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# **Rehabilitation and reintegration of terrorism convicts in Norway**

Post-release prospects and perspectives on their  
future

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MSc International Relations

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## **Declaration**

I, Sigrid Marthine Tronvoll-Jørgensen, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....

Date.....

## **Abstract**

Approximately 100 individuals left from Norway to in the civil war in Syria, between 2011 and 2016 (PST, 2016). Today, roughly 40 of the Syria travellers have returned to Norway and eighteen of them have faced prosecution. The time has now come when several of the terrorism convicts have been released from prison and the Norwegian society is currently facing the challenges of rehabilitation and reintegration of these offenders (Hansen & Bjørge, 2020; KDI, 2021; Svendsen, 2019c). This master thesis in International Relations uses a constructivist perspective on the discourse of rehabilitation and reintegration of terrorism offenders, by exploring the dialectic relations between citizens and their society. Through qualitative methods, this thesis consists of empirical data from the public and private sector associated with the concern of providing and facilitating rehabilitation and reintegration of these terrorism offenders, upon release. Additionally, the primary data of a released terrorism offender contributes with insightful and valuable perspectives on the topics of social exclusion, radicalisation and deradicalisation.

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# 1. Introduction

This thesis is built on the assumption that violent radicalism and extremism are a result of weakness from the community, which could stem from a lack of integrating, including, and dealing with the actual dilemmas individuals face as part of the community. Discussing extremism as a collective and societal issue, rather than an individual issue, is rarely the case within terrorism studies, which often imply that there are prevailed factors impacting the individual. However, individuals are rarely a singular actor within the system, hence at the root is the system, without claiming that it is the system's fault individuals become radicalised. The Norwegian Government and civil society alike had the potential to do more to prevent the 100 individuals from departing Norway to benefit the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and their goal of an Islamic Caliphate.

In 2012, the first Norwegians left to participate in non-state military activity in Syria and Iraq, because of the development and geographical expansions of ISIS's Caliphate (Carlsson, 2018). The Norwegian Security Police (PST) had announced that around 100 individuals left Norway to participate in terrorist organisations like ISIS or Jabhat al-Nusrah (Svendsen, 2019a), which is a large number when adjusted for the Norwegian population (Lia, 2014; Fangen and Kolås, 2016). In 2014, UN Security Council Resolution 2178 defined Foreign Terrorist Fighters and asked member states to prevent radicalism into terrorism and to rehabilitate, prosecute, and reintegrate foreign fighter returnees (UNSC, 2014; Strømme, 2017; Entenmann et al., 2018:354). International incidents of foreign fighters and several attacks in Europe since 2015 indicate the potential threats and security risks of returnees (Entenmann et al., 2018; Hegghammer, 2016). Several scholars have discussed different deradicalisation and disengagement methods and programmes, and some have conducted extensive research on national and private terrorist rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives (Horgan & Braddock, 2010; Christensen, 2015; Bjørgo & Christensen, 2018; Altier, et al., 2014; Horgan, et al., 2017; Horgan, 2008; Bjørgo & Horgan, 2014). While the UN uses the terms rehabilitation and reintegration in the context of terrorism and extremism, what that imply is not defined through the UN and extensively discussed in academia (Overland et al., 2018; Webber et al., 2020; Bjørgo & Horgan, 2009). As Entenmann et al. (2018:355) and Bjørgo (2018) point out, rehabilitation is not a "quick fix" but rather a long-term process which provides security measures, possible risk assessments, and benefits. While rehabilitation programmes vary by practitioner and discipline, they work generally, but not exclusively, with an individual's cognition. The goal is to enhance and strengthen the individual's process of reintegrating into society. More importantly, there is

a need to question the preferred outcomes of such programmes and initiatives, rather than merely using them as a tool for security (Horgan & Braddock, 2009).

The largest group that joined and affiliated themselves with terrorist organisations were from a multiethnic Islamist network in Eastern Norway. More than half of these individuals had immigrated (PST, 2016). It is common that these individuals were rarely employed or affiliated with working life or education, indicating a weak attachment to Norwegian society. In addition, more than 68% of them had a criminal record (PST, 2016). They were at various stages of the radicalisation process, and many of them were described as *not very religious*, although idealism and ideology were strong for some. The foreign fighter's motivation to leave their home and participate in terrorism varied. Some left for idealism and solidarity, while others left for a religious journey, wanted excitement and recognition, or found a place of acceptance and belonging (Lia, 2014; PST, 2016). The war in Syria offered a new environment for deviant behaviour, next to delinquency, rioting and street gangs, close relations, and inclusion (Coolsaet, 2016b). One assumption is that they were rebellious towards their parents and the Norwegian society, and for some of the converts, it could be described as a religious cleanse (Lia, 2014). In 2015, several Norwegians in Syria asked the Norwegian government for assistance to leave and return to Norway. The reality in the Caliphate was not as expected, and many were disillusioned. They voiced that they regretted their choice for several reasons, such as a lack of medicine, insecurities, and being disillusioned (Strand, 2015).

Hegghammer (2016) estimates that extreme Islamists will become a larger threat to Europe in the future, as a result of foreign fighters returning from the Middle East and radicalising others. Five years later, we see that this pessimistic view is not significant for the Norwegian context. Of the approximately 100 persons who left Norway for Syria and Iraq, around 40 have returned for various reasons, though many can be considered radical or extreme to some degree. Eighteen of the returnees have been charged with terror-convictions through the Norwegian terrorism legislation (Hansen & Bjørge, 2020; Svendsen, 2019c). The individuals that left to participate in the war in Syria and Iraq should perhaps be referred to as *Syria travellers* rather than fighters, as it is not clear what they did during their time there, nor their intention to participate (Bjørge & Horgan, 2014; Christensen & Bjørge, 2018; Coolsaet, 2016b; Fangen & Kolås, 2016; Gule, 2019b). It is still difficult to determine whether the returnees will contribute to society or what the chances for recidivism into other extreme movements or criminal activity are, because there is little empirical evidence of disengagement and deradicalisation (Bjørge & Horgan, 2009;

Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018). While Hansen and Bjørgo (2020) have stipulated that the returnees need similar care and attention as other convicts, it is not clear how Norway organises rehabilitation efforts or facilitates for safe reintegration. Moreover, it is not apparent what the Syria travellers want for their future, nor how they assess the process of rehabilitation and their new social roles and societies.

After 9/11 the political and academic discussion of radicalisation grew in importance and continued following the terrorist attacks in Madrid and London in 2004 and 2005 and Paris in 2015 and 2017 (Coolsaet, 2016b; Cragin, 2017b). Terrorism and extremism were then confronted with *war on terrorism* narratives and an emphasis on security which described Islam as a violent religion (Coolsaet, 2016a; Coolsaet, 2016b; Fangen & Kolås, 2016; Hegghammer, 2010). Changes in attitude, behaviour, and mind-set became the normative understanding of radicalism, shifting from a *normal* state into a terrorist or extremist (Horgan & Braddock, 2010; Bjørgo & Horgan, 2014; Overland, et al., 2018). In 2011, Norway experienced its first major terrorist attack, an attack on democracy and political values, but despite previous confrontations, it was met with a rose demonstration, where a sense of unity triumphed over hate. As the 10-year remembrance of the terrorist attack on Norway comes closer, the discussion has shifted, now asking where this unity has gone (Malm, et al., 2021; Johansen, 2021).

### **1.1 Problem Statement and Research Questions**

By dismantling the discourse of radicalism and extremism, research over the past six years has focused on countering terrorism, preventing extremism, and recognising patterns and factors as to why so many left Europe to fight in Syria. Understanding and perceiving a future post-release for the returnees from Syria is lacking in the existing literature (Bjørgo & Christensen, 2018; Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018). It became apparent through literature and pre-research planning that rehabilitation and reintegration have not received a large amount of attention in Norway (Hansen & Bjørgo, 2020; Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018). The discourse of rehabilitation and reintegration arises when exploring the post-release terrain of terrorism convicts, where the individuals meet various limitations and possibilities in the context of the Norwegian society. Where rehabilitation includes the psychological, physical, and behavioural aspect of deradicalization from extremism, reintegration discourse includes the process of entering the society again, with social interaction through work or education training and social skills (Bjørgo & Christensen, 2018; Christensen, 2019).

Through this discourse, the thesis aims to explore the future these individuals have upon release from a terrorism conviction. The objective is not focused on human behaviour but rather the

actors and institutions which are in contact with individuals. The interaction between various institutions and individuals with an extremist view or terrorism conviction shape the rehabilitation and reintegration process (Berge, 1967; Bjørgo & Christensen, 2018; Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018). How these interactions are enforcing or limiting the desired outcome of rehabilitation and reintegration is, therefore, the exploration of this thesis. The desired outcome is desistance from terrorism activities and limiting the possibility of recidivism into other criminal activities (Horgan & Braddock, 2010).

The main objective of the thesis is to explore the future perspectives and prospects of terrorism offenders, which is a result of the rehabilitation and reintegration process they go through. This process starts, for some, while they still are in Syria, and for others it starts upon return to Norway, or when incarcerated. It is not in the scope of this thesis to discuss when rehabilitation and reintegration processes end, however, it is a years-long process of interactions within various social spheres, including institutions and the civil society. These interactions generate limitations and possibilities for the future and are largely part of the rehabilitation and reintegration process of any extremist (Bjørgo & Christensen, 2018; Christensen, 2015). While actors and institutions normatively represent current norms, regulations, and systems, the interactions terrorism offenders have with the system are based on historical events and factors which are individualistic in their combination and value (Berg & Lune, 2012).

With this as a backdrop, this thesis explores the post-release future of the Syria travellers in Norway. The individuals returning to Norway from experiences in Syria and Iraq will, at some point, be released and must face the society again in some way. There are several processes at play for this to happen. Understanding what is meant by *coming back* into society entails a reintegration process, where an individual is allowed to navigate in the social community as the rest of the inhabitants, with some constraints. Scholars, practitioners, and the UN have emphasised rehabilitation as a tool to counter extremism (Horgan & Braddock, 2010; UNSC, 2014; Overland, et al., 2014; Hansen & Lid, 2020). While it is clear that the Syria travellers are returning and being released into society again, rehabilitation is discussed as a necessity. Yet what they need rehabilitation from is less clearly defined nor explored. Thus, this thesis asks the first of three main research questions. Each main research question is guided by sub-questions.

## **1. What do they need rehabilitation from?**

- 2.1 What tools and opportunities should be provided for them during such a process, for the rehabilitation to be socially accepted?

In order to understand what the Syria travellers are being reintegrated into, it is essential to understand what narratives and social forces they meet in the society upon release. These social forces can be situated in media outlets, public services and in the civil society. The limitations or possibilities the individuals have upon release from prison have implications for their future and their reintegration process. Thus, the second main research question is as follows:

## **2. What are terrorism offenders being reintegrated into?**

### **1.1 What societal forces push and pull the terrorism offenders upon release from terrorism conviction?**

Lastly, if both of the above questions are answered, there is a need to further assess the Syria traveller's future upon release. Thus, this thesis asks a third, exploratory, research question.

## **3. What does their future look like?**

### **3.1 What can the terrorism offender expect, and what can the society expect?**

By exploring the future prospects and perspectives of rehabilitating and reintegrating terrorism convicts in Norway, this thesis aims to situate the research within a societal and domestic discourse of International Relations. Social structures and public services are forces impacting the rehabilitation and reintegration of terrorism offenders and has consequences for the nation state and its society.

## **1.2 International Relations and terrorism studies**

Finally, this thesis situates the following research within the field of International Relations (IR). International Relations, narrowly, includes relations between states, international organisations, and polities. However, in the wider perspective, international relations include all the forces that impact a domestic and international environment and society. Factors should be included in the international relations discourse when they have implications or raise political discussions nationally and internationally, i.e., terrorism, which is more than a domestic problem.

This thesis uses a constructivist and poststructuralist approach to international relations, in exploring how the world is understood and what social and political factors push people into continued criminal activity or into a conformed and positive social life (Adler, 1997). Society is a dialectic phenomenon and a product of humans and human interactions with others (Berger, 1967:3). Humans are also a product of the society, and through the society, humans socialise and develop skills and identity. The society a human interacts with, therefore shapes the human and is a part of the identity building through social processes. IR is interested in world politics,

nations relations, and society building, in which the political theories of, for instance, Marxism, Realism, and Liberalism, are important. However, in the realm of international relations, the social processes and forces at stake impact the international on a large scale. This is evident through the US' war on terror in 2001, and how the UN and NATO were cautious with involvement in the Syrian civil war. National and foreign policies are formed by the cultural and social environment and processes at place domestically.

The terrorism studies of IR have largely focused on the international impact terrorism has on states, politics, and policies. With the dialectic relationship between states, society, and humans, terrorism studies need to expand and also view the national impact of terrorism. Through this thesis rehabilitation and reintegration concepts are explored within the discourse of terrorism studies in IR. Responses to terrorism participation have been largely discussed in academia by several accomplished scholars (Coolsaet, 2016; Hansen & Lid, 2020; Heath-Kelly, 2013; Overland et al., 2018). However, the societal and political responses to rehabilitation and reintegration of terrorism offenders have been deduced to include examinations of various strategies and methods for named processes (Horgan & Braddock, 2010). Therefore, this thesis tries to fill the gap of post-release futures for the terrorism offenders. With a constructivist approach, the thesis will explore how social interactions are shaping the rehabilitation and reintegration process for terrorism offenders in Norway.

### **1.3 Thesis outline**

This thesis is outlined with seven chapters, excluding bibliography. Chapter 2 begins with setting the scene for the discourse of extremism, terrorism, and returnees to Norway, following rehabilitation and reintegration into society in Norway, through a conceptual literature review of radicalism and extremism. The last section of the literature review includes a conceptual review of rehabilitation, reintegration and the security narrative which is related to extremism and terrorism. In Chapter 3 the theoretical and analytical framework is presented, where literature and discussions from Chapter 2 is included, including theories and typologies are outlined as a framework for the analysis and discussions. The chosen theories provide the possibility to analyse the data material and provide a structure for the discussion of rehabilitation, reintegration, and future perspectives of terrorism convicts. Chapter 4 explains the methodological approach for this thesis, which is rooted in qualitative research methods with content analysis of primary and secondary data. Limitations, obstacles, and ethical considerations have largely impacted the thesis both in the design and during the process of research and are therefore thoroughly discussed in this chapter as well. Chapter 5 presents the findings and analysis combined.

This chapter is divided into the five sections which are based on the theoretical framework and used the theories intrinsically in the analysis of the findings. The discussion is the following chapter which is sectioned based on the research questions provided in Chapter 1. The discussion is based on the literature review of concepts, including the analysis to discuss the research questions and its sub-questions thoroughly. As it is an explorative study, the aim is to open the discussion on how these issues are met by the individuals with a terrorism conviction, the support system, and the Norwegian society through narratives in media. Finally, Chapter 7 concludes with answers to the research questions, based on the discussions, and finishes with societal issues and suggestions for further research.

## 2. Literature review

The literature review is grounded in existing literature on radicalism, extremism, disengagement, and deradicalisation. The studies of terrorism and extremism are widespread and are not limited to international relations, terrorism studies, and security studies. By providing an interdisciplinary approach to this discourse, this literature review examines studies and literature from criminology, behaviourism, psychology, and law, to mention some. Little empirical research exists on rehabilitation and reintegration of extremists and terrorists, especially those that left as so-called foreign fighters to Syria and Iraq (Kristiansen and Feiring, 2018). This literature review starts by describing what Norway has faced regarding Syria travellers, foreign fighters, and Islamist extremism. Continuing, it provides a brief overview of the main concepts of radicalism and extremism, followed by the security narrative for meeting challenges of rehabilitation and reintegration of terrorism offenders.

### 2.1 Radicalism and extremism

Radicalisation and engagement are central concepts when understanding what an extremist is being rehabilitated from. Both concepts are unclear and vague, and difficult to measure for practitioners and scholars alike (Altier et al., 2014; Horgan, 2008; Coolsaet, 2016b; Sedgwick, 2010; Kundnani, 2012). Commonly, radicalisation considers ideology and a change of attitudes or values and encompasses a black-and-white understanding of the world with hostile and violent worldviews (Christensen & Bjørgo, 2018; Kundnani, 2012). Bertelsen and Kruglanski (2020) address radicalisation as the process of becoming extreme, a process from a normative middle-way into an extreme outer-point. Christensen (2019) defines radicalisation as repeated interactions within an extreme community. Some argue this is not the case for the *homegrown* extremists and *lone wolves*, however, they also have repeat interactions with extremist communities, most often online in various anonymous chat forums (Horgan & Shuurman, 2016; Jasko, et al., 2017; Strømme, 2017). Radicalisation also includes social persuasion, close ties with kinship, and relations (Bertelsen & Kruglanski, 2020). Additionally, radicalisation into violent extremism includes an increasing acceptance for violence (Kundnani, 2012; Fangen & Kolås, 2016; Schils & Verhage, 2017; PST, 2016). It is important to acknowledge that being radical is not necessarily dangerous nor illegal (PST, 2016), but rather the increased acceptance for violence, hostility, and aggression towards society with support for a particular ideological, political, or religious belief.

When radicalisation is understood as an increased willingness to accept the use of violence to achieve the ideological, political, or religious goal, Gule (2019a) claims radicalisation as derived from its original meaning. Instead, he would use *extremisation* as the concept of moving into a more extreme position (Gule, 2019a). The argument is, if one needs to accept the use of violence to achieve a political or ideological goal, to be radical, being radical without acceptance of violence is not an option nor legitimised. Horgan and Braddock (2010:152) claim that radicalisation does not necessarily lead to violence nor an acceptance of violence, but instead that it is one of many risk factors. In contrast to adding a new concept, as Gule (2019a) tried to develop, Horgan and Braddock (2010) add a new layer to the concept of radicalisation, defining violent radicalisation as a process of increased acceptance for and involvement in violence with a non-state movement, including physical engagement (Horgan and Braddock, 2010). Specifying the concept in this way, however, does not remove the idea that being radical is potentially related to danger and violence.

Being radical is not illegal nor unacceptable, however, it is the acceptance and legitimising of violence for a personal or ideological goal which is the danger, and where it becomes extreme. As Horgan and Braddock says, “not all that are radicalised are engaged in terrorism, and not all involved in terrorism are radical” (Horgan & Braddock, 2010:152) Describing radicalism or radicalisation as a linear process with clear indicators and identifiable factors is risky and not useful for depicting reality, especially when disengagement and deradicalisation are aspirations. As Christensen (2019) indicates, it is the interactions along the way that are impacting the phase of becoming extreme, in addition to other individual factors. The concept should rather define becoming extreme instead of becoming radical, to establish an acceptance for a variety of opinions and views within ideological, religious, and political stands. In addition to this argument, another issue is the way scholars differentiate between being radical and radicalisation, as it is the process which is dangerous and not the position. To properly assess whether an individual is acquiring dangerous and extremist views and accepting violence as means to an end, the concept needs to encompass the acceptable and licit form of radicalism and separate it from the illicit and threatening movement towards extremism.

How and why, someone becomes involved in terrorism has been studied and researched extensively. These studies try to identify vulnerability, individual socio-economic factors, background, and family history (Horgan, 2008; Wendelberg, 2020; Schils & Verhage, 2017; Mann et al., 2020; Nesser, 2018). Nevertheless, the more indicators revealed through assessing terrorists and extremists, the less generalisable the data becomes, as each radicalised trajectory is

individual (Horgan & Braddock, 2010). Personal motivations or needs, individual context, mental health, and behavioural patterns, could be some factors impacting the choice to engage in terrorism or extremism. However, it is not limited to these factors alone. The factors that provide leeway and impact the process of becoming involved in terrorism, are rarely related to what terrorism activity the person will be involved in, or how or when the involvement will take place (Horgan, 2008).

## **2.2 Rehabilitation, reintegration, and security**

Rehabilitation and reintegration are the processes at the other end of the spectrum, where an individual is expected to leave extremism or terrorism physically and psychologically. There has been less research on this, especially compared to radicalisation (Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018; Bjørgo & Christensen, 2018). Understanding deradicalisation and disengagement and defining the processes they entail have been broadly discussed and are underdeveloped (Horgan & Altier, 2012). Nevertheless, most agree that deradicalisation is a process in which the psychological involvement in violent activity and extremism reduces to a point where the individual is no longer at risk of further involvement in extremism (Horgan & Braddock, 2010; Bjørgo & Christensen, 2018; Kruglanski et al., 2013). Such a psychological process also includes a social aspect, where the social surroundings play an imperative role in shifting the mental process out of the extreme mindset. While Bjørgo and Christensen (2018:34-35) agree with Horgan that deradicalisation is a psychological process, they explain it as a change in attitude, values, world views, and belief systems, while Kruglanski et al. (2013) call it the elimination of such beliefs and ideology. Deradicalisation, therefore defines a change or elimination at the cognitive level and is difficult to observe as it implies a long-term change in belief and attitude (Horgan & Braddock, 2010). Deradicalisation is an unobservable psychological and cognitive change, where the belief- and attitude system is being challenged and redefined into a less extreme variety, or into a society-accepted and neutral world view. It is implied that it contains an absence from violence, or at least a reduced willingness to use violence as a means, for ideological, political, or religious goals.

Changing a belief system or attitude based on such beliefs, is not necessarily problematic. However, it is important to express and assess what is considered an acceptable change and define measures to assess when this change is achieved. The current empirical research does not provide any measurements for this, nor a definition of what is an acceptable outcome (Horgan & Braddock, 2010).

To continue, disengagement is broadly understood as a change in physical activities, such as participation in violent extremist activities (Bjørgero & Christensen, 2018). Compared to deradicalisation, disengagement is the more visible change an individual goes through when leaving an extreme network. The elimination of extreme behaviour and adherence to a terrorist group is part of the disengagement concept (Kruglanski et al., 2013). It is considered disengagement when an individual leaves an extreme group and no longer acts on behalf of the group and their ideology (Bjørgero and Christensen, 2018:34-35; Horgan and Altier, 2012). Disengagement could also be understood as seeking a new role within the group, as Horgan and Braddock (2010:152) discuss that psychological factors can lead to the seeking of a new role. It is essential to discuss disengagement as an individual choice with various push and pull factors (Altier et al., 2017; Horgan et al., 2017; Horgan, 2008), as it could also be an involuntarily process through imprisonment or defeat. In Norway, the individuals returned and were placed in prison after their initial disengagement. Understanding that disengagement can be voluntary or involuntary is important because disengagement does not necessarily mean deradicalisation. One could radicalise others while imprisoned or return to a similar extreme network upon release (Horgan, 2008; Hegghammer, 2016).

Rehabilitation and reintegration are the cornerstones of deradicalisation and disengagement (Horgan et al., 2017), which can be understood as schemes to change unwanted behaviour, lifestyles, and mindsets through psychological and psychosocial processes (Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018). Reintegration is the desired outcome of rehabilitation schemes, which aim to integrate terrorism offenders back into society. The goal of reintegration is to be transferred back to society without crime and extremism. Such schemes have been developed and used in places such as Northern Ireland, Colombia, Indonesia, Yemen, Sweden, and Saudi Arabia (Horgan & Braddock, 2010; Christensen, 2015). Norway, however, has very few official programs or schemes targeting behavioural changes, disengagement, or deradicalisation (Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018). It has been a long try-and-fail process, which has included various methods, focus areas, experiences, attempts to understand what works and what does not, and through sharing experiences with international organisations (Horgan, 2008). The promotion of disengagement is at the core of rehabilitation and reintegration, lacking the focus of deradicalisation (Horgan, 2008; Horgan & Braddock, 2010).

The psychological processes at play for deradicalisation lay the foundation for a well-grounded rehabilitation, where dialogue, cooperation, and equal participation are said to significantly im-

pact the success (Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018). Psychologists, through interdisciplinary cooperation in Norway, have developed a mentoring scheme resulting from the Action Plan Against Violent Extremism (Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2014). There is not a correlation with the mentoring scheme offered in the correctional facilities and the one developed from the Action Plan Against Violent Extremism, nor any national regulations on who is eligible for a mentor on radicalisation and extremism.

The figure below indicates the cases of inmates in target groups for radicalism and violent extremism from 2018 to 2020. In 2020, there were 24 inmates in the target group for radicalisation and violent extremism (KDI, 2021:75). Out of these 24, 14 were convicted or prosecuted for terrorism or hate-crimes, and only 7 took part in the correctional facilities’ mentoring scheme in 2020 (KDI, 2021:75).

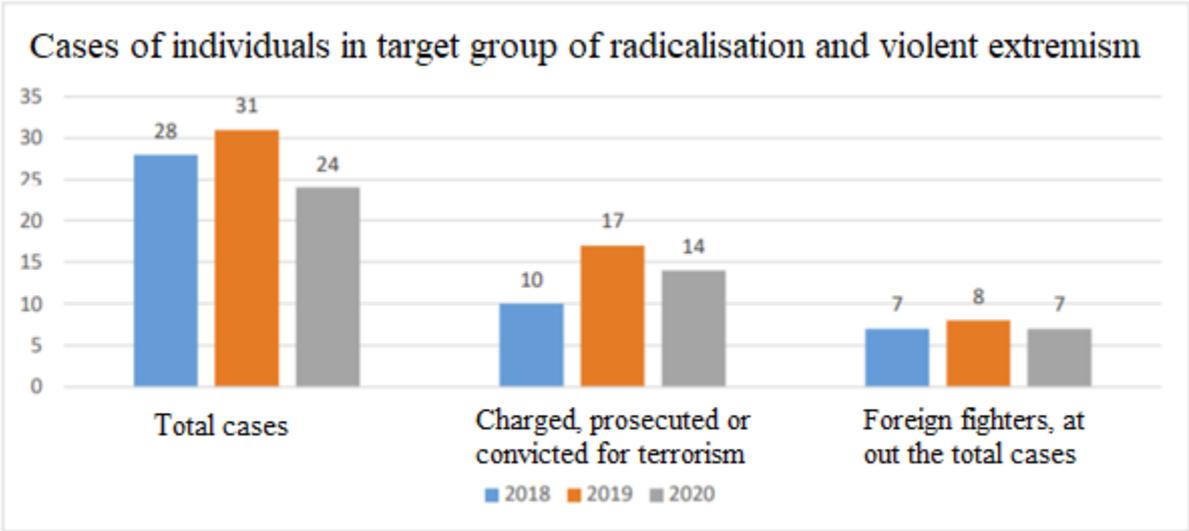


Figure 1: From KDI, 2021:76

**Security**

The narratives regarding the returnees and terrorism offenders are primarily divided into two, including a security narrative and reintegration narrative (Fangen & Kolås, 2016). The differences in these narratives impact the individual terrorism offender and play a role in how they are treated by society and media both through the sentencing and post-release periods. The security narrative is concerned with domestic security and prosecution, where the returnees are criminals and needs to be punished through conviction. Coolsaet (2016b) argues that the security risk they carry is higher in the countries where they acted as terrorists than in their home countries, and that the threat they have upon returning home might be the one we, as a society, make. The reintegration narrative focuses on rehabilitation from extremism and psychological

help because the returnees are inevitably going to be a part of society (Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018). The reintegration focus views the returnees as marginalised individuals with a troubled background and exclusion. Making the returnees understand that there is a future for them upon return, educating them, rehabilitating, and reintegrating with tools, provided through disengagement and deradicalisation literature and empirical evidence, is key (Coolsaet, 2016b).

It is of security interest to treat the returnees and terrorist offenders as individuals with different psychological or physiological issues and problematic backgrounds (Horgan & Braddock, 2010). Initially, the rehabilitation and reintegration efforts provide a foundation to desist from criminal activity, at least extremism and terrorism. What is regarded as desistance within criminology is defined as “a process where one arrives at a state of criminal cessation” where desistance is a process of the “reduction in frequency and severity of offending” (Altier et al., 2014:653). In terrorism studies, it is still unclear if desistance means a cessation from terrorism activity or from criminal activity as a whole (Horgan, 2009).

When incarcerated, it is the correctional facilities that oversee the execution of sentence and rehabilitation (Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018). This implies that it is the same institution governing both the stick and the carrot, while the overall responsibility of preventing extremism is shared between different actors (Coolsaet, 2016b). Kristiansen and Feiring (2018) find that the security narrative dominates in the cases of the returnees and terrorism offenders. The correctional facilities do, however, have strategies for working with dialogue and relations between the inmates and their staff (Justice Department, 2007). The goal is to create interpersonal relationships which can reduce further violations and make way for a safe rehabilitation and reintegration process, both within and outside the correctional facilities. In order to develop such an interpersonal relationship, trust is important. Hence, the strategy is aware of difficulties with regards to sharing information and trying to uphold trust and honesty amongst the inmates and staff (Justice Department, 2007).

An enlarged focus on security could result in further violations and hostile environments within the correctional facilities. Therefore, it is tried to be kept at its minimum. However, the media and PST depict and classify the returnees as fighters, dangerous, and terrorists, which can further create fear upon release. Concepts like this create fear and increase the stigma towards them, which ultimately impacts the rehabilitation and reintegration process (Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018). Society holds power over the reintegration process. The justice system in Norway focuses on rehabilitation and views a served sentence as a chance for new opportunities. Barriers such as the fear of stigmatisation and a ruined future can prevent reintegration and secession,

and in the worst-case, lead to recidivism (Bjørge & Christensen, 2018:35). The correctional facilities have an influential role in changing and impacting the offender's narrative, both regarding rehabilitation, security, and punishment (Bjørge & Christensen, 2018). The correctional facilities oversee the offenders if they are within their system, and their care for offenders also includes rehabilitation (Lister, 2015).

### **3. Theoretical and analytical framework**

The theoretical and analytical framework for this thesis provides a lens to understand the empirical data and content of secondary sources (Nygaard, 2017). This chapter will discuss which ideas, theories, and concepts this thesis is built upon and create a framework for analysis and discussion. Theories are ideas about how the world works, functions, or explains causes or effects (Nygaard, 2017). The concepts explained in the literature review are examined and put into a theoretical and analytical framework in order to be the foundation for the analysis and discussion in Chapter 4 and 5.

Being able to assess what the terrorism offenders need to rehabilitate from, the theoretical framework first needs to identify what constitutes as radical and extreme. Upon identifying the concepts of radical and extreme, the second priority in the analysis is identifying underlying factors which may be used as a foundation to legitimise such radical and extreme behaviours and beliefs. Third, the theories need to provide an analytical framework to analyse and discuss what is expected of the terrorism offenders upon release from incarceration and fourth, what they can expect of the Norwegian society and its institutions for a safe reintegration. An analytical framework to assess and analyse prospects and perspectives on their future will need to be constructed to identify and analyse the data in Chapter 5.

#### **3.1 Typologies as tools**

As stated in the literature review, research shows that being disengaged from extremism or terrorist activities does not necessarily indicate a change in belief and deradicalisation (Horgan & Braddock, 2010). It will therefore be difficult to assess whether one is deradicalised, while disengagement is a more visible and physical change. However, this thesis is exploring whether the terrorism offenders in Norway are deradicalised, but rather what they need rehabilitation from, what society they are reintegrated into, and their prospects upon release. While deradicalisation and disengagement programmes have difficulties with measuring success with reliable indicators (Horgan & Braddock, 2010), typologies can provide a more dynamic and flexible approach to deradicalisation and disengagement. When studying humans, human behaviour, factors, and underlying causes for various actions are not possible to generalise, but rather typologies can be made. Such typologies give the possibility of creating and explaining variations, deviances, and commonalities. Becoming radicalised or a terrorist is not guaranteed based on a difficult upbringing or low socio-economic background. It is rather an outcome based on human interaction with other humans, physically or through the internet, where they develop a world

view, create a figured world, and give it meaning. Similarly, there are several reasons, motivations, and factors that impact human behaviour in disengagement and leaving an extremist group (Horgan, 2008). It is impossible to explain this by only using one discipline, and thus, the interdisciplinary network and cooperation are important when creating interpretations of real-life. As a result, the typologies need to include cultural indicators, psychological changes, social factors, historical backgrounds, and each individual context to be dynamic, flexible, and adaptive to the individual context (Horgan & Braddock, 2010; Bjørgo & Christensen, 2018).

Radicalisation is an individual context, often in relation to others but not necessarily. Hence, disengagement and deradicalisation are also individual (Altier et al., 2014). The returnees are different from each other, and can therefore be expected to have different needs, experiences, and motivations (Bjørgo & Christensen, 2018). The degree of disillusionment, extremist belief, and violent capability also varies between the individuals. In addition to these variations, it is believed that experiences and mental health issues implicate how the returnees view themselves and the world around them (Bjørgo & Christensen, 2018). Such indicators of issues and belief systems could impact future possibilities in a negative way and are of importance for any rehabilitation effort.

<b>Black and white mindset</b>	<b>Not a part of the society at large, or any group</b>
<b>PTSD</b>	<b>Violence and threats are acceptable</b>
<b>Lonely</b>	<b>See and finds enemies in the society</b>
<b>Aggression</b>	<b>Lack of work experience and education</b>
<b>Guilt and shame</b>	<b>Difficulties with controlling reactions</b>
<b>Distrust</b>	<b>Need for contextual learning about society, religion, and politics</b>

Figure 2: Based on indicators presented in Bjørgo and Christensen (2018:25-35).

Bjørgo and Christensen (2018) claim that by using the individual’s context, identifying weaknesses and motivations, rehabilitation and reintegration efforts can use similar mechanisms as in radicalisation to deradicalise. Such initiatives can change and work with attitudes and value systems and motivate for personal achievement and norms. Personal and futuristic goals would be used as a motivational factor for these initiatives (Bjørgo & Christensen, 2018; Horgan & Braddock, 2009).

### **3N model**

Similarly, the parameters in the 3N model indicate radicalisation, by Bertelsen and Kruglanski (2020), and are the same indicators as for deradicalisation. The 3N model is based on the theories of significant quest and life psychology (Bertelsen & Kruglanski, 2020; Ozer & Bertelsen, 2020; Bertelsen, 2015; Jasko et al., 2017). The 3N model provides a typology of psychological indicators that can enable radicalisation; *needs*, *narratives*, and *networks* (Webber et al., 2020). The idea in the 3N model is that a motivational imbalance is the main concern of extremism, and that other important human and social conditions eschew for violent extremism to achieve a goal (Bertelsen & Kruglanski, 2020; Webber et al., 2020). The imbalance impacts the restructuring of life attachments, and place values on violent extremism rather than other universal human needs. The significant quest theory addresses deficit, justification, and social support as elements impacting radicalisation, deradicalisation, and disengagement, and further incorporate these elements in a motivational system. The theories emphasise that the motivational element in extremism is a natural human response to find a place in life, where networks and narratives are essential (Bertelsen & Kruglanski, 2020). Identifying significant means, goals, or gains which are justifying violence can then be used to alter the motivation into a new and attractive opportunity which is socially moderate and without violence (Bertelsen & Kruglanski, 2020). Such opportunities could be a new social network, new friends or a romantic relationship, and support from family and relatives. Through identifying significance and motivation, similar gains and meaningful ends can be met in a socially moderate and licit alternative, although they might not be aware of their search for *a place in life* (Bertelsen & Kruglanski, 2020). The 3N's are important here to identify the narrative that accepts violence as a means for significance, the desire and need for attaining significance, and the network that embraces these narratives. Personal relationships and meaningful networks are important to assist the transformation from violence to peace (Renee Garfinkel in Horgan, 2008).

### **Personality traits and motivation**

The typologies presented by Petter Nesser (2018) and Tore Bjørgo (2011) provide explanations and factors for entering extremism. Where Bjørgo's typology explains why individuals engage in extremism, Nesser's typology focus on personality traits and motivations for entering extremism. These typologies can provide guidance for what the individuals need upon returning to Norway, especially regarding rehabilitation and reintegration efforts (Bjørgo & Christensen,

2018). Using such typologies are essential for understanding what the individuals are rehabilitating from and simplifying the analysis with concepts and meanings. Nesser's typology is based on his and others' research on terrorist cells and plots, mainly in Europe, where he has found four ideal types and identified their reasons to enter extremism and their role in the terrorist cell. His work can further be used to acknowledge the different ways of facilitating disengagement and developing individualistic rehabilitation programmes. The presented ideal types and characteristics are simplified using the typology of Nesser (2018:12-18).

1. **Entrepreneurs:** Characterised by being religious or political activists, with a strong sense of justice. They have important roles in the network, such as recruiters and provide training as they have a large network within the extreme sphere. They are experienced and sometimes educated. They show passion in discussions about social and political causes and have a high focus on the greater good and having a religious duty. They have or attain authority, mainly because they have a deep knowledge in political and religious matters and are charismatic and influential.
2. **Protégé:** They are young and inferior. They are the right hand, often to the entrepreneur. They show signs of being devoted to the cause, ideological or political, and have a strong sense of justice. The driving cause for their radicalism is political grievance and injustice towards Muslims. They provide the terrorist network with resources and expertise. They rarely regret or show remorse of their actions and are consistent in their belief of their cause and the legitimacy of their actions.
3. **Misfits:** personal misfortune is partly what leads them into radicalisation. They have a troubled background and often a criminal record. They have a weaker personality with vulnerabilities and are not necessarily ideologically committed to the cause. They join the extreme group to deal with personal problems or out of loyalty. Participating could be a personal salvation or a cleanse, and they are often recruited through prison or criminal networks. They are often violent and provide the terrorist group with practical assistance and action. Social grievance, drug abuse, or a history of experienced racism or injustice is part of their justification.
4. **Drifters:** The drifters are the largest group of any terrorist group. They participate often due to a need for social connection and kinship. They could have any background, similarly to any of the three ideal types already identified, but do not have any specific reasons to join extremism. They lack social rewards and could be argued to become radicalised as a result of being socially connected to the wrong people. They could have

gone a different path, but it is the friendship and shared experiences that guide them. They are youthful rebels, in search for identity and adventure, or lack options for an alternative lifestyle.

Contrasting Nesser’s (2018) typology, where the ideal types provide distinct characters of the individuals involved in extremism, Bjørgo’s typology is a dynamic continuum that opens for individual context, background, and a flexible change of attitude and ideological motivation. It is a more inclusive typology, where an individual could be at one end of the continuum at one point in time and then drift towards the opposite outer point later in the extremist career. While the typology does not provide any clear characteristics for the middle of the continuum, it does emphasise the importance that there is a change at a cognitive and physical level, prior to entering the extremist group, during, and after leaving the group (Bjørgo, 2011).

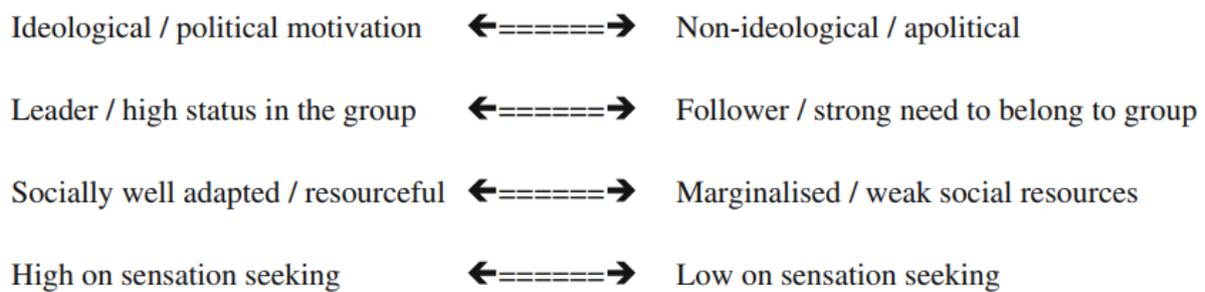


Figure 3: (Bjørgo, 2011:279)

Figure 2, above, demonstrates that there are various reasons for entering and leaving extremism. More importantly, it shows that there is neither a beginning nor an end to the spectrum of where one enters or leave terrorism activity and belief. By identifying where on the continuum an extremism is, there are identified measures to combat or rehabilitate such views or actions (Bjørgo & Christensen, 2018). When the ideologically or politically motivated become disillusioned it could be important to limit their contact with other inmates or provide a new and attractive career away from their familiar surroundings (Bjørgo & Christensen, 2018; Bjørgo, 2011). The followers, similarly, to the drifters in Nesser’s (2018) typology, enter the extremist network for kinship and community. When they disengage or deradicalise, they need a new and moderate social network, or they find new responsibilities with family and children (Nesser, 2018; Bjørgo & Christensen, 2018). It is important to be clear that these typologies are produced with little empirical foundations. Regardless, the mentioned scholars have vast field experience and are highly recognised in terrorism, extremism, and radicalisation discourse. These typologies will be used in the analysis to interpret various needs the terrorism offenders have upon returning to Norway and are not a general answer for every returnee.

**Push and pull factors**

The last typology that will be used as a framework for the analysis, is the push and pull factors which are regarded as decisive in disengagement (Bjørgero & Christensen, 2018; Altier et al., 2014; Horgan & Altier, 2012). Similarly, to the other typologies, they are not universal and there are exceptions to all of them as both radicalisation and disengagement/deradicalisation are an individual context, generally based on individual circumstances. However, typologies with factors, indicators, and identifiable traits are important both for countering extremism and radicalism and to conceptualise the disengagement and deradicalisation process and understand what they are being rehabilitated from. Push factors, in this typology, are circumstances and factors inside the extremist group that pushes for disengagement, while pull factors are outside the extremist society, and can pull an individual towards disengagement (Altier et al., 2014; Horgan et al., 2017; Bjørgero & Christensen, 2018:35). It is important to mention other push-and-pull indicators have been developed as well, within this discourse. However, the one used in this thesis is acknowledged by the aforementioned scholars.

<b>Push factors</b> <b>(Inside, pushing for disengagement)</b>	<b>Pull factors</b> <b>(Outside, pulls for a better alternative)</b>
Unmet expectations	Competing loyalties
Disillusionment with strategy or actions	Age
Disillusionment with personnel	Positive interactions with moderates
Disappointment or the moral distancing of the clandestine behaviour	Wanting freedom, safety, and the possibility to live a life without fear and danger
Difficulty adapting to a clandestine lifestyle	Employment or educational demands or opportunity
Disillusionment over being manipulated or the continued suspicion	Desire to marry, establish a family or family demands
Inability to cope with physiological or psychological effects of violence	Financial incentives
Loss of faith in ideology or political goal	Amnesty
Burnout, PTSD, or the pressure of being within the group	

Figure 4: Based on Bjørgero & Horgan (2014), Altier et al., (2014 and 2017) and Bjørgero & Christensen (2018)

It is important to acknowledge that these are indicators, which could be very telling for some, or without importance for others. For instance, loss of faith in the ideology is not the most

common cause for disengagement but could be a critical factor for others (Altier et al., 2014), while religion has been of immense importance for the interviewees in Kristiansen and Feiring's (2018) research. Some will experience several of these factors impacting their disengagement, while others will have alternative or no specific reason to disengage (Altier et al., 2017). Altier et al. (2014) discuss how push factors have shown to be more critical in the onset of disengagement and that pull factors motivate more further down the line.

Webber et al. (2020) link several typologies together, including push-pull and the 3N framework and highlight the importance of understanding the individual context and situational background to be successful in rehabilitating terrorist offenders. As these typologies all try to identify what measures should be taken in rehabilitation efforts, it can also be used as a framework to interpret *what* the terrorist offenders need rehabilitation from. By analysing needs, network, and narratives, the motivations for participating in or leaving an extremist group can be perceived (Webber et al., 2020). The search for a place in life, significance, and meaning is also rooted in the 3N model and motivation could be acknowledged through Bjørgo's (2011) continuum, where a shift in ideological motivation or even excitement seeking can be discussed. Further, the personality traits identified by Nesser (2018) highlight the importance of the different characters in a terrorist organisation and that each role has significance for the individual as well. Such significance can be countered and met through planned rehabilitation programs. Lastly, the indicators of issues and beliefs presented by Bjørgo and Christensen (2018) are important when analysing the future prospects of the terrorist offenders in Norway. Using these indicators, assessments of future needs, opportunities, or restrains can be analysed, together with the push and pull typology.

This theoretical chapter has included several typologies as tools for the analysis in Chapter 5. As it is difficult to generalise humans and human behaviour, these typologies have been chosen to create a foundation to build the analysis on. The model on grievances, experiences, and mental health by Bjørgo and Christensen (2018) creates an understanding of possible issues and problems the returnees and terrorism offenders have. This typology provides neither a solution nor a rehabilitation plan for the problems, however, it is an indicator for possible grievances and can be used as a basis for creating rehabilitation plans and reintegration measures. Moreover, the 3N model provides important tools to recognise which needs, narratives, and networks the terrorism offender had prior to leaving for Syria and what motivational indicators could be restored and used for managing a reintegration strategy for the individual (Bertelsen & Kruglanski, 2020; Ozer & Bertelsen, 2020; Bertelsen, 2015; Jasko et al., 2017).

Petter Nesser (2018) and Tore Bjørgo (2011) present typologies on personality traits and motivation, which are somewhat similar to the two aforementioned typologies with motivation and personal grievances. However, they are more thorough and include more details, which can include some terrorism offenders and exclude others. These typologies do provide important information for rehabilitation and reintegration efforts which cannot be underestimated. They provide an overview and acknowledge different ways of creating individualistic disengagement and deradicalisation programs for the individual. Tore Bjørgo's (2011) continuum has similarities to the typology provided by Nesser (2018), however the dynamic approach to human behaviour and human interactions interacts with the previous models of grievance and 3N. Lastly, the push and pull factors exemplify various incentives for reintegration into society and how discouragement is not the same as deradicalisation, which is an important distinction.

All together, these typologies lay the foundation for the theoretical framework of the analysis in Chapter 5 and show how the collected data will be used towards understanding rehabilitation and reintegration possibilities and constraints. In addition, combined with the data, the discussion will exemplify what terrorism offenders need rehabilitation from and what they need assistance with regarding reintegration upon release.

### **3.2 Figured worlds and futures**

Christensen (2019) uses the concept of figured worlds when describing disengagement and deradicalisation and how transitioning from one figured world to another can be difficult. Figured worlds are the concept of “a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation” (Holland et al., 1998:52). Figured worlds depend on interactions amongst the actors within itself, where the “us” is not only the actors within the figured world but includes the landscape and cultural setting where this interpretation is being made (Holland et al., 1998). Such a world is produced and reproduced through “collective meaning production” and socialisation, consequently important when seeking desistance and reintegration (Christensen, 2019:6). This will be important when examining future prospects of a new figured world for the terrorist offenders in Norway. As the figured world is constructed through participation, meaning productions, and reconstruction of values and norms within such a new world, the social realm one is surrounding oneself with is essential for creating a new licit and moderate figured world (Christensen, 2019). Holland et al. (1998) explain that figured worlds are agents that operate within a structure or institution, where others may not find meaning, power, or significance. Using this concept, creating a new future, a new figured world, or worlds, is difficult as it implies a social connection with other actors or agents, within a defined landscape. The figured world one is leaving,

in this case an extremist group, could leave any individual in a void of interpretation but a lack of meaning (Christensen, 2019). Kristiansen and Feiring (2018) discuss how this new identity and figured world is influenced not only by social and cultural interactions, but also by how others categorise them. One of their informants stated, “I left as a hero and came back as a monster” (Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018:364). Such categorisation and stigmatisation impact the terrorism offenders upon creating this new figured world and intensifies the lack of shared frames and trust with the new social context. Ultimately, creating a new figured world, or worlds, is a part of building a new identity, creating a rationale, and finding meaning where feelings are an important factor (Gule, 2019a).

The new futures, identities, and figured worlds the offenders meet upon release are, for some, extremely difficult. The future perspective is scarcely researched, hence there is a lack of empirical findings on how the former offenders meet the new figured worlds and new future (Bjørgero & Christensen, 2018). Bjørgero and Horgan (2014) and Horgan (2008) question what happens to them upon disengagement. The attention to future prospects for the terrorism offenders in Norway is based upon both their own individual context and how and to what extent the society is able to assist and support reintegration and the creation of a new future. The reintegration process involves social and economic support, but also includes rehabilitation efforts both physically and mentally, in order to create new future goals and visions for motivation (Bjørgero & Christensen, 2018). It is expected that they will meet hardship from the society upon release, based on the inhumane and violent behaviour of the extremist group they identified with (Bjørgero & Christensen, 2018). Kristiansen and Feiring (2018) find that the lack of services provided for the returnees while incarcerated leads them to worry about their future and reintegration, as many of them suffer from mental illnesses, some suffering prior to leaving for Syria. The prospects for a new figured world, new identity, and future are important for the society to understand and acknowledge. How a society treats its citizens, both as service providers and neighbours, affects the individual regardless of prior hardship, mental or physical battles, and criminal record.

The relevance of the figured world theory to terrorism discourse is the acknowledgement that the individuals are in constant interaction with a society, whether it is a closed and extreme society or an open society. The importance of including figured worlds in the analysis is to understand how a construction of a reality is made based on international politics, domestic security measures, and a municipality social life. This construction of reality is linked to the previous typologies on both the push and pull-factor typology and the typologies provided by

Nesser (2018) and Bjørgo (2011). Human behaviour and actions are shaped by the community and society one surround oneself in. In addition, the theory of figured worlds enables the analysis to seek patterns in the post-release prospects in the data, as the figured worlds are created on new social contexts, situations, experiences, and social interactions.

## **4. Methodological approach**

Through qualitative methods, patterns and impressions can be found among cases, societies, and persons (Berg & Lune, 2012:8). Parallels and patterns are considered a reliable means to achieve an awareness and knowledge on rehabilitation and reintegration in this study. Moreover, qualitative methods are reliable when examining individuals' assessment and views on social behaviour, social structures, and meaning systems, unlike quantitative methods (Berg & Lune, 2012:8). This thesis aims to acknowledge and research the reality terrorism offenders face upon release and what limitations and possibilities they have with the backdrop of being labelled a terrorist, formerly radicalised, and foreign fighter. As the purpose of qualitative research is to pursue answers within social settings and how individuals position themselves within this social setting, the research aims to understand the post-release reality through the lens of the offenders themselves (Berg & Lune, 2012:8). Furthermore, this thesis seeks to understand social roles, structures, and forces within the Norwegian society that are a part of the post-release future and their new perceived reality. The social actors within a social context perceive reality and their surroundings differently, based on their narrative and social foundations (Berg & Lune, 2012:8). It is therefore important to include their support system and secondary sources through media and news outlets to grasp this post-release future and predictions, including limitations and possibilities, as the social forces, structures, and context are in a constant interaction with each other.

Within the research design, possible obstacles to accessing and obtaining primary data was a concern, initially. Therefore, two research designs were created to prepare for the possibility of no informants with terrorism convictions. Both designs study the process an individual goes through in rehabilitation and reintegration from extremism post-conviction and sentencing. As a result of changes in the culmination of the thesis, the research design ultimately included one individual who has been convicted of terrorism, the support system which includes private and public offices, and secondary sources through news media outlets in Norway. Through these subjects, the analysis studies the post-release reality and future prospects of the terrorism offenders through different lenses of perspectives and perceptions. In order to outline what this

thesis defines as *support system*, the following graphics have been made to illustrate the different roles, actors, and agents that can include a supportive system around a terrorist convict<sup>1</sup>:

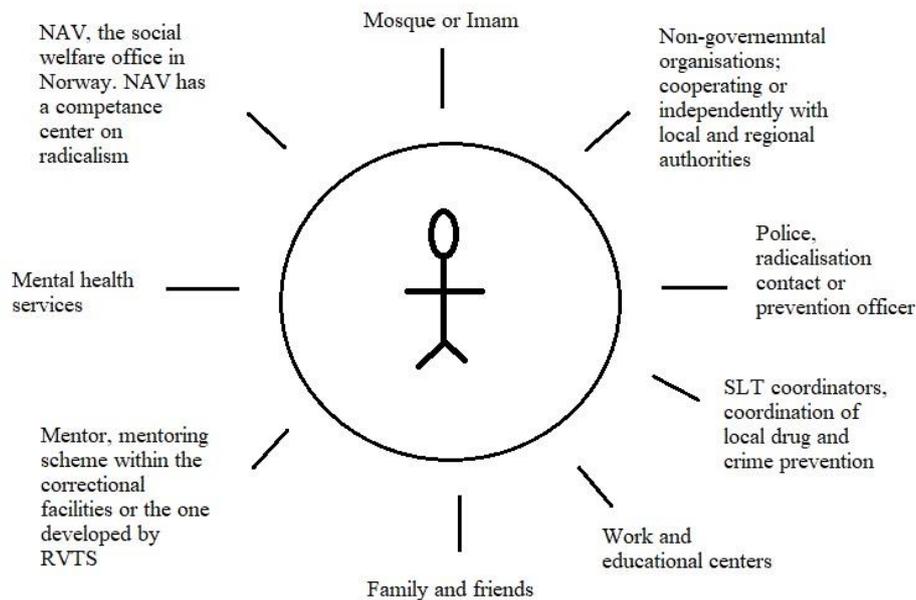


Figure 5: proposed support system of terrorism offenders in Norway

Berg and Lune (2012:6) explain that specific insight to the social and symbolic reality can be acquired through different methods. Trying to develop a holistic understanding of a possible and imagined post-release future for the terrorism offenders in Norway has been reviewed as reliable through an approach consisting of primary and secondary data from the support system, news media outlets, and one former terrorism convict.

## Discussion of limitations

The qualitative research methods in social sciences includes the involvement and interpretations of the researcher. This also includes the researchers own reflections, values, and attitudes which inevitable will affect the study itself (NESH, 2016:10). To acknowledge this, openness and transparency have been highly valued which will become evident through the discussions below. This research upholds the code of ethics and confidentiality, and anonymity will not be violated, even for the basis of openness (Berg & Lune, 2012:340). Generalising in qualitative

<sup>1</sup> The support system includes various professions and roles expecting to have significant meaning in the lives of the terrorism offender. It could be regarded as naïve to call them a support system, but their professional and personal position to support, guide, and assist the offender through the process of rehabilitation and reintegration has been reflected on as a support system. The support system varies for the individual offender regarding what is available for them based on contacts, pre-existing narratives, regional possibilities, and limitations in Norway and what social services they approach.

research is based on transferability (Berg & Lune, 2012). Concerning the thesis, this research is not necessarily transferable to other forms of extremism nor terrorist convicts in other countries with another background, social setting, and political ideology. In order to achieve such transferability, more subjects with terrorism sentences need to be included, as their process both in and out of extremism is individual (Berg & Lune, 2012; Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018; Bjørge & Christensen, 2018). Such an aim would be more balanced and inclusive, which was what this thesis strived for however, this was not obtainable. The thesis is not striving to reach such a transferability, but rather strives to be comparable and transferable within the Norwegian context of other terrorism offenders that participated in ISIS or similar organisations. Moreover, mentioning reflexivity in regard to transferability is important (Berg & Lune, 2012). By using the same methods and subjects as this thesis outlines, it is possible to achieve similar findings. However, reflexivity also includes uncertainties concerning gender biases and differences, religious background of the researcher, and the subjects age and personality traits (Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018; Bjørge & Ravndal, 2019). Personal traits have been an advantage during the data collection. For instance, a Syria traveller<sup>2</sup> said; “as you have been accepted by [his friend], you are already accepted by me”. Personality traits are therefore important in the initial stage of the interview, where there are formalities and starting the conversation. Further, religion could also have an impact, as a common belief and understanding would make it easier for the returnees to open up and trust the researcher. Building trust with the returnee-subjects are important as they are tired of everyone hassling and wanting to draw information from and surveillance over them (Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018; Jakobsen, 2018). The position the researcher achieve during the interview can also be understood as a powerful position, where the researcher is controlling the dialogue and questions, and the interviewee are limited to answer to the questions (Cappelen, 2014). There is inevitable a power relation between the researcher and the interviewee. This power relation can be met with conversations and considerations about the interviewee before the interview, in a way to get to know each other (Bryman, 2016). Also, the interview guide has been created to be flexible and semi structured, in order to open up for follow-up questions and off-topic conversations to limit the power relation experience. The semi-structured interview guide opens up to talk about the subject’s position and experiences in the field, as well as allowing to dive into interesting themes, examples, or experiences (Bryman, 2016). Additionally, the researcher’s personal opinion and reflections will also coincide during the

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<sup>2</sup> Yasin, the individual interviewed and used in analysis and discussions chapter

dialogue with interviewees and analysis (Bryman, 2016). Of course, pursuing transparency and limit the interviews to the questions have been attempted, though difficult at times.

#### **4.1 Ethical considerations**

A fundamental stage was to receive permission from the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) to conduct research in Norway. Through the application and dialogue with them, ethical considerations have been highlighted and concrete actions derived into plans, restrictions, and considerations towards the thesis and methods. Collection and handling of sensitive information from the target group and the other subjects was allowed based on the permission from NSD. The research is legally confined to be conducted within limits from NSD regarding anonymisation, privacy, and ethical standards. In addition to NSD, NESH's (2016) guidelines and recommendations have been used.

Furthermore, what is experienced and regarded as sensitive information can differ between individuals and groups, hence the importance of ethical knowledge and standards on research to protect the participants from exposure (Ingierd & Fossheim, 2013:10). Researchers must be careful not to increase stigma the group is already facing (Grønningsæter, 2013:46). Extremists and terrorism offenders are a sensitive and stigmatised group, where ethical competences and knowledge are required to avoid unnecessary exposure and stigma. If they are incarcerated, they could be regarded as being in a highly vulnerable situation, being a criminal and extremist, or at least alleged to be extremists. The subjects that have a terrorism conviction may want to believe that valuable results will come from the research, and the subject trusts that no suffering will result from the research activities and that the information regarding the project has been truthful (Ingierd & Fossheim, 2013:7). Trust is an essential dimension in research on and with humans (Ingierd & Fossheim, 2013). The habit of truth is discussed by Locke et al. (2014:25), where reliable knowledge is based on seeking the truth and being aware of interference. Ethical and truthful research does not commit compromises or excuses. The social contract between scholars, researchers, and the society at large, are upheld through trustworthy, reliable, and verifiable research planning, data collection, and analysis. This social and ethical contract is also placed upon participants in research, hence being aware of and preventing further suffering and damage to groups in vulnerable situations (Locke et al., 2014:27). The researcher's role is to assure that no damage and suffering will derive from the research, as well as during the research on both the subjects from the support system and the subjects with a criminal background.

Informed consent is a necessity concerning research (Ingierd & Fossheim, 2015). The informed consent form was delivered to all participants before interviews through email or text message. As Covid-19 impacted the possibility to meet people in person, the agreement and approval of participation in the research was accepted in written form through email or text message and through recorded video meetings. After an interview with an individual who had been released from prison under a terrorism charge, it became clear that it was not ethical to continue the participation. All information about him was then removed and everything was conducted in a professional and polite manner as it is voluntary to participate in the research. The global pandemic impacted data collection as well, as primary data had to be collected through Teams, recorded, and stored safely for transcription. The recorded files were stored on a disc which was secured with crypto two-factor authentication. In this case, BitLocker, was considered safe storage according to NESH (2016; Ingierd & Fossheim, 2013:10).

### **Access and obstacles**

The duty of confidentiality for several professions limited the access to important research data, such as access to correctional facilities (Bjørnebekk, 2013:22). Though the correctional facilities have the possibility to apply for access, this was restricted. Permission may only be granted to research inmates and officers, but further contact and information about who to contact and where was restricted by the duty of confidentiality (Bjørnebekk, 2013:22). Additionally, such restrictions could be regarded as controversial, as it constrains research on the topic and social phenomenon in Norway. In a conversation with a regional office for a correctional institution, it was said that access would be denied regardless of the application, but that it could be considered, if it was PhD research. Networks for students doing research on extremism in Norway have expressed similar concerns with correctional facilities and the police, where a master level of education and research is restrained from public institutions. Further, the correctional facilities did not want increased attention to extremism. There is balance between an individual's right to confidentiality and protection, and the societies need for knowledge (Grønningsæter, 2013:48). These comments are dangerous for research freedom and policy development in Norway, notwithstanding the implications extremism and terrorism have on society, both with regards to security and to societal structures and forces. Bjørnebekk (2013:89) explains that other researchers have also had to change their research designs to meet the duty of confidentiality during the research. The duty of confidentiality was one of the reasons for the change, however, restricting researchers in this way and not trusting the research ethical standards will prevent

possible contributions to policy changes and knowledge development (Myhrer, referred in Bjørnebekk, 2013:89).

Another obstacle concerning access and ethics is regarding mental health. It is known that the terrorism convicts in Norway had various mental issues both before leaving for Syria and Iraq and some due to their experiences participating in terrorist organisations (Hansen & Bjørgero, 2020; Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018). Additionally, being incarcerated brings many mental issues as well as removing freedom (Horgan & Braddock, 2010:152; Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018; Horgan, 2009; KDI, 2021; Hansen, 2018; Hansen & Bjørgero, 2020). One of the terrorism offenders that wanted to participate in this thesis, had to be politely turned away due to mental health. Talking about these topics may have worsened their private situation and the progress of rehabilitation. Even though these issues and how they are being cared for are of value to the thesis, it has not been included. There is a power issue and an ethical issue linked to unstable mental and physical health when interviewing and including participants with such limitations in research.

The initial objective of the research was to contemplate what the terror convicts want and need for their future reality post-conviction, which had its research design through qualitative open interviews and analysis. It is apparent through this methodology chapter that accesses to terrorism offenders, inside and outside the prisons, is challenging on various levels. They are a subject group that wants to lay low and very often do not want to be public and related to the offences (Altier et al., 2017). As a result of this, the research objective and design had to be altered. Additionally, the corona pandemic made it more challenging to achieve access to the terrorism convicts, both as an excuse from the correctional facilities, but also as a restriction when planning travel and for interviews. These issues and obstacles made it impossible for this study to assess the offenders' desires post-release and outlooks on their own perceived future and reality. Regardless, contact was attempted until the last month of the study.

### **Anonymity**

Similarly, to other professions, researchers also have a duty of confidentiality which, in addition to others, include the prevention of injury and damage to research participants (Ingierd and Fossheim, 2013: 9). Ethical considerations and knowledge regarding how the research methods and data collection are constructed is therefore closely linked to the duty of confidentiality and how the researcher prevents harm and damage to others, both during research and after pub-

lishing. The state of participants' mental health, which in this thesis is an essential ethical aspect, has been a reason for only having one subject with a terrorism conviction. Additionally, confidentiality is highly important, both for the subjects and their privacy and essential for the trustworthiness of the research and thesis (Ingierd & Fossheim, 2015). The duty of confidentiality also implies sensitive data and personal information. What is regarded as personal and sensitive data can sometimes be complex for participants to assess (Berg and Lune, 2016; Bjørnebekk, 2013). Hence, the researcher focused on the process of collecting data thoroughly, using analytical methods, and occasionally meeting the need to destroy and eliminate testimonies and data, regardless of their potential importance to the outcomes of the thesis.

Within the ethical aspect, trust has a significant priority. This includes respect for the participants, subjects, and others affected by the research directly or indirectly (Ingierd & Fossheim, 2013:9). Trust includes considering others autonomy and refraining from sharing personal and sensitive information, which is offensive (Ingierd & Fossheim, 2013:9). Moreover, trust between the researcher and participants is the foundation for information and knowledge sharing. It is trusting the researcher with a personal story and experience and how the shared information is processed. Anonymising and de-identifying personal information is a part of this process, ensuring trust and thoroughly processing sensitive information (NESH, 2016). This requires that information about anyone involved will not be identifiable. This could entail removing names and personal information, and additionally anonymising and de-identifying detailed information about a terrorism convict. Much has been written about Norwegian foreign fighters in the Norwegian media and especially about the ones who have faced conviction. While there is not much information about those who have not been sentenced, national news agencies seem to thrive off the cases about those who have. Therefore, the processed data needs to be closely assessed for its necessity and traceability.

## **4.2 Data collection methods**

The concepts of rehabilitation and reintegration issues and opportunities would be best described through the individuals going through these processes, which has been done by Kristiansen (2018). Those individuals are in the best position to reflect on what works and how these processes should be developed for long-term results. While some are incarcerated, several returned foreign fighters in Norway have finished their incarceration or have never been sentenced<sup>3</sup>. As those who are not incarcerated are extremely difficult to contact, the aim has been to develop contact with the individuals that have been released from prison. Hence, the data

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<sup>3</sup> Assessed through Lovdata

collection needed to widen and not solely depend on information from the returned foreign fighters and former inmates themselves. In order to explore future prospects with limitations and possibilities, subjects possessing professions where they have experience with integrating convicts or extremists back into society would be best qualified to provide knowledgeable answers. These professions are here referred to as the support system. Lastly, in order to understand the social forces and structures built and upheld by institutions and actors, secondary data has been assessed from media news outlets. Attitudes, words, and phrases were analysed to assess what can constrain or facilitate rehabilitation and reintegration of the terrorism offenders. Regardless of being media outlets, these are considered the fourth state power and is intrinsically interacting with the society and with the individual offenders as well. As Kristiansen and Feiring (2018) discuss, the narratives and discussions in the media impact the offenders, probably more than what the society could imagine.

## **Sampling**

The data collection method started with mapping who left Norway to participate in ISIS, through media news outlets and sentencing documents. Several of the large news agencies in Norway have investigated and produced articles about who left, where they came from, and their background. Some news agencies have been in contact with the Syria travellers and even travelled to Syria and Iraq (Arntsen & Byermoen, 2015; Svendsen, 2019a). In total, close to 75 persons have been identified through names or alias<sup>4</sup>. Lovdata was used to collect court decisions and to map who is still incarcerated or may be released. In Norwegian prisons, if 2/3<sup>rds</sup> of the sentence has been served, they can be liable for release with conditions. Even though the personal data is anonymised there, much of the information was easy to link to the names and data acquired through open sources. Through this information, the subjects were narrowed down to 14 possible individuals with a conviction in §147 in the penal law. Not much background information about these 14 individuals was needed. Regarding sampling, they all fit the criteria of having been in Syria, for various reasons, and returned to Norway where they faced a criminal charge of terrorism activity or participating in a terrorist organisation. Additionally, information concerning the lawyers was available through the court decisions, and the respective lawyers were contacted to try to facilitate contact with the offenders.

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<sup>4</sup> Some may be double recorded as names and aliases have varied and been difficult to verify.

Possible subjects	Lawyers	Answers
<b>A</b>	3	
<b>B</b>	2 (1)	Client has changed lawyer; you should try to contact him (I did). New lawyer: I will contact and let you know.
<b>C</b>	2	
<b>D</b>	2	You can contact him in prison. From what I know, he is not interested, but I can ask client again. (Sent him another email, as I saw he is representing a new client for similar charges) asked him, and he is not interested in participating.
<b>E</b>	2	I am no longer in contact with the offender. (Both said this)
<b>F</b>	2	Passed forward the information from the researcher, did not hear anything back.
<b>G</b>	2	I am still in contact, but he is incarcerated. Is it still relevant? He will need a translator and needs to be fully informed as he is worried about anonymity. To be mostly successful, I will contact him and explain everything to him in detail. I have been in contact with him now, and he is positive, you can now start the process of applying for permission.
<b>H</b>	2	
<b>I</b>	2	
<b>J</b>	2	You can contact him in prison, and call me if you would like
<b>K</b>	2	
<b>L</b>	2	I am no longer in contact with client. I am no longer in contact with the client.
<b>M</b>	3	I cannot help you
<b>N</b>	2	Been contacted like this many times, and the offender is not interested. No longer a defence lawyer.

Figure 6: table of contact with lawyers and responses

In the cases where the lawyer could not assist in arranging contact, the initial plan was to develop contact with prison priests or imams. The imams and priests could serve as gatekeepers towards inmates. Additionally, they are part of the support system and could contribute as a representative for their profession as well. However, after contacting the Norwegian correctional facilities to ask for permission to interview offender **G**<sup>5</sup>, the researcher was advised not to go further with a request for permission to research and access as it would be denied. No further contact with the correctional facilities were attempted.

<sup>5</sup> G is the offender mentioned in the table above, where access to conduct interviews within the correctional facilities were denied. This is the same case as mentioned in chapter 4.2

Establishing contact with released terrorism offenders stagnated as well. Kristiansen and Feiring (2018:351) also acknowledge the complex issues of acquiring contact with the Syria travellers from Norway. The ethical considerations already mentioned are in constant interaction and consideration, especially regarding preventing damage and injury to the participants. Random sampling and large-scale studies are very challenging, as the offenders rarely want to be associated with the events nor are they interested in participating in research (Altier et al., 2017). Additionally, there are not enough cases in Norway, hence the population is so small that anonymity easily becomes problematic (Altier et al., 2017). Out of the 14 individuals listed above, some contact information was available through online searches, and text messages were sent with a brief description of the intention of contact. Additionally, the text messages included a description of how the phone number was acquired and that any questions regarding the research were welcome. When reaching out through telephone or text message, a backup phone with WhatsApp and Signal linked to the phone number was used. Through this method, **I** agreed to participate in the research with the preferred method of contact being text messages and phone calls. **I** wanted to discuss more anonymity, as this was of primary concern. Ultimately, it became too draining mentally for **I** to continue to participate in the research and contact had to be cut in order for **I** to focus on self-progress. Surprisingly, at the end of the research period, contact with a friend of **E** resulted in **E** wanting to participate in the research project. This friend was initially part of the support system, and had frequent contact with **E**. All contact with **E** has been through text messages and Team's video conferences with recorded videos.

Professions with experience in the field were contacted directly. Professionals with the most information are considered to be located in the east of Norway and close to the capital (PST, 2016). Criteria set for the support system population was to have experience working with the target group of offenders, either before leaving for Syria, through prisons, or upon release and in the reintegration phase. The aim of including this population into the study was to build a knowledge gap and understand future possibilities and limitations the terrorist convicts meet post-release in Norway. By including this in the thesis, the expectation is that the professionals' and the offenders' experienced struggles would be highlighted and support that is beneficial for rehabilitation, reintegration, and security would be identified. Furthermore, it was important that the support provider has had more than three<sup>6</sup> contacts or experiences with returnees or

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<sup>6</sup> preferred five or more cases in order to de-identify

persons sentenced on §147. This is important so the information provided can be sufficiently anonymised and transferable and avoid personal identification.

Everyone in this population accepted participation in the study, except for PST, police, and the Norwegian correctional facilities, which either did not respond back or could not participate due to confidentiality. The data is therefore collected from an SLT coordinator, NAV, imams, RVTS, a coordinator for a support group for family members of Syria travellers, and lastly from a private organisation working with reintegration of extremists and members in organised crime. SLT would be translated into *Coordination of local drug and crime prevention*, and they are part of the first line services provided mainly for youths under 18 years and focus on preventative work in all municipalities in Norway (Bjørngo & Christensen, 2018:67-70). Some of the coordinators have experiences with reintegration and care of returnees from Syria and Iraq (Bjørngo & Christensen, 2018:67-70).

NAV, which is the social welfare office, is located in each commune as well. Their main goal is to assist people in Norway to secure or qualify for a job or education. To do so, they are in contact with people in all stages in life, also newly released inmates, and extremists. Imams play an important role when individuals are becoming religiously radical or extreme. They have firsthand knowledge on the religious teachings, and additionally some have qualified as mentors to facilitate other public services in the communes to assist with rehabilitation. RVTS is the acronym for the Regional Resource Centres for Violence, Traumatic Stress, and Suicide Prevention. They provide resources within research, knowledge-building on psycho-social topics, and mentoring education. RVTS is one of the main actors in the Action Plan in preventing radicalisation and extremism and has already assisted several cases in the districts with advice and guidance (Bjørngo & Christensen, 2018:68).

A support group for family and relatives for the individuals who left to participate in ISIS was created in 2015. An individual affiliated with this support group were available for interviews about the topic of rehabilitation and reintegration. Through an informative conversation with him, it became apparent that he had valuable reflections on limitations and possibilities of the future post-release and experienced figured worlds of the terrorism offenders and was therefore asked to participate in the research. Lastly, an organisation working with reintegration of extremists and members of organised crime, which also have experience from Sweden and Denmark, was included in the thesis. They have established a rehabilitation program and have had contact with Syria travellers as well as young members of organised crime and are knowledgeable in the field of reintegration after extremism and a violent lifestyle.

Seeing that primary data of terrorism offenders was problematic and access to the prisons was not established, collecting secondary data became a part of the research design. The criteria for what kind of secondary data could answer the research questions had to be developed. As the secondary data had to provide information about what a terrorism offender will experience post-release, it became reliable to focus on news media outlets as a source for public discussions on narratives and opinions. As Berg and Lune (2012:357) describe sampling for documents can be found in various data material. The ethical deliberations and considerations journalists must take before and after an interview are different from what a researcher goes through. Hence, numerous media articles about the terrorism offenders and the individuals who left to join ISIS were collected and published with or without consent, including their families and background. Using such documents requires sensitivities, therefore no personal information will be used from this data, but rather the overall collection of opinions, narratives, words, and phrases was extracted.

Upon deciding where to sample the documents from, the *Retriever* tool available through the university was used to skim through the enormous articles. The time frame was set from 01.01.2015 to 21.05.2021, as the beginning of 2015 was when Norwegian news outlets largely discussed the phenomenon of Syria travellers publicly (Arntsen, 2015a; Arntsen, 2015b; Arntsen, 2015c; Arntsen & Hopperstad, 2015; Arntsen & Tjømmøe, 2015; Brekke & Skille, 2015; Castello, 2015; Renå & Håkonsen, 2015; Tjømmøe & Arntsen, 2015; Wibe-Lund, 2015). The search words were defined as “terror”, “prison”, “rehabilitation”, and “terrorism”. These code searches were chosen as the articles needed to include rehabilitation in the discourse of terrorism or in the post-release discussions.

### **4.3 Method of analysis**

Finishing the data collection, the raw data was organised and primary data transcribed. By using colour coding, the data material was divided into categories which were associated to each research question and under categories (Berg & Lune, 2012:352). Content analysis is a common method for documents as data, especially secondary data (Berg & Lune, 2012:154, 349). Cordes (1987) recommend using content analysis when analysing terrorist literature and content collected from such individuals, as it examines the text as a whole, rather than focusing on phrases and words. By recognising patterns, similarities, and differences in the written texts, both transcribed and secondary data, highlighted topics and concepts will be visible and drawn out from the raw material (Berg & Lune, 2012:155). It is a lengthy and time-consuming process, which requires several readings of each document, but interesting patterns and impressions will be

extracted (Berg & Lune, 2012:155, 352). The relevant concepts and themes for this thesis were analysed through thematic methods to identify patterns, correlations, and connections with the data material which was collected from the terrorism convict. It was chosen to use the data from the terrorism convict central in the analysis and use the secondary data and subjects from the support system to compare, highlight, and discuss patterns and concepts. The analysis started with the concepts based on the research questions and existing literature of theories and discourse. Other patterns and distinctions that were acknowledged and recognised through this process, were addressed, and assessed in correlation with all the transcribed documents. According to Berg and Lune (2012:350), content analysis is the desired method to analyse raw data into codes, which further can be used to respond to the research questions. These codes, themes, patterns, and categories were linked with existing theories of future, figured worlds, rehabilitation and reintegration, and security dilemma. The codes and themes therefore related to already existing explanations and theories and were further analysed and discussed in connection with the research questions of the thesis (Berg & Lune, 2012:352).

The push and pull factors which were significant for the prospects and limitations for the future post-release, were assessed through the data from the terrorism convict and the secondary sources. Additionally, the support system provided an experienced reflection on this. Data collected on limitations and possibilities of the future reality post-release through the support system coincided with future assessment and predictions assembled through the news media outlets. It is argued that all the data material collected and analysed provided a thorough discussion of the rehabilitation and reintegration process terrorism offenders meet in Norway, as they provide different angles of approach to the same reality, and present different lines of perception and perspectives (Berg & Lune, 2012:6). Combining these insights with a content analysis contributed to the triangulation of the findings (Berg & Lune, 2012). Multiple inputs from various practitioners and their experiences were of great asset to the predictions, views and figured worlds collected through content analysis.

There are weaknesses with content analysis, as with other methods. It is ineffective, especially when it comes to causal relationships (Berg & Lune, 2012:376). The method sufficiently says what data is present, but not why. The researchers' opinions and interpretations can interfere with the coding regarding what is relevant and important (Berg & Lune, 2012:364). Trustworthiness and transparency are reached when the coding and analysis is conducted openly, therefore, the codes used in the analysis can be found in the appendix. The answers to the content

analysis lay in the data, and the analysis was therefore intrinsically intertwined with the research questions and codes which are deduced from them.

## **5. Findings and analysis**

The proceeding analysis is based on the interviews with **E**, who will hereafter be referred to as Yasin, which is not his name. During the data collection we had a long interview on Teams, and smaller conversations on other communication platforms. The interviews and conversations have been easy, filled with laughter, smiles, and serious talks about international and domestic politics, social forces, and wars. Other informants included in the thesis represent the support system through different professional positions, which have been more thoroughly explained in Chapter 4.3. As a caution and to ensure their anonymity, their names are fictive. Additionally, they represent themselves and their experience more than their employer and workplace, as they all have long careers and vast experiences working with extremism, radicalism, and reintegration.

In Chapter 2, the discussion about radicalism and extremism argued that being radical does not indicate a linear path to radicalisation and extremism, and that those concepts should be more thoroughly defined. The underlying factors that have been argued to lead to extreme and radical behaviour or participation in terrorist activities will be analysed through the theoretical framework of typologies of the 3N model, push-and-pull factors, and personal traits. Knowledge on what can make an individual become extreme can create a base for the following analysis and discussion of what the terrorism convicts need rehabilitation and reintegration from. Lastly the analysis will contain the typology of figured worlds and how social interactions and societal forces impact the recreation of figured worlds and narratives.

By analysing these topics through content analysis which seeks patterns and themes, the following discussion will be based on qualitative analysis of a selection of support systems available for the terrorist offenders and how mass media has portrayed the issues of Syria travellers to the Norwegian society. It is important to acknowledge that the terrorism offenders all have an individual context that has led them to the path of extremism and committing terrorism acts (Altier et al., 2014). The broad experiences of the support system and the story of Yasin can provide a wider comprehension to the discourse of rehabilitation and reintegration of terrorism offenders.

### **5.1 Typologies**

The model presented by Bjørge on grievance, experiences, and mental health, is a starting point for the analysis. This model presents a few indicators which the support system and Yasin acknowledged as relevant to some of the issues terrorism offenders and returnees face. Due to their agreement that these indicators are relevant, the importance of the model can be seen,

which allows us to recognise the mindset and issues that act as the foundation for further analysis. The black and white mindset indicates that the terrorism offenders, such as Yasin, do not see or recognise that there are variations and diversity amongst individuals or states, in the sense of international politics. Such a black and white mindset could have been triggered through ongoing emphasis on the black-and-white separations in the society and internationally. However, Lars, the SLT coordinator interviewed, emphasised that many of the individuals that left Norway to pledge alliance with ISIS, were quite knowledgeable and updated on news and international politics. In addition to this, Yasin explains that for him, it was not the case of hating Norway and Norwegians, and acting out of anger towards his home country, but anger placed at grievance experienced by individuals he compared himself with. The black and white mindset is a recognised element in radicalisation and extremism, where the feelings of division in the society and worldview are intensified (Christensen, 2019).

The other indicators in the aforementioned model, describe inner and outer grievances which can be a result of continued experiences with negative interactions. The feeling of not being a part of the society at large or any group, is emphasised by Yasin when he stated that “the only time I felt Norwegian... was when me and some friends saw a national football match and Norway lost. I laughed and made jokes, but my friend said “why do you laugh? You are Norwegian too you know”. Emphasising the feeling of not being part of society lays not only in classification of others as Norwegians or not, but rather the continued experiences of not achieving similar goals as others and the mass media and public sector using words with latent meanings of separation compared to words of collectively (Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018).

Sadiq, which represents the support group for relatives of Syria travellers, emphasises how the social exclusion and black and white worldview is preached by the extremist networks they affiliate themselves with as well. This, in turn, enforces manipulation of their religious ideology and can alter personal intentions.

However, the experiences of not being a part of society is not solely based on feelings, as the NAV employee states “they were never integrated. Regardless it being a white ethnically Norwegian or an immigrant.” The lack of integration can be based on bullying and exclusion, weak socio-economic background, or other factors. Regardless, not all that are bullied will end up as extremists. It is the continued experiences of such separation from the society, and the individuals’ social interactions with groups, online or in person, which amplify such experiences. Ruth, the representant from RVTS with experience on extremism and migration, states that it is common for extremists and terrorists to have “unprocessed childhood traumas which have not been

dealt with by the correct institution before”. Difficulties with controlling reactions, distrust, aggression, and PTSD could be reactions to the mentioned unprocessed childhood traumas and be amplified with acceptance and welcome from an extremist network.

Lars, the SLT coordinator, explains the difficulty in assessing what comes first, the separation and exclusion from the community or the mental health issues which have not been dealt with through proper health and social services. He states that “the [extremist or radical] mindset... and the kinship is easily accessible [now through internet]. What comes first, is it a person that is radicalised or is it a mentally ill person dressed as an extremist?”. By identifying what the prevalent problem is, the individual’s holistic context of mental health, ideology, motivations, and weaknesses, initiatives towards deradicalisation and disengagement will be more precise and effective.

The problematic landscape of mental health and mental illnesses is prevalent in the findings, where Yasin and individuals from the support system have experienced such problems. However, the landscape of mental health and health services is not within the scope of this thesis, as this thesis is rooted in International Relations. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the impact mental health and undiscovered or untreated mental illnesses can have on an individual and further amplify segregation from society. This segregation can further push an individual into not learning and understanding the society, social codes, and roles, based on the lack of experience, poor education, and social interaction. This brings us further in the analysis, to the significant quest and life skills models by Bertelsen and Kruglanski (2020).

### **Significant Quest and 3N**

The theory of significant quest highlights the motivational imbalances which impact an individual’s life attachment, where the extreme outcome is that values are placed on violent extremism rather than other universal needs or normative political goals (Bertelsen & Kruglanski, 2020; Webber et al., 2020). Identifying the motivational imbalance is difficult as this is rooted in individual context. The significant quest theory addresses deficit, justification, and social support as elements impacting radicalisation, deradicalisation, and disengagement, and further incorporate these elements into a motivational system. Yasin explains how his motivation was to assist and help the Syrian people from grievance and oppression. His motivation could be argued to be pure, however his means are illegal, hence the terrorism conviction. Lars, the SLT coordinator, recognises that the motivation of the individuals who left to participate in the Syrian war, occurred at a time when the media was describing the conflict as a justified riot. However, the situation in Syria turned out to be more confusing than that, with many rebellious

groups and political gaining domestically and internationally. This is not to say that ideology, kinship, and violent means did not influence the motivational imbalance, but rather to describe how the justification and social support within the network and group overshadowed other universal motivations.

The networks are highlighted in the significant quest theory and 3N model, where networks and narratives are essential when identifying needs and a significant quest (Bertelsen & Kruglanski, 2020). The motivational element in extremism is a natural response to this. The quest in life to do good, help, and support others, can therefore be shaped by the networks one participates in and their narratives. Sadiq states that “it was about the club, the group. They found their loyalty and their duty. They did not know much about the ideology but were taught what to chant”. This is interesting where the network aspect seems to be the centre of motivation and further the radicalisation process towards extremism. However, it is neither straight forward nor generalisable for the Syria travellers from Norway. The networks, in Yasin’s story, were acknowledging the injustice and exclusion he himself had experienced in Norway, and together the narrative was shaped into frustration and anger to remove suffering from the Syrian people. Yasin is clear that the religious ideology of his motivation was shaped by the networks he participated in; “Syria consists of Muslims, so why not. Why should they not have an Islamic state if that is what they want and right? I had this perception. But I did not have knowledge of if the majority of the Syrian people shared this perception”. But the ideology was used as an excuse to further their motivational imbalance and goal to do what was argued to be righteous towards the Syrian regime in order to help the Syrian people.

Yasin claims that he has changed his point of view after release from prison, and his motivation, which can be described as similar to the one prior, is now shaped by a new narrative. The interaction with people, and the disengagement through imprisonment has impacts on the significant quest and the motivational imbalance. The difficulty with changing such narratives, worldviews, and ideologies is emphasised by Lars from a public sector point of view, “[one] have the perspective of not getting involved with religion and politics and such”. When removing these topics from the discussion and conversation in the support system or in public sector institutions, civil society networks and groups, and extremist groups, can exemplify this and enhance suffering to achieve the group’s quest.

The networks and groups are described as more important or influential than the ideology, initially. Having something to do in one’s spare time is part of any social and human need. This network focus is also an important element in the rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives,

where Lars says, “if we were in position to help with the social problems they had, the ideology would have disappeared”. Being socially marginalised or experiencing social exclusion is a prevalent factor for radicalisation throughout the analysis of the data material. Stabilising and recreating human interactions, social bonds, and social needs is demanding but also essential during incarceration and upon release for the terrorism offenders. Yasin had several important human interactions which impacted his change in belief, ideology, and worldview. These interactions were rarely forced, and have, for Yasin’s case, been a part of realising that his initial quest to help and assist in human suffering can also be achieved through other means than extremism and terrorism. By continuing to explore one’s significant quests, Yasin for example, can have opportunities with new friends and networks that share similar narratives, goals and means as himself.

Identifying significant means, goals, or gains can be used to alter the motivation into a new and attractive opportunity which is socially moderate and without violence (Bertelsen & Kruglanski, 2020). Using the 3N model is important to identify the narratives that have accepted violence, the network that embraces these narratives, and the need for attaining significance in life. Upon identifying this, a rehabilitation process can be developed to meet the needs of the individual. The data indicates that the terrorism offenders strive to start a family, creating family bonds, sexual relations, and personal relationships of their own are significant and represent a need for most of them. In addition to fulfilling a need for significance, family and personal relationships also provide stability and continued social interaction. In the aspect of human social interaction, the mentoring scheme can offer a co-migrant experience which can “display empathy, support, and assist the terrorism convict through their ups and downs”, which is immensely important according to Ruth. Rehabilitation is about creating a good life “where they can find peace and comfort and be able to create a new presence for growth and personal development”, Ruth continues. A mentor can take this place and assist with identifying the 3N’s and present continuous support and encouragement for personal development in rehabilitation.

Additionally, a mentor can help with the development and balancing of life skills and life tasks during the rehabilitation process (Bertelsen & Kruglanski, 2020). Sultan and Mousavi (2016) emphasise the importance of not treating the terrorism offenders as incapacitated. Being incapacitated indicates that they are not responsible for their own actions. Yasin, for example, explains how he was fully aware of what he participated in, while acknowledging that “some left [for Syria] quite quickly, but most of us had done our homework, while others were unprepared. Maybe they imagined something else, or maybe they had not done their research. The stories

[of the Syria travellers] are different”. This difference is an important acknowledgement and indicates that the Syria travellers are a group of individuals which have made their choices based on individual contexts and situations. Some have little knowledge of life skills and tasks prior to leaving for Syria. Huzaifa, the imam interviewed for this thesis, has a perception of extremists as someone who does not know how the society and government work, nor how it is structured. The offenders need to be taught how the institutions operate and learn about the Norwegian society and other social skills in order to have a successful reintegration. Such teachings cannot only be done by individuals such as Imam Huzaifa, when they are met with “a possibility to get a relation with a counsellor or anybody, it will be easier... Humans have the potential to adapt. But they need the society’s generosity”.

### **Push and pull factors**

Similar to all the typologies and theories used in this thesis, the push and pull factors are not universal. Radicalisation, disengagement, and deradicalisation are all processes based on individual contexts and circumstances. The factors presented in the push and pull typology of Altier et al. (2014), Horgan et al. (2017), and Bjørgo and Christensen (2018) are important to understand motivations for leaving an extremist group. The typology also provides a valuable understanding of rehabilitation and reintegration efforts needed for such processes to succeed. All the factors presented in the typology are relevant when discussing rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives, however, that does not indicate that they are compatible nor applicable for all terrorism offenders.

This section starts with the push factors, which are factors within the extremist or terrorist network that can push for disengagement. Several of the factors have been mentioned and emphasised in the data. Several of the articles analysed from the media outlets informs about Norwegian Syria travellers trying to escape the Caliphate and the regime they are conditioned by, emphasising that they want to leave and that it is not what they thought it would be (Ravndal, 2016; Svendsen & Alayoubi, 2019). It is clear that there are various push factors driving them away, however, these have not been sufficiently identified for the analysis.

Yasin, for instance, places significance on factors such as disillusionment with strategy and loss of faith in the political goal. He states that “there are groups in Syria today that are not recognised as terrorist groups, which want to implement an Islamic state. I realised that if the Syrian people wants an Islamic state they can, but it cannot be forced. And that is where the difference between Al Qaeda and ISIS was. Al Qaeda wanted to move in slowly, building the Islamic system from within”. The loss of faith in the strategy or the political goal can be devastating for

the returnees, and Hans suggests that “[rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives should] give them another faith. ...the most important is not to believe in something, but to believe in yourself”. The suffering of loss of faith, which could be, for some, a result of pushing for returning to Norway, could be used to move forward. This way, they can attain control and responsibility over their own life again, which is an important step in the reintegration process according to Jacob, from NAV.

Yasin continues with how he needed to stop puzzling over the issues of force and religion, and the different strategic means, as it was draining and has taken a psychological toll on him. Yasin says that he is currently facing such difficulties, where especially anxiety and depression has prevailed and taken more space in his life. This is similar to the push factor of burnout and PTSD which can be linked to the push factor of the inability to cope with the physical and psychological effects of violence. The psychological effects of participating in or being close to war zones are also recognised when working with migrants and refugees. RVTS and Ruth have a lot of experience with these topics and have seen similar psychological and physical effects on refugees and extremists which have been in war zones. Yasin experienced violence while he was in Syria. He claims he did not have the intention of moving and living in Syria on a permanent basis and he explained, “I do not think that anyone could live in such a war zone forever. It would not work for me at least”, it was just “not me as a person to be living in a country I do not understand fully”. However, he recognises that others that he knew and met in Syria had other intentions.

Other push factors that have been mentioned by the support system are the unmet expectations, which can be similar to what has been analysed previously with regards to life skills and life tasks. Yasin claims he knew what he was getting himself into and therefore knew what to expect, but that the situation in Syria changed. Meanwhile he also recognises how others left in a rush and could experience disappointment or shock based on lack of knowledge. Hans, has a vast practical experience in the field of returnees and extremists, and he says “many believed they were only supposed to work from 08-16:00, and would have the rest of the day off to explore, hang out and meet girls. But what they met were the opposite”. The narrative portrayed through the media outlets suggest that most of the Syria travellers were fighters, by using the concepts of foreign fighters and ISIS-fighters. To some degree this could be true, however this research and analysis does not focus on the fighting aspect of the participation in terrorism networks. What is interesting however, is the unmet expectations towards the ones that thought they were going to be or wanted to be fighters. Individuals were expecting action, but instead

experienced waiting for days or weeks on look-out posts (Bjørgero, 2011). However, no one in the data mentions this side of the unmet expectation factor.

Regarding the push factor of being disillusioned by the clandestine behaviour or the difficulty of adapting to the clandestine lifestyle, the data does not suggest any such issues. Hans acknowledges that the returnees and terrorism offenders have, most likely, gained military training in a brutal way, and that lessons learnt on killing or violence are difficult to unlearn. As a result of this, the returnees are very popular amongst the criminal gangs and networks upon release. Hans says that the “challenge is to prevent them from entering such criminal networks, because it is very easy for them. They are being looked down-upon by everyone else, the rest of the society. It is easy to seek comfort in the criminal networks”. Lars, the SLT coordinator agrees with this, and recognises the challenge of reducing recidivism into criminal behaviour and networks upon release. The impression he has, which correlates with Sadiq’s experiences as well, is that most of the returnees from Syria returned into the same networks they were affiliated with before. Sadiq says that “we have pacified them through incarceration. But most of them return to the same friends and networks they had before. All of the members [of an extremist group that recruited many individuals to ISIS] has returned to the group again but have stopped with the activism”. These findings indicate that the factor of disillusionment by the clandestine behaviour is not prevalent for many of the returnees to Norway, regardless of them being prosecuted or not. Initiatives to prevent the terrorism offenders of recidivism could be found in other typologies and will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

However, Yasin is not agreeing with this. Through his own experiences being tired and exhausted from his experiences in Syria, his incarceration, and his release, he estimates that other returnees are tired as well. Regardless, he is concerned that the younger generations are still vulnerable and easily susceptible to extremist networks online, and he explains, “Because, when I see the youths doing crime, it is the same as what I did. I get discouraged. I cannot just stand by and look at this happening again and again”. The discouragement from Yasin is exemplifying that neither the push factors nor the experiences with extremist networks are similar for all returnees. Altier et al. (2014) discuss how push factors have been shown to be more important in the onset of deradicalisation and disengagement, but the pull factors are the motivations upon release from prison.

The pull factors are described as better alternatives outside of the extremist networks, that can pull for disengagement or deradicalisation. The factor of amnesty will not be analysed in this thesis, as amnesty is not offered in Norway for terrorism offenders. Further, the desire to marry

and establish a family has already been analysed as a motivational aspect regarding the significant quest theory. All subjects agreed the wish to start a family is a motivational factor for many of the returnees and terrorism offenders. However, whether starting a family was of very high importance is not present in the data, as it has been analysed to be a future motivational goal and not a present factor.

Similarly, employment or educational demands are not shown in the data to be a present factor, but rather occur as a quest or wish to be able to obtain a job in the future. Yasin explains that he has had vocational training but has difficulties obtaining a job since his release from prison. He says he is “trying to get a job, but it is not easy, as I have some challenges with this sentence”. The pull factor to have a steady income, stability, and the ability to provide for oneself is motivation. But it is difficult to get a job with a terrorism sentence and he is scared. He explains, “I fear that it will happen, that someone will contact my workplace and tell them about me, and then I lose the job”. Imam Huzaifa has experienced that extremists who do not get a job or gain positive social bonds with non-illegal networks, may gain negative thoughts which amplify the personal grievance of exclusion even more. However, openness and trust are important when applying for a job, especially if the person has been incarcerated for terrorism. Lars says “one cannot pretend that everything is OK, because situations will occur. It is better to be open to begin with. But I experience that many employers are sceptical, and others are willing to take the chance”, and sometimes the explanation of rehabilitation initiative works as a gateway to start an employment.

Jacob works at NAV, the social welfare office that offers support for unemployed individuals. He says that “they need to get out into the workforce, and then we can work with openness which can make them be valued as an asset and a colleague, of course with a questionable background and views sometimes”. A job provides new social networks and something valuable to spend your time on, instead of suffering, exclusion, or participation in negative or extremist networks. The support from NAV, or other professions as the role of a support system, is important when the terrorist offenders are applying for jobs. Hans says that “using mentors that work only with this, the relationship between the individual and a workplace or work attitude”, is something they often do in these cases. Social work, and a cooperation between the correctional facilities and the work force is important for this to work, along with trust and openness. A mentor can assist with changes and challenges the terrorism offenders meets upon release. Obtaining a job is a cornerstone for integration into society. Hans says, “they have learnt and done rotten things, which I cannot tolerate, but we cannot just sit and watch. They

are going to be integrated into the society in one way or another. The best way to do that is to accept who they are”. On the other side, Sadiq claims that many of the returnees have a job already. However, it is unclear if the individuals he is referring to have been prosecuted.

The pull factor that considers freedom and safety is also relevant for the analysis. As the previous paragraph shows, released terrorism offenders meet difficulties obtaining jobs. Some have been interviewed in the media, while others are from a smaller municipality where *everyone* knows about the terrorism charge. Wanting freedom and safety can be a motivation and a comfort for continuing the process of rehabilitation and reintegration upon release, but the experiences with the society upon release can impact the experience of freedom. Additionally, the social and economic marginalisation that often follows unemployment can inhibit further reintegration on other levels as well, which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Another point of view regarding freedom, is related to the female Syrian travellers. Sadiq has experienced that several of them wanted freedom from negative social control within their family and found this freedom within the extremist networks. Sexual and amorous feelings were suddenly allowed, and they could be free from the control they had been living under. However, other subjects have not discussed this, and it is not relevant for further discussion on rehabilitation and reintegration, as it is limited to factors for radicalisation and becoming extreme.

The other pull factors of competing loyalties, age, and financial incentives are not present in the data and not available for the analysis. Regardless, the pull factor of positive interactions with moderates has been analysed in the previous section of 3N models, regarding the importance of positive networks and social interactions. As Altier et al. (2014) have discussed, the pull factors are of more relevance upon release as that is when the alternatives are available for them and can function as motivation and driving forces for the further process of rehabilitation and reintegration.

### **Personality traits and motivations**

The following typologies by Petter Nesser (2018) and Tore Bjørgo (2011) are created to explain radicalisation and engagement in extremism and terrorism. However, the typologies can provide information that can be valuable upon answering the research questions on what the terrorism offenders need rehabilitation from and social forces that can limit or assist the reintegration.

The analysis of the data material suggests that the returnees and terrorism offenders charged in Norway are comparable to Nesser’s (2018) characterisation of misfits or drifters (Blingheim,

2016). The main difference between the drifters and the misfits is that the drifters are referred to as “youthful rebels in search for identity and adventure or lack option for an alternative lifestyle” (Nesser, 2018:12-18). The misfits on the other hand have a criminal background, with violence, petty crimes, or drug abuse, and use the participation in extremism as a cleanse or salvation (Nesser, 2018). The drifters are more lacking a social connection and a suited path for them in life. With this comparison, the Syria travellers from Norway could be argued to be a mix of both, as the secondary sources suggests that some had a criminal record, while others changed personality suddenly and joined the extremist networks. Yasin underlines this by his upbringing where he experienced exclusion, and grievances founded in Muslim hate and experiences of not being a part of the society. Yasin, for instance said that “if someone had said to me that *I know it’s tough and dark, but one day you will get a job, a family and you are safe here in Norway*. It would have meant a lot, but no one did”. However, others that are mentioned in the data material, left for Syria and terrorism to create an escape from the reality they had in Norway. Sadiq claims that several of the girls and young women that left for Syria, was the first choice they had made in their life by themselves, escaping negative social control or other restrictions put on them by becoming more religious and righteous than their family.

Continuing, Yasin explains how the “extreme came and created forums for us. And assisted us into a more radical direction”, where he was accepted, trusted and surrounded by people who believed in him. The religion was not the single factor bringing them together, “they do not need the religion. They have more than enough gas to light the fire, with the human aspects and human suppressed feelings”. This is also evident in the data material from the support system, where social exclusion, injustice, racism is all mentioned as elements pushing the individuals towards the extreme.

When the grievance and social exclusion is such a large burden, the need for acceptance and comfort becomes important. Again, there are similarities to what the analysis indicated through the Significant Quest theory, 3N models and the push and pull factors. The individual context based on upbringing, social experiences and opportunities in the Norwegian society are all used as arguments for explaining why the many from Norway left for Syria. However, the ideological was important as well, possibly not for everyone, but was a binding force for further the comradeship and extremism.

Nesser’s (2018) typology describes misfits as individuals with personal misfortune that partly lead to radicalisation. The personal experiences have been exaggerated through constant social interaction with the extreme networks and provided answers that were justified for the group.

Yasin explains how religion was always an important part of his life, and an incentive for personal growth and development. He acknowledges how a time in his life he was vulnerable and was pulled in the extreme direction. “I think it also was caused by the situation in the society at the time, with the caricature drawings and all the issues related to that. it pushed me in the radical direction”. These social forces that impact the individuals is a pattern in the data material, where the support system mentions the society’s responsible for inclusion and space for grievance and support for suffering or vulnerabilities. The connection between the Muslim community and the rest of the Norwegian society is important to prevent divisions where extreme groups are the best option.

Imam Huzaifa focus on the importance of this connection “Imams and mosques needs to be engaged in the society, be visible ... and have a role in the society. If the society wants what’s best for the people, the individuals will experience that as well... they need to see that the society can include, because they have felt a strong sense of exclusion”. The cooperation between the Muslim community and the overall society is not that much present in the data material. The support system interviewed says that they want to have the cooperation with the Muslim community, as it can have “a preventative influence on the youths and be important as role models” Hans claims. However, Lars express that many of the extremists “are not very excited about the already established mosques”.

Moreover, the other characters described by Nesser (2018) are entrepreneurs and protégés. The analysis indicates that most of the Norwegian Syria travellers, to the knowledge and experience of the support system, would be mostly categorised as misfits or drifters, the entrepreneurs have been present to some extent as well. Sadiq explains how the leaders of the groups and networks were professing an already finished ideology, where the members were not able to impact or influence. The leaders were described as having a “prominent religious identity, eternally ethical and moral, and influential towards the youths”, by Sadiq. While the leaders, or entrepreneurs, profited from the youngster’s engagement, the leaders used it as “... a business for people who wanted to be Muslim leaders. I have seen many of the leaders’ private homes, and they do not live up to their own substance and preaches”, according to Sadiq. The leaders in the extremist groups and networks in Norway could be similar to the entrepreneurial or protégé role in Nesser’s (2018) typology, however the data material does not go into detail about the leaders, but rather the younger generations vulnerability and social exclusion. Which could be characterised as a combination of the drifters and misfits.

## **Continuum**

Lastly is the continuum typology developed by Tore Bjørgo (2011). It is rooted in the constructivist idea of Bergen (1967) where social interactions are dynamic and dialectic, impact and change the individuals through social interactions. The typology could be argued to be more inclusive than Nesser's (2018), arguing that the individuals with entrepreneurial characteristics can change in role, function, or ideology. The continuum provides the analysis with the importance of social interaction for cognitive change, which is further emphasised through the Significant Quest and 3N model as well as motivations and pull factors.

The previous typology informs that the data material does not have sufficient knowledge on Syria travellers with leader status, an entrepreneurial role or protégés. The analysis of the data with this typology will therefore exclude that section of Bjørgo's (2011) typology, however it may be relevant nonetheless for Syria travellers from Norway, it is not mentioned in the data of this thesis. Continuing, the data material does not provide sufficient information for analysing the change of cognitive, ideological, or behavioural changes. This is largely due to that the terrorism offenders are early in their process of rehabilitation, and knowledge on these changes have not been experienced by the support system interviewed for this thesis. Additionally, the section in Bjørgo's (2011) continuum concerning socially well adapted or marginalised have already been analysed in the section of life skills and life tasks, as well as regarding Significant Quest and the 3N model.

However, the impact of social interaction for change, on either cognitive or behavioural level, have been discussed largely amongst the subjects. Providing a new and moderate social network is influential regarding rehabilitation and reintegration, as new networks and social interactions can offer alternatives for violence, sensation seeking and life skills (Bjørgo & Christensen, 2018; Nesser, 2018). Through social interactions, conversations built on trust and acceptance, Yasin became aware that others with similar identified significant quest in their life, had chosen a legal route to fight oppression. He says that "we became pretty good friends and talked about injustice and oppression. We concluded that we had similar onsets but used different channels to fight oppression.", social interactions like these causes change and can impact the deradicalisation process the individual is going through.

Sultan and Mousavi (2016) address the influence of social interaction and its importance in rehabilitation and reintegration. Recreating the connection with the civil society and provide safe spaces to grow, change and learn are all important elements influenced by social interaction (Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018). Thus, Sadiq's experience with radicalisation and that the radical

and extreme youths lack protection factors, he suggests that rehabilitation should be "... about giving them space from ideology and see the human being that they are". The safe spaces were missing in their lives before and during their radicalisation process, and the rehabilitation process can construct and facilitate this (Jakobsen, 2018).

Families, friends, hobbies, and workplace can provide safe spaces and enforce positive social interactions during the rehabilitation and reintegration process. Mentors and varied assistance from the public services are also important to enforce rehabilitation and reintegration upon release. Many of the returnees have a good connection with their family with support and comfort, which Hans claims to be very important for the terrorism offenders. Yasin explains how his family have grown closer and "when me and my family got help from the municipality, a lot of my anxiety and fear was reduced". However, Hans has experienced a difference between the ethnical Norwegian families and returnees from an ethnic minority. "There are good Norwegian boys that were missing a community. They did not have anything, no network. More often for them, than [for returnees from] ethnic minorities, are they rejected by their families". This is also exemplified by Jacob, from NAV, where extremists with an ethnic Norwegian background often have difficult relationships with their families. Workplace and friends can also provide social interaction and support in the rehabilitation and reintegration processes. Which has already been analysed previously in the analysis and will be discussed further in the discussion chapter.

### **Figured worlds**

Relating to the importance of social interactions and human connections, Christensen (2019) uses the concept of figured worlds as constructed realms of social and cultural meaning systems. The variations of figured worlds an individual have and meet upon release and during the rehabilitation and reintegration processes can be overwhelming and challenging to comprehend. Social interactions are important to create new and collective meaning productions and socialisation, that are a part of reconstructing values, norms, and lives upon release from a terrorism conviction.

Figured worlds encompasses collective identities, structures and social norms and values, that are dialectically in transformation with the members of the figured worlds (Christensen, 2019; Holland et al., 1998). There is a latent void present when leaving one figured world while trying to find or develop a new one (Christensen, 2019). A mentor or a co-migrant as Ruth describes some of the mentors, could be provided as a support through this emotional and cognitive process. However, with the variations between municipalities on mentor pools and no connection

between the mentoring scheme in the Correctional facilities, Imam Huzaifa, Ruth and Lars are all worried about the continuity of the rehabilitation. Ruth suggests that the mentoring scheme could be a part of the sentencing conditions upon release, however this is rarely the case. The holistic approach of assigning a mentor to a terrorism convict or extremist is the support and guidance through the difficult and tough days, as well as the encouragement to continue the process of defining and recreating new figured worlds. The mentor can also assist with assistance towards other public and health services, as Ruth says “I have no faith in [public health services] if the individual is all alone without a supporter... We experience that this [the mentoring scheme] fills a gap that is missing all over the country.” Ruth continues to amplify the importance of a mentor in rehabilitation and reintegration because the terrorism offenders need to “reconstruct contexts in their lives. Actually, they are patching their whole life together”, that is recreating their identity and future.

The new figured worlds are constructing new identities, new rationales and meaning systems. These processes are not limited to the theological or ideological aspect of their commitment to extremism and terrorism. Imam Huzaifa says that “we cannot be alone on this, the whole society is important for a successful reintegration”. The narratives discussed in Chapter 2.1 are also impacting the recreation of figured worlds and the rehabilitation and reintegration of the terrorism offenders. These narratives also impact the individual offender, as Lars describes that “they are so convinced that others view them like this [dangerous, monsters, and fighters], that they do not see the ones who care”. Yasin agrees with this and is “... convinced everyone know who I am”. Creating a new identity and new figured worlds is difficult when the social forces met upon release resembles the familiar narratives prior to leaving for Syria. These narratives of the returnees and terrorism offenders being dangerous, monsters, and a security threat are enforced by media and politicians, which is deduced from the secondary sources. Resulting in that the terrorism offenders lay low, stay isolated and excluded from the society, again. Hans says that “they are not proud of what they have done” and are scared of counterreactions by the society if they integrate back into the society. The stigmas, fears and wanting to push the offenders away, are not unfounded, as Hans claims, they are individuals who have committed terrorism and been convicted. Yasin is aware of how and why the society does not like him, however, he is worried about the future generations if knowledge and understanding about individuals like him is constrained.

## **6. Discussion**

This thesis is not looking at whether the terrorism offenders in Norway are deradicalised, but rather what they need rehabilitation from, what society they are reintegrated into, and their prospects after release. Upon release, the municipalities are on their own and must figure out what to do regarding rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives, depending on resources and knowledge (Fangen & Kolås, 2016). PST has a role within the reintegration process, where they will monitor the released offenders and possibly do check-ups continuously (Fangen & Kolås, 2016). This discussion will use the analysis from the previous chapter to discuss the topics of rehabilitation and reintegration of terrorism offenders in Norway. The public services, support systems and civil society are of significance when it comes to these processes which have repercussions for the future of the terrorism offenders themselves and the Norwegian society. The aim of rehabilitation and reintegration efforts is to create desistance, which means refraining from terrorism activities, and reduce chances of recidivism i.e., committing new crimes.

The discussion chapter is sectioned according to the main research questions, where each sub-chapter will firstly discuss the sub-questions and further discuss the main research questions. The previous analysis, theoretical framework and literature review establish the foundation of this discussion.

### **6.1 Rehabilitation**

It is commonly agreed that the returnees need rehabilitation, and the discussion has from there on been on how such rehabilitation should be facilitated and what it should include (Christensen, 2019; Hansen & Lid, 2020; Overland, et al., 2018; UNSC, 2014). However, what the individuals need rehabilitation from are rarely defined and contextualised. Christensen (2019) explains how individuals leaving all types of extremism networks often end up in a social vacuum, with psychological issues related to trauma, anxiety, and depression. The analysis clearly indicates that what constitutes as rehabilitation is based on the individual context and needs to be balanced with security (Bjørgero & Christensen, 2018; Horgan & Braddock, 2010). Rehabilitation therefore needs to include various forms of treatment physically, mentally notwithstanding the social and relational aspect of participating in the civil society.

#### **What tools and opportunities should be provided?**

Currently, what is being offered as regards to rehabilitation towards the terrorism offenders is dependent on the Correctional facilities and the programs and strategies provided while incarcerated. Kristiansen and Feiring (2018) research argue that rehabilitation is rarely offered the

terrorism convicts. The rehabilitation needs to have a purpose, be planned, and have the ambition to change cognitive attitude skills, where the aim is a successful reintegration without recidivism (Bjørgero & Christensen, 2018; Horgan & Braddock, 2010; Kristiansen and Feiring, 2018; Overland, et al., 2018). The analysis emphasises the importance of identifying personal needs, that being mental illnesses and treatments, theological or ideological discussions, social and relational skills or learning to navigate in the Norwegian society. Through the psychological narrative, it is important to treat illness, traumas and other mental health issues, as mental vulnerabilities could have had a large impact on the radicalisation process towards extremism (Bjørgero & Christensen, 2018; Christensen, 2019; Horgan & Braddock, 2010; Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018). Simultaneously, other cognitive and ideological worldviews need to be challenged and amended in order for the reintegration process and future perspectives to have a more positive outlook. These challenges and amendments could be facilitated through a mentor; however, it is not limited to the mentoring scheme. The analysis indicates that other social interactions with civil society and the public support system also have great impact on these elements. Regardless, in order for the continuity to be upheld, assigning a mentor provides the most purposefully and stable support.

Additionally, including mentors, civil society and the public support system, family and friends are highlighted both in the analysis and academically as important for a successful rehabilitation. Ruth, from RVTs states the importance of including family in the pursuit of rehabilitation, as families represents an important protective force. Ruth emphasises that the individuals vulnerable for extremism, and terrorism offenders, have experienced an extreme exclusion, which can also have impacted the family and relatives. Hence, sometimes also the family members are in need for support of themselves as well. Horgan and Braddock (2010) want to include family and friends in the rehabilitation process, in order for them to be aware of problems that may come in the future and be conscious about changes on both behavioural and cognitive level of the terrorism offender. Yasin has also highlighted how his family have become closer and received support from the public support system.

Regarding tools and opportunities that should be provided for the terrorism offenders, the analysis emphasises on consistency. The rehabilitation process is a lengthy process and having a system or support around to trust in, is important to limit the possibilities of entering new extremist networks. The analysis also indicates that the rehabilitation needs to be developed according to the individual's context, history, and significant quest. Through identifying signifi-

cant quest, motivation and personal goals are identified and can have the purpose of commitment to something more tangible than cognitive and attitudinal changes. Lastly, it is important that the rehabilitation strategies are holistic and without an expiration date.

### **What do they need rehabilitation from?**

Discussing what the terrorism convicts need rehabilitation from, it is important to recognise what rehabilitation constitutes for these individuals. The discussion has thus far discussed what rehabilitation is and how it should be, with attention to individual context and identifying needs, narratives, and the socioeconomic situation. The characterisation of the terrorism offenders as misfits, drifters, marginalised or oppressed prior to leaving for Syria, indicates that they did not have hope, lacking in social and economic skills and a personality that does not fit into the overall society. However, the circumstances are more challenging than that. The analysis repeats that the terrorism convicts need rehabilitation from diverse aspects, such as mental health, relational skills, learning to understand and navigate in the society.

Bjørge and Christensen (2018) explains that mental health issues, and individual experience of deprivation impact the returnees as well as their rehabilitation. It is therefore important to distinguish these, to know what the individual needs rehabilitation from. It is important to acknowledge that the returnees are various individuals, although we tend to put them in the same group as *returnees*. Their background, regardless of potential psychological issues, are individual and they would therefore need individual and holistic rehabilitation, focusing on exclusion, creating an association to the society and provide mental health support. Through the analysis, the overall perception of the terrorism offenders is that they are individuals that has experienced extreme exclusion, high levels of self-perceived injustice and grievance. These injustices, grievances and societal exclusion indicate that there are factors which have impacted the offenders outside of their control. Kristiansen and Feiring (2018) changes the narrative, and argues that the terrorism offenders never were habilitated, which is also implied in the analysis and data material. This coincides with what PST (2016) wrote in their analysis of the Syria travellers not being sufficiently integrated to manage life skills and tasks in the society. By focusing on habilitation, the attention is towards concepts of help and support, combined with, and not instead of punishment and sentencing (Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018:367). Habilitation indicates that they need to be taught how to be in charge of their own life, which encompasses more than the aforementioned elements in rehabilitation. Jacob, with work experience from NAV, said “through habilitation you are establishing your life for the first time, while through

rehabilitation you are supposed to go back to something you had before”. It is imperative that the terrorism offenders are not rehabilitated into where they were before leaving for Syria, not even prior to becoming radical (Horgan & Braddock, 2010).

## **6.2 Reintegration**

As previously mentioned, reintegration is the desired outcome of rehabilitation, and when they eventually, and hopefully, lose connection with the previous terrorism networks and leave their criminal activities behind (Horgan, 2008; Horgan & Braddock, 2010). This section discusses reintegration of terrorism convicts in Norway. The effect of successful reintegration is not merely based on themselves and the rehabilitation they receive, but also how the Norwegian Government, mass media and civil society are included in this reintegration. As the convicts are released from prison, they cannot reintegrate themselves as reintegration is dependent on the larger society as well.

### **What societal forces push and pull?**

The analysis indicated that the push factors could have a larger impact initially in the disengagement stages of rehabilitation and reintegration. While the pull factors were more influential upon release and during the reintegration process, agreeing with Altier’s (et al., 2014) study. The push and pull factors can be described as motivation to disengage and reintegrate into society.

The characterisations of the terrorism convicts impact them, probably more than the media expect. Kristiansen and Feiring (2018) argue that the descriptions of the Syria travellers impact them and can affect their possibilities for a successful reintegration. The stigmas and fears some of the Syria travellers experienced prior to their radicalisation have large similarities with the phrases and words used towards them upon returning to Norway. Before they left for Syria the narratives of individuals being *dangerous* and *monsters* were, mostly, directed at terrorist organisations abroad. Now, the media outlets use similar words, phrases, and narratives to describe the terrorism offenders that are released from prison (Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018). The continued stigmas the released experience, makes it increasingly difficult to be accepted by the society and community, and could lead them further into new extreme networks or criminal organisations (Bjørgero & Christensen, 2018).

The previous section of this discussion emphasises the importance of a social network, which can be achieved through friends, family, neighbours and the society, and workplace. Being able to recreate old social relations with individuals that were not part of the criminal or extreme

networks are important. Yasin has managed to recreate such contact, however he reckons prison has changed him as “they use to call me and ask me to come out or do something... But I just sit at home. This is how I am programmed through prison”. Additionally, developing new and valuable relations built on trust, is important for the reintegration process (Bertelsen & Kruglanski, 2020). Avoiding the social vacuum and void the recreating of new figured worlds implicate, is essential. Having something to do and spend time on is also suggested by the support system. Education or an employment is here important, both for developing new skills and the experience of being of value, and for the time-consuming activity it is (Horgan & Braddock, 2010). Time away from the internet, the former friends and networks is crucial for a successful reintegration.

Job opportunities are a meaningful pull factor for the released Syria travellers. Bjørge (2011) lists preventive functions for the terrorism offenders, in order to reduce their chance of recidivism. Job opportunities or education such as vocational training can be important for this. The analysis points out the importance and significance of attaining a job, as well as being able to obtain a job is a familiar pull factor for the support system. However, as indicated in the analysis, the barriers of entering the job market are visibly present in the Norwegian society. Employers does not want to hire individuals that have a terrorism conviction, or they are scared of what it entails, employing a former extremist. This obstacle prevents the reintegration process and stalls the progress of several other important elements regarding both rehabilitation and reintegration, such as social networks and role models, as well as the experience of being valuable for the society. An employer can provide skill sets, colleagues, salary, social community, and inclusion.

Again, mentoring can address many of these obstacles and be a support for a future employer that does not have the capacity to tackle everything by themselves (Bertelsen & Kruglanski, 2020). In addition to this, cooperation and interaction between the civil society, job market and the Muslim communities are decisive. Imams and their mosques provide brotherhood and sisterhood, and a community that gathers people with different political viewpoints and are able to take on responsibilities regarding religious radicalism.

In order for these aforementioned aspects, the analysis focus on motivation and significant quests to influence these new social networks and relations. Identifying significant quests or needs provides a motivation that can pull the reintegration into a new social network and new figured world (Bertelsen, 2015; Bertelsen & Kruglanski, 2020). These new networks and figured worlds are intrinsically linked to the reintegration process as the development of a new

social identity and role is part of the process, in order to remove oneself from the previous networks (Christensen, 2019). It is exemplified in the analysis how clandestine networks function as an easier path because it has similar figured worlds and social networks to what is already familiar. This could be the reason why several of the returnees have already ended up in criminal network or the extremist groups they participated in before. It is familiar, secure, and accustomed behaviours.

By comprehending the totality of the discussions above, including what the terrorist convicts need habilitated, motivation and safe spaces are essential to further the reintegration process. The characterisation and narratives of the terrorism convicts and returnees impact how they portray themselves and can negatively impact their psychological and behavioural process towards a successful reintegration with desistance (Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018). Notwithstanding the discussions of how society treats these former offenders which can, and has according to the analysis, resulted in isolation and further exclusion (Entenmann, et al., 2018; Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018).

### **What are the Syria travellers being reintegrated into?**

Yasin's experiences with release has been used as examples in the analysis. There are several obstacles and issues he has met. His statement that he "... thought I could start with a clean slate, but that was too much to ask for", is related to the rejection of obtaining a job, constantly being recognised or so he thinks, and the experience of how difficult it is for the society to allow him to move on. Regardless, this is his experiences post release, while he also recognises that the help and support, he has been given through public services has been helpful for him and his family. Kristiansen and Feiring (2018) considers it problematic that it is the municipalities in charge for reintegration, as there is little experience on these types of offenders and the Syria travellers.

The analysis and data material indicates that there has been a lot of changes regarding how the public services are supposed to work and what they can do. For instance, sharing of information between different public services is restricted to duty of confidentiality. NAV has no mandate to work for individuals who are not in need of their other services, meaning that the terrorism offenders who do not need housing, assistance with searching for jobs or financial services, do not necessarily receive any assistance from NAV. Lars, the SLT coordinator said that the municipalities were alerted by PST if returnees were coming home, however also this practice was changed. The question of how the municipalities and public services know that the terrorism

convicts have been released or are living in their district, was answered with “we do not, unless they contact us” by Lars and Jacob.

Jacob, from NAV, informed that there are sections in the Public Administration Acts that can be used to work with extremists and terrorism offenders upon release, in order to assist with general advice, support and social work. However, this is not widespread knowledge throughout the municipalities. Similarly, some municipalities have had more cases or experience than others, hence also the resources and knowledge differ throughout Norway. Not to argue that every district should have the same expertise, but as Kristiansen and Feiring (2018) argues, there should be a national expertise which can assist, advice and support the municipalities with rehabilitation and reintegration of terrorism offenders. Currently, Norway has expertise on mentoring in the West, on cooperation between and within municipalities, and knowledge building in the South, and from other public services such as NAV, SLT and the police in the East. However, this is existing insight for the experts, not necessarily familiar to public servants throughout Norway.

Other challenges terrorism offenders meet upon release and during their reintegration process is the narrative of security or rehabilitation, which was mentioned in the literature review in Chapter 2.2. The media and politicians impact the civil society through words and phrases, of how the returnees should be punished or how dangerous they are to the Norwegian society, as mentioned previously in the discussion (Fangen & Kolås, 2016). These narratives are not something Yasin perceive to be correct for himself nor his friends. Not to claim that no returnee is dangerous, however, Kristiansen and Feiring’s (2018) experience with interviewing several of the terrorism convicts gave the impression that they were more friendly and empathic than first expected. A continued focus on the security narrative, how the society can protect itself from the terrorism offenders or returnees will push them further towards criminal gangs or extremist networks, as experienced by Lars and Hans, and discussed in the analysis.

A part of the reintegration process is the importance of acknowledging that most of terrorism offenders have been marginalised and excluded from the society, and they need to understand that they can have the future they want, rooted in motivation, needs and significant quest (Bertelsen & Kruglanski, 2020; Bjørge & Christensen, 2018; Kristiansen & Feiring, 2018). However, this is obtainable as long as they are provided the tools, skills and social relations needed to succeed. These tools, skills and social relations cannot only be provided by the public or private sector but needs to be provided through the opportunity to succeed as neighbours,

friends, employees, and colleagues (Hansen & Lid, 2020). These social relations and interactions evidently shape the individuals during their reintegration process and are hence very valuable for the society and to ensure a successful reintegration and future for the individuals.

### **6.3 Future**

In Sweden, the exit program uses social interaction, reproduction of social and cultural norms and values, additionally with mentors, in order to support the transition into a new figured world and identity formation (Christensen, 2015). Through this initiative it is possible to counter unwanted behaviour and extreme beliefs through individualistic initiatives focusing on perceptions, and realities. Emphasising that all the terrorist offenders have different contexts and starting points, regardless of the generalisation through concepts of misfits and marginalised individuals, is important (Bjørngo, 2011; Bjørngo & Christensen, 2018; Horgan and Braddock, 2010; Nesser, 2018; Ravndal, 2016). Planned and implemented integration and habilitation strategies and initiatives can counter such unwanted behaviour and facilitate a welcome to the society upon release. This last section of the discussion regards the future prospects and perspectives the terrorism convicts have upon release from prison. A lot of perspectives have already been discussed through the previous sections in this chapter, however, this section will emphasise the expectations and the narratives regarding the returnees and terrorism offenders.

#### **Expectations, perspectives, and prospects**

The already discussed narratives portrayed in media and by politics, affects the civil society and their expectations to the returnees and terrorism offenders. Kristiansen and Feiring (2018) claims that descriptions of monsters versus men, or heroes versus monster, have consequences for how they are treated through their sentencing in the correctional facilities, and by the society upon release.

Through the analysis of the subjects from the support system, it is evident that the support system needs individuals that are motivated, knowledgeable, and unafraid in these professions. The individuals interviewed were all aware that the structures and systems in Norway need to have the right people in the right positions, in order to change the narratives and the future prospects of the terrorism offenders. In addition to that, the society and the professionals need to dare to talk about the difficult topics, providing platforms and safe spaces for discussions and disagreement is common perceptions of changes needed in the society by the subjects (Jakobsen, 2018; Renå & Håkonsen, 2015). Alayoubi and Tahir (2020) writes how an inmate perceives his sentencing and treatment within the correctional facilities to be tainted by these narratives.

Hans states that the expectations the extremists and terrorism convicts have to rehabilitation and reintegration are low, based on their experiences with the public and private sector. However, he states that they have "... a fear and a motivation. They fear what they are and are humble. We create their expectations".

The pressure to succeed can become so demanding in a society where no one expect you to succeed, or want you to (Prestegård, 2019). Yasin claims that he did not expect everyone to like or accept him, but at least accept that he has served his sentence and been given an opportunity to try to start over again. Unfortunately, his experiences with the society upon release showed that he continues to encounter limitations, especially the narrative of him being a danger to the society, which inhibit a lot of his reintegration, he argues.

The security threat professed by media, and academic articles, worry that the returnees will attack their country of origin, and be a large security threat to the Norwegian society (Bjørge & Christensen, 2018; Hegghammer, 2016; Storhaug, 2019; Wibe-Lund, 2015). An examination of the future post-release for terrorism offenders, by Coolsaet (2016b), indicates that the offenders were a larger security risk abroad than in their home country. However, the narratives, limitations, and continued exclusion, along inconsistent and insufficient knowledge about habilitation and reintegration of terrorism offenders, can contribute to a domestic risk created by the society itself (Coolsaet, 2016b; support system). The threat lies beneath the surface, amongst the excluded and isolated individuals, and groups, that are not supported with safe platforms and positive social networks for expression of beliefs and vulnerabilities. The attacks that have already happened in Europe, prove that there is some truth to the concerns (Cragin, 2017a).

## 7. Conclusion

This thesis provided a conceptual and theoretical analysis of the discourse of rehabilitation and reintegration of terrorism offenders in Norway, by using academic literature from recognised scholars, primary and secondary data. The objective of this thesis was to explore the future perspectives and prospects of terrorism offenders in Norway, and the process of rehabilitation and reintegration they go through.

The analysis and discussion have provided empirical and informative knowledge on current initiatives and challenges on a structural and societal level, for the rehabilitation and reintegration process to be successful in their aim of achieve desistance and reduce recidivism. Suggestions founded in personal and professional experiences has been analysed through the established theoretical frame, and further discussed with existing literature in the discourse of rehabilitation and reintegration.

Regarding the first main research questions, it is difficult to suggests what all the terrorism offenders need to be rehabilitated from. The discussions indicate that holistic and individual approaches are the best option in order for the rehabilitation to be consistent, and to best support the individuals needs based on their context and experiences. However, the analysis provided important insight into challenges on the structural and organisational level regarding rehabilitation. Currently, the only rehabilitation tool in Norway with a program, plan and structure is the mentoring scheme provided by RVTS. This scheme is achieving influence on a structural level in various municipalities, but not consistently throughout Norway as it is up to the municipalities themselves to apply to the education program.

Further, limitations due to the duty of confidentiality was discussed as inhibiting both rehabilitation and reintegration, as there is no system nor support to alert municipalities about released terrorism offenders nor returnees. The analysis implies that there are several experts and experiences practitioners in this field in Norway, currently in various positions in public and private sector. However, it is essential that the responsibility of structuring and organising of rehabilitation programs and reintegration initiatives are not placed on the municipality alone, as these experts are situated across Norway. Providing a holistic and consistent rehabilitation and reintegration is important for the state of Norway, in order to success regarding desistance and recidivism.

The second main research question was considering what society the terrorism offender is being reintegrated into. The experiences of Yasin were important for the analysis and discussion regarding this research question. Continued exclusion from the work force and self-perceptions of injustice and oppression, has been difficult for him. Accordingly, his experiences coincided with the data from the support system and existing literature, regarding existing narratives which have been publicised by Kristiansen and Feiring (2018) as well. These experiences and continued narrative of being a danger or a security risk for the society, along with a variety of vulnerable factors, may lead some terrorism offenders further towards criminal or extremist networks. The analysis indicates that some of the returnees and terrorism offenders have returned to their former extreme networks or ended up in other forms of organised crime. This indicates that the reintegration efforts have not succeeded, however, any distinct reason have not been empirically suggested. The discussions have highlighted the importance of social inclusion, societal integration, and social interactions, which can reduce exclusion while providing platforms and safe spaces.

Lastly, the third main research question was an explorative question which was based on the empirical and analytical assessments of the previous two questions. In order to assess what the terrorism offenders' future look like, a larger amount of empirical data should have been accumulated and analysed. However, exploring the answers to the previous two research questions, suggests that there are initiatives, individual people, and experts, that have succeeded and have experience with these topics and challenges. However, upon understanding what has push the individuals towards extremism and terrorism, the narrative used to push for exclusion and social marginalisation prior to them leaving for Syria, resembles the narratives presented in the discussion.

It is important to nuance the descriptions of the returnees and terrorism offenders in Norway, as not everyone is dangerous, nor does everyone pose a security threat. The terrorism offenders will meet many issues and challenges upon release from incarceration, hence the importance of consistency, structure, and trust, in the rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives. Additionally, in order to succeed with rehabilitation and reintegration, the civil society needs to cooperate with the public and private sector. It is through the dialectic interactions between the actors in the society, change occur (Berger, 1967).

Society is empowered through knowledge about vulnerable and sensitive groups, which was the objective of this explorative thesis in rehabilitation and reintegration of terrorism convicts (Grønningsæter, 2013:35). Suggestions for further research would be to include more empirical

data, especially of the terrorism offenders themselves, in order to sufficiently answer the research questions provided in this thesis. A larger qualitative study on rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives in Norway, with suggestions for improvement would be valuable for the society and the future of terrorism offenders in Norway. The value of this research lays in the hands of the reader, that is assessing the methods, findings, and discussions. It is through the reader this thesis becomes important and recognised for further approaches, narratives, and policy changes on a structural and systemic level (Nygaard, 2017:131).

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