

Abstract

This study investigates the radicalization pathways of German jihadist Denis Cuspert and Norwegian right-wing extremist Anders Breivik. The aim is to identify causal factors that could have initiated, promoted, or accelerated the respective radicalization process and to compare the radicalization pathways with each other in this regard. The purpose of this study is to better understand the complexity of a radicalization process in terms of causes, reasons, effects, and correlations in order to be able to respond to it adequately. Right-wing extremism and jihadism are current security threats to Western democracies and their societies. A comparison of jihadist and right-wing extremist radicalization processes helps design and further develop preventive and deradicalization measures. Essential causal factors that contributed to the radicalization process of Cuspert and Breivik are personal crises, rejection, the search for meaning and belonging, the desire for attention and recognition, interaction with like-minded people, psychological group processes, perceptions and narratives of deprivation and threat to one's social group, and foreign policy events. The cases differ concerning personal experiences and perceptions due to background of origin and, in particular, regarding the importance of the Internet during the radicalization process.