

***The process of radicalization leading to violence (RLV):  
Perceptions of the Quebec population, and the influence of both  
traditional mass media and new social media (MMS)***

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**CONTEXT**

Many societies know the fear of violence carried out by young radicals inspired by extremist ideologies. For instance, media coverage of young men and women moving to war-torn countries after conversions to extremist ideologies provokes fear and lack of understanding in the population.

**MAIN OBJECTIVE**

The project seeks to better understand the role play by many type of media – understood here as mass media and social media (MMS) – on the perceptions of Quebecers and on the dynamic of radicalisation leading to violence (RLV).

**HYPOTHESIS**

Media plays a definite role in both RLV itself and the perception of it in the popular imagination.

**QUESTIONS**

The project seeks to answer questions such as the following: What are the perceptions of the Quebec population regarding various forms of radicalization leading to violence (RLV)? What effect would a related event have on this population? How do differences in media content, style, and platform affect their impact? What is the role of MMS in the dynamic of RLV and in the formation of radicalized groups?

**METHODOLOGY**

To answer these complex questions, the project will bring together a multidisciplinary team using different methodologies. During the first year, the team will deliver the results of a survey on the perceptions of Quebecers (1600 respondents). Using the *Observatoire de la circulation de l'information (OCI)* to guide the development of an enormous media database from which they will draw out salient information, the team will conduct two experiments with the *Laboratoire de communication politique et d'opinion publique* intended to measure the effect of various types of media coverage and platforms (1600 survey respondents). The first phase also involves seven studies using a qualitative research approach: a. Analysing the media corpus using the guidelines given by OCI; b. 20 biographical interviews; three interrelated surveys including c. an online survey; d. 20 semi-directed interviews; and e. 10 recorded diaries. In addition, f. seven focus groups with media professionals about the process of creating the news; g. 20 interviews with key stakeholders on the dynamics of radicalized group formation; completed with h. participant observation. These analyses will be achieved and the results compared over the course of the second year.

**EXPECTED RESULTS**

The underlying goals of the project are, above all, a keen understanding and prevention of RLV, and, in a related way, de-radicalization or counter-radicalization (Gouv. Québec 2015). The methodologies chosen will enable us to gather data pertinent to meeting these goals.

**NATURE AND SCOPE OF BENEFITS**

The findings will be beneficial in three ways: a. on a practical level, e.g., as part of widely-disseminated tools and strategies to prevent RLV; b. policy development, e.g., the results obtained will lead to knowledge useful for “deconstructing prejudices” and guiding inclusive policies; c. for public programmes, e.g., family, educational, and social service programmes will benefit from our results.

**PARTNERS**

The project involves nine university partners and thirteen community and organisational partners, notably from a Center of health and social services, school, journalistic, and Muslim organisations, and those dedicated to popular education.

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