CLUSTERS OF GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

Identifying the nature of an emerging violent radical threat through group and individual clustering

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INTRODUCTION

The practical value of typologies to support the operational fight against terrorism

Attempting to develop typologies of violent radical groups and individuals has brought useful insights into the mechanisms underlying their actions. A large amount of research has classified violent radical groups and individuals through their ideology, but by classifying them on the basis of their operational and organisational factors instead, CEIS developed an alternative and complementary approach to the violent radical threat. Moreover, this complementary approach to violent radical groups and individuals can provide valuable and actionable insights to support the operational fight against violent radicalisation.

A clustering analysis on a sample of violent radical groups and individuals revealed several clusters, resulting in the construction of two typologies for violent radical groups and individuals.

Who can benefit from this approach?

The typologies divide the studied groups and individuals into different clusters. These clusters can be used at an intermediary level (e.g. law enforcement agents involved in the analysis of the terrorist threat) to support the assessment of a violent radical threat
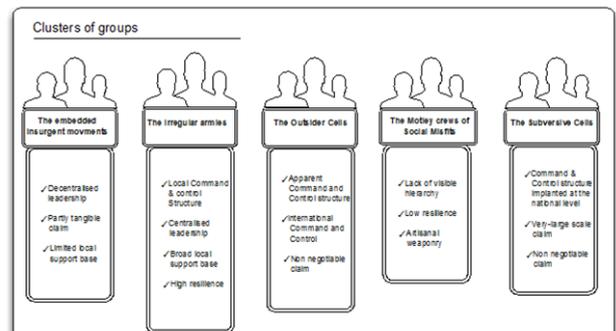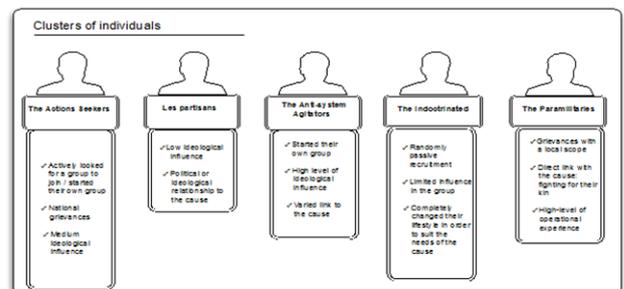
METHOD

One of the approaches in the framework of the SAFIRE project was a statistical analysis focusing on operational aspects of terrorism, while putting aside factors linked to the ideology of a group or of an individual. Using an analysis grid built around the factors related to their "Means, Motives, and Opportunity", we studied 41

terrorist groups who have perpetrated attacks on European soil and 83 individuals linked to these groups.

The statistical analysis revealed clusters of groups and clusters of individuals who share similar motivations and means of actions despite having different allegiances.

RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS

The following two figures show the typologies drawn from the statistical analysis and the main characteristics the groups and individuals share:

The typologies help identify the similarities and differences the groups and individuals share when ideological indicators are disregarded. They can also be useful in supporting:

1. The fight against terrorism:

   ✓ By identifying the nature of an emerging terrorist threat: look for similarities between this new threat and the clusters of groups or individuals identified in the typologies.

✓   By adapting counter-terrorism strategies according to the analysis of the threat made from the typologies.

✓   By adjusting counter-terrorism tools and interventions according to the operational characteristics of each cluster.

2.   **The fight against violent radicalisation:**

✓   The typologies provide an in-depth insight into the links between groups and individuals, which allows for a better development of counter violent extremism strategies.