Stakeholders of (De)-radicalisation

D3.3 Synthesis Report

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About the project

D.Rad is a comparative study of radicalisation and polarisation in Europe and beyond. It aims to identify the actors, networks, and wider social contexts driving radicalisation, particularly among young people in urban and peri-urban areas. D.Rad conceptualises this through the I-GAP spectrum (injustice-grievance-alienation-polarisation) with the goal of moving towards measurable evaluations of de-radicalisation programmes. Our intention is to identify the building blocks of radicalisation, which include a sense of being victimised; a sense of being thwarted or lacking agency in established legal and political structures; and coming under the influence of "us vs them" identity formulations.

D.Rad benefits from an exceptional breadth of backgrounds. The project spans national contexts including the UK, France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Finland, Slovenia, Bosnia, Serbia, Kosovo, Israel, Iraq, Jordan, Turkey, Georgia, Austria, and several minority nationalisms. It bridges academic disciplines ranging from political science and cultural studies to social psychology and artificial intelligence. Dissemination methods include D.Rad labs, D.Rad hubs, policy papers, academic workshops, visual outputs and digital galleries. As such, D.Rad establishes a rigorous foundation to test practical interventions geared to prevention, inclusion and de-radicalisation.

With the possibility of capturing the trajectories of seventeen nations and several minority nations, the project will provide a unique evidence base for the comparative analysis of law and policy as nation states adapt to new security challenges. The process of mapping these varieties and their link to national contexts will be crucial in uncovering strengths and weaknesses in existing interventions. Furthermore, D.Rad accounts for the problem that processes of radicalisation often occur in circumstances that escape the control and scrutiny of traditional national frameworks of justice. The participation of AI professionals in modelling, analysing and devising solutions to online radicalisation will be central to the project's aims.

Abstract

The report synthesises the findings of country reports that mapped the contexts, trends and perceptions of the violent threats as well as the main radicalisation agents and de-radicalisation stakeholders in 17 countries covered by the *De-Radicalisation in Europe and Beyond: Detect, Resolve, Reintegrate* (D.Rad) project: the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Finland, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Georgia, Turkey, Israel, Jordan and Iraq. We unpack the variety of social mechanisms of (de-)radicalisation in the context of the global crisis of political representation since the neoliberal turn in the West and the failure of state developmentalist projects in the peripheral and semi-peripheral countries. The report identifies right-wing radicalisation as the main rising violent threat across the D.Rad countries, even though other cases of radicalisation should not be disregarded. We explain conceptual, methodological and institutional reasons for underestimating right-wing violent attacks and the elite and mass framing mechanisms that legitimate or downplay them. Summarising discussion of the main agents of radicalisation in their socio-political ecosystems across the country reports demonstrates the social embeddedness and connectiveness of the violence agents that crucially influence the dynamics of radicalisation. We demonstrate that the right-wing violence agents commonly benefit from superior access to resources for violence, political opportunities and allies among the elites than other cases of radicalisation. Finally, we challenge the assumptions behind the prevailing approaches to prevent and reverse radicalisation processes based on the homogenising concepts of "extremism" and "terrorism." This perception underlies the dominant approaches to de-radicalisation focused on the paths to and from radical politics primarily via individual conversion to and from extremist ideologies and contributes to the limited focus, political biases and overreliance on civil societies with questionable efficiency of the preventive strategies.

Introduction

The goal of this report is synthesising the findings of the 17 country reports[1] prepared within Work Package 3 of the *De-Radicalisation in Europe and Beyond: Detect, Resolve, Reintegrate* (D.Rad) project on the stakeholders of (de-)radicalisation in the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Finland, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Georgia, Turkey, Israel, Jordan and Iraq. Work Package 3 aims to map key meso-level stakeholders and identify situations of radicalisation in order to provide a foundation for situational analysis among all the partners of the D.Rad project, elaborating the links between individuals at the micro-level across the I-GAP (injustice-grievance-alienation-polarisation) spectrum and meso-levels of radicalisation. This report unpacks the social mechanisms of (de-)radicalisation process in the context of macrostructural trends, discusses the violence trends across the cases of radicalisation, their social construction by the political elites and perception by the general public, summarises discussion of the main agents of radicalisation in their socio-political ecosystems as well as of the typical problems that the prevalent de-radicalisation stakeholders and approaches meet in the countries covered by the consortium.

The following analysis relies on the D.Rad definition of *radicalisation* as a process involving the increasing rejection of established law, order, and politics and the active pursuit of alternatives, in the form of politically-driven violence or justification of violence. *De-radicalisation* denotes the processes countering such rejection at individual (micro), organisational (meso), or societal (macro) levels resulting in a shift from violent to nonviolent strategies and tactics; de-radicalisation might or might not be an outcome of de-radicalisation programmes. D.Rad focuses on the cases of ethnonationalist and separatist, jihadist, right-wing and left-wing radicalisations.

The present report identifies, reviews and summarises the typical patterns, trends and problems as well as the most notable exceptions in the findings on the stakeholders of de-radicalisation country reports and discusses them through the theoretical perspective of the dynamic relational analysis of contentious politics (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2001), specifically elaborated in regard to the processes of radicalisation and de-radicalisation (Alimi, Bosi and Demetriou, 2015; Bosi, Demetriou and Malthaner, 2016). In this perspective, violence is analysed as one of the many strategies employed by the agents of political contention (including the state) as a part of a historically specific repertoire of violent and nonviolent actions. The turn to violence (radicalisation) or the reverse process of de-radicalisation is caused not by primarily individual propensities of the agents (e.g., psychology, identity, ideology) but by the dynamic interactions and changing relations between the contentious agents, including both extreme and centrist political movements/parties, other segments of the civil society, the institutions of state and elite factions. In their own turn, the structural processes shape but do not determine the (de-)radicalising interactions. Therefore, the violent agents should be analysed in the context of their entire "ecosystems" of various relations (e.g., of cooperation, competition, confrontation) with their front-groups, media, social networks of mobilisation, recruitment, and sponsorship, "respectable" political forces and the state institutions. The state and civil society stakeholders of de-

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[1] Available at D.Rad project web-page (http://dradproject.com).

radicalisation are thus analysed as a group of agents in the context of diverse, evolving and contradictory interactions with the radicalising movements and the factions of the elite.

Looking at the findings of the country reports through the dynamic relational perspective on (de-)radicalisation allows us to challenge the assumptions behind the prevailing approaches to monitor and counter political violence based on the homogenising concepts of "extremism" and "terrorism." "Terrorism," according to Europol, "can be considered to be a set of violent tactics employed mainly by extremists" (Europol, 2021, p. 11), while "the underlying causes that lead people to radicalisation and terrorism must be sought in the surroundings (structural factors) and personal interpretations (psychological factors) of the individual" (Europol, 2021, p. 108). This perception underlies the dominant approaches to de-radicalisation focused on the paths to and from radical politics primarily via individual conversion to and from extremist ideologies. The thorough mapping of the trends and agents of violence by the D.Rad country reports shows that the extremism concept may misleadingly homogenise the diverse cases of radicalisation with vastly different scales and dynamics of violence and critically divergent in access to the resources of violence and influential allies. In dealing with the vast diversity of the countries and cases of radicalisation covered by the D.Rad consortium, the dynamic relational perspective is especially helpful because it does not allow us to essentialise the groups of countries (e.g., the West vs. the Rest, EU vs. non-EU countries, liberal democratic regimes vs. various authoritarianisms) but requires us to remain sensitive to cross-cutting macrostructural processes, among which the crisis of political representation is one of the most important. Furthermore, we point to the processes of radicalization which arise from contentious interactions among the variety of actors (including not only "extremist" organisations but also the state, elites, centrist political parties and non-radical segment of civil societies), which do not necessarily require conversion to extremist ideologies and which remain outside the spotlight of the typical policies aimed to prevent radicalisation.

Events, mechanisms, and structures of (de-)radicalisation

This section summarises the analysis of the events, mechanisms and structural processes of (de-)radicalisation in the countries covered by D.Rad consortium. Identifying the main (de-)radicalising events in the country reports is instrumental for unpacking the common robust mechanisms of (de-)radicalization. These are shaped (but not determined) by the local contexts of the respective countries and region-wide or global macrostructural trends. The latter is crucial for identifying the main points and limits of intervention by the de-radicalisation stakeholders. This analysis contributes to the hotly debated questions of the rise and decline of jihadist violence, the upsurge of right-wing radicalisation and populist movements and the illiberal transformation of the states and ruling elites.

From the perspective of dynamic relational analysis of contentious politics, we do not assume that any events automatically led to radicalisation or de-radicalisation. The events are socially constructed elements in the complex sequences of mechanisms that need to be identified, amplified, and exploited by the (de-)radicalising agents in their interaction with other movements, parties, domestic and international states, civil society organisations and broader social groups. An event presupposes some unique incidence. This uniqueness must be recognized and persuasively framed for different publics of allies, sympathisers, supporters, the state and the

international public (Basta, 2018). At the same time, the sequences of (de-)radicalising mechanisms reflect structural processes on the global, region-wide and local levels that shape and contribute to the resilience, expansion, and amplification of the (de-)radicalisation processes beyond the political entrepreneurs and violent specialists,[2] ideologically extreme groups, de-radicalising activists or officials and capturing wider social groups, the nation-wide or global politics.

Appendices 1 in the country reports identified a number of the main (de-)radicalising events for each of the countries covered by the D.Rad project, such as the most resonant violent attacks or the state policies intensifying repression of the violent activities, or introducing new de-radicalising programs. With some important exceptions, the events cover primarily the period since 2001 that marked the rise of global attention to the jihadist terror. Most events identified had only local significance, from which it is impossible to generalise without going into an in-depth comparison of the cases.[3] However, many of the events unpacked relatively common sequences of (de-)radicalising mechanisms on the regional and global levels. Among such events, the most important are:

- the collapse of the USSR and Yugoslavia;

- the eastward expansion of the EU and NATO;

- 9/11 terror attacks in the US and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq;

- the Arab Spring revolutions and their consequences: the wars in Syria and Lybia, expansion of ISIS and the "refugee crisis" in EU;

- election of Donald Trump as the president of the United States;

- COVID-19 pandemia and respective lockdown and vaccination measures.

The sequences of interacting (de-)radicalising processes were different for each of the events. The crumbling of the USSR and Yugoslavia in the centrifugal elite disintegration process opened political opportunities for violent political entrepreneurs (e.g., warlords). These activated national boundary categories and led to nationalist polarisation facilitated by the weakened (or, in certain places, collapsing) states. The results included accumulating resources for violence and diffusing ethnic conflicts. They further included the weakening of the political left, the latter's de-radicalisation and its shift to the political centre, at the same time contributing to the legitimation of neoliberal policies. As a result, these developments increased inequality and social marginalisation even beyond the East European region, as the collapse of the state socialist alternative and the centrist shift of the political left contributed to the legitimation of neoliberalism as the only "game in town" not only in Eastern Europe but globally. EU and NATO expansion fostered de-radicalising processes in the Western Balkans and compensated for the weakness of

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[2] Political entrepreneurs and violent specialists play the prominent roles in initiating, amplifying and escalating political violence. According to Tilly, the former's "specialty consists of organising, linking, dividing and representing constituencies". The latters are the specialists in deployment of violent means such as soldiers, police, thugs and gang leaders (Tilly, 2003, p. 30).
[3] See D3.2 country reports in D.Rad project with precisely such extensive analysis of the hotspot cases.

the nation-building projects in Eastern Europe. However, they contributed to further nationalist boundary activation and internalisation of the international conflict with Russia in post-Soviet states like Georgia and Ukraine that did not get an EU membership offer. Furthermore, EU enlargement brought political and socio-economic policies that illiberal nationalist politicians reject and instrumentalise for strengthening their grip on power in post-socialist EU member states like Poland and Hungary.

9/11, as well as the other resonant jihadist terror attacks in Western Europe (such as 7/7 in the UK or the attack on the *Charlie Hebdo* editors in France), contributed to the upward spiral of political opportunity between jihadist and right-wing radicalisations not only in the respective states but region-wide in the EU and the Middle East. In Western Europe, the terror attacks favoured the boundary activation vis-à-vis Muslims by the political right. These have attributed threats in ways that often legitimised anti-jihadist and broader anti-Muslim and anti-migration mobilisation, leading to further alienation and marginalisation of the ethnic and religious minorities and securitisation of domestic policies. The expanding wars and state collapse in the Middle East and Northern Africa further escalated violent trends by opening opportunities and accumulating resources for jihadist violence agents, diffusing anti-Western frames, brokering the networks between the jihadist organisations and the local Muslim communities in Europe, and expanding their base for recruitment. Similar to the diaspora nationalists in post-socialist Eastern Europe, some international Islamic NGOs contributed to the diffusion of more radical religious interpretations that were previously uncommon among the local Muslim communities. Right-wing radicalisation, in turn, exploited the so-called "refugee crisis" in the EU via the familiar mechanisms of threat attribution, boundary activation, legitimisation, marginalisation, alienation, and polarisation. Moreover, the fighters returning from the wars in the Middle East brought home the skills and resources for violence, connections to radical organisations and extreme ideologies, becoming a major concern for European security agencies and further contributed to securitising domestic policies across most of the EU.

The election of Donald Trump in the United States legitimated the Western European far right and the conservative wings of the right-of-centre parties by offering them a successful case for emulation, in some ways similar to the role of ISIS expansion in inspiring jihadist movements. At the same time, illiberal rulers and the far right in Eastern Europe exploited this opportunity to legitimate and present themselves in line with the mainstream in Western "civilised nations."

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemia and the unprecedented lockdown measures offered the far right opportunities to expand the reach of the global conspiracy theories among European publics, extend international brokerage links between local far-right communities and contributed to further right-wing radicalisation.

The discussion of these events helps to identify various sequences of common robust mechanisms of radicalisation. These include: *boundary formation and activation*, *in-group and out-group brokerage*, *legitimisation* and *de-legitimisation*, *diffusion* and *emulation*, *internalisation* of international conflicts into domestic politics, *threat and opportunity attribution*, *alienation* and *polarisation* (the latter are part of the IGAP processes, in line with the terminology of the D.Rad consortium). However, further systematic paired comparisons between cases of right-wing, left-wing, ethnoseparatist and jihadist (de-)radicalisation across the nations would be necessary to understand how the diverse sets, sequences, and interactions between the mechanisms shaped

by the local structural contexts contributed to the diverging outcomes of (de-)radicalisation (see the next section).

The extreme diversity of local contexts across the countries of the D.Rad consortium makes it difficult to generalise the impact of local structures on (de-)radicalisation. It is certainly possible to identify common sequences of (de-)radicalising mechanisms for EU and non-EU countries; for countries of the former post-socialist Eastern Bloc and for the others; for the countries with Muslim majorities or large minorities and those which do not have them; for liberal democratic, competitive authoritarian, and fully-consolidated authoritarian regimes; for the sending and receiving sides of international migration; for the aging-population countries of Western and Eastern Europe and the countries with demographic "youth bulges" and other structural factors that have been extensively discussed in the literature on radicalisation (Della Porta, 2013; Goldstone, 2011; Malešević, 2017; Tilly, 2003, 2006). However, the benefit of looking at 17 extremely diverse countries is to see "the elephant in the room" – the fundamental political processes unfolding globally and exerting a crucial influence on the dynamics of (de-)radicalisation. Furthermore, the diverse country sample helps explaining not only the "how" of (de-)radicalisation processes but also the "why." For instance, why are the dominant economic, political, and social structures now less capable of coping with radicalising events, although they could successfully neutralise similar-scale events in the past? Why were the radicalisation mechanisms able to develop and expand beyond the political entrepreneurs, violent specialists and extreme ideologues and capable of rooting in the broader social groups unleashing the IGAP-processes? Why are the international radicalisation networks and organisations capable of capturing local ground despite the different, often less favourable structural contexts in contrast to their places of origin?

The crisis of political representation is crucial to answering the questions above (Bayat, 2017; Crouch, 2004; Ishchenko and Zhuravlev, forthcoming; Mair, 2013). It means the diminishing capacity of ruling elites to successfully claim representation of the interests of broader social groups and even less so of whole nations. In various forms, the crisis of political representation develops across the diverse local contexts but has accelerated since the global economic crisis of 2008. As it is usually claimed, the crisis reveals itself in decreasing trust and participation in political institutions, e.g., elections, declining membership in political parties and civil society organizations, shrinking social capital, and growing detachment of popular masses from the traditional political elites perceived as "all the same corrupt." In relation to (de-)radicalisation, what is particularly important is the weakening of the centrist "moderate" parties and politicians and their decreasing capacity to accommodate the majority interests and secure their active consent and political participation. This is crucial for the escalation and upscaling of the IGAP-processes, for which temporality plays an important role. Injustices would less likely develop into grievances, alienation and polarisation if injustices were perceived as temporary and already on the path of smoothing or resolution, such as during the modernisation and development projects of the previous two centuries. On the contrary, if injustices are perceived for the foreseeable future as stable or only aggravating even more (the feelings of "no future"), the development and expansion of radicalisation processes are more likely.

The neoliberal turn and the inequalities that they aggravate, the collapse of the state socialist or developmentalist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, and failed transition are among the most important factors contributing to the crisis of political representation. However, there is

a common perception of closing political space, whether in the form of proliferation of technocratic rule in the EU, depreciating the results of the electoral turnover; or in the form of authoritarian rule consolidation in some Eastern European and Middle Eastern countries; or, finally, in the form of elite group conflicts in weak regimes. Specifically, this means the perception of *lacking* powerful political forces that would articulate and pursue the interests of broad majorities, so these are left systematically unrepresented in conventional politics and pushed to explore the unconventional, including violent means. On the other hand, where such political forces have materialised around illiberal nationalist politicians, there is growing polarisation as illiberal powerholders have done little to accommodate the political claims of other groups.

At the same time, the unfolding crisis of representation leads to a plethora of pseudo-solutions: either in the form of populist parties, or the rise of authoritarian leaders who try to maneuver contradictory social interests, or diffusion of "movements of the squares" and "colour revolutions" (Ishchenko and Zhuravlev, no date). The solutions are deficient because they either only conserve the crisis of political representation or, in attempts to respond to the crisis, intensify the crisis. At the same time, in attempts to compensate for deficient solutions, they risk contributing to (usually nationalist and right-wing) radicalisation. Moreover, the perception among Western elites of an intensifying fundamental conflict with China or Russia may incentivise the former to compete for the meaningful interest representation of broader masses and the loyalty of peripheral countries. However, the escalation towards a "New Cold War" bears further serious radicalisation risks in domestic and international politics (Charap and Shapiro, 2015; Legvold, 2021; Milanovic, 2021; Westad, 2020). All in all, the structural processes weakening or strengthening the ruling elites' capacity to accommodate and incorporate the interests of broad social groups are crucial for understanding the success and failure factors for both radicalisation strategies and de-radicalisation policies.

Trends in violent threats, their perception and framing by political elites and mass public

This section discusses the trends in violent attacks across the cases of right-wing, left-wing, ethnoseparatist and jihadist radicalisations identified in the country reports as well as the typical patterns in their perception by the mass public and elites. This discussion contributes to understanding the crucial dissimilarities in political violence across the cases of radicalisation and how their subsumption under generic terms of "terrorism" and "extremism" promotes the downplaying of (primarily, right-wing) violent threats and favours radicalisation. It also helps to explain how such radicalising elite discourses do not simply react to the radicalising mass public perceptions but rather result from the elites' interests in the context of the political representation crisis. The country reports also raise important methodological issues on the estimation of the right-wing violence, the institutionalized biases in such measurement, and their contribution to the trend of downplaying the extent of right-wing radicalisation.

The countries covered by the D.Rad consortium are very diverse in the extent to which political violence presents a threat within them (see Table 1). Taking Slovenia and Iraq as the extremes in the D.Rad country sample, there have been no records of even a single terror incident in

Slovenia between 2001 and 2020 in the authoritative Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and the country shares the lowest, the 135th, place in the rank of terrorism impact, according to the Global Terror Index (GTI) produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace. In contrast, Iraq holds the highest second position in the world after Afghanistan (after holding the first position for 14 consecutive years since 2004) and experienced over 23,000 terror incidents and 67,000 deaths since 2001. Turkey also has a "high" terrorism impact score based on the weighted data for the last five years before 2020. The D.Rad countries in Western Europe, as well as Israel and Georgia, suffered medium to low impact from terrorism, while Eastern European countries experienced "very low" impact. Furthermore, there is variation in the extent of the violent threat presented by different cases of radicalisation in specific countries. Last but not least, the structure of radicalisation is dynamically changing and new threats replace the older ones. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify a few robust general trends of violent attack dynamics and of corresponding elite and mass perceptions, which are explained below, noting the most important exceptions and nuances. This indicates that common processes are standing behind the apparent diversity in varying local contexts.

Table 1. Data on terrorism impact in D.Rad countries

Country	GTI rank, 2020	GTI score, 2020	No. of terror incidents, 2001-19	No. of killed, 2001-19
Iraq	2	8.682	23,296	67,253
Turkey	18	6.110	1,394	1,658
UK	30	5.161	1,127	138
France	38	4.614	407	293
Israel	40	4.522	1,098	866
Germany	48	3.965	222	40
Jordan	57	3.149	40	107
Italy	59	3.043	131	6
Finland	83	1.721	18	2
Austria	91	1.016	18	3
Bosnia and Herzegovina	95	0.677	26	7
Georgia	100	0.635	100	40
Hungary	103	0.551	6	2
Poland	114	0.239	6	1
Serbia	126	0.057	20	4
Kosovo	135	0.000	91	36
Slovenia	135	0.000	0	0

Source: GTI report 2020 (IEP, 2020); GTD, 2019.[4]

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[4] https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/

We will start from the *trends in violent attacks* and then proceed to the typical patterns in perceptions.

1. Perhaps, the most general finding is the *diminished or, often, almost non-existent threat of left-wing violence* in most of the D.Rad countries. The most notable exception is Italy, where the radical left (mostly, anarchist) groups did the majority of the terror attacks, while the New Red Brigades committed the most high-profile terror attacks in the country since 2001, including murders of a government consultant, a professor, and a policeman. The number of left-wing violent attacks is not insignificant in some other Western European countries, and, for example, in Germany, scores close to the right-wing violence in attack incidence (even though there are critical differences in left-wing and right-wing violence, see the next section). However, even in Italy, the number of left-wing terror attacks tends to be methodologically over-estimated by Europol in comparison with the extent of right-wing violence. Besides, there are crucial differences in the targets, organization, the interactional situations of the right-wing and left-wing attacks (see below and in the next section). One could also mention the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Turkey that is responsible for the largest number of terror attacks in the country since 2001 (even though it espouses the Kurdish ethnoseparatist cause, PKK historically has Marxist-Leninist origin and now positions itself within the libertarian socialist ideology) as well as the Marxist-Leninist DHKP-C (Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front). Nevertheless, overall the left-wing violence is the least in scale and frequency among the cases of radicalisation.[5]

   The main factor for the diminishing left-wing violence trend appears to be the shift to the centre and the weakening of left-wing parties and movements that accelerated especially after the collapse of the USSR. Left-of-centre political parties have adopted market-friendly policies and have implemented austerity and welfare retrenchment in the 2000s, often in more consistent and effective ways than right-of-centre parties (Tavits and Letki, 2009; Mudge, 2018). This also resulted in decreasing national and international support for violent left-wing movements. However, there are important caveats to be made about the sustainability of the declining left-wing violence trend. First, as discussed above, the weakening of the left has contributed to the crisis of political representation - the main structural process underlying radicalisation in recent decades. The consequences of exacerbating inequalities and the incapacity of ruling elites in addressing injustices are revealing themselves now in forms of radicalisation other than left-wing. Second, the centrist shift of the previously radical left has recently triggered reactive left-wing radicalisation, at the moment primarily taking the form of voting for left-populist parties and participation in various "movements of the squares." Politically disappointing (so far) results of left-wing populist and peaceful protest strategies may provoke further ideological and tactical radicalisation of left-wing movements (Venizelos and Stavrakakis, 2020).

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[5] See also a long-term trend of decrease of left-wing terror incidents recorded in GTD in Western countries (IEP, 2020, p. 63).

2. Many of the *ethnoseparatist conflicts still breed significant violence* even if peaceful solutions have been reached. Most of the terror attacks in the EU in the 2000-10s were connected to ethnoseparatist conflicts, according to Europol reports (e.g., Europol, 2021). In a number of countries, ethnoseparatist violence is still among the main or even the most important threats. "Hot phase" ethnonational conflicts are ongoing in Turkey, Iraq, and Israel. There is a significant risk of re-escalation in other countries, which indicates the deficiency of peaceful solutions. In 2019, almost 90 percent of terror attacks in the UK were ethnoseparatist violence in Northern Ireland, despite the Good Friday agreement reached more than 20 years ago. Most or a significant number of ethoseparatist violent attacks are recorded in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Serbia as a simmering legacy of the Western Balkans wars. Georgia's conflicts with separatist republics in Abkhazia and South Ossetia are frozen at the moment. However, as the wars between Russia and Georgia in 2008 and between the neighbouring Azerbaijan and Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 demonstrate, "freezing" the conflict does not present a stable, long-lasting solution. This is especially true for weak post-Soviet regimes in Eastern Europe vulnerable to the intense inter-elite struggle and geopolitical rivalry between Russia and the West, contributing to radicalisation in the region. One should also worry about the sustainability of deescalating ethnoseparatist conflicts in the countries with stronger state institutions like France (Corsica) or Italy (South Tirol). Brexit may demonstrate how ethnoseparatist tension re-emerges under the weakening legitimacy of central (British) and/or European institutions.

   The country reports indicate that many ethnoseparatist conflicts have never reached a systemic, long-lasting settlement via trustworthy institutions of inclusive nation-building, overcoming the crisis of representation for ethnoreligious minorities. Moreover, the peaceful solutions often stabilised and institutionalised the ethnic and religious boundaries (e.g., the 1995 Dayton agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina or the 2005 Constitution of Iraq). Such institutionalisation of boundaries structures political contention with the very categories that the violent movements build on and results in the enduring reproduction of ethnoseparatist tension that may escalate due to violence agents exploiting the opening of political opportunities.

3. Despite being responsible for some of the most spectacular and lethal acts of indiscriminate violence in recent decades, and the primary image of "terrorism" threats for security institutions, elites, and the general public in many D.Rad countries, *the jihadist violence has generally been in decline* in the recent years or even hardly materialized into a major threat at all (e.g., in Eastern Europe). However, this should not lead to an equally simplistic discard of jihadist violence threats as simply "overblown" by right-wing political forces. On the contrary, the scope of D.Rad coverage allows us to notice important nuances in trends of jihadist radicalisation.

   For starters, jihadism remains the biggest violent threat in most of Europe's immediate (South-East European and Middle Eastern) neighbourhood, even if often inter-twined with other types (e.g., ethnoseparatist) conflicts and reinforced by (failing) states radicalisation. The defeat of ISIS was the primary cause of the jihadist violence decline. At the same time, the ISIS-affiliated groups have expanded their geographic reach beyond the MENA

region (IEP, 2020, pp. 53–59). In Western Europe, France is a notable exception where jihadist attacks are among the growing violent threats, rooted in the expanding Muslim communities of poor peri-urban areas. The jihadist violence reached its peak in France in 2015, with the attacks on the Charlie Hebdo journalists and the Bataclan theatre as the most notorious incidents. France was the only target of jihadist terror attacks in the EU in 2019. Many other countries, even with low threat of jihadist violence internally, such as Italy, Slovenia, Poland, Hungary, Finland, matter as jihadist logistical bases as well as transit routes to Western Europe. The threat from jihadist foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) returning home from the wars in Syria and Iraq and bringing radical ideologies, skills, and connections to violent networks is a major potential risk for European security institutions. The estimated number of FTFs only from France in 2018-2019 in Syria and Iraq was 1,324, with 398 returning back.

One could be wrong to project the currently declining trends of jihadist violence in Europe in the future and forecast the gradual disappearance of jihadist threats. As discussed in the previous section, the rise of jihadism is closely related to the political representation crisis driving disaffected youths to join jihadist networks in Western and South-Eastern Europe and the failures of developmentalist states in the Middle East. The wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Lybia, with US and European states' involvement, further contributed to the crisis of representation. Nevertheless, their inevitable withdrawal cannot automatically reverse the structural processes underlying radicalisation in the Middle East that could breed future outbursts of jihadist violence.

4. *Right-wing radicalisation is the main rising threat* in most D.Rad countries in the EU and a big point of concern in the Western Balkans (mused with persisting ethnonationalist conflicts) as well as in the UK, Turkey, Georgia, and Israel. In some countries, most notably in Germany, it translates into the highest number of violent attacks and casualties in recent years. Germany, the UK and France had the largest number of far-right terror incidents after the US in 2002-2019 (IEP, 2020, p. 63). In other countries, most prominently in Hungary but also in Poland, the right-wing radicalisation is facilitated by ruling parties and/or consolidating illiberal regimes. It is on the rise in many countries even if ethnoseparatist, jihadist or leftist violence still numerically dominates in the statistical estimations of terror incidents.

The country reports typically note that the threat of right-wing violence may be significantly and systematically underestimated. There are institutional as well as methodological and conceptual reasons for underestimation, which has an impact on threats perception regarding different cases of radicalisation and, therefore, on designing and implementing de-radicalisation policies (Heitmeyer, 2003, p. 424; Koehler, 2016). The most common incidents of right-wing violence, i.e., the decentralized anonymous attacks on political opponents and ethnic, religious and gender minorities, are typically counted not as terror attacks but as hate crimes or even often go into general criminal statistics. In many countries, these attacks are estimated primarily by human rights and other civil society organisations with fewer resources and, therefore, a lower scale of data collection. Besides, right-wing violence tends to be unaffiliated to any specific group, unlike typical left-wing or ethnoseparatist terror attacks, which makes it more difficult to assign specific

incidents to a right-wing violence category (IEP, 2020, p. 64). Partially driven by the state securitising perspective as well as by specific political ideologies, the institutionalisation of terrorism studies as a separate field of knowledge studying presumably a distinct and coherent phenomenon of terrorism has been long criticised by prominent social scientists (Tilly, 2004; Gunning, 2007; Jackson, 2016). An alternative is a historically broader and politically neutral conceptualisation of "terror" as a contentious political strategy of asymmetrical violence conducted by state or non-state agents, usually with means that are unconventional for the respective political regime (Tilly, 2004, p. 5). Such a conceptualisation allows to properly incorporate the bulk of right-wing violence into the overall picture of radicalisation (often intertwined with state institutions or even facilitated by them) as well as overcomes the blinding focus on the indiscriminate violence conducted by global undergrounds networks making political statements.

The country reports provide extensive analysis of how political elites frame violent threats in their countries. Appendices 2 include rich data of typical or especially significant quotations from top officials and the main parties' leaders about various violent threats. They allow outlining certain *typical patterns of perception and framing of violent threats*. Some of them are expected, while others add important nuances and, foremost, indicate the mechanisms through which the political elites contribute to radicalisation.

For example, the presence of ethnoseparatist conflicts, even in institutionalised and simmering form, strongly structures political discourse on violent threats, amplifying "patriotic," nationalistic frames and legitimising the violence of "our" radicals while shifting the blame on the "enemy" side (the Western Balkans provide the primary examples). There is a certain mismatch between the strong attention paid to jihadist terror and its actual declining significance as a threat to national security. Partially, this attention is driven by institutional inertia but also by the rising right-wing radicalisation triggering and amplifying boundary activation, threats and opportunities attribution, legitimation, alienation, and polarisation mechanisms. However, as indicated above, there are good reasons not to ignore the jihadist threat. What is also significant is that jihadism can hardly find any allies among the political elites beyond the Middle Eastern region. This is also true of left-wing violence. Even where it presents a non-negligible threat like in Italy, it does not have any more allies among the relevant political parties (see the next section). The situation is strikingly different from right-wing radicalisation. Even where there has been historical sensitivity to extreme right like in Germany or Austria and growing recognition of its rising danger, nowadays, several typical mechanisms are legitimating right-wing radicalisation and facilitating its escalation. The most important of them are:

- *shifting blame-attribution,* meaning that the blame for right-wing violence goes to isolated individual perpetrators and "extremist" groups while attributing collective blame for jihadist violence to wider Muslim and migrant communities, in this way inspiring anti-migrant or anti-Muslim mobilisation;

- *internalisation of the external threat* by assigning the role of "traitors," "public enemies," and "fifth column" to categorical groups within societies on arbitrary criteria that allegedly "unite" these groups with the external enemy (especially prominent in the case of ethnoseparatist conflicts);

- *rationalisation*: "respectable" right-wing parties may often condemn the most extreme instances of far-right violence while simultaneously calling to "understand" the reasons for it (e.g., Italian *Lega* party in relation to the violence by the neofascist *Casa Pound* movement);

- *relativising* the problem. For example, German conservatives typically bring up the threat of "left-wing extremism" when speaking about the threat of "right-wing extremism," with the political effect of relativising right-wing violence. The overarching and loose concept of "extremism" helps to cover the many critical differences between left-wing and right-wing violence (see the next section);

- *civic legitimation* of violent actions, e.g., calling to solve the "problems" of "Gypsy crime" or "immigrant crime," which the state allegedly does not want to or is incapable of dealing with, by means of civic self-organisation through vigilante or street patrol groups (examples include even countries like Finland or Slovenia, with very low threats of terror attacks from within ethnic or migrant minorities).

These and other mechanisms legitimating radicalisation require detailed investigation and further cross-case, rigorous comparison to be continued within WP3 and other work packages of the D.Rad project. Intensifying right-wing radicalisation may contribute to a typical spiral of reciprocal escalation with left-wing and jihadist radicalisation processes. This raises the question of why these mechanisms are activated and reproduced, bearing all the risks of violence, in situations where it is rather de-radicalizing actions expected from ruling elites and centrist parties. Our analysis demonstrates that the elites do not simply respond to the radicalising public demand of their social and electoral bases. The overview of the available polls shows that the public reacts to resonating terror actions at home and abroad. However, there is nothing "natural" or "automatic" about how events gain resonance; and in exactly what (radicalising or deradicalising) frames do popular media and the ruling elites (as the most important stakeholders of (de-)radicalisation) use for interpreting events. The understanding of the current trends of (de-)radicalisation requires further research on how ruling elites facilitate radicalisation as a deficient response to the crisis of representation. Mobilisation against the internal and external threat temporarily overcomes the alienation between elites and the masses that the former cannot overcome through progressive development.

The main agents of radicalisation in their social-political surrounding

The country reports identify the main agents of radicalisation in their countries and analyse their network of connections. Usually, these are the groups and organisations which committed the largest number of violent incidents. However, they may also include the agents responsible for especially bloody and consequential attacks. Furthermore, the reports discuss agents so far uninvolved in violent attacks (at least according to the available statistics), but that could become the main threats or other agents crucially contributing to (rather than perpetrating) violence, including the ruling parties in some countries. The country reports thus also explored the connections and relations between the main agents of radicalisation and various supporting or collaborating parties, organisations, networks, and media that, for example, share membership

and formal or informal affiliation with violent agents, serve as recruitment bases, legitimate or promote the messages or even activities of the violent agents, and collaborate with them in violent or nonviolent activities, e.g., participate in protest and other public events. Starting from the violent agents, we were able to unpack their whole social-political "ecosystems" of dynamic relations, impelling, sustaining and escalating radicalisation (see Appendices 3 in the country reports for the graphic representations). Each report also discussed the contribution to the radicalisation of state institutions, including but not limited to law enforcement. This section aims to draw the most important (to the extent they are possible across the highly diverse local contexts) generalisations from the country reports that would be most relevant for the discussion on the (de-)radicalisation stakeholders (also to be expanded in the next section).

The analysis of the dynamic relations network of the main radicalisation agents directly challenges the still prevalent assumptions both behind the dominant counter-terrorism and de-radicalisation approaches based on the overarching concepts of terrorism or extremism. As mentioned earlier, there is an assumption that "terrorism" and "extremism" represent some distinctive and coherent field of politics, driven mostly by radical agents with extreme ideologies. Most attention goes to individual ("extremist" or "radical") trajectories and not to collective and interactive processes leading to political violence, processes that could be prevented or reversed at different stages of radicalisation. Mapping the social and political surroundings and connections of the main agents of radicalisation, we see a richer and rather different picture of how political violence emerges, unfolds, and escalates:

- The main agents of radicalisation are not isolated lone-wolves but usually interconnected with communities, nonviolent agents and legal entities, often including the state institutions. They are embedded in social networks for recruitment, organisational structures, pools of resources, and popular frames. Notwithstanding ideological dogmatism and typical competition for supporters, members, resources, and power among the organisations, which proclaim similar political goals, the crucial connections of violence agents may include religious institutions, ethnic communities, social centres, non-profit organisations, media, extra-parliamentary and parliamentary parties, organised crime, law enforcement, top officials, and foreign states. The character, dynamics, and scale of these connections are the decisive factors of radicalisation, and we see critical differences across the various cases of radicalisation in accessing resources and opportunities that their web of connections provide and that have pivotal implications for the violent risks stemming from them - a point to be expanded below.

- Violence is only a part of the contentious repertoire of radicalization agents. To the extent they are allowed in specific political contexts, violent actions typically go along with propaganda and education, peaceful mobilisations, "small deeds" strategy. Despite the use of political violence, the agents of radicalisation may find ways to participate in the elections or influence their outcomes. Under the conditions of failed states, violence agents may take over functions usually expected from state authorities and provide, for instance, education and healthcare to local communities. Even a functional state as Italy provides such an example, with the neofascist Casa Pound movement combining violence and social actions in the West European context. Hamas, the Kurdish Workers' Party, and ISIS are further and more extreme examples of violence agents taking over quasi-state functions in the context of weaker state

institutions. Even if state surveillance, arrests, and bans of the respective organisations preclude the legal activities of violence agents, these activities nevertheless take place via their front groups or in connection with nonviolent allies. Contrary to the extremism perspective, the nonviolent activity of radical movements is critically important. It offers opportunities for reaching wider audiences, recruiting prospective members via actions requiring much lower participation barriers than violence, and connecting with "respectable" parties and organisations as well as elite factions. This helps to legitimise radicalisation agents within civil societies and portray them as dealing with urgent social problems that should be a point of public concern and civic action.

- The social connectedness and embeddedness of violence limit the efficiency of either repression or the individual-focused de-radicalisation approaches (see also the next section). Rather than sticking to extremist dogmatism, the agents of radicalisation are usually flexibly adapting to the changing contexts of repressive threats and opening opportunities. Bans on hate speech and propaganda of extreme ideologies are circumvented via their "softened" versions. Meeting the restrictions on political activities, violent agents actively use the cultural channels of radicalisation. If offline recruitment and propaganda become too dangerous, radicalisation moves online. If extreme right or jihadist groups are banned by the most popular social networks belonging to Western corporations (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube), they move to non-Western networks like Telegram. At the same time, the inconsistent application of repression to socially embedded violence risks a backlash expanding the anti-state mobilisation and intensifying radicalisation. The increasing salience of violent strategies in the repertoire of radicalisation agents results from the interactions and dynamic relations to other agents in the field of contentious politics, including the state, rather than from their ideological blueprints. This does not mean that repression cannot be efficient, however, it rarely is sufficient. At the same time, individually focused de-radicalisation does not supplant it fully when the radicalisation proceeds through collective interaction.

The dynamics of violence is decisively dependent on the connections and dynamic relations determining the resources and political opportunities that the agents of radicalisation can appropriate. One should therefore pay attention to the key differences in these dimensions across our cases of radicalisation. The extremism perspective on political violence insists on the distinctiveness of terrorism and extremism, but this approach may not only lead to a misleading analysis but may also legitimate relativising and downplaying radicalisation threats when presenting the different cases of radicalisation as equally dangerous threats, despite the pivotal differences between them.

- The country reports that reveal significant *left-wing* violence note that it differs fundamentally from right-wing violence, with which one could expect an escalating spiral of radicalisation. Except for the notable outliers like Italy, left-wing violence more often targets property and rarely people. In the latter cases, it often arises from the escalating confrontations with the extreme right in mobilisation-countermobilisation dynamics. Moreover, unlike right-wing radicalisation, left-wing violence usually does not have influential and resourceful allies anymore - neither strong parties, state institutions or foreign states that would legitimate, support, and escalate left-wing radicalisation. One must nevertheless note that when intertwined with ethnoseparatist struggle, e.g., in

Turkey, left-wing radicalisation often scales up and violent groups benefit from embeddedness in resourceful social and political networks.

- *Ethnoseparatist* radicalisation, especially when happening in authoritarian but infrastructurally weak states, opens up opportunities for embedding violent strategies in territorially concentrated communities with strong oppositional identities. The social networks of recruitment and support are often historically marginalised groups, which limits the resources for violence. However, ethnoseparatist radicalisation may also often rely on support from local elites and geopolitical rivals among the foreign states, providing critical resources and supporting the violent agents. Such conflicts may simmer for decades, especially when the states suffer from the crisis of representation and are failing at synthetic nation-building.

- Globalized *jihadist* networks like ISIS are capable of organising or instigating actions of indiscriminate violence with mass casualties. However, the relational focus on radicalisation points to the fact that the social base of jihadism in non-Muslim countries are marginalised communities, for whom joining the jihadist organisations fighting in Syria or Iraq is often an opportunity for vertical social mobility. The jihadist radicalisation there lacks any internal political allies and meets largely hostile majorities. The figures who would call for rationalisation or legitimation of the causes for the jihadist violence would rather meet stigmatisation. The primary resources for jihadism build on the opportunities for extortion, oil sales and drug trade under the failing-states conditions in the Middle East.

- On the contrary, *right-wing* violence is underestimated but also more dangerous among other cases of radicalisation. Typically, violent right-wing agents benefit from the legitimation and often covert support of far-right and sometimes right-of-centre parties and factions of the ruling elite. Among the most notorious are the Italian Lega party's legitimation and connections to the neofascist Casa Pound that help the former recruit electoral support; and the Hungarian and Polish ruling parties' legitimation, support and instigation of the extreme right. Certainly, the relations between the violent and parliamentary Right are multifaceted and should not be simplified. Competition for power and even violent confrontations are common too. In 2020, the extreme right was involved in attempting to murder the far right-Finnish FP party's parliamentary assistant for contributing to the exclusion of several far-right members from the party. The French National Rally (ex-National Front) has been using the strategy of 'de-demonisation' for some time. Hungarian Fidesz instrumentalised the more extreme right-wing Mi Hazánk party against Jobbik for electoral purposes. These examples, however, do not refute the fact that right-wing radicalisation is better-off in connection with influential elite allies. The targets of right-wing violence are primarily marginalised groups, having fewer self-defense capacities. Sympathies and connections of the right-wing violent groups to the law enforcement and military institutions facilitate the recruitment of the violent specialists (capable of more dangerous violence), access to guns, and relative protection from eventual prosecution (if compared to other cases of radicalisation).

Violent agents fundamentally differ in their embeddedness in groups possessing important resources and connections to elite factions, major political parties and state institutions that define the opportunities for the violence they can appropriate. Homogenising the cases of radicalisation

under the concepts of terrorism or extremism as well as focusing on the individual trajectories to violence primarily via conversion into extremist ideologies does not allow us to see the relational dynamics behind radicalisation and underpins the limited de-radicalisation strategies of questionable success so far.

Stakeholders, problems and biases of de-radicalisation

If right-wing radicalisation is on the rise, while other cases of radicalisation remain important, the de-radicalisation efforts by state and civil society institutions are problematic. This section discusses the main stakeholders and summarises the typical problems and biases of the dominant de-radicalisation approaches based on the country reports. Firstly, we discuss the shortcomings of the repressive policies to radicalisation that remain the main approach of *states*, while prevention and reversal of radicalisation, rehabilitation and reintegration of the radicalised individuals are outsourced to the civil society. Secondly, we discuss the typical limitations of the civil society's less comprehensive, less sustainable and lower-scale de-radicalisation efforts. Thirdly, we summarise the typical biases of the main de-radicalisation approaches that usually ignore the rising threat of right-wing radicalisation (with some notable exceptions). Finally, we explain how they are connected to the dominant extremism concept that defines the selective focus on specific cases of radicalisation and on the individual paths to radicalisation, while giving very little attention to the radicalisation resulting from the interaction in the context of the structural processes reproducing the crisis of political representation.

The country reports list and analyse the most important stakeholders and programmes of de-radicalisation in D.Rad countries, their typical problems and limitations (see Appendices 4). Across such a diverse sample of countries with drastically different state capacity and political regimes, we still note a growing understanding among officials that de-radicalisation cannot be reduced to repression of "extremism" as well as systematic (to various degrees) institutional attempts of implementing alternative approaches. Nevertheless, repression is still the prevalent, most systematically applied state approach, while preventive, reversing, rehabilitating and re-integrating programs are typically outsourced to the civil society with problematic consequences for these programs' sustainability, scale and legitimacy. We identify the typical risks of relying on repression in policing "extremism" - risks for democracy and human rights; risks of aggravating injustices; risks of backlash – that may result in counterproductive outcomes that contribute to further radicalisation.

A typical criticism voiced of the new or strengthening the old counter-terrorist measures is that they bear the risk of curtailing democracy and violating human rights that would also result in aggravating injustices and alienation of some groups of the population. Especially in authoritarian regimes, states typically exploit the "terrorist" threat to legitimate suppression of the political opposition. For example, in Turkey, left-wing politicians, civil society and human rights organisations expressing support for the Gezi Park protests or blaming the government for supporting attacks against the Alevi minority are typically brought in connection with the DHKP-C left-wing organisation and accused of terrorism. At the same time, in Jordan, the harsh legislation against hate speech is criticised for being instrumentalised against the anti-government opposition. Jordan also uses capital punishment for terrorism. The human rights concerns over

racial and religious profiling are also typically raised in relation to the preventive de-radicalisation and surveillance measures, notably contributing to alienation and radicalisation of the Muslim minority in the case of the UK Prevent programme, which sometimes even meets boycotts and protest actions. The recent introduction of a new criminal offense in Austria – "religiously motivated extremism" – targets Muslims primarily. Giving the public schools' central role for the French state's de-radicalisation strategy introducing prevention, the identification, reporting, and monitoring of the pupils led to securitisation of the schools. It led not only to the stigmatisation of Muslims and dissenters but also to the conservation of internal conflicts in schools.

A variety of mechanisms work for legitimating repression; securitising and nationalistic agitation are among the most common. The consolidated democracies of Western Europe also employ a subtler and more effective ideological legitimation of repression. The concepts of *wehrhafte* or *streitbare Demokratie* in Germany, *muscular liberalism* in the UK, *laïcité* in France, illustrate this mechanism. The concepts have different histories, however, they stand for a similar idea that excessive tolerance to "illiberal" ideologies and religions has been damaging for the security of liberal democratic states. The legitimacy of the concepts reaches far beyond the nationalist and right-wing public to the centrist segments concerned with the decline of liberalism and democracy. The concepts, however, proved to be easily instrumentalised for nationalist and xenophobic purposes identifying Western institutions with progress and culturally essentialising the opposition to liberal-democratic institutions.

Finally, as straightforward a solution as repression may seem, it leads to the opposite effect of escalating backlash in many situations. Relying on repression in dealing with the violent threats requires sufficiently strong state institutions capable of implementing repression consistently and systematically; otherwise, there is a significant risk of escalating violence via the typical backlash mechanism (Davenport and Inman, 2012; Sullivan and Davenport, 2017). The state's repression capacity is uneven across the D.Rad consortium and typically weaker in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Under certain conditions, repression only further facilitates state failure (e.g., in Iraq). However, the concerns about the counterproductive outcomes of repression are also typical in Western Europe. The growing concern with radicalisation (particularly jihadist) in prisons has not led to successful de-radicalisation programmes. Establishing special "units for radicalisation prevention" or "radicalisation evaluation districts" like in France has proved to be of questionable efficiency so far while covering only a small number of radicalised individuals with even fewer success stories. Another typically used method of dissolving the extremist organisations may exacerbate the feelings of political exclusion and alienation and, in any case, is clearly insufficient, as many radical movements flexibly adapt to the new forms of activities under repression, as discussed in the previous section.

It is commonly the *civil society* stakeholders that compensate for the insufficiency of the repressive approaches, lack of interest and efforts by the state, particularly in dealing with the issues that do not get into the governmental focus (such as right-wing violence). However, civil society can take over only the limited range of de-radicalisation activities primarily focused on education, awareness-raising, monitoring and analysis, advocacy and legal help, small-scale rehabilitation and reintegration projects. Civil societies can hardly be expected to reverse the structural processes behind radicalisation. There are further problems with the civil society-driven de-radicalisation that undermine its efficiency. They are primarily related to the sources of funding

and instability of resources for the civil society projects that have implications for their scale and sustainability. There are also partially separate problems with the legitimacy of the civil society efforts in de-radicalisation.

Civil societies usually lack internal resources for de-radicalisation projects and rely on the national governments, EU, or international funding schemes. This leads to two problems. First, civil society de-radicalisation work is organised in unstable and mostly low-scale projects that often cannot endure after the external funding stops, especially in the countries with the weaker and foreign-funds dependent civil societies as in Eastern Europe. Second, governments and political opponents typically exploit the foreign funding of civil societies to delegitimise and expose them as the agents of adverse powers, especially when dealing with such sensitive topics as support for people involved in violence. Within the counter-terrorism framework, this is typically presented as "helping terrorists." The issue is furthermore complicated as sometimes such allegations may not be completely groundless. For example, in 2014, Kosovo closed several internationally connected NGOs and detained over 100 individuals, including several imams suspected of jihadist radicalisation.

There are separate issues with the legitimacy of the civil society's takeover of the state functions. For example, in Germany, the right-of-centre CDU opposes allocation of the funds on countering the right-wing de-radicalisation to the "too left-wing" NGOs. On the one hand, it reproduces the relativising argument equating right-wing and left-wing "extremisms." On the other hand, right-wing civil society may replicate the claims to be represented as legitimate stakeholder in countering jihadist and left-wing radicalisations. Certifying and supporting only "properly liberal" civil society actors opens a Pandora box of ideological bias in dealing with radicalisation. The mirror-image problem is related to the governmental support for the civil society de-radicalisation programs, which bears risks and is sometimes perceived as co-optation and depoliticisation of the civil society organisations that lose legitimacy in their own segments of the public.

Outsourcing the de-radicalisation activities beyond repression to the civil society is certainly insufficient to deal with the main causes, mechanisms and consequences of the various kinds of radicalisation. Throughout the 2010s, many EU states have proceeded with adopting and implementing state de-radicalisation strategies and plans. The National Radicalisation Prevention Plan in France is among the most comprehensive and systematic. However, it was adopted only in 2018 and such strategic plans are not yet a general rule even in the EU (e.g., Italy still has not adopted one, despite a significant threat of political violence),[6] not to mention their consistent implementation and efficiency. Despite moving towards strategic de-radicalisation, most D.Rad countries rely rather on a heterogeneous mix of ad-hoc governmental solutions and civil society initiatives.

The governmental de-radicalisation programmes (as well as the funding priorities for civil society de-radicalisation projects) suffer, furthermore, from a limited focus on youth and the Muslim population. They often ignore which cases of radicalisation present the biggest violent threat

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[6] See the compiled list of the radicalisation preventive strategies in the EU member states here: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/orphan-pages/page/prevent-strategies-member-states_en.

and/or are misguided by the dominant perceptions of "terrorism." For example, right-wing militants are typically not among the priority targets of de-radicalisation programmes. The most notable exception is Germany, historically more sensitive to right-wing extremism and where the left-wing and jihadist violence were included among the main risks only recently. In 2020, right-wing extremism was recognized as the main threat to democracy with establishing the Cabinet Committee for the fight against racism and right-wing extremism. The majority of the de-radicalisation projects funded in Germany also target right-wing violence. In general, however, right-wing radicalisation remains downplayed or even a blind spot of the de-radicalisation programmes and plans. There are also nationally specific drawbacks related to the dominant ideology or interests of the ruling elites. Ignoring or tolerating ethnonationalist radicalisation in Eastern Europe or radicalisation driven by the Eastern Orthodox church in Georgia could be named among the examples.

The fundamental problem of the dominant de-radicalisation approaches lies in the prevailing conception of radicalisation as individual conversion to extremist ideologies or convictions, seen as circulating within particular communities (Kundnani, 2012; Silva, 2018). De-radicalisation strategies discuss the group level of radicalisation primarily to identify the collective characteristics making individual radicalisation more likely, giving little attention to interactional dynamics of radicalisation and, moreover, opening the way to group profiling and alienation. This also translates into an overemphasis on activities aiming at cognitive individual change, promoting democratic culture, and sometimes focusing on helping individuals under radicalisation threat use educational opportunities and labor market integration. A further complication here is that cognitive approaches might help de-radicalise particular individuals, but if pursued alone, they are inappropriate for preventing radicalisation because of their socially embedded nature (see above). Altogether, dominant approaches underestimate radicalisation emerging as a result of not so much individual but relational mechanisms and involving larger interactions across wider groups and institutions than simply within vulnerable minorities. Recognising the latter would require expanding the scope of de-radicalisation activities and stakeholders targeting a much broader range of organisations, parties, and elite groups that are struggling to represent the majority of citizens politically.

Conclusions

The goal of this report was to synthesise the findings of the 17 country reports prepared within Work Package 3 of the De-Radicalisation in Europe and Beyond: Detect, Resolve, Reintegrate project on the stakeholders of (de-)radicalisation. WP3 aims to map key meso-level stakeholders and identify situations of radicalisation for building a basis for situational analysis among all partners of the D.Rad project. The report unpacked the social mechanisms of (de-)radicalisation in the context of macro-structural trends. It discussed the main violence trends across radicalisation cases, political elites' social construction, and general public perception. It also summarised the discussion of main radicalisation or violence agents in their socio-political ecosystems as well as of the typical problems that the prevalent de-radicalisation stakeholders and approaches meet in the countries covered by the consortium.

The analysis across the 17 consortium countries produced the following findings.

Radicalisation unfolds against the background of a political representation crisis, taking shape over the last two decades and accentuated by the world financial crisis of 2007-8. This crisis amplified injustices and grievances among social strata fearing or experiencing marginalisation. However, the representation crisis also translates into a narrowing political space, with a shift to the political centre among mass membership political parties. This means that broad and marginalised social strata hardly find political representation among mainstream political parties. This crisis translates into different patterns of radicalisation. After a surge in the 2000s in response to the US invasion of Iraq, *jihadist violence has seen a declining trend over the last decade*, despite an exceptionally violent mid-decade in France, with three large terrorist attacks in 2015-6 (Charlie Hebdo, the Bataclan theatre, and the Nice truck attack). These attacks nevertheless reverberated across Europe to produce, in the context of a growing influx of refugees mainly from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan in 2015-6 and of a growing securitisation of political discourse, an increase in far-right radicalisation and mobilisation. Presently, r*ight-wing radicalisation is the main threat* on the rise in most of the D.Rad countries in the EU and a big point of concern in the Western Balkans (mused with persisting ethnonationalist conflicts), as well as in the UK, Turkey, Georgia, and Israel. The D.Rad country reports show that the salience of this threat comes from the easiness with which right-wing radicalisation finds political understanding and support among established political parties and state institutions. This holds even for countries with a historical sensitivity to and growing recognition of extreme-right threats (Germany and Austria). In contrast, jihadist groups can hardly find any political allies beyond the Middle Eastern region, which is also true of left-wing radicalism.

This trend of strengthening right-wing radicalisation builds on two further sets of findings. First, it relates to the mechanisms legitimating right-wing radicalisation and facilitating its escalation that the D.Rad consortium uncovered in this Work Package. These mechanisms include, for instance, shifting the blame for right-wing violence to isolated individual perpetrators and "extremist" groups, while attributing the blame for jihadist violence to wider Muslim and migrant communities; or relativising right-wing violence, with right-of-centre politicians typically bringing up "left-wing extremism" whenever right-wing violence sparks debates, despite right-wing radicalisation leading to incomparably higher numbers of (lethal) casualties.

Second, our findings draw a picture that differs strongly from a prevalent assumption behind the dominant counter-terrorism and de-radicalisation approaches based on the overarching concepts of terrorism or extremism. These approaches assume concepts of terrorism and extremism to represent a distinctive, homogenous field of politics, driven mostly by radical agents with extreme ideologies. They, therefore, focus mainly on the personal trajectories of individual perpetrators, underestimating collective and interactive processes that could be prevented or reversed at different stages of radicalisation. Mapping the social and political surroundings and connections of the main agents of radicalisation, we see a richer and rather different picture of how political violence emerges, develops and escalates. The main agents of radicalisation are not isolated perpetrators or groups of extremists but usually emerge in close interaction with state institutions (from law enforcement to educational), nonviolent agents and legal entities, and broader communities. They are embedded in social networks for recruitment, organisational structures, pools of resources, and popular frames. *The character, dynamics, and scale of these connections and networks are the decisive factors of radicalisation.* This perspective allows us to see crucial

differences across the various cases of radicalisation in accessing the resources and opportunities provided by their networks and that have direct consequences fo their capacity to engage in violence. In general, the far-right benefit from superior access to resources for violence, political opportunities and allies among the elites than other cases of radicalisation.

Furthermore, violence is only one part of the contentious repertoire of radicalisation agents. To the extent they are allowed in specific political contexts, violent actions typically go along with propaganda and education, peaceful mobilisations, and "small deeds" strategy. Despite the use of political violence and respective repression, agents of radicalisation may find ways to participate in elections or influence their outcomes. Under conditions of weak states, violent agents may take over functions usually expected from state authorities. This social embeddedness of violence raises doubts about de-radicalisation strategies that place a strong emphasis on NGOs only in countering the recruitment efforts of violent groups, a strategy uncovered in most Western European and Western Balkan countries. This strategy can lead to situations in which NGOs find themselves face-to-face with violent agents engaged in their own civil society efforts. Right-wing civil society may replicate claims to represent legitimate stakeholders in countering jihadist and left-wing radicalisations, or might simply incriminate de-radicalising NGOs as (left-wing) political activism, a line of argumentation pursued by right-of-centre and far-right parties in some of Germany's regional parliaments. Civil societies can hardly deal with the structural processes and interactive mechanisms of radicalisation. National strategies for radicalisation prevention should not only expand their focus beyond youth and Muslim minorities to account for the rising threat of right-wing violence but also reconsider the conceptual foundations behind de-radicalisation approaches.

A core problem of the dominant de-radicalisation approaches lies in the prevailing understanding of radicalisation as individual conversion to extremist convictions, taking shape within isolated communities. This understanding gives little attention to the interactional dynamics of radicalisation and, moreover, facilitates group profiling and alienation. Instead, our reports have traced radicalisation back to relational mechanisms involving more groups, discourses, and institutions than just vulnerable minorities and the extremist ideologies allegedly characterising these. Recognising this point would require expanding the scope of de-radicalisation activities and stakeholders targeting a much broader range of organisations, parties, and elite groups than it is presently the case.

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