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Thesis BSc European Studies

THE RADICALIZATION THREAT

Making Sense of Government Policy

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Abstract

In the past few decades, Islamic radicalization and its extreme terrorism have become an increasingly large problem to governments throughout the world. To properly address this, governments need effective policies to implement to protect their people. By looking at existing academic literature on both radicalization in general and Islamic radicalization specifically a framework has been created on how to best address radicalization. By analysing government policies from four different countries and their effectiveness, a properly backed recommendation can be made. The research shows that while many governments are aware of the generally perceived causes of radicalization, the actual translation into policy tends to be lacking. Likewise, the academic arena can successfully identify causes but proposing solutions becomes more difficult. Additional research remains needed to come to an end-all solution for radicalization.

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Alexander de Boer,
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List of Abbreviations

AIVD	General Intelligence and Security Service (The Netherlands)
BfV	Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution(Germany)
EU	European Union
GCHQ	Government Communications Headquarters (United Kingdom)
MI5	Security Service (United Kingdom)
NCTV	National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (The Netherlands)
UKBA	United Kingdom Border Agency
VSSE	State Security Service(Belgium)

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1. Introduction

"One shouldn't pursue the wrong policies just because one is afraid of not being reelected. Those who intend to govern have to take responsibility for their countries and for Europe as a whole. This means, if need be, that they have to pursue the right policies, even if many voters think they are the wrong ones."
- Jean-Claude Juncker,
President of the European Commission, then Prime Minister of Luxembourg

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Paris November 2015, 137 deaths. Brussels March 2016, 35 deaths. Nice July 2016, 85 deaths. They are only the three most severe attacks Europe has been subject to in the past few years. Attacks perpetrated by terrorist groups against the very heart of Europe. To make matters worse, these attacks were at least in part organized by people who were born and raised in the continent. What was once something that happened over there and only in rare cases in Europe has become increasingly common. This places European, and Western in general, governments in a difficult position. How to deal with the threat posed by radical groups such as the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda? The problem isn't new, back in 2014 there were already reports that the Islamic State had managed to recruit 3,000 fighters from Western countries(1/4th of the total amount of foreign fighters in Syria) and a history of terrorist groups seeking out Western fighters for greater effectiveness(Barrett, 2014).

Radicalization Is not exclusive to Islamic youth, with many movements of native Europeans existing right now and having existed in the past. However, radicalized Islamic youth have displayed a resistance to traditional measures taken to combat radicalization and as will become clear later tend to have different motivations for turning to the radicalized ideologies. Thus, the governmental response to radicalization is lacking and a new understanding is needed for the future. A requirement made only more significant by the refugee crisis resulting in a massive influx of, in many cases traumatized, individuals (especially children) who will need to find a way to integrate into Western society in a sustainable way.

In this thesis, I address the fundamental causes of and recommended solutions to radicalization as assessed by the academic world and compare this with existing policy as well as the academics specifically focusing on radicalization among Islamic youth. I then conclude with a critique of existing policy and recommend the basic framework in which to proceed. All of this will be based on academic literature, policy documents, statements by government officials and other sources of public policy.

1.1. Research Question

When establishing the research question a focus was placed on finding one that manages to cover the subject matter in a concise but reliable way. Thus, analysing policy in all the 28 EU member states was simply not practical. This has led me to restrict the original research to Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Belgium. Beyond this the question needed to encompass the entire subject matter. Thus, the following question was chosen.

What are the perceived causes and perceived solutions to radicalization among Islamic youth in the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom and Germany according to the academic literature on radicalization among Islamic youth and radicalization theory in general?

To answer this larger question several smaller sub questions have also been chosen. These three sub questions are asked in the various perspectives. The goal here is to develop an understanding on what drives policy action and develop a new understanding of what needs to be done based on the academic theory and what is being done by the governments. Most researchers have so far focused on purely developing the theories concerning radicalization, however the work on comparing this to government policy has been highly limited.

What are the perceived causes of and perceived solutions to radicalisation per academic literature?

Via this question, I seek to establish what causes and possible solutions according to academics. Both specifically about Islamic radicalization and radicalization in general. The answers in each part will then be used in the conclusion to assess the extent of the divide between academics and practice to policy. This question primarily serves to create a framework that Is capable of being used in an objective way. It is not unique research. However, without it the next two questions would be incredibly difficult to answer. If not impossible.

What are the policies against radicalisation among Islamic youth in The Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom and Germany?

Via this question, I look at the four countries and research the current policies as well as the motivation behind them. I also attempt to identify where they may differ from each other in both perceived causes and solutions to radicalization among Islamic youth. In doing so, a practical context will be provided for the analysis of how this problem is addressed beyond just the academic one. The goal of this question is the most research-focused one as it requires comparing policy between countries and to academic theory in an objective fashion. As somewhat hinted at in explaining the full research question, this is a specific area very few researches have analysed and as such it provides new information to the existing works. Finally, to answer the research question and pass any kind of judgement on radicalization policy, we do need to know what policies are being implemented and the motivations behind them.

Do they differ, and if so how can the differences be explained? May differences about the perceived causes offer an explanation?

Via this question, I explain the differences by looking at the unique conditions in each country and placing these in the context of the academic literature. For any analysis to be objective, possible factors must be considered. While simply looking at policies could provide enough information in a theoretical world, the nuances of the real world must be considered here. As it stands even less work exists in the academic world analysing this, as such just like with the second question there is no real method of deriving it from existing academic literature.

1.2. Structure

In chapter 2 I have outlined the dominant academic theory regarding radicalization and its processes in general. In chapter 3 I have provided further elaboration on the methodology and provide justifications for the choices made. I have then analysed academic literature specifically regarding radicalization among Islamic youth in chapter 4 and compared these to the dominant teachings from chapter 2. I have done the same process in chapter 5 for the four countries but also provided a comparison among the countries themselves. Finally, in chapter 6 I have used the prior work to come to a conclusion that answers the research question outlined in the previous section and provides some recommendations based on it.

2. Radicalization Theory

Radicalization has a long history as a tool used by various movements and even governments throughout history. While the basis has remained roughly the same, the details have evolved through the ages and even based on geography. Related to this, there have also been various definitions over time. Radicalization has been looked at from different fields, though the most dominant ones are psychology, sociology, political science and security studies. McCauley and Moskalenko (2008) define radicalization as the change of beliefs, feelings and actions towards inter-group conflicts, yet within that same article the definition changes to a mechanism of opposition politics as well(McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). Meanwhile, Githens-Mazer (2012) recognizes a definition where radicalization is a form of populism as a result of revolutionary opportunity to declining power, yet he also recognizes that it is a process of moderates shifting to the extremes. It should be noted here as well that he established an important difference between radical, radicalism and the more recent word radicalization. The latter of which, he argues is often used interchangeably with fundamentalism(Githens-Mazer, 2012). Mandel (2010) however argues that as it stands radicalization is mostly a hollow concept and that caution must be maintained not to misuse it. The definition he does relates radicalization to the moral position as velocity is to the physical, in that it is a movement towards extremism from an original point. While more basic, this definition has a lot of similarities with ones from the previous authors. As such, while there are many disagreements about what radicalization is specifically and it has changed over time. There has been a historical consensus that radicalization is a process from one point to a more extreme other point. This seems to fall in line with observations made in reality as well, with radicalized individuals often being considered extremist and the terms radical and extremist being used interchangeably in most common language.

In the next section I first look at the history of radicalization research to this point, I then shortly discuss some of the current dominant researchers in the field. In the section following that one, I first outline different types of radicalization and then provide the consensus concerning both causes and solutions from the various researchers. As these researchers have roots in different disciplines, the work there is also based on these different disciplines.

2.1. Development of Radicalization Theory

2.1.1. History

Radicalization, while the term might be new, has a long history. McCauley and Moskalenko (2008) recognize Andrei Zhelyabov, the Russian who orchestrated the plot that killed Tsar Alexander II, as one of the first radicals(McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). However, at the same time cases of terrorism go back centuries to even the Roman times. As such it is not surprising that people have tried to explain it over time. While theories have been formulated, most of the developments that shape current radicalization theory are from roughly the past 50 years. While Islamic radicalization is currently the focus of most analysis, it mostly started as a method to explain resistance movements such as the Irish Republican Army and Tamil Tigers (while also recognizing the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Red Army Faction)(McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008) and the neo-Nazi movements in the western world(Bj⊘rgo, 1993). While the nature of the work has changed, the conclusions generally drawn have been fairly consistent throughout the decades. Differentiation mostly happening in the level of detail and how an increasingly varied amount of disciplines became involved and provided their own unique perspectives on the matter(Della Porta & LaFree, 2012; Githens-Mazer, 2012; Hamm, 2008; Horgan, 2008; Kruglanski

et al., 2014; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). The major exception to this has been the impact of technology on the radicalization process, which is a development of recent years(Ashour, 2011). Yet, even there the mechanism has not changed at its core when it comes to recruitment but rather the much more expanded impact of it.

An important development that can be seen though over time is that research moved from beyond just attempting to explain it, to also providing possible solutions. This was primarily due to observing conflicts develop and eventually conclude(Mandel, 2010).

2.1.2. Current Dominant Researchers

To list all the researchers who have contributed to radicalization research in even the past decade would almost be a thesis in itself, however some outliers can be recognized. Who, thus, are also featured heavily as sources in the theory below. As becomes clear early on, especially the field of psychology tends to be represented extensively in the research area.

The first of these is Professor McCauley who has developed a comprehensive theory on the methods of radicalization has placed this in a historical perspective. He primarily recognizes radicalization as a process fuelled by personal grievances, combined with group methods observed in other psychological experiments. It should be noted here that he doesn't recognize radicalized individuals as specifically flawed(McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). His positions as a psychologist fit in line with several of his peers in psychology, such as Professor Kruglanski.

Professor Della Porta as a political scientist sees things from a different perspective, yet she too recognizes radicalization as a process involving both individual and group interactions. With the only way to resolve these being policies addressing both these areas(Della Porta & LaFree, 2012). Professor Hamm then again looks at matters from a criminal perspective and has two decades of experience in the field, he likewise recognizes individual and group mechanisms. Though in his work the latter rise more to the forefront(Hamm, 2008).

2.2. Current Theory

2.2.1. Types of Radicalization

Radicalization can be divided into different types. The dominant types currently are religious radicalization such as with Islamic radicalization, political radicalization such as the Red Army Faction, national/racial radicalization such as the Irish Republican Army and the Palestine Liberation Organization, but also the neo-Nazi movements who have risen and anti-governmental radicalization such as individuals who have committed attacks against government buildings in the past and the militias active in countries like the United States(McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008).

While each of these have different motivations, at their core they do tend to operate similarly. There always is a type of grievance experienced strong enough to invoke fierce resistance; be it the denial of independence, oppression of religion or differences in political ideology. Likewise, while individuals can radicalize on their own and commit attacks on their own, their opinions were nearly always shaped in some way by a group. Either directly, or from afar(Hamm, 2008; Kruglanski et al., 2014; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). Solutions likewise tend to focus on the same elements among the various types(McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008).

2.2.2. Causes

The first of many causes identified by the dominant radicalization theory is that of personal victimization. Rather than just acting for a cause, it is believed that many who shift to radical ideologies, and its ultimate extreme; terrorism have at some point faced an offence against their person or immediate area. Examples of this are the Black Tigers from the Tamil Tiger movement (Della Porta & LaFree, 2012; Horgan, 2008; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). Closely related to this is individual radicalization caused by political grievance, in this case while the individual might not have experienced the victimization themselves but identify with the victimization of a larger group they feel a sense of belonging to. This could be religion, such as in the case of modern Islamic terrorism, or race such as resistance to how black people have been treated in the US, or a combination of nation and religion such as with the IRA. The list of possible identifiers goes on, but all show a similar pattern of a dominant group standing over a weaker group and individuals from the latter resisting (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). The social network matters as well when It comes to individual radicalization, while it might seem unusual that the group could influence individual radicalization, the proximity to a radical group can serve as a strong tool pushing people along a slippery slope. Both the individual is more easily convinced by people they know while the radical group is more likely to welcome someone that they trust(Horgan, 2008; Kruglanski et al., 2014; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). Once an individual does join a group, they get pushed further along a slippery slope. A process very much psychological in nature, as it has similarities with the infamous Milgram experiment. By a gradual escalation of small increments in radical action the individual goes deeper and deeper until they eventually reach the point where they have become truly radicalized. Along this path, they are often able to justify it themselves as the increments are small while they also believe there is no longer a return(McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008).

Just as important as individual radicalization is group radicalization, here too several factors can be identified in a process that gradually escalates. In some cases, these can even overlap with elements in the previous paragraph. The first factor to look at is a shift from more minor believes to extremes. Individuals in a group have surrounded themselves in an environment of like-minded people. Without a voice of opposition, members are continuously challenged to shift them believes further to the extreme, in a need for agreement among their group and pressure from other members(Hamm, 2008; Kruglanski et al., 2014; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). As these groups isolate themselves further from the general accepted norms in society, the cohesion rises. The group develops an increased us vs. them sentiment, with members perceiving they can only count on their fellow group members. This higher cohesion then also imposes higher demands on members to conform to the dominant beliefs(Hamm, 2008; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). A further group radicalization mechanism is competition with other likeminded groups for a limited support base. To show off their capabilities, groups are motivated to essentially one-up each other as the more famous group is more likely to attract more people and increase in status. As a group rises in status it will eventually reach the point where it can more openly stand against state power, having grown so large that even a military would have difficulties stopping it. At this stage a further development becomes clear, with some who join more open actions being deterred by government response while others see it as an even greater motivator to participate and significantly expand the contributions. A final motivator for more violent action by a group and further radicalization can ironically be out of an effort to keep the group together. As internal frictions rise, a renewed focus on the external threat becomes needed to keep the group together(McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008).

In these methods of radicalization, the internet is also considered a major factor in recent times due to the increased abilities of radical groups to expand their ideology to a wider group(Ashour, 2011).

Radicalization is almost never caused by one single cause, while many reasons shown within this picture not any single one will on its own result in radicalization. Discrimination, for example, is very much something that affects other groups as well. These groups do not radicalize. What pushes an individual and group to radicalize is when there is a combination of causes(McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). Discrimination against the Irish minorities, combined with a history of religious strife, the need for independence and open oppression by predominantly English authorities gave way to the Irish Republican Army. Similarly, Hamas and other groups active in Palestine have primarily formed as resistance to the Israeli possession of land the Palestinians claim.

2.2.3. Solutions

As the combination of causes as well as definition implies, radicalization is primarily a path from one position to a more extreme version. As such policies intended to counter this need to be focused on returning those individuals to the moderate. The methods used to reverse radicalization can likewise be applied to individuals sensitive to it preventively so their radicalization can be prevented in the first place(McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008).

Likewise, it is important to instil a realization in radicalized individuals that violence is not an acceptable mechanism of voicing their frustrations and gaining recognition for their grievances(McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). To do this the tools that were used to radicalize the individual and group can be used to revert the process. A political radical can be given a pathway for legitimate representation in a country (such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army) while religious radicals can be addressed by instilling in them an interpretation of their faith conductive to peaceful coexistence. Even when not outright giving in to demands, it is important to make the individual feel like they have achieved something(Della Porta & LaFree, 2012; Kruglanski et al., 2014).

Furthermore, officials tasked with dealing with radicalized individuals or at-risk individuals should understand what moves the individuals they work with. A proper representation of for example Muslim guards was considered an important element in avoiding radicalization in prison. When a person feels understood and respected, they are less likely to engage in radical activities or to turn radical(Hamm, 2008).

Beyond just addressing with the individual and even group, it is likewise important to give the grievance that caused the radicalization in the first-place attention. Legitimate grievances (such as civil rights issues in the 20th century United States or racism against Muslim minorities in Europe) should be addressed, while with less legitimate grievances a path should be sought to create an understanding among radicalized individuals why the situation was not as they thought it was(Horgan, 2008; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008).

Finally, it is of vital importance to minimize the impact of misinformation in society at large, but also the at-risk groups in specific. Especially in the modern age of internet it has become incredibly easy for any group or individual to make their opinion known to the world. Yet even before, groups already managed to spread their works via preachers and other activists. If deradicalization and the avoidance of radicalization is the goal, policies need to include some measure to minimize the impact of external elements(Ashour, 2011; Horgan, 2008)

2.3. Concluding Remarks

Radicalization as research specifically is still relatively young, yet the process beneath it goes back centuries. Over time the research on the field has evolved, yet the base perception and assumption has remained mostly fixed. As research has continued, definitions have been expanded and different types have been identified.

While these types seem different on the surface, they are very similar when one looks deeper. In almost all cases the causes can be traced back to an escalatory individual and group process. Due to victimization individuals grow bitter against the institutions they feel slighted them. As more and more individuals grow bitter groups develop and recruit likeminded individuals. These groups then proceed to push their members further to the extreme and in the process themselves become more and more extreme. In the end a point of no return is achieved and even group competition takes over in a race to the bottom. It must once again be emphasized though that, radicalization is almost never caused by just one single factor such as discrimination. While different factors contribute in different ways, there almost always are multiple(Hamm, 2008; Horgan, 2008; Kruglanski et al., 2014; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008).

To avoid and even reverse radicalization, efforts need to be built on instilling a realization that the tools used so far are morally unacceptable and at the same time an alternative must be provided for the radicalized individual to move to. In this the very tools of radicalization (such as religion) can instead be leveraged to deradicalize(Della Porta & LaFree, 2012; Hamm, 2008; Kruglanski et al., 2014). Beyond motivating rejection of violence, it is also important to address those factors that caused the radicalization in the first place. Either by addressing legitimate grievances that may have been had, or by targeted education to remove the idea the grievance was justifiable in the first place if possible(Ashour, 2011; Horgan, 2008). This mechanism can both deradicalize individuals and avoid radicalization from occurring in the first place.

3. Methodology

Due to the nature of the research question the decision has been made to opt for a document study, there are few ways to empirically measure the perceived causes and solutions to radicalization by policy actors and as such an empirical design would make little sense in this area. Beyond that policy is primarily a matter of theory to begin with, with all policy needing a basis in something written or stated by governments or other elites. Beyond this there was a need to keep things contained to a fairly small measurable area that would still be able to give a mostly accurate image of Europe at large. More specific explanations on why the four countries were chosen will be added in the part below. In addition to this some confusion may exist on the exact definitions behind the concepts, as such for the thesis the following ones will be used.

Perhaps the most important concept to discuss is radicalization. To establish a framework for this concept I will refer to the article Determinants of radicalization of Islamic youth in the Netherlands: Personal uncertainty, perceived injustice, and perceived group threat by Doosje, Loseman, and Bos (2013). Radicalization is profiled by a strong resistance against an authority and/or society that stands opposed to the values held. Furthermore, to be radicalized an individual need to have a strong conviction in a religion or ideology. Finally, a radicalized individual needs to show a propensity for violence, or at the very least justify its use.

Related to this is also the definition of deradicalization. For this we will primarily be looking at Mind over Martyr by Stern (2010). Deradicalization can primarily be profiled as a program to reverse and prevent the radicalization process in groups and individuals. While there are many different interpretations, deradicalization involves some form of education or public campaign, targeted at the vulnerable group. A final and important element in defining deradicalization is that while the program may involve punishment, it should not be exclusively punitive.

3.1. Method of Case Selection

When determining which countries to analyse several factors were considered. On the pragmatic side, as mentioned before, these include the extent to which the thesis can be generalized to the entire continent with as few countries as reasonably possible. This has resulted in four countries who have all had a sustained history of immigration yet in different waves and from different regions. Each of these countries has also had different systems of government and most importantly different views on integration and immigration. When looking at this the policies regarding EU migrants are not considered, these are tied to external rules and do not help to answer the research question.

Germany is perhaps an outlier when it comes to the four countries selected, with only a limited history in colonialism the country has no significant immigration wave that originates from former colonial possessions. Additionally, an element that has shaped the German culture and its perception of foreigners is its history with national socialism in the past and the collective feeling of guilt over the holocaust. This has led to a country that in its policies can be considered extremely open minded to foreign influences in the form of immigration and has historically not places much emphasis on integration(Süssmuth, 2009). Opting to preserve each culture. Before 2000 responsibility for integration of immigrants primarily fell to employers, local governments and civil society organizations. This changed after 2000 when it became increasingly clear that the policy of simply letting immigrants be without an easy path to naturalization but without a requirement for integration was unsustainable. This led to several years of reform that both

made obtaining citizenship easier but also launched programs to promote such things as language acquisition(Süssmuth, 2009). What Germany does share with another country of the four though is the large amount of labour migrants, primarily from Turkey and North Africa, in the late 20th century. While Germany has a tradition of multiculturalism there have always remained some anti-migrant sentiment and in recent years resistance has risen. That has not stopped Germany from welcoming Middle Eastern refugees fleeing their countries due to the wars. At the same time, Germany has no significant experience with terrorism either.

The United Kingdom is very different, being an island nation it has traditionally been able to much more effectively regulate immigration and by virtue of a history of empire. it has an extremely long history of migration from areas formerly under its control (perhaps most importantly in this case, several countries in the Middle East. When it comes to integration policy the United Kingdom is quite difficult to fully assess. The most straightforward is the status of refugees who are the responsibility of the UKBA. This agency is tasked with both the integration and settlement of refugees. This agency is also responsible for settlement and citizenship policy of non-refugees. The Department for Communities and Local Government is however responsible for community cohesion with the Government Equality Office handling discrimination. A difference between recognized refugees and asylum seeker persists beyond this point. A major problem the government is facing is that the original system for integration was implemented for first generation immigrants in the 60s, this system adapted to accommodate future generations but did not maintain the original systems for newer first generation immigrants. A problem that still haunts the system, an example of where the system is lacking is the lack of targeted language courses for new arrivals(Spencer, 2011). The United Kingdom has been victim of Islamic terrorists in the past with the London bombings in 2005 being the most memorable attack.

The Netherlands, much like the United Kingdom, has had waves of immigration throughout history with most coming from former colonial territories until the late 20th century. Like Germany a large group of labour migrants entered the country. Originally from southern Europe but later Turkey and Northern Africa. The Netherlands also lacked a clear integration policy at the start, operating under the assumption integration was not needed as the migrants were going to return to their home country anyway if there was no longer employment for them. This changed in the late 80s and 90s as the migrants had since settled and reunified their families, suddenly the need for increased integration efforts became obvious and over the next two decades several measures were implemented. Key of these a mandatory integration course which includes a requirement to learn the language as well as learn more about society. While the national government sets policy the municipalities execute it for those already in the country while those seeking immigration need to fulfil the requirements in their country of origin. A notable exception to the latter are refugees who do not have the ability to stay in their country of origin(Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, 2016). The Netherlands has not had a significant terrorist attack motivated by Islamic jihad however these groups have been active in the country. The most memorable cases being the assassination of Theo van Gogh and the takedown of the Hofstad Network.

Compared to the other three countries Belgium is a unique country to tackle on its own, while the other countries all have some clear overarching themes like a single language and in general a mostly unified system, Belgium is divided along language lines (primarily Dutch and French). As with the Netherlands and Germany immigration in the late 20th century was primarily labour based and from countries like Turkey and Northern Africa. Waves before that were predominantly from colonial territories. While Belgium started relatively early with integration policies (the 80s), the government has consistently maintained a

rather laissez faire approach. Imposing no strict integration conditions and allowing for an incredibly fast path to citizenship(Petrovic, 2012). What makes the country most interesting for analysis is its recent history with terrorism. Both the attacks on Paris of November 2015 and Brussels on March 2016 had perpetrators who were raised or spent significant time in Belgium. Most importantly the Brussels area. There have been theories on causes for this phenomenon such as the rather complicated bureaucratic system in Brussels as well as the above-mentioned integration principles. It has also yet to be determined if this phenomenon is anything more than coincidence however for this thesis it is worthy of consideration.

3.2. Method of Data Collection

The work in this thesis is based extensively on data from roughly two sources. Internet accessible academic journals (and books, to a lesser extent) and policy published to the public. In this section I explain the exact methods of obtaining the data, and more importantly. Why it was done this way.

The information used in the academic part of the thesis has been primarily drawn from publications such as the Journal for Strategic Studies and Studies in Conflict & Terrorism. These publications have a very high reputation within the academic world and publish predominantly on matters of a military or judicial nature in some way. Furthermore, these journals also address the radicalization matter from both perspectives aimed at the causes and possible solutions. In this it can be said that they are almost tailor made for the goals of the thesis. To pinpoint these articles and the journals they are contained within, I have read a large amount of the works found via Google Scholar and by seeing how often each article was cited. Then I also looked at the sources used within those articles to find the information they were based on, and where possible incorporate those as well. This was done this way so that the information used is representative of the field and to ensure the steps can easily be replicated for future research. It was also done to develop an understanding that both covers the entire field and is still precise enough to observe.

The policy analysis was multi-stage as well in the collection of data. The initial focus was to have several documents from each country at least to have a representative overview of policy, but at the same time not overextend myself either. The information was then sourced by looking at which government departments and organizations within each of the countries were responsible for policy regarding radicalization and terrorism. Once these were established I proceeded to look for publications made by them concerning policy. Especially security services were found to be very open concerning this in the Netherlands and Germany. In the United Kingdom, most information was sourced from documents made public via Parliament and primarily the Home Office. Belgium was a different case entirely, with very little information being available on the federal level and thusly I also needed to look at regional governments there. Information was retrieved from the various departments concerned with education as well, as a great focus of radicalization policy was found to be within educational materials. When not enough information from publicly available documents could be found, analysis of the statements of leaders was also utilized to derive policy. The data collection was done in this way to make the project both feasible and open to replication. While there is the risk documents not available to the public containing vital data, this seems somewhat unlikely as European countries tend to publish policy to the public.

3.3. Method of Data Analysis

Based on the research question and sub-questions a working theory can be defined. For the purposes of this thesis I assume that there exists a gap in understanding and/or willingness for the policies to be implemented that could prevent radicalization. I also assume that the countries differ amongst each other

in results due to both conditions that affect the individual countries and the policies each have implemented. Both assumptions are made because there exists a problem. The assumption that can be derived from this is also that academic literature has the better perspective on preventing radicalization. This can thusly also be deemed part of my working theory.

The data I am using is very much theoretical in nature, as it stands there exists no real database of how many Islamic radicals, or even radicals in general, there are in the world. More importantly, there is no empirically proven dataset concerning why people have turned radical. Instead almost all existing work is based on social research and talks psychologists have had with radicals. Additional data has been derived from individuals who were deradicalized but the sample is not large enough to base empirical research on. That being said, not every theory that could be found was used. Each of the articles was thoroughly read and overlap was sought between the various articles to make sure the authors had some kind of consensus among them. The data was then operationalized in a more understandable form that can be used in a comparison. This operationalization was achieved by retrieving the underlying theories from the articles analysed and writing those out. Where articles overlapped significantly, but used different phrasing, the content was translated so that it applied to both. All of this was done to have a uniform and, perhaps more importantly, universally applicable framework. Articles were furthermore given more weight if they were very well cited and/or published more recently. As radicalization in general, and radicalization among Islamic youth in specific, is a rapidly changing field the more recent articles are more likely to provide more relevant information. Furthermore, these articles are often also based on prior articles but they add additional information that the originals didn't have. Linked to this is the fact that an article that is cited very often was most likely considered useful by other researchers in the field, and thusly contain information deemed very important by the field.

Similar motivations were in play when it comes to analysing policy. The primary difference is however that there have been reviews on the effectiveness of policy. While I would also avoid calling this work as truly empirical, it has some empirical basis. A different problem that appeared though was that it can be difficult to derive the motivations behind policy at times. To achieve this I first looked at the policy measures the policies directly outline, this already provided the information needed to answer the solutions part of my research question early on. Based on these solutions I then looked at the motivation provided in the documents themselves as well as supporting documents and analyses. Based on these two things and the solutions, the perceived causes could be derived more effectively. This only applies to the analysis of the policy documents however, when it came to analysing the other documents that weren't implemented policy directly a different approach became needed. Sources in the forms of statements, presentations and leaflets from senior officials and departments were analysed by reading them in full like policy documents. However, rather than taking the wording too literally the spirits of the text were derived, with the political angles and simplifications removed as much possible. As becomes clear in the analysis of policy, this latter data is also used significantly less with a greater focus on the policy documents. Both methods were used to ensure that the assumptions behind policies were recorded properly and that a comparison would not be based on faulty information. Just like with the greater focus in the previous paragraph on information that is both more recent and more cited, the assumption here was that the information closer to the source is more likely to be accurate and go into deeper detail. As such during the analysis this information was prioritised over the others. At the same time when it comes to analysing policy information that is recent is even more important. While an article that was written in the 1990s could still be relevant to modern literatures, a law formulated in that same time and since overridden by

several other measures can at best serve as context. As such the greater focus was also placed on policy documents that were written more recently.

With frameworks from both the academic and policy areas established, as well as a greater point of reference from dominant radicalization theory in the theoretical framework the ingredients were there for the comparisons. For the comparison among countries the policies in each country were combined with the historical and current related variables (such as government system or immigration history as formulated in the case selection as well). These complete packages were then compared amongst each other to establish both differences and similarities, while also providing some explanations. This was done so that the conclusions would be both valid and reliable. Not considering the historical backgrounds might have still been reliable, it would however have affected at the very least, content validity. To contrast policy with work of academia on Islamic radicalization, a more summarized version of the information in the previous chapter was compared to the framework established during the analysis of the latter. Attention was still paid to other factors that could explain differences. Just like the comparison of countries, this was done to make the results both valid and reliable. Content validity faced many similar threats, as such it was important to continue maintaining safeguards. The final contrasting of both policy and academics with the general radicalization theory and its authors were done to have a frame of reference that looks beyond the specifics, and has a more historical background. The theoretical framework was given both more and lesser importance in the analysis for various reasons. An absolute benefit is that it was based on other conflicts that involved radicalized individuals and groups that have since been resolved, as such it has more information on how conflicts like these can be resolved most effectively due to hindsight. At the same time, by being based on more historical events and not specific to the exact kind of radicalization this thesis Is built on, it cannot answer all questions directly. As such in the analysis those elements that could be applied uniformly were given significant weight, while others that could not be to the same extent were given less weight. This can mostly be seen by the causes of radicalization receiving more comparison than the solutions, this because with the causes we can more immediately assess to what extent the information relates to the case.

Recommendations were formulated based on all three comparisons with especially the solutions from general radicalization theory being considered, as these were primarily based on other conflicts while the assumed solutions from policy and academics on Islamic radicalization are still primarily predictions.

3.4. Threats to the Design

As the thesis is primarily a theoretical matter there are threats to the design. Many of these have been anticipated and are corrected for to a certain extent, there could however be more currently or ones that will be discovered at a future moment in time that are beyond the scope of this thesis.

The most important threat to the design stem from the rather active development and changing nature of radicalization, with innovations in technology, the geopolitical situations and responses within society actively contributing to this development. At this stage, much of the academic literature is already several years old and in some cases even older. This is countered primarily by using the most up to date, yet well appreciated, articles and focusing on those authors who have a history of doing research in the field. Additionally, while many of the specifics have changes the more basic tenets inherent in radical groups from the IRA in the past to the Islamic State today have mostly remained similar. As such while this thesis may become outdated on the specifics as well it will remain valid on the basic motivations and as such

hold some continued importance on resolving the problems. In a way, this is also countered by using a large amount of quality literature rather than restricting oneself to a smaller amount.

The final threat is the one that cannot be compensated for as it is inherent in nearly all research in the social sciences. Decades of research have provided causes of radicalization and more specifically the conditions that would turn an individual radical however it is not impossible that there is some kind of cause that has not yet been observed or properly analysed. Such a new discovery could fundamentally affect the core of this thesis. As this is hypothetical there is no compensation for this but it had to be established.

3.5. Concluding Remarks

With the various sections of this methodology as basis I compare data derived from academia on Islamic radicalization to policy documents from the Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom and Belgium. For the data from academia I read articles and books published in journals relating to this matter from authors who are cited extensively and ideally have published their works more recently. For policy, I primarily source information from the official websites of government departments and organizations but when not enough information can be derived from these I also consult other sources. I then proceed to use the information gathered and the theoretical framework to answer my research question and provide recommendations.

4. Radicalization Among Islamic Youth, As Perceived by Academics

Based on the sub-questions this chapter has been divided into two parts, the causes of radicalization and the solutions to these causes.

4.1. Causes

As radicalization is influenced by a great many factors these have been divided into three groups. Individual causes, which address the factors in a person's life that may make them vulnerable to radicalized sentiment. Collective causes, which address the factors that affect a group at large and could make members vulnerable to radicalized sentiment. Finally, other causes, which include other matters that make persons in the west more likely to radicalize than just twenty years ago, in general what becomes clear fast is in many cases religion is only part, and in some cases no part at all, of why individuals radicalize with explanations found more in other conditions.

Perhaps one of the most important things to establish before proceeding is that terrorists are not somehow systematically different from "normal" people, where with many other crimes some kind of psychopathological element can be established research on former terrorists has not managed to find a similar link for terrorism(Doosje et al., 2013). Likewise, another important thing to remember, and as brought up in the theoretical framework, is that no single cause is likely to be the sole cause of radicalization among Islamic youth

4.1.1. Individual Causes

One of the first causes that jumps to mind when thinking about radicalization is discrimination, as such it is no surprise that significant research has been done to analyse this possible cause. In western society Muslims are inherently disadvantaged in the social sphere. A rapidly growing group of native citizens in the west have grown a fear, and in some ways, hate of Muslims. A fear not in the least fuelled by increasingly polarized politics and a media that is focused on pinpointing the extremes in society. Beyond this, Muslim individuals tend to have lower chances on the labour market and in education(Doosje et al., 2013; Murshed & Pavan, 2011; O'Duffy, 2008; Ryan, 2007; Slootman & Tillie, 2006). For the native sentiment against Islam we must first look at the recent trend discrimination has taken when it comes to Western Europe. Where historically racism has been driven by biological factors such as complexion, this has shifted to cultural identities. Thus, there has been a growing disdain of Islam and the culture it is part of. This hatred and fear has primarily focused on elements of the religion that are perceived as intolerant and violent, and as such are deemed a threat to the European identity. This sentiment from native Europeans has itself fuelled a response from Muslim populations in an increasing hatred for the West(Murshed & Pavan, 2011). In several countries analysed Muslim populations systematically have less access to higher education and are more likely than native citizens to be in an unskilled job. If they are lucky enough to have a job at all with unemployment among Muslim immigrants also being significantly higher than among native citizens(Murshed & Pavan, 2011).

A factor specifically contributing to increased radicalization among later generation migrants (more specifically second and third generations) is not just the discrimination faced in their country of residence but also the country of origin. Rather than being welcomed in many cases they are treated as foreigners there as well. Especially in cases where there is only a limited comprehension of the language. This creates an atmosphere where an individual feels isolated in both countries and thus the personal uncertainty grows. They then become more susceptible to outside factors which further increases the isolation and

thus a greater susceptibility. A sustained vicious cycle(Doosje et al., 2013; Murshed & Pavan, 2011; Ryan, 2007).

Directly related to discrimination is a feeling of personal uncertainty. Individuals no longer know, or never knew to begin with, who they are and what their role is in the world. To an individual who so fundamentally lacks a true understanding of the self becomes an easier target for extremists and extreme groups. The group provides a strong sense of what is right and what is wrong and it provides direction to the individual. In essence to the individual it gives a purposeless life purpose(Doosje et al., 2013; Ryan, 2007). Individuals want to do something and make themselves felt, with often having developed a black and white view of the world, they feel defending Islam either by opposing the establishment in sentiment or action is virtuous(Bizina & Gray, 2014). Important in the area of personal uncertainty as well is the tendency of certain individuals to project their internal suffering onto the rest of society. Such as for example the Tsarnaev brothers behind the Boston Marathon bombing who turned to radical groups not purely because of personal uncertainty fuelled by discrimination but rather primarily by deteriorating family and personal financial circumstances(Bizina & Gray, 2014). Furthermore, when it comes to this side of things there is also the perception that Muslims simply can't have their voices heard via alternative means. Radicalization and ultimately terrorism are horrible tools and individuals at large reject killing however they feel that once it is done their voices are heard. While their general non-participation in politics also reduces the possibilities for the communities to have their voices heard this is partly caused by discrimination and personal uncertainty. Essentially the relative inability to have their voices heard by less extreme ways enable one to opt for the more extreme ones(Murshed & Pavan, 2011).

Related to both discrimination and personal uncertainty but more caused by government policy (or the lack thereof) rather than sentiment among the population is the rise of parallel societies and a lack of integration. In many countries, Muslim immigrants have moved into closed and segregated communities. This is the result of a combination of factors, due to the income equality Muslims have less financial means to select the area they want to move into. Once a large group of immigrants has moved into a certain area the misconceptions among the native population results in those seeking to move away and thus having even less interaction between populations. As the Muslim migrants have no real means of interacting and integrating in a natural way with the native population and targeted government policy only kicked in late these communities remained isolated. This isolation has since also spread to later generations(Bizina & Gray, 2014; Murshed & Pavan, 2011). An individual in this group, both resisting against a system they feel has abandoned them in a country they think hates them and often exposed to radical thought becomes a lot more open to extreme ideology(Doosje et al., 2013; Murshed & Pavan, 2011).

While wealth itself does not indicate the likelihood of radicalization directly they can still be factors in what motivates an individual to radicalize. Both for the rich and the poor. Those from a rich background will often turn to radical Islam for intellectual reasons. They are less likely to be affected by the more traditional recruitment efforts but could be convinced of the merits of radical belief in ideological debate(Bizina & Gray, 2014; Kirby, 2007). These groups are also incredibly popular among terrorist groups due to generally being more highly educated and more capable of fulfilling the objective of an attack(Bizina & Gray, 2014). Those of a poor background however are more likely to be affected by the causes illustrated above, essentially more often subject to the discrimination, personal uncertainty and social inequality. To these individuals radical thought is not simply ideology but also a means to an end. While less extreme than in Middle Eastern countries where radicalism is a way to earn the bread it provides for a less tangible nourishment in the case of youth in the West(Stern, 2010).

Faith itself is not a predictor of radical thought however a rapid process of moving to orthodoxy from a previous secular lifestyle can be indicative of a radicalization process(Bizina & Gray, 2014). Beyond this in a certain twist of irony radicalized individuals tend to lack an understanding of the faith they believe to defend. A significant share of homegrown radicals had limited interactions with Islam before they radicalized, they went to Mosque and in general kept informed but in many cases didn't read the holy scripture or truly understand the core of the faith. Such as a mandate to observe and respect other religions and to be above all tolerant of those who are different and to not engage in violence without truly legitimate grievances that would justify such a move. Without this knowledge preachers and radical groups are capable of twisting the individual to believe in their version of Islam rather than the opinion of scholars(Murshed & Pavan, 2011; Stern, 2010).

To conclude, in the process of developing these individual causes it has become clear that there is a wide spectrum of factors that can contribute to radicalization among Islamic youth. While discrimination is a major factor, it is reinforced by isolation as well as uncertainty in the person. Additionally, a lack of proper integration and allowing the development of parallel societies can lead to radicalization among Islamic youth.

4.1.2. Collective Causes

Collective causes in many ways overlap with those of the individual as many of them are caused by the same mechanisms being in play and in part by the same actors. Where they differ is that the collective causes affect the group at large. They are not simply about how an individual feels but rather how their entire group is subjected to certain matters that can cause direct radicalization or fuel the individual causes even further.

The first that affects Islamic communities at large throughout Europe is the perception that a war is being fought against Islam. On first sight, it is easy to see where they would get this idea from. The war against Afghanistan (which while generally deemed legitimate is still extremely controversial) and the Iraq War (which is criticized even by the West and the powers that started it) combined with drone campaigns, support for Islamic dictators such as Mubarak and the greater war against terrorism which has left Muslim communities throughout the world angered. Whenever excesses like Abu Ghraib are exposed or a far-right politician accuses all terrorists of being Muslim or even when reports indicate that police disproportionately affect minorities and the counter-terrorism policies focus directly on Muslim communities, groups like the Islamic State and Al Qaeda gain new recruits. Even in western countries(Bizina & Gray, 2014; Doosje et al., 2013; Murshed & Pavan, 2011; O'Duffy, 2008; Ryan, 2007). Beyond just the recent past there also remains disgruntlement over events further back in history such as the Crusades, expulsion of Muslims from Spain and the British-French Sykes-Picot pact, while these events happened centuries ago they continue to affect the cultural heritage and memory of Muslim communities(Murshed & Pavan, 2011).

A second factor contributing to an increase in radical thought within groups is the direct result of the individual causes and in a way also causes some of these itself (the earlier indicated reverse causation). For this factor, several mechanics are in play which will be addressed individually. First there is the rise of in-group superiority. Due to the isolation of the groups from mainstream society there is little exchange of ideas and believes. This leads to feelings that the group an individual belongs to is superior to other groups. A member of the group and the group do not recognize those who aren't in the group as an equal, they are inferior and worth nothing. In the case of Muslim groups this takes the form of believers and

non-believers and even believers and less extreme believers. The lack of knowledge about Islam can only strengthen this development as the group observes a twisted concept and rejects all those who do not match it. As a direct consequence of this the group does not recognize the authority of the establishment to rule over them. In this case this most often takes the form of rejection of laws and the police. Both the not generally accepted interpretation of Islam and the perception that authorities are discriminatory further contribute to this as the group starts observing those laws they feel are fair to them, in this specific cases the laws of God(Doosje et al., 2013).

To conclude the factors that affect the group at large are on the one hand the result of external factors such as the foreign policy of several global powers and on the other hand the result of processes that affect the individual and when multiplied onto the individuals in a larger group in themselves cause further negative effects in a vicious cycle. Again, while many of these factors are linked and in some cases overlap. No single cause can be defined which is responsible for all radicalization among Islamic youth.

4.1.3. Modern Technologies

Both the individual and collective causes already address the fundamental requirements for radicalization. While the cause outlined in this part cannot on its own cause radicalization it does allow for it to be an easier and faster process. Allowing for something that may have taken years to be done in a matter of weeks or even days with less risk to the groups behind it.

The first cause for increased levels of radicalization is the rise in social media use, especially in the West. The development of the internet at large has also aided terrorist groups. Where in the past radicalization was a close affair, requiring sustained and direct contact with individuals who at first needed to be discovered in the first place. This was difficult and incredibly risky as such activities could easily be traced by authorities and were more obvious to the environment allowing for authorities to be informed more easily by the communities themselves. These days, groups like the Islamic State have run several popular Twitter accounts, Facebook pages have been created, videos on video sharing websites show the front and to those interested in exploring terrorism they can simply look up the digital magazine and once they are trusted revert to the deep web and become almost untraceable to authorities. This has removed almost all difficulties and risk that used to make radicalization harder. Essentially to those who are vulnerable they can look up everything needed to radicalize in a single afternoon(Thompson, 2011; Van Leeuwen, 2005). To see the effect of this one only has to look at the so called Arab Spring. Without the benefit of an organization with years of experience behind it and governments actively restricting access to the internet the people still managed to overthrow dictators by communicating actively over social media. Effectively mobilizing the people and redirecting them where they were most needed for the greatest effect. A darker angle exists in both the victims and perpetrators of the 2008 Mumbai Terrorist attacks, using social media to figure out what is going on and in the case of the victims find a way to escape while the perpetrators used the information to track them down(Thompson, 2011).

4.2. Solutions

While the causes for radicalization go incredibly deep and in many ways are multi-dimensional, with each one in part contributing to another in a vicious cycle it Is not a cycle that cannot be broken. For this to be done however strong and in some cases unpopular measures are needed. Unpopular in varying amounts with the national governments, native populations and Islamic migrant communities. Solutions for each of these causes are outlined below, no single measure addresses all of them but a combination will per the academic literature be most effective.

The chapter primarily consists of addressing solutions to the causes, the final part then concludes with an example from Saudi Arabia that implements many of the proposed measures already and serves as an example of how this can work in reality. This example does not include all the solutions.

4.2.1. Discrimination, Personal Uncertainty, and Segregation

To deal with discrimination measures are needed that affect both the migrant population and the native population. While nothing can be done about the reception individuals receive in their country of origin, this is not the case for how they are treated in their country of residence. When looking at how to deal with race Europe has a long history. Measures to combat discrimination take a top-down approach and to be effective the government needs to implement it both on the organisational level of itself and within the education system. With the former a clear example needs to be set by the government for both civil servants and companies in the private sector. Such policy needs to have a clear and planned out goal to improve equality and thus to increase the chances of Islamic youth to find a position within the labour market(Luthra & Oakley, 1991). This, however, only addresses the discrimination faced in economic opportunities by Islamic youth. To reduce the fear towards Muslims and for Muslims to feel like they belong measures are required that affect society itself. One of the most effective ways a government can facilitate this is through education. The native population needs to become aware of the struggles faced by Islamic individuals and the intricacies of Islam so the image that it is simply a backwards, intolerant and violent can be defeated. The native population needs to realize that a Muslim is just as much part of society as anyone else is. This has already been shown to improve interactions between different communities and improve the situation for both(Reardon, 1998).

Combating discrimination will already contribute to decreasing personal uncertainty however other measures can also be taken to further decrease this phenomenon. One of these measures is to enhance integration, both within the Islamic community and society at large. A collective identity needs to be created that allows for the individual to identify with both their community and the country they live in so they can consider both their home(Bizina & Gray, 2014). It is likewise important to guarantee integration into the family where possible so the individual has strong roots to fall back to in times of need(Stern, 2010).

Combating discrimination will influence segregation however additional separate measures can still be taken to address segregation with relative ease. An added bonus of these efforts is that it will allow greater intelligence gathering so radicalization and terrorism can more accurately be targeted by authorities. The first step the government can take is to improve awareness amongst its own police and intelligence officers as well as social workers. By having these individuals become fluent in the communities they monitor and engage with they can more accurately become part of these communities and address specific concerns. Furthermore, enhancing this positive interaction with the government can serve as an example for society at large by enabling greater involvement of migrant communities in the country and interaction with other communities, most importantly the native population. Key in all of this is that it needs to be a cooperative effort between the government and local community leaders that are often respected by their peers(Bizina & Gray, 2014).

More relevant for the future these measures are most effective immediately post-immigration, while this is no longer possible with second and third generation migrants it can still work for more recent arrivals such as Syrian and Iraqi refugees. If desegregation efforts through engagement happen swiftly after residency is granted, or even during the process, an immigrant can be integrated into the communities

from the start and feel included much earlier on. This will then translate to enhanced integration of later generations and allow for problems we are experiencing right now to possibly be avoided in the future(Bizina & Gray, 2014).

4.2.2. Knowledge of Faith

Improving the knowledge of Islam is a complicated matter in Europe and the West in general. With most countries having freedom of religion as a fundamental value and observance of the separation of church and state caution has to be maintained that policies are not considered a government-imposed religion(Rascoff, 2012). Beyond the legal it can also be argued if heavily government-influenced Islam would even be accepted by at risk youth. As such policies are incredibly dependent on a cooperative effort with religious leaders. This could take the form of educational programs within the communities that are shaped by religious leaders but with government support to spread the message. Essentially to have classes without themselves dictating the content and without being seen as recognizing a single relation above the other(Bizina & Gray, 2014; Murshed & Pavan, 2011; Stern, 2010).

4.2.3. Solutions to Collective Causes and Addressing Modern Technologies

The solution to the isolation of an entire group by reversely causal elements is effectively the addressing of these elements as has been done above. Removing those elements that fuel the cause the vicious cycle can be broken and isolation reduced. More specifically greater engagement and integration will break down the group itself and return its members to the larger immigrant community and native population while it is also likely to increase the respect for and acceptance of the laws and authorities. Combating the perception of a war being fought against Islam is however much more complicated. Changing foreign policies would work in this but the desirability of this can be questioned. Likewise, historical grievances are simply that, history, and can no longer be changed. That does not mean however that nothing can be done at all. A reason radical groups are so effective is that in many ways they control the flow of information and can project their interpretation of global events onto impressionable souls. It is important for governments to make a justifiable case for foreign policy decisions to the Islamic communities. Furthermore when deciding on foreign policy the governments should attach greater importance to how policy will affect all the communities within their countries(Murshed & Pavan, 2011; O'Duffy, 2008).

Just like with improving knowledge of faith, combating radical thought on the internet is complicated both in practice and in legality with freedom of speech concerns coming up as well as jurisdictional issues. Simply said, a government can't just block the internet or say what can and cannot be said on it without properly making a case that would hold up when measured against the law, the constitution and international law. Related to this is also the relative inability of government policy to adapt to changing developments, with technology often advancing faster than the legislation to control for it. As such the most important first step is to pass the legislation needed for effective and targeted surveillance and intervention that does not infringe on the fundamental rights of the individual. Furthermore, Intelligence and law enforcement agencies need to be empowered to develop the technological means to do such while those in positions of power need to be trained on how modern technologies can be used and how to combat them. Most importantly, to recognize the fundamental threat they pose as well as the radicalization process itself(Thompson, 2011; Van Leeuwen, 2005).

4.2.5. Concluding Remarks

When fighting radicalization, the phrase fight fire with fire simply does not work, it is more likely to backfire than provide a permanent solution to the threat pose by the more extreme ideologies and

terrorism. What needs to be done is to engage the communities and approach the individual. This is not something a single authority can do but rather a cooperative effort by government and civil society. This can serve to prevent radicalization in the first place and revert it if it has already occurred. Furthermore, considering the recent development of many refugees entering Europe it is important to already implement measures to avoid repetition of past mistakes.

5. Radicalization Among Islamic Youth, As Perceived by Policy

To make things easier to follow rather than dividing by causes and solutions this chapter is divided by country which is then divided into solutions and causes. As mentioned in the Methodology chapter the information in this chapter is based on national laws, policy documents from relevant government agencies as well as to an extent the statements by officials and relevant agencies not directly part of the government. The decision was made here to switch things around, compared to other chapters, as many of the perceived causes are derived from policies and this way it more properly addresses the research question.

5.1. Germany

5.1.1. Solutions

When analysing German policy specifically for the phenomenon of radicalism among Islamic individuals the issue quickly becomes a relative lack of specific policy made for this group of individuals. While there are documents specifically relating to this kind of radicalism, most take the form of general policies against radicalism from all angles. While this cannot always be replicated, the basic concepts should remain applicable to the specific case of radicalism among young Muslims. When it comes to documents more specific about Islamic radicalization the emphasis of authorities tends to be on treating the symptoms rather than the underlying problem.

The German government recognizes the need to engage a larger network of actors in combating extremism and preventing radicalization from a collaborative point of view. These partners include everything from the Armed Forces to parents to religious leaders to schools. Furthermore, the importance of improving an understanding and appreciation of democracy is also emphasized by programs specifically intended to inform those who might be inclined to oppose it. Additional programs exist to enhance intercultural exchanges and mutual understanding. A matter that somewhat complicates collaborative efforts is the lack of certain elements being centralized with regions having a great level of autonomy in the German system. As a result of this the federal government works extensively with regional governments, primarily via task forces against radicalization and terrorism(Bundesministerium der Innern, 2016a). The community is also engaged by providing services for people to receive more information about radicalization and if they feel someone in their environment is radicalizing to report it anonymously. This is in many ways related to a more general focus by the government on monitoring its population in cooperation with actors from the various authorities, politics and civil society(Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, 2015b).

As the largest cause of Islamic radicalization is considered the combination of strong external parties with the penetration of internet it is no surprise that a lot of policy is built around combating this side of things. For the internet side of things various measures are taken. For one a focus is placed on educating individuals, especially young people, about the internet while attempts are made to prevent the accessing thereof. Furthermore the messages are countered on the platforms themselves and by reinforcing individuals who could counter them(Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, 2014; Bundesministerium der Innern, 2016a). The strength of the organizations behind the propaganda is primarily addressed by punitive legal sanctions, for one Islamic State activities have been banned since 2014 while the Ministry of Justice has authorized the prosecution of those found to spread the messages and those actively recruiting(Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, 2015b).

What is less obvious on first sight but deserves attention is that by having counter-radicalization policy for the entire population and enhancing cultural awareness the German government is in effect combating discrimination more directly. So while this does not appear to be identified as a cause for Islamic radicalization by the German government it is still being addressed(Bundesministerium der Innern, 2016a).

5.1.2. Causes

From existing policies, some assumed causes can be interpreted. Firstly, the German government considers foreign conflicts to be a major tool in both reinforcing foreign extremist organizations and enabling them to more effectively attract those living in Germany(Bundesministerium der Innern, 2016b). Throughout German policy in general it is nearly impossible to find factors that would move an individual to accept extremist beliefs, what the assumption by the government seems to be is that this group simply exists and that its further reversion is caused almost exclusively by the existence of a Salafist movement in Germany rather than why someone would become part of such a movement. The government identifies young people as the most likely target and recognizes misinformation about Islam as being a major factor in the success of these movements(Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, 2015a, 2015b; Bundesministerium der Innern, 2016b).

What Germany does extensively recognize as a cause for radicalization is the penetration of the internet and social media into society. Linked to the previous paragraph an emphasis here is the sophistication and high quality of the efforts of jihadist groups in this. Where in the past, it was a recruiter approaching an individual in a Mosque, there is now a periodical with fancy graphics and videos with effects that would be expected in high end video productions. This propaganda is also incredibly closely related to events and intends to cause feelings of anger while simultaneously managing to spread a faulty message of what Islam is(Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, 2014; Bundesministerium der Innern, 2016b). While not explicitly stated the German government also recognizes the role of family and the surrounding environment on the effectiveness of radicalization efforts(Bundesministerium der Innern, 2016a).

5.2. United Kingdom

5.2.1. Solutions

When it comes to counter-terrorism and deradicalization in the UK almost all of it can be traced back to CONTEST. This program is comprehensive and treats multiple facets of what causes terrorism and radicalization. For this thesis, only the Pursue and Prevent elements are relevant as those include measures to prevent radicalization, either by directly affecting the person or by removing others who may have a damaging influence. Protect and Prepare however deal with protecting UK assets from terrorism and if the worst were to happen to mitigate the effects.

Pursue can essentially be considered the stick of UK counter-terrorism policy. In the early 2000s in response to terrorist threats in North Ireland and with the rising threat of Islamic terrorism several measures were undertaken to form an aggressive front against terrorism. After the 7/7 attacks these measures were further expanded upon. While under CONTEST the more rights-violating measures have been reduced what remains is still fairly comprehensive(Home Office, 2016). At its core the UK government feels that strong cooperation between the police departments, intelligence services (such as MI5 and the GCHQ) and other security agencies is needed to maximize prosecution and conviction chances. Prevention of and handling individuals in the process of terrorist activity even if overseas is the objective of most of their work. By handling these individuals the risk to UK nationals vulnerable to

radicalization is already expected to be reduced(Home Office, 2015, 2016). In all of this the various agencies have permission to engage in such activities as searches and when it is believed needed detention without charge for a limited period of time(Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, 2015). These policies have mostly remained unchanged as the general assumption by the British government is that these have been successful in reaching their goals with minimal violation of civil rights(Home Office, 2015, 2016; Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, 2015).

When it comes to Prevent the British government already believes that the effectiveness in Pursue can serve as a deterrent however they also recognize that the amount of people vulnerable to radicalization is well beyond the capacity of the government to constantly monitor and prosecute in time(Home Office, 2011, 2016).

Firstly, Prevent uses community engagement as well as government resources to provide a counter-message to what radical groups will say to recruit individuals for their cause, in addition to just providing a counter message the UK government also denies those individuals likely to cause radicalization among individuals in the country access to the United Kingdom. Furthermore, under Prevent programmes have been started within key institutions and sectors to keep vulnerable youth from radicalizing or if they already have been radicalized to revert this process. Consolidated efforts for integration, while not executed under the context of Prevent but rather separately, are also being undertaken to further reduce the risk of radicalization(Home Office, 2011).

To undertake these preventative measures the government seeks to engage local government as well as elements of civil society and the direct environment of individuals at risk for the most effective cooperative policies as transparently and with no more impact than absolutely needed to reach the end result(Home Office, 2011).

Finally, when it comes to the internet the UK seeks to make it a hostile environment for terrorist activity. It seeks to do this by identifying, investigating and disrupting the use of internet by terrorists, make it harder to exploit the internet for the purpose of radicalization and recruitment, counter-terrorist propaganda and make it harder to conduct cyber-attacks(Home Office, 2011).

Essentially UK deradicalization policy is a collection of both punitive and supportive measures to surgically strike at the areas where intervention is needed the most for the best possible results.

5.2.2. Causes
As indicated in the Case Analysis section the United Kingdom has a long history with terrorism of an Islamic origin and in addition to this, terrorism at large. As such it is not surprising that the government has obtained quite some experience in dealing with it. Much of the British response to terrorism is in the CONTEST program and while primarily a set of measures, the causes of terrorism as perceived by the government can be translated from this.

Firstly, the CONTEST program recognizes ideology as a key element in radicalization(Home Office, 2011). With some more context it becomes clear that the ideology of terrorists and radicalized individuals is intended with this and more specifically the misinformation they may have concerning Islam and the base violent ideology that keeps the radical and terrorist movements going. Additionally, the UK recognizes the role of social media and the internet in general in spreading violent thought and extremism, much like the German government in this it considers the online activity and more importantly the high value of the

productions as a significant threat to the domestic security situation. In the specific case of the Islamic State four main themes have been identified. To spread the image of success, essentially create the idea that the Islamic State is winning their wars. To create the illusion that the Islamic State is a utopian state for Muslims where they will find status and belonging. To stress that it is a personal duty for all true believers to join them and that only the Islamic State can defend the Sunni Muslims, in their eyes the true believers(Department for Education & Home Office, 2015; Home Office, 2011, 2016).

Secondly, the personal situation of an individual appears to be considered a cause for radicalization, in this case referring to both the mental and financial circumstances of the person as well as the realization that not providing help to this group will likely result in radicalization(Home Office, 2011).

Thirdly, the government considers the need to engage and cooperate with the community and local levels of governance as incredibly important in combating terrorism and radicalization. More specifically the importance of these groups on members that may be vulnerable to radical thought.

Finally, the government feels that isolated and segregated societies are more likely to enable radicalization as such it feels integrated societies could go a long way to preventing radicalization and terrorism(Home Office, 2011).

5.3. The Netherlands

5.3.1. Solutions

When analysing Dutch policy against radicalization, perhaps the most important document is the so called 'Actieprogramma Integrale Aanpak Jihadisme'(Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding en Veiligheid, 2014) by the NCTV and the various agencies and Ministries directly concerned with combating terrorism and by extension radicalization in the Netherlands. This program forms the framework on which other policies are based and can essentially be considered the Dutch counter-radicalization policy at the national level in a nutshell.

The first set of measures outlined by government policy are for punishing those already radicalized and reducing their risk to the country. The primary method used for this is legal sanctions in the form of imprisonment and where possibly the revocation of the Dutch nationality or a residence permit. These latter measures can also be taken to prevent an individual from traveling to other countries to join violent plots against the country(Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding en Veiligheid, 2014).

While the focus is primarily treating the symptoms of radicalism, it is not exclusively. The plan also outlines various measures to prevent radicalization and to attack external factors that may contribute to it. The first of these is an aggressive approach towards violent preachers and recruiters for violent jihad. This takes the form of criminalizing efforts to recruit individuals (which has already happened) and imposing serious punishments for being a member of a terrorist organization. There is also an emphasis on handling online recruitment by engaging in cooperation with social media and other websites in taking down content, while the various agencies do monitor the internet themselves they also provide systems for others to report content. Where cooperation does not work, legal tools are in place to enforce takedown. Finally when it comes to reverting radicalization and preventing escalation to lawbreaking levels the government provides the infrastructure for parents, schools and others in the community to report individuals at greater risk of radicalizing(Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding en Veiligheid, 2014).

To prevent radicalization without falling back on legal measures and helping the individuals as well as the Islamic communities at large. The cornerstone consists of maintaining close ties with the Islamic communities, primarily by engaging and cooperating with religious leaders. Regular meetings with these religious leaders, subjects discussed at these meetings include but are not limited to how to counter radicalization, educating individuals on Islam and countering discrimination, islamophobia and hatred for Muslims. Key individuals in local and national networks within the Islamic communities can also rely on support from the government with things like media training and support. Where needed they can also be given protection(Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding en Veiligheid, 2014). Similar support as for religious individuals will also be given to educational institutions so they and the teachers employed by them can detect the warning signs and report it early on(Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding en Veiligheid, 2014; Spee & Reitsma, 2015). When it comes to neighbourhood police officers they are also afforded an important role in engaging the community and by being the middle-person between the communities and the government at large knowing where intervention can be most effective. The formation of an expert centre to improve networks and increase communication between relevant actors so quick intervention is possible is also considered a cornerstone of the measures(Kop & Moors, 2015; Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding en Veiligheid, 2014).

5.3.2. Causes

It is important to point out, as has become clear in the previous paragraph, that when it comes to the causes of radicalization, or more specifically terrorism, that authorities in the Netherlands place a great emphasis on the infrastructure of groups rather than the things that drive the individual to join it in the first place. In this it has a greater focus on treating the symptoms of radicalization than more specifically addressing the problem itself. This can be seen especially with the AIVD where great emphasis is placed on the ways jihadist networks communicate, both within the country and internationally with likeminded groups. The AIVD in this also sees the internet and more specifically social media as a major cause for radicalization and the ease in which it can happen as well as improving efficiency afterwards(Algemene Inlichtingen en Veiligheidsdienst, 2014). Likewise the AIVD feels that a rise in activism among supporters of jihad and those who have a radical belief system causes a chain reaction in confronting more vulnerable individuals with the ideals and connecting individuals and groups that previously might not have interacted, this according to the organization leads to a rise and professionalization of the movement at large(Algemene Inlichtingen en Veiligheidsdienst, 2014). A final threat the AIVD recognizes when interpreting radicalization in the Netherlands is that the renewed rise of mostly independent preachers has an impact on the levels of radicalization and while these preachers do not directly support violence, their message is one of an anti-democratic and to the country dangerous nature that is generally adopted by the community it targets. Likewise the revolutions in the Middle East are considered a direct cause for a rise in radicalization(Algemene Inlichtingen en Veiligheidsdienst, 2014; Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding en Veiligheid, 2015). In conclusion, the position of the intelligence service can primarily be summarized in that the recent surge in radicalization is mostly caused by external factors such as conflicts in other countries (Syria specifically) and the rise of the internet as a tool for organizations.

When looking beyond just the security services and law enforcement though, a stronger focus on why someone radicalizes assumes a greater role. Research on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture for example has indicated that a lack of social connection(isolation) as well as problematic identity development, presence of radical individuals in the environment, personal crises, frustrating events,

troubling personal events, performing bad on school as well as having limited opportunities on the labour market, psychological problems and substance abuse are all connected to the possibility of radicalization(Spee & Reitsma, 2015). Furthermore it is deemed that international events can translate into a surge in popularity of radical thought and that it is important for schools, family and police to act as the eyes and ears so troubling developments can be detected early on(Kop & Moors, 2015; Spee & Reitsma, 2015).

It is also perceived that feelings of not being able to change things via the democratic process is what motivates individuals to adopt the even more violent versions of radical belief systems and that due to this perception an individual is more likely to engage in violent activity themselves. Likewise terrorist events happening in other countries have been shown to make individuals more supportive of it(Spee & Reitsma, 2015).

All in all, when it comes to causes it can be concluded that while the Dutch government is aware of personal circumstances that can lead to radicalization, the emphasis is placed on those mechanisms that further radicalize and how to treat the symptoms.

5.4. Belgium

Unlike the other three countries Belgium needs some prefacing, due to the highly divided and territorial nature of the country policy that targets radicalization happens on multiple levels (even more so than with for example Germany or the United Kingdom which are decentralized to an extent as well). Thus, conclusions regarding causes and solutions are drawn from both regional and federal documents.

5.4.1. Solutions

The first observation that can be made is, that when it comes to addressing radicalization there is a rather significant lack of information regarding actions undertaken to do so. This is despite the availability of a lot of research on explaining radicalization as will become clear in the next section.

Specific measures against radicalization depend on where someone is in the country and the level of bureaucracy in play with a large amount of organizations responsible for monitoring and processing things in one form or another. On the federal level Belgium has implemented various laws that make terrorism illegal and the VSSE is engaged in follow-up activities with those who have been convicted and subsequently released for terrorist activity. Intelligence and security services have also been involved with targeting the supporting infrastructure of terrorist movements such as illegal documents(VSSE, 2012).

In 2015, a set of measures were announced to reduce radicalization and terrorism. The bulk of these are punitive ones such as expanding the law to cover more versions of terrorism as well as giving more authority to agencies responsible for combating these phenomena(Federale Regering, 2015). Other measures include improving the links between the various agencies and areas of government responsible for dealing with terrorism while reforming and expanding security, intelligence and police services to more effectively combat radicalization and terrorism(Federale Overheidsdienst Buitenlandse Zaken, 2016; Federale Regering, 2015). More specifically to counter radicalization reforms have also been announced that would provide for radicalization in prisons to be prevented by early detection and removing the elements in prisons that would attempt radicalization(Federale Regering, 2015).

5.4.2. Causes

In Belgium, several possible causes for radicalization have been identified. While these are not stated to be true and the strength of the link is not the same for all the ones, these factors have been in general identified as possible contributors.

Polarization in society is believed to fuel a climate of us against them, it is believed that existing within such a climate can give cause for radical ideas. While some believe there could be a link, but simultaneously maintain the reservation that there have been times of polarization without a corresponding increase in radicalization others believe that polarization and radical ideas can sustain each other and worsen both. Related to this polarization is also discrimination. While Belgium in general attempts to avoid discrimination, many individuals believe that they are disadvantaged compared to their native counterparts. Combined with some level of anti-colonial sentiment over past events this further leads to feelings of anger towards the society they live in and is considered to make individuals more susceptible to terror. Likewise, negative portrayal in the media can also lend strength to this sentiment, this is believed to be caused by the role media plays as the guard dog within society. Focusing on everything that goes wrong without pointing out those things that are going right. A final factor related to this is that individuals might feel they are not afforded the space to properly practice their faith, for example by wearing religious clothing. Measures that prevent this exercising of their religion can further make an individual feel alienated from society(Renty, 2015).

Beyond this both the internet, social media and the extent to which an individual is exposed to violence are considered in explaining why they would radicalize. With the former two as has become a pattern the belief is that by allowing for easier access to radical content the chances of radicalizing are increased significantly. Especially the relative anonymity is considered an important factor in this. Additionally a tolerance for violence and exposure to violence in real life or in the digital environment are also believed to contribute to increased radicalization risk(Renty, 2015).

Moving beyond polarization and the digital world there is the personal sphere. It is believed that being part of a strong and healthy social network, consisting of family, friends and influential persons in the environment who would keep an individual on the straight path, is incredibly important in preventing radicalization. The lack of such a network would significantly increase the risk. Importance is placed on one specific part of such a network. The parents, and more specifically how an individual is raised. It is believed that parents leading by example in how to interact with others and how to exist within society reduces the risk of radicalization. The environment in which they are raised is also considered a factor related to this, where being in an environment that does not provide many opportunities is considered a cause of radicalization(Renty, 2015).

While these are all causes that surround the individual there are also several causes deemed to be specific to the individual, though also tied to societal developments. First of these is a negative self-image and a lack of future perspective. This directly ties into feeling like others do not understand them which causes and is related to feeling isolated. Other factors that are believed to contribute in a similar way are psychological vulnerabilities, personality characteristics and experiencing a significant event. Finally a lack of knowledge about religion is also deemed a possible cause(Renty, 2015).

Finally the influence of organizations both within Belgium and abroad that spread radical thought are deemed a cause for radicalization(VSSE, 2012).

6. Conclusion

As has become clear in previous chapters, both academia and public policy officials tend to be on a similar line of thought when it comes to identifying the causes of radicalization. When it comes to addressing these causes however in effective solutions, things tend to become different. In this final chapter, I first compare the countries, and identify the differences and the explanations for them. I then proceed to contrast policy with academics on Islamic radicalization specifically, in the section after that both policy and academics on Islamic radicalization are contrasted with general radicalization theory. In the final section I formulate recommendations for public policy and for future research in the field.

6.1. Comparing the Countries and Explaining the Differences

Of the four countries analysed, Belgium is perhaps the one that stands out the most. In the past two years, the most significant terrorist attacks in Europe have been linked to Belgium and more specifically Brussels. When we analyse government policy it quickly becomes clear that the implementation is lacking and that due to how the country is governed, there is limited central oversight. While Belgium started focusing on integration relatively late, this is unlikely to have a significant influence as other countries have similarly been lagging on integration policy.

In contrast to Belgium however; the Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom have all implemented some form of program to proactively combat radicalization within the community. In this case the Netherlands and the United Kingdom have a greater focus on clearly visible differences while German authorities tend to be a bit more cautious. This can be related back to the migration histories each of these three countries have had. With the Netherlands and the United Kingdom realizing the need for integration before others.

When it comes to identifying the causes of radicalization all four countries appear to be roughly on the same line of thought, with a combination of individual experiences and group effects being considered vital in the development of radical thought. Belgium in this case has identified the most possible causes, while the Netherlands and the United Kingdom have roughly the same convictions. Germany appears to have placed the onus of radicalization on external factors rather than internal ones, but has nevertheless identified several internal causes. All four countries agree that the ability of radical groups to spread their belief systems via modern social media and the internet in general has created a paradigm shift.

Another common trend among all four countries is, that there appears to be a gap in translating the causes to specific policies. Belgium is the most immediate example of this, with extensive reports having been commissioned by the governments while the other three also display varying levels of implementation.

Both the similarities and differences between the countries can be explained by looking at each country's history with immigration as well as systems of government and political leanings. Based on just these four countries. It can be said that the more effectively the government actively fights against radicalization (with punitive, educational and preventative measures), the more positive results are achieved. Part of being effective in this is significant cooperation between governments, security and police services, educational institutions, clergy and societal circles.

6.2. Contrasting Policy with Academics on Islamic Radicalization

In the analysis of government policies, it has become clear that between the four countries, almost all the identified solutions from the academics have been considered and executed in some form. The only exceptions being targeted policies against discrimination and the perceptions of Islam in general society.

Both the Netherlands and the United Kingdom have taken significant steps to involve themselves into the cultural groups that exist within Islamic societies, this has been achieved by interactions with local actors such as clergy but also by the police forces making themselves approachable to local youth and proactively reaching out. Furthermore, methods have been created for people close to possibly radicalized individuals to anonymously inform the authorities. For this final part a system of trust had to be created, that those reported would be helped. While the two governments have not actively interfered in matters of faith, they have enhanced the abilities of moderate clergy to spread their message, while the more violent ones have been barred or outright banned. This serves to address the knowledge of faith issue. Germany has taken many similar efforts, but with less enthusiasm so far. Belgium is a notable outlier in this, with a focus on stepping in once someone has radicalized already and only then more in a prison context.

Much like the academic theory requires the resolving of group causes to be to an extent based on the resolving of individual causes, this is also the case for policies. With many of the policy efforts in the previous paragraph serving a dual-purpose to prevent groups from radicalizing. What can be done beyond the individual measures however is properly addressing misinformation spread by radical groups, both on-line and within social groups. Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands all recognize the need for countering the spread of misinformation. All three have taken actions to some extent to address them, however if enough has been done can be questioned. The United Kingdom excels in the field by having engaged groups the most of all four countries. Both Germany and the Netherlands have shown significantly less, but still reasonable effort and effectiveness in countering radical messages. With the internet phenomenon still being relatively new, even for the academics, countries can be excused for not entirely having developed their policies just yet.

The causes identified by academics can be derived from government documents of the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Belgium easily. Germany, while it does take more of a careful reading, also seems to be aware of most of these issues when looking at the measures they are taking. The only real contrast that can be applied here compared to academics, is that these countries place the emphasis on the groups rather than the individual. Based on the research so far, as will become clearer in the next section, the focus on groups affects later stages of radicalization while intervention early on would be much more effective.

6.3. Contrasting Policy and Academics on Islamic Radicalization with General Radicalization Theory

Both the policies by policy makers and academics specifically on Islamic radicalization have focused in on this area specifically and identified primarily the causes that are believed to be relevant for this group. It can however be argued that more general radicalization theory has positions that both other sectors can benefit from. Radicalization theory so far has been based on centuries of experiences and while each movement is unique, unifying elements can still be identified.

Policy makers have to a large extent already applied the lessons when it comes to the individual path to radicalization and even the group effects. They have however only to a limited extent recognized the

effects of competition between and within groups. The self-imposed isolation however can also be seen in a similar form from the efforts to engage communities and via them get to radicalizing youth and the most vulnerable individuals. Another element that has not been developed as well in specific policies, is the negative effects social circles can have. While the solutions executed in most of the countries is not unlike the suggested path from general radicalization theory, it can mostly be concluded to not go as far. A conclusion that can thusly be made, is that more significant efforts are required to achieve the desired results. This is based on prior experiences with movements in both the recent and distant past.

A similar pattern can be seen in academic literature specifically concerning Islamic radicalization. While it more properly identified, the causes seen in general radicalization as well as the required focus on the individual, it still falls just shy of fully covering all fields. Dominant academic literature on Islamic radicalization likewise fails to recognize the between-group and within-group mechanics that can cause further radicalization in a race to the bottom, and individuals reaching a point they believe they can no longer return from. Thus, just like with public policy it is important for the specific academics to also recognize the need for solutions to address the group mechanics more.

With both fields, it can be said that compared to the more aged radicalization theory, the causes are usually identified mostly but the translation into effective solutions is lacking. Likewise, both fields have not recognized the possible positive contributions former radicalized individuals could provide in preventing radicalization and enhancing deradicalization efforts.

6.4. Conclusion

With all the research done in this thesis the following answers have been reached for each of the questions. When it comes to the first question, regarding the perceived causes and perceived solutions in academic literature, it can be concluded that both general radicalization theory and radicalization among Islamic youth theory recognize a combination of reasons. These reasons include individual factors such as discrimination, but also group dynamics and external parties using means such as the internet to push a certain narrative to their targeted group. While none of these causes are likely to cause radicalization on their own, the combination of several is considered the likely cause. As a result, proposed solutions are focused on addressing a combination of factors, such as enhancing integration while resisting the narrative pushed by groups such as ISIS and promoting positive group dynamics.

When it comes to the second and third questions, regarding the policies in the four countries and how they compare, it can be said that they tend to be widely different from each other. When it comes to perceived solutions, all four countries share that there should be punitive measures for radicalized individuals. Germany however is more focused on a hands-off approach when dealing with the communities while both the United Kingdom and the Netherlands are focused on intervening. Belgium, then again, focuses on strengthening its security and intelligence agencies to more effectively deal with the problems they experience. Contrary to solutions, all four countries seem to have a similar idea when it comes to the causes of radicalization. All of these recognize individual factors such as isolation and lack of integration, but also group dynamics and external groups impacting radicalization among Islamic youth in their countries. For Germany the focus on the external forces is greater, while the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Belgium focus more on the dynamics within the country. Most of these differences could possibly be explained when looking at the history of each country with migration and their current government systems.

6.4.1. Recommendations

Throughout this thesis, it has become clear that governments do a lot of things right when it comes to combatting radicalization, there are however still many things that go wrong. Likewise, it has become clear that not all countries are created equal. With the effectiveness in different countries not being the same and with even the systems of government seemingly affecting the ability of a government to act against radicalization.

The initial focus of governments should be making sure that close ties exist between the governments, security and police services, non-governmental actors and civil society. Beyond this, it is important to focus on the individual and why they might radicalize. In this it needs to be made clear every step along the way that there is a way to return and that the cycle can be broken.

Likewise, governments should seek to create a greater understanding of Islam in general society so that individuals and groups might feel themselves be welcome. Highlighting the good, while reducing the focus on the bad can create this greater understanding. Beyond the government, other actors such as media also have a role to play in this. Related to this is also the need for a much greater focus on combating discrimination both in education and in the workplace. Experiments such as blind applications are promising in this field, as they can circumvent natural tendencies.

A final effort, to dismantle groups governments should consider is to actively reach out towards former radicalized individuals and involve them in counter-radicalization and deradicalization initiatives. By involving these individuals and having them share their experiences, those most likely to be affected by radicalization will receive the information from people they are inclined to trust. As has been seen already with several past conflicts throughout the world (including former Jihadi groups).

Radicalization is an enormous problem that likely will always remain, Islamic radicalization specifically has had decades to develop with many perceived grievances against the communities resulting in the current situation. There is no easy solution, but by creating a better understanding and recognizing mistakes of the past there is a path to a much better future. As such, a final recommendation for both governments and academics on Islamic radicalization I would provide is to keep working on expanding the theories and implementing solutions that are likely to work. Finally, it is also important for governments to get ahead of the matter as they seek to integrate refugees and other immigrants into the countries so that the problems of now can be avoided in the future. There are few risks and the possible rewards are enormous. A world where terrorist attacks are no longer the norm but rather an exception will require hard and continued work, but it can be reached and it is worth reaching.

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