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Jihadist Terror with a Fatal Outcome

A comparative case study on attacks in Austria and Germany

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The number of jihadist-motivated terror attacks with a fatal outcome has also increased in recent years in German-speaking Europe, specifically in Austria and Germany.[1] Analysis shows that these acts are mostly isolated or considered in the context of time and content with attacks abroad in non-German-speaking countries. This article presents a comparison of the fatal jihadist attacks of recent years in this part of the continent.[2] The period chosen goes back as far as 2015. Following the refugee crisis, which culminated in the autumn/winter of that year, the parameters and potential for such attacks in Central Europe changed substantially.[3] Basically, it can be said that terror attacks resulting in fatalities (regardless of the motivation of the respective perpetrator) were rather rare up until that point. According to official data, until 2 November 2020, there had not been any fatal attacks in Austria at all since 1995 (the Oberwart attack) and 2009;[4] the two mentioned were completely differently motivated ideologically speaking. In Germany, there were rightwing terrorist-motivated attacks in Munich (22 July 2016), Kassel[5] (2 June 2019), Halle (9 October 2019) and Hanau (9 February 2020) – all committed by lone perpetrators in execution of the crime. To some extent, dissatisfaction with refugee policy played a role as a motive for the attacks to a greater or lesser degree, as was proved in Munich, Kassel and Halle (Hartleb 2020). For the jihadist spectrum, the final attack of the type considered in Germany would be that of 2 March 2011 at Frankfurt Airport, which cost two US soldiers their lives.[6] The decision to focus on those cases in which victims died is because these attacks have to be considered as having been the "most successful" from the perspective of the terrorists. The question as to whether an attack was a "terrorist act" within the meaning of the penal code did not play a role in their selection – also because differences exist in the legal frameworks from country to country in this regard.

1. CASE STUDIES

The case studies presented below have a uniform structure in order to make them easier to compare: first, the course of events is outlined, then the prior history of the perpetrator and the role of the authorities. Particular attention is paid to how well the perpetrator was known (to the authorities) and whether he had previously been identified as delinquent, i.e. the extent to which he was "on the radar". All those mentioned are naturally presumed legally innocent until handed down a final sentence by a court of law. Names are given to the extent they were already mentioned publicly, mostly in the media.

It should be noted that of the five cases considered here, Würzburg was included with reservation. A jihadist motive was quickly presumed by the authorities,[7] but the actions are now considered to be those of a psychologically ill person: a fact that is not surprising, especially where this phenomenon is concerned (cf. Neumann 2016, 191–196; 257–261).[8] With regard to the lone perpetrator involved in carrying out the act, there is a nexus of psychopathology and Islamist-orientated ideology (cf. Cotti/Meloy 2019). This can also be clearly seen in another case from the recent past: on 6 November 2021, a 27 year-old Syrian randomly stabbed passengers with a knife on an Intercity Express (ICE) train and injured four people. The man arrived in Germany as a "refugee" in 2014 and had lived there ever since. The perpetrator had watched propaganda videos of Islamic State (IS), but was subsequently classified as guilty by reason of insanity and sent for psychiatric treatment (cf. Aykanat 2021). Thus the (possible) political aspect of the act rapidly disappeared from the public discussion. The case highlighted various parallels with those under consideration here, but unlike that of Würzburg was not included here because it did not result in any fatalities.[9]

The underlying situations of the various cases are to be described as being very different. Perhaps the most thoroughly processed was that of Berlin: for three years and three months, members of the German Bundestag interviewed around 180 witnesses and experts. The findings obtained ran to almost 1,900 pages. In the other cases, there were relatively few sources, primarily journalistic in nature, which is why it was felt important to involve such media that are commonly thought of as being "quality media".

1.1 Berlin, 19 December 2016 – Anis Amri

Anis Amri had taken control of the lorry in which he sat on 19 December 2016 only that very afternoon. He left the body of the Polish driver he had shot and killed beforehand lying on the passenger seat while he carried out the attack. Towards 20:00 hours, he drove the hijacked tractor unit into the crowd of people visiting the Christmas market at the Gedächtniskirche memorial church on Breitscheidplatz in Berlin. Eleven died, more than 60 were injured, some seriously. Amri managed to flee the scene and even the country. He was shot dead in Milan on 23 December 2016 during a routine police check, after he had first opened fire. The route he fled via is one of the puzzling facts of the case, as the investigative committee of the Bundestag noted (cf. Deutscher Bundestag 2021, 1330).

Anis Amri was not a blank sheet of paper before the attack: he was born in Tunisia and came from the Kairouan region – located near the Libyan border, it is considered to be a stronghold of jihadism. As a youth, he committed minor offences. In 2011, aged 19, Amri left North Africa on a refugee boat bound for Europe. In Italy, he was sentenced to four years in prison for attempted arson. After his release in May 2015, Amri was supposed to be deported; however, the Tunisian authorities did not take him back (cf. ibid., 271 f)

Amri first travelled illegally to Switzerland, where he apparently obtained the weapon he was later to use, a small calibre pistol. In July 2015, the by now probably 23 year-old arrived in Germany as an alleged refugee, accompanied by two other IS sympathisers (cf. ibid., 273 f). As he came across to one roommate as being a "zealot", the police opened a test case. From November 2015 at the latest, the federal prosecutor in Karlsruhe had

him specifically monitored by the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) and by the State Criminal Police Office (LKA) of North Rhine-Westphalia. According to the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, Amri had spoke to IS on the telephone at some point after 2 February 2016, offering himself as a suicide bomber in Germany. At times, he planned to fight for IS in the Middle East, but then apparently decided to carry out an attack in Germany. Amongst other things, Amri attended the now banned Deutschsprachiger Islamkreis Hildesheim mosque, where he was observed during the undercover investigations against the suspected terror cell of the locally resident "hate preacher" Abdullah Adbulah, alias "Abu Walaa". Abu Walaa was considered to be the leader of IS in Germany at the time. Amri received a "private audience", during which the later attack is presumed to have been theologically "blessed".

In March 2016, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution ruled that Amri was canvassing across Germany for people to commit Islamically motivated attacks (cf. Federal Ministry of the Interior 2016). However, in June 2016, the working group of the newly created Joint Counter-Terrorism Centre (GTAZ) – in which Amri was raised as a topic on a total of eleven occasions – came to the conclusion that he did not pose any specific danger (cf. Gemeinsames Terrorabwehrzentrum 2016a). The reason why the representatives of 40 security agencies came to this (new) assessment cannot be found in the records. The fact that Amri dealt professionally in drugs probably played a role as this finding is considered "incompatible" with terror plans. Monitoring by the LKA in Berlin was suspended on the basis of this appraisal on 15 June 2016, i.e. about six months before the attack (cf. Gemeinsames Terrorabwehrzentrum 2016b).

In April 2016, Amri's requests for subsidiary protection were refused for being unjustified (cf. Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz 2016). However, the addressees of the decision revealed a certain "Ahmed Almari" as well as eight other identities, including his real name. Efforts to deport him were unsuccessful because his file remained cold and he engaged in obfuscation tactics with his many "identities". In total, more than 60 agencies in Germany dealt with the small-time criminal known for a being a radical before the attack took place.[10] The Tunisian committed drug-related offences and was caught using a false identity, but was released after one day in detention. Amri knew about the dangers of deportation. At times, he would search on social media for women in order to marry and thus obtain the right to remain.[11]

In Berlin, at the latest from mid-December 2015, he frequently visited the mosque association "Fussilet 33", hidden behind the façade of an inconspicuous residential building in Berlin's Moabit district. In the "hotspot for Islamists" and surrounded by IS supporters, he called off the attack date a total of 18 times between 2 October and 19 December 2016, as the location data retrieved from his mobile phone revealed (cf. Deutscher Bundestag 2021, 149 f). The Bundestag's investigative committee, also set up by virtue of this fact, ruled that the lone perpetrator thesis was to be rejected (cf. ibid., 1114). The parliamentarians reached the conclusion that "[the] investigations into Amri's escape route [left] much room for speculation" (Deutscher Bundestag 2021, 1117). Apparently, a "Berlin family entangled in Salafist structures" provided support here.[12] Moreover, there is the justified suspicion that foreign intelligence services were also involved in Amri's escape – presumably with the intention of spying on Amri's IS contacts (cf. Aust/Büchel 2017). Amri's attack was

claimed by IS. Attacks involving lorries had previously been described in its online magazine "Rumiyah" ("Rome")[13] in an edition of November 2016, under the heading "Just Terror Tactics" (Rumiyah 2016) and probably inspired copycat offenders.[14]

1.2 Hamburg, 28 July 2017 – Ahmad Alhaw

In the afternoon of 28 July 2017, Ahmad Alhaw picked up a 20 cm-long knife in a supermarket in Hamburg[15] and used it to attack several people in the store and on the street. During the attack, he called out "Allahu Akbar". His goal was "to kill as many German citizens of Christian belief as possible" (Woldin 2018). The then 27 year-old injured a total of seven people, three of them in the supermarket, one of whom bled to death at the scene. A group of passers-by, many of them Muslims themselves, prevented worse from happening.[16] The men faced the attacker with chairs and everyday objects and cornered him. A hit caused him to fall to the ground unconscious, allowing the police to arrest him (cf. Mascolo/Steinke 2017). Shortly before the attack, Alhaw had attended the Assahaba mosque for Friday prayers. In the past, this had become the focus of the State Office for the Protection of the Constitution because of the activities of the Egyptian "hate preacher" Baher Ibrahim (cf. Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz Hamburg 2015). After the attack, he described himself as a terrorist and IS follower. During the police interview, he uttered a pledge of allegiance to IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (cf. Maxwill 2018). Ahmad Alhaw was born in Saudi Arabia into a Palestinian family. When he was nine years old, the family moved to the Gaza Strip. His family was supposedly Muslim, but not strictly religious. Having completed school, he travelled with the aid of a tractor to Egypt to study dentistry. However, the young man soon aborted this undertaking as he wanted to live and study in Europe. Alhaw travelled via Turkey and Greece to Norway, where an uncle lived. This uncle, a retired airline captain, reported that Alhaw assumed he would get an education in Europe without any problem. However, he failed repeatedly to obtain a residence permit: Norway in 2009, Sweden and Spain in 2013, and Norway again in 2014. In March 2015, Alhaw set off for Germany. Allocated to Hamburg through an asylum distribution procedure, he submitted an asylum application in May 2015. In accordance with the Dublin Regulation, Alhaw should actually have been returned to Norway, but the authorities missed the relevant deadline by just one day (cf. Wiedmann-Schmidt 2018). In December 2016, his Germany asylum application was also rejected. The Palestinian was required to leave the country; further identification papers, which were unavailable anyway, would not be necessary for his deportation to Gaza (cf. Backes et al. 2017). Apparently willing to leave the country himself at this point in time, he did not file an appeal. According to various witnesses, the young man fluctuated between a western lifestyle, which included drug taking, and a strict religious appearance. And so, one day in November 2016, Alhaw suddenly turned up in a café for refugees at Hamburg University and read out a self-written text saying that Muslims around the world were being oppressed and Germany was partly responsible for this (cf. Wiedmann-Schmidt 2017). A friend reported his behaviour and further radical statements to the police in August 2016. In fact Alhaw was already known to the authorities for being an Islamist before the attack, but not as a jihadist. He was considered to be extremist, but not given to violence and was assessed as being "below the threshold". Alhaw had contacts on the Salafist scene and had

probably had dealings with IS since 2014. The perpetrator was noted for being a drug user and for his particular hatred of Germans. A home-made flag of the self-styled Caliphate was found in his refugee accommodation; however, the Caliphate did not claim the attack for itself (cf. Jansen 2017). Alhaw was considered to be unstable and conspicuous in his behaviour. At the same time, however, he was entirely willing to cooperate, collaborated on the procurement of documents and appeared willing to leave the country. In May 2018, Alhaw was sentenced to life imprisonment, with the court recognising the particular severity of his guilt (cf. Goertz 2019, 33 f).

1.3 Dresden, 4 October 2020 – Abdullah Al Haj Hasan

Abdullah Al Haj Hasan was purported to be 20 years old when he stabbed two men from behind in the middle of the street with a kitchen knife he was carrying, at 21:30 hours on 4 October 2020. The 21 cm-long blade penetrated the body of the first man almost completely, snapped and remained in place. The killer continued his attack with a second knife. His victims were – recognisable as such – a homosexual couple. One victim suffered fatal injuries, the second survived the attack seriously wounded (cf. Ramm 2021). The perpetrator had previously described homosexuals as "enemies of God". It seems that Al Haj Hasan was carrying the household knife specially for the purpose of (spontaneously) committing a crime.

Born in Aleppo, Syria, Abdullah Al Haj Hasan came to Germany in autumn 2015 as an unaccompanied, underage refugee together with a cousin. His family Syria, members of the Sunni branch of Islam are not said to have been strictly religious. Upon his arrival, he nurtured a western lifestyle. From spring 2016, he increasingly engaged with IS and the idea of jihad. His radical attitude is evidenced by chat posts and the use of IS symbols. For him, Germany was enemy territory, a fact that did not escape the security authorities. He was known to the State Office for the Protection of the Constitution in Saxony as an extremist from 14 July 2017 onwards and was subsequently handled by the intelligence services. In August 2017, he was considered to be an Islamist threat (cf. Nimz 2021). Initial direct contact with extremists prepared to use violence apparently took place via the video platform YouTube. Even before the attack, the Syrian had been given a suspended sentence by the Dresden Higher Regional Court in the context of his radical attitude. In 2018, investigators found messages on his mobile phone, in which he ranted against "infidels" and threatened to "slaughter" them. The young man is said to have described himself as a "sleeper cell" and to have planned a suicide bombing with an explosive belt. For this, and explicitly because of his support for a terrorist organisation, he received a youth sentence of two years and nine months. During his detention, Al Haj Hasan attacked a law enforcement officer; the district court in Leipzig sentenced him again. In prison, he took part in therapy and a deradicalisation programme. After being released, he was monitored from time to time, even on the day of the attack. Al Haj Hasan only appeared to be fulfilling all the conditions imposed on him. It later became clear that he tried to radicalise his fellow inmates. He apparently dreamed of travelling to the IS Caliphate in order to fight there. According to the treating therapist, a martyr's death was the only right way to die (cf. Barth 2021). He had apparently selected his two victims in order to punish them with death for being representatives of a free and open social order that he rejected as "faithless". As the police could only identify him as the per-

petrator through traces of DNA, 16 days passed between the attack and his arrest. During this period, he "prepared bigger things and wanted to kill other infidels or return to Syria". At the time of his arrest, Al Haj Hasan is again thought to have been carrying a commercially available knife (Barth 2021).

The Higher Regional Court in Dresden sentenced the perpetrator to life imprisonment, referring to the particular gravity of his guilt. Al Haj Hasan was required to leave the country, but was tolerated and not deported because of a moratorium on deportations to Syria in force in Germany at the time. The Federal Intelligence Service received a warning from a foreign intelligence service in August 2019. However, as journalistic research revealed, the responsible caseworkers did not forward the warning to the authorities in Saxon, the police or the State Office for the Protection of the Constitution. The Joint Counter-Terrorism Centre was not informed either. On the day of the attack, he prayed at a mosque in Dresden immediately before the attack (cf. Flade et al. 2020).

1.4 Vienna, 2 November 2020 – Kujtim Fejzulai

Kujtim Fejzulai opened fire shortly before 20:00 hours, killing a 21 year-old man who was to become the first victim of the attack. The 20 year-old killer, armed with a replica Kalashnikov, a Tokarev pistol and a machete-like knife, then roamed the area around Ruprechtskirche church and Schwedenplatz, a popular nightlife district (cf. Fuchs 2020). The second victim was a German waiter, who died when the perpetrator fired into a group of people outside the restaurant. Further shots injured a 44 year-old so seriously that she later succumbed to her injuries in hospital. On Schwedenplatz, he shot dead a 38 year-old restaurant owner, who was trying to move his staff and guests to safety. After just a few minutes, a police officer confronted the attacker and returned fire. Fejzulai gunned down the officer, but he survived – also thanks to the courageous intervention of two men from Turkey and a Palestinian, who removed him and an older woman from the danger zone. In total, in the short duration of the attack, there were five firefights between the perpetrator and the authorities. He was finally shot dead by two members of the special unit WEGA[17] on Ruprechtsplatz (cf. Wiener Zeitung 2020). As he was wearing a fake explosive belt during the attack, the bomb squad of the Ministry of the Interior was called in first (cf. Der Standard 2020). Only nine minutes after it started, the attack ended with Fejzulai's death. Four people had lost their life, over 20 others were injured, some of them seriously,[18] 13 of them having suffered bullet wounds (cf. Wiener Zeitung 2020).

It was not immediately clear that the attack had been carried out by just one person. Special forces and police officers therefore cordoned of Vienna city centre and combed through it. Only in the course of 3 November 2020 did they come to the conclusion with the necessary degree of certainty that Fejzulai – at least during the attack – had acted alone. In the hours after the attack, 15 people in his locality were arrested and several apartments in Vienna and other cities in eastern Austria were searched (cf. ibid.). The attack also led to house searches and arrests in Switzerland and Germany, although their connection to the attack in Vienna is now questionable. The attacker himself was identified within four hours. His apartment was searched the same night. He had obviously prepared it for a possible firefight (cf. ibid.). The day after the terror attack, so-called "Islamic State" (IS) claimed responsibility for the act and published a video containing a

pledge of allegiance, in which Fejzulai used the battle name "Abu Dujana al-Albani" (cf. Gruber 2020).

There was much speculation over Fejzulai's motive and more specific details as to why he chose the time and place of the attack in the way he did (Stockhammer/ Neumann 2021, 4). As far as the choice of targets was concerned, the fact that Fejzulai carried out the attack in a popular nightlife district was interpreted by some as being an attack on the western lifestyle.[19] The fact that the attack began in the immediate vicinity of the synagogue on Seitenstettengasse was seen as a possible indication that he had deliberately wanted to murder Jews.

As it turned out, Kujtim Fejzulai was very well known to the authorities – even as a (prevented) IS terrorist. The 20 year-old was born in Austria and grew up in Vienna; he was of Albanian heritage and held Austrian and North Macedonian citizenship. In September 2018, he had tried to travel with a companion to the areas in Syria controlled by IS. Apprehended and detained by the Turkish authorities, he was sent back to Austria,[20] where he was sentenced to 22 months' detention on 25 April 2019 for membership of a terrorist association. As prescribed in law, Fejzulai was conditionally released early on 5 December 2019, having served two thirds of his time in prison. According to the judiciary, he complied with the conditions imposed on him.[21] The Provincial Agency for State Protection and Counter Terrorism (Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz [LVT]) in Vienna held a threat evaluation meeting, in which the released prisoner showed little cooperation – but his case was initially classified as not being a priority. The initial evaluation took place late, namely in September 2020. At the beginning of October, it was changed to the lower level of "high risk", which, however, has no consequences.[22] According to investigations, Fejzulai regularly attended two relevantly known mosques, the Melit Ibrahim mosque on Hasnerstraße in Wien-Ottakring and the Tewhid mosque on Murlingengasse in Vienna's Meidling district. He may have been radicalised here before his detention (cf. Wiener Zeitung 2020).

Following a discussion between the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice as to who would be responsible if the perpetrator were no longer in detention or would not be in detention again in the future despite being handed down a relevant sentence, the Ministry of the Interior was soon forced to admit to several failures and mistakes. In July 2020, Fejzulai had already met up with comrades from Germany and Switzerland who were known to the authorities – to some extent, these should have been classified as a terror cell. The meeting was also monitored at the request of the German authorities, who above all had an interest in the participants who had travelled to it. After the meeting, observation of the later attacker was discontinued on 20 July 2020. On 21 July 2020, the sentenced terrorist travelled to Bratislava, where he tried to buy munition for an AK-47 in various gunshops. He failed because he was not in possession of any legal firearms documents. The Slovakian authorities promptly passed this information on via Europol to the authorities in Austria. These, however, did not take any measures aimed directly at Fejzulai as they felt further clarification was necessary. The case subsequently lay unattended to for a long time.[23]

1.5 Würzburg, 25 June 2021 – Abdirahman Jibril A.

On Friday, 25 June 2021, at 17:00 hours, Abdirahman Jibril A. entered a department store in Würzburg and enquired about kitchen knives in the household de-

partment. The 24 year-old Somali citizen reached for a knife with a blade length of 33 cm and began his attack. He killed a 49 year-old woman, who threw herself over her 11 year-old daughter to protect her, and seriously injured the child. An 82 year-old woman, who came to assist the mother and daughter, did not survive the attack either. A 24 year-old student also died in the department store. The perpetrator left the department store and continued his attack in a Sparkasse savings bank and on the street, where passers-by stood in his way. With some using everyday objects, they cornered the man, who was still armed with the knife, and backed him into a side street.

Almost two minutes after the alarm was raised, the police arrived on the scene. With knife in hand, A. then approached a police officer, who rendered him immobile with a shot to the thigh and the attacker was detained.

In addition to the three women who lost their life, a total of nine people were injured in the attack – five of them seriously and in some cases with life-threatening injuries (cf. Jansen/Sabin 2021). According to two witnesses, of whom one was estimated by the authorities to be reliable, A. supposedly called out "Allahu Akbar" during the attack. Later, while receiving medical treatment in custody, he is said to have spoken of "jihad" (cf. ibid.). However, initial reports on the discovery of what might have been IS propaganda material were not confirmed. His mother and ex-wife said he was "definitely not a radical extremist" (Flade/Mascolo 2021). Reports on the case discussed the Somali's psychological problems and two admissions for treatment on the basis of threatening or unclear behaviour in January and June 2021, raising them as a possible – "non-political" – explanation for the attack. According to reports in the media, he is said to have received inpatient, psychiatric treatment of varying duration on up to five occasions. However, Bavaria's interior minister Joachim Herrmann pointed out that psychological problems and terrorist motives did not have to be mutually exclusive.[24] The perpetrator was later admitted to a psychiatric ward (cf. Flade/Mascolo 2021). He is now considered to be incapacitated, which also brought the (political) debate around the attack to a standstill. Abdirahman Jibril A., born in 1997 in Mogadishu, Somalia, arrived in Germany in May 2015 and was registered in various German cities, from September 2019 onwards in a homeless shelter in Würzburg. He was not known to the authorities for radical Islamic views or even for being a dangerous person, although there were various other points of contact: investigations into a physical altercation in an asylum shelter, admission to a psychiatric facility after he had threatened people (but did not attack anyone) with a knife during a dispute in the shelter in January 2021, and an incident in June 2021, in which A. refused to get out of a car. Also at the beginning of 2021, another resident indicated that A. had spoken about having killed people for the terror organisation al-Shabaab in his country of origin Somalia in 2008/2009. However, an investigation was not opened due to a lack of specific information. The question as to whether there was a nugget of truth in this assertion – connection to a terror militia – was raised again after the attack, but once more rejected as a "misunderstanding". A. had said to the Imam of a mosque he regularly attended that he worked for the Russian and American intelligence services – which is probably to be viewed as a construct or even a delusion (cf. ibid.). According to the authorities, the asylum process was still ongoing and A. was legally resident in Germany as a person entitled to subsidiary protection.

2. ANALYTICAL COMPARISON

The political reactions to the attacks are to be evaluated as extremely different, at least with regard to the respective government leadership. The relationship between "refugee crisis" and "danger of terrorism", which is deemed especially delicate in Germany,[25] can be shown.

Angela Merkel, a CDU politician and Federal Chancellor since 2005, repeatedly and explicitly did not want to see this relationship. Terror does not come through refugees, she said in August 2016 – probably also because of the "welcome culture" introduced by her and to some extent understood in dogmatic terms (cf. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 2016), which remained prominent in political and media discourse (cf. Haller 2017). Only a few other voices articulated by the rightwing populist "Alternative für Deutschland" (AfD), which profited electorally from being in opposition to Merkel, was able to wins seats in all state parliaments and the German Bundestag after the party climbed another three percent in the polls in summer 2015 (cf. Hartleb 2017, 97–120). The former Berlin CDU Senator of the Interior Frank Henkel, who was under pressure as the lead candidate in the Berlin elections, expressed himself with drastic words in July 2016, just months before the attack by Anis Amri in Berlin: "Nobody should delude themselves, we have clearly imported some utterly brutal people who are capable of barbaric crimes, which have not been an everyday occurrence in our country until now. This must be called out clearly and without taboo. This clarity also includes dealing proactively with the topic of Islamism. Otherwise, politics risk being perceived as detached from reality" (Tagesspiegel 2016).

Under the impression of the attack in Vienna, the then Austrian Federal Chancellor Sebastian Kurz made clear statements about not wanting to have the "sick ideology" of "immigrated Islamism" in the country (Bild-de 2021).

However, Germany's long-time chancellor and her (later) Austrian counterpart had already adopted very different positions following the migration movements of 2015, although both also acted in coordination as members of the European People's Party (EPP) at European level: while Merkel committed herself to the welcome culture addressed above, Kurz shaped his profile mainly by touting that he had implemented the "closure of the Balkan route".[26] Kurz differed clearly from Merkel on the topic of migration, amongst other things in his choice of coalition partner. It is worth noting that he became extremely popular with this line in some of the German media and among sections of the population in the large neighbouring country.

That the danger of such attacks was increasing was articulated more clearly in Austria than in Germany during the period investigated. The two approaches, both the negation of the relationship on the one side and the naming and condemnation of the radical Islamic or jihadist background on the other, are represented by people and the opposite position is often seized upon as provocation and thus viewed negatively. As both positions deal with mass positions to a certain degree, "politics" here can never "please" all citizens and will always irritate a large proportion in the way it reacts. The polarisation of our societies is not likely to abate in the near future, especially since the pressure of migration will probably increase again and, for example, new (refugee) movements from Afghanistan are to be expected.[27] As the cases dealt with here show, the risk will continue or arise that people in asylum seeker facilities and/or due to a lack of prospects will become (further) radicalised or at some

point give expression to their radical attitude through violent acts.

However, implementation of the right to asylum and residence was not the only topic for which problems with the state apparatus came to light in the course of coming to terms with the attacks: before the attacks in Berlin, Vienna and Dresden, information was not forwarded promptly or at all to or between authorities, even though foreign intelligence services had provided clues or sent warnings. In the cases of Berlin and Vienna, various investigative committees dealt with the tricky question of a failure of the authorities, which for some, especially among some media representatives, was already a given in the immediate wake of the attacks. A distinction must be made in the assessment: both perpetrators were involved in international networks and spent quite some time preparing their attacks. Ex post, an intervention at certain points in the time leading up to the act itself seems to have been entirely possible in these cases. However, why this failure happened, which was (allegedly) clearly identifiable after the fact, is hardly ever dealt with in the media and thus public discussion. Thus it mostly remains unclear whether there are "construction errors" in the respective security architecture and what these are based on,[28] whether the problems could be solved with a larger deployment of resources (e.g. more staff or better training), or whether the failure happened simply because of mistakes by or even a lack of suitability of the persons involved. Thus, in all probability, not "all lessons" were learned from the attacks and only ad hoc or staffing adjustments were carried out, where perhaps systemic reforms or simply more resources were necessary.

For all the criticism, some of it justified, it must not be overlooked that the authorities have been increasingly successful at uncovering attack plans or preventing their execution, both in Germany and in Austria.

All five perpetrators came from different countries of origin, but the history of their residence differs only between Austria and Germany, where the attacks took place. All four men who carried out attacks in Germany arrived in the Federal Republic in 2015, while Fejzulai was the only one to grow up not only in the country, but even in the city in which he carried out his attack. An indirect biographical parallel comes from the fact that Fejzulai's family, like those of all perpetrators in Germany, came from a region characterised by (ethnic) conflicts. Moreover, four of the five perpetrators (Berlin, Dresden, Vienna and probably also Hamburg) had contacts and more or less concrete plans to fight for the "IS Caliphate" in its dominions in the Middle East.

On the basis of this fact, IS-inspired attacks are to be examined with an environmental analysis – even when the respective attackers act alone in the immediate execution of an attack. Too often, physical and virtual contacts can be detected with networks, if one could speak here of a "perpetrator acting on their own" (Nesser 2018, 310). The term "lone perpetrator plus", which was already in use in connection with Vienna, seems to have a certain justification cases such as these and represent a good approach to better classification of this phenomenon, especially since social networks and encrypted interaction channels have a role to play. The "lone perpetrator plus" may act in a manner decoupled from a terror network, but is in direct contact with relevant jihadist groups and comrades at home and abroad (cf. Stockhammer/ Neumann 2021, 4).

All perpetrators were obviously devout and invoked Islam in their acts. Witness statements referring to the typical calling of "Allahu Akbar" can be found in the at-

tacks in Berlin, Hamburg and Würzburg. The perpetrators from Berlin and Dresden attended a mosque on the day of the attack, the perpetrator from Hamburg shortly beforehand. The perpetrators from Vienna and Würzburg also frequently visited places of worship houses.[29] The mosques in Berlin, Hamburg and Vienna were already known to the authorities before the attacks as places of potential radicalisation and in some cases, such as, for example, the Fussilet mosque in Berlin, should even have been closed. In Austria, too, there had already been attempts to close radical mosques since 2018, but these closures were repealed by the courts (cf. Ichner 2021). No general causal relationships between mosque visits and radicalisation should be construed here. Nevertheless, this fact stands out.

All perpetrators without exception were known to the authorities. In the case of Amri, numerous offences were on file, but he was detained in Germany only for a single day. Alhaw was deemed an Islamist and it was known that he (like Amri) took drugs. In the case of Al Haj Hasan, the authorities were informed about his hatred for Germany and his willingness to resort to violence. Fejzulai was detained for his membership of a terrorist organisation. Nevertheless, before the attack in Vienna, as previously in Berlin and Dresden, monitoring was at some point suspended or only carried out sporadically. Al Haj Hasan and Fejzulai had to go through deradicalisation programmes during their time in prison which quite obviously did not bear fruit.

Both managed to skilfully deceive their supervisors. Investigations into A. for his assertion that he had killed for al-Shabaab in his home country were suspended. Another parallel between Amri and A. is that both displayed behavioural problems in Germany.

For the perpetrators of Hamburg, Dresden and Würzburg, psychological abnormalities can be observed. All three were described after the event as unstable by witnesses. This kind of abnormality occurs frequently in lone perpetrators (cf. Gill et al. 2014; Cotti 2021). The danger of being deported may have exacerbated the problem in the perpetrators.[30] In some of the cases, the authorities were accused of failings, although the reasons that led to these failings are debatable: Amri, Fejzulai and Al Haj Hasan were all monitored, at least from time to time. Hasan nevertheless managed to walk through Dresden "armed" with household knives; Amri even managed to go underground. In the case of Fejzulai, the monitoring did not prevent him from maintaining contacts in the radical Islamist environment and these had no consequences for him. Many authorities also dealt with Amri without tangible success or consequences for the perpetrator. Both were classified as being less dangerous than they actually were, although it is obvious that precisely this dangerousness could have been detected beforehand with the resources available. In the case of the attack in Dresden, warnings from the Federal Intelligence Service did not penetrate to the authorities in Saxony. Where Vienna is concerned, the Slovakian information was not processed quickly enough or used appropriately. At least in the public discourse, the question as to whether this concerns individual mistakes or a systemic failure (possibly due to a lack of resources) remains unanswered.

A clear pattern can be discerned in the residence status of the perpetrators: Alhaw should have been deported to Norway in accordance with the Dublin Regulation. Al Haj Hasan would have been required to leave the country, but this did not happen because of the moratorium on deportations to Syria. Amri should also have been deported because of his identity fraud and

because he was known to be dangerous. Fejzulai may have been an Austrian citizen, but the authorities had tried to strip him of it – which would only have been at all possible because he also held North Macedonian citizenship.[31] In the case of A., the asylum process was ongoing. The perpetrator was thus eligible for subsidiary protection and he resided formally and legally in Germany.

Thus for four of the five perpetrators, the authorities came to the conclusion before the attacks were committed that they had no claim to a residence permit or their deportation would have been in the interest of the respective community, but various legal obstacles stood in the way of their deportation, some of which could not be eliminated by the local authorities.[32] A political debate could be held on this as many people came to Central Europe under the designation "refugee", but have a status that means neither refugee protection nor eligibility to claim asylum (cf. Stehle 2021). Both Dresden and Würzburg and in other ways Vienna point to the difficult procedural arrangements and sometimes also grey areas: these are an open goal for generalisation and the levelling of blame, especially against the administrative apparatus bound by the laws in the constitutional state. Politically, the debate continues to be shied away from, at least in Germany, as the notion of the "welcome".

3. CONCLUSION

In summary it can be said that all five attackers were known to the authorities – in many cases as extremists or for their willingness to resort to violence. The (virtually) networked perpetrators were most strongly in the sights of state security. Nevertheless, the danger they posed was not correctly classified for various reasons or the resources used were insufficient to thwart the crime being committed. Some of the information that could have been warnings was processed either not at all or not quickly enough. Attempts at aligning authorities (meetings at the Joint Counter-Terrorism Centre in the cases of Berlin and Dresden) or the introduction of RADAR-iTE in Vienna are obviously not panaceas.

As the comparison shows, since 2015, it has been possible to subdivide jihadist-inspired terror attacks with fatalities in German-speaking Europe broadly into two groups: spontaneous perpetrators acting in isolation, who strike relatively immediately with "quickly improvisable weapons" (in these cases commercially available knives), and those perpetrators who receive at least virtual support from sympathisers or agents of IS. The latter consequently commit logistically more complex attacks, some of which proceed in accordance with the model of highly visible attacks around the world. This group of perpetrators tends to be "more efficient" in committing the act, the attacks lead to more deaths and injured people and are utilised by IS in professionally produced propaganda. But also those who had contacts and allegedly some form of assistance – even if only psychological in nature – acted as lone perpetrators in committing the act. This fact presently seems to be a characteristic of jihadist terror in Germany and Austria.

Another feature of the German-speaking countries could be that the political and public debate over attacks and their prevention is heavily influenced by historically constructed, social and political norms. The obvious mixing of possible trauma and flight, mental disorder and political radicalisation complicate policy approaches and make it difficult to have an objective follow-up debate on the role of the police and justice system in the constitutional state and the question of acting differently beforehand, e.g. through rapid deportations.

This is compounded by the issue that the phrase "failure of the authorities" often flows into the debate after an attack, but without questioning the precise reasons for this or the general framework conditions in detail, and discussing greater use of community resources for safety and security in broad terms. In the authors' opinion, it is therefore urgently necessary to focus on the topic more broadly, in order to obtain findings from beyond the German-speaking region, such as from France, Belgium and the United Kingdom. However, an analysis beyond a superficial and brief consideration, as the investigated cases show, is necessary because the security authorities knew in all of the cases about the danger of perpetrators being "in our midst" and yet for various reasons were still unable to protect the population.

Source: Schliefsteiner/Hartleb (own presentation)

Category	Berlin	Hamburg	Dresden	Vienna	Würzburg
Psychological problems/ instability	not really (western lifestyle, active drug dealer)	yes	yes	unknown	yes
IS material	yes (material and contacts)	yes (material consumed, crafted flag)	material consumed	probably yes	unclear, apparently not
Support of IS	yes ("official" confessional video)	yes	yes	yes ("official" confessional video)	no
IS contact	yes (numerous, battle planned there)	no (but apparently wanted to travel to the regions)	yes (at least plans to fight for IS; attempted to recruit others)	yes (battle planned there)	no
Claimed by IS	yes	no	unclear	yes	no
Weapon	pistol, lorry	household knife	household knife	rifle, pistol (machete)	household knife
Known to the authorities	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes (but not as an Islamist)
Status after the attack	shot (on the run)	arrested (immediately after the attack)	arrested (after investigations)	shot (during the attack)	shot at and arrested (immediately after the attack)
Involvement of passers-by	no (hardly possible due to the lorry attack)	yes (attacker kept at bay)	no	yes (victims removed from the danger zone)	yes (attacker kept at bay)
Classification before the attack	classified as highly dangerous (IS terrorist)	deemed extremist, but not ready to use violence	deemed dangerous	classified as dangerous (IS terrorist)	know for being aggressive
Warnings before the attack	yes (specific, also from foreign intelligence services; potential IS fighter)	yes (known to pose a danger)	yes (specific, also from foreign intelligence services, but were not forwarded)	yes (also by authorities in the neighbouring country; potential IS fighter)	yes (known for being aggressive and criminal in nature)
Arrival in the country of attack	July 2015	March 2015	Autumn 2015	born and grew up in the country	May 2015

Comparison of the attacks

[1] *In Morges, in the canton of Waadt, Switzerland, there was an attack on 12 September 2020, in which a victim was stabbed to death. The case exhibits fundamental parallels with the cases dealt with here – however, it was not included because Morges is part of francophone Switzerland and therefore an influence of the French-speaking extremist and jihadist scene is to be assumed and would thus have to be considered.*

[2] *The article is based on Hartleb/Schliefsteiner 2021. It has been generally revised and heavily abridged as well as partially realigned in thematic terms.*

[3] *A quantitative analysis on the jihadist infiltration of the migration flows is now also available, based on datasets supplemented with qualitative interviews, e.g. Mullins 2019.*

[4] *The last "official" act of terror with a fatal outcome was the 2009 attack on a guru in a Sikh temple in Vienna. Cf. Austrian Annual Report on the Protection of the Constitution (VSB), (BVT 2010, 70) and Austrian VSB (BVT 2011, 71 f). However, the research contains critical voices that see the events in Graz 2015, Linz 2017 and Wullowitz 2019 as (possible) acts of terror. On Austria generally, cf. Steinberg 2021 and Schliefsteiner 2019.*

[5] *Murder of Kassel district president Walter Lübcke in his private residence.*

[6] *Arid Uka, a Kosovo Albanian, who had lived with his family in Frankfurt a.M. since 2011 and was apparently radicalised on the Internet, acted as a lone perpetrator (cf. Obert 2011). This case exhibits parallels with the attacks considered here.*

[7] *Cf. the press conference on the knife attack in Würzburg on 25 June 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxWZGZmGbls (20.01.2022).*

[8] *That also applies to racially motivated lone perpetrators, such as to the case in Norway on 22 July 2011 (Breivik) and the Munich attack on the same day five years later. Cf. Hartleb 2020.*

[9] *Moreover, very little is known about the identity and prior history of the perpetrator.*

[10] *For a long time, the number mentioned was approx. 50. That has gone up again to approx. 60. The case presentation on Anis Amri is based on Hartleb 2018.*

[11] *Cf. ZDF broadcast "Frontal 21" on 07.03.2017.*

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] *The city of Rome stands for the centre of Christianity and power. The Sack of Rome in 1527 is also considered to be a portent that a conquest can succeed through violent warlike excess.*

[14] *On 14 July 2016, a jihadist who also came from Tunisia killed 86 people with a lorry on a promenade in Nice.*

[15] *Various media reports explain how he took the packaged knife from a shelf and tore it out of the packaging; according to the State Office for the Protection of the Constitution, he took it from the display. The difference is marginal (cf. Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz Hamburg 2018).*

[16] *The court also came to the conclusion in the proceedings that his objective had been to murder "infidels" – according to Richter, Alhaw determined who an "infidel" was by their pale skin colour (cf. Fokken 2018).*

[17] *The designation derives from the earlier name "Wiener Einsatzgruppe Alarmabteilung"; the special unit is primarily tasked with attending operations with an elevated degree of danger.*

[18] *The figures ranged between 22 and 24 people.*

[19] *For example, Der Standard 2020.*

[20] *For the life history of Fejzulai, also cf. in detail the reports of the independent investigative committee: investigative committee on the terror attack of 02.11.2020 (Geschäftszahl BMI: 2020-0.748.397, Geschäftszahl BMJ: 2020-0.752.496), interim report of 22.12.2020 (BMI 2020), final report of 10.02.2021 (BMI 2021). The reports build on each other and investigate the period from Fejzulai's release from detention until his death. However, they are partially redacted. The first report deals primarily with the perpetrator and the time before the attack, the second looks in depth at the institutional and intra-agency procedures and researched what did not function in this regard.*

[21] *Cf. interim report of the investigative committee on the terror attack of 02.11.2020 (Geschäftszahl*

BMI: 2020-0.748.397, Geschäftszahl BMJ: 2020-0.752.496), interim report of 22.12.2020, (BMI 2020, 9 f).

22 *Investigative committee on the terror attack of 02.11.2020 (Geschäftszahl BMI: 2020-0.748.397, Geschäftszahl BMJ: 2020-0.752.496), interim report of 22.12.2020 (BMI 2020, 11, 17 f). The LVT used RADAR-iTE, an instrument developed in Germany for estimating the individual risk of violence. This was developed under the lead of the Federal Criminal Police Office as a consequence of the attack perpetrated by Amri. However, the programme was asserted to have been "used in a technocratic, formalistic way". Investigative committee on the terror attack of 02.11.2020 (Geschäftszahl BMI: 2020-0.748.397, Geschäftszahl BMJ: 2020-0.752.496), final report 10.02.2021 (BMI 2021, 22 f).*

23 *For detailed information on these procedures, see: Investigative committee on the terror attack of 02.11.2020 (Geschäftszahl BMI: 2020-0.748.397, Geschäftszahl BMJ: 2020-0.752.496) interim report of 22.12.2020, (BMI 2020, 16–18).*

24 *Cf. the press conference on the knife attack in Würzburg on 25 June 2021, https://www. youtube.com/watch?v=QxWZGZmGbls, timestamp 0:49:00 to 0:50:08 (15.01.2022).*

25 *Another case should cited here. An allegedly underage, unaccompanied refugee from South-East Asia came to Germany without documents in June 2015. Although he was placed with a foster family and was ostensibly deemed well integrated, he seriously injured five people on a regional train in Würzburg with an axe and a knife. There was an IS symbol on his backpack.*

26 *For the considerations made here, it is not relevant whether this (self-)presentation matched the facts. It is primarily about the positioning and the presentation of one's own position.*

27 *This has obviously also applied since February 2022 to Ukraine and thus to a European country. Yet is must be assumed that there will be fewer challenges here in the field of radical Islamic/jihadist extremism.*

28 *Such "mistakes" or circumstances that lead to problems can arise from historic-cultural circumstances, such as the separation requirement (between police and intelligence service activities) in Germany.*

29 *This fact is by no means a given for jihadist perpetrators and their radicalisation processes. Cf. Baehr 2020, 195 f.*

30 *That is shown, for example, by the case of the Islamist-motivated suicide attack at a concert in Ansbach on 24 July 2016. The Syrian who travelled to Germany via Bulgaria and Austria in 2015 was supposed to leave the country. He was receiving psychotherapy.*

31 *Austrian citizens shall not be expelled from Austria, nor their arrival on federal territory refused. On the efforts to derecognise Fejzulai, cf. Krutzler 2020.*

32 *Many of these reasons are "hurdles" that arise from due process and international obligations. Political decisions (in principle) play a role to some extent. There is no question that the constitutional state is a valuable commodity and that its mechanisms are therefore to be protected. However, at a minimum, it should be discussed how far better material and staffing of certain bodies could accelerate due process and where legal requirements could be modified in favour of prevention, without undermining the protection of fundamental and human rights.*

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