Trigger factors in the radicalisation process: An integrative literature review

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Abstract

In this paper we provide an integrative review of the role of trigger factors in the radicalisation process. Trigger factors are events that have a demonstrable effect on (further) (de-) radicalisation. Two different categories of trigger factors are proposed: Turning points and catalysts. 'Turning points' are events that make people susceptible for a new ideology or worldview. These trigger factors result in (further) radicalisation, but can also instigate a process of de-radicalisation. 'Catalysts' refer to events that speed up or slow down the radicalisation process. The mostly qualitative data are structured firstly across three different levels: the micro-level (the personal level), the meso-level (the group level), and the macro-level (the societal, (inter)national level). In addition we propose that typologies of radicalisation (i.e., identity seekers, justice seekers, significance seekers and sensation seekers) moderate effects of tirgger factors. In addition, the available evidence from the literature suggests age, gender, education, and possible behavioural problems to be of importance, but to a different degree.

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Trigger factors in the radicalisation process: A literature review

> "The romantic notion of becoming a guerrilla was certainly attractive to him, and he knew it was virtually impossible to become a guerrilla without getting military training outside of Japan. For Okamoto and many of his contemporaries, becoming a guerrilla fighter holds the same fascination that joining the International Brigade in Spain had for an earlier generation of idealistic students in the late 1930s. Yet the linking of the offer of military training with the possibility of seeing his brother certainly strengthened Okamoto's desire to go."
>
> Steinhoff (1976, p. 836)

Today we have experiences with foreign fighters who radicalise to a point that they join an extremist group and commit terrorist acts. According to a UN report in 2015 around 25.000 foreign terrorist fighters from more than 100 UN Members States were associated with Al-Qaida and Islamic State (UN report ref. S/1015/358, 2015). This review focuses on the question which concrete events can "trigger" individuals to join extremist groups and/or commit ideology-motivated violence. For example, the opportunity to travel to Beirut for military training and to seeing his brother (who had been involved in a plain hijack before, Steinhoff, 1976) can be considered 'trigger factors' in the radicalisation process of Okamoto. Eventually this resulted in Okamoto's involvement in the 1972 massacre at Lod Airport (now Ben Gurion Airport) in which twenty-six individuals died. This attack was sponsored by the Japanese Red Army (*Sekigunha*) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, an Arab guerrilla organisation. Before joining in the 1970s, Okamoto was a student in the agricultural faculty at Kagoshima University (Japan).

We define trigger factors as events that have a demonstrable effect on (further) (de-) radicalisation. A great deal of knowledge has been accumulated over the past decade identifying factors that underlie radicalisation, the so-called *root factors*. These factors may

explain the underlying foundations involved in radicalisation but often a concrete event can be identified that 'triggers' an individual to radicalise or commit an act of violence.

In the present integrative literature review, we aim to answer the questions what trigger factors are, how they differ from more structural factors in the radicalisation process and which role they play in that process. We structure our review on the basis of level of measurement (micro-, meso-, and macro-level). Most of the literature and open media sources used in the review are related to Islamic radicalisation. This is currently the ideology that has captured most attention of researchers and policy makers, because of the magnitude of the societal problems. Nevertheless, in our view, trigger factors can explain radicalisation in other ideologies as well such as right-wing extremism, left-wing extremism, but also religious cults and extreme behaviour in related research fields such as criminology (for example youth gangs). As strong empirical data is lacking in the field of radicalisations (see also Feddes & Gallucci, 2015) we decided to also include findings from the research field of criminology. As will be discussed further below, similar processes seem to be at work in radicalisation and development of criminal behaviour.

First we will provide an outline of the background of this research where we provide a conceptual discussion of the trigger factor concept. We then provide an overview of research on trigger factors at the micro-, meso-, and macro-level based on a literature review. We conclude with a discussion of possible moderators of trigger factor effects on radicalisation including typology of radicalisation (identity seekers, justice seekers, significance seekers and sensation seekers), age, gender, education, and problem behavioural.

Background of the research

Radicalization is a process in which people become increasingly motivated to use violent means against other people or symbolic targets to achieve political goals (Doosje, Moghaddam, Kruglanski, De Wolf, Mann, & Feddes, 2016). Based on the existing literature

on radicalisation, we distinguish between four phases in the radicalisation process: vulnerability, exploration, membership, and action (see also Borum, 2011; Moghaddam, 2005; Precht, 2011; Sageman, 2004; Schmid, 2013; Silber & Bhatt, 2007; Wiktorowicz, 2004). The vulnerability phase refers to the time that precedes actual radicalisation. In the exploration phase individuals actively start searching for information related to an ideology and start to develop a radical interpretation. The membership phase refers to membership in a physically real or virtual radical group that is characterised by an ideology that possibly supports the use of violence. The final 'action' phase is the period in which actions and behaviours are performed which precede a terroristic act. It is expected that trigger factors can play a key role in moving from one phase to the next, or back.

Conceptual discussion of trigger factors

The Oxford Dictionary defines a trigger as "an event that is the cause of a particular action, process, or situation". In the radicalisation literature there are terms that are related such as 'trigger event' (Veldhuis & Staun, 2009; Van der Valk & Wagenaar, 2010), 'key event' (Feddes, Mann, & Doosje, 2013), 'critical event' (Silke, 2008; Rytter & Pedersen, 2014), an 'event' or 'image' (Van San, Sieckelink & De Winter, 2013) and 'turning point' (Rutter, 1996; Soyer, 2014). In the present review, we consider trigger factors as an inclusive concept related to two kinds of events in the radicalisation process:

1) events that result in a *turning point* in the life of a person and initiate a process of (further) radicalisation or reverse the process (de-) radicalisation;
2) events that serve as a *catalyst* and can speed up or slow down processes of (de-) radicalisation.

In the field of criminology there has been considerable attention for trigger factors. For example, according to the *general strain theory* (Agnew, 1992) criminal behaviour can be explained largely by negative and stressful experiences. Agnew outlined that effects are

depending on the extent they are (1) greater in magnitude or size, (2) recent, (3) of long duration, and (4) clustered in time.

Trigger factors are expected to play a role at the micro- (individual), meso- (group) and national/societal (macro-level). This division is in line with research investigating the so-called "root factors" of radicalisation (i.e., Kruglanski & Fishman, 2009; Schmid, 2013). Trigger factors are related to root factors as they influence psychological processes that have been identified in radicalisation such as relative deprivation (Moghaddam, 2005). However, whereas the experience of relative deprivation involves an internal psychological process, trigger factors are concrete, observable events.

Inclusion of literature on criminal behaviour

In the research field of criminology there has been considerable attention for trigger factors. For example, according to the *general strain theory* (Agnew, 1992) criminal behaviour can be explained largely by negative and stressful experiences. Agnew outlined that the effect of these trigger factors are depending on the extent they are (1) greater in magnitude or size, (2) recent, (3) of long duration, and (4) clustered in time. Based on this theory, it is already possible to make predictions for possible effect of trigger factors. Because previous researchers have pointed out that comparisons can be made between radical groups and criminal groups (i.e., youth gangs, see Bovenkerk, 2010; Decker & Pyrooz, 2007), we also included literature from this research field.

Method

Online databases

Online databases were explored between April 15 until April 30, 2015. The first step of the search was conducted focusing on keywords in the title, keywords, and abstract of the manuscripts. The following databases were included in the search: Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts, EconLit, ERIC, International Bibliography of the Social Sciences

(IBSS), National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS), PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, Social Services Abstracts, Worldwide Political Science Abstracts.

Search strategy

Online data search. Based on a pilot study we used the following search terms in different combinations: trigger factor, trigger event, life event , key event, turning point, radicalisation, extremism, terrorism. We also explored the criminology using "criminology" or "gangs" as search terms. In addition, we searched for English, Dutch, and German literature on Google Scholar.

Request to colleague researchers. A total of 55 colleague researchers in the following countries were approached twice via email in May and June 2015: Australia (n = 1), Denmark (n = 5), Germany (n = 3), France (n = 1), Ireland, (n = 1), Israel (n = 1), Italy (n = 1), the Netherlands (n = 26), Norway (n = 2), Spain (n =1), UK (n = 2), USA (n = 10), and Sweden (n = 1). The research background of these researchers included: criminology (n = 6), forensic psychology (n = 1), developmental psychology (n = 1), pedagogical science (n = 4), political science (n = 11), psychology (n = 6), sociology (n = 3), and general social science (n = 23).

Criteria of inclusion and exclusion

Studies were included if a quantitative or qualitative analysis was presented or in case of a theoretical discussion related to trigger factors in the radicalisation process or processes related to criminal behaviour. All disciplines of magazines were included to allow for a broad approach of the subject and collecting all relevant data.

Results

The steps of analyses of the literature search are given in the PRISMA diagram in Figure 1. This diagram presents the different steps taken in the literature review (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & the PRISMA group, 2009). The first author conducted a first analysis of a total of 5.595 manuscripts. After removal of duplicates and a first selection based on the

title, abstract, and keywords a first selection of 357 manuscripts was made. Independently of each other, the first and third author examined 90 manuscripts based on relevance. The interrater reliability was .56 (Cohen's Kappa), a reasonable level of agreement according to Altman (1991). Eventually, 88 manuscripts were excluded, the remaining 269 manuscripts dealt with the topics radicalisation (n = 142), criminal behaviour (n = 124) or both (n = 3). We now discuss the trigger factors that were present in these manuscripts on a micro-, meso-, and macro-level.

Trigger factors at the micro level

The first set of trigger factors are events that occur in the personal realm. The first two factors we discuss are encounters with death and domestic problems (conflict, divorce of parents).

Confrontations with death. Researchers have pointed out that death can be a trigger in the radicalisation process. For instance, Slootman, Tillie, Majdy and Buijs (2009) give the example of a young Islamic man who converted himself to radical Islam after having been confronted with death (p. 38):

> "At a point, I was afraid of dying and to die as an infidel. Once, I was in the metro and had the feeling I was dying. When I came home, I got a similar feeling. My heart raged and it felt like my spirit was departing. I lied down and my mother called the ambulance. This really was decisive for my conversion. I always postponed converting myself: "Next week, next week". But you can die at any time."

This event evidently made a deep impression at the young man who at the time of the event and was, according to him, decisive for his conversion. Experiences with death can concern the individual himself, but death of relevant others can also serve as trigger factors. For example, in interviews with former right-wing extremists, Van der Valk and Wagenaar (2010) found that the 2004 murder on the Dutch film maker Theo van Gogh by an Islamic

extremist triggered their radicalisation process as they wanted to "do something against it" and considered themselves "warriors for a good cause" (p. 58).

Empirical research supports the notion that a confrontation with death can lead to further radicalisation. In a laboratory experiment, Pyszczynski and colleagues (Pyszczynski, Abdollahi, Solomon, Greenberg, Cohen, & Weise, 2006) confronted (non-radical) Iranian students with their own death. In a control group, the students were asked to think about a negative topic unrelated to death. Results showed that people who were confronted with their own death supported suicide attacks by others aimed at the US to a greater extent than did people in the control group. These findings were replicated in the US where subjects who were confronted with their own death showed greater support for the use of military violence that kills thousands of civilians in a hostile country.

Also Lankford (2014) concludes in a research among 130 suicide terrorists that about half of them had been confronted beforehand with the death of a close friend. Also Buijs and colleagues (2006) and Weggemans, Bakker and Grol (2014) mention death as a possible trigger factor. Other research suggests that death can trigger radicalisation in significance seekers are the so-called "black widows" in Chechnya; woman who commit suicide attacks after their husband had been killed in battle (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006). Finally, for sensation seekers no evidence was found, however, based on terror management theory it can be predicted that also these individuals can be triggered by a confrontation with death.

Domestic problems. Events related to domestic problems can also serve as a trigger in the radicalisation process. This is first of all suggested in a study by Corner and Gill (2014) focusing on 119 lone actor terrorists in the EU and the US. The authors found that 33% of these terrorists the parents had been divorced.

De Graaf (2012) describes the story of Belgian-Moroccan Malika E. who suffered under violence at home, broke up with her family, and was later abandoned by the father of

her child. She found comfort in religion or as she put it: 'praying was my last resort'. Eventually she found her way to Al-Qaida.

Other case studies are presented by Buijs et al. (2006). They describe the domestic problems of two Dutch extremists, Jason W. and Mohammed B. Jason W., who was a member of the Dutch Muslim extremist Hofstad group, was 13 years old his parents divorced and his father became an alcoholic Buijs et al. (2006). Also Mohammed B., the murderer of Theo van Gogh, experienced domestic problems as his mother died of cancer when he was 21. Whereas Jason is characterised by Buijs et al. as a typical seeker for (political) justice, is Mohammed characterised as primarily a religious seeker (2006, p. 241) in our classification system a significance seeker.

Both Geelhoed (2012) and Wiktorowicz (2004) note that domestic problems can result in an identity crisis which can trigger radicalisation also suggest identity to be susceptible to negative events in the family. Domestic problems have been reported by Lankford (2012) in half of the 12 suicide terrorists he describes. Also Kleinmann (2012) describes how negative events in the family have played a role in the radicalisation process of radicalised Muslims.

Aly and Striegher (2012) describe the case of Jack .R. He mentions the divorce from his wife as one of the trigger factors which left him with a feeling of emptiness and isolation and motivated him to pursue a religious quest. In 2000 he travelled to Afghanistan where he met senior Al-Qaida leaders (including Osama Bin Laden) and received a military training. In November 2002 he was arrested under charges of preparing a bomb attack on the Israeli embassy in Canberra.

Losing perspective on work or problems at school. These factors were encountered in several publications. Lankford (2012) observed that losing work or problems at school were reported for eight out of 12 suicide terrorists from the US. Also Kleinmann (2012) concludes

from a study among 83 radicalised Muslims in the US that losing a job and problems at school serve as trigger factors. Porter and Kebbell (2015) found that problems at school were a trigger factor for one of 21 convicted extremists in Australia and Feddes and colleagues (2013) found in an interview study with former right wing extremists that losing a job was a trigger for one of 13 interviewed persons. Aly and Striegher (2012) mention that losing a job his job also played a role in the earlier discussed case study Jack R. (who left for Afghanistan in 2000 and was later arrested). Based on an interview with the British Muslim Moazzam B., who was released from Guantánamo prison in January 2005 after being held for allegedly conspiring to acts of terrorism, Abbas (2007) notes that dropping out of college due to domestic pressures and having to work a for him tedious job as a civil servant triggered his ongoing search for Islam in his attempt to "get rid of the cultural baggage" which ultimately led to his trips to Pakistan where he got arrested. Moazzam did not feel at home in British society and struggled with his identity while facing racial hostility (p. 432).

An example that losing work can be a trigger factor is the case of Jermaine W. who was the brother of Jason W., a member of the Dutch terrorist "Hofstad" group. After being released from custody due to lack of evidence of his involvement in the group, he started studying and found work at an accountant bureau. However, he was fired based on his past. After this he quitted applying for jobs and started interacting again with religious friends. In August 2014, he took his wife and three children to Syria where he died during a bombardment on June 1, 2015 (Sterkenburg, 2015, June 20). In a letter about his brother after his death Jason W. writes (Le Fever, 2015, June 8): "He firmly believed in the ideals he died for, believing he was fighting for a true and just cause." This would suggest Jermaine was a justice seeker just like his brother Jason (see Buijs et al., 2006). Having been fired earlier from his work could have increased feelings of injustice done to him and Muslims in general and motivated him further to make the move to Syria.

In criminology, a range of empirical, longitudinal studies have shown that losing work and dropping out of school is related to criminal behaviour. For example, Corner and Gill show that losing work on short term can result in criminal behaviour. Other studies in the US (Uggen, 2000; Laub & Sampson, 2003; Wright & Cullen, 2004), Norway (Skardhamar & Savolainen (2014), Finland (Savolainen, 2009) and the Netherlands (Van der Geest, Bijleveld, & Blokland, 2011) present evidence that the reverse pattern also is found: criminal behaviour declines after finding work. Also, in a sample of 4.147 delinquents Blomberg, Bales, and Piquero (2012) found that academic achievement is an important trigger factor re-directing juvenile delinquents away from subsequent offending. In the context of radicalisation these findings would suggest that academic achievement and work can be important protective factors against radicalisation, while dropping out of school or losing work can trigger (further) radicalisation.

Direct experiences with discrimination, racism, and exclusion. Corner and Gill (2014) conclude that of the 191 lone actor terrorists had 40% had been a target of prejudice and 45% had an experience of being disrespected in build up to the event providing further evidence that experiences with discrimination and exclusion can trigger radicalisation. This is in line with research in regard to *school shootings* in the U.S. (Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, & Stucke, 2001). For example, McCauley, Moskalenko and Van Son (2013) find that stressors related to exclusion played a role in 98% of the school shooters in their study.

That experiences with discrimination can serve as a trigger factor can be also concluded from an interview study by Wiktorowicz (2004). He concludes, based on interviews with 22 Muslim extremists in the UK, that experiences with discrimination really made them reflect on their life and that this reflection led to a so-called 'cognitive opening'. According to Wiktorowicz this reflection process made them to re-examine their values and their identity that made them vulnerable for radicalisation. This can be illustrated by a

statement of a former Muslim extremist from Belgium (Stockmans & Alde'emeh, 2014, June 13):

> "It felt as if I had to defend myself in front of the whole classroom. In seconds which felt like minutes I looked around the classroom and suddenly saw only white children – the victims, the Americans – and myself, I was Osama Bin Laden, the perpetrator, the Muslim. I never had hear of [Bin Laden], but felt a mysterious connection with him and was curious about what had driven him. The hatred and the quick verdict of a teacher bombarded a kid from Baardegem to representative of worldwide terrorists."

Also Richardson (2012) mentions experiences with discrimination as an important factor in radicalisation in a review study based on open sources that focused on 41 Somali-Americans who had left for Somalia. An example is a Somali young man, Abikar M., who recalls an incident that "opened his eyes to the flagrant discrimination that the system meted out to Somali-Americans and other refugee minorities" (p. 45). He explained that even though he graduated high school among the top five students he did not get a scholarship to go to college even though he felt he clearly deserved it.

Negative experiences with authorities (secret service, law enforcement). Based on the literature these events can also trigger (further) radicalisation. Negative experiences can result in negative emotions that, in turn, can lead to further radicalisation (Feddes, Mann, & Doosje, 2012). This can be illustrated by the above-mentioned interview excerpt with, Moazzam B. who had been raided by the British intelligence service MI5 in 2000 and experienced this as an attack on him as a person which further radicalised him (Abbas, 2007, p. 434). Another example is the excerpt from a young Muslim woman who was interviewed by Choudhury and Fenwick (2011) after she had been physically attacked after the terrorist attack in London on July 7, 2005 (p. 157):

> "It was such as traumatic experience, because we've been spat at before, we've been sworn at, but this is physical harm; somebody actually physically harming you. And my daughter was

> with me as well. But what happened was eight hours I had to wait to be interviewed and even during that process the police kept saying that they're just young lads and trying to discourage me; that they are maybe just playing around. But it's the principle of the matter . . . in the end the case was dropped; it didn't go as far as the court but nobody informed me. It was only when we chased it up that they said that it was too far ahead and there is nothing we can do. There wasn't sufficient evidence. They made excuses . . . The legal remedy wasn't there for me. I'm quite angry actually."

However, a confrontation with authorities can also be a trigger factor that reverses or slows down the radicalisation process. This becomes evident from a statement by a jihadi-Salafist in a study by Slootman et al. (2009) who distanced himself from the group because he wanted "to have nothing to do with the AIVD [Dutch intelligence service]" (p. 20).

Interestingly, research from criminology provides longitudinal empirical data showing that contact with police increased the chance that young adults predicted future use of violence (The Rochester Youth Development Study; Ward, 2011; Ward et al., 2014; Lopes, Krohn, Lizotte, Schmidt, Vásquez, & Bernburg, 2012). As a possible explanation, the authors conclude that *labelling* (putting a label on a person or group) can negatively influence future behaviour of the individual or group (see also Atchison & Heide, 2011).

A final case study of radicalisation in which negative experiences with authorities played a role is Mohammed E., better known as "Jihadi John". .... describes that Mohammed travelled to Tanzania in 2009 to go on safari. He was detained on arrival, however, held overnight and deported. In 2010 he was imprisoned and controlled by counterterrorism officials in Britain in 2010. In 2010 he wrote in an email to a friend (Botelho & Starr, 2015, November 14):

> "I had a job waiting for me and marriage to get started [but now] I feel like a prisoner, only not in a cage, in London. A person imprisoned & controlled by security service men, stopping me from living my new life in my birthplace & country, Kuwait."

Friends suspect the incident in Tanzania was a trigger factor in his radicalisation process. In 2012 he is believed to have travelled to Syria to Join ISIS and regularly appeared in beheading videos in recent years.

Detention. Related to the previous trigger factor, it has been argued that detention or an arrest can be a trigger factor. Weggemans and De Graaf argue this is the case because these events "confirm the individual's and his/her group's hostile world view" (p. 50). In support for this notion Van der Valk and Wagenaar (2010) found in an interview study with former right wing extremists that their detention experience "neatly fitted the existing world view" because they felt to be a victim of the enemy against whom they were fighting (2010, p. 82). Most of the 12 interviewees saw police actions and their detention as "a confirmation of hostile relations between their own group and the "Jewish state" (p. 110) which would make this trigger in particular relevant for justice seekers. In addition to these observations, Weggemans and De Graaf consider prisons to be an environment that can trigger radicalisation as they are "places of vulnerability" (2015, p. 49) which would make detention an important potential trigger for individuals who are already struggling with their identity.

Also Veldhuis and Staun (2009) point out that prisons are hostile environments where membership in a group is essential. When these groups form based on ethnicity or religion than this could further trigger the radicalisation process, in particular among individuals who are looking for social bonds (see also Trujillo, Jordan, Gutierrez, Gonzalez-Cabrera, 2009). Detention has been documented to play an important role in the radicalisation process of, for example, Mohammed B. (the murderer of the filmmaker Theo van Gogh in Amsterdam in 2004) who got interested in a radical interpretation of Islam during his prison time in the '90s (see Veldhuis & Staun, 2009). Also Chérif K, one of the three attackers on the editorial office of the satirical newspaper agency *Charlie Hebdo* and a Jewish supermarket in Paris in January 2015, was said to be influenced by an Islamic extremist, Djamel B., who introduced

him to Amedy C. Also Abbas (2007) concludes that detention further triggered the radicalization process of Moazzam B. who himself refers to it as a confrontation with "white racist fascists" (p. 432).

Prison can, however, also serve as a *positive* trigger factor. Consider this former right wing extremist who says in an interview (Feddes et al., 2013, p. 82):

> "At that time I was not in doubt, however when I really got arrested, when I really found myself isolated in a tiny prison cell then I started to think. And then I realised I really was on the wrong track. That really was the moment that I decided to quit it".

For this person detention led to the earlier discussed 'cognitive opening' as mentioned by Wiktorowicz (2004). However, in this case the trigger factor served as a turning point and was the basis for a process of de-radicalisation.

Summary trigger factors at a micro-level

This review has shown that different factors can trigger (further) radicalisation, or introduce a process of de-radicalisation. No single, unique trigger factor stood out and the trigger factors that were identified occurred not only in the context of Islamic radicalisation but also in context of right-wing radicalisation and criminal behaviour. Overall, empirical evidence for trigger factors on micro-level is scarce. Trigger factors at a micro-level seem to play an important role in particular in the early phases of radicalisation; they can result in a personal crisis and lead to a cognitive opening and a pursuit of a radical ideology.

Trigger factors at the meso level

While relatively much research has focused on trigger factors on micro-level in comparison to the meso- and macro level, many researchers emphasize that group processes play a crucial role in the radicalisation process. In this section, we examine trigger factors related to the social context: breaking social bonds, meeting a radical person, joining a radical group, marriage, participating in a training, and confrontation with propaganda.

Cutting social bonds. Breaking social bonds is also referred to as 'bridge burning' (Bjørgo & Carlsson, 2005). Our literature search suggests that this is a trigger factor in the early phases of radicalisation (sensitivity for radicalisation and exploration) but also a possible trigger factor during membership. Groen and Kranenberg report that a break in the family has played a role in the radicalisation process of several female Muslims who were member in the Hofstadgroup. Weggemans and colleagues (2014) point out that Muslims who travelled to Syria to join extremist groups isolated themselves beforehand from society and broke with family members and friends. Buijs and colleagues (2006) describe how Mohammed B. quits his education in 2002 and lives in isolation and depending on welfare from that point onwards. Buijs et al. point out that it was in this period of time that a change in his worldviews occurred (2009, p. 37). He meets radical Muslims among whom members of the Hofstadgroup and murders Van Gogh in November 2004.

That cutting social bonds can serve as a trigger factor can also be theoretically supported based on the findings that social bonds are associated with a greater level of resilience against radicalisation (Mann et al., 2015). Doosje et al. (2013) find in a study among non-radical Muslims that a greater disconnectedness from Dutch society is associated with more positive attitude toward the use of extremist violence. A break with the social environment can, therfore, also occur in a later phase of radicalisation when people join an extremist group and are encouraged or forced to break their bonds with their social environment (see also Bjørgo & Carlsson, 2005). Recruiters actively make use of this phenomenon by further isolating people from the outside world (see also Buijs et al., 2006). In an interview with Callimachi, a former recruiter says (2015, June 27): "We look for people who are isolated. And if they are not yet isolated already, then we isolate them". In an interview a 20 year-old American woman describes how she broke with her family and travelled to Syria in November 2014 (Hall, 2015, April 18):

> "I literally isolated myself from all my friends and community members the last year I was in America," she said, explaining that she didn't want to associate with anyone who didn't share her interpretation of Islam, an interpretation that she said demanded every Muslim move to ISIS controlled territory. "As I grew closer to my *deen* [religious life], I lost all my friends, I found none in my community that desired to tread the path I was striving for."

In particular, these descriptions fit the typology of identity seekers who are looking for social bonds. Indeed, Winter (2015) points out that propaganda of extremist groups often targets the need to belong and by addressing people's identity. However, also justice seekers, like the earlier mentioned Jason W. got in a conflict with a mosque after which he distanced himself (Buijs et al., 2006, p. 27). Also Kouwenhoven (2014, July 5) describes the story of 10 young Dutch Muslim men who travelled to Syria in 2012 after breaking from a mosque who sent them away for their radical statements. At a meso-level, recruiters and propaganda can highlight and strengthen these feelings of injustice (see also Campbell, 2015, July 30; Wiktorowicz, 2004).

Meeting a radical person. As pointed out in the discussion above, recruiters can often be a decisive factor in the radicalisation process. An example is the case of a former radical who was in an early phase of radicalisation when he was approached by a recruiter (De Wever, 2015, April 6):

> "It was not until a recruiter of Hizb ut-Tahrir approached me and confronted me with my anger that I became enthusiastic about the Caliphate which offered me an explanation and a dream. I connected my anger to radical Islam, a disgusting ideology. That step made me radical."

Also the brothers K., who were involved in the attack on Charlie Hebdo in Paris in January 2015, were presumably triggered in their radicalisation process by a charismatic preacher

(Farid B.; Callimachi & Yardley, 2015, January 17). The Dutch convert Dennis H. was, according to himself, 'recruited' by an ultra-orthodox Egyptian sheik at a moment he already had developed an orthodox style of life. Later onwards he met Fouad B. (of the organization Sharia4Belgium) who triggered him further (De Stroop, 2015, February 25).

In line with these case studies, Silber and Bhatt (2004) stress that radicalising people are often triggered by extremists they contact. Also Precht (2007) points out that a charismatic person or spiritual leader can be seen as a catalyst or turning point in the radicalisation process (AIVD, 2006). Other research of the Dutch police also stresses that without exception all jihadist groups in the Netherlands are able to "convert others to a Salafist, political variant of the Islam"(Poot & Sonnenschein, 2009, p. 95). In this context, it is important to note that this offer meets a demand in the seekers, whether it is a need for identity, justice, significance, or sensation. In this sense the interaction can be seen as a process of demand and supply (Mellis, 2007; Moors et al., 2009). Social media plays a crucial role in this as can be illustrated by the story of Alex, a 23-year-old American woman who lived in the countryside. A British recruiter, Faisal M. got in touch with her via Twitter and slowly pulled her into the world of radical Islam (Callimachi, 2015, June 27).

Also family and friends can trigger individuals to radicalise further (i.e., the 'bunch of guys' phenomenon, Sageman, 2004). This can be illustrated by a description of Slootman et al. of a group radical males in Amsterdam (2009, p. 15):

> "Almost all the young men were influenced by people out of their own environment, like brothers, friends, and other relatives. In the religious development some leading persons played an important role. In the case of Ali, Hakim, Lofti and Said the leading role of Moustapha was clear. He influenced them and taught them what they know now. Most likely Ali, Hakim, Lofti, and Said would not have been salafi-Jihadi if it were not for Moustapha and if they had not met a person like Moustapha."

Joining a radical group. One of the most important trigger factors in the radicalisation process is becoming an actual member of an extremist group, the step from the exploration phase to a membership phase. Examples are the Buttes-Chaumont group in Paris. Members of this group were the K. brothers who committed the attack on Charlie Hebdo in Paris in January 2015. The group was influenced by a radical preacher who worked as a caretaker in a building in the area they lived in. In the group the men radicalised further (Yardley, 2015, January 11). An example from the Netherlands is the before-mentioned Hofstadgroup in which a group of friends radicalised under the influence of a radical Syrian preacher (Schuurman,,Eijkman, & Bakker, 2014). The group also served as a catalyst in the radicalisation process of several young Moroccan men in The Hague (Bahara, 2013, June 19). De Graaf (2012) describes how a young Belgian woman, Malika E. radicalised after becoming member in an extremist group (p. 192):

> "After a troubled period in her life she found peace in the Islamic Centre Belge in Sint-Jans-Molenbeek; a meeting place for Islamic fundamentalists and one of the first places where a radical-jihadist ideas were expressed."

In the group she met her husband with whom she ultimately joined Al-Qaida. Sageman (2004) illustrates this 'bunch of guys' phenomenon by referring to the Hamburg Group in Germany. Also McCauley and Moskalenko (2008) emphasise the importance of group dynamics in the radicalisation process and illustrate this by referring to several case studies (ARTIS, 2009).

Developmental studies in the area of criminology suggest, in line with the radicalisation findings, that the influence of peers can be an important contribution to development of criminal behaviour in adolescence. In a longitudinal study among 1.354 delinquent adolescents, Monahan, Steinberg, and Cauffmann (2009) report that exposure to antisocial behaviour in mid-adolescence predicted antisocial behaviour in young adulthood.

Their research results provide empirical evidence for the notion that socialisation processes play a key role in development of, in this case antisocial, behaviour. Interestingly, the authors find that after the age of 20 the effect of peers becomes less important which the author's attribute to a greater resilience to normative pressure with age.

Marriage. Marriage is often mentioned as a trigger factor in the radicalisation process in particular when the partner is already radical (Von Knop, 2007). Indeed, the number of young Western woman who travelled to Syria seems to be growing and arranged marriages have been mentioned to play a role in this (Bakker & De Leede, 2015; Von Knop, 2007). Von Knop points out that arranged marriages form a method for extremist Muslim groups to not only to strengthen the bonds with the new recruit, but also to the family of the recruit.

The literature provides some qualitative evidence for the notion that marriage can serve as a trigger factor. Groen and Kranenberg (2006) describe how a marriage pulled Oum Y. in the extremist Hofstadgroup. Another example mentioned by Groen and Kranenberg is the Belgian Muriel D. who radicalised after marrying an extremist and eventually died as a suicide bomber in Iraq (p. 122):

> "Muriel D. (38) was raised in a workers neighbourhood in Wallonia. She smoked, drank alcohol and used drugs until she got into a relationship with a Turkish man. They broke up and Muriel married Hissam G., a radical Belgian-Moroccan Muslim. Influenced by G. she quickly radicalised. She started wearing a headscarf, and later on a niqab, she started reading the Koran and took Arabic lessons. When visiting her parents the couple demanded the women and men sat separated. Hissam even forbade the father of Muriel to drink beer in his own house.

Interestingly, a consistent finding in the criminology literature is that marriage is associated with *less* criminal behaviour in men and women (i.e., Bersani, Laub, & Nieuwbeerta, 2009; Burt, Simons, & Gibbons, 2012; Zoutewelle-Terovan, Van der Geest, Liefbroer, & Bijleveld,

2012) and to less involvement in criminal gangs (Tripp, 2007). Key is whether the partner is a criminal or an extremist. Marriage could, therefore, trigger de-radicalisation as suggested by the following fragment (Sterkenburg, 2014, January, 25):

> "Baaij confirmed that Victor D. already had Jihad plans in summer: 'When we discussed marriage he said he did not want to marry because he wanted to join the Jihad. Becoming a Jihad warrior would be more difficult when you have to leave a family behind.'"

Participating in a training camp/course. Bovenkerk and Roex (2011) consider participating in a training camp as an important potential trigger factor leading to further radicalisation. They illustrate this by pointing out that several dozens of Dutch radicals have travelled to countries such as Pakistan and Chechnya to visit a training camp, including members of the Hofstadgroup Samir A. and Jason W.. Dutch jihadists in Syria told a journalist about a training they had followed (Groen, 2013, June 15). The Dutch police also concludes that training is a trigger factor and describe several elements of such a training (Poot & Sonnenschein, p. 104):

> "Young adults [...] receive the opportunity, parallel to radical-ideological lessons and meetings, to make up a testament and make testimonies related to Jihad which are recorded. This occurs under supervision of religious leaders or teachers. As the testimonies are fixed, it makes it less easy to change their minds afterwards. In addition, an instructor takes the recruits to training camps to train their physique. During these events he organises, besides activities such as canoeing and throwing lugs, also joint praying sessions that clearly are in line with violent Jihad."

Recording testimonies of intentions are trigger factors as they result in increased commitment to the group; it creates a point of no return. In case of suicide bombers, these testimonies imply a confrontation with one´s own death that was discussed as a trigger factor at the

micro-level. Training camps further can serve as trigger factors as they increase the connection to the group. In this regard, Bovenkerk and Roex (2011) cite a Youtube-video in which a group radical young men speak about their experiences in a training camp (p. 146)

> "It is a powerful, indescribably beautiful and affectious brotherhood you share with mujahideen, brothers from many different countries... Russia, Morocco, Tunesia, China, Turkey, Europe, Oezbekistan, Tadzjikistan, and Iran. Allah brought all of them together."

The strengthening of in-group bonds can also result into bridge-burning, that is, breaking former social bonds. In Afghan camps Al-Quaida encourage participants to break with their former home bonds and to be adopted in the new family (Bovenkerk & Roex, 2011, p. 145). This is in line with research on initiation rituals in which isolation is used as a strategy to let individuals being "reborn" into a new environment and with a new social identity and status (Van Gennep, 1909/1961). In this respect, a training camp is considered a particularly important trigger factor for identity seekers (creating new social bonds and a new identity) and significance seekers (as it creates a clear purpose for the future).

A final important trigger function of training camps is that it can increase the willingness to use violence to reach one's goals. This can be illustrated by an excerpt of the in the beginning cited Japanese terrorist Okamoto (Steinhoff, 1976, p. 837-838):

> "Okamoto was impressed both by the training and by the serious commitment to revolution which everybody displayed. [...] Okamoto, who as a tenth grader wanted to go to the Defense College, feels superior because his commitment was voluntary and he believes his training was better. [...] The instruction he did receive was very intense and individualised [...] It was not until the seventh and final week of actual military training that Okamoto was told about the Tel Aviv attack plan by Okudaira. He was informed that he would participate and he agreed [...] since he volunteered for the

> training, there was no real question of whether he would "volunteer" for this assignment."

In this sense the training served as a trigger factor in the final phases of radicalisation pushing Okamoto from the group membership phase to the action phase.

Confrontation with propaganda. Development of a radical ideology is a key process in the radicalisation process. It can therefore be presumed that confrontation with propaganda is a trigger factor as well. At a meso-level this trigger manifests itself in a radical group, either in a physical manner (think of training camps) or virtual group (think of online radicalisation). Indeed, a recent study to the radicalisation of 62 jihadists in the US indicated that all these individuals had been at least partly influenced by propaganda on the internet (Bergen, 2015). A concrete example of how this could work is the following excerpt of an interview with a former extremists, Sajid, in the UK (Campbell, 2015, July 30):

> "I started to look at movies and became bitter [...]. After I read about crimes committed by Shiites,I watched a video of an execution of an Iraqi soldier and I remember thinking: 'Good'."

An important aspect of propaganda is that messages and images such as the crimes described above result in negative emotions (Mann et al., 2015) that can play an important role in predicting extreme action (see Feddes et al., 2012) and feed into existing root factors of radicalisation. These emotions include anger and shame (see Kruglanski et al., 2014), but also humiliation (Lickel, 2012) and contempt (Tausch, Becker, Spears et al., 2011). Rieger, Frischlich and Bente (2013) point out that professionally made films which are personalised to the needs of receivers have more effect. For example, Hedgehammer (2010) found that Saoedi jihadists in Afghanistan were most attracted by the masculinity of the messages and the excitement of weapons training.

Summary trigger factors at a meso-level

While much research has focused on trigger factors at a micro-level, group processes evidently play a key role in the radicalisation process. Based on the literature review, we have identified a range of trigger factors: breaking social bonds, meeting a radical person, joining a radical group, marrying a radical individual, participating in a training camp, and confrontation with propaganda. While trigger factors at a micro level seem to play an important role in early stages of radicalisation (vulnerability and exploration), trigger factors at a meso level are often encountered in later levels such as group membership and action phase. Quantitative empirical evidence is rare also at meso-level. Most evidence from the literature was based on anecdotal or theoretical basis.

Trigger factors at a macro level

At a macro-level radicals and extremists often refer to global events and security services stress that international events ini Syria and Iraq can serve as triggers. The Dutch ministry of security and justice recently posed that "the role of current events as 'trigger' cannot be underestimated" (NCTV, 2015). Little scientific evidence exists, however, that has investigated the effects of events on (inter)national level on the radicalisation process. In this section, we distinguish three triggers: calls for action and lack of efficacy, perceived attacks on the in-group, and governmental policy aimed at the in-group or radicalisation.

Calls for action and (lack of) efficacy. An example of a possible trigger factor at macro-level is a call for action that triggers further radicalisation in individuals worldwide. A recent example of what is considered to be a strong global trigger was the announcement of the Caliphate by IS on June 29, 2014, which also implied a call for Muslims worldwide to join this Caliphate. The glossy IS magazine 'Dabiq' also encourages Muslims to "come, recruit, and join the warriors in Iraq and Syria to fight" (Mullen & Todd, 2014, September 17). Another recent example is the call of the spokesperson of IS, Abu Mohammed al-Adnani, to Muslims worldwide which was followed by a series of attacks in Tunesia, Kuwait,

and France on June 26, 2015 (Hubbard, 2015, June 26; see also Geelhoed, 2012): "Muslims, embark and hasten toward jihad [...] O mujahedeen everywhere, rush and go to make Ramadan a month of disasters for the infidels."

An explanation why these calls can serve as trigger factors is that they target individuals globally who identify with this group. According to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986) people are motivated to join successful social groups. Indeed, research by Tausch and colleagues (2011) has shown that a strong identity can contribute to support for extreme actions to improve the position of the in-group. They further show that a lack of efficacy is positively related to this support for extreme actions, a root factor also other researchers have identified (i.e., Moghaddam, 2005; Richardson, 2012; Wiktorowicz, 2004). For example, based on his interview study with extremist Muslims in the UK, Wiktorowicz concludes that many of them were highly educated students with a university background who were convinced that in the British system it was not possible to realize their potential. When these calls for action refer to suffering of the in-group or injustice against the in-group, justice seekers will most likely be susceptible (e.g., Precht, 2007; Horgan, 2008; Buijs et al., 2006). The same can be expected for calls referring to a joint shared social identity (identity seekers), calls referring to a clear future goal (significance seekers) and calls emphasizing to join the glory and excitement of battle (sensation seekers).

Perceived attacks on the in-group. Military actions in which Muslims have become victims can also serve as a trigger as they can be framed as an attack on the worldwide Muslim community, the Ummah (see also Geelhoed, 2012, p. 228; Lakhani, 2013, p. 127-128). By framing attacks, such as those of the Western coalition in the Middle East, as a threat to Islam, it becomes part of the ideology of extremists (Wiktorowicz, 2004). This so-called 'injustice-frame' becomes evident in a series of theories on group dynamics and social movement as. It binds the group together, strengthens feelings of 'othering', us-them thinking

and legitimises and escalates an ongoing process of radicalisation (see also De Graaf , 2014). Also Groen and Kranenberg recognize this "jointly shared feeling of being a victim" where interviewees stress that they are "being excluded" and there is a global "fight against the Islam"(2006, p. 283). As a Dutch Jihadist in Syria put it: "if there is someone responsible for recruiting us than it is the West with their barbarian wars in Muslim countries" (Groen, 2013, June 15). These jihadists therefore see themselves as fighters against this injustice and 'defenders' of the Ummah which is under threat. Concrete examples are American-Somali Muslims travelling to Somalia after military intervention of Ethiopia (Richardson, 2012), the scandals happening in Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad (Veldhuis & Staun, 2009). However, also the arrest of in-group members can be seen as an attack on the in-group which can lead to further radicalisation. This is suggested by Weggemans and De Graaf (2015) who mention the example of RAF members Andreas B., Gurdun E., Ulrike M, and Jan-Carl R. in the 70s which became a symbol for the movement confirming that their anti-governmental view was correct.

In addition, symbolic attacks on the in-group like the Danish cartoons in the newspaper *Politiken* , could trigger actions. These cartoons led to emotional outcries and violent attacks on an EU establishment in Gaza in January 2005 (Modood, Hansen, Bleich, O'Leary, & Carens, 2006). When these events are magnified and framed in terms of injustice against the in-group they are especially likely to trigger further radicalisation in justice seekers.

Governmental policy aimed at in-group or radicalisation.. Crenshaw (1981) poses that governmental policies can function as a trigger factor for terrorism. She writes (p. 384):

> "The last category of situational factors involves the concept of a precipitating event that immediately precedes outbreaks of terrorism. Although it is generally thought that precipitants are the most unpredictable of causes, there does seem to be a

> common pattern of government actions that acts as catalysts for terrorism. Government use of unexpected and unusual force in response to protest or reform attempts often compels terrorist retaliation."

An example of such a trigger factor was the military response by the army of Assad against the Syrian uprising movement which created the basis of an ongoing conflict nurturing terrorism. Crenshaw herself mentions the case of the death of Beno Ohnesorg at the hands of the police in a demonstration against the Shah of Iran in 1968 as a trigger factor of the emergence of the RAF, which also illustrates that an event at macro-level can trigger justice seekers.

Governmental responses to radicalisation and terrorism such as the Prevent policy in the UK also has been criticized as potentially discriminatory for the Muslim population (Lakhani, 2012). Concrete incidents could result in further alienation from Western societies and become susceptible for radicalisation (Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011). Rytter and Pedersen (2014) also mention that by labelling Muslims as *usual suspects* a minority can get frustrated and angry and susceptible to radicalisation. In this respect, research from criminology has shown that 'labelling' can trigger delinquent behaviour (e.g., Lopes et al., 2012; Ward et al., 2014).

Summary trigger factors at a macro-level. The review provides anecdotal evidence that events at a marco level can result in further radicalisation. In the description of the cases, it becomes evident that the interpretation or framing of events is as important as the event itself. The direct relation between trigger events and the radicalisation process is difficult to show. Events worldwide can result in negative emotions on a micro- or meso-level which in turn can explain (further) radicalisation.

Conclusions

This review of trigger factors has shown that a wide range of events may trigger (further) radicalisation at a micro- (personal), meso- (group) and macro- (national, global) level. Trigger factors can initiate radicalisation at different stages in the process of radicalisation; the vulnerability-, explorative-, group membership-, and action phase. Evidence has also been found that trigger factors can revert the radicalisation process leading to de-radicalisation. In addition, trigger factors can serve as catalysts either speeding up or slowing down the radicalisation process.

One conclusion we draw is that there is a lack of strong empirical evidence in this field in regard to processes of radicalisation. Limited by the low numbers of terrorists and radicals willing to participate in studies, much of the evidence put forth is derived from case studies or anecdotes. Another conclusion is that there is more research about the individual level than the meso and macro level. In addition, it seems that the micro level trigger factors are more focused on the earlier phases of radicalization (the vulnerability and explorative phases), while the trigger factors at the meso and the macro level are more associated with later phases (group membership and action phases). Thus, in the review, it became evident that trigger factors at a micro-level, such as confrontations with death, can explain what Wiktorowicz (2004) referred to as events leading to a *cognitive opening* which makes a person susceptible for alternative world views and, in the case of radicalisation, extreme ideologies. These trigger factors can initiate a process of searching for truth or cause to identify with. Trigger factors at a meso-level can also initiate exploration, but play a particular important role in later phases of radicalisation where individuals radicalise further in a group and are getting increasingly willing to commit extremist actions. Trigger factors at a macro-level also can lead to a cognitive opening and can be used (through framing) by extremist groups to push people to join in or to commit an extremist action.

Outline for future research

The literature review has shown that trigger factors can occur at different measurement levels and in different stages of radicalisation. It is likely that the effect of trigger factors is highly dependent on characteristics of an individual. In Figure 1 this notion is summarised. In line with previous research on radicalisation processes we expect the effect of trigger factors on radicalisation to depend on several moderators including typology (Buijs et al., 2006; Venhaus, 2010), gender (e.g., De Graaf, 2012, Monahan, 2012), age (e.g. Bhui, Dinos, & Jones, 2012), education (Schmid, 2013) and presence of behavioural disorders (e.g., Kleinmann, 2012; Weenink, 2015). We will limit our discussion to the possible role of typology. Following Buijs, Demant, and Hamdy (2006) and Venhaus (2010) four types of extremists can be distinguished. Each type can be characterised with specific underlying motives for radicalisations. *Identity seekers* are those individuals motivated by a quest for social status, a well-defined identity, and strong bonds to a social group. The need to belong to a social group is a basic need of people (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Group membership can be a source from which people can derive self-esteem and it can reduce feelings of uncertainty (Hogg, 2014; Doosje et al., 2013). The quest for status, identity, and social bonds is what motivates the identity seeker to join an extremist group (see also Bjørgo & Carlsson, 2005; Kepel, 2004). The development of a positive identity is considered a critical task in adolescence (i.e., Erikson, 1968). Adolescents in general can, therefore, be termed identity seekers, but in particular members of minority groups who struggle with a hybrid identity are considered especially vulnerable to radicalisation (Buijs et al., 2006, Feddes, Mann, & Doosje, 2015; Moghaddam, 2005; Van Bergen, Feddes, Doosje, & Pels, 2015). This is in line with the findings by Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder (2006) who could show in a study with more than 5300 immigrant youths that individuals with a so-called “diffuse identity” had poorest psychological and sociocultural adaptation and for these individuals “personal and social problems are likely to appear”.

The second type, *justice seeker*, are considered those individuals who perceive that they themselves or their social group are treated less well in comparison to other social groups. These feelings of relative deprivation have been shown to be an important root factor of radicalisation among radicalising Muslims in Western democracies (Buijs et al. 2006; Doosje et al., 2013; Kepel, 2004; Moghaddam, 2005; Van den Bos et al., 2009). This type of radicals are likely to be particularly vulnerable for trigger factors related to experienced injustice.

The third type, *significance seekers*, are individuals who are primarily driven by a quest for significance. According to Kruglanski, Bélanger, Gelfand and colleagues (2013) it is the experience of having a purpose in life that drives individuals to radicalise. In the so-called 'quest for significance' people try to provide meaning to their existence. One important way of doing this is by following an ideology or religion that is in line with the community they identify with. Buijs and colleagues (2006) refer to these people as 'religiously motivated individuals'. Converts are likely to fall in this category.

Finally, *sensation seekers* are those individuals who actively search for excitement and adventure. Venhaus (2010) labels them 'thrill seekers'; bored people full of energy, aiming to show their masculinity by following a radical adventurous path. Bjørgo and Carlsson (2005) discuss thrill seeking as an important motivation for people to join extreme-right wing groups, searching to find a way to display violent behaviour (Van der Valk en Wagenaar (2010). Radical Islamic males may be sensation seekers and find this in adventure, the excitement and violence of the battle field. Female Islamic thrill seekers may feel attracted to such men and may marry them (Sageman, 2008).

Practical implications

The findings of the review can inform policy and guidelines to prevent radicalisation. Often concrete events can initiate or speed up the radicalisation process and can therefore be

used to detect signals of radicalisation. The different types of (radicalising) individuals can help determine how an individual might best be approached. By identifying the needs and motivations of a radicalising individual, a more tailored countering approach can be outlined. For example, creating resilience in identity seeker takes a different approach than making sensation seekers resilient.

Further research is needed to specify characteristics of the identity-, justice-, significance-, and sensation seekers and whether certain types are particularly vulnerable for specific (combination of) trigger factors. The research area focusing development of criminal behaviour and in particular antecedents and consequences of involvement in criminal gangs could is also considered as a valuable resource that can inform effects of trigger factors in the radicalisation process, especially because they have more experience with longitudinal research.

A final note is that many trigger factors play a role in radicalisation independent of ideology; whether it is radicalisation leading to Muslim extremism, right-wing or left-wing extremism. While recognising the complexity of the radicalisation process and the uniqueness of each individual case, in the present paper, we have aimed to make more concrete which events can have a demonstrable effect leading to (further) radicalisation.

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Figures

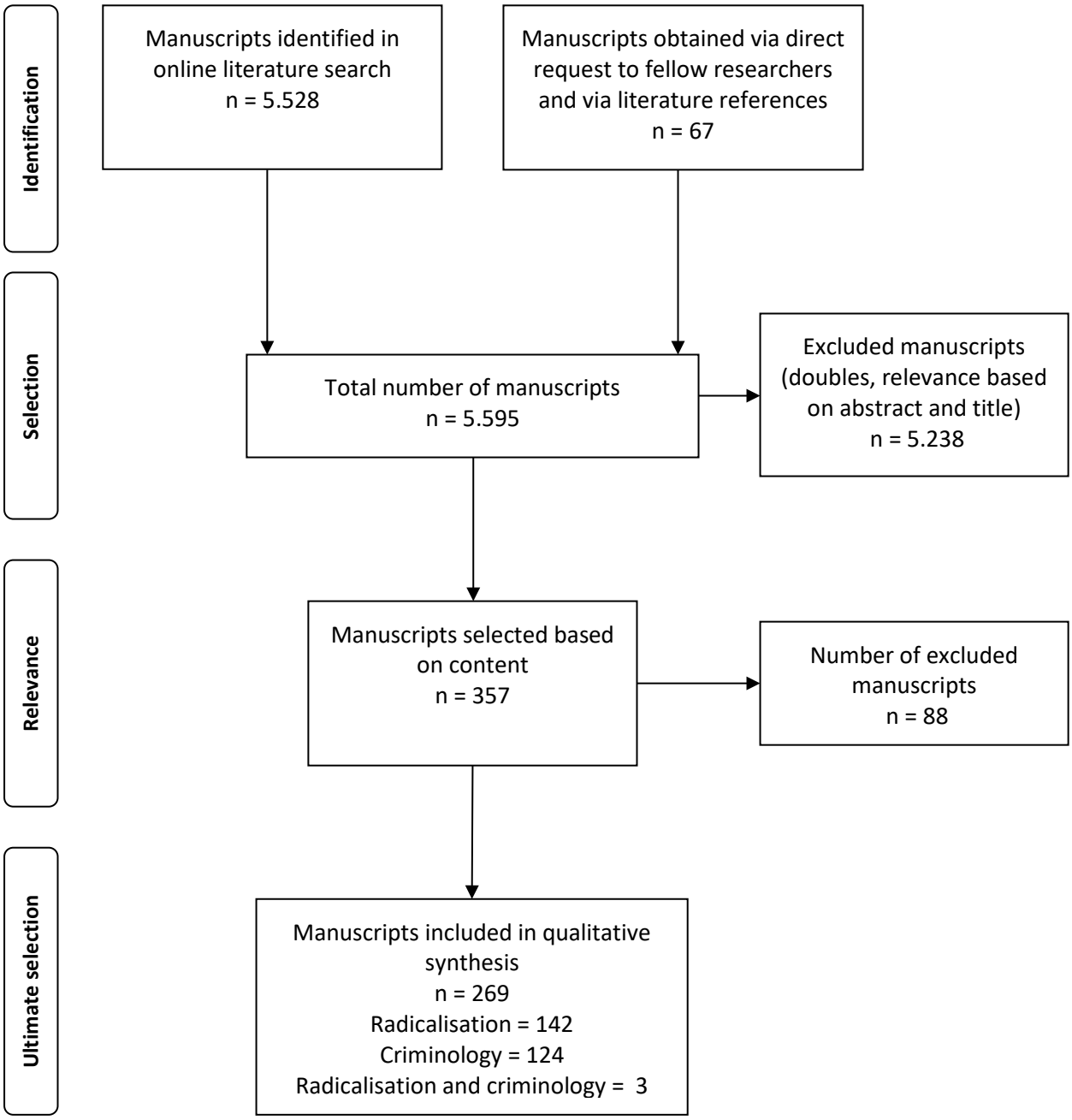

Figure 1.

PRISMA overview of selection of studies

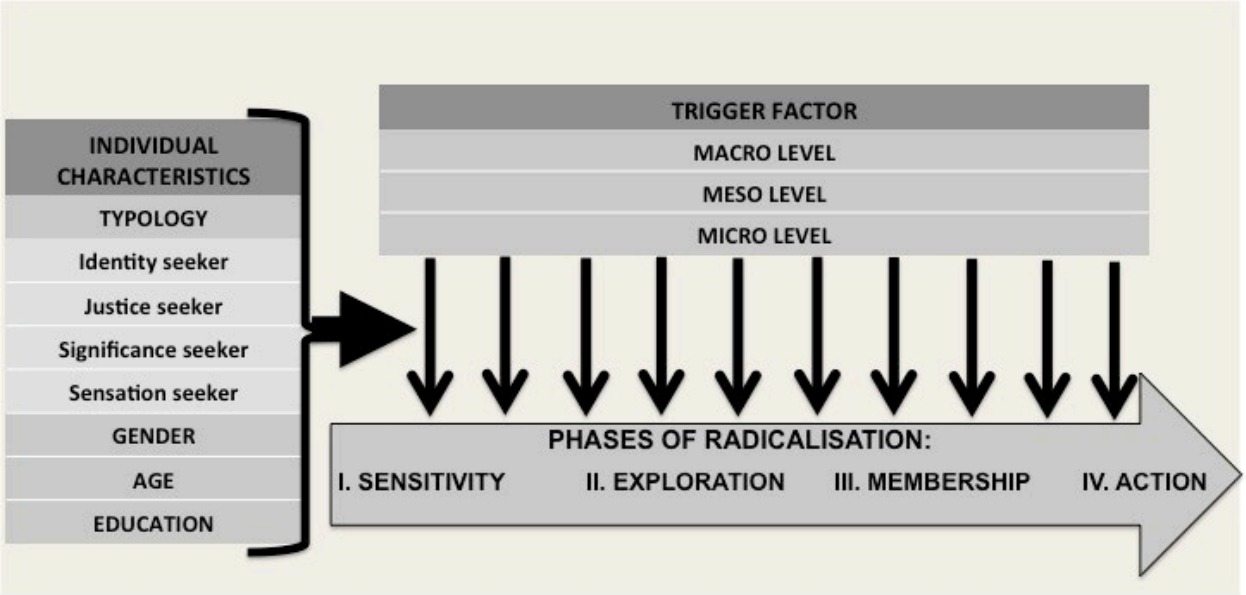

Figure 2.

A trigger factor model of radicalisation: The influence of trigger factors at a micro- (individual), meso- (group), and macro (societal/international) level on the radicalisation process and characteristics of the individual as moderators: typology (identity seekers / justice seekers / significance seekers / sensation seekers), gender, age, education, and behavioural disorders.