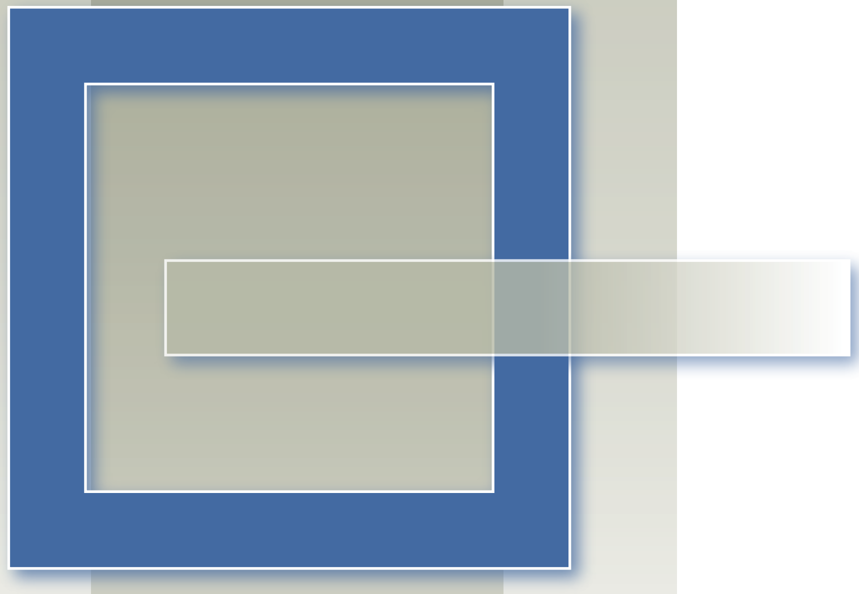

UNDERSTANDING RADICALISATION

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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DEMOCRACY

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The phenomena of radicalisation today develop and change at high speed, with their extreme forms manifested globally. The destructive dimensions of (violent) Islamist or right-wing radicalisation have become dramatically visible in Europe posing serious challenges to European societies. This literature review presents key academic conceptualisations and debates on the phenomena of radicalisation that might lead to violence. It deals with three different forms of radicalisation, including Islamist radicalisation, right-wing as well as left-wing radicalisation. In addition, an overview is provided of current academic debates regarding the role of the internet in radicalisation processes. The review is intended to help social scientists who are entering the field of radicalisation studies navigate through the complexity of underlying processes and factors that lead different individuals or groups to adopt radical ideas and commit acts of violence. The review is particularly relevant for countries of Central and Eastern Europe where radicalisation remains understudied, although most countries in the region share histories of extremism and political radicalism.

Authors:
Rositsa Dzhekova, Coordinator, Security Program, Center for the Study of Democracy (Chapter I)
Nadya Stoynova, Analyst, Center for the Study of Democracy (Chapter I)
Anton Kojouharov, Analyst, Center for the Study of Democracy (Chapter II)
Mila Mancheva, Senior Analyst, Center for the Study of Democracy (Chapter III)
Dia Anagnostou, Senior Research Fellow, Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy (Chapter IV)
Emil Tsenkov, Senior Analyst, Center for the Study of Democracy (Chapters I, II, III and IV)

Editorial Board:
Ognian Shentov
Boyko Todorov
Alexander Stoyanov

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© 2016, Center for the Study of Democracy
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5 Alexander Zhendov Str., Sofia 1113
tel.: (+359 2) 971 3000, fax: (+359 2) 971 2233
www.csd.bg, csd@online.bg

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INTRODUCTION

Since 11 September 2001, "old" and "new" forms of radicalisation related to religion-inspired, right-wing, left-wing, ethno-nationalist, separatist and single-issue extremism have undergone dynamic development and are to be found in most European countries. Over the last few years, right-wing extremism has become an issue of particular concern for most European governments. The terrorist attacks in Norway in July 2011 testified to the highly destructive capacity of this phenomenon. At the same time, lawful manifestations of discontent by movements such as Pegida in Germany bear the potential to burst into violent acts. Also worrying for many countries in Europe is Islamist radicalisation exemplified by the terrorist attacks in Madrid (2004) and London (2005). This threat has reached new dramatic dimensions with the violent attacks in Paris in 2015. The current situation in Syria and Iraq and the emergence of the so called Islamic State have led to new forms of radicalisation, especially the phenomenon of transnational fighters traveling to and from conflict zones who are believed to pose serious security threat to many member states.

Studying radicalisation has become a foremost priority in Europe, giving rise to a wealth of publications that explore its motives and causes, as well as the processes whereby individuals and groups come to espouse radical ideas and engage in violent actions. Islamist radicalisation and right-wing extremism in particular have attracted a large amount of research. The present literature review provides an overview of the key academic discussions on radicalisation that might lead to (political) violence. The review presents the current state of the art knowledge on radicalisation as a phenomenon that may or may not lead to violence. The review seeks to facilitate an understanding of radicalisation as a complex and dynamic process, which implies the identification of its transformative stages and drivers, and how it may or may not lead to political violence and acts of terrorism. The literature review also highlights some key points of disagreement and contention in the current academic and policy discourse on radicalisation and terrorism. Developments in the theoretical frameworks for understanding radicalisation are presented, including debates on definitions, root causes, patterns of recruitment as well as stages of the radicalisation process. In addition, reviews are provided of academic literature on three types of radicalisation: Islamist radicalisation, right wing radicalisation and left wing radicalisation. A discussion of literature and academic concepts is also presented with regard to the use of internet for the purposes of radicalisation. The literature review summarises current academic debates on the complex factors generating particular type of radicalisation, as well as on the ideological foundations and expressions, the organisational structures, the manifestations and the root causes associated with it.

Although terrorism and radicalisation which may lead to violence are treated as distinct concepts in this literature review, with the focus being on the latter, terrorism studies are also included as they provide useful insights into understanding the process of radicalisation, as well as its relationship to acts of terrorism. The digest includes studies from a wealth of disciplines including sociology, criminology, psychology, as well as history and political science. EU and national level policy documents in counter-radicalisation and counter-terrorism are also discussed.

The literature review covers the following issues:

- the definitions of radicalisation put forward by academics and policy makers;
- the factors and root causes that generate and lead to radicalisation of individuals or groups;
- the stages of the radicalisation process;
- the role of internet in propaganda and recruitment associated with radicalisation;
- the historical background, the factors, the ideas and the manifestations of Islamist radicalisation;
- the historical background, the factors, the ideas and the manifestations of right and left wing radicalisation.

This literature review demonstrates that there is a lack of consensus among scholars on the root causes that lead to radicalisation, on the factors contributing to violence as well as on the conceptualisation of this phenomenon and its link to terrorism. The presented theoretical discussions are intended to help social scientists who are entering the field of radicalisation studies navigate through the complexity of underlying processes and factors that lead different individuals or groups to adopt radical ideas and commit acts of violence. Such a literature review is particularly relevant for countries of Central and Eastern Europe where radicalisation has generally been understudied, although extremism and political radicalism have long existed in most countries in the region.

The literature review is structured in four chapters. Chapter one provides an overview of the definitions and concepts of radicalisation and related terms used in academic literature and by governments, and touches upon some key points of discontent among leading scholarly approaches. Chapter two discusses the role of the internet, including online recruitment and the use of the internet as key catalyst factors in radicalisation. The thematic focus of chapter three is on Islamist radicalisation, while that of chapter four is on right/left-wing radicalisation with root causes, manifestations and ways of recruitment discussed for each type of radicalisation.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPTS

Some of the central research questions from which the present review proceeds are why, when and how are individuals recruited in organisations that espouse radical views and why, when and how some of these individuals (alone or with others) engage in violent acts that may involve physical destruction or threat to the safety and lives of human beings? The review found that there is a lack of consensus in the literature not only on the factors that lead to radicalisation, but on the very definition and conceptualisation of this phenomenon and its link to terrorism. Discussions of potential approaches to intervention are further complicated by the disagreement on whether cognitive radicalisation should warrant intervention, since there is a danger that radical but non-violent groups would be further alienated. Nevertheless, the following notions have been identified as key to arriving at a more differentiated and nuanced understanding of radicalisation processes:

- There is often a close association between radical or extremist views and attitudes on the one hand, and the use of violence on the other, although these two do not necessarily go together. Individuals and groups may espouse radical and extremist views without necessarily deploying aggressive tactics. At the same time, involvement in violent acts is not necessarily premised on or driven by adherence to radical beliefs and frames of thinking, but could be motivated by personal or group loyalty or peer pressure.
- Radicalisation is best understood as a dynamic, multi-staged and multifaceted phenomenon that occurs at the interaction of individual vulnerabilities (biographical exposure) with an encouraging environment and is therefore always context-specific.
- Three levels need to be considered when studying factors of radicalisation – the micro (individual), meso (social surrounding/group dynamics) and macro (broader societal and political environment) levels of analysis.

1.1. DEFINING RADICALISATION

This section provides an overview of definitions and concepts of radicalisation and related terms used in the academic literature and policy documents. Due to the ambiguity of the subject matter and the difficulty of defining it, the concept of radicalisation needs to be briefly situated within the context of the contemporary terrorism debate – and to differentiate it from the latter – in order to map out its current use from more traditional notions.

Della Porta and LaFree (2012: 6) stress that earlier notions of radicalisation were used in the 1970s in studies on political violence and depicted "the interactive (social movements/state) and processual (gradual escalation) dynamics in the formation of violent, often clandestine groups." In this earlier notion, "radicalisation referred to the actual use of violence, with escalation in terms of forms and intensity" (Ibid.). Neumann (2013) noted that until the early 2000s there had been virtually no mentioning of radicalisation in texts on terrorism and political violence. After 9/11 it became difficult to discuss the root causes of terrorism due to the perceived implication of justification in such discussions (Neumann, 2013; Kundnani, 2012).

At the same time, the urgency to better understand what gave rise to the so-called processual "new terrorism" led to the emergence of the concept of radicalisation as a less value-laden, more liberal alternative to the "simple accounts of terrorism offered immediately after 9/11" (Kundnani, 2012: 5). As one of the founders of the new radicalisation debate puts it: "in the highly charged atmosphere following the September 11 attacks, it was through the notion of radicalization that a discussion about the political, economic, social and psychological forces that underpin terrorism and political violence became possible again" (Neumann, 2008: 4).

In mainstream political debates the concept of radicalisation is understood as a process of developing extremist ideologies and beliefs, and hence to some extent it is used to denote a major precursor to terrorism (Borum, 2011c), although this approach is heavily criticised as it is neither based on empirical findings, nor does it help to better understand the mechanisms that lead to political violence and escalation (Kundnani, 2012; Goodwin, 2014). In Europe, the term became prominent since the Madrid bombing of 2004, in particular within research on Islamist terrorism in the OECD countries (Council of the EU, 2005; Hörnqvist & Flyghed, 2012; European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation, 2008; della Porta & LaFree, 2012: 6). In recent years, there has been an effort to broaden the understanding of radicalisation to other forms of political violence, and to apply its concept to the analysis of right/left-wing and separatist violence as well, due to the similarities between "radicalisation to current Islamist or jihadist terrorism and radicalisation associated with left-wing, right-wing or ethno-nationalist terrorism in Western Europe since the 1960s" (European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation, 2008: 17). Nevertheless, the application of analytical models developed within radicalisation research is still limited beyond studies of Islamist terrorism.

Although many scholars warn that radicalisation should not be understood as a precursor to terrorism since the causal relationship between the two is problematic at best, such a simplistic notion is still widespread in mainstream debates.

1.1.1. Academic definitions

Given that this review covers not only religiously-inspired radicalisation that leads to political violence but also right/left-wing extremism, this section provides a broad overview of how the term radicalisation is used and defined in the literature and discusses some key theoretical approaches to explaining it.

There are numerous definitions of radicalisation, and the term is highly contested in academic as well as policy discourses. The vast majority of experts consider it a poorly defined term. It is used to denote complex phenomenon/phenomena and means different things to different people (Schmid, 2004b), while its meaning can vary with place and time (Neumann, 2013). For example, Githens-Mazer (2010: 9 and 2012: 557-558) points out that in the contemporary political science literature, the terms “radical”, “radicalise” and “radicalisation” have been used to denote a variety of meanings:

- “forms of populism related to revolutionary opportunity […];
- a revolutionary act in response to declining power (and used interchangeably with ‘fundamentalism’) […];
- an ‘ultra’ form, or intensification of existing political orientations and behaviors often typified by a shift from peaceful activity to (ever more) violent ‘extremism’ […];
- the process by which political moderates become militant or increasingly support extremists and their positions, as well as a related sense of reaction to catalyst occasionally described as recruitment,
- and finally, an individual sense of becoming hyper-aware of critical issues resulting in a ‘radical irrationality’ and a subsequent willingness to violently act on this awareness […] (Githens-Mazer, 2010: 9).”

According to Schmid (2011: 217), radicalisation studies “approach the field of extremism and terrorism by focusing on the processes through which individuals become socialized into engaging in political violence without moral restraints”. The European Commission’s Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation (2008: 7) has developed the following working definition of violent radicalisation: “socialisation to extremism which manifests itself in terrorism”. However, many definitions used in the academic literature and in the policy debate lack precision and the term “radicalisation” is often used interchangeably with other concepts such as political radicalism (as expression of legitimate political thought), (violent) extremism, (religious) fundamentalism, political violence, and terrorism. There is lack of consensus on how to differentiate between these. Therefore, it is necessary to review how the term is defined in relation to, and differentiated from, other related concepts.

Most often radicalisation is discussed as a political phenomenon. Sedgwick (2010) writes that it can be best positioned in relation to mainstream political activities, at least in the context of democratic societies, yet this also implies that it always needs to be understood in relative terms. The term radicalisation as a “recent innovation” in the terrorism debate (Githens-Mazer, 2012: 557) needs to be differentiated from the traditional use of radicalism as an expression of legitimate political thought. The European Commission’s Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation (2008: 5) denotes radicalism as follows:

> “radicalism as advocacy of, and commitment to, sweeping change and restructuring of political and social institutions has historically been

> associated with left and right-wing political parties – at times even with centrist and liberal ideologies – and involves the wish to do away with traditional and procedural restrictions which support the status quo. As an ideology, radicalism challenges the legitimacy of established norms and policies but it does not, in itself, lead to violence."

Given the focus of this review on radicalisation which might lead to terrorist violence,[1] it is important to distinguish it from the larger phenomena of political radicalism. This is a concern shared by researchers as their discussions focus on two different notions (Borum, 2011a: 4, based on Veldhuis and Staun, 2009: 4):

> "on a broader sense of radicalisation, where emphasis is placed on the active pursuit or acceptance of far-reaching changes in society, which may or may not constitute a danger to democracy and may or may not involve the threat of or use of violence to attain the stated goals," and

> "on violent radicalization, where emphasis is put on the active pursuit or acceptance of the use of violence to attain the stated goal."

According to Bartlett, Birdwell and King (2010: 10), radicalisation that does not lead to violence – non-violent radicalisation – refers to "the process by which individuals come to hold radical views in relation to the status quo but do not undertake, or directly aid or abet terrorist activity referred to as 'radicals.'"[2] Conversely, violent radicalisation is "a process by which individuals come to undertake terrorist activity, or directly aid or abet terrorism" (Ibid).

Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010: 798) provides the following useful definition of radicalisation in terms of its broader relationship to radicalism: "A radical is understood as a person harboring a deep-felt desire for fundamental socio-political changes and radicalization is understood as a growing readiness to pursue and support far-reaching changes in society that conflict with, or pose a direct threat to the existing order […] violent radicalization [is] a process in which radical ideas are accompanied by the development of a willingness to directly support or engage in violent acts."

Radicalisation and violent extremism

While the above definitions attempt to provide some clarity on how violent radicalisation is differentiated from broader notions of political radicalism, its relationship (and often equation) with violent extremism is also problematic. For example, Neumann (2013: 874) argues that at the most basic level radicalisation is "the process whereby people become extremists." However, extremism is a similarly vague concept that needs further clarification. Some authors have argued that its popular use often invokes associations with negative stereotypes, thus neglecting the fact that many personalities formerly regarded extremists are now considered reformers and legitimate political activists (Awan & Blakemore, 2013: 6).

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[1] Some critics altogether reject the notion of a transformative process or "radicalisation" as a radical becomes a terrorist (see Goodwin, 2014).

[2] See Bartlett, Birdwell and King (2010). Their conclusion, based on the study of profiles of radicals and in-depth interviews, belies accepted stereotypes about radicalism being the "first step on the path to violence." They claim that radicalisation leading to violence can be distinguished by different indicators from those that indicate purely 'religious', non-violent radicalisation. "Assuming that radical views […] constitute the base of the terrorist pyramid can result in counter-radicalisation strategies against large numbers of people who object entirely to al-Qaeda's methods…" (pp. 129-130).

Neumann (2010: 12), drawing in part on *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought* stresses that extremism can be used in two ways:

> "to refer to *political ideologies* that oppose a society's core values and principles. In the context of liberal democracies this could be applied to any ideology that advocates racial or religious supremacy and/or opposes the core principles of democracy and universal human rights. The term can also be used to describe the *methods* through which political actors attempt to realise their aims, that is, by using means that show disregard for the life, liberty, and human rights of others".

Mandel (2009:111) explains the relationship between radicalisation and extremisms as follows: "Radicalization is to extremism as velocity is to position. That is, radicalization is a (positive) change in the degree of extremism expressed by an individual or group".

The EC's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation further emphasises the difference and the relationship between the terms: radicalisation is understood as the process of "socialisation to extremism which manifests itself in terrorism", where extremism (and terrorism in particular) implies the "active subversion of democratic values and the rule of law" (2008: 7), while radicalism does not necessarily reject diversity/pluralism. Similarly, Schmid (2013: 10) concludes that "while radicals might be violent or not, might be democrats or not, extremists are never democrats." Schmid further argues that although both terms can be seen as ideal types and explained in terms of deviation from the mainstream or the status quo, extremism has some distinguishing features such as the rejection of pluralism and diversity, use of force over persuasion, collective goals over individual freedom, and close-mindedness compared to more rational radicals. Following this, Schmid argues that in the context of democratic societies, (violent) extremist groups, movements and parties tend to have a political programme that contains many of the following elements (Schmid, 2011: 630):[3]

- "Anti-constitutional, anti-democratic, anti-pluralist, authoritarian;
- Fanatical, intolerant, non-compromising, single-minded black-or-white thinkers;
- Rejecting the rule of law while adhering to an ends-justify-means philosophy;
- Aiming to realise their goals by any means, including, when the opportunity offers itself, the use of massive political violence against opponents."

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[3] See also Midlarsky (2011: 7).

Another category, which is often used in the framework of radicalisation discussions, is that of political violence,[4] defined by della Porta (1995: 3-4) as "…a particular repertoire of collective action that is considered illegitimate in the dominant culture, involves physical force and causes damage to the adversary in order to impose political aims."

However, violent radicalism/radicalisation should be distinguished from a variety of violent phenomena including: hunger strike to the bitter end/self-burning (political suicide); blockade, public property damage or sabotage; hate crimes or lynching; violent demonstrations, mob violence or rioting; brigandry or warlordism; raids, razzia, pillage or pogroms; torture, mutilation, mass rape; tyrannicide; extra-judicial execution, massacre, disappearances; ethnic cleansing, mass eviction, purge; guerrilla warfare, partisan warfare; subversion, intervention; revolt, coup d'état rebellion, uprising, insurgency, revolution (Schmid, 2013: 13).

Cognitive vs behavioural radicalisation

It is evident from the above definitions that the attitude-behaviour axis is often central to defining radicalisation and has been the subject of heated scholarly debate. In fact, many scholars propose a further differentiation between cognitive and behavioural radicalisation (Neumann, 2013). Borum (2011c: 2), for example, advocates for differentiating between radicalisation as the *process* of developing extremist ideologies and beliefs and action pathways as the actual involvement in terrorism and violent extremist actions, in order to highlight that radicalisation is only one of many pathways towards terrorism. It is further suggested that these phenomena should be analysed separately and that the focus should be mainly on action pathways and away from ideologies and beliefs since there is no inevitable link between them. Similarly, della Porta (1995) and Sageman (2004) have found that extremist beliefs are not the key variable in terrorist trajectories. Della Porta and LaFree (2012: 7) argue that "action (behavior) and attitudes (aims and perceptions) are linked, but must not be understood as necessarily depending on or even corresponding to each other." Instead, social movement research has found that "becoming involved in violent groups and engaging in acts of violence does not always presume adherence to radical aims and frames of reference, but can be motivated by, for example, personal relationships and loyalty to a group" (Ibid.). Others, on the contrary, reject this ambiguity and argue that a holistic understanding of radicalisation cannot be achieved through separating political beliefs from political action (Neumann, 2013: 873). These positions have given rise to different theoretical and policy approaches.

These discussions indicate that while there seems to be a broad agreement among scholars that radicalisation is a process which involves different multidimensional factors and dynamics, there are at least two definitional aspects that are highly problematic. Neumann (2013) points to two major points of contention in reaching a universally accepted definition of radicalisation: 1) the question of the “end-points” of radicalisation (whether the end-state of radicalisation is the development of extremist views or involvement in violent acts); and 2) context and normative issues (what is meant by radical and extreme is relative and needs to be defined against a benchmark).

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[4] The notion of violence should be distinguished from that of contention or conflict (see Karampampas, 2013 for more reflections on this).

There are numerous forms of radicalisation in terms of the underlying ideological justifications of violent extremist and terrorist actions, including religious, ethnic-nationalist, separatist, anarchist, single-issue, right/left-wing, animal-rights, etc. This will be further discussed in the section of typologies and classifications of terrorism. Three particular forms of radicalisation in terms of ideological motivations are furthermore discussed in more detail below.

1.1.2. Policy and law enforcement definitions

The *Prevent Strategy* of the UK Government provides the following definitions of radicalisation, extremism and violent extremism: (HM Government, 2011; House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 2012):

- Radicalisation is defined as “the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.”
- Extremism is defined as “vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.”
- “Violent extremism” is considered to mean the endorsement of violence to achieve extreme ends.

According to the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET), radicalisation is “a process in which a person is increasingly accepting the use of undemocratic or violent means, including terrorism, in an attempt to achieve a specific political/ideological goals” (Kühle & Lindekilde, 2010:24).

The General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD) of the Netherlands considers radicalisation to be “the (active) pursuit of and/or support to far-reaching changes in society which may constitute a danger to (the continued existence of) the democratic legal order (aim), which may involve the use of undemocratic methods (means) that may harm the functioning of the democratic legal order (effect)” (General Intelligence and Security Service, 2004: 13).

The Norwegian government in its *Action Plan against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism* (Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2014: 7) provides separate definitions for radicalisation and violent extremism. Radicalisation is understood as “a process whereby a person increasingly accepts the use of violence to achieve political, ideological or religious goals. A process of radicalisation that results in violent extremism is characterised by: i) a cognitive development toward a steadily more unilateral perception of reality, where there is no room for alternative perspectives; ii) thereafter, a further development where the perception of reality is experienced so acutely and seriously that violent actions appear necessary and just." The Action Plan defines violent extremism as "activities of persons and groups that are willing to use violence in order to achieve their political, ideological or religious goals".

The definition of the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is: "The process of adopting an extremist belief system, including the willingness to use, support, or facilitate violence, as a method to effect social change."[5]

According to the Swedish Security Service (Säpo) (2009),[6] radicalisation can be both "a process that leads to ideological or religious activism to introduce radical change to society" and a "process that leads to an individual or group using, promoting or advocating violence for political aims."

1.2. FROM RADICALISATION TO VIOLENCE: CAUSES, PATTERNS, AND PATHWAYS

1.2.1. The (causal) link between radicalisation and terrorism

As discussed above, radicalisation has been at the centre of recent policy debates on the causes of terrorism. Although the borderline between the two concepts is often blurred in such discussions, this paper is based on the understanding that they are distinct and the correlation between them is not unproblematic. This section, therefore, highlights the distinction – as well as the link – made between radicalisation and terrorism in the literature. It was already discussed that the difference between beliefs and actions is debated in contemporary conceptualisations of radicalisation as "cognitive" and "behavioural."

Similarly, some scholars argue that radicalisation and acts of political violence including terrorism should be viewed as two concepts that are distinct from each other. Veldhuis and Staun (2009: 6) explain this distinction as follows: "terrorism is above all a political tool that, irrespective of its success rate, is used in an attempt to bring about political or societal change. Radicalisation, on the other hand, is a process of transformation that in itself does not serve a clearly defined purpose and that does not necessarily have to be related to violence."

One of the earlier concepts that called for understanding terrorist action in the context of radicalisation processes is Sprinzak's theory of deligitimation (1991, 1995). He stresses that despite major differences, there are some shared characteristics between terrorist groups that allow for generalisations, namely that they have emerged as "splinter groups of larger radical movements," and also that they have been radicalised into terrorism: "none of the known terrorist groups started its career by the application of terrorism. Most modern terrorists had reached their terrorism *gradually*" (Sprinzak, 1991: 51). Consequently, Sprinzak sees terrorism as the product of the most extreme form of the radicalisation process, namely "transformational deligitimation," which is also the main feature that distinguishes terrorists from non-violent radicals:

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[5] Cited in Allen (2007: 4).

[6] Cited in Ranstorp (2009: 2).

> "Terrorism implies a crisis of legitimacy. What terrorists do – and other radicals do not – is to bring their rejection of the regime's legitimacy to the point of challenging it with unconventional violence. However, since terrorism never emerges overnight, this crisis of legitimacy unfolds through a prolonged process of delegitimation of the established society and the regime. The beginning of this process, and usually its end, are non-terroristic" (1991: 52).

This raises many important questions, such as whether radicalisation is the necessary condition for involvement in terrorist acts, or whether radicalisation must end up in terrorism. According to Veldhuis and Staun (2009: 6) "terrorism is one of the worst possible, but nevertheless avoidable, outcomes of violent radicalisation. In other words, although every terrorist is a radical, not every radical is a terrorist." Here, terrorism is conceptualised as the end product of the radicalisation process, which suggests a causal link between the two concepts.

However, Borum (2011a, 2011b, 2011c) calls for greater caution when implying such causation, although it has been at the core of many policies aimed at de-radicalisation. According to him, radicalisation is only one path towards terrorism. Borum (2011c: 2) argues that radicalisation in itself cannot explain why some people with radical views resort to violence and other don't. Therefore, he advocates for understanding radicalisation as "but one of many possible pathways into terrorism involvement, and that the broader question is how people become involved, stay involved, and sometimes disengage from terrorism" (Ibid). Demetriou (2012), based on analysis of three historical radicalisation episodes in Palestine, Ireland and Cyprus also calls for distinguishing between radicalisation of political opinions and the introduction and advancing use of violent tactics, although he also holds that these processes evolve together.

Demetriou (2012: 392) suggests a sort of reconciliation between these conflicting views on ideology as the missing link between radical beliefs and violence: "if a prevailing understanding has emerged at all […], then it is one holding that political violence and political radicalization are in a dialectic with each other," and that this is affected by other factors such as "social interaction, organization, and structures of power as well as to mobilization, resources, and threats and opportunities."

These different approaches towards understanding the link between radicalisation and terrorism have given rise to a multitude of frameworks and models explaining the process of radicalisation into terrorism and violent extremism, including phase models and root-cause models. These are discussed below.

1.2.2. Analytical approaches and levels of explanation

There are different analytical approaches to modelling radicalisation and terrorism at both individual and group/societal levels, with the most widely used being social movement theories, psychological, social-psychology and integrated approaches. It should be noted that in *The Routledge Handbook on Terrorism Research* edited by Schmid (2011), radicalisation theories are considered as only one approach to explaining terrorism.

Within terrorism research, on the other hand, there is a much wider range of theoretical approaches used, although many overlap with those applied by more recent radicalisation studies. Gupta (2008: 16) provides a comprehensive overview of different theories of terrorism, pointing out that many terrorism studies conducted by leading scholars such as Laquer, Jenkins, Schmid, Hoffman, Rapoport, among others, are not grounded in any particular social theory. Terrorism studies based on a specific paradigm usually fall within several theoretical schools: psychological and socio-psychological studies, cognitive theories, aggregate social-structural theories (Marxist theories of revolution, modernisation, relative deprivation, recourse mobilisation and social movements), and rational choice models.

TABLE 1. CLASSIFICATION OF THEORIES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND TERRORISM

No specific theoretical foundation	Studies based on theoretical paradigm		
	No explicit behavioural assumption regarding human nature		Explicit assumption regarding human nature (rational choice models)
Historical case studies Journalistic studies Case studies by security experts and former intelligence officers	**Psychological theories** • Psychopathology • Social psychology • Social learning • Identity theory • Narcissistic personality • Paranoia hypothesis **Social psychological theories** • Social learning • Frustration-aggression hypothesis **Cognitive theories**	**Marxist theories** **Western sociological theories** • Modernisation • Structural imbalance • Relative deprivation • Resource mobilisation	Rational actor hypothesis Game theoretic models

Source: *Gupta (2008: 16).*

Social movement theory and network theory

There are a number of sociological perspectives on models and explanations of radicalisation. It has been extensively studied from the perspective of social movement theory (SMT) and social network theory (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010; della Porta & LaFree, 2012; Sageman, 2004; Wiktorowicz, 2004). These studies emphasise the role of social bonds and networks and the individual's interaction with a radical group for radicalisation and recruitment processes and alignment of the individual's with the group's frame of reference, values and beliefs.

Della Porta was one of the first scholars to apply SMT – widely used in the social sciences – to the study of radicalisation by looking at Italian and German militants (1995).

According to earlier conceptualisations of social movements as elaborated by Charles Tilly (in Waldmann, Sirseloudi & Malthaner, 2010: 57), they are a phenomenon that developed in the nineteenth century in particular. The forms of collective political mobilisation understood by this term challenge national power holders and demand the removal of certain social evils by circumventing elections or regular political channels. "The protest movement par excellence of the nineteenth century was the Labour Movement" (Ibid).

More recent research on social movements of this type has focused on Islamic radicalism. The theoretical framework developed by Wiktorowicz (2004) of using social movement theory in relation to religious mobilisation and radicalisation is ideally suitable for deepening our understanding of these processes across diverse contexts. According to Wiktorowicz, there are three broad parallel processes that explain how and why Muslims in Western liberal democracies are drawn to radical Islamic groups: through cognitive openings, religious seeking, and constructing sacred authority (these will be discussed in detail below).

This sociological approach was recently refined with the theory of group/friendship and kinship bonds by Sageman in his ground-breaking book *Understanding Terror Networks (2004)*. He claims that terrorist groups, especially Middle Eastern ones represent "leaderless jihad," i.e. they are groups whose members typically join for a couple of years, who engage in other crimes along with terror, and who are, in the main, not strongly bonded to their group. Much of the recent analysis of groups involved in terrorism suggests that their organisational structure is less vertical and that membership is less permanent than many had suggested earlier, resembling the informal-diffuse descriptions of gang organisations.

More recent refinements of the social movement theory include (see Borum, 2011a): new social movement theory (focus on macro/structural processes); resource mobilisation theory (focus on group dynamics) and framing theory (see Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010), where a constructivist perspective is adopted to study how "social collectives construct, produce, and disseminate meaning" (Borum, 2011a: 18).

Criminological theories

Criminological theories suggest a comparison between radicalism studies and those of organised crime in the framework of criminological theories/analyses. There are both similarities and significant differences between radicals/terrorists and "non-political" criminals. In their research *Gangs, Terrorism, and Radicalization,* Decker and Pyrooz (2011: 151) "find little evidence to support the contention that American street gangs are becoming increasingly radicalized." They argue that "organized crime groups lack the political motivation that drives terror groups, seek to avoid public scrutiny, and engage in highly targeted, instrumentally focused activities; terror groups seek publicity for their cause and act largely from expressive motivations."

According to Curry (2010), there are some similarities, as the members of both groups are primarily male, violence is common in both groups, solidarity and elements of collective behaviour operate in both groups, and the violence used by both groups often represents a form of self-help, or attempts to redress wrongs. Differences, however, are paramount: they include "a profit motive for gangs that is largely absent for terrorist groups, cross-national connections maintained by terror groups, the diversity in different types of crime that typifies gang crime, and an ideological belief among members of terror groups that is not present among gang members."

However, Decker and Pyrooz conclude (2011: 161) that "there is an axis of continuity across criminal, deviant, and extremist groups that, when explored, will bring a better understanding to radicalization processes."

Psychological, social psychological and psychiatric explanations

Radicalisation is often viewed as psychological and psychiatric phenomenon, although mainstream opinion in the West has moved well beyond the Baader-Meinhof related fixation on psychopathology as the source of violent radicalism. There are two main traditions within psychological research on the root causes of terrorism and political violence. The psycho-pathological school treats the individual terrorist "in isolation, searching for deviant character traits" (Lia & Skjølberg, 2004: 9). More recently, the emphasis within social psychology theories is less on individual characteristics and mechanisms, and more on how the environment influences individual behaviour. Explanations based on relative deprivation and social polarisation theories are commonly cited in this psycho-sociological tradition.

In a critique of psychological approaches, Viktoroff (2005: 34) states, that "terrorist behavior is probably always determined by a combination of innate factors, biological factors, early developmental factors, cognitive factors, temperament, environmental influences, and group dynamics. The degree to which each of these factors contributes to a given event probably varies between individual terrorists, between individual groups, and between types of groups. Theories that claim the predominance of one of these influences over the others are premature since no studies have systematically examined more than one or two of these factors, let alone empirically examined one while controlling for the others."

Levels of analysis

These broader theoretical perspectives have inspired the development of a number of conceptual models and explanatory frameworks of the root causes of radicalisation and terrorism, as well as its pathways, which will be discussed below. Borum (2011a: 26), based on a review of a number of social science theories of violent radicalisation concludes that most have components that account for at least three factors: "(1) developing antipathy toward a target group; (2) creating justifications and mandates for violent action; (3) eliminating social and psychological barriers that might inhibit violent action." Radicalisation that leads to violence is increasingly understood as a process taking place at "the intersection of an enabling environment and a personal trajectory" (European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation, 2008: 9). Therefore, when discussing different explanatory models of the causes and factors for terrorism and radicalisation many scholars advocate the use of different levels of analysis. The three-level model of analysis (micro, meso and macro) described by Schmid (2013: 4) and similar frameworks proposed by other authors attempt to address to some extent the shortcomings of other analytical approaches, which tend to overemphasise only one of the levels when searching for causes/factors and neglect others (see Box 1).

BOX 1. LEVELS OF ANALYSIS OF CAUSES FOR RADICALISATION THAT CAN LEAD TO TERRORISM

1. *Micro-level*, i.e. the individual level, involving e.g. identity problems, failed integration, feelings of alienation, marginalisation, discrimination, relative deprivation, humiliation (direct or by proxy), stigmatisation and rejection, often combined with moral outrage and feelings of (vicarious) revenge;

2. *Meso-level*, i.e. the wider radical milieu – the supportive or even complicit social surround – which serves as a rallying point and is the 'missing link' with the terrorists' broader constituency or reference group that is aggrieved and suffering injustices which, in turn, can radicalise parts of a youth cohort and lead to the formation of terrorist organisations;

3. *Macro-level*, i.e. role of government and society at home and abroad, the radicalisation of public opinion and party politics, tense majority-minority relationships, especially when it comes to foreign diasporas, and the role of lacking socio-economic opportunities for whole sectors of society which leads to mobilisation and radicalisation of the discontented, some of which might take the form of terrorism.

Source: *Schmid, 2013: 4.*

Similarly, Lia and Skjølberg (2004) differentiate between explanations at: a) the individual and group levels (psychological and socio-psychological approaches); b) societal and national level (correlations between the occurrence of terrorism and the historical, cultural and socio-political characteristics of the society; the impact of modernisation, democratisation, income inequality) and c) international level or world systems (international relations foreign policy, etc.). Della Porta and LaFree (2012) also stress that in order to analytically capture motivational drivers other than subscription to radical frames of reference (for example, other factors such as peer pressure, group loyalty or personal relationships may be at play) one needs to distinguish between micro, meso, and macro levels of radicalisation: “individual processes of radicalization should be distinguished from radicalization on the group and organizational level, and both need to be situated in prevailing structural conditions and discursive settings” (della Porta & LaFree, 2012: 7).

The next sections provide examples of some well-known explanatory models of the causes for radicalisation into violence as well as the stages of the radicalisation process, which to a large extent have adopted such a multi-level analytical approach.

1.2.3. Root causes and factors

It is widely agreed in the literature that there is no single cause for terrorism or a standard path of radicalisation into terrorism. There are different conceptual frameworks of analysis of the root causes and factors of radicalisation. Despite the variations, there is some agreement in the literature on root causes of terrorism and radicalisation that the pull and push factors (external vs internal drivers, elsewhere also called demand vs supply factors) and the background conditions or breeding ground for radicalisation need to be examined, while the analysis should be multi-levelled. As Ranstorp (2010: 3-4) puts it: “rather it is the complex interplay between these factors being played out simultaneously across the global and local levels and across different geographic contexts down to the individual level”. This makes it difficult to isolate decisive factors across different contexts.

Bjørgo (2005: 3-4) provides a generic framework of different categories of the root causes of terrorism:

- *Structural causes* (demographic imbalances, globalisation, rapid modernisation, transitional societies, increased individualism with rootlessness and atomisation, relative deprivation, class structure);
- *Facilitating (or accelerator) causes* make terrorism possible and attractive (these include mobility, technology, transportation, publicity, weapons technology, weak state control of territory etc.);
- *Motivational causes* (the actual grievances that people experienced at a personal level, motivating them to act); and
- *Triggering causes*, such as a political calamity, an outrageous act committed by the enemy, or some other events that call for revenge or action.

The root-cause model of radicalisation developed by Veldhuis and Staun (2009: 24) resonates with the three-level analytical approach discussed earlier (see Table 2).

TABLE 2. A ROOT-CAUSE MODEL OF RADICALISATION

		Types of causes	Types of catalysts
Macro level		Political Economic Cultural	Trigger events
Micro level	Social	Social identification Social interaction & group processes Relative deprivation	Recruitment Trigger Events
	Individual	Psychological characteristics Personal experiences	Recruitment Trigger Events

Source: *Veldhuis and Staun (2009: 23-24).*

According to Veldhuis and Staun (2009: 27) "most factors could theoretically be listed at the macro level as well as at the micro level, and then in turn often at the social as well as individual level. Many macro-level factors have a social or individual element to them. Consider, for example, how poor socio-economic integration not only manifests itself at the macro level, but also in the social and individual sphere if groups or individuals experience social exclusion or rejection when, for example, entering the labour market […] To a large extent the levels and causal factors overlap."

The Dutch Institute for Safety, Security and Crisis Management (ISSCM) in collaboration with stakeholders from EU member states published a report identifying the following sets of factors as causal of Islamist radicalisation (ISSCM, 2008):

- Causal factors at the external level
  - Political: poor integration, perceived marginalisation, discrimination, feeling that the world is at war with Islam;
  - Economic: poverty and deprivation, discrimination;
  - Cultural: globalisation and modernisation, identity clash between Muslims living in Western countries and the host society, conflicts between radical and moderate strands of Islam;
  - Catalysts: recruitment (cannot initiate radicalisation, only accelerate it), trigger events.

- Causal factors at the social level
  - Social identification: identity crisis, threat to the in-group;
  - Network dynamics: homophily, social influence, social rules, friendship bonds;
  - The role of the internet: network and opinion formation;
  - The role of prisons;
  - Relative deprivation;
  - Catalysts: recruitment and trigger events.

- Causal factors at the individual level
  - Psychological characteristics: e.g. depression, anxiety, violent, identity seeking, impulsive, sensitive to humiliation, etc.;
  - Personal experiences: lead to the adoption of radical ideology (ideology itself is not a causal factor);
  - Rationality: motivations for joining radical groups;
  - Catalysts: recruitment and trigger events.

A study by RAND Europe (2011) reviewed commonly observed factors among radicalised individuals from across Islamist, left-wing, right-wing, single issue and separatist groups. The following factors were found to be the most significant across groups: perception of impotence to affect political change, past training activity, political activity, proneness to violence and experience of negative meaningful events. The study also divided the most relevant factors according to the type of terrorist group:

- Factors significant for Islamist terrorism
  - Background: fascination with spirituality/religion, proneness to violence, helping kin, fascinations with leaders, event occurrence and poverty;
  - Proximate: Linking the local to the international, social influence, desensitisation, event occurrence, search for meaning, training, lacking political clout, internet use, reinforcement of an insurgent movement and receiving means;
  - Immediate: expressing targets, event occurrence, out of routine behaviour.

- Factors significant for right-wing radicalization
  - Background: Prone to violence, event occurrence, political activity, rural residence, employment, being prone to criminality;
  - Proximate: Training, lacking political clout, fearing opponents.

- Factors significant for left wing radicalization
  - Background: poverty, political activity, poor education and high education;
  - Proximate: lacking political clout;
  - Immediate: event occurrence.

Terrorists are acting in groups/organisations, or individually (the "lone wolves" phenomenon). In both cases, radicalisation is a phased process in which the actors undergo a profound motivational transformation that prepares and pushes them into action. Here also individual paths to terror can be distinguished from the more general process of individuals joining a terrorist cell/structure. Given the diversity observed among radicals and the paths toward terrorism, the fact that often these individuals are rather unremarkable and that ideology is a weak factor has led some researchers to try to explain radicalisation in terms of group dynamics. Since these dynamics are not tied to a particular ideology or setting, they can help illuminate important dimensions of the radicalisation process applicable to different types of extremists. Such explanations also imply different strategies towards monitoring and dealing with such offenders.

Certain group behaviours identified by social psychology are relevant in this regard (Borum, 2011a: 20-21):

- Group polarisation: individual opinions tend to become more extreme in a group context and in turn group attitudes tend to be more extreme than the ones held by individual members.
- Groupthink: the phenomenon in which the desire to reach consensus in the group becomes stronger than arriving at the best and most rational decision. In that process, members do not express any dissenting opinions they might hold.
- In-group/out-group bias: holding a much more positive view of the ones inside the group and a much more negative view of the ones outside.
- Diminished sense of responsibility: individuals feel less responsible for actions that have been taken in a group context or in the name of the group.
- (Perceived) rewards and benefits: individuals join groups in order to receive something, be it material goods like food or shelter or perceived benefits such as companionship, sense of belonging, etc.
- Group norms and rules: the conduct of individuals within the group is regulated. The more cohesive and isolated the group is, the stricter the enforcement of rules.

Another important factor for terrorist acts is the so-called "trigger event/s." According to Crenshaw (1981: 24), factors that set the stage for terrorism over the long run, also referred to as preconditions and root causes, should be distinguished from situational factors that immediately precede the occurrence of terrorism, also known as precipitants or trigger causes. The latter include events that call for revenge or action, such as violence against in-groups, police brutality, contested elections, but also provoking acts committed by hostile out-groups or compromising speeches by public figures.

Bartlett, Birdwell and King (2010) also discuss a number of causes for radicalisation, including global factors (foreign policy and military actions), state factors (marginalisation from state and social structures, alienation, etc.), socio-cultural factors (ideology, culture, identity). However, they also stress that "underlying causes are neither necessary nor sufficient conditions for terrorism, but are 'permissive' factors that help establish an environment in which terrorism is more likely to occur" (pp. 37-38).

Evidently, many of the frameworks of root causes provided by different authors discuss similar categories of factors, despite the variations in labelling and levels of analysis to which they are applied. Overall, analyses of the types of factors and root causes of radicalisation depict it as a process that takes place at the intersection between individual vulnerabilities, intrinsic motivations, grievances or predispositions on the one hand (push factors), and a favourable environment (exposure to ideologies, recruiters – or pull factors), on the other. Often, certain background or structural factors contribute to this process (breeding ground), while certain trigger events and accelerators facilitate or catalyse it. As Schmid (2011: 221) points out, there is now broad agreement that structural factors are insufficient to explain radicalisation, but greater emphasis should be placed on how the enabling environment resonates with the individual. Propaganda and recruitment are often catalysts for this resonance.

Recruitment is one of the ways of bringing a radical into the orbit of organised terrorist activities. Propaganda is a key part of the radicalisation process as it offers doctrinal arguments that serve to legitimise extremist positions. “By disseminating propaganda, radicals achieve a wider audience for the violent opinions and demands supported by both real and imaginary grievances that are aimed at persuading minds and shaping wills through aggressive rhetoric. An exaggeration and exacerbation of tensions between the in-group and those defined as the ‘enemy’ is thus achieved. Comparative analyses of different violent phenomena make clear that a combination of variables is commonly present in the propaganda material used by different radical collectives. In order to supply motivations and encouragement for those engaged in the radicalisation process the propaganda employed by radical and terrorist groups tends to be framed around considerations that can be defined as ideological, utilitarian, emotional and identitarian” (European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation, 2008: 16).

While the discussion of factors and root causes provide useful insights into why people radicalise, it does not fully answer the question how radicalisation leads to violence. Generally, certain sets and configurations of the same factors outlined above are stated by other researchers or practitioners as playing important roles in radicalisation. However, important distinguishing factors between violent and non-violent radicals have rarely been addressed. An exception is Bartlett and Miller's (2012) study of Islamist radicals.

The research conducted by Bartlett and Miller (2012: 13), which draws on social movement theory and compares samples of terrorists with non-violent control groups, suggests that four elements are often overlooked, but taken alongside other factors “can deepen our understanding of how radicalization that leads to violence sometimes differs from radicalization that does not:

- Emotional ‘pull’ to act in the face of injustice,
- Thrill, excitement, and coolness,
- Status and internal code of honour, and
- Peer pressure.”

Furthermore, the authors found that non-violent radicals are more nuanced in their views – they accept that they do not have complete knowledge and look for other sources of information on Islam beside radical sources. They also do not support violent jihad in the West and they even admire some Western values (Ibid). Terrorists, on the other hand, are more likely to come from a culture of violence and so are used to validation being granted on the basis of willingness to use violence (Ibid). Chermak et al. (2013) show that far-right groups which release ideological publications are significantly less likely to be violent.

1.2.4. Pathways/stages of the radicalisation process

The pathways and stages approach to explaining the process of radicalisation has been used by many scholars to further the understanding of radicalisation and illuminate how radicals turn to violence. This approach, however, also has its critics. According to Veldhuis and Staun (2009: 17), phase models "select observations of 'successful' radicalisation and start reasoning backwards to describe the radicalisation process which these radicals have presumably gone through. This selection procedure will produce biased results and is therefore unsuitable for deducing or testing hypotheses about causal inferences."

According to Neumann (2013: 874), "virtually all academic models of radicalization – such as Fathali Moghaddam's 'staircase', Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko's 'pyramid', or Zeyno Baran's 'conveyor belt' – conceptualize radicalization as a progression which plays out over a period of time and involves different factors and dynamics. They differ when it comes to length and complexity, but they all subscribe to the idea that 'becoming extremist' is a process, and that studying radicalization is about discovering the nature of that process." There have been many attempts at modelling radicalisation into violence as a process of discrete phases that individuals go through before undertaking violence (Barttlet & Miller, 2012).

Most scholars suggesting frameworks and models of radicalisation processes agree that there needs to be a multi-level analysis of stages, paths and steps. It should be noted the vast majority of most well-known and widely used models have been developed to conceptualise the radicalisation path towards Islamist terrorism, whereas the question of radicalisation pathways is much less often posed in the context of what is perceived as more traditional forms of political violence (left-wing, nationalist). Nevertheless, many models suggested by radicalisation researchers today have been influenced by the earlier work of Sprinzak on his theory of delegitimation, which was developed to analyse separatist/ nationalist phenomena (1991; see also Schmid, 2011: 219). Some well-known stage models include (for a more detailed review see Christmann, 2012; Borum, 2011b; Young et al., 2013):

- Sageman's four stage process involving 1) moral outrage, 2) generalised interpretation of events, which then begins to 3) resonate with personal experiences and finally leads to 4) mobilisation through networks (Sageman, 2004).
- Moghaddam's 'staircase to terrorism' model. A multi-causal approach with emphasis on psychological explanations, which involves three levels: individual (dispositional factors), organisational (situational factors) and environmental (socio-cultural, economic and political forces) (Moghaddam, 2005).
- Taarnby's eight-stage recruitment process depicts the steps from intent to action: 1) individual alienation and marginalisation; 2) a spiritual quest; 3) a process of radicalisation; 4) meeting and associating with like-minded people; 5) gradual seclusion and cell formation; 6) acceptance of violence as legitimate political means; 7) connection with a gatekeeper in the know, and finally 8) going operational (Taarnby, 2005).

- McCauley and Moskalenko's 12 mechanisms of political radicalisation with emphasis on intergroup conflict, operating across three levels (individual, group and mass-public levels, see Table 3) (McCauley and Moskalenko, 2008).
- Wiktorowicz's al-Muhajiroun model, which involves four dimensions of social influence on the individual towards radicalisation: cognitive opening, religious seeking, frame alignment and socialisation (Wiktorowicz, 2004).
- NYPD's four-stage radicalisation process, including pre-radicalisation, self-identification, indoctrination and jihadisation (Silber & Bhatt, 2007) (for more details see section 2.2.1.).

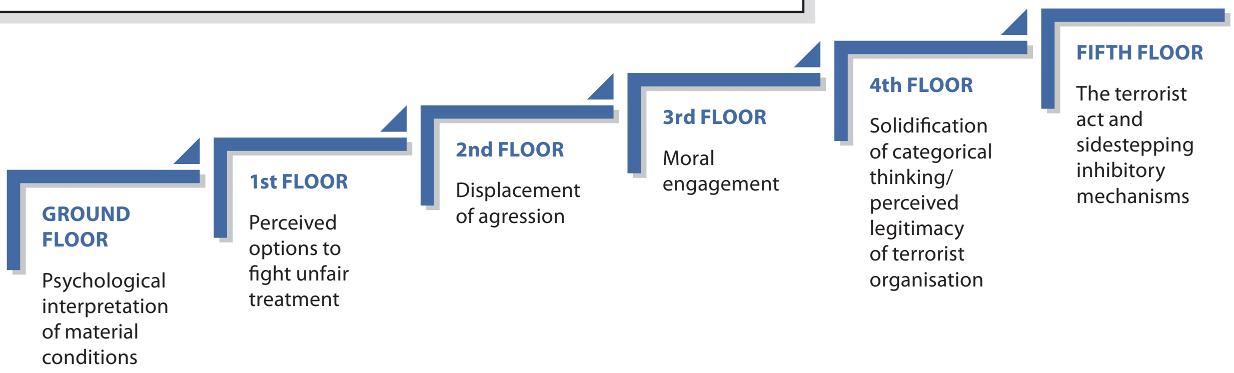
There are many more phased models that put emphasis on different factors, yet most of them agree that the stages are not necessarily sequential.

TABLE 3. McCAULEY AND MOSKALENKO'S 12 MECHANISMS OF RADICALISATION AT INDIVIDUAL, GROUP AND MASS-PUBLIC LEVELS

Level of radicalisation	Mechanism
Individual	1. Personal victimisation
	2. Political grievance
	3. Joining a radical group – the slippery slope
Group	4. Joining a radical group – the power of love
	5. Extremity shift in like-minded groups
	6. Extreme cohesion under isolation and threat
Mass	7. Competition for the same base of support
	8. Competition with state power-condensation
	9. Within-group-fissioning
	10. Jujitsu politics
	11. Hate
	12. Martyrdom

Source: *McCauley and Moskalenko (2008: 418).*

FIGURE 1. THE 'STAIRCASE TO TERRORISM' MODEL


GROUND FLOOR
Psychological interpretation of material conditions
1st FLOOR
Perceived options to fight unfair treatment
2nd FLOOR
Displacement of agression
3rd FLOOR
Moral engagement
4th FLOOR
Solidification of categorical thinking/ perceived legitimacy of terrorist organisation
FIFTH FLOOR
The terrorist act and sidestepping inhibitory mechanisms

Source: *Moghaddam (2005), in Borum (2011b: 40).*

2. THE EXTREMIST INTERNET: RADICALISATION, PROPAGANDA AND RECRUITMENT

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Academia, as some have argued (Pyrooz et al., 2013), has been somewhat slow in responding to the proliferation of internet-enabled deviancy and cybercrime. The inherent difficulty in dealing with issues concerning the digital domain lies, partly, in that any discussion inadvertently suffers the disadvantage of reviewing the problems from the point of view of history. Both quantitative and qualitative studies are limited to capturing a mere temporal snapshot of the digital domain. Moreover, "the diffused prolificacy of the Internet poses a challenge for qualitative research, especially given the fluidity and ephemerality of much Jihadist internet content" (Awan et al., 2011: 15). Cyberspace showed an early proclivity to cater to the needs of the deviant mind in both adapting to already existent crimes and enabling and facilitating unprecedented ones. Early studies of criminality on the internet were exploring an unprecedented phenomenon and were naturally concerned what the internet may hold for the future in terms of the potential proliferation of the volume and types of deviant activities. Already in the mid 1990's, some researchers had hinted of the inherent dangers lurking in an "anarchic" cyberspace, stating that "high technology crimes are going to be more sophisticated in the future and that law and law enforcement agencies will be ill-prepared to meet this challenge" (Coutori, 1995, in Mann & Sutton, 1998: 206). Still, others had been sceptical to conclude that the advent of the internet will necessarily lead to serious problems for law and order in the future (Mann & Sutton, 1998). Paradoxically, although today we are more or less aware of the dangers and threats associated with the use of the internet for deviant purposes, there is still much academic and political ambiguity as to what the future may hold for developments in the use of the digital domain for criminal and deviant ends. One of the reasons behind such uncertainty is that abusers of the online are themselves fuelling large part of the innovations potentially changing the substance of the internet. Some even argue that the digital is being innovated by the criminal, in that innovation is at the heart of the growth of illegal internet-based activities.

> "[Illegal] organisations are not only incorporating emerging technologies in their activities, but are increasingly pioneering and seizing opportunities for new illegal enterprises made possible by the Internet" (Kraemer-Mbula et al., 2013: 241).

The internet may be viewed as both a culture and a cultural artefact (Hine, 2000) and these cultures and cultural artefacts exist and operate in a networked state (Castells, 2001). On the one hand, this implies that meaningful social relations are formed and exist in the digital domain, and that they are interlinked. On the other, it means that online communities and exchanges may reflect and/or expand social phenomenon based in the offline world. From an anti-terrorist and radicalisation perspective this is significant, since it must be realised that the internet may enable and facilitate radicalisation and terrorism-related communication of conventional/traditional nature and creates conditions for new types of criminal and/or terrorist behaviour.

The discourse on the role of the internet and its effects on radicalisation proceeds in two opposing theoretical directions. It is claimed by some that the internet, with its diverse assortment of ideas and attitudes, affords the opportunity to encounter a wide range of opinions and create a heterogeneous network, which will more or less represent a balanced reflection of the offline world. Moreover, such an experience with diverse opinions would inevitably increase the level of democratic participation, in the form of sharing and exchanging, and ultimately, in managing and governing (Hardy & Scheufele, 2005). However, others have put forward arguments that the internet enables and facilitates groups with homogeneous beliefs, whereby they enhance the capacity of selectivity. This results in a selective use of the internet where people reinforce their previous beliefs and attitudes. Such a phenomenon would enhance the influence of so-called echo chambers: internet spaces in which people only listen to like-minded opinions (Al-Lami et al, 2012; Weimann, 2004; Silber & Bhatt, 2007). Nevertheless, the volumes of radicalisation and terrorism research that has been produced since 9/11 indicate that there is consensus that the digital domain may facilitate radicalisation and terrorism-related activities, however discussions continue as to the precise scope and depth of the internet's involvement in inciting radicalisation and terrorism.

2.2. ISLAMIST USE OF THE INTERNET

There is a wide agreement among both academia and relevant government agencies that the internet may play a facilitating role in the process of radicalisation. However, this is a rather commonsensical observation, as with many other facets of the human experience the internet has played a facilitating and enabling role, particularly in easing and speeding global communication and collaboration. In this sense, the distribution of radical and terrorist-related information and propaganda on the internet should not come as a surprise. Where experts differ in opinion, including in academia and operational government structures, is how and to what extent online Islamist propaganda may be related to cases of radicalisation, wherein the problem of utmost concern is whether or not online radical propaganda is capable of recruiting new terrorist operatives. Such concerns have gained particular political saliency and have produced a myriad of operational and academic reports often framed within the threat of home-grown radicalisation and terrorist activity. The home-grown terrorist attacks of Madrid and London, and individual cases of self-radicalisation in Western Europe (see Dodd and Topping, 2010) drew attention to the role of radical propaganda on the internet in facilitating extremist and terror-related activities and potentially recruiting citizens of established and developed democratic states for an extremist cause. In the US, although it has been recognised that the threat of home-grown radicalisation generally stands at a lower level than in Western Europe, certain terrorist activities – for example the involvement of Somali-Americans in suicide bombings in Somalia (see Elliott, 2009) – have escalated the issue to the highest priorities in homeland security.

Although not part of the mainstream radical Islamist propaganda is easily accessible and visible on the internet and as a consequence it has been the most interrogated phenomenon in the field of online radicalisation and recruitment as the "supply" side of radicalisation. The proliferation of Islamist presence in the digital domain, from less than 100 in 1996 to over 5,000 websites in 2006, coupled with findings showing spikes in terrorist-related internet traffic prior to large-scale terrorist attacks suggests a strong relationship between radical and terrorist organisations and the internet. In fact, some experts argue that "the use of the Internet to radicalize and recruit home-grown terrorists is the single-most important and dangerous innovation since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001" (Neumann, 2012: 9). In addition, there have been growing fears that the internet allows and enables individuals to "self-radicalise" without input or encouragement from individuals in an offline setting – the so-called "lone wolves" (Hegghammer, 2012; Briggs, 2014; Torok, 2011).

2.2.1. The threat of radicalisation and recruitment

Several analytical frameworks have been suggested to illuminate how Islamist radical organisations and terrorist groups use the internet in attempting to recruit new members. Denning (2006) proposes a broad three-pronged approach to understanding how terrorist use the internet, which includes activism, hacktivism and cyberterrorism. Although hacktivism and cyberterrorism may have been a part of some terrorist organisations' agenda in terms of desired attacks, the main attraction of the internet has been its ability to provide a platform for easy access to and distribution of propaganda material, as well facilitating communication, organisation and planning. Since this review is focused on interrogating radicalisation and recruitment, most extremist activities online will fall under the general category of activism. Activism, according to Denning (2006) refers to the normal, non-disruptive use of the internet in support of an agenda or cause; for example, browsing the web for information, constructing websites and posting materials on them, transmitting electronic publications and letters through e-mail, and using the internet to discuss issues, form coalitions, and plan and coordinate activities. It should be noted, however, that the relationship between activism and radicalism has been subject to some academic debate. There are generally two contending theories purporting to illuminate that association. One states that there is a linear relationship progressing from passivity to activism to radicalism, wherein radicalism may be understood as an extreme form of activism. The second view stipulates that radicalism requires a different appraisal of the political reality that justifies and requires violent political action as the only possible way forward, wherein activism and radicalism may co-exist as contending strategies of political action (Moskalenko and McCauley, 2009). Popular media framing of terrorist propaganda tends to support the former interpretation, while recent research indicates that the latter is most likely the case (Rogan, 2007; Moskalenko and McCauley, 2009).

Most experts agree that the various ways terrorists use the internet generally fall into several main categories (Weimann, 2004; Raduica, 2005; Nordeste and Carment, 2006; Stevens and Neumann, 2009; Briggs, 2014; Keene, 2011). These categories reflect what terrorist organisations display as activities online and what they attempt to achieve. It must be noted, however, that the actual results and consequences of their online operations remain debatable.

Psychological warfare. On the one hand, terrorists use the internet to incite "cyberfear" and helplessness by spreading disinformation and threats, and by disseminating horrific images of recent actions (Lemieux et al., 2014; Zelin, 2015). On the other, depicting and praising horrific acts of terrorism, and marketing them as success stories may have a positive recruitment effect for new operatives (Jensen, 2011). Jihadist websites also include much video footage destined solely to provoke Muslim anger around the world.

Publicity and propaganda. Most radical Islamist websites accentuate two issues: the limitations placed on freedom of expression and the predicament of comrades who are now political prisoners. These topics resonate strongly with their own supporters and are also intended to elicit sympathy from Western audiences that value freedom of expression and disapprove of measures to silence political opposition. In order to justify their reliance on violence to achieve political goal terrorist employ three rhetoric methods. The first one involves claiming that terrorists have no other choice but to resort to violent means, which are described as the only response for the weak and oppressed toward the powerful. The second method aims to demonise and dehumanise the enemy, whereby terrorist are described as victims, while the enemy is the real terrorist. In this way terrorist rhetoric attempts to shift the responsibility for violence away from the extremist and onto the enemy. Lastly, some organisations aim to disguise their violent aims by employing a diplomatic stance in promoting peaceful solutions.

Most extremist and terrorist organisations have established and maintain some level of online presence (Weimann, 2004). An important purpose of Islamist propaganda is framing and justifying extremist messages and calls for support and recruitment within a conceptual ideological direction (Aly, 2012). Placing a particular conflict and/or struggle within a religious context provides a terrorist organisation the required theological justification to call for jihadist support (Soriano, 2010). In other words, terrorist organisations need to be perceived as legitimate conveyors of religious values in order to be able to have a solid theological standing and recruit new operatives. For example, for al-Qaeda and associated campaigns, it is essential to "explain the mujahid revolutionary theory and its objectives on an ideological level" (Ryan, 2007).

Some experts discuss the terrorist use of the internet as part of a wider terrorist media strategy (see Lynch, 2006; Rogan, 2007; Soriano, 2010; Mozes & Weimann, 2010; Aly, 2012). In this respect the relationship between terrorist and the media in general has been described as one of dependence, wherein extremist rely on media channels, including the internet, to distribute their propaganda and rally support. Bhui and Ibrahim (2013) argue that jihadist websites use marketing techniques through multimedia formats aiming to formulate identities, both collective and individual. The marketing techniques combine established forms of rhetoric and propaganda with new ways to reach the targeted public through both popular culture and religious ideologies.

- A rhetoric of "symbolic crusades" – provides political arguments aiming to convince the audience of the legitimacy of jihadists' goals.
- Conception and dichotomisation of believers and nonbelievers – viewed through the prism of the Ummah the potential public is divided into believers and infidels.
- A binding of propaganda to the sacred script is used as a technique to legitimise the ideology of extremism by continuously using elements from the holy script and extremist ideologies, thereby interweaving jihadist ideas with Islamic concepts.
- A "displacement of responsibility" is propagandised as violence is deemed as the only possible means to deal with and defeat the enemy.

(Adapted from Bhui and Ibrahim, 2013)

Another result of an intensified and accessible Islamist propaganda are internet initiated religious conversions. An argument is being put forward that through the concept of the ummah (idealised global Muslim community) and the vast capabilities of information and communication technologies, Islam is developing toward a global, albeit stateless religious movement, wherein religious identities are being forged outside the constraints of the nation-state realm (Bhui and Ibrahim, 2013). Without presenting their point of view, terror organisations cannot attract support, funding, new recruits, or general sympathy with their struggle.

Data mining. Terrorists may use the internet as a digital library to search and find materials that may assist them in furthering their goals. This may include target selection, studying structural plans of buildings and infrastructural facilities, airports, dams and so on. Terrorist make use of any publicly available data to research their potential targets.

Fundraising. Extremist groups use the internet to raise funds like many other political organisations. Al-Qaeda is a case in point for a terrorist organisation that has always relied heavily on donations, and its world-wide fundraising network is designed upon a foundation of charities, nongovernmental organisations, and other financial institutions that use websites and internet-based communication channels. Moreover, because of IP geolocation capabilities of the internet, terrorist organisations are able to tailor their approach to different target audiences. Users landing on terrorist and Islamist websites may experience differentiated content based on their origin, including different languages, as well messages. Internet demographics are also collected through online questionnaires, which enable the media specialists in the terrorist organisation to learn about a user's preferences and political dispositions, therefore facilitating the delivery of tailor-made messages through e-mails (Keene, 2011; Weimann, 2006).

Recruitment and mobilisation. Perhaps the most feared consequence of online jihadism is the purported possibility for terrorist organisation to recruit undetectably new operatives globally and to elicit "self-radicalisation" responses to their propaganda. It is argued that "images and video clips serve terrorist organisations as tools of empowerment, which can lead to radicalisation of the viewer, which in turn may lead to recruitment into the terrorist organisation" (Keene, 2011:365). Persons who are sympathetic to an Islamist cause are susceptible to being converted by the images and messages of terrorist groups. There is also evidence to suggest that internet chat rooms are virtual meeting points for individuals to come together not only to enrol in the cause, and be further radicalised and recruited in the terrorist organisation (Keene, 2011). More typically, however, "terrorist organizations go looking for recruits rather than waiting for them to present themselves" (Weimann, 2006: 8).

Briggs (2014) argues that "the Internet is an important part of the radicalisation process in most cases, intensifying and accelerating radicalisation" (Briggs, 2014: 6). Pantucci (2011) adds that online recruitment propaganda may be particularly effective toward an alienated loner to feel part of a group and gain a sense of belonging and confidence, and that "the increasing prevalence of the internet and the easy availability of extremist material online have fostered the growth of the autodidactic extremist" (Pantucci, 2011: 11).

A NYPD report on the threat of home-grown radicalisation explains a scenario of internet-facilitated Islamic radicalisation:

> "As individuals progress through the various [radicalisation] stages, their use of the Internet evolves as well. In the **Self-Identification** phase, the Internet serves chiefly as the person's source of information about Islam and a venue to meet other seekers online. With the aggressive proliferation of the jihadi-Salafi ideology online, it is nearly impossible for someone to avoid this extreme interpretation of Islam.
>
> "During the **Indoctrination** phase those undergoing this self-imposed brainwashing devote their time in the cyber world to the extremist sites and chat rooms... At this stage, individuals or the groups they are in are likely to begin proliferating jihadi-Salafist ideology online along with consuming it. The Internet becomes a virtual 'echo chamber'...

> "In the **Jihadization** phase, people challenge and encourage each other's move to action. The Internet is now a tactical resource for obtaining instructions on constructing weapons, gathering information on potential targets, and providing spiritual justification for an attack" (Silber and Bhatt, 2007: 37).

Networking and information sharing. New technologies greatly reduce the cost of communication, speed up the pace of information exchange and provide anonymous and secure communication channels. Terrorists are increasingly using the sharing and connectivity features of online platforms to organise their activities. Much in the same way that the internet helped transform business into a "networked state" (see Castells, 2001), so have terrorist organisations decentralised their structures facilitated by the capabilities of online communications (Weimann, 2006; Soriano, 2010). Concerns that the internet may be used as a training platform for new operatives have been raised by the availability and easy accessibility of online guides on how to build explosives and manuals on how to help the jihadist cause.[7]

For example, al-Qaeda's English language *Inspire* magazine has been studied as the signpost of jihadist online media efforts. *Inspire* is described by experts as a "streamlined and seamless fusion of ideologically driven material with pragmatic instructional and skill-building content" (Lemieux et al. 2014: 355). The synthesis of such elements is aimed simultaneously to increase motivation and minimise the obstacles of access to terrorism-related activities, with the intent of promoting a do-it-yourself attitude resulting in terrorist behaviours (Lemieux et al. 2014).

Planning and coordination. Terrorists use the internet to plan and coordinate their activities. There is evidence that the so-called "chatter" reaches peak levels before an attack, which indicates that intensified online activities precede terrorist acts (Weimann, 2004). According to Weimann (2006), Hamas largely relies on chatroom communication to plan and coordinate activities, while al-Qaeda made intensive use of e-mail messaging prior to the 9/11 attacks.

2.2.2. Islamist internet recruitment – revisited

Discussions on the threat of the terrorist use on the internet have suffered from a lack of understanding of both the radicalisation and the recruitment process. As a result the internet has been described as a "virtual training camp" (Stenersen, 2008; Nesser, 2008) or a "conveyor belt for terrorists" (Moskalenko & McCauley, 2009). Although there is almost unanimous agreement among experts that the internet facilitates radicalisation and terrorism inasmuch as it does any other business or criminal activity, there is now a shift in paradigm pointing to the conclusion that some may have been rash in pointing fingers toward the internet as a lone culprit for radicalisation. Some reports claim that the so-called echo-chambers – online communities where radical beliefs are being reinforced and intensified – are crucial for the online radicalization process (Silber & Bhatt, 2007). Recent research, however, indicates that there is no conclusive evidence that these echo-chambers have a negative or positive influence on their participants (O'Hara & Stevens, 2015). In a study on echo-chambers' role in internet radicalisation O'Hara and Stevens conclude that:

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[7] See Weimann (2006) and Briggs (2014) for specific cases on self-radicalisation and use of online materials to assist in a terror attack.

> "Research into the facilitation of social networks by technology has thrown up paradoxes and ambivalent conclusions rather than direct unequivocal effects… It is possible that Internet technology could exacerbate problems with communities of such people, but can hardly be held responsible for their existence" (O'Hara & Stevens, 2015: 18).

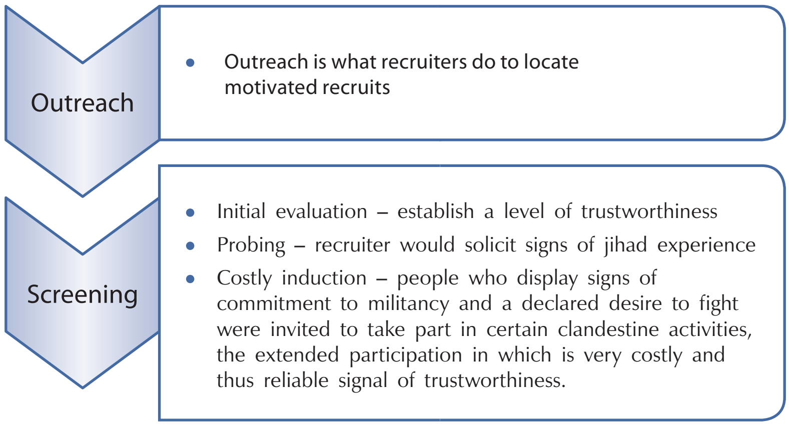
Furthermore, the assumption that potential radicals are actively engaged in online exchanges in Islamist forums and chatrooms has been challenged as well. In a study of online jihadist presence Hoskins et al (2009) conclude that:

> "There is little ostensive or meaningful debate, discussion, or dialogue amongst members of most jihadi forums observed… words and deeds of jihadists are accepted wholesale and go unchallenged" (Hoskins et al. 2009: 5).

Evidence has been recently produced which questions the common assumption that the internet is used as a "virtual training camp." A survey by Nesser (2008) suggests that the internet's role as a facilitator of terrorist training might be overstated. Although the digital domain "has become an important tool for terrorists on many levels, they maintain an urge to obtain real-life, military-style training in jihadi combat zones" (Nesser, 2008). Stenersen's (2008) review of the jihadi training manuals and interactive forums that exist on the internet today indicates that al-Qaeda is, in fact, not making an organised effort to train their followers online (Stenersen, 2008; Hoskins, 2009; von Behr et al., 2013).

There is a wide agreement among experts, academics and government agencies that the internet plays an important role in Islamist radicalisation. Opinions, however, remain divided and at times contravening, especially in terms of delineating the point at which a person becomes recruited. A large volume of research is seeking to dispel the urban myth of the "conveyor belt" power of the internet to radicalise and recruit new extremist operatives (Stevens and Neumann, 2009; Hoskins, 2009; von Behr et al, 2013). Others insist on the internet's crucial importance in enlisting and recruiting – "the creation of virtual communities, the social bonding online, and the radicalization process are all instruments of ideological recruitment" (Mozes & Weimann, 2010: 220; see also Gates & Podder, 2015). It is argued that recruiting and training new operatives is a vital task of any terrorist organisation (Faria & Arce, 2012). Such a scenario would make terrorist recruiters extremely valuable to an extremist organisation. It is therefore unrealistic to suppose that such recruiters would be willing to contact strangers over the internet, whereby risking exposure and potential capture by law-enforcement (Hegghammer, 2012). In other words the sustained abundance of Islamist/extremist content on the internet may elicit an incommensurate judgement of the threat of internet recruiting. Ultimately a crucial differentiation should be made between attempting to recruit through propaganda and actually recruiting new operatives. Hegghammer (2012) puts forward a framework for understanding the recruiting process into extremist organisations (see Figure 2).

FIGURE 2. RECRUITER'S STEPS



- Outreach is what recruiters do to locate motivated recruits

- Initial evaluation – establish a level of trustworthiness
- Probing – recruiter would solicit signs of jihad experience
- Costly induction – people who display signs of commitment to militancy and a declared desire to fight were invited to take part in certain clandestine activities, the extended participation in which is very costly and thus reliable signal of trustworthiness.

Source: *Derived from Hegghammer, 2012.*

He argues that it is highly unlikely that a recruiter would be able to successfully and with minimum risk complete the screening process using only remote online communications. A number of other studies also refute the common misperception about extremist groups that they enlist any willing person they can put their hands on. A study into the recruiting process of a terrorist organisation in Turkey, for example, concludes that most recruits have enlisted because of personal ties with family members and friends (Teymur, 2004). Although the internet may provide more opportunities for radicalisation it is unlikely that self-radicalisation and/or radicalisation without physical contact will occur (von Behr et al. 2013). Furthermore, research into individual cases of apparent self-radicalisation over the internet claim that must be understood through "personal histories and existing social and cultural tensions, rather than the seductive power of extremist ideologies" disseminated online (Halverson & Way, 2012).

In other words, the process of radicalisation – even where it has a virtual dimension – remains rooted in the real world. Stevens and Neumann point out that the "reason for the absence of self-radicalisation and self-recruitment online is that real-world social relationships continue to be pivotal… [T]he internet can support and facilitate but never completely replace direct human contact and the ties of friendship and kinship through which intense personal loyalties form" (Stevens & Neumann, 2009: 13).

The overstated role of the internet in producing radicals is being consistently put into question in a number of emerging stories and investigations into home-grown radicalisation. The radicalisation of the Somali-Americans in Minnesota is a case in point. When in 2007 a group of young Somali-American joined the jihadist Shabaab, producing the first known American suicide bomber, media were snap to point fingers to online social networks and the internet as the main culprits for the unprecedented scale of home-grown radicalisation (Elliott, 2009). However, when in 2015 six members of the same Somali community were arrested on charges for joining ISIS, the FBI were quick to point out that the group "recruited each other" in what is known as radicalisation by peers (Shane, 2015).

2.2.3. Other extremists and the internet – the far right

Islamist extremists are not the only groups employing the digital domain to further their causes. A plethora of radical and extreme interests of non-Islamist nature are making use of the internet to attempt popularisation of their agenda and recruitment of new members. These include political separatists like ETA, neo-Nazi, white supremacists, right-wing radicals, as well as animal rights and nature conservation extremists, among others. Many of these groups maintain websites, engage in information exchange through forums and chatrooms, and actively use social media for campaigning and recruitment purposes. As with the jihadist use of the internet studies have shown that terrorist groups use a vast amount of social media tools for their PR-like communication (Rothenberger, 2012).

Various far-right groups have been known to establish their presence on the digital domain and use it as a platform for propaganda and recruitment. Organisations such as the Christian Identity Movement, the Ku Klux Klan and the Creativity Movement maintain a loose network of websites and engage in a variety of online activities aiming at the popularisation of their beliefs and political positions. Their racist propaganda is often mixed with the propagation of Christian values, or is presented as a last resort to being assimilated by other races. Studies have demonstrated that supporters of white racism have had considerable success in spreading their messages via the internet. Moreover, investigations have illuminated that white extremists do attempt to attract adolescents with lyrics, music, and games (Bowman-Grieve, 2009). Research into white supremacists' online presence and activities has shown that providing entertainment-related content is viewed as particularly effective to spreading recruitment propaganda among targeted adolescent population. Features such as "white power music" and "whites-only" dating sites and services, reinforce the "white power" rhetoric and act as an important recruitment tool, representing primarily the youth sub-culture of the movement (Bowman-Grieve, 2013). Anti-Semitic games, such as "Ethnic Cleansing" and "White Law" are easily available and accessible online, and are aimed at spreading far-right/neo-Nazi messages to younger male audiences (Ibid.).

Analysing the online activities of German and Italian far-right groups Caiani and Wagemann (2009) find that recruitment, communication and planning violent attacks are the main ways in which such groups use the internet. Moreover, the risk and threat of radicalisation of the vulnerable "lone wolf" – that an isolated individual might find a common identity in an environment dominated by extremist messages, therefore becoming more susceptible to radicalisation – is also being identified in the context of far-right radicalisation (Caiani & Wagemann, 2009).

In an empirical interrogation of online far-right forums and websites Wojcieszak (2010) cautiously defends the "echo chamber" hypothesis by concluding that "opinion extremism increases with increased involvement in radical and ideologically homogeneous online groups" (Wojcieszak, 2010: 648). Although the research demonstrates an association between participation in online groups and opinion extremism, this association does not provide evidence that extreme opinions *cause* extreme action (Wojcieszak, 2010).

To summarise, the ease of access, security and speed of communication, overall lack of censorship and ready availability of information are factors that make the internet appealing for spreading extremist and radicalising messages by organisations from various fringes of the political spectrum. The internet is an unprecedented global phenomenon – it has no conventional governance and ownership and it is largely unmanageable as digital innovations and content are increasingly user-generated. It is simultaneously a culture and a cultural artefact, and therefore difficult to fully comprehend all of its intricacies. In this sense, the internet may be seen by some as lacking the capacity of being controlled, supervised and managed. Perceived in this way, it is natural that a seemingly chaotic and anarchic space would be blamed for the increasing prevalence of complex socially rooted phenomena, such as radicalisation. Consequently, the internet has been blamed for inciting terrorist activity, training of extremist operatives and recruiting new radicalised members.

Despite an overarching agreement among scholars and professionals that the digital domain facilitates access to and dissemination of radical propaganda, research has demonstrated time and again that radicalisation without physical social contact is rare and highly unlikely. Above all, radicalisation is not a technical process, but a sociological one. As with any other social development, technology may only facilitate or hinder it. Experts have revealed and defined a number online tools and mechanisms, which some consider potential instruments toward radicalisation. For instance, it is widely recognised that the so-called echo chambers exist and function as an instrument for self-affirmation and support of personal beliefs and standpoints, as well as promoting a sense of belonging and identity. However, there is little evidence to support the causality between participating in homogenised echo chambers and radicalisation and/or terrorist activity. Conversely, Wojcieszak (2010) finds that offline engagement with dissimilar agents aggravates the effects of online groups. Such findings not only question the plausibility of causality between online activities and radicalisation, but highlight the thesis that conventional social contact is indispensable for the radical mind if it is to act on its beliefs and convictions.

Instead of playing down the importance of the internet in facilitating radicalisation this chapter has rather sought to frame it in realistic boundaries that may prove useful for further policy relevant research. It is without doubt that the digital domain plays a role in radicalisation, however it very rarely commences in an isolated virtual state. This is significant from a policy-making perspective as countermeasures are envisioned to be effective when combining concurrently and complimentary online and offline approaches to manage the risk of radicalisation. Several such initiatives have been implemented in the US, such as the Building Community Resilience Program targeting Somali-Americans in Minnesota.[8] The EU has encouraged member states to develop counter- and de-radicalisation programmes commensurate with their risk assessment to include “building trust within and between the communities, promoting a better understanding of each other’s sensitivities and problems, engaging different sections of society, and much more” (European Commission, 2015). Therefore, it might be argued that although the internet may facilitate radicalisation, it also inadvertently pinpoints those sensitivities in societies that threaten social resilience, cohesion and perception of justice, which may fuel radicalisation in the first place.

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[8] Full document available at http://www.justice.gov/usao-mn/file/642121/download

3. ISLAMIST RADICALISATION

This chapter deals with Islamist radicalisation or radicalisation connected to militant Islamism in Europe. Compared to other radicalising ideologies, militant Islamism is newer to European history and for this reason is still less researched and less well understood (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010: 798). The study of the processes of Islamist radicalisation in Europe is a post 9/11 phenomenon with empirical investigations and theoretical conceptualisations having developed in regard to al-Qaeda and its affiliate organisations (Pisoiu, 2014: 771; Ranstorp, 2006: 4). There is a variety of definitions of Islamist radicalisation. Some authors define it by focusing on its genesis:

> "Islamist radicalization is an individual process, occurring in interaction with various levels of social environments and at the intersection of various types of discourse. More importantly, it is not something specific or derived from the quality of being Muslim" (Pisoiu, 2014: 796).
>
> "Radicalization is a complex and highly individualized process determined by the interaction of various structural and individual factors, and it is therefore very difficult to exactly capture in all its dynamics" (Vidino, 2011: 7).

Other definitions focus on the nature of the ideology associated with Islamist radicalisation:

> "Islamist radicalisation involves adopting the belief that, to recreate an Islamic state, Muslims must not only adhere to a strict Salafist or ultraconservative interpretation of Islam, but also wage jihad, defined as armed struggle against the enemies of Islam, including non-Muslim nations (especially the United States) and the current rulers of Muslim states who have supplanted God's authority with their own" (Rabasa, Pettyjohn, Ghez & Boucek, 2010: 2-3).
>
> "[Islamic] Radicalisation is a process of relative change in which a group undergoes ideological and/or behavioural transformations that lead to the rejection of democratic principles (including the peaceful alternation of power and the legitimacy of ideological and political pluralism) and possibly to the utilisation of violence, or to an increase in the levels of violence, to achieve political goals" (Ashour, 2009: 4).

Following a review of a rich body of academic literature dealing with the topic of Islamist radicalisation in Europe, this chapter provides an outline of the main terms and ideas associated with the phenomenon, the history of its penetration and development in Europe and the associated organisational structures and recruitment mechanisms and their evolution from the 1980s to the present. The various conceptualisations of Islamist radicalisation and the different paradigms in explaining its root causes and driving forces are a matter of special attention.

3.1. IDEOLOGICAL MOTIVATION AND CHARACTERISTICS

Often, the ideology of Islamist radicalisation is being situated within Salafism and Wahhabism and is further discussed in connection to terms such as fundamentalism, (global) jihadism[9] or even Islamism. In fact, these terms are often used interchangeably with Islamist radicalisation with little regard to their true meaning and genesis. The attempts to situate the ideology associated with Islamist radicalisation within Wahhabism and Salafism are criticised by many scholars with the argument that Wahhabism has evolved since its traditional beginnings, with its standards having moderated and that the Salafi movement is marked by diversity and inconsistencies (Hellmich, 2008: 114, 117-118). "Fundamentalism" is a term applied to both Muslims and Christians and is generally used to denote religious practice based on literal interpretation of a sacred text, and in discussions of popular religion (Githens-Mazer, 2010: 9). According to Vidino and Brandon (2012: 9), who adopt Peter Mandville's definition (Mandville 2007: 57), Islamism denotes "forms of political theory and practice that have as their goal the establishment of an Islamic political order in the sense of a state whose governmental principles, institutions and legal system derive directly from the shari'ah." The two authors, however, stress that political Islam is a global and highly flexible movement, taking different manifestations in different environments. Islamist movements in Europe and elsewhere are extremely varied in their characteristics that could be differentiated, according to their modus operandi, in three groups: violent rejectionists, non-violent rejectionists and participationists.[10]

Salafism emerged as an intellectual movement in the Al-Azhar Academy in Cairo at the end of the 19th century with the aim to restore the purity of religion through return to the testament of the ancestors from the time of the early Islam. Respectively, the term "Salafi" denoted those who follow the example of the companions of the Prophet Mohammed. As they learned about Islam directly from the Prophet they commanded a pure understanding of the faith. Salafis stand for purified Islam strictly following the Qur'an and the Sunnah which is a way to eliminate human subjectivity and thus allow the identification of the singular truth of God's command (Wiktorowicz, 2005: 75). Salafis aim to eradicate the impurities introduced during centuries of religious practice (termed "traditional Islam"). For them, interpretations that are not based on the original source are a distortion that leads Muslims astray from the path of God (Stemmann, 2006: 2). Wahhabism emerges as a puritan form of Islam founded in the 18th century by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. Its followers propagate the reliance on the Qur'an as the primary source of legitimacy and the purification of Islam from all innovations after the third century of Islam ("Wahhabiyya," 1960). In 1924-25, Wahhabis conquered Hijas and established the Wahhabi Kingdom (to become the core of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia established in 1932) (Троева, 2012).

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[9] With respect to developments in the Caucasus and Tatarstan, the issue of Islamist radicalisation is discussed in connection to the increasing predominance of Salafism and Salafist organisations (indigenous and coming from aboard) and the competition with traditional forms of Islam in these regions (Pisoiu, 2014: 772).

[10] Violent rejectionists (often referred to as jihadists) are individuals and networks that reject participation in the democratic system and advocate the use of violence to advance their goals. Non-violent rejectionists are individuals and groups that openly reject the legitimacy of governments not based on Islamic law, but do not advocate the use of violence to further their goals. Participationists are individuals and groups that advocate interaction with society at large, both at the micro-level through grassroots activism, and at the macro-level through participation in public life and the democratic process (Vidino & Brandon 2012: 9).

Salafism and Wahhabism emerge independently from one another and at different times in history. However, they share the rejection of traditional Islam and prefer direct "fundamentalist" interpretation of the religious sources. They differ in that Wahhabism refutes modernity, while Salafism aims at reconciling Islam with modernity. Although they are associated with conservative lifestyle including austere clothing and life arrangements, neither Salafism nor Wahhabism are violent per se (Öktem, 2010: 18).

While a key feature of Salafism is that there is one legitimate religious interpretation, three main branches have evolved within the movement: (i) purists who put focus on non-violent methods of propagation, purification and education, (ii) a political branch, whose followers advocate the application of the Salafi creed in the political arena, and (iii) jihadist branch, whose followers take a militant position arguing that the current context calls for violence and revolution.

The jihadi branch of Salafism emerged only in the 1980s, during the war in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union.[11] Conflicts such as the ones in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Iraq or Syria have functioned as radicalisation triggers for individuals originally traveling there on charity missions and have played an important role in the construction of a jihadi narrative of oppression exercised by Western powers on Muslims around the world (Pisoiu, 2014: 772-773). Jihadism refers to Sunni Muslim militant ideologies and movements calling for armed struggle "in the cause of God", aiming to defend Muslim territories, to establish Islamic Emirates, and to re-establish the Caliphate. In answering three key questions (why do we fight, who do we fight and how can the enemies be defeated) different jihadist trends provide different interpretations. According to Nesser, classical jihad is "armed struggle to overthrow Muslim world regimes and establish Islamic states, and … armed struggle against non-Muslims occupying Islamic territories" (Nesser, 2011: 175). Jihadism emerged as an internationally oriented movement in the 1980s among Arab volunteers taking part in the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan (Nesser, 2011: 175).

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[11] "The conflict functioned as a dangerous incubator by exposing Saudi Salafis (and other) to the radical and politicized teachings of the Egyptian Muslims Brotherhood and related splinter groups (the Islamic Group, Islamic Jihad, etc.) in a context of military training and warfare" (Wiktorowicz, 2006: 208, 225). Still, according to the accounts of other scholars "jihadi" Salafism emerged only in the 1990s in the context of the Gulf War when Saudi Arabia responded to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait by inviting U.S. troops onto its soil. In parallel, the jihadi ideology gradually gained ground in Afghanistan and eventually merged with the radical branch of Salafism (Stemmann, 2006: 4).

A very important point made by Wiktorowicz is that the divisions between the three different branches of Salafism are not about creed but about the contextual analysis of the contemporary world which instructs the proposition of different solutions (Wiktorowicz, 2006: 208). In other words, Islamist radicalisation is not ingrained in the Salafi belief per se but in some of the contextual readings and more specifically those that are proposed by the jihadi branch. In the same regard, some authors argue that movements within the same ideology may promote different messages, which renders the focus on religion only or on Salafism when studying Islamist radicalisation somewhat useless (Wesley, 2008). While the role of religion in forms of violent radicalisation and violent political mobilisation is an important area of study, religion is not to be approached as the cause of radicalisation (Githens-Mazer, 2010: 14, 16). For example, authors such as Wiktorowicz make clear delineation between "jihadi thought" and Salafism (Wiktorowicz, 2005: 76). The author provides an account of the main points of diversion and dispute between the Salafi mainstream and the jihadi thought: 1) whether Muslims can call leaders apostates and wage jihad against them; 2) the nature of jihad; 3) the permissibility of targeting civilians, and 4) the legitimacy of suicide bombings (Ibid.).

Apostasy for mainstream Salafi requires absolute proof of intentions which makes declaring someone an apostate extremely difficult. According to current jihadi argument any leader who does not implement and follow Islamic law is an apostate. The same is applied to rulers in the Muslim world who use non-Islamic legal codes (Wiktorowicz, 2005: 78-80). Regarding the second issue of content (jihad) according to well-established Islamic legal opinions jihad is either a struggle of the soul for purification or a defensive war to protect the Muslim community if/when it is invaded by an outside force. According to jihadi ideology the use of force is needed to help Islamic truth predominate, jihad is to be waged to establish an Islamic state. As for the third point of contention, nonviolent Salafis and other Muslims argue for a prohibition against purposely targeting non-combatants (civilians). Although by the end of the 1990s, al-Qaeda uniformly rejected the targeting of Muslim civilians unless they assisted the infidel, many jihadists justify the killing of non-Muslim civilians (Wiktorowicz, 2005: 90-91). The fourth issue of contention – the permissibility of suicide bombings – became subject of debate in Salafi circles in the mid-1990s in response to its widespread usage by Hamas and other Palestinian factions. Senior clerics in Saudi Arabia refute suicide bombings in compliance with the explicit prohibition in Islam of suicide. The argument of the jihadist, however, who views suicide bombings as legitimate martyrdom operations, is that they are justified as acts of sacrifice in the name of the martyr's religion (Wiktorowicz, 2005: 93).

Jihadi Salafism came into contact with various European-based ideologies which are exemplified by three fundamentalist ideas promoted by the cleric Abu Qatada: 1) the only way to build the Islamic State and establish God's sovereignty is by fighting; 2) all other means – such as preaching or participation in politics – are excluded; 3) the fight is a religious duty. The fusion of militant Salafism and the jihadi ideology was further consolidated under Osama bin Laden whose declaration of war on the West caused groups originally set to provide logistical support to al-Qaeda to turn their attention to the West (Stemmann, 2006: 5). The well-known concept of the ummah in Islam is invoked by militant Islamists to construct sense of solidarity between Muslims in Europe and Muslims in conflict areas around the world. Such solidarity is also galvanised by the imagery of suffering civilians and appeals in propaganda materials of militant groups to come to their rescue (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010: 800).

A concise definitional summary of the ideological justification of militant Islamism is proposed by Dalgaard-Nielsen in her review of empirical research in the field published between 2001 and 2008:

> "Militant Islamism is centered on a narrative, which claims that Islam and Muslims are constantly attacked and humiliated by the West, Israel, and corrupt local regimes in Muslim countries. It claims that in order to return to a society of peace, harmony and social justice, Muslims need to unite and stand up for their faith. They need to fight the West and other corrupting influences. Violence, including violence against civilians, is a necessary and legitimate means given the superior military power of the West. The fight, which militant Islamism claims is a religiously sanctioned fight, is an individual duty and an emancipatory journey, which brings the fighter closer to God" (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010: 798).

3.2. REPERTOIRE OF ACTIONS AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES

3.2.1. History of the phenomenon in Europe

In terms of membership and contributory factors, Islamist radicalisation in Western Europe is related to colonial histories, immigration (post-colonial and economic) and the situation of Muslim immigrant minorities in the host societies. A review of the scholarship on Islamist radicalisation suggests that there have been three to four stages in the development of jihadist networks and the penetration of Islamist terrorism in Europe.[12]

1) In the 1980s, Europe played the role of a marginal basis of operations. Jihadist activities at that time were undertaken by small groups with national orientation aimed to influence the political situations in their countries of origin (Willemse, 2007: 24). In the same period, some of these Muslims headed to Afghanistan and Pakistan to participate in the struggle against the Soviet Army in Afghanistan. As a result, there emerged a sense of solidarity among the multinational mujahedeen in Afghanistan that evolved into an aspiration to liberate all Muslims in the world from corrupt and godless leaders. Still, at this stage there was no jihadist activity against Western targets or in the West itself.

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[12] The account is based on the following authors: Pisoiu, 2014: 773-774; Willemse, 2007: 24; Vidino, 2011: 1-4; Nesser, 2011: 180-181.

2) The second stage that took place in the 1990s involved the establishment of a presence in a number of European countries such as Spain, France, Germany, Netherlands, UK, Italy and Belgium of international networks such as the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC), Hamas, Ansar al-Islam, Hezbollah, the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM). In addition, returning Afghan mujahedeen looking for refuge in Europe or relocating to new fronts in Chechnya and Bosnia contributed to a wave of radicalisation in the continent. This development marked the emerging linkage between typical nationalistic struggle and global jihad. The shift to global jihad is associated with the reorganisation of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan by Osama Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, who created a global platform and fostered a strategy according to which jihadist action had to be directed at both secular regimes in the Muslim world and their Western supporters. Respectively, many of the networks in Europe had fallen in the orbit of al-Qaeda and for the first time appeared ready to invest efforts not only in conflicts in the country of origin but in serving the global project of al-Qaeda. Still, in this period Europe was primarily a basis for financing, equipment and propaganda, rather than a target of acts of violent Islamist radicalisation (Nesser, 2011: 180-181).[13]

3) The third period, starting with the turn of the century, is associated with Europe's involvement in the war in Iraq and the controversies related to the wearing of headscarves and the cartoons in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*, which contributed to making the continent a legitimate target as part of global jihad against all enemies of Islam. This period, also called by Vidino the "home-grown phase," involves a change in jihadist networks worldwide after the 9/11 attacks, the blow to the al-Qaeda leadership and the destruction of their Afghan training camps by the US. The dismantling of networks associated with al-Qaeda in Europe affected those remaining loyal to the ideology of al-Qaeda to become independent in their operations. These developments were also marked by the shift in the reasons for radicalisation – from developments in the countries of origin or global conflicts to domestic (such as the Danish cartoons controversy). In consequence, domestic motivations for radicalisation translated into domestic targets in Europe. These developments were demonstrated by a series of attacks such as the one in Madrid (2004), the murder of Theo Van Gogh (2004) or the attack in London (2005).

4) Some authors identify a fourth stage, the so called "linkage phase," which is associated with the emergence of linkages between home-grown networks and al-Qaeda affiliated groups.

In the context of the "Arab spring" and the dismantling of the of old regimes in the Middle East and North Africa the links between home-grown extremists and jihadi organisations were personalised and enforced through thousands of foreign fighters joining the fight in Syria.

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[13] Nesser speaks about a classical jihad phase in Europe with the bombings by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in France in 1995 (p. 182).

3.2.2. Organisational structures and repertoire of actions

Scholars who study jihadist activities and organisational structures are usually discussing the levels of presence of novel and traditional forms of organisation, namely the balance between centralised and decentralised, hierarchical and horizontal networks, independent vs. affiliated or single actor vs. group activities. Some authors stress the novel nature of current radical Islamist networks that involves decentralised and highly mobile jihadi structures, undertaking training and combat travel to conflict areas from Pakistan to Syria and mixed composition cells including immigrants from third, second and first generations as well as converts (Pisoiu, 2014: 773). The novelty of the present period also involves the plotting of attacks in Europe by returning indoctrinated fighters, as well as by low scale attacks perpetrated by relatively autonomous and unprofessional cells (Pisoiu, 2014: 774, citing Ranstrop, 2010). However, while recognising the novel aspects in the organisation and orientation of jihadi networks, other scholars point that the more traditional forms of organisation remain important. Vidino claims that presently there is a mixture of operational jihadist structures in Europe including both the newly emerged home-grown clusters which are leaderless, without structure and links to external organisations and the cells based on well-structured network and subjected to a hierarchy. The change involves a shift from the hierarchically structured cells of the 1990s to home-grown groups without a traditional leader, clear division of roles and formal structure and every member being free to act on his own (Vidino, 2011: 4-5). Another novel feature of the European jihadist networks is the growing presence of converts and women.

The mixed nature of present organisational structures is evidenced by the results of a study on jihadi terrorist plots in Western Europe between 1994 and 2013 conducted by Nesser. Results for the period 2008 – 2013 show the majority of the plots being part of organised extremist groups and terrorist networks; a good share of the plots with some kind of connection to al-Qaeda's affiliates in countries such as Yemen, Iraq, Somalia and Algeria; a continuing presence of group plots and a marked increase in the single actor plots (believed to be a tactical decision in the context of significant counterterrorism pressure) (Nesser, 2014: 451-452). The diverse nature of present jihadi organisational structures is confirmed by the empirical study by Bakker of 31 cases of jihadi terrorism in Europe. Identifying 28 involved networks, the author reveals that they display significant variety in terms of size, geographic distribution of their operations and in the rate of success. While some networks are one-man enterprises, others include more than 30 persons; they operate in one country only or in a number of countries. In addition, they involve people from various socioeconomic strata and occupations as well as diverse age and profile and family status with married, divorced and single men alike (Bakker, 2006: 31-34). The empirical studies of other authors show a dominance of home grown and independent networks in Europe. In his analysis of jihadist plots against the West between 2004 and 2008, Sageman identifies that 78 per cent of the plots originate in "autonomous home-grown groups without any connection, direction or control from al-Qaeda core or its allies." In addition, his data also show that 60 percent of “global neo-jihadi terrorist networks from 2004 onwards did not have any formal training from foreign terrorist groups” (Sageman, 2009: 11, 16).

In discussing home-grown terrorism in Europe and by using the dimensions of belonging (to the West) and autonomy (from Islamist militants abroad) Crone and Harrow (2010: 8-10) define 4 types of jihadi structures on the continent. They include 1) *internal autonomous terrorism* with the dynamics leading to a plot exclusively found within the Western country and involving autonomous individual or group, self-started, self-trained, and self-radicalised with a high degree of belonging to the West; 2) *internal affiliated networks* are also home-grown, but they have some sort of affiliation to organised terrorism either as members or more limited contact, such as economic or ideological support or training; 3) *external autonomous* terrorism is perpetrated by individuals or groups who are independent of terrorists outside the West and have a low degree of sense of belonging to the West. They form a group, plan, prepare for, and (if not stopped) carry out a terrorist attack in the West; 4) *external affiliated* terrorism mirrors internal affiliated terrorism except for the lower degree of belonging to the West.

In should be noted that when discussing organisational structures of radical (militant) Islamist networks one should not forget that their characteristics differ significantly from country to country and, in many cases, within each country from region to region and from city to city (Vidino, 2011: 28-29). While countries such as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom experience widespread jihadist activities on their territory and consider the risk of an attack against them very elevated, other countries such as Greece, Portugal, and the Eastern European members of the European Union face no or minor challenges.

3.2.3. Recruitment

Parallel to the changes in organisational structures a change in recruitment mechanisms is presently observed in Europe. Vidino (2011: ix) claims that there is a shift in the ways of familiarisation with jihadist ideology on the continent. Before the turn of the century this had been the result of personal interaction with preachers and recruiters in places such as prisons and radical mosques, while presently a process of self-radicalisation is being observed often through the internet or in small groups of peers. The dynamics of recruitment in Europe, understood to be the process through which a terrorist group includes in its ranks an already radicalised individual, do not involve top-down efforts on the part of al-Qaeda or associated movements (AQAM). Recruitment into jihadist structures and activities in Europe is a bottom-up process that is better defined as “linkage” (Vidino, 2011: 7-8). Irrespectively of where it is established, the linkage between European individuals or clusters and AQAM in most cases leads the former to spend some time training or fighting (or both) in one of five places: Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen, Iraq, or the Maghreb (Vidino, 2011: 25). According to Dalgaard-Nielsen, the changes in recruitment mechanisms can be explained with the more hostile environment to recruitment due to the stringent counter-radicalisation measures by governments and reactions of communities in Europe. The outcome is that recruitment is largely driven underground with the key figure in recruitment presently being the activist rather than the self-styled imam or the radical organisation. In this sense Dalgaard-Nielsen confirms the claims of Vidino about a horizontal as opposed to top-down process of recruitment (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010: 803). The finding is substantiated by Nesser whose empirical findings indicate a horizontal pattern and entrepreneurial type peer group leaders who recruit on their own initiative among family, friends and members of social network (Nesser, 2004, cited in Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010: 807).

3.3. ROOT CAUSES AND LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

Islamist radicalisation is studied by scholars from various disciplines – political science, sociology, criminology, psychology, religious studies or terrorism studies. Respectively very different approaches have been employed to study and explain it. With regard to the unit of analysis scholars place attention on the individual and the group, on the community, or on behaviour and ideas.

Three analytical paradigms can be identified in researching and explaining Islamist radicalisation today. Within the first paradigm, scholars aim to answer the question "why" and look at the factors that explain radicalisation. Within the second paradigm, scholars are interested in the process of radicalisation and therefore try to answer the question "how." Many of these scholars work with the social movement theory and the network theory and look at dynamics of social networks and social interaction. A third paradigm involves interest into both factors and processes of radicalisation and looks at individual level factors and mechanisms facilitating radicalisation and recruitment or self-recruitment (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010: 798).

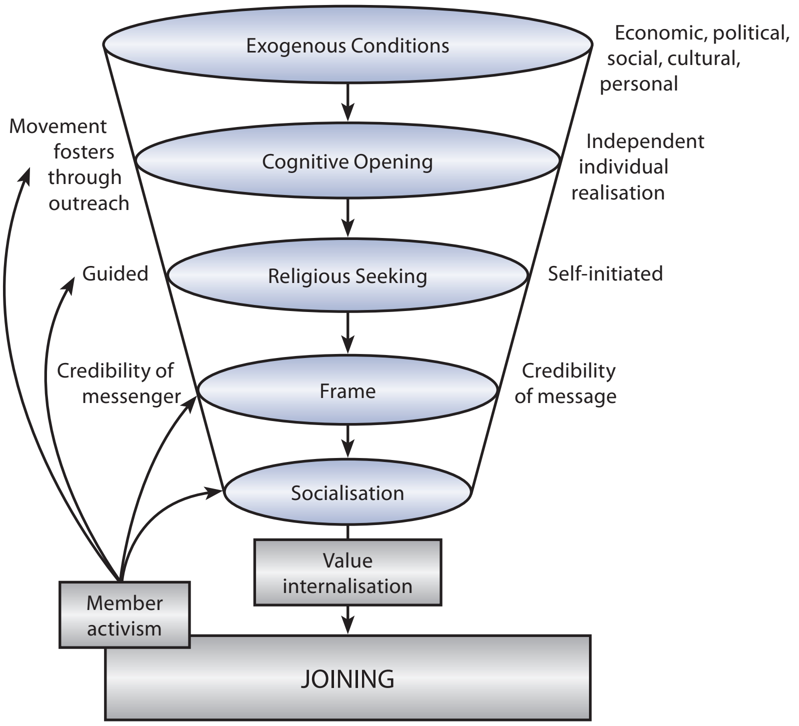
Scholars who look at the factors for Islamist radicalisation put forward the thesis that it is associated with jihadi social movement of global orientation based on the tenets of Islamic fundamentalism and rooted in the social, political and cultural conditions in Europe and the Middle East. Islamist radicalisation is found to be rooted in the economic and cultural conditions in the Arab world and related grievances such as hostility between the Arab world and the West, colonialism, frustration with underdevelopment, economic disadvantage, the poor-rich gap, and corruption. These are grievances that often fuse into an anti-Western discourse and reach Europe by influencing the mind-set of segments of some communities there (Pisoiu, 2014: 776). According to Roy (2004) this movement is de-cultured and de-territorialised with European radicals perceiving themselves to belong to a virtual ummah, rather than to the host or the origin country.

For other authors the main factors for Islamist radicalisation are related to identity dynamics. The argument ties the process of search for identity, dignity and meaning to perceived discrimination and pressure on Islam which induce receptiveness toward the radical worldview of militant Islamists. The radicalisation of individuals from Europe's lower social strata is explained by classical sociological factors such as economic marginalisation, lack of education, neighbourhood solidarity and peer pressure. The radicalisation of members of the well integrated Muslim middle class, on the other hand, is explained with search for identity, meaning and community, particularly acute for second and third generation Muslim immigrants who no longer feel part of the community in their origin countries. Compounded with experiences of discrimination and socio-economic disadvantage in European societies the state of identity search is termed by some authors "double sense of non-belonging" (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010: 800). It should be noted, however, that this explanatory paradigm provides no answers as to why it is only a minority that reverts to violence while the same structural factors affect the whole mainstream (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010: 801; Pisoiu, 2014: 779). In the context of widely diverse jihadi cells (in terms of nationalities, ages, professional occupations and family backgrounds) it is hard to establish if social factors matter in the recruitment process (Nesser, 2006: 52).

With regard to the causes of radicalisation a concept dominant at all levels of analysis is that of "grievance". While empirical research on Muslim communities in Western Europe points to various aspects of insufficiency, frustration and anger there is no straightforward empirical evidence that radicalised individuals or perpetrators of violence have experienced these frustrations. Two explanations are offered to sustain the concept of grievance at the individual level of analysis, both involving the community as unit of analysis. According to the first, individuals radicalise as they adopt group grievances on the basis of common (ethnic or religious) identity. According to the second, individuals radicalise when their own grievances correspond with those of the community (Pisoiu, 2014: 775).

Scholars working with the second approach and using the social movement theory and network theory pay attention to the specifics of recruitment and the process of (violent) radicalisation. The authors working in this paradigm underline the importance of group factors for radicalisation. They stress the role of socialisation (the importance of networks and personal bonds) rather than inherent psychological characteristics or socio-economic deprivation as key to understanding radicalisation (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010: 805). Wiktorowicz (2004b) working with the social movement theory and Sageman (2004) using the network theory claim that radicalisation takes place in smaller groups where bonding, peer pressure and indoctrination gradually change the worldview of an individual. Some of the answers provided rely on psychological approach and models of "cognitive opening". Wiktorowicz (2005) established a three stage model of engagement in Islamist activism. The first stage associated with development of interest for the radical movement that creates willingness of exposure to new ways of thinking is followed by the second stage of "religious seeking" associated with cognitive crisis which is handled by "religious meaning" that helps in finding answers. The third stage is associated with involvement in risky activism. The circumstances or crises that trigger the cognitive opening stage may be economic (being laid off, blocked mobility), social or cultural (racism, humiliation), political (repression, political discrimination) or personal crises such as death or victimisation by crime.

FIGURE 3. WIKTOROWICZ'S MODEL FOR JOINING EXTREMIST OR TERRORIST GROUPS


Exogenous Conditions
Economic, political, social, cultural, personal
Movement fosters through outreach
Cognitive Opening
Independent individual realisation
Guided
Religious Seeking
Self-initiated
Credibility of messenger
Frame
Credibility of message
Socialisation
Value internalisation
Member activism
JOINING

Source: *As quoted in Schmid, 2013: 23.*

A similar model is established by Wilner and Dubouloz, which is grounded in the transformative learning theory from education and rehabilitation science. Their model explains the psycho-cognitive processes associated with radicalisation, which involve psycho-cognitive construction of self, ideological learning and internalising the rationales that legitimise violent behaviour (Wilner & Dubouloz, 2011: 419). In their model, there is an initial moment of crisis that triggers cognitive opening for new beliefs and values, which after being adopted are cemented through confirmation from the social environment. Finally, by socialising with like minded individuals the new identify is strengthened. "Changes in behavior (including violent behavior) is the reflection of the solidification and empowerment of the individual's meaning perspective, belief system, and identity" (Wilner & Dubouloz, 2011: 423). The most significant findings in these models, according to Pisoiu, include the role of social validation in the process of adopting new ideas and the fact that behaviour, including violence, becomes legitimised by the existence of new values and rules (Pisoiu, 2014: 784).

At the individual level of analysis this approach looks at pathways and ways of involvement as well as personal histories and processes. According to the social learning theory in criminology, the adoption of rules and values is based on feedback from the social environment and the observation of rewards and punishments received for different behavioural models. While radicalisation is the outcome of "kaleidoscope" factors (Ranstrop, 2010: 4), social networks are generally acknowledged as one ingredient of the radicalisation process contributing to decisions for joining radicalised groups. Sageman (2004 and 2008) argues for a model of Islamist radicalisation that has come to be known as the "bunch of guys" theory because of its emphasis on friendship and kinship as central to the radicalisation process.

An important strand in present scholarship on Islamist radicalisation approaches the topic from the perspective of communities and diasporas with their cultural and religious specificities and identity dynamics. Authors that resort to this analytical paradigm seek explanations for the phenomena of Islamist radicalisation in particular cultural, social, economic features (inherent or circumstantial) of the Muslim communities in Europe (Pisoiu, 2014: 785). Some authors study the links between Muslims communities in Europe and the Middle East. According to them, Muslim communities in Europe either find themselves in identical situations of strain as those abroad or bring to the continent grievances and political divisions from the countries of origin. The radicalisation of Muslim communities occurs among the first generation out of concerns for development in the origin countries with which they maintain tribal ties. Among the second and third generation it happens through indoctrination and bringing conflicts home through videos and graphic pictures of the suffering of Muslims in conflict zones. These are interpreted as the outcome of what is claimed to be direct or indirect Western oppression. Other scholars place focus on the tensions arising from the condition of being a minority in a different cultural environment involving cultural and generational conflicts. Scholars provide accounts of assumed specific Muslim grievances related to marginalisation and discrimination. According to Khosrokhavar (2005: 155), the process leading to radicalisation is the following: first Muslims in Western Europe experience humiliation out of economic marginalisation and social inferiority, then through the media they experience humiliation of Muslims in Bosnia, Afghanistan, Iraq or Palestine; third, they feel that their immersion in the Western world has defiled them. Subsequently, lost dignity is restored by participation in a group that is fighting Western arrogance and hegemony inside the West (Pisoiu, 2014: 787). According to Khosrokavar, the anonymity and individualism of the big multicultural city is destabilising for Muslims, it threatens the traditional social and family links and opens the door to virtual identities (Khosrokavar, 2005: 158, cited in Pisoiu, 2014: 787). All cited scholars share an understanding of the role of jihadism in bringing strong identity, sense of meaning and mission in life (Pisoiu, 2014: 786-787).

Both Pisoiu and Dalagard-Nielsen argue that to look at Islamist radicalisation through the lens of community and community dynamics is very problematic as it discusses the circumstances and conditions of whole communities as causes while only isolated individuals get radicalised and even less resort to violent behaviour (Pisoiu, 2014: 788). According to Pisoiu, the fact that certain Muslim communities display features of marginalisation or discrimination is not sufficient to lead to the conclusion that those features are drivers to individual radicalisation. She also argues that macro-level realities such as discrimination, external conflicts or the collapse of traditional social structures are not a direct cause or a contributing factor to radicalisation but should be understood as elements of discourse that are purposefully created and developed within social interaction. Arguing against the community paradigm some authors note that policies aimed at countering violent extremism and targeting entire Muslim communities risk constructing "suspect communities" and thus negatively impacting community cohesion, or even acting as triggers of radicalisation (Vermeulen, 2014, cited by Pisoiu, 2014: 789).

Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010: 806-809) outlines one more approach to studying the root causes of Islamist radicalisation, namely the case-study driven approach with focus on individual level motivations. These are empirical studies that do not utilise particular theoretical framework but add empirical data on factors and processes of radicalisation. To some extent they confirm the conclusions of studies conducted within the social movement and the network theories – the importance of social connections and processes in the radicalisation process. However, the empirical studies provide more insight into the motivations and trigger factors at play at the individual level and help better understand the different types of activists that make up radical groups and the different roles that they perform. A study comparing the worldviews of democratically active second generation Moroccan youth in the Netherlands with the views of Moroccan youth in the Netherlands adhering to different branches of the Salafi movement, including more radical groups with violent views, shows that resourceful individuals become open to messages of violent Islamism not because of lack of identity, community, family relations, education and socioeconomic opportunities, or perceived grievances but because of lack of belief in their own abilities to address these grievances and effect change through legal and constitutional channels (Bujis, Demant & Hamdy, 2006, cited in Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010: 813).

The value in the case studies driven by the empirical approach is in demonstrating that it is not possible to identify one single socio-economic profile that characterises radical individuals. Therefore attempts to use socio-economic profiling to identify potential radicals or terrorists are not likely to be effective. In addition, there is no single or prevalent set of motivations driving radicalisation at the individual level. It is nevertheless possible to identify a limited number of types of activists within radical groups and a limited set of reasons why these individuals end up on the path of radicalisation (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010: 810).

4. RIGHT-WING AND LEFT-WING RADICALISATION

Right-wing and left-wing extremism and radicalisation never entirely withered in post-war Europe. However, their emergence, growth and political salience have varied across countries and time periods. Left-wing extremism was vital and robust in the decades following the leftist movements of the 1960s, and in some countries it remained visible and active through the 1980s (as in Italy) or in the 1990s and throughout the 2000s (as in Greece). Overall, however, left-wing extremism has been rather marginal, if not dormant, in contemporary Europe. In some countries, such as Greece, where it has always been an active segment of the extra-parliamentary system, left-wing radicalism seems to have acquired new vitality in the context of the socio-economic crisis since 2010 as the country entered a protracted period of fiscal austerity and economic recession.

Right-wing extremism, on the other hand, while mostly a marginal factor in post-World War II European politics, began to re-emerge in the late 1980s and in the 1990s, and to become increasingly salient, active and politically influential (Betz, 1999: 299-300). This latest period has been seen as third-wave right-wing radicalism in post-war Western democracies. This third wave should be distinguished from the old right: it expresses a “softening of anti-democratic rhetoric and willingness to play according to the rules of the game, as well as by its advocacy of ethnocentrism rather than classic biological racism” (Minkenberg, 2013: 19). Notably, the academic and policy-relevant literature on right-wing radicalisation is far more voluminous than that on left-wing extremism, undoubtedly reflecting the far greater prominence of the former in comparison to the latter since the 1990s in Europe, but also in the US and elsewhere.

Even though left-wing extremists are considered progressive social movements and right-wing conservative counter-movements, this chapter discusses and analyses left-wing and right-wing extremism and radicalisation together. Notwithstanding their markedly distinct, if not directly oppositional, reservoir of ideas and beliefs from which they draw, they apparently share many characteristics in regard to forms of organisation, group dynamics, and the tactics that they use. Right-wing and left-wing extremist groups may interact in a highly conflictual fashion even as they tend to imitate each other in the kinds of tactics of choices of arenas in which to act (Caiani et al., 2012: 14).

Radicalisation is a process characterised by the increased commitment of individuals and groups to the use of violent means and strategies in political conflicts. Such a commitment and the resort to violence usually goes hand in hand with shifting perceptions of actors towards “polarizing and absolute definitions of a given situation, and the articulation of increasingly ‘radical’ aims and objectives” (della Porta & LaFree, 2012: 6-7). On the other hand, the process whereby individuals and groups withdraw from and abandon such a commitment can be seen to manifest the phenomenon of de-radicalisation (della Porta & LaFree, 2012: 5-6). There is often a close association between radical or extremist views and attitudes, on the one hand, and use of violence in action on the other, however, these two do not necessarily go together. Individuals and groups may espouse radical and extremist views without necessarily deploying aggressive tactics in action. At the same time, involvement in violent acts is not necessarily premised on or driven by adherence to radical beliefs and frames of thinking, but it may be motivated by personal loyalty or peer pressure.

In the rest of this chapter, the review of the literature and the analysis of right- and left-wing radicalism in this section proceeds in several parts. First, it examines the background of ideas, beliefs and ideologies from which each kind of extremism tends to draw. While left and right-wing extremisms draw from profoundly distinct, if not contrasting ideological substrata, the actual mixture of ideas and beliefs that different strands and organisations *within* each movement espouse is strongly context-specific and varies across countries and time periods. Secondly, the chapter describes and analyses the diversity of organisations that right- and left-wing radicalisms encompass, drawing a clear distinction between political parties, and the broader array of formations that comprise the left and right extremisms as social movements. Thirdly, a discussion and analysis is provided of the relevance and the emergence of violence as a cardinal means for pursuing political ends among extremists. Of central interest here, as well as in no few other studies, is the distinction between radicalisation that leads to violence and radicalisation that does not lead to violence: why and how individuals and groups cross over the line and come to employ violence in action? Finally, some main approaches and perspectives on the root causes of right- and left-wing extremism are examined.

4.1. IDEOLOGICAL AND DISCURSIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Right-wing and left-wing radicalisms draw from distinctive reservoirs of ideological traditions and beliefs, which we describe and discuss in this section. At the outset though, it must be noted that the specific assortment of ideas and goals professed by different organisations within each movement significantly or substantially differ.[14] Far-right extremism encompasses a diverse range of groups with different ideologies, which makes it inherently difficult to define it with any degree of coherence (Taylor, Currie & Holbrook, 2013). They range from less ideological youth street gangs to neo-Nazi terrorist cells, to anti-Islam activists and registered parties seeking to affect change through the political system, and to informal groups gathering and mobilising around music and sports events. Left-wing extremists on the other hand comprise challengers of capitalism and the class society, activists opposing neo-liberalism and economic globalisation, groups defending animal rights, protesting shale gas drilling and advancing other environmental causes, as well as activists seeking to stop the deportation of immigrants, among others. In the light of such diversity, it is not possible to define a single and coherent right-wing or left-wing ideology that is common to the wide variety of the relevant movements and organisations that we find across countries. We can identify, though, distinct pools of ideas and traditions from which right-wing radicalism and left-wing radicalism draw.

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[14] Mudde (1995) noted that there were at least 26 definitions of right-wing extremism, mentioning at least 58 features, with only five of these (nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democratic sentiment and a call for a strong state) mentioned by more than half of the authors.

The new radical right is an "exclusionary populism", an ideology that is based on "…a restrictive notion of citizenship, which holds that true democracy is based on a homogeneous community (what some on the radical right have referred to as "organic democracy"), that only long-standing citizens are full members of civil society and that a society's benefits should only accrue to them" (Merkl and Weinberg, 2003: 74). Adherents to such views demand the expulsion of unemployed foreigners and foreigners charged with having committed a crime, an immediate stop to all transfer payments to refugees and asylum-seekers, and the "repatriation" of asylum-seekers whose applications have been denied (Ibid.). Racism, xenophobia, ultra-nationalism, and opposition to liberal democracy are commonly defining features of contemporary right-wing extremism (Ramalingam, 2014: 5).

Migrants and various kinds of minorities (ethnic, religious, sexual) are prime targets of right-wing extremism and they are stigmatised as cultural threats. Right-wing activists often see themselves as protecting the nation against outsiders such as fascists, Jews, migrants, homosexuals, women (Caiani et al., 2012: 5-6).

Scholars who have for a long time been studying this phenomenon define "right-wing extremism as a political ideology revolving around the myth of a homogenous nation – a romantic and populist ultra-nationalism hostile to liberal, pluralistic democracy, with its underlying principles of individualism and universalism" (Minkenberg, 2013: 11). While some argue that the new right-wing movements profess ideas and engage in forms of action that invoke close linkages with the fascist movements of the past (see Mammone et al., 2013: Introduction), others like Minkenberg view the contemporary radical right's intellectual origins to lie in the New Right of the 1970s – 1990s. The New Right brought a renewal of fascist ideology by formulating the concept of "ethnopluralism" and demarcating its thinking from old-fashioned ideas of biological racism and white superiority.

> "Ethnopluralism is a politically enforced segregation of cultures and ethnicities according to geographical criteria – and the New Right's counter-model to multiculturalism, one that functions as a modernized strategy against immigration and integration. It precedes and merges into the xenophobic messages promulgated by mainstream politicians and authors" (Minkenberg, 2013: 19).

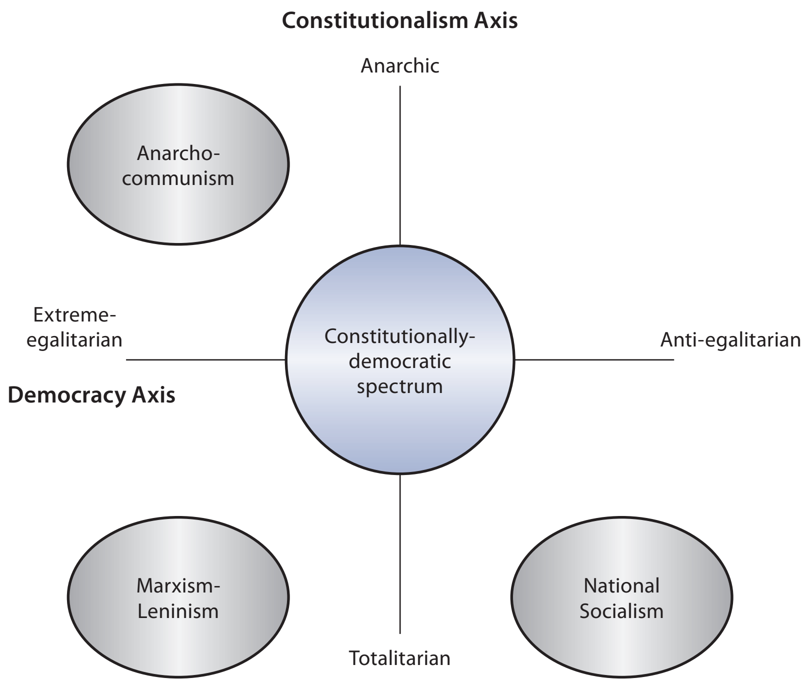
Beyond ultra-nationalism and ethno-pluralism, right-wing extremism has a distinct anti-systemic and anti-constitutional thrust, even among some political parties that are elected in parliament. While they do not necessarily reject the fundamental values, procedures and institutions of the democratic state (they may), they criticise systemic parties for arguably not representing the people belonging to the dominant nation. Characteristic features of right-wing parties are their espousal of populist tactics and rhetoric and their reliance on mobilisation of popular *ressentiment* (Merkl & Weinberg, 2003: 74).

Far right extremism takes a number of forms ranging from electoral organisations, such as political parties, to various other organisations, informal groups and networks, such as youth gangs, white power and skinhead groups, sports and music groups, terrorist cells and lone actors, political movements and paramilitary groups; and nativist and anti-Islam movements (Ramalingam, 2014: 7). Right-wing extremists engage in a wide range of activities: spontaneous hate crime, vandalism and hooliganism, and they also promote the participation of individuals in street protest movements defined not by rigid membership structures but by a fluid "march and grow" strategy. As emphasized by Briggs and Goodwin (2012), right-wing extremists often commit low level acts of violence, which are unlikely to find themselves on the front pages of newspapers. Manifestations may include vandalising shops owned by foreigners, attacking a person for racial or ethnic reasons. Merely shouting racist and other abusive slogans is a form of violence (Mudde, 2007). The ten most targeted groups for crime with a perceived racist motive are the Roma in the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and in Greece, Somalis in Finland and in Denmark, Africans in Malta, Sub-Saharan Africans in Ireland, and North Africans in Italy (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2012).

The internet and social media have become cardinal and little regulated vehicles of propagating, communicating and disseminating right-wing extremist ideas through semi-public and password-protected forums (Daniels, 2009). Spaces like Stormfront.org founded by a former KKK leader in the 1990s served as means of communication, recruitment, mobilisation and propaganda over the last decade (Ministry of Justice, Sweden & Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2012: 36). Far-right websites are becoming increasingly professional-looking in presentation and appearance, which is helping them gain credibility and appeal to wider audiences, and generate new and major sources of funding. The internet is a main vehicle for spreading ideas and attracting voters. It crucially enables individuals from across different countries and continents to build an imagined society and a collective identity (see Caiani & Parenti, 2013). The Internet and social media are also instrumental in establishing and sustaining the transnational dimension of right-wing extremism. Groups like EDL are starting to present themselves as part of a growing transnational movement, building on the success of counter-jihad equivalents initiated in the US and attempting to capitalise on the anti-Islam "hook". Apart from the internet, right-wing ideas are communicated and spread via other vectors, such as football events and sports groups (on the latter see Testa & Armstrong, 2013), or through music (see Langebach & Raabe, 2013).

In contrast to right-wing extremism that began to re-emerge in the 1980s and 1990s, the heyday of left-wing extremism with a violent strand was in the 1970s and until the 1980s. Having their roots in the protest movements of the 1960s, various groups and organisations in countries like Italy, Germany, Spain, and Greece, among others, saw themselves as the revolutionary front of the struggle against world capitalism. They variably endorsed traditional dogmas of Marxism-Leninism, New Left issues, or anarchist views, and in some cases, such as in the Basque Country and in Northern Ireland, they allied with ethnic separatists (Mareš 2007: 295). At the antipode to the right-wing radical ideas, left-wing radicals see the existing world organised around a capitalist economy as profoundly unequal and unjust. At the same time, in contrast to right-wing radicals who espouse ideas of exclusion and hostility towards the outsider (be it an immigrant or just a member of a different ethnic, cultural or racial stratum), left-wing radicals believe in an inclusive society. They profess a resolute commitment to transforming the world in a revolutionary manner and to creating an equal and just society. Contrary to right wing extremism, the "enemies" of left-wing radicalism are not immigrants but the wealthy and the upper classes. In Figure 5, Backes illustrates this differentiation by comparing left-wing to right-wing radicalism using two-dimensional political space.

Figure 4. Forms of political extremism in a two-dimensional political space (anti-democratism/anti-constitutionalism)



Source: *Backes, 2007: 254.*

The so-called "red terrorism" of the 1970s and 1980s frequently employed tactics such as kidnappings, assassination of selectively chosen victims (politicians, industrialists, members of security forces), damaging of property, etc. It was characterised by intense bursts of activity, followed by (sometimes lengthy) periods of silence (General Intelligence and Security Service, 2013: 7). Since the 1980s, though, this kind of left-wing extremism has significantly withered in Europe, as a consequence of the demise of communism and the rise of Islamic radicalism in the Arab countries, which was not interested in secular kinds of radical left politics (Mareš 2007, 297). Even though it has substantially subsided, left-wing extremism is not entirely extinct in Europe, while it was transformed by taking up new issues and pursuing various kinds of disruptive actions. Small groups still exist in Western Europe, albeit with low levels of membership, as well as with limited funds and weaponry at their disposal (Mareš, 2007: 298). In Greece in particular, a variety of splinter and offshoot groups emerged after the arrest and dissolution of the notorious 17 November terrorist group in 2003, which had been responsible for several killings since the 1970s. These new extreme leftist groups have frequently engaged in violent actions such as bombings, arson, property destruction and arm robberies, and they have increasingly created bridges within and outside of prison with criminal gangs. Left-wing extremists are largely disaffected young people, mostly students (the age group varies between 20 and 35 years).

One strand of the revamped left-wing extremism since the 1990s has been the anti-globalisation movement that has elevated opposition to global capitalism and neo-liberalism – seen as particularly harsh phases of capitalist development – into its rallying cry. This movement comprises a variety of different currents of traditional and new extreme left, environmentalists, anarchists, indigenous rights activists, and various ethnic and other groups. In recent years, the anti-globalisation movement has staged mass riots, demonstrations at G8 summits, and protest actions such as the Occupy Wall Street in 2011. According to the *Washington Post* columnist Michael Gerson, "its collectivist people's council seems to have two main inspirations: socialism (often Marxist socialism) and anarchism. The two are sometimes in tension. They share, however, a belief that the capitalist system is a form of 'institutionalized violence' and that normal, democratic political methods dominated by moneyed interests are inadequate. Direct action is necessary to provoke the crisis that ignites the struggle that achieves the revolution" (cited in Eckman, 2011). The so-called "Black Bloc" is a set of tactics variably advanced in the frame of the anti-globalisation movement, which promote the use of protective clothing and offensive weapons such as spray paint, Molotov cocktails, slingshots, etc., in aggressive and disruptive protests against the police forces. Even though the anti-globalisation groups have occasionally engaged in acts such as small-scale bomb attacks, their scale and intensity of violence is far more limited in comparison to traditional "red terrorism" of earlier periods.

The new left-wing extremism also manifests itself in a variety of single-issue groups and organisations advancing issues that were raised by the new left movements of the late 1960s, such as the protection of the environment, the rights of migrants and asylum-seekers, feminism and anti-fascism among others. A recent overview of left-wing radicalism in the Netherlands published by the Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service identified four forms: animal rights activism, asylum, environmental activists, and anti-fascists. They engage in various kinds of public and occasionally illegal actions, such as freeing animals from breeding farms or engaging in violent street clashes with extreme right groups, which, however, are not comparable to the level and intensity of violence deployed by traditional left extremists in earlier periods (Mareš, 2007: 307-309). For example, the kind of left-wing activism described in the Netherlands uses radical actions in the form of unconventional action and occasionally disruptive protest, mostly though within the law, and only exceptionally crossing over the line of legality with vandalisms (General Intelligence and Security Service, 2013: 9). While new, leftist radical groups and organisations are single-issue based, they tend to form alliances, while there are also strong transnational links with anarchist and extremist groups abroad.

4.2. ORGANISATIONAL FORMS AND REPERTOIRE OF ACTIONS

Right-wing extremism encompasses a wide variety of political parties that have witnessed considerable electoral success in countries such as Austria, Hungary and Greece, among others. The rise and electoral success of right-wing parties, however, is only one component of a much broader phenomenon. As already described in the previous section, right-wing extremism encompasses social movement organisations, informal groups of skinheads, politicised hooligans and music groups, among others, and even latent subcultures among populations, which may be openly expressed under certain conditions. Alongside right-wing political parties, an underground subculture of xenophobia and racism has emerged among violent young extremists. Far from being a united family, right-wing extremism includes entities that are not only defined by diverse ideological tendencies, but which also mobilise around distinct issues, and use different action repertoires (Caiani et al., 2012: 4).

Scholars who have been long-standing researchers of right-wing extremism identify several types of radical right wing groups in terms of the kind of organisation they employ: (1) groups that try to win public office, organising themselves through political parties and electoral campaigns; (2) groups that do not nominate candidates for public office, but rather try to mobilise support through larger social movements with which they identify and which offer interpretative frames for particular problems; (3) smaller groups and socio-cultural milieus, which operate relatively independently from parties and larger social movements, do not exhibit formal organisational structures, and may exhibit higher propensities toward violence; and (4) a subculture among segments of the population, whose perceptions and views passively (and occasionally actively) endorse and sustain right-wing extremism (Minkenberg, 2013: 13; Merkl, 2003: 3). These different organisational forms have been identified in studies of right-wing extremism. Unfortunately, there are no comparable studies on left-wing extremism. On the basis of what we know about the latter though, we can reflect on the relevance of these organisational forms for left-wing radicalism.

An extremist right-wing subculture, “as stable social world in itself”, has its historical context of reference in the destructive wars of the past, in reactions to a historical crisis and generally to painful social change. Such a subculture is (re)produced within families once closely identified with the fascist regimes of Italy, Germany or Spain, or in families where prejudicial views towards erstwhile colonial subjects and subsequent migrants and asylum-seekers are strong or influential. Right-wing inclinations and views may also be present among middle-class and working-class families confronted with impoverishment and high levels of unemployment beyond their control. People may be socialised into these subcultural attitudes without ever becoming political activists of extreme right-wing organisations, while remaining merely sympathisers (Merkl, 2003: 4-5). An extreme left-wing subculture may also exist, especially in countries like Greece, where the left was defeated in a brutal civil war in the late 1940s and was excluded from the political system until the 1970s. Such a subculture was arguably manifested in the implicit tolerance of or even support for left-wing terrorism among the society at large from the 1970s onwards, which helped protect the "red terrorists" of 17 November from being identified and arrested by the police. While not as strong, such a subculture remains visible and present in Greece, and it underpins the aggressive actions and protests, in which extreme leftist and anarchist groups in the country regularly engage.

Turning to electoral organisations, right-wing political parties are characterised by far-reaching diversity across national and local contexts, and they often contain important internal factions (Mammone et al., 2013: 2). As all political parties, they are specialised organisations for electing representatives in national, local and regional assemblies, and they depend for their success in doing so on structural and political factors (i.e. electoral system), on leadership, and on financial and other resources (Merkl, 2003: 5-6). Studies on right-wing political parties have employed various terms to define them: extreme right, radical right, extreme right-wing populist, populist extreme parties, neo-populist, exclusionary populist, radical populist right, anti-immigrant, radical right-wing populist, neo-fascist and new populist (Wilson & Hainsworth, 2012: 12). Some of those parties (the French National Front and the Flemish Vlaams Belang) grew from the old extreme right, and others (the Freedom Party of Austria and the Swiss People's Party) were created where a parliamentary party of the right was radicalised; they represent the anti-state and anti-welfare Nordics (the Danish People's Party and the Progress Party in Norway), separatists (Italy's Lega Nord), post-communist extreme-right parties (Ataka in Bulgaria, Jobbik in Hungary) and the more recent populist far rights (the Party for Freedom in the Nethrlands, True Finns) (Hainsworth, 2000: 4-5).

Right-wing parties include the National Front in France, Vlaams Belang (Flanders), the Austrian Liberal Party, and the Golden Dawn in Greece, among others. More recently, radical right-wing parties marked a remarkable upsurge in a number of EU countries. In the Netherlands, for instance, the political party of Geert Wilders is a particularly representative example of a right-wing radical party. It controversially claims that the exclusion of the Moroccan, Algerian, Polish and Bulgarian immigrant population would open up more jobs in the Dutch labour market and solve major economic problems that are now plaguing the Netherlands. Similarly, Nigel Farage's UK Independence Party is another Western European party with a strictly right-wing radical ideology. It strongly opposes free movement in Europe, claiming that its abolition would decrease the immigration levels in the UK and enhance British people's access to employment.

One major feature of these parties and movements is their ideological and political mix of radicalism and constitutionalism. While they in principle accept parliamentary democracy and the constitutional system, they tend to exhibit a preference for direct democracy under the form of popularly initiated referenda, while sometimes they support or sympathise with acts that are on the border of democracy and legality. They also opt for partnerships with other parties in government (for example, the Northern

League in Italy, the Union democratique du centre in Switzerland, the Party of Liberty in the Netherlands, etc.). In general, these parties share the conviction that the European Union is a gradually failing organisation, incapable of accommodating the varying needs of the divergent European nationalities, hence the necessity for leaving the Union. This common belief is, however, dangerous because it inspires ultra-nationalism in the already self-centred and already nationalistic nation-states that are the building blocks of Europe. Consequently, the ultra-nationalism that they propagate closes the already quite reserved European societies to novelty and mutual understanding (Pliner, 2013).

Right-wing radicals and parties (also characterised as populists) should be distinguished from right-wing extremists; the latter reject parliamentary democracy and human rights, and they are often described as “neo-fascist.” “Where neo-fascism focuses its energies on the streets and is associated with the ideology of the ‘boot-boy,’ the preferred arena for the New Populists is the parliamentary one, and here they are more likely to be wearing bespoke suits than military fatigues” (Taggart, 1995: 34). A clear dividing line between radicals and extremists was also introduced in national law. As Backes (2010) points out, the current legal framework in Germany declares the radical critique of the existing economic and social order to be perfectly legal, while it criminalises “extremism”, defined as the rejection *en bloc* of all the underlying values of its Constitution. Parties like Jobbik in Hungary, Golden Dawn in Greece, and the National Democratic Party in Germany fall in the latter category, some of them benefitting from a more lenient national law (see Savage, n.d.).

Beyond political parties, right- and left-wing extremisms constitute broader social movements that are the dynamic product of the underlying subcultures. They exhibit some degree of organisation, comprising associations devoted to certain salient issues, or to a professed struggle against government authoritarianism (as some right-wing groups) or to the capitalist state (as in some left-wing extremist groups). There are often several antagonistic movements within a single subculture and country. Social movements and social movement organisations (SMOs) have a discernible point of origin in time, and they may undergo various organisational transformations over time or fade away. Furthermore, SMOs may be surrounded by an extended circle of sympathisers, who, however, choose not to get actively involved, or who may not entirely share in the ideological beliefs and views of a social movement (Merkl, 2003: 5).

Right-wing and left-wing social movements also encompass formations that do not necessarily have a clear organisational form, but are more informal networks of individuals and groups that have a basis in local contexts such as neighbourhoods, universities, sports stadiums and events, among others. Research on left-wing militancy in the 1970s and 1980s showed that the participation of individuals in extreme leftist groups, who were recruited in such local spaces, was greatly strengthened by tight-knit social networks and affective ties, which enhanced trust and loyalty. Extreme leftist groups in Italy in the 1970s and 1980s mainly comprised autonomous groups of very small size and violent repertoires of action, which had formed after the breakdown of larger semi-legal organisations (della Porta, 1988: 158; 162).

In exploring and understanding the organisational structure and repertoire of action among right- and left-wing extremisms and radicalisms, it is important to take a perspective of these as social movements or social movement fields that encompass but are not limited to political parties and other non-party organisations (see also Caiani et al., 2012: 10). The relationship and complex connections between the different organisational forms must also be explored. Social science research shows that when SMOs move into the electoral arena to become political parties they shed away their radical fringe as they are compelled to play by the rules of the parliamentary game. Therefore, tensions may arise between political parties and the social movements and networks out of which political parties grow. Some extreme right-wing parties have openly denounced extra-parliamentary and violent kinds of actions, and cut ties with organisations and groups engaging in such actions. Others, however, like Golden Dawn in Greece or Jobbit in Hungary implicitly nurture and support violent actions, especially when directed against the most vulnerable, such as migrants and the Roma.

Recent research also shows that the connections between right-wing political parties and the respective social movements may be close and mutually supportive. In Greece, for instance, the electoral success of Golden Dawn at the local and the national levels has largely depended on the extensive grassroots organisation, mobilisation and close ties with informal neighbourhood and residents' groups in inner city Athens (Dinas, Georgiadou, Konstantinidis, & Rori, 2013). Radical left-wing parties on the other hand do not enjoy nearly as much electoral support and political influence as their right-wing counterparts. Even in earlier periods, communist and leftist parties in Europe had largely denounced the use of political violence by leftist and anarchist groups and refused to associate with them.

Another form that right-wing extremism and radicalisation (and also Islam-related) appears to take is what has been called "lone wolf terrorism" (LWT). Reflected in the killings of a large number of people committed by Anders Breivik in 2011 in Norway, LWT is perpetuated by individuals who do not belong to an organised group, and who are difficult to identify and detect. Studies show that such individuals are not isolated but their beliefs, rhetoric and development of activism have strong similarities with that of the larger, in the case of Breivik anti-Islamic, right-wing movement that sees Islam as an existential threat to Western society and culture. Although Breivik operated alone, his ideology, worldview and narratives emerged from a large, radical and some parts of it rapidly radicalising and relatively new anti-Islamic movement (Berntzen & Sandberg, 2014: 772). Breivik's horrendous actions were the result of a progressive process of radicalisation that he underwent, in the course of which he came to endorse violent means as a necessary tool of struggle against the entrenchment of political elites (Berntzen & Sandberg, 2014: 769).

4.3. FROM RADICAL BELIEF TO RADICAL ACTION: OPPORTUNITY, PEER INFLUENCE AND PROTEST AS TIPPING POINTS

Left- and right-wing radical movements deploy a broad repertoire of collective action that includes but is not limited to the use of violence, and one of the research goals is to determine the conditions and factors, under which collective action escalates into violence. Espousal of radical and extremist views does not necessarily lead to violent action; in fact, only a very small number of radicals engage in violence while most will refrain from it. At the same time, individuals may join in violent and aggressive confrontation without holding or being motivated by radical ideas. In order to address this gap, researchers have drawn various distinctions between belief and action, and violent versus non-violent radicalisation, among others. They have also depicted different steps of radicalisation with most individuals remaining neutral and refraining from violence or being sympathizers, to a smaller number of individuals who move into justifying violence and an even smaller number to the more extreme phase of feeling a personal moral obligations to engage in violent actions (McCauley & Moskalenko 2014: 70-71). Various models and conceptual schemes have been developed that depict radicalisation into violence as a phased and gradual process (Young, Zwenk, & Rooze, 2013: 11-19).

To complicate things further, it is recognised that perpetrators of hate crimes may be more motivated by "thrill-seeking", opportunistic or criminal motivations rather than any ideological factors. Overall, very little is known about the distinctions between hate crime and far-right extremist violence, and what might motivate an individual to move from engaging in "'sporadic acts of violence' to terrorist activity" (Ramalingam, 2012: 4). A central question that occupies studies on radicalism and radicalisation is when, why and how are individuals and groups recruited into organisations that espouse extremist views and forms of political violence, and when individuals, alone or together with others, engage violent acts that may have high cost in in physical destruction and human lives.

One issue that is debated is whether the use of violence as a central characteristic of the radicalisation of individuals and groups lies with some quality intrinsic to certain groups (i.e. religious beliefs, leftist views, etc.), or whether it is the product of particular contexts of interaction and conflict. While generally the potential to resort to violent means is an inherent possibility in all forms of collective identity, it is argued that "the potential for violent escalation … gains prominence when a collective identity is formed around the belief that it is beset by an existential threat, where culture and survival are at stake" (Berntzen & Sandberg, 2015: 772). It should come as no surprise that social movements that inspire violence and terrorism are largely those that that use the language of war, and portray secret conspiracies of elites responsible for grave injustices, as was the case with leftist terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s, and radical Islamism in the 1990s and 2000s (Berntzen & Sandberg 2015: 773). This should not necessarily lead us to think that particular religions or political ideologies are inherently violent. Instead, their aggression-proneness is more likely to stem from the particular interpretation and selective appropriation of religious and political ideas and views.

Europol's most recent EU Terrorism Situation and Trend report defines far-right terrorist groups as those that "seek to change the entire political, social and economic system on an extremist right-wing model", whose ideological roots "can usually be traced back to National Socialism" (Europol, 2012: 43). Based on this definition, Europol argues that the threat of terrorism is most likely to emanate from lone actors, but that organised underground groups also have the capability and intention to carry out attacks. Europol confirms that many members of the extreme right-wing scene have access to or harbour ambitions to acquire weapons, ammunition, or explosives (Europol, 2012: 29). Though most groups with a far-right orientation do not openly endorse violence, there is reason to be concerned about the articulation of narratives that can legitimate violence under certain conditions. Recent research has drawn out the "motivational vocabularies" that inspire far-right commitment, and that tend to amplify feelings of threat, urgency and survivalism: a struggle for racial and cultural survival (Ministry of Justice, Sweden & Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2012: 75).

While the ideological, personal or social-psychological profile of lone wolf terrorists has been depicted as marked by grievance, depression, and experience with weapons, it is argued that such characteristics do not necessarily lead one to engage in violence; most people who have these characteristics will not do so. The pathways to participating in a terrorist group are many and too varied, rendering it very difficult to depict a typical profile of a violent activist or terrorist (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2014: 83). Cognizant of this, researchers argue that the belief and motivation to commit violent acts is not sufficient; it is also necessary to possess the means to do so, as well as for the opportunity to present itself to use them, for example by connecting with a radical violent group. From this perspective, the most accurate indicator for the potential violent engagement of a lone wolf is exhibited in individuals among whom radical opinion and the possession of the means to use violence are combined with the opportunity to do so (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2014: 81-83).

In other studies, the resort of individuals or groups to political violence is not seen as a feature that is inherent in the content of the beliefs that they espouse, but as a process of violent radicalisation that occurs in the context of particular group dynamics, or at particular points in a cycle of protest and conflict. Such group dynamics may involve the splintering and reconstitution of SMOs, in the course of which some groups employ violence in an attempt to differentiate themselves from and outperform their competitors, and accrue respect and status. Inter-group competition and peer pressure within groups appear very important in pushing members of a group towards extreme radical positions (Bartlett & Miller, 2012: 16; della Porta 1988). The decision of individuals to join militant or clandestine groups may be motivated by political beliefs, but it may very well be driven by personal ties of friendship, or the need to gain the approval of others.

Social movement scholars see political violence as one among a broader repertoire of actions deployed by extreme right and left-wing activists and organisations. Individuals may engage in political violence before they join an extremist organisation, as this often occurs in the context of protests and clashes with the police and security forces, or between right- and left-wing radicals. Studies argue that such clashes can be seen as important tipping points and radicalisation moments, during which individuals who may passively support a radical worldview may begin to act violently (Caiani et al., 2012: 17-18). In order to understand the escalation of action into violence, particular attention must be paid to processes of interaction among extreme right and extreme left actors, with other actors, which can lead to a strong sense of conflict and the prevalence of a Manichean view of politics (Caiani et al., 2012: 14). For instance, right-wing movements have been seen as counter-movements, rising into visibility in opposition to socially progressive movements, while left-wing organisations and networks often radicalise in the process of interacting and clashing with police forces.

4.4. ROOT CAUSES AND LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

Researchers and scholars have sought to explain the root causes of right- and left-wing extremisms and radicalisation by focusing on different levels of analysis: the macro, the meso and the micro level. At the macro-level, the emergence of right-wing extremism has been explained as a consequence of post-industrial restructuring in a highly globalised and competitive international market. In the face of rising unemployment, workers and individuals who are unable to adapt and utilise their skills in these new conditions face obsolescence and adopt a defensive and culturally parochial stance that is expressed by the radical right.[15] In a similar vein but through a more sociological lens of a break-down theory, the rise of the extreme right in Europe is seen as a manifestation of the dysfunctional effects of rapid social change and especially of the disintegration of social ties taking place in the context of social modernisation and globalisation, the sense of personal alienation and the search for a new identity by joining a radical group (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). In another interpretation, the rise of the radical right in western Europe can be seen as a reaction to the 1968 social movements, from whose strategies for propagating their ideas right-wing extremists arguably "learned" (Minkenberg, 1997).

Poverty and high unemployment arguably have the potential to lead to alienation, thus increasing an individual's susceptibility to extremist ideas. According to a 2007 study by the German Institute for Economic Research, there appears to be a strong association between a parent's unemployment status and the formation of right-wing extremist beliefs in their children – specifically xenophobia and antidemocratic ideals (cited in U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2009). Social dislocations, and the expression of the resulting anxiety and resentment is often directed against non-European migrants, who may be seen as threatening the national cultural identity, taking away jobs, and drain the resources of the European welfare state (Betz, 1999: 314). Right-wing extremism is arguably instigated by the fear of being treated unfairly or unjustly as a result of the entry of outsiders who have the potential to infiltrate and purportedly dilute the traditional community with foreign value systems and beliefs (Grabow & Hartleb, 2013). As the European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation also acknowledges, "the experience or the perception of prevalent social injustice that creates barriers for entry into mainstream society" (European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation, 2008: 11).

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[15] For an overview of this argument, see Betz, 1999: 302-303 and Kitschelt, 1995.

Demand-side theories focus on societal shifts and the resulting social and political orientations (concerns with particular issues such as immigration, perceived threat to traditional values, or social insecurity), while supply-side theories turn attention to changes in the political environment and the political, ideological and discursive possibilities and opportunities that it provides for new social and political orientations to be expressed and acquire organisational form (such as the leadership and programmes of insurgent and mainstream parties, or the media).[16]

At the micro level, researchers, mainly those studying Islamic-related terrorism, have focused on the personal and social characteristics and conditions of individuals that make them more likely to join extremist groups and engage in violent acts. Focusing on individual behaviour, psychologically oriented theories tend to attribute the resort to political violence to the feelings of deprivation, loss of social status and frustration experienced by individuals in the context of broader economic and rapid social change. From a sociological perspective, researchers have sought to identify pathways to youth radicalisation by focusing on parenting and socialisation processes. Primary organisations such as the family and the immediate social groups, as well as membership in particular subcultures, are arguably very relevant in explaining the genesis of right-wing radical motives and actions, and specifically the experience of being subjected to violence within one's family, and the lack of meaningful interaction and communication within the family, among others (Gabriel & Keller, 2014). Studies of youth radicalisation into right-wing extremism and violence from the disciplines of criminology and social psychology have also focused on the micro level. For example, the study of Pauwels and De Waele (2014) argues that factors such as lack of social integration, perceived group discrimination, perceived illegitimacy of the police and distrust of procedural justice are all related to the use of violence by right-wing youth.

While a macro level theory, such as the so-called post-industrial thesis, depicts the broader context within which right-wing radicalism emerges, it cannot directly explain the rise of right-wing political parties, or the emergence of right-wing social movement organisations, let alone shifts in individual beliefs and actions at the micro level. In order to understand these developments, the attention of researchers has also turned to factors related to electoral systems, and political opportunity structures among others. At the meso level, studies have explored the role of political factors in explaining the rise of extreme right political parties, such as the electoral system, disillusionment with traditional political parties in the face of convergence among the established parties, processes of voter dealignment and realignment in the party system, among others (for an overview see Rydgren, 2007). The analysis of the meso-organisational level has largely been limited to political parties. More limited attention has been paid to the study of right- and left-wing radicalism and radicalisation as a social movement. This is an important shortcoming and gap to fill in order to enhance our understanding of how the broader structural changes in society and the economy are filtered through and impact on individuals' perceptions and consciousness, as well as their expression in collective organisation and action.

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[16] For an overview see Eatwell, 2003.

In this direction, recent research has been focusing on the organisational structures and dynamics within a broader social movement field. Social movements are seen to be largely instrumental and rational actors that mobilise on collective interests and identities. Research on their organisational dynamics and on resource mobilisation is aimed at explaining when, why and how individual and societal discontent is transformed into collective action, at times taking violent forms. In exploring these, social movement studies focus on political opportunity structures, such as institutional characteristics of the political system, configuration of elite allies and opponents, as well as on discursive opportunities, such as the reigning discourse among political parties or dominant definitions of citizenship and the nation, among others. Formal political opportunities and appealing discourses may make the radicalisation of protest more or less acceptable and opportune (Caiani et al., 2012: 12). The extent and structure of right- and left-wing organisations and networks defines their mobilisation capacity. In exploring the organisational structure and networks of right wing movements, attention should not only focus on political groups but also on sports or music groups, squatters, as well as other informal networks where right-wing protest and mobilisation take place. Similarly, concerning left-wing radical movements, besides violent actions employed by political groups, other kinds and spaces of action must also be studied, such as the squatting of buildings, or groups within universities.

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