

## Chapter 2

# Homegrown Terrorism: An Analysis of Its Effects on PESTLE Factors

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### ABSTRACT

*To tackle the phenomenon of terrorism, especially the attacks carried out by homegrown terrorists, since 2005 all the EU's member states have adopted the Global Strategy to Combat Terrorism. Focusing on four pillars (prevention, protection, persecution, and response), the strategy provides for security measures to protect against terrorism as a criminal act. What if, instead, we consider terrorism as a social phenomenon, strictly connected to radicalization and resulting from discriminatory experiences and discomfort young second generation immigrants suffer within the European society? Moving in this direction, through the application of the PESTLE analysis to the specific context of Belgium, this study elaborates a counterterrorism policy which takes into account the root and activating factors of radicalization by filling Belgium's gaps in terms of integration policies and which could help reducing the likelihood of occurring radicalization and terrorist attacks episodes.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Global Strategy to Combat Terrorism was issued by the European Union in 2005 and it is focused on 4 pillars: prevention, protection, persecution and response. To tackle the phenomenon of terrorism and in order to try to reduce its frequency, especially the attacks carried out by homegrown terrorists, the first pillar of the strategy deals with the increased border and weapons market control, the constant monitoring of the online propaganda and the criminalization of every action and monetary support to foreign fighters. Terrorism is considered by the European Union as a criminal act, uncoupled from radicalization. What if we consider it as a social phenomenon, resulting from radicalization and originating from discriminatory experiences and discomfort young second generation immigrants suffer within the European society? If we move in this direction, we can elaborate counterterrorism policies which take into account the root causes of terrorism and which could help reducing the likelihood of occurring radicalization and terrorist attacks episodes. Through the application of the PESTLE analysis to the specific context of Belgium, we have analysed the living condition of the young Muslims of second generation within the European society and its emergence in the political, economic, social, technological and legal discriminations which they experience on a daily basis and which, functioning as predisposing factors, enable them to tackle the path of extremism as the only way out of the isolation and poverty they experience. From this study we aim to provide the possibility to develop a counterterrorism strategy which addresses the root and activating factors of radicalization considering Belgium as a case. We identify the gaps in terms of integration policies, thus helping diminishing radicalization and terrorism phenomenon.

## **EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy**

The latest data collected by Europol in TE-SAT Report show how, since 2006, the frequency of jihadist-style terrorist attacks in Europe has increased, while their sophistication and their planning has decreased (Europol, 2018, p.4). This phenomenon's trend seems to be linked to the new threat Europe has been facing since the 2005 London bombings: the homegrown terrorism. To tackle the new evolution of terrorism characterized by second or third generation young immigrants, born and/or raised in the West, that independently (without direct support from international terrorist organizations) and ideologically driven by the political Islam, decide to attack their own country (Nelson, 2011, pp. VII, 11), the European Union has implemented the "EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy" to combat the global terrorism (European Council & Council of the European Union, n.d.). All EU Member States have transposed the four-pillar counterterrorism strategy into their national legislation.

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