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PRE-EXISTING SOCIAL TIES IN JIHADI-SALAFIST RADICALIZATION: SPAIN'S CASE
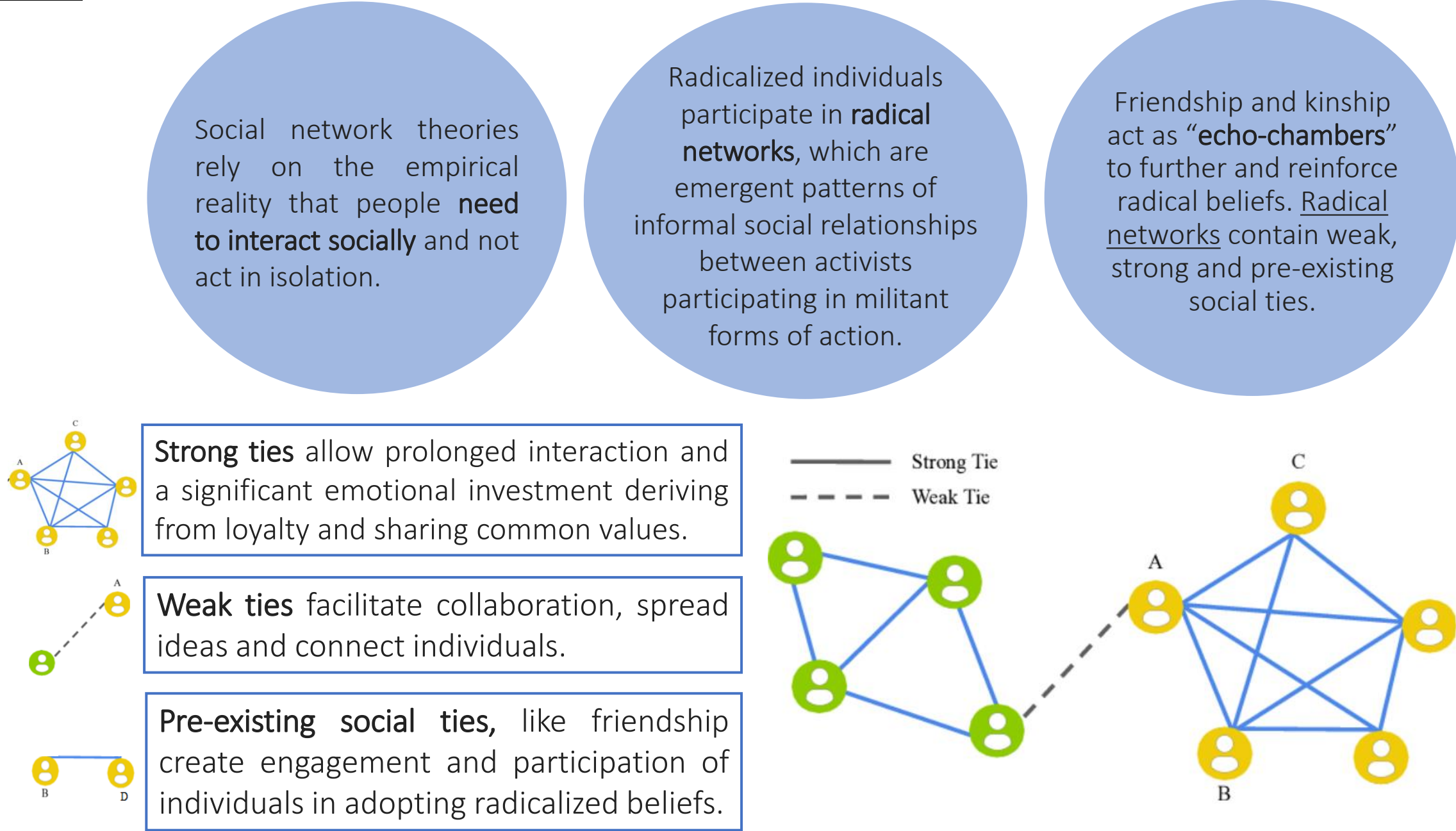
1 INTRODUCTION

15 years: 3 Jihadi-Salafist terrorist attacks in Spain **killed 234 people** and **injured 2.284.**

Understanding how social ties **legitimate, reinforce** beliefs and **facilitate** recruitment with immediate circles will help authorities <u>reshape</u> public policies.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social network theories rely on the empirical reality that people **need to interact socially** and not act in isolation.

Radicalized individuals participate in **radical networks**, which are emergent patterns of informal social relationships between activists participating in militant forms of action.

Friendship and kinship act as "echo-chambers" to further and reinforce radical beliefs. <u>Radical networks</u> contain weak, strong and pre-existing social ties.

3 METHODOLOGY

Empirical-Descriptive Methodology

Theoretical framework: Theories comparison and trend analyses of Sageman, Della Porta & Malthaner with *thematic analysis* to analyze.

Analytical study: With data from the El Cano's database of Jihadists in Spain (BDEYE) from 2001 to 2011 and 2012 to 2018 we will test our hypothesis analyzing the radical networks, radicalization modalities and pre-existing social ties.

Strong ties allow prolonged interaction and a significant emotional investment deriving from loyalty and sharing common values.

Weak ties facilitate collaboration, spread ideas and connect individuals.

Pre-existing social ties, like friendship create engagement and participation of individuals in adopting radicalized beliefs.

Strong Tie
Weak Tie

4 OBJECTIVES, QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

Research Questions

- As social media platforms become prominent from 2012 to 2018, will pre-existing ties <u>still be relevant</u>?
- Are pre-existing social ties, <u>significant</u> in the process of Jihadi-Salafism radicalization in Spain?

Objectives

- **Understand** the role of social networks on the adoption of radical jihadist beliefs.
- **Comprehend** if social networks are relevant in the individual's radicalization in Spain.

Hypothesis

- Pre-existing social ties are an <u>essential</u> component in the adoption of radical jihadist beliefs in Spain in the two periods.

<u>8 out of 10</u> individuals who radicalized had pre-existing social ties. Radicalized agents will **instrumentalize** the friendship and family connections with recruitment finalities. Those relations appear in the offline and mixed modalities.
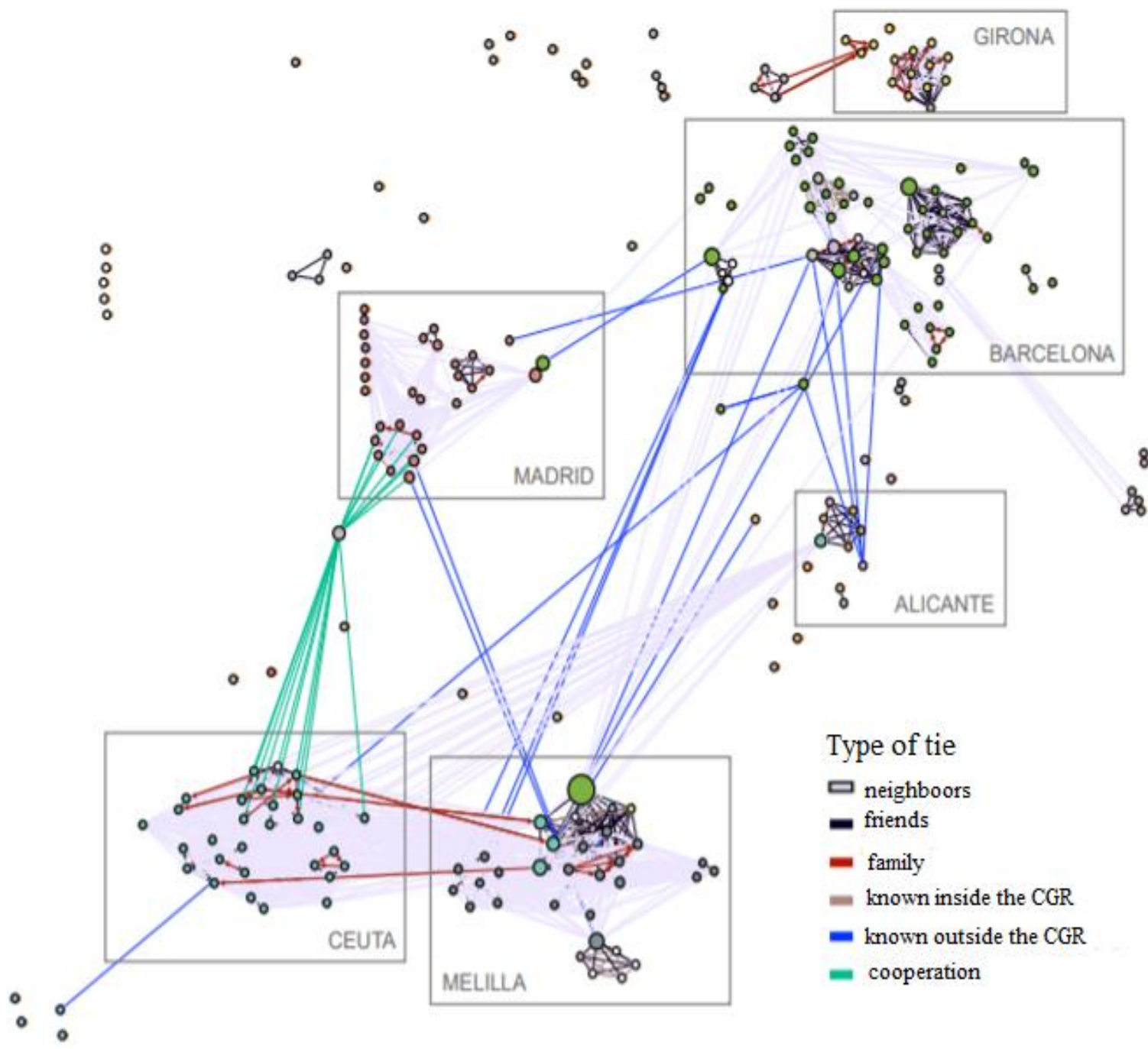
Prior social ties			
Environment	Yes	No	Total
Online	15,40%	77,80%	31,40%
Offline	20,50%	14,80%	19,00%
Mixed	64,10%	7,40%	49,50%
Total	78	27	105
Cases without data	9	4	13

<u>Change in patterns</u> on the two periods due to the increased importance of the **Internet**, more activists diversifying their recruitment means, leading to decreased offline and mixed and online modalities gaining importance.

Pre-existing ties are **relevant in both periods**, even with the increase of online modality. <u>71,9%</u> individuals radicalized using social networks (mixed and offline modality), being still prominent in the second period.

	Detained or deceased in 2001 to 2011		Detained or deceased in 2012 to 2017		Total	
Environment	In company	Alone	In company	Alone	In company	Alone
Mixed	46,50%	-	54,20%	-	51,80%	-
Offline	51,20%	-	17,70%	11,10%	28,10%	11,10%
Online	2,30%	-	28,10%	88,90%	20,10%	88,90%
Total	43	0	96	9	139	9
Cases without data	1	0	22	3	23	3

5 ANALYSIS OF OUR CASE STUDY: SPAIN

Type of tie
- neighboors
- friends
- family
- known inside the CGR
- known outside the CGR
- cooperation

Radicalization processes in Spain → concentrated in Barcelona, Madrid and Ceuta and Melilla: **radicalization bags**.

Radical networks of friends, neighbors, and family = networks with <u>strong ties</u> (inside the network), <u>weak ties</u> (that connect different networks) and <u>pre-existing social ties</u> (through friendship, family and neighborhood relations).

Radical networks' **echo-chamber role** with the need for the individual to ratify their ideas and act socially, will lead to the concentration of the radicalization processes.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The existence of pre-existing social ties is <u>crucial</u> in the jihadist radicalization processes.

The methodology allowed to identify the <u>main trends</u> in the selected literature by focusing on the literature of radicalization processes.

Future studies need to establish the link between <u>pre-existing social ties</u> and individuals engaging in <u>violent actions</u>, i.e., terrorism, to better understand the impact of this study's results.