

F.A.R.

Folks, Authorities and Radicalism: between polarization and social construction

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NETWORK PROJECT

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FINAL REPORT

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ABSTRACT

The concept of “Radicalisation” is currently considered as one of the key issues of the evolution of our societies. Largely used by the media and the public policies, the concept is, however, quite vague and in close relationship with other concepts such as engagement, political activism, extremism, terrorism. The present project offers to address the dearth of original and empirical data (especially in Belgium) regarding this issue by developing an interdisciplinary agenda which aims to interconnect different sets of aspects situated at three different levels of analysis: micro, meso, macro. To do so, the project is divided in three work packages.

The first work package focuses on the public policy of de-radicalisation and its implementation. To examine this policy, we target three specific objectives which have been outlined in three specific reports. The first report describes the various public policy initiatives justified by the prevention or the sanction of “radicalisation processes” and investigates those policies' effects on the stakeholders. It highlights two visions of radicalisation that co-exist; one based on a security approach that defines radicalisation as a violent form of militancy and action, the other based on a social approach that defines radicalisation as the social process of alienation and marginalisation. Then, the study shows how important and what role local authorities play in the policy implementation process. Finally, the connections between the LIVC R (*Lokale integrale veiligheidscel*; Local integral security cells) and the police reveal issues about confidentiality and information sharing. The second specific objective we pursue drawn from the last observation. We examine how prevention officers, social actors, and police at the local level deal with confidentiality and information sharing. The third specific objective aims to assess the impact of the policy on Belgian Muslims. We chose to operationalise this objective by focusing on the effects of early detection and reporting of violent radicalisation among Belgian Muslims.

The second work package aims to evaluate whether we observe among Belgian citizens signs of ideological polarisation, and whether this polarisation was associated to acceptance of illegal and violent actions by radical political groups and by state authorities in the way they deal with such radical political groups. We conduct two surveys. A first one draws from the Belgian population and a second one focuses specifically on Belgian people who identified themselves as Muslim. The first survey shows that there is no clear support in the Belgian population in general for illegal or violent action for political purposes. Tolerance regarding this kind of violence is very low regardless of ideological, philosophical, or religious beliefs. Besides this main conclusion, three observations can be made. First, looking at individual variations, within the nativist and anti-immigration movements support for actions involving physical violence (against police or civilians) is somewhat higher. Second, the survey shows that rejection of political violence can be acquired through education and awareness of pluralism of opinion. Finally, the perception of violence in regard with the methods used by the police to investigate arises questions. As a matter of fact, a large number of citizens seem to be open to the police using violent methods such as prolonged police custody, wiretapping of suspects' relatives, and even interrogation methods that weaken the physical and psychological condition of suspects. The second survey examined the attitudes of Muslims residing in Belgium regarding illegal and violent political actions and confirmed the observations of the first survey.

The third work package examines at the micro-sociological level the individual characteristics as well as the journeys and/or the penal episodes of the individuals identified as 'radicalised' (in the broad sense of the term) by the Belgian public authorities (law-enforcement entities of the administration of the criminal justice administration system, security services).

The purpose of this work package is threefold. First, to analyse how the Belgian criminal justice administration system (CJAS) deals with the phenomenon of radicalisation by conducting an analysis of the legislative and grey literature containing information on the main databases that are used by this system. It results in two main observations: (1) the public authorities have developed a desire to detect and record suspicions of any form of radicalism at an increasingly early stage, starting with administrative police surveillance or the security and intelligence services; (2) the authorities have engaged in a trend of sharing information among a large number of services (police, justice, intelligence services, local and socio-preventive services, etc.) coordinating their actions according to a multi-agency model. Second, to describe individual trajectories and penal episodes of a sample of individuals ($n = 19.641$) who have been characterised as radical by the Belgian public authorities (federal police and CUTA) by the development and the exploitation of the first integrated database on 'radicalisation' constructed based on several extractions from main CJAS databases (e.g. relative to prosecution, conviction and imprisonment). The first results objectify the presence or not of the sampled individuals in different CJAS databases but do not, in any way, validate or refute at this stage the crime terror nexus hypothesis formulated by the literature. Further analysis to reconstruct firstly their proper trajectory is necessary. Another analysis conducted on the individuals who have been convicted of terrorism in Belgium ($n = 489$ persons, convicted between 2006 and 2020) gives substantial information about characteristics, antecedents, and recidivism of these persons. Third, to focus on the discourses of individuals to apprehend the concrete impact of the interaction between individuals characterised as radical and the Belgian CJAS. Interviews were conducted, on the one hand, with justice assistants and members of the management of local justice houses involved in the accompaniment of defendants characterised as being terrorist and/or radicalised. The results show that the justice assistants did not fully submit to the security imperatives underlying these cases, although these cases significantly influenced their work (e.g. complexification of the procedure verification, new professional relationship, ethical dilemma, workload). The analysis also highlights **among other things** that the management of information has become an essential part in their work. On the other hand, interviews were conducted with individuals who self-identify as radicals or were characterised as such by the public authorities. Generally speaking, the findings, drawn from the results of the analysis of our respondents' discourse, correspond in many ways to what is found in the specialised scientific literature on the social movements. Moreover, it highlights various dimensions of their engagement, the motivations behind it, the practices that result from it, and the effects of their engagement and the social reaction.

Keywords: Polarisation, Radicalism, Violence, Security, Terrorism

1. INTRODUCTION

This final report introduces the scaffolding, the theoretical foundations and main results of the joint research project Folks, Authorities, and Radicalism. Specifically, this report presents the objectives that have been pursued, the methodology implemented within the different work packages, their main findings, recommendations made on the basis of those findings, dissemination and valorisation strategies and activities, and publications made within the project. The report provides a comprehensive overview of the project, and of its different components¹. As it will be explained in further details, the project is divided into three work packages and each one of them pursues different specific objectives. Within the three work packages, an individual report for each specific objective has been published and can be consulted in the annexe of this report. Therefore, for a full view on the findings, we invite readers to consult those individual reports².

This study seeks to contribute, in an empirical based approach, to the existing policy and academic work on radicalisation. Above all since the terrorist attacks of Paris in 2015 what is currently described in the media and political discourses or public policies under the term “radicalisation” has been considered one of the key challenges of our societies and this question has been at the heart of our federal public strategies. This term was already at the heart of counter-terrorism measures in several European countries (such as the Netherlands or Britain). In Belgium, the called “*Plan M*” (plan Moskee/plan Mosquées) adopted after 11/9 attack, evolved in 2006 into the “*Plan R*” (*Plan d’Action Radicalisme*, Radical Action Plan). The Plan R implemented mostly administrative measures. After the 2015 attack in Brussels, Plan R was updated to reach two main objectives: “to map individuals and organisations that could encourage radicalisation around them and to reduce vectors of radicalisation”. Indeed, in reaction to those terrorist attacks Belgian authorities, like many other public authorities across Europe, have strengthened their policies and legal tools to prevent these events and counterterrorism. This new framework has quickly extended beyond a mere focus on terrorism to also include a focus on radicalisation and policies have been developed to counter and prevent radicalisation, as well as to facilitate what would be called “de-radicalisation”.

Public authorities at those times identify what they referred to as “radical Islamism” as the core of a threat posed to national security. In addition, during the last ten years we observe a rise of isolated attacks across Europe claimed by Daesh but also from nationalists and ultra-right-wing advocates (see the recent case of Jürgen Conings or the terrorist attacks from extreme-right groups in Germany in 2019 and 2020). This context is also characterised by the rise of social movements such as the *Gilets jaunes* in France, which expressed a deep global dissatisfaction from the French and Belgian populations and lead to violent actions from demonstrators and the police. This peculiar context calls to a better understanding of the perception of radicalisation and violence. In this context, the main objective of this joint research project is to provide a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the phenomenon of radicalisation and the effects of the policies taken to regulate it in Belgium. We follow an interdisciplinary agenda which interconnects three approaches, each one deals with different

¹ For the record, the joint project has started in April 2017 and was initially planned to last four years (until April 2021). Yet, different difficulties, most of which related to the unique COVID-19 pandemic, have slowed down the project, which has eventually been extended until mid-September 2022.

² Individual reports are available in the annexe of this final report.

families of aspects: political, sociological, and criminological, but also with different levels of analysis: micro, meso, macro.

The work package 1, “Public policies on de-radicalisation” is led by Professor Nadia Fadil from IMMRC (Interculturalism, Migration and Minorities research centre) from the University of Leuven. This part of the research project is situated at the intersection of political sciences, political anthropology and the study of ethnicity and migration. It focuses on the public policies on de-radicalisation that have been adopted in the Belgian context.

Report WP1.1 JAMINÉ S., FADIL N. (2019), Between prevention and security. The Belgian approach in the fight against radicalisation. Report. Faculty of Social Sciences.

NL:

http://www.belspo.be/belspo/brain-be/projects/FinalReports/FAR_FinRep_nl.pdf

FR:

http://www.belspo.be/belspo/brain-be/projects/FinalReports/FAR_FinRep_fr.pdf

Report WP1.2 Between confidentiality and information sharing (September 2022)

NL: <https://soc.kuleuven.be/anthropology/files/FARapport2-web-NL>

FR: <https://soc.kuleuven.be/anthropology/files/FARapport2-web-FR>

Report WP1.3 Between fundamental rights and monitoring (September 2022)

NL: <https://soc.kuleuven.be/anthropology/files/FARapport3-web-NL>

FR: <https://soc.kuleuven.be/anthropology/files/FARapport3-web-FR>

The work package 2, “Quantitative analysis: is polarisation nourishing the support for violence?” is led by Professor Jean-Benoit Pilet from Cevipol (Centre d’étude de la vie politique) with the support of Corinne Torrekens from GERME (Groupe de recherche sur les migrations), both from Université libre de Bruxelles. The goal of this work package is to understand on an empirical base what drives (or not) the support for violent actions, ideas, and groups. We draw on two surveys which both aim to understand how the Belgian public, and individuals within Belgian society, perceive the contemporary debates around radicalisation, terrorism and the way Belgian authorities are responding to this perceived threat.

Report WP2.1 The attitudes of Belgian citizens towards the use of illegal and violent actions for political purposes (March 2020)

NL:

https://dipot.ulb.ac.be/dspace/bitstream/2013/349224/3/Pilet_Torrekens_Ognibene_NL.pdf

FR:

https://dipot.ulb.ac.be/dspace/bitstream/2013/349223/3/Pilet_Torrekens_Ognibene_FR.pdf

Report WP2.2 The attitudes of Belgian residents who self-identify as Muslims towards the use of illegal and violent actions for political purposes (September 2022 – provisional version)

FR: <http://hdl.handle.net/2013/ULB-DIPOT:oai:dipot.ulb.ac.be:2013/350607>

NL: <http://hdl.handle.net/2013/ULB-DIPOT:oai:dipot.ulb.ac.be:2013/350608>

The work package 3, “study of trajectories” is led by Isabelle Detry, Benjamin Mine and Patrick Jeuniaux, researchers at the National Institute of Criminalistics and Criminology (NICC). This part of the research pursues at the micro-sociological level the criminological study of individual characteristics as well as the journeys and/or the penal episodes of the individuals identified as 'radicalised' (in the broad sense of the term) by the Belgian public authorities (law-enforcement, entities of the administration of the criminal justice system, security services). It also examines the way the Belgian criminal justice administration system (CJAS) conceptualises and organises its response to apprehend the so-called phenomenon of 'radicalisation' and try to understand the effects of the interaction between the individuals characterised as radical and the Belgian CJAS.

Report WP3.1. DETRY, I., MINE, B., JEUNIAUX, P. (2021a), La radicalisation au prisme des bases de données Rapport de recherche, Institut National de Criminalistique et de Criminologie, Direction Opérationnelle de Criminologie, Collection des rapports et notes de recherche, n° 47, 76 p.

FR: <https://incc.fgov.be/la-radicalisation-au-prisme-des-banques-de-donnees>
 NL: <https://nicc.fgov.be/radicalisering-vanuit-de-invalshoek-van-databanken>

DETRY, I., MINE, B., JEUNIAUX, P. (2021b), La radicalisation au prisme des banques de données. Addendum Note complémentaire relative aux directives sur la gestion de l'information policière, Institut National de Criminalistique et de Criminologie, Direction Opérationnelle Criminologie, Collection des rapports et notes de recherche, 4p.

FR: https://nicc.fgov.be/upload/publicaties/detry_et_al_2021_bd_radicalisation_fr_a_ddendum.pdf
 NL: https://nicc.fgov.be/upload/publicaties/detry_et_al_2021_bd_radicalisering_nl_addendum.pdf

Report WP3.2. JEUNIAUX, P., MINE, B. & DETRY, I. (to be published in the last quarter of 2022). Études des trajectoires individuelles et de la radicalisation vues sous l'angle des bases de données de la justice pénale. Rapport de recherche de l'Institut National de Criminalistique et de Criminologie, Direction Opérationnelle Criminologie, Collection des rapports et notes de recherche.

Report WP3.3. MINE, B., JEUNIAUX, P., & DETRY, I. (September 2022). La radicalité verbalisée. Analyse du discours de personnes radicales à propos de leur engagement pouvant mener à la légitimation et/ou à l'usage de la violence. Rapport de recherche de l'Institut National de Criminalistique et de Criminologie, Direction Opérationnelle Criminologie, Collection des rapports et notes de recherche.

FR : <https://incc.fgov.be/la-radicalite-verbalisee>

The scope of this project of research falls thus primarily within the research priority 2.3.3 “security” of the BRAIN call 2016 aimed at apprehending, on the one hand, the different radicalisation processes and, on the other hand, the spread of a relative insecurity feeling in the population and concerns about fundamental rights. It also incorporates elements that are relevant for the research priority 2.3.2 “migration” especially since one of our goals is to address the reciprocal representations that exist between minority and majority groups, as well as elements for the axis 2.3.1 “violence” since it intends to document and analyse what

influences the support for violence and the determinants to it. In this sense, the research project complies with the conjunction of the axes “federal public strategies” and “major societal issues” since our aim is to address the security threat posed by recent terrorist events in Europe by looking at two topics: (1) polarisation and the support for violence and (2) the legal framework developed by state authorities to counter and prevent terrorism and radicalisation.

2. STATE OF THE ART AND OBJECTIVES

Among social scientists, but also in the public debate and among political actors, much confusion remains on how to define the security threat that is linked to concepts of terrorism, engagement, activism, violence, and radicalisation (Schmid, 1992). There is a great deal of confusion in the use of concepts of terrorism and radicalisation, both in scholarly debates as well as in the public debate. Too often terrorism and radicalisation are treated as almost synonymous when it comes to terrorist attacks by individuals linked to groups such as al-Qaeda or Daesh. Historically, this confusion between terrorism and radicalisation is far from new (see about Germany, Braunthal, 1990, or the labelling as “radical nationalists” of the secessionist movements like ETA or IRA, Bosi, 2012; Demetriou, 2012; Zuleika & Douglass, 1996). The drift from the concept of terrorism to the concept of radicalism is, however, not that straightforward. While terrorism would primarily refer to clear delimited acts of political violence (Wieviorka, 1988), radicalism is a much more multifaceted and debated concept (Kundnani, 2012; Sedgwick, 2010; Gordon and Kinna, 2019).

First, while terrorism refers to a precise act with a clear timing, radicalisation refers to a longer process that is not linear (McCauley et Moskalenko, 2008, Precht, 2007; Silva, 2018; Coolsaet, 2019). Second, radicalism is linked to the idea of political involvement and of activism, in its most extreme form (Moskalenko and McCauley, 2009). The goal of radicals is to transform radically the political order (Bittner, 1963; Abbas, 2007). Finally, the relation between radicalism and violence is not straightforward. Some authors do associate them (Ponsaerts *et al.*, 2009; Gielen, 2008), while others call for their separation (Bartlett and Miller, 2009). In order to clarify those concepts, it is needed to question the notion of ‘radicalisation’ and its relationship to close concepts such as ‘engagement’, ‘disengagement’, ‘violence’, ‘terrorism’, ‘extremism’, ‘political activism’. Both (de-)radicalisation and (dis-)engagement can be conceived as the result of a process (Fillieule, 2012) and the complex relationships between these two types of processes need to be examined (Sommier, 2012).

But the debates are not only conceptual. Discussions on the roots of terrorism and on the processes of radicalisation are very lively, both conceptually and empirically. In particular, there is little consensus on how to explain these processes. The first theoretical framework of the radicalisation process apprehends its psychological roots (Horgan, 2005; Garcet, 2021). But the work of Martha Crenshaw (1986, 1992, 2000) and more recent research (Silke 2001, Silke, 2008, Silke, 2011, Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010) significantly challenge the narrow psychopathological view that individuals tempted by violent actions are troubled by mental disorders (Bigo *et al.*, 2014). The frustration and relative deprivation theory that explains radicalisation by factors such as poverty and lower education (see Gurr 1970; Krueger and Maleckova, 2003) has also shown its own limits since it is proven that part of the terrorists and members of Islamists groups are highly educated and come from middle and upper socio-economic categories. Their motivations can thus be based on economic and material (lack of) conditions (Kepel, 2004, Khosrokhavar, 2005, Bigo et Bonelli, 2008, Della Porta, 2012) as well as a gap between their education level and their expectations in terms of socio-economic

status and their objective situation in terms of job opportunities (Sieckelinck and Gielen, 2016). Research has developed more complex and comprehensive case studies illustrating the socialisation process that violent radical groups permit where issues of codes of honour, prestige, redemption, meaning, and rewards were stressed (Abbas, 2007, Bartlett et Miller, 2009). Radicalisation then appears as a multiple-driven process based on different categories of both individual and societal factors which importance depends on each individual (Slootman et Tillie, 2006, Crettiez, 2011, Ranstorp, 2010, Pauwels et Brion, 2014; Meringolo, 2020).

In this context, the main objective of this research project is to provide a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the phenomenon of radicalisation and the effects of the policies taken to regulate it in Belgium. To reach this objective, we use a combination of data and methods in order to target the micro (individual based characteristics), the meso (social links, distance and mutual representations between reified groups) and the macro levels (global social and political contexts at both national and international levels embedded in trust in different social and political structures and multi-level public policies). Those levels of analysis are embedded in three different approaches. The first level of analysis concerns work packages 1 and 3 and examines the ability of political plans, policies and programmes to respond and to adapt to the apprehension of support for violent groups and actions, both at the level of the policy-makers as well as at the level of the targeted groups. The other level of analysis which concerned work package 2, assesses both the nature and scope of the support of violent groups and actions and its impact in terms of polarisation of social representations between socially distant constructed groups (“migrants”, “Muslims”, “non-Muslims”, etc.) for the Belgian population.

The first part of the research project (work package 1) aims at describing precisely the various public policy initiatives that are justified by the prevention or the sanction of “radicalisation processes”. Several scholars have indeed paid attention to the ways through which de-radicalisation policies turn Muslims into suspect communities (Awan 2012; Heath-Kelly 2013). The securitising effect impacts upon multicultural policies (Kundnani 2014) and how this policy measures side-track existing social networks (Aly 2013) have also been examined. Some other authors have also paid attention to how such counter-radicalisation policies produced new political stakeholders and stimulate the development of communal identities (Ragazzi 2016). Building upon these insights, this work package focuses on how these public policies on de-radicalisation in Belgium result in new forms of collaborations which accord a new sense of agency to the different governmental levels and how these policies are being understood by the professional workers on the ground. Therefore, the work package 1 pursues three specific objectives.

The first specific objective is to map all public initiatives carried on by the Belgian state to act against radicalisation. This specific objective had been divided in three research questions:

- 1) What is the history and scope of policy against radicalisation in Belgium?
- 2) Is there a Belgian de-radicalisation policy?
- 3) How do political actors perceive the development of this policy?

The second specific objective examines how professional workers implement this policy of de-radicalisation, with a focus on confidentiality and information sharing in a context of multidisciplinary collaboration. This objective is a continuation of the first one and build on its findings, notably information sharing as a main issue. Through a specific study, we shed light

on how policy is shaped “from the ground” and the areas of tension it generates. This specific objective is divided into three sub-questions:

- 1) How does confidentiality take shape in a wider social context?
- 2) What are the views of young people, social workers and preventionists on this issue?
- 3) What is the perspective of the police, social and prevention actors in the framework of the Local Unit for Integral Radical Security (LIVC R)?

The third specific objective of this work package is to assess the impact of this policy on Belgian Muslims. We choose to operationalise this research question by focusing on the effects of early detection and reporting of violent radicalisation among Belgian Muslims. The research sub-questions are as follows:

- 1) Which possible events are related to a negative security signal or warning?
- 2) What are the material and non-material consequences of this negative security signal or advice on the daily lives of Belgian Muslims?
- 3) How do our respondents challenge a negative security warning or advice, and what are the results?
- 4) What is the impact of these experiences on trust in politicians and how do they view surveillance?

The second part of the research project (work package 2) aims at situating the contemporary processes of (de)radicalisation in their social context. Through a large population survey (N=1500), it maps contemporary attitudes of citizens residing in Belgium towards the use of violence either by radical groups or by the public authorities. The primary assumption was that there is a growing polarisation within society on what is perceived as a legitimate use of violence and on what the causes that can justify this use of violence by either radical groups or state authorities are.

Five clusters of dimensions were taken into consideration to determine which combination of characteristics encourages the support of violent ideas, actions or groups:

- 1) socio-economic position,
- 2) political behaviours,
- 3) identity dimensions,
- 4) religious values,
- 5) social distance and polarisation between groups

The third and last part of this research project (work package 3) focuses on a micro-sociological level of analysis on individuals whom the Belgian authorities suspect of being radicals. To do so, we identify three specific objectives:

The first one focuses on how the Belgian CJAS deals with radicalisation. The idea is to determine the way the CJAS conceptualises and organises its responses to apprehend the phenomenon of radicalisation. Associated research questions are the following: What are the concepts used by these public authorities (e.g. radicalisation, terrorism, violent extremism)? How relevant are these concepts? How are they expressed from a legal standpoint? How are they operationalised in the different recording systems of the CJAS to capture this ‘phenomenon’? How were these recording systems affected by the phenomenon of

radicalisation and its emergence in the political agenda of the public authorities (i.e. in terms of registration practices, recipients, access)?

The second specific objective focuses on individual radical trajectories in the CJAS. The idea is to describe the individual trajectories and penal episodes of individuals who have been characterised as radical by the Belgian public authorities, either because they have been labelled as potentially radicalised, violent, or presenting a threat to society, or they have been suspected or convicted for a crime related to terrorism, whether they are still active (i.e. engaged) or inactive (i.e. disengaged) in the process. Associated research questions are the following: How many individuals are concerned by this phenomenon? In what recording systems of the CJAS are they recorded? What are their socio-biographic characteristics? Do they have a criminal record? If applicable, what is their criminal career?

The third specific objective focuses on the discourses of individuals dealing with the CJAS. The idea is to apprehend the concrete impact of the interaction between the individuals characterised as radical and the Belgian CJAS. Associated research questions are the following: What is the impact of the political injunction to deal with radicalisation on those that are in charge of dealing with the phenomenon in the CJAS? Does it change the way they conduct their work? And, on the other hand, what is the impact of being characterised as radical by the CJAS on the individuals characterised in this way? What are the motives behind the engagement of these individuals in a radical cause? What are the effects of their engagement on their life? What are the consequences of the social reactions towards their 'radicalisation'?

3. METHODOLOGY

Work Package 1 - Public Policies on De-Radicalisation

We adopted a qualitative analysis based mostly on interviews combined with desk research through legal and administrative documents to account for the complex ways in which de-radicalisation policy have been developed and implemented. Such a methodological approach allows us to investigate the "local" effect of broader policies by documenting and understanding how security policies produce and sustain a new understanding of what counts as danger, and how these are being mediated and contested on the ground.

Regarding the qualitative side, a total of eighty-five interviews were conducted for the different research questions of this work package. Due to the sensitivity of the subject matter, anonymisation was an important issue for all interviewees. Therefore, we left out all recognisable personal details and/or the function. It was, in some cases, also part of the process of negotiating informed consent. For this reason, regions, organisations, or specific functions are not mentioned in this study.

The first specific objective of the work package 1 consists of a mapping of the existing policies on de-radicalisation since its first instalment at a federal level in 2005. We relied primarily on analysis of public documents. We consulted action plans, government websites and existing research to learn more about the federal, regional and community actors that work for local communities. These observations were complemented by information from eleven interviews carried out with employees of government institutions at federal, regional and community levels. These interviews focused on the position of the departments involved in the Belgian policy for de-radicalisation and not on the role of individual officials. To ensure the anonymity

of these respondents, we did not use literal quotes or names. We conducted a total of sixteen interviews with local officials between December 2017 and April 2019. For the selection of these municipalities, we used three criteria. First, all of these municipalities received support in the form of grants, participation in working groups, or individual advice. We selected the cases according to the variation in the types of grants. Secondly, we sought a diverse representation in the local actions. Finally, geographical location was also a criterion. Thus, we visited municipalities in all three regions and selected both cities and municipalities.

The second specific objective of the work package 1 examined how professional workers implement this policy of de-radicalisation, with a focus on confidentiality and information sharing in a context of multidisciplinary collaboration. To do so, we analysed relevant policy documents, legal texts and working instruments to cease the social and legal context of confidentiality and information sharing. Then, between March and November 2020, we interviewed key actors in the sectors of youth care and prevention. In this way, we were able to get an idea of the field of actors. We also get some relevant contacts to carry out other interviews. In addition, we conducted interviews with researchers, policy staff and members of civil society organisation between March and November 2020 to benefit from their expertise and perspective. Based on the literature review and these interviews, we limited the research to two target groups: (1) actors who do not participate in LIVC R, i.e. young people, youth care workers, and youth prevention workers; and (2) actors who participate in LIVC R and/or do consulting in the framework of LIVC R. We interviewed actors in eight Belgian municipalities, both in Flanders and in the Brussels-Capital Region and Wallonia.

The third specific objective of the work package was to assess the impact of this policy on Belgian Muslims. The data collection was carried out between January and February 2021. In the first phase, we took written policy reports and national and international scientific studies, as well as exploratory interviews with key people. From February 2021 onwards, we developed a strategy for the recruitment of relevant respondents. In order to keep a relevant scope of research, certain selection criteria were used. The focus was on concrete events, not just the suspicion of being monitored. So, we had to find women or men who had experienced certain events, which made them suspicious of being reported as radicalised. This event could be the (potential) loss of a job after a negative security notice, the closing of a bank account, a ban on entry a territory. We also tried to maintain a balance between French and Dutch-speaking respondents. Finally, we chose to interview only people who had never been prosecuted for terrorism-related offences.

To identify our respondent, we followed a two-step method. First, we used our own networks and contacted people who met our selection criteria. The Flemish respondents were all found by this method. Secondly, we worked with a number of key people, especially in French-speaking Belgium (i.e. the Brussels-Capital Region and Wallonia). We established a partnership with the CIIB (Collectif pour l'Inclusion et contre l'Islamophobie en Belgique) which play an important role in assisting victims of Islamophobia, since 2014. They were an important intermediary to get in contact with Francophone respondents who wished to share their stories with us. Seven of the twelve Francophone respondents we interviewed were found through this channel. This difference in recruitment strategy undoubtedly had an important effect on the selection of respondents and the stories we were able to collect (the so-called selection effect).

This third report is therefore based on the analysis of twenty-three interviews³. In terms of age, place of residence, ethnicity and occupation, our sample is very diverse. However, all our respondents self-identify as Muslims, even if they express their religious experience in different ways. To complete and deepen the information collected, we also spoke to lawyers and legal experts who were able to guide us and clarify some observations (in particular, the operation of databases and appeal procedures). We spoke to four lawyers: three criminal lawyers and one migration lawyer.

Work Package 2 - Quantitative Analysis: Is Polarisation Nourishing Support for Violence?

To analyse the different degrees of support for political violence among citizens in Belgium, we used the same method for both axes of research. The first research axe was based upon a survey of a representative sample of the Belgian population. The survey was designed by the ULB team and aimed at evaluating the views of Belgian citizens towards the acceptance of political violence. In order to ensure an accurate representation of the entire Belgian population, an original CATI (telephone) survey with a national representative random sample composed of 2,985 participants living in Belgium was conducted. The sampling recruitment, as well as the interview phase, was administered by the survey company Kantar TNS. Data were collected between March 8th and May 25th of 2019. The questionnaire is composed of about 30 questions, divided into several modules such as

- the socio-demographic profile of the respondent;
- attitudes towards various ideologies that may be associated with political groups that have conducted illegal and/or violent actions in recent years in Belgium or in other European countries;
- attitudes towards the use of illegal and violent actions for political purposes (by non-state and state actors);
- potential determinants of attitudes towards illegal and violent actions (relative deprivation, perceived discrimination, dogmatic intolerance, belief in a just world, respondents' social networks).

The average time for completing the questionnaire was around 20 minutes. The survey was available in the two main national languages, i.e. French and Dutch. The total sample of respondents includes 2,985 people residing in Belgium and aged 18 and older. The sample was selected according to a series of criteria to ensure its diversity and representativeness. The criteria considered were the following: gender, age, region of residence, educational attainment, professional status, and social groups (based on education attainment and professional status of the head of the household).

These criteria allow having a good representativeness of the Belgian population, in terms of gender, age and province of residence. It is also well diversified in terms of socio-professional categories, national origin (nationality of parents), and philosophical and religious convictions. Despite this good representativeness, there are still some biases in the sample. We correct them in all our analyses through a weight variable. Based on these considerations, we were able to produce analyses with an estimated margin of error between 2-3% (see

³ In total, twenty-six interviews were conducted to collect those individuals' story. However, three interviews were not included in the analysis in this report because the case did not quite fit the criteria we had set.

Tableau 1). Therefore, the findings have an overall good representativeness, and the conclusions can be generalised to the entire population in Belgium.

Tableau 1 Sample of respondents

	Population (N)	Sample (n)	Margin of error
General population	9.374.472	2985	2%
Women	4.795.454	1538	3%
Men	4.576.018	1447	2%

The second research axe of work package 2 aimed at capturing the attitudes of a specific group of the population – Muslim citizens residing in Belgium - about the same illegal and violent actions tested in the first survey. Following the terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels, much scholarly and political attention had been paid over the last decade towards the attitudes of Muslim citizens regarding the use of political violence. Our hypothesis was whether this subgroup of the population shows specific attitudes towards illegal and violent actions by political groups, and especially by groups promoting a radical Islamic ideology, and whether such attitudes are affected by the socio-economic and ideological characteristics of citizens identifying as Muslims and residing in Belgium. From the first survey on the broad Belgian population, those ideas are clearly disconfirmed (see section 4 on scientific results), but the number of Muslim citizens surveyed is limited (N=245). Therefore, to obtain more robust findings, we opt for a second survey with a larger sample of citizens specifically identifying themselves as Muslim.

The second survey was designed by the ULB team, but data collection was fielded by Kantar Belgium. Fieldwork took place between May and July 2022. It was again a CATI (telephone). A sample of respondents who self-identify as Muslim was composed via a triple method. First, a wide pool of respondents who could potentially identify as Muslim was identified via a name screening of phone registers owned by Kantar Belgium. This first pool of respondents was then enlarged by targeted recruitment via social media, especially for groups that are harder to reach via phone registers (younger and urban citizens). Finally, the pool of potential Muslim respondents was contacted by phone and the first questions were asking about their religious affiliation. Only those who self-identify as Muslims were asked to fill in the entire questionnaire. This method has allowed constituting a sample of about 1,500 respondents residing in Belgium and identifying as Muslim. The representativeness of the sample vis-à-vis the full population of Belgian residents identifying as Muslims cannot be verified as there is no religious census in Belgium. Yet, we have verified the diversity of the sample in terms of gender, age, education, employment, national origin and region of residence and it appears that the sample is rather diverse.

Work Package 3 – Study of Trajectories

The methodology we use in work package 3 to reach the defined specific objectives can be summarised through five methodological steps. First, we carry out a literature review on the link between radicalisation and justice (step 1) followed by an analysis of the legislative and grey literature containing information on the main databases used by the CJAS (step 2). Then, informed by this analysis, we analyse a sample of individuals characterised as radical by the

public authorities (step 3). Later, we carry out interviews with justice assistants and members of the management of local justice houses involved in the accompaniment of defendants characterised as being terrorist or radicalised (step 4). Finally, we carry out another round of interviews with individuals who self-identify as radicals or are characterised as such by the public authorities (step 5).

Literature Review on the Link Between Radicalisation and Justice

The first step consists in conducting a literature review of the empirical studies that examined the relation between radicalisation and justice. This literature review provides us with a better understanding of the concepts and notions (e.g. 'radicalisation') of the field covered by the specific objectives of work package 3. To do so, we collected a sample of 55 studies (43 articles and 12 reports) from three bibliographical databases: (a) Web of Science (WoS), (b) Perspective on Terrorism (PoT) and (c) the Bibliography of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS). The selection strategy is being described in detail in Detry *et al.* (2019).

Conceptual and Functional Analysis of Criminal Justice Databases

In the second step, we conduct an analysis of the legislative and grey literature containing information on the main databases used by the CJAS. This methodological step mostly intends to address the first specific objective of this work package. This analysis is supplemented by targeted semi-structured interviews with staff members who possess expertise and knowledge on some of these databases.

We selected the databases whose analysis (to be performed in step 3) would allow a reconstitution of criminal trajectories (from the realisation of infractions or suspicious behaviour to prosecution, conviction, and imprisonment). We assumed that the content of these databases would be affected by the phenomenon of radicalisation and its emergence in the political agenda of the public authorities, and consequently would contain information about the people characterised by them as radical.

The selected databases were:

- (1) the Coordination Unit for Threat Analysis (CUTA) list (which later became known as the Common Database⁴).*
- (2) the judicial and administrative section of the General National Bank⁵ of the Federal Police;*
- (3) the databases of the youth courts and prosecutors' offices (PJP/DUMBO);*
- (4) the databases of correctional (TPI/REA) public prosecutor's offices;*
- (5) the Central Criminal Records (CJCS);*
- (6) the databases from the penitentiary institution (SIDIS greffe and SIDIS suite).*

Dimensions of interest in this analysis are related to the nature of the concepts that were adopted to describe the radicalisation phenomena (e.g. definitions, criteria), the type of information being recorded in the databases (e.g. existence of new fields, registration

⁴ Banques de données commune (BDC), Gemeenschappelijke Gegevens Databanken (GGD).

⁵ Banque de Données Générale Nationale (BNG), Algemene Nationale Gegevensbank (ANG).

practices) and the recipients of the information. For more information on the methodology, please see Detry *et al.* (2021a, 2021b).

Analysis of Individuals' Characteristics Based on Criminal Justice Databases

Step 3 consists in collecting data on a sample of individuals characterised as radical by the public authorities. This methodological step is part of the analyses linked to the first and second specific objectives of this work package. To do so, we solicit an authorisation to a secure access to the aforementioned databases. We also organise meetings with some users and responsible staff of these databases to increase our knowledge about their content and to specify the data to be selected.

In particular, we set up a sample strategy to extract information on facts linked to radicalisation phenomena and related individuals from the (General National Bank) GNB over the 2014-2017 period. Information from the administrative data pertaining to the people, groups, and phenomena to monitor as they might disturb the public order was obtained from the GNB over the 2002-2018 period. We also obtain data on the radicalised individuals followed by the CUTA in the context of the Syrian war crisis over the 2016-2017 period. This data constitutes our sample of individuals considered as radicalised by the public authorities (about 20.000 individuals, including duplicated individuals to be sorted out). On top of this, we add information on the first fact related to the radicalisation of the person registered in the GNB for all these individuals (if applicable). We process the data in order to identify only unique individuals (i.e. identifying duplicates).

For data exploration and statistical analysis, we model the resulting data into a Neo4j graph database. We insert the relevant data from other sources (CJCS, SIDIS, TPI/REA, etc.). We identify which individuals from our sample could be connected to the data emanating from these other sources, whether according to their national register number or a combination of identifying bits of information (e.g. first name, last name, date of birth). Then, we conduct a statistical analysis to provide information on the individuals and their trajectories in the Belgian CJAS as witnessed by their presence in these various records. Finally, we anonymize the database by removing the identifying bits of information. The database can then be later exploited for further scientific analyses on the individual trajectories. For more details on the methodology, see Jeuniaux *et al.* (2022).

Interview of Staff from Justice Houses

Step 4 consists in interviewing justice assistants and members of the management of local justice houses⁶ involved in the accompaniment of defendants characterised as being terrorist or radicalised. This methodological step is part of the analyse linked to the specific objective 3. The interest in studying this population of professional workers was to assess the influence of counter-radicalisation and counterterrorism policies on the practices of social workers in the CJAS. This population was also much less known than those evolving in other sectors of criminal justice (e.g. prison or prosecution). We find it particularly relevant to focus on this population knowing that the number of cases of convicted of terrorism had recently increased. A sample of people working in French-speaking Belgian justice houses (n = 11) was constituted. Interviews were semi-structured and tape-recorded; we conducted them between August and November 2019. They were transcribed and then analysed in the NVivo software,

⁶ Maisons de Justice, Justitie Huizen.

using the principles of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). For more details about the methodology see Jonckheere *et al.* (2021) or Mine *et al.* (2022a, 2022b).

Interview of Individuals Considered as Radical

Step 5 consists in interviewing individuals who self-identify as radicals or are characterised as such by the public authorities. This step is also part of the analyse linked to the specific objective 3. Given the nature of this population who (1) might be suspicious of any contact with researchers whom they might identify as representatives of the public authorities, or who (2) might not know that they are characterised by the public authorities as radicalised, it is a challenge to get access to the individuals. We constitute the sample (n = 23) aiming to represent as many political points of view as possible (e.g. anarchists, communists, 'anti-specist', identitarian). However, most of these points of view belong to the left of the political spectrum, and five interviews have had to be left aside for a distinct analysis because they are much different from the rest of the sample. Similarly, as in Step 4, interviews followed a semi-structured format, and were conducted and recorded between January 2019 and February 2020. Special attention was paid about the effects of the individuals' engagement on their life. Given the little knowledge we had at the time on the important dimensions of the radical perspective, we decide to analyse the data manually rather than using automated techniques as initially considered. We therefore used the same strategy as in Step 4. The interviews were transcribed and analysed in NVivo. The theoretical framework favoured in our examination of the discourse of these individuals was composed of elements from symbolic interactionism, differential association theory and narrative criminology. For more details about the methodology see Mine *et al.* (2022c).

4. SCIENTIFIC RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Work Package 1 - Public Policies on De-Radicalisation

The work package 1 achieves three specific objectives: to carry out an overview of Belgian policies to counter (de)radicalisation, to analyse the implementation of those policies and to examine their impact on professional workers as well as the Muslim population. We produced a report for each one of them to present our conclusion which support different recommendations addressed to public authorities

Report 1. "Between prevention and security"

The first report presents a mapping of the different initiatives that have been adopted since 2013 at the different government levels, as well as of the initiatives aimed at bringing these levels more in congruence with one another. It also reflects how those policies are perceived by professional workers at a local level. Three main observations can be drawn on this study.

First observation: there seem to be two different views on the policy of de-radicalisation. A first view associate radicalisation to violent forms of militancy and action groups (such as Salafism). A second view sees radicalisation as a social process of alienation and marginalisation. In this view, the focus is on social discontent that may lead to rejection of, or even an attack on, society.

The field of tension between these two visions can be found in the different policy initiatives. When the policy was introduced at the Belgian federal level in 2002, a security vision based on surveillance and control prevailed. This is partly due to the competent authorities (Justice and Home Affairs), but also to the link made between the problem of radicalisation and certain

groups, such as Sharia4Belgium or the GICM (Moroccan Islamist Combatant Group). The departure of young people to Syria in 2013, however, led a local administration to develop a broader view of the radicalisation process. This way of understanding radicalisation as a phenomenon that affects vulnerable and young Muslims implies that preventive social measures could be implemented as well. The social process-oriented view of radicalisation, however, also means those social phenomena - such as frequenting certain groups or making statements about attacks on schools - are addressed from a security perspective. Thus, police officers are increasingly expected to take on a social role as information officers in schools and other places, and to engage in community policing, with police officers taking an active part in public life. Social workers, on the other hand, are invited to participate in the fight against violent radicalisation. The convergence of these two logic also carries a risk, namely that social projects can no longer justify their existence on the basis of a purely social agenda, but that a security agenda (including the prevention of radicalisation) has become a condition for receiving support.

Second observation: our study shows the central role of local municipalities in the development of radicalisation policy. Several Belgian cities and municipalities play a pioneering role in the development of de-radicalisation policy. These, in turn, will reward part of those policies and encourage their diffusion. In addition to legal texts and official circulars, the various authorities use subsidies. Given the sense of urgency to act on this issue, many governments opt for (short-term) project grants that encourage a specific approach. Where structural resources are provided, it is often through thematic "envelopes" in which radicalism is one of the themes to be addressed with a larger budget. Because resources come from different governments, they can be combined locally. However, several local officials cite the brevity and uncertainty of resources. On the one hand, they feel the urgency of radicalisation and the need to act on it, but on the other hand, the related budgets remain uncertain. In addition, this financial uncertainty leads to a loss of expertise among staff members who develop local policy. The uncertainty of their positions and short-term projects makes it difficult to build sustainable knowledge.

Third observation: in addition to the substantial entanglement of prevention and social security, there is also institutional cooperation between police and social actors within the LIVC R. Since 2015, LIVC Rs bring together administrative, police, and social-preventive partners to discuss decisions (optional) and to follow up on individual cases (mandatory). Our research shows that the organisation of the LIVC R varies greatly across municipalities, both in its composition and in the regularity of its meetings. While some municipalities meet only sporadically, others choose to leave it dormant. Since 2018, the organisation and implementation of a LIVC R are mandatory: all municipalities must organise a LIVC R and have it meet at least once a year. However, some municipalities simply report no problem cases.

Several local leaders also say that the general legal guidelines for organising a LIVC R at the outset allowed them to develop a specific approach. The open-ended nature of the LIVC R allows them to work on the trust relationship with the social partners and seek an approach that works. For example, officials may very deliberately include a feature in LIVC R that protects the confidentiality (or duty of discretion) of social partners by filtering or masking information. Other officials, however, see this non-binding approach as a risk, as it creates a lack of clarity regarding information sharing. The new legal framework, also known as the "pot pourri" law, is intended to clarify information sharing within a daily living information centre. All

information is placed under shared confidentiality, which means that no member of the LIVC R (including the police) can act without the consensus of the other parties involved.

However, this law also raises many concerns and worries among local partners because it affects professional confidentiality. Members of a LIVC R generally have different professional codes of confidentiality, ranging from codes of ethics, a duty of discretion to formal confidentiality. As a result, confidentiality is not always interpreted or understood in the same way. In addition, local actors are often concerned about the relationship of trust with their target groups and the extent to which participation in a LIVC R might affect that relationship.

Based on this first contribution, the authors draw five recommendations.

- *Recommendation 1:* Increase clarity and visibility of the existing policy for officials, partners or target groups who are confronted with it. In this process, adopt a critical posture towards the stigmatising effects of these policies on Muslim communities. Also consider the existing scientific literature and national and international criticism on the usefulness of extensive preventive measures in tackling radicalisation and their effects on Muslim communities.
- *Recommendation 2:* Various actors in the field warn against the increasing dominance of a security lens within the social field. Policy makers and social actors must be vigilant in dealing with this development because it could have counterproductive effects and could generate mistrust. Social care and youth care must be recognised first for their primary function as support for vulnerable groups. Another risk is the criminalisation of actors and organisations working with vulnerable groups. Local governments can play a role through the support (normative, spatial, and financial) of those social projects but without put forward radicalisation as a main theme.
- *Recommendation 3:* Provide more structural support for local actors and organisations that have a relationship of trust with the local communities and support vulnerable families. Again, this does not necessarily have to be done from the perspective of the fight against radicalisation.
- *Recommendation 4:* Make a clear distinction between the operational and strategic angles. The operational angle discusses individual cases. The strategic angles, on the other hand, are valuable for developing a specific local policy, and the cooperation between preventive partners and the police can be useful in this case. For the strategic angles, therefore, clear deontological codes should be agreed upon between the participating actors and enforced. A shared notion of confidentiality is often not enough to meet the concerns of local actors who work with vulnerable target groups.
- *Recommendation 5:* Trainings and education are considered important by the interviewed officials. However, several officials highlight an oversupply. Therefore, there is a necessity to evaluate the existing offer of training and education on de-radicalisation, both in terms of its usefulness and the effects it generates.

Report 2. “Between confidentiality and information sharing”

The second report provides an overview of how prevention officers, social actors, and police at the local level deal with confidentiality and information sharing in the context of the fight against radicalisation.

The first objective of this second report is to place the debate on confidentiality and information sharing in a broader social and historical context. Since the 1990s, exceptions to confidentiality have been systematically put in place and the conditions surrounding them have been relaxed. The Dutroux affair, the debates around sexual abuse in the Catholic Church and the fight against terrorism and violent radicalisation have given impetus in this direction. However, the new legislation on confidentiality has been challenged. For example, following an appeal to the Constitutional Court in 2019, the active reporting requirement for social security benefits was removed, and an appeal against the LIVC R law was filed, which was found to be unfounded by the Constitutional Court in 2021.

We distinguish two broader social trends that are guiding policy and public debate on confidentiality and information sharing: the empowerment of the individual and the growing desire for control and security. These developments, which are not new, are creating a social climate in which new regulations on confidentiality are being introduced, and partnerships and information sharing are gaining in value. Social and societal problems are also seen as an individual responsibility and are more often linked to the issue of security and prevention. In the fight against violent radicalisation, these two trends translate into greater individual responsibility of professional workers to detect radicalisation early and share information via LIVC R, among others.

The political and public debate on confidentiality and information sharing in the fight against violent radicalisation is also characterised by a strong opposition between supporters and opponents. The actors interviewed in the report address this issue from different social perspectives. Those in favour are mainly found among some policymakers, the police, and the judiciary. They have argued that a strict application of confidentiality prevents the sharing of information, thus hindering the functioning of the police and the prosecution and jeopardising social order and security. Opponents of these changes were mainly among actors from youth care, social welfare, and human rights sectors. They considered confidentiality to be essential for welfare and social order. They also recalled the existing exceptions and the fact that confidentiality is not absolute. The climate of urgency, panic, and fear during the first phase (2012-2016) when youngsters left for Syria explains much of this debate. It put the Muslim community and professionals (social workers, youth workers) being put in the public eye, as well as into the heart of political debate.

A second objective of this report is to find out how workers from youth care and prevention sectors apprehend and deal with the topic of radicalisation and the principles of information sharing and confidentiality. We interviewed a total of sixteen staff members from ten organisations working in Flanders and the Brussels-Capital Region. These conversations led to five important conclusions:

- First, workers from youth care and prevention seem to have an ambiguous view of the topic of radicalisation: although they are critical of the concept, they reproduce the discourse in their daily practice. They do so, for example, by questioning the recurrent association between Islam and radicalisation, while at the same time Islam remains the dominant and spontaneous frame of reference in the given examples. However, interviewees warn of the negative impact of politics and public debate on their organisations and on young people, in particular: (a) the labelling as "radical"; (b) the problematic framing of Islam;

and (c) the way politics and public debate consolidate old mechanisms of discrimination and exclusion.

- Secondly, the principles of confidentiality do not take shape in an unequivocal way, as they are specific to the sector, the organisation, and the function. The distinction between confidentiality and the duty of discretion, which is very different from a legal point of view, does not exist as strictly among the actors interviewed in their daily practice. This distinction lies in the value of confidentiality that society attributes to a profession: is secrecy necessary and therefore socially important? However, the interviewees consider confidentiality to be an essential condition for building trust and ensuring access to and use of social and fundamental rights. Furthermore, professional workers face similar questions, dilemmas and tensions when sharing information, regardless of confidentiality.
- Third, our study shows that actors are confronted with the issue of information sharing in three types of situations: (a) in situations of concern; (b) in case of questions coming from outside the members of the LIVC-R; and (c) in case of questions coming from youth themselves. Information sharing generates a series of dilemmas and uncertainties for the interviewees, revolving around the following questions: (a) the degree of transparency to and the participation of a young person, (b) the impact of information sharing on the relationship of trust, (c) the role that practitioners can play in such situations, (d) and when and how something is understood as worrying, dangerous or criminal. Such information sharing is not done lightly but involves professional considerations and often generates a series of ethical dilemmas for practitioners.
- Fourth, sharing information in situations of distress is the exception. Some organisations also report that they are sometimes pressured to share information because of ad hoc and specific requests from police, justice, or local authorities, or from other practitioners, educators or social workers. Several practitioners interviewed also expressed concern about other organisations' perceived lax or nonchalant enforcement of their confidentiality practices.
- Finally, a good framework and internal step-by-step system are essential to help practitioners manage confidentiality and information sharing. Professional workers often make these decisions in consultation with a team or the coordinator. They may seek additional support through external inter visions, within their own sector or from local authorities. In addition, we find that the coordinator or director often acts as a filter and buffer to protect the practitioner.

A third objective of this report is to understand the views of actors participating in a LIVC R on information sharing and confidentiality. We interviewed thirty actors in eight Belgian municipalities. This survey leads to six main conclusions:

- First of all, the actors mainly invoke Article 458ter of the Belgian Penal Code or shared confidentiality to justify the sharing of information at LIVC R. However, we note that there is no clear understanding of the issue, nor a uniform view of the legal framework. Among the police actors, some feel that the legal framework does not go far enough, while others see it as a confirmation of their current way of operating. Among social and prevention actors, there is a division on the legal framework: while some consider

the current framework adequate and good, others criticise it because the legal framework is inadequate, raises concerns or is unnecessary. Finally, a final group of social and prevention actors interviewed are unaware of the existence of such a framework or have no opinion about it.

- Second, trust seems to be a decisive factor in information sharing: only when there is trust then information will be shared. The legal framework and cooperation protocols are therefore not sufficient. Trust is seen as a process that is built gradually and requires continuity. Clarification of tasks and roles, and the existence of respectful communication around them, can facilitate this trust, although clarification of roles does not always occur in practice. Actors generally report that there is a degree of trust in the cooperation within LIVC R. However, this trust does not negate the fact that some reluctance towards the other is felt.
- A third conclusion revolves around the importance of ethical considerations in information sharing. The mission of the LIVC R is more in line with the ethics of the police than with those of social workers. Actors from prevention sectors are aligned with both. For the police, these ethical considerations revolve mainly around confidentiality and maintain trust between them and LIVC R partners and between them and the security services. The situation is more complex for social and prevention actors because they have different tasks and ethical codes. Sharing information may be legally permissible, but this does not make it ethical in the eyes of several social and prevention actors interviewed. Ethical considerations tend to crystallise around the following questions: (a) To what extent is the usual task of the social or prevention actor consistent with the task of the LIVC R? (b) To what extent is transparency valued and how can this be translated into practice? (c) On which principle is the process of information sharing done? Is it based on the principle of safety or on the principle of benefits? And finally: (d) what happens to the shared information?
- Fourth, in the event of a disturbing report, the actors interviewed discuss it first in internal channels before sharing the information on a LIVC R. It is mainly the police, and to a lesser extent prevention staff, who refer cases to a LIVC R. Therefore, the police assume a guiding role. The prevention and police actors also emphasise that in their function and as LIVC R, they work both to the advantage and disadvantage of the person being talked about. This means that, during an assessment, they provide both advantageous and disadvantageous information; that they screen people so that they do not end up on a LIVC R; and, finally, that positive information can lead to the reduction or termination of the follow-up.
- The fifth finding is that an operational LIVC R performs a variety of tasks. Here we distinguish three main tasks. A first task is information transfer or follow-up: this involves transmitting or requesting information. A second task is case monitoring, whereby the participating actors keep each other informed about the follow-up to ensure continuity of support and possibly coordinate with each other. A third task is to make a joint assessment of a certain situation or case and to find a follow-up. Finally, how a LIVC R is organized affects ethical considerations, trust, and information sharing. The composition and size of the table, the way it is organised according to the logic of safety and urgency, and the involvement and role of the mayor all play a role. The mayor appears to be an important link in the functioning of the LIVC R: a change of mayor can lead to a perpetuation or a change in the organisation of a LIVC R. The mayor also determines the margin available to the preventionists to shape the LIVC R and influences the mutual relations between the participating actors. A small group of

respondents, both police and prevention actors, indicate that they have been pressured by the mayor to share information.

Based on this second contribution, the authors draw eleven recommendations.

- *Recommendation 1:* Changes to regulation around confidentiality are not always useful. There is a need for further research and an accompanying political debate into the effects of these changes and information sharing.
- *Recommendation 2:* Organise a monitoring system as a federal, regional, and regional policy and as a sector (youth care and prevention) that can supervise the way in which information is shared and where possible pressure around it can be reported. A possible authority is a reference person or ombudsman at sectoral or regional government level.
- *Recommendation 3:* Interviews reveal that there is a lack of clarity regarding the deontological and legal frameworks surrounding information sharing and confidentiality. Make sure that regional and regional authorities pay sufficient attention to, and free up resources to, organise inter visions and training on how to deal with information sharing and confidentiality at organisational and sectoral level. Training can be useful, but daily concrete support appears more relevant because of the many grey areas with which practitioners are confronted.
- *Recommendation 4:* Develop a step-by-step system and/or decision-making process at a sector level (youth care and prevention) or organisation level in dealing with information exchange, without it becoming an extra administrative workload. This can not only support professional workers, but also ensure the necessary discretion regarding both concerns and questions from outsiders. Make sure that the policy (youth care and prevention) gives sufficient support and attention to this.
- *Recommendation 5:* In practice and at every policy level avoid using the term “confidentiality⁷” as terminology within the LIVC R. This not only creates confusion but can also create reluctance among actors.
- *Recommendation 6:* Although from a legal point of view the mayor plays an important role in the organisation of the LIVC R, we see that if local prevention officers are given enough space, and are supported by the mayor, they can take on a bridging function between the participating actors in the LIVC R.
- *Recommendation 7:* Ensure, as a matter of policy (federal, regional, and local), that independent and structural monitoring is organised to ensure that participating actors, especially those employed by local government, are not pressured, or forced to share information. The organisation of a focal point at the policy or sector level is also recommended.
- *Recommendation 8:* Our study shows that it is not always clear for the participants, what happens with the shared information. Therefore, transparency of this information flow is crucial. Provide a protocol at LIVC R level that describes possible scenarios. Visualisation is useful in this respect. It is also intended that independent and structural supervision will provide an overview of the information flows that occur in practice at LIVC R level.

⁷ In French “secret professionnel”, in Dutch “gedeeld beroepsgeheim”.

- *Recommendation 9:* Our survey shows that there is a need for inter visions and safe spaces for social and prevention actors who participate in a LIVC R and receive little support in considerations of information sharing and confidentiality. Due to the sensitivities of this topic, there are few spaces, other than specifically for some prevention and information officers, where actors can exchange on their questions, concerns, or good practices. Again, we see that there is less need for training, but hands-on support is more pertinent. On policy or sector level, platforms could be created where actors can go with their questions and concerns and learn from each other. An example of this is the inter visions that the VVSG (Vereniging voor Vlaamse Steden en Gemeenten) organises for case managers.
- *Recommendation 10:* As regional and federal authorities take on a role in raising awareness of the implementation of codes of ethics, roadmaps or cooperation protocols, and internal evaluations. Collect existing good practices. Stress the importance of clarifying tasks and expectations and respecting the ethical boundaries of all actors involved. This last point also implies that restrain itself should not be a problem.
- *Recommendation 11:* As federal, regional, and local authorities, consider the need to establish a LIVC R. Indeed, its organisation is not always appropriate and sometimes represents an additional workload. The creation of LIVC R was established during the departures to the Syrian conflict in 2012 to 2015, it is relevant to update this policy in regard of the current context, its costs, and benefits.

Report 3. “Between fundamental rights and monitoring”

The third report examines the side effects of signalling and early detection by the police and security services on the daily lives of Belgian Muslims. Five statements can be drawn on this research.

- First, the participants who took part in the interviews for this study experienced several incidents and events that made them feel reported as radicalised. Although they rarely received confirmation, they experienced things that limited their actions (and in the majority of cases still limit them). It is important to note that only a minority of respondents received actual confirmation of being reported, as this information is not publicly available. The only exceptions are respondents who have received negative safety advice as part of their professional activities. Thus, for many, this often remains suspicion. Some respondents have experienced a combination of incidents or events (see Tableau 2). For many, this event came as a shock, as did the suspicion that they were reported somewhere in a radicalisation or terrorism context. These specific events are reported in the following table (Tableau 2)

Tableau 2 Incidents overview

Negative safety advice	4
Bank account closed/no possibility to pen a new one	7
Travel restrictions and controls at the airport	14

The exact reason why people have had an experience remains unclear. Because of the restriction to information, respondents are often left in the mist. This lack of clarity often continues to haunt them, producing great uncertainty. In our study, we asked respondents if they had any suspicions about why they were reported. We list the most important reasons our respondents cited as possible explanations (Tableau 3)

Tableau 3 Assumption for reporting

Acquaintances, friends or relatives have left for Syria	8
Engagement in civil society	13
Allegation from the professional sphere	4
Allegation from school	3
Allegation from the familial sphere	2
Social media behavior	4
Police control	1
Unknown	4

Respondents understood involvement in the civil society as a risk factor. Several of them have given up on getting involved in organisations because of what they have experienced. Another explanation is the fact that they know someone who has gone to Syria. Many suspect that the fact that they could have been reported as radicalised may be related to this. It may be from a family member or neighbour. Finally, our survey shows that respondents also suspect close acquaintances, family, or colleagues as a possible source of reporting partly due to personal conflicts.

- Second, our study shows that the impact of being reported as radicalised has a considerable impact on the daily lives of our respondents, mostly through loss of money. Some of our respondents received a negative safety advisory and were summarily dismissed. This has often left those affected with no income. A travel restriction or bank account closure can also result in a loss of money. When a person is stopped at the border or not allowed to travel, it often means that hotel and flight costs incurred are lost. In addition, these also have a serious impact on the mental and physical well-being of those affected. Several interviewees testified that the realisation that they were being reported triggered various anxieties in them. Anxiety of travel, anxiety to work, to express their opinions, to lose the custody of their children. Often, this anxiety also translated into periods of depression. In consequence of this reporting, many respondents had their trust in the State deeply shaken. The difficulty (or even

impossibility) to act and appeal against the reporting led most respondents to lose confidence in the institutions. They often felt unfairly targeted. While many had been brought up to believe that they lived in a democracy with fair and transparent procedures, what happened to them seriously undermined their views.

- Third, our study shows that challenge the fact of being reported is difficult. Here we distinguish between those who lost their appeal due to a negative security recommendation and those who did not. When a person loses an appeal against a negative safety recommendation, there is a formal appeal procedure to administrative institution in charge of safety issues. In our study, three of the four respondents who received a negative clearance were able to appeal. Two of them were successful. However, the respondents found the procedure difficult and unclear. They indicated that it was difficult to appeal without proper legal assistance, also because of the limited information available on the procedure. The eight-day deadline for filing an appeal was also considered very short. In addition, defendants and their lawyers experience the right to defence as particularly difficult, because the exact allegations remain veiled: the reports they receive are often largely incomplete because authorities considered part of it as classified information. This fact creates a lot of stress and insecurity for the respondents, as they do not know what they are accused of and cannot defend themselves.

Regarding travel and bank restrictions, there is also no formal procedures for appealing. In fact, it is impossible to appeal a travel restriction from Belgium. Interviewees who face travel restrictions are usually informed at the airport that they are being denied entry for security reasons, but without the specifics. This is partly due to the great uncertainty on how personal data is distributed at national and international level: with which services and authorities it is stored and for how long. Indeed, personal data can also be shared with foreign governments, in the framework of bilateral or international cooperation (Europol, Interpol). It is therefore possible that a person is no longer listed in Belgium but is still present in foreign databases. There is a great deal of confusion and lack of clarity, not only among respondents but also among their lawyers and sometimes even among the police.

- Finally, despite having experienced the consequences of being reported as radicalised, most respondents still support a policy on radicalisation and terrorism. Moreover, few of them question the existence of the policy itself, and almost everyone thinks it is legitimate for a government to monitor its own citizens in certain circumstances. Although their trust in the State was shaken by their experience, our respondents also felt it was important for the government to keep its citizens safe. However, interviewees felt that current policy is not targeting the right people and that the scope of this monitoring is not properly delineated. For example, all our informants felt that Muslims are disproportionately targeted by this policy. They also felt that other forms of extremism, such as right-wing extremism, are not adequately addressed. Several interviewees believe that the many "mistakes" made by the policy are the result of limited knowledge of Islamic movements and the community. Terms such as Salafism, Wahhabism and the Muslim Brotherhood are often used by the security services without a clear understanding of the complex realities behind them. There is a general feeling among the interviewees that intelligence and security services do not

have sufficient knowledge of Muslim communities to be able to assess the situation properly.

Based on this third contribution, the authors draw eleven recommendations.

- *Recommendation 1:* Create a legal possibility for citizens to find out whether they have been reported and whether it is justified, relevant and accurate. If it is not, there should be an opportunity for appeal.
- *Recommendation 2:* Create a mechanism to regulate the exchange of personal data with countries outside the EU, as well as control of this exchange for example, apply diplomatic pressure on the countries that do not refresh and update their databases. This can be done through bilateral agreements.
- *Recommendation 3:* Question the categories used to signal and track people within the relevant databases. Evaluate the usefulness of the current early detection mechanisms for radicalisation.
- *Recommendation 4:* Review the eight-day period for lodging an appeal with the appeal body. Also ensure greater transparency in the files of the intelligence services for the right to defence.
- *Recommendation 5:* Produce public information to explain the different steps ahead in the case of a seizure or negative security clearance.
- *Recommendation 6:* Create modules on this topic within the framework of the permanent training of lawyers.
- *Recommendation 7:* Give the mandate and the resources to a recognised and independent human rights organisation where people can go with their questions on this issue to avoid unnecessary lawyers' fees and to get the right referral.
- *Recommendation 8:* Make government resources available for an awareness-raising campaign on these issues, in cooperation with civil society actors. Also create the necessary psychosocial support for those involved.
- *Recommendation 9:* Make the police and security services aware of the far-reaching consequences of such a signal and its material and immaterial effects. Let them know that such cautions can be as far-reaching, if not more so, than a criminal record.
- *Recommendation 10:* Make the police and security services aware of the problematic aspects of the radicalisation theory, and how (religiously inspired) activism can be read selectively through this lens with the risk of double standards.
- *Recommendation 11:* Make the professional sector of journalism aware of the far-reaching consequences that the dissemination of unverified/incorrect information or the violation of privacy on this subject can have on those involved. This issue poses specific challenges to the professional ethics and deontology of journalists. Such a process of awareness-raising and reflection can be organised in cooperation with responsible bodies such as the Press Council or the Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel (CSA).

Work Package 2 - Quantitative Analysis: is Polarisation Nourishing Support for Violence?

As explained, the goal of the second work package is to evaluate whether we observe among Belgian citizens signs of ideological polarisation, and whether this polarisation is associated

with acceptance of illegal and violent actions by radical political groups and by state authorities while dealing with such radical political groups. We present the findings based on the first survey in the report: The attitudes of Belgian citizens towards the use of illegal and violent actions for political purposes (March 2020). Then, in a second time, we conduct a second survey to test specifically how Muslim population considered violent actions. We present the results in the second report: The attitudes of Belgian residents who identified as Muslims towards the use of illegal and violent actions for political purposes (September 2022).

For the first survey, we draw a sample from the Belgian population. It consists of 3000 citizens aged over 16 years old and residing in Belgium. The survey includes a series of questions asking respondents to evaluate how acceptable they found some illegal and violent actions that could be conducted, first, by political groups define as non-state actors, then, by political groups define as state actors that possess the monopoly on the legitimate use of force. Here, 'political violence' is defined as a heterogeneous repertoire of actions that aim to cause physical, psychological, or symbolic damage to people and/or property in order to influence civil society and bring about (or to resist) political, social and/or cultural changes (Bosi & Malthaner, 2015). When perpetrated by violent non-state actors (PVNSA; Political Violence perpetrated by Nonviolent State Actors), political violence can be used by groups and movements from all political backgrounds, it can include actions such as attacks on property, physical assault, explosive attacks, kidnapping, hostage taking, and large-scale assassinations, to name just a few. From this general definition, we build the following survey question:

“To defend their ideological cause, political movements can carry out different actions. We are going to present you with some of these actions. For each one, can you tell us to what extent do you agree or disagree with a political movement choosing to carry out such an action? Please express your opinion on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means “strongly disagree” and 10 “strongly agree”.

- *Organising a blockade of roads or highways*
- *Occupying or deteriorating public buildings (ministry, parliament, city hall, etc.)*
- *Physically attacking police officers*
- *Physically attacking men and women in the street”*

In addition to political violence perpetrated by non-state groups, several authors point out that public authorities also may perpetrate political and repressive violence (RVSA; Repressive Violence State Actor). States, institutions, and police may use different forms of illegal, repressive, and more direct violent actions to govern and use their power. Social scientists define state violence very broadly, ranging from repression to direct violence, genocide, the abolition of social service provisions, new forms of surveillance technology, etc. (Davenport, 2007; Torres, 2018.) Therefore, following the question on illegal and violent actions by non-state actors, we asked respondents about their attitudes towards three actions perpetrated by public authorities to deal with political groups considered as a threat to public order (RVSA). As we did for the ideological statements, we review in the media all the actions taken by different political groups in the last months (before the survey administration) in Belgium and other European countries. We selected ten of them and tested via an online pilot survey (Qualtrics platform) on a sample of 1,000 respondents living in Belgium.

The question was asked as follows:

“Confronted with such political actions, the Belgian police have a different repertoire of actions it could use. We are going to present you with some of them. For each one, can you tell us to what extent do you agree or disagree with the possibility for the Belgian police choosing such action to deal with violent people or groups? Please express your opinion on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means “strongly disagree” and 10 “strongly agree”.

- *Put all members of the suspected political group, and their relatives, under police surveillance (access to telephones, e-mail, etc.),*
- *Put in custody all members of the group for more than 48 hours for deep interrogations,*
- *Authorise interrogation techniques to weaken the suspect’s psychological and physical state.*

Here, the choice of items is based on two processes. First, we started with different measures that go beyond the current legal framework in Belgium, but which have been debated by the media and public authorities (such as the duration of police custody or surveillance). Then, we selected ten items that were tested in our pilot survey. Three of these items were found to present significant differences in the respondents’ answers, and especially if they were well understood by respondents. Other items showed some problems being understood.

Those two survey questions have allowed examining what the level of acceptance within the Belgian population towards the use of illegal and violent actions by non-state and state actors was. Tableau 4 shows the frequency distribution for the seven political violence items (four for the PVNSA, and three for the RVSA).

- Concerning the PVNSA, the first result that must be highlighted concerns the low degree of acceptance of each of the four violent actions. Findings reveal that 19.8% of respondents agree with the item « Blocking Highway » as a legitimate means of political mobilisation. Furthermore, we can see the more violent the actions become, the less support there is. Thus, an important decrease can be found looking at the results for the most violent item « Attacking civilians », where only 5.8% of the respondents have shown a favourable attitude towards the action. Finally, concerning the other two items, it appears that 14.2% of respondents are in favour of the item « Occupying Building » while 7.7% of the respondents agree with the action « Attacking police officers ».

Tableau 4 Acceptance towards illegal and violent actions among Belgians

	Disagree (0-4)	Neutral (5)	Agree (6-10)	Do not know/ no answer	Total
Non-state actors					

Blocking highways	63,1	15,7	19,9	1,3	100
Occupying buildings	73,5	10,8	14,5	1,2	100
Attacking police officers	85,6	6,2	7,6	0,6	100
Attacking civilians	89,2	4,2	5,8	0,8	100
State actors					
Surveillance	40,4	19,1	39,0	1,6	100
Police custody	20,5	12,4	66,1	1,0	100
Violence police interrogations	52,9	15,4	30,3	1,4	100

- Concerning the RVSA, the most significant result is that the levels of agreement with the three items are much higher. This degree of support varies from 30.4% for the most violent item « Violent Police Interrogation », to 66.0% for the item « Police Custody ». In addition, 39.0% of respondents agreed with the action « Surveillance ».

Three interpretations can be given at this stage. First, we interpret the items related to the RVSA as forms of violence that are less severe, or at least having fewer physical consequences compared to items like « Attacking Police » or « Attacking Civilians ». Second, the differences we observed could also be interpreted by a recognition of the legitimate use of force. For those people, these kinds of actions could be considered legitimate and necessary means that public authorities can use to deal with violent political groups, even if these actions go beyond the current legal framework. Third, some of these items – especially « Surveillance » and « Police Custody » - might have been considered as not being illegal. As stated above, Belgian politicians and the media had debated in the months before the survey whether to introduce these two actions as possible means for the Belgian police. Thus, some of the respondents might have considered these two actions as actually legal. This could explain the high level of support for these two actions.

The next step in the analysis is to examine whether attitudes towards the use of violent and illegal actions are affected by ideological polarisation. In order to test it, we ask respondents to declare their proximity with a series of political causes. In the questionnaire, respondents were presented with a list of seven political statements representing different ideological causes that are normally debated in the Belgian political context. For each of these statements, respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the item. Responses were provided using a Likert scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree); higher scores indicate a stronger acceptance of each statement. The seven ideological statements included in the questionnaire are:

1. *“Belgium must quickly close their national borders to preserve its national culture” (Anti-immigration item).*
2. *“Capitalism is a real threat to our society” (Anti-capitalism item).*
3. *“The laws passed by the Belgian Parliament should better defend Belgium's Christian values” (Defending Christian values item).*
4. *“Islam and the Coran are not respected enough by the Belgian political authorities” (Islam and Coran not respected in Belgium item).*
5. *“Racism is very present in Belgium, especially towards migrants” (Anti-racism item).*
6. *“Fighting against global warming is more important than economic growth” (Environmentalism item).*
7. *“Political authorities are not doing enough to fight discrimination against women” (Anti-gender discrimination item).*

These seven statements are not selected at random, but in three steps. First, we identify ideological issues defended by social movements that have been most visible in the Belgian media debates in recent years. Then, for each of these debates, we consult the websites of the main social movements related to these ideological issues. We formulate the statements considering the positions defended by these movements in Belgium or Europe. Then, we test the interpretation of these statements (and a few others) through two different tests. First, an online pilot questionnaire (through the Qualtrics platform) was submitted to a sample of 1,000 respondents in Belgium. Second, we checked the statements qualitatively through one day test in the TNS Kantar offices. More precisely, 10 people were selected to test the questionnaire qualitatively, considering the diversity of gender, age, education, and ethnic origin. Hence, the formulation and the selection of the final seven ideological statements took these different stages into account. We use the scores given by respondents on the 7 statements to select their political causes they felt the closest to, and to examine whether it could be related to a greater (or weaker) support for illegal and violent actions by non-state and state actors. The findings are reported in Tableau 5.

The analyses reveal some interesting and significant differences. Firstly, regarding the four items related to illegal and violent actions by non-state actors, we can see those respondents declaring to feel the closest to the idea that Islam is not respected in Belgium are the more open to accepting illegal actions such as blocking highways and occupying buildings. Yet, they are not open at all to violent actions like attacking police officers or civilians. On those last two items the group that is the most accepting (or rather the least rejecting) is composed of respondents declaring as political claims that feel the closest to that Belgium should close its borders.

Finally, it is possible to note that the respondents who are the least open to the use of ideological violence are also those who feel that racism is still very present in Belgium.

Tableau 5 Mean Acceptance of Illegal and Violent Actions by Ideology Respondents Are the Closest

Non-state actors	State actors
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Causes respondents feel the closest	Blocking highways	Occupying buildings	Attacking police officers	Attacking civilians	Surveillance	Custody	Police interrogations
Close borders	3.19	2.92	1.85	1.47	5.77	8.02	5.61
Capitalism as threat	3.26	1.99	1.19	0.72	4.13	5.94	3.28
Defending Christian values	2.88	2.12	1.35	1.00	5.00	7.57	4.91
Islam not respected	4.02	3.17	1.39	1.19	5.18	6.40	3.99
Anti-racism	2.71	1.87	1.17	0.92	4.40	6.40	3.16
Global warming	3.20	2.36	1.26	0.90	4.51	6.21	3.34
Gender discrimination	2.80	2.12	1.37	1.03	4.72	6.35	3.66

Regarding the three items related to the use of illegal and violent actions by the police, the main result is that it is once again the respondents calling for the closure of national borders are clearly the most open to the fact that public authorities can go beyond the current legal framework in their actions to deal with political movements deemed dangerous. This group of respondents appears to be more open to violent action outside the legal framework, both by private political movements and by public authorities. Conversely, respondents who distrust capitalism and anti-racists are the most opposed to public authorities going beyond the legal framework.

We conduct further analyses on the link towards ideological polarisation and support for illegal and violent actions. Detailed findings can be found in the full report, but they go in the same direction. Finally, we conduct analyses to examine whether some characteristics of respondents – other than the ideological causes they feel close or oppose to – might affect acceptance of political violence.

This second round of analysis complemented our finding in three ways. First, some socio-demographic characteristics seem to highlight differences in the relationship to political violence. On the one hand, differences appear according to the age of the respondents. Older people are less likely to accept illegal actions carried out by non-state political movements. They are, however, more open than younger respondents to the police exceeding the legal framework. On the other hand, the fact they having been able to continue their studies produces a much more negative relationship towards all forms of political violence. Second,

regarding religious and philosophical denominations, three different results were observed: 1) respondents of Christian denominations are more tolerant of institutional violence; 2) those of Muslim or other denomination are more tolerant of forms of illegal action without physical violence (blocking of roads and occupation of buildings) but less tolerant of institutional violence; 3) respondents who stated that they do not belong to any religious denomination show negative attitudes towards all forms of political violence. Finally, we also observe the effects of the respondents' place of residence. Individuals living in Flanders are less tolerant of private political violence but more tolerant of institutional violence. Conversely, people from Brussels are notably more opposed to all forms of political violence. The Walloon respondents are somewhere in between.

Building on the findings of the first survey, a second survey has been developed on the specific case of citizens residing in Belgium and identifying as Muslims. The first survey shows that those citizens were not, as support by some political actors, more prone to accept political violence. It is not the case for Muslims in general, and not even for those who strongly agree with the idea that Islam is not well respected in Belgium. Their support for violent political actions (like attacking police officers or civilians) is actually among the lowest. Yet, the total number of Muslim citizens in the sample was rather low (N=245). Therefore, a second survey aims to verify whether those findings held on a larger sample. It has been done in Spring 2022, with a CATI (phone) survey with a sample of about 1,500 Belgian residents self-identifying as Muslims.

This second survey allows, first, examining the attitudes of Muslims residing in Belgium regarding illegal and violent political actions. Our analyses confirm that tolerance towards such actions is extremely limited, in the same proportions we observed in the representative sample of the Belgian population. If differences are to be underlined, it is that Muslims residing in Belgium are even less tolerant towards illegal or violent political actions (see Tableau 6). We can also observe that more tolerant attitudes are not found among respondents who would be more religious or who would express stronger empathy towards the Muslim community in Belgium and abroad. In other words, the second survey confirms that there is no specific issue with the attitudes of Muslim citizens regarding illegal and violent political actions. Actually, the factor that is most significantly associated with tolerance towards political violence within the sample is, like in the first study, education. Access to higher education is associated to significantly weaker support for political violence.

Tableau 6 Attitudes towards illegal and violent actions in survey 1 (Belgian population) and survey 2 (Muslims residing in Belgium)

		Occupying building	Attacking police officers	Attacking civilians
Survey 1	Mean	2,29	1,35	1
	N	2980	2998	2994

Tableau 6 Attitudes towards illegal and violent actions in survey 1 (Belgian population) and survey 2 (Muslims residing in Belgium)

		Occupying building	Attacking police officers	Attacking civilians
	Std deviation	2,807	2,369	2,143
Survey 2	Mean	1,4	0,56	0,35
	N	1421	1469	1471
	Std deviation	2,557	1,69	1,34

The second set of analyses that we can conduct with the sample of 1,500 Muslims residing in Belgium is about their attitudes regarding allowing the police to go beyond the current legal framework in its actions against politically radical groups. The main findings are that Muslims residing in Belgium are a bit more tolerant on this question than for illegal and violent actions by radical groups, but they are less tolerant than the wider Belgian population (according to our first survey, see Tableau 4).

Tableau 7 Attitudes towards allowing an extension of the police's current prerogatives in survey 1 (Belgian population) and survey 2 (Muslims residing in Belgium)

		Surveillance	Police interrogation	Allowing all actions deemed necessary, without restriction
Survey 1	Mean	4,73	3,85	—
	N	2970	2974	—
	Std deviation	3,168	3,244	—
Survey 2	Mean	3,95	2,86	1,89
	N	1433	1411	1422
	Std deviation	3,82	3,44	3,07

In addition to those aggregate figures, we also examined with factors were significantly correlated with the attitudes of Muslims residing in Belgium regarding the means of actions of the police. The most important finding is that more religious respondents and those who express stronger empathy towards the Muslim community are less tolerant about the police being allowed to use actions that are going beyond the current legal framework.

Main Conclusions and Recommendations

The main conclusion of our study is that there is no real issue in the relationship of citizens to political action by illegal or violent means. Tolerance is very low in general; it is even almost zero for violent means of action (physically attacking police officers or civilians). This is true for all strata of the population, and regardless of ideological, philosophical, or religious beliefs. If we look at the individual variations, however, there are two elements that deserve attention.

On the one hand, within the nativist and anti-immigration movements, support for actions involving physical violence (against police or civilians) is somewhat higher. It is especially towards these groups that attention should be focused. On the other hand, it seems that the rejection of political violence can be acquired through education and awareness of pluralism of opinion. It may therefore also be useful to invest heavily at this level, through schools and citizenship education programmes to set clear guidelines for legitimate political action. This

seems all the more important as it is among the youngest that tolerance for illegal or violent political action increases.

Finally, the question of the relationship to investigative methods by the police that go beyond the legal framework seems to be much more controversial among the population. A large number of citizens seem to be open to prolonged police custody, wiretapping of suspects' relatives, and even interrogation methods that weaken the physical and psychological condition of suspects. It is undoubtedly at this level that a real social and political debate should be conducted to clarify the limits set by the rule of law in Belgium for the police. There is no broad consensus among the population, and this deserves to be clarified through public debate and collective decision.

Recommendation 1: To reinforce the monitoring of nativist and anti-immigration movements.

Recommendation 2: To reinforce awareness measures towards pluralism of opinions especially to young people.

Recommendation 3: To open the debate with the population on the limits of police legal actions.

Work Package 3 – Study of Trajectories

As explained earlier, this third work package focuses on individuals considered as radical by the Belgian public authorities and their connection with the Belgian CJAS. To do so, research had been conducted in five steps. From those different steps, we can draw several observations.

Literature Review on the Link between Radicalisation and Justice

Based on our literature review (see Detry *and all.*, 2019), we showed it is not possible to claim that people who self-identify as extremists or who are reported as such by the public authorities generally have a criminal record either before or during their process of radicalisation. Our literature review also showed that, in case they have one, it is not possible to state that this criminal record plays a role of adjuvant that stimulates the process of radicalisation. However, an empirical analysis from a sample drawn from the database presented in the step 3 below is necessary to test this claim.

Another important insight of the literature review is that three elements tend to curb extremist tendencies: (a) trust from the citizens in the police and the administration of justice; (b) the promotion of a quality police and judicial attitude and (c) the perception of their fairness in the resolution of conflicts. On the other hand, perceived injustices as well as episodes of confrontation with the authorities may play a role in violent radicalisation. The experience of repression appears to play a significant role in the decision to engage in violence, and in particular the experience of torture. Some studies suggest that prison conditions can lead to a sense of discrimination and injustice that can reinforce radicalism.

Finally, there is a lack of evaluative research on the prevention and repression of those labelled as radicalised. From the available research, there seems that the effects of these interventions vary according to the individuals but also according to their role into the group in which they evolve. The extent to which preventive and repressive policies affect their engagement therefore remains unclear.

Conceptual and Functional Analysis of Criminal Justice Databases

Our analysis of the legal and grey literature as well as relevant interviews on a selection of criminal justice databases led to numerous observations (Detry *and all*, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2021d, 2021e). We provide here the two most important ones. First, the public authorities have developed a desire to detect and record suspicions of any form of radicalism at an increasingly early stage of the criminal process, starting with administrative police surveillance. Second, the authorities have engaged in a trend of sharing information among a large number of services (police, justice, intelligence services, local and socio-preventive services, etc.) coordinating their actions according to a multi-agency model.

The fight against terrorism and radicalisation, which hitherto is the prerogative of the intelligence services, has evolved, in line with the evolution of the threat and its manifestations, towards the development of prevention mechanisms involving all the services that are concerned by this issue. In order to assess the threat and coordinate preventive actions, these services, and more particularly the Coordination Unit for Threat Analysis (CUTA), require access to information available at various levels of competence. To this end, numerous discussion and consultation platforms are set up at local and federal levels (examples of such platforms are the Local Integral Security Cells (CSIL/LIVC R), the Local Task Force, the National Task Force, and the Joint Decision Centres). Concurrently, the exchange and sharing of information recorded by each service have been developed. This led to the establishment of a “common database” in which each service registers (for a second time) their data on entities (e.g. individuals) who displayed signs of (violent) radicalisation (see Detry *and all*, 2020, 2021e). Extended access to these new databases is granted to some actors (e.g. the Foreigners' Office, the Worship Department, the Treasury of the Federal Public Service Finance⁸).

This new “common database” system, which is certainly useful to the intelligence services, nevertheless raises several questions, of which we provide a few examples:

- What are the risks that a service involved in this system becomes or starts to be perceived by their clients (i.e. the population at large, that may be radicalised or not) as an informant for the intelligence services, hereby betraying the trust these clients have initially invested in them?
- Could the boundaries between the missions of the various services involved in this new system become blurred? Could the data collected through this system be used for purposes that are different from those initially intended? What would be the consequences for society?

These questions are all the more acute as the range of behaviours that are nowadays considered as indicators of risks from a radicalisation standpoint has become quite wide and diverse. At the level of the administrative police, information is recorded concerning people involved in the activities of a group or phenomenon, politically singled out as a potential risk to public order (see Mine *and all*, 2021). At the level of the CUTA, any person holding extremist views that justify the use of violence or coercion as a mode of action in Belgium is now registered if, according to the criteria established by the CUTA they present an increased risk of violence (see Detry *and all*, 2020 and 2021e). At the level of prison, inmates are observed

⁸ Office des étrangers, Service des Cultes, du Service Public Fédéral Justice, l'administration générale de la trésorerie du Service Public Fédéral Finances

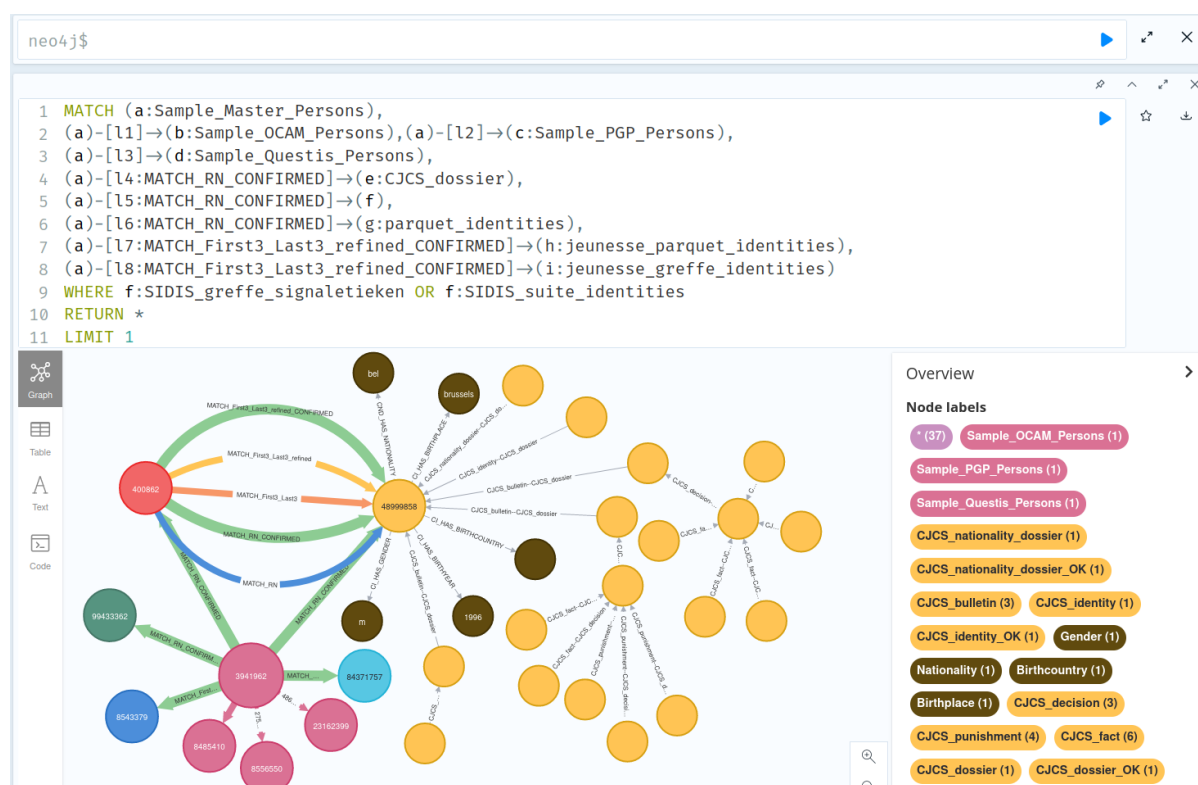
in their daily life to detect possible signs of radicalisation or proselytising. Furthermore, while legislators, in compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights, have refrained from condemning radicalisation as such, the fact remains that, at this level too, the formulation of terrorist offences in the Criminal Code increasingly refers to behaviour well upstream of an act.

Following the example of public health prevention in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, public policies in the implementation of tracking and information-sharing measures are subject to a delicate balancing act between, on the one hand, the interest of all in preventing the (spread of the) phenomenon and, on the other hand, the interest of each individual in safeguarding their freedom of thought, expression, and movement.

Analysis of Individuals' Characteristics Based on Criminal Justice Databases

Much of the data was processed with Python scripts and imported in a Neo4j graph database system, resulting in an integrated database of +100 million nodes and +180 million relations. Below is an example of a fraction of data pertaining to one person, as visible through the Neo4j visual interface (Figure 1). The upper side of the figure is a Cypher query used to retrieve the data from the database. The lower part of the figure is a graph representing the data. Some circles represent the person, whereas other circles represent features of the people (year of birth, conviction, etc.).

Figure 1 Example of data visualised through the Neo4j Browser User Interface



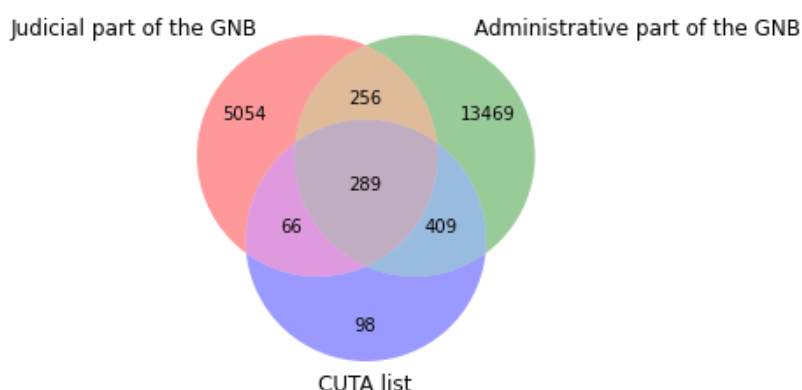
We believe that this database on radicalisation is the first of its kind. It compiles data from official sources for scientific, statistical, and historical purposes. The data contained in the integrated database originated from the Coordination Unit for Threat Analysis (CUTA) list, the

judicial and administrative section of the General National Bank (GNB) of the Federal Police, the databases of the youth and correctional public prosecutor's offices, the Central Criminal Records and databases from the penitentiary institutions.

The heart of this database is a sample of people considered by the public authorities as radical, based on the sources we have access to, and the selection criteria we retained (for more details about the methodology see Jeuniaux *and all*, 2022). After removing duplicates, the number of these 'radical' people is established to be 19.641. In that sample, 14.423 individuals (73%) had at least one record in the administrative section of the GNB used to monitor some individuals, groups and phenomena (PGP) that might constitute a threat to public order (2002-2018 period), 5.665 individuals (29%) had a least one offence related to the phenomenon of radicalisation recorded in the judicial section of GNB (2014-2017 period), and 862 individuals (4%) had a record in the CUTA list (2014-2017 period).

A same person can have a record in any of these databases (see the Venn diagram below), but only 289 people have a record in all three sources (as seen in the middle – the grey surface – of the figure). As we can see from Figure 2, the administrative part of the GNB is the broadest source of information we could have access to.

Figure 2 Number of people in the sample as a function of the sources of their records



The sample is mainly composed of males (86%), Belgians (72%), half of them being, on the 1st of January 2019, presumably between 28- and 45-year-old.

We performed a specific analysis of the administrative police data section of our sample (PGP), as it is the largest group of all (see Mine *and all*, 2021b). This constituted the first empirical analysis of this type in Belgium. The 14.423 people who have a record in PGP are associated with at least one group or phenomenon of interest.

In total they were 282 groups and 14 phenomena. These could be categorised as belonging to ten broad categories, which we here list by the decreasing number of people who fall into them:

(1) Recorded in the Judicial GNB, for example, because a projectile was thrown during a demonstration that injured a police officer, or because the person is subject to a stadium ban ($n = 4.663$);

(2) At-risk supporters of a soccer club ($n = 4.550$);

- (3) Religious extremism, including radical Islamism (n = 2.565);*
- (4) Extreme Right including Identitarian movement (n = 1.647);*
- (5) Extreme Left including Anarchism (n = 1.628);*
- (6) Members or supporters of Motorcycle chapters (n = 1.463);*
- (7) Terrorism as identified by the Council of the European Union (n = 1.031);*
- (8) Other types of groups or phenomena such as computer activism, riots, squatters (n = 847);*
- (9) Environmental extremism including antispecism (n = 650), and (10) Sects (n = 137).*

One particular difficulty that we could address through the integrated database was to connect for each individual their records from various sources. The integration of the records from CUTA, the administrative section of GNB (PGP) and the judicial section of GNB to create the sample of 19.641 individuals was done partially manually. The integration of their records to the records emanating from other sources (youth prosecutor's office records and youth court registries records, correctional prosecutor's office records, criminal records, prison records) were done computationally (see Jeuniaux *and all*, 2022).

The outcome of the computational procedures is a link of three types of quality ([best] Quality 1, [acceptable] Quality 2, [ambiguous] Quality 3) or no link. When the National Registry Number (NRN) was available (note that it is neither systematically encoded, nor necessarily available, for example, for foreigners without a residence permit), it was used (hereby allowing drawing links of Quality 1). However, it is important to note that the national registry number is not necessarily well encoded or even consistent over time (e.g. change of sex of the person). If the NRN was not available, then other features (e.g. names, dates of birth) were used and compared to each other by calculating a similarity score. A threshold was set to keep the best links between records (links of Quality 2). When several links could be drawn between a person in the sample and the records of more than one person in the same source (e.g. criminal records), these links were declared to be ambiguous (links of Quality 3). Links of Quality 3 are ignored in the present calculations.

Based on this methodology, it was found that:

- (a) 3670 individuals from the sample (about 19%) could be connected to the youth prosecutor's office or youth court registry records;*
- (b) between 11065 and 14327 individuals from the sample could be connected to the correctional prosecutor's office records (the rate varies between 56% and 73% of the sample, a higher rate being achieved if we allowed links of Quality 2 in the mix);*
- (c) between 9738 and 9911 individuals from the sample (about 50%) could be connected to the criminal records (CJCS); and*
- (d) between 2626 and 2832 individuals in the sample (about 14%) could be connected to the prison records (SIDIS greffe or SIDIS suite).*

At this stage, such numbers only objectify the presence of the sampled individuals in the other CJAS databases and do not validate or refute the crime terror nexus hypothesis. The reasons or circumstances for these connections (timing and types of offences? Conviction? Prison terms?) will be investigated in upcoming research (through the Belspo funded IIHA project <https://incc.fgov.be/IIHA> and the activities of the Recidivism and Criminal Careers Cell (CReCC) <https://incc.fgov.be/CReCC>).

In anticipation of this investigation, we develop a methodology to describe the individual characteristics of offenders based on the conviction data present in the criminal records (see Mine *and all*, 2021a). A sample of the criminal records is made to focus on the individuals who have been convicted for terrorism ($n = 489$ people, convicted between 2006 and 2020). Their trajectory is reconstructed as the succession of all their convictions are ordered by the date of their judgment. If many of them (43%) are convicted only once, most of them (57%) are convicted more than once (the maximum number of convictions being 39).

We observe that 48% of the people in our sample had already been convicted prior to their first conviction for terrorism, most of the convictions being about driving offences ($n = 1231$), offences against property without violence ($n = 340$), and violence against people ($n = 187$).

It is to be noted that former results on judicial antecedents in the available literature are only based on partial data and public sources. In contrast, our numbers are based on an official source (the criminal records). Our study is the first one to provide a complete view of the judicial antecedents of all people convicted for terrorism in Belgium up to 2020.

Finally, we observe that only 23% of the people in our sample are convicted for a second time for an offence (i.e. an offence of any type, including terrorism) after their first conviction for terrorism. However, this observation must be tempered by the fact that not all these people are likely to commit offend again (e.g. because they were convicted for the first time for terrorism, only recently, or because they were in prison or deceased). Consequently, this measurement should be re-examined, taking methodological precautions. For instance, the rate of reconviction reaches 44% if we limit ourselves to the people in the sample who are convicted of terrorism for the first time during the first nine years of the dataset (i.e. 2006-2014, instead of 2006-2020) hereby allowing a minimal observation window of 5 years.

Former results on recidivism were mainly based on public sources, focusing on small groups of individuals and the recidivism that were measured was limited to recommitting terrorism. By contrast, our numbers provide rates of recidivism for all types of recidivism, for the whole population of individuals convicted of terrorism and based on an official source (criminal records).

Interview of Staff from Justice Houses

We hereby summarise the analysis of the interviews carried out with staff members of French-speaking justice houses (i.e. probation officers and the management staff) (for more details see Jonckheere *and all*. 2021, Mine *and all*. 2022a, 2022b).

In Belgium, the sectors of justice houses (probation) and prison are developed as two distinct streams. The justice houses that were created in 1999, stopped being under the authorities of the prison in 2007. Since the dramatic events of 2015 (in Paris) and 2016 (in Brussels and Zaventem), the justice houses have had to deal with a massive influx of cases linked to Islamic terrorism and potentially violent extremism related to radical Islam. These cases can be

considered as highly symbolic and not like the usual ones. During data collection, we did not observe an opening of enquiry mandates for other forms of ideological engagement.

We observed that the justice assistants did not fully submit to the security imperatives underlying these cases, although the new situation significantly influenced their work.

Especially in Brussels, they have sought to innovate in terms of their professional positioning. They quickly reflected about how to handle such cases. They took initiatives on their own to acquire knowledge on relevant topics (e.g. Islam). They established an ad hoc procedure to evaluate if and how information about the people being monitored (hereafter “the client”) could be communicated to other services with which they were not used to collaborating on a regular basis until then (e.g. CUTA, State Security). The management of information has become an essential part in their work not only in terms of how they could communicate the information to these external services but also in terms of how they treat the information being received by these services. The exchange and nature of the information have become more formalised.

On top of creating new professional relationships with external services (such as State Security), other professional relationships with classical collaborators such as the police or the prosecution office have intensified. This is for instance the case with the police, through the use of I+Belgium (i.e. a computer platform that share information between the police, judicial authorities and the justice houses).

The management of these cases has not modified the essence of the work of the justice house assistants. However, it led to new administrative and verification procedures. For instance,

- (a) the immediate designation of a justice house assistant to take charge of the case of a client (i.e. no more delay permitted),*
- (b) it became necessary to send a copy of the justice assistant report to the management team for proofreading,*
- (c) the hierarchy had to be immediately informed in case of any change observed in the administrative situation of the client,*
- (d) it became necessary for the justice assistant to have a debriefing meeting with the director,*
- (e) the use of an up-to-date CUTA threat analysis document during interviews with the client became mandatory.*

The last example involving the CUTA threat analysis document illustrates again the crucial character of information management by the justice house assistants. Before the increase of these cases after the 2015 and 2016 attacks, they had the freedom to consult the sources of information they judged the most relevant to handle the cases. However, with these special cases, this type of information was imposed to them.

Whereas the main “tool” employed in their work has been traditionally the relationship being established with the client, the changes we described having raised a moral question to the justice house assistants. Normally, they are supposed to communicate to their client any new information that is known about them. In a security context involving terrorism, it is difficult, if not precluded, to satisfy this requirement. In the other way around, it is difficult to preserve a

relationship based on trust if the justice house assistant behaves like an informant and systematically communicates the information that is being collected from the client to the intelligence services. This situation shows that the conflicting role of the justice house assistant (split between helping and monitoring) was affected by the new situation.

Interview of Individuals Considered as Radical

We hereby summarise the most important points from our analysis of the interviews with people self-identified as radical or being considered by the public authorities as radical (for more details see Mine *and all.* 2022c). Generally speaking, these findings, drawn from the analysis of our respondents' discourse, correspond in many ways to what is found in the specialised scientific literature on the subject. Here are some elements that emerge from the analysis of their speech.

All respondents (n = 18) self-identify as radical for political reasons. They all reject the prevailing status quo. Their commitment to their radical causes is therefore result-oriented (i.e. they aim at political changes). The respondents distrust the authorities and pay more attention to alternative narratives. Although they have a nuanced opinion of the police forces, those who have been confronted with the actors of the judicial system (e.g. magistrates) seem to be very distrustful of them. They feel a strong sense of injustice and lack of dialogue, while at the same time reproaching the actors of the judicial system for participating in the maintenance and renewal of the status quo. They share an extremely divided vision of society that, according to them, is induced by a violent and unjust Western neoliberal capitalist system in which an elite dominates the rest of the population thanks to the collusion of the media and various parts of the Government. Traditional structures of political engagement (e.g. political party, trade unions) are perceived as obsolete. In general, our respondents' perception of the future is bleak due to the inertia of the Government and the population facing what they perceived as an urgent situation.

The engagement of our respondents is multiple, multifaceted, and evolving. The engagement for a cause offers psychological benefits rather than material benefits, and can have a variety of functions: social, educational, pedagogical, cultural. People commit themselves for self-knowledge, to learn to know-how, to contribute to their beliefs, for self-realisation (even at the professional level). It also profoundly affects the person's relationships because radical engagement is intense and inherent to the existence of the person. It also involves significant psychological and material (e.g. financial) costs. The commitment to a cause raises a lot of questions in the respondents' minds, mainly about how to force the change, in the most effective way possible (violent or not). It also raises issues in terms of coherence (how can you be consistent with your ideology and the way you live?)

The question of the means and modes of action to be favoured to advance the promoted cause is recurrent in the life of the militants. It is most often polarised between a predilection for the use of conventional democratic means that can also be qualified as legalistic (e.g. authorised demonstrations, petitions, debates), and more radical modes of action such as civil disobedience or direct action (e.g. wild demonstrations, operations to free farm animals, blockades). The more radical modes of action are generally presented as legitimate and more appropriate to make things happen, while more conventional means are criticised for their lack of effectiveness. However, each course of action has its supporters. The main parameter that can influence the decision of performing an illegal action depends mostly on the message to be conveyed.

The collectives to which the majority of our respondents belong are generally based on self-organisation and function without any real structure or internal support, which makes it difficult for the authorities to apprehend them. However, despite the claim of horizontality in the relationships between them, several statements still suggest that many collectives are informally relatively hierarchical or concentric in decision-making as well as in the organisation and planning of actions.

Violence calls for violence, so many respondents favour nonviolent modes of action, while leaving it up to each individual to decide how to behave. All of them reject violence against people, except for a marginal number of them who might find it acceptable (in case of self-defence or responsibility for the situation imputed to the target of violence). The respondents believe that militant violence remains relatively marginal and must be put into perspective with the primary and institutionalised violence of the system (which on top of that decides what is legal and not legal, what is violent and not violent, and uses the media to focus on the so-called violence of the militants). Capturing the attention of the media and obtaining their support is a determining factor for activism to convince public opinion and try to change the balance of power. Indeed, it is the media that make and break the image of the protesting collectives.

A minority of our respondents refuse any dialogue with law enforcement or public authorities because they no longer believe in fair deliberation in an unjust world. However, for some of them, maintaining a dialogue with the police is important. Several respondents denounced the radicalisation of the repression of protest movements, which is reflected in the over-equipment of the police as well as in the tactics deployed (i.e. pre-emptive arrest, “nassage” police trap during demonstrations) or the disproportionate use of violence by the police or the judiciary (i.e. gag procedures).

State violence has a varying effect among individuals. Depending on the intensity and duration of this exposure to public force, three outcomes could be observed through the narratives:

(1) an acceptance of the inequitable balance of power which implies the weighting of one's commitment or a revision of one's modes of action;

(2) an abandonment of militant action;

(3) a strengthening of one's determination in militant action to the point where one feels that one has nothing to lose anymore.

Recommendations

Based on those observations, we can formulate nine recommendations related to the three specific objectives of this work package; which are, for the record, (1) to assess how the CJAS organises its records with issues linked to radicalisation; (2) to describe the individual trajectories and penal episodes of individuals who have been characterised as radical by the Belgian public authorities; (3) to apprehend into discourses the concrete impact of the interactions between individuals characterised as radical and the CJAS.

Specific Objective 1. The Criminal justice administration system dealing with radicalisation

Each year, the Ministry of Home Affairs, based on a list offered by the Directorate of Administrative Police Operations of the federal police (DAO), approves a list of phenomena and groups whose activities represent a risk of disturbing public order (Mine *and all.* 2021).

This list allows, if necessary, to feed the table 'People and Groups to be monitored (PGP)' of the administrative police database (BEPAD). This act by the executive branch is not controlled by the legislative or judicial branches. It is an eminently political list. However, this inventory of groups and phenomena, and *a fortiori* of the individuals linked to them, can affect police work at the operational level. In fact, the literature has shown that the police act more according to the socio-political and ideological identity of the protesters than to their actions.

Recommendation 1. Provide democratic oversight, for example by the Federal Parliament, of the political choice made by the executive power when it annually validates the list of groups and phenomena to be monitored.

Several of the databases studied (e.g. PGP and the Common Databases) contain categories (e.g. "phenomenon", "potentially violent extremists") or subcategories (e.g. "nuisance and anti-social behaviour", "nuisances around train stations", "computer activism", "riots") of records that are either not defined or are too loosely defined. Such a state of affairs could lead to abuse.

Recommendation 2. Define categories and concepts more precisely and establish clear and precise criteria to justify the registration of a person in these databases. Such a definitional exercise should itself be the subject of reflection and democratic debate.

Currently, there is an increase in the number of users of database content as well as greater collaboration between them, which implies an increase in the exchange of information and potentially the replication of the same shared information in different recording systems. As a consequence, the fate of the information may escape the scrutiny of the initial data provider (i.e. the original source).

Recommendation 3. It is crucial to ensure the temporary and revocable nature of individual records in the database by monitoring the flow of data exchanges, by regularly evaluating the relevance of their retention, by guaranteeing the deletion of the information in all its destinations and by allowing the individuals to effectively exercise their right of access to the data recorded about them to request their correction or deletion .

The various criminal justice record systems that we studied were most often created for administrative or operational purposes. In some cases, the original purposes for processing the recorded information and data have evolved to meet certain new requirements in the field. However, it appears that there is little or no information on the outputs and outcomes of these recording systems that would allow us to assess their impact at both the organisational and societal levels.

Recommendation 4. Conduct an evaluation of the operation, outcomes, and impact of these registration systems both at the level of their users (e.g. relevance of the information exchanged) and at the level of the individuals, objects of the recording (e.g. the impacts on their professional and private life).

Specific Objective 2. The individual radical trajectories in the criminal justice administration system

In order to develop an integrated database to reconstruct the individual trajectories or criminal episodes of individuals involved in the phenomenon of radicalisation as conceived by public authorities, information from various databases in the CJAS was assembled in an attempt to

link records that were thought to belong to the same person. Such an attempt was made difficult by the lack of a unique identifier shared by all the database extracts that were accessed in the attempt to assemble this data. Indeed, although there is a special field in all the databases considered recording the national registry number, it is not systematically encoded, it is not necessarily available (e.g. foreigners without a residence permit), it is not necessarily well encoded or even consistent over time (e.g. change of sex of the person). Such an identifier should meet requirements of unique attribution to the individual (one identifier per person, and one person per identifier) and technical requirements to ensure a valid registration of this information (e.g. pre-structuring of the registration field, an obligation to complete it before continuing the encoding).

Recommendation 5. The recording of a unique identifier for individuals in criminal justice databases should be systematised to meet administrative, operational, and scientific purposes requiring the identification of individuals.

Conducting criminological studies from the databases of the CJAS remains difficult not only because of the complexity of the recording systems but also because of the procedures necessary to obtain access to the data. In order to guarantee the feasibility and sustainability of such studies, a structural solution is needed.

Recommendation 6. Make legal provision for the structural use of criminal justice databases for scientific, statistical, and historical purposes.

Specific Objective 3. The discourse of individuals dealing with the criminal justice administration system

The respondents share a divided vision of society in which the State, the media, the police forces, and other components that constitute society (political parties, unions, etc.) do not appear to be sufficiently legitimate, due to a series of recurring dysfunctions (corruption, violence, inconsistency, arbitrariness, etc.) and a lack of transparency in their actions. In many cases, such findings are a breeding ground for radical militant engagement. Beyond the duty to set an example, it is essential in a democratic society that political decision-makers be able to account for the effects of their decisions and actions. In this perspective, it therefore seems important, by virtue of the legislation on the publicity of the administration⁹, to improve public access to information held by the public authorities, particularly regarding deliberations and decisions concerning public action and the general interest of society. In addition, it is important to develop a culture of evaluation of public policies and their effects at all levels of government as well as within administrations to improve the efficacy, effectiveness and efficiency of public action.

Recommendation 7. Promote transparency and evaluation of public policies.

Those considered radical share a divided vision of society in which the State and its representatives do not appear sufficiently legitimate, due to the perception of a series of recurrent dysfunctions (corruption, violence, inconsistency, arbitrariness, etc.) and a lack of transparency in their actions or inaction.

⁹ Act of 11 April 1994 on the publicity of the administration and Act of 12 November 1997 on the publicity of the administration in the provinces and municipalities.

In many cases, these perceptions are a breeding ground for radical militant engagement. A first tool in the fight against radicalisation is therefore simply a stronger legitimacy of our democratic system. Radicalisation could thus be reduced through improved democratic functioning and compliance with legislation. Areas such as the fight against corruption or the transparency of government action could be further invested in this framework. In the same vein, the development of a culture of evaluation of public policies and of highlighting their effects would contribute to increasing the legitimacy of institutions, while offering opportunities to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and efficiency of public action. All these actions would increase the exemplarity of institutions and officials.

Beyond that, there is the question of the quality of democratic debate. This is an essential element in enabling everyone to express their views and to avoid feelings of exclusion or frustration which can lead to a rejection of the democratic system. In theory, the democratic system has the virtue of allowing the integration of divergent points of view, and it is essential that it continues to do so, to prevent these points of view from being expressed outside the democratic framework, or even against it.

Recommendation 8. Maintain funding and enhance the status of educational and psychosocial staff.

From the interviews conducted for this project, it appears that militant engagement disrupts the relational networks of individuals. The more people cut themselves off from the ideas of other people, the more they evolve in an ideologically homogeneous environment, the more likely they are to adopt a harder, even extreme, political position, which may lead them to legitimise the use of violence (Ognibene, 2021; Paulis and Ognibene, 2022). In order to avoid isolation, *l'entre-soi* and polarisation, structures that encourage listening and dialogue are needed. In this sense, it is essential to reinforce the subsidies of those services which have a linking role in the society (and in particular, in the CJAS) and to valorise the status of their personnel.

Recommendation 9. Promote a procedural justice:

The results of the interviews with radicals show nuanced views of law enforcement. The interventions that are perceived as unjust and/or disproportionate can contribute to the radicalisation of positions as well as to the legitimisation of the use of violence (whether to express discontent, to defend oneself, or to seek revenge), and, *a fortiori*, increase distrust of the state and its institutions. The results of the research on procedural justice must be taken into account and implemented both in police training and in its internal organisation, which aim in particular to ensure fairness in the resolution of disputes (e.g. by encouraging the dialogue with the population, avoiding the use of violence by police forces, enabling complaints to be made and ensuring that they are dealt with promptly and fairly).

5. DISSEMINATION AND VALORISATION

A wide variety of dissemination and valorisation activities were conducted within the FAR project. They were aiming at reaching out to three main publics: (1) scholars working on (de)radicalisation, (2) public authorities and stakeholders, (3) the wider public.

Towards the academic community, two main activities were conducted. First, from the very start of the project, meetings and discussions have been held with the other research projects

on (de)radicalisation financed by BELSPO within the BRAIN framework. In particular, we collaborated and exchanged with the projects CONRAD and AFFECT. Meetings were organised on June 26, 2017, and February 5, 2018. Further collaborations between researchers of the three projects were regularly held in the following months (meetings on February 27, 2019, and April 9, 2019). Convergences were especially present for the inventory of public initiatives for de-radicalisation (work package 1).

The second set of actions for the dissemination and valorisation of the FAR project among scholars was the participation to a series of conferences in Belgium and abroad, and the publications of a series of articles and papers (see list of publications in the next section). The most important conferences in which research papers from the FAR presented were the following:

DETRY Isabelle. The role of monitoring and evaluation methods on boosting the effectiveness of Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) measures, conference organised by Institut Egmont and Open Society, 10 December 2018

MINE Benjamin, JEUNIAUX Patrick, & DETRY Isabelle. Études des trajectoires individuelles sous l'angle des rapports entre Justice et Radicalisation. Egmont Institute, Brussels. Journée d'étude / Studiedag. Data Révolution et études du terrorisme en Belgique. Regards croisés entre praticiens et chercheurs / Data revolutie en terrorismestudies in België. Een gedachtewisseling tussen praktijk en onderzoek. Organisation: Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations & OCAD/OCAM, 14 June 2019 in

JAMINÉ Silke. Les dispositifs de contre-radicalisation au niveau local conference organized by Prof. Fabienne Brion, UC Louvain, 22 November 2019

OGNIBENE Marc. The bifurcated effect of perceived injustice on political violence justification: A mediation model, Annual Conference of the Flemish and Francophone Belgian Political Science Associations, Belgium: The State of Federation. Ghent University, 17 December 2020

MINE Benjamin, JEUNIAUX Patrick, & DETRY Isabelle. La récidive et les carrières criminelles des personnes condamnées pour terrorisme en Belgique. FAR webinar. Organisation: ULB, KU Leuven, NICC-INCC, 29 March 2021.

MINE Benjamin, JEUNIAUX Patrick & DETRY Isabelle. La récidive et les carrières criminelles des personnes condamnées pour terrorisme en Belgique, Webinar entitled "La récidive terroriste : Évaluation du risque et prise en charge – Recidivisme bij terroristen: risicobeoordeling en -beheer", organized by Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations and NICC-INCC, 27 May 2021.

MINE Benjamin. La récidive et les carrières criminelles des personnes condamnées pour terrorisme en Belgique, talk for the seminar : "Criminologie clinique" (clinical criminology). Organisation: LUC Robert, Université de Mons, 29 November 2021.

MINE Benjamin. La récidive et les carrières criminelles des personnes condamnées pour terrorisme en Belgique. Organisation: Groupe de travail Prisons et exécution de peines de la task force nationale, 7 December 2021.

JANSSENS, Lore. Seminar/presentation. Engaging with policymakers and practitioners: bring arguments across. Seminar series Ethnography, engaging the field, the public. KU Leuven, 14 December 2021.

JANSSENS, Lore & FADIL, Nadia. Le rôle du corps et des sentiments dans la gestion des dilemmes éthiques et la radicalisation. Internationaal colloquium : Au-delà du séparatisme et de la radicalisation. Penser les intensités religieuses et militantes en France et en Europe. Université de Strasbourg, 17-18 March 2022.

In addition, the FAR project has also organised its own events during the pandemic and the successive lockdowns. The goal was to maintain a link among members of the project, with the advisory committee and with colleagues working on related topics. A series of webinars was therefore organized to present the recent developments within the three work packages of the project. These were held (via Zoom) on 29 March 2021, 22 April 2021 and 20 May 2021.

Finally, Marco Ognibene has obtained his PhD at Université libre de Bruxelles on December 17, 2021, with a dissertation titled “The role of push, pull and personal factors in accepting political violence. From Individual to Network explanations” and based upon the survey data collected within the FAR project (work package 2).

Next to these dissemination and valorisation activities towards the academic community, members of the project have also been extremely attentive to creating a rich and constant dialogue with public authorities and stakeholders active in (de)radicalisation policies and initiatives. In particular, the first reports on the research axes that have been published (reports 1.1, 2.1 and 3.1 – see introduction) have been presented in events organised by public authorities or stakeholders: VVSG (Vereniging van Steden en Gemeenten), CUTA (Coordination Unit for the Threat Analysis), JINT (een uitwisseling tussen Europese jeugdwerkers die rond radicalisering werken), Réseau de prise en charge des extrémismes et radicalismes violents de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles (CAPREV), College of Public Prosecutors, Conference “Effecten van het (de)radicaliseringsbeleid” organized by Uit De Marge, Conference “Justice et Radicalisation” organized by Egmont Institute and CUTA.

Members of the INCC have also been involved in various groups set up by public authorities like the “Groupe de réflexion” of the SPF Justice on the use of the database for scientific, statistical and historical analysis, the “GT Prison-Exécution des peines Task Force Nationale” (Benjamin Mine), and the “Commission d’évaluation de l’application de la circulaire du Collège des Procureurs Généraux en matière de discrimination (COL 13/2013)” and the “working group on hate speech of the Cabinet of the Minister of Justice” (Isabelle Detry).

Since we still have a series of reports that have just been published in September 2022, our goal is to replicate the same strategy to disseminate of our project results to public authorities and stakeholders in the last months of 2022. Three policy briefs have been prepared for that and will be sent to relevant stakeholders. The final workshop of September 14th, 2022, has been a first step in that strategy.

Finally, towards the wider public, we have invested in a series of publications and interviews with newspapers or other publications (De Morgen, Apache, Le Soir, RTBF, Science Connection).

Final workshop

On September 14 of 2022, the follow-up committee was invited to a final workshop to discuss the latest results and the main conclusions of the joint project. This workshop was open to the public and a representant of the civil society was present (Fondation d'Egmont).

The workshop started with an introduction by Aziz Naji (BELSPO) on the specificities of BRAIN research program. Then, Corinne Torrekens (ULB) presented the objectives of FAR and its structure divided in three work packages. She also commented on how the different research adapted to the realities of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The researcher of the first work package (Nadia Fadil and Lore Janssen, KUL) presented the results of WP1, with more details provided for the latest two thematic reports of the WP:

- *“Tussen Grondrechten en Surveillantie. De neveneffecten van de strijd tegen radicalisering op Belgische moslims”*

- *“Radicalisation et secret professionnel”*

A Question-and-Answer session was open. Based on the recommendations, it is suggested to produce a ‘how-to-guide’ document that could help social workers on local grounds regarding the question of confidentiality. In that end, Aziz Naji suggested to contact the relevant public authorities through BELSPO. The question of trust between people and the public authorities was highlighted during the discussion. It is an element that stood out in the studies of the work package 1 (as a consequence of reporting someone as radicalised) but also of the work package 2’s surveys about the methods used by the police and in the interviews with radicalised people led by work package 3.

The researcher of the work package 2 (Jean-Benoit Pilet and Robin Lebrun, ULB) then presented the main findings of their two surveys. The two surveys aimed at examining citizens residing in Belgium were evaluating (a) the use of illegal and political actions by radical political groups and (b) the use of illegal actions by the police towards such radical political groups. The first survey, in 2019, was based upon a sample of 3000 citizens, representative of the Belgian population. The second survey, in 2022, was based upon a sample of 1500 citizens residing in Belgium and who self-identify as Muslim. The presentation during the workshop focused especially on the later survey.

During the Question-and-Answer session different comments were made. Regarding the second survey, a first observation was made on the necessity to clarify what the recruitment strategy was, considering the fact that the patronymic method let aside a whole part of the Belgian Muslim community (such as some converted ones or Caucasian Muslims). Also, the fact that the participants self-identified as Muslims could have led aside people from the Muslim community who do not identify as such. Then, a question on how the perception of socio-economic inequalities could be interpreted was raised. Researchers agreed that two ways of interpreting are open: “I am preoccupied by socio-economic inequalities in general” or “I am preoccupied by discrimination towards Muslim people”. Finally, researchers agreed to add a table on bivariate correlations between independent variables to check for non-collinearity.

Researchers of the work package 3 (Benjamin Mine, Isabelle Detry and Patrick Jeuniaux INCC) presented the results of the three reports produced within the WP (see above). During

Question-and-Answer session, two major observations were made. One on the importance to secure the database produced within WP3 on judicial records, the second on bias due to the recruitment strategy for interviews that was explicitly assumed.

Finally, Jean-Benoit Pilet concluded the discussion by acknowledging the support of BELSPO, the members of the follow-up committee and all the partners of the project.

The final report and final thematic reports produced by each work package were sent to all the members in advance.

Members of the follow-up committee validated the report and the discussions.

6. PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviews

- DETRY, I., MINE, B., JEUNIAUX, P. (2019), « Revue des études empiriques concernant la radicalisation et la justice », *Revue internationale de criminologie et de police technique et scientifique* Vol. LXXII, 280-292.
<https://www.polymedia.ch/fr/revue-des-etudes-empiriques-concernant-la-radicalisation-et-la-justice/>
- DETRY, I., MINE, B., JEUNIAUX, P. (2020), « Les Banques de Données Communes dans la lutte contre le terrorisme et l'extrémisme (potentiellement) violent », *Revue du Droit des Technologies de l'Information*, 80, pp. 47-75.
https://www.docs-crids.eu/index.php?lvl=notice_display&id=39434
- JAMINÉ, S.; FADIL, N. (2020) "Tussen Preventie en Veiligheid. De Belgische aanpak in de strijd tegen radicalisering" in *Science Connection*, nr. 62, April-Mei, pp. 4-7
- DETRY, I., MINE, B., JEUNIAUX, P. (2021), « Les banques de données communes dans la lutte contre le terrorisme », *Justice en ligne* [en ligne], URL : <https://www.justice-en-ligne.be/Les-banques-de-donnees-communes>.
- JONCKHEERE, A., MINE, B., DETRY, I. & JEUNIAUX, P. (2021), « Travail social en justice et terrorisme », *Criminologie*, 54 (2), pp. 321-345.
<https://www.erudit.org/fr/revues/crimino/2021-v54-n2-crimino06596/1084299ar/>.
- MINE, B., JEUNIAUX, P., DETRY, I. (2021), « Description et mise en perspective des données de police administrative relatives aux personnes, groupements et phénomènes à suivre », *Revue de droit pénal et de criminologie*, 6, pp. 607-633.
<https://www.jurisquare.be/fr/journal/rdpc/2021-6/chronique-de-criminologie-description-et-mise-en-perspective-des-donnees-de-police-administrative-re/>
- MINE, B., JEUNIAUX, P., DETRY, I. (2021), « La récidive et les carrières criminelles des personnes condamnées pour terrorisme en Belgique », in B. MINE, *La récidive et les carrières criminelles en Belgique*, Col. Les Cahiers du Groupe d'Études sur les Politiques de Sécurité, Politeia, Bruxelles, pp. 117-160.
<https://politeia.be/fr/publications/276892-la+recidive+et+les+carrieres+criminelles+en+belgique+papier+sans+abonnement>
t.

- OGNIBENE M. (2022) Between “love” and “hate”. How ingroup favouritism and outgroup derogation explain the acceptance of political violence: an experimental study. *Terrorism and Political Violence*.
- MINE, B., JONCKHEERE, A., JEUNIAUX, P. & DETRY, I. (2022a), « Des dossiers (pas) comme les autres. L’accompagnement socio-judiciaire des dossiers de terrorisme en Belgique francophone », *Champ pénal, / Penal field, nouvelle revue internationale de criminologie* 27.

FR : <https://journals.openedition.org/champpenal/13583>

EN : <https://journals.openedition.org/champpenal/13658>

Press

- De Morgen (19/09/2019): [“Strijd tegen radicalisering mist doel”: studie uit kritische bedenkingen bij ‘deradicaliseringsindustrie’](#)
- De Morgen (19/09/2019): [“De overheid bereikt wat ze wil bestrijden”: onderzoekers over het tijdperk van radicalisering](#)
- Le Soir (03/10/2019) [Le rôle ambigu des référents radicalisme dans les communes](#)
- Mo Magazine (30/11/2020) [Strijd tegen “politieke islam” creëert een monster dat overal en nergens is](#)
- BELSPO Science Connection, Nr. 62 : [Tussen preventie en veiligheid De Belgische aanpak in de strijd tegen radicalisering](#)

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- Detry I., Mine B. and Jeuniaux P. (2021c), *La radicalisation au prisme des banques de données. Addendum Note complémentaire relative aux directives sur la gestion de l'information policière*, Institut National de Criminalistique et de Criminologie, Direction Opérationnelle Criminologie, Collection des rapports et notes de recherche, 4p.
- Detry I., Mine B. and Jeuniaux P. (2021d), *Radicalisering vanuit de invalshoek van databanken. Addendum: Aanvullende nota over de richtlijnen betreffende het beheer van politionele informatie*, National Instituut voor Criminalistiek en Criminologie, Operationele Directie Criminologie, Collectie van de onderzoek rapporten et notas, 4 p.
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ANNEX – LIST OF THEMATIC REPORTS PUBLISHED WITHIN THE THREE WPs OF THE FAR PROJECT

Report WP1.1 JAMINÉ S., FADIL N. (2019), Between prevention and security. The Belgian approach in the fight against radicalisation. Report. Faculty of Social Sciences.

NL: http://www.belspo.be/belspo/brain-be/projects/FinalReports/FAR_FinRep_nl.pdf

FR: http://www.belspo.be/belspo/brain-be/projects/FinalReports/FAR_FinRep_fr.pdf

Report WP1.2 Between confidentiality and information sharing (September 2022)

NL: <https://soc.kuleuven.be/anthropology/files/FARapport2-web-NL>

FR: <https://soc.kuleuven.be/anthropology/files/FARapport2-web-FR>

Report WP1.3 Between fundamental rights and monitoring (September 2022)

NL: <https://soc.kuleuven.be/anthropology/files/FARapport3-web-NL>

FR: <https://soc.kuleuven.be/anthropology/files/FARapport3-web-FR>

Report WP2.1 The attitudes of Belgian citizens towards the use of illegal and violent actions for political purposes (March 2020)

NL:
https://dipot.ulb.ac.be/dspace/bitstream/2013/349224/3/Pilet_Torreken_Ognibene_NL.pdf

FR:
https://dipot.ulb.ac.be/dspace/bitstream/2013/349223/3/Pilet_Torreken_Ognibene_FR.pdf

Report WP2.2 The attitudes of Belgian residents who self-identify as Muslims towards the use of illegal and violent actions for political purposes (September 2022 – provisional version)

FR: <http://hdl.handle.net/2013/ULB-DIPOT:oai:dipot.ulb.ac.be:2013/350607>

NL: <http://hdl.handle.net/2013/ULB-DIPOT:oai:dipot.ulb.ac.be:2013/350608>

Report WP3.1. DETRY, I., MINE, B., JEUNIAUX, P. (2021a), La radicalisation au prisme des bases de données Rapport de recherche, Institut National de Criminalistique et de Criminologie, Direction Opérationnelle de Criminologie, Collection des rapports et notes de recherche, n° 47, 76 p.

FR: <https://incc.fgov.be/la-radicalisation-au-prisme-des-banques-de-donnees>

NL: <https://nicc.fgov.be/radicalisering-vanuit-de-invalshoek-van-databanken>

FR: https://nicc.fgov.be/upload/publicaties/detry_et_al_2021_bd_radicalisation_fr_addendum.pdf

NL: https://nicc.fgov.be/upload/publicaties/detry_et_al_2021_bd_radicalisering_nl_adendum.pdf

Report WP3.2. JEUNIAUX, P., MINE, B. & DETRY, I. (to be published in the last quarter of 2022). Études des trajectoires individuelles et de la radicalisation vues sous l'angle des bases de données de la justice pénale. Rapport de recherche de l'Institut National de Criminalistique et de Criminologie, Direction Opérationnelle Criminologie, Collection des rapports et notes de recherche.

Report WP3.3. MINE, B., JEUNIAUX, P., & DETRY, I. (September 2022). La radicalité verbalisée. Analyse du discours de personnes radicales à propos de leur engagement pouvant mener à la légitimation et/ou à l'usage de la violence. Rapport de recherche de l'Institut National de Criminalistique et de Criminologie, Direction Opérationnelle Criminologie, Collection des rapports et notes de recherche.

FR : <https://incc.fgov.be/la-radicalite-verbalisee>