DeRadicalisation
in Europe and Beyond: Detect, Resolve, Reintegrate

Trends of Radicalisation

Slovenia/3.2 Research Report

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About the Project

D.Rad is a comparative study of radicalisation and polarisation in Europe and beyond. It aims to identify the actors, networks, and wider social contexts driving radicalisation, particularly among young people in urban and peri-urban areas. D.Rad conceptualises this through the I-GAP spectrum (injustice-grievance-alienation-polarisation) with the goal of moving towards 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 addresses the issues of radicalization in Slovenia via a case study of a particular “hotspot of radicalization” – namely, an organised homophobic attack on Cafe Open a LGBTQ+ venue in Ljubljana by a far-right group. The report has four principal parts. The first part describes the hotspot of radicalisation, presenting in detail the homophobic incident; the second part discerns the methodology used; the third part provides a multilevel analysis of the forces of radicalization connected to the hotspot, including the identification of the macro, meso micro, facilitating and motivational factors that influenced to the radical act. The final part of the report quantifies the attackers’ motivational factors via the I-GAP coding method and puts them in relation to macro, meso, micro and facilitating factors. The report argues that the homophobic attack on Cafe Open has become more than just a specific historical occurrence. Rather it is Slovenia’s representative “hotspot of radicalisation” as it can still speak today to processes of radicalization in Slovenian society.

Introduction

This report addresses the issues of radicalization in Slovenia via a case study of a particular "hotspot of radicalization" – namely, an organised homophobic attack on a LGBTQ+ venue in Ljubljana by a far-right group. The report has four principal parts. The first part describes hotspot of radicalisation, presenting in detail the homophobic incident, the attackers and court verdit(s). The second part discerns the ways in which data was collected and the methodology used. The third part provides a multilevel analysis of the forces of radicalization that are most intimately linked to the hotspot. This means identifying the macro, meso and micro factors of radicalisation as well as facilitating and motivational factors that led the individuals to the radical act. The final part of the report quantifies the attackers' motivational factors via the I-GAP coding method and puts them in relation to macro, meso, micro and facilitating factors.

The goal of the report is not to deliver a theoretical overview or a comprehensive study of social and economic processes that potentially influence radicalisation of individuals in Slovenia. Neither does the report represent an in-depth critique of homophobia in Slovenia or an exhaustive catalogue of its manifestations. The report's main aim is instead to scrutinize a specific, pivotal moment in Slovenian society – a "hotspot of radicalization" – that provides meaningful insights into the types and sizes of radicalized incidents one can expect in Slovenia.

What is a "hotspot" and how does one define a "hotspot of radicalization"? Specific events that qualify as hotspots are (1) premeditated and (2) potentially scalable acts of (3) extremist violence within (4) a larger series or pattern of similar acts that are committed by radicalized individuals (5) clearly linked to or influenced by a radicalized group, network or organization. An isolated act of violent extremism committed by a "lone wolf", for instance, is not considered a hotspot. The report acknowledges that not many incidents occurred in Slovenia since it gained independence from Yugoslavia in 1991 that fit this definition. Radicalized groups, networks and organizations do exist in the small nation of two million, but have arguably been very reluctant to organise these types of attacks. There is however this attack on the LGBTQ+ venue that undoubtedly stands out and calls for further scrutiny. And this is exactly what the goal of this report is.

Hotspots of radicalization

Overview of the chosen hotspot

Due to the almost non-existent terrorist attacks, the very small number of organized extreme violent attacks and the lack of in-depth analyses of radicalized groups, it was difficult to find appropriate "hotspots of radicalization" in Slovenia. The only case that to some extent allowed the analysis according to the envisaged standardised methodology was the homophobic attack on Cafe Open carried out by an organized group of young far-right extremists on 25 June 2009 around 9 pm in the week of events related to the ninth annual Ljubljana Pride Parade.

Let us describe the incident as it was recalled by witnesses during the investigation (Bulc 2021). In the evening of that day a LGBTQ+ poetry event took place in Cafe Open, one of the very few gay-friendly bars in Slovenia at the time. In a nearby park, young men with shaved heads or short haircuts gathered and at a certain point started running, undressing their bomber jackets and putting on balaclavas, hoods and camouflage caps. Dressed in black clothes that were too warm for summer temperatures, they carried sticks in their hands. Gay activist Mitja Blažič had just exited Cafe Open to have a cigarette in front. Before lighting up, though, he started hearing stomping sounds, as if an army was marching towards him. Seven to nine masked young men appeared in front of the cafe, wearing heavy shoes and making a lot of noise. One of them shouted: “Faggots!" and Blažič knew an attack was imminent.

The guests in front of the bar started running away in fear. Several masked men attacked Blažič. In court, he emphasized (Bulc 2021) that he was attacked merely because he was standing in front of the door. The target of the attack was not him, but rather the LGBTQ+-venue and all its guests. The attackers were holding torches that emitted red flame. The atmosphere was as if one joined the supporters’ stand at a football match. The attackers repeatedly shouted insults like "Fagot!", "Fagots!" and "Fucking fagots!" Blažič was beaten with fists and hard objects, with a burning torch pressed against his neck at a certain point. He defended himself to the best of his ability with his hands in front of his face. At one point, they knocked him to the ground and started kicking him. One of the attackers broke the cafe’s window, while another (or even the same attacker) opened the door to the cafe and threw a burning torch into it. According to the testimonies of those present inside the cafe, many guests feared that it was a bomb or some similar explosive device. For a moment, fear and panic reigned. The attackers fled, though, after about 30 seconds, and the flame of the torch thrown into the cafe was quickly put out.

Later, Blažič obtained a medical certificate stating that he has a wound on his head, a superficial burn on his neck and a fracture of the base of the final joint of the fourth finger of his left hand. All three were classified in court as minor bodily injuries.

Slovenian police arrested three suspects who admitted to being present in front of Cafe Open at the time of the attack and were members of the assault team. In house searches, which were not opposed by the suspects, police seized several items of black clothing, camouflage caps and mobile phones. The analysis of the communication showed that the defendants were in regular contact at the time of the attack as well as before and after the attack. They acted as an organized group, planning the attack in advance. Some of the attackers were sent out as scouts in order to check the security of the place. They all said they are, or were until recently, members of the Green Dragons, Olimpija Ljubljana sport team supporters’ group. In one of the suspects’ apartments, book The Diary of a Nazi Skinhead was found, while in another’s t-shirts celebrating the Blood and Honor Neo-Nazi organization and stickers promoting the far-right group Slovenski radikali [Slovenian Radicals] were confiscated.

In 2010, the court found them guilty of the criminal offense of inciting hatred, violence or intolerance in complicity under Article 297 of the Slovenian Criminal Code and sentenced each to one and a half years in prison. Later, the court shortened their sentences, and in 2014, acquitted all three men due to a technical yet important error – the identity-revealing DNA

sample of one of the attackers was kept in police archives illegally. All the evidence used in the case was considered by the court as the “fruit of the poisonous tree” and the three attackers became officially innocent.

Method and reasons for choice of the hotspot

Apart from a few journalistic (RTV SLO 2014), blogger (Vladozlom 2020a; 2020b) and anthropological (Gregorčič 1999; 2000; Šabić 2012; Bajt 2015) accounts of right-wing extremists in Slovenia, there are no publically available analytical reports on membership characteristics of such groups, their background and their recruitment strategies that we know of, let alone any in-depth research studies or public de-radicalisation programmes targeting them. When assessing violent attacks by such groups most of the Slovenian public is left with an impression that assailants are not organised groups but rather individual wrongdoers whose violence appears spontaneously in the heat of the moment rather than in a pre-conceived and planned manner. Their acts and motives are prevailantly described by using everyday crime vocabulary rather than that of national security, counter-terrorism or counter-radicalisation discourse.

In the case of the assault on Cafe Open, the reaction was somewhat different. The assault was the most radical homophobic attack in the last twenty years, if not the worst since the emergence of the gay and lesbian rights movement in Slovenia in the mid-1980s. Certainly, organized attacks on LGBTQ+ persons and premises have taken place before, but this one was the only organized group homophobic attack where the police discovered some of the perpetrators, where the prosecution accused them and the judge convicted them. It was also one of the very rare cases where the court convicted attackers under an article that deals with acts that incite hatred. Specifically, they were convicted for the criminal offense of “incitement to hatred, violence or intolerance” under Article 297 of the Criminal Code. The fact that they were convicted for homophobic hate crime is unusual. According to a 2008 research commissioned by Human Rights Ombudsman, nearly 86% of hate crimes committed against gays and lesbians in Slovenia were never reported to the police, while the police reacted constructively in just 30% of incidents reported (DIHR 2009, 5; see also Magić 2014, 5). Arresting and trying homophobes is therefore definitely not a common occurrence in Slovenia.

The media reported about this homophobic attack more extensively than usual. As researchers, we therefore could access dozens of journalistic pieces dealing with the case, both from the time of the attack and trial(s). They vary from tabloid snippets to serious political analyses of the incident. At the same time, we had the opportunity to interview gay activist Mitja Blažič, the victim of the attack. He provided us with relevant information on the attackers obtained by the court, quoting to us the relevant paragraphs from the verdict(s). In this way, we had a relatively good insight into a specific part of the lives of the three young men who committed the crime. Through an analysis of media coverage and a semi-structured interview with Blažič, we learned how the three homophobes prepared for the attack, how they communicated with each other, what they were wearing, what words they shouted during the attack, and so on. Finally, we studied some of the academic ethnographic accounts of far-rights groups in order to be able to understand the motives for homophobia in these groups and compare them to the motives of the attackers.

Combining all this information, the report uses the I-GAP Coding method as a way of identifying the motivational factors that led the three men towards radicalisation. The analysis of motivational factors strives to reveal the motives of these individuals, which reflect their subjective sentiments and impressions on friendly and opposing social group(s) in particular and Slovenian society in general. The I-GAP coding method uses four types of motivational factors that are in a causal and chronological relation to each other: first, there is the attackers' perception of *injustice*, which leads to their *grievance(s)*, feelings of *alienation* and finally perception of social *polarization*. All four help us discern the motives for radicalised actions that culminated in the violent assault on Cafe Open.

Macro, meso and micro factors

Macro Factors

For easier understanding of the impact macro factors might have had on the three homophobes' actions, here is a short description of Slovenia's LGBTQ+ rights struggles through time. Slovenia decriminalized homosexuality in 1976, when it was still part of socialist Yugoslavia. The gay and lesbian movement began in Ljubljana in 1984, as part of the Slovenian New Social Movements, and was the first in Eastern Europe (Kuhar et al. 2012, 52). It was a movement that advocated for more rights for gays and lesbians within the socialist system rather than an oppositional movement. One its first goals was "to relocate the issue of homosexuality from the psychiatric context to the cultural and political contexts (...) demanding an amendment to the Yugoslav constitution so that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation would be prohibited" (Kuhar and Švab 2013, pp. 27-28). Also, it demanded homosexuality to be included in the school curriculum as one of the topics (Kuhar et al. 2021, p. 52).

Although they did not possess the same system of values, the New Social Movements and conservative/nationalist civil society groups, including the Roman Catholic Church, gradually forced the Communist elite to allow the first "free elections" in the late 1980s (Kuhar and Švab 2013, 28). It is then that the new right-wing political elites emerged and their vision of representative democracy and free speech differed significantly from what the leftist-liberal elites and leftist civil society understood under these terms.

The clash between the two streams was most obvious in their opposing ideas on how to deal with the socialist heritage of state feminism and women's rights and also in their understanding of homosexuality. While the activists from the new social movements believed that "sexual orientation" should be one of the grounds on which discrimination is prohibited, the conservatives believed that such a clause would represent a threat to the nation, the family and (Christian) morality, and contribute to the alleged dying out of the "small Slovenian nation." (...) For that reason sexual orientation is not explicitly mentioned in Article 14 of the new Slovenian constitution (Equality before the Law), although it is explained that this article includes sexual orientation among "other personal circumstances" on the grounds of which discrimination is prohibited. (Kuhar and Švab 2013, p. 28-29)

During Slovenia's accession-to-European-Union process there was no serious opposition to anti-discrimination legislation demanded by both the EU and the local LGBTQ+ organisations.

As the EU membership was a primary goal of all major political options, the Republic of Slovenia was behaving very servile towards the EU request, adopting all anti-discrimination laws in an expedited manner. Kuhar and Švab (2013, 23) describe this as a process of "downloading" of the EU human rights protection standards. During this period the first Pride gathering (rather than parade) happened in Ljubljana in 2001, followed by many on a yearly basis. Unlike in some other ex-Yugoslav countries, the first few pride parades in Slovenia were not challenged by conservative demonstrators or violent attackers. There were however in this period, as chronicled by Velikonja and Greif (2012), many instances of homophobic public discourse by elite politicians, representatives of the Catholic Church, the media, and ultra-nationalistic groups. What stood out was hate speech on the internet calling for killings of LGBTQ+ persons in the weeks after Sister, a transvestite trio, won the 2002 Slovenian selection for the Eurovision song contest (see ibid., 219-220).

In 2004, with all the new legislation in place, Slovenia finally became a member of the EU (and NATO). It seems, however, that equality of LGBTQ+ residents of Slovenia in all spheres of life did not follow the fast-track adoption of anti-discrimination legislation. As sexual minorities gained greater visibility by demanding equal rights in terms of partnerships and families instances of violent homophobic attacks increased (see Kuhar and Švab 2013, 23; 31; Velikonja and Greif 2012, 201-302). These attacks culminated in the 2009 Pride Week attack on Cafe Open.[1]

Interestingly, the 2009 assault on Cafe Open was the sole instance when politicians of all major parties in Slovenia unequivocally condemned the homophobic violence. In other instances of homophobic attacks before (or after) this one, the conservative politicians in particular would relativize homophobia in their comments or refrain from commenting altogether. Moreover, many conservative, and even nominally liberal politicians, employed homophobic rhetoric themselves. For example, Zmago Jelinčič, MP of the Slovenian National Party (SNP), has persistently called gay persons faggots and pederasts (Roglič 2008), while another MP of this party, Sašo Peče, said in an 2001 interview that he could never have a drink with a homosexual (or a person of dark complection) (Velikonja and Greif 2012, 207). In 2005, MP Bogdan Barović (SNP) claimed he would rather step down as the mayor than marry a gay couple (ibid., 256), while in 2006, Janez Drnovšek, president of Slovenia at the time (and a former communist and a former president of the left-liberal party Liberal Democracy of Slovenia), recommended in an interview on the topic of gay rights that a public display of "different sexual orientation" can justifiably disturb people, as sexuality should be "kept in the private sphere" and "not be displayed unnecessarily" (ibid., 269).

What president Drnovšek is describing could be termed the "new homophobia" (Anna Marie Smith in Kuhar et al. 2012, 54) by which tolerance towards gays is legalised and possible in real-life circumstances as long as they do not breach the norms of the heteronormative or rather heterosexist society. In other words, as long as they stay invisible, they have the right to be tolerated. If they appear in public's eye, their equal rights disappear. Applied to the Slovenian context, Kuhar and Švab (2013, 19) describe this experience as a particular type of "transparent closet" (Kuhar and Švab 2013, 19-21).

This means that in the family contexts gays and lesbians are often pushed back into the closet after they come out – except that the closet is now a transparent one. Gays and lesbians in the transparent closet are expected not to talk about their homosexual identity and to deny/hide it as much as possible. It seems that the phenomenon of a "transparent closet" is not limited to private spaces but can be found also in the public sphere: the Pride Parades and similar public activities, organised by LGBT non-governmental organisations, represent the coming out of the community in public space. However, the violent reactions of society push gays and lesbians back into the closet – into the transparent closet." (Kuhar and Švab 2013, p.21)

This process is possible because sexual orientation is one of rare personal circumstances not detectable by eye. Coming out does not necessarily bring visibility; for that kind of exposure one often needs to actually join the scene – hang out in the clubs, bars etc. The distinction between the (im)possibility of public display of gay affection is arguably what distinguishes homophobic societies, such as Slovenian, from those that allow LGBTQ+ persons to enjoy equal rights in all regards. As we will try to show in this report, it is the presumed breach of the norm of invisibility of gay persons (gathering in gay-friendly bars, joining pride parades, hugging, kissing etc.) that serves as an argument for homophobes to not only verbally but also physically attack LGBTQ+ people in Slovenia.

Social homophobia is the ideological pillar upon which homophobia of both powerful and weak individuals rests. In Slovenia, as in other Eastern European countries, as Kłosowska (2011) points out, perceptions of gay persons are bound to be shaped by conspiracy theories and prejudiced attitudes based on "nationalist, populist, and religious family values" (Kłosowska 2011, 182). To a certain degree these attitudes can be measured. For example, citizens of Slovenia in general have not particularly liked to be in proximity of LGBTQ+ persons since the very recent past, but the ones who do not mind are now in majority. Namely, in 1995, there were 61% who did not want to live next door to homosexuals, which was the highest proportion since the homosexual neighbour question was first used in the Slovenian Public Opinion survey in the early 1990s. Gradually falling, however, this proportion was at 34% in 2008 (Kuhar et al. 2012, p. 52.) and at 29.5% in 2017 (Velikonja 2020, 123). Nevertheless, Slovenian society has been and remains homophobic in numerous ways. For instance, a telling indicator is a complete lack of openly gay politicians and business leaders in Slovenia.

The LGBTQ+ persons have hence often been "tolerated" in Slovenia yet rarely perceived as true members of the national community. There was nevertheless a time when elites had a nationalistic reason to include gays and lesbians in Slovenian body politic, at least nominally. Namely, in the late 1980s, when socialist Yugoslavia was falling apart and Slovenia was on its path to secession, Serbian media was criticising a gay and lesbian event taking place in Slovenia as foreign import from the decadent West, while majority of Slovenian media supported the local queer organisers – as representatives of civilized European identity against the Balkan savages (Kuhar & Švab 2013, 29-30). Still, after gaining the independent statehood the attitude towards LGBTQ+ persons returned to "normal" and they were once again expelled from the idea of a proper Slovenian identity.

However, simultaneously, European values – including political correctness and the recognition of the human rights of minorities – became more and more important, placing Slovenian identity building between Scylla and Charybdis: on the one hand homosexuals were understood as something non-Slovenian, while on the other it became clear that non-acceptance of homosexuals would make Slovenian culture Balkan-like – the image that Slovenians wanted to escape from. It is between these two tensions that Slovenian homophobia has existed and flourished. (Kuhar and Švab 2013, p. 27)

Kłosowska (2011, 182) describes a similar paradox which also has relevance for Slovenia – homophobic conservatives always perceive themselves as a *minority* (within the EU) which is endangered by a (conspiratorial) majority that supports LGBTQ rights. However, at the same time they perceive themselves as the majority (within their country) which is endangered by a conspiratorial LGBTQ+ minority. On the one hand, therefore, they are “David" fighting “Goliath”, while on the other hand, “Goliath” fighting “David”. It seems that this mixed-up bipolar reasoning forces them into linking homosexuality with (local and foreign) liberal elites, which in turn play a major role in many conspiracy theories involving criminalized sexuality, such as prostitution and paedophilia. In Slovenia, for instance, homophobes often equate homosexuality with paedophilia[2] (and, lately, zoophilia),[3] claiming that children (and domestic animals) need to be protected against gay predators.

Meso Factors

According to media reports and the interview with attacked gay activist Mitja Blažič (Bulc 2021), the three attackers at Cafe Open claimed to be, or were in the past, members of Green Dragons, Olimpija Ljubljana supporters’ group. They denied belonging to any neo-Nazi organization, although there were many indications they were at least linked to, if not members of, far-right organizations, including, but not necessarily exclusively, the far-right patriotic youth organization Tukaj je Slovenija (TJS), an extreme nationalist group Slovenski radikali [Slovenian Radicals] (SR) and the neo-Nazi group Blood and Honour (B&H). In attackers’ homes, the police found neo-Nazi literature, SR stickers, as well as B&H t-shirts and typical far-right black clothing. In addition, eyewitnesses identified the group of attackers as skinheads dressed in black, while the presence of some skinheads in the group of attackers was also confirmed by the three arrested during investigation.

As there is a severe lack of in-depth research of radical right-wing groups during the time period under review in this report, it is difficult to claim exactly what the peer groups, to which the three attackers most likely belonged, actually advocated and to what extent they were homophobic. We will hence turn for assistance to media reports, the chronology of the lesbian organization Škuc-LL, and two anthropological studies of the TJS group, which were published three and six years after the attack on the Cefe Open

Judging by the chronology of the lesbian organization Škuc-LL (Velikonja and Greif 2012), far-right groups in Slovenia regularly addressed the topic of homosexuality on their web portals, participated in discussions on this topic on mainstream media portals, and communicated directly with LGBTQ+ organizations. For instance, in 2001, a few days before the demonstrations called the March Against Homophobia, they announced an “Armageddon to

faggot scum" on their website and left a message on the answering machine of Galfon, a SOS hotline for gays and lesbians, warning them that "faggots in Ljubljana will no longer be able to show off in public"(ibid., 210).

In 2003, the Slovenian branch of B&H sent a provocative invitation to the Škuc-LL lesbian organisation to visit the B&H website and "if the page appeals to you, you can also add it to the links on your website" (Ozmec 2003; Velikonja and Greif 2012, 238). In 2005, Škuc-LL reported an unknown writer on the Domoljubna mladina [Patriotic Youth] (PY) website to the Office for Equal Opportunities for promoting intolerance towards gays and lesbians (ibid. 253). In 2005, it reported the same organisation and its new website called Tukaj je Slovenija (TJS or tu-je.si) for the same offence (ibid. 266). The communication of Nazi skinheads with the LGBTQ movement, however, could also turn into physical violence. For example, in July 2004, five Nazi skinheads harassed the guests of a gay-friendly bar in Ljubljana and the police had to intervene (ibid., 247).

Perceiving themselves as a minority within the EU, far right homophobes often seem to fear for the future existance of their (small) national culture within the multicultural and multinational EU, accusing LGBTQ+ persons of reducing the chances of nation's survival due to their inability to have children (while nevertheless strictly opposing artificial insemination of single women or women in lesbian relationships, as well as surrogacy and adoption by gay couples). In this sense, they seem to perceive homophobia as a patriotic act and even a deterrent against declining birth rates in Slovenia.

Trough interviews with TJS members and discourse analysis of the TJS website, for example, Veronika Bajt (2015) finds that their discourse shows, among other things, homophobic prejudices, which they try to justify by using demographic arguments. A person called Tomaž (not his real name), for example, said that "when it comes to homosexuality, no one supports it. No ... It's normal that they are all in favour of a higher birth rate, from the point of view of patriotism" (ibid., 161). Another interviewee, nicknamed Gonzales, believes that "family is made up of women and men, which is normal. No real patriotic organization supports same-sex partners because same-sex partners cannot have children, which leads to even fewer births in Slovenia." (ibid.)

In the ethnographic analysis of the TJS group conducted by Simona Šabić (2012), we see that her "patriotic" interlocutors also do not like gays and lesbians because they presumably cannot have children. One of them, for example, says that gays and lesbians, "do not contribute to the fertility potential of the nation and thus do not revive it, but actually inhibit and destroy, you know, its existence. I would simply hit such people with higher taxes" (ibid., 69). Those interviewees who accept gays and lesbians as part of Slovenian society or even as their acquaintances said gays and lesbians must show their sexual orientation in private rather than in public, opposing gay parades and public kissing.[4] A notorious homophob, MP Zmago Jelinčič,[5] being one of their references, the TJS members seem to employ homophobic discourse as a common communication form on regular bases. For example, one of the interviewees strongly doubts that Mitja Blažič could be a patriot, since he personally does not know of any homosexual who is a patriot (ibid., 46). Interestingly, one of the interviewees, who introduces himself as one of the leaders of TJS, seems to know the attackers on Cafe Open,

as he says that as a group they are aware that violence is not the right way to "solve anything, right? When the sport team supporters beat up those faggots and that, but, I don't know, usually, we don't consider their ideas. I mean, not usually, we never consider their ideas." (ibid., 91) In short, the violent solutions of the "supporters" were allegedly not taken into account at the higher echelons of the TJS, but the men who carried out the attack on Cafe Open seem to have been familiar to them. It seems therefore that the attitude of TJS members towards LGBTQ+ persons is almost identical to that of the three attackers, the only difference being that the attackers were more than willing to use physical violence.

Micro Factors

Using the court documents cited by the attacked activist Blažič (Bulc 2021), we obtained some general information about the three attackers. All three attackers were white young men (aged between 19 and 22), citizens of Slovenia and members of a Olimpija Ljubljana sport club supporters group, and in all probability also members of far-right organizations. All three were single at the time of the trial and had no children. All three lived with their parents. One graduated from vocational high school, another completed three years of a four-year high school program, and the third graduated from high school and enrolled in a university program but has stagnated in his studies. One was a high school student at the time of the attack, another a university student, while the third was employed as a transport worker. All three were without a university degree, without their own apartment, without a serious life partner and without property.

Facilitating factors

There are several facilitating factors that seemed to influence the choice of the hotspot. The first one is the general, social homophobic climate. Since hate speech is not rigorously prosecuted in Slovenia, but rather tolerated by the Prosecutor's Office (see Bajt 2016; Moti and Bajt 2016; Splichal 2017), conservative political, religious and media elites often enable and encourage the production of macro climate that readily condones homophobic discourse. As we have shown already, it's been quite common to hear discriminating discourse on LGBTQ+ persons from Slovenian MPs. However, it has been appearing in religious circles as well. For example, a representative of Catholic Church and moral theologian, Ivan Štuhec, said in a media interview in 2002: "No, God did not create homosexuals, they were created because of such and other combinations that happen in nature. Nature is not perfect. It also has its defects." (Velikonja and Greif 2012, 219).

Further, before the attack on Cafe Open there were other violent attacks against LGBTQ+ venues (see Velikonja and Graif 2012, 247) and against LGBTQ+ individuals in the streets (ibid., 250; 265; 291) carried out with impunity. This definitely was not a deterrent.

Gay persons are perceived as weak and helpless by the far-right group members and have in this sense been a rather easy target for violent attacks. One of the TJS members discussed this topic in the following way: "They're just such a category that they already are, you know, they're already, you know, most of these homosexuals, they're not bodybuilders out there, you know, rather they're like some poor things." (Šabić 2012, 74)

In addition, on the day of the attack, Cafe Open as the venue was not guarded by any hired or voluntary security service, as emphasized by Mitja Blažič (Bulc 2021). This was due to the fact that the organizers of the event had had a meeting with the police a week before the Pride Week where they reached an agreement that the police will carry out stricter control of all venues where Pride Week events were to take place. The Cafe Open organisers believed this meant police would be circling their cafe on regular basis. However, this did not happen for reasons that seem not to have been established. Cafe Open's location in a narrow short street away from the crowds of the central city district must have also played a role.

Finally, the police record in dealing with homophobia might also be one of the facilitating factors. A few months before the Cafe Open attack police presented Codex of Police Ethics to the public, which, however, omitted sexual orientation from the paragraph on respect for equality before the law. Lesbian commentator reminded the public that "in the UK, Germany, France, the Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries and elsewhere the police run support and inclusive employment programs for gays and lesbians, as do for all other minorities. Moreover, they have specially trained units to deal with homophobic crimes." (Velikonja and Greif 2012, 296) These types of programs and units had not existed in Slovenia in the time of Cafe Open attacks and arguably still do not. There are some indicators that Slovenian police persons act in homophobic fashion on certain occasions, calling gay persons "damn faggots" and even beating them up (see Velikonja and Greif 2012, 288). It seems also that, more than just occasionally, the police does not report homophobic attacks as hate crimes but rather as bullying or disturbances of public order (ibid., 304).

Motivational factors (quantified in the I-GAP Coding)

We have managed to obtain some of the three homophobic assailants' statements presented in court – as quoted to us from various court verdicts by the attacked activist, Mitja Blažič (Bulc 2021). It is rather remarkable to what degree these statements match the meso-level homophobic rationale of the far-right group members and the macro-level homophobic utterances by politicians, representatives of Catholic church and conservative media. It seems therefore plausible to argue that mainstream political homophobia "trickles down" and empowers homophobia of organised far-right groups (and sport club supporters' groups), as well as individual homophobes – to the point where LGBTQ+ persons can be even physically attacked by them.

All three attackers claimed in the court investigation that they went in front of the Cafe Open in order to express their "opinion". However, the judge did not believe them, as the attackers' defence did not match the course and consequences of the incident. The court found in the verdict that they headed towards Cafe Open with the intention of attacking the bar and physically challenging those present. Why did they want to attack gays and lesbians? The motive that drove them seems to be their explicitly expressed disagreement with the visibility of homosexuality in Slovenian society. They went there because they opposed public expression of particular sexual orientations. One of the attackers, for example, as trial documents quoted by Blažič attest, "is not bothered if these people are at home and doing their own thing, but he is bothered if they show their sexual orientation in public and in front of children" (Bulc 2019). Another asserted that he had nothing against gays, "but that he did not like their exposure and spreading of I-don't-know-what, but if they do that in private life it does

not bother him" (ibid.). One of the attackers went even further – in addition to disagreeing with LGBTQ+ people publicly expressing their sexual orientation, he stressed that "it is not desirable for same-sex people to express their opinions publicly" (ibid.).

It seems that the three attackers were radicalised not necessary by personal circumstances (micro level), but rather by openly homophobic conservative public sphere in Slovenia, including MPs, religious representatives, controversial psychiatrists and the media (macro level). Also, a greater prominence of LGBTQ+ identities in Slovenian society in the 2000s, in particular after Slovenia joined the EU, could have influenced the assailants' motivation. In other words, they might have been triggered by the justice claims of their rivals – the LGBTQ+ organisations (meso level). In addition, however, the three assailants were most probably radicalised also by homophobic discourse produced by their far-right peers, internalising the discourse voiced by social groups with which they appeared to identify the most (meso level).

It seems also that their feeling of perceived injustice was not triggered by possibly unfair distribution of resources but rather as an outcome of systemic changes in Slovenian society with regard to visibility of LGBTQ+ persons, by the general homophobic climate in conservative public sphere as well as by far-right group peer pressure. In this sense, the attackers did not appear to point to the injustice rooted in lack of political representation. On the contrary, their homophobic views have been rather richly represented in the Slovenian parliament before and after the attack took place. By attacking Cafe Open the three men did not seem to intend to restore justice in society in general, but rather to instil fear in the "opponents" whom they viewed as representatives of a social group rather than individuals. They put into action hateful ideology – namely, homophobia – to achieve this goal. It seems the three attackers share the far-right groups' feeling of insufficient recognition in Slovenian society of traditional values and ideologies such as patriotism, traditional gender roles, traditional nuclear family structure etc. One of the assailants for example claimed in court "a child needs to have a mother and a father rather than a father and a father" (Bulc 2021).

The grievances the attackers experienced seemed to be abstract, general and broad, rather than personal and specific. They do not address their grievances to a body that might cure it. Rather they seem to be satisfied with a general complaint about the behaviour of gays and lesbians. They seem to accuse the LGBTQ+ population as a whole, rather than specific individuals, for being too visible and exposed in the Slovenian public sphere. The attackers mention explicitly just one potential grievance – public visibility of gay sexual orientation (and gay opinion). However, it could be argued that they did also embrace the grievances of far-right organisations they seemed to identify with – namely, blaming gays and lesbians for being non-patriotic due to their inability to have children and hence restrain the growth of the nation's population. The grievances of the three assailants were therefore based in prejudice and bigotry rather than in plausible social fact that could be changed or social problem that could be remedied by a certain rational procedure.

The assailants' feeling of powerlessness and alienation is arguably almost impossible to detect from the available data. One of the assailants does however mention that the sport team supporters group has been a bad influence (Bulc 2021). He managed to avoid it while he had a girlfriend, but started hanging out with the sports team supporters group once again after he

and her ended the relationship. This seems to indicate that he was searching for more meaningful relationships and found it with the girlfriend. Was there desire present to reverse the process of alienation and possibly radicalisation on his part? It is hard to say. It could also be argued that the fact the assailants joined a far-right peer group was a result of their feeling of alienation. There is no data, however, that supports this claim. It seems to be clear nevertheless that the assailants joined the sport team supporters group (and most probably far-right groups, too) as a result of an autonomous decision rather than external social factors or coercion.

As (most probable) members of far-right groups the three attackers (most probably) experienced polarisation to a certain degree and perceived their actions as part of actions of a particular socio-cultural group – male dominated far-right extremists. Since they nominally regretted the assault and stated they do not hate gays and lesbians, as well as apologized to Blažič, one might argue their perception of the scale of polarization between camps had always been rather small. However, their regret and apology was described by the judge as insincere. It is therefore difficult to establish how irreconcilable they consider their values to be with the values of the opposing camp. Interestingly, the three attackers do not seem that polarised in their relation to the establishement, as the attackers homophobic views match the views on gays and lesbians expressed by conservative politicians, religious representatives etc. There were arguably at least two far-right political parties present in the Slovenian Parliament at the time of the attack that the attackers could vote for in theory. Although there was no political party that would publically support violent attacks against LGBTQ+ persons, there were several whose agenda called for discrimination against LGBTQ+ persons and other minorities, mirroring the views held by Slovenian far-right groups and the three assailants.

Conclusions

Slovenia's social and individual homophobia, as well as the country's radicalisation and extremism in general, should always be analysed in relation to social, economic and historical circumstances. It is therefore hard to generalize about homophobia in Slovenia without falling into a trap of painting it with too broad a brush. Nevertheless, this report argues that the homophobic attack on Cafe Open is more than just a specific historical occurrence. It is the country's representative "hotspot of radicalisation" precisely for the fact that it can still speak today (and most probably will for a long time in the future) to processes of radicalization in Slovenian society. It represents extremist violence by far-right groups that is far from extinct. Not studying it in detail would be irresponsible.

Hopefully, this report is a step forward towards understanding the motivations of radicalized individuals (in our case young far-right radicals) in relation to their organised peer groups (far-right groups) and general trends in society (prevalent social homophobia). As we analysed attackers motivation factors (injustice-grievance-alienation-polarization) and the hotspot (homophobic incident) and correlate them with macro, meso and micro factors as well as facilitating factors that influenced the violent act, we could see that in Slovenia all these factors have been to a large degree connected. Attackers' views on LGBTQ+ people's visibility in Slovenian society practically mirrored those held by their peers in far-right groups, which mirrored those of conservative elites. It seems this phenomenon of "matching homophobic socks" on both Dr. Martens boots and Louis Vuitton shoes, which most probably sprung into

existence years before the fatal evening of 25 June 2009, has still not disappeared today and will not disappear in the near future.

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Annex: I-GAP Coding

Homophobic Assault on Cafe Open in Ljubljana

Injustice Coding

Q1. To what extent the hotspot is a response to injustice?	2
Comments to Q1	The three attackers did not seem to intend to restore justice in society in general but rather to instill fear in the "opponents" . They did put into action hateful ideology - namely, homophobia.
Q2. To what extent was the actor motivated by a real or perceived systemic bias or prejudice which leads to consistently unfair treatment?	4
Comments to Q2	It seems the perceived injustice was experienced as an outcome of systemic changes in Slovenian society as LGBTQ+ persons started enjoying and demanding more rights and became more prominent in public life.
Q3. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of redistribution?	1
Comments to Q3	Arguably, redistribution did not at all play a significant role in radicalisation of the three assailants.
Q4. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of recognition?	4
Comments to Q4	It seems the three attackers share the far-right groups' feeling of insufficient recognition in Slovenian society of traditional values/ideologies such as patriotism, traditional family ("mother and father, not two fathers"), traditional gender roles etc.
Q5. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of representation?	2
Comments to Q5	The three attackers did not seem to point to the injustice rooted in lack of political representation, which might not be unusual as their homophobic views are rather richly represented in Slovenian parliament, (as well as in the Catholic Church circles and the media)

Grievance Coding

Q1. How specific is the experienced grievance?	2
Comments to Q1	The assailants seem to accuse LGBTQ+ population in general for being too visible and "exposed" in the Slovenian public sphere .
Q2. How extensive and diverse is the list of grievances?	2
Comments to Q2	The attackers explicitly mention only one potential grievance (public visibility of gay sexual orientation), yet it might be argued that they did identify with grievances of far-right organisations they seemed to identify with - namely that gays and lesbians cannot be patriotic because they cannot have children and hence contribute to nation's growth.
Q3. How personal is the grievance?	5
Comments to Q3	All three assailants describe their grievance in rather impersonal way.
Q4. How formalized is the demand to address the grievance?	5
Comments to Q4	The attackers do not address their grievance to a body that might cure it. Rather they seem to be satisfied with an abstract complaint about the behavior of gays and lesbians.
Q5. How realistic are the prospects to address the grievance?	5
Comments to Q5	The grievance of the three assailants was based in prejudice and bigotry - namely, in homophobia.

Alienation Coding

Q1. How specific and central is the sense of alienation?	3
Comments to Q1	The assailants' feeling of powerlessness and alienation is arguably almost impossible to detect from the available data. One of the assailants does however mention that the football supporters group has been a bad influence. He managed to avoid it while he had a girlfriend, but started hanging with the football supporters group once again after him and the girlfriend broke up. This seems

	to indicate that he's been searching for more meaningful relationships.
Q2. How voluntary is the process of alienation?	2
Comments to Q2	The assailants have joined the football supporters group (and seeminly far-right groups, too) as a result of an autonomous decision.
Q3. How complete is the alienation?	2
Comments to Q3	
Q4. How entrenched is the alienation?	3
Comments to Q4	It is practically impossible to answer this question with the date that is available to us at the moment.
Q5. How reversible is the sense of alienation?	4
Comments to Q5	There is a desire present to reverse the process of alienation and possibly radicalisation in statements of one of the attackers. He seems to regret ending the relationship with his girlfriend and returning to the group of football supporters.

Polarisation Coding

Q1. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized?	3
Comments to Q1	As probable members of far-right groups the attackers experienced polarisation to a certain degree and perceived their actions as part of actions of a socio-cultural group.
Q2. How high is the perceived level of the polarization?	3
Comments to Q2	As the actors nominally regretted the assault, stated that they do not hate gays and lesbians, and apologized to the attacked gay activist, one might argue their perception of the scale of polarization between camps is rather small. On the other hand, their regret and apology was described by judge as insincere. It is therefore hard to say how irreconcilable do they consider their values to be with the other camp.
Q3. To what extent do the actor's opinions radically contrast with the	2

institutions (political, religious, cultural) and policies that are currently in place?	
Comments to Q3	The three attackers do not seem that polarised in comparison to the establishement as the attackers homophobic views fit nicely with the views on gays and lesbians expressed by conservative politicians, religious representatives etc.
Q4. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized as compared with the social sphere?	3
Comments to Q4	The available data does not allow as to speculate on this.
Q5. Did the actor consider their radical positions to have a clear outlet on the institutional, cultural, or political spectrum prior to the hotspot?	4
Comments to Q5	There was arguably at least two far-right political parties present in the Slovenian Parliament at the time of the attack that the attackers could vote for. There was no party that would publically support violent attacks against LGBTQ+ persons, but there were several whose agenda was to discriminate against various minorities including the LGBTQ+.