

Drugs and Violent Extremism

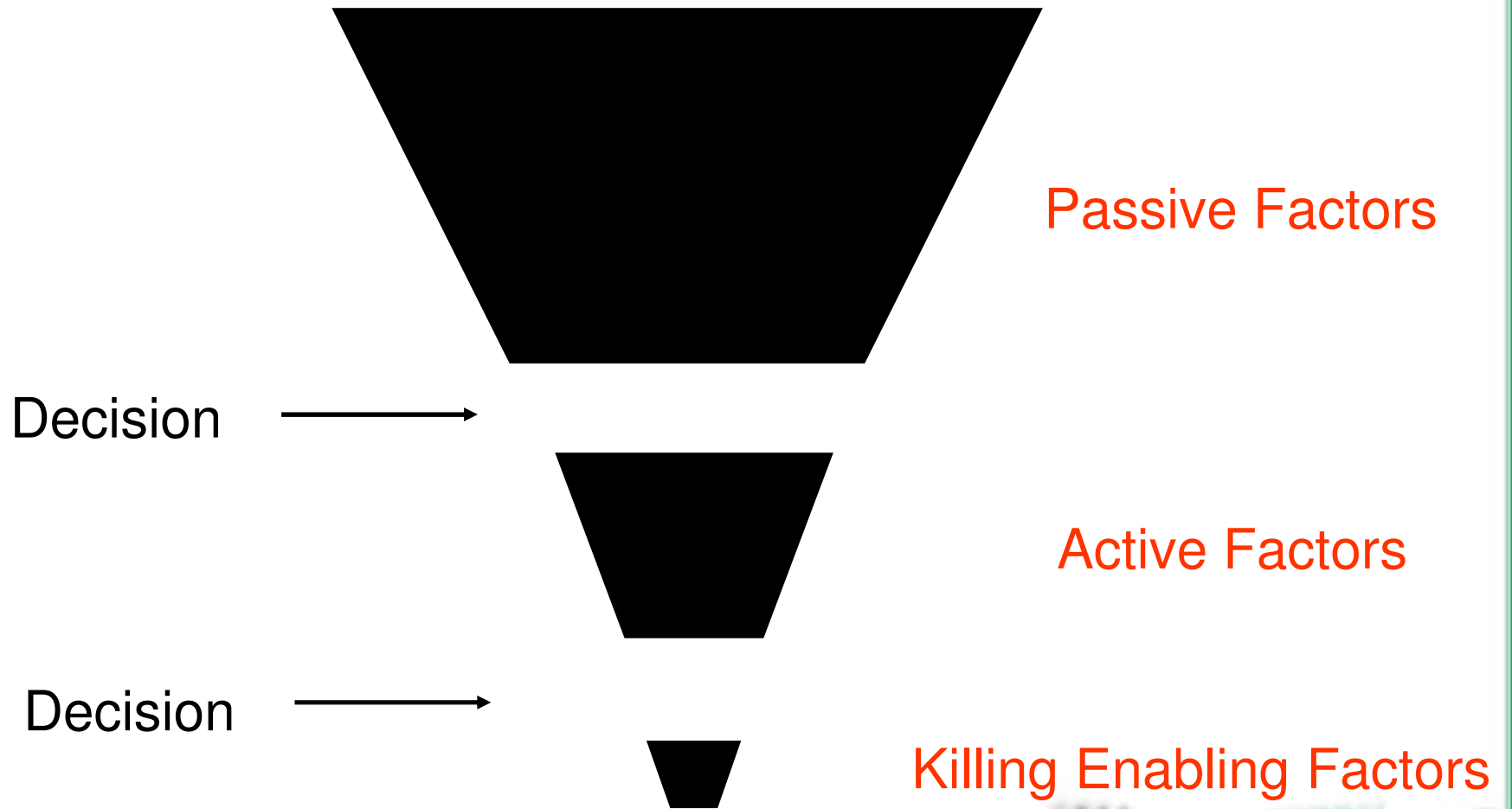
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The Rational Choice Model



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Risk taking behaviours

Many young people engage in 'hedonistic' risk taking behaviours which puts them at risk of a variety of negative outcomes.

In the development of violent extremism a period of engaging in risk taking behaviours is often observed.

It is when they seek to change their risk taking behaviour that they are vulnerable to the influence of violent extremists.



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Sudden change in religious practice

Religiously inspired violent extremism is a blend of ideology and religion and it is common for violent extremists to undergo rapid changes in religious practice.

Coupled with this increase in religious observance is a limited understanding of the faith.

This lack of religious knowledge is exploited by ideologues and recruiters in their rhetoric.

The increase in religious observance coupled with a limited theological understanding that originates from violent extremist ideology is the key.



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Negative peer influences

Evidence of gang involvement linked to criminality or to hate-linked violence.

Specifically, the formation of gangs for “defending the community”.

Can be seen as rejecting mainstream society and enforcing separatism between communities.

Acts of criminality are common among violent extremists, particularly petty fraud and drug dealing.

Vulnerable individuals can rationalise their criminal behaviour through adopting violent extremism.



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Conclusions

Drug use and distribution are common behaviours observed in violent extremists.

The income generated from drug distribution can be used to fund violent extremism.

Therefore, drugs are both active and passive factors in the rational choice model.



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