

# VORTEX NEWSLETTER

*Welcome to the May 2024 edition of the VORTEX newsletter. We are delighted to bring you the latest highlights and developments from our dynamic doctoral network. Some of us are already on their first secondments - others are already in the middle of field research. And our doctoral candidates are also busy writing blogs and pieces of their dissertations or presenting at conferences and so much more...*

*We have also recently launched a new logo and website – check it out at <https://vortex.uni.mau.se/>*

*Enjoy reading - we will regularly keep you up to date on what is happening at VORTEX.*

*Your editorial team - Laura and Lotta*

## VORTEX News

### **Excursion to The Hague (15.04. – 17.04.2024)**

VORTEX doctoral candidates Laura Stritzke and Lotta Rahlf joined other PRIF doctoral candidates on their joint annual PhD excursion. This year's destination was the Hague in the Netherlands. A recurring theme of the trip was the challenge of producing and communicating research that is relevant also beyond academia, including practitioners and policy-makers. Especially the exchanges with researchers at the International Centre for Counterterrorism (ICCT) and the Conflict Research Unit of Clingendael Institute centered on exchanging experiences. The doctoral candidates also took the opportunity to visit both the ICC and the ICJ as well as the Humanity Hub and International Alert. They were also warmly welcomed by other PhD students at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) enabling some more informal exchanges.



## VORTEX Blog Series

VORTEX has its own blog series where our doctoral candidates regularly publish short pieces related to their work: <https://vortex.uni.mau.se/blog/>. We are happy to present many blog posts since the last newsletter - there is a lot going on at VORTEX:

- [\*The Jihadis' path to self-destruction – book review\*](#)  
by Orwa Ajjoub
- [\*Re-focusing family counselling in extremism prevention\*](#)  
by Lotta Rahlf
- [\*Reflections from the first module of the Europaeum Scholars Programme\*](#)  
by Rohan Stevenson
- [\*Tensions between security and support in P/CVE\*](#)  
by Laura Stritzke
- [\*The proscription of Terrorgram as a terrorist organisation in the UK: Insights from the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation\*](#)  
by Joshua Farrell-Molloy
- [\*Influence of social network processes on radical conspiracy theories\*](#)  
by Heidi C. Piva
- [\*On salafism: concepts and contexts. The book review\*](#)  
by Orwa Ajjoub
- [\*The 'terrorist' label: the implications of \(not\) calling extreme right-wing violence terrorism\*](#)  
by Rohan Stevenson
- [\*Collusion postponed? \(De\)radicalizing center-right and the brief overview of the on-going Dutch coalition talks\*](#)  
by Javid Ibad
- [\*On the challenges of evaluating efforts to prevent a causally complex phenomenon such as violent extremism\*](#)  
by Lotta Rahlf

## News from VORTEX Doctoral Candidates



Camilla Winde Gissel has recently returned from data collection in Helsinki, Finland from two NGO-based programs who work mainly with secondary prevention of violent extremism. This one-month fieldwork trip contributed with some interesting perspectives of the challenges and benefits of the NGO structure for preventive work. One of the great challenges for NGOs is the short-term funding structure they operate with which results in difficulty planning long-term preventive work and often causes frustration among practitioners as their everyday work and job security is a central issue. This does not seem to be a unique issue for Finland however, [Koehler \(2021\)](#) points to similar and further challenges in his work in the German context. Camilla is now working towards gathering data from NGO-type preventive efforts in another Nordic country.



Heidi C. Piva just finished her secondment at the Bruno Kessler Foundation, in Trento, Italy on May 24th. During her two months there, she has had the pleasure of working with researchers from the Complex Human Behaviour Lab at the Digital Society Center, who have provided feedback and ideas regarding digital humanities and computational methodologies that could be applied to her research. At the Center for Religious Studies, Heidi participated in several seminars and conferences closely related to the topic of her research (religious conspiracy theories and beliefs), having also obtained further insights from the staff there.



Joshua Farrell-Molloy spent two months at Philipps-Universität Marburg, where he was based at the Department of Social Psychology under the supervision of Dr Christopher Cohrs. While there, he presented his research on far-right influencers to the department and also at the Center for Conflict Studies, alongside fellow VORTEX doctoral candidate Violette Mens and her supervisor Dr Thorsten Bonacker.



Javid Ibad is currently doing his two-month secondment at Malmö University. He is based at the Department of Global Political Studies within the Faculty of Culture and Society alongside his second supervisor, Dr. Kristian Steiner. While working there mainly on his doctoral thesis in-depth, he also closely communicates with the rest of the Department to exchange ideas and get a grasp of new perspectives on matters closely related to his research sub-field.

## Research Output

Piva, Heidi C. (2024). Modelling the Semiosphere on Thermodynamic Open Systems. In: Tragel, E.M. (eds) *Explorations in Dynamic Semiosis*. Theory and History in the Human and Social Sciences. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-47001-1\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-47001-1_4)

Piva, Heidi, C. (2024). Breakdown of knowledge authority: semiotic analysis of an anti-vax conspiracy theory influencer on Twitter. *Social Semiotics*, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2024.2341398>

Rahlf, Lotta (2024). Historical Context and The Good Lives Model. Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats. 11.04.2024. <https://crestresearch.ac.uk/resources/historical-context-and-the-good-lives-model/>

Lewis, James, Sarah Marsden, Adrian Cherney, Martine Zeuthen, Lotta Rahlf, Chloe Squires, Anne Peterscheck (2024). Case management interventions seeking to counter radicalisation to violence and related forms of violence: A systematic review. *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 20 (2). <https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1386>

Ajjoub, Orwa (2024). Crossroads in Idlib: HTS navigating internal divisions amid popular discontent. Middle East Institute. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/crossroads-idlib-hts-navigating-internal-divisions-amid-popular-discontent>.

## Other News



Rohan Stevenson recently presented at the Annual Finnish Social Psychology Conference. Re-watch the presentation 'Returning to Nature: the imaginative geographies and histories of the 'folkish' far right' on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8x-xrUrdeg>



Lotta Rahlf and Julian Junk attended the first meeting of the International Academic Partnerships for Science and Security (IAPSS) consortium in London in March. Funding opportunities for early career researchers are also in development here. Read more about it here:

<https://crestresearch.ac.uk/comment/iapss-inaugural-meeting-if-were-going-to-have-ambition-it-should-be-big/>



Check out new episodes of the Europe Elects podcast with Javid Ibad as co-host. Check it out at:

<https://euro-peelects.eu/>

Marzena Oliveira Ribas presented a part of her doctoral project at the Computational Social Science course in Como. Its title was 'Utilizing Large Language Models for Studying Online Radical Communities'



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