



Are inequalities the root cause of violent extremism?

Assessing the research evidence

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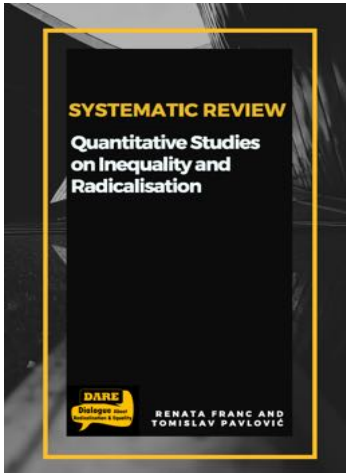


INTRODUCTION

- Presumption: **inequality** is positively related to **radicalisation**
 - Inequality = unbalanced distribution of economic, social, political 'goods'/opportunities across individuals or groups within a society (or globally)
 - Radicalisation = process by which individuals or groups come to embrace attitudes or engage in actions that support violence in the pursuit of extremist causes
- Multiple causal factors play a role in radicalisation, often categorised as:
 - broad grievances that '**push**' individuals toward a radical ideology;
 - more specific '**pull**' factors that attract them.
- These factors work at 3 levels: **structural** (macro); **group** (meso); and **individual** (micro).
- '**Root**' causes are those that work at the **structural** level.



DARE: Systematic review of research findings



http://www.dare-h2020.org/uploads/1/2/1/7/12176018/systematic_review_final.pdf

Inequality is identified in models of radicalisation as a ‘**push**’ factor working at the **structural level** to drive violent extremism

But what does empirical evidence tell us about the role of inequality in driving violent extremism?

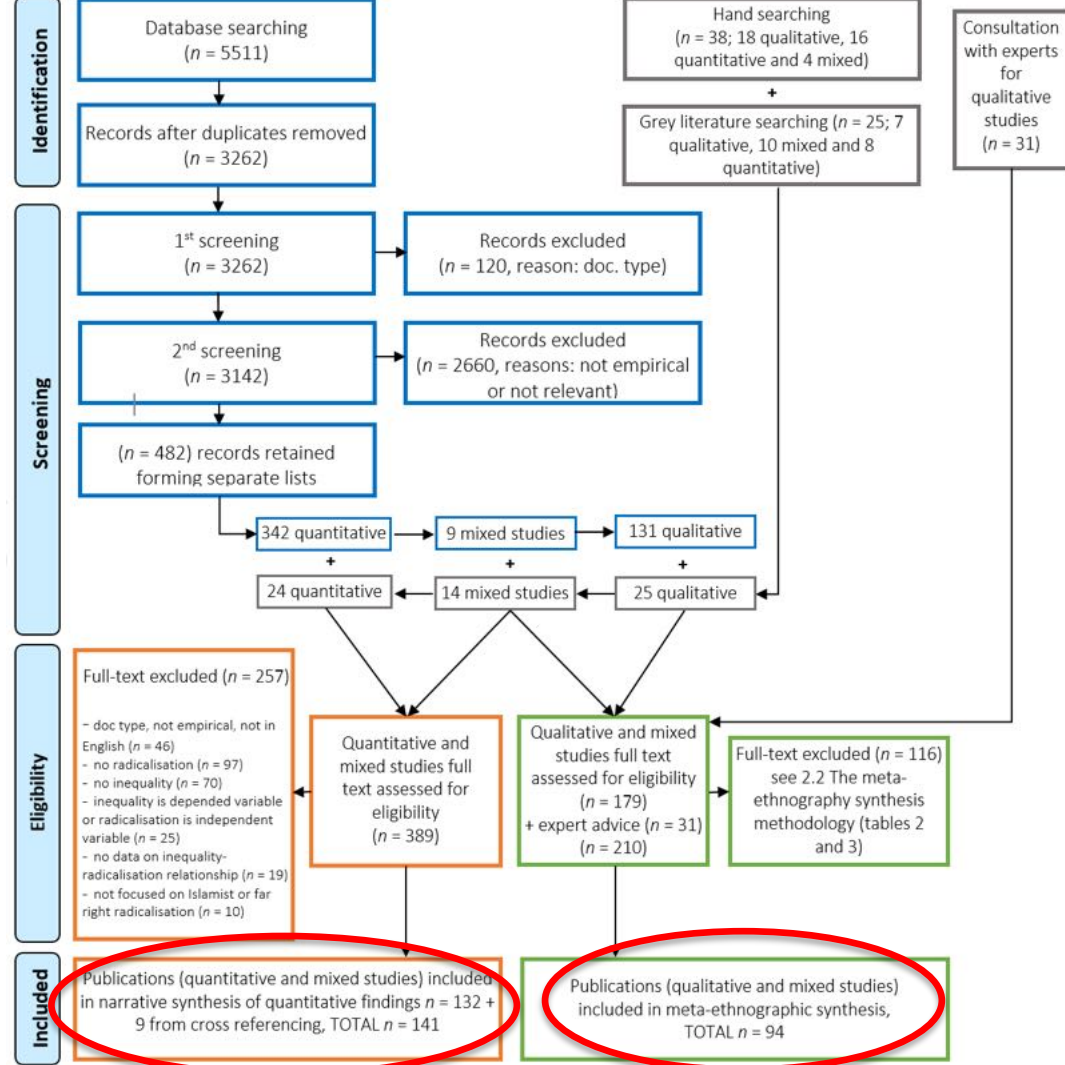
- ❑ In a systematic review of studies to date, DARE asked:
 - ❑ *Is inequality associated with radicalisation?*
 - ❑ *If so, how (positively or negatively), when, where and what can explain this association?*



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Flowchart of the literature search

- ✓ Data sources:
 - ✓ 7 well-known databases
 - ✓ Grey literature
 - ✓ Expert consultation
- ✓ EMPIRICAL studies
- ✓ Relevant to both radicalisation and inequality
- ✓ 1 January 2001 - 31 December 2017
- ✓ In English
- ✓ **Total texts analysed = 141**
(quantitative studies) + 94
(qualitative studies)





FINDINGS - INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

Objective: *education, income, living in poverty*

Subjective: *income dissatisfaction, poverty*

do not consistently predict radicalisation

IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT? **Islamist behavioural radicalisation**

predominantly Muslim countries

Inconsistent findings or more educated individuals

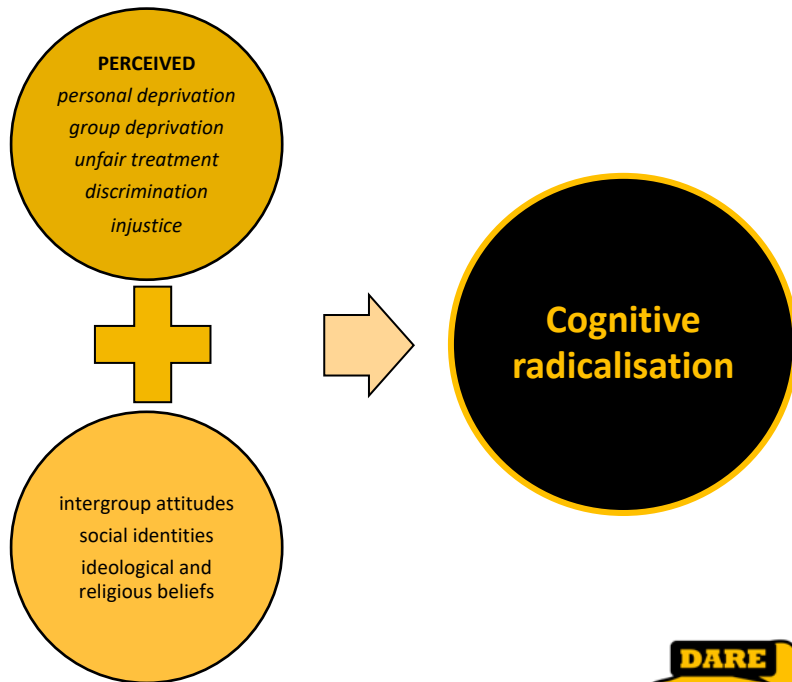
Western European countries

Less educated and those of a lower economic status

- Low number of studies
- Role in the terrorist group
- Participation in violence
- Type of violence! (e.g., against humans or objects)
- Contextual characteristics such as poverty at an individual and district level

...should also be taken into account.

SOCIO-POLITICAL INEQUALITY



- ✓ positive relationship between **PERCEIVED** (subjective) social inequality and cognitive radicalisation
- ✓ probably indirect

Regardless of the ideological orientation of radicalisation (Islamist or far-right) and context!



FINDINGS - SOCIAL LEVEL

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

- **economic development:**

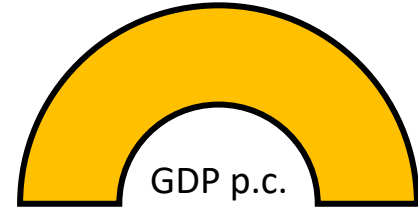
- GDP p.c.
- HDI
- Ad...acy
- employment rates
- education level

do not consistently linearly predict radicalisation

- **Economic distribution**

- GINI
- Poverty
- Interregional inequality

However...



Low number of studies!

transnational terrorism

domestic terrorism



SOCIO-POLITICAL INEQUALITY

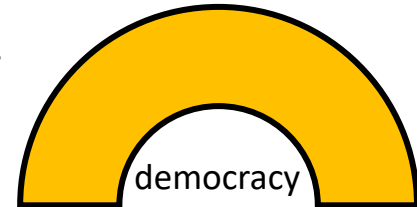
- abuse of physical integrity rights
- repression

more terrorism

- democracy
- civil rights
- liberties
- women's rights

do not consistently linearly predict radicalisation

However...



Qualitative studies: reversing the relationship...

- Inequality produces radicalisation but the focus on radicalisation also produces inequality through injustice/discrimination.
- Reducing social issues faced by specific communities to the problem of radicalisation may strengthen their identity positions, making them even more vulnerable to radicalisation.
- **Inequality and radicalisation are co-constructed phenomena.**



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CONCLUSIONS

- ✓ **Inequality, especially socio-political inequality is most probably related to radicalisation.**

However,...

- the complexity of inequality-radicalisation relationship
 - the limitations of the evidence base
 - the limitations **all conclusions remain provisional**
 - the limitations of applied statistical procedures
- ...should be taken into account!



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Thank You

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