

engage2innovate



Map & analysis of exemplar social innovation in Focus Area 2

Deliverable D2.4



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The information and views set out in this report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Neither the European Union institutions and bodies nor any person acting on their behalf.

Table of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviation	Meaning
E2i	Engage2Innovate
RRI	Responsible Research and Innovation
SI	Social Innovation

Index of Contents

1. Introduction	6
1.1 Deliverable D2.4	6
2. Criteria to select exemplar	7
2.1 Social innovation – The conceptual cul-de-sac	7
2.2 Development of criteria for exemplar selection	7
2.3 Exemplar case study selection criteria	12
2.4 Defining social justice	14
2.5 Defining enculturation – absorbing the innovation ethos	16
3. Selection of Focus Area 2 exemplar	18
3.1 Projects in Focus Area 2	18
3.2 Innovation resulting from MISRIK	20
4. Exemplar case study — MISRIK	22
4.1 About MISRIK	22
4.1.1 Core goals and deliverables	23
4.2 Problem addressed	25
4.3 The solution	26
4.3.1 Handbook “Kreative, ans Werk!”	27
4.3.2 Insight and innovation	28
4.4. Development and demonstration of the solutions	29
4.4.1 Solution development	29
4.4.2 Solution prototype testing	30
4.4.3 Solution demonstration	30
4.5 Project planning and support for implementation of project outputs	30
4.6 Dissemination and implementation of outputs	33
4.6.1 Project beneficiaries	33
4.7 Ethical and legal aspects	34
4.8 Social Justice Perspective	34
4.9 Next steps	34
4.10 Post-project implementation	35
4.11 Scientific insights	36
4.12 Lessons learned	37



5. Literature	40
Appendices	42
Appendix 1 – Workshops	42
Appendix 2 – Lectures	44
Appendix 3 – Articles and Essays	45
Appendix 4 – Presentations	47



1. Introduction

1.1 Deliverable D2.4

Engage2innovate (E2i) critically examines the prevailing technology-centric view of innovation and advocates for a broader understanding that encompasses social, process, and organisational innovations, among others.

E2i represents a broader movement that seeks to redefine innovation in a way that fully captures the complexity of human and societal needs. We advocate for an approach to innovation that is inclusive of, but not limited to, technological solutions, emphasising the importance of understanding and addressing the root causes of societal challenges. This perspective encourages a more holistic and interdisciplinary approach to innovation, recognising the value of contributions from fields outside of the traditional tech sector. One such field is Social Innovation.

Understanding Social Innovation policy, practice and theory within a specific context can provide deeper understanding and insight into an approach. Work package 2 (WP2) of the E2i project investigates Social Innovation in two Focus Areas:

- Focus Area 1: Security and security behaviour in public places, public transport or mobility
- Focus Area 2: Radicalisation, dis-integration in local communities and social media

Desk research was undertaken in Task 2.3 to source and review examples of social innovation practice within E2i Focus Area 2 — i.e. research and innovation projects (see deliverable D 2.3). Using criteria identified in subtask 2.3.1, task leader LKA selected an exemplar¹ Social Innovation for investigation, mapping and analysis using a case study approach involving qualitative research methods, including in-depth interviews with participants to review Social Innovation output(s). Captured data was analysed, interpreted and mapped, for publication in deliverable D 2.4. The empirical case study research was conducted by LKA, with support from USAL.

¹ An 'exemplar' is a person or thing serving as a typical example or appropriate model.

2. Criteria to select exemplar

2.1 Social innovation – The conceptual cul-de-sac

In order to select an exemplar social innovation project, criteria needed to be created through which such an exemplar can be identified.

Social innovation would appear to be more a social construction based on subjective criteria than a scientific definition. Consequently, generating usable, evidence-based criteria for case study selection from existing social innovation definitions becomes rather problematic. Such criteria must, to be of practical utility, be capable of ruling in or ruling out different aspects of any project being measured against them. Definitions using 'political' language that can be broadly interpreted do not lend themselves to clear criteria. For example, even the concept of being "of societal good" could be argued to include a potentially unlimited range of innovations, depending on how one were to frame and interpret the term 'societal good'.

Given this conceptual weakness of social innovation in the context of security research and its lack of methodological specificity, criteria were identified that were drawn from the discipline of human-centred design innovation. This allowed the definition of clear criteria for practical application, and is appropriate given that the human-centred design process (i) can effectively create innovations of benefit to society; and (ii) engenders meaningful engagement with end-users and relevant stakeholders to:

- Identify and frame problems appropriately
- Define potential solutions
- Prototype test solution options to ensure feasibility
- Maximise implementation and uptake of the final output.

2.2 Development of criteria for exemplar selection

In order to develop criteria that might be used to identify projects appropriate for in-depth case study research, the authors revisited the practical, Social Innovation project descriptors and indicators developed in deliverable D2.1 (page 13).

The authors developed supplementary indicators specific to conducting case study research, as shown in Table 1, below.

Table 1. Case study indicators within the Social Innovation project indicator table

CASE STUDY PRACTICALITY INDICATORS	
i.	Project appropriate for E2i case study: Meets criteria for E2i Social Innovation exemplar
	ia. Appropriate area of focus: The project tackled issues within the domain of E2i Focus Area 1 or Focus Area 2
	ib. Research feasibility: Undertaking research into the selected project is feasible within the limited timescale available
Project aims or goals	
1.	Innovative: Seeking out novel methods and solutions
	1a Reference to innovation in project title, summary or objectives – The project title / summary / objectives may refer to a specific deliverable (e.g. a new practical tool, product, process, system or service)
CASE STUDY INDICATORS	
1.1	Inventive / novel output: The project resulted in one or more novel solutions suited to end-user needs and operational contexts
	1.1.1 Social impact: <i>The project output embodies new thinking, a new way of framing, and/or a new approach to addressing the identified problem — and does so in a way that is fair, just and provides benefit to society.</i>
2.	Impact-focused: Prioritising social and environmental outcomes that, in principle, might be measured
	2a Stated objective to produce practical output of value to security end-users / citizens / policymakers – The project includes one or more objectives to produce practical outputs. This might be in the form of a product, service, process, guidelines, technology — or a combination of these outputs.
CASE STUDY INDICATORS	
2.1	Practical output(s): The project resulted in innovative outputs that are of practical value and positive impact for end-users / stakeholders. This may be in the form of a product, service, process, guidance materials, technology — or any combination of these.

2.1.1 Applied / implemented: *The project resulted in one or more solutions that have been taken up and implemented*

2.1.2 Wider impact: *The project resulted in one or more solutions that have been taken up more widely, by end-users / stakeholders that were not members of the project consortium*

3. Sustainable: Considering long-term viability, such as effects on future generations

* *No descriptor(s) included at this stage. Descriptors will be developed for consideration through survey / interview / focus group research*

4. Equity-driven: Aiming to reduce disparities and promote fairness

* *No descriptor(s) included at this stage. Descriptors will be developed for consideration through survey / interview / focus group research*

CASE STUDY INDICATORS

4.1 Social justice perspective: The project aims to address challenges relating equity, fairness and social disparity

Project structure and methodology / delivery process

5. Insight-enabling partnership: Partnering with relevant stakeholders in the research, design and implementation of solutions

5a End-user organisation is consortium partner – The project consortium includes one or more organisations that can enable project end-user engagement (e.g. an LEA)

CASE STUDY INDICATORS

5.1 End-users / innovation recipients are consortium member(s): To optimise access to end-users, the project consortium includes the end-users / recipients of the innovation.

5.1.1 End-user informed problem domain definition: *The end-user / recipient organisation is involved in identifying the broad problem domain on which the project will focus (i.e. the challenge or area of practice to be investigated and addressed).*

5.1.2 Engagement of end-users / stakeholders throughout the project: *End-users are involved in defining the specific problem or issue to address within the problem domain, as well as designing and validating solution proposals.*

- 5b Consortium includes capability for social research** – The project consortium includes one or more partners that provide intellectual insight on human behaviours, motivations and structures. These partners adopt social science methods that provide meaningful insight into such behaviours, motivations and structures

CASE STUDY INDICATORS

5.2 Project consortium contains social science and/or humanities capability:

The project consortium includes partners capable of providing intellectual insight on human behaviours, motivations and social contexts to ensure appropriate research and engagement methods are adopted.

5.2.1 Effort made to gain insight on human behaviours, motivations and operational contexts: *Social science methods are used to provide meaningful insight into human and social aspects of the problem domain.*

- 5c Citizen / CSO organisation is consortium partner** – The project consortium includes one or more organisations that can enable project citizen / CSO engagement

CASE STUDY INDICATORS

5.3 Project consortium contains one or more partners enabling access to the citizen perspective (e.g. CSO): The project consortium includes partners capable of providing insight on the citizen perspective and/or enabling engagement with citizens / CSOs.

5.1 Cross-sector Collaboration: Involving partnerships beyond traditional boundaries to leverage various strengths and perspectives

* *No descriptor(s) included at this stage. Descriptors will be developed for consideration through survey / interview / focus group research*

6. Participatory: Ensuring all voices, especially those of affected communities, are heard and valued

CASE STUDY INDICATORS

6.0.1 Stakeholders in solution implementation / use were identified: *Effort was made to map individuals, organisations and structures relevant to the design, implementation and use of project innovation outputs.*

- 6a End-user engagement** – The project engages end-users of any proposed solutions or those operating in the problem domain (i.e. those "on the ground", delivering services — not merely managers / directors). In the strongest case, the purpose of such engagement will be to better define problems and identify design requirements and constraints for proposed project outputs (solutions). Ideally, such engagement should include practical prototyping of outputs / solution options.

CASE STUDY INDICATORS

6.0.2 Appropriate end-user engagement: *The appropriate end-users from the recipient organisation (i.e. those "on the ground", delivering services — not merely managers / directors) were involved in the innovation design process. This might include: defining the specific problem or issue; identifying design requirements and constraints; and the practical prototyping and feasibility testing of proposed outputs / solution options.*

- 6b Citizen engagement** – The project engages citizens and/or relevant community representatives (e.g. CSOs) in the definition and development of project outputs. This is particularly necessary when citizens are the primary users or recipients of project outputs.

CASE STUDY INDICATORS

6.0.3 Appropriate citizen engagement: *The appropriate citizens or citizen representatives (e.g. CSOs with real, "on the ground" insight into the citizen experience in the problem domain) were involved in the innovation design process. This might include: defining the specific problem or issue; identifying design requirements and constraints; and the practical prototyping and feasibility testing of proposed outputs / solution options.*

- 6.1. Empowerment:** Focusing on strengthening the agency of individuals and communities to take action and make decisions affecting their lives.

* No descriptor(s) included at this stage. Descriptors will be developed for consideration through survey / interview / focus group research

CASE STUDY INDICATORS

6.1.1 Project enculturation: *Participants in engagement activities (end-users, stakeholders and/or citizens) were supported to understand and engage intellectually with the project methodology and design innovation process.*

- 7. Iterative Development:** Emphasising the importance of cyclical testing, learning, and refining solutions

- 7a Prototyping of practical outputs** – The project methodology includes mention of prototype testing of outputs / solutions with end-users, stakeholders and/or citizens.

CASE STUDY INDICATORS

- 7.1 Development of practical outputs involved prototyping:** The project employed iterative prototype testing to assess and refine the feasibility and acceptability of proposed design solutions.

7.1.1 **Engagement of end-users / stakeholders in solution prototyping:**

End-users are involved in defining the specific problem or issue to address within the problem domain, as well as designing and validating solution proposals.

- 7b Demonstration of practical outputs** – The project methodology includes mention of demonstration of outputs / solutions with end-users, stakeholders and/or citizens.

CASE STUDY INDICATORS

7.2 **Final practical outputs were demonstrated in an operational environment:**

The project undertook practical demonstration of final practical outputs in their operational context to validate their design with users and assess the need for any final refinements.

- 8. *Dynamic adaptability:*** Emphasising the project's capacity to adapt and evolve in response to new information, changing conditions, and stakeholder feedback throughout its duration

- 8a Enabling feedback integration** – The project has formal mechanisms in place to collect and integrate feedback from stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle.
Example: Regular review meetings with stakeholders to discuss project progress and make adjustments as necessary. (e.g. holding bi-annual stakeholder forums to discuss project progress and potential pivots).
- 8b Scalability and modularity of solutions** – The project outputs are designed to be scalable and modular, allowing for adaptation to different scales or contexts without extensive redesign.
Example: Use of modular design principles in technology development or scalable service frameworks that can be expanded or reduced.
- 8c Building stakeholder adaptive capacity** – Training and resources are provided to empower stakeholders to adapt practices based on project findings and external changes.
Example: Workshops or online resources to help local implementers adjust tactics based on new evidence or conditions.

- 9. *Systems thinking:*** Addressing root causes and interconnectedness of social issues

* *No descriptor(s) included at this stage. Descriptors will be developed for consideration through survey / interview / focus group research*

2.3 **Exemplar case study selection criteria**

Extracted from the **Table 1**, above, the final selection criteria for the selection of E2i exemplar case studies are presented below:

Y	N	Appropriate area of focus: The project tackled issues within the domain of the E2i Focus Area 1 or Focus Area 2 [i.a]
Y	N	Research feasibility: Undertaking research into this project is feasible within the limited timescale available [i.b]
Y	N	Inventive / novel output: The project resulted in one or more novel solutions suited to end-user needs and operational contexts [1.1]
Y	N	Practical output(s): The project resulted in innovative outputs that are of practical value and positive impact for end-users / stakeholders. This may be in the form of a product, service, process, guidance materials, technology — or any combination of these. [2.1]
Y	N	Social justice perspective: The project aims to address challenges relating equity, fairness and social disparity [4.1]
Y	N	End-users / innovation recipients are consortium member(s): To optimise access to end-users, the project consortium includes the end-users / recipients of the innovation. [5.1]
Y	N	Project consortium contains social science and/or humanities capability: The project consortium includes partners capable of providing intellectual insight on human behaviours, motivations and social contexts to ensure appropriate research and engagement methods are adopted. [5.2]
Y	N	Project consortium contains one or more partners enabling access to the citizen perspective (e.g. CSO): The project consortium includes partners capable of providing insight on the citizen perspective and/or enabling engagement with citizens / CSOs. [5.3]
Y	N	Development of practical outputs involved prototyping: The project employed iterative prototype testing to assess and refine the feasibility and acceptability of proposed design solutions. [7.1]
Y	N	Final practical outputs were demonstrated in an operational environment: The project undertook practical demonstration of final practical outputs in their operational context to validate their design with users and assess the need for final refinements. [7.2]

Table 1. The E2i exemplar case study selection criteria.

2.4 Defining social justice

The project criteria developed in D2.1 included the descriptor “*Equity-driven: Aiming to reduce disparities and promote fairness*”, but no indicators were proposed at that stage. In relation to the criteria for the case study exemplar, the descriptor ‘*Social Justice*’ was introduced.

Social justice refers to the concept of creating a fair and equal society where all individuals have the same rights, opportunities, and access to resources and services. It involves addressing and rectifying inequalities and injustices that arise from socio-economic disparities, discrimination, and systemic biases. The goal of social justice is to ensure that everyone, regardless of their background, has the ability to participate fully in society and to enjoy a decent quality of life. Social justice is closely related to policing and security in several critical ways, as it shapes how these institutions operate, interact with communities, and fulfil their roles in society. Here are some key aspects of this relationship:

- Equitable treatment
 - **Non-discrimination** – Social justice demands that policing and security practices are free from discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics. All individuals should be treated equally under the law.
 - **Bias-free policing** – Efforts should be made to eliminate implicit and explicit biases in policing practices to ensure fair treatment for all community members.
- Accountability and transparency
 - **Accountability mechanisms** – Social justice emphasises the importance of holding police and security forces accountable for their actions. This includes transparent investigations into misconduct, the implementation of body cameras, and independent oversight bodies.
 - **Community oversight** – Engaging community members in oversight roles can help ensure that policing practices align with community values and standards of justice.

- Community engagement and trust
 - **Building trust** – Effective policing relies on trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve. Social justice promotes community-oriented policing strategies that build relationships and trust through collaboration and mutual respect.
 - **Participatory approaches** – Involving community members in the development and implementation of security policies and practices ensures that these initiatives are responsive to the actual needs and concerns of the community.
- Preventive and proactive measures
 - **Addressing root causes** – Social justice encourages a focus on addressing the underlying social issues that contribute to crime and insecurity, such as poverty, lack of education, and social inequality. By tackling these root causes, long-term security can be enhanced.
 - **Supportive services** – Providing support services, such as mental health care, addiction treatment, and youth programs, can prevent crime and reduce the need for punitive measures.
- Use of force and de-escalation
 - **Proportional use of force** – Social justice principles advocate for the use of force by police only when necessary and proportionate to the situation. Training in de-escalation techniques can help reduce the likelihood of violent encounters.
 - **Protecting human rights** – Ensuring that policing and security measures respect and protect the human rights of all individuals, including those in custody or under investigation.
- Representation and diversity
 - **Diverse workforce** – A police force that reflects the diversity of the community it serves can enhance understanding, communication, and trust. Social justice supports the recruitment and retention of officers from diverse backgrounds.
 - **Cultural competency** – Training officers in cultural competency can improve interactions with diverse communities and reduce misunderstandings and tensions.
- Legal and policy reforms:

- **Policy reforms** – Social justice advocates for legal and policy reforms that address systemic issues within the criminal justice system, such as sentencing disparities, mandatory minimum sentences, and practices like stop-and-frisk.
- **Restorative justice** – Implementing restorative justice practices can provide alternative approaches to punishment, focusing on repairing harm and restoring relationships rather than solely on retribution.

The concept of social justice supports efforts to improve safety and security, while avoiding potentially negative impacts such as restrictions on freedom and infringement of rights to privacy.

2.5 Defining enculturation – absorbing the innovation ethos

The project criteria developed in D2.1 included the descriptor “*Empowerment: Focusing on strengthening the agency of individuals and communities to take action and make decisions affecting their lives*”, but no indicators were proposed at that stage. In relation to the criteria for the case study exemplar, the descriptor ‘*Project enculturation*’ was introduced. This refers to how participants in engagement activities (end-users, stakeholders and/or citizens) were supported to learn, understand and engage intellectually with project methods and the design innovation process.

“*Enculturation*” is the process by which an individual learns the traditional content of a culture and assimilates its practices and values. This can occur through experience, observation, and instruction as individuals gradually internalise the norms, customs, and beliefs of a cultural group.

The concept of “*enculturation*” in design research and innovation projects has been applied in a variety of ways. Relevant insights from the literature include:

- Enculturation in engineering design
Enculturation in design often involves assimilating into the professional culture of the field. For example, in engineering design, face-to-face conversations and interactions with other designers are crucial in solving complex, non-routine design problems and generating innovative ideas (Salter & Gann, 2003).
- Enculturation of non-designers in design projects

This kind of enculturation has been evidenced in educational contexts, in this case, the involvement of students being introduced to design in design projects. Here, enculturation helps those new to design internalise both the technical and social practices of innovation, such as problem-solving and interdisciplinary collaboration. In a Finnish multidisciplinary innovation project, students experienced enculturation as they navigated conflicts and internalised the phases of the innovation process (Hero & Lindfors, 2019).

- Enculturation in digital innovation

In the context of digital innovation, enculturation is key in integrating digital technologies into traditional design processes. The design science research (DSR) paradigm highlights how digital innovation is reshaped through enculturation, emphasising the interrelation between designing new artefacts and embedding them into existing cultural frameworks (Hevner *et al.*, 2018).

- Enculturation in university research and innovation

Enculturation in educational settings can involve adapting the cultural practices of innovation to promote deeper learning experiences. For instance, in university settings, design-based research (DBR) can create environments that allow students and teachers to internalise new methodologies and innovation processes through collaborative curriculum design (Cochrane *et al.*, 2023).

Enculturation in design and innovation is a dynamic process that encompasses both cultural transmission and active innovation. It facilitates the internalising of design practices and values, supports collaborative problem-solving, and shapes how new technologies and methods are integrated into existing frameworks.

3. Selection of Focus Area 2 exemplar

3.1 Projects in Focus Area 2

Various projects were analysed in Focus Area 2 and several notable projects were identified. Among these, the project MISRIK (Meme, Ideen, Strategien rechtsextremistischer Internetkommunikation – “*Memes, ideas and strategies of right-wing extremist internet communication*”) stands out as it meets the selection criteria for an E2i exemplar case, as summarised in **Table 3.1**, below:

Y	N	Appropriate area of focus: The project tackled issues within the domain of the E2i Focus Area 1 or Focus Area 2 [i.a] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The MISRIK project addresses a theme relevant to Focus area 2, namely right-wing extremist internet communication, particularly the spread of right-wing extremist internet memes.
Y	N	Research feasibility: Undertaking research into this project is feasible within the limited timescale available [i.b] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Research could be conducted feasibly by LKA as information was available via desk research. Interviews were conducted with the Project Coordinator to not only access publicly obtainable information but also gain insight from the project participants.
Y	N	Inventive / novel output: The project resulted in one or more novel solutions suited to end-user needs and operational contexts [1.1] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – MISRIK developed various outputs (e. g. the game Mem-Ori, a handbook and a textbook)
Y	N	Practical output(s): The project resulted in innovative outputs that are of practical value and positive impact for end-users / stakeholders. This may be in the form of a product, service, process, guidance materials, technology — or any combination of these. [2.1] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – MISRIK resulted in outputs of practical value to end users (a product and guidance material)

-
- Y N Social justice perspective:** The project aims to address challenges relating equity, fairness and social disparity [4.1]
- MISRIK aims to strengthen democracy and increase the resilience of the population and state institutions against far-right strategies. It thus seeks to reinforce democratic values. The handbook issued by members of the consortium aims to contribute to the defence of democratic internet culture and to counteract misanthropy.
-
- Y N End-users / innovation recipients are consortium member(s):** To optimise access to end-users, the project consortium includes the end-users / recipients of the innovation. [5.1]
- The Hessian University of Applied Sciences for Public Management and Security in Wiesbaden is directly involved as a potential end user and funded collaborative partner. In addition, four police academies are associated partners (Hamburg, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate). Four state criminal police offices are also associated partners (Schleswig-Holstein, Bavaria, Hesse, Rhineland-Palatinate). From civil society, ETH Zurich – Centre for Security Studies, the District Court of Darmstadt (District Court Judge Stefan Unger), the Schader Foundation and the Amadeu Antonio Foundation were associated partners. Several joint events were held with the Schader Foundation (practical conference, panel discussion, upcoming multiplier conference). A joint handbook on extreme right memes was created with the Amadeu Antonio Foundation. The authorities for the protection of the constitution are not associated partners, but information is nevertheless exchanged.
-
- Y N Project consortium contains social science and/or humanities capability:** The project consortium includes partners capable of providing intellectual insight on human behaviours, motivations and social contexts to ensure appropriate research and engagement methods are adopted. [5.2]
- Philosophy and sociology were represented at the Technical University of Darmstadt; ethnology at the Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz; and political science at the Hessian University of Applied Sciences for Public Management and Security in Wiesbaden. Thus, the MISRIK consortium was led by social
-

scientists able to provide insight into social science and human behaviour, etc.

- Y N Project consortium contains one or more partners enabling access to the citizen perspective (e.g. CSO):** The project consortium includes partners capable of providing insight on the citizen perspective and/or enabling engagement with citizens / CSOs. [5.3]
- ETH Zurich, the District Court of Darmstadt, the Amadeu Antonio Foundation and the Schader Foundation were associated partners in the project.
-

- Y N Development of practical outputs involved prototyping:** The project employed iterative prototype testing to assess and refine the feasibility and acceptability of proposed design solutions. [7.1]
- Parts of the textbook were tested at the North Rhine-Westphalia University of Applied Police Sciences and Public Administration and at the Hessian University of Applied Sciences for Public Management and Security in Wiesbaden and further developed based on the experience gained. Mem-Ori was tested at the practice conference and in seminars and provided to the Institute for Democracy and Civil Society in Jena.
-

- Y N Final practical outputs were demonstrated in an operational environment:** The project undertook practical demonstration of final practical outputs in their operational context to validate their design with users and assess the need for final refinements. [7.2]
- Mem-Ori was demonstrated at BMBF events in Brussels and Berlin. The third version of the game is currently available. Another version is in preparation. This is to be presented at an upcoming multiplier conference.
-

Table 3.1. The E2i exemplar case study selection criteria.

3.2 Innovation resulting from MISRIK

This report details a case study of MISRIK. A central objective of the project was to bring knowledge about extreme internet communication strategies, especially memes, into police training and further education. To achieve this, the Technical University of Darmstadt, the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and the Hessian University of Applied Sciences for Public Management and Security, Wiesbaden, were involved as project partners.



Further, four police academies, four State Criminal Police Offices (Landeskriminalamts), two foundations, a regional court and the ETH Zurich were associated partners in the project. These associated partners were included to various extents in the development of the project's solutions.

The *MISRIK* project was identified as appropriate for in-depth research due to: (i) it being considered "*of benefit to society*"; (i) it tackling issues within the domain of Focus Area 2; and (ii) it meeting the practical criteria outlined in **Table 1**. The case study on the MISRIK project is discussed in the next section.



4. Exemplar case study — MISRIK

4.1 About MISRIK

The project *Meme, Ideen, Strategien rechtsextremistischer Internetkommunikation (MISRIK)* ("Memos, Ideas, Strategies of Right-Wing Extremist Internet Communication (MISRIK)") is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) as part of the program "Research for Civil Security", in the context of the announcement "Civil Security – Societies in Transition". Information is available on the [Sifo website](#). The project started in August 2021 and had an original term until July 2024 but was further extended until the end of 2024.



Figure 4.1. The MISRIK Logo

The motivation for the project lies in the fact that right-wing extremist internet communication has undergone a transformation using digital services, be it spoken, written or visual language. This poses new challenges for educational and prevention organisations, but also for law enforcement and prosecution. Extreme right-wing actors form heterogeneous networks on the internet, communicate with an almost unmanageable number of symbols and conduct so-called "info wars" with sophisticated rhetorical means that are often barely recognisable as right-wing extremist to outsiders and may seem harmless to them.

A comprehensive analysis of right-wing extremist internet memes is being carried out. Internet memes are text-image arrangements that can be

categorised via similarities and repetitions in continuously varied series, which, by drawing on pop and net culture themes, symbols and other means of representation, take an ironic, humorous, but sometimes also contemptuous or aggressive aim at political and everyday issues. Such memes may appear as moving images, however they are mostly static images. They may consist of fixed images but can also combine several images as in a collage. They have no strong formal design criteria. There are also memes without text and even memes without images. Internet memes spread quickly and widely on social networks. With the help of interviews with police actors, operators of digital services and far-right activists, far-right imagery, theories, strategies and network activities were researched.

For the first time, researchers from the fields of philosophy, sociology, computer science, ethnology and political science were working together to decode right-wing extremist internet communication and automatically recognise it with the help of machine learning.

This section summarises the MISRIK project based on a review of published literature about the project, as well as input from interviews conducted with a member of the project consortium.

4.1.1 Core goals and deliverables

The MISRIK project's core goals were:

- To analyse how right-wing extremist world views are subtly disseminated, which theories are effective in the background and which strategies are used by right-wing extremists in the digital space
- To enable the automatic recognition of right-wing extremist meme messages with the help of knowledge gained from the project.

The project is characterised by a high degree of interdisciplinarity. The project structure was therefore primarily oriented towards disciplines that could only secondarily be assigned to the participating partners (philosophy, sociology, computer science at Technical University of Darmstadt; ethnology at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz; political science at the Hessian University of Applied Sciences for Public Management and Security, Wiesbaden). The division of effort was thus distributed among the participating institutes or subject areas, each of which defined the following work packages (WP) for themselves:

- WP 1 – Recording the phenomena of memetic communication
- WP 2 – Empirical research and investigation
- WP 3 – (Digital) discourse analysis and semiotics
- WP 4 – Qualitative data analysis
- WP 5 – Multimodal communication strategies and ideologies
- WP 6 – Intervention strategies and mediation
- WP 7 – Transfer to police education and training

The work packages were organised into two parallel groups based on the data used:

- WP 1, 3 and 5 comprised the analysis of crawled data.
- WP 2, 4 and 6 focused on analysing social science and humanities data (from literature interviews and participant observation).
- In addition, WP 7 served to transfer the results into police training and further education.

The project approach was to examine and understand the memetic communication strategy of the new generation of the New Right. To this end, memetic communication incidents were collected, evaluated and compared with the strategy discourses of the New Right. Memetic communication incidents are communication incidents that operate with memes in the broadest sense or react to other communication incidents in the sense of imitation (e.g. imitated dances, melodies, slogans, etc.). In addition, the strategy discourses were compared with the ideological and 'theoretical' discourses of the New Right. 'Theoretical discourses' were understood primarily as attempts by the New Right to justify their ideological positions and strategies by drawing on (contested) 'philosophy' and related humanities/social science discourses.

In terms of application, the results were disseminated to State Criminal Police Offices (*Landeskriminalamts*), police academies and civil society in order to be able to recognise, assess and, if necessary, counter the far-right's communication incidents and strategies more quickly.

The research approach was qualitative and empirically oriented (e.g. participatory observations, interviews, memetic communication incidents). The project pursued an interdisciplinary approach and considered memetic

communication as well as the phenomenon of the New Right as a "*complex concept*". Building on Christoph Hubig's work, MISRIK conceptualised complex phenomena as multifaceted intersections of diverse dimensions, which can only be effectively understood and analysed through an interdisciplinary approach. To this end, MISRIK implemented a high level of integration of the work packages involved, for example, through regular professional exchanges and joint publication projects.

4.2 Problem addressed

Memes are at the same time overdetermined and underdetermined. They are overdetermined because the image elements they use themselves have meaning — for example, by using a screenshot from a movie, a meme would also thereby include the movie's storyline. This background knowledge or surplus of meaning provides the scope for interpretation of a meme. At the same time, however, memes are also underdetermined, in that they always require interpretation and therefore usually remain ambiguous. So the viewer must "piece together" or "work out" how to interpret a meme themselves. As a result, memes are well suited to spreading ideological content. The correct interpretation does not *appear* to be predetermined, but is discovered by the viewer themselves, who thereby reinforces their pre-existing views.

Memes are not informative, but rather concern values and, especially in the case of extreme right-wing memes, mark how the viewer should understand and assess something from the perspective of the meme creator. In this way, memes resemble advertising messages, which are also repeated in variations to generate interest in a product.

The problem is that memes can be used to subtly spread right-wing extremist content — viewers might even be unaware of the type of content they are consuming. New right communication strategies do not aim to convey closed right-wing extremist world views. This is more of a welcome side effect. The purpose of memes is to introduce viewers to extreme right-wing narratives without immediately being met with defence. Personal (pre-)judgements are reinforced, often using humour, instead of being challenged or dispelled. As a result, viewers can become radicalised, even though they do not necessarily locate themselves on the political right or

extreme right-wing. Humour in memes plays a key role. If people have already laughed at a meme, they are often prepared to defend its content against criticism — even if they would not have supported it in a different form of presentation. The ideology thereby seeps in. In this context, New Right memes could be described as a modernised form of propaganda.

Right-wing memes are used as a metapolitical tool to subtly introduce content into mainstream discourse and shift the Overton Window — the range of ideas considered acceptable in public debate. This strategy is evident in the spread of ethnocentric ideas on migration policy and heterosexual hostility towards queer communities, which are sometimes adopted by democratic parties. As a result, extreme-right positions gradually become more compatible with the democratic spectrum. Civil society often struggles to resist these strategies, as right-wing extremist content — such as attacks on the human dignity of minorities — is not consistently recognized, and the underlying influence tactics are misunderstood. This is especially true when such strategies target fringe communities, like online gaming and trolling circles. Existing educational initiatives have not sufficiently addressed the dynamics of memetic communication that the new right employs for these metapolitical efforts. While there is some education on recognising extreme-right symbols, the mechanisms of memetic communication — particularly those designed to encourage imitation — are not being adequately addressed.

4.3 The solution

To tackle the issue outlined in the section above, the MISRIK project compiled and processed results in order to raise awareness of the problem and to clarify the issue. MISRIK produced outputs that provide information about right-wing extremist memes and are intended to assist relevant end users in recognising and addressing them. These outputs include:

- **The *Rechtsextreme Meme* (“*Extreme Right-Wing Memes*”) textbook** – This textbook addresses the security challenges posed by right-wing extremist ideologies on the internet and aims to raise the awareness of prospective police officers for the media practices of modern right-wing extremism. It also provides tutors at police academies with material for planning their courses. Although it is primarily aimed at police

academies, it may also be used in other social science and humanities degree programs. See also section **4.11 Scientific insight**

- **(Multiplier) Workshops** – See also section **4.5 Project planning** and support for implementation of project output
- **The game *Meme-Orientierung* (“Meme-Orientation”) or *Mem-Ori*, for short** – The *Mem-Ori* game is designed to encourage discussion in guided seminars on extreme right memes, but is not publicly available. The game consists of DIN-A6 cards with an extreme right-wing meme, with varying degrees of clarity to make it apparent that the extreme right-wing content of the memes is not necessarily recognisable at first glance. Therefore, the game also addresses memes that are hardly recognisable as extreme right memes. As well as an image, the cards contain short explanatory texts, as far-right memes should not be reproduced without comment. For this reason, and the potential for misuse, it is not planned to make this game publicly accessible after testing, but to provide it to appropriate end users with authorised access. The cards are accompanied by a handbook that explains each individual meme from different perspectives. The game is currently being trialled at the Institute for Democracy and Civil Society in Jena
- **An anthology on the MISRIK meme workshop** – held in November 2022
- **An educational video** – developed for primary and secondary prevention
- **The handbook *Kreative, ans Werk!* (“Creative minds, at work!”).**

The following section examines the handbook *Kreative, ans Werk!*, a good example of the MISRIK project's output, in more detail.

4.3.1 Handbook “*Kreative, ans Werk!*”

This section reviews a specific social innovation resulting from the MISRIK project, the handbook *Kreative ans Werk! Memes in extrem rechter Internetkommunikation* (“Creative minds, at work! Memes in extreme right-wing internet communication”). The handbook was published by the associated partner of the project, the Amadeu Antonio Foundation. The content is based on the findings of MISRIK, and focuses on:

- Defining extreme right-wing memes and illustrating their mode of action

- Describing the role of memes as a metapolitical tool
- Outlining communicative techniques in extreme right-wing memes
- Giving recommendations for dealing with extreme right-wing memes and providing further resources.



Figure 4.3.1. The MISRIK project handbook, Kreative, ans Werk!

4.3.2 Insight and innovation

The handbook is a compilation of knowledge on the topic of extremist right wing memes and includes general information on memes and explores memes as a political phenomenon and provides insights into the underlying mechanisms. It examines the role of memes as a metapolitical tool in the extreme right-wing culture war and how they make right-wing narratives plausible.

The handbook explores right-wing meme practice and sets out four different techniques or practices of “memeing”:

- Lurking

- Collecting
- Participating
- Producing.

The target audience of memes is also explored. The discussion addresses digital community-building through shared memetic language and explores the concept of 'participatory fascism.' These insights are drawn from digital ethnographic research on extreme right-wing meme practices, as well as interviews with extreme right-wing activists and trolls.

The handbook contains recommendations on how to deal with extreme right-wing memes and provides references to further resources. It is shown that — despite memes providing a pop-culture gloss to the radical right-wing agenda — inequality, group-based misanthropy and ethnic community fantasies still form the core of extreme right-wing politics. The handbook is intended as a resource for those who wish to educate others about the anti-democratic culture war and counter its strategic approach.

4.4. Development and demonstration of the solutions

4.4.1 Solution development

In terms of solution development, a comprehensive analysis of right-wing extremist memes was carried out and right-wing extremist imagery, theories, strategies and network activities were researched. A qualitative and empirical research approach was adopted (including: participatory observation, interviews and memetic communication incidents). For example, the information on meme practice in the handbook was collected through digital ethnographic research on right-wing extremist meme practice and interviews with right-wing extremist activists and trolls.

The project took an interdisciplinary approach, with researchers from the fields of philosophy, sociology, computer science, ethnology and political science working together to decode right-wing extremist internet communication.

The involvement of end users was of central importance in defining targeted output formats, especially for the police academies. For example, on the advice of end users at police colleges / academies, the original plan to develop a comprehensive teaching module was abandoned because it

would be too challenging to implement within the curricula of police colleges. Instead, a series of smaller teaching elements were developed that might be integrated within existing teaching modules. These will be presented in the textbook to be published at the end of 2024. Associated partners were directly involved in the development of the textbook as authors.

4.4.2 Solution prototype testing

Prototype versions of parts of the textbook were tested at the North Rhine-Westphalia University of Applied Police Sciences and Public Administration and at the Hessian University of Applied Sciences for Public Management and Security in Wiesbaden, and further developed / refined based on the experience and feedback gained. The game Mem-Ori was tested at the practice conference, in seminars, and lent to the Institute for Democracy and Civil Society in Jena.

4.4.3 Solution demonstration

The game Mem-Ori was demonstrated at BMBF events in Brussels and Berlin. Version three of the game is currently available. Another version of the game is in development. This is to be presented at an upcoming multipliers' conference in October 2024.

4.5 Project planning and support for implementation of project outputs

A number of project workshops were held to support the implementation of outputs. The first workshop, *Digitale Bilderkämpfe: Workshop zur philosophischen und interdisziplinären Mem-Forschung* (in English, *Digital image wars: Workshop on philosophical and interdisciplinary meme research*), was held online in November 2022. The workshop focused on the issue that internet memes were not only an integral part of internet and youth culture, but were also increasingly being used for political and propaganda purposes. The workshop clarified that memes are increasingly in need of scientific categorisation and analysis, but that at present there are few established systematic methods for the scientific analysis of memes. The workshop facilitated scientific exchange on methods and approaches to meme research, provides insights into the results of analyses and offers space for interdisciplinary specialist discussions.

The lecture series (*Digitaler*) *Faschismus?* (in English, (*Digital*) *Fascism?*) was launched in April 2023. The series ran from 17 April 2023 to 10 July 2023 and consisted of a total of 11 sessions. The lecture series looked at the fact that radicalisation can be observed more and more frequently on the internet and that hate on the internet is becoming more extreme and effective offline despite all countermeasures. Today, right-wing extremist ideas and strategies can be recognised particularly clearly in the digital space. The lectures explored the question of whether this is a renewed digital form of fascism and whether the current means of fascism research are sufficient, or whether a completely different vocabulary is needed to describe the aforementioned phenomena. The speakers presented various approaches to analysing right-wing extremist agitation in the digital space and explored these questions from their different perspectives.

The topic was examined further in the panel discussion (*Digitaler*) *Faschismus? – Extremismus im Netz* (in English, (*Digital*) *Fascism? – Extremism on the Internet*) organised in July 2023 by the Schader Foundation and MISRIK project. In cooperation with the Technical University of Darmstadt and the Hessian University of Applied Sciences for Public Management and Security, the focus and questions for the lecture series were agreed.

In addition, a multiplier workshop will be held in October 2024 in cooperation with the Schader Foundation. The multiplier workshop aims to turn knowledge into practice with the help of civil society, security authorities and other multipliers. As part of the workshop, MISRIK will present the results of the project to partners and practitioners from the police and civil society. The MISRIK work packages in the disciplines of philosophy, sociology, political science, ethnology and computer science will present their key findings and possible applications and ask for assessments from practitioners. The event will be interactive. The products being presented include the game *Mem-Ori*, the handbook *Kreative, ans Werk!*, the textbook *Rechtsextreme Meme* and the anthology of the MISRIK meme workshop in November 2022. In addition, the educational video *Iza gegen die Kohärente Gruppierung*, developed for primary and secondary prevention, will be shown. As well as background knowledge, the workshop will provide all participants with practical recommendations for action.

In terms of developing the scientific knowledge-base, a call for papers was issued on the question of whether there is a philosophy of right-wing extremism, and these contributions will be presented at a workshop to be held in November 2024.

In the period from 1 February 2022 to 11 September 2024, the project participated in 25 workshops. In addition, a further two workshops are planned to be held in cooperation with the following organisers:

- Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation, Regional Office Brandenburg
- Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation, Regional Office Lower Saxony
- Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation, Regional Office Saxony-Anhalt
- Frankfurt am Main Police Headquarters, Criminal Investigation Department 40 – State Security
- Foundation Life & Environment / Heinrich Böll Foundation Lower Saxony

The focus of the MISRIK workshops were:

- One workshop under the title *Anecken, Ausgrenzen, Aufräumen: extrem rechter Regime Change* (in English, *Disagreeing, ostracising, cleaning up: extreme right-wing regime change*)
- Sixteen workshops under the title *Anecken, Ausgrenzen, Aufräumen – Online-Strategien des jungen Rechtsaußenspektrums* (in English, *Disagreeing, ostracising, cleaning up – online strategies of the young far-right spectrum*)
- Five workshops under the title *QAnon(-Memes) als Aktualisierung antisemitischer Verschwörungserzählungen* (in English, *QAnon (memes) as an actualisation of anti-Semitic conspiracy narratives*)
- Two workshops under the title *QAnon in Deutschland: Ideologie und Bildsprache* (in English, *QAnon in Germany: Ideology and imagery*)
- One workshop under the title *Anecken, Ausgrenzen, Aufräumen: Frauen in der Neuen Rechten* (in English, *Disagreeing, ostracising, cleaning up: women in the New Right*).

The full list of the MISRIK workshops can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

4.6 Dissemination and implementation of outputs

Where do you see the results of MISRIK being implemented? Who are the beneficiaries of your project?

The MISRIK project's means of output implementation is their incorporation into lectures, publications, teaching and course units for police academies, handouts for security authorities and prevention programmes for civil society.

Findings from MISRIK were implemented in seminars, training courses and lecture series in the period from the winter semester 2021/22 to the summer semester 2024. Teaching took place in cooperation with the Hessian University of Applied Sciences for Public Security and Management and the Darmstadt University of Technology, Institute of Philosophy. A list of the lectures can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

In addition to the handbook and the textbook, further articles and essays were published—a list of which can be found in [Appendix 3](#). Section 4.11 *Scientific insight* of this report discusses selected published contributions in more detail.

The findings of MISRIK were also disseminated in presentations in the period from October 2021 to July 2024. The presentations were carried out in various contexts, including educational institutions, political institutions, civil society organisations, conferences and conventions. A further presentation is planned in July 2025 at the *German Journalists' Association* (DJV), Regional Association of Lower Saxony. A detailed list of the presentations can be found in [Appendix 4](#).

4.6.1 Project beneficiaries

Concerning the beneficiaries of the project, MISRIK's results are primarily aimed at State Criminal Police Offices (LKAs) and police academies / universities, as well as civil society — for example, to educate about new right-wing strategies. During the project, the importance of police academies as a MISRIK beneficiary increased. In the area of civil society, the focus was expanded to include schools.

4.7 Ethical and legal aspects

Legal aspects were considered, with a comprehensive legal report obtained through subcontracted work in order to resolve issues relating to the handling of anti-constitutional content under criminal, data protection and personal rights law. The legal report will be made available to other researchers on request.

The research design was checked against the ethical self-assessment questionnaires of the participating institutions and disciplines. It was found that, since the memetic communication data that was being collected generally cannot be assigned to individual persons, no ethical or data protection issues arise. The research-ethical issues in the subjects of ethnology, sociology and political science were also discussed and reflected upon in detail in an internal workshop with external experts.

4.8 Social Justice Perspective

The results of the project allow end users to understand current phenomena of the memetic communication of the New Right, including their formal and strategic dimensions, and to disseminate them according to the end users' needs. For example, it is possible to analyse far-right memes without resorting to individual specific symbols and to understand how far-right memes infiltrate mainstream discourses. This provides a more holistic understanding of far-right strategies, which can be taken into account in the defence against anti-democratic efforts.

MISRIK aims to strengthen democracy and increase the resilience of the population and state institutions against far-right strategies. It thus seeks to reinforce democratic values and to reject anti-democratic strategies.

4.9 Next steps

The project is at the end of the evaluation phase and in the midst of the dissemination phase. Dissemination will continue after the end of the funding period, as far as this is possible. However, the project is primarily carried out by scientists employed on a temporary basis, so that the continuation of the research work is very dependent on further third-party funding. To this end, further research proposals have been submitted to funders and are currently under review.

Further research questions that might be addressed, if funding is provided, concern the links between far-right strategies and the polycrisis, hybrid threats and far-right strategies in local areas. Election campaigns are consistently accompanied by memes, and meme strategies have played a major role for the far right in previous local elections. For example, internet image memes (e.g. for Pride Month) were displayed on classic election posters. There is currently no specific research on the interaction between online memetic strategies and party communication, particularly offline.

In addition, a 'mutation' of memetic communication on the internet is emerging that is less based on individual internet image memes and more on internet memes in the wider sense (e.g. on imitation effects). Furthermore, we are increasingly seeing meme campaigns that operate across platforms and are more flexible in terms of form and aesthetics than before. A follow-up project would be beneficial in this regard. It is foreseeable that generative AI will play an increasingly important role in memetic communication strategies. The first cases have already been examined in the context of the MISRIK project.

It is to be expected that the far-right will continue to develop its strategy with its increasing electoral success. This will also be reflected in its online communication strategy.

The current focus on hybrid threats involving state actors is problematic. While there is some evidence that segments of the extreme right receive support from Russia and China, this remains a minor factor in the broader strategy of the extreme right, which is already having a significant immediate impact. As a result, research on the extreme right is being deprioritised and marginalised in security studies at a time when it is needed most.

4.10 Post-project implementation

This section is currently not applicable to the MISRIK project, as the project end date has recently been extended. Therefore, implementation of the results beyond the directly involved associated MISRIK partners is still pending. However, the project partners have clarified their desire to reach a broader section of civil society in this regard.

4.11 Scientific insights

A textbook is planned to be published in October 2024 as one of the projects outputs:

- Knopp, V., Terizakis, G., Denker, K., Groß, E., Häfele, J. & Pollich, D. (2024) *Rechtsextreme Meme. Eine praxisorientierte Einführung für die Ausbildung in Polizei und Sozialwissenschaften*, transcript: Bielefeld, forthcoming ("Right-wing extremist memes. A practice-oriented introduction for training in the police and social sciences").

Summary: "Right-wing extremist ideologies on the internet pose many challenges for police state security. The "New Right" communicates symbolically with memes and uses sophisticated rhetoric to wage info wars. The authors sharpen prospective police officers' awareness of the media practice of modern right-wing extremism. Teachers at police academies will also find extensive materials for planning their own courses."

As well as the textbook and the handbook examined in [Section 4.3](#), several articles and essays were published. A comprehensive list can be found in [Appendix 3](#). Publications, inter alia, including:

- Nestler, N. & Knopp, V. (2023) "Memes als Mittel (extrem) rechter Radikalisierung". In MOTRA-Verbund (ed.), *MOTRA-Monitor 2022*. ("Memes as a means of (extreme) right-wing radicalisation")

Conclusion: "In its memetic communication, the New Right consciously relies on messages that appear moderate, subtle or sometimes encrypted, thereby achieving reach beyond its own channels in order to transport narratives into areas of the social centre. Internally and in relevant channels, meme communication is sometimes much more explicit and extreme, revealing its inherent potential for radicalisation even more clearly. Central to this is the creation of a general climate of mistrust and hostility towards state institutions, political opponents, the media and science, as well as an atmosphere of widespread fear of the future, deeply felt uncertainty and even apparent lack of prospects within the existing system, which is characterised as unstable or degenerated. The supposed solution, which either resonates in the background or is directly suggested in the narratives, lies in drastic political changes, the elimination of supposedly omnipresent left-wing

hegemony and even the hoped-for overthrow of the system. Memes play a central role in this respect, as they are a particularly efficient means of (sometimes subliminal) radicalisation and mobilisation as well as the dissemination and consolidation of political narratives, even beyond pop culture leisure activities. This is therefore analysable evidence of the practical implementation of metapolitical strategy by extreme right-wing groups.“

- Terizakis, G., Nestler, N. & Denker, K. (in press) "Angstpolitik und neurechte Meme: Narrative der Angst als Instrument der (vor-)politischen Kommunikation". In Jens Lanfer, Martin Schnell (Ed.), *Gesellschaftliche Angst und Angstpolitik*. VS Wiesbaden. ("Fear politics and neo-right memes: Narratives of fear as an instrument of (pre-)political communication")

Summary: "‘Fear’ is traditionally not a policy field that is amenable to political science analysis. Fear politics’ can be understood in two ways: Both as a specific political practice of fear or the exploitation of fear by political actors and as a possible limitation for the research process. In this article, the political content and political practices of fear are analysed based on the use of internet memes by (new) right-wing actors - in particular the new generation of the New Right - with a focus on the narratives used there."

4.12 Lessons learned

The basic assumptions of the research project were confirmed and refined

The MISRIK project has shown that internet image memes, unlike in previous meme research, need to be examined less as images and more as complex sign structures that exhibit language-analogue characteristics and whose grammar can be described. Thus, typical narrative patterns of the New or Extreme Right are not exclusively based on communicative means such as relevant symbols, as is usually the case in conventional educational material. Such memes can also be recognised by means of design that, for example, make use of the aesthetics of ugliness or disorder in comparative arrangements.

Extreme right-wing internet image memes might be interpreted as enthymemes

Enthymemes are incomplete 'argumentation figures' that are to be completed by the audience. Content is thus rather insinuated and remains interpretatively underdetermined, such that it is for the target audience of memetic communication to add it themselves. Extreme right memes arrange this underdetermined content in such a way that the reproduction of resentment becomes likely through interpretation, without the resentment having to be expressed directly. This mechanism can also be observed across various separate communication incidents. For example, resentment-oriented suggestions for interpretation can be made by mixing news articles and memetic communication of values in separate but closely related postings.

The far-right memes attempt to lend credibility to the narratives they convey with the help of seven communicative mechanisms

Some of these mechanisms are not specific to the far right, but are also used by democratic actors, such as personalisation. However, they occur with striking frequency in the far-right content that was analysed. The individual mechanisms are: (1) Insinuation: is used to depict policies not literally but implicitly; (2) (Re-)framing: involves (re)framing events and policies in line with one's own ideology in order to influence the perception of the observer; (3) Provocation: is used to attack the value systems of political opponents; (4) Retorsion: distorts the discourse of political opponents or places it in a new context in line with one's own ideology; (5) Personalisation can be observed as heroisation (of extreme right-wing figures) or as stigmatisation (of political opponents); (6) Immunisation: presents one's own ideology as "normal"; and (7) Polarisation: causes debates to no longer be conducted in a differentiated manner.

Extreme right-wing strategies simultaneously make use of affective and more cognitive-narrative content

This led to the result that the previously widespread characterisation of extreme right-wing affect politics as "hate" or "anger" must be expanded to include the dimension of wrath. Wrath is an aggressive affect that is linked to a moral narrative (cf. "righteous wrath", "wrath of God"). Extreme right-wing affect politics uses aggressive affects to activate potential supporters, but



always embeds this in overarching narratives that activate conspiracy theories, such as the alleged threat to ethnic-national or cultural identity. An analogous structure could be described for the affect of fear.



5. Literature

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Workshops

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Knopp, V. (2024, February 21). QAnon(-Memes) als Aktualisierung antisemitischer Verschwörungserzählungen [Workshop]. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Landesbüro Niedersachsen.

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- Knopp, V. (2023, May 3). Anecken, Ausgrenzen, Aufräumen – Online-Strategien des jungen Rechtsaußenspektrums [Workshop]. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Landesbüro Niedersachsen.
- Knopp, V. (2023, March 15). Anecken, Ausgrenzen, Aufräumen – Online-Strategien des jungen Rechtsaußenspektrums [Workshop]. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Landesbüro Niedersachsen.
- Knopp, V. (2023, March 2). Anecken, Ausgrenzen, Aufräumen – Online-Strategien des jungen Rechtsaußenspektrums [Workshop]. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Landesbüro Brandenburg.
- Knopp, V. (2023, February 8). Anecken, Ausgrenzen, Aufräumen – Online-Strategien des jungen Rechtsaußenspektrums [Workshop]. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Landesbüro Niedersachsen.
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- Knopp, V. (2022, September 13). Anecken, Ausgrenzen, Aufräumen – Online-Strategien des jungen Rechtsaußenspektrums [Workshop]. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Landesbüro Niedersachsen.

Knopp, V. (2022, July 5). Anecken, Ausgrenzen, Aufräumen – Online-Strategien des jungen Rechtsaußenspektrums [Workshop]. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Landesbüro Niedersachsen.

Knopp, V. (2022, May 7). Anecken, Ausgrenzen, Aufräumen – Online-Strategien des jungen Rechtsaußenspektrums [Workshop]. Stiftung Leben & Umwelt/Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung Niedersachsen.

Knopp, V. (2022, March 9). Anecken, Ausgrenzen, Aufräumen – Online-Strategien des jungen Rechtsaußenspektrums [Workshop]. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Landesbüro Niedersachsen.

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Appendix 2 – Lectures

Knopp, V. (SoSe 2024). *Rechtsextremer Kulturkampf als unkonventionelle Online-Partizipation* [Seminar]. Hessische Hochschule für öffentliche Sicherheit und Management, Lehrveranstaltungen für Studierende des Polizeivollzugs.

Knopp, V. (WS 2023/24). *This memes war!!! Rechtsextremer Kulturkampf als unkonventionelle Online-Partizipation?* [Seminar]. Hessische Hochschule für öffentliche Sicherheit und Management, Lehrveranstaltungen für Studierende des Polizeivollzugs.

N'Guessan, K., Knopp, V. (SoSe 2023). *(Extrem) rechte Vergemeinschaftung online: Einblicke in die Empirie* [Lecture Series]. TU Darmstadt, Institut für Philosophie.

Denker, K. et al. (SoSe 2023). *(Digitaler) Faschismus?* [Lecture Series]. TU Darmstadt, Institut für Philosophie

Knopp, V. (WiSe 2023/24). *This memes war: Strategien rechtsextremistischer Internetkommunikation* [Fortbildung]. Hessische Hochschule für öffentliche Sicherheit und Management, Fortbildungsangebot.

Knopp, V. (WiSe 2023/24). *This memes war: Strategien rechtsextremistischer Internetkommunikation* [Fortbildung]. Hessische Hochschule für öffentliche Sicherheit und Management, Fortbildungsangebot.

Knopp, V. (SoSe 2023). *This memes war!!! Rechtsextremer Kulturkampf als unkonventionelle Online-Partizipation?* [Seminar]. Hessische Hochschule für öffentliche Sicherheit und Management, Lehrveranstaltungen für Studierende des Polizeivollzugs.

Knopp, V. (SoSe 2023). *This memes war: Strategien rechtsextremistischer Internetkommunikation* [Fortbildung]. Hessische Hochschule für öffentliche Sicherheit und Management, Fortbildungsangebot.

Terizakis, G. (WS 2022/23). *Transparenzgespräche zu rechtsextremer Internetkommunikation* [Seminar]. Hessische Hochschule für öffentliche Sicherheit und Management, Lehrveranstaltungen für Studierende des Polizeivollzugs.

Denker, K. (SoSe 2022). *Chiffren, Parolen, Gefüge – Zeichenregime bei Deleuze/Guattari* [Seminar]. TU Darmstadt, Institut für Philosophie.

Regner, W., Benli, N., Knopp, V. (SoSe 2023). *Politische Bildung* [Seminar]. Hessische Hochschule für öffentliches Management und Sicherheit, Nachwuchsführungskräfte-Qualifizierung.

Terizakis, G. (SoSe 2022). *Transparenzgespräche zu rechtsextremer Internetkommunikation* [Seminar]. Hessische Hochschule für öffentliche Sicherheit und Management, Lehrveranstaltungen für Studierende des Polizeivollzugs.

Terizakis, G. (WS 2021/22). *Transparenzgespräche zu rechtsextremer Internetkommunikation* [Seminar]. Hessische Hochschule für öffentliche Sicherheit und Management, Lehrveranstaltungen für Studierende des Polizeivollzugs.

Appendix 3 – Articles and Essays

Denker, K. (2024) Extrem rechte Bild/Sprachen. Zur Grammatik von Internet-Memen. In: Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (ed.): *Wissenschaftskonferenz 2023. Tagungsband*. Köln, S. 176-190.

Denker, K. (2024) Hass, Wut und Zorn. Beobachtungen zum Imageboard 4chan/pol. In: Kettner, M. et al. (ed.): *Philosophische Digitalforschung*, transcript: Bielefeld, im Erscheinen.

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- Liu, C.C., Koto, F., Baldwin, T., Gurevych, I. (2023). Are Multilingual LLMs Culturally-Diverse Reasoners? An Investigation into Multicultural Proverbs and Sayings. *NAACL*, forthcoming. <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2309.08591>
- Bates, L., Christensen, P.E., Nakov, P., Gurevych, I. (2023). A Template Is All You Meme. *arXiv*. <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2311.06649>
- Nestler, N., Knopp, V. (2023). Memes als Mittel (extrem) rechter Radikalisierung. In MOTRA-Verbund (ed.), *MOTRA-Monitor 2022*.
- Terizakis, G., Nestler, N., Denker, K. (in press). Angstpolitik und neurechte Meme: Narrative der Angst als Instrument der (vor-)politischen Kommunikation. In Jens Lanfer, Martin Schnell (Ed.), *Gesellschaftliche Angst und Angstpolitik*. VS Wiesbaden.
- Meier-Arendt, David (2023): „Antifeministische Männlichkeit(en) im Netz: Digitale Transformation und technisch vermittelte Agitation. Eine Analyse der Funktions- und Wirkungsweisen antifeministischer Agitation auf Facebook und Twitter“, in: GENDER – Zeitschrift für Geschlecht, Kultur und Gesellschaft, 15/1, Themenheft »Ernährungspraxis im Wandel«, L. Bröcher / E. Gredel / L. Schelenz / B. Kortendiek. (Hg.) S. 27-42.
- Knopp, V. (2023). Interpretative Analyse rechtsextremistischer Meme am Beispiel einer rechten Jugendorganisation. In Frieder Stolzenburg, Christian Reinboth, Thomas Lohr, Kathleen Vogel (Ed.), *NWK 2023 – Tagungsband der 23. Nachwuchswissenschaftler*innenkonferenz, Harzer Hochschultexte Nr. 14*. Wernigerode.
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Appendix 4 – Presentations

Knopp, V. (2024, July 25). *Entzaubern, kritisieren oder ignorieren: Wie über AfD und neurechte Vordenker berichten?* [Presentation]. Deutscher Journalisten-Verband (DJV), Landesverband Niedersachsen.

Knopp, V. (2024, July 10). *Extrem rechte Influencer*innen und die Verbreitung binär-komplementärer Geschlechterkonzepte* [Presentation]. Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences.

Terizakis, G., Knopp, V. (2024, June 13). Spaltung der Gesellschaft und rechtsextremistische Internetkommunikation [Presentation]. Führungskolleg Hessen e. V.

Knopp, V., Denker, K. (2024, June 11). Extrem rechte Meme: Topoi, Stilmittel, Strategien [Presentation]. 29. Deutscher Präventionstag 2024 in Cottbus.

N'Guessan, K. (2024, May 21). *Memetapolitics: accelerationism, humor and play in post-digital activism of the far right* [Presentation]. Institutskolloquium Ethnologie Frankfurt.

Terizakis, G., Knopp, V. (2024, May 16). Extrem rechte Meme. Ergebnisse aus dem Forschungsprojekt MISRIK [Presentation]. Hochschule des Bundes, Wiesbaden.

Knopp, V. (2024, May 13). Rechtsextremismusforschung in Politik und Gesellschaft. Ein subjektiver Bericht [Presentation]. Schader-Stiftung, Darmstadt.

- Knopp, V. (2024, March 13). *Meme als neurechtes Mittel zur politischen Kommunikation: Erkenntnisse aus dem Forschungsprojekt MISRIK* [Presentation]. lea – gemeinnützige Bildungsgesellschaft mbH der GEW Hessen.
- Denker, K. (2024, March 7). *Die grammatische Struktur extrem rechter Internet-Meme* [Presentation]. Hochschule Fresenius, MOTRA-K #2024.
- Knopp, V. (2024, March 7). *Radikalisierung durch Reichweite(n)? Rechtsextreme Influencer*innen und das Mainstreaming binär-komplementärer Geschlechterkonzepte* [Presentation]. Hochschule Fresenius, MOTRA-K #2024.
- Knopp, V. (2023, November 22). *Aktualisierung antisemitischer Verschwörungserzählungen: QAnon auf Telegram* [Presentation]. Hessische Hochschule für öffentliches Management und Sicherheit (in partnership with Bildungsabteilung des Zentralrats der Juden in Deutschland, Schader-Stiftung, Polizeipräsidium Südhessen), HöMS-Hochschultag des Fachbereichs Polizei "Polizeialltag und Antisemitismus".
- N'Guessan, K (2023, November 18). *Rassismus, Rassifizierung, Kultur? Ethnologische Begriffsbestimmungen*. [Presentation]. Stiftung für die internationalen Wochen gegen Rassismus, Tagung Rassismus macht krank
- Terizakis, G., Knopp, V. (2023, November 9). *Rechtsextremistische Online-Kommunikation als Herausforderung für den demokratischen Diskurs* [Presentation]. Hessische Hochschule für öffentliches Management und Sicherheit, HöMS-Forschungstag 2023.
- Knopp, V. (2023, October 6). *Desinformation als Mittel gezielter Einflussnahme: Memes als extrem rechtes Agitationsmedium* [Presentation]. Koordinierungsstelle (KoSt) Vielfalt und Politische Bildung und Hochschuldidaktischer Dienst (HDD) der Hessischen Hochschule für öffentliches Management und Sicherheit (HöMS).
- Knopp, V. (2023, September 2). *Memetische Agitation des jungen Rechtsaußenspektrums: Mechanismen, Strategien, Narrative* [Presentation]. MetaRheinMainChaosDays (MRMCD).

Knopp, V. (2023, August 29). *Rechtsextremistische Meme als didaktisches Mittel in der Primärprävention* [Presentation]. 40th Online Gathering of the Graduate Network Civil Security.

N'Guessan, K. (2023, July 27). *Memetapolitics. Ethnographic Perspectives on far right meme practice* [Presentation]. DGSKA, München.

Denker, K. (2023, July 12). *Theory of Fascism on a Thousand Plateaus* [Presentation]. Deleuze and Guattari Studies Conference 2023, Belgrade/Serbia.

Denker, K. (2023, June 28). *Ein Vorschlag zum Verstehen (rechter) Internet-Meme* [Presentation]. Kolloquium des Instituts für Philosophie, TU Darmstadt.

Terizakis, G., Knopp, V. (2023, June 22). *Meme als neurechtes Mittel zur politischen Kommunikation: Erkenntnisse aus dem Forschungsprojekt MISRIK* [Presentation]. Hessisches Innenministerium.

Terizakis, G., Knopp, V. (2023, June 22). *Vorstellung von MISRIK* [Presentation]. Parlamentarischer Abend des Hessischen Landtags.

Knopp, V. (2023, June 22). *Ideen und Strategien der Neuen Rechten* [Presentation]. SPD-Landtagsfraktion Niedersachsen.

N'Guessan, K. (2023, June 8). *What is a woman? Ethnographic perspectives on uncertainty, trolling and far right metapolitics* [Presentation]. SIEF, Brno.

Knopp, V. (2023, June 1). *Anecken, Ausgrenzen, Aufräumen – Online-Strategien des jungen Rechtsaußenspektrums* [Presentation]. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Landesbüro Hessen.

N'Guessan, K. (2023, June 1). *Aktiv werden gegen Rechtsextremismus und Rassismus: was können WIR tun?* [Panel Discussion]. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Landesbüro Hessen

Knopp, V. (2023, May 17). *Rechtsextremistische Meme als didaktisches Mittel in der Primärprävention* [Presentation]. 38th Online Gathering of the Graduate Network Civil Security.

Terizakis, G., Knopp, V. (2023, March 15). *Meme als neurechtes Mittel zur politischen Kommunikation: Erkenntnisse aus dem Forschungsprojekt MISRIK* [Presentation]. Hessische Landtagsfraktion Die Linke.

Terizakis, G. (2023, March 8). *Meme als neurechtes Mittel zur politischen Kommunikation: Erkenntnisse aus dem Forschungsprojekt MISRIK* [Presentation]. Universität Bochum/Hochschule der Polizei und öffentlichen Verwaltung NRW, Duisburg.

N'Guessan, K. (2023, February 28). *Die wollen nur spielen!? – Trolling, shitposting und Spiel in der metapolitischen Praxis rechter Internetkulturen. Einblicke in ein ethnografisches Forschungsprojekt* [Presentation]. Hochschule Fresenius, MOTRA-K #2023.

Denker, K. (2023, February 28). *Hass, Meme, Theorie? Neurechte Kommunikationsstrategien im Netz* [Presentation]. Hochschule Fresenius, MOTRA-K #2023.

Knopp, V. (2023, February 28). *Rechter Online-Aktivismus am Beispiel der Memes der Jungen Alternative für Deutschland (JA)* [Presentation]. Hochschule Fresenius, MOTRA-K #2023.

Denker, K. (2022, December 8). *Wie lassen sich Internet-Meme analysieren?* [Presentation] Universität Paderborn, Paderborner Kolloquium zur Philosophie.

Liu, C., Geigle, G., Krebs, R., Gurevych, I. (2022, December 7-11). *FigMemes: A Dataset for Figurative Language Identification in Politically-Opinionated Memes* [Poster presentation]. The 2022 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Denker, K. (2022, December 2). *Internet-Meme: (Wie) Kann man sie philosophisch analysieren?* [Presentation] Universität Konstanz, Conference Was ist digitale Philosophie? Phänomene, Formen und Methoden.

Knopp, V. (2022, November 26). *Konstruktive Irritationen. Nichtrechte Rezeption(en) rechtsextremistischer Memes am Beispiel der politischen Erwachsenenbildung* [Presentation]. TU Darmstadt, Workshop Digitale Bilderkämpfe: Workshop zur philosophischen und interdisziplinären Mem-Forschung.

Denker, K. (2022, November 25). *Gibt es philosophische Mem-Forschung?* [Presentation] TU Darmstadt, Workshop Digitale Bilderkämpfe: Workshop zur philosophischen und interdisziplinären Mem-Forschung.

Meier-Arendt, D. (2022, November 25). *Kalkulierte Ambivalenzen und partizipative Propaganda in digitalen Bilderkämpfen. Eine Fallanalyse am Beispiel von Gewaltdarstellungen in rechten Memes* [Presentation]. TU Darmstadt, Workshop Digitale Bilderkämpfe: Workshop zur philosophischen und interdisziplinären Mem-Forschung.

Denker, K. (2022, September 10). *Spielerische Hassbotschaften in Internet-Memen* [Presentation]. TU Braunschweig and BU Wuppertal, Workshop Virtualität und Gaming.

Meier-Arendt, D. (2022, September 8). „*They continue their archaic way of life here*“: *An empirical analysis of masculinities and the reproduction of far-right narratives in the German digital public space* [Presentation]. KU Leuven, Hybrid Conference Resistance and Subjectivities in the Digital Public Space.

Knopp, V. (2022, August 20). *Jugendbewegung von rechts? Rechte Jugendorganisationen zwischen Attraktion, Agitation und Selbstsuggestion* [Presentation]. Archiv der Arbeiterjugendbewegung, Forschungsworkshop Arbeit-Jugend-Bewegung.

Terizakis, G., Noosten, M. (2022, March 9). *Neue Rechte im Netz – Memes, Ideen, Strategien* [Presentation]. Hessische Hochschule für öffentliches Management und Sicherheit, Vortragsreihe des Didaktischen Diensts.

Denker, K. (2021, October 13). *MISRIK: Rechte Meme im Internet erkennen und deuten* [Presentation]. 19th Online Gathering of the Graduate Network Civil Security.

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