Report on the Meta-Ethnographic Synthesis of Qualitative Studies on Inequality and Youth Radicalisation

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META-ETHNOGRAPHIC SYNTHESIS

Qualitative Studies on Inequality and Radicalisation

DARE
Dialogue About Radicalisation & Equality

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is based on a specific type of qualitative literature review, namely, the meta-ethnographic synthesis (MES). The MES undertaken was designed to generate interpretive explanations of the relationship between inequality and radicalisation derived from the synthesis of the findings of multiple empirical studies.

Studies included in this MES were qualitative (and mixed-method) empirical studies published in English between 1 January 2001 and 31 December 2017. The studies concerned two main forms of 'radicalisation' (radical Islamist and extreme right/anti-Islam(ist) and inequality (economic, socio-political and perceived injustice). The studies differed in terms of geographic location and their focus on different profiles of interviewees. A total of 179 publications meeting the inclusion criteria were initially identified through a search of seven well-known journal databases as well as two highly relevant journals, not listed in these databases, and the body of relevant grey literature. This initial database was supplemented through a process of engaging experts in the field to recommend further texts; 31 publications were identified in this way resulting in a total of 210 texts being subject to close reading. After that full-text reading, **94 were finally selected for synthesis**; of those 70 focused on Islamist radicalisation.

The findings of this meta-ethnographic synthesis suggest **there is an indeterminate relationship between inequality and radicalisation**. The analysed studies demonstrate, in particular, the tension between objective and subjective dimensions of inequality, both of which may lead individuals to follow a radicalisation pathway. The findings suggest that the **subjective meanings of inequality** – that is the perception that oneself is disadvantageously positioned in relations of power regardless of whether this feeling, perception or sense of injustice is associated with an objective situation or not – **supersede the objective variables of inequality in triggering a path towards radicalisation**. Recognition of the subjective dimension of the relationship between radicalisation and inequality also highlights the fact that this is not static.

The weight attached to subjective experiences of injustice in the studies in this review point to the fact that **radicalisation is more a process than a state**. Each experience of injustice is reflected, interpreted and potentially mobilised via a multiplicity of other factors, including the socio-economic situation, personal background, family ties and national context. This suggests **the need for future qualitative studies to explore more specifically how the experience of injustice is transformed into social criticism and action; what we might call the subjectivation process of radicalisation**.

This review also identifies a strong critique of the **tendency to reify the link between social inequality, religion and radicalisation**. The intertwining of social exclusion, religion and radicalisation

could be, in fact, a stereotype undermining the treatment of important social issues for affected populations (such as discrimination, racism, inequality).

This review demonstrates not that studies are inconclusive but that **the link between inequality and radicalisation is context-dependent**, if not case-by-case dependent. **Inequality** (such as poverty, marginalisation, disenfranchisement etc.), at the level of individual experience, **does not consistently explain radicalisation**. Indeed, feelings of victimisation and sense of injustice may operate also through the dimension of the imaginary of individuals and groups.

The Systematic Review of quantitative studies of the relationship between inequality and radicalisation (conducted in parallel with the current synthesis) demonstrated the importance of distinguishing between objective and subjective measures of inequality and that the relationship between radicalisation and subjective economic inequality is under-researched (Franc and Pavlović, 2018: 74). The findings of this MES, show that qualitative studies offer a particular insight into why subjective perceptions may play a more important role than objectively measured economic inequality in the inequality-radicalisation nexus. **Higher perceived inequality, especially stigmatisation and discrimination, were related to more radicalised attitudes across a range of different contexts.** This suggests that policy-makers should pay more attention to perceived injustice. However, these policies should not be entangled with counter-terrorism measures, which have been shown to, inadvertently, impact the self-esteem and the dignity of individuals and communities.

Finally, this review suggests that **inequality and radicalisation are co-constructed phenomena**. This means it is essential to recognise that **inequality produces radicalisation but radicalisation also produces inequality**.

A number of methodological limitations related to the scope of this study suggest the need for further analysis. These include: the limitations of the database search of abstracts and titles; and the difficulty in synthesising the wide range of meanings of inequality employed in the analysed texts. Future studies might specify more narrowly particular domains of inequality (such as education, urban exclusion, discrimination, gender) in order to improve our understanding of injustice and to define the needs in terms of social intervention and social work. In this respect, this MES should be considered as the first step towards understanding the relationship between radicalisation and inequality and serve as a starting point for future research that, through the employment of more sophisticated research designs, might allow more precise conclusions.

1. Introduction

Academic interest in, and literature on, radicalisation expanded dramatically following the attacks of September 11, 2001 in the United States. However, radicalisation does not only refer to Islamist extremism but to a range of violent social movements including neo-Nazi groups, radical anti-abortion activism or so-called 'eco- terrorism' (Khosrokhavar, 2013). While a range of definitions of radicalisation are applied (see Section 3.2), radicalisation has become widely used to refer to a process by which an individual or a group adopts a violent form of action as a consequence of following extreme political, social or religious ideologies that question the prevailing social, cultural and political order (Borum, 2011; Wilner and Dubouloz, 2010). Thus, the study of radicalisation has been primarily concerned with distinguishing different stages of the process: pre-radicalisation; self-identification with radical movements; indoctrination into extremist doctrine; and direct involvement in violent acts.

In seeking to understand *how* radicalisation happens, it is important not to lose sight of the deeper question of *why* it happens. There are, of course, multiple factors at play in any radicalisation trajectory: psychosocial factors, cultural determinants, international relations, the role of media and the Internet, the breakdown of social bonds (Khosrokhavar, 2009), political factors (Crenshaw 2005) and, especially in prison environments, charismatic personalities (Khosrokhavar, 2013). The factor that the current review is concerned with, however, is that of **socio-economic inequality**.

Inequality is often presumed to be an important factor in radicalisation because it has an established association with a host of other social ills including violent crime, poor mental health and low levels of civic participation and trust (Kawachi et al., 1997; Wilkinson and Pickett, 2011). A relationship between inequality and radicalisation might be expected because high levels of inequality can lead to a pessimistic outlook and insecurity about one's continued survival and prosperity (Norris and Inglehart, 2004; Hohman and Hogg, 2015). Such a relationship might also be anticipated because large differences in class and income can reduce the sense of solidarity and shared fate (Uslaner and Brown, 2005: 869). In the absence of generalised trust, people are less likely to take part in civic society outside of close-knit ethnic and political interest groups resulting in a less vibrant civil society and, potentially, internal conflict and radicalisation. Studies asking whether the likelihood of radical attitudes, values and incidents is correlated to objective measures of economic inequality (e.g. GINI coefficient) – as opposed to social integration or absolute measures of poverty and deprivation – have found conflicting results. Li and Schaub (2004: 251), for example, found that transnational terrorism increases with increases of within-country economic inequality. However, others argue that overall economic equality is insignificant; what matters are 'social cleavages' between ethnic, religious, regional and linguistic groups (Piazza, 2006).

Drawing on studies in international development, Stewart (2000) highlights the role of what she calls 'horizontal inequalities' in violent conflict, arguing that such conflict occurs when socioeconomic inequalities overlap with ethnic, religious or other salient group identities to create a sense of injustice. Structural inequalities between ethnic and religious minority groups and the majority is a reality in many European countries (Heath et al., 2008) and could be an important source of resentment. Such resentment on behalf of one's group could in turn be a driver of radicalisation even among individuals who are not personally disadvantaged economically. Piazza (2011) finds that countries with more minority group economic discrimination are significantly more likely to experience domestic terrorist attacks. Relative inequality is also a factor; a study of receptivity to radicalisation in the Netherlands found that young Dutch Moroccans have better prospects than their parents but fewer opportunities on the education and labour market than those of their ethnically Dutch peers. Highly educated Dutch-Moroccan youths are sensitive to discrimination and inequality and appear to be more vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism than their parents (Komen, 2013: 53).

However, Stewart (2000) also highlights that subjective perceptions about group inequalities can be as important as objectively measured inequalities in exacerbating already formed attitudes about injustice and privilege. For example, negative attitudes to ethnic minorities are often accompanied by unsubstantiated claims about 'benefit fraud' and inflated immigration figures (Sides and Citrin, 2007). Sageman (2008) argues that everyday experiences of discrimination against Muslims can fuel conspiracy theories and moral outrage. In addition, the social problems associated with economic deprivation and unemployment can cause a stigmatisation of ethnic and social groups and their neighbourhoods that increases discrimination against them, further widening inequalities and increasing the sense of injustice. This social stigmatisation is found frequently among anti-Islam(ist) activists also and is exacerbated by stigmatisation and isolation experienced as a result of public, media or family and friends' disapproval of their activism (Bjørgo, 2009: 47; Pilkington, 2016).

The importance of not only presuming, but systematically reviewing, the relationship between inequality and radicalisation is confirmed by the inconclusiveness of findings to date on that relationship specifically with regard to the two concerns of the DARE project: Islamist radicalisation; and anti-Islamist (extreme right) radicalisation.

In relation to Islamist radicalisation, inequality is cited as one of three structural (societal level) drivers of radicalisation (the others being the geo-political environment and religion/ideology). However, research to date has failed to demonstrate a direct link between collective or individual poverty and terrorism (Maleckova, 2005: 33-42). Khosrokhavar (2009: 11) notes that the role of micro- and macro-economic variables remains disputed by researchers and concludes that while the

economic factor should not be ignored as a driver of jihadism, its role must always be seen in context – in both the West and in the Muslim world. There is some evidence, for example, that in countries where economic prospects are bleak (e.g. Somalia, northern Nigeria), un(der)employment may be more important than ideology in radicalisation pathways (Schmid, 2013: 25; Medhurst, 2000). However, the demographic profiles of radical Muslims in the West suggest that they are generally not in situations of extreme poverty or political oppression (Veldhuis and Staun, 2009: 8). Thus, the relationship between inequality and radicalisation is complex and mediated through the politics of grievance. Grievance, born out of the interaction of post-colonial discrimination/racism, economic exclusion and identity problems, is identified in a number of European countries as a key driver of radicalisation. In Denmark, a study of young Muslims found 'radical Muslims' (6 per cent of respondents) to be more preoccupied with international conflicts in Muslim countries and more likely to have experienced discrimination than others (Goli and Rezaei cited in Borum, 2011b: 54-5). In France, those engaging with radical Islamism are mainly young people who feel they belong neither in France (where they are rejected as 'Arabs' and their Muslim identity is constrained by the principle of *laïcité*) nor to the country of their parents. The feeling of 'no future' among young people in the poor French suburbs provides a fertile recruiting ground for radical Islamist groups which offer Islamisation as a means of creating meaning to their existence and radical action as a way of gaining dignity (Khosrokhavar, 2009). Fishman (citing Buijs et al., 2006) suggests the critical climate towards Islam has contributed to radicalisation among Dutch Muslim youth with many second generation youths from Moroccan origin feeling misunderstood by their parents and rejected by Dutch society. Fishman (2010: 122) suggests findings of recent EC studies demonstrate that the sense of living in a hostile society in which Islam, migrants and Muslims are viewed with suspicion fuels radicalisation as Muslims feel required to assess their relationship to the politics of the Muslim world with which they are ill-acquainted. At the individual or micro level, empirical studies to date have failed to find any systematic psychological markers of individuals convicted of terrorism (Sageman, 2004) or any direct link between collective or individual poverty and terrorism.

The literature on anti-Islam(ist) radicalisation – shaped more by the tradition of studies of the far right than by terrorism studies – identifies economic insecurity as one of four main factors driving right-wing extremism. The others are: authoritarianism; lack of education; and social isolation (Klandermans and Mayer, 2006: 6). This is epitomised in the portrait of the typical extreme-right supporter in Europe as 'a twenty five-year-old unemployed man, with below-average education' (Bakić, 2009: 201) emanating from a marginalised and disaffected 'white working class' (Goodwin, 2011: 15). As in the case of Islamist radicalisation, however, there appears to be no proven relationship between inequality and anti-Islam(ist) radicalisation. Based on data from the 1999–2000

wave of the European Values Study (EVS) (in 32 countries), Strabac and Listhaug (2008: 279) find that education is a strong predictor of anti-Muslim prejudice in western European countries; the odds of expressing anti-Muslim prejudice decrease by 20 per cent for each additional level of education. In eastern European countries the effect is in the same direction albeit weaker. In terms of class, white collar workers and students were also found to be less prejudiced than blue collar workers in western Europe (ibid.: 280) but the supposed correlation between unemployment and right-wing extremism both at the national and the individual level remains disputed. A Demos survey via Facebook found a high rate of unemployment (28 per cent) among English Defence League (EDL) supporters (Bartlett and Littler, 2011: 5) but the analysis of EVS data (1999-2000) fails to confirm that the unemployed and individuals with financial difficulties display greater anti-Muslim prejudice (Strabac and Listhaug, 2008: 280). Qualitative studies often reveal circumstantial evidence of the connection between high unemployment or precarious informal employment and extreme right activism (Ezekiel, 2002: 58; Pilkington, 2016) but also counter evidence that such activists are not from the poorest groups (Blee, 2002: 25; Kimmel, 2007: 207) or come from relatively well-educated and economically better off groups (Kovacs, 2013: 229-30). However, as in Islamist radicalisation, individual narratives reveal extreme right activists often feel a lack of prospects, the loss of a sense of meaning to life and search for a 'higher' purpose (Griffin, 2012: 24-46; Ezekiel, 2002: 63-4; Pilkington, 2014).

At the individual level, scholarship on the far right demonstrates that there is not one 'type' of person attracted to either classic extreme right-wing movements or their contemporary anti-Islam(ist) versions. As with Islamist radicalisation a key motivational 'push factor' is identified as grievance or perceived injustice. The grievances of rank and file supporters of anti-Islam(ist) movements can be broadly situated within the series of backlashes against multicultural politics across European societies. For Linden and Klandermans (2007: 200), fighting perceived injustice underpins one of the key motivational trajectories - 'conversion' - into extreme right activism; 'converts' are angry about the wrongs they have suffered and express their anger through movement activism. Amongst grassroots activists in the anti-Islam(ist) English Defence League, for example, perceived injustice is articulated as a belief that the needs of others are privileged over their own, rendering them 'second-class citizens' or even victims of discrimination, violence or abuse (Pilkington, 2016). This injustice is understood to be institutionalised through a 'two-tier' justice system which privileges minorities whilst discriminating against 'us'; in this context activism is experienced as 'fighting back' against the government and liberal elite 'do-gooders' (ibid.).

A starting hypothesis for the systematic reviews of literature on the relationship between inequality and radicalisation, therefore, is that we might expect social inequality and discrimination to play a

role in radicalisation by giving rise to a sense of grievance and perceived injustice, which motivate engagement with radical ideologies and actions (Moghaddam, 2005; Doosje et al., 2013).

2. Method: the meta-ethnographic synthesis process

The DARE project undertook a review of the evidence to date on the relationship between inequality and radicalisation in the form of two parallel reviews: a systematic review (SR) of published quantitative and mixed method studies (see: Franc and Pavlović, 2018); and **a meta-ethnography synthesis (MES) of qualitative and mixed method studies** (presented in this report).

The review of qualitative data was conducted as a meta-ethnographic synthesis of relevant qualitative studies which sought to:

- draw together a body of qualitative research through a systematic cross-case approach;
- identify conceptual and theoretical advancement (by tracing the conceptual development of terms capturing the relationship between inequality and radicalisation);
- generate interpretive explanations (that go beyond the findings of any individual study) by drawing on multiple cases while retaining the sense of the original accounts.

2.1. Search process

As the MES was conducted in parallel with the systematic review of quantitative studies, a single, common search process was conducted as the first stage of the identification of the texts for review. This search used a single review protocol designed in advance. Following a pilot search phase, the protocol was amended slightly to reduce the number of databases searched and narrow the concrete search string applied.

2.1.1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The main inclusion criteria for the common search process were as follows:

- *the study should be empirical (quantitative, qualitative or mixed method);*
- *the study should be relevant to both key concepts (inequality and radicalisation).*

In addition, for inclusion in the data base, publications had to be: in English; be a journal article, book/book chapter[1] or report; and be published between 1 January 2001 and 31 December 2017.

[1] Potentially relevant books/book chapters retrieved by the common databases search were only included in the meta-ethnographic synthesis and were not considered within the systematic review of quantitative studies.

The starting date of 2001 reflects the point at which the concept of 'radicalisation' started to appear more often in the literature (Neumann and Kleinmann, 2013). An additional common criterion was that the study should investigate Islamist and/or far-right radicalisation. However, in the case of quantitative terrorism studies, this additional inclusion criterion was not applied since quantitative data about terrorism (outcome variable) usually do not differentiate between ideological bases of terrorism.

Empirical studies were included regardless of whether they employed primary or secondary data, their research design, data collection method, applied analyses, geographical scope or context of the data used.

2.1.2. Population

Regarding relevant populations, no restrictions regarding age, gender, ethnicity, nationality and geographical context were introduced, other than the focus on Islamist or far-right radicalisation (see above). Additionally, in line with the objective of the quantitative review to investigate the relationship between inequality and radicalisation at the individual *and* social level, alongside individuals, relevant populations included radicalised or terrorist groups, states or other aggregate units (in the case of quantitative terrorism studies).

2.1.3 Search strategy

A search strategy was developed based on the key concepts of inequality and radicalisation and how these concepts are understood and interpreted within the DARE project (DARE, 2016). The search strategy was also informed by consideration of the terms frequently found in the literature addressing concepts of inequality or radicalisation (McGilloway et al., 2015) as well as by previous systematic reviews focusing on aspects of inequality and other outcome variables e.g. income inequality and well-being (Ngamaba et al., 2017).

The aim of the search was to identify (as many as possible) quantitative and qualitative studies relevant to understanding the role of inequality in radicalisation at the individual and social level. Thus, in line with DARE's substantive focus, the search was directed towards Islamist and right-wing radicalisation while, based on our starting position that ideational radicalisation must be analytically distinguished from behavioural radicalisation, our operationalisation of the radicalisation concept as an outcome variable was very broad. In selecting search terms, we sought to focus the search on Islamist radicalisation (e.g. *jihad*, *salafi*, *Islam, Muslim* and *radical*, *violent*, *nonviolent*) and far-right radicalisation (e.g. *far-right*, *alt-right*, *ultra-right*, *identitarian*, *radical right*, *nationalism, patriotism* and *extreme*, *violent*, *ultra*). Additionally, we tried to cover radical beliefs and attitudes (e.g. *radical*

and *attitude*, *ideology*, *belief*, *discourse*), attitudes towards violence and justification of violence (e.g. *attitude towards violence, violence support, approval of violence, justification of violence*) as well as one's own violence, participation in terrorism, and incidence of terrorism (*radicalisation*, *deradicalisation*, *extremism*, *terrorism*, *lone wolf*, *foreign fighter*). Similarly, we started from an understanding of the concept of inequality as broad in scope and complex, requiring analytic differentiation between levels, types and dimensions/aspects of inequality. Hence, the inequality concept is also operationalised very broadly through search terms, covering economic and social inequality and including both objective and perceived inequalities at the individual and social level (Table 1). These search terms were applied in database searches for both the SR reported on separately (see: Franc and Pavlović, 2018) and for the meta-ethnographic synthesis (MES) reported on here.

Table 1. Search terms applied for inequality and radicalisation concepts

INEQUALITY	RADICALISATION
inequality, equality, wealth, poverty, unfairness, injustice	radicalisation, deradicalisation,
	extremism, terrorism, 'lone wolf', 'foreign, fighter'
Atkinson index, Hoover index, Robin Hood index, Schutz index, Theil index, GINI coefficient/index	
	radicals (violent, political, religious, ideological, nonviolent)
income gap, salary gap, wage gap, pay gap	violence (radical, religious, political, ideological)
	milieu (radical, violent, nonviolent)
social or socio-economic or economic - class - status - stratum - stratification - gradient - determinants	far-right, alt-right, ultra-right, identitarian, radical right, violent right,
	nationalism (extreme, violent, ultra),
	patriotism (extreme, violent, ultra)
	anti-Muslim, anti-Islam, Islamophobia
social or socio-economic or economic - exclusion - inclusion - integration - deprivation - disadvantage - marginalisation - discrimination	jihad, salafi
	Islam (radical, violent, nonviolent)
	Muslim, (radical, violent, nonviolent)
	attitude towards violence, violence support, approval of violence, justification of violence
Grievance (social, economic, political, religious, group, intergroup)	radical attitude, radical ideology, radical belief, radical discourse,
	violent attitude, violent ideology, violent belief, violent discourse

2.1.4. Database search

These search terms were combined by using Boolean operators (OR, AND), truncation command (e.g.*) and a wildcard adapted for different databases. The terms were combined in six search strings for the inequality concept and seven search strings for the radicalisation concept. This resulted in a total of 17 searches (including the final with data limiters for date of publication, type of publication and English language). A search history example for one database is provided as Appendix 1 of the Systematic Review report (D4.1) (see: Franc and Pavlović, 2018). The search strings used were developed after consultation with a library science expert.

Before the final selection of these search terms and strings, exploratory searches including additional terms (e.g. *fundamentalis**, *xenophob** for right-wing) and different combinations of terms were conducted. Based on the quantity of retrieved search results, some of the initially planned search terms were excluded (e.g. *xenophob** OR *racis** relevant for far-right radicalisation) or were additionally narrowed (e.g. instead of *nationalis**, we used *'extreme nationalis*'*, *'radical* nationalis*'*, *'violent nationalis*'* and *'ultra nationalis*'*).

Search process:

The literature search for both the SR and MES encompassed a common search of electronic databases, hand searching of two journals not indexed in databases and a grey literature search.

The search strings were applied in the following seven databases:

1. Web of Science Core Collection (excluding Chemical Indexes)
2. SCOPUS
3. Current Contents Connect (Social & Behavioral Sciences)
4. SocINDEX with full text
5. PsycINFO
6. EconLit (EBSCO)
7. MEDLINE®

These databases were selected following the testing of the SR protocol and the conducting of a pilot search, which revealed that the target number of databases in the original SR protocol was too high.

A common search for both syntheses (SR and MES) also included hand searching two journals not indexed in databases (*Journal of Deradicalisation* 2014/15 – 2017 and *Perspectives on Terrorism* 2007 – 2017) and a grey literature search. The grey literature search was limited to reports (excluding

dissertations and conference abstracts or papers) and based on web sources of relevant institutions, networks and projects (see 'Appendix 2. List of grey literature sources' in Franc and Pavlović, 2018).

For the SR, nine additional articles were selected for inclusion during the extraction phase based on a cross-reference search.

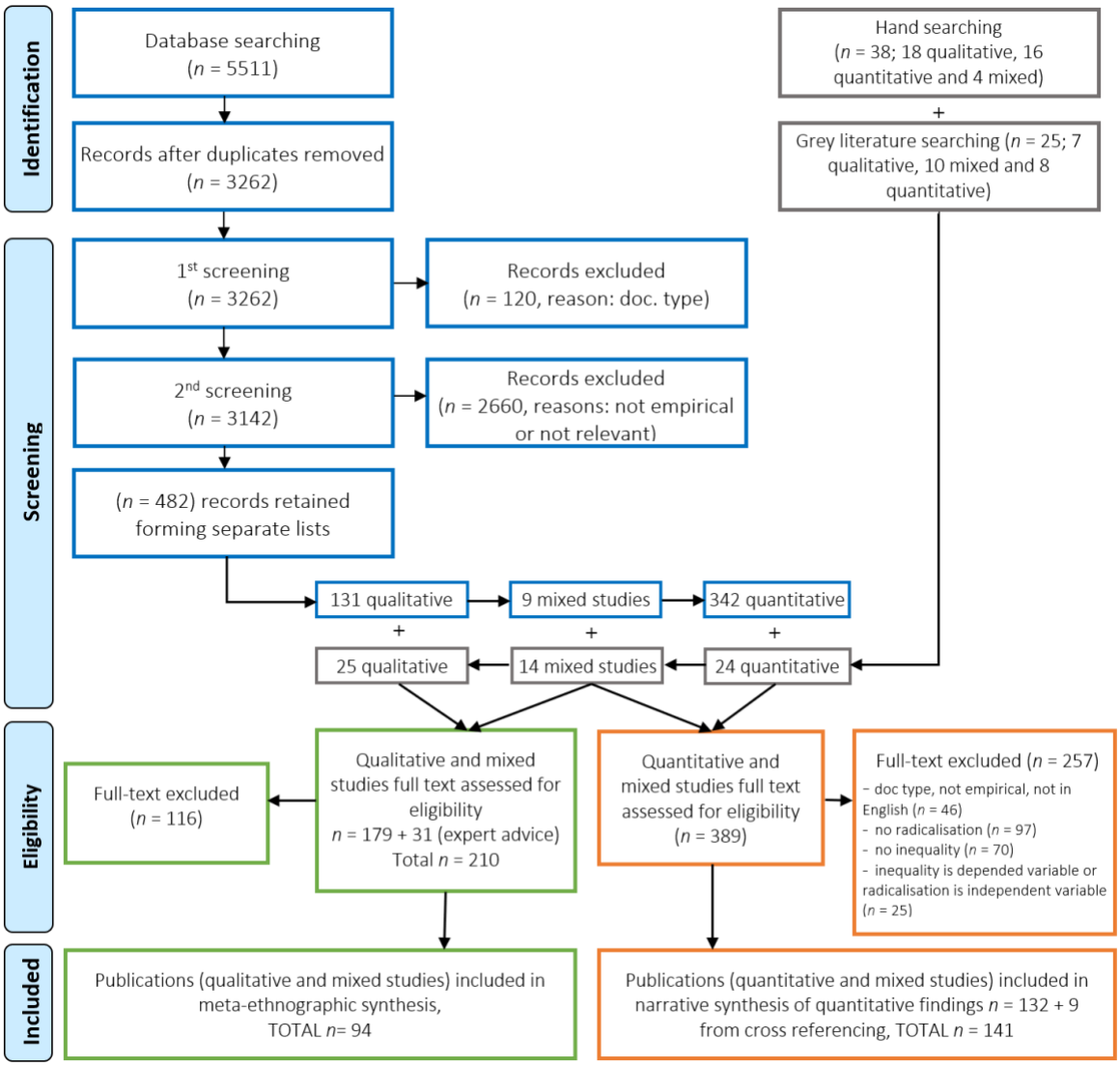
2.1.5. Search flow and results

Database searches resulted in the identification of 5511 items, which were indexed in a reference manager library. Automated and hand duplicate detection resulted in 2249 duplicates, which were removed leaving 3262 items. An initial screening of titles and abstracts for conformity to the document type inclusion/exclusion criterion, resulted in the removal of a further 120 items (editorials, book reviews, review articles and similar types of documents falling outside the inclusion criteria). The remaining 3142 items were subjected to a second screening for compliance with the main inclusion criteria, namely that the study should be i) empirical and ii) address inequality *and* radicalisation. This second screening was also based on the title and abstract. However, since abstracts in many cases did not contain all the relevant information, this phase frequently included full text screening. Following this screening, of the 3142 items, 482 were retained as potentially relevant. Of these, 131 items (including 34 books) were based on qualitative studies, 342 were quantitative studies and 9 were mixed-method studies. The final database search was conducted on 20 March 2018. The hand search of two relevant journals resulted in an additional 38 potentially relevant articles (18 qualitative, 16 quantitative and 4 mixed), while the grey literature search resulted in 25 additional, potentially relevant studies (7 qualitative, 8 quantitative and 10 mixed).

These original searches produced a total of 179 qualitative and mixed methods studies deemed potentially eligible for the synthesis. However, on reviewing the items identified by the systematic search, it became clear that not all works of relevance had been picked up. This, we believe, is explained by a number of factors including that the systematic search was based on the titles and the abstracts of texts which did not capture all relevant qualitative studies. This, we conjecture, is because qualitative studies were published often in the form of books or book chapters for which abstracts were unavailable or not sufficiently detailed, or because qualitative studies did not focus primarily on the relationship between socio-economic inequality and radicalisation (although included some discussion of it). For this reason, the database of potentially relevant items was supplemented through consultation with experts in the field from among the wider DARE Consortium. Through this process, 31 additional qualitative texts were identified. **Thus, the final database of potentially eligible texts for inclusion in the meta-ethnographic synthesis consisted of 210 texts based on qualitative and mixed method studies.** A flow diagram of the search and

selection process for both the systematic review (of quantitative studies) and the meta-ethnographic synthesis (of qualitative studies) is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Flow chart of the literature search for both syntheses (systematic review of quantitative findings and meta-ethnographic synthesis)



Adapted from Moher, D. Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., Altman, D.G. (2009) 'Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses: The PRISMA Statement', PLoS Med, 6(6): e1000097.

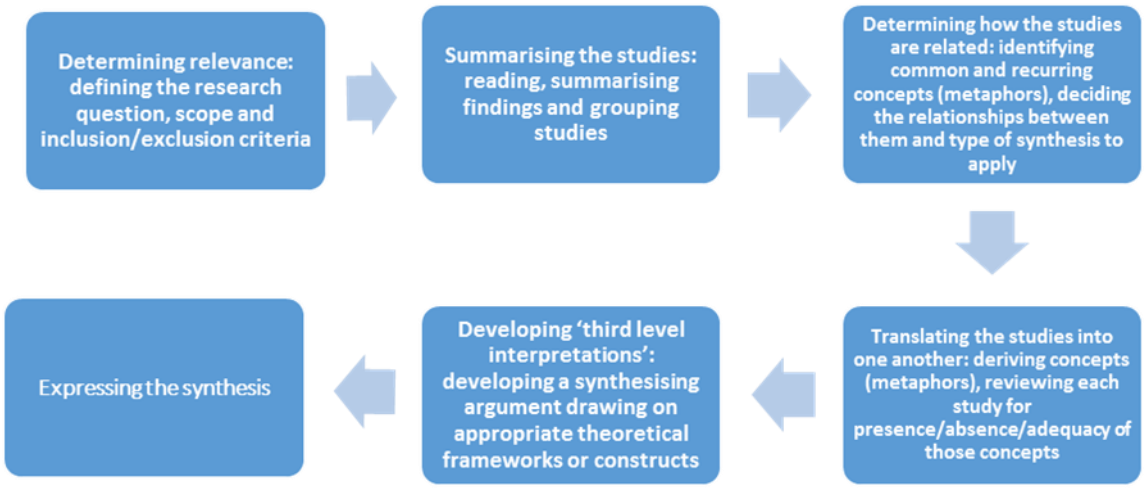
2.2. The meta-ethnography synthesis

This meta-ethnography seeks to:

- identify key concepts and themes in the selected studies through which authors describe and interpret the range of relationships between inequality and radicalisation;
- develop new interpretations through drawing cross-case conclusions by taking concept(s) from one study in order to recognise the same in another study. The explanations and the theories associated with these concepts are also extracted.

The MES was conducted as a six-stage process (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. The six stages of the meta-ethnography synthesis



Stage 1. Determining relevance: defining the research question, scope and inclusion/exclusion criteria

Step 1: Double-checking the abstracts by at least two independent researchers.

Documents were classified into three broad categories: relevant; problematic; not relevant. This was done according to two main criteria: firstly, the article should be empirical; and secondly, the article should deal with the relationship between radicalisation and inequality (even if this is not the main focus of the article).

The publications excluded at this stage mainly lacked a clear empirical dimension to their examination and understanding of the relationship between inequality and radicalisation. Many

offered an interpretation of this relationship by citing existing research, or theory, but the authors' own, empirically-based analysis was not employed to illuminate the discussion. In these cases it was evident that there was a presumption of the relationship (or lack of relationship) between inequality and radicalisation. For example, Sikkens et al. examine parental influence on radicalisation and de-radicalisation according to the lived experiences of former terrorists. Their findings do not deal with the issue of the relationship between inequality and radicalisation but the authors refer to this relationship by citing other research pointing to the lack of any 'clear link' between 'a family background marked by poverty or deprivation and membership in extremist organisations' (Sikkens et al., 2017). However, those publications where the results of the authors' own empirical study are referenced in the discussion of the relationship between inequality and radicalisation remained in the review database, even if the finding does not confirm the relationship. For example, Ahmad (2014), who explores the recruitment of young people to Islamist and extremist religious organisations in Pakistan, argues that it is 'plausible' that macro-level factors and events in the national or global arena or a range of political or social grievances may motivate people to join extremist and Islamist organisations but that the findings of this study suggested that this was 'not necessarily' the reason they did so (Ahmad, 2014). Similarly, Brinkerhoff (2006), who studied the role of Somalian 'digital diaspora' in preventing conflict, links stressful processes of assimilation with violence, where the structure of violence is defined as including 'exclusion, inequality, and indignity'.

A second reason for excluding particular texts from the database at this stage was when terrorism or extremism (notably post-9/11 events) were mentioned in the titles and/or the abstracts of publications as part of a general contextualisation of the research but the content of the article did not engage with the relationship between inequality and radicalisation. For example, Lewicki's (2014) study of the discursive framing of contemporary integration debates and social problems related to integration of Muslims in Europe, refers in its abstract to al-Qaida terrorism, structural inequalities and issues of citizenship. However, the relationship between inequality and radicalisation is not discussed to any significant extent; the author engages rather in theoretical reflection on the management of citizenship in the particular contexts of Germany and the UK. Similarly, despite Sauer and Ajanovic's (2016) book being called *Hegemonic Discourses of Inequality: Right-Wing Organisations in Austria*, it is concerned with the discursive strategies of the extreme right-wing party (FPA) rather than the relationship between inequality and radicalisation. In the abstract of Crivello's (2011) article on the relationship between migration and educational aspirations in the lives of young people, political violence and structural inequalities are also referenced although the article itself did not discuss radicalisation. The author simply concludes that young people's aspirations are formed against the backdrop of economic and social inequalities, a recent history of

political violence and resulting mass displacement**.** Other publications excluded for this reason discuss radicalisation in the context of identity issues but do not consider socio-economic inequality as part of the problem. This is the case, for example, in Brooks and Ezzani's (2017) study of the relationship between formal schooling, Muslim identity formation and the radicalisation process in the US context and Inayat's (2002) analysis of individuals' understandings of what it means to be Muslim in the post-9/11 UK.

A third cause for exclusion was where publications drew their empirical data from media discourses, published autobiographies of former radicals or propaganda material of radical organisations. For example, in his article about the rapid rise of the British Asian boxer Amir Khan, Burdsey demonstrates that in the periods directly after both the 2004 Olympic Games and the 7 July 2005 London bombings, discussion and representation of Khan were inextricably related to debates around multiculturalism, national identity, religious extremism and/or deviance amongst young British Muslim men (Burdsey, 2007). Gunaratna and Haynal's analysis of the background and radicalisation process of Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, the perpetrators of the Boston marathon bombing in April 2013, is based also on media discourses (Gunaratna and Haynal, 2013). Similarly, Gill-Khan's (2017) research draws on narratives of two British former radicals – Ed Husain, a former member of the banned Islamist group Hizb-ut-Tahrir, and ex-Guantanamo Bay detainee, Moazzam Begg – taken from their published autobiographies.

Following discussion within the team about what can be understood as 'empirical', therefore, it was agreed that the review should include only studies using primary research data with human participants (interviews and/or observation). Exceptions to this rule were made in a number of cases where studies based on criminal records or open source biographies were deemed to include highly significant information on the relationship between radicalisation and inequality. These were: a study by van Leyenhorst and Andreas (2017) based on pre-sentencing reports of 26 clients of the Dutch Probation Service (DPS), which included 'several socio-economic, historical, psychopathological and behavioural indicators'; Sageman's (2004) study of terror networks based on an analysis of 172 biographies of terrorists collected from open sources, which challenges assumptions about any linear relationship between radicalisation and inequality through its finding that members of the global Salafist jihad were generally middle-class, educated, young men from caring and religious families; Basra et al.'s (2016) study of 79 European jihadists, based on open sources, which similarly challenges the common assumption of the relationship between inequality and radicalisation; Hegghammer's (2010) comparative study of three waves of Saudi jihadism based on 539 biographies of Saudi militants constructed from open sources and supplemented by 32 interviews with friends and families of jihadists and veterans from foreign jihad fronts, former radicals, moderate Islamists,

journalists and expert commentators; and Timothy Gallimore's (2004) investigation, based on secondary data, of the cycle of violence-trauma-avenge in four cases of terrorism in the USA, which highlights the role of injustice, disadvantage and bullying in a trajectory towards terrorism.

At the end of this process, the number of texts identified as potentially eligible for inclusion in the meta-ethnographic study by category are detailed in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Qualitative documents selected as potentially relevant after search process and consultation with experts (n=210).

Document category	Articles	Books and book chapters	Grey literature
Qualitative studies	127	53	10
Mixed studies	7	2	11
Total = 210	134	55	21

Step 2: Full-reading of the documents and final selection of texts for inclusion

At this stage, full texts were read to check eligibility. This process revealed discrepancies between the presence of key selection criteria in the abstract but their absence in the full-text. The full-reading of the documents allowed us to check more carefully the presence of both key criteria (empirical research and discussion of relationship between inequality and radicalisation). It is important to note that where a text met these two criteria, it was retained in the database regardless of whether the relationship between inequality and radicalisation was a central theme or was marginal to the analysis. Moreover, we chose not to exclude texts on the basis of indicators of quality. The rationale for this decision was that the application of methodological quality criteria would have resulted in a much smaller number of included studies and, in practice, these studies and articles are read and cited in the literature and policy documents on radicalisation regardless of their varying methodological quality or specific limitations.

At the end of this process, the number of items eligible for inclusion in the final database for the synthesis was reduced to 94. The number of texts finally selected for inclusion by category is detailed in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Qualitative documents selected for inclusion after full reading of texts (n=94).

Document category	Articles	Books and book chapters	Grey literature
Qualitative studies	52	20	7
Mixed studies	5	2	8
Total = 94	57	22	15

Stage 2. Summarising the studies: reading, summarising findings and grouping studies

Step 1: The documents were grouped on the basis of four main criteria: (i) context; (ii) population studied in the research; (iii) type of inequality (discrimination/stigmatisation, poverty, class inequality and so forth); (iv) argument line about the relationship between inequality and radicalisation.

Step 2: Extracting the key content of the articles on the basis of a reading template (five criteria)

Type of radicalisation	• Islamist, anti-islamist, cumulative, extreme violence, extreme-right, etc.
Methodology	• Size of sample, population category, age, gender, national context, other variables. • This proved challenging because methodologies varied (from semi-structured face-to-face interviews to public discourses or statements of organisations). The clarity of the methodology also varied greatly between texts.
Concepts of inequality and radicalisation	• Discrimination, injustice, poverty, deprivation, disenfranchisation, exclusion. • Violent extremism, terrorism, violence, radicalism
Nature of relationship between inequality and radicalisation	• Direct/indirect; multifaceted/combined with other factors; general/structural context level/ individual level; emphasized/marginal/uncertain.
Arguments of the authors	• Extracting the relevant quotes. Extraction of the main relevant quotations in order to comment and to help to explain the line of arguments and to limit the dilution of nuances.

Stage 3. Determining how the studies are related: identifying common and recurring concepts (metaphors), deciding on the relationships between them and type of synthesis to apply

First, we generated a list of the key positions of authors in relation to each item in the reading template. Following this, we classified the information to provide a general picture of the homogeneity and/or heterogeneity of the corpus. Texts were classified according to: fieldwork site or context; type of sample (profile of interviewees); and type of relationship between inequality and radicalisation. This step allowed us to determine how the studies compared and thus to assess whether the concepts and ideas were similar, contradictory, or a variation of the research question.

During our reading we focused on two key points:

→ To what extent is the inequality-radicalisation relationship central or marginal to the analysis?

→ Is the relationship between inequality and radicalisation directly highlighted by the author or is it referenced in quotations from the interviewees?

Stage 4. Translating the studies into one another: deriving concepts (metaphors), reviewing each study for presence/absence/adequacy of those concepts

Noblit and Hare (1988) identify three forms of translation:

- Reciprocity
- Opposition
- Diverse but part of a single line of argument

For reasons discussed in Section 3, the corpus of texts in our synthesis lent itself best to the 'line of argument' translation. Concepts derived from the translation of studies into one another were thus organised into 5 distinct lines of argument.

Stage 5. Developing 'third level interpretations'

The five lines of arguments constructed from derived concepts are interpreted as: 'structural inequality'; 'perceived injustice'; 'a mediated relationship'; 'a vicious circle'; and 'a questionable relationship'. Given the large number of studies included in the synthesis and the complexity of the relationship between inequality and radicalisation already implicated in the lines of argument (including its reversibility, its circularity and its mediation by other factors), no attempt was made to generalise at a higher level.

Stage 6. Expressing the synthesis: this may be in textual or diagrammatic form

The synthesis is presented in textual form.

2.3. Limitations and strengths of the meta-ethnographic synthesis

A number of limitations in the methodology as applied should be noted. First, the limitation of our database to texts in English raises the potential that there are significant differences between findings in the literature in English and those contained in texts in other languages, which reflect other national contexts. Future research could usefully compare the findings from this corpus of English-language texts to the findings in texts in different European national contexts. A second, related, constraint concerns the lag with which texts published in national languages are translated or published in English language. Given the rapid expansion of academic and grey literature on radicalisation in recent years, we should expect that recent works published first in languages other than English will have been missed from the database. A third consideration is the difficulty of

assessing how many relevant works may be lost due to the fact that the search process in databases is mainly based on the titles and the abstracts of texts. As noted above, during the various steps in the 'reading' stage of the process, it became clear that there is often significant variance between the content of the abstract and the full text. That key texts were missed was demonstrated by the fact that some leading authors in the field of radicalisation studies were absent from the list of search-generated texts. Finally, the meta-ethnographic synthesis methodology itself, while extremely helpful in systematising the review of literature, suffers from an over-prioritisation of the author's arguments. Given the plurality of disciplines in the social sciences, the variation in approach as well as size and type of sample, it is potentially problematic to give all arguments equal weight in the translation process. Moreover, despite the concern within meta-ethnographic synthesis to retain the specificity of the original texts, the addition of a further level of interpretation cannot but risk losing some of the nuances contained in the original studies.

3. Results

3.1. General characteristics of analysed studies

In relation to **context**, the analysed texts (articles, books/book chapters and research reports) dealt mainly with Western countries, but included also Colombia, Yemen, Bangladesh, Peru, Indonesia, Palestine, Kyrgyzstan, Kenya, Somalia, Cameroon, Sudan, Niger and Nigeria, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Iraq.

In relation to the **population studied**, many articles concerned Muslims either as perpetrators or potential perpetrators of terrorism or as a stigmatised/discriminated population in the aftermath of terrorist events. However, some studies looked more widely at journeys into, and engagements with, fundamentalist religious positions such as Salafism. Studies on right-wing extremism include research relating to activists and supporters of the Freedom Party of Austria (FPO), English Defence League (EDL), British National Party (BNP) and United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), nationalist, racist and white power skinhead groups and scenes, neo-Nazi groups, the Ku Klux Klan and Christian identity groups.

In relation to the **type of inequality** discussed, this was highly diverse (in contrast to the relatively homogenous notion of radicalisation employed, for example). The range of inequalities studied included: financial inequality; perceived inequality; perceived discrimination; poverty; structural economic crisis in a country; family breakdown; structural disadvantage; social exclusion; economic distress; social vulnerability; downward social mobility; humiliation; economic insecurity or displacement; homelessness; unemployment; lack of freedom of expression and political 'silencing';

cultural marginality; vulnerability to stigmatisation; lack of opportunities; hopelessness; poor socio-economic conditions; segregation; socio-spatial marginalisation; and feelings of despair and isolation.

It is important to note that few of the texts analysed drew conclusions on **the relationship between inequality and radicalisation** directly based on the research evidence in the study. This may, in part, reflect a wider tendency in qualitative research to explore phenomena holistically rather than test specific associations or relationships (through a process of hypothesis testing and the elicitation of dependent and independent variables). Amongst the texts analysed here, it was also the case that some authors who did specifically discuss the relationship between inequality and radicalisation, did so based on pre-formed judgements or positions on that relationship. In other cases, authors acknowledged the relationship between social inequality and radicalisation but consciously set out to problematise assumptions about the nature of that relationship or show other 'causes' of, or meanings attached to, extremism. This is particularly the case with studies on the extreme right where authors often contested assumptions about the sole or direct relationship between economic dislocation and extremism and focused their studies on highlighting other dimensions to extreme right activism such as gender (Garland and Treadwell, 2011; Kimmel, 2014), emotional and affective elements such as solidarity (Pilkington, 2016) or on social diversity within extreme right supporters or activists (Blee, 2002; Rhodes, 2010).

The date of publication of the article, and the date of field research reported on, is important to take into account. This review generated articles published between 2002 and 2017 (although most were post-2010) and fieldwork was conducted mainly after 2001. When evaluating the findings of the articles it is important to bear in mind that the notion of radicalisation was increasingly employed and in theoretically more sophisticated ways over time, and especially from 2004 onwards.

3.1.1. Type of radicalisation

Islamist radicalisation (n =70)

The literature concerned with Islamist radicalisation, refers to at least three main types of research:

- Consequences of terrorism and counterterrorism for Muslim populations.
- Experiences or trajectories of (former) jihadists/terrorists and/or their families. Of this category, some articles question the experience of being discriminated against by former terrorists/or jihadists and/or their families. Asylah et al.'s (2014) study examines social discrimination experienced by previously convicted terrorists and their families in Indonesia and their coping strategies in response to it. The second article is an exploration of the experiences and needs of families whose members are accused or suspected of terrorism in the UK and shows that this 'hidden population of women and children' suffers from isolation,

police brutality, undignified treatment, financial hardship, and emotional and psychological difficulties (Guru, 2012).

- Understandings and explanations of Islamist radicalisation and/or fundamentalism among Muslim populations of different backgrounds.

Extreme-right, racist or anti-Islamist or anti-Muslim extremism (n=24)

The relatively low number of included texts – in comparison with those on Islamist radicalisation – demonstrates the way in which the term 'radicalisation' has been applied to date primarily to Islamist extremism. As noted above, it may also reflect the relative lack of empirical studies that tackle the *relationship* between inequality and radicalisation and the tendency to consider the role of inequality as one of a complex set of factors at play. It is also important to note that articles often expose the routinisation of anti-Muslim sentiments or attitudes; given such attitudes are becoming increasingly 'mainstreamed', they fall still further out of the bracket of 'radicalisation'. Indeed, many authors express the concern that the debate on radicalisation, terrorism and counter-terrorism itself can lead to misrecognition and misidentification of Muslims and thus contribute to discrimination of Muslims and a general vilification of Islam. This, in turn, may be a driver of (Islamist) radicalisation.

Another noteworthy finding is that considering the growing literature on both types of radicalisation in English, the number of articles which deal with the issue of inequality as a potential driver of radicalisation and on an empirical basis appears quite low.

3.1.2. Profile of interviewees

The profiles of interviewees in the studies included in our corpus of texts mostly concern the Muslim population in all its diversity (in terms of country, status, relation to Islam and to radicalisation etc.). The groups which formed the focus of the various studies included:

- Muslim women and men living in Western countries (native or migrant)
- Muslim men living in predominantly Muslim countries such as Pakistan, Syria and Kyrgyzstan
- Muslim women and men in other contexts (Nigeria, Taïwan, Kenya, Uganda, Argentina)
- Muslim private university students in predominantly Muslims countries (Bangladesh, Pakistan and India)
- Muslims active in radical Islamist organisations
- European jihadists and foreign fighters
- Jihadists from predominantly Muslim countries

- Minority groups mistaken as Muslims (Sikhs, Hindus, Black and Caribbean young people)
- Stakeholders, officials, police officers, journalists, experts, NGO activists
- Staff, social workers, practitioners of deradicalisation programmes
- Family, close relatives and friends of European foreign fighters
- Former extreme right activists (men) in Sweden, Denmark and Norway
- Right wing extremists: activists or supporters (in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and USA)
- Extreme right movements (Casapound in Italy, English Defence League, KKK, Stormfront in the Netherlands) and their leaders (Casapound)
- White racist Americans

The profiles of the interviewees are highly diverse but mainly capture a range of Muslim populations. This reflects the particular concern of Western academics to understand Islamist radicalisation as a unique form of radicalisation and their subsequent focus, when studying radicalisation, on Muslims in different social contexts but predominantly in Western countries.

In general, most of the studies dealt with the anglophone world including studies from Australia, America, Canada and the UK. However, the global nature of the phenomenon of radicalisation is reflected in the fact that many countries are represented in our corpus. These include European and Nordic countries (in addition to the UK): Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Kosovo, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Sweden and Switzerland. African countries and regions include: Cameroon, Kenya, Niger, North Africa, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda and Western Sahara. Contexts studied from the Middle East include: Iraq, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen. South, Central and East Asian contexts include: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, India, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Taïwan. Finally, from South America, included studies emanated from: Argentina, Colombia and Peru.

Some clear trends concerning discussion of the relationship between inequality and radicalisation were observed across countries. The majority of the articles concerned with the growth of stigmatisation and discrimination as a consequence of terrorism and counter-terrorism are found in the UK, the US and Canadian contexts. This is particularly evident in the case of the US where five of the six articles pertain to this topic. The studies of the participants and staff of deradicalisation programmes are mainly located in the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Norway. The four articles that adopt a diaspora-based approach concern the Somali diaspora (Phoenix, 2011; Thompson and Bucerius, 2017; Sporton et al., 2006; Brinkerhoff, 2006).

The gender and age profiles of the populations studied across the corpus of texts are more difficult to discern because the authors do not systematically provide details about the number of men and women in their sample, nor their ages.

Nine texts draw on studies focusing on women's experiences. Two deal with the lived experience of discrimination and exclusion in the aftermath of terrorist acts and/or in the context of war on terror in Western societies (Casimiro et al., 2007; Phoenix, 2011). Two concern, more specifically, the experiences and issues facing women (whose husbands have been arrested by the police) and their families in the context of the 'war-on-terror' in the UK (Guru, 2012) and in Quebec (CPRLV, 2016). One is about how young women in the UK become Salafi and the impact of conversion to Salafism on their families, education, work and romantic lives (Inge, 2016). Three texts explore the trajectories of women into violent extremism. Of these one follows the paths of three women who joined Syrian Salafi-jihadi groups from the family members' narratives in Sweden, Norway and Denmark (Aasgaard, 2017). Another focuses on women who have been radicalised in Kosovo (Speckhard and Shajkovci, 2017) and Kyrgyzstan (Speckhard et al., 2017) while a third is concerned with the recruitment of women into terrorist organisations (Saltman and Smith, 2015). One text looks at women's participation in white supremacist, neo-Nazi and skinhead groups in the United States (Blee, 2002)

Twenty-nine studies state explicitly that they are based on a sample including men and women.

Approximately twenty-seven studies focus on young people (up to 30 years of age) although this is difficult to specify accurately as many texts do not state the age of the interviewees.

It would appear that young men (12-35 years old) feature most strongly across the whole corpus of texts.

3.1.3. Size of sample

Details of the sample size of the empirical studies were recorded where given. In the case of mixed method studies, these figures relate to the qualitative part of the research only.

Sample of 10 or < 10 individuals = 14 texts

Sample 10-30 individuals = 21 texts

Sample > 30 individuals = 36 texts

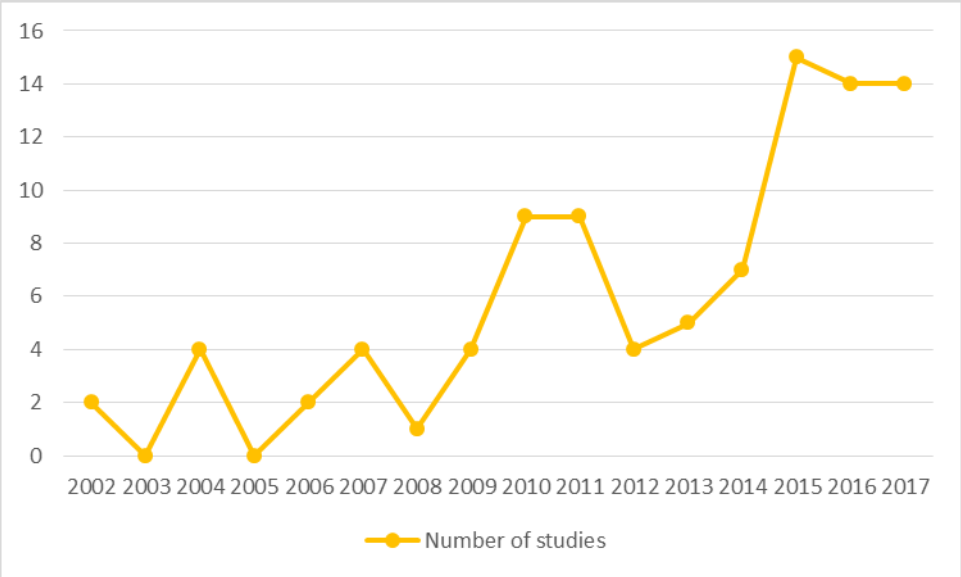
In 23 texts, the size of the sample is not specified.

3.1.4. Date of publication

It is of course important to consider the date of publication given the increasing use, conceptualisation and theoretical advancement of the notion of radicalisation, especially from 2004.

Figure 3 shows the number of texts in the review database by year of publication. It demonstrates how recent the corpus of literature is; of 94 texts in total, 77 were published in the second half of the included period (2010-2017) while just 17 were published in the first half (2002-2009). There is also a significant increase in publications from 2015.

Figure 3. Number of qualitative research studies by year of publication



3.2. Preliminary remarks on the concepts of inequality and radicalisation

Inequality and radicalisation are broad concepts that evade precise definition and this is reflected in the general absence of a clear definition for either concept in the reviewed studies. However, the main approaches to operationalising each of these terms that were adopted are outlined below.

3.2.1. Radicalisation

The term 'radicalisation' is usually either not defined or is reified into its common usage in the media and academic debate. Notwithstanding this, we can discern three broad tendencies in the operationalisation of the term 'radicalisation' in the analysed studies:

Radicalisation refers mainly to terrorism, terrorist acts and their consequences for Muslim populations in the West. In this case, the authors study the resonance of the debates and measures following terrorist acts on the lived experience of Muslims. In many articles radicalisation refers to: the terrorist acts in Western countries (notably the 9/11 events) but also in other contexts; or the consequences of those acts, and the associated policy measures, on Muslim populations. Radicalisation refers to the individual or collective risk of being perceived as radicalised or likely to be

radicalised and the consequences of this for the social conditions and positions of Muslim people. When used in conjunction with this understanding of radicalisation, inequality may have a variety of meanings but is, above all, associated with issues of stigmatisation, discrimination and, more generally, of injustice.

However, the association of radicalisation and terrorism can also be related to the perpetrators of terrorist acts. Thus, Coolsaet (2017: 15, 21), in his research on radicalisation among residents of Molenbeek (Belgium), sees radicalisation as the process of becoming a 'violent extremist' and terrorism (defined as 'the creation of fear, through the use of violence or threat thereof, with the aim of political change') as a tactic of violent extremists. Similarly, Cragin et al. (2015: 3-5) associate radicalisation with 'support for terrorist groups' while Kühle and Lindekilde (2010: 13) define those radicalised as individuals who have 'partaken in terrorism or who have been convicted of planning terrorism'.

The profiles of the studied population, group or individuals are themselves indicators of radicalisation, rendering it unnecessary to explain further. This is clearest in studies of 'foreign fighters', 'convicted terrorists', 'defectors from Islamic State' (see, for example, Speckhard and Yayla, 2015) and beneficiaries of deradicalisation programmes (both former extreme right activists and jihadists). In studies of such groups and individuals, radicalisation is understood simply as adherence or recruitment to diverse violent Islamist or extreme-right organisations such as ISIS, Boko Haram, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) or KKK. Our search terms also led to the inclusion of anti-Muslim, Islamophobic or radical right groups (e.g. English Defence League or Casapound), which are rarely studied through the lens of radicalisation but are discussed as part of the spectrum of extreme right activism.

However, a few texts in our corpus provide a more precise definition of the meaning of radicalisation or engage in extensive discussion on the term. Where this is the case, authors, especially those studying Western countries, tend to adopt a definition of radicalisation, close to the that of Abbas and Siddique (2012: 124) i.e. that 'the term radicalisation means when individuals use religion to justify the use or threat of serious violence'. From this starting point they draw on their empirical work to distinguish between 'softer' and 'harder' forms of radicalism where the former might be understood as some form of resistance manifest in a change in physical appearance and demonstrating a cultural identity shift, while the latter refers to support for violent ideology. Speckhard and Shajkovci (2017: 9) criticise the tendency to equate radicalisation with terrorism arguing that it is, rather 'a precondition to terrorism'. They go on to adopt Bartlett and Miller's (2014) definition of radicalisation as 'a process by which individuals are introduced to an overtly

ideological message and belief system that encourages movement from moderate mainstream beliefs towards extreme views' (Speckhard and Shajkovci 2017: 10).

The question of violence plays a key role in definitions of radicalisation. Coolsaet (2017: 15), for example, defines radicalisation as 'the process of violent socialisation to violent extremism'. For Cragin et al. (2015: 2, 4) and Robinson et al. (2017: 13) – both of whose studies focus on why people do not become violent extremists – see involvement in 'political violence' as the key marker of radicalisation. This focus on the realm of the political is shared by Kühle and Lindekilde (2010: 26) who extend radicalisation to include not only 'using or accepting political violence or terrorism' but also using 'undemocratic' means or aiming for an 'undemocratic' goal. Similarly, Jensen et al. (2016: 8) see acceptance of radical ideology as signifying radicalisation; for them radicalisation is 'the psychological, emotional, and behavioural processes by which an individual or group adopts an ideology that promotes the use of violence for the attainment of political, economic, religious, or social goals'.

This wider association of the acceptance of radical beliefs as constituting radicalisation, whether or not it leads to political violence, is found particularly in the discussion of Islamist extremism. Khosrokhavar's definition of jihadism (2009: 1) suggests that 'a Jihadist group is any group, small or large, for which violence is the sole credible strategy to achieve Islamic ends'. His study of both the ideology of jihadism and the subjective conception of jihadism through a series of qualitative studies on Muslim diasporas in Europe leads him to distinguish between jihadism in the Muslim world and jihadism in the West as follows:

> Jihadism [in the Muslim world] is an ideological movement with major intellectuals, martyrs, figures, and deep roots in the history of the Muslim world. Jihadism has rejuvenated and modernized the radical trends within Islam, which were formerly marginal, and local, and created a new worldwide movement […] Jihadism [in the West] is a social movement with no major intellectual figures, no notable martyrs, and no roots in history, due to the low intellectual level of the Jihadist Muslims in Europe. Only Arab intellectuals in London have been leading figures in Jihadist constellations. (Khosrokhavar, 2009: 249)

In contrast, Ahmad (2016) states that the term radicalisation 'refers to the processes by which people adopt extremist beliefs, ideologies and worldviews that may or may not lead to violent actions'. Speckhard and Shajkovci (2017: 9-10) also seek to differentiate radicalisation from terrorism, stating that while radicalisation is often a precondition for terrorism, it is not always the first step toward terrorism or violence. In either case, they say (ibid.) 'radicalisation represents a

process by which individuals are introduced to an overtly ideological message and belief system that encourages movement from moderate mainstream beliefs towards extreme views'.

While this view may be legitimate in that the adherence to radical beliefs could signal future violent actions and thus help identify early warning signs (van Leyenhorst and Andreas, 2017), such an approach runs the risk of stigmatising particular populations. Thus, some authors are keen to warn against an ever-expanding definition of 'radical', 'radicalisation' and terrorism. Based on his study of three activists of the Student Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) – two of whom had spent 27-30 months in prison for denigrating a photo of India's flag and making provocative speeches – Ahmad (2017) criticises the over-application of term 'radical' and its equation with terrorism. On the contrary, he argues, a radical is someone who demands substantial or extreme changes in the existing system and that being radical excludes the use of violence. Thus, an Islamist refers to someone who views Islam as not only a set of rituals but as related to society and politics (ibid.). Aasgard (2017) is also highly critical of the notion of radicalisation. Based on a narrative analysis of the lived experiences of family members of Scandinavian women who had joined IS or the Nusrah-front in the Syrian civil war, Aasgaard contends that radicalisation is 'a politically contrived concept, based on an attempt to understand, explain and prevent home-grown terrorism'.

Amongst right wing activists also, 'radicalisation' is not recognised as a description of self. In Van der Valk and Wagenaar's (2010: 26) study of the factors and phases of right-wing extremism, they found that interviewees rarely defined themselves as radical, i.e. as a 'right-wing extremist', preferring to characterise the ideology as 'right-wing nationalism', just 'right-wing' or 'national socialism'. This illustrates the fact that few studies of radicalisation challenge the researchers' definition of radicalisation on the basis of respondents' own understandings of the categories of research.

3.2.2. Inequality

The analysed studies take a broad range of approaches to operationalising **inequality**. The main point to note is that, in qualitative studies, the notion of inequality rarely refers to specific variables but is defined variously and in ways which mobilise either *objective forms of inequality* (such as level of poverty, class-belonging, context of economic crisis, deprivation, social exclusion, residence in deprived areas etc.), or *subjective conceptions of inequality* (feelings of being treated unequally, exclusion from social involvement, stigmatisation, discrimination, pejorative labelling, lack of dignity). Given the (frequent) absence of systematic data on the social positions of the individuals participating in the research studies it is often not possible to know whether even these – objective and subjective – markers of inequality attach to the same, or different, individuals.

Thus, in the studies analysed, the term 'inequality' often remained quite vague or limited to the experience of discrimination or different kinds of social vulnerabilities, or even to a mixture of low social positions, poverty, marginalisation, deprivation and perceived injustice. Quite a number of the studies do not attempt to explain what inequality is specifically, but whilst discussing the relationship between inequality and radicalisation or referring to factors leading or contributing to the radicalisation process of individuals, they refer to a particular form of inequality or disadvantage such as marginalisation, stigmatisation, economic insecurity, isolation, inability to develop a sense of belonging, lack of opportunities, unemployment, discrimination and so forth. For example, Shetret et al. (2013) draw on the concept of 'marginalisation' as a particular outcome of (or factor leading to) societal inequality whilst discussing violent extremism in Kenya and Somaliland. Saltman and Smith's (2015: 9) discussion of various factors pushing western women to migrate to ISIS-controlled territory, also note that 'feeling isolated socially and/or culturally' as well as 'uncertainty of belonging within a western culture' are push factors in this process. Similar factors are identified in extreme-right studies, expressed through the idea of being 'a foreigner in my own country', or being denied the right to feel national pride or patriotism, feeling politically silenced or even threatened due to the political standpoint embraced (Miller-Idriss, 2009; Pilkington, 2016; Rhodes, 2010, 2011; De Koster and Houtman, 2008). All of these perceptions could be considered as particular forms of disadvantage or inequality. Similarly, Coolsaet (2017: 63) refers to 'isolation' and 'vulnerability' among young people as constituting 'a fertile breeding ground for violent radicalisation'. Speckhard and Shajkovci (2017: 13) too refer to 'high unemployment' (an outcome of gender inequality) among drivers of radicalisation in Kosovo in their research investigating women's roles in supporting, preventing and fighting violent extremism. Barber et al.'s research (2016) – although not directly mentioning radicalisation – refers to a number of different forms of disadvantage in the context of societal upheaval (sometimes turning into violent street demonstrations) in Palestine against Israeli forces. The factors mentioned include 'limited access to basic resources', 'low employment', 'poverty', 'feeling broken', 'persistent humiliation' and 'inadequate access to medical care'; all of these can be considered as particular outcomes of inequalities. De Koster and Houtman's (2008: 14) research on the Dutch Stormfront (online platform for right-wing extremism) finds activists complain of 'being unable to express ideas' and 'being stigmatized' with one reporting having been 'fired from job' due to her/his political views. Pilkington's (2016) study of activists in the English Defence League found a recurrent sense that they felt like 'second class citizens' while Rhodes (2011: 114) also cites individuals who felt 'treated unfairly' because, as they put it, migrants were treated better than 'Englishmen'.

Inequality features in a number of texts in the specific form of vulnerability. For example, Basra et al. (2016: 4) (based on interviews with 79 European jihadists) refer to prison as a place of vulnerability 'in which extremists can find plenty of "angry young men" who are "ripe" for radicalisation'. Coolsaet (2017: 63) also notes that 'isolation and vulnerability of many young people in the community constitute a fertile breeding ground for violent radicalisation'. Jensen et al. (2016: 51) pays particular attention to what he refers to as 'psychological vulnerability', which he describes as 'cognitive and emotional characteristics that threaten a person's sense of self, which in turn makes them vulnerable to the adoption of radical beliefs and an engagement of radical behaviour'. The authors set out a range of (perceived) disadvantaged states of being such as personal humiliation, personal helplessness, significance loss, failure to assimilate to dominant cultures, emotional distress, cultural disillusionment, anomie and loss or distant relations from community members that contribute to such psychological vulnerability. Among the literature on the extreme right, traumatic and abusive experiences in childhood, as well as experience of bullying, negative personal experiences with immigrant youth, domestic violence and parental conflict are found to be widespread (Van der Valk, 2010; Van der Valk and Wagenaar, 2010; Garland and Treadwell, 2011; Gabriel, 2014; Kimmel, 2014; Pilkington, 2016) although other authors (Busher, 2016; Blee, 2002) warn that it is far from always the case that members of extreme right groups are 'damaged' or abused.

When operationalising the socio-economic variables on which they base the categories of poverty, marginalisation, deprivation etc. few authors clarify the criteria that they employ. These terms are often used broadly and without indicating the objective criteria to identify individuals or groups as poor, marginalised or deprived. Some authors such as Aslam (2014) explain that the term 'poverty' refers not only to 'money' but is a complex measure which 'includes issues of marginalization, alienation, prejudice, bias, discrimination, stereotyping, profiling and so forth'. This reminds us that the qualitative approach (which allows individuals to narrativise their experience) means that inequality and injustice are expressed subjectively and that often omit objective details that allow us to understand 'from where' (in the social stratification of society) people are talking.

Depending on the author's discipline (sociology, psychology, political science, geography etc.) and their approach, however, in some cases injustice may be more specifically defined. For instance, studies primarily concerned with issues of discrimination might address one domain of life; Livengood and Stodolska's research (2004), for example, focuses on the effects of discrimination and 'constraints negotiation' on the leisure behaviour of American Muslims. Alternatively, they might approach the issue through the lens of belonging; Baker's study of the 'cultural safety' of Muslim communities in Canada uses the term 'social health' to indicate 'a subjective state of social belonging incorporating both personal and social identities'. The focus of her analysis, however, draws on the

concept of 'cultural safety', developed by Maori nurses to understand the negative health effects of inequalities experienced by the indigenous people of New Zealand (and applied also in Canada) (Baker, 2007).

In some research, the relationship between radicalisation and inequality is assumed. Thus, Garland and Treadwell (2012: 123-4) describe the English Defence League as 'a collective of largely marginalised, white, working-class men who have used the EDL's marches to become involved in violent and hostile forms of direct action against what the group terms "Islamic extremism"'. This argument is based on the growth in popularity of the EDL, amongst some segments of England's 'marginalised and disenfranchised white working class' (ibid.: 123). Similarly, in her study of the Somalian diasporic digital network, *somalinet*, Brinkerhoff (2006: 26) asserts that her research 'focuses on one group that might be considered a resource base for violent action: diasporas from failed states' and starts from the premise that research shows a strong correlation between marginalisation and violence.

Interpretation of the arguments set out in the analysed studies is hindered by the frequent lack of clear distinction between structural economic conditions (economic crisis, structural poverty in particular regions, areas etc.), socio-economic exclusion, marginalisation and perceived injustice. In some studies it appears that various forms of injustice experienced by Muslim populations are equated with economic exclusion or that socio-economic exclusion and ethno-cultural exclusion are completely inextricable. Indeed, these studies often warn that the intersection of these exclusions may itself induce radicalisation if we are not alert to the dangers of generalising the link between Islam and violence or problematic understandings of Islam in Western societies.

Thus, we have two competing causal relationships being studied: the role of inequality in producing radicalisation; and the role of radicalisation in producing inequality (or injustice/discrimination).

3.3. Inequality-radicalisation relationships

Of the three forms of translation identified by Noblit and Hare (1988) – reciprocity, opposition (refutation) and line of argument – the third option, the common line of argument, was the most appropriate in our synthesis of studies. This is because in the studied texts there is significant agreement that there is a relationship between inequality and radicalisation and no direct refutation of its existence or significance. However, there is also no complete reciprocity between understandings of this relationship; indeed, understandings of the role, nature and even direction of the relationship vary from study to study (as outlined in Section 3.1). Thus adopting the line of

argument translation allowed us to recognise diversity in interpretations while identifying reciprocity where it was found. Poverty, marginalisation, deprivation, low economic backgrounds and/or discrimination and perceived injustice at the societal and/or personal level are understood as contributing in varying degrees to radicalisation or as resulting from radicalisation.

In the synthesis of the findings of the analysed studies, two interpretations of the relationship between inequality and radicalisation were identified: direct, and indirect. The former maintains that **structural inequality** (such as belonging to a disadvantaged group, class, district, country) **but also perceived inequality** are **directly connected** to the process of radicalisation. The latter demonstrates that **some determinant factors, drivers or variables mediate the link between inequality and radicalisation**. In the case of such indirect links, authors point to the absence of any consistent relationship between inequality and radicalisation and the complex nature of the relationship. While this might be interpreted as constituting a refutation of the first interpretation, the range of issues and factors taken into account in the qualitative studies analysed here should alert us to the importance of not artificially opposing different positions and of understanding radicalisation in a holistic way. However, since this synthesis was specifically designed to understand the relationship between inequality and radicalisation, it synthesises findings about that relationship only and, while noting the mediating factors discussed, it does not systematically review the findings on any driver of radicalisation other than inequality.

The findings of the synthesis are set out below according to five distinct lines of argument developed. The first two lines of argument posit a **direct** relationship between inequality and radicalisation: in the first case this pertains to structural inequality and in the second to subjective inequality (perceived injustice). The third and fourth lines of argument both understand inequality and radicalisation to be **indirectly** related. These lines of argument explore: the interaction of radicalisation and inequality – especially in the form of stigmatisation and misrecognition – creating a 'vicious circle' of co-production; and the way in which inequality is mediated by other factors in driving radicalisation. The fifth, and final, line of argument presents refutational studies, which suggest a lack of relationship between inequality and radicalisation. In all cases, attention should also be paid to the direction of the relationship since, as noted above, inequality may be understood as a root cause of radicalisation *or* a consequence of it (since radicalisation may have a negative impact on the socio-economic position of people and heighten perceived injustice). This reversibility of the relationship is noted in those lines of arguments and concepts where it is evident.

3.3.1. Structural inequality as the bedrock of radicalisation

The first line of argument proposes that socio-economic inequality directly drives radicalisation and is often presented as a counter-weight to interpretations suggesting violent extremism is driven

by ideology or religion. Inequality is not necessarily presented as the sole driver of radicalisation but a structural condition underpinning and directly driving the process. The studies suggested three distinct ways in which socio-economic factors drive radicalisation trajectories, expressed in the concepts outlined below.

Concept 1: Setting the stage for violent extremism: Socio-economic deprivation

A number of studies suggested that poor socio-economic conditions – rather than ideology or religion – lie at the root of radicalisation into violent extremism (Ahmed, 2016; Christensen 2015). Such 'conditions' included high unemployment (or under-employment), permanent dependence on state welfare, an inadequate public health care system, a poor school system and poor social mobility due to an intractable class system (Boukhars and Amar, 2011). Shetret et al. (2013: 27), in a study designed to inform international efforts to counter violent extremism in Somaliland and Kenya, identified common perceptions among local informants across coastal Kenya and Somaliland that poor access to public services and employment opportunities were key drivers of community insecurity as they directly contributed to a sense of disenfranchisement and marginalisation, particularly among young people (Shetret et al., 2013). This finding challenges arguments that radicalisation is a solely ideologically-driven process by pointing to the role of individuals' insecurity in accessing basic economic rights such as public services and employment opportunities (ibid.: 20). Similarly, a recent report by the United Nations Development Programme (2017: 58), assessing the factors leading people to extremism in Cameroon, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan based on interviews with over 700 people, identifies economic factors such as underemployment and deprivation as contributory factors in people's participation in violent extremist organisations. Although the report recognises that inadequate economic conditions are not the only driver of radicalisation – pointing to family circumstances, childhood experiences, educational access, religious ideologies and state and citizenship issues as influential also – the role of economic factors is judged to be one of the main factors in the radicalisation process because 'where there is injustice, deprivation and desperation, violent extremist ideologies present themselves as a challenge to the status quo and a form of escape' (ibid.: 85).

Coolsaet's (2017: 9, 17) study[2] conducted in Molenbeek – a largely Muslim area frequently portrayed as one the world's main breeding grounds of violent Islamism – identified socio-economic factors including unemployment as the most-important problem in this milieu. He concluded that segregation or lack of social capital – which is a result of cultural diversity, economic and social disadvantages, distrust in society and state – is an important factor in radicalisation (ibid.: 50). This

[2] In this study 406 individuals were interviewed including both men and women.

relationship between segregation and radicalisation is recognised by Khosrokhavar (2009) as present at a more general level. Socio-spatial concentration of poverty in this way is a factor in radicalisation:

> Banlieues are a French peculiarity related to the high concentration of poor people, the segregation process, and the subjective relation to the colonial past in the daily life of young 'Arabs'. Some of these ghettos are theaters of radicalisation and Jihadism (ibid.: 189)

In some texts analysed, a direct relationship between inequality and radicalisation is suggested through the depiction of radicalised individuals' backgrounds even though this does not result in a sustained argument by the author about the relationship between inequality and radicalisation. For instance, in family narratives of three Scandinavian women who joined Syrian Salafi-jihadi groups, the socio-economic situation of radicalised individuals are referred to, such as 'she had no job', 'she was homeless' (Aasgaard, 2017). However, the only connection made between inequality and radicalisation by the author concerns the negative impact felt by the family after their female family members had joined Syrian Salafi-jihadi groups, namely, 'They feel that society has abandoned them' (ibid.: 267). Azam and Fatima (2017), who studied the beneficiaries of a deradicalisation programme in Pakistan found that participants belonged to large or broken families with weak socio-economic profiles (although they identify also several additional shared characteristics such as experience of physical abuse or negligence as a child of a non-socio-economic nature). In his study of the family background of seventeen Belgian and Dutch converts, Van San notes that all of the western foreign fighters came from lower- or lower middle-class socio-economic backgrounds and had a low or medium level of education (Van San, 2015). The Dutch foreign fighters studied by Weggemans and al. (2014) are individuals 'with middle and low education levels, originating from lower or lower middle class socio-economic backgrounds' (ibid.: 107). They were raised in relatively bad neighbourhoods in both traditional religious immigrant and Islamic families as well as in ethnically Dutch families (Weggemans et al., 2014).

Hegghammer's (2016) comparative analysis of three waves of jihadist recruits from Saudi Arabia (a total of 539 biographies) is informative here. Although finding diversity in socio-economic backgrounds in all three waves of recruits, unemployment was more common among al-Qaida recruits (recruited 1996-2001) than among early (pre-1996) Saudi jihadists. He finds extensive anecdotal information on unemployment in the biographies of second wave jihadists. One Guantanamo prisoner who went to Afghanistan in March 2001, for example, said, 'I read on the Internet about the Taliban. I was looking for a job. The page said they need Muslims and their help. So I thought they would have jobs helping Muslims.' (Hegghammer, 2010: 131). Another explained that 'I finished elementary school, and sat around without a job for many years prior to leaving for

Afghanistan.' (ibid.) These rationales are consistent with evidence that unemployment in the kingdom increased rapidly in the second half of the 1990s as a result of a rising youth population and decreasing oil revenues (ibid.). However, it is the third wave of militants (recruited to QAP or al-Qaida on the Arabian Peninsula, post-2001) that are the least privileged of the three waves since they have the lowest levels of education and highest rates of unemployment (ibid.: 189). Nonetheless, even this last group, Hegghammer notes, 'cannot be described as poor or underprivileged' (ibid.). Thus, he concludes – rather ambiguously – that 'the hypothesis that unemployment and idleness fuelled recruitment to al-Qaida's training camps is probably correct' (ibid.: 131).

Radicalisation into extreme right movements is also associated by some authors with social problems - understood as a real situation or a feeling of being excluded – rather than ideology alone (Christensen, 2015). Studies of activists in the English Defence League by both Busher (2016) and Pilkington (2016) found the majority to be either out of work, in low-income jobs or earning a living through precarious and semi-legal activities. Thus although individuals themselves rarely connect their material circumstances with their trajectory into extreme right activism (Pilkington, 2016: 85), those circumstances remain an important context for understanding life decisions. Pilkington's (ibid.) study of EDL activism shows that, although not citing this as a reason for their activism, individuals talked frequently about surviving rather than living (often on welfare benefits), dependence on others, rent arrears, eviction, being on housing lists and shortage of money on an everyday basis. Here it is important to note that deprivation experienced may be relative rather than absolute. For example, Kimmel (2014: 70) notes that while members of far-right movements in Scandinavia are generally from lower middle-class rather than working-class origins, they are 'downwardly mobile' (in comparison to their parents' generation) and work sporadically and with little control over their own labour or workplace. Moreover, the spike in youth unemployment they experience coincides with a spike in the numbers of asylum seekers arriving (ibid.). This same sense of relative deprivation in relation to access to public services is identified in the studies by Rhodes (2011, 2014) and Pilkington (2016) where those supporting or active in extreme right movements cite privileged access of 'others' (ethnic minority, especially Pakistani or wider Asian, communities) to welfare, housing and even cultural provision as central to their reasons for supporting extreme right movements. Garland and Treadwell (2011) also find this pattern among three individual cases of male EDL supporters from working-class backgrounds. In two of the three cases, they report, the respondents' 'deprived background had left them with a feeling of resentment toward local Muslim populations whom they felt had been unfairly prioritized in the allocation of scarce local authority

resources' (ibid.: 632). This is explored in more detail below in relation to the role of 'perceived injustice'.

The relationship between inequality (coming from a lower or lower middle class socio-economic background, poverty or deprivation) and radicalisation is a common feature of radicalised people in the different studies cited above. However, the nature of qualitative research - with its relatively small samples and often inductively driven research questions – means that direct relationships between structurally rooted socio-economic conditions (at individual or societal level) and radicalisation are difficult to test, model or generalise. Thus qualitative studies tend to understand the difficulties, frustrations and forms of exclusion related to low socio-economic positions as factors in the multifaceted process of radicalisation. Recognising the complexity of understanding the combinations and interactions of these factors often leads authors to argue either that radicalisation is a complex process which should be understood on a case-by-case basis (see for example, Weggemans, Bakker and Grol, 2014; Botha, 2015; Azam and Fatima, 2017) or to present inequality as a factor among many others that are more or less interchangeable or cumulative (see for example Ahmad, 2014, 2016). Nevertheless, these studies provide important and valuable data on the backgrounds and, in some cases, the self-understandings of radicalised people, which point to the direct impact of inequality on radicalisation trajectories.

Concept 2: Global social injustice

Social conditions such as injustice and discrimination are experienced as global as well as national or local. Among Muslims in the UK, global social injustice (as opposed to ideologically driven social conflict) is found to be the chief driver of radicalisation (Ahmed, 2016). Inge's (2016) study of young women in the UK turning to Salafism found that some interviewees attending Islamic Society (ISOC) events encountered there a focus on emotive current events and political issues rather than improving Islamic knowledge:

> […] two women I interviewed had been particularly proactive in their ISOCs, which had at that time promoted an Islamist interpretation focused on raising awareness of perceived injustices against Muslims worldwide. They said they even met people there who approved of suicide bombings of civilians under certain circumstances. (Inge, 2016: 81)

This global social injustice is linked to the violence of the colonial past and the subsequent sense of injustice and disappointment as well as the use and abuse of state power. A sense of betrayal (by their state and the West) among North Africans living in Europe and the West, it is suggested, drives recruitment and participation in terrorism (Githens-Mazer, 2009). In many cases, the structural

inequality is embedded in macro-economic inequalities between the global North and the global South. The social injustice that characterises some Muslim countries (such as North African countries), as a consequence of the North-South divide, is part of the bedrock of the radicalisation process:

> The subsequent sense of injustice and disappointment, relating to the use and abuse of state power, continues to shape North African political mobilization, and worryingly has created a latent basis for radicalisation among North Africans living and working in Europe. (Githens-Mazer, 2009)

In this sense, terrorism should not be understood 'as a "neutral reality" but as a reflection of an asymmetrical order of political domination and resistance' (Ahmad, 2017: 119).

Khosrokhavar's (2009) study of the echoes of jihadism in the West finds humiliation to be directly related to violence. 'A vicarious humiliation' or 'humiliation by proxy', nurtured by the physical humiliation of Muslims in Muslim World and Europe, he argues, engenders a direct and intolerable sense of injustice (ibid.). This is expressed below in the words of one of the respondents in Khosrokhavar's study:

> 'You shouldn't kill innocent people. The Americans do that to the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and in Afghanistan. They sell their tanks to the Israelis to kill Palestinians. Bin Laden doesn't do all for money. He's already rich. The Americans make people hate them with their policies, and what Bin Laden did was not good but he is paying too. It is better to attack the government. The US does serious things in secret, everywhere. All these people have to be woken up so that they will come to know the whole truth and maybe the goodies are really the baddies, or worse still. They left the Muslims in Bosnia to die just for money! Then, when people of North African descent go to Afghanistan, I say it is normal. Young people (Muslims in France) don't have plans anymore. They don't have anything any more… There are people who come to recruit them. They are good talkers and promise things and off they go. They sacrifice themselves. It is religion. We are attacked. We have to strike back. They are slowly killing us. A small part of it is religious, but it is mostly the anger inside them that makes these young people leave and sacrifice their lives in Afghanistan. The TV stirs up the hatred. They show the injustice every day, politicians who are never imprisoned, dreadful pictures and it's no good'. (Omar, 25 years-old) (cited in ibid.: 200).

According to Khosrokhavar, global social injustice characterises a type of jihadist individual, 'the justice seeker', who is motivated by the conviction that injustice in the world is due to Western and, especially, American hegemony (Khosrokhavar, 2009).

> The humiliations endured by Muslims in many parts of the world, related in a real or imaginary way to Occidental hegemony, makes Jihadist Islam the only major bearer of the anti-imperialist standard in the West, particularly among converts. (ibid.: 235)

Concept 3: Exploitation of inequality

Studies of both Islamist and extreme-right radicalisation find that radical organisations exploit inequality experienced by the population.

The literature on Islamist radicalisation shows how radical organisations attract people by offering material gain and/or a grievances repertoire of militancy in order to manipulate individuals and/or groups. Socio-economic difficulties, and/or grievances, are part of the repertoire of action and militancy of radical organisations and, consequently, of their success. This understanding of the radicalisation process is found primarily in the context of developing countries. Musa's (2012) study of Boko Haram – based on interviews conducted with Nigerian experts - ascribes a central role to poverty in the rise and the success of Boko Haram, which appeared at a time of a major economic recession in Nigeria. Musa (ibid.) argues for the relevance of the Frustration Aggression Hypothesis (FAH) in the explanation of the emergence and the continuity of Boko Haram and notes that Muhammad Yusuf chose the poorest parts of Nigeria to begin his hate campaign. Another study of Nigeria, based on qualitative data obtained through 50 interviews with Nigerian stakeholders (journalists, NGO activists, Islamic clerics, university lecturers, computer experts living in Nigeria or in London), concludes that despite its reputation for fundamentalist doctrine, a major reason for the surge in activity of Boko Haram is not religious fervor but the level of social injustice that has led to rises in poverty and unemployment in the country (Suleiman and Karim, 2015). The study led by Boukhars and Amar on what they call 'Western Sahara vulnerability to militancy' after the events of Laayoune in November 2010, suggests a similar, albeit more cautious, interpretation. They suggest that collusion with radicalised groups such as Qaedat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Maghrib al-Islami (al-Qaida for Jihad in the Land of the Islamic Maghreb or AQIM) is financial (Boukhars and Amar, 2011). They indicate that cooperation for material gain seems to be the main motivation of the close ties between Polisario rebels and AQIM. They report that one arrested individual confessed to 'repeatedly delivering food to AQIM for financial reasons' (ibid.: 224).

Radical organisations (such as ISIS) exploit inequality through control of economic and social infrastructures; joining ISIS becomes a means of material survival. Based on the preliminary results of

the Islamic State Interviews Project (which interviewed thirteen Syrian IS defectors about life inside the 'Islamic State'), Speckard and Yailah conclude that one of the tactics applied by ISIS:

> […] is to quickly gain control of all the economic and social infrastructures in an area – making it difficult to resist – thereby forcing the inhabitants to join in order to survive, even to literally obtain food. (Speckhard and Yaylah, 2015: 99)
>
> They join for a loaf of bread. Because of these factors, it was very easy for IS to recruit the youth inside Raqqa (Abu Walid) (Speckhard and Yaylah, 2015: 102)

Another informant reported, 'If you do not fight for IS, you die from hunger as they would not feed or support you, or let you work. So, eventually, you either fight for them or die' (ibid.: 102). A third interviewee noted the benefits, on the other hand, of joining the group:

> I could stand six months before I was out of money and had to join them. If you fight for them, they pay two hundred US dollars per month, and also supply all your needs. So, you do not need to spend any money. Two hundred dollars is a lot more than a high-ranking judge can make in Syria today and equals to over sixty thousand Syrian pounds. When I joined, they told me I need to go to fight in Ramadi for a year and then I will be free to go anywhere in the Caliphate. They also give you a free house, furniture, all your needs in a house – even the money to purchase slave girls (Abu Jamal). (Speckhard and Yayla, 2015: 102)

The study of the SWAT valley deradicalisation programme in Pakistan also emphasises that many families in the region were poor and had little choice other than to join the militants. The majority of the 47 programme beneficiaries had been unemployed or in precarious situations, surviving as manual labourers on daily wages, before joining the militants (Azam and Fatimah, 2017).

The 'grievance repertoire' noted above, however, also features strongly in extreme-right studies. From his study of the rise in support for the British National Party in the town of Burnley (England), Rhodes (2010) notes that one tactic of party is to exploit social inequalities and sieze 'ownership' of 'white backlash'[3] sentiments. This is evident in narratives of those voting for the BNP in which they attack multiculturalism and draw on discourses of 'unfairness' and 'equality' to justify what they often saw as socially unacceptable political behaviour (Rhodes, 2010: 96). The exploitation of the grievances and frustrations of deprived and marginalised groups is also underlined in Garland and Treadwell's (2011) study of the English Defence League. The grievances of those they refer to as 'a

[3] 'White backlash' is used by Hewitt (2005) to refer to an emerging response to muliticulturalism and policies pursuing racial equality which expresses itself as a feeling that ethnic minority concerns are given too much attention and that the grievances and perspectives of the white community are ignored.

disenfranchised section of the white working class' are rooted in 'a dense tapestry of social, economic and cultural conditions and neglects' whose consequences are played out at global, national and local level (ibid.: 626):

> It is this connection between anger, marginalization, alienation and frustration felt by many young men in deprived white working-class communities that the EDL has been adept in exploiting. (ibid.: 632).

The transposition of a social register of injustice to an ideological one is also evident in radical Islamist movements. Khosrokhavar argues that jihadism, for example, transposes the Marxist notion of the fight against imperialism into the fight against *taqut* (idolatrous governments).

> Jihadism takes up many notions of extreme-left Marxism by renaming it through Islamic idioms. Imperialism becomes 'world arrogance' (*istikbar*) or idolatry *(taqut*); the working class becomes the oppressed (*mustadh'afin*); the repressive ruling classes become the oppressors (*mustakbirin*). (Khosrokhavar, 2009: 252)

3.3.2. Perceived injustice: the reversibility of the relationship between inequality and radicalisation

The second line of argument focuses on the relationship between the subjective understanding of inequality – perceived injustice - and radicalisation. Here the discerned concepts are relatively distinct and discrete in relation to extreme right and Islamist radicalisation. **In relation to the extreme right**, while social inequality experienced by activists is not objectively proven, studies show that activists perceive themselves to be unjustly treated while preferential treatment is given to 'others'. Thus, in this case, **perceived inequality gives rise to grievance, which fuels radicalisation. In the case of Islamist extremism**, inequality and radicalisation are related in the opposite direction. **Terrorist events, and the perception of Muslims as perpetrators of them, acts as a source of social vulnerability for Muslim populations leading to, or embedding, discrimination and inequality.**

Concept 1: 'Second-class citizens'

Among supporters and activists of extreme right movements and parties in the UK, the belief that the government gives preferential treatment to ethnic minorities in terms of access to benefits, social housing and jobs is commonplace and constructs immigrants and minority ethnic groups as a 'racial threat' in that they compete with 'indigenous' people for scarce economic resources (Rhodes, 2011: 108). This is illustrated by claims documented by Rhodes (ibid.: 114) that public resources are disproportionately and unfairly allocated to immigrants *vis-à-vis* those who are 'indigenous' community members: 'This is my country… I am a bloody Englishman, and you are treating them ("Asians") better than us, this is my country, not his'. The BNP voters studied by Rhodes (ibid.: 108)

construct what was interchangeably termed the 'Asian/Pakistani/Muslim' population as 'benefit-scroungers' who are, as such, undeserving of welfare provision and 'a material, political, and cultural threat to locality and nation'. Such an account of perceived unjust treatment is also identified by Klandermans and Mayer (2011). Their life-story interviews with 157 activists from 15 extreme right-wing organisations in Italy, France, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands showed remarkably similar accounts of interviewees' sense of having received 'unjust treatment' by authorities (ibid.: 183). They also found a shared account by many right-wing extremists of the exploitation of welfare provisions by immigrants:

> […] among German RWE [Right-Wing Extremists], the construal of shared grievances revolves to a large extent around the perceived exploitation of the German welfare state at the expense of native Germans by immigrants, asylum seekers, and other aliens who are accused of having contributed nothing to the welfare state in the first place. For example, one interviewee (Ute, female, 63) complained: 'Hence I don't see that this can work at all, when you are a welfare state, when you have a social security system, that this is then used by people – I refrain from saying abused now – but used, who come here and have never contributed a penny. It simply cannot work'. (ibid.: 243)

Pilkington's (2016: 174) study of activists in the English Defence League shows they are motivated by the compulsion to articulate the hardship and injustice they perceive themselves to experience; this grievance is expressed through the narrative of 'self' as 'second-class citizens' (in contrast to ethnic minorities who receive 'privileged' treatment). This leads to a racialised discourse of the 'unjust' allocation of resources in conditions of constraints on those resources which, in the UK context, is focused on access to social housing and benefit entitlements. As one respondent in that study put it:

> They come in this country, bam, house, house done up, money to get everything they want … about five or six years ago, they even used to get free driving lessons … Can you get your breath at that? Their kids used to get free cricket lessons, about five, six years ago. … and I couldn't afford to get my son into the local football team, do you know? It's just the two-tier system. (Tina) (cited in Pilkington, 2016: 160)

In Rhodes' (2010: 90) study, BNP voters also complained that there were special 'Welfare Offices' for ethnic minority communities that white communities had no access to, while a former BNP electoral candidate claimed that one borough (where the Pakistani community lived) had received as much funding as all 14 other boroughs in Burnley put together.

The perception of unfair treatment among extreme right-wing individuals in some cases is expressed as resulting in the erosion of European traditions and culture. Members of the Dutch Stormfront

online community, for example, feel that their cultural characteristics, customs and traditions are being 'assimilated' (De Koster and Houtman, 2008: 11). Similarly, Bartlett et al.'s (2011) study of over 10,000 individuals' comments and discussions on online digital platforms from 11 European countries, identifies conventional populist right-wing economic narratives around the job opportunities lost to, and 'abuse of welfare system' by, immigrants (ibid.: 48) but concludes that support for populist parties and movements is associated primarily with preservation of cultural identity (ibid.: 56).

Activism provides a mechanism for resisting this perceived second-class status through a discursive reordering of privilege and prejudice in which 'we' are seen as the discriminated and those in power are exposed as a liberal elite of 'do-gooders' who have little understanding of the everyday worlds of ordinary people. As one respondent in the study put it, activism is a way of saying 'I don't want to be a second-class citizen in my own country (Connor).' (ibid.: 174). The same feelings of injustice are documented in Busher's (2016: 47) study of the same movement where he describes trajectories into activism as being narrated through feelings of injustice and 'how "ordinary English people" were being ignored by the political elite'. Blee's (2002) study of women activists in white supremacist, neo-Nazi and skinhead groups in the United States also reveals that women may radicalise as a result of their experience of what they perceive as unjust treatment. One respondent recounted a series of events in her life where she had been thwarted by African Americans who reacted to her solely on the basis of colour, which had led her to feel 'forced into racial action' (Blee, 2002: 43-4). Rhodes (2010: 94) also found that the interviewees in his study who had voted for the British National Party presented themselves as 'tolerant' individuals who had simply been pushed to extremes by the 'unfairness' that they believed existed in the town. One respondent - an unemployed male in his 20s, living on an extremely deprived council estate - illustrates this:

> If they [council] did something about it [perceived inequity in funding] it'd be a lot better, treat us all the same and show us, if they could show them that we're not all that bad and we're only kicking off because we [whites] want what you're ['Asians'] getting. Because at the end of the day they kick off when they don't get something we have, we're only doing what they do. (cited in Rhodes, 2010: 94).

For EDL activists in Pilkington's study, this injustice is embedded in the system of justice itself, which they describe as a 'two tier' system which is weighted against 'people like us'. This form of injustice has three dimensions: the perception of a privileged sensitivity to the rights and needs of ethnic minority (especially Muslim) communities; the sense of discrimination or persecution of 'us' – as EDL supporters – by the justice system and law enforcement agencies; and a wider construction of whiteness as a site of discrimination and victimisation. This is expressed by one respondent talking

about a recent demonstration which had descended into violence leading to the arrest, prosecution and imprisonment of 32 activists:

> You can see it, you know, that there is a two-tier system going on. It's like up there at Walsall there was a group of about thirty Asians come past and was throwing bottles. That was what started it all off originally. … There is footage of it and all. The police do absolutely nothing about it. They just turn on us and start hitting us. It's almost like they are not allowed to hit them, you know, but they are allowed to just wade into us. (Euan) (cited in Pilkington, 2016: 168)

The argument that what is perceived as 'racism' is unequally applied across communities was also found in a number of studies of the extreme right. One such example is a respondent in Rhodes' (2010: 89) study of BNP voters who complained that his son was being expelled from school for using racist language although equally racist language used towards his own son by ethnic minority children had not been punished.

An exception to the rule in the studies on the extreme right is Van der Valk's (2013: 133) study of former extremists in far right groups and movements in the Netherlands which found that the experience of unjust treatment by government or society was not a factor beyond a 'general negative attitude and mistrust towards the government and society' although the author does note that 'interviewees had little trust in the police to protect them'.

Concept 2: Terrorism as a social burden for Muslims

Many authors of texts included in the synthesis emphasise the lived experience of discrimination among Muslim populations in Western countries following terrorist events (notably the 9/11 attacks). Indeed, one of the strongest associations encountered in the body of texts studied in this synthesis is that terrorism and counter terrorism are a particular burden for Muslim (ordinary, non-radicalised) populations in the West leading to - among other things - an increase in social vulnerability. Terrorist events are shown to have a major and direct impact on Muslims' experience in Western countries and consequently on their economic status and sense of injustice. The ways in which Muslim communities are subjected to multiple disadvantages accelerates the process of isolation while the notion that Islam and Muslims constitute some form of 'problem' for Western societies affects Muslim citizens' sense of belonging to the country in which they live.

Studies demonstrating increased social vulnerability of Muslim communities after terrorist attacks or legislation to prevent it stress the impact of the growing securitisation of ethno-religious differences and an increase in islamophobia in certain media and political discourses on the socio-economic positions of Muslims. Boyle and Songora's study among East African migrants in US in the context of

the war on terror demonstrates that many interviewees felt state protection was generally inadequate against prejudice emerging out of the war on terror. Their article questions the gap between the legalist intention and the consequences of legal measures on people and reflects on the tension between acceptable measures and insidious exclusionary and discriminating attitudes which could impact on the socio-economic situation of communities (Boyle and Songora, 2004).

Terrorism also has consequences for the social health (personal and social identities) and the sense of social comfort of Muslims (Baker, 2007). Baker's (2007) research was conducted in a small immigrant community of Muslims in an area of low cultural diversity in Canada following the terror attacks on 11 September 2001 (9/11). She shows that participants' sense of social comfort altered abruptly following 9/11 and that they described experiences of cultural risk within the local community, which they attributed to the intensive international media coverage of 9/11. In Australia, Casimiro, Hancock and Northcote highlight the experience of refugee women as 'a religious minority that has come under considerable racial attack in recent years in the wake of international terrorism' and demonstrate that the issue of racism and discrimination acts as a settlement barrier for these women (Casimiro et al., 2007).

The qualitative study of Barkdull et al. (2011), explores the experiences of 34 Muslim individuals in four Western countries (Australia, USA, Canada, Argentina) to gain a comparative understanding of their experiences with prejudice and discrimination following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The interviewees' experiences reflect many types of discriminatory acts, at the workplace, in employment, in gaining for job opportunities as well as incidents of verbal harassment, including racial slurs, or being called 'terrorists'. Other authors, for example Frisina and Bonino, who have worked respectively on Muslims in Italy and in Scotland, confirm the stigma and the growing Islamophobia in these contexts but draw our attention to the diverse ways Muslim people face this situation (Frisina, 2010; Bonino, 2015). In Italy, Frisina points out how young Muslims, who are the first Italian-born descendants of migrants resist and challenge frames of discrimination through visibility tactics, individual promotion tactics, local/national inclusion strategies and new-global movement strategies (Frisina, 2010). In Scotland, Bonino notes that contact with police and security officers at airports constitutes the main area of concern for Muslims, whose confidence, sense of equality and feelings of belonging to society are severely undermined by the securitization of their ethno-religious difference (Bonino, 2015). However, beyond security issues and interactions with the police, the workplace and the job market appeared to be areas of concern too. Interviewees think that Muslims' stigmatised ethnoreligious identity and visible diversity lessen their chances of obtaining ordinary jobs. These perceptions contrast with those concerning everyday interactions, which point to the generally positive in which Muslims in Scotland live. Taking a close-up approach,

Phoenix's study including ten young Somali Muslim women in London underlines the strategies of these women to distance themselves from Islamophobia while recognising the growing Islamophobic feeling (Phoenix, 2011). Phoenix shows how these young women position themselves in relation to other – even more – marginalised groups as a strategy for managing their own marginalisation. The 'othering' of other groups – such as the more devout Somali Muslims and recent Somali migrants – partly in response to integrationist and assimilationist agendas in Britain, was, Phoenix argues, 'central to the young women's construction of themselves as having less-stigmatized "new Muslim identities" and "new ethnicities" that moved them up in both the local and the national hierarchies of belonging' (ibid.: 328).

The hypervisibility of Muslimness as a result of counter-terrorism policy is a particular issue of concern. A key site of tension here is racial, ethnic, and religious profiling in airports (Boyle and Songora, 2004). But young people feel they are constantly 'in the public eye' be it at school, on the road or in other settings of their daily lives (Frisina, 2010). Exposed to comments that betray an anti-Islam prejudice, their religious diversity has become a stigma, which leads to a feeling that they need to 'justify themselves' whenever they find themselves in a public place (ibid.).

It should also be noted that similar forms of discrimination are experienced by non-Muslims as a result of their misidentification. Ahluwalia and Pellettiere's (2010) study of the experiences of five Indian American, Sikh men post-9/11 in the New York City metropolitan area explored the discrimination of populations often misidentified as Muslim and therefore equated with terrorists. These Sikh men encountered discrimination in educational systems, jobs and the U.S. government (including the armed forces) because of the visible nature of their identity. The participants reported feeling markedly stigmatised after 9/11. Incidents of verbal harassment, including racial slurs, were common, and many had been called 'terrorists'. Using a similar approach, the research of Hopkins et al. (2017) explored the experiences of ethnic and religious minority young people mistaken for being Muslims in Scotland on the basis of 224 interviews with young non-Muslims of south Asian and Black Caribbean heritage. The study demonstrated how these discriminations affect their sense of citizenship, belonging and personal well-being (ibid.).

These texts, in different ways, and from different perspectives and experiences, emphasise the social burden of terrorism and counter-terrorism for Muslims. They draw attention to the acute social vulnerability of Muslims in many societies since 9/11 and, in some cases, following the implementation of counter-terrorism policies. However, they also demonstrate the attitudes adopted by diverse Muslim groups to confront discrimination and stigmatisation and the diverse ways in which young people show 'remarkable resilience' (Hussain and Bagguley, 2013), agency and creative responses to the challenges faced. These include strategies of: 'softer radicalism' (Abbas and

Siddique, 2012); 'positive sentiments and local acts of social inclusion' (Bonino, 2015); 'negotiation of hierarchies of belonging', 'less-stigmatised new Muslim identities and new ethnicities' (Phoenix, 2011); 'visibility tactics, individual promotion tactics, local/national inclusion strategies, and new-global movement strategies' (Frisina, 2010).

Some of these studies call also for the decentring of the debate on radicalisation when discussing Islam and Muslims. Amath (2015: 7), for example, argues that the dominance of issues of fundamentalism, radicalisation, militancy and terrorism in media and political discourses related to Muslims and Islam 'does not provide a holistic understanding of Muslims, particularly their role, place and identity as minorities in a Western society'. Amath's interviews (n=30) with Muslim community leaders in Australia demonstrates the significance of terrorism and counterterrorism debates in feelings of social exclusion among Australian Muslim youth. His research stresses also the role of the Australian Muslim community in proactively engaging with the issue of social exclusion indicating the importance of the role and commitment of Muslim political actors. A British study on what Pakistani-heritage pupils in Newminster identify as the influences on their educational progress reveals a range of experiences of stigmatisation lived by young Muslim at school (Davies, 2017). Recounting the expectations of the participants in this study for teachers to dispel static stereotypes of Muslim pupils, Davies underlines that the strategies for differentiation and inclusion of pupils from specific minority-ethnic groups at school are constrained by polarisation of debates about Muslims in relation to radicalisation (and on the objectives of counter-radicalisation such as the Prevent programme), on the one hand, and the little training given in cultural awareness beyond generic 'equality and diversity' sessions, on the other. This raises the risk of reducing the attention to Muslim people to the problem of radicalisation and led to the recommendation that future policy seek to join up thinking on radicalisation and stigmatisation.

Concept 3: Abandoned by society

For former terrorists/or extreme-right activists and their families or the families of people arrested and convicted of terrorism, the sense of discrimination, disadvantage and exclusion is particularly significant and can lead to the sense of being 'abandoned by society'.

An Indonesian study examines the social discrimination against former terrorist convicts and their families and their coping behaviour (Asiyah et al., 2014). This article explores the type of difficulties encountered by these ex-convicts and their families in different domains of life. The authors identify different patterns of social discrimination encountered by them and their families including social 'isolation' resulting from negative labelling and a reluctance of others to cooperate with them. This situation leads them to limit their movements and their interactions. Hegghammer's (2010: 190, 195) study of the biographies of 259 recruits to the al-Qaida on the Arabian Peninsula (QAP), which waged

war on the Western presence in Saudi Arabia, also found that experience of arrest and interrogation following return from fighting in Afghanistan left many militants feeling betrayed by state and society. This led them to socialise mostly with other Afghan veterans and social networks within the jihadist community and thus compounded their isolation from wider society. Research in the UK – based on six interviews with the spouses of men accused or suspected of terrorism - highlights the experiences and needs of families whose members face this situation (Guru, 2012). The experiences of the women and the children testify to the isolation, police brutality, undignified treatment, financial hardship and emotional and psychological difficulties they face. The author calls for more attention to the profiles of relatives of radicalised individuals, particularly in social work research and literature. The family narratives of three Scandinavian women who joined Syrian Salafi-jihadi groups studied by Aasgard (2017) also point to the feeling that society had abandoned them.

In her study of former neo-Nazis within the Swedish organisation EXIT, which helps people leave the extremist right, Christensen evokes the difficulties encountered by the beneficiaries including threats from former friends, feelings of loneliness, aggression, violent reaction patterns, distrust of people and a lack of job opportunities (Christensen, 2015). Similarly, De Koster and Houtman's (2008) research on members of the online Stormfront community in the Netherlands demonstrate that they feel a strong sense of being discriminated against in terms of rights and opportunities supposedly accorded equally to all members of society. This relates to access to safe places (ibid.: 19, 20), treatment in the workplace (ibid.: 14) and participation in education (Ibid. 14) without restrictions being placed on their expression of political ideas or opinions. This series of articles underscores a more complex and controversial dimension of the relationship between inequality and radicalisation by advocating for the attention to the feeling of social exclusion experienced by terrorists, extreme-right activists, people arrested for terrorism and/or their families.

3.3.3. A vicious circle: Stigmatisation and exclusion

While discrimination and stigmatisation – as a result of terrorist acts and counter-terrorism policy - were identified as crucial to the production of social inequality (as outlined in the 'perceived injustice' line of argument above), **the synthesis of studies** revealed a discrete line of argument which **identified a vicious circle in which social inequality and radicalisation are co-produced through processes of stigmatisation and exclusion**. This line of argument predominantly pertains to Islamist radicalisation. However, there is some evidence in studies included in this synthesis of a similar process taking place in extreme right contexts.

Concept 1: Stigmatisation and exclusion: a consequence and driver of violent extremism

A shared interpretation among a number of studies is that the process of stigmatisation of Muslims impacts negatively on their sense of belonging to their country of residence and may engender forms of radicalisation. In other words, the sense of exclusion of Muslims from citizenship in Western societies – as a result of stigmatisation and discrimination following terrorist acts and targeting of Muslim communities in counter-terrorism policies - strengthens adherence to Islam and susceptibility to radicalisation. This vicious circle may develop in relation not only to terrorism but to religious extremism more widely. Coolsaet's (2017: 51-2) research in Molenbeek, for example, found concerns among Muslim communities that the presence of religious extremist actors with Muslim names led to all Muslims being stigmatised as well as fuelling the ranks of far right movements. In both cases this threatened to escalate radicalisation. A similar argument that multiple disadvantage and alienation and the associated process of isolation and disenfranchisement of Muslim populations constitute a risk of radicalisation is made by Abbas (2007). Using a life-history methodology and the experiences of Moazzam Begg as a lens through which to analyse the British context, Abbas (2007: 439) argues that the drivers of Islamic political radicalism are intertwined at the local, national and international levels, 'working in combinations and permutations that are ultimately deleterious for some Muslim minorities'. Islamic revivalism is presented as embedded in conflicting multicultural identity politics. Subsequent empirical research (30 in-depth interviews with Muslim men and women in Birmingham 2005-2007) conducted by Abbas and Siddique (2012) explored the perceptions of British South Asian Muslims on pathways towards radicalisation and the challenges of community leadership in relation to de-radicalisation. The authors concluded from their findings that 'radicalism is clearly the outcome of a multiplicity of factors' (Ibid.: 127) including the 'war on terror' (and other international issues related to predominantly Muslim countries) but also of 'exclusion, anti-Islamism and discrimination that large segments of British South Asian Muslims continue to face, with certain media and political discourses that continue to uncritically support the Islamophobic hegemony' (ibid.).

The research of Ahmed (2016), based on 64 in-depth semi structured interviews with British Pakistani Kashmiri Muslims in Birmingham, notes the same risks. Considering the 'enormous impact' of the 'war on terror' on legal rights and the status of Muslims in the UK, Ahmed argues that the 'war on terror' has facilitated religious belonging and that Islamophobia 'could feed into the process of radicalisation through making British Muslims feel detached from society and internalising their positions as the "other"' (ibid.: 121). Lindekilde (2012) also understands counter-terrorism policies to be concrete sites of the institutionalisation of misrecognition that negatively affect social cohesion and, paradoxically, fuel radicalisation by limiting the repertoire of moderate subject positions for

Muslims in European societies. Kühle and Lindekilde's (2010: 20, 136) empirical study of non-radicalised, mostly Arab and Somalian, residents in a social milieu of Aarhus (Denmark) found stigmatisation by media and society, a sense of discrimination, experience of misrecognition and inability to develop a sense of belonging to social inequalities can contribute to radicalisation trajectories. In the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attacks in France, the social expectation that French Muslims express publicly their solidarity with the French Republic and dissociate themselves from Islamist terrorists, is also seen as potentially fuelling social alienation among an already marginalised and discriminated population, and thus contributing to youth radicalisation (Andre et al., 2015). This threatens to develop into what Khosrokhavar (2009: 198) calls 'a subculture of self-estrangement and indignity' among some groups of European Muslims who live in conditions of stigmatisation; it is such 'internalized indignity', he suggests, on which the culture of jihadism feeds. This feeling finds objective basis in continued racism, remnants of colonial prejudice and Islamophobia and is intensified by spatial segregation and family backgrounds (with the notable exception of Turks) rooted in European colonies (ibid.). 'These Muslims', Khosrokhavar concludes, 'believe that they are rejected as citizens and even believe that they are considered inferior human beings.' (ibid.).

Concept 2: Focus on terrorism masks real socio-economic exclusion

In a partial refutation of the argument made above (Concept 1), some authors reject the idea that a reduced sense of belonging is the result of stigmatisation in the wake of terrorism and counter-terrorism legislation. Hussain and Bagguley's (2013) study of the changing experiences of British Pakistani Muslims in the three localities associated with the 7/7 bombers, for example, suggests British Muslims do not respond to Islamophobia through isolation and rejection of British identity. Their study shows that experiences of racism and Islamophobia are subtle and do not confirm the representation of British South Asian Muslims as rejecting Britishness, living in segregated ghettoes and subscribing to anti-establishment religious movements. They suggest, rather, that the notion of 'segregation', isolation and dysfunctionality of South Asian Muslim communities is a construct that emerged as a response to the 2001 riots and has been elaborated subsequently as part of the government's counter- terrorism policy (ibid.: 29). They stress that the results of their empirical investigations (based on 141 structured interviews of Muslim men and women) reflect a more complex and diverse reality:

> […] our interviewees were proud to be British and hostile to 'extremism', with many mixing with non-Muslims. At the same time they have become increasingly concerned about an anti-Muslim backlash and many are critical of the policies introduced by the

government in the name of integration and counter-terrorism. (Hussain and Bagguley, 2013: 44)

These authors thus identify a reification of the link between social exclusion and radicalisation, mediated by the cultural and religious issue.

From a similar perspective, through their examination of the experiences of counter-terrorism legislation and policies among young Muslims in the UK, Choudhury and Fenwick argue that 'there is no single monolithic Muslim community and, therefore, no single monolithic Muslim experience of counter-terrorism policing' (Choudhury and Fenwick, 2011). They assert that many characteristics including ethnicity, citizenship status, age, gender, and socio-economic position influence the experiences and impact of counter- terrorism policing and show the gap between the state insistence on the threat from international terrorism and the range of social issues connected to the everyday experience of the young Muslims interviewed. The authors underline that for many Muslims in their research, the English Defence League is 'a visible and real manifestation of violent extremism and one that many are more likely to encounter than an Al Qa'ida extremist'. They also suggest that policies designed to prevent tendencies leading to radicalisation should address issues of inequality and discrimination.

In the same vein, Spalek's (2011) study within the Muslim Contact Unit (MCU) and the Muslim Safety Forum (MSF) underlines that feelings of injustice may stem from an imbalance between the focus on terrorism and the lack of attention to other subjects such as racism and/or Islamophobia, which constitute a real danger but which have been under-researched. Spalek (ibid.) suggests that the stigmatisation of Islamic beliefs and practices in contexts characterised by real social and economic deprivation at 'street level' may give rise to feelings of injustice that could put people at risk of AQ recruitment. An important lesson drawn from the study has been the importance of considering structural issues of social and economic deprivation and marginalisation that are of concern to Muslim minorities; that is to reverse the attention from 'new terrorism' to social exclusion and economic deprivation (ibid.).

Concept 3: Social exclusion as a consequence of extreme right activism

While less developed in the literature, some studies of the extreme right included in this synthesis also point to the vicious circle between stigmatisation, social exclusion and radicalisation. For instance, Van der Valk and Wagenaar's (2010: 28-29) study of former extreme-right radicals in the Netherlands notes that radicalisation is likely to cause social vulnerability. While those who were working generally continued to work in the same sector after moving away from the extreme right, all experienced problems at work 'usually because their right-wing extremist activities somehow

became known − through an internet publication, for example, or because of publicity after an arrest' (Ibid.). Blee's (2002: 9) study of women activists in a range of extreme right and white supremacist movements in the United States also documents evidence that socio-economic disadvantage was a consequence rather than cause of radicalisation in some cases. For almost half of interviewees without good jobs (or married to underemployed men), Blee says, 'marginal employment was a consequence, not a cause, of being active in racist politics' (ibid).

Blee's finding that some women (or their husbands) lost their jobs when employers discovered their racist activities is identified also in Pilkington's (2016) study of English Defence League activists. Two of her respondents had lost their jobs due to their activism being exposed and four others talked about friends who had lost employment for this reason (ibid.: 88). This study – which was primarily focused on young activists – also revealed suspension or exclusion from education as being a common consequence of activism, thereby reducing future options and embedding a sense of injustice from an early age. The direct connection of this to radicalisation outcomes is most clear in those narratives where exclusion from school is recounted as the outcome of being bullied at school by pupils of other ethnic groups but, when the incident was reported, finding oneself being accused of racism (ibid.: 173). Social exclusion was also fuelled by the loss of, or being disowned by, family and friends because of their disapproval of – and the stigmatisation of - the respondent's activism in the EDL (ibid.: 88).

This study also suggests that the anger, bitterness and resentment expressed by individuals over the perceived prioritisation of needs of those recently arrived over the 'native' population is accompanied by intense feelings that they themselves are stigmastised, misrecognised as valueless and judged unjustly (Pilkington, 2016: 161). In this sense activism in movements like the English Defence League acts as a form of resistance or refusal by a devalued and ridiculed section of the working class to be judged in distinctively moral ways (ibid.: 175). However, as Garland and Treadwell's (2011) study of three supporters of the same movement indicates, such forms of resistance – where they involve violence or fighting - can in fact reinforce the existing social order; the use of violence by their three respondents, they conclude, further locks them into 'the cyclical marginal positions and frustrated identities that precipitate their aggressive behaviour' (ibid.: 632).

As noted above, there is some intersection between this line of argument and that set out under Section 3.3.2 (Concept 2: Terrorism as a social burden for Muslims), in the sense that stigmatisation and discrimination may lead to radicalisation. However, this causal chain is far from systematically repeated and, as noted in the discussion above, a number of studies point to other outcomes than radicalisation, especially resistance and resilience of people facing calls to radicalisation.

3.3.4. A mediated relationship

A clear line of argument emerging from the synthesis of studies is that **a relationship between inequality and radicalisation exists but is mediated by intervening factors or variables**. In outlining this line of argument, first the general position that radicalisation is caused by a complex and individually specific set of factors is outlined before considering in turn the key 'mediating' factors highlighted in the texts considered in this synthesis.

Concept 1: Complex and individual pathways

The importance of understanding the socio-economic situation of an individual or a group in combination with individual life experiences is noted by Botha (2015). Based on a study of radicalisation in Kenya and Uganda, as well as earlier research in Algeria, Botha argues that focusing on the external environment, without acknowledging the role the individual plays in radicalisation, oversimplifies our understanding of the process. For Botha, socio-economic trends may be important in encouraging radicalisation especially where there are 'economic disparities within identifiable ethnic, religious and geographic groups' (ibid: 12). However, her interviews (n=285) with members of four radical organisations – the Christian Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), the Islamist Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen (al-Shabaab) and the regional secessionist Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) – lead her to argue that that it is a combination of factors that explain radicalisation trajectories and this combination will differ from person to person. Her research shows that 'only a small minority – 13 per cent of ADF, 12 per cent of MRC and 4 per cent of al-Shabaab respondents – specifically referred to direct economic circumstances as a reason why they joined the organisation' (ibid.: 11). In most cases, the respondents referred to combinations of reasons, e.g. religious and economic, or ethnic and economic. This is confirmed in studies of extreme-right activism. Decisions to enter into, continue and draw back from activism in the English Defence League, Pilkington (2016: 89) concludes, are set within a complex web of local environment and personal and family psychodynamics, which can be identified in the socio-demographic profile of activists but also in their subjective perceptions and experiences of change in local communities. Van der Valk and Wagenaar's (2010: 34) study of twelve former radicals in the Netherlands also suggests that it is a combination of concern about inaction on a range of social issues (but especially inter-ethnic relations) and more emotional needs and desires (for friendship, social protection, excitement, violence and adventure) that brings people into the extreme right.

It is also important to note here that different socio-economic variables may be associated with different forms of radicalisation. Hegghammer's (2010) study of three waves of Saudi jihadists is informative here. Rather than look for correlations between, for example, regime types or poverty

and levels of terrorism or Islamism in general, he suggests, it might be more useful to examine their effects on different types of Islamist activism:

> […] it may well be that poverty and state repression are more strongly correlated with socio-revolutionary Islamism than with pan-Islamist militancy. Conversely, chronological variations in the number and visibility of international conflicts pitting Muslims versus non-Muslims may affect levels of pan-Islamist activism more strongly than socio-revolutionary Islamism. (Hegghammer, 2010: 231)

In this line of argument, it is notable that all authors emphasise that it is subjectively experienced inequality that is at play here and that radicalisation is the outcome of the accumulation of drivers. However, a number of key concepts capturing mediating factors can be discerned and are found in studies of both Islamist and extreme right radicalisation. These are detailed below.

Concept 2: Social ties

Some authors understand poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion as potentially facilitating the radicalisation process but see other factors such as social ties as crucial to radicalisation trajectories (Ahmad, 2014, 2016). Sageman (2004: 121-30) is particularly critical of explanations that place poverty (and ideology) centre-stage, arguing that social bonds among Muslim jihadists are crucial to the emergence of the global Salafist jihad. Hegghammer (2010: 236) also finds in-group loyalty to be more important than ideological factors in the recruitment of Saudi jihadists. Of those recruited between 1996 and 2001, he argues, many were linked by kinship or friendship to other militants (ibid.: 130) while later (post-2001) recruits often emerged from jihadi social networks to which former fighters in Afghanistan turned after feeling betrayed by the state and society (often experiencing arrest and interrogation) after return from Afghanistan (ibid.: 190, see Section 3.3.2).

Studies of extreme right radicalisation also point to the centrality of social ties in recruitment. Blee's (2002: 28) study of female participants in a range of white supremacist, neo-Nazi and skinhead groups in the United States demonstrated that women get involved through personal contacts and become racist as a consequence of associating with members of racist groups rather than joining racist groups because they are racist (that is, for ideological reasons) or for structural reasons.

There is significant evidence in the texts synthesised for this report that space or, more accurately milieu mediates socio-economic inequality in driving extreme right radicalisation. Miller-Idriss (2009: 100-101), for example, identifies the milieu of young working-class people to be a crucial factor in determining trajectories into support for the extreme right with particular districts in Berlin being 'renowned for the highly visible right-wing extremist youth who live and hang out among the housing complexes in the neighborhood'. Other studies suggest socio-spatial and territorial isolation may be

crucial to trajectories into racist violence (Pilkington et al., 2010: 30, 40). Feeling a cultural outsider in one's own immediate environment can also work to radicalise (Pilkington, 2016: 77).

However, there are critical voices from both Islamist and extreme-right studies. Pilkington (2016: 90) finds the emphasis on pathways into the movement through friends and acquaintances identified in other micro-level studies to be not fully confirmed by her study of EDL activists. Rather the movement appears to be a site for the formation of new affective bonds of 'family', 'friendship' and 'loyalty' (ibid.). Inge's (2016: 97) study of women's paths into Salafism also leads her to conclude that young women often become Salafi *despite* rather than because of social encounters with its adherents:

> […] while social networks were often crucial for the women to take the first steps towards joining a group that they might otherwise have avoided, becoming Salafi generally came at a social cost, rather than gain. They made some friends but lost others – and many struggled to form attachments to fellow Salafis. (ibid.)

Concept 3: Political-economic emasculation: the role of gender

Gender is a mediating factor in the relationship between inequality and radicalisation for both Islamist and right wing extremism.

In the case of Pakistan, Aslam (2014: 148) suggests that 'poverty jeopardizes masculine honour at a subjective level' and may lead individuals to seek to regain their position in the gender order through 'acts of violence that are culturally perceived as normative performances of the masculine' (Ibid Based on their research into drivers of radicalisation and violent extremism in Kosovo, Speckhard and Shajkovci (2017: 23) also suggest that roles in extremism are gendered, with men taking the active part while women's role is primarily supportive:

> Females who travelled to Syria from Kosovo […] were nearly all married. When wives do accompany their husbands, it appears to often be out of desire and need to keep familial ties intact, financial dependency and fear of abandonment and hardship if left behind as well as traditional mores of obeying the demands of one's spouse. (ibid.)

Studies of the extreme right confirm the significance of the gendered experience of inequality in driving radicalisation. Kimmel's (2014: 71) study of former neo-Nazi skinheads in Sweden, Norway and Denmark leads him to conclude that 'young men of the extreme right experience their downsizing, outsourcing, or economic displacement in specifically gendered ways: they feel themselves to be emasculated'. Economic displacement is experienced by men as 'political-economic emasculation', he argues, and entering extreme right movements 'has more to do with proving adolescent masculinity than in spreading Nazi ideology' (ibid.: 70). In the same vein, Garland and

Treadwell (2011: 621) focus in their research on how young, white, working-class men involved in the English Defence League, construct a specific form of violent masculinity. They emphasise that feelings of disadvantage and marginalisation, prompt resentment and anger in young men, who feel their voices are not being heard. This disenchantment manifests itself in externalised hostility and resentment which engender a process of scapegoating the Islamic 'other' (Ibid.).

Concept 4: Trauma

Jensen et al. (2016) suggest inequality in material terms is never the sole driver of radicalisation but is always accompanied by other factors such as personal or community crisis, psychological vulnerability etc. (ibid: 68.). Cragin et al. (2015: 5) also posit the feeling of 'despair' as an important affective dimension of material circumstance or disadvantage that potentially contributes to radicalisation. Based on research with young people in the West Bank of Palestine – specifically ten in-depth interviews with members of Hamas and Fatah – they suggest that while despair does not lead to radicalisation on its own, it can reinforce revolutionary tendencies in as much as it causes individuals to subjugate their identity to that of the group (ibid.). We might understand conversion to Jihadist Islam in prison as similarly indicating the role of personal crisis in guiding individuals towards a radicalisation pathway (Sporton et al., 2006: 215).

Studies of young people supporting extreme right views or active in extreme right movements confirm the consistent importance of personal trauma. Gabriel's (2014: 36) study of 26 young people expressing racist attitudes and behavioural dispositions in Switzerland led to the conclusion that 'social marginality' is less influential than 'deprivation or disintegration as a result of domestic violence and parental conflicts' in leading to such outcomes. This study also identified a strong 'culture of non-attention' among families which has an effect on the biographies of right-wing actors. Among racist Russian skinheads, a sense of parental abandonment was also expressed by respondents, who felt that 'parents have given up caring' about their children (Pilkington et al., 2010: 49). This cultural disposition was aggravated by early mortality especially of men in the region leading to many young people experiencing the loss of fathers at a young age (ibid.: 50). Of Kimmel's sample of former neo-Nazi skinheads in Scandinavia 'all but one' had experienced bullying in school (Kimmel, 2014: 71) while a number of respondents in Pilkington's (2016: 69) study of EDL activists also recounted experiences of bullying. In the latter study, many trajectories into the movement included childhood trauma and it was rare to find family contexts described as stable, strong or protective (Pilkington, 2016: 80). Eight respondents in the study had experienced or witnessed abuse in the family; two had experienced sexual abuse themselves while a third recounted that his sister had been subjected to this (ibid: 81). Three respondents had been physically and psychologically abused by parents over an extended period of time leading to them being taken into care and at

least two were still struggling with the trauma of those experiences (ibid.: 82-3). Trauma could also be more directly linked to the formation of anti-Islam or anti-Muslim ideological positions. Respondents in Pilkington's (2016) study recounted trauma experienced from media coverage of terrorist attacks – such as the murder of the British soldier Lee Rigby - or viewing violent images or videos by Islamist groups on the Internet as well as personally experienced trauma (bullying or being the victim of crime) as confirming their suspicion that the source of 'the problem' lay in particular ethnic or religious communities.

Blee's (2002: 10) study of women activists in extreme right movements in the United States, however, finds no evidence of greater experience of domestic trauma than that experienced by the population as a whole. Most of her respondents, she states, did not grow up in abusive families, none were raised in foster homes, by relatives, or in institutions and, indeed, some women related stories of idyllic family lives (ibid.: 9).

Concept 5: Political silencing

Finally, the failure of mainstream political parties (Garland and Treadwell, 2012; Rhodes, 2010, 2011) or the lack of power-sharing institutions (Bunte and Vinson, 2016) to address inequality and the resentment associated with low economic positions may transform poverty, marginalisation or deprivation into push factors of radicalisation. Drawing on interviews with current and former UKIP activists and figures that have played a central role in UKIP's history, Ford and Goodwin (2014: 243) characterise support for the party as 'heavily concentrated among older, blue-collar workers with little education and few skills', which, they say, are groups who have been left behind by the economic and social transformation of Britain and who have lost faith in the ability of traditional politics to solve their everyday problems (ibid.: 249-50). However, it is important to recognise that the inequality experienced is not only socio-economic, it is also socio-political. The formal political realm is experienced as one of 'silencing' of the voices of the 'white working class', policed, according to Pilkington's (2016: 204-14) respondents, by the application of the 'racism label' with the aim of teaching those with, what are judged to be, unacceptable views to 'keep their mouth shut'. Among respondents in Pilkington's (2016: 210) study there is an active disavowal of the formal political sphere. The 'political class', respondents believe (and regardless of party affiliation), are 'just do-gooders' who 'act like … everything's for the people when nothing is' (cited in Pilkington, 2016: 175). This potentially fuels radicalisation trajectories in that those who feel silenced reject formal politics as the 'politics of talk' in favour of a 'not-politics of action' (ibid.: 210; see also: Pilkington et al., 2010: 102).

Garland and Treadwell (2010) also note the mobilisation by the EDL of claims about the lack of political attention to the white, working class population by the British government as a source of hostility towards Muslim communities:

> […] the logic that underpins the EDL and Casual United's agenda is that the British government has engaged in the promotion and elevation of the interests of Islam against the white, Judeo-Christian traditions of liberty and equity they regard as 'English', including the differential treatment that, in their eyes, most (if not all) Muslims have been demanding (the recognition of Sharia being the most obvious). (ibid.: 15)

A similar recognition of the silencing of the expression of national pride is identified by Miller-Idriss (2009) as crucial to the rise of popular support for the right wing among working-class youth. Her study of 119 working class young Germans identified 'resistance to the taboo on national identity and pride' as central to young Germans' attraction to the extreme right (ibid.: 120). This is particularly true for alienated working-class youth, many of whom are likely to end up unemployed upon completion of their apprenticeships, she argues, and for youth from east Berlin, who sense that national pride – which was encouraged in the east – has been taken away from them in the post-unification era (ibid.: 121). For respondents in Busher's (2016: 59) study also, EDL activism was attractive because it allowed them to express feelings of attachment to, and pride in, their national or cultural identity which, elsewhere, was frowned upon.

3.3.5. Questioning the relationship between inequality and radicalisation

This final line of argument **refutes the idea that either objective, material inequality or subjective socio-economic grievances lead to violent extremism**. Although none of the authors denies the (potential) role played by socio-economic inequality in the radicalisation process, all suggest that less centrality should be given to it and propose different readings of the interplay between religion, ideology, poverty and radicalisation. In explaining radicalisation, the texts included in this synthesis, discuss a number of alternative drivers of the process including: a quest for adventure or attraction to the 'buzz' of violence; the search for status and meaning; ideology (including racism, Islamophobia and jihadist religio-politics); religious duty; feelings of belonging, companionship and loyalty; family or peer socialisation; subcultural 'cool' or trend; and social environment or milieu. Where these factors are considered in the texts as mediating socio-economic inequality in driving radicalisation they are discussed in Section 3.3.4. If they are presented as alternative explanations or dimensions of radicalisation, without reference to their interaction with inequality, however, they are not included in the synthesis since our search criteria required that texts be engaged with both inequality and radicalisation.

Concept 1: 'Not losers': individual characteristics and propensity to radicalisation

That radicalisation is not solely characteristic of the socio-economically disadvantaged is, of course, old news; this was in fact the conventional wisdom especially through the 1980s and 1990s. Basra et al. (2016: 13), for example, note that Egyptian sociologist Saad Eddin Ibrahim established in the early 1980s that a high proportion of imprisoned Egyptian Islamists were engineers and doctors from well to do families. Hegghammer's (2010: 242) study of three waves of Saudi jihadists (drawing on a total of 539 biographies) also shows that al-Qaida recruits were generally better educated than the national male average. All three waves of recruits were diverse in their socio-economic backgrounds and the backgrounds of Saudis going to Afghanistan in the 1996-2001 period 'were neither losers nor disgruntled graduates nor ideologically driven rich kids' (ibid.: 130). Sageman's (2004: 75) widely cited early study of global jihadi terror networks – based on 172 biographies constructed form open sources – also challenges the notion that poverty engenders terrorism by pointing to evidence that three-quarters of the global Salafist mujahedin were upper or middle-class. Sageman also found his sample to be well educated (40 per cent were college-educated), socio-economically aspirational, globally connected and multi-lingual (ibid.: 77).

Research on more recently radicalised individuals conducted by the Centre for Prevention of Radicalisation Leading to Violence (CPRLV) in Quebec (Canada) supports Sageman's finding that radicalised individuals do not always conform to the presumption of low educational level or achievement (CPRLV, 2015: 36). The Canadian study, on the contrary finds that 'in Quebec, social marginalisation and delinquency do not appear to be key elements in the radicalisation trajectories observed to date' and that sociodemographic analysis suggests an alternative model of radicalisation 'associated with integrated individuals from middle – or even upper class backgrounds' (ibid.: 34). Another study carried out by CPRLV (2016) on the motivations and trajectories of young radicalised women in Quebec also finds a diversity of profiles in terms of their education, life history psychological antecedents, family history and environments as well as level of social integration. It concludes that young women who aspire to leave Quebec to join ISIS 'are not from families that could be called problematic or dysfunctional' but are rather middle class and educated (ibid.: 82). In Denmark too, a study of 45 young Muslims in Aarhus found that although marginalisation, deprivation and feelings of discrimination may provide part of the explanation, 'Muslims who are "radicalized" are often fairly well-integrated, and at least no more marginalized and deprived than the larger part of the Muslim community' (Kühle and Lindekilde, 2010: 13). Finally, in a recent study of mainly young foreign fighters (as well as their family members, friends and associates), Dawson et al. (2016: 38) find little reference to material deprivation in the previous lives of foreign fighters. This leads them to conclude that 'pull factors' such as ideology, narrative, ideas and religiosity are

relatively more important in journeys to radicalisation than material factors. Indeed, drawing on the same study in which they conducted face-to-face or online interviews with foreign fighters who joined ISIS, Jabhat al-Nusra and Ahrar al-Sham, Dawson and Amarasingam (2016) conclude:

> In the twenty interviews analyzed no one indicated, directly or indirectly, that forms of socioeconomic marginalization played a significant role in their motivation to become a foreign fighter. Moreover, the interactions with these individuals were so heavily mediated by religious discourse it seems implausible to suggest that religiosity (i.e., a sincere religious commitment, no matter how ill-informed or unorthodox) is not a primary motivator for their actions. Religion provides the dominant frame these foreign fighters use to interpret almost every aspect of their lives, and this reality should be given due interpretive weight. (Ibid.: 192).

In the context of developing countries the critique of the primacy of economic deprivation thesis has started not from the absence of deprivation in radicalisation trajectories but the absence of radicalisation in deprivation trajectories. A number of studies conducted in Africa, for example, point to the fact that, on the one hand, disadvantaged individuals do not all become radicalised and, on the other, those who do radicalise have highly diverse socio-economic positions. In her research on young Qur'anic students (*almajirai*) in Kano in northern Nigeria, for example, Hoechner shows that contrary to the frequent representation of poor Muslims in northern Nigeria as prone to violence (in the context of Boko Haram insurgency), religious discourses are used by poor Muslims 'to reclaim dignity and resources in the face of poverty' (Hoechner, 2015: 271). By demonstrating the creative use of religious and cultural arguments by the *almajirai* to help endure difficulties and denigration, she challenges the global vilification of poor Muslims 'as 'foot soldiers' and 'cannon fodder' for violence and radicalisation. Another study conducted in Nigeria, with community leaders in 38 Nigerian districts, also starts from the observation that 'while the degree of poverty is comparatively similar across districts in northern Nigeria, they exhibit varying degrees of interreligious violence' (Bunte and Vinson, 2016: 49).

Studies of the extreme right also find 'no evidence that "right wing actors" come from "socially disadvantaged groups".' (Gabriel, 2014: 44). Gabriel (ibid.) finds that, contrary to dominant theory, young people with extreme-right trajectories come from 'all social strata, though mainly from lower middle-class families' and do not suffer from social exclusion or social deprivation. Blee's (2002: 8) study of female extreme right activists in the United States also challenges the 'common stereotypes about racist women as uneducated, marginal members of society raised in terrible families and lured into racist groups by boyfriends and husbands'. On the contrary, she argues, most were not poor, were educated and had good jobs (ibid.: 9).

Concept 2: Inequality as present but not determining

The shared interpretation of authors adopting a critical line of argument is that socio-economic factors may be present but not determining in the radicalisation process.

Hegghammer (2010: 133) suggests that it is very difficult to pinpoint socio-economic factors with a strong predictive value for individual Saudi recruitment to al-Qaida. As he puts it, 'They were young, urban and perhaps unemployed, but so were thousands of other Saudis who did not go to Afghanistan' (ibid.). Speckhard and Shajkovci (2017: 13) also recognise particular forms of inequalities, such as high unemployment and material benefits, play a significant role in pathways to radicalisation among women in Kosovo who travelled to Syria to join ISIS. However, they argue that such inequalities alone do not provide sufficient explanation:

> According to the Kosovo Police, the male foreign fighters from Kosovo typically drawn into Syria and Iraq may be characterized as young, lacking education (i.e. higher level of education), having criminal backgrounds, and coming from poor economic upbringings, although the data on a limited sample size, including predominantly self-reported data after arrest, suggest that a majority of them come from average or above average economic backgrounds. (ibid.: 21)

Thus, for Speckhard and Shajkovci, unemployment is an important disadvantage that can potentially lead individuals towards radicalisation and terrorist groups, but 'it requires a group, ideology, and social support to exploit this vulnerability for violence and terrorism' (ibid.: 22).

With regard to right-wing extremism, Gabriel (2014: 45) concludes that 'macro-sociological explanations of right-wing extremism alone are too narrow' and that 'even if we accept that socio-structural conditions have considerable influence, a large measure of autonomy remains'. Pilkington (2016: 154) suggests also that part of the problem lies in a limited understanding of inequality, which is manifest not only in individual social and economic profiles or backgrounds but also community fragmentation, loss of meaning and the fracturing of individuals' sense of self which can lead to resignation, shame and fear but also resentment and resistance.

The mobilisation of foreign fighters in Denmark, it is argued by Sheikh (2016) is not primarily driven by push factors (political stigmatisation, social marginalisation, or other factors suffered by disadvantaged individuals); while there is a correlation between individual socio-economic deprivation and risk of radicalisation, pull-factors such as statehood, pride, and revanchism are also crucial. Dawson et al. (2016) also argue that 'pull factors' are relatively more significant in radicalisation trajectories of those who become foreign fighters. As noted at the start of this section, a range of such 'pull' factors were identified and discussed in the corpus of literature reviewed here

but are included in this report only where those factors are explored in direct relationship to inequality.

3.4. Methodological limitations and shortcomings

The process of conducting this synthesis revealed a number of issues relating to the corpus of texts analysed that are important to bear in mind when interpreting the conclusions drawn.

The first concerns the object of study. Who are the 'radicalised' people studied? And what constitutes the radicalisation they have experienced? The texts included in the corpus refer, variously, to extremists, radicalised individuals or groups, bombers, foreign fighters or neo-Nazis. The objects of analysed studies are thus highly diverse groups whose experience and role in the radicalisation phenomenon often remain unclear. The precise activities or beliefs that they engage in also vary. Moreover, there is a clear focus in the corpus of anglophone literature identified for this review on Islamist radicalisation and Muslim people in general. This includes both a focus on Muslims in the profiling of radicalisation and attention to the stigmatisation of Islam and Muslims.

The second issue concerns the lack of historicity about radicalisation and, more precisely, the relationship between inequality and radicalisation. To what extent are the relationships between inequality and radicalisation new? And to what extent is there continuity or rupture with other and previous forms of terrorism?

Thirdly, the **analysed studies rarely take the relationship between socio-economic inequality and radicalisation as a core research question**. More usually, this relationship is assumed; the study starts out from the presumption that socio-economic inequality is a driver of radicalisation. Some authors set out a list of factors of radicalisation, including socio-economic factors, which are assumed to be already proven or whose validity is based on anecdotal cases.

Fourthly, meta-ethnographic synthesis is rooted in the interpretation of interpretations. However, in this body of literature, authors often conclude that it is impossible to assess the relative role played by various factors driving radicalisation. Thus, **studies often list poverty, marginalisation and low socio-economic conditions among the drivers of radicalisation but conclude that there is no single factor that explains the radicalisation process**. In this way, the studies analysed present a multi-causal approach to radicalisation, which explores diverse factors or causes of the phenomenon, but conclude by juxtaposing those factors and fall short of developing a unified line of reasoning.

Fifthly, and following from the point above, **explanations of radicalisation are highly context-dependent, making it difficult to synthesise the findings of studies across contexts**. In relation to

the inequality-radicalisation relationship, the argument that structural inequality is the key factor in radicalisation refers mainly to the specific contexts of developing countries and is often a refutation of the idea that radicalisation is ideology-driven or faith-based. This means that while the aim of any MES is to synthesise findings, the studies themselves pull against this; most emphasise that the causes or sources of radicalisation, including inequality, are context-dependent and cannot be generalised.

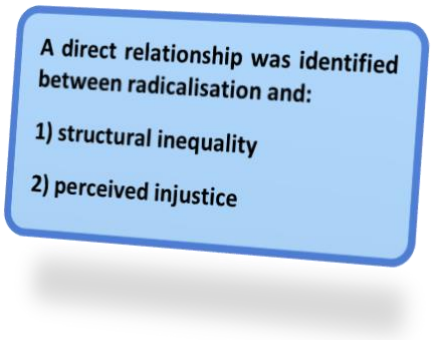
Finally, we recognise that the **search protocols used in the MES conducted here, which were devised in common with the Systematic Review of quantitative studies yielded an imperfect database** for the study. In particular, the search did not capture a number of key texts that the research team was aware of especially in relation extreme far right or anti-Islamist radicalisation. This is likely to be a consequence of the combined effect of: the tendency in qualitative studies not to use standard variables or criteria for referring to inequality; the infrequency of focused discussion of 'radicalisation' in studies of the extreme right; and the critical approach in qualitative studies, which often means that disputed terms such as 'Islamophobia', 'extreme' or 'far right', 'radicalisation' etc. are not used in titles or abstracts. Together these factors led to some key texts not being captured in the search and required a supplementary process of consultation with experts in the field (see Section 2.1.5).

4. Conclusions

The aim of this meta-ethnographic synthesis was to enhance our understanding of the relationship between inequality and radicalisation. To this end, we constructed a corpus of qualitative research studies and synthesised their findings through a systematic cross-case approach. This generated a set of interpretive explanations – lines of argument - which capture the different types of relationship between inequality and radicalisation identified in the studies analysed.

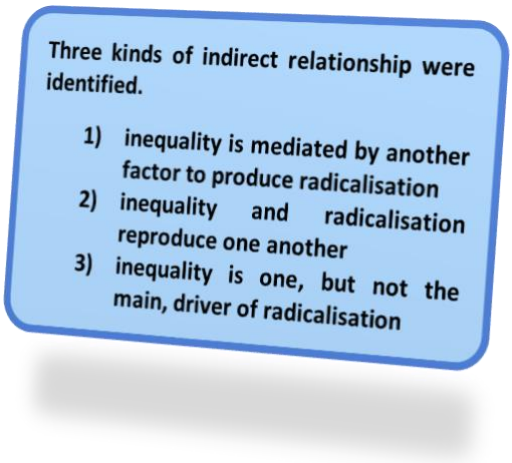
The evidence from qualitative research to date, we conclude, is that there are **two main types of relationship between inequality and radicalisation exist: direct and indirect relationships.**

A **direct** relationship between inequality and radicalisation was identified as one in which **structural inequality and associated perceived injustice are the main drivers of radicalisation**. Two lines of argument emerged from the synthesis of studies: on the role of



structural inequality; and on the role of perceived injustice.

The relationship between inequality and radicalisation is also interpreted within the published literature as **indirect**.



Three distinct lines of argument based on this understanding of the inequality-radicalisation relationship were identified: that the relationship is mediated by intervening factors; that inequality and radicalisation reproduce one another in a 'vicious circle'; and that, while a relationship between economic hardship and violent extremism may exist, poverty is not the primary driver of radicalisation.

Alongside the five lines of argument detailed in this report, the synthesis of qualitative data generated a number of important insights into the relationship between inequality and radicalisation that either confirm or supplement the findings from the parallel SR of quantitative studies conducted for the DARE project (Franc and Pavlović, 2018) and thus suggest the importance of integrating qualitative and quantitative findings on the relationship between inequality and radicalisation.

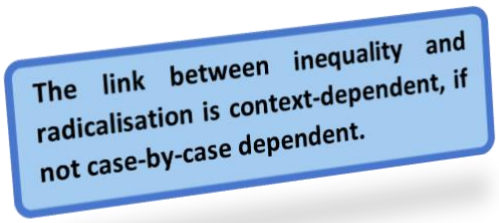
The first such insight is the identification of a bi-directional relationship between inequality and radicalisation. On the one hand, as is often supposed, **inequality produces radicalisation**. On the other hand, however, **radicalisation also plays a role in producing inequality** (or injustice/discrimination). The bi-directional nature of the relationship could be usefully further tested in future quantitative studies that consider the consequences of radicalisation/terrorism and CVE measures on individual attitudes and experiences. This would supplement the SR conducted for DARE, which focused on quantitative studies treating radicalisation as a dependent variable.

A second general finding concerns the tension between objective and subjective dimensions of inequality - both of which may lead individuals to follow a radicalisation pathway – that was identified also in the SR. The synthesis of qualitative studies suggests that **the subjective meanings of inequality** – that is the perception of being disadvantageously positioned in relations of power

regardless of whether this is associated with an objective situation or not – **supersede the objective variables of inequality in triggering a path towards radicalisation**. While this finding may well be at least partially a result of the qualitative mode of inquiry, it raises the question of when and how objective economic inequality interacts with a sense of injustice in the production of radicalisation pathways. It also warns against the tendency to reify the link between social inequality, religion and radicalisation. The intertwining of social exclusion, religion and radicalisation could undermine the treatment of important social issues for affected populations (such as discrimination, racism, inequality) and risk reducing any social issues concerning Muslim populations to the problem of radicalisation.

The weight attached to subjective experiences of injustice in the studies in this review also points to the fact that **radicalisation is more a process than a state**. Each experience of injustice is reflected, interpreted and potentially mobilised via a multiplicity of other factors, including the socio-economic situation, personal background, family ties and national context. This suggests the need for future qualitative studies to explore more specifically how the experience of injustice is transformed into social criticism and action; what we might call the subjectivation process of radicalisation.

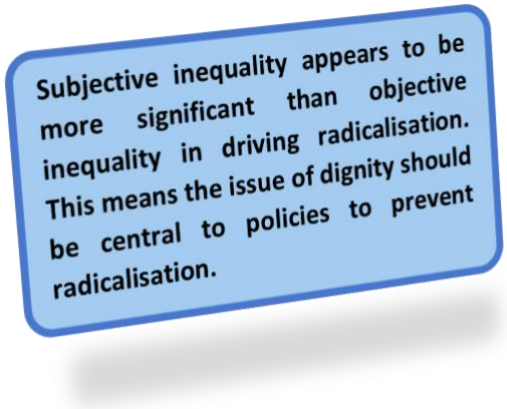
This leads naturally to the final general finding from this MES, namely that **the link between inequality and radicalisation is context-dependent, if not case-by-case dependent.** This confirms the importance of context identified in the SR but extends it to suggest that inequality (poverty, marginalisation, disenfranchisement etc.) at the level of individual experience not only fails to consistently explain radicalisation but that feelings of victimisation and injustice that steer people down a radicalisation path may be formed not at the level of experience at all, but be part of a subjective reality forged 'in the realm of imaginary' of individuals and groups (Khosrokhavar, 2018).



5. Recommendations

5.1. Policy

The findings of this MESs draw the attention of policy-makers to the fact that radicalisation is context dependent and that subjective inequality appears to be more significant than objective inequality in engendering radicalisation.



The importance attached to the subjective interpretation of inequality in the evidence to date suggests we need a better understanding of the subjectivation process of radicalisation and that the issue of dignity should be central to policies designed to prevent radicalisation.

This does not imply that the socio-economic background of radicalised groups and individuals is irrelevant. This review of qualitative research studies shows that many radicalised individuals are from lower or lower-middle classes. Even if the class dimension is not at the core of the motivations which lead an individual to become radicalised, we can make the assumption that belonging to a specific social class shapes the imaginary in some way. Thus it is not a question of whether socio-economic status *or* identity issues are important in explaining radicalisation; both sets of issues should be considered in making policy.

Political participation of individuals and groups at a local level is an essential aspect of the struggle against radicalisation. The role of local community should be taken into account in a positive way and considered separately to counter-terrorism measures and policies.

The social work profession should be supported in taking a leadership role in addressing stigmatisation, discrimination and sense of injustice that may lead to radicalisation but only as part of wider measures to directly reduce economic and education inequality (particularly among young people). Thus, policy makers should devote more resources to reducing objective inequality and subjective feelings of being rejected and denied dignity as citizens. Such efforts should be undertaken: at the individual level, i.e. target individuals and groups (communities) who consider themselves or their group to be discriminated, marginalised or targets of injustice; and at the social

level by ensuring the conditions that will facilitate a higher level of respect and fulfilment of citizens' socio-political rights. Poorer districts or suburbs, where a high concentration of urban poor live and suffer a burden of social stigma, should be the priority for future policies.

This review has demonstrated not only how inequality produces radicalisation but also the role of radicalisation in producing inequality (or injustice/discrimination). Policy-makers should invest additional efforts to avoid the potential of existing policies and measures - aimed at increasing security and lowering the risk of radicalisation and terrorism – to, in fact, exacerbate identity issues and thus increase the risk of radicalisation. Specifically, they should ensure that such policies do not increase perceived injustice and discrimination among targeted populations as such perceived injustice could increase receptivity to radicalised beliefs and lead to violence. In coming to this judgement, policy makers should take into account the influence of representations circulating in the media of radicalisation and radicalised people (whether directly associated with specific policy measures or not) and their potential to contribute to the exacerbation of identity issues and a heightened feeling of injustice.

Evidence that radicalisation can produce (as well as be produced by) inequality means policy makers should ensure that existing policies designed to increase security do not, in fact, increase perceived injustice and thus receptivity to radicalisation.

5.2. Future research

This MES demonstrates the need for new empirical qualitative research that seeks to understand the relationship between inequality and radicalisation. The focus on the intersection of social exclusion and perceived injustice should be a key approach to strengthen our knowledge about radicalisation.

Qualitative studies of individual pathways should consider the relationship between individuals becoming aware of socio-economic obstacles and injustices and radicalisation; this will enhance knowledge on individuals' own understandings of the 'objective' injustice done to them and its role in radicalisation.

As this review has demonstrated, qualitative research often refers to different concepts related to inequality without clarifying the socio-economic situation of the individuals or groups studied. Few studies specify or evaluate the socio-economic position of individuals considered

Qualitative research specifically on the relationship between inequality and radicalisation is urgently needed. Such research should ensure consistent and precise characterisation and measurement of both objective socio-economic status and subjective perceptions of injustice.

to be radicalised. Future research should avoid the imprecisions present in most existing studies. For example, in many cases, it is difficult to understand how, and by whom, it is determined whether what is narrated by a research participant constitutes 'objective socio-economic deprivation' or 'perceived injustice'. Further research might usefully consider also whether the perception of injustice is related to policies, media and/or personal or collective past experiences.

Looking at the diversity of the respondents' profiles in the qualitative research corpus, we can draw a general distinction between 'radicalised individuals' and 'non-radicalised individuals'. However, this general distinction needs qualification by reference to many intermediate positions or stages between these categories. This leads us to encourage future research on radicalisation to provide more evidence about who is a 'radicalised' individual, her or his role in radicalised groups and the ways she or he supports and/or contribute to violent actions.

Our corpus of documents demonstrates also the reductionist focus of research on Islamist radicalisation. Thus, the door is open for future studies that pay attention to diverse types of radicalisation and avoid contributing to the construction of Muslim communities as prone to radicalisation. Another path to expand research on radicalisation would be to study the relationship between inequality and radicalisation through the imaginary of our societies and not only in the light of the factors of radicalisation. For instance, European societies have been examined much less often than specific groups in these societies.

Finally, it is recommended that future studies explore the subjectivation (the ability to empower oneself as a social actor) of radicalisation including the self-empowerment and self-promotion processes that seem to play a major role in becoming social active and attaching oneself to radicalised groups.

6. Appendices

6.1. Appendix 1: List of included studies (articles)

1. Aasgaard, A. (2017) 'Scandinavia's Daughters in the Syrian Civil War: What can we Learn from their Family Members' Lived Experiences?', *Journal for Deradicalisation*, 13: 243-75.
2. Abbas, T. (2007) 'Ethno-Religious Identities and Islamic Political Radicalism in the UK: A Case Study', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 27(3): 429-42.
3. Abbas, T. and Siddique, A. (2012) 'Perceptions of the processes of radicalisation and de-radicalisation among British South Asian Muslims in a post-industrial city', *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture*, 18(1): 119-34.
4. Ahluwalia, M. K. and Pellettiere, L. (2010) 'Sikh men post-9/11: Misidentification, discrimination, and coping', *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, 1(4): 303-14.
5. Ahmad, A. (2014) 'The role of social networks in the recruitment of youth in an Islamist organization in Pakistan', *Sociological Spectrum*, 34(6): 469-88.
6. Ahmad, A. (2016) 'The Ties That Bind and Blind: Embeddedness and Radicalisation of Youth in One Islamist Organisation in Pakistan', *Journal of Development Studies*, 52(1): 5-21.
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6.2. Appendix 2 - List of included studies (Books and book chapters)

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