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Gianni Marasà, Williams Nuytens

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Radicalization and the social ties

The use of mixed methods in sociology: the case of French boxers

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Gianni Marasà, Phd. Student - Univ. Artois, Univ. Lille, Univ. Littoral Côte d'Opale, ULR 7369, Unité de Recherche Pluridisciplinaire Sport Santé Société (UR&PSSS), Sherpas, F-62800 Liévin, France

Williams Nuytens, Professor - Univ. Artois, Univ. Lille, Univ. Littoral Côte d'Opale, ULR 7369, Unité de Recherche Pluridisciplinaire Sport Santé Société (UR&PSSS), Sherpas, F-62800 Liévin, France

Introduction

The aim of this research is to focus on the links between combat sports and religious radicalization, which is a process throughout individuals or social groups could socialize on the basis of norms and values considered as deviant. If the lack of social recognition and/or protection appears to be key factors in this process, radicalization seems to depend on specific relationships with unique characteristics in quality and quantity.



Use of mixed methods

The analysis of these singular characteristics required the qualification of individual links through biographical interviews, but also their quantification through research techniques associated with network analysis (Lazega, 2012). The adoption of mixed methods has the advantage of being both qualifying and diachronic (through discourse analysis) as well as quantifying and synchronising (through network analysis).

Biographical interviews

Eight socio-biographical interviews (Dubar, Nicoud, 2017) were conducted with combat sport athletes, resulting in a preliminary typification. In addition, twenty "control" interviews were conducted to reinforce the typification and saturate the field data.

Network Analysis

A "logbook" was administered in order to reconstruct a *personal network* with two significant others in the baseline sample. Moreover, a meso sociological analysis was carried out with a "circle" allowing the identification of a *complete network* of about twenty participants (this analysis will not be presented here).

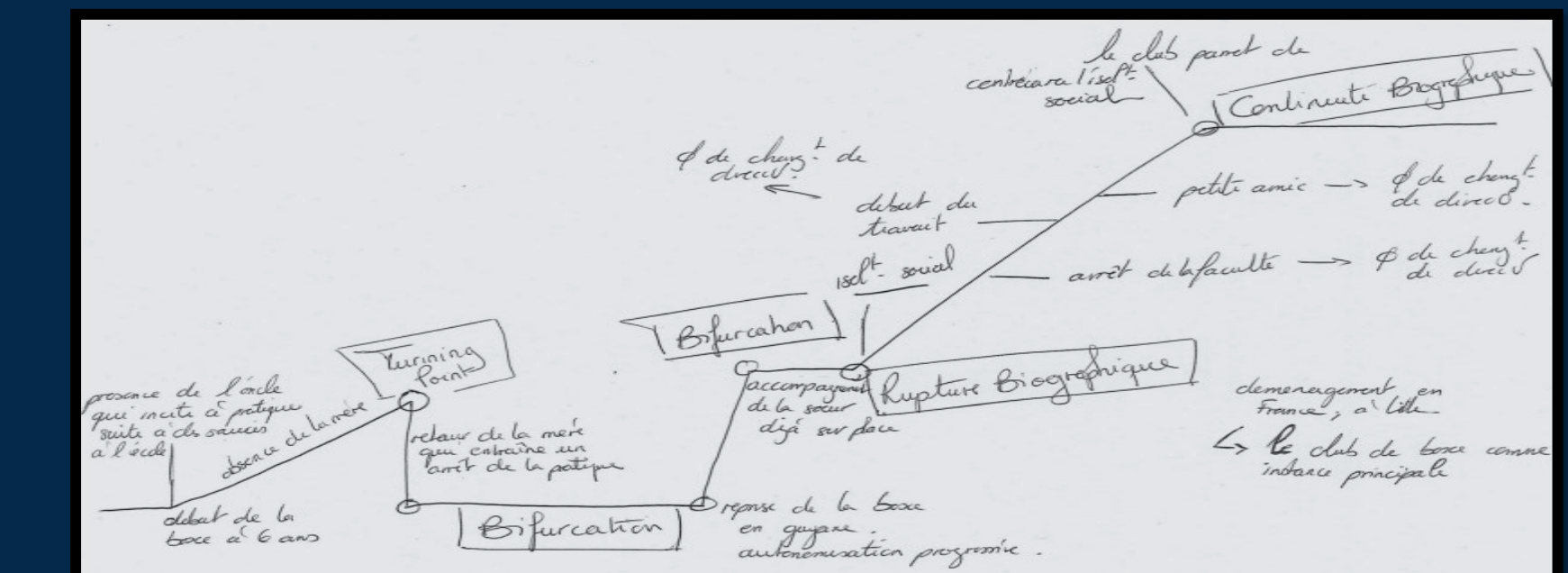
Presentation of tool

```
#Vertices 17
1 "X"
2 "A"
3 "B"
4 "C"
5 "D"
6 "E"
7 "F"
8 "G"
9 "H"
10 "I"
11 "J"
12 "K"
13 "L"
14 "M"
15 "N"
16 "O"
17 "P"
#Matrix
0 4 5 5 4 7 3 4 1 5 3 2 3 3 2 3 1
4 0 1 1 1 1 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
5 1 0 1 1 1 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
5 1 1 0 1 1 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
4 1 1 1 0 1 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
7 1 1 1 1 0 1 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
3 0 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 1
4 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 1 1 0
1 1 1 1 1 1 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
5 0 0 0 0 1 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1
3 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 1 0
2 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 0 1 0 1 1 1 1 0
3 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 0 1 1 0 1 1 1 0
3 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 0 1 1 1 0 1 1 0
2 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 0 1 1 1 1 1 0 0
3 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 0 1 1 1 1 1 0 0
1 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0
```

The logbook was administered to different boxers. Number of meetings, the status of the individuals visited, the perception of the exchange, the subject of the exchange, the place of the exchange, and other topics were investigated.

Data were coded in an integrated matrix in "Pajek" software for analysis. A network analysis was run and cross-tabulated with the socio-biographical interviews.

CARNET DE BORD DE : [Prénom du boxeur] Semaine du ??/??/2020 au ??/??/2020						
* Vous devez remplir ce carnet en prenant en compte uniquement les individus avec qui vous avez une interaction directe de plusieurs minutes. Exemple : vous êtes étudiant, vous êtes « boxeur » et 100 personnes dans la journée mais vous n'avez d'échanges directs prolongés qu'avec seulement 10 personnes au cours de la journée. Vous notez seulement les 10 personnes avec qui vous avez eu un échange. Exemple Biv : vous êtes au travail, vous saluez l'ensemble de vos collègues, mais au cours de la journée vous n'avez de discussion qu'avec un seul d'entre eux. Vous ne consignez que cette personne. Les échanges peuvent être contraints (imposés par un supérieur par exemple) ou acceptés (mutuellement décidés). * Il s'agit de l'ensemble de la vie sociale (travail, boxe, famille, amis, etc.)						
Jour (lundi...)	Heure	Nom	Lieu	Contraint ou accepté ?	Nature ? Motif de l'échange ?	Perception positive ou négative de l'échange ?
Lundi	10h	Amis J	Dehors	Accepté	Prendre des nouvelles	P
Lundi	12h-18h	C1	Boulot	Contraint	Travail	P
Lundi	12h-18h	C2	Boulot	Contraint	Travail	P
Lundi	12h-18h	C3	Boulot	Contraint	Travail	P
Lundi	12h-18h	Patron	Boulot	Contraint	Travail	P
Lundi	20h	Kader	Boxe	Accepté	boxe	P
Lundi	20h	Amis I	Boxe	Accepté	boxe	P



Results

The analysis of the biographical interviews traces the "career" of the individuals by considering both A) the successive stages that make up this career (Biographical Bifurcation, Turning Point, Biographical Rupture...) and B) subjective perceptions of these stages (Darmon, 2008). This procedure allows to integrate how biographical journeys and their characteristics have been experienced. The goal was to better explain and understand the finality of the career (in its sociological and non-professional sense).

In addition, the administration of the network analysis tool systematizes the individual's personal network and identifies the *centrality* of links or *circles* of relationships. The tool also allows to quantify and prioritize these links (according to their density, frequency or intensity), to identify *multiplex* links, and to highlight the recurrence of perceptions of the interactions experienced (whether negative or positive).

Thus, the use of mixed methods allows the study of an object or an individual in a systemic way (diachronically and synchronically). It also provides a systematization of the measurement scales and therefore a reproducibility during its administration. Indeed, predictable behavioral trends have been revealed. However, network analysis cannot be separated from a more qualitative analysis as far as it could deprive the researcher from a subjective dimension of the lived experiences, which is nevertheless explanatory of identity constructions.

Prospects

Network analysis is currently used in a reduced approach (close to the case study). We hope to stabilize the tool and then develop it further in order to 1) establish several measures (e.g., how social capital interacts with risky behaviors among more substantial samples) as well as certain correspondences (between social capital and deviant or non-deviant behaviors) or 2) modelling for "predictive" purposes. Precaution in the use of this approach is needed in order to avoid participants' stigmatization and a false understanding of the conditions leading to religious radicalization.

The aim of the project was to identify warning signals present in "biographical dispositions" (Marlière, 2021), indicators of relatedness (Paugam, 2008) and progressive disaffiliation (i.e., filiation, elective, and organic links and civic implication) or even of concentration (to the benefit of one or more particular circles). Therefore, this project contributes to radicalization preventions field in a French context considering for the factors leading individuals to a radicalized boxer career.

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