DeRadicalisation

in Europe and Beyond: Detect, Resolve, Reintegrate

Trends of Radicalisation

Austria/3.2 Research Report

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Miriam Haselbacher

Ursula Reeger

Institute for Urban and Regional Research,

Austrian Academy of Sciences

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	German	English
BKA	Bundeskriminalamt	German Federal Service of Criminal Investigation
BM.I	Bundesministerium für Inneres	Federal Ministry of the Interior
BVT	Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz und Terrorismusbekämpfung	Austrian Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counter-Terrorism
DERAD	Netzwerk sozialer Zusammenhalt für Dialog, Extremismusprävention und Demokratie	Network Social Cohesion, Dialogue, Extremism-Prevention and Democracy
DÖW	Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes	Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance
FPÖ	Freiheitliche Partei Österreich	Austrian Freedom Party
HiNBG	Hass-im-Netz-Bekämpfungs-Gesetz	Hate-on-the-Net-Combat-Act
HNA	Heeres-Nachrichtenamt	Military Intelligence Office
LVT	Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz und Terrorismusbekämpfung	Regional Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counter-Terrorism
ÖH	Österreichische Hochschüler_innenschaft	Austrian National Students' Union
ÖVP	Österreichische Volkspartei	Austrian People's Party
SPÖ	Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs	Social Democratic Party of Austria
StGB	Strafgesetzbuch	Austrian Criminal Code
VerbotsG	Verbotsgesetz	National Socialist Prohibition Law
VersG	Versammlungsgesetz	Austrian Assembly Act

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 the measurable evaluation of de-radicalisation programmes. Our intention is to identify the building blocks of radicalisation, which include the person's sense of being victimised, 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 in order to test practical interventions geared to prevention, inclusion and de-radicalisation.

With the possibility of capturing the trajectories of 17 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 the 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.

Executive Summary

Although violent extremism and actual terrorist attacks are the exception in Austria compared to other countries, certain tendencies towards alienation, polarisation, and radicalisation have become increasingly observable in recent years. The most important strands in this context include right-wing extremism that has a long history in the country and Islamic extremism, a quite new phenomenon in Austria that culminated in the terror attack in Vienna in November 2020. In this report, we provide an in-depth analysis of one example for each of these strands. In the realm of right-wing extremism, we introduce an action by the right-wing extremist group "Identitarian Movement" which took place in 2016 at the University of Vienna. Activists interrupted a play that was performed together with refugees, took the stage to unroll a banner and to spill fake blood in order to provoke calculated outrage. In the realm of Islamic extremism, we take a closer look at the attack in the inner city of Vienna in November 2020, when a single perpetrator and sympathizer of the terrorist militia Islamic State killed four people and injured more than twenty further victims.

Comparing the micro, meso and motivational factors related to the cases, these two incidents show some similarities regarding grievance and polarisation, while the elements of injustice and alienation differ to some extent. Pronounced feelings of discontent seem to have been the driving force in both cases, while the element of injustice was approached from quite different angles, with the Identitarian Movement considering the very label "extremist" unjust. Macro factors have created a highly polarised political and societal environment that may nurture individual processes of radicalisation. Regarding right-wing and Islamic extremism, there seems to be a vicious cycle: people of Muslim faith have been the target of populist discourses in recent years and the far right has mobilised its followers using nativist, anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim rhetoric. This leads to an environment where people who are perceived as "the other" are structurally excluded and alienated. Macro factors thus intertwine and set the margins for both hotspots, even though the effects are quite different.

Introduction

The aim of Work Package 3.2, "Trends of Radicalisation", is the in-depth analysis of the most vivid and consequential manifestations of radicalisation in the countries under study. In this report, we identify two events, so-called hotspots of radicalisation, which are exemplary for the Austrian case. We analyse micro, meso, and macro factors on the one hand and facilitating as well as motivational factors on the other. This helps us to gain a better understanding of (individual) processes of radicalisation and the environment that facilitates them, and to identify how these events are connected to feelings of injustice, grievance, alienation, and polarisation.

In the previous reports, we introduced the Austrian case and framework conditions that are crucial to understanding developments within the national context (see Haselbacher, Mattes and Reeger, 2021; Haselbacher and Reeger, forthcoming). This included trends in the field of radicalisation, extremism, and terrorism, the mapping of prevention and de-radicalisation measures, as well as an analysis of cultural drivers of radicalisation. Overall, and compared to other countries, Austria is characterised by low levels of extremist violence, and fatalities as well as terrorist attacks have been the rare exception. The two most pronounced strands of radicalisation are right-wing extremism and Jihadism[1]. While the first is closely connected to the country's history, the latter is a rather new phenomenon. Building on these insights into the Austrian case, we chose one hotspot related to the terrorist militia Islamic State and one from the field of right-wing extremism.

The first hotspot is represented by the terror attack in Vienna in November 2020. A single perpetrator fired around 150 shots in the city centre, killing four people and injuring more than 20 others. It was the first terror attack with connection to the terrorist militia Islamic State in Austria. The second hotspot is represented by an action of the right-wing extremist Identitarian Movement, which took place in 2016 at the University of Vienna. Activists interrupted a play that was performed together with refugees at the main auditorium of the university and stormed the stage to unroll a banner while spilling fake blood onto the stage. It was one of several actions of the Identitarian Movement at the time, forming part of a larger discourse underlining the strategical orientation of the group.

Our contribution brings an in-depth analysis of both hotspots by providing a systematic overview over contextual factors that facilitated the attacks as well as the motivational factors of the perpetrators and groups behind the events. In the following section, we start with the identification of the hotspots and their characteristics before giving an overview of the Austrian case by identifying the macro factors. We will then describe micro and meso factors as well as facilitating and motivational factors in detail for each hotspot before we end the report with some concluding remarks on trends of radicalisation in Austria.

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[1]   As we have outlined in report 3.1. (Haselbacher, Mattes and Reeger, 2021), we speak of right-wing extremism when referring to an ideology which aims at inegalitarianism, as conveyed in notions of so-called "natural inequality", e.g. nationalism, racism, and xenophobia, mostly in combination with anti-democratic and authoritarian ideas (Carter 2018). We refer to Jihadism when we speak of globally acting movements that call for a "holy war" against non-Muslims and against enemies whom they consider "not truly Muslim" (Sedgwick 2015).

Method and Reasons for Choice of Hotspots

The first step for this report was the identification of hotspots. A hotspot is defined as a premeditated and potentially scalable act of extremist violence that occurs within a larger series of similar acts committed by radicalised individuals who are clearly linked to a radicalised group, network, or organisation. Although the Vienna terror attack was carried out by an individual perpetrator, he had linked his act of extremist violence to the terrorist militia Islamic State and was connected to a network of other radicalised persons. Regarding the Audimax action, the opposite is the case: Members of the "Identitarian Movement" prefer to act as a group and try to remain anonymous in order to protect individuals. Only a few leading figures, locally, notably Martin Sellner (the head of the group in Austria), appear publicly under their own names.

Both hotspots are exemplary of the two most dominant strands of radicalisation in recent years. The Vienna terror attack was an unprecedented event that acted as a "caesura" (Haselbacher, Mattes and Reeger, 2021). Although there had been no acts of actual violence in connection to the terrorist militia Islamic State before November 2020, Austria has had one of the highest per-capita shares of foreign fighters in Europe (Hofinger and Schmidinger, 2020). According to numbers provided by the Austrian Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counter-Terrorism (BVT) by the end of 2019, 326 persons had travelled to Syria and Iraq to join the Islamic State or intended to do so. There are estimates that about 69 persons had died there, 93 came back to Austria, another 63 persons were hindered from their departure, and 101 are said still to be in the war zone.

Hofinger and Schmidinger (2017) argue that it is mostly young people of Muslim descent with a low socio-economic status and educational background that can be found in this group. The authors name marginalisation as one of the driving forces of radicalisation. They discern between three networks of jihadist Salafism in Austria (Hofinger and Schmidinger 2020, 290ff.): (1) The so-called Balkan connection, based in the Slavic Muslim diaspora, with Vienna as its centre. (2) Chechens who had come to Austria as refugees after the turn of the millennium and became radicalised through their resistance against Russia. (3) Young activists who grew up in Austria with no foreign connections. The authors found various connections between these networks and milieus (ibid., 295). We chose the Vienna terror attack as the first hotspot, because it meets all the criteria set out to qualify an event as a hotspot: The attack was a premeditated and potentially scalable act of extremist violence that can be linked to the terrorist militia Islamic State. Although it was the first attack of this kind in Austria, there have been similar acts across Europe and other parts of the world in recent years. Furthermore, the perpetrator's profile corresponds well with general insights into the scene of foreign fighters in Austria.

Right-wing extremism on the other hand functions and operates very distinctly. The right-wing extremist scene has a representative in parliament in the form of the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ). Scholars have classified the FPÖ as right-wing extremist (Bailer, n.d.; Reiter et al., 2020) or as forming part of the populist radical right (Mudde, 2007). The cooperation between parliamentary and extra-parliamentary right-wing extremism has steered right-wing extremist activities in Austria. While some scholars argue that the electoral strength of the FPÖ channels the hatred and that the level of violence therefore remains comparatively low

(Scharsach, 2000; Schiedel, 2007), right-wing extremist attitudes have been normalised and are socially acceptable (Pelinka, 2012).

The Austrian arm of the French youth organisation "Identitarian Movement" forms part of the "new right" and was founded in 2012 (Bruns et al., 2016; Goetz et al., 2018; Strobl and Bruns, 2016). It has since attracted public attention through targeted action that trigger calculated outrage. Although the movement has established its own rhetoric and is substituting explicit fascist vocabulary (e.g. by using the terms "patriotic", "Identitarian", and "ethnopluralism"), it reproduces anti-pluralist, elitist, and nationalist worldviews (ibid.). In 2019, linkages between the right-wing extremist assassin of Christchurch and Martin Sellner were discovered[2] and the group has since been under pressure. Consequently, the group was monitored more closely as it was classified as radical, and Sellner's home was raided. In its threat assessment, the BVT has connected the Identitarians to right-wing terrorist attackers such as Anders Breivik and the assassin of Christchurch, who also form part of the new right with ideological overlaps and promoting the same conspiracy theories (BVT, 2019). The FPÖ thus publicly distanced itself from the group and the Identitarians lost important infrastructure as well as their main audiences after having been deplatformed on YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram. Most recently, the Austrian government banned the symbols of the Identitarian Movement and its spin-off "the Austrians" (die Österreicher), while the French parent organisation "Génération Identitaire" was banned by French authorities. However, currently the group is regaining strength: The group has benefited from the change of power in the FPÖ in June 2021, as the new party chairman Herbert Kickl publicly declared that the group is a "project worth supporting" calling it a "NGO from the right"[3]. Furthermore, the group has moved to platforms such as Telegram and has used mobilisations against COVID-19 measures as a new possibility to recruit followers and to achieve media coverage. We chose the Audimax action as the second hotspot, because it is exemplary for the activities and actions of the group: It included the element of direct confrontation, triggered public outrage, and reproduces key narratives of the group.

We have used multiple sources for our analysis. For both hotspots, we tried to identify sources that reveal the worldviews of the perpetrators. In the case of the Vienna terror attack, our most valuable sources were articles about the perpetrator as well as the reports of the independent investigative commission. Regarding the Identitarian Movement, we could use primary sources in the form of videos and written statements. The group itself has documented the Audimax action in a YouTube video and published a number of statements and articles on its Webpage. When the legal prosecution of 17 activists began, the movement uploaded another YouTube video which serves to "detect" the "lies" of the press. For both hotspots we included scholarly literature that has focused on foreign-fighter and Islamic extremism or on the Identitarian Movement and right-wing extremism.

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[2]   In the terror attack in Christchurch, New Zealand, a single gunman entered two mosques during Friday Prayers in March 2019, killing 51 people and injuring 40. The authorities discovered that the perpetrator from the New Zealand attack had donated 1500 Euro to Sellner and they were exchanging emails. Consequently, Sellner was accused of forming part of an international terror network.

[3]   https://www.diepresse.com/5991498/kickl-identitare-so-etwas-wie-eine-ngo-von-rechts

The Austrian Context: Macro Factors[4]

Austria consists of nine federal provinces, including Vienna, the capital, with a division of powers between the federal level (*Bund)* and the nine federal provinces (*Länder*). Austria joined the European Union in 1995 but has retained its constitutional status of neutrality until today. For this reason, and due to its geographical position, the country fulfils an important function as a hub between East and West. Several international organisations such as the UN and the OSCE are based in Vienna. Currently, the country is home to 8.88 million people. Its population has experienced growth on account of international migration, with the main areas of origin being EU countries such as Germany, Romania, and Poland as well as the former Yugoslavia and Turkey (Bauböck and Perchinig, 2006). More recently, the Middle East has become a notable region of origin.

For many years, the Austrian party system was stable. It was dominated by two parties: the Social Democrats (SPÖ) and the People's Party (ÖVP). This began to change in the late 1980s. Votes for these two parties began to decline, whereas the FPÖ began to gain under their leader, Jörg Haider. New, upcoming parties joined the spectrum – among them, the Green Party and more recently (2012), the liberal party NEOS. Unlike Germany, where a far-right party was completely unimaginable for many years, due to the country's critical engagement with its National Socialist past, Austria followed the path of *politics of integration* and re-integrated former Nazis into politics and society (Falter, 2014; Manoschek and Geldmacher, 2006; Uhl, 2020). Consequently, rightist ideologies enjoyed political representation (Ager, 2014; Pirker, 2020).

Linguists and social scientists have highlighted the role of the FPÖ in steering public debates, making use of aggressive populist rhetoric and hate speech (Heinisch, Werner and Habersack, 2020; Wodak, 2018). Building on nativist elements, populist parties fuel xenophobic and anti-Islamic sentiments, framing immigration as a problem and associating Islam with extremism and terrorism (Ajanovic, Mayer and Sauer, 2016). Recent studies demonstrate that the rhetoric and the party programmes of the Austrian Peoples Party (ÖVP) and the FPÖ have begun to converge in recent years, the ÖVP having developed a strong anti-immigrant profile under the leadership of Sebastian Kurz (Hadj Abdou and Ruedin, 2021; Hadj Abdou, Bale and Geddes, 2021; Heinisch, Werner and Habersack, 2020). The FPÖ and its leading figures – among them Jörg Haider, Heinz-Christian Strache, and Herbert Kickl – have continuously shifted the boundaries of acceptable speech (Wodak, 2020).

Sebastian Kurz on the other hand has been a driving force in restricting migration to Austria since he became foreign minister, then party chairman, and finally Federal Chancellor. In report 3.1. (Haselbacher, Mattes and Reeger, 2021), we have argued that his statements regarding migration are illustrative of how migration and integration are rhetorically linked to Islam and criminal acts. The Ministry of the Interior as well as the integration agendas (gradually institutionalized since 2011) have been in the hands of either ÖVP or FPÖ ministers

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[4]   This chapter is a synopsis of the D.Rad 3.1 report. For a more detailed overview of the Austrian context see Haselbacher, Mattes, and Reeger, 2021.

since 2000. Following their party lines, the respective ministers have framed integration primarily as a problem and migration and Islam as the central threat to society and to social cohesion. Regarding Islam, the role of the ÖVP and Sebastian Kurz is particularly interesting (Gruber, Mattes and Sadlmair, 2015). Quotes from the beginning of his career confirm that he initially distinguished between Islam as a religion and the phenomenon of political Islamism. As Austria's Islam politics started to change, the differentiation became blurred (Hafez and Heinisch, 2018). Since then, representatives of the ÖVP have continuously referred to "political Islam", demanding the commitment to the constitution by people of Muslim faith and introducing a number of legal provisions specifically targeting Muslims. In 2020, the government of the ÖVP and the Greens established the Documentation Centre for Political Islam (*Dokumentationsstelle Politischer Islam*) which published an "Islam Map" (*Islam-Landkarte*), a publicly accessible map that lists the addresses of all Islamic associations and mosques in Austria. In the light of growing anti-Muslim rhetoric and attacks on Muslims and mosques, this map was heavily criticised for fuelling racism and because it poses a significant safety risk.

Public debates on radicalisation focus on jihadism and Islamic extremism. The political discourse described in the previous section is reflected in opinion polls on migration. As a recent report of the Austrian Society for European Politics (*ÖGfE*) demonstrates (Schmidt, Schaller and Millford-Schaber, 2020), 42 per cent of Austrians perceive migration as a threat. This corresponds with election polls where, with only a few exceptions, asylum and integration have been the dominant topics in campaigns throughout the last decade. Hadj Abdou and Ruedin (2021) illustrate that the heightened emphasis on immigration partly mirrors the public salience of the issue; however, the more recent political emphasis on migration contradicts the currently decreasing public salience of the issue.

Right-wing extremism, on the other hand, plays a major role in Austria but has been publicly downplayed for a long time. A gap is becoming evident between the number of incidents, perceptions of the public and the political elite, and de-radicalisation programmes aiming at right-wing extremism. Most recently, the police found the largest post-war collection of weapons in a raid in the extremist scene. Both the Vienna terror attack and right-wing upheavals therefore indicate imminent changes.

However, although the characteristics and operational modes of right-wing extremism and jihadism differ, both ideologies include feelings of injustice, grievance, alienation, and polarisation. Leading figures in both milieus have nurtured such feelings and have used them to recruit followers. While injustice, grievance, and alienation pertain to a more personal level, polarising effects have been quite visible and have manifested in society in the past years. In its extreme manifestation, the terrorist militia Islamic State has called for a holy war against all non-Muslim people, whereas neo-fascist actors advocate against foreign infiltration and the imminent Islamisation of the "occident". In the following section, we will show how these ideologies translate into acts of extremist violence and how they are related to the I-GAP coding scheme.

Hotspots of Radicalisation

In this chapter, we provide a separate, in-depth analysis for each hotspot. We start with the Vienna terror attack of November before paying attention to the Audimax action of April 2016.

Hotspot 1: Vienna Terror Attack

On the evening of November 2, 2020, a 20-year old assailant named K.F. randomly fired about 150 shots at passers-by and guests in restaurants and coffee shops for nine minutes in the city centre of Vienna. He was wearing a fake explosive vest and was armed with an automatic rifle, a handgun, and a machete. He killed four people and injured more than 20 other persons before he was killed by special police forces. He chose the Vienna city centre for his attack, more precisely the old Jewish quarter, a popular site for going out and at the same time a symbolic and important place for the Jewish community. In terms of timing, he decided to carry out the attack on the last evening before the start of a lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic, when many people went to the city centre to visit bars and restaurants before these had to close for a longer period. Contrary to immediate comments and reactions by eyewitnesses and the media, K.F. acted alone that night.

Concerning personal factors, we will focus on the biographical background of K.F. regarding his family life, education, employment history, migration background, religious affiliation, and glimpses at his view of the world and thus on (hard and soft) facts, as far as they are known. Furthermore, we will give an overview over his personal connection to the supporters of the Islamic State and his attempts to join them abroad prior to the attack in Vienna as well as on the network he was part of on the local level and in international terms (meso level). Factors such as identity, integration, marginalisation, discrimination, deprivation, etc. will be dealt with in the section on motivational factors related to the IGAP-spectrum, referring to the issue of perceived injustice as the starting point for grievance, alienation, and polarisation.

Micro and Meso Factors: Personal Life and Network of the Perpetrator

K.F. was born in June 2000 in a medium-sized town on the outskirts of Vienna called Mödling. He was raised in the 16th district of Vienna, which is characterised by a high share of migrants, predominantly from Turkey and the Balkans. His parents were members of the Albanian minority in North Macedonia and had migrated to Austria prior to the birth of K.F., who had held Austrian as well as North-Macedonian citizenship. His father worked as a gardener and his mother in the retail sector; K.F. has a younger sister. As a teenager, K.F. was seriously engaged in football and was quite successful at his Club "El Buhari", with players in this club being exclusively of Albanian descent and the club being closely related to a nearby mosque (Mijnssen, Häsler-Sansano and Baumgartner, 2020). He underwent a more or less normal school career in Vienna with four years each of primary and secondary school, but subsequently had dropped out of a higher technical college after two years of training, leaving him without a school-leaving qualification. Due to his young age, he never had a proper job.

It is not entirely clear when K.F. started to be interested in joining a terrorist organisation. According to Zerbes et al. (2020), the first information about K.F. being an IS-sympathiser

reached the Military Intelligence Office (*Heeres-Nachrichtenamt*) in February 2018. In August 2018, he tried to leave for Afghanistan to join the Taliban (together with a friend who finally did not join him for the subsequent steps), but was turned back due to his lack of a visa. In the following month, he travelled to Turkey and wanted to continue to Syria to fight with the IS, but was arrested by Turkish authorities and placed in detention pending deportation. In January 2019, he was transferred to Austria and arrested by security authorities directly at the airport. In April 2019, he was sentenced to 22 months in prison for membership of a criminal organisation and membership of a terrorist organisation. In December 2019, K.F. was conditionally released from prison for a three-year probationary period. He had to take part in deradicalisation programmes run by DERAD[5] (an NGO cooperating with the Ministry of Justice) and he furthermore had to maintain regular contact with Neustart, an association active in probation assistance.

Several new reports argue that there had long been severe tensions in his family. In the course of conversations with representatives of the Juvenile Court Assistance (Jugendgerichtshilfe) during his time in prison, K.F. described serious problems in his family that would have led him to leave Austria to become a foreign fighter (Zerbes et al., 2020). In court, he argued that he had gone to the "wrong" mosque at the end of 2016. Furthermore, his performance at school deteriorated, and at home, he increasingly had had arguments with his mother. Contrary to that, his defence attorney argued that K.F. came from a "normal" family and seems to have encountered "wrong" friends (Ozsváth, 2020).

It seems that religion started to play an important role in his life when he was quite young and some authors argue that this issue also negatively affected the relationship with his parents. He started to socialise with jihadi sympathisers in Salafi mosques, in parks and at a gym (Saal and Lippe, 2021) when he was about 16 years old. He also changed his outward appearance several times: While he stopped wearing a beard and Salafi clothes during his time in prison, he returned to that and probably started to take anabolic steroids after he had been released (Saal and Lippe, 2021).

His mandatory participation in a deradicalisation programme with DERAD started during his time in prison and continued after he had been released. He had 15 meetings with DERAD, approximately every two weeks for about 90 minutes each. According to Zerbes et al. (2020: 10), DERAD representatives described him as a friendly, naive, reserved person with a problematic, simplistic, and strongly dualistic understanding of religion. Ambiguities and contradictions seemed to overwhelm him. His knowledge of religion was superficial, only having had a rudimentary religious education. In an interview with the weekly journal "Profil", one of his counsellors from DERAD talked about an existential question for K.F. being that his "prayers of supplication" were not answered. "He had a completely rudimentary, naive idea of religion. He believed that for a true Muslim, every prayer would be answered. That is why he doubted himself. He didn't understand why he was in prison despite his prayers". The unheard prayers were a topic of discussion for K.F. during counselling until the end (Hoisl, 2020). He

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[5]   DERAD is an association offering programmes and support for prison detainees and follow-up support for persons convicted of relevant crimes. The service is provided almost entirely by Muslims with religious expertise, including religious-education teachers and theologians with a focus on religiously based political extremism in all its forms.

continued to seek exchange with DERAD and dialogue on religious topics. His views, however, hardly changed: Even though he was perceived as less radicalised and less consolidated in his beliefs than other clients, he remained a follower of Salafiyya, an ultraconservative branch of Islam, throughout the entire period of counselling, a fact that DERAD communicated to the authorities. In a risk assessment by Neustart, he was rated at the level with the highest need for care until the very end (Stammler, 2020).

Although he acted alone in the attack, he was embedded in and influenced by local as well as international networks. The role of supporters is still subject to investigations. Since his early teens, he had had connections with the Vienna-based Salafi and Jihadi milieus (Saal and Lippe, 2021), visiting two mosques in Vienna and probably being under the influence of a Balkan-born preacher. In the aftermath of the attack, several contact persons in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland were arrested. It is important to note that these contacts and networks have a strong online but also an offline dimension. Personal meetings for instance took place in July 2020 (less than six months before the attack), when K.F. and some Vienna-based friends hosted two Swiss and two German IS-sympathisers for five days. According to Saal and Lippe (2021), they visited several mosques and stayed at K.F.'s apartment.

Facilitating Factors

There are several factors that made this violent act possible. As we have explained, state and regional authorities have been well familiar with K.F.'s case. He had been convicted of being part of a terrorist organisation and subsequently imprisoned, he was taking part in deradicalisation measures and was subject to probation procedures. Nevertheless, he was able to carry out his attack in Vienna. After the attack, many accusations were made and various actors started blaming each other for what had happened. The BVT was once again criticised due to investigative errors prior to the Vienna terror attack and is currently facing increasing political pressure for a series of "mishaps". Meanwhile, experts (e.g. Zerbes et al., 2020, 2021; Saal and Lippe, 2020) have identified several facilitating factors aiding K.F.'s attack.

To begin with, the German Federal Service of Criminal Investigation (BKA) informed Austrian authorities about the perpetrator's links to the Jihadist movement in Germany. Furthermore, the BVT observed meetings of K.F. with IS sympathisers from Germany and Switzerland in June 2020 in Vienna, but the observation was stopped just before K.F. tried to buy ammunition in Bratislava in July 2020, an incident that the Slovakian police also reported to the Austrian police. This event led an official in charge with the LVT (the regional branch of the BVT, on the level of federal provinces, acting under the authority of the regional police headquarters) to recommend a reconsideration of the risk assessment for K.F. This recommendation was however not acted upon, because of the ongoing preparation for an operation against the Muslim brotherhood (Saal and Lippe, 2021).

The interim report of the independent investigative commission (Zerbes et al. 2020) states that there was an obvious lack of exchange between the institutions entrusted with the probation and supervision of K.F. (DERAD and Neustart) and the LVT, the BVT and the public prosecutor's office, which the commission assesses as a general structural problem. Neither DERAD nor Neustart knew that K.F. was observed to have met with Islamists, which placed him within the context of an internationally operating terrorist cell. The fact that he tried to buy

ammunition for an assault rifle in Bratislava also remained unknown to the supervisors. Zerbes et al. (2020, 2021) summarise that this knowledge would have changed the way the probation officers and DERAD staff dealt with and talked to K.F.

In the final inquiry report, Zerbes et al. (2021) conclude that the events relating to the November 2020 attack have revealed considerable shortcomings in the fight against terrorism. These are primarily related to the inadequate exchange of information between the agencies concerned (BVT, LVT). They also involve organisational problems of the security apparatus. Furthermore, the committee considers it necessary to continue applying the special competences of the deradicalisation institutions during the probationary period. These institutions should however be provided with a secure and reliable legal, organisational, and financial basis.

Motivational Factors

Regarding the mindset of K.F., we know about his strong wish to become a foreign fighter in Syria, an idea he wanted to execute on coming of age. As he was hindered from doing so, he took a different path, which culminated in the events of 2 November 2020. Born and raised in Austria, he was very much attached to the Jihadist movement in Austria and abroad. According to current insights, he was far from being one of the leading figures in this movement. Little is known about his feelings towards Austria in terms of embeddedness and feelings of belonging. It is interesting, however, to note that during his trial, he stated that he had not felt disadvantaged in Austria, but had expected a better life from the IS (Möseneder, 2020). Scholz (2020) argues that it is wrong to blame such an act of terror on discrimination, lack of education, or declassification. These factors may play a role in people's thoughts and actions, but it is much rather the conviction of wanting to fight for a "thoroughly just cause" that motivates an attack such as this.

These details correlate with the results of a study by Diaw and Hajek (2017), who had conducted a series of in-depth interviews with detained persons related to terrorist groups in the sphere of so-called political and Jihadist Salafiyya in Austria. The authors were interested in their everyday lives and radicalisation trajectories, Diaw being the head of DERAD, the organisation responsible for K.F.'s deradicalisation programme. We use this valuable resource as a starting point for the analysis of this hotspot regarding the I-GAP spectrum.

Starting with the issue of perceived injustice, the hotspot can be seen as a result of a general sense of injustice grounded in micro-, meso- and macro-level factors. An element of discrimination may exist on the personal level, on the level of the larger group with which the perpetrator identifies, as well as on a global and political level. The hotspot was clearly driven by ongoing perceived wrongdoing, but was not driven by an aim towards redistribution. Rather, the issue of recognition is a central feature. In terms of grievance, it is a matter of "us" versus "them". The latter grouping is considered infidels (this includes Muslims who practice their faith differently or "wrongly"). It is contrasted with a grouping of "holy warriors" without realistic prospects of addressing the perceived grievances.

Alienation is a central feature of this ideology. It issues a call for becoming and remaining a stranger within the own context. It further wishes to motivate its addressees to turn away from Muslims who accept democratic rules as well as from non-Muslims in Austria and other

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European countries. This form of self-alienation caused by IS propaganda leads to the claim of either leaving Europe and joining Daesh, or fighting European society in the current place of living. This claim of becoming a stranger is reinforced by personal experiences of exclusion, by news outlets, and on internet platforms (Diaw and Hajek 2018). We argue that the hotspot has a very distinct causal link to alienation. It is the desired state of mind and demands a total disengagement from any social surroundings that do not share the same worldview. It is the result of a continuous process of indoctrination that started at an early age and appears to be irreversible with no desire of becoming integrated into broader society.

Finally, this hotspot is characterised by a high degree of underlying polarisation. K.F. certainly saw himself as a member of a group with values that are irreconcilable with those not sharing his worldview. He obviously was not able to find any clear point of identification on the institutional or political spectrum in Austria.

Hotspot 2: Audimax

The Audimax action took place in April 2016. The Austrian National Union of Students (ÖH) had organised the performance of the play "Charges (The Supplicants)" (*Die Schutzbefohlenen*) by Elfriede Jelinek. She is an Austrian author and Nobel Prize winner who had repeatedly been the target of rightwing actors. In her oeuvre, she positions herself against rightwing extremism and racism, and critically engages with Austria's past and its role in the Second World War. The play addresses the topic of refugees looking for shelter in Europe and illustrates human rights violations and xenophobic discourses. During the performance at the University of Vienna, around 30 to 40 activists entered the main auditorium of the University (*Audimax*) and interrupted the play. Some of the activists stormed the stage to unroll a banner which read, "You hypocrites" ("*Ihr Heuchler*"), while spilling fake blood on the banner and the stage. Other activists distributed leaflets in the auditorium that read, "multi-culturalism kills" ("*Multikulti tötet*"). One activist spoke through a megaphone throughout the whole action. The situation soon got tumultuous when people from the audience tried to throw the activists out and to stop the disruptive action. Shortly after the activists had left, the police arrived and the play continued under police surveillance. The ÖH pressed charges against 17 people.

Unlike the first hotspot, the Audimax action was organised and carried out collectively. The following sections thus focus on the characteristics of the group "Identitarian Movement".Micro and meso factors as well as motivational factors will be considered for the group as a whole.

Micro and Meso Factors: The Background and the Network of the "Identitarian Movement"

Members of the "Identitarian Movement" usually come from bourgeois families with a higher socio-economic status. According to the Youtube video featuring the Audimax action and the webpage of the group, members of the "movement" are "the youth without migratory background" (Identitäre Bewegung Österreich, 2016). Being a youth organisation, members are usually university students and leading figures are now around 30 years old. Although the majority of activists are male, there have also been females who have appeared in public and who have their own channels and blogs, including Martin Sellner's wife. According to the biographies of (former) heads of the group, they have often come into contact with the right-

wing extremist and/or Neonazi scene at a young age. The entry points were either individuals that served as mentor figures or nationalist fraternities (*Burschenschaften*). Today, most of the members are also active in other organisations. Many have published in right-wing extremist magazines and blogs. Consequently, there are several connections between Identitarians, nationalist fraternities, organisations within the sphere of influence of the FPÖ, and other right-wing organisations (Weidinger, 2016). These personal and organisational networks represent the social capital of the group.

Regarding the infrastructure and the economic foundations of the group, there are three important sources: a) frequent appeals for donations; b) their own merchandising firm Phalanx Europe as well as other firms; c) financial and infrastructural donations through their networks. On its webpage and at the end of each video, the group asks for financial support, and has published donation appeals to finance current lawsuits. This is especially directed at sympathisers who cannot or do not want to get active personally but who support the ideas of the group. In addition to donation ads, the group has built up its own webshop where it distributes books, stickers, and T-shirts. Finally, members of the group have benefitted from the networks of the movement in the form of gaining employment and receiving financial support and through the provision of infrastructure.

Although the group is rather small in numbers, it tries to uphold the image of being a "movement" (Goetz, 2020). According to the BVT (BVT, 2019), 364 people were listed as members of the group in 2019. Actions are usually organised by a small number of persons but are documented and spread on the Internet. The strategic production of images and the creation of an "us" identity is one of the strengths of the group. Furthermore, the label "movement" alongside carefully orchestrated images create the feeling that the group is larger than it actually is. The group itself states that it is no party but an "idea" and therefore offers no formal membership.[6] While intervening actions such as the Audimax action require only the participation of a small number of people, joint European campaigns, such as "defend Europe" or "the great replacement" have helped the Austrian arm of the Identitarians to mobilise larger numbers of followers for marches and demonstrations.

An important factor in recruiting followers is the creation of collective phantom enemies and scenarios of threat. These include immigrants and refugees (predominantly of Muslim faith) as well as left-wing groups and politicians. Together, these resemble well-established frames within right-wing populist discourses, namely "us" against "the other" and "us" against "the elite" (Mudde, 2010; Wodak, 2015). The Identitarians have repeatedly talked about left-wing extremism and its willingness to resort to violence. Left-wing politics and the so-called "ideology of multiculturalism" are seen as the cause for migration and as forming an elite that supresses other worldviews and ideologies. This frame was present during the Audimax action, considering that the banner reading "You hypocrites" and the leaflets distributed among the audience were directed against the very people in the audience. Elfriede Jelinek was depicted as a representative of elitist left-wing cultural policies and her play as well as the performance with refugees as exemplary of the Islamisation of Europe and the suppression of

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[6]   https://www.identitaere-bewegung.at/#unterstuetzen

patriotic Austrians. The declared goal of creating a "counter- and protest culture" (Sellner, n.d.) thus has to be interpreted as twofold.

In the past, the group has regularly organised "patriotic" round tables to recruit followers, to exchange ideas, and to plan activities. Although the movement explicitly distances itself from any form of physical violence, the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DÖW) has pointed out the violence propensity of the group.[7] The group has organised self-defence training and has made use of warfare and combat metaphors.

On a meso level, it is important to note how the right-wing extremist scene in Austria has successfully established its own media platforms and online forums, which also facilitated the rise of the Identitarian Movement (Bailer, 2021; Goetz, 2021). While several print and online formats fulfil the function of linking various actors in the right-wing scene, it also ensures the discursive exchange within the scene and facilitates the establishment of counter-narratives.

Finally, national and international networks are responsible for empowering groups such as the "Identitarian Movement". Right-wing actors have long discovered the strength of network and coalition building (Schiedel, 2007, 2011). As an elitist and bourgeois group, members of the movement usually have a higher education and are well connected to legal experts and other key actors. They furthermore benefit from knowledge transfer, economic support, and patronage. Through its connections with the FPÖ, the group had a link to an elected party in the Austrian parliament. Internationally, the group has used joint campaigns with other national branches of the movement to increase attention. It still is well connected to leading figures of the right-wing extremist scene in Europe and the US.

Facilitating Factors

Two facilitating factors are relevant for the successful implementation of disruptive actions such as the one at the Audimax: a) the identification and exploitation of legal loopholes; and b) the creation of online and offline audiences to spread narratives. Both elements are highly relevant for the Audimax action: The movement chose a mode of action that was provocative and that drew public attention. Furthermore, it resulted in a procedure that ultimately legalised elements of this form of disruptive action. Finally, the group carefully staged and documented all the events and attempted to establish its own narrative. It successfully created audiences through the publication of its own material in the form of statements and videos and achieved extensive media coverage.

Regarding the identification and exploitation of legal loopholes, the group has attempted to redefine the boundaries of what can be said and done. The legality of these performative actions is liminal and they are designed to provoke calculated outrage. In order to attract public attention, either the approaches and modes of action (such as spilling fake blood during the Audimax action) and/or the narratives and the vocabulary are used to defy and challenge legal and social norms.

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[7]   https://www.doew.at/erkennen/rechtsextremismus/rechtsextreme-organisationen/identitaere-bewegung-oesterreich-iboe/gewaltdisposition

These deliberate provocations form the basis of the second aspect, namely the creation of audiences. On the one hand, actions serve to attract the attention of the media. On the other hand, the specific aesthetics of the videos and material serves as a characteristic feature differentiating the "movement" from other organisations. The group uses images associated with pop culture and includes elements of conservatism into its online content in order to uphold the image of a modern youth organisation. After each action, the group has published a short video to document and frame the activity strategically. In this context, disputes arose on the power of interpretation. In the case of the Audimax action, the group has published a YouTube video covering the events (see Haselbacher and Reeger, forthcoming). While the press and several actors have condemned the action, members of the Identitarians have released a number of corrective statements and an additional YouTube video to contradict the "lies of the press" (Identitäre Bewegung, 2016, 2018).

Motivational Factors

Recent interviews with Martin Sellner on info-direkt.eu, a right-wing-extremist online portal, reveal his self-portrayal as a martyr for the right-wing scene. He speaks of repression, censorship, demonization, and political persecution regarding his person and the "Identitarian Movement" in general. On a personal level, this reveals feelings of victimisation, injustice, and a high level of grievance. After the suppression of the group, these feelings grew and the group has spoken on its website of a "smear campaign" and the premature condemnation of the group by the media. Nevertheless, the same frames had already been present at the Audimax action: Back then, the group had published several corrective statements to detect the lies of the press saying that their insinuations were absurd and that the press allegedly tried to associate the group with Nazism. Labels such as "right-wing extremism", "neo-fascism" and "neo-Nazism" are generally rejected and condemned. In this context, actors like to argue with the freedom of speech and a wrongful treatment by elitist media and experts who have taken the prerogative of interpretation.

Alienation seems to play a smaller role. Using the label "patriots", members of the group portray themselves as devoted nationalists who seek to defend Austria and Europe against immigrants to secure a future for the "youth without migratory background". However, there are tendencies of alienation regarding institutions that are perceived to be in the hand of left-leaning politicians. The police raid together with the lawsuits seems to have nurtured these feelings of alienation towards the government and other institutions.

Regarding grievance, the group has suffered substantially from the sharp criticism and surveillance after the Christchurch attack, losing supporters and parts of the infrastructure. When Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube blocked their most relevant accounts, the group lost its main audiences. It has tried to establish new channels via Telegram, Odysee, Bitchute and other platforms but has failed so far to generate similar coverage. In this context, Sellner speaks of the "digital death penalty", "injustice", and the abuse of criminal justice in a recent video on Bitchute.

As far as polarisation is concerned, levels of polarisation are high but differ in form. It follows the lines of "left-wing vs. right-wing politics" as well as "patriotic" Austrians vs. Muslim immigrants. The value systems and the gap between these camps seem to be irreconcilable

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when considered from the point of view of the Identitarians. Polarisation thus was a major motivational factor for the planning and realisation of the hotspot and serves as a point of reference for the justification of the action. These images of enmity and dividing lines resemble societal fault lines and well-established populist frames that are encouraged by parliamentary and extra parliamentary right-wing extremist groups. In the FPÖ in Austria and the AfD in Germany, the group has found representatives of their ideological foundations, albeit in a less radicalised and moderate form.

Conclusions

The analysis of the two hotspots has provided important insights into the personal environment and the milieu of persons involved through the identification of micro, meso, and motivational factors. Considering these factors on a more individual level, it is crucial to note that polarisation and grievance play similar roles in both hotspots, while the elements of injustice and alienation differ. Polarisation is closely tied to the ideological superstructure of both forms of extremism and to macro factors as well as societal fissures. The high amount of grievance and discontent seems to have been a driving force in the process of becoming active and finding relief through the staging of an act of extremist violence in both hotspots. The element of injustice however was interpreted quite differently: While the terror attack may have been embedded in larger structures of injustice and the perceived lack of recognition by the own ideology, the Audimax hotspot is embedded in a frame of premature condemnation and false accusations. Here, the labels "extremism" and "extremist violence" as such are perceived as unjust and are being questioned. Regarding alienation, it becomes evident that this element of the I-GAP spectrum is not significant for members of the Identitarian Movement but highly relevant in radicalising the perpetrator of the Vienna terror attack.

On a structural level, we have identified macro and facilitating factors. Here, we can observe how macro factors have created a highly polarised political environment that nurtures individual processes of radicalisation. Regarding right-wing and Islamic extremism, there seems to be a vicious cycle: People of Muslim faith were the target of populist discourses in the past years and the far right has mobilised its followers using nativist, anti-Semitic, and anti-Muslim rhetoric. This leads to an environment where people who are perceived as "the other" are structurally excluded and alienated. Macro factors thus intertwine and set the margins for both hotspots even though the effects are quite different. Facilitating factors on the other hand are very different for the two hotspots. Regarding the Vienna terror attack, the independent investigative commission has identified serious errors on the side of the public authorities that will have to be addressed in the next months. The Identitarian Movement, however, made strategic use of loopholes and was not monitored back then. Both hotspots have in common that they relied heavily on their networks and the collaboration within the wider field of the respective scene.

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Annex: I-GAP Coding

Hotspot 1: Vienna Terror Attack

Injustice Coding

Q1. To what extent the hotspot is a response to injustice?	2
Comments to Q1	
Q2. To what extent was the actor motivated by a real or perceived systemic bias or prejudice which leads to consistently unfair treatment?	5
Comments to Q2	
Q3. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of redistribution?	1
Comments to Q3	
Q4. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of recognition?	5
Comments to Q4	
Q5. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of representation?	3
Comments to Q5	

Grievance Coding

Q1. How specific is the experienced grievance?	1
Comments to Q1	
Q2. How extensive and diverse is the list of grievances?	4
Comments to Q2	
Q3. How personal is the grievance?	1
Comments to Q3	
Q4. How formalized is the demand to address the grievance?	5

Comments to Q4	
Q5. How realistic are the prospects to address the grievance?	
Comments to Q5	5

Alienation Coding

Q1. How specific and central is the sense of alienation?	5
Comments to Q1	
Q2. How voluntary is the process of alienation?	4
Comments to Q2	
Q3. How complete is the alienation?	5
Comments to Q3	
Q4. How entrenched is the alienation?	4
Comments to Q4	
Q5. How reversible is the sense of alienation?	4
Comments to Q5	

Polarisation Coding

Q1. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized?	2
Comments to Q1	
Q2. How high is the perceived level of the polarization?	5
Comments to Q2	
Q3. To what extent do the actor's opinions radically contrast with the institutions (political, religious, cultural) and policies that are currently in place?	5
Comments to Q3	
Q4. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized as compared with the social sphere?	4

Comments to Q4	
Q5. Did the actor consider their radical positions to have a clear outlet on the institutional, cultural, or political spectrum prior to the hotspot?	1
Comments to Q5	

Hotspot 2: Audimax

Injustice Coding

Q1. To what extent the hotspot is a response to injustice?	2
Comments to Q1	
Q2. To what extent was the actor motivated by a real or perceived systemic bias or prejudice which leads to consistently unfair treatment?	2
Comments to Q2	
Q3. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of redistribution?	4
Comments to Q3	
Q4. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of recognition?	4
Comments to Q4	
Q5. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of representation?	2
Comments to Q5	

Grievance Coding

Q1. How specific is the experienced grievance?	1
Comments to Q1	
Q2. How extensive and diverse is the list of grievances?	3
Comments to Q2	
Q3. How personal is the grievance?	4

Comments to Q3	
Q4. How formalized is the demand to address the grievance?	4
Comments to Q4	
Q5. How realistic are the prospects to address the grievance?	4
Comments to Q5	

Alienation Coding

Q1. How specific and central is the sense of alienation?	3
Comments to Q1	
Q2. How voluntary is the process of alienation?	3
Comments to Q2	
Q3. How complete is the alienation?	1
Comments to Q3	
Q4. How entrenched is the alienation?	4
Comments to Q4	
Q5. How reversible is the sense of alienation?	4
Comments to Q5	

Polarisation Coding

Q1. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized?	2
Comments to Q1	
Q2. How high is the perceived level of the polarization?	4
Comments to Q2	
Q3. To what extent do the actor's opinions radically contrast with the institutions (political, religious, cultural) and policies that are currently in place?	2
Comments to Q3	

Q4. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized as compared with the social sphere?	4
Comments to Q4	
Q5. Did the actor consider their radical positions to have a clear outlet on the institutional, cultural, or political spectrum prior to the hotspot?	4
Comments to Q5	