



The Hague University of Applied Sciences

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*Prison Counter-Radicalisation Strategies: Comparative  
Analysis of the United Kingdom and Belgium*

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## Executive Summary

This dissertation focusses on the prison counter-radicalisation strategies of the United Kingdom and Belgium. Both British and Belgium prisons have become breeding grounds for Islamic radicalisation. Therefore, both countries have come up with different strategies and measures to tackle the issue. Thus, this dissertation analyses how prison radicalisation is being countered by the United Kingdom and Belgium.

The research has been done by writing a literature review, conducting extensive desk research and writing case studies. The literature review examines the concepts of radicalisation, de-radicalisation, (violent) extremism and terrorism. For the research, secondary sources were used, such as academic articles, government documents and news articles. The case studies examine programmes of the United Kingdom and Belgium that are aimed at preventing and countering radicalisation. The case studies show how these programmes address the different stages and phases of the radicalisation process.

Overall, the research identifies how the United Kingdom and Belgium define radicalisation. Secondly, the research examines the causes of prison radicalisation. In addition, an overview is given of the prison-radicalisation strategies of the United Kingdom and Belgium. After this, the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of several strategies is given. Lastly, the role of the European Union concerning prison radicalisation is discussed.

Looking at the main results, it can be concluded that the United Kingdom has created clear strategies to tackle radicalisation. Unlike the United Kingdom, Belgium has used international insights concerning prison radicalisation and has developed action plans. These strategies and plans include measures to counter, address and prevent prison radicalisation. Even though both countries do have some similar measures, such as training the prison staff and separating radicalised prisoners, they also have their own unique measures. The United Kingdom has created risk assessment tools and Belgium has created a database to collect information of radicalised individuals. Whereas the United Kingdom mainly focusses on confronting, preventing and fighting radicalisation, Belgium focusses on preventing, protecting and repressing radicalisation.

Finally, this dissertation recommends that the government of the United Kingdom should highlight the actual aim of the Prevent strategy, more research should be conducted to identify why some prisoners do radicalise and others do not, overcrowding and understaffing should be addressed and prison staff should receive updated training concerning Islam.

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## Preface

Before you lies the dissertation “Prison counter-radicalisation strategies: Comparative analysis of the United Kingdom and Belgium”, which is mostly based on extensive desk research. It has been written to fulfil the graduation requirements of the European Studies programme at The Hague University of Applied Sciences. I was engaged in researching and writing this dissertation from August to January 2019.

Early on in the European Studies programme, I became interested in terrorism. When I went on my exchange to Liverpool, I followed the course “Crime and Society”. I became fascinated by radicalisation, specifically Islamic radicalisation in a prison context. Prisons are becoming more involved in radicalisation which often leads to terrorism. Moreover, multiple individuals who have committed terrorist attacks in Europe were radicalised in prison. I decided to research the United Kingdom and Belgium since British and Belgian prisons have become breeding grounds for radicalisation and both countries have developed their own strategies to counter the issue. My aim was to build on the knowledge acquired by following the “Crime and Society” course, in order to create a comprehensive Bachelor’s dissertation. Even though the research was difficult sometimes, conducting extensive research has allowed me to answer the central question of the dissertation.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Mari-Jose Weijerman, for her guidance and feedback during this process. I also wish to thank my family for supporting me during this process and throughout my studies.

I hope you enjoy your reading.

Lisa Vastenhout

Heinenoord, January 8, 2019

## List of Abbreviations

CoPPRa	Community Policing and the Prevention of Radicalisation
CTC	Counter Terrorist Check
EC	European Commission
ERG22+	Extremism Risk Guidance
EU	European Union
HMP	Her Majesty's Prisons
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
NSC	National Security Council
NYPD	New York City Police Department
OIP	International Observatory of Prisons
Plan R	Action Plan against Radicalism
POA	Prison Officers Association
P&P	Prison and Probation Working Group
RAN	Radicalisation Awareness Network
UK	United Kingdom
VAF	Vulnerability Assessment Framework

## 1. Introduction

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***“What we are fighting, in Islamist extremism, is an ideology. It is an extreme doctrine. And like any extreme doctrine, it is subversive. At its furthest end it seeks to destroy nation-states to invent its own barbaric realm. And it often backs violence to achieve this aim – mostly violence against fellow Muslims – who don’t subscribe to its sick worldview”*** (Cameron, 2015).

*Prime Minister David Cameron, ‘Extremism’ Speech, July 2015*

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Radicalisation is not a new phenomenon for prisons but it is an area that has not been fully explored. Throughout history, there have been examples of prisons acting as both recruitment centres and headquarters for ideological and religious extremists. Examples are Joseph Stalin and Adolf Hitler, who used their time in prison to develop their extremist ideologies and recruit others. There have also been cases where religion took the upper hand. For example, Richard Reid, also known as the ‘shoe bomber’, who attempted to blow up an American Airline Flight in the year 2001. Reid converted to Islam while being incarcerated (Mulcahy, Merrington, & Bell, 2013). Another case is Jamal Ahmidan, also known as ‘el chino’, who is the brain behind the Madrid train bombings in 2004 (Wikipedia). Ahmidan adopted Islamic principles while being incarcerated. Criminologist Harvey Kushner even argues that Western prisons are one of the main recruitment grounds for Al Qaeda (Kushner, 2004).

Research suggests that many prisoners begin their time behind bars with little or no religious calling, but change faith during their incarceration (for example, Islam) (Hamm, 2007). While only a few of these prisoners change their faith solely as a result of their time behind bars, their experience of being in prison increases their radicalisation. The prison environment, together with its key features, such as isolation, lack of privacy and social contacts and already radicalised inmates, makes prisoners very vulnerable to new ideologies, recruitment and radicalisation (Brandon, 2009). Recruiters will be able to spot these vulnerable prisoners and then try to encourage them to follow their path.

Overcrowding and understaffing are important causes of prison radicalisation. Prisons that have a poor system and are unstable make the detection of radicalisation unmanageable. In addition, the prison staff does not know how to deal with radicalised prisoners or they are not well

equipped and trained to deal with the problem. Other prisoners who wish to recruit fellow inmates can easily approach them when they are not separated from the general prison population. The recruiters will try to become friends with the other inmates and try to convert them to their ideology and beliefs. This is why there is a continuous discussion whether radicalised prisoners should be separated from the general prison population or whether other measures should be taken to prevent radicalisation of prisoners.

Prisons can be a potential breeding ground for radicalisation due to risks, such as recruitment of other prisoners, supporting extremist groups and preparing for illegal acts (Radicalisation Awareness Network). That prisons can be a breeding ground for radicalisation is not surprising as prisoners often seek identity and protection. For prisoners who wish to radicalise fellow inmates, prisons provide near-perfect conditions in which radical ideologies can develop (Neumann, 2010). Since the problem of prison radicalisation and the number of Islamic extremists is growing, countering Islamic radicalisation in prisons has become a priority. At first, the focus was mainly on understanding the risks and dynamics behind this form of radicalisation. Nowadays, the focus is more on the counter strategies and rehabilitation approaches (Silke & Veldhuis, 2017).

Thus, Islamic radicalisation has become a growing issue for most European countries, including the United Kingdom and Belgium. Research found that there are a record number of radicalised individuals in British prisons (Dearden, 2018). Belgian prisons are hotbeds of Islamic radicalisation, the prisons somehow falling apart and having one of the highest levels of prison overcrowding in Europe (Schreuer, 2018). The problem of Islamic radicalisation within these prisons has long been ignored, leading to a harder challenge. How do the prisons of these countries create a strategy for countering Islamic radicalisation that is fitting and effective without the strategy being counter-productive (The Guardian, 2016)? With British and Belgian prisons being these 'hotbeds' of Islamic radicalisation, a reflection on the existing perspectives and strategies to counter radicalisation in prison is necessary.

### 1.1 Research Question and Sub-Questions

For the reasons that are outlined above, the central research question that this dissertation will attempt to answer, is as follows:

#### ***How is prison radicalisation being countered by the United Kingdom and Belgium?***

In order to answer this central research question, the following sub-questions ought to be answered:



- 1) *How is radicalisation being defined by the United Kingdom and Belgium?*
- 2) *What are the perceived causes of prison radicalisation?*
- 3) *What are the prison counter-radicalisation strategies of the United Kingdom and Belgium?*
- 4) *What are weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the British and Belgium strategies?*
- 5) *What does the European Union do about radicalisation in prison?*

## 1.2 Structure

The research that is presented in this dissertation will be structured as follows. At first, there is a literature review to explain the concepts of radicalisation, de-radicalisation, (violent) extremism and terrorism. Secondly, an overview of how the United Kingdom and Belgium define radicalisation is given, followed by the process of radicalisation and recruitment. Thirdly, the causes of prison radicalisation are explained, together with the indicators of how to identify radicalised prisoners. Next, the prison counter-radicalisation strategies of the United Kingdom and Belgium are discussed. After that, the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of these prison counter-radicalisation strategies are discussed. Next, the role of the European Union in countering prison radicalisation is explained. After that, two case studies are presented, followed by an analysis, conclusion and recommendations

## 1.3 Definitions of Key Terms

This section describes the key terms that are used in this dissertation.

### *Radicalisation*

Radicalisation 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” (Dzhekova, Stoyanova, Kojouharov, Mancheva, Anagnostou, & Tsenkov, 2016).

### *Islamic radicalisation*

Islamic radicalisation is defined as any form of Islam that clashes with democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs (Wikiquote).

*Counter-radicalisation*

Counter-radicalisation refers to an activity or activities aimed at a group of people with the purpose of dissuading them from engaging in terrorism-related activity (HM Government, 2011).

*De-radicalisation and Disengagement*

De-radicalisation refers to a mental shift in understanding and outlook that will move individuals away from legitimising the use of violence (Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2016).

Disengagement refers to a behavioural change, such as leaving a group or someone changing their role within it (Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2016).

*(Violent) Extremism*

Violent extremism can be defined as ideologies that oppose to the values of a society or as the willingness to use violence, or to support the use of violence, to further the development of particular beliefs of a political, social, economic or ideological character (de Leede, Hauptfleisch, Korolkova, & Natter, 2017).

*Terrorism*

Terrorism involves individuals and groups who are convinced that they can advance their political aims by using terror to pose a serious threat to the democratic values of societies and to the rights and freedoms of citizens (European Commission).

*Islamism*

Islamism is a philosophy which promotes the implementation of Islamic values to modern government. There are no universally agreed definitions of the terms 'Islamism' and 'Islamist' (HM Government, 2011).

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the literature that has already been published concerning the main concepts that are linked to the central research question. These concepts are *radicalisation*, *de-radicalisation*, *(violent) extremism* and *terrorism*. A wide range of sources were used, including journals, government documents, books and research papers and documents. The literature was gathered by using Google Scholar, JSTOR and Wiley Online Library. This literature review also includes the definitions that are used by the United Kingdom and Belgium of de-radicalisation, (violent) extremism and terrorism. The definitions that are used by the United Kingdom and Belgium of radicalisation will be discussed separately in Chapter 4.1.

### 2.2 Discussion of Concepts

#### 2.2.1 Radicalisation

The key challenge of understanding radicalisation is that there is an ongoing debate of how to best conceptualise it. An important scholar on terrorism and crime prevention is Alex Schmid, who mentions at the beginning of his research paper *Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review* that there is no generally accepted definition of radicalisation and that the concept cannot be understood on its own (Schmid, 2013). Mohammed Hafez and Creighton Mullins explain in their article *The radicalization puzzle: a theoretical synthesis of empirical approaches to homegrown extremism* in the *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* that the concept of radicalisation involves people who choose to follow an extremist worldview that is being rejected by the general society and that considers the use of violence legitimate as a way to achieve change. As such, the key elements of radicalisation are a (1) gradual process where people will commit to (2) extremist beliefs that will lead to (3) violence (Hafez & Mullins, 2015).

Scholars define radicalisation from perspectives of political science, social psychology or terrorism. Many of these scholars use the term 'process' to conceptualise radicalisation. However, they are aware that a description of this process is indefinite. Evidence in literature to justify the process cannot be found. In his book *Walking Away from Terrorism*, political psychologist John Horgan defines radicalisation as: "The social and psychological process of incrementally experienced commitment to extremist political or religious ideology". He adds that even though radicalisation may not lead to violence, it is a risk factor (Horgan, 2009). In his policy report *Prisons and Terrorism Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries*, Peter Neumann

conceptualises radicalisation as: “The process (or processes) whereby individuals or groups come to approve of and (ultimately) participate in the use of violence for political aims”. He continues by saying that some authors refer to the concept of ‘violent radicalisation’ to stress the violent outcome and the fact that the process is different from the process of ‘non-violent radicalisation’ (Neumann, 2010).

Bertjan Doosje et al. describe radicalisation as a process which runs through several phases. In their article *Terrorism, radicalization and de-radicalization* in *Current Opinion in Psychology*, Doosje et al. state that radicalisation is a process through which people will get motivated to use violence against people that are outside their own group in order to achieve change and goals. They elaborate that there are three phases of radicalisation; sensitivity (micro), group membership (meso) and action (macro). The sensitivity phase concerns the feelings of insignificance, the group membership phase concerns the social surroundings and the action phase concerns violence against other groups. Individuals will use anger and other reasons to justify the violence against other groups (Doosje, Moghaddam, Kruglanski, de Wolf, Mann, & Feddes, 2016). Needless to say, anger can be linked to the feeling that a prisoner might experience when being incarcerated. Alex Schmid highlights the same causes of radicalisation (micro, meso, macro) as Bertjan Doosje et al. (Schmid, 2013). These causes can be related to radicalisation in prison, as many prisoners feel the need to join a group for social bonds and the need of wanting a new identity. For prison-bound offenders, it can be very difficult to escape from the radical individuals when they are very open and have a strong character.

In contrast to Doosje et al. and Schmid, who explain the process of radicalisation by different phases, Professor Randy Borum writes in *The Handbook of The Criminology of Terrorism* that the process and the causes of radicalisation can be explained by psychological factors. Borum states that: “Psychological vulnerabilities or “need” states often create an opening that can increase a person’s receptivity to imposed ideas, influence, and sometimes even to seeking alternative worldviews”. He adds that these psychological vulnerabilities are a need for personal meaning and identity, a need for belonging and perceived injustice (Borum, 2017).

Social psychologists Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko do not use the term ‘process’ when defining radicalisation. In their article *Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism* in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, McCauley and Moskalenko focus more on group dynamics. They conceptualise radicalisation as: “Increasing extremity of beliefs, feelings, and behaviors in support of intergroup conflict and violence” (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). In their book *Eurojihad*, Angel Rabasa and Cheryl Benard conceptualise radicalisation in a European

context as: “The rejection of the key dimensions of modern democratic culture that are the center of the European value system” (Rabasa & Benard, 2015).

Disagreement occurs regarding the end-point of radicalisation. It can be concluded that radicalisation is widely seen as a process of people changing their beliefs and using violence. But are people who are fully radicalised those who hold extremist beliefs, or those who will commit terrorist acts? People who have changed their beliefs or whose beliefs have been radicalised are not automatically terrorists. This is also described in the article of Peter Neumann, *The trouble with radicalization* in International Affairs. Neumann makes a distinction between cognitive radicalisation (extremist beliefs) and behavioural radicalisation (extremist behaviour) (Nuemann, 2013). Both cognitive and behavioural radicalisation are requirements for violence, but do not always lead to violence. The literature is unclear whether cognitive radicalisation is a requirement for behavioural radicalisation. Arab Scholar Abdul Hussein Shaaban also makes the distinction between extremism and terrorism in his article that he wrote for Al Jazeera. He relates extremism to thought and terrorism to action and behaviour (Shabaan, 2015).

### 2.2.2 De-Radicalisation

Like the concept of radicalisation, many different definitions of de-radicalisation can also be found. The Home Office of the United Kingdom defines de-radicalisation as: “Activity aimed at a person who supports terrorism and in some cases has engaged in terrorist related activity, which is intended to effect cognitive and/or behavioural change leading to a new outlook on terrorism and/or disengagement from it” (HM Government, 2011).

Belgium has no clear definition of de-radicalisation that can be found. This is why the definition that is given by the Belgium political scientist Rik Coolsaet will be stated. In his article “Deradicaliseringsbeleid en de IS-generatie” (in English “De-radicalisation policies and the IS-generation”) in *Politiejournaal*, Coolsaet says that de-radicalisation means trying to attach individuals to the society again. He adds that it is necessary to look at every individual separately (Coolsaet, 2016).

Alex Schmid notes in his research paper *Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review* that: “It is difficult to identify what works and what does not work”. He adds that identifying the concept of de-radicalisation depends on the local context (Schmid, 2013). In his book *Walking Away from Terrorism*, John Horgan defines de-radicalisation as: “The social and psychological process whereby an individual’s commitment to,

and involvement in, violent radicalisation is reduced to the extent that they are no longer at risk of involvement and engagement in violent activity” (Horgan, 2009).

In contrast to Horgan, Political scientist Omar Ashour writes in his book *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamist Movements* that de-radicalisation is a process that occurs within Islamist movements, one in which the radical groups reverse their ideology and de-legitimise the use of violence to accomplish certain goals (Ashour, 2009). Unlike the other definitions, Ashour defines de-radicalisation within the context of Islamist movements. Another difference between the other definitions is that Ashour describes de-radicalisation as a collective event that involves the change of ideology. In his policy report *Prisons and Terrorism Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries*, Peter Neumann says that: “De-radicalisation describes processes whereby individuals (or groups) cease their involvement in organised violence and/or terrorism”. Additionally, he argues that many authors recognise two types of de-radicalisation; collective and individual de-radicalisation. Whether de-radicalisation is collective or individual depends on whether the process is led by, or aimed at, individuals or entire groups (Neumann, 2010).

Bertjan Doosje et al. define de-radicalisation in their article *Terrorism, radicalization and de-radicalization* in *Current Opinion in Psychology* as: “A process in which people reject the ideology they once embraced”. What is interesting is that they also point out that prison can lead to de-radicalisation as people sometimes want to make a new start (Doosje, Moghaddam, Kruglanski, de Wolf, Mann, & Feddes, 2016). In their definition, Doosje et al. do not link de-radicalisation to terms, such as ‘involvement’, ‘violence’ or ‘risk’ but it solely focusses on the rejection of a once embraced ideology. Professors Donatella Della Porta and Gary LaFree describe in their article *Guest Editorial: Processes of Radicalization and De-Radicalization* in *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* that: “The term de-radicalization can be understood to simply denote the reversal of radicalization processes” (Della Porta & LaFree, 2012).

Just as Schmid and Doosje et al., who highlight the causes of radicalisation to the micro, meso and macro phase, Della Porta and LaFree also link de-radicalisation to these phases. The micro phase involves the difference between de-radicalisation of attitudes and beliefs, disengagement from violent behaviour and the process of leaving violent groups and joining other groups. The meso phase involves the ending of violent campaigns by radical groups. The macro phase involves changing circumstances (Della Porta & LaFree, 2012). The definition of Della Porta and LaFree is unique from the other definitions, simply stating that de-radicalisation indicates the reversal of radicalisation processes. The definition avoids defining what these radicalisation processes entail.

### 2.2.3 (Violent) Extremism

Since (violent) extremism is often related to radicalisation, a further distinction of the concept is needed. The United Kingdom defines extremism as how it is defined in the 2011 Prevent Strategy. In this document, 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” (HM Government, 2015). Opposition to fundamental British values can be challenged and opposed in various ways. First of all, only some values are stated, which are a part of the list of what fundamental British values are. This indicates that there are more unidentified fundamental British values. Secondly, the values are also not specifically British. Looking at the definition of extremism, the United Kingdom defines an extremist as someone who opposes to fundamental British values. The definition makes it seem that someone who does not hold British values is an extremist.

A definition that is more understandable but still very complex is the one that is stated in Belgian Law. Extremism is conceptualised as: “Racist, xenophobic, anarchistic, nationalistic, authoritarian or totalitarian ideas or purposes, despite these ideas or purposes being of political, ideological, confessional or philosophical nature, that are theoretically or practically inconsistent with the principles of the democracy or other fundamentals of the constitutional state” (Dienst voor het Strafrechtelijk beleid).

Alex Schmid concludes in his research paper *Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review* that: “While radicals might be violent or not, might be democrats or not, extremists are never democrats”. He continues by stating that: “Extremists can be characterised as political actors who tend to disregard the rule of law and reject pluralism in society”. Extremists aspire to create a homogeneous society which is based on ideological principles. The creation of this society will be achieved by suppressing all opposition and by overpowering minorities. This distinguishes extremists from radicals who accept diversity (Schmid, 2013).

In his policy report *Prisons and Terrorism Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries*, Peter Neumann clearly points out that extremism can be used in two ways. “The term can be used to refer to political ideologies that oppose a society’s core values and principles. 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’”. Neumann also mentions that many governments speak of ‘violent extremists’ when referring to terrorists (Neumann, 2010).

In their article *Terrorism, radicalization and de-radicalization* in *Current Opinion in Psychology*, Bertjan Doosje et al. mention that: “Extremist groups supply individuals with a strong sense of in-group belongingness, which is a basic human need, and a clear image of an evil out-group, creating a strong intergroup dynamic” (Doosje, Moghaddam, Kruglanski, de Wolf, Mann, & Feddes, 2016). Especially within the prison context, individuals have a strong desire to be part of a group. When they are fully integrated in a specific group, the individuals who do not belong to that group are perceived as evil. By seeing the individuals outside the group as evil, the group communication and interaction will get stronger. What stands out, when looking at the other definitions, is that Doosje et al. do only speak of group dynamic and do not mention anything about opposing to values or principles.

The person who starts by saying that the concept of extremism is very difficult to define is Professor Preben Bertelsen . In his article *Violent radicalization and extremism* in *Department of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences* he defines extremism as: “An intense desire for and/or pursuit of a universal and comprehensive change in own and common life, socially, culturally, and/or societally, where the consideration for human coexistence is set aside”. Nevertheless, he points out that it is vital to distinguish between extremism and violent extremism. In fact, Bertelsen defines violent extremism exactly the same as how he defines extremism. The only difference is that he adds ‘by violent means’ to the definition of violent extremism (Bertelsen, 2016). Alex Schmid also emphasises the issues of conceptualising (violent) extremism in his research paper *Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review*. According to Schmid, it remains difficult to bring all the types of radicalisation under one theoretical model or theory (Schmid, 2013).

#### 2.2.4 Terrorism

A clear definition of terrorism is necessary since radicalisation can lead to individuals committing acts of terrorism. The United Kingdom defines terrorism as stated in the Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT 2000). This Act defines terrorism as: “An action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system”. However, the use or threat has to be aimed at influencing the government or intimidating the society. Furthermore, the use or threat has to be created to advance a political, religious or ideological cause (HM Government, 2015). The definition that is used by the United Kingdom does not mention that terrorist violence is often aimed at one specific group. By directing the violence at one group, a specific audience can be influenced.



In Belgian law, terrorism is described as: “An act or threatened act organised in secret for ideological, political, ethnic or religious ends, performed individually or in groups and intended as an attempt on the lives of individuals or to either partially or completely destroy the economic value of tangible or intangible property, whether to impact on the public, create a climate of insecurity or put pressure on the authorities in a bid to impede the running and normal operation of a service or business” (High-Level Advisory Board on the Financial Management of Large-Scale Catastrophes, 2011). This definition is very broad, stressing the fact that terrorism can be unpredictable.

Alex Schmid states in his research paper *Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review* that: “Even more than radicalisation, terrorism has been a contested and politicised term”. There are hundreds of known definitions of the concept of terrorism in both academia and governments (Schmid, 2013). Besides the different definitions of terrorism, the different types of terrorism (left-wing terrorism, right-wing terrorism, jihadist terrorism, cyber-terrorism, etc.) make the situation such a complex one.

In his policy report *Prisons and Terrorism Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries*, Peter Neumann argues that: “Terrorism typically consists of symbolic acts of violence which are intended to influence the political behaviour of a target group via the deliberate creation of fear”. Many governments and international organisations describe terrorism as politically motivated violence that is aimed at citizens and/or non-fighters (Neumann, 2010). A similar definition is given by Bertjan Doosje et al. In their article *Terrorism, radicalization and de-radicalization in Current Opinion in Psychology*, they conceptualise terrorism as: “An act of violence (domestic or international), usually committed against non-combatants, and aimed to achieve behavioral change and political objectives by creating fear in a larger population”. Doosje et al. point out that group membership plays a crucial role in understanding terrorism. Even though an individual may commit a terrorist attack, most of the attacks are committed by a group. The formation of a group makes it easier to prepare an attack and to have the motivation, instead of quitting at the last moment (Doosje, Moghaddam, Kruglanski, de Wolf, Mann, & Feddes, 2016).

The scholar Muhammad Feyyaz takes a different approach and mentions in his article *Conceptualizing Terrorism Trend Patterns in Pakistan— an Empirical Perspective* in *Perspectives on Terrorism* that terrorism can be expressed through eight narratives. “(i) As expression of religious constructions; (ii) as a protest and rallying symbol (ideological); (iii) as instrument of policy (political); (iv) as violent criminal behavior (organized crime); (v) as a warfare implement (spatiotemporal swathe); (vi) as propaganda tool (visual warfare through media); (vii) as

vengeance (norm) ;and (viii) as vigilantism (state functionalism)” (Feyyaz, 2013). Even though Feyyaz points out eight narratives through which terrorism can be expressed, Professor Jean-Marc Sorel has an opposing point of view. In his article *Some Questions About the Definition of Terrorism and the Fight Against Its Financing* in European Journal of International Law, Sorel emphasises that there is no clear and perfect definition of terrorism. Nevertheless, Sorel speaks of international terrorism which he defines as an act which causes disturbance to residents, by using violence in order to create an atmosphere of terror with the goal of influencing political action (Sorel, 2003).

### 2.3 Conclusion

From the review on radicalisation, it can be concluded that there is no definition of radicalisation that is universally agreed upon. Most scholars agree that radicalisation can be explained as a process where individuals or a group adopt extremist beliefs and will use violence to achieve change. This process involves several phases or stages and can be explained by different factors.

Looking at de-radicalisation, there is a lack of agreement regarding the definition. Scholars do agree that de-radicalisation can be seen as a process where individuals or a group move away from violence and/or terrorism. Most of these scholars add that the process ultimately leads to a new outlook on violence and terrorism. A few of them point out that de-radicalisation depends on the individual or group. Just as the process of radicalisation, scholars link the process of de-radicalisation to different phases.

Focussing on (violent) extremism, scholars provide two explanations. On the one hand, they state that (violent) extremism can be seen as ideologies that oppose to the values of a specific society. This is also how the United Kingdom and Belgium define (violent) extremism. On the other hand, (violent) extremism can be used to describe methods through which individuals or groups try to achieve their goals by using violence.

Speaking of terrorism, the United Kingdom, Belgium and other scholars describe terrorism as acts of violence against an individual or a specific group that causes damage to property and disturbance to residents. The acts of violence are performed to influence political action of a target group by creating fear. A few scholars point out that the acts are mostly aimed at non-combatants.

### 3. Methodology

This chapter gives an overview of the areas of study, the chosen research methods, ethical considerations and limitations of the study. The prison radicalisation that is being argued in this research refers to Islamic radicalisation. Additionally, the dissertation will focus on the past five years, since the problem of radicalisation in prison and the number of radicalised prisoners has significantly grown in the last few years.

#### 3.1 Areas of Study

Even though radicalisation in prisons is a global problem, this dissertation focusses on the United Kingdom and Belgium. These countries have been chosen for comparison because both the United Kingdom and Belgium have suffered from attacks committed by individuals who have been radicalised in prison, for instance the Westminster attack on 22 March 2017 and the Liège attack on 29 May 2018. Moreover, the governments of both countries have specified the importance of measures to counter radicalisation in prison. Through released plans, the United Kingdom and Belgium have outlined the need for de-radicalisation and specific methods so that the radicalised individuals can be effectively managed (Dugdale, 2017). This is why both countries have come up with several strategies and measures to try to counter prison radicalisation.

#### 3.2 Chosen Research Methods

The comparative analysis method was chosen to analyse the data from the United Kingdom and Belgium. The dissertation focusses on these two separate countries and their strategies and approaches towards countering prison radicalisation. This gives the ability to see how different or similar the approaches of the two countries are.

A literature review was also conducted to explain the main concepts that are relevant to the subject. Before writing about radicalisation, the term itself together with de-radicalisation, (violent) extremism and terrorism had to be explained. These terms are commonly used in relation to radicalisation and are closely connected. For these reasons, all of the terms had to be clearly defined and distinguished. By writing a literature review, different ways of thinking, understanding and analysing were acknowledged. The literature was gathered from articles published in academic journals, websites, books by prominent authors in this specific field, research papers and through search engines as Google Scholar, JSTOR and Wiley Online Library.

The preferred and main research method that was used for this dissertation was desk research. Because prison radicalisation is a serious and growing problem that has gotten more attention

during the years, there is a vast sea of knowledge and data available on the subject. This gave the ability to gather information on different areas concerning prison radicalisation. Secondary data was collected and analysed, using a wide range of sources. These secondary sources include media articles, websites, books written by prominent authors, official government documents and reports, policy papers and articles from academic journals (for example, *Perspectives on Terrorism* and *Current Opinion in Psychology*). The databases that were used were Google Scholar, JSTOR, Wiley Online Library and ResearchGate. Books were used to understand what radicalisation entails. Official government documents and reports gave a clear overview of the approaches of the United Kingdom and Belgium to counter prison radicalisation. Academic journals allowed for research that examined most of the areas of radicalisation, such as the process, the causes and the indicators of (prison) radicalisation.

The first sub-question discusses how radicalisation is being defined by the United Kingdom and Belgium. Government documents of the United Kingdom and Belgium were used. These documents clearly state the definitions of radicalisation as used by the countries. Furthermore, the process of radicalisation and the process of recruitment are also explained. For the process of radicalisation, a document of the NYPD and an article from an academic journal were used. These sources clearly explain their models of the radicalisation process that are most known and agreed on. For the process of recruitment, a chapter written for the McGraw-Hill Homeland Security Handbook was used. This chapter explains the different patterns of the recruitment process. In addition a report which discusses extremism and recruitment was also used to describe the recruitment process.

The second sub-question focusses on the perceived causes of prison radicalisation. This question is important for the report since the causes of prison radicalisation have to be explained in order to discuss any approaches to tackle it. Academic journals and documents from institutes were used. These sources make a clear distinction between individual, collective and other causes. In addition, indicators of radicalised prisoners (personality, appearance and behaviour) are also described to provide a broader understanding.

The third sub-question describes the prison counter-radicalisation strategies of the United Kingdom and Belgium. In this section, mainly government papers and reports were used since those sources give a clear overview of the strategies and measures of the specific country. Besides government sources, news articles were also used. These articles provided concise information about the strategies that the countries have developed.

The fourth sub-question examines the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the British and Belgium strategies. For this sections, news articles were used in which criticism, given by different individuals and groups, is clearly stated. Because some of the strategies have just been implemented by the United Kingdom and Belgium, not much criticism has been given yet.

The fifth sub-question analyses what the European Union does about prison radicalisation. To answer this sub-question, the speech that Commissioner Věra Jourova gave about radicalisation in prisons was used. In her speech, she mentioned what the European Union does about prison radicalisation. Academic journals and documents from the European Commission and the Council of the European Union were used to further explain the efforts of the European Union.

Case studies were also written to examine programmes of the United Kingdom and Belgium, aimed at preventing and countering (prison) radicalisation. Channel is the programme of the United Kingdom that is discussed and Community Policing and the Prevention of Radicalisation (CoPPRa) the programme of Belgium. The case studies show how Channel and CoPPRa counter the different stages and phases of the radicalisation process.

To avoid plagiarism and acknowledge the work of other authors, the citations and sources were carefully referenced using American Psychological Association Style. During the process of research and writing the dissertation, the author attempted to remain as objective as possible concerning collecting, analysing and interpreting data.

### [3.3 Ethical Considerations](#)

As there was no interaction with individuals and the dissertation solely relied on different types of documents and sources, ethical approval was not applicable. As there were no interviews conducted, no ethical considerations were made.

### [3.4 Limitations of the Study](#)

In the context of this study, several limitations were identified. First of all, prisoners are a difficult population for research. Overall, prisoners are isolated from society and are a population that is not easily accessible for researchers. Information tends to be classified and not made public.

Secondly, some of the strategies to counter prison radicalisation are rather new and not yet evaluated. This is why the weaknesses or vulnerabilities of some of the strategies could not be mentioned at the time of the research.

Thirdly, there are many publications on the subject but only a few resort to primary data. This is why the research depends mostly on secondary research, data that has already been collected by someone else earlier.

A fourth limitation of the study is that much of the academic literature is already several years old and in some cases even older. Since this dissertation focusses on the past five years, the most up to date information was used, focussing on the authors and professors who have a history of doing research in the particular field.

Another limitation of the study is that due to lack of response from interview respondents from the United Kingdom and Belgium, no expert opinion from these countries could be used in this dissertation. Including interviews (structured or semi-structured) with personnel from Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service and the Belgium Prison Service, such as prison officers, would have been beneficial for this dissertation. Interviews could have provided firsthand knowledge and information and a personal and practical perspective to the analysis. This could have helped to fill any 'knowledge gaps'.

## 4. Results

This chapter discusses radicalisation as defined by the United Kingdom and Belgium, the causes of prison radicalisation, the prison counter-radicalisation strategies of the United Kingdom and Belgium, the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the strategies and the role of the European Union.

### 4.1 Radicalisation

Radicalisation is a growing issue in the United Kingdom. Elizabeth Truss, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said that Islamic radicalisation is a danger to the society and poses a major threat to the public safety. Countering radicalisation in prison is fundamental to public protection (Ministry of Justice, 2016). According to the most recent data of the Home Office of the United Kingdom, on 31 March 2017 there were 186 individuals in prison classified as terrorist or radicalised prisoners. Of these prisoners, 90% declared themselves as Muslim (Allen & Dempsey, 2018).

Overall, the United Kingdom is home to up to 25,000 Islamic radicalised individuals. This high number does include people who have been part of an investigation, have been to prison, or have been member of an extremist group years ago. Of these 25,000 individuals, 3,000 are considered a direct and serious threat and 500 are under nonstop surveillance (Dearden, UK home to up to 25,000 Islamist extremists who could pose threat, EU official warns, 2017). Up to the year 2018, around 850 individuals had travelled from the United Kingdom to support or fight for jihadist groups in Iraq and Syria (BBC, 2017).

Besides the United Kingdom, Belgium has also become a major hotbed for Islamic radicalisation. Radicalised Muslims are often involved in terrorist attacks in Belgium (Teich, 2016). Belgian prisons have also become a breeding ground for radicalisation. According to Belgium's Ministry of Justice, the prison system is widely seen as a school for radicals and a serious change is necessary (Mufson, 2016). The Belga News Agency published an article that concluded that so far, there are 237 individuals in prison classified as terrorist or radicalised prisoners. Of these prisoners, the 22 most radical are being held in separate units (BELGA, 2018).

Most recent data shows that in 2017, there were 80 individuals in prison classified as radicalised prisoners (Belga, 2017). Additionally, in that year, there were more than 2,000 Islamic radicalised individuals in Belgium. Of these 2,000 individuals, about 500 travelled from Belgium to join the civil war in Iraq and Syria (Belga, 2017).

#### *4.1.1 Definition United Kingdom*

Just like the definitions of extremism and terrorism, a clear definition of radicalisation is given by the government of the United Kingdom. The Home Office of the United Kingdom and other reports also give clear explanations of the concept.

The government of the United Kingdom defines radicalisation as: “The process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups” (HM Government, 2015). The NHS England defines radicalisation as: “A psychological process where vulnerable and/or susceptible individuals are groomed to engage into criminal, terrorist activity” (NHS England). The government of the United Kingdom also states that vulnerability is an important cause of why individuals become radicalised. They can be drawn into the process of radicalisation due to factors, such as traumas, social exclusion, identity crisis, conflict over beliefs or views and discrimination (HM Government, 2015).

The Home office of the United Kingdom argues that when looking at the official definition of the concept of radicalisation, it is important to mention that radicalisation includes both the cognitive and behavioural dimension (HM Government, 2011). The cognitive dimension concerns extremist beliefs and the behavioural dimension concerns extremist behaviour. This is also explained in a research report about safeguarding and radicalisation that has been written for the government of the United Kingdom. This report states that radicalisation can be explained as a process that exists of two stages. The first stage involves a journey based on attitude. The vulnerable individual will begin to hold on to extremist beliefs. The second stages involves behaviour. Extremist beliefs turn into violent actions that are influenced by social, emotional or experiential factors (Chisholm & Coulter, 2017).

It is remarkable that no definition of Islamic radicalisation can be found. When speaking of Islamic radicalisation, the government of the United Kingdom refers to Islamic extremism. The government defines Islamic extremism as: “Any form of Islam that opposes democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs” (Wikipedia).

#### *4.1.2 Definition Belgium*

Unlike the definitions of extremism and terrorism, a clear definition of radicalisation is hard to find. In fact, in Belgium, no official legal definition of radicalisation exists (Federal Public Service Home Affairs). Nonetheless, various reports, newspapers and scholars give a definition of radicalisation.



Belgium's Action Plan against Radicalism (Plan R) developed a definition of the concept. Plan R defines radicalisation as: "A process during which a person or a group of persons experiences such influences that this person or this group of persons will at some point, be mentally moulded or disposed to commit terrorist acts". The definition of Plan R states that radicalisation is a process which determines the position of an individual towards using violence. Both radicalised individuals and groups are subject to a change and develop or adopt radical views and beliefs. The process of radicalisation can eventually lead to terrorism (Federal Public Service Home Affairs). The Brussel Times state radicalisation is a process that exists of four stages: pre-radicalisation, self-identification, indoctrination, and jihadisation (Bennett, 2016).

Belgium identify religious and social radicalisation. Religious radicalisation involves mosques with Islamist ideologies that are active in radicalising vulnerable individuals. Social radicalisation spreads among vulnerable individuals in marginalised neighbourhoods. The individuals who will be radicalised are often former members of criminal networks. To these individuals, radical Islam is not a belief system but an identity (Elnakhala).

An explanation of Islamic radicalisation is given by the Flemish government. This type of radicalisation finds its origins in Jihadi Salafism. Salafi-jihadists are individuals who want to live according to the literal interpretation of the Koran and who believe that the Koran should form the basis of the society. Nevertheless, they legitimise the use of violence against non-believers (EXPOO, 2015). The Belgian political scientist Rik Coolsaet points out in one of his studies that socio-economic and personal reasons are important drivers of Islamic radicalisation and that it is not an inevitable process. (Bennett, 2016).

#### *4.1.3 Process of Radicalisation*

##### Introduction

Different processes of radicalisation have been used by many scholars to explain the phenomenon and to understand how individuals radicalise and turn to violence. While there are some researchers that reject the idea of radicalisation being a process of change, most researchers agree with the idea that radicalisation can be explained by a gradual process of several stages and phases.

##### Models of the Radicalisation Process

A number of studies and scholars have identified that the process of radicalisation exists of several stages and phases. The process begins with a 'normal' individual and ends up with this

individual becoming active. Radicalisation often begins at meeting places, such as prisons, schools and mosques (Precht, 2007). No matter where the process begins, the stages and phases do not change. Two models of the radicalisation process that are most known and agreed on are explained. Important to mention is that radicalisation can take a short period of time (days, weeks) or a long time (months, years). Moreover, individuals who enter the process of radicalisation do not have to pass through all of the stages and they sometimes stop at any point. If an individual stops at a certain stage, he or she may not be fully radicalised. Individuals who have gone through the whole radicalisation process are likely to be involved in terrorism.

#### New York Police Department Four Stages of the Radicalisation Process

The Intelligence Division of the New York Police Department (NYPD) wrote a report, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*, in which radicalisation is fully examined. The Intelligence Division states that jihadist ideology motivates individuals to carry out terrorist attacks and is the key driver of radicalisation. The report identifies four stages of the radicalisation process: pre-radicalisation, self-identification, indoctrination and jihadisation (see Figure 1) (NYPD Intelligence Division, 2007). These stages are described below.

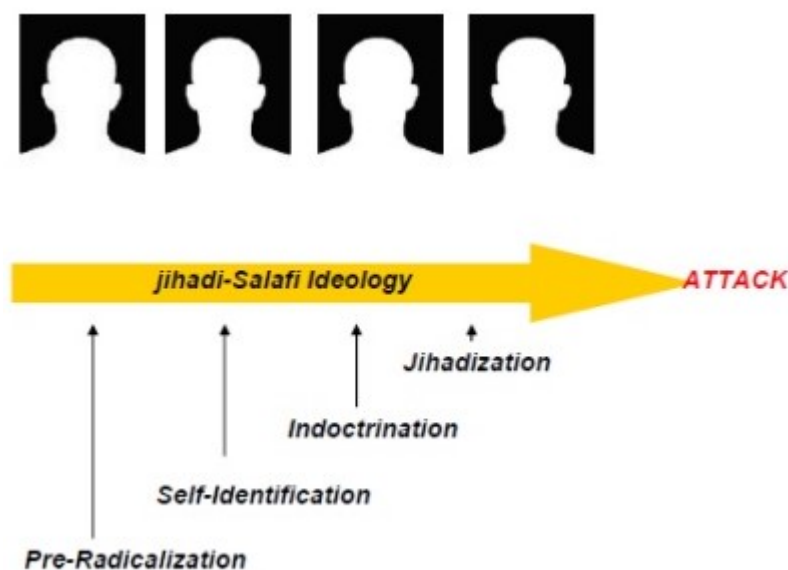


Figure 1. The four-stage radicalisation process (Christmann, 2012).

#### Stage 1: Pre-Radicalisation

This stage describes the life situation of individuals before they enter the process of radicalisation and get involved with Islam. It describes lifestyle, religion, social status, neighbourhood, education, etc. Furthermore the pre-radicalisation stage also describes the factors that make

individuals open to radicalisation before the actual process of radicalisation begins. These factors include: experiencing discrimination, the environment, identity problems, isolation and perceived injustice, traumas and deaths of relatives. An example is a neighbourhood where the ethnic population is largely Muslim can serve as an 'ideological sanctuary' for radical thoughts (NYPD Intelligence Division, 2007).

The factors that make individuals open to radicalisation are common to many individuals. Despite this, only a few of these individuals enter the process of radicalisation. The factors do not necessarily explain why individuals become radicalised. Nevertheless, they create a clear scene for the majority of individuals who have been radicalised and involved in terrorism. It could also be that some radicals already practised Islam before they entered the radicalisation process.

#### Stage 2: Self-Identification

This stage involves an individual identifying with a particular extremist cause and beginning to explore Islam. Additionally, the individual will accept a radicalised ideology. When speaking of a radical Islamic ideology, specific experiences, such as the exposure to Islamic radicalism and extremist videos, are more likely to drive the convert from conversion to Islam (Federal Bureau of Investigation Counterterrorism Division, 2006). What stimulates 'religious seeking' is a cognitive opening or a crisis. This influences the previously held beliefs of the individual and makes him or her open to new worldviews. Triggers that can be stimulate 'religious seeking' include: economic triggers (losing a job), social triggers (discrimination, racism), political triggers (international conflicts that involve Muslims) and personal triggers (the death of a family member or a friend) (NYPD Intelligence Division, 2007).

#### Stage 3: Indoctrination

In this stage, an individual makes his or her beliefs more intense and adopts the Islamic ideology. Furthermore, action is getting important and jihadist action is being justified (Aly & Striegher). Activities like group bonding, travelling overseas and training camps are important in this stage. In almost every one of the recent terrorist attacks, at least one individual has travelled to Syria, Iraq or an European country (Precht, 2007). In this stage, the confidence of the individual also increases and he or she will show how worthy he or she is to fight for Islam. This stage is mainly driven by a 'spiritual sanctioner'. As the process deepens, an important factor is the association with like-minded individuals. The role of the group becomes extremely important as the radical views are being encouraged (NYPD Intelligence Division, 2007).

#### Stage 4: Jihadisation

In the final stage, the individual engages in terrorist activities and even participates in Jihad. These activities are either violent or non-violent but are meant to always cause damage to the enemy (Federal Bureau of Investigation Counterterrorism Division, 2006). Group bonding and loyalty are being intensified by even more training activities like those that are described in stage 3. The jihadisation stage happens very fast, taking only a few weeks or months (Precht, 2007). Some of the individuals who reach the jihadisation stage are likely to participate in a terrorist attack, which includes planning, preparation and execution (Federal Bureau of Investigation Counterterrorism Division, 2006).

#### Bertjan Doosje et al. Three Phases of the Radicalisation Process

Bertjan Doosje et al. wrote an article, *Terrorism, radicalization and de-radicalization* in *Current Opinion in Psychology*, in which they discuss (de-)radicalisation, radical groups and the process of radicalisation. In their model (see Figure 2), the individual goes through three phases of the radicalisation process: the sensitivity phase, the group membership phase and the action phase. The model also explains how factors at the micro (individual), meso (group) and macro (societal) level influence the radicalisation process (Doosje, Moghaddam, Kruglanski, de Wolf, Mann, & Feddes, 2016). These phases and levels are described below.

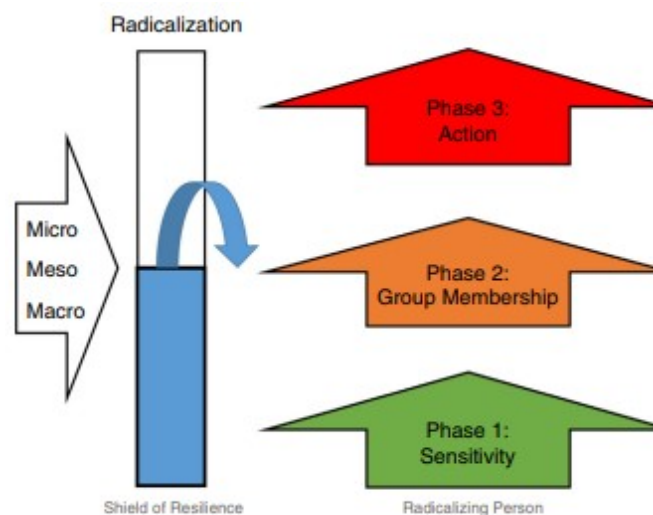


Figure 2. The three-phase radicalisation process (Doosje, Moghaddam, Kruglanski, de Wolf, Mann, & Feddes, 2016).

### Phase 1: Sensitivity

The first level, the micro (individual) level, involves factors of an individual that may influence the radicalisation process (Doosje, Moghaddam, Kruglanski, de Wolf, Mann, & Feddes, 2016). An important factor at the micro level is significance. This quest for significance involves the desire to matter, to be someone and to have respect (Kruglanski, Gelfand, Bélanger, Sheveland, Hetiarachchi, & Gunaratna, 2014). The feeling of insignificance can occur when an individual loses status, is humiliated or has poor career prospects (criminal activity, substance abuse). Radical Islamic groups like ISIS are well-equipped to restore the feeling of significance by giving the individual the respect he or she needs, status and the impression that the individual has to fight for a holy cause (Doosje, Moghaddam, Kruglanski, de Wolf, Mann, & Feddes, 2016).

The meso (group) level involves the social surroundings and environment. An important factor at the meso level is the feeling of suffering injustice. This is felt when individuals identify with their group and consider that their group has been treated unacceptable and worse than another group. A group that feels that they are suffering injustice can lead to the formation of terrorist organisations (Dzhekova, Stoyanova, Kojouharov, Mancheva, Anagnostou, & Tsenkov, 2016). The Muslim population experiences this feeling regarding education, work, income, etc. In addition, they are also experiencing discrimination. All this together makes them feel that they are treated worse than the non-Muslim citizens.

The macro (societal) level involves the society. Examples are majority-minority relationships and the political and socio-economic dominance of the West. These situations lead to radicalisation and terrorism (Dzhekova, Stoyanova, Kojouharov, Mancheva, Anagnostou, & Tsenkov, 2016). The Muslim population experiences the dominance of the West and perceives it as a threat to Islam and the population itself.

### Phase 2: Group Membership

The second phase is very important as the individual becomes a member of a radicalised group. The individual is fused with the group and the group is fused with the individual. At the micro (individual) level, the individual has to show how loyal he or she is to the radicalised group. This is done by following the norms, values and rules of the group (Doosje, Moghaddam, Kruglanski, de Wolf, Mann, & Feddes, 2016). Ideology also seems to develop mainly during the phase of group membership, especially in interaction with the other members of the radicalised group. This developing ideology helps the individuals and group to actually plan and commit the terrorist acts (Colaert, 2017).

The meso (group) level is also of high importance, as during this phase, the 'relationship' between the individual and the group will strengthen. Group membership is the enemy of the personal contacts of the individual. The individual will cut off all contact with friends and family and the group imposes a 'group mind' on the members. The identity of the individual will be completely fused. When the individual has cut off all contacts, he or she can be 'one' with the group. Individuals who are strongly fused with the group see the other group members as 'family'. This group fusion is a strong motivator of group action and extremist behaviour (Swann Jr. & Buhrmester, 2015).

The macro (societal) level involves the creation of a caliphate, declared by the leader of the Islamic State which has increased the competence of the group. This caliphate stretches across Syria and Iraq. It was actually possible for Muslims to create this dream of Muslim radicals that also shows Muslim greatness. This had led to the flow of thousands of foreign fighters to Syria and Iraq (BBC, 2014).

#### Phase 3: Action

The final phase of the radicalisation process involves using violence against members of other groups. To use violence, an important factor at the micro (individual) level is thinking about failure, embarrassment, personal uncertainty and even death. Individuals are often forced to think about the death of a family member or a friend in order to increase their willingness to support and use violence against members of other groups (Pyszczynski, Abdollahi, Solomon, Greenberg, Cohen, & Weise, 2006).

At the meso (group) level, video testimonies are an important factor. In case the individual dies while on the mission, he or she may record video testimonies before the start of the mission. These testimonies prepare the individual to fight against the evil and make it harder to quit at the last minute. Because the other groups are seen as evil, the use of violence towards another group is justified by the individual (Silke, *Understanding Suicide Terrorism: Insights from Psychology, Lessons from History*, 2015).

At the macro (societal) level, the important factor is appeals by authorities to use violence (Doosje, Moghaddam, Kruglanski, de Wolf, Mann, & Feddes, 2016).

#### *4.1.4 Process of Recruitment*

##### Introduction

In terrorist and radical organisations, recruitment is of crucial importance. The recruiters are able to spot, assess and encourage potential individuals to follow their path. A recruiter who is charismatic and very open but who has limited training or participation in Jihad is still able to alter their experiences into a recruitment tool that will attract individuals (Federal Bureau of Investigation Counterterrorism Division, 2006).

##### Patterns and Paths of the Recruitment Process

A number of studies and scholars have identified that the process of recruitment exists of patterns and paths. Just like radicalisation, recruitment is a gradual process that can occur in prisons, schools, on the internet, in mosques or other places where individuals get together. No matter where recruitment occurs, the process does not change. The patterns and paths are explained below.

##### Scott Gerwehr and Sara Daly Four Patterns of the Recruitment Process

Scott Gerwehr and Sara Daly wrote a chapter, *Al-Qaida: Terrorist Selection and Recruitment* for the McGraw-Hill Homeland Security Handbook, in which they discuss recruitment, the recruitment process, recruitment approaches and the challenges in identifying recruitment. They explain that the recruitment process exists of four different patterns: the net, the funnel, the infection and the seed crystal (Gerwehr & Daly, 2006). These patterns are described below.

##### Pattern 1: The Net

The net pattern occurs when a target population is equally engaged. An example is that the same videotape is being sent to every individual. In this case, the whole target population is seen as homogeneous and is approached with a single undifferentiated pitch. Even though some of the individuals will react positively, others will react negatively. Nonetheless, the whole target population is seen as qualified for recruitment (see Figure 3a). Where the target population is located, who gets caught in the net and who slips out of the net are important factors (Gerwehr & Daly, 2006).

## The net.

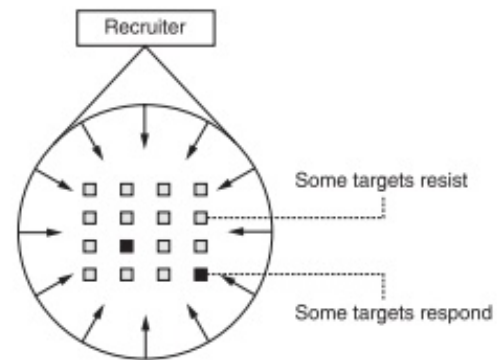


Figure 3a. The net pattern (Gerwehr & Daly, 2006).

[Pattern 2: The Funnel](#)

The funnel pattern occurs when a recruiter takes a phased approach when he or she thinks that the target population is the qualified target that is ready for recruitment. The use of the term 'funnel' implies that recruiters begin the recruitment process, are transformed or exit the process and end up as full-fledged members (see Figure 3b). This approach can be characterised by different milestones, such as exercises to build the group identity or in the case of Islam, commitment to principles and using violence (Gerwehr & Daly, 2006).

## The funnel.

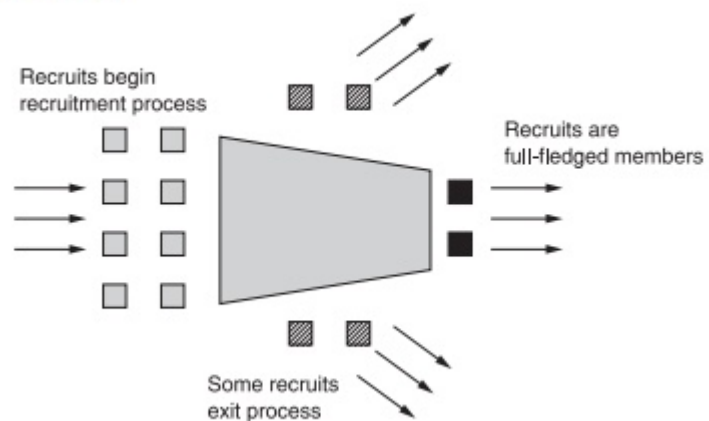


Figure 3b. The funnel pattern (Gerwehr & Daly, 2006).

[Pattern 3: The Infection](#)

The infection pattern occurs when a recruiter inserts a trusted agent into the target population. This is done in order to make it easier to recruit potential individuals through direct and personal appeals (see Figure 3c). Infection is likely to be successful where most members are not extremists. This way, the inserted agent will be able to convert selected members who are



dissatisfied. What is very important is the time that it takes to insert an agent into the target population and how long it takes for the 'infection' to become hazardous (Gerwehr & Daly, 2006).

### The infection.

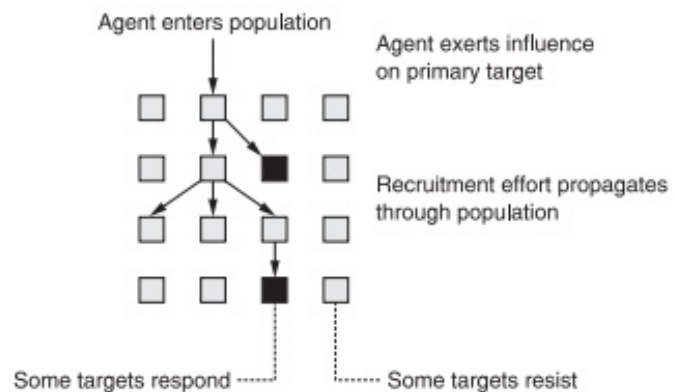


Figure 3c. The infection pattern (Gerwehr & Daly, 2006).

### Pattern 4: The Seed Crystal

The seed crystal pattern occurs when the target population is very distant and difficult to access and a trusted agent cannot be inserted (see Figure 3d). The seed crystal pattern can be compared to lowering the temperature of a glass until the water inside the glass cools down and ice crystals form as the seeds of a complete freeze. Important are the environmental forces that are used to 'cool the glass' and how long the 'freeze' lasts. In other words, how long does the environmental manipulation has to be applied to produce self-recruitment. Seed crystal is likely to be successful in populations where open recruitment is difficult, in particular in prisons (Gerwehr & Daly, 2006).

### The seed crystal.

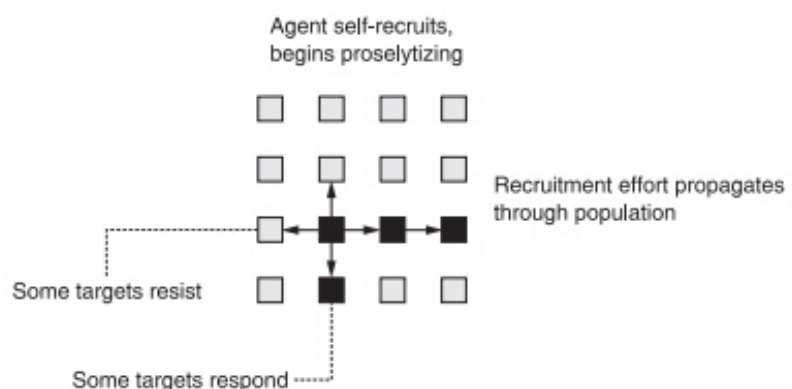


Figure 3d. The seed crystal pattern (Gerwehr & Daly, 2006).

[Pete Simi et al. Three Paths of the Recruitment Process](#)

Pete Simi et al. wrote a report, *Recruitment and Radicalization among US Far-Right Terrorists*, in which they discuss extremism and recruitment. They explain that the recruitment process exists of three paths: traditionally recruited, enlistment and self-starter (see Figure 4) (Simi, Windisch, & Sporer, 2016). These paths are described below.

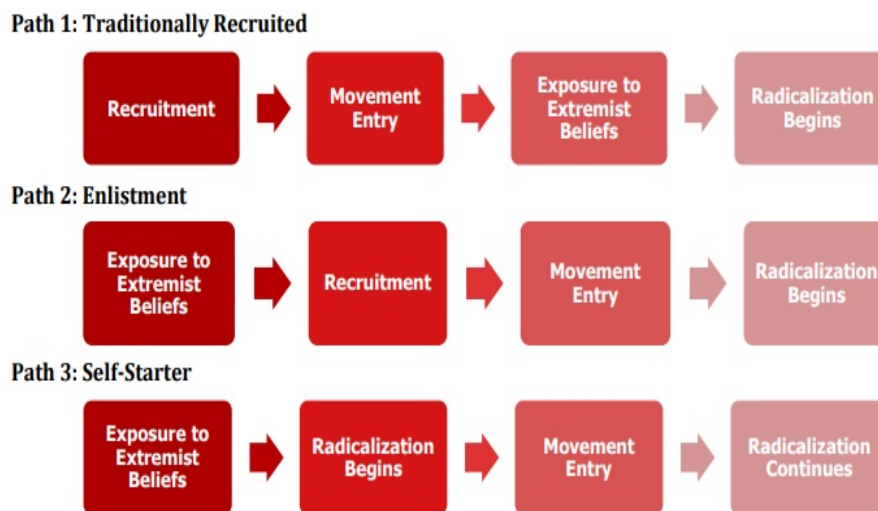


Figure 4. The three-path recruitment process (Simi, Windisch, & Sporer, 2016).

[Path 1: Traditionally Recruited](#)

The traditionally recruited path involves target individuals. Recruitment occurs in a variety of places: schools, mosques, online, prisons, parties, etc. Unlike the paths of enlistment and self-starter, individuals have had no exposure to extremist beliefs. Like the other paths, the individuals do not begin the radicalisation process until they have entered a movement (Simi, Windisch, & Sporer, 2016).

[Path 2: Enlistment](#)

The enlistment path involves individuals who have been exposed to extremist beliefs (music, books, videos, family, school). Like the traditionally recruited path, individuals do not begin the radicalisation process until they have entered a movement (Simi, Windisch, & Sporer, 2016).

[Path 3: Self-Starter](#)

The self-starter path involves individuals who are independent regarding entry and radicalisation. They indoctrinate themselves through literature and other resources without the assistance of

active radicals. Like the enlistment path, the self-starters have also been exposed to extremist beliefs (Simi, Windisch, & Sporer, 2016).

#### 4.2 Prison Radicalisation

Prison radicalisation refers to individuals being radicalised in prison. Prison radicalisation can be right-wing, left-wing, Islamist, etc. (Ionescu, Nadolu, Moza, & Lobont, 2016). Prison radicalisation is a serious issue for prison staff. Prisons are 'crisis' environments that create a need for belongingness, identity, protection and guidance. Moreover, prisons are a place where radicalised prisoners can establish contacts and relationships with other prisoners (Precht, 2007). In the end, the prison staff is held responsible for managing the risk of radicalisation and to spot signs of radicalisation.

##### *4.2.1 Causes of Prison Radicalisation*

Prison radicalisation is almost never caused by one single factor. Prisoners become radicalised when there is a combination of factors. The causes of prison radicalisation include individual, collective and other factors. Not every factor contributes to the radicalisation process. As an example, victimisation can be experienced by multiple prisoners but this does not necessarily mean that they will become radicalised. The factors that contribute to the process differ per individual and have the biggest impact on juvenile prisoners, unmarried prisoners and prisoners without children (Silke & Veldhuis, 2017). The factors that can influence the process of prison radicalisation are described below.

##### Individual Factors

An individual factor that can cause prison radicalisation is personal victimisation. In other words, prisoners identify with victims. An example is a radicalised Muslim blaming his behaviour on how other Muslims are treated and identifying with the suffering of these Muslims (Ionescu, Nadolu, Moza, & Lobont, 2016). Personal traumas (childhood, deaths) or experiences are also important factors. Personal experiences of perceived discrimination or exclusion often lead to anger and aggression. Exclusion makes prisoners feel like they do not belong anywhere and they will seek for belongingness and significance. As a response, they can become radicalised and become part of a group which promises to restore significance (Veldhuis & Staun, 2009). Identity issues are an important and common factor. A prisoner may find it hard to find his or her place and feels uncertain about his or her own identity. An extremist group is a source of self-esteem and offers the help to find a new identity. The more the group and the prisoner invest in this new identity, the stronger the identification becomes (Colaert, 2017).

### Collective Factors

Prisons that have poor management and that are overfilled create the perfect environment for charismatic leaders to organise groups and force the members to adopt extremist ideologies. The charismatic leaders will spot the vulnerable prisoners and try to create personal relationships in order to recruit a group of prisoners. Charismatic Muslim leaders often try to recruit 'lost' prisoners. The leaders will create trustworthy relationships and convince the prisoners to adopt Islamic ideology to find an identity and the meaning of life (Silke & Veldhuis, 2017). The most important collective factor is identification with other groups. To a large extent, how individuals behave depends on with whom they identify. Another factor is the feeling of deprivation. This can occur when prisoners are personally deprived but also when they act on behalf of a group. The feeling of deprivation refers to the difference between what individuals believe that they are rightfully entitled to and what they expect to obtain. Inability to obtain what they believe that they are entitled to creates frustration and ultimately leads to group violence and action (Veldhuis & Staun, 2009).

### Other Factors

Overcrowding is a problem in prisons worldwide and is often seen as one of the main causes of prison radicalisation. Overcrowding causes stress and prisoners will join smaller groups with the same interests. All the groups fight over the scarce resources and social status. In severe cases, prisoners need to join a group for protection and access to goods that they may not be able to get another way. These conditions make prisoners vulnerable to the influence of extremists groups and ideologies. The groups will offer support to the prisoners to deal with the conditions of incarceration (Silke & Veldhuis, 2017). Prison imams also play an important role since they can influence the mindset and the beliefs of prisoners by speaking from a position of authority on issues that concern religion (Precht, 2007).

#### *4.2.2 Indicators of Radicalised Prisoners*

It is generally accepted that there is no single profile that applies to radicalised prisoners in terms of age, gender, nationality, etc. (Council of Europe, 2017). The fact that many radicalised prisoners are 'normal' individuals makes it very difficult to identify them. During the radicalisation process, prisoners come into contact with a group who is seeking for new members and get involved with the group. At this point, several changes concerning personality, appearance or behaviour may start to show (FAIR, 2016). These changes do not necessarily happen to all prisoners who get radicalised. Moreover, not all radicalised prisoners are part of a group. Some of

them may be so-called 'lone wolves'. Radicalised prisoners can be young adults, older adults or juvenile. They are mostly men in their 20s or early 30s but the number of women is increasing. Even though the profiles of radicalised prisoners differ, there are indicators to identify radicalised prisoners (see Table 1) (Council of Europe, 2017). These indicators can be very clear but can also be hard to spot. Possible indicators are described below.

#### Personality

Making changes regarding identity can be a clear indicator. This might include changing religion and even name. Changes regarding religion might include longer or shorter prayers, isolation during prayer or acceptance or refusal of imams. Additionally, changes in attitude towards prayer also occur. Prisoners can force prayer upon other prisoners or even discriminate against moderate Muslims (FAIR, 2016). Prisoners can also start to use aliases instead of their official names. In terms of attitude and values, they may become very intolerant and inflexible (Council of Europe, 2017). Prisoners often begin to share certain views, such as 'us versus them'. Moreover, they begin to show a strong interest in the history and the beginning of a certain religion, often Islam (Dzhejkova, Mancheva, Stoyanova, & Anagnostou, 2017).

#### Appearance

Once the prisoner is part of a group, he or she tends to make the support visible by adopting a new style of dressing (religious clothing), letting facial hair grow (moustache, beard), shaving off all hair or getting tattoos which show that they are a member of a group. Overall, these changes are easy to spot, but they can be hard to spot or even overlooked in prisons where the prisoners wear uniforms. Besides physical appearance, indicators can also be visible in prison cells. A prayer rug can be present, articles and photos of extremist groups or writings about extremist ideologies on the walls. In the final stages of the radicalisation process, a prisoner may abandon his or her extreme look in order to blend in with the other members of the group. This is done to escape the notice of law enforcement. This situation makes it very hard for prison staff to identify radicalised prisoners (FAIR, 2016).

### Behaviour

When a prisoner tries to affirm membership of the group, changes in behaviour may become visible. This might include changing diet and changes in routine. The prisoner might isolate him or herself, refuse to take a shower, to eat or to share a prison cell and the common rooms with prisoners who do not belong to the group or who have other beliefs and ideologies, such as non-Muslim prisoners. Additionally, the prisoner might cut off all contact with friends and family. He or she will approach other prisoners who share the radical beliefs. The prisoner may also become aggressive and very expressive to show full support to the group and its ideology. The prisoner will put in all the effort to convince other prisoners to follow the same path. Their behaviour towards other people also changes, such as the relationship with the prison staff (FAIR, 2016).

Behavioural (individual and group)	Appearance	Attitudes, identity, cognitive factors	High-risk factors (pre-violence)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrupulous attention to what is haram and halal</li> <li>• Tensions or changes in family life</li> <li>• Withdrawal from previous relations, social isolation/polarisation.</li> <li>• Disconnecting with former community</li> <li>• Selective exposure to media</li> <li>• Dependence on communication technology</li> <li>• Engaging with propaganda material</li> <li>• Abrupt and noticeable change in religious practices</li> <li>• Forcing own (e.g. religious) beliefs, norms on others</li> <li>• Untouchable demeanour</li> <li>• Travel/residence abroad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in physical appearance/attire (e.g. growing a beard, cutting back fingernails, wearing traditional Islamic dress, wearing trousers until just above the ankles, refusing to wear shorts, refusing to have tattoos or hiding old ones for religious reasons, weight loss due to change in eating habits).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in personality and particular emotional expressions</li> <li>• Using aliases</li> <li>• Mentioning new role models or ideological leaders</li> <li>• Doubts over identity</li> <li>• Strong devotion to a particular change</li> <li>• Newly discovered patriotism</li> <li>• Us versus them societal view</li> <li>• Critical expressions against government</li> <li>• Feelings of disconnection, change in personal narrative</li> <li>• Strong interest in the history and beginnings of Islam</li> <li>• Adopting a legalistic interpretation of Islam</li> <li>• Trusting only selected religious authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Death rhetoric</li> <li>• Member of extremist group</li> <li>• Contact with known recruiters/extremists</li> <li>• Advanced paramilitary training</li> <li>• Overseas combat</li> <li>• Acquiring weapons, explosive materials</li> <li>• Organising protests inspired by extremist ideology</li> <li>• Taking part in criminal activity/problems with the law</li> <li>• Advocates violence</li> <li>• Attempts to conceal radical behaviour</li> <li>• Suspicious travel</li> <li>• Stores and collects hazardous materials</li> <li>• Looks for information on building weapons</li> </ul>

*Table 1. Examples of factors as indicators of radicalised individuals (Dzhekova, Mancheva, Stoyanova, & Anagnostou, 2017).*

## 4.3 Prison Counter-Radicalisation Strategies

### *4.3.1 The United Kingdom*

Elizabeth Truss, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, stated that Islamist extremism has to be defeated wherever it is found. The United Kingdom is committed to confront and fight this poisonous ideology in prisons. Countering prison radicalisation and preventing radicalised prisoners from

radicalising other prisoners is crucial to safe prison environments and public protection. The lack of confidence to challenge extremist behaviour and views resulted in hesitation to confront them (Ministry of Justice, 2016). The United Kingdom takes the threat of radicalisation in prisons extremely seriously and the government has developed different strategies to tackle radicalisation (Ministry of Justice, 2017). The United Kingdom will fight any kind of radicalisation and does not tolerate any sort of extremist activity (Prime Minister's Task Force, 2013).

#### Prevent Strategy

Prevent is the counter-radicalisation strategy of the United Kingdom. At first, Prevent was created as one of the strands of the counter-terrorism strategy of the United Kingdom called CONTEST. The other strands of the strategy are Pursue, Protect and Prepare. Prevent was further developed and update when CONTEST was made publicly available in 2006. The aim of Prevent is to safeguard vulnerable individuals who are at risk of becoming radicalised and being drawn into extremism (Malik, Wilson, Orton, & Rushchenko, 2017). The five key strands of the Prevent strategy are to: (1) challenge violent extremist ideology, (2) disrupt individuals who promote violent extremism and support the institutions where they are active (3) support individuals who are targeted and recruited, (4) help the communities who face violent extremism to recover quicker and (5) address injustice that can otherwise be exploited (Grimwood, 2016). By holding interventions, the Prevent strategy motivates Islamist extremists to disengage, while also monitoring and managing the risk posed by the individuals who choose not to (Ministry of Justice, 2016). Prevent works with different sectors and institutions where the risks posed by radicalisation is high, including prison and probation. In 2011, Prevent was made a core part of the counter-radicalisation strategy. In July of 2015, delivery of the Prevent duty became a legal requirement for all public bodies in the United Kingdom, preventing individuals from being drawn into radicalisation and terrorism. The public bodies include local authorities, prisons, schools, universities and National Health Service Trusts. When an individual is identified as vulnerable to radicalisation, he or she will be referred to Prevent to receive guidance and support (Malik, Wilson, Orton, & Rushchenko, 2017).

#### Risk Assessment Tools

Risk assessment tools have become the central instruments to counter radicalisation. The United Kingdom uses the Extremism Risk Guidance (ERG22+) and the Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF) (Knudsen, 2018). The Extremism Risk Guidance (ERG22+) is the risk assessment tool that the Prevent strategy is built on. The assessment is forced upon all public sector workers, including prison officers. The officers have to undertake a training programme to spot signs of



radicalisation (Alam, 2016). The Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF) is used within the Channel programme which is a part of the Prevent strategy. Both ERG22+ and VAF focus on the 22 risk indicators of radicalisation (see Figure 6). The tools are used to identify prisoners who are at risk of becoming radicalised. Both tools were created by the United Kingdom and are in wide use in the country. An ERG is carried out when a prisoner enters a prison to identify the factors that contributed to the original offence. The tool is used on a regular basis to measure the development of a prisoner and to identify any areas of concern. In 2012, the ERG became the basis of the Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF). This tool is also used by local authorities to identify individuals who are at risk of becoming radicalised, assess the nature and the extent of the risk and develop an appropriate plan for these individuals (Knudsen, 2018).

<b>Engagement</b>	
1.	Need to redress injustice and express grievance
2.	Need to defend against threat
3.	Need for identity, meaning, belonging
4.	Need for status
5.	Need for excitement, comradeship or adventure
6.	Need for dominance
7.	Susceptibility to indoctrination
8.	Political/moral motivation
9.	Opportunistic involvement
10.	Family or friends support extremist offending
11.	Transitional periods
12.	Group influence and control
13.	Mental health
<b>Intent</b>	
1.	Over-identification with a group or cause
2.	Us and Them thinking
3.	Dehumanisation of the enemy
4.	Attitudes that justify offending
5.	Harmful means to an end
6.	Harmful end objectives
<b>Capability</b>	
1.	Individual knowledge, skills and competencies
2.	Access to networks, funding and equipment
3.	Criminal history
+	Any other factor

Figure 5. The indicators of ERG22+ (Lloyd & Dean, 2015).

### Special Training

To comply with the prevent duty, the frontline officers have received special training courses. The frontline officers have to complete online or classroom exercises. The training is mainly aimed at Islamist extremists. The government wants to teach the frontline officers to contact authorities when they believe a prisoner is radicalised and when they have any concerns about a prisoner. The training will make sure frontline officers can spot the difference between prisoners who are



religiously conservative and prisoners who promote views and say things that make radicalisation more likely (Jeory, 2016). The Ministry of Justice stated that, up to the year 2017, more than 4,500 existing and new frontline officers have received special training concerning extremism and how to spot signs of radicalisation. The goal of this counter-extremism training is for the frontline officers to identify and challenge radical beliefs and views (Travis, 2017). Besides the training, the frontline officers have received the skills and authority that is needed to prevent radicalised prisoners exerting control and radicalising other prisoners (Ministry of Justice, 2016).

#### Wider Government Strategy

Prisons do not only provide an environment where individuals are becoming more vulnerable to extremism but also to radicalisation. In September 2015, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Michael Gove, asked Ian Acheson for a review concerning the growing threat which Islamist radicalisation poses to prisons. On 17 March 2016, the review team, led by Ian Acheson, submitted a report of their findings. These findings showed that Islamist radicalisation is a direct threat to the work that is carried out in prisons across the United Kingdom. Moreover, Islamic radicalisation represents an acute risk to the safety prisoners and staff, encourages criminal behaviour and undermines the functioning of the criminal justice system. As a response to the findings of the review led by Ian Acheson, the government of the United Kingdom formed a wider government strategy to tackle radicalisation in prison. This strategy supports both the Prevent strategy and the Counter-Extremism strategy. A policy paper by the government of the United Kingdom describes the actions of the wider strategy (Ministry of Justice, 2016).

#### Prison Chaplains

In the everyday prison environment, the wider government strategy has strengthened the providing of religious and pastoral needs by prison chaplains. These chaplains can provide religious legitimacy to the Muslim prison population. Moreover, they can motivate a group of radicalised prisoners to disengage from further reoffending. Besides helping prisoners inside prison, they will help released prisoners to integrate back into the society. The prison chaplains will provide religious and pastoral needs to the Muslim population (Awan, 2016). The government of the United Kingdom is strengthening the recruitment process of prison chaplains to make sure that the right individuals are appointed to tackle radical beliefs. Pre-appointment checks have been designed for all prison chaplaincy positions. These checks include Counter Terrorist Check (CTC), security clearance and professional credentials (Ministry of Justice, 2016).

### Extremist Literature and Friday Prayers

The government of the United Kingdom has instructed prison governors to ban extremist books and literature (Ministry of Justice, 2016). But they cannot just ban extremist books and literature, the decision must be proportionate and defensible. Assessment criteria will be used to assess the extremist nature of the books and literature. If the texts are considered inappropriate material, they may be banned (Ministry of Justice, 2016). The order to ban extremist literature came months after a prison inspection team found copies of banned extremist books in prisons. The books were looked at by a review panel and identified as extremist in nature. In addition, nine out of the eleven prisons that the inspection team visited had one or more texts in chaplaincy rooms that were identified as extremist in nature and in opposition to fundamental British values. Extremist literature that is found needs to be removed from the prison estate (prison libraries, chaplaincy rooms) (Roy, 2016). As to Friday prayers, prison governors are accountable and responsible for these prayers to be peaceful. Therefore, they have been instructed by the government of the United Kingdom to remove prisoners from Friday prayers who promote anti-British beliefs and values or other dangerous and radical views (Ministry of Justice, 2016). Prisoners who have been banned from Friday prayers will be offered in-prison cell alternatives to pray (Christys, 2016).

### Specialist Task Force

To keep building on the progress that has already been made in tackling radicalisation by separating prisoners, appointing prison chaplains, banning extremist literature and removing prisoners from Friday prayers, the United Kingdom has created a specialist task force (Home Office, 2017). The special team consists of counter-terrorism experts to tackle radicalisation and extremism in prison. The team of 100 experts trains prison staff to discourage prisoners from being or becoming radicalised. Additionally, the team gives advice to prisons in the United Kingdom on how to deal with radicalised prisoners. The team also examines intelligence from around the United Kingdom to assess the threat of radicalisation in British prisons (BBC, 2017). The strategy centre of the task force is located in London and the specialist teams are located across the country. The prison staff who are directly experiencing radicalised prisoners and prisoners at risk of becoming radicalised are asked to share their thoughts. The task force also trains prison and probation staff about how they can prevent individuals from becoming radicalised (Riley Smith, 2017). The task force is formed between Her Majesty's Prisons and Probation Service and the Home Office and it is being brought forward as a part of the Prison Safety and Reform White Paper. It works together with the police and other enforcement

agencies. The experts who gather evidence from front line staff are essential to keep the prisons safe (Sims, 2017).

#### Separated Units

A crucial element of this wider government strategy is moving radicalised prisoners to separation centres. The most dangerous radicalised prisoners will be separated from the general prison population and held in 'special units' in the high security estate (Ministry of Justice, 2016). These Islamist extremists are divided among three separation units and they are regularly transferred from one jail to another to prevent them from radicalising others (Kobayter). The first 'special unit' is located at HMP Frankland near Durham and opened in March of 2018 (Travis, 2017). This prison has been chosen because it houses some of the most dangerous killers and terrorist of the United Kingdom. The special units are separation units and not segregation units. The prisoners are not being punished but only separated from the general prison population (Parveen, 2017). The other two special units will be located at HMP Full Sutton near York and at HMP Long Lartin in Worcestershire. The three centres together hold up to 28 of the most dangerous radicalised prisoners. The Ministry of Justice of the United Kingdom stated that the radicalised prisoners who are selected for separation in the special units include the ones who have been involved in planning terrorism and terrorist acts and who pose a risk to the national security. Nevertheless, prisoners who are influencing other prisoners to commit terrorist acts or whose extremist beliefs and views are purposely undermining good order and security may also be held in the special units (Travis, 2017). Once prisoners are held in one of the three centres, experts will review them every three months. The prisoners will only be returned to the general prison population if the risk that they present has reduced to a level that can be managed there (Ministry of Justice, 2017).

#### 4.3.2 Belgium

Belgian authorities have not announced an official strategy concerning radicalisation. Nonetheless, the response of the country to this threat can be described as a mix of prevention, protection and repression (Elnakhala). In the year 2015, after the terrorist attacks in Paris, the government of Belgium decided to make radicalisation in prisons a priority. The government stressed the need for a thorough approach to radicalisation and terrorism. Even though Belgium tries to use international insights in this field, it is difficult to compare the situation of the country with other countries, given the differences concerning prison population and prison systems. This is why Belgium developed their own plans that are adapted to the specific situation of the country and the issue of radicalisation (Federal Public Service Justice, 2015).

### [Plan R](#)

The Action Plan against Radicalism or Plan R is a plan of approach that strives to restrict the development of radicalism and extremism in the society. To achieve this, an integrated collaboration between various public services is necessary. By mapping out the individuals and groups having a radicalising effect on their surroundings and reducing the impact of the key drivers of radicalisation. The purpose of Plan R is to (1) detect radicalised individuals in an early stage to (2) take the necessary measures. At the end of 2004, the Ministerial Committee for Intelligence and Security decided to develop Plan R. The plan focusses on the specific drivers of radicalisation and on preventive, proactive and reactive measures. Plan R got approved in 2006 and in 2015, the federal government decided that Plan R needed to be updated. On 14 December 2015, the Belgian National Security Council (NSC) approved the updated Plan R. Plan R has created working groups that focus on radicalisation in prisons, on the Internet, on the radio and on television. Nevertheless, the groups also focus on how to prevent radicalisation. The purpose of the working groups is to achieve a continuous collaboration between the public services and to gather specific knowledge about the drivers of radicalisation. The groups provide annual progress reports on the collaboration, the activities and the measures to reduce the effects of radicalisation (van Tigchelt, 2016).

### [Gathering, Analysing and Sharing Information](#)

Gathering, analysing and sharing information is a major element of Plan R. Information sharing between working groups, services and authorities on individuals or groups who need special attention is a must to develop a tailored approach to tackle radicalisation. Plan R has created a database that includes all relevant information of radicalised individuals or groups. Every working group, service or authority can consult the files in the database and add new information to it (van Tigchelt, 2016). To gather all the information, the working groups, services and authorities need to work closely together. Radicalisation in Belgian prisons will be analysed on a yearly basis and a annual overviews of the findings will be provided (Federal Public Service Justice, 2015).

### [Action Plan](#)

In 2015, Belgium developed the Action Plan against radicalisation in prisons. The objectives of the action plan are to (1) prevent the radicalisation of prisoners and (2) develop a specialised follow-up of radicalised prisoners. The action plan describes several action points that should make the prisoners be able to better cope with the influences of radical ideas and should ensure a strong and appropriate follow-up of radicalised prisoners (Federal Public Service Justice, 2015).

### Muslim Imams and Counsellors

Belgium introduced Muslim imams and religious authorities to monitor the situation in prison. After the Charlie Hebdo attack in 2015, the Ministry of Justice of Belgium decided to give the imams and authorities a more significant role in preventing the radicalisation of Muslim prisoners. They will be more involved in the process of identifying and monitoring radicalisation (Blažek, 2016). Flanders even turned to Muslim imams to de-radicalise prisoners who could be released early. A theological guidance process was missing. Prisoners who are radicalised or have a radicalisation problem need theological guidance. Prisoners and imams will discuss certain models that are aimed at behavioural change. This will increase religious and spiritual support. It also improves the status and role of Muslim imams and they will be more involved in de-radicalisation programs (Rubinstein, 2018). Muslim counsellors will join the Muslim imams and religious authorities. The counsellors need sufficient religious knowledge and need to be resistant to stress (Kuebler, 2016). To reduce the risk of radicalisation, an open and trustworthy relationship with the representatives of the Islam is necessary. The counsellors focus on individual contact with prisoners, providing assistance and giving advice. This makes them able to contribute to tackling radicalisation in prisons. The Muslim counsellors who work in Belgian prisons have taken an exam, have been screened by the State Security Service and have signed a charter, respecting the laws of the Belgian people. The Muslim counsellors will be able to signal indicators of radicalisation and any other problems and provide the right response (Federal Public Service Justice, 2015).

### Training of Prison Staff

Training the prison staff is not only important to detect radicalisation, but also for suitable contact with and supervision of radicalised prisoners (Federal Public Service Justice, 2015). All prison staff is being trained to improve their awareness of the risk of radicalisation in prison, tackle the threat of prison radicalisation and enhance the professional care for the prisoners who are convicted of terrorism (André, et al., 2016). The State Security Service organises courses concerning radicalisation in prisons. Every staff member who enters into service is trained to identify radicalised prisoners, tackle the issue, and deal with stress and avoid panic behaviour. The prison staff that has already been working in Belgian prisons will be offered e-learning modules to obtain the basic knowledge. Having successfully completed the training, the prison staff will be able to recognise indicators of radicalisation through their daily contact with the prisoners. The State Security Service has also organised information sessions for the prison staff, which focussed on identifying radicalised prisoners, the procedures concerning the selection of

radicalised prisoners and tackling the issue (Federal Public Service Justice, 2015). The prison staff of the special sections also receives specific training. They are being trained to deal with conflicts and they will learn how to draw up rehabilitation plans and observation reports for the regional direction and security services (Federal Public Service Justice, 2015).

#### Separated Units

Prisoners who may radicalise other prisoners and try to convert them to Islam will be separated from the general prison population. These prisoners will not be separated in high security cells but in special prison sections. The high security cells are reserved for prisoners who have been planning to carry out a terrorist attack. The prisoners will be separated in special prison sections that are created in the cities of Ittre and Bruges. In Ittre, 26 prisoners can be held and Bruges has place for 16 prisoners (AFP, 2015). Ittre prison, southwest of Brussels, holds some of the most dangerous murderers and crime figures. The special prison section is home to male prisoners who have been identified by Belgian officials as the most radical and dangerous Islamist prisoners. In June of 2018, the special prison section of Ittre prison held 13 prisoners. Even though the prisoners that are being held in these prison section are allowed to socialise with the other prisoners in the section, this is only permitted during certain hours and under close supervision (Mekhennet & Warrick, 2018). If it is needed, the separated prisoners will receive special follow-up from the prison staff. If the risk of radicalisation has reduced significantly, the prisoners will be transferred back to the regular prisons (Federal Public Service Justice, 2015).

#### 4.4 Weaknesses and Vulnerabilities Prison Counter-Radicalisation Strategies

The prison counter-radicalisation strategies that are developed and implemented by the United Kingdom and Belgium have been highly criticised by different individuals and groups. Especially Muslim prisoners, the Muslim Council of Britain and Muslim communities have criticised the strategies. The most important points of criticism from these different individuals and groups on the prison counter-radicalisation strategies are discussed.

#### Prevent Strategy

The Prevent strategy of the United Kingdom has been criticised by some members of parliament and the Muslim Council of Britain. They argue that the Prevent strategy is counterproductive and that it can make Muslim prisoners feel isolated and more open to radicalisation. Additionally, the Prevent strategy can create a sense of distrust across Muslim communities. The Muslim Council of Britain argues that the strategy is intrusive and diligent, every small thing that prisoners do or say being reported as concerning behaviour (BBC, 2017). The Muslim community in the United

Kingdom is concerned that the Prevent strategy is an attempt to create a network of spies. The training courses that the Prevent strategy offers to prison staff are also being criticised. The online courses, that ask prisoners to tick some boxes, are said to be inadequate and not taken seriously. Especially the Muslim Council of Britain points out that the training of thousands of prison staff members is counterproductive. The thousands of staff members who are looking for signs of what they perceive to be radical behaviour will result in many false flags and even discrimination, targeting Muslim prisoners in an unfair way (Jeory, 2016). According to David Anderson, former Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, only 25% of individuals who have been referred to the Prevent strategy are from 'white', far-right groups and 75% are from Muslim communities. Overall, a Muslim is 50 times more likely to be referred to the Prevent strategy than a non-Muslim. Due to this statement, Muslims in the United Kingdom feel that the Prevent strategy is discriminatory towards their communities (Qureshi, 2017).

#### Training of Prison Staff

Even though the British and Belgian prison staff receives special training to identify radicalised prisoners, most of the staff members lack Islamic knowledge. According to several staff members, they did not receive adequate training of Islam. Even with the lack of Islamic knowledge, the prison staff has to evaluate prisoners based on discussions that they have with them. Since these discussions often involve Islam, the staff members are not able to fully understand what the discussion is about. In the end, this makes them unable to properly evaluate prisoners (Hooper, UK prison staff trained to identify extremists 'lacked Islamic knowledge', 2017). The biggest problem in Belgian prisons is that the training that the prison staff receives is in the Dutch language. This creates a complex language situation as in some prisons in Belgium, Dutch is spoken and in other prisons, French is spoken. If the training of the prison staff is in Dutch, the staff might not be able to help or answer the needs of the French speaking prisoners and vice versa. When the staff needs to help the French speaking prisoners, the situation may take twice as much time (European Commission, 2017).

#### Prison Chaplains and Imams

Even though the tasks of prison chaplains include helping radicalised prisoners and motivating them to disengage from further reoffending, Muslim chaplains in British prisons have encouraged Muslim radicalised prisoners to murder any non-believers. The prison chaplains have also distributed extremist pamphlets and CDs in more than a dozen of British prisons. A report, commissioned by Justice Secretary Michael Gove, concluded that the majority of Muslim prison chaplains were under-equipped to execute their tasks concerning tackling radicalisation. They

either lacked the capability to do so or they did not have the will (Stubbs, 2016). Nevertheless, some of the Muslim chaplains were said to hold extremist beliefs that are contrary to British values and human rights (Hooper, 2016). As to Muslim imams, they have given out Islamic extremists texts from books that are banned in British prisons. The banned books call for jihad and promote hate and violence towards non-believers. The texts were found in multiple prisons during an inspection. The imams said that they did not have time to read the texts before giving them to the prisoners (Bayliss, 2016). As to Muslim imams in prison, a number of manuals that these imams use in Belgian prisons contain anti-Semitic and homophobic passages and violent calls to jihad (Galindo, 2018).

#### Separated Units

Both the United Kingdom and Belgium have created separated units for radicalised prisoners. The three separation centres in the United Kingdom can only hold up to 28 of the most radical prisoners. This capacity of 28 prisoners is far short of the latest figure of 186 prisoners in the system who have been convicted of radical or terrorist offences (Travis, 2017). Steve Gillan, member of the Prison Officers Association (POA), stated that due to the creation of separated units, in this case, the United Kingdom and Belgium could create their own version of Guantánamo Bay. The possible creation of this Guantánamo Bay, the United States military prison on a naval base in Cuba, could give radicalised prisoners the feeling that they are more important and better than the others. Other prisoners can start to show bad behaviour to also gain a place in the special unit. This already happened in Northern Ireland where some loyalist prisoners and some republican prisoners were separated. This gave the prisoners a political status and made the situation even worse. Implementing counter-radicalisation programmes became impossible and prison officers had trouble carrying out their tasks (Parveen, 2017). Moreover, human rights lawyers stress the psychological and physical consequences of separating prisoners in special units. They call it ill-treatment of prisoners and say that it can make prisoners more radicalised, as they are still allowed to communicate with the other separated prisoners. The International Observatory of Prisons (OIP) in Belgium concluded that prisoners are treated inhumanely, spending around 23 hours a day in their cell which causes them to speak to walls and feel troubled (Stahl, 2016). Even though separating radicalised prisoners seems an effective way to prevent the further spread of radicalisation, it does not confront the prisoners who already hold radical views (Kobayter).



#### 4.5 European Union and Prison Radicalisation

In the year 2018, Commissioner Věra Jourová, in charge of Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, held a speech about radicalisation in prisons. Commissioner Jourová said that prison radicalisation is a serious issue for the internal security of the European Union. Radicalised individuals do not only kill Europeans, they also attack European values. The majority of these individuals are European citizens, born and raised in EU member states, who became radicalised and committed terrorist acts against fellow citizens. To this day, even more EU countries are confronted with radicalised prisoners, prisoners at risk of radicalisation and the problem of prison radicalisation. At the end of her speech, Commissioner Jourová stresses that this problem cannot be tackled by the European Union alone. The response also needs to come from both local and national levels. The prison staff, probation officers and other responsible authorities need to put in effort to tackle radicalisation in prisons. (Jourová, 2018). Even though prison radicalisation and prison management are mainly the responsibility of the member states, the European Union is trying to fight and prevent radicalisation in prisons. (Jourová, 2018).

##### Radicalisation Awareness Network

The biggest way that the European Commission has been working on the issue of radicalisation in prisons is through the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). The European Commission has been doing this for several years and actually set up the network in 2011. The Radicalisation Awareness Network connects experts and practitioners from around Europe who are involved in preventing radicalisation and violent extremism (European Commission, 2016). These practitioners include prison authorities who work daily with radicalised individuals and individuals who are vulnerable to radicalisation. The aim of the network is to share knowledge, ideas and experiences to tackle radicalisation and violent extremism (European Commission). The Radicalisation Awareness Network plays an important role in the attempt of the European Union to support the member states with the necessary expertise and information to tackle radicalisation in prisons (Martins & Ziegler, 2017). The European Union mobilises €25 million up to and including the year 2022 to help the Radicalisation Awareness Network to achieve its mission (Jourová, 2018).

To tackle radicalisation more widely, the European Union can help practitioners and create platforms for exchange. This is why the EU supports the Radicalisation Awareness Network Centre of Excellence (Jourová, 2018). In October of 2015, the European Commission set up the Radicalisation Awareness Network Centre of Excellence. The RAN Centre of Excellence supports the work of the Radicalisation Awareness Network that connects over 2,400 front-line

practitioners including prison and probation officers. The aim of the platform is to share experiences, knowledge, identify the best practices and develop new initiatives to tackle radicalisation. The RAN Centre of Excellence consists of different working groups, where aspects of radicalisation and preventative approaches are discussed and tested. One of these working groups is the Prison and Probation Working Group (RAN P&P) (European Commission, 2016).

The Prison and Probation Working Group (RAN P&P) brings together practitioners from the prison and probation sector, such as prison staff, psychiatrists, chaplains and probation staff. Its aim is to support the practitioners who are involved in preventing radicalisation. The group will share ideas, contacts, practices and insights so that they can formulate recommendations for policy making (European Commission). Eurojust, an agency of the European Union, ensures that the sharing of information between prosecutors will be easier (European Commission, 2016).

#### Funding Radicalisation Projects

Another way of the European Union to tackle radicalisation more widely is redirecting some of their funding under the Justice programme to both tackle and prevent radicalisation in prisons. Under this Justice programme, the EU is funding 19 projects concerning radicalisation. Until the year 2020, the European Union has €314 million for anti-radicalisation projects across the European Union. To keep radicalisation from spreading in prisons, the European Union is providing financial support to (1) development risk assessment methodologies to identify radicalised prisoners, (2) promote alternatives concerning detention, (3) explore the role of probation and (4) support the training of prosecutors and the prison and probation staff (Jourová, 2018). One of the projects that is funded by the European Union is The European Union-Council of Europe HELP Radicalisation Prevention Project. The project is implemented by the Council of Europe and its aim is to improve the criminal justice response in the European Union to prevent radicalisation in prisons. This is done by increasing the capacities and by mutual trust of justice practitioners (prison and probation staff) who deal with preventing radicalisation through specific training and cooperating with other prisons (Council of Europe, 2018).

#### Conferences

In 2015, after the Charlie Hebdo attacks, Commissioner Jourová stressed the need to discuss the issue of radicalisation in prisons at European level. Especially due to the fact that one of the Charlie Hebdo attackers was radicalised in a French prison. This event is the reason that the European Commission organised the first conference on radicalisation in prisons on 19 October 2015 (Jourová, 2018). This conference mainly focussed on the response of criminal justice to

radicalisation. The conference included Justice Ministers, Member of the European Parliament, government officials, the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Eurojust and frontline practitioners (prosecutors, prison directors). The discussion on how to deal with radicalisation and finding the right responses of criminal justice to the issue was led by Commissioner Jourová (European Commission, 2015). This conference provided advice to the member states (Council of the European Union, 2015).

As a follow-up to this conference, on 27 February 2018, the European Commission hosted another conference on radicalisation in prisons. This conference included prison and probation experts, judges and prosecutors, international organisation, relevant NGOs and academics. Commissioner Jourová held a speech on radicalisation in prisons and how to fight this growing issue. This conference provided advice to European Union and prison authorities (Jourová, 2018)

#### High-Level Expert Group

Since radicalisation in prisons is one of the priority topics of the European Commission, the institution set up the High-Level Expert Group on Radicalisation in July of 2017. The tasks of the expert group are to give advice on (1) ways to improve the cooperation among stakeholders and in particular member states, (2) the further development of policies concerning the prevention of radicalisation and (3) mechanism for future structured cooperation at EU level (High-Level Commission Expert Group on Radicalisation, 2018). Nevertheless, the group has already made recommendations, such as to map existing practices to tackle radicalisation in prisons, to increase study visits and to discuss peer reviews of existing programmes that tackle radicalisation (Jourová, 2018).

## 5. Case Studies

Both the United Kingdom and Belgium have developed programmes that prevent and tackle radicalisation. Both Channel and CoPPRa have a solid basis to address the different stages and phases of the radicalisation process and to ensure that prison staff is able to spot and respond to radicalisation. Prison staff is an important group since they face prisoners vulnerable to radicalisation and radicalised prisoners. How Channel and CoPPRa address the different stages and phases of the radicalisation process, as explained in Chapter 4.1, is described below.

### 5.1 Channel, United Kingdom

Channel is a programme that was first piloted in 2007 and has been used in the United Kingdom since 2012. The aim of Channel is to provide support for people who are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism or radicalisation leading to terrorism. Since Channel is appropriate for any individual who is vulnerable to being drawn into any form of terrorism or radicalisation, it can also be used for prisoners. The programme identifies individuals at risk, explains why they may be vulnerable, provides indicators of vulnerable individuals, assesses the risk (nature and extent) and develops the most appropriate plan to support the vulnerable individuals (HM Government, 2015). Prisons and prison staff play an important role because the Channel programme also runs in prisons across the United Kingdom. Moreover, the prison staff regularly faces radicalised prisoners and prisoners who are vulnerable to becoming radicalised which leads to terrorism.

The pre-radicalisation stage or the sensitivity phase describes the life situation of individuals before they enter the process of radicalisation and get involved with Islam. This stage also describes the factors that make individuals open to radicalisation, such as experiencing discrimination, feeling insignificant, the environment, identity problems, isolation and perceived injustice, traumas and deaths of relatives (NYPD Intelligence Division, 2007). Even though most of these factors are unforeseen circumstances, Channel tries to prevent prisoners from entering the radicalisation process by protecting them from radical and extremist views and from other forms of significant harm, such as physical or emotional abuse, discrimination and injustice. The prison staff will identify the things that have influenced the prisoners (in their family, in the society). The staff will provide an appropriate response to show the prisoners that even though they have experienced harm, radicalisation is not a way out (Oldham Council, 2017). If there are any concerns about a prisoner who is vulnerable to becoming radicalised, a referral can be made to local authorities or the local police. These local authorities will meet and discuss the nature and

the extent of the vulnerability of the prisoner. The prisoner will be offered support that is tailored to his or her needs, such as interventions to reduce his or her vulnerabilities (Home Office, 2017).

The self-identification stage involves an individual identifying with a particular extremist cause and beginning to explore Islam. Additionally, the individual will accept a radicalised ideology (NYPD Intelligence Division, 2007). The prison staff will provide support to prisoners before their vulnerabilities are exploited by recruiters who want them to join their group and follow the same path (HM Government, 2015). Channel also provides the prison staff explanations of why prisoners may be vulnerable to being drawn into radicalisation and describes indicators so that the staff is able to recognise vulnerable prisoners (Home Office, 2012). If the prison staff has identified vulnerable prisoners, the information of the prisoners will be shared between the prison and local authorities to protect the prisoners from getting involved with a radical ideology (Oldham Council, 2017).

The indoctrination stage or the group membership phase involves an individual who makes his or her beliefs more intense and adopts the Islamic ideology (Aly & Striegher). In this stage, the individual will show how worthy he or she is to fight for Islam and the role of the group becomes extremely important (NYPD Intelligence Division, 2007). The prison staff is aware of the indicators of radicalised prisoners (personality, appearance, behaviour). The prison staff will provide all the support that is needed in order to prevent the prisoners becoming further involved in the radicalisation process (HM Government, 2015). If the prison staff notices that prisoners are adopting a specific ideology and show signs of radicalisation, they will provide each prisoner an individual response (Oldham Council, 2017). This response can be counselling, interventions, etc.

In the jihadisation stage or the action phase, the final stage, the individual uses violence against other groups, engages in terrorist activities and even participates in Jihad (Federal Bureau of Investigation Counterterrorism Division, 2006). Group bonding and loyalty are being intensified (Precht, 2007). Interventions will be held to prevent the prisoners from using violence and committing terrorist acts (Oldham Council, 2017). The Channel programme does not have any measures to de-radicalise radicalised prisoners.

### 5.2 CoPPRa, Belgium

CoPPRa (Community Policing and the Prevention of Radicalisation) is a training programme that was introduced in 2010 and is funded by the European Union with co-funding from the Belgian Federal Police. Even though CoPPRa was developed for frontline police officers, prison staff also makes use of it. The project has created a practical manual tool to support prison staff concerning

radicalisation. This manual includes visuals and the information. The aim of CoPPRa is to improve the capacity of frontline police officers and prison staff to prevent all forms of radicalisation. The officers and staff play an important role in preventing and tackling radicalisation because they work in the particular field and understand the different communities (Butt & Tuck).

The pre-radicalisation stage or the sensitivity phase describes the life situation of individuals before they enter the process of radicalisation and get involved with Islam. This stage also describes the factors that make individuals open to radicalisation, such as experiencing discrimination, feeling insignificant, the environment, identity problems, isolation and perceived injustice, traumas and deaths of relatives (NYPD Intelligence Division, 2007). In fact, most of these factors are unforeseen circumstances. Besides this, the prison staff knows how to engage with prisoners who have experienced traumas or certain life events. The staff has also been trained to build trustworthy relations with the prisoners in order to show them trust and respect. By doing this, the prison staff tries to show the prisoners that becoming radicalised is not necessary and is not the right way.

The self-identification stage involves an individual identifying with a particular extremist cause and beginning to explore Islam. Additionally, the individual will accept a radicalised ideology (NYPD Intelligence Division, 2007). The prison staff is able to respond to this situation by providing counselling to understand the prisoner and by trying to disengage him or her from further exploring. The manual of CoPPRa supports prison staff to detect the earliest signs of radicalisation (Butt & Tuck).

The indoctrination stage or the group membership phase involves an individual who makes his or her beliefs more intense and adopts the Islamic ideology (Aly & Striegher). In this stage, the individual will show how worthy he or she is to fight for Islam and the role of the group becomes extremely important (NYPD Intelligence Division, 2007). The pocket guide of CoPPRa provides the prison staff with information on the full range of extremists groups and movements. With the help of CoPPRa, the prison staff is aware of the radicalisation process and the indicators of radicalised prisoners (personality, appearance, behaviour). If the prison staff notices that a prisoner is adopting another ideology and shows signs of the radicalisation process, such as intensifying his or her beliefs and showing willingness to fight for a specific faith, the prison staff is able to provide an appropriate response to the situation. The prison staff will also identify the best way to stop the spread of radicalisation, for example by separating the radicalised prisoners from the general prison population to prevent them from radicalising others (Butt & Tuck).

In the jihadisation stage or the action phase, the final stage, the individual uses violence against other groups, engages in terrorist activities and even participates in Jihad (Federal Bureau of Investigation Counterterrorism Division, 2006). Group bonding and loyalty are being intensified (Precht, 2007). The prison staff will work together with local authorities and police forces as a response to tackle the dangerous radical prisoners and to try to prevent any terrorist activities. Like Channel, CoPPRa does not have any measures to de-radicalise radicalised prisoners (Butt & Tuck).

### 5.3 Comparison

When comparing Channel and CoPPRa, Channel specifically focusses on individuals who are vulnerable to radicalisation and terrorism and CoPPRa focusses on prison radicalisation. With Channel, a referral can be made to the local authorities and police of a vulnerable prisoner. Prison and these authorities will share the information of the prisoner to protect him or her from getting involved with a radical ideology. Both Channel and CoPPRa provide an individual response to radicalised prisoners and offer support, such as interventions and counselling. Channel also supports prisoners to prevent recruiters exploiting their vulnerabilities. Moreover, the prison staff who use Channel and CoPPRa try to prevent prisoners from entering the radicalisation process. Channel does this by protecting prisoners from any harm and radical views and CoPPRa by building relations with the prisoners. Both programmes provide indicators so that the prison staff is able to spot the earliest signs of radicalisation. Unlike Channel, CoPPRa provides the prison staff with all the information concerning radicalisation. Besides preventing and tackling radicalisation, CoPPRa also prevents the spread of radicalisation, for example by separating radicalised prisoners from other inmates. Whereas Channel will hold interventions to prevent radicalised prisoners from using violence and committing terrorist acts, CoPPRa will work together with local authorities and police forces.

## 6. Analysis

This chapter analyses the results that are presented in Chapter 4 in order to draw an appropriate conclusion concerning the central research question and the sub-questions.

Analysing government documents, it can be said that the United Kingdom provides a clear definition of radicalisation. When researching government documents of Belgium, a definition of radicalisation is hard to find. This is remarkable since radicalisation is also a serious issue in Belgium and it was expected that a clear definition could be found immediately. However, Belgium has developed an action plan in which a definition of the term is present. Speaking of Islamic radicalisation, the United Kingdom provides no definition and rather points at Islamic extremism. On the other hand, the Flemish government provides an explanatory definition of the term. With Islamic radicalisation posing a serious threat to the United Kingdom, it is remarkable that the country does not have a definition to explain the term. When looking at the processes of radicalisation and recruitment, no universally accepted models exist. There are many theories that explain the processes of radicalisation and recruitment. When examining the majority of these theories, patterns are found. Even though every radical individual is different, the processes of radicalisation and recruitment do not change.

Research has shown that prison radicalisation is almost never caused by one single factor but rather when there is a combination of factors. Because every individual case is different, the factors that contribute to the radicalisation process differ. The causes of prison radicalisation vary depending on individual, collective and other factors. Because there is no single profile that applies to radicalised prisoners, they are hard to identify. Changes concerning personality, appearance or behaviour can be spotted but since these changes do not necessarily happen to all prisoners who get radicalised, it remains hard to identify them.

When it comes to identifying the prison counter-radicalisation strategies of the United Kingdom and Belgium, the countries do have a few similar measures, such as training the prison staff and separating prisoners. Even though the United Kingdom will fight any kind of radicalisation, the country mainly focusses on confronting and fighting the Islamic ideology. Whereas the United Kingdom has developed clear strategies with specific measures, Belgium has not yet announced an official strategy. It is very unusual that even after several Islamist terrorist attacks in the past few years, Belgium has still not announced a strategy to fight the threat. In contrast to the United Kingdom, Belgium has used international insights concerning prison radicalisation and has



developed its own action plans. These plans include measures that are appropriate to the situation of the country and that focus on prevention, protection and repression.

While some of the measures of the United Kingdom and Belgium have just been implemented, criticism has already been given different individuals and groups. The biggest issue that is identified is that the Muslim community feels discriminated and spied on. This is not a surprising statement since prison officers who are looking for radicalised individuals mainly look at Muslim prisoners first. A real concern is the short training that the prison staff received. Even though they received special training concerning different aspects of radicalisation, most of the staff members lack Islamic knowledge. Moreover, prison chaplains and imams have encouraged radical ideas and have given out extremist literature. It is disturbing that this has occurred even though both the United Kingdom and Belgium have strengthened the recruitment process of these representatives.

Even though radicalisation is a serious threat to the internal security of the European Union, the EU considers that prison radicalisation and prison management are mainly the responsibility of the member states. Nevertheless, the EU does support member states with expertise and information to tackle prison radicalisation. Most importantly, the European Union is holding conferences, in which member states are included, that highlight the issue of prison radicalisation and provide advice to the relevant stakeholders. What stands out is that even though more EU countries are confronted with the issue of prison radicalisation, the European Union has no separate actions that are fitted for specific member states. This would be beneficial as in some countries, prison radicalisation is posing a bigger threat.

## 7. Conclusion

This research examined the prison counter-radicalisation strategies of the United Kingdom and Belgium. The following research question was used: *How is prison radicalisation being countered by the United Kingdom and Belgium?* Even though there is no silver bullet to solve the problem of prison radicalisation, the United Kingdom and Belgium have developed their own strategies and action plans that are adapted to the situation of their country and the extent of the issue. These strategies and action plans contain measures to counter, address and prevent prison radicalisation. The UK and Belgium do have similar measures, such as training the prison staff, a strengthened role of Muslim representatives and separating radicalised prisoners. The two countries also have their own unique measures, such as the risk assessment tools of the United Kingdom and the information database of Belgium. Whereas the United Kingdom mainly focusses on confronting, preventing and fighting radicalisation, Belgium focusses on preventing, protecting and repressing.

The literature review (see 2. Literature Review) showed that there are still debates on how to best define radicalisation and the concepts that are linked to the term. The case studies (see 5. Case Studies) showed that a programme that has been developed by the United Kingdom and one that has been developed by Belgium, to tackle prison radicalisation, have a solid basis to address and counter the process of radicalisation.

How the United Kingdom and Belgium define radicalisation showed that the United Kingdom describes radicalisation as a process where an individual will support terrorism and extremist ideologies of a terrorist group. In contrast to the UK, Belgium states no clear definition of radicalisation. The action plan of the country defines radicalisation as a process in which a person or a group experience influences that will guide them towards terrorism. The radicalisation process is mostly described as a process that starts with an individual who will identify with an extremist cause, join a radical group, adopt the Islamic ideology and engage in terrorist activities or participate in Jihad. The process of recruitment is described as a process in which a target population is equally engaged, approached by a recruiter and a trusted individual, after which the target population difficult to access.

When it comes to the perceived causes of prison radicalisation, it can be concluded that prison radicalisation is caused by individual, collective and other factors. While none of these factors are likely to cause prison radicalisation on their own, a combination of factors is considered to cause prison radicalisation. These factors differ per individual and do not all have to contribute to the

radicalisation process. There is no single profile of radicalised prisoners, but they are mostly men in their 20s or early 30s. The indicators to identify radicalised prisoners are often changes in personality, appearance or behaviour. These changes do not necessarily happen to all prisoners who become radicalised and can be hard to spot.

As far as the prison counter-radicalisation strategies of the United Kingdom and Belgium, the UK has set up the Prevent strategy to protect vulnerable individuals from becoming radicalised. The measures of the strategy include risk assessment tools to identify prisoners who are vulnerable to radicalisation and special training courses for frontline officers. The UK has also developed a wider strategy to tackle radicalisation in prison. The measures of the wider strategy include a strengthened role and recruitment process of prison chaplains, banning extremist literature, removing certain prisoners from Friday prayers, the creation of a specialist task force and moving radicalised prisoners to special units. Belgium has developed the Action Plan against Radicalism which includes improved gathering, analysing and sharing of information. Furthermore, Belgium has developed the Action Plan against radicalisation in prisons which includes a strengthened role of Muslim imams and counsellors, training of prison staff and moving radicalised prisoners to special prison sections.

The prison counter-radicalisation strategies of the United Kingdom and Belgium have received criticism from different individuals and groups. This criticism consists of the Prevent strategy being counterproductive and discriminatory towards Muslim communities. In addition, the trained prison staff lacks Islamic knowledge due to inadequate training. Further, some Muslim chaplains and imams have given out extremists literature and hold extremist beliefs. Moreover, the separated units for radicalised prisoners could create a version of Guantánamo Bay and is ill-treatment of prisoners that can make them more radicalised.

Examining the role of the European Union in tackling prison radicalisation, the European Commission has set up the Radicalisation Awareness Network to support member states in tackling the issue. Additionally, the EU is funding several projects concerning radicalisation in prison and is providing financial support to develop risk assessment tools, promote alternatives to detention, explore the role of probation and support training of prison and probation staff. The EC has held several conferences to discuss prison radicalisation and the right response to fight it. Moreover, the Commission has set up the High-Level Expert Group on Radicalisation which gives advice on ways to improve cooperation among stakeholders and member states, further development of policies to prevent radicalisation and mechanisms for structured cooperation at EU level.

## 8. Recommendations

Based on the findings from this dissertation, a number of recommendations can be made. These recommendations specifically focus on preventing, addressing and countering prison radicalisation.

Muslim communities in the United Kingdom should be assured by the government that the Prevent strategy was not set up as an attempt to spy on Muslim communities but to safeguard vulnerable individuals who are at risk of becoming radicalised. Islamic organisations like the Muslim Association of Britain and the Muslim Council of Britain, that also criticised the strategy, should be involved in the programme of the Prevent strategy. Besides Islamic organisations, Muslim leaders should also be involved to speak to their followers about the advantages and the aim of the Prevent strategy.

More research should be conducted to identify why some prisoners do radicalise and others do not. The research should focus on the factors that shield them against becoming radicalised and stop them from getting involved with Islam. Several studies have identified the perceived causes of prison radicalisation, such as personal traumas, the feeling of deprivation and overcrowding. However, these studies do not have an explanation of why, when under the same circumstances, some prisoners become radicalised while others do not.

To successfully implement any strategies to tackle prison radicalisation, overcrowding and understaffing, two major causes of prison radicalisation, need to be addressed first. Overcrowded and understaffed prisons have a poor system and lack security which makes the detection of radicalisation, radicalised prisoners and recruiters unmanageable. The conditions in British and Belgian prisons need improvement. Well-organised prisons with a safe and humane environment are a requirement to prevent radicalisation and to respond if necessary. Therefore, both the British and Belgian government should take notice and address the situation to avoid further harm. It is encouraged that both governments draft accurate prison reform plans.

Both British and Belgian prison officials should provide informative and updated training to the prison staff on a continual basis. The training should focus on subjects of Islam. Training is a key element of well-managed prisons and of great importance to identify and tackle prison radicalisation. Besides training, the prison staff should receive continuing education on security, communication with prisoners, gathering of information, prison rules and regulations, treatment of prisoners and responses to certain events. Prison officials are encouraged to find a way so that

the prison staff can train with other law enforcement agencies. By doing this, the staff and agencies are able to share knowledge, practices and experiences.

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## 10. Appendices

### A. Student Ethics Form

#### Student Ethics Form

##### European Studies Student Ethics Form

**Your name:** Lisa Vastenhout

**Supervisor:** Ms. Weijerman

##### Instructions/checklist

Before completing this form you should read the APA Ethics Code (<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>). If you are planning research with human subjects you should also look at the sample consent form available in the Final Project and Dissertation Guide.

- a. ☒ Read section 3 that your supervisor will have to sign. Make sure that you cover all these issues in section 1.
- b. ☒ Complete sections 1 and, if you are using human subjects, section 2, of this form, and sign it.
- c. ☒ Ask your project supervisor to read these sections (and the draft consent form if you have one) and sign the form.
- d. ☒ Append this signed form as an appendix to your dissertation.

##### Section 1. Project Outline (to be completed by student)

##### (i) Title of Project:

Prison counter-radicalisation strategies: Comparative analysis of the United Kingdom and Belgium.

##### (ii) Aims of project:

This dissertation will research how prison radicalisation is being countered by the United Kingdom and Belgium. Prisons are becoming more involved in radicalisation which leads to terrorism. The issue and the number of extremist offenders is growing. Both British and Belgian prisons have become breeding grounds for radicalisation. The two countries have come up with several strategies and measures in trying to counter prison radicalisation.

- (iii) Will you involve other people in your project – e.g. via formal or informal interviews, group discussions, questionnaires, internet surveys etc. (Note: if you are using data that has already been collected by another researcher – e.g. recordings or transcripts of conversations given to you by your supervisor, you should answer 'NO' to this question.)

YES / NO

If no: you should now sign the statement below and return the form to your supervisor. You have completed this form.

This project is not designed to include research with human subjects. I understand that I do not have ethical clearance to interview people (formally or informally) about the topic of my research, to carry out internet research (e.g. on chat rooms or discussion boards) or in any other way to use people as subjects in my research.

Student's signature  - date 31/12/2018

If yes: you should complete the rest of this form.

**Section 2 Complete this section only if you answered YES to question (iii) above.**

(i) What will the participants have to do? (v. brief outline of procedure):

(ii) What sort of people will the participants be and how will they be recruited?


(iii) What sort stimuli or materials will your participants be exposed to, tick the appropriate boxes and then state what they are in the space below?

Questionnaires[ ]; Pictures[ ]; Sounds [ ]; Words[ ]; Other[ ].

(iv) **Consent:** Informed consent must be obtained for all participants before they take part in your project. Either verbally or by means of an informed consent form you should state what participants will be doing, drawing attention to anything they could conceivably object to subsequently. You should also state how they can withdraw from the study at any time and the measures you are taking to ensure the confidentiality of data. A standard informed consent form is available in the Dissertation Manual.

(vi) **What procedures will you follow in order to guarantee the confidentiality of participants' data?** Personal data (name, addresses etc.) should not be stored in such a way that they can be associated with the participant's data.

Student's signature: ..... date: .....

Supervisor's signature (if satisfied with the proposed procedures):  date: 07/01/2019  
(permission of Ms. Weijerman)