

Abstract

This thesis will provide readers with an in-depth understanding of the root causes and risks factors of Islamic radicalisation in France. It argues that Islamic radicalisation in France cannot solely be explained through one factor. This research argues that mental illnesses, deception, trauma and relative deprivation do not give a solid impetus for individuals to radicalize. Rather, radicalisation in France should be understood as an association of socio-economic, psychological, and political factors. Given the misuse of the term, the first chapter has been dedicated to its definition and to the differences between cognitive and behavioural radicalisation. Such differentiation is necessary for a thorough understanding of the topic. The second chapter gives a clear and concise overview of the different models and theories of radicalisation, contributing to a quick introduction to the different root causes and risk factors of radicalisation. The third chapter consists of a review and analysis of the available literature on the risk factors of radicalisation while the fourth and final chapter consists of an analysis of said factors in light of the French case, ultimately aiming to understand which root causes and risk factors are of high relevance in the case of France.

All in all, this thesis sheds light on a few factors that were not accounted for in the general literature on radicalisation but that are of high importance for understanding the reasons behind the radicalisation processes of individuals in France. Hence, the overall conclusion of this thesis seeks to explain that there are a few issues within the French society that are acting as push factors for individuals to radicalize. A young age, unstable environments, a feeling of humiliation, social networks such as the carceral environment, a feeling of injustice, hatred towards the French foreign policy and military interventions, a search for an ideal, Salafi-jihadism ideology, a clash with the French secularism and assimilationist model and petty crimes are understood as risk factors and root causes of radicalisation in France. Overall, this research restates that radicalisation should be seen as a gradual process explained by various intertwined factors. Said statement leaves hope for counter-terrorism policies: As it is a gradual process, radicalisation can be more or less easily identifiable and stopped at an early stage.