

**Effectiveness of Implemented Preventive Measures on Local Radicalization: A  
Comparative Study of Sweden and Russia**

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# Effectiveness of Implemented Preventive Measures on Local Radicalization: A Comparative Study of Sweden and Russia

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Wenzao Ursuline University of Language, 2025

已實施的預防措施對當地激進化的成效：瑞典與俄羅斯的比較研究

## 摘要

本研究探討政府措施在遏制青年極端化方面的成效，並聚焦於瑞典和俄羅斯的比較分析。透過對政策和方案的分析，本研究突顯當地情境如何塑造去極端化的努力，並識別出在政治和社會挑戰中維持社會穩定的策略。鑑於政治局勢的惡化，再加上多重地緣政治事件導致激進元素進入社會，公民和政府有必要熟悉過去十年維護社會和平的策略。認識到極端化可能因多種因素而加劇，本研究將政治動盪與排外情緒視為主要分析範疇。本文探討政府和各組織所採取的措施，針對激進化的青少年進行分析，並進行比較，並持續考量政治的細微差異。

關鍵詞：民族主義、仇外心理、激進主義、身份政治、去激進化、預防計劃、瑞典、俄羅斯。

## **Abstract**

This research examines the effectiveness of government measures in curbing youth radicalization, focusing on comparative approaches in Sweden and Russia. By analyzing policies and programs, this study highlights how local contexts shape deradicalization efforts and identifies strategies for maintaining social stability amid political and social challenges. Given the worsening political situations, coupled with multiple geopolitical events that have led to an influx of radicalized elements in societies, it is imperative for citizens and governments to familiarize themselves with the strategies for maintaining social peace over the past decade. Recognizing that radicalization can be exacerbated by numerous factors, this study focuses on political unrest and xenophobia as the primary scope of analysis. The paper explores the measures employed by governments and organizations to radicalized youth, offering their comparisons while consistently considering the political nuances.

*Keywords:* nationalism, xenophobia, radicalism, identity politics, deradicalization, prevention programs, Sweden, Russia.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background

Radicalization among youth, particularly within Europe, has emerged as a pressing concern over the past decade, driven by various factors including socioeconomic disparities, feelings of alienation, exposure to extremist ideologies via online platforms, and geopolitical events.<sup>1</sup> The influx of refugees into Europe, particularly during the 2015 crisis, has had profound implications for societal dynamics, engendering heightened concerns about radicalization. While the majority of refugees seek safety and improved opportunities, the substantial volume of arrivals has strained resources and ignited debates surrounding cultural integration, which extremist groups have exploited for recruitment purposes.

With universal access to the Internet, the emergence of online radical groups has become prevalent across Europe. While the Internet predominantly serves as a tool for uniting like-minded individuals rather than outright coercing the vulnerable, instances of organizations manipulating individuals into self-harm, as evidenced by the Blue Whale phenomenon, are alarming.<sup>2</sup> Such groups often target minors and adolescents, who are notably more susceptible to influence.<sup>3</sup> The perilous nature of these groups compels governments to assist those at risk and mitigate further harm by enacting regulatory measures and funding support centers.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cherney, Adrian, Emma Belton, Siti Amirah Binte Norham, and Jack Milts. 2020. "Understanding Youth Radicalisation: An Analysis of Australian Data." *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 14 (2): 97–119. doi:10.1080/19434472.2020.1819372.

<sup>2</sup> Y. Li, "A Comparative Analysis of Anti-Cyberbullying Laws Between Russia and China," in *Handbook on Cyber Hate*, ed. A. Wagner and S. Marusek, vol. 13 (Cham: Springer, 2024), [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-51248-3\\_19](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-51248-3_19).

<sup>3</sup> S. Moskalenko and C. McCauley, "Understanding Political Radicalization: The Two-Pyramids Model," *American Psychologist* 72, no. 3 (2017): 205–16, <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000062>.

<sup>4</sup> Ayşenur Benevento, "In Search of an Appropriate Channel for Voicing Political Concerns: Political Participation among Radicalised Youth in Europe," *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 32, no. 3 (2023): 658–72, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2023.2180622>.

## **Motivation**

My interest in the problem of youth radicalization has intensified over recent years. Although I have not been directly affected, as a young individual with considerable social media engagement, I am routinely exposed to a myriad of content, comments, and representations of public opinion. In my subjective perception, there appears to be a troubling normalization of certain claims with insufficient consideration of radical implications. My cognitive attention gravitates toward issues that resonate with me personally. The shocking outcome of the U.S. presidential election in 2016 catalyzed my analysis of youth polarization within a reliable statistical framework, illuminating the complexities of global socio-political dynamics. This realization prompted years of investigation into social attitudes and scholarly discourse concerning radicalization.

This exploration is not merely academic; it represents a personal journey. Given the global interest in this topic and the challenges I face due to limited resources, I have opted to narrow my focus to my current social group: underground students. Following preliminary research, I identified Russia as a pertinent comparative context, further enriching the relevance of my study within the field of international affairs.

## **Research Purpose**

The primary purpose of this study is to ascertain the extent and manner in which government involvement contributes to the deradicalization of youth. The objectives that underpin this primary purpose include:

- Identification of existing preventive measures and programs in Russia and Sweden.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of these preventive measures.

- Identification of factors influencing the success of preventive measures in both countries.
- Investigation of the impact of legislative and law enforcement measures on student radicalization.
- Conducting a comparative analysis of strategies to prevent radicalization among students in Russia and Sweden.
- Development of recommendations for enhancing preventive measures for young adults.
- Investigation of the role of educational and social initiatives in preventing radicalization among students.

### **Research Questions**

- How effective are government preventive measures in reducing youth radicalization in Sweden and Russia?
- What specific strategies and programs have been successfully implemented to prevent youth radicalization in these countries?
- How do these measures vary between Sweden and Russia?
- What factors contribute to the success or failure of these preventive measures in each country?
- What common challenges are faced in implementing these measures in both Sweden and Russia?
- How do community involvement and support impact the effectiveness of these measures in each country?

## **Contribution**

This research on the impact of government preventive measures on youth radicalization in Sweden and Russia aspires to contribute valuable insights toward the development of effective strategies to counteract this phenomenon. The findings from the analysis of existing studies and interviews will not only inform improvements to current policies and programs but will also facilitate the exchange of experiences based on the comparative analysis of the two countries. The conclusions and recommendations that emerge from this research can serve as a foundation for developing novel approaches to education and social initiatives aimed at preventing radicalization among young people. Furthermore, the data collected through comparative analysis will help elucidate trends in the development of social perceptions within society. Ultimately, this contributes to the establishment of a safer and more sustainable environment wherein young individuals can thrive without succumbing to extremist ideologies.

## **Limits**

As previously mentioned, the challenges associated with accessing information for this research are significant. While I have adjusted the topic to navigate major obstacles, I must also consider the following limitations: First, the summer timing of this study coincides with a period when weather hardship due to the annual Typhoon season, followed by around a month of rain, bringing physical daily fatigue leading to the lowest productivity within the year, thereby imposing a strict timeframe for conducting my research. Additionally, differing factors in each country may further diminish participation rates in interviews. I anticipate that Swedish specialists may be less inclined to assist a stranger with a Russian background due to the nature of current social interactions and prejudice in Europe. While this may not present an insurmountable issue, it warrants careful consideration. Moreover, the language barrier is a

significant factor; although English proficiency in Sweden is statistically high, it remains a second language, potentially reducing my sample size. In Russia, lower engagement may stem from the sensitive nature of the questions posed, as individuals may be reticent to express their opinions publicly. Consequently, it will be crucial to formulate neutral, non-consequential questions that contribute meaningfully to the research. Lastly, my physical presence in Taiwan restricts my ability to travel to the countries of interest, necessitating online data collection and recruitment of respondents.

Despite these limitations, I am confident that careful planning and consideration of these factors will enable me to complete the study within the established timeframe.

### **Delimits**

This research will not include a personalized projection of the current situation in relation to the topic, due to a lack of personal experience in the field. Respondents will be categorized by their backgrounds if data varies sufficiently; however, the study will not be based on factors such as religion, personal psychological characteristics, or gender due to their irrelevance to the outcomes. Furthermore, this work will not examine the influence of international factors, such as global political events or ideologies, on radicalization in Russia and Sweden; rather, it will concentrate on governmental measures to prevent radicalization in relation to the aforementioned events.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The growing issue of radicalization in society is not a new phenomenon; it has been extensively studied and analyzed by many scholars, providing valuable insights into preventive methods. To understand what can and should be done, it is crucial to explore the process of radicalization itself—examining its causes, characteristics, and associated statistics. A key challenge in this field is that research on political violence often relies on a binary approach, interpreting the absence of one form of violence as peace. This simplification can be misleading, as various forms of violence can coexist, each serving as a potential expression of conflict. For instance, J.G. Horgan observes in “The Psychology of Terrorism” that the absence of civil war does not necessarily indicate peace; instead, terrorism may rise in its place. This limited perspective leads to biased conclusions, as it overlooks the complex interconnections between different types of political violence.

To avoid such oversimplifications, it is essential to consider historical contexts, cultural norms, and a country’s social and economic conditions when examining the types and causes of radicalization. A nuanced understanding of these factors enables us to grasp the complexities of reintegration and deradicalization, requiring a multifaceted approach involving media literacy, access to diverse information sources, critical thinking, and early education, as well as timely interventions at pivotal moments in a person’s life. While punitive measures implemented by law enforcement can often reinforce extremist views, social support and intervention from friends, family, or former radicals play an important role, emphasizing the influence of social environments on radicalization and deradicalization processes.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> National Institute of Justice, "Domestic Radicalization and Deradicalization: Insights from Family and Friends," 2024, <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/domestic-radicalization-and-deradicalization-insights-family-and-friends#policy-implications-and-future-research-directions>.

To fully understand this complex problem, we need to look at its roots in the unique histories of Sweden and Russia. Past conflicts, ideologies, and social issues shape the forms radicalization takes today. Exploring these histories reveals patterns that can inform effective prevention and intervention efforts.

### **Historical Background**

Throughout the history of nations worldwide, there have been radical movements with both socially beneficial and damaging outcomes. Their approaches to accepted violence differ based on various factors, including causes of dissatisfaction, goals pursued by these groupings, the timing of events, and location. Each decision made, with its butterfly effect, shapes the cultural code of future generations. The Arab Spring, a product of numerous state abuses, has renewed emphasis on civic engagement, collective activism, and the power of social media, galvanizing a generation to challenge authoritarian regimes and champion democratic ideals and human rights across the region and beyond.<sup>6</sup> Perceptions of historical precedents often prescribe what is deemed fitting within appropriate norms.

Thus, to understand contemporary dynamics, it is essential to analyze key historical events within each country, leading to insights into their tragically divergent paths.

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<sup>6</sup> "The Arab Spring: A Year of Revolution," December 17, 2011, National Public Radio, <http://www.npr.org/2011/12/17/143897126/the-arab-spring-a-year-of-revolution>.



## Sweden

Sweden, known for its welfare state and liberal values, has witnessed radicalization primarily through the far-left and far-right. In the post-WWII era, left-wing groups influenced by global revolutions gained traction but remained largely non-violent.<sup>7</sup> However, the 1990s saw a rise in nationalism, fueled by immigration debates, leading to the emergence of far-right groups like the Sweden Democrats, whose influence expanded in the 21st century.<sup>8</sup> The 2015 refugee crisis accelerated this polarization, resulting in increased far-right violence and radicalization linked to Islamist ideologies.<sup>9</sup> Young Swedish Muslims, in particular, have been radicalized through a combination of socio-economic alienation and global jihadist movements, including ISIS recruitment.<sup>10</sup> In response, Sweden has struggled to balance its inclusive policies with growing security concerns and gang violence, largely attributed to criminal immigrant networks.<sup>11</sup> Sweden's radicalization is thus a product of shifting demographic, political, and security dynamics, with ongoing tensions between multiculturalism and integration. As of 2024, political polarization continues to rise, particularly with far-right movements challenging Sweden's identity as a liberal haven.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> A. Peterson, H. Thörn, and M. Wahlström, "Sweden 1950–2015: Contentious Politics and Social Movements between Confrontation and Conditioned Cooperation," in *Popular Struggle and Democracy in Scandinavia*, ed. F. Mikkelsen, K. Kjeldstadli, and S. Nyzell (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), [https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-57855-6\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-57855-6_13).

<sup>8</sup> D. Tomson, *The Rise of Sweden Democrats: Islam, Populism and the End of Swedish Exceptionalism* (Brookings Institution, 2020), <https://coiink.org/20.500.12592/kfsmz5>.

<sup>9</sup> B. Özdemir and L. Scharenberg, *The Refugee Crisis and the Rise of Far-Right Violence in Europe* (Policy Analysis Institute, 2018),

<sup>10</sup> E. Bakker, *Global Jihadist Movements and the Radicalization of Youth* (Institute for Security Studies, 2017)

<sup>11</sup> C. Säfsström and J. Winroth, *Crime and Integration: The Impact of Immigrant Networks on Gang Violence in Sweden* (Swedish Institute for Crime Prevention, 2023)

<sup>12</sup> J. Möller, *The Rise of Political Polarization in Sweden* (European Political Studies Review, 2023)

## Russia

In contrast, Russia's radicalization history is marked by violent revolution and state-enforced control. The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, fueled by widespread discontent, established the Soviet Union under Lenin's radical Marxist-Leninist ideology, later enforced through Stalin's brutal purges and collectivization.<sup>13</sup> Following the collapse of the USSR, the 1990s saw the rise of both far-right nationalism and radical Islamic movements, particularly in the volatile North Caucasus.<sup>14</sup> In recent decades, Russia has experienced growing nationalism under Vladimir Putin's regime, often supported by far-right groups that view Russia's expansionism as vital to national identity.<sup>15</sup> The annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the ongoing war in Ukraine have fueled a resurgence of Russian imperialism and far-right radicalization, with groups like the Night Wolves biker gang endorsing the Kremlin's policies.<sup>16</sup> Domestic radicalization has also been marked by opposition movements, such as the Navalny-led protests, which faced violent repression, including arrests and exile of political dissidents.<sup>17</sup> By 2024, Russia remains polarized, with increasing state censorship, a crackdown on civil liberties, and the growth of both pro- and anti-regime radical groups.

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<sup>13</sup> P. Kenez, *A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End* (Cambridge University Press, 2006)

<sup>14</sup> S. Markov, *Nationalism and Radicalism in Post-Soviet Russia* (Russian Policy Review, 2015)

<sup>15</sup> V. Likhachev, *The Role of Nationalist Movements in Russia's Expansionist Policies* (Russian Studies Journal, 2021)

<sup>16</sup> D. Shvidkovsky, *Russian Nationalism and Far-Right Movements: The Case of the Night Wolves* (Eurasian Studies Quarterly, 2022)

<sup>17</sup> T. Jones, *Dissent in Russia: Navalny and the State's Repression of Opposition Movements* (International Journal of Political Studies, 2023)

## The Modern Definition of Radicalization

Research in Sweden and Russia suggests that, while definitions of radicalism vary, both countries converge on understanding radicalism as a deviation from democratic norms, manifesting through authoritarianism, nationalism, or rejection of liberal democratic values.<sup>18</sup> Studies indicate that defining radicalism can be challenging due to its encompassing spectrum of ideological beliefs, ranging from right-wing extremism to left-wing anti-establishment movements, depending on societal and political contexts.<sup>19</sup>

### Sweden

Radicalism in Sweden has increasingly tied itself to right-wing populism and nationalism, largely as a backlash against immigration and multiculturalism. The ascent of the Sweden Democrats—a populist, far-right party—illustrates this shift, as they have capitalized on growing anti-immigrant sentiments to reshape political discourse.<sup>20</sup> This rise in right-wing populism connects with underlying discontent toward liberal democratic values, often paired with nationalist and xenophobic perspectives resonating within segments of Swedish society.<sup>21</sup>

Long-term studies provide further insight into the psychological and social drivers fueling this trend. Research by McCauley and Moskalenko<sup>22</sup> identifies that radical attitudes often stem from perceived threats to national identity and cultural values. The Sweden Democrats have skillfully leveraged these perceptions to propagate anti-immigrant and anti-globalization

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<sup>18</sup> P. R. Neumann, *Radicalized: New Jihadists and the Threat to the West* (Bloomsbury, 2016)

<sup>19</sup> Ruud Koopmans and Susan Olzak, "Protest and Radicalization in Western Europe," *Social Movement Studies* 3, no. 1 (2004): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1474283042000267237>.

<sup>20</sup> Oskarson, Maria, and Marie Demker. "Room for Realignment: The Working-Class Sympathy for Sweden Democrats." *Government and Opposition* 50, no. 4 (2015): 629–51. <https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2014.41>.

<sup>21</sup> Ekman, M. *Populism and National Identity in Modern Sweden* (Nordic Journal of Migration Research, 2020)

<sup>22</sup> McCauley, C., and S. Moskalenko, *The Psychology of Radicalization: Individual and Social Pathways* (American Sociological Association, 2017)

narratives, framing multiculturalism as a threat to traditional Swedish values.<sup>23</sup> Broader European research shows that this phenomenon is not isolated to Sweden; it reflects a continent-wide trend toward populism and nativism, where similar movements have gained traction across various nations.

## **Russia**

In Russia, radicalism is primarily viewed as a direct challenge to state authority, historically tied to political dissent and separatist movements. This perspective is deeply rooted in Russia's revolutionary past, tracing back to early Soviet-era conflicts that framed opposition as threats to unity.<sup>24</sup> Today, the Russian government, particularly under Putin, characterizes radicalism as a destabilizing force, especially in regions like the North Caucasus, where Islamist and nationalist movements are closely monitored and policed.<sup>25</sup> Recent studies highlight Russia's dual approach to managing radicalism through suppression and strategic nationalism. Amarasingam details how the state restricts political discourse to limit dissent, while Verkhovsky describes "managed nationalism" as a strategy to maintain support for pro-state ideologies while harshly repressing anti-state activities. Russia's highly securitized model emphasizes control over social integration, focusing on preventing nationalist and religious extremism from challenging state stability—a method that aligns with its broader focus on national unity and loyalty to the regime.

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<sup>23</sup> Mulinari, D., & Neergaard, A. We are Sweden Democrats because we care for others: Exploring racisms in the Swedish extreme right. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, (2014) 21(1), 43-56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506813510423>

<sup>24</sup> P. Kenez, *A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End* (Cambridge University Press, 2006)

<sup>25</sup> David Herbert, *A Different Dynamic? Explaining Prejudice Against Muslims in the Russian Federation: Islamophobia or Internalised Racial Hierarchy?*, in: *Connections. A Journal for Historians and Area Specialists*, 01.02.2019, <http://www.connections.clio-online.net/article/id/fda-133252>.

## **Key Factors Contributing to Radicalism: Individual and Social Pathways**

Examining individual and social pathways to radicalism allows us to identify key drivers of radical behavior and beliefs. The individual pathway highlights how personal experiences—such as marginalization, identity crises, or perceived injustice—can give rise to feelings of alienation that radical ideologies exploit. This personal frustration can often provide the basis for radical beliefs, especially when individuals are searching for an identity or purpose that radical groups claim to provide.<sup>26</sup>

The social pathway, in contrast, looks at the broader influence of societal structures, group dynamics, and socio-political factors. In Sweden, social media and online forums disseminate radical narratives, often appealing to collective grievances or nationalist sentiments. However, in Russia, state control over these networks has influenced the development of secret communities where radical views can be amplified away from public scrutiny.<sup>27</sup>

Together, these pathways illustrate how radicalism does not simply emerge from isolated ideologies but as a confluence of individual motivations and social conditions. By analyzing these pathways, we can better understand how Sweden and Russia approach radicalism prevention, focusing not only on ideological containment but also on addressing underlying psychological and social triggers.

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<sup>26</sup> University of Oxford, *Radicalism and the Individual: A Study on Pathways to Extremism* (Oxford University Press, 2023)

<sup>27</sup> Karpova Anna Yu., Kuznetsov Sergey A., Savelev Aleksei O., Vilnin Alexander D. AN ONLINE SCAN OF EXTREME-RIGHT RADICALIZATION IN SOCIAL NETWORKS (THE CASE OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIAL NETWORK VKONTAKTE). 2022. <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/an-online-scan-of-extreme-right-radicalization-in-social-networks-the-case-of-the-russian-social-network-vkontakte>

## **Digital Media and Online Pathways to Radicalization**

Moving beyond individual and social pathways, digital media and online channels have become key vectors of radicalization, amplifying the impact of consumed content and facilitating recruitment. In Sweden, extremist groups have utilized platforms such as social media and encrypted messaging to reach marginalized individuals and amplify collective grievances. One prominent example is the spread of far-right nationalist narratives, which have surged dramatically on Swedish social media in recent years, fostering xenophobic and anti-immigrant sentiment. Research shows that these digital pathways significantly contribute to the radicalization of young people, particularly those feeling excluded from mainstream society.

In Russia, the role of digital media is shaped by strict state surveillance, yet underground networks on platforms like Telegram serve as hubs for radicalization. A notable case is the emergence of youth anti-system groups that leverage these platforms to spread subversive content and unite disenfranchised youth. Some of these groups even use cultural references or trending content to obscure radical messages, avoiding detection while tapping into popular narratives that resonate with young Russians questioning state control.

These examples illustrate the dual role of digital media as an outreach tool for radical groups and a growing challenge for authorities in both Sweden and Russia. By examining these digital pathways, we gain insight into how online spaces facilitate radicalization in differing socio-political landscapes, ultimately altering prevention strategies in both countries.

Online spaces in Sweden and Russia have seen a notable surge in radical influencers and groups targeting young people through platforms like YouTube and social media. In Sweden, the Nordic Resistance Movement, a far-right organization focused on anti-immigration and pro-nationalist agendas, has been one of the most active groups utilizing digital platforms. They

create content that shapes Swedish identity in opposition to multiculturalism, resonating particularly with a younger audience who feel disconnected from mainstream political discourse. Despite government control, their messages permeate online communities, creating a space for individuals to unite around xenophobic and anti-government views.

As Morgan Finnsiö argues in his interview with ICCT, the NRM's visibility has sparked considerable concern, prompting various counter-extremism measures. However, the movement's adaptability in both physical and digital realms has made it a persistent influence, contributing to the spread of far-right nationalism across Nordic countries. The organization's emphasis on community and resistance resonates particularly with younger individuals who may view NRM's activism as a rebellion against modern societal norms.<sup>28</sup>

In Russia, the digital sphere has similarly played an important role in disseminating ultra-nationalist ideologies. Influential figures associated with the neo-Eurasianist theories of Aleksandr Dugin utilize YouTube to promote Russian ethno-nationalist identity, often portraying Western influence as a threat to Russian sovereignty. These narratives resonate with Russian youth disillusioned by economic and social instability, becoming crucial to pro-Russian extremism and justifying interventionist policies, particularly regarding Ukraine.

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<sup>28</sup> Morgan Finnsiö, interview with ICCT about the Nordic Resistance Movement, 2024

## **Global Deradicalization Programs**

Given the different pathways of radicalization, understanding deradicalization programs necessitates examining global trends rather than focusing solely on individual countries. These international programs offer a range of approaches to addressing and disrupting extremist attitudes, influenced by varying socio-political landscapes and cultural factors. By employing a comparative lens, we can identify strategies that have proven most resilient and adaptable across diverse environments.

Global deradicalization programs illustrate a varied landscape of approaches and outcomes, shaped by factors such as stability, resource availability, and program design specificity. Studies from organizations like the RAND Corporation and the United States Institute of Peace indicate that countries with stable infrastructure, such as Denmark and Morocco, consistently report more effective deradicalization results. Denmark's “Aarhus Model” and Morocco's “Moussalaha” program achieve recidivism rates as low as 5% and reintegration rates near 70%, owing to their integrated use of psychological counseling, economic support, and continuous reintegration efforts, significantly lowering relapse risks.<sup>29</sup>

Programs in the U.S. and other Western nations often target behavioral change more than mental transformation. Collaborations with NGOs, like Beyond Barriers, focus on psychological support, job training, and social reintegration. However, the nuanced and ongoing nature of the radicalization process makes capturing reliable long-term success rates challenging, underscoring the need for improved data tracking and outcome analysis.

In sharp contrast, deradicalization efforts in conflict zones face significant obstacles. In Syria’s Al-Hol camp, for example, recidivism rates exceed 50% as instability, resource shortages,

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<sup>29</sup> M. H. O'Neill, "Assessing the Effectiveness of Denmark’s Aarhus Model," *International Journal of Peace Studies*, 2019



and security challenges hinder consistent program implementation. United Nations-backed initiatives promoting rehabilitation and reintegration find limited success due to persistent violence and inadequate support structures in these high-risk zones.<sup>30</sup>

The most promising deradicalization outcomes arise from programs blending psychological support, economic incentives, and individualized follow-up—characteristics evident in both the Aarhus Model and Moussalaha program. These approaches underscore the critical role of sustained resources, structured aftercare, and community engagement in fostering sustainable reintegration and minimizing radicalization relapse.<sup>31</sup>

### **Comparative Approaches: Sweden and Russia**

Sweden and Russia approach deradicalization in ways that mirror their societal structures and political goals, illustrating two contrasting models in the global fight against radicalization. In Sweden, deradicalization efforts are grounded in preventive and community-centered strategies. The Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) initiative is a core component of Sweden's approach, focusing on socio-economic support, education, and close collaboration with local authorities and civil society. This model includes individualized interventions for those identified as vulnerable to extremist ideologies, such as mentorship programs, psychological counseling, and skills training for social reintegration. These efforts align with the broader international agenda promoted by bodies like the United Nations, emphasizing addressing the root causes of radicalization through inclusivity, resilience, and community-led programs.<sup>32</sup>

Conversely, Russia's deradicalization approach centers on a securitized, state-led model. Russia's anti-extremism laws focus on dismantling radical groups, monitoring digital spaces, and

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<sup>30</sup> United Nations, "UN Support for Rehabilitation of Foreign Fighters in Syria," 2022

<sup>31</sup>K. Ahmed, "Best Practices in Counter-Radicalization Programs," *Journal of Extremism* 6, no. 2 (2020): 42–60.

<sup>32</sup> Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, "Preventing Violent Extremism in Sweden," 2020

surveilling suspected individuals. Although certain reintegration programs, such as the Social Adaptation initiative, offer limited support for reintegrating former radicals, these programs are heavily overshadowed by the state's emphasis on control and suppression. Russia's approach often involves collaboration with religious institutions to promote "patriotic values" and state-aligned narratives, focusing on discouraging dissent rather than fostering community inclusion. This strategy diverges from global deradicalization models, underscoring the prioritization of state security over community engagement and preventive care. Reports from the Institute for Strategic Dialogue and Human Rights Watch document how this method—focused on containment rather than open social reintegration—reflects an authoritarian response to perceived threats within Russia's political landscape.<sup>33</sup>

These radicalization strategies can differ widely in effectiveness and orientation. While Sweden's approach aligns with international best practices emphasizing prevention, resilience, and community support, Russia's model underscores the complexities of counter-radicalization in highly securitized states.

### **Government Initiatives in the Past Decade (2014-2024)**

In recent years, deradicalization programs globally have increasingly emphasized community involvement, economic support, and tailored psychological assistance as best practices for reducing the appeal of radical ideologies. Programs in Denmark and Morocco, such as the Aarhus Model and Moussalaha Program, illustrate this approach with low recidivism rates achieved through strong community ties and ongoing support networks. Over the past decade, both Sweden and Russia have implemented distinct yet occasionally overlapping strategies to

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<sup>33</sup> Institute for Strategic Dialogue, "The Authoritarian Approach to Extremism in Russia," 2021

address the spread of radical ideologies within their borders, designed to fit their unique societal contexts while aligning with global trends in countering violent extremism.<sup>34</sup>

Sweden's focus on local partnerships and community-based interventions reflects these global practices, particularly in its use of systematic aftercare and local buy-in. Meanwhile, Russia's model also aligns with global strategies, especially in integrating religious and ideological reformation elements. However, its unique blend of state-driven control and religious collaboration remains distinct from the more community-centered frameworks seen in Western countries, emphasizing a model of "managed nationalism" that allows certain groups to operate under state-aligned narratives.<sup>35</sup>

## **Sweden**

Sweden has developed an increasingly community-oriented and multi-agency framework aimed at both preventing and countering radicalization. The most influential work is conducted under the Swedish Center for Preventing Violent Extremism (CVE), established under the National Council for Crime Prevention to spearhead national efforts by coordinating resources among municipalities and law enforcement agencies. Sweden's updated "Prevent, Avert, Protect, and Manage" strategy, particularly after 2024, focuses on tackling violent extremism at its roots, utilizing agencies like the Swedish Security Service and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency to monitor risks and provide rapid responses to emergent threats. This strategy is supported by EU collaboration, aligning Sweden's methods with broader European counter-terrorism policies to ensure an adaptive approach.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> United Nations Development Programme, "Pathways to Prevent Violent Extremism," 2023

<sup>35</sup> A. N. Grigoryev, "Managed Nationalism: The Case of Russia," *Nationalities Papers* 50, no. 3 (2022): 456–78.

<sup>36</sup> Swedish Security Service, "National Strategy for Preventing Violent Extremism," 2023

Locally, Sweden emphasizes addressing social drivers of radicalization. The Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare aids municipalities in implementing preventative interventions that engage directly with communities, often including counseling, job training, and youth outreach to create a foundation for early intervention.

## **Russia**

In contrast, Russia's approach focuses heavily on ideological and rehabilitative methods, with a marked emphasis on containment within its legal framework. The National Anti-Terrorism Committee leads Russia's centralized response, deploying security operations in collaboration with religious organizations to counter radical narratives, particularly in high-risk populations like the North Caucasus. Since 2014, Russia has intensified efforts to de-radicalize inmates through ideological reformation programs, often supported by local religious authorities, to minimize recidivism and reintegrate individuals into society.

Collaboration with religious entities, such as the Russian Orthodox Church, forms a core part of Russia's strategy, particularly in Chechnya, where local government-driven rehabilitation combines cultural reinforcement with vocational training to address the specific needs of individuals affected by extremist ideologies. This model shows similarities to global deradicalization trends, particularly through community engagement and social support networks, yet remains distinctly aligned with Russia's state priorities, as partnerships with the Moscow Patriarchate contradict the interests of targeted groups.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> T. V. Nikolaev, "The Role of Religious Institutions in Russian Anti-Terrorism Strategy," *Sociological Review* 71, no. 2 (2024): 234–48

## **Alignment with Global Trends**

Sweden's commitment to a community-centered model aligns closely with global practices that emphasize social reintegration, local partnerships, and systematic aftercare. Russia's model, while similarly incorporating religious elements and social support networks, contrasts in its approach by blending state influence with ideological reformation. Nonetheless, both nations mirror global trends by integrating community engagement and multi-layered interventions as central to their deradicalization efforts.<sup>38</sup>

## **The Role of the NGOs**

Recognizing the critical role of NGOs in addressing radicalization and extremist ideologies is essential as we move from government-led deradicalization efforts. While state programs provide structure and legal frameworks, NGOs often bridge the gap between formal policies and community-based support, offering flexible, grassroots approaches to prevention and rehabilitation.<sup>39</sup> Organizations like Beyond Barriers in the United States and Exit Sweden emphasize personalized pathways out of extremism, tailoring their programs to meet the specific needs of individuals with backgrounds in radical groups.

These NGOs operate with less rigidity than government agencies, allowing them to build trust within communities, especially where government programs may face skepticism or resistance. Through initiatives like counseling, vocational training, and peer mentorship, NGOs foster a sense of belonging and support that can reduce the allure of extremist groups. Internationally, NGO collaborations complement government initiatives, sharing best practices

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<sup>38</sup> Global Counterterrorism Forum, "Community Engagement in Counter-Radicalization," 2021

<sup>39</sup> Beyond Barriers, "Empowering Individuals to Move Away from Extremism," 2022

and working across borders to tackle radicalization from a holistic, multi-dimensional perspective.<sup>40</sup>

In many cases, NGOs offer more hands-on, compassionate approaches that support long-term reintegration, emphasizing not only behavioral change but also social inclusion. This dynamic allows them to address specific psychological and social factors contributing to radicalization, often filling in where government programs leave off. The efforts of NGOs may vary based on their viewpoints, but they play a crucial role in countering extremism effectively.

Swedish NGOs tackle various forms of extremism, including far-right, religious, and xenophobic ideologies. Their community-oriented programs emphasize integration, social support, and inclusion. Organizations like Expo combat far-right extremism through research and education, while Fryshuset engages at-risk youth through mentorship and outreach initiatives. These NGOs align with Sweden's emphasis on human rights and social welfare, fostering resilience against radical influences and promoting social cohesion.

In contrast, Russian NGOs primarily focus on Islamist radicalization or ethnic nationalism, particularly in regions like the North Caucasus. The Civic Assistance Committee aids vulnerable populations, including migrants and refugees, but their efforts are shaped by a framework of state control that limits political dissent. As a result, these organizations often prioritize maintaining social stability over broader counter-radicalization efforts.<sup>41</sup>

This divergence in the roles NGOs play in addressing radicalization reflects the broader objectives of each country's deradicalization efforts.

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<sup>40</sup> A. B. Smith, "The Role of NGOs in Countering Violent Extremism," *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* 31, no. 1 (2020): 45–68.

<sup>41</sup> Civic Assistance Committee, "Supporting Migrants in Russia: Challenges and Opportunities," 2023

## **Case Studies of Deradicalization Programs: Sweden and Russia**

This divergence in NGO roles reflects the broader objectives of each country's deradicalization efforts, warranting exploration through detailed case studies. In this section, we will examine specific deradicalization programs implemented in Sweden and Russia, analyzing their methodologies, successes, and challenges within their unique political and social landscapes.

### **Sweden**

Sweden's approach to deradicalization consistently prioritizes community-based programs emphasizing prevention and rehabilitation. The Exit Programme, launched in 2000, is a cornerstone example of these efforts. It supports individuals aiming to disengage from extremist ideologies, particularly far-right and jihadist movements. This program's effectiveness lies in its peer-based model, where former extremists mentor those at risk, providing both psychological support and practical aid, such as job training.<sup>42</sup> This approach has been especially effective in building trust and facilitating disassociation. However, challenges remain, as a 2023 report from the Swedish Security Service documented a concerning rise in far-right activity, particularly among disaffected urban youth, underscoring the need for renewed strategies to tackle this issue.<sup>43</sup>

Sweden also actively participates in the Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN), a European initiative aimed at early identification and intervention. By training educators and social workers to recognize early signs of radicalization, Sweden has developed a proactive

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<sup>42</sup> A. Ranstorp and J. Horgan, "Deradicalization Programs: A Comparative Perspective," *Journal of Extremism* 6, no. 1 (2017): 25–43.

<sup>43</sup> Säkerhetspolisen, "Annual Report 2023," Swedish Security Service, 2023.

approach to prevention.<sup>44</sup> However, environmental shifts necessitate more focused interventions, especially in areas with high immigrant populations and growing social polarization.<sup>45</sup>

Moreover, Sweden's refugee integration programs have been crucial in mitigating social exclusion, a significant driver of radicalization. Since the 2015 refugee crisis, these programs have emphasized social integration through language courses and employment opportunities. Nevertheless, recent criticisms highlight that economic hardships among young refugees, coupled with rising political tensions around immigration, may exacerbate grievances that fuel radical ideologies.<sup>46</sup>

Looking forward, Sweden's National Action Plan (NAP) for 2024-2028 reflects a continued commitment to counter various forms of extremism, including far-right and radical Islamist movements. This updated plan centers on community engagement, social support, and integration as fundamental pillars of resilience against radicalization.

## **Russia**

In contrast, Russia's counter-radicalization approach diverges starkly from Sweden's, shaped by its historical challenges and tensions. In regions like the North Caucasus, where separatist and jihadist movements have deep roots, the Russian government has leaned on strategies of surveillance, ideological control, and force. Launched in the mid-2000s, Russia's counter-extremism campaign blends strict legal policies, sweeping surveillance, and a state-approved version of Islam to curb radical ideologies. On the surface, this has reduced visible terrorist actions, yet these methods often sidestep the underlying issues fueling

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<sup>44</sup> Hammarberg, A. "Radicalization Awareness in Sweden," *Journal of Social Work* 18, no. 4 (2023): 523–37.

<sup>45</sup> J. Dahl, "Social Polarization in Sweden: Implications for Radicalization," *Scandinavian Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 2 (2024): 125–45.

<sup>46</sup> M. Lodenius, "Refugee Integration and Radicalization: A Critical Analysis," *Journal of Migration Studies* 15, no. 2 (2023): 220–38.



radicalization—ethnic divides, economic hardship, and political repression.<sup>47</sup> Critics suggest these hardline tactics stifle outward extremism but leave core grievances unaddressed, risking further alienation.<sup>48</sup>

One controversial element of Russia’s approach has been re-education camps in the North Caucasus, where detainees undergo intense ideological training to instill state loyalty. Critics argue these camps reinforce alienation rather than lead to genuine disengagement from radical beliefs. Human rights groups widely criticize these camps for authoritarian methods, noting that instead of offering lasting solutions, they may perpetuate cycles of repression and radicalization.<sup>49</sup>

Additionally, Russia has intensified efforts to combat radicalization online, controlling narratives through state-run media and rigorous cyber surveillance. This intent to stifle extremist messaging raises significant concerns about censorship and the right to free expression. In a tightly regulated digital landscape, fostering meaningful dialogue with at-risk communities becomes a challenge, potentially deepening mistrust.<sup>50</sup>

Ultimately, Russia’s approach highlights the complexities of tackling radicalization through top-down control. Suppressive tactics may quiet symptoms, but they seldom address the complex roots of extremism, suggesting that a more nuanced, inclusive approach may be necessary for lasting change.

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<sup>47</sup> Swedish Government, "National Action Plan Against Violent Extremism," 2024-2028.

<sup>48</sup> A. Malyukov, "Counter-Extremism Strategies in Russia," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63, no. 1 (2019): 88–105.

<sup>49</sup> D. Ivanov, "Re-education Camps in the North Caucasus: Human Rights Concerns," *Human Rights Review* 25, no. 3 (2024): 345–62.

<sup>50</sup> M. Shvidkovsky, "Digital Censorship and Radicalization in Russia," *Media, Culture & Society* 46, no. 5 (2024): 667–84.

## Evaluation Methods and Gaps in Literature

Feedback on community-based deradicalization models in Sweden and Denmark has been constructive and critical. Supporters highlight the successes of the Danish Aarhus model, which prioritizes early intervention through close local collaboration between social workers, police, and other stakeholders to reduce radicalization risks. By engaging community leaders and families, these programs create a support structure to help vulnerable individuals. This locally focused, multi-stakeholder model has shown promising results, with reduced recidivism and better reintegration outcomes for participants. Initiatives in Sweden similarly leverage civil society and partnerships between municipalities, with a focus on inclusion and youth-oriented programs to mitigate the social drivers of extremism. However, critics argue that these programs sometimes struggle to balance safety needs with privacy concerns and integration challenges. In Sweden, concerns have emerged about the role of faith-based organizations (FBOs) and civil society groups, particularly regarding government funding and the potential influence of groups with controversial ideological affiliations. Some experts suggest that while these partnerships are critical, they can also lead to stigmatization if not managed sensitively, with concerns that certain programs may inadvertently alienate rather than integrate target groups, particularly if they lack transparency or clear accountability measures.<sup>51</sup>

These criticisms underscore ongoing debates about balancing human rights and security. While these programs are consistent with a global shift toward community-based approaches, the challenges reflect broader issues common to deradicalization efforts worldwide, namely

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<sup>51</sup> J. B. Smith, "Evaluating the Aarhus Model: Successes and Challenges," *International Journal of Peace Studies* 22, no. 3 (2020): 77–92.

maintaining a delicate balance between intervention and civil liberties, as well as the question of long-term effectiveness in preventing extremism.

In Sweden, the implementation of deradicalization programs, particularly through the Center for Preventing Violent Extremism (CVE), involves collaboration across various government levels, local organizations, and community groups. Local municipalities, police, and social services play critical roles in identifying individuals at risk and providing support and intervention measures. Key initiatives focus on outreach and early intervention, often involving educational campaigns, counseling services, and community engagement programs to address underlying social and psychological drivers of extremism.

Experts note strengths and limitations in Sweden's approach. The CVE's community-driven methods and integration with local actors are often praised for encouraging preventive rather than punitive measures. This approach is believed to offer longer-lasting outcomes by addressing root causes and providing at-risk individuals with pathways to reintegration. However, critiques arise primarily regarding the difficulty of measuring success due to the lack of transparent, long-term data on program outcomes. Some experts highlight concerns over privacy and freedom, as data collection can create ethical challenges related to surveillance and civil liberties.<sup>52</sup>

In Russia, deradicalization efforts are largely coordinated by the National Anti-Terrorism Committee, relying heavily on collaboration with religious and ideological organizations. Religious authorities, particularly in regions like Chechnya, facilitate ideological rehabilitation and reintegration, while government entities focus on maintaining tight control over the

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<sup>52</sup> Alhussein, "Ethical Challenges in Community-Based Deradicalization Programs," *Journal of Ethics in Social Work* 19, no. 4 (2023): 300–16.

narrative. Russian experts often view this approach as practical within the local context, yet international observers criticize it for being overly state-controlled, potentially undermining community trust and hindering true ideological reform.

These varied perspectives reflect both the benefits and challenges of deradicalization approaches in Sweden and Russia, with each country adapting its strategies to align with specific political and social contexts while engaging with global standards on combating violent extremism.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This research adopts a comparative, qualitative methodology to examine and understand the effectiveness of measures against youth radicalization in Sweden and Russia. The study uses semi-structured interviews in order to access deep, context-specific insights that quantitative methods might miss. By engaging with researchers, political scientists, and influential social media personalities directly involved in studying, discussing, or appraising the deradicalization measures, the study gains perspectives both from subject matter experts and from individuals engaged in public discussions.

The interview structure and research questions were crafted with two core objectives: first, to allow interviewees to share both academic and personal insights; and second, to align closely with existing theoretical frameworks on radicalization and deradicalization. The design acknowledges that radicalization has complex sociopolitical roots, and capturing these requires flexibility in questioning and depth in analysis.

A comparative approach was chosen to draw comparisons between policies implemented in Sweden and Russia effectively and efficiently. This method allows the research to identify unique country-specific factors and highlight similarities in youth deradicalization strategies. The responses were then analyzed through thematic coding, which helped identify major themes and variations between the two countries.

## Study Participants

Due to the study's specific focus and practical constraints, simple random sampling have been used to select participants. This approach is effective in providing a broad range of perspectives without needing to intentionally diversify the sample based on age, gender, race, or hierarchical position within organizations. Instead, participant selection have prioritized individuals with relevant expertise, specifically:

- Journalists covering issues related to radicalization and deradicalization.
- Experts in political science, sociology, or similar fields related to youth radicalization.
- Employees of research centers actively working on radicalization, deradicalization, or security studies.
- Individuals with firsthand experience of undergoing radicalization processes.

Each participant was required to have at least five years of experience in their respective fields, ensuring that responses reflect substantial, informed insights grounded in both practical experience and theoretical knowledge.

However, after a long process of reaching out, I have been rejected by each political experts, therefore, ended up in contact with 5 participants, 4 of them are men in the field of journalism, 2 Swedish and 2 Russian, covering various topics, including constant observation of local radicalism. Each of the worker had been working on articles starting over a decade ago, which exceeded intention of five year experience bar. Besides, one respondee is a woman from Sweden, who has experienced the deradicalization and now is partaking curatorship in the program herself.

This approach enabled the study to capture reliable perspectives that directly informed the effectiveness of radicalization measures.

## Interview Structure

A semi-structured interview format was selected to accommodate the multifaceted nature of radicalization and deradicalization. The interview guide was developed with three main goals in mind:

- Encouraging academic and professional Perspectives

Meaning, questions are crafted to prompt responses based on the participants' professional or academic backgrounds, allowing them to share both objective assessments and personal reflections.

- Allowing flexibility for detailed insights.

Through semi-structured questions, respondents can elaborate on aspects related to their own expertise, which is particularly beneficial given the varied professional experiences among participants.

- Aligning with theoretical frameworks:

The questions are informed by the chosen **Social Identity Theory**, exploring themes such as the influence of group identity on radical behaviors and the role of social learning in deradicalization.

## **Topics and Themes Covered**

The interview questions will focus on several key areas:

- Participants' involvement and perspective on deradicalization efforts.
- Perceptions of societal or structural factors contributing to youth radicalization in each country.
- Evaluations of the effectiveness of current policies and strategies.
- Reflections on the role of social identity and social learning in both the onset of radical behaviors and the deradicalization process.

## **Data Collection**

Interviewees were reached out through such platforms as LinkedIn, Email, public Facebook, and Telegram. Their contacts were identified through relevant academic articles, public program reports, and references made in various formats, including written and video essays. The process began in August with an average of month response, eventually including 5 participant for semi-structured interviews taken. The interviews themselves have been conducted through online platforms to ensure accessibility, considering participants' availability and location constraints. The interviews were recorded and transcribed with participants' consent, after which responses have undergone thematic coding. This analytical process is designed to systematically categorize key themes, identify recurring perspectives, and reveal cross-national variations and similarities in deradicalization practices and perceptions.

The thematic coding process supports the comparative analysis by highlighting both unique and shared patterns in Sweden's and Russia's approaches to youth deradicalization, offering insights that are both theoretically and practically relevant.



## DATA ANALYSIS

In assessing the effectiveness of youth deradicalization programs in Sweden and Russia, this analysis combines measurable statistical data with qualitative insights from expert interviews. This method allows us to identify core differences between the countries' approaches, framed around key thematic areas: Social Identity Theory, Governmental Influence, and Community Engagement. Each theme explored through a comparative lens, highlights how national priorities shape the structure and outcomes of deradicalization efforts.

### Sample Transcript Excerpt (of a Swedish Respondent)

Transcript text:

*"When young people join radical groups, it's often because they feel isolated and misunderstood by mainstream society. Our approach focuses on building relationships and community support, rather than punishment, which we find helps them create new identities that don't revolve around extremism. We work closely with NGOs to provide social networks and mentorship."*

Table 1.1: Patterns of NGO Collaboration in Sweden

Text Segment	Code	Theme
"When young people join radical groups, it's often because they feel isolated..."	Youth Isolation	Social Identity Dynamics
"...misunderstood by mainstream society."	Marginalization	Social Identity Dynamics
"Our approach focuses on building relationships and community support..."	Community-Based Approach	Community Engagement
"...rather than punishment."	Preventive Strategy	Community Engagement
"We work closely with NGOs..."	NGO Collaboration	Community Engagement
"...to provide social networks and mentorship."	Social Networks, Mentorship	Community Engagement

### Sample Transcript Excerpt (of a Russian Respondent)

Transcript text:

*"In Russia, we take a firm stance on extremism. The government has implemented strict policies to monitor and control radical activities. These measures help ensure that individuals are discouraged from engaging in these behaviors, and they know that there are legal consequences. However, we recognize that these approaches might lack the flexibility seen in other countries."*

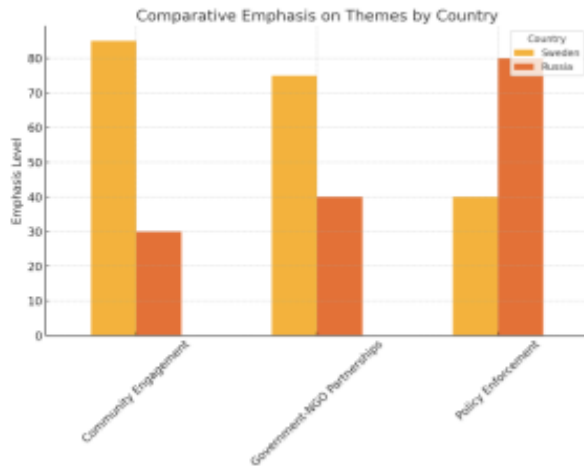
Table 1.2: Themes from Russian Respondent Analysis

Text Segment	Code	Theme
"In Russia, we take a firm stance on extremism."	State Control	Governmental Influence
"The government has implemented strict policies..."	Policy Enforcement	Governmental Influence
"...to monitor and control radical activities."	Surveillance	Governmental Influence
"These measures help ensure that individuals are discouraged..."	Deterrence Strategy	Governmental Influence
"...they know that there are legal consequences."	Legal Consequences	Governmental Influence
"We recognize that these approaches might lack flexibility..."	Limited Flexibility	Social Identity Dynamics

## Coding Process

In the coding process:

Chart 1.1: Youth Isolation in Sweden and Russia.



1. Identify Key Phrases: Select phrases that reflect specific ideas, such as “Youth Isolation” or “Policy Enforcement.”

2. Assign Codes: Apply concise codes to these phrases that capture the essence of each point. Codes may

directly reflect participant language (e.g., "NGO Collaboration") or imply deeper concepts (e.g., "Deterrence Strategy").

3. Group into Themes: Organize codes into broader themes relevant to the study’s objectives, such as “Social Identity Dynamics” or “Governmental Influence.”

4. Final Coding and Theming

The coded excerpts from both Swedish and Russian respondents show contrasting approaches:

Swedish Approach emphasizes themes around Community Engagement, using codes like “Community-Based Approach” and “NGO Collaboration.”

Russian Approach focuses on Governmental Influence, with codes like “State Control” and “Policy Enforcement.”

## Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT) asserts that group membership profoundly influences individual identity, often driving radical behaviors. Both Sweden and Russia attempt to address this through deradicalization, yet the approaches differ markedly.

### Sweden

Swedish respondents emphasized community support and personal reintegration as crucial to shifting youths' social identities away from extremism. *“Our work isn’t about punishment; it’s about providing new identities and networks,”* one Swedish interviewee explained. This approach aligns with SIT by reshaping exclusionary identities and fostering positive social bonds through alternative affiliations.

Sweden’s community-based programs show lower recidivism, with individuals less likely to reengage in extremism after program completion. Community involvement, therefore, becomes integral to Sweden’s model, indicating the effectiveness of identity-focused interventions.

### Russia

Russian respondents discussed the government’s strong stance on compliance, often reinforced through strict monitoring. As one Russian interviewee put it, *“The priority is on ensuring they comply with state-defined norms, which may not necessarily mean a change in identity.”* This approach can enforce in-group loyalty rather than transforming identity, particularly when viewed as an externally imposed structure.

Russia's deterrence-based model shows mixed results. While immediate compliance rates are high, research points to limitations in fostering voluntary disengagement, as compliance doesn't necessarily equate to personal transformation.

Sweden's identity-based approach, which fosters community integration, appears more sustainable for long-term disengagement. In contrast, Russia's focus on compliance provides a stronger deterrent but may reinforce exclusionary identities due to limited flexibility.

### **Governmental Influence**

The role of the government in deradicalization differs significantly between the two countries, reflecting their distinct sociopolitical contexts.

#### **Sweden**

Swedish respondents underscored the importance of a balanced approach, where government measures work in tandem with community support. *"Sweden's strategy is preventive and not overly punitive, which gives us flexibility,"* one respondent shared. Such collaboration aligns with a rights-based framework that values individual reintegration alongside state security.

Sweden's balanced approach reportedly achieves favorable outcomes, reducing the likelihood of recidivism. The government's partnership with NGOs and local institutions enables a structured yet adaptable response to radicalization.

## Russia

The Russian approach is notably centralized, with the government’s influence extending through legal frameworks and monitoring. *“Our policies are firm, and they discourage radical actions effectively,”* a Russian interviewee explained, reflecting the state’s prioritization of containment over integration. This approach offers immediate control but may lack the individualized support needed for deeper behavioral change.

Russia’s government-driven model has proven effective in reducing instances of visible extremism. However, the absence of individualized support networks often limits long-term success.

Sweden’s flexible, rights-based model enhances adaptability, fostering reintegration through community partnerships. Conversely, Russia’s centralized, policy-driven model prioritizes immediate deterrence but risks limiting long-term success due to its enforcement-heavy approach.

## Community Engagement

Community engagement plays a central role in Sweden’s approach but is limited in Russia’s state-centered model.

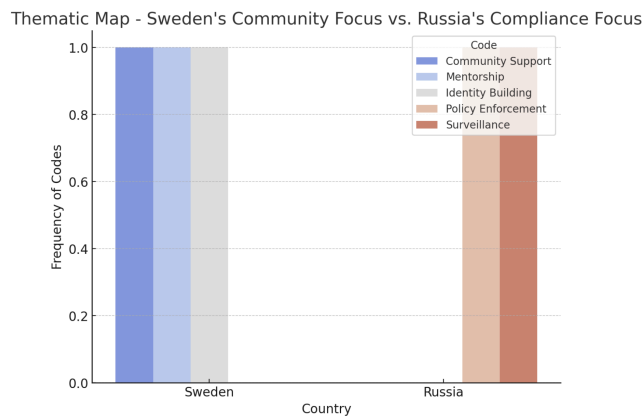


Chart 1.2: Community Engagement in Sweden and Russia

## **Sweden**

Swedish respondents noted the critical role of community organizations in supporting reintegration. *“We work with NGOs to create safe spaces and mentorship opportunities for young people,”* shared a Swedish interviewee. By involving non-governmental entities, Sweden’s approach aims to address social isolation—a common driver of radicalization—by providing alternative support networks and positive role models.

Community-based programs in Sweden report high success rates in terms of youth reintegration, with a notable reduction in extremist relapse.

## **Russia**

In Russia, state-driven approaches dominate, with limited NGO participation. *“Our programs are led by state authorities, which gives them a clear structure but may lack the personal touch that NGOs provide,”* a Russian respondent admitted. This model emphasizes compliance and policy, focusing less on community-level support that could facilitate social reintegration.

Community engagement emerges as a major advantage of Sweden’s model, creating a network of social support that addresses root causes of radicalization, such as isolation and the need for belonging. Russia’s state-driven model, while structured and controlled, may restrict the flexibility and personal connection needed for successful reintegration.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis finds that Sweden's community-based, identity-focused approach to youth deradicalization is more effective in supporting long-term disengagement from extremism compared to Russia's centralized, compliance-heavy model. Swedish government measures work collaboratively with NGOs and local networks to provide mentorship and social integration, which address the isolation and identity crises often underlying radicalization. By fostering positive social identities and involving at-risk youth in inclusive support systems, Sweden's model achieves lower recidivism rates and supports lasting behavioral shifts. Programs emphasizing identity transformation and social belonging are integral to Sweden's success, illustrating an approach that is both adaptable and resilient. In contrast, Russia's strategy prioritizes strict policy enforcement, monitoring, and immediate containment, effectively deterring radical behaviors but often without the personal support required for genuine identity change. The centralized approach limits flexibility, as it lacks community involvement that could address the deeper factors fueling radicalization. Both countries encounter challenges in implementing preventive measures that balance security needs with addressing the roots of extremism, but Sweden's integration of community resources proves essential in achieving sustainable outcomes. This comparative analysis demonstrates that Sweden's model, by emphasizing identity reformation through community engagement, provides a robust framework for effective deradicalization—offering a more sustainable alternative to Russia's enforcement-focused approach. This study contributes to the field by providing a comparative analysis of Sweden and Russia's approaches to youth deradicalization, emphasizing the role of community-based programs versus state-driven enforcement. The findings highlight the



importance of tailoring prevention measures to local contexts and offer recommendations for integrating community engagement into deradicalization strategies.

## APPENDIX A

### Semi-structured interview sample

1. **Как вы понимаете радикализм в общем? Какие характеристики он включает, и какие группы в Швеции вам известны?**

*Дополнительный вопрос: Как вы считаете, как социальные идентичности этих групп влияют на их поведение и убеждения, особенно в контексте предпочтения своей группы по отношению к другим?*

2. **Какова ваша роль в регулировании этого процесса? Были ли у вас прямые контакты с представителями радикальных движений?**

*Дополнительный вопрос: Как эти взаимодействия влияют на ваше понимание их социальных идентичностей и на то, как эти идентичности могут способствовать радикализации?*

3. **Как государство влияет на подход к предотвращению радикализации или дерадикализации в обществе? Какие законы внедряются?**

*Дополнительный вопрос: Как вы думаете, как государственные политики усиливают или бросают вызов социальным идентичностям маргинализированных групп, и какое это имеет влияние на радикализацию?*

4. **Какие техники использует ваша организация, и какие нюансы обычно принимаются во внимание? Насколько это отличается от государственной повестки?**

*Дополнительный вопрос: Как эти техники направлены на изменение или переосмысление социальных идентичностей участников для облегчения дерадикализации?*

5. **Насколько, по вашему мнению, государство участвует в проверке соблюдения установленных норм?**

*Дополнительный вопрос: Как вы думаете, как принудительное соблюдение этих норм влияет на социальные идентичности людей в радикализованных группах?*

6. **Какие критерии, по вашему мнению, используются для оценки успешности программы? Как определяется, готов ли участник программы вернуться или успешно реинтегрирован в общество?**

*Дополнительный вопрос: Как эти критерии отражают изменение социальных идентичностей участников и какую роль они играют в содействии принадлежности к своей группе против исключения из общества?*

7. **Знаете ли вы, насколько будет проверяться судьба тех, кто завершил программу? Есть ли последующие встречи, например, через год или два, и когда обычно возвращается полная автономия?**

*Дополнительный вопрос: Как вы думаете, как продолжающийся мониторинг влияет на социальную идентичность бывших участников, особенно в контексте их реинтеграции в общество?*

8. **Если вы лично взаимодействовали с представителями радикальных групп, проходящих программу, можете ли вы поделиться своим мнением о людях, их опыте и историях?**

*Дополнительный вопрос: Как их истории отражают динамику их социальных идентичностей и какие у вас есть мысли относительно их восприятия своей группы и других?*

9. **В каких областях вы не согласны с установленным набором правил? Что, по вашему мнению, должно быть адаптировано, удалено или добавлено?**

*Дополнительный вопрос: Как изменения в этих правилах могут лучше соответствовать социальным идентичностям вовлеченных людей и способствовать более эффективному процессу деродикализации?*

10. **В каком направлении движется политика деродикализации в нашей стране? Какие у вас ожидания в этом отношении?**

*Дополнительный вопрос: Как вы считаете, как эволюция этой политики повлияет на социальные идентичности молодежи в России и их отношения к радикальным группам?*

## APPENDIX B

### Informed Cosent Form

Форма информированного согласия на участие в исследовании

**Название исследования:** Эффективность применяемых программ дерадикализации радикалов в Швеции и России.

**Исследователь:** Алиса Юрьевна Супрун, студентка 文藻外語大學

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Научный руководитель: Philipp Fluri, drphilippfluri@gmail.com

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Описание исследования:

Вы приглашаетесь для участия в исследовании, которое направлено на изучение эффективности программ дерадикализации для ненасильственных радикалов в Швеции и России. Цель исследования — понять, какие методы работают лучше всего для реинтеграции участников этих программ в общество и какие трудности встречаются на этом пути.

Участие в исследовании добровольное и подразумевает проведение интервью, в ходе которого вам будут заданы вопросы о вашем опыте (или знаниях о программах) работы с ненасильственными радикалами. Интервью может проводиться по телефону или через видеосвязь, в зависимости от ваших предпочтений.

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Что включает в себя участие:

1. **Продолжительность:** Интервью продлится приблизительно от 30 до 60 минут.
2. **Вопросы:** Вопросы будут касаться работы вашей организации, подходов к дерадикализации, успехов и вызовов программ, или же Вашего опыта в обозрении таковых.
3. **Конфиденциальность:** *Все данные*, полученные в ходе интервью, будут анонимными. Ваше имя и любые другие идентифицирующие данные не будут упомянуты в исследовании без вашего письменного согласия. Информация будет использована только для научных целей и представлена в обобщенной форме.

4. **Запись:** Интервью может быть записано для обеспечения точности данных. Вы можете отказаться от записи, если чувствуете себя некомфортно. В этом случае будут сделаны только письменные заметки.
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Права участников:

- Ваше участие в исследовании полностью добровольное. Вы можете отказаться от участия в любой момент без объяснения причин.
  - Вы можете прекратить интервью или отказаться отвечать на любые вопросы в ходе беседы.
  - В любой момент вы имеете право запросить удаление ваших данных из исследования.
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Риски и выгоды:

- **Риски:** Участие в исследовании не несет физических или психологических рисков. Однако если вы почувствуете дискомфорт от обсуждения определенных тем, вы можете отказаться от участия.
  - **Выгоды:** Участие в исследовании не принесет вам финансовых выгод, но результаты могут способствовать улучшению понимания методов дерадикализации и повышения осведомлённости об эффективности программ по реинтеграции радикалов в общество.
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Конфиденциальность:

Вся информация, полученная в ходе исследования, будет храниться конфиденциально. Данные будут обезличены и использованы исключительно для целей научного анализа. Записи интервью будут защищены паролем и доступны только исследователю. После завершения исследования все записи будут уничтожены.

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Контактная информация:

Если у вас есть вопросы или замечания относительно этого исследования, вы можете связаться со мной или с моим научным руководителем по вышеуказанным контактам.

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Подтверждение согласия:

Я, \_\_\_\_\_ (ФИО участника), прочитал(а) и понял(а) условия данного исследования. Я понимаю, что участие является добровольным, и могу прекратить его в любой момент без объяснения причин. Подписывая данную форму, я даю согласие на участие в данном исследовании.

**Подпись участника:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Дата:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Подпись исследователя:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Дата:** \_\_\_\_\_

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