

## A Review of Literature on Radicalisation; and What it Means for TERRA

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## **Abstract**

TERRA is funded by the European Commission Directorate General of Home Affairs, and undertaken by Impact (the Netherlands), the Network of Associations of Aid to Victims of Terrorism (NAVT) and the Association of Aid to Victims of March 11 (Spain). It aims to support prevention and de-radicalisation through producing tools which can be used by professionals, such as for example police workers, teachers, or religious leaders, whose work brings them into contact with vulnerable groups or individuals.

The literature review, an initial phase in the TERRA research, is described in this report. After a brief introduction of TERRA, its goals and aims, the methodology section describes how Impact researchers developed search terms and carried out a literature search. Terms relating to radicalisation and terrorism are defined according to current literature. Choosing the definition of radicalisation by Schmid (2013), TERRA's starting point is that prevention, then, needs to address the aspects of radicalisation mentioned in that definition, which means that processes of change should be remarked and monitored, isolation should not get a chance, and development of preference for violent tactics should be stopped. Also, the existing order should keep proving its legitimacy.

Various authors have attempted to formulate a model to express the process of radicalisation, and these models are explored. The decision of TERRA researchers to use Moghaddam's Staircase to Terrorism model as the basis for its research is discussed.

Finally, some starting points for a "TERRA approach" are formulated. From an analysis of characteristics that promote vulnerability to radicalisation, we conclude that TERRA's emphasis should be on radicalisation amongst young adolescents. The intention of TERRA is to develop a coherent preventative approach which addresses the micro, meso and macro level. On the micro level, we need to involve the ones in contact with vulnerable individuals, like teachers and youth workers, religious leaders, community police, or prison and probation officers. On the meso level, the local governments play a role, responsible for health, wellbeing and safety in their municipality. On the macro level, involvement of the national government and of the media is necessary. For the micro and meso level, we follow recommendations we found in the literature to develop a community approach. For the macro level we explore literature on the role of journalists and on policy makers.

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# 1 Introduction

Terrorism and radicalisation are important topics on the agenda of the EU and EU countries. The most recent EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT), depicts a constant and diverse terrorist threat, which is a serious cause for concern. In 2013, seven people were killed in terrorist attacks in the European Union (EU).<sup>1</sup> Five EU Member States were confronted to a total of 152 terrorist attacks. The majority took place in France (63), Spain (33) and the UK (35). This is a decrease compared to 2012, and 2011. The number of arrests for preparation and execution of attacks, however, increased, with a shift in emphasis from arrest related to membership of a terrorist organisation to arrests for financing of terrorism; and travelling, facilitating travel or sending fighters to conflict zones, especially Syria. Since 2011, an ongoing increase in the number of arrests for religiously inspired terrorism has been observed, and the majority of EU Member States considers this type of terrorism as a major threat, with self-organised attacks on European soil, encouraged by Al-Qaeda and like-minded terrorist groups abroad, and aiming for indiscriminate casualties. Whereas arrests for separatist terrorism have significantly decreased, the number of attacks and arrests related to left-wing and anarchist terrorism, increased compared to previous years. Right-wing extremists display violent and intimidating behaviour, but barely employ terrorist *modi operandi*.<sup>2</sup>

The potential and experienced threat is taken very seriously and a lot of effort is put not only into countering terrorism, but also in prevention, which directs the attention to questions about radicalisation and de-radicalisation. The more we gain insight into radicalisation processes and possible effective interventions, the more we can do to build a safer Europe. Therefore, we need to bring together knowledge and expertise from different disciplines and perspectives, and form networks, and networks of networks, in which this knowledge can be shared. This is also one of the aims of the project “Terrorism and Radicalisation: European network-based prevention and learning program - TERRA”.

## ***The TERRA project***<sup>3</sup>

The TERRA research is designed to provide information about social psychological factors which play a role in the radicalisation process, and to translate this knowledge into a format in which it can contribute to the daily work of its target groups. Teachers, religious leaders, journalists, law enforcers, social workers and policy makers are target groups for TERRA’s work as the key figures who will implement the knowledge gained through the project. TERRA also gives the role of victims and de-radicalised individuals a primary place in its

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<sup>1</sup> One British army soldier in London (UK), one elderly Muslim male in the West Midlands (UK), two members of a right-wing extremist party in Athens (Greece) and three high-ranking *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan* (PKK, Kurdistan Workers’ Party) members in Paris (France). See Europol, TE-SAT 2014, p. 11

<sup>2</sup> TE-SAT 2014, p. 8, 11

<sup>3</sup> The TERRA project is run by Impact, the Dutch national knowledge and advice centre for psychosocial care concerning critical incidents, and the Network of Associations of Victims of Terrorism (NAVt) and the Association of Aid to Victims of March 11 (AVM11), Spain. In 2012, Impact and AVM11 were awarded a grant from the European Commission Directorate General of Home Affairs for the project.

model. It provides a unique opportunity to involve their narratives in the creation of new prevention and de-radicalisation materials.

This literature review provides the theoretical framework for the development of TERRA's tools. It therefore concentrates on useful models of radicalisation in order to identify why someone may radicalise, who the key figures are who may influence that process, and what they could do.

Using the voices of victims of terrorism and former radicals, and combining these with the knowledge and expertise which we have gathered through interviews with professionals and the literature review, TERRA's aim is to create tools to support those target groups. Further, the project will utilise and support networks of victims of terrorism in their awareness raising and prevention work, and bring other networks into contact with one another so that they can complement one another's expertise.

## 2 Methodology

In order to fulfil the objectives of the TERRA project, the research which underpins it has been designed to take place in a number of phases. The first of these is a literature review, intended to gather current state of the art knowledge on radicalisation and terrorism as phenomena, and to focus the attention of our research on practical initiatives and needs which we can try to address.

### 2.1 Literature Search

An immense body of literature exists around terrorism and radicalisation. The search which we undertook was designed to filter this body of literature according to its direct relevance to TERRA. The project does not intend to add to the body of research concerning the definitions of radicalisation or terrorism. Rather it poses the question, how academic research can be used to develop practical tools that support front line professionals to both recognise and respond to radicalisation. In order to provide the basis of a research structure, our literature review was designed to answer specific questions central to the TERRA project. These are:

- What are the crucial factors in the process of radicalisation which a prevention or de-radicalisation program might hope to tackle?
- Are there specific social or demographic groups which are particularly vulnerable to radicalisation?
- Who are TERRA's key figures – which professional figures play a key role in influencing a radicalising individual?
- Are there clear lessons to be learned from the literature on the role of these key figures which can influence our choices in the research process, or inform us in writing tools?
- Are there lessons learnt from previous de-radicalisation programs which might influence and inform the design of TERRA research and/or tools?

Europe has a long history of being troubled by terrorism, which had already given rise to a dedicated literature even before the September 11 attacks in 2001, which precipitated a new literature largely dedicated to Islamic extremism. In order to gather the wealth of modern knowledge on the subject, a comprehensive search of this literature was conducted. Christmann<sup>4</sup> provides a valuable list of search terms, and the current authors used this as a basis for formulating the table given in Appendix 1. Christmann's research focuses upon Islamic terrorism and radicalisation in the UK; in order to reflect the broader scope of TERRA, terms covering other forms of terrorism were also included. These terms were clustered and then mutually combined, and then further combined with other terms which related to either religious or political terrorism, for example, right or left wing, separatist or unionist, Catholic, Jewish and Protestant, and were derived from an internet review of current

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<sup>4</sup> Christmann (2012) p.74

forms of European terrorism. Appendix 1 gives a list of primary and secondary search terms, and a diagram visualising the search strategy used.

In order to refine the search in time frame, we included articles published since 1990. This allowed us to ensure that literature preceding the upsurge of Islamic radicalisation in the US and in Europe could also be included.

Further, while TERRA's focus is on terrorism and radicalisation within Europe, relevant literature ensued following the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks which focussed upon terrorist activity against America. Where these works were found to be particularly relevant, they were also included. Please refer to Appendix 1 for a full list of primary and secondary search terms.

The search rendered 6831 total hits, whose titles and the abstracts were then screened for relevance. Those which were judged to be of direct relevance were then read in full by Impact researchers. Our search followed a snowball method, in which references gleaned from articles found in the initial search were also read and, where found to be especially relevant, included.

### 3 Literature Review

#### 3.1 A Definition of Terms

The difficulty of defining the term “terrorism” is widely remarked upon in the literature on the subject, to the point that some authors conclude that it is “unlikely that any definition will ever be generally agreed upon.”<sup>5</sup> This difficulty appears to originate in the scope of activities which are considered to be terrorist actions, the purpose for which these activities are carried out, and the vocabulary which surrounds them: “one person’s terrorist is another person’s freedom fighter.”<sup>6</sup>

TERRA’s focus is a broad, European one. Both common European threats and smaller national groups will be included in our definition of terror organisations. For the purpose of this study, we emulate Neumann and Rogers<sup>7</sup> who follow the United Nations High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Changes, defining terrorism as: ‘any action... that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purpose of such act, by its nature and context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.’<sup>8</sup> Important elements of this definition are the threat against non-combatant population and the purpose of intimidation. In addition to the last part of this definition, we’d like to stress that terroristic acts are mostly symbolic in intent. Thus it differs from other types of political violence in that the target of violence does not equal the target of attention.<sup>9</sup> Many experts agree that terrorism seeks to undermine the authority of the dominant power, but lacks the military strength to overthrow the government or achieve their strategic goals.<sup>10</sup>

It may therefore not be the actual effectiveness of terrorism that attracts individuals to the point of committing terrorist acts themselves. Yet, as Louis (2009) states, what needs attention when looking at motives for engagement in terrorist actions, comprise (1) the person’s beliefs about the effectiveness of terror compared to alternative persuasive or coercive tactics; and (2) the psychological identities in which these beliefs are anchored.<sup>11</sup> This is also accounted for in the definition of terrorism by Schmid (2013), who points to the idea that terrorism refers not only to an act or practice, but also to a ‘*doctrine* about the presumed effectiveness of a special form or tactic of fear-generating, coercive political violence’.<sup>12</sup>

Counter-strategies nowadays not only focus on the practice of the actual attacks but also on prevention of acceptance of the doctrine terrorism constitutes. This has directed the attention

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<sup>5</sup> Shafritz *et al* (1991) p. 260. See also Silke (2008) p 99 -124; Pena and Opatow (2011) p 133; Schmid (2013) p. 15-17

<sup>6</sup> Moghaddam (2005) p. 161

<sup>7</sup> Neumann and Rogers (2007) p. 7

<sup>8</sup> United Nations document A/59/565 (2004).

<sup>9</sup> Post *et al* (2009) p.15; Schmid (2013) p.15

<sup>10</sup> Post *et al* (2009)p. 14; Jenkins (2006); Abrahms (2006).

<sup>11</sup> Louis (2009) p. 125, 129.

<sup>12</sup> Schmid (2013) p. 16



to the study of radicalisation. Definitions of radicalisation are, again, manifold – largely due to its use in the political arena where definitions are used to motivate policy choices. Academic definitions often seem to be coloured by the specific discipline, and a common complaint is that they tend to suffer from a lack of precision.<sup>13</sup> Authors also tend to distinguish several types of radicalisation.<sup>14</sup> An important difference is the one between violent and non-violent radicalisation. Holding radical views does not necessarily include nor inevitably lead to the acceptance of terror as a tactic.<sup>15</sup>

A rather full and precise definition is the one formulated by Schmid, based on years of research and thorough inventory and analysis of existing definitions. He defines radicalisation as follows:

“An individual or collective (group) process whereby, usually in a situation of political polarisation, normal practices of dialogue, compromise and tolerance between political actors and groups with diverging interests are abandoned by one or both sides in a conflict dyad in favour of a growing commitment to engage in confrontational tactics of conflict waging. These can include either (i) the use of (non violent) pressure and coercion, (ii) various forms of political violence other than terrorism or (iii) acts of violent extremism in the form of terrorism and war crimes. The process is, on the side of rebel factions, generally accompanied by an ideological socialization away from the mainstream or status quo –oriented positions towards more radical or extremist positions involving a dichotomous world view and the acceptance of an alternative focal point of political mobilization outside the dominant political order as the existing system is no longer recognized as appropriate or legitimate.”<sup>16</sup>

This definition combines a lot of aspects that are more or less partially referred to in other definitions:

- it is an individual process as well as a group process (so psychological and social factors should be taken into account)<sup>17</sup>
- It is characterised by the rejection of the legitimacy of the existing order<sup>18</sup>
- It can lead to non-violent tactics as well as to violent or terrorist acts<sup>19</sup>
- It comprises processes of ideological and social isolation from society, and dichotomous world view<sup>20</sup>
- It is essentially a process of change, increasingly justifying commitment to intergroup conflict<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Borum (2011/1); Schmid (2013) p. 17

<sup>14</sup> Sedgwick (2010); Wilner and Dubouloz (2011) p 420

<sup>15</sup> Bartlett, Birdwell, and King (2010)

<sup>16</sup> Schmid (2013) p. 18

<sup>17</sup> See also Post et al. (2009)

<sup>18</sup> See also Demant, Slooman, Buijs & Tillie (2008)

<sup>19</sup> See also Bartlett, Birdwell, and King (2010)

<sup>20</sup> See also Moghaddam (2005) p. 165

<sup>21</sup> See also McCauley and Moskaleiko (2008) p. 416; Christmann (2012) p. 10

TERRA's starting point is that prevention, then, needs to address the aforementioned aspects of radicalisation. Processes of change should be remarked and monitored, isolation should not get a chance, and development of preference for violent tactics should be stopped. Also, the existing order should keep proving its legitimacy.

Moghaddam argues that radicalisation often starts, essentially, when one ethnic, religious, political or even professional group feels that they suffer from deprivation when compared to other groups. Prevention, then, comprises not only support of vulnerable individuals, but might also refer to a broad approach, in which tolerance and equality are promoted within society at large, so as to avoid misunderstanding, distrust, inequality and discrimination between ethnic groups.<sup>22</sup> In order to develop useful tools for prevention on micro-level as well as on the macro level, TERRA needs to formulate a view on the psychological and social processes that play a role in radicalisation. From what is known about those processes, a lot of models of radicalisation have been developed. We now proceed discussing those models and their respective value for TERRA.

### **3.2 The psychological models of the radicalisation process**

In recent years a wealth of literature has emerged to answer the fundamental question with which most researchers working on this topic seem to wrestle: why would a civilian turn to violence in a bid to achieve his/her<sup>23</sup> political or cultural aims? To address this question, various theories on what triggers an individual<sup>24</sup> to become radicalised, what factors lead him along the path of increasing commitment to the cause, and what finally prompts him to carry out an terrorist act. The theoretical papers on this subject which our literature search yielded most focussed on Islamic terrorism, but several factors have been proved applicable to other forms of radicalisation as well.<sup>25</sup>

At first glance, these papers appear to be rather similar in the process which they describe. Ostensibly, all document the process through which an ordinary member of the public forms a certain set of beliefs, and/or becomes involved in a group where those beliefs are strengthened, and ultimately, carries out an act of violence against civilians in the belief that this act will somehow further the aims of this group. These theories vary drastically in scope, and a closer examination illustrates that they do not tend to contradict one another, but instead to complement one another, some highlighting in greater detail part of the process than another.

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<sup>22</sup> Staub (2007) provides a detailed description of what prevention activities might include, and what they might hope to achieve in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

<sup>23</sup> For reasons of legibility, the radicalised individual will further be referred to as 'he'.

<sup>24</sup> Schmid (2013) makes an extremely valuable point on trends in radicalisation, noting that radicalisation can be observed not only on an individual level, but on a political one too, with ostensibly democratic countries resorting to practices such as torture and "rendition" which do not conform to international human rights standards. TERRA's scope focusses on the individual, but Schmid's point highlights an important viewpoint for future research.

<sup>25</sup> De Koster and Houtman (2008); Van den Bos, Loseman and Doosje (2009); Doosje, Van den Bos, Loseman, Feddes and Mann (2012)

All of the models we will discuss below make a valuable contribution to the theoretical discussion on radicalisation; how it can best be envisaged and approached. The focus of TERRA’s research, however, requires that we take a viewpoint which is both specific – on the psychological factors influencing an individual in the radicalisation process – and broad, in that it should be applicable to the different and changing forms of radicalisation posing a threat to European society at the current time. For these reasons, and since it tracks the radicalising individual with the same degree of attention throughout his process, we have chosen to adopt Moghaddam’s Staircase to Terrorism<sup>26</sup> as the basis of TERRA’s research.

**Moghaddam’s Staircase to Terrorism<sup>27</sup>** describes a process through which an individual progresses up five conceptual “stairs” on a staircase, beginning on the ground floor and ending on a fifth stair – the terrorist act itself.

Figure 2: The Staircase to Terrorism



Moghaddam’s emphasis is on the psychological aspects of this process. He describes the ground floor, then, as being composed of the general perception of a population of their material conditions. Crucial to this perception are the elements of fairness and just treatment. Moghaddam uses the phrase of “perceived deprivation” to express the psychological phenomenon by which an individual feels that he and his fellow members of an ethnic, religious, political or even professional group do not have the same advantages as those from other groups. Although Moghaddam’s model is based mainly on Islamist radicalisation,

<sup>26</sup> Moghaddam (2005)

<sup>27</sup> Moghaddam (2005) and (2006)

research in the Netherlands by Doosje et al. proved that perceived injustice, symbolic threat to group identity, and relative deprivation are also determinants of the susceptibility for adopting radical right-wing attitudes and behaviours.<sup>28</sup>

The sense that he is unable to influence this situation through legitimate means can lead him to progress to the first floor, which Moghaddam entitles “perceived options to fight unfair treatment.” On this stair, an individual’s progress up the staircase can be halted by having access to legitimate means through which to address the perceived unfairness. These legitimate means may be, for example, legal proceedings, or the opportunity to participate in democratic processes which can positively influence the situation of the group. If these options are not available, however, a sense of injustice may be crystallised yet further, leading to the next floor: “displacement of aggression.”

On the second floor, some individuals feel that ‘injustices’ which they experience cannot be redressed through legitimate means, and these perceptions form the basis for a new morality. This involves laying the blame for the unjust situation at the feet of the group perceived to be in a better position. Oppositions between groups are stressed, a strong us-and-them thinking develops and violence against the out-group(s) may become adopted as morally acceptable.<sup>29</sup> On the third floor, “moral engagement”, this parallel morality becomes more developed within the individual, leading him to believe that an ideal society is achievable, and that any means are justified to achieve it. It is on this floor that commitment to a terrorist organisation and/or cause takes place. Tactics organisations use to dedicate recruits to the cause include isolation, affiliation, secrecy, and fear.

In some instances, those who become morally dis-engaged from mainstream society and morally engaged with ‘terrorism is justified’ type of thinking are ‘lone wolves’, or they work with only one or two others rather than having actual operational links to extensive terrorist networks. These ‘lone wolf’ or ‘self-generated’ terrorists are often highly influenced by terrorist websites, or information gained from Jihadi magazines, which include detailed information about bomb-making.

Moghaddam posits that once people have progressed to the fourth floor, “solidification of categorical thinking and perceived legitimacy of the terrorist organisation,” the terrorist organisation along with its parallel morality, have become central to their daily life.<sup>30</sup> They now function as a member of a terrorist cell, from which they receive a great deal of positive attention, both from a recruiter and from a cell leader. In the case of lone-wolf, ‘self-generated’ terrorist individuals and small groups, the reinforcement of behaviour is often through the internet and Jihadi websites. This reinforcement is also sustained through a ‘parallel universe’ created by the terrorist individual, a universe that is completely secretive and sees mainstream society as evil and a justifiable target for terrorist attacks.

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<sup>28</sup> Doosje et al (2012)

<sup>29</sup> Jessica Stern (2004) argues that the terrorist comes to see himself as perfectly morally “good.” p. xxviii

<sup>30</sup> Moghaddam (2005) p. 165

The fifth and last floor is entitled “the terrorist act and sidestepping inhibitory mechanisms.” At this stage, the individual, now a fully fledged terrorist, either as a lone wolf or a terrorist cell member, categorising civilians firmly as “them” in the “us and them” formulation, and justifying violence against them in this way. The terrorist act is carried out through sidestepping mechanisms which usually prevent civilians from harming one another (such as pity); the speed at which a terrorist act is carried out, allowing no time for the terrorist to establish any contact or emotional connection with their victims; and the belief that the act is perpetrated against an enemy population.

Critics of Moghaddam’s theory are few and far between, with one example from Lygre et al. (2011). These authors’ literature review sought to find evidence to support Moghaddam’s theory in studies on terrorism. They concluded that while the phenomena described on each floor were broadly supported by empirical evidence,<sup>31</sup> movement from one floor to the next was less clearly visible in empirical research.<sup>32</sup>

Lygre *et al*’s research confirms that Moghaddam’s theory is a sound one. With referral to their argument that transition from one floor to the next is not supported by empirical evidence, they suggest not to consider the stairs as necessarily linear, but as “components” of the process of radicalisation, with an increasing likelihood of terrorism when the components converge in a certain situation. This is also the starting point for some other models, some of which describe the radicalisation process only in part, some of which focus on the most appropriate response to radicalisation, and some of which set it in a broad social context. While none of these approaches are in any way irrelevant, their scope renders them less appropriate for direct use by TERRA. Some important viewpoints can be drawn from them, though, discussed below, mainly following the overview provided by Christmann (2012).

**The Prevent Pyramid**<sup>33</sup> consists of a pyramid which is divided into four tiers, the lowest representing all the members of a community, the second representing the most vulnerable of these, the third the moment in which some of the more vulnerable members are moving towards radicalisation and the fourth, in which some individuals are actively breaking the law. Each of these tiers is met with an appropriate response from civil society; respectively a universal approach, a targeted approach, an interventionist approach, and an enforcement approach. In this model, the emphasis is laid mostly upon the appropriate response from the context towards an individual who is radicalising. The actual process of radicalisation itself is not detailed in psychological terms, but forms the gradient up which an individual would progress in order to reach the top tier. The Prevent Pyramid, though less specific on the psychosocial factors of the process, adds a very valuable perspective on response to radicalisation. In the recommendations TERRA gives on response, we need to tie the different

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<sup>31</sup> Lygre et al. (2011) p. 612

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. P. 613. Also in 2011 though, Wilner and Dubouloz made a first attempt to give insight in the transitions by analysing an autobiographical account of a radicalisation process through the lens of transformative learning theory. What they call ‘transformative radicalisation’ explains how triggering factors connect meaning seeking processes and the altering of behaviour.<sup>32</sup> They don’t explicitly use the terms from Moghaddam’s model, but the processes they describe are very similar, so it would be interesting to expand research on this.

<sup>33</sup> Audit Commission (2008) p. 12

response types appropriately to the ‘floors’ we discuss, in order to prevent interventions from doing more harm than good.

**The New York Police Department’s four stage radicalisation process**<sup>34</sup> demands some discussion here since it emphasizes the role of ideology, more than most other models. The NYPD-model focuses on Islamist radicalisation, distinguishing a pre-radicalisation phase, a self-identification phase, an indoctrination phase and the jihadisation phase. In this model, the pre-radicalisation phase or the ‘point of origin’ is about having or seeking connection to Salafi-Islam, which is thus considered a cause or motive of radicalisation.<sup>35</sup> This is, in fact, a popular notion expressed by many policy makers and journalists, that ‘Islamist’ terrorism is a result of extremist tendencies inherent in a religion. Especially when it comes to suicide bombing, journalists and researchers tend to stress ideological motives.<sup>36</sup>

Consequently, several counterterrorism approaches tend to address ideology as a principal motivator to violence, therefore promoting ‘moderate’ Islam.<sup>37</sup> As McCauley points out, this could very well have a reverse effect, since Muslims may consider it (or jihadist groups may even use it) as an ‘intervention in religious identity’ or an ‘attack on Islam from within’.<sup>38</sup> Molix and Nichols (2012) also warn against ‘persuasion attempts’. Especially when delivered by someone with different values and narratives, this may reinforce radicalisation as opposed to presenting a counter narrative. This approach is also likely to fail since most authors are convinced that the role of ideology as a cause is misunderstood or at least highly overestimated.

It is undeniable that ideology plays a certain role in radicalisation. Yet, based on the observations in research, the connection cannot be described as causal. Adherence to a set of beliefs (cognitive radicalisation) does not automatically lead to behavioural radicalisation<sup>39</sup> This is also accounted for in the NYPD model, which qualifies that the pre-radicalisation phase must also include a stimulus and opportunity. This stimulus or opportunity might be for example a group or a recruiter with whom they have come into contact.

So, not every fundamentalist is a potential terrorist, and it has also been proved that not every terrorist used to be a fundamentalist.<sup>40</sup> Several researches show that in most cases, Jihadists did not originally have a religious background, and that ideology became a factor of importance only later in the radicalisation process.<sup>41</sup> Empirical research shows that people begin the process of radicalisation for many different social reasons and in many different

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<sup>34</sup> NYPD (2007) p. 21

<sup>35</sup> Aly and Striegheer (2012)

<sup>36</sup> Kassim (2011), Van der Pligt (2009), McCauley and Moskalenko (2012)

<sup>37</sup> Aly and Striegheer (2012) p. 849

<sup>38</sup> McCauley (2011)

<sup>39</sup> Aly and Striegheer (2012), Kassim (2011), Van der Pligt (2009)

<sup>40</sup> Bakker (2006) p. 39

<sup>41</sup> Sageman (2004), Bakker (2006), Silke (2008)

ways, not just because they first became attracted to an abstract set of ideas that lead them to violent behaviour.<sup>42</sup> Ideology may be referred to though, to justify violent acts.<sup>43</sup>

Using the staircase model of Moghaddam, TERRA approaches radicalisation as a process of identity formation, influenced by group dynamics. Ideology then, is more like a ‘dimension’ of the process<sup>44</sup>, or a ‘vehicle for group bonding, a moral template for constructing in-group/out-group boundaries’<sup>45</sup> The more a person is uncertain about himself, about his place in the world or being accepted by a group, the more he feels in need of an ideology and a close group that provides a clear and positive identity.<sup>46</sup> Radicalisation to extreme-right, often starts with a search for acceptance and belonging. Having found a group which fulfils those needs, the new member starts taking over the group’s norms and ideologies. Thus, ideology plays an important role in the processes and mechanisms connected to radicalisation, but it is not necessarily the starting point, and it in itself it is not a cause for terrorism. This may seem a subtle difference, but it has important consequences for the choice of a preventative approach. The most important conclusion for TERRA is that ideology and social processes should always be addressed as interconnected.

Also in **Wiktorowicz’s al-Muhajiroun model**<sup>47</sup> the ‘religious seeking’ dimension is explicitly mentioned, along with ‘cognitive opening’ where a demand for new views and perspectives develops; ‘frame alignment’, which refers to this demand finding a supplier in the form of a radical group; and ‘socialisation’, the process in which a person adapts to the group thinking and values. This research is based upon field work conducted with a radical Islamic group based in the UK, which supports the use of violence against Western interests in Muslim countries and the establishment of an Islamic state. Thus it empirically confirms that those processes can be noticed, at least in Islamist radicalisation.

This is also a quality of **Sageman’s four stage process**:<sup>48</sup> Sageman’s work, informed by many years of research and acting as advisor to the US government, forms an impressive body of evidence. He focuses upon Islamic militancy at international level. He discerns four factors that contribute to radicalisation. The first refers to a member of a broader public experiencing a sense of moral outrage as a direct result of perceived violations of a sense of what is right, for example the killing of Muslims in Bosnia. The second factor is an interpretation of events in which these incidents are no longer seen as isolated, but as part of a more generalised war on Islam. Third, this perception is echoed in the individual’s daily life; that is, discrimination which the individual himself experiences or perceives appears to echo his perception of a generalised war on Islam. Finally, these feelings are translated into action, when the individual seeks out a network of like minded individuals. An attractive feature of Sageman’s work is that it includes thrill and fame seeking behaviour as a factor influencing

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<sup>42</sup> START research brief 2014

<sup>43</sup> McCauley and Moskaleiko (2012)

<sup>44</sup> Van den Bos (2009)

<sup>45</sup> Aly and Striegher (2012)

<sup>46</sup> Meertens (2007), De Wolf en Doosje (2010)

<sup>47</sup> Wiktorowicz (2004)

<sup>48</sup> Sageman (2004), (2008)

young men in their gravitation towards a radical group. This aspect (which is not reflected in Moghaddam’s Staircase) provides some valuable insights for our discussion of the implications of the literature review for the key target groups of TERRA, with particular regard to journalists. Sageman’s model is also a persuasive one. However, in terms of the focus of its attention, it appears to be somewhat asymmetrical, focussing a great deal of attention in stages 1, 2 and 3 upon the factors motivating an individual to seek out a radical group, but letting him slip out of sight as soon as he has formed a bond with a radical group. Sageman’s model could helpfully be visualised as the movement between Moghaddam’s ground, first and second floors. His model expresses the early stages of the radicalisation process, and does not follow the individual’s progress from making an initial link with this group to committing an act of violence in its name. This has been elaborated, however, by **Taarnby** in his work on the cell which carried out the 9/11 attacks as a case study. He also addresses gradual seclusion and cell formation, acceptance of violence as a legitimate political means, and connection with a ‘gatekeeper’, as following steps towards a terrorist act.<sup>49</sup> In fact, this is giving a fuller insight into the processes also mentioned by Moghaddam in the Staircase Model.

A more different perspective is offered by the **Pathway Model** of **Gill** (2007). He points to the possible importance a catalyst event in the personal circumstances of the individual, and to the strong influence some family or friendship ties with a radical group can have on recruitment. Those are useful insights also for TERRA to bear in mind.

The important influence of family or friendship ties is called ‘the power of love’ by **McCauley and Moskalkenko’s** in their **12 mechanisms model** (2008). McCauley and Moskalkenko identify three domains in which radicalisation can take place: individual, group, and mass:

*Figure 1: McCauley and Moskalkenko’s 12 mechanism model<sup>50</sup>*

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

<sup>49</sup> Taarnby (2005)

<sup>50</sup> McCauley and Moskalkenko (2008) p. 418



Within this model, most terms are self explanatory. We might add that on an individual level, joining a radical group – the slippery slope describes the process in which the individual experiences an increasing degree of commitment to and involvement with the group, joining a radical group – the power of love shows how an individual is recruited through family or friendship ties and extremity shift in likeminded groups refers to how contact with like minded group members lead to a polarisation of the views of group members as a result of the confirmation which they receive from one another. At a group level, the authors identify four mechanisms: extreme cohesion under isolation and threat, competition for the same base of support (in which groups display greater radicalisation or, in some cases, violence, in an attempt to win support from a limited base) competition with state power ( in which an exchange of actions, sometimes in increasing violence, might be a reaction to state intervention against the group) and within – group competition in which factions of the group become more polarised in comparison with other factions of the same group, potentially leading to a greater degree of radicalisation. At the most macro level, their model includes a mass level, in which the authors identify three possible mechanisms: Jiu-jitsu politics (in which a population can solidify in support for a leader or movement as a result of external threat), hate (in which an “out group” is portrayed as so remote they become dehumanised in the eyes of the whole population, thereby justifying acts of extreme violence, and martyrdom, where the memory of those who have died for the mass cause is revered and appears to personify the cause itself).

If we compare Moghaddam’s Staircase model to that of McCauley and Moskalkenko, it is evident that most factors in the 12 Mechanisms model (up from the third mechanism) connect to stage 3 to 5 in the staircase. From this we can conclude that the power of the context increases, and degrees of (personal) freedom decrease, as individuals move up the staircase. Whereas in the first stages the individual perception of environment is crucial and emphasis is on psychological factors, in the later stages specific actors, ideologies, group processes etc. are increasingly influential, and social processes are determining. It is important to acknowledge this when thinking about tools for prevention.

Doosje en De Wolf (2010) use Moghaddam’s staircase model as the basis for extensive research on Islamist radicalisation in the Netherlands. From literature studies and interviews, they identify examples of the processes described in the staircase model, pointing to the signals that would make the respective processes visible for the immediate environment. They also address the possible implications of their findings for prevention and de-radicalisation. On the basis of their research, they identify key-figures who can play a role in intervention on each level of the radicalisation process.

*Figure 3: Matrix of de Wolf and Doosje*

	<b>Social psychological factors</b>	<b>Signals</b>	<b>Implications de-radicalisation programs</b>	<b>Key figures</b>
<b>Ground floor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frustration because of relative deprivation and discrimination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is potentially open to explaining ideology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce feelings of deprivation</li> <li>• Stimulate social</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipality, government, schools, media</li> </ul>

	Social psychological factors	Signals	Implications de-radicalisation programs	Key figures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertainty</li> <li>• Openness to close others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Searching for positive social identity</li> <li>• Influenced by others</li> </ul>	<p>creativity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create contact with people who can provide positive influence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipality, government, mosque</li> <li>• Municipality, government, schools</li> </ul>
<b>First floor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hope for improvement versus frustration in case of failure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Losing faith in justice of 'the system'</li> <li>• Loosing belief in effectiveness old groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take away feelings of a 'glass ceiling'</li> <li>• Stimulate the effectiveness of the own group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipality, government, schools, media</li> </ul>
<b>Second floor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search face-to-face and via internet</li> <li>• 'Commitment' to the group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploration of radical ideology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present other groups with clear ideology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipality, mosque</li> </ul>
<b>Third floor</b>	<p>Uncertainty about status within the group</p> <p>Stronger belief in the group through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reciprocity principle</li> <li>• Cognitive dissonance</li> <li>• Justify efforts</li> <li>• Depersonalisation</li> <li>• Polarisation</li> <li>• Learning through role models</li> <li>• Foot-in-the-door principle</li> <li>• Use of power</li> </ul>	<p>New member begins to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolate himself from former environment</li> <li>• Dress and behave like prototypical members of the group</li> <li>• Rebelling against other groups particularly those very similar to the own group</li> <li>• Adopt another name</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevention of isolation</li> <li>• Point out costs of group membership</li> <li>• Present alternative groups</li> <li>• Provide information on the power of the group over the individual</li> <li>• Signalling and pass on of signals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant others and acquaintances</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Municipality, government, mosque, clubs, employ</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Significant others and acquaintances</li> </ul>
<b>Fourth floor</b>	<p>More commitment to the group through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fusion of personal and social identity</li> <li>• Increase of power of the group</li> <li>• Change in self image because of functional role</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members become less noticeable as a result of their increasing participation in a shadow world</li> <li>• Prepare an attack</li> <li>• Members start dressing and behaving in a more western fashion again</li> <li>• Express hate against 'unbelievers'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signalling and pass on signals</li> <li>• Take care that 'detectors' know where they can go to</li> <li>• Questioning violence as a means</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers, community workers, youth workers, youth care institutions, police officers, guards , neighbours, parents and close others</li> </ul>

	Social psychological factors	Signals	Implications de-radicalisation programs	Key figures
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach new members the 'true doctrine'</li> <li>Produce legacy</li> <li>Re-socialise by instilling fear</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infiltrators</li> </ul>
<b>Fifth floor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commit to an attack</li> <li>Avoid inhibitory mechanisms through:</li> <li>Moral exclusion by dehumanisation</li> <li>Apocalyptic thinking</li> <li>Belief in a just world</li> <li>Decrease of own responsibility by compliant state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make a (video) testament</li> <li>Withdraw all money from the bank</li> <li>Expression of moral exclusion of other groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signalling and pass on signals</li> <li>Point out irrational character of used justifications</li> <li>Openly acclaim doubters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infiltrators</li> <li>Infiltrators</li> <li>Infiltrators</li> </ul>

We propose using this matrix as a basis for the development of TERRA's tools. Building upon Moghaddam's already substantial contribution to our understanding of the radicalisation process, De Wolf and Doosje's work provides a solid theoretical framework which we would like to broaden out, bearing in mind that we should evaluate the applicability at a European level, and the extent to which it is able to include other forms of radicalisation. Additionally, the tools will also be informed by the conclusions we drew above from the other models we discussed. They can be summarized as follows:

- Response should appropriately match the stage a radicalisation process is in; intervening too early or too heavily will worsen the situation.
- Ideology and religious seeking should be addressed; not as an isolated cause, but as a dimension of the identity and social processes taking place.
- Thrill and fame seeking behaviour can also be a factor influencing young men in their gravitation towards a radical group.
- We should pay attention to the possible role of catalyst events, such as a traumatic or violent incident, severe injustice or the death of a loved one.
- Friends and kin who are involved in radical movement can be considered a serious risk factor
- Most models point to an increasing influence of group and context in the course of the radicalisation process. At the same time, we should bear in mind that 'the process' is not static or one directional, but is in fact a combination of psychological and social processes, which occur not necessarily as linear as the staircase model might suggest.

## 4 Starting points for the TERRA approach

TERRA's focus is, above all, practical. Its ultimate objective is to translate the knowledge contained in research, and writing on the subject, along with that held by former radicals, people who have been affected by terrorism and experts in the field, into a format in which it will be applicable and usable to professional people whose work brings them into daily contact with potentially vulnerable individuals and groups. As we have already seen, De Wolf and Doosje's research (2010) is extremely helpful in identifying who these key figures are. Based upon their findings, we identified the following professional groups as being of particular interest: teachers and other youth workers, religious leaders, journalists, community leaders, law enforcers including prison, probation and parole officers and policy makers.

Yet, in order to define what their respective roles can be, we need to take a closer look on what characterises those 'potentially vulnerable individuals' have. In 5.1 we analyse the insights literature offers on that. In 5.2, then, we go deeper into the ways to involve professionals in the prevention of radicalisation.

### 4.1 Insights from literature on receptivity for radicalisation

A lot of effort has already been expended on discovering the characteristics of radicals and/or terrorists. One conclusion which is consistently drawn is that there is no such thing as a typical terrorist. Sageman notes that radical individuals can be found from all walks of life – those who are well educated and those who are less so, those who are from poor backgrounds, and those who are from wealthy ones.<sup>51</sup> Also the research from Bakker (2006), who studied the backgrounds of over 200 jihadis, resulted in a very nuanced picture.<sup>52</sup> Silke shows that in spite of the apparent irrationality of their actions, those who commit terrorist acts are not usually suffering from a mental disorder.<sup>53</sup>

Silke's research does, however help us to delineate some demographic factors which are very helpful. He suggests that the vast majority of terrorists are young (in their late teens or early twenties) and male. He supports this theory by referring to cross-cultural studies on violent crime, that all tend to show that more crime in general is committed by teenagers and young adults than by any other age category, and that willingness to offend also peaks for male between 15 and 18 years of age.<sup>54</sup>

This theory is further supported by Christmann,<sup>55</sup> and Sageman,<sup>56</sup> who add that the attraction of danger, "heroism" and adventure can be significant "pull factors" for young male recruits.

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<sup>51</sup> See Sageman (2004) See especially chapter three on the Mujahedin, pages 61 ff.

<sup>52</sup> Bakker (2006) p. 53 and chapter 5.

<sup>53</sup> Silke (2008) p 104

<sup>54</sup> Silke (2008) p105-6. This suggestion is further supported by Christmann (2012) p. 23

<sup>55</sup> Christmann (2012) p. 23

Christmann's review confirms that young people are especially vulnerable, suggesting that a search for identity or, more specifically, a confirmation of identity through interaction with like minded individuals, is a crucial factor which prompts young people to seek out a radical group. The issues of identity conflicts for young people from an Islamic background growing up in a Western society is further illustrated by Moghaddam and Solliday (1991), who identify a problem which they name the "good copy" problem – that is, the situation in which members of an ethnic or religious minority develop the sense that they can only at best hope to be a good copy of their autochthon equals. On a macro level, this phenomenon can, they argue, affect whole countries; on a micro, individual level, can cause great tensions for young Muslims growing up in the West. This is also connected to a more general problem amongst minorities: the struggle with dual identity issues. They need to assimilate but they also want to be faithful to their origins; and/or they want to assimilate but their environment tends to emphasize that they are of a different origin. It's evident that the factors described here can have implications for religious leaders, and more can be found in the literature on the subject. Griffin<sup>57</sup> suggests that radicalisation can be the expression of a group or individual's need to find meaning, a search for *nomos*. In a globalised, post modern world, he argues, a vital human drive can be left un-met – that is, "the drive to orient our lives towards the fulfilment of a higher cause or purpose whose significance transcends that of our own brief existence."<sup>58</sup> Assertions within the literature that a search for a religious identity can be a key factor leading young people to seek out radical groups provides a clear view of how religious leaders are well placed to offer guidance, support and positive influence in the lives of these people. Research by de Koster and Houtman (2008), who examined right wing extremism in the Netherlands, confirms that the sense of searching for identity at a young age is applicable not just to religious groups, but political ones, too.

Victoroff et al. (2012) also refer to other social psychological theories as a possible explanation for young adolescents being at a higher risk for radicalisation. They mention the connection confirmed by Gniewosz, Noack, & Buhl, 2009 between young adulthood and political alienation, and the approval of disruptive forms of political behaviour found by Watts (1999). They also refer to Flanagan & Sherrod, (1998), Leather (2009), and Steinberg (2007), stating that this period in life is in fact a natural phase in which social integration is in a developmental stage, and during which youth tends to question the status quo and explore their behavioural options – thereby more prone to risk taking. Victoroff et al. conclude from those theories that amongst young adolescents, greater openness to radical thoughts and attitudes and "perhaps to extremist behaviours" can be expected.<sup>59</sup>

Those results form a helpful basis for TERRA's work. We can now formulate a starting point as follows: **TERRA's emphasis is on radicalisation amongst young adolescents.**

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<sup>56</sup> Especially 2008.

<sup>57</sup> 2012

<sup>58</sup> P24

<sup>59</sup> Victoroff, Adelman and Matthews (2012) p. 795

## 4.2 Involving professionals in a preventative approach

In his extensive review of radicalisation and de-radicalisation, Schmid (2013) points to the difference between root causes on a micro-level (individual level), meso-level (the immediate social surround) and macro-level (role of government and society).<sup>60</sup> The intention of TERRA is to develop a coherent preventative approach which addresses all three levels. That means professionals at all three levels need to be involved. For the micro level, those are the ones in contact with vulnerable individuals, like teachers and youth workers, religious leaders, community police, or prison and probation officers. Parents also play an important role on this level. TERRA provides recommendations for the professionals to come into contact with parents and support them.

On the, meso level, the target group are the local governments, responsible for health, wellbeing and safety in their municipality. On the macro level, involvement of the national government and of the media is necessary.<sup>61</sup>

For the micro and meso level, we follow recommendations we found in the literature to develop a community approach.<sup>62</sup> This approach is based on the idea that professionals working with youths are in a position to observe possible signals when an individual is radicalising. By discussing the signals together, they can better estimate what might be going on, monitor processes, and decide who might be in the right position to approach the youngster if necessary. It should be emphasised that front line professionals are not asked to “spot radicals” or “identify terrorists”, but to be willing to signal and share concerns.<sup>63</sup> There is a need for more proactive involvement from front line professionals, but a majority is not aware of the urgency of this.<sup>64</sup> Tools should therefore in the first place create awareness of the possible role professionals can have, and then offer the knowledge basis they need to fulfil this role. Following the matrix by De Wolf and Doosje we discussed above, we should be able to provide insight into possible signals, related to the psychological and social processes of radicalisation.

**TERRA develops tools for professionals working with young people who are vulnerable to radicalisation. Those tools intend to stimulate and support a community approach. They create awareness amongst front liners about their role, and provide knowledge on possible signals they may observe.**

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<sup>60</sup> Schmid (2013) p. 4

<sup>61</sup> See also the model of concentric circles of Evidence by Shaftoe, Turksen, Lever and Williams (2007) p. 300

<sup>62</sup> Shaftoe, Turksen, Lever and Williams (2007) p. 299-304; Jacobson (2010) p. 2, 31; Bartlett, Birdwell and King (2010) p. 16, 45-46; Doosje and De Wolf (2010). Examples of this approach can be found in Amsterdam ([www.amsterdam.nl/radicalisering](http://www.amsterdam.nl/radicalisering)), in the COPPPRA project (Community Policing Preventing Radicalisation & Terrorism, [www.copprra.eu](http://www.copprra.eu)) and the Danish SSP co-operation between schools, social services and the police (See Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration: Preventing Extremism - A Danish Handbook Series: *Methods for Working with Radicalisation.*)

<sup>63</sup> Meah and Mellis (2009) p. 7

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. p. 10

On the macro level, we discerned journalists and policy makers as people who may be able to influence radicalisation processes. In the following we explore their possible role and the consequences this has for the tool TERRA has to develop.

### *The role of journalists*

Some guidelines for journalists already exist,<sup>65</sup> but TERRA will take a broad perspective, suggesting that journalists can play a vital role in tackling some of the issues underlying the causes of radicalisation, especially issues on identity, ignorance or misunderstanding of ethnic, religious or political groups who are living within the same country.

Stereotypes and prejudices can easily and sometimes unintentionally be maintained or reinforced by media coverage, especially on matters of religion or ethnicity. Confirmation of existing (but not preferred) social relations or status quo, may add to (group) grievances, consolidate or even fuel nationalism, or otherwise contribute to inter group tensions. On the other hand, when fully aware of the influence of rhetoric on the experience of ‘us-and-them’ thinking or on perceived deprivation, journalists also have the power to avoid facilitating or verbalising discrimination. In fact media coverage of ethnic and religious issues has already been the focus of attention during the last decades, at least in the mainstream, quality press, instigated by the introduction of diversity policies and editorial guidelines.<sup>66</sup> Research amongst journalists in several European countries shows that journalists declare themselves dedicated to the values of objectivity, media plurality, democracy and civic society when reporting about ethnicity and religion. Most of them feel a sense of responsibility when it comes to supporting intercultural understanding and respect for diversity in society. At the same time, they acknowledge that the media still often plays a role in the promotion of negative stereotypes and prejudices connected to ethnicity and religion. Especially in France, Italy and Greece journalists point to immigration as a highly politicized social problem that is hard to deal with objectively. In the Northwest European countries, journalists suggest that most stories seem to aim at polarisation instead of information and convergence.<sup>67</sup> What is needed, according to the interviewed journalists, is to achieve balance between two main efforts in reporting on diversity issues: informing and interpreting. Informing refers to a true presentation of the events as they occurred and interpreting should aim at the promotion of “a constructive public dialogue about the issues of public concern”.<sup>68</sup> The report discusses a number of good examples of media coverage of ethnicity and religion. They are characterised by aspects like:

- 1) Moving beyond the event: in-depth reporting, providing background information, and explaining legal contexts, conscious framing.<sup>69</sup>
- 2) Considering the impact: avoiding stereotypes, minimizing harm, careful with a rhetoric which underlines a sense of “us and them” in reporting.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> See for example Sindelarova and Vymetal (2006) and Vymetal et al. (2008)

<sup>66</sup> Rugar (2012) p. 5

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. p. 17

<sup>68</sup> Ibid p. 58

<sup>69</sup> See also Hoewe, Bowe and Zeldes (2010), Tiegreen and Newman (2008)

<sup>70</sup> Leudar, Marsland and Nekvapil (2004) provide an interesting discussion of how George Bush, Tony Blair and Osama Bin Laden all utilised the “us and them” terminology to mobilise support for their respective policies in the wake of the September 11 attacks.

- 3) Showing respect: giving a voice to the voiceless, raising awareness about diversity, and taking a stand on discrimination

Most of the abovementioned is also made explicit in many of the journalistic professional codes and guidelines that have been developed since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Those codes, however, often seem to break down in extreme circumstances, for instance a threat to national security or at times of war. In such circumstances, media can become overtly nationalist or patriotic, or even play a pastoral, comforting role. What makes it so hard in those cases to maintain balance, tell the different sides of a story, and avoid overly emotional language or labels? Two main reasons can be discerned: moral equivalency, and commercial liability. By moral equivalency, we refer to the given that, when media refuse to condemn acts that are labelled in politics as terrorism or murderous acts, they will be considered suspicious – that they are offering a platform to perpetrators or criticizing counterterrorism policies. This is reflected in commercial liability: reputational risk is directly related to financial risk in terms of lost advertising or circulation revenue. When, in the UK, the Daily Mirror took a strong anti-war stance in 2003, they suffered a crippling loss in circulation as a result. This is a rather crucial issue for journalism, particularly in times of economic pressure, due to financial crisis and a decreasing role for traditional media. Besides, the heavy workload of most journalists seems discordant with the recommendations to greater thoroughness, and more post-degree education for journalists.<sup>71</sup>

Not all of the poor reporting practices relate to the extent to which journalists stick to the code, though. An important and influential aspect to be aware of is the underlying assumptions of common representations of terrorism. We already mentioned the difficulties of defining radicalisation; the term terrorism is as hard to describe. Therefore, it is already important to realise or even make explicit what connotations may arise when describing certain events in terms of terrorism or radicalism. Most assumptions about terrorism are based on the so-called ‘black swans’: incidents that fall outside the realm of regular expectations, have a high impact, and defy predictions.<sup>72</sup> The attack on 9/11 is an example of a black swan; an extremely deviant event in all respects, but it has had major influence on many theories, definitions and measures related to terrorism. Being aware of the ‘myths’ on terrorism this event generated may also support more balanced reporting on terrorist attacks.<sup>73</sup>

Another aspect relevant to responsible reporting on terrorism is the fact that, as we have seen, apart from grievances, also thrill and excitement may push someone in the direction of radical

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<sup>71</sup> Rupar (2012)

<sup>72</sup> Taleb (2007)

<sup>73</sup> Examples of those myths, addressed by Gary LaFree, director of the START center, are the assumptions that terrorist attacks were rapidly increasing in the years leading up to 9/11; that terrorist attacks reach every corner of the world; that most terrorist attacks involve disgruntled groups and individuals from one country carrying out attacks on civilians in other countries; that most terrorist attacks are incredibly lethal; that terrorist organisations are long lasting and hard to eradicate, etc. see LaFree’s account on “Discussion point: black swans and burstiness: countering myths about terrorism”

(<http://www.start.umd.edu/news/discussion-point-black-swans-and-burstiness-countering-myths-about-terrorism>) and “START Director addresses common myths of terrorism”

(<http://www.start.umd.edu/news/start-director-addresses-common-myths-terrorism>).



behaviour. Think of the Rolling Stone glam coverphoto of Boston bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, which pictures the bomber as a sexy star, recalling photos of Jim Morrison.<sup>74</sup> Coverage of terroristic acts or threats should avoid “feeding” the thrill seeking tendency of young men at risk of radicalisation by reporting on aspects of terrorist activity which might be construed as exciting and adventurous.

Sageman (2008) also underlines the dangers of reporting on the words of radical clerics within the media; this can, he points out, mistakenly convey a sense that their words reflect the Islamic religion as a whole, or the general beliefs of a Muslim population. He further points out that as young men are often attracted to radical groups in search of fame; it is inadvisable for journalists to place too much emphasis on the arrest of terrorists, and to avoid a triumphalist portrayal, as again this can underline an “us and them” mentality.

The tool TERRA develops for journalists should therefore address:

### **Sensitive reporting on religion and ethnic minorities**

### **Fair and balanced reporting of issues around terrorism and radicalisation**

### **Finding space for practicing the above under pressure of time and money**

#### ***The role of Policy Makers***

Policy makers form a complex group as well, since “playing politics” with (counter-) terrorism also takes place in every European country. Populist parties tend to enhance polarisation and conflict rather than reduce them. It is clear, though, that radicalisation and the prevention of it should be high on the agenda of European policy makers, because if it is not so, the measures suggested above can only form, at best, isolated initiatives of limited scope. If, on the other hand, TERRA’s key figures can depend upon support from policy making level, a broader approach can be taken, reaching a wider pool of young people within the country.

Most of the literature relevant for policy makers focuses on de-radicalisation. Several insights were derived from the fact that Europe has, comparatively speaking, a long history of terrorism, which has now yielded a small group of former radicals whose process of de-radicalisation has been studied. Alonso (2011) in a study of former ETA members and the circumstances surrounding their disengagement, names three key factors in the Spanish government’s negotiations with ETA: 1) that ETA itself was not demanding political concessions in return for disbanding; 2) that the government was not offering political concessions, and 3) that the former radicals were offered social reintegration measures, which would allow them to start a new life, free from violence. Both Gunaratna and Bin Ali’s study (2009) on two Egyptian ex radicals who are now working against Al Qaeda, and Kassimeris’ study (2011) on two Greek ex radicals, name a crucial psychological factor – that the key reason behind the decision to disengage was a gradual realisation – leading to conviction- that

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<sup>74</sup> ‘Rolling Stone defends Tsarnaev glam cover amid outcry  
<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/07/17/dzhokhar-tsarnaev-boston-marathon-bombing-rolling-stone/2523891/>

violence did not in fact provide a means to reach the political end they sought. What is perhaps noteworthy about these case studies is that they illustrate that the processes which lead these individuals to disengage took place on a personal level. No concessions were offered on a political level, and as a result a personal shift took place – a disillusionment with the means which the terrorist group was using, and a recognition that violence would not achieve the political aims of the group.

A RAND report (2010) containing an evaluation of de-radicalisation programmes worldwide also emphasises the need to focus on individuals. According to the report, the effort to stimulate de-radicalisation can best be made in the crucial early phases, for example by influencing the ‘strategic calculus’; with measures that increase the costs of remaining in an extremist organization and at the same time offering incentives that increase the benefits of leaving.<sup>75</sup> Another key finding of the evaluation is that a de-radicalisation program should address the affective, pragmatic, and ideological commitment to the group. Programs focusing on only one of those components are likely to fail. When all three components are implemented together, individuals are provided with multiple reasons to leave, and may be more likely to do so.<sup>76</sup>

McAuley, Tonge and Shirlow (2010) offer an interesting study of post peace process Northern Ireland and the role that ex Loyalist Paramilitaries are playing in their communities. These authors point out that ex radicals in this context can be key in community building programs. As former radicals can be seen as, for want of a better word, champions of a radical cause, their voices can lend extra strength to de-radicalising activities – for example, in Northern Ireland these former radicals worked with local youth groups to demilitarise local murals. Similarly, their support for liaison programmes with the “other” (in this case, Catholic) community, was perceived as lending legitimacy and value to this process. The value of former radicals collaborating in de-radicalisation programmes is also confirmed by the analysis of Horgan and Altier (2012). They also stress that, in order to realise that ‘potential’, existing de-radicalisation programmes should be thoroughly and constantly evaluated to determine their effectiveness.<sup>77</sup>

Some recommendations for policy makers can be derived from the literature, then, although its emphasis is slightly different to that for the other key figure groups, which are largely centred upon prevention.

**Promoting prevention or de-radicalisation measures undertaken by the other key figure groups.**

**Offering personal, but not political, concessions to radicals, allowing them to disengage from the group without fear for their personal safety.**

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<sup>75</sup> Rabasa, Pettyjohn, Ghez, and Boucek (2010) p. xiv

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. p. xxi Also a Danish inventory of European best practices in de-radicalisation, concludes that successful programs tend to address both behaviour and ideological thinking: see Ministry of refugee, immigration and integration affairs (2010) p. 31

<sup>77</sup> Horgan and Altier (2012) p. 84

**Recognising that ex radicals can play a key role in community building programmes in the aftermath of violence.**

Our research has to date taken the form of a literature review which has, in summary, yielded a broad overview on the theories surrounding the psychological mechanisms behind radicalisation, and the implications of current studies for TERRA's key groups.

## Appendix 1: search terms

These search terms were intended to cover two areas highly relevant to this study. Firstly, Part 1 was intended to gather literature on the various kinds of terrorism which play a role in Europe. Part 2 covers the target groups of TERRA, as named in our proposal. It is designed to filter literature which can shed some light on the role played by these various key figures in the radicalisation/ prevention processes.

Please note that a + symbol indicates that variants of the term have been included. These variants might include the prefixes de-, anti- and counter- and suffixes – ation, - ized, - ised, - s, -ist, –ism, - tion, -ic, -men and -women where appropriate.

Primary search term	Secondary search term
	<b>Part 1</b>
Extreme +	Anarchy
Fundamental +	Animal Rights
Intervention +	Capital+
Jihad+	Catholic +
Terror +	Communist +
Prevent +	Environment+
Violence+	Global+
Radical+	Islam
	Jewish
	Judaism
	Left wing
	Loyalist
	Neo Nazi
	Pro life
	Protestant
	Right wing
	Separate+
	Sikh
	Union +
	<b>Part 2</b>
	Community leader+
	Imam+
	Journalist+
	Pastor+
	Police+
	Police officer+
	Policy
	Policy maker+
	Priest+
	Prison guard+
	Prison officer+
	Prison warden+

	Prison ward+
	Rabbi+
	Religious leader+
	Social worker+
	Teacher+
	Victim+

The search strategy was based upon these search terms shown in the table below. The terms were grouped into various clusters of meaning, for example “processes of radicalisation”. These were mutually combined and later combined with other search terms derived from relevant sources. Title, abstract, heading word, table of contents, key concepts, original title, tests & measures and/or subject headings (where appropriate) were searched.

The search strategy was implemented in PsycInfo (Ovid) and only items published since 1990, in peer reviewed journals, were included. Items found through the search strategy were supplemented by items found through snowballing and cherry picking.

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