

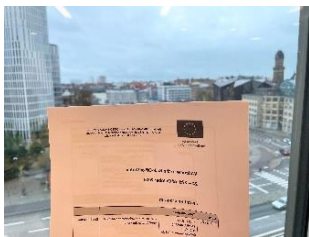
VORTEX NEWSLETTER

COPING WITH VARIETIES OF RADICALIZATION INTO TERRORISM AND EXTREMISM

Premiere! This is the first in a series of quarterly VORTEX newsletters that will provide an insight into our work until the end of the project in 2026. In this issue, we briefly introduce ourselves - VORTEX as a project and our doctoral students. However, will also be a lot to discover in our regular sections "VORTEX News", "Events", "Spotlights" and "Publications". We are delighted to have you as readers of this newsletter and hope you enjoy browsing through it.

Your editorial team – Laura and Lotta

Introducing VORTEX



A Marie Skłodowska-Curie Doctoral Network

VORTEX (Coping with varieties of radicalisation into terrorism and extremism) brings together eight partners (universities and research institutes) which will employ ten doctoral candidates. 14 associated partners will contribute to the doctoral network with professional expertise and secondment opportunities. VORTEX's overarching aim is to develop new evidence-based innovative strategies to counter and prevent ideological and behavioural radicalisation. VORTEX will provide an integrated and meaningful research programme not only but primarily for doctoral candidates to pursue their research in a fruitful and meaningful dialogue among relevant disciplines and in a dense web of supervision, training, and interaction to jump start both successful and relevant careers.

VORTEX News



Kick-Off at the University of Malmö

Now it's official: The four-day VORTEX kick-off at the University of Malmö allowed our ten doctoral candidates and their supervisors to get to know each other for the first time. In addition to promising doctoral project presentations, the consortium discussed radicalisation research, its gaps and ethical challenges. Next to shared goals and responsibilities, our consortium also established three working groups for each VORTEX research area: Pathways of Radicalisation, Social and Political Contexts of Radicalisation, and Countering Radicalisation. The rich programme was topped off with the first individual supervision meetings. This all-round successful first VORTEX meeting makes us look forward to the next one at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt from 27.02. to 01.03.2024.

Meet our Doctoral Candidates



Orwa Ajjoub, University of Malmö

Supervisors: Kristian Steiner, Sergiu-Miscoiu

In his VORTEX doctoral project, *“Radical rhetoric: Understanding legitimating and mobilising discourses”*, Orwa Ajjoub investigates the role that radical religious rhetoric plays in mobilizing support and legitimizing both inter-group and intra-group violence of Sunni jihadi groups—even when the involved groups broadly adhere to the same religion and share similar ideological beliefs. He has obtained a postgraduate degree in Middle Eastern Studies from Lund University and an undergraduate degree in English Language and Literature from Damascus University. Alongside his doctoral project, Orwa works as a research analyst, primarily focusing on issues related to jihadism and the Syrian conflict.



Joshua Farrell-Molloy, University of Malmö

Supervisors: Kristian Steiner, Tina Askanius, Christopher Cohrs

Joshua Farrell-Molloy's doctoral project *“The function of radical ideology for acceptance, status and meaning”* examines groups dynamics and the role of the visual in far-right subcultures. He holds a postgraduate degree in Security, Intelligence and Strategic Studies from the University of Glasgow and completed an undergraduate degree in International Relations at Dublin City University. Previously, Joshua worked as a research intern at the Institute of Strategic Dialogue and the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism and his research interests include the far-right, extremist digital subcultures and foreign fighters.



Rohan Stevenson, University of Helsinki

Supervisors: Leena Malkki, Torsten Bonacker

“Counterterrorism policies and their consequences in Europe” is the title of Rohan Stevenson's doctoral project. His research explores states' efforts to counter extreme right-wing terrorism, and the contestation and negotiation that takes place around those efforts. Previously, Rohan has researched 'eco-fascist' online groups on Telegram and holds a postgraduate degree in Sociology from Goldsmiths College, University of London and an undergraduate degree in Geography from the University of Edinburgh. At the moment, he is particularly interested in using constructivist grounded theory methods.



Camilla Winde Gissel, Center for Research on Extremism, University of Oslo

Supervisors: Tore Bjørgo, Julian Junk

In the doctoral network VORTEX, Camilla Winde Gissel is working on a project entitled *“Deradicalisation, disengagement and reintegration: approaches of security agencies, social service agencies and civil society”*, seeking to identify the strengths and weaknesses of such tertiary prevention efforts. She holds postgraduate degrees in Cultural Criminology from Lund University and in Cross Cultural Studies from the University of Copenhagen as well as an undergraduate degree in Arabic and Islamic Studies from Aarhus University. She previously worked as a coach and project assistant at Lund University.



Marzena Oliviera Ribas, Université Libre de Bruxelles

Supervisors: Corinne Torrekens, Julian Junk

Marzena Oliviera Ribas' doctoral project *“Extremist identity creation and meaning-making at the nexus between online and offline environments”* seeks to explore how extremist groups leverage the affordances of digital technologies to construct and reinforce their identities and ideologies, as well as how these identities are negotiated and transformed in face-to-face interactions. Marzena obtained her postgraduate degree in Psychology with specialization in Clinical Psychology from the University of Gdańsk and an undergraduate degree in Biomedical Engineering from the Gdańsk University of Technology. After graduating, she worked as a researcher at the Italian National Institute of Health for two years.



Lotta Rahlf, Peace Research Institute Frankfurt

Supervisors: Julian Junk, Tore Bjørgo

With her doctoral project *“Comparing Structures of Evaluation and Knowledge Management Across Europe”* at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, Lotta Rahlf contributes to understanding how P/CVE efforts can be improved through evaluation. Before starting at VORTEX, she worked as a researcher in the PrEval project on evaluation and quality management in extremism prevention, democracy promotion and civic education in Germany. She received her postgraduate degree in Terrorism and Political Violence from the University of St Andrews and her undergraduate degree in International Relations and International Organization from the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen.



Laura Stritzke, Peace Research Institute Frankfurt

Supervisors: Julian Junk, Michaela Köttig, Corinne Torrekens

Laura Stritzke's doctoral project traces "*The primary and secondary prevention conundrum: the ambivalences of the intersection between universal and selective prevention*". It seeks to detect mechanisms that drive such intersections as well as their consequences for prevention practice. She has obtained a postgraduate degree in (Intercultural) Psychology and an undergraduate degree in Psychology from University of Osnabrueck. During her studies she worked as student assistant at University of Osnabrueck, Christian Michelson Institute Bergen and Sigmund Freud University Vienna.



Violette Mens, Marburg University

Supervisors: Thorsten Bonacker, Leena Malkki

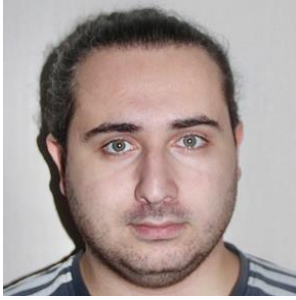
Violette Mens joins the VORTEX network with her project "*Dynamics of knowledge production: Understanding the dominance and diffusion of security cultures around radicalisation*". It focuses on knowledge creation regarding radicalisation and the translation of this knowledge into political action by decision makers. She received a postgraduate degree in Social Sciences with a specialisation in Middle Eastern Studies from Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS) in Lyon. She also holds an undergraduate degree in Anthropology from the University of Lyon 2 Lumière. During her studies, she mostly worked on middle eastern concerns, and more specifically on the topic of radicalisation.



Heidi C. Piva, University of Turin

Supervisors: Massimo Leone, Julian Junk

Heidi C. Piva's VORTEX doctoral project "*Fake und conspiracy: Disinformation dynamics and radicalisation*" perfectly matches her main research interests: religious and anti-scientific conspiracy theories, as well as the spread of dis/misinformation on social media and how these relate to processes of radicalisation. She obtained her postgraduate degree in Semiotics from the University of Tartu and her undergraduate degree in Social Communication from the São Paulo State University. For some time, she has designed cover artworks and illustrations for scientific dissemination in high impact journals.



Javid Ibad, Babeş-Bolyai University

Supervisors: Sergiu Miscoiu, Kristian Steiner

Specializing in social and political contexts of radicalisation with his doctoral project "*Radicalisation and the politics and social dynamics of populism and protest*", Javid Ibad explores the intricate relationship between populism, political parties, and protest movements. His research goals include mapping populism, studying European protest movements, and unravelling the dynamics of political radicalisation within contemporary Europe. Javid Ibad holds a postgraduate degree in International Relations and Diplomacy from Leiden University and an undergraduate degree in Political Science from Baku State University. With a diverse background in teaching and experience in both public and private sectors, he also currently serves as a research assistant at the University of Babeş-Bolyai in Cluj, Romania.

Publications

Check out the latest publications from our VORTEX doctoral candidates:

- Paalgard-Munden, Hanna, Sarah Marsden, Md Kamruzzaman Bhuiyan, Lotta Rahlf, Hanna Rigault Arkhis, Aimee Taylor. *Good Lives in Right-Wing Extremist Autobiographies*. Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST), October 2023, <https://crestresearch.ac.uk/resources/good-lives-in-right-wing-extremist-autobiographies/>