Summaries

Justitiële verkenningen (Judicial explorations) is published six times a year by the Research and Documentation Centre of the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice in cooperation with Boom juridisch. Each issue focuses on a central theme related to judicial policy. The section Summaries contains abstracts of the internationally most relevant articles of each issue. The central theme of this issue (no. 3, 2017) is *Terrorism and radicalization studies.*

Terrorism and radicalization studies. An explosive research field
B.A. de Graaf

Studying terrorism and radicalization is quite problematic because of a lack of reliable sources. Finding out what motivates terrorists often boils down to educated guessing. The author describes the search for an academic definition of terrorism and summarizes the development of this discipline since the 1970s, thereby distinguishing research on three levels: macro, micro and meso. While before 9/11 few academics were involved in this research field, it 'exploded' thereafter. Important factor contributing to this expansion is the greater availability of government funds and relevant data for this type of research. However, the growth of this discipline isn't just good news, researchers should be aware of a number of pitfalls identified as the proximity to government power, too much self-confidence (*hybris*) of researchers pretending to have designed a 'unified theory', the abundance of funds for this type of research, resulting in a lot of low-quality research, and finally the politicization of the subject, which could limit the academic freedom.

On perceived justice and radicalization
M. Bal and K. van den Bos

The authors propose that perceptions of injustice play a central role in radicalization toward violent extremism and terrorism. Perceptions of unfair disadvantage in comparison with other groups (horizontal deprivation) or by societal authorities (vertical deprivation) will elicit strong emotional and behavioral reactions. In combination with feelings of personal uncertainty and a lack of cognitive capacities to control justice-related emotions, this increases the pull and attraction of

radical ideologies. Furthermore, when people join a radical organization, a vicious circle of identification with and justification of radical ideology and illegitimization and rejection of the status quo follow, possibly resulting in the justification of violence to achieve social change. Injustice perceptions are difficult to change, but a better understanding of the basic processes involved allows for the development of prevention and deradicalization programs, which should focus on full and just societal integration of groups and individuals that have a high potential to radicalize.

The Dutch jihadist. Types and roles within the jihadist scene
E. Bakker

In the past few years, about three hundred Dutch Muslims travelled to Syria and Iraq to join the violent jihad. This article explores the phenomenon by looking into the individual characteristics and processes of these Dutch jihadis. It presents the findings of a study of the life stories of twelve of them, showing the diversity of the group. It also looks into types of jihadists and their roles in the jihadist scene using categories provided by Maher and Bjørgo. The article arrives at the somewhat unsatisfactory conclusion that there is no standard Dutch jihadist and that we need to study more individual cases and better understand what is going on within the jihadist scene in order to be able to stop people from following the path towards the violent jihad.

The radicalization of Muslims: The role of religious ideology
J. Wagemakers

The extent to which religious ideology appeals to potential radicals and the role it plays in their actual radicalization depends on a number of factors, such as the centrality of the religious ideology's message in the lives of the target group, its breadth, the credibility of both the message and the messenger expressing the religious ideology, as well as its experiential commensurability in the lives of the targeted audience. Variations in each of these factors help explain why religious ideology plays an important role in the radicalization of some Muslims, but less so in that of others, and why the same religious ideology can be influential in some contexts while having little impact elsewhere. This article uses the examples of the Jordanian Salafi scholars Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi and Muhammad Ibrahim Shaqra to illustrate this and shows that religious ideology should be taken seriously

as a factor in radicalization, but should also be contextualized to understand its full impact.

Islamic terrorism, Islamic terrorists? An empirical approach
M.T. Croes

In this contribution the author focuses on the relationship between Islam and terrorism. Based on data from the Global Terrorism Database he argues that Islamic terrorism dominates worldwide since 2002. Paying attention to the creed of the jihadists, Salafism, he argues that it is a continuation of the puritanical tradition within Sunni Islam.

Sharia4Belgium and the embourgeoisement of provocation
O. Verkaaik

In their book on Sharia4Belgium, an organization that during its short existence from 2010 to 2012 criticized what it perceived as anti-Muslim discourse and promoted the introduction of the sharia in Belgium, the authors Pim Aarns and Ineke Roex focus on the use of political humor by the spokespersons of the organization. They offer a nuanced interpretation of the political humor in a large number of online videos, distinguishing between, among other things, the ridicule of right-wing nativist opponents, a ludic critique of sexual mores, and the mockery of other Muslims who do not accept the group's version of Islam. The focus on humor is refreshing, because in today's liberal, secular democracy devout believers, and fundamentalist Muslims in particular, are often believed to be lacking a sense of humor. Although failing to offer a broader analysis of political humor in current political discourse, the book successfully shows that radical religious ideology and political humor are not mutually exclusive.