



Stakeholders of (De)- Radicalisation in Italy

D3.1 Country Report

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List of abbreviations

AIVITER	Association of Italian Victims of Terrorism
Co.Re.Is.	Comunità Religiosa Islamica Italiana
CPI	Casa Pound Italia
FAI	Federazione Anarchica Informale – Fronte Rivoluzionario Internazionale
IIC	Italian Islamic Confederation
ICI	Islamic Cultural Institute
NBR	Nuove Brigate Rosse
UCOII	Unione delle Comunità Islamiche d'Italia
RAN	Radicalisation Awareness Network

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About the Project

D.Rad is a comparative study of radicalisation and polarisation in Europe and beyond. It aims to identify the actors, networks, and wider social contexts driving radicalisation, particularly among young people in urban and peri-urban areas. D.Rad conceptualises this through the I-GAP spectrum (injustice-grievance-alienation-polarisation) with the goal of moving towards measurable evaluations of de-radicalisation programmes. Our intention is to identify the building blocks of radicalisation, which include a sense of being victimised; a sense of being thwarted or lacking agency in established legal and political structures; and coming under the influence of “us vs them” identity formulations.

D.Rad benefits from an exceptional breadth of backgrounds. The project spans national contexts including the UK, France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Finland, Slovenia, Bosnia, Serbia, Kosovo, Israel, Iraq, Jordan, Turkey, Georgia, Austria, and several minority nationalisms. It bridges academic disciplines ranging from political science and cultural studies to social psychology and artificial intelligence. Dissemination methods include D.Rad labs, D.Rad hubs, policy papers, academic workshops, visual outputs and digital galleries. As such, D.Rad establishes a rigorous foundation to test practical interventions geared to prevention, inclusion and de-radicalisation.

With the possibility of capturing the trajectories of seventeen nations and several minority nations, the project will provide a unique evidence base for the comparative analysis of law and policy as nation states adapt to new security challenges. The process of mapping these varieties and their link to national contexts will be crucial in uncovering strengths and weaknesses in existing interventions. Furthermore, D.Rad accounts for the problem that processes of radicalisation often occur in circumstances that escape the control and scrutiny of traditional national frameworks of justice. The participation of AI professionals in modelling, analysing and devising solutions to online radicalisation will be central to the project’s aims.

Executive summary/Abstract

This report contributes to Work Package 3 “Mapping Stakeholders and Situations of Radicalisation” and aims at drawing a general overview of radicalisation agents and de-radicalisation stakeholders in the context of Italy since 2001. We focus on religious, political and ethnonationalist/separatist cases of radicalisation, looking at jihadist; right-wing; left-wing; and ethnonationalist/separatist movements in Italy.

The first part of the report maps the current Italian context and violent extremist scene since 2001. It subsequently highlights broad trends and data, moving beyond the appearance that political violence has claimed less victims in Italy than in other European countries. Relatively few violent acts have been claimed by extreme Jihadist organisations and South Tyrol – the Alpine region between Italy and Austria inhabited by German and Ladin-speaking populations – has fortunately long overcome its bloodiest period of separatist political violence. However, the extreme left and anarchical groups remain very active on the Italian territory and have claimed the vast majority of violent actions recorded in official reports. Similarly, instances of rioting, disturbances and racially motivated violence by right-wing sympathisers has increased massively in the last decade.

The report also shows that Italian political parties have largely condemned political violence, and Islamist extremism and Jihadist violence, which is often framed as linked with migration across the political spectrum. However, right-wing political parties have maintained a somewhat ambiguous attitude to the illegal actions of far-right militants. In the case of South Tyrol, although the separatist political discourse has clearly distanced itself from the use of violence, local ethnicised politics provide a breeding ground for possible contaminations between legitimate socio-political institutions and extremist groups (often with a transnational character) on the basis of a very partial and distorted view of history and of a nationalist xenophobic ideology directed towards recent immigrants and refugees.

In the second part of the report, we consider a number of agents of radicalisation, starting with political movements. On the left, we consider the Federazione Anarchica Informale – Fronte Rivoluzionario Internazionale (FAI) and the Nuove Brigate Rosse (New Red Brigades/NBR). FAI is the most active anarchist groups in the country and has consistently engaged in violent political action, including vandalism, arson and sabotage, letter bombs and home-made explosives and violent attacks on prominent individuals, including the kneecapping of Roberto Adinolfi, CEO of the Italian nuclear power company Ansaldo Nucleare, in 2012. However, left-wing extremism is most closely associated with the NBR, which was responsible for the most high-profile terrorist attacks in Italy since 2001 (including the assassinations of government consultants Professor Massimo d’Antona in 1999, of and Professor Marco Biagi in 2002 and of policeman Emanuele Petri in 2003). The Covid-19 emergency and subsequent lockdown has offered opportunities for both FAI and the NBR to resume threatening letters and letter bombs against Italian authorities.

On the right, we focus on the self-defined ‘third millennium fascists’ of Casa Pound Italia (CPI). Despite a consistent emphasis on their cultural, social and leisure activities in support of the marginalised and deprived Italian population, it is well documented that CPI members and sympathisers have been responsible for ‘squadrist-style’ violent

political demonstrations, riots and racially motivated violent attacks. The most high-profile act involved Gianluca Casseri (a CPI sympathiser according to CPI spokespersons) who, in a racially-motivated attack, shot and killed two Senegalese market traders in Florence in December 2011.

We subsequently consider ISIS and al-Qaeda inspired groups for which Italy served as a logistical hub since the 1990's and represents a central transit country for Jihadists heading for the territories of ISIS. Although Italy did not yet suffer any major jihadist attacks, the country constitutes a target of potential terrorist attacks and propaganda directed against the Holy See and the city of Rome. Islamist extremism in Italy relies on individual pathways, on 'Lone Wolf' operations with linkages to a wider network such as the failed suicide bomb attack directed against a military facility in Milan by a Libyan citizen in 2009 that marked the arrival of home-grown jihadism in Italy. Since then, several Italian nationals, citizens with migration background and converts engaged in militant activities and contributed to recruit foreign fighters, with the web and social media platforms as primary sources of radicalisation.

Finally, we look at ethnonationalist and separatist driven radicalisation in the Alpine region of South Tyrol to focus on the historical weight of ethnic tensions in the area and on the dynamics by which different strands of radicalisation might combine. In this context, linguistic and ethnic differences have long been translated into a complex scenario still shaped by the concurrence and coexistence of two right-wing extremisms. On the one hand, with the end of clearly defined ethno-nationalist terrorism, a part of the German-speaking separatist discourse has increasingly become embedded and indeed swamped in the dynamics of right-wing extremism both at local level and among pre-existing transnational networks. On the other hand, Italian neo-fascism has been historically driven by a need of reaffirming the 'Italianness' of the region, in particular in the capital city of Bolzano, thought to a less extent today. In the last decades, such trends have received an increasing support also by young people. Indeed, Italian security reports have repeatedly pointed out how transnational contacts between for instance South Tyrolean skinheads and other pangermanist right-wing groups have been reinforced during transnational commemorations, concerts, paramilitary rallies organised abroad – mainly in Austria and Germany.

In the third part of the report, we present current initiatives for the prevention of radicalisation and de-radicalisation in Italy. We underline that, despite a strong emphasis on identifying and punishing violent extremists, most de-radicalisation programmes in Italy are promoted and run by civil society actors. We specifically consider the activities of the following associations: the *Association of Italian Victims of Terrorism (AIVITER)*; the *Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)*; the *Union of Islamic Communities of Italy (UCOII)*; the *Italian Islamic Confederation (IIC)*; *Co.Re.Is.*; and *Forum Prävention*. We find that many of these initiatives have remained at the pilot level, and that lack of broad national-level guidelines, legal frameworks and dedicated funding hamper their long-term success and sustainability.

To conclude, the report clearly highlights the lack of a systemic approach to de-radicalisation, which becomes a highly problematic feature when future trends of radicalisation are evaluated. In fact, although it is very unlikely that separatist-driven violence would resurge in the medium term, and while left-wing violent actions have remained a constant feature of the Italian landscape, right-wing extremism may become increasingly prominent in the future. In this context, different extremisms may

reinforce each other. For instance, a rise in xenophobic attitudes can end up jeopardising societal cohesion and creating a fertile ground for individuals who experience marginalization and discrimination on a daily basis to be open to radical ideologies and jihadist propaganda.

1. Introduction

This report is one of the output of the Horizon 2020 project D.Rad (De-Radicalisation in Europe and Beyond: Detect, Resolve, Re-integrate) and presents some of its results for Italy, one of the partner countries in the project. As part of the project's Work Package 3 "Mapping Stakeholders and Situations of Radicalisation," it aims at drawing a general overview of radicalisation agents and de-radicalisation stakeholders in the Italian context in the past twenty years.

As defined in the project, radicalisation in this report is understood as a process involving the increasing rejection of established law, order, and politics and the active pursuit of alternatives, in the form of politically driven violence or justification of violence. De-radicalisation refers to processes countering such rejection at individual (micro), organisational (meso), or societal (macro) levels resulting in a shift from violent to nonviolent strategies and tactics. However, the report addresses also the thin line between violent acts and legitimate activities and organisations, which shape the context in which processes of radicalisation develop.

D.Rad focuses on four cases of radicalisation: religious (jihadist), political (right-wing and left-wing), and ethnonationalist/separatist. Within the Italian case all these forms of radicalisation are considered in the following pages. Specifically, as the most relevant cases of radicalisation agents, the report considers the left wing Federazione Anarchica Informale – Fronte Rivoluzionario Internazionale (FAI) and the Nuove Brigate Rosse (New Red Brigades/NBR), right-wing Casa Pound and Forza Nuova, ISIS and al-Qaeda inspired groups. Furthermore, though ethnonationalist and separatist driven radicalisation is less relevant today in Italy, this report focuses on such type of radicalised group in the Italian province of South Tyrol due to the historical weight of ethnic tensions in the area, and the fact that it is a relevant example of how different strands of radicalisation might combine. The South-Tyrolean case constitutes a prime example to understand how to defuse violence in a separatist conflict, as well as how local radical discourses may eventually persist through time when incorporated in wider transnational dynamics.

The report is based on analysis of secondary sources, such as academic research, newspaper articles, government and NGO reports and published surveys, as well as four original interviews with Hamdan Alzeqri (UCOII – Unione delle Comunità Islamiche d'Italia); Dr Massimo Abdullah Cozzolino (IIC – Italian Islamic Confederation); Dr Luca Guglielminetti (RAN – Radicalisation Awareness Network); Dr Yahya Pallavicini and Dr Hamid Distefano (Co.Re.Is. – Comunità Religiosa Islamica Italiana). It is composed of four parts. After first presenting the contextual background of current radicalisation dynamics in Italy, the following section traces the main related events and threats and perception of them by the political elite and the general public. Then, the main collective agents involved in radicalisation are presented with their socio-political surrounding, followed by a sketch of the main actors involved in de-radicalisation and their activities. The conclusion summarizes the findings and traces possible future trends of radicalisation in Italy.

2. Contextual background

This section of the report aims to introduce the broad Italian social, political and economic context. We focus on events which underpinned phenomena of violent radicalisation and recent initiatives for de-radicalisation, considering four types of radical movements: political extremism (on the left and on the right); Jihadism; and ethno-national separatism.

Analysis of extreme right-wing and left-wing movements in contemporary Italy needs to be considered in the wider context of the Italian struggle with political violence in the “years of lead” between the 1960s and the 1980s (Maniscalco, 2019). These decades witnessed the proliferation of violent extra-parliamentary groups on the extreme left (such as the Red Brigades) and on the extreme right (such as Ordine Nuovo) as well as dozens of violent attacks ranging from political assassinations to bombings of civilians, resulting in thousands of victims (Cervi & Montanelli, 1991; Cervi & Montanelli, 2013; Zavoli, 2017). Extremist right-wing and left-wing groups active during the “years of lead” were eradicated (Cento Bull & Cooke, 2013; Giannulli & Rosati, 2017; Irrera, 2014; Sundquist, 2010), but their successors, often including former militants in their hierarchies and rank and file, remain the primary radical actors in the Italian context.

Left-wing violence and radicalisation since 2001 have ostensibly responded primarily to the liberalisation and globalisation of the Italian economy (Marone, 2015; Maroni, 2020). This rhetoric has intensified since the 2008 economic crisis and the subsequent austerity policies accelerated economic and social reforms. Major reforms of the Italian job market, including provisions to increase job flexibility and regulate termination of job contracts, were cited as triggers for the two most important violent actions by the New Red Brigades: the assassinations of labour ministry consultants Professor Massimo D’Antona in 1999 and Professor Marco Biagi in 2002. Actions by anarchical groups have similarly aimed to challenge the economic and security institutions of the state by targeting symbolic individuals and locations (Marone, 2015). This included campaigns of parcel and homemade bombs against high-profile symbolic locations as well as the shooting of Roberto Adinolfi (CEO of Ansaldo Nucleare) in 2012 (BBC, 2012).

The long-term impact of the 2008 economic crisis and austerity policies have also fed into a resurgence of the extreme right in Italy (Castelli Gattinara, Frorio & Albanese, 2013; Sesana, 2019). Economic hardship has fuelled violent right-wing actions combined with the emergence of Italy as a key migratory route from the Southern Mediterranean into Western Europe, and the increasing migratory flows following the collapse of the Gadhafi regime in Libya in 2011 (Castelli Gattinara, O’Connor & Lindekilde, 2018; Mammone, 2009). Emblematic of this trend are riots and protests against immigrants and Roma in the deprived peripheries of major Italian cities, including the ‘revolt of the peripheries’ in Rome in 2014. The confluence between the individual economic hardship of Italians and migration is emphasised by extreme right-wing groups. This association has motivated lone wolf attacks such as the shooting of two Senegalese traders by a Casapound ‘sympathiser’ in Florence in 2011 (The Guardian, 2011; BBC, 2011), and the drive-by shooting of migrants in Macerata by a former local candidate of the right-wing League party¹ in 2017 (La Repubblica, 2018). Whilst the League distanced itself

¹ The League was known as the Northern League until 2017, when it changed name. In this report, we will use its current name even for statements and actions preceding 2017.

from Traini's actions, Traini was publicly supported by the right-wing party Forza Nuova, which also offered to pay his legal fees during trials (Il Post, 2018).

The 2020 lockdown to contain the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is being exploited very effectively by many radicalising actors in Italy and abroad (Cossiga, 2020). In the Italian context, the extreme right has been most visible in their propaganda online and on the streets. This has entailed dissemination of racist messages against the Chinese population and Chinese products accused of spreading Covid (Bresciatoday, 2020); the exploitation of nationalist rhetoric, including emphasis on closing borders in retaliation for other European country's actions (Casa Pound, 2020); and the amalgamation of opposition to the country's democratic institutions and of challenge to lockdown restrictions (La Stampa, 2020).

With regard to Jihadism, Italy did not yet suffer any major jihadist attacks and has not experienced a surge in Islamic radicalisation as other European countries. However, due to its strategic position as a bridge in the Mediterranean, the country served as a logistical hub for Islamist militants since the 1990's and represents a central transit country for Jihadists heading for the territories of ISIS (Marone, 2017; Gaudino, 2018). With the rise of the Islamic State, Italy became a target of potential terrorist attacks and apocalyptic propaganda directed against the Holy See and the city of Rome as a major symbol of Western civilization (Gaudino, 2018; Vidino, 2018).

Italy's rather small Muslim community is still composed of relatively new migrants, is somewhat dispersed and contrary to other European countries, concentrated neighbourhoods or "ghettos" are a quite recent phenomenon (Guolo, 2018a; Guolo 2018b). Discrimination, lack of socio-economic integration and group dynamics play only a marginal role in the radicalisation process (Beccaro & Bonino, 2019; Marone, 2017; Vidino, 2014). Islamist extremism in Italy relies on individual pathways, on 'Lone Wolf' operations, i.e., violent actions by a perpetrator who has links with the wider network but is not directly instructed by it (Spagna, 2016), such as the failed suicide bomb attack directed against a military barrack in Milan by a Libyan citizen in 2009 (Vidino, 2014).

The still low level of radicalisation inside the Muslim community and a rather small number of foreign fighters joining ISIS can be linked to little resentment of the countries colonial history and less anger over Italy's foreign policy and involvement in the international coalition against ISIS (beccaro & Bonino, 2019; Groppi, 2017). Italy's jihadist scene therefore remains rather unsophisticated and lacking structure (Gaudino, 2018; Groppi, 2020). Yet, several Italian nationals, citizens with migration background and converts engaged in militant activities and contributed to recruit foreign fighters, with the web and social media platforms as primary sources of radicalisation (Gaudino, 2018). Consequently, Italian jihadism is becoming less "imported" and more homegrown (Vidino, 2018). The expulsion of aspiring jihadis with first-generation immigration background, the seizure of assets, mobility and occupational restrictions in particular, have been the cornerstone of Italy's effective counter-terrorism strategy (Groppi, 2017). However, the country still lacks counter-radicalisation or de-radicalisation strategies and the growing number of radicalised individuals holding Italian citizenship is challenging Italy's current strategy (Vidino, 2018).

With regard to radicalisation dynamics in a context of ethno-nationalism or separatism, Italy has experienced several separatist movements.² Most of these separatist struggles have not embraced violence or have been characterised by rare and extemporaneous violent events (The New York Times, 1985; The Guardian, 2014; The New York Times, 1997), with the exception of South Tyrol. In this Alpine region between Italy and Austria inhabited by German and Ladin-speaking populations, unresolved grievances stemmed from boundary changes, policies of forced assimilation, international disputes, developed into a context of polarisation, where “us vs them” narratives reinforced by systemic divisions escalated into a conflict between organised separatist groups and Italian institutions in the late 1950s and 1960s with few reverberations until the end of the 1980s. Separatists were motivated by the delusion of having being left in a State which had repressed any form of cultural diversity during the Fascist regime and which was – to some extent – continuing with such policy. Indeed, after the end of WWII and the fall of the fascist regime, Austria and Italy entered into bilateral talks to negotiate the autonomy of South Tyrol: the resulting agreement, named De Gasperi-Gruber Agreement from the name of the two foreign ministers, was signed in Paris in 1946 and granted equality of rights to Italian- and German-speakers, as well as “the exercise of an autonomous legislative and executive regional power” (Par. 2, *Paris Agreement on South Tyrol*, signed September 5, 1946). However, Italy initially violated the spirit of the Agreement by creating a wider region with the neighbouring province of Trentino and thus outnumbering the German-speaking community; the Italian government also persisted in industrialising the province, causing a continuous influx of Italian immigrants. Austria unsuccessfully filed legal proceedings against Italy under the European Convention of Human Rights and brought the case in front of the UN General Assembly (Medda-Windischer, 2008). Violent actions targeted Italian institutions, monuments, infrastructures and police forces, and were perpetrated in most part by the separatist organisations of BAS (*Befreiungsausschuss Südtirol*) and *Ein.Tirol*. While these groups were infiltrated by right-wing pangermanist extremists from both Austria and Germany, it also seems that the Italian secret services were to some degree involved in the implementation of the so-called *strategia della tensione* – tension strategy, that is, “the use of violent criminal actions by state agents to engender a climate of fear that blames the violence on a dangerous ‘public enemy’” (Clement & Scalia, 2020; Pallaver, 2008). Eventually, Italy adopted a compromise in 1969, called 'Package of measures in favour of the population of South Tyrol', effectively implementing South Tyrolean autonomy as established in the Paris Agreement. Nowadays, South Tyrol is widely considered a successful laboratory of local autonomy and power-sharing, while the violent period of ethno-nationalist terrorism seems to have been finally overcome (Bernardini & Pallaver 2015). Nevertheless, the reconciliation between the Italian and German language groups is sometimes called into question by the revival of old and new ethnic divides.

Against this background, linguistic and ethnic differences have long been translated into a complex scenario still shaped by the concurrence and coexistence of two right-wing extremisms (Kramer et al., 2019). On the one hand, with the end of clearly defined ethno-nationalist terrorism, a part of the German-speaking separatist discourse has increasingly become embedded and indeed swamped in the dynamics of right-wing extremism both at local level and among pre-existing transnational networks. Although the separatist political

² Among these, it may be useful to mention the old configuration of the League in Northern Italy – *Lega Nord* (which, as said, has however evolved into a right-wing nationalist party), *Liga Veneta* in the Veneto Region (a regional articulation of Lega with a still strong separatist/autonomist agenda), *Partito Sardo d’Azione* in Sardinia, *Die Freiheitlichen* and *Süd-Tiroler Freiheit* in South Tyrol.

discourse has clearly distanced itself from the use of violence, local ethnicised politics provide a breeding ground for possible contaminations between legitimate socio-political institutions and extremist groups often with a transnational character and on the basis of a very partial and distorted view of history (Barfuss, 2019). For instance, some members of local associations such as the *Schützen*³ or parties such as *die Freiheitlichen* have been found to endorse or disseminate revisionist, xenophobic or misogynist ideologies (L'Espresso 2008; Corriere dell'Alto Adige, 2018; Palermo, 2007). On the other hand, Italian neo-fascism has been historically driven by a need of reaffirming the 'Italianess' of the region, in particular in the capital city of Bolzano, thought to a less extent today (Mezzalira, 2019).

Though the conflict between Italian extremists and German separatist still remains at rhetorical level, it is reinforced by ethnicised political dynamics between local right-wing politicians and separatist parties (Corriere della Sera, 2002; Corriere della Sera, 2008; Alto Adige, 2011a; Open, 2019a; La Stampa 2019). At the same time, both groups show at least two common feature, namely a nationalist xenophobic ideology directed towards recent immigrants and refugees (Alto Adige, 2011b; Il Dolomiti, 2019).

3. Structures of radicalisation

Yearly Europol and national security reports (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri) provide the most reliable snapshot of the overall threat posed by cases of radicalisation in Italy. It is essential to note that these data should be considered in conjunction with more fine-grained and qualitative analyses of specific radicalising actors. Current definitions of 'terrorism' and 'terror attacks' by Europol and the Italian Security reports do not capture the entirety of the Italian experience as concerns political violence and tend to overinflate left-wing terrorism as compared with right-wing violence.⁴ Thus, it is helpful to consider them in conjunction with data on racially-motivated and xenophobic crimes (OSCE, 2020).

Whilst political violence has claimed less victims in Italy than in other European countries, it is well established that a variety of extremist groups have well-rooted networks on the peninsula. Europol data suggests that terrorist attacks have increased in frequency across all types of extremism, with the extreme left and anarchical groups claiming the vast majority of violent actions. In contrast, the extreme right accounts for only one of the terrorist incidents reported by Europol, despite ample evidence of violence by members and sympathisers of far-right groups: for example, gangs of teenagers leaving from the offices of the right-wing movement Forza Nuova were convicted of the racially motivated beatings of 80 Bengalese immigrants in relation to the 'Bangla Tour' inquest (La Repubblica, 2013a). This may be because many of the violent actions imputed to members and sympathisers of far-right organisations have not been officially claimed by the organisation itself, and have therefore been recorded as

³ Modern *Schützen* are – from a legal point of view – private voluntary associations that participate in historical revival events and religious ceremonies. These companies are inspired by the historic militia of the *Tiroler Schützen*, and, according to their statute, protect and defend the homeland and the identity of the Tyrolean people against internal and external enemies and threats. However, although equipped with modified weapons, they do not have any task of territorial defence.

⁴ Interview with Luca Guglielminetti, Assistant Professor at the Università degli Studi di Bergamo and Expert Consultant of the Radicalisation Awareness Network, 22nd of February 2021.

instances of rioting, disturbances or racially-motivated violence. In fact, in Italy, reported hate crimes have doubled between 2015 and 2019, and the vast majority (72%) of these crimes are racially motivated (OSCE, 2020). Moreover, when considering the number of people arrested under suspicion of terrorism, members of the extreme right have substantially increased over the last five years, pointing at a significant extremization of the political landscape.⁵

Despite a robust political and strategic emphasis on the Jihadist threat, data suggests that relatively few violent acts have been claimed by extreme Jihadist organisations. However, these numbers are increasing in the last years, perhaps because of the consolidation of Jihadist networks in the peninsula, as borne out of the Europol reports (Europol, 2014) and by Italian security sources (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2019). Moreover, high rates of arrests related with attempted Jihadist violence corroborates the common assertion that Italy has been remarkably successful in its investigative and repressive strategies (Vidino, 2014). Arrest rates confirm the predominance of extreme left and Islamist violence, but it is possible to detect a growing number of arrests across all types of politically extremist organisations.

With regard to the main events in the field of ethno-national extremism, it has to be reminded that South Tyrol has fortunately overcome its bloodiest period of separatist political violence (Belmonte, 2020).⁶ Indeed, Europol reports do not register violent events directly related to regional separatist groups. Nevertheless, during the 2000s it became clear that some extremists were still active. Since at least 2001, police forces focused on right-wing groups, composed mainly of young adults, who embraced neo-Nazi ideologies with ethno-supremacist and separatist shades (Nolet & Ottoni, 2013). Police actions culminated in the 2008 *Operation Odessa*, when a group of 16 young neo-Nazis was arrested in the area of Meran, the second largest town in South Tyrol (Kramer et al., 2019, p. 103). The group had threatened with violence immigrants and members of the Italian linguistic group (La Repubblica, 2008; Alto Adige, 2008). Although *Operation Odessa* successfully exposed a network of right-wing extremist in the region, neo-Nazi groups are still quite active and continue to receive the support of young adults (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2008). Furthermore, Italian security reports have repeatedly pointed out how transnational contacts between South Tyrolean skinheads and other pangermanist right-wing groups have been reinforced during transnational commemorations, concerts, paramilitary rallies organised abroad – mainly in Austria and Germany. These events have been attended also by South Tyrolean exiles and ex-terrorists from the 1960s, some of whom are still considered fugitives by the Italian justice (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri 2009; Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2016).

Italian political parties have largely condemned political violence. Centre and left-wing parties have consistently expressed disapproval of the violent actions of the Federazione Anarchica Informale and the New Red Brigades. For example, following the kneecapping of Adinolfi in 2012, Pierluigi Bersani, then secretary of the centre-left Democratic Party, called for a collective effort to suppress left-wing extremism: ‘We can’t afford a revival of terror and violence. We need to raise the alert levels and we need attention from everyone, not just from

⁵ Data compiled from Europol, *EU Terrorism Situation & Trend Report (Te-Sat)*, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/eu-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report#fndtn-tabs-0-bottom-2>

⁶ Between 1956 and 1991, 337 violent separatist attacks were conducted in the region.

the police forces, but also from public opinion. Because we need to be cautious with our words and actions. These people should not have water in which to swim'(La Rosa Nera, 2012).

Political parties in the centre-left unquestionably condemned all violent political actions by far-right militants. For example, in 2013, Luigi De Magistris, then Mayor of Naples, responded to the beating of the band 99 Posse by extreme right militants by stating that 'anti-fascism is the foundation of our democracy and of our Constitution... institutions and citizens always need to be vigilant as to the rebirth of nazi and fascist movements and phenomena, which spread racism and discrimination' (La Repubblica, 2013b). More recently, following clashes between the extreme right and the police in Rome in 2020, a Democratic Party statement declared that 'the capital cannot and should not welcome those who sow hate and violence on the wounds of this country offending the constitution and democracy' (RomaToday, 2020a).

Right-wing political parties have maintained a more ambiguous attitude to the actions of far-right militants (De Giorgi & Tronconi, 2018). On the one hand, leaders of right-wing parties like Lega (Albertazzi, Giovannini & Seddone, 2018) and Fratelli d'Italia have condemned the most extreme episodes of violence perpetrated by members of Casa Pound Italia and Forza Nuova. For example, Fratelli d'Italia's leader Giorgia Meloni declare: 'What do I share with Casa Pound and Forza Nuova? Nothing' (Genova 24, 2019). Similarly, Matteo Salvini, Lega's leader, called for 'No tolerance' for two members of Casa Pound accused of raping a woman in Viterbo in 2019 (Il Viterbese, 2019). On the other hand, prominent members of Lega and Fratelli d'Italia have consistently maintained that 'the reasons behind even violent behaviour are understandable'. For example, after a militants from Veneto Fronte Skinheads broke into the offices of the pro-migrant organisation 'Como senza frontiere' in 2017, Matteo Salvini stated: 'It is not polite to go uninvited into someone else's home, but the issue of the invasion of migrants highlighted by the skinheads is clear for all to see' (De Giorgi & Tronconi, 2018). Again, following the racially motivated shooting of six immigrants in Macerata in 2018, Salvini declared that 'It is clear that out-of-control immigration, an invasion like the one organised, wanted and financed in these years, leads to social clashes' and added 'beyond homicides, how many rapes, muggings, robberies, violences and daily aggressions are perpetrated by irregular migrants that should not be in Italy?' (Il Fatto Quotidiano, 2018). Similarly, Giorgia Meloni of Fratelli d'Italia reflected that 'after the death of Pamela Mastropietro no politician showed up in Macerata. People had to wait for Traini's revenge. But the citizens of Macerata know well that the real tragedy is what the Nigerians did, with a girl massacred and dismembered. Because of the left, people feel that immigrants are privileged compared with Italians' (Liberio, 2018).

Across the Italian political spectrum there is a strong opposition to Islamist extremism and Jihadist violence.⁷ Indeed, even while morally condemning the Islamophobic terrorist attacks in Christchurch (New Zealand, 2019), Salvini claimed that 'the only extremism that deserves to be at the centre of attention is the Islamic one' (Il Post, 2019). Right-wing parties often conflate opposition to Jihadist violence with their disapproval of immigration (Lega, Forza Italia & Fratelli d'Italia, 2018). For example, in 2015 Meloni of Fratelli d'Italia proposed reforming immigration so as to 'reward those who have demonstrated they can integrate easily. For others, closed doors until they will solve the problems with integralism and violence intrinsic

⁷ See, for example, the electoral programs for the 2018 national elections, available at <https://dait.interno.gov.it/elezioni/trasparenza/politiche2018>

to their culture' (il Fatto Quotidiano, 2015). Nevertheless, it has to be pointed out that also left-wing parties such as Liberi e Uguali have framed terrorism alongside migration as a crucial global challenge on the international arena (Liberi e Uguali, 2018).

In the context of ethno-nationalism in South Tyrol, a survey conducted in 2010 among South Tyrolean schools, youth centres and social service offices highlighted how youths reproduce slogans and populist statements of right-wing parties and associations (Koler et al., 2010, p. 31). Furthermore, it has been reported that ethnic issues escalate during regional election, thus confirming the negative role of local politics. Indeed, a major issue concerns the struggle to find a boundary between patriotism and political extremism. For instance, it has been reported how 'South Tyrolean patriotism is very strong, which is not to be judged as negative in terms of cultural identity, but unfortunately drifts strongly into partly racist or xenophobic tendencies towards Italian-speakers or foreigners' (Koler et al., 2010, pp. 32-33), while the so-called *Heimatliebe* (love of one's native country) 'is in most cases very superficial and stuffed with prejudices and insufficient knowledge of history' (Koler et al., 2010, p. 33). Consequently, many politicians in South Tyrol criticize escalation of ethnic rhetoric, discourses and actions that foment tensions between linguistic groups. Notwithstanding these dynamics, it is important to underline that mixed marriages are increasingly common: children born in these multilingual contexts – locally defined as *gemischtsprachig/mistilingue/mixtilingual* – have been found to be more sensitive to issue arising from ethnic/linguistic divisions but also to the advantages of multilingualism (ASTAT, 2014; ASTAT, 2017).

With regard to the perception of violent threat from the general public, data in the Italian context are quite scarce. Two significant surveys have been conducted in 2010 and in 2017. According to the 2010 Demos&Pi/Unipolis survey (conducted in November 2009), 33% of the interviewees felt "frequently worried" about possible terrorist threats, although terrorism was not considered among the most important issues to be solved by the country (Fondazione Unipolis, 2010). Regarding the threat of Islamic terrorism, the 2017 IPSOS/ISPI/RAINews survey (conducted in September 2017) highlighted how the general perception of threat had significantly decreased from previous surveys. In particular, only slightly more than 10% of the Italian population perceive Islamic terrorism as the most dangerous threat to the country (ISPI, 2017). Instead, it has to be noted that more than half of the interviewees thought that the government had not done enough to contrast illegal immigration.

With regard to the South Tyrolean context and ethno-nationalist attitudes, clear survey data on perception of threat are missing but some hints can be found in surveys on youth, which are particularly useful given the high impact of extremism on young people. According to a 2016 survey, the separation between language groups is perceived as a problem by a higher percentage of young Italian speakers (42,7%) and mixtilinguals (42.4%) in respect of German speakers (12.3%) and Ladin speakers (8.3%) (ASTAT, 2017, p. 162). Unfortunately, and arguably as a consequence of the spread of xenophobic ideologies, half of young South Tyrolean believe that immigrants are harbingers of crime or terrorism and that the flow of migrants should thus be limited (ASTAT, 2017, p. 174). Very interesting data come from the analysis of patriotic attitudes: while more than two thirds of Italian and German 'monolinguals' give a positive connotation respectively to the term *Patria* and *Heimat*, almost all mixtilinguals perceive patriotism as dangerous and more than half of them believes that it always results in a conflict (ASTAT, 2017, p. 176). Finally, with regard to violent behaviours, while only 1,5% of

the interviewees was involved in fights with either right- or left-wing extremist, almost 4% was engaged in violent events between locals and immigrants (ASTAT, 2017, p. 217).

4. Agents and channels of radicalisation

This section will briefly describe the major agents of radicalisation in Italy: *Federazione Anarchica Informale – Fronte Rivoluzionario Internazionale* (FAI), the New Red Brigades (NBR), Casa Pound Italia (CPI), Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS and al-Qaeda), and ethno-national right-wing extremism in South Tyrol. It provides information as to the ideology, membership, violent and non-violent activities of the groups since 2001, connections with nonviolent political parties, and the media employed to further the cause of the violent group.

4.1. Left-wing radical agents

The *Federazione Anarchica Informale – Fronte Rivoluzionario Internazionale* (hereafter, FAI) is the most active anarchist groups in the country (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2019). Insurrectionalist anarchist ideology legitimises the use of violence (mainly letterbombs and targeted attacks) to weaken and delegitimise the state and its institutions (Marone, 2014; Marone, 2015).

There is no precise information on membership, but estimates suggest about 50 members in hiding and a total of up to 200 militants (La Stampa, 2015). There is no clear demographic profile for typical FAI members. However, recruitment occurs predominantly among associated of left-leaning self-managed social centres, 'squatted properties which became the venue of social, political and cultural events' (Mudu, 2004, p. 917).

The group has focused on two sets of violent political actions: (1) vandalism, arson and sabotage against high-profile infrastructure (including antenna towers, high-speed rail connections, police stations, banks) and (2) letter bombs and home-made explosives against individuals selected on the basis of their profession (entrepreneur, policeman...) (Marone, 2015). Its most high-profile action was the kneecapping of Roberto Adinolfi, CEO of the Italian nuclear power company Ansaldo Nucleare, in 2012 (BBC, 2012). The FAI claimed the violent action in a letter to the newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, stating that their violent action aimed to 'return a minuscule part of the suffering that you, man of science, are inflicting on the world' by promoting nuclear energy (Corriere della Sera, 2012).

Beyond their violent political action, FAI has engaged in pacific demonstrations against criminalisation of illegal immigrants and asylum seekers and for the human rights of prisoners in Italian jails (Polizia Penitenziaria, 2020). They also engage in propaganda and cultural activities, primarily through affiliated self-managed social centres such as Collettivo Guernica (Modena); Circolo Anarchico il Tribolo and Furiluogo (Bologna) and Centro sociale Bencivegna occupato (Rome) (La Repubblica, 2020a; Il Resto del Carlino, 2016).

The FAI has no links with parliamentary political parties in Italy, but it is well embedded in the international network of anarchist organisations. It has a strong affiliation with Greek anarchist group Conspiracy of Cells of Fire, with the "black International" of anarchists and with Sardinian antimilitarist groups (Marone, 2014). For its propaganda, FAI relies on a clandestine

newspaper (Vetriolo) (Round Robin, 2020)⁸ and a range of online platforms, including social networks but also the websites roundrobin.info and “Informa-azione”.

In the Italian context, left-wing extremism is closely associated with the *New Red Brigades* (hereafter NBR). As their name states, the movement defines itself in continuity with the Marxist-leninist terrorist group ‘Red Brigades’ (1970-1988) (Bartali, 2007; Della Porta, 1990; Fasanella & Franceschini, 2004). Continuities are apparent in terms of clandestinity, ideology and operational strategies as well as in membership. The core aim of the NBR, as stated in their ‘strategic resolution’, was to ‘identify and target the political, economic or military staff of imperialism and of its structures; identify and target the political, economic or military staff of the project of State restructuring and its expressions; war to the imperialist war’ (Maroni, 2020).

Currently, their membership is estimated at about 10 clandestine members and unclear numbers of sympathisers. There is no typical demographic characteristics for members of the NBR.

The NBR were responsible for the most high-profile terrorist attacks in Italy in the period since 2001. In particular, their members claimed responsibility for the killing of government consultants Professor Massimo d’Antona (Rome, 1999) and Professor Marco Biagi (Bologna, 2002). In 2003, the NBR also killed policeman Emanuele Petri during an action which ultimately led to the arrest of an NBR leader, Nadia Desdemona Lioce, and the killing of another prominent member, Mario Galesi (AIVITER, 2020). Other actions include robberies (La Repubblica, 2003), an attack against a job centre in Florence (2002) and an attempted attack against some army barracks in Livorno (2006) (La Repubblica, 2011a).

The NBR has focused on violent political action. Its connections with existing civic organisations (such as Centro Sociale Gramigna in Padova) (Il Giornale, 2007) are primarily aiming at gathering funding and support for violent political action. In contrast their predecessor, the NBR cannot list support from any parliamentary political parties or public figures. It relies on social media, such as the Facebook accounts of sympathisers and former BR members, to disseminate its message (Il Riformista, 2020). The mainstream media coverage of trials also offers an opportunity for members to reiterate their message (Il Mattino, 2010; Il Giornale, 2012).

The Covid-19 emergency and subsequent lockdown has offered an opportunity for the NBR to resume its intimidatory activities against state authorities. For example, in November 2020, threatening letters intimating to ‘open everything’ were sent to a number of mayors and regional presidents in North and Central Italy (Il Resto del Carlino, 2020; Oggi Treviso, 2020).

4.2. Right-wing radical agents

With regard to the far-right, *Casa Pound Italia* (CPI) is the most active and fastest growing extreme right-wing group in the Italian context. CPI was founded as a youth cultural centre originating out of a youth branch of the Italian right-wing party Fiamma Tricolore (Cammelli,

⁸ Information on the publication of Vetriolo is disseminated via roundrobin.info and copies can be requested by emailing the editorial office.

2018).⁹ Due to their common origins, CPI collaborates closely with other ‘third millennium fascists’ (Cammelli, 2018), such as members of *Forza Nuova*, another spin-off from Fiamma Tricolore. In-depth discussion of Forza Nuova’s actions is beyond the scope of this report, especially because in late 2020, it dissolved into the new movement Italia Libera, with the objective of ‘entering elections with more competent people, coming from different formations and sides’ (Il Fatto Quotidiano, 2020a; Cipolla, 2020).¹⁰ However, because of its ideological and practical continuity to CPI, it is important to recall that Forza Nuova’s ideology was grounded in prohibition of abortion, pro-family policies, ban to immigration, fight against freemasonry and mafia, end of usury and public debt, Catholicism as Italy’s state religion, repealing laws criminalising fascism, and creation of corporations (Mammone, 2009). Since the start of the Covid-19 emergency in 2020, it emerged as a leading voice against the ‘sanitary regime’ or ‘sanitary dictatorship’, organising numerous protests throughout Italy (Loiacono, 2020; RomaToday, 2020b).

In contrast to Forza Nuova, CPI maintains a distinct identity and a growing profile in Italian politics. Despite previously taking part in local and European elections, CPI abandoned its ‘electoral’ and ‘party’ experience to focus fully on cultural, educational and social activities in 2019 (Open, 2019b). Ideologically, Sesana summarises that “movements like Casa Pound ... propose an image very close to that of traditional fascism, for which the best Italian youth is that that saves the nation, the best Italian young are those who save Italy keeping near to their people’ (Sesana, 2019). As self-defined ‘third millennium fascists’ (Cammelli, 2018), CPI members emphasise national identity, and virulent hostility to immigration, multiculturalism and the European Union (Europol, 2019; Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2019). Most importantly, it has been pointed out that ‘CasaPound does not envisage membership without active militancy’ (Castelli Gattinara, O’Connor & Lindekilde, 2018).

Despite a consistent emphasis on their cultural, social and leisure activities, it is well documented that CPI members and sympathisers have been responsible for ‘squadrist-style’ violent political demonstrations, riots and racially motivated violent attacks (Cammelli, 2018; Cammelli, 2017; Castelli Gattinara & Froio, 2014). Thus, the existing literature portrays leisure activities such as summer camps and sport activities as designed to test motivation and screen potential future members (Castelli Gattinara & Froio, 2014; Castelli Gattinara, O’Connor & Lindekilde, 2018).

The most high-profile act involved Gianluca Casseri (a CPI sympathiser according to CPI spokespersons) (La Repubblica, 2011b; The Guardian, 2011; BBC, 2011) who, in a racially-motivated attack, shot and killed two Senegalese market traders in Florence in December 2011 (Castelli Gattinara, O’Connor & Lindekilde, 2018). In 2016 another CPI sympathiser beat an asylum seeker to death in Fermo (Cammelli, 2018). In 2014, CPI was the principal organiser and, according to Selmini, ‘moral entrepreneur for violent anti-immigration riots that swept the Roman peripheries (Selmini, 2016).

⁹ Fiamma Tricolore was founded in 1995. Its creation as a splinter group from the post-war neo-fascist party Movimento sociale italiano (MSI) was a protest against the MSI’s decision to distance itself from its fascist legacy, change its name to Alleanza Nazionale and join a centre-right government coalition.

¹⁰ Italia Libera includes also the No-mask movement and members of the Movimento Gilet Arancioni, whose core aim is to transfer power from Parliament to the sovereign Italian people.

The membership of CPI is estimated at about 6,000, but there is no information on the specific demographic characteristics of its members.

CPI has portrayed itself as engaging primarily in activities for the benefit of the wider Italian population, such as occupations of social housing, food banks, relief to earthquake affected populations (Sesana, 2019). However, analysing over 307 actions by CPI, Castelli Gattinara & Froio (2014) found that as many as 34.6% of its actions are confrontational or outright violent.¹¹ The majority of its confrontational activities consist of public displays of fascist symbols and celebrations of fascist milestones, including the March on Rome, the Saló Republic and Mussolini's death. Violent actions by CPI and its student wing, Blocco Studentesco, range from the setting off of smoke bombs in a Roman high school while calling for the return of Mussolini (2012) (Cammelli, 2018), to high-profile violent protests against Roma camps and against refugee centres (Bianchi, 2014; Selmini, 2016), to racially-motivated and politically-motivated beatings (ANSA, 2020; La Repubblica, 2020b, Marconi, 2017). It is important that CPI propaganda presents its social action in support of the Italian population as deeply connected with its confrontational and violent actions against immigrants, refugees and left-wing militants (Bianchi, 2014).

CPI has extensive connections with other extremist right-wing groups in Italy (Forza Nuova; Militia; Veneto Fronte Skinheads) and international groups (Golden Dawn, Jobbik). Moreover, many of CPI's core themes and slogans on the European Union and migration align closely with those of two right-wing parties: Lega and Fratelli d'Italia.¹² Fratelli d'Italia has an estimated 160,000 members, 4.4% of the vote in the 2018 general elections, and 6.4% in the European Parliament Elections in 2019. Lega has an estimated 122,000 members, 17% in the 2018 general elections and 34.3% in the European Parliament Elections in 2019. Its leader, Matteo Salvini served as Interior Minister and vice-Prime Minister in 2018-2019. As early as 2015, CPI's leader, Di Stefano, expressed his political support for Salvini, declaring that CPI members 'share his manifesto' (La Repubblica, 2015a).¹³ Both Lega and Fratelli d'Italia have consistently distanced themselves from CPI's violent actions. For example, in January 2020 Matteo Salvini declared that 'between Lega, Casa Pound and Forza Nuova don't exist links at a local and national level' (Open, 2020). However, De Giorgi and Tronconi show convincingly that 'the strategy [by Lega and Fratelli d'Italia] seems to involve coming down on one side of the fence – condemning the most serious incidents – and then on the other – showing that the reasons behind even violent behaviour are understandable' (De Giorgi & Tronconi, 2018). Indeed, the more extreme right-wing members of Lega and Fratelli d'Italia built closer associations with CPI. For example, in 2014, Lega's Mario Borghezio,¹⁴ then a Member of the European Parliament, took part in a number of far-right demonstrations, including a neo-fascist

¹¹ Confrontational actions include illegal demonstrations, blockades, occupations and disturbances. Violent actions include symbolic and physical violence. In fact, 19.9% of all CPI actions were classified as involving heavy physical violence.

¹² These include 'Italy for the Italians', 'Take back our sovereignty', and in the words of CPI's leader Simone Di Stefano, 'From "No" to the euro to migrants, from "Italians first"' (De Giorgi & Tronconi, 2018; Mammone, 2009).

¹³ Shared demonstrations and events include a 2018 demonstration against illegal immigration (Il Corriere di Milano, 2018) and a 2019 demonstration in Rome (Il Fatto Quotidiano, 2019).

¹⁴ Mario Borghezio was so close to CPI that he was expected to form a local political party together with CPI (La Repubblica, 2014). Borghezio represents the most radical wing of Lega, and as such he was involved in a number of clashes with the party leadership and European Parliamentary Groups (Politico, 2013; Corriere della Sera, 2019a).

convention in Rome, where he declared: ‘why don’t we organise initiatives to defend the beauty of this city, disgustingly raped by those who filled it with immigrants and rubbish? If you promote this kind of initiative, I will be with you and I want to be at the first patrol. When our people need a national revolution, we need to guide them in this revolution’ (Bianchi, 2014). Fratelli d’Italia, Lega and Casa Pound also took part in several shared demonstrations, such as the anti-government demonstration of October 2019 (Open, 2019c). This ambiguity is reportedly helping Lega and Fratelli d’Italia to attract CPI sympathisers and boost their electoral support (De Giorgi & Tronconi, 2018; Wired, 2020).

CPI makes expert use of a variety of traditional and new media to disseminate its message. Traditional media include the newspapers ‘il primato nazionale’ and public events. Particularly notable are musical events by affiliated bands (Katanga; Sottofasciasemplice; Intolleranza; ZetaZeroAlfa). Musical concerts also become occasions for violent practices. Most apparently, ZetaZeroAlfa’s song, *cinghiamattanza*, is the soundtrack to a practice ‘where a large group of bare-chested men deliberately hit each other with buckle-less belts on all parts of the body except the head’ (Castelli Gattinara & Froio, 2014).¹⁵ CPI has an extensive internet presence, managed by sympathisers who do not wish to become full members (Castelli Gattinara, O’Connor & Lindekilde, 2018), which revolves around the CPI website, a number of social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, VKontakte, Parler, Gab, Telegram). For example, in 2019, the CPI facebook page was blocked for ‘spreading hate and attacking others on the basis of who they are’ (Il Sole 24 Ore, 2019).

4.3. Jihadi radical agents

Regarding Islamic terrorism, Italy has been an important logistical basis for Islamist militants since the early 1990s (Marone, 2017). The Islamic Cultural Institute (ICI) in Viale Jenner in Milan was a hotspot for transnational terrorists in the mid-1990. Not only was the imam of ICI, Anwar Shabaan, the commander of the foreign fighters brigade, successful in recruiting battalions from Northern Italy to fight in Bosnia. But the network around the ICI was crucial in providing logistical and ideological support for fighters around the globe seeking to travel to warzones in Bosnia and contributed to the radicalisation of Jon Fawzaan, a Milan resident of Egyptian descent, responsible for a car-bomb attack in Rijeka (Croatia) in October 1995 (Vidino, 2014).

Recent radicalisation however largely operates outside established mosques and relies on the web as their main operational platform encouraging radicalisation processes, contact between members and offering ‘citizenship’ of a virtual Caliphate (Vidino, 2014; Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2019). Throughout the years, over 200 individuals have been arrested on charges of terrorism, more than 100 sentences were passed, hundreds of preventive expulsions and deportations of foreign citizens were carried out. In 2018, 478 individuals were considered as radicalised or at high risk of radicalisation in Italian prisons (Marone & Olimpio, 2019; Beccaro & Bonino, 2019; ISPI, 2019).

Due to the “pulverization” of the Italian Jihadist scene and growth of loose network sympathizers relying on family relationships for radicalisation and for action, there is no reliable estimate of supporters of Islamic extremism in Italy. Security services suggest that most

¹⁵ Recently, spokespersons from CPI have distanced themselves from the practice. However, the practice appears central to propaganda videos (Blocco Studentesco, 2008).

Islamist extremists are born in North-Africa and the Western Balkans (Boncio, 2020; Spagna, 2016; Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2019). They are generally under-30 years old, mostly men, residing in Northern and Central Italy, almost 50% have criminal precedents, and almost a fourth spent previous time in jail (ISPI, 2018b).

Since 2001, Italy recorded at least 30 Islamist-related attacks or attempted attacks, including 20 thwarted plots, 6 unsuccessful and one partially successful attack (Groppi, 2015; Groppi, 2017; Groppi, 2020; Vidino, 2014). In 2009, a Libyan citizen, radicalised through religiously conservative and open jihadist websites, carried out a failed suicide-bomb attack on the Carabinieri military facility Santa Barbara in Milan. Authorities perceived this event as a sanctioning the arrival of home-grown jihadism in Italy (Beccaro & Bonino, 2019, Vidino, 2014).

Between 130 and 150 fighters have travelled from Italy to the territories controlled by ISIS and al-Qaeda, (Beccaro & Bonino, 2019; Il Fatto Quotidiano, 2020b). The most prominent stories concern the 'Inzago cluster' (surrounding Maria Giulia Sergio, an Italian convert (Fatima az Zahra), married to Aldo Kobuzi, an Albanian national) and the 'Lecco cluster' (surrounding Alice Brignoli, an Italian convert (Aisha) married to Mohamed Koraichi (Moroccan national, nickname: Simohamed) with the latter allegedly having planned attacks on the Vatican (Groppi, 2020, Marone, 2017). Female foreign fighters are reported to be in charge of online platforms and for the recruitment and radicalisation of their close family and friends (CounterExtremismProject, 2020). Facebook groups such as "with or without you the Caliphate came back" were blocked in 2015 with their members arrested and deported (La Repubblica, 2015b). Telegram includes the Italian-language chat 'affiliates of the Caliphate in Italy', where caliphate sympathisers disseminate tutorials for lone wolves, Italian translations of ISIS communications and videos from Hayat Media Centre, the media wing of ISIS (Mazzoni, 2019); the channel 'conquest of Rome'; 'khalifa News Italy'; as well as International channels and chat groups (Mazzoni, 2019). ISIS sympathisers employ two media outlets: La Luce and the Amaq news Agency website. Besides, Soundcloud contains playlists with speeches from famous radical preachers such as Mohammed al Adnani and Youtube was used by former hip hop artist Anas Al-Abboubi to advertise jihadi ideologues (Vidino, 2014).

Among influential preachers such as Mullah Krekar, Bilal Bosnic and Musa Cerantonio, was Elmahdi Halili, a talented "influencer" deemed responsible for the recruitment of 12 % of Italian Foreign Fighters. Contrary to other famous Jihadi preachers, he lacked, Mujahid experiences or Islamic scholarly engagement, but is young and skilled in ICTs, a great communicator on social networks, able to indoctrinate individuals who experienced personal and social grievances (Boncio, 2020). Radical proselytization has been detected in 108 mosques, and 11 have been linked to terrorist activities. In addition, a recent book by Alessio Postiglione "Sahara, deserto di mafie e jihad", and recent police investigations obtained evidence of connections between persons belonging to the Camorra (a criminal Mafia organisation), mainly active in the forgery of documents and money, and a person who was sentenced as a member of a terrorist group related to Al Qaida (Marini, 2019).

4.4. Separatist radical agents

In the context of ethno-national right-wing extremism in South Tyrol, it is not possible to identify an umbrella organisation that gathers all the neo-Nazi scene, towards which members of separatist groups sometimes gravitate. In most cases, single attacks have been perpetrated

by small groups of young adults (Alto Adige, 2013; La Repubblica, 2016; Koler, et al., 2010), who often join transnational right-wing movements (Kramer et al., 2019, p. 103; Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2009, p. 67). In fact, the provincial office dealing with Social Services and Minors reported that, in the period from 2005 to 2009, a total of 30 young people (almost exclusively young males) openly confessed to be supporters or sympathizers of “political extremism” or could be classified as such. However, the same office was convinced that the real number of young people associated with this phenomenon was much higher and difficult to measure due to a lack of communication between provincial offices and the office of the public prosecutor (Koler et al., 2010, p. 25).

4.5. State agencies that might contribute to radicalisation

There are no systematic official investigations on the links between the extreme right and the Italian police and military forces. However, anecdotal evidence of an ideological affiliation emerges from several prominent events since 2000. For example, the violent repression of demonstrations during the 2001 G8 in Genova included distinctly fascist imagery.¹⁶ Protesters were forced to line up, perform the Roman salute, the goose step and sing fascist songs (Menegatto & Zamperini, 2012; Pugiotto, 2014; The Guardian, 2008; Zamperini & Menegatto, 2015). Victims also reported that members of the security forces hummed fascist or extreme right-wing songs, and used these songs as ringtone for their mobile phones (Menegatto & Zamperini, 2012). More recently, the right-wing affiliations of some members of the Italian security forces made headlines as pictures of Italian Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini and extreme right slogans were discovered on the Facebook profiles of the policemen who shot Islamist terrorist Anis Amri.¹⁷ As a consequence of this discovery, German authorities decided not to award a medal to the two police officers (Il Fatto Quotidiano, 2017).

With regard to the context of ethnic nationalism in South Tyrol, as previously stated, radical ethnic-nationalist ideologies are offered a fertile breeding ground by an ethnicised political discourses at local level. In this regard the violence of past repressive actions contributes to current rhetorical conflicts, shaping divisive political discourses. Indeed, many South Tyroleans arrested and charged with terrorism during the 1960s accused the Italian police forces of tortures, while two of them died allegedly after having been beaten by members of the Carabinieri (Italian gendarmerie). A process followed but the accused policemen were either acquitted or pardoned (Commissione parlamentare d'inchiesta sul terrorismo e sulle cause della mancata individuazione dei responsabili delle stragi, 1992, p.18). For this reason, this topic remains an open wound in the history of the relationship between South Tyrol and Italy, and it is sometimes brought up in the local political discourse – not only by radical separatist parties (La Repubblica, 2006; Alto Adige, 2011c; Autonome Proviz Bozen – Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano, 2016).¹⁸

¹⁶ In Genova in 2001 the Italian state, through its police and military forces, committed torture and violations of human rights. These acts were defined ‘the most serious suspension of democratic rights in a Western country since the Second World War’ by Amnesty International. The European Court of Human Rights condemned Italy for torture and violations of human rights, as well as for failing to punish the perpetrators of these violations (ANSA, 2017).

¹⁷ Amri drove a lorry into a crowded Christmas market in Berlin in 2016 leaving 12 dead and 56 injured (BBC, 2016).

¹⁸ For instance, Austrian and South Tyrolean politicians have recently advocated a pardon for those separatists that have found asylum abroad, mainly in Austria (Alto Adige, 2019; Corriere della Sera, 2019b).

5. Stakeholders and channels of de-radicalisation

Despite a strong emphasis by the Italian state on identifying and punishing violent extremists, a key role in the prevention of radicalisation and de-radicalisation programmes is played by civil society and NGOs (Capano, 2018, Vidino, 2017; Marone & Olimpio, 2019). A governmental crisis and early elections prevented the approval of a proposed law on 'Measures for the prevention of radicalisation and of Jihadi extremism' (2017), which would have represented a first step in the creation of broad national-level legal frameworks and guidelines for the prevention of radicalisation, albeit limited to the Islamist phenomenon and therefore excluding political radicalisation (Vidino, 2017). As a result, civil society actors remain core to most efforts at de-radicalisation, often in partnership with municipal and regional institutions.

For example, the *Association of Italian Victims of Terrorism (AIVITER)* is an NGO committed to preserving and disseminating the collective memory of terrorism and political violence in Italy. It focuses on legal action, psychological support to victims, campaigns to influence state policies and initiatives to educate the wider Italian population through face-to-face and online initiatives.

Two relevant programmes which adopt a civic education approach are 'Memoria futura' and 'Counternarrative for Counterterrorism' (C4C). Memoria futura is a pedagogical project that involves students and teachers in research about terrorism. It has been rolled out in 2012 and at present is only available in Piedmont. Due to the nature of terrorism in Italy, its focus is primarily on the far-right and on the far-left. 'Counternarrative for Counterterrorism' is a cross-national project funded by the European Commission providing access to personal testimonies of Holocaust and terrorism survivors. The aim is to create and disseminate a counter-narrative showing the devastating impact of extremism and disseminating it through its website 'The Terrorism Survivors Storytelling'.

On a more international scale, the *Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)* is an international network funded by the European Commission with the aim of connecting practitioners, academics and policymakers across Europe to prevent and counter violent extremism. In Italy, it has promoted two main projects: Exit Europe and FAIR (Fighting Against Inmates' Radicalisation). Exit focuses on the de-radicalisation of individuals through a close collaboration with social workers and the judicial and security forces in the city of Turin.¹⁹ In contrast, FAIR provided training in identifying and discouraging radicalisation for volunteers, social workers and educators in collaboration with local actors such as UCOII and CODEIS.²⁰

When turning to the prevention of Jihadi radicalisation, the *Union of Islamic Communities of Italy (UCOII)* is an umbrella organisation of 122 Sunni Muslim association and 80 mosques. Whilst UCOII rejects the label of de-radicalisation,²¹ but its activities are expected to contribute to preventing Islamist radicalisation (i.e., work towards anti-radicalisation). First, in 2015 UCOII signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Italian Prison Service, establishing itself as

¹⁹ Interview with Luca Guglielminetti, Assistant Professor at the Università degli Studi di Bergamo and Expert Consultant of the Radicalisation Awareness Network, 22nd of February 2021.

²⁰ Interview with Luca Guglielminetti, Assistant Professor at the Università degli Studi di Bergamo and Expert Consultant of the Radicalisation Awareness Network, 22nd of February 2021.

²¹ Interview with Hamdan Alzeqri, Unione delle Comunità Islamiche Italiane, 24th of February 2021.

the first NGO providing spiritual assistance and support to Muslim inmates. As part of the memorandum, UCOII was charged with selecting Imams and spiritual assistants in prisons for further approval by the Ministry of Justice. At present, UCOII volunteers operate in six cities: Florence, Genoa, Pisa, Modena, Milan and Turin.²² Second, UCOII provides trainings for prison staff. These trainings include courses on Islamic religion and cultural context of the detainees, debates on issues of interest to the trainees, and meetings with the local Islamic community to develop a constructive relationship. Third, UCOII trains the Islamic ministers that operate in prison (under the broader umbrella of the RASMORAD project). The course aims to present the Memorandum of Understanding; provide operational language and tips for social workers; introduce the structure of the prison and Muslim inmates in prison; present the role of Imams in prison; provide legal vocabulary for operations. Trainings consist of lectures, debates and reflective practice (RASMORAD, 2017). Fourth, UCOII works with other NGOs and civil society organisations to support ex-inmates as they leave prison.²³ Finally, UCOII has engaged in inter-religious dialogue and educational activities in schools in cooperation with the Catholic Church and other religious actors.²⁴

The *Italian Islamic Confederation* (IIC) is an umbrella group of cultural and religious associations, driven by the motto of 'Italianness and Islamicity'. IIC has focused on educational activities, inter-religious activities and the promotion of counternarratives online.²⁵ Educational activities have taken place primarily within Mosques and have fostered approaches to Islam that nurture diversity and European life experiences among the youth.²⁶ They have been carried out by trainers trained by IIC in collaboration with the University of Padova (through the PriMED project). inter-religious dialogue and activities have led to sustained relationships with Catholic and Jewish organisations, and student visits to other places of worship.²⁷ Finally, counternarratives are being promoted and disseminated online in the framework of the CICERO project. For example, in December 2020 IIC organised an online conference to explore the figure of Prophet Muhammad as a unifying figure for all monotheistic religions.²⁸

The Co.Re.Is. is an organisation of Muslims on the national territory that plays a role of internal coordination of the heterogeneous voices of Muslims settled on the national territory, of mediation with the institutions of the Italian State and of stimulation of inter-religious dialogue. The organisation seeks to guarantee an officially recognised and transparent 'Italian Islam', open to freedom of worship in full compliance with the Italian legal framework. Through the SIMURG project, Co.Re.Is. has carried out a programme aimed at defusing the drivers that lead to radicalisation in the prison environment. However, the aim of the project was to enhance religious pluralism in prisons not so much as an antidote to radicalisation as to communicate to the world inside and outside prison that religious pluralism is an added value

²² Interview with Hamdan Alzeqri, Unione delle Comunità Islamiche Italiane, 24th of February 2021.

²³ Interview with Hamdan Alzeqri, Unione delle Comunità Islamiche Italiane, 24th of February 2021.

²⁴ It should be noted that, for years, UCOII has been confronted with controversies about an alleged informal influence of the Muslim Brotherhood on the organisation (Groppi, 2010; GMBWatch, 2017, Cominetti 2018).

²⁵ Interview with Dr Massimo Abdullah Cozzolino, Secretary General of the *Italian Islamic Confederation*, 3rd of March 2021.

²⁶ Interview with Dr Massimo Abdullah Cozzolino, Secretary General of the *Italian Islamic Confederation*, 3rd of March 2021.

²⁷ Interview with Dr Massimo Abdullah Cozzolino, Secretary General of the *Italian Islamic Confederation*, 3rd of March 2021.

²⁸ Interview with Dr Massimo Abdullah Cozzolino, Secretary General of the *Italian Islamic Confederation*, 3rd of March 2021.

and that confrontation with religious identities other than one's own is a source of personal enrichment. The project mainly involved inmates from various prisons who, confined to a prison environment, risk viewing religious differences as a pretext for conflict. The focus was on three different perspectives of transversal themes such as life/death, repentance/forgiveness, orthopraxis (such as nutrition, death, family, ritual practices or spiritual preparation). The three perspectives were organised in three separate modules: an anthropological perspective on religion and cultural aspects within the prison environment, a legal module on religious freedom in penal institutions, and a module of a strictly confessional-religious nature. Representatives of various religions took part in the latter module and discussed the previous issues from an interreligious perspective applied to the context of forced cohabitation in prisons.²⁹

Regarding ethno-nationalism in South-Tyrol, de-radicalisation efforts in this field overlaps with those directed towards extremism in general. At local level, in 2010, the Provincial Council in Bozen adopted a list of measures to fight extremism in South Tyrol based on a study conducted by the local NGO *Forum Prävention*. The provincial measures adopted a participative approach to inter-ethnic dialogue through the following actions:

- establishment of a “warning system” together with police forces in order to observe and recognize extremist phenomena in South Tyrol at an early stage;
- strengthening of the preventive network inside social services through joint programmes with police forces, training courses and dissemination initiative with local media;
- institution of a mobile intervention unit composed of people trained in social and socio-pedagogical work, which can directly intervene where there are outbreaks of conflict;
- development of a specific civic education programme in order to provide educational material to counter extremist ideologies;
- involvement of civil society in a campaign aimed at promoting democratic culture and encounters between language groups, confronting the issue of homeland and identity, and combating racism and xenophobia.

Counter-extremism measures are also adopted at school level. In particular schools may tackle extremism as a topic in specific subjects (History, Religion, Law, and in language education), through specific training courses or projects, with the help on internal help desks, and generally by monitoring eventual breaches of the school regulations such as in the case of a spread of extremist symbols (Koler et al., 2010).

In sum, these preventive measures have not been followed by the establishment of specific nation-wide institutions dedicated to the prevention of radicalisation and the promotion of de-radicalisation. Therefore, initiatives by civil society organisations and international networks, often run in cooperation with local and regional institutions, have succeeded in preventing the radicalisation or enabling the de-radicalisation of a limited number of individuals at risk across different types of extremism.³⁰ However, these valuable initiatives have not been scaled up to the national level, mostly remaining at the pilot level, with detrimental implications for their

²⁹ Interview with Dr Yahya Pallavicini (President) and Dr Hamid Distefano, 1st of March 2021.

³⁰ Interview with Luca Guglielminetti, Assistant Professor at the Università degli Studi di Bergamo and Expert Consultant of the Radicalisation Awareness Network, 22nd of February 2021.

sustainability and impact.³¹ Indeed, at a national level, the primary response to radicalisation in Italy has been security-driven, relying on arrests, trials and incarcerations.³² Even the 2017 draft law on the prevention of radicalisation focused overwhelmingly on Islamist radicalisation, overlooking home-grown extremisms on the left and the right (Capano, 2018).³³ Whilst punitive measures have been effective in incarcerating some violent militants, dismantling prominent networks engaged in the planning of violent attacks, and closing down the social centres where they gathered and recruited, in the long term these actions have not impacted on the movements, their actions and strategies as a whole. Interviewees also reported that provisions for expulsions, incarceration and solitary confinement in the most serious cases risk exacerbating the alienation and marginalisation of radicalised individuals.³⁴ Finally, it has been reported that there is still a lack of reliable data on the local extremist phenomenon. Empirical research on how people approach, become entangled and can exit extremist environment would very much help local social services in better understanding the phenomenon and devise more effective measures.

6. Conclusion

Valuable work for the prevention of radicalisation and for de-radicalisation is happening at the local level, with an important role of civic organisations and international networks. However, the lack of a clear legal framework and of broad national-level guidelines presents important challenges to this work. On the one hand, most of these associations work on a local level, with little resources and support to expand throughout Italy.³⁵ On the other hand, interviewees mentioned that most cases of radicalisation among adults are tackled exclusively through punitive measures, risking entrenchment of alienation and marginalisation.³⁶ Whilst highly prescriptive, top-down programmes may be counterproductive, a national-level legal framework, broad guidelines for the prevention of radicalisation and for de-radicalisation across political, religious and separatist movements, and the allocation of significant financial resources would enable local associations, municipalities and regional authorities to devise effective programmes responding to the specificities of each of their communities and contexts.

³¹ Interview with Luca Guglielminetti, Assistant Professor at the Università degli Studi di Bergamo and Expert Consultant of the Radicalisation Awareness Network, 22nd of February 2021; Interview with Hamdan Alzeqri, Unione delle Comunità Islamiche Italiane, 24th of February 2021.

³² This is reflected in Italy's current legislation and in its alignment with wider international conventions and directives, as underlined in Europol reports. In particular, C.A.S.A. (the Comitato Analisi Strategica sul Terrorismo) functions as an institutional hub for the coordination of anti-terror and anti-radicalisation policies across Italian institutions (Mentasti, Cambria & Basilone, 2018). This point was reiterated during our interview with Luca Guglielminetti, Assistant Professor at the Università degli Studi di Bergamo and Expert Consultant of the Radicalisation Awareness Network, 22nd of February 2021

³³ Interview with Luca Guglielminetti, Assistant Professor at the Università degli Studi di Bergamo and Expert Consultant of the Radicalisation Awareness Network, 22nd of February 2021

³⁴ Interview with Hamdan Alzeqri, Unione delle Comunità Islamiche Italiane, 24th of February 2021.

³⁵ Interview with Luca Guglielminetti, Assistant Professor at the Università degli Studi di Bergamo and Expert Consultant of the Radicalisation Awareness Network, 22nd of February 2021; Interview with Hamdan Alzeqri, Unione delle Comunità Islamiche Italiane, 24th of February 2021.

³⁶ Interview with Luca Guglielminetti, Assistant Professor at the Università degli Studi di Bergamo and Expert Consultant of the Radicalisation Awareness Network, 22nd of February 2021

Italy remains an important theatre for extremist political movements both on the left and on the right. The 2008 financial crisis, strains connected with illegal migratory influxes and the socio-economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic are providing new platforms and audiences for extreme political movements. Left-wing violent actions have remained a constant feature of the Italian landscape. However, data showing a doubling of hate crimes in the last five years (primarily racially and xenophobically-motivated violent crimes) corroborates perception of growing and increasingly confident right-wing extremism (Italian Coalition for Civil Liberties and Rights, 2018; OSCE, 2020). These data suggest that right-wing extremism will be increasingly prominent in the future and should be tackled more systematically in de-radicalisation initiatives.

Italy's domestic scene of Islamic extremism is relatively small in size, fragmented, unstructured with rather weak ties to other extremist organisations or networks and primarily relies on the web and social media platforms as a source of radicalisation. With the arrival of home-grown jihadism in the last decade however, several citizens and converts engaged in the production of Italian speaking propaganda, in the recruitment of foreign fighters and even left the country to join the battlefields of ISIS. Although Italy and in particular Rome is of great iconic value as cradle of Christianity and increasingly represents a target of jihadist propaganda, the country has been spared by cruel terrorist attacks so far. This is mainly due to Italy's long history and broad experiences in confronting domestic left- and right-wing terrorism as well as organised crime. Moreover, because of Italy's geographical vicinity to several conflict zones in North Africa and the Middle East, the country serves as ideal point for arrival and transit of Islamic militants. However, the rise of the far right and their anti-Muslim, anti-immigration rhetoric jeopardizes societal cohesion and creates a fertile ground for individuals who experience marginalization and discrimination on a daily basis, to be open to jihadist propaganda. Still lacking a counter-radicalisation or de-radicalisation strategy, the current cornerstone of Italy's counter-terrorism strategy, namely the deportation of foreign suspects, is challenged by a growing number of radicalised holding citizenship with some even returning from the territories of the Islamic State and with jihadist radicalisation in prisons. To confront the latter threat, UCOII and recently also COREIS are active in de-radicalisation programmes, yet a long-term strategy for the societal re-integration of convicted ex-Jihadists as well as a comprehensive preventive approach are still missing.

With regard to ethnonationalist and separatist driven radicalisation, these phenomena are undoubtedly less relevant today in Italy. In fact, the South Tyrolean case demonstrates how violence in a separatist conflict can be defused through power-sharing autonomy arrangements that enhance coexistence and cooperation between different language groups. However, this report has underlined how different strands of radicalisation might combine and consequently persist even after specific grievances are resolved. In the South Tyrolean case, pangermanist right-wing extremism have always been a component – although a minor one – of regional separatist groups. In the last decades, such aspect has become a prevalent trend in local extremist groups, receiving support also by young people. In this context, while the local political discourse has been ready to promptly condemn violent actions, ethnicised politics and a general shift towards more intolerant political views offers a breeding ground to political extremism, especially directed towards the new wave of immigrants. Consequently, local institutions have adopted preventive measures to tackle violence among youths. However, it has been reported that there is still a lack of programmes that offer solutions to

radicalised individuals, or that aim at defusing extremist attitudes in the adult population, especially in terms of civic re-education.

Notwithstanding the persistence of some forms of extremism in South Tyrol, it is very unlikely that separatist-driven violence would resurge in the medium term. However, for the very same reason, South Tyrol has become embedded into wider extremist trends, among which xenophobic attitudes towards immigrants are arguably the most alarming ones. As for past conflicts, solutions may come also from local policies and programmes targeting young people with the aim of cultivating an inclusive and tolerant society.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Main (de)-radicalisation events in Italy since 2001

Name	Date or period of time	Description
Killing of the consultant to the labour ministry Professor Massimo D'Antona by the New Red Brigades.	20.5.1999	The assassination of showed that violent political extremism was still active in Italy. The attack raised the profile of the New Red Brigades, as a newly created organisation. It was uniformly condemned by the political elite.
Killing of the consultant to the labour ministry Professor Marco Biagi by the New Red Brigades.	19.3.2002	The assassination of showed that the New Red Brigades could still assassinate prominent government consultants, even after the death of D'Antona in 1999. This attack further raised the profile of the New Red Brigades, as a newly created organisation. It was uniformly condemned by the political elite.
Establishment of the Committee of Counter Terrorism Strategic Analysis (C.A.S.A) by the Ministry of Interior (Decree 83/2002).	2003	C.A.S.A. brings together the three Italian intelligence services and the Central Office of Preventive Police within the Ministry of Interior. Its weekly meetings aim to provide up to date assessments on internal and international terrorist risks and activate necessary responses.
Law no. 155 of 31 July 2005 ("urgent measures regarding expulsion and deportation")	July 2005	This law provided Italian law enforcement agencies with the tool of expulsion and deportation of non-citizens engaged in acts of terrorism. To this day, expulsions remain the main tool employed by law enforcement agencies against Islamist extremists.
Creation of the Central Unit for Investigations (NIC) within the Ministry of Justice, Department for Prison Administration, Office of the Head of the Department	2007	NIC is tasked with monitoring radicalisation and proselytism in prison, collating local information and producing reports for C.A.S.A. Monitoring is based on three levels: (1) High (monitoring); (2) Medium (attention); and (3) Low (reporting) (Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2019).

<i>Operation Odessa</i>	April 2008	A group of 16 young neo-Nazis is arrested in the area of Meran, the second largest town in South Tyrol (Kramer et al, 2019, p. 103). The group had threatened with violence immigrants and members of the Italian linguistic group.
Failed suicide-bomb attack by Mohammed Game (Libyan citizen) on the Santa Barbara Army barrack in Milan.	2009	This terrorist attack is generally viewed as marking the arrival of home-grown Jihadism in Italy (Vidino, 2014).
Catalogo di misure a contrasto del fenomeno dell'estremismo in Alto Adige	2010	The Provincial Council in Bozen adopted a list of measures to fight extremism in South Tyrol
Shooting of two Senegalese traders by Gianluca Casseri (Casapound sympathiser) in Florence.	13.12.2011	This violent attack was condemned by all political parties in Italy, including the official spokesperson of Casa Pound Italia.
Kneecapping of Roberto Adinolfi (CEO of Ansaldo Nucleare) by the Federazione Anarchica Informale.	7.5.2012	This high-profile attack, following Italy's referendum on nuclear energy, provided visibility to the FAI. It was uniformly condemned by all political parties.
'Revolt of the Peripheries' wave of protests and violent clashes in the deprived outskirts of Rome. Protesters attacked refugee centres and Roma camps.	2014	The riots attracted attention from the media and politicians. Right-wing politicians and activists explained the violence with reference to uncontrolled immigration ('invasion syndrome'), the link between crime and immigration, and the failure of the State to deal with illegal migration. Casa Pound Italia emerged as a prominent actor in organising and carrying out the disturbances (Selmini, 2016).
Drive-by shooting by Luca Traini against migrants in Macerata.	3.2.2018	This violent attack was reportedly triggered by the assassination and dismemberment of a woman by two Nigerian immigrants. The perpetrator of the indiscriminate shooting was a former local candidate of the Lega. Following his arrest, the extreme right-wing party Forza Nuova offered to pay his legal expenses. Other political parties condemned the act.

<p>Lockdown to contain the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>March 2020-present</p>	<p>There is an emerging consensus that the waves of lockdown starting in March 2020 is contributing to political radicalisation and the emergence of 'lone wolves'. This is due to the increasing poverty and socio-economic marginalization of vulnerable individuals; to the social isolation of individuals who spend more time online and are more vulnerable to extremist content; and to the purposeful use of Covid-19 as a propaganda weapon by movements such as ISIS (Giro, 2020; La Repubblica, 2020c; Lecca, 2020).</p>
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Appendix 2. Political discourse about radicalisation in Italy

Quotation	Author(s)	Date	Source	Comments
<p>"For the South Tyroleans of that time, the Liberation did not take place on April 25, but on September 8, 1943: so much so that when the Germans arrived, they were greeted with bouquets of flowers. The Nazis were criminals, but since September 1943, the German culture persecuted by the Fascists has returned to South Tyrol."</p>	<p>Oswald Ellecosta, Südtiroler Volkspartei, Vice-Mayor of Bolzano/Bozen, Capital city of South Tyrol</p>	<p>27.4.2009</p>	<p>https://www.altoadige.it/cronaca/bolzano-il-vicesindaco-svp-diserta-il-25-aprile-la-nostra-festa-%C3%A8-l-8-settembre-1.395210</p>	<p>The statement followed Ellecosta's refusal to participate to the public event organised for the 25th of April, Italy's Liberation Day (commemorating the end of the Fascist Regime and of German occupation) Ellecosta was then vice-mayor of the city of Bozen, elected as a member of the Südtiroler Volkspartei, the strongest autonomist party in the region, sometimes regarded as a 'catch-all' party for its ideological openness ranging from Christian to social democracy. Ellecosta referred to the Armistice of Cassibile of September 8, 1943, between the Kingdom of Italy and the Allies. As a consequence of the armistice Germany freed Mussolini (previously arrested in July 1943), attacked Italian troops, established a puppet state in Northern Italy, and <i>de facto</i> annexed South Tyrol</p>

				(together with the current provinces of Trento and Belluno) to the German Reich.
<p>“We can’t afford a revival of terror and violence. We need to raise the alert levels and we need attention from everyone, not just from the police forces, but also from public opinion. Because we need to be cautious with our words and actions. These people shouldn’t have water in which to swim.”</p>	<p>Pierluigi Bersani, Secretary of the Democratic Party.</p>	<p>May 2012</p>	<p>http://www.larosa.nera.it/arivano-le-nuove-brigate-rosse-scattallarme-terrorism</p>	<p>This statement followed the kneecapping of Roberto Adinolfi (CEO of Ansaldo Nucleare). It is important because left-wing parties have been criticized for not distancing themselves from the Red Brigades in the 1960s-1980s. This attitude was reversed in the 2000s, when condemnation of left-wing extremism was clear.</p>
<p>“Anti-fascism is the foundation of our democracy and of our Constitution, both born from the Resistance. Institutions and citizens always need to be vigilant as to the rebirth of nazi and fascist movements and phenomena, which spread racism and discrimination.”</p>	<p>Luigi De Magistris, Mayor of Naples, Orange Movement</p>	<p>June 2013</p>	<p>https://roma.repubblica.it/cronaca/2013/06/07/news/velletri-ag-crediti-i-99-poss-e-picchiati-dai-neofascisti-60550310/</p>	<p>This statement follows the violent aggression of the left-wing band 99 Posse, perpetrated by a group of people displaying symbols associated with the extreme right.</p>
<p>“Today, as a Member of the European Parliament I visit Rome more, and I realised that Romans love deeply this city. So, considering this fact, why don’t we win Romans’ hearts and why don’t we organise initiatives to defend the</p>	<p>Mario Borghezio, Member of the European Parliament, Lega.</p>	<p>2014</p>	<p>https://www.internazionale.it/reportage/leonardo-bianchi/2014/12/11/come-i-neofascisti-</p>	<p>Borghesio was addressing a neo-fascist convention in Rome, alongside the former right-wing extremist Stefano Delle Chiaie.</p>

<p>beauty of this city, disgustingly raped by those who filled it with immigrants and rubbish? If you promote this kind of initiative, I will be with you and I want to be at the first patrol. When our people need a national revolution, we need to guide them in this revolution.”</p>			<p>hanno-provato-a-prendere-le-periferie-romane</p>	
<p>“If a remotely controlled plane bombs my village, I only have one way to defend myself besides the nonviolent techniques which remain the best: load myself up with explosives and make myself explode in an underground. I am not justifying or supporting this, far from it. I am trying to understand.”</p>	<p>Alessandro Di Battista, Member of the Chamber of Deputies for the Five Star Movement</p>	<p>August 2014</p>	<p>https://www.repubblica.it/politica/2014/08/16/news/ira-di-battista-m5-s-terrorismo-unica-arma-per-chi-si-ribella-93890219/</p>	<p>Reflections about ISIS on a blog coordinated by Beppe Grillo, founder of the Five Star Movement.</p>
<p>“The [Provincial] council officially elevates the mass murderers and terrorists to simple activists and unceremoniously asks the new president to pardon them. People who have never asked for forgiveness.”</p>	<p>Alessandro Urzì, member of the South Tyrolean Provincial Council, Fratelli D’Italia</p>	<p>February 2015</p>	<p>https://www.altoadige.it/cronaca/bolzano/grazia-ai-terroristi-altol%C3%A0-del-governo-1.426454</p>	<p>This statement was shared in reaction to the request of pardon for fugitive members of the separatist groups who took part in separatist actions during the 1960s and were later charged with terrorism.</p>
<p>“Let’s reward those who have demonstrated they can integrate easily. For others, closed doors until they will solve the problems with integralism and violence intrinsic to their culture.”</p>	<p>Giorgia Meloni, President of Fratelli d’Italia</p>	<p>September 2015</p>	<p>https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2015/09/02/meloni-stop-immigrati-islam-ufficio-governo-no-</p>	<p>This is an extract from an interview by Meloni. Because of her statements during the interview, she was admonished by the Council of Ministers’ National Office against Discrimination. The</p>

			stereotipi -lei- censura/ 2002406/	office declared that the statements in Meloni's 'communication based on generalisations and stereotypes does not encourage a prompt and sufficient process of integration and social cohesion'.
"The migratory situation is out of control... Italy is becoming a 'come and go' of terrorists, that we are not able to identify and report, who thanks to Shengen can easily cross borders in the whole of Europe."	Beppe Grillo, founder of the Five Stars Movement.	December 2016	https://www.repubblica.it/politica/2016/12/23/news/grillo_adeso_e_il_momento_di_proteggerci_rimpatriare_subito_tutti_gli_immigrati_irregolari_-154741098/	Grillo posted this statement following the arrest of Anis Amri (perpetrator of the Berlin Christmas Market attack) in Italy. It was widely interpreted as signalling an evolution in the Five Stars Movements' position on immigration, from broadly supportive to opposed to it.
"It is not polite to go uninvited into someone else's home, but the issue of the invasion of migrants highlighted by the skinheads is clear for all to see."	Matteo Salvini, Federal Secretary of Lega.	2017	Elisabetta De Giorgi and Filippo Tronconi (2018) The centre-right in a search for unity and the re-emergence of the neo-fascist right, Contemporary	This statement followed an action in which militants of Veneto Fronte Skinheads broke into the offices of the pro-migrant organisation 'Como senza frontiere' to read a lengthy anti-immigration statement.

			Italian Politics, 10:4, 330-345.	
<p>“It is clear that out-of-control immigration, an invasion like the one organised, wanted and financed in these years, leads to social clashes.”</p> <p>“Beyond homicides, how many rapes, muggings, robberies, violence and daily aggressions are perpetrated by irregular migrants that should not be in Italy?”</p>	Matteo Salvini, Federal Secretary of Lega.	February 2018	https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2018/02/03/macerata-forza-nuova-difende-lautore-della-sparatori-a-pieno-sostegno-a-luca-traini/4134933/	This comment followed the indiscriminate shooting of immigrant in Macerata perpetrated by a former local candidate of Lega (Luca Traini).
<p>“After the death of Pamela Mastropietro no politician showed up in Macerata. People had to wait for Traini’s revenge. But the citizens of Macerata know well that the real tragedy is what the Nigerians did, with a girl massacred and dismembered. Because of the left, people feel that immigrants are privileged compared with Italians.”</p>	Giorgia Meloni, President of Fratelli d’Italia.	February 2018	https://www.liberoquotidiano.it/video/politica/13307927/giorgia-meloni-pietro-senaldi-macerata-pamela-mastropietro-luca-traini-immigrati-privilegiati-sinistra.html	Meloni was reflecting on the events of Macerata (see above).
<p>“The only extremism that deserves to be at the centre of attention is the Islamic one. The extreme right and extreme left fringes represent some nostalgics out of the world and out of time</p>	Matteo Salvini, Federal Secretary of Lega, Interior Minister and Deputy President of the	March 2019	https://www.ilpost.it/2019/03/16/salvini-estremis-mo-islamico-attentato	This comment followed the right-wing terror attack in Christchurch, New Zealand.

that, fortunately, according to the security and information services that we can rely on, can represent a moral condemnation.”	Council of Ministers.		-nuova-zelanda/	
“No tolerance for pedophiles and rapists: jail is not enough, care is needed. Call it chemical castration or antiandrogens, the bottom line is that we will ask for an immediate debate in the Chamber of Deputies of our proposed law to intervene on these people, which has been blocked for too long. Whoever they are, white or black, young or old, they need to be punished and cured.”	Matteo Salvini, Federal Secretary of Lega, Interior Minister and Deputy President of the Council of Ministers.	April 2019	https://www.ilviterbese.it/2019/04/29/salvini-nessuna-tolleranza-di-maio-pene-esemplari-un-caso-nazionale/	This declaration followed the arrest of two members of Casa Pound for gang-raping a woman in Viterbo.
“What do I share with Casa Pound and Forza Nuova? Nothing.” “I don’t know why you keep asking me these questions, I don’t share anything with those people. We never had electoral or political pacts and the last time I went to Rome for a demonstration they disputed me.’	Giorgia Meloni, President of Fratelli d’Italia.	May 2019	https://www.genova24.it/2019/05/giorgia-meloni-in-piazza-a-genova-cosa-condivido-con-forza-nuova-e-casapound-nulla-217524/	Meloni was asked about Fratelli d’Italia’s links with Casa Pound Italia and Forza Nuova on the margins of her political campaign for the 2019 European Parliamentary Elections.
“Gathering in the streets alongside members of the extreme right cannot but create problems for those, like me, who lived and shared the history and values represented in the last	Mara Carfagna, Forza Italia.	October 2019	https://www.liberoquotidiano.it/news/politica/13517169/mara-carfagna-casapoun	Carfagna commented the decision by Lega and Forza Italia to take part in an anti-government demonstration

<p>25 years by Forza Italia.”</p>			<p>d-piazza-matteo-salvini-roma-rivolta-forza-italia-berlusconi.html</p>	<p>alongside Casa Pound Italia.</p>
<p>“Between Lega, Casa Pound and Forza Nuova don’t exist links at a local and national level.”</p>	<p>Matteo Salvini, Federal Secretary of Lega.</p>	<p>January 2020</p>	<p>https://www.openonline/2020/01/16/salvini-prende-le-distanze-da-casapound-e-forza-nuova-lantisemitismo-di-certa-destra-e-nostro-nemico/</p>	<p>This statement was released during Lega’s conference on The New forms of Anti-Semitism (January 2020). Holocaust survivor and Senator Liliana Segre declined the invitation to speak at the conference, prompting questions on the relationship between Lega and and the anti-semitic extreme right.</p>
<p>“The capital cannot and should not welcome those who sow hate and violence on the wounds of this country offending the constitution and democracy.”</p>	<p>Official communiqué from the Rome Office of the Democratic Party.</p>	<p>June 2020</p>	<p>https://www.romatoday.it/cronaca/ultras-destra-roma-6-giugno-2020.html</p>	<p>This statement responded to the advertising of a forthcoming demonstration in Rome organised by the extreme right and Ultras football supporters in defiance of Covid provisions. The demonstration aimed to protest against the government.</p>
<p>“The future is autonomy and overcoming nationalisms in Europe. One cannot move back the arrow of history, the future is Europe.”</p>	<p>Arno Kompatscher, President of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen</p>	<p>October 2020</p>	<p>https://www.ildolomiti.it/societa/2020/mentre-i-separatisti-soffiano-</p>	<p>This statement by the President of the Province of Bolzano highlights how the process of European integration has arguably had a positive effect on</p>

			sul-fuoco-del-nazionali-smo-dalla-provincia-di-bolzano-si-guarda-al-futuro-la-prospetti-va-e-leuropa	the accommodation of the separatist conflict.
<p>“The public prosecutor's office of Bozen/Bolzano [...] should immediately order the removal of the posters [...] praising the terrorist Sepp Kerschbaumer sentenced to 15 years in prison for blood and bomb attacks. Between him and a terrorist like Cesare Battisti, former member of the Armed Proletarians for Communism, there is no difference. [Kerschbaumer] was praised together with his so-called 'fighting comrades' [...] by the Südtiroler Heimat Bund (League for the South Tyrolean Homeland) and by the Südtiroler Schützen Bund (League of South Tyrolean Schützen). [...] Maybe tomorrow, on the occasion of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, while the Italians are controlled by the Ministry of the Interior with drones and 70,000 police officers, we will witness - even in defiance of any</p>	<p>Michela Biancofiore, Forza Italia</p>	<p>7.12.2020</p>	<p>https://www.adnkronos.com/alto-adige-biancofiore-via-manifesti-terrorista-kerschbaumer_2GGlPBLxqsEBM55ZQeixnN?refreshce</p>	<p>This statement was released in response to the appearance of posters praising Sepp Kerschbaumer, leading member of the South Tyrolean Liberation Committee (BAS), regarded as a freedom fighter by some sections of the South Tyrolean German-speaking population. The statement however goes further and criticizes the annual gathering of the Schützen, maintaining that these groups can enjoy more freedom than 'Italians' due to a non-application of Covid restrictions.</p>

<p>provision against gatherings - the traditional meeting of the Immaculate Conception in the town of Eppan, where every year the 'Schützen' - so-called 'sharpshooters' from the entire Alpine area - meet to commemorate the irredentists of the '60s."</p>				
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Appendix 3. Networks of connection of the main agents of radicalisation in Italy

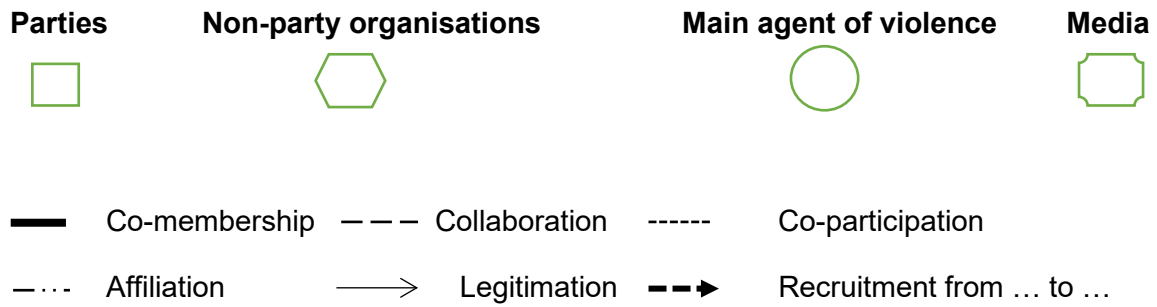


Figure 3.1: Map of Federazione Anarchica Informale connections

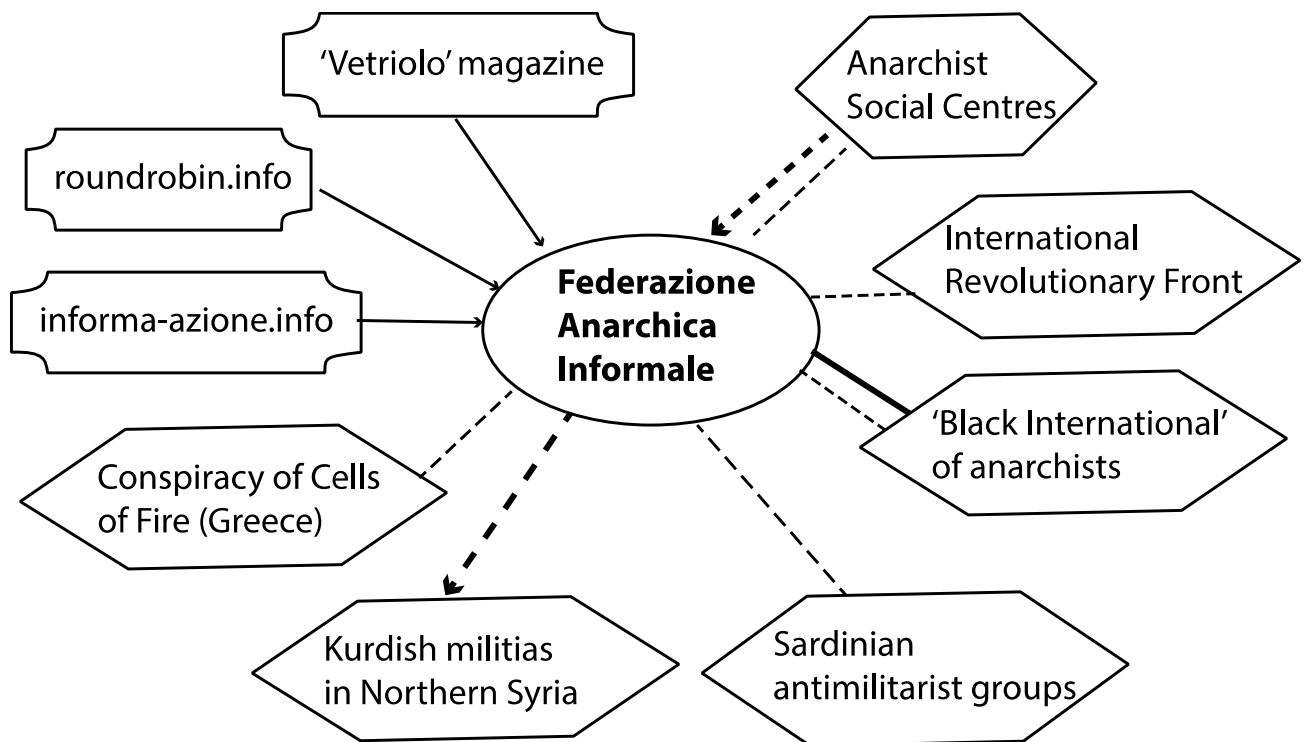


Figure 3.2: Map of New Red Brigades connections

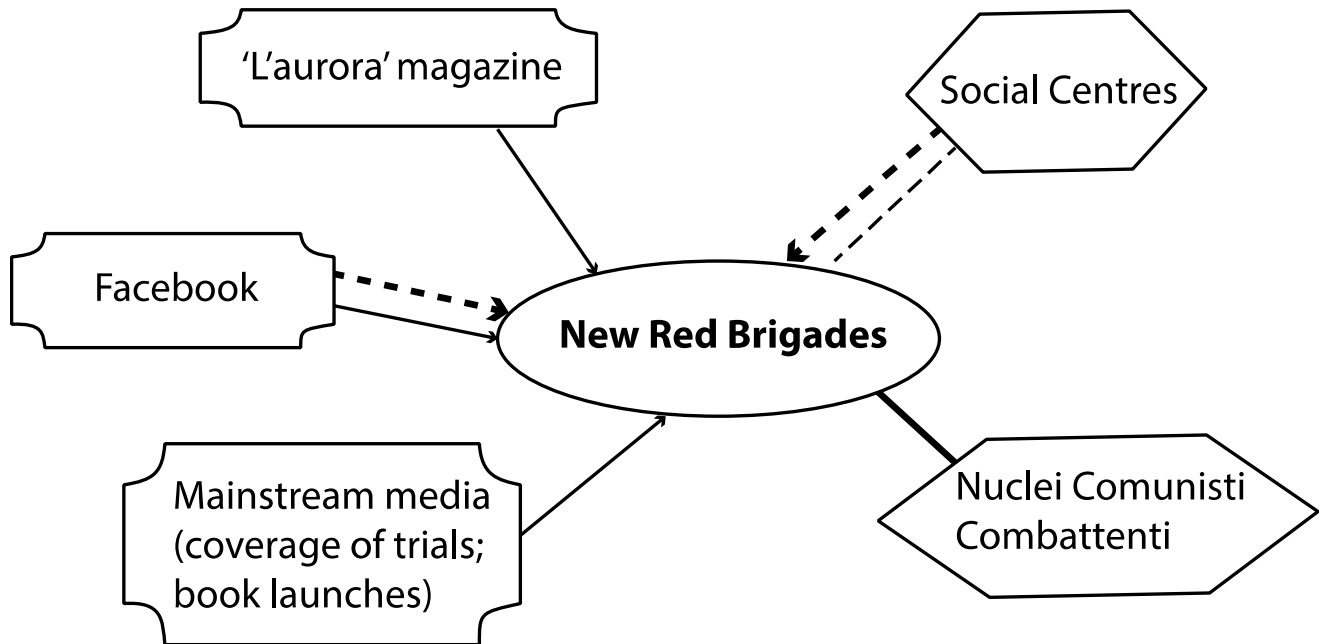


Figure 3.3: Map of Casa Pound Italia connections

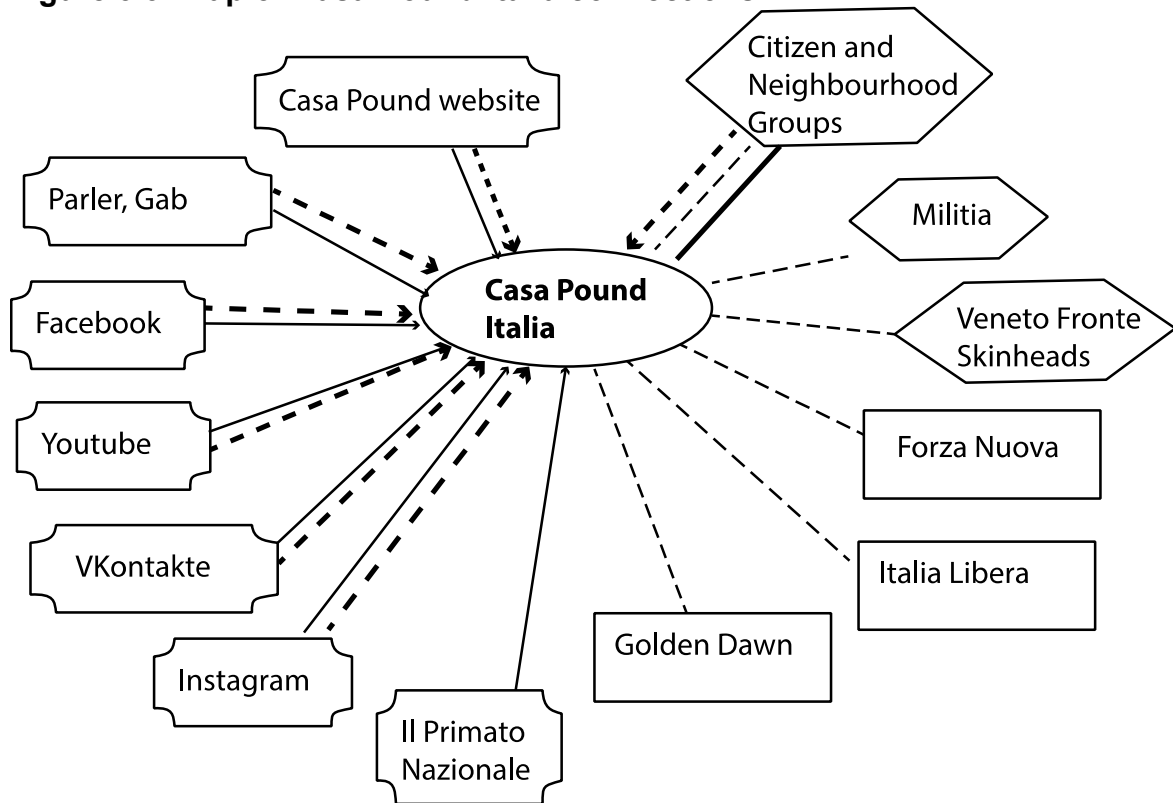


Figure 3.4: Map of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria connections

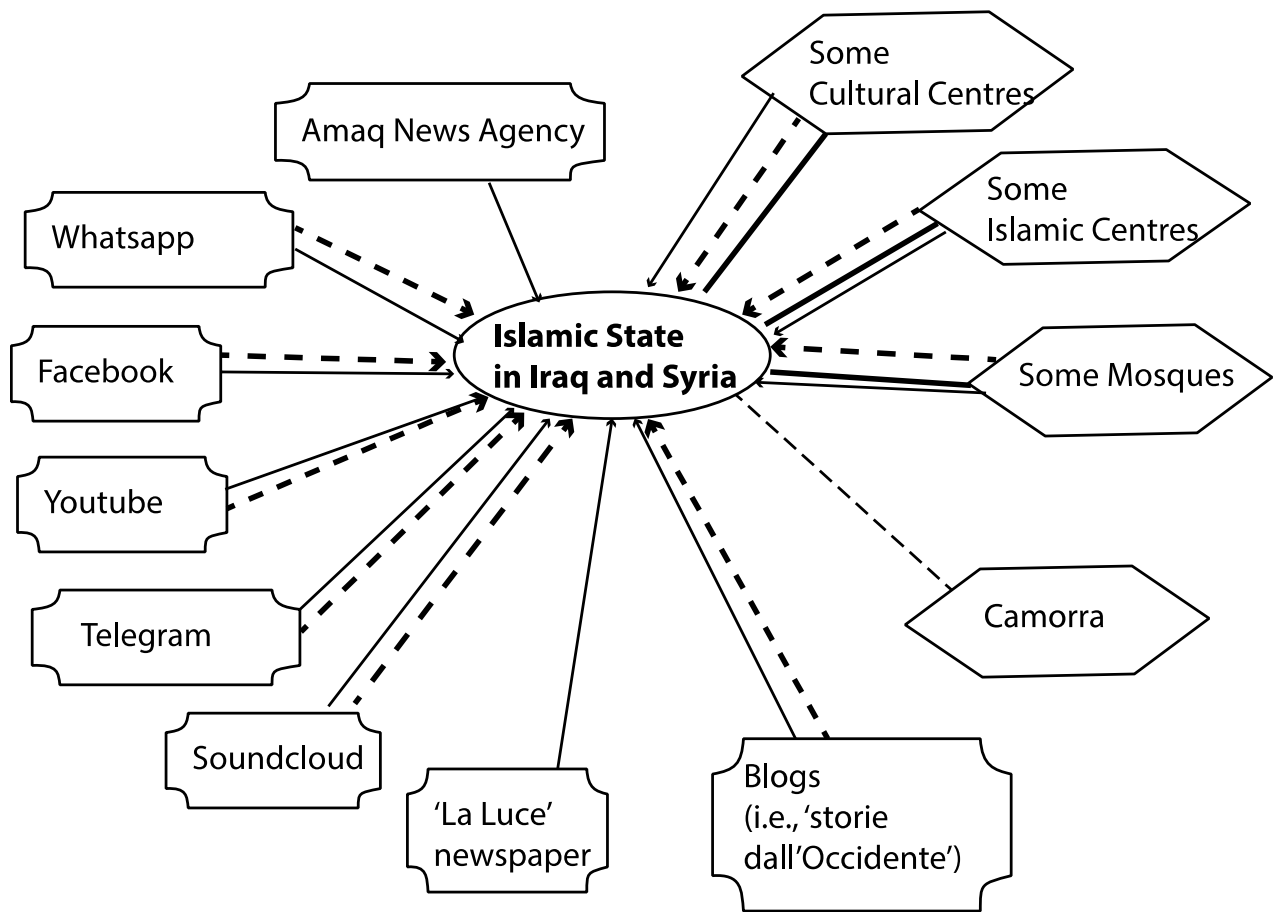
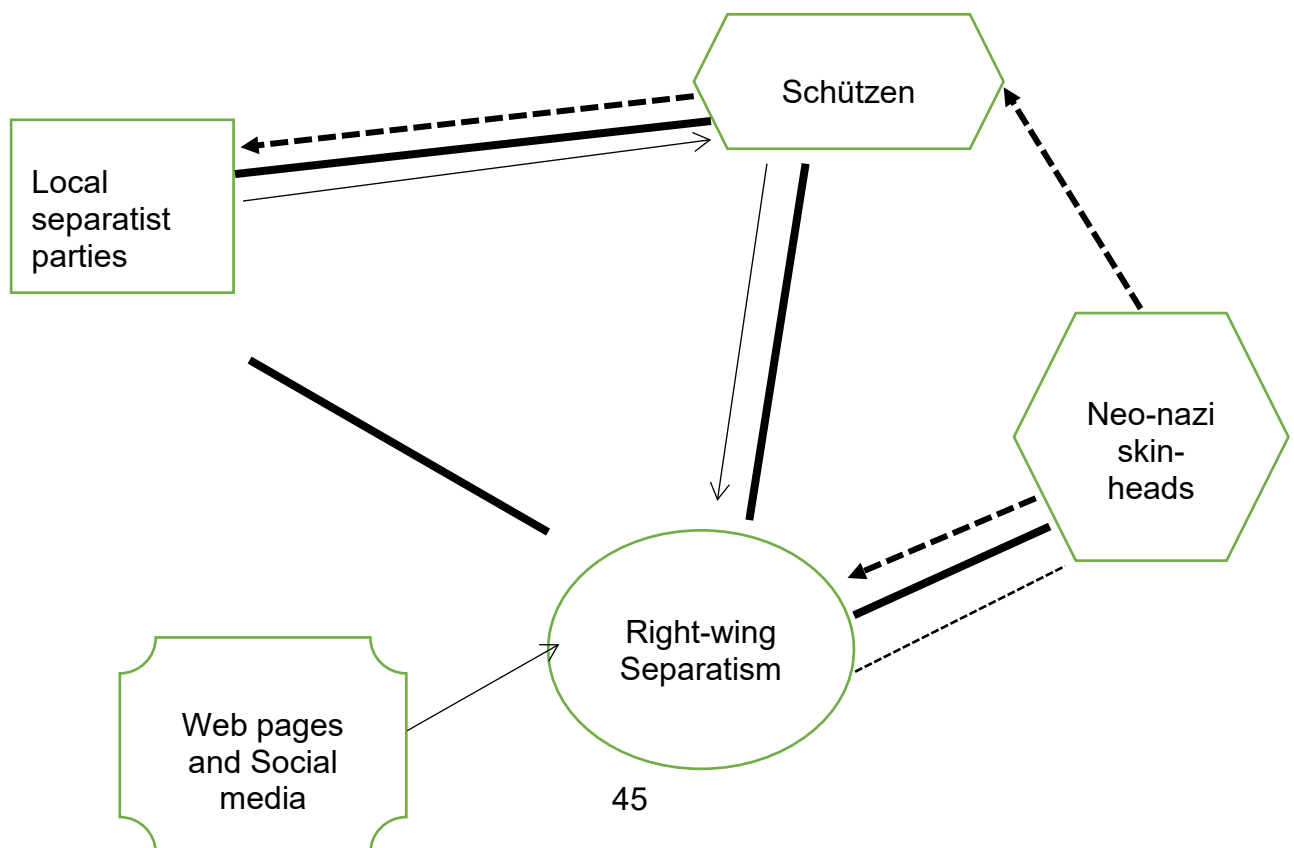


Figure 3.5: Map of Right-wing separatism connections



Appendix 4. Stakeholders of (De)-Radicalisation in Italy

Name	Dates	Agents	Approach	Scale	Targets
Masters in Prevention of Radicalisation into Terrorism and Policies for inter-Religious and inter-Cultural Integration at the University of Bari	2017-present	University of Bari	Civic education	Local	Targeted at those working in justice and policing, jails, social workers, teachers and educators, workers in the health sector, job centre workers and representatives of religious communities.
Memoria futura	2012-present	Association of Italian Victims of Terrorism (AIVITER)	Civic education	Local (Turin)	Young people and teachers
Counternarrative for Counterterrorism	2013-2014	Association of Italian Victims of Terrorism (AIVITER)	Civic education	Local (Turin)	School students
Memorandum of Understanding with the Italian Prison Service BRaVE project	2015-present	Union of Islamic Communities of Italy (UCOII); Italian Prisons Service	Integrative	National (Florence, Genoa, Pisa, Modena, Milan and Turin)	Muslim inmates in prisons; prison staff
RASMORAD - Raising Awareness and Staff Mobility on violent Radicalisation in Prison and Probation Services	2016-present	Union of Islamic Communities of Italy (UCOII)	Civic education	National (Florence, Genoa, Pisa, Modena, Milan and Turin)	Imams operating in Italian prisons
Exit Europe	2016-present	Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)	Punitive, integrative	Local (Turin)	Radicalised individuals under the care

					of the local social services
Fighting Against Inmates' Radicalisation (FAIR)	2018-present	Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), Union of Islamic Communities of Italy (UCOII), Comunità Religiosa Islamica Italiana (COREIS)	Civic education, integrative	National	Volunteers, social workers and educators
Provision of female Muslim spiritual guides in jail	2017-2018	ADMI			Female prisoners
Prevention measures to combat extremism among youths	2010-present	Province of Bolzano/Bozen, Social Services, Forum Prävention, Schools	Civic education, educational events	Local, South Tyrol	Mainly school students

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