Summary

Aim of the study, main questions and approach

This report presents the results of a literature study on Islamic and extreme right-wing radicalisation in the Netherlands. These two forms of radicalisation are presently considered by the government as the most threatening types of radicalisation. The aim of the study is to offer a comparative analysis of the relevant insights provided by the literature on both types of radicalisation.

The main questions of the research are:

1. What is the ideology of radical Islam as well as the extreme right in the Netherlands, how do they organize, what are the characteristics of their supporters, to which extreme actions do they turn, and how do they relate to their environment?
2. What individual and social conditions explain why people become radical and associate themselves with radical Islam and the extreme right?
3. How do people come into contact with the radical Islam and the extreme right in the Netherlands and what constitutes the attraction of these movements?
4. How do processes of radicalisation develop within radical Islam and the extreme right in the Netherlands?
5. What similarities and differences exist between radical Islam and the extreme right in the Netherlands with respect to the questions mentioned above?
6. What points of departure for a policy to prevent and combat radicalisation in the Netherlands follow from the comparative analysis of radical Islam and the extreme right?
7. What follow-up research could provide answers to any of these questions that cannot be answered in a satisfactory manner?

The literature research included the following steps: (a) an inventory of relevant literature and current research; (b) a selection of the literature for further analysis; (c) an analysis of the selected literature for each movement; (d) a comparative analysis of insights into both movements; (e) the writing of the report. The selection of the literature for this study is based on the following

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criteria: relevance for finding answers to the main questions, of recent date (21st century), and based on empirical research findings. Because of the scarcity of literature that meets these criteria it has been decided to add a few relevant older studies (on the extreme right) as well as some foreign studies on both types of radicalism.

Islamic and extreme right radicalism

Chapters 3 and 4 offer answers from the selected body of literature to the main questions with regard to Islamic and extreme right-wing radicalism in the Netherlands respectively.

Salafism is the most prominent radical movement within Islam and also the only type of Islamic radicalism investigated in the Netherlands. Commonly, three main currents are distinguished within the Salafi movement in the Netherlands: the a-political, the political, and the jihadist currents. Only jihadists support violent jihad to further their aims; the a-political and political currents are non-violent. Nevertheless, according to AIVD, the Dutch Intelligence and Security Services, these two non-violent branches also constitute a risk to social cohesion because of their anti-integrative attitudes. Thus, the risk of radicalisation also exists within the a-political and political branches of Salafism. Although the research literature in general does not confirm these concerns, it does not provide a firm enough basis to refute the AIVD claims either.

The extreme right-wing movement in the Netherlands has always been divided. The sharpest dividing lines are those between the right-wing extremist or neo-Nazi groups and the more moderate or 'classical' extreme right-wing political parties. The risk of radicalisation is inherent to neo-Nazi or right-wing extremist groups. Little is known about the risk of radicalisation of the more moderate extreme right-wing organisations and activists; radicalisation was not a research theme in this field until recently.

Comparison of Islamic and extreme right radicalism

Chapter 5 compares insights regarding both types of radicalism in the Netherlands. Two ways of investigating the ideology and organisations of both types of radicalism can be distinguished: top-down and bottom-up studies. The top-down studies are typically the reports of AIVD and the reports of the *Racism & Extremism Monitor* by Leiden University and the Anne Frank Foundation. Bottom-up studies are the sociological and ethnographic studies based on interviews with participants, activists and sometimes on participant observation. The former approach furnishes the necessary knowledge of major lines of developments regarding the organisations and ideologies of both radical

movements. Bottom-up studies rather offer a view from the inside, for example on the 'lived' ideology of the adherents and the way in which the organisations operate in practice. Both approaches are relevant and provide complementary information. However, diverging understandings may also result in a blurred picture of the radical movements.

As for their content, it goes without saying that the ideologies of Salafism and the extreme right are completely different. But on a higher level of abstraction there are many similarities with regard to the characteristics that makes them radical, such as: superiority of one's own group, distrust of authorities, firmness of principles, oversimplification and dichotomous thinking. Both movements also oppose the post-materialist, individualistic and tolerant mainstream culture. The most radical branches of both social movements are the neo-Nazi and jihadist ones. Both of these consider violent and anti-democratic action legitimate to further their goals.

The relatively moderate branches of both movements differ fundamentally: the (a)political Salafist movement has institutionalized itself in the Netherlands with a religious infrastructure, while extreme right-wing political parties are the typical relatively moderate exponents of extreme right. The most radical, that is to say, extremist groups – the jihadist and right-wing extremist groups – show more similarities: these groups are often characterized by a low degree of organization, seclusion, and often are without formal leadership.

The internet plays an important role in both movements with regard to recruitment and communication. However an important difference concerns the audience they reach: the (non-jihadi) Salafist websites attract a broader audience of migrant youth with an Islamic background, while the extreme right-wing websites and discussion groups are frequented mainly by extreme right-wing adherents. Regarding their extremist behaviour, there is certainly some overlap between both movements with regard to hate speech, discriminatory utterances and propagation of violence against particular persons and groups. However, while any kind of violence and vandalism are characteristic for neo-Nazi youth groups, the jihadist youth groups are focused on a much more limited range of extremist actions (assaults or acts of terrorism), but often they did not act at all.

With regard to the size of the circle of adherents to these movements in general and to their extremist branches in particular, there are only some estimates (by AIVD and the *Racism & Extremism Monitor*). The most radical or extremist groups typically attract youngsters. Within neo-Nazi groups, males seem to be hugely overrepresented. Within Salafist and jihadist alignments, also many

women participate. Furthermore, especially Moroccan-Dutch migrant youth are attracted by Salafist groups.

The relationship of either movement to mainstream society is at least ambivalent. Both prefer relations with like-minded organisations and people. Salafism is a religion, embedded in an Islamic infrastructure. Extreme right-wing groups are often embedded in particular subcultures, for example in the skinhead music scene. Social isolation characterizes both movements through dual process: through exclusion and stigmatisation by mainstream society, but also through seclusion on their own subculture as a result of their uncompromising attitudes.

Individual and social causal factors that constitute conditions for radicalisation receive special attention in more general social-psychological studies, and in studies analysing data bases on Jihadist terrorists. General social-psychological studies point to some similarities in factors that make youngsters liable to radicalisation in general or to radicalisation within either movement in particular. Feelings of being threatened as a group and of exclusion and discrimination may constitute a breeding ground for both types of radicalisation. Although stigmatisation and emotions of a threatened positive identity seem to be relevant factors in both types of radicalisation, a huge difference is to be found in the moment when these processes start to play a role. Association with the extreme right or with the Salfist movement is the result of a deliberate choice, a chosen identity. By contrast, the second and third generations of migrants with an Islamic background are structurally confronted with negative representations of Moroccans and Muslims in the Dutch society, which rather reflects an ascribed identity.

The ways in which people – especially adolescents and young adults, the focus of most research that is available – come into contact with both types of radicalism show many similarities. Adolescents and young adults often come into contact with radical groups via networks of friends or relatives, on their own initiative or through deliberate recruitment. Some locations are opportunity factors, for example certain websites, mosques (for Salafists), or skinhead music concerts (for extreme right-wingers). Formerly, mosques seemed to be places were jihadist met, but these days they are kept away from there. The motives to associate with radical groups vary. For young people, seeking a positive identity, fighting injustice and the need for companionship are main motives. The attractiveness of the violent image of the subculture and the desire for adventure are also important motives for joining an extremist group.

After having joined a radical or extremist group, processes of radicalisation may intensify. However, these processes have hardly been investigated in the Netherlands. Radicalisation is a long-term and complex process that may differ from individual to individual and from group to group. After one has been socialised into a group and its ideology, radicalisation may take its course. Although the scarce studies offer no basis for generalisations, it is clear that all kinds of factors and conditions may play a role in processes of radicalisation, such as group dynamics, leadership roles, organizational characteristics, ideology and the formation of social identities. Both the jihadist and the Neo-Nazi groups often seem to be small size, little organized, homogeneous and secluded groups. In view of this, it is not unlikely that, in spite of certain differences between the two movements, similar mechanisms may be of relevance during the process of radicalisation.

What policy recommendations to prevent and combat radicalisation in the Netherlands follow from the comparative analysis of radical Islam and the extreme right? An important point of departure for policy making is the finding that it is difficult for people who have been socialized in a radical group and who have been active for some time there to leave the group and its subculture. Therefore, preventive policies should focus on people who have just joined a radical group. School and parents play an important role in the life of adolescents, and for that reason they can also play an important role in policies of prevention.

Increasing social isolation is characteristic for people and groups who radicalize. It is a process of gradual withdrawal and of turning away from society. Fighting radicalisation often leads to a reinforcement of social isolation, and thus blocks a way back. This often unintended effect should be reckoned with. Moreover, radical ideologies offer a critical perspective on society and in that sense adherence to these is a sign of social involvement. This offers opportunities for entering into discussion with their members or sympathizers, especially if they are in an early stage of radicalisation.

What follow-up research could answer the not or incompletely answered questions?
The literature research has identified many gaps in our knowledge. Knowledge is especially limited on the most radical and extremist groups within both movements. Extreme right-wing radicalism in general has been largely neglected as a subject of research since the turn of the century. Furthermore, much is unclear about processes of radicalisation.

To answer the gaps in our knowledge on both types of radicalisation, six lines of follow-up research have been presented: research on current developments and border cases; on the relation between life stages and radicalisation; on the role of parents as educators; on the connection between radicalisation and other youth problems; on the role of the internet in processes of radicalization; as well as comparative research that enables us to explain why youngsters with certain characteristics are more prone to radicalization than others.