-VIOLENT FAMILY 14	INCARCERATION OF FAMILY MEM- 14
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SOCIETY

HOST COUNTRY ATTACHMENT 10 11 20 50	SOCIETAL ATTACHMENT 49 15 49	SOCIAL COHESION 9 19	GROUP EFFICACY 45	CROSS-GROUP CONTACTS 46	SOCIAL INTEGRATION 17
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SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT 4 8 3 16 30 38 26
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PEER

NON-VIOLENT PEERS 14 24	CROSS GROUP FRIENDSHIP 29	SOCIAL SUPPORT 42	MORE SOCIAL CONTACT 6
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THEORETICAL EXPLANATIONS

1. There was little theory in the evidence base which focused specifically on the idea of protection; the majority of theories related to radicalisation.
2. The theoretical accounts that have been developed offer some insight into the mechanics of risk and protective factors, seeking to explain why they are relevant rather than only identifying relationships.
3. Using these approaches to consider protective factors required some work to identify the implicit theories that seemed to inform individual studies.
4. Most theoretical explanations offered in the evidence base had some connection to criminology, including strain theory, anomie/a, social learning, and social control theories.
5. In general, the theoretical evidence suggests that the mechanics of radicalisation are fragile and dependent on the convergence of factors at different levels, suggesting that protective factors stem from limiting adversity, social and psychological mechanisms to deal with adversity that does arise, and insulation from extremist settings.

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

This is the Executive Summary taken from the Full Report, available here: crestresearch.ac.uk/resources/protective-factors-for-violent-extremism-and-terrorism-rapid-evidence-assessment/

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