Why do European States differ in their

Counterterrorism Strategies towards Radicalization

The cases of Austria, Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom

By

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Author's declaration:

I, the undersigned _____Atanaska Metodieva_____ hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where proper acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted as part of the requirements of any other academic degree or non-degree program, in English or in any other language. This is a true copy of the thesis, including final revisions.

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ABSTRACT

Referring to the Paris 2015 and Brussels 2016 attacks the increasing number of terrorist activities on European soil testifies that radicalization remains a serious threat to European security. Since every country has developed its own policy in this field, the differences in counterterrorism approaches establish a security gap at the European level. The present thesis seeks to explore why European states differ in their counterterrorism approaches towards the Islamic State. I will argue that there are three factors: a type of radicalization, strategic culture, and a type of resources that particularly matter with respect to counterterrorism strategies. The methodological strategy of my analysis is focused on a comparative analysis of four study cases: Austria, Belgium, The United Kingdom and Germany. The research identified that these countries face relatively similar threat concerning radicalization. However, they respond differently depending on resources that they have as well as the distribution of counterterrorism tasks between police and intelligence.

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Table of Contents

ABSTRACT ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii
Table of Contents iv
List of Tables v
Introduction 1
Chapter 1 - Conceptual and Theoretical Framework 4
1.1. Radicalization as a Threat 5
1.2. Radicalization and Counterterrorism 6
Chapter 2 – Methodology 8
Chapter 3 – A Map of Terrorist Events 11
Chapter 4 – Type of Radicalization 19
Chapter 5 – Strategic Culture 25
Chapter 6 – Type of Resources 30
Chapter 7 – Comparative Analysis 33
7.1. Type of Radicalization - Analysis 33
7.2. Strategic Culture – Analysis 35
7.3. Type of Resources – Analysis 36
Chapter 8 – Analysis of Interviews 37
8.2. Strategic Culture 37
8.1. Type of Radicalization 37
8.3. Type of Resources 41
Conclusion 44
Reference List 46

List of Tables

Table 1. Terrorist and extremist incidents in Austria between 2011 and 2016 12

Table 2. Terrorist and extremist incidents in Belgium between 2011 and 2016 14

Table 3. Terrorist and extremist incidents in Germany between 2011 and 2016 16

Table 4. Terrorist and extremist incidents in the United Kingdom between 2011 and 2016 18

Table 5. Type of Radicalization, Strategic Culture, and Type of Resources in Austria, Belgium, Germany and the UK 33

Table 6. Foreign Fighters produced by countries 2011-2015 34

Introduction

Radicalization in Europe became a central issue of counterterrorism policies after the attacks of 9/11. Referring to the Paris 2015 and Brussels 2016 attacks fifteen years later, the increasing number of terrorist activities on European soil testifies that radicalization remains a serious threat to European security. More than 6000 European jihadists have left to Syria since the outbreak of the war in 2011 (ICSR Report 2015). Moreover, their European citizenship allows them to return to the countries that they originally came from or move freely across other EU Member States. Consequently, they create substantial challenges to national counterterrorism strategies. Since every country has developed its own policy in this field, the differences in counterterrorism approaches establish a security gap at the European level.

The present thesis intends to reply the following **research question:** "Why do European states differ in their counterterrorism strategies towards radicalization?" The purpose of the thesis is to identify differences and similarities in the current counterterrorism approaches at an empirical level. The thesis is focused on one particular form of radicalization discussed in the literature, namely the emergence of radical political Islam.

Existing research has already discussed radicalization as a security issue, as several waves of terrorism analysis may be distinguished. Since 9/11 many studies examined the emergence of homegrown terrorism in Europe. After the London attacks of 2005 counterterrorism literature focused not only on radicalization but also counter-radicalization strategies that have been established by most Western European countries (Sedgwick 2010). The recent development of academic literature has been fueled by the emergence of ISIS and the current threat of jihadi terrorism to European security. As the point of interest refers to the variety of patterns of homegrown radicalization, a growing number of studies investigate the

different dimensions of terrorist threat within Europe (Art and Richardson 2007, Coolsaet 2011). The existing body of literature is devoted to research of the roots of radicalization within Europe by looking mainly at immigration policies and failed integration (Nesser 2015). Previous research in counterterrorism policies is predominantly focused on a national analysis. However, the comparative analysis of the current European counterterrorism approaches is insufficient (Coolsaet 2011, Foley 2013, Karin von Hippel 2005).

My contribution to the counterterrorism framework will be to examine the different patterns of Germany, the UK, Austria and Belgium in regard to the radicalization by using the lenses of comparative analysis. Each of the strategies selected for the goals of the thesis have been discussed separately in the literature. However, they have not been analyzed comparatively. Furthermore, the thesis will contribute to the broader academic debate whether EU states should predominantly rely on their national strategies or they should have a common basis for more comprehensive approach at the European level.

I will argue that EU countries differ in their counterterrorism approaches highly depending on three factors: a type of radicalization, strategic culture, and a type of resources. I expect that countries with a high potential of radicalization but fewer resources rely mainly on reactive measures referring to a "criminal investigation" approach, whereas states with a high potential of radicalization and more resources are proactive in their counterterrorism measures.

The methodological strategy is focused on a comparative analysis of four study cases: Austria, Belgium, The United Kingdom and Germany. This selection is a result of preliminary research, which showed that these four countries have a high level of radicalization in their societies (ICSR Report 2015). The research employs a combination of independent variables: Type of Radicalization, Strategic Culture and Type of Resources. The

relationship between the three factors will be measured in terms of their effect on political outcomes.

The overall research design is based on a combination of qualitative methods, including an empirical analysis of sources and semi-structured interviews with experts. Empirically, a wide variety of primary sources will be examined including media coverage, official reports, and national counterterrorism strategies. The thesis will rely on quantitative data such as a number of radicalized EU citizens/foreign fighters, a number of identified terrorist cells, and a number of prevented/conducted attacks. In order to verify my findings, I interviewed researchers from the examined countries relying on their local insights, expertise, observations and access to information. Interviews are aimed to confirm, support of reject my main hypotheses concerning a type of radicalization, strategic culture, and a type of resources.

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter One includes a review of existing research, basic concepts derived from previous analyses of radicalization and counter-radicalization. It discusses radicalization as a security issue in a sense of "homegrown" terrorism threat as well as the essentials of counterterrorism practices in Europe. Chapter Two is devoted to the methodological strategy employed for the goals of the thesis. Chapter Three maps the terrorism threats that the four countries face concerning recent terrorism incidents, identified terrorism cells, and foreign fighters. Chapters Four to Six investigate the role of independent variables, namely a type of radicalization, strategic culture and a type of resources. Chapter Seven analyzes the four case studies comparatively and evaluates to what extent independent variables affect the counterterrorism strategies. Chapter Eight summarizes the interviews with experts conducted for the goals of the thesis followed by findings in the conclusion.

Chapter 1 - Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

In this chapter I review the existing research on radicalization which has been defined as a threat in the counterterrorism literature. For this purpose I explore the conceptual link between radicalization and terrorism. Radicalization as a central issue of counterterrorism policies in Europe has been considered a typical European phenomenon. After 9/11 the academic debate in Europe has been dominated by questions concerning the roots of radicalization, and more specifically what prompts individuals to become terrorists (Coolsaet 2011). For the goals of my research the term "radicalization" refers to the expression of extreme ideas, on the one hand, and on the other, to violence in a sense that people act in accordance with what they say (Sageman 2011). Terrorism shall be understood as the consequence of individual or small group dynamics turning political radicalization into violent actions (Coolsaet 2011). The thesis is focused on one particular form of radicalization discussed in the literature, namely the emergence of radical political Islam.

Today jihadi terrorism has reached its peak with the rise of the Islamic State (ISIS). On European soil its basis is made of individuals or small groups that use religious discourse in order to justify terrorist activities. Referring to the theory of the "waves of terrorism" (Rapoport 2004) the current wave of jihadi terrorism begun around 1979 with the Iranian revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan that led to the jihad in that country (Pillar 2011). At the same time Islam in Europe has progressively started to affirm itself (Coolsaet 2011).

1.1. Radicalization as a Threat

Many authors have attempted to define the scope of a threat originated from religious radicalization. Identifying the threat is crucial for each counterterrorism policy. The academic debate devoted to jihadi radicalization as a threat is important with regards to the priority that policy-makers give to counterterrorism strategies and the resources that they are willing to allocate to the purpose (Pillar 2011). The fundamental challenge with respect to counterterrorism is that there is no one single profile of radicalization. The conventional image of an European citizen who has been long established in Europe – either born here or came at a young age (Roy 2011, in Coolsaet) does not seem to be fully applicable to the real terrorism threat since radicalized individuals arise from different social backgrounds.

The direct link between radicalization within Europe and terrorism has been broadly discussed in the counterterrorism literature. On the one hand, radicalization might not necessarily transform in terrorism. On the other hand, we can virtually see how radicalization is an essential in the process leading to violent actions. Referring to its goals to "mobilize followers and legitimize the use of violence in terms of religious principles", jihadi terrorism has been seen as the most dangerous form of "religious" radicalization (Crenshaw 2011, 57). Moreover, its supporters are driven not by their religious belief but also by the idea of world dominance, and consequently they are considered religious fanatics (Crenshaw 2011).

Politically, jihadi terrorism emerged as a threat in Europe at the beginning of the 90s (Bakker 2009). However, before 9/11 the threat at a political level was more often "underestimated, overlooked and misunderstood" (Bakker 2009, 131). Prior to the terrorist attacks in Madrid (2004) the possibility jihadi terrorists to attack Europe, was not widely spread. Moreover, the threat of jihadi terrorism coming from radicalized individuals within Europe was not seriously taken into consideration in the decision-making process before the

2005 attacks on the London underground (Bakker 2009). Since then the terror threat within Europe was increasingly seen as a homegrown challenge. Furthermore, the homegrown terrorism has been considered a threat due to its decentralization allowing the diffusion of terrorist attacks (Pillar 2011). Pillar emphasizes that the security task is not just to deal with established terrorist groups but to identify dangerous radicals: "the atomization of jihadi terrorism, to the point of having to worry about lone individuals being inspired to resort to violence, has made that challenge greater than ever (Pillar, in Coolsaet 2011, p 15)."

1.2. Radicalization and Counterterrorism

Counterterrorism policies differ depending on how governments understand radicalization. There are two underlying theoretical approaches that can be distinguished in the literature: "leader-led jihad" or "top-down" (Hoffman 2002) and "leaderless jihad" or "bottom-up" (Sageman 2004). According to the Hoffman's "top-down" approach terrorist attacks in Europe appear as a result of a terrorist organization's strategy. The leadership of organization is responsible to provide individuals with terrorist tasks (Nesser 2015). The alternative Sageman's "bottom-up" approach describes the threat as originated from social networks and communities. According to this model, individuals are inspired by the ideology of the organization but their actions are not necessarily under direct control of the terrorist group (Nesser 2015). Following these patterns, counterterrorism policies have shifted from "top-down" to "bottom-up" approach due to changes in threat. Previously, they were aimed to address the leadership of a terrorist organization, whereas today's threat comes from social circles and "influencers" who incite individuals to become violent (Olidort 2016).

In recent research terrorism has been seen more as a domestic issue than an external threat (Coolsaet 2011). It has become a domestic issue since terrorist attacks on European soil were conducted. Nowadays national level is considered to be the primary level for counterterrorism actions (Coolsaet 2011). Consequently, counterterrorism literature is predominantly nationally orientated following the national patterns of policy-making.

However, due to its "event-driven" nature, national counterterrorism policies often fail to address the threat of radicalization properly (Coolsaet 2011, 227). Since they have been derived from terrorist events, they have been criticized in the literature due to the "great haste and the lack of overall design" (Coolsaet 2011, 228). Furthermore, the impossibility of implementation of "a one size fits all" deradicalization approach (Coolsaet 2011, 240) creates a security gap at the European level. Due to the cultural differences among European countries radicalization has been seen differently more as a political or as a religious issue. Consequently, the "multifaceted" variations of the definition do not result in efficient overall strategy at the European level (Coolsaet 2011, 240). Consequently, the framework diversity leads to different counterterrorism policies.

The review of the existing research showed that counterterrorism literature which is mainly focused on a national analysis due to the understanding that radicalization is a domestic issue. Furthermore, European countries differ in their counterterrorism approaches depending on how they define radicalization. My contribution to the counterterrorism framework will be to examine the different patterns of Germany, the UK, Austria and Belgium with respect to radicalization as a threat by using the lenses of comparative analysis. In addition, the thesis will contribute to the broader academic debate whether European states should mostly rely on their national strategies or within these strategies they should look for more comprehensive approach at the European level.

Chapter 2 – Methodology

The method of this thesis is case study. I investigate four case studies of European countries with a high level of radicalization. These are the cases of Austria, Belgium, The United Kingdom and Germany. Due to the rapid emergence of radicalization in recent years, the thesis is focused on the counterterrorism efforts of the examined countries in the period between 2011 and 2016.

The overall research design is based on a combination of qualitative methods, including an empirical analysis of primary sources, a comparative analysis, and semi-structured interviews with experts. These methods are relevant for the goals of the thesis for two reasons. First, the qualitative approach will allow analyzing the national counterterrorism strategies from various perspectives. Second, quantitative data employed at an empirical level will allow their objective comparison and evaluation.

With respect to the **empirical analysis**, the thesis will examine a wide variety of sources such as media coverage of terrorist plots, national counterterrorism strategies and official reports. Although media sources have often been thought to be inaccurate, the news coverage of terrorist activities is an important tool in the overall research as it provides information derived from political statements, official documents and intelligence reports.

Furthermore, the thesis employs a **comparative analysis** in order to identify similarities and differences in the selected countries' counterterrorism policies. I explore three components which I consider influential in regards to counterterrorism: Type of Radicalization, Type of Resources, and Strategic Culture. The relationship between these factors will be measured in terms of their effect on political outcomes. Concerning a type of radicalization, I look at the radicalization profile of each country. In terms of resources I

distinguish between two groups: big size countries (Germany, the UK) relying on more resources and small size countries (Belgium and Austria) relying on less amount of resources such as budget, a number of experts, and intelligence capacity. Strategic culture refers to how counterterrorism tasks are given and distributed among the institutions in each state.

At last, the thesis employs **semi-structured interviews** with experts. I conducted interviews with three experts in counterterrorism from the examined countries. I interviewed researchers from the countries examined due to their local insights, observations and access to information. Interviews have been aimed to verify, support of reject my main hypotheses concerning Type of Radicalization, Type of Strategic Culture, and Type of Resources.

Experts' introduction:

Nicolas Stockhammer is a senior post-doc researcher at the University of Vienna and the Austrian National Defence Academy. His professional interests are related to terrorism, counterterrorism and national security.

Pieter Van Ostaeyen is an independent researcher and historian on current affairs in the Middle East. He maintains a blog devoted to the Islamic State's activities trying to provide an objective view on international Jihad.

Anthony Glees is a professor of Politics at the University of Buckingham and directs its Centre for Security and Intelligence Studies. He is a specialist in Security and Intelligence issues including the history of British intelligence, the Stasi, Islamism, terrorism and counterterrorism.

Data gathering:

For the purpose of this thesis I have followed a certain pattern of data gathering. First, data from media has been collected on terrorist incidents in Europe, including conducted and prevented terrorist attacks as well as number of cells and plots that have been reported in media. In addition, official reports and strategy documents were collected from websites of national and international institutions. Various reliable overviews of terrorist incidents were researched such as the Global Terrorism Database, EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Reports of Europol as well as Counter-Extremism Country Reports. The thesis relies on data about radicalized citizens, identified terrorist cells, and conducted or prevented attacks within each country. Since the available information about terrorism events is by definition incomplete, I combine different indicators, check the consistency between them and interpret them in order to provide an adequate factual basis for analysis. However, there is one serious limitation – we cannot assess the exact number of supporters who are radicalized but are not implicated in terrorist activities. At last, I take into account that every source can be potentially biased. In order to avoid such a risk, I tried to employ each source critically.

Chapter 3 – A Map of Terrorist Events

This chapter maps terrorism events between 2011 and 2016 in the four countries which are in the focus of this thesis. For this purpose national reports of Counter Extremism Project and annual reports of Europol have been researched. The available data is summarized by country and refers to foreign fighters, terrorist attacks, and major extremist and terrorist incidents.

Austria has not had an experience with major terrorist attacks between 2011 and 2016. There has not been a distinctive homegrown Islamic group (Austria: Extremism & Counter-Extremism 2016). However, it is among the European countries with identified processes of Islamic extremism on its territory. In 2014 the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counterterrorism (BVT) states: "Religiously motivated extremism and terrorism, above all of Islamic character… present a great potential threat" to Austria (cited in Austria: Extremism & Counter-Extremism 2016). Various media sources describe Austria as a "hub for European jihadists" used by individuals related to terrorist groups as a middle station before leaving for Syria through the Balkans (The Local, Gatestone Institute 2014). Others emphasize the support for terrorist organizations such as Hamas and ISIS coming from Muslims in Austria (The Long War Journal 2014). In regards to foreign fighters, up to now, around 260 Austrian citizens are believed to join the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, including 80 who have presumably returned to Austria (BTV, Report 2015). Individuals who have been thought to be affiliated to ISIS mainly come from the Caucasus region, but a large part of them were Bosnian and Turkish-born (The Local). All recent reports of BVT between 2012 and 2015 suggest the number of Austrian foreign fighters has increased.

Table 1. Terrorist and extremist incidents in Austria between 2011 and 2016[1]

Data	**Incident**
August 21, 2014	Nine Chechens were arrested by Austrian police on suspicion of planning to join the ranks of ISIS in Syria (BBC).
October 29, 2014	A 14-year-old boy was charged with planning major terrorist attack. The suspect with an Austrian citizenship and Turkish origin confessed he had planned to attack the Westbahnhof train station in Vienna. According to media reports, the boy was in connection with ISIS members (The Local).
November 28, 2014	About 900 police raided mosques, prayer rooms and homes in Vienna, Linzafter and Graz. As a part of two-year investigation the police arrested 13 individuals suspected of for recruiting for terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria (Daily Mail).
December 10, 2014	An Austrian citizen with Bosnian roots Mirsad Omerovic (Ebu Tejma) was arrested on suspicion of recruiting more than 150 individuals across Europe to join ISIS (The Local)
December 10, 2015	Two men suspected in links to ISIS were arrested at refugee shelter in Salzburg. They were thought by the Austrian police to have ties to the November 2015 attacks in Paris (BBC).

Source: Counter Extremism Project 2016

[1] In the four following tables in this Chapter I summarize data gathered by Counter Extremism Project 2016 in order to reflect the terrorist incidents in the four countries. The information is used with changes in original texts.

Belgium has the most recent experience of terrorist act conducted on its territory. In March 2016 a series of terrorist attacks were conducted in Belgium causing the death of 32 civilians and an injury of at least 200 more. The attacks, claimed by ISIS, came days after Belgian police captured Salah Abdeslam. According to the official information, he was directly implicated in the ISIS attacks in Paris in November 2015, which led to the death of 130 civilians and an injury of 350 more.

With respect to radicalization, Belgium is struggling to deal with various active networks. The Brussels' suburb of Molenbeek is considered a centre of extremism supplying terrorist groups with foreign fighters as well as easily distributed weapons. The country exports the highest number of foreign fighters among the European states. It has produced 40 jihadists per million citizens who have joined the ranks of ISIS in Syria and Iraq (ICSR 2015). The number of Belgians who have been thought to be active in the Middle East has increased to 553 (Peter Van Ostaeyen's website 2015). Referring to the Muslim population of approximately 640 000 people, it means that one per 1159 has been involved in military activities in Iraq and Syria. According to Peter Van Ostaeyen's blog, about 75% of the known Belgian fighters are affiliated with the Islamic State.

Table 2. Terrorist and extremist incidents in Belgium between 2011 and 2016

Data	**Incident**
May 24, 2014	A gunman attacked the Jewish Museum in Brussels killing four people. The suspect is a French citizen and ex-ISIS fighter (Guardian).
January 7, 2015	The French satiric magazine Charlie Hebdo was attacked by Said and Cherif Kouachi. The two brothers grew in France and subsequently were radicalized. A few days later Amedy Coulibaly killed a policeman and hostages at a kosher supermarket. In both cases the weapons were bought from a dealer in Brussels (Guardian).
August 21, 2015	An armed assault took place on a train between Belgium and France. The suspect Ayoub El Khazzani intended to conduct a terrorist attack. He opened fire and injured 4 people but later was kept by Belgian police. In 2014 he reportedly traveled to Syria (Telegraph).
November 13, 2015	A series of gun and bombing attacks were conducted in Paris leaving 130 people dead and more than 100 others in a critical condition. The terrorist attacks were coordinated by a Belgian ISIS fighter Abdelhamid Abaaoud (Telegraph).
March 22, 2016	A series of explosions took place in Brussels killing 31 civilians and wounding 300. The assaults were conducted by brothers Ibrahim and Khalid el-Bakraoui. The attack was claimed by ISIS (Guardian).

Source: Counter Extremism Project 2016

Germany has been considered a target of terrorism even though it has not had recent terrorist incidents like Belgium. Since 2014 Jihadi terrorism has represented an increasing threat to national security according to the official statements of the Federal Criminal Police (BKA). The threat is defined as possible attacks conducted by radicalized individuals or small groups (BKA, November 2014). In June 2016 four suspected ISIS members were arrested accused of preparing a terror attack on German soil (Independent 2016).

In regards to homegrown radicalization, according to BKA, there are 43 000 Islamists currently living in Germany. In addition, there are approximately 1000 individuals who are directly linked to jihadists groups (estimated by January 2015, BKA) and 230 of them have been put under special surveillance since they are thought to be willing to commit a terrorist act (Tagesschau 2014). The number of radical Salafists reported in media is 7900, growing from 5 500 in 2013 and 7000 in 2014 (BfV cited by DW). At least 760 German citizens have joined ISIS and approximately 240 of them returned to Germany, according to official data (Federal Criminal Police Office cited by DW). According to Radio Free Europe, German foreign fighters are believed to be "among the top commanders" in the ranks of ISIS (cited by Germany: Extremism & Counter-Extremism 2016).

Table 3. Terrorist and extremist incidents in Germany between 2011 and 2016

March 2011	American soldiers were attacked at the airport in Frankfurt by Arid Uka - an ethnic Albanian from Kosovo living in Germany. Two of them were killed and two others were injured (BBC).
April 2011	Four members of a cell of al-Qaeda in Dusseldorf were arrested for planning a terror attack in Germany (DW).
December 10, 2012	Police forces disabled a bomb at Bonn's central station placed there by ISIS suspects. Marco G has been charged by the federal prosecutor with planning the attack (Reuters).
March 2013	German security forces prevented an assassination attempt on the leader of the far-right party Pro-NRW by Islamist radicals. Again, Marco G has been charged by the federal prosecutor with planning the attack (Spiegel).
January 10, 2015	A suspected member of ISIS was arrested by German police. Nils D. is a German citizen traveled to join IS in Syria in 2014 and then returned to Germany (DW).
January 11, 2015	The office of the newspaper Hamburger Morgenpost which had republished the Charlie Hebdo cartoons was a target of an arson attack.
January 16, 2015	About 900 police raided mosques, prayer rooms and homes in Berlin arresting two suspects of recruiting and raising funds for ISIS (DW)
February 15, 2015	A festival in the city of Braunschweig was canceled due to an alert of possible terrorist attack (BBC).
September 17, 2015	An Islamist assailant was shot by police after he attacked a policewoman. Between 2008 and 2013 he was imprisoned for membership in a terrorist group and planning attack in Germany (DW).
November 5, 2015	A car with concealed firearms, explosives, and hand grenades was identified near the German-Austrian border. The 51-year-old man was arrested and later suspected of possible links to the Paris attacks (Reuters).
November 17, 2015	A soccer game between the German and Dutch national teams in Hannover was canceled due to intelligence warning for plans for terrorist attack. No explosive were found (DW).
December 31, 2015	Two Munich train stations were closed due bomb threats. ISIS linked individuals were planning suicide attacks on New Year's Eve, according to local police authorities (New York Times).
January 12, 2016	Ten German citizens were killed in suicide bomb attack in Istanbul. The perpetrator was an ISIS militant (Guardian).
June 2, 2016	Four Syrian men arrested for allegedly planning suicide bombings in Dusseldorf (Independent 2016).

Source: Counter Extremism Project 2016

The UK government considers the wave of homegrown radicalization a long-term threat to national security. According to Prime Minister David Cameron, the country may suffer extremist violence for many years ahead (cited by The UK: Extremism & Counter-Extremism 2016) since hundreds of British citizens have left to join the ISIS or other terrorist groups like al-Queda and al-Shabab. The British government assesses the possibility of a major terrorist attack on British soil as "highly likely" (UK Home Office 2016).

In regards to foreign fighters, Britons encompass a significant part of the foreign presence within ISIS ranks (The UK: Extremism & Counter-Extremism 2016). Official data shows that at least 800 British citizens have travelled to support or fight for jihadist organizations in Syria and Iraq, and approximately half of them have returned to the UK (BBC 2016). The British intelligence M15 follows closely the trend of U.K. nationals to travel particularly to three key territories: Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas for terrorism training; Yemen to join al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula; and Somalia to fight with al-Shabab, an al-Qaeda-affiliated Islamist terrorist group (UK Security Service cited by the UK: Extremism & Counter-Extremism 2016).

Table 4. Terrorist and extremist incidents in the United Kingdom between 2011 and 2016

April 26, 2013	11 Birmingham-based Islamic extremists were arrested on various charges of terrorist fundraising and suicide bomb attack plots (BBC).
May 22, 2013	The British Army soldier Lee Rigby was killed by Nigerian Islamic extremists in London (BBC).
2014	British national and ISIS member known "Jihadi John" became notorious for his participation in beheadings of western citizens captured in Syria (Daily Mail).
November 2014	40 major terrorist plots have been prevented since London bombing of 2005 disclosed by the U.K. Home Secretary (Guardian).
9 January, 2015	The British radical preacher Abu Hamza was sentenced in New York for terrorism and kidnapping (US Department of Justice).
June 25, 2015	30 British tourists were killed in terrorist attack in Tunisia. The perpetrator was the Islamist Seifiddine Rezgui Yacoubi; 8 other civilians in an attack claimed by ISIS (BBC).
December 5, 2015	Three people were injured by a man in the London underground. The suspect shouted “this is for Syria” when attacked them. The incidents came after the UK’s decision to join airstrikes against ISIS in Syria (BBC).
January 2016	A video published by ISIS showed the execution of five hostages arguing they were British spies. Prime Minister David Cameron refuted some of the executed individuals to belong to British intelligence (Guardian).

Source: Counter Extremism Project 2016

Chapter 4 – Type of Radicalization

In the next three chapters the thesis seeks to explore the scope of the three variables employed for the goals of the research. To reply to the Research Question: **"Why do the EU countries differ in their counterterrorism strategies towards radicalization?"** I look at three factors: Type of Radicalization, Strategic culture, and Type of Resources. The first variable discussed in this chapter is related to the type of threat that the four countries face. To facilitate the analysis I conceptualize three types of radicalization: passive radicalization (propaganda via social networks), active radicalization (religious organizations and terrorist cells); violent radicalization (terrorist attacks). The second and the third variables concerning the policy response will be discussed in Chapter FIVE and Chapter SIX.

Type of radicalization is a relevant variable with regards to the priority that policy-makers give to the counterterrorism strategies and the resources that they are willing to allocate to the purpose (Pillar 2011). At a conceptual level the thesis relies on the casual relationship between radicalization and terrorism discussed and presented in Chapter One. Despite the criticism identified in the literature, I consider the link between the process of radicalization and terrorism proven since the number of EU citizens belonging or willing to join ISIS has been significantly increased. I argue that even though Islamist radicalization is considered international phenomenon, European countries pursue different national approached depending on the threat that they meet at a domestic level.

Austria

In the case of Austria, signs of **passive** and **active radicalization** but **no violent** radicalization have been registered. A few major cases of propaganda on the social networks such as Twitter and Facebook have been reported in media. The intensive online campaign

launched by ISIS has reached a significant number of followers in Austria. The most telling example is the case of the Austrian teenagers Sabina Selimovic 15, and Samra Kesinovic 16 who joined ISIS in Syria. They become "ISIS poster girls" appearing on social media in images showing them carrying weapons and surrounded by armed men (Independent 2015). The pictures were aimed to advertise enrollment in the terrorist group (Austria: Extremism & Counter-Extremism 2016). Furthermore, some mosques and particularly imams have been considered another channel of passive radicalization by the Austrian authorities. According to the Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz, many imams preaching in Austria come from abroad and don't speak German: "We don't want to have influence from abroad and we don't want our Muslim community to be dependent on foreign funding" (cited by Austria: Extremism & Counter-Extremism 2016).

In regards to the **active radicalization**, there have been individuals with a clear link identified to terrorist cells or groups. A telling example is the case of a Bosnian-Austrian Mirsad Omerovic (Ebu Tejma) who was arrested in December 2014 on suspicion of recruitment of more than hundred European youths for terrorist activities. Tejma was believed to be a leader of the so-called "Bosnian cell" in Vienna that was "one of the most important logistic and financial support centers for jihadist activities in Europe." (Austria: Extremism & Counter-Extremism 2016).

Belgium

All three types of radicalization have been identified in the case of Belgium. Concerning **passive radicalization**, an intensive online propaganda (videos, internet forums, Facebook and Twitter) has facilitated ISIS to reach followers in Belgium as well as to recruit them as foreign fighters. Many Belgian citizens were recruited by their friends or relatives via social networks (Peter Van Ostaeyen's website).

Furthermore, a source of both **passive and active radicalization** has been considered the Belgian neighborhood Molenbeek, called by media (BBC 2015, The New York Times 2015) the centre of the Belgian jihadism. Several features of Molenbeek are important regarding my analysis: Here lives the biggest Muslim community in Brussels. There are 22 known mosques in the district; it is densely populated, with large immigrant populations, a very high level of unemployment. Belgium's unusual bilingualism (Flemish and French) makes it difficult for immigrants to integrate (The Washington Post). Consequently, all these factors have been thought contributing to the fast development of Belgian jihadism (The Atlantic 2015). There are a number of terrorist cells and radical organizations identified within the country. For example, *Sharia4Belgium* (radical Salafist group) has been the most influential organization disseminating radicalization. It has facilitated many Europeans to join ISIS in the Middle East. According to available data, more than 80 members of this movement have been reported to be active in Syria and Iraq (Peter Van Ostaeyen's website).

Concerning **violent radicalization**, Belgium has been the only one country among the examined cases where a major terrorist attack took place in March 2016. Three coordinated bombing attacks caused the death of 32 people and an injury of 300 others. The incident came several days after a series of anti-terrorist raids in Molenbeek in which Salah Abdeslam, a Belgian-born jihadist and a suspected accomplice in Paris attacks, was arrested by Belgian police. He is believed to have been coordinated the 13 November 2015 attacks in Paris. Additionally, some of the perpetrators were also Belgian nationals. Consequently, there is a number of links identified between the 2015 Paris attacks and extremists networks based in Brussels. A few days after the Charlie Hebdo shooting, two suspected jihadists were killed in a counterterrorism raid in Verviers, Belgium. Several months later (August 22, 2015), a suspect linked to the disrupted Verviers network was allegedly responsible for an attack on a train from Amsterdam to Paris. In both of these cases Belgian jihadist and ISIS member

Abdelhamid Abaaoud has been considered a coordinator or an accomplice to the attack (Belgium – Counter Extremism Project 2016). Thus, individuals radicalized in Belgium already demonstrated readiness to conduct attacks in other European countries.

Germany

In the case of Germany, there are cases of **passive and active radicalization** identified, but no **violent** radicalization. Again, social networks and forum have been actively used for propaganda and gaining support among the German Muslim population. Two more channels of passive and active radicalization have been indentified: religious organizations and the appearance of the refugee wave.

The Islamist organization *Milli Gorus*, the most influential in Germany, is believed to have a strong influence on homegrown radicalization within the country. Currently, the organization relies on more than 31 000 members and controls 323 mosques (DW 2015). Its mission is determined by the idea of less Muslim assimilation into German society and more powerful Islamic values against westernization (Germany: Extremism & Counter-Extremism 2016).

Additionally, asylum seekers have been seen by German authorities as potential target of radicalization. In October 2015 the German secret service warned that the country was "importing Islamic extremism" as a consequence of Berlin's "open-door" policy towards the refugees coming from the Middle East. In September 2015 German authorities stated that Salafist jihadists in Germany were attempting to radicalize asylum seekers arriving in the country (cited by Germany: Extremism & Counter-Extremism 2016). In February 2016, the head of Germany's domestic intelligence agency, Hans-Georg Maassen confirmed that ISIS members were posing as refugees to reach European countries (cited by New York Times 2016). Furthermore, in June 2016 four suspected ISIS members with Syrian passports were

arrested in Dusseldorf for planning a terror attack in Germany. According to the prosecutors, three of the Syrian men were directly "commissioned" by the so-called Islamic State to launch suicide bombing in Dusseldorf (Independent 2016).

The United Kingdom

In the case of the UK, cases of **passive and active radicalization** have been registered. The cases of **violent radicalization** do not have the feature of major terrorist attacks that we have witnessed in other European countries. Similar to the other cases, groups recruiting foreign fighters have used social networks for propaganda, attracting new sympathizers, radicalization and terrorism planning (Prevent Strategy, HM Government 2011). Furthermore, there is a variety of Muslim websites and TV channels that are available through satellite in the UK, for example Peace TV, Islam Channel as well as Salafi TV networks (Wojtowicz 2012). In addition, there is a broad network of radical mosques as well as radical Islamist organizations reported to promote their values via social networks.

Regarding the target, there has been a significant number of Muslim converts in the United Kingdom in the last five years and a rise of mosques, Islamic Centers and religious schools (The Islamification of Britain). In addition, university students are also among the preferred targets of UK extremism and terrorism recruitment. In 2011 the British authorities estimates that 40 universities were under the risk of radicalization or recruitment on campus (Daily Mail 2011).

With respect to the **violent radicalization**, there is a significant number of individuals who have been engaged in terrorist activities in Britain, foreign fighters, or radicalized Britons who have returned from Syria and Iraq. For example, Anjem Choudary has been considered by the British authorities to have links to more than 80 individuals related to various terrorism cases in the UK (The Telegraph).

In conclusion, the four countries face relatively similar threats. In all countries I have observed many signs of passive radicalization through propaganda tools such as social networks, online communication as well as religious groups and mosques. In the UK, Germany and Belgium there are active groups facilitating radicalization and recruitment for ISIS whereas in Austria there is no active terrorist organization. In terms of violent radicalization, Belgium is the most threatened country having recent experience with terror attacks in Belgium on 22 March 2016. The next two chapters the thesis seeks to explore the influence of Strategic Culture and Type of Resources on counterterrorism policy responses.

Chapter 5 – Strategic Culture

Having looked at the four cases, different types of radicalization have been identified. However, this variable does not provide the analysis with sufficient information concerning factors that influence counterterrorism policies. Consequently, there is a reason to look at other indicators such as Strategic Culture and Type of Resources. I discuss in here the role of strategic culture as it is a variable derived from the counterterrorism literature (Pedahzur 2009). For the goals of the thesis, strategic culture shall be understood as an independent variable which helps to analyze whether a country gives more priority to intelligence or police in counterterrorism tasks. At a conceptual level, the term "strategic culture" has emerged in International Relations literature to explain how decision-makers and security units act strategically based on certain preferences (Katzenstein 1996). In counterterrorism literature the term has been adopted in its specific dimensions explaining how counterterrorism priorities are allocated among security units. Strategic culture matters in dealing with terrorism threats as it depends who has been given the counterterrorism tasks – intelligence or police (Pedahzur 2010). My main goal to apply strategic culture to domestic security behavior as terrorism threats have been recognized as a domestic issue by the national counterterrorism policies of Austria, Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom. With respect to the terrorist threat that countries meet at a domestic level, it is important to know whether they participate militarily to fight terrorism at an international level.

Austria

The state prioritizes the role of intelligence within the police force. Various special task forces target terrorism under the supervision of the Directorate General for Public Security, which is a unit of the Interior Ministry. The most important unit among them is the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counterterrorsm (BVT) which

originated from the Austrian State police and operates as a domestic intelligence agency. Its responsibilities include protecting constitutional institutions as well as combating extremist and terrorist phenomena (Europol 2016). Each federal province relies on a provincial agency for the Protection of the Constitution and Counterterrorism located at the Security Directorates (Europol 2016).

Belgium

The internal strategic culture of Belgium is a result of the highly fragmentized nature of Belgian institutions as they emerged as a result of specific conditions. Belgium has been governed by local elites instead of a national government and, consequently, Belgians have developed an identity towards cities and localities rather than a national identity. One of the political outcomes is that Belgium did not adopt a national security strategy (Biehl, Giegerich, Jonas 2013).

Regarding counterterrorism tasks, **Belgium relies more on police units than intelligence.** The Belgian police have a two-level structure including the Federal and Local Police. Even though these two bodies are autonomous, they cooperate in their functions (Interpol). The special unit combating Islamic extremism is set within the Anti-Terrorist Unit of the Gendarmerie (since 1980). In 2001, the Gendarmerie was incorporated in Belgium's general police force (Encyclopedia of Law Enforcement). Furthermore, the Criminal Investigation Department acts as Belgium's civilian intelligence service. At a federal level, the intelligence branch works together with Belgium's local and federal police forces to prevent terrorism incidents. In addition, the Belgium's Threat Analysis Coordination Body (OCAM) subordinated to the Minister of Interior is responsible for the threat analysis of terrorism and extremism on the basis of intelligence information gathered from Belgium's

various counterterrorism bodies. Belgium's overarching counterterrorism program is controlled by its Minister of Interior (Belgium - Counter Extremism Project 2016).

Following the attacks in Paris, the Belgian police demonstrated its capacity by conducting arrests and raids, as well as thwarting new suspected terrorist attacks on jihadist cells in Brussels, Forest, and Schaerbeek. Additional efforts have been focused on diminishing the impact of *Sharia4Belgium* in Antwerp. The number of police officers patrolling in Brussels has been doubled after the Paris attacks of November 2015. In addition, military forces were engaged to support Belgian police officers in their investigation of suspects and jihadist cells in Belgium.

The highly fragmentized nature of Belgian institutions leads to criticism towards both the Belgian police and intelligence regarding their counterterrorism tasks. Due to the country's language divide, some Belgian intelligence officers operate in Flemish but others in French. This leads to gaps in intelligence, even for officers operating within the same neighborhood, like Molenbeek. Recently, they have been particularly criticized as a result of their inability to deal with the terrorist networks that have emerged in Molenbeek. In January 2015 Belgian police arrested a man on suspicion of selling weapons to two attackers: Amedy Coulibaly, the ISIS gunman accused of killing a French police officer before killing four people at a kosher grocery store in Paris; and the train assailant Ayoub El Khazzani, who was also believed to have secured his weapons in Belgium (Telegraph 2015).

Germany

The internal strategic culture of Germany puts an emphasis on police tasks rather than on intelligence. There are several levels of policing in Germany. The Federal Criminal Police Office is the central unit for cooperation between the Federation and the federal states (Interpol). It collects criminal intelligence and investigates cases of terrorism.

The Federal Police force has a responsibility to protect Germany's borders as the country does not have systematic border controls due to Schengen membership (Counter Extremism Project, Report 2016). Furthermore, there are sixteen state police agencies and their competencies and powers are ruled by the local police laws (Interpol). After the Paris attacks of November 2015 several additional counterterrorism measures were taken: an expansion of the German special arrest units (BFE) made up of German state police forces and the German Federal Police. The 250 additional officers (BFE+) are already part of a special unit aimed to prevent terrorism acts on a daily basis (DW 2015). Recently, German police forces have been active in conducting a series of actions on Salafist cells in Berlin, Hanover, and other cities. (Telegraph, New York Times, DW).

In terms of intelligence infrastructure, the competencies of intelligence units are relatively limited in comparison to police forces. Germany relies on a domestic intelligence agency (Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, BfV) contributing to the investigation of terrorist incidents working in cooperation with the Federal Criminal Police Office. Within the domestic intelligence agency, there is a Joint Internet Centre (GIZ) established in 2007 to monitor terrorist networks and prevent cyber threats (BfV). In addition, the Joint Counter-Terrorism Centre (GTAZ established in 2004) is a communication platform used by 40 internal security agencies and specifically focused to combat the threat posed by Islamic terrorism (BfV). Another counterterrorism unit (GSG9) launched after the Munich Massacre (1972), today has internal and external competences in cases of hostage-taking, kidnapping, terrorism (Counter Extremism Project, Report 2016). Recently, this special operation unit has contributed to arrests of several ISIS suspects within Germany (Suddeutschezeitung). Germany's foreign intelligence agency has a duty to monitor extremist activities and threats abroad (Germany – Counter Extremism Project 2016).

The UK

The British strategic culture is determined by high trust in intelligence services. The overall counterterrorism policy is led by the Home Office. With respect to counterterrorism tasks, there are several intelligence units which are responsible to deal with terrorism threats: The Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), the UK's foreign intelligence service, and the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) dealing with various tasks, including counterterrorism. The Security Service (MI5) is the domestic intelligence agency with a responsibility to protect national security from threats like terrorism or sabotage (SIS.Gov.Uk) Furthermore, the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), which is part of the Cabinet has a duty to assess events relating to external affairs, to monitor and give early warning on threats (Gov.UK).

The highly decentralized police system in the UK plays a less considerable role in comparison to the intelligence services. There are 43 police forces in England and Wales, 8 in Scotland and 1 in Northern Ireland (Europol 2016). These regional police units are responsible for the investigation of terrorist offences. Additionally, within each police force there is branch aimed to cooperate with MI5 concerning individuals who possibly may be involved in terrorism. Recently, the British police have been active conducting about 300 terror-related detentions (between March 2014 and March 2015), according to Scotland Yard's data. In 16 of these cases people were charged with having returned from Syria.

To sum up, each of the four countries addresses terrorism threats differently depending on how it allocates counterterrorism tasks among the intelligence and police forces. In one of the cases – the UK, I identified a clear emphasis on the role of intelligence. Germany and Belgium seem to be more in favor of a policing approach whereas the Austrian model is relatively balanced between police and intelligence.

Chapter 6 – Type of Resources

Type of resources is an indicator discussed by various scholars in the literature as one of the measures showing why countries respond differently to terrorism threats. I look at two groups of countries: the UK and Germany, arguing that they rely on more resources; and Belgium and Austria which supposedly/by default rely on fewer resources since they are significantly smaller. For the goals of the thesis I call resources the overall capacity of a country to deal with terrorist threats including budget, equipment and technical capacity, expertise, a number of servants in the counterterrorism agencies. The overarching question when I discuss a type of resources is whether countries with more capacity are better prevented from terrorism threats than those with less capacity.

In the case of **Austria**, the counterterrorism budget has been increased following the attacks in Paris of January 2015. The government has invested an additional 290 million euro for new counterterrorism measures over the next four years: hiring experts in crime fighting and cyber security; new equipment for security forces and counter-radicalization programs (The Local 2015). An example is the case of 20 youths who have been sentenced for supporting ISIS militants and several are now being supported by special trained youth workers as part of a Neustart rehabilitation program (The Local 2016).

In the case of **Belgium**, after the November 13 attacks in Paris the Belgian government announces an investment of 400 million euro in prevention. Currently, the Belgian intelligence service relies on an annual budget of 50 168 000. The number of staff is 600 people, which has been considered highly insufficient. Additionally, filling vacancies in intelligence service remains problematic (Politico 2015). Concerning expertise, there is a serious level of distrust between French and Flemish-speaking government officials, which creates obstacles to the effective implementation of counterterrorism tasks (The Atlantic

2015). In addition, there is a lack of personnel with Arabic language knowledge in police in intelligence units.

In the case of **Germany**, the government has invested in hiring more police and intelligence personnel following the attacks in Paris in 2015. In January 2016 the defense minister proposed military budget to be increased by 130 billion euro over 15 years (The New York Times 2016). After the Paris attacks of November 2015, several additional counterterrorism measures were taken: an expansion of the German special arrest units (BFE) made up of German state police forces and the German Federal Police; hiring 250 additional officers (BFE+) participating in terrorism prevention on a daily basis (DW).

Following the attacks in Paris, **the UK** planned the biggest increase in counterterrorism budget since the attacks of London 2005. The country intends to invest 30% more in counterterrorism actions in the next five years (George Osborne' statement, 2015). For 2016 the defence budget was increased from £34billion to £40billion. The government states that there is a specific need for experts in counterterrorism intelligence and airport security personnel (Guardian 2015). Thus, a top priority now is for intelligence agencies to hire new staff in order to meet the challenges posed by Islamic extremism**.** According to Osborne's statement a thousand more secret agents will be hired to uncover and prevent new terror plots (George Osborne' statement, 2015). Currently, the number of people employed by the intelligence agencies is about 12 700 (Guardian 2016). The government intends to increase security and intelligence personnel hiring 2000 new employers (increase of 15% at MI5, MI6 and GCHQ) (Guardian 2016). In addition, the UK plans to invest in aviation security officers as well as to improve the military arsenal buying 42 new F35 jets (Guardian 2016).

Following the priorities in counterterrorism tasks, the UK invests less in police than in intelligence. A series of budget cuts in the British police has been implemented over the last years. There are 43 police forces in England and Wales, eight in Scotland and one in Northern Ireland including 160 00 police officers, 90 000 police personnel and over 16 000 Community Support Officers (Europol).

To summarize, the four countries' investment follows the pattern of their cultural and political priorities in counterterrorism. The UK is willing to give more money to intelligence in comparison to the other countries. Also, the UK invests more in military forces, whereas Germany prioritizes domestic policing. In the case of the UK and Germany, we observe much more resources included in counterterrorism in comparison to Belgium and Austria. Since the big size countries rely on more capacity, they might be better prevented from terrorism threats than the small size countries relying on significantly more constrained budgets and expertise. In the case of Belgium, the insufficient resources lead to security failures such as undetected radicalization, missed signals and, consequently, terrorist attacks.

Chapter 7 – Comparative Analysis

In this chapter I present my findings concerning the three variables comparatively. The following table illustrates how the four cases differ regarding their Type of Radicalization, Strategic Culture, and Type of Resources.

Table 5. Type of Radicalization, Strategic Culture, and Type of Resources in Austria, Belgium, Germany and the UK

	Austria	**Belgium**	**Germany**	**The UK**
Type of Radicalization	Passive and active	Passive, active and violent	Passive and active	Passive and active
Strategic culture	Intelligence-equally prioritized Police-equally prioritized	Intelligence-less prioritized Police-more prioritized	Intelligence - less prioritized Police - more prioritized	Intelligence: more prioritized Police: less prioritized
Resources	Small country capacity-sufficient resources	Small country capacity-insufficient resources	Big country capacity-sufficient resources	Big country capacity-sufficient resources

7.1. Type of Radicalization - Analysis

The four countries face relatively similar threat. Signs of passive and active radicalization have been registered in all cases. Similar channels of propaganda have been employed such as social networks, online communication as well as local religious communities. In all four countries counterterrorism actors face broad networks of ISIS supporters and sympathizers. Other common feature is the strong influence coming from Muslim organizations, mosques and religious schools, some of which are considered hatcheries of Radical Islam: Milli Gorus in Germany, Sharia4Belgium in Belgium, a network of radical mosques and imams in the UK as well as in Austria. In the case of the UK,

Germany and Belgium there are identified terrorist cells or individuals facilitating radicalization and recruitment for ISIS, whereas in Austria there is no active terrorist organization.

Compared with the other states, Belgium seems to be the most threatened country looking at the role and the impact of the identified terrorist cells. Moreover, fighters or suicide bombers originated from Brussels have demonstrated readiness to attack other European countries (referring to the Paris attacks in 2105). Belgium is also the only one among the four states which was recently targeted by a major terrorist attack. Austria does not have any significant experience regarding terrorism between 2011 and 2016. Some incidents have been identified in the UK and Germany, however, they have not experienced major terrorist attacks.

Even though the four countries have different counterterrorism approaches, they produce high number of foreign fighters who have left to join ISIS in Syria and Iraq. The table below summarizes the approximate number of foreign fighters produced by each country. On the one hand, Germany and The UK have similar contribution to ISIS, on the other hand, the number of foreign fighters produced by Belgium is relatively higher in comparison to Austria.

Table 6. Foreign Fighters produced by countries 2011-2015

Country	Foreign Fighters	Returned
Austria	300	70
Belgium	470	118
Germany	760	200
The UK	760	350

Oct/Nov 2015, source: Telegraph

7.2. Strategic Culture – Analysis

There are several common similarities among the examined countries which are relevant in terms of the comparative analysis. The four states are members of NATO and the EU. Additionally, only the United Kingdom is not a part of the Schengen Area. The four states have similar level of democratization but different institutional embedding. A few findings have been identified concerning the domestic strategic culture.

Each of the four countries addresses terrorism threats differently depending on how it allocates counterterrorism tasks among the intelligence and police forces. Similar in the size of their population and economies, Germany and the UK have relatively similar capabilities to deal with terrorist and extremist incidents. However, they differ drastically in their approaches towards identified threats. The UK relies more on intelligence service, whereas Germany gives a priority to police force in its counterterrorism strategy. Consequently, countries also differ in conducting police raids. In states like Germany, Belgium, and partially Austria where the counterterrorism tasks of police forces are prioritized, police operations are more frequent, whereas in the UK the intelligence gathering plays more significant role. Depending on how they distribute counterterrorism tasks between police and intelligence Germany and Belgium seems to be more favor of policing approach where as Austrian model is relatively balanced between police and intelligence. Due to the experience with terrorist plots Belgium strategic culture allows for higher intensity in the use of police force than Austria. Although their potential power capabilities are relatively similar, Belgium and Austria also differ based on how their intelligence services are organized. The Belgian intelligence seems to be much more fragmentized than the Austrian.

Only in one of the cases - the UK, I identified a clear emphasis on the role of intelligence. UK is a state with a strategic culture that places the use of intelligence as an

instrument to pursue the counterterrorism goals on a relatively high position in their preferences in comparison to the other three countries. The UK employed more intelligence than Germany as well as is more willing to participate with military actions against ISIS. It seems the British strategic culture relies on higher public trust concerning intelligence.

7.3. Type of Resources – Analysis

Countries differ drastically in their counterterrorism approaches depending on how they distribute the resources that they have. With respect to budgets, Austria has demonstrated readiness to relocate or increase resources to combat terrorism if there is a significant change in a threat. Furthermore, the UK is willing to invest more in intelligence capacities, whereas Germany prioritizes domestic policing. Since Belgium gives counterterrorism tasks to military forces in support of police, it means counterterrorism budget is focused on development of operational units, but not intelligence. In the case of the UK and Germany much more resources have been included in counterterrorism in comparison to Belgium and Austria.

Due to its non-prioritization the Belgian intelligence suffers from insufficient resources. The lack of cultural and political prioritization of the intelligence service leads to budgetary constraints and consequently intelligence and police failures. Thus, even though Belgium meets the highest level of threat, its counterterrorism policy seems to have limitations such as lack of experts and security agents. Since the resources have been considered insufficient, this has led to system errors such as missed signals, late detection of radicalized individuals who are willing to conduct terrorist attack, failures to pass on information to other institutions at a domestic and an international level.

Chapter 8 – Analysis of Interviews

In this chapter I discuss the findings of the four interviews with experts that were conducted for the goals of the thesis. They are aimed to verify, support or reject my main hypotheses concerning Type of Radicalization, Type of Strategic Culture, and Type of Resources. I interviewed researchers from the countries examined due to their local insights, observations and access to information. In general, the interviews confirmed the initial hypothesis that the Type of Radicalization, Strategic Culture and Resources influence the counterterrorism approaches of the four countries examined.

8.2. Strategic Culture

8.1. Type of Radicalization

All interviewees agreed that type of radicalization matters regarding the counterterrorism approach. The experts acknowledged that the four countries meet a relatively similar type of threat including passive and active radicalization as well as a high possibility for terrorist attacks.

However, not all countries have been considered equally threatened by the experts. Stockhammer emphasizes that Austria is not a target of jihadism comparable to the other three countries, although it is a country where homegrown jihadism is flourishing. Furthermore, Stockhammer argues that homegrown radicalization is a more dangerous phenomenon than production of foreign fighters because "foreign fighters have been subjects of close investigation and surveillance, and consequently it would be hard for them to become active in any way." Concerning the radicalization in Austria, Stockhammer claims that "not all salafists are terrorists but some jihadists are criminals that take Islamism as a pretext to act".

Pieter Van Ostaeyen also agrees that radicalization is a feature of every society and does not necessarily to lead to terrorism. However, he refers to the current situation in Belgium where "we can clearly see that almost all of the radicalized Muslims end up in terror groups like the Islamic State". He distinguishes several waves of people in Belgium who were attracted by ISIS and left to join the group: The first one consists of radicalized Muslims, the jihadi ideologists that left in the very early days of the conflict in Syria. The second wave was made up of people who left for humanitarian reasons driven by a desire to help Muslims in Syria and stop killing by the regime there. The third group was formed by individuals who were socially pressured or motivated by other people via the social media (friends, relatives) to join ISIS. The forth group were the people who left after ISIS created a caliphate. Within all four groups, Ostaeyen argues, there are people with different social backgrounds, among whom many are criminals.

Anthony Glees also sees a clear link between terrorism and radicalization: "Not every radical is an extremist, not every extremist is a terrorist but every terrorist is both extremist and radical". He shares the opinion that today the four countries meet completely the same threat. However, he emphasizes that previously the threat posed to Germany has differed from that to the UK and Belgium. Although there have been Islamists there, Germany has not been considered a target equally with the other threatened states in Europe. After four suspects were arrested in Dusseldorf at the beginning of June 2016, it seems the situation has changed and now Germany faces a very similar threat to the other European countries.

With respect to the UK, Glees argues that the UK is a successful example towards prevention from radicalization even though more efforts should be done by engaging schools, universities and community leaders. Anthony Glees claims that the future prevention of radicalization would require much more intelligence: "Since students are overrepresented

among these people who have been convinced to join ISIS, it means that universities and schools shall be more engaged in cooperation with intelligence. Higher education shall be more convincing that democracy is a better way in resolving conflicts."

Furthermore, preventing terrorism incidents is not a guarantee for the success of a counterterrorism policy. Glees refers to the four pillars of the British counterterrorism strategy CONTEST: pursue, prevent, protect, prepare. Disrupting terrorism plans is a sign that pursuit is working well but it is not a guarantee that prevention is also effective enough. This is the reason, according to Glees, terrorism threats still to be considered severe by the UK government and attacks to be highly likely.

Interviewees agree that counterterrorism policies differ regarding how tasks are distributed between intelligence and police. Thus, the strategic culture of Germany seems to be more hostile towards intelligence gathering, whereas in the UK it is relatively favorable. Anthony Glees confirms that the British strategic culture allows a higher level of approval towards intelligence activities. In the case of the UK "there is a considerable public trust in and support for secret intelligence agencies and the origins of this trust are in the WWII when the role played by the intelligence keeping the country safe from Hitler and Nazi Germany was well understood and celebrated." Due to the role of intelligence, the UK is considered the safest country of the four, according to Prof. Glees: "The UK faces the same level of threat like the other European countries, but what makes the response different is the strength of the UK intelligence security community – the hugely intrusive powers that the Parliament gives them freely and willingly to keep the society safe".

In comparison to the UK, in Germany the public opinion towards intelligence agencies are more hostile. In Anthony Glees' view, the explanation has two main aspects. On the one hand, he refers to the history of Gestapo in the Third Reich, and on the other hand, it

is a result of the East German experience and the role of the Stasi. Glees argues that the previous German cultures that have generated Gestapo and Shtasi are responsible for the current culture which is very skeptical about role of the intelligence.

Furthermore, due to the inability of some countries to deal with counterterrorism threats, shifts in strategic cultures are highly likely. There has been a dysfunction in the Belgian intelligence since we witnessed terrorist attacks in Brussels, Glees claims. The terrorist attack is a clear sign that the Belgian government has lost control of security, he argues referring to the main duties of the state, among which is to deliver security. Consequently, shifts in strategic cultures are highly expected according to the interviewed experts. Both Nick Stockhammer and Anthony Glees argue that we may observe changes in the strategic cultures of some countries. In Glees's view, shifts in strategic culture would come as a result of states' failure to properly deal with the migrant waves that the EU states currently experience. Moreover, he claims, "absence of evidence for terrorism is not necessary evidence for absence". Hence, if a state cannot deliver security, it will change the strategic culture demanded by the society. In this sense, Glees believes that countries like Austria would become more militant due to the lack of security that the country would possibly generate. Consequently, that can make some Islamists to plan attacks in countries like Austria that they have not targeted before.

Stockhammer also shares the view that shifts in domestic counterterrorism policies shall be expected. In the case of Austria, we may particularly observe changes in strategy including military forces in the field of counterterrorism, which currently is a priority only of the police forces. However, due to public pressure in the last two years, the domestic security actors are forced to prove that they are able to react. Thus, decision-makers become more

willing to adopt changes in counterterrorism policies. In comparison, there are military forces in Belgium that have been engaged in daily counterterrorism actions.

8.3. Type of Resources

The finding that countries with more capacity are better prevented from terrorism threats than those with less capacity has been confirmed by some of the interviewees. With respect to the resources, Glees argues that the UK is safer than any other EU country and possibly Germany comes close to Britain because they are bigger and richer and have more resources. On the other hand, Stockhammer claims that the threat determines the willingness of the government to provide resources and it is not the capabilities that count, but the intention. In the case of Austria, he argues, if there is a necessity of capabilities to be increased, it will be done by the government.

Concerning the resources of Belgium, Ostaeyen refers to the current issues of the intelligence service. In Ostaeyen's view, domestically, intelligence services do not have enough resources and enough experts with a specific qualification. Ostaeyen claims that there are gaps in monitoring of terrorist networks. Moreover, the biggest challenge for the intelligence service is that they do not know where the potential threat will come from. Sometimes the threat is formed not as a result of radicalization but due to a criminal background. He refers to both the Paris (November 2015) and Brussels attacks (March 2016), which demonstrate that attackers do not possess a strong radical Islamist background but criminals being aware of where to buy weapons from, where to rent a flat and so on. Consequently, they relied more on their criminal networks' connection rather than ISIS networks. Thus, counterterrorism actions towards chasing down these networks have not been considered very successful. Referring to the weakness of the security forces, Ostaeyen concludes that the role of police forces is more significant.

All interviewees share critiques towards the insufficient cooperation among the countries at the European level. Stockhammer states that the European strategies are too nationally oriented: “There is a lack of intergovernmental cooperation. It is highly necessary institutions and countries to exchange data, to cooperate”. He refers to the Austrian experience and particularly the case of Mohamed Mahmud, a jihadist who is currently in the leadership of ISIS. He has been imprisoned for four years in Austria and later arrested in Turkey and then he escaped to Syria. Stockhammer asserts that cases like this can be prevented with more cooperation at an international level.

Ostaeyen also supports the view that intelligence organizations do not cooperate enough with each other. He believes that some of the previous terrorist incidents could be prevented, if individuals like, for example, Salah Abdeslam had been apprehended before conducting the November 2015 attacks of Paris. A telling example for the security gap in counterterrorism strategy, in his view, is the fact that Salah Abdeslam was able to live in Brussels for more than four months after the Paris attacks, completely undetected.

Anthony Glees asserts that the threat that the states in Europe face is common and can only be effectively dealt with common efforts. Consequently, he argues, it is crucial whether the UK will exit or remain in the EU with respect to the common European counterterrorism policy. Referring to the Lisbon Treaty, national security is so preserved by the nation states, and consequently, the EU has no responsibility for national security issues. However, the EU provides a number of ways in which the member states can easily work together on the European level.

In conclusion, the conducted interviews confirmed that counterterrorism policies differ significantly depending on the threat that they meet, the national strategic culture, and resources that they rely on. Three main finding may be distinguished: security gaps at a

domestic level lead to security gaps at an international level; shifts in strategic cultures are highly expected due to public expectations for more effective counterterrorism measures. In addition, all interviewees are highly critical towards the lack of international cooperation among European countries.

Conclusion

The thesis was focused on counterterrorism responses of radicalization in Europe as a terrorism threat. The thesis was aimed to reply the following research question "Why do European states differ in their counterterrorism strategies towards radicalization?" The purpose of the research was to identify differences and similarities in the current counterterrorism approaches at an empirical level focusing on one particular form of radicalization discussed in the literature, namely the rise of radical political Islam.

The thesis contributes to the existing counterterrorism framework by providing a comparative analysis of the counterterrorism strategies of Germany, the UK, Austria and Belgium with respect to radicalization. Empirically, the thesis proved that the countries differ in their counterterrorism approaches largely depending on three factors: a type of radicalization, strategic culture, and a type of resources.

With respect to the findings, the empirical research illustrated that countries face relatively similar threats concerning radicalization. Several channels of radicalization have been identified such as social networks, online communication as well as local religious communities. In all four countries counterterrorism actors face broad networks of ISIS supporters, sympathizers. Violent radicalization has been identified only in the case of Belgium in terms of a conducted terrorist attack. In the other three cases there were prevented terrorism incidents. Even though the four countries have different counterterrorism approaches, they produce high number of foreign fighters who have left to join ISIS in Syria and Iraq.

Furthermore, the comparative analysis showed that each of the four countries addresses terrorism threats differently depending on how it allocates counterterrorism tasks

among intelligence and police forces. For example, the UK relies more on intelligence service, whereas Germany gives a priority to police force in its counterterrorism strategy. The lack of cultural and political prioritization of the intelligence service in Belgium leads to system errors such as missed signals, late detection of radicalized individuals who are willing to become terrorists, failures to pass on information to other authorities within the country or to intelligence services at an international level. Furthermore, countries also differ significantly depending on how they distribute their counterterrorism resources. The thesis proved that states with a high potential of radicalization but fewer resources rely mainly on reactive measures referring to a "criminal investigation" approach, whereas states with a high potential of radicalization and more resources are proactive in their counterterrorism measures.

Additionally, the conducted interviews with experts confirmed the initial hypothesis that the Type of Radicalization, Strategic Culture and Resources influence countries' counterterrorism approaches. It was confirmed that states with more capacity are better prevented from terrorism threats than those with less capacity. On the other hand, the fact that there are no terrorist attacks in some of the four countries does not necessary mean it is less threatened. The conducted interviews confirmed that counterterrorism policies differ significantly depending on the national strategic culture. Moreover, shifts in strategic cultures are highly expected, according to the interviewed experts, due to public expectations for security. With respect to the broader academic discussion whether European states should predominantly rely on their national strategies or there is a common basis for cooperation, the thesis proved that more comprehensive approach at the European level is required. Since the current counterterrorism policies are highly criticized and changes in strategies are expected, this can bring closer the different national approaches towards radicalization. Consequently, there is a potential for the existing security gap at the European level to be reduced.

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