Alleged Terrorists, Refugees and Radicalized Muslims in Europe: A Wicked Discursive Conjunction*

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Abstract: The article examines the public discourse in Austria on issues of (potentially) radicalized Muslims in Europe and associated security perceptions. The main question is how recent terrorist attacks in Paris conducted by radical Islamists and the developments in Syria and Iraq have affected public (media) attitudes towards Muslim citizens and incoming refugees. The current refugee movements not only pose a humanitarian, social and logistical challenge for Europe but – in combination with the territorial power of the Islamic State – are perceived or presented as a security threat by several actors. Integration efforts and policies as well as the willingness to receive an increasing number of refugees and immigrants are contested and deteriorating as the crisis persists. The (perceived) security threats in form of returnees, refugees and radicalized Muslim youth are the main subjects of this article.

Keywords: Muslim immigrants, refugees, radicalization, migration, security, Austria
Stichworte: Muslimische Immigranten, Flüchtlinge, Radikalisierung, Migration, Sicherheit, Österreich

1. Introduction

The main research interest of this paper is to investigate and examine the public (media) discourse on Muslim citizens and refugees in Europe which is currently interfused with the discourse on terrorism, current migration and refugee movements and the societal integration of Muslims in European countries. The potential implications and those that can be empirically observed are manifold: radicalization among (mostly adolescent) Muslims living and often born in European countries, extremists joining the *Islamic State* (IS) in Syria and Iraq as foreign fighters or as propagandists, inspired individuals planning and/or executing terror attacks in Europe, and Syrian fighters returning to Europe or entering the European Union (EU) disguised as refugees.

The perceptions of security threats posed by returnees, refugees and radicalized Muslim youths among Europe's huge migrant population (being entangled in current public and political discourses) as well as the policy reactions of national governments in Europe are the main subjects of this article. A qualitative media analysis (content analysis) on the wicked discursive conjunction of 'security', 'refugees', 'IS terrorism' and 'Muslim citizens' is conducted on the basis of two Austrian newspapers; a document analysis on governments' policy and legal responses in terms of security supplements the empirical basis. This will help to answer the two research questions: 1) How are the issues of Muslim citizens, refugees and IS terrorism intermingled in the current media discourse? 2) What is the impact of speculations on disguised/alleged terrorists entering EU territory as refugees?

The article is based on a variety of data material: besides scientific publications from integration and migration research as well as security and radicalization studies, policy documents from different EU members states and EU agencies have been analyzed. In addition, a media analysis of Austrian newspaper articles was conducted in autumn of 2015. This – qualitative and quantitative – data collection and analysis was carried out in order to reconstruct and comprehend the current public (media) discourse on the issue of perceived security threats from migration, refugee movements and Islamist events in the Middle East.

Section 2 will give a brief introduction on the background and context and lay out the main problem that is examined in this article. In section 3, the topic of (perceived) threats from IS terrorism, disguised refugees entering Europe and the radicalization of European Muslim youths is discussed and framed. Section 4 will present key findings from the conducted media analysis, and section 5 will summarize and draw the main conclusions from the research.

2. Islamism – from Syria and Iraq to Europe

Recent events and developments in the Middle Eastern countries of Iraq and Syria have, once more, revealed the global context and impact of terrorist activities and religious and militant fanatics within the complex, internally divided and civil war-torn politics of the region. The aim of this article is to identify and analyze the manifold impact of these political-military events on European societies and politics with a special focus on the integration of Muslim migrants and the (perceived) security threats of radicalized youth, Islamists and alleged terrorists.

When in the summer of 2014, the militant, radical-Islamic militia *Islamic State* (IS; formerly firmed under the name *Islamic State of Iraq and the Levante* – ISIL) seized military power of Iraq's second biggest city Mosul, not far from Bagdad, and proclaimed a caliphate on June 28, 2014, Western governments abruptly became aware of this new Islamic militia's potential for destabilizing the whole region. Syria's civil war, with its growing number of national and international factions participating on both sides, which was until then internationally neglected, suddenly caught the West's attention again. Soon, it became apparent that the *Islamic State* was able to inspire and attract more and more people not only from within the region but from Western countries as well – people who were willing to join the military fight of IS either within the contested territories in Syria and Iraq or as jihadists against the "infidels" in Western states. A professional propaganda campaign by IS using all common social media channels, like Twitter, YouTube, Facebook etc., supported recruitment of mainly young Muslims and converts in Europe, the US and other Western countries

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for the military fight in Syria and Iraq as well as IS' ideological war. A sudden reoccurrence of terrorist attacks conducted by jihadist radicals against alleged foes of (pure) Islam excited the West's worst fear of "home-grown" terrorists, and of attacks in Western capitals and brutalized returning fighters from the Middle East. At the same time, general attitudes towards Muslim citizens and immigrants deteriorated substantially in European countries (for Austria see ZARA 2015, 13-65), similar to post-9/11 trends (Schüller 2012, 3ff.).

European governments began to react – strongly urged by the US administration – and to refer to the rising danger of terrorist attacks within Western countries conducted by radicalized Islamists who follow IS' appeals to attack and kill Islam's enemies within their own territories or attacks conducted by fighters from Syria or Iraq. The latter group might consist of foreigners either with European citizenships or seeking asylum as refugees. The threat of "home-grown" terrorism – which might include second or third generation migrants born and raised in Western countries as well as converts to Islam (Schahbasi 2009, 20) – has called some attention after the Islamist attacks of 9/11 in New York and Washington, 2004 in Madrid and 2005 in London (Brooks 2011, 7; Johnson 2011; Bürkli 2011, 38). In 2015, France was hit by several major terrorist attacks conducted by radical Islamists: on January 7, 2015, two gunmen – French citizens of Algerian origin – attacked the office of the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* as a revenge for its supposedly blasphemous work. Two days later, a kosher supermarket in Paris was high-jacked and citizens taken as hostages. While these two attacks were claimed by Al-Qaida supporters, the most recent series of terrorist events – on November 13, 2015 – in Paris, where 130 civilians died and hundreds have been wounded in six different places, was supposedly coordinated by members of the *Islamic State* (who were – at least some of them – European citizens with a migrant background).

With regards to the potential threats of Islamist radicalization and terrorism, Schahbasi (2009, 21) classifies the potential actors who are involved into radicalization and recruitment within Europe into three subgroups: (1) persons who were born abroad and migrated to Europe ("immigrants" or so-called "first-generation migrants"), (2) persons who were born and raised in Europe (e.g. "second- and third-generation migrants" of Muslim belief) and finally (3) European converts who enter a process of religious radicalization. The (perceived) threat emanating from these groups is divided into potential "attacks in Europe" and "attacks abroad" (ibid.). In light of the article's focus and research questions, all three categories of actors and both types of (perceived) threats are integrated and, wherever possible, analyzed separately.

This article discusses Austrian perceptions of and reactions to recent events and developments of IS military advancements, tangible and anticipated risks posed by (returning) European jihadi fighters and followers, and finally, the political, public-discursive and societal impacts concerning Muslim citizens and immigrants in European countries. The empirical part of the article presents a qualitative analysis of media articles on radicalization, migration and refugee movements and Islamist terrorism, conducted with samples from Austrian online newspapers between 2014 and 2015. The aim was to frame, describe and analyze the published

discourse in Europe on migration and integration in relation to Islamist terrorism, demonstrated by the case study of Austria as one of those European countries with a huge Muslim population, a history of broad emotional discourses on migrant integration, and a disproportionately high number of people joining IS' military fights. Although the case study and the data sample cannot be expected to be representative for the European context, the results of the analysis conducted for this article highlight the wider context and societal background – as represented in published media – of a public discourse on Muslim immigrants and citizens against the background of wide-spread security concerns, fear of "the others" as well as anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant resentments.

3. Perceived threats from migration, terrorism and Muslims in Europe

For the purpose of the article, two main categories of perceived security threats related to Islamic/jihadist terrorism and migration/integration of (mostly Muslim) refugees are identified: The first category refers to security concerns relating to Islamist terrorists entering Europe as (disguised) refugees and asylum-seekers. Already in 2014, but increasingly since the more or less uncontrolled entrance of hundreds of thousands refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and African countries in the summer of 2015, concerns – often from right-wing actors and boulevard media – were raised, that Islamist terrorists might (mis)use the humanitarian right of asylum and international protection for refugees to enter the European Union for terrorist activities. Since the terrorist attacks in Paris on November 13, 2015, where one offender supposedly entered Europe as a refugee through Greece, this fear has increased as first empiric case.

The second category refers to the increasing radicalization of mostly young European Muslim citizens, often second- or third-generation migrants who grew up in Western societies and have been radicalized. These cases are of special importance for various reasons: The integration of immigrants has been a contested and complex social, cultural and political issue within European immigration countries for several decades. States pursuing such different policies as France, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden or Austria have been struggling with deficient results of broad integration programs and measures and – with a strong and still growing anti-immigrant, right-wing movement, both within and beyond the party system and public elections (emfs 2006, 11ff.; Gilardoni et al. 2015, 2). Therefore, terrorist attacks conducted by Islamist jihadists such as in Paris in January 2015 or in the past in London and Madrid fuel the widespread resentment among Europe's population (Cesari 2010, 13ff.) and are instrumentalized by right-wing parties and protest movements (e.g. the PEGIDA movement in Germany and Austria: see Schulze 2015, Dearden 2015) who aim at restricting immigration and protect the "Christian" West from a growing Muslim minority. Again, the attacks in Paris in November 2015 – which were to a large extent planned and conducted by Belgian and French citizens with close ties to IS – nurture resentments against descendants of Muslim immigrants in Europe.

Besides the fear of a growing right-wing, anti-immigrant and anti-Islam movement, "[f]or European countries, the risk is that their own Muslim citizens may be recruited and trained by IS, and then return home to carry out terrorist acts" (Witney 2014). Of the estimated approximately 20,000 foreign fighters from 90 countries who joined IS and related militias in Syria and Iraq, around 3,400 are assumed to come from Western nations (AP/ Huffington Post 2015). These numbers exceed by far the followers who left for the Middle East to join the military fight in earlier wars within the region. Thus, the West – and here especially Europe with its millions of Muslim citizens – worries about the previously unknown force of attraction and the successful recruitment and PR campaigns carried out by IS members and followers. Several studies have highlighted and analyzed the social media campaigns of IS with their utilization of youth and pop cultural elements including music, strong images of heroic fighters, unified troops and military success (e.g. Klausen 2015, 10).

A broader and more long-term threat which might result from the current discourse is the *securitization* of migration and integration by linking the discourses and policies of migration and integration with security concerns, and using this linkage as justification for extraordinary security measures. This development could already be observed after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 as well as the bombings in Madrid and London (cf. Fauser 2006, 2; Buonfino 2004, 24; Cesari 2010, 13ff.).

4. Media discourse analysis

4.1 Methodology

The media analysis was conducted as a combination of a qualitative content analysis according to Philipp Mayring (2010) and the discourse analysis approach of Reiner Keller (2011). The media articles in the compiled data corpus was first coded openly and then structured along content categories such as the main root causes of radicalization (cf. section 4.6) as well as relevant discourse categories like identified discourse actors (presented in an overview in section 4.4 and integrated into the content categories).

The media analysis bears clear explanatory power for the selected case of Austria; however, its results are of limited representativeness and scope for several reasons: first, the empirical basis is limited by the time frame and the selected newspapers (cf. section 4.3); second, the case selection is limited to the small country of Austria. While Austria shares some background and challenges with other European countries, the results and conclusions from the Austrian media discourse cannot be transferred to other European countries. Third, the media analysis itself is limited to the *published* discourse, thereby excluding other elements, actors and issues of a general *public* discourse.

4.2 Case selection

For the media analysis the case of Austria was selected. This country is of high interest for the topic of IS terrorism and integration discourse for several reasons: around 20 percent

of Austria's 8.47 million population have a "migration background", meaning they have either immigrated themselves or have foreign-born parents. Around half a million people in Austria are Muslims. In 2014, the official "Integration Report" published by the Ministry of the Interior cites its national survey on the general attitude towards integration: 51 percent of Austrian respondents (without a migration background) state "that the integration of migrants is rather bad or very bad", which is however a great improvement from 69 percent agreement with this statement in 2010 (Integration Report 2014, 3). As recent studies and surveys reveal, the role of religion is particularly critical for Austrians' attitudes toward minority groups (meinungsraum.at/MKÖ 2015). At the same time, Austria is "characterized as inclusive in terms of the governance of religion and thus often described as a best-practice model for the incorporation of religious minorities, particularly Muslims" (Mattes & Rosenberger 2015, 129).

In the 1990s, the formerly peripheral right-wing *Freedom Party of Austria* (FPÖ) gained massive increases in voters' approval leading to the countries first center-right coalition in 2000. As a consequence, 14 EU member states introduced sanctions against Austria in order to protest against the inclusion of a radical right-wing party, which owed its success to an extremely populist anti-immigrant campaign, in the national government. Although the *Freedom Party* lost voters' support in later elections, the migration and integration discourse has been a top issue on the country's political, media and societal agenda (Meyer & Rosenberger 2015).

Finally, Austria was repeatedly heading the news in various European media channels when in 2013 and 2014 cases of young Muslim Austrians leaving to join the IS fight in Syria and Iraq became public. The most spectacular and widely observed case is that of two teenage girls (15 and 16 at the time) of Bosnian origin, Samra Kesinovic and Sabina Selimovic, who left Austria to marry IS fighters in Syria. The destiny of these two girls has been reported on in international media and spread light on the issue of Austria's problem with radicalized youths being recruited for the *Islamic State* (Hall 2014, Perez 2014).

4.3 Data corpus

The analyzed data corpus consists of 302 articles of various types (interviews, reports etc.) which were extracted from two Austrian newspapers: The first is the high-quality newspaper *Der Standard*, which targets a mainly academic audience and is published daily. The second is the daily boulevard newspaper *Kronen Zeitung*, which is the country' most-read medium and which reaches almost three million readers a day. In total, 209 articles from *Der Standard* and 93 articles from *Kronen Zeitung* were selected for the time period of January 1, 2014 to October 7, 2015 by searching these keywords: radicalization, refugees, terrorism, Islamic State.[1] The selection and application of these particular keywords was deliberate and intended to identify the specific entanglement of the public discourse in Austria on security and radicalized Muslims. Thus, the data does not

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1 Articles were retracted from the online archives of the newspapers: www.derstandard.at and www.krone.at.

represent the basis of the general discourse on integration and migration in Austria, but a certain part of it. All articles that are not relating to Europe and the issue of migration, integration and/or Islamic radicalization were excluded. The data corpus was then openly coded and structured according to partly pre-defined, partly inductively generated categories (cf. Mayring 2010, 48-109; Keller 2011, 83-110). Additionally, further information and context material (e.g. security reports, press releases etc.) was used. In the following, some of the main findings of this media study are presented.

4.4 General description: Topical aspects and variety of the discourse

The analyzed articles show a broad range of main topics and topical aspects when reporting on Islamist radicalization in Europe, security threats from migration and refugee movements and the fear of Islamist terror activities on European soil. While fact-centered reports on current events and incidents make up a great part of the corpus for both newspapers, several topics are preferred. For example, *Der Standard* dedicates more space and articles to expert opinions on potential root causes and facilitating factors of adolescents' radicalization and, in some cases, the decision to join the Jihad in Syria and Iraq as foreign fighters or to execute terrorist attacks within Europe (23 percent of articles in *Der Standard*, 14 percent in *Kronen Zeitung*). *Kronen Zeitung* on the other hand has an evident focus on "security issues" with a huge number of articles covering criminal investigations in Austria and other European countries on alleged terrorists entering EU territory, Austrian citizens and asylum-seekers leaving to join the Islamic state, returnees etc. (66 percent in *Kronen Zeitung*, compared to 36 in *Der Standard*). However, both media share common core topics.

4.5 Discourse actors

Concerning the actors of the media discourse, a broad range of governmental representatives is dominant. As the topical area of *IS*, terrorism and threats in Europe/Austria has been repeatedly debated in parliament, several politicians from the main parties (the two governing parties of social-democrats and Christian-conservatives, as well as the opposition parties of left-oriented Greens, center-party *Team Stronach* and right-wing *FPÖ*) are cited with public statements from parliamentary debates, interviews and press-releases. Besides high-ranking governmental actors, researchers, representatives of Muslim organizations[2], the Mauthausen-Committee[3] (an association of survivors of the Nazi concentration camp Mauthausen) and political stakeholders from other EU countries are cited as the opinion-leading positions within this discourse. Immigrants in Austria, Muslim citizens, or asylum seekers can be identified and described as actors within this discourse – however, they hold a marginalized position and are – to a very large extent – only "passive actors" without own voices in the published discourse.

2 Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich (IGGiÖ): http://www.derislam.at/
3 Mauthause Komitee Österreich: http://www.mkoe.at/

4.6 Most relevant categories

4.6.1 Root causes of radicalization

Pieces on the problem of young Muslim migrants – many of second- and third-generation descendant – religiously radicalizing and being recruited by extremist Islamist networks related to *IS* represent a dominant topic in several of the analyzed articles. This part of the discourse has been prompted when in 2014, a case of two teenage girls of Bosnian origin, aged 15 and 16, who left Austria to become *IS* fighters' wives in Syria in order to support the Islamist Jihad, became public (see for example Kraitt 2014, Daniel 2014, Diehl & Hengst 2014). The background and social media entries (mainly on their Facebook sites) of the girls were analyzed by governmental authorities and the case was reported in several European media channels, newspapers and security reports. Along with other reported cases of Austrian youth (including Muslim second- and third-generation migrants as well as converts) trying to leave the country and join *IS* or prepare for terrorist attacks at home, the public, media and authorities started a broad debate on the motives for and potential measures against the radicalization of young Muslim Austrians.[4] One stream of media discourse focuses on the role of social media as the main arena of recruitment. Other lines of analyses and argumentation stress the role of parents and families (here, a whole separate debate on first-generation migrants failing to integrate and assimilate to Austrian/European "values" and conventions – allegedly demonstrated by Muslim parents refusing to respect female teachers in Austria – was initiated: see postings within *Der Standard,* 27.1.2015).

Root causes for the Islamist radicalization of Muslim (and converted) youths in Europe – including persons who were born and raised here (second- or third-generation migrants) as well as people who migrated or fled to Europe for various reasons – are broadly discussed in media articles in both selected media. As a general observation it can be stated that *Der Standard*, being a high-quality newspaper with generally longer articles than boulevard media (cf. Neissl/Siegert/Renger 2001, 98ff.), has a stronger and more in-depth focus on this aspect than *Kronen Zeitung.*

Root causes are described as a combination of push and pull factors from personal to political motives and sociological factors: For this purpose, *Der Standard* published a number of interviews with national and international experts from different fields, such as security and criminal justice, social work, academic research from political science, sociology or security studies, and practitioners from schools, non-governmental associations and religious organizations. Several articles stress the importance of juvenile rebellion, social factors and a general feeling of exclusion and discrimination of Muslims in European societies. For example, the Islam scholar Lamya Kaddor states in an interview published in *Der Standard* on October 4, 2015 (Nimmervoll 2015b): "It is mainly social causes – the desire for recognition, for attention, solidarity, community, for appreciation of one's personality, compensating one's feeling of inferiority, finding a new

4 Many hold the Austrian citizenship and were born within the country.

emotional home, that they didn't have before. For many, there is a great emptiness".[5]

On February 16, 2015, *Der Standard* published an interview with sociologist Kenan Güngör, an Austrian with Turkish-Kurdish background, on the topic of Muslim youth radicalization in Austria and Europe. In the article[6] the well-known integration specialist Güngör lists factors of the general feeling of exclusion and injustice often felt by young Muslims in European societies. Combined with a general adolescent fondness for protest against the generation of parents (which are, according to Güngör, much less religious and have a weaker feeling of being discriminated by autochthon societies), established sets of values (e.g. regarding the role and "pureness" of religion) and socio-economic disadvantages, this might constitute a fertile ground for radical Islamists such as Salafist networks active in Austria. These networks start recruiting young, usually not very religious, Muslims, not on the grounds of religious debates (e.g. on *IS*' vision of "pure" Islam), but by providing clear answers on the meaning of life, justice and community. As Güngör states: Youths are offered "social warmth, recognition and belonging to an absolute community with an absolute truth and mission standing above all. This provides previous underdogs with a feeling of superiority"[7] (*Der Standard*, 16.2.2015). Consequently, he speaks of "Salafist Street Work" and "Underdog Salafism" (ibid.).

In contrast to *Der Standard*, the *Kronen Zeitung* focuses to a far lesser extent on underlying root causes of radicalization. The issue is mentioned and referred to rather briefly in several articles that report on cases of Austrian Islamists. The aspect of causes and factors of radicalization are in many articles mentioned for single cases only, e.g. through information from radicals' former school colleagues or parents on speculated causes and radicalization factors.

4.6.2 The role of social media in recruitment

The potential threat of recruitment via social media channels has been tackled by many political stakeholders, especially from governmental actors. Thus, this aspect plays a prominent role in many of the analyzed articles in both newspapers. The Austrian Foreign Minister and State Secretary for Integration, Sebastian Kurz, as well as the Minister of the Interior, Johanna Mikl-Leitner, put the issue of social media usage in the context of radicalization and counter-radicalization measures on the agenda at several international meetings. *Der Standard* reports on several Austrian contributions from Kurz and Mikl-Leitner, e.g. on Kurz' meeting with representatives from Facebook and Google. Kurz is cited on his strategy in *Der Standard* of April 30, 2015: "With the know-how of these companies we want

to elaborate instruments that help prevent the recruiting of adolescents by terrorists and the distribution of respective videos and pictures via the Internet"[8] (Wallisch 2015).

4.6.3 Returning fighters from Syria and Iraq – national security – terrorism

Different estimates presume around 100-150 (ICSR/Neumann 2015) or up to 178 *(Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counter-Terrorism: BVT)* persons from Austria who joined the IS militia in Syria and Iraq. Relative to the population size, Austria is ranked forth on the list of most affected Western European countries, according to a study of the *International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence* (ICSR) published in January 2015 (most affected in relations to the population size are Belgium, Denmark, and Sweden, ICSR/Neumann 2015). The Austrian BVT (German: *Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz und Terrorismusbekämpfung* – BVT) has evidence of 68 returned fighters from the Middle East and has imposed close monitoring measures of the suspects. Already in its report on 2013, the BVT states the "middle- and long-term threat for public security" that could be posed by "returnees from Syria". Concerning the composition of this group of foreign fighters from Austria, the BVT states that "an essential part" of this group holds the Austrian citizenship and has "families [originated] from South-East-Europe and the Western-Balkans region. Persons with foreign citizenship (especially persons from the Caucasus region), holding a valid residence permit in Austria, make up the greatest part"[9] (BVT 2014, 50).

The issue has been debated in parliament; media have reported the details stated publicly by the Minister of the Interior, Johanna Mikl-Leitner. On March 27, 2015, *Der Standard* cited Mikl-Leitner, calling returned foreign fighters as "ticking time bombs" (Moser 2015) who are monitored by the police and security authorities. She also announces that around 150 preliminary investigations on alleged jihadists have been initiated. Further legal actions, which will be described below, are planned and to some extent already implemented at this point in time.

4.6.4 Social measures and legal policies

In 2014, the coalition government announced that a new set of policies and measures "against jihadists" on prevention and awareness-raising, consulting and support for parents and friends of radicalized youths, as well as several improvements of existent instruments in the executive branch will be introduced.

Several of the analyzed media articles had social and legal measures as focal points: from changes in criminal law (e.g. discussion on the ban of IS symbols, the deprivation

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5 *German original:* "Das sind vor allem soziale Ursachen – die Sehnsucht nach Anerkennung, nach Zuwendung, Zusammenhalt, Gemeinschaft, nach Aufwertung der eigenen Persönlichkeit, eigene Minderwertigkeitsgefühle zu kompensieren, eine neue, emotionale Heimat zu finden, die sie vorher nicht hatten. Bei vielen ist eine große Leere" (ibid.). All English translations by the author.

6 The article was commented 185 times by users in the online forum of the newspaper. This shows that the issue is highly contested and provokes a manifold discussion.

7 *German original:* "(…) soziale Wärme, Anerkennung und Aufgehobensein in einer absoluten Gemeinschaft mit absoluter, über allem stehender Wahrheit und Mission. Das gibt vormals Unterlegenen ein Überlegenheitsgefühl" (ibid.).

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8 *German original:* "Mithilfe von Know-how dieser Unternehmen wollen wir Instrumente in die Hand bekommen, die das Anwerben Jugendlicher durch Terroristen und die Ausbreitung entsprechender Videos und Fotos via Internet verhindern helfen" (ibid.).

9 *German original* (complete quote): "Bei einem wesentlichen Teil der aus Österreich nach Syrien reisenden Personen handelt es sich um österreichische Staatsangehörige, deren Familien aus Südosteuropa und der Westbalkan-Region stammen. Personen mit fremder Staatsbürgerschaft (insbesondere Personen aus der Kaukasus-Region), welche über einen gültigen Aufenthaltstitel in Österreich verfügen, stellen den größten Anteil" (ibid.).

of citizenship for persons who leave Austria to join IS etc.), reinforced cooperation with Google and YouTube to suppress the distribution of IS propaganda material, to the implementation of a support hotline for parents who become aware of their child's Islamist radicalization and search for help. With regards to the membership in a terrorist organization, the Austrian criminal law is already quite restrictive: As a *Der Standard* article from September 13, 2014 states: "Both citizens and persons with a permanent residence permit are confronted with up to ten years in prison only for membership"[10] (*Der Standard*, 13.9.2015). Throughout 2015, several trials and investigations were ongoing concerning the cases of Austrian citizens or residents with foreign citizenships who joined IS and were planning to leave for the IS fight in Syria and Iraq. For the exhibition and distribution of IS symbols (e.g. via social media platforms), the Minister of the Interior, Johanna Mikl-Leitner, demands to introduce a penalty of 4,000 Euro for first offenders and 10,000 Euro for repeat offenders.

Another area of prevention and counter measures that is extensively covered in the *Kronen Zeitung* and *Der Standard* alike are schools, teachers and parents. In 2014, a debate was "initiated" about the "unwillingness" of many Muslim parents in Austria to sufficiently cooperate with schools and especially female teachers. Some alleged cases of problems between Muslim pupils, their parents and female teachers were taken as a starting point for a broader, very negative debate on potential sanctions for Muslim parents and pupils who are "unwilling to integrate". For example, the *Kronen Zeitung* reports in-depth on Minister Kurz' suggestions for potential measures: "These adolescents should be obliged to take over community work on afternoons or, when others have spare time, in school. And teachers should get more rights – as soon as they detect radicalization tendencies, directly contact the youth welfare service and the police. Currently, this process takes too long via all authorities such as director, school supervisory and advisory board (...)"[11] (Vettermann/*Kronen Zeitung*, January 24, 2015).

4.6.5 The case of Chechens

Chechens[12] make the majority of asylum seekers in Austria. Altogether, the Chechen community in Austria consists of around 30,000 persons (Weißensteiner 2015). According to the findings of the Ministry of the Interior (ibid.), of the approximately 170 persons recruited for IS' fight in the Middle East, around 50 percent are Chechens and they make up the majority of the 60 returnees. As reaction to this, a debate on targeted integration measures for this immigrant group was initiated by the opposition politician Peter Pilz (ibid.). The well-known representative of *The Greens* argues that young men from this minority are especially vulnerable and prone to Islamist recruiters and IS-related extremist propaganda as

a result of war traumata, the non-accessibility of the Austrian labor market (due to their asylum seeker status) and the related fatigue, as well as "despotic fathers and an old sense of honor"[13] which he assigns to Chechen families (Pilz in Weißensteiner 2015). In order to prevent Islamist radicalization among this group, special integration measures should be developed and introduced – an opinion that was immediately rejected by other political actors and public stakeholders.

5. Conclusions: Islamic State, terrorism and the European discourse on immigration and integration

The article presented an empirical discourse analysis on the European debate on migration and integration against the background of Islamist terrorism related to the militia of *Islamic State*. Recent political-military developments in Syria, Iraq and surrounding countries of the region, that is the territorial expansion of the radical-Islamist militia *Islamic State* and its successful propaganda and recruitment of mostly young Western followers as "foreign fighters", have a noticeable impact on European policies (from border management to social policies and criminal law) on the one hand and on its societies' relations and attitudes towards the millions of Muslim citizens and migrants living with them on the other.

So far, while the threat of "disguised terrorists" and returnees as "ticking time bombs" is repeatedly presumed by political actors, security services and media, no cases of IS fighters entering the European Union disguised as refugees are known.[14] Returnees (i.e. European citizens who had joined Islamist militia as foreign fighters) from Syria and Iraq on the other side are said to be comprehensively identified and monitored by European security services and the police. In Austria several are under arrest and their contact with other detainees is limited in order to prevent the further distribution of radicalized ideas and potential recruitment (BVT 2014, 52ff.).

For the media analysis, Austria was selected, a small middle-European country with a big Muslim population and a record of public dispute on immigration and integration. The discourse analysis of Austria's newspapers *Der Standard* and *Kronen Zeitung* revealed that in 2015 – a year in which Europe saw several terrorist attacks on its soil by radicalized Muslims related to *Islamic State* in one way or another – Muslims (from second- and third-generation migrants to recently arrived refugees from the Middle East) are strongly linked with negative characteristics and that mostly negative knowledge repertoires linked to immigration and Muslims are reproduced. Although the selection of the media corpus suggests a focus on problematic issues (see remarks on the objective and consequences related to the selection of keywords and the data corpus in section 4.3), the manner of defining, framing and coping with these issues showed very one-sided, deficient lines of narration and argumentation. The discourse is dominated by a strong focus on Muslim youth as a (potential) threat to national security

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10 *German original:* "Sowohl Staatsbürger als auch Menschen mit dauerhaftem Aufenthaltsrecht werden allein schon für die Mitgliedschaft mit bis zu zehn Jahren Haft bedroht." (ibid.)

11 *German original:* "So sollen diese Jugendlichen verpflichtet werden, gemeinschaftliche Arbeiten am Nachmittag, oder wenn die anderen Freizeit haben, in der Schule zu übernehmen. Und die Lehrer sollen mehr Rechte bekommen – sobald sie Radikalisierungstendenzen feststellen, direkt das Jugendamt und die Polizei einschalten. Derzeit dauere der Weg durch sämtliche Instanzen, wie Direktor, Schulaufsicht und Schulrat, (...)" (ibid.).

12 mostly with citizenship of the Russian Federation

13 *German original:* "despotische Väter und ein altes Ehrgefühl" (ibid.)

14 Investigations about the offenders of the series of terror attacks in Paris on November 13, 2015, are still in process at time of finalizing this paper.

and the concern of increased immigration of refugees and asylum-seekers from Muslim countries. Various measures have been discussed and implemented since 2013 such as a deradicalization hotline for friends and parents of radicalized young persons, legal measures (e.g. the prohibition of IS symbols and tougher punishments for the membership in a terrorist organization etc.), increased border controls and the close monitoring of returned fighters from Syria and Iraq.

A comparison with media coverages and public discourses in other European countries – especially Germany – reveals similar discourse characteristics. The perceived threat of radicalized Muslims within Europe on the one side and the assumed security concerns regarding 'disguised terrorists' who might exploit the chance of travelling uncontrolled amongst the current refugee influx on the other side is similarly discussed in Germany and other countries. One of the main differences between the two countries is the increased emergence of political violence against asylum accommodations etc. (e.g. arson attacks) across Germany (Diehl 2015), while in Austria the anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant resentments have so far been covered by legal-constitutional actors (e.g. the Austrian *Freedom Party* – FPÖ).

What is in large part missing in the published discourse positions within the Austrian media corpus are reflections on the (potential) negative impacts of this discourse – in which Muslim citizens and immigrants are widely framed in a security context and a threat to social cohesion – on (1) the integration and inclusion efforts of minority groups, particularly the identification of first-, second- or even third-generation migrants with societies or nations, that collectively link them to radical Islamism and terrorism. (2) By focusing on the "threat" posed to "us" by Islamist terrorism and radicalized citizens and narrating the story from one side only, the discourse strongly contributes to an increased polarization within Western societies, thereby hurting the weak relations between autochthon populations and immigrated residents and their descendants. When developing a comprehensive and sustainable strategy to counter and prevent the radicalization of Muslim youths in Europe and the recruitment of foreign fighters for the *Islamic State*'s war in the Middle Eastern and Arab region, the impact of our own verbal and actual actions, i.e. the manner of European discourse on Islamist terrorism and migration/integration, needs to be taken into account for the benefit of peaceful, tolerant and diverse societies – in the West and Middle East alike.

In terms of evidence-based security threats from Islamist terrorism, experts have already elaborated comprehensive schemes and policy recommendations, which are based on the insight that "much can be done to reduce the threat of foreign fighters committing terrorist attacks in the West" (Byman/Shapiro 2014, 28). Recommended measures include community outreach, counter narratives and other prevention measures. At the same time, a small but real potential of extremists taking action as "lone wolfs" has to be accepted as a real and persisting threat: "Terrorism, unfortunately, has become a feature of modern life. It cannot be eradicated, only controlled" (ibid.). The threat from radicalized Muslims in Europe is still intangible and not proven by much empiric evidence. However, the discriminatory effects of publicly portraying "Muslims" in general as "security threats" for Europe as well as

the deteriorating relations between Muslim- and non-Muslim populations within Europe might prove to be an ever bigger problem for the cohesion and security of European societies.

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