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READING AND LEARNING DURING A JOYFUL SUMMER!

We prepared the expert interviews analysis, we finalized the focus groups and started working on their evaluation, we designed the Experimental Labs methodology...

What other things we did during the summer? We read, we learned, we analysed, we researched, we designed, we innovated...

And we had a well-deserved rest!

Looking forward the new conference season and the new challenges ahead of ARMOUR!



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ARMOUR - A radical model of resilience for young minds



Newsletter #4
July – August
2019

Learn more about the project, its design and structure, the partners involved and the most recent news at www.armourproject.eu!





ARMOUR advances in its research activities

At the beginning of July 2019, the ARMOUR Project submitted to the EC the **first qualitative research results** under the project.

A total of seventy-one stakeholders were interviewed across seven European countries: Austria, Greece, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania, and Spain. The profiles of the respondents were quite diverse: teachers, researchers, social workers, health workers, law enforcement agents, mediators, consultants, jurists, and home providers.

The analysis of the findings shows that:

- Radicalisation is understood as a very complex, dynamic and multidimensional process leading individuals to gradually extreme/radical thoughts and emotions that legitimise violence to the commitment of violent acts in the context of intergroup conflict.
- Not all practitioners have or know about protocols to identify, prevent and address radicalisation, though the already existing training courses could solve this lack of knowledge.
- In order to improve the protocols and their use, a close collaboration with state institutions, as police, as well as the usage of sound existing protocols seem fundamental.
- The measures used to reduce radicalisation are like those implemented for other purposes when dealing with conflicts or personal problems. As there are a limited number of specific measures to prevent and deal with radicalisation and violent extremisms, additional measures should be created and validated.
- Ideology seems to be a quite significant element in the processes of radicalisation, specifically religious in association to Islam and right-wing ideologies are the most cited. However, respondents often conceive ideologies and beliefs as an excuse to justify and legitimise violence.
- Likewise, radicalisation seems more plausible in more polarised societies.
- Together with ideology and polarisation, interviewees recognise individual and psychological, social relations and psycho-social, socio-economic and structural factors. The first two types were more prevalent.
- We highlight that the 3Ns model (needs, narratives and networks) seems to fit well when grouping the different factors that lead to radicalisation. According to this model, we found a huge prevalence of needs over narratives and networks.
- Regarding the use of psychosocial measures, they should be based on research, increasing their attractiveness and creating secure networks.
- It is also necessary to develop intervention programmes focused on prevention which address the creation of community networks, understanding and satisfying the specific needs of young people and the development of alternative narratives.





- Similarly, practitioners and youth should be trained in communication skills, tolerance, and critical thinking to build resilience. These competences would constitute a solid basis for learning other abilities related to increasing resilience and personal autonomy.
- These skills could be integrated within the 3Ns model so that young people resilience is strengthened in order to satisfy their needs, the rejection of violent narratives and their integration in safe and empowered communities.

These findings are based upon the results obtained in the interviews, which may vary due to the specificities across countries or be limited by other aspects like number of respondents or lack in provided information.

Currently, the ARMOUR Consortium is processing the findings from the second qualitative research activities – focus groups, and the results will be published in the last quarter of 2019.

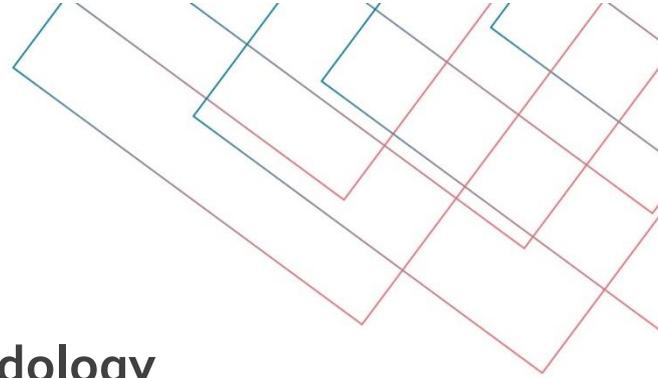
The last focus group – the Austrian one - was held on 4 July 2019 and was virtually hosted by our partner SYNYO GmbH. Only three practitioners took part (six professionals had been recruited, but due to technical or personal reasons three of them failed to participate).

The focus group followed a scenario of a semi-structured discussion. It focused on the topic of radicalization and understanding of violent extremism, in order to identify and communicate cases of radicalization towards designing a specific program for effective prevention and intervention with young people and children. You can find more information on the focus group methodology [here](#).

Several conclusions stood out: if a young person does not have any space for discussion and for exchange, and hasn't yet developed a strong personality, the person is more open for extreme ideologies; it is more likely that a young person joins an extremist group, if the person always had strong ties to a particular ideology and if the ideology was normal in the family setting; the sensibilization is crucial, directly addressing the narratives and sometimes you need provocation; etc. Participants called for more funding for collaborative projects and the development of a practitioners' network for exchanging practices.

Both sets of results will feed into the work under [Work package 3 'Experimental labs'](#) and [Work Package 4 'Integrating best practices and training'](#).





ARMOUR Experimental Labs methodology

With respect to the advancements in the research stage, the ARMOUR Team is now ready with the methodology for the upcoming **Experimental Labs** – a key ARMOUR tool towards achieving its goals. The labs will represent a safe chamber where participants can experience alternative ways of responding to push and pull factors of social polarisation and extremism. The focus shall be placed on internalising and further facilitating learning by others of practical, hand-on strategies and personal skills of conflict resolution, peace building, critical thinking, anger management, proportionate response, etc.

Each lab will accommodate 14-21 participants, each category of participants (vulnerable community members, civil society, teachers, social assistants, psychologists, law enforcement and security experts) being represented in a proportionate ratio. Each lab will have a duration of 8 hours. Each lab session is followed by individual practice and active feedback collection transmitted to the facilitators (2/lab). Furthermore, labs will be cascaded in 6 countries - Italy, Malta, Greece, Spain, Romania and the Netherlands – therefore giving project team the opportunity to improve the model according to findings.

ARMOUR is aimed at designing, pre-testing and implementing a set of 7 experimental labs based on (1) the **cognitive-behavioural instructional model** and (2) the **learning by doing model**. The main aim is to provide trainees with an essential set of skills and behaviours easily usable and adaptable in their daily professional activities.

The labs are planned to start in the beginning of 2020. If you are interested to take part, drop us a line via email or social media!

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Are you interested in cooperating or taking part?

Do you want to know more about the project or any of our activities?

Get in contact via office@armourproject.eu or follow us online @TheARMOURmodel

