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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Following the events of '9/11', countering terrorism inspired by radical Islamic ideologies has become a top priority for the European Union. After the terrorist attacks that struck Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005, in which the involved perpetrators were born and raised in Europe, specific attention was directed to understanding the 'home-grown' aspect of terrorism and radicalization. Understanding why relatively well-integrated Muslims in Europe are willing to engage in terrorist violence against the countries in which they are often born and raised, is now widely considered to be of crucial value in any attempt to tackle the phenomenon.

Radicalization of minorities can have profound consequences for European societies. Not only can it forebode terrorist activity, it can lead to polarization and inter-group conflicts. For instance, radicalization of Muslims in the Netherlands not only led to the violent assassination of filmmaker Theo van Gogh and a number of violent incidents, but also resulted in heated debates about the position of Muslims in Dutch society. As the consequences of radicalization for society can be severe, the pertinent question is: how and to what extent the EU has taken measures to counter radicalization?

Evidently, the protection of potential targets and minimizing the impact of possible attacks are not sufficient in combating terrorism. There is wide agreement that reducing the threat of terrorism lies primarily in preventing new recruitment and disrupting existing terrorist networks. In-depth research of why people feel attracted to radical attitudes and ideologies, and how they are subsequently recruited to engage in a violent struggle are of great importance for dealing with the terrorist threat. Hence, in order to develop counterradicalization measures it is important to take note of the underlying mechanisms or causes that may lead to radicalization.

Bearing in mind the distinction between radicalization and terrorism, the present paper sets out to map the measures taken to prevent radicalization and recruitment at the EU level. Relevant policy papers are analyzed to gain a better understanding of the EU strategies to tackle this phenomenon. Building on the findings of objective five (Workpackage 4, 'Causal Factors of Radicalisation') – a theory-based treatise identifying the most prominent causal factors of radicalization processes – this report depicts the

relation between causes and catalysts or radicalization and EU policies.<sup>1</sup> Aiming to provide further insight into how the contributing factors of radicalization are addressed by EU counterradicalization and recruitment strategy, a model was developed to illustrate the degree of overlap. In other words, the model highlights those elements that have been incorporated into EU policies. Finally, an assessment of specific measures to counter radicalization in the UK and the Netherlands are used as examples of how EU Member States are dealing with issue at the national and local levels.

The examples of the UK and Amsterdam should not be taken as comprehensive analysis of Member States' policies. Rather, the two case studies are used only insofar as they illustrate which counterradicalization measures have been pursued by countries that face significant challenges with radicalization and have been affected by homegrown terrorist violence. Additionally, the UK and Amsterdam were selected to further the continuance between the case studies in objective five and the present paper. Since the individuals profiled in the previous objective originated either from the UK or the Netherlands.

## **2. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK**

The present paper assesses counterradicalization measures taken by the European Union and two Member States, with the aim to determine the extent to which these measures are designed to curb radicalization by dealing with the causal factors. EU policy papers in combination with policy documents from the UK and Amsterdam constitute the basis for this work.

While radicalization and terrorism are two distinct constructs, their intermingled nature necessitates focusing on counterterrorism when looking at counterradicalization. As objective five illustrates, the process of radicalization is a complex interaction of factors that does not necessarily lead to violence. Since the process can evolve in many different directions, including non-violent ones, radicals can engage in non-violent behavior without terrorist intent yet still be considered radical (Workpackage 4, objective five). As such, although not every radical becomes a terrorist, every terrorist has gone through a radicalization process. This indicates that terrorism is the worst possible outcome of the radicalization process. Examining the EU counterterrorism policy provides additional insight into the Union's strategy to combat radicalization.

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<sup>1</sup> For an in-depth analysis of the complex interaction between the identified three levels of radicalization, please see objective 5 of Workpackage 4.

Based on the findings of objective five (Workpackage 4), we illustrate how the set of radicalization characteristics fares in comparison with the overall counter-radicalization strategy set out by the European Commission. The classification model of the causal factors of radicalization (see figure 1) will provide a launch pad to effectively assess and evaluate the most prominent measures in the EU strategy. In order to do so, we first provide an overview of the European counterradicalization and relevant counterterrorism policies.

1) The European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy, published in 2005, introduces the four main strands of EU action; prevent, protect, pursue and respond. This document outlines the most prioritized counterterrorism measures of the EU and provides the basis for all other policy documents concerning counterterrorism and radicalization. In line with these strands, in 2005 the EU came forth with 2) the European Union Strategy for Combating Radicalization and Recruitment to Terrorism. This document outlined policy measures designed specifically to counter the threat of radicalization and recruitment. In 2007, the EU introduced its 3) Strategy for Combating Radicalization and Recruitment Implementation Report, outlining how the designed interventions should be implemented by the independent member states. The strategies are further supplemented by 4) the EU Counter-Terrorism Action Plan from 2007, an annual update to account for the progress and status of the implementation of specified measures. From the first two documents in which the overall strategies are outlined – the EU counterterrorism strategy and the counterradicalization and recruitment strategy - we aim to distinguish the most prominent measures the EU has taken to tackle radicalization and recruitment. The other documents are used only as a reference point.

### **3. CAUSAL FACTORS OF RADICALIZATION**

Identifying the causes of radicalization is essential in order to develop efficient measures to tackle the reasons often attributed to it. Therefore, in order to assess EU practices in countering radicalization, we take a closer look at the causal factors that can lead to radicalization and how they interact. Using the findings of objective five, 'Causal Factors of Radicalization' (see Workpackage 4,

obj. 5) as a basis, this paper builds on the theoretical discussion and brings into focus the ways in which the elements discussed are incorporated into EU policies. Although the previous objective does not provide concrete policy advice, the discussion and elaboration on the causal factors of radicalization is taken as a starting point for further analysis.

These findings are based on a few essential assumptions about radicalization. First and foremost, the main premise is that radicals are made, not born. They are not insane psychopaths suffering from mental illnesses (Post, 1998; Reich, 1998; Silke, 1998; Crenshaw, 2000). Additionally, radicalization is prominently an individual process that is the result of a complex interaction between causal factors; hence, no single explanation of radicalization exists.

The authors distinguish causal factors at three measurement levels; external, social and individual. Such categorization is based on the position of the individual in relation to the causes. In turn, factors at these levels can be subdivided into different dimensions. More specific, external factors like the political, economic and cultural climate at the country or global level shape and constrain people's environment but are unlikely to have a direct effect on the individual's behavior. For example, poverty does not have a direct radicalizing effect on individuals, as that would imply that every poor person is bound to radicalize. Other factors at the social and individual level therefore interfere with the relationship between external factors and radicalization. Hence, social factors describe relations between people in the sense that they put the individual in relation to relevant reference groups.

Reference groups can consist of people with whom the individual is directly related, but can also include people beyond the boundaries of the individual's social group. For example, social identification mechanisms or network dynamics can affect how the individual responds to his or her external environment. Lastly, individual factors describe the individual and can include psychological characteristics or personal experiences. No uniform profile exists that fits every terrorist; people simply differ in the extent to which they are aggression-prone or susceptible to social pressure, for example. Also, major life occurrences like traumatizing events or abusive childhoods can be consequential for personal decision-making later in life.

Additionally, the authors distinguish *causes* - factors that lay the foundation for radicalization and gradually affect the individual's behaviour, from *catalysts* - events that occur rapidly or only once, and can accelerate already ongoing radicalization processes. For example, trigger events and recruitment can rapidly intensify radicalization

processes, but, in contrast to causes, catalysts cannot initiate such processes. Thus, while catalysts are not *reasons* for radicalization, they do influence individuals who have already radicalized. Therefore, their effects are strongest on people in later stages of the radicalization process.

Together with the three measurement levels (external, social and individual) these causes and catalysts define the x- and y-axes of a simple model with which we study the different dimensions and aspects of radicalization (see figure 1).

Fig. 1: Categorization of causal factors of radicalization.

<b>Level</b>	<b>Types of causes</b>	<b>Types of catalysts</b>
<b>External level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political</li> <li>- Economic</li> <li>- Cultural</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recruitment</li> <li>- Trigger Events</li> </ul>
<b>Social level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social identification</li> <li>- Network dynamics</li> <li>- Relative deprivation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recruitment</li> <li>- Trigger Events</li> </ul>
<b>Individual level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Psychological characteristics</li> <li>- Personal experiences</li> <li>- Rationality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recruitment</li> <li>- Trigger Events</li> </ul>

The authors of objective five argue that no single explanation for radicalization exists and that none of the causal factors are in themselves sufficient conditions for radicalism. Rather, radicalization is always the outcome of a complex interaction between factors across levels and across dimensions. Although each factor contributes to the emergence of radicalism, a combination of factors is likely to be crucial for the intensity of the readiness for radicalization. For example, poor integration of Muslim communities in Europe - a cultural factor at the external level - will have the strongest affect on people who categorize themselves as Muslims. In other words, social identification, measured at the social level, moderates the relationship between poor integration and radicalization.

Moreover, the authors conclude that academics as well as policy makers focus too strongly on finding the causes of radicalization in externalities like political and economic conditions. Rather, the authors suggest that radicalization is primarily an individual development that is prominently caused by a combination of social and individual causal factors, which therefore deserve further notice when developing counter radicalization measures. The following paragraphs discuss the policies implemented by the EU in order to tackle the threat of radicalization and determine to which extent these interventions address the causal factors that are responsible for radicalization.

#### **4. THE EU COUNTER RADICALIZATION AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGY**

Over the last decade, the EU has developed a number of important legislative measures and policies to ensure the safety of its civilians and protect the fundamental democratic values of the Union. One of these measures was the development of a comprehensive strategy to tackle the terrorist threat. In 2005 the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy was introduced, constituting a framework for a broad and proportionate response to combat terrorism at the international, European and national level. The Strategy covers four strands of work, fitting under its strategic commitment 'to combat terrorism globally while respecting human rights, and make Europe safer, allowing its citizens to live in an area of freedom, security and justice' (European Commission, 2005). The four pillars of the framework for addressing terrorist activity include: *prevent* (individuals from turning to terrorism), *protect* (citizens and infrastructure by reducing vulnerability to attack), *pursue* (investigate terrorists and disrupt support networks) and *respond* (manage and minimize the consequences of attack). Furthermore, under each of the four pillars, a set of key priorities for action is distinguished.

Although the primary responsibility for combating terrorism lies with the individual Member States, the EU set out four 'cross-cutting contributions' (EC, 2005), through which it can add value to countering the terrorist threat: strengthening national capabilities of EU Member States (by sharing knowledge and using best practice), facilitating European cooperation (by working together in sharing information), developing collective capability (by making collective

policy responses to the terrorist threat) and promoting international partnership (by working together with international organizations and key third countries).

The EU also agreed on the importance of a structural assessment of its numerous counterterrorism measures. As mentioned earlier, based on the Counter-Terrorism Strategy, an EU Counter-Terrorism Action Plan on Combating Terrorism is published annually, in order to determine the status and progress of specific counterterrorism actions.

As mentioned earlier, *prevent* is one of the four strands of work that constitute the framework for countering terrorism. In December 2005, the Council adopted the European Union Strategy for Combating Radicalization and Recruitment to Terrorism. Accordingly, the EU has defined radicalization as 'the phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views and ideas which could lead to acts of terrorism' (EC, 2006). In order to effectively reduce the terrorist threat, the EU is committed to 'prevent people from turning to terrorism by tackling the factors or root causes which can lead to radicalization and recruitment, in Europe and internationally' (EC, 2005). Hence, we focus on the strand of *prevent* in our effort to study the measures the EU employs to tackle radicalization and recruitment. (For additional information on the other three strands, please see Workpackage 6, deliverable 10).

Highlighting the fact that radicalization and recruitment are not confined to one belief system or political persuasion, the EU strategies nonetheless focus on countering radicalization and recruitment to Islamist-inspired terrorist groups. This is perhaps due to the assumption that this type of terrorism currently represents the main threat to the European Union.

Similar to the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the EU Strategy for Combating Radicalization and Recruitment to Terrorism is reviewed annually. As the name suggests, the Implementation Reports mainly cover implementation of the Strategy in combating radicalization and recruitment by the EU institutions. Here too, however, the primary responsibility in tackling these issues lies with the individual Member States.

## **5. COMPARING AND CONTRASTING CAUSAL FACTORS AND EU POLICIES**

In our effort to evaluate EU policies in countering radicalization and recruitment, we assess how the overall EU counterradicalization and recruitment strategy fares in comparison with the findings and conclusions derived from objective five. Looking closely at the classification model in which the different dimensions and aspects of radicalization are defined, we found that difficulties arise when comparing the separate fields of the model directly to the EU policy documents.

First, in our effort to distinguish the dominant overlapping elements between the fields of the classification model and policies taken directly from EU strategies, we found a discrepancy between the broad nature of the EU policy papers, and the very specific character of the levels and causes of radicalization in the matrix set forth in objective five. Nonetheless, we strived to find a common ground in the degree of overlap between the causes and EU counterradicalization strategy.

To complicate matters further, countering radicalization and recruitment is not solely an EU level matter. The Commission points out in both the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the Strategy for Combating Radicalization and Recruitment to Terrorism, that the EU can add value in countering radicalization and terrorism, but that the main responsibility lies with the individual Member States (EC, 2005). Thus, while the EU aims to provide a framework, it is up to the Member States to determine how policies are integrated at the national level. This revealed a second hurdle in assessing the EU strategy for countering radicalization; the fact that EU measures are complemented by counterradicalization policies developed by individual EU Member States. This is yet another reason to explore the efforts of the UK and Amsterdam.

Lastly, although the EU justly treats radicalization and terrorism as two different constructs, it simultaneously considers countering radicalization as part of its effort to prevent the emergence of terrorism. Consequently, the EU counterradicalization strategy is designed not only to prevent individuals from radicalizing, but particularly to prevent already radicalized individuals from engaging in violence. This is somewhat contrary to the findings of objective five in which the authors argue in an effort to curb radicalism policy makers should

put more focus on the underlying causes of radicalization. The slight, but significant difference in perspective should be kept in mind when attempting to compare and contrast EU's policies against the findings of objective five.

## **6. RADICALIZATION AND EU POLICIES**

Having distinguished the most relevant EU policy papers to the issue at hand, we now aim to assess which goals the EU has set in its effort to counter radicalization and recruitment. For this purpose, we will have a close look at the aims outlined in the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy under the strand of *prevent*, and the policies set out in the European Union Strategy for Combating Radicalization and Recruitment to Terrorism.

### **6.1. The EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy**

Countering radicalization and recruitment falls under the *prevent* strand, whose main goal is to 'prevent people from turning to terrorism by tackling the factors or root causes which can lead to radicalization and recruitment, in Europe and internationally' (EC, 2005). According to the Commission, it is paramount to 'prevent people from turning to terrorism and to stop the next generation of terrorists from emerging'. Therefore, the EU is committed to 'identify and counter the methods, propaganda and conditions through which people are drawn into terrorism', and to spot and disrupt radical behavior (EC, 2005). Being aware that globalization and the openness of the EU enable radical groups to put their ideas in to action, the Commission considers the existence of propagation of extremist worldviews to be the core of the issue. For example, propaganda that distorts conflicts around the world as supposed proof of a clash between the West and Islam. To address these issues, the Commission aims to ensure that 'voices of mainstream opinion prevail over those of extremism by engaging with civil society and faiths groups that reject the ideas put forward by terrorists and extremists that incite violence' (EC, 2005).

Further, the EU pays special attention to the way its own message comes across, in order to change the perception of national and European policies and ensure that its own policies do not exacerbate division. Moreover, the EU is aware that certain conditions in society may create an environment in which

individuals can become more easily radicalized. To counter this and to ensure the long-term integration of minority groups, the EU is committed to 'promote even more vigorously good governance, human rights, democracy as well as education and economic prosperity, and engage in conflict resolution' (EC, 2005). It also aims to 'target inequalities and discrimination where they exist and promote inter-cultural dialogue and long-term integration where appropriate' (EC, 2005).

Finally, the EU perceives radicalization and recruitment as an international phenomenon, where much of the terrorist threat has roots in parts of the world beyond the EU. Therefore, the EU finds co-operation with and the provision of assistance to priority third countries – including in North-Africa, the Middle East and South East Asia – to be vital. According to the EU, an 'international dialogue and alliance between cultures faiths and civilizations', is crucial 'in order to address the motivational and structural factors underpinning radicalization (EC, 2005).

In order to counter the issues of radicalization and recruitment efficiently, the Commission has listed a set of key priorities under the strand *prevent*. These include:

- Develop common approaches to spot and tackle problem behavior, in particular the misuse of the internet;
- Address incitement and recruitment in particular in key environments, for example prisons, places of religious training or worship, notably by implementing legislation making these behaviors offences;
- Develop a media and communication strategy to explain better EU policies;
- Promote good governance, democracy, education and economic prosperity through Community and Member State assistance programs;
- Develop inter-cultural dialogue within and outside the Union;
- Develop a non-emotive lexicon for discussing the issues;
- Continue research, share analysis and experiences in order to further our understanding of the issues and develop policy responses.

## **6.2 The European Union Strategy for Countering Radicalization and Recruitment to Terrorism**

The Strategy for Combating Radicalization and Recruitment to Terrorism builds forth on the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The combating recruitment strategy was particularly designed to curb the threat of violent radicalization, by preventing 'individuals from turning to violence, while halting the emergence of the next generation of terrorists' (EC, 2005).

The Commission starts out with a few premises. Firstly, although the EU has witnessed several types of terrorism in its history, this strategy is aimed at terrorism perpetrated by Al Qaeda and the groups it inspires, as this kind of terrorism presently poses the main threat to the EU. Further, the EU emphasizes that the 'vast majority of Europeans, irrespective of belief, do not accept extremist ideology, and that amongst the small number that do, only a few turn to terrorism' (EC, 2005). Regarding Muslim communities in Europe, the EU stresses that 'the overwhelming majority of people espouse the values of peace and tolerance' (EC, 2005). Lastly, although the strategy includes practical steps to address radicalization and recruitment, the EU admits it is 'continuing to increase its understanding of the issues' in order to develop an appropriate response (EC, 2005).

In identifying and countering 'the ways, propaganda and conditions through which people are drawn into terrorism and consider it a legitimate course of action' (EC, 2005), the EU resolves to three main goals.

First, it aims to 'disrupt the activities of the networks and individuals who draw people into terrorism' (EC, 2005). The main premise here is that individuals must take practical steps to become involved in terrorism. Therefore, the EU 'works' to spot suspicious behavior, for instance by monitoring the Internet and travel to conflict zones. Subsequently, the EU aims to disrupt this behavior, by 'limiting the activities of those playing a role in radicalization' (EC, 2005), including in prisons, places of religious training and worship, and the Internet. The EU also strives to prevent individuals from gaining access to terrorist training, for instance by monitoring travel to conflict zones. Finally, the EU works towards a 'right legal framework to prevent individuals from inciting and legitimizing violence' (EC, 2005).

The second aim is to ensure that 'voices of mainstream opinion prevail over those of extremism' (EC, 2005). As previously stated in the Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the EU considers extremist propaganda to be crucial, especially propaganda which depicts international conflicts as proof of the clash between the West and Islam. The Commission is committed to counter propagation that 'claims to give individuals both an explanation for grievances and an outlet for their anger' (EC, 2005). In order to do so, the EU aims to empower moderate Islamic voices, for instance through cooperation with Muslim organizations and faith groups and the encouragement of the emergence of European imams. Further, the EU aims to 'coordinate and enhance our efforts to change the perceptions of European and Western policies particularly among Muslim communities, and to correct unfair or inaccurate perceptions of Islam and Muslims' (EC, 2005). The Commission seeks to avoid the linkage between Islam and terrorism at all times, for instance by developing a non-emotive lexicon for discussing sensitive issues.

Thirdly, the EU aims to 'promote yet more vigorously security, justice, democracy and opportunity for all' (EC, 2005). This goal, previously mentioned in the Counter-Terrorism Strategy, is designed to respond to conditions in society that might create an environment for radicalism. According to the EU, these conditions include a lack of political and economic prospects, unresolved international and domestic strife, and inadequate and inappropriate education or cultural opportunities for young people, among others. The Commission adds that these conditions may be particularly present in immigrant communities. To address these issues, the EU aims to target 'inequalities and discrimination where they exist and promote inter-cultural dialogue, debate, and where appropriate, long-term integration' internally. Outside Europe, the EU works to 'promote good governance, human rights, democracy, as well as education and economic prosperity', as well as conflict resolution (EC, 2005).

## **7. ASSESSING EU COUNTERRADICALIZATION POLICIES**

Having provided insight on the findings and conclusions about the causal factors of radicalization from objective five, as well as measures outlined in the EU policy papers that address the issues of radicalization and recruitment, we

now turn to a discussion of the dominant overlapping elements between the two. We will also shed light on elements from the previous objective that are not present in the relevant EU strategies. In order to do so, we have made a distinction between elements from objective five that have significant overlap – those that have indeed been incorporated into EU policies – elements that overlap to a certain extent and elements from objective five that are not mentioned in the EU strategies.

### **7.1 Classification model**

To further understand the interaction between causes and catalysts of radicalization (findings of objective five) and relevant measures set out in EU policies, a visual depiction is presented in Figure 2. The simple model is developed to assess this relationship. The x-axis of the matrix defines the causes and catalysts derived from objective five, divided into the three measurement levels for radicalization (external, social, and individual). The y-axis determines to which extent the causes are addressed by EU policies, following the abovementioned categorization. The degree of overlap is subdivided into three categories: *high* (overlapping elements), *medium* (semi-overlapping elements) or *low* (missing elements).

Fig. 2: Classification of the relation between causes and catalysts of radicalization and relevant EU policies.

<b>Degree of overlap</b>	<b>Causes</b>			<b>Catalysts</b>
	<b>External</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Individual</b>	
<i>High</i>	Political causes; Cultural causes; Network dynamics			Recruitment
<i>Medium</i>	Economic causes	Social identification; Relative deprivation		Trigger events
<i>Low</i>			Psychological characteristics; Personal experiences; Rationality	

## **7.2 Overlapping elements**

By *overlapping elements*, we mean the causes and catalysts for radicalization derived from objective five, that are directly addressed by the two relevant EU documents.

### *7.2.1. Political causes*

At the external level, the authors of objective five argue that political climates, and the opportunities and constraints a political system creates, affect the emergence of radicalism. For Muslim communities in Europe, poor political integration is frequently mentioned as a prominent cause for radicalization. Research has shown that Muslims often feel underrepresented in the political system and of no priority to policy makers (EUCM, 2006). Moreover, international political positions, in particular the diplomatic position of Western governments in Middle Eastern conflicts, have been linked to increased Muslim radicalism.

The EU shares these concerns about poor political integration in relation to the susceptibility to radicalize. It describes a 'lack of political prospects' as one of the conditions that might contribute to the emergence of radicalism, and strives

to 'target inequalities where they exist' (EC, 2005). Further, the EU underlines the international dimension of the radicalization threat, by stating that the 'terrorist threat affects and has roots in many parts of the world beyond the EU'. It is committed to promote 'conflict resolution, good governance, human rights, democracy, education and economic prosperity' across its borders, in order to address the motivational factors underpinning radicalization, and also to change negative perceptions of European foreign policy – especially among Muslim communities (EC, 2005).

### *7.2.2. Cultural causes*

Research has shown that Muslims in Europe are frequently confronted with discrimination and stigmatization of their religion. Furthermore, Muslims experience various levels of marginalization in employment, education and housing, as well as negative stereotyping and prejudicial attitudes (EUCM, 2006). According to the authors of objective five, such issues at the external level pose considerable threats to Muslim integration, and have the potential to fuel conflicts *within* Muslim communities, that both can contribute to radicalization processes.

The EU considers the abovementioned issues to be 'structural factors supporting radicalization', and commits itself on eliminating 'inequalities and discrimination where they exist' (EC, 2005). The EU speaks of enhancing its efforts to 'correct unfair and inaccurate perceptions of Islam and Muslims', as well as developing a non-emotive lexicon to discuss sensitive issues. Further, the EU considers 'inadequate and inappropriate education of cultural opportunities for young people' as a contributor to environments in which people radicalize, and strives to overcome these inequalities. Regarding influential radical movements within Islam, the EU aims to ensure that 'voices of mainstream opinion prevail over those of extremism', mainly by engaging with civil society and Muslim faith groups that reject the radical ideas put forward by extremists (EC, 2005).

### *7.2.3. Network Dynamics*

According to objective five, at the social level, networks influence people's tendencies to radicalize, while people usually invest in relationships with

individuals who share their opinions and beliefs. Radicals of the same network are often very homogenous with respect to their attitudes and behavior. Places where the radicalizing effect of network dynamics is particularly present include the Internet – where existing virtual communities are connected through shared attitudes and ideology, and prisons – where the feeling of being collectively marginalized creates an environment where the attitudes and actions of influential co-inmates are easily adopted.

The European Commission is aware of the radicalizing effect certain networks can have. Spotting radical behavior, and subsequently disrupting the activities of the networks and individuals that carry out radical and violent messages is one of its main goals. The EU also recognizes the Internet and prisons, as well as places of religious training or worship, as 'key environments', and aims to closely monitor them to detect radical behavior and recruitment activities (EC, 2005).

#### *7.2.4. Recruitment as a catalyst*

In addition to identifying the types of causes of radicalization, the authors of objective five have also distinguished a set of catalysts as contributors to radicalization across all levels. Catalysts are different from causes in the sense that they catapult existing radicalization processes, but cannot initiate radicalization. One of the most prominent catalysts the authors of objective five distinguished in this context is recruitment.

Recruitment is an important catalyst that can manifest itself at the external, social and individual level. It is believed recruitment can only occur in a later stage of the radicalization process, following the argument that only people who are radicalizing or have radicalized face incentives to join a radical group. Thus, while recruitment does not *initiate* radicalization, but it does *accelerate* it.

According to the EU strategies, radicalization and recruitment are two intermingled issues the EU aims to curb, with the 'prevention of new recruits to terrorism' as one of its most prominent objectives. The EU has set out a range of measures to counter recruitment, such as monitoring key environment such as prisons, as well as putting in place a legal framework to bring individuals who employ recruitment activities to justice (EC, 2005). Thus, we can conclude that the EU is very aware of the fact that recruitment can trigger individuals with

radical ideas into joining a radical group, and has put in place several measures to counter it.

### **7.3 Some -overlapping elements**

In this section, we aim to point at certain causes and catalysts from objective five that are not directly addressed by EU measures, but are slightly touched upon by the strategies. Further, semi-overlapping elements include conditions that are labeled 'causes for radicalization' by the European Commission, while the authors of objective five contest the role such conditions play in radicalization processes.

#### *7.3.1. Economic causes*

At the external level, poverty and relative deprivation are frequently cited as causes for radicalization and terrorism. However, the existence of a causal relationship between economic hardship and the susceptibility to radicalize can be contested, for the simple reason that not every poor person becomes a radical. Radical Muslims are in fact distributed across all socio-economic classes (Sageman, 2004; Bakker, 2006). Thus, the authors of objective five suggest that other factors intervene in the relationship between economic deprivation and radicalization, and that economic deprivation alone cannot cause radicalization.

Nevertheless, the EU refers to a lack of economic prosperity as one of the conditions that create an environment in which people tend to radicalize more easily, and aims to counter this by promoting 'even more vigorously economic prosperity'. Further, according to the EU, 'a lack of economic prospects' is one out of a range of conditions that can make a radical message more appealing to certain groups (EC, 2005). Thus, although the authors of objective five argue that economic hardship does not directly cause radicalization, the EU does consider it to be a contributor that must be dealt with.

#### *7.3.2. Social identification*

One of the most prominent factors at the social level, and according to objective five the most intervening, is identification with social groups. To a large extent, how we behave depends on who we identify with. Therefore, social

identification is a particularly accurate predictor of behavior, and thus the susceptibility to radicalize. Identity crises and the feeling that the group is threatened, both strengthen an individual's identification with and adherence to a social group.

The EU is committed to 'identify and counter the methods, propaganda and conditions through which people are drawn into terrorism' (EC, 2005). One of its most prominent objectives is to prevent people from turning to radical groups. For instance, the EU aims to detect and eliminate propaganda that holds an extremist and violent message. Further, the EU aims to address the issue by making sure that moderate Islamic voices, including faith groups and civil society organizations, prevail over radical ones that incite violence. The EU also urges these voices to overtly reject radical views and to condemn terrorism. In sum, the EU aims to prevent individuals from starting to feel attracted to radical groups by countering radical propaganda and engaging with moderate Islamic voices. The concerted focus of the EU, however, is at the individual level. The EU strategy highlights the importance of understanding social identification only marginally as part of a larger effort to promote security, justice, democracy and opportunity for all. As such, this cause is considered to have semi-overlapping elements.

### *7.3.3. Relative deprivation*

Numerous studies have been conducted with the hypothesis that relative deprivation can cause violent, collective action, even when people are not personally deprived but act on behalf of a group. Scholars agree that a discrepancy between what people believe they deserve, based on a comparison with relevant others, and what they expect to obtain, can bring about frustration and violent action. Furthermore, people can feel deprived in relation to their own expectations, in case of a discrepancy between people's personal expectations and reality. According to objective five, the concept of relative deprivation can provide us with a clarification of the fact that many radicals do not stem from poor socio-economic strata. Also, it can explain why young, relatively well-off Muslims living in Europe tend to radicalize.

The EU strategies do not account for feelings of relative deprivation as an incentive for people to turn to radical and sometimes violent networks. No

mention is made of measures aimed to counter relative deprivation being a cause for radicalization. However, the strategies do list a range of conditions in society that may create an environment in which people can more easily be radicalized. The Commission continues by stating that these factors do not necessarily lead to radicalization, but 'may make the radical message more appealing both to those who suffer them and those who identify with their suffering' (EU, 2005). Thus, although the EU refers to people that radicalize because they identify with the suffering of others, the concept of relative deprivation as a reason for radicalization and violent action is not further illustrated in the EU strategies.

#### *7.3.4. Trigger events as a catalyst*

As mentioned above, catalysts catapult or accelerate already existing radicalization processes. The authors of objective five have distinguished *trigger events* as a prominent catalyst to radicalism.

Like recruitment, trigger events are incapable of initiating radicalization, but can abruptly intensify radicalization processes, as these events mainly prompt emotional responses from individual that have already radicalized or are in the processes of radicalizing. Examples of trigger events are events that call for revenge or action, such as police brutality, contested elections, but also provoking speeches by public figures.

In neither of the EU policy papers that account for tackling radicalization and recruitment, mention is made of trigger events as being a crucial factor in the sudden occurrence of violent action, or as catalysts for radicalization. However, the EU does stress its responsibility to 'identify and counter the ways, propaganda and conditions through which people are drawn into [radicalism and] terrorism and consider it a legitimate course of action' (EU, 2005). Thus, we can conclude that although the EU has not set out a policy to directly address trigger events, it does address issues that might lead to trigger events. For instance, the EU strives to develop a non-emotive lexicon to discuss certain topics, which might prevent government officials and public figures from making provoking statements about Muslims and Islam.

## **7.4 Missing elements**

In contrast to the previous sections which addressed high and medium degree of overlap between the findings of objective five and EU policies, the following elements (causes of radicalization) are not mentioned in the EU strategies. Hence, these causes are not addressed by EU counterradicalization measures and are classified as *missing elements*.

### *7.4.1. Psychological characteristics*

At the individual level, psychological characteristics presumably influence an individual's susceptibility to radicalize. However as previously mentioned, radicals do not fit a specific psychological profile, nor can they be deemed as insane psychopaths. According to the authors of objective five, thus far no research has confirmed that radicals match specific descriptions – such as aggressive, depressed or identity seeking. However, they also argue that individual contributors have the most direct relationship with individual behavior, and therefore are particularly important in radicalization processes.

The EU agrees that 'the decision to become involved in terrorism varies from one individual to another, even though the motives behind such a decision are often similar' (EC, 2005). But the documents do not elaborate on policies that are aimed at influencing psychological variables that may contribute to radicalization, which is of course very difficult. Nonetheless, the EU could invest more in increasing knowledge about the influence of psychological characteristics on radicalization, and raise the general awareness of this important factor.

### *7.4.2. Personal experiences*

The choices and decisions people make are to a large extent based on their personal experiences. Therefore, at the individual level, these experiences influence how people respond to their social and external environment. It seems that major life events, such as a traumatizing and abusive childhood, can lead to radicalization.

Although the EU does highlight the central role individual motives play in radicalization processes, personal backgrounds and experiences as prominent causes are not discussed in either of the strategies concerning radicalization.

### *7.4.3. Rationality*

Individuals radicalize for different reasons, of which some are more conscious than others. Examples of intentions why people join a radical group include adventurous reasons, obtaining a specific identity, or ideological motivations. Therefore, the question arises whether radicalism is a product of rational choice. The authors of objective five argue that radicalization is usually a gradual process, and thus a state of mind, rather than a tool that is employed to achieve a goal.

In its strategies, the EU indicates that an individual must take 'practical steps' to become involved in terrorism, and that 'the decision to become involved in terrorism is an individual one' (2005). However, despite the emphasis that is laid on the role of the individual in radicalization and terrorism, no mention is made of rational choice being a reason for radicalism in the strategies. Of course this factor is linked to the types of causes at the external level, i.e. political, economic and cultural causes.

## **8. CASE STUDIES: UK AND AMSTERDAM**

This section examines the measures taken by the national government of the UK and local authorities of Amsterdam to counter radicalization. Drawing on the factors of radicalization established in objective five and the efforts taken at the EU level, the case studies are intended to further understanding of practical experiences in countering radicalization by two EU Member States. The selection of cases is based in part on the identified cases of European radical Islamists in objective five. Since the individuals profiled in that report originated from the UK and the Netherlands, further exploration of the measures in these countries was needed to understand what is being done at the national and local levels. The decision to cross examine efforts at the national and local level stemmed from the fact that neither country has a comprehensive counterradicalization strategy. As such, the policy papers produced at the EU level serve as guides for Member State implementation. Furthermore, Amsterdam is used as an example of a large city that has adequate resources to undertake the issue at hand on a local level.

## **8.1 The UK Approach**

As part of their counterterrorism efforts, the UK has intensively focused on relations with the Muslim community. Realizing the need to reach out to moderate Muslims in order to counter extremism and diminish support for terrorists, the Home Office strives to achieve its strategic objectives by working closely with partners both at the national and international levels. Part of a grand long-term strategy to protect the public, counter terrorism and counter radicalization efforts are of great priority. The 2008-11 Home Office Strategy sets out goals to reduce the risk of terrorist attacks by addressing radicalization that leads to violent extremism (Strategy: 12). Reflecting the EU strategy of 3PR strands, preventing radicalization is one of the four objectives in the Home Office Strategy. Focusing on the prevention of radicalization involves a number of steps and specific measures including 'challenging the ideology of violent extremism; addressing radicalization in prisons; working with education institutions; and tackling the use of the internet to radicalize and groom young people' (Strategy: 13). Before delving into the specific measures undertaken by the UK authorities and assessing how they fare in relation to the causal factors of radicalization distinguished in objective five, we consider the landscape of the UK's Muslim communities.

Britain is home to approximately 1.6 million Muslims from a number of countries. According to national demographic statistics, over half belong to the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities (The National Youth Agency, Data on the UK Muslim Community)<sup>2</sup>. About half of Muslims in the UK are under 25 years of age compared with a third of the population as a whole (Home Office Memorandum, 2004)). In general the Muslim communities are among the most deprived educationally and economically. According to national statistics, 31% of young British Muslims leave school with no qualifications, compared to 15% of the total population (The National Youth Agency, Data on the UK Muslim Community). Additionally, 73% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi children are living in households below the poverty line compared with just under a third (31%) of children as a whole.

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<sup>2</sup> Additional useful facts and statistics can be found on the organization's website - <http://www.nya.org.uk/Templates/internal.asp?NodeID=92837>. Last accessed 29 April 2008.

Such statistics are alarming and while some refute the hypothesis that educational and economic scarcity is the wellspring of terrorism<sup>3</sup>, the findings of objective five highlight that such a relationship exists in relative rather than absolute terms. Social and individual factors enter the equation in considering relative deprivation as 'the perception of being unfairly disadvantaged in relation to reference groups' (WP 4, objective five: 15).

When it comes to religion, the Home Office Citizenship Survey found that religion and faith among Muslims ranked second after family and was particularly strong amongst young people. This is in stark contrast to Christian respondents who listed religion seventh out of a total of ten factors (Home Office Research Study, 2001:20). According to the same survey, the level of civic participation among Muslims as compared with other faith groups is particularly low. Only about 30% of Muslims reported participation in civic activities (Ibid: 42). Bearing in mind the statistics, we analyze specific measures taken by the UK authorities to curb radicalization.

Building on the social identification factors described in objective five, the following section presents the initiatives that have been developed and undertaken by Britain to counter radicalization. These range from Muslim outreach and customized information resources for young Muslims, to participation in campus debates and sponsorship of activities for Muslim student groups. Part of a larger effort to achieve policy objectives, the UK strives to persuade young Muslims that they can be Muslim and British, and that Islam is not regarded with hostility. Based on a four fold strategy, programs of the Home Office focus on 1) intensified dialogue with Muslim communities; 2) action to help Muslim communities themselves address the main risks of radicalisation; 3) research and surveys to better understand the perceptions of Muslim communities and changes in them; and 4) ensuring that government is effectively tackling disadvantage and discrimination faced by Muslim communities (Home Office Memorandum, 2004). Concerning dialogue, substantial progress have been made in forging closer relations with the Muslim Council of Britain. Encouragement of moderate Muslim opinion is of top priority for the UK, especially when we consider that 'developments within Islam are believed to contribute to Muslim fundamentalism' and that 'radicalization of

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<sup>3</sup> See overview of Krueger and Malečková study in objective five.

Muslims is partly the result of conflicts between moderate and radical movements within Islam' (WP4, objective five: 16). In 2004 a letter was sent on behalf of the Muslim Council of Britain to Imams and Mosques urging them to be clear about the incompatibility of terrorism with Islam and about the need for Muslims to cooperate with the police (Home Office Memorandum, 2004). Additional work is being done to enlist members of Parliament with large Muslim constituencies as partners in the government's dialogue and engagement with Muslim communities and particular attention is being paid to using non-inflammatory terminology. This is consistent with the EU's efforts to develop a non-emotive lexicon for discussing sensitive issues.

Also in-line with the EU's strategy is the focus on research and experience sharing. The UK's Community Cohesion team – a concept developed to principally reduce social exclusion - is used to further understand and gain insight into the social interaction within communities. For example, the team has set up a system for monitoring community tensions in key areas around the country. Additionally, research and survey programs help provide better insights into the causes of radicalization and recruitment. Lastly, to tackle disadvantage and discrimination, British departments and public authorities are increasingly encouraging departments and public authorities to address faith-based inequality in their work (Home Office Memorandum, 2004).

Curbing extremism and recruitment continue to dominate the counter radicalization agenda. Specific points of action include: 1) improving understanding of the extent and causes of extremism among young Muslims; 2) combating recruitment of young British Muslims by terrorist organizations; 3) combating Islamophobia; 4) continuing dialogue and building leadership capacity with young Muslims; 5) reaching out to underachievers; 6) responding to Muslim concerns about the use of anti-terrorism powers; and 7) promoting mainstream Islam (Home Office Memorandum, 2004). Working in concert with government and non-government agents, specific tactics are used to achieve these goals.

To improve understanding of causes of extremism, focus groups are conducted with young Muslims to explore their views on key aspects of foreign and domestic policy. Drawn from a range of educational, economic and ethnic backgrounds the focus groups also address the compatibility of being British and Muslim as well as the interpretations of Islam by Muslim youngsters. On the basis of such research, the Home Office had advocated development of a

comprehensive Interventions Strategy to enable intervention at key trigger points in order to prevent young Muslims from becoming drawn into extremist and terrorist activity and action.

The use of appropriate, non-emotive lexicon in reference to Muslim issues as well as engagement of moderate Muslims furthers the goals of assisting and promoting mainstream Muslim communication channels and combating Islamophobia. Furthermore, expanded and deepened dialogue with young Muslims on non-traditional foreign policy areas, such as development, globalisation and human rights, help build sustained leadership capacity. Encouragement of civic participation in local and national youth parliaments is a particularly interesting tactic considering the aforementioned statistics from the Home Office Research report.

Placing the UK efforts within the context of Figure 1, it can be assessed that countering radicalization has been undertaken at the external and social levels. Tackling not only the types of causes, but also the catalysts of recruitment and trigger events, the UK authorities are laying the foundation for effectively dealing with the threat of radicalization for youngsters. Encouraging positive network dynamics by promoting dialogue and moderate Muslim opinion, the UK places great importance on understanding the perceptions of Muslim communities and the changes within them.

Overall, much like the efforts at the EU level, the work of the UK demonstrates increased awareness of the radicalization issue and proactive steps toward curbing its potentially detrimental effects. However, while the measures indeed address issues at the external and social levels, like the EU, the UK has neglected the importance of causes at the individual level. Perhaps these issues will be addressed through further research and studies.

## **8.2 *The Amsterdam approach***

The Netherlands has experienced a wave of terrorist activities in recent years perpetrated by so-called home grown terrorists. As in most other places, countering terrorism in the Netherlands involves countering radicalization that can lead to violent extremism. Focusing on the Dutch approach to countering radicalization, we highlight the efforts of the city of Amsterdam. Radicalism is

considered to be a broad social issue and considerable risk that poses a threat to the stability of the Amsterdam community. As such it can lead to societal unrest and increasing polarization. Analysing the *Wij Amsterdammers* action plan aimed at halting the emergence of Islamic radicalisation, we describe concrete actions that are being taken in the city of Amsterdam.

The Netherlands is home to one million Muslims with an estimated 24% population in Amsterdam (EUMAP.org/Muslims in EU Cities)<sup>4</sup>. As in the UK, a large proportion of the population are concentrated in low-income neighborhoods where the quality of housing and high levels of crime are a significant problem. Further inequalities exist in the level of education and employment within the Muslim communities. Following the rise in violent extremism and the murder of Theo van Gogh in 2004, the Minister of Integration and Immigration commissioned a comprehensive inquiry into the radicalization of young Muslims.

While there are no statistics on the extent and scope of radicalization in Amsterdam, the AIVD (Dutch Intelligence Service) has shown an increase in Islamic radicalism in 2006, concluding that radicalization among youngsters from a migration background is continually increasing. Furthermore, as part of a study conducted by the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES) in September 2006, a survey showed that 2% of all Muslims are susceptible to radicalization because they follow certain orthodox beliefs, combining it with the belief that Islam is under threat and something must be done about it. While reference is only made to one of the studies, it's worth pointing out that two reports have been issued, the first in January 2005 and the second in February 2006.

The IMES study entitled *Processes of radicalization: why young Muslims in Amsterdam radicalize*<sup>5</sup>, was part of the *Wij Amsterdammers* program and formed the basis for 'Amsterdam Against Radicalization' ('Amsterdam tegen radicalisering', Gemeente Amsterdam, Redactie team: PAS, IHH, en COT, November 2007). Recommendations taken from the study (2006: 9-11) include: 1) increase societal trust; 2) increase political confidence; 3) increase religious defensibility; and 4) find ways of contacting radical youngsters (2007: 22). Additionally, the report points explicitly to the necessity of assistance to Mosques in countering radicalization and importance of increased insight into the diversity

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<sup>4</sup> Additional facts and statistics can be found on the website - <http://www.eumap.org/topics/minority/reports/eumuslims>. Last accessed 29 April 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Radicaliseringsprocessen: waarom moslimjongeren in Amsterdam radicaliseren.

within Islam. Recommendations stemming from the IMES were translated into concrete actions by the advisor of Social Cohesion of Amsterdam. Taking a broad approach aimed at not only countering radicalism, but also removing the reasons for radicalization, included consideration of measures aimed at integration, participation and cohesion.

A two-pronged approach is used in Amsterdam to counter radicalization. A hard and repressive approach is employed against 'doers': extremists that are suspected to have a willingness to use violence in trying to achieve their ideological goals. Recognizing the importance of working together, the city's mayor has teamed up with the police force, judiciary, AIVD and NCTb. With an emphasis on actively preventing radicalization, greater privileges have been extended to the police and security forces to disrupt individual actions. Critics argue that such an approach, based on profiling is not prudent (Amsterdam tegen radicalisering, 2007: 6 and 15).

The curative or soft power approach towards radicalization is aimed at the 'thinkers': individuals that do not want to employ violent tactics (yet), but do radicalize in the sense that they are increasingly following radical ideologies. With the aim of investing into the intellectual social capital, each individual case is analyzed to ascertain what is needed to turn around the radicalization process and is followed by suitable interventions (Wij Amsterdammers II, 2006: 22). Finally, there is the preventive approach intended to eliminate the breeding grounds for radicalization. This includes measure aimed at increasing resistance against radical thoughts among individuals that might be sensitive to these ideas.

With an eye on the future, existing projects are constantly improved and new ones are created based on past experiences. In shaping these projects, the three target points (eliminating breeding grounds for radicalization, increasing defensibility and de-radicalization) are constantly kept in mind. The curative and preventive approaches in Amsterdam mainly focus on the risks and effects of radicalization that can not be dealt with at the judicial level. The recommended approach is a strengthened and replenished version of existing projects and activities:

- More emphasis is laid on approaching target groups. Three categories are distinguished: the radical, the searcher and the environment (Amsterdam tegen radicalisering, 2007: 28).

- Also, the starting points of the strategy are sharpened: de-radicalization; increased defensibility; eliminating breeding grounds (Amsterdam tegen radicalisering, 2007: 29).
- The approach is also strengthened by more intensive cooperation with key partners such as leading figures from the Muslim community and religious organizations in Amsterdam, which is recommended by the IMES (Amsterdam tegen radicalisering, 2007: 30).

Local level help is enlisted by delegating responsibility to several parts of the city (stadsdelen) who work on their own measures to curb radicalization. The local government has allocated 1,33 million euro for these activities. Other financial means come from regular budgets. Activities and projects are divided into 16 subjects which are further sub-divided into three target points. These include (Amsterdam tegen radicalisering, 2007: 31-33):

De-radicalization:

- develop and employ interventions
- further developing the *Meld- en Adviespunt* and expanding its network
- countering right-wing radicalism
- training of professionals
- intensify activities aimed at education and radicalization
- increase knowledge and knowledge exchange
- develop and employ activities in several parts of the city (stadsdelen).

Increase of defensibility:

- Increase the defensibility of Muslims
- Increase the defensibility of women
- Realize projects aimed at internet and radicalization
- Realize alternative proposals from youth workers

Eliminate breeding grounds:

- Eliminate discrimination and intolerance
- Increase insight in diversity of Islam
- Ways of conduct with media and stereotyping
- Enhancing intercultural relations
- Enhancing social capital and political (self)confidence.

Once again looking at the endeavors of local authorities in Amsterdam in their relation to the measures taken at the EU level to counter radicalization, it is clear that at the local level the external and social levels are addressed. Incorporating hard and soft approaches, the Amsterdam authorities have strived to strike a balance between countering radicalization in the political, economic and cultural spheres. As is the case with the UK, however, the broad and often general policies fail to take into account the possible causes of radicalization at the individual level, namely the psychological characteristics and personal experiences. While it is the aim of the Amsterdam approach to eliminate breeding grounds for radicalization, the measures continue to emphasize the external and social level as the main areas in which progress can be achieved.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

Through analysis of the most relevant EU documents, this report sought to determine the design of EU policies as they concern countering the causes of radicalization. Based on the findings of a previous chapter (objective five) and the content of the EU's Counter Terrorism Strategy and the European Union Strategy for Combating Radicalization and Recruitment to Terrorism, the analysis provides insight into how the contributing factors to radicalization are addressed by the EU. Additionally, the UK and Amsterdam approaches to countering radicalization at the national and local level illustrated the practical measures and efforts used for dealing with the phenomenon.

According to the authors of objective five, radicalization is a complex phenomenon that can only be caused by a combination of factors at three levels. They suggest that radical behavior stems from a combination of social and individual causal factors. Further, external factors contribute to this interaction in the sense that they can create an environment in which individuals radicalize more easily. Nonetheless, their radicalizing effect should not be overestimated. The authors of objective five conclude that policy makers focus too strongly on finding the causes of radicalization in externalities, such as political and economic conditions.

This holds true for the European Union as well. Looking closely at its policies designed to curb radicalization, we see that the Commission focuses strongly on externalities that might contribute to radicalization. Looking closely at the

classification model developed to illustrate the analysis and findings, we conclude that less attention is paid to setting out measures that address causal factors at the social level, and almost no mention is made of tackling causes of radicalization at the individual level in EU policy papers. Thus, we argue that causes for radicalization that can be found in the direct environment of the individual deserve further notice when shaping EU policies.

Further, the EU strategy for countering radicalization should be considered as part of its overall counterterrorism strategy. However, after assessing the EU measures, it is clear that the Union's efforts are aimed more at addressing external factors of radicalization rather than dealing with the individual causes that lead people to feel attracted to radical ideologies in the first place. For instance, although disrupting radical networks is important in preventing the emergence of new recruits to terrorism, without addressing the direct causes for radicalization new networks will continue to form. Drawing from the findings of objective five, we argue that such causes can be found in social environments and individual dynamics.

Given the multilateral character of the European Union and the fact that the responsibility for countering radicalization lies with the individual Member States, a lack of instruments might prevent the EU from effectively addressing social and individual factors that cause radicalization. Despite difficulties in coordination, the EU strategies nonetheless provide a valuable framework that individual Member States can use in shaping counterradicalization policies at the national level.

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