DeRadicalisation
in Europe and Beyond: Detect, Resolve, Reintegrate

Trends of Radicalisation

France/3.2 Research Report

July 2021

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Horizon 2020
De-Radicalisation in Europe and Beyond: Detect, Resolve, Re-integrate
959198

Co-funded by the Horizon 2020 programme of the European Union

Reference: D.RAD [D4]

This research was conducted under the Horizon 2020 project 'De-Radicalisation in Europe and Beyond: Detect, Resolve, Re-integrate' (959198).

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This document is available for download at https://dradproject.com.

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Acknowledgements

We thank **Zachary Egan**, **Dominic Spada**, and **Madison Coakley** for their assistance in research for the 3.2 report, and the D.Rad project.

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 broader 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) so as to move 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.

Executive Summary/Abstract

This report traces the main trends of radicalisation in France by identifying three historical “hotspots”, which speak to the specificities of political, economic and cultural development and tensions that structure the French socio-political reality. “Hotspots” represent a culmination of general radicalisation trends and provide meaningful insights into their rise and expansion. Instances of radicalisation qualify as “hotspots” for the purpose of WP3.2 only if these are (1) premeditated (and potentially scalable acts) of (2) extremist violence (3) with significant duration that are (4) committed by radicalized individuals (5) linked to a radicalized milieu. The analysis of trends of radicalisation as they are reflected in the chosen case-studies consists of four principal stages.

In viewing these trends, the consortium experts are called to correlate the hotspots with macro, meso, and micro circumstances of the violent acts, outline the climate that facilitated them, and situate them on the injustice-grievance-alienation-polarisation (I-GAP) spectrum.

The three hotspots identified for the purposes of this report are characteristic of the current trends of extremist violence in France. They are representative products of their time, socio-political climate, networks, and, most importantly for the purposes of this report, of the motivations driving radicalised individuals to transform their convictions into violent action. The choice and investigation of the three case studies in this report account for the fact that drawing sweeping generalisations from one hotspot to a trend risk essentialising one incident of violence and mistaking an exception for the rule. Each of the hotspots analysed above reverberated widely in the mainstream and fringe media and remain embedded in the French public consciousness no less than in the collective memory of radical violent circles. They also had broad political, legal, and social implications.

Introduction

Radicalization must not be understood in a socio-historical vacuum. Its analysis must be attentive to the specificities of political, economic and cultural development and tensions that structure a given region. This report therefore examines three specific "historical hotspots" that speak to processes of radicalisation today and underscore its most vivid and consequential manifestations. Instances of radicalisation qualify as hotspots only if these are premeditated (and potentially scalable acts) of extremist violence with significant duration that are committed by radicalised individuals linked to a radicalised milieu. The hotspots in this report focus on general trends that led to specific situations. In viewing these trends, the report correlates the hotspots with macro, meso, and micro circumstances of the violent acts, outlines the climate that facilitated them, and situates them on the injustice-grievance-alienation-polarization (IGAP) spectrum.

The three hotspots identified for the purposes of this report are (1) the murder of Samuel Paty, a history and geography teacher, by a jihadist perpetrator, in October 2020; (2) the attempted assassination of President Jacques Chirac by a neo-Nazi in July 2002; and (3) the attack and setting on fire of a police vehicle by a group of ultra-left activists in May 2016. These events are characteristic of the current trends of extremist violence in France. They are representative products of their time, socio-political climate, networks, and, most importantly for the purposes of this report, of the motivations driving radicalised individuals to transform their convictions into violent action. The choice and investigation of the three case studies in this report account for the fact that drawing sweeping generalisations from one hotspot to a trend risk essentialising one incident of violence and mistaking an exception for the rule. Each of the hotspots analysed above reverberated widely in the mainstream and fringe media and remain embedded in the French public consciousness no less than in the collective memory of radical violent circles.

These cases are formative for the radical milieus to which the three perpetrators examined here belonged. They serve as role models in virtue of their declared ideology but most of all in view of what their followers perceive as just, even heroic. The actors in all three hotspots are the front men of their respective categories of extremism. Their actions shape the perceptions of extremist threat in the political and media spheres, and then feed back into their networks and followers. The government and public reactions to Paty's murder, Chirac's attempted assassination and the attack of a police vehicle formulate not only the state's response to violence but also the next twist of the violent spiral.

No less important, the three hotspots had broad political, legal, and social implications. Paty's murder, while very recent, has already pushed the French government to step up its securitisation reforms implementing anti-migrant and anti-Muslim policies (a Chechen asylum seeker was deported to Russia a few months after Anzorov's act). Maxime Brunerie has effectively introduced the lone-wolf strategy to France and made a major contribution to the recent revival of the French extreme-right. And the attack of the police car by ultra-left activists was a breaking point in the government's tolerance towards ultra-left protesters.

The report proceeds as follows. Having identified and presented the hotspots, the report provides a multilevel analysis of the forces of radicalisation that are most intimately

linked to the chosen hotspots. This part identifies micro, meso, and macro factors that drive radicalisation: micro factors cover the personal background of the individuals responsible for planning, organizing, and carrying out the violent acts; meso factors point to the wider radical milieu – the supportive or even complicit social surround – which serves as a rallying point and may be the "missing link" with wider radicalised networks; and macro factors provide the context that identifies the role of the government and society (at home and abroad) in processes of radicalisation. The report also addresses the hotspots' facilitating factors that make the violent acts possible or attractive.

Finally, the report identifies the motivational causes for each of the hotspots and quantifies their impact by coding them on the I-GAP scale. The coding is a constructivist method of multifaceted assessment, developed especially for WP3.2, which allows to trace the motives driving radicalisation. The motives are observed from the point of view of the individuals involved in the hotspot and reflect their own sentiment and impressions rather than external or "neutral" perspectives.

For each identified hotspot, the report examines four aspects of radicalisation that motivate individuals to engage in violent extremism. Country reports will ground the chosen hotspots in perceptions of *injustice*, which lead to *grievance*, *alienation* and *polarisation* (I-GAP), and finally culminate in the violent act. The I-GAP coding provides a spectrum that allows to quantify these sentiments. The data obtained from the coding allows to move towards measurable evaluations of de-radicalisation programs.

The quantification of the four components for each chosen hotspot is achieved with the help of five scaled-response questions. The answers range from 1 to 5. Low and high scores indicate lower and higher degree of radicalisation, respectively.

Overview of chosen hotspots

The events qualifying as hotspots for the purposes of this report are (1) *premeditated* and (2) potentially *scalable acts* of (3) *extremist violence* (4) with *significant duration* that is (5) clearly *linked to or influenced by* a radicalised group, network, or organisation. The choice of the hotspots in this report reflects the diversity of motives and drivers of extremist violence in France, which assists in presenting a comprehensive portrait of all radicalisation trends in the country.

Hotspot 1: The Murder of Samuel Paty (jihadist violence)

On October 20, 2020, Abdoullakh Anzorov, an 18-year-old Russian national of Chechen origins and a resident of France, murdered Samuel Paty, a 47-year-old history and geography teacher, by stabbing and decapitating him with a 30-cm kitchen knife nearby the junior-high in the Parisian suburbs, where he used to teach. Minutes after the murder, Anzorov posted a photo of Paty's severed head on Twitter, along with the message: "In the name of Allah the most gracious, the most merciful, ... to [President Emmanuel] Marcon (sic), leader of the infidels, I have executed one of your hell-hounds who dared to belittle Muhammad" (Chiarello, 2020). He also sent a short audio message on Instagram to two members of a Syrian terrorist organization, in which he declared to have "beheaded the teacher" and committed jihad in France (Thiolay, 2021). Anzorov then fled the scene but was spotted and killed by the police after allegedly shooting at them with an airgun and shouting "Allah Akbar". Another, smaller, knife was found on his body (Chambraud, Chapuis and Vincent, 2020).

The police investigation has established that Anzorov was driven by jihadist ideology and underwent a process of radicalisation prior to the murder. According to some sources, Anzorov expressed interest to join a combat zone and contacted an Al-Qaeda affiliate for this purpose as early as April 2020 (Thiolay, 2021).

The motive for his actions was found to be a civic education class that was given by Paty a few days earlier, on October 6. The class was entitled "A dilemma situation: to be or not to be Charlie", in reference to the "I am Charlie" slogan that appeared during the mass public mobilization against jihadist violence in the aftermath of the attack on the editorial team of the *Charlie Hebdo* French newspaper in January 2015. During the class, Paty showed his students two caricatures of Mohammad published by *Charlie Hebdo*. One of the caricatures, originally published by the newspaper in 2012, incited strong backlash in some Muslim communities in France and abroad, provoked fierce public debates about the proper limits on the freedom of expression, and is in fact considered to be among the triggers that led to the murderous *Charlie Hebdo* attack (Sawyer and Zinigrad, 2021b). The caricature is entitled "Mohammad: a star is born" and depicts "a bearded figure crouching over to display naked buttocks and genitals, a star covering his anus" (Memmott, 2012; Schechner and Meichtry, 2020). *Charlie Hebdo* published this drawing as a satirical response to waves of protests and demonstrations that erupted in some Muslim countries in reaction to an Islamophobic low-budget movie, "The Innocence of Muslims", that was distributed online and broadcast on private television channels in the same year (Arefi, 2012).

This class discussion took place at a period of heightened sensitivity to the tension between individual rights, secularism (*laïcité*), and rule of law in France. One month before the class, France opened the trial against the fourteen alleged perpetrators of the January 2015 Paris attacks at the *Charlie Hebdo* headquarters and at the *Hypercacher* Jewish supermarket. On September 1, one day before the first hearing of the trial, the new issue of *Charlie Hebdo* featured on its cover caricatures of Mohammad that were published by the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* in 2006 and that also provoked controversy and violence. The editorial board explained that "it was the publication of these drawings, considered blasphemy by a number of Muslims, which was the motive for the January [2015] massacre by assassins who wanted to […] 'avenge the Prophet'. These drawings are therefore evidence [for the trial]" (Paris Match, 2020b).

Anzorov may have been incited and encouraged by a Syrian-based jihadist to retort with violence to the republication of the cartoons or to the trial opening (see below). He was not, however, personally familiar with Paty and lived 80 km away from the teacher. Anzorov only found out about the case following a Facebook post published on October 7 by Brahim Chnina, the father of one of Paty's students. The content of this post is important in that it sheds light on the challenges involved in detecting online content that might lead to violence. The post began with the statement "Incredible but true and it concerns every one of you" and went on to claim that "the history professor" of Chnina's daughter "asked all Muslim students in class to raise their hand" and then told them to leave the room because he is about to "distribute an image that is going to shock them". It then claimed that Paty showed the students an image "of someone naked and told them this is the prophet of the Muslims". Chnina ended the post with a call to fire the teacher. In a video recording published by Chnina the next day he repeated the demand to dismiss Paty, asked to share the story "as much as possible" and to send him a message if the viewers want to stop this type of behavior (Sideris, 2020) Crucially, Chnina's messages did not incite to violence against Paty but included Paty's name and phone number, as well as the name of his school (Politi and Chevillard, 2020).

The content of the Facebook post turned out to be based on false facts. Chnina's daughter, who initially told her father she was suspended from Paty's class for protesting against his statements and the show of Mohammad's caricatures, confessed after the murder that she did not attend the class at all. Paty himself likewise denied ordering any students to leave the classroom. Summoned for a questioning by the police a few days before his murder due to a criminal complaint for dissemination of pornographic images filed against him by Chnina and his daughter, he explained: "I suggested that my students look away for a few seconds if they thought they were shocked for one reason or another. At no time did I tell the students: 'Muslims, you can go out because you are going to be shocked'. And I didn't ask the students which ones were Muslim" (*Sud Ouest*, 2020). His statement was confirmed by other students (Décugis and Pham-Lê, 2021b).

After the murder, Cnnina expressed regret for the grave consequences of his campaign against Paty, saying that he did not care about the caricatures and did not imagine his messages are going to be read by "terrorists". Had he known that his daughter was not expelled from class he might therefore not have published his initial post and Paty's show of the caricatures would have passed unnoticed. But irrespective of his intentions, Chnina's protest and calls to fire the teacher do not seem to have been a factor in Anzorov's resolution

to kill Paty. As shown below, it is highly likely that Anzorov was simply looking for a pretext to act upon his radical ideology and the caricatures gave him an opportunity to do so.

According to the police and journalist sources, Anzorov contacted Chnina, his daughter, and a 14-year-old teenager from Paty's school on social media, shortly after the (distorted) account of Paty's class started circulating online. Anzorov was driven to Paty's school by a friend on the day of the murder, met the 14-year-old boy and paid him about 300 euros in exchange for identifying the teacher. Anzorov then spent several hours in front of the school talking to other students and stating he wanted to "film", "humiliate", or "hit" Paty, until finally, two of them pointed at Paty when he was leaving the institution (Fansten and Devin, 2020; Le Point, 2020; Politi, 2020).

Hotspot 2: Attempted Assassination of Chirac (extreme right violence)

On July 13, 2002, one day before the celebrations of the Bastille day in France, Maxime Brunerie, a 25-year-old French extreme-right activist and member of the nationalist revolutionary group *Unité Radicale*, published a message on the online forum of the British neo-Nazi movement, Combat 18. The message was written in English and read: "Watch the Tv This Sunday, i will be the star.... Death to zog,88, [sic]" (*Los Angeles Times*, 2002). "ZOG" referred to the "Zionist Occupation Government" conspiracy theory according to which Israel or the Jews control the governments of other states; and 88, representing the eighth letter of the English alphabet, stood for "HH" or "Heil Hitler" (Reuters, 2004; Rastier, 2006).

The next day Brunerie attempted to assassinate President Jacques Chirac with a .22 long rifle during the military parade on the Champs-Élysées avenue. He hid the weapon he purchased shortly beforehand in his father's guitar case and managed to get strikingly close to Chirac. He made the shot less than 20 meters away from the President, but the rifle was deflected by an onlooker and Chirac was not harmed. Brunerie then recharged the weapon and tried to turn it to himself, ostensibly to commit suicide, before he was overpowered and arrested (Le Monde, 2009; Beaudoin, 2011).

Already when arrested, and in all subsequent interviews and accounts of the attack, Brunerie consistently claimed that his act was not driven by any political ideology but by distinctively personal motives, such as "an existential despair, a rejection of our society which turned into rage and hatred of the whole world. And a good deal of megalomania" (Reuters, 2004; Beaudoin, 2011). His plan after killing Chirac was to commit suicide or to be shot to death by the gendarmery. A few days after the shooting Brunerie wrote a letter to Chirac in which he regretted his "senseless and intolerable" act (Chirac has not replied) (*Le Monde.fr*, 2009). Later, during the trial, he announced that Jean-Marie Le Pen, then the head of the far-right *Front National* party, "would have been a better target" (Beaudoin, 2011; Bronner, 2014). Chirac himself considered Brunerie to be "much less the herald of a far-right plot than a deeply unhappy boy" (*Le Monde.fr*, 2009).

Brunerie was convicted for attempted murder in 2004 and sentenced to ten years in prison of which he served seven. Having almost immediately engaged in a process of self-deradicalisation he was released for good behaviour in 2009, decidedly shook off all past

extreme-right acquaintances and ideology and was successfully reintegrated in his community and hometown.

The view that Brunerie's feelings of hopelessness and self-insignificance pushed him to end his life in a desperate act of heroism that would leave a lasting impression is the prevailing assessment of the affair (Bronner, 2014, 2018). However, as this report shows, Brunerie's neo-Nazi past played significantly contributed to his radicalisation. Even presuming that Brunerie was sincere in explaining his motivations, his own perceptions must be examined on par with his extremist milieu and activism prior to the attack. The dissonance between the the meso and the motivational factors in this hotspot is therefore highly instructive in the analysis of lone-wolf extremist violence.

Maxime Brunerie's failed assassination of Chirac is an important turning point in the evolution of the French far-right in the 2000s. The symbolic magnitude of his act and the administrative dissolution of the *Unité Radicale* following the attempted assassination inspired and contributed to the escalation in violence by extreme-right groupings. And the "lone-wolf" strategy Brunerie imported to France transformed their methods of operation (François, 2016).

Hotspot 3: Attack against the police (ultra-left violence)

On May 18, 2016, the right-leaning police union *Alliance* has organised a police demonstration against "anti-cop hatred" at the *Place de la République* in Paris, the central and most emblematic centre of protests for social justice. The demonstration took place at a sensitive timing and place. It occurred in parallel with the protests of the *Nuit debout* social movement (the French equivalent of the Occupy movement in the US) that were also concentrated at the *République* square. The *Nuit debout* was at the time at the peak of its mobilisation against the government's prospective neo-liberal reform in the French labour laws but was also partially directed against police brutality. To that date, more than three hundred police officers were injured in clashes with the *Nuit debout* protesters so that the police demonstration on May 18 was both a symbolic and physical attempt to constrain the public hostility towards them (Pascual, 2016; *Le Monde*, 2016a; Halissat, 2017).

The police procession was however confronted by a non-authorised group of about a 100-150 counter-protesters. Pushed away from the square to a side street leading to the quay of the nearby Canal Saint-Martin (Quai de Valmy), the protesters accidentally ran into a police car with two police officers – Kevin Philippy and Alison Barthélemy – who were not involved in the demonstrations and were not part of the security forces in that area. Several protesters attacked the car with an iron bar, broke its windows, and threw a smoke bomb inside. The car set on fire but the policemen did not receive serious injuries and returned to duty soon after the incident (*Le Monde*, 2016c; *Le Monde*, 2016b; Halissat, 2017).

The police car set on fire on May 18, 2016 (*source*: Le Monde, 2017)

Antonin Bernanos, a 23-year-old sociology student at the university of Nanterre, and a known antifascist activist was identified as one of the attackers and arrested together with several others. During a search at his parents' home, where Antonin lived at the time, the police found "a gas mask", "a brass knuckles", "anti-fascist stickers", "248 leaflets and 24 posters", "4 shin guards", "5 small bottles of camping gas", and "7 black hooded jackets" (Halissat, 2017). Bernanos ended up spending ten months in pre-trial detention and was eventually convicted of "willful violence against a person holding public office" for smashing the car's rear windshield and striking Kevin Philippy on his head while he was sitting in the vehicle. He was sentenced to five years of imprisonment two of which were suspended (Halissat, 2017; Le Monde, 2017). Throughout the judicial proceedings against him Bernanos denied having participated in the attack. Six other participants in the violent incident received similar sentences (see below).

In a recent interview, Bernanos laid out his political worldview. Among others, he stated that the French government, and political and judicial systems, are increasingly dominated by fascist ideology; that the police collaborates with the extreme-right and is currently the main agent of racist violence in France, more than marginal extreme right groups; and that the media has a central and essential role in the demonisation and criminalisation of the antifascist movement. He does not consider anyone in the political sphere – not even the far-left party *La France insoumise* – to be representing his interests and ideology ('Antonin Bernanos: Antifa sous surveillance', 2020).

Method and reasons for choice of hotspots

This report detects and reviews general trends of radicalisation in France through an inductive analysis of "hotspots" that epitomise them. The analysis identifies, contextualises, and then quantifies distinct occurrences of physical or emotional violence that are characteristic of and central to the trends. The report does not aim to deliver a theoretical overview of all socio-economic or geopolitical shifts that shape the contemporary manifestations of radicalisation. Nor does it attempt to produce an exhaustive catalogue of these manifestations. The report's main task is instead to scrutinise specific, pivotal moments – "hotspots" of radicalisation – that

represent a culmination of general radicalisation trends and provide meaningful insights into their rise and expansion.

The events that qualify as hotspots for the purposes of this report are (1) premeditated and (2) potentially scalable acts of (3) extremist violence (4) with significant duration that is (5) clearly linked to or influenced by a radicalised group, network or organisation.

Hotspot 1: The Murder of Samuel Paty

The murder of Samuel Paty answers all criteria of a "hotspot" as defined in this work package and is characteristic of the patterns of jihadist violence in France in the past decade. It also bears symbolic value because of its target – a teacher representing the French system of education, the government's main tool in the fight against jihadist radicalization. Finally, Anzorov's background and radicalization process underscore the difficulty in distinguishing cases of political extremism from criminal violence and the elusive nature of online radical networks.

Representative hotspot of jihadist violence

Anzorov's act was premeditated: he travelled 80km from his home in Évreux, Normandy, to Paty's school in Conflins-Sainte-Honorine, a town located in the north-western suburbs of Paris, with the intention of finding and killing the teacher. As demonstrated below, the case's circumstances and the investigation that followed show that Anzorov underwent a process of radicalization in the year preceding the attack and was driven by jihadist ideology. Likewise, the pattern of Anzorov's action is typical of the so-called "lone wolf", endogenous, jihadist violence that is considerably boosted by online interaction with radicalization agents and encouraged through social networks. Jihadist violence by individuals who have little to no association with terrorist organisations like the Islamic State or Al-Qaeda has recently become "dominant, even hegemonic" type of extremist violence in France (Ayad, 2021; Sawyer and Zinigrad, 2021b). Finally, Anzorov's background and the murder's circumstances fit the pattern of a series of similar acts of jihadist violence that have been taking place in France in the course of the past decade and whose beginning was marked by the shootings committed by Mohammed Merah in 2012 (Sawyer and Zinigrad, 2021b).

Public education and *laïcité*

The French system of public education is the main, and most revered, site for instilling the ideal of French secularism (*laïcité*) and other "Republican" values in the state's future generations. *Laïcité* is also instrumentalized by the state to counter what President Emmanuel Macron alternately branded as "Islamic separatism" and "radical Islamism". This phenomenon involves, according to Macron:

> A conscious, theorised, political-religious project […] materialising through repeated deviations from the Republic's values, which is often reflected by the formation of a counter-society as shown by children being taken out of school, the development of separate community sporting and cultural activities serving as a pretext for teaching principles which aren't in accordance with the Republic's laws (Macron, 2020).

Schools are thus politicised and presented as one of the foremost mechanisms for preventing radicalisation. This gives an extremely high symbolic value to the educational system. Paty's murder has therefore an ironic effect of raising the stakes for the perception of schools as sites of deradicalization by indirectly affirming the government's largely unfounded axiom that more *laïcité* leads to decrease in violence (Sawyer and Zinigrad, 2021b). Analysing this hotspot's background and Anzorov's motivations are therefore essential for answering whether deradicalization is effective or even possible through a kind of Republican secular civic education.

The place of ideology in radicalised attacks

As an interpretive frame, the question of whether acts of radical violence take root in religious or jihadist ideology, or are they are in fact a product of social, economic, and political marginalisation may also be mapped onto a left-right political spectrum. Left mainstream media and literature question the applicability of the term "jihadism" to cases like Paty's murder, whereas the right insists on the links between "lone-wolf" terrorism, immigration, and religious fundamentalism. The left-leaning Le Monde has recently suggested this violence is not rooted in "a politico-religious ideology" but rather in "ultraviolent individual fundamentalism" the prevention of which requires "placing a large part of society under massive surveillance". Such a remedy, according to *Le Monde*, "would then be worse than the disease" (Ayad, 2021). Anzorov's case is a vivid example of the complexity in classifying extremist violence. His personal hardship is closely intertwined with the process of his religious fundamentalism and jihadist radicalisation, which challenges the ability to determine what place religious ideology actually holds in violent radical acts.

Networks

Recently, the idea of an "atmospheric" jihadism, or an "ambiance" of radicalisation has been proposed (Gressani and Ramond, 2020; Kepel, 2020; 'Qu'est-ce que le "djihadisme d'atmosphère"? Les explications de Gilles Kepel', 2021). This is an important contribution. But of course, atmospheres are structured through social and media practices. Even if the social networks are the same for everyone, the ways they operate and are mobilised around any given hotspot generate something we might refer to as a "social media footprint." Anzorov's attack significantly contributes to the understanding of the precise ways in which contemporary online networks are instrumentalised, mobilised and configured around a specific event.

Attempted Assassination of Chirac

The ultimate "lone-wolf"

Brunerie's failed assassination is of particular interest for several reasons. First, though Brunerie would appear to be almost an ideal type of "lone-wolf" radicalisation, his case shows that even the most solitary extremists rarely operate in political vacuum. They are nurtured, educated, and radicalised with the support of online and offline actors that provide them with both ideological training and a sense of belonging that might culminate in violence.

Brunerie's attempted violence was an isolated act, and he might have just as well thought of it as a desperate cry for help or attention. But the timing of his actions and his extreme-right background suggest a more complex account. For instance, the "lone-wolf" strategy was consciously adopted by the member of the neo-Nazi militant "French and European Nationalist Party" (PNFE) – of which Brunerie was part – after the French government mandated its dissolution in 1999. To avoid infiltration and future prosecution of the group, the PNFE's ex-activists switch to operating alone or in cells of two or three people. Likewise, the bulletin of *Unité Radical*, the group Brunerie joined in early 2000s, featured the banner, "Tomorrow, the enemy will know the price of blood and tears" (Homer, 2002).

Motives, and prospective deradicalisation

The circumstances and turn Brunerie's case into a particularly informative case-study. The attempted assassination reveals a stark dissonance between Brunerie's own claims that he was motivated by a-political, "suicidal and megalomaniac madness", and the investigation's findings about his active involvement in extreme-right groups and interest in neo-Nazism prior to his violent act. Second, Brunerie is one of the rare cases of a successful (auto)-deradicalisation. After serving time in prison, he has fully reintegrated into society, while also recognising and lamenting his attempted violence and association with the radical right. Third, he offers a strong contrast within the I-GAP spectrum, especially with regards to alienation, to the other cases we have chosen, in particular Anzorov's murder of Samuel Paty.

Hotspot 3: Attack against the police

Representative hotspot of radical left violence

The Bernanos case has been selected for the character of his actions, his personal profile, his past association with the radical left, and his prominence in the contemporary extremist scene. The nature and scope of the actions at hand are highly representative of the type of violence committed by ultra-left movements in recent years. The violence deployed by the ultra-left is generally limited to damaging property, violent clashes with extreme-right activists, and violent defense tactics undertaken against the police forces during manifestations. As in the case of the police car attack, there is generally no intention to kill or inflict significant harm to individuals for the sake of violence.

Bernanos' two decades of activism and multiple clashes with the police and extreme-right groups have positioned him at a visible and respected figure not only among other militants for the ultra-left but in broader, more mainstream left circles. His articulate political agenda and reputation make a particularly central personification of the radicalisation trends of the radical left in France.

Finally, this hotspot has been chosen to emphasize the stark dissonance between the characteristic profile of ultra-left extremists, and those of extreme-right and jihadist perpetrators. Whereas the former is most often an individual integrated in society and at times connected to the (left) intellectual elites, the two latter are typically cases of marginalised youth, alienated from their family and immediate social circles and living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Micro factors

The micro level refers to the personal background of the individuals responsible for planning, organising, and carrying out the violent acts. Relevant personal information may include identity problems, failed integration, marginalisation, discrimination, relative deprivation, humiliation (direct or by proxy), stigmatisation and rejection, often combined with moral outrage and feelings of (vicarious) revenge, level of education, employment history, civil status, socio-economic status, citizenship, and migration history. Another important factor is the individual's place in the hierarchy of the group or organisation responsible for the hotspot.

Hotspot 1: The Murder of Samuel Paty

The micro factors consist of the personal background of the individuals responsible for planning, organising, and carrying out the violent acts.

Statistical profile of jihadists extremists

The majority of jihadist radicals in France fit a specific profile – these are non-immigrant, young French men of Maghrebin origin, raised in a Muslim family and coming from poor urban districts (Karoui and Hodayé, 2021; Crettiez and Barros, 2019; Hecker, 2018). According to a recent study, 61% of individuals engaging in jihadist violence are 18-26 years old; 80% are men; 94% are French nationals, and 89% are born in France; 76% have family ties in countries other than France (at least 55% are descendants of immigrants from the Maghreb); 70% to 75% are born to Muslim parents (i.e., not converts); and 86% live in poor metropolitan areas or cities suffering from urban decline (Karoui and Hodayé, 2021).

At least on paper, Mr. Anzorov seemed a good candidate to fit into French society. A Russian of Chechen descent, born in Moscow, he arrived in Paris when he was 6 and entered a public primary school. His family received refugee status in France due to a risk of persecution he was acknowledged to be facing by the Russian and Chechen authorities for his support of the Chechen resistance (Chichizola, 2020; *BBC News*, 2020). When Anzorov was about 10, his family moved to Évreux, a city in Normandy, in an economically depressed area about 90km west of Paris and home to about 50 Chechen families, according to Chechens living in the city.

Anzorov does however partially fit the statistical profile of jihadist perpetrators. He was 18 years old at the time of the incident; an immigrant who arrived in France when he was six years old. He was born to Muslim parents and raised in a religious family but was of Chechen and not Maghrebin origins. He was a French national but a citizen of Russia, born in Moscow after his family left Chechnya. He lived in Évreux, which is not a poor suburban area outside Paris but a mid-sized French city, in Normandy (Onishi and Méheut, 2020).

Personal trajectory

After moving to France, Anzorov spent most of his life in a social housing neighbourhood in Évreux that has seen a wave of riots against the police at the end of the 90s. He was interested in mixed martial arts – a popular sport in Chechnya and the Chechen diaspora – practised

wrestling and regularly attended boxing centres. Anzorov attended a vocational high school but was permanently excluded from it in 2018 following being involved in a violent brawl between two groups of youth of Chechen and African origins. After this incident he did not continue his secondary education and started working in construction. Shortly prior to the murder Anzorov was awaiting an authorisation to work in security and was about to obtain his driving license (Cherel, 2020; Radenovic, 2020). In fact, indirectly, his exclusion from school played a crucial role in the process of his radicalisation. French public schools have recently introduced extensive surveillance and implemented methods of detecting and reporting violent behaviour and radicalisation. These mechanisms were not put to use in Anzorov's case. The system chose to leave Anzorov to his own fate and wash its hands instead of taking the tedious and riskier path of helping him to disengage from violence.

Online presence and radicalisation process

Anzorov's activity on social media months before Paty's murder attests to the process of his radicalisation and eventual subscription to violent ideology. According to one source, "Anzorov's digital activity was almost exclusively devoted to his obsession with jihad. And to the promotion […] of Russian-speaking fighters – Chechens, Tajiks, Uzbeks – who died as 'martyrs' in the Caucasus, Syria or Afghanistan" (Thiolay, 2021).

Two of the five Snapchat groups that he joined were named "soldiers of Allah" and "Hunters of idolaters", and on June 8, 2020 Anzorov opened a Twitter account (@Tchetchene_270) and was followed by users whose names included violent references, such as "AminAttaque" or "MartyrFassi" (Suc, 2020; Thiolay, 2021). Some of his tweets on the now-suspended account indicated frustration with the lack of adherence to fundamentalist Islam. E.g., On September 13, Anzorov reproached the Saudi government for assisting "in the founding of idols worshiped outside of Allah [such as] the UN, Unesco, the WTO, the Council of Gulf States, the Arab World League", for aligning "with the crusaders disbelievers against the Taliban" and for being traitors and "traitor and hypocrite towards Islam" (Naar, 2020). On September 30, he criticized the "disbelief of the Saudi state […] and all those who support them", posting a photo of the Saudi King in a meeting with Queen Elisabeth II with the Queen's face and hands blurred out. On the same day he tweeted that "Almost all Netflix series are haram, […] I know you I'm sure you won't watch any of those series that Allah has ordered us not to watch") (Naar, 2020; Suc, 2020).

In another message, he protested against what he perceived as media hypocrisy in the coverage of jihadist violence (e.g., on October 1: "An Armenian priest holding a gun and a cross [...] no one has treated him as radicalised. On the other hand, it is enough for a Muslim to take a weapon to be a terrorist"). Other tweets indicated animosity towards Jews and Christians (e.g., on July 27, referring to Jews as the "cursed people" and on September 30: "You [Jews and Christians] are infidels because you refused to believe in the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad"). On October 1 he also posted a religious hymn associated with the Islamic State (Burel, 2020; Suc, 2020).

Most symbolically in retrospect, on August 30, Anzorov posted (and then quickly deleted) an image taken from the Turkish historical fiction TV series, *Resurrection: Ertuğrul*

that shows a man being beheaded with a long knife. The original face of the victim was replaced by another person whose identity could not be identified (Suc, 2020).

Anzorov's tweet two months before the murder of Samuel Paty (*source*: Suc, 2020)

Two weeks before murdering Paty, Anzorov deleted the approximately 700 tweets on his account, leaving only the Islamic State hymn and a message approving that "Chechnya [is] free". Finally, a few minutes after the murder Anzorov posted a photo of Paty's decapitated head followed by the comment: "From Abdullah, the servant of Allah, to [President Emmanuel] Marcon [sic], the leader of the infidels, I executed one of your hellhounds who dared to belittle Muhammad, calm his fellows before you get a harsh retribution…" (Suc, 2020).

Anzorov's violent and hateful messages on Twitter were spotted by several concerned users (including by *LICRA*, the International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism). Some of his tweets were reported to *PHAROS* (Platform for Harmonization, Analysis, Cross-referencing and Referral of Reports), a government mechanism for reporting illegal online content, and subsequently deleted. Yet, Anzorov was not known to the intelligence services, was not under surveillance and was not even classified "*Fiché S*" (a French system of flagging individuals considered to be posing a threat to national security or undergoing a process of radicalisation (Sandford, 2018)). The national anti-terrorism prosecutor stated that Anzorov "was known [to the police] for incidents of damage to private property and gang assaults" but he did not have a criminal record and was never convicted of this or any other type of violence (Cherel, 2020; Décugis and Bonnet, 2020; Paris Match, 2020a).

Family

Anzorov was raised in a Muslim family of Chechen refugees. According to his own message sent to a jihadist preacher, his parents opposed to him leaving for Afghanistan (Thiolay, 2021). The national antiterrorist prosecutor has stated that Anzorov's half-sister joined the Islamic State in Syria in 2014 (*BBC News*, 2020).

Hotspot 2: Attempted Assassination of Chirac

Personal trajectory

Brunerie lived in Courcouronnes, a town in the southern suburbs of Paris. His friends and neighbours described him as relatively isolated, calm and withdrawn (Ceaux, Pereira and Simon, 2002). He had been a student in a vocational "BTS" (Advanced Technician Certificate) program and had just failed his final examinations for the diploma in June 2002, one month before the attack (Tourancheau, 2002). In parallel with his studies and until February 2002, he had a temporary job as a personal driver and a night watchman for a hotel. According to his own account, in 2002 he was getting increasingly overwhelmed by his unbalanced and stressful rhythm of life. He would finish his night shift at 5am, engaged in political activism (see below) from 5am to 7am, and then "would take the car home, shower, breakfast, and go to class". Eventually, he found himself "all alone", without "any real social life". (Tourancheau, 2002; Denètre, 2009).

He had very few friends and no significant romantic relationships. During his trial, Brunerie testified that his act was linked to an unrequited love for a MNR activist (France 24, 2009). At one point, he even invented a girlfriend ("Maud") to impress his friends. He has written her name in his address book and introduced a fictional phone number next to it to make her look more realistic (Tourancheau, 2002; Fleury, 2004).

The seven years of Brunerie's life prior to the attempted assassination had been marked by health issues: he was operated for a strabismus at 18 and then fought off lymph node cancer when he was 21. He also suffered from a congenital deformity in his thorax and pelvic torsion (Fleury, 2004; Mouhoubi and Cohen-Grillet, 2009). Health issues and chronical pain, especially the cancer, have been shown to have an impact on the general psychological state as a result of physical and mental fatigue necessary for fighting the disease. A recent study shows, for instance, that "[r]ates of depression and other psychological disorders are substantially higher in [adolescents and young adults] with cancer when compared with older adults" (Park and Rosenstein, 2015).

Brunerie had clearly been premeditating the possibility of a violent act. He had told his friends about his plans to assassinate Chirac and, emptied his bank accounts and purchased the rifle in early July 2002, made numerous gifts to his friends and then trained in the handling of his weapon in Burgundy with a former legionnaire. When the police investigated his room in his parents' home after the failed assassination, they discovered 10kg of sodium chloride and powdered sugar, which could have been used to make a bomb. Similarly, a search on his personal computer revealed documents with instructions about the preparation of explosives. He was also steeped in classic works of the extreme right, including "Mein Kampf" (Ceaux, Pereira and Simon, 2002; Reuters, 2004).

Family

At the time of the attack, Brunerie was still living with his parents. His relationship with them was uneasy and invoked in him strong feelings of resentment. His father was "transparent" – passive and indifferent to his interests, whereabouts, even to his son's trial. His mother was more involved in raising him, but also very constraining (Albouy, 2002). Brunerie described

her as “paranoid” and “castrating”, not allowing him to attend “summer camp, outings, sport, or anything”. He also speculated that without this “family prison”, he would have “experienced a teenage crisis like the others and fallen into line a year later” (Catalano, 2011). After the assassination attempt, his parents testified they were aware of their son’s far-right activism (see below) but knew nothing about the planned attack and were shocked to learn of his intentions (Albouy, 2002).

Brunerie also had a younger sister the relationship with whom was no less tense. The sibligns have not spoken for three years because Maxime disapproved of his sister’s relationship with a Tunisian man (Albouy, 2002).

After the attack

It is important to note that following his prison sentence, Brunerie was successfully deradicalised, albeit his later life is not without violent episodes. He was a model inmate and his sentence was reduced for good behaviour. He obtained his BTS diploma wile in prison, found a job at the townhall of his town (Courcouronnes) in 2009, and at 34 years of age, started a stable relationship with a woman with whom he attended “the mass every Sunday” at a church in his hometown (Tourancheau, 2011).

In 2011, Brunerie published an autobiography, entitled “An ordinary life: I wanted to kill Jacques Chirac” in which he detailed his early life and his time in prison (Brunerie and Rol, 2011). He tried to join the ranks of *MoDem* (*Mouvement démocrate*), a centrist political party, but was refused membership and then announced he supports the candidacy of the socialist candidate Ségolène Royal for the 2012 presidential elections (later, Brunerie claimed these political statements were made only to boost the sales of his book) (Lorriaux, 2011; Clier, 2020).

In 2018, Brunerie published another book – a fiction novel based on his life story. The preface, written for the book by an acknowledged French novelist who was following Brunerie’s life after the attempted assassination, called the readers to celebrate his “revival and reconstruction”. In the same year, however, Brunerie was also convicted for domestic abuse of his partner in the years 2012-2013 and received a three-month suspended sentence (Mahaut, 2018).

In a recent interview for a newspaper given in December 2019, a few months after Chirac’s death, Brunerie said he is self-employed “as a management assistant and an amateur actor in an improvisation theatre troupe in the Paris region” and stated: “I finally found my balance” (Clier, 2020).

Hotspot 3: Attack against the police

Personal trajectory

Antonin Bernanos is an experienced radical left activist. He has been taking part in militant advocacy from the age of fifteen and has been part of the anti-fascist group, *Action antifasciste Paris-Banlieue*, since 2010. At the time of the police car attack Bernanos was a 23-year-old sociology student at the university of Nanterre and a deputy director of a recreation centre in

a Parisian suburb. Prior to that incident he was subject to twelve legal proceedings but eleven of the cases were either dropped or ended with an acquittal (Seckel, 2017, p. 142). , eleven of which, however, ended with an acquittal. According to his own statement in October 2020, he has undergone "around forty arrests, 17 indictments, nine trials, two convictions, four incarcerations, nearly two years spent in bars, and just as much in judicial supervision, electronic bracelets and house arrests" (Girard, 2020).

In 2020, Bernanos co-authored a booklet denouncing "the links between the fascist movements and the police [and criticising] the repression against anti-fascist activists, stigmatized as Black Blocs" (Girard, 2020).

Though he sits high on the injustice, grievance and polarisation spectrums, it is worth noting that Antonin Bernanos does not show any of the signs of alienation that characterise the other cases we have studied. He is particularly well-integrated into his family and educational structures, being deeply supported by his brother, ostensibly finding a community of support within his lycée, university and in the wider academic environment. He also has the highest socio-economic status of our cases, including the cultural capital associated with the name Bernanos.

Family

Perhaps more than in the previous cases, Bernanos's family merits mention. Whether or not there is any direct relationship to ideological positions or the actual process of radicalization of Antonin Bernanos, the context of Parisian intellectual elites has been regularly invoked. Indeed, he is the great-grandson of the famous and controversial writer Georges Bernanos, a Catholic Royalist who is known at once for the quality of his writings as well as for his anti-semitism.

Angel, Antonin's younger brother (by three years) shares a very similar profile. In 2016, when the hotspot took place, he was a first-year university student in geography and had a part-time job as an animator. Yet, had already been placed under *Fiché S* (see above) prior to the events for belonging to "the anti-fascist protest movement likely to engage in violence" (Marteau, 2017). He was present in the demonstrations where the arson took place and initially arrested as a suspect (Halissat, 2017). The brothers had a history of participating in violent demonstrations and engaged in violent confrontations with the extreme right. In the six months prior to the hotspot, Antonin and Angel were involved in about a dozen manifestation that ended in violence (Marteau, 2017).

Their father, Yves, the grandson of Georges Bernanos, is a documentarist. Their mother, Geneviève, is a director of urban development in the Parisian suburbs and a strong supporter of her sons' ideology and activism. In June 2017, Geneviève Bernanos co-established the "Collective of solidary mothers in support of the victims of fascism and state repression" whose goal is to "share the concerns of the parents of activists who are today killed, injured and repressed, prevented from expressing their ideas that are being caricatured" (Égré, 2018). In a recent interview, given after Antonin's most recent arrest, Geneviève said she was proud to see him "determined, posed, calm, accepting his fate, always remaining in a perspective of struggle and combat". She is also happy to see her sons militating for

"undocumented migrants, working-class neighborhoods, for Palestine" and "never imagined that one could be deprived of liberty by defending these ideas" (Marteau, 2017; Girard, 2020).

Educational/Ideational background

Antonin had developed a long-term engagement with far-left ideology. He attended an experimental high school, the Lycée auto-géré de Paris (LAP), inspired by the socialist self-management movement and based on the concept of autonomous education. Bernanos' teenage years shaped his future political views and the LAP certainly offered an environment in which far-left ideas were acceptable. His first clashes with the extreme right took place already during this period (Marteau, 2017).

In the same period he also he befriends Clément Méric, a radical left activist killed in 2013 at the age of 18 by members of the extreme right during a violent confrontation. Bernanos described Méric's death as a "turning point" when he realized that "being an activist was going to be the centre of [his] life" (Girard, 2020).

It is worth noting that Bernanos has been openly supported by his university professors and French public intellectuals during the Quai Valmy affair. 380 professors protested against his detention and his teachers from the university of Nanterre came to visit him during his incarceration and gave him lessons. After nine months of pre-trial detention his professors wrote a petition demanding his release and a day of support was organised at Nanterre with the participation of faculty, students, journalists and activists (Livois, 2017; Marteau, 2017). During his sentencing hearing, several dozens of activists chanted "Everyone hates the justice system", and "*Liberté! Liberté!*" (Barbier, 2017).

Involvement in violent clashes with extreme-right groups

Antonin Bernanos was 22 year old at the time of the act and had already been arrested on several occasions for carrying prohibited weapons and aggravated violence, in particular during demonstrations in tribute to Clément Méric and Rémi Fraisse, an environmental activist killed by a stun grenade in 2014 (Marteau, 2017).

In April 2018, a few days after his release from prison for the Quai Valmy case, Bernanos was arrested once more for involvement, with three others, in a brawl against members of the extreme right groups, *Zouaves* and *Génération identitaire* (Chevillard, 2019). One year later, during the Yellow Vests protests in Paris, he was arrested with eight others for altercations with members of the far-right *Zouaves Paris*, *Milice Paris* and *Génération Identitaire*. Bernanos was however the only one to remain under pre-trial arrest and placed in solitary confinement for two months (*Lundimatin*, 2019).

Meso factors

The meso level points to the wider radical milieu – the supportive or even complicit social surround – which serves as a rallying point and may be the "missing link" with wider radicalised networks. This may include political cells, religious communities or leaders, an online network

or groups on social media encouraging violence or providing ideological training, an organised militia providing weapons for the hotspot or militarised training camps.

Hotspot 1: The Murder of Samuel Paty

Context

While the assassination was organised primarily by one individual against another specific target, Anzorov was integrated into networks and communities that turned around a few principal figures and have likely contributed to his violent act. He was not formally trained or recruited by a jihadist organisation, but connections made online, predominantly in Russian, facilitated his radicalisation and ultimately also assisted him in finding a clear target against which to perpetuate the attack.

Syrian connection - HTS

During 2020, Anzorov was several times in contact with Farrukh Fayzimatov (known as Faruq Shami), a 27-year-old Syrian based pseudo-journalist of Tajik origins. Fayzimatov is a member and propagandist of the Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), a terrorist organisation mostly active in the Idlib region that formally split from Al-Qaeda in 2017 butt also adheres to Salafi-jihadist ideology. At least since 2020, Fayzimatov issued "an intense propaganda activity in Russian to promote his group, recruit candidates […] and collect funds" (Décugis and Pham-Lê, 2021a). He is known to have had online conversations with Anzorov and other radicalised youth in France and advised them on religion and jihad. Notably, on September 13, 2020 – shortly after the republication of Mohammad's cartoons by *Charlie Hebdo* and about a month prior to Paty's murder – Fayzimatov published a video on Facebook urging Ramzan Kadyrov, the Head of the Chechen Republic, to "send brothers to France" to retaliate against the newspaper (Décugis and Pham-Lê, 2021a). This message may have provoked Anzorov to act in response to this call. Indeed, the audio message recorded by Anzorov minutes after the murder (see above) was sent on Instagram to two accounts, one of which belonged to Fayzimatov (named "Dnevnik_71"). Fayzimatov's response to the message was: "Peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you" (Suc, 2020; Thiolay, 2021; Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2018).

The second account – nicknamed "12.7x108", after the calibre of a Soviet heavy machine gun – to whom Anzorov sent the audio recording was owned by another member of the HTS, possibly a sniper. Anzorov exchanged several messages with this account's owner in September 2020, receiving from him photos and videos featuring HTS fighters. Among others, Anzorov inquired of him whether it is difficult to cross the Syrian-Turkish border, and expressed a desire to fight (Suc, 2020; Thiolay, 2021).

Chechen connection

During the year preceding Paty's murder, Anzorov was influenced by and in contact with Abdullah Kostekskiy. Kostekskiy is a prolific social media jihadist polemicist and a leading figure at the *Caucasus Emirate*, a terrorist organisation affiliated with Al-Qaeda that operated in the territory of North Caucasus between 2007 and 2015. The USA FBI found that Anzorov

followed three online accounts managed by Kostekskiy and, according to a testimony of a friend of Anzorov, watched hours of his videos and was likely to be influenced by his radical ideology (Thiolay, 2021). In April 2020, Anzorov addressed a personal message to Kostekskiy, expressing fear for his faith and interest "to do hijra in Afghanistan […] on the way to Allah" despite his parents' will (Thiolay, 2021).

French contacts

Among Anzorov's contacts on Snapchat were at least two young men, known as Louqman I. and Ismail G. who shared his interests and were also in touch with HTS fighters. Both men are charged with a terrorist conspiracy (Thiolay, 2021).

Another person charged with complicity in a terrorist murder in relation with the Paty affair is Abdelhakim Sefrioui, a radical Islamist activist and founder of the pro-Hamas movement, *Collectif Cheikh-Yassine*, with ties to far-right figures in France, notably the anti-semitic, negationist comedian Diuedonné (Pascariello *et al.*, 2020; Sawyer and Zinigrad, 2021a). Sefrioui is accused to have assisted Brahim Chnina to designate Samuel Paty as a target on social media (Le Figaro, 2021).

As of June 2021, the French authorities have overall charged fifteen people for different levels of association with Abdoullakh Anzorov with crimes related to Paty's murder. These include Brahim Chnina and the young man who helped Anzorov to find Paty (Le Figaro, 2021).

Chechen Diaspora in France

Chechens, especially since the collapse of the Soviet Union, as a whole have successfully integrated into France. Between 40-60,000 émigrés of which 16,000 are still considered refugees [Le Monde]. Nonetheless, Anzorov's act was not the only incident of jihadist violence with links to the Chechen community. In 2018 a knife attack was committed in Paris by a Chechen who pledged allegiance to ISIS. Likewise, 300 Chechens in France have been placed under *Fiché S* (see above) (Mandraud, 2020).

In 2019-2020, violent Chechen street gangs provoked unrest in working class neighborhoods in Dijon and Nice. Chechens from Belgium, France and Germany organized punishment raids after it was claimed that someone had attacked a Chechen immigré. These events were not presented as religiously motivated or classified as radicalised violence and were directed against members of Maghrebin communities. They have been broadly interpreted as criminal activity.

Anzorov himself clearly maintained some ties with the Chechen community. For example, he was a member of a Chechen martial arts club. It is important to highlight that no direct relationship has been established between the assassination of Samuel Paty and the wave of violence within Chechen communities in France. However, the fact that a series of high-profile violent sets of events involving Chechens took place within a few months of one another raised questions as to the shared grievances, levels of integration. Moreover, since the events in Dijon and Nice were facilitated by social media, it raises the question of the Chechen social media networks and violence during that period. But once again, at this stage no clear connection has been established between them.

Hotspot 2: Attempted Assassination of Chirac

The French media and public opinion have it that Brunerie's attack was an isolated act of a desperate and unstable individual whose ties to the extreme right were incidental to the attempted assassination. This thesis must however be rejected when examined in view of Brunerie's long and substantive affiliation with neo-Nazi circles and, more generally, of the history and evolution of the French far-right in the past two decades (Griffin, 2008; Camus and Lebourg, 2017).

Extreme right circles

Brunerie was well-integrated into a variety of extreme-right and neo-Nazi groups. As a skinhead in his teenage years, Brunerie was influenced by the British "Rock Against Communism" (RAC) white-power music, affluent with racist and antisemitic lyrics, and by their French equivalent – "Rock Identitaire Français" – popular in neo-Nazi circles in the 90s. In particular, the RIF scene contributed to Brunerie's and other skinheads' political and ideological formation (Bourseiller, 2011). His activism included distributing RIF music, "which small groups use as an ideological tool to attract people who are not receptive to political discourse" in the Paris region (Homer, 2002), and the role of a treasurer of the *3B* (*baise-bière-baston*: "fuck-beer-fight") skinhead group (Reuters, 2004; Tourancheau, 2011).

Brunerie was active in the French and European Nationalist Party (PNFE), a neo-Nazi militant group that split away from the French Nationalist Party in 1985, and joined gangs "who particularly distinguished themselves by their violence during football matches" (Daoudi, 2002). He also campaigned, for the neo-faschist student union, *Groupe Union Défense* (Dumond, 2002).

Since 1997, he was on file within the French police for participating in neo-Nazi manifestations organised by the PNFE. After the PNFE was administratively banned and dissolved due to its activities, its members – including Brunerie – assimilated into the extreme-right group, *Unité radicale* (which was, in its turn, dissolved in the aftermath of Brunerie's attempted assassination).

SOS Racaille

Maxime Brunerie had links to another agent of the French extreme right, Joël Sambius, a French national and the founder of the website "SOS-Racaille", which existed in the years 2001-2003 and animated an online forum for far-right sympathisers. Aside from his activities in spreading xenophobic propaganda Sambius had a long history of convictions for financial crimes, primarily credit card scams, and left France for Russia in 1998. He was later sentenced, in 2001, to five years in prison for an electronic payment fraud and in 2006, to 12,000 euros fine for a defamatory post published on the SOS-Racaille website. Both sentences were given *in absentia* and Sambius was never extradited to France (Smolar and Subtil, 2004; Le Monde, 2006).

Sambius' role in Brunerie's radicalisation remains unclear although the police and the media got onto some traces of their relationship shortly after Brunerie's failed attack (Smolar and Subtil, 2004). Brunerie himself never commented on their relationship in interviews or in

his book, and Sambius was all but absent in the mainstream media coverage of the attempted assassination and of Brunerie's whereabouts throughout the years. Yet, a recent journalist investigation based on interviews with high public officials closely familiar with the Brunerie affaire claims that Sambius was in regular contact with Brunerie and had significant impact on his decision to assassinate Chirac (Albertini and Doucet, 2016). The findings include the testimony of Amaury de Hauteclocque, the head of the counter-terrorist section in the Paris crime squad in 2001-2007, according to whom Sambius instructed and "asked Brunerie to attack Chirac on July 14". The counter-terrorist section also uncovered that Brunerie informed Sambius he is about to act (Albertini and Doucet, 2016).

De Hauteclocque's statements were supported by Marie-Odile Bertella-Geffroy, the examining magistrate who carried out the pre-trial investigation in the Brunerie case. Bertella-Geffroy stated that "Brunerie was quite active on the Internet [and] had been accompanied in his actions. It was on sites such as SOS-Racaille that this lonely boy had been trained. He was just a lost soul who would never have thought of taking action if it hadn't been prompted to do so" (Albertini and Doucet, 2016). Similarly, Philippe Bilger, the Advocate-General who lead Brunerie's trial readily admitted to have "made a mistake in not sufficiently addressing Brunerie's ideological contingent, of which the websites he visited were a part. I chose to insist more on the sociological motives of the person than on his ideas and the means through which they were formed" (Albertini and Doucet, 2016). These findings strengthen the hypothesis that Brunerie's act must be considered in the context of the extreme-right ideological climate in his social circles and analysed as one link in the chain of radical-right extremism in 21st century France.

The lone-wolf

Brunerie's case vividly demonstrates that individual extreme-right (or jihadist) violence administered without an apparent command or group planning is nevertheless most often nurtured, encouraged, legitimized, and so becomes feasible only within a social context and networks that channel radical ideology to its members: the "methodology of individual action should not be confused (as it often is) with the question of self radicalization: the lone wolf belongs to a milieu" (Camus and Lebourg, 2017).

According to one analysis, the way in which Brunerie "internalised one adjacent strand of the extreme right world-view, carrying their self-appointed mission in a spirit of 'leaderless resistance', is symptomatic of the biggest change of all to affect fascism in the 'post-fascist age': groupuscularisation" (Griffin, 2008):

In the context of extreme right-wing politics in the contemporary age, 'groupuscules' can be defined as numerically negligible political (frequently metapolitical, but never party-political) entities formed to pursue palingenetic ideological, organisational, or activist ends with an ultimate goal of overcoming the decadence of the existing liberal-democratic system. Though fully formed and autonomous, they have small active memberships and minimal if any public visibility or support. Yet they acquire enhanced influence and significance through the ease with which they can be associated, even if only through linkages in cyberspace, with other grouplets which complement their verbal onslaught against the present phase of the West and attempt to lay the theoretical foundations of a new type of society. As a result, the

groupuscule has a Janus-headed characteristic of combining organisational autonomy with an ability to create informal linkages with, or to reinforce the influence of, other similarly minded formations. This enables groupuscules, when considered in terms of their aggregate impact on politics and society, to be understood as non-hierarchical, leaderless, and centreless (or rather polycentric) movements with fluid boundaries and constantly changing components. These 'slimemould' fascist movements have the characteristics of a political and ideological subculture rather than a conventional political party movement, and is perfectly adapted to the task of perpetuating revolutionary extremism in an age of relative political stability (Griffin, 2008)

The lone-wolf strategy was devised in the 70s by Joseph Tommasi, an American neo-Nazi and founder of the National Socialist Liberation Front. As a believer in the Zionist Occupation Government (ZOG) conspiracy theory (see above), Tommasi thought that decentralised violence would be an efficient technique in the fight against "Jewish world domination", more resistant to detection and infiltration. Brunerie, who also subscribed to the ZOG conspiracy, resorted to the same method twenty some years later. His online message on the Combat 18 forum on the eve of his attack, which included the phrase "Death to zog [sic]", clearly attests that his ideological training played a crucial role in the resolution to transform whatever personal frustrations he had into violent action. Irrespective of his subjective intentions and motives, Brunerie had a typical profile to engage with the far right, which "attracts disturbed people who think of themselves as the vanquished in history and who want to prove it wrong" (Homer, 2002). Moreover, he was the pioneer who imported the lone-wolf strategy to France (Camus and Lebourg, 2017), and inspired multiple perpetrators on both the extreme-right and jihadist edges of extremist violence (see also below).

Hotspot 3: Attack against the police

Antonin Bernanos has been active in ultra-left circles from the age of fifteen and joined the *Action antifasciste Paris-Banlieue*, a group described as "autonomous ultras", in 2010 (Vaton, 2017). Clément Méric, the radical left activist who inspired Bernanos and was killed in 2013, belonged to the same collective (Vaton, 2017).

The attack of the police vehicle was carried out by several individuals. Along with Bernanos, the court convicted six other people for their roles in the hotspot. Yet, typically for an ultra-left hotspot, the attackers were not an organised group operating in tandem with a prior plan and no close ties among the convicts were revealed during the criminal proceedings.

The longest prison sentence, of seven years, was handed down *in absentia*, to *Joachim Landwehr*, a Swiss citizen, for throwing the object that caused the fire into the police vehicle. *Nicolas Frensch*, a 40-year-old, unemployed computer scientist, and *Ari Rustenholz* were both sentenced for two and a half years of jail term, and another two and a half years suspended, for hitting one of the police officers or their vehicle. *Kara Brault*, a 27-year-old American transgender, received two years in prison and two years suspended for smashing the car's windshield. Thomas Richaud was sentenced to one year of prison and another one suspended for hitting the police vehicle, and *Leandro Lopes* received one year of suspended sentence for "participation in a group for the purpose of preparing an assault" (Jarry, 2017; Le Monde, 2017; *RFI*, 2017).

Throughout the trial the accused received open public support (see above) but were also backed by extremist networks. A website named “Infokiosques” published an overview of the Bernanos affair in April 2017. The document was titled “In solidarity in the struggles, in solidarity in the face of repression” and ended with the statement: “accomplices, at least have the desire to see cop cars burning” (Infokiosques, 2017). Similarly, the “Paris-Luttes” website published a long list of violent incidents claimed to have taken place in retaliation of the arrests and sentences handed down in the affair, under the title: “Burned Keufmobile [slang for a police car], Solidarity means attack” (*[Keufmobile brûlée] La solidarité, c’est l’attaque !*, 2017).

Macro factors

The macro level is the most abstract dimension of the context that identifies the role of the government and society (at home and abroad) in processes of radicalisation. Its scope includes systemic and structural factors, such as racialised public opinion and party politics, tense majority-minority relationships (especially when it comes to foreign diasporas), lack of socio-economic opportunities for whole sectors of society, political and religious tensions, demographic imbalances, cultural cleavages, rapid modernisation, increasing individualism and social atomisation, class structure or globalisation.

Hotspot 1: The Murder of Samuel Paty

Context

In the past decade, France has seen a substantial increase in transnational jihadist terrorism. Between 2001 and 2011, only four (foiled) attacks were linked to jihadist groups. The shift was marked in 2012 by Mohamed Merah, a solo terrorist trained in Afghanistan/Pakistan who kills seven people and wounds five in three shooting incidents. In the following 2014-2019 period, 42 completed or attempted jihadist attacks took place in France. Jihadist terrorism reached its most infamous and lethal peak in 2015. The first among the fifteen incidents of that year were the attack on the offices of the *Charlie Hebdo* journal, the shooting of a police officer, and the siege at a kosher supermarket in January 2015 committed by individuals associated with AQAP and the Islamic State. In November of the same year, the IS claimed responsibility for a series of coordinated attacks at a sports stadium, the Bataclan theatre, and several restaurants in Paris that took a toll of 130 killed and 493 wounded (Fenech and Pietrasanta, 2016). The Bataclan attack alone, with 89 people killed, is the single deadliest incident of political violence ever committed on French territory (*Le Parisien*, 2015). The threat continues to linger in France and is higher than in its neighbouring countries. France was the only target of jihadist terrorism in the EU in 2019 and, according to Europol, it counted eight jihadist attacks only in 2020 (including Paty’s murder) (Europol, 2020, 2021).

Immigration and *intégration*

Immigrants currently make about 10 per cent of the French population (~6.5 million); more than a third are naturalised. 46.5% of immigrants living in France were born in former French colonies in North and West Africa (mainly in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia), and another third

were born in Europe (primarily in Portugal and Italy) (INSEE, 2019). Immigration is a recurring but remarkably fluctuating topic in French election campaigns – it was highly politicised in the 1988, 2002 and 2012 elections but received low attention levels in the subsequent 1995, 2007 and 2017 electoral cycles (Grande, Schwarzbözl and Fatke, 2019). More generally, immigration and the French colonial past, the intersection of which is most vivid in the large waves of migrants arriving from Algeria in the '60s and '70s, continue to play a significant role in the country's politics and affect its collective identity.

The struggle of second- and third-generation immigrants from former colonies against discrimination and for recognition of their identity began in the '80s. It is still far from being fully addressed by the state. Systemic racism denied them equal opportunity in education, employment and housing, and spatial segregation enclosed communities of North- and West-African immigrants in the French suburbs (*banlieues*), where they continue to suffer from unemployment, violence and marginalisation (Chabal, 2015; Chrisafis, 2015). Until today, "Living in banlieues and immigrant-concentrated neighbourhoods in Paris is a proxy for racial and ethnic background; it marks one as non-white or as a visible minority within France" (Barwick and Beaman, 2019). Revolts against the effective transparency of these conditions have been breaking out in the *banlieues* since the '80s. The protest peaked in 2005, with violent riots that started in a northeast suburb of Paris and grew into a two-week uprising in 300 towns that involved the setting on fire of some 10,000 vehicles. The 2005 riots were met with severe police response, brought to more than 3,000 arrests and led the President to declare a state of emergency for the first time in metropolitan France since the Algerian war (Dikeç, 2007; Horvath, 2018).

Except for an initial period of relative openness to immigrants' identity politics in the mid-'80s, French governments downplay the unique grievances and demands of this group (Chabal, 2015). Multicultural attitudes to ethnic and religious minorities are rejected in favour of a policy of *intégration* into the French republican project, which "requires the effective participation of all those called to live in France in the construction of a society that brings [its citizens] together around shared principles as they are expressed in equal rights and common responsibilities". In recent years, the integration rhetoric increasingly focuses on the religious dimension of the problem and underscores *laïcité* – the French notion of secularism – as the regime's foremost "shared principle" (Chebbah-Malicet, 2018).

Laïcité and jihadist violence

The French government's two principal mechanisms employed to deal with jihadist violence are its security apparatus and public education system. Constitutional and legislative reforms, pumped up by emergency executive prerogatives unfolding in the wake of global jihadist terrorism after 9/11 and intensified after the 2015 Paris attacks, have equipped the state with extensive (and precarious) police powers to detect, trace and foil violent activity.

Coinciding regulatory reforms in the school system have sought to ensure the next generation of French citizens subscribes to the regime's fundamental values, the most important of which in this context is the *laïcité*. Officially written into law in 1905 as a standard ensuring strict institutional separation of (the Catholic) church and state, the *laïcité* has been gradually transformed under the Fifth Republic into a principle that extends to the regulation

of individual conduct in the public sphere and encourages "moderate" religious practice. In the past twenty years, it has been famously mobilised to prohibit visual manifestations of religious attributes, such as hijabs in schools and burqas in public places and presented as the common denominator for all French citizens.

The French government insists that the preventive and integrative policies ensuing from the combination of law enforcement with the principle of *laïcité* target only radicalised "Islamist" individuals and by no means intend to stigmatise Islam or Muslim French citizens and residents as a whole. Yet, notwithstanding the official declarations regarding equality and religion-blind actions, French legal reforms and political discourse increasingly conflate Islam with jihadist ideology.

One of the aggravating factors contributing to the problem is the instrumentalisation of *laïcité* to confront violent radicalisation and, more generally, religious *communautarisme* (communitarianism). "Communitarianism" is commonly understood in France as a case of social pathology where an ethnic group prioritises traditional or religious values above the interests of the "nation" and the republican society. Historically, French governments have favoured *communautarisme* as an alternative explanation to their failure in handling the country's colonial legacy, social integration of immigrants and other manifestations of systemic racism and discrimination. Save for the radical left, *communautarisme* is routinely denounced by politicians across the political spectrum who invoke *laïcité* as the ultimate antidote against the "desire to secede from the Republic in the name of a religion" (Faye, 2019). And as the government depicts *laïcité* as being threatened by jihadism, its aversion to *communautarisme* is gradually conflated with its concern for jihadist violence (Chabal, 2015; Geisser, 2020b).

The bill "reinforcing respect of the principles of the Republic", currently pending in the Senate, illustrates the problem. It is criticised for blurring the line between jihadism and Islam by lumping together security procedures aimed at curtailing terrorism (e.g., "expansion of the national file of perpetrators of terrorist offences to those who advocate and provoke terrorist acts") together with measures limiting the place of religion in the public and private spheres (e.g., "respect for the principles of equality, neutrality and *laïcité* by employees participating in a public service mission" and "strengthening the fight against forced or fraudulent marriages") (Assemblée Nationale, 2020; Geisser, 2020b). Such steps turn attempts to deradicalise "Islamists" into a policy of "deradicalisation" of Islam and discredit the government's repeated declarations that in the eyes of the law, "*communautarisme* is not terrorism" (Faye, 2019).

The pressure to abandon the so-called *communautarisme* and assimilate in the secular notion of French citizenship risks, according to some researchers, generating xenophobia in the general population and sending the French Muslims the message: :We don't want your otherness because we want you to be like us" (Onishi and Méheut, 2020).

Educational system

Public schools in France have been at the centre of debates on secularisation. This debate reached new heights in the early 2000s, when a government committee was created to draft a report and recommendations on secularism in France. One of the highly symbolic recommendations made by the Stasi Commission (1998-2004) was to ban wearing headscarves or veils in public schools as a part of a project to further secularize public spaces

and especially educational institutions. French public schools' role in the government's strategy of deradicalisation has become more fundamental in recent years. The current "policy for the prevention of violent radicalisation" implemented by the Ministry of National Education is part of the 2018 National Radicalisation Prevention Plan (PNPR). The two main pillars of the policy are civic education and securitisation of the school, with an increasing emphasis on the latter. According to the Ministry of Education website, the plan revolves around "4 axes: prevention, identification and reporting, monitoring of young people in the process of radicalisation and staff training" (Politique de prévention de la radicalisation violente en milieu scolaire, 2020).

The pedagogical aspect of preventing radicalisation consists of moral and civic education. The main components of this curriculum are the principle of laïcité (the French notion of secularism); media and information education; the development of critical thinking and of a "feeling of belonging to a society"; and a "nuanced and objective approach to the history of religious ideas and facts".

Beyond their essential mission of providing an education for French boys and girls, the decision to emphasise schools as a secular space profoundly augmented the stakes and challenges of teaching in extremely diverse contexts. In recent years, French teachers are charged with an even more challenging mission of ensuring that their civic curriculum will decrease violence and turn students away from fundamentalist jihadist networks and contents. The discourse of President Macron and other French politicians advocating for more emphasis on *laicite* in schools sends an implicit message to teachers that they are expected to render civic education an efficient security mechanism directly applicable to immediate issues of student radicalisation. But teachers are not trained to teach and instil *laïcité* in children and a recent poll shows that 49% of them prefer to sidestep religion-related topics in class in order to avoid confrontations with students (Obin, 2020; Roder, 2021; Weitzmann, 2021).

This background is essential for understanding how the public, politicians and media have invested schools with a singular role in pitting French Republican values against religious practice. In this context, all forms of persistent religious expression may appear to be signs of radicalisation. Similarly, treating religious themes in the classroom takes on a particularly political character. At the same time, the civic *laicite* curriculum is being increasingly presented as a tool of deradicalisation that fails to convincingly state whether the radicalisation refers to religious practices in general or is focused solely on potential extremist violence.

Charlie Hebdo Legacy

One of the most visible and horrific terrorist events in France in recent years took place at the headquarters of *Charlie Hebdo* on 7 January 2015. *Charlie Hebdo* is a radical left satirical newspaper, widely known for publishing anti-religious caricatures of all confessions. Similar to a publication in a Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten in 2005, caricature of Mohammed printed by the *Charlie Hebdo* in 2012 – especially the one entitled "A star is born" (see above), incited strong backlash in some Muslim communities in France and in the world, prompting the French government to temporarily close embassies, cultural centres and schools in 20 Muslim countries (*France 24*, 2012). The cartoons were the main motive for the traumatic and emblematic attack on the *Charlie Hebdo* headquarters in January 2015.

This attack led to a highly symbolic cross-partisan march (excepting Marine Le Pen and her far-right *Front National* party) and the widespread slogan "*Je suis Charlie*" (I am Charlie) The slogan became one of the most widespread, public displays of anti-terrorism and solidarity on the part of the French society (present in bumper stickers, t-shirts, placed in window shops, etc) but has also generated an almost immediate backlash, including in schools, and gave birth to the counter-movement, "*Je ne suis pas Charlie*" (I am not Charlie). The widespread public support of a previously marginal satirical publication further politicised the resistance on the part of certain populations. Similarly, in schools, discussions around the slogan varied from widespread recognition to pedagogical tensions among pupils who did not necessarily feel solidarity with the Charlie Hebdo newspaper as a result of the caricatures it had published.

In September 2020, Charlie Hebdo republished the illustrations on the eve of the opening of the trial for the perpetrators of the January 2015 attacks. This republication brought a new relevance to its initial publication, the events of 2015, and the controversies around the *Je suis Charlie* movement (see above).

Hotspot 2: Attempted Assassination of Chirac

The symbolism in assassinating the French President

Assassination attempts against high-ranking political officials have a long history and have always contained a strong symbolic value. This fact is increased in the context of Presidential regimes, and especially the French 5th Republic where the President is elected by direct universal suffrage. Previous assassination attempts against Charles De Gaulle during the Algerian war by such organisations as the far-right "Secret Armed Organisation" (OAS) marked moments of intense discord in the body politic. The fact that Brunerie's attempted attack took place within months of Jacques Chirac's re-election in the spring of 2002 reinforced the context of presidential legitimacy. This was all the more true since Chirac had been elected by over 80% percent of the electorate in the second round because he had faced Jean-Marie Le Pen who had reached the second round of presidential elections for the first time after running in 4 presidential elections (since 1974). Without establishing any direct condition, the fact that the assassination attempt took place on the Champs-Élysées, during the national parade on July 14 (watched by millions of viewers in person and on television), against a President who had just won with more than 80% of the vote in a massive outpouring of cross-partisan support, suggests that Brunerie was attempting a highly symbolic act, with the maximum amount of public impact.

Rise of the Far-Right in France and the National Front/Rally[1]

The 2017 presidential elections reorganised the bipolar structure of French politics into a multi-party system controlled by a strong centre. In past decades however, the French electorate was characterised by a relatively balanced right-left divide with one or two political parties on

[1] This section draws on parts previously published in Sawyer and Zinigrad, 2021b.

each side. The rise of the far-right National Front (*Front National*) party from the end of the '80s and on was initially linked to the politicisation of migration and processes of globalisation and European integration, and has gradually created a third stable electorate. In 2002, the far-right block was strong enough for its candidate to qualify for the second round in the presidential elections (for the first and not the last time). The elections took place only one week after Brunerie's attempted assassination of Chirac who got only 3% more votes than Jean-Marie Le Pen in the first round, but ultimately won Le Pen by an overwhelming margin in the second.

The steadily growing popularity of the *Front National* (rebranded as National Rally – *Rassemblement National* – in 2018) is due in part to the fact that, "over a long period of time (1972-1999), it succeeded in federating— albeit with tensions and schisms— the different components of the French far right, which sometimes have diametrically opposed frames of reference" (Camus and Lebourg, 2017). According to one analysis, the far-right proviso of unity beyond divisions, demonstrates that all the subfamilies of the French far right have a sense that they belong to the same camp, that of the losing side in all the major breaks that have marked the history of France: the Revolution of 1789, the Dreyfus Affair, the Liberation, the loss of the colonial empire. What unites these various components is greater than what separates them from their adversary, designated by the expression "the parties of the System," or quite simply reduced to "them" versus "us" (Camus and Lebourg, 2017).

Another factor is the stability of the party's leadership under the Le Pens, first the father and now the daughter. The familial discipline allowed for a strong sense of unity and continuity, in spite of a change in the name of the party and a relatively sharp departure from some of the more hard-core far-right positions, especially concerning anti-semitism, shifting the primary enemy toward the Muslim community. This familial discipline over the party has continued even amidst pressures from Marine Le Pen's niece Marion Maréchal Le Pen.

The unity of the far right has been slightly shaken in recent years, especially with the rise of increasingly media savvy figures who operate outside the traditional party structures. Figures like Eric Zemmour have been proposed by the press and some associations as possible candidates following on Marine Le Pen's defeat in the 2017 election. Nonetheless, at present the Rassemblement/Front National is the only far-right party in the French Parliament. It holds 8 out of 577 seats in the National Assembly and 23 out of 79 French seats in the European Parliament. In the past decade, the party is led by Marine Le Pen, MEP in 2004-2017 and Member of the French National Assembly since 2017. Le Pen received 21.3% and 33.9% of the votes in the first and second round of the 2017 presidential election, respectively.

The party's nationalist platform (e.g., in the most recent 2020 municipal elections) features anti-immigration and anti-Muslim sentiments (Evans and Ivaldi, 2020). Yet, Le Pen advances a "de-demonisation" strategy and attempts to distance the party from its original Fascistic agenda devised by its founder and Le Pen's father – Jean-Marie Le Pen (Camus and Lebourg, 2017; Camus, 2020). As part of the disassociation with some of its most radical fringes, the party ostracised members with records of racist or violent past (Camus, 2020). This strategy shows some signs of success among young (18-24 years old) voters on the right who consider the party's ideas to be "in the majority" and are attracted to them in the context of economic insecurity generated by COVID-19 (Pouzadoux, 2021). Yet, the *Rassemblement National* is also the loudest voice in the French political and public spheres raising the blatant

claims that immigration and Islam are the main sources of extremist violence in France. Since the early 2000s, the party's local and national officials have ben drawing connections between immigration from the French former colonies and terrorism. For instance, after the 2012 shootings committed by Mohamed Merah in Toulouse, Marine Le Pen – the chairman of Front National – has asserted that "radical Islam" is a "consequence of mass immigration", asking "How many Mohamed Merah are there in the boats, the planes, which arrive in France every day filled with immigrants?" and "How many Mohamed Merah among the children of these unassimilated immigrants?" (Geisser, 2020a).

France also counts several non-violent and nonregistered extreme right-wing political parties. These associations serve as a more radical alternative to those dissatisfied with the less radical discourse of the *Rassemblement/Front National* (Camus, 2020). They operate legally; some have in the past (unsuccessfully) run for national elections. Notable among them is *Parti de la* France, founded in 2009 by Carl Lang, a nationalist (Perrineau, 2016), former MEP and former member of the *Front National*. Lang's anti-immigration and Islamophobic statements include calls to stop "the process of Islamic colonisation of France and […] the construction of new mosques in our country" (Carhon, 2011); the current party platform includes the "de-Islamisation" of France, zero immigration policy and remigration (Joly, 2020).

Other examples include the Dissidence française, an ultranationalist and racist group founded in 2011 by Vincent Vauclin (self-dissolved and rebranded as the Mouvement national-démocrate in 2020), known for his antisemitic statements and nostalgia for the Nazi regime (Assouline, 2018). The party initially called for seizing power by a "military coup" and later advocated for remigration and "reconquest" of France by the white (Assouline, 2018; Boissieu, 2019; Lambrecq, 2019). The Parti Nationaliste Français (PNF), established in 1983 and led by WWII collaborationists and Nazi sympathisers, has been revitalised in 2015 by former members of organisations banned by the government in 2013 (Camus, 2020). Its current spokesman is Yvan Benedetti, self-described as "anti-Zionist, anti-Semitic, anti-Jewish" (Libération, 2011).

Rise of the "lone-wolf" strategy

The "lone-wolf" is often judged to be unpredictable, highly particular and thus at once almost impossible to predict or to treat systemically outside of blanket profiling and highly generalized surveillance models. And yet, the lone-wolf strategy itself has a history as well as a structural logic. It has been invented in 1974 by an American neo-Nazi to fight the ZOG, imported to France by Maxime Brunerie for similar reasons (see above), and served as an inspiration for extreme-right and jihadist violence ever since. Thus, Gillaume M. who plotted to assassinate Emmanuel Macron in 2017 stated he contemplated to shoot the current French President on July 14, like "what Maxime Brunerie had done" (*Ouest-France*, 2019).

Studies of radicalisation patterns consistently confirm that "acting as a lone wolf amounts to adopting a method of individual action, but does not mean that the terrorist has radicalised on his own or that he is not linked to any network" (Bouzar and Caupenne, 2020). "The wolf is never far from the pack, he certainly acts alone but in an operation which owes everything (the choice of target, action, method etc.) to the environment in which he operates. Brunerie's case is no exception to this rule and his solitary execution of the failed attack on

Chirac should not overshadow his multiple associations with neo-Nazi organisations prior to 2002.

Hotspot 3: Attack against the police

Context of ultra-left violence

Extremist ultra-left violence has a diverse record in France. Its main driving forces since WWII may be classified in five (intertwined) categories: 1) anti-capitalist; 2) anti- and pro-colonial; The first category is associated primarily with the extremist left-wing *Action Directe* operating in France in 1979-1987 against French ties with international corporate business and military industry. Anti-colonial violent struggles spread across South-East Asia, North Africa, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa from mid-'40s to early '60s,[2] and with less success in the French Overseas Territories (DOM-TOM) in the '70s-'80s.

Since the 1990s and in even more so in the 2000s, radical left mobilisation have has been taking novel forms. New radical left movements have emerged in protesting global capital market economy, notably around international conventions such a G7 or G20 around the world and, more localy, in France during the European Nice Summit under the French Presidency of the European Union in 2000.

Extremist violence from the left is assoiated with movements generally acknowledged around the umbrella term of the ultra-left. The ultra-left is not organized and cannot be totally captured through the prisms of unions, syndicates, or political parties. It is constituted by a cluster of various movements and groups, that do not always operate as organised or hierarchical structures. The ultra-left covers a variety of movements, groups and initiatives that include anarchists, revolutionary Marxists, radical ecologists and independentists. These movements have only quite recently developed violent tactics, especially targeted at interactions with police forces. Notably, the "black block" tactic, developed in Germany in the 1980s started to be deployed by these ultra-left groups and movements in France around the 2010s.

The black blocks have been observed in demonstrations of the Yellow Vests in Paris, Bordeaux, Toulouse and Nantes, giving rise to scenes of violent urban altercations with the police. On these occasions, activists from the radical and insurrectionary left, dressed in black to remain anonymous and identifiable only as parts of a determined crowd, gather behind banners with anti-capitalist and anti-state slogans and destroy bank windows and billboards, perceived by them as the ultimate symbols of capitalist oppression.

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[2] The most notorious of these was led by the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN) in Algeria during its War of Independence (1954-1962) – brought to a quick dissolution of most of the French empire. The pro-colonial *Organisation Armée Secrète* (OAS) – a paramilitary group founded by members of the French military in 1961 and fighting *against* the self-determination of Algeria – was the first in this period to "import" large scale terrorist attacks into Metropolitan France.

Facilitating factors

Facilitating factors refer to circumstances that make the violent acts possible or attractive. The facilitating factors differ from the micro-meso-macro context of the hotspot in their direct and more immediate causal link to the violence. Yet, they are not based on what motivated individuals to engage in violence or on their personal experience.

Hotspot 1: The Murder of Samuel Paty

The main facilitating factors that enabled Anzorov to devise and carry out his plan were the Facebook posts by Brahim Chnina that made public the contents of Paty's class while misleadingly presenting it in a manner hostile to Islam and offensive to Muslims. Anzorov might have eventually found another target for his violent drive but the murder of Samuel Paty could not have taken place had Chnina protested against the class to the school and the police alone.

Another factor were the teenagers that helped Anzorov, who was not familiar with Paty and did not know how he looks like, to identify the teacher at the exit from the school minutes before his murder.

The failure of the French police and intelligence apparatus to detect Anzorov's radicalisation or mark him as a potential threat to national security ("*Fiché S*", see above) makes for another facilitating factors of this hotspot. It underscores the difficulty to recognise and trace loose extremist networks forming and operating almost exclusively online. Despite Anzorov's months-long violent discourse on social media, contacts with Syrian jihadists, online conversations with other radicalised youth in France, several *PHAROS* complaints filed against his tweets (see above), and his involvement in violent fights, he triggered no alarms in the government's extensive surveillance machine counting about two dozen bodies, directorates and sub-directorates responsible for the prevention of (mainly jihadist) terrorism (Moréas, 2020).

Hotspot 3: Attack against the police

The main factor that facilitated the attack of the police car had to do with the security arrangements at the *République* square on the day of the incident. Authorising the police demonstration to pass at the same place and at the same time of the *Nuit debout* protests created an unnecessary situation of conflict between two mutually hostile groups that was prone to deteriorate into violence.

Motivational factors

The I-GAP coding is a constructivist method of multifaceted assessment that allows to trace the motives driving radicalisation. The motives are identified from the point of view of the individuals involved in the hotspot and should reflect these individuals' own sentiment and impressions rather than external or "neutral" perspectives.

For each hotspot, the report examines four aspects of radicalisation that motivate individuals to engage in violent extremism. The coding breaks the hotspots' elements into perceptions of injustice, which lead to grievance, alienation and polarization (I-GAP), and finally culminate in the violent act. The I-GAP coding provides a spectrum that allows to quantify these sentiments. The data obtained from the coding will allow to move towards measurable evaluations of de-radicalisation programs.

The quantification of the four components for each chosen hotspot is achieved with the help of five scaled-response questions. The answers range from 1 to 5. Low and high scores indicate lower and higher degree of radicalization, respectively. The coding and the reasoning behind are detailed in the annex (see below).

Conclusions

The micro, meso, and macro analysis of the context in which Anzorov, Brunerie and Bernanos operated provides two types of insights about the contemporary vectors of extremist violence. It elucidates the atmosphere and the very trends of jihadist, extreme-right and ultra-left violence, but also exposes the parallels and discrepancies among them. The most striking similarity is observed in the mode of operation chosen by Anzorov and Brunerie. Both were radicalised through radical networks but ultimately acted alone. Initially exercised by the extreme-right, the lone-wolf strategy has now also become the most common expression of jihadist extremism. Another trait shared by jihadist and extreme-right – but not ultra-left – perpetrators is the degree of violence they exercise. Both Anzorov and Brunerie aimed to kill their target whereas Bernanos and the other attackers of the police car were more interested in making a point of their protest rather than taking the policemen's lives. Last but not least, both Anzorov and Brunerie had substantial online contacts with agents of extremist violence online, which played a major role in their radicalisation process and determination to take action.

Other elements in the micro-meso-macro analysis show important differences among the perpetrators. The most outstanding micro factors in the three cases are the leve of education and socio-economic status. Abdoullakh Anzorov did not finish high school (and was in fact abandoned by the system of compulsory education, which did not want to deal with his violence) and was forced to work in construction. Maxime Brunerie had a high-school diploma and was studying to become a technician. While working in part-time jobs he could also invest time in his voluntary activism with neo-Nazi groups. Finally, Antonin Bernanos, who came from a well-to-do family was a university student who could afford studying for a degree in humanities. He was also the only one among the three to be praised for his ideological activism by his family and close social circles.

On the meso level, Anzorov's case differs from the other hotspots in that his radicalisation took place almost exclusively online. In recent years, self-radicalisation on the Internet and propaganda received through social media have indeed become more common than recruitment of jihadist fighters into the ranks of ISIS or Al-Qaeda (Sawyer and Zinigrad, 2021b).

Finally, the most important contribution of this report to the understanding of the radicalisation trends in France is the analysis of the hotspots' motivational factors and I-GAP coding. The analysis provides an insight into the perpetrators' own perceptions of injustice, grievance, alienation and socio-political polarisation. In some instances, these perceptions significantly diverge from the micro-meso-macro framework that provides an "external" outlook on the committed violence.

For example, Anzorov's aspiration to "commit jihad" stemmed exclusively from the radical religious dogma he adopted relatively shortly before the murder. His fundamentalist ideology generated a strong sense of grievance against anyone who did not subscribe to his radical views, which in turn contributed to his alienation from family, friends, and community. He was not at all concerned with other factors that may have contributed to his sense of injustice against the system (such as his expulsion from school) and was not interested in seeking non-violent alternatives with which to resolve his frustrations. Brunerie is the inverse example of the same dissonance because despite his extensive involvement with neo-Nazi circles, he did not see his act as an expression of extreme-right violence. Brunerie stated that the attempted assassination of Chirac was not meant to forcefully impose his ideological or political agenda on the body politic but a desperate cry for help stemming from a sense of personal failure. Brunerie did not therefore see himself as a representative of the extreme right.

The gaps between the motivational factors of extremist perpetrators and the micro-meso-macro context of their violent acts suggest a potential path to deradicalisation and prevention of violence. Closing these gaps in the perpetrators' own perceptions may be a step in this direction. Thus, Anzorov's reintegration in the educational system after his expulsion could have provided him with the much-needed sense of belonging, lowered his alienation and kept him outside of radical social circles. Similarly, Brunerie's blindness to the impact of his extremist networks on the decision to channel his personal problems into a political assassination indicates that extremist violence is often not driven by deep ideological convictions and so can be effectively prevented.

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Annex: I-GAP Coding

Hotspot 1: The Murder of Samuel Paty

Injustice Coding

Q1. To what extent the hotspot is a response to injustice?	1
Comments to Q1	Anzorov was motivated by a strong sense of injustice that was, in his view, inflicted by the "infidel" French government and possibly also by the Charlie Hebdo newspaper on Islam and the Muslim world by means of offending Mohammad. A few minutes after the murder Anzorov posted a photo of Paty's decapitated head followed by the comment: "From Abdullah, the servant of Allah, to [President Emmanuel] Marcon [sic], the leader of the infidels, I executed one of your hellhounds who dared to belittle Muhammad, calm his fellows before you get a harsh retribution" (Suc, 2020)
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	Anzorov's online messages prior to and immediately after murdering Paty indicate that the act was more than a limited-scale retaliation against Charlie Hebdo or the show of Muhammad's caricatures in Paty's class. He expressed a general frustration with his non-Muslim and non-religious-enough environment, and indicated he wanted to commit jihad in France irrespective of specific developments or events. Anzorov reproached the Saudi government for not adhering to a fundamentalist approach to Islam (specifically, for assisting "in the founding of idols worshiped outside of Allah [such as] the UN, Unesco, the WTO, The Council of Gulf States, the Arab World League", for aligning

	"with the crusaders disbelievers against the Taliban" and for being traitors and "traitor and hypocrite towards Islam" (Naar, 2020)). He criticized the "disbelief of the Saudi state […] and all those who support them", posting a photo of the Saudi King in a meeting with Queen Elisabeth II with the Queen's face and hands blurred out. On the same day he tweeted that "Almost all Netflix series are haram, […] I know you I'm sure you won't watch any of those series that Allah has ordered us not to watch") (Naar, 2020; Suc, 2020). He criticized the media hypocrisy in the coverage of jihadist violence (e.g., on October 1: "An Armenian priest holding a gun and a cross [...] no one has treated him as radicalised. On the other hand, it is enough for a Muslim to take a weapon to be a terrorist"), showed animosity towards Jews and Christians (e.g., on July 27, referring to Jews as the "cursed people" and on September 30: "You [Jews and Christians] are infidels because you refused to believe in the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad"), and finally, referred to Macron as the "leader of the infidels" (Burel, 2020; Suc, 2020).
Q3. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of redistribution?	1
Comments to Q3	Redistribution did not feature as a driver of radicalisation in Anzorov's available written statements or activity.
Q4. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of recognition?	5
Comments to Q4	Recognition did not feature as a driver of radicalisation in Anzorov's available written statements or activity.
Q5. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of representation?	1
Comments to Q5	Representation did not feature as a driver of radicalisation in Anzorov's available written statements or activity. Anzorov did not seem

	to be striving towards a peaceful, political resolution to his perceptions of injustice.

Grievance Coding

Q1. How specific is the experienced grievance?	5
Comments to Q1	Anzorov's motivation in killing Paty was driven by specific wrongs committed, in his view, by a series of actors - from Paty himself to the Charlie Hebdo newspaper, to the government and the system as a whole. All perceived wrongs were related to disobeying Sharia Law.
Q2. How extensive and diverse is the list of grievances?	2
Comments to Q2	Paty's killing was motivated by a closely related "bundle" of grievances in which the general condemnation of the non-fundamentalist Muslim regime eventually spilled into the violent murder.
Q3. How personal is the grievance?	3
Comments to Q3	Anzorov seemed to have been frustrated both with his own life circumstances and the larger-scale state of affairs in France. His personal, environment was not, in his view, adhering to a strict enough lifestyle and agenda: he wrote messages to Syrian contacts about his interest in crossing the Syrian-Turkish border, moving to Afghanistan and fighting despite the will of his parents (Suc, 2020; Thiolay, 2021). But the Twitter message he sent immediately after the murder ("In the name of Allah the most gracious, the most merciful, ... to [President Emmanuel] Marcon (sic), leader of the infidels, I have executed one of your hell-hounds who dared to belittle Muhammad") and his statement about the hypocrisy of the media in relation to jihadist violence ("An Armenian priest holding a gun and a cross [...] no one has treated him as radicalised. On the other hand, it is enough

	for a Muslim to take a weapon to be a terrorist") indicate that he was also driven by what he perceived as a collective grievance.
Q4. How formalized is the demand to address the grievance?	4
Comments to Q4	Anzorov accused Macron, the media, Paty, and others for not submitting to jihadist rule and ideology but did not seem to consider any agent or body as a potential address for curing this grievance. Paty's murder was perceived by Anzorov as an act of jihad.
Q5. How realistic are the prospects to address the grievance?	5
Comments to Q5	In Anzorov's view, jihad was the only answer to the grievances he experienced. He considered no peaceful or compromising alternative to extremist violence. In a short audio message sent on Instagram to two members of a Syrian terrorist organization after Paty's murder, Anzorov stated he committed jihad in France (Thiolay, 2021).

Alienation Coding

Q1. How specific and central is the sense of alienation?	5
Comments to Q1	Anzorov experienced strong social alienation from the French political regime, his surroundings, possibly even from his own family in virtue of his radical religious worldview His alienation was directly and consciously related to his decision to murder Samuel Paty. (The sense of a direct and causal link between the sense of alienation and the hotspot is where Anzorov's and Burnerie's trajectories diverge entirely).
Q2. How voluntary is the process of alienation?	1
Comments to Q2	Anzorov's messages on social media suggest that his process of radicalisation and related alienation was perceived as voluntary. He actively sought guidance on

	religion and jihad from agents of extremist propaganda and expressed disdain to values that did not correlate with his own.
Q3. How complete is the alienation?	5
Comments to Q3	Anzorov's perception of alienation was comprehensive and concerned personal, communal, religious, and political aspects. (This is again where Burnerie and Anzorov diverge)
Q4. How entrenched is the alienation?	1
Comments to Q4	Anzorov's perceptible process of alienation started no more than a year prior to Paty's murder. It did not stem from his family (there was no indication that his half-sister's departure to Syria played a role in his radicalisation) or his education (he attended a public school until his expulsion in 2018) and was not deep-seated. Shortly prior to the murder Anzorov was still awaiting an authorisation to work in security and was about to obtain his driving license (Cherel, 2020; Radenovic, 2020).
Q5. How reversible is the sense of alienation?	5
Comments to Q5	Anzorov seemed to perceive his process of alienation as irreversible.

Polarisation Coding

Q1. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized?	1
Comments to Q1	Anzorov resolved to commit an act of jihad on behalf of Islam as he interpreted it. It was not intended to ignite a political change within the constrains of a democratic regime and deliberation.
Q2. How high is the perceived level of the polarization?	5
Comments to Q2	As Anzorov mentioned in his last Twitter post addressed to President Macron (see above),

	he perceived the social polrisation in religious terms, as a conflict between Muslims and non-believers.
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	Anzorov perceived the government and the system as hopelessly irredeemable and standing in stark contrast to his own views and extremist agenda.
Q4. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized as compared with the social sphere?	2
Comments to Q4	Anzorov's comprehensive criticism of the French government along with international bodies (such as the UN, Unesco, the WTO, the Council of Gulf States, the Arab World League) and Muslim leaders (like the Saudi king) strongly indicates he did not perceive the political sphere as meaningfully polarised (Naar, 2020; Suc, 2020).
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	Anzorov did not nurture any reasonable hope for his jihadist agenda to be realised by means of political representation.

Hotspot 2: Attempted Assassination of Chirac

Injustice Coding

Q1. To what extent the hotspot is a response to injustice?	1
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?	1

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	The recognition is largely individual. Though he was part of extreme right groups, his motivations appear overwhelmingly individual and self-centred.
Q5. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of representation?	1
Comments to Q5	

Grievance Coding

Q1. How specific is the experienced grievance?	2
Comments to Q1	Once again, the personal grievances are extremely precise. But their relationship to the actual hotspot is indirect.
Q2. How extensive and diverse is the list of grievances?	3
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	
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?	1

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

Polarisation Coding

Q1. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized?	3
Comments to Q1	He doesn't deny his belonging to far-right associations and organisations. At the same time, he insists that this is not what actually drove him to act.
Q2. How high is the perceived level of the polarization?	2
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?	4
Comments to Q3	
Q4. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized as compared with the social sphere?	2
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?	5

Comments to Q5	

Hotspot 3: Attack against the police

Injustice Coding

Q1. To what extent the hotspot is a response to injustice?	5
Comments to Q1	The violent attack of the policemen was seen by Bernanos as a retaliation against police repression and part of a general fight agains the French extreme-right that, in his view, is influential in the police ranks (Bernanos, A., 2020. Letter from a French Prison. Cosmonaut; Antonin Bernanos: Antifa sous surveillance, 2020).
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	Bernanos is of the view that the French system of government, as a whole, is infiltrated and controlled by fascist elements (Bernanos, A., 2020. Letter from a French Prison. Cosmonaut; Antonin Bernanos: Antifa sous surveillance, 2020).
Q3. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of redistribution?	2
Comments to Q3	Redistribution is a negligible motive in Bernanos' discourse with regard to violence against the police
Q4. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of recognition?	1
Comments to Q4	Redistribution is a negligible motive in Bernanos' discourse with regard to violence against the police
Q5. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of representation?	5
Comments to Q5	Bernanos considers the political sphere as a whole – including "La France insoumise" – to be powerless against the rise of fascism in

	France. He thinks that the French political discourse is increasingly chauvinist and sovereigntist, and perceives his activism to be the only effective means to fight the French extreme-right.

Grievance Coding

Q1. How specific is the experienced grievance?	2
Comments to Q1	While the attack of the police car was rooted in the immediate sense of grievance from being pushed out from the République square during anti-police protests, Bernanos is consistent in his statements that he is fighting the system as a whole.
Q2. How extensive and diverse is the list of grievances?	4
Comments to Q2	Bernanos' motivation is rooted in a general grievance against the fascist elements in the French government but these break into specific and articulated sub-grievances against the judicial system, the political sphere, the police, and the government apparatus.
Q3. How personal is the grievance?	3
Comments to Q3	Bernanos declares to be fighting fascist forces in France out of ideology but he has also experienced frustration with the police brutality directed personally against him or against fellow far-left activists, such as in the case of Rémi Fraisse, an environmental activist killed by a stun grenade in 2014 (Marteau, 2017).
Q4. How formalized is the demand to address the grievance?	5
Comments to Q4	Bernanos does not present specific demands for political transformation and does not cast blame on any one particular government or social institution

Q5. How realistic are the prospects to address the grievance?	3
Comments to Q5	Bernanos' claims are coherent (if not fully substantiated) and rationally resolvable, albeit only after a thorough and comprehensive change in the ranks of the government, the judiciary, etc.

Alienation Coding

Q1. How specific and central is the sense of alienation?	4
Comments to Q1	Bernanos does not experience any social alienation. He is embraced by his family, friends, and even academic circles (Livois, 2017; Marteau, 2017; Barbier, 2017). He is however senses high alienation from the political sphere and his potential political representatives
Q2. How voluntary is the process of alienation?	4
Comments to Q2	His alienation from the political system results form his perception that the state democratic institutions are captured by fascist forces
Q3. How complete is the alienation?	3
Comments to Q3	The alienation is experienced against all government institutions but is distinct and detailed
Q4. How entrenched is the alienation?	5
Comments to Q4	Bernanos' sense of alienation is a result of a decades long struggle against fascist elements in the French government and society
Q5. How reversible is the sense of alienation?	4
Comments to Q5	The alienation from the political and judicial systems is reversible in theory but requires radical changes in its structure and representatives.

Polarisation Coding

Q1. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized?	5
Comments to Q1	Bernanos perceives himself as the true voice of the left who takes action because the political left consistently fails to protect the interests of its electorate.
Q2. How high is the perceived level of the polarization?	4
Comments to Q2	According to Bernanos, the polarisation between the left and right in the society is irreconcilable but is not reflected in the political sphere.
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	There is a radical dissonance between Bernanos' antifascist activity and political views, and the French political institutions across the board
Q4. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized as compared with the social sphere?	1
Comments to Q4	Bernanos considers all political parties and government institutions to be captured by the extreme-right, some more willingly than others.
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	Bernanos is deeply pessimistic about the possibility of change without violence.