

# Re-integration for returning Belgian Jihadists

How can the Belgian government improve its current approach of dealing with returning jihadists in light of re-integration programmes across Europe?

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## Executive Summary

Since 2011, over 500 Belgian nationals have become radicalised and left Belgium for a Jihadist conflict zone. The Brussel bombings, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2016 were carried out by two Belgian nationals who were also returning Jihadists. This dissertation explores whether Belgium can improve its current approach regarding returning Jihadists in light of re-integration programs across Europe. Through a literature review, two case studies and three in-depth interviews.

The literature review establishes an understanding of why Belgium has the highest amount of Jihadist per capita by a framework of radicalisation. The Framing theory describes how strained environmental conditions in Belgium such as poor integration of Muslim youth and high unemployment cause individuals to become vulnerable and prone to radicalisation. These strained environmental conditions are then framed in ways where Social Islamist movements in Belgium for example Sharia4Belgium to radicalise individuals into becoming Jihadists and facilitate recruitment to their Islamist organisation (Teich, 2016, p. 37). Upon their return these individuals become returning Jihadists. Belgium's current approach in dealing with returning Jihadist is, in short, a crisis centre, Task Force Syria and the Project returnees, the responsibilities are described as an efficient optimal coordination to ensure the information exchange between the local and federal police platform.

The case studies in the findings chapter provide insight in the re-integration programs. The German Hayat method works by educating the relatives about radical argumentation and ideological narratives in order to counter them. The Danish Aarhus method is the prevention of political and religious radicalisation of young people and in addition ensuring these young people are safe and are able to thrive. It also offers after-care for returnees, this includes: debriefing, psychotherapy, medical care, mentoring contacts and participation in the exit programme (J.Lundager Personal communication 1, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, p.5).

The research leads to the following recommendations for Belgium to improve its current approach. It is beneficial to develop a programme that includes family counselling, establish cooperation between police, society and social services, develop an exit strategy for returning Jihadists who are cleared of criminal suspicion, offer Jihadists still in a conflict zone a safe way to return home, improve the strained environmental conditions that can lead to recruitment to a radical group and initiate dialogue with Islamic communities that have previously seen members become radicalised.

## List of Abbreviations

ADIV	the General Intelligence and Security Service of Belgium
AIVD	the Netherlands Intelligence and Security Service
CTA	Centre for Terror analyses
EJP	the East Jutland Police
ICT	the international institute for Counter-Terrorism
IS	the Islamic state
SMT	Social Movement theory
SSP	Schools, Social Services and Police
ZDK	Centre for Democratic Culture

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## **Preface**

I would like to thank my supervisor Isabel Düsterhöft for all the support and advice during the process of writing this dissertation. Furthermore I would like to thank my parents, my family and friends for all of their love and support.

## 1. Introduction

“ The Brussels attacks, which killed at least 31 people and left about 250 others injured, were promptly claimed by the Islamic State, the terrorist group that has unleashed a series of external plots as its territory in Syria and Iraq has begun to shrink. Belgian officials described the devastation as a “black day,” darker than any the country had seen since World War II.”

The Washington post, *How Belgium became the hub of terror in Europe*, 2016

Since the civil war of Syria that started in 2011, Belgium has had over 516 of its citizens leave to fight alongside terrorist group such as The Islamic State, Jabhat al Nusra and Al-Qaeda. Belgium has the highest amount per capita of foreign fighters in Europe (Gidda, 2014, para 1). The Brussel bombings of 2016 were carried out by Ibrahim El Bakraoui and Najim Laachraoui, two Belgian returning Jihadists (NU, 2016). In addition, French authorities have evidence that Abdelhamid Abaaoud, another Belgian national, masterminded the Paris attacks of the 13<sup>th</sup> of November (Breedon, Freytas, Bennhold, 2015, para 1). In addition to this, ISIS propaganda has surfaced in where Belgian Islamic state veterans have warned against new attacks in Europe. After the Brussel bombings, it has become apparent that these threats are serious and that Belgium can improve its current approach to help prevent and avoid these attacks that are carried out by returning Jihadists or Jihadist sympathisers.

Some of these Jihadists such as Abdelhamid Abaaoud return to Belgium and it is a predicament how to handle these Jihadist returnees, not only to Belgium but to other European countries. Recent terror attacks such as the Paris attacks on of November 2015 and the Brussels bombings in March 2016 have shown that Europe is constantly under attack. Experts agree that these returning Jihadists pose a threat: “When you have these large numbers of foreign fighters, ISIS can cherry-pick the best ones to give them training and dispatch them to their home country to carry out attacks,” said Bruce Hoffman, a terrorism expert and director of Georgetown University’s Centre for Security Studies (Graham, 2015, para 1). Daniel Benjamin, a former top counterterrorism official has said that: “The tragedy is that country after country has had to learn this the hard way,” he said, describing the Islamic State’s support network in Belgium as “probably the most fully developed [terror] infrastructure in Europe.” (Miller, Warrick, 2015, para 11). The current Belgian method is still developing. It is a mix of criminalizing returning Jihadists, possibly

removing the returning fighter's Belgian citizenship and the project returnees which includes the Task Force Syria (Carcaci, 2014, art 3).

The rise of terror attacks and the threats of terror attacks in Belgium, such as the Brussels Bombings in March 2016 and multiple foiled attacks have been the inspiration to develop and research the dissertation question: *How can the Belgian government improve its current approach of dealing with returning jihadists in light of re-integration programmes across Europe?*

The main research question concerns two re-integration programmes, which are analysed, described, and compared in a case study. The case study method is applied in order to limit the scope of the research in order to achieve an effective analysis of the re-integration and de-radicalisation programmes. The two methods, the Danish Aarhus method and the German Hayat programme are chosen based on the fact that these programmes are currently the most developed programmes in the field of re-integration and de-radicalisation.

To answer the main dissertation question, this dissertation sets out to answer the following sub-questions:

1. What is the current situation in Belgium with returning Jihadists?
2. What is Belgium's current method?
3. What are advantages and disadvantages of Belgium's current method?
4. What kind of re-integration programmes are there in Europe?
  - A. Case study the Danish Aarhus method
  - b. Case study The German Hayat method
5. How can those re-integration programmes be applied in Belgium?
6. What method or combination of methods would benefit Belgium the most?

In this paragraph the re-integration programmes referred to in sub-question five are briefly explained: The Danish Aarhus method is a project that develops exit talks targeted at young people who are a part of extremist groups. It focusses on helping them find constructive social alternatives to extremist groups rather than punishing them for their behaviour (Danish ministry of Integration, 2011). The Hayat programme is a programme where family counselling can help radical extremists leave the extremist scene. The project consists of experts who can be reached via a helpline. The experts act as a bridge in all directions, mediating between parents, children, schools and imams. If necessary, they contact the police and other authorities (Jansen, 2014, para 4).

In addition, this dissertation addresses the following topics:

Who exactly is a Jihadist and what is a Jihadists motive?

What conditions have lead Belgium citizens to leave and join terrorist groups in the Middle East?

What circumstances are there in Germany when Jihadi fighters return?

What are recent developments on the issue of returning Jihadists in Belgium?

This dissertation will maintain the following structure in order to present the outcome of this research: The first chapter is a Literature Review, in this chapter, key terms are defined and the analytical framework is presented.

The second chapter, the methodology provides an overview of the research methods that are used. The methods used for this dissertation are a combination of desk research and conducting interviews as well as case studies. The methodology section explains and justifies the use of those particular methods.

The findings of the desk research and the interviews are presented in the Results chapter, in addition relevant developing information are added as necessary since this topic is very current and constantly developing. The discussion chapter discusses and links the case study findings in the context of the literature review. Following that chapter the recommendation section lists recommendations based on the findings of this dissertation. Finally, the conclusion chapter summarizes the findings and recommendations of the entire dissertation.

## **2. Literature Review**

This chapter describes the relevant literature used for the construction of this dissertation. This chapter serves to explain all relevant terms and serves to develop sharper and more insightful knowledge on the topic (Yin, 2003, p. 9). Firstly, the term Jihad is defined in order to understand the literature on the topic of returning Jihadists fighters. Secondly this chapter describes and reviews available literature on the current situation regarding Jihadists in Belgium as well as the current Belgian method of dealing with returning Jihadists. Thirdly literature concerning the Germany Hayat method and the Danish Aarhus programme is described and analysed.

### **2.1 The meaning of Jihad**

The word Jihad is mentioned in the Quran, which is the Holy book of people who subscribe to Islam. There are different sects of Islam and in order to understand the term Jihad is, it important to understand the difference. For the purpose of this subchapter, the sects Sunni, Shi'a and Wahhabism Islam will be briefly explained, as these apply most to this dissertation. Sunni Islam is the largest sect of Islam, which believes that the Islamic prophet Muhammed first successor was his companion Abu Bakr (Blanchard, 2006, p. 2). Shi'a Islam does not agree and believes that the Prophet's son in law was the first successor (Blanchard, 2006, p. 2). Wahhabism is a subset of Sunni Islam which refers to a movement that encourages return to the pure and orthodox version of Islam, without any innovations or practices that inconsistent with the seventh-century teachings of the Prophet Muhammed (Blanchard, 2005, p. 4).

Wahhabism is the most fundamentalist sect within the Islamic community and wish for Islamic law known as Sharia Law to be practiced without any alteration, Jihadist groups are usually followers of the Wahhabi sect (Chosky, Chosky, 2015, para 21). Despite differences in practice and interpretation, all three sects share the Quran as their holy book. In the next subchapter the term Jihad will be defined by different Scholars as well as Jihadist terrorist organizations, all of these definitions stem from the Quran. Wahhabism is also referred to as Salafism.

In order to understand who a Jihadist is and what motivates a Jihadist one must first understand what the term Jihad means. The term Jihadism is described by Islamic religion expert Brachman, (2009, p. 5) as a controversial term that refers to the "peripheral current of extremists Islamic thought". These extremists Islamic thoughts demand the use of

violence in order to oust non-Islamic influence from traditionally Muslim lands en route to establishing true Islamic governance in accordance with Sharia, Or God's Law. However the expression's most significant limitation is that it contains the word Jihad (Brachman, 2009, p4). The word Jihad is considered to have multiple different meanings. Brachman (2009, p5) describes the word Jihad as the internal spiritual campaign that one wages with oneself but it could also refer to the act of physically waging warfare in defence of Islam. The encyclopaedia of Islam describes Jihad as: "in law according to general doctrine and in historical tradition, the jihad consists of military action with the object of the expansion of Islam, if need be, of its defence" (Martin, 2004, para 1). This definition is similar to Brachman's, which also connects the term Jihad to the act of physically waging warfare in defence of Islam. However The Quran, the holy book of Islam describes the general term Jihad as: "striving with one's self and one's money in the cause of God". The term Jihad refers to a more general concept of exerting efforts in the way of Allah, which fighting the enemy, or armed jihad, is only one aspect according to Quranic terminology (Fatoohi, 2009, para 13).

Professor Mohamed Sa'id al- Buti of Damascus university describes Jihad as a defensive measure: "it becomes axiomatic that the responsibility for guarding and defending these two possessions [Islam's territorial abode, and the Islamic society] cannot be fulfilled by peaceful Jihad, by tongue or by proclamation. It is a task that can only be achieved by driving back aggressors, repelling them and foiling any dangers likely to be caused by them" (Cook, 2005, p. 12). It is interesting that the common theme across the definitions of the encyclopaedia of Islam and Brachman as well as Professor Al-Buti is that their definition of Jihad includes violence and physically waging warfare in defence of Islam. Despite the fact the definition of the Quran includes other aspects of Jihad. The definitions in this paragraph are mainstream definitions of Islam and on the other hand there are terrorist Jihadists organizations that interpret Jihad a different way.

Jihadists groups have a slightly different interpretation of Jihad and this interpretation can be considered more extreme. Sayyid Qutb who was a member of the Muslim brotherhood in Egypt, became a prominent figure in Jihadists ideology when he described the term Jihad in his book Milestone (Signposts on the road). In his book Qutb declared Western civilization as enemies of Islam and believes that the only true religion for the world is Islam (Haynes, 2004, p. 10). The only way to achieve these goal is to use Jihad, which Qutb defines as "jihad of the sword, is rightly necessary to defeat its enemies, to remove impediments, and to spread Islam worldwide" (Toth, 2013, p. 363). Qutb justifies his definition of Islam with this verse in the Quran: "Fighting them is a great sin, but to prevent the people from the

way of God, and to reject God, and to stop people from visiting the Mosque and to expel people from their homes are a much greater sin and oppression is worse than killing” (Toth, 2013, p. 363).

The definition that Qutb described in his book influenced Osama bin Laden, the former leader of terrorist organization Al-Qaeda to use his vision to justify the use of violence. In the publication *Al Qaeda in its own words*, Scholar Gilles Kepel explains that Bin Laden released his “Declaration of Jihad against the Americans occupying the Land of the Two Holy Sanctuaries” the former Al Qaeda leader takes ideas used by Qutb such as injustice and oppression to justify the use of violent Jihad (Kepel 2008,p. 53). According to Kepel (2008): “ Bin Laden promotes the Jihad as an external means to fight” (p. 54).

The Islamic state [IS], a terrorist organization that gained recognition when the organization proclaimed a worldwide caliphate in June 2014, has a different definition of the Jihad. The leader of IS Abu Bark Al-Baghdadi stated during a speech in May of 2015 that: “Indeed, your Lord has made Jihad for the cause of Allah obligatory upon you and has commanded you to fight His enemies so that He may forgive your sins, raise you in rank, take from among you martyrs, purify the believers, and destroy the disbelievers. Otherwise, He Himself (the Glorified) is capable of prevailing over them. But it is in order to test you” (Ostaeyen, 2015). The definition of Jihad according to the IS leader is in accordance with Bin-Laden’s definition that calls for the fight against enemies of Islam. The common thread between these definitions seems to be that Jihad is often used in order to justify the use of violence in order to achieve a goal. For the purpose of this dissertation, the definition of religious expert Brachman will be adhered to when referring to the concept of Jihad. Brachman’s definition of Jihad which is the internal spiritual campaign that one wages with oneself but it could also refer to the act of physically waging warfare in defence of Islam. This definition includes both elements of violent Jihad and non-violent Jihad.

### **2.1.1 Jihadists**

In the previous subchapter it was explained how Jihad can be interpreted by different scholars and Jihadist groups. It also explains how there is a difference between violent and non-violent Jihad. This subchapter will serve to briefly clarify what Jihadists believe and what their goals are.

Jihadists who are also referred to as the mujahidin in the Quran believe themselves to be elites of the Islamic world. The ideology of Jihadist is described by scholar Brachman (2009, p5) as the last remaining vestige of an Islam that was practiced and preached by the Prophet Mohammed himself. Jihadists believe that the religion of Islam has deviated from its original path and if that does not change, Muslims will continue to be oppressed and persecuted. In the ideology of Jihadists fighters, Islam is the one and only answer for everyone (Brachman, 2009, p. 5).

In their path of bringing true Islam back to its original path, Jihadists are willing to become martyrs for that cause. Professor of Islamic Studies Cook agrees with Brachman that becoming a martyr is one of the important aspects of Jihadists ideology and described that: "Martyrdom in Islam is described in early Quranic verses as dying during a battle in the name of Islam" (Cook, 2005, p. 25). IS leader Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi also mentions Martyrdom where he calls on martyrs to leave the life of disgrace in the west and join IS in Syria to fight against the people of disbelief. In his speech he states that according to the Quran "he who fights in the cause of Allah and is killed or achieves victory we will bestow upon him a great reward" (Ostaeyen, 2015).

According to the Netherlands Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD) the idea behind Jihadist ideology is that the Islamic world is in crisis. The Jihadists believe this crisis will come to an end if Western influence in the Islamic world is ended, the land of Islam is recaptured and there is an establishment of a worldwide caliphate with the introduction of Sharia law. The AIVD describes that Jihadists believe in using violent Jihad to achieve those goals (AIVD, 2016). Jihadists are individuals who wage a war against anyone who can be considered an enemy of Islam. The Jihadists believe that it is their duty to defend the values of Islam and of all Muslims worldwide (AIVD, 2016).

This theory is in accordance with the definitions of Cook and Brachman that the ultimate goal of a Jihadist is to become a martyr while waging war to protect Islam against its enemies. The instance where a Jihadist returns from conflict zones such as Iraq and Syria to wage war to protect Islam, that individual becomes a returning Jihadist.

In the process of researching what a Jihadists is, it is beneficial to know how one becomes radicalized. The next subchapter explains what radicalisation entitles and how one becomes radicalized as far as wanting to become a martyr for the cause.

## 2.2 Radicalisation

There is no uniform usage of the term radicalisation in social science. It is difficult to define what it exactly entitles and many definitions of the word exist. According to Belgian expert Rik Coolsaet, who was part of an Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation established by the European Commission to study the problem, the very notion of radicalisation as 'ill-defined, complex and controversial' (Coolsaet 2011, p. 240). European governments also differ when defining radicalisation. The AIVD defines the concept of radicalisation as "the (active) pursuit of and/or support to far-reaching changes in society which may constitute a danger to (the continued existence of) the democratic legal order (aim) which may involve the use of undemocratic methods (means) that may harm the functioning of the democratic legal order (effect)" (AIVD, 2003, p13).

The United Kingdom House of Commons defines radicalisation as: "the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism." (House of Commons, 2012, p4). It is apparent that in each governmental definition, the emphasis is different. The United Kingdom's definition emphasizes the support of terrorism while the Dutch government emphasizes dangers to the democratic legal order. The Belgian government has not defined radicalisation per se as a term however Belgium's national Radicalisation strategy links the term to violence, the Belgian Coordination for Threat Analysis augmented their definition in 2013 to include foreign fighters, counter internet-based radicalisation and address the radicalisation that takes place in the prison system (Teich, 2016, p. 31). The definition of the Belgian government is broader than those of the Dutch and English government, however all definitions seem to have either the aspect violence or harm in common.

The international institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) researched that here are a number of factors that are taken into account when discussing how an individual becomes radicalised. According to the ICT It is important to take into account conditions such as: strained environmental conditions, organizational framing of those conditions in an effort to facilitate recruitment to a radical group and availability of pathways to radicalisation. It is a dangerous mixture of fertile ground and organizational structure (Teich, 2016, p. 37).

According to Coolsaet, global, sociological and politic drivers matter as much as ideological and psychological ones (Coolsaet, 2008, p. 7). The main similarities between these two factors of radicalisation are that they both agree that environmental conditions play a role,

however the main difference is that the ICT includes additional more detailed factors. For the purpose of this research, the definition of the ICT will be adhered to when referring to the concept of radicalisation

### **2.3: The situation of Jihadists in Belgium**

The past following years it is apparent that Belgium has the largest amount of Jihadists per capita (Teich, 2016, p. 37). This subchapter analyses the radicalisation in Belgium through a chosen theoretical framework. In the previous subchapter it was stated that radicalisation has multiple factors such as: strained environmental conditions, organizational framing of those conditions in an effort to facilitate recruitment to a radical group, and availability of pathways to radicalisation (Teich, 2016, p. 37).

The International Centre for Counter-terrorism (ICT) has researched radicalisation of Jihadists in Belgium in the paper: Islamic radicalisation in Belgium, in this paper the ICT applied a theoretical framework. For the purpose of understanding the current situation in Belgium regarding Jihadists, the framework established by the ICT is used as it describes the factors that lead to present day. The original Social Movement theory (SMT) is a theoretical framework developed by scholars Zald and Mccarthy. The theory first defined social movements as “a set of opinions and beliefs in a population, which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society” (Zald, Mccarthy, 1979, p. 2). There is a contemporary variant of SMT, which is useful in the understanding of radicalisation; this variant is called Framing theory.

Framing theory discusses how social movements frame messages in a certain way in order to construct and propagate meaning. The ICT references a paper by Dalgaard-Nielsen of the Danish Institute for International Studies, when explaining how the Framing theory is useful to understand the process of radicalisation (Teich, 2016, p. 37). Dalgaard-Nielsen explains that within the Grounded Theory movements diagnose problems and attribute responsibility, offer solution, strategies, and tactics (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2008, p. 6). In addition movements provide motivational frames to convince potential participants to become active.

The key to mobilization, according to Framing theory is whether the movement’s version of reality resonates or can be brought to resonate with the movement’s potential constituency (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2008, p. 6). To simplify the Framing theory: strained environmental

conditions and mass discontent are framed in ways to facilitate recruitment, people can use and re-direct mass discontent to mobilize the masses (Teich, 2016, p. 37). Social Islamist movements in Belgium, use these strained environmental conditions to recruit new members by framing their personal discontent as political Islamist ones. This causes individuals to relate their personal discontent to the political views of the Islamist group and they became vulnerable to radicalisation (Teich, 2016, p. 38).

According to the original SMT explained above, movements arise out of strained environmental conditions that lead to personal discontent. An example of the strained environmental conditions that is leading amongst Belgian Jihadists is unemployment. The former director of the Belgian Equal Opportunity Centre established a link between the number of Belgian Jihadists and the structural inequalities that lie in their home country: "In Belgium, the gap between natives and immigrants (from outside the EU) in terms of employment and education is higher than anywhere else in Europe" (Coolsaet, 2015, p.15).

Another source of strain is the poor integration of Muslims into Belgian society. Montasser AlDe'emeh researcher for the University of Antwerp, has said that "The IS is giving them what the Belgian government can't give them, identity and structure". AlDe'emeh claims that Muslim youth often feel cut off from Belgian society but on the other hand can't fully relate to their ancestor's cultures and that makes them vulnerable to radicalisation (Birnbaum, 2015, para 20).

Bilal Benyaich who is a full time policy advisor at the Social and Economic Council of Flanders as well as a researcher on migration and integration issues agrees with AlDe'emeh on the explanation that Muslim youth often feel lost between two cultures. Benyaich stated that "It doesn't surprise me, because radical and political Islam in Belgium is something that grew up through the years, The fact that many people feel they will never make it, don't stand a chance in society and envy others — this makes fertile grounds for recruiting" (Mufson, 2016, para 7). It is apparent that the common theme when discussing radicalized Jihadists that leave Belgium is the lack of social identity and the lack of connection to their home country creates a vulnerable environment where they are prone to radicalisation.

It is the framing of the strained conditions that allow groups such as Sharia4Belgium to radicalize and recruit Belgian Muslim citizens to become Jihadists. Sharia4Belgium is a Wahhabi Islamist organization that advocated to implement Sharia Islamic law in Belgium. The group was suspected to be anti-democratic because it urged their followers to help overthrow the Belgian government, and as a result it was banned in 2013 (Eeckhaut, 2013,

para 1). Despite the fact that Sharia4Belgium was banned the founder Fouad Belkacem continued the group unofficially. It was discovered Belkacem brainwashed and indoctrinated dozens of Belgian nationals through social media designed to recruit and radicalize them, an estimated 10% of Belgian foreign fighters have been linked to Belkacem's organization (Crawford, 2015, para 7).

The Belgium suburb Molenbeek, is a borough with a population of 90,000 in the capital of Belgium where some neighbourhoods are up to 80% Muslim. The city of Brussels has nineteen municipalities yet there is only one that has been in the news so frequent in connection with terrorist attacks and Jihadists, the borough Molenbeek. It is also one of the poorest suburbs in Brussels. With recent attacks connecting to the borough Molenbeek it is now considered to be a terrorist hub and Belgium minister Charles Michel stated: " There is nearly always a link with Molenbeek, and that is a huge problem", Michel was referring to the Paris attacks where 130 people died due to a terrorist attack planned by Belgian Jihadist nationals who grew up in Molenbeek (Van Amerongen, 2016, para 1).

Molenbeek is also the location where Abdel Hamid Abaaoud, the mastermind behind the Paris attack was found in hiding. Furthermore in the past two years. Almost seven other Jihadists terrorist attacks or foiled plots have been linked to Belgian nationals or have taken place on Belgian soil (Miller, Warrick, 2015, para 22). This borough is an example of how the strained social conditions have led Jihadists to become radicalized.

## 2.4 Belgium's current method

This subchapter will describe the issue with Jihadists returning and how Belgium approaches it. As mentioned before the number of those travelling has increased in the past few years, this brings out concerns on the potential threats they pose when they return to their home country (Briggs, 2014, p36). According to counter-extremism researchers Rachel Briggs and Tanya Silverman, returning Jihadists can pose threat upon return to their home country. There is a possibility they have received training or engaged in military practices that provided them with the competence and abilities to plan and execute an attack (Briggs, 2014, p. 37).

In addition they most likely have made international like-minded contacts that can provide them with the means necessary to carry out an attack in their home country. Furthermore they will possess knowledge of Western cultural practices and even security practices which can increase the likelihood that an attack could be successful (Briggs, 2014, p. 37). Thomas Hegghammer studies returning Jihadists from Western Europe and states in his paper that: "Western jihadists prefer foreign fighting, but a minority attacks at home after being radicalized, most often through foreign fighting or contact with a veteran" (Hegghammer, 2013, p. 1). This theory proves to be applicable to the case of returning Jihadists to Belgium. IS propaganda has surfaced where Belgian Islamic state veterans have warned against new attacks in Europe. In addition, in the past two years, at least seven other Islamic terrorist attacks or foiled plots have taken place on Belgian soil or have been linked to Belgian nationals (Miller, Warrick, 2015, para 11).

Belgium has 11.2 million inhabitants, which means that the ratio of Belgian fighters who have left to the middle-east is an estimated 45 for every 1 million citizens (Miller, Warrick, 2015, para 11). Belgium's current method for dealing with the threats posed by returning Jihadists is described in the memorandum of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Security and Justice developed in 2014. The Belgian government has set up a crisis centre which focusses on the issues of Jihad and Terrorism.

The two structures to enhance the coordination on a federal level are called: the Task Force Syria and the Platform "returnees". The responsibilities of the Task Force Syria are described as an efficient optimal coordination to ensure the information exchange between the local and federal police platform. The project "returnees" describes the measures needed to identify persons who are looking to join, have already joined or have returned

from Syria or another Jihadists conflict zone. Once those persons are identified it is the responsibility of the task force to continue the operation needed to deal with such persons. Local authorities are encouraged to identify and prevent radicalisation. These identification and de-radicalisation processes are supported by the operational coordination organ for threat analyses (Belgische Kamer van vertegenwoordigers, 2014), the memorandum describes different methods including the rights that are granted to the General Intelligence and Security Service of Belgium (ADIV), to keep track of returning Jihadists. This includes practices such as wiretapping their telephones or reviewing their online communication.

The information collected with these measures are then shared with foreign intelligence agencies to ensure the information exchange as described in the Task Force Syria project (Belgische Kamer van vertegenwoordigers, 2014). However these rights have caused some controversy with privacy experts in Belgium. Mathias Vermeulen who is a professor at the University of Antwerp has said that listening in on phone conversations is not going to stop terrorism. The professor is vehemently against the approach and has said that there are issues with that approach.

The first issue is that the approach is inefficient and moreover is violated if man collects information of innocent civilians on a large scale. Vermeulen has worked for the United Nations as an assistant of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, researching counter terrorism and has co-written research reports torture and kidnappings. The professor stated having met people whose entire lives were ruined by measures against terrorism (Vanhecke, 2014, para 4).

Vermeulen argues that Jihadists are aware of these tactics and would not discuss sensitive over the phone therefore it is not necessary for the ADIV to tap into telephone calls of civilians. The order van Advocaten, which is a Belgian organization of collaborating lawyers is also critical of the privacy regulation presented to combat terror. The president of the order Dominique Mathys spoke on behalf of the organization when he stated that: " The orde shall review measure that limit our privacy with great critical concern and will not hesitate to warn the government of the consequences when violating those rights" (Matthys, 2015, para. 1).

As far as Criminal prosecution of returning Belgian Jihadists, it is the preferred way when the specific individual is deemed a threat and if there is evidence the individual is engaged in criminal and terrorist activities as researched by Lorenzo Vidino for the Centre for Security Studies (Vidino, 2015, p.8). In an interview with Belgian newspaper Canvas

Ostaeyen states that the punishment ranges from electronic monitoring to receiving a prison sentence (Canvas, 2016). According to Ostaeyen It is often difficult to obtain evidence of alleged crimes committed while the Jihadists were not in Belgium. During his research Ostaeyen monitored that there are about 120 Jihadists returnees to Belgium however this is not an official number and there is a strong possibility that there are more in hiding in Belgium (Canvas, 2016).

To date the government of Belgium has prosecuted 8 suspects that have allegedly returned from Syria to Belgium for crimes of terrorism (Nieuwsblad, 2015, para 1). At the local level, Belgian city councils have deleted individuals that have travelled to Syria from their residents' registry in order to terminate their unemployment benefits, this will make it more difficult for Jihadists to have income upon their return (Vidino, 2015, p. 8). Another measure is possibly revoking their citizenship (Carcaci, 2014, art 3).

To summarize the Belgian approach is a combination of the crisis centre, the task force Syria, the project returnees and if possible criminalisation. There is also possibility of revoking citizenship and financial benefits. It is difficult to specifically define these approaches as they relatively new and there is no data available yet on their effectiveness and their results.

## 2.5 Danish Aarhus Method

This subchapter will explain the situation in Denmark regarding Jihadists. Furthermore the Danish Aarhus Method will be explained, this is a re-integration programme that is used in Denmark to re-integrate Jihadists that return to Denmark after travelling to Iraq or Syria.

According to Centre for Terror analyses (CTA) (2013, p. 1), 80 Danish nationals have left Denmark for Jihadists conflict zones such as Syria and Iraq. The CTA also mentioned that “not all of those who leave to engage in the conflict in Syria pose a threat to Denmark”, however the CTA also made clear that there is a possibility that the specific skills acquired in Syria could be used by some to commit acts of terrorism in Denmark (Centre for terror analyse, 2013, p. 1).

The Danish government had announced a series in 2015 of law proposal that are introduced to combat Jihadists and their return, currently Danish law does not have the satisfactory abilities to prosecute or charge Jihadists as there are no existing laws for it. It is often not possible to collect evidence that they have engaged in illegal activity (Dwyer, 2015, para 14). Danish authorities also monitor returnees closely and assess the potential threat posed by each individual. Denmark also has an extensive counter-radicalisation programme that is directed at individuals who have returned from conflict areas. Local governments, work together with national authorities and there are initiatives aimed at the reintegration, normalization, and de-radicalisation of returnees. These initiatives include mentoring schemes, educational and vocational training, and psychological support (Vidino, 2015, p. 9) the initiatives are part of the Aarhus programme, which is explained in detail in the next paragraph.

The Municipality of Aarhus in Denmark has created an exit programme, which is targeted towards Aarhus citizens who are politically or religiously radicalized Jihadists to such an extent that they –encourage- support- or carry out- violent, extremist’s acts on the basis of their political or religious opinion (Info House, 2015, Para. 4). This programme helps these individuals to remove themselves from extremist environments and return to life in their home country. The exit programme specifically focusses on the needs of the individual because they are crucial in determining what works actually needs to be offered. This ranges from advice and guidance, psychological counselling, or assistance in searching for an education or a career (Info House, 2015, Para. 4.)

The requirements for participation in the exit programme are that the individual is sincere and motivated, in addition the individual consents to the exchange of information between authorities. In the exit programme mentor support is mandatory and is registered and assigned a case number with social services (Aarhus Program, 2015). Some other Nations have deemed the Danish programme too soft, for example Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, whose government has introduced new anti-terror laws, made his position on foreign fighters clear. "If they come back, they will be taken into detention, because our community will be kept safe by this government." (Gidda, 2015, para 11).

A spokesperson for the Britain's Home Office said in an interview with the CNN: "We take the risk of those returning from Syria very seriously. Some of these people may have been exposed to traumatic experiences and others may be radicalized or vulnerable to radicalisation." (Bharati, Naik, 2014, para 16).

The Danish method of dealing with returning Jihadists is a combination of criminalizing when possible and the Aarhus programme. This programme is used in Denmark to re-integrate returning Jihadists by advice and guidance, psychological counselling, as well assistance in searching for an education or a career. This is the scope of the available secondary research of the Danish Aarhus programme; the details of the programme will be explained further through primary research in the findings chapter.

## **2.6 German Hayat Method**

This subchapter will explain the situation in Germany regarding Jihadists. Furthermore the German Hayat Method will be explained, this is a re-integration programme that is used in Germany to re-integrate Jihadists that return to Germany after travelling to Iraq or Syria. According to research by Vidino (2014, p10) as of 2014, an estimated 270 German citizens have left their country to fight in Syria. Individuals who have reached Jihadist conflict zones such as Syria and have engaged in terrorist-related activities there, are subject to be prosecuted under German law (Vidino, 2014, p. 10).

In addition administrative measures have been set up to combat the threat of Jihadists returning to Germany. Examples of these are: the German border police has developed an elevated approach for detecting returning Jihadists, Jihadists who are known to have left are put in Schengen system, which therefore should warn authorities once they return to the Schengen area (Vidino, 2014, p. 11). Another measure that has been implemented in Germany is Hayat, a family counselling programme that is available to the family members

or friends of radicalized Jihadists who are preparing to go to, have travelled to, or have already returned to Germany from Syria or other Jihadists conflict zones, this measure is further explained in the next paragraph.

The German Hayat method was established in 2011 and it is the first German counselling hotline programme for those involved in radical Islamic groups are on the path to join a Jihadists group, it includes those travelling to Islamic combat zones as well. Hayat is a Turkish and Arabic word for Life (Hayat, 2016. para 1). It is inspired by the Berlin based EXIT programme which helps individuals escape out of any sort of extremist group, for example neo-Nazis. Daniel Koehler, who is a counsellor at the organization, explains what the method entitles. Koehler states that first it is necessary to assess the situation in order to establish a concrete situation, then an individual counselling processes and step-by-step plan will be designed. During that phase measures to prevent further radicalisation or to stop and reverse the process will be included (Jansen, 2015, para 2).

This process is important because if the Jihadist chooses to return it is important to know how to rehabilitate the person. It is important to engage them in a manner they understand and will not feel threatened by and avoiding playing into the role of the enemy. Koehler states an example of how to avoid the role of the enemy and explains what recruiters of Jihadists will say upon arrival in a combat zone: "Not even your family will ever accept you and your faith; and they will try to get you out of here" (Jansen, 2015, para 2). This brainwashes Jihadists into thinking that their family is part of the enemy, which is detrimental as the family plays a huge part in re-integrating a Jihadist upon their return.

A strategy of the Hayat programme was to have the family behave in the direct opposite way to how recruiter said they would behave. In these cases, the relatives remain patient and are open to conversation. They attempt to argue from an Islamic perspective. "The prophet Mohammed clearly says that paradise lies at your mother's feet," Koehler states this as an example: "When you're a Muslim you can't avoid it: you have to hold your parents, and above all your mother, dear" (Jansen, 2015, para 5). This approach uses the Jihadists own logic, which is to adhere to the Quran, by stating verses that the Jihadists cannot deny the truth of.

The Hayat programme has encountered positive responses from countries that desire to set up a similar programme to combat radicalized jihadist youth in their country. Professor Abbe Corb, who is an expert on far right hate groups and teaches terrorism studies at the University of Ontario stated that: "More and more people are acting out, leaving the safety

and security of Canada and heading overseas, with nothing for them in their own country, some Canadians have been turning to EXIT, which is funded by the German government. “There’s no support for the families of the radicalized individuals” (Bell, 2014, para 9), the concern of Corb resulted in a Public Safety Canada official visiting Berlin to discuss counter-radicalisation and reintegration strategies. The programme is inspiring other countries to review alternative methods of dealing with foreign fighters (Bell, 2014, para 9).

The German method of dealing with returning Jihadists is a combination of criminalizing, increased border intelligence as well as the Hayat method. This method is used in Germany to re-integrate returning Jihadists by counselling processes and step by step planning designed for each specific individual. This is the scope of the available secondary research for the Hayat method, the details of the programme will be explained further through primary research in the findings chapter.

### **3.1 Methodology**

In the Literature review the main outlines of the research have been described. This chapter will outline the methodology that was used in order to establish the findings. The specific research methods chosen are discussed and described. The research was a mix of primary and secondary research, quantitative and qualitative data, as well as case studies. In addition semi-structured interviews were conducted. Finally, other aspects of the research such as ethical considerations followed by a conclusion of the chapter will be included

#### **3.1 Research methods**

At the beginning of this project it became apparent that the complexity and as well as the fact that the topic is developing it was necessary to take a more flexible approach to the research. For that reason mixed methods are used. For this research an inductive approach is applied which is the basic technique that allows moving from a set of observations to a new theory (Gilbert, 2008, p. 27). This means that results are not one fixed response and can be a combination of answers.

The main research question entitles: How can the Belgian government improve its current approach of dealing with returning jihadists in light of re-integration programmes across Europe? The main theory is in this case and from there after inductive research, a new theory can be developed that is a combination of answers. For this reason, first data is gathered on how different experts and even Jihadists groups defined relevant terms. Secondly data is gathered on the current situation in Belgium as well as the re-integration programmes Hayat and Aarhus. Thirdly a pattern between the findings is established and lastly a general theory of what the results are is established (Chutt, 2006).

##### **3.1.1 Secondary research**

In the process of researching Belgium's current situation and policies in dealing with returning Jihadists it became clear that there is a need for an in depth understanding of the topics and the re-integration programmes. Therefore as secondary data, desk research is conducted to create a more in-depth understanding of the current situation in Belgium, background information as well as governmental policies. This also applies to the German Hayat programme and the Danish Aarhus method. The result of the desk research is used in parallel (Gilbert, 2008, p. 132) to prepare for the primary research method, interviews and case studies.

### **3.1.2 Primary research**

The original objective of this dissertation was to conduct the primary research data by conducting interviews and the secondary research data by collecting quantitative and qualitative data. However during the course of the research it became clear that it is more beneficial to add case studies to the primary research. This was chosen because case studies are preferred when examining contemporary events (Yin, 2003, p. 7) its unique strength allows you to deal with a full variety of evidence, documents, interviews articles and observation (Yin, 2003, p. 8). This change is also updated in the research proposal form that is accessible in the appendices.

This is especially beneficial because the topic of returning Jihadists is contemporary and currently developing, the change to case studies allows for more relevant information to be included into the primary research of this dissertation. The first main topic is the current situation in Belgium, regarding their policies and approach on returning Jihadists. The second case study is the Aarhus method in Denmark and the third case study is the Hayat programme in Germany. The case studies of the Aarhus method and the Hayat programme are the two cases that are used to possibly improve the first main topic of this dissertation which is Belgium's current approach.

### **3.2 Interviews**

The phenomenon of returning Jihadists is quite new and therefore information available on the topic is limited, in order to gain more knowledge of the subject interviews are scheduled to provide insight into specific issues (Gilbert, 2008, p. 246). In total three interviews are held. There are two dominant modes of transcribing: naturalism, where everything is transcribed as detailed as possible, and denaturalism, in which elements of speech such as pauses, uhm and small conversation are removed. This dissertation will adopt the denaturalised way of transcribing as it focusses on only the relevant parts of the interview to keep the information as clear as possible (Oliver, Serovich, & Mason, 2005, p.1)

The first interview is held with Pieter van Ostaeyen, a Belgian Islamicist, historian and Arabist expert on current affairs in the Middle East & background with a focus on returning

Jihadists. The interview with Mr. van Ostaeyen provides insight on the situation on Belgium regarding returning Jihadists and facts & figures.

The second interview is held with Daniel Koehler, the founder and director of the German Institute on Radicalisation and De-radicalisation Studies and a former Hayat programme family counsellor. Mr. Koehler also co-developed the approach used in the Hayat programme. The interview with Koehler provides insight on the workings of the Hayat programme.

The third interview is held with Eva Entenmann, the Programme Officer at the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism. Entenmann is also a researcher of Foreign Fighters and wrote a publication on the rehabilitation of Foreign Fighters. The interview with Entenmann provides additional in-depth insight on these topics.

The chosen style of interview of Mr. van Ostaeyen and Ms. Entenmann is semi-structured. In this style questioning is open ended in order to gain spontaneous information rather than rehearsed answers (Gilbert, 2008, p. 246). The semi-structured nature of the interviews also allows for questions to be asked if any information is unclear. The use of both secondary research, interviewing and case studies allows data integration which is a process that brings different methods together to form a coherent whole (Gilbert, 2008, p. 135). This allows for a more thorough examination because the desk research is used to find initial in-depth information and the interviews and case studies assist to add to that information in order to create a coherent inclusive research.

The chosen style for the interview of Mr. Koehler is via Email communication; the reason for the Email interview is that Mr. Koehler is not available for a phone or skype interview until the end of June, which is passed the dissertation deadline. Therefore the only option is to conduct the interview through Email communication, unfortunately this will not allow probing, which is a concept used in interviews that involves follow-up questioning to get a fuller response (Gilbert, 2008, p. 251).

### **3.3 Ethics and Limitations**

Ethical consideration is important during research, as it is a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others (Gilbert, 2008, p. 146). When writing research it is important to consider ethical principles such as respect for privacy, informed consent and the

confidentiality of the data (Gilbert, 2008, p. 147). The topic of Jihadists extremism is quite sensitive and new and therefore it is important to consider the safety and necessities of those involved in the interviews.

In order to ensure the comfortability of those participating, informed consent is applied. This principle provides that the persons, who participated in the interviews, are given the fullest information concerning the topic and nature of the interview as well as the options for maintaining the confidentiality of the data (Gilbert, 2008, p. 151). The participants also have the option to remain anonymous.

### **Limitations**

During this research, some limitations have occurred. The first limitation is the terms that are used that refer to a returning Jihadist. The term for a returning Jihadist is not yet uniformly defined and has many different forms. Different countries, scholars and publications that are included into this dissertation use a different terms such as returning Jihadist, returnee, foreign fighter and Syrian volunteer. For example the term Jihadist refers to individuals who wage a war against anyone who can be considered an enemy of Islam. Jihadists believe that it is their duty to defend the values of Islam and of all Muslims worldwide (AIVD, 2016). The instance where a Jihadist returns from conflict zones such as Iraq and Syria to defend the values of Islam or wage war that is a returning Jihadist. The term foreign fighter can be described as an individual who joins insurgencies abroad and whose primary motivation is ideological or religious rather than financial (Bakowski, Puccio 2015, p. 2) and by another scholar as an individual who leaves his or her country of origin or habitual residence to join a non-state armed group in an armed conflict abroad and who is primarily motivated by ideology, religion, and/or kinship (Kraehenmann, 2016, p.6).

The term returnees is used by the Belgian Ministry of Foreign affairs and the Ministry of Security and Justice in a memorandum that describes the current method for dealing with the threats posed by returnees. The term is not defined in the memorandum however the memorandum is designed to describe the measures needed to identify persons who are looking to join, have already joined or have returned from Syria or another Jihadists conflict zone (Belgische Kamer van vertegenwoordigers, 2014). The Aarhus program uses the term Syrian Volunteer as the program believes that individuals travel to Jihadist conflict zones for different reasons, one could travel to provide humanitarian aid and the other to join Islamic terrorist organisations. All of the definitions just mentioned include an element of motivation of travelling abroad to a Jihadist conflict zone in the name of an ideology. For

this dissertation these terms are used interchangeably, depending on what source is being relied upon. The reason that the terms are used interchangeably is to adhere to the term used by the scholar, countries and publication as well as the interviews that are held with experts on the field, in order to keep it as original as possible. The definition this dissertation uses in context where there is no source relied upon, is the definition attached to returning Jihadist. The reason for that is that the term includes Jihad and also emphasizes that the individual has returned and is not still in a Jihadist conflict zone.

The second limitation is finding a substantial amount of academic literature regarding the topic. Considering that the phenomenon of returning Jihadist fighters is quite new, it is difficult finding relevant sources because a lot of the information is described by the media and in interviews. For this reason the literature that is used in this dissertation seems limited, the literature most used is by Agerschou and Koehler. The reason for that is the literature by Agerschou and Koehler is the most reliable as Agerschou is the section chief of the Aarhus method. Koehler is a former family counsellor of the Hayat programme.

As stated in the last paragraph it was a challenge to find relevant academic literature of the topic, which also lead to difficulty with finding experts to interview on the matters. In order to better understand the re-integration programmes of Germany and Denmark, it is necessary to attempt to interview the initiators of these programmes, Claudia Dantschke and Anton Aarslev. Unfortunately due to the scarcity of experts on the re-integration programmes, demand for interviewing them became very high and the experts rejected a proposal for an interview. That results in a large limitation as there is not many information present on the internet regarding those programmes. Luckily the experts send additional information through email and that is used in the findings chapter. This limitation is overcome by broadening the search for experts on the topic and programme instead of the initial focus on the initiators of the programmes.

## 4. Findings

In this chapter, the findings of the interviews and the case studies are explained. As stated in the Methodology chapter, the first main subject is the current situation in Belgium, regarding their current approach on returning Jihadists. The first case study is the Aarhus method in Denmark and the second case study is the Hayat programme in Germany. The case studies of the Aarhus method and the Hayat programme are the two cases that are used to possibly improve the first main subject of this dissertation, which is Belgium's current approach. The following subchapter will cover the current situation in Belgium regarding returning Jihadists and their approach.

### 4.1 Belgium government's current approach

According to Pieter van Ostaeyen, the last few years, there has been a steady flow of Jihadists leaving Belgium, the absolute maximum is around 600 or 620, that have left for Syria or Iraq (P. van Ostaeyen, Personal interview, May 15, 2016).. There are different reasons for these Jihadist to leave Belgium, the first group of people who have left is what Ostaeyen calls "hard-core Jihadists, who already wanted to join Jihadi groups in the past and had sometimes tried previously to do so in 1990" (P. van Ostaeyen, Personal interview, May 15, 2016). Following that there was a wave of people, who's motivation was their ideology and to protect the Syrian people, amongst these first groups there was a significant number of people that were members of Sharia4Belgium (P. van Ostaeyen, Personal interview, May 15, 2016). This second group of people called upon their relatives, friends and colleagues to follow them and join the fight in Syria (P. van Ostaeyen, Personal interview, May 15, 2016). This leads to the third group of people leaving Belgium, which are people who have left under social and peer pressure. The last group are individuals who immediately wanted to join the Jihad of the Islamic state (IS), after IS restored the caliphate on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June 2014 (P. van Ostaeyen, Personal interview, May 15, 2016).

According to Ostaeyen the conditions in Belgium that cause these individuals to leave Belgium is the fact that they feel treated as second rank civilians and are left out of society. As noted by Ostaeyen these individuals feel that there were no fair chances on employment or education, the Jihadists feel that there is no place for them in society and it becomes some kind of rebellion against their parents and society. There is an image of an Islamic ideal, especially in the IS where there is a possibility for a new life and it is their duty to contribute to the IS (P. van Ostaeyen, Personal interview, May 15, 2016).

The last few months many of these Jihadists were identified and named in different trials, such as the trial around Zerkani<sup>1</sup>, in that trial a lot of people who might have been in the database at some time but are now known (P. van Ostaeyen, Personal interview, May 15, 2016). The way the government is dealing with the returning Jihadists differs, Ostaeyen said that on one hand “some of them who have returned and have remorse are freed quite rapidly” (P. van Ostaeyen, Personal interview, May 15, 2016) and the other hand there is another example that Ostaeyen mentioned which was: “one example who has admitted that he has beheaded in Syria, also the police overheard him saying that in a tapped phone call that this guy is roaming the streets freely, so it is completely different, every person is treated in a different way in my opinion” (P. van Ostaeyen, Personal interview, May 15, 2016).

As noted by Ostaeyen these individuals feel that there were no fair chances on employment or education, the Jihadists feel that there is no place for them in society and it becomes some kind of rebellion against their parents and society. There is an image of an Islamic ideal, especially in the IS where there is a possibility for a new life and it is their duty to contribute to the IS (P. van Ostaeyen, Personal interview, May 15, 2016).

On the topic of re-integrating Jihadists, Ostaeyen said that currently he has no knowledge if there is such a thing in Germany. However Ostaeyen believes it is important, because at some point, the Jihadists return and once that happens it is not possible to criminalize them for life. The exact way to approach this is difficult, it would depend on the case, and they should be handled by individual approaches, not one size fits all (P. van Ostaeyen, Personal interview, May 15, 2016).

According to Eva Entenmann, who is the Programme Officer at the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, it is important that returning Jihadists that are unconvicted are offered an exit out of the extremist environment. Entenmann stated that it should be part of any comprehensive approach to counter terrorism of a government, because countering terrorism cannot just be drones or hard repressive approaches, for Entenmann personally it needs to have a full spectrum of tools in a toolbox (E. Entenmann, Personal interview, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016). This could be for example an exit programme on voluntary basis. However Entenmann noted that the issue with a programme on voluntary basis is that not many

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<sup>1</sup> Zerkani is an individual who recruited 18 Belgian nationals to join the fight in a Jihadists conflict zone, he was sentenced to 15 years. (Bolle, J. 2016)

participate. When offering a re-integration programme it is a good idea to incentivize potential participation. The programmes can be incentivised by for example offering to remove administrative measures such as the revoking of citizenship or cancelling benefits (E. Entenmann, Personal interview, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016).

## **4.2 Case study: Aarhus Method Denmark**

This subchapter is a case study of the Danish Aarhus method will focus on the details of said method. This subchapter contains information obtained from personal communication with the Aarhus programme as well as any relevant documents and information that is found online.

The Danish Anti-Radicalisation efforts, the Aarhus programme was established in 2007 as a pilot project. The objective of the project is the prevention of political and religious radicalisation of young people and in addition ensuring these young people are safe and are able to thrive. The pilot transitioned into full operation on the first of January 2011.

Correspondence with the East Jutland Police and Aarhus municipality communication advisor Janni Lundager stressed that in Denmark it is not illegal to travel to Syria, unless certain conditions are fulfilled and it is not illegal to return from Syria. The police has authority to arrest those that are proven to have participated in illegal activity according to Danish legislation (J. Lundager, personal e-mail, May 2, 2016).

There are 80 Danish nationals that have travelled abroad to Jihadists conflict zones. If there is any suspicion of illegal activity, the police will investigate and prosecute those individuals. In addition the police and the municipality cooperate on prevention, which is applied in the Aarhus programme, the East Jutland police stresses the fact that the alternative to what the government in Denmark is not to put people in prison, the alternative is not doing anything (J. Lundager, personal e-mail, May 2, 2016).

### **4.2.1 Organisation**

According to the East Jutland Police (EJP) the work that is carried out to prevent radicalisation is based on a set of values that is outlined in the Aarhus Municipality's integration police, the focus lies on active citizenship. The work undertaken is directed by the objective: "to strengthen societal cohesion in Aarhus and ensure that everyone, regardless of ethnic or cultural background, are able to participate as active citizens with respect for fundamental democratic values." (J. Lundager, Personal communication 1, May 2, 2016, page 2).

The EJP states that the actual work that is carried out is a collaboration between the East Jutland Police and Aarhus Municipality and is initiated as a supplement to the existing crime

prevention initiatives and procedures, which are supplemented by an intersectional and interdisciplinary working group that possesses a specific knowledge of radicalisation. The work is initiated and managed by the director of the Department of Children and Youths as well as the East Jutland police and Department of Social Services (J.Lundager, Personal communication 1, May 2, 2016, p. 2). In addition at the end of 2013, authorities took initiatives to respond to the potential for volunteers from Aarhus going to or returning from Syria. The radicalisation prevention work is a collaboration between East Jutland police, Aarhus municipality and Aarhus University (J.Lundager, Personal communication 1, May 2, 2016, p. 3).

### **Goals and Objectives**

According to Agerschou the strategy is to regard radicalisation exactly as any other crime preventative work that requires general, group related and specific actions. The work carried out is ongoing, with four key objectives/initiatives that are important to apply (Agerschou, 2015, p. 6). Agerschou further states that the planning and execution of a coordinated strategy of radicalisation prevention, advice and guidance on radicalisation, determining how radicalisation happens to groups or individuals. It also includes handling individual cases of young people at risk of radicalisation (Agerschou, 2015, p. 6).

### **Initiatives**

The EJP states that the Aarhus City Council approved an action plan for an expansion of the existing anti-radicalisation efforts with children, youth and persons over the age of 18 in the spring of 2012 (J.Lundager Personal communication 1, May 2, 2016 , p. 4). The EJP further explains that the action plan requires knowledge to be able to identify radicalisation and also requires special skills that enable the implementation of preventative measures (J.Lundager Personal communication 1, May 2, 2016, p. 4). The fieldwork is a combination of the constitutional rights of freedom of expression, religious activism and violations and also of the Danish Penal code §114, which is better known as the Terrorism clause<sup>2</sup>. The initiative is closely linked to Aarhus Social services and the operations of the plan started on the first of January 2015 (J.Lundager Personal communication 1, May 2, 2016, p. 4). It

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<sup>2</sup> The Danish Criminal Code concerning terrorism. Freedom of expression for example becomes illegal when an act with the intent seriously to intimidate a population or unlawfully to compel Danish public authorities to do or abstain from doing any act or to destabilise or destroy the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country provided that the offence may inflict serious harm on a country by virtue of its nature or the context in which it is committed. (Committee of Experts on Terrorism, 2006)

also combines other legislation that sets limits on the means of how one can promote one's cause (J.Lundager Personal communication 1, May 2, 2016, p. 4).

According to the EJP there are four key objectives that are secondary but add to the anti-radicalisation efforts, which are (J.Lundager Personal communication 1, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, p. 4): the development and execution of a coordinated strategy for radicalisation prevention, offering advice and guidance on radicalisation, the identification of radicalisation of individuals or groups and finally taking on individual cases of people at risk from radicalisation.

### **Efforts to Raise Awareness**

The EJP describes that the Aarhus municipality has held over 120 awareness-raising presentations between the December 2008 and September 2015. The effort to raise awareness was necessary in order to spread knowledge about radicalisation and also to equip adult professionals and volunteers (J.Lundager Personal communication 1, May 2, 2016, p. 4).

### **The Info House**

The Info House was created in January 2010 as disclosed by the EJP. This is an information centre where public sector employees but also private citizens can come together to discuss or ask questions about radicalisation. The Danish police, Social Services and initiative management groups work together at the Info house to investigate and handle enquiries that the centre receives (J.Lundager Personal communication 1, May 2, 2016, p. 4). The EJP further explains that private citizens can present their enquiry and the centre investigates if it is a case of radicalisation or a case of 'youth rebellion', or something similar. After the investigation, a decision on the course of action is taken, this could be for example advice and guidance in the form of counselling, social activities might be of interest or the offer of mentor support (J.Lundager Personal communication 1, May 2, 2016, p. 4).

### **Mentor guidance and Dialogue based workshops**

Professor Preben Bertelsen of the Aarhus University Psychological Institute developed the concept of mentor involvement when there is a concern for radicalisation in 2011 (J.Lundager Personal communication 1, May 2, 2016, p. 4). Bertelsen's experience in the field of psychology allowed him to educate mentors for the mentor involvement programme to help their young mentees, who often lack basic life skills. The support of mentors is essential as it can keep the young mentees from being attached to extremist environments. As of September 2015, there are 20 mentors who have been assigned to young mentees who, with the approval of their parents agreed to working with a mentor (J.Lundager Personal communication 1, May 2, 2016, p. 4).

The EJP explains that in order to promote early intervention, dialogue-based workshops have been established to make contact and have a personal dialogue with young people. According to the EJP this route was chosen because it can achieve a more intimate and involved dialogue, which cannot be achieved by handing out flyers or guides. The workshop is two and a half hour session that includes materials and a guide for teachers with interactive student assignments (J.Lundager Personal communication 1, May 2, 2016., p. 4). There have been 157 workshops since August 2012 to the end of September 2015, and in addition six instructors have been trained to conduct the workshops (J.Lundager Personal communication 1, May 2, 2016, p. 4). The workshops for adults aimed at parents and youth workers are being developed. The workshop for youth workers ran Autumn/Winter 2015/16 and the workshop model for parents is currently being tested and is on standby for resource-related reasons (J.Lundager Personal communication 1, May 2, 2016, p. 4). Information on the status of the workshops for youth workers or parents is not yet available.

### **Community outreach**

The EJP notes that based upon American and other countries' experiences, a strategy was developed in relation to different community settings and ethnic minority, in 2015. The Aarhus Municipality's radicalisation prevention work facilitates the work of developing a strategy for future initiatives based on the outcomes of the "Building resilience to radicalisation and violent extremism" (J.Lundager, Personal communication 1, May 2nd, 2016, p. 6). The EJP states an example of the work carried out in this area includes, Dialogue with the Somali community, there has been dialogue with the Somali Association

in Aarhus to prevent radicalisation of Somali youth and prevention of travel to Syria (J.Lundager, Personal communication 1, May 2nd, 2016, p. 6). There also has been an outreach to prevent radicalisation and travel to Syria with the Muslim Youth Centre Grimhojvej, it was established that some individuals that have travelled from Denmark to Syria were members of this group (J.Lundager, Personal communication 1, May 2nd, 2016, p. 6). Finally the EJP states that are plans to establish an inter-faith group called: Living with your religion in Danish Society. The theme of this group include practicing ones religion but living with it in a peaceful manner that does not conflict with modern Danish values and society.

### **4.3 Aarhus method with regards to Syrian Volunteers**

The Danish authorities have taken initiatives to respond to the potential for volunteers from Aarhus going to or returning from the conflict in Syria as stated by the EJP. The work to prevent such radicalisation is carried out with people who reside in the Aarhus area and is carried out on the basis of an international research (J.Lundager, Personal communication 1, May 2nd, 2016, p. 5)

According to the EJP this research revealed that staying in a conflict zone significantly increases radicalisation. The work undertaken with Syrian volunteers<sup>3</sup> from Aarhus strives to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism following participation in the Syrian conflict with three types of service (J.Lundager, Personal communication 1, May 2nd, 2016, p. 3). The EJP further explains that the first type of service is an individual advice and guidance service to people who are thinking of travelling to Syria as a relief worker or as a fighter, or those who have already travelled and returned from the conflict.

This type of individual advice includes information on the risk of prosecution under the anti-terrorism legislation if they participate in the Syrian conflict, information on the risk of staying in a conflict zone such as the physical dangers, the psychological trauma for themselves and the indirect effects they would have on their family and friends (J.Lundager Personal communication 2, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, p.3). The individuals also receive information on available help that can assist them to leave extremist circles (J.Lundager Personal communication 2, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, p.3). The second type of service is After-care for returnees, this includes: debriefing, psychotherapy, medical care, mentoring contacts and participation in the exit programme (J.Lundager Personal communication 1, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, p.5). These returnees receive help via an exit programme, which is still in its first phase. The exit programme is explained in the next paragraph.

### **4.4 The exit programme of Aarhus**

The Exit programme as described by Aarhus Youth worker Toke Agerschou, is for people in the Municipality of Aarhus that are politically or religiously radicalised to a degree where

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<sup>3</sup> The Aarhus method refers to Syria and Syrian volunteers in official documents regarding the program, email communication confirmed that the method does not apply to Syria alone but also to any other Jihadists conflict zone.

they are encouraging, supporting or carrying out violent, extremist acts based on political or religious conviction (Agerschou, 2015, p. 10). According to Agerschou (2015) this programme was previously targeted against individuals under the age of 18, with the option to include those over 18 based on specific assessments. However in 2012 the Municipality of Aarhus decided to expand it to include adults regardless. It was decided that the responsibility for the measures targeting individuals over 18 would be placed on the Department of Social Affairs and Employment of Denmark. In addition to that there is an organizational link to the existing work with the Schools, Social Services and Police (SSP) working with crime prevention among children and youth (Agerschou, 2015, p. 10).

Agerschou further explains that the exit programme consists of two parts. The first part has the goal of helping individuals exit extremist, religious or political environments. The second part is to establish conditions that guarantee the inclusion of those individuals as well as the inclusion in the society as fellow citizens (Agerschou, 2015, p. 11). The Exit programme is in close connection with already existing work in the field of youth work and adult work in Aarhus. The programme is described below and several of the exit measures are still developing, the Exit programme is in a test phase during which various means will be evaluated regularly and developed as necessary.

Agerschou (2015, p. 12) describes the following measures that the Exit programme consists of as: "risk assessment and referral, counselling and guidance, compulsory mentor processes, education and employment, housing, psychology sessions network resources, anchoring of faith/political conviction and medical treatment". In the next paragraphs, each of these points will be explained.

### **Risk assessment and referral**

The Info House previously mentioned is the initial entrance to the Exit programme, it is manned by two police constables and an employee of the Department of Social Services (Agerschou, 2016, p 12). According to Agerschou all inquiries that concern radicalisation first go through the Info House. The contact to potential exit candidates is established in different ways, for example through questions from citizens, relatives of the potential candidates or municipal employees. Once there is an inquiry, the employees of the Info house carry out the process to identify the potential candidate's motivation for participating in the exit process. If it is necessary the process can go forth in collaboration with other professionals that are part of the task force. The members of the Exit programme task force are representatives from the Department of Social Services, The East Jutland Police

District, The Department of Children and Young people, the Department of Employment and the Danish Prison and Probation Service (Agerschou, 2015, p 11).

Agerschou describes that the Info House assess if individual cases are relevant for the Exit programme and if so the case is handed over to the Task force. The Task Force then conducts a broadly-based assessments of the individual case and makes a recommendation for an exit process based on the various qualifications the task force represents (Agerschou, 2015, p. 12). This exit process will then have to be approved by the Department of Social Services and the East Jutland Police district. The individual exit process is usually financed as an individual case in the Department of Social Services and the Department of Employment (Agerschou, 2015, p. 12). Furthermore it is important that the relevant authoritative bodies approve the programme before it can take place. More importantly, a written consent from the individual exit candidate has to be provided that allows exchange of information between the relevant authoritative bodies (Agerschou, 2015, p. 12). The exit process is always catered to an individual and it depends on the individual's motivation, eligibility and needs. Before the start of a programme an agreement of cooperation is written up for every individual that provides a description of the measures and provides clarity.

Agerschou describes an exit process as an individually planned process and therefore the type of measures provided vary from case to case depending on the citizen's motivation, eligibility, and needs (Agerschou, 2015, p. 12). In addition a written agreement of cooperation is prepared for every individual in an Exit programme with the purpose of targeting the measures and providing clarity regarding the purpose of the exit process as explained by Agerschou. Every individual taking part in the exit programme is also assigned a contact person from the exit house, who is required to stay in contact with the individual (Agerschou, 2015, p. 12).

## **Counselling and Guidance**

According to the EJP the Info house always offer an individual counselling and guidance in regards to exiting a violent and extremist environment. The EJP further states that counselling is also available for relatives and people in the individual's life. If necessary the case is referred to the Task Force (J. Lundager, Personal communication 2, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, p.3), and If necessary relevant professionals such as psychologists can be asked to participate. If individuals are for example in Syria, The EJP stresses that the Info house typically does not specialize in counselling those individuals however help, advice and guidance is then provided to the relatives of the individual, including help to reach the individuals location (J. Lundager, Personal communication 2, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, p.3). There is a contact network amongst ambassadors and consulates in Turkey and the Lebanon Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danish Security and Intelligence service and Danish representatives working in the region with international police (J. Lundager, Personal communication 2, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, p.3).

Agerschou (2015, p. 13) explains that in the process, an individual is always assigned to a mentor who provides support during the process. As stated before the mentors are educated by Professor of psychology Bertelsen. The mentor serves as an agent that provides continuity in the progress, the reason for that is that there are various authoritative bodies involved which could be confusing or overwhelming for a person (Agerschou, 2015, p. 13). In addition the process of mentoring depends on the needs of the individual and will always be adjusted according to the individual's capability of handling the challenges the radicalisation has brought out (Agerschou, 2015, p.13). Ultimately the mentor's responsibility is to supervise the process and provide the support that the individuals needs in order to achieve inclusion into society.

The mentors needed in this process are required to complete an educational programme before being able to support an individual. Agerschou (2015, p. 13) explains that the mentors are part of a specialised mentor corps that meet every month with the mentor consultant as the process of being a mentor can be quite challenging. The mentor processes are therefore closely followed by the mentor consultant who provides monthly status reports on the exit process to the task force.

## **Education, Employment and Housing**

As far as education, employment and housing Agerschou (2015, p.14) states that including the individual is important during this project and during this step of the process the re-integration into the labour and educational system is considered. The mentor is required to always support the individual to ensure continuous contact with the educational and employment system and support to processes that have been set up to integrate the individual back into employment or education.

Agerschou (2015, p.14) further explains that if necessary the Exit programme will provide relocation of the individual although it is not a fixed part of the programme. Under exceptional circumstances where it is necessary for the individual to leave the violent environment, it will be provided. The Social Housing Department is then consulted to help facilitate this process as an application for emergency housing

## **Psychology sessions**

Individuals participating in the Exit programme are offered a limited number of sessions with a psychologist (Agerschou 2015, p14). The sessions are based on the method called life psychology under guidance of professor Preben Bertelsen. Life Psychology is a theory well founded in years of research. As described by the Aarhus workshop guide: Life psychology teaches that everyone aspires to a life that is “good enough”, as it will never be perfect or free of challenges, obstacles and setbacks.

The guide further describes that it is needed to acquire skills to cope sufficiently with these challenges, whether the challenges are daily life tasks or big life-changing decisions (Ostjyllands politi, nd, para 1). It is a method that addresses and strives to cope with the fundamental life tasks that confront everyone. If there is need for longer lasting therapy session, it will be continued through the individual's personal health system.

Agerschou (2015, p. 15) notes in this section that currently the possibilities of acquiring possibly external psychological are being explored. If there is a need for physical medical care that process goes through the ordinary health care system and the mentor assist the individual to gain access to this service.

**Network sources**

Network resources are a vital part in the exit process (Agerschou 2015, p. 14). According to Agerschou it is important to consider an individual's network and whether the persons in this network can assist the individual in their exit process. The individuals that can assist are the parents, family member or friends of the individual. The Info house performs a screening in order to assess if the close relatives or friends of the individual can be included in the process, if that is the case, counselling and guidance that is described in the previous paragraph will be applied.

**Anchorage of Faith and political conviction**

Agerschou notes that in the exit process individuals who at one point radicalized are involved and religion or storing political convictions plays a crucial role in their lives. It is likely that these individuals feel a need to discuss religious or political views and attain a more nuanced view of those topics (Agerschou, 2015, p. 15). It is not yet been made clear who will be in charge of this in the Exit programme as it is developing.

**Delimitation of exit processes**

The length of an exit process is typically one year however it could be shorter or longer depending on the individual and their needs (Agerschou 2015, p.16). The Info House mentors and employees will stay in contact after the process and the process is considered successful if the individual achieves the goals that were written in the initial agreement. It is also possible that the exit process is terminated if either the individual or the authorities do not adhere to the conditions of the previously set up agreement (Agerschou 2015, p.16). The Task force of the Exit programme decides the termination of the process. Agerschou explains that the communication between collaboration parties depends on the individual's needs (Agerschou 2015, p.16). For example contact with the Danish Security and Intelligence agency will go through the East Jutland police department and contact with the Prison and Probation service will go through the existing SSP.

#### **4.5 Results of the Aarhus method as of 2015**

According to the EJP since the establishment of the programme in 2007, the Info House received around 160 enquiries' related to concerns about radicalisation; most of these were handled with advice and guidance from employees of the Info House. In 19 cases a mentor programme was initiated, of these 19 cases, 11 individuals completed the programme successfully (J. Lundager, Personal communication 2, May 2nd, 2016, p.3). The way successful completion of the programme is measured is not clear. The EJP states that there is contact with people who are part of an extremist environment and are motivated to leave that environment, but for some reason are not in a position to leave without outside help. The individuals that are stuck in that situation receive help via the Exit programme, which is still in its first phase (J. Lundager, Personal communication 2, May 2nd, 2016, p.3).

The EJP notes that the work carried out thus far has significantly reduced traffic to Syria, from 30 individuals in 2013 to 1 person in 2014 and 3 in the beginning of 2015 (J. Lundager, Personal communication 2, May 2nd, 2016, p.3). In addition 5 younger individuals and their families have received advice, guidance and assistance with the concern the individual was about the travel to a Jihadist conflict zone, that has meant that in these cases, the travel from Denmark was prevented (J. Lundager, Personal communication 2, May 2nd, 2016, p.3). As for as returning Jihadists, there is contact with 16 individuals who have returned from Jihadists conflict zones, 10 of these individuals have received guidance, advice and help. The six other individuals are engaged in different areas of dialogue that enables authorities to keep track of them and their activities (J. Lundager, Personal communication 2, May 2nd, 2016, p.3).

#### **4.6 Case study: German Hayat Method**

This subchapter is a case study of the German Hayat method. This subchapter contains information obtained from a personal interview with former Hayat programme family counsellor and director of the German Institute on Radicalisation and De-radicalisation Studies Daniel Koehler, who also developed the methodology for the Hayat programme. Furthermore this subchapter will cover any relevant documents and information that is found online.

According to research by Vidino (2014, p. 10) as of 2014 270 German citizens are Jihadists in either Iraq or Syria. The fear of the German government is that these individuals join terrorist organizations and return to Germany to become engaged in terrorist attacks. Scholar Daniel Koehler of the German institute of radicalisation and de-radicalisation, states that since December 2013, the German Ministry of the Interior established that there are around 50 individuals that have returned to Germany (Koehler, 2013, p. 185). There is concern that 17 of these individuals have allegedly participated in terrorist activities. The German Federal persecutor has opened investigations against six of those individuals. These events have led to the creation of the German Hayat programme (Koehler, 2013, p. 185).

##### **4.6.1 Organisation**

Scholar Daniel Koehler extensively discusses the Hayat programme in his paper Family Counselling as Prevention and Intervention Tool Against 'Foreign Fighters' (2013). Koehler (2013, p. 185) stated that The Hayat programme is part of a German nation-wide counselling network focusing on radicalisation established by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in 2011 and is run by the Centre for Democratic Culture (ZDK) in Berlin. It is a nationwide phone hotline for families and concerned persons who request advice on how to deal with a radicalised individual, the hotline provides free and anonymous first line counselling.

The Hayat programme is responsible to tackle the highly radicalized cases of returning Jihadists. The programme was inspired by the successful de-radicalisation programmes for right-wing extremist: EXIT-Germany and therefore the Hayat method can use the knowledge available and apply to the realm of Islamic extremism (Koehler, 2013, p. 185).

Koehler (2013) The ZKD gained experiences to deal with de-radicalisation with its project: Strengthening families against violence and extremism. It was a counselling service for family and friends if individuals involved in Islamic extremist environments between 2007 and 2010 (as cited in C.F. Dantschke, 2010). The programme is financed by the Ministry of the Interior through the Federal Office for Immigration and Refugee Affairs in full (D. Koehler, Personal Email, May 28, 2016).

## **Strategy**

Koehler (2013, p. 185) describes how the programme focusses on the counselling of relatives and friends of individuals who are radicalized as vital in the decline and reversion of radicalisation processes. According to Koehler, (2013, p. 186) any effective de-radicalisation programme should focus on the de-legitimisation and invalidation of the individual's narratives and interpretations, it is also important that the previously learned radical ideology is dismantled. Furthermore it is important to reach a critical self-assessment of the individual's past. The Hayat programme works by educating the relatives and friends of radicalized individuals about radical argumentations and ideological narratives the relatives or friends to counter them (Koehler, 2013, p. 187).

The family serves as an example portraying something different from how the radical ideology tells the individual the family will react. In the literature review chapter it was described that recruiters of Jihadists will say upon arrival in a combat zone that their own family will never accept their faith and will try to convince them to return (Jansen, 2015, para 2). The Hayat programme responds to that by educating the relatives of radicalised individuals on how to recognize provocation and handle conflicts and how to compromise with the individual while respecting their faith and adhering to clear boundaries, that way the family was portrayed by the recruiters is questioned by the individual (Koehler, 2013, p. 187).

This allows relatives or friends that are opposed to the ideology of the individual to be empowered in their argumentation, in the past it became clear that prior to any exit out of an extremist environment, almost every individual had doubts about their movement and its objectives (Koehler, 2013, p. 188) The ZDK uses this emotional bond to plant seeds of doubt in the radical ideology of the individual which is beneficial for de-radicalisation.

## General method

The first step is an intense and highly complex experts assessments of networks, ideology, and risks of the radicalised individuals life, this is important in order to determine if the individual is violently or non- violently radicalised (Koehler, 2013, p. 191). This assessment is carefully conducted by a team of experts specialized in radicalisation, Islamism and terrorism. The team is equipped to counsel relatives and friends of the individual to develop an understanding and appreciation of the individual's new beliefs even if it conflicts with their own beliefs. If the individual is non-violently radicalised, counselling is shifted to a family therapy approach, where the individual is involved to improve the family context while respecting the faith and religious freedom (Koehler, 2013, p. 191).

Koehler (2013, p 191) describes the next step as 'clarification of personal dispositions and motivations of the radicalised individual'. It is essential to establish what makes the radical group appealing to the individual in order to structure further counselling efforts. It is necessary to detect and solve potential conflicts within the family in order to strengthen the family bond, as it is the most important element in the counselling experiences. It is also beneficial that the individual has access to other harmless forms of communities with religious background as it the individual should have access to their religion in a safe way (Koehler, 2013, p. 192).

Koehler (2013, p. 139) states that it is important to keep in mind that the programme focusses on the counselling of the family, the environment of a radicalised person, not the individual itself. It is counter-productive to include the radicalised person because the programme believes that it will be interpreted as a tool for manipulation of those against their religion. As stated before, individuals who are radicalised are told that their family is against them and the involvement of the individual in the process feeds into the notion that they are not accepted by their family (Koehler 2013, p 139). It causes the idea that every effort on the side of the family is interpreted as externally controlled with the goal of leading the individual to abandon their faith; this is usually applied when individuals are extremely radicalised or violent (Koehler 2013, p. 139).

Koehler (2013, p. 140) describes that in order to identify the individuals requirements and motives for radicalisation, the process always starts with an individual discussion with experienced and professional advisors and on the basis of that information the team develops a plan of action, along with goals and a realistic time frame for the family.

The first phase will overcome the individually perceived biggest obstacles to the targeted goals. These obstacles concern: preparation administrative formalities, legal information and advice, information and family-oriented counselling, mediation between state intuitions and psychological assistance. The assigned counsellor will accompany the process for as long as it is necessary and is available for contact 24 hours a day by telephone to assist families that deal with these critical situations (Koehler, 2013, p. 194). It is important that during this process the basic rights and security of all persons involved are safe guarded.

### **Goals and objectives**

The goal of the counselling process depends on the individual because all counselling processes are catered to a specific individual. According to Koehler (2013, p. 195) there are different scenarios for action in order to reach the goals designed. Additionally the included partners, religious figures, security personnel, psychologists, therapists and different authorities need to be coordinated for external assistance as well as for the counselling process at specific times in the process (Koehler, 2013, p. 195)

In a personal interview with Koehler<sup>4</sup>, the scholar emphasizes the importance of an efficient bridge between the family and all relevant actors, such as police, social workers, and schools, employers that requires high professional standards, evaluation and rigorous training for the staff (D. Koehler, Personal Interview. May 27, 2016). Koehler stated that since the publication of his paper in 2013, this has been a struggle and has even caused the programme to violate ethical standards.

Koehler explains that there have been incidents where security relevant cases were withheld from authorities because a lack of trust towards the police and intelligence. This is caused by a lack of the essential basis for that mechanism, without intense training in risk assessment, counsellors have no idea when to contact the authorities. This training was not implemented in the Hayat programme according to Koehler, despite the fact that it is essential for the programme. Koehler explains that the counsellors also need intensive training for example in Jihadi ideology, psychology of radicalisation, IS recruitment and propaganda, risk assessment (D. Koehler, Personal Interview. May 27, 2016). According to Koehler the Danish Model is exceptionally effective because it has an important long-term component regarding trust and network in community. It is run by policy and ensures

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<sup>4</sup> Koehler has left the Hayat programme in 2014, all of Koehler's statements come from the perspective of a well-informed researcher and former family counsellor.

control through the government. The Danish Model was built on a very long tradition of cooperation between police, social services and civil society; it is essential to design these programmes to be sustainable for a long time. (D. Koehler, Personal Email. May 28, 2016). Otherwise it will be difficult to implement these programmes because it would cause a very high degree of mistrust and critique (Koehler, 2015)

#### **4.7 Hayat programme with regards to Foreign Fighters**

The methods above are the general ideas behind the Hayat programme, as stated in the first paragraph it is a programme designed for the counselling of families that deal with security related cases such as foreign fighters (Koehler, 2013, p. 194). The Hayat programme has a specific programme for foreign fighters before leaving, during the time they are abroad and upon return.

Koehler (2013, p. 195) explains that it is important to know the difference between different types of individuals who might want to leave their home countries. It is possible that some individuals are for example leaving Germany to study Arabic in Egypt, this could be seen as a first step to joining radical Islamic groups however it could also be legitimate. The Hayat programme tries to assess every individual on the possibility of Foreign Fighter relevancy (Koehler, 2013, p. 196).

Koehler (2013, p 197) explains that there are three different types:

##### **The individual is about to leave**

In this case it is important to prevent the individual from leaving by any means necessary. However it is important to take into account the motivation behind the individual leaving, it could for example be learning Arabic or providing humanitarian aid. If this is the case it is important to offer alternative such as Arabic lessons in the home country or raising money for charity rather than humanitarian aid. In this stage the counselling method of creating a positive family environment where the individual's religion is applied. The counselling also provides the family with abilities to prevent the individual from leaving such as security agencies.

**The individual has already left**

In this case the counselling team needs to research more information about the activities of the individual who has left. It is still possible that the individual is not engaging in terrorist activities but is working in humanitarian assistance. It is important to find out information on the individual's contact with the family or if the authorities are investigating the case. The Hayat counselling team works as a bridge between the family and authorities at this stage. The team protects the privacy rights of the family and their concerns while trying to gain as much information as possible to locate the individual. If there is any concern regarding terrorist activity, the authorities need to be involved.

If necessary the Hayat programme will provide legal assistance and mediation to minimize the negative effects on the family, while maximizing the work to bring back the individual as safely as possible. It is possible that at this stage the family can be guided to prevent the individual from engaging in terrorist organisation in order to further facilitate a safe return to their home country without fears of criminalisation. In some cases the counselling can be shifted to a family therapy style approach.

**The individual returns**

In this case it is important to conduct a risk assessment, there is a possibility that the individual has been involved in illegal activities, the individual was trained for combat, or that the individual has contact with dangerous networks and groups. It is then important to strengthen the family in order to provide a safe and stable environment for the individual because the individual will most likely be arrested by the police or intelligence services immediately after their return. In order to prevent even further radicalisation, the family of the individual needs to be strengthened and trained to assist the individual in dealing with traumatic experiences during their time abroad.

The basic and most important rule here is that the stronger the environment around the individual is, the more difficult it is that the individual is radicalised further or chooses to engage in illegal activities. If the person expresses no interest in leaving the radicalised environment, the only measure left for Hayat is to assist the family with the situation and provide the option of continuing the process if the individual is arrested.

Koehler stated during the personal interview that regarding returning individuals, a very sophisticated method is needed to analyse each individual case, assess the risk and design

a hand tailored approach. On the basis of that assessment, there needs to be decision on which route to take, in the Hayat programme currently this particular method is currently missing (D. Koehler, Personal Interview. May 27, 2016).

To summarize, Koehler describes the goals of Hayat in regard to foreign fighters as: “to prevent the relative from leaving (voluntarily), to motivate him or her to return or to desist from fighting etc., and to induce a de-radicalisation process once returned” Koehler (2013, p 197).

#### 4.9 The Hayat programme results as of 2013

According to Koehler (2013, p 200) since the launch of the Hayat programme in 2011, 53 cases were handled between 2011 and 2013. These cases were mostly German however some cases were assigned by Sweden and Canada. Many of these cases had a Foreign Fighter related background. In 31 of these cases Hayat was contacted directly and 22 of these cases were referred to the Hayat programme. In December 2013 there were 39 active counselling processes with different degrees of diversity and security relevance. In at least eight cases the security relevance was significantly high. In these cases activities involving terrorist organisation have occurred or were preeminent.

Koehler (2013, p 211) describes that: a clear 'Foreign Fighter' background (according to the above mentioned types) was relevant in eight cases. One case was a domestic terrorism case. In the majority of cases there has been an advanced to high level of radicalisation with links to internationally operating and violent Wahhabi networks. Koehler (2013) also noted that in several cases, there was disproportional media coverage and interference of security agencies that caused additional problematic escalation of the situation.

Additional results are that in two specific Foreign Fighter cases, leaving the country could be prevented. In two other cases it was proven that the individuals leaving were harmless. In six cases the individual already left when The Hayat Programme was contacted. In 15 cases the risks associated with the situation were reduced through the counselling process by strengthening the families of the individuals. As of December 2013, seven cases have been closed successfully meaning that the families and the counsellor agreed that there was no need for further counselling, 30 cases are still on going and one case has been a failure. During the personal interview, Koehler mentioned that there have been cases of individuals travelling to Syria and committing suicide attacks after the family counselling process had started, this is possibly an example of a failure (D. Koehler, Personal Interview. May 27, 2016). In addition Koehler states that currently evaluation and transparency of the programme needs to be improved, if a case goes wrong, there is need for critical reflection and analysis in order to improve the programme.

## 5. Discussion

This chapter discusses case study results in the context of the relevant literature. The initial research question of this dissertation is: How can the Belgian government improve its current approach of dealing with returning jihadists in light of re-integration programmes across Europe? In order to answer this, it was necessary to first examine the current situation in Belgium; who a Jihadists is and what motivates a Jihadists to leave Belgium and finally the two re-integration programmes the Hayat programme and the Aarhus method.

### 5.1 Belgium

To answer the main research question, this dissertation first examined the current situation in Belgium. In recent years it is apparent that Belgium has the largest amount of Jihadists leaving their country per capita (Teich, 2016, p. 37). It is important for this research to determine the reasons for individuals becoming radicalised Jihadists and leaving Belgium to join the fight in Jihadist conflict zones. It became clear that in wider academic literature the reasons are, in short, that radicalisation has different factors. These factors include strained environmental conditions, organizational framing of those conditions with the goal to facilitate recruitment to a radical group and availability of pathways that lead to radicalisation (Teich, 2016, p. 37).

Some examples of strained environmental conditions are unemployment among Belgian Jihadists and the poor integration of Muslims into Belgian society (Birnbaum, 2015, para 20). This theory is in accordance with the opinion of Belgian expert Pieter van Ostaeyen who stated that the conditions in Belgium that cause these individuals is because they feel treated as second rank civilians and are left out of society. Ostaeyen further explains that these individuals feel that there are no fair chances on employment or education and therefore rebel against society (P. van Ostaeyen, Personal interview, May 15, 2016). It became apparent while researching the current situation in Belgium that the situation in regarding Muslim youth needs to be addressed. The lack of social identity and unequal chances for education and employment for these individuals creates a vulnerable environment, where they are prone to be recruited into a Jihadists group. If these conditions are improved over time in Belgium, it will decrease the lack of social identity, which will further decrease opportunities for radicalisation.

### 5.1.2 Belgian government's current approach:

Furthermore it became clear that in Belgium, the approach for dealing with returning fighters could be improved, as it is not very extensive. The current Belgian approach is described in a memorandum of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Security, the memorandum describes the projects: "returnees" and Task Force Syria. The Task Force Syria is an efficient optimal coordination to ensure the information exchanges between the local and federal police platforms. The project "returnees" describes the measures that are needed to identify persons who are looking to join, have already joined or have returned from Jihadist conflict zones such as Syria and Iraq. When those persons are identified the Task Force continues the operation needed to deal with such individuals (Belgische kamer van vertegenwoordigers, 2014). The criminal prosecution of returning Belgian Jihadists is preferred if the specific individual is deemed a threat and if there is evidence the individual is engaged in criminal or terrorist activities (Vidino, 2015, p. 8). The Belgian government would reach more individuals by adding any other Jihadists conflict zone to the Task Force Syria as currently it is limited to Syria.

According to Belgian expert Pieter van Ostaeyen, the government deals with returning Jihadists in a different way, on the one hand some individuals who have returned and showed remorse are freed quite rapidly. On the other hand there is an example of an individual who admitted to criminal activities in Syria which was overheard by the Police during a wire-tapped phone call, this individual is roaming the streets freely (P. van Ostaeyen, Personal interview, May 15, 2016). Ostaeyen also stated that he monitored about 120 Jihadists returnees to Belgium, stressing that it is not an official number and there is a strong possibility that there are more hiding in Belgium (Canvas, 2016). This indicates that the current Belgian approach can use improvement with regards to returning Jihadists, the example of Ostaeyen which mentions an individual who was not criminalised upon return despite the fact the individual was overheard confessing criminal activity. This is an example of an individual that can benefit from a re-integration programme. As Ostaeyen stated there are about 120 known returning Jihadists to date. Therefore the Belgian government's approach can improve in order to deal with these returning Jihadists.

Eva Entenmann, Programme Officer at the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, states that it is beneficial to develop a comprehensive approach, which includes re-integration for any government in dealing with returning Jihadists. As stated in the previous subchapter not all returning individuals are criminalised due to lack of evidence. For these

individuals a re-integration programme is applicable. According to Entenmann this can be an exit programme on a voluntary basis (E. Entenmann, Personal interview, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016). The exit programme can re-integrate an individual into society. However Entenmann noted that there are some troubles that arise with a re-integration programme on a voluntary basis. There are not many individuals who are willing to participate (E. Entenmann, Personal interview, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016).

To combat that issue, Entenmann states that it is beneficial to incentivise potential participation. Belgium can combat the issue of individuals not participating in potential re-integration programmes by offering incentives that make it attractive for individuals to participate. As stated in the literature review, part of Belgian's current approach is revoking citizenship of Jihadists and cancelling their financial benefits, an incentive could be offering to remove those restrictions if the individual participates in re-integration programmes.

## **5.2 Similarities and Differences of the Hayat programme and the Danish Aarhus method**

To examine how the Belgian government can approve their approach in light of re-integration programmes across Europe, two different re-integration programmes are discussed in this chapter. The German Hayat Programme and the Danish Aarhus Method. There are some aspects that the two programmes have in common.

### **Family counselling**

The Hayat programme focusses on family counselling in dealing with Jihadists, the Aarhus method is not solely a family counselling based programme, however it does include family support as one of many intervention models. The Aarhus method uses parents of children who are involved with Jihadist activity are offered communication with a network of parents in a similar situation, if an individual would requests their family to became a part of their process in the Aarhus method, the family will be offered counselling and guidance. The Aarhus method is also implementing a model for a workshop targeted at parents of Jihadists individuals.

The Hayat programme is family focused and works by educating the relatives and friends of radicalized individuals about radical argumentations and ideological narratives and teaches the relatives or friends to counter them (Koehler, 2013, p. 187). The ideology of the Hayat programme emphasizes the importance of counselling the relatives and friends of individuals who are radicalized as it is vital in the decline and reversion of radicalisation processes Koehler (2013, p. 185). Family counselling proves to be important to include as a strategy in order to improve the current Belgian method, as it is applied in both programmes and a helpful method in the de-radicalisation and re-integration of returning Jihadists.

### **Collaboration between community and authoritative bodies**

In the Hayat programme, there is collaboration between partners, religious figures, security personnel, psychologist, therapists and authorities for external assistance as well as counselling. The co-developer and former family counsellor of the Hayat programme Daniel Koehler emphasize the important of an efficient bridge between the family and all relevant actors mentioned above (D. Koehler, Personal Interview. May 27, 2016). Koehler explains

that the counsellors also need intensive training for example in Jihadi ideology, psychology of radicalisation, IS recruitment and propaganda, risk assessment (D. Koehler, Personal Interview. May 27, 2016). Which is important but not implemented in the Hayat programme.

According to Koehler, the Danish Model is exceptionally effective because it has an important long-term component regarding trust and network in the community. It is run by policy and ensures control through the government. The Danish Model was built on a very long tradition of cooperation between police, social services and civil society, it is essential to design these programmes to be sustainable for a long time. (D. Koehler, Personal Email. May 28, 2016). Otherwise it will be difficult to implement these programmes because it would cause a very high degree of mistrust and critique towards police involvement in the method (Koehler, 2015).

The important factor here for the Belgian government to remember is that in order to improve the re-integration of returning Jihadists, it is important to first establish a cooperation between police, social services and society before implementing a re-integration strategy. In addition it is essential to form a bridge between the family and all important bodies that contribute to re-integration, such as the authorities, social workers and schools that requires high professional standards, evaluation and rigorous training for these involved actors.

### **Pre-radicalisation prevention**

Another difference between the two programmes is that the Aarhus method includes a concept called Community outreach. This is beneficial to build resilience to prevent racialisation and violent extremism in the community. As stated in the last chapter, the Aarhus method initiated Dialogue with the Muslim Youth centre to prevent Muslim youth from becoming radicalised and travelling to a Jihadist conflict zone. Previously it was established that members of the Youth centre had travelled from Denmark to Syria (J.Lundager Personal communication may 2, page 6). There also has been an outreach to prevent radicalisation and travel to Syria with the Muslim Youth Centre Grimhojvej, it was established that some individuals that have travelled from Denmark to Syria were members of this group. The community outreach is beneficial in order to improve the communication between the community and the authorities. The community can spot early stages of radicalisation and contact the authorities to prevent an individual from becoming radicalised by referring to the Exit programme or from leaving to join the fight in Jihadist conflict zones.

While this dissertation focusses on re-integration, it is also beneficial for Belgium to include this step so that the problem of re-integrating Jihadists back into society becomes irrelevant.

### 5.2.2 The programmes in regards to returning Jihadists

The inner-workings of two programmes are different. The Hayat programme is designed to tackle the highly radicalized cases of returning Jihadists. While the German Hayat programme uses a hotline to receive inquiries, the Aarhus method uses an information centre called the Info House. In the Info House, citizens, relatives, friends of the potential candidates or municipal employees can ask questions and raise concerns about the radicalisation of an individual. The Hayat programme handles inquiries by educating the relatives and friends of radicalized individuals about radical argumentations and ideological narratives the relatives or friends to counter them (Koehler, 2013, p 187). The goals of the Hayat Programme concerning foreign fighters are to prevent the individual from leaving, to motivate the individual to return and to induce a de-radicalisation process once the individual returns (2013, p 197). However as co-developer and former Hayat counsellor Daniel Koehler stated in a personal interview, that a very sophisticated method is needed to analyse each individual case, assess the risk and design a hand tailored approach once an individual returns. On the basis of that assessment there needs to be decision on which route to take, in the Hayat programme currently this particular method is currently missing in the Hayat programme (D. Koehler, Personal Interview. May 27, 2016).

This is something that is lacking in the Hayat programme but can be found in the Danish Aarhus Method. The Aarhus method offers after care for returning Jihadists, which includes debriefing, psychotherapy, medical, care, mentoring contacts and participation in the Exit programme. The exit programme describes in detail the process of dealing with a returning Jihadist. The initial entrance to the Exit programme goes through the Info House. These returning Jihadists receive help via an Exit programme. It is important to stress that these services are offered to individuals who have not engaged in criminal activity, if so the Info House will contact the relevant authoritative bodies.

Within the Info House there is a Task Force that conducts a broadly based assessment of the individual case and makes a recommendation for an exit strategy based on the qualifications that the Task Force represents. The members of the Task force are representatives from the Department of Social Services, The East Jutland Police District, The Department of Children and Young people, the Department of Employment and the Danish Prison and Probation Service (Agerschou, 2015, p. 11). This includes all-important

areas that need to be covered when developing an exit strategy for a returning Jihadist. Once a strategy is developed by the Task Force, it is approved by the relevant authoritative bodies before the process can start, in addition a written consent from the individual exit candidate is mandatory which allows exchange of information between authoritative bodies. The individual exit strategy will be financed by the Department of Social Services and the Department of Employment.

The exit programme is discussed extensively in paragraph 4.5, in short, the programme first assesses the risks and then refers to case to the Task force. The Task force then develops a strategy that includes counselling and guidance of an individual and if necessary their family. The individual will be offered education or employment that suits their interests. If necessary the Task Force will provide housing and relocation. Furthermore the individual will be offered psychology sessions to deal with possible post-traumatic stress related to their experiences in a Jihadists conflict zone. The network sources consider if the individual's network can be helpful during the process, or harmful. The anchorage of faith and political conviction is important to note because the individual's faith is still integrated into their lives, however the individual should be motivated to attain a more nuanced view of those topics. The delimitation of the exit process is then started by the Task Force if the individual achieves the goals that were previously agreed to. As stated before this is integrated into the Aarhus method and ensures a path of re-integration for a returning Jihadist.

### **Task force**

Although the current Belgian method includes Task Force Syria; which focusses on an efficient and optimal coordination that ensures the information exchange between the local and federal police platform. It is beneficial to set up a Task Force similar to the Danish Aarhus method, which combines all relevant authoritative bodies needed to re-integrate returning Jihadists. In addition this further improves the information exchange between the local and federal police platform, as the individual exit candidate gives consent that allows information exchange during their exit programme.

### **Jihadists still in a conflict zone**

The Hayat programme and the Aarhus method both have a strategy for individuals that have not returned yet but are still in a Jihadists conflict zone. Within the Aarhus method if individuals are in a Jihadist conflict zone like Syria. The Info House will provide assistance

to the relatives or friends of an individual that would like to return. The Info House has a contact network amongst ambassadors and consulates in Turkey, the Lebanon Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danish Security and Intelligence service and Danish representatives working in the region with international police. If there is any concern for illegal activity, it is made clear to the relative and friends that the authorities will be contacted.

The approach of the Hayat program in the case of an individual still in Jihadist conflict zones is similar. The Hayat counselling team first researches more information about the activities of the individual who has left, if the person is engaging in terrorist activities or if the individual is there to work as a humanitarian. The program then finds out information on the individuals contact with their family and if the authorities are investigating the individual. The Hayat counselling team works as a bridge between the family and the authorities. If the authorities are not involved and there is concern regarding terrorist activity, similar to the Aarhus method the authorities are contacted. The difference is that if necessary the Hayat programme will provide the family of the individual with legal assistance and mediation to decrease any negative effects on the family, while increasing the chance of bringing back the individual as safely as possible. In this stage the family is also counselled to prevent the individual in engaging in illegal terrorist behaviour in order to facilitate a safe return home without the fear of the individual being criminalised.

A combination of both methods would be most beneficial for the Belgian government. The Aarhus method offers individuals a contact network that is shared with family or friends of the individual still residing in a Jihadists conflict zone, the Hayat program lacks a contact network however does offer legal assistance and mediation. This combination will offer individuals a safe return while being aware of possibly being criminalised. This will benefit Belgian government as well because it provides an overview of the returning Jihadists in the country. This is especially important as Ostaeyen stated that there are cases of returning Jihadists that are not known by the government. This combination of methods will combat that and also allow the government to be aware of the possibility that the returning Jihadists needs to be re-integrated.

## 6. Recommendations

This chapter serves to summarize the recommendations given in the previous chapter.

This dissertation has several recommendations for the Belgian government to improve its current approach based on the research conducted.

To improve their Belgian's current approach, the first recommendation is to develop a programme that includes family counselling. Family counselling has proven to be important as it declines and reverses radicalisation processes. The programme will benefit from both an Info House where individuals can walk in and ask for guidance and advice as well as a hot-line for those who have security concerns, those individuals can then call the hot-line to receive guidance and advice.

The second recommendation is to establish a long-term component regarding trust and a safe network in the community. Although this is difficult to establish it is essential in order for the re-integration program to be sustainable for a long term. This is important to do because if the programme is not adequately implemented it can backfire and cause mistrust and negative feelings towards government involvement. Therefore it is important to establish cooperation between police, society and social services. In order to do so, all involved actors such as the authorities, social services and the education system need to participate in rigorous training to achieve the high professional standards needed to establish safety and trust within the community.

The third recommendation is to develop an exit strategy for returning Jihadists that have not committed any criminal activity while in a Jihadist conflict zone. This exit strategy should first analyse each individual case, assess the associated risks and lastly design a hand tailored approach for each individual. The cases of the exit strategies should be a collaboration between any authoritative bodies, a Task Force that can assist the returning Jihadists with re-integrating into society. The authoritative bodies are for example the Department of Social services, the Police department, the Department of Employment and the Department of Justice. Currently the Belgian government's approach includes a Task force Syria and it would be beneficial add the Task Force mentioned above.

The fourth recommendation is to a strategy to prevent radicalisation and travel to a Jihadist conflict zone. This can be done by engaging in dialogue with for example a Muslim Youth centre or local mosques that have a strong influence on impressionable youth. The

communities are able to spot early stages of radicalisation and can involve the re-integration program to prevent an individual from becoming radicalised or from leaving the country. While this dissertation focusses on re-integration, it is also beneficial for Belgium to include this step so that the problem of re-integrating Jihadists back into society becomes irrelevant.

The fifth recommendation is to offer Jihadists still in a conflict zone a safe way to return home. Some individuals become disillusioned from their experience abroad and would rather return home. There are cases of returning Jihadists that enter the country undetected, which is a safety concern. This will allow the Belgian government to have an overview who of returning Jihadists and their whereabouts. It is important to make clear to individuals who are interested in a safe return that there will be criminal investigation upon their return, if the individual has not engaged in criminal investigation there will be the opportunity of participating in an exit strategy.

The last recommendation is to improve the strained environmental conditions that can lead to recruitment to a radical group and pathways to radicalisation. These conditions such as lack of social identity and unequal chances for education and employment increase opportunities for radicalisation of Muslim youth in Belgium. If social inclusion is improved and there are initiatives and efforts to decrease the inequality in employment and education that is currently present in Belgium opportunities for radicalisation will decrease as well.

## 7. Conclusion

This dissertation aimed to answer the following question: How can the Belgian government improve its current approach of dealing with returning Jihadists in light of re-integration programmes across Europe? In order to answer this research question, the literature review first established an understanding of the current Belgian approach, which includes the Task Force Syria and the Platform returnees which are designed to improve coordination on a federal level. The Criminal prosecution of returning Jihadists is preferred if there is significant evidence that the individual engaged in criminal activity, which is often difficult to prove. In addition Belgian city councils have adopted measures to delete individuals from their resident's registry and terminated financial benefits. Secondly the literature review included a framework of radicalisation using the Framing Theory, which established that strained environmental conditions such as lack of social identity, and unequal chances can lead to recruitment to a radical group and develop pathways to radicalisation. This causes Belgian nationals to become radicalised into Jihadists that travel to a Jihadist conflict zone, if the Belgian government improves the strained environmental conditions, radicalisation will decrease also. In the case that these individuals return from a Jihadist conflict zone and are not criminalised it is possible that they are still a threat to society due to their experience abroad in a Jihadist conflict zone.

To improve its current approach the Belgian government can implement measures to combat the possible threats associated with returning Jihadists such as terror attacks in Belgium or radicalisation of other Belgian nationals. The measures that the Belgian government can implement in light of re-integration programmes across Europe are inspired by the Belgian Hayat program and the Danish Aarhus method.

The measures that can improve Belgian's current approach are to first to develop a re-integration program that includes Family counselling. The families and friends of a Jihadist can then contact the family counselling service where experts in the field of Islamic extremism, authorities and social services can offer them advice and guidance to help remove their relative from that environment. Whether the individual still resides in Belgium or has travelled to a Jihadist conflict zone the family can contact the counselling service via a hot-line or a visit an info house to request advice and guidance. In order to do so, it is also important for Belgium to improve trust and a safe network in the community. The cooperation between authorities, society and social services needs to be improved. Within the family counselling programme, the Belgian government can implement an exit strategy

for returning Jihadists that have not engaged in any criminal activity abroad. The exit strategies are catered to an individual and should be a collaboration of a Task Force that includes the Department of Social services, the Police department, the Department of Employment and the Department of Justice to fully re-integrate the individual into society.

Additional measures that the Belgian government can improve are the prevention of radicalisation and travel to a Jihadist conflict zone. This will eliminate the issue of returning Jihadists and can be done by initiating dialogue with communities where Jihadists are a part. These communities such as a local mosque or a Muslim youth centre can much like the family spot early stages of radicalisation and contact the re-integration programme for advice and guidance. The Belgian government can also benefit by providing an exit strategy to Jihadist that are still in a conflict zone and have become disillusioned, show remorse and want to return home. It is important to help these individuals to return home while emphasizing that there will be criminal investigation to verify if they are indeed remorseful. This will allow the Belgian government to be aware of how many Jihadists are returning, their mind frame and whereabouts.

Another measure that falls outside of the scope of this dissertation but is important to mention is the radicalisation that takes place within prisons. In the case that a returning Jihadist is criminalised, prisons can serve incubators or accelerators for radicalisation, which causes individuals to become further radicalised (Entennman et al, 2015, p.10). The window of opportunity for a returning Jihadists in prison to be influenced by ideology or other positive intervention is quite big ( E. Entennman, Personal interview, June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016) This window can be utilized by countering radicalisation within the prison system and offering an exit programme as well as including de-radicalisation, counselling and guidance while the individual is still incarcerated. Participation in the programme can be incentivized by offering the individual more family visits or the eligibility for parole if the individual shows significant progress (E. Entennman, Personal interview, June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016). Ultimately the individual then leaves the prison system de-radicalised with an exit strategy that will allow them to re-integrate back into society with the help of an established re-integration program outside of the prison system.

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## **9. Appendices**

### **9.1 Personal Interview Daniel Koehler**

Interview questions Mr. Koehler. Co-developer and former family counsellor of the Hayat programme.

#### **Can you please describe the current status of the Hayat program in Germany?**

The program is currently a project being run by a German non-governmental organization as part of a nationwide counselling network consisting 8 other NGOs and financed by the Ministry of the Interior. So Hayat is not an NGO as such but a mere project.

#### **In your email, you mentioned that the work of 2013 is a bit outdated, and the program as it is being run today is deficient. Can you please explain why it is deficient?**

In my original methodology I developed the approach to be an efficient bridge between the family and all relevant actors, such as police, social workers, schools, employers etc. That requires high professional standards, evaluation and rigorous training for the staff. Neither has been realized by the organization that eventually ran (and still runs) the program. In fact, they did not implement the necessary and crucial components of the method that I developed. In addition, the program has violated ethical standards, compromised the trust based relationship with some families and increasing numbers of families have contacted other programs, because they did not receive the adequate help from Hayat. All of which indicates that the program has struggled and eventually failed to establish the high aims set in the original methodology.

Also there have been incidents where security relevant cases were withheld from the authorities because a lack of trust from that NGO towards the police and intelligence. Methodologically the essential basis for that mechanism (involving the authorities when a case turns high risk) is intense training in risk assessment. Without that counsellors have no idea when to involve the authorities. This training (and other) was not implemented in the Hayat program, which basically renders my approach inoperable and even dangerous.

#### **Please describe what has changed positively and negatively since the publication of your paper?**

Positively, family counselling programs have become some of the most important and innovative CVE tools around the world. A high number of countries have introduced family counselling hotlines. Mostly they were not modelled after the German case (which is very important NOT just Hayat but a public private partnership between the Ministry of the Interior and 9 NGOs including Hayat) but I would say heavily inspired partially by my

research, since I advised many of these countries directly and advocated for the adoption of family centric programs to counter violent extremism. Since I left the Hayat program in 2014 I have also developed more specific training courses for family counsellors, evaluation mechanisms, family networks and other additional tools, that are missing in the current Hayat program. So I feel that the issue of family focused prevention and intervention has received much more attention in recent years. What I see critically however is, that in most countries the programs are not being built with coherent standards and training for staff. Family counselling in deradicalization is not something a social worker or psychologist can do 'just like that'.

They need intensive training for example in Jihadi ideology, psychology of radicalization, ISIL recruitment and propaganda, risk assessment etc. In addition, there are many complex details about family counselling and deradicalization and I am currently the only expert in that field who can conduct dummy case training exercises to actually test and prepare the counsellors for a variety of potential case scenarios. Also a negative thing: evaluation and transparency are very much lacking, especially in Germany. When cases go wrong, which happened in Germany multiple times, there is no critical reflection and analysis in order to improve the program. A couple of weeks ago for example a bomb attack against a Sikh temple in Essen was conducted by two 16yo Salafists was conducted.

One of them had been in family counselling for 1 ½ years in the Wegweiser program (not part of the counselling network and government run but using more or less similar methods). No attempt has been made to scrutinize the program if it failed or made a mistake in the counselling. There have been cases of young men travelling to Syria and committing suicide attacks after the family counselling had started. This is not to say that it does not work but that this field requires high standards and evaluation.

**The Hayat Program focusses on the de-radicalisation of an individual and in your paper you stated that if there is if there is any concern regarding terrorist activity, the authorities need to be involved. In your opinion what approach is beneficial method to deal for returning Jihadi fighters, criminalisation, de-radicalisation and re-integration or a combination of both? (For example if the person is criminalised, is there still a process for de-radicalisation?)**

The Hayat program first of all should (according to my methodology) focus on slowing down and stopping the radicalization of the relative. Ideally it would induce a deradicalization process, where another program focused on individual case management should take over, as family counselling and individual derad can have conflicting goals. Germany does currently not have a follow up individual derad program for Jihadis, which is a very

problematic point. As I said above, training in risk assessment is essential to fulfil that role of deciding when the authorities need to be involved. Regarding returning fighters you need to have a very sophisticated method to analyse each individual case, assess the risk and design a hand tailored approach. On the basis of that assessment the program has to decide which route to take. Each one makes for certain cases. It depends. In the German context, this method is currently missing.

**How many cases are being handled at once in order to maximize the results of the Hayat program?**

The program has no effective internal statistics or has been evaluated in any way. So it is not possible to tell how many cases they in fact work on. Another question is case classification. A program could say they work with 500 cases but 490 of them are actually low level no risk cases that require not a lot of resources. On the other side a program with 4 full time counsellors could be completely overworked with 15 cases if they are high intense. As the Hayat program has no such a classification scheme that I know of it is impossible to tell.

**How important is the cooperation during Hayat counselling cases of security agencies and the media?**

Again that depends on the individual case. It can be very important or highly destructive. The question is about the assessment and treatment method. Both media and security agencies are very delicate due to German data protection and privacy laws, which prohibit sharing personal information in most cases and situations.

**How important is the collaboration between professional partners (youth welfare service, family counselling, psychotherapists), in your paper you mentioned these professionals were either absent or had insufficient knowledge on Islamist-Salafist radicalization and were simply overwhelmed, Please describe recommendations on how can this be tackled and improved?**

This cooperation is critical as the family counselling program cannot conduct all these services on its own. Specific training courses for these partners are the key to raise awareness and built trust on their side, as well as clarity about what to do when and how.

**How are the 39 active cases as of 2013 currently developing?**

As there is no evaluation it is not possible to tell.

**What have been the most important lessons learned so during the course of the Hayat program that can improve the program in the future?**

What I explained above regarding standards, training and evaluation.

**Can you draw any comparisons between the Hayat program and similar initiatives in The European Union?**

They are all very different in fact. However, most European programs are intelligence or police led and driven and do not focus on deradicalization but detection of potential terrorists. What is comparable is the lack of standards and training though.

**9.1.1 Personal Email Daniel Koehler**

This appendix is confidential and only available to the supervisors of this dissertation.

## **9.2 Personal Interview Pieter van Ostaeyen**

Interview questions Pieter van Ostaeyen, Belgian Islamicist, historian and Arabist expert on current affairs in the Middle East & background with a focus on returning Jihadists.

**Thank you so much for agreeing to do the interview. I would just like to point out one more time that it is being recorded for transcribing purposes**

Yeah no problem

**Could please describe the current situation of returning Jihadist to Belgium?**

That is a bit hard for me to say, I don't have a real insight in that because basically what we, what I can say is that there are official numbers of people who have returned and I have to stick to those official numbers because basically I wouldn't have any idea when anybody is going to come back to Belgium. Then there is also the way that the government is dealing with them, it seems that some of them are locked up but not all the them some of them who have returned and have remorse they would be freed quite rapidly but then again right for example who has admitted that he has beheaded in Syria also the police overheard him saying that in a tapped phone call that this guy is roaming the streets freely, so it is completely different, every person is treated in a different way in my opinion.

**So it just depends on the case?**

Uhum (yes).

**Have you noticed any changes that have increased the amount of Jihadists leaving Belgium?**

Well we did have a steady flow in the last few years at the moment we have around well that would be an absolute maximum which would be around 600 or 620 something like that, that have left Belgium for Syria or Iraq. The last few months we identified a lot of them and that basically is because of the fact they were named in different trails like for example the trail around de naim and serkani there we get a lot of details about people who might have been in the database at some time but are now known.

**Could you think of some reasons of why they would leave Belgium to join the fight?**

There were different reasons, the first guys who left were who I would call hard-core jihadists who already wanted to join Jihadi groups in the past, and had sometimes even tried to do so in 1990 then we had a wave of people who left out of ideology and left to go to Syria to protect Syrian people and among these first groups there were some rather

significant number of sharia4belgium people, sharia4belgium has been acting as a, how should I call it, it was a, uh I forgot the exact word it was a catalyst, that's exactly, because some of these members of sharia4belgium that left Belgium they called upon their friends, relatives colleagues sometimes to come over to Syria and join the fight so that would be the third group of people who left under social and peer pressure and then we have a group that would be the guys who actually joined the Islamic state because of the Islamic state, if you understand me, people who immediately wanted to join the Jihad of the Islamic state, and we see quite a number of people in the category leaving after the Islamic state restored the caliphate on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June 2014.

**Do you think that there are conditions in Belgium that cause these fighters to leave?**

Well yes in a way some part of the rhetoric that always returns is the fact that they feel treated as second rank civilians and they feel left out of society, they feel that they had no fair chances on in employment or at school and stuff like that so basically they feel discriminated, they feel that they have no place in our society and they turn themselves against our society and basically it is you can look at it as some kind of rebellion. Or a revolution if you want, these youngsters they rebel against their parents they rebel against society and they see some kind of an Islamic ideal especially in the Islamic state they feel that there is a new way of life actually that they feel, it is their duty to go help the Islamic state create a the Islamic state and the caliphate.

**Earlier you had said that it depends on the case of a returning fighter if he is criminalized or anything else, how do you feel about the method of re-integration of returning Jihadists, do you have any thoughts on that?**

I have no idea of we do have program are that are re-integrating or re-assimilating these people back into society, of course we need them because basically we cannot deny that at some point, some of these people will come back and will, and we cannot just lock them up for life you know, so we have to do something with them. What the exact way to treat these people is, I cannot say because it also depends here it would depend on person per person, we need individual approaches, not just one size fits all that's not going to work I think but how and what we're going to have to do well difficult to say at this point.

**Well it is quite a new phenomenon so that is understandable**

**What do you think the future holds regarding Jihadist returning to Belgium that should be taken into account now so maybe something we are overlooking now or something that isn't getting enough attention**

No, we already facing the mistakes we made, basically because we already had the attacks had the attacks in Brussels we already know that a lot of these Belgians especially these from the zirkani cell are really dangerous network, perhaps even the most dangerous network that we have seen in Belgium, so we do have to realize that these guys, the same, this network might be able to commit more crimes anytime soon. It is very much possible that there will be an attack anytime soon, not necessarily in Belgium but somewhere in Europe.

**Anywhere else where they might return?**

Uhum (yes)

**Oh Im sorry did you want to something?**

No its basically well we don't know where the next attack will be, but it could be in Germany it could be in Spain, it could be, we don't know.

**Is there any approach in Europe that you think Belgium can learn from, anything that you've heard of?**

Not really sure because also here the part of the re-integration and the de-radicalisation and that is not so much my topic actually, I'm more how should I say I detect the problem and I describe the problem I'm not going to solve the problem.

Are there any others topics that you find important and that haven't we haven't discussed yet, anything that is important to mention for the research?

Let me think no not really I think this would be, you've got enough information actually.

## 9.2.1 Interview guide Pieter van Ostaeyen

Main questions/topics	Additional questions	Clarifying questions
Please describe the current situation of returning Jihadists in Belgium?	How did these problems arise? Under what circumstances does the problem arise? Have you noticed any changes that increased the Jihadists leaving Belgium? How do you explain the problem?	Can you expand a little on this? Can you give me some examples? Can you tell me any anything else? Can you please elaborate on that?
What is Belgium's current method of dealing with returning fighters?	What was the previous method? What has changed with the increase of returning Jihadists fighters?	
What are the reasons that Belgium has the highest amount per capita of fighters leaving?	What are some reasons for Jihadists in Belgium for becoming radicalized? What conditions cause Jihadists to leave Belgium?	
What conditions are there when Jihadists return to Belgium?	How have returning Jihadists been received in Belgium How do you think the conditions should be when Jihadists return?	
In Conclusion: Are there any topics that you find important to mention that we haven't discussed yet?		

### 9.3 Personal Interview Eva Entenmann

Interview questions Eva Entenmann, Programme Officer at the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism.

**Could you please describe the importance for any government in including a rehabilitation/re-integration program in a comprehensive approach regarding returning Jihadists/Foreign Fighters?**

Yeah sure, it's clear that you've read the paper, the policy paper a little while ago, it's very nice to hear that you're following up on some of these questions. There is an overall debate as you of course know from writing your thesis. Whether rehabilitation should be integrated, and its only really been recently that governments started talking about it, we know that there is about 40 programs worldwide that work on rehabilitation of extremist offenders. So that's not just "jihadists" but other types of terrorism so they started in the late 90's with right extremist rehabilitation programs in scandinavia and Germany and now as you know this idea has become more popular with governments and theyre thinking about it more. It's a good idea to tackle and prevent terrorism.

Personally I think it's part of any comprehensive approach to counter terrorism, counter terrorism can't just be drones or hard repressive approaches, and for me personally it needs to have a full spectrum of tools in a toolbox. If you think about someone who is convicted of a terrorist offence, most likely that they will end up in prison and in the European context, I know that it is different in other context, but in the European context at least, most of them will eventually be released, so they will have some time in prison and then will then come out of prison. Ok if you have a terrorist that is convicted and goes into prison for I don't know five, ten, 15 years in prison. Will come out in the end, you don't want to person to come, have finished their sentence and then still be a terrorist. So one way to try to tackle that is to use a rehabilitation program. Another aspect of that is of course prevent radicalisation in prison so either of the person has gone to prison or has been convicted for terrorism offence that he or she himself will become radicalised, you know prisons are quite stressful environments.

The window of opportunity, or the open ness of an individual to new ideas and new ideologies or to other positive intervention is quite big. So we need I think rehabilitation is one way to try prevent them for further radicalising or radicalising at all. And a second aspect of prison radicalisation is that we don't want the person to radicalise others. And

there's many different ways how prison officials are going about this as well. In some countries, for example Netherlands, to prison wings, the TA's where everyone convicted for pre-trying intention for terrorism offences will be in the same wing and will not have any contact with non-terrorist offenders, so there you could argue they might not get any more radicalised or can radicalise others because all the people in the same wing are already radicalised but then would also have to look at this everyone in this wing is, is terrorist offender radicalised to the same extent? Is there a follow-leader ideology? Again here I think rehabilitation might be an option. And the very last one I think is that states have a certain duty of care towards their citizens as well and a responsibility for security. So yes someone has committed an offence, for a really big offence, terrorism but I personally think you should also allow a second chance, we do this with other crimes that there, unless you are a repeat offender, there is ways to redeem yourself. So why shouldn't we offer that also with rehabilitation. That was a really long answer to your question ha-ha!

**No it's very comprehensive, and that's amazing. What are your thoughts about for example returning Jihadists that are not criminalised, so for example there is not enough evidence so they are not criminalised? Do you think that some sort of program should be applicable to them as well?**

I think that's really, you got really the difficult question here. If you know talk about foreign fighters especially. We know that a lot of them are going abroad, have a couple of cases against them not many but there is cases against them. And most of them, the guys or girls as well they go abroad and say well ok yes I was there, yes I posed maybe with a Kalashnikov but it was for protection. I was just there, I was a chef or a nurse or I actually fought against ISIS, I was part of the free Syrian army or I was doing humanitarian work. So yeah then you have might have a court case if there is enough evidence, you might have a court case. The likely you'll get as you say is that not many of them would be convicted or would be charged at all.

Now the question is, we can't of course, they are presumed innocent until they are proven guilty. I fully fully support this idea, that's the basis of our democracy and of our rule of law basis. But there is concerns of course. And I know that there is different governments, again the Dutch example there is a voluntary programme an exit programme facility on a voluntary basis for returnees that are unconvicted aren't you know in the criminal proceedings to participate in an exit programme, I think that on a voluntary basis is a fantastic idea and to offer this but the question is of course who would do that voluntarily? So yeah here you have this whole debate and I think you ask this question later, should it be mandatory or

voluntary? Yeah great to offer voluntarily, if you're not in prison and offering voluntary we see that not many actually take it on. Then you can have almost like a half voluntary thing, where you incentivize potential participation, so many foreign fighters in the Dutch context that are suspected of gone of having return that there is no case against them yet they might have their passports withdrawn or they might have administrative measures might have happened to them, there we know that rehabilitation can work as an incentive. It's about incentivizing, again you have to think of course of what is the motivation, is it only to get their passport back or to get sanctions lifted or is it actually they want to change something about themselves. Recently heard a very interesting perspective of someone working in rehabilitation in the Asian pacific region, not in a terrorism context yet most of the experience there was in the sex offender context and their experience was yes, it works best when its voluntary but actually when we do it on a mandatory basis especially in the prison context, people will participate if it goes for long enough they know have to be in it for a year and they eventually listen to it, they consider it. They might think about it, and they might over time be actually "rehabilitated" in quotation marks because you can't measure it. But that's already an interesting perspective in the prison context.

Again I know you asked me about outside the prison context but in the prison context if you make it mandatory but you know the person is in prison anyway, the person knows he or she sits in there for ten years, might as well do something or participate in something for a couple of hours a week. Or being made to do it, but if you then incentivize and say okay if you participate in this for one or two years and you show progress then you might be open for parole earlier so there's these kind of incentives. I know I have now moved away from your question, haha its such and interesting topic where everything kind of is interlinked

**Let's see here because you answered some things in my other questions, what benefits do you think are there for the government if they offered a program to foreign fighters and returning Jihadists? For example after the have received a prison sentence, what is the benefit for the government.**

So I think some of the questions of that question I've already answered in the very first question, any other aspects you could think of are for example you can use someone who participated in a rehabilitation program and that has been "successful" again in quotation marks in being rehabilitated, that person could then, the government could then use that person for example for counter narratives, are you familiar with that term counter narratives?

**Yes I am**

For example for counter narrative things, and I know for example in France they're doing that for disillusioned foreign fighters or otherwise there is also a lot of rehabilitation programmes that uses former violent extremist offenders and one of them is Exit in Sweden relies heavily on experience of formers to then counter and help rehabilitate current violent extremist offenders so I think that's some other added benefits that the government would have in rehabilitating someone.

I think maybe one thing that you haven't, that isn't an interview question but is really really important and you should probably address or make a disclaimer in your thesis is the problem of measuring success. I am sure Daniel has talked a lot with you about this. That is a really really important aspect, and the other aspect is that what is rehabilitation and re-integration actually? As a programme so there's, yes you're looking at Aarhus and Hayat why do you classify that as a program and why not?

**Yeah I will definitely look into that. I think you have answered most of my questions, is there anything else that is important that I am not looking at besides measuring success etc.?**

Yeah or maybe there's one aspect that's rehabilitation and re-integration, so the re-integration one I think that's a really really fascinating one overlooked as well and by myself as well but some aspects of this is where do you re-integrate someone into, what kind of society? If you look at some of the foreign fighters in the European context, the research has shown that many of them come from pre-established networks, criminal networks or jihadist networks or you know if you look at the famous example of Molenbeek. So if you then talk about re-integration what do you re-integrate someone into? I don't have the answer for it. I think you need to find a community that's not only willing to take someone back, but also a community that's able to do so. And here I think civil society can be included more often.

**Right, re-integrate somebody for example back into Molenbeek, it would not really make sense because that is where the individual already became radicalised and that's definitely something that needs to be addressed**

Yeah, Well I think that Molenbeek is an interesting example because it is in the Media, it's been hyped up as this black hole of you know violent extremist Jihadists and radical Muslims walking around, you know it's not like that in reality. But I think there is some strong networks within Molenbeek, yes you have that in so many other areas throughout Europe. But yeah so if you go back into that very small, into that mosque that might be perpetuating radical ideas. You can't look at it at a Molenbeek level because it's more complicated than this but you're very small network of it, or your mosque or your school, maybe even your work place.

**That's true, it might be a good idea to highlight as well stepping into dialogue with these communities for example Muslim youth centres or mosques where radicalisation has stemmed from and imitating dialogue with those communities can definitely help the process**

And definitely the private sector don't overlook that. In prison if they learned a certain skill maybe it's handy to talk to the private sector and the person can then work, you know use that skill to actually work and get a job.

**Could you elaborate on that? What do you mean by private sector?**

Companies

**Oh okay, got it so if somebody says in prison, I can make furniture for example.**

Exactly so this is where we can learn a lot from normal re-integration and parole officers and all of those kind of people, this exists already for other crimes. This exists and is completely normal that you report that you report to your parole officer once a week or what have you and you find a new job very normal but in the terrorism context don't properly look at this yet, or haven't applied it yet.

**Yes when talking to Mr Koehler, he explained that the intent is there but not many people are educated in violent extremism or Jihadists ideology and know that I'm talking to you, I realize that it might be incorporate that with parole officers as well, that they are educated in those kind of fields, so they can deal with that.**

Yeah that's a fantastic idea I think, there is one, in the Netherlands that is going on but I'm not sure how far this is developed or not

**I will definitely take a look at that, it is quite difficult as everything is so new, there isn't really academic literature, not a lot of it available. When I found your work I was very happy.**

Ha-ha, I think much of it is classified in nature as well, so many one of these indicatives theyre only being piloted, theyre classified to test a little bit and see if its working or not, just because it's such a contemporary topic as well. So if you don't find information it's probably why.

**Ah so it's classified, maybe in a few years I can take a look.**

Yeah exactly, so theyre testing out the waters.

## 9.3.1 Interview guide Eva Entenmann

Main questions/topics	Additional questions	Clarifying questions
Could you please describe the importance for any government in including a rehabilitation/re-integration program in a comprehensive approach regarding returning Jihadists/Foreign Fighters?	Is an approach necessary?	<p>Can you expand a little on this?  Can you give me some examples?  Can you tell me anything else?  Can you please elaborate on that?</p>
Do you think a rehabilitation/re-integration program should be incorporated into the criminalisation process of a returning Jihadists/Foreign fighter?	What reasons are there for it to be included?	
Do you think it would be beneficial to develop one approach that is applicable to all cases or handle it case by case in regards to returning Jihadists/Foreign fighters?	How would it be beneficial?	
What benefits are there for a returning Jihadist/Foreign fighter that will motivate the individual to participate in a rehabilitation/re-integration program?	What benefits are there for the government?	
In your opinion is it beneficial that participation in the rehabilitation/re-integration program is mandatory or voluntary?	In your paper Rehabilitation for Foreign fighters you state that prisons serve as incubators or accelerators for radicalisation by causing individuals to become (further) radicalised, do you think it is important to tackle that? And if so, how can it be tackled?	

#### **9. 4 Personal Email Janni Lundager**

This appendix is confidential and only available to the supervisors of this dissertation.

## 9.4 Personal Communication 1 Janni Lundager

### East Jutland Police and Aarhus Municipality

Department of Social Services and Children and Youth



#### Prevention of radicalization and discrimination in Aarhus

The 5th of November 2015

#### **A short description of the strategies and work conducted in relation to the: "Prevention of radicalization and discrimination in Aarhus"**

The anti-radicalization prevention efforts started in 2007 as a pilot project with the objective of preventing the political and religious radicalization of young people and also ensuring that these young people were safe and thriving. The pilot project transitioned into full operation on the 1st of January 2011.

#### **Definitions and clarification of terms**

Radicalization is understood as a process that leads to a person increasingly accepting the use of violent or other unlawful means to achieve specific political or religious goals. Violent extremism is understood as the use of violent or other unlawful means, including terrorism, to achieve specific political or religious goals.

Radicalization is regarded as risk behaviour that has an impact upon others (safety) and risk behaviour that has an impact upon the individual (their own well-being) Seen in this context, there is a risk that radicalization can lead to criminality, however, this is a process which can be prevented. Radicalization can also be seen as a phenomenon, which can be justified by both politics and religion.

Discrimination is understood in accordance to Danish law, that is as, the discriminatory treatment of an individual that leads to a person receiving inferior treatment and having worse opportunities than others because of, for example, their gender, their skin colour, religion, political opinions or their national, social or ethnic origins.

Discrimination is considered as an important factor in creating the conditions for radicalization.

As such, radicalization prevention efforts work from the premise that:

- Experiencing discrimination and poor experience of inclusion in the wider society is one of several factors that can lead to radicalization.
- The prevention of radicalization in Aarhus also includes an active effort against discrimination.

The work carried out to prevent radicalization is based on a set of values outlined in Aarhus Municipality's integration policy, where the focus is on active

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**Forebyggelse af Radikalisering og diskrimination i Aarhus**

citizenship. As such, the work undertaken is directed by the objective of this policy i.e.: "to strengthen societal cohesion in Aarhus and ensure that everyone, regardless of ethnic or cultural background, are able to participate as active citizens with respect for fundamental democratic values."

**Organisation:**

The work carried out is a collaboration between East Jutland Police and Aarhus Municipality, and is undertaken as a supplement to the existing crime prevention initiatives. As far as possible, the work uses existing criminal prevention initiatives and procedures, which are supplemented by an intersectional and interdisciplinary working group with specific knowledge of radicalization.

The work is initiated and managed by the Director of the Department of Children and Youths, the Director of Social Services and the Director of Police. Daily operations are carried out by a management group and an interdisciplinary working group consisting of Social Services, East Jutland Police and Social Services - Department of Children and Youths.

**Goals and Objectives:**

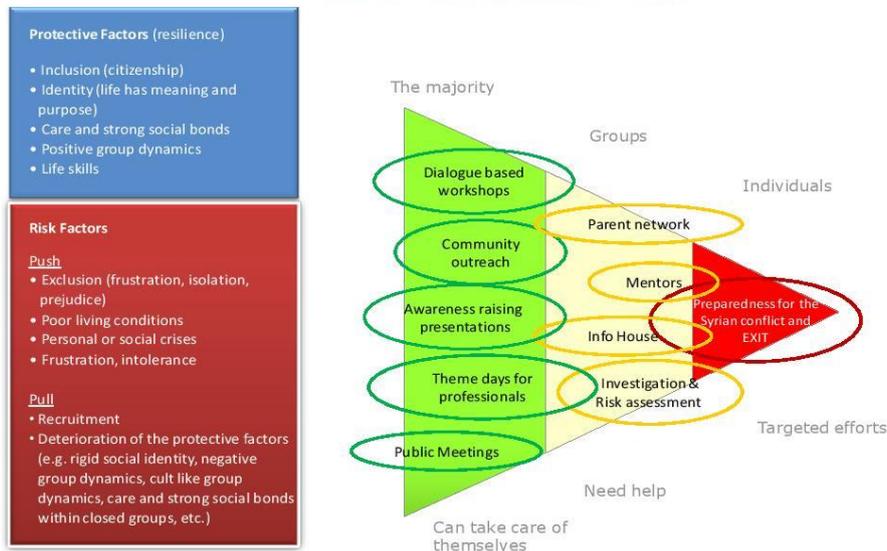
The strategy is to regard radicalization in the same way as any other crime prevention work that requires general, group related and specific actions.

Work is on-going, with four key objectives/initiatives:

- Planning and execution of a coordinated strategy of radicalization prevention.
- Advice and Guidance on radicalization.
- Determining how radicalization happens to groups or individuals.
- Handling individual cases of young people at risk of radicalization.

- Prevention of radicalization and discrimination in Aarhus

→ **Model – The Prevention Triangle**



Side 2 of 7

**Initiatives**

In the spring of 2012, Aarhus City Council approved an action plan for an expansion of the existing anti-radicalization efforts with children and young people in Aarhus Municipality. The plan was adapted to target the over 18's in addition to children and young people.

The initiative is closely linked to Aarhus Social Services and operations began on the 1st of January 2015. The expansion of the action plan has been integrated into the existing working group's activities.

It requires knowledge to be able to spot/identify radicalization, and special skills to be able to implement preventive measures. The field of work lies between, on the one hand, the constitutional rights of freedom of expression as well as political and religious activism, and on the other hand, violations of Penal Code § 114 (terrorist clause) or other legislation that sets limits on the means by which one can promote one's cause.

There are four key secondary objectives to the anti-radicalization efforts, which are realised as follows:

**A. The planning and execution of a coordinated strategy of radicalization prevention:**

- Run a cross-sector and interdisciplinary working group with the participation of East Jutland Police and Aarhus Municipality.
- Individual activities and initiatives independently organised by the working groups, with a clear leadership and coordinating function.

**B. Advice and guidance on radicalization**

- Run an information centre to deal with enquiries about radicalization and give advice and guidance in respect to those inquiries.
- Up-skill employees who teach or work with children and young people and inform them about radicalization and its prevention.
- Disseminate knowledge about radicalization to institutions and associations.
- Disseminate knowledge and information on the experiences and the work undertaken by Aarhus Municipality to other municipalities in East Jutland County Police district.
- Open up a dialogue with young people via dialogue-based workshops.

**C. Identification of radicalization in groups or individuals**

- Investigate inquiries regarding concern of radicalization, to establish whether there is in fact an instance of radicalization, and if so, how this was expressed or came to light. Recommendations for appropriate action can then be given.

**D. Handling of individual cases of people at risk from radicalization**

- Give advice and guidance on appropriate preventive measures and/or a specialized mentor programme when troubling, radicalised risk behaviour is detected, to prevent or stop further development of radicalized risk behaviour.
- Offer potential or returning Syria volunteers counselling, guidance and possibly an exit strategy.

- Offer Parents of radicalized youths, or youths at risk of radicalization, counselling, for example, in the form of a parent network.

**Presentations to Raise Awareness:**

In line with the work undertaken by existing networks and specialized systems to implement measures necessary for the prevention of radicalization and discrimination, it has also been a priority to equip adult professionals and volunteers adequately for the job.

For this reason, there has been a concentrated effort to spread knowledge about radicalization as a risk behaviour that requires attention and action.

Between December 2008 and September 2015, 120 awareness-raising presentations have been held in the geographic area of Aarhus Municipality, including dialogue with a range of professional or personnel groups and volunteers from associations.

**Infohus:**

In January 2010 Infohus (Infohouse) was inaugurated. At this information centre, public sector employees and private citizens can discuss any concerns they may have about radicalization.

Infohus is staffed by both the police (who deal directly with inquiries) and Social Services, who are supported by the initiatives management group to investigate and handle the enquiries received by the centre, for example, is it a case of radicalization or a case of "youth rebellion", exploration of identity or something similar? Based upon their appraisal, a decision on the necessary course of action is taken, for example, advice and guidance, social activities, or the offer of mentor support.

The final decision regarding initiation of a mentor-based intervention is a decision for the authorities which is taken by Social Services Advisors.

**Mentor involvement:**

From the spring of 2011, it has been possible to offer a mentor to a young person, where there is a concern for radicalization. As of September 2015, 20 mentors have been assigned to youths (under 18 years of age) who, with their parent's agreement, have agreed to working with a mentor.

A collaboration with Professor Preben Bertelsen from Aarhus University Psychological Institute began in the autumn of 2011. Through his work on the concept of life psychology, Professor Preben Bertelsen has contributed to developing the skills of a corps of ten mentors to date. The intention is to equip the mentors with useful tools to support them in their work with the young mentees, who often lack basic life skills, which can be instrumental in keeping them attached to extremist environments.

**Dialogue-based workshops for the young:**

The idea of dialogue-based workshops is, via early intervention, to make contact and achieve a more intimate and involved dialogue with young people, when compared with that which can be achieved by simply handing out general paper-based information.

Forebyggelse af  
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The workshop model consists of a two and a half hours session plus materials and a teacher guide, including proposals for student assignments. From August 2012 to the end of September 2015, 157 workshops have been conducted in classrooms and groups. 6 instructors have been trained to conduct the workshops.

Since the spring of 2013, there has also been work on the development of a workshop for adults aimed at parents and professionals involved in youth work. The workshop model for professionals is expected to be fully tested by autumn/winter 2015-16, whereupon a decision will be taken regarding its further expansion. After a few tests, the workshop model for parents is currently on standby for resource-related reasons.

**Initiatives and actions in response to Syrian volunteers from Aarhus**

At the end of 2013, the authorities took initiatives to respond to the potential for volunteers from Aarhus going to or returning from Syria. The radicalization prevention work is a collaboration between East Jutland Police, Aarhus Municipality and Aarhus University.

The work to prevent radicalization is carried out with people residing in the Aarhus area and is carried out on the basis of international research, which reveals that staying in a conflict zone significantly increases the risk of radicalization.

The work undertaken in this area seeks to prevent radicalization and violent extremism following participation in the conflict in Syria with three types of service:

- *Individual advice and guidance* to people who are thinking of travelling to Syria either as a relief worker or as a combatant, or those who have returned after having participated in the conflict.
- *After-care* for returnees, such as, debriefing, psychotherapy, medical care, mentoring contacts and participation in the exit program. A comprehensive Exit Program has been developed and elements of the programme are therefore used in a number of cases. Work is undertaken to encourage full participation in the programme.
- *Advice and Guidance* for family members of those who are thinking of travelling to Syria to participate in the conflict, or those who have returned after participating in the conflict. Support is available in the form of a network or individually. In the autumn of 2014, a number of coaches for parents were educated, two of which facilitate parent networks and offer advice and guidance.

**Parent Network:**

From the autumn of 2013, work has been undertaken with the parents of young people involved in far-right groups as well as with parents and families of Syrian volunteers, on both an individual and group basis.

As of September 2015, the families of the Syrian volunteers network have held twenty meetings. At these meetings professionals and local authority officials were in attendance to provide professional support and insight depending upon

the needs and requirements of the group. According to the participants, the network met its objectives and it has since been dissolved. There are currently attempts to assemble participants for a new network based on religious radicalization, by the end of 2015.

### **Community outreach**

In the autumn of 2015, work on developing a coherent strategy and targeted efforts in relation to different community settings and ethnic minority groups began. The strategy is based upon American and other countries' experiences.

Under the auspices of Aarhus Municipality's radicalization prevention work, the planned international conference from the 19th to the 20th of November 2015 "Building resilience to radicalization and violent extremism" will facilitate the work of developing a strategy for future initiatives in this field.

Thus far the work carried out in this area has included:

#### **a. Dialogue with the Somali Community**

Following the conference in May 2010 regarding potential radicalization in the Somali community, there has been continuous dialogue with the Somali Associations in Aarhus on possible areas of cooperation between the Somali associations, the municipality and the police regarding the promotion of integration and prevention of radicalization (Amongst other things, the prevention of travel to Syria has been included as a discussion point in this dialogue).

#### **b. Dialogue with the board of Grimhøjvej Mosque and MUC (Muslim Youth Centre)**

During the work covering groups at risk of radicalization it was established that some individuals in this target group – both those who travelled to Syria and individuals where there was another form for concern of radicalization- frequented the mosque on Grimhøjvej. From the beginning of 2014 a dialogue with the board of the mosque was established on to how to handle this situation and on the prevention of radicalization more generally. As an extension of this work, there has been dialogue with the MUC (Muslim Youth Centre – including 1 Salafist association), which is based at the mosque.

#### **c. Living with your religion in Danish Society**

Since the spring of 2015 there have been attempts to establish an inter-faith group, which works with the theme: practicing ones religion and living with it in a peaceful manner in modern Danish society. It has not been possible to establish and sustain a group. As such, at this point in time, further attempts to develop this work are not a priority.

### **Expansion of anti-radicalization efforts in East Jutland's Police District**

In the autumn of 2012 and the spring of 2013 there have been a number of anti-radicalization dialogue meetings in the police districts.

In addition to Aarhus, 6 City Councils wanted these meetings and there have also been presentations for frontline workers.

As a follow up to meetings and presentations, there is a continuous exchange of information and experiences which is coordinated by SSP in East Jutland (SSP is an alliance between Social Services, Schools and The Police)

**Nationwide Cooperation:**

Since the previous government in 2009 launched "*A common and safe future - An action plan to prevent extremist views and radicalization among young people*", those involved in the anti-radicalization efforts in Aarhus have actively participated in the dialogue and sparring on the development of strategies and interventions with changing governments and new agencies.

Aarhus is also in dialogue with VISO (National Knowledge and Specialist Consultancy Organisation in the social field and in special education) with a view to them working with cases of radicalization.

**The Press and Visits**

After the summer of 2014, those involved in anti-radicalization in Aarhus have experienced a massive interest in their work especially from the foreign press and the media (more than 250 enquiries have been received, many of which involved visits / research in Aarhus - including workshops).

This has resulted in a longer series of visits of delegations including politicians and researchers from abroad, who want to hear about and learn from the work carried out in Aarhus.

*Toke Agerschou, Natascha M. Jensen, Allan Aarslev, Hans S. Kristoffersen*

*Radicalization Prevention Aarhus*

## 9.5 Personal Communication 2 Janni Lundager

ØSTJYLLANDS **POLITI**

### ***Facts On East Jutland Police And Aarhus Municipality's Work To Prevent Radicalization. Contingency Plans And Actions In Response To Travellers To Syria.***

#### ***What is the idea behind your anti-radicalization project?***

To prevent radicalization and violent extremism early on, whether it is right or left extremism or religious-funded extremism, and thus, increase safety and security. The target group is primarily individuals who may pose a potential risk to safety in Denmark, but who do not yet pose an immediate risk to safety.

#### ***How/why did the project get started?***

The work was an East Jutland Police initiative, which began in response to the bombings in London in 2005, and the goal was initially to prevent home-grown terrorism. The circumstances in Syria and Iraq have meant that as part of our efforts we developed contingency plans for dealing with travellers to Syria.

#### ***How long have you been working with this?***

Efforts to prevent radicalization have been running since 2007. Preparations for dealing with events in Syria started in mid-2013 based on a recognized need for a more specialized and concerted effort in this area. Until then, travellers to Syria were dealt with under existing efforts to prevent radicalization.

#### ***Who is involved in the project (the authorities)?***

East Jutland Police and Aarhus Municipality. Aarhus Municipality is represented by the Municipal Department for Social Affairs and Employment and the Municipal Department for Children and Young People.

There is collaboration with the University of Aarhus, Probation Services, Clinic for PTSD and Transcultural Psychiatry, Ministry of Children, Equality, Integration and Social Affairs, as well as PET (The Danish Security and Intelligence Service)

There is national cooperation in this field, primarily with the organisation VINK (Knowledge & Inclusion in Copenhagen), which does similar work, and is based in Copenhagen.

There is also international cooperation, primarily via the European Network RAN (Radicalisation Awareness Network).

#### ***Who do you have contact with?***

##### ***How do you get in touch with those who are possibly at risk of going to Syria?***

Via parents, social workers, teachers, youth club workers, outreach workers and the police. An extensive network has been built from which information flows to "Infohus" (Infohouse), which is the place you contact if you have a concern for people who are radicalised, or are at risk of being radicalized. At the same time, "Infohus" makes the first contact with the target group, so "Infohus" is the frontline and contact point for the whole operation.



*Can you describe those you have contact with?*

Side 2

Those from Jutland have typically been young people, mostly men, aged 15-25 years. They are of mixed ethnic background, and consist of both people with a Muslim cultural background and converts. Most are people with a serious approach to life and preoccupied with the situation in the Middle East and for Muslims in general. There are also cases of socially awkward youths, who find peace in a fundamentalist interpretation of the Koran, marked by rituals. They are simultaneously impressionable and easy targets for recruitment into violent extremism. There are a few cases of people with criminal backgrounds, but they committed crimes mostly for a bit of excitement, and they see Jihad as a way to acquire "street credit" and atone for past sins.

*Where does the "radicalization" come from - how and why are they radicalized?*

Radicalization is a process in which the person increasingly accepts the use of violent or illegal means to promote their cause. That is, a move towards violent extremism, which is the use of violent or illegal means. The causes of radicalization are manifold, but the personal development of a radicalized person is often characterized by three factors: 1) They have felt, or have actually been excluded from the surrounding society. 2) They lack life skills, resulting in a readiness for violence. 3) They are affected by their peers, the group dynamics of the people around them and by the environment in which they live.

*What is your approach to them?*

Preventing radicalization and violent extremism is a part of crime prevention, especially in relation to Penal Code § 114, and therefore requires a specialized approach. The approach is to promote the person's potential for inclusion in the community, improve their life skills and positively impact on their network - the goal is to eliminate the risk of violence (security) and include the person into society again as an active and participative citizen (safety).

*Are you also involved with their peers/family?*

Very much so. Self-help groups have been set up for families who have a child in the Syrian conflict and for parents of right-wing extremists. Strengthening the family and having networks are fundamental to the response to the individual.

***Specifically, how do you work?***

Resources are designed to prevent radicalization and violent extremism with three types of interventions:

- Individual counselling and advice for people who intend to travel to Syria to participate in the conflict, or those who have come back after participating in the conflict.
- Guidance and counselling for families of people who intend to travel to Syria to participate in the conflict, or those who have come back after taking part in the conflict.
- Dialogue and contact within the local environment, including public meetings.

*What does your work consist of before the volunteers leave for Syria?*

- Information on the risk of prosecution under the anti-terrorism legislation on their return to Denmark if they participate with particular parties in the Syrian conflict.



- Information on the risk of staying in a conflict zone: physical dangers, psychological trauma, radicalization, indirect effects on family and friends.
- Information about available help for their own situation, including assistance to leave extremist circles.

Side 3

*What does your work consist of when the volunteers return from Syria?*

- Screening for radicalization and offers of help in connection with that, including the offer of a mentor and an exit strategy.
- Screening for potential physical and psychological trauma and advice and guidance on where to get help
- General advice and guidance - work/education, housing and financial support.
- If required, temporary sessions with a psychologist until proper treatment can be initiated.

*Guidance and counselling for relatives*

Parent groups have been established for families of persons from Aarhus intending to participate, are participating or have participated in the Syrian conflict. Parents groups are organized as self-help groups with a narrative-based approach and sessions are conducted under the guidance of trained staff from Aarhus Municipality. Professor Preben Bertelsen, from the Psychological, Institute at Aarhus University, also participates by appointment.

Based on parents' meetings, families can arrange individual counselling courses with Preben Bertelsen about how to deal with being a relative of a person who intends to participate, is participating or has participated in an armed conflict, and who has, to some extent, been radicalised.

Work is not undertaken with people whilst they are in Syria, but help, advice and guidance is provide to the relatives of Syria Volunteers, including help to get the Syria Volunteer home. Through a contact network with, among others, ambassadors and consulates in Turkey and Lebanon Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET) and Danish representatives in the region working with the international police, it is possible for 'Infohus' based locally, to advise and guide relatives through the formalities and the practicalities necessary for the return journey of the Syrian Volunteer.

***What has been the experience with the work carried out thus far?***

Since the work began in 2007, Infohus has received approximately 160 inquiries related to concerns about radicalization. Most inquiries are handled with advice and guidance, and in 19 cases a mentor program has been initiated. Of these, 11 completed their programme successfully and 8 courses are still running as of March 2015.

At the same time, dialogue has been initiated with the communities and minority groups who have experienced members of their community being recruited into violent extremism. This has given an overview of the scale of the problem and has enabled us to establish contact with young people entering into extremist circles. With the aid of advice and guidance and the assignment of mentors, we have managed to prevent these young



people from continuing with the radicalization process. At the same time, we have also made contact with people who are a regular part of the extremist environments, and who are motivated to leave it, but are not in a position to do it so without outside help. These people receive help via an exit program, which is still in its first phase.

Side 4

Self-help groups for parents of radicalized youths have also been established. In addition to helping parents, it has strengthened cooperation with the families of radicalized youths, and families have become key players in the collaborative efforts to help individuals.

Work in all areas has succeeded in significantly reducing traffic to Syria, from 30 individuals in 2013 to 1 person in 2014 and 3 in the beginning of 2015.

5 young people and their families have received advice, guidance and assistance in connection with a specific concern about travel to the conflict zone in Syria/Iraq. This collaborative work has meant that in these instances, travel from Denmark was prevented.

There is contact with 16 people who have returned from conflict areas in Syria and Iraq, 10 of whom receive guidance, advice and help. These 10 people are engaged in work or education and their key focus now is not on the conflict in Syria. The others are engaged in different degrees of dialogue, partly to enable the authorities to keep in touch with them and to be prepared for any eventualities with regard to Syria, and partly to keep an eye on their activities.

*The experiences so far:*

- The work and interventions described here are most effective with those who are in the early or middle stages of the radicalization process.
- Early interventions with specific solutions to the problems that are causing the person's frustration, reduces the radicalization of the person and removes their readiness for violence.
- Dialogue, advice, guidance and practical assistance measures are effective tools in relation to preventing those who wish to participate in the conflict in Syria/Iraq and for the rehabilitation of those who are marginalized as a result of radicalization.
- A friendly but firm approach strengthens the dialogue. Unambiguous messages from the authorities on the criminal, personal and social consequences of violent extremism, combined with appreciative communication and concrete help strengthens the dialogue with radicalized individuals and groups.
- A meaningful dialogue with minority communities, possibly including radicalized sectors within those environments, gives better oversight, strengthens planning and implementation of interventions for the prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism.

*Updated March 2015*



## 9.6 Research proposal form

<b>Personal details student</b>	
Name	Jihan Jesse
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ES3 ( ) ES4 ( ) Public ( ) Private ( ) Dissertation ( ) Final Project ( ) Final Project only: Name and address organisation: Name assignment provider: E-address assignment provider:	Give reasons why you would like to write your Final Project/Dissertation in another specialisation:
<b>Purpose of the form</b>	
This form is designed for you to create a concrete research plan for your assignment. You will use a similar form for future projects.	
<b>Give a brief description of what you want to know</b>  What is the central problem or question that you hope to address with your research? The word 'problem' here refers to any theoretical or practical issue that you believe would benefit from further research.  At this stage, you have to formulate a central research question that indicates what you intend to find out about the problem you have identified. Further, you need to outline sub-questions related to your central research question.	<b>Central Research Question and Sub-questions</b> <i>How can the Belgian government improve its current approach of dealing with returning jihadists in light of re-integration programmes across Europe?</i>  1. What is the current situation in Belgium with returning Jihadists? 2. What is Belgium's current method? 3. What are advantages and disadvantages of Belgium's current method? 4. What kind of re-integration programmes are there in Europe? A. Case study the Danish Aarhus method b. Case study The German Hayat method 5. How can those re-integration programmes be applied in Belgium? 6. What method or combination of methods would benefit Belgium the most?
<b>Explain why you want to answer this question</b>  Use the adjacent box to reflect on key social, political or economic issues as well as any historical events or general circumstances that define the context of your research question.  Introduce this context by reference to quality sources that you found and listed in the 'Tentative bibliography' (see below). Use APA style.	<b>Context/Justification of the Research Question</b> I have chosen this topic because the topic is a very current one. According to Belgian senior European Union official Gilles de Kerchove, there are about 3000 foreign European fighters in the middle east. According to intelligence the full amount of Islamic state fighters are 30,000 which means a tenth of them is European (BBC News, 2014). Across the whole of Europe there is not one approach and it is possible that these approaches can be combined in order to get a better result. My aim is to research how what these approaches are and what they can learn from eachother with a focus on re-integration policies. I have chosen Belgium to do this because their current approach is not re-integration and therefore I can research their current method and see if re-integration policies will benefit their current approach.  Belgium has the highest amount of foreign fighters of Europe. There are over 516 Belgian

	<p>citizens in the middle east and many of them return to Belgium after fighting in countries such as Syria and Iraq. In fact, french authorities have evidence that Abdelhamid Abaaoud, a Belgian national, masterminded the Paris attacks of the 13<sup>th</sup> November (Breedeen, 2015).</p> <p>Some of these fighters such as Abdelhamid Abaaoud return to Belgium and it is a predicament how to handle their return, not only to Belgium but to other European countries. Furthermore the United Nations on the use of mercenaries has called on Belgium to develop an inclusive vision and action on the issue of foreign fighters that form a threat to the country (OHCHR, 2015).</p> <p>The current Belgian method is not very cohesive. It is a mix of criminalizing returning Jihadists and removing their Belgian citizenship (Ringeling, 2016). I would like to explore the current method Belgium uses and the effectiveness of it versus re-integration programs in Europe such as the Danish Aarhus method and other methods such as the Hayat method.</p> <p>A brief explanation of the Danish Aarhus method is that it is a project that develops exit talks targeted at young people who are a part of extremist groups. It focusses on helping them find constructive social alternatives to extremist groups rather than punishing them for their behaviour (Danish ministry of Integration, 2011).</p> <p>The Hayat method is a method where family counselling can help radical extremists leave the extremist scene. The project consists of a handful of people who can be reached via a helpline. The experts act as a bridge in all directions, mediating between parents, children, schools and imams. If necessary, they contact the police and other authorities (DW, 2016).</p> <p>The reason that my research is different is that my aim is to research how and If these methods can learn from each other rather than focussing on just one method. The researches that are published already focus on one approach, for example how you can take away their citizenship or on what grounds you can arrest them. There are also other publications explaining how you can also re-integrate them in society or de-radicalize them. My research is different because I will not be focussing on just one and I want to research what they can learn from eachother.</p>
<p><b>Relevance of the proposal to one or more topics that are part of the European Studies programme</b></p> <p>Briefly explain how your topic and research relate to the field of European Studies. Can you link your research to specific modules within the European Studies programme?</p>	<p>This dissertation question relates to several topics that are part of the European Studies programme. The first being International Relations where topics such as globalization were discussed, during that course I have written an essay on the use of social media by terrorist organization and that is how I become familiar with the phenomenon of jihadists.</p> <p>The question also relates to a minor I followed called International law which contained the subjects International human rights law and International criminal law with Mr Maarten van Munster. In those classes we discussed Islamic extremism and what kinds of international laws and policies exists to combat them and that is information I plan using while researching this questions.</p> <p>Lastly it also relates to European Public Policy as I will research the current policy Belgian applies and what sort of Policies the EU requires.</p>
<p><b>Methodology</b></p> <p>What are the research methods you will use and how will they enable you to answer your research question? What (types of) information sources do you</p>	<p>The difference between primary research and secondary research is that with primary research you conduct your own interviews or surveys to gain new knowledge (Harvard university, 2016). On the other hand secondary research means that you collect existing data from other people's research to use for your own research. I am planning to use both quantitative and qualitative data for research. Quantitative is method of collecting more in-depth data and text based sources while qualitative data displays numeric information for example the amount of fighters leaving Belgium (Harvard university, 2016).</p>

<p>plan on using and why? In the adjacent box, describe your methods and justify their suitability for your research. Refer to literature on research methodology. Use APA style.</p>	<p><b>Secondary research:</b></p> <p>I have chosen to consult the website of the Belgian government. The information provided on their website will be used to discover their current stance and policies on the matter of combatting returning Jihadists. It will provide me with factual information in comparison to newspaper articles that are sometimes speculations without real facts which makes them less reliable. This information is needed to discover their current strategy.</p> <p>National Belgium law will be research in order to find out the legality of possible criminalization and the use of the Aarhus program. This is needed to determine what laws the Belgian government allowed to use to possibly convict returning Jihadists. This will also possibly what laws and regulations the Aarhus program would in order to be used in Belgium.</p> <p>The website of the Danish government will be consulted to research the Aarhus Method (Danish ministry of Integration, 2011). It is a unique program that is developed by a Danish officer that is employed by the Danish National Police Force. The website will provide all the necessary facts and figures on the Aarhus method and the effectiveness of the Program regarding returning Jihadists, this information will be used in comparison to the outcomes of criminalizing returning Jihadists.</p> <p>The website of the German Hayat method will be consulted, on that website there is information on the project and there is a possibility to request more information via the website. This will also provide me with information about the effectiveness of the method as well as facts and figures (Hayat, 2016).</p> <p>Several books such as Global Jihadism: Theory and Practice (Brachman, 2009) shall be used to define terms such as Jihad or Islamic extremism. The book Global jihadism is one example of the books that shall be used to research the meaning of Jihad as well as the history to determine why these young people are leaving the west and what their reasoning and beliefs are in order to answer the sub questions. These books will provide universally accepted definition of words such as Jihad, this important to determine rather than using information that is provided on the internet and might be biased.</p> <p>The European Union has conducted several researches and interviews on the issue of returning Jihadists. This secondary existing data will be used to determine how large the problem actually is in the European Union and particularly in Belgium. An example of the information that will be used is data showing the rise of returning jihadists. One example is Radicalization and Jihadists violence, Europe at crucial crossroads and Radicalization Processes leading to Acts of terrorism (European Commission, 2008)</p> <p>As this is a current issue there have been several European parliamentary debates on the subject Belgium has also joined these debates and their stance will be analysed and used for the research. This will provide me with more relevant information on recent developments of their policies on the topic. This is important because the topic is very current and the opinions of governments are constantly changing.</p> <p>Based on a recommendation in the ES4 guide for the final project and dissertation I will use the following books to help improve my research skills: Political research – methods and practical skills (Sandra halperin, 2008) as well as Research methodology, a step by step guide for beginners (Kumar, 2014).</p> <p><b>Primary research:</b></p> <p>For my research the best reasoning to use is inductive reasoning usually because it usually</p>
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	<p>involves using theory from specific examples and data. This means that results are not one fixed response and can be a combination of answers. Deductive approach tests the validity of assumptions (or theories/hypotheses) in hand, whereas inductive approach contributes to the emergence of new theories and generalizations (Singh, 2008). The research will include two case studies. Case studies are applicable when examining contemporary events, the use of case studies allow the use of a full variety of evidence, documents and interviews ( Yin, 2003, p.7/ 8). That is applicable to this topic because it is contemporary and developing. The case studies are the Belgian Hayat programme and the Danish Aarhus method.</p> <p>I have chosen to conduct the following interviews because that allows me to ask questions that will provide me with the exact information that I am searching for. Furthermore I will be able to ask follow-up questions to information that I might not understand. This is more beneficial to my research than the yes and no questions I would receive if I had chosen a survey. I have chosen to conduct semi-structured interviews which allows me to prepare an interview guide, which is a list of questions and topics that need to be covered during the conversation. However it allows me to follow information that may strays from the original ones if I feel that the information will benefit the research (Kumar, 2014). During these interviews I will at all times follow the rules of ethics set by the American Psychology Association, I will conduct them while always remaining truthful, open, honest and accurate. I will respect the dignity and worth of all people, and the rights of individuals to privacy, confidentiality, and self-determination (APA, 2016). I will ask my interviewee's if they feel comfortable doing the interview with their name mentioned, if not that information will remain anonymous.</p> <p>The way the interview is conducted, via skype, telephone, email or in person will depend on the availability of the interviewee. The only interviews I will try to conduct via skype or telephone are the interviews with Mr Aarslev who is in Denmark and Ms Dantschke who resides in Germany. The others I will try to schedule in person. The interview questions will not be the same for each interview and will be catered to a specific person.</p> <p>An interview shall be held with the International centre for counter terrorism in the Hague. This centre provides facts and figures on the rising problem of European citizens leaving and joining terrorist organizations in the middle east and in Africa. The interviews will provide more depth into the origins of this problem in Europe and what the best approach might be for those who return to Europe after having been part of a terrorist organization. The interview will be held with Dr. Grégory Chauzal he is a Research Fellow at ICCT. In this capacity he is contributing to a project on the foreign fighter phenomenon and the relevant policies in the EU member states (chauzal, 2016).</p> <p>An interview will be held with Pieter Van Ostaeyen he is a Belgian expert on Jihadism, he is a historian, Arabist and islamicist on current affairs in the Middle East &amp; background. I would like to interview him because he can give me an insight and the reasons these Belgian citizens have left Belgium to join extremists groups and why they are returning (Ostaeyen, 2016).</p> <p>I will attempt to schedule an interview with Allen Aarslev, if that is not possible, existing interviews with Allan Aarslev, founder of the Aarhus method will be transcribed and used for research. Scheduling an interview with the founder of the method might not be possible so existing interviews will be transcribed and the information given in them will be used to answer the research questions as he is the person who developed the concept. This will provide information on the success the program has had in Denmark and that information can be used to research if that effect will be possible if Belgium applies the method. This also applies to the interview i will try to set up with Claudia Dantschke who is the project director of the Hayat method in Germany.</p>
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<p><b>Tentative bibliography</b></p> <p>Use the adjacent box to provide a tentative list of academic (3) sources and non-academic reports, articles or books (3) that you plan to use in your research. Also add literature on research methodology (at least one source). Use APA style.</p>	<p><b>Tentative Bibliography</b></p> <p>Alastair Reed, J. d. (2015). <i>Pathways of Foreign Fighters: Policy Options and Their (Un)Intended</i>. The Hague: The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism.</p> <p>APA. (2016, March 23). <i>Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct</i>. Retrieved from American Psychological Association: <a href="http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx">http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx</a></p> <p>BBC News. (2014, September 24). <i>BBC Middle east</i>. Retrieved from BBC News: <a href="http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29372494">http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29372494</a></p> <p>Brachman, J. M. (2009). <i>Global Jihadism: Theory and Practice</i>. Wolverhampton: Keystroke.</p> <p>Breeden, A. (2015, November 16). <i>New York Times</i>. Retrieved from Call to Arms in France Amid Hunt for Belgian Suspect in Paris Attacks: <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/17/world/europe/paris-terror-attack.html">http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/17/world/europe/paris-terror-attack.html</a></p> <p>chauzal, G. (2016). <i>ICCT</i>. Retrieved from International centre for counter terrorism: <a href="http://icct.nl/">http://icct.nl/</a></p> <p>Danish ministry of Integration. (2011, August). <i>Denmark's deradicalization efforts</i>. Retrieved from Danish ministry of Integration: <a href="https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/8A7278CB-EFAD-43CC-B8E4-EE81B8E13C6D/0/factsheetderadicalisation.pdf">https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/8A7278CB-EFAD-43CC-B8E4-EE81B8E13C6D/0/factsheetderadicalisation.pdf</a></p> <p>DW. (2016, March 15). <i>German program triggers international deradicalization network</i>. Retrieved from DW: <a href="http://www.dw.com/en/german-program-triggers-international-deradicalization-network/a-17898077">http://www.dw.com/en/german-program-triggers-international-deradicalization-network/a-17898077</a></p> <p>European Commission. (2008). <i>Radicalization process leading to Acts of Terrorism</i>. Brussels: European Commission.</p> <p>Harvard university. (2016, March 23). <i>Why use sources?</i> Retrieved from Harvard University: <a href="http://guides.library.harvard.edu/secondary">http://guides.library.harvard.edu/secondary</a></p> <p>Hayat. (2016, March 23). Retrieved from Hayat Deutschland: <a href="http://hayat-deutschland.de/english/">http://hayat-deutschland.de/english/</a></p> <p>Kumar, R. (2014). <i>Research methodology, a step by step guide for beginners</i>. Sage publishing.</p> <p>Marie Clare Foblets, A. O. (2002). <i>State intervention in the institutionalisation of Islam in Belgium</i>. Leuven: Peeters.</p> <p>OHCHR. (2015, October 15). <i>Belgium: UN expert group calls for robust integrated action to address risks posed by foreign fighters</i>. Retrieved from United Nations Human rights office of the high commissioner: <a href="http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16613&amp;langID=E">http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16613&amp;langID=E</a></p> <p>Ostaeyen, P. v. (2016). <i>Pieter van Ostaeyen</i>. Retrieved from <a href="https://pietervanostaeyen.wordpress.com/about/">https://pietervanostaeyen.wordpress.com/about/</a></p> <p>Ringeling, A. (2016, March 23). <i>Belgie wil paspoort jihadgangers afpakken</i>. Retrieved from The Post online: <a href="http://nieuws.tpo.nl/2014/11/21/belgie-wil-paspoort-jihadgangers-afpakken/">http://nieuws.tpo.nl/2014/11/21/belgie-wil-paspoort-jihadgangers-afpakken/</a></p> <p>Sandra halperin, o. h. (2008). <i>Political Research - methods and practical skills</i>. Oxford university press.</p> <p>Singh, Y. B. (2008). <i>Research Methodology: Techniques and Trends</i>. Publishing Corporation Students.</p> <p>Yin, R. (2003). <i>Case study research</i>. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.</p>
<p><b>Timeline</b></p> <p>What is your timeline for completion? Describe the key steps in your progression to the successful submission of your research project. What do you plan to do, when and why?</p>	<p>Week 12: Finish and get proposal approved</p> <p>Week 13: Create personal plan of action and weekly assignments/goals for dissertation          Contact the individuals I would like to interview, contact back up interviews          Start researching          Start draft of introduction and methodology          Email contact with supervisor</p> <p>Week 14: Start with research for all sub-questions          Write draft for sub-questions 1 and 2 and corresponding chapter          Continue contact with possible interviewees          Construct interview guide for interviews          Finish and send first version introduction and methodology</p> <p>Week 15: Finish and send draft sub-question 1 and 2 corresponding chapter          Hold interviews from week 15 and on          Start draft sub-questions 3 and 4 corresponding chapter</p> <p>Week 16: Finish and send draft sub-questions 3 and 4 corresponding chapter          Transcribe interview if possible</p>

	<p>Hold interviews if possible Start draft sub-questions 5 and 6 corresponding chapter</p> <p>Week 17: interviews if possible Finish and send sub-questions 5 and 6 corresponding chapter Start results and findings to answer main research question and write literature review</p> <p>Week 18: finish and send results and findings Construct draft entire report Send first few chapters for spell check to personal marker Hold interview if possible</p> <p>Week 19: write recommendation and conclusion based on available information send findings to supervisor Meeting with supervisor to ask last questions and advice Transcribe interviews if possible</p> <p>Week 20: last possible week to send findings to supervisor Continue working on final draft such as conclusion etc, adjust any comments of personal marker and supervisor Continue research</p> <p>Week 21: hold interview if possible and transcribe interview Send any changes to personal marker Print and read entire report and find mistakes Adjust to mistakes Continue on conclusion and recommendations according to information discovered in interviews</p> <p>Week 22: finish draft of conclusion and recommendations and possibly ask supervisor advice Send additional changed chapter to personal marker Add feedback and add finishing touches and entire report Room to transcribe last interview if necessary</p> <p>Week 23: print and read entire report. Personal deadline finishing entire report</p>
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First send form 4 and later, after approval, send a hard copy of the form with the supervisor's and second marker's signature to Ms. v.d. Haspel (chair of the Final Project Committee).

Approved by:

Supervisor:

Second marker:

Date:

Date:

Signature:

Signature:

## 9.7 Student ethics form

### Student Ethics Form

#### European Studies Student Ethics Form

**Your name:** Jihan Jesse

**Supervisor:** I.K. Dusterhoft

#### Instructions/checklist

Before completing this form you should read the APA Ethics Code (<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>). If you are planning research with human subjects you should also look at the sample consent form available in the Final Project and Dissertation Guide.

- a.  Read section 3 that your supervisor will have to sign. Make sure that you cover all these issues in section 1.
- b.  Complete sections 1 and, if you are using human subjects, section 2, of this form, and sign it.
- c.  Ask your project supervisor to read these sections (and the draft consent form if you have one) and sign the form.
- d.  Append this signed form as an appendix to your dissertation.

#### Section 1. Project Outline (to be completed by student)

**(i) Title of Project:** Re-integration for Belgian Jihadists

**(ii) Aims of project:**

To research whether the Belgian government can improve its current approach of dealing with returning Jihadists in light of re-integration programmes across Europe.

**(iii) Will you involve other people in your project – e.g. via formal or informal interviews, group discussions, questionnaires, internet surveys etc. (Note: if you are using data that has already been collected by another researcher – e.g. recordings or transcripts of conversations given to you by your supervisor, you should answer 'NO' to this question.)**

**YES / NO**

**If no: you should now sign the statement below and return the form to your supervisor. You have completed this form.**

This project is not designed to include research with human subjects. I understand that I do not have ethical clearance to interview people (formally or informally) about the topic of my research, to carry out internet research (e.g. on chat rooms or discussion boards) or in any other way to use people as subjects in my research.

Student's signature \_\_\_\_\_ - date \_\_\_\_\_

If yes: you should complete the rest of this form.

**Section 2 Complete this section only if you answered YES to question (iii) above.**

**(i) What will the participants have to do? (v. brief outline of procedure):**

Participants will have to answer about 10 questions in a semi-structured style personal interview. The questions are catered to each individual depending on their expertise.

**(ii) What sort of people will the participants be and how will they be recruited?**

The participants are experts in the field related to the topic. The first participant specializes in Jihadists in Belgium, the second participant is a co-developer of a re-integration program used in this dissertation and the third participant is a researcher in the field of rehabilitation for violent extremists. The participants are contacted through e-mail communication.

**(iii) What sort stimuli or materials will your participants be exposed to, tick the appropriate boxes and then state what they are in the space below?**

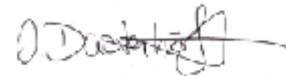
Questionnaires[ ]; Pictures[ ]; Sounds [ ]; Words[X]; Other[ ].

**(iv) Consent:** Informed consent must be obtained for all participants before they take part in your project. Either verbally or by means of an informed consent form you should state what participants will be doing, drawing attention to anything they could conceivably object to subsequently. You should also state how they can withdraw from the study at any time and the measures you are taking to ensure the confidentiality of data. A standard informed consent form is available in the Dissertation Manual.

**(vi) What procedures will you follow in order to guarantee the confidentiality of participants' data?** Personal data (name, addresses etc.) should not be stored in such a way that they can be associated with the participant's data. There is an informed consent form for every participant. The participants will be made aware that interviews are recorded. The recordings of the interviews will only be shared with the supervisors through an electronic dossier and will not be posted online or shared with any other party. The transcribed interviews will only include the participants name and function with permission of the participant.

Student's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ date: 09 June 2016

Supervisor's signature (if satisfied with the proposed procedures):



date: 9 June 2016

## 9.8 Informed consent forms

Daniel Koehler

### Informed Consent Form

#### Informed Consent Form

- 1) Topic: How can the Belgian government improve its current approach of dealing with returning jihadists in light of re-integration programs across Europe.
- 2) Project description: This project aims to research how the Belgian government can improve its current approach because currently Belgium has the highest amount of foreign fighters per capita of Europe. This project aims to explore the current method Belgium applies as well as the effectiveness of the method versus re-integration programs across Europe. For this project the Danish re-integration method called the Aarhus method will be researched as well as the German Hayat method.

**If you agree to take part in this study please read the following statement and sign this form.**

**I am 16 years of age or older.**

I can confirm that I have read and understood the description and aims of this research. The researcher has answered all the questions that I had to my satisfaction.

I agree to the audio recording of my interview with the researcher.

I understand that the researcher offers me the following guarantees:

All information will be treated in the strictest confidence. My name will not be used in the study unless I give permission for it.

Recordings will be accessible only by the researcher. Unless otherwise agreed, anonymity will be ensured at all times. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcriptions.

I can ask for the recording to be stopped at any time and anything to be deleted from it.

I consent to take part in the research on the basis of the guarantees outlined above.

Signed: \_



\_\_\_ Date: \_\_May 24, 2016\_\_\_\_\_

Eva Entenmann

**Informed Consent Form**

**Informed Consent Form**

- 1) **Topic:** How can the Belgian government improve its current approach or decline with returning jihadists in light of re-integration programs across Europe.
- 2) **Project description:** This project aims to research how the Belgian government can improve its current approach because currently Belgium has the highest amount of foreign fighters per capita in Europe. This project aims to explore the current method Belgium applies as well as the effectiveness of the method versus re-integration programs across Europe. For this project the Danish re-integration method called the Aamus method will be researched as well as the German Havat method.

**If you agree to take part in this study please read the following statement and sign this form.**

**I am 18 years of age or older.**

**I can confirm that I have read and understood the description and aims of this research. The researcher has answered all the questions that I had to my satisfaction.**

**I agree to the audio recording of my interview with the researcher.**

**I understand that the researcher offers me the following guarantees:**

**All information will be treated in the strictest confidence. My name will not be used in the study unless I give permission for it.**

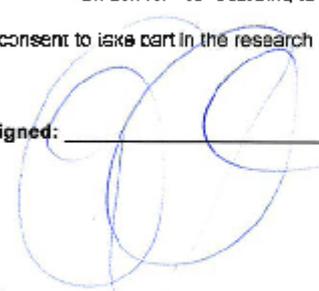
**Recordings will be accessible only by the researcher. Unless otherwise agreed, anonymity will be ensured at all times. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcriptions.**

**I can ask for the recording to be stopped at any time and anything to be deleted from it.**

**I consent to take part in the research on the basis of the guarantees outlined above.**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** 31/03/2016



Pieter van Ostaeyen

### Informed Consent Form

#### Informed Consent Form

- 1) Topic: How can the Belgian government improve its current approach of dealing with returning jihadists in light of re-integration programs across Europe.
- 2) Project description: This project aims to research how the Belgian government can improve its current approach because currently Belgium has the highest amount of foreign fighters per capita of Europe. This project aims to explore the current method Belgium applies as well as the effectiveness of the method versus re-integration programs across Europe. For this project the Danish re-integration method called the Aarhus method will be researched as well as the German Hayat method.

If you agree to take part in this study please read the following statement and sign this form.

I am 16 years of age or older.

I can confirm that I have read and understood the description and aims of this research. The researcher has answered all the questions that I had to my satisfaction.

I agree to the audio recording of my interview with the researcher.

I understand that the researcher offers me the following guarantees:

All information will be treated in the strictest confidence. My name will not be used in the study unless I give permission for it.

Recordings will be accessible only by the researcher. Unless otherwise agreed, anonymity will be ensured at all times. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcriptions.

I can ask for the recording to be stopped at any time and anything to be deleted from it.

I consent to take part in the research on the basis of the guarantees outlined above.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

9/16