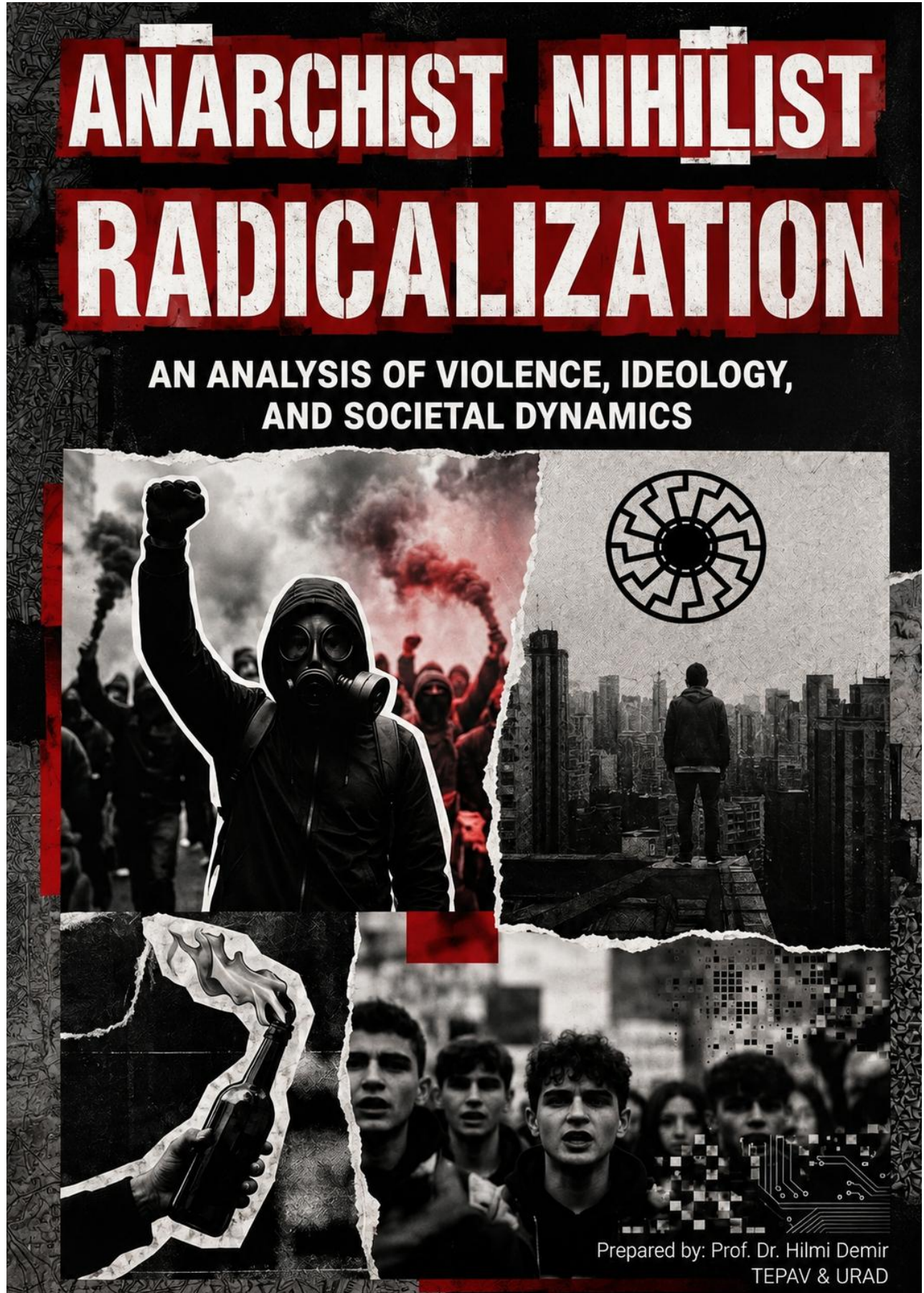




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Chapter One: The Changing Landscape of Radicalization and Ideological Fragmentation

Until recently, terrorism, radicalization, and extremism were generally associated with groups that possessed hierarchical structures and pursued clear ideological or political objectives. Salafi-jihadist organizations such as Al-Qaeda and Daesh, along with traditional racist, fascist, and far-left movements, have long been among the primary focuses of security policies and research on radicalization. Today, however, security experts, academics, and policymakers are increasingly confronted with a new form of radicalization that is difficult to explain through these conventional categories. This phenomenon is commonly described as “composite violent extremism” or “salad bar extremism.”¹

In this new form of radicalization, young people are able to combine fragments of beliefs and narratives that may appear deeply contradictory from an ideological perspective. Neo-Nazism, jihadism, misogyny (particularly within incel subcultures), and esoteric or occult beliefs, such as Satanism, can coexist within a single, highly eclectic worldview. In this context, anarchist-nihilist radicalization, which rejects political objectives and treats violence not as a means but as an end in itself, emerges at the intersection of cultic and occult beliefs and digital ecosystems. Today, the processes that draw young people toward violence are driven less by the direct propaganda of traditional hierarchical terrorist organizations and more by the toxic convergence of disparate ideas, grievances, identity struggles, and conspiracy theories encountered in online spaces.

According to Peter Neumann, Professor of Security Studies at King’s College London, radicalization today takes place largely in bedrooms, closed online chat rooms, and on mobile phones. Data cited by Neumann shows that 38 of the 58 suspects identified in Europe were between the ages of 13 and 19.² In youth radicalization processes, violence itself often comes to overshadow the ideology being defended. As former FBI Director Christopher Wray has noted, some attackers carry a “strange mix of ideologies” in their minds, which makes traditional counterterrorism methods increasingly inadequate.

This report aims to provide a comprehensive account, through global and Türkiye-specific examples, of how nihilist tendencies that move beyond ideological boundaries and focus solely on violence, chaos, and the destruction of the existing order radicalize young people in digital environments through cults and occult symbols. Unfortunately, school massacres that are often treated in Türkiye as isolated acts of murder should in fact be understood as part of anarchist-nihilist radicalization and extremism. It also seems possible to examine even the 16-year-old Daesh-linked attacker seen in İzmir within this context.³

In recent years, the growing role of adolescents, and even children, in acts of violent extremism around the world has become a phenomenon that alarms security agencies and counterterrorism experts. A 17-year-old killing three young girls in a stabbing attack in Southport, England, a 15-year-old attacking an Orthodox Jewish man in Switzerland, and a 14-year-old being arrested in Australia while planning a terrorist attack are only the tip of the

¹ Hilmi Demir, “Türkiye’de DEAŞ’ın dönüşümü ve ‘salata barı’ radikalleşmesi,” *Fikir Turu*, Accessed May 31, 2026. <https://fikirturu.com/jeo-politika/turkiyede-deasin-donusumu-ve-salata-bari-radikallesmesi/>.

² Hilmi Demir, “Eskişehir’deki Saldırı Bize Ne Söylüyor?” *Fikir Turu*, August 15, 2024. Accessed May 31, 2026. <https://fikirturu.com/toplum/eskisehirdeki-saldiri-bize-ne-soyluyor/>.

³ Hilmi Demir, “16 yaşında bir çocuk nasıl IŞİD’li oldu?” *Fikir Turu*, Accessed May 31, 2026. <https://fikirturu.com/toplum/16-yasinda-bir-cocuk-nasil-isdli-oldu/>.

iceberg. Global data clearly show the gravity of the situation: in France, the number of minors facing preliminary terrorism-related charges rose from just two in 2022 to 19 in 2024; in the United Kingdom, MI5 has reported that children now account for 13% of counterterrorism cases, a figure that has tripled over the past three years. In Canada, children with an average age of 13 to 14 make up 70% of those referred to deradicalization programs.

Nihilist violent extremism is a new generation of extremism that differs from traditional ideologies seeking to achieve a specific political, religious, or social utopia. In this form of extremism, destruction, chaos, and social collapse are not seen as means to an end, but as the end itself. At its core lies an extreme philosophical belief that life is inherently meaningless, moral values are arbitrary, and existence has no higher purpose.

Individuals or networks that embrace this form of extremism act out of a deep hatred of society. They glorify violence not as a tool for achieving a political objective, but as a direct expression of existential despair and misanthropy, in other words, as “violence for violence’s sake.” Nihilist extremists, who claim that no life matters, including their own, target civilians indiscriminately, gamify violence, derive sadistic satisfaction from it, and create an “anti-purpose” terrorist ecosystem that seeks the complete destruction of existing civil society.

Nihilist violent extremist networks systematically exploit the psychological vulnerabilities of children and young people, especially those between the ages of 8 and 17, along with their need for belonging and the dynamics of digital platforms, in order to draw them in. This study examines nihilist violent extremism and the pathways of radicalization in detail.

Nihilist Radicalization and Accelerationism

The destructive impact of cultic and occult beliefs appears in its darkest form in the phenomenon of “nihilist radicalization,” which rejects ideological objectives altogether and treats violence as an end in itself. In this context, violence is not a tool for building a better social order. On the contrary, it becomes both an aesthetic and practical form of destruction used to prove the meaninglessness and corruption of the existing order.

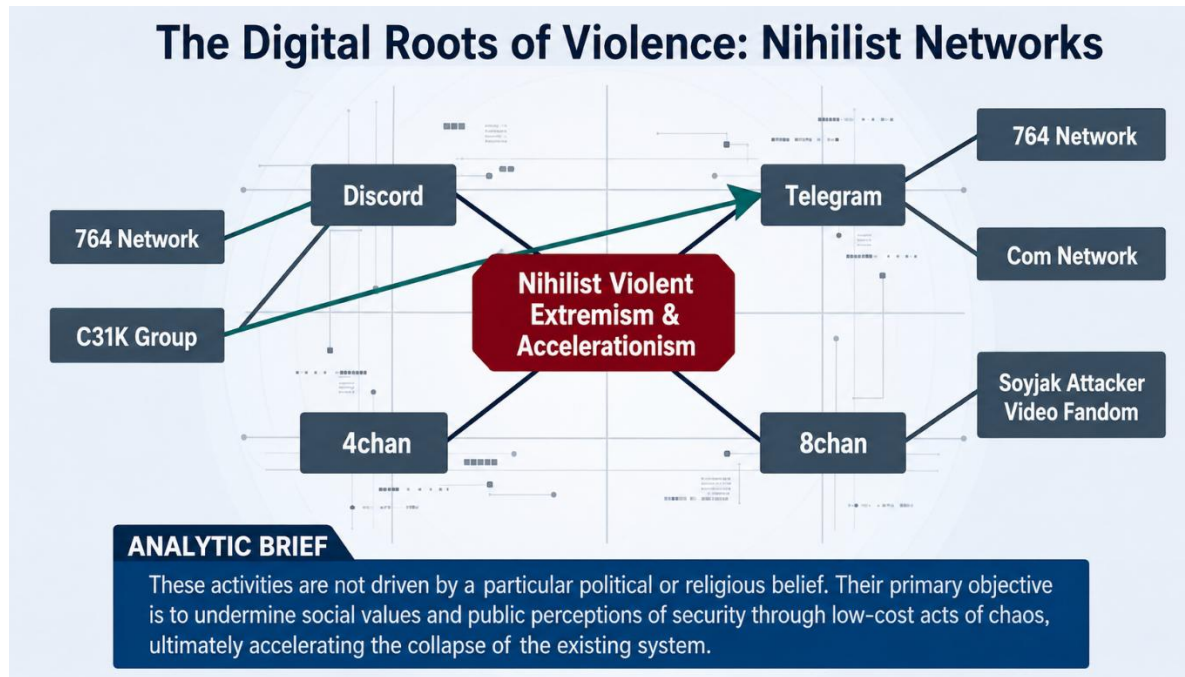
According to the groundbreaking observation of political scientist Olivier Roy, even contemporary jihadist terrorists are not so much devout militants with deep theological knowledge of radical Islam as members of a “generation of nothingness,” fascinated by death, involved in drug use and petty crime, and deprived of any real future. Roy describes this not as the “radicalization of Islam,” but rather as the “Islamization of radicalism and nihilism.” In this sense, the fascination with death among modern nihilist youth follows a pattern similar to the psychology of the 1999 Columbine High School attackers or school attackers who emulate satanic cults.

One of the greatest threats facing security forces today is “militant” or “nihilist accelerationism.” Accelerationism is a radical meta-ideology which holds that existing political, economic, and social systems are corrupt beyond repair and that crises and violence must therefore be deliberately escalated in order to hasten their collapse. The belief seen in apocalyptic movements as forcing God’s hand in bringing about the end times can, in this context, be understood as an attempt to summon the apocalypse.

Concepts such as democratic ideals, human rights, and multiculturalism are rejected entirely as parts of the corrupt order. For these young people, the aim is not to build a new order, but to produce “total collapse without reconstruction.” To that end, violence is seen as something

to be unleashed, and the world as something to be driven into chaos. Destruction becomes a necessary condition for the purification of the world.

This anarchist and nihilist radicalization is now taking shape in online subcultures that pursue no clear political objective, including the “Com network,” the “764 network,” the “Soyjak Attacker Video Fandom” (SAVF), the “True Crime Community” (TCC), and groups such as C31K in Türkiye. These groups communicate with one another online, inhabit the same digital atmosphere, and encourage one another in the spread of violence.



The 764 network is an extremely dangerous structure reportedly inspired by the satanic and misanthropic, or human-hating, texts of the Order of Nine Angles (O9A). It is said to coerce young children and adolescents, through blackmail, into acts such as self-harm, producing child abuse material, and animal cruelty. Digital traces linked to these networks have reportedly been detected in some cases in Türkiye.⁴ Young people under the influence of these networks often do not act for an ideological cause, but to shock others and gain status within their own dark digital circles.

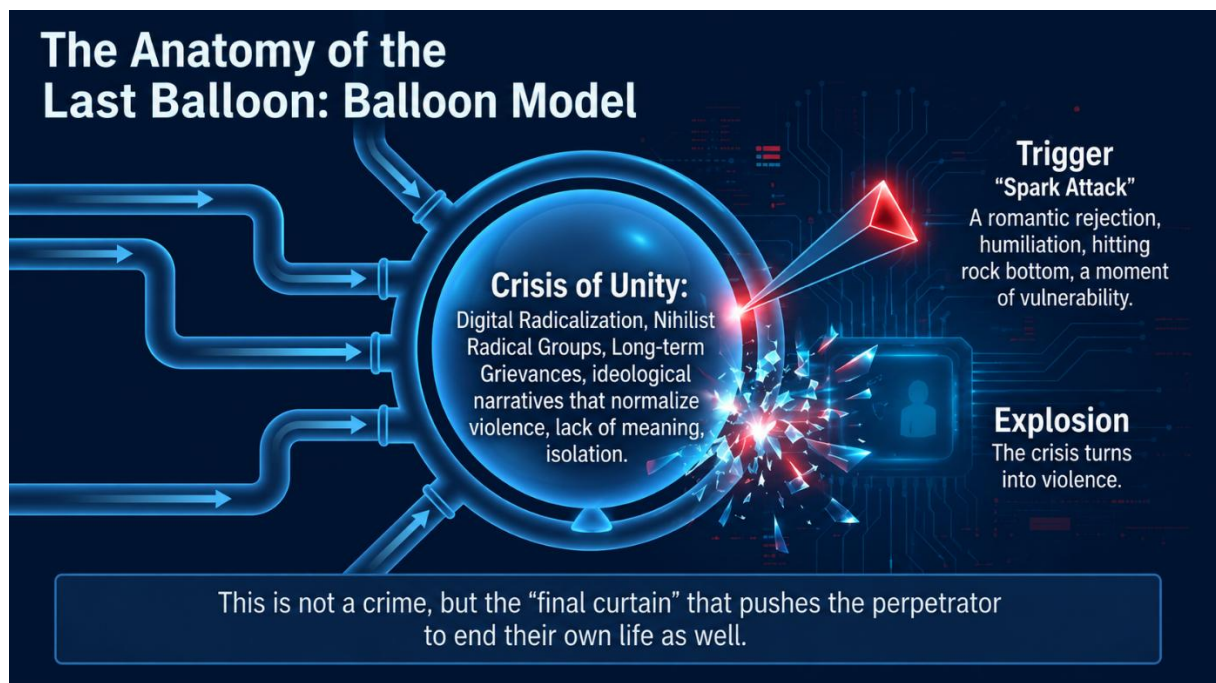
The True Crime Community (TCC), by contrast, is a vast fan base that aestheticizes and glorifies serial killers, school attackers, and terrorists. Its members tend to develop a psychological fixation not on the perpetrators' political ideologies, but on the aesthetics of violence and on their personal diaries. For example, in 2024, 15-year-old Natalie Rupnow, who carried out a school shooting in Wisconsin, signaled to the world that she had symbolically joined the legends of TCC culture by wearing the same T-shirt as Columbine attacker Eric Harris. In December 2025, another 17-year-old who planted a bomb at a school in Indonesia also imitated Harris's clothing and used symbols referencing the New Zealand attacker Brenton Tarrant.

⁴ Hilmi Demir, X post, May 22, 2026, 11:44 p.m., “Anarşist Nihilist Radikalleşme küresel bir trend haline geldi...,” accessed May 31, 2026, <https://x.com/ProfHilmiDemir/status/2057925677295263947?s=20>.

The “Evil” Aesthetic Through Occultism, Satanism, and the Order of Nine Angles (O9A)

Cults, occult beliefs, and neo-pagan mythologies play a dual role in the radicalization of young people: they provide an ideological foundation while also creating a sense of belonging through an aesthetic of “evil” or “warriorship.” American neo-Nazi and racist skinhead groups, in particular, have fueled their radicalization processes by adopting pre-Christian Germanic beliefs, such as Odinism.

These occult and pagan beliefs are used not only to promote Aryanism, but also to construct a dangerous myth that portrays members of the white working class as an elite “warrior class” that must unite against other minorities. This myth serves to strengthen solidarity in environments where violence is already intense, such as prisons. From this perspective, the anger behind school attacks is not sudden or spontaneous; it is accumulated, learned, and nurtured within a specific ecosystem.



One of the most striking examples of the role of occult beliefs in youth radicalization is the entanglement of esoteric and satanic formations such as the Order of Nine Angles (O9A) and Tempel ov Blood with extreme racist violent groups. O9A has a complex belief system that advocates the complete destruction of Western society at any cost and encourages its followers to support extremist movements such as jihadism or neo-Nazism. This ideology has acted as a poison seeping into militant accelerationist neo-Nazi groups such as Atomwaffen Division. O9A promotes the most extreme forms of violence, including “human sacrifice,” as a way to overturn the existing order. Young people channel their anger at the perceived decay of the modern world through these elitist and destructive narratives, presenting the “pursuit of evil” as the only path toward a purified social order.

However, the use of these occult symbols does not always reflect a deep theological belief. They are often used superficially to create a provocative, highly violent, and “evil” aesthetic that defies social norms. For example, the worldview of Nikolas Cruz, who killed 17 people in Florida in 2018, was a chaotic mixture of racism, Nazism, and Satanism, including “666”

symbols. Similarly, the diary of Jack Reed, a 16-year-old neo-Nazi arrested in the United Kingdom in 2019, combined admiration for Hitler with Satanism. For these young people, Satanism is less a religious dogma than a psychological tool for rejecting social norms, seeking purification through “evil,” and pushing society into chaos.

Examples of Anarchist-Nihilist Radicalization in the Context of Türkiye

One of the most striking international cases illustrating the role of occultism in anarchist radicalization, and one with direct links to Türkiye, is that of Ethan Melzer, a 22-year-old U.S. soldier who openly identified himself as a supporter of O9A.⁵ Although connected to online neo-Nazi channels, Melzer attempted to facilitate a jihadist attack, linked to Al-Qaeda or Daesh, against his own American military unit stationed in Türkiye. His primary objective was not an ideological victory, but rather to contribute to accelerationism by dragging the United States into a prolonged military conflict and thereby hastening the collapse of the American system. This case clearly demonstrates how an occult cult such as O9A can erase ideological boundaries between seemingly incompatible movements such as neo-Nazism and jihadism, and mobilize a young mind toward purely nihilistic destruction.

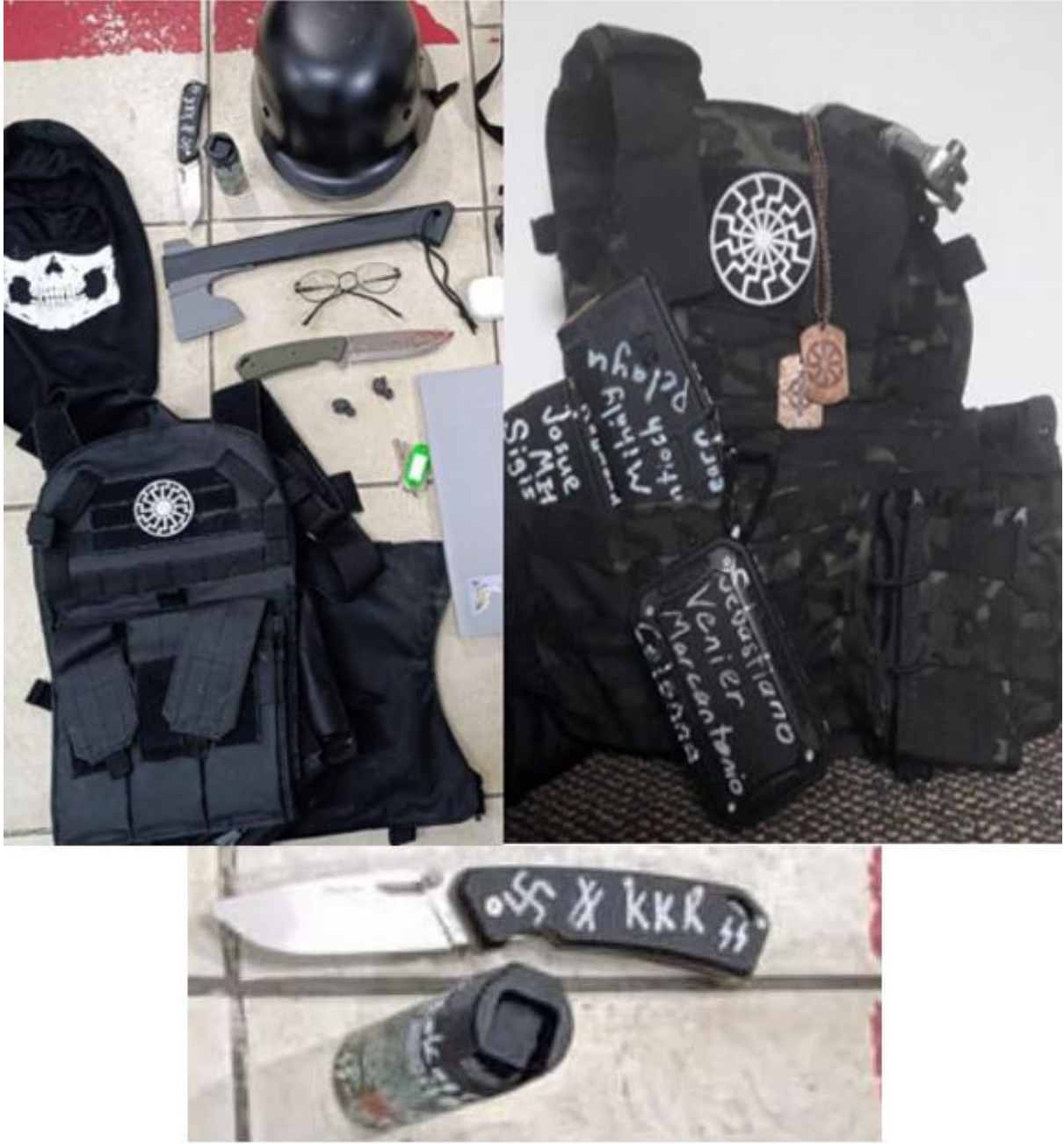
In recent years, Türkiye has also witnessed the emergence of local cases of violence, particularly among young people, that bear striking similarities to developments observed in Western countries.

The Eskişehir Attack (The Case of Arda K.): On August 18, 2024, in Eskişehir, 18-year-old Arda Küçükyetim (Arda K.) stabbed five people sitting in the courtyard of a mosque while livestreaming the attack. He was wearing a tactical vest and displayed Nazi symbols, including the “Black Sun,” a symbol frequently used by both neo-Nazi groups and O9A, along with an SS-style helmet and a knife engraved with a swastika and the initials of the Ku Klux Klan. The incident was one of the first “lone actor” attacks in Türkiye linked to Nazi-inspired ideology and was accompanied by a 17-page manifesto.

Arda K. was not affiliated with any political organization but was connected to international online networks promoting nihilistic violence. In his manifesto, he described humanity as “bugs,” “vermin,” and “stupid insects,” while portraying himself as a “mass cleaner” or “hunter” tasked with purging a corrupt world. He referenced Jordan Patten, who had planned an attack in Australia two months earlier. Months later, Arda K.’s attack was praised and cited as a source of inspiration by 15-year-old Samantha Rupnow and 17-year-old Solomon Henderson in the United States.

Alienated from both his family and society, Arda K. viewed his depression not as a weakness but as an awakening and a badge of honor in opposition to what he perceived as a corrupt system. The case demonstrates how profound misanthropy, hatred of humanity, combined with apocalyptic beliefs, can turn Nazi ideology into little more than a vehicle through which an individual channels accumulated anger and resentment.

⁵Aaron Katersky and Meredith Deliso, “US Soldier, Alleged Member of White Supremacist Group, Accused of Plotting Attack on Own Unit,” *ABC News*, June 22, 2020. Accessed May 31, 2026. <https://abcnews.com/US/us-soldier-alleged-member-white-supremacist-group-accused/story?id=71392427>.



Note: The image in the upper left shows the vest worn by Arda Küçükyetim, while the image in the upper right shows the vest worn by Brenton Tarrant, the perpetrator of the Christchurch massacre in New Zealand. The image below presents a detailed replica of the knife used by Arda Küçükyetim during the Eskişehir attack.

The Kahramanmaraş Attack (The Case of İsa Aras): Another act of violence linked to this ecosystem was carried out on April 11, 2026, in Kahramanmaraş by 14-year-old İsa Aras. Both his actions and the manifesto he left behind reflected a deeply narcissistic worldview, expressed through statements such as, “I am a genius, the superior human being.” Rather than portraying his isolation as a weakness, İsa Aras framed it as a mark of superiority. In his

manifesto, he explicitly stated, “I hate people,” presenting this sentiment as a justification for his actions.⁶

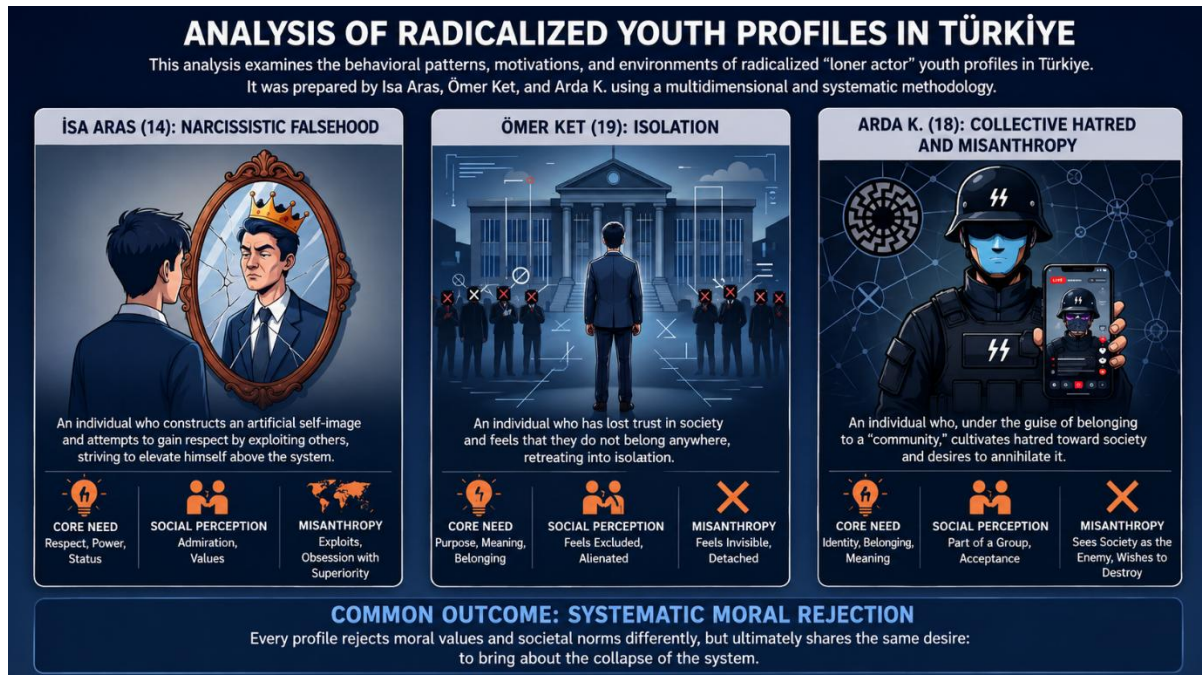
Moreover, by using the image of Elliot Rodger, the misogynistic incel figure responsible for a mass killing in the United States in 2014, as his profile picture, he positioned himself within that dark online subculture and transformed violence into a form of belonging. He described the education system as corrupt and acted upon the anger and resentment he harbored toward humanity.

The Fatih Murders and Ritual Crimes (The Case of Semih Ç.): Another disturbing example from Türkiye is the case of Semih Ç., which has been discussed in the context of ritual crimes. Semih Ç. brutally murdered two young women he had previously known in Fatih, İstanbul. According to his father’s statement, he had been a religious young man who prayed before the age of 16, but underwent a major change over the next three years and withdrew into his room.

The surrealist drawings of mutilated female bodies and the religious or spiritual objects found in Semih Ç.’s home suggest that the murders may be interpreted as “ritual murders” shaped by pagan, occult, or satanic motifs. Ritual murders are brutal acts in which the perpetrator turns the victim into a sacrifice and transforms the act itself into a kind of rite. Before the attack, Semih Ç. recorded a video in which he said, “To remove her heart, her eyes... you already know.” This points to the symbolic and ritualistic nature of gouging out the victim’s eyes and removing her heart, reflecting a narcissistic and occult desire for control.

The Şanlıurfa/Siverek School Attacker (The Case of Ömer Ket): Ömer Ket, born in 2007 and aged 19, also left behind an action diary and a manifesto. He is known to have used Nazi symbols and to have held Islamophobic beliefs. However, the detailed information that has so far appeared in the media about him remains limited. For this reason, although a comprehensive assessment is not yet possible, this act may also be understood as part of a pattern similar to the other cases.

⁶ Hilmi Demir, “Eskişehir’den Kahramanmaraş’a: Türkiye’nin Yeni Güvenlik Tehdidi,” *TEPAV*, May 2, 2026. Accessed May 31, 2026, <https://tepav.org.tr/tr/haberler/s/11206>.



Taken together, these local examples show that online networks similar to “C31K,” organized on platforms such as Discord and Telegram, as well as international anarchist-nihilist radicalization networks, can rapidly radicalize Turkish youth through violent pornography, child abuse, and content that denigrates religious values, much as they do in Western contexts.

Part Two: The “Cult of Saints” and the Sanctification of Violence

Another striking dimension of cultic beliefs in anarchist-nihilist youth radicalization is found in digital subcultures known as the “Cult of Saints.” This phenomenon, frequently seen in militant accelerationist and incel, or involuntary celibate, communities, openly sanctifies violence by portraying mass killers and terrorists as saints or martyrs. In fact, this has a historical background. The Cult of Saints, which has long glorified far-right terrorists, is rooted in cult-like approaches to Nazism. In the 1950s, the Greek-French National Socialist Savitri Devi argued that Adolf Hitler was an avatar, or reincarnation, of Vishnu who would bring an end to the Hindu dark age known as Kali Yuga. This interpretation placed Nazism within an occult and religious mythology. This historically deviant belief tradition has now evolved into a modern digital cult in which school attackers are deified in a quasi-religious form.

Brenton Tarrant, who killed 51 Muslims in Christchurch, New Zealand, in March 2019, was immediately declared a “saint” by online networks and depicted with a religious halo around his head. Many perpetrators before and after Tarrant, including the 2011 Norway attacker Anders Breivik, the Unabomber Ted Kaczynski, members of Atomwaffen Division, and the 1995 Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh, have been added to this “sacred” digital pantheon. As perhaps the clearest sign that fanatical admiration for violence can fully eclipse political ideology, even Jim Jones, the leader of the Jonestown cult who had no connection to the far right and drove more than 900 of his followers to suicide, has appeared on some saint lists.



Brenton Tarrant's portrayal as a Christian saint within online extremist networks.

Today, this Cult of Saints is organized around ecosystems on Telegram such as the "Terrorgram" network and the "Soyjak Attacker Video Fandom" (SAVF). These networks publish monthly "Saints' Calendars" listing perpetrators' attack dates and deaths, turning nihilist violence into something resembling a religious ritual. For a young person, these "Saint Cards" offer a sense of belonging and dark role models, much like a religious community. The perpetrators' actions are mythologized, and each new massacre is treated as a symbolic act of worship that adds to this legendary narrative.

For example, Juraj Krajčík, who carried out a bar attack in Slovakia in October 2022, and Peyton Gendron, who carried out the Buffalo attack, were inspired by this pantheon. After Krajčík thanked Terrorgram in his manifesto, the network quickly declared him a "Saint."

The same cultic worship and sanctification of violence are also widespread in misogynistic incel communities. Elliot Rodger, who carried out the Isla Vista massacre in 2014, is referred to as "Saint Elliot" on incel forums, and violence against women is described within this subculture as "going ER." Incel communities glorify the actions of figures such as Rodger by turning them into cult leaders as a way of overcoming their social exclusion and crises of masculinity. Indeed, the fact that İsa Aras, the perpetrator of the Kahramanmaraş attack in Türkiye, used an image of Elliot Rodger to reference this aesthetic reflects the local manifestation of a global cultic pattern.

Internet Folklore

Internet folklore consists of urban legends, memes, fictional horror stories, and subcultural jokes collectively created by users in digital environments. In traditional folklore studies, legends are not merely stories that are told; they also function as "maps of action" that shape

human behavior. The transformation of internet folklore into violence can be understood through the concept of enactment. Enactment refers to the real-world performance of a digital legend, fictional narrative, or online story, in other words, the transition from narrative to action. Alienated individuals may seek to become part of these digital legends by participating in them through acts of physical violence.

Alongside occult organizations and the Cult of Saints, digital cults that form around fictional internet legends play a significant role in the radicalization of anarchist and nihilist youth within online ecosystems. Cult-like beliefs built around internet legends can drive young people toward brutal acts of real-world violence. The most striking example is the Slender Man stabbing case of 2014 in the United States, in which two 12-year-old girls, Anissa Weier and Morgan Geyser, lured a classmate into the woods and stabbed her 19 times. The attackers committed this horrific act in an effort to become followers, or proxies, of the entirely fictional Slender Man character they had encountered online and to summon him into the physical world. This bloody incident clearly demonstrates how anonymously created fictional legends can become deadly maps of action for young people who have become detached from reality.

Similarly, in December 2024, 15-year-old Natalie Rupnow, who carried out a school attack in the United States, shared a photograph of herself online wearing the same T-shirt as Columbine attacker Eric Harris, thereby participating in this folkloric legend through an act of enactment.

The Bandar Utama school stabbing in Malaysia in October 2024 and the Jakarta school bombing attempt in Indonesia in November 2025 are further international examples of enactment, in which perpetrators brought internet folklore into the real world by adopting popular references, styles of dress, and replica weapons associated with these online legends.

Apocalyptic (Eschatological) Conspiracy Theories:

Apocalyptic conspiracy theories are belief systems that adapt themes from traditional Christianity, especially those found in the Book of Revelation, such as the end of the world, the final judgment, and the cosmic battle between good and evil, to contemporary secular political events.

These theories claim that behind the world's economic, social, and medical crises lies a deep-state or cabal structure made up of a secret, satanic elite seeking to destroy the world. Believers see themselves as holy warriors or chosen prophets tasked with purifying the world before the coming "Apocalypse" or "Storm." They view the world as so corrupt that, rather than seeking to heal it, they desire its complete destruction through catastrophe.

QAnon, "The Storm," and the January 6 Capitol Riot:

QAnon is a digital apocalyptic cult built around the belief that a global elite cabal engages in child trafficking, worships Satan, and controls the world. This conspiracy theory anticipates a coming "day of reckoning," referred to as "The Storm" or "The Great Awakening," during which members of the elite will supposedly be tried and executed. Followers portray former U.S. President Donald Trump as a messiah-like figure engaged in a struggle against this evil. QAnon beliefs did not remain confined to the virtual world; they manifested in acts of violence during the January 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol, when crowds that included Jacob Chansley, widely known as the "QAnon Shaman," stormed the building.

Covid-19, Biological Weapons, and the Train Sabotage Case (Eduardo Moreno)

During the Covid-19 pandemic, QAnon and similar apocalyptic movements promoted the belief that the virus, or the vaccines developed to combat it, were “biological weapons” created by powerful elites to control or eliminate humanity. In April 2020, a train engineer named Eduardo Moreno intentionally derailed a locomotive in Los Angeles after becoming convinced that the USNS Mercy, a U.S. Navy hospital ship deployed to assist Covid-19 patients, was actually part of a government conspiracy. Believing the vessel was connected to a covert government takeover, Moreno attempted to damage it by deliberately driving the train off the tracks.

The Paranoia of Weaponized Natural Disasters and Climate Manipulation:

Apocalyptic conspiracy theories often adapt biblical narratives of floods and catastrophes to contemporary climate-related events. Following Hurricanes Helene and Milton in the United States in October 2024, conspiracy theorists portrayed the disasters not as natural ecological events but as attacks carried out through “weather weapons” or geoengineering technologies allegedly controlled by the government to punish civilians, reduce the population, and deceive the public. These apocalyptic delusions escalated to the point that meteorologists reporting on weather conditions received death threats.

Part Three: Why Are Our Youth Being Drawn into the Wave of Anarchist-Nihilist Violence?

Deep psychological and sociological mechanisms help explain why cultic, occult, and anarchist-nihilist beliefs can have such a transformative and deadly effect on young people. Violent extremism is generally defined as the approval, justification, and direct use of violence to achieve ideological, religious, or political objectives. Today, reductionist approaches that explain radicalization and violent acts solely through individual psychopathology have largely been abandoned. Instead, theories that examine the intersection of an individual’s social context, psychological needs, and ideological narratives have come to the fore.

In particular, the loss of meaning and the perception of hopelessness experienced by young people in transitional periods through psychosocial processes can play a significant role in drawing them toward nihilist extremism and radical groups. For this reason, the search for meaning and the perception of hopelessness will be addressed as the first pathway of nihilist radicalization.

Step One: Meaning, Belonging, and Alienation

Youth is the stage of life in which individuals most strongly need to form an identity, find a place in society, be recognized, and be respected. For this reason, young people who are looking for work, seeking a romantic partner, disconnected from education, neglected within their families, or excluded from their social circles are among the groups in which the search for meaning is most intense. When young people cannot find a strong purpose to hold onto, a reliable sense of belonging, or hope for the future, they may develop a deep sense of loneliness, alienation, and meaninglessness. In sociological terms, this condition can be described as “anomie.” Anomie refers to the weakening of an individual’s ties to society’s rules, values, and institutions; it is the feeling of being outside the social order, abandoned, and deprived of meaning.

This void of meaning plays a critical role in radicalization processes. Psychological research shows that individuals who turn to violence are often driven not only by ideological texts, but also by the desire to “matter,” “make themselves visible,” “gain respect,” and “leave a mark.”

Significance quest theory points precisely to this dynamic. When individuals feel worthless, invisible, or unsuccessful, they become more receptive to narratives that promise to restore a sense of significance. These narratives may take religious, ideological, nihilist, occult, or destructive forms.

Cultic and occult groups offer an alternative space of identity and belonging, especially to young people who feel excluded from society, isolated, or burdened by a sense of failure. These groups construct a false world of meaning in which young people are made to feel like “elites outside the system,” “awakened individuals,” or “superior beings.” As a result, the young person begins to interpret failure in their own life not as a personal inadequacy, but as the product of a “corrupt system.” This interpretation provides a form of narcissistic relief. The problem is no longer within the self, but in the world as a whole. Therefore, the world must be rejected, society must be scorned, institutions must be dismissed, and the existing order must be declared entirely rotten.

Nihilist violence networks become effective precisely on this fragile psychological ground. While traditional ideologies often offer young people a long-term cause, organized struggle, and political objectives, new nihilist and occult networks offer a darker, more personal, and more destructive promise. This promise is not built on “fixing the world,” but on “taking revenge on the world.” Socially isolated young people who struggle with depression, have suffered peer bullying, or have experienced neglect or trauma within the family are offered dark fame, power, and visibility through violence. As a result, a young person who believes they have no impact in ordinary life may fall into the illusion that they can “go down in history” through destruction.

Structures such as O9A, the Cult of Saints, and similar online nihilist violence networks exploit this void of meaning. They provide young people with a false sense of superiority, control, and destiny that they cannot find in ordinary life. The declaration of perpetrators as “saints,” the circulation of manifestos as sacred texts, the presentation of attacks as performances, and the glorification of perpetrators within digital subcultures are all parts of this mechanism. In this way, a young person trapped in a sense of victimhood may suddenly begin to imagine themselves as someone who will “change history,” “defy the system,” or “punish the corrupt world.”

In this process, dystopian and utopian narratives become intertwined. On the one hand, the young person comes to believe that the world is entirely broken, that humanity is decaying, and that society has lost its meaning. On the other hand, within this collapse, they assign themselves a special, chosen, and superior role. Thus, nihilism merges with narcissism. The individual claims to believe in no values, yet at the same time attaches extraordinary meaning to their own destructive act. This is one of the most dangerous thresholds of radicalization. At this point, the young person is no longer simply angry; they have begun to understand their anger as a historical, metaphysical, or cosmic mission.

Young people today face this fragility amid even deeper global crises. Climate change, pandemics, economic inequality, weakened confidence in the future, declining trust in institutions, and digital loneliness all produce serious existential anxiety among young people. Loneliness is therefore no longer merely an individual feeling; it has become a widespread social problem. When families, schools, religious institutions, politics, and civil society fail to offer young people a strong sense of meaning, belonging, and future, dark networks fill that void.

The traces of this dynamic can also be seen in cases such as Arda K. and Semih Ç. In these cases, loneliness, withdrawal, exclusion, the turn toward digital subcultures, and the search for a dark form of meaning are intertwined. The issue is not merely individual psychopathology or isolated deviance. Rather, it points to a broader crisis of meaning. When a young person cannot find a place in mainstream society, digital violence networks offer a false sense of belonging and a destructive sense of significance. Radicalization should therefore be understood not only as a process of ideological persuasion, but also as a distorted search for meaning.

In conclusion, nihilist and occult radicalization is a new form of violence that exploits young people's need for meaning, belonging, status, and recognition. These networks do not offer young people a genuine purpose in life; instead, they turn their wounds, loneliness, and feelings of worthlessness into a destructive fantasy. For this reason, the response cannot be limited to security measures alone. A broad prevention ecosystem must be built, extending from families to schools, from psychological support mechanisms to digital platforms, and from religious and civil structures to local governments. Unless the networks that promise young people false superiority and dark fame are countered with genuine belonging, hope, meaning, and a dignified future, it will not be possible to understand or prevent this new form of radicalization.

Step Two: A Sense of Hopelessness

Young people's feelings of insignificance, marginalization, and hopelessness can act as catalysts in radicalization processes. Those who experience peer bullying, become socially isolated, or lose hope for the future because of economic deprivation may turn to radical groups as a way of overcoming their sense of exclusion. These groups offer not only an ideological framework, but also a sense of belonging, brotherhood, visibility, and a clear purpose that young people may not find in mainstream society. For a young person who feels worthless, alone, or abandoned, the radical group can therefore become, even temporarily, a space of meaning, status, and protection.

Today, younger generations are confronted not only with individual problems, but also with broader social and ecological crises. Growing awareness that the planet is being damaged by human action, combined with the perception that the political, economic, and social institutions created to improve life often produce inequality, insecurity, and alienation for large segments of society, feeds a collective sense of hopelessness. Constant exposure to these realities from an early age can deepen anxiety, depression, and a sense of having no future among young people. In this context, the growing popularity of philosophical approaches such as absurdism and nihilism is no coincidence. These ideas offer individuals either a form of acceptance or a mental escape from meaninglessness and uncertainty. Their spread, therefore, should be read not merely as an intellectual trend, but also as a response to the psychological and social pressures produced by the contemporary world.

An article published in August 2025 in the U.S. scientific journal PLOS One, based on surveys of millions of people across more than 40 countries, found that young people have become the age group with the lowest life satisfaction. According to the study, until recently, the happiness curve followed a clear pattern: high in childhood and youth, lower in middle age, and higher again in old age. Today, however, young people, once the second-happiest group, have

become the only group experiencing a decline in happiness. The group most affected by this trend is individuals aged 12 to 24.⁷

Recent surveys indicate that young people's interest in democracy has declined significantly, while trust in political institutions has fallen to historically low levels. As confidence in established institutions weakens, young people may become increasingly receptive to alternative narratives that promise certainty, belonging, or a sense of purpose. This erosion of trust can create a fertile environment for radical ideologies, conspiracy theories, and anti-system movements that present themselves as alternatives to mainstream political and social structures.⁸ This should be read not merely as political apathy, but as the result of a deeper social disillusionment. As young people lose faith in the ability of existing institutions to solve problems, hope gives way to cynicism and pessimism. The ironic, dismissive, and hopeless language that has become widespread, particularly in online culture, makes this mood even more visible. As a result, young people withdraw from political participation, social struggle, and individual effort because they no longer believe that change is possible. In other words, the passivity of younger generations stems not from laziness, but from a weakened belief that the system can truly change.

Imagine being told throughout your life that "if you work hard enough, you can become anything," only to discover upon entering adulthood that almost everything, from housing and healthcare to education and basic needs, has become increasingly out of reach. The world inherited by Generation Z is defined less by promises of freedom and opportunity than by economic insecurity, the climate crisis, political deadlock, and a digital culture that produces a constant sense of catastrophe.

For this reason, many young people do not see the problems they face as stemming solely from their own individual failures. On the contrary, they see that the institutions built and managed by previous generations have failed to address economic crises, pandemics, climate challenges, and social inequalities. More importantly, they witness political leaders often choosing to mobilize people through fear, anger, and polarization rather than producing solutions to these crises.

In this environment, politics ceases to be a space where common problems are addressed and instead becomes an arena in which everyone tries to defeat everyone else. Polarization turns every debate into a confrontation and every attempt at compromise into an act that is perceived as betrayal. As anger becomes the dominant language of public life, politicians seek to preserve their power by constantly reproducing that anger.

Social media deepens this mood even further. Young people are constantly exposed to news of disasters, while also living in a performance space where they feel pressured to appear successful, informed, political, sensitive, and influential at all times. In this digital culture, sincerity is often perceived as weakness, cynicism is rewarded, and optimism is seen as naive or even embarrassing.

⁷ Ana Galvañ ve Daniel Soufi, "A Generation in Crisis: Why Young People Are So Unhappy," *EL PAÍS English*, October 12, 2025. Accessed May 31, 2026. <https://english.elpais.com/health/2025-10-12/a-generation-in-crisis-why-young-people-are-so-unhappy.html>.

⁸ Seona Maskara, "'We Have the Least Amount of Agency in Our Future, but the Most Future to Live': Youth Share Their Distrust of Democracy," *CIRCLE*, March 25, 2026. Accessed May 31, 2026. <https://circle.tufts.edu/latest-research/we-have-least-amount-agency-our-future-most-future-live-youth-share-their-distrust>.

As a result, when young people look at democracy, they struggle to see a system in which promises are kept, problems are solved, and people are genuinely represented. Instead, they see a dead end where everyone speaks but no one listens, crises are postponed, anger is amplified, and hope for change is steadily eroded. Their distancing from democracy, therefore, cannot be reduced to simple indifference or apoliticism. The real issue is not that young people fail to understand the value of democracy, but that they have lost faith in its ability to produce tangible improvements in their own lives. As young people lose that faith, their anger grows.

Step Three: Moral Disengagement and the Aesthetics of Dehumanization

For young people trapped in hopelessness, radical groups present violence not merely as a form of action, but as an exciting “adventure,” even a grand stage of existence, against a life they perceive as ordinary, dull, and worthless. Within these narratives, a young person who cannot find meaning, success, or belonging in life is no longer merely excluded, oppressed, or victimized. A new role is assigned to them: warrior, avenger, chosen one, or savior.

This is precisely where the influence of radical groups begins. These groups offer young people both dystopian and utopian narratives. The dystopian narrative claims that the world is collapsing, society is corrupt, and race, nation, religion, or humanity is being driven toward extinction. The utopian narrative, in turn, promises a perfect order to be built after this collapse. In this way, the young individual begins to see personal anger and feelings of failure as part of a larger historical mission. The pain they experience is no longer merely a personal problem; in their eyes, it becomes a sign of a great war, a sacred cause, or an approaching apocalypse.

For this reason, a radicalized young person often perceives violence not as a simple crime, but as an act that will give meaning to their existence. The way to overcome a sense of insignificance is to imagine oneself as a figure who can alter the course of history. Unable to create value in their own life, the young person assigns themselves a false but powerful sense of value within radical narratives. This value often takes shape around ideas such as a “sacred mission,” “final battle,” “purification,” “revenge,” or “building a new order.”

Cults, occult violence networks, and nihilist radical circles make this process even more dangerous. These structures gradually disable the radicalizing individual’s internal moral compass. As described by Albert Bandura’s concept of moral disengagement, perpetrators first justify their own actions, then strip their victims of their humanity, and ultimately come to view violence as morally acceptable behavior. As a result, the idea of killing, harming, or destroying ceases to be perceived as an ordinary evil and is instead reframed as something necessary, inevitable, or even noble.

At this stage, language plays a decisive role. Violence often begins with words. People are first described as “enemies,” “traitors,” “scum,” “vermin,” “insects,” or “beings that must be eliminated.” This language severs the human connection between victim and perpetrator. Once empathy disappears, the moral barriers that restrain violence begin to erode. For young minds constantly exposed to dark digital networks that glorify hatred, apocalypse, destruction, and misanthropy, maintaining a healthy moral balance becomes increasingly difficult.

Arda K.’s description of people in his manifesto as “bugs,” “cockroaches,” and “vermin,” as well as İsa Aras’s openly misanthropic statements, are clear examples of this moral rupture. At this point, the victim is no longer perceived as a human being. Their family, story, suffering, fears, and life are erased. What remains is merely an object that must be destroyed. Radicalization,

therefore, is not only an ideological transformation; it is also a corruption of language, morality, and the perception of humanity itself.

Ultimately, radical groups offer hopeless young people a false sense of meaning, a false form of heroism, and a false promise of grandeur. Yet at the center of this meaning lies not the preservation or enrichment of life, but its destruction. While the young individual imagines themselves as a savior, they become trapped within a dark moral universe that devalues human beings, erodes compassion, and sanctifies violence. For this reason, understanding youth radicalization requires looking beyond organizations, ideologies, and digital networks alone. It also requires examining the search for meaning, feelings of worthlessness, the corruption of language, and processes of moral disengagement as interconnected dimensions of the same phenomenon.

Step Four: Motivational Imbalance and the Justification of Violence

Motivational imbalance occurs when one need begins to outweigh all other needs. For example, a young person may excessively amplify the need to feel meaningful, valued, or significant. This need can become so dominant that safety, survival, moral boundaries, and social rules are pushed into the background.

In this situation, violence gradually begins to appear legitimate in the individual's eyes. First, the person starts to disregard the moral and social limits that would normally restrain them. People generally act by balancing different needs. Yet when the search for meaning and significance comes before everything else, a person may ignore their own safety, the principle of not harming others, or the rules set by society. In this way, the first psychological barrier against violence weakens.

In the second stage, the individual becomes more receptive to narratives that justify violence. Extremist ideologies present acts that would normally be considered crimes as sacred duties serving a higher cause. Attacking civilians is reframed as defending a cause; dying or killing is reinterpreted as honor, sacrifice, or heroism. Violence therefore ceases to be a moral problem in the individual's mind.

In the third stage, the person begins to believe that violence will give them value. Extremist groups present violence, and even the sacrifice of one's own life, as the highest proof of loyalty. The individual comes to believe that such an act will bring respect, remembrance, or profound meaning. Even costs such as imprisonment, death, or social exclusion become insignificant when compared with this exaggerated "gain in value."

Ultimately, violence no longer appears to the individual as deviant behavior, but as a way to prove themselves and give meaning to their existence. Motivational imbalance becomes dangerous precisely at this point, because the person no longer sees violence as wrong, but as a legitimate means of gaining value.

Vulnerable Identities as Targets in Digital Environments

Nihilist and violence-promoting online networks deliberately target vulnerable young people. Those with limited social support, feelings of exclusion, or difficulty seeking help are particularly susceptible. LGBTQ+ youth, members of racial or ethnic minorities, individuals experiencing psychological difficulties, and those struggling with profound loneliness are among the groups most at risk.

These networks operate in digital spaces where young people already spend a significant amount of time. Platforms such as Roblox, Minecraft, Twitch, Discord, and mainstream social media have therefore become important hunting grounds. Young people who are interested in true crime content, serial killers, graphic violence, dark humor, or shocking material are often targeted more directly.

The recruitment process rarely begins with an explicit call to violence. Instead, it starts with the cultivation of trust. Network members establish friendships or even deceptive romantic relationships with young people. This process is commonly referred to as grooming, a form of online preparation designed to facilitate exploitation. The young person begins to feel understood, accepted, and valued. Communication is then gradually moved to more private platforms such as Discord, Telegram, and similar spaces. Over time, the young person becomes increasingly disconnected from family, school, and the wider social environment.

Within these networks, violence is often presented as a game. Bullying, threats, and criminal behavior are framed as entertaining challenges. Status and prestige are measured according to how bold, ruthless, or transgressive an individual appears to be. Young people seek visibility within these virtual communities and are encouraged to escalate their behavior in order to gain respect, influence others, or inspire fear.

These environments frequently develop their own internal hierarchies. In some respects, they resemble the social structure of a high school cafeteria, where those who display the most extreme, provocative, or aggressive behaviors gain the highest status. This is where clout culture, the pursuit of online visibility and reputation, becomes particularly important. Young people are drawn into competition in order to maintain or improve their position within the community.

Memes, dark humor, and the aesthetics of violence make this process even more attractive. Meme cultures such as Soyjak communities can normalize sadism and cruelty. Humiliation, threats, and dehumanizing language are presented as forms of entertainment or rebellion. As a result, young people may initially encounter violence as a joke. Over time, however, this humor can weaken moral sensitivity.

The next stage involves desensitization. Young people are repeatedly exposed to graphic videos, footage of animal abuse, terrorist executions, and other forms of extreme violence. The goal is to erode empathy. Gradually, brutality becomes normalized. Suffering, death, and harm begin to appear as ordinary forms of online content.

As involvement deepens, young people may be asked to prove their loyalty to the group. They may be encouraged to harm themselves, harm animals, or participate in minor criminal activities. In some cases, they are pressured to share sexually explicit images. Once such material has been provided, it becomes a tool of control in the hands of the network.

At this stage, blackmail mechanisms often emerge. Network administrators may use compromising images, videos, or records to threaten the young person. Fear of exposure to family members, schools, or peers can push individuals toward increasingly serious actions. As a result, the young person may come to believe that there is no way out. In some cases, they may be pressured into irreversible acts such as arson, assault, suicide, murder, or school attacks.

This process should not be understood solely as individual deviance. It is also connected to broader crises associated with the digital age. Digital echo chambers, information overload, and online misinformation profoundly shape how young people perceive the world. Constant exposure to crises, contradictory information, and polarizing content can foster deep skepticism toward the very idea of objective truth.

Over time, this skepticism can evolve into a loss of meaning. For some young people, all knowledge begins to appear subjective. The future seems bleak, society appears artificial, and humanity itself comes to be viewed as fundamentally hopeless. Such perceptions can strengthen nihilistic tendencies. The idea that life lacks meaning becomes increasingly persuasive.

These nihilistic tendencies do not remain confined to abstract beliefs. They become visible in young people's humor, online language, and social media behavior. Making jokes about disasters, transforming hopelessness into humor, and portraying all forms of conviction as naïve or ridiculous become increasingly common. This attitude often functions as a coping mechanism. At the same time, however, it reflects deeper experiences of meaninglessness, insecurity, and social disconnection.

In the digital age, cults and extremist ideas spread more rapidly through algorithmic systems. Filter bubbles and echo chambers repeatedly expose young people to similar content. Gradually, they lose contact with alternative perspectives and become immersed in the same language, the same humor, the same anger, and the same dark worldview.

These subcultures also draw heavily on elements of contemporary gaming culture. Graphic violence is presented through the aesthetics of video games. Violent acts are described using language reminiscent of first-person shooter games. Tactics, targets, and weapons are discussed, evaluated, and sometimes ranked. The perpetrator increasingly imagines themselves as the protagonist of a game.

Livestreamed attacks provide some of the clearest examples of this logic. In cases such as the Eskişehir attack, the camera transforms the act into a performance. The objective is not merely to inflict harm. It is also to be watched, discussed, and imitated. The perpetrator behaves almost like a player attempting to achieve a high score.

For this reason, online violence networks do more than produce propaganda. They reshape young people's emotional worlds, moral boundaries, and perceptions of reality. Violence first becomes humor. It is then gamified. Later, it becomes a source of status and recognition. Eventually, it emerges as a viable course of action in the real world.

As a result, cognitive radicalization deepens. The young person no longer perceives violence as a senseless evil. Instead, it comes to be seen as a means of proving oneself, taking revenge, becoming visible, or gaining membership in a community. Once this stage is reached, radicalization no longer remains at the level of ideas alone; the risk of translating belief into action increases significantly.

Conclusion: Future Threats and the Search for Solutions

Traditional counterterrorism measures, built around the "capture or kill" paradigm of the past, were designed to address adult terrorist organizations characterized by clear ideological agendas and hierarchical structures. As a result, they are increasingly inadequate in confronting today's self-radicalized young perpetrators who often operate independently. In an

environment where social media acts as an accelerator, extremism is gamified on platforms such as Roblox and Discord, and children as young as eight or ten years old are being targeted, there is an urgent need for long-term, innovative, and preventive policy responses. To address this growing crisis, five key policy measures should be implemented without delay:

A New Security Approach Beyond Ideological Categories, Focused on Violent Impulses

The first and most urgent step in preventing youth radicalization is for security forces and policymakers to revise their traditional understanding of extremist ideologies. Today's young people often do not adhere to the rigid manifesto of a specific organization, such as Al-Qaeda. Instead, they construct their own worldview by combining contradictory ideologies with personal grievances through what is known as "composite violent extremism." In many cases, the main driver of violence is not ideology, but deeply personal factors such as loneliness, bullying, parental neglect, or romantic and sexual frustration.

For example, the Southport attacker, Axel Rudakubana, was referred three times to the United Kingdom's preventive "Prevent" programme because of his interest in terrorism and school attacks. Yet the case was closed early because security officials could not identify a "fixed ideology" in his actions. The absence of a clear ideology does not mean the absence of danger. Indeed, this misjudgment cost the lives of three young children. For this reason, the concrete policy recommendation is to move away from a siloed approach that places ideology at the center of youth violence, and to adopt a broader model focused on the systemic problems and underlying motivations behind violence. Heavy interventions by intelligence and security forces should be reserved only for violent cases that have reached the final stages of radicalization. Early detection and intent assessment for young people should instead be treated as a specialized field led by radicalization experts with competence in the psychology of violence and terrorism, rather than being left solely to security units.

Security units, for their part, must learn to read perpetrators' ritualistic motives and esoteric symbols, including logos associated with O9A or the 764 network, through criminal profiling models such as the "symbolic analysis" used by the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit. Families, school psychological counselors, and civil society actors must also be trained to recognize "leakage" behaviors before an attack occurs, such as writing manifestos or posting threats on social media. Unfortunately, it must be acknowledged that Türkiye currently lacks the programmes needed to train specialists in these fields.

Supporting Youth-Led, Organic, and Inclusive Community Initiatives

Radicalization often operates by exploiting young people's need for belonging and purpose. The second concrete policy recommendation is therefore to support online initiatives that promote tolerance, inclusion, and positive forms of community in order to fill this void in a healthy way. A critical principle must be observed, however: these programmes should not be government-controlled initiatives or projects conducted through official state messaging. Public awareness campaigns created in a bureaucratic language often fail to gain credibility among young people and may even be perceived as alienating.

Instead, support should be directed toward grassroots initiatives led by young people themselves. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Youth-Led Action Board provides a positive example of this approach. Similarly, the "Birds Aren't Real" movement, a satirical conspiracy theory campaign created and led largely by members of Generation Z, has

demonstrated how organic humor can serve as an effective antidote to misinformation and extremist narratives by mocking conspiracy theories and exposing their absurdities. Young people should be provided with funding and legal frameworks that enable them to create their own narratives and initiatives aimed at preventing radicalization. As one South African youth leader aptly stated, “Nothing should be done for children without children.” This principle should guide future prevention efforts.

Non-governmental organizations and municipalities should allocate substantial annual funding to youth-led projects designed to prevent radicalization. Equally important, these funds should be distributed through transparent and objective processes rather than ideological considerations, ensuring that support is based on merit, effectiveness, and inclusivity.

Making Major Investments in Mental Health, Psychological Resilience, and Parent-Focused Preventive Programmes

The third step is to recognize youth radicalization not merely as a public order problem, but as a broader public health and psychological crisis, and to shape budgets accordingly. Loneliness, neurodiversity, including autism diagnoses, domestic violence, and sexual frustration, as seen in the incel movement, are among the key triggers that can push young people toward neo-Nazi groups or nihilist suicide networks such as “764.” Governments should allocate substantial funding to preventive anti-violence infrastructures that strengthen young people’s psychological resilience. Moreover, this psychological support should not be limited to clinics; it should also be provided directly on the online platforms where young people are being radicalized, through trauma-informed teams.

The most important pillar of this policy is the education of parents and caregivers. Families should be placed at the very center of this struggle as the first line of defense. The grooming tactics used by extremist groups online, that is, the methods used to prepare children for online exploitation, resemble the methods of child abusers: first, they isolate the child from the family, and then they exploit the child by assigning radical tasks. Families should be equipped to recognize the warning signs that their children are being drawn into dark corners of the internet. Through tools such as prepared guides, parents should be taught strategies for reclaiming young people from extremist groups through compassionate, open, and understanding communication rather than anger or punishment.

Strict Online Content Moderation and Social Media Algorithm Reform

The greatest accelerator of this problem is undoubtedly unregulated digital culture. Platform algorithms designed to maximize corporate profit deliberately steer children toward violent, misogynistic, and far-right content in order to increase screen time. Indeed, research has shown how a young TikTok user can be exposed by the algorithm to a vast amount of misogynistic content in just five days. The fourth policy solution is to hold technology companies legally accountable through regulation and to transform the “anarchic” free-market logic of the digital world into a security-oriented infrastructure.

In this regard, legal regulations should be introduced to hold technology platforms accountable for the content they host and circulate. Severe sanctions should be imposed on platforms that allow pedophilic, zoophilic, and incel content. Social media companies should be held directly legally responsible when their algorithms contribute to the radicalization of children. The European Union’s Digital Services Act, which exposes companies to heavy fines, and

Australia's efforts to ban social media use for children under the age of 16 are examples of concrete steps governments can take.

However, the issue should not be limited to bans, or merely cutting off supply. Steps must also be taken to reduce demand among young people. Education policies should be updated so that children are taught critical media literacy in schools. Just as they are taught to pay attention to their physical nutrition, they should also be taught how to filter the toxic content they consume online. Short films, animations, games, and other age-appropriate materials should be developed to raise children's awareness of such harmful content.

A Youth-Centered Social State

Radicalization, particularly nihilist violent extremism, cannot be prevented through security measures alone. Such forms of violence are often driven not only by ideological doctrines, but also by loneliness, exclusion, hopelessness, and a loss of meaning. Young people who feel worthless, abandoned, and without a future can become increasingly vulnerable to dark digital networks, destructive narratives, and subcultures that glorify violence.

For this reason, one of the most important strategies for countering radicalization is the development of a strong social state and an inclusive model of governance that places young people at its center. Governments should not view young people solely through a security lens. Instead, they should adopt comprehensive policies that address education, employment, mental health, housing, belonging, and social support as interconnected dimensions of youth well-being.

When young people's need for meaning and belonging goes unmet, extremist groups step in to fill the void with toxic narratives. These groups offer young people a false identity, a false community, and a false sense of purpose. A strong social state, by contrast, can create meaningful opportunities in real life through vocational training, employment programmes, volunteering opportunities, cultural activities, and youth centers. When young people feel that they are valued, visible, and productive members of society, the appeal of the dark forms of belonging offered by violent networks begins to diminish.

At the same time, easy, free, and stigma-free access to mental health services is essential. Young people experiencing depression, trauma, social isolation, or profound hopelessness should be identified and supported at an early stage. Psychological counseling, guidance services, and crisis intervention mechanisms should be strengthened in schools, families, and local institutions. Without creating an environment in which young people feel comfortable seeking help, it is impossible to address the deeper drivers of radicalization.

Likewise, fundamental needs such as housing, employment opportunities, continued participation in education, and inclusion in social life should be treated as integral components of radicalization prevention policies. Educational institutions, social services, healthcare providers, local governments, and security agencies should work together, approaching at-risk youth not merely as potential offenders or threats, but as individuals who deserve protection, support, and inclusion. Multi-agency early intervention models represent one of the most effective ways to support vulnerable young people before they fall into the hands of extremist networks.

In conclusion, a youth-centered social state can reduce the feelings of hopelessness, loneliness, and meaninglessness that often fuel radicalization. It provides young people with

education, employment opportunities, psychological support, safe social environments, and a genuine sense of belonging. In doing so, it weakens the sense of despair that serves as the primary fuel for violent digital tribes, nihilist networks, and extremist groups. Countering radicalization is therefore not only a matter of security; it is also a matter of creating meaningful, dignified, and secure places for young people within society.

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