Report on policy recommendations
September 2019 (M36)

WP 5, T 5.3

Authors: UCSC, HUJI

Modelling the Processes leading to Organised crime and Terrorist Networks
FCT-16-2015
Report on policy recommendations

**Technical References**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Acronym</th>
<th>PROTON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Title</td>
<td>Modelling the PRocesses leading to Organised crime and TerrOrist Networks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Project Coordinator | Ernesto Savona  
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore |
|                   | ernesto.savona@unicatt.it |
| Project Duration | October 2016 – September 2019 (36 months) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deliverable No.</th>
<th>D5.3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination level</td>
<td>PU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Package</td>
<td>WP 5 – WP 5: Final outputs: PROTON Simulations &amp; Wizard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>T 5.3 – Recommendations for the prevention of recruitment to OCTNs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead beneficiary</td>
<td>UCSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing beneficiary(ies)</td>
<td>HUJI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due date of deliverable</td>
<td>31 August 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual submission date</td>
<td>15 September 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 PU = Public  
PP = Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)  
RE = Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)  
CO = Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)
Table of contents

0 INTRODUCTION 5

1 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE RECRUITMENT INTO ORGANISED CRIME 5

1.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS 6

1.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS 6

1.3 POLICY IMPLICATIONS 6

2 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE RECRUITMENT INTO TERRORIST NETWORKS 8

2.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS 8

2.2 POLICY IMPLICATIONS 8

2.3 INTEGRATIVE APPROACH 11

REFERENCES 11
Introduction

This deliverable presents the reports of T5.3 as part of WP5. It focuses on presenting the policy recommendations based on the results of the PROTON-S simulations. Since the consortium agreed on the development of separate models for the recruitment into organised crime and terrorist networks, the report is divided in two sections.

1 Policy Recommendations on the recruitment into organised crime

Regarding the recruitment into organised crime, PROTON-S carried out experiments that simulated the four interventions designed to reduce the recruitment into organised crime: targeting OC leaders, targeting facilitators, primary socialization, and secondary socialization. The interventions were selected on the basis of the results of previous work packages, a PROTON workshop in Rome and three ad-hoc meeting with policy makers in Milan and Amsterdam in September 2018. The four interventions were run both in a Southern and Northern European context. Overall, the interventions rely on different theoretical and policy assumptions. The first two interventions modify the probability of arrest of specific agents, while maintaining the overall levels of law enforcement interventions constant. They are also inspired by a growing literature on criminal network disruption (Bichler & Malm, 2015; Bright, Koskinen, & Malm, 2019; Calderoni & Superchi, 2019; Duxbury & Haynie, 2019; McMillan, Felmlee, & Braines, 2019). The primary and secondary socialization interventions focus on youth at risk of involvement into organized crime. They are inspired by several theoretical frameworks such as social learning, differential association, social embeddeness of organised crime and social opportunity structure (Sutherland, 1947; Akers, 2009; Kleemans & Van De Bunt, 1999; Kleemans & de Poot, 2008).
1.1 Summary of findings

Due to the complexity of designing simulations relying on a multiplex network structure, the computational requirements and run time for the simulations were unexpectedly demanding. These issues required several interventions and adaptations of the simulations. The results are currently a proof of concept, designed to test whether the interventions were implemented correctly. In the proof of concept, the simulations were adapted under several perspectives. In particular, the number of agents was decreased to 3,000, the number of OC members and the rate of yearly law enforcement interventions was increased. Furthermore, three out of four interventions were implemented at high levels of dosage and/or at more extreme values.

Of the four interventions, the targeting of facilitators yielded a statistically significant effect and decreased the number of OC members compared to the baseline model both in the Southern and Northern European contexts. The primary socialization intervention resulted in a statistically significant reduction of the number of OC members only in the Southern European context. The targeting OC leaders and secondary socialization interventions did not lead to statistically significant reductions in the number of OC members.

1.2 Summary of findings

Of the four interventions, the targeting of facilitators yielded a statistically significant effect and decreased the number of OC members compared to the baseline model both in the Southern and Northern European contexts. The primary socialization intervention resulted in a statistically significant reduction of the number of OC members only in the Southern European context. The targeting OC leaders and secondary socialization interventions did not lead to statistically significant reductions in the number of OC members.

1.3 Policy implications

The results of the systematic review and innovative studies conducted in WP1 showed that the recruitment into organised crime is driven by different factors depending on the types of criminal organization, the socio-economic conditions and the institutional and law enforcement reactions. Nevertheless, the studies showed that involvement into organized crime often occur through social
relations, including family, friendship, co-working, acquaintances, and co-offending. At the same time, individuals recruited into organized crime often exhibit prior criminal convictions, and criminally exploitable skills (e.g. propensity for violence). These results indicate that entering into organised crime is the result of complex socialization processes and relational dynamics that may often start from childhood, although in a non-negligible number of cases individuals were involved into criminal groups at in their adulthood. The PROTON-S simulations of WP5 were based on these findings and modelled the recruitment into organized crime as a complex dynamic resulting of both social relation and individual attributes.

The results of PROTON-S simulations on the recruitment into organized crime focused on a proof of concept aiming at testing the stability, reliability and theoretical effect of the four interventions. This was due to the unexpected computational challenges of running extremely complex simulations requiring several days for a single run. The simulations were thus adapted and the interventions were implemented at high levels of dosage in a partially modified simulated environment. Due to the focus on the proof of concept, the results summarised above should be interpreted with caution and do not allow to assess the impact of the selected interventions in more realistic environments.

From a policy perspective, the results of D5.1 are preliminary and do not enable to properly assess the impact of the interventions in realistic conditions. Simulations are inevitably affected by the main assumptions and the setup of the models. Unless additional results are generated by simulating the interventions under empirically representative parameters and values, formulating any specific policy recommendation would be premature and incautious. For these reasons, at the moment, we consider ethically appropriate to refrain from any possible speculation on the impact of interventions tested in the models.

To address these issues, the research team aims at continuing to run the simulations. In particular, it will attempt to 1) further specify the implementation of the interventions 2) explore several combinations of parameters to further test the reliability and sensitivity of the models 3) decrease the levels of dosage of the interventions to verify whether the effect on the number of OC members are significant also in more realistic conditions.
2 Policy Recommendations on the recruitment into terrorist networks

Regarding the recruitment into terrorist networks, PROTON-S carried out experiments that simulated the effects of three key policies designed to reduce radicalization and recruitment in a simulated borough of a major European city. Each of the three policies were chosen based on: 1) the results of PROTON's work packages on terrorism, 2) their implement ability, 3) their real-life applications. The three policies tested were 1) Employment of high-risk individuals, 2) The introduction of additional community workers into existing community centers, 3) the replacement of a proportion of the existing police-force with community-policing police officers. Each policy was tested at a high level of dosage, in order to examine whether under optimal conditions a policy would have impact. One of the policies (employment) relies on a situational opportunity reduction framework that primarily affects individuals’ routine activities. The other two policies are underpinned by the theoretical framework that by tackling underlying risk factors, and buffering protective factors, there will be a reduction in radicalization, and thereby a spillover effect to reducing recruitment.

2.1 Summary of findings

Of the three policies, only the employment initiative led to a statistically significant reduction in recruitment, however, it had no effect on underlying, dynamic risk-protective factors or radicalization. On the other hand, the community workers' initiative had statistically significant effects on underlying, dynamic risk-protective factors, leading to significant reductions in radicalization; but no spillover effect on recruitment. In the case of the community-policing initiative, statistically significant effects were found only for improvements on trust/legitimacy.

2.2 Policy implications

Design and implementation of countering violent extremism (CVE) policies should include realistic objectives and expectations. Some policies may be
better suited to addressing short-term, and more immediate goals and objectives, whereas for others it should be acknowledged that any anticipated results may take more time to materialize. CVE policies based on the idea that mitigating risk-factors and buffering protective factors can reduce radicalization and thereby recruitment, are based on a theoretical framework that it inherently long-term oriented. Changes in dynamic risk factors and radicalization require time, and for these changes to affect recruitment will take even longer.

At the heart of these findings are a group of realities of the European setting that require distinctions between short term and long term policies, and between goals of recruitment and prevention of radicalization. Based on realistic estimates our landscapes include large numbers of individuals who have radical ideas (European Values Survey, 2008). This means that there are large numbers of individuals that could be recruited in European urban settings. In the short term, there are many more potential recruits than recruiters can possibly contact and influence. This is a key reason why short term reductions in recruitment are affected most by an employment intervention. At the same time, it seems critical to the long term interests of European communities that the number of radicalized individuals is reduced over time, and certainly not increased over time. Both of the community interventions will have this impact and thus are important policies for government to consider.

The results of PROTON-S find that lowering unemployment among the top 5.6% high-risk individuals leads to relatively immediate reductions in recruitment. Unlike more long-term strategies that focus on dynamic risk-protective factors, employment changes the routine activities of high-risk individuals, thereby reducing opportunities for interactions with radicalizing and recruiting elements (Simi & Windisch, 2018). This finding follows the theoretical propositions of routine activities and differential associations, which maintain that there is 1) a steady supply of potential offenders, and that 2) routine activities determine the availability of opportunities for engagement with deviant elements, and thereby determines criminal behaviors (Osgood et al., 1996; Haynie and Osgood, 2005; Apel & Horney, 2017). The findings also follow the literature on desistance which has found that encouraging desistance from terrorism is likely more achievable than de-radicalization, and employment can lead to desistance through changes to routine activities (Windisch, Simi, Logan and McNeel, 2018).

In terms of implementation, it is important that suitable jobs are found, and if necessary, that additional training is provided to the potential employees in...
order to ensure that they are not underemployed. Some research indicates that under-employment can also be a risk factor for radicalization and recruitment. Under-employment is also more likely to lead to job-loss, which Work Package 2 studies found to be a risk factor for recruitment. In this regard, studies have found that some jobs, such as construction, may encourage after work leisure activities—such as drinking—which increase the likelihood of deviant behaviors (Stinson, DeBakey, and Steffens, 1992). As demonstrated by Apel & Horney (2017), the largest reductions in the risk of criminal offending through the employment-routine activities dynamic, are through high hours, high income, and high commitment employment.

Policies such as community workers explicitly seek to enhance integration, with the idea that this ought to reduce radicalization (Rabasa et al., 2011:141). As such, improving integration and radicalization are in and of themselves objectives, even if they do not translate into reductions in recruitment. The Netherlands is one example of a country who has invested much into community workers, employing more than 4000, with a focus of efforts at the borough level (Christmann, 2012; Ranstorp & Hyllengren, 2013). One issue is that community workers may not be accessing high-risk individuals. In the UK, while PREVENT funding went primarily to community workers (33%) and other local community service providers (32%), with a stated objective of 'increasing resilience', only 3% of providers dealt with high-risk individuals 'justifying violent extremism' (Kellard, Mitchell and Godfrey, 2008). It has since been questioned whether or not community workers are in the best position to access high-risk individuals (Hirschfield et al., 2012). The results of PROTON-S may support these conclusions.

Similarly, with regards to community policing, the underlying rationale is that more procedurally just policing is intended to reduce feelings of discrimination and other grievances which can contribute to radicalization and recruitment. More importantly however, the rationale behind using community policing in countering violent extremism policy is that by improving trust and legitimacy, community members will be more willing to report suspicious activities and individuals to the police. As a result, police ought to be better positioned to intervene with these individuals (Jackson, Huq, Bradford and Tyler, 2013; Tyler, Schulhofer and Huq, 2010; Hasisi & Weisburd, 2014; Murphy, Madon and Cherney, 2018). The results of PROTON-S support the literature in that community policing can and does improve trust and legitimacy. While the results show no spillover effect to radicalization and recruitment, they do indicate that police-community relations can be improved and thereby improve the police's position for identifying and intervening with high-risk individuals.
2.3 Integrative approach

Given the above, while we have evidence to suggest that employment can serve as a good policy to reduce recruitment in the short-term, there is still the outstanding challenge of identifying high-risk individuals. Identification of high-risk individuals may best be performed by community policing, who have the trust of community members and are positioned within the community. Community police could then refer high-risk individuals to community workers, who may be well positioned to carry out risk-assessment and referral for vocational training and employment. Such an integrative approach could capitalize on the strengths of the different stakeholders and mechanisms involved in the radicalization and recruitment process. We do not suggest that this is the only, or even the best way to integrate different approaches. PROTON-S did not examine such integrative approaches, nor did it examine the effects of community policing on reporting of high-risk individuals, or how directing high-risk individuals to community workers impacts radicalization and recruitment outcomes. Nevertheless, the results, when taken cumulatively, indicate that simultaneous implementation could be beneficial for both short and long term implementations, and for the generalized reduction of radicalization in communities. Future analyses should seek to identify the length of observation needed in order to identify long-term effects from policies such as community workers; the effects or re-directing high-risk individuals to community workers; and the effects of trust and legitimacy on community members' reporting to community police. Such analyses would serve to better inform the structuring of integrative policy approaches.

References


---

This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement N° 699824.


