

Topic 1: Youth Radicalization in Austria

Brief study description: Most research on both socio-political and religious radicalization has been conducted retrospectively on adults; yet mounting evidence suggests that adolescence is the developmental key period during which radicalization occurs. The FWF-funded 4 year project “Youth Radicalization in Austria”, starting in May 2023, aims for a longitudinal study among adolescents between the ages of 14 and 16 in Vienna, Upper Austria, Burgenland, Salzburg, and Vorarlberg, tracking the development of radicalization outcomes and various commonly theorized predictors and protective factors. The end result will be comparative test of various radicalization theories.

For a glimpse at the topic, see: [link](#).

Expected time frame: The first wave of data collection is scheduled for spring 2024.

Tasks and expectations: Students in the project are required to help with data collection, specifically by going to schools to administer the questionnaire there. The contents of the questionnaire are pre-determined by the aims of the project, but students are free to develop their own research questions using some of these measures within their thesis.

Supervision: Julia Reiter

Topic 2: Behavioural measures of supporting radical political groups

Brief study description: The readiness to engage in political violence and to support political groups / actors who employ violent means are both central outcomes to the field of radicalization studies; yet it is exceedingly difficult to measure these outcomes. There are practical and ethical limitations to the simple observation or experimental induction of these behaviours, but directly and hypothetically asking about people’s readiness to engage in them comes with its own set of limitations (such as social desirability, the incentive to deceive both oneself and others, lacking capability to imagine the situation and one’s true capabilities in such a situation, ...). This project aims at developing a valid true behavioural measure of support for radical political groups by using donation behaviour.

For a glimpse at the topic, see: [link](#).

Expected time frame: Flexible

Tasks and expectations: Data collection among students, participation in project meetings

Supervision: Julia Reiter

Topic 3: Internalised misogyny

Brief study description: Internalised misogyny describes sexist and patriarchal values held by women, resulting in negative effects on their self-concept and wellbeing. Han et al. (2023; see below) have recently developed and validated a comprehensive scale of the phenomenon. This project seeks to create and validate a German version of the scale, which also allows you the freedom to come up with other constructs which interest you in relation to internalised misogyny and include these in the study.

For a glimpse at the topic, see:

Han, E., Hoffman, L. & Wood, S.M. Using the Internalized Misogyny Scale Across Sexual Orientations: Measurement Invariance and Item Factor Analysis. *Sex Roles* **88**, 290–304 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-023-01357-x>

(Access to [article](#) on-campus via u:account login)

Expected time frame: Flexible

Tasks and expectations: Data collection, independent research questions in relation to the construct; previous experience with scale validation is not required, but must be willing to learn about what makes a good, valid measure over the course of the project

Supervision: Julia Reiter

Topic 4: Sex work in the context of work and health psychology

Brief study description: Sex work is an underresearched area of work, yet it is relevant to multiple sub-disciplines of psychology such as social psychology (thinking, for example, of the stigma affecting the profession, issues with discrimination and multiple marginalizations, and the social interactive dynamics between workers as well as between workers and clients), occupational psychology (thinking, for example, of job demands and job resources, some of which are comparable to other physically and emotionally demanding jobs while others, such as the socio-cultural stigma, are more unique to sex work), or health psychology (such as physical and mental health effects, both negative and positive, on both sex workers and clients). Moreover, the profession of sex work is extremely heterogeneous in terms of working conditions, clients, etc. Ongoing research in the department is using a mixed methods approach to look into job demands and resources of various kinds of physical sex work; a master student could either join in and support the quantitative part of this data collection, or look into other specific fields such as digital, non-physical sex work, or other questions such as the intersection between sex work and health and social services.

Expected time frame: Ongoing data collection (quantitative) could be joined in the summer semester, around April/May; own data collection would be more flexible

Tasks and expectations: Assist with data collection (quantitative) or collect own data (opportunity for qualitative or mixed-methods work); out of topics 1 – 4, this is the one requiring the highest willingness to work independently, but also with the greatest freedom; there is another master student working on the same topic with one semester of experience they are willing to share.

Supervision: Julia Reiter

Topic 5: Domain-Specific Time Preference Scale

Developing and validating a time preference scale, to compare their reliability/validity with regular intertemporal choice tasks. The student will be required to use Qualtrics to program a questionnaire, similar to DOSPERT for risk preferences ¹. Ideally, this study is run in the current academic year, but there is no hard deadline.

1. Blais AR, Weber EU. A Domain-Specific Risk-Taking (DOSPERT) scale for adult populations. *Judgm Decis Mak.* 2006;1(1):15.

Supervision: Simon van Baal

Topic 6: Investigating the General Factor of Impulsivity

There is funding for running a pilot study to identify the General Factor of Impulsivity. The student will help with composing a cognitive battery and conducting testing. In addition to the cognitive battery, the student will be involved in developing and administering experience sampling surveys. This project needs to be completed by August 2024.

Supervision: Simon van Baal

Topic 7: Self-reliance and economic mobility

Brief study description: Solving collective societal challenges through cooperation is efficient, yet when possible, many people would opt to solve these challenges on their own (“self-reliance”), largely to circumvent the risk of being exploited by free-riders. For example, one chooses to own a car rather than contribute to better public transportation. While self-reliance is safe and effective, it wastes resources, undermines social cohesion, and increases inequality. How to encourage cooperation in the presence of self-reliance opportunities thus emerges to be a critical question. In this project, we examine how (perceived, intragenerational) economic mobility (i.e., how variable one’s resources in an extended period) affects people’s preferences for self-reliance (vs. cooperative solutions) to collective challenges.

Critical references:

- Gross, J., & De Dreu, C. K. W. (2019). Individual solutions to shared problems create a modern tragedy of the commons. *Science Advances*, 5(4), eaau7296. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aau7296>
- Gross, J., Veistola, S., De Dreu, C. K. W., & Van Dijk, E. (2020). Self-reliance crowds out group cooperation and increases wealth inequality. *Nature Communications*, 11(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-020-18896-6>
- Gross, J., & Böhm, R. (2020). Voluntary restrictions on self-reliance increase cooperation and mitigate wealth inequality. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 117(46), 29202–29211. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2013744117>

Tasks and expectations: Students are expected to survey the social psychology/behavioral economics/macroeconomics literature to identify proper measures of the constructs in question (e.g., objective and subjective indicators of people’s preferences for self-reliance) and build a survey for an online study. Students have the freedom to propose related research questions within the general framework of this project and add their own measures to the study. It is in principle a correlational study, but it is possible to add simple experimental elements to it.