

# DRIVE

Resisting Radicalisation Through Inclusion

## Major Research Report

Deliverable 7.1

Authors: Tahir Abbas, Eolene Boyd-MacMillan, Valerie DeMarinis,  
Gabe Mythen, and Mark Sedgwick



This project has received funding from the European Union's H2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 959200.

## Project Information

DRIVE project information	
<b>Grant agreement number</b>	959200
<b>Project full title</b>	Determining multi-level led causes and testing intervention design to reduce radicalisation, extremism and political violence in Northwestern Europe through social inclusion.
<b>Project acronym</b>	DRIVE
<b>Funding scheme</b>	H2020 Research and Innovations Actions (RIA)
<b>Start date of the project</b>	1 January 2021
<b>Duration</b>	42 months: 1 January 2021 - 30 June 2024
<b>Project website</b>	<a href="https://www.driveproject.eu/">https://www.driveproject.eu/</a>

## History of Changes

Version	Publication date	Author	Description of change
1.0	01-05-2024	Tahir Abbas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Initial version, with gaps</li></ul>
1.1	13-07-2024	Project PIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Revised version with comments</li></ul>
1.2	14-07-2024	Tahir Abbas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Final version</li></ul>
1.3	22-07-2024	Tahir Abbas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Redrafting and finalising</li></ul>
1.4	28-07-2024	Tahir Abbas and PIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Finalisation and submission</li></ul>



# INVESTIGATING SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND RADICALISATION

## D7.1. Major Research Report of the DRIVE Project



**Universiteit  
Leiden**  
The Netherlands



**UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE**



**AARHUS UNIVERSITY**



**UiO : University of Oslo**



**UMEÅ  
UNIVERSITY**



**connectfutures**  
Creating Change Together



**UNIVERSITY OF  
LIVERPOOL**

**FRYSHUSET**



### Authors

Tahir Abbas  
Eolene Boyd-MacMillan  
Valerie DeMarinis  
Gabe Mythen  
Mark Sedgwick

### To be cited:

Abbas, T., Boyd-MacMillan, E., DeMarinis, V., Mythen, G., and Sedgwick, M. (2024). Investigating Social Exclusion and Radicalisation: D7.1. Major Research Report of the Drive Project, Leiden University: European Commission Funded H2020 programme (grant no. 959200)



### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<b>Participant organisation name</b>	<b>Short name</b>	<b>Country</b>
Leiden University*	ULEI	Netherlands
Aarhus University	AU	Denmark
University of Cambridge	CAM	UK
University of Liverpool	LIV	UK
University of Oslo	OU	Norway
Umeå University	UmU	Sweden
Innlandet Hospital Trust	HF	Norway
ConnectFutures	CF	UK
Fryshuset	FH	Sweden

\* Coordinator



### PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

Professor Tahir Abbas, Professor of Radicalisation Studies, Leiden University and Honorary Professor, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter (Scientific Coordinator and Netherlands PI)

Dr Eolene Boyd-MacMillan, Senior Research Associate, Co-Director IC Research, Co-Founder IC-ADAPT Consortium, Department of Psychiatry, Cambridge Public Health, University of Cambridge (co-PI, Public Mental Health Team, UK)

Professor Valerie DeMarinis, Senior Professor in Public Mental Health, Department of Public Health and Clinical Medicine at Umeå University, Sweden, and Professor of Public Mental Health Promotion at Innlandet Hospital Trust, Norway (co-PI, Public Mental Health Team, and Norway, PI through the University of Oslo)

Professor Gabe Mythen, Professor of Criminology, Department of Sociology, Social Policy, and Criminology, University of Liverpool (UK, PI)

Professor Mark Sedgwick, Professor of Arab and Islamic Studies, Aarhus University (Denmark, PI)

### ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Professor Anouk de Koning (Chair), Amsterdam University

Dr Nadia Fadil, KU Leuven

Sascha Havlicek, Institute for Strategic Dialogue

Professor Lars Lien, Arctic University of Norway

Professor Jacqui True, Monash University

### ETHICS BOARD MEMBERS

Professor Joachim Koops (Chair), Leiden University

Professor Joel Busher, Coventry University

Dr Jennifer Philippa Eggert, Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities and University of Warwick

Dr Peter Hervik, Aarhus University

Dr Mona Kanwal Sheikh, Danish Institute for International Studies

Professor Emeritus Derrick Silove, UNSW Sydney

Dr Alvin Kuowei Tay, Teachers College, Columbia University

### PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH TEAM (and authors of Chapter 6)

Prof Valerie DeMarinis, as above, Dr Eolene Boyd-MacMillan, as above

Dr Maria Nordendahl, Senior Lecturer, Public Mental Health, Department of Public Health and Clinical Medicine at Umeå University, Sweden



## Contents

---

Executive Summary.....	9
Background.....	9
Methodology .....	9
Key Findings.....	10
Implications and Recommendations .....	12
Chapter 1. Social Exclusion and Radicalisation.....	14
Introduction to The DRIVE Project .....	14
Social Exclusion and Radicalisation: Definitions and Debates .....	18
Integrating Marginalisation and ‘Othering’.....	20
Globalisation, Identity Politics, and the Re-Sacralisation of Religion .....	22
Chapter 2: (Re)Constructing Theory .....	26
Initial Hypotheses on Factors Enabling Radicalisation .....	26
Working Hypothesis 1: Spatial Formations.....	26
Working Hypothesis 2: Identity Politics.....	26
Working Hypothesis 3: Intergenerational Change and Continuity.....	27
Working Hypothesis 4: Reciprocal Radicalisation .....	28
Prior Understandings .....	28
Working Hypothesis 1: Spatial Formations.....	28
Working Hypothesis 2: Identity Politics.....	30
Working Hypothesis 3: Intergenerational change .....	31
Working hypothesis 4: reciprocal radicalisation .....	33
Public Mental Health Synopsis .....	35
Concluding Thoughts.....	42
Chapter 3. Methods .....	44
Research Design Objectives .....	44
Coding Approach and Justification of Themes .....	48
Protocols for Fieldwork.....	48
Implications and Relevance.....	49
Multi-sited Fieldwork .....	51



Entanglements of Online and Offline spaces .....	51
Study Populations and Sampling Procedures .....	53
Ethical Reviews and Approvals: .....	54
Chapter 4. Young People Viewpoints .....	56
Introduction .....	56
Denmark.....	57
Muslim Participants .....	57
Nationalist Participants.....	58
Discussion .....	59
Netherlands .....	61
Muslim participants .....	61
Nationalist Participants.....	62
Discussion .....	63
United Kingdom.....	64
Muslim Participants .....	64
Nationalist Participants.....	65
Discussion .....	67
Norway .....	67
Muslim Participants .....	67
Nationalist Participants.....	68
Discussion .....	69
Chapter 5. Practitioner Perspectives .....	71
Introduction .....	71
Intergenerational Differences and Identity Struggles .....	73
The Role of Space and Spatiality.....	74
Reciprocal Radicalisation and Polarisation.....	77
The Politicisation of Identity and Grievances .....	79
The Multifaceted Nature of Social Exclusion.....	81
Discussion .....	83
Concluding Thoughts.....	85
Chapter 6: The Public Mental Health Analysis .....	87
Social and Emotions Code Category.....	87
Patterns Emerging for Groups from COVID Code Category:.....	89



The “Wellness Check” results .....	90
Population samples by group and nationality .....	90
SCL-10 results .....	90
CD RISC-2 results.....	91
Chapter 7: Conclusions.....	93
Summary of Key Findings and Broad Insights.....	93
Policy Implications: Specific to Each Country and Universal Principles .....	95
Similarities and differences across countries and added value.....	97
Limitations and Implications for Future Research.....	99
Contribution and Actionable Recommendations .....	100
References.....	104
Appendix .....	117



## Executive Summary

---

### Background

The European Commission funded the 42-month DRIVE project, which has completed groundbreaking research examining the complex relationships between social exclusion, identity, and the potential acceptance of extremist ideologies among Muslim minorities and ethnic majorities in the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, and the United Kingdom. Initiated in January 2021, the project deployed a multi-methods approach and engaged with a range of key stakeholders, including practitioners working to prevent extremism, civil society organisations, activists, and young people. DRIVE investigated personal experiences of social exclusion as an overarching experience reported by two groups of young people in all four countries.

The project examined Muslim minorities and nationalist groups within the ethnic majority separately, anticipating that these groups would encounter distinct forms of social exclusion. One consequence of this is that the project may appear at times to view Muslims and nationalists as comparable, equivalents, or opposites. Instead, we found that each group reported different experiences of social exclusion, and each mentioned members of the other group as having problematic beliefs and views relating to identity and belonging. In other words, the experiences of each different group offer an example of social exclusion resulting from multi-levelled (micro, meso, macro) and multi-directional societal interactions.

The study addresses a critical gap in understanding the “enabling factors” that connect individual, micro-level experiences to macro-level structures that may contribute to radicalisation of thought processes, if not directly to violent radicalisation per se. By focusing on the lived experiences of Muslim minorities and nationalist expressions of ethnic majorities, DRIVE provides valuable insights into the dynamics that can contribute to societal polarisation and the potential for radical thought patterns or extremist ideologies to emerge.

### Methodology

The DRIVE project employed a robust mixed-methods approach across the four countries, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis as follows:

Qualitative methods:

- Semi-structured interviews (417 in total)
- Ethnographic event observations (30 in total)
- Web analysis of far right and Islamist organisations
- PMH Focus groups with (14 young people in total)



- Feasibility and acceptability testing of a brief pilot “intervention” design (4 in total, in two countries)

Quantitative methods:

- Surveys (5,501 respondents in total)
- Analysis of European Social Survey (ESS) data

Target populations:

- Young people from Muslim minorities
- Young people from ethnic majorities (with a focus on nationalist perspectives)
- Practitioners
- Activists

Theoretical framework:

- The study used thematic content analysis and grounded theory approaches to analyse the qualitative data gathered using Atlas Ti. We statistically analysed the quantitative data using the software programme SPSS for data management and analysis.

## Key Findings

**Pervasive social exclusion:** The project results emphasise the widespread and multi-level experience of social exclusion faced by Muslim minorities in all four countries with potential mental health consequences, including high levels of stress and anxiety, and the risk of resilience depletion while navigating ongoing change and unpredictability. This exclusion manifests in various domains, including education, employment, and public spaces. Muslim women, in particular, encounter notable difficulties, including gendered Islamophobia and elevated levels of prejudice in both public spaces and online environments. Non-Muslims who self-identify as nationalists also experience exclusion, though in different ways and not to the same extent. Some also experience high levels of stress and anxiety, along with the risk of resilience depletion.

**Identity Formation and Negotiation:** The study highlights the significance of identity formation processes in shaping individual perspectives and feelings of inclusion. Religion plays a central role in the identity of Muslim participants, often intertwining with cultural, ethnic, and national affiliations. Nationalist participants prioritise their political identities, frequently connecting them with cultural and ethnic nationalism. These divergent identity formation processes demonstrate how religious, cultural, and political factors can interact to create or exacerbate certain social exclusion experiences that shape experiences of, perspectives on, and behaviours towards oneself, others, and one’s environment.

**Spatial Dynamics:** The research reveals that spatial formations have a limited impact on experiences of exclusion and, potentially, radicalisation. Repeated discrimination causes some young people to turn inward, confining parts of their experiences to their



communities and neighbourhoods, which they perceive as both safety zones and under-served. If young Muslims and nationalists make their political views known, they may perceive public spaces as hostile environments. In such perceived hostile environments, protective, safety- and belonging-seeking coping behaviours are common.

**Intergenerational Differences:** The study identifies both significant intergenerational gaps and significant intergenerational continuities in religious and political beliefs, cultural practices, and understandings of identity. Differences can create tensions within families and communities, but we found no evidence that they contribute to feelings of alienation or vulnerability to radical thought patterns or extremist narratives.

**Reciprocal Radicalisation:** The findings challenge simplistic notions of reciprocal radicalisation between Islamists and far right extremists and suggest that the issue extends beyond marginalised groups to encompass broader societal dynamics. Cyclical tensions are not primarily between Islamist and far right extremists, but generally among Muslim minorities and ethnic majorities, including as a result of dominant narratives in media, politics, and national policies.

**Public Mental Health Promotion Approach:** Incorporating a public mental health promotion framework provides valuable insights into the eco-bio-psychosocial dimensions of exclusion and alienation. The findings from the public mental health team's sub-studies within the DRIVE project indicate that among the young people included in the project, approximately 50% of these young people, all of whom are functioning in education, work, and community settings, are experiencing stress and anxiety symptoms at the level of a pre-clinical population. Experiences of ongoing unpredictability, constant change, and depletion of hope and resilience resources may elicit some thought patterns that become more radical, though not violent.

### Country-Specific Insights:

**The Netherlands** has high levels of perceived discrimination among ethnic minorities, as well as enduring patterns of ethnic and socioeconomic segregation in its cities.

**Denmark:** Political discourse and policies have a significant impact on Muslim communities' sense of belonging.

**United Kingdom:** Complex, societal (macro) level, indirect influences amongst many actors (social and mainstream media, state, general public), and related policy and voting behaviours contribute to experiences of social exclusion for young people, leading to coping by curating a wide range of strategies, including turning inward **and** working to effect positive social change.

**Norway:** Has high levels of perceived racism and discrimination among Muslim youth, persistent patterns of minority-group segregation in cities, and significant influence from political discourse and state policies on the perceptions of belonging and alienation of both Muslim and nationalist youth.



**Majority Perspectives:** The study also reveals concerns among ethnic majority participants with nationalist views. These individuals express apprehensions regarding perceived threats to national identity, culture, values, and, in the UK, personal economic viability due to immigration, Islam, and multiculturalism.

## Implications and Recommendations

**Policy Reform:** The findings underscore the urgent need to reassess and potentially reform policies that may inadvertently contribute to social exclusion and alienation. This includes a critical examination of integration, education, employment, public health, and counter-terrorism policies to reduce social and health inequalities and remove barriers that exacerbate socio-economic and socio-cultural divisions.

**Education and Youth Empowerment:** Invest in ways to eliminate social exclusion and bullying from schools and other educational institutions, recognising the links between social and health inequalities and educational attainment.

**Public Mental Health Promotion: Cross-Sector Integration:** Incorporate public mental health promotion and prevention approaches into whole population and whole community actions, recognising the interconnectedness of mental health, physical health, resilience, well-being, and social inclusion as protective factors against risks that can elicit extremist thought patterns and behaviours.

**Tailored Approaches:** Recognise the unique contexts and challenges in each country, developing tailored interventions that address specific local and national dynamics while drawing on shared principles of inclusion and reduction of social exclusion and inequalities.

**Continued Research:** In Northwestern Europe, the DRIVE project provides a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics of social exclusion and its potential relationship to societal polarisation among Muslim minorities and ethnic majorities. By shining a spotlight on the lived experiences of those facing various forms of exclusion, the study offers valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers dedicated to reducing social exclusion and preventing circumstances that can lead to extremism. The findings underscore the pressing need for approaches that address the underlying structural, systemic and political factors that contribute to exclusion, inequalities, and marginalisation, while also promoting inclusive identities, resilience, and empowerment for all members of society

Moving forward, we would recommend support for genuinely inter-disciplinary research to deepen our understanding of the relationship between social exclusion, alienation, and extremism. Further research should include, *inter alia*, focusing on identity



formation, senses of belonging, public (mental) health, and how experiences of exclusion, inequalities and alienation can mediate or moderate the risk for radical thought patterns. Promotional and preventive policies, as well as feasibility, acceptability, efficacy, and effectiveness tested interventions, when necessary, should adapt to changing societal challenges and incorporate the perspectives of underrepresented populations.



## Chapter 1. Social Exclusion and Radicalisation

---

### Introduction to The DRIVE Project

In an era of increasing global interconnectedness and social change, the challenges of social exclusion and radicalisation have emerged as critical concerns for European societies. The European Commission funded the DRIVE project, a comprehensive 42-month study, to explore these complex issues across four Northwestern European countries: the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, and the United Kingdom.

Launched in January 2021, this groundbreaking research initiative explored the intricate relationships between social exclusion, belonging, and the potential for radicalisation. By focusing on the lived experiences of Muslim minorities and individuals with nationalist perspectives, DRIVE aimed to illuminate the factors that promote social exclusion and produce conditions that may contribute to extremist ideologies.

This report presents the findings of our extensive study, which combines qualitative insights from interviews and focus groups with quantitative data from surveys, existing datasets, and health-related instruments included by the public mental health team. Through this multifaceted approach, we offer a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by diverse communities and the potential pathways towards more inclusive societies. In the coming chapters, readers will discover:

1. A comprehensive overview of the project's methodology and theoretical framework
2. In-depth analyses of country-specific contexts and findings
3. Cross-cutting themes that emerged across all four countries
4. The role of spatial dynamics and potential role of intergenerational differences in shaping experiences of exclusion
5. An exploration of identity formation processes and examples of their potential effects on young people
6. Insights into the potential factors and levels of interaction that may influence both reciprocal radicalisation and polarisation between different groups.
7. The incorporation of a public mental health approach to understanding these complex issues

Our findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, community leaders, and educators working to address the challenges of social inequalities that may, in some circumstances, elicit problematic thought patterns. In order to promote harmonious societies, engaging in dialogue with professionals working in prevention spaces is necessary, as is listening to the voices and experiences of young people and reporting the views of activists. Through these efforts, the DRIVE project's determined ambition is to contribute to



the development of more effective, empathetic, and inclusive approaches to reducing social exclusion in diverse European contexts.

As we navigate the complexities of our increasingly interconnected world, the DRIVE project stands as a testament to the power of rigorous research in informing evidence-based policies and practices. We invite readers to engage with the wealth of data and analysis presented in this report, as well as consider its implications for building more resilient, inclusive communities across Europe and beyond.

Social inclusion is vital for a cohesive, just society. When people feel excluded, whether due to injustice, discrimination, or isolation, it can breed discontent and fuel feelings and conditions that increase their susceptibility to extremism. Already ten years ago, the 2014 EU briefing on radicalisation called for holistic solutions to foster inclusion. Research like the DARE<sup>1</sup> project reveals how perceptions of inequality can make people turn to violence. Exclusion also causes acute “social pain” and deteriorating health. The latter coheres with the WHO’s (2024) position: “Research shows that social determinants can be more important than health care or lifestyle choices in influencing health.” “Social determinants” are non-medical factors such as the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, as well as the wider forces and systems that shape daily life conditions, including economic policies and systems, social norms, policies, and political systems (ibid.).

In the absence of strong social bonds, and a sense of belonging to society as a whole rather than just to one’s own group, individuals may turn to radical groups for a sense of purpose, particularly if their existing bonds and sense of belonging lead them to reject the social mainstream—whether from self- or other-exclusion. DRIVE spotlights how societal dynamics and personal experiences intertwine to enable the circumstances that could lead to radicalisation, including acknowledgement of the association between social structures and public (mental) health. Specifically, DRIVE included an eco-bio-psychosocial model called IC-ADAPT, which looks at how people, communities, and societal disruptions or breaks affect each other on many levels and in many directions. It looks at five systems: safety and security, identity and roles, justice, bonds and networks, and existential meaning (religious, spiritual, economic, or other). Within these five interacting systemic categories, individuals and groups experience the social determinants of health, initially adapting to disruptions, but potentially moving towards maladaptive reactions if the disruptions persist and become indefinite. A lack of inclusion can drive some groups towards extremism in parts of Northwestern Europe in an effort to satisfy deeper needs—to belong, to matter, to change their conditions. These localised insights can guide policies aimed at preventing and intervening against interest or involvement in violent extremism, thereby promoting social inclusion and reducing the social inequalities that fuel social fragmentation and conflict.

---

<sup>1</sup> The DARE (Dialogue about Radicalisation and Equality) project is funded under the EU Horizon 2020 Framework Programme (2017-2021) and includes 17 partners in 13 countries – Belgium, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Malta, Norway, Poland, Russian Federation, The Netherlands, Tunisia, Turkey and the UK.



This report represents an extensive study exploring the complex interplay between social exclusion, identity formation, and radicalisation among Muslim minorities and ethnic majorities in Denmark, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Norway. The European Commission's Horizon 2020 programme funded a 42-month research project that culminated in this report, bringing together a consortium of nine partners from five European countries to investigate the factors contributing to radicalisation and develop evidence-based policy recommendations for reducing social exclusion and other social contributors to violent extremism. The aim of this report is to provide a nuanced and contextualised understanding of the dynamics of social exclusion that may contribute to radicalisation in Northwestern Europe, drawing on the lived experiences and perspectives of Muslim and nationalist individuals, as well as the insights of practitioners and activists and a small number of former extremists. The study shows how structural, interpersonal, and individual factors affect a sense of belonging and identity formation. These factors can contribute to radical thought patterns and a possible openness to extremist ideas.

Eight main chapters, each addressing a specific aspect of the research project, provide the structure for this report. Chapter 1 sets the stage by introducing the key concepts of social exclusion and radicalisation, providing an overview of the existing literature and debates surrounding these phenomena, and highlighting the gaps and limitations in current understanding. The chapter also presents the project's working hypotheses, which guided the research exploring how spatial formations, identity politics, change and continuity across generations, and reciprocal radicalisation can help or hinder the process of radicalisation. Chapter 2 explores the theoretical foundations of the study, elaborating the original hypotheses and evaluating the existing evidence supporting or challenging these propositions. The chapter also identifies further knowledge gaps and introduces the public mental health promotion approach that informs the research design and analysis. Chapter 3 provides a detailed overview of the methodological approach employed in the study, including the sampling procedures, data collection instruments, fieldwork protocols, and ethical considerations. The chapter also discusses the implications and relevance of the research design for understanding the dynamics of social exclusion and potential radicalisation.

Chapter 4 offers a preliminary analysis of the primary data collected through interviews, focus groups, and surveys in each of the four countries. The project's four working hypotheses structure the chapter, with a presentation of the key findings and insights related to spatial formations, identity politics, intergenerational dynamics, and reciprocal radicalisation. The analysis also highlights the similarities and differences in the experiences and perspectives of Muslim and nationalist individuals across the four countries. Chapter 5 examines practitioners' perspectives and their understanding of the importance of appreciating the potential role of social exclusion in radicalisation. Chapter 6 introduces the public mental health promotion approach that informs the research design and analysis, emphasising the importance of considering the structural and eco-bio-psychosocial dimensions of social exclusion, belonging, and identity that may contribute to some radical thought patterns and possibly radicalisation. The chapter introduces the eco-bio-psychosocial IC-ADAPT model, serving as the theoretical framework



for the design, feasibility, and acceptability testing of a brief “intervention” design. This design explored young people’s understandings of belonging and the implications of not belonging, as reported during the preceding interviews that included wellness checks and focus groups. Finally, chapter 8 summarises the main points of the study and suggests a broad model of how social exclusion potentially affects extremism. This model shows how structural, interpersonal, and individual factors interact to create potential vulnerabilities for radicalisation and protective factors that build resilience. The chapter discusses the policy implications of the research, offering both country-specific and general principles for addressing social exclusion and preventing possible extremism. The chapter also addresses the limitations of the study, explores avenues for future research, and highlights the practical recommendations and contributions of the project to the field of radicalisation studies and counter-extremism efforts.

Throughout the report, the findings underscore the pervasive nature of social exclusion and discrimination experienced by Muslim minorities across the four countries, the identity struggles and feelings of alienation that may contribute towards vulnerabilities to extremist ideologies, alongside their resilience, extensive coping strategies, and the ongoing strong desire to contribute to the wider society in each country. The report also highlights the role of social and mainstream media, mainstream politics, and government policies in fuelling polarisation and operating as indirect conduits for what was observed pre-COVID as reciprocal radicalisation, as well as the importance of considering the gendered dimensions of these phenomena. The results stress the importance of taking a whole-person approach that addresses the political, structural, and institutional causes of exclusion and marginalisation. These approaches should also promote inclusive identities, a sense of belonging, social equality, and multi-levelled empowerment for everyone. The report also emphasises the importance of adopting an intersectional and contextualised approach to understanding and addressing radicalisation, recognising the interplay of multiple identities and the specific social, political, and historical factors shaping each national and local context. The report advocates for a more grounded and empathetic understanding of social exclusion and radicalisation by engaging with the lived experiences and perspectives of those affected, challenging simplistic and stigmatising narratives that can fuel further polarisation and conflict.

The insights and recommendations generated by the DRIVE project offer a powerful call to action for all those committed to building more just, inclusive, and peaceful societies in Europe and beyond. By embracing the complexity and diversity of human experiences and working together to dismantle the barriers that divide us, we can create the conditions for all individuals and communities to thrive, regardless of their background or identity. This report provides a timely contribution to the field of radicalisation studies and counter-extremism efforts, offering a robust evidence base and actionable recommendations for addressing the challenges of social exclusion and polarisation in Northwestern Europe. By highlighting the urgent need for a paradigm shift in our understanding and approach to these phenomena, the report paves the way for more effective, inclusive, and sustainable strategies for reducing social exclusion and contributing to the prevention of violent extremism in diverse societies.



## Social Exclusion and Radicalisation: Definitions and Debates

The discussion surrounding social exclusion is multifaceted, encompassing various dimensions ranging from economic disparities to broader societal marginalisation. Whether to view social exclusion through an economic lens or to encompass a broader spectrum of marginalisation across social, political, and cultural domains is a key debate. Some argue that we should primarily understand social exclusion as an economic phenomenon, focusing on objective indicators of disadvantage like income inequality and employment opportunities. This perspective posits that social exclusion occurs when individuals or groups do not have access to economic resources and opportunities. However, this view risks overlooking other critical aspects of exclusion. Proponents of a broader definition contend that social exclusion must also incorporate subjective perceptions and lived experiences of marginalisation. An inability to fully participate in social, political, and cultural life can coexist with a lack of access to economic resources and opportunities, and this inability can exist independently of economic exclusion. Well-being economically does not guarantee well-being elsewhere. This view emphasises the importance of considering factors such as everyday discrimination, internalised oppression, stereotype threat, and cultural alienation, which can lead to exclusion from social, political, and cultural spheres even in the absence of severe economic deprivation.

Furthermore, defining inclusion in various realms—economic, social, cultural, and political—shapes the identification and measurement of exclusion. This raises questions about the baseline level of participation required for individuals to be considered included in society, as well as how disparities in access to these realms contribute to exclusion. For example, is having a job sufficient for economic inclusion, or does one need fair pay, job security, and opportunities for advancement? Another point of contention is whether we should primarily understand social exclusion as involuntary, stemming from structural inequalities and discrimination, or whether we should also consider voluntary withdrawal or self-exclusion. While involuntary exclusion often stems from systemic barriers and societal norms that limit opportunities for certain groups, voluntary withdrawal may occur due to personal preferences, cultural practices, or a rejection of mainstream societal norms that marginalise minority identities. Involuntary exclusion may also encourage voluntary withdrawal. Making the distinction between voluntary and involuntary factors and their interactions is difficult. When voluntary and involuntary factors combine, it can sometimes be difficult to make a meaningful distinction.

The debate surrounding social exclusion underscores the complexity of societal dynamics and the importance of considering multiple dimensions—economic, social, political, and cultural—in understanding and addressing exclusionary processes within societies. This complexity requires an examination of both objective conditions and subjective experiences across these realms. The discourse surrounding radicalisation is also marked by divergent perspectives that profoundly shape how this phenomenon is understood and studied across academic, policy, and security contexts. At the heart of these debates lie fundamental questions regarding the very definition of “radical” itself—



what ideologies, beliefs, or activities should qualify as radical, and what is the link between being radical, radicalisation and extremism? Perspectives on this central issue range from narrow conceptions equating radicalisation solely with violent extremism and terrorism to broader definitions encompassing non-violent beliefs.

Where one falls within this spectrum holds significant implications for how the processes and outcomes of radicalisation are characterised and addressed. If radicalisation is confined purely to violent extremism, the analytical focus and policy responses concentrate on security dimensions. However, adopting a broader definition that includes non-violent extremism necessitates grappling with factors that may encourage such beliefs and their relationships with violence. Indeed, some compelling arguments suggest that extreme, non-violent ideologies may represent a “gateway” to eventual violence, even if indirectly. Thus, examining and countering radicalisation may require addressing underlying belief structures that legitimise violence. Furthermore, beyond definitional issues lie deeper debates regarding whether radicalisation refers principally to the processes through which individuals develop extreme views or the outcomes of adopting extremist ideologies. A top-heavy emphasis on outcomes risks ignoring the gradual progression of radicalisation and the importance of preventative interventions during the early stages of extremist indoctrination. Yet analysing processes in isolation obscures the most consequential results of radicalisation: violence and extremist group activity. Integrating perspectives on processes and outcomes may therefore prove most fruitful.

Additionally, scholars differ on the fundamental ‘drivers’ of radicalisation, with some focusing on material and situational factors like political, economic, and social grievances and others stressing ideological positions or psychological explanations (Sedgwick. 2010). Though these factors likely all contribute to varying degrees, their precise interaction and the preconditions enabling violent manifestations remain poorly understood, although some evidence indicates the existence of some underlying contributors that seem to be common to all violence. Gaining clarity on these dynamics through further research holds profound importance for counter-radicalisation policies. In assessing the linkage between social exclusion and radicalisation specifically, opinion remains divided on the inevitability and linearity of this relationship. While social exclusion may provide fertile ground for radicalisation in some cases, the two do not relate in a simple, straightforward manner. Rather, several interrelated and context-dependent factors related to identity, community integration, perceptions of injustice, ideology, meaning-making processes, and psychosocial processes seem to mediate the connection. Disentangling this interplay is critical to policies aimed at prevention while simultaneously addressing social exclusion’s potential radicalising effects at multiple levels.

Continuing debates on conceptualising and explaining social exclusion and potential links with radicalisation highlight the intricacy of this field of study. They point to the need for more analytical precision, the integration of diverse disciplinary viewpoints, and consideration of contextual nuances in radicalisation processes. Developing systematic frameworks that bridge current divides will prove essential to mitigating this pressing societal challenge.



## Integrating Marginalisation and ‘Othering’

Previous research has identified and examined many variables in the violent radicalisation process, including socio-economic, gender, psychological, religious, ideological, theological, globalisation’s impact, Islamophobia, cultural, political factors, and sociological accounts (United States Agency for International Development, 2009; Ness, 2007; Horgan, 2005; Moskalenko and McCauley, 2008; Laqueur, 1999; Neumann, 2008; Hussain, 2007; Baker, 2011; Devji, 2008; Neumann, 2008; Roy, 2002; Mythen, 2012; Change Institute, 2008; Kundnani, 2012). This multi-disciplinary knowledge has accumulated rapidly since 9/11. However, the scholarship has primarily focused on processes at the individual/micro level, rather than identifying differences between, and interactions among, micro, meso, and macro factors.

At the micro level, focusing on individuals, various psychological models have emerged, such as the staircase model, which identifies perceived deprivation and unfairness as radicalisation bases (Moghaddam, 2005). Other models centre on personal grievances, echoing the quest for significance as the main driver (du Bois et al., 2019). Another approach measures cognitive complexity using the integrative complexity (IC) frame, demonstrating that low IC (inflexible, closed thinking unable to engage pro-socially with difference) is a prevalent precondition for extremist violence across diverse groups in diverse contexts (Stewart, 2023; Smith et al., 2008; Suedfeld et al., 2013; Conway and Conway, 2011). Initially, mental health impairments were thought to hold the key to ‘curing’ radicalisation until research showed mental illness does not cause violent extremism (DeMarinis and Boyd-MacMillan, 2019; DeMarinis, 2018). Overall, micro-level motivational factors include seeking purpose, adventure, belonging, acceptance, status, material enticements, fear of repercussions, and expected afterlife rewards.

Dominant models outline how individuals become radicalised within social groups and networks using social movement theory (Wiktorowicz, 2005; Sageman, 2008). The meso-level focuses on the wider social milieu or groups influencing the radicalisation process (du Bois et al., 2019). This highlights group interrelationships, dynamics, and how higher or lower cognitive complexity interacts bi-directionally at individual and group levels, becoming mutually reinforcing and self-perpetuating. Radical groups develop a strong in-group identity contrasting with an inferior out-group perceived as accountable for the in-group’s grievances, thus a legitimate target (Avramidis et al., 2019). However, while explaining why a small minority of young Muslim men resort to undertaking violence against their societies, these accounts focus on individual-enabling factor interactions like social networks, describing a process equally applicable to non-Muslim, non-violent social movements (Wiktorowicz, 2005).

To date, these accounts have not sufficiently addressed violent radicalisation regarding the relationship between structural and macro causes and enabling factors, failing to offer empirically-based explanations for what makes some individuals more susceptible or resistant than others to engaging in violence (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). Analysis of structural and macromotivations has featured less prominently, though factors like repression, corruption, unemployment, inequality, discrimination, conflict, and external state interventions have been identified (Khalil and Zeuthen, 2016; Mythen et al.,



2009). Individuals looking for extremist solutions, especially those from certain socioeconomic backgrounds with few job or career opportunities after school, are more likely to suffer from lack of resources, unmet expectations, repression, and an educational system that promotes cognitive closure, clear-cut answers, and intolerance of ambiguity (Gambetta and Hertog, 2009).

The most dominant macro accounts stem from sociology (Roy, 2002; Mythen and Walklate, 2015) or history (Devji, 2008), focusing on globalisation and modernity's role in transforming religious and ethnic minorities in Europe. When examining the emergence of collective political mass violence, researchers have integrated specific environmental factors at the social, economic, cultural, or political level rather than focusing solely on individual factors (Veldhuis and Staun, 2009). Radicalisation processes should consider supranational and national socio-political contexts, as globalisation, migration, and virtualisation have created new tensions where identities are increasingly politically relevant (van Stekelenburg, 2014). The current context involves conflicts rooted in local grievances and tensions, as well as wider (supranational) systems. At this critical point, frustrated groups may demand radical changes, which some interpret as the modern state's failure to peacefully channel these demands (van Stekelenburg, 2014). These accounts describe the macro-social conditions that support some individuals' radicalisation well, but they do not explain why only a small group seems sensitive to these conditions (Daugaard-Nielsen, 2010). Not only do they not explain why some individuals choose to commit violence, but their accounts also do not adequately explain the relationship between enabling and micro-level mechanisms. Therefore, studying this relationship is crucial, as there is a tension between relatively rapid macro-level changes and the slower psychosocial space for change (van Stekelenburg, 2014).

Another crucial factor is the internet's role in radicalisation. The internet is central to radical engagement among extreme right and Islamist extremist groups, as communicating online is simple and inexpensive (Koehler, 2014). It has enabled online networks of like-minded individuals, providing a sense of community inclusion and a way out of isolation for many youths (Crettiez and Barros, 2019). Collective identity is vital when researching the internet and radicalisation, as internet communities reinforce the 'echo chamber' effect where users see their ideological viewpoints in a cohesive network (Odag et al., 2019). The internet also allows extremist communities to share important information, such as routes to reach ISIS's caliphate, bomb-making instructions, and materials reinforcing the community bond through shared suffering videos (Odag et al., 2019). While right-wing extremist communities share literature, music, clothes, and manuals central to their lifestyle, building a translocal identity is challenging as national interests are crucial for right-wing ideology (Koehler, 2014; Odag et al., 2019). The online jihadist communities were once much more transnational than right-wing extremist ones (Odag et al., 2019), although in recent periods this ground has been shifting. The PMH team published an "empty review" after not finding any studies about addressing online radicalisation and recruitment to violent extremism through public mental health approaches (Mughal, et al., 2023). Research often focuses on recruitment mechanisms, lacking user perspectives and understanding the mechanisms behind online radicalisation, where studying both website users and the potential causal relationships between



websites and user radicalisation is important (Koehler, 2014; Odag et al., 2019). An important research avenue is examining how local grievances translate online and how offline radicalisation factors manifest digitally, with a greater focus on the consumers of these online spaces (Odag et al., 2019). The internet does not cause radicalisation, but understanding the intersection of micro-level and structural factors is crucial (see, for example, Mughal et al., 2023).

The interplay between structural motivators and individual-level incentives is a glaring gap in violent radicalisation analysis. The enabling factors bridge this gap by examining radical mentors, access to online communities, social networks, weaponry access, comparative state absences, and familial support absences (Khalil and Zeuthen, 2016). Missing is empirical data on enabling factors of spatial formations, identity politics, intergenerational change, and reciprocal radicalisation – variables DRIVE explores at individual, community, and structural levels—along with motivations affected by wider social inclusion and exclusion at the micro-level. Structural factors in the European context include forms of injustice, inequality, exclusion, and perceived insecurity or lack of safety, alongside disrupted roles, identities, bonds, and networks, and ‘shattered’ worldviews (Janoff-Bulman, 2010) or existential meaning systems (impairment of the ADAPT eco-bio-psychosocial life systems) contributing to societal tension and minority group marginalisation. The conventional understanding of structural factors in theories of violent radicalisation is notably deficient in acknowledging the influence of secular trends and their connection with evolving religious practices in society.

## Globalisation, Identity Politics, and the Re-Sacralisation of Religion

Muslim diasporas share similarities with other migrant communities, but for Muslim minority communities, their level of religious commitment is an important factor because of the intricate nature of secular, liberal Western democracies where many reside (Abbas, 2016). People can perceive religions that resist privatisation as a threat to modernity, and the public presence of Muslims in European societies as a risk to secular values, fuelled by the visibility of religious symbols, their increasing urban presence, and political mobilisation around free speech and foreign policy issues. The hijab question frames Muslim women as suppressed by Muslim men and Islam, driving public interest in ‘Muslim unassimilability in secular liberal democracies’—an ongoing issue exemplified by France’s active 2000s niqab ban. This secular-sacred tension has persistently recurred in public discourse responding to crises like the Rushdie affair (1988), the Danish cartoons (2006), and Charlie Hebdo (2015) - an expansive, vocal, encroaching Muslim presence overwhelmingly perceived.

One explanation behind religion’s re-sacralising is globalisation, which homogenises while simultaneously fragmenting, by ordering, making, and unmaking social and political realities, developing thought systems no longer linked to a given culture. Globalisation threatens the nation-state by separating cultures from their territories and uprooting societies, resulting in endless mutations. Practically, this implies that individuals can adopt and repackage ideas and practices from other places with their existing local ideas



and practices, creating new syntheses and practices. We can view the individual adoption of religions as a micro-level reaction to macro-factors such as globalisation and social exclusion, which presents new challenges for European-born Muslims experiencing various internal intergenerational changes and adaptation issues. In response to social problems and global events, there is considerable engagement with religion by a significant number of European Muslims (Hamid, 2017; Mythen, 2012). For some, religion plays a significant role in shaping young Muslim activists' political outlooks, regardless of practice (Mustafa, 2017). Generation "M"—Muslim Millennials—describes a confident young middle class at the cutting edge but equally comfortable with their religious identity (Janmohamed, 2016).

In short, as a growing number of second- and third-generation Muslims continue to achieve some degree of social mobility, with greater cultural and political mainstream engagement, many regard their religious faith and modernity as conterminous. However, religion's resurfacing in the public sphere does not necessarily mean re-sacralisation. Moreover, people often invoke religious symbols for various purposes, such as constructing group identities, galvanising resistance against outsiders, and enhancing dignity and self-esteem (Cox, 2013). Roy (2009), for example, views the 'born-again' Salafi tendency, and de-culturalisation, as secularism's success, their practices having a private, individualised orientation aligned with European society's cultural norms, e.g., freely choosing spouses and racial intermixing. Other examples include the proliferation of Halal fast-food restaurants and mortgage products that comply with Sharia law. According to this perspective, Islam also promotes globalisation and embraces modernity as a by-product of social exclusion.

As a result, there are two distinct yet interrelated phenomena: the decline of religion as a formal organisation and cultural system, as well as the resurgence of religious experiences. Rather than using the term "return," a more appropriate term would be "transformation". However, a small but vocal group of individuals on the fringes of society can exploit and manipulate religious identity in order to engage in political violence. This is evident in the sudden departure of over 5,000 young Europeans to the Middle East to join ISIS (Soufan Group, 2015). Policymakers are concerned that individuals who have returned from Syria or Iraq may specifically target European countries, which necessitates an immediate need to develop effective strategies to address this serious threat. In addition to recent attacks in Europe, the emergence of European fighters has sparked discussions about the influence of religion on violent radicalisation. This has significant implications for the development and implementation of policy responses, as it brings attention to the core issues within models of violent radicalisation, and the need to comprehend shifting religious and secular trends.

As the far right populist and ethnic nationalist spectre takes an ever-greater hold across Western European societies, there is also a persistent move towards the right in mainstream contemporary European politics (Wagner and Meyer, 2016), with far right political leaders' speeches supporting a wider transnational far right discourse (Froio and Ganesh, 2018). This trend extends beyond developed Western democracies like the UK, Germany, and the Netherlands to newer liberal states like Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia (Halikiopoulou, 2017). A shift within broader right-wing extremism is emerging, with



many groups and individuals - including Anders Breivik, condemning Nazism, fascism, and anti-Semitism but defining their cause as a defence against Islam's perceived threat (Archer, 2013).

The Christchurch attack in March 2019 aptly illustrates this shift among right-wing extremists to a misguided and contorted 'defence' against Islam's supposed menace. The primary suspect, a self-identified white supremacist, held a Manichean view of the world, perceiving Islam and its people not only as a blemish on the landscape but also as a threat to the survival of the white nation. However, there is no perspective on this 'whiteness', which encompasses its internal diversity as well as the historical legacies of class formation, colonialism, orientalism, or eugenicism that define the space occupied by white people. This perspective is also an odd fear/threat combination, presented as concerning the 'other', whose motivations are to 'take over', through 'population expansion', while simultaneously decrying these 'others' for their primitive, backward, hateful natures, legitimising ethnic nationalism and white supremacy espoused by right-wing sympathisers, extremists, and terrorists.

Supporters of far right political agendas founded on ethno-religious uniformity face targeting by left-leaning cadres based on historical fascism and racism associations (Swami et al., 2018; Rzepnikowska, 2019). While space plays a crucial role in shaping identity formations and fostering conflict with the immediate 'other', ideology also plays a significant role. In an ironic twist, far right thinking wants to reclaim and reshape local territory in its own image, whereas radical Islamists have abandoned the local in preference for the global or conceptual, illusory notion of the caliphate. Pitted against each other in the most difficult social and political conditions, they (metaphorically or physically) fight for different political outcomes. For example, both groups project resistance against aspects of left-liberalism or a misogynistic attitude towards women. Yet, a sense of personal grievance leads to hate, supported by an ideology wrapped around a doomsday scenario. For radical Islamists, it is the end of times, and for far right groups, it is a race war, with both groups somehow seeing themselves as victims in their gloomy scenarios. Over time, the consistent theme is that 'we' must resist most what is furthest from who 'we' do not see ourselves as, while 'we' are an indivisible unitary whole facing further pressure from localisation, globalisation, neoliberalism, and the backlash against diversity. Given various local area concerns, the intersection of local and global issues occurs where groups are culturally, socially, and politically furthest apart, yet economically closest. All this points to wider issues of economic inequality, social immobility, structural marginalisation, and labour market discrimination patterns affecting former white working classes and highly visible minorities, namely Muslim groups.

Understanding the dynamics of exclusion and extremism among minority groups in Northern Europe reveals significant challenges and trends. In Denmark, non-Western immigrants face notably higher unemployment rates compared to native Danes, with Muslims encountering discrimination in the job market and witnessing a surge in hate crimes. Norway similarly grapples with disproportionately high unemployment rates among immigrants and minorities, alongside a presence of far right and Islamist extremism, although the rate of expansion has slowed. Meanwhile, in the Netherlands, non-Western minorities, particularly Moroccans and Turks, confront elevated unemployment



levels, along with persistent antisemitism and a rapid rise in Islamist extremism. These issues highlight the ongoing economic exclusion that minority groups—particularly Muslims—face in Northern Europe, which can exacerbate feelings of marginalisation and disenfranchisement. Furthermore, the rise in hate crimes and extremist activities highlights the interconnected nature of exclusion and extremism, with discrimination and socioeconomic disparities serving as potential catalysts for radicalisation and extremist ideologies. However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the available data and the need for more nuanced statistical analysis that considers various confounding factors to better understand the relationship between exclusion and extremism. By addressing these challenges and trends, policymakers and stakeholders can work together to implement targeted interventions and policies aimed at promoting social inclusion and countering extremism effectively.



## Chapter 2: (Re)Constructing Theory

---

### Initial Hypotheses on Factors Enabling Radicalisation

The DRIVE project aimed to advance research on radicalisation by examining potential ‘enabling factors’ that link and go beyond individual, biographical, interpersonal, or social factors to include macro-level, community, systemic, and structural factors. DRIVE aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the specific factors that contribute to social exclusion, their connections to space, identity, intergenerational dynamics, and reciprocal radicalisation at a structural level, factors commonly considered as radicalisation drivers. The ultimate goal was to use this understanding to contribute to the development of more effective policy responses to counter violent extremism.

The original idea was to interview Islamists and far right extremists, or at least those who were on the fringes of Islamism or far right groups. As the study advanced, it became evident that it was extremely challenging to locate individuals who were ‘near extremists’ to the extent that we had expected. As a result, the project interviews included a wider range of participants in order to implement a more comprehensive approach to understanding how social exclusion contributes to polarisation and the potential for violent extremism.

The DRIVE project established an exploratory evidence base that illustrates how social exclusion can influence individuals, potentially resulting in some thought patterns that are problematic and retrogressive. We explain the basis for the four initial working hypotheses below, which aim to investigate these enabling factors.

#### Working Hypothesis 1: Spatial Formations

*When features of post-industrial towns and cities can operate as radicalisation-enabling factors when they combine with individual and community experiences of structural social exclusion to support or generate motivations for turning towards violent extremism.*

In post-industrial spaces, groups cluster in specific urban areas, utilising the group’s social, economic, and cultural capital for advantage. The spatial concentration of deprived marginalised majorities is also an opportunity to protect group norms and values associated with the group identity, which, in the light of present politics, may feel threatened by a perceived dominant other (Nayak 2010).

#### Working Hypothesis 2: Identity Politics



*Identity politics can operate as a radicalisation-enabling factor when it combines with individual and social experiences of social injustice to support or generate motivations for turning towards violent radicalisation.*

This can include making race, gender, class, nationality, and religion key elements of political contestation in both minority and majority situations (Heyes 2020). It is important that the claims are political; a sense of belonging to a group without political claims is identity, not identity politics. According to Iris Marion Young, “social justice” is how well a society supports the two basic values of (1) developing and exercising one’s abilities and expressing one’s experience, and (2) having a say in one’s actions and the conditions of those actions (Young 1990, 37). Injustice is defined through two social conditions: ‘domination, the institutional constraint on self-determination’ and ‘oppression, the institutional constraint on self-development’, particularly the ‘five faces’ of oppression: exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence (ibid., 38–65).

Identities are fluid, dynamic, and context-specific. In an era of globalisation, identities are more fractured than ever and hybrid (blending online and offline personas), leading to conflict within nations based on questions of loyalty, citizenship, and belonging. Experiencing a void between civic identity and ethno-religious identity can lead to significant turmoil, commonly referred to as a ‘double sense of non-belonging’ (Dalgard-Nielsen 2010). Groups like Islamic State and National Action in the UK have become adept at manipulating this kind of identity crisis and offering a solution with existential meaning through inflexible, closed group membership and political violence (Feldman 2015).

### **Working Hypothesis 3: Intergenerational Change and Continuity**

*An experienced tension between intergenerational change and continuity can operate as a radicalisation-enabling factor that combines with experiences of structural social injustice to support or generate motivations for turning towards violent radicalisation. Here, intergenerational change refers to the measure of differences in prevailing attitudes and perspectives between generations that are typically two decades apart. Social injustice refers to instances of discrimination and disadvantages that impact some groups more than others.*

Many second- and third-generation Muslims have to reconcile between the new and the old, the past and the present, and a plethora of values and practices. Some youths from the majority group are facing challenges in their social mobility, resulting in a feeling of unfairness that subsequently becomes racialised. Struggling to adapt while navigating social and cultural tensions, along with experiencing social exclusion, can lead to a sense of cultural void. From experiences of disconnection from one’s original heritage and/or from the dominant culture of the host society, a sense of estrangement can emerge from the symbols and practices of both cultures. This sense of alienation creates



the conditions in which sub-cultures and social movements with strong normative boundaries and charismatic personalities fill the generational and cultural void.

#### Working Hypothesis 4: Reciprocal Radicalisation

*Far right and Islamist groups can contribute to each other's radicalisation by mutually reinforcing verbal and behavioural expressions of hate, intolerance, or indignation towards one another, both individually and collectively. collectively.*

In the Western European context, a range of sociological issues underpin far right and Islamist reciprocal or cumulative radicalisation, as observed in pre-COVID-19 research. These groups can radicalise each other through verbal expressions and actions that mutually reinforce their hate, intolerance, or indignation towards each other. The way that far right and Islamist extremist groups radicalise each other shows a number of sociological issues that affect political identities, citizenship, and questions of nationhood for young men who feel socially and culturally isolated (Bailey and Edwards 2006; Bartlett and Birdwell 2013; Ebner 2017). Therefore, it is critical to understand the landscape of extremism, radicalism, and political violence from a broader perspective in order to evaluate the significance of local urban social issues. These issues, where radicalisation is a local problem, also require local solutions. It's worth noting that this analysis is based on studies conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have introduced new dynamics to the phenomena described.

#### Prior Understandings

The following section is a review of recent research conducted on the four initial hypotheses in Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United Kingdom. By examining the latest findings and developments, we aimed to assess the ongoing issues and identify research gaps that required further investigation. This review built upon the existing knowledge base, which suggested that specific spatial formations, particularly diverse post-industrial urban centres, provided hospitable contexts for radicalisation, with identity politics playing a central role in the polarisation of society. The research also highlighted the importance of intergenerational dynamics in social exclusion

#### Working Hypothesis 1: Spatial Formations

Existing research supports the hypothesis that there are specific spatial formations that provide hospitable contexts for radicalisation. This is particularly true for highly diverse post-industrial large and small urban centres in the United Kingdom, where we can find the most evidence of Islamist extremism. Far right extremism, in contrast, shows a significantly lower concentration in urban areas. Instead, middle- and small-sized towns and rural areas often show significant activities by far right groups across the four countries. Concentrated socio-economic marginalisation in specific urban, semi-urban, or rural areas correlates with occurrences of extremism in the UK and the Netherlands, but not in Denmark or Norway.



In **Denmark**, various forms of exclusion are conducive to radicalisation, but post-industrial blight is less significant than in some other European countries. To the extent that there are problems of classic post-industrial blight, these are found in the smaller towns of North and North-west Jutland, the area around Randers, Southern Jutland, and the belt of islands south of Ærø (Bitsch Christensen 2005). Support for the Danish People's Party is strongest among the less educated, as well as in southern Jutland. Although there is some nationalist radicalisation in Copenhagen, there is no evidence of any connection with post-industrial blight.

In the **Netherlands**, we observe that much research operates with definitions that are out of date and no longer fully viable. This means much of the literature on extremism in the Netherlands has not caught up with the significant socio-geographical changes that have manifested in the past few years. A significant gap resulting from the fragmentation and diversification of spatial arrangements is the lack of a theoretical perspective that can integrate these diverse forms of spatiality.

In **Norway**, despite the substantial number of analyses of drivers of far right support, there are gaps in the literature regarding our understanding of the character, dynamics, and attractions of radicalisation processes. National statistical reports outline factors affecting social determinants of health, including information on housing, density of dwelling, employment, and other living conditions regarding refugees and immigrant groups (see Hermansen et al., 2022; Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2024). Radicalisation research has not investigated such factors in relation to minority groups in Norway, despite the clear evidence of such determinants. However, housing, “ghettoisation,” and a tendency toward territorial ethnic segregation have been topics of previous research (Eriksen, 2013). Much existing scholarship on far-right actors in Norway focuses on actors in geographic locations, despite the growing evidence of transnational networking, both physical and online, within and beyond Europe. However, the 2024 national report from the commission on extremism (NOU, 2024) raises attention to the examination of hybrid identities, both physical and online.

For the **United Kingdom**, existing research and empirical evidence indicate that there are regions and cities that are relatively prone to segregation along cultural, ethnic, and religious lines, and this raises the probability of extremist organisations gaining traction in specific locales. This presents tangible and multi-layered dilemmas for institutional decision-makers, policy developers, and practitioners seeking to challenge extremism while working to promote resilience and strengthen protective factors against extremism among individuals and communities.

In general, there is limited research that relates spatiality to extremism. The literature primarily focuses on the relationship between socio-economic factors and extremism, with an emphasis on austerity measures, poverty, and social exclusion. These processes and issues are directly relevant for the DRIVE project. Nevertheless, the existing literature does not directly establish a correlation between spatiality and these community dynamics. Bailey's (2015) study investigating far right and Islamist extremism in the United Kingdom found that specific cities and neighbourhoods in which tensions between different communities are palpable may be prone to problems of radicalisation and extremism.



### Working Hypothesis 2: Identity Politics

Existing research in **Denmark** supports DRIVE's second hypothesis concerning identity politics. Identity politics are important for nationalists, just as identity is important for Danish Muslims. Although the primary social-psychological understanding of radicalisation de-emphasises identity, it is generally understood that it is still important, especially for right-wing radicalisation.

In the **Netherlands**, existing research suggests that the dynamics of cultural, ethnic, and religious identity play a central role in the polarisation of society. There is some evidence that these tensions might constitute enabling factors for extremist violence. The Netherlands has viewed integration through the prism of pillarisation and multiculturalism since the nineteenth century, where several cultures have coexisted (Duyvendak and Scholten 2010). Officially, the identities of migrants were considered equal to those of the Dutch, but when it came down to it, the Dutch hegemonic culture prevailed (Schrover 2010). In 2004, through a series of columns, books, and discussions, the term 'Eurabia' surfaced in Dutch debates, following *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis* by Bat Ye'or (2004). 'Eurabia' is a conspiracy theory in which the European political elite are believed to conspire with the Arabic elite to Islamise Europe (Buuren van 2016, 119; Sedgwick 2019). The 'refugee crisis' of 2015–2016 had a big impact on extreme right-wing thinking and action in the Netherlands (Wagenaar 2020). In an atmosphere of societal unrest, expressions and acts of racism increased significantly, a trend that decreased again with declining refugee arrivals (Tierolf et al., 2018). Refugees and Muslims were particularly targeted. Clear perceptions about the nature of Dutch national identity often combine with feelings of xenophobia and Islamophobia, based on essentialised images of the 'other', ignoring the heterogeneous, changing, contested, and constantly renegotiated ideas about Dutch identity.

Although there are few current studies on identity politics in **Norway**, we can make some preliminary observations. Already in 2013, Eriksen's report, *Immigration and National Identity in Norway*, provided an excellent resource for understanding what has driven identity politics in Norway. In various ways, perceptions of cultural otherness, rising crime, gender inequality, religiosity, and an inability to adapt to Norwegian norms and values fuel identity politics in Norway. Many Norwegians are fearful and insecure about the impact of immigration-generated ethnic and religious diversity on identity. Over the past few years, a variety of anti-immigrant populist parties in Norway, such as the Progressive Party, have arisen from this fear. When it comes to identity politics on diversity and multiculturalism, one group remains at the centre of this anti-immigrant discourse: Muslims. The line between the perception of the Norwegians and the non-Norwegian Other, with variations of such Others, is in part based on a territorial idea of identity, culture, heritage, and origin. Religion and identity intertwine, but we should understand religion primarily as an aspect of belonging rather than the belief itself (Marzouki 2016). A recent article on a study of Muslim radicalisation in Norway highlights the different dimensions affecting identity politics and Muslims (Ahmed, 2023).

Research on identity politics in the **United Kingdom** has highlighted issues surrounding belonging, inter-generational change, and societal and political alienation. We



can describe the UK as a country where regional areas clearly differ in terms of employment, income, wealth, access to resources, and longevity. Recent media and political narratives have focused on religious identity and ethnicity, in some instances exacerbating tensions. For instance, former Prime Minister Boris Johnson compared Muslim women in the burqa to ‘bank robbers’ and ‘letterboxes’ in a 2018 **Daily Telegraph** column.<sup>2</sup> Although there is no direct correlation between this and acts motivated by racial hatred, the following week saw a 375% increase in anti-Muslim incidents (Johnson 2018; Edwards 2021).

The extent to which the United Kingdom has embraced a multicultural ethos is a subject of disagreement. In 2000, the Runnymede Report asserted the need to de-racialise or disassociate British identity from whiteness, enabling individuals from ethnic minority communities to identify not as ‘British citizens’, but as simply British (Runnymede Report, 2000, 36–39). The Brexit referendum demonstrated the overlaps in terms of racial politics and understandings of nation between Conservative and UKIP voters, as well as far right groups such as Britain First. Popular far right political organisations such as Patriotic Alternative (PA) rely heavily in promotional materials on essentialist notions of identity, prescribed gender roles, and historical rights to territory for ‘native’ White British indigenous groups.

### Working Hypothesis 3: Intergenerational change

Prior research in **Denmark** did not support DRIVE’s third hypothesis concerning intergenerational changes. Intergenerational changes were not considered to be important for right-wing radicalisation, though it was noted that there was more support for the nationalist parties among the young. Much European research shows that intergenerational changes are a factor behind the growth of Salafism, as European-born Muslims frequently reject their parents’ understanding of Islam as ‘cultural Islam’ and look instead for ‘pure Islam’, often ending up with some form of Salafi Islam. This is also the case in Denmark. Intergenerational dynamics do not cause the growth of Salafism, despite it being a marker of intergenerational change similar to improved fluency in Danish.

Existing research in the **Netherlands** suggests that intergenerational dynamics play a significant role in the social exclusion that may be associated with violent extremism. Two particular studies suggest that due to racialised discrimination and labour market marginalisation second-generation men from non-white migrant backgrounds face some of the most severe obstacles to social mobility in Dutch society, more so than first-generation men from non-white migrant backgrounds. Despite relatively low income inequality in the Netherlands, the Centraal Planbureau (2019) notes that there are important income differences between people with and without a migration background. These inequalities have persisted over generations and seem to persist within the current unchanging structures. These statistics reveal both patterns of structural discrimination and unequal social mobility for children with and without migration backgrounds. In 2015, Sieckelinck and de Winter published a study on right-wing, Islamist and left-wing

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/08/05/denmark-has-got-wrong-yes-burka-oppressive-ridiculous-still/>



radicalisation amongst youngsters in the Netherlands, Denmark and the United Kingdom entitled ‘Formers and Families’. The Dutch sub-study focused mainly on the interaction between parents and children. The study clarified that there was no correlation between the type of ideology youngsters adopted and the strength of their adoption and the ideas and ideals of their parents (Sieckelinck and de Winter 2015, 31), thereby refuting the hypothesis of intergenerational changes. However, about two-thirds of the interviewed families had to cope with divorce, an absent father, a lack of emotional support, psychiatric issues, illness, or death. The study concluded that family difficulties in themselves do not explain the process of radicalisation but could form a fertile breeding ground for it (Sieckelinck and de Winter 2015, 6–7).

A 2017 population survey in **Norway** revealed that non-Muslim Norwegians display significant subjective distance towards Muslims, although less than in other European countries (Hoffman and Moe 2017). Although Norway is striving to reduce inequalities and subsidise low-income families, first, second, and third-generation immigrants are still more likely to live in disadvantaged households and to experience discrimination in the labour market (Hermansen et al., 2022; Eriksen, 2013; Midtbøen 2013). There is a gap in research regarding whether socio-economic disadvantages transmitted from one generation to another could be a factor in radicalisation. Intergenerational change or continuity in far right extremism in Norway also remains largely unexplored and deserves further investigation.

In the **United Kingdom**, the evidence is mixed, with the data being inconclusive. It remains unclear whether there are significant differences in political outlook between first, second, and third generation Muslims in the UK that reproduce tensions and conflicts likely to encourage gravitation towards extremist perspectives. Some studies focusing on conceptions of belonging towards Britain amongst British Muslims of different generations suggest that second-generation Muslims are more likely to construct themselves as affiliating with Britain than first-generation Muslims, who show greater attachments to their traditional culture and religion (see Anjum et al., 2019).

The existing research in the United Kingdom exploring the interplay between identity and religion within Muslim communities demonstrates that Islamic religion and faith remain powerful influences in shaping identity. However, relationships to Islam vary between individuals and communities, remain diverse, and differ between and within generations (Sartawi and Sammut 2012). The internal struggle of some British Muslims, particularly those in their second and third generations, challenges them to reconcile the values of their Muslim identity as ethnic and religious minority members with their British identity, often viewed as separate, incompatible, and at odds (Hunt, Franz, and Nigbur 2021; Sartawi and Sammut 2012). Children of European-born Muslims who are ‘in-between’ or half-generation face a dual identity and contend with contradictory discourses on multiculturalism and diversity. They also encounter varying degrees of prejudice, exclusion, stigmatisation, and marginalisation, which can vary based on factors such as visibility, religiosity, skin colour, and other factions (Haw 2009; Hunt, Franz, and Nigbur 2021). Diaspora-born Muslims face particular challenges in identity construction and have to navigate and make choices between the ethnic heritage of their Muslim parents and the predominantly secular way of life of Western society. Combined with routinised



experiences of Islamophobia, marginalisation, and discrimination, a sizeable number of young Muslims have chosen to ‘(re)turn’ to their idea of religion (Abbas 2019). The inter-generational transmission of Islam remains relatively strong, even in a primarily secular UK context (Scourfield et al. 2012).

However, conversely, the operationalisation of the Prevent strategy has proven to be a key source of grievance for young Muslims in particular (see Mythen and Walklate, 2013). Furthermore, there are some signs that the targeting of young Muslims manifested in counter-terrorism initiatives such as Prevent, coupled with disgruntlement regarding the implementation of stop and search policing tactics, has facilitated stronger forms of attachment to Islam and the Ummah, as well as the manifestation of reactive pride (see Mythen, 2012).

#### Working hypothesis 4: reciprocal radicalisation

In **Denmark**, DRIVE’s fourth hypothesis concerning reciprocal radicalisation was supported by prior research. Muslims, or at least majority **perceptions** of Muslims, radicalise members of the majority population, and the nationalism of the majority population, or at least Muslim **perceptions** of it, radicalises members of the Muslim community.

Research on nationalist radicalisation in Denmark invariably notes the importance of immigration. Karpantschov and Mikkelsen (2017) note that violent actions against Danish Muslims peaked in the aftermath of 9/11 and the Cartoon Crisis of 2005–2006. Although they do not label this as reciprocal radicalisation, their findings suggest this. One study in 2017 (Petersen et al., 2018) asked a representative selection of Danes to say how true they thought a selection of imaginary newspaper headlines were. Fifty percent of respondents were fully or partially convinced that ‘Muslim imams encourage non-Western immigrants to commit social security fraud so that they can avoid working and contributing to Danish society’, a proposition that only 29 percent of respondents were fully or partially convinced was untrue. Thirty percent of respondents were fully or partially convinced that “Danish media deliberately hide facts about how widespread violence and crime are among young immigrants,” and 28 percent were fully or partially convinced that “Leading figures in mosques are forcing young Muslims to commit burglary to raise money for holy war.”

In the **Netherlands**, there is clear evidence that far right groups use the alleged or real threat of Islamism for purposes of mobilisation. In contrast, extreme Islamist groups rarely talk about the far right per se but rather refer to the overall discriminatory and morally abject nature of Dutch and European society. Extreme right-wing groups have actively mobilised against what they perceive to be hotbeds of Islamism. In 2018, Identitair Vezet organised a protest in the Schilderswijk in The Hague, also against the foundation of a mosque (Wagenaar 2020, 39). Protesters met counter-protesters on several occasions. Extreme-right movements challenged the municipality’s decision to ban protests in the neighbourhood, but a judge affirmed it (Wagenaar 2020, 39). Although the far right is well-documented in its identification and mobilisation against the image and presence of the Muslim minorities in the Netherlands, extreme Islamist communities have not historically identified and mobilised against the far right as such. This begs the question



about the nature of possible ‘reciprocal’ radicalisation in the Netherlands. Is there a bi-directional relationship? Does this relate to polarisation or radicalisation?

There is little academic evidence of reciprocal radicalisation in **Norway**. Reports and studies dealing with both far right (Bjørge and Ravndal 2019) and Islamist (Bjørge and Gjelsvik 2015) extremism do not mention this phenomenon. Rather, other push and pull factors have been highlighted as a proxy for violent radicalisation in Norway (Rogelio et al. 2008; Bjørge 2009; Bjørge 2011). While there is no clear evidence that Islamist and far right extremists feed off each other in Norway, Bangstad (2016) found that organisations such as **Stopp Islamiseringen av Norge** (Stop the Islamisation of Norway, SIAN) rely on what Abbas (2020) refers to as the ‘othering’ of the opposing group. While right-wing extremists’ 2011 Oslo terrorist attack may have sparked reactions from anti-racist groups, existing scholarship has not observed any patterns of reciprocal radicalisation among Islamist extremists. International events have so far been considered more important factors in radicalisation (Enstad 2017).

In the **United Kingdom**, the existing research and literature endorse the final DRIVE hypothesis concerning far right and Islamist groups radicalising one another by reinforcing hate, intolerance, or indignation towards each other. As knowledge about the process of reciprocal radicalisation grows (see Lee and Knott, 2020; Macklin, 2020), it is becoming clear that individuals adopting extreme far right viewpoints and those affiliating with Islamist ideology, which promotes violence, not only have geographic and socio-economic characteristics in common, but they also fuel and feed off each other’s rhetoric and activism. Academic and policy literature acknowledges the process of the cyclical generation of extremism, but it remains sparsely explored.

Islamist and far right organisations propagate many underlying framing mechanisms of attribution and exclusion that are inextricably similar and inclined towards establishing absolutes (Smith, Stohl, and al-Gharbi, 2019). Irrespective of the similarities and differences between the ambitions and objectives of Islamist-inspired and far right groups, a common thread exists in terms of amplifying difference, attributing blame, and inciting hatred.

While the existing research does not provide any clear-cut conclusions, the studies completed do indicate that far right and Islamist groups feed off each other’s rhetoric. While events such as the 2001 disturbances and the 2017 attacks in London and Manchester seem to have influenced political behaviours (Trilling, 2021) and triggered online violence (Lee and Knott 2020), there is no clear empirical evidence that they have indeed triggered reciprocal radicalisation. In addition, most of the existing literature focuses on how extreme far right movements such as the EDL feed off Islamist extremism, but not so much on the reverse dynamics. The emergence and consolidation of mixed, rather than singular or doctrine- forms of extremism further questions the cohesion and strength of the reciprocal radicalisation thesis as the types of extremism detected by security practitioners, CVE professionals, and academic researchers continue to morph.



## Public Mental Health Synopsis

Despite the existence of research studies from various disciplines that address mental health and health-related factors for radicalisation, as well as the use of multi-disciplinary designs, no study has yet established a link between public health research and social science research, as the DRIVE project intended. The ambitious design of the DRIVE project—to create this link—presented opportunities and challenges. The intention was to create an inter-disciplinary framework while being mindful of accountability issues raised in the respective disciplines regarding conceptualisation, theoretical transparency, and methodological rigour. The specific limits of political and legal structures in each country that shape public mental health and health systems, as well as their relationship to understanding and engaging with the larger topic of radicalisation, presented challenges. Yet, these challenges also presented opportunities for DRIVE to work collaboratively as researchers and with communities to increase the knowledge base that can expand the understanding and assessment of needs, capacities, and resources for decreasing radicalisation and countering violent extremism (CVE).

In any given research project or programme development, ‘perspective-taking’ is essential for public health. People have framed public health from numerous historical and contemporary perspectives. Powers and Faden’s (2006, 2019) reasoning and the theory that came from it, which focuses on social justice rather than narrow utilitarian goals for health outcomes, have become an important and empowering way of looking at public health. This perspective positions social justice as the moral foundation for public health, in contrast to the more usual considerations of bringing about the greatest health benefits from limited public health resources (Tol, 2020). Powers and Faden’s theory is a non-ideal theory, but it functions as a real-life approach, providing a framework for analysing which inequalities matter most in the real world, where very large populations and groups have unmet basic needs and no secure liberties, and human rights violations are commonplace. This social justice perspective asserts that we should give the greatest moral urgency to populations that fare badly on multiple dimensions—those who are most at risk. An essential part of the job of social justice is to identify the interlocking patterns of disadvantage that systematically marginalise population groups (Powers & Faden, 2006, 2019). This overarching social justice perspective provides the theoretical background for the project’s public health and public mental health promotion framework.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), ‘Public health refers to all organised measures (whether public or private) to prevent disease, promote health, and prolong life among the population as a whole. Its activities aim to provide conditions in which people can be healthy and focus on entire populations, not on individual patients or diseases’ (WHO 2016a, 2016b). An approach to public health that includes public mental health with a health promotion focus recognises protective factors for mental health and wellbeing as well as broader determinants, including the lifelong impact of mental illness and other risk factors. Good mental health, as the WHO has noted (WHO 2004), is the basis of all health. The absence of mental illness does not represent the physical, psychosocial, and economic benefits of mental health (Wren-Lewis and Alexandrova, 2021). Furthermore, promoting mental wellbeing can both prevent and assist



in the recovery from mental and somatic disorders. Promotion and prevention play a crucial role in the sustainable reduction of the burden of mental disorders. This is because, once a disorder manifests, treatment can only alleviate a small portion of this burden. This is largely due to a lack of treatment facilities and the fact that it often takes years from the onset of symptoms to the onset of treatment-seeking behaviour, which is partly due to stigmatisation (Boyd-MacMillan & DeMarinis 2020). The challenge is to incorporate such interventions into non-clinical and clinical practice, as well as to engage with a range of other service providers, including public health and primary care physicians (Campion et al. 2012).

According to DeMarinis (2018), this focus has been missing due to a number of issues, including training primarily for diagnosing and treating mental disorders, a lack of resources, strategies for coordinating between ministries, institutions, agencies, and sectors, and practical models that could help with coordinating the prevention and promotion foci. Public mental health, therefore, needs to incorporate various strategies, ranging from the promotion of mental wellbeing to primary prevention and other forms of prevention and intervention. Planned strategies need to focus on individual, societal, and environmental aspects. Targeted interventions concerning individuals will also need to focus on and assess the levels of function in the whole population. Kalra et al. (2012) propose a nested approach with the individual at the centre, surrounded by family, carers, and significant others, and educational and other local networks, surrounded by society at large, as the most suitable way to approach this.

A public mental health-wellbeing orientation focuses on both challenges (e.g., psychosocial impairment, distress) and strengths (e.g., wellbeing, resilience) no matter when or where one enters the process (DeMarinis & Boyd-MacMillan, 2019). In research among displaced or disenfranchised populations, mental health, wellbeing, daily functioning, family cohesion, and community member interactions in general appear to benefit from integrated models of clinical and community care programmes, but evidence regarding their implementation among such populations remains limited (Tol et al., 2011). When considering the implementation of care services that foster local agency, an ecological approach may promote culturally appropriate care (Ager et al., 2005). This kind of approach fits well with the Bronfenbrenner (1979) model that has become a standard reference. Humanitarian organisations routinely conduct psychosocial needs assessments (Wells et al. 2016), but an ecological assessment goes further by examining the context and culture of service access to address identified needs (Wells et al. 2018).

Westerhof and Keyes (2010) introduced a more recent conceptualisation of mental health and mental ill-health, as two separate domains and argued for its validity across the life-span. It was first visually depicted by DeMarinis & Boyd-MacMillan (2019), and further refined by Boyd-MacMillan & DeMarinis (2020; Cetrez et al., 2021). This model presents mental health and mental ill-health as two distinct yet interacting ‘domains’ (i.e., areas of experience, depicted as two separate continuums) each based on level of function and subjective wellbeing. The dual domain model replaces the previous model that used only one continuum and featured mental health and mental illness at opposite ends of the spectrum. Increasing evidence shows relatively weak correlations



between mental illness and subjective wellbeing, along with findings that many experience high-functioning wellbeing in the presence of mental illness symptoms (Patalay & Fitzsimons 2016; Kalra et al. 2012). Mental disorder/illness and mental health/wellbeing are distinct, although related domains, to the extent that the absence of either mental health or mental disorder does not imply the presence of the other. Campion et al. (2012) discovered a close relationship between the prevention of mental disorders and the promotion of mental health and associated resilience. This finding supports a two-domain view of mental health, where mental ill-health and subjective wellbeing are distinct constructs that are, in some studies, only moderately associated (Patalay & Fitzsimons 2016). The two-domain model permits a more complete understanding of mental health and focuses on numerous interacting factors that can affect actual daily function. The model is not static but fluid and reflects the growing evidence of interaction between the two domains (Patalay & Fitzsimons 2016; DeMarinis and Boyd-MacMillan 2019; Kalra et al. 2012). A two-domain model does not underestimate the importance of understanding risk factors for negative mental health consequences, such as war-related violence and other traumatic losses. These can be recognised while also addressing the important critique that Betancourt and Khan (2008) raise: a focus on trauma alone has resulted in inadequate attention to factors associated with resilient mental health outcomes.

The need for a new paradigm emerged from an analysis of the results of the first-wave CVE by Weine and colleagues (2016, 2017a). The first wave focused on a criminal justice perspective and community policing strategies meant to foster collaborative partnerships between law enforcement and impacted communities. However, not all programmes led to the intended results. In the first-wave CVE, the emphasis was on having a proactive joint problem-solving approach to build trust and cooperation and address the immediate conditions that lead to public safety issues. Though a necessary component, there have been many documented drawbacks regarding community isolation and group stigmatisation. The paradigm shift has been to a second-wave CVE, with activities focused more specifically on prevention and intervention components. Programmes, policies, and interventions, known as prevention activities, aim to include individuals and communities at risk, lessen their exposure to violence's causes and promoters, and slow down the progression towards violence. Furthermore, these strategies aim to enhance the availability of support and resources that foster individual and community resilience.

The argument for a paradigm shift has focused on the need for a framework that will accommodate the individual, social, community, and structural factors involved in radicalisation and extremism, and public health has been nominated to fill that role. Public health involves diverse disciplines relevant to CVE, such as psychiatry, psychology, sociology, anthropology, communications, education, and public policy. Public health professionals conduct their work through many relevant approaches, including developing and implementing community-based programmes, administering services, conducting research and evaluation, and recommending policies. All these characteristics make public health a potentially beneficial multi-disciplinary framework through which to understand the multiple aspects of violent extremism, as opposed to looking at it from a



single perspective. Public health has not heretofore played a significant role in programme planning or discourse on CVE, despite some prior calls for greater public health involvement in CVE (Bhui et al. 2014). However, there is a growing movement in the US and Europe that is approaching violence prevention and intervention from a public health point of view. With a PMH team in the project consortium, DRIVE joins this movement with a particular focus on radicalisation and violent extremism.

In relation to radicalisation and CVE, there are several cautions to heed in the public mental health research area. Aggarwahl (2019) has been the most prominent of such voices. He notes that the attempt to identify psychological and mental health risk factors remains incomplete. According to Bhui and Jones (2017), we need to establish an evidence base because the majority of incidents do not directly relate to mental illness, and we have yet to determine the extent of modifiable psychological processes or vulnerability. Other mental health professionals, with a problematic orientation, view the public health sector as filling a void between suspected and known active militancy. Weine and colleagues (2017b) identify a gap in social services for those at risk for violent extremism who have not yet committed a crime. This “pre-criminal space” becomes their public health focus (Weine et al. 2017b, 210). Similar to Bhui and colleagues’ focus on psychological and mental health factors, Weine and colleagues (2017) acknowledge the absence of a clear evidence base identifying risk and protective factors that could guide the planning of public health programmes (Weine et al., 2017b, 212). Aggarwahl (2019) emphasises that Weine and colleagues (2017b) note that there is no way to measure the construct of ‘violent extremism’ because there is no consensus definition to begin with.

Finding information about violent extremism that could jeopardise public health screening raises ethical concerns in addition to scientific ones. CVE programmes urgently need to strike a balance between civil rights and public safety: ‘Stakeholders must proceed with great sensitivity in seeking community buy-in and collaboration and to ensure the protection of civil liberties’ (Weine et al. 2017b, 54). Certain CVE efforts and their results have once again raised longstanding apprehensions over the relationships of mental health professionals with state governments. In 2016, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association observed that counterterrorism measures have resulted in the closing of space for civil society in the UK, admonishing that Prevent is having the opposite of its intended effect by dividing, stigmatising, and alienating segments of the population (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2016). Of 7631 people referred to British law enforcement from April 2015 to March 2016, 4997 (65%) were for ‘Islamist’ versus 759 (10%) for ‘right-wing’ extremism (The Home Office 2017), with Muslims referred forty times more than others (Versi, 2017). Simply stating that CVE initiatives do not target particular communities, such as Muslims, does not assuage fears of religious profiling based on the types of counter-terrorism referrals in the UK and grant recipients in the US. In CVE research, negative experiences should also inform future initiatives. If state governments fail to conduct credible, methodical analyses of the effectiveness of CVE programmes, they risk eroding trust in the mental health system. Responsible CVE initiatives through the public health system go beyond merely creating new forms of mental health ‘knowledge’ about Muslims and disseminating practices across societies (Aggarwahl 2019).



The specific pathway for a public mental health promotion framework is community-based participatory research (CBPR). This research design brings together programme researchers, practitioners, and intended beneficiaries in genuinely equitable partnerships that define processes and outcomes to link local public policies with individual interventions (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008). Involving the community from the very beginning of the research process is essential, as is the triangulation of data through coordinated methods in a sound, mixed-methods design (DeMarinis & Boyd-MacMillan, 2019; Boyd-MacMillan & DeMarinis, 2020; Boyd-MacMillan et al., 2016). It is critical to access knowledge at the local and community levels. Existing models, such as the Community Readiness Assessment (CRA) model and method (Wells et al. 2019), are essential for gaining deep community knowledge and engagement. Such community assessment and readiness models also need to incorporate an understanding of transnational and other hybrid online communities that bridge global and local radicalisation strategies and identities (Atran, 2021; Jones, 2017). For this reason, interventions to bring about change at different levels among different target groups must be planned through a collaborative, cumulative process that leads to a better understanding of how push, pull, and personality factors interact in a community setting (DeMarinis & Boyd-MacMillan, 2019). The community context may include social, familial, personal, organisational, and structural factors. When we identify specific factors, we can achieve more. A collaborative, cumulative process includes an examination of the crucial area of the social determinants of health related to violent extremism (Alcalá, Sharif, and Samari 2017). This process also allows for a much-needed multi-levelled focus on resilience, as outlined above. Stephens et al. (2021) have noted in their literature review on preventing violent extremism that, up until now, the conceptualised relationship of resilience to extremism has primarily centred on the individual, with insufficient focus on the role of contextual structures and institutions. They suggest that a social-ecological perspective on resilience could re-orient the discourse on resilience towards extremism. Framing CVE community programming from a public health promotion perspective might also allow prevention and intervention programmes to access new resources as part of public health programmes (DeMarinis, 2018). Community safety is critical for both public health and law enforcement. This framing could also facilitate the integration of programmes into existing structures, such as community organising and strengthening structures, rather than introducing new structures that appear to be part of the security apparatus. As we transition to this public health paradigm, we must specifically focus on health promotion and acknowledge the significance of context, community, and the operative culture; this represents a significant shift in perspective and focus.

The DRIVE project used surveys, interviews, and observations to test four working hypotheses about how people's experiences of social exclusion are connected to different structural factors that help and encourage radicalisation in far right and Islamist extremist groups. The structural dimensions include space, identity, intergenerational conflict, and reciprocal radicalisation. The PMH team contributed to the project's research instruments and analyses that addressed the above hypotheses. Furthermore, as the project progressed, the PMH team formulated more precise public mental health work-



ing hypotheses in these areas, identified specific communities, and analysed initial community-related data. The findings from the data analyses informed the development of focus group questions for use with members of both target populations in all four countries, using the Community Readiness Assessment model (CRA; Wells et al. 2019).

The PMH team recruited focus group participants from young people interviewees in Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and the UK who had completed the ethically mandated “wellness check” as part of the interview using validated instruments related to mental health function and resilience marker levels (‘SCL-10’ and ‘CD-Risc-2’).<sup>3</sup> The CRA model enabled the PMH team to test (and refine as needed) the findings about how people in each community (meeting in separate focus groups) related to issues surrounding the hypotheses’ key concepts. The CRA process also pinpointed any additional information required for successful intervention planning, such as the participants’ need and readiness for change, the nature of the change, and the individuals who can facilitate the change in a particular community. Accessing this type of information through the CRA model created community engagement in each target group, in each country, and ensured that the involvement of participants in two countries, from each identity group, in feasibility and accessibility testing a brief pilot “intervention”, fit with their community values. The CRA model also helped each group identify leadership requirements for consensus-building regarding problem recognition and resource needs for addressing identified problems (Edwards et al. 2000). In each focus group across the four countries, the CRA process also tested dimensions from the eco-bio-psychosocial IC-ADAPT model, which was the basis of the brief pilot design. The PMH team used the findings from the focus group discussions to populate the brief pilot “intervention” design. In two countries, Norway and the UK, focus group members from each group who agreed to participate further experienced the brief pilot “intervention” in separate groups with evaluation protocols. We asked the individuals in each brief pilot “intervention” group if they would be open to meeting online, ‘human-to-human’, in a focus group format, without engaging in arguments or debates with the other group. During the design process, the PMH team developed feasibility and acceptability hypotheses to test the brief pilot “intervention” design. The findings from Norway and the UK were used to inform recommendations for testing the brief pilot “intervention” in Denmark and the Netherlands.

In line with Bronfenbrenner’s oft-cited ecological framework (1979), the PMH team created the brief pilot “intervention” using the IC-ADAPT model to focus on experiences of exclusion, belonging, and not belonging. These experiences represent common denominators underlying the project’s and the PMH team’s more specific, working hypotheses focusing on space, identity, intergenerational conflict, and mutual radicalisation.

The brief pilot “intervention” model and design supported participant wellbeing and resilience at the micro, meso, and macro levels. The IC-ADAPT model informed a multi-levelled, multi-directional interaction brief pilot “intervention” design to strengthen existing normative capacities and skills while promoting the development of

---

<sup>3</sup> The 12-item brief question “wellness check” included the 10-item symptom tick list (10-SCL; Strand et al., 2003) and the resilience tick list (2-CD-RSC; Vaishnavi et al., 2007).



new ones, particularly in contexts of past and current adverse experiences. Over 40 years of research into the interactionist cognitive processing model, ‘integrative complexity’ (IC), has explored how people (interpersonally and socially) engage with varying and diverse environmental demands and stressors and features a cross-culturally validated empirical measurement frame (Suedfeld and Tetlock 2014; Baker-Brown et al. 1992). We use the term ‘cognitive’ in a broad sense, encompassing affective (emotions and feelings), social, and popularly understood ‘cognitive processing’, such as logical thinking. “Cognitive processing’ involves an interplay among the somatic, affective, and cognitive processes informing how people think, feel, and interact with other people (individuals, groups, communities, and societies).

The IC model uniquely divides cognitive processing into two measurable variables, representing the fundamental developmental progression of self-regulation for all human beings: differentiation and integration (Suedfeld, 2010; Bailey & Jones, 2019; first recognised as such by Boyd-MacMillan & DeMarinis, 2020). These variables are ethically accessible, value-neutral, and therefore acceptable across groups and ideologies, as well as present in and adaptable to all contexts and cultures. Differentiation emerges through the recognition of different dimensions or perspectives, such as the three reasons I love where I live, the two reasons I hate where I live, and the times when I love and hate where I live without knowing why. With the presence of differentiation, integration can emerge through connections among different dimensions or perspectives, e.g., knowing there are beneficial reasons why I both love and hate where I live helps me to cope with the stress; you love where we live and I hate where we live, but we can work together to improve our community (Baker-Brown et al., 1992; Conway et al., 2008).

Increasing awareness of IC capacities for more flexible engagement in diverse situations is associated with more peaceful outcomes to differences and disagreements, both within and between societies and groups (Park & Deshon, 2018). Sometimes inflexible thinking is required, e.g., about immediate physical danger—get out of the way of a car heading towards one at speed! However, an inability to regulate IC or to use IC flexibility is a prevalent precondition for social division, conflict, and even violence (e.g., Liht et al., 2005; Suedfeld, 2010; Conway and Conway, 2011; Suedfeld, Cross, Logan, 2013; Houck, Repke, and Conway, 2017). Increased awareness and regulation of IC flexibility is associated with increased social and emotional learning, reactions to threats, expression of values, understanding and responding to different levels of stress, and the ability to resolve disagreements between opposed groups in mutually agreeable ways (Andrews Fearon & Boyd-MacMillan, 2016; Kugler & Coleman, 2020; Brodbeck et al, 2021).). In the IC-ADAPT model, ADAPT’s full name, “Adaptation and Development After Persecution and Torture,” refers to severely affected sub-groups, but as an eco-bio-psychosocial model, it is relevant to all groups experiencing distress and the potential for lowered functioning at the micro (individual), meso (family and group), and macro (society) levels (Silove 2013; Tay & Silove 2017). The ADAPT model organises every society’s eco-bio-psychosocial domains into five “life” or “societal systems” that support (1) safety and security; (2) interpersonal bonds and networks; (3) justice; (4) identities and roles; and (5) existential meaning, whether religious, spiritual, political, economic, or other (Silove 2013).



These five eco-bio-psychosocial life systems overlap and interact in multiple directions. At each eco-social level, whether micro (individual), meso (family, group), or macro (societal), people in a society exhibit core bio-psychosocial reaction patterns when one, a few, or all five pillars (life systems) face disruption or undermining. The five ADAPT pillars (life systems) collectively represent universal experiences of potential displacement and disruption, providing an intuitive and meaningful overview for both professionals and the affected individuals (Silove & Steel 2006; Silove 2000). Providing resources based on this meaningful overview to young people, families, and communities who may perceive themselves as displaced is itself an initial wellbeing and resilience-promoting intervention. Research has demonstrated that the model, in its entirety, effectively illustrates the direct impacts of persistent adversity on individuals, groups, and communities while also exerting a moderating influence on the adverse events themselves. The IC and ADAPT models were well-suited to the DRIVE project's goals. First, they are evidence-based and multi-disciplinary. Second, they work from a bottom-up perspective (how individuals and groups make sense of their experiences), while also providing an organising framework to ensure coherence in lived experiences. Third, they are applicable throughout the life cycle and have validity across cultures and contexts. The PMH team in the DRIVE project used the IC-ADAPT model (Boyd-MacMillan & DeMarinis, 2020) to feasibility and acceptability test a brief pilot "intervention" design focusing on increasing participants' awareness of and capacity to self-regulate in situations that could involve both stress, threat, and exclusion, as well as belonging and inclusion.

## Concluding Thoughts

The DRIVE project aimed to address critical gaps in our understanding of the enabling factors that link individual experiences of social exclusion to structural conditions that, in combination with other micro, meso, and macro factors, may potentially be a contributing factor to radicalisation. DRIVE aimed to offer a deeper and fuller picture of the complicated factors that can lead to the formation and maintenance of extremist environments by focusing on four main hypotheses: spatial formations, identity politics, inter-generational change, and reciprocal radicalisation. The project's multi-sited ethnographic approach, which incorporated both offline and sometimes online environments, allowed for a closer examination of individuals' lived experiences and subjective interpretations within these contexts.

However, the project also acknowledged the significant challenges and limitations inherent in researching extremist milieus, particularly in light of the evolving socio-political landscape and the growing backlash against critical scholarship in this field. The lack of conceptual clarity surrounding key terms such as 'extremism,' 'far right,' and 'Islamism,' coupled with the paucity of empirical evidence on the specific risk and protective factors associated with radicalisation, underscores the need for greater theoretical and methodological rigour in this area of study. Engaging with communities that are frequently stigmatised and targeted by counter-terrorism policies necessitates a reflexive



and collaborative approach that prioritises the protection of civil liberties and the empowerment of marginalised voices due to the ethical and political implications. As DRIVE navigated these challenges, it was careful to maintain a critical stance towards the role of state institutions and dominant discourses in shaping the conditions and perceptions of radicalisation.



## Chapter 3. Methods

---

### Research Design Objectives

The research project took 42 months to complete, with 6 months of initial desk research on each country (including evaluation of existing programmes based on published empirical assessments), 24 months of field collecting, analysing, and writing up the data, during which the PMH team was continuously identifying the components required to formulate a brief pilot “intervention” design, 4 months of feasibility and acceptability testing the design, and 5 months of analysing and writing up the results. DRIVE sought to understand two broad trends. Initially, we evaluated the significance and widespread nature of specific elements that could facilitate radicalisation. Secondly, we focused on the interaction between social exclusion and factors that might, over time, lead to problematic thought patterns, but not necessarily violence.

Consequently, DRIVE had three research design objectives. First, we conducted research in the UK, Norway, the Netherlands, and Denmark—all significant locations that reflected diverse post-war migration patterns into advanced industrial societies that experienced reconstruction, followed by deindustrialisation and globalisation two generations later. Second, we conducted individual and focus group interviews with members of Muslim minority populations and nationalist majority groups in cities and towns. Third, we conducted interviews and focus groups with a diverse range of key stakeholder participants across generations, professions, racial-ethnic backgrounds, and genders. These three objectives enhanced the reliability and credibility of the data, increasing the likelihood of identifying broad trends with comparative assessments. We selected these countries due to their distinct yet interconnected contexts, enabling us to study the nature of potential radicalisation in specific secularised, spatial environments with frequently socially marginalised populations. In addition to these similarities, the countries varied in their structural and systemic responses to these challenges, rendering the findings applicable to a range of contexts.

Project researchers used qualitative analyses to understand people’s experiences, identify different perspectives, and explore the meanings and implications of the data in relation to DRIVE’s research aims (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). For one-to-one interviews, researchers used a semi-structured format, incorporating a loose structure of both fixed and open-ended questions. Semi-structured interviews facilitated the systemic implementation of DRIVE’s aims across the four research teams, as well as generating common threads and themes among respondents in the four countries. It also provided researchers with flexibility to probe beyond the immediate set of questions to elicit further information from interviewees (Arksey and Knight, 1999). In addition, an online survey was administered in all four countries, which included scaled attitudinal questions for analysis using non-parametric statistical tests. And observation work was conducted at some sites. This design lends itself to replicability due to its enhanced ability to contextualise and coordinate mixed-methods data, thereby increasing



reliability and validity.

The dataset under consideration comprises a total of 417 interviews conducted across four countries. The data profile reveals a balanced distribution of interviews among the countries, with the United Kingdom contributing the largest share (32.6%), followed by Denmark (23.2%), the Netherlands (23%), and Norway (21.1%). This distribution ensures a comprehensive representation of each country, allowing for a nuanced exploration of the similarities and differences that may emerge from the analysis. We categorise the interviews based on various attributes such as the interviewee pool, actor type, location, and gender, which provides a multidimensional framework for understanding the complexities of the data. See Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1. Distribution by interviewees by country

Country	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Denmark	97	23
United Kingdom	136	33
Netherlands	96	23
Norway	88	21
Total	417	100

Tables 3.2 and 3.3 provide further information on the interviewee type, the first identified by type of respondent and the second by gender of respondent.

Table 3.2. Distribution by type of participant

Actor type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Young person	215	51.6
Activist	82	19.7
Practitioner	120	28.8
Total	417	100

Table 3.3. Distribution by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (*)
Male	239	57.3
Female	172	41.2
Unknown	6	1.4
Total	417	100

The geographical distribution of interviews within each country varied. In the United Kingdom, London was the primary location, accounting for a significant portion of the interviews. Our concentration on the capital city reflected its status as a major hub for political, economic, and cultural activities. The experiences and views expressed in



London may not reflect those of people in other parts of the country. Thus, the inclusion of interviews from Manchester and other unspecified areas helps to mitigate this potential bias and ensures a more comprehensive representation of the United Kingdom’s diversity. We applied a similar approach to each country.

Table 3.5. Distribution of interviewees by location (top 5)

Location	Frequency	Percentage (100)
Copenhagen	53	12.7
London	67	16.1
Aarhus	44	10.6
Other (UK)	37	8.9
Oslo	39	9.4
Other	177	42.4
Total	417	100

In contrast to the United Kingdom, the Netherlands presents a more dispersed geographical distribution of interviews. We conducted interviews in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and various other locations. This broader geographical spread reflects an effort to capture the diversity of experiences and perspectives across different regions of the country. Amsterdam, as the capital city, offered a unique set of dynamics and challenges, while Rotterdam and The Hague provided insights into the experiences of individuals in other major urban centres. The inclusion of interviews from various other locations further enhanced the representativeness of the data, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the Dutch context.

The geographical distribution of interviews in Norway presents a slightly different picture, with the majority taking place in Oslo and Kristiansand. Oslo, as the capital city, was a focal point for many of the research issues and experiences. The concentration of interviews in Oslo reflected the city’s significance in terms of political, social, and cultural dynamics. Kristiansand, on the other hand, provided a valuable counterpoint to the capital, offering insights into the experiences of individuals in a different regional context, with both different traditions and a different and much deeper orientation to Christian religiosity. The smaller subset of interviews from other regions in Norway highlights the need to consider the potential limitations of geographical representation in the data. While the interviews from Oslo and Kristiansand offer valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge that they do not fully capture the diversity of experiences across the entire country and are, as with all the DRIVE countries, gathered through a convenience sample (or theoretical sampling) methodology.

We conducted interviews with young people aged 18–25, in addition to interviews with activists and practitioners. DRIVE initially aimed to interview 160 individuals in each country, including 20 Muslim minorities, 20 far-right extremists, 40 activists, 40 parents, and 40 practitioners. However, we found interviewing parents of young people to be challenging and ethically sensitive. Therefore, we determined to disband interviews with parents and instead attempt to deepen our understanding of the young people’s



experiences by increasing the number of interviews in this group. We split each set of interviews by gender. We conducted a survey with translations in local languages in the four countries, targeting specific cities and locations, to supplement the qualitative information. Table 3.5 highlights the sample distribution of the Drive survey respondents across the four countries.

Table 3.5 Online survey sampling

Country	Frequency	Percentage (&)
The Netherlands	1963	36%
United Kingdom	2535	46%
Denmark	635	12%
Norway	368	7%
Total	5501	100%

Throughout all data analyses, the PMH team developed a brief pilot “intervention” to test for feasibility and acceptability in the final quarter of 2023. Testing could not take place until all previous data collections and preliminary analyses had taken place. The PMH team’s feasibility and acceptability tested the brief pilot “intervention” design in the UK and Norway. As reported in 6.2 and 6.4, the participant recruitment pathway for the brief pilot “intervention” began with semi-structured interviews that included “wellness checks,” which enabled consideration for participation in focus groups with each identity group across all four countries. Table 3.6 presents the number of focus group participants in each of the four project countries and the brief pilot “intervention” participants in Norway and the United Kingdom, with the potential numbers of participants for brief pilot “intervention” design testing in Denmark and the Netherlands.

Table 3.6 Focus group participants and “intervention” workshops in the UK and Norway

Country	YP Far right / Nationalist perspective		YP Muslim perspective		Total focus group participants	Total brief pilot “intervention” participants
	Focus groups	Brief pilot “interventions”	Focus groups	Brief pilot “interventions”		
<b>The Netherlands</b>	1 (2)	-	2 (4)	-	6	-
<b>The United Kingdom</b>	1 (5)	1 (2)	2 (14)	1 (5)	19	7
<b>Denmark</b>	2 (5)	-	2 (7)	-	12	-
<b>Norway</b>	2 (6)	1 (3)	4 (23)	1 (6)	29	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>6 (20)</b>	<b>2 (5)</b>	<b>8 (28)</b>	<b>2 (11)</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>16</b>



## Coding Approach and Justification of Themes

Coding qualitative data is a critical step towards understanding the dynamics of social exclusion, polarisation, and radicalism in many situations. We conducted this study in four European countries with the goal of documenting young people, activists, and practitioners' lived experiences, viewpoints, and insights through coding. Using a thorough and structured coding methodology, we were able to identify patterns, themes, and paradigms that provided insight into the basic mechanisms and processes that shape these social realities.

Coding is essentially an interpretive activity that requires a deep engagement with the material, strong analytical vision, and a commitment to self-reflection. The approach involved breaking down the material into key chunks, assigning codes to these segments, and then reassembling them to form a coherent and insightful story. This method demanded more than simply mechanical execution; it was a highly intellectual and creative activity that involved a delicate balance between inductive and deductive thinking, as well as a balance between closely scrutinising the facts and applying established theoretical frameworks.

Constructivist epistemology, which understood that individuals' and groups' interactions and interpretations actively build social reality, served as the foundation for the coding method. This suggests that the social, cultural, and historical context not only influences but also shapes the experiences and perspectives of young people. As researchers, we sought to study and interpret these creations, as well as the many and sometimes contradictory narratives, and position them within wider theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

The coding method in scientific research adheres to the ideals of transparency, systematicity, and replication. We develop the coding scheme by constantly comparing and assessing the data, revising, merging, or removing codes based on their suitability for the data. Furthermore, we thoroughly document the coding process, including precise descriptions and examples for each code. This makes it easier for other researchers to understand and replicate the analysis. The application of scientific rigour is critical to ensuring the dependability and credibility of research findings. In this study, the coding process provided an important link between the raw data and the final analysis.

## Protocols for Fieldwork

Discourse and thematic analysis identified mobilised tropes, offline event framing, and affective expressions. We decided to administer the survey online to reach a wide audience. The aim was to survey about 500 people per city, totalling approximately 4,000 respondents (5,501 in the end). We kept the survey online for 14 months to increase the number of responses. We regularly issued updates and reminders to encourage participation. Since random sampling was not feasible, the approach was to sample as many people as possible and then weight the data post-sampling. This convenience sampling helped minimise biases and generated a large, robust sample size. The inclusion criteria focused on adults over 18 living or working in the countries of interest



currently or in the past decade. The exclusion criteria included being under 18 or not having lived or worked in the target countries. Leiden University used Qualtrics to administer the survey online.

Due to the different COVID-19 regulations in place across the four countries, we conducted semi-structured interviews mostly online in certain countries. We obtained consent for audio recording and enacted detailed protocols for data security. When necessary, we also prioritised researcher wellbeing through self-reflective practices, training, peer discussions, and professional referrals. Multi-level assessment procedures for any incident were defined.

## Implications and Relevance

The project's research design employed a classic typological mixed-methods, partial concurrent and partial sequential explanatory design. Sequential data collections proceeded from desktop reviews to a phase one online survey (qualitative and quantitative) that was concurrent with phases 2 and 3 qualitative data collections (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). First, practitioners, policymakers, civil society actors, and activists were interviewed to get qualitative data. Then, young people, who made up about half of the interviewees, were interviewed to get both qualitative and quantitative data. Phase two started as soon as the online survey (design, development, piloting, and data collection) ended. We also collected quantitative data from the young people who responded to a brief 12-item online 'wellness check' questionnaire, which included a 10-item symptom checklist and a 2-item resilience marker checklist, during the interview. Phase three followed with qualitative data collection during focus groups in all four countries. All data analyses informed the design of a brief pilot "intervention" that was feasibility and acceptability tested in Norway and the UK. This approach aimed to triangulate quantitative and qualitative data to gain a deeper understanding of the specific contexts and community frameworks that shape the complex situation under study (Creswell and Plano, 2011). Focus groups in Denmark and the Netherlands, as well as preliminary results from testing the brief pilot "intervention" design in Norway and the UK, informed deliberations over testing the design in those contexts, if funded after project end.

The nature of this project, with populations that may have been considering or turning towards radicalisation, and all the safety and risk dimensions that this entailed, as well as the unpredictable demands of the COVID-19 situation throughout the first year and a half of the project, the latter, for example, affecting the ability to organise in-person meetings, meant that there were some changes in the method design along the way (e.g., online rather than in-person interviews and focus groups). Allowing for this flexibility is a recognised process in complex mixed-methods designs, even without COVID-19 and these target populations as factors. It is important to note that while the outlined mixed-methods design guided this project, the design remained "emergent" (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Emergent designs emerge when one of the components or planned data-gathering methods becomes inadequate or unfeasible during a project and its indicated data-gathering phases (Morse and Niehaus, 2009). By definition, the design



cannot anticipate unexpected events and/or outcomes in advance. We reported any such occurrences, including steps taken to address concerns involving data gathering or data analysis processes, to the ethics committee through approved amendment procedures.

This international research project spanned three years, plus a six-month extension due to COVID, in four Northwestern European countries (Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United Kingdom). We selected these countries due to their unique yet interconnected contexts. Each country has similar histories in relation to post-war migration, integration, citizenship, and experiences of extremism and terrorism that implicate Muslim minorities as well as majority groups, but they also display different outcomes concerning patterns of radicalisation within specific nation-state contexts.<sup>4</sup> In addition, there is variation among the countries in their structural and systemic responses to these challenges, and therefore the findings will apply to a range of contexts with varied structures and systems. We focused on specific physical and associated or distinct online localities in each country: Denmark's Copenhagen and Aarhus, the Netherlands' Amsterdam and The Hague, Norway's Oslo and Kristiansand, and the United Kingdom's London and Manchester. The selection criteria for these cities were 1) the capital city in each country and 2) a second, large city, with previous research finding evidence of radicalisation processes in each city. [4] We started the mixed-methods partial concurrent and partial sequential data collection in these urban localities, and as the snowball and convenience sampling progressed, we extended it to other urban and rural areas.

Despite the widespread recognition of the importance of thick and grounded empirical data, studies only rely on a slim margin of extremism (Harris, Simi, and Ligon 2016, 602). DRIVE created and tested new empirical tools, such as an online survey and a semi-structured interview protocol with a 12-item "wellness check," for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. These tools combined new, internationally validated questions with participants' experiences and points of view to allow analysis and triangulation (Corbin and Strauss 2008).

Although the importance of thick and grounded empirical data is widely recognised, only a slim margin of extremism studies relies on empirical data (Harris, Simi, and Ligon 2016, 602). DRIVE developed and tested new empirical tools (e.g., an online survey, a semi-structured interview protocol with a 12 item "wellness check") for quantitative and qualitative data collections that combined new and internationally validated questions designed to capture participants' experiences and perspectives for analysis and triangulation

---

<sup>4</sup> For Denmark see for instance Hemmingsen (2011, 2012 and 2016) and Karpantschov and Mikkelsen (2017). For the Netherlands, see for instance Bergema and San (2019) and Wagenaar (2020). For Norway see for instance, see Bjørge (1997) and Smith (2015). For the UK, see for instance Abbas (2019) and Jensen, S.Q, and Larsen, J.F. (2021).



## Multi-sited Fieldwork

DRIVE research involved *multi-sited fieldwork* (Horst 2009, 120) to study the role of social exclusion in nationalist and Muslim convenience samples; these groups were not viewed as comparable, equivalent or opposite (see discussion above). The ‘field’ (Gupta and Ferguson 1997) is often understood as a physically bounded space, defined by a particular community with distinct territorial and cultural parameters. Recently, researchers have expanded the field to include a multi-sited approach that is conducive to researching flows of spatial connectedness within a dynamic and global setting (Coleman and Hellermann 2012; Marcus 1995). In this project, multi-sited fieldwork will allow the researcher to transcend geographical place and instead observe the field ‘as a network of localities’ (Horst 2009, 120) with boundaries in flux. The challenge with multi-sited fieldwork is to explore local and global linkages and the flows that create and maintain such linkages (Horst 2009, 122), while the opportunity is to see the social world, including its extremist milieus, in their emergent and relational expressions.

## Entanglements of Online and Offline spaces

As depicted in the flow chart below (Figure 3.1), there are three phases of research. In phase two, 320 young people between the ages of 18 and 25 were interviewed. In phase three, focus groups followed by a brief pilot “intervention” design was feasibility and acceptability tested with young people interviewees who fulfilled the inclusion criteria (including the completion of the 12-item wellness check during the interview).. These young people are born into an era of constant connectivity – so-called ‘digital natives’ that are utilising multiple technologies to negotiate belonging and forge communities.

A study by UNESCO from a public mental health and public health perspective points to the connection between online and offline interaction by noting that social media channels are used for creating interactive platforms, disseminating violent content, identifying potential participants, producing false information, fostering one-to-one dialogue, and even for forming offline ties with individuals with the aim of recruitment (Alava, Frau-Meigs, and Hassan 2017). The importance of understanding the public health and public mental health implications of online and offline interactions are especially important for creating and reinforcing what has been described as a virtual ‘echo chamber’ (Davies et al. 2016) of extreme views and ideas through which unacceptable behaviours become normalised (Denoeux and Carter 2009; Hassan et al. 2020). This virtual echo chamber can then influence real-life actions as the meaning-making patterns (DeMarinis 2018) are transposed into everyday reality. Accordingly, the PMH team published a systematic review of the literature applying public mental health approaches to preventing and reducing online radicalisation and extremism (Mughal et al, 2023). As the title indicates, *Public mental health approaches to online radicalisation: An empty systematic review*, this is a major gap in the literature and therefore research. Public mental health and public health models built from a Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) framework (Minkler & Wallerstein 2008) allow for the interactive flow between all relevant spaces, both physical and online, and the global



and local shaping of community belonging and engagement. Phase three focus groups and pilot interventions were designed within a CBPR framework for maximum engagement with participants and coherence across the multi-disciplinary research methods and the DRIVE project has laid the foundation for further work in this area.

The work for this research project proceeded through five steps: theoretical conceptualisation, exploratory hypothesis generation, mixed-methods research design creation (to explore hypotheses), data collection, data analysis, PMH generation of working hypotheses in preparation for focus groups and brief pilot “intervention” design testing, thematic analyses linked to both whole project and PMH hypotheses, refinement or generation of new hypotheses based on analyses, synthesis of findings across phases, and writing up. The data collections included primary data. This included 200+ hours of practitioner and activist interviews with community influencers, and 200+ hours of interviews with young people (aged 18-25 years old). The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, translated into the project’s common working language, English, and compiled into an anonymised database.

Data analysis included organising the interview transcripts through coding to distinguish individual and collective narratives. This enabled further interpretation via critical discourse analysis by charting the recurrence of codes and examining the politics of identity within the narratives. The outcome was a categorised database of coded transcriptions and frequency statistics to uncover conceptual themes. The conceptualisation phase identified explanatory themes from the data analysis and used these to generate interpretations. Data analysis involved triangulation to increase the validity of findings by deliberately seeking evidence from a wide range of sources and comparing findings from those different sources. A mixed-methods design, alongside extensive literature reviews, enabled data analyses that included comparisons across countries and trend identification.

This comprehensive and in-depth literature review entailed a meticulous assessment of various subject-related domains across multiple disciplines. The subject areas included terrorism, social exclusion, spatial formation, personal and political identity, social intergenerational dynamics, active citizenship, public mental health promotion, and religion. Literature was accessed from a range of disciplines, including sociology, politics, security studies, international relations, public health, with an emphasis on promoting mental health in the community, social psychology, urban studies, and religious studies. We employed an approach that combined academic content with rigorous analysis. DRIVE utilised thematic analysis, as it avoids starting from a predetermined point and instead allows the data to speak for itself. This approach reflects a hypothetico-deductive approach. Furthermore, due to the anticipated abundance of data and the objective of maximising the potential themes that may arise, this project utilised SPSS and Atlas Ti. Both software packages facilitate the management, categorisation, assessment, and analysis of relationships in extensive datasets (Field, 2009).

The project’s theoretical foundation drew upon sociological and public mental health perspectives, while also incorporating insights from criminology, security studies,



and global affairs. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach, DRIVE sought to unravel the multidimensional nature of radicalisation and its relationship to social exclusion.

## Study Populations and Sampling Procedures

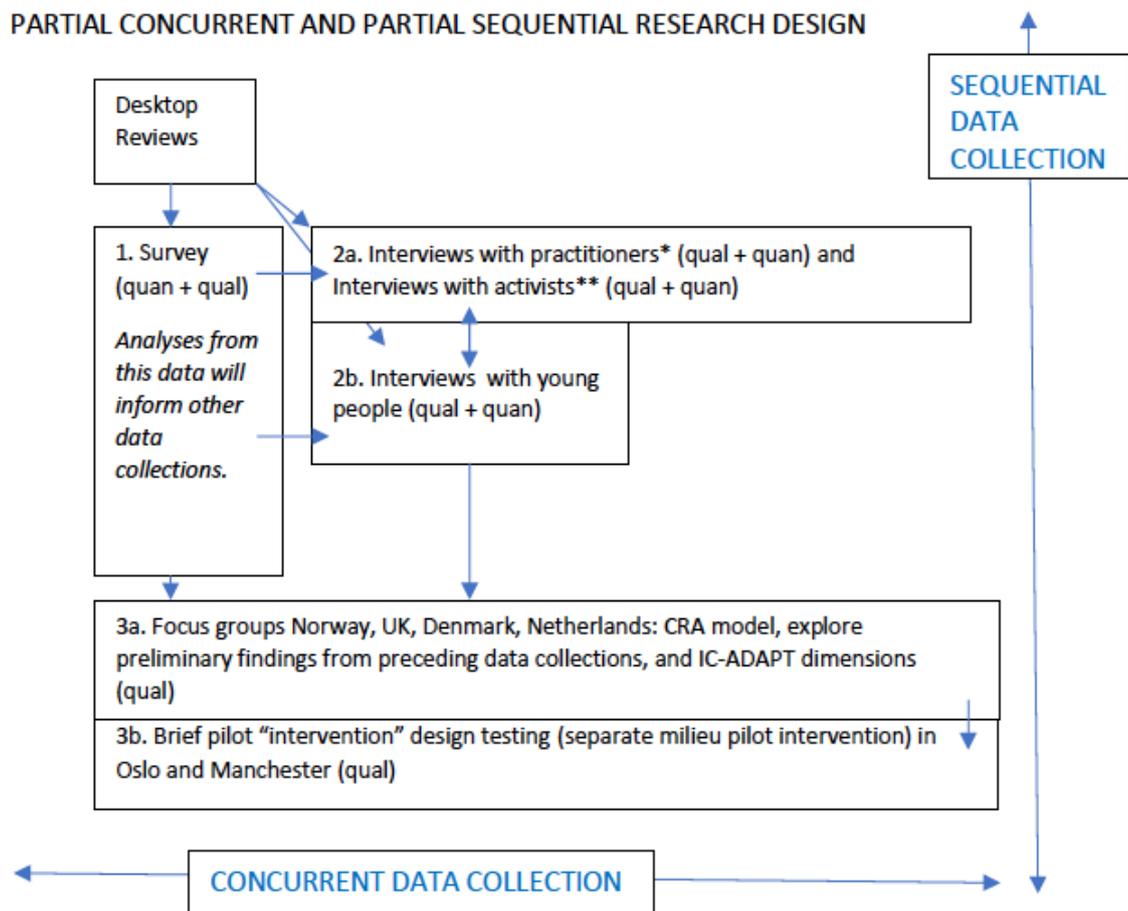
In each country, we interviewed participants from three overarching stakeholder groups: practitioners, activists and young people. For the latter stakeholder group, we interviewed young people (aged 18-25) in two identity groups, those who self-identified as nationalists and those who identified as Muslims. It is important to note that these participant groups are not viewed as equivalent, comparable or opposing groups.

As represented in the diagram below participants in the young people interview group were recruited through existing networks among project researchers and colleagues, cultural brokers and gatekeepers, as well as via recommendations made by practitioners and those working in civil society organisations. Focus group participants were recruited exclusively from the two interviewed young people groups aged 18-25 and screened according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria and had completed the “wellness check”. Brief pilot “intervention” participants from each identity group were recruited exclusively from the young focus group participants aged 18-25 according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the mixed-methods concurrent and sequential convergent design employed in the DRIVE research project. This methodological approach is integral to the study’s overarching aim of investigating social exclusion, polarisation, and radicalisation across four European countries. The diagram delineates a multi-phase research process that integrates both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. It begins with a desktop review, followed by three distinct yet interconnected phases. Phase 1 involves an online survey, running concurrently with Phases 2 and 3. Phase 2 encompasses qualitative data collection through interviews with three target groups: practitioners/policymakers/civil society actors, activists, and young people. Notably, the young people cohort, comprising the majority of interviewees, also completes a brief quantitative ‘wellness check’. Phase 3 builds upon the previous stages, incorporating focus groups across all four countries. The data collected and analysed from these phases informed the design of a brief pilot “intervention,” which was feasibility and acceptability tested in Norway and the UK. This design exemplifies a sophisticated approach to triangulation, enabling researchers to corroborate findings from multiple data sources and methodologies. The concurrent and sequential elements allow for iterative analysis and refinement of research hypotheses. Moreover, the inclusion of feasibility and acceptability testing a brief pilot “intervention” design demonstrates the project’s commitment to translating research findings into practical applications. The figure underscores the study’s adherence to a rigorous, multifaceted methodology that seeks to capture the complex interplay of factors contributing to radicalisation processes in diverse European contexts.



Figure 3.1. Mixed-methods concurrent and sequential convergent design description



\* governmental, non-governmental and civil society actors, including mental health workers, social workers, youth workers, teachers, etc.

\*\* community leaders, religious leaders, ideological frontrunners, etc.

## Ethical Reviews and Approvals:

The research conducted for the DRIVE project underwent the following reviews:

1. Netherlands: Leiden University, through the Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs [approval no. 2021-016-ISGA, 5 November 2021];
2. Denmark: Aarhus University, through the Ethics Committee [approval no. 2021-85, 3 November 2021];



3. Norway: Innlandet Hospital Trust, through the Ethics Committee [approval no. 16802659, 2 December 2021]
4. United Kingdom: University of Cambridge, through the Ethics Committee [approval no. PRE-2021-098, 31 January 2022].
5. United Kingdom: Liverpool University, through the Ethics Committee [approval no. 10752, 24 March 2022];

Given the inclusion of a public mental health component, the University of Cambridge ethics committee and the Innlandet Hospital Trust ethics-review process conducted a whole project review to ensure that the research conformed to the UK Health and Social Care Legal Framework.

Submitted and approved documentation for all ethics committees included:

6. The research rationale, design and method;
7. all participant information sheets and consent protocols (oral or written); participant recruitment pathways;
8. all inclusion and exclusion criteria for all participants;
9. a whole project risk mitigation plan; and
10. a full data management plan.



## Chapter 4. Young People Viewpoints

---

### Introduction

The rise of alienation, radicalisation, and extremism has become a pressing concern across Europe, particularly in the context of growing tensions between majority populations and minority communities (most notably Muslims). By examining the experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of committed Muslim and nationalist young people and activists, as well as the perspectives of practitioners, DRIVE throws light on the factors contributing to social polarisation and thus to the radicalisation process.

The four countries included in this study, while sharing some common characteristics as Western European democracies, each present unique social, political, and cultural landscapes that shape the experiences of their Muslim and nationalist populations. Denmark, Norway, and the Netherlands have witnessed the rise of right-wing populist parties and the mainstreaming of anti-Islamic and anti-immigrant discourse. The United Kingdom, in the wake of high-profile terrorist attacks and the Brexit referendum, has seen an increase in Islamophobia and the mobilisation of nationalist sentiments, but has not experienced populist parties in the same way as other countries perhaps because of its unusual voting system.

Across all four countries, the Muslim population, which constitutes a significant and growing minority, continues to face challenges related to integration, discrimination, and stigmatisation. The interviews with young people highlight the pervasive nature of social alienation and negative experiences among Muslim individuals, with participants reporting feelings of exclusion, discrimination, and the need to hide their religious identity in various contexts. Muslim women, in particular, emerge as a vulnerable group, facing gendered Islamophobia and higher rates of discrimination and attacks in public spaces and online. Nationalist individuals, on the other hand, expressed concerns about the perceived threat to their national identity, culture, and values posed by immigration, Islam, multiculturalism, and gender policies---so called “Wokeism”.

The findings underscore the significance of identity formation processes in shaping worldviews and a sense of belonging. For Muslim participants, religion emerges as a central aspect of their identity, often intersecting with cultural, ethnic, and national belongings. Nationalist participants, meanwhile, prioritise their political identities, which are often intertwined with notions of cultural and ethnic nationalism.



## Denmark

### Muslim Participants

The analysis of interviews with Muslim respondents revealed a high prevalence of feeling different or not feeling Danish, with 75% (36/48) of participants expressing this sentiment. As one respondent poignantly stated, “I identify as a Dane but on paper it says I’m not a Dane and so I often end up thinking ‘well, then, I’m probably not’. All my connections to Denmark are just disappearing and this feeling of being a Dane is disappearing too. Because in reality I am nothing [i.e. stateless]. It’s on paper.” This encapsulates the struggle many Muslim respondents face in reconciling their sense of identity with the official rejection of their Danishness. The notion of being “nothing” highlights the profound impact of restrictive citizenship legislation and of other legal and bureaucratic classifications on individuals’ self-perception and sense of belonging.

The most frequently cited reasons for feeling different were the general political discourse, laws resulting from this discourse, and being told by members of the general public that they are unwanted. One respondent remarked, “No one in their right mind would attack their community and harm their community if they were happy with the community they lived in. The challenge is that there are so many Danish Muslims who do not feel part of society, they do not feel a love for this society. In this way, I believe that it is politicians and media that are the main cause of social exclusion of young Danish Muslims. And thus radicalisation.”

This statement draws a direct link between political discourse, social exclusion, and the potential for radicalisation among young Danish Muslims. The respondent suggests that the lack of acceptance and belonging fostered by legislation, political rhetoric and media coverage can lead to a disconnection from society and, consequently, increase the risk of radicalisation. Moreover, 70% of Danish Muslim respondents expressed negative views on the general political discourse and/or specific government measures, with nearly all participants feeling that Muslims were unfairly targeted. Some respondents lamented that discriminatory and racist approaches had become widespread. A few attributed this to politicians seeking votes, suggesting that the political debate and measures stem from the views of the electorate.

Several Muslim respondents directly criticised Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, often referencing a recent (at the time of our interviews) speech in which she complained about “immigrant lads” making the Copenhagen light railway insecure for others. One respondent pointed out that Frederiksen, as a social democrat, might have been expected to be more liberal and inclusive. The criticism of Prime Minister Frederiksen highlights the disappointment and frustration felt by many Muslim respondents who had hoped for a more inclusive approach from the social democratic party. The adoption of nationalist rhetoric by mainstream parties has accompanied a broader shift in Danish political discourse and government policy towards an ever more hard-line stance on immigration and integration issues.

The most frequently mentioned laws and projects were those related to clothing restrictions (e.g., a proposed ban on hijabs in schools, an existing ban on niqabs), increasingly stringent citizenship requirements for people born and raised in Denmark, and



the “ghetto plan,” which has led to the demolition of social housing blocks inhabited by people of immigrant origin, who have been forcibly relocated. These policies and initiatives have had a profound impact on the lives of Muslim individuals in Denmark, contributing to feelings of marginalisation and discrimination. The targeting of visible symbols of Muslim identity, such as the hijab and niqab, sends a message of exclusion and othering that can further alienate Muslim communities.

The tightening of citizenship requirements for individuals born and raised in Denmark creates a sense of precariousness and uncertainty, even for those who have spent their entire lives in the country. The “ghetto plan,” exacerbates feelings of exclusion, and further strains the relationship between Muslim communities and the Danish state.

When asked about Rasmus Paludan, an anti-Islamic and anti-immigrant activist known for provocative actions like burning the Quran, nine respondents criticised the Danish state for enabling his actions at taxpayers’ expense, while only two condemned Paludan without also condemning the Danish state. This finding suggests that Muslim respondents perceive that the Danish authorities are promoting anti-Muslim hate speech and actions rather than preventing it. The perception can further erode trust between Muslim communities and the authorities.

Experiences of discrimination and social exclusion were prevalent among Muslim respondents, with 85% reporting negative encounters with indigenous Danes. These experiences were most common in school settings (69%), but also occurred with strangers in public places and at work. Additionally, several respondents reported unintentional “micro-aggressions,” often related to language, such as being congratulated on speaking Danish or addressed in English despite being Danish-born. The high prevalence of negative experiences in school settings is particularly concerning, as education plays a crucial role in shaping young people’s sense of identity, belonging, and social integration. The occurrence of micro-aggressions reveals the subtle yet persistent ways in which Muslim individuals are othered and their belonging is questioned. These experiences can accumulate over time, contributing to a sense of alienation and exclusion.

In schools, negative experiences were almost equally attributed to teachers and students. Some respondents mentioned institutional issues, such as the general ban on Islamic ritual prayer. These findings highlight once again the multiple layers of exclusion and discrimination that Muslim students encounter in educational settings, from individual interactions with teachers and peers to institutional policies intended to prevent religious practices.

### Nationalist Participants

In contrast to Muslim respondents, nationalist participants did not report feeling different, although 65% experienced hostility towards their perceived racism from both indigenous Danes and Muslims, particularly while campaigning for “Islam-critical” anti-immigration parties. This finding suggests that nationalist individuals may not experience the same sense of alienation or exclusion as Muslim respondents, despite facing criticism for their views. The hostility they encounter is primarily directed towards their political beliefs and actions, rather than their fundamental sense of belonging or identity as Danes.



A significant proportion of nationalist respondents (70%) reported negative experiences with Muslims, primarily in school settings. Two respondents attended schools where Muslims were the majority. Several informants experienced violent actions or threats directed at themselves, their younger siblings, or other Danes, either at school or on the streets. Several respondents encountered criminality or bad behaviour not directly targeting them, such as repeated shoplifting by a Muslim individual or boasting about assaulting gay men by two Iranians. One respondent noted, “I think [dialogue] might have made a difference if it was the case that right-wing people and Muslims had never met each other before, but I mean we are members of right-wing parties because we have met each other before. It’s because we know what each other stands for, and we know each other.” This highlights the challenges of fostering dialogue and understanding between groups with entrenched positions and negative experiences of each other.

Interestingly, only 35% of nationalist respondents expressed dissatisfaction with state policies. When asked about their entry into politics, 55% of respondents who provided a reason mentioned school social studies classes, while only one cited immigration-related issues. Nationalist respondents generally adhered to their parties’ platforms when expressing views on immigration. This finding suggests that nationalist political engagement may not be primarily driven by dissatisfaction with state policies, which in Denmark have become closer and closer to the policies that nationalist parties are calling for. Instead, exposure to political ideas and discussions in educational settings, such as social studies classes, appears to play a significant role in shaping nationalist individuals’ political interests and involvement. The low level of dissatisfaction with state policies among nationalist respondents contrasts with the high levels of frustration and criticism expressed by Muslim respondents towards government measures and political discourse.

## Discussion

The findings provide valuable insights into the dynamics of identity, alienation, and radicalisation in the Danish context. While the initial hypotheses regarding spatial formations and generational differences were not supported, the analysis confirmed the importance of identity politics and reciprocal radicalisation, albeit in ways that diverged slightly from the original expectations. The high prevalence of alienation and feelings of not belonging among Muslim respondents, often linked to experiences of discrimination, political discourse, and government policies, is a significant finding that adds nuance to previous research. The study highlights the role of “indignation over injustices,” “narratives of exclusion,” and mainstream anti-Islamic discourse in shaping Muslim individuals’ sense of identity and belonging.

The high prevalence of negative experiences in school settings, both in interactions with teachers and student relations, is a notable finding that warrants further attention. The current study’s findings suggest that Muslim students in Denmark face multiple layers of exclusion and discrimination in educational contexts, which can have detrimental effects on their academic engagement, well-being, and overall integration. The prevalence of micro-aggressions and the questioning of Muslim individuals’ belonging, even



when they are Danish-born and speak Danish fluently, is another important finding that resonates with the work of Sue et al. (2007) on the cumulative impact of subtle forms of discrimination. These experiences can contribute to a sense of alienation and exclusion, as evidenced by the respondents' accounts.

The study's findings on reciprocal radicalisation deviate somewhat from the initial hypothesis. While nationalist respondents reported negative personal experiences with Muslims, they did not mention Islamism specifically. These experiences likely contributed to their political motivations, and several respondents explicitly made this connection. This finding challenges the "contact hypothesis," which posits that hostility towards minorities stems from ignorance and can be reduced through contact. Muslim respondents, on the other hand, directly linked their alienation to experiences of hate, intolerance, and injustice perpetrated by the Danish state, politicians, and ordinary Danes, rather than specifically by far right groups. Some respondents acknowledged that political discourse and state policies are shaped by the democratic process, as politicians seek to win votes. This suggests that reciprocal radicalisation in Denmark occurs between the 25% of the population supporting nationalist positions and the Muslim community as a whole.

The findings of this study have important implications for policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders working to address radicalisation and reducing social exclusion in Denmark. The high levels of alienation and exclusion reported by Muslim respondents underscore the need for reflection concerning the actual consequences of Danish policies and practices, some of which are intended to promote integration, but according to our interviewees are instead increase alienation and polarisation. The democratic process requires accurate information to function properly, and it may be that the actual consequences of policies and practices need to be paid more attention. The study did not identify equally clear explanations of the positions of young nationalists. While Muslims feel excluded from a majority with which they often cannot identify, nationalists do not experience anything comparable. Nationalist are alienated from Muslims, not from the mainstream. This perhaps requires further research.

Educational institutions play a crucial role in reducing social exclusion and inequalities which in turn reduce the potential for radicalisation. The findings of this study highlight the need for schools to reassess their existing efforts to create safe, inclusive, and non-discriminatory learning environments for all students, regardless of their religious or cultural background. It should be remembered that it is not only Muslims who report bad experiences in school, but also nationalists. Teacher training and professional development programs should adjust their focus on cultural sensitivity, anti-discrimination, and inclusive pedagogy to ensure that all educators understand the diverse needs of their students. Inclusive pedagogy is already much emphasised, and most teachers are probably excellent at it, but some are evidently not---and it is that small minority of teachers that contribute to a wider problem. In some cases this may reflect a fundamental misunderstanding about what constitutes culturally sensitive inclusion, The ban on ritual prayer, for example, is widely understood as promoting inclusion, since if ritual prayer were allowed, it would create differences between Muslim and non-Muslim pupils, and Muslim pupils who did not wish to pray might be pressured to do so. There is



merit in this view, but there is also evidence that the ban on prayer results in exclusion and well as inclusion, and perhaps creates more exclusion than inclusion. Similarly some teachers who are experienced by Muslims as excluding them may actually be trying to include them, and teachers who are experienced by nationalists as favouring the Muslim majority may actually be trying to be inclusive.

## Netherlands

### Muslim participants

The analysis of interviews with Muslim respondents revealed a high prevalence of feelings of exclusion and alienation from Dutch society, often linked to experiences of discrimination and microaggressions in everyday life. Nearly 70% of Muslim respondents reported facing discrimination and microaggressions from non-Muslim Dutch people, particularly in the labour market, public transport, public spaces, and on social media. Muslim women, especially those who wear headscarves, were particularly vulnerable to discrimination. As one respondent poignantly stated, “It was always that Dutch identity was excluded from us. Not because we were Muslim or brown but just because we were different, different enough that it mattered. So generally growing up, in the 1990s, it felt like there was a segregation, an exclusiveness to Dutch identity that I was never going to be able to access.” This encapsulates the struggle many Muslim respondents face in reconciling their sense of identity with the barriers they encounter in being accepted as fully Dutch. The notion of being “different enough that it mattered” highlights the profound impact of exclusionary attitudes and practices on individuals’ sense of belonging and self-perception.

Moreover, over 30% of Muslim respondents reported feeling discriminated against by state bodies, such as the police, government, tax authorities, banks, and educational and healthcare systems. They expressed a sense of being unfairly targeted by the very public services meant to protect them, further compounding their feelings of alienation. As one respondent noted, “Muslims mentioned that they feel they are a more common target of these state bodies because of their faith, and, therefore, they seem to suffer discrimination from the public services that should work for their protection and equal promotion of their citizenship and rights.” This finding aligns with previous research on the marginalisation and “othering” of Muslims in the Netherlands. The experiences of discrimination and exclusion reported by Muslim respondents underscore the persistent challenges they face in being fully accepted and included in Dutch society.

In terms of identity and ideology, religious and cultural identities were slightly more salient than political ones for Muslim respondents. Around 30% of Muslim respondents discussed being actively involved in their faith community, highlighting the importance of religious identity and practice in their lives. Culturally, nearly 40% endorsed an inclusive perspective on Dutch society and nationalism not dictated by ethnicity. This inclusive vision contrasted sharply with the more exclusionary identities expressed by nationalist respondents. Notably, 37% of Muslim respondents reported experiences of social alienation and feeling different, often connected to nationality and skin colour. One respondent shared an experience of being barred from entering a club due to their dark skin



colour, illustrating the overt discrimination and exclusion Muslims face in various social settings. Muslim respondents also expressed concerns about the broader societal issues contributing to polarisation and radicalisation. Over one in ten (11%) worried that spatial inequality in schools and neighbourhoods enabled polarisation between vulnerable groups. More than a quarter (19%) attributed social exclusion to institutional racism in integration, refugee, and education policies. Furthermore, more than one in five (21%) criticised immigration policies as perpetuating polarisation through inadequate housing, language training, and youth support.

When discussing radicalisation specifically, 19% of Muslim respondents emphasised structural drivers like inequality, changing social norms, and distrust in authorities. They highlighted the role of online spaces in enabling youth recruitment and cautioned against blaming parents for radicalisation or tasking them solely with de-radicalisation, as this could breed further alienation.

### Nationalist Participants

In contrast to Muslim respondents, nationalist participants reported alienation stemming from perceptions that Dutch culture and traditions were under threat from migration, Islam, and “globalism.” Over 30% had negative experiences with state policies, such as economic decline in fishing communities and lack of housing for native Dutch (compared to migrants). They saw multiculturalism, especially in immigrant and ethnic minority neighbourhoods, as eroding community cohesion and safety. Mistrust of the government was high, exacerbated by Covid-19 measures. This aligns with studies on how perceptions of threatened national identity and distrust in political elites fuel nationalist backlash.

Nationalist respondents discussed political identities more frequently than Muslim respondents (45% vs. 37%). While some positioned themselves as centrist, most endorsed conservative right-wing views, with a few openly sympathising with the far right. Notably, nearly a third supported right-wing conspiracy theories, especially QAnon narratives about aliens and a “globalist” plot to undermine white Christian civilisation. Covid-19 was frequently an entry point into conspiratorial thinking. This supports research linking nationalist mobilisation to conspiracy theories in the Netherlands. Nationalist respondents expressed resistance to a wide range of positions, including far right, Muslim, and left-wing movements (28%), as well as political ideologies (28%). They also showed significant resistance to gender views (32%), being anti-feminism, anti-LGBTQIA+, and opposing sex determination by children and young people, as well as gender diversity. When discussing radicalisation, over one in five (22%) nationalist respondents focused on far right recruitment targeting disadvantaged white men, often via mental health and economic anxieties. They noted connections between Dutch and international far right networks and the role of Covid-19 measures in sparking far right mobilisation. Nationalist respondents rarely discussed social exclusion, focusing instead on resisting social changes around gender, sexuality, and religion. More than a quarter (27%) felt diversity had undermined community cohesion and public safety compared to the past.



## Discussion

The findings provide valuable insights into the dynamics of identity, alienation, and radicalisation in the Dutch context. The analysis reveals a landscape of reciprocal polarisation between Muslims and nationalists, fuelled by feelings of social exclusion, threatened identities, and institutional failures. Mainstream politics and media are key mediators, with Muslims overwhelmingly reporting discrimination and alienation, while nationalists report narratives of cultural threat, often via conspiracy theories. Covid-19 has intensified these dynamics.

The high prevalence of discrimination and exclusion reported by Muslim respondents, particularly in everyday settings such as the labour market, public spaces, and interactions with state bodies, underscores the persistent marginalisation of Muslims in Dutch society. These experiences align with previous research on the “othering” of Muslims in the Netherlands and highlight the urgent need for policies and initiatives that foster inclusion and combat discrimination.

The salience of religious and cultural identities for Muslim respondents, coupled with their endorsement of an inclusive perspective on Dutch society and nationalism, suggests a potential pathway for building a more cohesive and pluralistic society. However, this inclusive vision stands in stark contrast to the exclusionary and threat-based narratives expressed by nationalist respondents.

The prevalence of right-wing conspiracy theories among nationalist respondents, particularly QAnon narratives about aliens and a “globalist” plot, is a concerning finding that aligns with research linking nationalist mobilisation to conspiracy theories in the Netherlands. The role of Covid-19 as an entry point into conspiratorial thinking further highlights the need for proactive measures to counter the spread of misinformation and extremist ideologies.

The divergent concerns expressed by Muslim and nationalist respondents regarding societal issues and radicalisation underscore the polarised nature of the Dutch social and political landscape. While Muslim respondents emphasised structural drivers of exclusion and polarisation, such as institutional racism and inadequate integration policies, nationalist respondents focused on perceived threats to Dutch culture and resistance to social changes around gender, sexuality, and religion.

Addressing reciprocal radicalisation and polarisation in the Netherlands will require tackling the deeper roots of exclusion and division in Dutch society. This includes combating discrimination and institutional racism, promoting inclusive integration policies, and fostering dialogue and understanding between communities. It also necessitates countering the spread of conspiracy theories and extremist ideologies, particularly in online spaces where youth are vulnerable to recruitment.

Furthermore, the findings highlight the need for a more nuanced understanding of the factors contributing to alienation and radicalisation, beyond the initial hypotheses of spatial formations and intergenerational differences. While these factors may play a role, the study suggests that identity politics, experiences of exclusion, and the reciprocal nature of polarisation are more salient drivers in the Dutch context.

The findings reveal a landscape of reciprocal polarisation, fuelled by experiences of discrimination, threatened identities, and institutional failures. Muslim respondents



reported high levels of exclusion and alienation, stemming from discrimination and microaggressions in everyday life, as well as perceived targeting by state bodies. They endorsed an inclusive vision of Dutch society and nationalism, contrasting with the exclusionary narratives expressed by nationalist respondents. Nationalist respondents, in turn, reported feelings of cultural threat and supported right-wing conspiracy theories, with Covid-19 serving as an entry point into conspiratorial thinking. The analysis highlights the urgent need for policies and initiatives that combat discrimination, promote inclusive integration, and foster dialogue between communities. It also underscores the importance of countering the spread of extremist ideologies and conspiracy theories, particularly in online spaces where youth are vulnerable to recruitment. Addressing the deeper roots of polarisation and radicalisation in the Netherlands will require a concerted effort from policymakers, civil society organisations, and communities themselves. By promoting inclusion, combating institutional racism, and fostering mutual understanding, the Netherlands can work towards building a more cohesive and resilient society.

## United Kingdom

### Muslim Participants

For the Muslim group of UK young people interviewees, the first hypothesis focusing on spatial formation is not supported. Analyses revealed that post-industrial town and city spaces per se were not significant, and experiences of structural social exclusion were not reported as motivators for violent extremism. However, multi-levelled formative experiences of social exclusion in a range of spaces were reported. At the micro level, almost all Muslim young people reported experiences of personal exclusion (verbal, behavioural) from students and teachers in educational spaces. Exclusion experiences also involve colleagues and supervisors in the workplace (e.g., lower performing colleagues being promoted instead of high performing Muslims, peers complaining about Muslim colleagues not joining drinking socials). The interviewees reported that these experiences across diverse spaces have formed identity tensions between belonging and being outcasts or unacceptable and continue to inform their daily routines and affiliations. Meso level shifts in Muslim working class employment opportunities, from local factories to driving taxis across wide city spaces, were identified as undermining a sense of community and increasing alienation. In macro level spaces, mainstream media portrayals of Muslims as terrorists, inarticulate and homogeneous, and government policies such as Prevent, were identified as adversely affecting individual and collective identities as well as perpetuating structural social exclusion.

The identity politics hypothesis was not supported for Muslim participants. Analyses revealed a wide range of political, cultural, and ethnic identities among Muslims, along with variations in religious behaviours and practices, and in levels of political involvement, ranging from none to activism at the local, regional or national levels. This diversity in identities contrasts with nationalist reports that Muslims have created an effective ethno-cultural and religious vanguard that dominates large portions of UK cities and towns. The Muslim young interviewees reported feeling different and excluded from,



and distrust toward, government and policies. Moreover, analyses revealed heterogeneity within and across young Muslims, with regard to families, ethnicities, views on gender, religious commitments, political views and engagement, and otherwise, thereby precluding the existence of a centralised, organised political identity. The view that all Muslims are the same is a generalised micro, meso and macro levelled experience reported by young Muslims across many contexts (schools, workplace, media, wider public). The young Muslims framed their reports about explaining and educating people about Islam and Muslims in various ways, as coping strategies, welcomed opportunities, or another expression of exclusion that was exhausting. Nationalist political (flash) protests, canvassing, and media coverage elicit safety and security fears. Some use education, ‘calling out’, reporting to the authorities as coping strategies. Some follow safety protocols and prioritise religiosity, education, seeking gainful employment. Some turn inward to fend for themselves feeling alienated from government and politics.

Regarding intergenerational change and continuity, the group of young Muslim interviewees reported that their parents had it easier socially before and until 9/11, 7/7 and the war on terror, then much harder with numerous and continuous experiences of physical and verbal racism and Islamophobia, and now a bit easier socially. Interviewees reported that they have had it easier socially than their parents, although the majority of young people reported their own experiences of racism and Islamophobia. Reports conflicted about whether socially and culturally it has become easier or harder for Muslims in the last two years, with some reporting that younger generations of non-Muslims are experienced as more inclusive. Other reported areas of discontinuity were linked to religiosity, political views, technology and social media, education and employment opportunities, income levels, gender roles, and interracial marriage. These changes and tensions did not enable Muslim radicalisation but created complicated familial, relational, contextual, and psychosocial tensions for which a range of coping strategies were reported.

The young Muslims we interviewed did not report ideas or practices that aligned with Islamist ideas or practices. Analyses revealed young Muslim longings for acceptance and belonging and experiences of radicalisation and extremism only as externally imposed labels by teachers, mainstream media, social media, and others.

### Nationalist Participants

While nationalism by definition involves attachment to a particular geographical region and persons associated with that region, often by blood, the initial hypothesis about spatial formation is not supported for the nationalist group of UK young people interviewees. Analyses revealed that, at the macro level, all nationalists reported strong attachment to England, based on geography and ancestral blood ties, and many reported formative attachments to the spaces where they grew up. Rejecting violence themselves, they predicted multi-levelled violence (micro, meso, macro) as a natural outcome of immigration and multi-culturalism. At the meso level, all reported declining living conditions in rural and varied urban areas (seaside and post-industrial towns, major urban centres), where they grew up, and some still live. These declines are attributed to immigration, multi-culturalism, and governmental inaction and corruption. Alongside the spatial declines were



micro level reported experiences of social exclusion in work and university spaces, and for half, within their familial relationships, all related to their ethnonationalist views. At all levels, nationalists perceive the government as having given up on and abandoned them as hopeless cases and this reinforces their nationalist views.

The nationalism represented by this small sample of young nationalists has not achieved political power in the UK, in the way that has occurred in other project countries, such as Denmark. Some UK Conservative party politicians and proposals align with the positions of the interviewed nationalists (e.g., anti-immigration), but analyses revealed that the tiny sample of young conservative interviewees had observed but not experienced social exclusion based on their political identity, had diverse views and social networks, and that they explicitly supported immigration and opposed nationalism. In contrast, analyses revealed that all nationalists reported close social bonds with party members, or a ‘brotherhood’, based on a shared ethno-national political identity, with exclusionary positions regarding Muslims, immigrants, and race. Other key issues of concern focus on the rising cost of living, economic hardship, the environment, and gender. The nationalists report a double betrayal by the current government through their failure to fulfil their promises to stop immigration, and through the government’s attacks on nationalists when they try to help the government fulfil their promises to stop immigration. All nationalist interviewees reported experiences of social alienation and exclusion in educational, work, social, and for some, familial settings, as a result of their political identities, alongside the stress of coping strategies such as avoidance, self-censorship and living double lives.

In contrast to the Muslim interviewees, nationalists report that the previous generation had it much easier financially, economically, and socially. The small sample of young nationalists report intergenerational changes for the worse and as evidence point to the current cost of living, increased homelessness amongst young people, a lost sense of community belonging and cohesion, that they attribute to decreased homogeneity, and declining social conditions. They also report a perceived declines in the native English population and native industries that reduce the potential for prosperity. Reported intergenerational discontinuities also involve religious and political commitments, with some nationalists reporting strong familial opposition to their political views, including ‘terrible’ disagreements related to COVID. One identified as an eco-ethnonationalist who experienced discontinuities with their parents and sibling on climate change. These identified discontinuities mediate their movement into nationalism where they experience (online/ offline) some relief from their stress and anxiety through close bonding, a sense of belonging and community.

Nationalist young people identified as ‘ethno-nationalists’ and ‘far-right’ and reported that their group membership provided experiences of community and belonging that contrasted with feeling alienated by multi-culturalism, excluded by social and cultural change, and censored in educational, work, and for some, familial, contexts. All reported strong bonding experiences within the nationalist group through (online/ offline) discussions, community building, and preparatory activities for an expected societal break-down triggered by multi-culturalism.



## Discussion

The data collected from each of these groups of young people in the UK does not support the hypotheses linking spatial formation, identity politics, intergenerational change, or reciprocal radicalisation to violent radicalisation. Identity is crucial for each group, but for one group, its value for its members is based on its assertions of homogeneity, while for the other group, experiences of bias and stigma are based on stereotypes of homogeneity and widespread ignorance of heterogeneity.

Muslim participants reported significantly more negative experiences and limited positive social connections compared to their nationalist counterparts, pointing to the identified risk of the impact of systemic discrimination and marginalisation on their well-being and sense of belonging. Nationalist participants, while expressing concerns about the erosion of social cohesion and the perceived threat of Islam, often benefit from a sense of camaraderie and belonging within their political circles.

Our study also examined the influence of power structures and intergenerational dynamics on the radicalisation process. Muslim participants highlighted the impact of state policies and institutional discrimination on perpetuating their marginalisation and alienation. Nationalist participants, conversely, expressed concerns about the alleged dominance of liberal elites and sometimes also about the erosion of traditional values, sometimes subscribing to conspiracy theories and narratives of victimhood. Intergenerational dynamics, while not emerging as a driver of any form of radicalisation, reveal the negotiation of religious, cultural, and political identities across generations. While instances of reactive mobilisation and the appropriation of each other's tactics and narratives are evident, our study suggested that the root causes of Islamist and far right radicalisation are distinct.

Across all four countries, the young people interviews identified social exclusion, marginalisation, and discrimination, all of which were classed as key factors contributing to the vulnerability of individuals to extremist narratives in previous research, though we found no evidence of this. The findings underscore the urgent need for policies and initiatives that foster inclusion, combat racism and Islamophobia, and address the structural inequalities that perpetuate the alienation of minority communities.

## Norway

### Muslim Participants

For the Muslim group of Norwegian young people interviewed, the initial hypothesis about spatial formation is not supported. Post-industrial towns and cities are not constructions that resonate in the Norwegian context. Also, there is no evidence for motivations leading to violent extremism. However, reports of social exclusion and special formation are related to: the micro level of personal discrimination and racist actions in different spatial contexts (both verbal and physical); the meso level of their communities and organisations being targeted as dangerous and being deprived of resources; and, the macro level in terms of experiencing structural social exclusion in terms of certain regional practices that hinder assistance in their communities when needed.



Identity politics is a relevant topic for analysing the Muslim young people interviews. In many ways, identity politics for the majority of young Muslim persons, concerns the defending of their religion and culture in terms of both experienced structural social exclusion and often daily experiences of discriminatory verbal as well as sometimes physical abuse. Many of those interviewed feel a direct need to correct biased views and unsupported fears regarding Islam and Muslims in general. Though being Muslim is an essential base for their identity, the majority of young Muslims interviewed do not have as a goal to be involved in political activities but simply want to be left alone to live and work as productive Norwegian citizens. In many ways, the weight of having to be involved in identity politics is exhausting and debilitating for their health and wellbeing. Though involvement in identity politics may result in resistance in the form of demonstrations, protests or lobbying from the excluded population, these Muslim young people expressed a fear of such forms of peaceful resistance as this might be interpreted in a negative way and add to the negative myths regarding Islam and Muslims in Norway. In addition, many do not trust that the police would physically protect them if something happened at such demonstrations. The very real individual as well as group social and health consequences of how identity politics is needing to be addressed in Norway by young Muslims may over time lead to a turning inwards and a loss of hope for acceptance and belonging that may be associated with more extremist thought patterns.

For the Muslim group of young persons, the interview data point to a variety of intergenerational patterns. Within family structures most of the young Muslims report a continuity of religious beliefs and practices with their parents. A few have pointed to differences regarding religiosity with the younger generation encouraging greater religiosity than their parents in order to address the circumstances for Muslims in Norway today. There are a variety of patterns related to gender equality and roles, especially voiced by female participants.

In general, the young Muslims interviewed have more negative experiences of discrimination, racism and micro-aggressive behaviours with members of the older generation of Norwegians, and less with their peers. However, the effect when experienced by peers is reported as more damaging.

For Muslim youth a reciprocal radicalisation thought pattern might be the result of direct conflict not with young nationalists per se, but more at the macro level with the majority society as a whole, and to some extent with the state in terms of practices and lack of enforcing their rights.

### Nationalist Participants

For the nationalist group of Norwegian young people interviewed, the initial hypothesis about spatial formation is not supported for the same reasons as for the Muslim group noted above. However, reports of social exclusion and special formation are related for some nationalist young people at the micro level reporting experiences of personal discrimination and racist actions in different spatial contexts primarily verbal but less by minority groups than by the majority Norwegian population; at the meso level of anticipating negative confrontations if entering minority-dominant communities and neighbourhoods; and, at the macro level in terms of experiencing structural social exclusion



in terms of state policies that are perceived as favouring migrants, especially Muslims, in terms of providing financial support via the welfare system to minority neighbourhoods where it is perceived that no or little efforts are made by the residents of such neighbourhoods to acculturate and contribute to Norwegian society. Spatial formation attitudes regarding minority-dense communities and neighbourhoods does contribute to the development and sustainability of radicalised thought patterns for many of the nationalist young persons.

Identity politics is central for the nationalist young people interviewed. Though there are several issues involved including gender views, Norwegian values, a central theme is the betrayal by the Norwegian state in relation to migration policies, and especially concerning Muslims. Political identity is central for this group of young nationalists. For some, their political identity provides not only a political community but a social community especially if they have experienced rejection by family and friends due to their political beliefs and views. Patterns of exclusionary and sometimes extremist thoughts are common in nationalist identity politics.

The nationalist young persons have expressed a range of familiar patterns, depending on the political views of the family members. Many of the young nationalists interviewed express a clear break with extremist far-right organisations, primarily with an older membership, such as SIAN (Stop the Islamisation of Norway). Others see some of SIAN's activities such as Quran burnings as supportable.

For nationalist youth, a reciprocal radicalisation thought pattern also might be the result at the macro level with state policies of migration, especially with Muslim populations, but it is also at the meso level with Muslim citizens and Muslim and minority neighbourhoods and communities.

## Discussion

Analysis of the data for both groups appears to support that experiences of social exclusion might lead to the radicalisation of thought patterns and a change of behaviours, non-violent, related to coping strategies to meet daily life challenges. This is especially the case for the young Muslim youth interviewed. For the young nationalist youth interviewed the personal experiences of social exclusion are fewer, yet there is a common view of social exclusion at large directed at the state and its perceived failure to protect Norwegian values and traditions.

The Wellness Checks, consisting of mental health and resilience assessments, conducted as part of the interview process revealed that Norway was an outlier. Whilst Norway had the lowest percentage of young persons experiencing symptoms of daily distress (somatic, psychological, and existential), Norway also had the lowest percentage of resilience among the four country populations. Both lowered measures (of daily dysfunction symptoms and of resilience functions) are important factors to be analysed together. They may contribute, in combination with other factors, to radicalising patterns of thought for young people, a turning inwards after repeated experiences of perceived discrimination and exclusion. However, it is important to note that there was a statistically significant difference between Muslim and nationalist youth in Norway, with 60% of



Muslims and 10% of nationalists experiencing these patterns of distress with somatic, psychological, and existential symptoms interacting with reduced resilience functions.

The study found no support for the hypothesis on direct reciprocal radicalisation between these groups. Further analysis will assess an emerging hypothesis that state policies on immigration may act as a moderator of some aspects of reciprocal radicalisation. It is important to note that no young Norwegian participants in this study supported any type of violence. A crucial distinction between changing thought patterns and changing behaviours is essential for this project and in general for research on radicalisation.

Comments related to the topic of radicalisation often contained references to the problematic nature of language related to ideologies and unsubstantiated ideological ideas. Interestingly, both Muslims and nationalists talked about the dangers of the term ‘ideology’ and the labelling accompanying it. Instead, the findings supported the importance of understanding meaning-making worldviews and meaning-making processes rather than simplistic ideological models for understanding the relationship between experiences leading to a sense of alienation and how radicalisation of thinking and a turning inwards may happen.

Both the young persons and the practitioners interviewed in this project raise the need for creating safe spaces for effective dialogue between young persons, and the need to understand the complex interaction among the micro, meso, and macro levels to address the issues of social exclusion and alienation. The Norwegian data of the DRIVE project’s findings support the work of recent research pointing to the complexity of social exclusion as an important factor, though never in isolation, which can contribute to radicalising thoughts and behaviours. The data also supports findings relating to the complex plight of Muslim youth in western school settings as presented in two review articles, and to the importance of understanding cultural context and codes for understanding Islamophobia in educational contexts. On a closing note, it is important to emphasise the need for prevention- and resilience-building efforts, cited in the recent report from the Norwegian National Commission on Extremism titled “Joint Efforts Against Extremism: Better Conditions for Preventive Work.” The findings from the Norwegian context underscore the complexity of the experiences and consequences of social exclusion and alienation among Muslim and nationalist youth, as well as the need for nuanced, multi-level approaches for fostering inclusion and preventing radicalisation. Policymakers and practitioners must consider the diverse experiences and coping mechanisms of these groups when designing interventions and initiatives to reduce social exclusion and promote wellbeing and resilience.



## Chapter 5. Practitioner Perspectives

---

### Introduction

This chapter focuses on interview data from practitioners across Norway, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Denmark. It offers several valuable insights into the intricate relationship between social exclusion and radicalisation processes as understood and framed primarily from pre-COVID research and professional experiences. In certain aspects, the data from practitioners aligns with the themes highlighted in the interviews with young people. In other respects, it differs. Understanding why this is so critically important for understanding the DRIVE project as a whole.

The practitioner group in each of the project countries comprises a variety of professionals. These include but are not limited to: researchers in different social science disciplines exploring topics related to radicalisation and extremism; social workers with experience of working with individuals and groups that have been exposed to and engaged in experiences labelled radical in their respective countries; mental health workers with responsibility for devising and running programmes for individuals and/or groups for rehabilitation of persons engaged in radical or extreme behaviours; community professionals in radicalisation prevention youth programmes; and law enforcement professionals.

The data from the practitioners needs to be approached with three important observations kept in mind in order to understand both the similarities and differences between practitioner data and young person data in the DRIVE project. The first observation is that, in large measure, there is a fundamental difference between the individuals and groups with which the practitioners have worked and the groups of young people that the DRIVE project actually interviewed. With few exceptions, the interviewed practitioners are professionals who have had experience with persons who have committed radical actions, persons in identified risk zone behaviours thought to lead to radicalisation, or persons in communities and neighbourhoods understood to be at increased risk for radicalisation. The second observation is that the majority of interviews with practitioners, in contrast to the interviews with young people, were conducted during COVID or just after lockdown in the respective countries.

As mentioned above, the focus concentrates mainly on pre-COVID knowledge and experience. However, many practitioners across the countries emphasised the significance of the COVID era in identifying major and shifting patterns of adolescents' behaviours and routines for individuals and groups. Some, particularly in the fields of social work and mental health, emphasised the importance of post-COVID research in informing not only prevention and early intervention programmes for youth at risk of radicalisation and extremism of thought and behaviour, but also in assessing the consequences of COVID experiences for understanding youth mental health. The third observation is that many of the practitioners worked with people under the age of 18, whereas the young



people interviewed by DRIVE were between 18 and 25 years old. Furthermore, none of those interviewed by DRIVE acknowledged coming from families with multiple addictions and abuse, yet practitioners in various countries particularly mentioned their encounters with people from such homes.

With these three important observations in focus, which are meant to act as cautions in the application of practitioner theme data to the young people themed data in the DRIVE project, we can never-the-less gain an understanding of how practitioners had been working pre-COVID in order to better understand the perspectives of those working directly with affected individuals, groups, and communities. This analysis aims to shed light on how approaches to exclusion have contributed to extremist ideologies and other dimensions of radicalising behaviours taking root. Specifically, this report investigates four key hypotheses that emerge from the practitioner interview data: the impact of intergenerational differences on identity struggles and susceptibility to radicalisation; the role of physical and virtual spaces in shaping experiences of exclusion and facilitating extremist narratives; the phenomenon of reciprocal or co-radicalisation, wherein extremist ideologies from opposing groups fuel each other's growth; and the politicisation of identity and grievances, which can create fertile ground for the spread of extremist narratives.

Drawing from existing literature, the concept of social exclusion has been extensively studied and theorised. Scholars have conceptualised social exclusion as a multi-dimensional process that deprives individuals and communities of the resources, opportunities, and capabilities necessary for full participation in society (see Sen, 1992; Townsend, 1979). This deprivation can manifest in various domains, including economic, political, cultural, and social spheres, creating a cycle of marginalisation and disempowerment. The relationship between social exclusion and radicalisation has been explored through various theoretical lenses. Prior to the existence of radicalisation studies, strain theory, proposed by Robert K. Merton (1938), suggests that individuals who experience a disjuncture between their aspirations and their ability to achieve them through legitimate means may turn to deviant or extremist behaviours as a means of coping with this strain. Similarly, the relative deprivation theory, put forth by Ted Robert Gurr (1970), posits that individuals or groups who perceive themselves as disadvantaged in comparison to others may become more susceptible to extremist ideologies that promise to address these perceived injustices. In more recent times, the concept of identity formation and the search for belonging have been central to understanding the appeal of extremist narratives. Classical theories such as social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorisation theory (Turner et al., 1987) have highlighted how individuals derive a sense of self-concept and purpose from their group memberships and how the need for positive distinctiveness can drive individuals towards extremist groups that offer a clear-cut identity and a sense of shared purpose.

By drawing upon the rich, context-specific insights from practitioners across four European countries, this research aims to refine and extend both historically embedded and contemporary prevalent theories, again noting the need for post-COVID research, while also generating new conceptual and empirical understandings of the complex relationship between social exclusion and radicalisation and thereby hoping to inform



such post-COVID research. The analysis will proceed by first providing an examination of the interview data across all four countries, identifying recurring themes and patterns that speak to the four hypotheses under investigation. Subsequently, a more granular, country-by-country analysis will be presented, allowing for a nuanced exploration of the unique socio-cultural and political contexts that shape the manifestations of social exclusion and radicalisation in each nation based on each of the four hypotheses.

## Intergenerational Differences and Identity Struggles

Across the four countries studied, the practitioner interview data consistently highlighted two intergenerational interactions: the significant generational gaps between immigrant (or ethnic minority) parents and their children born or raised in the ‘host’ country. These intergenerational differences often manifested in somewhat divergent religious and political beliefs, cultural practices, and understandings of identity, creating fertile ground for identity struggles among youth.

In the Netherlands, respondents noted that second-generation Muslim youth often adopted more conservative, literal interpretations of Islam compared to their parents’ cultural understanding (Theme 6)<sup>5</sup>. As one practitioner stated, “There is a generational shift in religiosity between the first and second generation and often also in practices between the first and second generation of Dutch Muslims.” (Theme 6). This divergence in religious interpretation and practice can create tensions within families and contribute to a sense of alienation among youth who may feel disconnected from both their parents’ cultural heritage and the mainstream society in which they are growing up.

Similarly, in Denmark, practitioners observed that young people expressed frustration with their parents’ perceived lack of proactive engagement with their religion in society (Theme 16). A respondent noted, “I think a lot of young people are tired of their parents not proactively trying to implement their religion in society.” (Theme 16). This sentiment reflects the desire among some youth to assert their religious identity more strongly, potentially leading them to seek out alternative sources of guidance and community.

The generational divide in the United Kingdom was also evident, with respondents discussing how positive family relationships could influence the transmission of beliefs and values across generations (Theme 14). As one practitioner stated, “Is that you know where young people have had a kind of positive relationship with their family that quite often, you know they do have sort of you know, similar beliefs and then it quite often follows through the generations if you like.” (Theme 14). Conversely, negative or toxic family relationships were seen as potential risk factors, as youth may reject their family’s beliefs and values, potentially making them more vulnerable to alternative ideologies.

In Norway, respondents highlighted the role of parental influence and intergenerational change, with one practitioner stating, “So I think the parents are the most important. When I worked in the security service, I also came up with one measure in the

---

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix for a complete list of ‘themes’ derived from the thematic analysis of 120 practitioner interviews across the four countries.



action plan. It was the family counselling centre. Because when we work with a foreign fighter, I think the family can be a very good factor.” (Theme 5). This emphasis on involving and supporting families in prevention efforts underscores the recognition of the significant influence that intergenerational dynamics can have on radicalisation processes. Those working in community-based projects with families highlighted another aspect of intergenerational processes. This aspect focused on the similarities of fundamental beliefs, values, and orientations shared by family generations in support of democratic processes, with respect for different expressions of such. “It makes a big difference when different family members can be involved and together work on issues, separating types of expressions from shared understanding of a central value that provides strength and hope.” (Theme 5)

Theoretically, these findings align with the concept of intergenerational value transmission and the potential for divergence in beliefs and practices between generations (Schönpflug, 2001). The process of acculturation and the challenges of navigating multiple cultural identities can create tensions and a sense of “in-betweenness” among second-generation youth (Berry, 1997; Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). When coupled with experiences of social exclusion and marginalisation, these identity struggles can make young people more susceptible to the allure of extremist ideologies that offer a clear-cut sense of belonging and purpose.

The findings from the practitioner interviews highlight the perceived significance of intergenerational differences as a potential contributor to identity struggles and vulnerability to extremist ideologies among ethnic minority youth. However, these perceptions warrant critical examination and further empirical investigation to assess their validity and alignment with the lived realities of the communities in question. From a sociological perspective, the persistence of practitioner concerns regarding intergenerational divides raises important questions about the processes of acculturation, integration, and assimilation.

In the data for both of the young people groups, there were two patterns of intergenerational similarities and differences across countries. One reflected the orientation noted above by the practitioners. However, such differences did not lead any of the young people interviewed for DRIVE to support any type of violent extremist behaviour. The other pattern reflected a similarity in belief, value, and culture within the generations. There was a wide variety of sub-patterns of similarity expressed.

## The Role of Space and Spatiality

The practitioner interviews across all four countries highlighted the significance of both physical and virtual spaces in shaping experiences of social exclusion and facilitating radicalisation processes. Respondents discussed how segregated neighbourhoods, parallel societies, and feelings of living in opposition to the majority society contributed to a sense of marginalisation among minority youth.

In the Netherlands, practitioners noted the enduring patterns of ethnic and socio-economic segregation in Dutch cities (Theme 16). As one respondent stated, “So if you look at a map of The Hague, you can really, for each single neighbourhood, you can, you



can see which kind of people live there. Yeah. And only a few neighbourhoods you can say is mixed.” (Theme 16). This spatial segregation can reinforce feelings of disconnect and “otherness” among minority communities, potentially making them more vulnerable to extremist narratives that tap into these experiences of marginalisation. Similarly, in Denmark, respondents discussed the impact of the local area on radicalisation processes, with one practitioner noting, “Our challenge is mainly... or if I have to describe the area first. The Gellerup area was built in the late sixties, early seventies and is currently characterised by a need for renovation. This contributes to the perception of a parallel society where there is something in opposition to the majority society and also makes that there are many young people growing up in the area who perceive themselves as being different or have an identity that is in opposition to the normally defined society.” (Theme 8). Physical spaces and urban environments can shape perceptions of identity and belonging, potentially contributing to a sense of alienation from the broader society.

In the United Kingdom, respondents acknowledged the importance of local context in the development and implementation of prevention strategies to counter extremism. As one practitioner put it: “I think the problem is that the principles are general, but the problems themselves are always local, and it’s very hard to have a national strategy that you then can adapt locally.” (Theme 9). This recognition of the localised nature of radicalisation highlights the need to consider the unique spatial dynamics and community contexts in developing effective prevention and intervention approaches. Norwegian respondents also discussed the role of specific geographic areas in shaping experiences of exclusion and vulnerability to radicalisation. One practitioner noted, “There are small rural places where there’s mainly a white population and the mayor and the other practitioners of the municipality tend to see some right-wing extremist or activist behaviour, but they can’t pinpoint it because they are closed communities, and they keep everything to themselves.” (Theme 28). The dynamics of social exclusion and extremism can manifest differently in rural versus urban settings, underscoring the importance of considering spatial context. These findings align with the concept of spatial exclusion, which recognises the ways in which physical spaces and geographic contexts can contribute to the marginalisation of individuals and communities (Musterd et al., 2006). The spatial concentration of poverty, lack of access to resources and opportunities, and the physical isolation of certain neighbourhoods can reinforce experiences of social exclusion and create environments that are more conducive to the spread of extremist ideologies (Macken et al., 2022).

Additionally, the role of virtual spaces and online platforms in facilitating radicalisation processes was consistently highlighted across the four countries. Respondents emphasised the impact of social media algorithms, echo chambers, and the blurring of online and offline worlds in amplifying extremist viewpoints and providing a sense of belonging for disaffected individuals (e.g., Theme 12 in the UK, Theme 19 in Denmark). These findings resonate with the concept of online radicalisation and the proliferation of extremist content and communities in digital spaces (Conway, 2017; Aly et al., 2017). The anonymity and accessibility of online platforms, combined with the ability to connect with like-minded individuals across geographic boundaries, can create virtual echo



chambers that reinforce extremist narratives and provide a sense of belonging for those feeling marginalised in their physical communities (Khosravinik, 2017).

The findings presented in this study highlight the complex interplay between physical and virtual spaces, social exclusion, and radicalisation processes. However, it is critical to consider the broader historical and societal factors that have contributed to the marginalisation of minority communities and the perpetuation of exclusionary narratives. Historical factors, such as limited integration policies and systemic discrimination, have played a significant role in shaping the experiences of minority communities in Europe. In the Netherlands, for example, the Dutch government's initial approach to immigration in the 1960s and 1970s assumed that guest workers would eventually return to their countries of origin, leading to a lack of effective integration policies (Scholten, 2011). This historical oversight has contributed to the persistent patterns of ethnic and socio-economic segregation in Dutch cities, as mentioned in this study (Theme 16). Similarly, in other European countries, the legacy of colonialism and the ongoing effects of racialisation and exclusion have disproportionately impacted minority communities, particularly those of Muslim background (Modood, 2005). The prevalence of Islamophobic narratives and the portrayal of Muslims as unwilling to integrate into European societies have further perpetuated experiences of marginalisation and alienation (Fekete, 2009). These narratives can become self-fulfilling prophecies, as the constant questioning of Muslims' belonging and loyalty to their countries of residence can lead to a sense of disillusionment and a retreat into parallel societies (Kundnani, 2014). Moreover, the lack of recognition of the structural barriers and discrimination faced by minority communities can lead to an overemphasis on individual responsibility for integration. These narratives place the onus on minority individuals to adapt to the majority society, without acknowledging the systemic challenges they face in accessing education, employment, and social mobility (Essed & Nimako, 2006). Failure to address these structural inequalities can further entrench experiences of social exclusion and create fertile ground for the spread of extremist ideologies that exploit feelings of marginalisation and injustice.

The practitioner data also identified existing themes related to social exclusion, which the young people's data echoed and expanded upon. These themes include, but are not limited to: the hybrid experience of geographical and virtual spaces and networks; the potential of online spaces for promoting radicalising messages and forming closed, excluding communities; the feeling of isolation and abandonment due to society's lack of focus and resources in certain neighbourhoods; the importance of society understanding the debilitating consequences of both explicit and implicit acts of exclusion by the majority culture on minority groups in public spaces such as school, shopping, and transportation (expressed by both Muslim youth and nationalist youth); and the systemic processes that hinder integration. However, across all the countries, a number of themes emerged concerning the inclusive experiences in various spaces. These themes included feelings of safety, support, and recognition in minority-dominated neighbourhoods, positive encounters with non-exclusionary online religious and political networks, and the aspiration to actively participate and voice opinions in the development of community- and neighbourhood-based initiatives, such as safe spaces and youth programmes.



## Reciprocal Radicalisation and Polarisation

The data from practitioners across the four countries revealed some concerns about the phenomenon of reciprocal or co-radicalisation, wherein extremist ideologies, and actions from one group fuel the radicalisation of opposing groups in a cyclical manner. This dynamic was often exacerbated by the normalisation of extremist narratives in mainstream media and political discourse, as well as the amplification of these narratives through online spaces.

In Norway, practitioners perceived an uneven handling of Muslim extremists compared to neo-Nazis by authorities, which could contribute to further polarisation and a sense of injustice among Muslim communities (Theme 7). As one practitioner stated, “Yes, absolutely, and it must be said that it is not that it is the only clue but let’s say in relation to how the police and security officers handled the prophet’s umma. I think no one liked that they were there, me included, but the way they handled them versus how to deal with neo-Nazis in our streets I react to.” (Theme 7) This perceived double standard can reinforce the narrative of victimisation and marginalisation, potentially contributing to the radicalisation of individuals seeking to redress these perceived injustices.

Similarly, in Denmark, respondents discussed how the actions and rhetoric of far right figures like Rasmus Paludan could provoke and radicalise young Muslims in specific areas, leading to a cycle of mutual radicalisation (Theme 10). As one practitioner noted, “Well it’s the political system. But it’s also Rasmus Paludan because he’s the one who shows up in the boxing ring and the other politicians don’t really do that. Rasmus Paludan analog? Enemy you can take and touch. The times he has been in our area there, we have spent a lot of effort to let the air out of the situation. We have, for example, tried to get something on, something else that is fun so we can get the young people away from the area, Or, explain to them that counteraction is exactly what he wants, so...contributes in to exactly what he would like to have.” (Theme 10). The actions of extremist groups can directly provoke and mobilise opposing groups, contributing to a cycle of polarisation and radicalisation.

In the Netherlands, respondents highlighted the role of online spaces and social media in facilitating the normalisation of extremist narratives, which can contribute to the phenomenon of reciprocal radicalisation (Theme 21). As one practitioner stated, “During COVID-19, the big concern for a lot of groups, especially far right and right wing groups, was that, you know, this was an opportunity, A, to target the state, because it’s a democratic state and the far right doesn’t want a democratic state, no matter what the issue is. So if there’s a crisis, if there’s an opportunity to target, is like opposition in parliament, right, I’m going to target it.” (Theme 21). Online spaces and social media amplified extremist narratives and provided a platform for far right groups to target and mobilise against the state during the COVID-19 pandemic, potentially contributing to a cycle of reciprocal radicalisation.

In the United Kingdom, while some respondents acknowledged the potential for reciprocal radicalisation, many expressed scepticism about the empirical support for this concept in contemporary Britain (Theme 4). As one practitioner stated, “I think that the idea of reciprocal radicalisation was sketchy when [redacted] put it forward 20 odd



years ago. I think that the evidence for it has been sketchy ever since.” (Theme 4). Several practitioners suggested that historically there have been examples in which cycles of violence have emerged with one opposing group’s activity inflaming conflict and triggering a response from the ‘other’ group, such as the violent conflict in Northern Ireland beginning in the late 1960s and the clashes between the EDL and Al-Muhajiroun in 2011. Nevertheless, the large majority of practitioners expressed the view that direct reciprocal radicalisation had declined due to a number of factors, including Islamist groups dissolving or going underground due to fears of arrest. The lack of clear cut evidence endorsing the reciprocal radicalisation thesis signals the need for ongoing debate and further research about the phenomenon of reciprocal radicalisation.

The concept of reciprocal radicalisation aligns with the principles of conflict escalation and the role of intergroup dynamics in perpetuating cycles of violence and extremism (McCauley & Moskalkenko, 2011; Moghaddam, 2005). The perceived injustices and grievances experienced by one group can contribute to the radicalisation of opposing groups, who may then engage in actions or rhetoric that further reinforce the original group’s grievances, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of radicalisation (Schmid, 2013). The normalisation of extremist narratives in mainstream media and political discourse can contribute to the phenomenon of reciprocal radicalisation by creating an environment in which these narratives become more acceptable and mainstream (Borum, 2011; Eatwell, 2006). The amplification of these narratives through online spaces and social media can further exacerbate this phenomenon, as extremist groups can more easily disseminate their messages and mobilise supporters (Khosravini, 2017; Conway, 2017).

The data from young people and practitioners underscored the normalization of extremist narratives in mainstream media and political discourse, as well as their amplification through online spaces. However, despite numerous expressions of hopelessness about the possibility or productivity of attempting to build relationships with members of the other group, there was virtually no evidence in the young people's data that this normalisation of extremist narratives was affecting them in a way that made them perceive the other group as the enemy or the total other. Following individual interviews with the young people in the focus groups (separate Muslim youth and nationalist youth groups) held in each of the countries, they unanimously agreed that they would attend an in-common focus group with members from both Muslim and nationalist groups if one were to be organised. Representatives from both groups expressed concern about the long-term impact of negative narratives in print and social media, which they believed could lead to societal breakdown. Rather than identifying patterns of reciprocal radicalization between these groups, the data on young people revealed that both groups attributed current expressions of social exclusion, radicalization, and the growth of extremist systems of meaning to different dimensions of politics and national policies.



## The Politicisation of Identity and Grievances

Across the four countries, respondents highlighted the complex interplay between social exclusion, discrimination, and the politicisation of identity and grievances. Perceptions of injustice, whether related to immigration policies, differential treatment of minority groups, or broader experiences of racism and marginalisation, were frequently cited as potential drivers of radicalisation.

In the United Kingdom, respondents discussed how expectations versus reality played a significant role in generating grievances, with extremist narratives providing a target to blame for the gap between individuals' lived experiences and their perceived entitlements (Theme 3). As one practitioner stated, "It's not about real grievance. It's about where you think you should be, where you perceive yourself to be, and how big the gap is between the two. And who do you blame for that gap?" (Theme 3). Perceptions of relative deprivation, and unfulfilled expectations can contribute to a sense of grievance, potentially making individuals more receptive to extremist narratives that offer a scapegoat for these perceived injustices.

Similarly, in Denmark, respondents noted how perceptions of unfairness in refugee and immigration policies, such as the differential treatment of Ukrainian refugees compared to those from the Middle East, could feed into narratives of broader societal exclusion exploited by extremist ideologies (Theme 5). As one practitioner observed, "Even despite the principle of subsidiarity, I haven't talked to that many, but it's not really my understanding that you blame the Ukrainians. If you see Afghans or those from Syria, then there is something similar about their history. There, it can be so hard that suddenly it becomes everyday life. Then, the new Ukrainians are integrated. And then they are still left at the bottom of the hierarchy." (Theme 5). Perceptions of differential treatment and injustice in immigration policies can contribute to a sense of marginalisation and potential vulnerability to extremist narratives.

In the Netherlands, respondents discussed the impact of social exclusion and discrimination on vulnerability to radicalisation. As one practitioner stated, "I think it's absolutely common that this is a factor in why people become radicalised... because a kind of sense of belonging and kinship is one of the factors in the first radicalised extremist people, which we saw, for example, within jihadism, were people who felt they had no belonging, no kinship over here, and also described a lot of discrimination that they experienced" (Theme 13). Experiences of exclusion, lack of belonging, and discrimination can contribute to a sense of grievance and potential susceptibility to extremist ideologies that promise to address these perceived injustices.

In Norway, respondents highlighted the negative portrayals of minorities in media and politics as a contributing factor to the politicisation of identity and grievances. One practitioner noted, "But then we see that it becomes more, you know, like I said, freedom of speech comes with a responsibility also. But that didn't come along. So now people throw shit and the most extreme have become the most normal." (Theme 8). The normalisation of extreme rhetoric and negative portrayals of minority groups in the media and political discourse can contribute to the politicisation of identity and the sense of grievance among these communities.



These findings align with the concept of relative deprivation and the role of perceived injustice in driving extremist ideologies (Gurr, 1970). When individuals or groups perceive themselves as disadvantaged or discriminated against in comparison to others, they may become more susceptible to narratives that promise to redress these perceived injustices, even through extreme means (Moghaddam, 2005). When individuals' identities become intertwined with perceptions of injustice and discrimination, they may be more likely to align themselves with extremist groups that offer a sense of belonging and shared purpose in addressing these perceived grievances (Moghaddam, 2018). Furthermore, the normalisation of extremist narratives in mainstream media and political discourse can contribute to the phenomenon of “overton window shift,” whereby ideas and rhetoric that were once considered extreme become gradually more accepted and mainstream (Borum, 2011; Eatwell, 2006). This shift can create an environment in which the expression of far right, xenophobic, and Islamophobic views becomes more prevalent and socially acceptable (Eatwell, 2006).

The politicisation of identity and grievances, as highlighted in the document, plays a significant role in exacerbating the risks of radicalisation for both Muslim and other minorities and certain sub-groups within ethnic majorities. The complex interplay between social exclusion, discrimination, and the normalisation of extremist narratives in mainstream discourse creates a polarised environment that can fuel radicalisation processes. For Muslim minorities, the experience of cultural and structural exclusion can contribute to a sense of alienation and marginalisation. The persistent negative portrayal of Muslims in media and political discourse, coupled with experiences of discrimination in various domains of life, such as education, employment, and housing, can reinforce feelings of injustice and grievance (Kundnani, 2014). This sense of exclusion and perceived lack of belonging to broader society can make Muslim minorities more vulnerable to extremist narratives that offer a sense of identity, purpose, and a means to address their grievances (Lyons-Padilla et al., 2015). Moreover, the differential treatment of Muslim refugees and immigrants, as mentioned in the document (Theme 5), can further compound feelings of injustice and contribute to the politicisation of identity. When Muslim minorities perceive unfair treatment compared to other groups, like Ukrainian refugees, it can reinforce systemic discrimination narratives and fuel a sense of grievance that extremist ideologies can exploit (Doosje et al., 2013).

The polarisation of public discourse and the increasing acceptance of extremist narratives can contribute to the radicalisation of individuals from ethnic majority backgrounds who may feel threatened by the perceived “otherness” of Muslim minorities and the changing demographics of their societies (Küpper et al., 2010). The politicisation of issues such as immigration, integration, and national identity can fuel a sense of grievance among ethnic majorities, making them more susceptible to far right extremist ideologies that promise to protect their perceived interests and cultural hegemony (Mudde, 2007). Furthermore, the lack of meaningful interaction and dialogue between Muslim minorities and ethnic majorities can exacerbate the risks of radicalisation on both sides. As mentioned in the document (Theme 16), spatial segregation and the existence of parallel societies can limit opportunities for intercultural understanding and the development of



bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000). Social exclusion and inequalities, and the perpetuation of “us vs. them” narratives, can further entrench polarisation and make both groups more vulnerable to extremist ideologies that thrive on division and conflict (Jasko et al., 2020). The politicisation of identity and grievances, fuelled by cultural and structural issues of exclusion and polarisation, creates a complex landscape that can contribute to the radicalisation of both Muslim minorities and ethnic majorities. Addressing these challenges requires an approach that tackles the root causes of exclusion, promotes inclusive narratives, and fosters meaningful dialogue and interaction between communities to reduce exclusions and inequalities and thereby reinforce and augment resilience against extremist ideologies.

Themes relating to experiences of racism, discrimination, inequalities, stereotyped identities, and systemically rooted injustices are widespread in the young people data, especially with the group of young Muslims. However, the main message of response to these experiences in the young people data is the importance of understanding them, creating a framework for coping with such, and working to address these issues. Simultaneously, there is a clear expression of exhaustion when such experiences are often and multiple. This leads to a draining of resources for resilience, a loss of hope, and is expressed in both somatic and psychological patterns of distress. (See the Public Mental Health chapter for further analysis related to these aspects of the social determinants of health.)

## The Multifaceted Nature of Social Exclusion

While the interviews with practitioners highlighted specific factors such as intergenerational differences, spatial dynamics, reciprocal radicalisation, and the politicisation of identity as potential contributors to radicalisation, the data also underscored the multifaceted and intersectional nature of social exclusion. Practitioners across the four countries discussed how socioeconomic deprivation, lack of educational and employment opportunities, family dysfunction, mental health challenges, and systemic barriers to social mobility could all interact to create a sense of marginalisation and disaffection among minority communities.

In Norway, for instance, respondents discussed the barriers to immigrant employment and social mobility, with one practitioner noting, “There are also a higher number of immigrants’ children from immigrants who take higher education, and don’t get a job. And so, the key of the success as a nation, it has to be in every level, it has to be corrected. People must see there is a reason to study, because if you go to the café and then you have two guys who are thinking OK, what should I apply for at the university, and then you have another guy who just finished university and has had no job in two years, you think they will be keen to study?” (Theme 10). The lack of employment opportunities, even for educated immigrants, can contribute to a sense of disillusionment and potential vulnerability to extremist narratives.

In the United Kingdom, respondents discussed the impact of social exclusion and ethnic minority status on vulnerability to radicalisation, with one practitioner stating, “Yeah I mean, I think, you know, the social exclusion is absolutely kind of prevalent in you



know, in the radicalisation and I think you know it all ties in doesn't it with what we're saying before about kind of burnt people who are vulnerable people wanting to belong. people wanting to kind of you know, feel... feel that they're part of something and I think that that can be seen really clearly." (Theme 15). The interconnectedness of social exclusion, the need for belonging, and the potential appeal of extremist ideologies among marginalised and vulnerable populations.

In Denmark, respondents discussed the role of educational institutions in perpetuating segregation and contributing to social exclusion. As one practitioner noted, "White people choose white schools. And people with other ethnic backgrounds are left with the other schools. And you are not allowed to sort of make a selection of kids based on background, obviously, because that would be discrimination." (Theme 17). Structural factors within educational systems can reinforce patterns of segregation and exclusion, potentially contributing to a sense of marginalisation among minority youth. These findings align with the concept of intersectionality, which recognises the multidimensional and interconnected nature of various forms of discrimination and disadvantage (Crenshaw, 1989). Social exclusion is not a monolithic phenomenon but rather the result of the intersection of various social, economic, political, and cultural factors, including race, ethnicity, gender, class, and immigration status (Room, 1995). Furthermore, these findings resonate with the social-ecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which emphasises the reciprocal interactions between individuals and their broader social, institutional, and community contexts. The experiences of social exclusion and marginalisation are shaped not only by individual factors but also by the broader systems and structures in which individuals are embedded. Consequently, addressing the drivers of radicalisation requires an integrated approach that considers the multifaceted and intersectional nature of social exclusion. Interventions and policies must target not only individual-level factors but also the structural and systemic barriers that perpetuate marginalisation and disaffection among minority communities.

It is necessary to situate these findings within the broader academic discourse on social exclusion and radicalisation. This involves explicitly discussing how the key themes and conclusions drawn from the practitioner interviews relate to, support, or challenge existing theories and frameworks in the field. One central theoretical concept that emerges from the analysis is that of relative deprivation, which posits that individuals who perceive themselves as unjustly disadvantaged compared to others are more likely to experience frustration and resentment, potentially leading to radical attitudes or actions (Gurr, 1970). There are numerous examples across the four countries that support this theory, such as the discussion of economic marginalisation and barriers to immigrant employment and social mobility in Norway (Theme 10) and the impact of perceptions of discrimination and injustice on vulnerability to radicalisation in Denmark (Theme 5). However, there are nuanced insights that extend and complement the relative deprivation framework. For instance, the findings on intergenerational differences and identity struggles suggest that the experience of exclusion and grievance is not solely determined by objective socio-economic conditions but also shaped by complex psychosocial factors such as the negotiation of hybrid identities and the transmission of values and be-



liefs across generations. This aligns with more recent developments in the field that emphasise the multidimensional nature of social exclusion and the importance of considering the interplay between structural and individual-level factors in the radicalisation process (Jasko et al., 2020; Dixon & Joly, 2021). Moreover, the findings on the role of spatial dynamics and the politicisation of identity and grievances highlight the need to consider the broader sociopolitical context in which experiences of exclusion and radicalisation occur. This resonates with the growing body of literature that adopts a social-ecological approach to understanding radicalisation, recognising the embedded nature of individual trajectories within wider community, institutional, and societal contexts (Hardy, 2018; Stephens et al., 2021).

## Discussion

The analysis of the interview data from practitioners across Norway, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Denmark has shed light on the multifaceted and complex relationship between social exclusion and radicalisation processes. Through the lens of four key hypotheses – the impact of intergenerational differences, the role of spatial dynamics, the phenomenon of reciprocal radicalisation, and the politicisation of identity and grievances – this study has revealed several recurring themes and insights that contribute to our understanding of the drivers of extremism and the potential pathways toward effective prevention and intervention strategies.

One of the central themes that emerged across all four countries was the significance of intergenerational differences and identity struggles in shaping vulnerability to extremist ideologies. Respondents consistently highlighted the generational gaps in religious and political beliefs, cultural practices, and understandings of identity between immigrant parents and their children born or raised in the host country. These divergences, coupled with experiences of social exclusion and marginalisation, created fertile ground for identity struggles among youth, who may feel disconnected from both their parents' cultural heritage and the mainstream society in which they are growing up. Theoretically, these findings align with the concepts of intergenerational value transmission (Schönpflug, 2001) and the challenges of navigating multiple cultural identities (Berry, 1997; Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). When coupled with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorisation theory (Turner et al., 1987), these insights suggest that the search for a coherent sense of self and positive distinctiveness can make young people more susceptible to the allure of extremist ideologies that offer a clear-cut identity and a sense of shared purpose.

The analysis highlighted the significance of spatial dynamics, both in terms of physical spaces and virtual spaces, in shaping experiences of social exclusion and facilitating the spread of extremist narratives. Respondents discussed the enduring patterns of ethnic and socioeconomic segregation in urban areas, which can reinforce feelings of disconnect and “otherness” among minority communities, potentially making them more vulnerable to extremist ideologies that tap into these experiences of marginalisation. Theoretically, these findings resonate with the concept of spatial exclusion (Musterd et al., 2006) and the ways in which physical spaces and geographic contexts can



contribute to the marginalisation of individuals and communities. Additionally, the role of online spaces and social media algorithms in amplifying extremist viewpoints and creating virtual echo chambers aligns with the literature on online radicalisation (Conway, 2017; Aly et al., 2017) and the proliferation of extremist content and communities in digital spaces (Khosravini, 2017).

The analysis also revealed concerns about the phenomenon of reciprocal or co-radicalisation, wherein extremist ideologies, and actions from one group fuel the radicalisation of opposing groups in a cyclical manner. Respondents discussed how the perceived uneven handling of extremist groups by authorities, as well as the normalisation of extreme rhetoric in mainstream media and political discourse, could contribute to further polarisation and a sense of injustice among marginalised communities. Theoretically, these findings align with the principles of conflict escalation and the role of intergroup dynamics in perpetuating cycles of violence and extremism (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2011; Moghaddam, 2005). Additionally, the normalisation of extremist narratives in mainstream discourse can contribute to the phenomenon of “overtone window shift” (Borum, 2011; Eatwell, 2006), whereby ideas and rhetoric that were once considered extreme become gradually more accepted and mainstream, potentially contributing to the appeal of extremist ideologies. Moreover, the analysis highlighted the complex interplay between social exclusion, discrimination, and the politicisation of identity and grievances. Respondents consistently discussed how perceptions of injustice, whether related to immigration policies, differential treatment of minority groups, or broader experiences of racism and marginalisation, could contribute to a sense of grievance and potential susceptibility to extremist ideologies that promise to address these perceived injustices.

To enhance the transitions between the cross-country analysis and country-specific sections, it is essential to highlight the key similarities and differences across the four countries in relation to the main research themes: intergenerational differences, spatial dynamics, reciprocal radicalisation, and the politicisation of identity and grievances. One notable similarity across the countries is the impact of intergenerational differences on identity formation and vulnerability to radicalisation. For example, in the Netherlands, practitioners noted a “generational shift in religiosity between the first and second generation and often also in practices between the first and second generation of Dutch Muslims” (Theme 6). Similarly, in Denmark, respondents discussed how “young people expressed frustration with their parents’ perceived lack of proactive engagement with their religion in society” (Theme 16). These findings suggest that the disconnect between immigrant parents and their children born in the host country can create a sense of identity crisis and susceptibility to extremist ideologies across different contexts. However, there are also notable differences in how these intergenerational dynamics manifest in each country. In Norway, respondents emphasised the role of parental influence and family support as potential protective factors against radicalisation (Theme 5), while in the UK, the focus was more on the impact of positive versus negative family relationships on the transmission of values and beliefs (Theme 14). These nuances highlight the importance of considering the specific cultural and societal contexts when an-



analysing the relationship between intergenerational differences and radicalisation processes. In terms of spatial dynamics, there are common patterns of ethnic and socio-economic segregation across the four countries, with practitioners discussing the impact of “parallel societies” and feelings of living in opposition to the majority society (Theme 8 in Denmark, Theme 16 in the Netherlands). However, the specific manifestations of these spatial inequalities vary, with respondents in Norway highlighting the challenges faced by minority communities in rural areas (Theme 28), while those in the UK discussed the role of local context in shaping experiences of exclusion and the effectiveness of counter-terrorism strategies (Theme 9).

It is necessary to situate the findings within the broader academic discourse on social exclusion and radicalisation. This involves explicitly discussing how the key themes and conclusions drawn from the practitioner interviews relate to, support, or challenge existing theories and frameworks in the field. One central theoretical concept that emerges from the analysis is that of relative deprivation, which posits that individuals who perceive themselves as unjustly disadvantaged compared to others are more likely to experience frustration and resentment, potentially leading to radical attitudes or actions (Gurr, 1970). There are numerous examples across the four countries that support this theory, such as the discussion of economic marginalisation and barriers to immigrant employment and social mobility in Norway (Theme 10) and the impact of perceptions of discrimination and injustice on vulnerability to radicalisation in Denmark (Theme 5). However, there are nuanced insights that extend and complement the relative deprivation framework. For instance, the findings on intergenerational differences and identity struggles suggest that the experience of exclusion and grievance is not solely determined by objective socio-economic conditions but also shaped by complex psychosocial factors such as the negotiation of hybrid identities and the transmission of values and beliefs across generations. This aligns with recent developments in the field that emphasise the multidimensional nature of social exclusion and the importance of considering the interplay between structural and individual-level factors in the radicalisation process (Jasko et al., 2020; Dixon & Joly, 2021). Moreover, the findings on the role of spatial dynamics and the politicisation of identity and grievances highlight the need to consider the broader sociopolitical context in which experiences of exclusion and radicalisation occur. This resonates with the growing body of literature that adopts a social-ecological approach to understanding radicalisation, recognising the embedded nature of individual trajectories within wider community, institutional, and societal contexts (Hardy, 2018; Stephens et al., 2021).

## Concluding Thoughts

Through the lens of four key hypotheses—the impact of intergenerational differences, the role of spatial dynamics, the phenomenon of reciprocal radicalisation, and the politicisation of identity and grievances—this study has revealed several recurring themes and insights from the practitioner interviews and existing theory that contribute to our understanding of the contributing factors that may influence extremism and the potential pathways towards prevention and intervention strategies. In addition, a closing section



in each hypothesis area provided a quick snapshot of similarities and differences between themes that emerged in the practitioner interviews and the young people interviews.

To inform our understanding of contributing factors that may influence extremism, it is important to return to the two opening observations of this chapter. The first concerned the unique nature of the young people groups in the DRIVE project: these are young people who have experienced social exclusion in different forms and measures, who are struggling with negotiating different dimensions of their identity, and who are trying to voice their concerns and have these concerns listened to and understood. These are not radicalised young people, but young people who are struggling to make meaning in complex and often taxing contexts.

These young people are also resilient, trying to find resources to move forward and maintain hope. Unlike many young people the interviewed practitioners have encountered through prior prevention and intervention programmes, the young people interviewed in the DRIVE project are in need primarily of health-promoting strategies that will assist them in getting answers to their profound questions and concerns, working with them to identify and address structural and systemic problems, and providing their urgently requested safe spaces so that they may resist the radicalising pressures around them. Across the countries, many of the practitioners emphasised the need for future efforts to begin early in development, include all voices, and map resources and not only problems. In this respect, the DRIVE project may provide a first step towards these future efforts.

The second observation concerned the pre-COVID experiences of the interviewed practitioners. It is important to point out that the majority of practitioners, across the countries, made note of the unique challenges presented by COVID and the exacerbation of different pre-COVID social factors previously linked to social exclusion and linked to different forms of radicalisation of thought as well as behaviour. Many also noted and provided examples of the increase in online sites targeting individuals toward radicalizing networks. In the practitioner interviews, another COVID theme underscored the fact that we won't fully understand the extent of COVID's effects on the population, particularly young people, until we complete current post-COVID research and develop new frameworks for testing. The DRIVE project, which is one of these post-COVID research projects with young people, aims to provide basic research knowledge and targeted resources for practitioners.

The third observation concerned the differences in ages between those the practitioners engage, which include young people below the age of 18, and those interviewed for the DRIVE project, which included only those between ages 18 and 25 years. It is important to bear in mind developmental differences, not least, cognitive, emotional, and social, between those who are above and below 18, as well as the ongoing brain development that continues up to age 25 or 26. This third observation also highlighted the disparities in home and family experiences between DRIVE participants and practitioners, with the latter frequently involving substance and other abuse at home, whereas none of the DRIVE young people reported these experiences.



## Chapter 6: The Public Mental Health Analysis<sup>6</sup>

---

This Public Mental Health (PMH) section concentrates firstly on a deeper analysis of data from across the four DRIVE project countries within two of the interview code groups that the PMH team contributed to the interview protocol: (i) Social and emotions, and (ii) COVID. Secondly, this section presents the four-country data results of the ethically-mandatory “Wellness Check” for all young people in the DRIVE project. The PMH section applies a multi-level approach (acknowledging the influences of individual, familial, community and wider social and structural factors) to the data collected from each of the convenience sample population groups (Muslim young people, and nationalist young people) with references to the interacting micro, meso, and macro levels of findings (Cetrez et al., 2021; Boyd-MacMillan & DeMarinis, 2020).

### Social and Emotions Code Category

Conducting analyses within a public mental health framework can increase understanding about the roles of culture, context, and subjective experience at the individual and group levels while also supporting individuals, groups, and communities to respond adaptively to their own and others’ vulnerabilities. Multi-directional influences between situational factors and individual and social adaptive factors always inform ongoing experiences of social exclusion. Experiences of social exclusion are associated with stress, trauma, neglect, and other harms, eliciting adaptive reactions that over time can become maladaptive. Human adaptation has universal underpinnings, but the way these processes are understood, represented, and expressed is greatly influenced by culture and context.

Analyses of data from each country reveals that each group of young people reported, during interviews and focus groups, experiences associated with positive *social connections*. In all four countries, the young people also reported experiences associated with negative and positive *emotions and feelings*.

Across all four countries, young **Muslims** reported **negative emotions and feelings** at the micro, meso and macro levels related to their own or others’ experiences of racism and discrimination in educational and/or work-related contexts, experiences with members of the general public, government policies and stances, and in response to national or international events. The negative emotions and feelings include fear, anger, worry, helplessness, anxiety, unsafe, frustration, discomfort, and shock, eliciting resignation, hyper-vigilance toward self and others (being watchful of what one does and

---

<sup>6</sup> To be cited as: DeMarinis, V., Boyd-MacMillan, E., Nordendahl, M. (2024) The Public Mental Health Analysis, in Abbas, T., Boyd-MacMillan, E., DeMarinis, V., Mythen, G., and Sedgwick, M. (2024). Investigating Social Exclusion and Radicalisation: D7.1. Major Research Report of the Drive Project, Leiden University: European Commission Funded H2020 programme (grant no. 959200).



say, and of what others do and say), distrust, and hopelessness. These commonalities were found despite great variations across the countries, including levels of Muslim representation, specific events, and government policies and stances, e.g., Quran burnings have occurred in some countries and not others.

Across three countries (DK, NO, UK), young **nationalists** reported **negative emotions and feelings** at the micro, meso, and macro levels related to public name calling, physical attack and harassment, changes in personal relationships, COVID, rejected by and powerless to change society. The emotions included fear, sadness, frustration, rejection, hatred, and unsafe. In Denmark, experiences and negative emotions were not as severe as in Norway, although in Denmark, the Netherlands, and Norway some reported being physically attacked by minority groups. In the UK, nationalists also reported feeling terrified, disappointed, abandoned, ashamed, silenced, alone, disapproval from parents (among some), and scapegoated. Nationalist parties in the UK have not achieved power as in other project countries, such as Denmark, and membership is higher, although not exclusively, among those who have experienced social inequalities and deprivation. A small number of young **nationalists** in the Netherlands reported **negative social connections** at the micro and meso levels related to adverse experiences during COVID and struggling to find friends after moving to a new area.

Across all four countries, young **Muslims** reported **positive emotions and feelings** at the micro and meso levels related to place attachment, visibility, diversity, multiculturalism, family, education, mosque, politics and work. In the UK, positive emotions and feelings also related to being respected and accommodated, supported and connected, belonging and fitting in. In Norway, the positivity was more muted and focused on feeling safety and warmth within a wider context of unsafety, feeling accepted and understood. In both Norway and the UK, there were expressions of hope.

Across three countries, young **nationalists** reported **positive emotions and feelings** at the micro and meso levels related to party membership and engagement. In Denmark, positive emotions and feelings are also related to home, feeling safe, and school. In the UK, positive emotions and feelings are also related to place attachment, online engagement, and reluctantly toward Muslims, due to agreement with Muslims, more than with “white people”, on what nationalists perceive to be “Muslim views” on some issues (crime, racial mixing, religious fundamentalism). But the UK nationalists still see Muslims as a threat and prefer them not to be around.

Across four countries, young **Muslims** reported **positive social connections** at the micro, meso, and macro levels related to family, similar *and* diverse friendships across ethnic lines, their community, religion, area, educational and work contexts, and the general public. In Denmark, friends’ understanding of intersectional (dual or more ethnic and cultural) identities and home situations, not taking a victim role, online connections, and for three, parental affirmation of both genders, were important. One noted that radicalisation can happen without a sense of belonging. In both Denmark and the Netherlands, unexpected positive encounters with the general public, at work, or in social settings generated positive emotions and feelings. In the UK, positive encounters with state representatives were reported, e.g., with police after a house burglary and



other engagement, although negative encounters with police were also reported, e.g., unnecessary stops and searches based on name and skin colour.

Across four countries, young **nationalists** reported **positive social connections** at the micro and meso levels related to party membership, shared party views, friendships with party members, having a sense of belonging, their parents, religion and during COVID. In the Netherlands, Norway and the UK, nationalists reported positive social connections with migrants and Muslims. In the UK, this was qualified with still preferring they were not in the UK. In Denmark and the UK, positive connections through hybrid (online-offline) identities and engagement were highlighted. In Denmark, Norway, and the UK, being with like-minded people created hope. Norway nationalists emphasised the importance of celebrations.

### Patterns Emerging for Groups from COVID Code Category:

A quantifying of the COVID responses of the Muslim and nationalist young people, across the four countries, resulted in the identification of recurrent theme patterns across all countries for the two respective groups. Charts 1 and 2 present these findings, organised by the three-level framework (micro/sex, meso/group, macro/ nationality) and both negative and positive experiences. In the charts, it is important to note both the overlap of similar experiences as well as the differences between the groups. Due to living situations, and conditions of dense occupation of living accommodation for many Muslims and other minority-population groups in these countries, the number of COVID deaths in proportion to their population number far exceeded those of the respective majority populations. It also needs to be noted that in Denmark, due to immigration policy restrictions on citizenship, there were references to difficulties related to travel for burial services and religious rituals due to COVID-related restrictions for Muslims without Danish citizenship on travelling to other countries eliciting fears of not being allowed entry back into Denmark upon return.

Chart 7 1. Muslim young people experiences/ perceptions of COVID, all four countries

## Muslim youths’ experiences and perceptions of COVID

### Negative (selected themes)

#### Micro level

- Feeling isolated and alone
- Separation of family members
- Disruption of routines, more anxious

#### Meso level

- Negative images of immigrant communities in media
- Immigrant communities higher losses due to housing situations
- Less support for schools, community services in immigrant neighbourhoods
- Negative media portrayals of Muslims and mosques, presented as spreading COVID

#### Macro level

- Unequal resource distribution (schools, social services)
- Not equal means for communicating information, procedures

### Positive (selected themes)

#### Micro level

- More time to be with family
- More time to practice religion, read Quran, pray
- Friend support online

#### Meso level

- Support from job and help from boss
- Good community support
- Muslim communities and individuals working and providing services

#### Macro level

- General support for lockdown measures but with exceptions



Chart 2: Nationalist young people experiences/ perceptions of COVID, all four countries

## Nationalist youths' experiences and perceptions of COVID

### Negative (selected themes):

#### Micro level

- Feelings of being isolated and alone
- Difficult living situations with others of opposite views
- Family in forced separation
- Lost friends to the virus
- Job loss

#### Meso level

- Distrust of mainstream media
- Alarmism about COVID
- Media smear campaign on political party

#### Macro level

- Lockdown policies as part of government conspiracy theory
- Exaggeration of danger and lost autonomy
- Foreign conspiracies (such as by Chinese)

### Positive (selected themes)

#### Micro level

- Support from online people and meetings of like-minded
- New friendships
- Time to learn more about politics

#### Meso level

- Nationalist support systems (food, help with jobs)
- People more caring and sharing, helping

#### Macro level

- Stronger alliances with certain political parties

## The “Wellness Check” results

The “Wellness Check” refers to 12 questions that combined the ten item Symptoms Check List (SCL-10) (Strand et al., 2003) with the two item Connor-Davidson Resilience Check List (CD-RISC-2) (Vaishnavi et., 2007). These were included during the semi-structured interviews with young people from each group identity, across all four countries. These two validated instruments were selected for the “Wellness Check” based on the importance of understanding the interactions among mental health function level, resilience function level, and other factors that may affect radicalising patterns (DeMarinis, 2028). (All statistical analyses on the “Wellness Check” results were performed through the SPSS Statistics v29)

## Population samples by group and nationality

The **group identity** (Muslim vs. nationalist) distribution within each country and across the four countries differs significantly between men and women ( $p=0.015$ ), with less women represented in the study’s nationalist category. The **nationality** (Norway, Denmark, Netherlands or United Kingdom) is evenly distributed in men and women across the four countries ( $p=0.969$ ). As noted throughout the DRIVE project reports, these groups (Muslims, nationalists) were not viewed or treated as comparable, equivalents, or opposites.

## SCL-10 results

**Lower points on this short form of the Symptom Check List with 10 items correspond to having a lower burden of symptoms.** Comparing the **SCL-10 sum** (as a continuous variable) between men and women, men had significantly lower points (mean 14.76 (13.89-15.63 95% C.I.) vs. women 16.31 (15.03-17.60 95% C.I.);  $p=0.011$ ). When



comparing the countries' SCL10 sums, Norway had significantly lower scores compared to the other three countries (Denmark, Netherlands, United Kingdom; p-value <0.001 for all), while Denmark, Netherlands and United Kingdom all were comparable. This indicates that the Norwegian individuals, as a country group, experienced less symptoms than those from the other countries.

The **SCL10** variable was also categorized as a binary variable, **with cut-off at 1.85 points**. There was no significant difference between the sexes, with 84 men (75.7%) and 52 women (74.3) showing scores below the cut-off. With the 1.85 cut-off, there were significantly more nationalists below the cut-off compared to the Muslims (n=49 (84.5%) vs. 87 (70.7%); p=0.046). Further, there were significantly more Norwegian individuals below the 1.85 cut-off compared to the individuals from Denmark, Netherlands or United Kingdom. Findings from the latter three countries did not differ significantly from each other.

### CD RISC-2 results

The other measure that was included in the "Wellness Check", the **CD-RISC-2, consists of two items with higher points indicating a better mental resilience**. Analyses of the **sum of CD RISC-2**, as a continuous variable showed no difference between the sexes; men had a mean value of 6.65 points and women 6.29 points (6.44-6.86 95% C.I. vs. 5.94-6.63 95% C.I.). When comparing the group identities, the Muslims had slightly lower points compared to the nationalists (mean 6.39 (6.16-6.62 95% C.I.) vs. 6.76 (6.45-7.07); p=0.050). There was a trend, although non-significant (p=0.051), towards a better mental resilience in the individuals from the Netherlands, especially compared to the Danish and Norwegian groups.

The **CD RISC-2** instrument has a **cut-off at 6 points**, where scores over the cut-off are indicative of a better mental resilience. Analyses comparing the sexes, group identities and nationalities showed no significant differences. A little more than half of the men and a little less than half of the women (n=62 (55.9%) vs. 34 (48.6%); p=0.339) had scores above the cut-off. In nationalists there were 35 individuals (60.3%) above the cut-off, with the corresponding figure for Muslims being 61 (49.6%; p=0.176). As for the analysis using the CD RISC sum variable, individuals from the Netherlands were close to having significantly better mental resilience compared to the three other countries (n=26 (68.4%) vs. 19 (40.4%) in Norway, 23 (48.95%) in Denmark, and 28 (57.1%) in the United Kingdom; p=0.064).

A secondary analysis of the data across the countries revealed **similar patterns of high distress and lowered resilience for those young people from the sample who would be considered in a pre-clinical category**, meaning that their scores were the same or more severe than those receiving care for mental health dysfunction. It is important to note that the most frequent symptoms involve an interaction of psychological, somatic, and existential components, and that change adaptation is the most depleted resilient factor. The combination of these findings is important for interpreting the results, understanding the consequences of social exclusion, and identifying possible contributing factors towards a "turning inwards" and developing a more excluding (radicalising) worldview function. Though all of the young people in the



study are still functioning in their daily life routines, their resources are being depleted, and if no new resources are provided, their daily life functioning will be affected, not just for the individual but for her/his surroundings. The findings here are in line with the WHO (World Health Organisation, 2024) findings on the social determinants of health in relation to the consequences of social exclusion and discrimination on mental health, and on health in general. Finally, it can be noted that the qualitative findings from the interview code categories outlined above (Social and Emotions and COVID) align with the quantitative findings from the “Wellness Check” regarding the co-existence of high levels of resilience, as well as experiences of stress and anxiety, collected during each young person’s interview. In particular, the findings of both positive and negative emotions and feelings in the same contexts, work and educational contexts as well as with the general public and with some state representatives, coheres with the finding of low resilience related to adjusting to change. That is, the experience of unpredictability in three broad and significant contexts (work, education, general public) - as to whether the encounters will be positive or negative - requires significant levels of resources to prepare for either type of encounter, sometimes both simultaneously. This unpredictability, coupled with not coping well with change, will contribute to the depletion of resilience. Both group identities reported that they curated a wide variety of coping strategies to cope with negative emotions and feelings and the unpredictable nature of their social encounters.



## Chapter 7: Conclusions

---

The DRIVE project, a comprehensive 42-month study, has shed light on the complex dynamics of social exclusion, the development of identity, and the process of radicalisation among Muslim minorities and ethnic majorities in Denmark, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Norway. By utilising a comprehensive and varied methodology that includes interviews, focus groups, and a large scale survey, this research has provided an invaluable understanding of the factors that may contribute to social exclusion, alienation, and extremism in these countries. The project's results emphasise the widespread presence of discrimination, stigmatisation, and marginalisation faced by Muslim minorities in Northwestern Europe. This highlights the immediate need to address the structural and institutional factors that perpetuate these inequalities. We should not underestimate the influence of these experiences on individuals' feelings of belonging, personal identity, and overall well-being, as they create conditions that encourage feelings of isolation and the possibility of radicalization. Meanwhile, the study found that nationalist individuals, although not facing the same extent of institutional bias as their Muslim counterparts, reported feeling disconnected due to perceived exclusion by the political majority and the general public, as well as perceived risks to their national identity, culture, and values. These sentiments often revolve around concerns about cultural decay, the perceived rise of Islamic influence in Europe, and the perceived shortcomings of multiculturalism, which are often entwined with economic inequalities. The intricate interaction of socio-economic, political, and cultural elements in influencing nationalist sentiments, as well as the attractiveness of far-right ideologies, illustrates the diverse nature of the difficulties confronting Northwestern European societies. The increasing prevalence of far-right rhetoric in political and media domains serves to normalise and validate these beliefs, leading to the division of societies based on identity and providing a fertile environment for the expansion of exclusionary and extremist ideologies.

### Summary of Key Findings and Broad Insights

The DRIVE project's findings reveal an intricate network of factors that contribute to social exclusion and may contribute to radical thought patterns but not violent behaviour among Muslim minorities and ethnic majorities in Northwestern Europe. The research highlights the importance of identity formation processes in influencing how individuals feel a sense of belonging and/or exclusion. It reveals that religion plays a significant role in shaping the identity of Muslim participants, intersecting with their cultural, ethnic, and national affiliations. The challenge of harmonising these various identities in the presence of societal pressures and prejudice frequently resulted in self-seclusion coping strategies, which could lead to a sense of estrangement. Many Muslim individuals often



face the challenge of balancing their religious beliefs with the secular norms of the dominant society. This can result in feelings of “double marginalisation” or a sense of not belonging. Younger Muslim generations can struggle to meet family and community expectations while also conforming to society. The demand to integrate or adhere to prevailing cultural standards while also preserving their religious and cultural identities generated a feeling of inner turmoil and inconsistency. Identity struggles, when combined with encounters of discrimination and exclusion, can increase individuals’ susceptibility to radical ideologies that provide a feeling of belonging, purpose, and redemption. In contrast, participants with nationalist views placed greater emphasis on their political identities, which were strongly associated with concepts of cultural and ethnic nationalism. Their sense of belonging was based on a perceived common history, culture, and values, which they believed were at risk due to immigration, multiculturalism, and the increasing presence of minority communities, especially Muslims. Respondents with nationalist views frequently defined their identities by contrasting themselves with the “other,” creating a narrative that emphasised the distinction between “us” and “them.”

The results also highlight the significance of emotions and feelings related to negative and positive experiences that can promote resilience, exclusion, and a sense of not belonging, sometimes both in the same context. Compared to their nationalist counterparts, Muslim participants reported a higher number of negative encounters with the general population and had fewer positive social relationships with members of the general and majority populations. This finding reaffirms the influence of systemic discrimination and marginalisation on individual well-being and sense of belonging. Many Muslim participants reported instances of social exclusion, sensations of being different, and concealing aspects of their identities in different contexts as strategies to prevent or avoid hostility and bias. Nationalists also expressed a sense of social exclusion, not belonging, and described instances of hostility or aggression directed towards them, which they perceived as unjust and undeserved. Insufficient positive social connections and supportive networks can worsen feelings of isolation and disconnection, potentially increasing individuals’ vulnerability to radical groups that provide a sense of camaraderie and purpose. Participants who identified as Muslim and expressed strong connections to their religious and cultural communities, along with positive relationships with family and friends, demonstrated higher levels of resilience and coping abilities when confronted with challenges. These findings highlight the significance of advocating for social inclusion, establishing connections between communities, and cultivating a sense of belonging as crucial tactics for preventing the potential for radicalisation over the long term. Nationalist participants, while voicing apprehensions about the gradual breakdown of social unity, described a feeling of fellowship and belonging within their political spheres. The collective feeling of resentment, combined with the affirmation of their perspectives within closed communities, can generate a potent sense of unity and inclusion. Nevertheless, the strong unity within the in-group frequently results in a lack of empathy and comprehension towards out-groups, leading to the strengthening of exclusionary beliefs and the reinforcement of a dichotomous mindset of “us” versus “them.”



These findings suggest that social exclusion may have a long-term, broad impact on the potential for extremism. The interactions between structural inequalities, discrimination, and marginalisation, along with challenges to identity and social-emotional vulnerabilities, can create circumstances that may be potentially favourable to radicalisation. Our findings highlight the interactions among different aspects of individual identities, as well as the role of social exclusion and inequalities in the long-term potential development of radical thought patterns, but not violence. Social exclusion operates at various levels, ranging from interpersonal to structural, and these levels interact in intricate and ever-changing manners. Instances of prejudice, social exclusion, and relegation to lower status experienced in personal interactions, educational environments, and public areas can result in feelings of isolation, discontentment, and animosity. Systemic disparities and institutional obstacles may exacerbate these experiences by restricting individual access to education and employment opportunities, health, including mental health resources, and civic influence. Identity threats, such as the perception of cultural erosion, religious discrimination, or doubts about one's sense of belonging, can elicit defensive and reactionary reactions. When individuals face these threats, along with a deficiency in positive social connections with the general population and a lack of other support systems, they may turn to alternative sources of identity and belonging, such as extremist groups that provide a sense of purpose and validation. Exclusionary and discriminatory speech in the public domain, the transformation of identity into a political tool, and the decline of confidence in democratic institutions can all lead to the division of societies and the possible validation of extremist ideologies. Combined with individual-level experiences of exclusion, this may contribute to the potential for extreme thought patterns, but it does not necessarily produce direct violence.

### **Policy Implications: Specific to Each Country and Universal Principles**

The results of the DRIVE project have important policy implications for tackling social exclusion and preventing radicalisation in Denmark, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Norway, as well as in other European settings. Despite the unique social, political, and historical factors that shape exclusion and extremism in each country, we can apply general policy principles to diverse national contexts. The findings in Denmark emphasise the pressing necessity for reflection on the true ramifications of Danish policies and practices, some of which aim to foster integration but may inadvertently exacerbate alienation and polarisation. Additionally, school leadership should evaluate their current initiatives aimed at establishing secure, inclusive, and unbiased learning environments that cater to the needs of all students, irrespective of their religious or cultural heritage, including non-Muslim students with nationalist leanings. The Netherlands encounters substantial obstacles in tackling the discrimination and institutional racism endured by Muslim and other minority communities, specifically concerning integration, refugee, and education policies. Policymakers should prioritise implementing measures that advance fairness, inclusivity, and social justice in these areas. This can encompass measures such as providing anti-bias training for educators and public officials, reeval-



uating integration policies to prioritise social inclusion instead of assimilation, and enhancing support systems for refugees and asylum seekers. Furthermore, the divisive impact of identity politics and the increasing acceptance of far-right ideologies in the Netherlands demand immediate attention. Policymakers should allocate resources towards initiatives that cultivate dialogue, comprehension, and empathy among communities, such as intercultural education programmes, community-based dialogues, and media campaigns that advocate for diversity and inclusion. These efforts should be accompanied by strategies to combat the dissemination of hate speech and extremist propaganda, both in the digital and physical realms.

The results from the United Kingdom emphasise the necessity for comprehensive public mental health promotion and primary prevention measures that enhance the availability of resources at both the community and national levels. These actions would involve addressing the underlying factors that lead to social exclusion and marginalisation, specifically in post-industrial towns and cities that have been severely affected by austerity measures, limited job prospects, and the reduction of community services. It is imperative for policymakers to give utmost importance to investing in community-based programmes and initiatives that prioritise social inclusion, economic empowerment, and youth engagement. These measures should encompass job training and apprenticeship programmes, community development initiatives, and youth mentoring and leadership schemes. Furthermore, it is imperative that immediate action be taken to address the normalisation of Islamophobic narratives in public discourse and policy frameworks in the UK. Policymakers should confront the stigmatisation and securitisation of Muslim communities, which have been intensified by counter-terrorism measures such as the Prevent programme. This can encompass efforts such as reevaluating counter-terrorism strategies to give greater importance to community involvement and assistance, advocating for more favourable portrayals of Muslim communities in media and political discussions, and enhancing legislation against hate crimes. Counter-extremism strategies, like Prevent, have mainly targeted Islamist and, to a lesser extent, far-right extremism. However, it is important for security and intelligence professionals to also pay attention to emerging forms of extremism that are characterised by a combination of different values and beliefs rather than being based on specific doctrines. These new forms of extremism should be given more attention in efforts to prevent extremism.

Despite Norway's reputation as an inclusive welfare state, it continues to encounter difficulties in tackling the discrimination and marginalisation faced by Muslims and other minorities in different aspects of life, such as education, employment, and housing. First, policymakers should investigate the structural and systemic factors that contribute to these difficulties. Secondly, there is a need to formulate specific measures that advance inclusivity, counteract discrimination, and cultivate a feeling of belonging for every individual in society. This may encompass endeavours such as providing educators and employers with evidence-based diversity training, fortifying anti-discrimination laws, and advocating for inclusive housing policies. Thirdly, as pointed out by both the young persons in this study and the practitioners interviewed, providing safe spaces for young persons of majority and minority cultural groups to meet as persons and as active citi-



zens of Norway is vital. The recent national commission report on responding to extremism (NOU, 2024) develops these and many other recommendations. Furthermore, the increasing dominance of right-wing lifeviews and different forms of conspiratorial beliefs, especially on digital platforms, necessitate proactive policies to mitigate their dissemination and consequences. It is imperative for policymakers to allocate more resources towards media literacy initiatives that provide individuals, especially young people, with the necessary abilities to analyse online content in a discerning manner and counteract extremist propaganda. It is important to combine this with the creation of counter-narrative strategies that provide alternative perspectives on lifeviews, belonging, identity, and social justice.

In all four countries, policymakers should adopt an intersectional approach to understanding and, as much as possible, resolving social exclusion. This approach recognises that the intricate interplay of various identities, including race, ethnicity, religion, gender, and class, influences individuals' encounters with discrimination and marginalisation. This approach necessitates a departure from isolated and simplistic policy frameworks towards comprehensive and integrated strategies that tackle the interconnected manifestations of inequality and oppression. Policymakers should actively seek input and cooperation from a wide range of communities to ensure that policies are based on their real-life experiences and effectively address their needs. It is critical to acknowledge that certain factors contributing to social exclusion are beyond policymakers' control. Politicians, to whom policymakers are accountable, may either deeply ingrain these factors in human nature or create them.

## Similarities and differences across countries and added value

A critical comparative analysis of social exclusion dynamics across Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom reveals complex patterns of institutional marginalisation and resistance that operate through interconnected mechanisms at micro, meso, and macro levels. The findings demonstrate remarkable consistency in how Muslim populations across these contexts experience systematic forms of exclusion, albeit through locally specific manifestations shaped by distinct national political cultures and institutional arrangements. In all four countries, Muslims report pervasive experiences of discrimination and microaggressions in educational settings, employment contexts, and public spaces, pointing to deeply embedded structural inequalities that transcend national boundaries. However, the precise contours of exclusion vary significantly - in Denmark and Norway, state policies around “ghetto plans” and hijab restrictions compound experiences of alienation, while in the UK and Netherlands, issues of surveillance and securitisation emerge as particularly salient factors. This variation in institutional practices reflects different historical trajectories of immigration and integration policy, yet produces strikingly similar outcomes in terms of Muslim communities' sense of social and political marginalisation. The consistency of these experiences across diverse national contexts suggests the operation of common



European-wide mechanisms of racialisation and othering that require coordinated transnational responses.

The findings related to nationalist movements and ideologies reveal a more variegated picture that highlights the importance of national political opportunity structures in shaping expressions of nationalist sentiment. While nationalists across all four countries articulate concerns about perceived cultural erosion and demographic change, their political expression and social organisation takes markedly different forms. In Denmark, nationalist parties have achieved significant electoral success and institutional legitimacy, whereas in the UK, nationalist movements remain more marginalised from mainstream politics despite similar underlying grievances. The Netherlands and Norway present intermediate cases where nationalist parties maintain steady support while facing varying degrees of political ostracism. These differences appear to stem from distinct national traditions of dealing with political extremism, varying electoral systems, and different historical experiences with immigration and multiculturalism. However, a common thread across contexts is the way nationalist movements position themselves as defenders of traditional cultural values against what they perceive as the twin threats of immigration and progressive social change, particularly around gender and sexuality. This suggests that while nationalist movements may be nationally bounded in their immediate expression, they draw on and contribute to broader European and global discourses of cultural anxiety and resistance to cosmopolitan values.

From a methodological perspective, the project's four-country comparative framework generates crucial insights about the interaction between universal processes of social exclusion and nationally specific institutional arrangements. The research reveals how similar underlying dynamics of marginalisation and resistance manifest differently depending on local political cultures, policy frameworks, and historical trajectories. This comparative lens enables the identification of both common patterns - such as the consistent role of educational institutions in reproducing social exclusion - and important variations in how these patterns play out across contexts. Moreover, the multi-level analytical approach, examining micro-level experiences alongside meso-level institutional practices and macro-level political structures, illuminates the complex ways in which different scales of social organisation interact to produce and maintain patterns of exclusion. This methodological sophistication allows for a more nuanced understanding of how abstract social processes materialise in concrete institutional settings and lived experiences across different European contexts.

The research findings have significant implications for European policy approaches to social inclusion and counter-radicalisation. The consistent patterns of exclusion experienced by Muslim communities across all four countries, despite varying national policy frameworks, suggests the need for coordinated European-level responses that address structural dimensions of marginalisation while remaining sensitive to local contexts. Similarly, the transnational character of nationalist movements, despite their nationally specific manifestations, indicates the importance of European-wide



strategies for promoting social cohesion and countering extremism. The project's findings challenge simplistic policy approaches that focus solely on individual-level interventions or cultural integration, highlighting instead the need for multi-level responses that address institutional practices, political structures, and everyday experiences of exclusion. This European added value emerges not just from the comparative insights generated, but from the way the research reveals common challenges that require coordinated responses while illuminating how such responses must be carefully calibrated to local conditions and institutional arrangements.

## Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Although the DRIVE project offers valuable insights into the dynamics of social exclusion and radicalisation in Northwestern Europe, it is crucial to recognise its limitations and pinpoint areas for future research. The qualitative nature of the study, although providing in-depth and subtle insights, may restrict the applicability of the findings to broader populations or contexts. The DRIVE project's use of qualitative methods, such as interviews and focus groups, has facilitated a profound and contextual understanding of Muslim and nationalist individuals' experiences and viewpoints in the four countries under investigation. However, the relatively small sample sizes and the use of non-random sampling techniques may limit the findings' applicability to broader populations or contexts. To validate and expand on the findings of this study, future research could use larger-scale and representative sampling methods. This would improve the external validity of the findings and make them more applicable to different settings. Furthermore, the DRIVE project's cross-sectional design, which entails gathering data from participants at a specific moment, may not comprehensively capture the dynamic and evolving nature of social exclusion and radicalisation processes. Intricate and fluctuating social, political, and historical factors frequently influence these phenomena, developing gradually, particularly in the context of international relations. We conducted our research during a period of relative calm, following the decline of public attention towards 9/11 and the War on Terror, and prior to the escalation of tensions caused by events in Gaza. Future research should consider implementing longitudinal designs that track participants over extended periods of time, allowing for a more comprehensive comprehension of the patterns and routes of exclusion and radicalisation. These designs could also provide insight into the lasting effects of interventions and policies that aim to foster social inclusion and prevent extremism.

The study primarily concentrates on Muslim minorities and ethnic majority populations, possibly disregarding the experiences of other marginalised groups or the interconnectedness of identities beyond religion and ethnicity. Although the DRIVE project offers valuable insights into the experiences of Muslim minorities and ethnic majority populations in Northwestern Europe, it may inadvertently neglect the experiences of other marginalised communities, such as Roma, non-Muslim refugees and immigrants, or LGBTQ+ individuals. Furthermore, the study's focus on religious and ethnic identities may not comprehensively encompass the interconnectedness of identities and how other factors, such as gender, class, or sexuality, influence individuals' encounters with



exclusion and radicalisation. Future research should employ an intersectional approach to examine the experiences of various marginalised groups and the intricate interplay of their multiple identities in influencing their susceptibility or resilience to extremism. The DRIVE project's understanding of radicalisation and extremism, although based on existing research, may not completely encompass the intricacy and multifaceted nature of these phenomena. Radicalisation and extremism are frequently debated and politically charged concepts, with differing definitions and understandings in academic, policy, and public discussions. Future research should conduct more rigorous and thoughtful examinations of these concepts, investigating their historical and ideological foundations, their various expressions in different situations, and their consequences for policy and practice. This theoretical refinement has the potential to enhance the development of more sophisticated and contextually-responsive frameworks for comprehending and tackling radicalisation and extremism.

## Contribution and Actionable Recommendations

The DRIVE project provides substantial contributions to the scholarly comprehension of social exclusion and radicalisation in Northwestern Europe while also offering practical and implementable insights for policymakers and practitioners involved in the counter-extremism domain. The study emphasises the importance of identity formation processes and the influence of identity politics in shaping feelings of belonging and exclusion. This contributes to ongoing theoretical discussions on the ecological, psychological, and social aspects of radicalisation. The findings of the DRIVE project emphasise the significant impact of identity formation processes and identity politics on individuals' experiences of belonging and exclusion, as well as their susceptibility or ability to withstand radicalisation. The study examines the intricate relationships between religious, ethnic, cultural, and political identities in the lives of Muslim and nationalist individuals. It adds to the ongoing theoretical discussions on the psychological and social aspects of radicalisation. Additionally, the research provides insight into how identity politics, within both minority and majority groups, can contribute to polarisation, exclusion, and extremism. This emphasises the need for a more detailed and analytical exploration of these dynamics in the study of radicalisation. The results question oversimplified ideas of reciprocal radicalisation and the "mirror image" hypothesis, highlighting the importance of a more sophisticated comprehension of the unique factors and mechanisms behind Islamist and far-right extremism. The study recognises that there are cases of reactive mobilisation and the adoption of each other's strategies and stories. However, it highlights the importance of developing a more detailed comprehension of the unique motivations, dynamics, and expressions of these two types of extremism. The findings emphasise the involvement of non-radical Muslims in isolating individuals from the dominant ethnic group, as well as the involvement of non-radical members of that group in isolating Muslims. The study also emphasised the government's role in marginalising Muslims when it succumbs to political pressure from voters leaning towards nationalist stances.



The findings of the DRIVE project emphasise the pivotal role of structural and institutional factors in influencing individuals' encounters with exclusion and discrimination, as well as the potential of these experiences to lead to problematic thought patterns but not violence. The study adds to the important conversations about the social and political factors that might help or hurt the growth of radical ideas but not violence. It does this by looking at the results of policies, practices, and conversations about identity, citizenship, security, and integration. The results question explanations of radicalisation that focus on individualism and pathologisation, highlighting the importance of considering individuals' experiences and decisions within larger frameworks of power, inequality, and oppression. Additionally, the study highlights the significance of considering the unintended repercussions of counter-terrorism, counter-radicalisation, and integration strategies, which might unintentionally contribute to exclusion, stigmatisation, and polarisation, thereby reinforcing social exclusion and inequalities, with the potential to contribute to extremism. Close collaboration and partnership among researchers, policymakers, and civil society organisations are essential for effective counter-extremism strategies. The DRIVE project's findings underscore the importance of fostering these partnerships to ensure that policies and interventions are evidence-based, contextually specific, and responsive to the needs and perspectives of the impacted communities. This can include collaborative research efforts, policy discussions, and community involvement forums that bring various stakeholders together to exchange knowledge, perspectives, and exemplary approaches. We should establish these collaborations on the foundations of trust, openness, and mutual regard, acknowledging the unique roles, knowledge, and priorities of each participant. Furthermore, it is necessary that these partnerships give utmost importance to the participation and empowerment of marginalised and vulnerable communities. This entails ensuring that their perspectives and lived experiences play a central role in the development, execution, and assessment of counter-extremism tactics.

To prevent and counter radicalisation, it is necessary to engage in an ongoing and comprehensive public discussion about the intricate matters of social exclusion, identity, and belonging. The DRIVE project's findings underscore the importance of creating spaces that acknowledge and value a variety of voices and perspectives, fostering a culture that values transparency, empathy, and mutual understanding. This can encompass endeavours such as community forums, public debates, and arts-oriented projects that unite individuals from diverse backgrounds to exchange their experiences, difficulties, and aspirations. Competent and unbiased moderators should lead these discussions, ensuring that all participants feel secure, valued, and empowered to make contributions. Furthermore, these discussions should be connected to wider initiatives aimed at fostering social unity, active citizen involvement, and the revitalisation of democracy by tackling the underlying structural and institutional obstacles that sustain exclusion and division.

Ultimately, the DRIVE project offers insights into some of the intricate dynamics of social exclusion and potential long-term contributors to radicalisation within Muslim minorities and ethnic majorities in Denmark, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and



Norway. This study contributes to theoretical and empirical debates on the eco-bio-psychosocial dimensions of radicalisation by synthesising the key findings. The findings of this study emphasise the importance of comprehensive, community-centred strategies that tackle the underlying structural and institutional factors that can lead to exclusion and marginalisation. As a result, policy implications and practical recommendations should prioritise these approaches. Although recognising the study's constraints, the findings produced by the DRIVE project establish the foundation for future investigations and evidence-supported interventions aimed at promoting inclusive and resilient societies in Northwestern Europe and other regions.

The findings of the DRIVE project emphasise the immediate necessity for a fundamental change in our analyses and strategy regarding the connection between social exclusion and potential long-term developments towards extremism. Instead of considering these phenomena as distinct and isolated, it is critical to acknowledge their profound origins and interconnections within the intricate interplay of social, political, economic, public health, public mental health, and cultural elements that influence individuals' sense of belonging, identity, and ability to act. This necessitates a profound realignment of our policies, practices, and discussions, transcending limited, security-oriented interventions towards a proactive and empowering approach that begins to tackle some of the root causes of exclusion, inequalities, and polarisation.

At the core of this fundamental change is the necessity to prioritise the inclusion and empowerment of marginalised and vulnerable communities, specifically Muslim minorities and certain groups within the ethnic majority, in the development, execution, and assessment of counter-extremism tactics. It is necessary to carefully consider the influence of power dynamics and biases on our own viewpoints and actions as researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. We must be open to questioning and changing the structures and systems that maintain inequality and injustice, to the best of our ability, within a democratic framework that holds policymakers and practitioners accountable to their political superiors. Significant political issues necessitate political resolutions and cannot be effectively addressed through administrative measures.

Furthermore, this fundamental change requires acknowledging the interconnected and situational character of radicalisation and extremism, as well as the necessity for customised, flexible, and prompt actions that tackle the distinct requirements and difficulties of various communities and individuals. This entails a shift from uniform and authoritative methods to a more adaptable and inclusive approach to prevention and building resilience. It emphasises the involvement of various stakeholders and sectors, harnessing their strengths and resources.

The insights and recommendations produced by the DRIVE project ultimately serve as a compelling call to action for individuals dedicated to constructing a fair, comprehensive, and harmonious society. By acknowledging and accepting the intricate and varied range of human experiences and by collaborating to dismantle the obstacles that separate us, we can establish the circumstances for every individual and community to flourish, irrespective of their origins or characteristics. Reducing social exclusion and inequalities, and promoting trust and belonging, is not only a moral obligation but also a



strategic requirement. The future stability and prosperity of our societies rely on our capacity to promote these values in the midst of increasing polarisation and extremism.



## References

---

- Abbas, T., 2016. Ethnicity and politics in contextualising far right and Islamist extremism. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 10(3), pp.54-61.
- Abbas, T., 2019. *Islamophobia and radicalisation: A vicious cycle*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Abbas, T., 2020. Far right and Islamist radicalisation in an age of austerity: A review of sociological trends and implications for policy. *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism*.
- Ager, A., Strang, A., and Abebe, B., 2005. Conceptualizing community development in war-affected populations: illustrations from Tigray. *Community Development Journal*, 40(2), pp.158-168.
- Aggarwal, N.K., 2019. Media psychiatry: The role of mental health professionals in countering violent extremism. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 53(11), pp.1142-1143.
- Ahmed, U., 2023. Reflections on racialisation's impact on research: Insights from a study of Muslim radicalisation in Norway. *Current Sociology*, 0(0).
- Alava, S., Frau-Meigs, D. and Hassan, G., 2017. *Youth and violent extremism on social media: mapping the research*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.
- Alcalá, H.E., Sharif, M.Z. and Samari, G., 2017. Social determinants of health, violent radicalization, and terrorism: a public health perspective. *Health equity*, 1(1), pp.87-95.
- Aly, A., Macdonald, S., Jarvis, L. and Chen, T.M., 2017. Introduction to the special issue: Terrorist online propaganda and radicalization. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 40(1), pp.1-9.
- Andrews Fearon, P. and Boyd-MacMillan, E.M., 2016. Complexity under stress: Integrative approaches to overdetermined vulnerabilities. *Journal of Strategic Security*, 9(4), pp.11-31.
- Anjum, S., McVittie, C. and McKinlay, A., 2019. It's not quite cricket: Muslim immigrants' accounts of integration into UK society. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 49(1), pp.88-103.
- Archer, T., 2013. Breivik's mindset: The counterjihad and the new transatlantic anti-Muslim right. In: M. Taylor, P.M. Currie and D. Holbrook, eds. *Extreme right wing political violence and terrorism*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Arksey, H. and Knight, P.T., 1999. *Interviewing for social scientists: An introductory resource with examples*. London: Sage.
- Atran, S., 2021. Psychology of transnational terrorism and extreme political conflict. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 72, pp.471-501.



- Avramidis, G., Galanopoulos, G., Tsoutsos, D., Kelekis-Kelekis, A., Ioannidis, D., Pastalidis, C., Patirakis, M., Magoulas, C., Stampolidis, N. and Ioannovich, J., 2019. Data analysis of burn patients hospitalized in Greece from 2008 to 2015. *Annals of burns and fire disasters*, 32(4), p.289.
- Bailey, D.H. and Jones, S.M., 2019. Cognitive and approaches to self-regulation have unique relationships with diverse outcomes in children. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 60(9), pp.1029-1041.
- Bailey, G. and Edwards, P., 2006. Rethinking 'the social': towards a politics of social quality. *Contemporary Politics*, 12(1), pp.17-33.
- Baker, J., 2011. *Arguing for evolution: An encyclopedia for understanding science*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO.
- Baker-Brown, G., Ballard, E.J., Bluck, S., de Vries, B., Suedfeld, P. and Tetlock, P.E., 1992. The conceptual/integrative complexity scoring manual. In: C.P. Smith, ed. *Motivation and personality: Handbook of thematic content analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.401-418.
- Bangstad, S., 2016. Islamophobia: What's in a Name? *Journal of Muslims in Europe*, 5(2), pp.145-169.
- Bartlett, J. and Birdwell, J., 2013. *Cumulative radicalisation between the far-right and Islamist groups in the UK: A review of evidence*. London: Demos.
- Bat Ye'or, 2004. *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.
- Benet-Martínez, V. and Haritatos, J., 2005. Bicultural identity integration (BII): Components and psychosocial antecedents. *Journal of personality*, 73(4), pp.1015-1050.
- Bergema, R. and van San, M., 2019. Waves of the Black Banner: An Exploratory Study on the Dutch Jihadist Foreign Fighter Contingent in Syria and Iraq. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 42(7), pp.636-661.
- Berry, J.W., 1997. Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied psychology*, 46(1), pp.5-34.
- Betancourt, T.S. and Khan, K.T., 2008. The mental health of children affected by armed conflict: Protective processes and pathways to resilience. *International review of psychiatry*, 20(3), pp.317-328.
- Bhui, K. and Jones, E., 2017. The challenge of radicalisation: a public health approach to understanding and intervention. *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy*, 31(4), pp.401-410.
- Bhui, K., Everitt, B. and Jones, E., 2014. Might depression, psychosocial adversity, and limited social assets explain vulnerability to and resistance against violent radicalisation?. *PloS one*, 9(9), p.e105918.
- Bitsch Christensen, S., 2005. *Den moderne by*. Danske bystudier, 4.
- Bjørge, T. and Gjelsvik, I.M., 2015. *Forskning på forebygging av radikaliserings og voldelig ekstremisme: En kunnskapsstatus*. Oslo: Politihøgskolen.



- Bjørge, T. and Ravndal, J.A., 2019. Extreme-right violence and terrorism: Concepts, patterns, and responses. ICCT Policy Brief, 12.
- Bjørge, T., 2009. Processes of disengagement from violent groups of the extreme right. In: T. Bjørge and J. Horgan, eds. Leaving terrorism behind. Abingdon: Routledge, pp.48-66.
- Bjørge, T., 2011. Dreams and disillusionment: Engagement in and disengagement from militant extremist groups. *Crime, law and social change*, 55(4), pp.277-285.
- Borum, R., 2011. Radicalization into violent extremism I: A review of social science theories. *Journal of strategic security*, 4(4), pp.7-36.
- Boyd-MacMillan, E.M. and DeMarinis, V., 2020. Learning Passport: Curriculum Framework (IC-ADAPT SEL High). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Boyd-MacMillan, E.M., Fearon, P., Ptolomey, A.M. and Mathieson, L., 2016. I SEE! Scotland: Tackling sectarianism and promoting community psychosocial health. *Journal of Strategic Security*, 9(4), pp.53-78.
- Brodbeck, F.C., Kugler, K.G., Fischer, J.A., Heinze, J., and Fischer, D., 2021. Group-level integrative complexity: Enhancing differentiation and integration in group decision-making. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 24(1), pp. 125-144.
- Bronfenbrenner, U., 1979. The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design. Cambridge: Harvard university press.
- Buuren, J. van, 2016. Doomed to fail: A critical assessment of the Dutch national counterterrorism strategy. Leiden: Leiden University.
- Campion, J., Bhui, K. and Bhugra, D., 2012. European Psychiatric Association (EPA) guidance on prevention of mental disorders. *European Psychiatry*, 27(2), pp.68-80.
- Centraal Planbureau, 2019. Inkomensongelijkheid naar migratieachtergrond. CPB Policy Brief. The Hague: Centraal Planbureau.
- Cetrez, Ö., DeMarinis, V., Pettersson, J. and Shakra, M., 2021. Integration Policies, Practices and Experiences: Sweden Country Report. Zenodo.
- Change Institute, 2008. Studies into violent radicalisation: The beliefs, ideologies and narratives. London: Change Institute.
- Coleman, S. and Von Hellermann, P. eds., 2012. Multi-sited ethnography: Problems and possibilities in the translocation of research methods. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Conway, L.G. and Conway, K.R., 2011. The terrorist rhetorical style and its consequences for understanding terrorist violence. *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, 4(2), pp.175-192.
- Conway, L.G., Suedfeld, P. and Tetlock, P.E., 2008. The psychology of political rhetoric. New York: Psychology Press.
- Conway, M., 2017. Determining the role of the internet in violent extremism and terrorism: Six suggestions for progressing research. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 40(1), pp.77-98.
- Corbin, J. and Strauss, A., 2008. Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory. Thousand Oaks: Sage publications.
- Cox, J.L., 2013. The invention of God in indigenous societies. Abingdon: Routledge.



- Crenshaw, K., 1989. Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), p.139.
- Creswell, J.W. and Plano Clark, V.L., 2011. *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage publications.
- Crettiez, X. and Barros, Y., 2019. The Radicalization of Young Muslims in France: A Sociological Approach. *European Journal of Sociology/Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, 60(2), pp.237-267.
- Dalgaard-Nielsen, A., 2010. Violent radicalization in Europe: What we know and what we do not know. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 33(9), pp.797-814.
- Davies, G., Neudecker, C., Ouellet, M., Bouchard, M. and Ducol, B., 2016. Toward a framework understanding of online programs for countering violent extremism. *Journal for Deradicalization*, (6), pp.51-86.
- DeMarinis, V. and Boyd-MacMillan, E., 2019. A mental health approach to understanding violent extremism. RAN Centre of Excellence.
- DeMarinis, V., 2018. Public mental health promotion, and the prophecy of failure. In: L. Beddoe and J. Maidment, eds. *Public Mental Health: Global Perspectives*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp.255-261.
- Denoeux, G. and Carter, L., 2009. *Guide to the drivers of violent extremism*. Washington, DC: USAID.
- Devji, F., 2008. *The terrorist in search of humanity: militant Islam and global politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Dixon, J.C. and Joly, D., 2021. The role of social relationships in explaining anti-immigrant attitudes. *International Journal of Sociology*, 51(2), pp.124-145.
- Doosje, B., Loseman, A. and van den Bos, K., 2013. Determinants of radicalization of Islamic youth in the Netherlands: Personal uncertainty, perceived injustice, and perceived group threat. *Journal of Social Issues*, 69(3), pp.586-604.
- du Bois, C., Buts, C., Raeymaeckers, P. and Verleye, G., 2019. *Deradicalization: Scientific insights for policy*. Brussels: Flemish Peace Institute.
- Duyvendak, J.W. and Scholten, P., 2010. The invention of the Dutch multicultural model and its effects on integration discourses in the Netherlands. *Perspectives on Europe*, 40(2), pp.39-45.
- Eatwell, R., 2006. Community cohesion and cumulative extremism in contemporary Britain. *The Political Quarterly*, 77(2), pp.204-216.
- Ebner, J., 2017. *The rage: The vicious circle of Islamist and far-right extremism*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Edwards, L., 2021. The impact of Boris Johnson's comments about Muslim women. *The Conversation*. [online] Available at: <<https://theconversation.com/the-impact-of-boris-johnsons-comments-about-muslim-women-161817>> [Accessed 14 July 2024].



- Edwards, R.W., Jumper-Thurman, P., Plested, B.A., Oetting, E.R. and Swanson, L., 2000. Community readiness: Research to practice. *Journal of community psychology*, 28(3), pp.291-307.
- Enstad, J.D., 2017. "Glory to Breivik!": The Russian Far Right and the 2011 Norway Attacks. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 29(5), pp.773-792.
- Eriksen, T.H., 2013. *Immigration and National Identity in Norway*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.
- Essed, P. and Nimako, K., 2006. Designs and (co) incidents: Cultures of scholarship and public policy on immigrants/minorities in the Netherlands. *International journal of comparative sociology*, 47(3-4), pp.281-312.
- Fekete, L., 2009. *A suitable enemy: Racism, migration and Islamophobia in Europe*. London: Pluto Press.
- Field, A., 2009. *Discovering statistics using SPSS*. London: Sage publications.
- Froio, C. and Ganesh, B., 2018. The transnationalisation of far right discourse on Twitter. *European Societies*, 20(3), pp.371-388.
- Gambetta, D. and Hertog, S., 2009. Why are there so many Engineers among Islamic Radicals?. *European Journal of Sociology/Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, 50(2), pp.201-230.
- Gupta, A. and Ferguson, J., 1997. *Anthropological locations: Boundaries and grounds of a field science*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gurr, T.R., 1970. *Why men rebel*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Halikiopoulou, D., 2017. A right-wing populist momentum? A review of 2017 elections across Europe. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 56(S1), pp.63-73.
- Hamid, S., 2017. *Islamic exceptionalism: how the struggle over Islam is reshaping the world*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Hardy, K., 2018. Comparing theories of radicalisation with countering violent extremism policy. *Journal for Deradicalization*, (15), pp.76-110.
- Harris, D.J., Simi, P. and Ligon, G., 2016. Reporting practices of journal articles that include interviews with extremists. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 39(7-8), pp.602-616.
- Hassan, G., Rousseau, C. and Moreau, N., 2020. Adversité et résilience: parcours d'adolescents réfugiés. *Le Carnet PSY*, (3), pp.28-31.
- Haw, K., 2009. From hijab to jilbab and the 'myth' of British identity: being Muslim in contemporary Britain a half-generation on. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 12(3), pp.363-378.
- Hemmingsen, A.S., 2011. Salafi Jihadism: Relying on fieldwork to study unorganized and clandestine phenomena. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 34(7), pp.1201-1215.
- Hemmingsen, A.S., 2012. *Anti-democratic and violence-promoting environments in Denmark that subscribe to Islamist ideology*. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies.



- Hemmingsen, A.S., 2016. An introduction to the Danish approach to countering and preventing extremism and radicalization. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies.
- Hermansen, A.S., Hundebo, P.O. and Birkelund, G.E., 2022. Spatial Assimilation at a Halt? Intergenerational Persistence in Neighborhood Contexts among Immigrant Minorities in Norway. *International Migration Review*, 56(4), pp.1069-1106.
- Heyes, C., 2020. Identity politics. In: E.N. Zalta, ed. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. [online] Stanford: Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. Available at: <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/identity-politics/>> [Accessed 14 July 2024].
- Hoffman, C. and Moe, V., 2017. Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims in Norway 2017: Population survey and minority study. Oslo: Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities.
- Horgan, J., 2005. *The psychology of terrorism*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Horst, C., 2009. Expanding sites: The question of 'depth' explored. In: M-A. Falzon, ed. *Multi-sited ethnography: Theory, praxis and locality in contemporary research*. Farnham: Ashgate, pp.119-134.
- Houck, S.C., Repke, M.A. and Conway III, L.G., 2017. Understanding what makes terrorist groups' propaganda effective: An integrative complexity analysis of ISIL and Al Qaeda. *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, 12(2), pp.105-118.
- Hunt, E., Franz, J. and Nigbur, D., 2021. Exploring British Muslim identity through social representations theory: A review of literature and future research directions. *Social Psychology*, 52(3), pp.186-197.
- Hussain, E., 2007. *The Islamist: Why I joined radical Islam in Britain, what I saw inside and why I left*. London: Penguin UK.
- Janmohamed, S., 2016. *Generation M: young Muslims changing the world*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Janoff-Bulman, R., 2010. *Shattered assumptions*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Jasko, K., Szastok, M., Grzymala-Moszczyńska, J., Maj, M. and Kruglanski, A.W., 2020. Rebel with a cause: Personal significance from political activism predicts willingness to self-sacrifice. *Journal of Social Issues*, 76(3), pp.456-483.
- Jensen, S.Q. and Larsen, J.F., 2021. Sociological perspectives on Islamist radicalization—bridging the micro/macro gap. *European Journal of Criminology*, 18(4), pp.620-639.
- Johnson, B., 2018. Denmark has got it wrong. Yes, the burka is oppressive and ridiculous – but that's still no reason to ban it. *The Telegraph*, 5 August.
- Jones, S.G., 2017. The wave that's still building: European jihadists in Syria and Iraq. *CTC Sentinel*, 10(3), pp.1-8.
- Kalra, G., Christodoulou, G., Jenkins, R., Tsipas, V., Christodoulou, N., Lecic-Tosevski, D., Mezzich, J. and Bhugra, D., 2012. Mental health promotion: guidance and strategies. *European Psychiatry*, 27(2), pp.81-86.



- Karpantschov, R. and Mikkelsen, F., 2017. The rise and transformation of the radical right movement in Denmark, 1980–2015. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 40(8), pp.712-730.
- Khalil, J. and Zeuthen, M., 2016. Countering violent extremism and risk reduction: A guide to programme design and evaluation. *Whitehall Report*, 2(16).
- Khosravinik, M., 2017. Right wing populism in the West: Social media discourse and echo chambers. *Insight Turkey*, 19(3), pp.53-68.
- Koehler, D., 2014. The radical online: Individual radicalization processes and the role of the Internet. *Journal for Deradicalization*, (1), pp.116-134.
- Kugler, K.G. and Coleman, P.T., 2020. Get complicated: The effects of complexity on conversations over potentially intractable moral conflicts. *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research*, 13(3), pp.211-230.
- Kundnani, A., 2012. Radicalisation: the journey of a concept. *Race & Class*, 54(2), pp.3-25.
- Kundnani, A., 2014. *The Muslims are coming!: Islamophobia, extremism, and the domestic war on terror*. London: Verso Books.
- Küpper, B., Wolf, C. and Zick, A., 2010. Social status and anti-immigrant attitudes in Europe: An examination from the perspective of social dominance theory. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence (IJCV)*, 4(2), pp.205-219.
- Laqueur, W., 1999. *The new terrorism: Fanaticism and the arms of mass destruction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lee, B. and Knott, K., 2020. Fascist aspirants: Fascist Forge and ideological learning in the extreme-right online milieu. *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, 12(4), pp.247-264.
- Liht, J., Suedfeld, P. and Krawczyk, A., 2005. Integrative complexity in face-to-face negotiations between the Chiapas guerrillas and the Mexican government. *Political Psychology*, 26(4), pp.543-552.
- Lyons-Padilla, S., Gelfand, M.J., Mirahmadi, H., Farooq, M. and van Egmond, M., 2015. Belonging nowhere: Marginalization & radicalization risk among Muslim immigrants. *Behavioral Science & Policy*, 1(2), pp.1-12.
- Macken, A., Aly, A. and Mahmood, M., 2022. Spatial exclusion and identity: a case study of Muslims in Sydney, Australia. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 42(1), pp.1-18.
- Macklin, G., 2020. The Evolution of Extreme-Right Terrorism and Efforts to Counter It in the United Kingdom. *CTC Sentinel*, 12(1), pp.15-20.
- Marcus, G.E., 1995. Ethnography in/of the world system: The emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual review of anthropology*, 24(1), pp.95-117.
- Marzouki, N., 2016. *Islam: An American Religion*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- McCauley, C. and Moskalenko, S., 2011. *Friction: How radicalization happens to them and us*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Merton, R.K., 1938. Social structure and anomie. *American sociological review*, 3(5), pp.672-682.



- Midtbøen, A.H., 2013. The invisible second generation? Statistical discrimination and immigrant stereotypes in employment processes in Norway. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 40(10), pp.1657-1675.
- Minkler, M. and Wallerstein, N. eds., 2008. *Community-based participatory research for health: From process to outcomes*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.
- Modood, T., 2005. *Multicultural politics: Racism, ethnicity, and Muslims in Britain*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Moghaddam, F.M., 2005. The staircase to terrorism: A psychological exploration. *American psychologist*, 60(2), p.161.
- Moghaddam, F.M., 2018. *Mutual radicalization: How groups and nations drive each other to extremes*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Morse, J.M. and Niehaus, L., 2009. *Mixed method design: Principles and procedures*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.
- Moskalenko, S. and McCauley, C., 2008. Measuring political mobilization: The distinction between activism and radicalism. *Terrorism and political violence*, 20(2), pp.239-260.
- Mudde, C., 2007. *Populist radical right parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mughal, A.W., Casey, A. and Newton, A., 2023. Public mental health approaches to online radicalisation: An empty systematic review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(5), p.4078.
- Mustafa, A., 2017. Religious practices and long-term development: The role of British Muslim identity in promoting political engagement and integration. *Review of Faith & International Affairs*, 15(2), pp.75-86.
- Musterd, S., Murie, A. and Kesteloot, C. eds., 2006. *Neighbourhoods of poverty: Urban social exclusion and integration in Europe*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mythen, G. and Walklate, S., 2013. Risk, nichtwissen and fear: searching for solidity in liquid times?. In: F. Welz and U. Weisenbacher, eds. *Soziologische Theorie und soziologisches Denken*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS, pp.55-72.
- Mythen, G. and Walklate, S., 2015. *Contradictions of terrorism: Security, risk and resilience*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Mythen, G., 2012. Identities in the third space? Solidity, elasticity and resilience amongst young British Pakistani Muslims. *The British journal of sociology*, 63(3), pp.393-411.
- Mythen, G., Walklate, S. and Khan, F., 2009. 'I'm a Muslim, but I'm not a Terrorist': Victimization, Risky Identities and the Performance of Safety. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 49(6), pp.736-754.
- Nayak, A., 2010. Race, affect, and emotion: young people, racism, and graffiti in the postcolonial English suburbs. *Environment and Planning A*, 42(10), pp.2370-2392.
- Ness, C.D., 2007. The rise in female violence. *Daedalus*, 136(1), pp.84-93.
- Neumann, P.R., 2008. Introduction. In: P.R. Neumann, J. Stoil and D. Esfandiary, eds. *Perspectives on Radicalisation and Political Violence. Papers from the First*



- International Conference on Radicalisation and Political Violence. London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, pp.3-7.
- NOU, 2024. Felles innsats mot ekstremisme: Bedre vilkår for det forebyggende arbeidet [Joint Efforts Against Extremism: Better Conditions for Preventive Work]. Oslo: Norges offentlige utredninger.
- Odag, O., Leiser, A. and Boehnke, K., 2019. Reviewing the role of the Internet in radicalization processes. *Journal for deradicalization*, (21), pp.261-300.
- Park, G. and DeShon, R.P., 2018. Effects of group-discussion integrative complexity on intergroup relations in a social dilemma. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 146, pp.62-75.
- Patalay, P. and Fitzsimons, E., 2016. Correlates of mental illness and wellbeing in children: are they the same? Results from the UK Millennium Cohort Study. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 55(9), pp.771-783.
- Petersen, M.B., Osmundsen, M. and Arceneaux, K., 2018. A "need for chaos" and the sharing of hostile political rumors in advanced democracies. *PsyArXiv Preprints*.
- Powers, M. and Faden, R., 2006. *Social justice: the moral foundations of public health and health policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Powers, M. and Faden, R.R., 2019. *Structural injustice: Power, advantage, and human rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Putnam, R.D., 2000. *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Rogelio, A., Thorshaug, K. and Valenta, M., 2008. *Understanding the causes of radicalisation among youth*. Oslo: Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi).
- Room, G., 1995. *Beyond the threshold: the measurement and analysis of social exclusion*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Roy, O., 2002. *Globalised Islam: The search for a new Ummah*. London: Hurst.
- Roy, O., 2009. *Holy ignorance: When religion and culture part ways*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Runnymede Trust, 2000. *The future of multi-ethnic Britain: report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*. London: Profile Books.
- Rzepnikowska, A., 2019. Racism and xenophobia experienced by Polish migrants in the UK before and after Brexit vote. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(1), pp.61-77.
- Sageman, M., 2008. A strategy for fighting international Islamist terrorists. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 618(1), pp.223-231.
- Sartawi, M. and Sammut, G., 2012. Negotiating British Muslim identity: Everyday concerns of practicing Muslims in London. *Culture & Psychology*, 18(4), pp.559-576.
- Schmid, A.P., 2013. Radicalisation, de-radicalisation, counter-radicalisation: A conceptual discussion and literature review. *ICCT Research Paper*, 97(1), p.22.



- Scholten, P., 2011. Framing immigrant integration: Dutch research-policy dialogues in comparative perspective. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Schönpflug, U., 2001. Intergenerational transmission of values: The role of transmission belts. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 32(2), pp.174-185.
- Schrover, M., 2010. Pillarization, multiculturalism and cultural freezing. Dutch migration history and the enforcement of essentialist ideas. *BMGN-Low Countries Historical Review*, 125(2-3), pp.329-354.
- Scourfield, J., Gilliat-Ray, S., Khan, A. and Otri, S., 2012. Muslim childhood: Religious nurture in a European context. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sedgwick, M., 2010. The concept of radicalization as a source of confusion. *Terrorism and political violence*, 22(4), pp.479-494.
- Sedgwick, M., 2019. Key thinkers of the radical right: Behind the new threat to liberal democracy. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sen, A., 1992. Inequality reexamined. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Sieckelinck, S. and de Winter, M., 2015. Formers and families: Transitional journeys in and out of extremisms in the United Kingdom, Denmark and the Netherlands. The Hague: National Coordinator Security and Counterterrorism.
- Silove, D. and Steel, Z., 2006. Understanding community psychosocial needs after disasters: Implications for mental health services. *Journal of postgraduate medicine*, 52(2), p.121.
- Silove, D., 2000. Trauma and forced relocation. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*, 13(2), pp.231-236.
- Silove, D., 2013. The ADAPT model: a conceptual framework for mental health and psychosocial programming in post conflict settings. *Intervention*, 11(3), pp.237-248.
- Smith, A.G., Suedfeld, P., Conway III, L.G. and Winter, D.G., 2008. The language of violence: Distinguishing terrorist from nonterrorist groups by thematic content analysis. *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, 1(2), pp.142-163.
- Smith, E. and Julie, T., 2015. Islamic Radicalization in Norway: Preventative Actions. International Institute for Counter-Terrorism,(retrieved from <http://www.ict.org.il/Article/1339/Islamic-Radicalization-in-Norway>).
- Smith, L.G., Stohl, M. and al-Gharbi, M., 2019. Discourses on countering violent extremism: The strategic interplay between fear and security after 9/11. *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 12(1), pp.151-168.
- Soufan Group, 2015. Foreign fighters: An updated assessment of the flow of foreign fighters into Syria and Iraq. New York: The Soufan Group.
- Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2024. Innvandrere i Norge 2023 [Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents in Norway 2023]. Oslo: Statistisk Sentralbyrå.
- Stephens, W., Sieckelinck, S. and Boutellier, H., 2021. Preventing violent extremism: A review of the literature. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 44(4), pp.346-361.
- Strand, B.H., Dalgard, O.S., Tambs, K. and Rognerud, M., 2003. Measuring the mental health status of the Norwegian population: a comparison of the instruments SCL-



- 25, SCL-10, SCL-5 and MHI-5 (SF-36). *Nordic journal of psychiatry*, 57(2), pp.113-118.
- Sue, D.W., Capodilupo, C.M., Torino, G.C., Bucceri, J.M., Holder, A., Nadal, K.L. and Esquilin, M., 2007. Racial microaggressions in everyday life: implications for clinical practice. *American psychologist*, 62(4), p.271.
- Suedfeld, P. and Tetlock, P.E., 2014. Integrative complexity at forty: Steps toward resolving the scoring dilemma. *Political Psychology*, 35(5), pp.597-601.
- Suedfeld, P., 2010. The cognitive processing of politics and politicians: Archival studies of conceptual and integrative complexity. *Journal of Personality*, 78(6), pp.1669-1702.
- Suedfeld, P., Cross, R.W. and Logan, C., 2013. Can thematic content analysis separate the pyramid of ideas from the pyramid of action? A comparison among different degrees of commitment to violence. In: L. Cabayan, V. Sitterle and M. Yandura, eds. *Looking Back, Looking Forward: Perspectives on Terrorism and Responses to it. Strategic Multi-Layer Assessment Occasional White Paper*. Washington, DC: Department of Defense, pp.61-68.
- Swami, V., Barron, D., Weis, L. and Furnham, A., 2018. To Brexit or not to Brexit: The roles of Islamophobia, conspiracist beliefs, and integrated threat in voting intentions for the United Kingdom European Union membership referendum. *British Journal of Psychology*, 109(1), pp.156-179.
- Tajfel, H. and Turner, J.C., 1979. An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In: W.G. Austin and S. Worchel, eds. *The social psychology of intergroup relations*. Monterey: Brooks/Cole, pp.33-47.
- Tay, A.K. and Silove, D., 2017. The ADAPT model: bridging the gap between psychosocial and individual responses to mass violence and refugee trauma. *Epidemiology and psychiatric sciences*, 26(2), pp.142-145.
- The Home Office, 2017. Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme, April 2015 to March 2016. *Statistical Bulletin 23/17*. London: Home Office.
- Tierolf, B., Kapel, M. and Hermens, N., 2018. *Vijfde rapportage racisme, antisemitisme en extreemrechts geweld in Nederland*. Utrecht: Verwey-Jonker Instituut.
- Tol, W.A., 2020. Interpersonal violence and mental health: a social justice framework to advance research and practice. *Global Mental Health*, 7, e15.
- Tol, W.A., Barbui, C., Galappatti, A., Silove, D., Betancourt, T.S., Souza, R., Golaz, A. and Van Ommeren, M., 2011. Mental health and psychosocial support in humanitarian settings: linking practice and research. *The Lancet*, 378(9802), pp.1581-1591.
- Townsend, P., 1979. *Poverty in the United Kingdom: a survey of household resources and standards of living*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Trilling, D., 2021. The fall of the red wall. *London Review of Books*, 43(16), pp.25-28.
- Turner, J.C., Hogg, M.A., Oakes, P.J., Reicher, S.D. and Wetherell, M.S., 1987. *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.



- United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2016. End of Mission Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association at the conclusion of his visit to the United Kingdom. Geneva: OHCHR.
- United States Agency for International Development, 2009. Guide to the drivers of violent extremism. Washington, DC: USAID.
- Vaishnavi, S., Connor, K. and Davidson, J.R., 2007. An abbreviated version of the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), the CD-RISC2: Psychometric properties and applications in psychopharmacological trials. *Psychiatry research*, 152(2-3), pp.293-297.
- Veldhuis, T. and Staun, J., 2009. Islamist radicalisation: a root cause model. The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael.
- Versi, M., 2017. The latest Prevent figures show why the strategy needs an independent review. *The Guardian*, 10 November.
- Wagenaar, W., 2020. Factsheet extreemrechts in Nederlandse gemeentes. Amsterdam: Anne Frank Stichting.
- Wagner, A. and Meyer, T.M., 2016. The radical right as niche parties? The ideological landscape of party systems in Western Europe, 1980–2014. *Political Studies*, 65(1\_suppl), pp.84-107.
- Weine, S., Eisenman, D.P., Jackson, L.T., Kinsler, J. and Polutnik, C., 2017a. Utilizing mental health professionals to help prevent the next attacks. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 29(4), pp.334-340.
- Weine, S., Eisenman, D.P., Kinsler, J., Glik, D.C. and Polutnik, C., 2017b. Addressing violent extremism as public health policy and practice. *Behavioral sciences of terrorism and political aggression*, 9(3), pp.208-221.
- Weine, S., Horgan, J., Robertson, C., Loue, S., Mohamed, A. and Noor, S., 2016. Community and family approaches to combating the radicalization and recruitment of Somali-American youth and young adults: A psychosocial perspective. *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, 2(3), pp.181-200.
- Wells, R., Abdullahi, N.A., Rahman, A., Yusuf, N., Akter, K., Hasan, S.I., Rashid, S., McGarry, O. and Coyle, R., 2019. Community readiness assessment for global health: a case study in Salvador, Brazil, for engagement toward tuberculosis control. *Global public health*, 14(4), pp.522-535.
- Wells, R., Abo-Hilal, M., Steel, Z. and Hunt, C., 2018. A systematic review of psychosocial interventions with refugees addressing cultural adaptation, racial discrimination and acculturation. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 16(4), pp.469-494.
- Wells, R., Steel, Z., Abo-Hilal, M., Hassan, A.H. and Lawsin, C., 2016. Psychosocial concerns reported by Syrian refugees living in Jordan: systematic review of unpublished needs assessments. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 209(2), pp.99-106.



- Westerhof, G.J. and Keyes, C.L., 2010. Mental illness and mental health: The two continua model across the lifespan. *Journal of adult development*, 17(2), pp.110-119.
- Wiktorowicz, Q., 2005. *Radical Islam rising: Muslim extremism in the West*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- World Health Organization, 2004. *Promoting mental health: Concepts, emerging evidence, practice: Summary report*. Geneva: World Health Organization.
- World Health Organization, 2016a. *Global strategy on human resources for health: workforce 2030*. Geneva: World Health Organization.
- World Health Organization, 2016b. *mhGAP intervention guide for mental, neurological and substance use disorders in non-specialized health settings: mental health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP)–version 2.0*. Geneva: World Health Organization.
- World Health Organization, 2024. *Social determinants of health*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.who.int/health-topics/social-determinants-of-health>> [Accessed 14 July 2024].
- Wren-Lewis, S. and Alexandrova, A., 2021. Mental health without wellbeing. *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, 46(6), pp.684-703.
- Young, I.M., 1990. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.



## Appendix

---

Original ‘themes’ based on thematic analysis by country-practitioner codes:

### Norway:

- Theme 1. Firsthand experience with exclusion and discrimination
- Theme 2. Lack of belonging and identity struggles
- Theme 3. Barriers in the education system
- Theme 4. Economic marginalisation and poverty
- Theme 5. Importance of parental influence and intergenerational change
- Theme 6. Role models and representation
- Theme 7. Polarisation and reciprocal radicalisation
- Theme 8. Negative portrayals of minorities in media and politics
- Theme 9. Social bonds and sense of community
- Theme 10. Barriers to immigrant employment and social mobility
- Theme 11. Nuances of religious practice and identity
- Theme 12. Mental health and psychosocial risk factors
- Theme 13. Online echo chambers and radicalisation
- Theme 14. Institutional discrimination and unresponsive systems
- Theme 15. Lack of trust in institutions and authorities

### The Netherlands:

- Theme 1. The role of grievances and perceived injustices in radicalisation
- Theme 2. The impact of stigmatisation and discrimination of minority communities
- Theme 3. The role of identity and belonging in attracting individuals to extremism
- Theme 4. The generational dynamics and youth vulnerability to radicalisation
- Theme 5. The evolving and increasingly diffuse nature of extremist movements, including the role of the internet
- Theme 6. The role of online platforms and social media in facilitating radicalisation
- Theme 7. The impact of the social environment and peer influence on the radicalisation process
- Theme 8. Experiences of social exclusion and polarisation as contributing factors to radicalisation
- Theme 9. Family and social support play a protective role in the deradicalisation process
- Theme 10. The importance of education and exposure to a variety of perspectives in facilitating deradicalisation
- Theme 11. The evolving nature of extremist movements and ideologies over time
- Theme 12. The role of online spaces and social media in facilitating radicalisation



- Theme 13. The impact of social exclusion and discrimination on vulnerability to radicalisation
- Theme 14. The protective role of inclusive, multicultural environments in preventing radicalisation
- Theme 15. The normalisation of extremist narratives and lowered thresholds for radicalisation
- Theme 16. Enduring patterns of ethnic and socioeconomic segregation in Dutch cities
- Theme 17. The role of the education system in perpetuating segregation
- Theme 18. The exclusionary impact of post-9/11 anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiment
- Theme 19. The retrenchment of Dutch multiculturalism and embrace of assimilationist policies
- Theme 20. The impact of right-wing politics on funding and support for community-building initiatives
- Theme 21. The role of conspiracy theories and disinformation in driving anti-government sentiment and far right mobilisation
- Theme 22. The complex intersection of legitimate local grievances and far right ideologies
- Theme 23. The normalisation and mainstreaming of extremist narratives in the context of COVID-19
- Theme 24. The role of social media algorithms in amplifying misinformation and extremist content
- Theme 25. The challenges in building trust and “media literacy” to counter disinformation and extremism

#### United Kingdom:

- Theme 1. Perception of grievances is more important than objective socioeconomic conditions in driving radicalisation
- Theme 2. The Internet has made extremist narratives more accessible and persuasive
- Theme 3. Expectations vs. Reality plays a key role in generating grievances
- Theme 4. Reciprocal radicalisation is an overly simplistic concept
- Theme 5. The pandemic created more opportunities for far right mobilisation
- Theme 6. Multidisciplinary Approach to Studying Extremism
- Theme 7. Importance of Environmental Factors in Radicalisation
- Theme 8. Blended Nature of Radicalisation (Online and Offline)
- Theme 9. Importance of Local Context in Counterterrorism Strategies
- Theme 10. Unintended Consequences of Counterterrorism Policies
- Theme 11. Vulnerability and susceptibility to radicalisation
- Theme 12. The role of social isolation and belonging in radicalisation
- Theme 13. The influence of online platforms on radicalisation
- Theme 14. The impact of family relationships on radicalisation
- Theme 15. The relationship between social exclusion, ethnicity, and radicalisation



Denmark:

- Theme 1. Importance of Parents in Radicalisation
- Theme 2. Role of Social Relationships and Groups
- Theme 3. Dual Identity Struggles
- Theme 4. Gaps in Educational Support
- Theme 5. Perceptions of Discrimination and Injustice
- Theme 6. Generational differences in religious and political beliefs
- Theme 7. Social exclusion and marginalisation
- Theme 8. The impact of the local area on radicalisation processes
- Theme 9. The role of parents in radicalisation and prevention
- Theme 10. Mutual radicalisation between groups
- Theme 11. Parental Influence on Radicalisation
- Theme 12. Role of Social Networks and Group Dynamics
- Theme 13. Identity Struggles and Belonging
- Theme 14. Institutional Gaps and Missed Prevention Opportunities
- Theme 15. Transnational Connections and Grievances
- Theme 16. Generational Differences in Religious and Political Beliefs
- Theme 17. Social exclusion and marginalisation
- Theme 18. The Role of Local Communities and Social Institutions
- Theme 19. The Interplay of Online and Offline Spaces
- Theme 20. The Complexity of Identity Formation

