

# Excluded: The Sense of Non-Belonging and Violent Radicalisation in the UK

Written by Lorand Bodo

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LORAND BODO, AUG 7 2016

“By the time you receive this letter, I will already have crossed the border into Syria.” (Maher, 2014: 31). This sentence is part of a letter that was handed over by an accomplice to the parents of the so-called “Portsmouth boys”. Asad Uzzaman, Muhammad Hamidur Rahman, Mamunur Roshid, Mashudur Choudhury, and Mehdi Hassan decided in October 2013 to leave Britain and join the so-called Islamic State. They were strongly influenced by their common friend, Ifthekar Jaman, who had already gone to Syria, but had kept contact with the group via social media (Maher, 2014: 29-33). Interestingly, after only 17 days one of the group members, Mashudur Choudhury, had decided to return back to the UK where he was immediately arrested, charged with attending a terrorist camp, and eventually imprisoned for four years (Whitehead, 2015). The reason for his return is that he was deemed to be unsuitable by ISIS members and furthermore, he found life there to be too harsh (Whitehead (b), 2015). In contrast, the rest of the Portsmouth group, including Ifthekar Jaman, are reported to have been killed (Whitehead and Crilly, 2015).

The story about the “Portsmouth boys” is just one story of many that illustrates the increasing number of Britons leaving the UK to join terrorist groups such as ISIS. In fact, “more British Muslims have joined Islamist militant groups than serve in the country’s armed forces.” (Weaver, 2015). This statistic is quite shocking and raises the question what drives British Muslims to join violent radical groups? There are numerous and various theories and models attempting to explain the phenomenon of violent radicalisation. According to Neumann, there are three so-called ingredients that all of these theories and models have in common: Firstly, the theme of grievances that embodies experienced feelings such as racism, discrimination, and the sense of non-belonging. Secondly, the theme of ideology that allows to understand the experienced grievances and thus, channels it into a violent radical direction, e.g. takfiri ideology (a strict black and white interpretation that justifies killings[1]). Lastly, the theme of mobilisation – emphasising radicalisation is the result of social interactions among like-minded, e.g. “Portsmouth boys”. Although the ingredients are known, the scholarly discourse disagrees with the order and to what extent these factors have to emerge in order for individuals to become violently radicalised. Furthermore, due to the highly complex nature of radicalisation there is no single and universal explanation for it (Neumann, 2010: 2-3).

Leaving aside the disagreements on emphasis and order of the “ingredients” for radicalisation, Shiraz Maher identifies issues of identity and belonging as the most significant driver in many cases of radicalisation (Maher, 2015). This leads to the question of how these issues contribute to the violent radicalisation of individuals. In fact, analysing the Citizenship Survey (2001-2011) reveals that 90 percent of Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians felt that they were a part of Britain (Karlsen and Nazroo, 2015: 1-2). In other words, 90 percent felt to belong to the UK and thus, identified themselves with British values. Although the percentage is quite high, there are still 10 per cent who do not feel that they belong to the UK. Given the fact that issues of identity and belonging are crucial drivers for radicalisation and that more British Muslims have joined militant Islamist groups than British armed forces, it could be assumed that there is a striking connection between the sense of belonging and violent radicalisation. This leads in turn to the research question of this dissertation, namely, to what extent does the feeling of non-belonging lead to the violent radicalisation of a few individuals? This becomes crucial in terms of creating and implementing more effective counter-measures to stop and contain the rise of foreign fighters. Therefore, it is necessary to gain a more nuanced understanding of the concepts of identity, belonging and violent radicalisation.

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To answer the research question, this dissertation employs two semi-structured interviews, qualitative content analysis of secondary sources, such as case studies, newspaper articles, statistics, and documentaries, and a survey for illustrative purposes. By using an inductive approach, this dissertation attempts to examine how the sense of non-belonging could lead to the violent radicalisation of a few individuals. The key findings of this dissertation are that politicians and policies, domestic situation, society, British mosques, and the internet could convey a feeling of non-belonging. This means that these sources identified could significantly influence the process of violent radicalisation of a few individuals, especially for second and third generation Muslims. In this respect, it must be emphasised that the problem about violent radicalisation is not to be religiously fundamental in the first place, but to belong to the wrong group that is strongly determined by ideology.

The overall structure of this dissertation is composed of six parts. It begins by introducing and defining the terms used in the academic discourse and particularly in this dissertation. Furthermore, it highlights the distinction between radicalisation and violent radicalisation, which is necessary for a more nuanced understanding. It will then go on to the literature review that reviews all the relevant literature to the research question, or more precisely the literature that deals with issues of identity and the concept of belonging. For the purpose of clarity the literature review is divided into two sub-parts, each representing a category of literature. The third part is concerned with the research methodology used for this study, which is divided into three sub-parts. The first subpart generally highlights the limitations of radicalisation research, which is required to understand the choice of the sources of the data and the research strategy used that is covered in the second subpart. The last subpart discusses the research methods used for the purpose of answering the research question. Part four presents the theoretical framework that is comprised of three theories – Social Identity Theory, Framing Theory, and Self-Perception-Theory – in order to apply theoretical insights and answer the research question. Due to word limitations and the number of findings in this dissertation, part five directly goes into the discussion of the findings. It begins with discussing the themes of ideology and hate-preachers which are necessary for the discussion that follows and argumentation of this dissertation. It will then go on to discuss the five themes identified by applying the theoretical insights. It must be mentioned that the application of the theoretical framework will be more detailed for the first theme as in comparison to the other four themes. That is to prevent unnecessary repetitions of the overall argumentation. The sixth and last part of this dissertation presents the conclusion which summarises and concludes the main findings and furthermore, state the limitations of this dissertation by providing new research questions for future studies.

## CHAPTER ONE: Definitions

The study of radicalisation forms a vital part of understanding the root causes of Islamist terrorism. To explore the causes of radicalisation, it is firstly necessary to define and understand key terms and concepts that surround the phenomenon of radicalisation. What does it mean to be radical or extreme? What is the difference between radicalisation and violent radicalisation? What is the difference between religious fundamentalism and violent radicalisation?

According to Mandel, *“to be radical is to be extreme about something that is defined or accepted as normative, traditional, or valued as the status quo.”* (Mandel, 2009: 105). Thus, being radical is socially constructed and consequently, dependent on the perceptions of others. In other words, what one group views as radical may not be seen as radical or extreme at all by other groups. In contrast, for Borum, an extremist can be depicted as *“[...] simply one who deviates from the norm [...]”* (Borum, 2004: 47). Once again, it could be argued that extremism depends on what is set as the status quo and the perceptions of others. Leaving these debates aside, extremism forms an inherent component of radicalism (Kleinmann, 2012: 282). Borum distinguishes two types of extremism that differ in, what he calls, the “direction of activity”. In the first type, interests focus more on the promotion of the “cause”, where creation and attainment of a desired outcome (mostly political) is set as the main goal. In contrast, in the second type, interests are more focused on the destruction of those who oppose the desired outcome, where the annihilation of non-believers and opponents are set as the main goal. This concept explains why not every extremist becomes a terrorist, whereby in contrast nearly all terrorists are extremists (Borum, 2004: 47). Given this ambiguity, it makes sense to add the adjective “violent”, that is, violent extremism, when talking about extremism and the use of violence

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(Neumann et al., 2007: 6).

Defining radicalisation is as problematic as defining the terms radical and extreme. That is because defining these terms relies heavily on the perceptions of others and thus, varies from person to person. In consequence, there is no agreed definition of the concept of radicalisation (Neumann, 2013: 874). The variety of definitions and understandings have also led “to the construction of Muslim populations as ‘suspect communities’.” (Kundani, 2012: 3). Regardless of the definition debate, it is essential for the purpose of this Dissertation to outline three important parameters for a better understanding of the whole concept. The first parameter, which nearly every scholar in the studies of radicalisation agrees, is that radicalisation is described and understood as a process that individuals pass through (Neumann and Brooke, 2008: 6; Jensen, 2006: 61). Borum’s ‘Pathway Model’ (Borum, 2003), Wiktorowicz’s ‘Theory of Joining Extremist Groups’ (Wiktorowicz, 2004), Moghaddam’s ‘Staircase to Terrorism’ (Moghaddam, 2005), the NYPD’s Radicalisation Process (Silber and Bhatt, 2007), and Sagemann’s ‘Four Prongs’ (Sagemann, 2007) all emphasise the fact that radicalisation does not happen overnight, but in a gradual process (King and Taylor, 2011: 604-8).

The second parameter suggests that the concept of radicalisation should be seen as a relative rather than an absolute notion, which significantly depends on the context and normative issues (Sedgwick, 2010: 491) (Neumann, 2013: 876). For instance, the use of condoms to prevent pregnancies would be considered radical by the Catholic Church, whereas the majority of Europeans consider it as a legitimate and useful contraceptive. In other words, “Radicalization [...] is inherently context-dependent, and its meaning will always be contested.” (Neumann, 2013: 878). The third parameter describes the transition from just having radical ideas to the actual use or threat of physical coercion in order to achieve political goals (Schwarzmantel, 2011: 2), which is then described as violent radicalisation (Kleinmann, 2012: 282; Neumann et al., 2007: 11). Henceforth, this dissertation will use the adjective violent, embedded in brackets, when using the term radical to ensure a clear distinction between being radical and violently radical. Based on the three parameters mentioned, violent radicalisation will be defined in this dissertation as follows – A gradual process in which an individual or group of individuals deviate(s) from the norm, which is dependent on context and normative issues, and finally makes use of political violence in order to achieve his/her/their goal(s).

Having outlined the concept of violent radicalisation, it is necessary to draw a line between religious fundamentalism, on the one hand, and violent radicalisation on the other. That is because the former does not automatically lead to the latter. The underlying ideology of religious fundamentalists of the Sunni stream refers mostly to the Salafi/Wahhabi ideology that has the aim of the establishing a Caliphate (Ruthven, 2007: 27-8). The Salafism ideology was developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and called for a return to the traditional Islam as it was practised and observed in the days of the Prophet Mohammad and his followers. Wahhabism in contrast insists on a literal interpretation of the Quran. Nevertheless, Salafism and Wahhabism are often seen as synonymous ideologies that have many similarities (Alvi, 2014: 39-40). The interpretation of Salafism/Wahhabism differs from individual/group to individual/group. Wiktorowicz identified three factions of Salafists: Purists, Politicos, and Jihadis. Although these three factions share the same common religious creed, they differ in their assessment of contemporary problems and thus, how this creed should be applied. Purists focus on non-violent preaching of Islam (Dawah), education and purification of religious beliefs and practices (Wiktorowicz, 2006: 217), whereas Politicos eschew violence as well but engage in the political sphere (Wiktorowicz, 2006: 221-3). Jihadis, however, support and promote the use of violence to establish the Islamic state (Wiktorowicz, 2006: 225). Given these facts, religious fundamentalism and violent radicalisation are not the same. Being religiously fundamental does not necessarily mean that political violence will be employed to achieve certain goals. As Wiktorowicz showed, there are different factions within the Salafi Movement who agree on a common religious creed but differ in terms of their means – non-violent vs. violent.

## CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

The study of terrorism and radicalisation is a multi-disciplinary academic field that has been dominated by traditional research interests in history, law, sociology, political science, psychology, international relations and military studies

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(Reid and Chen, 2007: 42). Consequently, a vast amount of literature has emerged attempting to explain the phenomenon of terrorism and radicalisation in particular, which is seen as the root cause of terrorism (Kleinmann, 2011: 279) (Schmid, 2013: 2). Although there has always been an interest in issues related to radicalisation, the focus on this specifically has only recently glided into scholarly discourse (Neumann and Kleinmann, 2012: 361). The reasons for this are the terrorist attacks in Madrid (2004) and London (2005) which added a new and urgent dimension to the concept of terrorism – namely, “home-grown terrorism” (Schmid, 2013: 2) (Neumann and Kleinmann, 2012: 363-364). The literature offers many lenses through which to look at this phenomenon, but the plurality and diversity of these theories can be at times confusing.

To present and to analyse, in a critical manner, the part of published literature that is relevant to the research question of this dissertation, the literature review is structured into two sections. Each representing a certain approach in attempting to explain (violent) radicalisation and the emergence of terrorism. The literature review will first outline each approach by stating the main assumptions, and second, analyse the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches. The two categories are simple phase models and root cause models.

## *2.1 Simple Phase Models*

Developing simple phase models stem from the idea that once the steps of the radicalisation process are identified and known, efficient counter-radicalisation measures and policies can be drawn up to prevent people from becoming violently radicalised (Veldhuls and Staun, 2009: 13). This dissertation reviewed four simple phase models – those of Borum’s pathway (Borum, 2003), Wiktorowicz’s theory of joining extremist groups (Wiktorowicz, 2004), the NYPD’s radicalisation process (Silber and Bhatt, 2007), and Sagemann’s four prongs (Sagemann, 2008). In all models, identity-related issues form the core of the radicalisation process in some form of personal crisis. According to these models, a personal crisis is a crucial aspect of shaping and managing the development of one’s identity. (King and Taylor, 2011: 611). Borum for instance, explains that identities that were formed during adolescence could be severely damaged by a grievance or personal crisis. This damaged identity leads consequently to a lower self-esteem that results for some individuals in adopting violent radical ideologies and joining violent radical groups to boost their self-esteem (Borum, 2004: 28-29). Borum offers an excellent explanation that links the concept of self-identity with self-esteem. Moreover, his model, like the other four simple phase models, rank the process of radicalisation in distinct consecutive phases. This ranking enables authorities to gauge which issues relating to the radicalisation process must be prioritised in order to prevent people effectively from becoming violently radicalised. Nevertheless, his explanation is limited to only some people. While many youths experience some form of grievance or crisis during adolescence, Borum does not offer an explanation why this only affects a minority in becoming violently radicalised. Furthermore, his model, and simple phase models, in general, cannot explain why people radicalise in a non-violent direction. That is because simple phase models are based on successful radicalisation stories and make their conclusions through backwards reasoning. Therefore, it is impossible to describe and explain cases of non-violent radicalisation (Veldhuls and Staun, 2009: 17).

## *2.2 Roots and Causes*

The second category that attempts to explain the phenomenon of terrorism and radicalisation, in particular, is the so-called roots and causes of terrorism and radicalisation. The underlying assumption of these frameworks or approaches, generally speaking, is that as long as the underlying causes remain, new terrorists will always be generated. Thus, to tackle terrorism or violent radicalisation, roots and causes of terrorism and radicalisation must be tackled. However, this idea stems more from the realm of political discourse than from terrorism research (Bjorgo, 2004: 2). Within this category, arguments range from the role of poverty, feeling deprived in relation to the majority (relative deprivation theory), political leaning to personality factors and religion (Veldhuls and Staun, 2009: 21; Neumann et al., 2007: 14).

Concerning the sense of belonging, the so-called French sociologists – Gilles Kepel, Farhad Khosrokhavar, and Oliver Roy – must be highlighted. These three scholars focus more broadly on Islamism as a cultural, social, and political phenomenon (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010: 799). Their main contribution to radicalisation studies is their ability to explain why also members of a wealthy and apparently well-integrated Muslim middle class in Europe become violently

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radicalised. Khosrokhavar and Roy coined the term “a double sense of non-belonging” to explain this phenomenon. Meaning that second and third generation Muslims in Western democracies firstly, do not feel a sense of belonging to their parent’s home countries because they were born and raised in Europe. Secondly, they also do not feel a sense of belonging to the Western European country in which they are living, because of experiencing various forms of discrimination and racism (Khosrokhavar, 2005: 185; Roy, 2004: 15). In consequence, a violent radical interpretation of Islam offers a potential “solution” to their search for identity, dignity, and meaning. Moreover, all three authors point out that the violent radical interpretation of Islam permits the individual to blame his identity, namely being a Muslim, rather than blaming other factors for feeling excluded. In the view of these (violent) radicalised Muslims, the hostile Western culture leaves no space for Muslims (Kepel, 2004: 250; Khosrokhavar, 2005: 174; Roy, 2004: 15; Daalgaard-Nielsen, 2010: 800).

The French sociologists offer a real explanation why also wealthy and well-integrated second and third generation Muslims become violently radicalised. However, similar to Borum’s pathway model, the French sociologists cannot explain why only a small minority of individuals turn into violent radicalised individuals while the majority remains unaffected by that violent ideology (Daalgaard-Nielsen, 2010: 801). In general, one of the main criticism of the roots and causes approach is, “[...] while grievances are widespread, terrorism is not.” (Neumann et al. 2007: 14) (Meijer, 2015: 80). Thus, even if the roots and causes apparently explain a few cases of violent radicalisation, it does not automatically mean that everybody becomes violently radicalised when exposed to these particular underlying causes. Furthermore, even though the root cause models provide useful indicators for radicalisation, they lack in giving entirely satisfactory explanations for different types of radicalisation (Robinson, 2006: 2). With regards to the French sociologists, they do not offer an explanation as to why only a few individuals become violently radicalised, while others might become non-violently radicalised engaging in the political realm for instance (Daalgaard-Nielsen, 2010: 801).

In summary, simple phase models and root cause models provide useful lenses with which it is possible to identify important drivers for radicalisation. However, both are insufficient in explaining why these drivers affect only a few people. Furthermore, both models do not differentiate between different types of radicalisation – violent versus non-violent. The French sociologists, for instance, cannot explain why only a few people become non-violently radicalised. Becoming radicalised and violently radicalised are two separate issues. That is because being religiously fundamental (radical) is not the same as being violently radical[2]. In this respect, the sense of non-belonging has been identified as an important driver for radicalisation. However, the question remains, to what extent does this feeling lead to the violent radicalisation of individuals? Therefore, this Master’s dissertation aims to contribute to the work of the French Sociologists by providing an explanation that differentiates between violent and non-violent radicalisation. Furthermore, it seeks to provide an explanation for the non-violent radicalisation of individuals.

## **CHAPTER THREE: Research Methodology**

This chapter outlines the research methodology of this MA dissertation for the purpose of answering the research question: To what extent does the feeling of not belonging lead to the violent radicalisation of individuals? It begins with mapping the limitations and problems in radicalisation research, which are necessary to highlight for the purposes of understanding the research design used. Based on these constraints and challenges, the next section delineates the sources of the dataset and justifies the research strategy. The final section focuses on the research methods used and the justification of their choice.

### *3.1 Limitations and Problems in Radicalisation Research*

“There are probably few areas in the social sciences literature in which so much is written on the basis of so little research” (Schmid and Jongman, 1988: 1789). This quotation from 1988 underlines a still existing problem in terrorism and radicalisation studies, namely finding primary sources. The scarcity of primary sources constitutes the “Achilles Heel” of (counter-) terrorism studies (Schuurman and Eijkmann, 2013: 1-3). In consequence, the research

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quality of the majority of studies can be considered poor as demonstrated by several other studies (Schmid and Jongman, 1983, 1988) (Silke, 2001). A recent study conducted by Neumann and Kleinmann subjected the quality and rigour of academic literature on radicalisation from 1980 – 2010 to critical scrutiny. The results of their study revealed both positive and negative issues in radicalisation research. Although the research on radicalisation has generally improved, one of the main critique points was that a considerable number of publications relies heavily on secondary sources to support their conclusions. (Neumann and Kleinmann, 2013). Thus, the explanatory power of these publications can be considered as weak.

Furthermore, the nature of terrorism and radicalisation research prevents fieldwork from being carried out. That is because of two conditions: Firstly, there is a small number of terrorists – and those who aspire to become a terrorist. Secondly, it is very challenging to locate these people and conduct interviews with them under safe circumstances (Neumann & Kleinmann, 2013: 378). Despite these challenges, “[...] the perspective of individuals who have intimate personal experience of recruitment, volunteerism, and indoctrination practices can be of immense value to scholars and practitioners.” (Barrett, 2011: 749). However, only talking to terrorists, for example, is not enough. Horgan distinguishes explicitly between talking with terrorists and interviewing terrorist, whereby emphasis is placed on the latter to call for better research (Horgan, 2012: 29). In sum, research on radicalisation should rely more on primary, rather than secondary sources. Nevertheless, the use of primary sources alone does not guarantee valid and rigorous research. Therefore, a sound and well-developed research design is required.

## *3.2 Source of the Dataset and Research Strategy*

Bearing the above-outlined limitations and problems in mind, this dissertation gathers data both from primary and secondary sources. This dissertation used accounts and stories from the press, journal articles, and documentaries, which were supplemented by two semi-structured interviews and a survey that was used for illustration purposes. The use of primary sources is necessary to, first, balance out the analysis of secondary sources, and second, to boost the explanatory power of the overall argument of this dissertation.

In general, the dissertation follows a qualitative research strategy in a case study research design<sup>[3]</sup>. Exploring the causes and circumstances of the high complex process of (violent) radicalisation requires an inductive view of the relationship between theory and research (Bryman, 2012: 380). Due to the fact that there is no single general explanation for radicalisation, the use of an inductive approach seems appropriate for the purpose of this dissertation (Veldhuls and Staun, 2009: 4) (Borum, 2011: 12) (Vidino, 2011: 400). Moreover, the study of radicalisation cannot be merely considered as an input-output relationship as in quantitative research strategies. Therefore, and as Neumann and Kleinmann argue “[...] the use of qualitative methodologies [...] may, in many cases, be more appropriate and produce more valid results than the construction of large – and largely meaningless – datasets.” (Neumann & Kleinmann 2013: 378).

## *3.3 Research Methods*

To overcome the challenges and constraints mentioned above, this dissertation employed a semi-structured interview with a former Salafi-jihadi (hereafter known as interviewee b)<sup>[4]</sup>, who, according to his view, has been successfully de-radicalised. His account offers profound and rich insights into the process of (violent) radicalisation, especially because of his past experiences as a recruiter of dozens of young British jihadis and his present experiences in supporting de-radicalisation programmes in the UK. His first-hand experiences are immensely valuable for this dissertation because he experienced the feeling of non-belonging, and furthermore, he has seen the same feeling occurring in other individuals as well. Above all, first-hand accounts of former violently radicalised individuals are rare and thus, immensely significant for rigorous research.

Also, an expert semi-structured interview was conducted with a social and urban geographer from the University of Birmingham. His field of expertise covers the concepts of identity, belonging, security and the governance of communities. His doctoral research investigated the political identity of Muslim communities in Birmingham, in light of the Government’s emerging counter-terrorism and anti-extremism policies. His expertise in the concepts of identity and belonging and moreover, his experiences with Muslim communities provide, therefore, a valuable contribution to

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the exploration of the research question. Furthermore, this dissertation carried out a survey of 31 students living in the UK, for the purposes of attempting to gather the perspectives of students on the phenomenon of violent radicalisation. The purpose of the survey – as well as of the two interviews – is to balance out the use of secondary sources and to explore to what extent does the feeling of not belonging lead to the violent radicalisation of a few individuals. Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that the survey conducted is not representative, but was rather used for illustration purposes.

Also, qualitative content analysis of secondary sources in the shape of newspaper articles, case studies journal articles, statistics, and documentaries was employed to support the overall argument of the dissertation. However, two important issues must be highlighted concerning the use of the sources mentioned above. First, these sources should be interpreted carefully and critically due to the biased representations by the authors (journalists, law enforcement and intelligence agencies, and governments). Second, there are no theories of radicalisation which can be applied to empirical case studies (Mastors and Siers, 2014: 386). Therefore, this dissertation does not aim to apply the theoretical framework to these sources, but rather uses them to underpin the overall argument.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: Theoretical Framework**

To answer the research question of this dissertation – to what extent does the sense of non-belonging lead to the violent radicalisation of a few individuals? – It is useful to break down the research question into four distinct questions to ensure that the research question is fully answered: Firstly, why do individuals join groups at all? Secondly, how does the sense of non-belonging contribute to the process of joining a group? Thirdly, why are individuals attracted to particular groups? Fourthly, how do individuals become violently radicalised after joining a radical group?

This dissertation draws upon a tripartite framework that allows for an explanation and understanding of the questions mentioned above. As there is no single explanation for (violent) radicalisation, it is necessary to look at this issue through different lenses. The theoretical framework is comprised of three theories that will be outlined in the following section. These theories are Social Identity Theory (SIT), Framing Theory (FT), and Self-Perception Theory (SPT). Furthermore, this framework constitutes a cross-discipline approach by borrowing theories from sociology (SIT, FT) and psychology (SPT).

### *4.1 Social Identity Theory (SIT)*

- Why do individuals join groups at all?
- How does the sense of non-belonging contribute to the process of joining a group?

Social Identity Theory (SIT) was developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979) for the purpose of presenting a theory of intergroup conflict (Tajfel and Turner, 1979: 33). SIT primarily focuses on the socio-cognitive process underlying group dynamics and how they shape identity (Raffie, 2013: 76). SIT postulates that the social categories, groups, and networks individuals fall within provide insight into how those individuals define themselves. Defining oneself is understood as a process by which individuals create a social identity based on their perception to which social group, network or category they belong to (Canella, Jones, and Whites, 2014: 438). Social identity is an individual's self-image that derives from the social category he perceives him/herself as belonging to, together with the value and emotional significance attached to the membership (Trepte, 2006: 258-9; Tajfel and Turner, 1979: 40). Social categories, in general, are broad and large-scale sources of social identity, for instance, ethnicity, gender, and religion. Furthermore, they set up imaginary boundaries between members (in-group) and non-members (out-group), more precisely, boundaries between "us" and "them" (Raffie, 2013: 76).

The key assumption of SIT is that individuals are motivated to enhance and maintain their self-esteem and their positive social identity. This leads individuals to make social comparisons between the group they belong to (in-group) and relevant groups they compare themselves with (out-group). This has the ultimate aim to achieve both a

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distinct and positive position for the in-group and above all for their self-esteem (Taylor and Mogghadam, 1994: 61). Nevertheless, if social identity is perceived as unsatisfactory, individuals will strive to leave the in-group and join a more positively distinct out-group. Alternatively, they could make the existing in-group more positively distinct (Henry and Tajfel, 1978: 40).

According to Brannan, Esler, and Anders Strindberg SIT is comprised of three components: a cognitive, an evaluative, and an emotional component. SIT postulates that individuals identify themselves with a single or many groups to which they belong. The cognitive component here is understood as the knowledge that one belongs to a group. For instance, a young Muslim male identifies himself, based on his religion, with the Muslim community. Hence, he feels that he also belongs to this Muslim community (group of Muslims). The second component evaluates the membership of the individuals. As mentioned earlier, individuals strive to maintain and enhance their self-esteem and social identity. The value of the membership could have a positive or negative connotation. Referring to the first example, the young Muslim male, for instance, evaluates his group membership, belonging to the Muslim community, as negatively.

This evaluation could be explained by several reasons. Nevertheless, this leads to the third and final component of SIT, namely the emotional component. Based on the individual's evaluation, the individual develops either a positive or negative emotional attachment to the (in-) group. In the above-described example, the young Muslim male would develop a negative emotional attachment such as hate, contempt, shame, etc. to the (in-) group he still belongs to, namely the Muslim community. He now has two options: Firstly, he could leave the Muslim community and join a new group, for instance, the Jewish or Christian community. Alternatively, he stays in the Muslim community and starts to enhance the image of the group. This could be achieved by, for example, developing and executing Pro-Muslim campaigns to improve the image of the Muslim community in the wider society. Overall, regardless of the option he chooses, it is ultimately about enhancing and maintaining his self-esteem and social identity (Brannan, Esler, and Anders Strindberg, 2001: 18).

## 4.2 Framing Theory (FT)

Why are individuals attracted to particular groups?

Framing theory studies the language and rhetoric of social movements (Bentzen and Sandberg, 2014: 760). The concept of using frames in the study of social movements is primarily derived from Erving Goffmann (Goffmann, 1974). According to Goffmann, frames describe a "schemata of interpretation" which enable individuals to identify, label, locate, and perceive the occurrences that surround the individual and thus, make sense of the "world out there" (Goffmann, 1974: 21; Benford and Snow, 2000: 614). In contrast, collective action frames also perform the same interpretive function by simplifying and condensing aspects of occurrences that surround the individual. However, collective action frames are "[...] intended to mobilise potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilise antagonists." (Snow and Benford, 1988: 198). Thus, "[...] collective action frames are action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organisation (SMO)." (Benford and Snow, 2000: 614).

According to Snow and Benford (1988), collective action frames entail three core tasks: diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing. The first task is to identify a problem with attaching certain attributes to it. For instance, an unemployed right wing sympathiser blames migrants for his joblessness. Hence, migrants are diagnosed as the primary cause of his financial problems. The next task in collective action framing is the so-called prognostic framing. In other words, it is about problem resolution and hence, what can be done about it. Following the above-mentioned example, the right wing sympathiser believes that if all migrants were kicked out of the country and in addition, borders were closed for other migrants, his/her situation would be significantly improved, namely he/she would not be unemployed anymore.

The last task of collective action framing is motivational framing. This task is about presenting a rationale for



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engaging in a collective action or some articulation of a motive. Following this task, the right wing sympathiser needs to convince his fellows by providing a rationale or some articulation of a motive. This rationale could be, for instance, arranging demonstrations and giving rhetorical speeches to present his/her “sound” arguments. (Berntzen and Sandberg, 2014: 760-1; Benford and Snowden, 2000: 615). However, one of the most critical moments of the collective action frame process is the so-called frame resonance. That is the ability to transform a mobilisation potential into actual mobilisation and thus into action. To put it differently, if the frames are not convincing, there will be no movement and hence no action. In order to enhance mobilisation, a movement should draw upon indigenous cultural symbols, language and identities because frame resonance is then more likely to happen (Wiktorowicz, 2005: 16; Benford and Snow, 2000: 619-622).

## 4.3 Self-Perception- Theory (SPT)

- How do become individuals violently radicalised after joining a group?

Self-perception theory offers an excellent lens through which to look at the transition from being radical to become violently radicalised. Self-perception theory (SPT) was developed by Daryl Bem (1967) as an alternative interpretation of cognitive dissonance<sup>[6]</sup>. SPT postulates that individuals infer their attitudes, opinions, and other internal states by observing their behaviour and the circumstances in which that behaviour occurs. Self-perception is the ability of an individual to respond differentially to his behaviour and is the outcome of social interaction (Bem, 1967: 183-4; Bem, 1972: 4-9). In other words, individuals observe their attitudes, behaviour, and opinions and conclude what must have caused it.

Self-perception theory was also used to analyse the social influence in the online recruitment of terrorists and terrorist sympathisers. By analysing the online recruitment strategy of Al-Qaeda – Guadango et al. concluded that individuals may be influenced to form more radical beliefs. That is because of the strategy itself, where simple requests are given at the beginning, but then commitment to the cause gradually increases. As proposed by SPT, individuals may form increasingly more and more (violent) radical beliefs and attitudes which is the result of his or her own self-perception (Guadango et al. 2010: 25-26). To put it differently, when individuals are compelled to engage in (violent) radical activities, according to SPT, these individuals will adopt increasing (violent) radical attitudes and behaviours. This in turn will be interpreted by the individual as having adapted to the group’s values.

To summarise, the tripartite framework allows the research question to be explained and understood from three different angles. Firstly, the sociological angle, where SIT is an appropriate lens to examine why individuals join groups in the first instance and furthermore, it enables the extent to which the feeling of non-belonging leads to violent radicalisation to be gauged. Secondly, the angle of the organisation and the individual, where FT enables an understanding of why people are attracted to particular groups. Furthermore, it helps to explain why only a few become attracted to these groups (frame resonance). Thirdly, the psychological angle, where SPT offers an appropriate lens through which the psychological process within the violent radicalisation process can be understood.

## CHAPTER FIVE: Discussion

It must be emphasised that the aim of this dissertation is to demonstrate how the sense of non-belonging could lead to the violent radicalisation of a few individuals. Therefore, the here mentioned themes must be seen as significant drivers that firstly, cause and lead to the sense of non-belonging and secondly, therefore put these vulnerable individuals at higher risk of becoming (violently) radicalised. However, in what order and how many of these factors are required to become violently radicalised are not subjected to critical scrutiny here and hence, are not covered in this dissertation[6]. The discussion begins with illustrating the importance of ideology and the so-called “hate-preachers”. After that, each theme will be discussed in detail and furthermore, it will be explained how these themes could lead to violent radicalisation by applying the tripartite framework.

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## 5.1 Ideology and Hate-Preachers

In order to answer the research question of this dissertation – to what extent does the sense of non-belonging lead to the violent radicalisation of individuals – it is necessary to look at the aspects of ideology and the so-called “hate-preachers”. The reason for this is to get a nuanced understanding of how the sense of non-belonging could be channelled into violent radical thinking and/or behaviour. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the research question from the perspective of (violent) radical recruiters.

According to Interviewee b, ideology constitutes the most important factor concerning the violent radicalisation of individuals. “It is fuel to anger, fuel to that intolerance and divisiveness and it’s fuel to justify aggression.” (Confidential Interview, 2015). In this respect, the takfiri ideology must be highlighted, which is understood as the practice of declaring someone as an unbeliever (Arabic: *kāfir*). This strict interpretation of black and white is mostly used to eliminate opponents to achieve greater power (Confidential Interview, 2015). In 1803, for instance, Abd al-Aziz Ibn Muhammad used the takfiri ideology to justify the slaughter of thousands of Shias in Kerbala (today located in Iraq) including women and children (Armstrong, 2014). According to interviewee b, the use of the takfiri ideology allows individuals to label someone quite easily as an unbeliever (*kāfir*) and hence, justify his or her killing for the purpose of gaining more influence and thus, power (Confidential Interview, 2015).

In addition to the takfiri ideology, interviewee b perceives the so-called “hate-preachers” as a very dangerous element in the whole (violent) radicalisation process. “It is sheer madness [...] to ignore the fact that divisive preachers are perhaps the single most dangerous element to this whole situation that has been built.” (Confidential Interview, 2015). Interviewee b arrives at that conclusion by emphasising the persuasive qualities of these preachers. “Whatever grievances are, justified anger, [...] hate preachers, they make matters worse, they pervert the faith, they corrupt the hearts [...] they are the catalysts, they provide the poison, they are more than fuel, they are explosives.” (Confidential Interview, 2015). In summary, the takfiri ideology and the so-called “hate preachers” constitute a crucial factor that channels the sense of non-belonging into (violent) radicalisation of individuals. The feeling of non-belonging alone does not lead necessarily to (violent) radicalisation. That is because non-belonging is widespread, whereas (violent) radicalisation is not. What is required, therefore, is a mediator who can successfully channel a negative feeling of non-belonging into a positive feeling of belonging, namely belonging to the wrong group – a (violent) radical group. In what exact way, ideology and hate-preachers contribute to the process of (violent) radicalisation, will be further discussed below.

## 5.2 “Small p” politics vs. “big p” politics

The theme of “small p” politics is of significant importance concerning conveying the sense of belonging. The term politics refers here to a key concept in political geography that classifies politics into two distinct categories – “big p” politics versus “small p” politics. In a traditional sense, “big p” politics deals with states and their relations with other states, whereas “small p” politics is concerned with politics by non-state actors who tend to work through social movements and other groups (Mountz et al., 2008: 10-11). Nevertheless, “small p” politics is not only concerned with politics by non-state actors, but it also deals with politics of identity and belonging (Isakjee, 2015). Regarding the latter, Yuval-Davis (2011) distinguishes two types of belonging, firstly, emotional belonging that is about personal issues, such as what makes me feel comfortable, at home, and happy<sup>[7]</sup>. Secondly, politics of belonging that is concerned with drawing a line between groups within states, more precisely, who belongs to “us” and who belongs to “them” (Yuval-Davis, 2011: 178-9). To put it differently, politicians and policies could either convey a feeling of belonging or a sense of non-belonging that is crucial for one’s understanding of identity. Following from this, “small p” politics is as important as “big p” politics (Isakjee, 2015).

In support of the interviews conducted, secondary sources were used to further corroborate the theme of “small p” politics and its implications. For instance, a newspaper article in the form of an open letter, published by The Guardian, underlines what serious impact “small p” politics has concerning drawing a line between British society and Muslims living in the UK. In this open letter, Siema Iqbal, a British Muslim, addresses David Cameron’s latest speech on tackling extremism in the UK that had aroused much anger among British Muslims. “Despite being born in Manchester, growing up here and being proud Mancunian (let’s overlook my support for Liverpool FC), for the first

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time in 37 years I feel as though I don't belong. And yes, I am Muslim. Just a British Muslim" (Iqbal, 2015). This quote highlights two important issues. Firstly, the power of politicians to establish a dividing line in society, or more precisely to divide British people from British Muslims. Secondly, the division of two separate groups, namely the British people and British Muslims could force the latter group to draw in on itself, uniting in solidarity and ultimately, establishing a parallel society. In consequence, this furthers the alienation of British Muslims from the rest of British population.

Furthermore, another important source that conveys the feeling of non-belonging are counter-radicalisation / counter-terrorism policies. These policies are a relatively new and an emerging policy field in Europe that has been established in response to "home-grown" terrorism around the period of 2005-2006 (Lindekilde, 2012: 337). In response to this new threat, the British government, for instance, has applied its community policing principles to counter-terrorism enforcement. Community-based policing is understood as improving communication with Muslim communities, finding ways of marginalising extremists, and above all promoting social integration (Klausen, 2009: 409-10). Although the idea to integrate the Muslim communities is appealing, community-based policing of terrorism, however, has failed to build trust among the general Muslim public (Klausen, 2009: 417-8). According to Kundani this is because the 'Prevent Agenda', which has evolved under the agenda of British Prime Ministers Blair, Brown, and Cameron, is solely focused on Muslims.

Furthermore, it has increasingly emphasised the demand that British Muslims declare their allegiance to British values. However, demanding an adjustment to British values from British Muslims, whom themselves identify as British on their own terms, appears undemocratic and above all alienating. Everybody has the right to define the meaning of Britishness based on his or her terms (Kundani, 2015: 31-2). In consequence of this demand, British Muslims develop a sense of non-belonging to British society and a stronger sense of belonging to the Muslim community in the UK. This ultimately results in furthering the cultural gap between Muslims in the UK and the rest of British society. To summarise, although politicians and their developed counter-policies are intended to prevent (violent) radicalisation, this dissertation argues that politicians and policies could further the alienation of Muslims in the wider society that in turn could lead to a few individuals becoming violently radicalised.

It is about these few individuals who, according to the cognitive component of SIT, arrive at the conclusion that although they live in the UK and have British passports, they feel like they do not belong to British society anymore as conveyed by politicians and policies. Hence, this could lead to an adverse evaluation of belonging to British society (evaluative component) that could ultimately result in a negative emotional attachment to being British (emotional component). According to SIT, however, individuals strive to enhance and maintain their self-esteem and social identity (Taylor and Mogghadam, 1994: 61). Enhancing and maintaining these values, however, depends on the group membership of these individuals. In this case, a negative evaluation of being British could lead ultimately to a negative emotional attachment to being British, namely disgust, hate, and repulsion. In consequence, these individuals have two options to enhance and maintain their self-esteem and social identity. First, they leave the first group (being British) and enhance their self-image and social identity by making the second group (being a Muslim) more positively distinct. Second, they stay in the first group (being British) and promote the membership of being a British Muslim, in other words, enhancing the image of belonging to two groups at the same time. Bearing in mind that there are other factors as well, such as domestic situation, society, British mosques, and the internet that convey the same feeling of non-belonging, this dissertation argues that there is a high likelihood that these individuals would favour the first option. Thus, these individuals would leave the first group (being British) and enhance their self-image and self-esteem by making the membership of the second group (being a Muslim) more positively distinct.

The following quote by a young British Muslim, borrowed from a study carried out by Abbas and Siddique (2011,) underpins this argumentation. "[An] increasing number of young Muslim women are wearing the Hijab (headscarf) and men are growing beards and wearing caps . . . I think that this is a form of resistance . . . to . . . racism and what they, I suppose, see as an attack on their faith. It provides a sense of identity." (Aisha, Bengali (Sylheti), young woman, aged 21) (Abbas and Siddique, 2011: 126). If British Muslims are compelled by politicians or policies to adopt "British values" and above all are told directly or indirectly not to belong to British society, it could have severe implications concerning their (violent) radicalisation process. That is because British Muslims, who do not feel that they are British anymore, will make their membership of being a Muslim, according to SIT, more positively distinct to

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enhance and maintain their social identity. In consequence, these individuals could adopt more cultural and religious Muslim values that could result in a stricter interpretation of the Islam. In other words, becoming religiously fundamental.

Becoming religiously fundamental or what others might call radical is not the problem per se. However, belonging to the wrong group, as this dissertation argues, constitutes the main problem. Wrong groups, within the dissertation's context, are understood as violent radical groups that promote and execute violent radical activities. In a survey, carried out for this dissertation, which aimed at gaining the perception of students in the UK about radicalisation, about one third associate the term 'radical' with deviating from the norm. Furthermore, about 64 % of the respondents perceive deviating from the standard as something positive (Bodo, 2015). It must be underlined that this survey conducted is used for the purpose of illustration rather than used as a representative source. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, defining the term 'radical' depends heavily on perceptions, in other words, radical can be perceived as good for one person, but bad for another (Neumann, 2013: 874).

Concerning wrong groups in the UK there are officially more than 500 affiliated national, regional, and local Muslim organisations, charities, mosques, etc. under the umbrella of the British Muslim Council (BMC, 2014). Nevertheless, it is about these violent radical groups who are not part of the British Muslim Council and who either operate secretly in the UK or from abroad. Joining these groups enables and facilitates significantly the process of violent radicalisation because their work is not regulated by a higher authority, or in this case by the British Muslim Council. In this respect, ideology and hate preachers must be emphasised because they play a significant role in attracting individuals who have decided to leave the 'British group' and enhance his or her Muslim self-image by becoming more religious. While others become more religious and adopt a modern lifestyle, there are also a few individuals who feel strongly attracted to Salafism. That is because to enhance their social identity, namely being a Muslim, they pursue a "pure" religious life, meaning a literal interpretation of Islam (Hamid, 2008: 10). Following a literal interpretation of the Islam that has the aim of establishing a caliphate in a liberal and democratic country could lead to problems with the nation state they live in. This is of particular concern because Salafis (Purists, Politicos and Jihadis) do not engage in negotiations with the state, due to that fact that their belief forbids these individuals to consider themselves as active participants in a non-Muslim state.

Likewise, the Islamic State (IS) calls for hijra in their own periodically issued magazine, called *Dabiq*<sup>[8]</sup>. Using a Framing Theory lens, the analysis of the third issue published enables the explanation of why a few individuals could be attracted to this violent radical group. Firstly, the IS diagnoses a problem, namely "This Khilāfah is more in need than ever before for experts, professionals, and specialists, who can help contribute to strengthening its structure and tending to the needs of their Muslim brothers." (Islamic State, 2015: 26). Secondly, they prognose what the implications will be, if Muslims do not join the Islamic State: "Otherwise, his claims will become a greater proof against him on Judgment Day." (Islamic State, 2015: 26). Lastly, they provide a motivational framing that attempts frame resonance, in other words, motivates them to join the Islamic State:

"As for the Muslim students who use this same pretense now to continue abandoning the obligation of the era, then they should know that their Hijrah from dārul-kufr to dārul-Islām and jihād are more obligatory and urgent than spending an unknown number of years studying while exposed to doubts and desires that will destroy their religion and thus end for themselves any possible future of jihād." (Islamic State, 2015: 26).

To summarise, individuals who follow a literal interpretation of the Islam could be attracted by this collective action framing that heavily relies on ideology and more precisely draws upon their religious duties. Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that individuals feel only attracted if frame resonance is achieved. This also explains why only a few become attracted and join the Islamic State while the majority of Muslims condemn the IS.

Once these individuals joined the Islamic State or other violent radical groups, these individuals start to develop voluntarily or through peer pressure the same attitudes and behaviours as their fellow members, which in turn consolidates their (violent) radical thinking (McCauley and Moskaleiko, 2010: 85-86). Regardless of being radical or violently radical at the beginning of their membership, according to SPT, these individuals will infer from their observed attitudes, behaviours and their surroundings that they have become "more religious" (e.g. watching

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executions, participating on the battlefield' etc. that is justified by the underlying ideology) and hence, infer to do the right thing. However, from our perspective, these individuals have become "more religious", but in a violently radicalised sense. That is because violent radical groups such as the Islamic state predefine the attitude, behaviours, and values of the group. Hence, once in the group, these individuals have to adjust to the group. This implies that regardless of being radical or violently radical at the beginning, this dissertation argues, there is a high likelihood caused by SPT and/or peer pressure that they will end up being violently radicalised regardless of whether or not this is voluntary.

### *5.3 Domestic Situation*

Alienation of British Muslims is not only caused by politicians and policies but can also start in the family home. According to interviewee b, "what contributes to radicalisation is how a person has grown up at home without adequate self-esteem" (Confidential interview, 2015). Family discipline, such as strict obedience and respecting parents, has a striking connection with self-esteem among minority adolescents. According to a study, carried out by Olsen, Barber, and Shagle (1997), exerting psychological control, within families who emphasise collectivist values such as interdependence, leads to lower self-esteem in children. Also, another study conducted by Chen, Liu, and Li (2000) has demonstrated that the family environment has a significant impact on the physical and mental well-being of adolescents. Bearing these two studies in mind it is clear that an uncomfortable family life caused by strict obedience, respecting parents without reciprocation, and the lack of communication within the family significantly affects the well-being of young males and females (Lam, 2005: 26).

The lack of communication in families could lead to individuals with low self-esteem to develop psychological distress. Psychological distress, in the context of this dissertation, specifically refers to emotional vulnerability (Winefield, Gill, and Pilkington, 2012: 3). A study carried out by Wei et al. examined whether or not the use of social support concerning racial discrimination could lead to psychological distress for individuals with high or low levels of self-esteem. The concluding results found that low use of social support, in other words, lack of communication, may put male students with low self-esteem at risk of developing psychological distress (Wei et al., 2013: 1). However, it is unclear if female students would show the same pattern when compared to male students.

To summarise, family life significantly affects the physical and mental well-being of adolescents. The lack of communication in families could lead to emotional vulnerability for individuals with low self-esteem. In consequence, these vulnerable youths are at the highest risk of being successfully recruited by radical and/or (violent) radical groups who exploit that vulnerability for their purposes. Furthermore, low levels of self-esteem convey the feeling of being insignificant which could ultimately lead to a sense of non-belonging to his or her family. According to Cross and Madson (1997), an increase or decrease in self-esteem may also be attributable to an adolescent's perception of social inclusion or exclusion, depending on his or her self-perception (Lam, 2005: 24). In other words, self-esteem and the sense of belonging are linked with each other. Hence, domestic situation could be seen as a significant contributing factor towards adolescents' emotional vulnerability and thus, put them at higher risk of being open minded for radical and violent radical views (Darab, 2015).

In order to underpin this argumentation, a case study of Omar al Hammami – a young male who joined a Somali terrorist camp – demonstrates what severe impact a domestic situation could have on individuals. His radicalisation process is described as incremental and started with his interest in the terrorist attacks from 9/11 (Masters and Siers, 2014: 381). "It's difficult to believe a Muslim could have done this." (As quoted by Elliot, 2013). He concluded that he had not enough knowledge about Islam, which led him to search for mentors and teachers (Masters and Siers, 2014: 381). It could be argued that these mentors were hate preachers who used radical violent ideology to violently radicalise Hammami. However, there is not enough evidence for this assumption due to the lack of more precise information in this case study. What could be argued and underpinned instead is that his domestic situation led Hammami to pursue a strict interpretation of Islam, namely Salafism. His friends believed that Hammami's attraction to Salafism can be inferred from asserting his differences and disobeying his father (Elliot, 2013; Masters and Siers, 2014: 381-2). Furthermore, it could be argued that Hammami had to respect and obey his father without reciprocation that resulted in a feeling of insignificance and non-belonging. Hence, this had led to an emotional vulnerability that in turn, made him susceptible to (violent) radical ideologies.

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As in contrast to his past, his father decided to become more religious, however, followed a conventional interpretation of Islam without any extreme doctrine (Masters and Siers, 2014: 380-1). According to SIT, Hammami, who was emotionally vulnerable, concluded that he does not want to belong to his father because he did not follow the “pure” form of Islam – Salafism. To maintain and especially enhance his self-esteem, he wanted to make his membership of being a Muslim more positively distinct by adopting more religious attitudes and behaviours and above all, distancing himself from his father. This could be also interpreted as a response to disobey him.

Following FT, the ideology presented by his mentors and teachers achieved a frame resonance, meaning that what he was taught made sense (prognostic and diagnostic framing) and in the end, motivated him to participate in a Somalian terror camp (motivational framing). According to SPT, he inferred from his more religious life, as in contrast to his father, that he followed the right path and hence, was “more Muslim” than his father. Furthermore, the role of his mentors and teachers must be underlined as they encouraged him to follow the “true Islam”. Unfortunately, the “true Islam” can be depicted, from our perspective, as engaging in violent radical activities. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that these assumptions should be seen as hypothetical rather than empirically underpinned. That is because the case study lacks a greater level of detail. Overall, it can be summarised that the domestic situation led Hamami to leave the (in-) group (family) to join a more positively distinct (out-) group (violent radical group) in order to enhance his social identity and self-esteem that was damaged by the domestic situation. Thus, what made him decide to participate in a terrorist camp was not that he became more religious, but his membership in the “wrong” group.

### 5.4 Society

Likewise, the society causes emotional vulnerability in a similar way as the domestic situation. Racism towards Muslims severely affects the sense of belonging to Muslim individuals. There are varying ways in which racism could be conveyed, such as cultural racism (e.g. how ethnic groups are portrayed in the media), institutional racism (policies and/or institutional procedures e.g. the implications of counter-radicalisation policies), and interpersonal racism (e.g. racism that occurs to individuals in daily life) (Brondolo et al., 2012: 360-70). According to a study by Brondolo et al. (2012), who subjected the implications of racism on the social and physical well-being to critical scrutiny, concluded that experiencing racism is a likely contributor to the development of symptoms such as depression and other negative moods (Brondolo et al., 2012: 374). Hence, both, the domestic situation and the society could be seen as significant drivers for the emotional vulnerability that in turn, put these vulnerable individuals at higher risk of becoming (violently) radicalised. That is because (violent) radical behaviour could be interpreted as a response to racism. Abbas and Siddique (2011) examined the perceptions of the process of radicalisation among British South Asian Muslims in Birmingham. One interviewee stood out with his statement concerning racism and radicalisation; he said: “[...] radical behaviour is a response to many factors I suppose ... a response to oppression, exclusion, racism ... which make young people adopt a radical form of Islam as a form of resistance.” (Abdullah, Pakistani (Kashmiri), political figure, aged 56) (Abbas and Siddique, 2011: 125). Politicians, policies, the domestic situation, and the society have the power to convey the message of belonging or non-belonging. In the case of British Muslims for instance, all these factors could be seen as interlinked and above all, facilitating the process of (violent) radicalisation by making vulnerable adolescents susceptible to (violent) radical ideologies.

Similarly, a documentary on the root causes of extremism by Afrua Hirsch also concluded that the underlying causes of extremism among British Muslims are alienation. During her interviews conducted with young Muslims in the UK, she found that these Muslims have a profound and consistent sense of being demonised by society, and as creating a source of fear. Also, despite being born in the UK, Hirsch concluded that these Muslims (mostly second and third generations) are still not fully accepted as UK citizens by British society. “If you are not white in the UK, people constantly ask you where you are from.” (Hirsch, 2014). Being rejected by society and not being respected by their parents will lead to young Muslims developing a sense of non-belonging, or more precisely “a double sense of non-belonging”, as coined by Khosrokhavar and Roy (Khosrokhavar 2005, 185; Roy 2004, 193). This in turn triggers a search for identity (Raffie, 2013: 74). To summarise, politicians, policies, the domestic situation, and the society all contribute to a great extent to the sense of non-belonging of young Muslims, especially to those of second and third generation Muslims. Furthermore, the domestic situation and the society could cause emotional vulnerability to adolescents, whereas politics and policies could also contribute to this emotional vulnerability to some extent, but

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should be seen as more of a source of constant oppression and racism.

The British documentary *Exposure – Jihad: A British Story* demonstrates how the feeling of non-belonging led in two cases to embracing a violent radical ideology directly caused by society. In this documentary by Deeyah Khan, she investigates the roots of Islamic extremism in the UK by speaking to reformed extremists – among others – in order to answer the question why some young British Muslims join violently radicalised groups like ISIS (ITV, 2015). Two interviewees – Alyas Karman and Munir Zamir – stand out with their answers to the question about what had drawn them into extremism. Both interviewees share the same factor that had facilitated their violent radicalisation, namely the feeling of non-belonging conveyed by British society. Alyas Karman and Munir Zamir were both rejected by British society due to their ethnic background and in Zamir's case, additionally due to his innate disability. Zamir said: "[...] PAKI GO HOME. I heard that religiously like the five times call to prayer for the first 16 years of my life." (ITV, 2015). These continuous and intense racist utterances deeply affected Zamir and above all, emphasised that he did not belong to British society. In contrast, Karman said: "I've done everything to fit in, I even got the white girlfriend and everything else [...] and still you're not accepted bizarrely." (ITV, 2015).

According to SIT, both, Karman and Zamir concluded that they do not belong to British society. Moreover, they developed a negative emotional attachment to being British. To enhance their self-esteem and social identity, both favoured to stay in the first (in-) group (being a Muslim) and to improve their self-image and self-esteem by making their membership (being a Muslim) more positively distinct. Hence, they adopted more religious attitudes and behaviours. Furthermore, a hate preacher offered both an ideology that drew upon the takfiri ideology. This strict "black and white" interpretation enabled them to understand their problems (rejected by society), offered a solution (become a jihadi), and motivated them (jihad is the biggest duty of a true Muslim) to follow a violent radical interpretation of Islam. Furthermore, according to SPT and argued earlier, both inferred from their observed more religious attitude and behaviour that they engage in honourable activities, which from our perspective could be interpreted as violent radical activities. In summary, the society – among other themes identified – severely affects the process of the violent radicalisation of a few individuals. As demonstrated in this case, it led to embracing a violent radical ideology, also strongly determined by a hate-preacher. Once again, it could be argued that becoming religiously fundamental does not constitute the main problem in becoming violently radicalised, but belonging to the wrong group.

## 5.5 British Mosques

Excluded from politics and British society, denied in terms of significance and respect by their parents, British mosques should at least constitute a place of solace which offers guidance and support, or more precisely a source of belonging. If mosques, however, convey a feeling of non-belonging, this dissertation argues, (violent) radical groups will fill that vacuum by providing a (violent) radical ideology that could be appealing to vulnerable adolescents. Given the fact that half of the entire British Muslim population is comprised of individuals aged under 25, it could be argued that the high percentage of adolescents under 25 constitutes a large target group for (violent) radical groups (Ali, 2015: 27).

Two important factors undermine the role of British mosques. Firstly, the way in which British mosques are run in the UK. Secondly, cultural and language barriers of British Imams. Concerning the running of mosques in the UK, Imran Süleman, a British born and trained Imam, has worked in many mosques across the UK. In his view, a lot of the elder Imams, who originally come from the Indian subcontinent, insist on running British mosques as they would be run in India or Pakistan (Ahmed, 2015). According to a poll that was conducted by Quilliam Foundation in September 2008, 97 % of British Imams from 254 mosques were born abroad, and 92 % of British Imams from 154 mosques were trained abroad (Dyke, 2009: 11). Although the statistics are nearly eight years old, it could still be argued that the results have not changed dramatically. This results in large numbers of mosques being run like those abroad, provided that, the Imams involved have no interest in adopting modern and British cultural values (Maher, 2014: 28; Confidential Interview, 2015). In turn, this results in high numbers of adolescents feeling that they do not belong to a British mosque. That is because these Imams preach in the manner found in the Indian subcontinent rather than what is found in a liberal and democratic state. In consequence, these young people try to search for other sources that preach Islam in the context that they can better relate to. This is precisely the point where (violent) radical groups

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come in because they have the potential to fill this gap by providing a (violent) radical ideology. According to Süleman, “A lot of young people when they go to mosques, and they see the narrow-mindedness, the cultural baggage, the ceremony in a language that they can’t understand, they tend to go towards extremism or they go to the likes of ceremony preachers whom they see as a lot more articulate and who have a more clear vision.” (Ahmed, 2015).

Concerning cultural and language barriers, British Imams are unable to address how British Muslims should meet challenges currently facing them. This vacuum, however and as argued earlier, could be easily filled by (violent) radical groups who exactly understand their problems, provide the seemingly right answers, and above all speak a language they all understand (Abbas and Siddique, 2011: 131). Furthermore, the anti-political attitude of British mosques enables and facilitates the spread of (violent) radical ideology. The damaging side effect of this attitude is that people who want to discuss political issues have to find secret places where they can talk freely about their thoughts and opinions without fearing of being kicked out of the mosque, which is in most of the cases the punishment for doing so (Isakjee, 2015). If mosques did not provide a place where Muslims can discuss political issues, (violent) radical groups are able to provide an alternative space to do this.

The main problem with this situation is, however, that these conversations cannot be regulated anymore by people who have a certain expertise and above all have not embraced a violent radical view. In consequence, these secret places could transform into places where radical or even violent radical thoughts are developed and above all, they could transform into a platform to attract more individuals who are interested in discussing political issues (Isakjee, 2015). To summarise, although British Muslims belong to the Muslim community and hence to a mosque, British mosques constitute a source of non-belonging. This in turn, alienates British Muslims from their mosques, which is because British Imams lack the appropriate administrative, cultural, and language skills. (Violent) radical groups, however, could fill this vacuum that ultimately put young British Muslims at higher risk of becoming (violently) radicalised.

To support this argumentation with empirical evidence, the radicalisation story of a teenager, named Jejoen Botnik, is worth mentioning. His ‘journey to jihad’, as it is called in the New York Times article, began when he was fifteen years old. At that time, he started to perform poorly at school and moreover, his girlfriend broke up with him. His father described his mental well-being as “Jejoen fell down in a black hole.” (Taub, 2015). Jejoen himself depicted this period as “one of searching and looking for an alternative to the pain.” (Taub, 2015). At the age of sixteen, he started to date a Moroccan girl whom he liked very much. Nevertheless, he was told by her to learn about Islam, if he wanted to see her again. In consequence, Jejoen converted to Islam on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2011 at the De Koepel Mosque in Belgium (Taub, 2015). The crucial moment in his “journey to jihad” is not the fact that he had converted to Islam, but rather the mosque he visited. The De Koepel mosque was built in Antwerp in 2005 and had quickly become a home for hundreds of converts and second generation Muslims. The crucial problem here was that Friday prayers were conducted in Arabic or Turkish, languages both of which Jejoen did not understand (Taub, 2015). This had provided the opportunity for “hate-preachers” to take over. Three months after his conversion, his neighbour named Azzedine invited him to the headquarters of Sharia4Belgium, an organisation that has the aim of establishing a Caliphate in Belgium. Jejoen had spent a lot of his time at Sharia4Belgium and was most likely radicalised by this organisation. The highlight of his “journey to jihad” was the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 2011 when he travelled to Syria to join his friends on the battlefields (Taub, 2015).

According to SIT, it could be argued that Jejoen’s emotional vulnerability (poor performance at school and being single) led him to the decision to join the Muslim community and date the Moroccan girl and thus, enhance his self-esteem. While studying Islam, he developed a positive emotional attachment to the Muslim community. Nevertheless, it could be argued that the De Koepel Mosque was a crucial factor in his turning point from being a devoted Muslim to becoming a violent radical Muslim. That is because the Mosque did not offer Friday prayers in a language he could have understood. Furthermore, Jejoen was a “newbie” Muslim, who needed guidance and support. His neighbour exploited Jejoen’s excitement by inviting him to Sharia4Belgium where he was incrementally radicalised.

Concerning ideology, it could be argued that it is easier to achieve frame resonance and thus, motivate Jejoen to participate in violent radical activities if individuals are new converts. That is because these individuals are taught an



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ideology that is perceived by these individuals as pure, correct and furthermore does not allow any comparisons with other Muslim streams due to the lack of knowledge. In this respect, Belkacem's role as the leader (hate-preacher) must be highlighted because his violent radical ideology drew upon the takfiri ideology. "Belkacem dedicated the last four weeks of the course to teaching the importance of loyalty toward Muslims, and disavowal of non-Muslims." (Taub, 2015). As mentioned earlier, hate-preachers and the takfiri ideology have a significant impact on the violent radicalisation processes of individuals. Once he joined the group and above all made new friends his self-esteem was boosted, which encouraged Jejoen to adopt the shared attitudes and beliefs of the group. This according to SPT made him believe he was following the right path. At that time, he was convinced that "good deeds erase bad deeds, and jihad is the best deed" (Taub, 2015). When he arrived in Syria for the first time, interestingly, Jejoen hesitated about using violence although he had embraced a violent radical ideology. "I found it strange to see them with weapons," he told police. "I hesitated and then asked if this was what I had come for." (Taub, 2015).

Later on Jejoen was put in a bunker, which could be interpreted as a test for compelling him to adjust to the group because of his hesitation of using violence (Taub, 2015). Hence, Jejoen could be depicted as not violently radicalised, but only radicalised when he arrived in Syria. Nevertheless, according to SPT, Jejoen was compelled to do violent radical things that in turn led him to infer from his observation that he finally became a true Muslim. In the end, he became violently radicalised. This argumentation can be underpinned by a video that shows Jejoen firing guns and shouting "Allah-u-Akbar" alongside Syrian rebels (Taub, 2015). Nevertheless, it could be also argued that he was compelled to act in the video. All in all, it must be underlined that although the case study used is rich in detail, there are important parts that are missing and crucial for an in-depth analysis.

## 5.6 The Role of the Internet

Another factor that serves as an important aspect concerning the sense of non-belonging is the internet. It constitutes in today's digitalized world a crucial factor concerning the (violent) radicalisation process of individuals. Firstly, it serves as a "virtual messenger" for society and secondly, it provides a hub for alienated people. With regard to the "messenger" function, according to Isakjee, the internet, or more specifically the comment sections in online newspaper articles, blogs, and Facebook have a severe damaging impact on the individuals' feeling of belonging to society. The online comment sections, for instance, of the Huffington Post or The Guardian are full of racist comments against Muslims that say they do not belong to British society (Isakjee, 2015). It could be argued that the internet could affect individuals in a similar way that it does a society, which in turn leads to emotional vulnerability. That is because the internet constitutes a virtual space for society. Furthermore, it serves as a virtual space where anonymity is guaranteed, unlike on the streets where people have to directly confront one another (Cornish, 2008: 3). To put it differently, the internet could be seen as a modern instrument that allows society to be anonymously racist.

As mentioned earlier, many young people do not feel that they belong to British mosques and furthermore, they are not permitted to discuss political issues within these mosques. These two factors combined with politics, domestic situation, and society all convey the message that they do not belong to society, which in turn could lead individuals to search for an alternative place where they can connect with like-minded people who also feel excluded. Therefore, the internet offers a perfect place to easily connect with these like-minded people. According to Isakjee, the internet has become a hub for alienated individuals (Isakjee, 2015). Likewise, the survey conducted demonstrates that the internet and social media play a vital role in the radicalisation process (Bodo, 2015). According to a study by debatingeurope.eu, 32 % of Europeans use the internet to follow politics, whereas the number of younger people is even higher<sup>[9]</sup>. Moreover, 40 % of Europeans aged 15-24 say that they have expressed their perceptions on public issues through social media (Debating Europe, 2015). Thus, it could be argued that this European openness to political issues reflects an interest in public participation. If Europeans (especially European second and third generation Muslims) feel alienated, caused by politics, domestic situation, society, mosques, and the internet, (violent) radical groups could draw upon this interest for participation and channel it into active engagement in (violent) radical activities.

Nevertheless, unlike the dominant perception of governments and academics that the internet constitutes a factor that causes radicalisation, the internet should be seen as facilitating the process, rather than being the cause of it (Van Behr et al., 2013: 8-33). Likewise, interviewee B perceives the internet as not the cause of (violent)

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radicalisation, but rather as a facilitating factor. While talking about his past, interviewee b stressed the fact that he and his fellow peers became violently radicalised by watching VHS cassettes and not by the internet. The driving force behind their violent radicalisation processes was the factor of grievance. The Russian invasion of Afghanistan, cruelty towards Afghans who were perceived by interviewee b and his fellow peers as poor and innocent victims led to their decisions to engage actively in that conflict. In addition, both, Isakjee and interviewee b underpin their argumentation by stating the fact that the majority of people have easy access to violent radical content on the internet. Interestingly however, not everybody becomes violently radicalised (Confidential Interview, 2015; Isakjee, 2015). Furthermore, both interviewees emphasise that the process of violent radicalisation is a two-way process, which firstly requires active contribution from a person (Confidential Interview, 2015; Isakjee, 2015). "Radicalisation is not just something that happens to you [...], you do it as well." (Isakjee, 2015). In summary, according to Interviewee b, the internet does provide an easily accessible platform for (violent) radical thoughts, but people have to already be prepared to a large extent in order to become violently radicalised (Confidential Interview, 2015).

A case study of two British Muslims demonstrates the powerful impact of the internet on vulnerable young adolescents. Yanis Tsouli and Ifan Rafa spent hundreds of hours on the internet, downloading videos, sending emails and chatting on web forums. As a result of this, both concluded that they wanted to participate in a terrorist attack. Furthermore, both were joined by others online attempting to establish a "virtual terrorist cell". Nevertheless, both brothers were arrested by British authorities and a terrorist attack was thus prevented (Policy Planners Network, 2011: 2).

In general, it is not clear from the case study why both individuals spent so many hours on the internet instead of using their free time otherwise. It could be argued that the internet became a hub for Tsouli and Rafa because it conveyed a feeling of belonging (chatting with like-minded excluded people) and/or significance. In contrast, politics, domestic situation, society, British mosques and/or other factors could have conveyed the opposite feeling. Furthermore, it could be assumed that politics, domestic situation, society, and British Mosques strongly influenced their decision to leave the (in-) group (belonging to the UK) and join a more positively distinct (out-group), in this case a (violent) radical online community to enhance their self-esteem and social identity. This in turn, led to adopting more and more religious attitudes and beliefs that were fostered by online interactions with like-minded people. Following SIT, it could be assumed that their self-esteem and social identity could have been significantly enhanced by their membership of that (violent) radical online community.

Furthermore, the internet provided easy access to (violent) radical content that both were attracted to. According to FT, it could be said that a (violent) radical ideology caused frame resonance by firstly, diagnosing their problem, secondly, prognosing what will happen, and thirdly, motivating and calling them for action. Being connected with like-minded people led both brothers to conclude that they were following the right path. Following SPT, it could be argued that the intense online contact resulted in a situation where members supported and pushed each other to become more "religious". Hence, to become the best, namely the most religious person, members embraced more and more violent radical attitudes and behaviours. In the case of Tsouli and Rafa, it could be assumed that both adopted more and more violent radical views to comply with like-minded people on the internet. Thus, both inferred from their observations that they became more religious and followed the right path that can be depicted from our perspective as a path strongly influenced by violent radical ideology – Jihadi Salafism. For this reason, they decided to plan a terrorist attack based on their underlying takfiri ideology, namely killing unbelievers. Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that due to the lack of further and detailed information about this case study, this interpretation must be seen as a hypothetical rather than empirically underpinned assumption.

## **Conclusion**

To answer the research question of this dissertation to what extent does the sense of non-belonging lead to the violent radicalisation of a few individuals, the following can be summarised. The sense of non-belonging, conveyed by politicians, policies, domestic situation, British mosques, and the internet significantly influences the individuals' (violent) radicalisation process. That is because these factors strongly determine the choice of either staying in the (in-) group or leaving it and joining a more distinct (out-) group. In the case of British Muslims, there is a high likelihood that these individuals decide not to belong to British society anymore and hence, decide to make their

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membership of being a Muslim more positively distinct by adopting more religious attitudes and behaviours. Neglecting his or her citizenship could be caused by politicians and policies for instance. In consequence, becoming more religious, e.g. wearing a headscarf or growing a beard as a response to racism, furthers the alienation of British Muslims in the wider society. In turn, that could ultimately result in the establishment of a parallel society in which individuals seek to enhance and maintain their social identity and self-esteem by becoming religiously fundamental.

Nevertheless, the problem of becoming (violently) radicalised is not being religiously fundamental, but belonging to the wrong group. This helps to explain why only a few become violently radicalised while others might become non-violently radicalised. Hence, being violently radicalised or just radicalised depends on which group individuals feel they belong. Individuals who believe that they belong to a certain group will naturally adopt the same attitudes, behaviours, and values of the group. Regardless of being radicalised or violently radicalised at the beginning of their membership, the group determines the orientation – violent or non-violent. In the end, it is up to the individual to stay in this group and adapt the group's values or to leave it and join another group which is perceived as a better group for his or her self-esteem and social identity.

Also, the domestic situation plays a significant role in the choice to which group he or she wants to belong. Family discipline, especially obedience and respecting parents without reciprocation, has a striking connection with the self-esteem of adolescents and their sense of belonging. Furthermore, the lack of communication at home could lead to psychological and emotional vulnerability for individuals with low self-esteem. Likewise, the society causes emotional vulnerability in a similar way as the domestic situation. Cultural, institutional, and interpersonal racism severely affects the mental well-being and above all, the sense of belonging of adolescents. In this respect, the society also contributes significantly to the individuals' group membership. If British Muslims are not allowed to call themselves and feel British on their own terms, they will make their membership of being a Muslim more positively distinct by adopting more religious attitudes and behaviours. In consequence, the alienation gap becomes bigger and bigger and the wall between British people and British Muslims higher and higher – a vicious circle. Also, being emotionally vulnerable puts these individuals at higher risk of becoming violently radicalised, because these individuals are more susceptible to violent radical ideologies. As opposed to those individuals with high self-esteem and mental stability who can think critically and hence, reject violent radical ideologies that oppose the state's democratic and liberal values.

British Mosques that are expected to convey a source of belonging and guidance for British Muslims are found to convey the exact opposite. Therefore, many adolescents cannot identify with the mosques and struggle to find suitable guidance. In consequence, individuals who have low self-esteem, are emotionally vulnerable and who decided to make their group membership of being a Muslim more positively distinct are at higher risk of being lured into violent radical groups that offer exactly what British mosques cannot – a sense of belonging and guidance. Likewise, the internet constitutes a hub for alienated Muslims, who feel excluded by politics, domestic situation, society and British mosques. Therefore, the internet offers a perfect place for violent radical groups and recruiters to spread their ideology and attract new members. This situation becomes highly problematic when these groups and recruiters target particularly psychological and emotional vulnerable individuals. Furthermore, there is a high interest for public participation among European adolescents. Violent radical groups could draw upon this interest and channel it into violent active engagement. This, however, could be easier and more successfully undertaken with emotional and psychological vulnerable adolescents who are not able to reject ideas that oppose the society's democratic and liberal core principles due their lacking critical reflection.

In summary, the sense of non-belonging is a significant factor for violent radicalisation. However, becoming religiously fundamental or what others might call radical is not the problem per se, but to which group individuals belong, constitutes the main problem. This helps to explain why also a few become radicalised in a non-violent orientation, namely (the sense of) belonging to a non-violent radical group. It must be underlined that individuals most likely do not differentiate between violent and non-violent orientation because they probably would not depict them as radical in the first place. It is the ideology that is accountable for the orientation – violent or non-violent. In this respect, frame resonance must be highlighted which must be achieved in order to establish a feeling of belonging to that particular group. If frame resonance was not achieved, the individual would not feel motivated and hence, attached to that group.

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In contrast to the French Sociologist, this explanation provides a more nuanced understanding of becoming non-violently radicalised. This is necessary for creating and implementing more effective counter-measures to tackle violent radicalisation in the UK. The ability to explain radicalisation in both directions, a violent and non-violent, enables to determine specific variables. This allows a greater picture of the (violent) radicalisation process and thus, the possibility of more effective counter-measures.

Nevertheless, further research is required to examine if individuals who belonged to a violent radical group, could also adopt non-violent radical attitudes, behaviours and values and if so, how? Alternatively, if individuals belonged to a radical group, could they also adopt violent radical patterns and if so, how? All in all, it must be highlighted that this study that intends to portray a case study (the United Kingdom) is quite limited. That is because of the nature of the study of radicalisation. The lack of primary sources, more precisely detailed case studies, led to the inclusion of case studies that do not refer to the United Kingdom. However, as the concept of belonging is not only limited to the United Kingdom but could be described as a universal concept of human beings, the research outcome can be still depicted as rigorous and valid.

Having outlined how the sense of non-belonging could lead to the violent radicalisation of individuals, it is thus necessary to complement this study with recommendations for the future. Firstly, politicians must understand and be aware of their power of dividing society. Either in speeches or by developing particular policies, politicians must bear in mind that in a democratic and liberal state, every single citizen possess the right to define his or her citizenship on his or her terms. Therefore, politicians should use their power in a uniting sense rather than in a dividing one. Secondly, preventing (violent) radicalisation begins at home. Therefore, parents must understand the importance of conveying the feeling of significance, respect, and belonging. This applies to every parental home regardless of their ethnic background. Growing up without adequate self-esteem severely affects the mental well-being of adolescents and thus, put them at higher risk of becoming (violently) radicalised. Thirdly, in the case of the UK, British mosques need to employ firstly, more Imams and secondly, those Imams, who have a certain expertise on history and culture of the United Kingdom and above all, speak English on a certain level. These requirements prevent adolescents from feeling they do not belong to their mosque and hence, provide them with a source of guidance and support.

Furthermore, these Imams are required to counter balance and tackle the spread of violent radical ideologies. Lastly, society and the internet are also two quite important sources that could convey the feeling of non-belonging. However, it is quite difficult to change the public's opinion, either in real life or virtual space. Therefore, this dissertation recommends to improve the situations in politics, the domestic situation, and the British mosques. An enhancement in these areas will empower the individual with adequate self-esteem and social identity that will make adolescents reject (violent) radical ideologies that oppose the democratic and liberal core values in the country they live in. In consequence, individuals are well equipped to cope with hate-preachers and violent radical ideologies.

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[1] The takfiri ideology will be further discussed in the Definition section

[2] See definitions

[3] Although this study includes case studies from other countries to underpin the argument, the concept of belonging can be seen as universal and hence, not only limited to the UK

[4] Confidential interview

[5] Cognitive dissonance refers to a situation involving conflicting attitudes, beliefs or behaviours. For example, parents teach their children that brown haired people are bad people. However, these children experience by themselves the opposite. Brown haired people are not bad people. Thus, cognitive dissonance emerges.

[6] That is firstly, due to word limitations of this dissertation and secondly, this requires further in-depth research

[7] The concept of emotional belonging is for the purpose of this dissertation irrelevant and will not be further discussed.

[8] Dabiq is a place in Syria that is supposed to be the location for one of the final battles according to certain Muslim myths about a final apocalypse. (The Clarion Project, 2015).

[9] What the exact number is, however, cannot be found in the study (Debating Europe, 2015).

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